

EUROPE

President Zelenskyy Bans Opposition Parties in Ukraine

On Sunday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy announced a ban on at least 11 opposition parties under the guise that they have links to Russia. This amounts to censorship, and is stirring up even more Russophobia.

Juan Andrés Gallardo | March 21, 2022



In a video released in the early hours of Sunday morning, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy reported that the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine had decided to suspend the activities of at least eleven opposition parties. These include The Opposition Platform for Life, Shariy Party, Nashi, Opposition Bloc, Left Opposition, Union of Left Forces, State, Progressive Socialist Party of Ukraine, Socialist Party of Ukraine, Socialists Party, and Volodymyr Saldo Bloc, among others.

Zelenskyy claims that these parties have ties to Russia, and said, “Any activity of politicians aimed at splitting or collaborating will not succeed.” His move amounts to censorship of the political opposition, and stirs up both Ukrainian nationalism and Russiaphobia, both of which have increased in recent years, especially since the beginning of the war and in particular under the influence of far-right and neo-Nazi organizations like the Azov Battalion.

“Given the full-scale war waged by the Russian Federation and the ties of some political structures with this state, any activity of a number of political parties during the martial law is suspended,” Zelenskyy argued. The Ministry of Justice has been instructed to “immediately take comprehensive measures to prohibit the activities of these political parties in the prescribed manner,” he added. In Ukraine, martial law was declared on February 24, the day the Russian invasion began.

Zelenskyy, who is the founder and leader of the Servant of the People party, stated that “now everyone must look after the interests of our State.” He continued, “I want to remind all politicians from any camp: wartime shows very well the meanness of personal ambitions of those who try to put their own ambitions, their own party or career above the interests of the state, the interests of the people.”

Zelenskyy’s new policy comes as talks between Russia and Ukraine stalled after a potential 14-point agreement was announced last week, and Russian troops continue advancing and attacking several cities, particularly in the east and south of Ukraine.

The magnitude of this political censorship and persecution is serious. For instance, one of the banned parties, the Opposition Platform for Life, has 10 percent of the seats in the Supreme Council, Ukraine’s unicameral parliament.

Zelenskyy’s real objective is to do away with all political opposition, regardless of whether or not it has verifiable links to Moscow. The regime’s aim is to ban and persecute all those who question the government’s nationalist and pro-Western policies. That is why the parties targeted by Zelenskyy range from those who refuse Ukraine’s accession to NATO or the European Union, to all parties that have any kind of leftist, center-left, or even socialist connotation, even as part of their name.

The ban on these political parties represents a repressive domestic policy against any kind of opposition. The move is a direct alignment with the nationalist and extreme right forces that are stirring up an increasingly strong anti-Russian sentiment. This is stoking hatred towards the Russian-speaking population, which makes up 30 percent of the country’s inhabitants. In fact the Secretary of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine himself, Oleksiy Danilov, wrote on his Facebook account: “This decision will be impossible for the actions of those cooperative politicians who throughout their activities confess the Russian position and share the fascist ideology of the ‘Russian world.’”

“There is an external enemy and there are representatives of it in the country,” he concluded. “This fifth column must cease to exist.” Danilov’s comments put the life of any political opponent at risk.

In the face of Putin's reactionary invasion of Ukraine, the Western media have portrayed Zelenskyy as a hero, democrat, conciliator, and pacifist. Their objective has been, among other things, to contrast him with the Putinist autocracy which, for years, has been proscribing and persecuting the opposition and today imprisons thousands of Russians who protest the war. The decision to ban and persecute the opposition inside Ukraine begins to cast doubt on the image of Zelenskyy invented by the media.

Originally published in Spanish on March 21 in [La Izquierda Diario](#).

Translated by Sou Mi

 [Russia](#) | [Ukraine](#) |



Juan Andrés Gallardo

Juan is a journalist from Buenos Aires and the editor of the international section of our Argentinian sister site [La Izquierda Diario](#).

[Twitter](#)

EUROPE



Rishi Sunak: Banker to the Rescue of a Declining Empire

MOST RECENT



The Supreme Court Is the Opposite of Democracy

Nathaniel Flakin | December 21, 2022



SIGN UP FOR OUR NEWSLETTER

Left Voice 2021 | All rights reserved