

Unofficial translation

**Regarding the Situation with the Desecration and Destruction
of Monuments Dedicated to Those Who Fought against Nazism
in the Years of World War II**

Report by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
of the Russian Federation

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Introduction

Since the end of the World War II, approximately 4,000 monuments to Soviet soldiers have been raised in Europe. A total of more than one million Red Army soldiers are buried in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. In general, the peoples of the USSR and Europe paid a much higher price for the Victory over Nazism, measured in tens of millions of lives.

As a reminder: the Soviet army, besides, of course, the territory of the Soviet Union, including its constituent republics, liberated Bulgaria, Poland, Czechoslovakia (today there are two separate States – the Czech Republic and Slovakia), Hungary, Austria (the eastern part of the country and Vienna), Romania, Yugoslavia and a number of other European countries from Nazism. Most of the Soviet monuments are installed exactly in these countries. There are also monuments to the Soviet soldier in Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Finland, and France.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, many memorials were located in the territories of Russia's neighbouring countries that were established in the

territory of former Soviet republics. The political course to revive of Nazism and the rewriting of history set in a number of these countries have had a strong impact on the memorial heritage of the Great Patriotic War.

"Decommunization", the destruction of monuments to our common history and culture, the desecration of the graves of fallen Soviet soldiers, neo-Nazi torch marches, the glorification of Nazis and their collaborators, the physical elimination of ideological opponents – many of these manifestations, and often all of them at once, have become commonplace in Ukraine, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, as well as in Poland, the Czech Republic and a number of other European countries. Namely these countries have become the "subjects" of this report. Under the guise of laws on "decommunization" and by demolishing monuments to Soviet soldiers, the governments of these countries are trying to "reinforce an anti-Russian front". At the same time, monuments to Nazi criminals are raised, they legally protected and rare actions by activists against monuments to Nazis are severely prosecuted. The key objective of such steps is the complete cleansing of historical memory.

This report has been prepared as part of the work of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation to draw attention to the manifestations in foreign countries of various forms of glorification of the Nazi movement, neo-Nazism, racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance.

The report is devoted to the actions of certain States, primarily the Baltic States, Poland and Ukraine, which, using Russia's Special Military Operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine and protect the peaceful population of Donbass as a pretext, have dramatically increased the scale of their long-standing practice of destroying Soviet, Russian, and often their own, memorial heritage in their territory. To this end, the relevant legislative framework has already been drawn up and gets even more extensive.

In terms of content, this document is based on the provisions of the UN General Assembly thematic resolution "Combating the glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance". The resolution stresses, inter alia, that the General Assembly expresses its deep concern at the increasing attempts and incidents of desecration or destruction of monuments erected in honour of those who fought against Nazism during the World War II, as well as the unlawful exhumation or removal of their remains; strongly condemns incidents involving the glorification and propaganda of Nazism, such as the acts of drawing of pro-Nazi graffiti and drawings, including on monuments to the victims of the World War II.

As part of the efforts to affirm the Victory as the common heritage of the UN Member States and to prevent the destruction or desecration of monuments and memorials to those who fought Nazism in accordance with the provisions of the said UN General Assembly resolution, this report focuses on the policies of the above-mentioned European countries with regard to monuments and memorials dedicated to the Red Army soldiers who liberated Europe from the Brown Plague, anti-Nazi soldiers and members of the Resistance Movement, and their safeguarding.

Bulgaria

The fight against monuments to Soviet soldiers unleashed by the country's political establishment is alarming. The most blatant manifestation of the cynical policy of Bulgaria's current leadership was the dismantling of the Soviet Army monument in Sofia in December 2023 under the pretext of the need for its "urgent restoration" and in defiance of the decisions of the Sofia City Court. Most of the representatives of the parties in power (Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria, Continuing Change, Democratic Bulgaria and Movement for Rights and Freedoms) favoured the destruction of the monument, emphasizing that "a symbol of communist occupation" has no place in the centre of the capital city. The monument has been desecrated many times before.¹

According to Head of the Sofia region, V. Todeva, the monument is supposed to be moved to the Museum of Art of the Socialist Period after it is repaired, yet no restoration has been carried out so far. The bronze figures, which used to crown the monument, have been cut into pieces and are stored now in open areas without proper supervision.²

In 2022, the Alesha Monument in Plovdiv was also daubed with paint. The graves of soldiers in Dobrich were subjected to hooliganism twice. On the eve of the Victory Day in 2022, the ceramic portraits on the monument to naval officers in Pomorie were shattered, the memorial in Radomir desecrated, wreaths burned on the graves in Pernik, and the plate on the monument to Georgy Zhukov in Strelcha damaged.

Consequences of mockery are promptly cleaned up thanks to efforts of Russophile organizations, anti-Nazi NGOs and the Embassy of Russia in

1 СК возбudit дело после повреждения памятника Советской Армии. РИА Новости. 18 августа 2023 г. <https://ria.ru/20230818/pamyatnik-1890906737.html> [The Investigative Committee to Launch an Investigation after Damage Caused to a Monument to the Soviet Army. RIA Novosti 18 August 2023]

2 "Сто години да стои, пак нищо няма да му стане". Къде са фигурите от съветския паметник. Свободна Европа. 5 March 2024. <https://www.svobodnaevropa.bg/a/32842392.html>

Bulgaria. Vandals, as a rule, manage to escape punishment. Police actions against offenders are often recognized as not complying with the law. For example, the Sofia District Court released marginalized people detained on 25 February 2022, for attempting to write "Save Ukraine" on the Monument to Soviet Army, recognizing the "action" as a form of protest against "Russian aggression in Ukraine" and their arrest as illegal.

On the eve of the Victory Day in 2022, starting from 4 May, a group of individuals sharing anti-Russian sentiments tried to wrap Ukrainian flags around the Monument to Soviet Army and once again daub it with paint and cover it with dirt. Russophiles organized a round-the-clock guarding of the monument to prevent its desecration.

The main Soviet war memorials in Bulgaria have repeatedly fallen victim to vandals earlier. Thus, on the night of 13 January 2020, the police foiled an attempt by two schoolgirls to draw pictures on the Monument to Soviet Army. On the night of 30 January 2020, the side part of Alesha Monument and the exposition with the bas-relief in front of the monument were daubed with red paint and scrawled with the words "we have not forgotten" and "we will not forgive".

On 13 February 2020, an act of vandalism was also recorded during the regular inspection of the mass grave of Soviet soldiers in Sofia's Lozenets district. Two sculptures of soldiers from the bas-relief sculptural group had their noses chipped off and their heads damaged. In May of the same year, on the eve of the Victory Day, Head of the district K. Pavlov proposed to get rid of the entire memorial. He did not give up on this idea after his re-election in 2023.

On the night of 9 April 2020, the monument on the mass grave of 45 Soviet officers and soldiers was attacked by vandals in the city park of Dobrich. On a 7-metre sculpture and a 12-metre pylon, the offenders wrote inscriptions "Death to the USSR", "Death to Russia", "Bulgaria is on its own",

"Death to the occupier", "Death to Aleshas", "Death to communism" and "Enough of self-humiliation" with blue paint.

Overnight of 11 August 2020, the Monument to the Soviet Army in Sofia was desecrated again. Its central memorial plaque "To the Liberating Soviet Army from the Grateful Bulgarian People" was scrawled in black paint with the words "Boyko, Lukashenko, stay away". Two months later, on 13 October, the same plaque was scrawled in black paint with the Nazi SS symbol in the form of a double rune "sig" with the number 700 under it which serves as a designation of the SS Anti-Tank Brigade consisting of 700 Bulgarian volunteers. On 17 February 2021, the mass grave in Lozenets was desecrated again through scrawling various symbols on it.

Overnight on 23 February 2023, a memorial plaque with the inscription "To the Liberating Soviet Army from the Grateful Bulgarian People" on the façade of the Monument to Soviet Army in Sofia was damaged.

On 3 March 2023, the bust of Nikolay Ignatiev in Varna was daubed with white paint.

On 31 March 2023, the Monument to the Soviet Army in Sofia was desecrated. Unidentified individuals daubed the part of monument's façade with red paint and scrawled an inscription "To demolish" on it.

On 25 April 2023, a swastika was sprayed with black paint on the star adorning the façade of the Monument to the Soviet Liberator Soldier in Ruse ("Alesha in Ruse"). The monument was promptly cleaned up by Russian compatriots. The administration of the city self-disengaged from the process. The surveillance cameras installed near the object "did not record anyone".

On 12 May 2023, the inscriptions "We want a Bulgarian monument" and "Decommunization" were painted on the façade group of the Monument to the in Burgas ("Burgas Alyosha").

On 13 May 2023, paint was poured on a plate at the burial place of Soviet servicemen killed during the Great Patriotic War in the town of Bankya (Sofia region).

On 14 May 2023, the sculptural composition of the mass grave of the Red Army soldiers in the Bulgarian capital's Lozenets district was painted with crossed out signs "Z", "X", sickle and hammer, along with the inscription "Death to the occupant".

On 18 August 2023, fans of the Levski soccer club attacked a tent camp set up by Bulgarian citizens to protect the Monument to the Soviet Army in Sofia from demolition. The vandals smashed part of the marble plate with the inscription "To the Liberating Soviet Army from the Grateful Bulgarian People". Smoke bombs and torches were used during the action, a banner that read "To demolish" was stretched. The inscription "We want a Bulgarian monument" was painted on the facade of the monument with black paint.

Overnight on 20 August 2023, unidentified individuals desecrated a monument on the mass grave of 50 Soviet soldiers in Stara Zagora: the hands of the statue of a soldier were covered in red, the letter "Z" was drawn and crossed out on his coat. According to media reports, footage from video cameras in the area of the monument have been handed over to law enforcement authorities for investigation.

On 13 December 2023, the bust of Nikolay Ignatiev in Varna was again covered with white paint, and on 10 January 2024, vandals pushed the bust off the pedestal. On 11 January 2024, the police detained a 45-year-old man suspected of committing acts of hooliganism. On 19 January 2024, the restored monument was returned to its pedestal.

On 10 January 2024, the barbaric initiative to demolish the Monument to the Soviet Liberator Soldier "Alesha" in Plovdiv by the end of the year was made by members of the Municipal Council from the formation "Democrats for a Strong Bulgaria". There was a response from the public. On 17 January, a

protest action was held under the slogan of saving the Monument to the Soviet Liberator Soldier. In addition to the concerned citizens, the action was attended by deputies of the city council from the Socialist party. In early February 2024, unidentified individuals desecrated the "Alesha" monument once again by scrawling provocative inscriptions on it. On the base of the monument the inscriptions "Murderers", "Demolition", "Red scum" were written in red paint³.

On 6 March 2024, the fact of desecration of a sculptural composition on the mass grave of Soviet soldiers in Sofia's Lozenets district was recorded. The façade of the monument was daubed with red paint. The Ukrainian flag along with inscriptions "Murderers", swastika and crossed-out letter "Z" were drawn on its central bas-relief.

On 18 April 2024, the fact of desecration of a sculptural composition on the mass grave of Soviet soldiers in Sofia's Lozenets district was recorded. The façade of the monument was daubed with brown paint, with a Bulgarian flag and several crossed-out letters "Z" painted on its central bas-relief.

On the eve of the holiday of 9 May 2024, unidentified individuals smashed the plate with the inscription "Eternal Memory" on the memorial to Soviet and Bulgarian submariners in the village of Kamchiya, Varna region. The list with the names of those who gave their lives for the freedom of Europe was daubed with red paint.

Overnight on 12 May 2024, a monument to the Soviet soldier installed on a mass grave in a park in Stara Zagora was desecrated. The inscriptions "Decommunization" and "Anti-communism" were put on the stele. In addition, the central composition of the monument was daubed with red paint.

³ Паметникът «Альоша» в Пловдив осъмна надраскан с червени надписи «убийци» и «събаряй». Dir.Bg. 3 February 2024.

<https://m.dir.bg/dnes/krimi/pametnikat-alyosha-v-plovdiv-osamna-nadraskan-s-cherveni-nadpisi-ubiytsi-i-sabaryay>

Latvia

The cult of Nazis and their accomplices is being aggressively planted in Latvia. The nationalist ruling coalition, formed following the parliamentary elections in October 2022, is pursuing a course of building a mono-ethnic model of the state, while constructing a parallel reality both in everyday life and in the country's historical past. The Latvian authorities deliberately distort history in order to justify their sacrilegious fight against the memory of the Red Army soldiers who liberated Latvia from Nazism, as well as to justify their actions to glorify Latvian SS legionnaires and Nazi collaborators.

Moreover, Latvia, along with Canada, Lithuania and Estonia, is one of the few countries in the world where, contrary to the verdict of the Nuremberg Tribunal, as well as numerous international instruments, including the resolution adopted annually by the UN General Assembly on combating the glorification of Nazism, SS criminals continue to be openly honoured (including annual marches of these former members of this Nazi unit on 16 March).

After the start of the Russian Federation's Special Military Operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine and protect the peaceful population of Donbass, Latvia took the most pronounced anti-Russian position among the Baltic States. There was a sharp upsurge in Russophobia in the country, and violations of the rights of national minorities increased manifold. In general, for Latvian politicians, the Ukrainian crisis has become a convenient occasion to pursue their Russophobic aspirations.

In recent years, the efforts of the Latvian authorities to glorify Nazism and justify the crimes of Nazi collaborators have taken unprecedented – by the standards of this country – forms and scales. Latvia has cynically chosen as the main focus of its policy the fight against monuments to the soldiers who liberated it from Nazism and the banning of the celebration of 9 May, a holiday which, it should be recalled, was celebrated by many residents of Latvia.



9 May celebrations in Riga in 2018

Photo by: Sputnik/Sergey Melkonov

Source: <https://lv.sputniknews.ru/20180501/Rige-9-maja-zajavleny-tri-shestvija-8140883.html>



Victory Day celebrations in Riga in 2021.

Photo by: neskaties.lv

Source: <https://www.rubaltic.ru/article/politika-i-obshchestvo/20210506-russkie-la>



City square near the Monument to Liberators in Riga on 9 May 2022.

Photo by: Sputnik/Sergey Melkonov

Source: <https://lv.sputniknews.ru/20220401/edinstvennaya-tsel-novogo-zakona---unizit-kak-teper-prazdnovat-9-maya-v-latvii-21199563.html>

On 31 March 2022, the Latvian Parliament passed a package of amendments to the Law on Safety of Public Events, which introduced a ban on holding events within 200 metre range of any monument "glorifying the victory and memory of the Soviet Army or its servicemen in Latvia".⁴

On 7 April 2022, the law "on the establishment of the Day of Remembrance of those who died and suffered in Ukraine" was adopted, according to which 9 May was declared a day of mourning with a ban on mass and festive events (however, the law had a "one-time effect" and expired on 11 May 2022).⁵

4 Сайт Сейма ЛР: <https://www.saeima.lv/lv/aktualitates/saeimas-zinas/30860-publiskos-pasakumos-aizliedz-izmantot-militaru-agresiju-un-kara-noziegumus-identificjosa-stilistika-izmantotus-simbolus>
[Website of Saeima of the Republic of Latvia]

5 Сайт Сейма ЛР: <https://www.saeima.lv/lv/aktualitates/saeimas-zinas/30909-sogad-9-maija-latvija-piemines-krievijas-agresijas-ukraina-upurus> [Website of Saeima of the Latvian Republic]

On 20 April 2023, the law "On Prohibition of Certain Public Events on 9 May" was adopted, according to which restrictions were imposed on mass gatherings (marches, meetings, picketing) and the use of pyrotechnic products on that day. The only exception concerned events dedicated to Europe Day.

In addition to the restrictions imposed, the Latvian authorities took steps to prevent the mass celebration of 9 May and the laying of flowers first at the monuments to the soldiers who liberated Latvia and then, after their barbaric demolition, at the places where they were previously located.

Since 2022, the Latvian authorities, in the throes of ultra-nationalist fervor, have intensified their efforts to destroy Soviet memorial heritage and falsify history. The cynical efforts to demolish the Liberator Soldiers Monument in Victory Park in Riga became especially telling. On 12 May 2022, members of the Latvian Parliament promptly legitimized the dismantling of the monument by suspending Article 13 of the 1994 Russian-Latvian Intergovernmental Agreement on Social Protection of Military Pensioners which obliged Latvia to protect Soviet memorial sites in its territory.⁶

The members of the Saeima Foreign Affairs Commission, the authors of the amendments, in justifying this sacrilegious action explicitly stated that "Latvia's obligations under Article 13 of the Agreement no longer apply to such a structure as the Monument". This decision was followed by a vote of the Riga City Council at an extraordinary session on 13 May 2022, when the city deputies voted by a majority (39 to 13) to demolish the Monument to the Liberator Soldiers.⁷

Following that, local radicals launched a massive campaign to demolish Soviet memorials, focusing their efforts on the country's main symbol of victory over Nazism.

⁶ <https://www.saeima.lv/lv/aktualitates/saeimas-zinas/31022-saeima-aptur-latvijas-un-krievijas-divpuseja-liguma-darbibu-attieciba-uz-memorialajam-buvem-un-pieminekliem>

⁷ <https://www.riga.lv/lv/jaunums/rigas-dome-uzdod-demontet-padomju-pieminekli-uzvaras-parka>

The dismantling of the monument was accompanied by insulting statements by Latvia's top officials. In particular, the then president of Latvia, E. Levits, publicly called the memorial a "thorn in the soul of Latvians"⁸. The former president of the Latvian Republic V. Vīķe-Freiberga, whose family together with her in 1944 fled Latvia from the advancing Red Army to Nazi Germany, and later settled in Canada for many decades, called the monument "a pillar of shame of the times of dependence".⁹ Latvian Prime Minister K. Karins, in turn, stated that "thanks to the demolition of the monument, Latvia has finally freed itself from the consequences of the occupation, as well as from the feeling that it is not in control of its land".¹⁰

E. Rinkevich, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, warned against participation in protests in connection with the forthcoming demolition of the Monument, threatening to expel all foreigners from the country, regardless of citizenship and nationality, who would be found guilty of "illegal and unauthorized actions" during the dismantling.¹¹

The Latvian authorities commenced the demolition of the Monument on 23 August 2022, the 33rd anniversary of the "Baltic Way". The last element of the memorial, a 79-meter stele, was dismantled on 25 August 2022.

Numerous appeals from the Russian Side to the authorities of Riga to assist in evacuating the Monument to the territory of Russia and to prevent its destruction were uncompromisingly rejected.

It is also indicative that the Latvian authorities, in the nationalist frenzy of the campaign to demolish the Monument to the Liberators of Riga, completely

⁸ <https://mixnews.lv/latviya/2022/05/03/eto-zanoza-v-dushe-latyshey-levits-vyskazalsya-za-snos-pamyatnika-v-pardugave/>

⁹ <https://rus.tvnet.lv/7591608/vike-feyberga-tak-nazyvaemyy-pamyatnik-pobedy-vsegda-byl-pozornym-stolbom>

¹⁰ <https://rus.delfi.lv/news/daily/latvia/karinsh-demontazh-pamyatnika-sovetskoj-armii-zasluga-vseh-zhitelej.d?id=54676918>

¹¹ Твиттер-аккаунт министра иностранных дел Латвии Э.Ринкевича:

https://twitter.com/edgarsrinkevics/status/1561758450819932162?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Cwterm%5E1561758450819932162%7Ctwgr%5Ed4ee205f51e54b8cf1869317465444b78207c4cl%7Ctwcon%5Esl_&ref_url=https%3A%2F%2Fbb.lv%2Fstatja%2Fpolitika%2F2022%2F08%2F22%2Fsos-pamyatnika-osvoboditelyam-glava-mid-latvii-predupredil-inostrancev [Latvia's Foreign Minister E.Rinkevich's Twitter account]

ignored the opinion of international human rights organizations and their obligations under international treaties. On 26 August 2022, the UN Human Rights Committee (HRC) appealed to the Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in connection with complaints received regarding violations of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (an attempt by public activists to suspend the dismantling of the Monument to the Liberators of Riga and Latvia). The Committee's appeal did not prevent the demolition of the monument, but the Latvian government was ordered to provide the HRC experts with explanations on the situation by 26 February 2023. Latvian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman D. Eglite, commenting on the appeal of the HRC received by the Latvian authorities, stated the following: "The Committee is not a court, and its conclusions are not legally binding for the country."

The Liberator Soldiers Monument in Riga has been irritating for right-wing nationalists before. Options have been proposed to rename or transform the memorial to reflect its supposedly "true meaning". The initiative to demolish it was discussed within the framework of a working group formed in the Latvian Seimas. The possibilities of the Internet were utilized. Opposite the Russian-language name of the monument "Victory Monument" in the Google Maps service an incorrect "translation" into Latvian as "Okupācijas piemineklis" ("Monument of Occupation") was put. The administrators of the US web source did not respond to the complaints.

The Monument to the Liberators of Riga was one of the first to fall victim to vandalism of monuments to Red Army soldiers who liberated the country from Nazism during World War II, which spread across Latvia after the start of the Special Military Operation to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine and protect civilians in Donbass. On 24 February 2022, vandals poured paint on the monument. Later, a vandal tried to smash the monument with a hammer. The police detained the intruder. Against this background, Latvian Justice Minister J. Bordans called for the monument to be dismantled, calling it a threat to

national security and urging the Latvian authorities to find loopholes to circumvent the provisions of the treaty with Russia protecting the memorial.

Along with legislative acts aimed at the demolition of the Monument to the Liberators of Riga, since 2022 Latvian authorities have intensified their efforts to destroy all memorials in honour of the Red Army soldiers, also providing a legislative basis for their actions. On 16 June 2022, the Saeima passed the law "On the Prohibition of the Exposition and Display of Objects Glorifying the Soviet and Nazi Occupation Regimes in the Territory of the Republic of Latvia"¹², which obliged local governments to remove all memorials in honour of the Red Army soldiers. The law obliged local governments to dismantle Soviet memorials by 15 November 2022. Approximately 300 Soviet memorials dedicated to Soviet soldiers were subject to this law.

President Levits, who lived in Germany for most of his adult life until 1991, publicly supported the act, noting that it was dictated by the desire to prevent "any glorification of Russia's imperial ideology in public space".

On 14 July 2022, the Latvian government approved a list of 69 Soviet monuments to be removed by 15 November.¹³

In terms of the above-mentioned sharp increase in cases of desecration of Soviet war memorial sites in Latvia since 2022, the following comparison should also be made. While the Russian Embassy in Latvia recorded four acts of vandalism against Soviet monuments on the territory of the Republic of Latvia in 2021, as of 1 July 2023 alone, 22 Soviet monuments and 5 fraternal war graves (FWG) were desecrated, and more than 120 monuments and 4 FWGs were illegally dismantled.

¹² <https://www.saeima.lv/lv/aktaalitates/saeimas-zinas/31190-saeima-pienem-likumu-padomju-un-nacistisko-rezimu-slavinosu-objektu-demontazai>

¹³ Список объектов, прославляющих советский и нацистский режимы, подлежащих демонтажу на территории Латвийской Республики: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/334177-latvijas-republikas-teritorija-esoso-demontejamo-padomju-un-nacistisko-rezimu-slavinoso-objektu-saraksts> [List of the objects glorifying the Soviet and Nazi regimes to be demolished in the territory of the Republic of Latvia]

In a number of cases, such blasphemous acts were approved by local legislative bodies. In particular, it is known about the approval of such acts by the regional councils of Ogre and Jelgava.

The attitude of Latvian local authorities and their specific leaders is also demonstrated by the fact that a number of local governments took the initiative in the demolition of Soviet memorials without waiting for the legislative amendments to come into force. Thus, on 31 May 2022, authorities of the city of Sigulda announced plans to dismantle 3 monuments: a memorial to the Panfilov Division in the village of Malnīls, a memorial to the conference of the Communist Youth Union and a memorial stone in Sigulda dedicated to Soviet prisoners of war.

On 14 June 2022, in violation of Latvia's international legal obligations, the authorities of the town of Jekabpils started the practical implementation of the unlawful decision of the regional council to liquidate the fraternal war grave located at 205 Rīgas Street and situated in close proximity to the memorial complex. Heavy machinery was used to destroy the pedestal of the monument to Soviet artillerymen and exhume the remains of three Soviet officers buried beneath it. On the same day the memorial complex adjacent to the burial site was demolished in memory of the heroes of the Soviet Union who died during the Krustpīliskaya operation. The head of the Jekabpils Regional Council R. Ragainis allowed himself to publicly call the dismantled memorial stones "concrete pieces that have no historical value".

The monument in Jekabpils has been attacked by vandals before. On 24 February 2021, a 76 mm gun was stolen from the monument's pedestal. This act of vandalism, committed by unknown persons, was clearly perceived by Latvian nationalists as an act of patriotism and received the warmest approval of the authorities. Latvian Defense Minister A. Pabriks said in this regard: "Any such structure represents some kind of value, political influence or political direction. The presence of Soviet-era monuments in the country must be

carefully evaluated, especially if they are associated with military symbols. There is no place for this cannon – that's for sure." A few days later, the former mayor of the Krustpils region, G. Kalve, in an interview with the scandalous journalist E. Veidemane, transparently hinted that it was he who stole the cannon and threw it into the river. Also in the interview he confidently stated that the cannon will not return to the pedestal, because "this garbage has been taken away, and it will never return to our city". In early March, the cannon was found at the bottom of the River Daugava. The kidnappers have been identified, but no names have been given. No official accusations have been brought.¹⁴ The case was subsequently dropped.

