

'THERE ARE AND CAN BE NO CHANGES'

At 05:00 Moscow time on 11 November 2022 Russia's Ministry of Defence completed the withdrawal of its forces from Kherson to the left bank of the Dnipro. Hours later the Kremlin said the region's status as 'a subject of the Russian Federation' was fixed in law and could not change. The same day Ukrainian forces entered the city. One claim, the record, and what it concedes.

UKRAINE EVIDENCE HUB
VERIFIED RECORD

NOV 2022

143

UN member states that called the 'referendums' invalid and the attempted annexation unlawful, 12 Oct 2022 (5 against, 35 abstentions)

A

UN General Assembly resolution ES-11/4 (GA/12458)

30 days

between that vote and the Russian withdrawal from Kherson, 12 Oct – 11 Nov 2022 B

UN GA/12458; Russian MoD, 11 Nov 2022

30,000+

Russian servicemen withdrawn from the right bank, by Russia's own count C

Russian MoD, 11 Nov 2022 (via Meduza)

9

torture chambers found in liberated Kherson region by 24 Nov 2022 B

Office of the Prosecutor General, 24 Nov 2022

BOTTOM LINE

The law says otherwise. 143 states in the General Assembly declared the September 2022 'referendums' without validity and called on all states not to recognise any alteration of the region's status (ES-11/4, 12 Oct 2022).

The 'status' rested on the army. Russia's claim held only where its forces stood; when they left the right bank on 11 November, Russian administration of the city ended the same day.

What the withdrawal uncovered. Within two weeks investigators found nine torture chambers in the liberated part of the region (Prosecutor General, 24 Nov 2022).

THE 1 CLAIMS

Dmitry Peskov, Kremlin
spokesman · 11 Nov 2022

"It is a subject of the Russian Federation; this status is defined and fixed in law. There are and can be no changes here."

False under
international law

WHAT WE ASK

Answer every 'status' claim with ES-11/4 and the date Russian forces left Kherson · keep non-recognition in every text on the occupied regions · demand access for the UN Commission of Inquiry and HRMMU to civilians held from Kherson region.



WHO SAID IT, WHERE, AND TO WHOM

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Where each claim was made, who made it, how the others in the room answered, and what the statements left out.

THE OCCASION AND THE RECORD

Occasion	Russian forces complete the withdrawal from Kherson city and the right bank of the Dnipro (Russian MoD: 05:00 Moscow time, 11 Nov 2022)
Where the claim was made	Kremlin press call, 11 Nov 2022, as reported by Interfax (via Meduza, 09:24) and AFP

THE SPEAKERS

Dmitry Peskov	Press secretary of the President of the Russian Federation	Said on 11 Nov 2022 that Kherson region 'is a subject of the Russian Federation' and that 'there are and can be no changes'
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WHAT OTHERS SAID

UN General Assembly	143 in favour of ES-11/4 (12 Oct 2022): the 'referendums' and attempted annexation have no validity; no alteration of status to be recognised.
UN Secretary-General	Any annexation of the four regions 'would have no legal value and deserves to be condemned' (29 Sep 2022).
European Union	European Council, 30 Sep 2022: 'firmly reject and unequivocally condemn the illegal annexation'; will 'never recognise' the 'referenda'.
G7	Foreign ministers, 30 Sep 2022: 'We will never recognise these purported annexations, nor the sham "referenda" conducted at gunpoint.'
Voted against ES-11/4	Belarus, DPRK, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, Syria.

WHAT THE STATEMENTS LEFT OUT

- That the 'status' had been rejected by 143 UN member states a month earlier (ES-11/4).
- That Russia's own Ministry of Defence had announced the withdrawal from the city hours before.

HOW IT TRAVELS

The quote was carried by Russian news agencies (Interfax) on the morning of the withdrawal and repeated in international wire reporting (AFP). It restated the line of the 'accession' ceremony of 30 September 2022, held two weeks before the General Assembly vote.

Sources: Interfax via Meduza, 11 Nov 2022 · AFP via The New Arab, 11 Nov 2022 · Ukrainska Pravda, 11 Nov 2022 · UN press release GA/12458 (ES-11/4), 12 Oct 2022 · UN Secretary-General, 29 Sep 2022 · European Council and G7, 30 Sep 2022 · Office of the Prosecutor General, 24 Nov 2022 · Ukraine Evidence Hub, Kherson, November 2022 dossier

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V1 · 27 OCT 2026



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CLAIM, RECORD, CONCESSION

Each claim as made, with the date, the venue and a link; the record it runs into, with the tier of the evidence; and what it concedes. Words in square brackets are the Hub's.

