

UKRAINE CRISIS 16 MAR, 18:52

Azov battalion militants blow up Mariupol theater building — Defense Ministry

Previously, refugees that escaped Mariupol, informed that Nazis from the Azov battalion could have held civilians hostage in the theater building, the ministry specified



MOSCOW, March 16. /TASS/. Militants of the Azov nationalist battalion blew up the Mariupol theater building, which they rigged with explosives earlier, Russian Defense Ministry announced Wednesday.

The Defense Ministry debunked Kiev's accusations of an airstrike on the theater building, where civilians could have been held hostage.

Ads on TASS

"During daylight on March 16, Russian aviation carried out no missions involving strikes on ground targets within Mariupol limits. According to the verified information, militants of the Azov nationalist battalion carried out another bloody provocation by blowing up the rigged theater building," the Ministry of Defense said.

"Previously, refugees that escaped Mariupol, informed that Nazis from the Azov battalion could have held civilians hostage in the theater building, using the upper floors as emplacements," the Ministry added.

The Ministry also stated that, "considering the potential danger for civilians, and considering the March 9 provocation with the Mariupol hospital number 3, the theater building has never been considered as a strike target."

Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) People's Militia forces surrounded Mariupol on March 1 and currently fight to liberate the city. Despite the agreements between Moscow and Kiev on humanitarian corridors, nationalist battalions prevent local residents from leaving Mariupol, threatening them with guns. Nevertheless, several thousand people managed to escape the city. The city is currently experiencing a difficult humanitarian situation: there is no water, electricity, gas, food supply.