

**INCITEMENT TO GENOCIDE AGAINST UKRAINIANS  
IN RUSSIAN AND BELARUSIAN PROPAGANDA**

*Experience in documentation and systematization*

*Pilot report*

**May 2023**

## **Incitement to genocide against Ukrainians in Russian and Belarusian propaganda. Experience in documentation and systematization. Pilot report**

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### **About iSANS**

**iSANS** is an international expert initiative aimed at identifying, analyzing, and countering hybrid threats to democracy, the rule of law, and the sovereignty of the countries of Western, Central and Eastern Europe and Eurasia.

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## Foreword

### *Research goals*

This research represents an attempt to identify statements across the range of anti-Ukrainian rhetoric in Russian and Belarusian propaganda that contain evidence of a crime, as described in paragraph C of Article III of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (hereinafter referred to as the Convention), namely “direct and public incitement to genocide.”<sup>1</sup>

iSANS began to analyze anti-Ukrainian and anti-Western rhetoric in Belarusian and Russian state media long before the full-scale invasion of Ukraine that began in February 2022.<sup>2</sup> Since the spring of 2022, iSANS has been studying propaganda storylines aimed at defending and justifying aggression and war.<sup>3</sup> With the start of the large-scale invasion of Ukraine, our work has also included monitoring military activity in Belarus, documenting evidence of the Lukashenka regime’s complicity in aggression against Ukraine, and examining threats to regional security.

The emergence of shocking reports of mass crimes against the civilian population in Ukraine by Russian military personnel at the beginning of the war created a new demand for documenting incitement to genocide made by Russian and Belarusian propaganda.

iSANS’s long-term analysis of propaganda media and of events related to Ukraine lead to the conclusion that the atrocities committed by the Russian military in Ukraine, and the very fact of criminal aggression, are a direct consequence of a long-term hate campaign in Russian and Belarusian state-owned or state-controlled publications. These publications together have an enormous audience of tens of millions of people in Russia, Belarus, and in other countries. The ideologists of the war have demonized and “dehumanized” Ukrainians, accusing them of all

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<sup>1</sup> Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide  
<https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/1948-convention.shtml>

<sup>2</sup> See, for example: Andrey Yeliseyev. Pro-Kremlin Propaganda in Belarus: Classification of Narratives. iSANS, November 2020 <https://isans.org/analysis-en/reports-en/pro-kremlin-propaganda-in-belarus-classification-of-narratives.html> and other iSANS articles on the subject in the Analysis (<https://isans.org/analysis>) and Publications (<https://isans.org/publications>) sections

<sup>3</sup> See Andrey Kalikh. From “Fortress” Rhetoric to the Rhetoric of “War.” iSANS, November 2022  
<https://isans.org/analysis-en/reports-en/from-fortress-rhetoric-to-the-rhetoric-of-war.html>

kinds of misdeeds and attributing to them “inhuman” qualities. In the process, however, they have essentially dehumanized Russian citizens and military personnel, turning them into ruthless killers and removing moral barriers to violence against the civilian population.

Based on this, we believe that the key propaganda figures who have incited to commit crimes and who have supported destroying Ukraine and Ukrainians are criminals who should be punished along with those who have issued criminal orders and those who implement them with weapons in their hands. The same court proceedings should be held for propagandists as for those in the military and for the Russian and Belarusian political leadership.

Propaganda figures include not only those who directly conduct hate campaigns – employees of propaganda media outlets, primarily national television channels, “journalists,” “experts,” observers, hosts of political talk shows – but also those who set the ideological course, including political and public figures, theorists and ideologists close to the Russian presidential administration, foremost the authoritarian leaders of Russia and Belarus themselves – Vladimir Putin and Alexander Lukashenka.

It is important to consider that from the point of view of criminal law, ideological views and statements, no matter how hateful they may be, cannot in themselves constitute a crime unless they contain direct and public incitement to aggressive war, violence, discrimination, war crimes, crimes against humanity, or genocide. In each case, it must be established that a particular person significantly influenced, created, and distributed relevant propaganda messages and had corresponding intent. At the same time, even if ideological statements are not the basis for criminal liability, they must be considered, analyzed, and assessed for their role in shaping public policy and for their contribution to creating a basis for the emergence of more radical messages that directly incite to commit crimes, including genocide.

The efforts of lawyers, non-governmental organizations, politicians, and experts from different countries aimed at creating international mechanisms to bring propagandists to justice who incite to commit crimes require support in the form of a clear evidence base that could become important in such processes.

## ***Role of propaganda and incitement to genocide in its commission***

The Convention defines genocide as “acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group” (Art. II).

Genocide is a mass, collective crime that requires the acknowledging and accepting by a large number of implementers the task of destroying an entire national, ethnic, racial or religious group or part of this group. Therefore, all known cases of genocide have been accompanied by mass aggressive propaganda. Propaganda is needed to dehumanize victims and normalize largescale violence. Even when genocidal propaganda has not been translated into acts of genocide, it tends to lead to the commission of war crimes and crimes against humanity and generally contributes to manifestations of brutality in armed conflicts. The study of propaganda narratives is of fundamental importance for the legal qualification of crimes, specifically for establishing genocidal intent, establishing the causes of crimes committed, and in preventing new crimes.

The practice of international tribunals proceeds from the exceptional importance of propaganda for the commission of genocide and other international crimes, for example, the persecution and mass extermination of Jews by the Nazi regime in Germany and the occupied territories; the killing of Serbs, Croats, and Bosnian Muslims in conflicts in the former Yugoslavia; the Tutsi genocide in Rwanda; and ethnic violence in Kenya and Ivory Coast. International tribunals have not looked at propaganda as a blanket explanation for crimes, but have established a clear link between propaganda and crimes.

The international military tribunal in Nuremberg convicted propagandist Julius Streicher for the incitement to crimes against humanity, specifically the persecution of Jews, which a few years later was characterized as genocide.

The International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia considered propaganda an important factor in inter-ethnic violence. In its verdict in the case of Radoslav Brđanin, the tribunal described propaganda as one of the main driving forces of inter-ethnic conflicts, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda considered propaganda as incitement to genocide that directly influenced the commission of acts of genocide. Specifically, the verdict in the case of Kayishema and Ruzindana said that as a result of propaganda, “the killings ‘started off like a little spark and then spread.’”<sup>4</sup> The accusations in a number of cases, most notably in the so-called “media trial” against representatives of the Free Radio and Television of the Thousand Hills (Radio Télévision Libre des Milles Collines, RTLM) and the Kangura newspaper, were based on statements by media officials who incited to mass murder. The verdict in this case established a causal link between the incitement to murder disseminated by the media and acts of genocide.

International justice acts slowly, but it can be inexorable. In 2022, the trial began in The Hague of 89-year-old Felicien Kabuga, the founder and main sponsor of the RTLM, who was a fugitive for more than 25 years and lived under an assumed name in France until he was hunted down and caught in 2020. In May 2023, one of the few remaining wanted leaders of the Rwandan genocide, former police officer Fulgence Kayishema, was arrested in South Africa. Prior to this, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda had convicted more than 60 main leaders of the genocide of the Tutsi people, including propagandists.

A fundamentally important legal concept is that the Convention defines “direct and public incitement to commit genocide” as a separate punishable act, along with genocide proper, conspiracy to commit, attempted genocide, and complicity in genocide (Art. III).

A feature of this form of crime is that such instances of incitement are punishable regardless of whether they were followed by actual acts of genocide or not. This follows from the fact that incitement is a special model of a crime (*sui generis*), the responsibility for which comes independently, and in international criminal law it is provided only for the crime of genocide (for example, in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court<sup>5</sup>).

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<sup>4</sup> Prosecutor v. Clément Kayishema and Obed Ruzindana, Case No. ICTR-95-1-T, Judgement (TC), 21 May 1999, para. 282.

<sup>5</sup> Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, Art. 25(3)e. <https://www.icc-cpi.int/sites/default/files/RS-Eng.pdf>



Incitement to genocide can be realized not only through acts of genocide, but also in other crimes, including war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Under Article IV of the Convention, persons who commit genocide or any other acts listed in Article III are subject to punishment, whether they are rulers, officials, or private individuals. It follows that it is individuals who are subject to punishment for incitement to genocide.

At the same time, in accordance with the practice of the International Court of Justice (Judgement in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina v. Serbia and Montenegro of 2007<sup>6</sup>), the commission of acts of genocide also entails state responsibility, which can be imputed (attributed) to the actions of agents. Traditionally, states have been held responsible for violations of their obligations to prevent and punish genocide. Now, essentially there is also the responsibility of the state for the very acts of genocide committed by its agents. In the case of propaganda, it is also possible to recognize state responsibility, since propagandists act under the control and instruction of the state with the assistance of means provided by the state (state media).

Nevertheless, in any case, it is the actions of individuals that are primary and most important. Without them, there is no *corpus delicti* of genocide and there is no state responsibility.

In addition to actual instances of incitement to the eradication of Ukrainians, of which, in our opinion, we managed to determine quite a few, we considered it necessary to also include in the report examples of hate speech and eliminationist rhetoric against Ukrainians as a national group.

Of particular importance are examples of justifying the forced deportation of Ukrainian children to Russia (an act that, according to the Convention,

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<sup>6</sup> Summaries of Judgements, Advisory Opinions and Orders of the International Court of Justice, pp. 172-190. [https://legal.un.org/icjsummaries/documents/english/st\\_leg\\_serfl\\_add3.pdf](https://legal.un.org/icjsummaries/documents/english/st_leg_serfl_add3.pdf)

is in itself an act of genocide<sup>7</sup>) and the need for them to be adopted by Russian families, “re-educated,” assimilated or Russified.

In addition, the report includes examples of incitement to the destruction of civilian infrastructure, leading to casualties and suffering for the civilian population.

Separately, we identified instances of incitement to the destruction of the Ukrainian state (or the rejection of the idea of Ukraine as an independent state). Although this rhetoric is not connected directly to the crime of genocide, it underpins Russian state policy towards Ukraine and creates the basis for the commission of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

This study is preliminary and pilot in nature. Against the backdrop of active discussion on international platforms of proposals for the use of various legal mechanisms for bringing the perpetrators to justice and issuing the first judicial warrants against Russian representatives by the ICC, there has been a need to urgently identify, at least roughly, statements in Russian and Belarusian propaganda that could be considered criminal and punishable under international law.

Considering that at the beginning of 2023 there were very few studies of possible incitement to genocide during Russia’s aggression against Ukraine and that those made were limited in scope<sup>8</sup>, we set out to quickly collect and carry out a preliminary analysis of data over a longer period to understand the scope of the problem and outline next steps. This study has fulfilled this task. We have managed to identify and describe the main types of statements – not only the denial of the existence of the state of Ukraine and Ukrainians as a separate national group and statements that cultivate hatred towards and glorify terror against Ukrainians but also statements that represent direct and public incitement to the elimination of Ukrainians that fall under the definition of criminal acts prohibited by

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<sup>7</sup> Article II(e) “Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group” from the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.  
[https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocities-crimes/Doc.1\\_Convention%20on%20the%20Prevention%20and%20Punishment%20of%20the%20Crime%20of%20Genocide.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/atrocities-crimes/Doc.1_Convention%20on%20the%20Prevention%20and%20Punishment%20of%20the%20Crime%20of%20Genocide.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, “An Independent Legal Analysis of the Russian Federation’s Breaches of the Genocide Convention in Ukraine and the Duty to Prevent.” New Lines Institute and the Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights, 2022  
<https://www.raoulwallenbergcentre.org/images/reports/English-Report-2.pdf/>

the Convention, namely incitement to genocide in the form of complete or partial destruction of the Ukrainian national group.

To prepare a full-fledged body of evidence, an in-depth and more systematic study must be conducted that will allow for the collection of more data and a more thorough classification and analysis of that data. More importantly, an in-depth legal analysis of these statements must be carried out to ensure that the documented propaganda statements selected will be able to serve during trials as solid and convincing evidence of crimes committed.

