
Snapshot of the day:

General, humanitarian:

- At night, Ukraine survived another drone attack; all 16 kamikaze drones were shot down.
- The energy deficit remains at the level before the tenth massive Russian missile attack on December 29. The damage had a much smaller impact on the power system than the enemy expected.
- Foreign governments and NGOs provided Ukraine with about 5,000 generators. Another 8,000 are expected in early 2023.
- There are 3.6 million people in Kyiv now, almost as many as before the war, according to the mayor Vitaly Klitschko calculations.
- The government cyber response team registered and investigated 2,100 cyber attacks on Ukraine in 2022.
- The Ukrainian government, together with the World Bank and the European Commission, conducted the first verified assessment of the funds needed to restore Ukraine; it is about 700 billion dollars.

Military:

- There is no significant change in the operational situation
- The enemy is trying to break through the defense of the Ukrainian Defence Forces north of Bakhmut.

International:

- The new Chinese Foreign Minister shares Russia's view on the war in Ukraine but wants to avoid its spillover and overall confrontation between the major countries.
- Putin talked to Xi Jinping but did not get the backing he might have hoped for.
- Former French President François Hollande defends his Russian policy and believes the Minsk arrangements' resurrection is a good idea.

Humanitarian aspect:

More than 1,322 Ukrainian children suffered as a result of the full-scale armed aggression of the Russian Federation. As of the morning of December 30, 2022, the official number of child victims has not changed and remains at 450. However, the number of injured has increased to 872.

A total of 3,126 educational institutions were damaged due to bombing and shelling by Russian troops, and 337 of them were completely destroyed.

At night, Ukraine survived another drone attack; all 16 kamikaze drones were shot down. Oblast Military Administrations (OMA) reported:

- 5 UAVs were shot down over Kyiv; one administrative building was partially destroyed;
- 10 drones were shot down over Dnipropetrovsk and Zaporizhzhia Oblasts
- Air defense also worked in Kirovohrad and Cherkasy Oblasts, no destruction was reported.

Consequences of enemy shelling on the morning of December 30.

Eleven regions of Ukraine suffered from the Russian attacks during the last day, OMA reported.

- At night, the Russians attacked **Kyiv Oblast** with 7 kamikaze drones. Two were shot down on the approach to the capital, and five over Kyiv. Falling debris damaged residential building and administrative building in the Holosiivskiy district.
- Occupiers shelled the territory of **Kherson Oblast** 81 times. One wounded civilian was reported. In Kherson, enemy shells hit a store, critical infrastructure objects, industrial enterprises, and private and apartment buildings.
- Yesterday, a warehouse was destroyed due to a rocket attack on **Mykolayiv Oblast**, and an infrastructure facility and residential buildings were damaged. In addition, the enemy attacked the water and the port area of Ochakiv.
- The enemy attacked the civil infrastructure of the Orihiv, Hulyaipole and Vasylivka districts of **Zaporizhzhia Oblast**.
- Yesterday, the Russian military shelled the Shalygin community (15 rounds), Znob-Novgorodsk (19 rounds) and this morning Myropillia community (60 rounds) of **Sumy Oblast**.
- As a result of yesterday's massive shelling, two civilians were killed, and 1 was wounded in **Kharkiv Oblast**. Infrastructure facilities in Kharkiv and Kharkiv Oblast were damaged. Also, during the day, the enemy attacked Kupyansk (1 killed civilian), Chuhuyiv and Kharkiv districts.
- At night, the occupiers again shelled the Nikopol district of **Dnipropetrovsk Oblast**.
- On December 29, one civilian was killed in Bakhmut, **Donetsk Oblast**. A church in Bagatyr village and power lines in Gostromy were damaged, and Dalne village was shelled in the morning.

Energy system: As of 11:00 a.m., the power deficit is at the same level as before the tenth massive Russian missile attack [on December 29], reported NEC Ukrenergo. "Thanks to the professional actions of the "Ukrenergo" dispatch center, the consequences of the damage had a much smaller impact on the operation of the power system than the enemy expected." It is noted that the power system is returning to regular operation as planned. At the same time, the situation in the southern and eastern regions remains challenging due to hits to some energy facilities. Consumption limits have been established for all areas. Exceeding them would lead to emergency shutdowns.

