

Deep Russia: **DEWILDBERRIESATION**

What Russians discussed on "VKontakte" and "Telegram" from 13 to 19 July

Period	13 - 19 July 2026
Platforms	VKontakte, Telegram (regional communities)



Key Findings

The week was packed with Unmanned Aerial Vehicle strikes on Russian territory. The most notable:

- **13 July** over 350 drones flew toward Moscow and Moscow Oblast
- **14 July** strikes on "Gazprom Neftekhim Salavat" in Bashkortostan and the Afipsky oil refinery in Krasnodar Krai.
- **18 July** strikes on Wildberries warehouses in Elektrostal (Moscow Oblast) and Kotovsk (Tambov Oblast), as well as an oil depot in Noginsk, Moscow Oblast.

Strikes on Wildberries warehouses became the main topic of the week in regional public groups and pushed the oil theme out of discussions. Attacks on Moscow and the oblast were discussed across the whole country. A noticeable share of public groups closed comments under news about the attacks. Where comments stayed open, discussions were generally about a failure to understand the logic of the strikes, the compensation scandal around Wildberries, distrust of official casualty figures, and the argument over who is to blame for the situation.

Affected sellers became a separate media phenomenon. Social media was flooded with clips of shop owners crying over lost goods. Commenters were outraged that in the videos entrepreneurs mourn their losses while practically ignoring the warehouse workers who died. The performance of air defense provoked both admiration and gratitude from the audience and anger, especially regarding the official figures on downed drones.

In most regions where comments are open, blame for the situation is placed on their own authorities, the "Special Military Operation" and Putin personally, while accusations against Ukraine were voiced noticeably less often. In several regions there were calls to "destroy Kyiv" or "raze Ukraine to the ground". At the same time, calls of "we need to end all this already" increasingly gather reactions.

The fuel crisis has not disappeared, but its rhetoric is changing. Deputy Prime Minister Aleksandr Novak announced a "partial stabilization" of the market, placing the emphasis on diesel supplies to farmers. The audience continues to read the alternation of "shortage-stabilization" as a gap between official words and personal experience of queues at filling stations, although in some regions relief is indeed noticeable.

In parallel, the line of **tightening digital control** continued. The MAX messenger and VK apps were removed from Google Play (after removal from the App Store a month earlier). Registration of State Duma candidates and flooding in the Urals rounded out the week.

The resignation of Ukraine's Defense Minister Fedorov and the protests that followed in several Ukrainian cities were received skeptically. The public does not believe in the authenticity of the protest at all, while taking the opportunity to mock its own inability to protest in Russia.

