Monitor Regional Processes in Russia
The first half of 2024

The non-governmental analytical center «Ukrainian Studies of Strategic Disquisitions» is conducting a long-term project to **monitor regional processes in Russia.**

The aim of the research is to record and determine the dynamics of conflictogenic and disintegration factors that will contribute to the deconstruction of the Russian Federation and its disappearance as a geopolitical reality.

The object of the monitoring is the information field of the Russian Federation, analyzing the most popular news from different regions of Russia monthly, which will provide a clearer picture of the internal processes occurring within the aggressor state and allow monitoring of conflictogenic regional processes.

The project is conducted in partnership with the «Anti-Imperial Block of Nations» initiative and the public organization «Ukrainian Student».

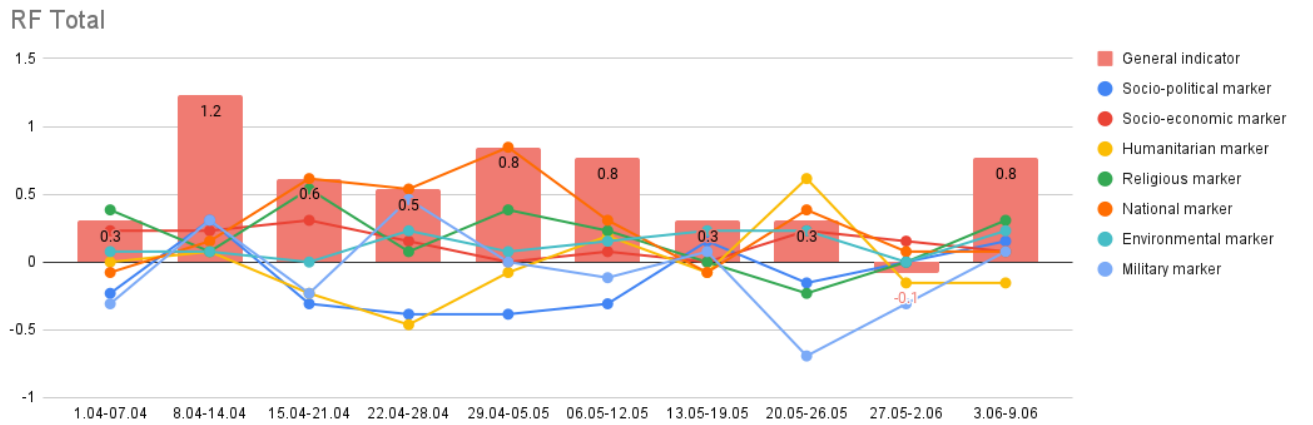
The monitoring is carried out according to **seven main qualitative parameters**, considered in the context of their impact on strengthening or weakening the central government, i.e., the potential for its disintegration or, conversely, integrity.

1. Socio-political: local politicians, «varangians», political institutions, clans, processes, etc.
2. Socio-economic: interbudgetary relations, business activity, control over assets and cash flows, etc.
3. Humanitarian: language, culture, education, film production, etc. Statements of authorities, intelligentsia, activists on historical and cultural issues.
4. Religious: separation of church from state, participation in state propaganda/counter-propaganda, influence on political and cultural processes.
5. National: the status of indigenous peoples, their impact on the regional situation, liberation struggle.
6. Environmental: environmental pollution and the protests it causes.
7. Military: the impact of war and mobilization on the socio-political situation.

Monitoring of conflictogenic and disintegration factors in the Russian Federation

First half of 2024

The most significant influence on processes in Russia in the first half of 2024 is exerted by Russia's aggressive war against Ukraine (the so-called «Special Military Operation»), the country's shift to a wartime footing, and the narrowing of civil and national rights. The main conflictogenic social events in Russia were the January protests in Bashkortostan, large-scale environmental disasters in the spring, including floods in the Orenburg and Kurgan regions, and major fires. *The situation in Russia continues to gradually deteriorate, and the central government continues to lose control over the situation, maintaining, however, information censorship in the country and forceful levers of influence.*



An important event of an all-Russian scale was the so-called Putin elections in March 2024, which led to a «reboot of power» at the federal and regional levels, government changes, and the dismissal of some heads of federal subjects. Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu was dismissed and appointed Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation (replacing Nikolai Patrushev Sr.). This dismissal is most likely a punishment for the unsuccessful conduct of the war. The former Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs, Andrey Belousov, who is associated with Putin's close allies Kiriyenko and the Kovalchuks, was nominated for the position of head of the military department.

In the Russian regime, the significance of institutions depends on their leaders' connections to Putin. As a result, the Security Council loses its role and becomes an honorary retirement post, to which Shoigu has been sent. At the same time, his key deputies are subjected to arrests — first, Shoigu's deputy Timur Ivanov, then the head of the Main Personnel Directorate of the Ministry of Defense, Yuri Kuznetsov.

Among those close to the Kremlin dictator is Nikolai Patrushev Sr., whose role has slightly weakened, but Putin evidently still considers him, as he was appointed advisor to the administration, and his son Dmitry became Deputy Prime Minister.

Most importantly, all heads of security agencies, except for Shoigu, remained in their positions — Alexander Bortnikov (head of the FSB), Vladimir Zolotov (head of the National Guard), and Sergey Naryshkin (head of the Foreign Intelligence Service). It is worth noting that Bortnikov and Zolotov are Patrushev's protégés, counterbalanced by Andrey Belousov and Valery Gerasimov. Most likely, Putin will try to work through them, directly managing the conduct of the war.

But the main fact is that, despite various insider reports, the head of the government, Mikhail Mishustin, has not changed. He started as an inconspicuous technocrat and still minimizes radical statements regarding foreign policy, presenting himself as an «effective manager.» There are increasing indications that Beijing supports him as Putin's successor, and he is forced to consider the opinion of his «older brother.» Not coincidentally, the new old government was appointed before Putin's visit to China on May 16-17.

Another trend seen in the news is that the Russian regime faces an inability to wage war without a general mobilization, leading to massive recruitment of mercenaries from Africa and Asia. Additionally, in June, several regions significantly increased local budget payments to support «volunteers.» However, the authorities fear full mobilization and subsequent mass protests.

Economic problems, exacerbated by Western sanctions, are also increasing. After falling under sanctions on June 13, trading in dollars and euros on the Russian stock exchange ceased. The Russian ruble is no longer a freely convertible currency. Additionally, the U.S. Department of the Treasury announced it is prepared to impose any sanctions against foreign banks for transactions with Russian financial institutions, including Sberbank and VTB. New sanctions were also introduced in the IT sector. From September 12, exporting, selling, or supplying IT consulting and design services, IT support, and cloud services from the U.S. and third countries to Russia is prohibited.

According to traditional parameters, the Russian economy is in excellent shape. However, Putin and his associates have so distorted its structure towards the military-industrial complex that it can no longer be measured similarly to other countries worldwide. Kremlin propagandists happily point out that their GDP is growing faster than in many EU countries. However, they fail to mention that Russia currently has unprecedented capital movement restrictions, the government's role in economic processes has unnaturally increased, and Moscow's trade ties with the outside world have radically reoriented from the West to the Southeast in two years.

Russia does not yet have a planned economy regime characteristic of the USSR before its collapse. On the other hand, the aggressor country is no longer a market economy state. The current system in Moscow is called «dirigisme,» characterized by active state intervention in all economic processes.

The Moscow government implements its strategy through repressive methods, placing business and population interests below military needs. At the same time, the minimal welfare of ordinary citizens remains an essential part of Kremlin policy. In his pre-election statements, Putin promised state programs to his voters that could cost many trillions of rubles. Likely, the promises will remain unfulfilled: these trillions will be spent on «death benefits» and repairing oil refineries damaged by Ukrainian drones, not on the welfare of the dark Russian village's residents.

After two years of great war, the basic scenario for Moscow has become long-term armed confrontation. The Kremlin does not believe in the possibility of defeat, nor does it hope for the lifting of sanctions and a return to world trade. Recent restrictions on the Moscow stock exchange, although extremely painful, did not come as a surprise; the government had been preparing for them for a long time.

The future of the Russian economy depends on whether the Kremlin can find sources to finance rapidly increasing military expenditures. The budget's expenditure increase is planned to be financed by energy sales revenues, but it remains unclear if these revenues will be realized. The source for covering the deficit is the National Welfare Fund, which is rapidly depleting: its liquid assets' value has decreased from 9 trillion rubles at the beginning of 2022 to 5 trillion at the beginning of 2024.

REGIONS

A) Caucasus

Rostov Region

On March 15-17, presidential elections were held in Russia. The Russian Central Election Commission stated that Putin received 90.81% of the vote in the Rostov region, indicating the targeted work of local authorities. Significant events in the first half of the year include:

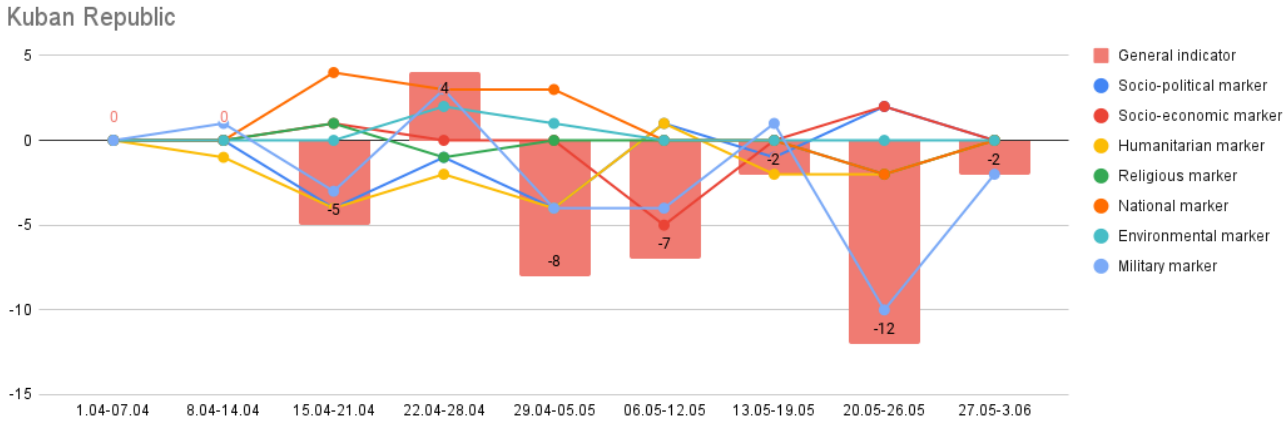
The arrest of four Rostov residents suspected of setting fire to two transformer substations and planning to set fire to a main oil pipeline.

A fire at the Novocherkasskaya GRES on the night of March 25. Ukrainian media reported that the event occurred due to an attack by Ukrainian drones. Russian media did not report the causes, only the fact of the fire and the elimination of all consequences.

The media report little information about subversive activities—attempts at sabotage actions on the region's energy systems and lack of support for Russian military personnel. The motivation and reasons for such actions are interesting. The region is close to the Ukrainian border, so the war's consequences are felt more here. Events occur in the region that can be interpreted as shaking the internal stability of power.

Kuban (Karachay-Cherkess Republic, Krasnodar Krai, Republic of Adygea, Stavropol Krai)

According to Rosstat, Krasnodar Krai ranks third among regions in natural migration growth since the beginning of 2024. The region continues to attract labor migrants from the mountainous republics of the North Caucasus, where there is a surplus of labor resources, and from the unrecognized Abkhazia. The Cossack sub-ethnos is increasingly gaining strength and feels like the first among equals on the banks of the lower and middle Kuban. Even «Russian» newcomers from the Slavic regions of Russia constantly note the condescending attitude of the «Kubanites.» Labor migrants from the Central Asian republics feel this the most. After the terrorist attack at the Crocus City Hall concert venue near Moscow during the performance of the band «Piknik» on March 22, 2024, security forces are conducting constant raids on construction sites and agricultural enterprises, where they find illegals subject to deportation.



