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**Snapshot of the day:**

**General, humanitarian:**

- Russian forces attacked 9 regions of Ukraine on February 18; there were killed and wounded civilians.
- Russia blocks the rotation of IAEA experts at the Zaporizhzhia NPP. Also, Russia continues to station military personnel and military equipment on the territory of the nuclear plant, as well as on the adjacent territories. Ukraine's Ministry of Foreign Affairs called on the international community to take immediate steps to expand sanctions against Rosatom, its affiliated companies and to end cooperation with the Russian Federation in the field of nuclear technologies, as well as limiting the rights and privileges of Russia in the IAEA.
- This week, the Russians changed their tactics of missile attacks.
- Ukraine will not take part in the official events of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly during the winter session in protest of the Russian delegation. However, Ukraine's delegation will take part in negotiations with partners on how to get the OSCE out of the crisis.

**Military:**

- The enemy will continue to focus on offensive operations in the Kupyansk, Lyman, Bakhmut, Avdiivka and Shakhtarsk directions.
- **Possible operation situation developments:** the enemy will continue its efforts to capture Bakhmut by February 24, to enter the approaches to the Sloviansk-Kramatorsk agglomeration and to take control of Avdiivka, Maryinka and Vuhledar.
- The enemy continues shelling the Ochakiv port, trying to prevent Mykolaiv from joining the ports of the Grain Initiative.

**International:**

- Russia may be planning a false flag operation involving radioactive substances.
- US Secretary of State warned China not to assist Russia's war efforts in Ukraine.
- Two leading Republican, House Foreign Affairs and Intelligence committees' chairs, called on President Joe Biden to increase military aid to Ukraine.
- Putin's chief hitman Ramzan Kadyrov expressed his desire to establish his own private military company.
- Viktor Orban believes Moscow doesn't pose a threat to Europe and Hungary won't wind down economic relations with Russia.

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**Humanitarian aspect:**

In Ukraine, as a result of the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation, 461 children died, and 924 were injured, reported the Prosecutor General's Office.

**Russian attacks**

The Russian army carried out attacks on nine regions of Ukraine on February 18, according to the consolidated report of the regional military administrations (OMAs).

Consequences of enemy shelling:

- On February 18 morning, the enemy struck twice at **Khmelnyskyi**, hitting a military facility and a public transport stop. The blast wave damaged 8 high-rise buildings, three educational institutions, 7 private houses, and eight objects of business activity. Two wounded were provided with medical assistance.
- In **Sumy Oblast** the enemy shelled several communities. More than 75 hits were recorded. As a result of the shelling of Ryzhivka village, 5 households were damaged, three houses are uninhabitable (due to direct impact), and a car was damaged.
- In the **Dnipropetrovsk Oblast** yesterday afternoon, the Russians shelled the Nikopol district four times and hit Marhanets and Nikopol with heavy artillery. In Nikopol, two lyceums, a hospital, a lawyer's office, eight high-rise buildings, and a broken power line were damaged. Several private houses and farm buildings were damaged in Marhanets.
- Over the past day, the Russian military shelled 10 border towns and villages of Chuhuyiv (1 killed), Kupyansk (2 wounded) and Kharkiv districts of **Kharkiv Oblast**. In Kupyansk, the administrative building, garages and cars were damaged. In Dvorichna village, the emergency medical facility was damaged.
- In Avdiivka, **Donetsk Oblast**, the House of Culture and numerous residential buildings were damaged by shelling; the exact consequences are being clarified. In the middle of the day, the enemy struck Ukrayinsk from "Smerch"; 19 residential buildings, a school and a sports school were damaged. The enemy carried rocket attacks on Druzhkivka. Two high-rise buildings and private cars were damaged. Information about the victims is being clarified.
- Yesterday, the occupiers shelled the districts of Malynivka, Stepove, Mali Shcherbaky, Novodanylivka, Mala Tokmachka and Biloghiryia of **Zaporizhzhia Oblast**. Law enforcement officers received 1 report about the destruction of civil infrastructure.
- Kherson, its suburbs and more than 27 towns and villages of **Kherson Oblast** were affected by enemy artillery fire. In the past day, two people were injured in the region. Another 110 people were evacuated from the territories of the Kherson Oblast liberated from the Russians, including 15 children and two people with reduced mobility.

Three people were killed, and eight were injured due to the Russian shelling of the village of Burgunka, Kherson Oblast, on February 19. One of the shells hit the courtyard of a residential building; three members of the same family were killed there. Among the victims were three children. All the wounded have been hospitalized.

