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Moscow Accuses Ukraine of 'Ecocide' in Occupied Regions

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Russian-occupied Mariupol. **Arthur Novosiltsev / Moskva News Agency**

Russia has accused Kyiv of committing environmental crimes in the Ukrainian territories that its troops currently occupy, including soil contamination caused by exploding artillery shells, the state-run TASS news agency reported.

Moscow said it will begin collecting evidence of Ukraine's "ecocidal violations" in the Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions, which it claims to have annexed last September, compiling them into a so-called "White Book."

"We want to record where ecosystems have been destroyed and compile it as a collection," deputy head of Russia's Natural Resources Ministry Konstantin Tsyganov said at an environmental conference in Rostov-on-Don on Thursday.

"We are starting the work this year, and from next year onwards, we will fill this White Book with details," the official added.

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Russian authorities claim that shells used by the Ukrainian army have led to “colossal” contamination of the soil with zinc, phosphorus and lead, as well as habitat loss in areas that have witnessed fighting.

"Military actions from the Ukrainian side result in ecocide in this territory, but Russia will restore soils, forests, water bodies and improve the environmental situation in the Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics, as well as in the Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions," said Elena Zlenko, a former senator from Russia's upper-chamber Federation Council who is now involved in environmental issues.

Moscow also blames Ukraine for the June 6 destruction of a Kakhovka dam, which caused devastating floods and forced thousands to flee.

But Kyiv says Russian troops blew up the Soviet-era dam on the Dnipro River, describing its destruction as "ecocide."

An earlier version of this article incorrectly stated that Zlenko is currently a member of the Federation Council.

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