

# Zelensky: “Dictator” Who is “Divorced from Reality”

Statement of Former Senior Advisor to Ukraine President

By [Ahmed Adel](#)

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*Oleksii Arestovych, Volodymyr Zelensky’s former chief of staff, described the Ukrainian president as a “dictator” who has become “divorced from reality” in relation to the way he has reacted to the Russian special military operation since it began in February 2022.*

“First, someone behaves like a dictator and, instead of following the normal path of accelerated development, chooses stagnation. Then someone breeds massive corruption. Then someone breeds hatred for any opinion different from their own. And then – a year and a half later – autumn comes, both in relations with the West and with our own people. And no matter how much you deny reality, it doesn’t go away,” [said](#) the former advisor on X (formerly Twitter).

– Сначала кто-то ведет себя, как диктатор и вместо того, чтобы пойти нормальным путем ускоренного развития, выбирает стагнацию.

Потом кто-то плодит массовую коррупцию.

Потом кто-то плодит ненависть к любому мнению, отличному от своего.

А потом – спустя полтора года –... [pic.twitter.com/LjifhRtF6Q](https://pic.twitter.com/LjifhRtF6Q)

— Arestovych (@arestovych) [October 31, 2023](#)

Arestovych made his post in response to an article in Time magazine, written by correspondent Simon Shuster, which addresses the isolation of the Ukrainian leader and is entitled, “Nobody believes in our victory like I do. Nobody.” For him, the article reveals an “unpleasant and vaguely familiar image – a dictator abandoned by everyone, wandering

through the back streets of the bunker, unwilling to face reality and hysterically exclaiming about a quick victory, which he is unable to achieve.”

“An authoritarian leader to whom those around him are afraid to tell the truth,” he continued. “All dictators who are divorced (in the name of their fantasy) from reality end up the same way.”

According to the Times article published on October 30, Zelensky “feels betrayed” by his Western allies because “they have left him without the means to win the war, only the means to survive it.”

“The scariest thing is that part of the world got used to the war in Ukraine,” Zelensky told Shuster. “Exhaustion with the war rolls along like a wave. You see it in the United States, in Europe. And we see that as soon as they start to get a little tired, it becomes like a show to them: ‘I can’t watch this rerun for the 10th time.’”

He also stated that Kiev is firmly opposed to any ceasefire. This position has been criticised even by Ukrainian military leaders, who admit failure in the much-touted summer counteroffensive. The situation is so desperate for Ukraine that the country can no longer assemble the same well-prepared army it had assembled before launching the counteroffensive at the beginning of the European summer, let alone what it had before the start of the Russian military operation.

Concluding his tweet, Arestovych said that the Times article “condemns Zelensky to loneliness and the judgment of history – to loneliness, for which he has no one to blame but himself.”

Although much attention following the publication of the Times article has been given to the fact that Ukraine is becoming increasingly isolated, especially since the start of the Middle East crisis, overlooked was the revelation that the average age of a soldier in Ukraine is around 43 years, demonstrating just how crippled the Ukrainian Armed Forces are.

According to Shuster, the Russian special military operation has “eroded the ranks of Ukraine’s armed forces so badly that draft offices have been forced to call up ever older personnel, raising the average age of a soldier in Ukraine to around 43 years.”

“They’re grown men now, and they aren’t that healthy to begin with,” Shuster cited a close aide to Zelensky as saying. “This is Ukraine. Not Scandinavia.”

According to the article, Ukraine’s Territorial Defence Forces reportedly accepted 100,000 new recruits in the first ten days of the all-out war, showing how confident people were, which was partly fuelled by senior officials audaciously making optimistic predictions that the war would be won in only a few months.

“Many people thought they could sign up for a quick tour and take part in a heroic victory,” said a second member of Zelensky’s team to the Times correspondent.

However, with revelations that Ukraine is suffering catastrophic losses, with more than 90,000 casualties since the spring offensive, according to Moscow, recruitment is way down. This has intensified conscription efforts, so much so that Zelensky’s dictatorial tendencies are seen with draft officers illegally pulling men off trains and buses and sending them to

the front.

Arestovych's latest outburst against Zelensky has only fuelled rumours about his own political aspirations despite his frequent assurances that he would not run for president if Zelensky does.

It is recalled that Arestovych was forced to resign as senior adviser to the president in January 2023 after his statement on a YouTube programme that Ukraine's air defence forces shot down the missile that destroyed part of a house in Dnipro, then fell on a high-rise building and exploded, something which countered the official narrative of the Kiev regime. Since then, he has been in political battles with the ruling elite of Kiev, as demonstrated by his pointing out that Zelensky is a dictator.

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*Featured image: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky delivers an address in Kiev, Ukraine, April 15, 2022. (Credit: Ukrainian Presidency)*

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