

FACTSHEET: “System of Filtration: Mapping Russia’s Detention Operations in Donetsk Oblast”

1. What the report found

The Yale Humanitarian Research Lab (Yale HRL) report has identified a filtration system in Donetsk oblast. This filtration system is the physical infrastructure and process used to register, interrogate, and detain Ukrainian civilians, prisoners of war (POWs), and others in areas that are controlled by Russia and its proxies. The [report](#) offers four key findings:

- Yale HRL has determined with high confidence that Russia and Russia-aligned forces operate at least 21 facilities in and around Donetsk oblast that are part of the filtration system;
- There appear to be four types of facilities. These types are: (1) registration, (2) holding, (3) secondary interrogation, and (4) detention. One facility can serve multiple purposes and a facility’s use may be fluid over time;
- Disturbed earth consistent with potential graves is present at Volnovakha Correctional Colony № 120 near Olenivka, Volnovakha raion (district) on two separate occasions. Volnovakha Correctional Colony № 120 is the location of the 29 July 2022 explosion that allegedly killed 53 Ukrainian prisoners of war; and
- The appearance of disturbed earth sites in satellite imagery predates the explosion. One area of disturbed earth was observed in imagery from 11 April 2022. This apparent disturbed earth is contemporaneous with an open source account of alleged gravedigging. Disturbed earth appeared again in a second location by 27 July 2022. Both areas of disturbed earth appear to be located near the barracks where the POWs have reportedly been held.

2. How the report was produced

This report was produced over five weeks of open source data collection, analysis, and documentation. Each source was evaluated using criteria established by the Berkeley Protocol on Digital Open Source Investigations. Data points were cross-referenced against recent very high resolution satellite imagery. Five independent sources had to corroborate a site’s location and the filtration activities alleged to occur there for the site to be included in the report. Twenty-one sites met or exceeded that threshold. Multiple sites did not meet the threshold for either number of sources or confidence in geolocation and were not included in the report’s final tally.

3. What the report does not address

The report does not provide estimates for how many people have gone through or are currently within the system. Filtration locations inside Russia are not addressed in the report. However, one location in Russia (Taganrog) is discussed with reference to its role in the movement of people from Donetsk oblast. This report does not draw conclusions about who and what caused the 29 July explosion in Volnovakha Correctional Colony № 120 near Olenivka. Lastly, the report does not provide any new material related to allegations of child separation within the filtration system.

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