



2023

Fundraising Support for Ukraine



A NAFOASIAPACIFIC Publication

10/25/2023

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You'll say this is not our fight, and you're right, it's not our fight.

This is not our responsibility to help a mother carry her groceries when she's trying to get her kids inside

It's not our fight if we don't want it to be,

We can choose to help or not, neither is wrong.

I've enjoyed myself here, I've learned to live and to love here.

I have fallen in love with the people, the country.

I came out here not fully knowing what I was getting myself into,

But now I'm here and 5 months on my resolve is only getting stronger.

I haven't felt this satisfied and alive for a long time.

It has been great to be around people with the same mindset and goals to my country New Zealand.

Be happy, be in love,

Find a reason to be in love with your life.

I'll miss your mountains, your rivers, and the seas so much.

To Ukraine: You'll win.

You'll see the sunflower fields plentiful under a free yellow and blue flag in the wind soon

I know it

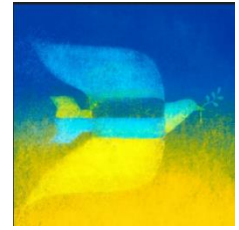
Zhovti Vodi, you'll be in my soul forever .



Kane Te Tai, former NZDF soldier and volunteer in Ukraine, died in combat in March 2023. Kane spent a year in Ukraine, initially as volunteer, humanitarian and eventually as the leader of a reconnaissance unit on the front line.

SUMMARY

Amidst ever-changing justifications for Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine and terror attacks on Ukrainians, you can be forgiven for wondering whether Ukraine must have provoked or in some way failed in its neighbourly relations with its former colonial master.



Because it is imperative that democratic, progressive countries like New Zealand continue to support Ukraine's defence against Russia terror, it is also important that New Zealanders have access to knowledgeable information sources, to properly understand the dynamics of the war and how Russia's 'firehose of propaganda' narratives work in Western countries to harm Ukraine.

The purpose of this two-part Fundraising Support for Ukraine series is to provide information about the Russia's invasion of Ukraine, together with sources for further reading and online discussion.

Russia is part of APEC, ASEAN, EAS, WTO and has a permanent (although likely not entirely kosher) seat on the United Nations Security Council – and yet, Russia's President Vladimir Putin is also the subject of an International Criminal Court arrest warrant for war crimes. New Zealand relations with Russia have deteriorated since Russia's 2014 illegal annexation of Crimea invasion of Ukraine, and New Zealand has provided some humanitarian, military, intelligence and logistics support for Ukraine as well as applying sanctions on Russian entities and individuals.

Russia's Ambassador to New Zealand actively incites hatred towards Ukrainians and publishes official Russian pro-genocidal messaging and threats of violence to Western countries who support Ukraine. Russia has explicitly and directly threatened the world's grain and vegetable oil supplies, energy supplies to Europe and regularly publishes direct threats of nuclear annihilation to a range of near and far European and Western targets. It has attacked and blocked civilian shipping routes in the Black Sea. Russia regularly threatens its other close neighbours as well as distant countries.

Whether we know it or not, Russia's war in Ukraine is a unique event in our lifetimes.

The catastrophic global ripples arrive on New Zealand's shores in ways that we might not always recognise as being caused by Russia's actions. Global oil and grain shortages; there has been the threat of danger and disruption to logistics and supply chains. Political attention of the world's leaders has been distracted away from other urgent and important concerns. There are increased cybersecurity risks, and no doubt a direct contribution to global warming, as direct results of Russia's war in Ukraine.

Putin wants to return Ukraine to full Russian influence and governance. After 19 months of full-scale war and terror, it is not plausible to deny Russia's genocidal aims in Ukraine. Russian state television now devotes itself to endless hours of promises to destroy Ukrainians as a people, erase a sovereign state, to continue to 'claim' even more territories as an ongoing marauding, looting, murdering genocidal land-grabbing monstrosity with no defined 'end point'. State propagandists compare Russia's ongoing slaughter of Ukrainians to a steel furnace in which a new Russian nation is being forged.

This article explains Russia's attempts to reduce Western support for Ukraine via Putin's Information War, a weapon that Putin hopes will enable him to annihilate Ukraine, a state of > 40 million people, that has been independent for over 30 years.

Find out how Russian state violence crushed independence in 30 states over 105 years – Ukraine is just the latest in a long continuous line of assaults on regional territories and peoples.

What really happened in 2014? Find out how Russia annexed Crimea and sent armed forces and thugs into Eastern Ukraine to provoke and kill Ukrainians. You may recall the downing of the Malaysian Airlines Flight MH17, and how Russia tried to blame that on Ukraine, instead of admitting that it was carried out deliberately by Russia's armed forces.

We also cover some of the prominent figures in Russia's campaign to annex and occupy Ukraine, including the architect of Russian disinformation warfare and annexation, and tactics of Russian warfare in Ukraine 2022 – 2023.

The war can be won by Ukraine – according to both military and civilian experts. Ukraine has made good use of available resources in its counteroffensive but faces formidable minefields and artillery attacks from a vastly larger invader.

Ukraine – a country without a navy – has forced Russia to move its Black Sea Fleet away from easy striking distance of Ukraine's southern export seaports, and Ukraine has worked hard to maintain its vital grain exports despite large scale repeated missile strikes on port infrastructure and grain stores.

