

Russian Forces Disperse Ukraine Protesters With Gunfire

By [AFP](#)

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Footage showed a group of people treating a stunned and bleeding elderly man. **Screenshot / @DmytroKuleba**

Ukraine's leaders on Tuesday accused Russian forces of firing on unarmed protesters in the occupied southern city of Kherson, with videos appearing to show residents fleeing flash-bang grenades and sustained gunfire.

"Occupiers shot at people who went out peacefully, without weapons, to protest. For freedom — our freedom," President Volodymyr Zelensky said, leading the condemnation.

A series of videos posted on social media and the messaging app Telegram showed citizens gathering in Kherson's "Freedom Square" protesting against Russia's recent seizure of the city.

Dozens of men and women wrapped in Ukraine's blue-and-yellow flag are heard chanting

"Go home" and "Glory to Ukraine" before stun grenades force them to flee in panic.

Russian soldiers can be seen firing multiple volleys of gunfire into the air, with no immediate evidence their rifles were trained directly at civilians.

However video footage also showed a group of people treating a stunned and bleeding elderly man, before carrying him away.

Local official Yuriy Sobolevsky said the elderly man's leg was "badly injured" and he "lost a lot of blood."

But he added that medics were treating the wounded and "their lives are not in danger."

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba posted a video of the incident on Twitter.

"In Kherson, Russian war criminals opened fire at unarmed people who peacefully protested against invaders," Kuleba said.

"This is the ugly face of Russia, a disgrace to humankind. We must stop Russia! Sanction them, isolate them, hold war criminals to account," he said.

Kherson, a city of almost 300,000 people before the war, was the first major Ukrainian city to fall to Russian forces, with Moscow capturing it within the first week of its invasion.

People in Kherson have held regular demonstrations against Russian control of the city, a direct challenge to Russia's claim to have liberated the city.

Local media have reported several times that Russian forces have fired at protesters.

Sobolevsky vowed the demonstrations would continue. "Despite everything, the protesters did not disperse! And tomorrow they are going to gather again!" he said.

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