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Feb 6 · 35 tweets · [neil_abrams/status/1622694391096741902](https://twitter.com/neil_abrams/status/1622694391096741902)

Anyone who insists the West stop arming Ukraine or force it to negotiate a peace agreement against its will is, wittingly or not, endorsing mass death and other human rights abuses.

How do we know? Russia's own recent history tells us so.

A thread:

As you're undoubtedly aware, ever since Russia commenced its 2022 invasion a large community of ostensible leftists, not to mention bad-faith rightwing actors, have been urging "negotiations" toward a "peace agreement."

According to this view, the West, by providing Ukraine with weapons instead of compelling it to negotiate a peace settlement, is prolonging and escalating the war.

Those calling for "peace" see this as a war between two countries which share culpability and could hash things out if only they negotiated in good faith. In truth, it's an invasion aimed at colonial conquest. And a brutal colonial conquest is exactly what "peace" would entail.

I've previously made my contempt for these people quite clear. Their calls to disarm Ukraine and force negotiations seemingly betray a childlike naïveté about Russia's aims and conduct. It's "you can't hug a person with lethal arms," only dressed up in adult-sounding language.

Only most of those urging disarmament and "peace" are not naïve. They are, in fact, well-aware of the obvious counterargument: That a negotiated "peace" would consign millions of Ukrainians to genocide. Still, for whatever reason, they persist with their concern-trolling.

So for brevity's sake I'm going to assign these people a label: peace-trollers. A peace-troller, in the context of Russia's war on Ukraine, is someone who disingenuously calls for "peace" in order to deflect from an honest discussion of the conflict.

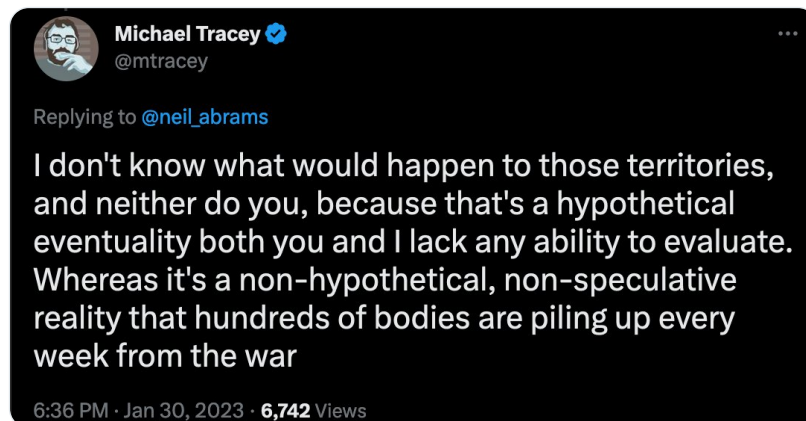
As you probably know, peace-trollers like to argue that NATO provoked Russia to invade. This argument is flatly contradicted by Russia's own behavior as well as the statements of its state media, key officials, and Vladimir Putin himself. Receipts:



If, after seeing the evidence in the above thread, you still think Russia can be satisfied merely by a Western guarantee against further NATO expansion as opposed to the acquisition of vast Ukrainian lands, I really don't know what to tell you.

Still, peace-trollers retort, even if Russia seeks territorial conquest, there's no reason to think Ukrainians who get annexed by Russia would fare worse than they do now, right?

Actually, there's every reason to think so—which probably explains why Ukrainians continue to fight.



This brings us to another refrain by peace-trollers, whose incessant condemnations of lethal aid to Ukraine are often based on the (very stupid) presumption that the West is somehow forcing Ukrainians to fight and die against their will.

