

Russia Says Captured Key Water Supply Route to Crimea

By [AFP](#)

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People on a bridge over Northern Crimean Canal in the town of Armyansk. **Sergei Malgavko / TASS**

Russian forces invading Ukraine said they had taken control of a vital canal to supply water to Moscow-annexed Crimea, which has been suffering from shortages for the past eight years.

Crimea received most of its water from Ukraine's Dnieper River via the North Crimean Canal until 2014, when Moscow annexed the peninsula and Kyiv authorities blocked the waterway.

Since then, Crimea has been facing severe water shortages, especially during summer droughts. The canal blockade has affected agriculture on the peninsula.

"The joint use of raid detachments and airborne troops in the Crimean direction ensured the exit of Russian troops to the city of Kherson," defense ministry spokesman Igor Konashenkov said Thursday.

"This made it possible to unblock the North Crimean Canal and restore water supply to the

Crimean peninsula."

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On Friday, Crimean Governor Sergey Aksyonov said he inspected the canal, adding that it could take at least two weeks for it to become operational.

"There are issues that will take some time to resolve," he said on social media, adding that part of the canal bed in Ukraine had been overgrown with forests.

"The clean-up work will take about two weeks," he added.

"The main thing is that there is an understanding that Crimea will have water, and this will not create any problems for the residents of the Kherson region" in Ukraine.

Russian President Vladimir Putin announced the start of a major military operation in Ukraine in the early hours of Thursday.

Western countries have imposed a barrage of international sanctions against Russia since the attack was launched.

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