The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Ukraine War Is "Killing Russia" – Rutte to MT

By Charlie Hancock

February 14, 2026



NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte speaks during a press conference on the sidelines of a NATO defense ministers' meeting in Brussels, on Feb. 12. **John Thys / AFP**

MUNICH, Germany — The Russian people should know that the war is destroying their country and should do everything they can to stop it, NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte told The Moscow Times.

Speaking on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference, the former Dutch prime minister discussed what the Russian people should know about their country's leadership and place in the world as the Kremlin further restricts their access to the global information ecosystem by blocking Telegram and WhatsApp.

"In December, they lost 35,000 of their own men, and in January — 30,000," he said, pointing to figures that Western officials say show that more Russians were killed in Ukraine than were recruited to fight in the same period.

Related article: Next Round of Ukraine Talks Set for Next Week in Switzerland, Kremlin Says

These casualties "do not come from Moscow and St. Petersburg, so the elite may not immediately experience this," Rutte said. "But this will come soon, because at this [rate] of so many people dying in action, it's unavoidable that it will also reach Moscow and St. Petersburg.

"I would say, 'Do everything you can to stop this, because it is killing Russia. It is so bad for Russia'," he said.

The conference took place the day after NATO defense ministers met in Brussels and announced another package of $500 million in military aid to Ukraine through the Prioritized Ukrainian Requirements List (PURL), which allows countries to buy U.S. weapons for Ukraine.

The figure included over $200 million from Britain to buy air defense missiles, as Russia continues targeting Ukraine's cities and energy infrastructure.

On the main stage at Munich, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky thanked the U.S. and European countries for their support and said Ukraine was ready to strike a peace deal.

But he said that while Ukraine was willing to make concessions, he saw no evidence that Russia would.

Several speakers at the conference, including U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, openly doubted whether there was clear evidence Russia wanted to end the war.

In remarks to journalists ahead of his meeting with Rubio, Zelensky said he believed that Russia's only goal in invading his country was its total occupation and it was a mistake to believe that ceding the Donbas to Russia would bring peace.

Related article: Up to Each European Country to Decide on Re-Engaging With Russia, Rutte Says

Not only does how the war ends look unclear, but so does the relationship Russia will have with the rest of the world.

"I'm afraid under the current leadership of Russia, a return to normal relations with the West is unlikely," Polish Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski told The Moscow Times on Friday. "Colonial wars, if you look historically, are only ended by a different team than started them."

"Let's have a peace deal first and then see what happens after that," Rutte said. "But for NATO, it's clear as we see things now, Russia is a long term threat to the whole of NATO's territory."

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2026/02/14/ukraine-war-is-killing-russia-rutte-to-mt-a91953