Additionally, judicial repressions against war opponents continue, including the trial of Mikhail Balabanov. (Mikhail Balabanov, a native of Kazan, was detained in the Stavropol region in December 2022. The investigation believes he planned to set fire to a military recruitment office on the orders of Ukrainian intelligence. A criminal case was initiated under the article on

preparing for a terrorist attack. The prosecutor also demanded 10 years for Pyatigorsk eco-activist Sergey Legkobitov.)

On March 19, the operation of the airport in the regional capital was interrupted due to damage to the runway.

«Cossackization»

In the Krasnodar Krai, the process of building the «Kuban Cossack Army» is actively underway, encompassing all important spheres of regional life: from preschool education to the participation of «KCA» units in the «Special Military Operation» (SVO). This occurs with active support from the regional administration. This issue is directly overseen by the ataman of the «KCA,» Alexander Vlasov, who holds the position of Deputy Governor of the region. However, in other regions historically part of the Kuban region, these processes either do not occur or are more moderate and not as comprehensive.

The ideological pillars of «Cossackization» are myths about «gratitude and loyalty to the Russian Empire,» «the Great Victory,» and the «SVO.» They create a convenient worldview for Moscow, where Cossacks are both the empire's guard dogs and the combat vanguard of the «Russian world.»

Socialization of Children and Youth

Two basic elements of socializing young Cossacks in the Kuban are gratitude to the empire and adherence to the all-Russian integral myth of the «Great Victory.» Here are a few examples:

During the celebration of the 295th anniversary of the birth of Catherine II in Krasnodar, Deputy Governor and ataman of the «Kuban Cossack Army» A. Vlasov emphasized: «Our young Cossacks know from childhood the birthdate of Catherine II and also remember the significance of the charter for the settlement of the Kuban lands, granted to the Cossacks on June 30, 1792.»

During the awarding of winners of the children's Cossack song contest and gala concert dedicated to the 79th anniversary of the «victory in the Great Patriotic War,» an honored guest from the Russian Investigative Committee said: «Here today we see young people carrying the flags of our grandfathers, soldiers who, like our ancestors, defend the honor and freedom of the Motherland, performing the most difficult tasks during the SVO, showing courage and heroism.»

At the meeting of the Council of Atamans of the All-Russian Cossack Society, ataman «KCA» A. Vlasov stated that the Union of Cossack Youth of the Kuban has over 118,500 members.

Historical Memory

The charter of Krasnodar will enshrine the «historical role» of the «KCA» as a tool for protecting imperial interests. «It will not be a mistake if the Charter states that the city of Krasnodar-Katerinodar was founded by Cossacks in the period 1793-1794 to protect the southern borders of Russia,» said Mikhail Dimitrenko, Deputy Director of the Legal Department. On April 26, the Day of the Rehabilitation of Kuban Cossacks was commemorated, established by the Legislative Assembly of the Krasnodar Krai in 1995. The «Kuban Cossack Army» planned ceremonial and commemorative events in 556 Cossack

societies in the territories of Krasnodar Krai, the Republic of Adygea, and the Karachay-Cherkess Republic, as well as in the Sukhum special Cossack department in Abkhazia. On Lazarus Saturday, in memory of the Cossacks who perished during the years of Soviet repression, Metropolitan Vasily performed a memorial service at the end of the Liturgy in the Alexander Nevsky Military Cathedral. An illustrative statement on this day came from the Governor of Krasnodar Krai, V. Kondratiev: «Today we celebrate its revival, reconciliation with the past, and the triumph of historical justice. Our region has always been and will remain the land of Cossacks, devoted to their Motherland.» Thus, the regional leader prefers not to mention Moscow's leading role in the repressions against the Kuban Cossacks to avoid destroying the propaganda-created worldview. The same applies to Ukrainian culture in the Kuban, reduced to ethnographic-folkloric expressions. Here, the flagship is the State Academic Kuban Cossack Choir, led by the loyal Putinist Viktor Zakharchenko, whose 50-year creative activity as the artistic director and chief conductor was widely celebrated at the highest regional level. This honored his contribution to transforming the illustrious creative collective into a propaganda tool.

«SVO»

In the Kuban, a powerful regional military cluster is forming. Its foundations are the state-sponsored pro-Moscow Cossack ideology, material incentives, and «Cossackization» based on territorial principles. No significant event in the life of military units stationed in Krasnodar Krai is consecrated without the Deputy Governor of Krasnodar Krai, Kremlin ataman of the «Kuban Cossack Army,» A. Vlasov. His presence symbolizes the belonging of any uniformed individuals to the Cossack military tradition. Local authorities at all levels encourage replenishing the ranks of those willing to die in Ukraine. For example, in Gelendzhik, local deputies decided on an additional one-time payment to those who signed a contract for service «beyond the ribbon.» The «carrot» amount is 250,000 rubles. Interestingly, the «premium» for choosing a named unit (i.e., one assigned to Krasnodar Krai) exceeds the federal payment: 195,000 versus 200,000 rubles. With the regional payment, it can amount to up to 1.4 million rubles (about $14,000).

Protest and Anti-System Actions

The only form of protest in the Kuban that does not greatly irritate the regime is environmental actions supported by the court opposition. More than 150 people participated in a rally against a planned landfill near the village of Sovetskaya, the organizers reported. «There was a lot of police. The rally went well and organized. About ten people, including residents of the village, representatives of the Communist Party and Yabloko party, and environmentalists, spoke at the rally,» commented Albina Mashchenko, leader of the public organization «Caucasus Gate.» On the other hand, resistance to the aggressive war and support for Ukraine are sporadic and unorganized. The special services strive to suppress any attempts. For example, FSB operatives detained a man who intended to transmit information about the actions and locations of the Russian armed forces. The security forces note that the Kuban resident contacted Ukrainian intelligence himself.

Additionally, a criminal case was initiated against a 16-year-old teenager from Stavropol for calls to terrorism (Part 1 of Article 205.2 of the Criminal Code) due to anti-war leaflets. «More than 400 people were killed in the village of Bucha as a result of war crimes committed

by the Russian Armed Forces. This is not liberation; this is genocide,» the leaflets allegedly stated, which he supposedly posted on the night of April 3 to 4. They also featured a photograph of a destroyed building, the inscription «Freedom for Russia,» and a link to the Telegram channel of the «Freedom of Russia» Legion.

«Cossackization»: SWOT Analysis

Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Administrative Resources: The process is supported and facilitated by regional administrative structures. Ideological and Value Basis: Strong ideological framework based on historical narratives and loyalty to the Russian Empire. Resource Availability: Adequate resources allocated for the development and support of Cossack organizations. Autonomy of the Process: The process operates with a significant degree of autonomy from central authority. Totality and Multidirectionality: Comprehensive and multifaceted approach encompassing various aspects of regional life.	Resistance from Non-Cossack Slavs: Opposition from the local Slavic population that does not identify as Cossacks. Caste System: Creation of a caste-like social structure that may lead to internal divisions. Territorial Limitation: The process is limited to specific geographic areas with historical ties to the Kuban region. Lack of Federal Legislative Framework: Absence of a nationwide legal basis to support and legitimize the process. Negative Attitude from Other Ethnic Communities: Resistance and negative perceptions from other national and ethnic groups. Apolitical Nature: The movement may lack political engagement and influence.
Opportunities	**Threats**
Formation of a Local Army Similar to the «Kadyrovtsy»: Potential to establish a regional military force akin to the Chechen units. Expansion to Other Regions: Ability to scale the process to other areas historically linked to the Kuban region. Gaining Federal-Level Benefits and Privileges for Krasnodar Krai: Opportunity to secure federal advantages for the region. Growth of Ethnic Consciousness and Nation-Building: Increased ethnic awareness and the potential for nation-building. Securing Personal Benefits and Privileges for Cossacks: Obtaining specific benefits for individuals identifying as Cossacks. Transforming Kuban into a Magnet for the Slavic Population of the North Caucasus: Attracting Slavic populations from the North Caucasus. Increasing the Influence of the Kuban Elite on a National Scale: Enhancing the political and social influence of Kuban elites in Russia. Politicization of the Process (Creation of a Relevant Party): Establishing a political party to represent Cossack interests.	Interethnic Conflicts: Potential for conflicts between different ethnic groups. Conflicts with Other Russian Regions: Possibility of disputes with other regions within Russia. Spontaneity and Loss of Control: The process might become unmanageable and deviate from intended goals. Inflated Expectations and Disappointment: High expectations could lead to dissatisfaction if special laws are not enacted or are disappointing. Conflict with Central Authorities: Tensions with the federal government, leading to demands for increased regional status, autonomy, or even separatism. Curtailment of the Process by Central Authorities: Potential suppression or restriction of the process by the central government.

The process of «Cossackization» currently serves the interests of the Putin regime, as it is under strict ideological control and primarily appears to the central government as an ethnographic reservation for the Cossack ethnicity in the Kuban region. This creates an organized community with an imperial worldview, ready to defend its interests against internal enemies, and also serves as a source of replenishment for the losses of the occupation forces. However, this process carries significant risks and conflict factors that Ukraine should definitely take advantage of.

«Cossackization» will start to threaten imperial integrity when it begins to exhibit the following features:

- Politicization: Cossacks voting exclusively for «their own,» demanding expanded quotas in party lists, and creating a political party. Increasing the influence of Cossack organizations on the decisions of relevant authorities.

- Chauvinism: As a privileged class, the Kuban Cossacks will increase aggression towards other ethnic groups and migrants from other Russian regions.

- Creation and legalization of a Cossack power structure: This will become a tool for resolving economic, ethnic, and other disputes, leading to increased ambitions of local elites.

- Finding a place in the current federal system and a desire to change it: Growing self-awareness based on a broad resource base will necessitate readjusting relationships both with central authorities and neighboring subjects of Krasnodar Krai. This will primarily occur under the pretext of reclaiming historical lands of the «Kuban Cossack Army» and protecting the interests of the Cossacks living there.

Given the above, it is in Ukraine's interest to covertly promote the following narratives:

- Discussion around the Law «On Russian Cossacks»: Demands for its speedy adoption and inclusion of provisions favorable to the «Kuban Cossack Army,» which are unlikely to be accepted. This will undermine trust in the regime and Cossack representatives working for it.

- Promotion of myths about the exclusivity of the Cossacks, their uniqueness, and the inferiority of other peoples of Kuban (a return to the «golden age» of pre-revolutionary times): This will lead to increased tension in relations with national republics and communities, and heightened ethnic conflicts.

- «Kadyrovization»: The «Kuban Cossack Army» should have a license for violence similar to Chechen security forces. This will inevitably lead to more conflicts resolved by force and destabilize the situation, thereby fostering distrust in the regime.

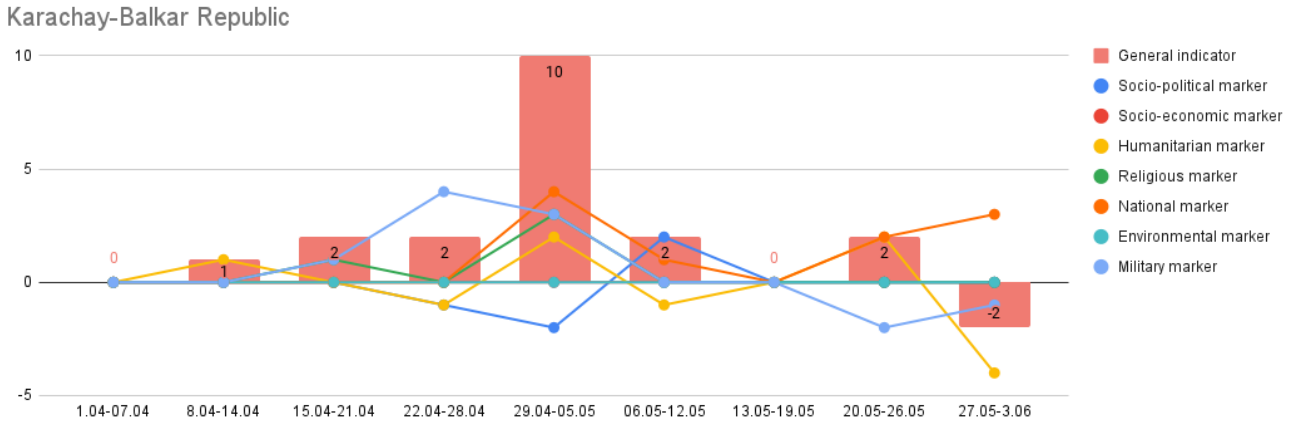
- Demonstration of the inequality of the status of Kuban Cossacks in different federal subjects: For instance, privileged in Krasnodar Krai and powerless in Karachay-Cherkessia. Encourage the former to «help their brothers,» and the latter to withdraw areas with a Slavic majority from the republic and join the krai.