All nine units of nuclear power plants in the territory controlled by Ukraine [that excludes ZNPP] are operating at maximum capacity, reported NAEC Energoatom.

International assistance: During December, foreign governments and NGOs handed Ukraine about 5,000 generators to meet humanitarian needs. Another 8,000 are expected to arrive in early 2023, stated Deputy Prime Minister for Reconstruction, Oleksandr Kubrakov. The generators are distributed according to the requests and needs of the regions to ensure the operation of critical infrastructure facilities, "Points of Invincibility", health care and education facilities, etc. The allocation of equipment took place with the assistance and cooperation of the European Commission, the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC).

POWs: There are **3,392 Ukrainian prisoners of war** in Russian captivity, Alyona Verbytska, Commissioner for the Rights of Defenders, said in an interview with the German publication RND. According to her, another 15,000 people [both civilian and military] are considered missing. It is unknown whether these people are in captivity, were forcibly taken out of the occupied territories or killed.

Kyiv: Since the beginning of the Russian invasion, 120 Kyiv residents, including five children, have died, and 495 residents were injured, including 30 children, the city military administration said. According to Kyiv authorities, as of December 30, the Russian military carried out a total of 52 air attacks on the city, damaging more than 600 buildings. "Since the start of the full-scale invasion, 638 air raid sirens have sounded in the capital. The total duration of air raid sirens is 693 hours and 49 minutes. That is almost 29 days! The residents of the city spent a whole calendar month this year in shelters and bomb shelters!" - said the head of the military administration of Kyiv, Serhiy Popko.

There are almost as many people in Kyiv now as before the war, the city mayor Vitaly Klitschko said in an interview with the German publication Spiegel. "We calculate how many cell phones are being used. Before the war, there were 3.8 million people here, in March - less than a million, in July - two-two and a half million, now 3.6 million, 300 thousand of them are registered refugees from other parts of the country. The city is full," Klitschko said.

Operational situation

(Please note that this section of the Brief is mainly on the previous day's (December 29) developments)

It is the 310th 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 enemy is concentrating its primary efforts on attempts to break through the defense of the Joint Forces in the Bakhmut direction and to improve its tactical position in the Lyman and Kupyansk directions.

Over the past 24 hours, the enemy launched 85 missile strikes and 35 air strikes, and 63 MLRS shellings. In the border areas, the enemy fired at the positions of the Defense Forces and the populated areas of Chernihiv, Sumy and Kharkiv Oblasts. The enemy launched an airstrike with combat helicopters near Velyka Pysarivka, Sumy Oblast.

The situation remains stable in the Volyn, Polissia, Siversk, and Slobozhansk directions, and no signs of the formation of hostile offensive groups have been detected. The danger of air and missile strikes on the country's critical infrastructure remains.

Aviation of the Defense Forces carried out 12 strikes on the areas of concentration of enemy personnel, weapons, and military equipment and a strike on the position of the enemy's anti-aircraft missile complex. Rocket and artillery forces units hit 5 enemy command and control points, 5 manpower concentration areas and the ammunition warehouse.

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 is trying to stabilize the defense line in the Kreminna area, unsuccessfully attacked in the areas of Stelmakhivka and Bilohorivka. Over the last week, the Ukrainian Defense Forces units have advanced almost 2.5 km in the Dibrova area. From the geography of the enemy's artillery fire, it can be concluded that the enemy's command is expecting an attack by the Defense Forces in the Svatove area.

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 regiment 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 is trying to break through the defense of the Joint Forces north of Bakhmut. Russian forces moved their main efforts to the south of the city, attacked in the areas of Ivanivske and Klishchiivka, and used attack UAVs near Kurdyumivka. In the area of Pidgorodnie, the enemy is entrenched and preparing for further attacks north of Bakhmut.

The enemy stepped up its attempts to break into Avdiivka from the eastern direction. Fighting continues in the center of Maryinka. The enemy is trying to complete the task of capturing Donetsk Oblast within its administrative borders.

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 operational situation is unchanged. After a long break, the enemy used aviation at Mykilske, Hulyaipole and Stepove.

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 operational situation is unchanged. The enemy, after a long break, used aviation in the area of Novosilka.