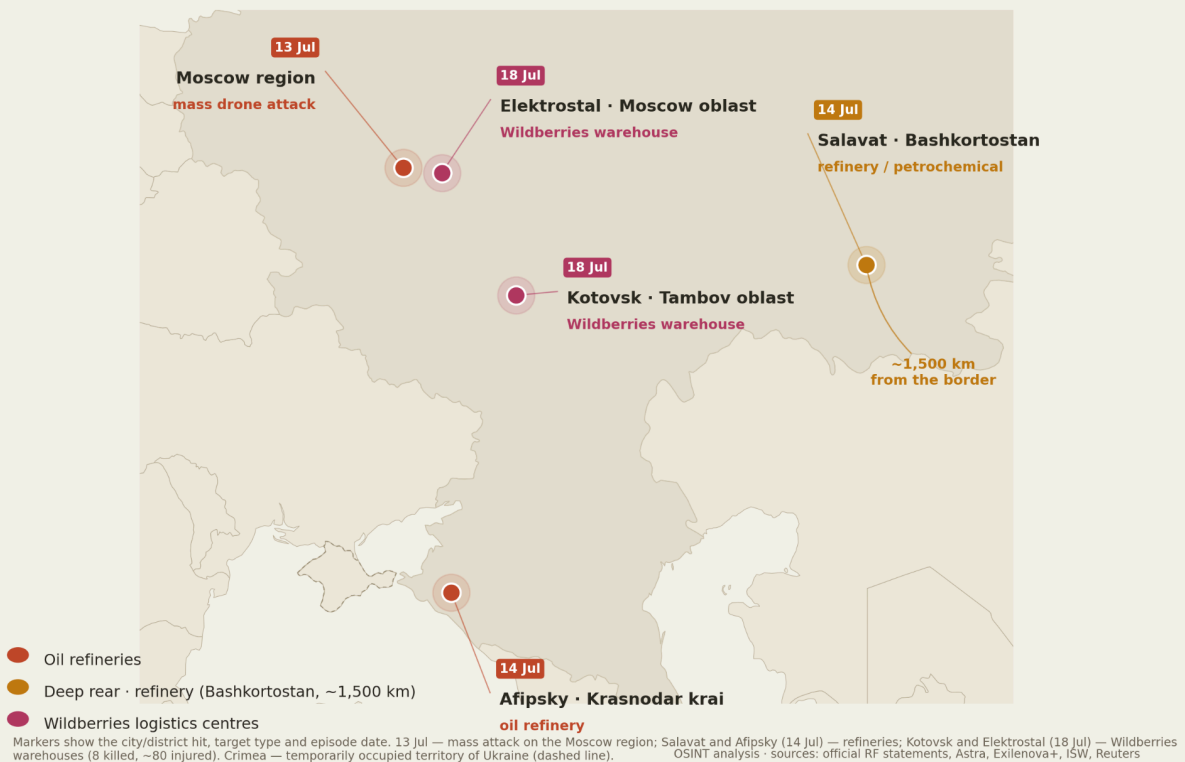
1. DEWILDBERRIESIZATION

Timeline of key events

On the night of **13 July** over 350 drones flew toward Moscow and Moscow Oblast. [Moscow Mayor Sergey Sobyanin reported](#) that most drones were neutralized on distant approaches, and 50 on the approach to the capital. [Moscow Oblast Governor Andrey Vorobyov specified](#) that 81 drones were intercepted over the region.

Geography of Ukrainian strikes on Russia

Key episodes of the week of 13–19 July 2026 · mass attacks, refineries and logistics



14 July the main confirmed episode was the strike on "Gazprom Neftekhim Salavat" in Bashkortostan. [Khabirov acknowledged](#) an attack by 32 Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, but stated that the key units were undamaged and that the plant [should return to normal operating volumes within a few days](#). This version was refuted by data [cited by The Insider](#): both primary refining units, AVT-6 and AVT-4, were damaged and shut down; AVT-6 was estimated at roughly 60% of the plant's capacity and AVT-4 at about 40%, while repairs could take from several weeks to several months.

The same day, a strike on the Afipsky oil refinery in Krasnodar Krai was confirmed. [According to the Ukrainian General Staff](#), the plant is a key oil refining facility in southern Russia with a design capacity of about 6.25 million tons per year and is used to support military logistics. The Russian side, according to [TASS](#), claimed 288 Unmanned Aerial

Vehicles were shot down on the night of 14 July, but at the same time acknowledged a fire at the Afipsky oil refinery and damage in the surrounding settlements.

18 July a strike was carried out on two large logistics facilities in Moscow and Tambov Oblasts. [Zelensky stated](#) that these sites were used to supply sanctioned components for the production of drones and navigation equipment. [The facilities hit belonged to Wildberries in Elektrostal and Kotovsk; separately, an oil depot was burning in Noginsk. It is reported](#) that the strike on two Wildberries warehouses left 8 dead and about 80 injured, while preliminary damage estimates reach over 50 billion rubles.

How regional Telegram and VKontakte public groups reacted

Strikes on Wildberries warehouses became the main topic of the week in regional public groups and pushed the oil theme out of discussions. Attacks on Moscow and the oblast were discussed most across the whole country. A noticeable share of public groups closed comments under news about the attacks. Where comments stayed open, discussions were generally about a failure to understand the logic of the strikes, the compensation scandal around Wildberries, distrust of official casualty figures, and the argument over who is to blame for the situation.

