

Humanitarian aspect:

According to the morning round of Oblast Military Administrations, **8 Ukrainian oblasts came under Russian fire on December 2**. Mostly civilian infrastructure got hit. **Kharkiv Oblast** reported one wounded civilian, and **Donetsk Oblast** reported one dead and 4 wounded civilians. During the past day, the evacuation of the civilian population from the temporarily occupied territory of **Zaporizhzhya Oblast** was carried out. In **Kherson Oblast**, gas has been restored in 50 towns and villages out of 86 with a centralized gas supply.

A little after midnight on December 3, the head of the **Kherson Oblast** Military Administration (OMA), Yaroslav Yanushevich, said that the Russian forces damaged the power grid in Kherson, and the city was again left without electricity.

In the early morning of December 3, Russian occupying forces launched two rocket attacks on one of the populated areas of the **Zaporizhzhia district**, the head of OMA, Oleksandr Starukh, reported. Roofs were destroyed, and windows were broken in nearby buildings. No one was injured.

At around 5 p.m. on December 3, Russian troops launched a missile attack on the industrial zone of **Kramatorsk, Donetsk Oblast**, Mayor of Kramatorsk Oleksandr Honcharenko said. Damages are being studied.

According to the NASA Harvest study, **the Russian Federation stole at least \$1 billion worth of Ukrainian grain**, Bloomberg reports. The agency notes that nearly 6 million tons of wheat, comprising about 88% of winter crops sown in the occupied territories, were harvested from territories not controlled by Ukraine, and unharvested areas were mostly located along the front line. Almost a quarter of Ukrainian wheat is grown on lands annexed by Russia.

Today, two men were killed by a mine explosion in the **Izyum district, Kharkiv Oblast**, while delivering bread. The mine danger in the recently liberated territories is still extremely high.

Since the beginning of the full-scale Russian invasion, **the National Police launched 46,600 criminal investigations into the facts of possible crimes committed by the Russian military and their accomplices**, the press service of the National Police reports. Most criminal investigations, 35,244, are launched under Art. 438 of the Criminal Code (Violation of laws and customs of war), as well as Art. 110 of the Criminal Code (Encroachment on the territorial integrity and inviolability of Ukraine), namely 9097.

Occupied territories:

The occupying authorities continue to bring teachers from Russia to the temporarily occupied territories, who are supposed to "Russify" Ukrainian children, the National Resistance Center at the Ukrainian MOD said. Teachers from the Russian region of Dagestan were brought to

Melitopol, Zaporizhzhya Oblast. They are supposed to compensate for the existing shortage since most Ukrainian teachers refused to cooperate with the Russian-appointed authorities.

From December 3 to December 5, the Ukrainian authorities will evacuate Ukrainians who are currently on the left bank of the Dnipro River in a summer settlement and did not have time to leave the temporarily occupied territory of **Kherson Oblast**. Evacuation is necessary due to the possible intensification of hostilities in this area. The authorities do not clarify whether there is an agreement with the Russian occupation forces and how they will react to the evacuation.

In **Luhansk Oblast**, the partisans cut off Russian rail supply for the next 14-20 days, Serhiy Gaidai, the head of the Luhansk OMA, said. "Someone" set fire to the equipment of the automated railway control on the Luhansk-Lantrativka railway section in the area of the Luhansk TPP (Schastya). The equipment was destroyed by the fire.

Operational situation

(Please note that this section of the Brief is mainly on the previous day's (December 2) developments)

It is the 283rd day of the strategic air-ground offensive operation of the Russian Armed Forces against Ukraine (in the official terminology of the Russian Federation – "operation to protect Donbas"). The Russian military does not stop striking civilian infrastructure objects and continues to conduct the offensive in the Avdiivka and Bakhmut areas. Russian personnel and military equipment movement to replenish units that have sustained losses continues.

Over the past day, units of the Ukrainian Defense Forces have repelled Russian attacks in the areas around Chervonopopivka of Luhansk Oblast and Soledar, Opytne, Nevelske, Krasnohorivka and Maryinka in Donetsk Oblast.

At the same time, the Russian forces launched 5 missile and 27 air strikes and fired 44 MLRS rounds on civilian targets and positions of the Ukrainian defense forces along the contact line. The Russian military fired mortars and artillery systems at the areas around Strilecha, Neskuchne, Ternove, Starytsia, Ohirtseve and Chernyakiv of Kharkiv Oblast.