Ukraine has also struck hard at the Russian Defense facilities in occupied Crimea and elsewhere and has already taken steps to become more self-sufficient in military equipment, but right now, patience and our continued support is needed. ¹

The consequences of expansion of Russian terror, through it's already growing Axis of Evil dictatorial states with whom it obtains military support and provides training in terror tactics, are extremely dire for peaceful democracies and trading nations. The time for feigning disinterest is rapidly closing, as is the window for action.

This article has been made possible by the combined efforts of the Asia Pacific Regiment of the North Atlantic Fellas Organisation² (NAFO), an online network of tens of thousands of volunteers around the world who combat disinformation about Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and who help fundraise for campaigns directly assisting Ukrainians to survive the war.



¹ <https://www.ukrainianworldcongress.org/the-state-of-the-war-timothy-snyder-on-ukraines-war/>

² The authors are founding members of the Asia Pacific Regiment and have supported the Ukrainian community both in New Zealand and Australia. We work online and in the community, and we are in touch with many Kiwi and Australian volunteers who have, or are currently, volunteering in Ukraine. Our information sources include real-time updates from commentators, reporters in the field, fundraising campaigns of all shapes and sizes, representatives of volunteer forces serving in Ukraine (including Kiwis and Australian volunteers), officials from the many countries in the EU, NATO, Baltic and Scandinavian countries close to the action, independent Ukraine media, official Ukraine sources, international organisations, military analysts, historians, political scientists, Ukraine medical professionals, specialists, defenders, aid workers, ambulance drivers and those who travel to the frontlines frequently.

WHAT IS RUSSIA'S WAR IN UKRAINE ABOUT?

Putin Wants to Return Ukraine to Russian Influence

The Kremlin's objective was earlier thought to be simply to return Ukraine to Russia's sphere of influence including socially and culturally. Normalising Russian control regardless of whether Ukrainians or Russians control a given area.³

The 'Restoration of the Russian Colonial Empire'

After 19 months of full-scale war and terror, the goalposts have become starker. It is not plausible to deny Russia's genocidal aims in Ukraine. Russian state television now devotes itself to endless hours of promises to destroy Ukrainians as a people, erase a sovereign state, to continue to 'claim' even more territories as an ongoing marauding, looting, murdering genocidal land-grabbing monstrosity with no defined 'end point'. State propagandists compare Russia's ongoing slaughter of Ukrainians to a steel furnace in which a new Russian nation is being forged.⁴

Attempts to Reduce Western Support for Ukraine

The Kremlin is trying to slow or impair Western and Ukrainian decision-making — one of the few ways in which Russian President Vladimir Putin can advance his objectives. Slowed Western decision-making resulting in lagging military aid deliveries can provide Russia with relief and new opportunities for attack⁵.

Putin's Information War

Russia has refined its misinformation weapons over the last century of clothing invasion and occupation in fabricated justifications. The information war is a large part of Putin's campaign to annihilate Ukraine. Elements of the information war are played out in countries who support Ukraine's independent sovereignty and include:

³ Mason Clark, interviewed for The Institute for the Study of War in 2021

⁴ Sergey Mardan, Russian propagandist, and Professor Sergey Luzyanin, shown on Russian Media Monitor (JuliaDavisNews)

⁵ Nataliya Bugayova, [It's Time for the West to Embrace Ukraine's Way of War, Not Doubt It](#), in Institute for the Study of War, 25 Sep 2023.

VOLUNTEERS ARE INTEGRAL

"There is no Ukrainian volunteering phenomenon, it's just one of the instruments of the nation's total resistance."

Come Back Alive Founder Vitaliy Deineha¹

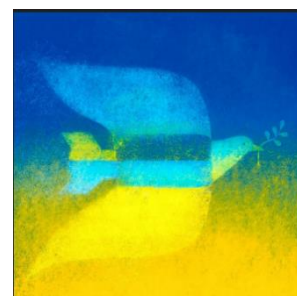


Moise Bondarenko

"I didn't know what I was going to do (when I enlisted) but the violin was with me. It was the most important thing".

"It doesn't matter if I play in a concert hall or an underground passage"

Moisey is known for his touching violin performances in the middle of war-ravaged cities in Ukraine. He also performs in de-occupied zones, hospitals and to front line defenders. Source: [KyivPost 18 March 2023](#)



- The “Firehose of Falsehood” Propaganda Model.⁶
- The use of Western non-governmental amplifiers of disinformation⁷ – tv, radio, social media, internet.
- Manipulating professional⁸ & amateur media outlets⁹.
- High number of channels.
- Paid Russian Internet troll farms operating 24/7.
- Dissemination of partial truths and outright lies.
- Creating polarization at national and international levels.
- Campaigns to change social norms and world views.
- Getting targets to act in Russian interests without realising.

New Russian Propaganda

- Entertains, confuses and overwhelms the audience
- Rapid, continuous and repetitive.
- makes no commitment to objective reality.

All other things being equal,
messages received in greater volumes
and from more sources will be more
persuasive.

Russia’s Military Invasion & Illegal Occupation of Ukraine – Yet Another Russian Invasion.

The war to gain physical control of Ukraine’s territories started in 2014. For Russia, such invasions are almost routine practice, part of Moscow’s demonstrated colonising behaviour it has used to control territories and the many indigenous peoples of the region.