### ***Methodology***

For three months, from February to April 2023, the iSANS research group monitored messages in state and pro-state media in Russia and Belarus, as well as in Telegram channels, personal pages on social networks, videos on YouTube, and other video hosting sites to identify statements by political and public figures and propagandists that may contain signs of incitement to commit crimes of genocide or eliminationist rhetoric. This report includes statements made between 2021 and May 2023, if they met selection criteria. In studying ideological concepts that became the basis of anti-Ukrainian state policy, we also turned to earlier statements, beginning in 2014.

Through monitoring about thirty sources, more than two hundred statements and quotes from articles, posts on social networks, television broadcasts, etc. were selected. Due to the large amount of material, we are forced to limit the report to only the most important and resonant statements.

The report does not include numerous, often more radical statements by other “narrators” about the war, for example, military bloggers, “military correspondents,” and Z-activists, with the exception of a small number of those that were most revealing. In general, these statements, full of insults and truly genocidal rhetoric, tell little in terms of content, as they follow in the wake of guidelines set by state ideologists. Regarding genocide, statements by those embedded in the state system who have state power and who implement a policy of genocide, including through the deliberate indoctrination of the population and individual groups, are of key importance. This primarily concerns civil servants and employees of

state-owned and state-controlled media. In addition, the audience coverage of Z-channels is not as large as that of national outlets. It is also important to consider that many statements made by bloggers and “Z-activists” have been made mainly in chats and Telegram channels, which raises the question of their authenticity. It is also important to consider the problem of preserving content that has evidentiary value.

However, we deemed it necessary to include some examples of this type, as they are widely known and discussed in Russian and even world media. The diaries of “military correspondents” themselves are, on the whole, more independent (uncensored) sources of information (of course, within the framework of a unified anti-Ukrainian discourse), in which even criticism of the military command is allowed – something impossible to imagine in state media.

We emphasize that we have selected for this report instances of incitement to eliminate Ukrainians as representatives of a national group, and not military personnel of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and generals who are combatants or the political leadership of Ukraine.

As a result, about a third of the pre-selected material was included in the report. Statements were chosen according to criteria of compliance with the Convention and the inclusion of illustrative and demonstrative threats.

Further, the material compiled was studied and classified, after which it was analyzed by a lawyer specializing in international criminal law.

When citing, the spelling and punctuation of the authors have been preserved.

It should be noted that the number of statements selected for this study made by Belarusian propagandists that correspond to these criteria is significantly less than that of Russian propagandists. We attribute this to several factors. First, the Russian propaganda machine that has been built up over the years is much larger and has enormous resources. There are many more Russian “fighters on the propaganda front” than Belarusian. Second, the propaganda explanation for Lukashenka’s actions during the aggression against Ukraine requires a more nuanced approach. It is important, on the one hand, to justify the complicity of the regime in

Russian aggression, repeating the anti-Ukrainian guidelines of Russian propaganda, and on the other hand, to explain why the Belarusian armed forces are not directly involved in the invasion, presenting Lukashenka as a “peacemaker” and guarantor of stability who is protecting the country from being directly involved in hostilities. Finally, there is no urgent need in Belarus for the production of anti-Ukrainian propaganda on the same scale as in Russia because Russian propaganda channels influence Belarusian audiences with the same intensity and “zombie” power as they do in Russia. Russian media and social networks dominate the media landscape in Belarus. Propaganda statements from Lukashenka’s media have been almost completely synchronized with Kremlin propaganda since September 2020, and Belarusian “journalists” and “experts” can only echo their “big brothers” from Moscow in a weaker voice, sometimes adding the words “Belarus,” “union state,” and “defenders of the western frontiers.”

### ***Challenges in defining a “protected group”***

In preparing this study, quite a heated internal discussion was held on the question of who, in the case of Ukraine, can be identified as a target of genocide – a group protected by the Convention. Disagreements were essentially surrounding the concepts of “Ukrainian people,” “people of Ukraine,” and “Ukrainians.”

After discussions with colleagues and specialists in international criminal law (ICL), we came to the conclusion that the most accurate name for the protected group is “Ukrainians” as primarily a national group. One and the same community can mix the characteristics of various protected groups (especially national and ethnic, but often religious). Ukraine has a wide variety of linguistic, ethnic, religious, cultural, and other differences that are reflected in regional characteristics. This makes it difficult to simply describe the entire protected group as “ethnic.” At the same time, we consider the self-identification of people as “Ukrainians” to be a fundamental factor. The vast majority of people living in Ukraine consider themselves to be of the “Ukrainian nation,” regardless of the above differences and without abandoning them. This is a question not only of having Ukrainian citizenship, but also of belonging to an actively emerging “civic nation,” especially during the ordeals of the last 10 years. For the purposes of this study, we define the whole of Ukrainians in terms of international law as a “national group.”

Equally or even more important for the purposes of identifying incitement to genocide is the subjective identification of the target group in the eyes of the perpetrators, who are the bearers of genocidal intent. We mean perception by Russians (and Belarusians) in the position of power, propagandists, and those who carry out the orders, of people living in Ukraine either as part of the “united Russian people” who have accepted the concept of the “Russian world,” or as those who, from the point of view of the perpetrators, persist with their Ukrainian-ness, are infected with the “disease of Nazism,” and do not want to be Russian or become Russified.

The problem of defining a target of genocide (protected group) is not merely an academic issue. It is of fundamental importance for determining the methodology for collecting data, the legal framework for their analysis, and putting together a body of evidence for possible prosecution. There are certain challenges in interpreting exactly what ideas the imperial Russian and Belarusian political actors and propagandists are guided by in relation to the “Ukrainian” national group. These are not least caused by the lack of a stable system of values and systemic ideas about the world among adherents of the “Russian world” and their limited ability to think critically and explain complex realities. The manipulative, situational nature of imperial propaganda also contributes to the problem, darting between the standard myths about Russia’s greatness and stereotypical clichés about enemies and the need to explain inconsistencies in the schematic theories of their ideologists and justify the failures of politicians. Moreover, it is not always easy to draw a line between the beliefs of imperial actors and the propaganda they generate. The popular notion that leaders living in self-isolation and an illusory “bunker” reality begin to believe in the ideas of the propaganda policies that serve them seems to us not far from the truth.

Gleb Bogush, an expert in ICL, researcher at the University of Copenhagen, and consultant for this study, believes that the dominant attitude that determines the actions of the Russian authorities towards Ukraine is their desire to destroy Ukraine as a state or the idea of Ukraine as an independent state, while the desire to destroy the Ukrainian ethnos is of secondary importance. Hatred for the Ukrainian ethnos as such (and for Ukrainian culture and language) is clearly visible in propaganda statements, but still cannot be said to be the main message of propagandists. The rhetoric of hatred is directed, foremost, at the “bearers” of the idea of Ukrainian independence, which in this rhetoric are

defined primarily in political terms (“nationalists,” “Banderites,” “Nazis,” etc.). However, “political groups” are not groups protected by the Convention, since the drafters of the Convention expressly refused to include such groups.

The propaganda follows the ideological texts of its leader. Putin’s famous article “On the historical unity of Russians and Ukrainians,” which will be discussed below, speaks of “the unity of peoples” and “one people,” asserting that Ukrainians are part of the Russian people. This article written by the head of state rejects the identity of the Ukrainian people as a separate national group. This idea has been repeatedly reinforced both by Vladimir Putin himself and by other political figures and many propagandists and has become the basis of Russian state ideology in relation to Ukraine. Based on these optics, it is difficult to imagine intent to destroy a group, which, according to the bearers of intent, does not exist. This point is raised specifically by law professor William Schabas.<sup>9</sup>

We do not share a restrictive approach and believe that this paradox only at first glance seems to be an insoluble contradiction. Studying the statements, we see a direct connection between the pseudo-historical concepts of denying the existence of the Ukrainian state and an autonomous Ukrainian people in articles by ideologists and in the speeches of politicians, on the one hand, and direct incitement to the elimination of people and genocide on national grounds, on the other. The denial of the existence of “Ukrainians” as a separate national group at the level of state policy and statements that Russian troops care about the inhabitants of Ukraine and came to save them from the “Nazis” logically coexist with the hateful ideas of many Russian propagandists that if some residents of Ukraine do not accept the idea of a unified people, refuse to consider themselves an integral part of the Russian people, do not want to be “Russified,” and steadfastly continue to consider themselves Ukrainians, they need to be “denazified” and “de-Ukrainized.”

In the view of imperial ideologists, the “nazified” residents of Ukraine are precisely those who consider themselves Ukrainians. For example, the pro-Kremlin publicist Timofei Sergeytsev, in his famous article “What Russia Should Do with Ukraine,” published in April 2022 by the leading

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<sup>9</sup> Schabas William A. Genocide and Ukraine. Do Words Mean What We Choose them to Mean? Journal of International Criminal Justice 20 (2022), 843–857 <https://doi.org/10.1093/jicj/mgac042>

state news agency RIA Novosti, writes about the need for “a set of measures towards the nazified mass of the population” and argues for “re-education achieved through ideological repression (suppression).” Such notions are not direct incitement to genocide, but they mean that it is necessary to compel (clearly, through force and coercion) those obstinate Ukrainian residents to recognize new realities, renounce their identity, and become Russians.

From this idea, it logically follows that if these “unrighteous,” “nazified” Ukrainians persist, Russia has no choice but to eliminate them. Incitement to the “denazification” of Ukrainians (not state institutions, but specifically residents of Ukraine) is easily transformed into direct incitement to the elimination of people on the basis of their self-determination as members of an independent national group and their refusal to merge with another national group.

Some Russian propagandists with a lower status, but with large audiences, discard these abstract formulations and go further in their statements, stating outright that some Ukrainians must be eradicated if they do not “cure themselves” of Nazism. The following sections of the report contain many examples of such statements.

How many “wrong Ukrainians” exist (and therefore must be destroyed) in the view of Russian propagandists? They began by calling the members of the Azov and Aidar battalions Nazis, then they included the Ukrainian political leadership, and more recently they have been talking about two to five million people, 10 percent of the population of Ukraine, etc.

The main thing in understanding the motives of those who bear responsibility for genocide is their attitude towards distinguishing “bad” Ukrainians from “good” ones. This is a very subjective view, most likely based on how the objects of their genocidal intent behave. In the case of Ukraine, these perceptions can be based on the following: if inhabitants of Ukraine declare that they are Ukrainians and do not want to “live under Russia”; if they speak out in defense of Ukrainian independence, speak Ukrainian, or sing Ukrainian songs; read internet resources banned by the occupiers; are unwilling to obtain Russian passports or cooperate with the occupying authorities, including resettling on their orders, etc., they are defined as “wrong” and become the most obvious candidates for re-education by coercion and, if necessary, for elimination.



## **Part 1. Ideological foundation of and justification for genocide**

### ***Instances of incitement to the eradication of Ukraine. Rejection of the concept of Ukraine as an independent and sovereign state***

As mentioned above, incitement to the eradication of Ukraine as a state, from the point of view of the Convention, is not incitement to acts of genocide, since it does not refer to a protected group of people. However, we consider that such appeals have an important place in justifying violence against and killings of members of a protected group. First, propagandists have often made statements about the destruction of Ukraine along with its population without qualification. That is, “eliminate it, and that’s it,” “shut down the Ukraine project,” “do not stand on ceremony” because “this is a war without rules,” etc. Second, it is important to understand that allegations that Ukraine is a “non-state” or a “Nazi” or “Satanic” state that poses a threat to Russia are made to make it easier for the Russian population to accept the need for an aggressive war, massive shelling of civilian targets and the destruction of peaceful cities, and for the Russian military to undertake the task of overcoming moral barriers to violence and murder.

