

## MONITORING OF REGIONAL PROCESSES IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION: WINTER 2024/2025

The non-governmental analytical center "Ukrainian Studies of Strategic Disquisitions" continues its long-term project on Monitoring Regional Processes in the Russian Federation.

**The purpose of the research is to record and determine the dynamics of conflict-generating and disintegration factors that will contribute to the deconstruction of the Russian Federation and its disappearance as a geopolitical reality.**

The object of monitoring is the information space of the Russian Federation, with the most popular news from the various regions of Russia over a quarter being analyzed. This will provide a more or less clear understanding of the internal processes occurring within the aggressor state and allow for the monitoring of conflict-generating regional processes.



During this period, many regions experienced problems with infrastructure, for which winter traditionally came unexpectedly. In regions close to Ukraine, the "arrival of war" into daily life became apparent. Across Russia, there is a worsening socio-economic situation, and nationally and religiously based conflicts are intensifying in some regions.

# EUROPEAN PART

## Moscow Region

Despite the apparent stability of the center, the winter of 2024–2025 revealed a number of the structural problems that are increasingly penetrating the social-political fabric of the region.

Economically, the area was impacted by the strikes on oil refining infrastructure, resulting in a 50–60% drop in refining capacity. This didn't only affect production but also intensified the pressure of security services on industrial enterprises. Inflation exceeded 10%, particularly hitting food prices, which triggered a rise in social discontent.

Protest activity increased against the backdrop of widespread problems in the housing and utilities sector. Protests were held due to heating outages and rising tariffs in several cities of the Moscow region — including Khimki and Krasnogorsk. In the regions of the Central Federal District, there were numerous instances of electricity and heating disruptions. Emerging of such actions in the privileged Moscow region indicated the serious systemic failures.

At the political level, there is an intensification of repressive measures against the opposition. Events surrounding the anniversary of Navalny's death gained particular attention that the detention of activists attempting to reach Moscow demonstrated the government's fear of even symbolic acts of defiance. Despite this, a small memorial rally took place in the capital, signaling the presence of remnants of political resistance, albeit deeply marginalized.

An interesting new line of tension is the split within the Russian Orthodox Church. A priest from the Mozhaysk district publicly criticized Patriarch Kirill for his "excessively patriotic" rhetoric, that sparked wide resonance. This indicated the emergence of internal resistance even within an environment that has traditionally been loyal to the regime.

The environmental issue remains one of the enduring catalysts for protest — residents of the region are opposed to the construction of the agricultural land and landfills. Although these actions are not yet widespread, they are rooting protest culture among local communities.

Overall, the Moscow region showed the signs of a gradual loss of social consensus that were an economic pressure, the failures in the utility sector, the strengthening of the police state, and even beginning of religious discontent are creating an unstable environment. The last could lead to the unexpected political outcomes under the external or internal stress.

Humanitarian	1
Environmental	2
National	0
Criminal	0
Religious	1
"Special Military Operation" (SVO)	2
Socio-economic	2
Socio-political	2

## **Bryansk Region**

During the specified period, the Bryansk region has been under conditions of the increased internal tension, caused by a combination of the economic, social, and security factors.

The inflation rate reached 11% in February 2025 was causing the public dissatisfaction, particularly due to the association of rising prices with the costs of the war against Ukraine. The amount of criticism directed at both local and central authorities is increasing.

There are also noticeable human losses: over three months, 3 civilians were killed and another 11 were injured, while among the military, more than 530 were killed. This has led to public discussions on the legitimacy of the war.

The demographic crisis became deeper: the mortality is more than twice the birth rate, and the average age of residents is 39 years. The authorities introduced financial payments for the pregnant schoolgirls and students to stimulate birth rates. That caused mixed reactions in society.

The security situation became significantly worse: from December to February, hundreds of drone, missile, and artillery strikes were recorded. Regular warnings about missile threats have also appeared.

Thus, Bryansk is gradually transitioning into a state of chronic tension, where the military factor is closely intertwined with the internal political and socio-economic dissatisfaction.

Humanitarian	0
Environmental	0
National	0
Criminal	0
Religious	0
"Special Military Operation" (SVO)	3
Socio-economic	2
Socio-political	0

## **Chuvashia**

The winter of 2024–2025 in Chuvashia passed under the conditions of political instability and social dissatisfaction. The new regional leader faced resistance from the old nomenklatura, which retains influence through schemes for redistributing positions. Corruption scandals and internal elite struggles are intensifying the crisis of trust.

Mobilization is met with persistent resistance, especially due to the stories about its compulsory nature, particularly among prisoners.

