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The Kremlin at the UNGA

Staying the Course on War and “Dangerous Self-Deception”

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Table of contents

Executive Summary 6

“The SMO Will Not Stop”: Response to the Declaration on Russian Aggression 10

“An Unhinged Pole”: Anti-European Rhetoric 14

“This Is the UN’s Funeral”: Russian Propaganda on the UN 17

Sources 19

At the United Nations General Assembly, the Kremlin again made clear that it has no intention of ending the war, responding to calls for a ceasefire with verbal attacks on Europe and the organization itself.

At the same time, propaganda efforts to dismiss and downplay international support for Ukraine provoked irritation even within the pro-war community, where some saw the messaging as dangerous self-deception.

Key topics:

1. “The SMO Will Not Stop”: Response to the Declaration on Russian Aggression
2. “An Unhinged Pole”: Anti-European Rhetoric
3. “This Is the UN’s Funeral”: Russian Propaganda on the UN

Executive Summary

The high-level week of the 81st session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 2026 showed that the Kremlin is responding to growing international pressure in three ways: rejecting any ceasefire, shifting responsibility for the war onto Europe, and discrediting the UN itself as the forum where that pressure is formally expressed.

At home, however, this messaging is becoming harder to sustain. Propaganda efforts to minimize the significance of a declaration signed by 51 countries drew sharp criticism even within the pro-war community.

The joint declaration, released on the eve of the September 23 meeting of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) as a demonstration of international solidarity with Ukraine, reiterated Ukraine's readiness for a full, immediate, and indefinite ceasefire, a position it had maintained since March 2025. Moscow responded with a coordinated rejection across official channels.

Even before the declaration was published, presidential press secretary Dmitry Peskov set the tone by contrasting a ceasefire with "a lasting peace, peace forever." Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov then ruled out any pause in the war for negotiations in any format, Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov equated a ceasefire with "a respite for Ukraine, which is under severe pressure," and State Duma International Affairs Committee Chair Leonid Slutsky again demanded the "complete elimination of the root causes of the conflict."

State media simultaneously pushed the claim that "only one-third" of UN member states had backed the "anti-Russian" declaration, portraying support for Ukraine as a global "minority" position. Particular emphasis was placed on the absence of the United States among the signatories, a point actively promoted by presidential special envoy Kirill Dmitriev. Television propaganda went further, contrasting the declaration

with a 2022 resolution that it claimed had been signed by "nearly 150 countries."

This line of argument backfired on the Kremlin. Pro-war Z-blogger Anastasia Kashevarova noted that there had been 40 signatories a year earlier and 51 now, accused the country's leadership of self-deception and of lacking an ideology it could present to the world, and concluded that "we are behaving like a defeated country" and that "things are not fine at all, and they will get worse."

Her post was forwarded at least 1,400 times and quoted by 62 public Telegram channels, including those of pro-war writer Zakhar Prilepin and Apti Alaudinov, commander of the Chechen Akhmat battalion.

The rest of the Z-community largely supported the official line. The channel Two Majors, which is close to the security bloc, summed up the Foreign Ministry's position as follows:

> "first, all of Russia's demands must be met, and then there can be negotiations. If there is anyone left to negotiate with."

Russia 1 war correspondent Yevgeny Poddubny, who was among the top five candidates on United Russia's list during the 2026 State Duma election campaign, summarized the message as "there will be no halt to the 'special military operation' (SMO)."

After Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy warned of a cold winter, Two Majors called for Kyiv to be "wiped off the face of the earth," while also expressing concern that funds allocated to protect Russia's own infrastructure would simply be siphoned off.

In the Kremlin's official rhetoric, responsibility for the war is routinely shifted onto Europe. Lavrov told the UNSC that Ukraine could have remained within its 1991 borders were it not for European "cheating," accused an "alarmed Europe" of derailing the implementation of understandings reached

in Anchorage, and portrayed the glorification of Nazism as foundational to the values of the European Union.

Meanwhile, Russia 1, a nationwide television channel, aired a propaganda segment in which a Kremlin propagandist followed EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas and Zelenskyy, pressing them with questions. Zelenskyy's sharp reply that he would travel to Moscow "on a missile" was presented by propaganda as evidence that he was unwilling to pursue peace, while Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova called him a "dehumanized character" who had "completely gone off the rails."

