
Snapshot of the day:

General, humanitarian:

- On February 20, the Russian army attacked eight regions of Ukraine, shelling residential areas. Victims are reported in Donetsk and Kherson Oblasts.
- There has been no energy shortage in the system for ten days, and none is expected unless there are new attacks.
- Over the year of the war, the trust of Ukrainians in the Armed Forces increased from 65 to 97% and the trust in the President from 36 to 90%. 95% of Ukrainians believe in victory and 86-87% support the EU and NATO membership. Tolerance towards LGBT has increased, while the support of capital punishment decreased.
- The Ukrainian court banned the Party of Regions, whose representative Viktor Yanukovich was ousted from the post of the President of Ukraine in the Revolution of Dignity.

Military:

- Russian military efforts are concentrated on offensive in the Kupyansk, Lyman, Bakhmut, Avdiivka and Shakhtarsk directions in the areas of Nevske, Bakhmut, Novobakhmutivka, Vodyane and Maryinka;
- Significant depletion of the 1st Army Corps units in positions in Donetsk Oblast is observed;
- Russian forces will deploy about 15 BTGs to the Orihiv area by February 24. The concentration of troops may indicate the preparations for an offensive from the direction of Robotyne, Pyatykhatka, and Novopokrivka
- **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.
- **Sea:** Iranian instructors are scheduled to arrive at the "Kacha" airfield (temporarily occupied Crimea) to train the personnel of the Russian naval aviation regiment; in March, the delivery of up to 40 of the "Shahed-136" kamikaze drones is expected.

International:

- There was almost nothing new in Vladimir Putin's "parallel reality" speech. He blamed the West for ill intent and declared that Russia wasn't "at war with the people of Ukraine."
- The only new thing Putin said was Russia's "suspension" from the last remaining strategic arms control treaty. It won't have an immediate effect and is unlikely to lead to a new arms race, given the dire straits of the Russian economy, sanctions, export control measures, etc.
- "Ukraine will never be a victory for Russia, never," was the POTUS message from Warsaw. Joe Biden reassured allies of rock-solid security guarantees..

Russian attacks

According to the Heads of Oblast Military Administrations (OMAs) as of 09:00 a.m. Tuesday, February 21, 8 regions of Ukraine were shelled and attacked by the Russian army over the past day.

- **Chernihiv Oblast:** 5 instances of artillery and mortar shelling were reported during the day; no victims or destruction were reported.
- **Sumy Oblast:** during the day, the Russian forces shelled 4 communities with no losses or destruction. In the evening, the Esman territorial community was shelled with a mortar from the territory of the Russian Federation.
- **Zaporizhzhia Oblast:** during the past day, the occupiers shelled civilian infrastructure of at least 17 towns and villages. There were 40 reports of destruction as a result of the shelling.
- **Dnipropetrovsk Oblast:** in the past day, the Russian occupying army struck the Nikopol district three times. Shells from the enemy's heavy artillery hit Marhanets and Chervonohryhorivka communities. Rescue workers were working at the sites of shelling.
- **Kharkiv Oblast:** In the Slobozhansk and Kupyansk directions, more than 25 populated areas were subjected to Russian shelling. A private residential building and commercial buildings were damaged in Novoosynove, Kupyansk district, and there were fires. A private residential building was damaged in Vovchansk, Chuhuyiv District, 3 residential buildings were damaged in Dvorichna, Kupyansk district.
- **Luhansk Oblast:** The enemy shelled Stelmakhivka, Nevske, Ploschanka, Dibrova, and Chervonopopivka and launched an airstrike on Bilohorivka. The situation in the region remains difficult.
- **Donetsk Oblast:** 40 attacks were recorded in the past 24 hours. The enemy used S-300 anti-aircraft missiles, Smerch, Grad, and artillery. Numerous damages to civil and economic objects were reported. 3 civilians were killed and 5 wounded in 24 hours.
- **Kherson Oblast:** according to the information of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, more than 35 towns and villages were affected by Russian artillery fire in the Kherson direction. As a result of the attack on Antonivka, two people were killed. Two more people were injured in the Kherson Oblast. In addition, 43 people were evacuated from the liberated territories of the Kherson Oblast, including 3 children.

