

Taras Kuzio  
in collaboration with Stefan Jajeczyk-Kelman

## **Fascism and Genocide**

Russia's War Against Ukrainians

# UKRAINIAN VOICES

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Collected by Andreas Umland

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# FASCISM AND GENOCIDE

## Russia's War Against Ukrainians

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'When someone is at war with an entire nation, he doesn't stand a chance.  
For us, this is a people's war. People are invincible!  
When the people have such friends as those of the Ukrainians,  
victory becomes inevitable.'

'We will fight to the end. We shall fight on the seas; we shall fight in the air.  
We shall protect our land, whatever the cost may be.  
We shall fight everywhere—on heaps of debris, on the banks of the Kalmyus and  
Dnipro, and we shall never ever surrender.'  
*Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy*



# Contents

Preface.....	11
1 Obsession.....	35
2 Genocide.....	67
3 Disinformation.....	107
4 Military.....	129
5 Volunteers and Geeks.....	167
6 Divorce.....	207
7 Global Crisis.....	235





## Tables

Table 1. Russia’s War and Genocide Against Ukrainians.....	10
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## Graphics

1. Killed Russian Officers Per Day (30-day average). Ragnar Gudmundsson, Icelandic Data Analyst. ....	20
2. Russian Officers Killed in Ukraine. @KilledinUkraine.....	21
3. Dmitry Medvedev. EU vs Disinformation. ....	76
4. Russian Military Losses in Ukraine. Ragnar Gudmundsson, Icelandic Data Analyst. ....	143
5. Russian Tank Losses in Ukraine. Ragnar Gudmundsson, Icelandic Data Analyst. ....	144

**Table 1. Russia's War and Genocide Against Ukrainians**

10,000 Ukrainian soldiers and other security forces have been killed and two times that number wounded.
Upwards of 150,000 Ukrainian civilians have been killed since 2014. 100,000 of these were killed during the destruction of Mariupol.
Twelve million refugees and IDP's were created.
100 Ukrainian athletes and coaches have been killed.
1,100 children have been killed and injured.
The Ukrainian general prosecutor's office has collected data on 45,000 incidents of aggression and war crimes. A further 15,000 crimes against the national security of Ukraine have also been registered: or nearly 60,000 in total. <a href="https://warcimes.gov.ua/all-crimes.html">https://warcimes.gov.ua/all-crimes.html</a>
Destruction of cultural heritage in Ukraine 'has become an integral element of Russia's war' the UN reported. Russia has damaged or destroyed 600 cultural heritage sites and objects, which includes religious sites, museums, historic buildings, buildings dedicated to cultural activities, monuments, and libraries. Russia has damaged one half of Ukraine's energy generating systems.
Russia has damaged or destroyed 130,000 residential buildings, 400 enterprises and plants, 18 civilian airports, 800 kindergartens and 2,200 educational facilities, hundreds of medical facilities, 50 shopping centres, 500 administrative buildings, 28 oil depots, and 650 cultural facilities.

# Preface

“On the day of the invasion, Putin ‘spoke like some  
White general from the Russian civil war’”

*Ivan Krastev*

The decision to invade Ukraine was made by the Kremlin in summer 2021. Vladimir Putin’s long, rambling essay published in July 2021 was the ideological treatise to justify the ‘liberation’ of Little Russians (the nineteenth century Tsarist Empire term for Ukrainians). Nineteenth century imperial nationalist myths had become mainstream in Putin’s Russia over more than two decades he has been in power and drove Russia’s invasion. Russia’s imperialist campaign was defeated by the twenty first reality of a robust Ukrainian national identity, modern military technology and training, a resilient society, volunteers, and civil society.

Six reasons Putin outlined for launching a full-scale invasion of Ukraine are not justified by international law. These included:

1. Ukraine had never existed until the USSR was created, a claim that could be made against all fifteen Soviet republics – including the Russian Federation. All former Western colonies had never existed before the building of European empires in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.
2. The Donbas had not recognised the legitimacy of Euro-maidan revolutionaries coming to power, a favourite Kremlin trope about an alleged ‘putsch’ in 2014. President Viktor Yanukovich was not ousted in a ‘putsch;’ he fled from Ukraine and the Ukrainian parliament, including members of the Party of Regions, voted unanimously by 328 to zero to impeach him. Russia transformed protestors in the Donbas into armed insurgents; this was never an organic process.
3. Putin has argued repeatedly since his 2008 speech to the NATO-Russia Council that Ukraine includes ‘ancient Russian lands,’ an argument that Ukraine could turn round and argue Russia also includes ‘ancient Ukrainian lands’ such as the Kuban. Russia itself includes former German,

Finnish, Estonian, Mongolian, Chinese, and Japanese 'ancient lands;' if territorial changes are to be implemented why should these be only Ukrainian?

