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## Ukraine Live Updates: Russia Opens Murder Investigation After Blast Kills Daughter of Putin Ally

Daria Dugina died after the vehicle she was driving exploded outside Moscow on Saturday. Her father, Aleksandr Dugin, is an ultranationalist whose writings helped lay the ideological foundation for President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine.



Ukraine paraded a host of destroyed Russian armored vehicles Saturday in Kyiv's Maidan Square, the site of the 2014 uprising against Russian influence. Jim Huylebroek for The New York Times

### Here's what you need to know:

- Daria Dugina, the daughter of an influential Russian writer, was killed on a highway west of Moscow.
- Aleksandr Dugin, a chief promoter of Russia's war in Ukraine, is sometimes called 'Putin's philosopher.'
- Another night of Ukrainian attacks in Crimea spurs a wave of criticism in Russia.
- A Russia-backed official escapes a blast in Mariupol, as Moscow presses its offensive in the east.
- Albania says it arrested Russians and a Ukrainian suspected of spying on a weapons factory.

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### Daria Dugina, the daughter of an influential Russian writer, was killed on a highway west of Moscow.



An image taken from video released by the Investigative Committee of Russia showed investigators working on Sunday at the site of a car explosion outside Moscow. Investigative Committee of Russia, via Associated Press

The Russian authorities said on Sunday that a car bomb killed the adult daughter of a prominent Russian ultranationalist whose writings are believed to have influenced President Vladimir V. Putin's invasion of Ukraine.

The authorities said they had opened a murder investigation into the death of the woman, Daria Dugina, after a Toyota Land Cruiser exploded on a highway 20 miles west of Moscow and burst into flames, scattering pieces across the road. State news media identified her as the daughter of Aleksandr Dugin, an outspoken supporter of Russia's war in Ukraine, whose car she was driving.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the incident. Russian news media said that associates of Mr. Dugin believed that he, not his daughter, was the target.



A Ukrainian official disavowed his country's involvement. But pro-Kremlin commentators and politicians quickly blamed Ukraine and demanded revenge, injecting new uncertainty into a war that has lasted nearly six months.

Russian investigators said that an explosive device had been planted underneath the car on the driver's side and that the attack was believed to have been "a premeditated crime."



Aleksandr Dugin in 2007.  
Ivan Sekretarev/Associated Press

Mr. Dugin is a self-educated political philosopher known for pushing a vision of a more powerful, aggressive Russia. He is frequently described as "Putin's brain," although the actual relationship between the two men is opaque.

The United States has imposed sanctions against Mr. Dugin for supporting militants in eastern Ukraine. Ms. Dugina, 29, shared her father's views and promoted them as a radio and TV anchor. In July, the British government imposed sanctions on Ms. Dugina, citing her as a "frequent and high-profile contributor of disinformation in relation to Ukraine and the Russian invasion of Ukraine on various online platforms."

Russia's Investigative Committee — the country's version of the F.B.I. — said in a statement that Ms. Dugina had died at the scene of the blast in the Odintsovo district, an affluent area of Moscow's suburbs. "The identity of the deceased has been established: it is the journalist and political scientist Daria Dugina," the statement said.

Images and videos circulating on Russian social media showed a vehicle engulfed in flames and car parts blasted across the road. A man who appeared to be Mr. Dugin paced back and forth, holding his hands to his head, as fire trucks rushed to put out flames. These images could not be immediately verified.

Zakhar Prilepin, a popular conservative writer, said in a post on his Telegram channel that Mr. Dugin and his daughter were at a nationalist festival on Saturday but left in different cars. The festival, called Traditions, gathered prominent Russian nationalist figures. Mr. Dugin gave a lecture on the "metaphysical dualism of historical thinking," according to the festival's website.

Russian state media described the festival as a relatively low-security event. The state-run news agency Tass cited an unnamed law-enforcement source as saying that there were no security checks at the entrance to the parking lot where the car driven by Ms. Dugina had been parked.

The incident came as the Kremlin faces intensifying questions over its war effort in Ukraine and why it is not doing more to prevent attacks deep behind the front lines. Prominent supporters of the war — already angry over recent Ukrainian sabotage attacks in Crimea — quickly took to social media with claims that Ukraine was behind Ms. Dugina's death.

A senior Ukrainian official denied responsibility for the attack.

"Ukraine certainly had nothing to do with yesterday's explosion," Mykhailo Podolyak, an adviser to Ukraine's president, said in televised comments on Sunday morning. "We are not a criminal state like the Russian Federation, much less a terrorist one."

Denis Pushilin, the head of Russian-backed separatists in the Donetsk region of eastern Ukraine, wrote on the Telegram social network that the "terrorists of the Ukrainian regime" were behind the car bombing.

The Russian Foreign Ministry's spokeswoman, Maria V. Zakharova, stopped short of accusing Ukraine. But she wrote on Telegram that if Ukraine was indeed responsible, "then we have to be talking about a policy of state terrorism being realized by the Kyiv regime."

"We are waiting for the results of the investigation," she wrote.

— Anton Troianovski, Ivan Nechepurenko and Jeffrey Gettleman

## Aleksandr Dugin, a chief promoter of Russia's war in Ukraine, is sometimes called 'Putin's philosopher.'



Aleksandr Dugin in 2016. Francesca Ebel/Associate Press

Aleksandr Dugin, 60, is a Russian political thinker sometimes called "Putin's philosopher" who has been a leading advocate for conquest of Ukraine.

Originally an anti-communist dissident, Mr. Dugin in recent years has focused on influencing the Kremlin and promotes a vision of a resurgent Russia whose main enemy is an "Atlantic" world led by the United States.

His thinking builds on ideas of "Eurasianism," that Russia is a distinct civilization that should forge a continent-spanning state along the lines of its former empire but without the Communist ideology of the Soviet Union. Jane Burbank, an emeritus history professor at New York University, has written that in Mr. Dugin's view, after the Soviet Union's "sellout" to the West in the 1990s, "Russia could revive in the next phase of global combat and become a 'world empire.'"

Mr. Dugin called the 2013 Ukrainian uprising against the country's pro-Russian leadership a "coup d'état by the United States" meant to thwart such an expansion. "Only after restoring the Greater Russia that is the Eurasian Union, we can become a credible global player," he said.

The United States imposed sanctions against Mr. Dugin in 2015 for his role in policies that threatened Ukraine, including helping to recruit fighters for Russian-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine. His daughter Daria Dugina, 29, who was killed on Saturday when the car she was driving exploded on a highway outside Moscow, was a journalist who was hit with sanctions this year by both the United States and Britain, accusing her of publishing disinformation on Ukraine.

Writing before the incident on Saturday in his channel on Telegram, a social messaging app, Mr. Dugin said that Russia could not win the war in Ukraine unless it puts the entire society on a war footing. He said that recent attacks inside Crimea and Kyiv's pledge to launch a counteroffensive demonstrated that Ukraine and its Western allies were not ready to compromise.

Russia has "challenged the West as a civilization," Mr. Dugin wrote in the post. "This means that we must also go to the end."

— Austin Ramzy

## Another night of Ukrainian attacks in Crimea spurs a wave of criticism in Russia.