Russia has refined it’s repertoire of tactics over the past 105 years to prevent its former colonies from leaving the Soviet Union or Russian Federation. Since 1917, these tactics have included false flag operations (fabricated ethnic clashes, provocations), invasion, occupation, terror, ethnic cleansing by mass deportation and slaughter of tens of thousands, to crush resistance.

⁶ [The Russian Firehose of Propaganda Model](#), C Paul, M Matthews (2016) RAND Corporation

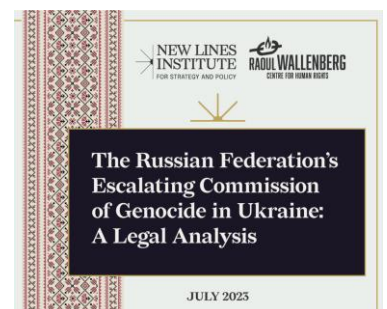
⁷ 3/9/2023 [The EU Warned Elon Musk to reduce Russian Disinformation on his X platform \(formerly Twitter\). META is also under scrutiny for its diminishing news content](#)

⁸ [How Russian Media Uses Fox News to Make Its Case](#)

⁹ [Newly unclassified US intelligence](#) describes Russia’s systematic intelligence program to influence public policy and public opinion in the West by directing Russian civilians to build relationships with influential US & western individuals and disseminate narratives that support Russian objectives.

GENOCIDE OF UKRAINIANS

A recent independent legal analysis makes the compelling conclusion that the Russian Federation has not only continued but escalated its efforts to commit genocide in Ukraine. **There are violations of the Genocide Convention beyond a reasonable doubt.** The consequences of this finding are far-reaching and clear. The U.N. Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide is a binding agreement; it requires states to prevent genocide once they become aware of the risk of it or should have been aware.



Source: New Lines Institute and Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights independent inquiry, [An Independent Legal Analysis of the Russian Federation’s Breaches of the Genocide Convention in Ukraine and the Duty to Prevent](#), released in May 2022, updated in July 2023.



Russian state violence crushed independence in 30 states over 105 years:

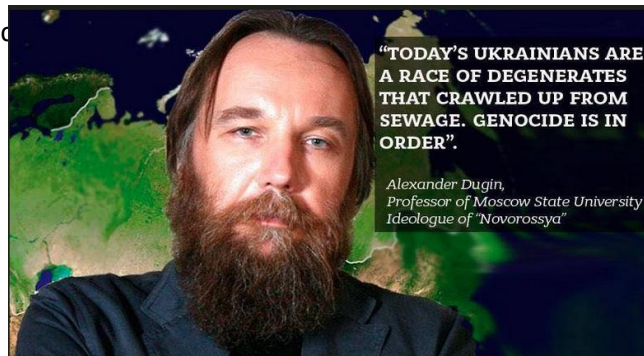
- 1917 - 1924: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bashkortostan, Belarus, Crimean Tatars, Estonia, Georgia, Karelia, Latvia, Lithuania, North Caucasus, Ukraine.
- 1924 to WWII: similar tactics were used to crush independence of indigenous minorities including Crimean Tatars, Dolgans, Kazakhstan, Khanty, Nenets, Tungus Republic of Indigenous Arctic Nations and Yakutia. Anti-colonial fighters from Central Asia were slaughtered in North Afghanistan, and Russia's campaign in North Caucasus continued.

Crimean Tatars, Kuban Cossacks and Ukrainians had all tried to establish early indigenous democracies which were crushed by Russia. Moscow continued with these tactics until WWII, using fabricated ethnic conflicts to justify invasions and mass slaughter of inhabitants in many eastern European countries (it also made a deal to divide Europe with Hitler).

- The German-Russian invasion of Poland resulted in the slaughter of 200,000 Poles.
- Russia invaded Finland, slaughtered 400,000 Finns and annexed 10% of Finland's territories.
- Russia forced the Baltic States into accepting Russian military bases which it used to then invade, carrying out ethnic cleansing with the murder of over 179,000 Estonians, Latvians & Lithuanians.
- Russia invaded Romania and annexed 15% of Romanian territory.

After WWII in the 1950s Russia continued to crush uprisings in Germany, Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

In 1991, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania left Russia colonialism, despite violent efforts of Moscow to incite ethnic hatred, economic and disinformation campaigns. Azerbaijan and Georgia were less successful in 1989/1990, but their independence movements continued to grow. 20% of Georgia and



2013 – 2015 – Russian Operations Led to Annexation of Ukraine Territories

Despite propaganda to the contrary, Russia’s invasion of Ukraine was not provoked by civil war or ethnic conflict¹⁰.

Russian President Putin used tactics that have come to define Russian colonialism over the past 105 years – fabricated ethnic clashes, infiltration, illegal occupation and military aggression – to prevent Ukraine’s development as a more European-focused, democratic and independent state.

While Ukraine had taken steps towards a closer association with the European Union, in 2013 pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovich refused to sign an association agreement with the EU. Yanukovich was impeached by Ukraine Parliament and declared to be a wanted fugitive, which may have been the spark that led eventually to the full-scale military invasion in 2022. The last 10 days of February 2014 saw the gunning down of peaceful protesters on Maidan, followed by Yanukovich’s flight to Russia¹¹.

2014 – Crimea Annexed; Igor Girkin and Armed Russian neo-Nazis Sent to Ukraine.

February 2014 also saw Russia, using fabricated justifications about ethnic strife and using armed infiltrators, annex the Crimean Peninsula against the express wishes of Ukraine’s government, violating Article 2 of the UN Charter which protects territorial sovereignty. Evidence exists of phone calls at the time between an advisor of Putin’s and pro-Russian individuals in Ukraine¹².

