

Moscow Claims Ukraine Poisoned Head of Occupied Luhansk Region

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Lieutenant General Igor Kirillov. **Russian Defense Ministry**

Russia's Defense Ministry on Monday [accused](#) Kyiv of trying to poison the Kremlin-backed head of eastern Ukraine's occupied Luhansk region Leonid Pasechnik.

“Pasechnik was severely poisoned with phenolic compounds on Dec. 5, 2023,” said the head of the Russian Defense Ministry’s radiation, chemical and biological protection forces, Igor Kirillov.

Phenol is a chemical compound used in various industrial processes, such as the production of plastics, pharmaceuticals, and disinfectants, and it can be toxic in high concentrations.

Kirillov’s claims, made as part of a larger statement accusing Kyiv and its Western allies of using toxic chemicals on and off the battlefield, could not be verified.

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However, on Dec. 11, less than a week after his alleged poisoning, Pasechnik was [shown](#) at a press conference in Moscow and appeared healthy.

Dozens of high-profile backers of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and Moscow-installed officials have been targeted in poisoning attempts, shootings and car bombings since President Vladimir Putin ordered the invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

Kirillov said investigations were ongoing into alleged poisonings against other Kremlin-backed officials in occupied Ukraine.

In addition to Pasechnik, he named Vladimir Saldo, who has governed the occupied territories of southern Ukraine's Kherson region since April 2022, as the target of poisoning in August 2022.

The Luhansk and Kherson regions are two of four Ukrainian regions Russia claims to have annexed in the fall of 2022.

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