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**Snapshot of the day:**

**General, humanitarian:**

- 11 million Ukrainians of about 16 million, who came to the European Union last year, have returned home. About 4 million Ukrainian remained on the territory of the EU under temporarily protection.
- Russian military attacked 9 Ukrainian Oblasts on March 7.
- The Ministry of Economy estimated the fall in the GDP of Ukraine in February at 26%, which is better than the January indicator of 32%. According to the Ministry estimates, the situation in many sectors of the economy is improving.

**Military:**

- The enemy focuses its main efforts on offensive actions in the Kupyansk, Lyman, Bakhmut, Avdiivka and Shakhtarsk directions;
- The spring break-up slows down the pace of hostilities due to the deterioration of the terrain's passability;
- The transfer of combat-ready units from Kreminna to Vuhledar testifies to the importance of this direction for the enemy's command, which is trying to increase its efforts there;
- Russian units took control of the fortifications on the commanding heights in the Klishchiivka area, which allowed them to shell primary and secondary routes, cut T0504, and capture Ivanovske. This, in turn, will enable them to launch an offensive on Chasiv Yar.
- The enemy advanced to the northeast from Vodyane, which opened the prospect of capturing Avdiivka from the south;
- Increasing the intensity of airstrikes, in particular with the new UPAB-1500 heavy air bombs, should be considered as the enemy's preparation for intensifying offensive actions on Avdiivka and Vuhledar.

**International:**

- Volodymyr Zelensky met with UN Secretary-General António Guterres in Kyiv. They discussed the extension of the grain deal, the safety of nuclear power plants, and the issues of prisoners of war.
  - The Georgians fight in the streets of their capital for the European future and against Russian influence.
  - The President of Ukraine invited the House Speaker to visit Ukraine and learn how Ukraine is fighting. Kevin McCarthy indicated he doesn't plan to appear in Kyiv but supports Ukraine. Meanwhile, a theme of cutting support to Ukraine is a loud one among some Republicans and former President Trump.
  - Several Swiss bankers who helped a friend of Putin to operate with his money are testifying before the court. Several independent journalist investigations showed Sergei Roldugin as Vladimir Putin's money bag.
  - Ukraine's defense minister called on his European colleagues for 1 million rounds of ammunition "as soon as possible."
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## Humanitarian aspect:

### Ukrainian refugees

Last year, about 16 million Ukrainians arrived in the European Union, of which 11 million later returned to Ukraine, and another 1 million people went on to other countries. About 4 million refugees remained on the territory of the EU, said European Commissioner for Internal Affairs Ylva Johansson at a press conference in Brussels dedicated to the first year of implementation of the Directive on temporary protection for Ukraine. According to Johansson, the return of Ukrainians home is not related to the fact that they are allegedly not welcome on the territory of the EU, but primarily caused by their desire to be part of the resistance to Russian aggression and to continue working in Ukraine.

According to the European Commissioner, about 200,000 border crossings by Ukrainians to and from the EU are recorded weekly.

The European Commission is ready to propose extending the temporary protection for Ukrainians for another year, until March 2025, stated the Vice President of the European Commission, Margaritis Shinas, at the same press conference.

### Russian attacks

Russian military attacked 9 Ukrainian Oblasts on March 7. Some of the consequences include:

- The Russians shelled two territorial communities of **Sumy Oblast**. No casualties or damages were reported. The Defense Forces shot down one of two Shahed-type UAVs over the north of the Oblast.
- The Russian occupiers shelled the civilian infrastructure of about 20 towns and villages of **Zaporizhzhia Oblast**. 25 reports were received about the destruction of houses and apartments of citizens and infrastructure facilities.
- On the morning of March 8, the enemy shelled the Marhanets community of **Dnipropetrovsk Oblast**. Information on the consequences and victims is being established. On March 7, the Russian army struck the Synelnyky district and Velykomykhalivska community. The power line was damaged. Rescuers are still determining the consequences of the attack. People were not injured.
- In the Slobozhansk direction of **Kharkiv Oblast**, the Russian army carried out mortar and artillery attacks on at least 18 towns and villages. In the Kupyansk direction, they carried out artillery shelling of the areas of Hryanykivka and Krokhmalne. On March 7, in Snizhkivka, Izyum district, a 63-year-old man stepped on a Russian anti-personnel mine in his own yard. He was hospitalized in a moderate condition.
- On the morning of March 8, the city of Kostyantynivka of **Donetsk Oblast** was shelled, private houses were damaged. Also, in the morning, artillery fire hit Avdiyivka and the industrial zone in the area of the Avdiyivka Coke Plant. Three people were injured. According to the head of the Avdiyivka city military administration, 80 people were hiding from shelling in warehouses on the plant's territory. During the day, the Russian military carried out airstrikes (the type of missiles had not been established) and used Grad anti-aircraft missiles and artillery.