4. Ukraine refused to implement the Minsk agreement. This is best understood as Ukraine refused to agree to Russia's interpretation of them (see later).
5. Ukraine was committing 'genocide' against Russian-speakers in the Donbas. There has never been any evidence of this and only two percent of Ukrainians believed Russia invaded Ukraine to protect Russian speakers.
6. The West and its Ukrainian nationalist puppets transformed Ukraine into an 'anti-Russia.' This justification flowed from the long-standing Russian denial of a sovereign Ukraine and its depiction as a US puppet. As a sovereign state and founding member of the UN, Ukraine has every right to pursue whatever domestic and foreign policies it wants.

Over the course of 2021-2021, the Kremlin became increasingly frustrated with Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Treason charges were levelled against Viktor Medvedchuk, leader of the pro-Russian Opposition Platform-For Life. His four pro-Russian TV channels were closed in February (ZiK, 112, NewsOne) and December 2021 (First Independent). Medvedchuk was *de facto* Vladimir Putin's political representative in Ukraine and Putin is the Godfather of Medvedchuk's daughter. Putin regarded the criminal charges as a direct challenge to his authority and standing and the closing down of television channels as evidence Ukraine had become an 'Anti-Russia.'

A second factor was the launch of the Crimean Platform in summer 2021 to lobby countries around the world to support the peninsula's de-occupation. Crimea was always viewed by the Kremlin as off limits for negotiations and a closed subject. Putin had refused to include Crimea's fate within the two Minsk Agreements.

The Kremlin's changed calculus became evident in October 2021 when deputy head of Russia's Security Council Medvedev penned a vitriolic attack on Ukrainian identity and an anti-Semitic attack on Zelenskyy which ruled out further negotiations with

Kyiv. Medvedev claimed Ukrainian leaders were US puppets and therefore the Kremlin needed to negotiate directly with their alleged Washington ‘puppet masters.’ Meanwhile, Russia would wait for the emergence of a ‘sane leadership’ in Kyiv (i.e., the installation of a pro-Russian satrap) who would return ‘normality’ to Russian-Ukrainian relations that the Kremlin craved.

In November 2021, the Kremlin unfurled a fake crisis to justify its invasion four months later. Putin issued an ultimatum to the West, demanding ‘written security guarantees’ there will be no further NATO enlargement. While this demand primarily targeted against Ukraine, it also applied to Georgia, Finland, and Sweden. Finland and Sweden joined NATO after the invasion; Ukraine and Georgia were never invited into MAP’s (Membership Action Plans) and were therefore never in the queue to join. The US, UK and NATO rejected the Kremlin’s red lines. The West has never accepted Russia has a right to an exclusive sphere of influence in Eurasia, dictating the parameters of Ukrainian sovereignty, and demanding changes in policies towards Central-Eastern Europe. The Kremlin undoubtedly knew they would never sign its ‘written security guarantees.’

In Spring 2021, Russia deployed 100,000 troops on the Ukrainian border which rose to 175,000 by February 2022. Although this was a significant mobilisation with a clear intention of putting military pressure on Ukraine and the West, it sent confusing signals. To occupy a country as large as Ukraine and defeat Ukraine’s security forces, which would eventually number 400,000 and, following full mobilisation, one million a Russian invading force would need at least four times more troops. Oleksiy Danilov, Secretary of Ukraine’s National Security and Defence Council, said Russia would need between 500,000 and 600,000 troops.

There were two reasons for Russia’s invasion force numbering only 175,000. The first is it was based on nineteenth century Russian imperial nationalist myths of Little Russians eagerly awaiting their liberation from Ukrainian nationalists operating as US puppets. The second was that Russia did not have many more troops it could use; the Russian-Ukrainian war has shown that Russia is a

Potemkin military power. Russia has long been a mafia state and corrosive corruption has affected every aspect of its military forces. Russian intelligence forces were hampered by being too afraid to tell Putin the truth. Russian security forces had stolen much of the funds earmarked for Ukraine. Meanwhile, those who Russian intelligence services had paid in Ukraine simply told them what they wanted to hear.

