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Ukrainian Cell Service Cut Off in Russian-Occupied Kherson

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Two Russian soldiers patrol an administrative area at the Khersonvodokanal (water channel) in Kherson, south Ukraine. **AP Photo / TASS**

Ukrainian cell service has been cut off in the country's southern Kherson region, Russian state media reported Tuesday, as Moscow continues to cement its presence in occupied territories.

Russian SIM cards were apparently unaffected by the latest outage Monday, which Ukrainian and Russian-installed officials in Kherson both blamed on each other.

"The connection works, but only the Russian connection now," an unnamed Moscow-appointed official in the area told Russia's state-run news agency TASS.

The outage comes days after Kherson and the occupied area of neighboring Zaporizhzhia switched from Ukraine's +380 to Russia's +7 telephone area code Friday.

Russian state television in annexed Crimea, which shares a land border with Kherson, reported Tuesday that lines stretching "kilometers" had formed outside cellphone stores in

the occupied city, as locals gathered to buy Russian SIM cards.

Moscow-appointed official Kirill Stremousov said earlier that three Russian mobile operators would soon appear in Kherson, the latest sign of the occupied region's "Russification."

Russian forces captured Kherson soon after invading Ukraine in late February, installing pro-Moscow "military-civilian administrations" and introducing Russian currency, media and internet services.

Several Russian and pro-Moscow local officials have signaled in recent weeks that occupied territories in southern and eastern Ukraine will be annexed by Russia.

One-fifth of Ukrainian territory — including annexed Crimea, Donbas, and parts of the Kharkiv, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions captured during the 2022 invasion — is currently under Russian occupation, according to Forbes Ukraine.

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