

# Zelenskyy Says Russians Are Carrying Cremation Chambers Into Ukraine

The Ukrainian leader alleged that the chambers are to dispose of Russian troops who have been killed, thereby obscuring the true number of casualties.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Thursday that Russian troops are lugging mobile cremation chambers with them as they continue their assault across the country, allegedly to dispose of their own dead and obscure the true number of casualties they've incurred.

"These guys are carrying those cremation chambers for themselves," Zelenskyy said at a press conference with reporters in Kyiv where he lamented that young Russian soldiers are being used as "cannon fodder."

"It's inhumane," he said.

Zelenskyy said a large number of Russians are believed to have died in the conflict so far, but he alleged that no one is keeping track.

Russian President Vladimir Putin amassed around 150,000 troops to support the conflict, according to the Pentagon. Most have been deployed.

"No one is counting them. No one cares how many die in the shellings," Zelenskyy said.

"They knew in advance they were not going to show to their families, to their mothers, what happened to their children, that they died here," he went on. "They came here to kill us, and we are defending our freedom and our homes, and that's why they're dying. We don't want to kill them."

In the eight days since the invasion began, people on social media have circulated graphic photos and videos of dead Russian soldiers [apparently abandoned](#) on the sides of roads.

The Telegraph previously [reported](#) that mobile crematoriums were expected to be used on the battlefield, citing U.K. Defense Secretary Ben Wallace.

Putin pledged Thursday to grant the families of fallen soldiers 5 million rubles — around \$50,000 — in what The New York Times [said was the first time](#) Putin publicly acknowledged that Russians have died in the war.

The Russian leader also sought to downplay widespread reports that the Ukrainians have put up a much stronger defense than he'd anticipated, claiming that the "special military operation in Ukraine" is "going strictly according to the schedule just as it has been planned."

The Russian Defense Ministry on Wednesday [announced](#) that nearly 500 of its soldiers have been killed and another 1,600 injured, although [Western estimates are significantly higher](#). Ukraine says its fighters have killed more than 5,000 Russian troops. An American official told The New York Times the figure is more like 2,000.

Russia reportedly took control of the Ukrainian port city Kherson this week — the first major city to be taken over.

But according to the Pentagon, and scattered [reports](#), the Russian military is facing a serious morale problem made worse by food shortages. Some Russian troops are sabotaging their own military vehicles and laying down arms, [according to the Pentagon](#), in order to avoid fighting a war that Russian authorities have baselessly described as a mission to liberate oppressed Ukrainians.