Claims that the former Soviet republics do not have full-fledged sovereignty and are still part of Moscow’s “sphere of influence” have been made in one form or another throughout the entire post-Soviet history – as earlier, when within the framework of the “Brezhnev Doctrine” in the Soviet period, only the limited sovereignty of countries of the “socialist camp” was recognized. Russia’s imperial ambitions have never disappeared and were not defeated even during the relatively democratic period of the 1990s. An example of this is the massacre in Chechnya, which fought for independence.

Active imperial revenge began with Vladimir Putin coming to power in 2000. Putin set a goal in the first years of his presidency of suppressing national liberation movements within Russia and the restoration of control over the post-Soviet space. The most dramatic leap in neo-imperial rhetoric followed Russia’s aggression against Georgia in 2008. Dmitry Medvedev, at that time President of the Russian Federation who

was considered “liberal”, said then that the post-Soviet region is a “zone of privileged interests” of Russia.<sup>10</sup>

The American international law website Just Security maintains a continually updated collection of anti-Ukrainian statements made by Russian politicians and propagandists.<sup>11</sup> It opens with a quote from Putin from a conversation with George W. Bush back in 2008: “Ukraine is not even a state. What is Ukraine? Part of its territories is Eastern Europe but the greater part is a gift from us.” Putin already threatened then that if Ukraine was accepted into NATO, Russia would start tearing away Crimea and Eastern Ukraine.<sup>12</sup>

In May 2023, Bill Clinton, the 42nd President of the U.S., told the Financial Times about his conversation with Putin in 2011, during which Putin told him that he did not agree with the treaty Clinton signed with Boris Yeltsin, under which Russia committed itself to respect Ukraine’s territorial sovereignty in exchange for Kyiv’s relinquishing their nuclear weapons. “From that day on, I knew that war with Ukraine was only a matter of time,” Clinton told FT.<sup>13</sup>

But publications questioning Ukrainian sovereignty and identity appeared long before that. In 2000, at the dawn of Putinism, one of the ideologists of neo-imperialism Alexander Dugin wrote that “Ukraine as a state has no geopolitical meaning. It has neither a special cultural message of universal significance, nor geographical uniqueness, nor ethnic exclusivity.”<sup>14</sup>

At the same time, the propaganda media popularized the myth of the “historic Russian lands” which were supposedly taken from Russia by the former republics of the USSR. (After Ukraine, this theme has been most actively developed relative to Kazakhstan.) Putin himself has become the

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<sup>10</sup> Shkel T. Dmitry Medvedev has named five principles of Russia’s foreign policy. Rossiyskaya Gazeta, September 1, 2008 <https://rg.ru/2008/09/01/princypi.html>

<sup>11</sup> Russia’s Eliminationist Rhetoric Against Ukraine: A Collection. Just Security. <https://www.justsecurity.org/81789/russias-eliminationist-rhetoric-against-ukraine-a-collection/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/877224>

<sup>13</sup> Bill Clinton Saw Vladimir Putin’s Ukraine Campaign As “Just A Matter Of Time.” Financial Times, May 4, 2023 <https://www.ft.com/content/404af8ef-d073-4edc-ab25-384442864342>

<sup>14</sup> Dugin A. Fundamentals of Geopolitics, Moscow 2000, “Geopolitical Decomposition of Ukraine” p. 928, as quoted here: [http://cejsh.icm.edu.pl/cejsh/element/bwmeta1.element.ojs-doi-10\\_17951\\_we\\_2016\\_2\\_2\\_57/c/5571-3827.pdf](http://cejsh.icm.edu.pl/cejsh/element/bwmeta1.element.ojs-doi-10_17951_we_2016_2_2_57/c/5571-3827.pdf)

main disseminator of this narrative.<sup>15</sup> This is also connected with a deliberately tendentious, revisionist historical policy; the discrediting of national liberation movements in Eastern Europe, including Ukraine and the Baltic countries; and the aggressive use and consolidation, through criminal and other legislation, of myths about World War II. These ideas successfully supplemented the resentment nurtured by Putin and his propagandists that were based on the regularly repeated claims that in the 1990s the West took advantage of Russia's weakness and tried to bring it to its knees, and that "great Russia" is a fortress surrounded by enemies from which everyone wants to tear off a "fatter piece." After many years of such treatment of the population, the regimes in Russia and Belarus, which had become completely dependent on the Kremlin, no longer needed to make much effort to prepare the public for war, as the seeds of discord and hatred fell on fertile soil.

Following the annexation of Crimea and the occupation of part of the Donbas in 2014, pro-Kremlin propaganda no longer concealed the fact that Russia's goal was complete control over Ukraine.<sup>16</sup> However, apart from threats, nothing concrete had been voiced by the authorities for almost eight years.

The revival began in the spring of 2021. In April, the website of an important state media outlet, RIA Novosti, published an article by publicist Timofey Sergeytsev entitled "What kind of Ukraine we don't need," in which he wrote the following: "Ukraine, the existence of which is still allowable, must without a doubt become neutral and federal" and "the start of a large-scale military conflict is increasingly likely."<sup>17</sup> Prior to this, the rhetoric in Sergeytsev's publications towards Ukraine was much softer.<sup>18</sup> The background for the appearance of this radical article was a

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<sup>15</sup> "If this or that republic became part of the Soviet Union, received a large amount of Russian land or traditional Russian historical territories, and then decided to secede from this Union, at least then it would leave with what it came with. And it wouldn't take gifts from the Russian people away with it." Vladimir Putin, June 20, 2020 <https://reform.by/141855-putin-o-vyhode-stran-iz-sssr-ne-tashhili-by-s-soboj-podarki-ot-russkogo-naroda>

<sup>16</sup> Zakhar Prilepin (2017): "Kyiv is the ultimate goal [of Russian aggression]. We will not hide. ... Kyiv is a Russian city. A Russian Ukrainian city... All of Ukraine is the goal. There can be no other goal." Interview with Komsomolskaya Pravda, February 12, 2017 <https://www.kp.ru/daily/26642.5/3661046/>

<sup>17</sup> What kind of Ukraine we do not need. Timofey Sergeytsev. RIA News. April 10, 2021. <https://ria.ru/20210410/ukraina-1727604795.html>

<sup>18</sup> Timofey Sergeytsev (2014): "We should not fight with Ukraine..." "Let's stop this nonsense about the Russian World. There is none of that." "Let's stop this nonsense about 'Eurasianism'..." <https://ria.ru/20230103/sud-1842964097.html>

serious escalation of the conflict in April 2021, accompanied by the first large-scale buildup (up to 100,000) of Russian troops on the Ukrainian border.

The signal after which it became clear to many that Putin was preparing for something more than local actions in the Donbas was his lengthy policy article titled “On the historical unity of Russians and Ukrainians,” published in July 2021 on the Kremlin website in Russian and Ukrainian languages.<sup>19</sup> The feigned conciliatory tone towards Ukrainians<sup>20</sup> was alternated there with a rejection of Ukrainian history and identity<sup>21</sup> and narratives of a “humiliated nation” in the spirit of the early Third Reich.<sup>22</sup> The article contained vague threats against certain forces trying to turn Ukraine into an “anti-Russia.” According to Vyorstka, several drafts of the article were written. One of these drafts contained a direct threat of beginning a military operation, but it was not included in the final version.<sup>23</sup> The article was viewed by the expert community as a rationale for a future invasion. This was confirmed by the fact that, according to media reports, the article was sent for study to the Armed Forces for reading by all military personnel.

These ideas were later expanded upon by Putin in a much tougher and more candid statement in connection with Russia’s recognition of the independence of the so-called LPR and DPR on February 21, 2022, on the eve of the large-scale invasion. This document reiterated that “modern Ukraine was created entirely by Russia” at the expense of “its historical territories,” but the threats already sounded quite unambiguous (“Do you want decommunization...? We are ready to show you what real decommunization for Ukraine means”, etc.).<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Article by Vladimir Putin “On the historical unity of Russians and Ukrainians” (English translation). July 12, 2021. Website of the President of the Russian Federation. <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66181>

<sup>20</sup> Putin: “The wall that has emerged in recent years between Russia and Ukraine, between the parts of what is essentially the same historical and spiritual space, to my mind is our great common misfortune and tragedy.” Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Putin: “Ukrainians and Russians were one people, a single whole,” “modern Ukraine is entirely the product of the Soviet era,” “The great Russian nation is a triune people, consisting of Velikorossiyans, the Malorossiyans and Belarusians.” Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Putin: “We know and remember well that it was shaped – for a significant part – on the lands of historical Russia,” “One fact is crystal clear: Russia was robbed, indeed.” Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Zhegulev I. Why Putin has come to hate Ukraine. Vyorstka, April 25, 2023 <https://verstka.media/kak-putin-pridumal-voynu>

<sup>24</sup> Address of the Russian President. February 21, 2022. Website of the President of the Russian Federation. <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/67828>

During the war, Putin has repeatedly publicly reiterated these ideas. On October 27, 2022, at a meeting of the Valdai International Discussion Club, he said the following: “Frankly speaking, only Russia, which created today’s Ukraine, could be the only real serious guarantor of Ukrainian statehood, sovereignty, and territorial integrity.”<sup>25</sup> The American Institute for the Study of War (ISW) wrote at the time that “Putin continues to reject the idea of Ukrainian sovereignty in a way that is fundamentally incompatible with peace negotiations.”<sup>26</sup>

In the second month of the war, RIA Novosti published a new article by Sergeytsev titled “What Russia Should Do with Ukraine,” which could well be called a “genocide manifesto.” For the first time in the article, the word “de-Ukrainization” was used to characterize this policy. Sergeytsev wrote, “Denazification will inevitably also be de-Ukrainization – a rejection of the large-scale artificial inflating of the ethnic component of self-identification of the population of the territories of historical Malorossiia and Novorossiia, begun by the Soviet authorities.”<sup>27</sup>

The “innovation” in the article was also in the fact that Sergeytsev formulated the notion of the collective guilt of Ukrainians: “Denazification is necessary when a significant part of the people – most likely, the majority – has been assimilated and drawn into its politics by the Nazi regime. That is, when the idea that ‘the people are good and the government is bad’ does not work... “Denazification is a set of measures in relation to the nazified mass of the population.” “Further denazification of this majority of the population consists of re-education, which is achieved through ideological repression (suppression).” “In addition to the elite, a significant part of the masses who are passive Nazis and accomplices of Nazism are also guilty.”<sup>28</sup>

However, even Sergeytsev’s articles look tame compared to those of another “preacher of evil” in the same outlet RIA Novosti, Victoria Nikiforova. Here is just one excerpt from her article “What Russia is

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<sup>25</sup> Meeting of the Valdai International Discussion Club. October 27, 2022. Website of the President of the Russian Federation. <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/69695>

<sup>26</sup> Russian offensive campaign assessment, Oct 27, 2022. Institute for the Study of War. <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-27>

<sup>27</sup> What Russia should do with Ukraine. Timofey Sergeytsev. RIA News. April 3, 2022. <https://ria.ru/20220403/ukraina-1781469605.html>

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

fighting for in Ukraine” (April 6, 2022): “We do not teach our children to kill. This is disgusting, dear Ukrainians. ‘Kalibrs’ and ‘Iskanders’ are conveying to you today this simple idea.”<sup>29</sup>

Both Sergeytsev’s article and Nikiforova’s article came out a few days after the news of the first heinous war crimes committed by the Russian military – the massacre of civilians in the town of Bucha.<sup>30</sup> These articles continue to be freely available on the website of a reputable federal agency from which all the main propaganda media get their news.