Prices for basic goods and utilities rose deepening social tension.

The population increasingly demonstrated alienation from the official authorities that reflected in online discussions and comments in local media.

Humanitarian	0
Environmental	0
National	0
Criminal	0
Religious	0
"Special Military Operation" (SVO)	2
Socio-economic	1
Socio-political	1

### **Tatarstan**

During the winter of 2024–2025, Tatarstan sharply experienced an escalation of structural problems encompassing the economy, demographics, identity, and politics.

There was the staffing and financial crisis in republic. Despite the presence of 49,000 migrants, there is a shortage of 37,000 workers, and the state debt reached 113.4 billion rubles, mostly due to federal loans. Meanwhile, nearly 80% of taxes are directed to Moscow, further increasing the region's dependence on the center.

The demographic situation became worse because the natural population decline nearly doubled, the mortality rose by 6.6%, and the birth rates fell by 3.3%.

Social and cultural tension is rising due to the neglect of the Tatar cultural monuments and the prioritization of the Christian cultural heritage sites. Despite this, there is growing interest in Islam in the region. There were mass Quran courses, the activity of Muslim communities, and increased religious self-organization.

The arrest of Tatar national movement veteran Fazil Valiakhmetov and reports of thousands of the casualties in the war with Ukraine only intensify anti-war and national sentiments. Behind external loyalty, there was a gradual increase in internal instability.

Humanitarian	1
Environmental	0
National	-1
Criminal	1
Religious	1
"Special Military Operation" (SVO)	-2
Socio-economic	2
Socio-political	-1

## Bashkortostan

The winter season in Bashkortostan was marked by a number of series of social protests and an increase in repression.

The most important from these events were:

- Protests by residents of Ufa against the opening of a probation center at the art college;
- A protest by the workers on the M-12 highway over unpaid wages;
- Environmental outrage in Sterlitamak regarding the landfill, as well as displays of anti-imperial behavior by teenagers who burned the imperial flag.

All these events met the reactions of the authorities — from the temporary concessions to the high-profile persecutions. Repression continued against participants of the last year's protests in Baymak.

At the same time, corruption scandals unfolded in the region. There are sentences for the director of the transport agency of Bashkortostan Nizakayev, deputy of the local parliament from “united russia” Lokotchenko, and the head of the local company “Bashstroi,” also growing dissatisfaction due to inflation, air pollution, and the threat of floods. Despite efforts by the head of the republic, Khabirov, to maintain the stability through the infrastructure projects, his position has been weakened by the loss of business interests in Abkhazia.

The influence of the war against Ukraine increased in the region. The bomb shelters were shelters were started to build on order, and fake stories about “Ukrainian hacker transfers” were circulating. The general social picture was a growing disillusionment with the conditions, marked by uncoordinated but regular protest activity.

Humanitarian	0
Environmental	0
National	1
Criminal	0
Religious	0
"Special Military Operation" (SVO)	1
Socio-economic	-1
Socio-political	1

## Orenburg Region

Throughout the winter, discussions continued regarding about the flood in the region at the beginning of 2024, particularly concerning compensation and the responsibility of the authorities. Some facilities (such as the polyclinic and the “Rus” sanatorium) were restored, but the population remained dissatisfied with the lack of systemic changes. There weren’t the significant changes despite statements from the Ministry of Emergency Situations (MNS) and an inspection by the President's Administration’s control office. The last led to a wave of mistrust.

Suppression of dissent continued: three people were sentenced for “justifying terrorism,” including two residents of Orenburg — a woman to 5 years and a man to 12 years, as well as a citizen of a

Central Asian country. The telegram channel "Utyug," which criticized Russia's internal policies was repressed. Two its administrators were detained on charges of extortion.

Amidst rising social tension, there were several attacks on law enforcement officers. Meanwhile, acts of protest noticeably increased:

- Residents of Chebenki village protested against the closure of medical institutions;
- Orenburg city residents protested due to transportation issues and rising tariffs;
- Residents of Energetik village and Novotroitsk city protests against the reduction of medical infrastructure.

There was a mass poisoning at Gymnasium No. 4 of Orenburg on December of 2024. It was denied by the authorities caused public outrage.

Problems in the housing and utilities sector escalated. The company "Priroda" failed to remove garbage, leading to a rat infestation, and announced its exit from the Orenburg region. A conflict between this company and regional governor Pasler over tariffs led to a prolonged standoff until March. Large-scale corruption in road construction was uncovered — the CEO of "Orenburgremdorstroy" was detained, and a cartel conspiracy involving five companies operating in the region was announced.