The threat of Russian missile strikes on critical infrastructure facilities persists throughout the territory of Ukraine.

The Republic of Belarus continues to support the armed aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine. In particular, some units of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation get training on its training grounds.

During the day, the aviation of the Ukrainian Defense Forces dealt 13 strikes on areas of the Russian personnel, weapons and military equipment concentration and 3 strikes against Russian anti-aircraft missile systems. Over the past day, Ukrainian forces shot down a Russian helicopter and six UAVs of the Orlan-10 type.

Units of the missile and artillery troops of the Ukrainian Defense Forces hit 5 Russian command and control points, 2 ammunition depots, 11 areas of Russian personnel, weapons and military equipment concentration and 4 other important military targets.

Kharkiv direction

- *Topoli - Siversk section: approximate length of combat line - 154 km, number of BTGs of the RF Armed Forces - 23-28, the average width of the combat area of one BTG - 5.5 km;*
- *Deployed enemy BTGs: 26th, 153rd, and 197th tank regiments (TR), 245th motorized rifle regiment (MRR) of the 47th tank division (TD), 6th and 239th TRs, 228th MRR of the 90th TD, 25th and 138th separate motorized rifle brigades (SMRBr) of the 6th Combined Arms (CA) Army, 27th SMRBr of the 1st Tank Army, 252nd and 752nd MRRs of the 3rd MRD, 1st, 13th, and 12th TRs, 423rd MRR of the 4th TD, 201st military base, 15th, 21st, 30th SMRBr of the 2nd CA Army, 35th, 55th and 74th SMRBr of the 41st CA Army, 275th and 280th MRRs, 11th TR of the 18th MRD of the 11 Army Corps (AC), 7th MRR of the 11th AC, 80th SMRBr of the 14th AC, 76th Air assault division, 106th airborne division, 2nd, 3rd, 14th, 24th and 45th separate SOF brigades of the Airborne Forces, military units of the 1st AC of so-called DPR, 2nd and 4th SMRBr of the 2nd AC, PMCs.*

The Russian forces are on the defensive. They fired tanks and artillery in the areas around Senkivka and Tabaivka in Kharkiv Oblast and Novoselivske, Stelmakhivka, Makiivka and Ploshanka in Luhansk Oblast, and carried out airstrikes on Novoselivka and Ivanivka.

Donetsk direction

- *Siversk - Maryinka section: approximate length of the combat line - 144 km, the number of BTGs of the RF Armed Forces - 13-15, the average width of the combat area of one BTG - 9.6 km;*
- *Deployed BTGs: 68th and 163rd tank regiments (TR), 102nd and 103rd motorized rifle regiments of the 150 motorized rifle division, 80th TR of the 90th tank division, 35th, 55th, and 74th separate motorized rifle brigades of the 41st Combined Arms Army, 51st and 31st separate airborne assault brigades, 61st separate marines brigade of the Joint Strategic Command "Northern Fleet," 336th separate marines brigade of Baltic Fleet, 1st, 3rd, 5th, 15th, and 100th separate motorized rifle brigades, 9th and 11th separate motorized rifle regiments of the 1st Army Corps of the so-called DPR, 6th motorized rifle regiment of the 2nd Army Corps of the so-called LPR, PMCs.*

The Russian military continues to concentrate its main efforts on offensive actions. They shelled with tank and artillery fire the areas of Belogorivka, Yakovlivka, Soledar, Bakhmut, Klishchiivka, Kurdyumivka, Druzhba, Opytne, Avdiivka, Vodyane, Nevelske, Krasnohorivka, Maryinka, and Novomykhailivka in Donetsk Oblast. Russian aviation carried out airstrikes near Verkhokamyanske, Soledar and Spirne.

