Deep Russia:

THE OLESHKY TRUCE

What Russians discussed on "VKontakte" and on "Telegram" from 26 October to 1 November

Period 26 October – 1 November 2026

Platforms VKontakte, Telegram (regional communities)



Key Findings

Kyiv and Moscow agreed on a bilateral ceasefire ("regime of silence") in the Oleshky area. The ceasefire began at 03:00 on 27 October and lasted until 22:59 on 1 November. As of 30 October, according to Ukrainian Ombudsman Dmytro Lubinets, the ceasefire had held for more than 87 hours with no shelling along the agreed corridor; his Russian counterpart also confirmed this.

Federal media and Z-Telegram channels shifted the focus from the humanitarian catastrophe caused by the occupation to "Russia's magnanimity" and "Melania Trump's constructive role". On social media, the news mostly concerned the agreements on a temporary ceasefire, the evacuation of civilians, the delivery of humanitarian aid and Melania Trump's mediating role.

The humanitarian mission itself was perceived as a **valuable achievement** regardless of attitudes toward the parties to the war. The public thanked all participants for delivering aid and ensuring safe departure, and also discussed housing, medical treatment and further support for the evacuees. Most of the audience sympathized with the civilian population. People most often mentioned elderly people forced to leave their homes, fallen soldiers and civilians, hunger and harsh living conditions. Skeptics in the discussions compared a few days of an internationally publicized mission with years of occupation, the destruction of the town and the lack of stable access to food and water. They called the operation "a show" and asked why civilians could not have been evacuated earlier.

After reports of **the completion of the mission**, commenters asked why such an agreement should be limited to a single town. This position was not the same as support for negotiations. Alongside it remained distrust of Ukraine's statements and suspicions that any pause would be disrupted.

The choice of evacuation destination became one of the most actively discussed topics. Some commenters emphasized people's right to decide for themselves where to go. Others demanded that evacuees be screened as potentially disloyal, spread myths about forced mobilization in Ukraine, or disparaged those who chose to go to Ukraine. In Belgorod and Moscow Oblasts and Temporarily Occupied Crimea, attention was drawn to posts claiming that a significant share of the evacuees had chosen to leave for Ukraine. Neither side has published official figures on how many people left in each direction.

Russian posts often presented **the involvement of the US First Lady** as the main explanation of why the agreement became possible. Commenters doubted the feasibility of such a format and asked why the parties could not ensure a basic humanitarian operation without an external mediator. Posts also repeated the Russian authorities' claims about Ukrainian mining of roads and strikes on civilians. In loyal public groups these claims were accepted without reservation, but opponents pointed out that the town is controlled by Russian troops and that the occupying state's responsibility for providing for civilians does not disappear because of the danger on the front line.

1. THE OLESHKY TRUCE

Humanitarian mission in Temporarily Occupied Oleshky

Kyiv and Moscow agreed on a bilateral ceasefire in the Oleshky area (the Russian Ministry of Defense announced the ceasefire "on the Kherson direction"). The ceasefire began at 03:00 on 27 October and lasted until 22:59 on 1 November. The mission in Oleshky was directly carried out by Ukrainian Ombudsman Dmytro Lubinets and his Russian counterpart Yana Lantratova. As of 30 October, according to Lubinets, the ceasefire had held for more than 87 hours with no shelling along the agreed corridor; Lantratova also confirmed this.

The mission was made possible by intensive international consultations and mediation, in particular by Melania Trump.

The first days of the "regime of silence" (27–29 October) were spent on demining safe routes. On 30 October, a humanitarian convoy entered the town, consisting of 25 buses with 750 seats, ambulances for people with limited mobility, and provisions.

Tonnes of food, water and medicines were delivered to the town. All civilians who expressed a wish to leave for territory controlled by the Government of Ukraine were put on evacuation buses. Among the evacuees, the youngest child was just over one year old and the oldest person was 94; pets were evacuated as well.