These narratives should not have any pro-Ukrainian coloration or extreme manifestations. Their main task is to sow doubt and set the stage for discussions to ensure that the «Cossackization» movement is not prematurely halted as a threat to the stability of the Moscow Empire.

Karachay-Balkaria

To celebrate the Day of the Revival of the Karachay People, the President of the Karachay-Cherkess Republic, Rashid Temrezov, inaugurated the construction of the «Alan-K'ala» tower in the highland village of Khurzuk (one of the Karachay «garlands»). The event was attended not only by the republican elite but also by federal-level Karachay figures:

Senator Akhmat Salpagarov, State Duma Deputy Soltan Uzdenov, and managing partner of AFK «Sistema» Ali Uzdenov. The company is one of Russia's largest public diversified holding companies with a presence in the defense, financial, and technology sectors, and has been under US sanctions since autumn 2023. The head of the republic deferentially stated during the event: «This significant cultural-historical event in the life of not only the peoples of our multinational Karachay-Cherkessia has great unifying significance for all the peoples of the North Caucasus and our Great Russia.»

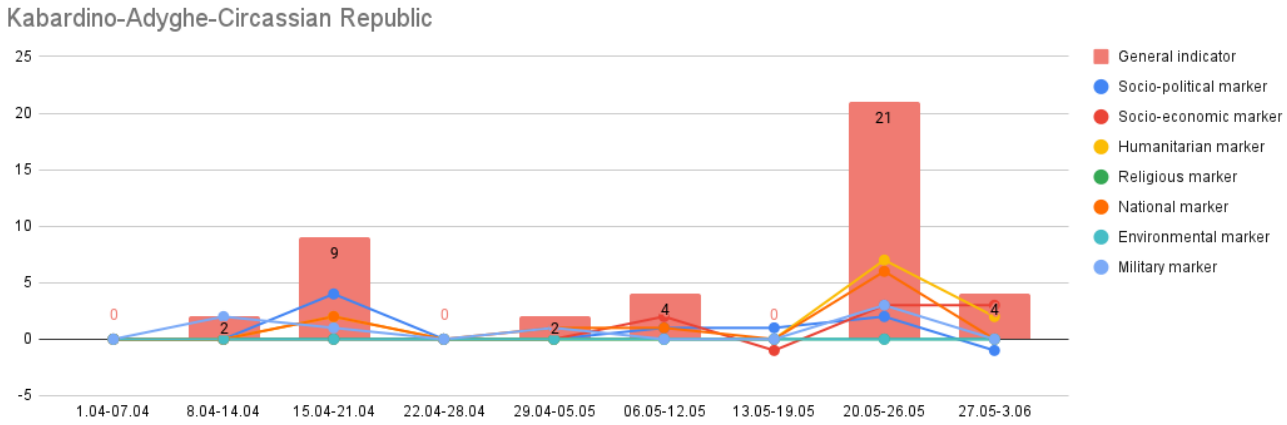


When the Karachay-Cherkessia officially talks about «friendship among peoples,» it means that there is another «fire» to put out. This time it happened against the backdrop of two armed attacks by local military-political opposition fighters on Russian police officers near Karachayevsk. The insurgent detachment, consisting of Karachays and a Slav who converted to Islam, inflicted casualties on the security forces but was destroyed in the battle. This event caused a significant resonance in the republic and led to lively discussions and assessments. The Interethnic Council of Karachay-Cherkessia had to respond to this informational wave: «In the light of these tragic events, we have witnessed messages spreading on social networks that offend people on a national basis and contain information that does not correspond to reality,» the statement said.

An important agent of the colonial administration in Karachay-Cherkessia is the Islamic religious institutions. A very influential figure among the local elites is the head of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of the Karachay-Cherkess Republic, Karachay Ismail-Haji Berdiev, who has simultaneously chaired the Coordinating Center of Muslims of the North Caucasus since 2003. This is Russia's largest muftiate, headquartered in Moscow. The main task of the structure is to fight Wahhabism in the region, which, since the last Russian-Chechen wars, has posed a significant threat to the official authorities, as its followers are ready to resist the imperial administration with arms. However, it seems Ismail-Haji from the Kremlin towers did not see what was happening in his native republic. After all, it was Wahhabis who made up the detachment that twice engaged in battle with Russian police officers near Karachayevsk. Of course, following the hot trail, the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of KCR, at the behest of Mufti Berdiev, held a meeting where the imams of the largest mosques, as well as qadis and representatives of all districts, condemned attempts to label the Karachays as «Islamist extremists.» This once again confirmed that national conflicts within the republic are simmering.

Kabardino-Adyghe-Circassian

The occupiers neutralized a significant group consisting of local residents. This indicates the potential of anti-system movements among local communities. Security forces blocked 12 «militants» in a gardening association in Nalchik, killing several of them. The «militants» eliminated by special services in the suburbs of Nalchik turned out to be residents of Kabardino-Balkaria.



Authorities recognize the main threat as the activities of armed resistance groups formed based on religious and national affiliations.

On April 22, there was an attack on a police patrol in Karachayevsk. One of the attackers, Ruslan Semenov, is on the list of extremists and terrorists. This allows the incident to be qualified not as the actions of criminals, but as an activity of the military-political opposition in the Karachay-Cherkess Republic. The authorities of Kabardino-Balkaria report that they have directed more than 1.6 billion rubles to support participants of the «Special Military Operation» and their families. However, this is clearly not what the highlanders need, as they constantly complain about high transportation costs and the dilapidated healthcare system in the republic. The persistence of these problems ensures dissatisfaction and heightened protest sentiments, especially among the youth who see no future within the Russian empire. This results in the activation of radical religious and separatist movements. One of them is the «Islamic State,» which, despite being banned in Russia, continues to recruit its supporters. For instance, the Southern District Military Court in Rostov-on-Don sentenced a resident of Kabardino-Balkaria, Kantemir Nafedzov, for participating in this terrorist organization and preparing a terrorist act in Nalchik last summer. The FSB of Russia in Kabardino-Balkaria also reports stopping the activities of a 23-year-old resident of Baksan district. He was distributing materials on social media that «contain calls for extremist activities and justify terrorism.» Additionally, in the village of Adil-Khalq in the Karachay-Cherkess Republic, a 25-year-old insurgent died in a battle with security forces. The deceased served in the 49th Combined Arms Army of the Southern Military District. His smartphone revealed correspondence with coordinators abroad. Thus, the situation in the Northwestern Caucasus is heating up, and modern communication means allow for influence from a safe distance.

External influences contribute to the growth of national consciousness of the Kabardino-Cherkess people and the radicalization of their resistance to the imperial administration. Both official representatives and local elites loyal to Moscow indirectly and directly acknowledge this. Following the clash near Nalchik involving 12 insurgents, a briefing was held with the participation of the Deputy Prime Minister of Kabardino-Balkaria and the head of the republican

prosecutor's office. Officials stated: «The operational circumstances in the republic are threatening religious and national factors... Both in the years when the underground bandit group was active and in the current period, certain destructive forces are trying to destabilize the situation in the republic from various sides.»

This situation forces the imperial administration to react proactively. The Day of the Circassian Flag became a litmus test. Official events took place only in Adygea (as it is the flag of the republic). In the Karachay-Cherkess Republic, pro-Moscow leaders held a special preventive conference, sharply condemning those who «allow themselves provocative statements against Russia's external and internal policies. It is especially inappropriate that foreign provocateurs speak on behalf of the entire Circassian people without any authority.» In Kabardino-Balkaria, the authorities tried to hide the celebrations as much as possible. For example, the public organization «Nart Heku» filed an application to hold national games «djeegu» in Nalchik on Abkhazia Square, but they did not receive permission, so the event moved to the House of Youth, significantly limiting the number of spectators and participants. Thus, the imperial policy towards the Kabardino-Cherkess people leads to increased national resistance and the search for alternative sources of information, opposition leaders, and the formation of radical groups. Ukrainian intelligence agencies must take these circumstances into account to influence the situation in the North-Eastern Caucasus region.

Chechnya

Kadyrov continues to express full support and loyalty to Putin, making loud statements regularly. However, a series of dismissals of key politicians in Chechnya might indicate that Kadyrov is consolidating his power, surrounding himself with more reliable and loyal individuals. The shooting incident in St. Petersburg involving a Chechen might be an isolated act of anti-government protest, though authorities deny this.

In spring 2024, the human rights situation in Chechnya remains challenging. Activists and journalists highlighting these issues face threats and violence, complicating their work. Chechnya plays a significant role in Russia's military strategy, especially concerning the war in Ukraine. Chechen military units are actively involved in combat, emphasizing their importance in Russia's military and foreign policy strategy.

Additionally, Chechnya continues to support Moscow's foreign policy initiatives in the Muslim world, particularly in relations with the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf.

On April 22, news emerged that Ramzan Kadyrov is terminally ill. These rumors are not new, as reports of his illness first appeared in 2019. The nature and tone of the reports, combined with people's surveys, suggest that Kadyrov is suffering from terminal pancreonecrosis. However, there is some evidence indicating this might not be the case. In the event of his death, there is potential for conflict in Chechnya and shifts within the Russian Federation.

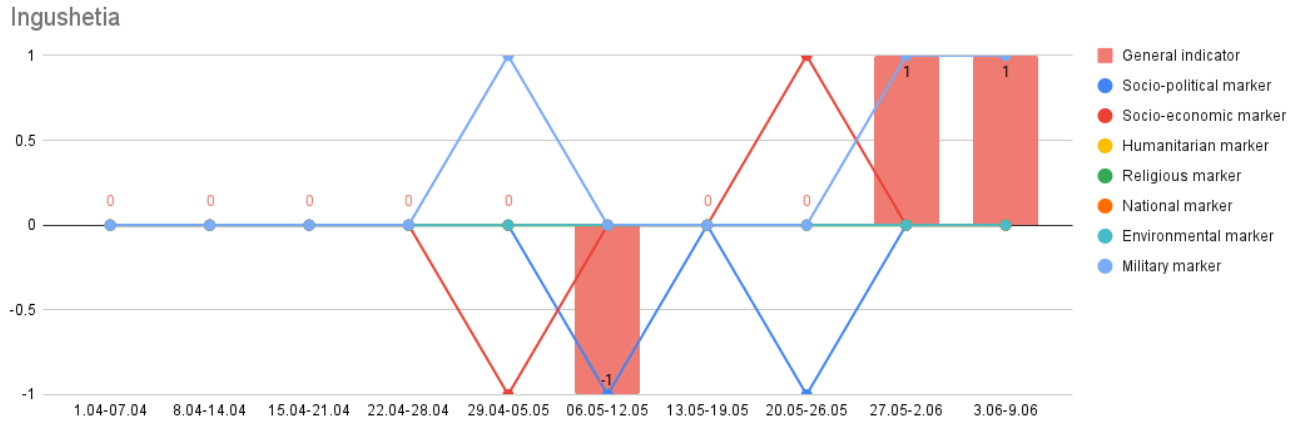
Already in May, there have been government rotations in Chechnya aimed at strengthening the positions of Kadyrov's immediate relatives. However, the majority, even the elite, do not accept them. Rumors suggest that Putin and the FSB favor Major General Apti Alaudinov, commander of the «Akhmat» battalion, which closely collaborates with «ex-Wagnerites.»

