The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Invasion of Ukraine Was ‘God’s Will,’ Putin Says

February 24, 2025



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Russian President Vladimir Putin said Sunday that his decision to invade Ukraine three years ago was part of “God’s will.”

“It was at God’s will that this fate fell upon our shoulders to carry out such a challenging but honorable mission of defending Russia,” Putin told soldiers after a Kremlin ceremony where he awarded them state decorations.

Putin ordered troops into Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022, under the pretext of halting what he called a “genocide” against Russian speakers in eastern Ukraine and “demilitarizing and denazifying” the country.

Since then, Russia has shifted its war goals to capturing territory in southeastern Ukraine. The Kremlin has repeatedly vowed to continue its so-called “special military operation” until “all its goals are met.”

Putin allegedly believes Russia has already achieved its key objectives in Ukraine and has grown increasingly concerned about the war's economic toll at home, anonymous sources familiar with Kremlin thinking told Reuters last month.

The war — the largest conflict in Europe since World War II — has killed tens of thousands of soldiers and civilians, displaced millions of Ukrainians and devastated cities across the country's south and east.

In Russia, anti-war protests have been criminalized, with activists jailed, forced underground or driven into exile.

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