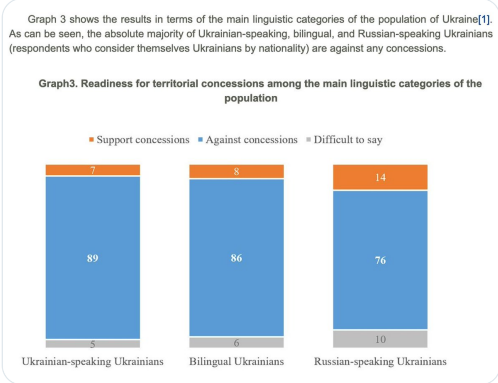
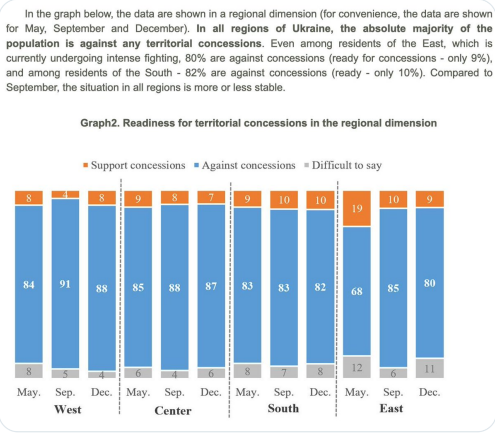
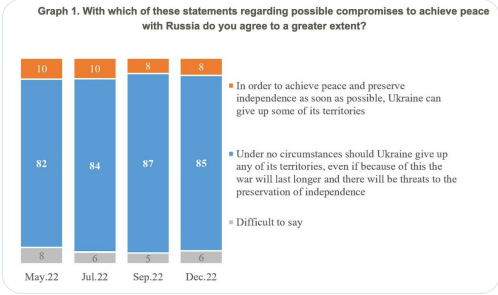


Upon learning my spouse is Mexican, a mom, jubilant over her toddler's newfound enthusiasm for Legos, once asked me: "Do they have Legos in Mexico?"

Yes, Becky, they have Legos in Mexico—just like they have OPINION POLLS IN UKRAINE.

For the record, nobody is *making* Ukrainians defend their country against Russian aggression.

Survey evidence shows Ukrainians overwhelmingly reject a land-for-peace deal with Russia, a view which holds across all regions and linguistic categories. <https://kiis.com.ua/?lang=eng&cat=reports&id=1167&page=1>



So let’s set the record straight and see exactly what Russia has in store for any Ukrainian territories it acquires as a result of a “peace deal.”

Below is a brief survey of the appalling abuses that have followed Russia’s various post-Soviet conquests.

For simplicity’s sake, I’m keeping this discussion restricted to the post-Soviet period—even though one could easily include the horrendous crimes carried out by the Soviets and the Tsars.

And one more thing: Lest you feel tempted to try and what-about me by bringing up America’s own history of terrible crimes, just save it. Yeah, I know all about that shit and condemn it in the most forceful terms. So stop acting like it somehow excuses Russia’s conduct.

With that out of the way, let's get to it. The first stop on our tour of Russian horrors is the former breakaway province of Chechnya.



Chechnya has a long history of repression and rebellion stretching back to the Tsarist period. The Soviets deported the entire population in 1944 only to allow them to return in 1957. After the Soviet collapse, Chechens fought a war for independence from the Russian Federation.

The war lasted from 1994-96 and ended with an interim peace deal. In 1999, Russia, now led by Putin as P.M., invaded Chechnya again. By mid-2000, it had managed to largely pacify the province

But the key question for Ukraine is: What happened next, after “peace” was restored?

Since 2005, the European Court of Human Rights has decided 499 suits brought by Chechen civilians against Russia for the latter's human rights abuses, practically all of which occurred *after* the end of major military operations in mid-2000.



**STICHTING
JUSTICE
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ECHR Cases from the North Caucasus
Stichting Justice Initiative and its partner organizations utilize domestic and international legal mechanisms to seek justice for grave human rights violations in the North and South Caucasus, and h...

https://www.sji.org/en/legal/cases/?set_filter=Show&cn_filter=&f_33_4029086902=Y&...

This 2015 report by the International Crisis Group details Russia's record of unrestrained violence and savage repression against the Chechen population since the end of the war.



