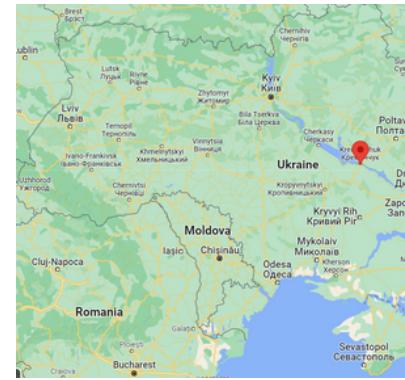


# The Kremlin's disinformation on Kremenchuk



## THE EVENT

- On June 27th, a Russian cruise missile struck the Kremenchuk shopping mall, creating an inferno that trapped civilians inside.
- Currently the death toll stands at eighteen, but it is highly likely this will rise significantly.
- There is a realistic possibility that this was a deliberate retribution attack for Ukraine's candidacy for the EU. Both the Kremlin and Ukrainian experts asserted future punitive strikes as a way of punishing Ukraine were likely. This scenario would fit the Kremlin's track record.
- Some have suggested Russian armed forces missed their target (a road machinery plant used as a temporary arms depot north of the mall). Even if true (see below), it would still require accountability for criminal negligence.
- The Kremlin has not denied the event took place or labelled it was a false-flag attack (their traditional tactic), but has engaged in disinformation to confuse the facts.



## KREMLIN DISINFORMATION

### 1) The mall was not the target/was not damaged by Russian attacks

- Igor Konashenkov, spokesman of Russia's Ministry of Defence, said at a press briefing that the country's air force had carried out a "high precision air attack at hangars where armament and munitions were stored" at the Kremenchuk road machinery plant, a few hundred meters north of the shopping mall.
- He further claimed the mall had caught fire as a result of the strikes on the nearby target.

### 2) The shopping mall was non-functioning/the death toll has been exaggerated

- To support this disinformation, Kremlin-linked propagandists posing as 'fact-checkers' have asserted the carpark had very few vehicles in it.
- Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov repeated this assertion, but provided no evidence.

### 3) The mall itself was used as an armoury for local territorial defence forces.

- Vitaly Kiselyev, assistant to the head of the so-called Luhansk People's Republic, alleged this piece of disinformation.
- It has since been picked up by Russian citizens and Kremlin 'fact-checkers.'

## FACT CHECK

### 1) Security footage from multiple angles of the surrounding area clearly shows the mall being struck by a missile

- It further shows the road machinery plant was struck after the mall in a second strike, rather than first with a fire spreading to the mall.
- Satellite imagery also clearly shows that while the mall and the machinery plant have been completely destroyed, buildings between them remain untouched, so a fire spreading from the plant is impossible.

### 2) Both video and online evidence demonstrates the mall was in use and had a large number of civilians within it.

- Satellite imagery from previous weeks suggests it was not uncommon for the mall to have few cars in its park.
- Retailers renting office space within the mall were advertising their presence the day before hand.
- Previous shoppers have posted recent transaction receipts.

### 3) Evidence indicates the mall was functioning in a civilian capacity and had no military use.

- A YouTube video by a Ukrainian family recorded the day before the attack and showed the mall open.
- Local Telegram groups had been highlighting that multiple people at the mall were missing in the hours after the attack, all of them civilians.
- Despite extensive coverage by international media, with journalists reporting on the ground, none have reported any evidence of military hardware at the scene or uniformed personnel among the dead.