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Putin Claims Western Intelligence Behind 'Terrorist Attacks' in Occupied Ukraine

April 05, 2023



Vladimir Astapkovich, RIA Novosti / kremlin.ru

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday accused Western intelligence agencies of "regularly" staging "terrorist attacks" in Russia and in Moscow-occupied Ukrainian territories.

"Terrorist attacks targeting government and law enforcement officials, journalists, public figures, teachers of schools and universities are staged regularly," Putin said at a Security Council meeting dedicated to ensuring law and order in four Ukrainian territories he claimed to have annexed last year.

"There is every reason to believe that ... Western intelligence services are involved in the preparation of ... terrorist attacks," he added at the meeting, which was also attended by the Ukrainian regions' Kremlin-installed heads.

In apparent reference to Ukrainian authorities, Putin said that "neo-Nazis and their accomplices were acting" in Russia as well as the annexed Ukrainian territories including the regions of Zaporizhzhia and Kherson.

He did not provide evidence for his claims.

Embed:

> Путин заявил о западном следе в терактах на новых российских территориях:
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> "Задействован потенциал третьих стран - западных спецслужб" pic.twitter.com/1ZGQ9EPMp3
>
> — Кремлевский пул РИА (@Kremlinpool_RIA) April 5, 2023

He also warned that various criminal groups including drug traffickers were seeking to "take advantage" of the current situation.

He reminded officials in attendance that Russian security services and law enforcement units should be established in those areas by June 1.

“The ability of people [in these regions] to return to normal life under Russian laws will depend on how systematically and well it will be executed,” Putin said.

“The vast majority of citizens in the new regions ... stand for unity with Russia,” he claimed. “They must know, see and feel that our entire large country is behind them, and we must do everything to protect them,” he claimed.

AFP contributed reporting.

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