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Main discussions

- **A valuable achievement.** The humanitarian mission itself was perceived as a valuable achievement regardless of attitudes toward the parties to the war. The public thanked all participants for delivering aid and ensuring safe departure, and also discussed housing, medical treatment and further support for the evacuees. Most of the audience sympathized with the civilian population. People most often mentioned elderly people forced to leave their homes, fallen soldiers and civilians, hunger and harsh living conditions. Skeptics in the discussions compared a few days of an internationally publicized mission with years of occupation, the destruction of the town and the lack of stable access to food and water. They called the operation "a show" and asked why civilians could not have been evacuated earlier.

Temporarily Occupied Crimea

"I've been on the verge of tears all day. 👍🙏" — October 30 at 19:27, ♡13

Temporarily Occupied Crimea

"Now everyone will be given support, the medics have already checked who needs rehabilitation, they will definitely get it" — October 31 at 22:38

- **Is the ceasefire a step toward a broader pause?** After reports of the completion of the mission, commenters asked why such an agreement should be limited to a single town. This position was not the same as support for negotiations. Alongside it remained distrust of Ukraine's statements and suspicions that any pause would be disrupted.

Tatarstan

"One would like to hope..... 🕊️🕊️🕊️" — October 29 at 18:30, ♡2

Rostov

"5 years of senseless war." — October 29 at 18:22, ♡107

Temporarily Occupied Crimea

"So they can do it if they want to? They're keeping the silence - nobody wants to die if they screw up - and that's exactly how this Special Military Operation should be ended" — October 30 at 15:17, ♡2

- **The choice of evacuation destination** became one of the most actively discussed topics. Some commenters emphasized people's right to decide for themselves where to go. Others demanded that evacuees be screened as potentially disloyal, spread myths about forced mobilization in Ukraine, or disparaged those who chose to go to Ukraine. In Belgorod and Moscow Oblasts and Temporarily Occupied Crimea, attention was drawn to posts claiming that a significant share of the evacuees had chosen to leave for Ukraine. Neither side has published official figures on how many people left in each direction.

Moscow

"Of the 750 people evacuated from Oleshky:
47 chose Russia, and the rest chose Ukraine.
Everyone who chose Ukraine was taken to Anapa, then by plane to Gomel and then by bus to Kyiv.
The overwhelming majority were immediately sent to hospitals due to exhaustion and other medical conditions." — November 2 at 1:43, ♡30

- **Melania Trump's mediation and shifting responsibility onto Ukraine.** Russian posts often presented the involvement of the US First Lady as the main explanation of why the agreement became possible. Commenters doubted the feasibility of such a format and asked why the parties could not ensure a basic humanitarian operation without an external mediator. Posts also repeated the Russian authorities' claims about Ukrainian mining of roads and strikes on civilians. In loyal public groups these claims were accepted without reservation, but opponents pointed out that the town is controlled by Russian troops and that the occupying state's responsibility for providing for civilians does not disappear because of the danger on the front line.

Rostov

"What path to peace? These are people you can't negotiate with; they are carrying out a humanitarian mission at Melania Trump's personal request so that civilians can leave the settlement of Oleshky." — October 29 at 18:59, ♡22

Rostov

"It's all a game of cat and mouse. The Anglo-Saxons have plans to destroy Russia and they won't calm down until they achieve it, or until they get smashed in the face with a broken spine." — October 29 at 19:03, ♡40

"Sergey, then why didn't they finish us off in the '90s, and instead sent humanitarian aid so that we wouldn't starve to death?" — October 29 at 19:12, ♡31

St. Petersburg

"Overall, the dialogue was substantive, which is surprising coming from Europe with its Russophobia..
They were reminded once again that it is Zelensky who is dragging out the conflict, since he doesn't even show up for negotiations))" — October 27 at 17:06, ♡2

"Arina, stop writing nonsense." — October 27 at 17:15, ♡17

"Tatiana, it's nonsense to you and me, but for her it's the official talking points, practically holy scripture. And it converts into cash." — October 27 at 17:19, ♡11

Temporarily Occupied Crimea

"Melania Trump is overseeing the operation, that's why they can" — October 30 at 16:37, ♡1

Features of the discussions in Temporarily Occupied Crimea

Crimean discussions were among the most prominent in the regional dataset. This is explained by the fact that the topic directly concerned the region, as evacuees who chose to go to Russia were received in Temporarily Occupied Armiansk and Temporarily Occupied Simferopol.

