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Pro-Russian Communists Unveil First Stalin Monument in Occupied Ukraine

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Communist party members pose in front of the new Stalin monument in Melitpol. **@kprfmelitopol76 / Telegram**

Members of Russia's Communist Party on Thursday erected a bust of Soviet dictator Josef Stalin in the Moscow-controlled Ukrainian city of Melitopol.

It is the first Stalin monument in Russian-occupied Ukraine, according to the party's branch in the Zaporizhzhia region.

Photos and videos shared by one of the party leaders showed a group of adults carrying Soviet flags and children wearing socialist neckerchiefs and caps at the unveiling ceremony.

"For the fatherland, for Stalin, hoorah!" Taras Genov, who heads the Russian Communist Party branch in the Zaporizhzhia region, was heard cheering in one of the videos.

He said donations by residents of Melitopol helped finance the monument's construction and installation at the city's Alley of Heroes.

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Melitopol, which had a pre-war population of around 150,000 people, was captured soon after Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022.

It remains the largest city in the Zaporizhzhia region under Russia's control. Zaporizhzhia is one of four Ukrainian regions that Russia claimed to have annexed in the fall of 2022 despite not having full control over them.

Stalin's image has seen a gradual restoration in Russia in recent years despite the widespread atrocities committed during his rule.

There are 120 Stalin monuments in Russian cities, 105 of which have been erected in the 25 years of President Vladimir Putin's rule, according to estimates by the exiled news outlet Mozhem Obyasnit.

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