

**Humanitarian aspect:**

As of 09:00 on December 19, during the preceding 24 hours, **3 civilian Ukrainians were killed by the armed aggression, and 11 more were injured**, Deputy Head of the Office of the President Kyrylo Tymoshenko reported with reference to Oblast Military Administrations (OMAs) data.

On the night of December 19, Russian troops attacked Ukraine with Iranian-made kamikaze drones Shahed-136/131. According to the Air Force of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, a total of about 35 UAVs were detected, and 30 of them were shot down. In particular, the attack was directed against **Kyiv and Kyiv Oblast**. 18 out of 23 drones that targeted Kyiv were shot down. In Kyiv Oblast, three people were injured, 9 houses were damaged. Some critical infrastructure objects got hit.

The Ukrainian national energy company Ukrenergo reports that a difficult situation developed in the Ukrainian energy system on December 19, after the Russian strike by drones. As a result, emergency shutdown schedules have been introduced in Sumy, Kharkiv, Poltava, Dnepropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhya, Kirovohrad, Zhytomyr, Chernihiv, Cherkasy, Kyiv Oblasts and Kyiv. Ukrenergo warned that lengthy outages were possible.

This night, the Russian forces attacked **Dnipropetrovsk Oblast** with kamikaze drones, heavy artillery and "Grad" MRLS. They shelled towns and villages in three communities - Chervonohryhorivska, Myrivska and Marhanetska. There is a lot of destruction as a result, but luckily no victims, the head of the Dnipropetrovsk Oblast military administration, Valentyn Reznichenko, said.

Vaccination against poliomyelitis, measles, diphtheria and tetanus has been resumed in a number of de-occupied communities of **Kharkiv Oblast**, namely Balakliyska, Izyumska, Shevchenkivska, Velykoburlutska, Malinivska and Vovchanska, the Ministry of Health informed.

**Occupied territories:**

On December 19, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a decree on additional social support measures for Russian military personnel. The decree recommends giving free land on the Crimean peninsula to the Russian military, who received awards for the war in Ukraine. In addition, family members of the military personnel who "died as a result of a wound or illness sustained during the special operation" can also apply for free land plots in Crimea and Sevastopol. Crimean de facto authorities said that a fund of several thousand land plots is being formed in Crimea to be presented to Crimeans with government awards who participated in Russia's aggression against Ukraine. The land is scarce in Crimea and its distribution has been riddled with conflicts and corruption, especially due to the return of the Crimean Tatar people in the early nineties.

On the morning of December 19, Russian occupiers searched the homes of Crimean Tatars in the Dzhankoy district of the occupied Crimea. Two people were taken in an unknown direction, said the chairman of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people, Refat Chubarov. The occupiers do not provide any reasons for the searches.

According to the calculations of the legitimate authorities, about 7 thousand civilians remain in the occupied **Sievierodonetsk in Luhansk Oblast**, the head of the military administration of Severodonetsk, Oleksandr Stryuk, said. According to Stryuk, it is "practically impossible" to live in the city now: the sewage does not work, there is no heating, and houses are destroyed or damaged. Some humanitarian aid is being provided by the Russian authorities and humanitarian foundations, but barely enough. Evacuation from Severodonetsk, as well as from other occupied cities, is currently possible only through Russia and to the Baltic states or through occupied Crimea and then also through Russia to the EU.

The Russian occupiers prepared the collections of Tauric Chersonese to transport outside the peninsula, Evelina Kravchenko, a senior researcher at the Institute of Archeology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, said. According to her, about a year ago, the occupiers issued an "order" to prepare the "evacuation" of the collections of four Sevastopol museums: the National Reserve "Tauric Chersonese", the Sevastopol Art Museum named after Kroshchyskyi, the combined museum of panoramas and dioramas, the museum of the naval fleet. Throughout 2021, employees of Crimean museums and the "Cultural Department" of Crimea corresponded about the allocation of funds for the preparation of exhibits for export. "As of today, the money has been allocated. There is information that everything is already packed in Tauric Chersonese," she said.

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### **Operational situation**

(Please note that this section of the Brief is mainly on the previous day's (December 18) developments)

*It is the 299th 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 Stelmakhivka, Makiivka, Chervonopopivka and Bilohorivka of Luhansk Oblast and Verkhokamyanske, Bakhmutske, Pidhorodne, Bakhmut, Klishchiivka, Andriivka, Krasnohorivka, Oleksandropil, Maryinka, Pobyeda and Novomykhailivka in Donetsk Oblast.