Main discussions

"These aren't military plants"

A cross-cutting reaction in all regions is the question of why hit a marketplace. In Tatarstan the first news of the strikes was taken for a fake outright. In occupied Donetsk region they wrote that the facility is not military, "that's why it wasn't shot down — who knew it would be hit". In one region commenters arrived at the version that it was not the Armed Forces of Ukraine at all, but "enemies and competitors" settling scores with Wildberries. Peskov's statement that Wildberries warehouses are not used to supply the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation became grounds for doubt as to whether the warehouses are really so "civilian", since there is already a popular conviction that whatever Peskov says is the exact opposite of the truth. This incomprehension quickly grew into fear of possible attacks on other facilities, for example electrical substations and thermal power plants. There were also expectations of escalation — that martial law would be introduced or a second wave of mobilization announced.

Buryatia

Aleksandr Ryabov · July 18 at 12:05 · ♥ 10

"This is just plain funny 🤔 Wildberries is a strategic facility of course, the country's entire stock of condoms and dildos has perished. Are they idiots or what? Most likely this could be a cover-up for major embezzlement or something else, or maybe insurance — what kind of idiot would bomb a building like that. This is no oil refinery, mind you. Unless the drone operator mixed up a parcel pickup point with a refinery"

The compensation scandal

Wildberries and Ozon changed their contracts with sellers shortly before the attacks, absolving themselves of liability for losses from "military actions". According to commenters, the compensation clause was removed 11 days before the strike on Elektrostal. The audience massively reads this as planned evasion of obligations under cover of force majeure, and some directly suspect a "conspiracy". Owner Tatyana Kim's promise to pay compensation after all did not add trust, nor did the preferential loans from Wildberries Bank and support measures from VTB.

Affected sellers became a separate media phenomenon. Social media was flooded with clips of shop owners crying over lost goods. Commenters were outraged that in the videos

entrepreneurs mourn their losses while practically ignoring the warehouse workers who died. At the same time, part of the audience argued over who should pay at all — the marketplace, the insurer, the state, or "whoever set all this up".

Altai Krai

Igor Vetrov · July 18 at 12:21 · ♥ 10

"They knew in advance they would be hit back for Nova Poshta, that is why they changed the insurance terms unilaterally ahead of time. Wildberries is Kremlin-whore and Kadyrov-owned"

Distrust of the figures and locked doors

The performance of air defense provoked both admiration and gratitude from the audience and anger, especially regarding the official figures on downed drones.

- **Wildberries warehouses.** The official figure of 8 dead is not believed. Commenters have seen the size of the warehouses and are convinced there were far more people inside, "the authorities are simply hiding it". Additional outrage came from testimony by workers that during the attack and the fire management would not let them leave the building. News focused on the victims drew sympathy for the families and outrage at strikes "on civilians". In Elektrostal, under the news about the person killed, a grim reaction with wishes for peace prevailed, and in the comments people exchanged their own information about the impacts, who saw and heard what.

Rostov

Egor Erokhin · July 22 at 9:13 · ♥ 155

"I wonder, will Wildberries employees and entrepreneurs go and vote for United Russia after this?"

- **Salavat.** Residents of Bashkiria noticed a foamy river on the border with Tatarstan. Some linked it to the attack on Salavat, suggesting some chemical may have spilled, and were afraid to swim. There were no official comments from the authorities.

Where the anger is directed

In most regions where comments are open, blame for the situation is placed on their own authorities, the "Special Military Operation" and Putin personally, while accusations against Ukraine are voiced noticeably less often and are often labeled by other users as bot activity. In Krasnodar Krai, after a death, people wrote that "the Special Military Operation is greed for profit", and sarcastically "thanked Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin for bringing the country to this". In Krasnodar, blame for the fire at the oil depot was placed on "Putin and his hustle, which stopped being fun a while ago". In the Wildberries discussions there was hate toward the state "that started this", and the question of "how long this is going to go on".

Samara

Angel V-Kedakh · July 16 at 10:22 · ♥ 37

"So this is how it will be: you scratch my back, I scratch yours! 🤝 And when will this end?"