External Influence

On May 10, the President of the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, Umaru Sissoko Embalo, visited Chechnya, reported by the aide to the head of Chechnya, Umar Daudov. On May 11, a member of the Guinean delegation who arrived in Chechnya with the president requested shooting lessons for Guinean soldiers from Adam Kadyrov, the 16-year-old son of the regional head, head of the security department of the head of Chechnya, and curator of the Russian University of Special Forces (RUS). In April, a notable event was the arrest by Dagestan police of the head of the Ministry of Emergency Situations of Chechnya, Alihan Tsakayev, for drunk driving, later forcefully released by Chechen security forces. Subsequently, the head of Dagestan, Sergei Melikov, stated: «The incident at the Gerzel checkpoint undoubtedly requires careful and detailed analysis and will not affect our fraternal and good-neighborly relations with the Chechen people.»

Ingushetia

In the spring of 2024, the situation in Ingushetia remained unstable. During this period, Russian security forces conducted several so-called «counter-terrorist operations,» particularly in the city of Karabulak.



On March 12, in Ingushetia, FSB officers allegedly found a stash in the forest belonging to the fighters of the Ingush Liberation Army, who died during a battle on March 2 in Karabulak. The Committee for Ingush Independence confirmed responsibility for the battle with the occupiers.

In the Russian presidential elections, Putin reportedly received almost 90% of the votes in Ingushetia. Interestingly, it was claimed that Palestinian refugees could vote in the Russian presidential elections in Ingushetia.

The region continued to experience cases of enforced disappearances, torture, and extrajudicial executions. Reports from human rights organizations indicate attacks on civilians, leading to numerous casualties. International organizations are calling for immediate measures to stop these violations, but the situation remains critical.

The socio-economic situation in Ingushetia remains difficult. High unemployment and poverty levels contribute to social tension. Despite some local government initiatives to develop infrastructure and create jobs, the region requires substantial support to stabilize the situation.

The issue of internally displaced persons remains relevant. Many people who fled from Chechnya during the conflict still reside in Ingushetia. Their situation is complicated by pressure from Russian authorities, who are trying to force them to return to Chechnya, often without providing adequate conditions for their return (Human Rights Watch).

North Ossetia – Alania

In the spring of 2024, significant political tensions were observed in North Ossetia, related to elections and internal conflicts. Local elections were marred by allegations of fraud, including cases of ballot stuffing and the failure to seal ballot boxes. The «United Russia» party saw a slight decline in support (from 64.3% in 2012 to 59.23% in 2024).

Conflicts between parties, such as between the Communist Party of the Russian Federation and the «Communists of Russia» party, led to mutual accusations and lawsuits. Tensions also arose over the appointment of a health minister from another region, causing mass resignations of medical professionals.

In the spring of 2024, Ukrainian drones attacked the military airfield in Mozdok. On June 8, Russian forces shot down a Ukrainian UAV over North Ossetia - Alania. This incident, reported by the Russian Ministry of Defense, caused significant concern among the local population. This highlights the region's importance for Russian military operations and the inadequate preparedness of local air defenses.

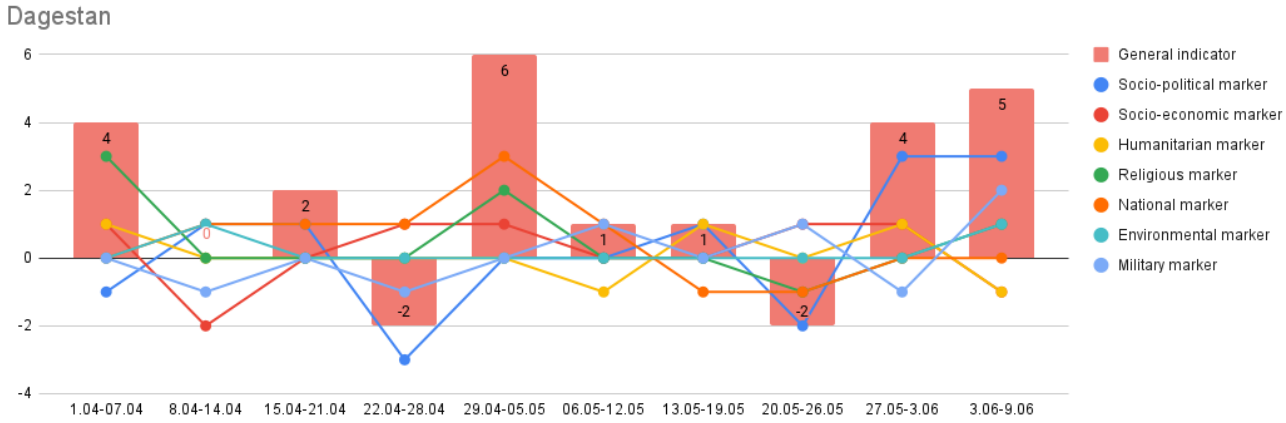
On June 11, a Su-34 of the Russian Aerospace Forces crashed in the mountains of North Ossetia during a scheduled training flight, killing the crew, according to the Russian Ministry of Defense.

The economic situation in North Ossetia remains challenging. The region relies on federal subsidies and revenues from agriculture and small-scale industrial production. Investments in the region's development are limited, hindering economic growth and infrastructure development.

Dagestan

In the presidential elections, Putin received 92.12% of the votes.

A notable news story involved the arrest in absentia of two Dagestanis fighting on the side of Ukraine, charged with treason. According to court materials, the men left Russia in 2012 and 2017 and moved to Ukraine.



A high-profile investigation into illegal actions by Makhachkala police continues. On January 21, police officers killed a 35-year-old man during an arrest. Several suspects are under arrest, indicating attempts by the authorities to show a high level of effort against police misconduct.

Governor Melikov demonstrates the protection of local residents' interests. Following his appeal, Rosrybolovstvo supported the proposal to transfer the property complex of the Arakum and Lower Terek reservoirs to the ownership of the Republic of Dagestan. Simultaneously, the Makhachkala court ordered the city's administration to stop discharging sewage into the sea.

There is a noticeable increase in business and tourist presence from Muslim countries, particularly the UAE. In January, UAE representatives who arrived in Dagestan discussed creating working groups for more detailed collaboration with Dagestan. According to RIA «Derbent», the cooperation will involve tourism (a five-star hotel), medicine (a medical center), and construction.

The national question is becoming more acute: in Derbent, a poster for the elections referred to Dagestan as «Lezgistan.» This caused outrage among commentators, who saw it as ignoring other peoples of the republic and inciting interethnic hatred.

On March 31, in Makhachkala and Kaspiysk, Russian occupiers conducted a «counter-terrorist operation» against an underground resistance group. The FSB surrounded a quarter on Akhmet-Khan Sultan Street, detaining three people allegedly planning an explosion on the waterfront or in Victory Park in Kaspiysk. During the search, automatic weapons, ammunition, and a ready-to-use sniper rifle were found. The occupying administration demonstratively reminds about the danger of radical appeals, indicating widespread discontent.

In mid-April, criminal proceedings against human rights activists continue in Dagestan, though local police often avoid using force. At the same time, a campaign against local «corrupt officials» within the regional elite is unfolding. Former and current employees of «Rosseti North Caucasus» and the «Dagenergo» branch are accused of embezzling 2.8 billion rubles from the budget. The head of the land and property relations department of the Izberbash administration, accused of fraud and abuse of power, has been taken into custody. He is the third figure in a criminal case involving the illegal transfer of land to the «EKO» company and the unlawful issuance of building permits.

In early April, events commemorating the 150th anniversary of the national poet Suleyman Stalsky take place.

Former UFC champion from Dagestan, Khabib Nurmagomedov, has been criticized by Russian pro-government figures. The reason was his request to stop the war in Gaza, addressed to Donald Trump. Khabib Nurmagomedov met with the former US president, now a presidential candidate, on June 2 in Newark. However, most residents of Dagestan support him.

On May 8, in the village of Batlukh in the Shamil district, a house belonging to religious figure Ahmad Batlukhskiy burned down. The fire is linked to his rhetoric opposing pro-government muftis.

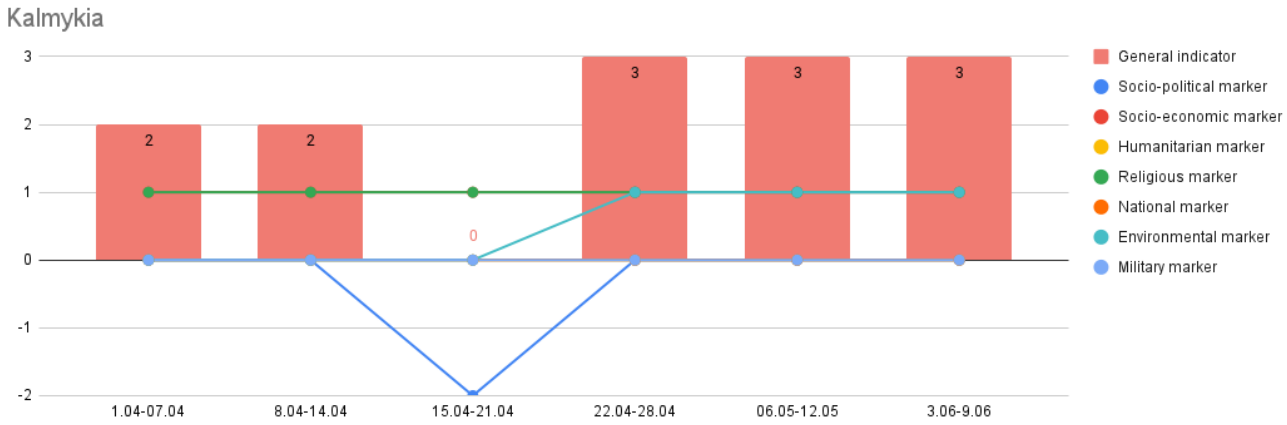
Valery Fadeev, head of the Human Rights Council under the Russian president, believes that the country should introduce a ban on wearing the niqab (a Muslim women's head covering that covers the face, with a narrow slit for the eyes). He plans to discuss this issue with regional authorities and «representatives of traditional Islam,» Fadeev said in an interview with «Parliamentary Newspaper.» This issue has been criticized by many Muslim bloggers.

In May, Sergey Melikov addressed the Dagestan parliament. His speech is widely quoted and discussed. Instead of municipal districts, districts will be created, and instead of rural and urban settlements, territorial departments of the district administration will be formed. Melikov also paid significant attention to the fight against the ideology of extremism and terrorism, condemning «pseudo-Islamic rhetoric».

It is worth noting the deepening of direct economic cooperation with Muslim countries, particularly the UAE. Despite dependence on the Kremlin, the local authorities participate in cross-border negotiations (primarily with Azerbaijan). In May, trade agreements were concluded with Oman and Azerbaijan.

Republic of Kalmykia

Kalmykia is one of the most economically depressed regions in Russia. The majority of its population is ethnically Kalmyk and predominantly Buddhist. The results of Putin's election reveal a high potential for protest, with the communist candidate receiving over 7% of the votes. Batu Khasikov is fighting to be re-nominated as the head of the Republic. Former leader Kirsan Ilyumzhinov occasionally stirs media speculation about his possible return to power.



The Republic has a history of independence movements, and its diaspora is part of the League of Free Nations, not recognizing the election results. In March, Vladimir Dovdanov, the deputy of the Congress of the Oirat-Kalmyk people, was declared wanted.