Emotional intensity was high. Positive reactions most often concerned the rescue of families, elderly people, people with disabilities and pets. Alongside sympathy, congratulations and wishes for a safe resettlement, there were questions about whether there would be enough resources and who would be responsible for long-term support. There was also noticeable outrage over their accommodation in Temporarily Occupied Crimea: commenters feared an additional burden on social infrastructure and spending on housing and payments for the resettled people. There were demands for thorough screening of the arrivals, who were suspected of disloyalty to the Russian Federation. Labels such as "zhduny" ("those waiting" for Ukraine to return), suspicions of espionage and calls not to house evacuees in Temporarily Occupied Crimea were repeated. Some commenters wondered why some residents were choosing to leave for Ukraine.

Temporarily Occupied Crimea

"Another batch of 'zhduny' is on its way to Crimea, we need tough filtration." — October 31 at 10:22, ♡19

"Again they get certificates, housing, and then they betray us..." — October 31 at 13:55, ♡5

"And why Crimea, is it made of rubber or what?" — October 31 at 6:49, ♡20

"Lenochka, I also wonder why everyone is sent here, are there no other cities !??" — October 31 at 6:50, ♡14

"But let's also not forget about the Crimeans themselves who are suffering in our north too!!! And nobody pays attention to them!!!" — October 30 at 23:20, ♡72

Temporarily Occupied Crimea

"Suitcase, train station, off you go. A l l t h e b e s t!" — October 31 at 14:41, ♡12

Temporarily Occupied Crimea

"The only question is - why is Russia handling this if they wanted to become residents of Ukraine?" — October 31 at 13:19, ♡39

Temporarily Occupied Crimea

"The most important thing is that there was a ban on re-entering Mother Russia." — October 31 at 14:42, ♡18

"Natalya, they're not our enemies, they're victims of the situation, they would be glad to stay in safe Russia, but they understand that their families remain in danger, that Ukraine will take revenge on them as families of traitors" — November 1 at 10:49

Temporarily Occupied Crimea

"Let them fly. People were given a choice. They used it. It's THEIR life. It's THEIR choice. Russia has fulfilled its mission - it gave them the opportunity to choose where and how to live." — October 31 at 18:15, ♡5

"Angelina, except you forgot to mention how russia first carried out another mission, destroyed this village, caused a HUMANITARIAN. Catastrophe there. And now of course it helps people leave, BECAUSE it doesn't give a damn about these people. russia doesn't need them. russia "liberates" people ONLY from their lives. I say this as a native CRIMEAN" — October 31 at 18:43, ♡1

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

Resonant news of the week

1. *Air raid alerts, Unmanned Aerial Vehicle attacks and warnings*

Throughout the week, regional sources repeatedly reported missile and drone threats, air defense operations, sirens and the aftermath of attacks. The most active discussions were concentrated in Lipetsk, Voronezh, Tula, Rostov and Volgograd Oblasts. People discussed whether the signal could be heard in different districts, where to go after a warning and who should provide access to shelters. Alongside gratitude to air defense, there was fatigue from the alerts and calls to stop the war.

