
Snapshot of the day:

General, humanitarian:

- Russian forces attacked 9 Ukrainian regions on February 17, at least three regions reported civilians killed in the shelling;
- Ukrainian air defense shot down 2 out of 4 missiles fired at Ukraine today from the Black Sea;
- 77% of displaced Ukrainian children witnessed shelling and bombing, 4% went through filtration camps;
- Two Russian cruise missiles flew dangerously close to Pivdennoukrainska NPP, risking a nuclear disaster;
- There is no electricity shortage in the Ukrainian power system, and imports from Slovakia are insignificant.

Military:

- The main enemy's efforts are concentrated on offensive actions in the Kupyansk, Lyman, Bakhmut, Avdiivka and Shakhtarsk directions;
- Unfavorable weather conditions limit the Russian military to using the Orlan UAVs, which reduces the effectiveness of the Russian grouping's artillery;
- The enemy is critically short of tactical officers.
- **Possible operation situation developments:** The enemy would continue efforts to capture Bakhmut before February 24, enter the approaches to the Sloviansk-Kramatorsk agglomeration, and take control of Avdiivka, Maryinka, and Vuhledar.

International:

- The US formally accused Russia of crimes against humanity in Ukraine.
- The UK announced longer-range weapons for Ukraine and readiness to "help any country, provide planes that Ukraine can use today."
- Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee is for giving "everything they [Ukrainians] need to win this thing," including "longer range artillery to hit the Iranian drones in Crimea." Michael McCaul believes there is a bipartisan majority in Congress, so Ukraine could get another round of funding.
- The Netherlands had enough with the Russian spies, so it sent them off and reduced the number of Russian diplomatic personnel.
- Xi Jinping's top foreign policy adviser announced that Beijing would present a peace proposal for Ukraine. However, it's unlikely to satisfy Ukraine.
- Kamala Harris warned PRC not to provide Russia with lethal support that "would only reward aggression, continue the killing, and further undermine a rules-based order."

Humanitarian aspect:

77% of Ukrainian displaced children witnessed shelling and bombing, 73% were in bomb shelters, and almost 30% survived the occupation, according to the *Children and War* study conducted by the SOS Children's Villages charity organization. 4% of young Ukrainians passed through Russian filtration camps, and about 8% of children survived hunger and lack of access to drinking water.

Russian attacks

Russian forces attacked 9 Ukrainian Oblasts on February 17, at least three Oblasts reported civilians killed in the shelling.

- The Russian military shelled **Chernihiv and Sumy Oblasts** in the north of Ukraine. No victims were reported. 120 hits, including 2 by S300 missiles, were recorded in Sumy Oblast.
- Residential areas were shelled in **Zaporizhzhia and Dnipropetrovsk Oblasts** in the center of Ukraine. A 76-year-old woman was injured in the Nikopol district of Dnipropetrovsk Oblast. The authorities received 14 reports of damaged infrastructure in Zaporizhzhia.
- 3 districts were shelled in **Kharkiv Oblast**, namely Chuhuyiv, Kupyansk and Kharkiv. In Vovchansk, of Chuhuyiv district, the CP "Center for primary medical and sanitary care" buildings were damaged. A 68-year-old civilian died in Kupyansk.
- The situation remains hard in **Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts**. Shelling and air strikes were recorded in Luhansk Oblast. In Donetsk Oblast, there is constant shelling of the villages in Maryinka and Soledar communities. There are 3 dead, 5 wounded in Donetsk Oblast.
- **Kherson Oblast** is under constant Russian shelling, the suburbs and the city of Kherson, as well as the districts of more than 25 villages, were affected by Russian artillery fire. 1 person died, and 3 were injured in the Oblast over the last day.

On the morning of February 18, two explosions were recorded in **Khmelnysky**, in the west of Ukraine. A military facility was hit. There is also another hit near a public transport stop. Civilian houses, 3 educational institutions were damaged by the blast wave, hundreds of windows were broken, and 11 cars were damaged.

Energoatom reported that on February 18, during another massive Russian missile attack on the Pivdenoukrainska NPP at 8:25 and 8:27 a.m., the flights of two enemy cruise missiles were recorded. They moved along the Pivdenny Bug River in the direction of Pervomaiske, Mykolaiv Oblast, and flew dangerously close to the nuclear facility, Energoatom said. It accused Russia of another act of nuclear terrorism.

Ukrainian air defense shot down 2 out of 4 missiles fired at Ukraine today from the Black Sea, reported the Air Force of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

Energy

Due to the threat of a missile attack, emergency power outages were applied in Kyiv, and Kyiv, Odesa and Dnipropetrovsk Oblasts. This was a forced preemptive step to avoid significant damage to the energy infrastructure if enemy missiles reached the target, DTEK explained. Power supplies were restored after the end of the attack.

