

Monitoring of Regional Processes in the Russian Federation: Spring 2025

The non-governmental analytical center Ukrainian Studies of Strategic Disquisitions continues its long-term project of the regional processes monitoring in the Russian Federation.

The aim of the study is to record and identify the dynamics of the conflictogenic factors within the Russian Federation. These factors will contribute to the deconstruction of Russian Federation and its disappearance as a geopolitical reality.

The object of monitoring is the information space of the Russian Federation. The most popular news from various Russian regions is analyzed quarterly, which provides the demonstration of the internal processes taking place on the territory of the aggressor state. This allows to monitor the conflictogenic regional processes.



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

CENTRAL REGION

Moscow Region

The situation in the region during the spring period is marked by the intensification of the authoritarian practices, the socio-humanitarian degradation, and the environmental discontent. All of this make the groundwork for potential destabilization. Heightened pressure on independent media, blocking of the Amnesty International, expansion of the “foreign agent” status, and the systemic repression of the political prisoners point to an attempt to completely eliminate the legal space for opposition.

Socio-economic tensions are rising due to deepening demographic crisis, the sanctions pressure, and the conflicts between state propaganda and the interests of youth, the students, and a small business. Particular dissatisfaction is caused by the militarization of the education and the restrictions on the migrants.

The religious sphere is also becoming militarized — the church is turning into a tool of political propaganda. A hostile campaign against Catholics and Greek Catholics is gaining momentum.

Environmental issues are emerging as a new source of the public resistance: the protests against mass culling of animals, the activist raids in Moscow, the spontaneous public gatherings near administrative buildings, and conflicts over the development of green areas. This is one of the few areas that unites the broad segments of the population — even those who are not politically active.

All of this contributes to a growing reservoir of protest potential, which could be activated by an external or an internal catalyst.

Marker	March	April	May
Socio-political	-3	-1	-2
Socio-economic	-1	0	0
Religious	-2	0	-1
Humanitarian	2	0	2
Environmental	2	1	-1
Military	1	2	2
National	0	0	0

Bryansk Region

The situation in the Bryansk region reflects a classic combination of military, economic, and demographic tensions that create conditions for regional destabilization. Constant shelling from Ukraine (up to 102 drones at a time) not only damages infrastructure but also strikes symbolically important targets — including the home of well-known local propagandist Alexander Bolshunov’s family and defense industry enterprises. The region’s total losses — over 660 servicemen in the spring alone — are fueling war fatigue, Especially this is happening among the residents of the border areas, where the public complaints about the authorities are increasingly frequent on the social media, despite ongoing censorship and blocking.

The demographic situation is critical: authorities are directly encouraging the underage births. The law banning “incitement to abortion” is being introduced from the 1st of September. This provokes public resistance and deepens the divide between the state’s agenda and the actual needs of the population.

The economic situation is rapidly deteriorating. Prices for basic food products (potatoes +180%, cabbage +58%) and utilities (+10%) are rising amid the high inflation (10.89%), which locals believe is underreported. Fuel price hikes and the forced transition of the taxi drivers to the domestically produced vehicles are further fueling the public dissatisfaction.

Marker	March	April	May
Socio-political	-1	0	-2
Socio-economic	-1	-1	-2
Religious	1	1	2
Humanitarian	1	1	-1
Environmental	0	0	1
Military	-1	-2	-2
National	-1	-1	1

NATIONAL REGIONS OF THE EUROPEAN PART OF RUSSIA

Orenburg

The situation in the Orenburg region in the spring of 2025 demonstrates the chronic governance crisis, growing pockets of resistance, and the attempts by Moscow to place the region under tighter control. The replacement of Governor Pasler with a “varangian” from occupied Donetsk — Yevgeny Sontsev, formal head of the government of so called DPR. Sontsev blamed the problems on his predecessor and promoted the elimination of some of them: resolving the waste crisis, the restoration of facilities after the floods. Sontsev dissolved the regional government, a number of its representatives followed Pasler.