Instability deepened due to personnel changes: Orenburg's mayor, Salmin, went off to the war against Ukraine, leaving his position to the first deputy, Obyedkov. Salmin was constantly criticized by residents, and his approval rating was among the lowest in Russia. Social media speculated that he "ran away" to avoid responsibility. Meanwhile, Pasler, despite belonging to the "united russia" too actively distanced himself from Salmin, publicly criticizing him.

Activity surrounding the war against Ukraine intensified. Numerous examples of mobilization, the returns from captivity, the formation of the evacuation points, and even the bomb shelter inspections were noted. Financial support for war participants was increased — 350,000 rubles each for 5,000 people. Instances of forced mobilization continued. For example, an Orenburg resident who was detained for selling a child.

Protests remain local and disorganized, with systemic opposition groups taking the initiative: the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF), "Fair Russia," and Ksenia Sobchak. Meanwhile, there was the noticeable fatigue from the inefficiency and the corruption in the region. According to estimates, the level of centrifugal processes in the region continues to moderately increase.

Humanitarian	1
Environmental	0
National	1
Criminal	0
Religious	0
"Special Military Operation" (SVO)	-1
Socio-economic	1
Socio-political	1

## **EASTERN SIBERIA**

### **Primorye**

In the period from December 2024 to March 2025, Primorsky and Khabarovsk regions experienced a number of incidents signaling an increase in repressive mechanisms and internal instability. In Velyki Kamen, the 16-year-old teenager set fire to the bank and attempted to set fire to an administrative building. In Komsomolsk-on-Amur, the local woman received a suspended sentence for attempting to set fire to a military enlistment office due to manipulations of the fraudsters. In Ussuriysk, the former contract soldier claimed to have been tortured at a military unit.

In Khabarovsk, the bust of Dzerzhinsky was erected, and journalist Mingazov was fined 700,000 rubles for "fake news" about Bucha. Former Governor Furgal was being persecuted continues in case of the creation of an organized criminal group.

On the economic front, the strategic enterprise "Dalpolimetal" extracting metals for the military industry, was brought under state control. At the same time, there was an ongoing demonstrative "fight against dishonest politicians" — the head of the local "United Russia" faction in Arsenyev was removed from office by the authorities.

Overall, the situation in the region was relatively controlled but shows signs of the systemic degradation and an increase in the repressive apparatus.

Humanitarian	-1
Environmental	0
National	0
Criminal	1
Religious	-1
"Special Military Operation" (SVO)	1
Socio-economic	-2
Socio-political	1

### **Kamchatka**

Kamchatka Krai faces a number of serious issues in housing and utilities, the economy, ecology, and politics. In the housing and utilities sector, seismic activity and the region's isolation lead to excessive resource exploitation, particularly geothermal water, which causes heating problems. 25% of the housing stock doesn't meet seismic safety standards, leading to numerous complaints. Power supply is also deteriorating due to outdated infrastructure. The economic situation is also difficult: budget deficits, rising unemployment, inflation, and declining purchasing power negatively impact the social conditions. Meanwhile, crime is on the rise, including murders and thefts.

Road infrastructure remains in critical condition, although the number of traffic accidents decreased due to partial road repairs. Environmental disasters, such as oil spills and accidents, made the situation in the environment worse. Kamchatka also experienced demographic decline, despite attempts to attract specialists through the national project "Demography."

An increase in repressive practices and the suppression of civil society is heightening social tensions. Overall, Kamchatka Krai continues to face challenges in all areas of life, particularly in resource management and addressing socio-economic issues.

Humanitarian	0
Environmental	0
National	0
Criminal	1
Religious	0
"Special Military Operation" (SVO)	1
Socio-economic	2
Socio-political	1

### **Sakhalin**

Key issues include the housing and utilities crisis, the collapse of transportation infrastructure, rolling power outages, and the downhill demographic situation. Some settlements were isolated leading to an increase in the traffic accidents and the supply disruptions due to snowdrifts and the inaction of the local authorities. Power and heating outages during the extreme cold spells caused the significant public dissatisfaction.

In this resource-rich region (including oil and coal), economic indicators were deteriorating: a decline in the extractive industry, agriculture, and transportation led to a reduction in real incomes, despite formally high wages. Inflation rose, and there was a crisis in consumer purchasing power.

Against this backdrop, emigration and mortality were increasing, especially in remote areas where medical assistance is lacking. The intensification of repression (including the case of 85-year-old human rights activist Mark Kuperman) and xenophobic actions against the migrants deepen social anxiety. The accident involving a Chinese ship highlights environmental risks and the lack of transparency in Russian-Chinese relations. The concealment of war casualties only exacerbates distrust in the authorities.