Putin also used Russian neo-Nazi and/or far-right activists in eastern Ukraine, including the self-confessed mercenary torturer Alexei Milchakov and his friend Jan Petrovsky. In 2021 Dmitry Demushkin, a far-right Russian nationalist, revealed details of how in 2014 he was invited by Russian Deputy Prime Minister to gather nationalists to fight in Ukraine. He refused to go, and was prosecuted, tortured himself and imprisoned. But other far-right groups and individuals had no problem killing Ukrainians. Alexander Zhuchkovsky¹³ arrived from Russia in Sloviansk, Donetsk with Russian intelligence (FSB) Colonel Igor Girkin and remained there. Zhuchkovsky, described as openly holding

¹⁰ this has been publicly admitted by prominent Russian military figures¹⁰ who have criticised aspects of Putin’s invasion, as well as many of those who were paid and armed by Moscow

¹¹ [Human Rights in Ukraine](#), 11/1/22

¹² [Human Rights in Ukraine](#), 1/10/21

¹³ [Denys Kazansky](#), 3/10/2019 “85 Days of Slavyansk” by Zhuchkovsky: Confession; LiGA.net

Nazi views, has written a book '85 Days in Sloviansk' in which he openly wrote about how Moscow supplied the 'militia' with weapons and 'confesses' that Russia 'sent in the troops' after a closed meeting between President Putin and Russian 'journalists' who asked Putin to send troops to the Donbas to support the small militia there that opposed the entire Ukrainian army.

Another prominent participant in the events of 2014 in eastern Ukraine, and former Russian neo-Nazi, former "Governor" Pavel Gubarev, has acknowledged that the 'people's uprising' in the Donetsk oblast was nothing of the sort, and that without Russian involvement, it would have remained a "usual, unarmed and toothless street protest". Gubarev's admission is worth noting, and not only because of Russia's constant narrative about a 'civil war' in Donbas¹⁴. Russian intelligence (FSB) Colonel Igor Girkin (who was formerly in the Russian annexed part of Georgia, and fought in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and was also connected to kidnappings and killings in Chechnya) claims credit for 'fanning the flames of confrontation' at that time, and Gubarev among other participants has supported this claim. First place, in all of this, Gubarev says, belongs to "Strelkov", the nom de guerre of the Russian 'former' military intelligence officer, better known, to the Dutch prosecutor and International Criminal Court, as Igor Girkin. Without Girkin / Strelkov, the so-called 'Russian spring' in Donetsk and Luhansk would have died the same death that it did in Odesa and Kharkiv, Gubarev admits.

It was Girkin who was able to "drag the uprising out of a usual, unarmed and toothless street protest"¹⁵. Girkin claims to have led a squad of armed men to seize government buildings in Kyiv, and it he intended to create a separatist region in Eastern Ukraine that would be annexed by Russia, just as Russia had annexed Crimea. Girkin maintains that his Russian separatists had not intended to build self-ruling states but had hoped that these Eastern regions close to the Russian border would be absorbed by Russia. Girkin was named Minister of Defense¹⁶ in the self-declared "Donetsk People's Republic". Girkin has been accused of ordering the abduction, torture and murder of political opponents and forcing people to fight against Ukrainians.



In 2014 Girkin boasted that Russian 'separatists' had downed a 'military plane'. In fact, Malaysian Airlines Flight MH17 was a civilian jetliner - 298 passengers (including 38 Australians amongst a majority of Dutch passengers) and its Malaysian crew were killed in this deliberate missile attack by Russian paid and Russian armed forces, from eastern Ukraine. Girkin made up an alternative story about the plane having been filled with rotting corpses and flying on autopilot before it was shot down. Girkin was later convicted by a Dutch

court for his role this 'false flag' operation, which found Girkin and two other men guilty of the murder

¹⁴ [Human Rights in Ukraine](#) 11/01/22

¹⁵ [Anna Dolgov, The Moscow Times](#), 21/11/2014

¹⁶ Other sources say he was promoted to the non-existent position of "Supreme Commander of DPR"

of all victims, and also found that Russia had overall control of the separatist forces in Eastern Ukraine at the time.¹⁷ Girkin was handed down a life sentence in absentia.

Although Igor Girkin was awarded by Putin with a gold coin for his help in annexing Crimea, he fell out of favour with the Kremlin and has openly criticised Putin's war methods in Ukraine on his Telegram war blog. Girkin was arrested in July 2023. In late August 2023 a Moscow court ordered him to remain in prison on charges of extremism. Girkin has launched his own campaign to oust Putin. Girkin has also traded insults with Putin's former chief of Wagner PMC, the late Yevgeny Prigozhin, who allegedly came to a fiery end himself recently after an aircraft he was a passenger in exploded en route to Saint Petersburg. Girkin is included in official sanctions against Russian military figures by many countries.



It is significant that many participants in the armed conflict in eastern Ukraine do not support the Kremlin's narrative that the appointed leaders of the annexed regions were 'local leaders' 'elected' by the so-called 'republics'.

The leaders of the annexed regions were appointed by Moscow, and at least one of these former leaders was also killed under Moscow orders. A Ukrainian hostage, Oleksandr Pohorelov, was subject to torture in order to obtain a false confession to killing the leader Zakharchenko.¹⁸ The many interviews given by these participants form significant evidence of Russia's war crimes in Ukraine.