- The occupiers shelled **Kherson Oblast** 61 times over the past day, firing 309 shells from heavy artillery and "Grads". The Russian army shelled the city of Kherson 4 times. 17 shells hit residential quarters, private and apartment buildings. 1 civilian was wounded. 87 people were evacuated from the de-occupied territory of the region.

### **Russian war crimes**

The UN has preliminarily confirmed that the video of the execution of the Ukrainian soldier, who says "Glory to Ukraine" before being shot, is authentic.

### **Occupied territories**

Yaroslav Zhuk, a volunteer kidnapped in Melitopol in June, is planned to be transported to Russian Rostov-on-Don by the Russian invaders, where he will be put on trial, reported the Crimean human rights group.

As reported, in June 2022, in the temporarily captured Melitopol, the Russian military kidnapped volunteers Yaroslav Zhuk and Ilya Yenin. Later, human rights activists published a statement by Zhuk, who said he was beaten, tortured with electric current, kept in the basement with a bag over his head and forced to write a confession. In a letter, the deputy of the Mejlis of the Crimean Tatar people, Nariman Dzhelal, said that Zhuk is being physically abused in the Simferopol pre-trial detention center. After the torture, Yaroslav Zhuk partially lost his hearing.

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### **Operational situation**

#### **General conclusion:**

- The enemy concentrates its main efforts on conducting offensive actions in the Kupyansk, Lyman, Bakhmut, Avdiivka and Shakhtarsk directions;
- The spring break-up slows down the pace of hostilities due to the deterioration of the terrain's passability;
- The transfer of combat-ready units from Kreminna to Vuhledar testifies to the importance of this direction for the enemy's command, which is trying to increase its efforts there;
- Russian units took control of the fortifications on the commanding heights in the Klishchiivka area, which allowed them to shell highways T0506 and T0504 and other secondary routes between them, cut T0504, and capture Ivanovske. This, in turn, will enable them to launch an offensive on Chasiv Yar. The Defense Forces do not have powerful defense centers between Ivanovske and Khromove, which jeopardizes its overall stability in the Bakhmut area;
- The enemy advanced to the northeast from Vodyane, which opened the prospect of capturing Avdiivka from the south;
- Increasing the intensity of airstrikes, particularly with the new UPAB-1500 heavy air bombs, should be considered as the enemy's preparation for intensifying offensive actions on Avdiivka and Vuhledar.

#### **Battleline:**

- Units of the Defense Forces repelled 140 enemy attacks in various directions.

- The enemy unsuccessfully conducted offensive actions in the areas of Hryanykivka, Bilohorivka, Spirne, Vyimka, Nevske and Fedorivka in Luhansk Oblast; Berkhivka, Dubovo-Vasylivka, Orikhovo-Vasylivka, Bohdanivka, Ivanivske, Klishchiivka, Oleksandropil, Kamiianka, Severne, Vodyane, Maryinka and Novomykhailivka in Donetsk Oblast.
- The units of the 25th separate airborne brigade and the 92nd separate motorized brigade defeated the enemy in the Nevske - Chervonopopivka area, and advanced to the east of the R-66 highway. To the south, the enemy is trying to stop the advance of the Defense Forces to the southern outskirts of Kreminna with constant counterattacks.
- Units of the 1st Presidential Brigade finally stopped the enemy's advance in the Novobakhmutivka area, inflicting heavy losses on them, and conducted several successful counterattacks.
- The enemy has some success in Pobyeda, where they have advanced almost to the center of the village.
- Over the past two days, the enemy has advanced in Maryinka along Druzhba Avenue, captured the territory around the traffic control center in the north and entered the territory of the "Agroresurs" enterprise in the south.
- The Ukrainian Defense Forces counterattacked in the Pavlivka area and regained control over most of the village.
- For the past few days, the aggressor has been advancing in the direction of the South Donbas mine, further east of Vuhledar, constantly losing equipment and manpower.