During the past 24 hours, the Russian forces have launched 4 missile strikes and 7 air strikes with Shahed-136-type unmanned aerial vehicles and fired 55 MRLS rounds. Residential areas, civilian infrastructure and the civilian population were affected. The village of Hremyach in Chernihiv Oblast and Bilokopytove in Sumy Oblast were hit by mortar fire; the Russian military shelled the areas of Chervona Zorya, Strilecha, Hlyboke, Starytsya, Vovchansk, Volohivka, Chuhunivka, Figolivka, Dvorichna and Novomlynsk in Kharkiv Oblast.

The occupiers continued the searches of residents in the temporarily occupied territories of Donetsk and Zaporizhzhia Oblasts. Special attention is paid to mobile phones and smartphones.

During the past day, Ukrainian aviation made 9 strikes on areas of Russian personnel, weapons and military equipment concentration and 3 strikes on the positions of the Russian anti-aircraft missile systems.

At the same time, seven unmanned aerial vehicles of the "Shahed-136" type were shot down by Ukrainian air defense.

Units of the Ukrainian Defense Forces missile and artillery troops hit one утуьн command and control post, 1 area of Russian personnel concentration, two Russian ammunition depots and a "Zoopark" radar.

Mobilization efforts are ongoing in the temporarily occupied territory of Luhansk Oblast. Since December 5 of the current year, military commissariats have sent registration cards to all enterprises in the region. A similar situation is observed in the temporarily occupied territory of Donetsk Oblast. In Horlivka, employees of city-owned enterprises are subject to mobilization.

#### **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 areas of Yahidne, Kyselivka, Kotlyarivka, Krokhmalne, Berestove in Kharkiv Oblast and Novoselivske, Stelmakhivka, Makiivka, Ploshanka, Chervonopopivka and Dibrova in Luhansk Oblast were affected by artillery fire.

#### **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 fired tanks and rocket artillery in the areas of Verkhokamyanske, Spirne, Berestove, Bilohorivka, Yakovlivka, Soledar, Hryhorivka, Bakhmutske, Bakhmut, Chasiv Yar, Stupochki, Klishchiivka, Andriivka, Kurdyumivka, Dyliivka, Ozaryanivka, Severnye, Opytne, Avdiivka, Krasnohorivka, Maryinka and Novomykhailivka.

### **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 forces hit the areas of Temyrivka, Chervone, Novoandriivka, Mali Shcherbaky and Plavni with rocket and barrel artillery. The number of Russian soldiers in the villages of the Melitopol district has increased. In addition, the Russian occupiers consider the possibility of involving former police officers who have defected to them to participate in hostilities.

### **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 military hit the areas of Chervonohryhorivka and Nikopol of Dnipropetrovsk Oblast and Sadove, Kherson, Komyshany and Kizomys of Kherson Oblast with rocket and barrel artillery. There are casualties among civilians.

### **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 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 keeps only 8 surface ships at sea. They are located along the southwestern coast of Crimea. There are no Kalibr cruise missile carriers at sea.

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.

**"The Grain Initiative":** 7 ships with 182,000 tons of agricultural products for Africa, Asia and Europe left the ports of Greater Odesa in 2 days.

Among them are tankers BOSPHORUS ASIA (30.5) and PRINCESS MANISSA (20.5) with 51,000 tons of corn for Tunisia and Libya.

Currently, 24 vessels are being processed in the ports of Greater Odesa. 973 thousand tons of Ukrainian agricultural products are loaded onto them.

5 ships are moving along the "grain corridor" to be loaded with 104,400 tons of agricultural products.

Since August 1, 565 ships have left the ports of Greater Odesa, which exported 14.2 million tons of Ukrainian food to Asia, Europe and Africa.

**Russian operational losses from 24.02 to 19.12.22**

Personnel - almost 98,800 people (+520);

Tanks 2,988 (+1)

Armored combat vehicles – 5,969 (+6);

Artillery systems – 1,953 (+5);

Multiple rocket launchers (MLRS) - 410 (0);

Anti-aircraft warfare systems - 212 (+1);

Vehicles and fuel tanks – 4,592 (+13);

Aircraft - 281 (0);

Helicopters – 264 (0);

UAV operational and tactical level – 1,657 (+8);  
Intercepted cruise missiles - 653 (0);  
Boats/ships - 16 (0).

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### **Ukraine, general news**

Over the past year, more Ukrainians have begun to support the idea of moving the celebration of Christmas from January 7 to December 25. 44% of Ukrainians agree to change the date, compared to 26% last year. At the same time, 31% of respondents are against such an idea (58% in 2021). Another 23% indicated that they do not care about this issue, and 2% could not answer, the results of a survey conducted by the "Rating" sociological group have shown.