On 25 October 2022, the Liepaja authorities demolished the monument to the defenders of the city, erected on the embankment of the Liepaja Canal on Parade Square in 1960 to commemorate the events of 22-29 June 1941, when the city was defended from Nazi troops.¹⁵

In late October 2022, heavy machinery in Latvia damaged a part of the memorial "Friendship Mound", which is located near the border of Latvia, Russia and Belarus.¹⁶ The memorial complex was built in 1959. It is a symbol of the heroic struggle of Russian, Belarusian and Latvian partisans during the Great Patriotic War. A month later, at the end of November, Latvian authorities destroyed the pedestrian bridge over the Sinjukha River near the monument.¹⁷

On 4 November 2022, in Ludza, with the permission of the city administration, a memorial dedicated to the soldiers of the Second Baltic Front who liberated Latvia from the Nazis in July 1944 was demolished.¹⁸

14 <https://www.rubaltic.ru/article/politika-i-obshchestvo/20210316-latviya-priznala-aktom-patriotizma-oskvernenie-mogil-sovetskikh-voennykh/>

15 <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/25102022-v-liepae-snosyat-pamyatnik-zashchitnikam-goroda/>

16 <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/29102022-v-latvii-razrushili-chast-memoriala-kurgan-druzhby-na-granitse-s-rossiei-i-belarusyu-video/>

17 <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/24112022-latviya-razrushila-peshekhodnyy-most-u-kurgana-druzhby-na-styke-granits-rossii-i-belarusi/>

18 <https://www.ntv.ru/novosti/2731241/?ysclid=lm4gka9hk843892631>

On 6 November 2022, a monument to Soviet partisans, memorial plates and a tombstone with the names of buried Red Army soldiers (about 30 people) were demolished in the village of Shkiaune in Dagda region. The monument was leveled with the ground by heavy construction machinery. The remains were not exhumed.¹⁹

A few days later, a mass grave of Soviet soldiers was dug up in the Tukum region, but their remains were moved to another location. Local municipal authorities stated: "During the dismantling of a Soviet monument in the Tukum region, the grave of more than fifty soldiers was found. According to the documents they should not have been there". According to journalist A. Stefanov, it cannot be that "the remains of 52 people were simply forgotten. Although now the Latvian authorities are trying to present everything in this way. Allegedly they should have been reburied back in 1977, but they did not do it. And now they are trying to sell us that the vandals also did a good deed – reburied the remains of heroes".²⁰

On 9 November 2022, the last of the large monuments to Soviet soldiers on the territory of the country – the monument in Rēzekne known as "Alesha" – was demolished. The mayor of the city A. Bartashevich stated that the demolition of "Alesha" was a desecration of memorials and an act of vandalism. But the central authorities did not hear him.²¹ In an address to the citizens on 8 November, the mayor said that the options proposed by him, suggesting the transfer of the monument to the territory of one of the city cemeteries, were rejected by Riga. Latvia also ignored the opinion of the UN Human Rights Committee, which urged to preserve the monument. For his independent position and attempts to preserve the Soviet memorial heritage A. Bartashevich was removed from the post of the mayor of the city in November 2023 under

19 <https://regnum.ru/article/3900345>

20 Ibid

21 <https://www.rubaltic.ru/article/politika-i-obshchestvo/20221125-potomki-kollaborantov-prodolzhayut-perepisyvat-istoriyu-pribaltiki/>

far-fetched pretexts, where he had worked for 14 years. He was also expelled from the "Concord" party. Latvian prosecutor's office charged him with disclosure of restricted information to his wife Olga. At the same time, the Anti-Corruption Bureau charged Bartashevich with concealing transactions worth almost 270,000 euros in another criminal case.²²

On 31 October 2023, in Daugavpils two monuments dedicated to Soviet soldiers were demolished – a stele in the Glory Square and a memorial on 18 November Street, opposite the Fraternal Cemeteries. At the same time, the mayor of the city and local residents opposed the dismantling of the monuments. On the day of the demolition, the police cordoned off the monument and eventually detained 37 people and drew up reports on them, including for singing songs allegedly glorifying the hostilities.²³

In November 2023, in Riga's Agenskalns district, a monument to Z. Ozole, a sanitary instructor of the 43rd Guards Latvian Rifle Division, who died in the battles near Staraya Russa, was destroyed. The memorial stone was erected in Soviet times near the school where Z. Ozole studied.²⁴

Serious concern is caused by the increasing number of cases of reburial of the remains of Soviet servicemen in circumvention of the existing Russian-Latvian agreement "On the Status of Burial Sites" of 2007, under which the parties undertook to ensure "the arrangement, maintenance and protection of burial sites located on the territory of the States" and to rebury remains from burial sites where the original burial took place "only with the consent of the other party".

Thus, in addition to the unauthorized exhumation of the remains of Soviet soldiers in Jekabpils, similar illegal actions took place with regard to mass graves in Rudbarji settlement and Jaunsatu parish, as well as in Shkiaune

22 https://pravfond.ru/press-tsentr/otstranennogo-po-politicheskim-motivam-mera-rezekne-bartashevicha-obvinyayut-v-dvukh-prestupleniyakh/?sphrase_id=4883

23 <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/31102022-v-latvii-snesli-dva-pamyatnika-sovetskim-voinam-vopreki-protestam-zhiteley/>

24 <https://iz.ru/1597381/viktor-nedelin/nechestivoe-plemia-v-latvii-khotiat-raskopat-mogily-sovetskikh-soldat>

settlement, where the burial was simply destroyed. In July 2023, the Balva Regional Council announced the decision to exhume the remains of Soviet partisans buried in Viljaka. The monument of the same name, erected at the burial site, was supposed to be destroyed.

In 2023, on the eve of Victory Day, numerous cases of desecration of the remaining memorials to Soviet soldiers were also recorded. War graves in Riga's Bergi neighbourhood, Jaunpiebalgi settlement and Valmiera city were vandalized.

On 21 June 2024, in the territory of the military cemetery "Liekni" of Kuldiga region, a ceremony of reburial of the remains of Soviet servicemen, previously exhumed without the agreement of the Russian Side from the territory of the mass grave in Rudbarji settlement, took place.

In November 2024, the Committee of Fraternal Cemeteries of the Republic of Latvia attempted to excavate the BVZ in Riga's Bergi neighbourhood in order to verify the presence of remains there for the subsequent possible dismantling of the memorial complex.

Even monuments erected in honour of Latvian Red Army soldiers are demolished. For example, on 9 May 2022, in Tome village, Ogre region, a monument to the famous Latvian scout Arvids Roze and the reconnaissance group "Baikal" led by him was demolished. During the Great Patriotic War A. Roze and his group sent important information about the movement of Hitler's troops and the construction of fortifications near Riga to the headquarters of the 1st Baltic Front.²⁵

It is also indicative in this respect that official Riga widely applies repression to those who oppose their course of destruction of memorials. Latvian security services initiate investigations and disciplinary inspections against those city governors who try to oppose or "sabotage" (delay) the

²⁵ <https://lv.sputniknews.ru/20220511/v-poslke-tome-snesli-pamyatnik-legendarnomu-latyshskomu-razvedchiku-21766017.html>

demolition of memorials to Red Army soldiers. In particular, on 9 November 2022, mayor of Daugavpils A. Elksnins was summoned to the Latvian State Security Service for explanations because of his interview with a local TV channel, in which he condemned the dismantling of Soviet memorials in Latvia and called Crimea part of Russia.

Latvian MPs from nationalist parties, dissatisfied that the 2022 campaign of mass demolition of Soviet monuments did not lead to the complete disappearance of monuments to Soviet soldiers in Latvia, put forward a new initiative in 2023.

In late October 2023, several committees of the Latvian Parliament received proposals from members of the National Bloc faction (A. Kiršteins, E. Shnore, N. Puntulis, I. Indriksone, A. Butans, J. Vitenbergs and J. Dombrava) to liquidate all remaining monuments and memorials of Soviet soldiers located in crowded places in the country. The remains buried under these monuments are proposed to be transferred to fraternal cemeteries in inaccessible places, similar to what happened in Estonia in 2022.²⁶ One of the co-authors of this bill, E. Schnore, stated the following: "These graves are turning into propaganda sites. The Russian Embassy takes care of many of them. We want to liquidate them".²⁷

On 7 April 2025, the Press Bureau of the Foreign Intelligence Service of the Russian Federation has reported that, according to information received by the SVR, the Latvian authorities are preparing for the large-scale destruction of Soviet war memorials before the 80th anniversary of the Victory over Nazism. The press bureau noted that the Latvian authorities plan to get rid of about a third of the monuments over the mass graves of Soviet soldiers-liberators "in the shortest possible time". To give the act of vandalism a semblance of "civility" it is supposed to conduct fictitious archaeological research, which should "by all

²⁶ <https://iz.ru/1597381/viktor-nedelin/nechestivoe-plemia-v-latvii-khotiat-raskopat-mogily-sovetskikh-soldat>

²⁷ https://vk.com/wall-134162128_714335

means disprove" the existence of mass graves of soldiers under the memorials. As an executor of the grim plan one of the "search groups" was invited, whose leadership gave preliminary consent "for a reasonable fee" to abuse the graves and fabricate "necessary" protocols of excavations on the absence of traces of burial. The plan is to start with the Orthodox Tornakalns and military Bratsk cemeteries located in Riga.^{28,29}

In 2023-2024, another trend regarding monuments appeared in Latvia, namely the fight against Russian historical memory. A vivid proof of this was the demolition in Riga of the monument to the great Russian poet Alexander Pushkin in May 2023 and the monument to academician Mstislav Keldysh, who was born in Riga and one of the authors of the Soviet space programme, in October 2023³⁰. It is indicative that vice-mayor of Riga L. Ozola called the demolition of the monument to Alexander Pushkin its "removal" from Kronvalda Park and its delivery for storage, to be later transferred to the Museum of the Union of Artists of Latvia³¹. On 13 September 2024, the Monuments Council of Riga City Council approved the dismantling of memorial stones to Alexander Pushkin, Anna Kern, memorial plaques to Peter the Great, Vladimir Lenin, "Cina" printing house, Latvian writer A. Upītis and historian J. Zūtis.

In July 2024 it became known that the deputy mayor of Riga E. Ratnieks submitted to the Center of Public Memory, whose main task is "desovietization" of Latvia, a list of 8 monuments related to the Soviet and Russian past, which should be demolished. The list includes monuments and memorial stones to military leader Mikhail Barclay de Tolly, Alexander Pushkin, Valentin Pikul, Maris Liepa and others. According to E. Ratnieks, the mentioned monuments

28 <http://www.svr.gov.ru/smi/2025/04/latviya-obyavila-voynu-pavshim-geroyam.htm>

29 <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/07042025-v-rossii-soobshchili-o-planakh-rigi-demontirovat-okolo-treti-sovetskikh-pamyatnikov/>

30 <https://iz.ru/1597381/viktor-nedelin/nechestivoe-plemia-v-latvii-khotiat-raskopat-mogily-sovetskikh-soldat>

31 <https://iz.ru/1520664/2023-05-30/v-rige-zaiavili-o-perevozke-pamiatnika-pushkinu-iz-kronvaldskogo-parka>

remind of "the pain of the past and occupation". The deputy mayor also called them "propaganda tools" that are used to undermine Latvia.³²

This initiative was put into practice. At the end of October 2024, the Riga authorities demolished the monument to Mikhail Barclay de Tolly. The initiator of this barbaric action was vice-mayor of the city, E. Ratnieks. He stated that the statue symbolized "glorification of the Russian Empire and praise of Russification".³³

Although the law adopted in Latvia provides for the demolition only of monuments under which there are no burials of Soviet soldiers who liberated the country from Nazism, nevertheless, in July 2024, discussions began in the country about the dismantling of monuments erected on soldiers' graves as well. The media, in particular, published a statement by sculptor and member of the Riga City Council Monuments Board G. Panteleev that local governments have the right to independently decide on the demolition of monuments on their territory. He also stated that "it is bad when burials are located in the central square of a village or city".³⁴

It is regrettable to note that a negative trend is firmly established in Latvia as a whole. Numerous notes from the Embassy of the Russian Federation addressed to the Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs demanding that international obligations in the war memorial field be fulfilled in good faith and that unilateral illegal actions by local governments be stopped are invariably ignored by the Latvian authorities. Until recently, the consequences of acts of vandalism have been eliminated only thanks to the initiative of local residents, despite the fact that local governments are responsible for the maintenance and preservation of memorial sites. Now the authorities intend to prevent such initiatives of local residents.

32 <https://ruskiymir.ru/news/327180/>

33 <https://rg.ru/2024/10/31/geroj-ne-ugodil-potomkam-v-rige-snesli-pamiatnik-barklaiu-de-tolli.html>

34 <https://baltija.eu/2024/07/18/v-latvii-obsuzhdayut-snos-sovetskih-pamyatnikov-raspolozhennyh-na-soldatskih-mogilah/>

Separately, it should also be mentioned that Latvian law enforcement agencies and the Latvian authorities in general do not pay due attention to numerous cases of desecration of Soviet soldiers' graves, while isolated actions against graves and monuments in honour of SS legionnaires receive a response from Latvian law enforcement agencies. For example, in July 2024, it became known that the Latvian State Security Service detained a "criminal" allegedly recruited by Russian special services, who turned out to be an Estonian resident with Russian and Estonian citizenship. The detainee is accused of having poured red paint on a memorial stone in honour of Latvian Waffen SS legionnaires on 29 January 2024.³⁵

For example, the head of the Jekabpils Regional Council R. Ragainis, as mentioned above, allowed himself to publicly call the dismantled monuments from the fraternal war grave and the adjacent memorial "concrete pieces that have no historical value". The head of the Ogre Regional Council, E. Helmanis, who actively supported the demolition of four monuments in honour of Soviet soldiers and officers who fell during the liberation of Latvia from the Nazis and the monument to diplomatic courier Theodor Nette, cynically stated that the monument demolished in Madliene would be used for road construction work.³⁶ Also "distinguished" was Riga mayor M. Stakis, who announced that after the demolition of the Liberators' Monument there are no plans to preserve any parts of it and promised to completely dispose of the monument, as it allegedly has no artistic value.³⁷ According to the media, Riga City Council representatives turned their press conference on the demolition of the monument into a soap opera to satisfy the vengeful impulses of Russophobes.³⁸

35 <https://lv.sputniknews.ru/20240704/vlasti-pribaltiki-doveli-russkikh-do-partizanskoy-voiny-28238329.html>

36 <https://lv.sputniknews.ru/20220511/v-poslke-tome-snesli-pamyatnik-legendarnomu-latyshskomu-razvedchiku-21766017.html>

37 <https://lenta.ru/news/2022/08/03/monument/>

38 <https://lv.sputniknews.ru/20220804/ne-razbirat-po-chastyam-no-i-ne-vzryvat-kak-budut-snosit-pamyatnik-osvoboditelyam-22415313.html>

Moreover, the Latvian authorities in official documents deliberately distort facts and interpret history in order to justify their own disreputable actions. This is precisely the approach used to justify Latvia's blatant glorification of Latvian SS legionnaires, Nazi collaborators, and to justify the open fight against the memory of the Red Army soldiers who liberated Latvia from Nazism.

On 14 October 2022, a month and a half after the dismantling of the monument to the Liberators of Riga, the Latvian Foreign Ministry responded to Russia's protests sent as early as August 24. Parallels are drawn between modern Russia and the USSR, which "occupied" Latvia after the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. It is then concluded that the achievements of the Soviet army are cultivated by Russia to justify its own "aggressive geopolitical ambitions". On this basis, the Russian Side's protest and accusations against Latvia of violating its obligations under Article 13 of the bilateral agreement were rejected, with the indication that Latvia has been "honestly" fulfilling it for 30 years.

This is followed by the conclusion that with the beginning of "Russian aggression in Ukraine" the Monument to the Liberators of Riga has turned into a "symbol of violence and threat", which leaves it no chance to exist in "democratic Latvia". It is further concluded that "aggression" forces the international community to reconsider the attitude towards symbols associated with the USSR army.

In February 2024, the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs put about 60 Latvian politicians on the wanted list for the case of destruction of graves (Article 243.3 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation). The wanted list includes 15 out of 38 Riga City Council deputies who adopted the decision to demolish monuments to Soviet soldiers, including current mayor of Riga V. Kirsis and his predecessor M. Stakis, as well as 59 out of 68 members of the Seimas who voted in favour of breaking the Russian-Latvian agreement on the

preservation of Soviet monuments. Members of the Cabinet of Ministers – Latvian Agriculture Minister A. Krauze, Finance Minister A. Asheradens, Justice Minister I. Libinja-Egnere and M. Golubeva, who served as Interior Minister until May 2022 were also added to the wanted list.³⁹

³⁹ <https://nashrezekne.lv/snos-pamyatnikov-rossiya-obyavila-v-rozysk-bolee-60-deputatov-sejma-latvii/>

Lithuania

Official Vilnius openly pursues a course of falsifying the history of the World War II and glorifying Nazi collaborators, equating them with national heroes, which contradicts the conclusions of the Nuremberg Tribunal. In recent years, this discriminatory policy has been supplemented by the inculcation of hatred against Russians and everything connected with the USSR and modern Russia, including monuments in honour of Soviet soldiers who died in the liberation of Lithuania from Nazism.

Along with the traditional long-standing processions held by Lithuanian neo-Nazi organizations and right-wing forces on the occasion of the public holidays of 16 February ("Day of Restoration of Lithuanian Statehood") and 11 March ("Day of Restoration of Lithuanian Independence"), the political establishment of the Republic of Lithuania, in an impulse of historical revisionism, has set a course for the demolition of monuments to Soviet soldiers located at the burial sites of Red Army soldiers throughout the country in 2022. The authorities motivate this policy by the desire to get rid of the "totalitarian heritage". There is a legal basis for this: Soviet symbols are forbidden by law in Lithuania. After the communist period of the country's history was officially recognized as an "occupation" on a par with the Nazi occupation, all objects reminiscent of that time, primarily monuments, became targets for destructive efforts of leaders at all levels.

On 13 December 2022, the Seimas of Lithuania adopted by a majority vote the Law on the Desovietization of Lithuanian Public Spaces, which entered into force on 1 May 2023. The law prohibits the propaganda of "totalitarian and authoritarian regimes and their ideology" and prescribes the removal from public space of public objects that promote them. Official Vilnius considers the Soviet Union to be such "totalitarian and authoritarian" regimes. Local authorities were given twenty days to collect and submit materials about the objects covered by the new law. This act made it easier for the Lithuanian

authorities to fight against Soviet heritage sites, as it created conditions for the demolition of unwanted monuments, memorial sites, and renaming of streets, squares and other toponyms. Even images of people are covered by this law.⁴⁰ In the adopted law we are no longer talking about Soviet party figures – the objects dedicated to them were gotten rid of in the early 1990s – but about Lithuanian writers, poets and artists who lived safely under the USSR and received badges of honour from the Soviet authorities for their services.⁴¹

On 19 April 2022, the Lithuanian Minister of Culture signed an order allowing local governments to determine the future of "aggressive and war-symbolizing" Soviet monuments in cemeteries.⁴² At the same time, a formal reservation was made that the graves of the fallen with tombstones will remain untouched, because, they say, Vilnius undertakes to fulfill the relevant provisions of the relevant Geneva Conventions. However, in practice, this is not systematically observed.

In June 2024, the Seimas adopted amendments to laws that allow the remains of Soviet soldiers to be removed from cities and towns and reburied in regular cemeteries located remotely. The amendments also allow for the destruction of such monuments in cases where it is recognized that graves and cemeteries "propagate totalitarian, authoritarian regimes and their ideology", despite the fact that they are listed in the Register of Cultural Property.⁴³ Thus, after the adoption of the mentioned amendments, Lithuanian legislation considers the graves of Soviet soldiers as objects subject to the prohibition of "propaganda of totalitarian, authoritarian regimes and their ideologies". And the

40 <https://ruskiymir.ru/news/308367/>

41 <https://iz.ru/1713577/viktor-nedelin/nadrugatelstvo-nad-pamiatui-v-litve-prodolzhaiut-oskverniat-zakhoroneniia-sovetskikh-soldat>

42 <https://lrkm.lrv.lt/lt/naujienos/parengtos-rekomendacijos-savivaldybems-del-sovietiniu-paminklu-nukelimo>

43 <https://lt.sputniknews.ru/20240225/v-litve-predlozhili-uzakonit-snos-mest-zakhoroneni-y-sovetskikh-soldat-32071675.html>

provision prohibiting the liquidation of graves and cemeteries included in the Register of Cultural Property does not apply to soldiers' graves.⁴⁴

Under this pretext, in 2025 the Lithuanian authorities announced plans to rebury the remains of Red Army soldiers in Šiauliai and Merkin. Mayor of Šiauliai, A. Visotskas, had previously made an odious comment on this issue, stating that "the burials of Soviet soldiers were arranged in representative places of settlements in a biased manner in order to instill a sense of gratitude and moral obligation to the soldiers of the occupation army".⁴⁵

In fact, the Special Military Operation by the Russian Federation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine and protect the peaceful population of Donbass was used by the Lithuanian authorities as a pretext for such actions. After the start of the Special Military Operation, a wave of vandalism swept through Lithuanian settlements, desecrating some 30 memorials and obelisks, mostly located in places of military burial. Law enforcement authorities reported the initiation of investigations into the incidents, but no vandal was ever punished.

It is obvious that the Lithuanian authorities are not interested in solving such crimes and are ready to turn a blind eye to them, as such actions are fully in line with their own political course. An example is the situation around the monument to the Soviet soldier in Kurkliai, Anikščiai district, which was desecrated by vandals on 10 April 2022. On 18 May 2022, the Utena District Prosecutor's Office issued a ruling to terminate the pre-trial investigation of the incident "due to the absence of a legally defined crime". This outcome was facilitated by the fact that on 5 May, the sculpture had already been dismantled by decision of the local government⁴⁶.

44 <https://iz.ru/1713577/viktor-nedelin/nadrugatelstvo-nad-pamiatui-v-litve-prodolzhaiut-oskverniat-zakhoroneniia-sovetskikh-soldat>

45 <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/22782235>

46 <https://lt.sputniknews.ru/20220519/v-litve-zakryli-delo-ob-oskvernenii-pamyatnika-sovetskomu-soldatu-23254639.html>

According to the data collected, from 2022 to the present, 86 cases of alteration of graves or memorials have been identified. In 53 cases the monuments were completely demolished. In addition, given the unprecedented anti-Russian campaign of the Lithuanian authorities, it is impossible to carry out improvement work and repairs on memorials.

Vandalism against Soviet monuments is encouraged by the top officials of the Lithuanian State. Thus, President G. Nauseda (who lived in the Lithuanian SSR for almost half of his life) made it clear that he does not intend to "put up with relics of Soviet propaganda"⁴⁷. Prime Minister I. Šimonaitė, who in her childhood also attended a Soviet school, stated that she allegedly did not understand "why monuments are considered as some kind of heritage and in general – what kind of heritage is that"⁴⁸.

The Lithuanian authorities have been determined to destroy monuments to Red Army soldiers up to the present time. In February 2024, the Lithuanian Seimas, on the proposal of the head of the ruling faction in the parliament, R. Morkunaite-Mikulienė, unanimously adopted a resolution on the continuation of decommunization of the Republic of Lithuania, which calls on the authorities of Lithuanian cities to more actively demolish Soviet monuments.⁴⁹

The following are examples of barbaric destruction of memorials by the Lithuanian authorities, often accompanied by corresponding public comments.

