

Key Takeaways:

- **Zelensky does not imminently risk losing all of Ukraine.**
- **Most Ukrainian cities have not been destroyed.**
- **Ukrainian law prohibits holding elections in wartime (unlike the US Constitution, which requires it).**
- **Ukraine has not suffered millions of losses.**
- **Europe provides about as much direct aid to Ukraine as the United States.**
- **European loans to Ukraine are backed by income from frozen Russian assets, not Ukraine.**
- **Ukraine did not misuse or lose half of the aid the United States has provided.**
- **Ukraine repeatedly invited Putin to negotiate in early 2022.**

Zelensky does not imminently risk losing all of Ukraine.

- Russian forces currently occupy around 20 percent of Ukraine, leaving the remaining 80 percent of the country under Ukraine's sovereign control.
- At the current rate of advance, it would take Russian forces over 83 years to capture the remaining 80 percent of Ukraine, assuming that they can sustain massive personnel losses indefinitely.
 - Russia's rate of advance on the frontline has slowed significantly over the past three months.¹
 - Russian forces are making small territorial gains at the cost of massive personnel losses.²
 - Russian forces advanced at an average rate of 27.94 square kilometers per day in November 2024, 18.1 square kilometers per day in December 2024, and 16.1 square kilometers per day in January 2025.³

Most Ukrainian cities have not been destroyed.

- Many of Ukraine's largest cities, including Kyiv, Lviv, Dnipro, and Odesa, have avoided destruction and continue to function. Russia has leveled some Ukrainian cities as it has attacked and occupied them, such as Mariupol.⁴ Cities throughout the 80 percent of Ukraine that Russian forces have not occupied have remained largely intact during Russia's invasion, apart from deliberate Russian strikes against critical and civilian infrastructure.⁵

Ukrainian law prohibits holding elections in wartime (unlike the US Constitution, which requires it).

- Ukraine's Constitution prevents the Ukrainian government from holding elections or amending the constitution in times of martial law.⁶
 - Russia triggered Ukraine's martial law provisions when it launched its illegal invasion of Ukraine.
 - The Ukrainian government cannot constitutionally suspend martial law while Russia continues to attack Ukraine.
 - Ukrainian opposition politicians, including those who have historically run against Zelensky, have stated that holding elections under martial law would be both illegal and immoral.⁷

Ukraine has not suffered millions of losses.

- Ukraine has not suffered "millions" of losses by any reliable estimate, either in terms of civilian or military casualties.
 - Zelensky stated on February 16, 2025, that Russia has killed 46,000 Ukrainian soldiers since the start of the full-scale invasion, and that Ukraine has suffered over 390,000 soldiers wounded in action.⁸
 - US officials have placed the number of Ukrainian military losses between 60,000 and 70,000, but no reputable source places casualty estimates near or in the millions.⁹
 - The UN confirmed that Russia had killed over 12,000 Ukrainian civilians as of the end of 2024.¹⁰

Europe provides about as much direct aid to Ukraine as the United States.

Europe (including European Union [EU] members and EU institutions plus Norway and the UK) has overtaken the United States in terms of cumulative direct (military and non-military) aid allocations to Ukraine (not counting the costs of US forces forward-deployed in Eastern Europe).¹¹

- Europe has provided Ukraine with a total of \$166 billion in cumulative aid and pledged an additional \$34.7 billion to be allocated through 2030.¹²
- Europe has provided and pledged approximately \$204.1 billion in all — over \$174 billion from the EU, \$13.9 billion from Norway, and \$16.2 billion from the UK — compared to America's \$183 billion.¹³
- These figures do not include the EU and G7 commitments to provide loans to Ukraine financed by income generated from frozen Russian assets.

European loans to Ukraine are backed by income from frozen Russian assets, not Ukraine.

The EU is contributing \$20 billion in loans to Ukraine that are backed by extraordinary revenues from immobilized Russian sovereign assets, not Ukraine.¹⁴

- The EU holds approximately \$220.5 billion in Russian frozen assets.¹⁵

- The EU has already made available \$1.6 billion for Ukraine from immobilized Russian assets and disbursed \$3.2 billion in loans in January 2025.

Ukraine did not misuse or lose half of the aid the United States has provided.

- The majority of the funds the United States has allocated for Ukraine stays in the United States to fund domestic defense industrial base and replenish US stockpiles.¹⁶
- US government agencies closely oversee the remaining US aid, which is directly issued to Ukraine. The US Department of Defense (DoD) Office of the Inspector General reported on January 11, 2024, that it had found no evidence of misappropriated aid.¹⁷

Ukraine repeatedly invited Putin to negotiate in early 2022.

