
Snapshot of the day:

General, humanitarian:

- Kherson: the number of casualties due to the massive enemy shelling on December 24 has increased; Kherson residents are urged to evacuate to safer regions due to the increased frequency and scale of enemy shelling; police documented more than 4,400 crimes committed during Russia's occupation of Kherson.
- 700 humanitarian organizations are working in Ukraine. 13.6 million Ukrainians have received aid.
- The power shortage in the energy system remains significant. Emergency power outages were introduced in 5 Oblasts and Kyiv.
- The Security Service of Ukraine has neutralized more than 4,500 cyber attacks.
- 14 major Ukrainian banks united in a common "Power banking" network to provide customers with emergency banking services during power outages.

Military: There is no significant change in the operational situation.

- Russian operational losses in KIA increased to 102,600 people.
- At night, the strategic aviation airfield in Engels, Russia, was attacked for the second time in a month.

International:

- China pretends to play a constructive role in Ukraine.
- Russians aren't happy about 2022 but barely notice repressions and NATO enlargement

Humanitarian aspect:

Since the beginning of the full-scale war with the Russian Federation, **331 Ukrainian children are currently considered missing**, according to the data of the state child search portal "Children of War". As of December 26, 8,517 children were found, and 125 were returned.

Consequences of enemy shelling.

In Ukraine on December 25, Russian troops shelled 6 Ukrainian Oblasts:

- Yesterday, after 22:00, Russian troops shelled the Seredyna Buda community in **Sumy Oblast** with artillery and mortars.
- The Russian military shelled the civil and military infrastructure of **Zaporizhzhia Oblast** in the areas of Hulyaipole, Chervone, Mali Shcherbaky, Stepove, Shcherbaky and Charivne.
- The enemy shelled the territory of **Kherson Oblast** 33 times. In Kherson, they targeted warehouses, private homes and apartment buildings.
- The Russian military continued to shell the populated areas of **Kharkiv Oblast**. A house was damaged in the Kupyansk district, and a fire broke out in an area of 250 square meters.
- On December 25, the Russians wounded 2 civilians in **Donetsk Oblast**: in Avdiivka and Predtechyne.

- No shelling was recorded in Mykolaiv and Dnipropetrovsk Oblasts.

Energy system:

Emergency power outages were introduced in Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia, Kharkiv, Lviv, Kyiv Oblasts, and Kyiv. Energy company "Ukrenergo" noted that the power shortage in the energy system as of the morning of December 26 remains significant.

Kherson:

As a result of the shelling of Kherson, which took place on Saturday, December 24, 11 residents were killed, and 64 were injured, 18 of them are currently in serious condition, Yaroslav Yanushevich, the head of Kherson OMA, reported on his Telegram channel.

The Ministry on Reintegration of Temporarily Occupied Territories once again urged Kherson residents to evacuate due to the increased frequency and scale of enemy shellings. The security situation has been very tense in recent days. The local authorities also advise the residents of Kherson not to risk their lives and the lives of their relatives and to evacuate to safer regions of Ukraine.

Due to Russian shelling, a critical situation has developed in one of Kherson's neighbourhoods, the Korabelny district: many houses lack electricity, heat and running water supply, but some still have a gas supply, reported the Kherson City Council. The situation is particularly dangerous to the livelihood of the most vulnerable category of residents, the less mobile population.

The police documented more than 4,400 crimes against the peace and security of mankind and the international legal order committed during Russia's occupation of Kherson, of which more than 3,600 criminal proceedings were opened for violations of the laws and customs of war. This is stated in the response of the Main Investigative Department of the National Police of Ukraine (GSU NPU) to Ukrinform's information request.

Humanitarian assistance:

Since February 24, 13.6 million Ukrainians have received aid from Humanitarian organizations, reported the Ministry of Reintegration of the Temporarily Occupied Territories. "Currently, 700 humanitarian organizations are working in our country, including international agencies, as well as local non-governmental organizations and charitable foundations. This is 5 times more than 10 months ago. For more than half of humanitarian operators, the main activity remains food aid and providing basic necessities and means of livelihood," the ministry notes.