*Other examples of public justification of and incitement to the destruction of Ukraine include:*

*Dmitry Medvedev, Deputy Chairman of the Russian Security Council:* “Why will Ukraine disappear? Because no one needs it. An incomplete Ukraine is not a country at all... Pieces of Russia, called Ukraine within the borders of 1991, are just a misunderstanding generated by the collapse of the USSR. And so we do not need an incomplete Ukraine. No one on the planet needs this kind of Ukraine. That’s why it will cease to be.” (April 8, 2023).<sup>31</sup>

*Konstantin Malofeev, owner of the Tsargrad-TV channel:* “The goal [of the ‘special military operation’] should be the complete destruction of this neo-Nazi and anti-Christian pseudo-state entity... The true Ukraine is an integral part of Russia.” (August 11, 2022).<sup>32</sup>

*Malofeev:* “Novorossiya is Russia. Malorossiya is Russia. All Ukraine is Russia. And it will be freed. The whole world must be freed from the dictates of Western Sodom.” (September 30, 2022).<sup>33</sup>

*Alexander Dugin, “philosopher,” Kremlin propagandist:* “Ukraine will either be part of the great Eurasian Empire or it will not exist at all.” (March 1, 2023)<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> ‘Kalibr’ (Caliber) and ‘Iskander’ are Russian cruise and ballistic missiles.

<sup>30</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bucha\\_massacre](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bucha_massacre)

<sup>31</sup> [https://vk.com/dm?w=wall53083705\\_54704](https://vk.com/dm?w=wall53083705_54704)

<sup>32</sup> Personal channel <https://t.me/kvmalofeev/896>

<sup>33</sup> <https://t.me/kvmalofeev/1046>

<sup>34</sup> [https://dzen.ru/b/ZCZox1UqlhHAQCvY?share\\_to=link](https://dzen.ru/b/ZCZox1UqlhHAQCvY?share_to=link)

*Sergei Mardan, columnist for Komsomolskaya Pravda radio:* “It is time to clearly articulate that Russia’s goal is to destroy the Ukrainian state as such. Its symbols must be banned, its toponymy burned away, the memory of its ‘heroes’ destroyed, and the very memory of this political freak erased from history, which was born in 1991 and grew stronger into a ghoul by 2014.” (March 27, 2022).<sup>35</sup>

*Mardan:* “This formation that appeared in 1991 on the world map under the name of the ‘Ukrainian state’ is a chimera that should be erased from the world map.” (March 28, 2023).<sup>36</sup>

*Andrey Tkachyov, Russian Orthodox priest:* “It is senseless, ukraine. And in its senselessness, it is dangerous to everyone, like Chernobyl that once exploded. (April 18, 2022).<sup>37</sup>

*Sergey Aksyonov, “head” of the annexed Crimea:* “Now it’s our turn to burn out the Nazi plague with a red-hot iron. The best guarantee that it will never crawl out of her caches again is the liquidation of the Ukrainian statehood that gave birth to Nazism.” (October 28, 2022).<sup>38</sup>

*Boris Korchevnikov, host and general director of the Orthodox television channel Spas:* “The Ukraine project started to die when a half-naked slut was cutting a cross on the Maidan in 2012. Slut – the state of Ukraine – will end up even worse and will be eaten alive. The worms are already feasting. It’s already a corpse.” (March 31, 2023).<sup>39</sup>

*Pyotr Tolstoy, Deputy of the Russian State Duma:* “We must follow through until we totally destroy the Nazi plague, and the international terrorist organization called ‘Ukraine’ ceases to exist.” (April 2, 2023).<sup>40</sup>

*Dmitry Rogozin, head of the Roscosmos state corporation (2018–2022), propagandist:* “What has grown up in the place of Ukraine is

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<sup>35</sup> Personal channel <https://t.me/mardanaka/7650>

<sup>36</sup> <https://youtu.be/G5dyEPK2UIU>

<sup>37</sup> Personal channel [https://t.me/o\\_andrey\\_tkachev/2835](https://t.me/o_andrey_tkachev/2835).

<sup>38</sup> Personal channel <https://t.me/Aksenov82/1643>

<sup>39</sup> Personal channel <https://t.me/boriskorchevnikov/2273>

<sup>40</sup> Personal channel [https://t.me/petr\\_tolstoy/1729](https://t.me/petr_tolstoy/1729)

an existential threat to the Russian people, Russian history, Russian language, and Russian civilization. If we do not get rid of them... we will die, but the cost to our grandchildren will be even greater. So, let's get this over with. Once and for all." (June 16, 2022).<sup>41</sup>

*Vitaly Milonov, Deputy of the Russian State Duma:* "Doves of peace and spiritual purification from fascist scum are flying to Ukraine. Sorry, not to Ukraine, but to the part of Russia temporarily occupied by pederasts." (October 19, 2022).<sup>42</sup>

*Andrey Gurulyov, Deputy of the Russian State Duma:* "The subject of Ukraine must be wrapped up tightly. And now it is necessary to recognize that there is already a need to close the "Ukraine" project forever with denazification and demilitarization. That's it. There was and now there is no Ukraine. This is Russian territory. (February 13, 2023).<sup>43</sup>

*Vladlen Tatarsky, propagandist, "military correspondent":* "Ukraine is a demonic state... This state must be ended sooner or later... This should be our policy." (April 1, 2023).<sup>44</sup>

*Anton Krasovsky, RT propagandist:* "How long will it take for all this to end?... Until there is no more Ukraine, and only our land, inhabited by our Russian people, remains." (February 25, 2023).<sup>45</sup>

*Alexander Shpakovsky, Belarusian pro-government and pro-Russian "expert":* "The current Ukrainian regime is an instrument of Western aggression that poses a threat to the security of the Union State. Therefore, the goal is to dismantle this regime, return Ukraine to the traditional orbit of the Russian civilization, and conduct a large-scale denazification of the society in the country." (May 31, 2021).<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Personal channel [https://t.me/rogozin\\_do/3158](https://t.me/rogozin_do/3158)

<sup>42</sup> Personal channel <https://t.me/govoritmilonov/1097>

<sup>43</sup> <https://youtu.be/n6k9A5KzRqA>

<sup>44</sup> Personal channel <https://t.me/vladlentatarsky/20379>

<sup>45</sup> Personal channel <https://t.me/AntonKrasovskii/1529>

<sup>46</sup> Personal channel <https://t.me/shpakouski/781>



*Shpakovsky*: “At present, the very existence of the state of Ukraine is a threat to the Belarus’s national security... The overthrow of the Zelensky regime and the return of Ukraine to the traditional orbit of the East Slavic civilization is the most important issue for the survival of the Belarusian state model.” (July 26, 2022).<sup>47</sup>

*Shpakovsky*: “The turning of Ukrainian society into beasts, the starting points of which were the first and especially the second Maidan, has reached its climax. The ugly offspring of the Belovezhskaya Accords must be destroyed.” (August 17, 2022).<sup>48</sup>

### **Hate speech. “Five Ds +”**

To assist with this study, we have drawn in part on the 2018 genocidal language building block diagram for protected groups proposed by the Jerusalem Center for Genocide Prevention.<sup>49</sup> It consists of the so-called “five Ds +”: dehumanization, demonization, delegitimization, disinformation, denial, threats, and the glorification of terror. We will articulate the meaning of each term for the purposes of this study to avoid discrepancies:

1) Dehumanization – bestowing a human group with “inhuman” qualities, for example, comparing it with animals, insects, zombies, vampires, or diseases to incite a feeling of disgust or contempt. This method was widely used during the Tutsi genocide in Rwanda in 1994 by propagandists of the Free Radio and Television of the Thousand Hills, who incited to the killing of Tutsis and labeled them “cockroaches” who needed to be “exterminated.”

2) Demonization – a) shifting blame and responsibility for all misdeeds and failures to a group; b) provoking a feeling of fear relative to that group, for example, by assigning it monstrous, mystical properties.

3) Delegitimization – denying a group’s right to memory and history, rejection of a group’s national identity, and accusing a group of crimes.

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<sup>47</sup> <https://t.me/shpakouski/2170>

<sup>48</sup> <https://t.me/shpakouski/2233>

<sup>49</sup> Richter Elihu D., Markus Dror Kris, Tait Casey. Incitement, genocide, genocidal terror, and the upstream role of indoctrination: can epidemiologic models predict and prevent? Public Health Review, 2018 <https://publichealthreviews.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s40985-018-0106-7/>

4) Disinformation – presenting false or incomplete information to denigrate a group.

5) Denial – rejection of historical facts and the right to remember past victims.

6) Threats – statements of intent to inflict terrible strikes on a group.

7) Glorification of terror – a) holding up the perpetrators of war crimes as heroes and role models; b) justification of strikes against civilian infrastructure and residential buildings of civilians.<sup>50</sup>

Experts from the Jerusalem Center looked at the connection between genocidal language and war crimes and have concluded that, if not properly countered, such language leads to genocide.<sup>51</sup> In strictly legal terms, we do not consider it possible to argue that these instances of hate speech are offenses prohibited by the Convention, that is direct incitement to genocide. If there are no direct calls to kill members of a group or to destroy the group in whole or in part, it is not possible to qualify these statements as incitement to genocide. However, we agree with the Jerusalem Center's conclusion that the link between such "genocidal speech" and genocide itself is clear.

To one degree or another, all Ds + are present in the language of Russian and Belarusian propaganda. However, we decided to use only a part of these. To uncover the ideological preparation for acts of genocide, the first three "Ds" are enough, as well as points 5 (denial of the right to identity) and 7 (glorification of terror). More work will clearly be needed to create a comprehensive body of evidence for future trials.

*Examples of dehumanization:*

*Vladimir Solovyov, propagandist, host of the program 'Evening with Vladimir Solovyov' on television channel Russia 1 (in discussing the "special military operation" in Ukraine): "When a doctor is*

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<sup>50</sup> Classification is given in this table:

<https://publichealthreviews.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s40985-018-0106-7/tables/1>

<sup>51</sup> <https://publichealthreviews.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s40985-018-0106-7/>

deworming a cat, then for the doctor this is a special operation. For worms it is a war, and for the cat it is cleansing.” (July 19, 2022).<sup>52</sup>

*Roman Golovanov, correspondent to the Komsomolskaya Pravda newspaper:* “We are not just fighting the Nazis. We are at war with cannibals... Satanism has turned them into animals.” (September 25, 2022).<sup>53</sup>

*Shukhrat Adilov, a Russian mercenary, interview to the Kaluzhskaya Nedelya newspaper:* “I can say one thing for sure: we are fighting non-humans. If they are not stopped, they will come to our house and kill our children, and those who survive will be turned into drug addicts and perverts.” (September 21, 2022).<sup>54</sup>

*Sergei Mardan, columnist for Komsomolskaya Pravda radio:* “I don’t feel sorry for anyone. Nobody at all. That’s who the Russian army is fighting with - it is fighting with ghouls. With the resurrected living dead.” (March 28, 2023).<sup>55</sup>

*Andrey Mukovozchik, Belarusian propagandist for “SB. Belarus today”:* “Ukro-Nazi must be taken out like cockroaches – once and for all.” (March 6, 2022).<sup>56</sup>

#### *Examples of demonization:*

*Grigory Azarenok, Belarusian propagandist, ONT television presenter, in discussing Ukraine:* “The state is a beast. It has sung and praised the basest human feelings. It has encouraged murder, cultivated bullying, and was built only at the expense of hatred for Muscovites, “Colorados,” “separatists” – basically anyone. And now they’re showing this.” (March 23, 2022).<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> <https://twitter.com/JuliaDavisNews/status/1549381189336711169/>

<sup>53</sup> Personal channel <https://t.me/romagolovanov/9152>

<sup>54</sup> Because the Motherland is calling! Kaluzhskaya Nedelya, September 21, 2022  
[https://nedelya40.ru/potomu-cto-rodina-zovyot\\_188489/](https://nedelya40.ru/potomu-cto-rodina-zovyot_188489/)

<sup>55</sup> [https://t.me/dmytrogordon\\_official/17311](https://t.me/dmytrogordon_official/17311)

<sup>56</sup> “SB. Belarus Today” <https://www.sb.by/articles/ne-boevye-deystviya-razdelyayut-ukrainskiy-narod-a-banderovshchina-kak-sistema-vospitaniya.html>