Kalmykia holds the record for the highest debts among the population and loan dependency. The Republic also leads in crimes involving firearms. It ranks last in Russia for the availability of medical personnel and access to centralized water supply, with only 1.86% of the population earning more than 100,000 rubles. Small and medium businesses rank in the top 10 for the lowest number of jobs.

The environmental situation in the Republic is worsening. The People's Hural of Kalmykia passed a law on state regulation of agricultural land fertility. According to Minister Timur Gavayev, the ministry can now conserve pastures unfit for livestock to restore them using phytomeliorants.

Desertification is a serious ecological problem in the Republic. The anthropogenic pressure will increase as private farms expand. This situation is exacerbated by steppe fires, which take decades for ecosystems to recover from, and a shortage of fresh water.

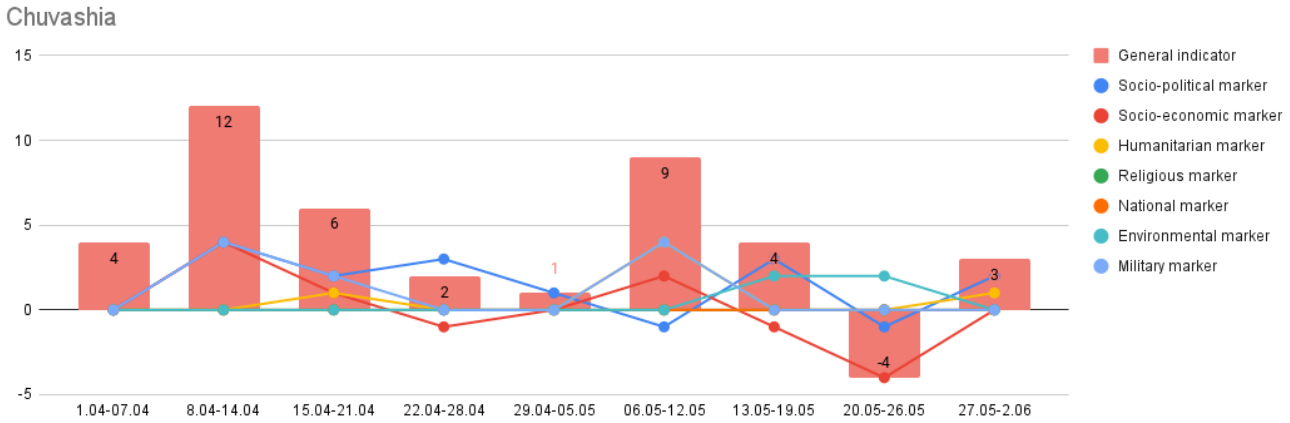
On May 31 and June 1, there were two accidents on the worn-out pipes of the «Verkhniy Yashkul - Elista» water pipeline. The wear and tear of water pipes in Elista (the capital of Kalmykia) is 90%. Batu Khasikov, who decided to capitalize on this problem and formed an emergency headquarters to deal with the accident, was caught in an unpleasant scandal. Instead of drinking water, people were supplied with rusty and cloudy technical water.

In early May, the Elista airport, the first airport in the Southern Federal District, was supposed to resume operations, but the opening was postponed without explanation.

B) Idel-Ural

Chuvashia

The region is facing significant economic problems as well as internal issues with public sentiment. The authorities pretend to engage in anti-corruption activities, but in reality, new corrupt officials replace the old ones. This is satisfactory for a society that blindly consumes only official «positive» news. However, opposition Telegram channels conduct their own mini-investigations, showing that these so-called changes are ineffectual and cannot be considered changes at all.



Negative attitudes toward mobilization are also observed in the region, with the authorities trying to recruit the population to the war effort through intimidation with news about the consequences for those who refuse or go into hiding. Additionally, they highlight the benefits of military service, periodically releasing news about the privileges granted to participants in the so-called special military operation (SVO).

There is also increased news about security measures, such as bomb shelters, reflecting the authorities' and the population's concerns about the situation. In the context of various (economic, cultural) news, there are unobtrusive mentions of domestic UAV production and successes in shooting down UAVs entering Russian territory.

The greatest centrifugal tendencies are seen in the cultural sphere and are highlighted in both unofficial and official news. Various cultural events dedicated to Chuvash traditions and artists are held in the Republic. Artists working abroad focus many of their exhibitions and works not only on historical themes but also on resisting the system.

Republic of Bashkortostan

January was the most active month. The excessively harsh decision of the Baymak District Court in Bashkortostan, which sentenced well-known local eco-activist, former head of the banned «Bashkort» organization, Fail Alsinov, to 4 years in prison for «inciting hatred or enmity and humiliating human dignity» under Article 282 part 1 of the Russian Criminal Code, caused mass protests.

On the day of the verdict, January 17, 2024, thousands gathered outside the courthouse, as they had the day before. In response, Russian security forces resorted to mass beatings, tear gas, and arrests of protesters. Subsequently, reprisals were unleashed against activists. The head of Bashkortostan, Radiy Khabirov, directly accused one of the leaders of the Bashkort movement, Ruslan Gabbasov, who is abroad, of inciting the protests.

In May-June, significant concerns about Ukrainian drone strikes were recorded in the Republic, particularly the May 9 attack on the «Gazprom Neftekhim Salavat» oil refinery.

Mari El

No apparent separatist sentiments were observed in the region during the reporting period. Instead, actions aimed at strengthening Moscow's ideology and authority took place. The center continues to implement programs aimed at the ideological education of children. The region also boasts of improving economic provision for its residents. Residents of the region are being sent to the war in Ukraine. Notably, the only reported casualty from the region was an ethnic Russian.

During the elections, a «Noon against Putin» protest took place in several regions of the Volga region, where dissenters were called to vote against or spoil their ballots at 12 noon. Central repressive organs responded with threats against participants in such actions. However, no information was reported about such an action taking place in Mari El.

Tatarstan

In May 2024, several significant trends were observed in Tatarstan, reflecting the region's socio-economic and political processes:

1. Decline in Birth Rate. In the first quarter of 2024, the birth rate decreased by 6.7% compared to the same period in 2023. This indicates a reduction in the number of newborns, which may result from demographic and economic factors.

2. Socio-political Tension. Tatarstan is experiencing tension due to the activity of national and religious movements. The FSB is conducting searches and detentions among activists of the Tatar national movement. Over four days in May, Russian security forces searched the homes of four national movement activists: Rail Sadriyev, Engel Fattakhov (former Minister of Education of the Republic), Rafik Karimullin, and Zinnur Agliullin. Fattakhov was arrested, and theatrical figure Sadriyev was banned from performing and communicating with colleagues. The State Council of Tatarstan prepared a draft amendment to the Labor Code of the Russian Federation for submission to the State Duma, allowing teenagers aged 16 to work in hazardous and dangerous industries. Students in Yelabuga have been working for a year on the assembly of Iranian UAVs. These events point to issues with labor legislation, finances, and labor safety. For example, the proposed changes to the Labor Code allowing teenagers to work in hazardous industries have caused public outrage. The budget deficit in Tatarstan and the conflict over compensating a worker injured in construction highlight serious economic and social problems.

3. Ethnic Tensions. Tensions between different ethnic groups are rising, including conflicts between Russians and Muslims, often leading to violence. An example is the conflicts between Russian and Muslim communities, including attacks on participants of the «SVO» (Special Military Operation) by migrants in Kazan.

4. Ban on Traditional Clothing. Debates continue in the region regarding the wearing of hijabs and niqabs. Representatives of the «Russian World» seek to ban these clothing items, claiming they do not align with traditional Russian Muslim culture, causing outrage among local Muslims.

5. Extremist Organizations' Activity. The activity of extremist organizations, such as the «Russian Community,» which held marches in Yekaterinburg with xenophobic slogans, reflects the growth of nationalist sentiments affecting interethnic relations in the region.

These trends indicate increasing socio-political and economic pressure in Tatarstan. The decline in the birth rate, ethnic conflicts, the activity of national movements, and the harsh response from the authorities create a complex context for the region's development in the near future.

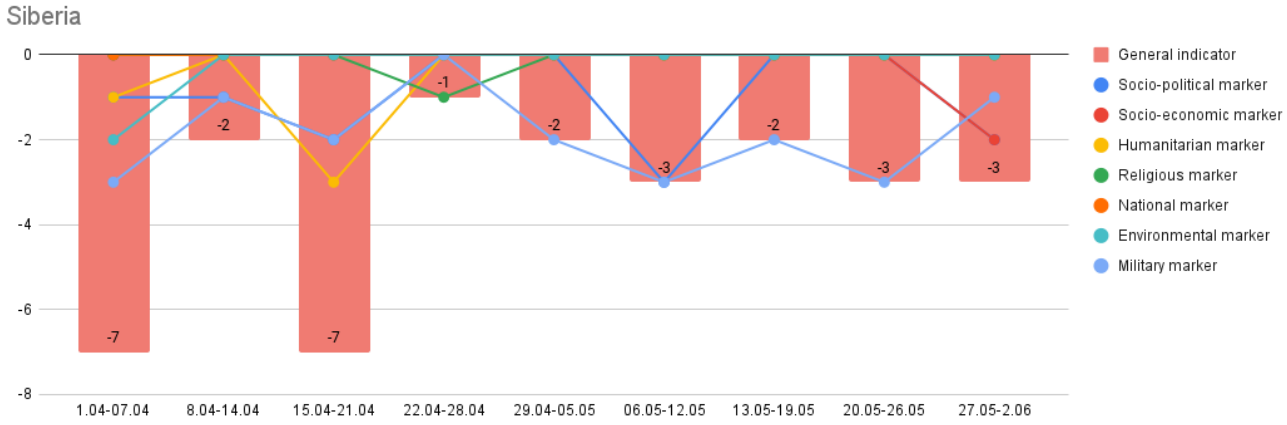
Republic of Mordovia

Some of the population supports the state plans of the Russian Federation for the reconstruction of buildings and roads in various cities. They see themselves as part of the federation and support state policies: children in schools make items for soldiers, and humanitarian aid is collected. People are also massively involved in commemorating the victims of the «Krokus» terrorist attack.

C) Siberia and the Far East

Siberia

From March 15 to 17, elections without choice were held in the Russian Federation. In Yakutia and Chukotka, nearly 100% voter turnout was recorded. Overall, the voting took place relatively smoothly and calmly. Only a few small direct action protests were noticed: in Novosibirsk and Krasnoyarsk Krai, people poured or attempted to pour green dye into the ballot boxes. In the Khanty-Mansi Autonomous Okrug, an attempt to burn ballots was recorded. The nationwide «Noon Against Putin» action took place, especially in Chukotka.



«Thirteen people in Novosibirsk will be tried for arson of relay cabinets» — this may have been opposition to the war, and theoretically, there could have been weapons on the trains. In the Altai Krai, a blogger was detained for «anti-Russian content» because he supported Ukraine on a Telegram channel. A schoolboy from Krasnoyarsk is suspected of more than 20 bomb threats.

In Chukotka, actions in memory of those who died in «Crocus City Hall» took place on March 24. The next day, the «Cranes» action began in several places in Chukotka, where people use the symbol of white cranes and the song «Cranes» to honor the memory of the dead. Meanwhile, Yakutia is training snipers for the «SVO.» T

he training ground area is more than 400 hectares. There is a program to improve skills for soldiers sent from the «SVO.» Training has already taken place twice in the combat zone.

Censorship on Social Networks

Several cases of people receiving sentences for social media posts were recorded weekly. A resident of Novosibirsk was sentenced to a year probation «for the rehabilitation of Nazism» because she «left an offensive post on social networks on May 9» in a group on a social network. Another resident of Novosibirsk was also sentenced to 2 years probation «for the rehabilitation of Nazism» for his reflections on the USSR in VK. Nikolai Konashenkov posted on social media asking why «Crocus» was attacked and not the Kremlin, for which he was arrested.

