

Mariupol Theater Destroyed in Russian Siege Reopens After Reconstruction

December 29, 2025



A reopening ceremony at Mariupol Drama Theatre on Dec. 28, 2025. **Denis Pushilin / Telegram**

A theater destroyed in one of the most notorious attacks of Russia's siege of Mariupol in early 2022 has reopened following reconstruction, Russian authorities said Sunday, as the Kremlin continues efforts to showcase reconstruction in occupied Ukrainian territory.

State television broadcast footage of a reopening ceremony featuring performers from Mariupol and St. Petersburg, showing the theater's rebuilt marble staircase and columns, as well as a 2.5-ton crystal chandelier hanging in the auditorium.

"The Mariupol Drama Theatre has reopened its doors to spectators," said Denis Pushilin, the Moscow-backed leader of the eastern Donetsk region, in a statement. He said the theater's "historic image" had been restored alongside the installation of modern equipment.

Authorities had initially said the reopening would take place last Wednesday, which passed without any announcements. It was not immediately clear why the event was moved to Sunday.

Russian forces captured Mariupol, a major port city on the Sea of Azov, in the early months of their full-scale invasion of Ukraine, subjecting it to a nearly three-month siege that left much of the city destroyed and thousands dead.

Human Rights Watch estimated at least 8,000 civilian deaths, while the city's exiled Ukrainian municipal council has put the toll at more than 22,000.

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During the siege, the Mariupol Drama Theatre was hit in a Russian airstrike. The Associated Press [reported](#) that up to 600 people were killed in the attack, which Russian authorities blamed on Ukrainian forces.

Amnesty International [confirmed](#) that at least 12 people were killed, but said many more likely died, noting the bombing occurred despite visible signs indicating civilians were sheltering inside the building.

St. Petersburg played a major role in the reconstruction of the theater, sending workers and architects to Mariupol. Governor Alexander Beglov, who attended Sunday's reopening, [called](#) the project "a question of honor."

According to the St. Petersburg news outlet Bumaga, up to 13 billion rubles (\$169 million) were [estimated](#) to have been spent on the theater's reconstruction from a local government foundation.

The UN has said around 90% of Mariupol's buildings were damaged or destroyed during the Russian siege in early 2022, and roughly 300,000 residents fled the city from a pre-war population of about 540,000.

Since capturing Mariupol, Russia has sought to present it as a symbol of reconstruction in Ukrainian territories under its control.

AFP contributed reporting.

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