- Zelensky proposed to meet with Putin on February 19, 2022 — just five days before Russia launched its full-scale invasion.¹⁸ Putin ignored this request and invaded Ukraine on February 24, 2022.¹⁹
- Zelensky called for direct talks with Putin "in any format" in March 2022 and offered to compromise on Ukraine's accession into NATO.²⁰ The Russians demanded the full surrender and demilitarization of Ukraine.²¹
- Zelensky also expressed openness to discussing the status of occupied Ukrainian territories on the condition that the Ukrainian people would ratify any deal through a referendum.²² Putin rejected that offer as well.

End Notes

¹ <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-february-3-2025>

² <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-december-31-2024>

³ <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-december-31-2024>;
<https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-february-3-2025>

⁴ <https://www.hrw.org/feature/russia-ukraine-war-mariupol>

⁵ <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/russia-resumes-bombing-campaign-of-ukraines-civilian-energy-infrastructure/>

⁶ <https://www.president.gov.ua/ua/documents/constitution/konstituciya-ukrayini-rozdil-v> ;
<https://unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/hlm/prgm/cph/experts/ukraine/ukr.constitution.e.pdf>

⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/YuliaTymoshenko/posts/pfbidofzCcBwxsPBwPMunsW4durKurTWf2cieMHBhtrWzdsac4kAZaizXJ3eNbaojn8bRsl>; <https://www.politico.eu/article/donald-trump-volodymyr-zelenskyy-president-ukraine-russia-war-white-house/>; https://x.com/iaponomarenko/status/1892538509031837920?s=46&t=byfUkXblQx4o_XnoLTu-sg
⁸ <https://www.the-independent.com/news/world/europe/ukrainian-soldiers-killed-russia-putin-zelensky-b2699903.html>

⁹ <https://www.the-independent.com/news/world/europe/ukrainian-soldiers-killed-russia-putin-zelensky-b2699903.html>

¹⁰ <https://press.un.org/en/2024/sc15952.doc.htm>

¹¹ <https://www.ifw-kiel.de/publications/news/ukraine-support-after-3-years-of-war-aid-flows-remain-low-but-steady-shift-towards-weapons-procurement/>

¹² https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/united-states-america/eu-assistance-ukraine-us-dollars_en?s=253;

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-support-to-ukraine-factsheet/uk-support-to-ukraine-factsheet>;

https://www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/foreign-affairs/humanitarian-efforts/neighbour_support/id2908141/

¹³ <https://www.ukraineoversight.gov/Funding/>; https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/united-states-america/eu-assistance-ukraine-us-dollars_en?s=253; <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-support-to-ukraine-factsheet/uk-support-to-ukraine-factsheet>; https://www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/foreign-affairs/humanitarian-efforts/neighbour_support/id2908141/

¹⁴ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/united-states-america/eu-assistance-ukraine-us-dollars_en?s=253

¹⁵ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions-against-russia/sanctions-against-russia-explained/>

¹⁶ <https://www.csis.org/analysis/aid-ukraine-administration-requests-more-money-and-faces-political-battles-ahead> ;

<https://united24media.com/anti-fake/how-us-aid-for-ukraine-actually-boosts-americas-economy-4>;

<https://breakingdefense.com/2023/10/most-aid-to-ukraine-is-spent-in-the-us-a-total-shutdown-would-be-irresponsible/>;

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<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2023/11/29/ukraine-military-aid-american-economy-boost/>

¹⁷ https://media.defense.gov/2024/Jan/11/2003374323/-1/-1/1/DODIG-2024-043-EEMU_REDACTED%20SECURE.PDF

¹⁸ <https://www.npr.org/2022/02/19/1081952588/russia-ukraine-harris-sanctions>

¹⁹ <http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67843>

²⁰ <https://www.dw.com/en/ukraines-zelenskyy-asks-putin-for-direct-talks-as-it-happened/a-60993269>;

<https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2022/03/21/7333439/>

²¹ <https://www.wsj.com/world/russia-ukraine-peace-deal-2022-document-6e12e093>;

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/exclusive-war-began-putin-rejected-ukraine-peace-deal-recommended-by-his-aide-2022-09-14/>

²² <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/mar/28/zelenskiy-hails-upcoming-ukraine-russia-peace-talks-amid-fallout-from-biden-comments-on-putin>