## Energy

Ukrenergo reports no capacity deficit in the Ukrainian power system, and none is forecast.

Russia blocks the rotation of IAEA experts at the Zaporizhzhia NPP. Also, the aggressor country continues to station military personnel and equipment on the territory of the nuclear plant and adjacent territories, stated the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine.

The Ministry warned that Russia's criminal actions at the Ukrainian nuclear facility could lead to a catastrophe, the scale of which was unknown to Europe. "The ongoing crimes of the Russian Federation against civilian nuclear facilities in Ukraine, including the occupation of the ZNPP, obstructing the work of the IAEA and creating threats to the lives of international experts, require

an urgent international response," the statement emphasizes. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs called on the international community to take immediate steps to expand sanctions against the Russian state corporation Rosatom, its affiliated companies and institutions, and other key factors of Russia's nuclear energy industry. They separately emphasized the urgency of ultimately ending cooperation with the Russian Federation in the field of nuclear technologies, as well as limiting the rights and privileges of Russia in the IAEA.

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## **Operational situation**

### **General conclusion:**

The enemy's main efforts will continue to focus on conducting offensive operations in the Kupyansk, Lyman, Bakhmut, Avdiivka and Shakhtarsk directions.

### **Battleline:**

- Units of the Defense Forces repelled the enemy attacks in the areas of Hryanykivka and Masyutivka in Kharkiv Oblast; Bilohorivka, Chervonopopivka and Kreminna in Luhansk Oblast and Vyimka, Fedorivka, Dubovo-Vasylivka, Berkhivka, Bakhmut, Ivanivske and Chasiv Yar in Donetsk Oblast.
- Units of the 3rd motorized rifle division of the 20th Army unsuccessfully tried to attack Bilohorivka, Zarichne, and Makiyivka.
- Units of Ukraine's Defense Forces tried to advance near the Zhuravka creek and Yampolivka and restore lost positions near Ploschanka.
- Russian troops came closer to the T0504 road northeast of Klishchiivka and advanced close to Ivanivske southern and southeastern outskirts.

### **Change in enemy disposition:**

- The 3rd separate motorized rifle brigade of the 1st Army Corps was reorganized into the 132nd separate motorized rifle brigade of the Southern Military District and is now conducting combat operations near Novobakhmutivka.
- In Melitopol, personnel with identification marks of the "Wagner" PMC were spotted.

**Escalation indicators:** Not identified.

**Possible operation situation developments:** the enemy will continue its efforts to capture Bakhmut by February 24, to enter the approaches to the Sloviansk-Kramatorsk agglomeration and to 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 enemy has 10 surface ships and submarines at sea, which are carrying out tasks south of the Crimean peninsula. Of them, two submarines of *project 636.3* are carriers of Kalibr missiles. Together, they have up to 8 missiles on board.
- One patrol boat is on duty in the Sea of Azov waters.
- Enemy aviation continues to fly from the Crimean airfields of Belbek, Saki, Dzhankoy and Hvardiyske over the northwestern part of the Black Sea. During the day, 16 sorties of enemy aircraft over the Black Sea were recorded.
- The enemy continues shelling Kherson from the Velykyi Potyomkinsky and Bilohrudy islands of the Dnieper delta. The enemy intensified sabotage and reconnaissance activities and the movement of artillery and mortars to the island with the aim of constant fire on the right bank of the Dnipro river and blocking shipping. Also, to encourage the "evacuation" of civilians and discredit the Defense Forces of Ukraine, the Russian occupiers are constantly shelling civilian infrastructure objects and residential areas in the so-called "fifteen-kilometer zone" of the temporarily occupied left-bank territory of the Kherson Oblast.
- The enemy continues shelling the Ochakiv port. Another artillery strike was noted on the morning of February 19. The enemy is trying to prevent Mykolaiv from joining the ports of the Grain Initiative.

### **Russian operational losses from 24.02.22 to 19.02.23**

Personnel - almost 142,860 people (+590)

Tanks - 3,310 (+7)

Armored combat vehicles – 6,545 (+12);

Artillery systems – 2,327 (+1);

Multiple rocket launchers (MLRS) - 469 (0);

Anti-aircraft warfare systems - 243 (0);

Vehicles and fuel tanks – 5,196 (0);

Aircraft - 298 (0);

Helicopters – 287 (0);

UAV operational and tactical level – 2,016 (0);

Intercepted cruise missiles - 873 (+2);

Boats/ships – 18 (0).

