



Zelensky Slams NATO's Refusal To Impose No-Fly Zone Over Ukraine: 'All These People Will Die Because Of You'

Description

UKRAINE: The president of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelensky has accused the West of abandoning millions of his people to their deaths at the hands of Russian troops.

Lashing out at NATO powers for refusing to establish a no-fly zone over his country, a furious Zelensky said "All the people who will die starting from this day will also die because of you. Because of your weakness, because of your disunity"

NATO has said that a no-fly zone over Ukraine could provoke a widespread war in Europe with nuclear-armed Russia

The Kremlin claims to have stopped firing and opened humanitarian corridors to allow civilians to leave the strategic port of Mariupol in the south-east and Volnovakha in the country's east for five hours between 12pm and 5pm Moscow time

The [Mail Online](#) reports: Volodymyr Zelensky has urged Ukrainians to continue fighting Vladimir Putin's forces following allegations that Russian troops are shelling Mariupol despite promising a ceasefire to allow hundreds of thousands of civilians to escape the strategic port city.

In a defiant address on Saturday, the comic-turned-war leader ordered 'those who can' to keep attacking Kremlin troops as more than 200,000 civilians in Mariupol and the town of Volnovakha in the country's east are given five hours to evacuate west to Zaporizhzhia.

Addressing the US directly, Ukraine's president then thundered 'what more is needed' to convince President Joe Biden to enforce a no-fly zone, an action which could widen the war, after he accused the West of cowardice in the face of Russian aggression.

Officials in Mariupol have alleged that Russian forces are flouting an agreed ceasefire and pounding the city. Deputy mayor Serhiy Orlov told the BBC: 'The Russians are continuing to bomb us and use

artillery. It is crazy. There is no ceasefire in Mariupol and there is no ceasefire all along the route. Our civilians are ready to escape but they cannot escape under shelling.'

Ukraine's deputy prime minister Iryna Vereshchuk said Kyiv is 'verifying' claims that Kremlin forces are shelling Mariupol, warning: 'The whole world is watching.'

The Russian defence ministry said on Saturday that its units had opened humanitarian corridors near the two cities encircled by its troops for five hours between 12pm and 5pm Moscow time, Russia's RIA news agency reported.

In Mariupol, citizens would be allowed to leave during a five-hour window, it quoted the city's officials as saying. The Russian defence ministry said a broad offensive would then continue in Ukraine, RIA said.

The Ukrainian government said the plan was to evacuate around 200,000 people from Mariupol and 15,000 from Volnovakha, and the Red Cross is the ceasefire's guarantor. There was no immediate confirmation that firing had stopped and it was not clear if the ceasefire would be extended to other areas, as Putin's war with Ukraine entered its 10th day.

The evacuation will be seen as a prelude to a final assault that, if successful, would see the Russian army push north from occupied Crimea and link up with their forces from the east and take control of Ukraine's coast on the Sea of Azov.

Since Russia invaded on February 24, Moscow has pummelled Ukrainian cities, with officials reporting hundreds of civilians killed. Europe's largest atomic power plant has even come under attack sparking fears of a catastrophic nuclear accident. But Russia has so far only seized two key cities, Berdiansk and Kherson on Ukraine's southern Black Sea coast.

Capturing Mariupol represents a bigger prize for Russian forces as it would deal a severe blow to Ukraine's maritime access and connect with troops coming from annexed Crimea and the Donbas.

Zelensky said on Saturday: 'We managed to get an agreement to provide assistance to those cities in Ukraine that are in the dire and worst situation, Mariupol and Volnovakha, to save children and women and older people. To provide medication and food to those who stay there in those places.'

'Those people willing to leave these places should be able to do so now using the humanitarian corridor, but those who can should continue fighting.'

'We do everything we can on our side to make sure this agreement works, regarding the humanitarian corridors and we will see if we can move even further about our negotiations with Russia.'

Aid agencies have warned of an unfolding humanitarian disaster as food, water and medical supplies run short and refugees stream into western Ukraine and neighbouring European countries.

In the southeastern port city of Mariupol – whose capture would be a key prize for Russia – there is no water, heat or electricity and food is running out, according to Mayor Vadym Boychenko. 'We are simply being destroyed,' he said.

The siege of Mariupol came as more Russian forces inched closer to the capital Kyiv, encountering stiff resistance and shelling the western suburbs and the northern town of Chernihiv, where there have

been heavy civilian casualties in recent days.

In a bitter and emotional speech late on Friday, Zelensky lashed out at NATO powers for refusing to impose a no-fly zone over his country, warning that 'all the people who die from this day forward will also die because of you'. He claimed the West's hesitancy will fully untie Russia's hands as it escalates its air attack.

NATO says a no-fly zone could provoke widespread war in Europe with nuclear-armed Russia. But as the United States and other NATO members send weapons for Kyiv and more than 1million refugees spill through the continent, the conflict is already drawing in countries far beyond Ukraine's borders.

'The alliance has given the green light to the bombing of Ukrainian cities and villages,' he said, warning that 'the history of Europe will remember this forever'. In a separate video message to anti-war protesters in several European cities, Zelensky continued to appeal for help. 'If we fall, you will fall,' he said.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg had earlier ruled out the possibility of a no-fly zone, saying Western planes would have to shoot down Russian aircraft.

by Niamh Harris

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