The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Director Zvyagintsev Denounces Ukraine War ‘Carnage' at Cannes Awards

By AFP

May 24, 2026



Russian director and screenwriter Andrey Zvyagintsev celebrates on stage after winning the Grand Prix Award for the film "Minotaur" during the closing ceremony of the 79th edition of the Cannes Film Festival in Cannes, southern France, on May 23, 2026. **Sameer AL-DOUMY / AFP**

Acclaimed Russian director Andrey Zvyagintsev urged President Vladimir Putin to end the “carnage” in Ukraine on Saturday after his new movie set during the war came runner-up at the Cannes Film Festival.

“Millions of people on both sides of the line of contact now dream of only one thing: that the massacres finally stop,” he said in his acceptance speech at the awards ceremony in Cannes.

“And the only person who can put an end to this meat grinder is you... put a stop to this carnage, the whole world is waiting for this.”

Zvyagintsev's “Minotaur” was among the frontrunners for the Palme d'Or top prize for best

film in Cannes, finishing with the second-place Grand Prix award behind “Fjord” by Romanian director Cristian Mungiu.

The first movie in nine years from the Russian director of “Leviathan” and “Loveless” is set against the backdrop of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

It focuses on a callous businessman who must deal with a marital crisis at the same time as requests from local officials to identify employees who can be enrolled in the army.

“It is absolutely awful for me to acknowledge what Russia is doing in Ukraine. Before you now, I can tell you that I am ashamed,” he told reporters during a post-awards press conference.

Zvyagintsev, who now lives in exile in France, told AFP this week that he did not expect his film to be released in his homeland but that many Russians would watch it on pirated copies or by using VPNs.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2026/05/24/russian-director-zvyagintsev-denounces-ukraine-war-carnage-at-cannes-awards-a92830