State Duma deputy Zhuravlyov's demand to "eliminate Zelensky and the entire leadership of Ukraine" was met mostly with ridicule. The public was shocked that deputies demand "tough decisions" precisely because of Wildberries' losses, whereas the deaths of civilians and daily losses in border regions provoked no such statements.

The standard response to loud appeals from officials' offices is a suggestion that the officials personally take up arms; calls for harsh responses are also present, but collect far fewer likes than ironic comments. Those who justify the authorities or talk about "successful retaliatory strikes" are mocked, told to "go sober up", or asked how much they are paid for bot-farming.

Rostov

Lyudmila Shilova · July 19 at 15:44 · ♥ 48

"So what? Will these retaliation strikes mean less of it flying at us? Every year they fly further and further in and everything burns. The only things that don't burn or suffer are certain dachas outside Moscow. No strikes there, no tears of wives over dead husbands.

The party goes on there"

The radical segment has not gone anywhere. In several regions there were calls to "destroy Kyiv" or "raze Ukraine to the ground"; under the news about Elektrostal noticeable bot activity was recorded pushing the thesis of "strike Kyiv". But even the Russian "response" — the destruction of the AMTEL logistics center in Kyiv and Nova Poshta terminals — did not convince everyone: they asked how this would help "stop things flying at us".

Calls of "we need to end all this already" increasingly gather reactions. They are recorded in several regions and are gradually gaining support. A small but noticeable percentage write that Putin has lost his mind.

Samara

Nail Galimov · July 19 at 8:34 · ♥ 125

"This is how it should have been done from the very start, terrorize them day and night, morning and evening. If they do not want to capitulate, then raze all of Ukraine to the ground."

Border contrast

Belgorod region and occupied Donetsk and Luhansk regions greeted the strikes on Wildberries warehouses with neither surprise nor sympathy. Commenters point out that the oblast has lived under constant attacks since 2022. In the comments they stress that daily losses in the region remain ignored by other oblasts, and call for hostilities to be ended as soon as possible. Individual users express the view that those who supported territorial claims in 2014 must be held accountable, and such comments receive support.

Belgorod

Maria Kolesnik · July 18 at 15:04 · ♥ 63

"In Belgorod there have been dead and wounded every single day for 4.5 Years!!!! Somehow we don't hear words of sympathy from other regions. Maybe it will dawn on the others too that this stopped being a special military operation long ago, this is a bloody slaughter nobody needs!!!"

Attention to oil strikes

Against the backdrop of the Wildberries strikes, attention to oil and fuel infrastructure faded into the background. Where there was news, the reaction came down to stating the fact and expecting worse. After the attacks on Salavat and the Afipsky oil refinery people talked about the enrichment of the authorities and oligarchs and even argued about mobilization. Some commenters linked the fuel crisis to the drones that got through, joking that soon people will be fined for photographs of empty filling stations rather than for the failure of air defense.

Novosibirsk

Aleksey Sibiryak · July 18 at 12:46 · ♥ 18

"Next Solovyov will start singing 'After this action, Russians are heading to enlistment offices en masse'."

Rostov

Aleksey Zaytsev · July 14 at 7:26 · ♥ 171

"In a month they have burned almost everything connected with oil refining, a pile of seaports, tankers are not allowed into the Sea of Azov. The Kremlin has not even expressed concern — do they really not give a damn to that extent?"

How Russians reacted to the "cardboard Maidan"

The resignation of Ukraine's Defense Minister Mykhailo Fedorov and the protests that followed in several Ukrainian cities were practically absent from Russia's regional information space. Of all the monitored regions, relevant news or discussions were noticeable only in Kursk and Rostov Oblasts, as well as in the Temporarily Occupied certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions and Temporarily Occupied Crimea.

In Kursk Oblast one of the public groups spread a message about allegedly large-scale protests in Ukraine and the possibility of a new "Maidan". The topic provoked almost no reaction from the audience. Isolated commenters claimed that protest participants attend rallies for money.

In Rostov Oblast they published about the alleged dismissal of Syrskyi and the appointment of Drapatyi. The material was built on discrediting both commanders. Syrskyi was called a "butcher" and his successor a "war criminal", with the emphasis that a personnel change would alter nothing. There were few reactions, and insulting comments prevailed. Individual users "were surprised" that personnel decisions could be made as a result of protests.