In April 2022, the authorities of Kaunas demolished the monument at the military cemetery in Aukštieji Šanciai. In this cemetery are buried 5,065 soldiers

47 <https://ru.respublika.lt/ru/naujienos/ru/politika/ne-miritsja-s-perezitkami-propagandi-i-razziganija-vojni-gnayseda-o-sovetskix-pamjatnikax/>

48 [https://www.lrt.lt/ru/novosti/17/1660229/evrei-litvy-osuzhdaiut-oskvernenie-memoriala-pamiati-zhertv-kholokosta#:~:text=%D0%95%D0%B2%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%B9%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B0%D1%8F%20%D0%BE%D0%B1%D1%89%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B0%20%D0%9B%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B2%D1%8B%20\(%D0%95%D0%9E%D0%9B\)%20%D0%B2,%D0%BC%D0%B5%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B5%20/oD0%BC%D0%B0%D1%81%D1%81%D0%BE%D0%B2%D1%8B%D1%85%20%D1%83%D0%B1%D0%B8%D0%B9%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B2%20%D0%B2%20%D0%9F%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B5%D1%80%D1%8F%D0%B9](https://www.lrt.lt/ru/novosti/17/1660229/evrei-litvy-osuzhdaiut-oskvernenie-memoriala-pamiati-zhertv-kholokosta#:~:text=%D0%95%D0%B2%D1%80%D0%B5%D0%B9%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%B0%D1%8F%20%D0%BE%D0%B1%D1%89%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B0%20%D0%9B%D0%B8%D1%82%D0%B2%D1%8B%20(%D0%95%D0%9E%D0%9B)%20%D0%B2,%D0%BC%D0%B5%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B5%20/oD0%BC%D0%B0%D1%81%D1%81%D0%BE%D0%B2%D1%8B%D1%85%20%D1%83%D0%B1%D0%B8%D0%B9%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B2%20%D0%B2%20%D0%9F%D0%B0%D0%BD%D0%B5%D1%80%D1%8F%D0%B9)

49 <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/17022024-v-parlamente-litvy-prizvali-aktivnee-snosit-sovetskie-pamyatniki/>

and officers of several rifle corps of the 5th Army of the 3rd Belorussian Front, who died in July 1944 in battles in this area, including 12 Heroes of the Soviet Union.⁵⁰ In May 2022, the Lithuanian authorities demolished the monument at the grave of Soviet soldiers in Palanga, whose mayor, S. Vaitkus, pathetically called this heinous act "a new page in the history of the city". The authorities explained their act by the fact that the sickle and hammer on the monument did not fit well with the church building next to it. However, the most probable reason is that in close proximity to the monument there is a monument to Jonas Žemaitis, who during the Great Patriotic War served in the Nazi punitive unit "Lithuanian Local Detachment" and later led nationalist gangs – for all these crimes he was executed in 1954. On 4-6 July 2022, the memorial to the Red Army soldiers in Klaipėda was actually destroyed: sculptures of three soldiers, images of the sword and the red star, as well as the Eternal Fire were destroyed.⁵¹

In October 2022, in Raudonė, Jurbarko district, a monument at the burial site of Soviet soldiers, a sculpture of a soldier holding a banner in his hands, was demolished. The remains of 190 soldiers and officers from the Red Army units that liberated the town from the Nazis and their collaborators in October 1944 were buried in this military cemetery.

In July 2023, the authorities of Pumpėnai (Pasvalio district) destroyed a monument at the mass grave of Soviet soldiers in the centre of the town. At the same time, the grave itself was destroyed. This was carried out by the public organization "Service for the Protection of Cultural Property", acting with the permission of the local authorities. The Lithuanian Department of Cultural Heritage, explaining the reasons for this barbaric act, stated that "over the years, the social need to make the central square of the town of Pumpėnai, where the

50 <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/26042022-v-kaunase-snesli-pamyatnik-na-zakhoronanii-sovetskikh-voinov/>

51 <https://www.1tv.ru/news/2022-07-05/432684->

[v_klaypede_nachalsya_snos_monumenta_sovetskim_voinam_kotorye_pogibli_osvobozhdaya_litvu_ot_fashizma](#)

grave was located until now, the main place of public life has become obvious".⁵²

Meanwhile, cases of vandalism of the few surviving memorials to Soviet soldiers continue to be recorded. On 23 February 2024, two Red Army burial sites were desecrated in Alytus County in southern Lithuania. One of the vandals' targets was a memorial sign at the site where the Nazi concentration camp for prisoners of war "Stalag 343" was established on the territory of the barracks in Alytus in 1941-1943, and then from May 1943 to July 1944 it also held persons displaced from the western regions of Russia. About 20,000 people died in this camp. A monument in Druskininkai at the mass grave of 250 Red Army soldiers who died in July 1944 during the liberation of the city also suffered from the vandals.⁵³ In September 2024 in Krekenava, two local residents dismantled memorial plates with the inscription "Eternal Glory to Heroes" from the burial place of Red Army soldiers. One of the vandals turned out to be Romualdas Lyutkus, a candidate for the Lithuanian parliament from the Order and Justice party. He was not even fined for his actions, as the plates are not cultural property. However, his actions were condemned by both the mayor of Panevėžys district and the headman of Krekenava. At the same time, the Panevezyski District Commissariat said that the burial site had not been desecrated, thus there was no investigation carried out.⁵⁴

The struggle against the memory of the heroic feat of liberating Lithuania from Nazi invaders culminated in the demolition of six stelae representing Soviet soldiers belonging to different branches of the armed forces, which were the central element of the memorial at Antakalnis Cemetery in Vilnius – the

52 <https://iz.ru/1713577/viktor-nedelin/nadrugatelstvo-nad-pamiatu-v-litve-prodolzhaiut-oskverniat-zakhoroneniia-sovetskikh-soldat>

53 <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/24022024-v-litve-oskvernili-dva-zakhoroneniya-vremen-velikoy-otechestvennoy-voyny/>

54 <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/28092024-v-litve-vandal-s-kladbishcha-sovetskikh-voinov-okazalsya-kandidatom-v-deputaty/?ysclid=m8ioi1u6s3344736373>

location of the largest Red Army burial site in Lithuania.⁵⁵ For decades, this monument at the burial site of 3,098 soldiers and officers of the Red Army, including five heroes of the Soviet Union, was the main place where the Embassy of the Russian Federation held wreath-laying ceremonies on the memorable dates of the Great Patriotic War. Russian compatriots also gathered there en masse on such days. The demolition was repeatedly preceded by barbaric acts of desecration of the memorial by local vandals, in this regard, in October 2022, the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation initiated a criminal case (subsequently, a criminal case was also initiated in connection with the destruction of the monument).

⁵⁵ <https://www.lrt.lt/ru/novosti/17/1840837/na-antakal-nisskom-kladbishche-vil-niusa-demontirovany-skulptury-sovetskim-voinam>



Flower-laying at the Antakalnis Cemetery in Vilnius. 9 May 2015.

Photo by: BFL/Vygintas Skaraitis

Source: <https://zw.lt/wilno-wilenszczyzna/9-maja-w-wilnie-georgijewskie-wstazeczki-czerwone-kwiaty/#gallery-1>

The decision to destroy the memorial was made by the Vilnius authorities in June 2022. At a meeting of the City Council, mayor R. Šimasius called the monument "a militaristic monstrosity that does not correspond to the graves".⁵⁶ In late November – early December 2022, demolition work was carried out on the sculptures of the memorial.⁵⁷

The destruction of the Antakalnis Cemetery monument was not prevented by the UN Human Rights Committee's appeal to the Lithuanian authorities not to destroy the memorial. This appeal for temporary protection measures to be imposed on the memorial steles was sent to Vilnius after the Committee

⁵⁶ <https://lenta.ru/news/2022/06/08/pamyatnik/>

⁵⁷ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/30112022-v-vilnyuse-nachali-demontirovat-memorial-sovetskim-voinam/>

received a complaint from a group of concerned Lithuanian citizens about the actions of the authorities.⁵⁸

Commenting on the actions of the Vilnius authorities who ignored the appeal of the HRC, mayor R. Šimasius called this act of vandalism a response to "Russian aggression" and agreed that "the UN is not the authority that has the right to tell Lithuania or Vilnius whether the symbols of totalitarianism can be there".

On 7 February 2024, Lithuanian authorities reported the completion of the demolition of the monument to Soviet soldiers-liberators in Antakalnis Cemetery.⁵⁹ On 22 February 2024, on the occasion of Defender of the Fatherland Day, staff members of the Russian Embassy in Lithuania laid a wreath and flowers to what was left after the barbaric intervention. The Embassy emphasized that it was impossible to hold a commemorative event in the central part of the memorial complex, as the Lithuanian authorities continued the barbaric destruction of this war memorial – largest in Lithuania. The Embassy published several photos from the Antakalnis Cemetery. The images showed a broken tombstone, a muddy road damaged by heavy machinery to the place where the war memorial used to stand.⁶⁰

The destruction of the memorial did not prevent concerned residents of Vilnius and other Lithuanian cities, who honour the feat of Soviet soldiers, to pay tribute to them on 9 May 2024. Candles were brought to the burial site itself, as well as to the place where the memorial to Soviet soldiers used to stand, and flower arrangements and wreaths were placed. Lithuanian police

58 <https://www.delfi.lt/ru/news/live/komitet-oon-ne-razreshil-ubrat-stely-s-antakalnissskogo-kladbischa-v-samoupravlenii-ot-planov-ne-otkazyvayutsya.d?id=91815411>

59 <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/07022024-v-litve-zavershili-snos-krupneyshego-memoriala-sovetskim-voinam/>

60 <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/22022024-posolstvo-rf-v-litve-pokazalo-kak-posle-snosa-pamyatnika-vyglyadit-kladbishche-v-vilnyuse/>

officers were on duty at the site and scrupulously recorded what was happening.⁶¹



Flower-laying at the Antakalnis Cemetery in Vilnius in honour of the 79th anniversary of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War, 9 May 2024.

Photo by: TASS/AP/Mindaugas Kulbis

Source: <https://iz.ru/1713577/viktor-nedelin/nadrugatelstvo-nad-pamiatu-v-litve-prodolzhaiut-oskverniat-zakhoroneniia-sovetskikh-soldat>

61 <https://iz.ru/1713577/viktor-nedelin/nadrugatelstvo-nad-pamiatu-v-litve-prodolzhaiut-oskverniat-zakhoroneniia-sovetskikh-soldat>



People are laying flowers at the Antakalnis Cemetery after the demolition of the steles.

Photo by: Mindaugas Kulbis / AP

Source: <https://rtvi.com/news/zamministra-finansov-litvy-pytayutsya-prinudit-k-otstavke-iz-za-posta-pro-9-maya/>

The Russian authorities are taking measures to identify and bring to justice those responsible for these sacrilegious acts. The Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation is investigating the destruction of memorials erected in memory of Red Army soldiers who died fighting the Nazis. In September 2023, the agency reported that the investigators have 16 criminal cases under investigation for 143 cases of desecration, destruction or damage to war graves, monuments and memorials to Soviet soldiers. 173 foreign nationals – citizens of Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Poland and Ukraine – have been brought as defendants in absentia for committing these crimes.⁶² On 24 February 2024, Head of the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation A. Bastrykin instructed to investigate the desecration of the memorial sign to Soviet soldiers in Druskininkai.⁶³

⁶² <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/12092023-sk-rossii-zaochno-obvinil-grazhdan-stran-baltii-i-polshi-v-oskvernenii-sovetskikh-pamyatnikov/>

⁶³ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/26022024-v-rossii-rassleduyut-fakt-oskverneniya-pamyatnika-sovetskim-voinam-v-litve/>

In October 2023, the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs declared the chairperson of the Historical Memory Commission of the Vilnius City Council Kamile Šeraite wanted for active efforts to "desovietize" Vilnius.⁶⁴ In December 2022, after the Lithuanian Seimas adopted a law on the desovietization of public space and announced the city authorities' plans to remove Soviet symbols and inscriptions in Russian from 16 monuments and memorial plaques in the capital, Kamile Šeraite pointed out the need to rid the city of the ideology of the sickle and hammer.

On 13 February 2024, the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs declared S. Kairis, the then Minister of Culture of Lithuania, wanted for the destruction of monuments to Soviet soldiers.⁶⁵

Former mayor of Vilnius R. Šimasius was also declared wanted.⁶⁶

64 <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/30102023-mvd-rossii-obyavilo-v-rozysk-glavu-komissii-istoricheskoy-pamyati-v-vilnyuse/>

65 <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/13022024-mvd-rossii-obyavilo-v-rozysk-ministra-kultury-litvy/>

66 <https://www.rubaltic.ru/article/politika-i-obshchestvo/20240221-rossiya-zastavila-nervnichat-bortsov-s-sovetskimi-pamyatnikami-iz-pribaltiki/>

Moldova

The situation with monuments and memorials to Soviet soldiers in present-day Moldova looks very alarming. The invariable pro-European course of the Moldovan leadership, headed by Maia Sandu, suggests a complete inclusion of the Moldovan state in the alliance of ardent Russophobes.

In terms of the state's attitude towards its own history and identity, what is happening in Moldova today mirrors the processes observed in Ukraine. Maia Sandu's regime, akin to the Ukrainian leaders, "on its way to European integration" seeks to "cancel" an entire period of its own country's history through totalitarian means. This involves destroying all Soviet heritage, including the cultural expressions of national minorities.⁶⁷ The regime even shows its readiness to obliterate the country's national (Moldovan) identity by misrepresenting it as Romanian.

Pursuing its national policy, the official Chisinau, under the direction of its Western curators, is copying the actions of the neo-Nazi regime in Kiev and the nationalist regimes in the Baltics, which are based on Russophobia, war on monuments to Red Army soldiers, and Neanderthal anti-Sovietism of the Cold War.

Given the above, it comes as no surprise that Moldova continues to witness attacks against the historical memory of the Great Patriotic War, and increasingly growing revisionist pro-Western tendencies. Radicals from among the supporters of the liquidation of Moldovan statehood and accession to Romania have recently become much more active. Against this background, the Republic's attempts to glorify Nazism and its accomplices in order to "whitewash" them in the public consciousness are becoming increasingly clear.

⁶⁷ Украинская пропаганда вместо Пушкина: в Молдове взят курс на тотальную русофобию. [Pushkin Substituted with Ukrainian Propaganda: Moldova on a Course to Total Russophobia.] RuBaltic. 12 March 2023. <https://www.rubaltic.ru/article/politika-i-obshchestvo/20230312-ukrainskaya-propaganda-vmesto-pushkina-kulturnaya-politika-v-moldove-stroitsya-na-rusofobii/>

With the assistance of the official Moldovan authorities and the leadership of the Action and Solidarity party,⁶⁸ the reconstruction and installation (frequently funded by external sponsors) of memorials honouring the 'heroes of the Romanian army', that occupied present-day Moldova in 1941, has become systematic. At the same time, the occupation of Moldovan territory by Romanian fascist troops, who were allies of Nazi Germany, and the regime of terror and mass murder that they established, during which over 300,000 Jewish and more than 50,000 Roma citizens were killed, is presented as "liberation".

The Moldovan authorities' attitude towards anti-fascist veterans is completely different. On 23 August 2024, Ilan Shor, the leader of the opposition bloc "Pobeda" (Victory), commented on the Moldovan authorities' attitude towards the 80th anniversary of liberation from fascism. He said that the Moldovan leadership remains silent on commemorative dates such as this one, while neglecting the veterans of the Great Patriotic War. On his Telegram channel, he published, for example, the following statement: "These days we are celebrating the 80th anniversary of the liberation of our towns and villages from fascism; a date that is treacherously hushed up by the Sandu regime. For our "Victory" bloc, it is vital that veterans in their later years do not feel neglected. Our team is looking after them. They are heroes who <...> have been practically forgotten by the authorities," he wrote. Ilan Shor also said that representatives of the bloc congratulated the veterans on the holiday. Simultaneously, the opposition seeks to make sure that WWII veterans feel cared for and attended to not only during holidays but throughout the year.⁶⁹

In the same month, it transpired that the Moldovan authorities did not allow the Eternal Flame to be lit at Serpeni Bridgehead memorial, as reported

⁶⁸ The party was headed by Maia Sandu until her election as president in November 2020.

⁶⁹ В Молдавии обвинили власти страны в замалчивании дат освобождения от фашизма. Известия. 23 августа 2024 г. [Moldova Accuses its Authorities of Hushing up the Dates of Liberation from Fascism. Izvestia. 23 August 2024] <https://iz.ru/1747800/2024-08-23/v-moldavii-ulichili-vlasti-strany-v-zamalchivanii-dat-osvobozhdeniia-ot-fashizma>

by Diana Caraman, member of the Moldovan parliament. The ceremony at the site where thousands of Soviet soldiers had lost their lives during the Jassy-Kishinev operation was scheduled to coincide with the 80th anniversary of the country's liberation from fascism. In a video message on her Telegram channel, Diana Caraman said: "I received a reply from Minister Anatolie Nosatii that there will be no Eternal Flame. Apparently, Moldova's Liberation Day is not a holiday for our authorities."⁷⁰

Since 2022, Moldova has started imposing restrictions on holding events on the occasion of 9 May and other dates commemorating the Great Patriotic War, despite the country's traditional widespread celebration of this holiday.



Victory Day celebration in Moldova.

Source: <https://www.md.kp.media/online/news/5799768/>

70 В Молдавии запретили зажечь Вечный огонь на мемориале «Шерпенский плацдарм». Известия. 21 августа 2024 г. [Moldova Bans the Lighting of the Eternal Flame at Serpeni Bridgehead Memorial. Izvestia. 21 August 2024] <https://iz.ru/1746488/2024-08-21/v-moldavii-zapretili-zazhech-vechnyi-ogon-na-memoriale-sherpenskii-platcdarm>

With the start of the fight against symbols of the Victory in April 2022, Moldova adopted amendments to the Code of Offences, introducing fines or forced labour for the use of items or symbols of "military aggression". These included the "black and orange bicolour ribbon", i.e. the St. George's ribbon, and the "Z" and "V" symbols. The new provisions of the law came into force as soon as it was published, just before the 9 May celebrations.

In 2023, Maia Sandu's government continued its efforts to limit the celebration of the Victory over Nazism. On 19 June 2023, the Moldovan government approved a bill by MPs from the ruling Action and Solidarity party to rename Victory Day "Victory over Nazism and Remembrance of the Fallen in World War II" and move it from 9 to 8 May.⁷¹ This was done in the face of strong condemnation from the parliamentary opposition, extra-parliamentary parties and movements, and civil society representatives. In their statement, they noted that "President Maia Sandu and the Action and Solidarity party are increasingly setting themselves against the people whose votes brought them to power in the country. The people believed in their promises to fight corruption and improve living standards. At the same time, Maia Sandu and the Action and Solidarity party promised not to touch upon topics that would cause conflict in society, in particular the cancellation of Victory Day celebrations on 9 May".⁷² On 3 June 2023, many people rallied in the centre of Chisinau against the renaming of Victory Day and the moving of its date.⁷³ Thousands of people marched from the railway station to the monument to the heroes-liberators.

71 Правительство Молдовы одобрило инициативу правящей партии о переименовании Дня Победы. RuBaltic. 19 июня 2023 г. [The Moldovan Government Approves the Ruling Party's Initiative to Rename Victory Day. RuBaltic. 19 June 2023.] <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/19062023-pravitelstvo-moldovy-odobrilo-initsiativu-pravyashchey-partii-o-pereimenovanii-dnya-pobedy/>

72 В Молдове Партия социалистов потребовала публичного обсуждения идеи отмены Дня Победы. RuBaltic. 5 июня 2023 г. [In Moldova, the Socialist Party Calls for Public Debate on the Idea of Cancelling Victory Day. RuBaltic. 5 June 2023.] <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/05062023-v-moldove-partiya-sotsialistov-potrebovala-publichnogo-obsuzhdeniya-idei-otmeny-dnya-pobedy/>

73 Жители Молдовы вышли на марш против закона о переименовании Дня Победы. RuBaltic. 3 июня 2023 г. [Residents of Moldova Marched Against the Law to Rename Victory Day. RuBaltic. 3 June 2023.] <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/03062023-zhiteli-moldovy-vyshli-na-marsh-protiv-zakona-o-pereimenovanii-dnya-pobedy/>

Many of them came with portraits of their relatives who fought in the Great Patriotic War.⁷⁴

In 2024, Moldova's ruling elites continued their war on historical memory. In February, the country's media space discussed an initiative to rename a street in the city of Balti named after Ivan Stepanovich Konev, Soviet marshal and two-time Hero of the Soviet Union.⁷⁵ On 3 April 2024, on the initiative of the Prosecutor General's Office, the Ministry of Justice and the Moldovan Information and Security Service, a district court in Chisinau declared as extremist the flag with three horizontal lines of black, yellow and white colours used in the Russian Empire.⁷⁶

On 30 April 2024, amendments to Law on Monuments were adopted in Moldova. According to these amendments, local authorities may initiate the demolition of a monument under their jurisdiction, on the pretext of them "violating public order and good morals". The initiative has not yet been put into practice.⁷⁷

In 2024, the Moldovan leadership distanced itself almost entirely from the numerous commemorative events held to mark the 79th anniversary of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War. The only event the leadership attended was the modest laying of flowers at the Eternal Flame and the granite steles of anti-fascist soldiers. All efforts were focused on celebrating the "Day of Europe" on 9 May 2024. To this end, a "European Town" was set up in the central square of Chisinau, where visitors could learn about the lives of EU member states in the

74 Митинг против отмены Дня Победы прошел в Кишиневе. Известия. 3 июня 2023 г. [A Rally Against the Cancellation of Victory Day is Held in Chisinau. Izvestia. 3 June 2023.] <https://iz.ru/1523084/2023-06-03/miting-protiv-otmeny-dnia-pobedy-proshel-v-kishineve>

75 В Молдавии решили переименовать улицу маршала Конева. 23 февраля 2024 г. [Moldova Decides to Rename the Street of Marshal Konev. 23 February 2024.] <https://ria.ru/20240223/pereimenovanie-1929163660.html?ysclid=m6r4y1z0ye212060720>

76 В Молдавии признали флаг Российской империи экстремистским. 5 апреля 2024 г. [Moldova Recognizes the Flag of the Russian Empire as Extremist. 5 April 2024.] <https://ria.ru/20240405/glag-1938068144.html?ysclid=lwkgd92gcg122682774>

77 Правительство Молдавии одобрило поправки в закон о сносе памятников. 30 апреля 2024 г. [The Moldovan Government Approves Amendments to Law on the Demolition of Monuments. 30 April 2024.] <https://ria.ru/20240430/moldiviya-1943133341.html?ysclid=m6r541wcmk195597052>

pavilions. However, despite the country's pro-Western forces taking an openly anti-Russian stance, more than 50,000 people from both sides of the Dniester river took part in commemorative events held in Chisinau and across the Republic.⁷⁸

On 25 September 2024, President Maia Sandu refused to introduce a single medal to mark the 80th anniversary of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War, as adopted by the CIS. The award was intended to honour those who had defeated Nazism. As of September 2024, 24 former Nazi fighters were living in Moldova.⁷⁹

It should be noted that Maia Sandu regime's policy of opposing the celebration of Victory Day is not popular with the country's population. According to a 2023 survey, nearly 90 per cent of the country's residents said they considered 9 May to be Victory Day and did not support the idea of renaming it. A sociological survey conducted in spring 2024 showed that Victory Day was celebrated by 64 per cent of people in the country.⁸⁰

The position taken by Moldova when voting in the UN General Assembly on the draft resolution, submitted annually by Russia and other co-sponsors, entitled "Combating Glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other Practices that Contribute to Fuelling Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance", is indicative of its attitude towards the glorification of the Nazis and their accomplices, as well as monuments in honour of those who had fought against fascism. From 2022 to

78 В Молдавии более 50 тысяч человек приняли участие в памятных маршах. 9 мая 2024 г. [Over 50,000 People Take Part in Commemorative Marches in Moldova. 9 May 2024.] <https://ria.ru/turbopages.org/turbo/ria.ru/s/20240509/moldavia-1945028991.html>

79 «Идеальная провинция». Как Майя Санду обкатывает фашистскую политику румын. Регнум. 30 сентября 2024 г. ['Perfect Province'. Maia Sandu is Testing Fascist Policies of the Romanians. Regnum. 30 September 2024.] <https://regnum.ru/article/3919742>

80 Апартеид имени Санду: молдаван пытаются сделать бесправными на собственной земле. RuBaltic. 10 марта 2025 г. [Apartheid by Sandu: Attempts to Make Moldovans Powerless on Their Own Land. RuBaltic. 10 March 2025.] <https://www.rubaltic.ru/article/politika-i-obshchestvo/2025-03-10aparteid-imeni-sandu-moldavan-pytayutsya-sdelat-bespravnyimi-na-sobstvennoy-zemle/>

2024, the Moldovan delegation voted against the resolution, acting "in unison" with the EU delegations (in 2021, it abstained).

Against this backdrop, it is not surprising that there have been a number of problems with the preservation of more than 2,000 monuments to Soviet soldiers-liberators in Moldova over the past few years. Due to financial constraints, for example, the local and central authorities fail to maintain the monuments in proper condition, particularly by failing to carry out scheduled repairs.

Cases of desecration of Soviet memorials are also growing in number. For instance, Moldova's central 'Eternity' memorial was attacked twice in 2019: a memorial plaque was smashed and parts of the entrance were stolen. Similar news reports from the regions included coverage of the destruction of a community-installed commemorative plaque at a long-term firing point in the village of Cosnita, Dubasari district, as well as the desecration of the pedestal of the T-34 tank monument in the village of Leuseni, Hincesti district.

In January 2021, the memorial to the heroes of the 161st Rifle Regiment of the 95th Rifle Division near the village of Rusca, Hincesti district, was desecrated.

In June 2021, the "Glory to Heroes" memorial complex in Vulcanesti (the ATU of Gagauzia) was seriously damaged by vandals. The Eternal Flame star was torn off the monument's pedestal and thrown away nearby.

