The Moscow Times
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Kremlin Rejects Film Director Zvyagintsev's Anti-War Appeal to Putin

By AFP

May 25, 2026



Russian director and screenwriter Andrey Zvyagintsev. **Anna Kurth / AFP**

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Monday that he will not pass on Russian film director Andrey Zvyagintsev's anti-war message to President Vladimir Putin.

Zvyagintsev used his acceptance speech for the Cannes Film Festival's prestigious runner-up Grand Prix award this weekend to denounce the 2022 invasion of Ukraine. Addressing Putin directly, the director called him the "only person" capable of ending the war.

Asked Monday whether the director's message had been or would be relayed to the Russian leader, Peskov flatly rejected the idea.

"I, for one, will not do it," Peskov told reporters at a daily briefing. "I do not think that anyone else will do it."

Peskov said Zvyagintsev did "not have the right" to issue anti-war statements since he

apparently has not condemned Ukrainian attacks on the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine, which Russia says it annexed in September 2022.

Zvyagintsev's latest feature film, "Minotaur," chronicles life inside wartime Russia by following a provincial businessman whose marriage is collapsing while he is simultaneously forced to choose which of his employees to send to the front lines in Ukraine.

Related article: Russian Director Zvyagintsev Denounces Ukraine War 'Carnage' at Cannes Awards

During his acceptance speech in France, Zvyagintsev acknowledged that Putin would likely not be watching, but voiced hope that his anti-war message would make its way to the Russian president through official channels.

"There are people in his entourage who know how to pass these words on to him," Zvyagintsev said. "Millions of people from both sides of the front line are dreaming just of one thing: for the massacres to stop."

"The only person who can put an end to this meat grinder is you," the director said, addressing Putin. "Put a stop to this carnage. The whole world is waiting for this."

Last week, the Kremlin said it was too early to determine whether "Minotaur" would be granted a screening license in Russia.

Zvyagintsev said he believes Russians who want to see the film will easily find ways to watch it online even if it does not receive permission to show in theaters.

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