

HELP STOP A GENOCIDE

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Sometimes things are very simple. If you can easily do something to halt a genocide, then you should.

The First Holodomor, the genocidal starvation by Josef Stalin of millions of Ukrainians 90 years ago, was kept hidden from the world for many decades. The Second Holodomor, now being attempted by Vladimir Putin, is in the open for all the world to see.

The notion that Ukraine does not exist, that its state is artificial and its national consciousness a confusion — this Putinist rhetoric is genocidal. Moscow's claims that Ukrainians are all Nazis or gays or Jews or Satanists (the current line) is nothing more than a fascist politics of us-and-them: the enemy is defined via hate speech as subhuman, as beyond any ethical concern, existing only to be destroyed.

The Russian intention in Ukraine has been genocidal from the beginning.

The standard Russian occupation practices of kidnapping children, raping women, and executing local leaders are genocidal. Everywhere that Russia has been forced to leave Ukrainian territory, for example in Kherson region these last few days, Ukrainians find the death pits and the torture chambers. These and other actions constitute genocide in the sense of the 1948 convention.

It is Russian policy to deprive Ukrainians of light, heat, and water during the winter by destroying civilian infrastructure. Just yesterday Russia fired dozens more missiles at civilian targets, leaving about *ten million people* without electricity during very cold nights and days. As I write, people I care about are in bomb shelters, listening to explosions.

This deliberate creation of misery and lethal conditions for civilians is contrary to the laws of war. It is also another violation of the genocide convention, which forbids “deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part.”

That this is indeed the intention is gleefully affirmed practically every day on Russian state television.

Yesterday's attack was the largest on Ukrainian civilian infrastructure since the war began. Russia launched 95 missiles and drones. To stop the missiles, Ukraine needs Western government help with air defense and aircraft. The Shahed drones, from Iran, are what is known as loitering munitions.

For weeks they have been used to destroy the Ukrainian power grid as well as other civilian targets. They are a terror weapon put to a criminal purpose.

The Ukrainians are good at repairing what the Russians destroy. But the large number of drones has made it hard to keep up. And the loss of the electricity grid as such will lead to horrific conditions and tremendous loss of life, especially among the vulnerable and the elderly.

This is where we can do something. We can help stop the drones. President Zelensky's United24 Foundation asked me to raise money for a cause of my choice. As a historian, I could have chosen a destroyed library (which I visited in Chernihiv a few weeks ago), and in the future I will do just that. But right now Ukrainians need to get through this winter and win this war.

So rather than indulge my own preferences, I asked where I could be most immediately helpful. The answer from the Ukrainians I asked was a system to defend against the Iranian drones. And so that is what, as an ambassador of the president's United24 platform, I have pledged to do: to raise \$1.25 million for such a system, a Shahed Hunter.

Want to help stop a genocide? It's easy: Donate to fund a Shahed Hunter

Yes, I am counting on you to help, and to spread the word.

A difference between this genocide and others is that you can do something to stop it easily and right now. Please make a contribution here to protect Ukrainians from the drones that are destroying their conditions of life. And then please share this post with others who might wish to do the same. Thank you.

In meeting with President Zelensky, I found him to be a profoundly decent man. I did get him to laugh once or twice. The warmth and intelligence he is able to show in these deeply distressing conditions is just hugely admirable. Help me to get to that smile again by providing Ukrainians with what they need most.

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