The massing of Russian forces on the Ukrainian border was intended to back up the Kremlin's ultimatum to the West which was described in stark terms by the Russian Foreign Ministry: 'The West has two paths: to take seriously Russia's proposals on 'written security guarantees', or to deal with a military-technical alternative.' The 'alternative' came on 24 February 2022 when Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Putin's ultimatum consisted of three elements:

1. *A Halt to the Eastward Enlargement of NATO*: Putin demanded 'written security guarantees' against further NATO enlargement to the East, and the denial of accession to the alliance of former Soviet republics (i.e., Ukraine and Georgia). The irony is that long-standing neutral Finland and Sweden joined NATO because of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Russia issued broader demands: 'NATO and the US must not station any additional military personnel or weapons outside the countries where they were stationed as of May 1997 (prior to the accession to the alliance of Eastern European countries) except in exceptional cases with the consent of Russia.' Russia also demanded NATO did not militarily cooperate with, and did not establish military bases in, Ukraine and former Soviet republics in the South Caucasus and Central Asia. New NATO members and Ukraine were never going to agree to the former two demands while the creation of NATO military bases in Ukraine and elsewhere in Eurasia had never been discussed. Ukraine has been militarily cooperating with NATO since the mid 1990s and ironically, the inflow of Western military equipment since Russia's invasion has

increased Ukraine's integration with NATO and the interoperability of Ukrainian and Western military forces.

2. *The Implementation of the Minsk-2 Ceasefire Agreement:* Moscow blamed Ukraine for the lack of progress in the peace process in the Donbas. The peace process was hampered by two different interpretations. Ukraine proposed to implement security measures first, such as demilitarising the Donetsk Peoples Republic (DNR) and Luhansk Peoples Republic (LNR) proxy forces, withdrawing Russian troops and regaining control over the Russian-Ukrainian border. Then Ukraine would hold local elections under OSCE supervision and Ukrainian legislation, and Ukrainian parliament would amend the constitution to create a 'special status' region for the Donbas. Russia proposed the opposite way forward: to firstly hold elections and change the constitution followed by de-militarisation and border questions.

Presidents Petro Poroshenko and Volodymyr Zelenskyy never trusted Russia to follow through on all the steps if Ukraine agreed to Russia's interpretation of the sequencing of the Minsk Accords. Since the invasion trust is non-existent. 'I have no faith in the Russian Federation,' Zelenskyy told Turkish President Recep T. Erdogan because, 'The people who're killing, raping and dropping rockets on our civilian infrastructures every day cannot want peace, so they have to leave our territories first.'

Putin described Zelenskyy's proposals for updating and revising the Minsk ceasefire agreements as the 'destructive line of Kyiv.' But Zelenskyy's proposed changes were reflective of public opinion in Ukraine, with only 12 percent of Ukrainians believing the Minsk Accords should be implemented in their current format. The Kremlin's hardline stance failed to capitalise on Zelenskyy's post-election naivety regarding Russia and his desire to rapidly prove he was being successful in securing peace. In 2019, if Russia had adopted a less brazen negotiating stance it may have been able to sign a peace accord with Zelenskyy. In autumn 2019, Zelenskyy agreed to the Steinmeier Formula

(a 2016 proposal by German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier) which basically followed Russia's sequencing with elections held before de-militarisation followed by the creation of a 'special status.' The following year, Zelenskyy became increasingly frustrated by Russia's intransigence and dropped the Steinmeier Formula. By 2021, on the eve of the invasion, Russia's intransigence and Ukrainophobia had transformed Zelenskyy into being little different to his predecessor, Poroshenko.

The crux of the matter was that the Kremlin was frustrated by being unable to pressure Kyiv to capitulate to its version of the Minsk accords that would have transformed Ukraine into a Russian satellite. The Kremlin always sought Ukraine's capitulation and never a compromise. Russia has steadfastly stuck to its demand for Ukraine's 'total capitulation,' as Medvedev explained even after the rout of its forces in Kharkiv *oblast* in September 2022, on Russia's terms. In response to comments from President Zelenskyy, Medvedev posted on Telegram, 'The current 'ultimatums' are a warm-up for kids, a preview of demands to be made in the future. He knows them: the total surrender of the Kyiv regime on Russia's terms.'

