
Snapshot of the day:

General, humanitarian:

- The Russian military shelled 8 Ukrainian regions on February 25. At least 5 people died, and at least 12 were injured;
- Currently, 180 people have become Russian political prisoners in Crimea, most of whom, 116 people, are Crimean Tatars;
- Russian occupation authorities brought 150 Russian conscripts from the Russian Chelyabinsk Oblast to build fortifications in Crimea.

Military:

- The Russian military is concentrated on the offensive in the Kupyansk, Lyman, Bakhmut, Avdiivka and Shakhtarsk directions;
- Russian groupings bordering Ukraine lack the capabilities to conduct an offensive operation even with limited objectives.
- **Possible operation situation developments:**
- Russian forces will try to break through to Lyman and capture Bakhmut, setting the conditions for capturing the Sloviansk-Kramatorsk agglomeration;
- Russian efforts to switch to the Sumy and Kharkiv sections of the front should not be ruled out if they fail in the Kupyansk-Lyman direction.

Sea:

- as of February 25, 2023, 58 vessels with a combined market value of \$440 million remained blocked in Ukrainian seaports.

International:

- Joe Biden ruled out F-16s for Ukraine for now. Jake Sullivan emphasized that the US is "taking a very hard look at what it is that Ukraine needs for the immediate phase of the war." McCaul criticized the Biden Administration for its "slow-walk" on providing Ukraine with necessary aid.
- Jake Sullivan didn't reveal whether the Administration would support Ukrainian efforts to liberate Crimea.
- So far, Joe Biden hasn't seen evidence of China helping Russia militarily. Still, he had warned Xi Jinping before that such a move would trigger Western companies to wind down their activities in China as it had happened in Russia.

Humanitarian aspect:

For nine years, since February 26, 2014, there has been resistance to the Russian occupation of Crimea. Currently, 180 people have become political prisoners of the Kremlin, most of whom, 116 people, are Crimean Tatars, the Verkhovna Rada Commissioner for Human Rights, Dmytro Lubinets, stated in Telegram.

Russian attacks

The Russian occupiers shelled 8 Ukrainian regions on February 25; there were wounded and dead civilians.

- **Sumy Oblast:** Russian forces shelled 3 territorial communities. 36 hits were recorded, including 28 from mortars and 8 from artillery, fortunately, without victims and destruction.
- **Zaporizhzhia Oblast:** the Russian occupiers shelled the civilian infrastructure in the area of 13 towns and villages. Houses (apartments) and infrastructure facilities were damaged.
- **Dnipropetrovsk Oblast:** four communities came under Russian fire. No people were hurt, but there was destruction. Private residential buildings, high-rise buildings, restaurants, gas pipelines, power lines, and colleges were damaged.
- **Kharkiv Oblast:** The shelling was carried out in 3 directions. An 82-year-old woman was injured.
- **Luhansk Oblast:** The Russian forces shelled an area around four villages. The situation in the region remains tense.
- **Donetsk Oblast:** 3 dead and 4 injured civilians. During the day, there was the shelling of 6 communities. On the morning, Chasiv Yar was shelled. At night, there were two rocket attacks on Lyman. S300 missiles were used. Private houses were damaged.
- **Mykolaiv Oblast:** during the day, the Russian military struck the water area of the Ochakiv community and the coast of the Kutsurub community with anti-aircraft guns and other types of artillery. There are no casualties.
- **Kherson Oblast:** Russian troops continue artillery shelling of populated areas bordering the contact line. Two Kherson regional emergency and rescue service employees were wounded by Russian fire. Overall, 2 people were killed and 7 people were injured.

Occupied territories

According to the **Luhansk Oblast** Military Administration, schoolchildren in the occupied Sievierodonetsk, Luhansk Oblast, do not get proper schooling because no single school in the city works. Children come to school a short time once a week to complete their assignments. Distance education cannot be organized because there is no cable internet, and mobile internet is not strong enough.

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;
- Russian groupings in the oblasts bordering Ukraine lack the capabilities to conduct an offensive operation even with limited objectives.

Battleline:

- Units of the Ukrainian Defense Forces repelled about 70 Russian attacks in different directions;
- The Russian forces carried out unsuccessful offensive actions near Ploschanka, Nevske, Kreminna, Dibrova, Bilohorivka, Spirne, Rozdolivka, Fedorivka, Vasyukivka and in the area

of Serebryansk Forestry. They unsuccessfully attacked near the towns and villages of Orihovo-Vasylivka, Yahidne, Bakhmut, Ivanivske, Pivnichne, Nevelske, Krasnohorivka, Avdiivka, Severne, Vodyane, Maryinka, Novomykhailivka, Vuhledar of Donetsk Oblast;

- The Russian forces gained a foothold in Berkhivka and started attacking Bohdanivka. The Ukrainian Joint Forces blew up the dam of the Berkhivka reservoir in order to flood the area from the south of Berkhivka towards Pidhorodnie in the north and thus impede the Russian advance. Units of the "Wagner" PMC began an assault on Ivanivske;
- A unit of the 503rd motorized rifle regiment of the 19th motorized rifle division of the 58th army of the Southern Military District tried to conduct a combat reconnaissance near Shcherbaky but lost more than 120 people and retreated to its position.