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 at sea. They are located along the southwestern coast of Crimea; among them is one surface ship - a carrier of cruise missiles "Kalibr". Up to 8 missiles can be ready for use.

In the Sea of Azov waters, 2 patrol boats are stationed on the approaches to the Mariupol and Berdyansk seaports to block the Azov coast.

Enemy aviation continues to fly from the Crimean airfields of Belbek, Saki, Dzhankoy and Gvardiyske over the northwestern part of the Black Sea.

"Grain Initiative": The NEVA ship with a humanitarian cargo of Ukrainian wheat arrived in Somalia. The NEVA is the third vessel under the #GrainFromUkraine program that arrived at the destination port. It has 25,000 tons of food wheat on board. This is part of humanitarian aid from Ukraine to Ethiopia and Somalia, which are on the brink of famine. The governments of Finland, France and Japan bore the costs of cargo logistics. The bulk carrier NEVA left the port of Odesa on December 9. This is already the second batch of Ukrainian wheat for Somalia. In the fall, a ship with 28,500 tons of grain was sent from the Pivdenny port as part of the "Grain Initiative".

The #GrainFromUkraine program was initiated by the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenski. Its essence is direct purchases of Ukrainian grain by partner countries and its transfer to countries experiencing a humanitarian crisis. The program is implemented in partnership with the World Food Program under the auspices of the United Nations.

Russian operational losses from 24.02 to 30.12.22

Personnel - almost 105,250 people (+650);

Tanks - 3,026 (+8)

Armored combat vehicles – 6,059 (+12);

Artillery systems – 2,010 (+6);

Multiple rocket launchers (MLRS) - 423 (0);

Anti-aircraft warfare systems - 212 (0);

Vehicles and fuel tanks – 4,683 (+8);

Aircraft - 283 (0);

Helicopters – 268 (0);

UAV operational and tactical level – 1,740 (+23);

Intercepted cruise missiles - 711 (+58);

Boats/ships - 16 (0).

Ukraine, general news

On Friday, President Volodymyr Zelensky held another meeting of the Staff of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief on the operational situation at the front, improving air defense and restoring the energy system of Ukraine.

The government cyber emergency response team CERT-UA registered and investigated 2,100 cyber incidents and attacks in 2022, more than 1,500 of them since the beginning of Russia's full-scale military aggression. According to CERT-UA, hostile hackers most often attack the public sector, accounting for about a quarter of all investigated cases. Cyberattacks on energy companies differ in their implementation and preparation complexity, making them more challenging to detect. Companies that provide services, hardware and software for energy companies are also under constant attack. In addition, hostile hackers actively attacked the logistics, telecom, commercial, defense sectors, etc.

A large batch of Starlink stations arrived in Ukraine from Poland, Minister of Digital Transformation, Mykhailo Fedoriv, said. Earlier, President Zelensky signed laws for the preferential import of Starlink and generators.

The government, together with the World Bank and the European Commission, conducted the first verified assessment of the funds needed to restore Ukraine; it is about 700 billion dollars, said Prime Minister of Ukraine Denys Shmyhal during a government meeting. He emphasized that Ukraine will do everything possible to confiscate hundreds of billions of dollars frozen in the West and direct them to the restoration.

The Ministry of Justice of Ukraine announced the beginning of the process of creating an international Registry of damages caused by the armed aggression of the Russian Federation. It is the first step towards implementing Resolution A/RES/ES-11/5, adopted by the UN General Assembly on November 14. The draft resolution aims to create a mechanism to compensate Ukraine for damages caused by the war, which was launched and is still being waged by Russia against Ukraine.

International diplomatic aspect

Just before changing ambassadorship to the United States for China's Foreign Minister post, Qin Gang published an article in the National Interest, outlining the worldview of Beijing, thus blueprinting his approach. He expressed China's "high concern about the situation in Ukraine." China is shy to call the "situation" a proper term – aggression, which would be the case if one adheres to the UN Charter and reads the UN General Assembly's Resolution 3314 (XXIX) of 1974 on the definition of aggression.