Operational situation

(Please note that this section of the Brief is mainly on the previous day's (December 25) developments)

It is the 306th 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 24 hours, the enemy has launched 1 air attack, 5 missile strikes and fired more than 40 MLRS rounds. Enemy shelling was recorded in the areas of Vyntorivka, Manukhivka, Ryzhivka and Vorozhba of Sumy Oblast. Mortar and artillery shelling was recorded in the areas of Strilecha, Starytsia, Zemlyanka, Ustynivka, Vilkhuvatka, Chugunivka, Novomlynsk and Kamianka of Kharkiv Oblast.

Ukrainian Defense Forces repelled enemy attacks in the areas of Novoselivske, Stelmakhivka, Ploshanka, Nevske, and Chervonopopivka in Luhansk Oblast and Vesele, Yakovlivka, Soledar, Bakhmut, Pidgorodne, Bakhmut, Kurdyumivka, Mayorsk, Vodiane, Krasnohorivka, and Maryinka in Donetsk Oblast.

The Defense Forces aircraft, during the past 24 hours, struck 5 areas of enemy personnel and equipment concentration. Rocket and artillery units hit 9 enemy command and control points, 2 manpower concentration areas and 2 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 enemy inflicted fire damage on the areas of more than 25 towns and villages. Among them are Dvorichna, Kyslivka, Kotlyarivka and Berestove in Kharkiv Oblast; Stelmakhivka, Ploshanka, Dibrova and Chervonopopivka in Luhansk Oblast and Yampolivka and Torske in Donetsk Oblast.

About 50 seriously wounded enemy servicemen have recently been delivered to a military hospital in Starobilsk, Luhansk Oblast.

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 enemy shelled Ukrainian troops' positions in more than 20 towns and villages, including Spirne, Berestove, Yakovlivka, Soledar, Bahmut, Opytne, Ozaryanivka, New York, Avdiivka, Krasnohorivka, and Maryinka. In Horlivka, due to the shortage of donor blood, all employees of medical institutions were forced to donate blood according to the established schedule.

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.*

Vuhledar, Velyka Novosilka and Vremivka of Donetsk Oblast; Hulyaipole, Chervone, Stepove, Mali Shcherbaky, Shcherbaky and Charivne of Zaporizhia Oblast and Nikopol of Dnipropetrovsk Oblast were shelled.

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 enemy continues artillery shelling towns and villages along the right bank of the Dnipro River. The civil infrastructure of Respublikanets, Tyagynka, Zelenivka, Inzhenerne, Antonivka, Sadove, Veletenske, and Kherson was damaged.

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 enemy has 10 surface ships and submarines at sea. They are located along the southwestern coast of Crimea, among them three carriers of cruise missiles "Kalibr", namely two submarines with 4 missiles and one surface ship with 8 missiles on board. The total salvo might amount up to 16 missiles.

In the Sea of Azov, the enemy continues to control sea communications, keeping 1 boat on combat duty.

Enemy aviation continues to fly from the Crimean airfields of Belbek, Saki, Dzhankoy and Gvardiyske over the northwestern part of the Black Sea. Over the past day, 12 combat aircraft from Belbek and Saki airfields were deployed.

Thanks to the "**grain agreement**", over the past few months, more than 15 million tons of agricultural products have been exported from Ukrainian ports. From August 1 to December 25, 585 dry cargoes left the ports of Ukraine. In total, 15.8 million tons of 13 types of agricultural products were transported through the "grain corridor". At the same time, 171 dry cargo ships arrived at Turkish ports. 15% of all products exported along the "grain corridor" were delivered to Turkey. 12% were sent to African countries, 29% to Asia, and 44% to European countries.

Russian operational losses from 25.02 to 26.12.22

Personnel - almost 102,600 people (+550);

Tanks - 3,016 (+5)

Armored combat vehicles – 6,017 (+7);

Artillery systems – 1,996 (+5);

Multiple rocket launchers (MLRS) - 418 (0);

Anti-aircraft warfare systems - 212 (0);

Vehicles and fuel tanks – 4,647 (+12);

Aircraft - 283 (0);

Helicopters – 267 (0);

UAV operational and tactical level – 1,707 (+1);

Intercepted cruise missiles - 653 (0);

Boats/ships - 16 (0).

