

Ukraine City Mariupol Tries Again to Evacuate Civilians

By [AFP](#)

March 06, 2022



If Russian forces succeed in capturing Mariupol which held out against rebel forces in the previous 2014 conflict, they will control Ukraine's entire Azov Sea coast. **UNIAN**

The Ukrainian port city of Mariupol, which is surrounded by Russian troops, said it will restart efforts to evacuate civilians Sunday, after earlier efforts were scuppered by ceasefire violations.

"From 1200 (1000 GMT) the evacuation of the civilian population begins," city officials announced in a statement, which said a ceasefire was agreed with Russian-led forces surrounding the city.

An earlier attempt on Saturday to allow civilians to leave by buses and private cars along the road northwest towards Zaporizhzhia failed when both sides accused the other of shelling.

According to aid agency Doctors Without Borders (MSF) the humanitarian situation in

Mariupol, a key target for the Russian invasion forces, is "catastrophic" with no power or water in civilian homes.

"It is imperative that this humanitarian corridor ... is put in place very quickly," MSF's emergency coordinator in Ukraine, Laurent Ligozat, told AFP.

Ukrainian authorities accuse the Russians of shelling even when civilians were gathering to form an escape convoy, but Moscow's defense ministry accuses the city's defenders of exploiting a "human shield."

Separately, on Sunday, the head of Kyiv-controlled Luhansk regional administration, said a train would be organized to evacuate women, children and the elderly from Lysychansk.

Lysychansk is near the frontline between Ukrainian forces and Moscow-backed separatists, who are fighting to link up with the Russian forces and control the entire southeast.

"You need to reach Lysychansk station on your own. Women with children are boarding first, then women under 40, women, the elderly," Sergiy Gaiday wrote on Telegram.

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This would give them a landbridge from Russia to Russian-annexed Crimea and an important supply route and port if they decide to push north in a bid to take all of eastern Ukraine.

Original url:

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