

# “Victory Over Russia is Impossible”: Zelensky Can’t Eschew Responsibility for Rising Public Anger at Ukraine’s Conscription Crisis

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*Zaluzhny knows better than anyone else in Ukraine that his side’s envisaged maximum victory over Russia is impossible, but it’s still being sought in spite of that because it’s ultimately Zelensky’s decision whether or not to continue the conflict. His order to fortify the entire front instead of resuming peace talks with Russia per reported Western pressure and unilaterally complying with its requested security concessions in defiance of his patrons is why more conscription is needed.*

Zelensky revealed during a press conference on Tuesday that the military wants to mobilize [up to half a million](#) more conscripts, but he said that he’s holding off on authorizing any decision on this for the time being until he receives more information from them about what these new troops will be doing. His announcement followed senior advisor Podolyak’s candid declaration on national TV earlier this month that the state will soon [unleash a self-described “propaganda” campaign](#) to help with conscription.

The [counteroffensive’s failure crushed Ukrainian morale](#), [weakened Western support](#), and [exacerbated preexisting political rivalries](#) in Kiev, which altogether led to an explosion in public anger that Zelensky sought to preemptively discredit last month by alleging that Russia is planning a “[Maidan 3](#)” against him. The powerful Atlantic Council didn’t buy his lie, however, and one of their experts just demanded in a piece for Politico that he form a “[government of national unity](#)” to help manage and mitigate this anger.

The Financial Times’ chief foreign affairs columnist went a step further after citing an unnamed former US official in their recent piece who said that “[We have to flip the narrative and say that Putin has failed](#)” in order to establish the ‘publicly plausible pretext’ for advancing a ‘[land-for-peace](#)’ deal with Russia. President Putin [strongly signaled](#) this month that he’s not interested in simply pausing the conflict, but he’s still open to political means

for achieving [Russia's security-centric goals](#) in this conflict.

Zelensky isn't interested in restarting such talks despite reported [Western pressure](#) while the West is reluctant to approve the concessions that Russia requires for agreeing to a "land-for-peace" deal. That's why the first is [bracing for a possible Russian offensive](#) by fortifying the entire front while the second might be [plotting a false flag against Belarus](#) to escalate the conflict with a view towards coercing Russia to walk back its required concessions. [Amidst this impasse](#), Ukraine's [conscription crisis](#) has worsened.

The New York Times (NYT) published an extremely unsavory piece last week titled "['People Snatchers': Ukraine's Recruiters Use Harsh Tactics to Fill Ranks](#)", which was followed this week by the Wall Street Journal's one titled "[Ukraine's Front-Line Troops Are Getting Older: 'Physically, I Can't Handle This'](#)". Interspersed between them, Ukrainian military intelligence chief Budanov [candidly admitted](#) that the "efficiency" of his country's conscripts is "almost zero", and it's not difficult to understand why.

Another recent piece by the NYT reported that "[Ukrainian Marines on 'Suicide Mission' in Crossing the Dnipro River](#)", within which [a whiff of mutiny pervaded](#) seeing as how those primary sources risked charges of insubordination for going behind their superiors' backs to inform foreign media about this suicidal situation. [Time Magazine](#) also revealed in late October that some front-line commanders had begun refusing the presidential office's orders to advance due to a dearth of arms and troops.

As Ukraine's conscription crisis worsens, Commander-in-Chief [Zaluzhny](#)'s popular appeal has exploded as proven by a mid-November poll that was cited by [The Economist](#) in one of their articles from the end of that month, which was referenced by the previously mentioned Atlantic Council expert. Russian foreign spy chief Naryshkin shared a scenario forecast last week about Western plans to [replace Zelensky with Zaluzhny](#) or one of several other leading figures, which preceded that expert's piece by exactly a week.

His popular appeal has risen in parallel with public anger against the authorities that's largely driven by Zelensky's forcible conscription policy that he just implied might soon attempt to snatch another half-million people off the streets if he agrees with what he claims is the military's latest demand. Therein lies the contradiction, however, since it was Zaluzhny's admission to [The Economist](#) in early November that the conflict had entered a stalemate which exacerbated his preexisting rivalry with Zelensky.

The Commander-in-Chief knows better than anyone else in Ukraine that his side's envisaged maximum victory over Russia is impossible, but it's still being sought in spite of that because it's ultimately the President's decision whether or not to continue the conflict. Zelensky's order to fortify the entire front instead of resuming peace talks with Russia per reported Western pressure and unilaterally complying with its requested security concessions in defiance of his patrons is why more conscription is needed.

In response to these military tasks placed upon him against his implied will, Zaluzhny presumably informed Zelensky that it can only be accomplished with half a million more troops, but Zelensky dishonestly made it seem like his top rival made this demand on his own. This twisting of the truth was meant to redirect public anger against Zaluzhny even though it's Zelensky who's entirely responsible for trying to perpetuate the conflict for self-serving political reasons as it [finally begins to wind down](#).

The only reason why he'd resort to such trickery is because he seemingly fears that a bonafide "Maidan 3" is brewing together with an impending mutiny, the first of which could be encouraged by the West to establish the 'publicly plausible pretext' for the second, provided of course that the decision is made. That hasn't yet happened, but these interconnected scenarios are deemed credible enough by Zelensky for him to preemptively attempt to redirect public anger against his top rival in order to impede them.

The takeaway from this scandalous revelation during Tuesday's press conference is that the Ukrainian leader is feeling pressured from all sides but is still clinging to what Time Magazine described as his messianic delusions of maximum victory over Russia per an unnamed senior aide. This further intensifies the country's converging crises and moves all key players closer towards the seemingly inevitable climax wherein one of them either finally buckles or makes a power play against another out of desperation.

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