

Address by the President of the Russian Federation

September 21, 2022 09:00

President of Russia Vladimir Putin: Friends,

The subject of this address is the situation in Donbass and the course of the special military operation to liberate it from the neo-Nazi regime, which seized power in Ukraine in 2014 as the result of an armed state coup.

Today I am addressing you – all citizens of our country, people of different generations, ages and ethnicities, the people of our great Motherland, all who are united by the great historical Russia, soldiers, officers and volunteers who are fighting on the frontline and doing their combat duty, our brothers and sisters in the Donetsk and Lugansk people's republics, Kherson and Zaporozhye regions and other areas that have been liberated from the neo-Nazi regime.

The issue concerns the necessary, imperative measures to protect the sovereignty, security and territorial integrity of Russia and support the desire and will of our compatriots to choose their future independently, and the aggressive policy of some Western elites, who are doing their utmost to preserve their domination and with this aim in view are trying to block and suppress any sovereign and independent development centres in order to continue to aggressively force their will and pseudo-values on other countries and nations.

The goal of that part of the West is to weaken, divide and ultimately destroy our country. They are saying openly now that in 1991 they managed to split up the Soviet Union and now is the time to do the same to Russia, which must be divided into numerous regions that would be at deadly feud with each other.

They devised these plans long ago. They encouraged groups of international terrorists in the Caucasus and moved NATO's offensive infrastructure close to our borders. They used indiscriminate Russophobia as a weapon, including by nurturing the hatred of Russia for decades, primarily in Ukraine, which was designed to become an anti-Russia bridgehead. They turned the Ukrainian people into cannon fodder and pushed them into a war with Russia, which they unleashed back in 2014. They used the army against civilians and organised a genocide, blockade and terror against those who refused to recognise the government that was created in Ukraine as the result of a state coup.

After the Kiev regime publicly refused to settle the issue of Donbass peacefully and went as far as to announce its ambition to possess nuclear weapons, it became clear that a new offensive in Donbass – there were two of them before – was inevitable, and that it would be inevitably followed by an attack on Russia's Crimea, that is, on Russia.

In this connection, the decision to start a pre-emptive military operation was necessary and the only option. The main goal of this operation, which is to liberate the whole of Donbass, remains unaltered.

The Lugansk People's Republic has been liberated from the neo-Nazis almost completely. Fighting in the Donetsk People's Republic continues. Over the previous eight years, the Kiev occupation regime created a deeply echeloned line of permanent defences. A head-on attack against them would have led to heavy losses, which is why our units, as well as the forces of the Donbass republics, are acting competently and systematically, using military equipment and saving lives, moving step by step to liberate Donbass, purge cities and towns of the neo-Nazis, and help the people whom the Kiev regime turned into hostages and human shields.

As you know, professional military personnel serving under contract are taking part in the special military operation. Fighting side by side with them are volunteer units – people of different ethnicities, professions and ages who are real patriots. They answered the call of their hearts to rise up in defence of Russia and Donbass.

In this connection, I have already issued instructions for the Government and the Defence Ministry to determine the legal status of volunteers and personnel of the military units of the Donetsk and Lugansk people's republics. It must be the same as the status

of military professionals of the Russian army, including material, medical and social benefits. Special attention must be given to organising the supply of military and other equipment for volunteer units and Donbass people's militia.

While acting to attain the main goals of defending Donbass in accordance with the plans and decisions of the Defence Ministry and the General Staff, our troops have liberated considerable areas in the Kherson and Zaporozhye regions and a number of other areas. This has created a protracted line of contact that is over 1,000 kilometres long.

This is what I would like to make public for the first time today. After the start of the special military operation, in particular after the Istanbul talks, Kiev representatives voiced quite a positive response to our proposals. These proposals concerned above all ensuring Russia's security and interests. But a peaceful settlement obviously did not suit the West, which is why, after certain compromises were coordinated, Kiev was actually ordered to wreck all these agreements.

More weapons were pumped into Ukraine. The Kiev regime brought into play new groups of foreign mercenaries and nationalists, military units trained according to NATO standards and receiving orders from Western advisers.

At the same time, the regime of reprisals throughout Ukraine against their own citizens, established immediately after the armed coup in 2014, was harshly intensified. The policy of intimidation, terror and violence is taking on increasingly mass-scale, horrific and barbaric forms.

