

Incident Assessment

Incident ID	CIVo464
Location	Moskovskiy District, Kharkiv, Kharkiv Oblast
Coordinates	50.0027, 36.3290 ¹
Date	28/02/2022
Time	Unknown

Description of the Events

On 28/02/2022, an image taken from Instagram was posted on Twitter, showing a 9M55k rocket motor which had impacted into the ground next to a school in the North-East district of Kharkiv. 28/02/2022 saw heavy shelling of multiple districts of Kharkiv.

Due to occurring approximately 300 meters away from CIVo075 and CIVo093 and reporting indicating they all happened on 28/02/2022 it is assessed that this incident is likely connected.

Key Findings

- On 28th February 2022, a 9M55K cluster munition rocket was fired at Kharkiv.
- The rocket motor section of the rocket landed and embedded itself into the ground outside a school in a residential area of Kharkiv.
- No military objects were identified in the likely area of impact.
- Exact area of impact of the submunitions was not identified.
- Exact location of launch was not identified.

Description of Searches

In addition to Source 1, which was listed in the Civilian Harm sheet, further searches were conducted to find any more relevant footage of the incident, with the following search terms: “Saltivka impact”, “Saltivka shelling” “Saltivka”. Searches were limited to 27/02/2022 and 28/02/2022 and conducted in English, Russian and Ukrainian.

No footage of the incident in question was found, however, two videos of a cluster munition strike on the same day around 3.5 km away were discovered as part of this process.

¹ <https://goo.gl/maps/ASt3ZSv5mG8xoQgC9>

Background Summary of Significant Descriptive Content

Media Reports

None identified.

NGO Reports

None identified.

Other

None identified.

Analysis of Examinable Content

- Source 1 Image 1 (S1I1): An image of a rocket motor embedded into the ground with two children standing next to it. Posted on [Twitter](#)² on 28/02/2022.

The CIVHARM sheet lists a single source for this incident (Source 1). This source points to an image of the incident within a Twitter thread. The Twitter thread features pictures of incidents, which at first seem related. However, upon further analysis it was identified that those are separate incidents relating to other recorded incidents in the CIVHARM sheet, happening on different days.

The image from Source 1 shows two children posing next to what appears to be some form of rocket motor.

² https://twitter.com/2022Kharkiv/status/1498321124345716739?s=20&t=_DSyM-_uJWe2TqKDIsjTsg



[S1I1](#)³ - Image from Twitter depicting a rocket motor embedded into the ground.

The rocket in S1I1 can be identified as the rocket motor section of a 9M55K “Smerch” rocket using the resource below. The conical end of the rocket motor matches other photos of a 9M55K, while the size of the motor is consistent with a 9M55K.

³ https://twitter.com/2022Kharkiv/status/1498321124345716739?s=20&t=_DSyM-_uJWe2TqKDIIsjTsg



Left: [S1I1](#)⁴. Right: 9M55k reference photos and identifiers (Credit: [Mark Hiznay](#)⁵).

According to [Army Recognition](#)⁶, the BM30 “Smerch” system has a range of 20 to 70 km .

Initial analysis on the direction of origin was conducted by analyzing the direction in which the rocket motor is pointing to. However, the rocket remains show signs of lateral stress. The rocket is bent horizontally, which could have happened on impact, bending the rocket section in a manner which does not clearly indicate its direction of origin, making the analysis based on the pointing direction unlikely to be accurate. As such, this report draws no conclusions about the direction of origin of this munition.

S1I1 features a watermark, characteristic to those added by Instagram’s automated location attributor or “filter”.

The watermark translates to “School number 98” and helps to geolocate the incident.

The original post made on Instagram could not be identified.

⁴ https://twitter.com/2022Kharkiv/status/1498321124345716739?s=20&t=_DSyM-_uJWe2TqKDIsjTsg

⁵ <https://twitter.com/MarkHiznay/status/1497741893479841797?s=20&t=GTfChRhp2eIpihDyXKwUpA>

⁶

https://www.armyrecognition.com/russia_russian_army_vehicles_system_artillery_uk/bm-30_smerch_9k58_300mm_multiple_rocket_launcher_system_technical_data_sheet_information_description.html

Questions to Investigate

Where Was the Incident?

Searching for “School number 98 Saltivka” resulted in a Google image of the school posted by an individual.



Left: [An image](#) of School N.98 taken from Google (Credit: Fatima Alimadjiyeva (Фатима Алимхаджиева)).⁷ Right: [S1I1](#)⁸. The matching details are marked with red circles.

The school, as seen in the Google image, can be matched to the building in the background of S1I1. This strongly indicates that the location of where the rocket motor impacted is around [50.0027, 36.3290](#)⁹.

Searching for impact footage for this area on 28/02/2022 did not result in any footage from the specified location. However, two other incidents are recorded to have taken place within approximately 300 meters of this location: CIV0075 and CIV0093.

What Was the Location Used for?

The location where the rocket motor landed is an area between a school and a children's playground. According to an artillery expert, the submunitions from this cluster munition likely impacted up to 1 km away from where the rocket motor landed. However, since a clear direction of origin could not be calculated, this area could not be established.

⁷ <https://goo.gl/maps/3iLPf4jePqbRRpJTA>

⁸ https://twitter.com/2022Kharkiv/status/1498321124345716739?s=20&t=_DSyM-_uJWe2TqKDIIsjTsg

⁹ <https://goo.gl/maps/ASt3ZSv5mG8xoQgC9>

Were There Military Structures, Installations or Other Assets in the Area?

