



## “So Not Even A Fly Can Escape”: Putin Declares Mariupol ‘Liberated’ – Orders Besieged Steel Plant Sealed Off

### Description

Weeks ago Russian forces had already captured and besieged much of the southeast Ukrainian port city of Mariupol, which began a process of the majority of civilians emptying out – though there could still be tens of thousands remaining. Within the past days **an estimated couple thousand Azov fighters have been surrounded and holed up** at the large, cavernous Azovstal steel plant, reportedly including some civilians, resulting in a standoff situation where those inside are fast running out of supplies.

Previously it was thought that Russian troops were preparing to storm the sprawling complex, but instead on Thursday President Vladimir Putin indicated to his Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu that this course of action must be scrapped and **instead the plant should be completely sealed off**.



*Azovstal Iron and Steel Works, file image*

Putin further declared Mariupol, which prior to the invasion had a population of about 450,000, **is now “liberated”** – and congratulated the defense chief on the military “success” – at a moment Russia has launched a broader major offensive to take the whole of Donbas.

The Russian leader gave the words in response to Shoigu’s own briefing to his commander-in-chief, which was [aired on state TV](#):

“Mariupol has been liberated,” Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu told Putin in a televised meeting. **“The remaining nationalist formations took refuge in the industrial zone of the Azovstal plant.”**

As for the plant, Putin said it should be sealed off with those inside *“so that not even a fly can escape”* ...

“We should always think, in this case especially, about saving the lives and health of our soldiers and officers. There is no need to climb into these catacombs,” Putin said.

**“Block off this industrial area so that not even a fly can escape,”** he continued.

Those trapped in the plant will be offered a chance to surrender, and they can keep their lives and receive a “dignified treatment,” Putin [said](#).

Putin is hailing Russia’s “liberation” of Mariupol after his forces completely destroyed during a two-month siege.

He told defense minister Sergei Shoigu to block off the Azovstal metallurgical plant, where the last Ukrainian troops are holed up, “so that a fly can’t get in.” [pic.twitter.com/g2lNd44qXF](https://pic.twitter.com/g2lNd44qXF)

— max seddon (@maxseddon) [April 21, 2022](#)

Previously a Ukrainian official in the region **gave those still inside Azovstal “days or hours”** to holdout – given they are not only cut off from all escape routes but that essential supplies like food, water, and likely ammo are running out.

One retired military official, Lt. Col. Daniel L. Davis, explained to CNN that Putin’s strategy is a rational one from a [strategic point of view](#):

**“There’s no point in just ratcheting out and going in for each individual person in that very labyrinth complex ... There’s no reason to do that.** All they have to do is just keep that last piece cordoned off and virtually the city is already theirs.”

Davis said further, “Even though the Russians don’t go after them [the Ukrainian troops inside the

plant], because they have them surrounded, they can't get even food or water, much less ammunition."

**"The risk to those soldiers is that they would slowly die if they don't get some help.** I think in probably the coming hours or days you're going to hear that those troops are finally negotiated out," he added. However, some pundits see in it a sign of the exhaustion of Russian forces...

Interpreting it for you guys from Putin's into human language: "Our forces in Mariupol are extremely exhausted after over 50 days in fierce urban combat, and we just can't spend even more time and resources to zerg rush this 5-km wide steel plant turned into a giant fortress." [pic.twitter.com/4mSozfsPdg](https://pic.twitter.com/4mSozfsPdg)

— Illia Ponomarenko ?? (@IAPonomarenko) [April 21, 2022](#)

Starting Tuesday the remaining civilians began exiting the plant. Russian forces established a 'humanitarian corridor' and some 120 were safely evacuated. RT aired footage of the Ukrainian civilians being escorted out of the area later that day.

*Russian forces have been blaring on speakers their demand for Azov fighters to lay down their arms and exit the complex 'or else'...*

Russia is using a Tigr vehicle with a loud speaker to get Ukrainian soldiers to surrender at the Azovstal plant. <https://t.co/oqgo1xcK7H> [pic.twitter.com/5RqtbA7lhr](https://pic.twitter.com/5RqtbA7lhr)

— Rob Lee (@RALee85) [April 21, 2022](#)

Russian forces have seen the Black Sea port city as crucial in completing a land bridge which links up territories already under its control stretching to Crimea.

by Tyler Durden

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