Increased pressure in the Orenburg region was implemented by the Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation, the police and the FSB. The Investigative Committee of the Russian Federation intrusively pressured the local authorities of the region due to minor local problems (attacks by the dogs, the closure of a school). The police and the FSB imprisoned many residents of the region for: swearing and throwing glass objects at police officers, criticizing the georgian ribbon on social networks, supporting Ukraine on social networks and the illegal possession of weapons, the attempt of the terrorist attack on the railway, damaging symbols of power on the fence of the presidential cadet school, the actions of 2 Russian citizens in connection with an attempt to leave and fight for Ukraine.

The war against Ukraine had the double effect: on the one hand there were the drones, the explosions, the panic, the forced mobilization. On the other there were public support from part of the population, encouraged by Putin’s awards and tax benefits from Sontstev. Against this backdrop, the regional system is being held together, but cracks are already visible including due to the public dissatisfaction by the pollution of the region and the subsequent corruption scandals involving the local government officials.

Marker	March	April	May
Socio-political	0	-1	2
Socio-economic	2	0	0
Religious	0	0	0
Humanitarian	0	0	0
Environmental	0	0	0
Military	-2	0	1
National	0	0	0

Bashkortostan

The situation in Bashkortostan in the spring of 2025 is marked by a systemic escalation of social conflict, which is gradually taking on the characteristics of a prolonged crisis. Protest activity has intensified primarily in the form of mass demonstrations in the Abezilovsky district against mineral development on the Kirkty-tau ridge. There is approximately 90% support in some villages both on social networks and physically: through the numerous gatherings and meetings with the local authorities. Since January, the activity of the "Sterlitamak, breathe!" movement against the construction of a landfill in the city has been increasing. There are also individual manifestations of disobedience, such as speeches: anti-Russian blogger Rustam Absalyamov and in support of the defendants from Baymak by activist Buranbai Askarov.

At the same time there was wave of political repression including the prison sentences for marked bloggers and for financing of the Ukrainian religious organization. There was the financial purge by the liquidation of the last local bank. Corruption scandals (the arrest of officials from the city authorities of Birsik and Ufa, the Federal Penitentiary Service) and the resignation of the Minister of Internal Affairs Pryadko tarnish the image of local and federal authorities.

Social tensions are growing due to the air pollution and the explosion at the factory in Salavat city, the floods, the road collapses, and the government's ineffective response to this.

The negative impact of the war on the residents of Bashkortostan was also growing. UAVs are flying into the region more often, causing a fire on the oil refineries. Authorities denied to pay for the veterans of the war against Ukraine for the Russian Federation. Meanwhile, the largest number of people in the war among the regions of the Russian Federation are from Bashkortostan. Also, 5 conditionally volunteer military formations were formed in Bashkortostan and workers from the region were sent to work in the occupied territories of the Luhansk region.

Despite attempts by the authorities to promote themselves through the cultural projects or the education reforms, negativity to the regime is increasing. The social preconditions for broader protests are already in place.

Marker	March	April	May
Socio-political	1	-2	1
Socio-economic	3	0	2
Religious	0	0	0
Humanitarian	-1	-2	0
Environmental	0	0	0
Military	3	0	-1
National	0	1	0

Chuvashia

The situation in Chuvashia in the spring of 2025 reflects deep everyday and moral discontent. It hasn't transformed into open protest activity yet but is gaining momentum through the public dissatisfaction and the distrust of the authorities. One of the main irritants has been utility tariffs — against a backdrop of the absence of a hot water, heating, and the poor service quality. Outrage on social media turned into the public humiliation of the authorities, which forced them to prematurely end the heating season — without actually solving any of the underlying problems.

The military aspect of destabilization is expressed in the widespread dissatisfaction of so-called “veterans” of the war against Ukraine, particularly regarding the non-payments, the neglect, the

assistance lack, and the societal contempt. There was also a noted conflict between the real veterans and the fake figures promoted by the media for the future political advancement. This is causing the particular frustration even among the military correspondents, who openly speak of a betrayal of the frontline soldiers' interests.

Institutional distrust is being deepened by the corruption scandals. Firstly the case of Ladykov Jr., who committed yet another fatal traffic accident became a focal point of the public anger, especially due to his high-ranking background. Some officials, trying to escape accountability, are going to the front — using it as a kind of “indulgence.”