On 21 August 2021, a memorial plaque was unveiled near the village of Korpaci to honour the Guards Uman Airborne Division, which reached the border area of the USSR near the Prut River in March 1944.

On 23 August 2021, a plate saying "Inspected. No mines", placed on one of the buildings in Chisinau, which the municipal authorities of the Moldovan capital had recognized as a historical monument, was desecrated.⁸¹

⁸¹ В Молдавии открыли памятник воевавшим на стороне нацистской Германии румынам. Известия. 26 октября 2021 г. [A Monument to Romanians who Fought Alongside Nazi Germany Unveiled in Moldova.

In March 2022, Ukrainian migrants and pro-Romanian radicals from Anatol Salaru's National Unity party in Moldova vandalized the "Victoria" memorial complex near the village of Leuseni. The front of the pedestal was painted blue, and the commemorative date plaques were doused with paint. In addition, vandals desecrated the T-34 tank monument on a pedestal in Balti (4 March 2022); the memorial plaques at a long-term firing point in Cosnita village, Dubasari district (27 March 2022, the memorial had been attacked by vandals several times before), as well as the Lenin monument in Anenii Noi (9 March 2022).

On 4 November 2022, vandals desecrated the Soviet memorial complex "Grieving Mother" in Edinet. The radicals painted swastikas on the monuments and bas-reliefs.⁸²

On 13 August 2023, a monument honouring Soviet soldiers near the village of Korpaci in the Edinet district was desecrated with insulting inscriptions and symbols of Iron Guard, Romanian fascist organization. The following day, local activists, supporters of the Revival party, cleaned up the monument.⁸³

Izvestia. 26 October 2021.] <https://iz.ru/1241365/2021-10-26/v-moldavii-otkryli-pamiatnik-voevavshim-na-storone-natsistkoi-germanii-rumynam>

82 В Молдове вандалы нанесли свастику на памятники мемориала советским воинам. Point. 5 ноября 2022 г. [Vandals Paint Swastikas on Monuments of the Soviet Soldiers' Memorial in Moldova. Point. 5 November 2022.] <https://point.md/ru/novosti/obschestvo/v-moldove-vandaly-nanesli-svastiku-na-pamiatniki-memoriala-sovetskim-voinam/>

83 Активисты в Молдове отчистили от краски оскверненный вандалами памятник советским воинам. RuBaltic. 14 августа 2023 г. [Activists in Moldova Remove Paint from the Vandalized Soviet Soldiers Monument. RuBaltic. 14 August 2023.] <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/14082023-aktivisty-v-moldove-otchistili-ot-kraski-oskvernennyy-vandalami-pamyatnik-sovetskim-voinam/>



Activists clean the monument to Soviet soldiers.

Source: <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/14082023-aktivisty-v-moldove-otchistili-ot-kraski-oskvernenny-vandalami-pamyatnik-sovetskim-voinam/>

On the night of 11 September 2023, a monument commemorating the heroic deeds of the Soviet liberators of the Sixth Tank Army in Cornesti, Ungheni district, was desecrated by unidentified vandals. Insulting inscriptions were written on the pedestal of the commemorative T-34 tank, erected in honour of the soldiers of the Sixth Tank Army who were the first to reach the border area of the USSR in March 1944.⁸⁴ Volunteers from Balti joined in with the clean-up of the monument.⁸⁵ Russia's Investigative Committee launched an investigation into the desecration.⁸⁶

On 6 October 2023, the memorial to the 161st Rifle Regiment of the 95th Moldovan Rifle Division in Rusca village, Hincesti district, became the

84 В Молдавии осквернили танк-памятник Т-34. 11 сентября 2023 г. [T-34 Tank Monument Desecrated in Moldova. 11 September 2023.] <https://ria.ru/turbopages.org/turbo/ria.ru/s/20230911/pamyatnik-1895614707.html>

85 В Молдове вандалы осквернили танк-памятник Т-34. RuBaltic. 11 сентября 2023 г. [Vandals Desecrate T-34 Tank Monument in Moldova. RuBaltic. 11 September 2023.] <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/11092023-v-moldove-vandaly-oskvernili-tankpamyatnik-t34/>

86 СК расследует обстоятельства осквернения танка-памятника Т-34 в Молдове. RuBaltic. 13 сентября 2023 г. [The Investigative Committee is Looking into the Desecration of T-34 Tank Monument in Moldova. RuBaltic. 13 September 2023.] <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/13092023-sk-rassleduet-obstoyatelstva-oskverneniya-tankapamyatnika-t34-v-moldove/>

target of blasphemous acts. Radicals added anti-Russian and anti-Soviet inscriptions to the immortal lines of Robert Rozhdestvensky.⁸⁷

In Balti, on the night of 15-16 January 2024, the information panel installed on the street named after Rodion Malinovsky, Marshal of the Soviet Union, whose name is inextricably linked to the Moldovan land, was torn down. On 18 January, however, thanks to the efforts of concerned young activists, the information panel was returned to its rightful place, and a new one was installed on the street named after the hero of the Great Patriotic War.⁸⁸

On 8 February 2024, Aleksey Petrovich, chairman of the search movement "Russian Historical and Patriotic Club", recorded the disappearance of a sculpture of the Soviet Soldier, which had been part of a monument marking a mass grave in the village of Bilicenii Vechi, Singerei district, in northern Moldova.^{89,90}

On 24 February 2024, damage was discovered to the memorial monument of Guards Captain Andrey Kolbinsky, participant in the Great Patriotic War, which was installed at the "Eternity" military glory memorial in Chisinau. The black granite tombstone monument, bearing inscriptions and a photograph of the deceased, was thrown from its pedestal, leaving minor surface damage to the granite slab. On 28 February 2024, the Russian Embassy in Moldova and activists from the search movement restored the said site of cultural and historical heritage.

87 Вандалы осквернили памятник советским воинам в Молдавии. 6 октября 2023 г. [Vandals Desecrate a Monument to Soviet Soldiers in Moldova. 6 October 2023.] <https://ria.ru/turbopages.org/turbo/ria.ru/s/20231006/vandaly-1900991240.html>

88 В городе Бельцы вандалы сорвали посвященное маршалу Малиновскому панно. [Vandals Tear Down Information Panel Dedicated to Marshal Malinovsky in the City of Balti.] <https://tass.ru/turbopages.org/turbo/tass.ru/s/obschestvo/19737519>

89 The Soldier of Victory, 9 February 2024. http://t.me/soldat_pobedi/4304

90 На севере Молдовы демонтировали памятник на могиле советских воинов. RuBaltic. 9 февраля 2024 г. [A Monument on the Grave of Soviet Soldiers Dismantled in Northern Moldova. RuBaltic. 9 February 2024.] <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/09022024-na-severe-moldovy-demontirovali-pamyatnik-na-mogile-sovetskikh-voinov/>

On 17 April 2024, a monument commemorating Komsomol members of the anti-fascist movement in the town of Riscani, in the north of the country, was vandalized. Unidentified individuals sprayed insulting graffiti and Nazi symbols on the granite slabs.⁹¹ In connection with this act of vandalism, Eugenia Gutsul, the head of Gagauzia, filed a complaint with the police. On her social media account, she suggested that supporters of Moldova's accession to Romania were involved in this barbaric act. "I provided additional information to the investigators at the Buiucani Police Inspectorate today who are investigating my complaint against Vasile Sinigur, supporter of the Unionist and Action and Solidarity parties. This activist is well known in Gagauzia – desecration of the monument to soldiers-liberators, insulting inscriptions on the stele at the northern entrance to the autonomous region, and regular insulting attacks against the Gagauz people", wrote Eugenia Gutsul on her Telegram channel.⁹² Alexandr Nesterovschi, Moldovan MP who reported the vandalism on social networks, said that just a few days earlier, young Renaissance party activists had restored the monument and cleaned the surrounding area.⁹³

On 6 May 2024, radical nationalists posted a video on social media in which they insulted the villagers of Bubuieci who had fought in the Red Army during the Great Patriotic War, and called for the demolition of the monument erected in honour of the Soviet Soldier-Liberator.⁹⁴

91 На севере Молдавии неизвестные осквернили памятник советским героям. 17 апреля 2024 г. [A Monument to Soviet Heroes Desecrated by Unidentified Persons In Northern Moldova. 17 April 2024.] <https://iz-ru.turbopages.org/turbo/iz.ru/s/1683689/2024-04-17/na-severe-moldavii-neizvestnye-oskvernili-pamiatnik-sovetskim-geroiam>; В Молдавии вандалы осквернили памятник комсомольцам, погибшим в ВОВ. 17 апреля 2024 г. [Vandals in Moldova Desecrate a Monument to Komsomol Members Who Died in World War II. 17 April 2024.] <https://ria.ru/20240417/moldaviya-1940581152.html?ysclid=m6r4zkokc261451752>

92 Глава Гагаузии обратилась в полицию из-за осквернения памятника советским солдатам. ТАСС. 16 апреля 2024 г. [The Head of Gagauzia Appeals to the Police over the Desecration of a Monument to Soviet Soldiers. TASS. 16 April 2024.] <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/20565513>

93 В Молдавии вандалы снова безнаказанно оскверняют памятники советским воинам. EurAsiaDaily. 17 апреля 2024 г. [In Moldova, Monuments to Soviet Soldiers Vandalized Once Again, with the Perpetrators Going Unpunished. EurAsiaDaily. 17 April 2024.] <https://eadaily.com/ru/news/2024/04/17/v-moldavii-vandaly-snova-beznakazanno-oskvernyayut-pamyatniki-sovetskim-voinam>

94 The Soldier of Victory, 6 May 2024. http://t.me/soldat_pobedi/5078

Despite relevant provisions in Moldovan legislation that provide for the punishment of vandalism, nobody has ever been prosecuted for such offences.

In all such cases, the Russian Embassy has acted promptly, publicly stating its opposition to such actions and urging the local authorities to take measures to find and punish the perpetrators.

In this series of incidents involving the desecration of monuments to Soviet soldiers, we should mention the incident of 22 October 2022. On that day, the Moldovan Ministry of Defense announced that it had been forced to extinguish the Eternal Flame at the country's largest memorial, "Eternity", for several hours due to low pressure in the gas transmission network. This decision by the authorities provoked public outrage. Former president of the Republic Igor Dodon, for example, called the incident a disgrace, and citizens and public figures began gathering with candles at the memorial to military glory. After that, the authorities relit the Eternal Flame. Several experts and Russian officials described the incident as an attempt by the Moldovan authorities to pressure Russia into offering discounts on gas supplies during regular negotiations on a new long-term contract for supplying "blue fuel" to Moldova, amid the gas crisis that had emerged in the country against this backdrop.⁹⁵

On 30 April 2024, amendments to Law on Monuments were adopted in Moldova. According to these amendments, local authorities may initiate the demolition of a monument under their jurisdiction, on the pretext of them

95 «За то плюнули в сторону России»: в Молдавии открыли памятник румынским оккупантам – «освободителям» 1941 года. Комсомольская правда. 26 октября 2021 г. ['But Then We Gave Russia a Slap in the Face': A Monument to Romanian Occupiers-'liberators' of 1941 Unveiled in Moldova. Komsomolskaya Pravda. 26 October 2021.] <https://www.kp.ru/daily/28348/4495374/>; Примаков счел потушенный в Кишиневе Вечный огонь попыткой давления на РФ. Известия. 23 октября 2021 г. [Primakov Views the Extinguished Eternal Flame in Chisinau as an Attempt to Put Pressure on Russia. Izvestia. 23 October 2021.] <https://iz.ru/1239794/2021-10-23/primakov-schel-potushennyi-v-kishineve-vechnyi-ogon-popytkoi-davleniia-na-rf>; Главное про энергетический кризис в Молдавии: откуда долг за газ в 700 миллионов долларов и зачем тушили Вечный огонь. Комсомольская правда. 23 октября 2021 г. [The Main Thing About the Energy Crisis in Moldova: Where Has the USD 700 Million Gas Debt Come From and Why Extinguishing the Eternal Flame? Komsomolskaya Pravda. 23 October 2021.] <https://www.kp.ru/daily/28347.5/4493983/>

"violating public order and good morals". The initiative has not yet been put into practice.⁹⁶

96 Правительство Молдавии одобрило поправки в закон о сносе памятников. 30 апреля 2024 г. [The Moldovan Government Approves Amendments to Law on the Demolition of Monuments. 30 April 2024.] <https://ria.ru/20240430/moldaviya-1943133341.html?ysclid=m6r541wcmk195597052>

Poland

Poland is among the nations whose authorities are actively demolishing monuments and memorials in tribute to Red Army soldiers who lost their lives during the country's liberation from Nazism in World War II. Cause-and-effect linkages between the events of that tragic period for all mankind and their assessments are deliberately distorted to suit political interests. Ideas denying the decisive contribution of the Red Army to the defeat of Hitler's Germany are being propagated, and efforts are being made to eradicate the Soviet/Russian war memorial heritage in Poland. The Polish authorities have set out to erase from public consciousness the memory of the liberating role played by the Red Army (600,000 soldiers and officers of the Red Army died liberating Poland from the Nazis) in saving the Polish people from physical extermination by the Nazis. In the Polish media, Soviet soldiers are portrayed in a negative way only, and are accused of committing crimes against civilians and civilian infrastructure out of historical context. Furthermore, the narrative of a "double occupation" of Poland by Nazi and Soviet forces is being promoted. Local propaganda portrays Poland itself exclusively as the main victim of "two totalitarianisms".

The Polish authorities have not only been demolishing monuments to Soviet soldiers, but also trying to whitewash Nazi collaborators. As to Poland's policy of falsifying history, its government has been making special efforts to glorify the role of "underground heroes" – the "cursed" (or "unbroken") soldiers⁹⁷ in achieving freedom and independence of post-war Poland (which became allegedly possible only at the juncture of the 1980s–1990s⁹⁸).

97 Members of the Polish nationalist (anti-Soviet) underground who organized the killing of civilians, including women and children, inter alia, Orthodox Belarusians in Eastern Poland (Podlasie), Jews, and Poles after the war. One of the 'cursed' commanders was Romuald Rajs (Bury). After Poland had been liberated in 1944-1945 by Soviet troops, armed resistance was initiated by part of the Polish anti-Soviet underground against Red Army soldiers and representatives of the new Polish government.

98 <https://www.prezydent.pl/aktualnosci/wypowiedzi-prezydenta-rp/wystapienia/art.989.wystapienie-podczas-centralnych-obchodow-narodowego-dnia-pamieci-zolnierzy-wykletych.html>

Furthermore, by adopting a Russophobic stance and showing solidarity with the neo-Nazi regime in Ukraine, the Polish authorities are applying double standards to figures and events of World War II that are viewed negatively even within Polish society. This is also clear from the way people feel about what happened during the Volyn massacre.⁹⁹

The process of "decommunization" of public space in Poland is carried out in accordance with the Act on the Prohibition of the Promotion of Communism or Other Totalitarian System of 1 April 2016 (with subsequent amendments). Monuments to Soviet soldiers-liberators are being taken down due to the perception that they represent the ideology of communism or promote it. Poland, therefore, violates its international commitments as outlined in the Treaty between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Poland on Friendly and Good-Neighbourly Cooperation of 22 May 1992, as well as the intergovernmental agreements regarding cooperation in cultural, scientific, and educational fields dated 25 August 1993, and burials and commemoration sites for victims of wars and repression ratified on 22 February 1994.

Moreover, at the end of the 2010s, monuments to Soviet soldiers in Poland were not only demolished, but also depersonalized (with references to Red Army soldiers, in whose honour they had been erected, removed), and altered in terms of how they looked and what they represented.

Since the late 1990s, the majority of monuments to Soviet soldiers, located outside burial grounds, have been destroyed in Poland. By 2024, only a few dozen remained out of the 561 memorials that had been included in the "List of Memorial Sites of Soviet Defenders of the Motherland Who Fell on Polish Soil". The list was compiled jointly with the Polish Side in 1997. Even these surviving memorials are now under threat of destruction.

⁹⁹ This aspect is covered in greater detail in the second joint report by the foreign ministries of the Russian Federation and the Republic of Belarus regarding the human rights situation in certain countries.

Since the start of Russia's special military operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine, and protect the civilian population of Donbass, the number of acts of vandalism against Soviet memorials and graves in Poland has increased dramatically. Typically, vandals deface monuments with Nazi and Ukrainian neo-Nazi symbols and obscene language, and douse them with paint.

In 2022, there were 46 cases of vandalism against the graves of Soviet soldiers, four against non-burial monuments, and 18 cases of illegal demolition of monuments. Specifically, such incidents occurred in urban and suburban areas within the voivodeships: in Greater Poland (Rawicz, Poznan and Gniezno); Holy Cross (Sandomierz); Lubusz (Zary); Masovian (Warsaw, Radom, Garwolin and Minsk Mazowieckie); Silesia (Katowice and Chorzow); Lower Silesia (Wroclaw, Luban, Walbrzych, Katy Wroclawskie, Swidnica and Boleslawiec); Pomeranian (Gdansk, Zukowo and Tczew); West Pomeranian (Kolobrzeg and Koszalin); Kuyavian–Pomeranian (the settlement of Glynki (Torun district) and Brodnica)); Lesser Poland (Szczucin, Wegrzce, Myslenice and Wadowice); Subcarpathian (Krosno and Mielec); Lublin (the village of Flisy and the settlement of Wilkow); Podlaskie (Zambrow and the village of Harasimowicze); Warmian–Masurian (Elblag, Lubawa, Ostroda and the village of Wronki Wielkie); and Lodz (Lodz, Zgierz and Piotrkow Trybunalski). Four incidents unrelated to burials were recorded involving monuments in Olistyn in Warmian–Masurian voivodeship, Glubczyce in Opole voivodeship, Wegrzce in Lesser Poland, and Gliwice in Silesian voivodeship. Some memorial sites (in Warsaw, Poznan, Wroclaw, Tczew, and Luban) were repeatedly desecrated. A number of monuments (for example, in the settlement of Chrzowice-Folwark, and the city of Glubczyce) were demolished "for the cameras".

At the same time, the Polish authorities openly expressed their intention to destroy memorials honouring fallen Red Army soldiers. In March 2022, Karol Nawrocki, chairman of the Institute of National Remembrance (INR), announced that the Institute possessed a catalogue of 60 commemorative

locations associated with the Red Army and that the INR would seek to remove them in collaboration with the local government.¹⁰⁰ In April 2022, he pledged at a press conference that the INR would energetically implement the "decommunization" law relating to monuments (excluding burials).¹⁰¹

It is quite revealing that the Polish local authorities at various levels initiated mass demolition of Soviet monuments located outside burial grounds, both independently and in coordination with the Polish Institute of National Remembrance.

In 2023, 13 acts of vandalism were reported at Soviet burial sites, along with eight cases of illegal dismantling of memorial objects.

The following should be mentioned, among others. On 5 May 2023, an obelisk was removed in Glubczyce, which had been erected in 1945 on the former grave of 676 Soviet soldiers of the 1st Ukrainian Front (according to the Polish Red Cross, the remains of the soldiers were reportedly moved to a different cemetery in 1952). At a press conference ahead of the demolition, INR chairman Karol Nawrocki and Adam Siwek, director of the INR's Office for Commemorating the Struggle and Martyrdom, insulted the memory of fallen Soviet soldiers.

In August 2023, it emerged that a sculpture dedicated to Terespol's former mayor (1935–1939) had been erected on the site of a monument on the mass grave of 64 Soviet soldiers killed in 1944. The monument had been demolished in Terespol, Lublin Voivodeship, in July 2022.

In November 2023, in the settlement of Kiezlino near Olsztyn, Warmian-Masurian voivodeship, by a decision of the Polish local government, agreed with the Institute of National Remembrance and the Warmian-Masurian voivode, a stone monument was demolished at the place of death of Piotr

100 <https://www.pap.pl/aktualnosci/news%2C1136300%2Cprezes-ipn-czas-dokonczyc-dekomunizacje-polskiej-przestrzeni-publicznej>

101 <https://dzieje.pl/demontaz-upamietniajacych-armie-czerwona-pomnikow-w-siedlcu-i-miedzyblociu>

Dernov, Hero of the Soviet Union, who had covered an enemy firing point with his body.

In 2024, 16 cases of vandalism to the graves of Soviet soldiers, two cases of illegal demolition of memorial sites and two acts of vandalism to monuments were reported. As of January 2025, two acts of vandalism against Soviet war graves were recorded.

The Russian Side usually finds out about the destruction of monuments after conducting an inventory. Recently, the Polish media have preferred to remain silent about such facts, so the list of cases involving the destruction of monuments, of which the Russian Side has become aware, is far from complete and will be updated over time.

Furthermore, Polish local governments, in coordination with the Polish Institute of National Remembrance, also initiate the demolition of Soviet monuments located outside the burial grounds.

In February 2024, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Russian Federation (MIA of Russia) put Roman Szelemej, President (Mayor) of Walbrzych in the Lower Silesian voivodeship, on a wanted list. He had ordered the dismantling of a monument to Soviet soldiers near the Soviet soldiers' cemetery of the city in September 2022. The wanted list also included Karol Nawrocki and Karol Rabenda, former Deputy Minister of State Assets of Poland, who had been pushing for the removal of the monument to Soviet soldiers in Malbork (Pomeranian voivodeship) and involved in its demolition on 9 August 2022. In May 2024, the Russian Interior Ministry added Marek Charzewski, current mayor of Malbork, and Jerzy Wrebiak, former mayor of Brzeg in Opole voivodeship, to its wanted database.¹⁰²

Following the start of the SMO, the Polish Side ceased to inform Russian diplomatic missions of the discovery and subsequent reburial of the remains of

¹⁰² <https://topwar.ru/242464-mvd-rossii-objavilo-v-rozysk-rjad-byvshih-i-nyneshnih-pribaltijskih-i-polskih-chinovnikov-za-snos-pamjatnikov-sovetskim-voinam-osvoboditeljam.html?ysclid=lwgir8zfq2556827709>

Soviet soldiers. The relevant Polish authorities have failed to respond to the Russian Side's submissions confirming its interest in participating in the reburial ceremonies for Soviet servicemen, who had died during World War II while fighting to liberate Poland or in German camps in its territory.

Ukraine

It is quite clear by now that the ruling regime in Kiev is an out-and-out Nazi regime, inspired by Nazi Germany in everything it does and engaged in countless gross and systematic violations of human rights in all areas of public life.

Neo-Nazism has a long history in Ukraine, practically since "independence" itself. And since 2014, when nationalists seized power in Kiev as a result of an anti-constitutional armed coup d'état orchestrated by the West, violations of fundamental human rights and freedoms in Ukraine, especially the glorification of Nazism, have become widespread and systemic. With active encouragement from their Western handlers, the government is working to mould the society on the basis of Nazi ideas. To that end, Kiev is consistently spreading aggressive neo-Nazi propaganda accompanied by the rewriting of the history of the Great Patriotic War and World War II. It has become a deliberate state policy in Ukraine to glorify Nazism, encourage its penetration into all spheres of public life, systemically suppress human rights, opposition and dissent, and fight against everything connected with Russia. At the same time, Ukraine is consistently pursuing a course of forced Ukrainianization of all spheres of public life and accelerated assimilation of national minorities.

It is implanting a distorted version of history which diminishes the USSR's role in and contribution to the victory over Nazism, in order to erase the historical memory of the Ukrainian people about the events of that war. Ukraine's state policy and the government's active steps at all levels aimed at whitewashing and glorifying Nazism and Nazi collaborators of World War II, and dignifying various Ukrainian groups that collaborated with the Nazi invaders during the war, under the guise of members of the "national liberation movement" – all serve to cultivate nationalist sentiments among broad segments of Ukrainian society. Particular attention is paid to the adoption of a wide range

of measures to provide state support for the movements glorifying Nazi criminals and collaborators.

In parallel with honouring Nazi collaborators and vilifying the memory of Red Army soldiers, the Ukrainian authorities are working to demolish monuments to Soviet soldiers-liberators. Right-wing radicals have joined local authorities in their "war" on monuments to Red Army soldiers and victims of WWII tragic events, including the Holocaust. Until 2022, such instances were put on record by Ukrainian law enforcement agencies and entered into the unified pre-trial investigation register. However, the perpetrators of these blasphemous acts were never brought to justice.