Zaporizhzhia direction

- *Maryinka – Vasylivka section: approximate length of the line of combat - 200 km, the number of BTGs of the RF Armed Forces - 17, the average width of the combat area of one BTG - 11.7 km;*

- *Deployed BTGs: 36th separate motorized rifle brigade (SMRBr) of the 29th Combined Arms (CA) Army, 38th and 64th SMRBr, 69th separate cover brigade of the 35th CA Army, 5th separate tank brigade, 135th, 429th, 503rd and 693rd motorized rifle regiments (MRR) of the 19th motorized rifle division (MRD) of the 58th CA Army, 70th, 71st and 291st MRRs of the 42nd MRD of the 58th CA Army, 136th SMRB of the 58 CA Army, 46th and 49th machine gun artillery regiments of the 18th machine gun artillery division of the 68th Army Corps (AC), 39th SMRB of the 68th AC, 83th separate airborne assault brigade, 40th and 155th separate marines brigades, 22nd separate SOF brigade, 1st AC of the so-called DPR, and 2nd AC of the so-called LPR, PMCs.*

The Russian military is on the defensive. Russian forces shelled the areas of Velyka Novosilka, Vuhledar, Prechystivka, Zolota Nyva of Donetsk Oblast and Olhivka, Malynivka, Chervone, Ternuvate, Charivne, Hulyaypil and Kamianka areas in Zaporizhzhia Oblast.

More than ten automobiles carrying wounded servicemen and the bodies of dead Russian soldiers arrived in the city of Tokmak.

Tavriysk direction

- *Vasylivka – Stanislav section: approximate length of the battle line – 296 km, the number of BTGs of the RF Armed Forces - 39, the average width of the combat area of one BTG - 7,5 km;*
- *Deployed BTGs of: the 8th and 49th Combined Arms (CA) Armies; 11th, 103rd, 109th, and 127th rifle regiments of the mobilization reserve of the 1st Army Corps (AC); 35th and 36th CA Armies; 3rd AC; 90th tank division; the 22nd AC of the Coastal Forces; the 810th separate marines brigade of the Black Sea Fleet; the 7th and the 98th airborne division, and the 11th and 83rd separate airborne assault brigades of the Airborne Forces, 10th separate SOF brigade.*

The Russian forces defend previously occupied frontiers. The Ukrainian troops' positions in Dudchany, Tyahynka, Ivanivka and Dniprovske were hit by artillery fire. The occupiers do not stop shelling Kherson suburbs.

Azov-Black Sea Maritime Operational Area:

The forces of the Russian Black Sea Fleet continue to stay ready to carry out two operational tasks against Ukraine:

- *to project force on the coast and the continental part of Ukraine by launching missile strikes from surface ships, submarines, coastal missile systems, and aircraft at targets in the coastal zone and deep into the territory of Ukraine and readiness for the naval amphibious landing to assist ground forces in the coastal direction;*
- *to control the northwestern part of the Black Sea by blocking Ukrainian ports and preventing the restoration of sea communications (except for the areas of the BSGI "grain initiative") by carrying out attacks on ports and ships and concealed mine-laying.*

The ultimate goal is to deprive Ukraine of access to the Black Sea and extend and maintain control over the captured territory and Ukraine's coastal regions.

The Russian fleet has significantly increased its forces at sea to comprise 18 surface ships. Among them are 4 Kalibr cruise missile carriers; the total possible number of missiles in a salvo is 24. Most likely, this is due to the beginning of a new "school year" in the Russian Armed Forces, and the deployment of the ships is aimed at renewing the skills of the crews following the training courses.

In the Sea of Azov, the Russian military continues to control sea communications, keeping 2 boats on combat duty.

The Russian forces continue shelling the port cities of Kherson and Ochakiv using artillery and MLRS.

Russian aviation continues to fly from the Crimean airfields of Belbek and Hvardiyske over the northwestern part of the Black Sea. Over the past day, 14 combat aircraft from Belbek and Saki airfields were involved.

"The Grain initiative". The bulk carrier Neva is the third ship that called in the port of Odesa to load 25 thousand humanitarian wheat from Ukraine for Somalia within the framework of the program launched by the President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky in partnership with the World Food Program (WFP) of the United Nations. Its purpose is to help countries to combat hunger.

The second vessel, BC Callisto, in Chornomorskiy port today completed loading 30,000 tons of wheat, which will be sent to Ethiopia. We expect that by the end of spring, the ports will receive more than 60 ships delivering Ukrainian wheat to countries in need.