<sup>57</sup> <https://youtu.be/YqWvkiR4YW8>

*Azarenok*: "Ukraine is a satanic state. Christ will conquer the devil." (March 24, 2022).<sup>58</sup>

*Sergei Aksyonov, "head" of the annexed Crimea*: "We understand that with this regime we are dealing not only with anti-Russian, but also with anti-Christian forces. In other words, with Satanists." (April 18, 2022).<sup>59</sup>

*Ramzan Kadyrov, head of Chechnya*: "There is no doubt that as soon as we give up in Ukraine, hordes of the devil's servants will be already here." (October 8, 2022).<sup>60</sup>

*Dmitry Medvedev, Deputy Chairman of the Russian Security Council* (congratulating on the Day of National Unity): "We listen to the words of the Creator in our hearts and obey them. These words give us a sacred purpose. The goal is to stop the supreme ruler of hell, no matter what name he uses – Satan, Lucifer or Iblis. For his goal is death. Our goal is life. (November 4, 2022).<sup>61</sup>

*Vladimir Solovyov, propagandist, host of the program Evening with Vladimir Solovyov on the television channel Russia 1*: "In general, if you think about it, what is happening is Satanism. Pure demons. You can't say otherwise... If we are dealing with the servants of the Prince of Darkness, if we are dealing with a satanic principle, what kind of negotiations are we talking about and with whom are we talking? What kind of negotiations can there be with Satan? They have always lied, and that is the basis of Western Satanic civilization." (December 16, 2022).<sup>62</sup>

*Ramzan Kadyrov, head of Chechnya*: "Over the course of a few months of the special operation in Ukraine we have witnessed the worst manifestations of Satanism come to the surface – ardent fascism, absolute godlessness, black cynicism, and aggressive LGBT propaganda." (August 1, 2022).<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> <https://youtu.be/9spq2L7zmo4>

<sup>59</sup> Personal channel <https://t.me/Aksenov82/720>

<sup>60</sup> Personal channel [https://t.me/RKadyrov\\_95/2953](https://t.me/RKadyrov_95/2953)

<sup>61</sup> Personal channel [https://t.me/medvedev\\_telegram/206](https://t.me/medvedev_telegram/206)

<sup>62</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xhY4-lhUkkl>

<sup>63</sup> Personal channel [https://t.me/RKadyrov\\_95/2644](https://t.me/RKadyrov_95/2644)

*Kadyrov*: “...Yes, the Ukrainian population is dying. But they should be offended that they are dying in vain for the right of the West to hold rainbow parades in front of children, and not for their national values. Sodom and Gomorrah were punished by the Almighty. And today this sword of sacred punishment is in the hands of Russia!” (January 7, 2023).<sup>64</sup>

*Aleksey Pavlov, assistant to the Secretary of the Russian Security Council*: “I believe that with the continuation of the special military operation, it becomes more and more urgent to carry out the de-Satanization of Ukraine, or, as the head of the Chechen Republic Ramzan Kadyrov aptly put it, its “complete de-Shaitanization.” (October 25, 2022).<sup>65</sup>

*Alexander Samsonov, columnist for Military Review*: “If you take Tolkien’s universe, its images, then the Ukrainians, who have forgotten that they are Russians, are “orcs” – corrupted, dark elves.” (March 17, 2023).<sup>66</sup>

*Margarita Simonyan, editor-in-chief of RT*: “To our horror and, unfortunately, to our general silent amazement, a significant part of Ukraine, the Ukrainian people – certainly not all, and I hope that not even the majority, but a significant part – have been seized by this Nazi madness.” (March 26, 2022).<sup>67</sup>

#### *Examples of delegitimization:*

*Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, Deputy of the Russian State Duma*: “No one needs you [Ukrainians]. You are all European garbage, you are not needed, and you are being cleaned up! [...] You are European manure! You must disappear, but not right away. Dozens of years will pass. There are still 30 million of you left, then there will be 20, then 10. (November 11, 2019).<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> [https://t.me/RKadyrov\\_95/3256](https://t.me/RKadyrov_95/3256)

<sup>65</sup> [https://aif.ru/society/religion/chto\\_varyat\\_v\\_vedminom\\_kotle\\_na\\_ukraine\\_nabrali\\_silu\\_neoyazycheskie\\_kulty](https://aif.ru/society/religion/chto_varyat_v_vedminom_kotle_na_ukraine_nabrali_silu_neoyazycheskie_kulty).

<sup>66</sup> Alexander Samsonov. The end of the “Ukraine” project. Military Review, March 17, 2023 <https://topwar.ru/212932-konec-proekta-ukraina.html>

<sup>67</sup> Their own truth. NTV. <https://www.ntv.ru/peredacha/SvoyaPravda/m78960/o693638/video/>

<sup>68</sup> <https://www.politnavigator.net/zhirinovskijj-nazval-ukrainu-evropejskim-navozom-i-posovetoval-smenit-gimn.html>.

*Andrey Medvedev, Deputy of the Moscow City Duma, host of the Vesti program on the Russia 1 television channel: "By and large, the Ukrainian nation does not exist. It is a political orientation. To be a "Ukrainian," you don't even have to speak the Ukrainian language (which is also still being created). Ukrainians are Russians who have been convinced that they are special, more European, more racially pure and more morally correct Russians." (November 23, 2022).<sup>69</sup>*

ISW, in its review of Russian military aggression, called this statement by Medvedev "genocidal rhetoric."<sup>70</sup>

*Sergei Mardan, columnist for radio Komsomolskaya Pravda: "Why not put together a small local Zaporozhye Gulag, a nice one in the steppe for [Ukrainian] teachers [who do not want to teach Russian in schools in the occupied territories] and who have not yet learned our love of a beautiful homeland." (August 7, 2022).<sup>71</sup>*

*Mardan: "Someone who now in Crimea declares his desire for his children to learn the language [Ukrainian] should immediately be taken into questioning by the FSB. The choice of language is a political declaration. These people are clearly not loyal to Russia... Formally, it can remain as a school elective, but in reality children should completely forget the Ukrainian language by the age of 18." (September 1, 2022)<sup>72</sup>*

*Mardan: "Ukrainism as a system must be completely eradicated in the liberated territories. Complete and total de-Ukrainization. From destroying the signage in Ukrainian to the abolition of the language in school." (December 13, 2022).<sup>73</sup>*

*Nikita Mikhalkov, film director, television presenter: "The Ukrainian language has become an image of Russophobia. The phrases that we hear in Ukrainian, their transcription and pronunciation, they are*

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<sup>69</sup> Personal channel <https://t.me/MedvedevVesti/12173>

<sup>70</sup> <https://www.understandingwar.org/background/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-november-23>

<sup>71</sup> <https://youtu.be/luZd6sUWrG4>

<sup>72</sup> Personal channel <https://t.me/mardanaka/10424>

<sup>73</sup> Personal channel <https://t.me/mardanaka/12310>

for us, for the world in principle, and for themselves an expression of hatred for Russia. (August 26, 2022).<sup>74</sup>

*Sergei Moiseev, head of the organization "Rus' Triedinaya" (Rus triune):* "Ukrainianism is a suicidal form of life, the will to die. Either we collect Russian lands and unite the Russian people, or our civilization will go into oblivion." (November 24, 2022).<sup>75</sup>

*Roman Antonovsky, Z-blogger, propagandist:* "Being a Ukrainian should be shameful and painful, while being a Russian of Malorossiia is joyful and honorable." (March 27, 2022).<sup>76</sup>

*Vladlen Tatarsky, propagandist, "military correspondent":* "A Ukrainian is a sick Russian. It's like a transvestite, born a man and then something happened to him. He had an operation and wanted to become a woman... Ukrainianism is a Russian spiritual transvestite who is trying to fit into a different skin... Therefore, the future of Ukraine, of the people who live there, is Russians who will return to their normal condition." (October 2022).<sup>77</sup>

*Sergei Mikheev, "writer":* "A political khokhol [a pejorative nickname for a Ukrainian] is a completely unprincipled, poorly educated, terribly evil, incredibly greedy, and vile person." (April 2, 2023).<sup>78</sup>

*Yuri Kot, Dean of the Faculty of Media Communications at the Moscow State Institute of Culture (in an interview to the Tsargrad-TV):* "Ukrainianism is terror, devilry, demonism, terrorism, Nazism and everything else. Only in this format can Ukrainianism exist." (March 10, 2023).<sup>79</sup>

*Vladimir Solovyov, Russia 1 propagandist:* "The Washington Post, for example, publishes lengthy material accusing the Russian

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<sup>74</sup> <https://focus.ua/voennye-novosti/526919-ukrainskiy-yazyk-stal-obrazom-rusofobii-mihalkov-video>

<sup>75</sup> [https://tsargrad.tv/news/herson-dolzhen-stat-gorkim-urokom-pohabnyj-mir-razrushit-rossiju-do-osnovaniia\\_670510](https://tsargrad.tv/news/herson-dolzhen-stat-gorkim-urokom-pohabnyj-mir-razrushit-rossiju-do-osnovaniia_670510)

<sup>76</sup> Personal channel <https://t.me/SonOfMonarchy/5729>

<sup>77</sup> <https://twitter.com/JuliaDavisNews/status/1584365167176871936>

<sup>78</sup> Personal channel <https://t.me/romagolovanov/10969>

<sup>79</sup> [https://tsargrad.tv/articles/jurij-kot-protiv-nashih-detej-brosili-vyrus-ostajotsja-bit-na-porazhenie\\_737059](https://tsargrad.tv/articles/jurij-kot-protiv-nashih-detej-brosili-vyrus-ostajotsja-bit-na-porazhenie_737059)

authorities of kidnapping. This is a whole set of formulas... The 'aggressor country' is doing all this to destroy some kind of 'Ukrainian identity.' Question: can there be at least an ounce of truth in such articles? Answer: no. Starting with the fact that there is no 'Ukrainian identity.'" (December 25, 2022).<sup>80</sup>

*Stanislav Yaskevich, Belarusian pro-government blogger* (repost of "Memo to the Liberator Warrior," one of the points of which includes the following): "There are no 'Ukrainians' in nature. These are random historical mutants. Traitors. Moral freaks, proud of the renunciation of Faith, Blood, and Ancestors. (February 4, 2022).<sup>81</sup>

*Alexander Shpakovsky, Belarusian propagandist*: "...People of reproductive age are being destroyed, which, in addition to the millions emigrating and natural population decline, makes it possible to consider Ukraine a dubious asset in terms of the demographic security of the civilization of the 'Russian world'... Moreover, the paradox of the situation is that the more Russia will be soft and sentimental, the greater the losses will subsequently be in this war. That is, what looks cruel now is justified from the point of view of the future. Could the war have been avoided? No." (April 26, 2022).<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Personal channel, repost from Telegram-channel "Kremlyovskaya Prachka" ("The Kremlin Laundress") <https://t.me/SolovievLive/147514>

<sup>81</sup> Personal channel <https://t.me/drugoeeto/1482>

<sup>82</sup> Personal channel <https://t.me/shpakouski/1889>



## Part 2. Instances of incitement to acts of genocide

### *Instances of incitement to the eradication of Ukrainians*

As in the case of other genocides in the history of the 20th century, “pure” examples of direct public incitement to the destruction of Ukrainians as a protected group under the Convention are rare. Nevertheless, cases of incitement to the murder and destruction of the entire Ukrainian people or its part stand out quite clearly from the general flow of hatred. In addition, expressions widely found in anti-Ukrainian propaganda connect it to other genocides, including the Holocaust, such as dehumanizing, discrediting, and ridiculing Ukrainians while denying their right to exist as a national group. An important feature of genocidal discourse is generalization – blaming all representatives of the Ukrainian people for all misdeeds and making no distinction between combatants and non-combatants.

