

Humanitarian aspect:

Based on the results of the work of the UN Monitoring Mission, the **UN has documented the violent deaths of 441 civilians (341 men, 72 women, 20 boys and 8 girls) in Kyiv, Chernihiv, and Sumy Oblasts during the first 6 weeks of the Russian invasion**, the organization said in a report. The report examines 100 murders in detail. The mission estimated that 57 of these were arbitrary executions, 30 took place in detention centers, and 27 victims were killed on the spot shortly after coming under the control of the occupiers. Men and teenagers accounted for 88% of victims of arbitrary executions.

Over the past day, **the army of the Russian Federation shelled eight regions of Ukraine, 11 Ukrainian civilians were killed, and 17 were wounded** as a result of the armed aggression of the Russian Federation. The information was made public at the Oblast military administration (OMA) round-up at 9:00 a.m. Thursday, December 8.

On December 7, the Russian forces killed 9 civilians in **Donetsk Oblast**, the Head of the Donetsk OMA Pavlo Kyrylenko reported. 15 more people were injured in the Oblast. 1 person died, 2 were injured as a result of the Russian shelling of the city of Toretsk on the evening of December 7. Shells hit the private sector, at least 12 houses were destroyed and damaged.

Russian forces hit a private house in the **Kharkiv** district on the evening of December 8. A fire broke out, and four people were injured, the head of Kharkiv OMA, Oleg Synegubov, said.

Head of the **Dnipropetrovsk Oblast** Council, Mykola Lukashuk, said that the air raid alert in Nikopol district lasted for 13 hours due to the threat of shelling. 7 Russian attacks hit the city during the night. No victims of significant damage were reported.

As of 11:00 a.m, Thursday, due to damage to power plants and the high-voltage network caused by Russian missile attacks, **the system experiences a significant shortage of electricity**, the press service of the transmission system operator Ukrenergo reported. In addition, the situation in the power system is complicated by weather conditions: in many regions in the west of the country, frost, rain from snow and strong gusts of wind cause icing of wires and their damage. However, currently, the most difficult situation persists in the eastern region.

In **Kherson**, 60% of customers who receive heat from the local heat-producing plant already have heating, Naftogaz reported.

Almost **3,000 unemployed Ukrainians are involved in the Ministry of Economy "Rebuilding Army" program**. They perform socially useful work and can thus earn money, the press service of the Ministry of Economy reported. Currently, seven regions are involved, and two more plan to join. People get paid at least a minimum wage of UAH 6,700 [per month]. The Ministry adds

that employees can earn even more because the regional administrations can disburse payments for such work from their budgets.

Last week the **Red Cross visited Ukrainian prisoners of war held by Russia**; the next visit is planned for this week. During the same period, visits were made to Russian prisoners of war, and more visits are planned for the end of December. The President of the Red Cross, Miryana Spolarich, arrived in Ukraine on December 8 for a four-day visit. The BBC reports that earlier the [Russian] occupation administration in the captured territories of eastern Ukraine prevented international observers from accessing places where Ukrainian prisoners were held. It is still unclear what made the Russian side start cooperating.

The State Emergency Service of Ukraine has already deployed 1,072 "**points of invincibility**" across Ukraine. The points have heat, electricity, hot drinks and internet during blackouts. Since the beginning of their operation (November 18, 2022), more than 198 thousand people have been helped in these points, including more than 178 thousand people in mobile points based on tents, SES said.

In **Zhytomyr Oblast**, the SBU started security measures in two monasteries and hermitages of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarchy (UOC (MP)). Previously, the SBU conducted searches in dioceses of the UOC (MP) in various regions of the country. Individuals holding Russian citizenship, pro-Russian literature and millions of cash were found in many of them.

Occupied territories:

Russia continues attempts to integrate occupied Ukrainian regions. Head of the Russian Ministry of Industry and Trade Denis Manturov said that the process of synchronizing the legislation of newly occupied regions with the Russian federal legislation had been launched.

