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Elderly Ukrainian Suggests Russia Co-Opted Her as Pro-War Symbol

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“It’s awful that Russia came to us with war. Very awful,” Ivanova said in the video published Thursday.
Ukraine’s center for strategic communications and information security

An elderly Ukrainian woman who became a symbol of support for Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has been located in a Ukrainian hospital and filmed suggesting that her image was co-opted by Russian officials and state-owned media.

The pensioner known as "granny Anya" was last month caught on camera mistakenly greeting Ukrainian soldiers with a Soviet flag. The soldiers took the flag from her, and walked on it.

That original footage went viral in Russia, heavily promoted by state-owned news outlets, and images of "granny Anya" were widely displayed in public spaces. A top Kremlin official who unveiled her statue in the shattered port city of Mariupol this week said he wanted to locate Anya "to thank her and bow to her.”

The Ukrainian government’s center for strategic communications and information security

shared Thursday a video of babushka Anya, whom it identified as Anna Ivanova, and her husband in a hospital in the city of Kharkiv.

“It’s awful that Russia came to us with war. Very awful,” Ivanova said in the footage.

“I was just thinking that I could congratulate the Russians for coming and tell them to stop the destruction and solve their problems peacefully,” she explained.

"Now I ended up a traitor," Ivanova said to the protests of her interviewers behind the camera.

Embed:

> #Ukraine says it’s found “Granny Anya,” the elderly woman now celebrated in Russia for waving a Soviet flag at Ukrainian troops. Anna Ivanovna and her husband are now in Kharkiv after their home came under Russian artillery fire. pic.twitter.com/mrEy7T0KdM
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> — Stratcom Centre UA (@StratcomCentre) May 5, 2022

Asked about her newfound fame among pro-war Russians, Ivanova said: “I wish there was no celebrity and no war.”

Social media footage posted earlier this week showed Ukrainian troops urging Ivanova and her husband to leave their damaged home on the outskirts of Kharkiv.

“Everyone else has left,” a soldier told the couple. “The Russians are 5 kilometers from here, they’re shooting at us and have shot up everything here. We'll call someone to get you out.”

The commander-in-chief of Ukraine’s army Thursday announced Ukrainian counteroffensives against Russian troops around Kharkiv and the neighboring town of Izyum.

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