
TERROR AS A MODEL OF RUSSIA'S WAR AGAINST UKRAINE

Andrii Kutsyk

University of Warsaw

&

Maria Yuzyk

University of Warsaw

The collective moral responsibility of Russian society and an international tribunal for the leadership of Russia as a just outcome of the war.

At a time when Ukraine is trying with all its might to agree with Western countries (in particular, Germany) on the supply of tanks and aircraft, for further fighting with Russia at the front, Russia continues to terrorize the civilians.

Most recently, the demolition of the rubble of a high-rise building in Dnipro, which was hit by a Russian missile on January 14, was completed. According to the Dnipro regional military administration, 45 people were killed. (numbers may change, the number of dead may increase). It is important to understand that the massive missile attack was carried out on a weekend, when almost all residents of the Dnipro apartment building were at home. One of the missiles hit a residential apartment building, leaving many innocent people mutilated.

Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, such an act of terrorism is not new. We have already seen and must remember how the Russians committed the genocide of Ukrainians in Buch, how they bombed the maternity hospital and the drama theater in Mariupol, how they hit the shopping center in Kremenchuk. And of course we

know and remember how the Russians systematically shelled and continue to attack Ukraine's energy infrastructure. All this is terrorism and genocide, and the rocket attack on a high-rise building in Dnipro only shows the systematic nature of this terror and its infinity.

All the above-mentioned things and circumstances show the face of this war, a war that has the spirit of terror, which Putin's regime is perpetrating against Ukraine with the tacit support of its society.

All Russian wars are wars against the civilian population.

We must understand that the previous wars of Putin's Russia, in particular the war in the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, as well as the war in Georgia and Syria, were wars against the civilian population. The first thing the Russian army did when it entered the cities (if not destroying them first) was to loot, to kill civilians, and to rape. Apparently, this style of war is, on the one hand, a great flaw of the Russian army – an incurable disease – but on the other hand, it is simply an inheritance of the behaviour of the Soviet army. This model of behavior of the Soviet soldier was characteristic of his invasion/occupation of Budapest in 1956 or Prague in 1968. It was similar when the Soviet troops occupied Afghanistan; they fought with the civilian population, looted, and raped. If any of the well-known people in society pointed out these crimes, such as the human rights defender Andriy Sakharov in Soviet times or Anna Politkovska in the time of already independent Russia, then the Soviet and later Russian society harassed these people and continued to support the government and its actions. Impunity has become part of Russian society and its culture. This impunity partly has echoes in Russia itself: it is only worth mentioning the murders of Politkovskaya or Nemtsov. However, this impunity is mostly manifested in Russia's wars against other countries, in particular against Ukraine. This impunity must end.

Russian society must go through the process of purification, just as German society once did.

By supporting Putin's regime, Russian society becomes complicit in crimes and after Putin's defeat must undergo a cathartic process of confession and purification. We should not be supporters of collective responsibility in the legal aspect of this definition, but collective responsibility in the moral aspect is needed. German society supported its power practically from the beginning second world war until its end, and so does Russian society. German society went through a process of moral purification for many years, and the same should happen with Russian society. Only a collective admission of guilt and collective remorse can alleviate the future burden of moral responsibility for supporting the crimes of the Putin regime.

The unpunished evil of the past becomes a double evil in the future. We had Nuremberg and The Hague. Now we need a new city and a new court.

The non-condemned actions of the Russian army in the past, which according to international law can be qualified as terrorism and genocide, has led to the Russian leadership perceiving silence as international permissiveness. The collective interna-

tional measures have, at best, been weak, enabling largely unopposed new terrorist attacks against the civilian population of Ukraine.

Only the trial of Russia's political and military leadership will be able to restore justice and prevent a new war and war crimes by Russia against another sovereign independent state and its citizens. In this case, we are talking about the legal component of the crime, when every crime, every murder has its own name, has an observer and an executor. Each customer and executor must suffer a just punishment. After all, it wasn't Putin who dropped a bomb on the maternity hospital in Mariupol. It wasn't Putin who tortured and beheaded civilians in Bucha. And it wasn't Putin who pressed the button to launch a rocket at a high-rise building in Dnipro. This was done by specific people who have a name. All these people should suffer personal punishment. This is exactly how it was with the top leadership of Nazi Germany and with the perpetrators of crimes. This is how it was with Milosevic and his soldiers who were war criminals. This is how it should be with Putin's regime and people who were directly involved in killing and persecution of civilians. It's not about revenge, it's about justice and fairness. The guilt of every criminal must be proven by an international court, and if guilty, every criminal must suffer a just punishment.