The main target, however, was Polish Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski, who addressed Lavrov with the words,

> "Sergey, I know you're listening. Tell your boss: enough is enough."

Z-blogger Yulia Vityazeva called him a "Polish half-wit" and an "unhinged Pole"; Zakharova advised him to stock up on "haloperidol"; and Deputy Chairman of Russia's Security Council Dmitry Medvedev described Sikorski as a "poorly educated British subject."

Medvedev portrayed Sikorski's reference to the long history of Russian-Polish wars as evidence of preparations for aggression against Russia, while omitting Sikorski's remark that Poland would not surrender if attacked.

When Sikorski said Warsaw "won't make a big deal out of it" if the Kremlin apologizes for a Russian helicopter's incursion into Polish airspace on September 23, the Z-channel Notes of a Veteran responded ambiguously:

> "And if something really happens, will it be enough simply to apologize? Fine, we'll remember that."

Against this backdrop, Moscow has systematically sought to undermine the standing of the UN itself. Peskov has said

that any reform of the UNSC must preserve Russia's permanent seat and veto power.

Responding to Sikorski's call to strip an aggressor of the immunity afforded by permanent membership, Zakharova argued that Russia's seat had been "earned with the lives of our ancestors." **Telegram-based propaganda outlets** closely tracked similar calls for reform from Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, leaders of the Baltic states, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez, and outgoing UN Secretary-General António Guterres.

State television, meanwhile, portrayed the organization as being "in crisis," mocking Kallas with the claim that she cannot tell Morocco from Monaco. Kirill Logvinov, director of the Foreign Ministry's Department of International Organizations, and Rodion Miroshnik, an ambassador-at-large at the Foreign Ministry, blamed Guterres personally for the crisis.

The Z-community went a step further. Vityazeva concluded that "the UN can be shut down," while propagandist Vladimir Solovyov, reacting to a speech by U.S. President Donald Trump, called what was happening "the UN's funeral."

"The SMO Will Not Stop": Response to the Declaration on Russian Aggression

The 51-country declaration on the Russia-Ukraine war was released ahead of the September 23 meeting of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).[1] It reaffirmed Ukraine's readiness, maintained since March 2025, for a

> "full, immediate, and indefinite ceasefire" and called on Russia to "end its aggression, agree to a ceasefire, and engage meaningfully in negotiations."

The Kremlin again used every available channel to reject the prospect of a ceasefire, while propaganda described the document as "anti-Russian."[2] A day before the declaration was published, Putin's press secretary Dmitry Peskov had already stated the same position:

> "We are in favor of a lasting peace, peace forever, not a ceasefire."[3]

Similar statements followed from Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, who said that Russia would not pause the "special military operation" (SMO) for negotiations in any format;[4] Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov, who said that "a ceasefire means a respite";[5] Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova, who said Lavrov had "brought everyone back down to earth";[6] and State Duma International Affairs Committee Chair Leonid Slutsky, who said that any settlement must be sustainable and must include the "complete elimination of the root causes of the SMO."[7]

Official propaganda, meanwhile, sought to downplay the declaration's significance. Almost simultaneously, multiple propaganda outlets published reports carrying the same message:

> "Only one-third of UN member states supported the anti-Russian declaration on Ukraine."[8,9,10]

The outlets placed particular emphasis on the fact that the United States had not joined the declaration,[11] a point amplified by Kremlin negotiator Kirill Dmitriev.[12] Television propaganda promoted the same narrative while misrepresenting the figures:

> "In 2022, almost 150 countries signed a resolution calling for an end to hostilities; now only around four dozen have agreed."[13]

This framing, however, provoked anger within the pro-war Z-community. Hard-line Z-blogger Anastasia Kashevarova published a post titled "51 countries against Russia. And there are more of them every year," sharply criticizing the leadership's approach to Russia's international image. Responding to the propaganda claim that support amounted to "only one-third," she wrote:

> "That's not how it is, friends. Last year there were 11 fewer countries, meaning 40 out of 193. Today there are already 51."

