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Yanukovych Criticizes EU and Ukraine's NATO Ambitions in Rare Video Appearance

By AFP

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Viktor Yanukovych. **Vladimir Gerdo / TASS**

Former Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych made a rare appearance in Russian state media on Monday, accusing the European Union of "arrogance" in negotiations with Kyiv before he was ousted from power in 2014.

Yanukovych, a Kremlin ally who fled to Russia after security forces killed dozens of demonstrators during pro-EU protests in Kyiv, told state-run outlets that Brussels failed to account for Ukraine's economic difficulties.

"They did not show understanding of the complexity of the economic situation in Ukraine. I will say it bluntly — they were arrogant," Yanukovych said in a video released by RIA Novosti.

He also warned that Ukraine's NATO accession would be "a direct path to civil war,"

reiterating his long-standing opposition to membership in the alliance.

Russian outlets did not specify when or where the video was recorded. Independent media noted it was Yanukovych's first public appearance since Moscow launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

Yanukovych was impeached by the Ukrainian parliament after the 2014 Maidan protests and sentenced in absentia to 13 years in prison for treason in 2019. President Volodymyr Zelensky stripped him of his Ukrainian citizenship last year.

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