On Tuesday, February 21, the Russian military shelled the center of **Kherson**, hitting a public transport stop with many people. Local publication "Most" also writes about rockets hitting a residential building in the city's center. It was reported that 5 people died and 16 were wounded in the shelling.

Energy

The Ukrainian energy system has been operating for 10 days without a power deficit; if there are no new attacks, no shortage is expected, PM Denys Shmyhal said.

Justice for the Russian war crimes

Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, Kyiv city law enforcement agencies have been investigating 1,539 crimes related to the armed aggression of the Russian Federation, the Head of the Kyiv City Prosecutor's Office, Oleg Kiper, said. In Kyiv itself, the death of 72 civilians,

including six children from the Russian attacks, is being investigated. In total, according to the results of investigations, 116 persons have been charged.

A Russian serviceman was sentenced to 12 years in prison. In March 2022, in Terekhivka, Chernihiv district, the perpetrator, together with other military personnel of the Russian Federation, forcibly held a wounded civilian in store for four days, periodically torturing him and depriving him of sleep.

Occupied territories

According to the National Resistance Center of the Ukrainian MOD, the Russian occupying authorities confiscate Ukrainian passports from the residents of the occupied territories. They go to people's homes and demand that they get property and other documents issued per Russian legislation, which is possible only if one has Russian citizenship. When applying for Russian citizenship, a Ukrainian passport must be submitted [confiscated]. Passports are also taken from those sent to the torture chamber and not returned after release. "It is also worth emphasizing that the Russians use the passports that were later selected for their DRGs [sabotage reconnaissance groups] and in other special operations against Ukraine," the National Resistance Center said.

General Staff also reports that public servants in Horlivka, Donetsk Oblast, were ordered to either get Russian citizenship or leave their jobs.

According to the President's Representative to the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, Tamila Tasheva, the illegally mobilized residents of the occupied Crimea break Russian military equipment in order not to have to fight in Russia's war against Ukraine.

Operational situation

General conclusion:

- The main efforts of the Russian military are concentrated on offensive actions in the Kupyansk, Lyman, Bakhmut, Avdiivka and Shakhtarsk directions in the areas of Nevske, Bakhmut, Novobakhmutivka, Vodyane and Maryinka;

Battleline:

- Units of the Ukrainian Defense Forces repelled Russian attacks in the areas of Hryanykivka and Masyutivka, Kharkiv Oblast; Bilohorivka in Luhansk Oblast and Vasyukivka, Berkhivka, Bakhmut, Vasylivka, Novobakhmutivka, Vodyane, Nevelske and Maryinka in Donetsk Oblast;
- The Russian forces waged positional battles at the Dvorichne - Hryanykivka frontier in Kharkiv Oblast. The enemy is actively defending and advancing slowly at the line between Svatove and Kreminna in Luhansk Oblast but cannot break through the Ukrainian defense. The Ukrainian Defense Forces sent reinforcements to Torske in Donetsk Oblast in case units of the 144th motorized rifle division resumed their assault. Russian troops tried to advance in the direction of Bilohorivka and Makiyivka and attacked near Hryhorivka and Zarichne.

- The Russian military captured Paraskoviivka, north of Bakhmut.
- Russian units cut the section of the N20 Donetsk - Kramatorsk highway near Vesele.

Enemy disposition:

- Significant depletion of the 1st Army Corps units in positions in Donetsk Oblast is observed.
- Russian troops are concentrating their forces near Orikhiv and will deploy about 15 BTGs there by February 24. The concentration of troops may be a sign of preparations for an offensive from the direction of Robotyne, Pyatykhatka, and Novopokrivka.