Chechnya: The Inner Abroad

A powerful propaganda machine promotes the "success story" of today's Chechnya. But its peace is fragile; government repression is used to keep the people at bay while economic inequality, poor socia...

<https://www.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia/caucasus/russianorth-caucasus/chech...>

Violence has become more targeted, but serious violations continue to be reported: torture, enforced disappearance, summary execution, hostage-taking, illegal detention, falsification of criminal cases, arson, and a lack of fair trials.¹⁶⁶ Numerous sources allege that physical violence can be applied to anyone who comes into conflict or disagrees with representatives of the ruling elite and security services, regardless of the reasons. Intimidation and illegal violence reportedly affect all spheres of life and

keep the system functioning, while perpetrators enjoy impunity, and federal prosecuting agencies are impotent.

D. A Climate of Fear

Fear keeps the population obedient.²⁰¹ "If somebody does not take my orders in this republic, I'll force him", Ramzan says, "because I know what God says, what the law says and what the people need". Top interior ministry officials echo this: "God damn those who dare to turn right or left from the path intended by our head", one said.²⁰² The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe noted that "current authorities continue to nurture a climate of pervading fear", while the ex-chair of Russia's federal Accounts Chamber, Sergey Stepashin, said simply, "the whole republic is in Ramzan Kadyrov's ownership".²⁰³

The presence of many armed men in public places reinforces the feeling that coercion can be used easily. Security services leak videos of torture, humiliation and brutal punishments, including of women, that are shared on mobile phones and disseminated by internet.²⁰⁴ A café owner in central Grozny turned pale and refused to

sell coffee because of Ramzan's order not to serve food in daytime during Ramadan, explaining, "If I give you coffee, armed men will come to me".²⁰⁵

Despite the apparent decline in violence, fear has become stronger. Human rights organisations say people are scared to report violations publicly, especially after murders of activists in 2009.²⁰⁶ Seeing the impunity of law enforcement and republic leaders, there is a concern that pursuit of legal remedies might be futile, even counterproductive: "This man [Kadyrov] remains unpunished despite everything; federal authorities cover up all his crimes in Russia and abroad".²⁰⁷ During interviews, respondents turned off their phones, insisted on anonymity and allowed no voice recording. A Grozny resident said:

It was easier when federal troops were here; we knew where the enemy was, where danger came from. There was a feeling of solidarity. We went out and were not afraid to protest. Now our nation is divided; people do not know what to think. Everything is so confusing; everyone has relatives in law enforcement agencies and prefers not to discuss politics to avoid conflicts within their families.²⁰⁸

E. Opposition and Dissent

No opposition is accepted. Ramzan himself says, "I'm the boss. And no one else but me, understand? Ramzan – and this is it. No other names in this region, there is only one name – Kadyrov".²¹¹ Dissenters are considered enemies. Deputy Interior Minister Apti Alaudinov said candidly, "those who even yap against the authorities, I swear by Allah and the Quran, up to the maximum possible ... I do not want to tell this in

front of the camera, [but] I personally will try to create as much trouble as possible for this man".²¹²

Intellectuals and artists are at risk if the authorities are dissatisfied with their statements or work. Scholars may face persecution for interpretation of facts. Journalists and writers complain of severe censorship. Ramzan said on Russian TV of a

Only very brave complainants turn to independent NGOs for help. After public criticism and threats by Ramzan and others against Russia's prominent human rights group Memorial, its leading member, Natalya Estemirova, was abducted near her house in Grozny on 15 July 2009 and later that day found shot dead in Ingushetia.²¹⁷ The chair of Memorial accused Ramzan of responsibility, which he denied, asking,

"why would Kadyrov kill a woman who is not needed by anyone? She never had honour, dignity, conscience".²¹⁸ In August 2009, unidentified law enforcement officials took the director of the humanitarian organisation Save the Generation, Zarema Sadulayeva, and her husband, Alik Dzhabrailov, from their office; the next day they were found dead, their bodies showing numerous signs of torture. In October, during an operation Ramzan led, an employee of the Danish Refugee Council, Zarema Gaysanova, was taken from home and has not been heard from since.²¹⁹ No investigation of these cases has been completed, and many independent activists have fled Chechnya.²²⁰

