

Former Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko calls Putin a murderer and calls for international tribunal

Barbara O'Sullivan - News 360

Former Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko on Thursday called Russian President Vladimir Putin a "criminal" and "murderer" and said "his place is in jail", after advocating the creation of an international tribunal to judge the crimes of Moscow's troops in the framework of the invasion of Ukraine.



Archive - Former Ukrainian president Viktor Yushchenko - MYKHAYLO PALINCHAK / ZUMA PRESS / CONTACTOPHOTO© Provided by News 360

Yushchenko, who was in power between 2005 and 2010 and promoted a policy of rapprochement towards the European Union (EU) and NATO, has stated that "it is very important in politics to give a concrete definition to things", before stressing that "Putin is a criminal, Putin is a murderer and his place is in jail, if the court shows humanity towards him".

"It is very important, it is a matter of principle, that Putin and all his actors sit in the dock to be properly judged by the world, including his commander (Russian Defense Minister Sergei) Shoigu," the former Ukrainian president defended on the opening day of the 10th Baku Global Forum, organized by the Nizami Ganjavi International Center.

He also blamed the war on "the 140 million 'little Putins'", in reference to the Russian population. "These 140 million people in Russia legitimize Putin", he argued, while calling "not only to focus on bringing war criminals to justice, but to address the policies and principles that brought them to power".

"When we talk about victory, the concept of great victory includes the victory over Putin and Putin's regime," said Yushchenko, who stressed his wish that "the hundreds

of Russian native nations (...) will have their own resistance and will clearly express their will on how they see the future of Russia."

Regarding the conditions for the opening of a dialogue with Russia in view of a peace agreement, the former Ukrainian president said that "the first precondition is to liberate all occupied Ukrainian territories", in line with the position defended by the Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelensky.

"Before that, we cannot talk about any peace", he maintained, before asserting that the other conditions are "the reconstruction of all that Russia has destroyed", "a new security agreement in the world" and the above-mentioned international tribunal.

Regarding the third point, he argued that "Europe needs one security regime, not two or three, if we do not want to repeat again and again the mistakes of 2008", in reference to the war between Russia and Georgia.

The former president assured that Ukraine and its partners "will win" and stressed the importance of "solidarity". "What Putin fears the most is solidarity", he defended, while he praised that Ukrainians "have finally managed to speak with a consolidated voice".

Finally, he warned that "if they believe that they can build and develop a country with a common border with Russia and that they will be left in peace, they are making a big mistake".

Yushchenko came to power after the repetition of the 2004 elections, in which the then Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich won, according to official results that led to numerous allegations of fraud and the emergence of the 'Orange Revolution', after which the Supreme Court annulled the results.

In the second instance, Yushchenko won with 52 percent of the votes, against 44 percent won by Yanukovich, who maintained a position of rapprochement with Russia. Yanukovich would prevail in 2010 and would hold office until 2014, when he was forced to leave office amid the 'Euromaidan' protests.

During the 2003 election campaign, Yuschenk was the victim of an assassination attempt with a dioxin that caused him to suffer acute pancreatitis and disfigurement of his face, according to toxicology experts, although the former president, who accused Ukrainian government agents - when he was one of the leaders of the opposition - managed to recover.

THE RESPONSE "COULD BE STRONGER" On the other hand, the President of Latvia, Egils Levits, participated in the panel and acknowledged that the international reaction to the Russian invasion of Ukraine "could be firmer" and argued that the conflict "is a continuation of the aggression that began in 2014, with the annexation of Crimea, but before that it began with the aggression against Georgia".

Thus, he has argued that the "most obvious" external threat to states today is "Russian aggression against Ukraine", before extolling that "it is the first time when the international community responds to this kind of aggression". "It is necessary to

respond", he said, before also defending the creation of "an 'ad hoc' international tribunal to judge the Russian aggression against Ukraine".

Levits explained that this tribunal is necessary to achieve "justice for Ukraine" and "demonstrate that international law works, as it is the basis for world peace". "If it is not respected, we will return to military anarchy as in the 19th century", he pointed out, before asserting that a third reason for creating this tribunal is "to demonstrate to all potential aggressors that there will be no impunity".

Impunity for one crime invites another crime. We saw it in the case of Russia in 2008 and 2014", said the Latvian president, who also reiterated that "Ukraine needs much more military aid and economic and humanitarian assistance" to cope with the Russian military offensive, unleashed on February 24 on Putin's orders.

**** Source: (EUROPA PRESS)*