"Ukraine systematically meets its obligations within the framework of the "Grain Initiative" and continues to work on the development of President Volodymyr Zelensky's Grain from Ukraine initiative. We are grateful to the countries participating in the project and are confident that with joint efforts, we will be able not only to fight world hunger but also to maintain Ukraine's status as a key exporter of agricultural products," said Oleksandr Kubrakov, Deputy Prime Minister for the Reconstruction of Ukraine — Minister of Community Development, territories and infrastructure.

As part of the "Grain Initiative", on December 2, 7 ships with 287.4 thousand tons of agricultural products left the ports of Greater Odesa for Asian countries. Among them is the AL SAAD bulker, with 55,000 tons of wheat for Indonesia, suffering from a food crisis.

Ukraine exported 7.2 million tons of agricultural products in November of this year. According to the Ministry of Economy, this is the largest indicator for all months of the war; it almost reached the level of exports in January 2022 — 7.8 million tons. The leading exports are corn (2.5 million tons), wheat (1.76 million tons), ore (783 thousand tons - for the first time since the beginning of the year less than 1 million tons), rapeseed (529 thousand tons), sunflower oil (483 thousand tons — growth compared to October by 28 thousand tons), sunflower seeds (398 thousand tons),

soy (384 thousand tons). Since the "grain corridor" launch, Ukraine has exported 12.7 million tons of agricultural products.

Russian operational losses from 24.02 to 03.12.24

Personnel - almost 90,600 people (+510);

Tanks - 2,917 (+1)

Armored combat vehicles – 5,886 (+3);

Artillery systems – 1,906 (+1);

Multiple rocket launchers (MLRS) - 395 (0);

Anti-aircraft warfare systems - 210 (0);

Vehicles and fuel tanks – 4,472 (+8);

Aircraft - 278 (0);

Helicopters – 263 (+1);

UAV operational and tactical level – 1,572 (+8);

Intercepted cruise missiles - 531 (0);

Boats/ships - 16 (0).

Ukraine, general news

The head of the "Servants of the People" parliamentary faction, David Arakhamia, put forward the conditions for possible negotiations on security guarantees for the Russian Federation, which French President Emmanuel Macron brought up on December 3. Ukraine is ready to provide security guarantees to Russia if it leaves the territory of Ukraine, pays reparations, punishes all war criminals and voluntarily surrenders nuclear weapons. Arakhamia emphasized that after that "we are ready to sit down at the negotiating table and talk about security guarantees."

Adviser to the head of the Office of the President Mykhailo Podolyak said that Russia is most likely waiting for the weather to get very cold to deal another devastating strike on the Ukrainian critical infrastructure. "They are openly waiting for an opportunity to freeze [us – ed.] as hard as possible." He noted that such a plan is absolutely "cannibalistic" and it is thoroughly thought through.

International diplomatic aspect

The EU, G7, and Australia are imposing a \$60 oil cap on Russia. The agreement will restrict Putin's "primary source of revenue for his illegal war in Ukraine while simultaneously preserving the stability of global energy supplies," US Treasury Secretary said.

"If the price of Russian oil is capped at \$60 instead of, for example, \$30, which was discussed, in particular, by Poland and the Baltic states, then the Russian budget will receive about \$100 billion a year. This money will go not only to the war and not only to Russia's further sponsorship of other terrorist regimes and organizations. This money will also go towards further destabilization of precisely those countries that are now trying to avoid serious decisions," Ukraine's President said. "Today's agreement on the Russian oil price cap is indispensable, but delivery is weak. We

need immediately push for a lower level of the Russian oil price cap. Russian oil money is blood money," Estonia's Foreign Minister said.

Throughout the year, the average price on the Urals was around \$78, falling to \$66 before the decision on the price cap. With a net cost of production within \$30-40, the Russian budget for the coming three years is based on prices between \$50 and \$70, while production is set to be 9-10 million barrels a day. So, the \$60 price cap fits into the lowest margin the government set in its financial calculations and thus can cope with it if it will export at least the planned amount of oil.

Russia exported 231 million tons of oil last year. Next year it will lose the western market of 118 million tons of oil because of the embargoes. Russia has been trying to redirect its exports to Asia, but it's unable to compensate for the loss of the Western markets and faces logistics difficulties. Before the all-out invasion, more than half of Russian oil exports were destined for Europe, with Germany, the Netherlands, and Poland as the largest customers.

