



Ukraine Reform Monitor No. 9

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Related Categories: Democracy and Governance; Europe Military; International Economics and Trade; Military Innovation; Science and Technology; Warfare; Russia; Ukraine

UKRAINE'S REGIONS SHED THEIR SOVIET PAST

Maksym Kozytskyi, the governor of Ukraine's Lviv region, announced at the end of January that all monuments in his region with connections to Soviet rule have been removed, making Lviv the first part of Ukraine to do so. As part of a campaign that began in 2014, following the ouster of the country's then-president, the Kremlin-friendly Viktor Yanukovich, the Lviv region successfully removed over 300 Soviet-era monuments last year alone. Kozytskyi made a point of noting that "not a kopek" from public coffers was spent on the removal of these monuments. Rather, he pointed out, activists and local residents have taken that duty upon themselves.

Lviv's progress is part of a larger trend. Over the past decade, numerous street and settlement names throughout the country have been altered in an effort to reclaim national identity and distance the country from its historic connections with Russia. In Kharkiv, for example, the city's mayor has put forth a proposal to change the name of the main street in the city, currently named after Russian poet Alexander Pushkin, to that of a Ukrainian philosopher. In Kyiv, meanwhile, city authorities took down a statue of a Red Army commander on a prominent street last December. (Reuters, January 30, 2024)

THE GROWING PRICE TAG FOR UKRAINIAN RECONSTRUCTION

Just how much will it cost to rebuild Ukraine? Estimates of the projected costs have varied widely (and grown) as Russia's full-scale invasion has progressed, but the general consensus has been that the financial burden involved in reconstructing Ukrainian infrastructure once the current conflict inevitably draws to a close will be steep. Now, a new assessment by the United Nations has given the international community a better sense of just how large of an economic challenge building Ukraine back will actually be.

Based on updated data, the UN now projects that reconstruction and recovery in Ukraine will cost \$486 billion over the coming decade, with the highest areas of expenditure allocated to housing (an estimated 17%), transport, commerce and industry, agriculture and energy (under 10% apiece). Just the cost of clearing away the debris caused by Russia's massive bombardment of Ukrainian cities and its military's destruction of infrastructure will be almost \$11 billion, the UN assessment predicts. For their part, Ukrainian authorities are estimating that \$15 billion will be needed this year alone for immediate reconstruction and recovery priorities throughout the country. (un.org, February 15, 2024)

KYIV'S DEFENSE CHIEF DOUBLES DOWN

As Ukraine enters a new, and grave, phase of its struggle against Russia against the backdrop of declining Western support, officials in Kyiv are doubling down on anti-corruption as an element of national defense. "Corruption during war is worse for me than terrorism. There will be no negotiations with those who steal from our soldiers and our society," Defense Minister Rustem Umerov warned in a recent public speech in Kyiv. Umerov's Ministry is at the forefront of anti-corruption measures, he noted, having already uncovered "violations worth tens of millions of hryvnias" that have adversely affected supplies for and the performance of the Ukrainian military. "We continue to work with the Security Service of Ukraine, the Prosecutor General's Office, the State Bureau of Investigation, and the NABU (National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine) to identify corruption schemes in the Defense Forces," Umerov laid out. (*Kyiv Independent*, February 25, 2024)

GETTING THE RAILWAYS BACK ON TRACK

The former head of Ukrainian Railways, Yevhen Kravtsov, has been formally charged by authorities for his role in the embezzlement of 11.4 million hryvnias (some \$300,000) several years ago. The scheme, uncovered last month by NABU and the country's Specialized Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office, involved a group of businessmen and corrupt officials gaining control of the utility's commodity and cash flows late last decade. Between 2018 and 2021, Ukrainian Railways officials ordered products at inflated prices, pocketing the difference. Kravtsov served as acting chairman of Ukrainian Railways between August 2017 and January 2019, and subsequently as chairman from January-December 2019. (*Kyiv Independent*, February 28, 2024)