Leaving aside diplomatic wording that "conflicts and wars produce no winner; there is no simple solution to a complex issue; confrontation between major countries must be avoided," Qin Gang speaks his mind. He believes that the most urgent task is to "promote peace talks between Russia and Ukraine," which is formally logical but factually meaningless, given Moscow's demand for Ukraine to accept the illegal annexation of its territories as a starter. Qin Gang went further, pushing a dialogue between the US, the EU, NATO, and Russia. He states that this is a proxy war of the West against Russia. That's why, he says, "in the long term, people [the Americans] must realize that grounding one's own security on other countries' insecurity won't work." It shows both acceptance of the Kremlin's narrative of NATO's encirclement of Russia and China's own concerns. China isn't willing to tie its hands with ally relations, including with Moscow, and nervously reacts to the US strategy to build a network of alliances and partnerships in the Indo-Pacific region. By saying that "it is necessary to establish a balanced, effective, and sustainable European security framework," Qin Gang also talks about China's desire to be within security structures, where it can overweight rather than be a potential adversary against which security arrangements are being formed.

The [newly-appointed] Foreign Minister rejects a "democracy vs authoritarianism" perspective, which will "very likely usher in a world of division, competition, and conflict." Instead, Qin Gang

believes it is possible to pursue "openness, cooperation, and win-win outcomes." But he doesn't explain how Russia, a revisionist power with a zero-sum game mindset, might be a partner for "openness, cooperation, and win-win outcomes," not to mention to be a part of a "sustainable European security framework."

"We share the same views on the causes, course, and logic of the ongoing transformation of the global geopolitical landscape," Vladimir Putin told Xi Jinping in a virtual meeting. "In the face of unprecedented pressure and provocations from the West, we defend our principled positions and defend not only our own interests but also all those who stand for a truly democratic system and the right of countries to freely determine their own destiny," he said hoping to get in return assurance of support and further deepening partnership.

Xi expressed the readiness to "stand against hegemonism and power politics," opposing unilateralism in international relations and protectionism. The Chinese leader said that the countries should "strengthen strategic coordination" and "inject more stability into the world." However, Xi didn't unleash his criticism of the West and is unlikely to increase the kind of support that might help Putin to continue the war. Xi didn't mention the military and military-technical cooperation that Putin did. Beijing is more interested in calming down the situation and might softly push Russia to find a way out, though it is an unlikely option for Vladimir Putin.

Following Angela Merkel's path, François Hollande argued that the Minsk arrangements bought Ukraine time to prepare militarily. Though the former German Chancellor explicitly said she had considered giving Ukraine time to prepare, the former French President noted that it was rather the merit of the Minsk arrangements. Neither Germany nor France provided Ukraine with defensive weapons at the time. Thus, the point about a deliberate pause for boosting defense readiness is rather a revision of the actual intentions and events given new circumstances.

At the same time, he rejects any benefits of "dialogue for the sake of dialogue". He insists that it "can even have negative consequences by suggesting that responsibilities are shared and by offering a convenient communication framework for Putin." This statement is in line with Ukraine's criticism of Emmanuel Macron's position.

Nevertheless, Hollande belongs to the camp that believes negotiations are the last step to conclude "a conflict". He further said that the Minsk arrangements "can be resurrected to establish a legal framework already accepted by all parties."

Russia, relevant news

At the entrances to the illegally built bridge across the Kerch Strait ("Crimean Bridge") and at the bridge itself, a traffic jam of 5 kilometers has formed. The police check every car. Some drivers stay in line for 11 hours. The enhanced inspection of vehicles is carried out as part of the "yellow level of terrorist danger", which was extended on the occupied peninsula until January 21.

Since the beginning of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the richest Russians have lost more than \$93 billion of their wealth, Bloomberg calculated. According to the agency, on February 24,

Russian businessmen lost \$46.6 billion. In the months following the imposition of Western sanctions, they lost another \$47 billion.

From July to September 2022, Russians transferred 1.47 trillion rubles to accounts in foreign banks, which is 26 times more than for the same period in 2021, reported RBC with reference to the statistics of the Central Bank of Russia. In total, in 2022, Russians withdrew more than 2.5 trillion rubles from the country. RBC writes that the results [of private funds transfer to foreign banks] of the three quarters of 2022 have become record-breaking in the entire history of the observed Central Bank since 2018, Meduza reports. **Snapshot of the day:**

General, humanitarian:

- Ukrainian energy system was not seriously damaged in today's massive Russian attack
- President Zelensky addressed the Russian people and said that the only reason for the war is Putin's desire to stay in power.
- 1,596 people have been freed from Russian captivity this year

Military:

- There is no change in the operational situation. The Russian command plans to intensify its efforts in the area of Bakhmut. Russia is peppering for defense in Zaporizhzhia direction.

