

Azovstal employee dies; critical supply bridge in Mariupol blown up

In separate attacks on the night of December 23, three Azovstal employees were assaulted, one of which was killed, and a railway bridge to Metinvest's plants in Mariupol was blown up.

At 00:20, a group of people wearing camouflage uniforms and armed with machine guns attacked Azovstal employees patrolling a railroad track near the Mukhinsky Bridge. An employee from Azovstal's Heavy Plate Mill died and a maintenance fitter was taken to the hospital with critical injuries, while the third employee was unharmed. When law enforcement inspected the scene of the attack, they found two sacks of TNT next to a bridge column.

Later, at 01:45, a railroad bridge at the 1,260 km distance marker over the Kalchik River was blown up. This destroyed the railway link between Mariupol Merchant Sea Port and the city's railway station, via which Metinvest's plants in Mariupol, Azovstal and Ilyich Iron & Steel Works of Mariupol, are connected. The two plants are now facing the threat of interruptions: they received at least 30% of their raw materials (coal, iron ore materials, and sintering ore) and shipped over 60% of their steel products via the port in Mariupol. The plant's employees are currently searching for other ways to receive and ship goods.

Yuriy Ryzhenkov, CEO of Metinvest Holding, LLC:

"Recently, the Group's enterprises have constantly come under attack or fire by heavy artillery. This is happening both in the Anti-Terrorist Operation zone and elsewhere; recently there were incidents in Zaporizhya and Kriviy Rih. Today an Azovstal employee died and one from Ilyich Iron & Steel Works of Mariupol was seriously injured. We do not believe that the destruction of the Ukrainian metallurgical industry is someone's deliberate goal. We are doing our best to overcome the consequences of the attacks, provocations, and assaults that have damaged our production facilities and transportation routes, which deprived us of raw materials. I hope that the Security Service of Ukraine, police, and Prosecutor's Office will protect us and our cities from criminals and do everything to preserve the industrial potential of Southeastern Ukraine. Otherwise, the region could plunge into chaos."