Escalation indicators: not indicated

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, 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 situation at sea has no significant changes. The Russian fleet has 7 surface ships and submarines at sea performing tasks south of the Crimean Peninsula. Of them, one 636.3 *project* submarine is a Kalibr missile carrier. In total, it has up to 4 missiles on board.
- One patrol boat was on duty in the Sea of Azov waters.
- Two *project 1135.6* frigates and two *project 636.3* submarines, a patrol ship of *project 22160* and 7 amphibious ships are located in Sevastopol. One "Buyan-M" corvette is in Feodosia, ready to go to sea. One "Buyan-M" corvette, three submarines (two of them of *project 636.3*), a patrol ship of *project 22160*, 5 landing ships are in Novorossiysk.
- Russian aviation continues to fly from the Crimean airfields of Belbek, Saky, Dzhankoy and Hvardiyske over the northwestern part of the Black Sea. MiG-29K of the Northern Fleet from the "Saky" temporary air base and the Ka-31R radar patrol helicopter were involved in monitoring the surface and air situation in the northwestern part of the Black Sea. Two Il-22PP interceptor aircraft were on duty in the airspace over the Sea of Azov.

- Iranian instructors are scheduled to arrive at the "Kacha" airfield (temporarily occupied Crimea) to train the personnel of the Russian naval aviation regiment; in March, the delivery of up to 40 of the "Shahed-136" kamikaze drones is expected.
- On February 19-21, the strategic command and staff training of the strategic deterrence forces of the Russian Armed Forces "Grom-2023" continues. As part of the exercise, one strategic missile submarine cruiser of the Northern Fleet of the Russian Federation was deployed to the area of launching ballistic missiles from the waters of the Barents Sea.
- To prevent the landing of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, the Russian forces increased the density of mine-explosive barriers along the coastline in the areas of Bilohrudy and Kruglyk islands in the Dnipro delta near the city of Kherson. The Russian military has deployed additional anti-landing mines and continues shelling the positions of Ukrainian units and civilian objects in Kherson Oblast. It improves the engineering fortification of the defense areas on the left bank.
- The "**Grain initiative**". The bulk carrier ROYAL STAR chartered by the UN World Food Program (WFP) left the port of Odesa. The bulker will deliver 25,000 tons of Ukrainian wheat to Afghanistan. Over the past weekend, 10 ships with 361.2 thousand tons of agricultural products for Africa, Asia and Europe left the ports of Greater Odesa. Since August 1, 757 ships left the ports of Greater Odesa, exporting 21.9 million tons of Ukrainian food to the countries of Asia, Europe and Africa.

Russian operational losses from 24.02.22 to 21.02.23

Personnel - almost 144,440 people (+760)

Tanks 3,326 (+10)

Armored combat vehicles – 6,562 (+9);

Artillery systems – 2,338 (+4);

Multiple rocket launchers (MLRS) - 471 (0);

Anti-aircraft warfare systems - 243 (0);

Vehicles and fuel tanks – 5,210 (+1);

Aircraft - 299 (0);

Helicopters – 287 (0);

UAV operational and tactical level – 2,023 (+5);

Intercepted cruise missiles - 873 (0);

Boats/ships – 18 (0).

Ukraine, general news

The Eighth Administrative Court of Appeal banned the Party of Regions. The decision was made on the appeal of the Ministry of Justice and the Security Service of Ukraine. The State Bureau of Investigation notes that, in particular, they provided evidence of illegal actions of the leadership of the Party of Regions during the signing and ratification of the so-called Kharkiv agreements and crimes they committed during the Revolution of Dignity. The Security Service and the State Criminal Investigation Department documented the criminal actions of "regionals" and initiated the transfer of 100% of "party" property to the income of Ukraine. The court's decision concerns all the assets of the banned party and its structural divisions in various regions of our country.