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CLAIM 1 · DMITRY PESKOV, KREMLIN SPOKESMAN · 11 NOV 2022

“It is a subject of the Russian Federation; this status is defined and fixed in law. There are and can be no changes here.”

Interfax via Meduza, 11 Nov 2022, 09:24; AFP

meduza.io/news/2022/11/11/zdes-net-i-ne-mozhet-byt-nikakih-izmeneniy-peskov-zayavil-cto-othod-iz-hersona-ne-menyaet-status-anneksirovannoy-territorii

FALSE UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW

Evidence A

The UN General Assembly declared the 'referendums' invalid and demanded that Russia reverse its decisions of 21 February and 29 September 2022 on the status of the four regions (ES-11/4, 143–5–35). Russia's Ministry of Defence announced that same morning that its forces had left the right bank; Ukrainian forces entered Kherson on 11 Nov 2022.

What the claim concedes: The 'status' was a claim backed by troops — and it ended in the city when the troops left.

Sources: Interfax via Meduza, 11 Nov 2022 · AFP via The New Arab, 11 Nov 2022 · Ukrainska Pravda, 11 Nov 2022 · UN press release GA/12458 (ES-11/4), 12 Oct 2022 · UN Secretary-General, 29 Sep 2022 · European Council and G7, 30 Sep 2022 · Office of the Prosecutor General, 24 Nov 2022 · Ukraine Evidence Hub, Kherson, November 2022 dossier

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WHAT RUSSIA SAYS, WHAT THE RECORD SHOWS

Each line sets a Russian statement against the finding of a mandated body or, where none exists, an independent investigation. Tiers are marked on every source.

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THE RECORD

QUESTION	WHAT RUSSIA SAYS	WHAT THE RECORD SHOWS	SOURCE
Legal status of Kherson region	'A subject of the Russian Federation', fixed in law	Part of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders; the 'referendums' and attempted annexation 'have no validity under international law' (ES-11/4, op. 3)	UN GA resolution ES-11/4, 12 Oct 2022 (A)
Who recognises it	Implied: settled	143 states voted for non-recognition; 5 voted against (Belarus, DPRK, Nicaragua, Russia, Syria)	UN press release GA/12458 (A)
Russian control of Kherson city	Unchanged	Russia's Ministry of Defence announced the withdrawal from the right bank complete at 05:00 Moscow time the same morning; Ukrainian forces entered the city that day	Russian MoD via Meduza and AFP, 11 Nov 2022 (C); Kyiv Independent, 11 Nov 2022
UN Secretary-General	—	Any annexation of the four regions 'would have no legal value and deserves to be condemned' (29 Sep 2022)	UN News, 29 Sep 2022 (A)

FAIR TO SAY

Russia still occupies part of Kherson region on the left bank of the Dnipro; the Hub's verdict concerns the legal claim to the whole region and the city, not the front line.

The quote is from news agency reporting of a Kremlin press call; the Kremlin transcript is not published.

Sources: Interfax via Meduza, 11 Nov 2022 · AFP via The New Arab, 11 Nov 2022 · Ukrainska Pravda, 11 Nov 2022 · UN press release GA/12458 (ES-11/4), 12 Oct 2022 · UN Secretary-General, 29 Sep 2022 · European Council and G7, 30 Sep 2022 · Office of the Prosecutor General, 24 Nov 2022 · Ukraine Evidence Hub, Kherson, November 2022 dossier

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ESTABLISHED, PATTERN, POSITION

What mandated bodies have established, what the record shows as a pattern, and what is a position — kept apart. Then the lines to take and the questions to expect.

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THE LAW

Established (UN finding): the General Assembly declared that the September 2022 'referendums' and the attempted annexation of Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia regions 'have no validity under international law and do not form the basis for any alteration of the status' of these regions, and called on all states and international organisations not to recognise any such alteration (ES-11/4, ops. 3–4, 12 Oct 2022).

Established (treaty text): UN Charter art. 2(4) prohibits the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity of any state; the 1970 Friendly Relations Declaration (GA res. 2625 (XXV)), recalled in ES-11/4, states that 'no territorial acquisition resulting from the threat or use of force shall be recognized as legal'.

Established (treaty text): under the Hague Regulations (1907), art. 43, an occupant exercises authority in fact, not sovereignty; under the Fourth Geneva Convention, art. 47, people in occupied territory keep their protections even if the occupant annexes the territory. A domestic Russian law cannot change either rule.

Position of states: the European Council 'firmly reject[ed] and unequivocally condemn[ed] the illegal annexation' and said it would 'never recognise' the 'referenda' (30 Sep 2022); G7 foreign ministers: 'We will never recognise these purported annexations' (30 Sep 2022).