In the occupied **Luhansk Oblast**, doctors forcefully discharge civilian patients who have not yet finished treatment, and wounded Russian servicemen take their places, the National Resistance Center of the Ukrainian MOD reports. The number of seriously injured Russians [military] is increasing, and the [Russian] occupiers have no place to accommodate them. Therefore, civilian patients must be discharged, including people with complex injuries and those blown up by Russian mines.

The Russian occupiers in **Mariupol** critically damaged or destroyed at least 80% of its medical infrastructure, namely 82 out of 106 medical facilities. Researchers say that the Russian invaders destroyed 4 out of 5 hospitals, more than three-quarters of primary [health]care clinics, almost all maternity and children's facilities, and the only psychiatric hospital. The study was conducted at the Ukrainian Health Care Center (UHC). The researchers analyzed hospital data from February 24 to May 20, 2022, the date of the full occupation. "These losses cannot be recovered quickly. And in the conditions of occupation and constant hostilities, they indicate a provocation of a humanitarian catastrophe in the city," the report says. Mariupol is one of the cities where the Russian military used tactics similar to the ones they practiced in Syria, namely targeted bombing hospitals with aviation.

Operational situation

(Please note that this section of the Brief is mainly on the previous day's (December 7) developments)

It is the 288th 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").

Over the past day, units of the Ukrainian Defense Forces have repelled Russian attacks in the areas of Ternova, Kharkiv Oblast; Stelmakhivka, Ploschanka, Chervonopopivka and Bilohorivka in Luhansk Oblast and Bilohorivka, Berestove, Yakovlivka, Bakhmutske, Bakhmut, Opytne, Kurdyumivka, Mayorsk, Maryinka and Novomykhailivka in Donetsk Oblast.

Over the past day, the Russian forces launched 7 missile strikes, 16 air strikes and fired over 40 MLRS rounds. The Russian military carried out artillery and mortar attacks on Hrynivka and Hremyach in Chernihiv Oblast and Novovasylivka, Ulytsia, Chernatske, and Seredyna Buda in Sumy Oblast. The areas of Udy, Veterynarne, Starytsia, Ohirtseve, Vovchanski Khutory, Ambarne, Bolohivka, Dvorichna, and Kamianka in Kharkiv Oblast were hit by tanks and artillery. The threat of Russian missile strikes on energy and critical infrastructure facilities persists throughout the territory of Ukraine.

During the day, the aviation of the Ukrainian Defense Forces dealt 17 strikes on areas of the Russian personnel, weapons and military equipment concentration and 2 strikes against Russian anti-aircraft missile systems. Ukrainian forces shot down a "Shahed-136" type attack drone and an "Orlan-10" reconnaissance UAV.

Units of the Ukrainian Defense Forces missile and artillery troops hit 6 enemy command and control points, 35 areas of personnel, weapons and military equipment concentration, an artillery position and 2 Russian ammunition depots.

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 shelled the areas of Kupyansk, Synkivka, Kyselivka, Kotlyarivka, Tabaiivka, Krokmalne, Berestove and Pershotravneve in Kharkiv Oblast and Stelmakhivka, Andriivka, Grekivka, Makiivka and Ploshanka in Luhansk Oblast, Terny, Dibrova and Hryhorivka in Donetsk Oblast.

In the Zhytlivka area, the Russian military employed the forces of two reinforced companies from the 144th motorized rifle division to try and organize a battalion defense area.

Units of the Ukrainian Defense Forces repelled previous Russian attempts to counterattack in the direction of Yampolivka.

Two rifle battalions of the mobilization reserve of the 1st Army Corps of the so-called DPR have arrived in the area. They are setting up defensive positions for further movements towards the west of Chervonopopivka and Pishchane.

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 continuously tries to go on the offensive. Verkhokamianske, Spirne, Bilohorivka, Soledar, Bakhmutske, Bakhmut, Klishchiivka, Kurdyumivka, Druzhba, Zalizne, Pervomaiske, Nevelske, Krasnohorivka, Maryinka and Novomykhailivka of Donetsk Oblast were shelled by tanks, mortars, barrel and rocket artillery.