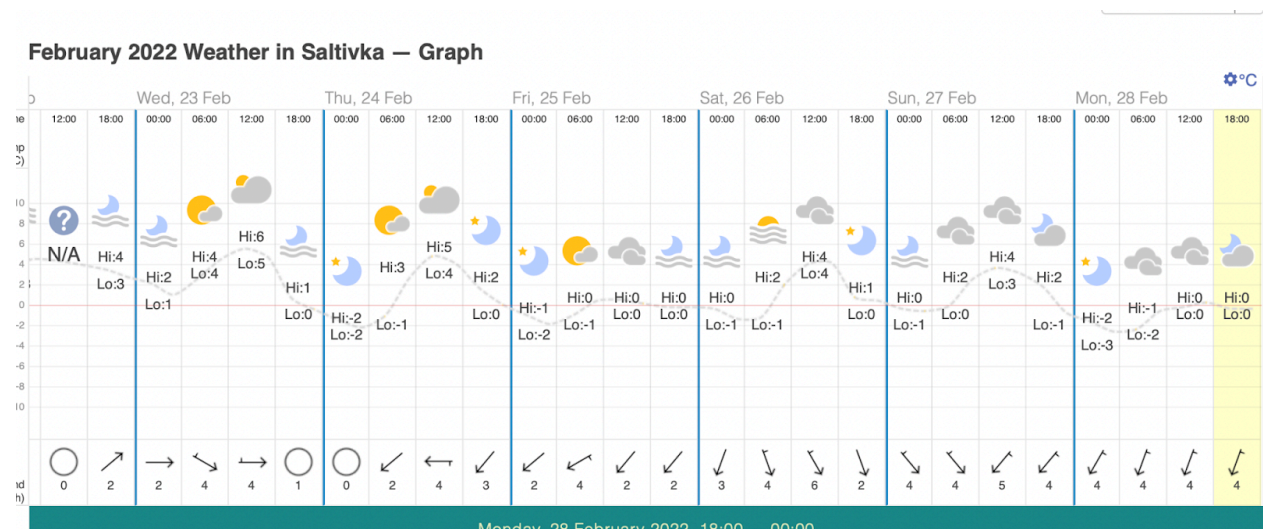
Analyzing the area of impact for military objects, none could be identified within 1 km of the rocket motor through open source research.

It is worth noting that the Malyshev tank repairing factory is located around 3.5 km South-East of the impact site and was targeted by shelling on 27/02/2022 at [49.9745, 36.2831](#)¹⁰.

When Was the Incident?

Date

The earliest identified post regarding this incident was Source 1, which was posted in the afternoon of the 28/02/2022. An attempt to use satellite imagery to identify the date and time was made, however, no imagery was available for 27/02/2022 and 28/02/2022. This is further impacted by the cloud coverage of the area for these dates.



Weather in Saltivka for the last week of February 2022. [Timeanddate.com](#)¹¹

Although the exact date of the image could not be confirmed, the invasion of Ukraine began on 24/02/2022, and Source 1 was posted on 28/02/2022. As such, this image was almost certainly taken between 24/02/2022 and 28/02/2022.

Time

The time of the incident could not be accurately assessed due to the lack of shadows in the source image and cloud coverage on the specified dates.

¹⁰ <https://maps.app.goo.gl/hH6XdgbWhvUw6phAA>

¹¹ <https://www.timeanddate.com/weather/@6722148/historic?month=2&year=2022>

Statements from Parties of the Conflict

Ukraine

There is no specific statement from Ukraine media regarding this incident. In broader terms this incident refers to the use of cluster munitions in residential areas, which has been covered by Ukrainian media:

- 1) <https://news.obozrevatel.com/society/rossiya-primenyaet-v-ukraine-kassetnyie-boepripasyi-venediktova-nazvala-regionyi-kotoryie-uzhe-postradali.htm>¹²;
- 2) <https://focus.ua/voennye-novosti/509124-v-oon-poluchili-dokazatelstva-primeneniya-rossiey-kassetnyh-bomb-v-ukraine>¹³;
- 3) <https://www.ukrinform.ru/rubric-regions/3454014-rf-sbrasyvaet-na-harkov-kassetnye-bomby-s-parasutov-eto-prestuplenie-protiv-celovecnosti.html>¹⁴.

Russia

- 1) Kremlin's spokesperson Dmitry Peskov, denies cluster munitions use in Ukraine <https://www.gazeta.ru/politics/2022/03/01/14589073.shtml>¹⁵.

Conclusion

On 28/02/2022, an image was posted to Twitter showing a 9M55k rocket motor embedded into the ground next to a school in the North-East district of Kharkiv. It is unknown what its intended target was, and although open sources demonstrate that Kharkiv was under bombardment at this time, it was not possible to identify where this barrage impacted exactly. The direction of origin of this motor could not be clearly identified.

Further Action

- Conduct further social media analysis to find footage of impact north of the rocket motor on 28/02/2022.

¹²

<https://news.obozrevatel.com/society/rossiya-primenyaet-v-ukraine-kassetnyie-boepripasyi-venediktova-nazvala-regionyi-kotoryie-uzhe-postradali.htm>

¹³

<https://focus.ua/voennye-novosti/509124-v-oon-poluchili-dokazatelstva-primeneniya-rossiey-kassetnyh-bomb-v-ukraine>

¹⁴

<https://www.ukrinform.ru/rubric-regions/3454014-rf-sbrasyvaet-na-harkov-kassetnye-bomby-s-parasutov-eto-prestuplenie-protiv-celovecnosti.html>

¹⁵ <https://www.gazeta.ru/politics/2022/03/01/14589073.shtml>