Economy and Sanctions, Corruption Scandals

In Chukotka, a «micro-nuclear power plant» is planned to be built by July 1. There are also plans to build a ski base in Syktyvkar. In the Komi Republic, two inter-settlement gas pipelines are planned to be constructed in 2024, and eight boiler houses will be converted to natural gas. Since the beginning of the year, almost 3 tons of gold have been extracted in Chukotka. Russia, fearing Ukrainian attacks, is sending Il-76 military planes, which were stationed in Pskov on the border with Estonia, to Siberia — about 10 units. Along with them, about 1,500 soldiers. Yakutia's diamonds, which are almost impossible to sell due to sanctions, will be bought by the Russian Ministry of Finance. In the second half of 2023, the profits of «Alrosa» — Russia's largest diamond producer — fell by 47%. 61% of diamonds remain unsold. Immediately after February 24, 2022, «Alrosa» came under sanctions.

Former minister in Khakassia, former rector of the Omsk Technical State University, was accused of corruption. A case of animal cruelty was also brought against a former deputy, and the head of the city traffic police was sentenced to 11.5 years for a bribe in Kuzbass. A deputy in Tulun was detained on suspicion of large-scale fraud. In Transbaikalia, two officials received about 60 million rubles in kickbacks on state contracts. A former deputy prosecutor received 4 years for a bribe in Novosibirsk. A criminal case for bribery was opened against a deputy of the Novosibirsk City Council and former mayoral candidate Igor Ukraincev.

There is also dissatisfaction among the population due to a lack of funds. At the beginning of the month, Irkutsk doctors complained to Putin about low salaries via a video message. Firefighters are massively resigning in Tomsk due to low wages. Krasnoyarsk authorities also decided to save on the quality of school meals by setting the minimum price.

L/DNR and Northern Regions: Reconstruction, Trips to the «SVO» Zone

The cooperation between the terrorist republics and remote federal subjects continues. On April 4, it became known that the so-called LNR signed an agreement on cooperation with Yakutia. At the end of March, a report in Yakut media described journalists' trip to temporarily occupied Dokuchaevsk. This city is «sponsored» by Yakutia, which took over from the Volgograd region.

Before this, Yakutia took care of the Kirov agglomeration for two years. Notably, the Dokuchaevsk district includes the village of Olenivka, well known to Ukrainians. This region is very close to the front line. Presidential elections in Russia were held in Olenivka in 2024.

Along with reconstruction work, Russian schools and kindergartens will emerge, spreading Russian propaganda and indoctrination among children who have not yet moved to Ukrainian-controlled territory.

Yakutia head Aisen Nikolaev visited the «SVO» zone, meeting with the head of the so-called DNR Pushilin in Dokuchaevsk.

In April, cooperation between northern federal subjects and Russian terrorist entities in Ukrainian Donbas intensifies. Collaborators from Donetsk are taken to Siberia for training, particularly in Krasnoyarsk Krai. Doctors from Yakutia work in the DNR (Dokuchaevsk). Chukotka also delivered humanitarian aid to Novoluhanske near Debaltseve. People from occupied Kherson are «offered» evacuation to Tyumen.

Cultural Surge in Yakutia

In March, several films were released in Yakutia: «Abaasylaakh House,» «Secrets of the Island of Mists,» «Timir.» On January 29, news broke that the annual international indigenous peoples' film festival Skábmagovat was held in the cultural capital of Finland, the village of Inari. Five Yakut works from Russia participated. These were all short films: «Cuckoo,» «Bull of Cold,» «Aiyy Kuo,» «Hinkelten,» and «Supput Suruktar.» Yakutia will also release a new film about survival in the remote taiga: this time about a little girl, «Karina.» This is a real story about Karina Chikitova and her puppy Naida. And in Chukotka, they will release a digital encyclopedia of the culture and languages of indigenous peoples.

May rallies

Powerful rallies took place this month, by Russian standards: in Novosibirsk – against animal euthanasia, attended by 200 people. Also near Novosibirsk, a rally of 200 people was held on May 23 against the construction of the South Siberian Metallurgical Plant (YUNMZ) in Iskitim, Novosibirsk Oblast. Activists planned to gather there, but the city administration banned a June 1 rally in defense of the rights of mobilized children. Iskitim is one of Russia's most polluted cities. 2.6 thousand signatures were collected against the plant, but the city mayor accused activists of «hype».

On May 9 in Novosibirsk, students and faculty of the Agricultural University were urged to participate in the «Letter to a Hero» and «Letter to a Soldier» actions in support of Russia's war against Ukraine. Later, two protests also took place in the city regarding the release of political prisoners, including Lev Yashin, Vladimir Kara-Murza, and Sergei Furgal.

In Omsk, students of the technical university were forced to vote in the presidential elections, threatening to deprive them of scholarships.

Arrests

At least two attempts to set fire to a military enlistment office occurred in Novosibirsk and the region in May: a successful one in Berdsk and an unsuccessful one in Novosibirsk. Even approval on social media for setting fire to the military enlistment office resulted in a fine of 350,000 rubles. The FSB also detained a resident of Birobidzhan on charges of planning to set fire to a military recruitment point.

After two years, Novosibirsk court sentenced Ilya Baburin to 25 years in prison for attempting to set fire to a military enlistment office and a music school, a case that became known in 2022. Thus, Baburin became the first defendant in state treason for attempting to set fire to a military enlistment office.

Arrests or sentences were also carried out for arson or sabotage on railways in May 2024. Three 16-year-olds were arrested for two months in the city of Bilovo, Kemerovo Oblast.

Another minor from Tomsk was sentenced to 4.5 years for the same actions he committed in September 2023. A resident of Novosibirsk, who applied to join the Legion «Freedom of Russia,» was sentenced to 12 years for a similar attempt – on November 4, 2022, Gurulev attempted sabotage at the Siberian station of the West Siberian Railway.

In Irkutsk, a man was sentenced to 3 years in military court for «public justification of terrorism.» There were also 41 cases of desertion and leaving service positions in this region.

In Krasnoyarsk, officials were arrested for exceeding their authority – including the former deputy minister of health of the region.

Meanwhile, in Tomsk, the parents of the arrested ex-head of Navalny's headquarters in the city, Ksenia Fadeeva, were not allowed to visit her daughter in pretrial detention.

Freedom of speech, belief, and conscience

Verdicts or arrests were repeatedly made based on the lack of freedom of speech in support of Ukraine or anti-war statements.

In Omsk, a court sentenced the former head of the Omsk branch of the «Alliance of Doctors» union, Olga Byelova, to six years in prison for a publication on «VKontakte» where she expressed an anti-war position.

Another pensioner from the Omsk region faces up to 7 years for anti-war posts on «Odnoklassniki» – she posted a song in Ukrainian, a comment with wishes of victory to Ukraine, and comments criticizing the policy of the Russian president.

Another pensioner was fined 100,000 rubles for three comments on «VKontakte» where he criticized the war in Ukraine. Another resident of Irkutsk was found guilty of «public justification of terrorism» and sentenced to three years in prison for a comment in support of the explosion on the Crimean Bridge in October 2022. For wearing the trident symbol on a cap in the Altai Krai, a local resident was fined 1,000 rubles. There were also trends towards arresting clergy.

In Omsk, the parish of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church was liquidated, where an icon depicting Stepan Bandera was found, and the rector Igor Maksimov is under house arrest. There were also court sentences for quite strange reasons. For example, in Gorno-Altaysk, local resident Andriy Kartopolov was sentenced to 2.5 years in prison for involvement in the «citizens of the USSR» movement.

The same court sentenced a local resident to one year of probation for attempting to destroy ballots during the presidential elections held in March this year. Although without arrest, the court deprived opposition deputy Yevgeny Kaverzin of his seat in the Tomsk City Duma.

There are also sentences for desertion: in Chita, a military court sentenced a serviceman to 7.5 years in a general regime colony for evading military service twice. For repeated escapes, a serviceman in Barnaul received a record term of 10 years – most often the term is conditional so that the soldier can be returned to the war.

A man in Angarsk, Irkutsk Oblast, received 12 years in a state treason case for collecting «information and photo materials on the state of an industrial object and production» for the «Ukrainian special services». The same number of years is assigned by the court for supporting military organizations formed from Russians fighting on the side of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – thus, for distributing leaflets of «Freedom of Russia», a resident of the Priangarsky region received a 13-year term.

Russian military and crimes at home

People who committed serious crimes in Siberian regions are participating in the war against Ukraine. A military from Kuzbass was detained for killing a taxi driver, and a former PMC «Wagner» mercenary was detained for murder in the Krasnoyarsk Krai. A villager was also killed for commenting on a parked car, and a native of Ukraine in Angarsk. Another military committed armed robbery after returning from Krasnokamensk. Two former police officers went to war after committing murder. There is also a growing trend towards meetings of «Wagnerites» with children. In Novosibirsk, a military who had previously beaten children was invited to another meeting.

Ecology and natural disasters

Northern regions of Russia were plagued by natural disasters in May. Forest fires engulfed Siberia as early as May. Evacuations began in the Omsk region on May 6 due to rising water in the Ishim River. This threatened the federal highway Omsk-Tyumen. On May 9, a fire started in the Irkutsk region near the city of Bratsk. The city of Vikhorevka was evacuated. There were casualties and injuries in the region, with many houses burned near Bratsk.

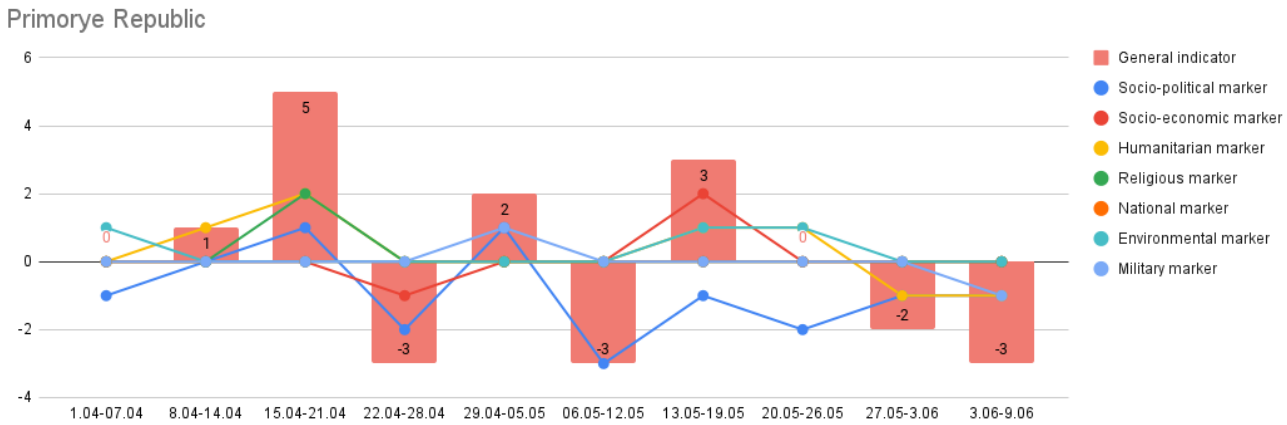
High water reached the Tomsk region on May 8, flooding 20 settlements. Gas cylinder explosions were reported on the same day near Krasnoyarsk, spreading fire over a thousand square meters. The cause was attributed to grass burning. In Novosibirsk, a landfill burned for 5 days.

A serious accident occurred on May 11 in Olekminsk, Yakutia – a boiler exploded, leaving 90 houses without electricity. In this area, four villages were flooded. It was later revealed that Surgutneftegas had concealed information about an oil spill in Yakutia (which occurred on May 10).

On May 12, hundreds of houses in the north of the Omsk region were flooded. A local official called those affected by the disaster «clowns». Later, he was fired.

Primorye

In March, governors fulfilled the task of maximizing voter turnout in elections. Pro-government «experts» note that the history of the Far Eastern protest is a thing of the past.