Humanitarian	0
Environmental	1
National	0
Criminal	0
Religious	0
"Special Military Operation" (SVO)	1
Socio-economic	2
Socio-political	1



## CAUCASUS

### Dagestan

From December 2024 to March 2025, the repressive campaign in Dagestan intensified under the pretext of combating terrorism. Against the backdrop of the ongoing persecution of the region's Muslim community, the authorities strengthened control over the information space. On December, and internet and the messengers were blocked for several days.

The FSB regularly reports on the "elimination of militants." Meanwhile, detainees are increasingly accused of preparing the terrorist attacks, such as the schoolboy Murad Kadirov or the imam of the village of Serebryakovka. Many detainees reported torture: Khalid Magomedov, a suspect in the case of attacks on religious institutions in June, claimed that FSB officers forced him to confess to the terrorism.

On the evening of February 14, a shootout occurred in Makhachkala, involving former deputy mayor of Makhachkala, Alibulat Magomedov, and his acquaintance Saypulakadi Magomedov. The cause of the shooting may have been a construction contract in the village of Khurik—the official allegedly was dissatisfied with the delay. Later, the individuals appeared at the police with a confession.

The number of cases related to "justifying terrorism," even through publications in messaging services grew. Streamer Khavier Yarmagomedov received the 7-year sentence for the broadcasting insulting the religious symbols.

On February 20, the Federal Agency for Nationalities Affairs (FADN) developed the amendments to the law "On the Guarantees of the Rights of Indigenous Minorities of the Russian Federation." The agency proposes depriving Dagestan of the right to independently determine the list of indigenous minorities living in the republic. Currently, it is the only region with such authority.

Dagestan was one of the Russian regions where medical institutions were most actively closed last year, according to The Moscow Times. District rural hospitals and maternity wards were the most frequently shut down.

Overall, there was a noticeable increase in the use of coercion, restrictions on freedom of expression, religious rights, and the use of the anti-religious rhetoric as a tool for political control. The situation indicates a systemic escalation of repression in Dagestan.

Humanitarian	-1
Environmental	2
National	3
Criminal	3
Religious	-1
"Special Military Operation" (SVO)	1
Socio-economic	0
Socio-political	-2

## North-Western Caucasus

The winter of 2024/2025 in the North-Western Caucasus was marked by an ecological disaster that occurred on the Black Sea coast of Krasnodar Krai. Just before the New Year, two tankers carrying a fuel oil were wrecked. The efforts to mitigate the consequences of the disaster divided society into two camps. These were volunteers self-organized and tried to do everything they could to mitigate the effects of the catastrophe, and the authorities turned the fight against the environmental disaster into another publicity stunt and a festival of lies. The growing self-organization of the active part of the local community and its confrontation with the cynicism and dishonesty of the local administration in the long term create favorable conditions for destabilizing the situation in the region.

On the other hand, there are the so-called Cossack communities. Their task is to accumulate the active and ambitious youth within their ranks. Various Cossack organizations guide the youth through all stages of the "patriotic education," offering career advancement through law enforcement structures. In exchange, loyalty to the authorities and the devotion to the imperial system are instilled in the younger generation. A numerous number of the loyal system supporters was educated by this way. However, in the medium and long term, the future of the "Cossacks" remains unclear. Will they remain loyal to the authorities, or will they become a center of destabilization within the society?

Humanitarian	1
Environmental	1
National	-1
Criminal	1
Religious	-1
"Special Military Operation" (SVO)	1
Socio-economic	1
Socio-political	1

## NORTH-WEST

### Republic of Komi

The winter period of 2024–2025 in Komi was marked by the transportation difficulties due to heavy snowfalls, the destruction of the old housing stock, and the critical infrastructure degradation.

The newly appointed governor, Rostislav Goldstein, initiated the personnel purges among officials, criticizing their inactivity.

Despite salary and pension indexing, the region continues to decline. The inflation rose, the population shrink, and youth outflow increased. Komi remains one of the main suppliers of mobilized troops for the war against Ukraine—through the financial incentives and the significant losses among the indigenous population. The republic shows signs of the systemic degradation against the backdrop of its natural wealth (the region hosts production facilities for corporations such as Lukoil, Gazprom, Transneft, and Vorkutaugol).