I want to stress the following. We know that the majority of people living in the territories liberated from the neo-Nazis, and these are primarily the historical lands of Novorossiia, do not want to live under the yoke of the neo-Nazi regime. People in the Zaporozhye and Kherson regions, in Lugansk and Donetsk saw and are seeing now the atrocities perpetrated by the neo-Nazis in the [Ukrainian-] occupied areas of the Kharkov region. The descendants of Banderites and members of Nazi punitive expeditions are killing, torturing and imprisoning people; they are settling scores, beating up, and committing outrages on peaceful civilians.

There were over 7.5 million people living in the Donetsk and Lugansk people's republics

and in the Zaporozhye and Kherson regions before the outbreak of hostilities. Many of them were forced to become refugees and leave their homes. Those who have stayed – they number about five million – are now exposed to artillery and missile attacks launched by the neo-Nazi militants, who fire at hospitals and schools and stage terrorist attacks against peaceful civilians.

We cannot, we have no moral right to let our kin and kith be torn to pieces by butchers; we cannot but respond to their sincere striving to decide their destiny on their own.

The parliaments of the Donbass people's republics and the military-civilian administrations of the Kherson and Zaporozhye regions have adopted decisions to hold referendums on the future of their territories and have appealed to Russia to support this.

I would like to emphasise that we will do everything necessary to create safe conditions for these referendums so that people can express their will. And we will support the choice of future made by the majority of people in the Donetsk and Lugansk people's republics and the Zaporozhye and Kherson regions.

Friends,

Today our armed forces, as I have mentioned, are fighting on the line of contact that is over 1,000 kilometres long, fighting not only against neo-Nazi units but actually the entire military machine of the collective West.

In this situation, I consider it necessary to take the following decision, which is fully adequate to the threats we are facing. More precisely, I find it necessary to support the proposal of the Defence Ministry and the General Staff on partial mobilisation in the Russian Federation to defend our Motherland and its sovereignty and territorial integrity, and to ensure the safety of our people and people in the liberated territories.

As I have said, we are talking about partial mobilisation. In other words, only military reservists, primarily those who served in the armed forces and have specific military occupational specialties and corresponding experience, will be called up.

Before being sent to their units, those called up for active duty will undergo mandatory

additional military training based on the experience of the special military operation.

I have already signed Executive Order on partial mobilisation.

In accordance with legislation, the houses of the Federal Assembly – the Federation Council and the State Duma – will be officially notified about this in writing today.

The mobilisation will begin today, September 21. I am instructing the heads of the regions to provide the necessary assistance to the work of military recruitment offices.

I would like to point out that the citizens of Russia called up in accordance with the mobilisation order will have the status, payments and all social benefits of military personnel serving under contract.

Additionally, the Executive Order on partial mobilisation also stipulates additional measures for the fulfilment of the state defence order. The heads of defence industry enterprises will be directly responsible for attaining the goals of increasing the production of weapons and military equipment and using additional production facilities for this purpose. At the same time, the Government must address without any delay all aspects of material, resource and financial support for our defence enterprises.

Friends,

The West has gone too far in its aggressive anti-Russia policy, making endless threats to our country and people. Some irresponsible Western politicians are doing more than just speak about their plans to organise the delivery of long-range offensive weapons to Ukraine, which could be used to deliver strikes at Crimea and other Russian regions.

Such terrorist attacks, including with the use of Western weapons, are being delivered at border areas in the Belgorod and Kursk regions. NATO is conducting reconnaissance through Russia's southern regions in real time and with the use of modern systems, aircraft, vessels, satellites and strategic drones.

Washington, London and Brussels are openly encouraging Kiev to move the hostilities to our territory. They openly say that Russia must be defeated on the battlefield by any

means, and subsequently deprived of political, economic, cultural and any other sovereignty and ransacked.

They have even resorted to the nuclear blackmail. I am referring not only to the Western-encouraged shelling of the Zaporozhye Nuclear Power Plant, which poses a threat of a nuclear disaster, but also to the statements made by some high-ranking representatives of the leading NATO countries on the possibility and admissibility of using weapons of mass destruction – nuclear weapons – against Russia.

I would like to remind those who make such statements regarding Russia that our country has different types of weapons as well, and some of them are more modern than the weapons NATO countries have. In the event of a threat to the territorial integrity of our country and to defend Russia and our people, we will certainly make use of all weapon systems available to us. This is not a bluff.

The citizens of Russia can rest assured that the territorial integrity of our Motherland, our independence and freedom will be defended – I repeat – by all the systems available to us. Those who are using nuclear blackmail against us should know that the wind rose can turn around.

It is our historical tradition and the destiny of our nation to stop those who are keen on global domination and threaten to split up and enslave our Motherland. Rest assured that we will do it this time as well.

I believe in your support.

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