According to generalized data, after processing 90% of the protocols in the Far Eastern Federal District, 86.61% of voters voted for Putin (in Russia – 87.21%). Thus, the incumbent president improved his result in the region by almost 20% compared to 2018.

The authorities feel threatened by supporters of former Khabarovsk Krai Governor Furgal, and repression against them has intensified. The Khabarovsk Krai Court granted the

prosecutor's lawsuit and recognized the movement «I/WE Sergei Furgal» as an extremist organization.

On February 15, the police conducted a search of activist and blogger Oleg Pankov from Komsomolsk-on-Amur. The 58-year-old former deputy was arrested in connection with the case of «discrediting the army» and taken to Khabarovsk.

In May, a volunteer from Navalny's headquarters in Nakhodka disappeared without a trace after searches. Two emergencies occurred simultaneously in the Amur region:

1. Several miners stayed in the mine for several days;

2. In Blagoveshchensk, a kiosk with fruits was set on fire on national grounds after an attack on «Crocus». The mayor hinted at a connection with Ukraine.

The problem of ecology remains significant at the moment, especially forest fires. Since the end of April, Vladivostok has faced significant shortages in the supply of social products, including cereals, tea, and pasta. Leaflets with instructions on how to act during a terrorist act are being distributed.

The legal case against the arrested Gordon Bleck, allegedly for stealing an American citizen, is ongoing at SIZO-1 in Vladivostok.

The EU has imposed sanctions against Primorye Governor Oleg Kozhemyako «for facilitating military cooperation between Russia and North Korea,» according to the EU Council.

«There are 50,000 Primorye residents on the front lines,» said Governor Oleg Kozhemyako.

Increasing Chinese Influence

There are increasingly economic and infrastructural contacts with China. In Guangzhou, a meeting took place between Julia Korsak, head of the regional tourism development department, and Alexander Bobrov, director of aviation commerce at Vladivostok International Airport, with representatives of Guangzhou International Airport discussing prospects for opening a direct flight route between the territories. Primorye Territory Governor Oleg Kozhemyako noted that the region is actively working to strengthen friendship with neighboring Chinese province Heilongjiang. In an interview with Heilongjiang Television, he emphasized the importance of cultural and sports exchanges, as well as participation in the 8th China-Russia EXPO.

Russia and China have reached an agreement on the joint development of Big Ussuri Island. The signing ceremony of the project concept took place in Beijing in the presence of Russian President Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping.

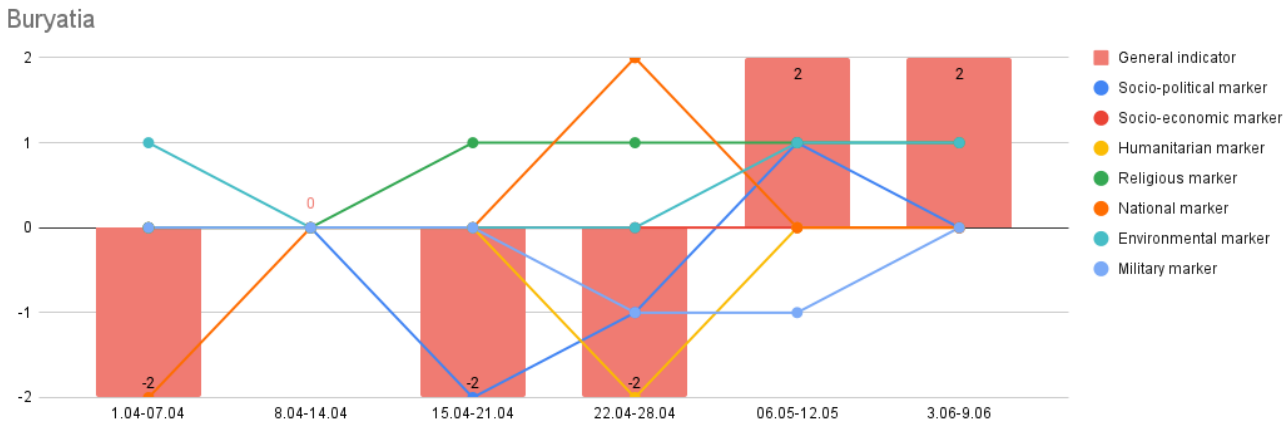
The Chinese city of Hunchun bordering Primorye is implementing a people's event to stabilize the situation on the border between Russia and North Korea. Recruitment of guards from the people has already started, with quite serious requirements. For example, they should not be residents of Hunchun border villages, according to Biang.ru portal.

Republic of Buryatia

The voter turnout in the elections was 73.72%. Allegedly, 87.96% voted for Putin. There are noticeable economic problems. Among all the Far Eastern regions, Buryatia ranked second to last in terms of wage growth. Leading the top three are the Chukotka Autonomous Okrug, where employers started offering 34,507 rubles more than the previous year. Second place

goes to the Jewish Autonomous Oblast (+26,383 rubles), and third place to the Magadan Oblast (+26,116 rubles).

Putin's loyalist head of the republic, Alexei Tsydenov, confidently controls the situation in the republic. During the monitoring period, a significant part of the political elite supported an appeal to defend the detained former head of the People's Hural (local parliament) Tsyren-Dasha Dorzhiev, who was arrested for 2 months under Article 159 Part 4 of the Criminal Code («Fraud»), accused of embezzling 36 million rubles during the construction of Sosnovo-Ozorsky SS 1 in conspiracy with a group of individuals.



A significant part of the Buryats left the country during the so-called Special Military Operation, mostly to Mongolia. There are opposition organizations in the diaspora opposed to the current government. At Tsydenov's initiative, the Hural abolished direct mayoral elections in Ulan-Ude. Now they will be appointed. In 17 out of 21 municipal districts and two urban districts of Ulan-Ude and Severobaikalsk, appointments will be made through competition. The only Communist deputy in the Ulan-Ude city council, Viktor Yevremov, wrote a statement about leaving the party. In 2024, the adoption of a municipal program to protect the titular language is planned, requiring entrepreneurs to print signs in two languages.

Potential separatism is one of the main threats to the stability of central authority in Buryatia. In January 2024, a state headquarters «to combat separatism» was created in Buryatia.

On April 26, 2024, Abdulgamid Bulatov, head of the Federal Agency for Nationalities of the Russian Federation, announced a thousandfold increase in nationalist and separatist propaganda in Buryatia since the beginning of the war.

The Buddhist religious structure is one of the pillars of identity and language preservation in the republic. Therefore, the head of the republic tries to keep Buddhism under control. On April 23, a delegation from the Republic of Buryatia headed by Alexei Tsydenov visited Lhasa, the capital of the Tibet Autonomous Region of China. The purpose of the visit was tourism cooperation in terms of Buddhism. From August 12 to 14, 2024, Ulan-Ude (the capital of Buryatia) plans to host the II International Buddhist Forum on the topic of «Traditional Buddhism and Contemporary Challenges». Buryatia claims to be a center of the Buddhist world in Russia.

On April 28, the public council for the celebration of the 300th anniversary of Kyakhta confirmed the return to the dual name of the city Kyakhta-Troitskosavsk. In fact, the colonial name of the city from the time of the Russian Empire has been restored.

On April 26, a competition in the Buryat language was held at the Buddhist University «Dashi Choinkhorlin» named after D.D. Ivolginsky Datsan. At the same time, the Department of Buryat Language at Buryat State University was closed, and Russian language courses for foreigners were opened.

At the end of spring and the beginning of summer, large-scale fires broke out in Buryatia. On April 30, 2024, fires occurred in various parts of Ulan-Ude, caused by strong hurricane winds, particularly a large fire in the territory of the military unit in the settlement of Vostochnoe. About 100 hectares of forest were burned. As of June 3, 6 fires covering over 34,000 hectares were recorded in Buryatia. A fire regime was in effect in Buryatia.

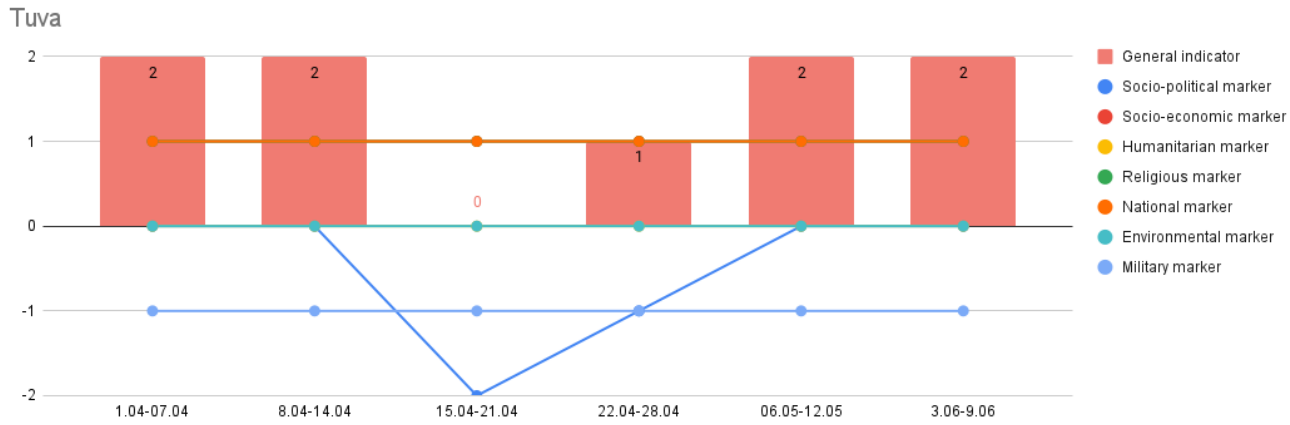
In January 2024, Buryatia entered the top ten most criminal regions of Russia. On May 8, fake public hearings on the construction of a «supercolony» for three thousand prisoners were held in Buryatia. The hearings were accompanied by protests from residents of the «Energetik» microdistrict of Ulan-Ude.

Mobilization is intensifying, including many reports from the Selenginsky district. Military gatherings of students from technical schools and colleges are taking place in Buryatia from April 1 to 26 as part of the federal project «Patriotic Education» on the territory of the 11th separate guards airborne assault Suvorov order brigade. Over four weeks, 1200 cadets are planned to be covered. Under the guise of conducting reservist gatherings, summons are being distributed, which can be perceived as covert mobilization.

Approximately 7.4% of Buryats aged 18 to 49 are mobilized for war in Ukraine (on average across the country 2%). At least 1493 verified Buryats have been confirmed killed in the war in Ukraine.

Tuva

Tuva is an outsider in Russia in terms of socio-economic development, a leader in committing criminal offenses, and in the involvement of men in the war in Ukraine.



The region has always been under the influence of former Defense Minister and Tuvan Sergei Shoigu. After his resignation, a struggle began between the clan of the current head of the republic, Vladislav Khovalyg, and the former head, now Deputy Speaker of the State Duma Sholban Kara-ool. The latter publicly accused his supporters - participants in the war in Ukraine who took part in the so-called «primaries» for the local parliament from «United Russia» on behalf of «young men in suits» - of threats. In turn, «United Russia» accused the Deputy Speaker of spreading false information about the party primaries. This conflict highlighted the

weakening of Shoigu's people's positions and the Kremlin's bet on the current head of Tuva, Khovalyg (a protégé of Sergei Kiriyenko, Deputy Chief of the Presidential Administration).

Due to the war in Ukraine, over a thousand children in Tuva lost their fathers. As of June 2024, according to verified data, over 500 Tuvans have died in the war («Niva Tuva» publication).

According to the study «Demography Fell,» Tuva leads in the number of men involved in the war - 9.3%.

In May, about 100 Tuvans, mostly prisoners, were sent to serve in the Special Forces. According to official data in the media, 540 Tuvans were killed during the war in Ukraine. Tuva sent a group of forensic experts to Rostov to identify the dead. Tuva has created a Single Center to assist servicemen and families of the missing.