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### **Ukraine, general news**

This week, the Russians changed their tactics of using rockets: if they used to launch a mass attack about once every two weeks, now they use rockets in small quantities, launching them over the rivers of the Dniester and the Southern Bug, "pressing" as low as possible to the ground, said Yuriy Ignat, the spokesman of the Air Force Command of the Ukrainian Armed Forces.

Ukraine will not take part in the official events of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly during the winter session, to be held on February 23-24 in Vienna, said Yevgenia Kravchuk, the deputy head of the Verkhovna Rada Committee on Humanitarian and Information Policy. "We will not take part in the official events of the Parliamentary Assembly, none. But we are going to Vienna for negotiations with our partners on what to do, how to get the OSCE and at least the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly out of this crisis," Kravchuk said. She reminded that the Austrian side issued visas to 61 people from the Russian delegation.

"There are not only parliamentarians who are war criminals. There are a whole bunch [of Russians], just special services, propagandists who will come to use the session of the Parliamentary Assembly simply as a decoration. Together with our Ukrainian community, we are working on protests near the Hofburg territory, where it will take place so that it does not become the norm," Kravchuk said.

### **International diplomatic aspect**

The Kremlin has been promoting various false narratives that Ukraine was developing nuclear weapons, planning to deploy a "dirty bomb," and setting up an incident at one of Ukraine's nuclear power plants. Besides justification for the illegal invasion, such narratives are likely a cover-up for Russia's false flag operation. It well may be another case this time, as Russia's defense ministry accused Ukraine of planning a "provocation" with "transferred" from one of the European countries "radioactive substances to blame Russia" on the eve of the 11 extraordinary sessions of the UN General Assembly.

US Secretary of State warned China not to assist Russia's war efforts in Ukraine. "Just weeks before the aggression, you will remember that President Xi and President Putin had a meeting in which they talked about a partnership with no limits, and we were concerned that among the lack of limits would be Chinese support for Russia in the war," Antony Blinken said. "The concern that we have now is, based on information we have, that they're considering providing lethal support. We've made it very clear to them that would cause a very serious problem for us and in our relationship."

"There's been no blank checks. Every single item that we have sent to Ukraine has been done in full consultation with Congress, and we have really enjoyed terrific bipartisan support — bicameral and bipartisan — on Capitol for support for Ukraine. And we fully expect that that will continue," National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby said on MSNBC. Two leading Republicans in the US House of Representatives called on President Joe Biden to increase military support to Ukraine. "The longer [Biden] drag this out, they play into Putin's hands. He wants this to be a long, protracted war, because he knows that potentially ... we could lose the will of the American people, and therefore the Congress," chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee Mike McCaul said. On the issue of supplying Ukraine with F-16, the Republican congressman, said that the "momentum is building for this to happen." "You have a handful on both sides, both sides, Pamela, who have been cautious or who have said that they don't support, or they want support to come to an end," chair of the House Intelligence Committee Mike Turner told CNN

anchor Pamela Brown "There are 435 members of Congress, there are probably 400 that are for continuing in this direction, in this path."

The US government estimates that the mercenary Wagner Group has suffered more than 30,000 casualties, including roughly 9,000 "soldiers of fortune" killed. About 90% of those killed in December were recruited from Russian prisons, US National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby said. Meanwhile, Putin's chief hitman Ramzan Kadyrov expressed his desire to establish his own so-called private military company [prohibited as such under Russian legislation] after he retires from the civil service. The "father of the nation," a title the Chechen "parliament" awarded Kadyrov this February, is the key figure in keeping the balance in the Republic and carries out dirty deeds for his Kremlin's boss. Boris Nemtsov, a prominent opposition leader, was shot dead near the Kremlin by a former officer in the security forces of Ramzan Kadyrov. Four more Chechen men were also prosecuted for the murder. There have been dozens of cases of Kadyrov's henchmen being involved in murders and other criminal activities. However, the "father of the nation," which is an allusion to Joseph Stalin's title, holds power by suppressing other Chechen clans, including those who fought for the Republic's independence in 1990th. Therefore, a pocket mercenary company is the way to protect the lives of Kadyrov and his minions after Vladimir Putin is no longer the czar.

"The Hungarian government does not consider the suggestion that Russia is a threat to the security of Hungary or Europe to be realistic," infamous Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban said in his annual state of the nation address. "We will keep our economic relations with Russia, and this is what we propose to our allies as well," Viktor Orban said.

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