The State Bureau of Investigation and the Prosecutor General's Office completed a special pre-trial investigation into possible treason on the part of the former President of Ukraine, Viktor Yanukovich and Prime Minister of Ukraine, Mykola Azarov, for the implementation of the "Kharkiv Agreements". The agreements extended the stay of the Black Sea Fleet of the Russian Federation in Ukraine for another 25 years and increased the number of personnel of the armed forces and military equipment of the Russian Federation in Crimea.

Former ministers of defense, justice and foreign affairs of Ukraine have also been charged and are wanted for treason. Currently, the extradition procedure is ongoing regarding the former ministers of justice and foreign affairs, one of them is reportedly hiding in Cyprus, and the location of the other is being verified. The former Minister of Defense of Ukraine, who is also suspected of committing treason, is hiding in the territory of Belarus, which currently makes his extradition impossible. Moreover, the Ministry of Defense of Belarus is taking measures to issue him a military pension, the DBR notes.

According to the press service of the Ministry of Finance, during the period of martial law, 17,032 credit agreements for a total amount of UAH 71.19 billion were concluded under the preferential lending program (including state sector banks – 12,909 credit agreements for the amount of UAH 38.03 billion). The loans were taken for the following purposes:

- for investment purposes - UAH 0.8 billion;
- as anti-crisis loans - UAH 6.1 billion;
- as refinancing of previously received loans – UAH 4.34 billion;
- loans for agricultural producers - UAH 25.72 billion;
- for anti-war purposes - UAH 34.21 billion.

### **International diplomatic aspect**

Russian President Putin arrived in Minsk after three years. According to Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov, Putin was going to discuss military issues with Lukashenko but not force him to participate in Russia's "special military operation" in Ukraine. The talks between Putin and Lukashenko lasted more than two and a half hours. Lukashenko said that strengthening ties between Moscow and Minsk was a natural response to the changing situation in the world. According to him, the joint steps of Russia and Belarus allowed the countries to prevent the negative consequences of Western sanctions. Putin also talked about economic issues and said

that he expects trade between Russia and Belarus to reach \$40 billion in 2022. The joint production of new military equipment and training of Belarusian military pilots in Russia were also discussed. Lukashenko said that Belarus had put the S-400 and Iskander systems handed over by the Russian Federation on combat duty. Putin noted that the chairmanship of the CSTO will go to Belarus from January 1. On the same day, the Belarussian Ministry of Defense announced that the inspection of combat readiness announced six days ago had been completed.

The German government is concerned about the first visit of Russian President Vladimir Putin to Minsk in three years, said the official representative of the German Chancellor, Steffen Gebeshreit. The concern, according to him, is caused by the lack of clarity of the answer to "the question about the role of Belarus in Russia's aggressive war against Ukraine and the possible further modification and transformation of this role."

The EU countries have agreed on a price cap for Russian gas in the amount of €180 per MWh. The price cap will come into force on February 15, 2023.

The head of the Information and Security Service of Moldova, Alexandru Mustiatse, in an interview with TVR Moldova said that Russia plans to invade the territory of the republic in 2023. According to Mustiatse, the issue is not whether Russia is going to attack but when this is going to happen, early in the year, in January or February, or a little later in March or April. Mustiatse reminded that the Transnistrian region is home to Europe's largest ammunition depot guarded by the Russians, and a hypothetical Russian invasion of Moldova could be linked to the use of these ammunitions in a possible military confrontation. How the situation develops will depend on the situation in Ukraine.

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak believes that it is impossible to conduct real negotiations between Moscow and Kyiv until Russia withdraws its army from the territory of Ukraine. The UK will transfer several hundred thousand artillery ammunition to Ukraine in 2023.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres is not optimistic about effective peace talks regarding Russia's war against Ukraine in the near future and believes that the military confrontation will continue. He said, however, that the organization is interested in intensifying the exchange of prisoners between Russia and Ukraine, especially against the backdrop of the approaching Christmas.

### **Russia, relevant news**

The head of the Ministry of Digital Development, Maksut Shadayev, said that foreign manufacturers of Russian processors Elbrus and Baikal in 2022 refused to fulfill orders, including shipping already produced chips.

Since the start of the parallel import regime, its volume has exceeded \$20 billion. According to the head of the Federal Customs Service, Vladimir Bulavin, these are mainly cars, machine tools and equipment. In total, 2.4 million tons of goods were imported.

Huawei closes the corporate sales division of data storage systems and telecommunications equipment in the Russian Federation, Kommersant reported.

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