

# PUTIN REAPS A BITTER HARVEST IN UKRAINE

<https://www.2thepointnews.com/putin-reaps-a-bitter-harvest-in-ukraine/>

Thousands of Russian corpses litter Ukraine

When Russia invaded Ukraine, it was widely believed to have expected an easy victory over its neighbor.

But so far, Russia has little to show for what it has called its “special military operation”: Its forces have been bogged down in fighting mainly on the northern, eastern and southern fringes of Ukraine and have found the country to be much more organized and well equipped than they expected.

Russian forces have seized only one city, Kherson, but even that occupation looks shaky, with Ukrainian forces launching a counteroffensive to retake the southern port. Similar moves have been seen elsewhere in Ukraine, with officials claiming its forces are mounting an increasing number of counterattacks.

Just over a month into the war, Moscow is facing unintended consequences of its aggression in Ukraine, ranging from high casualties among its troops to economic ruin for years to come.

Here are five of them:

1. *Russia will be leaving behind a lot of bodies.*

Russia has been coy about releasing statistics on its losses, but one Russian Defense Ministry official said Friday that 1,351 Russian soldiers had died in the war so far, and that 3,825 were injured.

Ukraine's authorities claim that more than 16,000 Russian soldiers have been killed in the conflict, while a senior NATO official last week estimated that between 8,000 and 15,000 have been killed.

If accurate, those numbers would be a heavy death toll for Russia — comparable to the almost 15,000 Soviet soldiers who died during the 10-year war in Afghanistan in the 1980s. To this day, that incursion is unpopular in Russia because it gained the country little but cost much blood.

To put the Russian forces' casualties in context, the United Nations' human rights office (OHCHR) said Tuesday that it has recorded a total of 1,151 deaths among Ukrainian civilians, including 54 children, and more than 1,800 injured civilians. It believes that the actual casualty figures are considerably higher.

“Most of the civilian casualties recorded were caused by the use of explosive weapons with a wide impact area, including shelling from heavy artillery and multiple launch rocket systems, and missile and air strikes,” the OHCHR said.

## *2. Ukrainians now loathe Russia*

One of the consequences of this war is that many Ukrainians will harbor an abiding animosity toward Russia, particularly after the bombing of homes and civilian infrastructure — including a children's hospital and maternity ward in Mariupol, as well as a theater where families were seeking shelter.

These are widely seen as war crimes by the international community.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy summed up the mood in the country in early March when he stated that *“We will not forgive, we will not forget, we will punish everyone who committed atrocities in this war on our land.”*

Russian President Vladimir Putin has extolled the cultural, linguistic and historical ties between Russia and Ukraine, but he's driven what's likely to be a permanent wedge between the nations.

member of the Ukrainian parliament, Kira Rudik, tweeted Monday that seeing Ukrainian homes burning as a result of Russian attacks “just makes us feel more rage” while another joined calls for reparations of \$400 billion from Russia in order to rebuild Ukraine.

Putin has goaded Ukrainians in recent years, reiterating his belief that Ukraine is not “even a state” and that it's a historical part — and indeed a creation — of Russia, a claim he's made again in recent weeks.

Many Ukrainians, on the other hand, have spent much of the last two decades trying to assert its separateness from Russia, rejecting pro-Russian politics (and politicians) and instigating not one but two dramatic uprisings in 2004 and 2013. In the latter “Euromaidan” protests, thousands of Ukrainians braved police brutality and violent repression to call for political change, and for Ukraine to join the EU.

This ambition has only deepened under President Zelenskyy, who has asked the EU to fast-track Ukraine's accession to the bloc, while conceding that Ukraine might never join NATO — one of Moscow's intended consequences — as it looks to compromise in order to find a peace deal with Russia.

### 3. *Economic ruin*

The international community was accused of being slow and ineffective when Russia annexed Crimea from Ukraine in 2014. This time, it upped the ante when Russia's full-scale invasion began, with Western democracies imposing wide-ranging sanctions on key Russian sectors, businesses and individuals connected to the Kremlin or who support the invasion.

As a result, the Russian economy is expected to fall into a deep recession this year. By the end of the year, Russians are predicted to be enduring as much as 35% inflation rates while the value of both their savings and their livelihoods craters.

The Institute of International Finance predicts Russia's economy will contract by as much as 15% in 2022 because of the war, and warned last week that the war "will wipe out fifteen years of economic growth."

This will last for quite a while and it's hard to discount the likelihood that many Russians will have a much more sour outlook toward their leader who brought them to this ruinous state.

### 4. *Europe is dropping Russian energy*

The war has also accelerated Europe's transition away from Russian energy imports, putting a large dent in the revenue the country gets from its oil and gas business.

It has also made the \$11 billion Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline — designed to bring more Russian gas to Europe (and which the United States, Poland and Ukraine warned would increase the region's energy insecurity) — redundant, perhaps for good.

The EU, which imported around 45% of its gas from Russia in 2021, has pledged to reduce its purchases of Russian gas by two-thirds before the end of the year, and the European Commission wants to stop buying all Russian fossil fuels before 2030.

Part of that massive market for natural gas may be picked up by American LNG exports. If so, we will see yet another example of Putin stabbing his own plans in the back and creating a financial situation that he constantly sought to use his leverage over European nations to avoid. And as the Russian foreign market for energy shrinks, so too does the nation's economy while other producers move in to fill the void.

### 5. *Russia has united the West*

During Putin's 22 years or so in power, he has systematically and repeatedly tried to weaken and undermine the West, trying to drive wedges between NATO partners and other western interests. In many cases, he's been surprisingly successful.

That's why Putin expected his invasion of Ukraine to have a disunifying effect on the West, with countries unable to agree on sanctions, or sending arms to Ukraine, but the opposite has proven true. The response to Putin's invasion has been almost unilateral in nature. Nearly everyone was immediately able to agree on was that Putin is a monster and almost immediately added the title of "war criminal" to his resume.

"The West's reaction is unprecedented. It is beyond anyone could have anticipated — united and much more

than anyone in Russia was preparing or prepared for,” says Anton Barbashin, a political analyst and editorial director of the journal Riddle Russia. “Essentially it is the ultimate economic warfare that will destroy Russia’s economy as we know it.”

So if he had any future plans of expanding his empire and weakening the West, he’s going to have a very difficult time gaining steam against the alliance currently shutting down and “canceling” his nation.

And that’s even more true now that the world has seen the disheveled nature of his military. We used to be told that Russia’s army was likely second to none on the planet other than that of the United States. At this point, I’m not even sure if they could knock over a gas station without some help.

---

*Holly Ellyatt is the European correspondent for CNBC; Jazz Shaw is a US Navy veteran and editor of HotAir.*

Copyright ©2024 **2 The Point News** unless otherwise noted.