In February 2020, nationalists in Odessa removed a memorial plaque featuring a bas-relief of Marshal Georgy Zhukov from the wall of the student dormitory at Odessa National Mechnikov University. In the post-war years, it housed the headquarters of the Odessa Military District, headed by Georgy Zhukov from 1946 to 1948. This bas-relief was the last one in the city commemorating the great Soviet commander and Marshal of the Victory. "Activists" did this with the consent of the university's administration.¹⁰³

In the same month, in Odessa, vandals desecrated the monument on April 10 Square, commemorating the liberation of the city,¹⁰⁴ and in Kiev, two young people desecrated the monument to Nikolay Vatutin in Mariinsky park by dousing it with brilliant green.¹⁰⁵ The monument to Nikolay Vatutin stands over the general's tomb. The media first reported that the police had opened a criminal case under Part 3 of Article 297 of the Ukrainian Criminal Code, relating to the abuse of graves, other burial places or the bodies of the deceased.¹⁰⁶ However, when the police detained one of the vandals later, he was

¹⁰³ <https://ria.ru/20200204/1564239120.html>

¹⁰⁴ <https://russian.rt.com/ussr/news/721345-vandaly-oskvernili-memorial-odessa>

¹⁰⁵ <https://russian.rt.com/ussr/news/716870-kiev-zelyonka-pamyatnik-vatutin>

¹⁰⁶ <https://kyiv.npu.gov.ua/news/novini/u-stoliczi-speczpriznachenczi-zatrimali-molodika-zaposhkodzhennya-pam-yatnika>

charged with an offence under Part 2 of Article 296 of the Ukrainian Criminal Code for hooliganism committed by a group of people.¹⁰⁷

In March 2020, in the town of Nyrkov, Ternopol region, unidentified perpetrators vandalized a Soviet Soldier monument by chipping off its head and part of its arm. Criminal proceedings were initiated by the law enforcement authorities under part 2 of Article 297 of the Ukrainian Criminal Code.

In May 2020, nationalists defiled a monument in Shelkovichny park in Slavyansk, on the eve of the Victory Anniversary celebrations, by daubing the figure of the Soviet Soldier, standing against the backdrop of the Victory Banner, with the colours of the OUN flag. The monument erected on the mass burial site of soldiers who had perished liberating Ukraine from Nazi invaders, was damaged as well.¹⁰⁸

The monument to Georgy Zhukov was once again attacked in Kharkov on 19-20 May 2020. For two nights in a row, unidentified individuals were dousing it with red paint.¹⁰⁹

On 12 January 2021, unidentified individuals desecrated the mass grave of soldiers-liberators of the Great Patriotic War in Kherson. Vandals smashed and knocked down 17 monuments at the city's memorial cemetery.

On 13 January 2021, in the village of Yareski, Poltava region, radicals defiled a monument to Soviet soldiers who had perished in the Great Patriotic War, and damaged the pedestal of the monument.

On 23 March 2021, nationalists defiled and damaged the memorial to soldiers-internationalists on Shevchenko Boulevard in Cherkasy.

On the night of 9 May 2021, in the towns of Novy Rozdol and Sudovaya Vishnya, Lvov region, vandals damaged monuments to Red Army soldiers.

107 <https://strana.today/news/249605-deputat-partii-poroshenko-vzjal-na-poruki-oskvernitelja-pamjatnika-vatutinu.html> (earlier <https://strana.ua/news/249605-deputat-partii-poroshenko-vzjal-na-poruki-oskvernitelja-pamjatnika-vatutinu.html>)

108 <https://ruskiymir.ru/news/272570/>

109 <https://www.interfax.ru/world/709467>

In July 2021, the USSR Armed Forces Military Glory Monument was demolished in Lvov. The statues of the Soviet Soldier and Mother Russia were the last to be dismantled. According to media reports, all parts of the monument were transferred to the "Territory of Terror" museum. The authorities plan to build a small park to commemorate the heroes of Ukraine on the former monument site.¹¹⁰ The Monument to the Glory of the Soviet Armed Forces was installed in Lvov's Central Park of Culture and Recreation in 1970. The ensemble comprised a 30-metre stele, a massive wall adorned with figures of Soviet soldiers, and two central sculptures symbolizing the Soviet Soldier and Mother Russia.

On 18 August 2021, the authorities of Drohobych, Lvov region, initiated the dismantling of the Eternal Flame memorial, installed on the mass grave of Red Army soldiers who had perished liberating Western Ukraine from Nazis.

On 30 September 2021, the local authorities demolished a monument on the mass grave of Red Army soldiers in Kolomyia, Ivano-Frankovsk region. Several tombstones with the names of the buried were broken.

On 19 October 2021, nationalists desecrated and damaged the monument on the mass grave of Soviet soldiers in the Lodomir cemetery's central alley in the town of Vladimir, Volyn region. Earlier, in the same alley, vandals desecrated the monument on the mass grave of soldiers who had perished during World War I.¹¹¹

On 22 October 2021, in Poltava, vandals smashed a memorial plaque in honour of Filipp Kiva, the Hero of the Soviet Union.

On 25-27 October 2021, by decision of the Lvov City Council Executive Committee, the central element of The Field of Mars (Marsovo Polye) memorial burial site, in the form of a massive copy of the Order of the Patriotic War, was

¹¹⁰ https://www.gazeta.ru/social/news/2021/07/24/n_16288910.shtml

¹¹¹ Онлайн-среда как инструмент нарушений прав и свобод в Украине. [The Online Environment as a Tool for Violation of Rights and Freedoms in Ukraine.] Institute for Legal Policy and Social Protection named after Elena Berezhnaya. 2022.

dismantled under the pretext of "renovation, renewal and redesign of the area around the Lychakov Military Cemetery".

On 2 November 2021, in the town of Dergachi, Kharkov region, a monument to the soldiers fallen in the Great Patriotic War was desecrated, and a granite monument to the NKVD 227th regiment soldiers who had lost their lives during the defense of Kiev, was demolished.

On 5 November 2021, extremists from the Future Society (C14) group damaged a memorial at the Soviet soldiers' burial site in the village of Zubra, Lvov region.

The destruction of monuments to Soviet soldiers has reached massive proportions since 2022. Such actions have been often accompanied by insulting statements from local authorities.

On the night of 15 March 2022, at Fontanka near Odessa, evil-doers destroyed a monument to NKVD soldiers who had defended the city from Nazi invaders in 1941.

On 11 April 2022, a T-34 Soviet tank monument was dismantled in Mukachevo, Transcarpathian region. On the same day, in the town of Stryi, Lvov region, a stele to the Soviet Soldier was destroyed with special equipment.

On 14 April 2022, a monument to Soviet pilots, made in the form of MIG-17 aircraft and located at the entrance to the National Renaissance park on the "Eastern" array, was dismantled in Ternopol.

On 16 April 2022, a monument to partisan Nikolai Prikhodko, Hero of the Soviet Union, was demolished with a tractor in the town of Zdolbunov, Rovno region.

On 17 April 2022, militants from the Kraken armed formation demolished a monument to Soviet military commander Georgy Zhukov in Kharkov.

On 19 April 2022, following the decision of the executive committee "On dismantling of monuments of history and monumental art", an obelisk of glory

in honour of the soldiers fallen in the Great Patriotic War was dismantled in Mukachevo, Transcarpathian region. According to local authorities, those interred in the graves will be reburied.

On the same day, a monument to the Soviet Soldier was demolished in the town of Kremenets, Ternopol region.

On 21 April 2022, Ukrainian vandals destroyed a monument to Hero of the Soviet Union Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya in Chernigov. On that very day, the Eternal Flame memorial was dismantled in a park in Drogobych, Lvov region.

On 29 April 2022, the monument on the grave of division commander Mikhail Bogomolov, Civil War hero, was demolished in Rovno. Plaques bearing the names of Great Patriotic War heroes were destroyed in that city as well.

In May 2022, a campaign was launched in the town of Dnepr (Dnepropetrovsk) to destroy sites related to the Soviet past. The Zhukov Square stele on Victory Boulevard was among the first to be knocked down. A total of 13 monuments were demolished.

In the same month, a monument to Soviet pilots was demolished on Shevchenko Boulevard in Zaporozhye. It was a pedestal-mounted La-5 fighter jet that had taken part in the Great Patriotic War air battles.

On 4 May 2022, a monument to Nikolai Kuznetsov, legendary Soviet intelligence officer and Hero of the Soviet Union, was demolished in Rovno. During the war years, Kuznetsov personally eliminated 11 generals and high-ranking officials of Nazi Germany's occupation administration.

On 5 May 2022, the Zhytomir authorities removed a T-34 tank from the pedestal of the monument to Red Army soldiers on Victory Square.¹¹²

On 8 May 2022, a monument to Valya Kotik, 14-year-old Soviet pioneer-hero, partisan and recon operative, was demounted in the village of Dolgoe,

¹¹² https://lenta.ru/articles/2023/01/19/pamyatniki_ua/

Transcarpathian region. On the same day, the Uzhgorod authorities decided to demolish a monument to the Solder-Liberator.

On 9 May 2022, it emerged that the Red Army Soldiers in Battle sculpture had been destroyed by local authorities' decision in the city of Chernovtsy. Furthermore, the Chernovtsy City Council responded to this desecration of memory by saying: "Soviet junk has no place in our beautiful city!" And Rovno demolished the monument on the grave of Red Army division commander Mikhail Bogomolov. Both cases of monument destruction were covered by Ukrainian TV channels. Later on, the same city demolished a monument to Nikolai Kuznetsov, legendary Soviet intelligence officer and Hero of the Soviet Union.¹¹³

On 13 May 2022, a monument to the Soviet Soldier was demounted from the Eternal Flame memorial complex in the town of Chervonograd, Lvov region.

On 18 May 2022, a monument to Red Army soldiers who had liberated Pustomyty, Lvov region, from the Nazis was demolished there.

On 19 May 2022, the Verkhovina village council, Lvov region, decided to demolish monuments to Red Army soldiers in the villages of Verkhovina, Iltsy, Verkhniy Yasenev and Krasnik.

On 20 May 2022, the Lvov regional administration initiated the demolition in its territory of all monuments to Red Army soldiers who had liberated the region from Nazi invaders.

On 30 May 2022, works to dismantle three Soviet memorial sites began in Victory park in Brovary, Kiev region. The memorial monuments included the Soviet MiG-15 fighter jet, which had also been manufactured in Ukraine.

In May 2022, a star was dismantled from a monument to Soviet soldiers in Svalyava, Transcarpathian region. A monument to Soviet tank crewmen was destroyed in Zaleshchiki, Ternopol region. A monument to partisans led by the

¹¹³ <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/14579273>

legendary Sidor Kovpak was demolished in the Zbarazh district, Ternopol region. A monument to the Soviet Soldier was destroyed in the village of Iltsy in the Verkhovina district, Ivano-Frankovsk region. The local authorities of Borislav, Lvov region, decided to dismantle the Soviet Soldier monument. In Rakhov, Transcarpathian region, vandals doused a monument to Red Army soldiers with red paint. A few days later, the monument was demolished. In the city of Rovno, a monument to the Budyonniy cavalrymen was destroyed. In the village of Yasenya, Transcarpathian region, a Soviet Soldier monument was also destroyed. In the village of Kapustiany, Khmelnytskyi region, Nikolai Vatutin's bust was dismantled.

The Russian Federation is keeping an eye on all this. In May 2022, based on historical materials from the Central Archive of the Russian Ministry of Defense and its Directorate for Perpetuating the Memory of Those Who Perished in Defense of the Fatherland, a new historical section entitled "Possessed by Criminal Unconsciousness" appeared on the Ministry's website.¹¹⁴ It recounts the battles fought by the Red Army for the cities in Ukraine's western regions, and the feats performed by its soldiers in these battles. The section also provides evidence of how the adherents of Banderarites and Nazi occupiers, supported by the authorities, have recently been eradicating the historical recollections of our peoples in a barbaric way.¹¹⁵

On 2 June 2022, a monument to the Soviet anti-aircraft gun 52-K was demolished in Odessa. The gun, which was installed in front of school No. 56 on Tenistaya Street, had defended the city from the Nazis during World War II. In addition, in early June, a monument to Vasiliy Chapayev was demolished and a Soviet order maquette dismantled in the village of Mazurovo, Krivoye Ozero community, Nikolaev region. In Naroditskaya community, Zhitomir region, Soviet symbols were removed from plaques bearing the names of Red Army

¹¹⁴ <https://ukrainememory.mil.ru/>

¹¹⁵ <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/14579273>

soldiers. In Karlovka, Poltava region, a mosaic featuring a hammer and sickle was knocked down. In Rovno, a bust of Soviet actress Gulya Korolyova, who had served as combat medic during the Great Patriotic War, was dismantled. In Korsun, Cherkasy region, commemorative plaques bearing the names of Heroes of the Soviet Union were dismantled.

On 3 June 2022, in Kryvoy Rog (Dnepropetrovsk Oblast), vandals covered a memorial plaque dedicated to Nikolay Vatutin with an informational leaflet honouring Roman Shukhevych. Additionally, the street sign for "Nikolay Vatutin Street" was covered with a leaflet renaming it "Roman Shukhevych Street."

On the same day, in Rovno, a monument to Red Army soldiers was dismantled.

In June 2022, in Buzhsk (Lvov Oblast), a monument to a Soviet soldier was demolished. In Chernovtsy, vandals poured red paint over a monument honouring the liberators of Bukovyna from Nazi-German occupiers, referring to the act as an "art installation." In Glukhov (Sumy Oblast), Soviet symbols were removed from a memorial dedicated to Red Army soldiers. Monuments to Red Army soldiers who died liberating Ukraine from the Nazis were also demolished in June in the cities of Rava-Ruskaya (Lvov Oblast), Berezhany (Ternopol Oblast), village of Torgovitsa (Transcarpathia Oblast), the territory of Zhdeneyevskaya community (Transcarpathia Oblast), the cities of Shumsk (Ternopol Oblast), Borislav (Lvov Oblast), villages of Urezh (Lvov Oblast), Gukalevtsy (Ternopol Oblast) and Rozhnyatov (Ivano-Frankovsk Oblast). In Kiev, commemorative plaques dedicated to Nikolay Gastello, Sidor Kovpak, Feodora Pushina, Pavel Rybalka, and Ivan Sergiyenko were removed.

In Lvov, a memorial plaque honouring wartime medics who served during the Great Patriotic War was removed from the grounds near the medical university.

In Kamenets-Podolskiy (Khmelnyskiy Oblast), a Soviet T-34 tank was dismantled from its pedestal.

Uzhhorod saw the removal of a second commemorative plaque dedicated to Ivan Ankudinov, a Great Patriotic War veteran and Hero of the Soviet Union.

In Kropivnitski (formerly Kirovograd), a memorial plaque honouring Semyon Budyonny was taken down.

In the Privolna community (Volyn Oblast), a monument to officers who served in the All-Russian Extraordinary Committee was dismantled.

In the village of Pobodna (Cherkasy Oblast), a bust of Nikolay Shchors was demolished.

In Rovno, the pedestal of a monument to Oleko Dundich, a participant in World War I and the Russian Civil War of Croatian origin, was removed. Earlier, vandals had severely damaged the monument by decapitating the sculpture. Dundich's remains were subsequently reinterred – relocated from the city centre to a local cemetery.

On 10 August 2022, the executive committee of Chernovtsy City Council resolved to dismantle several Soviet-era monuments in the city centre, including a mass grave of Red Army generals and officers, the "Soldier with a Rifle" monument, and a T-34 tank of the crew of Guards Lieutenant Nikitin. These monuments were relocated to Odesskaya Street.¹¹⁶

On 19 August 2022, the Lvov local council resolved to exhume and relocate the remains of Soviet soldiers who died during the Great Patriotic War and were buried at the Field of Mars war memorial.

On 19 October 2022, in Nikolayev, a monument to regional police officers killed during the Great Patriotic War and in the line of duty was destroyed by explosives after an initial demolition attempt failed.

On 3 November 2022, unidentified individuals detonated the "Rodina Mat" (Motherland) obelisk in Nikolayev's memorial park "Skorbyashchaya

¹¹⁶ <https://ria.ru/20220810/pamyatniki-1808630229.html>

Mat" (Grieving Mother) which was part of a memorial complex with a mass war grave.

On 9 November 2022, Uzhhorod witnessed the barbaric destruction of the "Ukraine – To Its Liberators" monument, a protected cultural heritage site. The bronze statue depicted a soldier holding an assault rifle and a victory banner was erected in 1970, commemorating the 25th anniversary of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War.¹¹⁷

On 26 November 2022, authorities in Khmelnytsky removed a Soviet-era T-34 tank monument located at the intersection of Svobody and Proskurovskaya Streets. The memorial had been erected in 1967 to honour military units that liberated the city from Nazi German forces. In a social media statement, Mayor Alexander Simchishin characterized the tank as a "unique historical artifact of its kind, of which no others remain worldwide," so the monument would be repurposed as a museum exhibit to commemorate the "period of occupation."¹¹⁸

On 16 December 2022, in Dnepr (formerly Dnepropetrovsk), a monument to pioneer Volodya Dubinin, who was a teenage partisan during the Great Patriotic War near Kerch, was dismantled.

On 25 December 2022, in Poltava, monuments to two Soviet generals from the Great Patriotic War—Nikolay Vatutin and Alexey Zygin – were splashed with red paint. They both died during war in the territory of the Ukrainian SSR. In July 2023, the monument to Nikolay Vatutin was demolished. On 27 July 2023, Verkhovna Rada MP Irina Gerashchenko from European Solidarity party published photos in her Telegram channel showing the dismantled statues of General Vatutin and poet Alexander Pushkin loaded together onto a flatbed truck.¹¹⁹

117 <https://www.mk.ru/social/2022/12/02/ot-pushkina-do-suvorova-skolko-pamyatnikov-uzhe-snesli-na-ukraine.html>

118 <https://ria.ru/20221126/pamyatnik-1834477083.html?in=t>

119 <https://easaily.com/ru/news/2023/07/27/derusifikaciya-na-ukraine-v-poltave-snesli-pamyatniki-pushkinu-i-vatutinu>

In January 2023, in Dnepr, a monument to Hero of the Soviet Union Alexander Matrosov was dismantled and a T-34 tank memorial, honouring city defender General Yefim Pushkin, was removed from its pedestal.¹²⁰ The following memorial cites were also demolished: the memorial plaque for students and teachers killed during the Great Patriotic War in the city of Uman (Cherkassy Oblast), the monument to Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya in the city of Novovolynsk (Volyn Oblast), the memorial plaque to Soviet soldier Vladimir Pachuliya and Heroes of the Soviet Union Stepan Artamonov and Zemlyanov in the city of Kolomyia (Ivano-Frankovsk Oblast), the memorial tablet for Marshal Georgy Zhukov in the city of Izyum (Kharkov Oblast), and the bust of Hero of the Soviet Union Nikolay Gastello in the village of Trapovka (Odessa Oblast). The Soviet soldier's relief sculpture was dismantled and all Soviet stars on concrete graves were plastered over at the "Hill of Glory" memorial in the city of Uzhgorod. In the city of Mostiski (Lvov Oblast) it was resolved to transfer a Soviet soldiers' cemetery from the city centre to the outskirts.¹²¹

In February 2023, the bust of Hero of the Soviet Union General Nikolay Vatutin was removed in the village of Getmanovka (Kharkov Oblast), monuments to Heroes of the Soviet Union Valery Chkalov and Nikolay Vatutin were dismantled in Kiev, and the Soviet star emblem was removed from the Eternal Flame memorial in Beregovo (Transcarpathia Oblast).

In March 2023, the following memorial cites were dismantled: Reliefs and monuments to Soviet soldiers in the city of Turka, villages of Medenichi, Strelki, Sulyatichi, Popovka, and Opory of the Lvov Oblast; in the village of Stanishovka of the Kiev Oblast, in the village of Dolina of the Ivano-Frankovsk Oblast, in the villages of Turiya Paseka, Turiya Remety, and Turitsa of the Transcarpathia Oblast; the stained glass window depicting Soviet soldiers in the

¹²⁰ <https://www.svoboda.org/a/v-dnepre-snesli-pamyatnik-aleksandru-matrosovu-raboty-vucheticha/32207478.html>

¹²¹ <https://zahid.espreso.tv/u-mostiskakh-na-lvivshchini-kladovishche-radyanskikh-soldativ-perenesut-z-tsentr-u-mista>

city of Uzhhorod, as well as the bust of Hero of the Soviet Union Vasiliy Sidorov in Kostopol of the Rovno Oblast.

In April 2023, monuments to Soviet soldiers and officers who died during the Great Patriotic War, were damaged or removed in the village of Velyatino in the Transcarpathia Oblast, city of Vladimir in the Volyn Oblast, in the villages of Voloshcha, Malnov, Beregovoye, and town of Krasnoye in the Lvov Oblast, and in the city of Nadvornaya in the Ivano-Frankovsk Oblast. In Podgaytsy (Ternopol Oblast) it was resolved to exhume the remains of Soviet soldiers in order to relocate the monument to Soviet soldiers – Hero of the Soviet Union Major Yakov Toporkov and Captain Zubkov.¹²² In late April it was reported that two more monuments honouring Soviet soldiers were demolished in the Mostiska district of Lvov Oblast: a Soviet soldier statue that was part of a memorial complex in the village of Malnov, and a "Grieving Woman" figure at the Soviet soldiers' cemetery in the town of Mostiska.¹²³

In May 2023, monuments and memorial plaques commemorating the deeds of Soviet soldiers and the Soviet people during the Great Patriotic War were dismantled in Kharkov, Putivl (Sumy Oblast), Velikiy Khodachkov village (Ternopol Oblast), and more than ten villages and towns in Transcarpathia Oblast, as well as in twenty settlements in Lvov Oblast. In the city of Svaliava, the town of Yasinia, and the village of Dolgoe in Transcarpathia Oblast, it was resolved to demolish memorial burial sites, exhume the remains of Red Army soldiers, and relocate them to a cemetery.¹²⁴

On 8 May 2023, in Poltava, the Eternal Flame—which had served as a symbol of perpetual remembrance for soldiers who died during the Great Patriotic War – was extinguished.¹²⁵

122 <https://zahid.espreso.tv/na-ternopilshchini-eksgumuyut-tila-radyanskikh-soldativ-shchob-perenesti-pamyatnik>

123 <https://sputnik.by/20230426/pamyatnik-sovetskomu-soldatu-snesli-na-zapade-ukrainy-1074853318.html>

124 http://www.mukachevo.net/ua/news/view/5054113?fbclid=IwAR22xvNpaAgxkqk058hno22om8YS_wG5FKMogqP_ulnGU1Fh0ewdAS_4v6s

125 <https://zmist.pl.ua/news/vichnyj-vogon-u-poltavi-zagasyly>

On 14 June 2023, it was reported that monuments to heroes of the Great Patriotic War were demolished in the town of Shchirets and the villages of Bolotnia and Velikoye Kolodno in Lvov Oblast. Two more monuments were dismantled in the villages of Selets and Tysmenichany in Ivano-Frankovsk Oblast. In two more villages of the Oblast—Maidan and Pavlovka—all references to the Great Patriotic War were completely removed from the monuments. One monument each was destroyed in the settlements of Velikiye Gai (Ternopol Oblast) and Velyatino (Transcarpathia Oblast). Additionally, plans were announced in the city of Rakhov (Transcarpathia Oblast) to dismantle another monument and relocate the remains of Soviet soldiers who died during the Great Patriotic War.¹²⁶

On 21 June 2023, ahead of the solemn anniversary of Nazi Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union, reports confirmed the destruction of Red Army soldiers' monuments in the villages of Zhukov, Remezovtsi, and Polyany (Zolochevskiy District, Lvov Oblast).¹²⁷

On 23 June 2023, the monument to Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya was demolished in Kiev. At the same time, messages began circulating on Ukrainian social media calling for the removal of monuments to writers Alexander Pushkin and Mikhail Bulgakov, Red Army Civil War division commander Nikolay Shchors, and Hero of the Soviet Union General Mikhail Kirponos.¹²⁸

Following another anniversary of the beginning of the Great Patriotic War, monuments honouring Red Army soldiers were destroyed in several western Ukrainian localities: Varyazh, Staroye Selo, Stenyatin, Peretoki, and Chishki (Lvov Oblast), as well as Ushomir (Zhitomir Oblast).¹²⁹

126 <https://iz.ru/1528472/2023-06-14/neskolko-pamiatnikov-geroiam-vov-snesli-na-zapadnoi-ukraine-za-sutki>

127 <https://iz.ru/1532770/2023-06-22/vo-lvovskoi-oblasti-za-sutki-demontirovali-tri-pamiatnika-sovetskim-soldatam>

128 <https://iz.ru/1533611/2023-06-23/v-kieve-snesli-pamiatnik-zoe-kosmodemianskoi>

129 <https://iz.ru/1533362/2023-06-23/na-zapade-ukrainy-snesli-shest-pamiatnikov-sovetskim-soldatam-za-sutki>

On 29 June 2023, two monuments to Red Army soldiers were destroyed in the villages of Kavskoye and Lisyatichi, Lvov Oblast. Regarding this, the head of the regional military administration, Maksim Kozitskiy, announced plans to "completely rid Lvov Oblast of markers of Soviet propaganda."¹³⁰