Samara

"That's how you live, dream, make plans... And then suddenly, the wail of sirens... And it turns out that everything you need in life can fit into a backpack... Even into a pocket, even into the palm of your hand... You take the hand of the one you love... And it turns out that all you need is LIFE. Life is the greatest value. Take care of yourselves, take care of your family and loved ones, take care of Life!" — October 30 at 3:26, ♡360

Temporarily Occupied Luhansk

"and there will be no end to this . zero use from all these so-called negotiations, always, and there will be . they're just destr@ying the whole donbas . and everyone they took .the situation only keeps getting worse in everything and will . all people live in fear 24.7 . especially when night falls. and nothing but problems in everything . very serious and only getting worse . no water .no electricity .no heating . and everyone is obliged to pay for non-services .and winter is coming" — October 29 at 12:06, ♡8

Kaluga

"170 drones, and how did they get through. They jammed the internet completely, so what's the point then?? Let's ask the incompetent authorities who give the order to switch off mobile internet Why jam the mobile operators if it doesn't help??? They flew in before and they still get through" — October 29 at 14:27, ♡16

Perm

"This can't be from a drone. Either ours are deliberately not shooting them down to „stir things up„ ,since they're interested in-another fuel shortage" — October 30 at 17:14, ♡11

2. *Halloween. To celebrate or not to celebrate?*

Halloween became both a mass urban event and a subject of administrative control. In Krasnodar, Rostov, Samara and Moscow, photos and videos of costume celebrations were

shared. In Moscow and Krasnodar, police raids and detentions were reported. Discussions revolved around whether Russians may celebrate it at all. Critics called the holiday alien to the culture and religion, while supporters replied that it is a masquerade and a rare chance to have fun. Most disapproved of the security forces' interference in young people's Halloween celebrations.

Samara

"There is no such holiday in our culture and religion" — November 1 at 14:01, ♡378
"Alexey, maybe people are fed up with your culture and all the rest." — November 1 at 14:04, ♡110

Belgorod

"The most shameful thing in this story is banning people from celebrating what they want to celebrate!" — October 30 at 21:05, ♡211

Tatarstan

"They can't do it any other way. They think young people can be cut off from the world, everything can be banned, and they'll start listening to Shaman's songs." — November 1 at 14:23, ♡13

Perm

"They'd better catch bandits and criminals. Although... those might smack you upside the head, scary... But detaining schoolkids is totally safe." — November 1 at 9:34, ♡8

3. Prices, shortages and restrictions on fuel sales

The fuel topic combined reports on prices, gasoline availability, queues and regional dispensing rules. After an attack in Nizhny Novgorod Oblast, a limit of up to 40 liters per car, a ban on sales into canisters and an odd-even license plate refueling scheme were applied again. The public argued over whether the shortage was caused by panic buying or by the supply disruptions themselves. Even reports of falling prices were met with distrust.

Samara

"After today's strikes the queues will be back..." — October 30 at 1:19, ♡110

Nizhny Novgorod

"But there'll be some action again, fights over gas, queues, dancing and partying at the gas stations.)" — November 1 at 8:52, ♡60

"Evgeny, it already started this morning, queues at the gas stations" — November 1 at 9:39, ♡21

4. Putin's statement on readiness for war with Europe

On 29 October, after the Russia – Africa summit, Vladimir Putin stated that Russia is ready for a possible war with Europe but does not want it, and that there would be no winners in such a conflict. The quote was widely circulated by regional public groups. Most often, people questioned the pronoun "we": who exactly is ready to fight and who will bear the losses. There were also calls to end the war, while others saw the statement as a

warning about possible consequences for Europe and a kind of appeal in favor of negotiations.

Omsk

"He's ready, let him go alone, the country is not ready, so many young people have already died, all this needs to end, and it should never have started." — October 30 at 7:00, ♡55

Kursk

"So it's Russia that will fight, not Moscow. We're already seeing a clear example: Moscow is living it up, the border areas are struggling to survive, the rest of Russia periodically suffers from strikes" — October 29 at 21:00, ♡73

Tatarstan

"Preparing us morally?" — October 30 at 20:07

Samara

"Yeah. The West envies our pensioners who collect expired food from the garbage dumps. They want our expired food too😌" — October 29 at 15:40, ♡67

Novosibirsk

"Maybe they'd better give us some gravel to fix the road on our street?" — October 30 at 3:23, ♡37



5. *Russia – Africa summit and mobile internet restrictions*

The third Russia – Africa summit was held in Moscow on 28–29 October. The regional feed published foreign policy statements and reports of mobile internet restrictions for Muscovites. People discussed how much the event cost the Russian budget. They compared aid and educational programs for Africa with the underfunding of the regions. The communication shutdowns were perceived quite painfully. There were also many typical comments in support of equal cooperation with African countries and about Russia not being isolated in the world.