Rostov

Maksim Vladimirović · July 22 at 6:21 · ♥ 8

"I have read front-line reports before, General Drapatyi is a very serious and strong opponent. You can laugh at his surname, but the opponent is smart and strong"

↳ Aleksandr Sturov · July 22 at 12:52

"Maksim, he alone will not change anything anyway, but yes, we have heard he is the most experienced and most unhinged of the command"

↳ Vladimir Fedorenko · 1 hour ago

"Maksim, all the more satisfying it will be to hang this Nazi."

Rostov

Kvadro Bobyor · July 21 at 23:31 · ♥ 17

"Good thing nobody steals in dear old Russia, there is no corruption and nobody sends anyone off to the slaughter 🍗"

In the Temporarily Occupied certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions and Temporarily Occupied Crimea they reported on rallies against personnel changes in Ukraine's Ministry of Defense in Kyiv, Dnipro, Lviv, Odesa and other cities. In the comments the protests were used to promote anti-Ukrainian rhetoric. Ukrainians were accused of believing in victory under the influence of Western propaganda, and freedom of speech was presented as the cause of internal instability. There were also approving assessments of a possible forcible suppression of the Maidan in Yanukovych's time.

Instead of conclusions

The public does not believe in the authenticity of the protest at all ("paid-for cardboard signs"), while taking the opportunity to mock its own inability to protest in Russia.

2. The week in Russian regional "VKontakte" and "Telegram"

Shared topics of the week in Telegram and VKontakte

Fuel crisis: partial stabilization

Aleksandr Novak announced a partial stabilization of the market with an emphasis on diesel supplies to farmers, however in most regions people kept posting about queues, sales limits on fuel and shortages of particular grades of gasoline.

Tatarstan

Ilnaz Avzalov · July 15 at 16:42 · ♥ 100

"If there is enough fuel, why are half the filling stations closed and at the ones still open half the pumps do not work?"

Pskov

Valentina Demchenko · July 13 at 9:51 · ♥ 49

"Is it just me, or have the queues gotten even longer?"

Users shared who waited how long and where (from 20 minutes to 7-9 hours), which filling station has which gasoline, how they get around the limits by license plate number (even/odd). Within these discussions there are several strands:

- **Self-organization and solidarity** — they thank volunteers at filling stations, share maps of fuel availability, warn each other.
- **Personal blaming of governors** — the governor of Kirov is criticized for "lying and changing his story in mid-air", because each time he gives a different version of the causes of the crisis; Stavropol governor Vladimirov was mocked for ordering officials to switch to bicycles.
- **Self-organized fraud around the limits** — discussions of how disabled people or pensioners "lend out" their privileged places in the queue, how drivers siphon gasoline into canisters under the guise of "their own quota". This provokes anger at "their own" cheats even more than at the authorities.
- **The fuel theme flows organically into the election theme** — they say one should not vote for the "United Russia crowd", who managed the country into a crisis.

Tolyatti

Ivan Epifanov · July 18 at 7:31 · ♥ 44

"With the current authorities things are getting worse and worse. They are incapable of handling what they have brewed. Their election slogan is let us bury as many Russians as possible... neither working people nor civil servants should vote for them, drones do not sort out who they kill..."

On VKontakte the fuel crisis is linked to strikes on oil refineries twice as often as on Telegram.

VK/MAX removed from Google Play

Google Play removed the MAX messenger and the VK ecosystem apps without warning (following removal from the App Store a month earlier); VK shares fell by over 7%. Most often people discussed how to install the app bypassing the ban (AppGallery, RuStore, APK). Many see such measures as "payback" for the blocking of Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and WhatsApp. A fairly widespread reaction was indifference and even joy at being freed from "digital slavery" by such removals.

Samara

Vladimir Vershinin · July 17 at 0:18 · ♥ 39

"Disgusting to listen to. So when they completely block the largest digital platforms, trampling on the rights of their own citizens to free access to information, that is fine. But when their oligarchic resources simply get removed from private marketplaces, suddenly they are fighters for the truth. When you have the truth, you are not afraid of someone else's position."