In July 2023 alone, about 30 monuments to Red Army soldiers were demolished in Lvov Oblast. On 15 July, Lvov Mayor Andrey Sadoviy announced the demolition of the Soviet warrior-liberator monument in the city of Vinniki.¹³¹ On 16 July, a monument to Red Army soldiers was demolished in the village of Podorozhnoye in Stryi district.¹³² On 17 July, monuments were destroyed in the settlements of Buyanov, Lipovtsy, Lopushanka, Pomoryany,¹³³ as well as in the villages of Zavodskoye and Podgaichiki.¹³⁴ On 19 July, memorials to Red Army soldiers were destroyed in the settlements of Velikiy Lyuben, Glinyany, Kutishche, Mikhailovichi, and Palikorovy.¹³⁵ On 20 July, monuments to Red Army soldiers were destroyed in the settlements of Krinitsa, Solonskoye, and Fusov.¹³⁶ On 21 July, reports appeared online about the demolition of monuments to Soviet soldiers in nine more settlements of the Oblast (Brody, Orekhovchik, Podkamen, Ponikovitsa, Rudniki, Semiginov, Skelevka, Sukhovolya, and Yazlovchik).¹³⁷ On 25 July, two monuments to Red Army soldiers were destroyed in the settlements of Pogortsy and Susolov in Lvov Oblast. The monuments were demolished and removed in parts.¹³⁸

130 <https://iz.ru/1536745/2023-06-29/vo-lvovskoi-oblasti-demontirovali-eshche-dva-sovetskikh-pamiatnika>

131 <https://iz.ru/1544699/2023-07-15/vo-lvovskoi-oblasti-demontirovali-pamiatnik-sovetskomu-voinu-osvoboditeliu>

132 <https://iz.ru/1544850/2023-07-16/vo-lvovskoi-oblasti-snesli-eshche-odin-sovetskii-pamiatnik>

133 <https://iz.ru/1546230/2023-07-19/chetyre-pamiatnika-sovetskim-soldatam-snesli-za-sutki-vo-lvovskoi-oblasti>

134 <https://iz.ru/1545688/2023-07-18/vo-lvovskoi-oblasti-za-sutki-snesli-dva-pamiatnika-sovetskim-soldatam>

135 <https://iz.ru/1546803/2023-07-20/vo-lvovskoi-oblasti-za-sutki-demontirovali-piat-pamiatnikov-sovetskim-soldatam>

136 <https://iz.ru/1547327/2023-07-21/tri-pamiatnika-sovetskim-soldatam-demontirovali-za-sutki-vo-lvovskoi-oblasti>

137 <https://iz.ru/1547881/2023-07-22/devyat-pamiatnikov-demontirovali-za-sutki-vo-lvovskoi-oblasti>

138 <https://iz.ru/1549481/2023-07-25/vo-lvovskoi-oblasti-demontirovali-dva-pamiatnika-sovetskim-soldatam>

The process of demolishing monuments honouring Soviet soldiers who liberated Ukraine from Nazism is actively underway in Lvov Oblast. In July 2023, Andrey Godik, deputy head of the Lvov regional administration, reported that approximately 100 Soviet-era monuments had been dismantled in the Oblast over six months as part of "decommunization" efforts.¹³⁹

In August 2023, the USSR coat of arms was removed from the shield of the "Rodina Mat" (Motherland) monument, installed in 1981 on the territory of the National Museum of the History of the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945 in Kiev. It was replaced with the Ukrainian trident.¹⁴⁰

Additionally, in Lvov Oblast alone during the same month, monuments dedicated to Red Army soldiers were destroyed in the following locations: in the towns of Zaborye, Oglyadov, Pavlov, Rechki, Staroye Selo, city of Chervonograd, villages of Mezhirechiye,¹⁴¹ Grushatichi, and Mizhenets in the Sambor district; towns of Baluchin, Nizy, Domashev, and Spas,¹⁴² villages of Dolinyany and Ugry. The "Motherland" monument in the town of Vorokhta (Ivano-Frankovsk Oblast) was also dismantled.¹⁴³

On 29 August 2023, it was reported that Chernovtsi authorities had demolished a monument in Taras Shevchenko Park honouring Heroes of the Soviet Union Major General Fedor Bobrov and Colonel Lavrentiy Voloshin, along with other Red Army officers. The remains were relocated elsewhere. The decision to exhume the Soviet soldiers' remains and remove the monument had been made as early as in April 2023. According to Mayor Roman Klichuk, this was the last Soviet-era monument in the regional centre.¹⁴⁴

139 <https://www.ntv.ru/novosti/2777954/>

140 <https://ria.ru/20230806/ukraina-1888424397.html>

141 <https://iz.ru/1564574/2023-08-25/vo-lvovskoi-oblasti-snesli-piat-pamiatnikov-sovetskim-soldatam>

142 <https://iz.ru/1560197/2023-08-17/vo-lvovskoi-oblasti-demontirovali-dva-pamiatnika-sovetskim-soldatam>

143 <https://iz.ru/1554032/2023-08-03/na-zapade-ukrainy-demontirovali-eshche-tri-sovetskim-pamiatnika>

144 <https://ria.ru/20230829/pamyatnik-1893014729.html>

On 6 September 2023, there were reports about the destruction of monuments to Soviet soldiers in the towns of Dobrosin, Velikiy Lyuben, and Magerov, as well as in the village of Koropuzh in Lvov Oblast.¹⁴⁵

On 26 October 2023, in Kiev, the monument to Soviet General Mikhail Kirponos, Hero of the Soviet Union, who commanded the city's defense against Nazi forces in 1941, was dismantled.¹⁴⁶

In early November 2023, in Svalyava (Transcarpathia Oblast), during the demolition of the "Memorial to Fallen Liberator Soldiers" complex, the remains of buried Soviet soldiers, partisans, and underground fighters were exhumed.¹⁴⁷

On 9 and 14 November 2023, members of "Right Sector Transcarpathia" demolished monuments to Soviet soldiers in the villages of Sredniy Berezov and Tekucha (Ivano-Frankovsk Oblast).¹⁴⁸

On 9 December 2023, Kiev removed the monument to Nikolay Shchors – commander of Ukrainian Red Guard insurgent formations and Red Army division commander during the Civil War.¹⁴⁹

On 14 December 2023, a seven-meter tall monument to Soviet soldiers who fought in the Great Patriotic War was dismantled in the village of Pererosl (Ivano-Frankovsk Oblast). The memorial also bore names of those killed in their fight against UPA nationalists.¹⁵⁰

On 16 December 2023, there were reports about the destruction of a monument in Kiev's Darnitskiy district honouring the crew of the Soviet armoured train Tarashchanets. The memorial stood at the burial site of crew members who defended the Darnitskiy railway junction against White Army

145 <https://life.ru/p/1605695>

146 <https://tass.ru/obschestvo/19126061>

147 <https://suspilne.media/uzhhorod/608543-u-svalavi-na-zakarpatti-eksgumuvali-restki-9-ti-radanskih-soldativ-ak-vidbuvaetsa-cej-proces/>

148 <https://suspilne.media/ivano-frankivsk/617459-ne-stalo-radanskogo-soldata-u-tekucij-na-frankivsini-demontuvali-pamatnik-radanskoi-dobi/>

149 <https://ria.ru/amp/20231209/schors-1914802631.html>

150 <https://suspilne.media/ivano-frankivsk/640144-u-seli-pererisl-na-frankivsini-demontuvali-7-metrovij-pamatnik-radanskim-soldatam/>

soldiers during the Civil War. The original monument was erected back in 1939 but was destroyed by Nazi forces during Kiev's occupation in 1941–1943. A replacement monument was installed in 1974.¹⁵¹

On 29 December 2023, monuments to Soviet soldiers were destroyed in the towns of Zarechovo and Simerki in Perechin territorial community, Uzhgorod district, Transcarpathia Oblast).¹⁵²

On 30 January 2024, Maksim Kozitskiy, head of the Lvov regional military administration, announced via his official Telegram account that local authorities had removed all monuments honouring soldiers who fought against Nazism in the region, with 312 monuments demolished in 2023 alone.

Notable cases concerning removing of memorials in 2024, which honoured Soviet soldiers who died fighting fascism include:

On 24 January, in the city of Vatutino (renamed Bagachevo on 19 September 2024) in Cherkassy Oblast, authorities dismantled a monument to Soviet General Nikolay Vatutin, the Hero of the Soviet Union who served during the Great Patriotic War.¹⁵³

On 19 February, there were reports about planned dismantling of a Soviet soldier monument in the village of Golgocha in the Ternopol Oblast.¹⁵⁴

On 12 April, in Kovel, Volyn Oblast, a monument to Soviet artillerymen who liberated the Ukrainian SSR from Nazi forces during the Great Patriotic War was removed.¹⁵⁵

On 26 April, in Rovno, the Eternal Glory monument, originally erected for the 40th anniversary of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War, was demolished. The eight-meter tall composition at the Glory Hill featured three bronze figures: a soldier, a partisan, and a young girl. Acting Mayor Viktor

151 <https://vz.ru/news/2023/12/16/1244642.html>

152 <https://vz.ru/news/2023/12/29/1246726.html>

153 <https://suspilne.media/amp/cherkasy/669368-na-cerkasini-demontuvali-pamatnik-rosijskomu-generalu>

154 <https://suspilne.media/ternopil/688178-u-gromadi-na-ternopilsini-demontuut-radanskij-pamatnik/>

155 <https://volyn-news.ru/society/2024/04/12/5670.html>

Shakirzyan stated that the sculptures would be scrapped, with proceeds funding drone purchases for Ukraine's Armed Forces.¹⁵⁶

On 7 May, in Kanev (Cherkassy Oblast), a bust of Oleg Koshevoy – posthumous Hero of the Soviet Union and one of the organizers and leaders of the anti-fascist youth resistance group "Young Guard" – was removed.¹⁵⁷

On 9 May, the Victory Day anniversary, vandals in Ivano-Frankovsk poured red paint on a monument commemorating the city's liberation from Nazi occupation;¹⁵⁸ unknown individuals defaced a bust of Hero of the Soviet Union Viktor Chaldayevev at the Alley of Glory in Ternopol's Old Park.¹⁵⁹

On May 10, in Nikopol (Dnepropetrovsk Oblast), a monument to Vasily M. Usov, a native of the city and posthumous Hero of the Soviet Union, was dismantled. He commanded the third Border Outpost of the 86th Augustow Border Detachment (Belarusian Border District) and died heroically on 22 June 1941, while defending the USSR State Border against Nazi German forces.¹⁶⁰

On 11 May, in Kamenskoye (Dnepropetrovsk Oblast), a memorial plaque honouring Hero of the Soviet Union Ivan Sachko was removed.¹⁶¹

On 9 July, monuments to Soviet liberator soldiers were dismantled in the village of Bukachevtsy (Ivano-Frankovsk Oblast) and Ternov (Lvov Oblast).¹⁶²

On 3 August, in Kharkov, a memorial plaque honouring anti-fascist fighters was removed despite its Ukrainian-language inscription.¹⁶³ Authorities

¹⁵⁶ <https://www.vedomosti.ru/politics/news/2024/04/26/1034548-v-rovno-demontirovali-pamyatnik>

¹⁵⁷ <https://ria.ru/amp/20240507/koshevoy-1944410048.html>

¹⁵⁸ <https://suspilne.media/amp/ivano-frankivsk/742069-v-ivano-frankivsku-oblili-cervonou-farbou-radanskij-monument/>

¹⁵⁹ <https://www.0352.ua/news/3773920/u-ternopoli-rozmaluvali-pamatnik-radanskomu-oficeru-caldaevu-foto>

¹⁶⁰ <https://www.prikhist.com/2024/05/u-nikopoli-demontuvaly-pam-iatnyk-viktoru-usovu-dyskusii-u-sotsmerezkhakh/>

¹⁶¹ <https://t.me/DecolonizationUkraine/13334>

¹⁶² https://zaxid.net/u_bukachivskiy_gromadi_na_prikarpatti_demontuvali_dva_pamyatniki_radyanskim_soldatam_n1589208

¹⁶³ <https://ria.ru/amp/20240803/kharkov-1963896143.html>

justified that it was removed because of the "Soviet star" symbol depicted on the plaque.¹⁶⁴

On 14 August, memorial plaques dedicated to Marshals of the Soviet Union and twice Heroes of the Soviet Union Rodion Malinovsky and Ivan Konev were destroyed in Kharkov.^{165,166} Their troops fought for the liberation of the Kharkov Oblast from German fascist invaders. Rodion Malinovsky commanded the troops that participated in the battles for Kharkov and the Kharkov Oblast in 1942 and 1943. Troops under the command of Ivan Konev liberated Kharkov in August 1943.

On 15 August, the city council of Akhtyrka, Sumy Oblast, decided to dismantle several objects depicting Russian and Soviet symbols, including a monument to Akhtyrka residents who died during World War II, as well as to demolish two individual and five mass graves of partisans and Soviet soldiers.¹⁶⁷

On 22 August, it was reported about the demolition of two monuments to Soviet soldiers in the villages of Kornich and Rakovchik in the Ivano-Frankovsk Oblast.¹⁶⁸

On 25 September, vandals destroyed a monument to the liberator soldiers of the Red Army in the village of Barvenkovo in the Kharkov Oblast.¹⁶⁹

On 20 November, a monument to Hero of the Soviet Union Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya was demolished in Belgorod-Dnestrovskiy in the Odessa Oblast.¹⁷⁰

164 <https://antifashist.com/item/nacistskij-revanshizm-v-harkove-v-gorode-demontirovali-memorialnye-doski-marshalam-konevu-i-malinovskomu.html>

165 <https://atn.ua/ukraine/u-kharkovi-demontuvaly-dvi-pam-iatni-doshky-radianskym-marshalam-447763>

166 <https://antifashist.com/item/nacistskij-revanshizm-v-harkove-v-gorode-demontirovali-memorialnye-doski-marshalam-konevu-i-malinovskomu.html>

167 <https://www.okhtyrka.net/content/view/15472/236>

168 <https://zahid.espreso.tv/novyny-prykarpattya-na-prikarpatti-demontuvali-dva-pamyatniki-radyanskim-soldatam>

169 <https://ria.ru/amp/20240925/kharkov-1974720214.html>

170 <https://ria.ru/amp/20241120/pamyatnik-1984862840.html>

On 4 December, the Odessa city council approved the demolition of more than a dozen monuments,¹⁷¹ including a monument to Odessa native, Marshal of the Soviet Union and twice Hero of the Soviet Union Rodion Malinovsky, under whose command the troops of the third Ukrainian Front liberated Odessa from fascist occupation in April 1944.

On the same day, busts of Heroes of war against Nazi Germany, twice Heroes of the Soviet Union Sidor Kovpak, Ivan Chernyakhovskiy, Pavel Rybalko, and Alexey Fedorov, were dismantled in Kiev's Park of Glory.¹⁷²

On 15 January 2025, the Lvov City Council approved a decision to exhume the remains of Red Army soldiers who died during the Great Patriotic War and were buried at the Hill of Glory. This concerned over 200 individual graves, four mass graves, and the burials of Heroes of the Soviet Union, including intelligence officer Nikolay Kuznetsov.¹⁷³

On 24 April 2025, Lvov authorities began implementing these barbaric intentions and destroyed a mass grave of 1,804 Soviet soldiers who died liberating the city from the Nazis and were buried at the Field of Mars. Formally, this act of vandalism was called the exhumation of soldiers' and officers' remains for transfer and reburial at Lvov's Goloskovsky Cemetery. However, this exhumation was carried out using excavators, with the soldiers' bones collected in bags and sent to a warehouse. Lvov authorities justified their disregard for the remains of Soviet soldiers by claiming that the graves might contain servicemen of the USSR People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs who died in battles against OUN-UPA units. It is illustrative that the theoretical and ideological justification for the action was entrusted to Svyatoslav Sheremeta, head of the "Dolya" Memorial Search Centre, who gained notoriety for wearing

171 <https://www.unian.ua/society/znesennya-pam-yatnika-pushkinu-v-odesi-miskrada-uhvalila-finansove-rishennya-novini-odesi-12841479.html>

172 <https://suspilne.media/amp/kyiv/894791-teper-bez-kovpaka-u-kyevi-u-parku-slavi-demontuvali-pogrudda-radanskih-diaciv>

173 <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-regions/3948695-u-lvovi-radanski-pohovanna-z-pagorba-slavi-perenesut-na-goloskivske-kladovise.html>

a specially tailored SS "Galicia" Division uniform during a 2019 reburial ceremony for its fighters.¹⁷⁴

The Lvov City Council's website described the purpose of the event in the following manner: "The remains of Soviet Army servicemen and individuals from the World War II period will be reburied from Field of Mars on Mechnykova Street. This decision was made by the Executive Committee of the Lvov City Council. A memorial complex for Heroes of Ukraine will be established at this site, in memory of Ukrainian soldiers who gave their lives for Ukraine's independence." Given the openly propagated policy of the current Kiev authorities to rehabilitate Nazis and their Ukrainian collaborators, there is little doubt about who these "heroes" will be.

In this context, it should be noted that the first exhumation of Soviet soldiers in Lvov began in March 2023, with reports claiming 459 burials were uncovered. This was reported, in particular, by journalist Oleg Khavich from "Ukraina.ru." Media also reported that the exhumed remains of Soviet soldiers were being stored in bags at a warehouse by local authorities "for further decisions."

At the same time, there are isolated examples where residents of Ukrainian settlements refuse to demolish monuments to Soviet soldiers. This often happens in rural areas. There, monuments are often located at mass graves where soldiers who gave their lives for that town or village are buried. Local conscripts mobilized in 1943–1944, as well as partisans often appear to be buried among them. In some cases, their relatives still live in the village. For example, such a case occurred in the village of Smykovo on 12 December 2023, when equipment was brought to the village to demolish a monument to Red Army soldiers. However, the village head, whose father is buried there,

¹⁷⁴ <https://ukraina.ru/20250424/pole-slavy-tolko-nashikh-geroev-tragediya-bespamyatstva-v-ukraine-priblizhaetsya-k-finalu-1062727571.html>

prevented this by physically shielding the monument to Soviet soldiers with his body.¹⁷⁵

On 22 April 2023, residents of the village of Lisichevo, Transcarpathia Oblast, refused to demolish a monument to Soviet soldiers who died during the Great Patriotic War. They stated that "the monument is dedicated to their fallen fellow villagers, not an abstract Soviet soldier," and therefore demolishing it would devalue their heroic deeds during the war and their very lives.¹⁷⁶

There are also known cases where, according to documents, a monument was supposedly demolished, but in reality, it still stands. Examples include three monuments in the Chervonograd district of the Lvov Oblast.¹⁷⁷

On 1 December 2023, media reported that residents of the villages of Kinashev and Zagorye-Kukolnitskoye in the Ivano-Frankovsk Oblast refused to dismantle monuments to Soviet soldiers. The villagers held a meeting during which they opposed the demolition of the monuments. It was noted that the monuments list the names of victims of the OUN and UPA, but the inscription "Died at the hands of Ukrainian bourgeois nationalists" on the monument had been painted over.¹⁷⁸

Ukrainian radicals have targeted not only memorials honouring Red Army soldiers who fought against Nazis and Ukrainian nationalists but also monuments dedicated to representatives of Russian culture and great figures from the Russian Empire era.

It should be noted that the fight against monuments in Ukraine did not begin after the 2014 coup, when the most intense and active phase of this "fight" (aside from the current one) began. As early as the 1990s, a wave of demolitions of monuments to Vladimir Lenin swept the country. During the first decade

¹⁷⁵ <https://vz.ru/world/2023/12/14/1244233.html>

¹⁷⁶ <https://iz.ru/1502674/2023-04-22/v-zakarpatskoi-oblasti-ukrainy-otkazalis-snosit-pamiatnik-sovetskim-soldatam>

¹⁷⁷ <https://vz.ru/world/2023/12/14/1244233.html>

¹⁷⁸ <https://vz.ru/news/2023/12/1/1242248.html>

after the collapse of the USSR, over 2,000 such monuments were destroyed in Ukraine, primarily in its western regions. Then, at the turn of the 1990s and 2000s, more than 600 Lenin monuments were dismantled in its western and central regions, and from 2005 to 2008, over 600 monuments were removed, mostly in central regions. Another wave of demolitions in 2013–2014 began with an attack by so-called Euromaidan "activists" on the Vladimir Lenin monument on Bessarabskaya Square. In total, 552 monuments were destroyed.¹⁷⁹

After the launch of the "decommunization" process on 15 May 2015, by then-President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko, which aimed to eliminate all communist monuments except those dedicated to the Great Patriotic War, a new wave of demolitions followed. Less than two years later, on 16 January 2017, the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory (UINP) reported the dismantling of 1,320 Lenin monuments.

In addition to monument demolitions, the "decommunization" pursued by Kiev from the outset primarily involved renaming settlements and streets, as well as removing commemorative signs and images associated with the Soviet past.

According to official data, over six years (from 2015 to 2021), 52,000 toponyms were changed, 987 settlements were renamed, and more than 2,500 Soviet-era monuments were dismantled.

In 2023, Ukrainian authorities continued "derussification" and in January submitted a corresponding draft law to the Verkhovna Rada, aimed at legalizing the fight against "hundreds of Pushkin street names" and "reducing the influence of Russian narratives." According to Minister of Culture Alexander Tkachenko, the document would enable Ukrainian authorities to promptly rename streets with Russian names and demolish monuments to Russian

¹⁷⁹ https://riafan.ru/23789952-hronika_voini_s_pamyatnikami_na_ukraine

figures.¹⁸⁰ On 27 July 2023, this law, passed by the Verkhovna Rada on 21 March 2023, under the title on the Condemnation and Prohibition of Propaganda of Russian Imperial Policy in Ukraine and the Decolonization of Toponymy," came into force.

Within six months from that date, by 27 January 2024, local self-government bodies and military administrations were required to clear public spaces of "symbols of the Russian world": dismantle monuments and commemorative signs, and rename streets and other objects.

In November 2024, the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory reported that in the year since the law on the Condemnation and Prohibition of Propaganda of Russian Imperial Policy in Ukraine and the Decolonization of Toponymy came into force, i.e., from 27 July 2023 to 27 July 2024, at least 25,194 toponymic objects were renamed across the country, and 1,066 monuments and commemorative signs were dismantled.¹⁸¹

Activists note that the full-scale war waged by Ukrainian authorities against public symbols, monuments, and names associated with Russia, the October Revolution, Soviet history, or leftist ideology requires significant funds. For instance, the leader of the Ukrainian party "Union of Left Forces of Ukraine – For New Socialism," Maxim Goldarb, cited data indicating that the cost of one new street nameplate for a single building is 1,000 hryvnias (equivalent to approximately 25 euros). Multiplying this by dozens (and sometimes hundreds) of buildings on a single street results in a considerable amount of money for just that street. Accordingly, the cost increases when accounting for tens of thousands of renamed streets across the country, as well as over 1,000 renamed cities and villages. In addition, there are many other cost components. These include the need to replace documents, seals, stamps, and entrance signs for all institutions and enterprises. New road signs, directional

¹⁸⁰ <https://iz.ru/1450760/2023-01-05/na-ukraine-reshili-uzakonit-derusifikaciiu-radi-borby-s-pushkinym>

¹⁸¹ <https://uinp.gov.ua/pres-centr/novyny/ponad-25-tysyach-obyektiv-toponimiyi-pereymenovano-pershi-oficiyni-dani-shchodo-realizaciyi-dekolonizacijnogo-zakonu>

markers, and signs at city entrances and highways across Ukraine are also required. Furthermore, new maps and atlases must be provided to numerous institutions, not only in the renamed cities but throughout the country. In total, by the most conservative estimates, the ongoing campaign of renaming and monument demolitions across the country, has cost more than one billion euro.¹⁸²

There are known examples where residents or authorities in certain settlements opposed the demolition of monuments and the renaming of streets associated with Russia or the USSR. For instance, in April 2022, the Kharkov administration refused to support a public appeal to demolish a bust of Alexander Pushkin and move it to a city museum. The Kharkov Department of Culture reported that the monument is listed in the State Register of Immovable Monuments of Ukraine as a monument of monumental art of national significance. The department's director, Eduard Pavlenko, emphasized that the issue of demolishing or relocating the bust is not within his authority.¹⁸³ In late February 2023, the authorities of Kamenskoye (Dnepropetrovsk Oblast) where General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee Leonid Brezhnev was born, stated that they would not demolish a monument erected in his honour. Citing a lack of funds for demolition and the challenging situation in the country, the authorities said the issue of dismantling Leonid Brezhnev's bust would be considered after the situation stabilizes.¹⁸⁴ However, later – on 27 July 2023 – the monument was ultimately demolished.¹⁸⁵

According to Viktor Cherniy, deputy chairman of an agricultural cooperative in the village of Letava, Khmelnytskyi region, when the Maidan protests began in Kiev, unknown individuals arrived in the village. They demanded the removal of a monument to Vladimir Lenin located in the village

182 <https://www.wsws.org/ru/articles/2023/03/14/monu-m14.html>

183 <https://iz.ru/1417509/2022-10-28/v-kharkove-otkazalis-demontirovat-biust-pushkina>

184 <https://iz.ru/1476101/2023-02-27/na-ukraine-otkazalis-snesti-pamiatnik-brezhnevu>

185 <https://life.ru/p/1596481>

centre. Local residents used a crane to carefully dismantle the monument and transported it to a grain storage facility. By 1 May, when the situation had calmed down, they returned it to its place.¹⁸⁶

One of the 2022 trends was that those fighting against the "Russian past" declared a personal war on the great Russian poet Alexander Pushkin, as Russian literature is allegedly a conduit for imperial ideas, and Pushkin in his poem *Poltava* negatively portrayed Hetman Ivan Mazepa, who betrayed Peter I and joined the Swedes. By the end of 2022, over the preceding 11 months, approximately 30 monuments to the Russian poet had been dismantled across Ukraine.¹⁸⁷

Numerous cases of the destruction of monuments and memorial plaques honouring prominent Russian and Soviet figures, as well as representatives of culture and science, in large and small cities and rural settlements have been documented. Among those demolished are monuments to Russian military commander Alexander Suvorov, Prince Grigory Potemkin, Mikhail Lomonosov, Nikolay Ostrovsky, Nikolay Gogol, Leo Tolstoy, Dmitry Mendeleev, Mikhail Bulgakov, Peter Tchaikovsky, pilot Valery Chkalov, Ivan Michurin, cosmonaut Yury Gagarin, and outstanding Soviet educator Anton Makarenko.