There is no shortage of electricity in the system. Consumption is down compared to Friday, and imports from Slovakia are insignificant. Some limitations were applied in Odesa and Kyiv Oblasts due to the damaged networks, Ukrenergo reported.

Operational situation

General conclusion:

- The main efforts of the enemy are concentrated on offensive actions in the Kupyansk, Lyman, Bakhmut, Avdiivka and Shakhtarsk directions;
- Unfavorable weather conditions limit the enemy use of the Orlan UAVs, which reduces the effectiveness of the Russian grouping's artillery;
- The enemy is critically short of tactical officers.

Battleline:

- Units of the Ukrainian Defense Forces repelled Russian attacks in the areas of Hryanykivka and Synkivka, Kharkiv Oblast; Stelmakhivka, Chervonopopivka and Kreminna in Luhansk Oblast and Vyimka, Fedorivka, Dubovo-Vasylivka, Rozdolivka, Paraskoviivka, Berkhivka, Bakhmut, Ivanivske, Chasiv Yar, Vesele, Vodyane, Maryinka, Pobyeda, Novomykhailivka and Vuhledar in Donetsk Oblast;
- The 95th separate airborne assault brigade of the Ukrainian Armed Forces launched a counterattack and repulsed the Russian forces, reaching the outskirts of Dibrova and Kuzmine.
- The Russian military stormed Bilohorivka from three sides, the village was practically destroyed, but it remained under the control of Ukrainian Defense Forces. In the Soledar area, the enemy continued to advance from Mykolaivka to Vasyukivka, Fedorivka, and Rozdolivka.
- The new front line of the Ukrainian Joint Forces in the Paraskoviivka area runs along the frontier on the hills east of the M03 highway from Zaliznyanske to southwestern Paraskoviivka and further to the northern outskirts of Krasna Hora. On the eastern outskirts of Bakhmut, units of the Joint Forces have stopped the Russian advance and are pushing the Russian forces out of the city, successively clearing the city blocks.
- With the forces of the 3rd separate motorized rifle brigade of the 1st army corps and a detachment of the "Wagner" PMC, the enemy attacked Ivanivka and Chasiv Yar to block the T0504 highway. Fierce assaults, which sometimes turned into hand-to-hand combat, were repulsed, and the Ukrainian Joint Forces held their positions.

Change in enemy disposition:

- An artillery brigade and a part of an artillery regiment were withdrawn from near Bakhmut to restore combat capability;
- From the accounts of prisoners of war, it is known that the remnants of the 40th and 155th separate marines brigades and the 72nd separate motorized rifle brigade of the 3rd army corps were joined into a combined brigade operating in the Vuhledar area.
- The former commander of the 8th army, Lieutenant General Andriy Mordvichev, was appointed commander of the troops of the Central Military District.

Escalation indicators: Not detected

Possible operation situation developments:

- The Russian forces will continue their efforts to capture Bakhmut before February 24, enter the approaches to the Sloviansk-Kramatorsk agglomeration, and take control of Avdiivka, Maryinka, and Vuhledar.

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 has 12 surface ships at sea performing tasks south of the Crimean Peninsula. Of them, two corvettes of the Buyan-M type and a *project 1135.6* frigate are carriers of Kalibr missiles. In total, they have up to 12 missiles on board.
- On the morning of February 18, the Buyan-M corvette launched 6 Kalibr missiles at Ukraine (from the external raid of the port of Feodosia).
- Two *project 1135.6* frigates and two *project 636.3* submarines are in Sevastopol, ready to go to sea. One "Buyan-M" corvette is in Feodosia, ready to go to sea.
- Eight amphibious ships are in Sevastopol (three are under repair), and four are in Novorossiysk. There are a total of 12 large amphibious ships in the Black Sea, of which 6 belong to the Black Sea Fleet of the Russian Federation, and three ships each to the Baltic and Northern Fleets.
- One patrol boat was on duty in the Sea of Azov waters.
- Russian aviation continues to fly from the Crimean airfields of Belbek, Saky, Dzhankoy and Hvardiyske over the northwestern part of the Black Sea. During the day, 20 sorties of Russian aircraft over the Black Sea were recorded.
- The intensity of the military equipment movement from Crimea to Kherson Oblast by road and rail transport remains steady, with freight trains arriving to unload military equipment and ammunition at the stations of "Kalanchak", "Brylivka" and "Novooleksiyivka".
- On February 17, the Russian forces launched mortar attacks on the water area and the coastal strip of the Ochakiv community. On February 18, the enemy again shelled a village in Ochakiv Community with anti-aircraft guns. As a result, residential buildings were damaged, and commercial buildings caught fire.
- Next week, negotiations will resume on the "**Grain Deal**" extension after the end of March 2023. It is expected that the Grain Deal may be extended to the port of Mykolaiv and, accordingly, the transportation of ammonia from the Port of Pivdenny may resume. Also, the Ukrainian side will insist on speeding up inspections of vessels in the Bosphorus Strait, which are being deliberately delayed by the Russian side.