The first surge of genocidal statements occurred at the time of the seizure of Crimea and the beginning of the open armed conflict in the eastern Donbas.<sup>83</sup> The new growth was recorded in preparation for the full-scale invasion starting in the fall of 2021. If at the beginning of the aggression, Russian and Belarusian propagandists were still repeating the mantra about the “fraternal people” and “liberation from fascism,” after reports of massacres in Bucha, Irpin, Izyum and other cities, the masks of the “liberators” were finally abandoned, and propaganda media began to call openly for victims among the civilian population.

*Olga Skabeeva, propagandist, television presenter for Russia 1: “Beat, Khokhlov, save Russia!” [On the air of the national station, Skabeeva laughingly voiced and repeated several times a pun using the name of a Russian football player – Khokhlov – and the derogatory nickname for a Ukrainian – khokhol – which sounds like a call to kill Ukrainians<sup>84</sup>] (program 60 minutes, September 2021).<sup>85</sup>*

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<sup>83</sup> Alexander Dugin (2014): “What we see on May 2 [clashes in Odessa on May 2, 2014] is already beyond all limits. And I think – kill, kill, and kill. There shouldn’t be any more talk. As a professor, I think it’s like this.” <https://youtu.be/dwgn3JGNrUo>

<sup>84</sup> This expression directly refers to the anti-Semitic slogan of the early 20th century, “Beat the Jews, save Russia!”, which served as a call for Jewish pogroms and was used first by right-wing monarchists, and during the civil War by various belligerents - White Guards, Red Army and others.

<sup>85</sup> <https://youtu.be/4IZM3Nr1Ob0?t=571>

*Aleksey Zhuravlev, Deputy of the Russian State Duma: “Two million [incorrigible] Ukrainians must be denazified; that is, eliminated.” (June 1, 2022).<sup>86</sup>*

*Sergei Mardan, columnist for Komsomolskaya Pravda radio: “I don’t care what they [drones] are called – if it’s the beautiful Arabic word ‘Shahid’ or the beautiful Russian word ‘Geran!’ If only they would fly and fall on the heads of the khokhols.” (August 7, 2022).<sup>87</sup>*

*Vladlen Tatarsky, propagandist, “military correspondent”: “I feel that people do not understand that enemies must be killed and that everything that they have taken from us must be taken back. That is, this must be done resolutely and irrevocably, without looking back at any... useless international law and the like.” (October 24, 2022).<sup>88</sup>*

*Tatarsky (at the ceremony for the incorporation of the occupied regions into the Russian Federation with the participation of Putin in the Kremlin): “We will defeat everyone, kill everyone, rob everyone we need to. Everything will be as we like! Let’s go with God!” (September 30, 2022).<sup>89</sup>*

*Anton Krasovsky, RT propagandist: “And they should have been drowned. Drown these children [who claim that Ukraine is occupied by Russia]. Once they’ve said that the Muscovites have occupied them, you immediately throw them into a river with a rapid current... Or in Smerekov’s hut [a house made of a pine log house in Transcarpathia] to pound and burn.” (October 24, 2022).<sup>90</sup>*

*Krasovsky with musician Akim Apachev:*

*Krasovsky: “You said 10 percent [of Ukrainians] need to be killed”.*

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<sup>86</sup> <https://censor.net/ru/v3339879>

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> <https://twitter.com/JuliaDavisNews/status/1584365167176871936>

<sup>89</sup> <https://t.me/nashaniva/54536>

<sup>90</sup> <https://www.currenttime.tv/a/32098615.html>

*Apachev*: “It is necessary to kill all the carriers of the Ukrainian idea... There is no such population there now. I think not so many, another 50,000 to kill, and that’s it.” (May 12, 2023).<sup>91</sup>

*Ilya Jansen, media technologist and mercenary*: “We need terror, the likes of which the world has never seen... Ukraine should be ablaze at this moment and howl the howl of hundreds and thousands of widows behind enemy lines.” (April 2, 2023).<sup>92</sup>

*Igor Mangushev, mercenary of the so-called “Luhansk People’s Republic”, public figure*: “Our war is a war against an idea. Against the idea of Ukraine as an anti-Russian state. We are at war against the idea, so all carriers of this idea must be destroyed... Ukraine must be de-Ukrainized.”

At a performance at a club, Mangushev was holding the skull of supposedly a Ukrainian soldier killed in Mariupol (August 30, 2022).<sup>93</sup>

*Pavel Gubarev, Russian mercenary, former “people’s governor” of Donetsk*: “Ukrainians are Russian people who have been possessed by a demon... We are not going to kill them, we want to convince them. But if you do not want us to convince you, we will kill you. As many as it takes – we will kill a million, five million, all of them, until you understand that you are demon-possessed and you need to be healed.” (October 11, 2022).<sup>94</sup>

*Kirill Benediktov, “publicist”*: “... Defeating this monster [Ukraine] is possible only in the way that Hitler was once defeated. That is, to destroy the army and not feel sorry for the civilian population...” (April 4, 2023).<sup>95</sup>

*Anton Krasovsky, RT propagandist*. He posted on his Telegram channel a video of a conversation with an elderly Russian woman on the street. On camera the woman says, “They [Ukrainians] must be

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<sup>91</sup> <https://war.obozrevatel.com/nado-ubit-vseh-nositelej-ukrainskoj-idei-v-rossii-razmechtalis-ob-unichtozhenii-2-mln-ukraintsev-video.htm>

<sup>92</sup> Personal channel [https://t.me/rus\\_jansen/2194](https://t.me/rus_jansen/2194)

<sup>93</sup> <https://www.currenttime.tv/a/ukraine-russia-war-mangushev/32010950.html>

<sup>94</sup> <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/41522>

<sup>95</sup> Personal channel [https://t.me/conservator\\_tv/524](https://t.me/conservator_tv/524)

destroyed there. Khokhols and their children. This is rot, it must be destroyed. The whole population. Ukrainians, all of them, down to babies. All must be destroyed. They are neither brothers nor sisters to us.” Krasovsky accompanied the video with his comment: “Our people.” (March 16, 2023). The video was removed after 15 minutes.<sup>96</sup>

*Yury Terekh, Belarusian propagandist for “SB. Belarus Today”:* “Until the Ukrainian issue is finally resolved, the attacks will continue... The fewer tools Ukraine has to influence the situation inside the country, the more frequently they will resort to terrorism... Does anyone need my condolences there? No, definitely not needed. Therefore, I will only voice a wish... Just kill everyone involved.” (August 21, 2022).<sup>97</sup>

### **Glorification of terror**

One of the types of the glorification of terror is the demonstrative encouragement by the authorities of those who commit this terror. On April 18, 2022, two weeks after the massacre and torture of civilians in the town of Bucha were revealed, Vladimir Putin conferred the honorary title “Guards” to the 64th separate motorized rifle brigade of the Russian Ground Forces. The decree on this was published on the Kremlin website. The text of the document says that the honorary title was awarded “for considerable heroism and bravery, fortitude and courage shown by the personnel of the brigade in combat operations to protect the Fatherland and state interests in armed conflicts.”<sup>98</sup> According to the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine, it is the 64th brigade that was involved in the Bucha massacre. The commander of the 64th brigade, Colonel Azatbek Omurbekov, was awarded by Putin the Order “For Courage and Heroism” and took part in the military parade on Victory Day in Khabarovsk on May 9, 2023.<sup>99</sup>

According to the Convention, the deliberate infliction on a group conditions of life calculated to bring about complete or partial physical destruction of that group is a crime of genocide (para. “c”, Art. II).

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<sup>96</sup> [https://twitter.com/Sota\\_Vision/status/1636623790888165377](https://twitter.com/Sota_Vision/status/1636623790888165377)

<sup>97</sup> Personal channel <https://t.me/Ludazhorrr/1522>

<sup>98</sup> <https://iz.ru/1322460/2022-04-18/putin-prisvoil-zvanie-gvardeiskaia-64-i-motostrelkovoi-brigade>

<sup>99</sup> <https://focus.ua/voennye-novosti/565367-v-rossii-v-parade-prinyal-uchastie-polkovnik-prikazyvavshij-rasstreliivat-grazhdanskih-v-buche-video>

Incitement to the destruction of civilian infrastructure is therefore also a punishable criminal act.

From the very beginning of the aggression, Russia has been ruthlessly firing missiles, bombs, and artillery at residential buildings in Ukrainian cities and villages. Massive shelling of Ukrainian civilian infrastructure facilities began with particular frequency in October 2022, after the Crimean bridge was blown up. In the propaganda media, such attacks are often referred to as “retaliatory strikes.”

As a result of rocket attacks on power plants, power lines, gas stations, boiler houses, and other vital facilities, dozens of cities and villages in Ukraine have been left without electricity, heat, gas, and water. Residents of destroyed and de-energized cities experience severe hardships and suffer from cold and hunger.

At the same time, pro-Kremlin propaganda has gloated, hooted, and demanded even more strikes against the civilian population while blaming Ukrainians themselves for their crimes.

*Andrey Gurulyov, Deputy of the Russian State Duma for Russia 1's 60 Minutes program: “A lack of electricity means a lack of water, refrigerators, sewerage, and the city of Kyiv will swim in shit a week after a lack of electricity, with a clear threat of epidemic... That is, we immediately predict the flow of refugees towards the western border, right? This also means the collapse of the country, and it's all quite effective. So I guess it should be continued, as it will have a very good effect.” (October 20, 2022).<sup>100</sup>*

*Gurulyov: “...We need to figure out how to take away Ukraine's heating, electricity, and water supply. We can say that we can do it. If you want to use Western weapons, then be prepared for a collapse.” (July 4, 2022).<sup>101</sup>*

*Gurulyov: “If we take a goal, for example, or one city, region or something else, then it needs to be cleared out so that there is simply nothing left. If we say that this is Kyiv... Kyiv is the mother of*

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<sup>100</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=10AiNAsCnkW>

<sup>101</sup> Personal channel <https://t.me/agurulev/1723>

Russian cities. Yes, this is the mother of Russian cities, but if it is necessary that Kyiv is brought to ruins and our flag stands there on top of these ruins, I think we need to come around to this..." (February 23, 2023).<sup>102</sup>

*Margarita Simonyan, Vladimir Solovyov, on the air of Russia 1 television:*

*Simonyan:* "And in Ukraine, what's left of the unliberated part, there is no civilian infrastructure? There are no power lines? The nuclear power plant is still there. The knots are a lot of different infrastructure pieces that could incapacitate what remains of this state hostile to us. Very quickly, easily and long lasting... And they ask me why we don't do this?"

*Solovyov:* "I have been calling for this for a long time. In my opinion, it's time to come down harder, it's just time to come down harder." (September 11, 2022).<sup>103</sup>

*Andrei Perla, commentator for the Tsargrad-TV channel:* "Ours are hitting infrastructure facilities. And they [Ukrainians] aim at people. And they cry when they sit without light. I think it's time for us to add some ruthlessness. You can't be kinder than your opponent if your opponent is inhuman." (December 13, 2022).<sup>104</sup>

*Sergei Mardan, columnist for Komsomolskaya Pravda radio:* "By turning off the lights in Ukraine, Russia creates a conditioned reflex for the khokhols. "The lights are off, so I did something wrong. What should I do to make the lights turn on again?" And all they need to do is stop singing Bandera songs, demolishing monuments to Pushkin and learn some history... The main thing to understand is that the lights are going out not because of a 'Kalibr'<sup>105</sup>, but from the mess in their heads and because of their actions." (December 6, 2022).<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Russia-1 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J\\_NXpXIBy3A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J_NXpXIBy3A)

<sup>103</sup> Sunday Evening with Vladimir Solovyov, Russia-1 <https://war.obozrevatel.com/propagandistyi-simonyan-i-solovev-razmechtalis-ob-udarah-po-ukraine-i-nazvali-prioritetnyie-tseli-video.htm>

<sup>104</sup> Russians have called for ruthless retaliation strikes: "It's time" [https://amp.tsargrad.tv/news/russkih-prizvali-k-bezzhalostnym-udaram-vozmezdija-pora\\_683881](https://amp.tsargrad.tv/news/russkih-prizvali-k-bezzhalostnym-udaram-vozmezdija-pora_683881)

<sup>105</sup> Name of a Russian missile.