Ceasefire deals to halt the conflict in eastern Ukraine proved to be ineffective¹⁹. Ukraine was under duress at the time that they were pushed into signing the hasty Minsk II deal, and the agreement itself is incompatible with Ukraine's existence as a sovereign country²⁰. While Ukraine saw the 2015 agreement as an instrument to re-establish control over its territories, Putin viewed it as obliging Ukraine to grant autonomous status of the separatist territories and representation in Ukraine's government (which effectively would give Putin veto power over Ukraine's foreign policy, including potential membership of NATO). Washington and NATO have rejected this demand.

People living in separatist territories of eastern Ukraine were exposed to extreme anti-Ukrainian propaganda for 8 years at that time, and Ukrainians feared that Russian warlords would end up sitting in Ukrainian parliament or on Ukraine's police force. Implementation of these Minsk protocols would likely be dangerous to Ukraine's stability. There was no full political settlement and deadly fighting

¹⁷ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/nov/17/three-men-found-guilty-of-murdering-298-people-in-flight-mh17-bombing>

¹⁸ [Human Rights in Ukraine](#), 14/12/21

¹⁹ [Minsk Agreement – Al Jazeera 9/2/2022](#)

²⁰ [Isobel Koshiw, OpenDemocracy 4/2/22](#)

between Ukraine and Russian ‘separatists’ continued for 9 years, although the majority of the casualties occurred in 2014-2015.

Vladislav Surkov – the Architect of Russian Disinformation Warfare and Annexation

A key Russian architect of both polarising disinformation and the Kremlin system of ‘annexation’ was Vladislav Surkov, a theatre director who wanted to make the world of politics into an avantgarde theatre.²¹ His idea was for Russia to finance fringe, extreme groups both from the far-left and from the far-right, thus provoking polarization and conflicts. The goal with this was to destabilize the West so that they'd be stuck on their internal conflicts (BLM is a great example). And then he did something nobody expected - he admitted to all this. Surkov's goal was to confuse people and make them doubt everything. Vladislav was behind the creation of Akhmat Kadyrov as the warlord of Chechnya, one of Putin’s top commanders responsible for war crimes in Ukraine in 2022.



Igor Girkin also stated that Surkov played a decisive role in the creation of the fake “Donetsk People’s Republic’ and “Luhansk People’s Republic” states in eastern Ukraine.

Surkov achieved this by acting like a theatre director – casting actors, writing scripts, reviewing ‘performances’, running promotions, thus creating false credibility for what were called ‘Donbas separatists’ who were actually just Putin’s puppets articulating Moscow’s goals. The technical term used in the former Soviet States for the highly developed industry of political manipulation is “Political Technology”. Fake fixed elections with 99% approval ratings are a hallmark of Surkov.



²¹ [Pekka Kallioniemi Twitter @P_Kallioniemi](#) [Vatniksoup.com](#) and this [NBC News story](#)

Oct. 28, 2016, 11:00 AM NZDT / Updated Oct. 28, 2016, 2:39 PM NZDT

By Robert Windrem

Karma, it turns out, is a borscht.

A Ukrainian group calling itself Cyber Hunta has released more than a gigabyte of emails and other material from the office of one of Vladimir Putin's top aides, Vladislav Surkov, that show Russia's fingerprints all over the separatist movement in Ukraine.

While the Kremlin has denied the relationship between Moscow and the separatists, the emails show in great detail how Russia controlled virtually every detail of the separatist effort in the Russian-speaking regions of Ukraine, which has torn the country apart and led to a Russian takeover of Crimea.

And unlike the reported Russian hack of the Democratic National Committee, the Ukrainian hack reached deep into the office of the Russian president.

"This is a serious hack," said Maks Czuperski, head of the Digital Forensic Research Lab of the Atlantic Council (DFRL), which has

The reason that we know about all of this is that Surkov's emails were hacked in 2016 by Ukrainian hackers. This was the subject of a NBC News story "Payback? Russia Gets Hacked, Revealing Putin Aide's Secrets".

The 'political technologists' kept Putin in power, unchallenged, for over 20 years.

British filmmaker Adam Curtis²² was one of the first journalists to expose Surkov's role in the creation of fake worlds and the control of political systems. "The goal of this manipulation is to spread a state of bewilderment and powerlessness across the globe. A sense that nothing quite makes sense" and where anger rather than argument is

persuasive.

Creation of the 'neo-Nazi/Banderite Problem in Ukraine' – Viktor Medvedchuk, Eduard Kovalenko

Ukraine oligarch and pro-Russian politician Viktor Medvedchuk was the money and power behind Viktor Yanukovich's election as Ukraine President in 2004. Medvedchuk used his wealth and media companies to defame and block publicity by Yanukovich's opponent. Medvedchuk launched a false flag operation involving a fringe far-right movement and a pro-Russian agitator, Eduard Kovalenko, who was bribed to organise a 'Nazi rally' in support of Yanukovich's political opponent.

Medvedchuk also was connected to the murder attempt of Ukrainian journalist Tetiana Chornovol during the Euromaidan protests in December 2013, and his murky dealings continued, as he was involved in negotiations between the Russian-controlled separatist states and Ukraine, while actually working for Russia. Medvedchuk was finally sanctioned and arrested by Ukraine in 2021 for financing terrorism. He has since been used in a transfer of prisoners of war between Russia and Ukraine. He has also been sanctioned by the US and his \$USD200 million yacht seized in Croatia. His helicopter and private jet are now helping Ukraine defend itself.