Against this backdrop, a muted but widespread dissatisfaction was forming, spreading both in the online spaces and during the private conversations. The potential for local protests is on the verge of breaking out.

Marker	March	April	May
Socio-political	-1	1	1
Socio-economic	1	2	1
Religious	0	0	0
Humanitarian	1	0	0
Environmental	1	2	2
Military	0	1	1
National	0	0	0

Karelia

In Karelia, the main destabilizing factor the situation continues was the environmental issues. The region faced the growing problems with the drinking water. The authorities managed to temporarily suppress protests over the illegal construction in the recreational areas, but these protests are likely to intensify again.

The negative economic situation had a significant impact on public sentiment. Inflation in the region was breaking all possible records, yet the authorities tirelessly claimed that the situation remains under a control. There were precedents of localities going “bankrupt” during the winter. This could happen again. If the regional authorities fail to properly prepare for a winter and this affects the municipal infrastructure, it could trigger a serious crisis.

At the same time, the authorities are trying to distract the population with the chauvinistic propaganda, which is unfolding against the backdrop of the militarization of the region.

The national movement has mostly been driven underground and manifests itself only through activities abroad, carried out in the form of the cultural events or the information campaigns; for example, in Kyiv, a memorandum of cooperation was signed between the Karelian and Ukrainian nationalists. Meanwhile, the pro-Moscow occupation authorities of Karelia have signed a memorandum of cooperation with the terrorist organization known as the DPR.

Marker	March	April	May
Socio-political	-2	-1	-1
Socio-economic	1	0	1
Religious	0	0	0
Humanitarian	1	0	2
Environmental	3	2	2

Military	1	2	1
National	2	1	2

SOUTH

Dagestan

The overall system of local governance was destabilized.

In Dagestan, there was a noticeable intensification of the repressions, with ongoing trials related to the previous incidents, including persecution by the occupiers for alleged participation in actions against the Russian Federation during the Chechen wars. There was the clear trend toward destabilization — with regular direct shootouts involving “extremists” at the same time. The fight against extremism was pushing the authorities to the reckless measures, such as the inspection of the women wearing niqabs. This may provoke the resistance from the radical Islamists and only further destabilize an already tense region.

Another significant destabilizing factors were the continued mobilization of the population for the aggressive war against Ukraine, and on the other hand, the issue of compensation for its veterans.

Land conflicts are also escalating against a backdrop of national tensions and the lobbying efforts of “SMO veterans” (particularly in the Aukh district, bordering Chechnya). Often these veterans of a war unwanted in the region competed for the land plots with the large families, further discrediting the war in the eyes of the locals and potentially igniting a major conflict.

Marker	April	May
Socio-political	+2	-1
Socio-economic		
Religious	-1	
Humanitarian	-2	
Environmental		+3
Military		
National		-2

Kuban

The occupation authorities are well aware of the risks associated with the national movements' activities of the oppressed peoples. So authorities undertook preventive measures. Repressions were carried out against the local activists, the national community leaders, and the religious groups. Governors appointed from Moscow, along with the local collaborators, are working to weaken the alternative foreign centers of the influence in the region and to completely suppress the local activism. This is done through the activists' intimidation of the fabricated extremism cases and through the crackdowns on the migration.

For Ukraine, the current situation in the region presents an opportunity in the context of ideological confrontation against the Kremlin narratives in the Arab countries. Official Kyiv can disseminate information about the repression of Muslims and ethnic groups who practice Islam in Russia. Publicizing these issues could deal a significant blow to the Kremlin's image in the Arab world, which has traditionally responded strongly to any oppression of Muslims around the globe.

Marker	March	April	May
Socio-political	2	2	1
Socio-economic	0	0	1
Religious	0	3	1
Humanitarian	1	1	0
Environmental	2	2	0
Military	-1	-1	-1
National	0	3	2

FAR EAST

Kamchatka

Monitoring of the local media and other sources indicates a growing accumulation of the critical problems in all sphere of the region's life. One of the key indicators of the destabilization was the worsening access to the basic medical services. This included the shortages of medicines in rural pharmacies and cases where discounted medications were provided only after the personal appeals to the authorities.