A joint mobile defence group was set up after the Estemirova murder. Lawyers from different regions of Russia, coordinated by Igor Kalyapin, the head of "Committee against Torture", work in rotation on cases of abduction and torture that appear to involve republic security officials.²²¹ The group has routinely been harassed by the Chechen authorities and smeared in local media, the lawyers illegally detained, repeatedly pursued and searched; their office was burned down in 2014 and attacked again in June 2015. Pro-Kadyrov activists also threw eggs at Kalyapin during a press conference in Moscow on human rights violations in Chechnya.²²²

For those who want to dig deeper, Emma Gilligan, a professor at Indiana University Bloomington, has written what is perhaps the definitive account of Russian crimes in Chechnya both during and after the end of active hostilities.



Chechnya is hardly the only example of crimes against humanity committed by post-Soviet Russia in the aftermath of war. In 2008, Russia launched an offensive against Georgia which, in 16 short days, managed to establish a Russian proxy state in the region of South Ossetia.



Back in 1991, when the USSR was collapsing, South Ossetia declared independence from what was then the Soviet republic of Georgia, sparking a civil war marked by ethnic cleansing on both sides.



Georgia might have successfully defeated the rebellion had it not been for the intervention of a Russian “peacekeeping” force, which in 1992 helped establish South Ossetia as a de facto independent state inside a now-independent Georgia.

Later, in 2008, Russia invaded Georgia a second time. This new invasion would see Russia temporarily occupy parts of Georgia proper and permanently occupy South Ossetia. Since that time, Russia has annexed South Ossetia in all but name.

But most relevant for Ukraine is what happened in South Ossetia after Russia's military victory. Well, what happened was the violent ethnic cleansing of the local ethnic Georgian minority in addition to arbitrary detentions, torture, and other abuses.



Up In Flames
Humanitarian Law Violations and Civilian Victims
in the Conflict over South Ossetia

HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH

Up In Flames
This 200-page report details indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks by both Georgian and Russian forces, and the South Ossetian forces' campaign of deliberate and systematic destruction of certa...
<https://www.hrw.org/report/2009/01/23/flames/humanitarian-law-violations-and-civilian-...>

- As an occupying power in Georgia, Russia failed overwhelmingly in its duty under international humanitarian law to ensure, as far as possible, public order and safety in areas under its effective control, instead allowing South Ossetian forces, including volunteer militias, to engage in wanton and widescale pillage and burning of Georgian homes and to kill, beat, rape, and threaten civilians.
- After Georgian forces withdrew from South Ossetia on August 10, South Ossetian forces over a period of weeks deliberately and systematically destroyed ethnic Georgian villages in South Ossetia that had been administered by the Georgian government. They looted, beat, threatened, and unlawfully detained numerous ethnic Georgian civilians, and killed several, on the basis of the ethnicity and imputed political affiliations of the residents of these villages, with the express purpose of forcing those who remained to leave and ensuring that no former residents would return. From this, Human Rights Watch has concluded that South Ossetian forces attempted to ethnically cleanse these villages. Approximately 22,000 villagers, the majority of whom had fled South Ossetia before the conflict started, remain displaced.
- In committing this violence, South Ossetian forces egregiously violated multiple obligations under humanitarian law, for which there must be individual criminal accountability and prosecution for war crimes where appropriate. To the extent that a number of these prohibited acts were committed as part of a widespread or

systematic attack directed against the civilian population, they may be prosecuted as crimes against humanity.