Registration of State Duma candidates

The Central Election Commission approved the lists of 11 parties; in the regions specific candidates registered (from the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, "Yabloko", the mayor of Severodvinsk, an entrepreneur from Altai). Reactions were dominated by weary cynicism about the predetermined result and suspicion that alternative parties, for example "New People", are in fact a project of the authorities themselves rather than real opposition. Separately, in Kuzbass people discussed the cost of the elections for their deficit budget, and in Voronezh — warnings about fakes regarding mobilization 2026, which are allegedly meant to reduce turnout.

Perm

Ruslan Lomaev · July 17 at 17:59 · ♥ 28

"For any party except United Russia"

↳ Daniil Malenkikh · July 17 at 22:49 · ♥ 2

"Ruslan, they are all the same."

Perm

Marina M · July 17 at 17:03 · ♥ 18

"After United Russia member and head of the administration of the town of Soltsy Maksim Timofeev, a complete stranger, together with his wife, a Ministry of Internal Affairs employee Nadezhda Timofeeva, took the daughter of a fallen Special Military Operation soldier, Nika Ostanina, away from her own family, This United Russia party should not exist any longer at all. #bringNikaHome"

The detention of opposition politician Boris Nadezhdin in Leningrad Oblast drew criticism of the authorities, with everyone referring to "SVObodnye elections" — a play on words embedding the Special Military Operation abbreviation into the Russian word for "free".

Flooding and the "Pasler curse"

Because of prolonged rains at least 8 regions were affected at once: a dam breach and a state of emergency in Perm Krai, flooding in Sverdlovsk Oblast (evacuation of a sanatorium using a tractor bucket), 57 flooded plots in Zabaykalye, a downpour in Sochi,

power cuts for 15,000 homes in Kostroma, a sewage breach in Ulyanovsk. A significant part of the discussions consisted of criticism of storm drainage, assessment of the consequences of the flooding and concern about compensation for damaged property. The "nobody is to blame, it is a natural disaster" version had little support, because even when the cause is clearly natural, the audience looked for someone to blame among officials.

In Sverdlovsk Oblast the main feature of the discussions was the emergence of a persistent meme about the "Pasler curse". Denis Pasler, governor of Sverdlovsk Oblast, who previously headed Orenburg Oblast, where there was also flooding, is accused of "carrying" the flood with him into his new region. People ironized en masse: "where Pasler is — there is a flood", "send him to Africa — it will flood there too".

Death of the chief engineer of the occupied Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant

"Rosatom" reported the death of the plant's chief engineer Aleksandr Yakovlev as a result of a drone strike on his official vehicle. On VKontakte, sympathy and calls for escalation are voiced almost equally, whereas on Telegram calls for "payback" prevail.

Regional discussions on VKontakte

- Residents of a building on Klykova Avenue opposed the creation of a mural in honor of a boy killed by an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle strike on a beach. The public mostly supports the residents, who note that they do not want to see the image of a dead child on the building's facade every day. In their view, people are already psychologically traumatized by the war, and such memorials only serve as a constant reminder of losses. They say a memorial plaque is enough.
- Residents of Kirensk, Irkutsk Oblast, held a rally demanding that the local airport be brought back into operation. In the discussions they criticized the local authorities.

Methodology

What this project is. Systematic monitoring of sentiment in Russian regions — with a focus on critical and negative posts as an indicator of what irritates, frightens or outrages people. The conclusions rest on two parallel sources.

VKontakte. Observations by analysts working in regional Russian VKontakte communities — in selected regions of all eight federal districts of the Russian Federation, as well as in Temporarily Occupied Crimea and the Temporarily Occupied certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

Telegram. About 410 regional Russian channels — regional news channels, city public groups, oblast media, local "chat bots" with audiences ranging from several thousand to tens of thousands of subscribers. Coverage — all Russian regions and the occupied territories of Crimea and certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

Quotes in the report text are given verbatim.