Russian operational losses from 24.02.22 to 18.02.23

Personnel - almost 142,270 people (+1010)

Tanks - 3,303 (+5)

Armored combat vehicles – 6,533 (+13);

Artillery systems – 2,326 (+4);

Multiple rocket launchers (MLRS) - 469 (+2);

Anti-aircraft warfare systems - 243 (+2);

Vehicles and fuel tanks – 5,196 (+9);

Aircraft - 298 (0);

Helicopters – 287 (0);

UAV operational and tactical level – 2,016 (+3);

Intercepted cruise missiles - 871 (0);

Boats/ships – 18 (0).

International diplomatic aspect

"Based on a careful analysis of the law and available facts, I have determined that members of Russia's forces and other Russian officials have committed crimes against humanity in Ukraine," the US Secretary of State declared. The United States believes that the acts of execution-style killings; torture of civilians, electrocution, and mock executions; rape; deportations of hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian civilians to Russia, including children forcibly separated from their parents, are "not random or spontaneous; they are part of the Kremlin's widespread and systematic attack against Ukraine's civilian population." The US is determined not to allow impunity for these crimes and will "pursue justice for the people of Ukraine for as long as it takes."

The UK will be the "first country to provide Ukraine with longer-range weapons," the Prime Minister announced. Britain also "stands ready to help any country, provide planes that Ukraine can use today," in addition to announced training of Ukrainian pilots to use the most advanced jets, "so that Ukraine has the capability to defend its security for the long term," Rishi Sunak said. He called on the partners to double down on our military, particularly on more artillery, armored vehicles, and air defense for "Ukraine to gain a decisive advantage on the battlefield to win the war, and a political strategy to win the peace."

The United States should give Ukrainians "everything they need to win this thing," Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Republican Representative Michael McCaul, said. Meeting with US Army Gen. Christopher Cavoli, NATO's supreme allied commander, both agreed on the necessity of sending more air-to-surface missiles, as well as "longer range artillery to hit the Iranian drones in Crimea, which currently Ukraine does not have, but they desperately need." Michael McCaul believes that Ukraine could get another round of funding, "I believe so. It would have to be bipartisan," he said, because "there are fringes on the far-left and -right who disagree with this conflict and assisting and helping Ukraine win this fight for democracy and freedom, but the majority of the majority still support this effort."

"Despite numerous attempts by the Netherlands to find a solution, Russia continues to try to get intelligence officers into the Netherlands under diplomatic cover," Foreign Affairs Minister Wopke Hoekstra said. Home to the International Criminal Court and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the Netherlands is an attractive target for Russian espionage. The Dutch government expelled 17 Russian intelligence officers right after the all-out invasion. Now, the government limits the number of Russian diplomats in the Netherlands to the number it has in Russia.

Latvia has come up with an idea of how to cope with drunk driving and help Ukraine. Inspired by the concept of the convoys/NGO Agendum, which has already delivered more than 1,000 cars to the UAF, the government launched a program of sending impounded cars to Ukraine instead of selling them off that was before.

Wang Yi, a top foreign policy adviser to Chinese President Xi Jinping, announced that Beijing would present a peace proposal for Ukraine. However, it's unlikely to satisfy Ukraine, for China is still shy to call Russia's actions war or aggression. Moreover, China's "adherence" to the UN Charter has been seen in abstention during the UN General Assembly's vote on the Territorial integrity of Ukraine (68/262 of 27 March 2014) and on Aggression against Ukraine (ES-11/1 of 2 March 2022).

The Chinese representative alluded that the proposal would reiterate the principle of respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity and warn against the use of nuclear weapons. But it will also mention the "legitimate security concerns," which means Beijing's support of the Kremlin's narrative about NATO expansion's "threat" to Russia.

"Of course, we have also seen nations like North Korea and Iran send weapons in support of Russia's brutal war. We are also troubled that Beijing has deepened its relationship with Moscow since the war began," the US Vice President told the Munich Security Conference. Kamala Harris warned China not to provide Russia with lethal support that "would only reward aggression, continue the killing, and further undermine a rules-based order."

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