- Residents of Akhagori district—an area in the east of South Ossetia populated mostly by ethnic Georgians and currently occupied by Russian forces—face threats and harassment by militias and anxiety about a possible closure of the district's administrative border with the rest of Georgia. Both factors have caused great numbers of people to leave their homes for undisputed Georgian territory.
- During the time when Russian forces occupied Georgian territory south of the South Ossetian administrative border, Ossetian militias looted, destroyed, and burned homes on a wide scale, deliberately killed at least nine civilians, and raped at least two. Russian forces were at times involved in the looting and destruction, either as passive bystanders, active participants, or by providing militias with transport into villages.
- Georgian forces beat and ill-treated at least five of the 32 Ossetians detained in August in the context of the armed conflict.
- After the withdrawal of Georgian forces from South Ossetia, South Ossetian forces, at times together with Russian forces, arbitrarily detained at least 159 ethnic Georgians. South Ossetian forces killed at least one detainee and subjected nearly all of them to inhuman and degrading treatment and conditions of detention. They also tortured at least four Georgian prisoners of war and executed at least three. All of these acts are war crimes, for which individual criminal accountability must be established.

The next example of Russia's barbaric conduct as an occupying power is Crimea, the Ukrainian Black Sea peninsula which Russia invaded and annexed in 2014. I've provided some background on this event in previous threads:

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In late-February 2014, mere days after Yanukovych fled, Russian troops occupied Crimea. Soon after, the Kremlin launched a major initiative to stir up separatist, anti-government protests in other parts of eastern and southern Ukraine.

2:10 PM · Oct 21, 2022

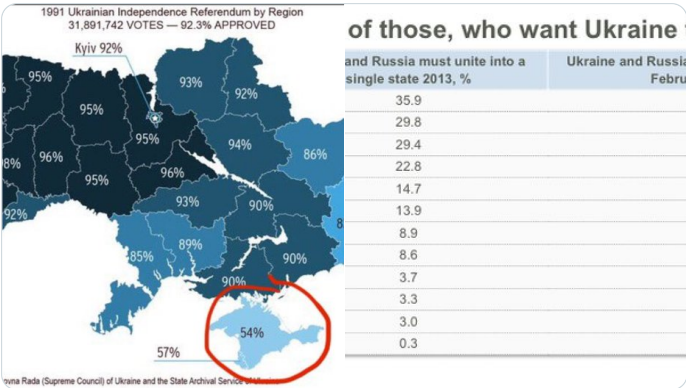
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Even in Crimea, the only province in which ethnic Russians comprise a majority, there was **never** majority support for joining Russia. Below are results from the 1991 independence referendum as well as a Feb. 2014 poll carried out during the Euromaidan revolt.



1991 Ukrainian Independence Referendum by Region
31,891,742 VOTES — 92.3% APPROVED

of those, who want Ukraine and Russia must unite into a single state 2013, %	Ukraine and Russia must unite into a single state Feb. 2014, %
35.9	35.9
29.8	29.8
29.4	29.4
22.8	22.8
14.7	14.7
13.9	13.9
8.9	8.9
8.6	8.6
3.7	3.7
3.3	3.3
3.0	3.0
0.3	0.3

3:40 PM · Oct 27, 2022

 113  Reply  Copy link

[Read 6 replies](#)

Crimea would endure the usual pattern of repression, intimidation, arbitrary detentions, torture, etc. It would also see the forced deportations of ethnic Ukrainians and Tatars and their replacement by hundreds of thousands of Russian immigrants:

https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Countries/UA/Crimea2014_2017_EN.pdf

Here's a relevant portion of the OCHCR report linked to above on the demographic changes Russia forced upon Crimea in the wake of its 2014 invasion:

46. According to the last census conducted in Ukraine, in 2001, 125 nationalities lived on the Crimean peninsula, which had a population of 2,401,209 (2,024,056 in Crimea and 377,153 in Sevastopol).³⁸ The census enumerated the population by ethnicity, finding the largest national groups in Crimea and Sevastopol to be Russians, numbering 1,450,394 (60.40 per cent); Ukrainians 576,647 (24.12 per cent); and Crimean Tatars 245,291 (12.26 per cent).