The majority (65%) of Ukrainians would like Zelensky to be re-elected for the next term. At the same time, more people are dissatisfied with the work of the Verkhovna Rada (54%) than satisfied (37%). If elections were held in the near future, almost half would look for an alternative among new parties, a Rating Group poll has shown. The poll was conducted on February 10-13, 2023.

The same poll has shown that during the year of the war, the trust of Ukrainians in the Armed Forces increased from 65 to 97% and the trust in the President from 36 to 90%.

According to the poll, the most driving emotion for the lion's share of Ukrainians (75%) is pride. Almost the entire nation (95%) believes in Ukraine's victory (up from 56% in January). Ninety-four percent of respondents identify themselves as citizens of Ukraine (as the most important identity). Public support for Ukraine's membership in the EU and NATO skyrocketed to 87% and 86%, respectively. Despite the horrors of war, proponents of capital punishment have decreased by 10% to 42%, while tolerance of LGBT has risen by 11% to 64%.

International diplomatic aspect

The buzz about Putin's speech was much greater than its substance. Traditionally, he blamed the West for ill intent about Russia, rejection of Russian "proposals" about security guarantees, "destruction" of arms control treaties, and "pushing" Ukraine to attack Donbas [Ukrainian territory, illegally occupied by Russia]. Vladimir Putin turned to history, his favorite subject, and hinted that Ukraine was an anti-Russia project created by Austro-Hungarian Empire and Poland. It is rather a "progressive" view on the history of Ukraine since, in his last speech, he speculated that Vladimir Lenin "created" Ukraine. "We are not at war with the people of Ukraine. I have already spoken about this many times," Putin said. "The people of Ukraine themselves became a hostage of the Kyiv regime and its Western masters, who actually occupied this country in the political, military, economic sense, destroyed Ukrainian industry for decades, and plundered natural resources."

The only new thing that has traction with reality was Russia's decision to "suspend" [there's no such option in the agreement, though] the New START Treaty - the last remaining nuclear arms control pact between the two countries. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken described this decision as "deeply unfortunate and irresponsible" and noted that the US will be "watching carefully to see what Russia actually does." "We remain ready to talk about strategic arms limitations at any time with Russia irrespective of anything else going on in the world or in our relationship. I think it matters that we continue to act responsibly in this area. It's also something the rest of the world expects of us," Blinken added. There is no immediate threat from Putin's decision. Russia's violation of the INF Treaty led to the US abandoning it. There has been distrust about the Russian actions, which grew even more after the Kremlin refused to follow the inspections provision of the New START. Russia has been increasingly but unsuccessfully using nuclear blackmail since the invasion of Ukraine in 2014. However, it should be watched carefully. Moscow is now even less capable of a nuclear arms race because of sanctions, export control measures, and other factors.

"Autocrats only understand one word: no, no, no. No, you will not take my country, no, you will not take my freedom, no, you will not take my future. And I'll repeat tonight what I said last year in the same place, a dictator bent on rebuilding an empire will never be able to ease the people's love of liberty. Brutality will never grind down the will of the free," Joe Biden said in Warsaw. "And Ukraine will never be a victory for Russia, never." "Kyiv stands strong. Kyiv stands proud," Biden declared. The POTUS assured Poland and other allies of rock-solid security guarantees. He underlined the importance of Ukraine's fight for the globe, for it's the fight for principles the world order is based on. Joe Biden made a case for the Russian people that the West isn't against them and that Putin's war is against their interests. Such an appeal is logical from the Western point of view but is not much appealing yet to Russians who are, in large numbers, supporting the Russian neo-imperial agenda wrapped up in pseudo-patriotic propaganda.

Russia, relevant news

Due to European sanctions on the import of furniture from Russia to the EU countries, Russian manufacturers lost about 18 billion rubles in a year, and furniture export fell by almost 40%, Kommersant writes with reference to the Russian Association of Furniture and Woodworking Industry Enterprises.

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