



Annexed Ukrainian Regions Under Nuclear Protection, Kremlin Affirms

Description

Update(1553ET): The Kremlin has continued its severe warnings which are aimed at NATO and Western backers of Ukraine, saying Wednesday that the four recently annexed territories in the east are **under Russia's nuclear protection**.

“All those territories are an **inseparable part of Russia**, and therefore all of them are under [our] protection,” Putin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters, specifically in response to a journalist’s question over whether these new regions absorbed into the Russian federation fall under its nuclear umbrella. “Their security is guaranteed precisely at the same level as the rest of the country.”

As CNBC reports, “The statement from the Kremlin came at a moment of acute tension, with both NATO and Russia expected to hold military exercises shortly to test the readiness of their nuclear weapons forces.”

Some US officials and pundits, as well as NATO-linked think tanks, have continued to urge the Western alliance not to bow to Putin’s “nuclear blackmail” – arguing that Ukrainian forces should continue receiving anything needed to stave off the Russian invasion. Kherson is now said to be in the Ukrainian counteroffensive’s sights, as described below.

“For some of Ukraine’s most ardent backers, even talking about diplomacy amounts to appeasement. Their argument is that the only acceptable & realistic way to end the war is for Putin to be defeated. This is... not hugely helpful.” – ?[@gideonrachman](#)?

<https://t.co/Fm6cuvQIJk>

— Nils Gilman (@nils_gilman) [October 19, 2022](#)

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Russian President Vladimir Putin has authorized martial law for the four recently annexed territories of Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia. This in effect gives emergency and extraordinary powers to the heads of these regions, with the *Associated Press* noting that “additional emergency

powers” have also been given to “the heads of all regions of Russia” – though it’s unclear precisely what this means.

The announcement comes the day after the Russian army said it is **preparing to evacuate civilians from Kherson**, which was **the first Ukrainian city to fall to the invasion in February**. “The entire administration is already moving today,” Moscow-installed regional head Vladimir Saldo confirmed on Tuesday.

This evacuation order is being widely seen as an admission that the Ukrainian counteroffensive threatening occupied Kherson is gaining rapid momentum, so the Russians **could be preparing a massive “scorched earth” bombardment in response**. Reports estimate that Russian front lines have been beaten back some 20 to 30 kilometers in the last few weeks alone, and Russian commanders are alarmed they could be backed up against the Dnieper River that bisects Ukraine.



Via EPA/EFE: Russian soldiers patrolling near the Dnieper river near Kherson, which has seen heavy fighting of late.

The Ukrainian government has rejected the martial law declaration as a “**pseudo-legalization of looting of Ukrainians’ property**” and has long urged its citizens to not comply with Russian occupied administration directives.

Russian state media has explained of Putin’s new order that the four territories “already had martial law in place when they became parts of Russia,” based on the president’s Wednesday statements. “So, the decision **provides the legal basis for it to remain in place under Russian sovereignty**, he said during a meeting of the National Security Council.”

Further state sources detail, “The document signed by Putin introduces martial law starting midnight on

Thursday. It also orders various parts of the Russian government to submit corresponding action plans within three days.”

The additional powers given to regional administrations within Russia appear to be in response to the fact that border regions, especially Belgorod and Kursk of the last several days, have been coming under increased cross-border missile and artillery fire from Ukraine. RT notes additionally of Putin’s legal decree:

*These include the Crimean Republic, the city of Sevastopol, as well as Krasnodar, Belgorod, Bryansk, Voronezh, Kursk, and Rostov Regions. **This is a special regime that gives officials additional authority to ensure security and rapid reaction to any emergencies.***

All of this is another iterative step toward Moscow declaring full war on Ukraine, after last month’s ‘partial mobilization’ and calling up of hundreds of thousands of reservists.



Source: CNN/Institute for the Study of War

One Moscow-based international war correspondent is predicting a “special” military operation is about to happen to “save face after recent defeats” in the east and south:

“[Martial law] will mean more restrictions on the movement of people. It will mean the military and local administrations will have the right to do what they want – in terms of

[deciding] how people move around or restricting them from gathering.

“Political parties gathering and activities will be banned, and civilian or semi-civilian factories will be asked to reorient their production lines to help the military.”

*In “annexed” areas, Vall said there is likely to be a **“total mobilisation instead of partial mobilisation, which has taken place in the Russian Federation.”***

*He added: **“Russians [had been] expecting something special to be done to save face after the recent defeats on the battlefield.”***

Ukrainian officials have meanwhile accused Moscow of stoking “hysteria” with its mass evacuation of the about 60,000 residents which still remain in Kherson.

Power plants across Ukraine have continued coming under attack, with the latest strike Wednesday being against Ukraine’s Vinnytsya region. At the start of the week President Zelensky said one-third of the country’s power stations have been attacked...

Video shows yesterday attack on power plant in [#Kyiv](#). Second missile was shot down or self-destructed. [#RussiansATerroristState pic.twitter.com/TPVMjWDEK2](#)

— Conflict Monitor (@MonitorConflict) [October 19, 2022](#)

CNN has cited a mass emergency text notification that locals received: “Dear residents,” the message began. **“Evacuate immediately. There will be shelling of residential areas by the Armed Forces of Ukraine.** There will be buses from 7:00, from Rechport [River port] to the Left Bank.”

The coming major fight for Kherson marks the first instance of the invasion that it’s Ukrainian forces besieging a large city, and that Russian forces are having to defend, setting up the possibility of pro-Russian civilians getting caught in the crossfire and under major Ukrainian shelling of its own (former) city.



General Sergei Surovikin

On Tuesday new commander of Russian forces in Ukraine, Gen. Sergei Surovikin, spoke to the press about the “special operation” in Ukraine for the first time, admitting that the situation in Kherson has become **“very difficult” and that tough decisions will have to be made.** “The Russian army will above all ensure the safe evacuation of the population” of Kherson, Surovikin told Rossiya 24. “The enemy is not abandoning its attempts to attack Russian troop positions.”

by Tyler Durden

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