

Putin does not want peace, experts say

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Anguish: Ukraine's President Zelensky has invited Donald Trump to come and see for himself the destruction wrought by Russia after Sunday's ballistic missile attack that killed at least 34 people in Sumy (above).

Is Europe already at war? Dozens of ordinary Ukrainian people have been killed in a Russian attack. Some say the war between Russia and Ukraine actually involves us all.

What's happening?

It was mid-morning on **Palm Sunday** in the Ukrainian city of **Sumy**.

Suddenly, there was chaos. Two Russian **missiles** struck the city centre. Thirty-four people were killed and 117 others were injured.

This is the deadliest attack on **civilians** in at least two years.

Find out more

Russia and **Ukraine** have now been at war for more than three years. The current war began when **Russia** invaded Ukraine in February 2022.

European leaders say Russia is the only country to blame for the war. But some experts say that we must accept that Ukraine is not the only one involved in the fight back. **Vladimir Putin**, they say, is really at war with the whole of Europe.

Russia was once at the centre of the **Soviet Union**, which broke up in the 1990s. Since then, Russia has been trying to take back control over the countries that were once part of the group: Moldova, **Georgia**, **Belarus** and Ukraine.

Many other eastern European **democracies** were once under Russian rule, such as the **Baltics**.

Many experts believe Russia is a direct threat to these countries. Ukraine may be simply the first stage in an invasion of all of eastern Europe.

At the same time, Putin is looking to weaken western European countries.

Is Europe already at war?

Some say

Yes! Russia will not rest until it has power over much of Europe. Every country is at risk. We should not pretend this is not true.

Others think

No! Putin's aims are quite clear. He wants power over countries that were once part of the Soviet Union. This is bad — but it does not put the whole of Europe in danger.

Some people say

"Russia is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma."

Winston Churchill (1874 – 1965), British politician

Empty heading

What do you think?

Six steps to discovery

1. Connect

How do you feel about this story? -

Are you worried about war coming to your country?

2. Wonder

What questions do you have? - For example: Why is peace so difficult?

3. Investigate

What are the facts? - Pick out one thing we know for certain about this story and one thing we cannot say for sure.

4. Construct

What is your point of view? - You are a top adviser to your country's leader. How do you respond to the Russian attack?

5. Express

What do others believe? - Why do you think Putin wants to take Ukraine? Discuss as a class.

6. Reflect

What might happen next? - Write a letter to the leader of your country, telling them what you think about the war.

Glossary

Palm Sunday - The Christian feast falling on the Sunday before Easter. It celebrates Christ's entry into Jerusalem.

Sumy - A city in northeastern Ukraine, with a population of 256,000.

Missiles - Objects (e.g. a stone, arrow, artillery shell, bullet, or rocket) that are thrown, shot, or launched usually so as to strike something at a distance.

Civilians - People who are not in the army or the police.

Russia - The largest country in the world by area. It has a population of 144 million people.

Ukraine - A country in Eastern Europe. It was invaded by Russia in February 2022.

Vladimir Putin - Russia's ruler since 2000. He is a strong opponent of the West.

Soviet Union - Officially the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). A powerful group of communist republics, the biggest being Russia, that existed from 1922 to 1991.

Georgia - A state in the southern USA. Also a country at the intersection of Europe and Asia.

Belarus - Belarus is an eastern European state that is a close ally of Russia. Run by Alexander Lukashenko, it is known as "the last dictatorship in Europe".

Democracies - Countries which have a system of government based on the idea of rule by the people.

Baltics - The three countries on the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.