International:

- Russia launched a new wave of missiles at Ukraine, while Putin addressed his subjects in a company of faked militaries. Russian Foreign Ministry believes that Moscow acts within international law and gathers the support of most foreign countries.
- Ukraine has secured vital support for the fight for its freedom. Though the war isn't over, justice and reparation tracks are active ones. Ukraine has inflicted a strategic defeat on Russia, though it still needs to achieve its strategic goals.

Russia:

- President Putin instructed the Russian Cabinet to draft a strategy and launch domestic mass UAV production.

Humanitarian aspect:

As a result of preventive technical measures and the excellent work of the Air Defense Forces, Ukraine's energy system was not seriously damaged after another Russian missile attack on Saturday, December 31, the Ukrainian Minister of Energy Herman Halushchenko said.

Russian attacks on civilians

1 person died, and 22 were injured due to the Russian attack on Kyiv on December 31. A Japanese journalist who stayed at hotel Alfavito in downtown **Kyiv**, damaged by the attack, was wounded and taken to the hospital, Kyiv Mayor Vitaliy Klychko reported.

Two children, a brother and a sister aged 13 and 12, respectively, were heavily injured due to a Russian strike on a school in the village of Naddnipryanske not far from **Kherson**. They were both taken to the local hospital, the head of Kherson OMA Yaroslav Yanushevych said.

As a result of the Russian missile strike in **Zaporizhzhia**, 4 people were injured, including a pregnant woman and a teenage girl. They are in the emergency ward in serious condition.

On Saturday, 6 people were injured in **Mykolaiv** in the south of Ukraine and 8 people were injured in **Khmelnyskyi** in the west of Ukraine as a result of a Russian missile strike, heads of the respective Oblast Military Administrations reported.

POWs

Ukraine conducted another prisoner exchange, bringing 140 people back home. Among them are the wounded defenders of Mariupol, Snake Island, territorial defense volunteers from Slavutych, and Ukrainian defenders from the Bakhmut direction. This is the 35th exchange implemented by the Coordinating Headquarters for the Treatment of Prisoners of War since the beginning of the full-scale invasion. 1,596 people, including both military servicemen and civilians, have been freed from Russian captivity this year.

Environment

1,042 events that took place on the territory of Ukraine as a result of the military intervention of the Russian Federation and caused damage to the environment were recorded in the Unified Register of Damages. The total amount of damage caused to atmospheric air, land and water resources exceeds 1.5 trillion hryvnias," said the first deputy head, of the State Environmental Inspectorate, Dmytro Zaruba.

Occupied territories:

Russia continues the integration of the recently annexed Ukrainian territories. The 1st and 2nd army corps of the so-called DPR and LPR are included in the Russian Armed Forces, Russian newspaper Kommersant reports. The occupation administrations told doctors, utility workers and others that they had to get Russian passports to continue working. In addition, they must write a statement renouncing Ukrainian citizenship, the National Resistance Center of the Ukrainian MOD reported.

Operational situation

(Please note that this section of the Brief is mainly on the previous day's (December 30) developments)

It is the 311th 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 Russian military launched 5 missile attacks and 29 air strikes, including 26 air strikes on critical infrastructure. In particular, the Russian forces used 10 Shahed-136 UAVs, but all of them were shot down. In addition, they fired 80 MRLS rounds, also hitting peaceful towns and villages.

The Russian military continues offensive actions in the areas of Bukhmut and Avdiivka and tries to improve its tactical position in Kupyansk and Avdiivka directions.

The situation remains stable in the Volyn, Polissya, Siversk and Slobozhansk directions; no signs of the formation of the offensive groupings have been detected.

The threat of Russian air and missile strikes on Ukraine's critical infrastructure still persists.

Aviation of the Ukrainian Defense Forces made 10 strikes on the Russian military concentration areas, 3 strikes on the positions of anti-aircraft missile systems. An enemy reconnaissance UAV "Orlan-10" was shot down.