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

- Units of the Central Military District, which retained combat capability in the battles near Kreminna, were hastily deployed to the Vuhledar area.

#### **Escalation indicators:**

- The positions of the Defense Forces in the Avdiivka area are subjected to regular airstrikes by UPAB-1500 guided bombs from Su-34 bombers;
- Enemy aircraft increased the intensity of airstrikes in the Vuhledar area.

#### **Possible operation situation developments:**

- The enemy will try to break the stability of the defense of the Ukrainian Joint Forces in the area between Ivanovske and Khromove and push them out of Bakhmut;
- In the course of 7-10 days, we should expect an increase in the enemy's offensive actions in the Avdiivka and Vuhledar areas.

#### **Azov-Black Sea Maritime Operational Area:**

- The enemy has increased its forces at sea; it has 9 ships of different classes carrying out tasks south of the Crimean peninsula. There is no Kalibr missile carrier; they have returned to their base stations and are ready to go to sea in 2 hours.
- One patrol boat is on duty in the waters of the Sea of Azov.
- Enemy aviation continues to fly from the Crimean airfields of Belbek, Saki, Dzhankoy and Hvardiyske over the northwestern part of the Black Sea. In total, 9 aircraft performed 18 combat sorties over the northwest part of the Black Sea during the day. Control of the air

situation and command of operational-tactical aviation in the airspace of the Rostov Region, Krasnodar Territory and over the waters of the Sea of Azov was carried out by three A-50U AEW&C aircraft.

- In the Kherson direction, the enemy continues to shell Ukrainian positions and towns and villages along the right bank of the Dnipro River with mortars, rocket and barrel artillery, tanks and UAVs.
- On the morning of Tuesday, March 7, in occupied Sevastopol, explosions were witnessed near the Belbek airfield. Crimean "authorities" traditionally justify the event with "training".
- According to Sky News, Iran secretly supplied Russia through the Caspian Sea with a large number of bullets, rockets and mortar shells for the war against Ukraine. In January, two Russian-flagged cargo ships, *Musa Jalil* and *Begey*, transitioned from an Iranian port to Russia via the Caspian Sea. According to the source, both vessels were believed to carry about 200 shipping containers filled with weapons. They could have approximately 100 million bullets and about 300 thousand shells. It is reported that the ships also had ammunition for MLRS, mortars and machine guns. It is noted that the Russian Federation paid for the ammunition in cash. Both vessels arrived in the Russian port of Astrakhan on January 27.

#### **"Grain initiative".**

- President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky met with UN Secretary-General António Guterres in Kyiv. They discussed the extension of the grain deal, the safety of nuclear power plants in the country, as well as the issues of prisoners of war. Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation, this is the third visit of the UN Secretary-General to Ukraine.

#### **Russian operational losses from 24.02.22 to 08.03.23**

Personnel - almost 155,530 people (+700)

Tanks - 3,436 (+4)

Armored combat vehicles – 6,723 (+9);

Artillery systems – 2,463 (+7);

Multiple rocket launchers (MLRS) - 488 (0);

Anti-aircraft warfare systems - 253 (0);

Vehicles and fuel tanks – 5,330 (+7);

Aircraft - 303 (0);

Helicopters – 289 (0);

UAV operational and tactical level – 2,098 (+3);

Intercepted cruise missiles - 873 (0);

Boats/ships – 18 (0).

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#### **Ukraine, general news**

The Ministry of Economy estimated the fall in the GDP of Ukraine in February at the level of 26%, which is better than the indicator of January - 32% (±2%).

