
Current Intelligence Report Circular

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Report Topic: Military Developments in the Russo-Ukrainian War

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Updates on the fighting in the strategic port city of Mariupol

The Ukrainian city of Mariupol has been under heavy attack from Russian forces since 24 FEB. The fighting is ongoing. On 17 MAR, the Drama Theater of Mariupol was bombed by Russian forces as it sheltered approximately 1300 civilians. Prior to the bombing, the word “Children” was written in Russian in large letters on the grounds of the theater. Roughly 130 civilians have been rescued since the bombing; casualty counts from the theater bombing are still unknown, but the estimated civilian casualties in Mariupol are greater than 2,500 since the invasion began, according to Ukrainian officials. Russian forces pushed deeper into the battered port city of Mariupol on 19 MAR, when heavy fighting shut down a major steel plant. According to Mariupol city officials, over 80% of residential buildings have been completely or partially destroyed. Russian forces have already cut Mariupol off from the Sea of Azov, and its fall would link Crimea, which Russia annexed in 2014, to territories controlled by Moscow-backed separatists in the east. END

CMCD Note

Mariupol is a key objective in Russia’s southern offensive, because it is Ukraine’s last standing port that offers access to the Sea of Azov. Russian control of Mariupol would provide a connection between the eastern and southern front in the war, which would allow the Russian military to transport personnel and logistics from one front to another in future operations.

Sources

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CNN, Survivors emerge from rubble of Mariupol theater bombed by Russia

<https://www.cnn.com/2022/03/17/europe/ukraine-mariupol-bombing-theater-russia-intl/index.html>

CBS News, Russians push deeper into port city of Mariupol as locals plead for help: “Children, elderly people are dying”

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/mariupol-russia-ukraine-war-locals-plead-for-help/>