Humanitarian	0
Environmental	0
National	0
Criminal	0
Religious	0
"Special Military Operation" (SVO)	1
Socio-economic	1
Socio-political	1

## **Karelia**

The winter of 2024/2025 in Karelia passed under patriotic slogans, which the authorities used attempting to cover up their failures in housing and utilities (HCU) and the environmental issues. December in the region began with the bankruptcy of an entire district—Muyezerky. It turned out that all the fees had been collected in advance, and the budget for the winter period was significantly deficient. As a result, direct administration was established in the district, and its budget was replenished from the republican and federal levels. The republic's authorities tried to overshadow the situation in Muyezerky by using the patriotic slogans, calls for mobilization to the war against Ukraine, and even organizing the parade of supposedly captured military equipment. In the Republic, the propaganda potential of "imperial grandeur," inflated by the wave of the aggressive war against Ukraine, is exploited fully. Meanwhile, local activists from the town of Kaalmo wrote a complaint to the Investigative Committee demanding the restoration of their water supply. The head of the Investigative Committee, Putin's friend Alexander Bastrykin, personally took up the case. This case is symbolic — when the high authority deals with the local water supply issues. It vividly demonstrates how Putin's friends and regime lackeys become the last hope for the ordinary citizens to chain the local "boyars" who have completely lost their way.

In the region, the struggle continues to preserve the unique recreational zones of the region. The environmental movement in Karelia is the most active and remains the only opposition to the occupation regime, as all active national forces have been suppressed and now primarily operate in exile. The local opposition information space was especially marked regarding the XII Bandera Readings, which took place in early February in Kyiv, where representatives of the local national movement participated. Meanwhile, the peace in the region is disrupted by the Kremlin regime itself. In one of his interviews, Putin's assistant Nikolai Patrushev again spoke about the "war crimes of fascist Finland" during World War II. A threat to the Finland's statehood lies in the comparison of its current situation to that which supposedly prevailed in the country on the eve of the Soviet-Finnish war. The official Kremlin frequently made such statements before taking aggressive actions against its neighbor.

Humanitarian	-1
Environmental	2
National	-1
Criminal	0
Religious	0
"Special Military Operation" (SVO)	1
Socio-economic	2
Socio-political	-1

## WESTERN SIBERIA

The winter in Siberia was marked by an increase in the repression, the social tension, and the environmental issues. In the Tomsk region, the government raised the payment for contracts with the Ministry of Defense to 1 million rubles, indicating the difficulties in the recruitment. Regional governors stopped publishing data on the fallen, and in Barnaul, the anniversary of Navalny's death was commemorated.

In Yakutsk, direct mayoral elections were canceled, and in Tomsk, residents demanded the resignation of the current mayor. In Novosibirsk, teenagers were sentenced for sabotage, in Krasnoyarsk were the repressions against "AllatRa," and in Tomsk was the sentence for erotic anime.

The situation with medicines remained critical. Several regions faced the insulin shortage, even for children. In Irkutsk, there was a protest against tariffs, and in Tomsk and Novosibirsk were the protests to preserve historical architecture. At the same time, the authorities promoted the "traditional values" and militarizing children's events.

Microplastics was detected in the atmosphere of Western Siberia, and rivers were polluted by the extractive industries. The real estate market in Novosibirsk was in a crisis.

Siberia showed increasing tension: the local resistance is growing, though it remained scattered. The region was caught between stability maintained by the repressions the and civil restless.

Humanitarian	1
Environmental	1
National	0
Criminal	1
Religious	0
"Special Military Operation" (SVO)	2
Socio-economic	1
Socio-political	2

## CONCLUSIONS

In all regions of Russia, the economic and demographic situations became worse. Inflation, rising unemployment, and economic stagnation were significantly narrowing opportunities and prospects for the population. On the other hand, the authorities urged people to mobilize for the aggressive war against Ukraine.

However, the number of willing to die in Ukraine, even for large sums of money, decreased. Under these circumstances, the Kremlin tried to combine a carrot and a stick. On one hand, the payments for the participation in the war were constantly increasing. While on the other hand, forced mobilization was practiced, mainly among the socially unreliable groups like prisoners.

The rising number of casualties in the war and declining standard of living escalating the situation increasingly, creating a fertile ground for the protests. The authorities are attempting to suppress protest potential through repression. But this will only make the situation worse and it will radicalize opposition to the government without addressing the root causes of the problem.

The situation has been already escalated in problem regions, and one of them for the Russian authorities is undoubtedly the Caucasus. In quieter corners of the empire, the authorities are still managing to keep the situation under control, often using the patriotic slogans for this purpose. The authorities are trying to consolidate the population in the context of war, but this is a dangerous game, as the growing casualties could, in fact, turn war into a catalyst for unrest. In regions close to Ukraine, the intensification of drone attacks or the use of heavier weaponry could act as a catalyst for public upheaval.

Protest potential exists in Russia. It only needs a spark to ignite it.

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