

# Russia blames Ukraine drone attack for major Crimea fuel depot fire



A view shows smoke rising following an alleged drone attack in Sevastopol, Crimea, on April 29, 2023.  
● REUTERS/STRINGER

A Ukrainian drone strike set ablaze a Russian fuel storage facility in the Crimean port of Sevastopol early on Saturday, sending a vast column of black smoke into the sky in the latest attack on the peninsula.

The city's Moscow-installed governor blamed Ukraine and later said the fire had been put out before a disaster occurred, Reuters

reported.

A Ukrainian military intelligence official said more than 10 tanks of oil products with a capacity of about 40,000 tonnes intended for use by Russia's Black Sea Fleet were destroyed, RBC Ukraine reported.

Ukraine says control of all its legal territory, including Crimea, is a key condition for any peace deal. Mos-

cow has accused Kyiv of sending waves of aerial and seaborne drones to attack Crimea.

Sevastopol governor Mikhail Razvozhaev said only one drone hit the oil tanks.

"The enemy ... wanted to take Sevastopol by surprise, as usual, by staging a sneak attack in the morning," Razvozhaev said.

Russian firefighters had

shown how to defeat a major blaze "and prevent a catastrophe", he added.

Ukraine lacks longer-range missiles that can reach targets in places such as Sevastopol, but has been developing drones to overcome this hurdle.

Ukrainian officials do not usually claim responsibility for explosions at military sites in Crimea, although

they sometimes celebrate them using euphemistic language. Andriy Yusov, a Ukrainian military official, did not say Ukraine carried out the attack.

Instead, he told RBC the blast was "God's punishment" for a Russian strike on the Ukrainian city of Uman on Friday that killed 23 people. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said Kyiv

would do all it could to ensure that those responsible for the attack on Uman be held accountable as soon as possible.

The attacks are largely led by the Wagner private army. Its founder, Yevgeny Prigozhin, said his forces had advanced between 100 and 150 metres on Saturday and claimed pro-Kyiv units now only controlled three sq km.

## Uzbeks attend constitutional reform poll

By Reza Abesh Ahmadlou  
Staff writer

EXCLUSIVE

Uzbekistan held a national reform poll on the new Constitution on Sunday. The updated law is aimed at consolidating the country's strategic course for further reform of the society and the state, which has had a positive impact on its foreign policy, primarily in the Central Asian region.

The draft of the new Constitution reflects the serious changes that have taken place in Uzbekistan since the beginning of the major reforms that were announced by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev at the end of 2016.

Serious amendments were made to the draft of the new Constitution concerning human rights and freedoms, personal inviolability of citizens and their private life in criminal proceedings, and conditions of detention. In the administration of justice, the use of evidence obtained in violation of the law is not allowed.

Under the new Constitution, the rights of youths, women and children are protected by the government. Special attention is paid to the protection of the rights and interests of



citizens with disabilities, as well as socially vulnerable segments of the population.

In the part concerning the economic rights of citizens, a separate article in the draft Constitution prohibits forced labor, any form of child labor. In 2021, Uzbekistan eliminated forced and child labor from the production cycle in cotton growing. The new paragraphs in the Constitution were highlighted in the print material sent across far flung territories to educate the people about what will change after the referendum.

"The large-scale reforms being carried out in the country today marked the beginning of a new stage in our development of the era of new Uzbekistan. And today we have every reason to say that in a historically short period a completely new atmosphere has formed in the country in the political, legal, socio-economic, scientific, spiritual and cultural terms," Mirziyoyev said.

yeve said.

The digitization of the electoral system makes the process most transparent in a sense that a single voter list was available to all at every polling station.

Also, over 2,500 IT experts and managers were present at the polling stations to keep the digitized system running smoothly without any disruption.

A mobile app was introduced that connected all polling stations with the central security system.

The heads of leading international organizations, as well as high-ranking representative of states including Gholamreza Nouri-Qezeljah, the Iranian chairman of the Iran-Uzbekistan Parliamentary Friendship Group, were invited to observe the important political event.

For more than a week, 55 polling stations were opened in 39 countries, including Russia, Turkey, South Korea, Kazakhstan and Iran for Uzbeks living abroad.

## Yemen's war winding down ...

While the end of the war is certainly a positive development, there

are still significant challenges ahead as Yemen tries to rebuild and address the humanitarian crisis that has resulted from the conflict.

One of the biggest challenges facing Yemen is the humanitarian crisis.

Millions of Yemenis are facing starvation and disease due to the destruction of the infrastructure and a blockade on food and medical supplies in the war-ravaged country.

The UN has called the situation in Yemen the world's worst humanitarian crisis, with over two-thirds of its population - 21.6 million people - in acute need of humanitarian assistance, including over 20 million requiring urgent health assistance.

While the peace agreement includes provisions for reopening critical infrastructure like ports and airports, it will take time and significant resources to rebuild these facilities and ensure that aid can reach those who need it.

Another challenge facing Yemen is the issue of militias and armed groups. The peace deal also includes provisions for the disarmament of militias, but it remains to be seen how this will be implemented on the ground. Yemen is home to a patchwork of armed groups and militias, some of which have ties to regional powers like Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Disarming these groups will require cooperation and coordination among the former government, the Houthis, and regional powers, which may prove difficult given the complex geopolitical dynamics in the region.

In addition to the humanitarian crisis and the issue of militias, Yemen also faces significant economic challenges. The war has had a devastating impact on the



country's economy, with GDP shrinking by more than half since the conflict began. Rebuilding Yemen's economy will require significant investment and the development of new industries to replace those that have been destroyed by the war. It will also require addressing corruption and ensuring that aid and resources are distributed fairly and transparently.

Finally, the end of the Yemen war also raises questions about the future of Yemeni politics. The peace deal includes provisions for a transitional government, but it remains to be seen how this will be achieved and whether it will be successful in bringing stability to the country. With a range of political factions and tribal groups, there is a risk that the country could slide back into conflict if these groups are not adequately represented in the transitional government.

In conclusion, while the end of the war is certainly a positive development, addressing the challenges will require significant resources, coordination, and cooperation among all sides including regional powers, and the international community. The world will be watching closely to see whether Yemen can successfully navigate these challenges and emerge as a stable and prosperous country.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Gas leak kills 11 in India



AP - At least 11 people were killed and almost as many were injured on Sunday after a gas leak in a city in the northern Indian state of Punjab. Officials sealed off a section of the city, Ludhiana, and evacuated hundreds of residents as they tried to identify the gas and the source of the leak.

According to Dr. Hatinder Kaur of the Civil Hospital of Ludhiana, preliminary investigations suggested that the victims' nervous systems had been affected.

### UK public asked to swear allegiance to king



● REUTERS

BBC - Millions of people in the UK and the Commonwealth have been invited to vocally swear their allegiance to King Charles III as they watch his coronation ceremony next Saturday.

Those watching the crowning have been asked to say: "I swear that I will pay true allegiance to your majesty, and to your heirs and successors according to law. So help me God."

### Paraguayans head to the polls



REUTERS - Paraguayans began voting on Sunday in what could be the biggest electoral challenge to the ruling conservative Colorado Party in over a decade and with the country's long ties with Taiwan potentially at stake.

Polling stations opened at 7 a.m. in what is expected to be a close contest between Colorado Party presidential candidate Santiago Pena and the political veteran Efraim Alegre, who is leading a broad center-left coalition and pledging a foreign policy shake-up.