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# Navalny Calls Ukraine War 'Distraction' From Russia's Problems

February 24, 2022




Navalny is currently on trial in a makeshift prison court on charges that could see his time in prison lengthened by up to 15 years. **@teamnavalny**

Jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny said Thursday he opposes President Vladimir Putin's declaration of war against Ukraine, calling it a "distraction" from Russia's economic stagnation and sociopolitical problems.

"I am against this war," Navalny told the judge, according to the independent Mediazona news website's live blog of the hearing.

"I think this war is designed to divert attention from Russia's problems, and it will only lead to greater impoverishment," he added before being interrupted by the judge. "I consider those who unleashed this war to be bandits and thieves. I went into politics to fight this criminal regime of thieves."

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**Embed:**

> Алексей Навальный прямо сейчас в суде говорит о войне с Украиной: pic.twitter.com/DS6zBa71lt
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> — Кира Ярмыш (@Kira_Yarmysh) February 24, 2022

Navalny's top aide Leonid Volkov warned that Putin "pulled Russia into the abyss."

"Now, in hindsight, it is clear how right we were when we said and shouted to the whole world: '[Putin] is insane and dangerous, stop him now, otherwise it will be too late'," Volkov said from exile.

"My confidence that Russia will exist at all after Putin is severely undermined," he wrote on Telegram.

Several public figures, including popular YouTube blogger Yury Dud, have taken to social media in recent days to express their opposition to the war.

Images in major Russian cities showed banners being unfurled and graffiti sprayed in public places with the message "no to war."

Authorities in Moscow broke up a small anti-war rally and detained participants over the weekend, and single-person pickets against the war have taken place in cities across the country.

On Thursday, several Russian directors, producers and celebrities posted black squares to Instagram in protest of the war.

Russian journalists also joined the chorus of voices opposing the war, with at least three dozen signing an anti-war petition launched by Kommersant business daily reporter Yelena Chernenko as of Thursday afternoon.

Putin ordered a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in the early hours of Thursday, claiming efforts to "demilitarize" and "denazify" its pro-Western neighbor, marking the start of potentially the largest conflict in Europe since World War II.

Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskiy on Thursday declared martial law and ordered the military to "inflict maximum losses."

Missile strikes were shown across Ukraine, including in Kyiv, Kharkiv and Odesa, sending Ukrainians into bomb shelters and highways leading out of major cities.

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