



RUSSIA REFORM MONITOR

The American Foreign Policy Council's Review of
Russian Government Actions and U.S. Policy

Russia Reform Monitor No. 2545

November 16, 2022 **Ilan I. Berman, Sydney Duckor, Brent Cagen**

Related Categories: Democracy and Governance; Economic Sanctions; Human Rights and Humanitarian Issues; Public Diplomacy and Information Operations; Warfare; Russia; Ukraine

A FRAMEWORK FOR REBUILDING UKRAINE

Although the war in Ukraine continues to rage, growing attention is now being paid to what a plan for reconstruction in the wake of the conflict might look like. In September, Ukrainian Justice Minister Denys Maliuska indicated that his government was planning to seek at least \$300 billion in war reparations from the Kremlin for its military aggression – a figure that roughly corresponds to the known assets held by the Central Bank of Russia. However, experts have estimated that the true cost of any reconstruction effort would run significantly higher. More fundamentally, there is currently no agreed-upon framework to implement (and enforce) such reparations.

Erecting such a mechanism is the subject of a new policy paper from the Washington-based Newlines Institute for Policy and Strategy. The October 2022 study, titled "Multilateral Action Model on Reparations," makes the case that "in order to ensure just and orderly payment of reparations and compensation... states supportive of Ukraine establish by treaty or similar instrument a means to provide for the identification, freezing, and seizing of Russian assets, and the establishment of an international Ukrainian Compensation Commission, to identify claims and make payments."

"Through its war of aggression, Russia seeks to erase Ukraine from the map and destroy its people and culture," the paper argues. "The violations of international law and disruption of geopolitical order entailed by Russia's aggression are so extreme that they require remedies *in extremis*." Such remedies, the study details, "would involve taking Russian assets and holding them in a fund to be distributed to Ukraine and Ukrainians injured by Russian state action."

Doing so, though a radical step, is justified under international law, the authors say. Moreover, it can serve as a potent hedge against future such actions, whether by Russia or other nations. "In such an extreme case as Russia's war against Ukraine, the identification, freezing, seizure, and transfer of Russian assets are justified in international law. Action is legally justified to provide reparations and compensation," the study argues. "It is also justified as a means to deter any other state from seeking to begin such a war of aggression." (*Odessa Journal*, September 12, 2022; Newlines Institute, October 2022)

TEACHING RUSSIAN STUDENTS THE WORLD ACCORDING TO MOSCOW

In an effort to counter perceived "U.S. and Western domination," Russian President Vladimir Putin and his inner circle are intensifying their efforts to inject pro-government propaganda into university curricula. The practice is borrowed from the USSR, where a course on "Scientific Communism" was required to complete one's university degree, but Putin's government has a more comprehensive indoctrination in mind. At the public school level, a module titled "Conversations About What Matters" has already emerged, aimed at teaching Russian children that the government's invasion of Ukraine was necessary because "the Ukrainian 'nationalists'... left it no choice."

This practice is now moving to Russia's institutions of higher learning, where the Kremlin is pushing an entire program of required courses for all students, especially those studying history and political science. The ideological curriculum, which is overseen by Sergey Kiriienko, the first deputy head of the Russian Presidential Administration, will include four distinct modules, encompassing "history," Russia's "cultural code," "Russia and the world," and "envisioning the future." While the contents of these modules are still unknown, each is being developed by key nationalists and loyalists – including former Minister of Culture Vladimir Medvedev, prominent political scientist Sergey Karaganov and Mikhail Kovalchuk, head of Russia's leading nuclear laboratory, the Kurchatov Institute. (*Meduza*, October 25, 2022)

THE ULTIMATE PENALTY FOR RUSSIAN DESERTERS

Amid low troop morale and mounting battlefield losses, desertions from the Russian military have become so pervasive that the Kremlin is resorting to drastic measures. Some troops are now reportedly being tasked not only with prosecuting the fight in Ukraine, but also with targeting any fellow soldiers that try to escape. Since the start of the war, there have been many reports of Russian troops abandoning their posts, either surrendering outright to the Ukrainian side or retreating back to Russia. Since Russian President Vladimir Putin's September "partial mobilization" order, the Russian military has enacted a new battlefield formation, whereby front-line troops are moved back to the second line (with troops consisting of former prisoners replacing them), where they wait in trenches and act as a "retreat-blocking detachment." These troops are then ordered to shoot any fellow soldiers who fall back from the front line. (*The Daily Beast*, October 27, 2022)