She concluded:

> "We are deceiving ourselves <…> Russia cannot explain in simple terms what it is fighting for. There is no concept of the Russian World, no ideological foundation. <…> In effect, we are behaving like a defeated country, like backward slaves. With no ideology at home. With no ideology to take to the world. <…> Russia needs to engage with the world. <…> And to do that, we need to stop lying to ourselves at home by saying that everything is fine and that we are winning everywhere. Things are not fine at all, and they will get worse, and we need to prepare."[14]

The post circulated widely in the Z-community. It was forwarded at least 1,400 times and quoted by 62 public Telegram channels, including those of pro-war writer Zakhar Prilepin[15] and Apti Alaudinov, commander of the Chechen Akhmat battalion.[16]

The rest of the Z-community largely echoed the official line. The Z-channel Two Majors, which is close to the security bloc, wrote:

> "Our Foreign Ministry, obsessed with red lines, has finally stated our sequence of actions correctly: first, all of Russia's demands must be met, and then there can be negotiations. If there is anyone left to negotiate with."[17]

It concluded:

> "We'll finish [Ukraine] off!"[18]

Yevgeny Poddubny, a war correspondent for the nationwide television channel Russia 1 who was among the top five candidates on United Russia's list during the 2026 State Duma campaign, wrote that "there will be no halt to the SMO."[19] "A not-so-subtle hint that Kyiv's plutocrats should hurry up with negotiations,"

wrote Dmitry Steshin, a war correspondent for the national daily Komsomolskaya Pravda.[20]

At the same time, almost all Z-channels continued to argue, as they routinely do, that Zelenskyy and Kyiv should not be taken seriously. Two Majors called for escalation:

> "Zelenskyy threatened Russia with a cold winter from the UN podium today. Now Kyiv can be wiped off the face of the earth, and the recording of this drug addict can be shoved in the international community's face."[21]

Yet the channel also reacted warily to warnings invoking "General Winter":

> "The main thing is to get the job done, rather than siphon off money meant for the defense of the Motherland under the pretext of implementing anti-sabotage and counterterrorism security measures together with the oversight bodies."[22]

"An Unhinged Pole": Anti-European Rhetoric

A separate line of official messaging and propaganda sought to shift responsibility for Russian aggression onto Europe. At the UNSC meeting, Sergei Lavrov said that "Ukraine could have remained within its 1991 borders if the Europeans had not engaged in cheating,"[23] later blaming Europe for derailing negotiations over Ukraine:

> "'Alarmed Europe' did everything it could to stall further work on the practical implementation of the understandings reached in Anchorage."[24]

He also repeated the Kremlin's familiar narrative about the revival of Nazism:

> "Racism, persecution of the church and priests, and the glorification of Nazism in the repulsive, bestial forms of Ukrainian nationalism are the very values on which the European Union rests today,"[25]

referring to statements of support for Ukraine by "Ursula von der Leyen and other figures in Brussels and European capitals."

Propaganda actively amplified this rhetoric. Russia 1 aired a segment in which a Kremlin propagandist repeatedly tried to provoke Kaja Kallas, the EU's foreign policy chief, and Volodymyr Zelenskyy:

> "The head of EU diplomacy fled from our journalists in New York <…> Ms. Kallas, when will you finally start serving European citizens instead of Zelenskyy? <…> [silence] <…> When are you coming to Moscow? [addressing Zelenskyy] <…> On a fucking missile [Zelenskyy's response]."[26]

Russian propagandists and officials reacted angrily to Zelenskyy's response. Zakharova called him "this dehumanized figure"[27] who had "completely gone off the rails,"[28] while propaganda presented the exchange as evidence of his "unwillingness to engage in peace talks."[29]

Particular attention was directed at Polish Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski, who had earlier addressed Lavrov at the UNSC:

> "Sergey, I know you're listening. Tell your boss: enough is enough."[30]

The segment then turned from Kallas, "who is dressed in the colors of the Ukrainian flag and whose jacket brooch also screams support for the regime," to Sikorski:

> "The Polish foreign minister is just the same. When will you stop caring about Zelenskyy and start caring about your own people? [question to Sikorski] <…> There are fewer and fewer such rabid supporters of Ukraine,"[31]

before returning to the claim that "only one-third" had backed the anti-Russian declaration.

