



## Russia-Ukraine war live: Putin visits Crimea to mark anniversary of annexation – as it happened

### Description

We have reached the conclusion of today's [Ukraine](#) blog. Thank you for following along. It is just past 9 p.m. in Kyiv. Here is a summary of today's events:

- **The Black Sea grain deal was renewed, according to parties to the agreement.** Turkey and the UN announced the initiative was extended, but did not say for how long. A spokeswoman for Russia's defence ministry said it has notified other parties that the deal was extended for 60 days, while a Ukrainian minister said the deal was extended for 120 days.
- **Russia launched a series of attacks on Friday, according to the Ukrainian armed forces.** Seven homes in the village of Veletenske in the Kherson region were destroyed and a nursery was damaged, but no one was injured, it said. The update, which the Guardian has not verified, also said ten Iranian-made Shahed drones had been shot down, and that Ukrainian forces had "repelled more than 100 enemy attacks".
- **Ukraine said some of the overnight drone attacks hit the relatively peaceful western region of Lviv.** Dnipro was also targeted, as was Kyiv, where air defences shot down all attacking drones. Ukraine's air force said 11 out of 16 drones were "destroyed".
- **Another 880 Russian soldiers were reportedly killed on Friday, according to unverified totals published by the Ukrainian army.** Its general staff said that it meant more than 164,000 Russian service personnel had been killed since the outbreak of war in February last year. In an update posted on Facebook, it said another five tanks, seven armoured combat vehicles and eight artillery systems were disabled by Ukrainian forces.
- **Russia's Wagner mercenary group plans to recruit approximately 30,000 new fighters by the middle of May, its founder Yevgeny Prigozhin said on Saturday.** In an audio Telegram message, Prigozhin said that Wagner recruitment centres, which he said last week had opened in 42 Russian cities, were hiring on average 500 to 800 people a day.
- **Russia will probably introduce wider conscription to boost its military requirements, the UK Ministry of Defence said.** In its latest intelligence update, the ministry said that Russian Duma deputies introduced a bill to change the conscription age for men from the current 18-27 to 21-30. The law would likely be passed, it said, and come into force in January 2024.
- **Senior Ukrainian and US security officials met via video link on Saturday, with representatives of Volodymyr Zelenskiy's government asking for further assistance,**

**including more equipment, weapons and ammunition.** Zelenskiy joined the call at the end of the meeting and discussed his forces' hopes to retake areas that Russia has captured.

- **US president Joe Biden said the international criminal court's (ICC) arrest warrant for Russian leader Vladimir Putin was "justified".** "But the question is – it's not recognised internationally by us either," Biden said, referring to the US not being a member of the ICC. "But I think it makes a very strong point."
- **German chancellor Olaf Scholz has also welcomed the ICC's decision.** "The international criminal court is the right institution to investigate war crimes ... The fact is nobody is above the law and that's what's becoming clear right now," Scholz told reporters.
- **Russian president Vladimir Putin visited the annexed peninsula of Crimea to mark nine years since Russia seized it.** Russian state news agency RIA Novosti said Putin visited an art school and a children's centre. These locations appear to have been chosen in response to the ICC's arrest warrant, which accuses Putin of being responsible for the abduction of children.



Russian president Vladimir Putin in Sevastopol, accompanied by its governor, Mikhail Razvozhayev. Photograph: SPUTNIK/Reuters

## Russia extends grain deal for 60 days, report says

Russia has notified all participants in the Black Sea grain initiative that the deal has been extended for 60 days, Russian media outlet RBC reported on Saturday, citing foreign ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova.

The Turkish president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, previously announced the agreement had been extended. The United Nations has also confirmed the extension. Neither specified a time frame.

Ukrainian infrastructure minister, Oleksandr Kubrakov, however, said the grain deal had been extended for 120 days.

**Some more details here from Associated Press on Vladimir Putin's visit to Crimea on Saturday ([see 13:37](#)).**

Russian state news agency RIA Novosti said Putin visited an art school and a children's centre. The locations appear to have been chosen in response to the international criminal court's arrest warrant being issued on Friday. The warrant accuses him of being responsible for the abduction of children.

Putin took a plane to travel the 1,821 kilometres (1,132 miles) from Moscow to Sevastopol, the region's largest city, where he took the wheel of the car that transported him around the city, according to its Moscow-installed governor, Mikhail Razvozhayev.

Along with the art school and children's centre, Putin also visited the archaeological site at the ruins of the ancient Greek city of Chersonesos, according to Russian state media.



Vladimir Putin and Governor of Sevastopol Mikhail Razvozhayev. Photograph: SPUTNIK/Reuters

The ICC's arrest warrant was the first issued against a leader of one of the five permanent members of the UN security council. The court, which is based in the Hague, the Netherlands, also issued a warrant for the arrest of Maria Lvova-Belova, the commissioner for Children's Rights in the Office of the President of the Russian Federation.

The move was immediately dismissed by Moscow – and welcomed by [Ukraine](#) as a major breakthrough. Its practical implications, however, could be limited as the chances of Putin facing trial at the ICC are highly unlikely because Moscow does not recognise the court's jurisdiction or extradite its nationals.

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