<sup>106</sup> Personal channel <https://t.me/mardanaka/12174>

*Mardan*: “The fact that the inhabitants of Ukrainian cities feel normal is not owing to their air defense, but to our shortcomings... The principle of ‘Ukraine must suffer’ remains unchanged... The people must endure all the horrors of being deprived of light, heat, pastries, and the internet. Therefore, missile strikes will continue until the Ukrainian brains are totally enlightened and they realize that peace comes from the East, and only Leopards and Haimars come from the West.” (January 15, 2023).<sup>107</sup>

*Vladlen Tatarsky, propagandist and “military correspondent”*: “Even in defense, infrastructure must be destroyed. Hospitals will not work and more khokhols will die on operating tables.” (September 13, 2022).<sup>108</sup>

*Ramzan Kadyrov, head of Chechnya*: “Just bomb all the points that are directly or indirectly related to this attack [raid of the Russian Volunteer Corps in the Bryansk region on March 1, 2023]. You don’t need to see if there are civilian targets nearby. If the enemy treats the defenseless in this way, then we do not need to stand on ceremony. It is already a war without rules that has been unleashed and imposed on us by the diabolical Ukrainian regime.” (March 2, 2023).<sup>109</sup>

*Boris Chernyshov, Deputy Chairman of the Russian State Duma*: “They [residents of Ukraine] will sit without gas, and without light, and without anything, because if the Kyiv regime has chosen the path of war criminals for itself, they should freeze and rot there. When infrastructure facilities get hit every day, when the civilian population has... unbearable living conditions in winter, ambulances do not go and old people and children die.” (November 18, 2022).<sup>110</sup>

*Ksenia Lebedeva, Belarusian television propagandist*: “In hindering the denazification and demilitarization of Ukraine, [its] authorities only complicate things... For example, how is it that Mariupol ended up in a blockade, where children are being born in unhealthy

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<sup>107</sup> Personal channel <https://t.me/mardanaka/12773>

<sup>108</sup> <https://t.me/kazansky2017/4120>

<sup>109</sup> Personal channel [https://t.me/RKadyrov\\_95/3406](https://t.me/RKadyrov_95/3406)

<sup>110</sup> <https://vesma.today/news/post/44251-oni-dolzhny-za>

conditions, old people are dying and buried in the courtyards of five-story buildings, and where there is not enough food? At the same time, the Ukrainian army and Azov and Aidar militants are blocking off the city... This could have been avoided if the Ukrainian authorities had tightened the screws on Bandera's followers in time and, of course, purged the Rada that protects the national battalions." (December 3, 2022).<sup>111</sup>

*Alexander Shpakovsky, Belarusian pro-government and pro-Russian "expert":* "Destroying the critical infrastructure of Ukraine, hitting substations, railways, and bridges was necessary from the first day of the special operation... The main thing now is to continue." (September 12, 2022).<sup>112</sup>

*Olga Bondareva, Belarusian pro-government and pro-Russian activist, blogger for Infospetsnaz* (repost of a text by another author): "...I see this as a situation with the Great Patriotic War.<sup>113</sup> To save our lands, we are forced to bomb our city, which is occupied by the Nazis... Kyiv should be bombed. We should not lose humanity, even if we are not soldiers. But we're also not khokhols." (October 10, 2022).<sup>114</sup>

*Stanislav Yaskevich, Belarusian pro-government and pro-Russian blogger:* "Envoys for denazification are flying over the entire territory of the former Ukraine today. Because of accurate hits on infrastructure facilities that should not be in operation under the Kyiv terrorist regime... the whole of Moldova has been left without electricity. (December 5, 2022).<sup>115</sup>

The Russian independent media outlet Meduza compiled a selection of malicious comments made on the Russia 24 television channel about the suffering of Ukrainians, for which they themselves were assigned responsibility.<sup>116</sup> The point of these comments is that President Zelensky

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<sup>111</sup> <https://shorturl.at/gKN06>

<sup>112</sup> <https://t.me/shpakouski/2322>

<sup>113</sup> The term used in the Soviet and the current Russian official historiography, referring to the period of WWII from the start of the German invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941 to the German capitulation to the Allied Forces in May 1945.

<sup>114</sup> [https://t.me/grodno\\_specnaz2/2462](https://t.me/grodno_specnaz2/2462)

<sup>115</sup> <https://t.me/drugoeeto/5675>

<sup>116</sup> <https://shorturl.at/gpJV1>



could end his citizens' hardship by making concessions and negotiating with Russia, but he is not doing this, thereby dooming them to cold and hunger. Here are some examples:

*News with Alexei Kazakov on Russia 24 television (November 29, 2022):* "For almost a week the cities of Nezalezhnaya<sup>117</sup> have been in impenetrable darkness... Ordinary Ukrainians now cannot afford complicated cooking. Even 100 milliliters of water (half a glass) on a candle fire will boil at best for 40 minutes... And Russian borsch, which Ukrainians love so much, cannot be cooked physically without generators, gas stoves, or fires... But even in such a situation, one can see advantages. Without classic stoves, it is difficult to fry meat with spices or bake pastries, but they are harmful. Why not take advantage of the situation and switch to healthier and simpler food? After all, the improvement of health of Ukrainian society is the main goal of attacks on the Nezalezhnaya energy grid."<sup>118</sup>

*News with Alexei Kazakov on Russia 24 television (November 24, 2022):* "'The Ukrainian leadership has every opportunity to resolve the situation in such a way as to end the potential suffering of the civilian population.' This was a comment made today by Dmitry Peskov. The stubborn failure of the Kyiv regime to comply with the requirements of the Russian side has led to large-scale power outages. Simply because the enemy has put its power grid on a war footing. It has to be attacked systematically. As a result, entire regions remain without power owing to Zelensky and Zaluzhny [Ukrainian chief military commander]."<sup>119</sup>

### ***Instances of incitement to the forced transfer and assimilation (Russification) of Ukrainian children***

According to the Convention, the forced transfer of children of a group to another group constitutes a crime of genocide (paragraph "e" of Article II). In justifying and calling for the forced transfer of Ukrainian children from

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<sup>117</sup> Russian propagandists often use the Ukrainian word "nezalezhnaya", which means "independent", instead of "Ukraine", to relay irony suggesting that Ukraine is not in fact an independent state.

<sup>118</sup> <https://smotrim.ru/video/2521638> (Russian state television web-sites can be opened in the EU only with using a VPN service).

<sup>119</sup> <https://smotrim.ru/video/2518984>

the occupied territories to Russia and their adoption/adaptation in Russian families is a punishable crime.

In this study, we focus on propaganda statements and instances of incitement to genocide, so it is neither possible nor necessary to describe this topic in more detail here. Much has been written about this crime. We only note that on April 27, 2023, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe recognized that deportation and forced transfer of Ukrainian children to Russian territory and their “Russification” have signs of a violation of Article II of the Genocide Convention.<sup>120</sup>

*Here are examples of justification of and incitement to the implementation of this criminal practice in propaganda:*

*Anna Dolgareva, poet, in an interview with RIA FAN<sup>121</sup>:*

*Host: “Is denazification possible? Is there any way to change the minds of these people [Ukrainians]?”*

*Dolgareva: “Igor Mangushev, my friend, captain of the LNR<sup>122</sup>, always said that denazification is possible only purely physically. You just need to destroy those who are at war with us and raise their children in the Russian spirit.” (February 15, 2023).<sup>123</sup>*

*Andrey Kartapolov, head of the Russia’s State Duma Defense Committee: “If we want these territories to remain with us so that they have a future as part of the Russian Federation, we need now to deal, first of all, with the children... Likely, in our Suvorov and Nakhimov cadet schools it would be possible to set up additional enrollment and take these kids there... We must do this, because then people will believe that Russia is serious, it is here for a long time and forever.” (August 1, 2022).<sup>124</sup>*

*Konstantin Malofeev, owner of the Tsargrad television channel: “Orphanages in Ukraine have not been renovated since Soviet*

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<sup>120</sup> PACE Resolution 2495 (2023)

[https://twitter.com/PACE\\_News/status/1651618439633465344?s=20](https://twitter.com/PACE_News/status/1651618439633465344?s=20)

<sup>121</sup> RIA FAN – The Federal News Agency, the “media factory,” is part of Evgeny Prigozhin’s Patriot media group.

<sup>122</sup> Acronym for the so-called “Luhansk People’s Republic”.

<sup>123</sup> [https://twitter.com/Gerashchenko\\_en/status/1626266991739666434?s=20](https://twitter.com/Gerashchenko_en/status/1626266991739666434?s=20)

<sup>124</sup> <https://www.dsnews.ua/world/u-derzhdumi-zaproponovali-zabirati-ukrajinskih-ditey-do-rosiyskih-viyskovih-uchilishch-video-02082022-463668>

times. Children are in need of the basics. There is not enough staff. At the same time compassionate [Russian] families are ready to adopt orphans... These demons are furious because of this: people should hate others, not love. This war was not unleashed by the West for this. They wanted us to hate each other. Instead, kind Russian mothers and fathers are adopting Ukrainian babies and love them like family. That's why they're angry." (March 18, 2023).<sup>125</sup>

*Malofeev*: "We all need to provide unlimited opportunities for teenagers from lands that have returned to their native harbor. We will help not only the Donbass, but all cities liberated from fascist evil spirits. Children who spoke Russian at home and dreamed of reunification with Russia will return home after their studies and become a real Russian elite." (March 9, 2022).<sup>126</sup>

*Valery Chumakov, propagandist*: "In total, Russia evacuated more than six thousand orphans from the war zone, humanely saving them. But in the terminology of the ICC, they have been "illegally deported." (March 22, 2023).<sup>127</sup>

*Zakhar Prilepin, propagandist*: "Children of the Donbass. There is a battle being waged for them... Our intelligentsia will ask: so this is the reason why everything was started? Even this would be enough. Just this." (May 11, 2022).<sup>128</sup>

*Prilepin*: "Putin signed a decree on the fast-tracked Russian citizenship for orphans from the DPR, LPR, and Ukraine. This is a Very. Necessary. Decree." (May 30, 2022).<sup>129</sup>

*Prilepin*: "Stremousov<sup>130</sup> said that all children in the region born after February 24 will automatically become Russian citizens. Wonderful.