Units of the Ukrainian Defense Forces missile and artillery troops hit one enemy command and control post, 7 areas of Russian manpower and military equipment concentration, 5 ammunition depots and 2 Russian radars.

Kharkiv direction

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- *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 military is trying to stabilize its defenses in the Kreminna area. It unsuccessfully attacked the areas of Stelmakhivka, Nevske, Chervonopopivka and Bilohorivka.

Two BTGs of the 137th parachute airborne regiment of the 106th parachute airborne division have arrived in the Popasna area. We should expect that they will be put into operation in the directions Popasna – Soledar or Popasna – Bakhmut.

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;*
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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 tries to break through the Ukrainian Joint Forces' defence in Bakhmut. It unsuccessfully attacked near Soledar, Bilohorivka, Bakhmutske, Pidhorodne, Bakhmut, and Klishchiivka.

In the area of Soledar, the Russian military concentrates operational reserves of 4-5 BTGs from the 56th and 108th air assault regiments of the 7th air assault division. The fact that this grouping is deployed immediately behind the battle formations of the "Wagner" PMC detachments is indicative. It can be considered an indirect response to the video message of the "Wagner" mercenaries criticizing the General Staff Commander of the Russian Armed Forces.

The Russian command plans to intensify its efforts in the area of Bakhmut. For this purpose, it redeployed up to four BTGs of the 20th motorized rifle division to the 150th motorized rifle division of the 8th Combined arms army of the Southern Military District, which will be put into operation in the area of Avdiivka, Mayorsk or in the direction of Mariinka - 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 command combined its C2 intended to maintain the land corridor to Crimea and formed the "Dnieper" operational grouping of troops. The commander of the Airborne Forces of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, Colonel General M. Teplinsky performs the duties of its commander.

Preparations for a defensive operation in this direction are ongoing:

- measures are taken to restore the combat capability of the 205th and 34th separate motorized rifle brigades of the 49th Army by transferring units of the so-called "Territorial troops" (formed from mobilized military units of light infantry) from the Autonomous Republic of Crimea;
- operational reserves are being deployed in the Crimea and Melitopol directions, for which the newly formed 44th airborne division (111th rifle regiment of the mobilization

reserve and 387th motorized rifle regiment of the territorial troops (a significant share of the officers of the tactical unit of the regiment are officers of the Ryazan Guards Higher Airborne Command School)) and the 104th air assault division (1044th motorized rifle regiment of the territorial troops, the formation of the second regiment of the division continues at the base of the 83rd separate airborne assault brigade in Ulyanovsk);

- a logistics hub was deployed in Dzhankoi, and two logistics routes, Mariupol – Berdyansk – Prymorske – Melitopol – Kakhovka and Dzhankoi – Krasnoperekopsk – Armyansk – Brylivka, were deployed.

The regrouping of troops is carried out under cover of large-scale transports of the Russian territorial troop units.

In the Polohy and Velyka Bilozerka areas, Russian losses amounted to 115 wounded soldiers. 5 units of military equipment, an anti-aircraft missile complex and an ammunition depot were destroyed.

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.*

There is no change in the operational situation. About 200 Russian invaders were destroyed in the area of Fedorivka village of Kakhovka district.

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 constantly changes the number of ships at sea. Since the morning of December 31, there have been 5 ships at sea, and none of them was a Kalibr missile carrier. But

at the same time, the Russian Navy keeps ships and submarines in Sevastopol, which can have up to 32 Kalibr missiles, ready to go to sea in 2-4 hours. According to preliminary information, Kalibr missiles were used by the Russian Air Force during the massive missile attack on Ukraine on December 31, 2022.

In the Sea of Azov, on the approach to the Mariupol and Berdiansk seaports, 1 patrol boat is located with the purpose of blocking the Azov coast.

Russian aviation continues to fly from the Crimean airfields of Belbek and Hvardiyske over the northwestern part of the Black Sea. During the day, about 20 sorties of Russian aircraft over the Black Sea were recorded.