On 25 February 2025, another historical monument was destroyed. The authorities of Poltava demolished a monument to Russian Emperor Peter I, located near the Museum of the History of the Battle of Poltava. The statue of the emperor was crafted as early as in 1915 in St. Petersburg. Initially, from 1919, it stood in the main lobby of the Petrovsky Poltava Cadet Corps. After the corps was disbanded, the statue was sent to Poltava. Commenting in her social media post on the demolition, acting city head Ekaterina Yamshchikova,

¹⁸⁶ <https://vz.ru/world/2023/12/14/1244233.html>

¹⁸⁷ https://riafan.ru/23789952-hronika_voini_s_pamyatnikami_na_ukraine

described the action as a deliberate societal effort and a liberation from "Russian imperial markers."¹⁸⁸

Among the barbaric incidents that took place in 2024, the following should be noted:

On 9 January, in Kherson, occupied by the Kiev regime, a bust of Soviet poet Vladimir Mayakovsky was demolished.¹⁸⁹

On 12 January, a relief of Alexander Pushkin was removed from the Pushkinskaya metro station in Kharkov, which was the last depiction of the poet in the city.¹⁹⁰

On 19 March, a memorial plaque to Vladimir Mayakovsky was dismantled in Kharkov.¹⁹¹

On 3 April, in Krivoy Rog (Dnepropetrovsk Oblast) a monument to Maxim Gorky, located near School No. 71, was dismantled.¹⁹²

In early May, a monument commemorating the Pereyaslav Rada, located under the Arch of Freedom of the Ukrainian People (formerly the Arch of Friendship of Peoples), was destroyed in Kiev. The Arch of Friendship of Peoples was removed from the register of immovable monuments by Ukraine's Ministry of Culture and Information Policy, as it was deemed to have lost its status as a historical monument.¹⁹³

On 17 May, in Pokrovsk, on territory temporarily occupied by the Zelensky regime in the DPR, a monument to Maxim Gorky was demolished.¹⁹⁴

On 4 June, a monument to the great Russian scientist Mikhail Lomonosov was demolished in Kharkov.¹⁹⁵

188 <https://www.rbc.ru/rbcfreenews/67bdcd6d9a7947b6b267aba1>

189 <https://tass.ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/19695265>

190 <https://iz.ru/1634015/2024-01-14/so-stancii-metro-v-kharkove-ubrali-eshche-odin-barelef-s-izobrazheniem-pushkina>

191 <https://www.ukr.net/ru/news/details/kharkiv/103423291.html>

192 <https://gorod.dp.ua/news/229898>

193 <https://iz.ru/1691339/2024-05-03/v-kieve-demontirovali-monument-v-chest-pereiaslavskoi-rady>

194 <https://pokrovsk-rada.gov.ua/uk/articles/item/10044/dekolonizaciya-publichnogo-prostoru-v-pokrovskij-tg-proveli-demontazh-pamyatnika-maksimu-gorkomu>

On 16 August, a bust of Alexander Pushkin was dismantled in Belgorod-Dnestrovskiy (Odessa Oblast).¹⁹⁶

On 9 September, a monument to Soviet cosmonaut Yury Gagarin was demolished in Kharkov.¹⁹⁷

On 13 September, in Odessa, a monument to writer Maxim Gorky, located in a park previously named after him and later renamed in honour of Mark Twain, was dismantled.¹⁹⁸

On 21 September, a monument to the legendary characters from the novels *Twelve Chairs* and *The Golden Calf* by Ilya Ilf and Yevgeny Petrov was demolished in Kharkov.¹⁹⁹

On 10 October, a monument to Soviet writer Nikolay Ostrovsky was dismantled in the village of Viliya in the Rovno Oblast.²⁰⁰

On 15, 20, and 28 November, monuments to Russian poets and writers Alexander Pushkin, Mikhail Lermontov,²⁰¹ Maxim Gorky,²⁰² and Leo Tolstoy²⁰³ were demolished in Krivoy Rog (Dnepropetrovsk Oblast).

According to the Odessa City Council's decision on 4 December 2024, the following monuments are subject to demolition: the historical monument to Alexander Pushkin on Primorsky Boulevard, which is a cultural heritage site and under UNESCO protection, and the monument to Alexander Pushkin on Italiyanskaya (formerly Pushkinskaya) Street,²⁰⁴ erected for the poet's 200th anniversary.

195 <https://suspilne.media/kharkiv/761211-u-harkovi-demontuvali-pamatnik-rosijskomu-vcenomu-lomonosovu-komentar-miskradi>

196 <https://suspilne.media/amp/odesa/815285-u-misti-na-odesini-demontuvali-pogrudda-pushkina>

197 <https://www.ukr.net/ru/news/details/kharkiv/106681571.html>

198 <https://www.ukr.net/ru/news/details/society/106765786.html>

199 <https://2day.kh.ua/ua/kharkov/z-tsentralnoyi-vulytsi-kharkova-prybraly-ostapa-bendera-ta-panikovskoho>

200 <https://www.ukr.net/ru/news/details/society/107277871.html>

201 <https://nachasi.kr.ua/kryvyj-rig/znesly-pamiatnyky-pushkinu-ta-liermontovu>

202 <https://vidomo.media/rus/events/1732103098-v-krivom-roge-demontirovali-pamyatnik-rossiyskomu-pisatelyu-gorkomu-foto>

203 <https://1kr.ua/news-97193.html>

204 <https://www.unian.ua/society/znesennya-pam-yatnika-pushkinu-v-odesi-miskrada-uhvalila-finansove-rishennya-novini-odesi-12841479.html>

On 12 December, a memorial plaque to Alexander Pushkin was dismantled in Belgorod-Dnistrovskiy (Odessa Oblast).²⁰⁵

On 31 December, a monument to Soviet actor, poet, and singer Vladimir Vysotskiy was demolished in Odessa.²⁰⁶

On 27 January 2025, a monument to Russian and Soviet scientist Ivan Pavlov was dismantled in Kiev.²⁰⁷

205 <https://bilhorod.rayon.in.ua/news/767845-u-bilgorodi-dnistrovskomu-demontuvali-memorialnu-doshku-pushkinu>

206 <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-regions/3943574-v-odesi-demontuvali-pamatnik-visockomu.html>

207 <https://www.ukr.net/ru/news/details/kyiv/109282268.html>

Finland

Following the launch by the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation of a special military operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine and protect the civilians of Donbass, a large-scale anti-Russian information campaign was launched in the Finnish media, against the background of which an increase in negative and discriminatory attitudes towards local Russian-speaking population was recorded.

Finland's consistent support for the "collective West" policy has negatively impacted attitudes toward the Russian-speaking population living in the country, manifesting in an increasing number of restrictions for this group, as well as affecting the treatment of monuments to Soviet soldiers.

Vandalism against Soviet/Russian military memorial sites in Finland has not yet become widespread. However, several such incidents were recorded in 2022-2024, which raised concerns.

In May 2022, on the eve of Victory Day, vandals defaced several slabs of a memorial in the town of Kirkkonummi by spraying them with coloured aerosol paint. The tombstones were promptly cleaned and the offence was reported to the local police, who conducted an investigation into the incident.

In February 2023, two acts of vandalism were committed against the burial site of Soviet soldiers located at the Kivikko cemetery in the Helsinki suburb of Malmi. Offensive inscriptions were made, and the monument was set on fire, which caused significant damage.²⁰⁸ A criminal case was opened regarding the vandalism.

In November of the same year, vandals covered several plaques with inscriptions on an obelisk at the burial site of Soviet soldiers in Kivilanummi (a suburb of Salo) with dark paint²⁰⁹ and wrote "Glory to Ukraine" in Latin letters

208 <https://yle.fi/a/74-20020662>

209 <https://yle.fi/a/74-20060284>

on its sides. Finnish authorities took on the financial costs of restoring the monument.

On 9 May 2024, unknown individuals once again doused a memorial at the Kivikko cemetery with red paint. Staff of the Russian Embassy in Finland eliminated the consequences of this act of vandalism, but on 24 May 2024, the monument was again covered in paint, and a swastika was drawn on it. The police have initiated an investigation into the incident.²¹⁰

However, it is noteworthy that although Finnish authorities reported the opening of criminal cases in all the mentioned incidents, there is no information about identification of the perpetrators or holding them accountable.

²¹⁰ <https://russian.rt.com/inotv/2024-05-28/-V-Finlyandii-vnov-oskvernili>

Federal Republic of Germany

The changing attitude in Germany toward issues of historical memory raises particular concern. At the state level, the country still acknowledges its historical responsibility for the crimes of the Nazi regime. Attempts to glorify the Nazi movement and its individual representatives in any form are criminalized. The following are criminally prosecuted: public denial, justification or underestimation of the crimes of National Socialism, public approval or glorification of Nazi tyranny, distribution of propaganda materials and use of symbols of anti-constitutional organizations, including the Nazi and neo-Nazi organizations (para. 86, 86a and 130 of the German Criminal Code (CC)).

At the same time, the actions of official Berlin cast doubt on the commitment of German authorities to preserving the historical truth about the World War II period, the horrors of the Nazi regime, the inhumane essence of Nazi ideology, and the decisive contribution of the Red Army and the Soviet people to the defeat of Nazism.



<https://www.mknews.de/social/2024/01/23/germaniya-akt-vandalizma-v-mire-evropeyskoy-demokratii.html>

Following the launch of the Special Military Operation by the Russian Armed Forces to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine and to protect the civilian population of Donbas, there has been a sharp surge in incidents including desecration and vandalism of Russian (Soviet) military burials and memorials in Germany. While in 2021, the Representation of the Russian Ministry of Defense's Department for Commemorating the Memory of Those Who Died Defending the Motherland at the Russian Embassy in Germany recorded three such incidents, in 2022 there were 16, in 2023 – 12, in 2024 – 18, and in the first three months of 2025 – three cases.

The display of the "Z" and "V" symbols is prohibited everywhere in Germany (prosecuted under para. 140 of the German Criminal Code "Encouragement and Approval of Crimes", punishable by up to 3 years' imprisonment). Restrictions have repeatedly been imposed on the use of Soviet and Russian symbols during events commemorating the anniversaries of Victory in the Great Patriotic War.

For example, in Berlin on 8 and 9 May 2024, the following was prohibited near Soviet military memorials: the use of Russian and Soviet flags, the Victory Banner, elements of historical military uniforms, St. George ribbons, orders and medals (including on photographs of war participants), listening to wartime songs, and similar activities. Exceptions to these restrictions applied only to war veterans and diplomatic delegations.²¹¹ The St. George ribbon was banned almost everywhere. In Hamburg, in addition to this, all flags and banners were prohibited.

In early April 2025, it was reported that a confidential "instruction" was sent by the German Foreign Ministry to regional and municipal authorities, as well as memorial complexes, regarding planned events dedicated to the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe. The document advises organizers of such events not to invite official representatives of Russia and

211 <https://www.berlin.de/polizei/polizeimeldungen/2024/pressemitteilung.1443764.php>

Belarus and effectively allows for their expulsion in case of "uncoordinated" appearances.²¹²

The management of memorials at the sites of former Nazi concentration camps Buchenwald, Mittelbau-Dora, and Dachau informed the Russian Embassy of their refusal to invite its representatives to official commemorative events in 2025. (Dachau also reported a ban on wreath-laying ceremonies and other public actions.)

212 <https://www.berliner-zeitung.de/politik-gesellschaft/geopolitik/80-jahre-kriegsende-auswaertiges-amt-will-keine-vertreter-aus-russland-bei-gedenkfeier-li.2313544>

Czech Republic

When the Russian Federation launched the special military operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine and protect the civilians in Donbass (SMO), Czech leaders openly and actively advocated the neo-Nazi regime in Kiev (along with its nationalist battalions) by supplying it with various weaponry.

The once careful and respectful attitude by Czech Republic (CR) residents towards the memorials to Red Army soldiers and victims of Nazism has lately given way to the ever more frequent cases of Czech authorities' "combatting" the Soviet memorial sites. The most odious of them include: the plaque to commemorate the liberation of Prague by the 1st Ukrainian Front troops dismantled from the city hall building by Prague City Council in 2017;²¹³ the monument to Soviet tankmen (in the form of an IS-2 tank) removed from the pedestal and repainted in pink; "explanatory plaques" placed in 2018 on the monument to Marshal Ivan Konev (it was under his command that the Red Army troops fought to liberate the city) on the Interbrigade Square (Prague-6 district). This monument was repeatedly vandalized as well as the monument to Red Army soldiers in the vicinity of Prague Castle.

The removal of the Ivan Konev monument carried out by the administration of Prague-6 district in early April 2020 in violation of the Russian-Czech Treaty of Friendly Relations and Cooperation of 1993, epitomized this cynical campaign. The statue of Marshal Konev was put in a depository and its pedestal destroyed. Both calls of the public to preserve the historically significant landmark and condemnation from President Miloš Zeman were ignored in committing this sacrilegious act. Besides, according to Ondřej Kolář, Prague-6 district head who became a major initiator of this vandal act, authorities deliberately took advantage of the state of emergency and

²¹³ Despite the initial assurances of the Mayor's Office to put the plaque back to its place after the restoration in 2019 the new city leadership refused to return the plaque.

limitations on free movement within the city imposed due to COVID-19 to conduct the dismantling without public protests.

Yet the Czech Russophobes didn't stop at that. The Prague city authorities decision of 26 May 2022 deprived Marshal Konev of the Prague honorary citizen title, and on 21 June 2022, Prague-3 legislative assembly voted for renaming the Konev Street situated in that area.²¹⁴ The relevant decision was adopted by Prague City Council on 19 June 2023.²¹⁵

Setting a course for the falsification of WWII history and demonization of the USSR and Russia, Czechia puts a considerable effort into whitewashing the image of Andrey Vlasov's Russian Liberation Army, with a purpose, in particular, to ascribe this criminal formation the decisive role in liberating Prague from the Nazis in May 1945. Having become more frequent in the country over the recent years, such public attempts appear to go in parallel with the measures to "fight" against Soviet monuments. Thus, a monument in honour of the Vlasovites was erected on 30 April 2020 in Prague's Řeporyje district at the initiative of its odious head Pavel Novotny. On 7 May 2022, a commemorative wreath-laying ceremony was held at this "installation". It is also noteworthy that the Olšany Cemetery has its Russian Liberation Army memorial where similar events are held on a regular basis.

Other acts of vandalism against Soviet monuments were also reported. For example, in December 2020, unidentified perpetrators vandalized the Red Army soldiers monument located in Ostrava-Zábřeh community in the Eastern CR.

Such incidents have become particularly frequent over the recent three years. In 2022, there were 9 cases of vandalism against memorial sites dedicated to the Soviet soldiers who liberated Czechoslovakia from Nazism. In March 2022, a Red Army soldier sculpture was detached from the monument to those

214 <https://ct24.ceskatelevize.cz/domaci/3510373-konevova-ulice-se-mela-prejmenovat-na-hartigovu-zmenu-podporili-zastupitele-prahy-3>

215 <https://www.praha3.cz/hartigova/proc-hartigova>

fallen in WW I and II by the decision of Přebyslav (Vysočina region) local authorities, and then placed in a depository.²¹⁶ In the city of Olomouc, swastikas and letters "UA" were painted on the monument to Red Army soldiers in March²¹⁷ and September²¹⁸ 2022 respectively. Vandals also defiled the monument to Red Army soldiers in the city of Litoměřice in October 2022²¹⁹ and August 2023²²⁰. Similar acts were committed in the cities of Přerov (October 2022), Příbor (March 2023) and Děčín (May 2023).²²¹

²¹⁶https://www.idnes.cz/jihlava/zpravy/valka-ukrajina-socha-pribyslav-vojak-samopal-pomnik-pamatka.A220304_653780_jihlava-zpravy_mv

²¹⁷ <https://www.novinky.cz/clanek/krimi-pamatnik-rude-armady-v-olomouci-pomaloval-sprejer-hakovymi-krizi-40390780>

²¹⁸ <https://www.novinky.cz/clanek/domaci-sprejer-pomaloval-pamatnik-rude-armady-v-olomouci-40409823>

²¹⁹ <https://www.novinky.cz/clanek/krimi-rudoarmejce-v-litomericich-obarvili-cervene-a-postavili-na-pracku-40412689>

²²⁰ <https://zpravy.aktualne.cz/domaci/foto-litomerice-spor-o-rusky-pomnik/r~0a3b961a40b111eeb1f50cc47ab5f122/>

²²¹ <https://english.radio.cz/vandal-sprays-z-letters-red-army-memorial-decin-8782494>

Estonia

Estonia has fully embraced neo-Nazism, as evidenced by its government's efforts to honour former Nazi collaborators, an intensifying campaign to destroy Soviet memorial heritage, suppress the activities of Russian activists who stand up for preserving the memory of the Red Army exploits in the fight against fascism, and Tallinn's numerous efforts to falsify the history of World War II and its aftermath.

Until recently, legalization of Nazis in Estonia has rested upon the poorly concealed governmental support and virtually reluctant population. Since 2022, the Estonian authorities came out of hiding and openly took the path of supporting Nazism and glorifying its accomplices. There are a number of monuments in Estonia in honour of former SS members and *Forest Brothers*, public events are held in their memory, and the few surviving former Nazis are awarded government awards. Estonian media reports call installations in honour of Nazi collaborators memorials "in honour of those fallen for the freedom of Estonia", and in rare cases where individual citizens express their negative attitude towards this fact, the most serious measures, up to criminal prosecution, follow.

All this causes a serious increase in the political weight of right-wing nationalist forces, more frequent manifestations of xenophobia, antisemitism, neo-Nazism, cases of desecration of monuments to Red Army soldiers and higher activity of right-wing radical groups.

Attempts to glorify Nazi accomplices, which have become an integral part of the public policy, are directly related to the increased manifestations of antisemitism and desecration of monuments to Soviet soldiers killed on the territory of Estonia in battles with Nazi invaders. In June 2019, vandals destroyed several tombstones at the Tallinn Jewish cemetery (for the first time in 110 years, including the period of Nazi occupation), with the grave of Vladimir Metelitsa, the former head of the Tallinn veteran association, among them.

At the same time, the official Estonian statistics note that not a single antisemitic incident was recorded in the country in the period from 2015 to 2018. Only two such cases were officially registered in 2019, none in 2020 and just one in 2021.²²² These data are annually repeated in the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) overviews. In particular, the latest overview notes that the authorities in Estonia received no information on any antisemitic incident or crime in 2022.²²³

It is with regret that we have to state that leaders of the Jewish community of Estonia conscientiously ignore the above-mentioned incidents and phenomena, focusing exclusively on commemorating the victims of the Holocaust.

In 2019, new cases of desecration of the Red Army soldier graves from the Great Patriotic War time were reported – in the city of Kuressaare (the monument was aerosol painted), in the village of Tehumardi (gravestones doused with engine oil). The local police conducted administrative proceedings, but the perpetrators were not found.

On 2 March 2021, unknown persons desecrated the T-34 tank Monument in Narva, installed in memory of the crossing of the Narva River by Soviet troops on 25-26 July 1944, during the offensive operation of the Leningrad Front. The monument was covered with graffiti saying "to the fallen heroes of the amphetamine war ... 2018."²²⁴

In early April 2021, a monument to the victims of fascism was desecrated at the Tallinn Rahumäe Cemetery. According to the local police, unknown persons put chicken eggs on the monument on 3 April. Birds broke the eggs and

222 Overview of Antisemitic Incidents Recorded in the European Union in 2011-2021. Report of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights. http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2022-antisemitism-overview-2011-2021_en.pdf

223 Overview of Antisemitic Incidents Recorded in the European Union in 2012 – 2022. Report of the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights. http://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2023-antisemitism-update-2012-2022_en.pdf

224 <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/02032021-posolstvo-rf-v-estonii-potrebovalo-nayti-vandalov-oskvernivshikh-tankpamyatnik-pod-narvoy/>

stained the tombstone. Police found no trace of vandalism. A criminal case was initiated over the monument desecration.²²⁵

On 7 April 2021, vandals toppled the memorial stone in Raeküla, installed at the site of the July 1941 execution of Red Army soldiers. After the Russian Embassy appealed to the chairman of the Pärnu City Assembly, the monument was restored to its original location.

The fact that any monuments erected to honour any soldiers whoever fought and were killed in the Soviet uniform (not only those to Red Army soldiers fallen for the liberation of Estonia from Nazism) came under vandal attacks even before 2022, is the proof of the actual sentiment of Estonian radicals and authorities sympathizing with them. The monument to the Soviet soldiers killed in Afghanistan in 1980s, was desecrated in the Tondiloo park (Kivila Street, Lasnamäe city district) on the eve of 17 October 2021 municipal elections. Unknown assailants doused with paint this memorial erected in 2006 to honour both Russian and Estonian "Afghans".²²⁶

The Estonian authorities had joined the vandal "fight" against monuments to Soviet soldiers long before the 2022 massive memorial destruction campaign: by that time the process of demolition of monuments and desecration of the burial places of Great Patriotic War participants had continued for many years in all Baltic countries. Relocation of the monument to the fallen in the Great Patriotic War set up on Tallinn's Tõnismägi hill on 22 September 1947 and unofficially dubbed *The Bronze Soldier* was one of the first and most symbolic steps in this direction. In April 2007, the Estonian Cabinet of Ministers decided to relocate the memorial and the remains of soldiers to a military cemetery on the outskirts of Tallinn. This decision provoked unrest involving thousands of

225 Monument to the victims of the Nazis in Tallinn was smeared with chicken eggs. RuBaltic. 10 April 2021. <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/10042021-pamyatnik-zhertvam-fashistov-v-talline-izmazali-kurinymi-yaytsami/> (in Russian).

226 <https://www.ritm Eurasia.org/news--2021-10-22--sovetskie-pamjatniki-v-estonii-nenavistny-vandalam-gosudarstvennym-i-chastnym-56993> (in Russian)

people. The murder of Russian citizen Dmitry Ganin became the most tragic episode of those developments.

Despite relocation, the memorial retained its central role in Victory Day celebrations. Every 9 May (the day the Great Patriotic War ended), tens of thousands of Tallinners gathered at The Bronze Soldier to commemorate the fallen heroes. Moreover, Estonian Defense Forces members also laid a commemorative wreath at the monument with their commanders' assent. However, the memorial still continued to be attacked by vandals.



Laying flowers at *The Bronze Soldier* on a Victory Day anniversary

Photo: Sputnik / Timur Nisametdinov

Source: <https://baltnews.com/Russkie-Pribaltiki/20240509/1026258097/Gde-razresheno-vozlakat-tsvety-9-maya-v-stranakh-Baltii.html>



Flowers at *The Bronze Soldier* monument in honour of 9 May

Source: https://pikabu.ru/story/pikabushniki_iz_tallinna_5884888

Russian compatriots were widely outraged by the desecration of this monument on 22 June 2019, when unidentified persons pinned a leaflet depicting a skull on the monument. The Estonian police brought no perpetrators to justice, winding the incident down and referring to the "poor quality of surveillance camera footage".

In July 2019, the memorial and burial place of Red Army soldiers in Taebla, Lääne-Nigula parish, were dismantled. The "relocation" of the burial ground was initiated by the administration of a school being reconstructed nearby, which was allegedly disturbed by the Soviet obelisk. According to the museum of the armed forces which supervised these works, remains of 11 people were exhumed at this place (however, according to the archival data, 26 people were buried there). According to a parish administration member, the monument was kept on the premises of a local gymnasium, though no photos were provided.

On 25 October 2019, the Russian Ambassador to Estonia, Alexander Petrov, sent a note to the Undersecretary for Political Affairs, Pait Teesalu, requiring official explanations of the incident; however, no meaningful response was ever received. Further attempts to engage in a constructive dialogue with the Estonian Side also failed. The Estonian authorities refer to the provisions of Article 8, Law on the Protection of Military Graves of 10 January 2007, which stipulates that "the remains are subject to reburial if the military burial is located in an inappropriate place". This wording has a rather broad interpretation. It is obvious that such vague provisions allow, if necessary, to recognize any memorial of such kind as "inappropriate".