In the temporarily occupied city of Yasynuvata of Donetsk Oblast, about 20 people [Russian personnel], who had been previously imprisoned, escaped with weapons during the transportation of their unit to combat positions. As a result of a search operation, three fugitives were eliminated. Search operations continue.

The commandant service units of the Russian grouping and military counterintelligence units were ordered to stop cases of "voluntarily leaving positions by groups of servicemen with weapons by means of filtering and detaining such servicemen in the tactical and operational-tactical rear of the grouping."

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 artillery and mortars fired in the areas of Vuhledar, Bohoyavlenka, Prechystivka and Zolota Nyva of Donetsk Oblast.

The Russian occupation forces plan to mobilize local residents in the temporarily occupied territory of Zaporizhzhia Oblast to replenish current losses. In particular, in Melitopol, draft notices were issued to men of conscription age, requiring them to promptly report to the military commissariat.

During the last two weeks, the Russian command in the Melitopol direction intensively transferred building materials, residential modules, and reinforced concrete barriers to the Tokmak area. It actively built up several defense areas at once, focusing on fortification. In particular, in the past 6 days, at least 12 convoys with materials and structures have passed through the Melitopol area to the north. According to all indications, the Russian command is briskly creating several defense areas near Vasylivka, Tokmak, south of Polohy and near Chernihivka, immediately beyond the range of the mass of field artillery of the Ukrainian Defense Forces.

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 are on the defensive. They are building up groupings of troops. The Russian military fired artillery at more than 15 towns and villages near the contact line, including Zolota Balka, Kachkarivka, Lviv, Tokarivka, Inzhenerne, Antonivka, Dniprovske, Belohrudy Island, and the cities of Kherson and Mykolaiv.

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.

There is no change at sea. The Russian fleet has 13 surface ships and a submarine at sea, including one missile carrier, namely a project 636.3 submarine with 4 Kalibr missiles.

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

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, 18 combat aircraft from Belbek and Saki airfields were involved.

On December 8 at 06:50, a loud explosion was heard in the central part of Sevastopol. The explosion set off car alarms in a radius of several kilometers.

"The Grain initiative": As of December 8 morning, 4 ships with 149.3 thousand tons of agricultural products for Asia and Europe left the ports of Greater Odesa. Among them is the bulker SUGAR with 37.5 thousand tons of oil for India. Currently, 20 vessels are being processed in the ports of Greater Odesa. 613.2 thousand tons of Ukrainian agricultural products are loaded onto them. 3 ships are moving along the "grain corridor" with 162.4 thousand tons of agricultural products.

Since August 1, 529 ships have left the ports of Greater Odesa, exporting 13.2 million tons of Ukrainian food to the countries of Africa, Asia and Europe.

Russian operational losses from 24.02 to 08.12.22

Personnel - almost 93,080 people (+340);

Tanks - 2,937 (+2)

Armored combat vehicles – 5,911 (+2);

Artillery systems – 1,925 (+2);

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

Anti-aircraft warfare systems - 211 (0);

Vehicles and fuel tanks – 4,528 (+2);

Aircraft - 281 (0);

Helicopters – 264 (0);
UAV operational and tactical level – 1,603 (+2);
Intercepted cruise missiles - 592 (0);
Boats/ships - 16 (0).

Ukraine, general news

In the event of a blackout, i.e. the complete disappearance of electricity, the national telethon and five radio companies can work for at least another 3 days, mobile operators must also provide communication for 3 days, the Head of the State Service for Special Communications and Information Protection of Ukraine Yurii Shchygol said.

The Security Service of Ukraine detained a couple of Russian spies in Odesa. They were collecting intelligence on possible locations and movements of air defense units of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the Oblast. Both of the detainees, the husband (born in Odesa but later served in the Russian army and took part in hostilities on the territory of Chechnya) and the wife, are citizens of the Russian Federation. The special service notes that the Russian Federation sent agents to Ukraine back in 2018, and the couple received a residence permit.