According to the Ministry of Economy estimates, the situation in many sectors of the economy is improving. In particular, in February, compared to January, the situation in industrial production slightly improved due to the reduction of the pressure of such a factor as the electricity shortage. In February, there were fewer missile strikes on electricity facilities, and the greater adaptability of producers offset their negative impact. In the transport sector, there was a gradual recovery of activity, except for air transport, the activity of which is currently not carried out due to military operations. There is also a gradual improvement in the situation in the construction sector. This happened because construction works are being intensified in the de-occupied territories, particularly on restoring destroyed or damaged residential, industrial, and infrastructure facilities.

The EU training mission will complete the training of 11 thousand military personnel of the Armed Forces of Ukraine by the end of March. Josep Borrell said the number of trainees would approach 30,000 by the end of the year.

### **International diplomatic aspect**

The Georgians poured onto the streets of the capital in protest against a draft of the law that would harm civil society and make the progress of European integration harder. A piece of legislation drafted by the pro-Russian movement requires an indication of foreign financing of non-governmental organizations, similar to one introduced in Russia. Russian authorities have smashed any independent organizations in Russia, accusing them of being agents of western powers and their intelligence. The Georgians consider such a restriction an offense against freedoms and give more say to Moscow. Russia is unable to absorb Georgia by military means, but it may use the destabilization to its advantage. The Georgian President stated that she would veto the law if it to be voted in the final reading.

"Mr. McCarthy, he has to come here to see how we work, what's happening here, what war caused us, which people are fighting now, who are fighting now. And then after that, make your assumptions," President Volodymyr Zelensky said on CNN. The House Speaker replied later that he does not plan to visit Kyiv, and though he does not support "a blank check," he still supports Ukraine. It happened on the background of the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC) last week, which former President Donald Trump and his fierce supporters and his ideological acolytes used to lambast the Biden Administration's continued support for Ukraine. The 45th president speculated that he would end the Ukraine war "in one day." Meanwhile, a proposal to express support for Ukraine and for continued U.S. assistance sparked emotional arguments at the Maine House of Representatives. Several Republicans spoke in opposition to the resolution, showing that the issue of supporting Ukraine has been chosen as one of the key themes for the 2024 election. After all, the resolution was passed 87 vs 54, with 53 of the 67 Republicans opposed. It reflects a similar process at the national level, where Reps. Marjorie Taylor Greene and Matt Gaetz, who had authored a "Ukraine fatigue" resolution, made anti-Ukrainian rhetoric a distinct feature of their oral exercises. Marjorie Taylor Greene misleadingly claimed Volodymyr Zelensky "wants our sons and daughters to go die in Ukraine." She referred to a deliberately distorted video where Volodymyr Zelensky appeared to say the phrase Marjorie Taylor Greene used. In reality, the Ukrainian President was calling to help Ukraine defeat Russia, so Vladimir

Putin won't be able to attack a NATO country, thus making "American sons and daughters go die."

The Swiss prosecutors are investigating a Russian musician linked to Vladimir Putin who transferred millions of francs through Swiss bank accounts and deposited millions to Swiss banks without proper checks. The four bankers - three Russians working in Zurich and one Swiss – denied wrongdoing at a Zurich District Court. Several independent journalist investigations of Sergei Roldugin concluded that he manages money on behalf of his friend - Vladimir Putin, which both of them deny.

Addressing his European colleagues, Ukraine's Defense Minister Oleksii Reznikov said the country needs 1 million rounds of ammunition "as soon as possible" to deter Russian forces and launch a counteroffensive. "When we bring this fresh money, then this will also increase the industry's capacity, and this is what we need anyway also for the future, that the European industries are capable of producing more shells," Estonia's defense minister said.

### **Russia, relevant news**

The German tire manufacturer Continental is leaving the Russian market, the company's CEO said. "The war [in Ukraine] is the reason for our controlled exit from Russia. This means the sale of our activities, including our factory in Kaluga. We are at an advanced stage in the sales process," Setzer said. Continental AG is a German manufacturer of tires and auto components, which ranks second in Europe and fourth in the global tire production market.

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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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