

# Zelensky Hopes to Boost Popularity by Holding 2024 Presidential Elections. Will this “Prolong the War”

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*Apparently, the Ukrainian government wants to disguise the dictatorial aspect of the regime by pretending to be a democracy. According to information reported by Western media, Kiev plans to organize elections next year. The news is surprising, as the country has been under martial law since February 2022, which would legitimize the postponement of the elections. However, the aim is believed to be to increase Zelensky’s popularity and improve his public image.*

The information was published by the Spanish newspaper [El Pais](#) on August 28th. Anonymous sources familiar with the matter were consulted by journalists and said that elections will strengthen Zelensky, thus motivating a circumvention of the norms imposed by martial law.

Until recently, Zelensky ruled out elections, but now there are signs that he and his team are changing the strategy. In an interview with local TV a few days ago, Zelensky [said](#): “The logic is that if you are protecting democracy, you must also protect it during the war. And one way to protect it is elections”. In the same vein, **Ruslan Stefanchuk**, the head of the Ukrainian parliament, stated in July that updates to Ukrainian martial law “would take place soon” as “democracy cannot stop”. Some analysts believe he was commenting on the possibility of calling elections even in times of war.

There are some additional reasons why Kiev is planning these measures. First, it is necessary to remember that the Ukrainian neo-Nazi regime is not sovereign, and all its decisions are taken under the direct influence of foreign agents. And recently there has been pressure from some Americans for Ukraine to implement “more democratic” policies to justify Western support. American politicians have already expressed, including in a personal meeting with Zelensky, their desire to see elections in Ukraine next year, which explains Ukraine’s readiness to revise its martial law.

“After a meeting with Zelenskiy in Kyiv on Wednesday, two senators from the Democratic Party, Elizabeth Warren and Richard Blumenthal, as well as Republican Lindsey Graham, stressed that they considered it necessary for Ukrainian democracy to hold elections despite the country being at war. The Democratic position has a lot to do with the upcoming presidential election in the United States, which will be held in November 2024. The Republican Party has numerous prominent members (including former President Donald Trump) who have criticized military support for Kyiv, and who, since last spring, have used the argument that Ukraine is not so different from Russia, since the country has suspended democracy under the pretext of war”, El Pais’ article reads.

However, some sources also believe that the main reason for Kiev to take this action is a matter of domestic politics. Zelensky’s popularity has fallen recently, not just because of the conflict, but also because the Ukrainian president has failed to fulfill his main promise during the previous election campaign: to fight corruption. So, instead of thinking about concrete solutions to the corruption problem, Zelensky apparently plans to regain his popularity through new elections. The Ukrainian political scenario does not allow for the existence of a solid opposition coalition, given that many parties were banned and opposing politicians arrested, so it could be “easy” for Zelensky to achieve victory.

In this regard, Mark Savchuk, a political commentator and adviser to the Ukrainian National Anti-Corruption Office, told journalists:

“Zelenskiy is a great public relations man, especially with the international community, and we are lucky for that, but if there is now talk of going to the polls it is because of Ukrainian internal issues that he does not want to be aired abroad (...) Only in the judiciary have there been improvements, but neither Zelenskiy nor his team are prepared [to fight corruption]. Ordinary Ukrainians see that this is still a corrupt country, they experience it on a daily basis and there are always new stories about it in the news (...) Their team is inept and corrupt. We have a serious corruption problem and they believe that their popularity will slip, so they want to take advantage of their charisma now electorally.”

However, it will not be so easy to organize elections in the midst of the conflict. There are many difficulties to be faced by Ukrainian citizens in an election scenario. In all regions affected by the hostilities it will be virtually impossible for citizens to vote, as the possibility of moving around is severely limited due to the intensity of the fighting. This will restrict the voting area to only some western regions of Ukraine, where the population is more influenced by pro-NATO media and tends to support the regime - despite growing criticism of Zelensky’s administrative ability.

In practice, there are two risks for Zelensky with the plan to hold a new election. One of them is Zelensky losing the dispute. Although the Ukrainian opposition has been practically neutralized by the regime’s dictatorial policies, it has become increasingly clear that Western sponsors plan to replace Zelensky, which makes it possible for Washington to create the necessary conditions for another candidate to win. The other risk is that, even if he wins, Zelensky remains unpopular, with his victory looking like a mere bureaucratic procedure, given the absence of relevant opponents. In this scenario, the plan to make Ukraine look “more democratic” would fail.

However, in either case, Ukraine’s real problem will not be solved: the country will continue

to work as a proxy for the US and fight an unwinnable war against a much stronger enemy, causing unnecessary suffering for the Ukrainian population.

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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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