If Russia had succeeded in capturing Kyiv in February 2022, Medvedchuk would have been potentially the leading candidate for Ukraine's Presidency. Medvedchuk's daughter Darya has Putin as her Godfather.

²² See film HyperNormalization by Adam Curtis, a 2016 BBC Documentary. Tim Adams [Guardian article](#).

Is Eastern Ukraine Really 'Russian'?

Eastern Ukraine was depopulated during WWII. After WWII Stalin 'Russified' the region, bringing in large numbers of Russian immigrant workers and restricting the use of Ukrainian language, so that when the Soviet Union collapsed, the Russians in the region started to campaign for Russian rule. The Budapest Memorandum of 1994 solved this on paper, when Ukraine was persuaded to return its remaining nuclear weapons to Russia, and Russia agreed to respect the 1991 borders establishing Ukraine's territorial sovereignty including eastern regions and Crimea.

After Russia invaded Crimea in 2014, it also created the two puppet states in Eastern Ukraine, governed by Russian propagandists and soldiers. Russia sent troops and created the fake information campaign about '14,000 civilian deaths in Donbas' and that they were 'exterminated by Ukrainian nationalists'. No Russians were being 'oppressed' at the time - this fake genocidal disinformation was used to justify Russia's full scale military invasion of Ukraine in 2022. This disinformation is still constantly re-reported by Russian official channels and their propagandists and troll farms. On the contrary, life for Ukrainians in occupied regions has been brutal and often fatal.

The LIE: "Ukraine killed 14,000 civilians in Donbas since 2014"

The FACTS: about Donbas Casualties since Russia's Illegal Annexations of 2014:

Civilians killed	3,104+
Civilians in flight MH17 shot down by RF	298
Ukraine forces killed	4,400
Russian & pro-Russian separatist forces killed	6,500
TOTAL KILLED 2014-2021	14,402+

If  had not organised and supported separatists, there would have been no deaths

Kremlin propaganda is a subject on its own, the main point to understand is that a series of repeating false narratives sought to justify Russia's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine have been used increasingly to justify direct strikes on civilians and civilian infrastructure.

Russian propaganda has become increasingly explicit about its genocidal intentions in Ukraine.

"Occupation means torture, deportation, re-education, rape and looting"

Dietmar Pichler, disinformation analyst & media literacy trainer.

@DietmarPichler1

On 24 February 2022 Russian military forces entered Ukraine from Belarus, Russia and Crimea.

RUSSIA'S FULL SCALE MILITARY INVASION OF UKRAINE – 24/2/22

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 has torn life apart for millions of ordinary families who had been going about their daily lives. In the fastest growing displacement and refugee crisis since World War II, millions were forced to leave Ukraine and become refugees, and millions more are now displaced within the country.

- Thousands of Ukrainian civilians have been killed and injured²³.
- Over 10,000 Ukrainian civilians verified by the UN Office of Human Rights as killed.
- Over 20,000 Ukrainian civilians verified as injured.
- Projected 70,000 Ukrainian defenders killed, over 100,000 injured
- 20,000 Ukrainian defenders are now amputees from landmines
- Actual figures will be in hundreds of thousands.

Russia attacks Ukraine, and countries who support Ukraine in multiple domains.

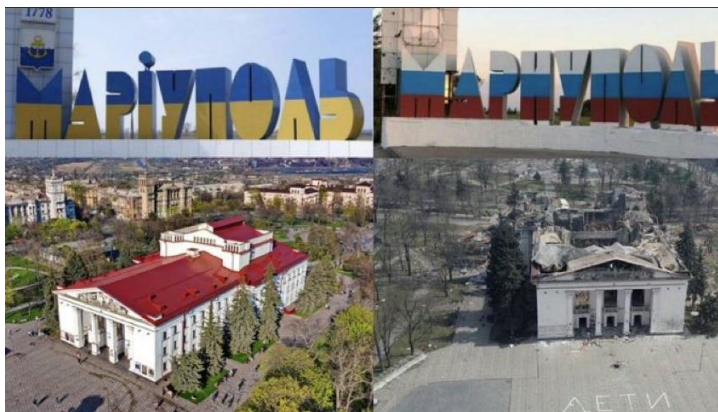
Russia's goal is to destroy Ukrainian identity.

Russia uses disinformation, violence and terror.

This is the largest attack on a sovereign state since WWII.

There is nowhere safe in Ukraine right now.

Most New Zealanders struggle to comprehend the destruction and death visited on Ukraine by Russia.



- Sending missiles to destroy maternity hospitals, people's homes, kindergartens and universities;
- Sending cluster munitions to blow limbs off adults and kill children at train stations and malls;
- Torture, mutilation, starvation and murder of civilians including children, and of POWs.

The coordinated, systematic, sustained nature of Russia's brutal tactics makes a mockery of its disinformation claims - in which it deflects blame onto either Ukraine or third parties such as NATO, the US, EU states.