In May, journalist Alla Dongur-ool was arrested in Tuva. The 69-year-old journalist systematically criticized the current government of Tuva. Under previous leadership, she had already been held in prison for criticizing the government.

Of the 170 schools in Tuva, 91 are wooden and in disrepair.

D) Central Regions

The center is Moscow and the region

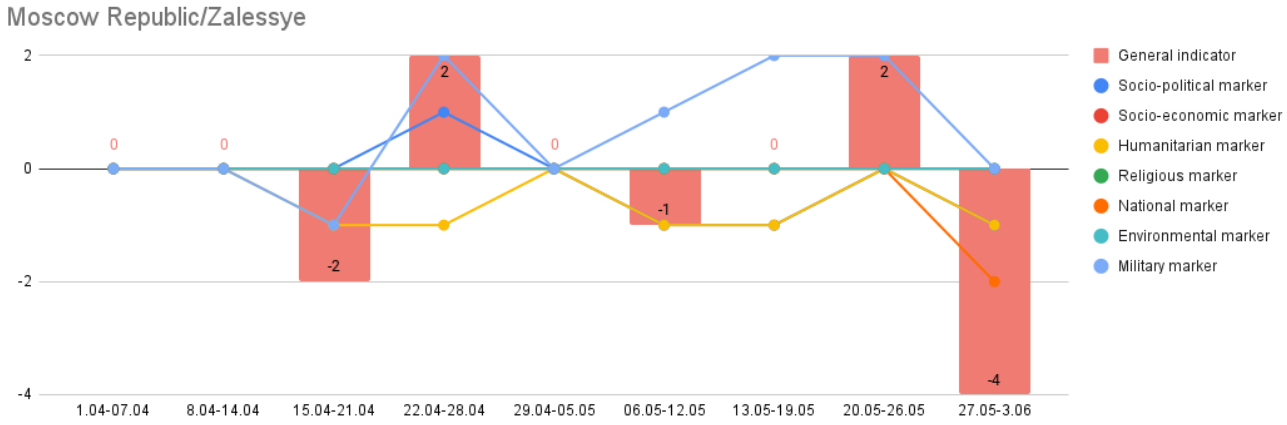
I. Socio-political marker. During March-June 2024 in the capital region of the Russian Federation, the following socio-political processes can be highlighted:

1. «Re-elections» of Putin and changes in the Russian government, Ministry of Defense. As a result, a shift towards a group of «technocrats» and a struggle among Putin's associates for influence.

2. Persecution of moderate opposition. The reason for the intensification of pressure on the opposition may be the demonstration of strength to potential regime traitors and Russian imperialism.

3. Sharp activation of denunciations. During the spring period, denunciations in Russia reached a new level. Now even governors loyal to Putin and deputies of the State Duma are under pressure. The consequence of this could be the erosion of the vertical of power due to the disappearance of immunity from persecution of regime loyalists.

4. Pressure on human rights defenders. Mass trials of lawyers and human rights organizations.



Most events in April-May were related to pressure on potential opposition members and harassment of migrants. It is interesting how the Kremlin divided the spheres of pressure. While the «lower ranks» engaged in pogroms against Kyrgyz, Tajiks, and Uzbeks, the courts and the FSB were busy intensifying trials against liberal journalists and human rights defenders.

In the coming months, there may be a hot conflict between migrants and nationalists. After that, Russian propaganda will again spread the narrative of peaceful coexistence of all peoples in Russia (as before the elections), and attempts will be made to extinguish the conflict (possibly even by arresting several Russian nationalists).

The situation with the persecution of opposition members continues. Anti-migrant sentiments are also spreading. Tension in society is growing, according to the increasingly chaotic search for potential enemies in the country, which in turn could lead to the disloyalty of the Kremlin elite.

II. Socio-economic marker. The economic situation in the Moscow region and neighboring regions is slowly deteriorating in such areas:

1. Agriculture. Since March, the Russian population has been preparing for price increases in agriculture in the summer due to poor harvests and damage caused by sanctions.
2. Financial difficulties. After the March «elections,» the forecast «dollar at 200» began to be realized after the introduction of June sanctions against the Moscow Exchange. Panic on financial markets has intensified hysteria among Russian business circles.
3. Conflict between business and government tax reform programs, due to the government's attempts to take populist steps and increase pressure on business.

III. Humanitarian Marker. The humanitarian situation mirrors the socio-political processes:

1. Persecution of civic and youth organizations.
2. Pressure on cultural figures engaged in anti-war activities.
3. Ban or scrutiny of many international organizations whose purpose is humanitarian activity in the territory of the Russian Federation.

IV. National Marker. The main conflict situation in the region is the persecution of Central Asian representatives after the terrorist attack in «Crocus City Hall.» As a result, the formation of «people's squads» for vigilante justice against migrants, mass arrests, and raids in places where they gather. Actions by Russian law enforcement have led to deteriorating relations between Russia and Tajikistan and other Central Asian states. The increase in discrimination has also affected the overall Muslim population of the capital region.

V. Military Marker. The most significant events in this marker are related to strikes by Ukrainian UAVs on Russian military industrial complexes (NPK) and arrests of Deputy Defense Ministers, generals, and officers involved in supplying the Russian Armed Forces. The consequences could lead to serious problems in Kremlin relations with military elites. Considering the recent legal immunity release of FSB Colonel, accused of corruption, shadow conflicts between special services and the military might escalate. Particularly noteworthy is the increased level of «denunciations» targeting Russian elites and ordinary citizens. Panic among military and law enforcement officials has grown, manifesting in a «witch hunt» that is gaining momentum.

Karelia

The Ministry of Defense of Russia deployed «Iskanders» in Karelia, citing it as a response by the Russian government to Finland joining NATO. In the region, there is the Sandarmokh memorial site where, among others, prominent figures of the Ukrainian social movement of the 1920s-30s were executed. However, the memorial site is expectedly neglected. The Russian authorities seek to erase Stalinist terror from public memory.

Society is tense following the terrorist act at «Crocus.» The tension has reached Karelia, where locals nervously react to anything reminiscent of shootings, explosions, etc. Mass events, including festivals, are being canceled. The main factors causing social unrest include ecological problems, particularly the adequate use of water bodies and access points to them. The fake opposition in the form of «Fair Russia» tries to take control of these processes, leading them. Local authorities comply with them, aiming to maintain power. The goal of this «circus» is clear. «Fair Russia» positions itself as the only effective opposition, aiming to consolidate public dissatisfaction around itself and direct it into the «right» direction.

Separately noted is the government's concern ahead of the traditional Victory Day on May 9th. This year, there is noticeable tension and panic, leading to restrictions on mass events and even recommendations to move the traditional Immortal Regiment march online.

Karelia's main trading partners in 2023 were estimated to be China, Belarus, India, and Turkey. However, no country, including China, could replace the volume of foreign trade that Karelia had with Finland.

Under current circumstances, interest in learning the Finnish language in Karelia is declining, resulting in a decrease in the ethnic number of its speakers. On April 20th, Karelia celebrated the Day of Karelian and Vepsian Writing. The Vepsians are a small Finno-Ugric ethnic group traditionally living in Russia within the territory of the Republic of Karelia. However, Karelia remains the only republic in Russia where the language of the titular people does not have official status.

In May, a conflict arose in the village of Panozero between the authorities and the population over the decision to close the only school. Despite unanimous protests from parents, officials stated that everything was already decided. Instead, students were offered to be transferred to the Kems boarding school, which, according to parents, is located hundreds of kilometers away from the village.

Saint Petersburg and Leningrad Oblast

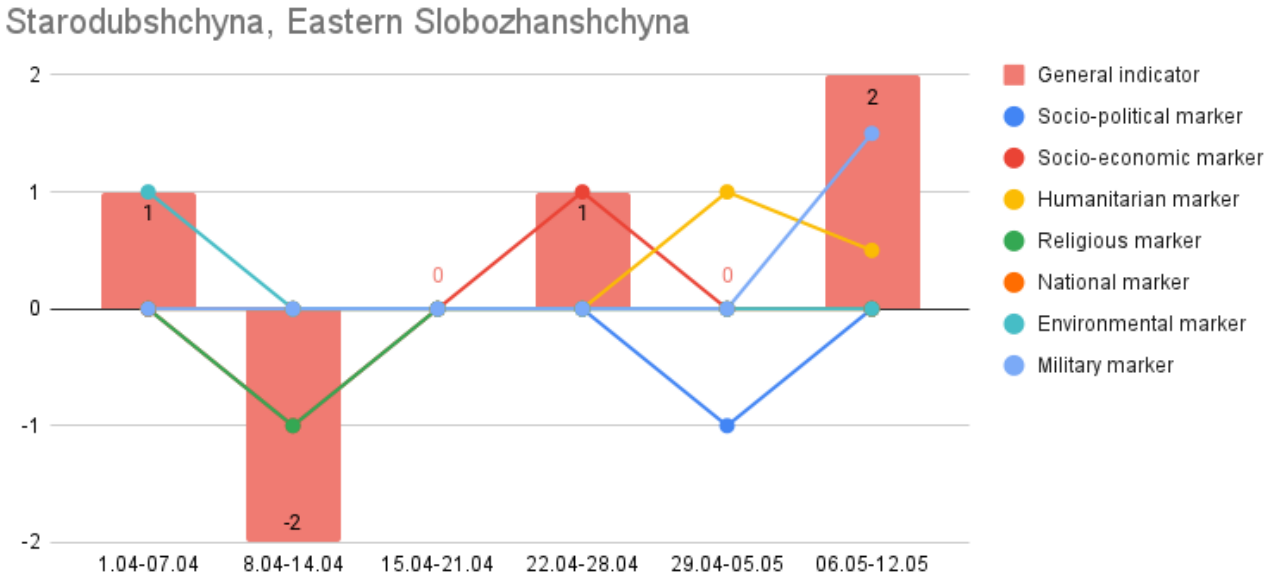
On one hand, it is impossible to assert the presence of any separatist or federalist tendencies in St. Petersburg today. On the contrary, most news demonstrates the adherence of local elites and citizens of St. Petersburg to the central course. On the other hand, attention should be paid to existing conflict situations, especially in the national sphere, which affect the exacerbation of interethnic and inter-ethnic conflicts in St. Petersburg as the second center of Russia. It is also necessary to consider resistance facts to the so-called «elections,» news about crimes caused by former participants in the so-called CVO, and other incidents.

Regarding conflicts on the national level, there is an attempt by the authorities to «smooth over» conflicts and «not provoke» the community. Thus, a picture of «friendship of peoples» is created - peaceful coexistence of national minorities and the indigenous population in the centers of Russia.

In particular, in St. Petersburg, teenagers from Uzbekistan simply beat a man in the San Galli garden on Ligovsky Prospekt. The victim died on the spot. The case was reclassified as «hooliganism» because the man died not from beatings but from a heart attack.

Eastern Slobozhanshchina

Despite the fact that falsifications in elections did not encounter widespread opposition from the population, there are cases of disrupting the electoral process by pouring zelyonka into urns with ballots.



The transfer of hostilities to the territory of the aggressor country is sharply reflected in the border regions. After the elections, the information space of local media is filled with news of shelling and clashes on the border with Ukraine. Any separatist or anti-war tendencies come either from the Ukrainian army and Russian volunteers or from locals tired of shelling.

The project is carried out in partnership with:

Initiative **«Anti-Imperial Bloc of Nations».** Partner page: **ABN pages** and **Facebook group**, website: https://abn.org.ua.

NGO **«Ukrainian Student»**.

Non-governmental analytical center **«Ukrainian Studies of Strategic Disquisitions»** in 2024 will conduct a series of research projects on the collapse of Russia and Ukraine's national interests in the world — more details on our resources at https://linktr.ee/nac.ussd/.

We invite interested experts and organizations to join the partnership.

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