Ukrainians have never accepted Russian ultimatums. In September 2022, 87 percent, an increase on 82 percent since May of that year, would not agree to territorial compromises for peace. The biggest increases have taken place in the east and south where 85 (up from 68 percent since May 2022) and 83 percent respectively are opposed to compromises. Among Ukraine's IDP's the figure is even higher at 92 percent. There is no difference between Russian (85 percent) and Ukrainian speakers (90 percent) over rejecting compromises. Ukrainian public support provides President Zelenskyy with the backing to reject Russian ultimatums he explained as follows:

'They don't want negotiations. In their understanding, they understand talks as an ultimatum in which we must recognise that the Donbas and Crimea are Russian territories. They recently said that Ukraine should



recognise the south as Russian territories after they hold some 'referendum' ...'

Zelenskyy showed, in the same manner as Ukrainians, he does not trust Putin and the Kremlin to keep to what they signed. This was because: 'They will still come after our other territories in six months.' Zelenskyy believed Russia would only negotiate when it was forced to by a combination of military defeats and 'when they see the strength behind the world's support for Ukraine.'

3. *Guarantees Against Military Deployments in Ukraine:* Russian leaders expressed concerns NATO weapons systems would be installed in Ukraine. They also demanded guarantees NATO would not use the former Soviet republics for military purposes against Russia. The Kremlin's demand for 'written security guarantees' against missile deployments were non-sensical as NATO had never deployed or planned to deploy offensive missiles in Ukraine. Until Russia's invasion the West desisted from transferring what it called 'offensive' military equipment to Ukraine. Until the invasion, Germany and the Netherlands had blocked the transfer of even defensive weaponry to Ukraine while the only countries who had been willing to transfer offensive capability were the three Baltic states and the UK. Prior to the invasion, Ukraine's requests for air and missile defence systems went 'unanswered despite assurances that 'NATO stands with Ukraine.' Russia's demand ignored Ukraine's domestic capabilities; its Neptune missiles have a range of 300 kms.

## **Russian Goals in Ukraine**

Russia's goal has always been to transform Ukraine into a country resembling Belarus similar to that run by self-appointed President Alexander Lukashenka. Ukraine as Belarus-2 would be committed to an alliance with Russia, disinterested in European integration, subservient to the Russian 'elder brother', and uphold the primacy of the Russian language and the Russian Orthodox Church. In other

words, Ukraine would return to what had existed in the USSR which would erase three decades of independence.

Between the 2014 crisis and invasion, the Kremlin planned to achieve its objective of moulding Ukraine into a second Belarus by pressurising Kyiv to accept its understanding of the September 2014 and February 2015 Minsk Accords. The Kremlin's pressure on Ukrainian presidents failed to achieve its twin goals of 'Bosnianisation' and 'Finlandisation.' Therefore, Russia moved to its alternative strategy of four months of negotiations that were a *maskirovka* in preparation for a full-scale military invasion.

Russia's goals of 'Belarusianisation' and 'Finlandisation' were understood as follows:

1. '*Bosnianisation*': transforming Ukraine into a decentralised federal republic with a weak central government. Russia would secure the ability to indirectly veto domestic and foreign affairs through its DNR and LNR proxy entities who controlled the Donbas 'special status' region. 35,000 military forces Russia had built up in the DNR and LNR would become official security forces for the Donbas 'special status' region. A Russian Trojan Horse would exist within the Ukrainian state.
2. '*Finlandisation*': Ukraine would drop its goals of NATO and EU membership and become a 'neutral' state; in effect, a Russian buffer state within Russia's sphere of influence. Russia's understanding of 'neutrality' has nothing in common with the internationally accepted norm; after all, Ukraine was a neutral ('non-bloc') country in 2014 when Russia invaded and occupied Crimea. Some Western experts wrongly believed Russia would agree to Ukraine dropping NATO and allowing EU membership goals. They ignored the fact Russia pressured President Viktor Yanukovich to not sign an Association Agreement with the EU with the goal of taking Ukraine into the Eurasian Economic Union. The Kremlin's pressure led to the Euromaidan Revolution of Dignity. Ironically, Russia's military aggression has led to the EU declaring Ukraine to be a candidate member and public opinion polls showing record support for

NATO and EU membership and no support for joining Russian-led Eurasian unions.