47. There were also 35,157 Belarussians; 13,602 Tatars; 10,088 Armenians; 5,531 Jews; 4,562 Moldovans; 4,459 Poles; 4,377 Azeri; 3,087 Uzbeks; 3,036 Greeks; 3,027 Koreans; 2,790 Germans; 2,679 Chuvash; 2,594 Mordovians; 2,282 Bulgarians 2,137 Georgians; 1,905 Roma; and 1,192 Maris. In addition, 17,298 persons did not declare themselves or belonged to ethnic groups numbering less than 1,000 individuals.

48. In September 2014, the Russian Federation conducted a census on the peninsula, which was not recognized by the Government of Ukraine.³⁹ According to its results, the population of Crimea and Sevastopol had decreased by 4.8 per cent since 2001, down to 2,284,769, albeit with differences between the two administrative units: in Crimea, the population decreased by 6.5 per cent, to 1,891,465, while that of Sevastopol grew by 4.1 per cent, to 393,304.

49. According to that same census, in the entire peninsula, the number of persons of Russian nationality increased to 1,492,078 (65.31 per cent), the Ukrainians dropped to 344,515 (15.08 per cent) and the Crimean Tatars decreased to 232,340 (10.17 per cent). The other communities diminished, except for the Tatars - a group culturally affiliated with the Volga Tatars and the Crimean Tatars - whose numbers rose from 13,602 to 44,996.

50. Since the beginning of the occupation, the displacement of residents of Crimea - mostly ethnic Ukrainians and Crimean Tatars - had multiple causes, notably the refusal to live under Russian Federation jurisdiction, fear of persecution on ethnic or religious grounds, threats or reported attacks, avoiding military conscription in the Russian Federation army and enrolling in Ukrainian education institutions.

Evidence of Russia's atrocious human-rights abuses in Crimea since 2014 is not hard to find. Here's a 2022 piece from the European Journal of International Law, complete with helpful links to formal reports by international rights organizations:



Crimean Tatars: Eight Years of Anything but Marginal Resistance

Blog of the European Journal of International Law

<https://www.ejiltalk.org/crimean-tatars-eight-years-of-anything-but-marginal-resistance/>

Finally, I'd be remiss if I didn't mention Syria. Although mostly known for Russia's indiscriminate aerial bombings, it also witnessed on-the-ground rights abuses by Russian paramilitary group Wagner, the neo-Nazi outfit now present in Ukraine.



Holding Wagner to Account for Russian Abuses in Syria

On the tenth anniversary of the Syrian revolution last year, a complaint against the Russian private military company (PMC) Wagner was filed in Russian courts, the first case ever brought against the...

<https://timep.org/commentary/analysis/holding-wagner-to-account-for-russian-abuses-i...>



The Tahrir Institute
for Middle East Policy



The Case

In 2017, a video [published](#) online by an unknown source showed five men in military uniform speaking Russian and violently beating a Syrian man in civilian clothes. The video was widely circulated in 2019 after an extensive version showing the men torturing, beheading, and mutilating the body of Syrian civilian Mohammad Taha Ismail al-Abdullah, more commonly known as Hamadi Bouta, was published online. Following an extensive investigation, the independent Russian media group, Novaya Gazeta, became the first to identify the perpetrators in the video as members of Wagner Group. Based on evidence collected from the media group's investigation, three NGOs, the Syrian Center for Media and Freedom of Expression (SCM), the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), and Memorial Human Rights Center, drafted and submitted a complaint filed by Bouta's brother on behalf of the victim against members of PMC Wagner.

In sum, Russia's bloody and brutal record as an occupying power provides ample justification for Ukrainians to resist rather than submit to its domination. And it shows just how morally repugnant are peace-trollers' calls for disarmament in service of a "peace agreement."

If and when Ukrainians choose to conclude a peace deal with Russia, the rest of the world should heed their decision. But, for now, it should respect—and, yes, aid—their quest to fend off Russian subjugation. This isn't hard, people, whatever peace-trollers want you to think.

/end

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