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<sup>125</sup> Personal channel <https://t.me/kvmalofeev/1412>

<sup>126</sup> [https://tsargrad.tv/news/v-mgimo-besplatno-postupiat-15-detej-iz-donbassa-i-osvobozhdennoj-ukrainy\\_508323](https://tsargrad.tv/news/v-mgimo-besplatno-postupiat-15-detej-iz-donbassa-i-osvobozhdennoj-ukrainy_508323)

<sup>127</sup> <https://www.souzveche.ru/articles/politics/71424/>

<sup>128</sup> Personal channel <https://t.me/zakharprilepin/9927>

<sup>129</sup> <https://t.me/zakharprilepin/11120>

<sup>130</sup> Collaborator, "deputy head" of the pro-Russian administration of the occupied Kherson region, killed in November 2022

More Russian children! More Russian, Malorossiyan, Tatar, Greek and all other kinds of children in Russia.” (June 16, 2022).<sup>131</sup>

*Maria Lvova-Belova, Commissioner for the Rights of the Child in Russia:* “We also discussed [with regional Commissioners] the living conditions of children evacuated from the DPR, LPR, and Ukraine... I called on my colleagues to be bold and more persistent when it comes to protecting the rights of our little citizens.” (July 26, 2022).<sup>132</sup>

*Leonid Slutsky, Deputy of the Russian State Duma:* “The children’s ombudsman and the Russian authorities managed to save a large number of [Ukrainian] children, many of whom lost roof over their head, parents, or were injured during shelling by Ukrainian neo-Nazis. And now they have a future in their own country, in Russia.” (March 17, 2023).<sup>133</sup>

*Margarita Simonyan, editor-in-chief of RT:* “How cool. Maternity funds in new regions are now authorized for children born from 2007. Because they have always been ours.” (February 21, 2023).<sup>134</sup>

*Sergei Mardan, columnist for Komsomolskaya Pravda radio:* “These children who have been brainwashed from the moment of birth, making them “Ukrainians,” need to be skillfully and systematically retrained. Children need to be brought up as normal Russian people and Russian citizens, and not fed a longing for the “lost Ukrainian paradise” at public expense. Any family in Russia that would demand now Ukrainian language lessons for their children is a cell of the ‘Ukrainian ISIS.’ (March 30, 2023).<sup>135</sup>

*Anton Krasovsky, RT propagandist:* “There has been discussion about whether a tear of our Russian child is worth a tear of a Ukrainian child. And everyone is afraid to admit that our child is dearer to us. Because he is ours. When we regain these lands, and

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<sup>131</sup> <https://t.me/zakharprilepin/11922>

<sup>132</sup> <https://t.me/malvovabelova/413>

<sup>133</sup> Personal channel [https://t.me/slutsky\\_1/1646](https://t.me/slutsky_1/1646)

<sup>134</sup> Personal channel <https://t.me/margaritasimonyan/12684>

<sup>135</sup> Personal channel <https://t.me/mardanaka/13790>

[Ukrainian] children become Russian, then we will protect them.” (July 18, 2022).<sup>136</sup>

*Krasovsky*: “This is the liberated Volnovakha [a city in Ukraine under temporary Russian occupation]. Russian children are going back to school and will finish this academic year... They... will not have to be ashamed of being Russian. No one else can brainwash them and fill them with self-hatred. These are our children.” (April 11, 2022).<sup>137</sup>

*Alexander Shpakovsky, Belarusian pro-government and pro-Russian “expert”*: “Recently, the President [Lukashenka] signed a decree on the rehabilitation of children from Syria and Uzbekistan in Belarus. I am sure that this should be extended to children from the war-affected areas of Donbass. And it doesn’t matter in the least that these children are under the jurisdiction of the unrecognized republics. First, mercy has no boundaries, and second, we should look less to the puppet government of Ukraine.” (August 17, 2021).<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Personal channel <https://t.me/AntonKrasovskii/1103>

<sup>137</sup> Personal channel <https://t.me/AntonKrasovskii/803>

<sup>138</sup> <https://t.me/shpakouski/1088>



## Conclusion

In preparing for the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Russian propaganda and, synchronized with it, Belarusian propaganda, constantly maintained that there was no Ukraine, that it appeared artificially only thanks to a mistake made by the Soviet authorities, and that “Ukrainians are Russians who have been convinced that they are special Russians.”

Moreover, Russian and Belarusian propaganda include widespread statements made in the spirit of a conspiracy theory that Western countries hostile to Russia run an experiment on people living in Ukraine, implementing an insidious project deemed “Ukraine as an anti-Russia.” In this perverted paradigm, global geopolitical concepts are closely intertwined with the denial of the existence of Ukrainians as an independent people and their right to statehood. The key thesis of this narrative is that, as part of this anti-Russian project, the hostile West supported (or even organized) the “illegal change of power” in Ukraine during the Revolution of Dignity in 2014 and is supporting the “Nazi Kyiv regime.”

Within the framework of these imperial ideas, the agency of Ukrainians and the independence of their actions are denied as are the very national identity of Ukrainians and their right to self-determination and statehood. Any attempt by Ukrainians to defend them is described as a threat to Russia. These conspiracy theories became the ideological justification for Russia’s full-scale criminal aggression against Ukraine in February 2022, with the complicity of the Lukashenka’s Belarusian regime, and for the further occupation of more than 20 percent of Ukrainian territory.

In fact, the “denazification” declared by the Kremlin as the key goal of the attack on Ukraine is a casuistic term that camouflages the real aspirations of the Russian leadership – “de-Ukrainization,” the destruction of Ukrainian identity and statehood, and establishing Russian control over the country and the people living there. The remaining stated goals, such as the demilitarization of Ukraine and preventing it from joining NATO, are byproducts of this main imperial plan. In the event of the “loss” of Ukraine, its “leaving for the West,” and its successful development within the framework of the model of a democratic and rule of law based state as part of Western intergovernmental associations, the project of reviving

“great Russia” with “borders that do not end” is doomed to failure. It is not groundless to assume that Kremlin strategists are mindful of how attractive the potential success of democratic reforms and the rejection of the authoritarian and corrupt system of governance in Ukraine could be as a model for Russians dissatisfied with the situation in their country.

The Russian leadership set from the very beginning and continues to set the tone for anti-Ukrainian propaganda campaign today. Policy articles and speeches broadcast on television and promoted through the internet by the leaders of the Russian state, beginning with the president of the country, have over the course of several years repeatedly affirmed and promoted the ideas described above. This indicates the presence of a clearly defined state policy directed against the existence of Ukraine as an independent state and denying the existence of Ukrainians as an independent ethnic group (national group in the definition of international law). These statements, unconditionally condemned and unacceptable from the point of view of universal human values and principles of international relations, are not in themselves criminal and punishable under international law, including the Genocide Convention. However, we see the evolution of propaganda towards ethnic hatred and the forming of a general climate of hostility increasing the risk of committing genocide.

It is clear to us that the anti-Ukrainian state policy formulated at the highest level and systematic statements made by state leaders have created fertile ground for the emergence of more radical and aggressive statements in Russia and Belarus. Before the invasion and during the aggression, a massive propaganda machine has fomented hostility towards Ukrainians among millions of Russians, Belarusians, and other audiences numbering in the millions, broadcasting hate speech on television and the internet on a daily basis. Propagandists have compared an entire ethnic group (Ukrainians) with “Nazis,” “Hitler Youth,” “Satanists,” “worms,” and “subhumans” and have attempted to denigrate, humiliate, and discredit them. Commenting on the missile attacks and bombings of Ukraine, propagandists have openly mocked the suffering and hardships of the peaceful population and have demanded more “retaliatory strikes” on civilian infrastructure.



Such hate speech is detestable, but it is also not an international crime, though it can be punishable under national legislation if it contains direct incitement to discrimination, violence, and war.

With the appearance of the first shocking evidence of mass extrajudicial executions, torture, and other war crimes committed by the Russian military against civilians, propagandists stopped hiding behind phrases of “denazification” and “liberation of Ukraine captured by the Nazis” and switched to blunt genocidal language, demanding more victims among the civilian population and murders of those who resist and do not recognize themselves as part of the “Russian world.”

The evolution of propaganda and the background of hatred gives rise to a further escalation in rhetoric when it is already difficult to distinguish individual hate speech from instances of incitement to genocide. This, of course, may impact the potential for committing individual crimes with genocidal intent.

We see that among the entire array of anti-Ukrainian propaganda statements quite visibly stand out cases of incitement to the elimination of Ukrainians or part of them which are termed “irredeemable” – Ukrainians who, according to Russian and Belarusian propaganda, do not want to give up their Ukrainianness and who have not been “cured of the disease of Nazism.” The proportion of the “irredeemable” of the entire population of Ukraine that will need to be eradicated varies according to propagandists, but in any case the discussion is of millions of people.

We also see numerous and systematic instances of incitement to the creation of unbearable living conditions for the civilian population of Ukraine through missile attacks on energy and other civilian infrastructure and the destruction of peaceful cities. At the same time, propaganda constantly demonizes Ukrainians, accusing them of all their troubles and sins, including the fact that Russia is being “forced” to bomb and fire rockets at them. “We must destroy them, we have no other choice” is essentially the criminal proposition of the propagandists.

Instances of incitement to the extermination of all Ukrainians or their part contain clear signs of a violation of Article III of the Genocide Convention, namely “direct and public incitement to commit genocide.” The convention defines genocide as “acts committed with intent to destroy,

in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group.” To ensure the accuracy of legal evidence and not engage in a broad interpretation of the legal norm, in this case it is worth discussing incitement to action to partially destroy Ukrainians as a national group. Documented in this and other studies, instances of incitement of this kind can be used as evidence of a crime in international courts, including the International Criminal Court (ICC).

We also found examples of the approval, protection, and upholding of Russia’s right to forced deportation, “re-education,” adoption, and assimilation of Ukrainian children in Russia. According to the Genocide Convention, “the forcible transfer of children from one protected group to another” is genocide. Currently, these actions by Russia against Ukrainian children are regarded by the ICC as a war crime, and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) in its April resolution recognized them as genocide.<sup>139</sup> It cannot be ruled out then that these statements will also be considered incitement to genocide.

Incitement to commit genocide is an independent international crime, regardless of whether the ICC or another international tribunal decides to recognize the existence of the crime of genocide in Russia’s actions or not. At the same time, given the key role of propaganda in the functioning of the Russian regime and the enormous scale of the propaganda machine, it seems clear that many of these instances of incitement to genocide could have a direct impact “on the ground” and lead to the commission of the crime of genocide as well as war crimes and crimes against humanity.

There is no doubt that the Russian military has committed numerous war crimes during the aggression against Ukraine. Evidence of this has been documented in reports from various international organizations, investigations by journalists and human rights NGOs, and in charges brought forward by the Prosecutor General’s Office of Ukraine. On March 2, 2022, the ICC launched its investigation into the situation in Ukraine for “any crimes within its jurisdiction,” including war crimes, crimes against

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<sup>139</sup> Deportations and forcible transfers of Ukrainian children and other civilians to Russia or to Ukrainian territories temporarily occupied: Create conditions for their safe return, stop these crimes and punish the perpetrators. PACE Resolution 2495 (April 2023)  
<https://pace.coe.int/en/files/31776/html>

humanity, and the crime of genocide.<sup>140</sup> On March 17, 2023, the ICC issued arrest warrants for Vladimir Putin and the Russian Commissioner for the Rights of the Child Maria Lvova-Belova on suspicion of committing a war crime, specifically the illegal deportation of Ukrainian children from the occupied territories to Russia during Russia's invasion of Ukraine.<sup>141</sup>

Separately and actively in the international community and among lawyers, the issue of another crime – that of aggression – and the need to create a special international tribunal to convict those responsible for its commission are being discussed.

The task of the court is to establish whether Russia is guilty of crimes of genocide during the invasion of Ukraine. At the time of writing this report, Russia or its representatives have not been suspected or charged with this crime by any international judicial body. However, the world seems to be gradually moving in this direction, with several international non-judicial bodies, specifically PACE (April 2023<sup>142</sup>) and the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (May 2023<sup>143</sup>) and the parliamentary bodies of some countries, having already recognized Russia's actions in Ukraine as genocide.

We hope that the evidence collected in this report and further research will be entered as evidentiary material in international courts and help bring Russian and Belarusian propaganda figures to justice for their crimes of “incitement to genocide” as part of a broader process of investigating possible international crimes committed by the Putin regime's during its aggression against Ukraine with the complicity of the Lukashenka regime.

Clearly, this requires more detailed study, during which it will be necessary to collect more data and conduct a more thorough classification and analysis while conducting a comprehensive legal analysis to ensure that selected documented propaganda statements will be able to serve as solid and convincing evidence of crimes during trials.

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<sup>140</sup> Situation in Ukraine: Investigation. International Criminal Court website. <https://www.icc-cpi.int/situations/ukraine>

<sup>141</sup> Situation in Ukraine: ICC judges issue arrest warrants against Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin and Maria Alekseyevna Lvova-Belova. March 17, 2023. International Criminal Court website. <https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/situation-ukraine-icc-judges-issue-arrest-warrants-against-vladimir-vladimirovich-putin-and>

<sup>142</sup> <https://pace.coe.int/en/files/31776/html>

<sup>143</sup> <https://www.nato-pa.int/document/declaration-482-united-and-resolute-support-ukraine>

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