Russian disinformation also tries to frame Russian aggression paradoxically in friendly terms which obfuscate or deny its brutality. "We are brothers" "We are all Russians"

²³ Office of United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Tactics of Russian Warfare in Ukraine 2022 – 2023

- 1000 km active frontline – **large-scale military invasion** by the 2nd largest army in the world.
- Wide scale **terror attacks** - missiles, rockets, artillery, armed UAV (drones), phosphorus on civilian targets,
- Systematic **torture, executions, mutilation, rape**, of civilians, children, babies, POWs.
- **Psychological warfare** – spreading propaganda **inciting hatred** towards Ukrainians, suppression of Ukrainian media and communications, threats and forced Russian citizenship.
- Withholding food, water, medicine, and imprisonment of civilians in basements. **Starvation, disease, mental illness.**
- **Large scale deliberate destruction and looting** of infrastructure, including hospitals, schools, sports and cultural facilities, world heritage facilities, shops, hotels, cafes, offices, libraries, energy infrastructure.
- **Systematic looting** of property, food, electrical appliances, clothing, furniture, agricultural and other machinery.
- Illegal **deportations** of health professionals from occupied areas, illegal deportations of hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian children, filtration camps.
- Targeting attacks on ambulance drivers, medics, doctors, civilian health professionals. New Zealander Andrew Bagshaw and his fellow volunteer medic British Chris Parry were executed deliberately.
- Laying of **minefields** and mines intensively in and around occupied towns and cities when retreating.
- Deliberate large scale **flooding** and ecocide from the destruction of the large Novo Kakhovka Hydro Power Plant, **drowning towns, villages, farms, livestock, pets, humans, wildlife.**



However – the world is a smaller, more connected place than ever, and New Zealand is not immune from Russia’s information war. Throughout 2022 and into 2023 we have seen Russia target all countries who support Ukraine with disinformation and overt blackmail.

Russia’s Ambassador to New Zealand actively participates through social media in spreading official Russian propaganda inciting anti-Western dissent, and inciting hatred towards Ukrainians. This has escalated through 2022-2023 to the point that official Russian state media and Russian diplomats actively spread pro-genocidal messaging and threats of violence to Western countries who support Ukraine.

Russia has explicitly and directly threatened the world’s grain and vegetable oil supplies, energy supplies to Europe and regularly publishes direct threats of nuclear annihilation to a range of near and far European and Western targets. It has attacked and blocked civilian shipping routes in the Black Sea. Russia regularly threatens its other close neighbours as well as distant countries.

Whether we know it or not, Russia’s war in Ukraine is a unique event in our lifetimes.

The catastrophic global ripples arrive on New Zealand’s shores in ways that we might not always recognise as being caused by Russia’s actions. Globally, there have been oil and grain shortages; there has been the threat of danger and disruption to logistics and supply chains. Political attention of the world’s leaders has been distracted away from other urgent and important concerns. There are increased cybersecurity risks, and no doubt a direct contribution to global warming, as direct results of Russia’s war in Ukraine.

Politically, the stakes are high in terms of whether aggressive large and well-armed states prepared to unleash terror on smaller states, will be allowed to expand in strength and come to dominate even more of the world’s resources, wreaking chaos and destruction, abusing and wasting resources at a time when the focus is sorely needed on transitioning to clean energy, improving economic equity, adapting to sea level rise and so on.

We have not seen this scale of war before – but our parents and grandparents have.

Our connections with Eastern Europe and West Russia, the Baltic States are also human connections. Many westerners (including New Zealand and Australian) have links of ancestry to these regions, through the many waves of emigrants of the 19th & 20th centuries who made their way to Western Europe, North America, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand.

Neither the US nor NATO invaded Ukraine or Russia

No US or NATO forces fight in Ukraine.

Ukraine’s war is one of political and cultural independence from Russia, which has invaded it. Following the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, Ukrainians voted for independence.

Russia, with its oligarch wealth and state-run media, with its disinformation war to manipulate Western politics, has ramped up its imperialist ambitions once more, and will not stop at Ukraine unless it is stopped. Explicitly genocidal and highly threatening messages are aired on Russian state media daily. Pavel Guberev is a former Russian installed 'People's Governor' of illegally annexed Donetsk, who often posts videos promising further death and destruction to Ukrainians.



Pavel Guberev, former 'Peoples Governor' of the illegally annexed Donetsk region describes his vision of Ukrainians on Russian state tv:

*"the enemy... these are Russian people possessed by the devil. We are coming to convince them, not to kill them. But if you don't want us to change your minds, then we will kill you. **We will kill as many of you as we have to...we will kill 1 million, 5 million...we can exterminate all of you...until you understand that you are possessed and you have to be cured. Zelensky is the devils spawn He is Hitler 2.0 with rabid Russophobia...they are bloody possessed Satanistsstupid people...**"*

"We have to re-educate them, drag some of them to concentration camps...we have to win at all costs and destroy as many people as possible"

Russia's war combines 20th century military strategy and weapons, 21st century technology and communications, and ethnic cleansing tactics refined by both Joseph Stalin and Adolph Hitler last century, and further refined by Russia's President Putin in Chechnya over 20 years ago.

Surveillance drones and combat drones bring us TikTok and Telegram images of a new kind of trench warfare, still heavily based on infantry, artillery and military intelligence of the enemy.

Daily videos are livestreamed from streets, homes, workplaces, cafes, hospitals announcing daily terror rations rained down on Ukraine's civilian population, subject to 19 months of near continuous missile, rocket, drone and artillery strikes.