Change in enemy disposition:

- Near the state border, the Russian military maintains several groups whose task is forward presence.
- Thus, the tactical group "Belgorod" - the 1007th and 1015th motorized rifle regiments of the territorial troops (their formation is not completed), seven motorized rifle battalions from the 20th Army and the 1st tank army, up to five artillery divisions, in total - up to 8,000 servicemen; tactical group "Bryansk" - 352nd motorized rifle regiment of the territorial troops, six battalions from the 1st tank army, three artillery batteries, in total - up to 4,800 servicemen; tactical group "Kursk" - the 380th motorized rifle regiment of territorial troops, six battalions from the 20th army, up to an artillery division, in total - up to 4,500 soldiers.
- Units of the "Akhmat" regiment were deployed in the Kreminna region to prevent retreat and desertion.
- The Russian military command has withdrawn the remnants of troops manned by contract soldiers from the Dnipro, and the first line of defense is held by units manned by mobilized soldiers.

Possible operation situation developments:

- The Russian forces will try to break through to Lyman and capture Bakhmut, setting the conditions for capturing the Sloviansk-Kramatorsk agglomeration;
- A switch of enemy efforts in the Sumy and Kharkiv sections should not be ruled out if they fail in the Kupyansk-Lyman direction.

Azov-Black Sea Maritime Operational Area:

- The enemy has built up its forces at sea. The Russian fleet has 7 surface ships at sea performing tasks south of the Crimean Peninsula. There are no Kalibr missile carriers.
- Russian ships are scattered at the bases of Sevastopol, Feodosia, Kerch, and Novorossiysk.
- The threat of a massive missile attack on the territory of Ukraine by carriers of sea-based cruise missiles persists. Up to 20 Kalibr missiles from three underwater and five surface carriers could be used. At the end of February 2023, Sevastopol is scheduled to receive another 20 Kalibr missiles manufactured by the Russian industry.
- One patrol boat was on duty in the waters of the Sea of Azov.

- Russian aviation continues to fly from the Crimean airfields of Belbek, Saky, Dzhankoy and Hvardiyske over the northwestern part of the Black Sea. A total of 20 sorties were made during the day.
- The Russian military continues constantly shelling Ukrainian positions and towns and villages along the right bank of the Dnipro River in the Kherson direction from mortars, rocket and barrel artillery, tanks and UAVs. Over the past day, Kherson, Sadove, Antonivka, Dudchany, Beryslav, Vesele and Tyahynka were under Russian artillery fire.
- The occupiers shell Kherson with artillery and mortars from the territories of Velykyi Potyomkinsky and Bilohrudy islands. The Kherson city districts of Korabel, Naftogavan, Richport, KhBK, Tavriysky and the city center are in the zone of Russian fire.

Russian operational losses from 26.02.22 to 26.02.23

Personnel - almost 148,130 people (+660)

Tanks 3,381 (+6)

Armored combat vehicles – 6,615 (+6);

Artillery systems – 2,380 (+7);

Multiple rocket launchers (MLRS) - 475 (0);

Anti-aircraft warfare systems - 247 (0);

Vehicles and fuel tanks – 5,242 (+7);

Aircraft - 299 (0);

Helicopters – 288 (+1);

UAV operational and tactical level – 2,037 (+2);

Intercepted cruise missiles - 873 (0);

Boats/ships – 18 (0).

International diplomatic aspect

"He doesn't need F-16s now," Joe Biden told ABC News's anchor about the requests from Volodymyr Zelensky. "I am ruling it out for now," the POTUS said. "F-16s is a question for a later time. And that's why President Biden said that, for now, he's not moving forward with those," national security adviser Jake Sullivan said. "We are taking a very hard look at what it is that Ukraine needs for the immediate phase of the war that we're in... the Ukrainian military needs tanks, infantry fighting vehicles, armored personnel carriers, and tactical air defense systems." House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Michael McCaul criticized the Biden Administration for its "slow-walk" on providing Ukraine with necessary aid, including F-16s. "When we slow-walk and slow-pace this thing, it drags it out. And that's precisely what Putin wants," he added.

"The question of Crimea, and the question of what happens down the road, is something that we will come to," national security adviser Jake Sullivan said. He didn't reveal whether the Administration would support Ukrainian efforts to liberate Crimea, saying that "the critical thing right now is that they need to take back the territory in the South and the East that they are currently focused on and we need to give them the tools to be able to do that." Jake Sullivan repeated the diplomatic mantra, "we're going to have to ultimately get to a diplomatic phase of this conflict."

So far, Joe Biden hasn't seen evidence of China helping Russia militarily. But, talking to Xi Jinping in the summer, the POTUS warned that China might see a retreat of Western companies as it had happened after the all-out Russian invasion. Given that Xi believes that the "future of China rests on investment from the Western world," he should think carefully about whether to come to help Putin with his aggression.

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*The CDC Daily Brief is produced with the support of the **Kyiv School of Economics** <https://kse.ua>*

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