The Estonian authorities used the Ukrainian crisis to push on the demolition of Soviet memorial legacy in the country and delete the historical truth from people's memory. This stance is being aggressively imposed on all residents of the country, including Russian speakers as well as independently thinking Estonians who believe that heritage site protection is meant to preserve memory. This is why it is necessary to preserve the heritage of various periods for them to stay before eyes as an open study book. All activities of the Estonian authorities in the memorial sphere were presented under the slogan "Estonia is at information war with Russia using Soviet symbols as a weapon".²²⁷

The process started with the prohibition of Soviet and Russian symbols. On 21 April 2022, the Estonian Parliament adopted a law banning open demonstration of symbols "used at commission of an act of aggression, genocide, crime against humanity or war crime, to support or justify such crimes". The law also introduced penalties of up to five years in prison for "joining the armed forces of a foreign state committing an act of aggression or another armed association of a foreign state taking part in an act of aggression; taking part in the commission or preparation of an act of aggression or

²²⁷ <https://iz.ru/1432352/viktor-nedelin/vandaly-v-zakone-estoniia-obiavila-voinu-sovetskim-pamiatnikam>

knowingly supporting an act of aggression by a foreign state, including its financing".

The Estonian authorities created obstacles for the Russian-speaking population to celebrate Victory Day. The Chief Central Criminal Police, Police and Border Guard Board, Aivar Alavere, stated on 24 March 2022 that the attitude of law enforcement officers towards St. George Ribbon appearing in public had to be reconsidered because this symbol was worn by Russian soldiers who "kill Ukrainian citizens."

Elmar Vaher, Chief Police and Border Guard Board, voiced the same position on TV broadcasts of Estonian public TV and Radio *ERR*, saying that the Estonian police would take increased measures to counter the display of Russian military symbols (including Soviet army uniforms and St. George Ribbons) on 9 May, because "the situation is not comparable to previous years". He also expressed hope that the Estonian Parliament would make some amendments to the law by 9 May in order to give police a free hand in respect to whoever dared to come about with such symbols.

The Estonian police officially banned *Bronze Night* and Victory Day public gatherings from 26 April to 10 May that expressed support for the "aggressor country" and used military symbols, including Soviet and Russian flags, St. George Ribbons and Soviet military uniforms. At first the ban was imposed in Tallinn, Harjumaa and Ida-Virumaa, and later it was extended to the whole country. On the eve of 9 May, police control (including over social media) was enhanced: On this day, "provocative" symbols were noticed in various regions of Estonia, about thirty persons were detained because of that, fines were imposed on 12 "habitual offenders".

In July 2022, the Estonian government ordered the removal²²⁸ of all monuments to Soviet soldiers killed in World War II and the reburial of the remains of soldiers under military monuments by the end of the year. According to the then Prime Minister Kallas, the specific decisions on war monuments stipulated that the remains of soldiers underneath the monuments should be reburied gradually, step by step, and the monuments themselves should be relocated.²²⁹ All in all, this demolition campaign covered about 400 Soviet monuments.

The same month, a special commission on the dismantling of Soviet monuments was established,²³⁰ whose task was to prepare a list of memorials subject to demolition and destruction. However, the entire composition of the commission was classified. So far, only the name of its head is known; it is Asko Kivinuk, who earlier worked with the Estonian centre of defense investments.

It is noteworthy that the commission, having considered the cases of the already demolished monuments and cemeteries, approved of them completely. It only recommended in some cases to "remove the tombstone part of the monument but keep the sculpture if possible". Besides, in a number of cases the commission demanded to replace even tombstones – they were considered ostensibly not to be "neutral" in some places. For example, commission members did not like a memorial plaque with the inscription "To Soviet Army soldiers fallen in the Great Patriotic War" at the foot of the mass grave monument in Kehtna park.²³¹

On 10 November 2022, the Estonian authorities adopted a set of amendments to the Building Code, Building Code Enforcement Act, Planning

228 In the spring of 2023, President Alar Karis rejected the bill to dismantle the Soviet monuments, noting that the ban was formulated "vaguely", and article 1 of the bill was "legally unclear" and contradicts the country's Constitution. On 27 September 2023, the Estonian Parliament rejected the bill for the second time.

229 <https://ren.tv/news/v-mire/1003115-v-estonii-do-kontsa-goda-snesut-vse-pamiatniki-sovetskim-voinam>

230 <https://rus.postimees.ee/7579463/pamyatnik-istoriya-propaganda-i-element-landshafta>

231 <https://regnum.ru/article/3768343?ysclid=ln6gp8apl2892174706>

Act, and Government Property Act, aiming to create a legal framework to demolish Soviet military monuments that were deemed "inappropriate for public spaces". The document cynically declares that building parts, monuments, sculptures and other structures visible to the public cannot express incitement to hostility, support or justify "an occupation regime, acts of aggression, genocide, crimes against humanity or war crimes".²³²

In November 2022, the mentioned working group on Soviet military memorials presented a report saying that 322 "red" monuments had been found in Estonia, 244 out of which were subject to demolition in whole or in part,²³³ and mass graves located in "inappropriate" places (parks, squares in front of schools, in the centre of any populated area) were to be relocated to the cemeteries agreed with local authorities. A catalogue with the photographs and descriptions of monuments (type – a monument, a mass grave, an individual grave; location data; form of property; a brief history) was also published on the Government Office web-site,²³⁴ as well as "recommendations" as to what to do with them next (demolish, replace or keep).

The public was presented with a sample of a "neutral sign" (a stone plaque with the inscription "Victims of World War II")²³⁵ designed to replace monuments and tombstones containing words "to Soviet soldiers", "during the Great Patriotic War" or Soviet symbols (the star, hammer and sickle, etc.).

Meanwhile, tombs and memorials to the Estonians who fought for the Third Reich are kept untouched. Mass media reported that the working group on Soviet memorial heritage did not take any decisions concerning the graves of Nazi soldiers on the territory of Estonia.²³⁶

232 <https://ria.ru/20221110/pamyatniki-1830494289.html?in=t>

233 <https://rus.err.ee/1608792445/komissija-goskanceljarii-78-iz-322-sovetskih-monumentov-mogut-byt-sohraneny-na-nyneshnem-meste>

234 <https://riigikantselei.ee/monumendid>

235 <https://tribuna.ee/tribuna/society/nadgrobija-sovetskaja-simvolika-zamenjat-nejtralnymi/>

236 <https://www.kp.ru/daily/27434.5/4635281/>

Answers to "citizen's typical questions" are noteworthy as well. Thus, the reasons to get rid of military monuments mention, among others, that all this is done for "ensuring domestic security", since the monuments "once again have become the symbols of active terror" and also "having been established by the countries that occupied Estonia, they rather bear a wider anti-humanist ideology than commemorate the memory of the fallen." It is particularly stressed that "social tensions are rapidly growing around occupying power's memorials".²³⁷ The answer to the question why memorials to SS soldiers are not being taken down is notable, "An agreement signed between Estonia and Germany to preserve military burial places stipulates that the dead soldiers of the German army are buried in neutral graves bearing no Nazi symbols, so there is no need to remove the tombstones".

In practice, all this has boiled down mainly to local authorities removing red stars from the monuments to Red Army soldiers and calling all those killed just "victims of World War II". It looks like Soviet soldiers are equalled to collaborationists in Estonia, since the Estonian authorities call them as well "victims of World War II".²³⁸

It is also worth noting that the elimination of Soviet monuments in Estonia had begun well in advance of the working group decision. Mass media reported 56 monuments to have been already destroyed in the country before the working group passed its decision. In some cases, disinterment from the nearby war communal graves took place simultaneously with the demolition of monuments. For example, in July to September 2022, authorities ordered to disentomb a total of 40 mass graves and rebury the remains in places where, according to Estonian officials, the dead soldiers "will cease serving the Soviet ideology". The working group approved of the demolition cases of several dozens of monuments upon consideration. In some cases, this body

²³⁷ <https://riigikantselei.ee/ru/monumenty>

²³⁸ <https://russkiymir.ru/news/309301/>

recommended to "remove the tombstone part of the monument but keep the sculpture if possible". Certain monuments already dismantled before the relevant recommendations, turned out to be broken during the dismantlement, as was the case, for example, with the Soviet monument in Elva, the demolition of which was supported by the commission.²³⁹

The Estonian authorities also categorically opposed proposals to organize public debates on every monument. In particular, Estonian Foreign Minister Urmas Reinsalu was staunchly against it. In his opinion, the people, having cast their vote for the ruling politicians, already give them a free hand to act in any manner while "this public discussion only binds hand and foot". He noted, "Red monuments are to be removed. The aim is to do this in the current year. This process has advanced, it does not stand still any more. This makes us happy".

The representatives of Estonian authorities did not even conceal that their efforts in this field were aimed at erasing the truth about Great Patriotic War facts from the memory of Russian residents of Estonia. For example, Minister of Justice Lea Danilson-Järg (member of the Isamaa right party) said in 2022, "The goal of the bill [she meant the draft law on combating Soviet memorial heritage] is simple – to relieve the country from the symbols that threaten our security. Besides, if we expect the integration of Russian-speaking residents of the country so that we have the same understanding of history, then this is difficult to achieve if we have monuments that symbolize a false understanding of history". She also voiced fear over the fact that Russian community members who protested against impairment of their rights rallied near Soviet monuments in Estonia, and called for doing away with this practice.²⁴⁰

In February 2023, the State Property Act, the Building Code Enforcement Act, the Planning Act, as well as the Building Code were amended²⁴¹ to require land owners, including municipalities where monuments with "the forbidden

239 <https://iz.ru/1432352/viktor-nedelin/vandaly-v-zakone-estoniia-obiavila-voinu-sovetskim-pamiatnikam>

240 Ibid.

241 <https://rus.postimees.ee/7713483/riygikogu-prinyal-zakonoproekt-o-snose-sovetskih-pamyatnikov>

symbols" were located, to bring their appearance in line with new standards (must not "incite hostility, support the occupation regime, genocide and war crimes"). This law simplifies and simultaneously expedites the procedure of demolishing monuments to Red Army soldiers killed in the battles for liberation of Estonia from Nazism. Meanwhile, as was noted, on 27 September 2023, the Estonian Parliament refused to adopt the law on the demolition of the Soviet era monuments without amendments. Earlier, in March 2023, it was turned down by Estonian President Alar Karis.²⁴²

In spring 2023, the Estonian authorities introduced a fine of EUR 1200 for celebrating Victory Day on 9 May. Estonian residents were prohibited to gather in groups on that day, use Soviet symbols of the Great Patriotic War period, and even play music of the war and post-war years that was declared "aggressive."²⁴³

It should be also noted that, after a special military operation to denazify and demilitarize Ukraine and protect Donbass civilians by the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation was launched in February 2022, the anti-Russian hysteria provoked a surge in acts of vandalism. According to the Russian Embassy in Estonia, 132 memorials to Soviet soldiers have been dismantled in the country since 2022, with 34 of them subject to exhumation of the Red Army soldiers' remains. Besides, the acts of vandalism were committed against 14 sites (with five of them being desecrated twice and one – four times).

The Estonian authorities destroyed 34 memorials and exhumed the remains of Soviet soldiers buried in mass graves beneath them.²⁴⁴

Recent acts of State vandalism include the following examples. In September 2024, the Russian Embassy in Tallinn expressed outrage over the

²⁴² <https://www.gazeta.ru/politics/news/2023/09/27/21378877.shtml?ysclid=ln6gox9oij124568211&updated>

²⁴³ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/article/politika-i-obshchestvo/20230803-korichneveyut-na-glazakh-vlasti-estonii-perestali-skryvat-svoi-politicheskie-predpochteniya/>

²⁴⁴ The list of dismantled monuments, destroyed burial sites, and desecrated memorials is provided in the latest report by the Russian Foreign Ministry on the Situation with the Glorification of Nazism and the Spread of Neo-Nazism and Other Practices that Contribute to Fuelling Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance.

exhumation of the remains of Soviet soldiers in the village of Tsooru (Võru county). A Russian Embassy note to the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs emphasized that exhumation was only possible in exceptional cases and after appropriate notification of the country of origin of the deceased. It was also noted: "An unequal battle with those who can no longer respond can hardly correspond to the image of a civilized state that adheres to the norms of international law. What is happening is especially sad against the backdrop of the ongoing celebration of the legionnaires of the 20th Waffen SS Division, to whom monuments are being erected in the republic. All this is indicative of the Estonian authorities' desire to revise the results of World War II."²⁴⁵

In late January 2025, a new act of Estonian State vandalism against the memory of Soviet soldiers and officers who gave their lives in the fight against the brown plague occurred. In the town of Valga, a stele was barbarically destroyed at the Mass Grave and slabs with the names of the Red Army soldiers resting there were dismantled. The Russian Embassy in Estonia sent a note to the Estonian Foreign Ministry demanding that the blasphemous actions and immoral campaign to eliminate Soviet military memorial heritage sites aimed at revising the results of World War II, be stopped.²⁴⁶

The confrontation between the Estonian authorities and Narva residents over the T-34 tank monument became in fact the main symbol of a new stage in the official Tallinn's fight against Soviet monuments. The Estonian government's decision to demolish all memorials and monuments to Red Army soldiers caused the outrage of Narva residents who stood up for keeping the monument in place. The Estonian leaders expectedly expressed their opposition to this stressing that monuments like the T-34 tank in Narva were causing a divide in the Estonian society in the context of the Russian special military operation. Meanwhile, on 8 August 2022, the ruling municipal coalition decided to convoke

²⁴⁵ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/21092024-rossiyskoe-posolstvo-v-estonii-osudilo-eksgumatsiyu-ostankov-sovetskikh-voinov/>

²⁴⁶ https://estonia.mid.ru/ru/press-centre/news/o_snose_monumenta_voinam_osvoboditelyam_v_g_valge/

a city council meeting to instruct the city administrative board to dismantle the Narva tank and move it to a closed and secure location within the city²⁴⁷.

The Narva authorities conducted an opinion poll among the citizens concerning the fate of the tank standing on the monument to Soviet warriors. According to the then Mayor Katri Raik, two-thirds of the three thousand respondents supported the tank to be kept in the city and stored in a closed area. She said the city council majority aligned with this view, as this exact stand was taken during inter-faction consultations.²⁴⁸

On 16 August 2022, the Government announced at an extraordinary press conference in Tallinn that seven Soviet monuments in Narva and Narva-Jõesuu were to be relocated. On the same day, the dismantling of the T-34 monument with its subsequent transfer to the Estonian War Museum in Viimsi began. Also, in Narva, memorial plaques in Petrovskaya Square, a monument to Red Army soldiers in the castle park and a memorial sign to Hero of the Soviet Union Igor Grafov who lost his life in the liberation of Narva in 1944, were relocated. The *Three bayonets* and *Meriküla landing force* monuments were removed in Narva-Jõesuu. Soviet symbols were removed from the gravestone on the Great Patriotic War victims' communal grave between the Narva river and Victoria bastion. To secure themselves against possible local protests, the authorities deployed additional police force in Narva blocking access roads to the monuments to be dismantled.

In 2023, Estonian authorities continued their fight against the Narva monument while trying to legalise their steps to demolish the monument. On 4 January, the Chancellery sought the Narva authorities' consent to remove two other monuments with Soviet symbols from public space. A memorial plaque with the names of residents of Narva district perished between 1941 and 1945 at

²⁴⁷ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/080822-pravyashchaya-koalitsiya-v-narve-prinyala-reshenie-o-perenose-sovetskogo-pamyatnikatanka/>

²⁴⁸ <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/11082022-izvestny-rezultaty-oprosa-zhiteley-narvy-o-dalneyshey-sudbe-sovetskogo-pamyatnikatanka/>

the hands of the Nazis, which is located in Võidu Park, is one of those. The second one is a tombstone in the Dark Garden marking the burial place of Communists and Red Army soldiers fallen in the battles for Narva in November 1918. The Chancellery also sought the Sillamäe authorities' consent to remove a Soviet *Unknown Soldier* monument erected in 1975.²⁴⁹ In April 2023, Minister of the Interior Lauri Läänemets signed an order on condemnation of the lot of the former T-34 tank monument site. The declared intention was to convert it to a surveillance position to "monitor Russia."²⁵⁰

Besides, Narva residents were forbidden to celebrate the 79th anniversary of city liberation from Nazi invaders. The Estonian police imposed an official ban on any public gatherings in Narva from 26 July to 2 August 2023. Estonian law enforcers did not even allow a group of former juvenile prisoners of Nazi concentration camps to lay flowers on the Soviet soldiers' communal grave. There was a police presence at all potential venues for commemorative events. The chief Narva police station, Indrek Püvi, illustrated ideological affinity between Estonian authorities and the Nazis by saying that "laying flowers on the day the Red Army marched into Estonia clearly supports Russia's propaganda narratives".²⁵¹

According to journalist Aleksey Stefanov, the T-34 tank, which was transferred from Narva to the War Museum, became a true pilgrimage object. According to museum's management, 33,000 people visited it in 2022, whereas before the pandemic, the museum received up to 24,000 visitors annually. Museum Director Hellar Lill admitted that the record number was achieved thanks to the transfer of the T-34 tank forcibly removed from a Narva street. He called the tank "the most famous piece" in the museum's collection. Hellar Lill also pointed out that people from Narva and other Estonian communities came

249 <https://regnum.ru/article/3768343?ysclid=ln6gp8apl2892174706>

250 <https://www.gazeta.ru/politics/news/2023/05/27/20535590.shtml>

251 <https://www.rubaltic.ru/article/politika-i-obshchestvo/20230803-korichneveyut-na-glazakh-vlasti-estonii-perestali-skryvat-svoi-politicheskie-predpochteniya/>

to see the T-34. The Director specified that Narva residents were concerned about the condition of the monument, which they had considered to be theirs for many years.²⁵²

The Russian Embassy sent notes of protest to the Estonian Foreign Ministry regarding all the above acts of vandalism against war memorials, as well as similar barbaric episodes that had taken place earlier. In August 2022, the Russian diplomatic mission made an attempt to inquire about the legal basis for the authorities' actions and whereabouts of the dismantled monuments, dates and sites of reburial of the remains (photographs of new graves, their size, layout, location data, address, number of buried persons), as well as whether the remains were identified during the exhumation and identification results. No response was received.

The Embassy's major efforts to protect the memory of the Great Patriotic War, preserve memorials and graves of Soviet soldiers and officers, as well as strong response to attempts to glorify the Nazis and their accomplices were widely supported by enthusiasts from the Russian community and certain compatriots associations, primarily uniting veterans, former residents of the besieged Leningrad and juvenile prisoners of Nazi concentration camps.

As the facts show, the Estonian authorities did not intend to stop in the "war on monuments" to Red Army soldiers. On 9 February 2023 already, Foreign Minister Urmas Reinsalu announced at a government press conference that 64 "red" monuments were removed from public space and about 150 more remained.²⁵³

252 <https://ruskiymir.ru/news/309277/>, <https://ruskiymir.ru/news/308848/>

253 <https://rus.delfi.ee/statja/120140868/video-perehod-na-estonskiy-yazyk-rossiyskaya-propaganda-sovetskie-pamyatniki-pravitelstvo-rasskazalo-o-svoih-novyh-resheniyah>

According to the Estonian Ministry of Defense, the government is covering the related costs, which are estimated at EUR 1.42 million.²⁵⁴ Moreover, the funds are laid out despite the economic crisis Estonia has faced.

It should be stressed that all the Estonian authorities' steps to destroy monuments to and sacrilegiously transfer the remains of Red Army soldiers have not been enshrined in law. As stated above, in March 2023, Estonian president Alar Karis denied the approval of a relevant bill as "contravening the Constitution of the Republic of Estonia."²⁵⁵ Nevertheless, the Estonian authorities persistently continue the "war on monuments".

It should also be noted that the "war on monuments" declared in Estonia is not limited to monuments to the Red Army soldiers who died in the battles to liberate the country from Nazism only. The Estonian authorities take active steps to "rebury" the remains of all Soviet soldiers.

In November 2023, the Estonian War Museum announced the reburial of the remains of 18 Soviet Army and Navy servicemen buried in the Tallinn Military Cemetery under the pretext of "clearing a passage" to the Knights of the Cross of Freedom monument. The burials of soldiers who died after the war fall under this "initiative" which took on horrifying scope. On 31 January 2024, the Russian Embassy in Estonia reported relevant information signs announcing the upcoming "reburial" to have appeared at 38 soldier graves. Such actions by the cemetery administration were aimed at quietly waiting six months from the date of sign installation and, without attracting attention or notifying relatives of the buried, dismantle the headstones "in the absence of objections", thus insulting upon the remains of the buried. The Russian Embassy called such actions a blasphemous act of State vandalism against Soviet (Russian) war

²⁵⁴ <https://rus.err.ee/1608878522/ministerstvo-oborony-prosit-vydelit-1-42-mln-evro-na-demontazh-sovetskih-pamjatnikov>

²⁵⁵ <https://rus.err.ee/1608906860/prezident-ne-provozglasil-tak-nazyvaemyj-zakon-o-sovetskih-pamjatnikah>

memorial heritage sites, aimed at revising World War II outcomes. The Embassy website published a list of burial sites²⁵⁶ to be "relocated".

On 2 April 2025, employees of the Estonian War Museum, supervised personally by its director Hellar Lill, committed another vandal act at the Tallinn military cemetery; they destroyed monuments to the brave Baltic sailors, soldiers and officers who lay in the bed of honour. The Russian Embassy called this an "act of State vandalism" and condemned the Estonian authorities' actions.^{257,258}



Monument in honour of the brave Baltic sailors, soldiers and officers who lay in the bed of honour at the Tallinn military cemetery.

Photo: Embassy of the Russian Federation in Estonia

Source: https://estonia.mid.ru/ru/press-centre/news/kommentariy_posolstva_v_svyazi_s_ochednym_aktom_glumleniya_nad_pamyatyu_geroev_velikoy_otchestven/

256 https://estonia.mid.ru/ru/press-centre/news/kommentariy_posolstva_v_svyazi_s_planami_po_oskverneniyu_zakhoroneniya_krasnoarmeytsev_na_tallinskom/

257 https://estonia.mid.ru/ru/press-centre/news/kommentariy_posolstva_v_svyazi_s_ochednym_aktom_glumleniya_nad_pamyatyu_geroev_velikoy_otchestven/

258 <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/03042025-v-estonii-unichtozhili-sovetskie-monumenty-na-tallinskom-voennom-kladbishche/>

The Estonian authorities take sacrilegious action against the Tehumardi memorial complex on Saaremaa Island; it was erected in memory of the battle that took place near the eponymous village between the 249th Estonian Rifle Division and Nazi invaders on the night of 8-9 October 1944. Liis Lepik, Assistant elder of Saaremaa parish, said that the parish itself applied for "reburial". It was announced that the remains of Soviet soldiers would be reburied on the same island, at the Vananõmme cemetery in the village of Lõmala. However, the dolomite gravestones with the names of Red Army soldiers would not be put back after the reburial of their remains. And the text on the sword-shaped obelisk would be changed.²⁵⁹ Given recent practice in this area, it is easy to assume that new inscriptions would also reflect the parallel reality where the Estonian authorities live and in which they are trying in every way to make the population of this Baltic State believe.

In July 2024, the Saaremaa parish authorities partnered with the War Museum administration to blasphemously dismantle the tombstones of the Red Army soldiers who rested in Tehumardi and shamelessly exhume their remains, in violation of Estonia's obligations under Article 34, Additional Protocol I to the 1949 Geneva Conventions. In March 2025, they began to desecrate the monument to those killed in that bloody battle, created by Estonian sculptors R. Kuld and M. Varik and architect A. Murdmaa. First, the memorial inscriptions and Victory symbols on the obelisk were covered up to give place to offensive writings.²⁶⁰

Against this background, the Russian Embassy in Tallinn called on the Estonian authorities to stop the "transfer" of Soviet soldiers' burial sites and sent a relevant note of protest to the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This note expressed Russian Embassy's "strong protest in connection with the commenced

259 <https://ren.tv/news/v-mire/1236102-demontazh-nadgrobii-sovetskikh-soldat-nachali-na-ostrove-saaremaa>

260 https://estonia.mid.ru/ru/press-centre/news/kommentariy_posolstva_o_situatsii_vokrug_memoriala_tekhumardi/

dismantling of the tombstones and the planned exhumation of the remains of the Red Army soldiers buried under them."²⁶¹ The Estonian authorities were called upon to stop the blasphemous actions and immoral campaign to eradicate Soviet war memorial heritage sites, aimed at revising World War II outcomes, and demanded to return the monuments to their former places. At the same time, the Russian diplomatic mission highlighted the difference in Estonian authorities' approach to the burials of Soviet and German soldiers who fought on Hitler's side. The latter enjoy demonstrative care. The well-maintained monument with the proudly hovering German flag in the village of Sõrve, can serve as an example.²⁶²

261 <https://www.rubaltic.ru/news/02072024-rossiya-vyrazila-protest-estonii-izza-perenosa-zakhoroneni-sovetskikh-voinov/>

262 https://estonia.mid.ru/ru/press-centre/news/o_demontazhe_tekhumardi/