Due to the massive Russian attacks on the energy infrastructure, Ukraine's GDP this year may fall lower, and the recovery next year may be much slower than predicted in October, Deputy Chairman of the NBU Serhii Nikolaychuk told a press briefing. The baseline scenario the Bank is looking at is a 25% energy shortage. "But even under our relatively optimistic baseline scenario, GDP growth will be very sluggish and much lower than the 4% we assumed in our October forecast," said the Bank Chairman Andriy Pyshny.

International diplomatic aspect

"Russia has stopped threatening to use nuclear weapons. This is a reaction to the fact that the international community has drawn a red line," the German Chancellor said in an interview. As deterrence works even after some believe Ukraine had crossed several of Moscow's red lines like the liberation of Kherson (where Russia pledged to "stay forever") and alleged attacks on the Kerch bridge, Sevastopol Naval Base and Russia's strategic air bases deep into Russia, it's high time for Olaf Scholz to revisit his no-tanks-for-Ukraine policy.

The POTUS National Security Advisor has encouraged Germany to supply Ukraine with Leopard 2 main battle tanks, according to the German FAZ. Jake Sullivan spoke about it with Jens Plötner, Chancellor's national security advisor, by phone in October. Marie-Agnes Strack-Zimmermann, head of the Bundestag Defense committee, confirmed that she was told about such a signal in Congress and the Department of State during her visit to the US. She believes Germany must support Ukraine with tanks.

It was Jens Plötner, who previously served under Frank-Walter Steinmeier Foreign Minister, who said that Europe should focus more on preserving long-term relations with Russia and less on the specifics of German tank shipments to Ukraine.

Meanwhile, Germany will send eighteen RCH 155-wheeled howitzers to Ukraine. It's a more sophisticated version of the Panzerhaubitze 2000, with unique features, like the ability to fire on the move, a huge advantage for counterbattery fighting, and remote fire control. This assistance is of great significance and will save many Ukrainian soldiers' lives.

Russia again [for the third time in eight years] doesn't "want" to annex Ukrainian territories, Putin's spokesperson said. "There is nevertheless a lot of work ahead to liberate the territories; in several new regions of the Russian Federation, there are occupied territories that have to be liberated. I mean part of the Donetsk Republic, as well as what became part of the Russian Federation, and then was re-occupied by Ukrainian troops," Peskov said. One can be confused with re-re-liberation clauses of the Russian newspeak.

"Moments ago, I spoke to Brittney Griner. She is safe. She is on a plane. She is on her way home," POTUS twitted. It's a moment of joy for the loved ones and those involved in her release. No doubt it's a political score Joe Biden got, though belatedly. The Kremlin didn't want to help democrats, and the retreat from Kherson and the release of Brittney Griner were highly likely held for the post-midterms. Vladimir Putin may be joyful too, for his hostage-taking tactics finally succeeded, and he returned Viktor Bout, the "Merchant of Death," convicted for twenty-five years.

"Viktor Bout, in my eyes, is one of the most dangerous men on the face of the Earth," former chief of operations for the DEA Michael Braun said. He went on by saying, "He is a shadow facilitator. He's arming not only designated terrorist groups, insurgent groups, but he's also arming very powerful drug trafficking cartels around the globe." Viktor Bout created and ran a highly sophisticated business and financial network, as well as complex logistic schemes across the globe. He knows many dirty secrets of intelligence, sabotage, subversion, and drug operations in his home country. His knowledge of how to run a multi-billion shadow empire is priceless for those in the Kremlin. It is so for personal reasons and for fighting the covert war against the West. And finally, it's a rare signal for alike that "Russians don't let theirs behind." Indeed, it's not the case with thousands of ordinary Russians fighting Putin's useless war in Ukraine or elsewhere.

Russia, relevant news

The American publication Politico recognized the Russian dictator Vladimir Putin as the "loser of the year". «Putin has long yearned to restore Russia to the great-power status it held during the Soviet period. Instead, his incursion has relegated his country to third-rate status, unable to overcome an opponent it underestimated and held in contempt». Politico wrote.

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