Ukraine's rejection of adhering to Russian demands for 'written security guarantees' was driven by experience of Russian behaviour. In 1994, Ukraine agreed to give up the world's third largest nuclear arsenal and join the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in exchange for security assurances provided in the Budapest Memorandum by the UK, US, and Russian Federation (France and China also signed separately). These five countries agreed to respect Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Russia's subsequent 2014 invasion of Crimea was a clear violation of what it had signed in the Budapest Memorandum; the Kremlin's demand for 'written security guarantees' was therefore an extreme case of double standards.

### **Putin's Three Miscalculations**

Four months of international negotiations in US-Russia, Russia-OSCE, and Russia-NATO formats failed to achieve any breakthrough; in fact, they were never meant to as they were always a *maskirovka* as a prelude towards a full-scale invasion planned since Summer 2021. The Kremlin never truly expected its demands for 'written security guarantees' would be accepted by the West. The entire exercise was a means to pin the blame for the invasion on the West.

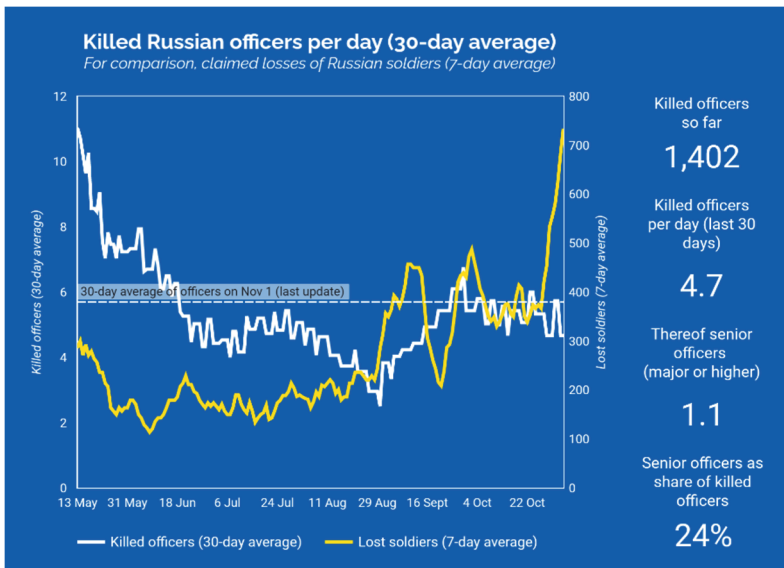
Putin's invasion of Ukraine was planned by the Russian security services, rather than the military, based on outdated myths and stereotypes about Ukraine and a lack of understanding of the West. Russia failed to achieve its planned two to three-day blitzkrieg capture of Ukraine and the capital city of Kyiv. The parade uniforms issued to Russian soldiers for a military victory parade on Khreshchatyk Street, echoing the Nazi parade in Paris in 1940, were never used. Russia captured only one *oblast* centre—Kherson—by treason, not military prowess. Putin miscalculated in three important areas.

1. *Ukrainians*: Putin's imperial nationalist denial of the existence of an independent Ukraine and separate Ukrainian nation is based on nineteenth century myths of 'Little

Russians' constituting one of three branches of a pan-Russian nation. The Kremlin really did believe its army would be greeted with bread and salt and flowers.

The Kremlin has never understood the concept of Russian-speaking Ukrainian patriotism. Ukraine built a civic nation since 1991 and its citizens have risen on three occasions in 1990, 2004 and 2013-2014 to demand their rights as citizens. Desovietisation and decommunisation have contributed towards Ukraine's Europeanisation. Russia has stagnated under Putin through a re-sovietisation of Russian society, cult of the tyrant Joseph Stalin, creation of a mafia state, cynicism, and violence at home and abroad. Ukrainians have grown as citizens; Russians have stagnated as subjects.

Little Russians do not exist in Ukraine and therefore they could not have greeted Russian soldiers as liberators. Instead, Ukrainians 'welcomed' the Russian army with stingers, NLAW's, javelins, and *Bayraktar* TB2 drones. After six months of war, Russian military casualties of 80,000 dead and wounded are far higher than ten years of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan.



Killed Russian Officers Per Day (30-day average).

Source: Ragnar Gudmundsson, Icelandic Data Analyst.