The economic situation deteriorated: the collapse of the mortgage sector, strikes over wage arrears (16 million rubles), and the suspension of public transport in Vilyuchinsk. Social tension rose against the backdrop of high prices and restrictions on locals' access to their own resources (for example, caviar).

Infrastructure collapse was also evident: flooding and the destroyed roads, the dismissals of officials linked to corruption in the road sector.

Political repression continued: the arrest of the "Yabloko" party leader for an online comment, and pressure on dissenters. The authorities actively redirected public attention to the military topics (the FSB raids, the patriotic games) and the xenophobic campaigns (the targeting migrants and mosques).

The crime situation is worsening due to the alcoholism and the drug-related crime among military personnel. An ecological disaster (oil spills, predatory fishing) was encouraging contact between the wildlife and humans.

Marker	March	April	May
Humanitarian	1	2	1
Environmental	1	1	0
National	-1	-2	0
Criminogenic	1	1	1
Religious	1	-1	0
«SMO»	-1	-2	-1
Socio-economic	1	1	1
Socio-political	-1	1	1

Sakhalin

The situation in the region during the spring of 2025 demonstrated the systemic governance failures, the critical infrastructure degradation, and the strengthening of the authoritarian practices.

Despite its energy potential, Sakhalin ranks second in Russia for the highest gasoline prices. This caused social tension and transportation restrictions. A fire at the oil refinery, the massive oil spills, 120 recorded fires, and the pollution of the water area indicate the regional environmental disaster.

Infrastructure problems became especially noticeable including the road collapses, the railway stoppages, the ferry queues lasting over a month, and detected the defects on the airport runways. Humanitarian conditions are worsening — rats attacked residential areas, the food prices are rising, the communication outages were recorded, and the chocolate prices reach 2,000 rubles per kilogram.

The socio-political situation was unstable. There were the increased control over migrants, the xenophobic raids, and the involvement of children in the militaristic performances. Against this backdrop, the regional governor personally made illegal visits to occupied territories, delivering the equipment to the military. The high-profile case of the voluntary surrender ended with a 15-year sentence. Crime rates in certain districts rose, including serious crimes, which have increased by 12.1%.

The region increasingly shows signs of isolation: the General Prosecutor's Office designated international organizations as undesirable. This only exacerbated the tensions against the backdrop of the geographic proximity to Japan and South Korea.

Marker	March	April	May
Humanitarian	0	1	1
Environmental	1	1	1
National	-1	-1	0
Criminogenic	0	1	1
Religious	0	0	0
«SMO»	-1	-2	-1
Socio-economic	1	2	1
Socio-political	-1	-2	0

CONCLUSIONS

Spring 2025 demonstrated a deepening systemic socio-economic and demographic crisis across all regions of the Russian Federation. Inflation, unemployment, infrastructure degradation, and rising prices for basic services are creating an 'hopelessness' atmosphere, especially in the periphery. Demographic depletion is compounded by the coercive mobilization practices primarily targeting socially vulnerable groups — the prisoners, the low-income populations, and the residents of the depressed regions. The number of willing to fight was steadily declining despite the financial incentives.

The rising death toll, the neglect of veterans and the unpaid compensations increasingly demoralized both the Russian society and the military. Against this backdrop, the authorities resort to the targeted repressions, the propaganda campaigns, and the mobilization through fear. But these measures are insufficient to neutralize the growing protest sentiments.

In the regions bordering Ukraine (notably Bryansk), drone strikes of the military and symbolic targets were creating the instability atmosphere. National republics (such as Bashkortostan) demonstrated not only dissatisfaction but organized opposition, including the environmental and ethnic protests.

Currently, the authorities still manage to contain the situation in the center through the repressive apparatus, the information censorship, and the cult of “war as the unifying force.” However, this mechanism was worn out. Under the current conditions only a single strong impulse is enough for the smoldering unrest to turn into the open crisis.

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