LINES TO TAKE

1. "A status that ends when the troops leave is not a legal status. It is an occupation."
2. "143 states said it in October 2022: the 'annexation' has no validity. A Russian law does not change international law."
3. "The Kremlin said 'no changes' on the morning its army left the city."
4. "Non-recognition is not a gesture — ES-11/4 asks every state and agency to act on it."

Q&A

"The people voted to join Russia."

The votes were organised by the occupying power during hostilities; the General Assembly condemned them as 'illegal so-called referenda' and declared them without validity (ES-11/4). G7 ministers called them 'conducted at gunpoint'.

"The withdrawal was a military manoeuvre; the status is unchanged."

Military position and legal status are separate questions. Legally, the status never changed: the region remains Ukraine's (ES-11/4). In fact, Russian administration of the city ended with the withdrawal.

"Russia still holds part of Kherson region."

Yes — on the left bank of the Dnipro. Holding territory by force is occupation; it does not transfer sovereignty (Hague Regulations art. 43; Friendly Relations Declaration).

WHAT WE ASK

Answer every 'status' claim with ES-11/4 and the date Russian forces left Kherson · keep non-recognition in every text on the occupied regions · demand access for the UN Commission of Inquiry and HRMMU to civilians held from Kherson region.



WHERE EVERY LINE COMES FROM

All sources were checked on 21 October 2026. Russian statements are listed as the position under review, not as evidence.

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SOURCES		
Meduza (Interfax)	Peskov: the withdrawal from Kherson does not change the status of the annexed territory, 11 Nov 2022, 09:24 https://meduza.io/news/2022/11/11/zdes-net-i-ne-mozhet-byt-nikakih-izmeneniy-peskov-zayavil-cto-othod-iz-hersona-ne-menyaet-status-anneksirovanny-territorii	RU
Ukrainska Pravda	Peskov says Russia has not withdrawn its claims to entire Kherson Oblast, 11 Nov 2022 https://pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2022/11/11/7375905	C
Meduza (Russian Ministry of Defence)	Russia's Ministry of Defence reports the retreat from Kherson, 11 Nov 2022 https://meduza.io/news/2022/11/11/minoborony-rf-otchitalos-ob-otstuplenii-iz-hersona	RU
The New Arab (AFP)	Russia says completed retreat in Ukraine's Kherson region, 11 Nov 2022 https://www.newarab.com/news/russia-says-completed-retreat-ukraines-kherson-region	C
Kyiv Independent	Ukrainian Armed Forces enter Kherson, 11 Nov 2022 https://kyivindependent.com/breaking-ukrainian-armed-forces-enter-kherson	C
United Nations, General Assembly	Press release GA/12458: resolution ES-11/4 adopted, 143 in favour, 5 against, 35 abstentions, 12 Oct 2022 https://press.un.org/en/2022/ga12458.doc.htm	A
UN News (Secretary-General)	Ukraine: UN Secretary-General condemns Russia annexation plan, 29 Sep 2022 https://news.un.org/story/2022/09/1129047	A
Statement by the members of the European Council	30 Sep 2022 (full text as republished by the Government of Bulgaria) https://www.mfa.bg/en/news/35179	Position of states
G7 foreign ministers	Statement on the illegal annexation of sovereign Ukrainian territory, 30 Sep 2022 https://www.canada.ca/en/global-affairs/news/2022/09/g7-foreign-ministers-statement-on-the-illegal-annexation-of-sovereign-ukrainian-territory.html	Position of states
Ukrainska Pravda (Office of the Prosecutor General)	Prosecutor General's Office confirms information about 9 torture chambers in Kherson Oblast, 24 Nov 2022 https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2022/11/24/7377767	B

METHOD

The claim is taken from news-agency reporting of the Kremlin press call of 11 Nov 2022 (Interfax via Meduza; AFP); the Russian original is given with the English translation. Words in square brackets are the Hub's.

It is checked against the text and vote of UN General Assembly resolution ES-11/4 (A), the Secretary-General's remarks of 29 Sep 2022 (A), the Russian Ministry of Defence's own withdrawal announcement (C) and the treaty texts cited. Statements of the EU and G7 are given as positions of states, not findings.

The verdict concerns the legal claim to the region and the city. The front line on the left bank is outside its scope; torture-site figures follow the Hub's Kherson, November 2022 dossier.

Tiers: **A** — UN-mandated bodies, international courts and organisations (OHCHR/HRMMU, Commission of Inquiry, ICC, ECtHR, IAEA, OSCE, OPCW, Security Council record); **B** — Ukrainian official bodies, marked "according to Ukraine"; **C** — independent investigators and media; **RU** — Russian official statements, the position under review. Tiers are never combined in one figure.