On the eve of the price cap, India was asking for a 30% discount on Russian oil. New Delhi had increased its import of Russian oil (in October, over 900,000 barrels per day or roughly a fifth of India's demand), but it has an Iraqi option with some \$10 off the Russian price. Next week it will face a dilemma of compliance with the price cap and making Russia comfortable with the fact that a BRIC member sides with the West and abandons its strategic partner. Foreign tankers ship about 90% of India's liquid trade.

China was buying up to 83 million tons of oil, mostly via pipelines and a bit of seaborne in the Far East. It may increase its imports from Russia but not too much. "Russian shipowners face rejections by Chinese authorities and companies in recognition of ship and cargo insurance documents issued by the aforementioned [Russian] insurance companies," Russia's Deputy Minister of Transport Alexander Poshivai said at the Russia-China Energy Business Forum.

Russian crude oil exports from the Black Sea ports to non-EU states are now 69% dependent on just two countries — India (in October, 456,6 thousand tons) and Turkey (915 thousand tons). However, Turkey is set to demand that oil tankers passing through the Bosphorus Strait must provide proof that they have adequate insurance (indeed, not a Russian one). Either Russia will comply with the price cap demands, or it may choose to sell all its Black Sea-loaded oil to Turkey, which is unlikely.

Greece, Cyprus, and Malta were among those who ruled out a price cap below \$60, for their tanker fleet carry most of Russia's oil. Besides those tankers, Russia employs a smaller fleet of its own ships and so-called dark-fleet vessels, which are engaged in risky exports of Iranian or Venezuelan oil.

Russia threatens retaliation over the price cap and says it will not comply with it. It has several options. Firstly, it may go for "oil laundering," which is mixing its own oil and foreign ones to hide its Russian origin. Secondly, it may increase shipments by the dark-fleet vessels to India, while it might not work with China. Beijing might stick to the world's leading insurers, which won't issue

insurance for suspicious tankers. Thirdly, Moscow may try to conclude a hybrid agreement with Beijing and New Delhi, asking to compensate for the cut by the price cap revenue by other means, like weapons export or something else.

Though the \$60 threshold is within Russia's budget planning, reaching the planned export levels will be difficult. So, there will be a blow to the revenue though it won't have the devastating effect needed for Russia to stop its aggressive war against Ukraine immediately. Moscow will likely try to inflict severe damage to Ukraine's critical infrastructure and civilians, aiming at breaking the will or ability to resist. Should it succeed in taking down energy infrastructure to a crucial point, it may threaten to go further or demand to accept the Kremlin's preconditions. It's unlikely that Ukrainians would accept those conditions, but they might face pressure from the partners to go for diplomacy.

Russia, relevant news

The National Crime Agency of Great Britain (NCA) arrested a wealthy Russian businessman on suspicion of money laundering, conspiracy to defraud the Home Office, and conspiracy to commit perjury, NCA said on Twitter. Ukrainska Pravda reported that the businessman is Russian billionaire Mikhail Fridman. He was later released on bail.

The border service of Lithuania reported that since September 19, when its policy toward Russian tourists changed, it denied entry to 709 Russians who did not comply with the new entry rules. Border guards also canceled 29 visas. Latvian border guards said that since September, they had denied entry to more than 400 Russian citizens. In autumn, the Baltic states and Poland introduced an entry ban for Russian citizens with short-term Schengen visas issued for tourist and leisure purposes.

The Russian Federation already uses its strategic stockpile of some types of weapons and sends some missiles to strike Ukraine directly from the factory, reports the Main Intelligence Directorate of the Ministry of Defense. How long they will last depends mostly on the production rate. The production fell compared to the pre-war period. "Unfortunately, because it circumvents economic sanctions, the Russian Federation is still able to produce a certain number of cruise missiles and other weapons that are used against our state," the Intelligence directorate said.

Centre for Defence Strategies (CDS) is a Ukrainian security think tank. We operate since 2020 We publish this brief daily. If you would like to subscribe, please send us an email at

cds.dailybrief@gmail.com

Please note, that we subscribe only verified persons and can decline or cancel the subscription at our own discretion

We are an independent, non-government, non-partisan, and non-profit organisation. More at

www.defence.org.ua

Our Twitter (in English) - https://twitter.com/defence_centre

Our Facebook (in Ukrainian) - <https://www.facebook.com/cds.UA>

Our brief is for information only and we verify our information to the best possible extent