Ukraine, general news

Since the beginning of the year, the Security Service of Ukraine has neutralized more than 4,500 cyber-attacks on Ukraine. The head of the SBU Cyber Security Department, Ilya Vityuk, noted that with the beginning of the full-scale aggression, the number of attacks increased 3-fold compared to 800 in 2020 and 1,400 in 2021. "Today, the aggressor country carries out an average of more than 10 cyber-attacks per day. Ukrainian society, fortunately, does not even know about the majority [of attacks]," Vityuk said. He also reported that energy, logistics, military facilities, government databases and information resources are in the zone of special attention of the enemy. "We monitor risks and threats in real-time 24/7. We know most of the hackers from the Russian special services who work against us by name. Work is underway to document them. After the victory of Ukraine, a separate block of meetings of the international military tribunal will await them," Vityuk noted.

14 major Ukrainian banks united in a common "Power banking" network to provide customers with emergency banking services during power outages, reported the press service of the National Bank of Ukraine. Thus, in the event of a blackout, it will be possible to receive cash, make payments or transfers and exchange currency in branches of the network, which currently includes over a thousand bank branches throughout the country. They, among other things, were provided with alternative energy sources and backup communication channels.

International diplomatic aspect

In his major foreign policy speech, the Chinese Foreign Minister claimed China to have "consistently upheld the fundamental principles of objectivity and impartiality, without favoring one side or the other, or adding fuel to the fire, still less seeking selfish gains from the situation." Ambivalently talking about "addressing both symptoms and root causes of the issue," as well as indirectly blaming the US for "fueling the fire" and persuading "selfish gains," Wang Yi de facto proved to have chosen a side. One hardly agrees with the Chinese claim to be playing a "constructive role in its own way to promote peace talks," while not condemning the blatant violation of the UN Charter and other norms and principles of international law. China abstained during the vote on the UN General Assembly's Resolutions on the territorial integrity of Ukraine in 2014, thus ignoring the illegal annexation of Crimea. China abstained again in 2022, thus not condemning the aggression against Ukraine. Beijing may play a law-abiding international party and a responsible broker, but its actions on two crucial issues (war of aggression and illegal land grabs) prove it false.

In the meantime, Beijing blamed the US for the "Cold War mentality and fabricating the false narrative of democracy versus authoritarianism," "suppressing China," "interfering in China's internal affairs," and "undermining China's sovereignty, security and development interests." Yet when it comes to Moscow, Beijing is set to "deepen strategic mutual trust and mutually beneficial cooperation between China and Russia, and cement China-Russia comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination."

According to a Levada Centre poll, more than half of Russians (fifty-three percent) consider this year more difficult for their family than the previous (an eleven percent increase). Furthermore, most Russians (seventy-six percent) believe 2022 has been a more difficult year for their country (a twenty-one percent increase). At the same time, almost two-thirds (fifty-seven percent) think that 2022 has been successful for them personally, while a third (thirty-two percent) believe that it hasn't been positive.

The top events of the year are the Russian war in Ukraine (forty-six percent), mobilization (thirty-four percent), further annexation of the Ukrainian territories (thirty-two percent), and COVID-19 (thirty percent). Meanwhile, only a handful consider as important the criminal persecution of [Russian] opposition leaders (six percent), suppression of anti-war protests (four percent), and the Nobel Prize to the Memorial, a longstanding human rights organization (three percent). Symptomatically, only six percent of Russians consider Finland and Sweden's accession to NATO notable. Had Russians really feared NATO "encroachment" towards the Russian borders, as propaganda insists, it could have been named one of the year's top events.

Russia, relevant news

At night, for the second time in a month, the strategic aviation airfield in the city of Engels was attacked. The Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation said that three soldiers died from the fall of the wreckage of the drone. Ukrainian media reports that the drone struck the base control center.

The Duma is developing amendments prohibiting Russians who have gone abroad from working as self-employed and paying fewer taxes. The deputies also plan to raise taxes for the departed individual entrepreneurs, said Andrey Isaev, deputy head of the United Russia faction.

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