Omsk

"Mutual trade with Africa..... We give them goods, and what do they give us, a dead donkey's ears?" — October 30 at 2:00, ♡27

Omsk

"Even medicine is powerless here. Russia will help Africa with medicine and education, donate grain, and the number of state-funded university places for African students will also increase, of course all this will be paid for with Russians' taxes, while meanwhile our country lacks schools and clinics, and healthcare funding for 2027 has also been cut, a brilliant plan. Russia is a generous soul, the main thing is to help others, and its own people will make do." — October 29 at 23:22, ♡99

Novosibirsk

"Reading these routine mantras about fighting the West and helping Africa is just sickening. What does an ordinary Russian care about these promises if, in the country itself, healthcare funding is being cut in favor of the military. All the 'geopolitics' comes down to lining the pockets of specific insiders." — October 29 at 13:02, ♡1

"Denis, it's easy to talk about cuts in favor of the military, we are defending our country's sovereignty, do you want us to surrender, withdraw our troops, and in half a year get hit, have Crimea taken from us, and let Zelya carry out his 40-day plan? So that he joins NATO and occupies territories that have already become ours? Read books and learn why all this is necessary" — October 30 at 19:15

6. Changes to search results for abortion-related queries

Putin instructed the preparation of proposals to prioritize websites offering help to women and families in search results for abortion-related queries. Commenters discussed censorship, the risk of dangerous underground procedures and the ineffectiveness of information restrictions in the absence of affordable housing, healthcare and childcare infrastructure. Sarcasm about "a ban on googling" was more noticeable than support for the proposed changes.

Kemerovo Oblast

"🤡🤡🤡 This will of course immediately boost the birth rate 🤡🤡🤡. Behaving like it's kindergarten. 🤡🤡🤡" — October 27 at 3:47, ♡38

Smolensk

"Support young families ❌
Make mortgages affordable ❌
Build more kindergartens and schools ❌
Ban abortions ✅
Cut social spending ✅
Ban googling about abortions ✅" — October 27 at 9:55, ♡41

"Anastasia, the first three points require money,, and there is no money" — October 27 at 14:57, ♡3

7. Internet ration coupons

According to media reports, the Ministry of Digital Development discussed routing foreign traffic through filtering tools and possible limits on its consumption. This was an initiative

under consideration, not rules already adopted; a threshold of 15 GB per month had been discussed earlier. Commenters called it isolation and digital degradation, criticized spending on blocking instead of network development, and doubted that it is technically possible to clearly separate foreign traffic from domestic traffic. Even supporters of security measures asked whether exclusive access would become a privilege of officials.

Rostov

*"F*cking sick of it. Introduce a limit on your stupid limits already." — October 28 at 6:56, ♡33*

Moscow

"The Ministry of Digital Development is an enemy of the people. Banning, slowing down, obstructing internet services - is that, what, a good thing??? For whom?" — October 28 at 23:04, ♡40

Novosibirsk

"People using tools to bypass Roskomnadzor repair cars, do construction, communicate, do science, learn something new in science and art .... So Roskomnadzor turns out to be against all of this ???" — November 2 at 12:57, ♡10

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 from monitoring regional VKontakte groups and Telegram.

VKontakte and Telegram. Automated data collection in regional Russian communities on VKontakte (536 groups) and Telegram (428 channels) — regional news channels, local public groups, oblast media, local "chat bots" with audiences ranging from several thousand to hundreds of thousands of subscribers. Coverage — all Russian regions and the occupied territories of Ukraine. Observations by regional analysts were additionally used.

Quotes in the report text are given verbatim.