Russian operational losses from 24.02 to 31.12.22

Personnel - almost 109,960 people (+710);

Tanks 3,029 (+3)

Armored combat vehicles – 6,075 (+16);

Artillery systems – 2,016 (+6);

Multiple rocket launchers (MLRS) - 423 (0);

Anti-aircraft warfare systems - 213 (+1);

Vehicles and fuel tanks – 4,707 (+24);

Aircraft - 283 (0);

Helicopters – 269 (+1);

UAV operational and tactical level – 1,740 (+23);

Intercepted cruise missiles - 711 (0);

Boats/ships - 16 (0).

Ukraine, general news

During his regular video address, President Zelensky said that the missile attack on New Year's Eve came from non-humans. He called the attackers terrorists and said they would lose and there would be no forgiveness for them. He also stressed that despite their claims of being Christians, these kinds of acts have nothing to do with Christianity. Addressing the Russian people in Russian, he said that the war "is for one person to remain in power until the end of his life. And what will be left of all of you, citizens of Russia - he does not care."

International diplomatic aspect

Russians launched twenty cruise missiles against Ukrainian cities as a final senseless act of terror on New Year's Eve. Vladimir Putin addressed his subjects on the background of security service agents pretending to be military. He backed his war by saying that "last year was a year of turning events that laid the foundation for Russia's future and independence. The truth is on the side of Russia, which protects its people on its historical territories."

Russian Foreign Ministry reported about "firmly defended national interests, based on the purposes and principles of the UN Charter and international law." Moscow believes that its actions were positively assessed by "a majority of the world community." The Kremlin accused

NATO of provocations on its western borders and the "collective West" of refusing Russian demands [blackmail] for security guarantees.

Most of the international community supports Ukraine's fight for freedom by providing weapons, finances, and humanitarian assistance. Meanwhile, Ukraine's diplomacy (from President Zelensky to Ukrainian soldiers and ordinary citizens) may enjoy significant success. Moreover, Ukraine's success is a part of Joe Biden's foreign policy legacy and is an integral element of the European future.

Ukraine's resistance and Western support caused Russia's strategic defeat, though it's not Ukraine's victory yet. The geopolitical overstretch will put an end to Moscow's ability to return to the world stage as a powerful actor. Russia has lost almost all its leverage over Europe it had been building for decades. The Kremlin lost the lucrative energy market and access to technologies and high-tech goods. Russia won't be able to redirect its energy streams eastwards, and the green shift pushes the commodities-dependent economy to compete for less attractive markets on the sidelines of the global economy.

Kyiv succeeded in gathering support for bringing Russia to justice, including by a special tribunal. The countries of the Free world provide support for collecting, processing evidence, and making court cases against war criminals and extend their jurisdiction to crimes committed by Russians in Ukraine.

Western countries are working out a legal framework to redirect Russia's frozen assets for Ukraine's reconstruction. There is an understanding that Ukraine needs to enjoy further support for strengthening its defense capabilities to repel further aggression. Ukraine has not achieved its strategic goals yet. Still, it's plausible, while Russian territorial gains are not strategic, there is no chance the Kremlin can get away with it without further worsening its strategic outlook.

Russia, relevant news

Russian President Putin instructed the government to adopt the strategy for developing unmanned aircraft until 2030 and for the future until 2035 by June 1, 2023, the Kremlin press service reports. Mass production of drones and their components is planned. A government commission is to be set up to prepare proposals for implementing the production, certification and operation of UAVs, as well as a training program for specialists. Before April 1 next year, a government procurement plan for domestic drones is to be drafted. The plan should be drawn up for the period up to 2030 and provide for an increase in the supply of unmanned aerial systems for civil and special purposes. Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin must determine the sources and annual amount of funding for this project, including from the federal budget, by September 2023.

On New Year's Eve, more than 1.8 thousand military personnel will be involved in Moscow's air defense and missile defense. In total, during the New Year holidays and weekends, about 20 thousand military personnel will be involved, the press service of the Russian Ministry of

Defense reported. A move that would have been absolutely unnecessary had Russia not attacked Ukraine in February of this year.

Six armed prisoners, forcibly recruited into "Wagner" PMC escaped from a training camp in Luhansk Oblast. Now they are being searched for on the territory of Russia. The prisoners were brought to the front line a few days ago. The men allegedly agreed to sign a contract with Prigozhin's PMC. However, after signing the "documents", they grabbed their weapons and fled the Russian media report.

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