

# Zelensky Urges Europe to Unite Behind Ukraine, 3 Years After Bucha Massacre

By [AFP](#)

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Bucha **UKRAINIAN PRESIDENTIAL PRESS SERVICE / AFP**

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Monday visited Bucha, where Russia's army is accused of murdering hundreds of civilians three years ago, urging European allies to unite to prevent fresh massacres.

Following Russia's retreat from the Kyiv suburb of Bucha after a month-long occupation ending March 31, 2022, AFP journalists saw the bodies of at least 20 civilians lying on a street after being shot dead, some with hands tied behind their backs.

It was the first in a string of macabre discoveries in towns abandoned by Russian forces, which sparked an international outcry and war crimes investigations. Moscow has denied responsibility, accusing Ukraine of staging incidents.

"Please remember that Bucha is not 'somewhere in Ukraine'; it is something that can happen

in any European country if our unity does not work now to genuinely hold Russia accountable for this war," Zelensky said at a ceremony.

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He and his wife Olena placed candles at memorial sites at a ceremony attended by parliamentary speakers from European countries including the speaker of the House of Commons, Lindsay Hoyle.

Officials held a minute's silence in memory of civilians killed by Russia's forces.

Ukrainian authorities have opened more than 180,000 war crimes investigations, Zelensky said, pinning hopes on the International Criminal Court to bring the most high-level criminals to justice.

As the US administration tries to broker a ceasefire and eventual peace deal between Russia and Ukraine, Zelensky said his country wanted to end the war with "guaranteed security, which is very important, with lasting peace and with dignity".

He also cautioned against lifting the sanctions imposed on Russia over its invasion, saying Moscow should not "benefit" from the war.

"Pressure on Russia and sanctions against it are necessary to ensure that the war and abuse do not expand further," he said.

Russia has made a deal on halting strikes in the Black Sea conditional on the lifting of sanctions on its financial institutions involved in food exports.

The United States has said it will help restore Russia's access to the world market for its agricultural and fertiliser exports.

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