Sikorski's address to Lavrov and his subsequent statements also drew an angry response from the Z-community. Another hard-line Z-blogger, Yulia Vityazeva, called Sikorski an "unhinged Pole"[32] and a "Polish half-wit,"[33] before delivering her own assessment of Poland:

> "Poland was once a country of some standing in Europe. Yes, it was shitty and arrogant. But it was respected and influential. Gradually, all of that was lost and squandered, in large part thanks to incompetent loudmouths like him. And simply ungrateful jackals who are ready to kiss the asses of the 'Khokhols' [a derogatory term for Ukrainians], who have spilled Polish blood for centuries."[34]

Dmitry Medvedev joined in this rhetoric, responding to Sikorski's reference to the long history of Russian-Polish wars while omitting the minister's remark, "If they attack us, we are not going to give up."[35] Medvedev wrote:

> "Poland has been fighting Russia for a long time, and it loses every time <…> the proud minister, of course, knows nothing about how Poles were saved from death during World War II. After all, he has been a poorly educated British subject since 1987 and learned history from the Anglo-Saxons."[36]

Maria Zakharova, for her part, urged Sikorski to stock up on "haloperidol."[37]

The Z-channel Notes of a Veteran hinted at the possibility of escalation involving Poland in response to a different statement by the Polish minister. Sikorski had said that Warsaw "won't make a big deal out of it" if the Kremlin apologizes for a Russian helicopter's incursion into Polish airspace on September 23.[38] The channel responded:

> "It is interesting to speculate what is meant by 'big problems': 'serious concern' or 'deep concern' at the UN? And if something really happens, will it be enough simply to apologize? Fine, we'll remember that."[39]

"This Is the UN's Funeral": Russian Propaganda on the UN

In their official statements, Russian officials called for reform of the UN's institutional architecture, but on terms favorable to the Kremlin. On September 22, Dmitry Peskov said that

> "the UN certainly needs to be reformed. Permanent membership must be expanded, without question," while insisting that Russia retain its permanent seat and veto power, which he described as "a very important element of the entire UN structure."[40]

Maria Zakharova made the same argument:

> "Russia's membership in the UN and the UNSC was earned with the lives of our ancestors who liberated the world from Nazism during World War II."[41]

She was again responding to Radosław Sikorski, who had argued that Russia's permanent membership in the UNSC grants immunity to an aggressor and had called for reform of the Council.[42]

Russian propaganda on Telegram also covered calls for UNSC reform in considerable detail, including those by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan,[43] leaders of the Baltic states,[44] Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez,[45] and outgoing UN Secretary-General António Guterres.[46]

At the same time, state television consistently portrayed the UN as "in crisis":

> "Criticism of the UN leadership is pouring from the main podium <…> the caliber of politicians representing international institutions has also declined. Kaja Kallas, a walking meme, cannot tell Morocco from Monaco; Ukraine is the only thing on her mind."[47]

Kirill Logvinov, director of the Russian Foreign Ministry's Department of International Organizations, blamed Guterres for the crisis:

> "Guterres's actions as secretary-general have undermined trust in the UN."[48]

Rodion Miroshnik, a Russian Foreign Ministry ambassador-at-large overseeing "issues related to war crimes and terrorist crimes committed by Ukraine and the West," echoed that line:

> "During his time in office, Guterres tried so often to evade direct assessments of Kyiv's crimes that a whole list of questions accumulated, which Sergei Lavrov made sure to put to the secretary-general one last time."[49]

The Z-community, in turn, echoed the same narratives. Z-blogger Yulia Vityazeva wrote that "the UN can be shut down. Today it has finally lost its original functions,"[50] while Z-propagandist Vladimir Solovyov concluded:

> "Speaking from the UN General Assembly podium, Trump showed contempt for every principle on which this organization rests. Everything happening now is the UN's funeral. There is nothing to talk about and no one to talk to. <…> Humanity, the economic system, diplomacy, and warfare have reached a stage at which every word spoken there is worthless."[51]

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