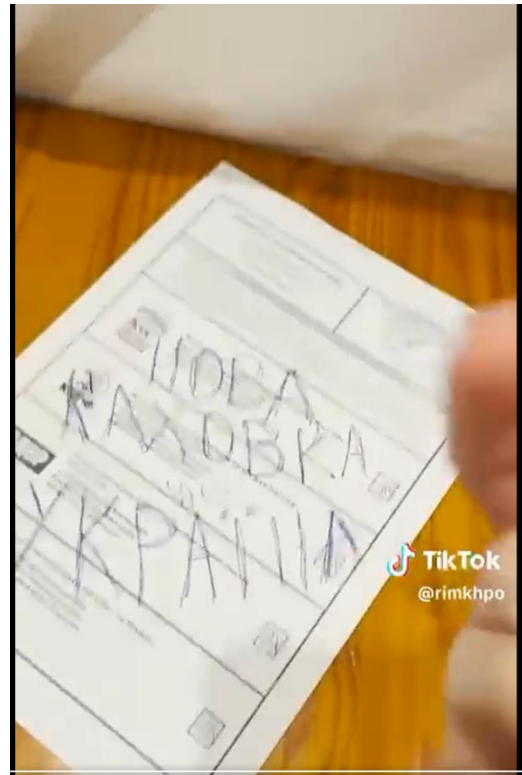
It is a genocidal invasion, evidenced by more than a decade of eliminationist rhetoric²⁴ in which Ukraine's very existence is denied by Russia. Regular and massive deportations and large scale

²⁴ <https://www.justsecurity.org/81789/russias-eliminationist-rhetoric-against-ukraine-a-collection/>

coercion, threats, sieges, and other events and practices specifically designed to annihilate Ukrainians are sometimes documented, but often hidden due to being carried out in occupied regions – although video evidence still does emerge sporadically, revealing fresh horrors.

It is a war which Ukraine must win or be sucked back into some ghastly resurrection of Stalin’s Soviet empire. Put simply, Ukraine does not have a choice – to survive, it must defend itself against this extreme warfare, and the world must do all it can to quell the fires of Russian aggression now, for peace and stability to return.

Photo: In an illegal ‘election’ in occupied Kherson Oblast, during which Ukrainians were threatened with dire consequences for not ‘electing’ Russian administrators, a ‘voter’ makes her protest by writing ‘Nova Kakhovka is Ukraine’ on the ‘voting paper’.



The war can be won by Ukraine – according to both military and civilian experts. Ukraine has made good use of available resources in its counteroffensive which aims not just to liberate occupied regions, but to minimise human losses while pushing through formidable minefields and artillery attacks.

Ukraine – a country without a navy – has forced Russia to move its Black Sea Fleet away from easy striking distance of Ukraine’s southern export seaports, and Ukraine has worked hard to maintain its vital grain exports despite large scale repeated missile strikes on port infrastructure and grain stores this year.

Ukraine has also struck hard at the Russian Defense facilities in occupied Crimea and elsewhere and will continue to do so.

Ukraine has already taken steps to become more self-sufficient in military equipment, but right now, patience and our continued support is needed.²⁵

²⁵ <https://www.ukrainianworldcongress.org/the-state-of-the-war-timothy-snyder-on-ukraines-war/>

Military support with training, intelligence, logistics, liaison, equipment.

\$NZD20 million funding towards NATO and UK military support

Humanitarian funds of \$NZD17 million via UN, NZ humanitarian NGOs, International Red Cross, World Food Programme.

Humanitarian funds annually to support UN Central Emergency Response Fund, helping humanitarian agencies scale up their Ukraine response.

New Zealand is helping Ukraine take its case against Russia to the International Court of Justice and to investigate war crimes through the International Criminal Court.

NZ has also co-sponsored UN Security Council and UN General Assembly resolutions condemning Russia's invasion.

NZ SANCTIONS ON RUSSIA

Relations have been strained since Russia's 2014 illegal annexation of Crimea and have deteriorated further since Russia invaded Ukraine²⁶. NZ suspended negotiations towards a Free Trade Agreement with Russia, and our officials have plenty of opportunity to communicate with Russian officials in our Asia-Pacific region (Russia is part of APEC, ASEAN, EAS, WTO and has a permanent seat, some say illegally, on the United Nations Security Council).

NZ joined Ukraine's other partners to apply economic sanctions to punish Russia economically²⁷. Sanctions target political and military figures from Russia, Belarus and Iran, oligarchs, major Russian-owned banks and financial institutions, and various Russian enterprises, companies and military, as well as imports of Russian origin fossil fuels, gold, vessels and aircraft.

HOW CAN KIWIS BEST SUPPORT UKRAINE?

There are many ways in which Kiwis can help Ukrainians via fundraising and financial support during the war.

Shipping quantities of bedding, medical supplies, sleeping bags or soft toys to the other side of the world is expensive and slow, and is not generally recommended.

Financial donations can provide vital food, water, medicines, clothing and shelter for displaced civilians, orphans and refugees.

Donations can also help fill the huge ongoing need for logistical vehicles involved in transporting civilians out of harm's way, humanitarian supplies where needed, wounded and ill people to hospitals and medical centres, and so forth.

Part 2 of this blog series will explain the nuts and bolts of how humanitarian aid, fundraising and public platforms for supporting Ukraine's defenders works, and a run-down on some of the most helpful and effective donation channels to help Ukrainians survive and win.

²⁶ New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade [website](#)

²⁷ NZ - [Russia Sanctions Regulatory Charter](#)