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**Snapshot of the day:**

**General, humanitarian:**

- The Russian army attacked nine regions of Ukraine over the past day; there were killed and wounded civilians;
- Ukraine's National Police has opened 56 criminal proceedings of the Russian military criminal offenses against mass media representatives.
- 95.8% of Ukrainians trust the Armed Forces of Ukraine; volunteers, national guardsmen and rescuers are among the top 5 most trusted institutions.

**Military:**

- The enemy continues to focus on the offensive operations in the Lyman, Bakhmut, Avdiivka, Maryinka, and Shakhtarsk directions;
- The Russian Armed Forces failed to capture Bakhmut so far;
- **Possible operation situation developments:** in the short term, the enemy will concentrate its efforts in the areas between Bakhmut and Bilohorivka and in the Kreminna-Lyman direction.
- **Sea:** The number of enemy ships at sea changed dynamically during the last day due to the Russian Su-27 fighter jets downing the American MQ-9 Reaper drone

**International:**

- The U.S. accused Russia of "maintaining an offensive biological weapons program in violation of its obligations."
- The joint RAF and German mission was conducted for scrambling a Russian military cargo plane in the Baltic region under the NATO Air Policing interception. Russia plans to recover the downed U.S. MQ-9.
- Poland's counterintelligence detained six people, allegedly operating in the interest of Russian intelligence services, near the airport in Jesionka, which has been an essential gateway for the Western assistance provided to Ukraine.
- Swedish PM hopes for "rapid ratification" of NATO membership following elections in Turkey. The opinion polls show a united opposition leader and political parties backing him have a chance to take power out of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's hands. If they succeed, they would restore the Parliament's role and mend relations with the West.

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**Humanitarian aspect:**

Since February 24, 2022, Ukraine's National Police has opened 56 criminal proceedings based on the fact of the Russian military criminal offenses against mass media representatives, reports Ukrinform. These include the deaths of 29, the wounding of 17, and the kidnapping of 12 media representatives, the Police statement reads. As earlier reported by Ukrinform, according to the Institute of Mass Information, Russia has committed 497 crimes against journalists and the media in Ukraine since the start of the full-scale invasion. In particular, as of February 24, 2023, 48 media

workers have already died in Ukraine due to Russian armed aggression — eight of them during the performance of journalistic activities.

Due to the full-scale invasion of Russia, almost 1,300 objects of Ukrainian cultural infrastructure were damaged or completely destroyed, according to the Deputy Minister of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine, Kateryna Chuyeva. She noted that the situation with the museum, private, archival, and library collections is challenging. The Russian invaders took out parts of the museum collections from those territories of Ukraine that were under occupation, in particular from Kherson Oblast. In addition, losses of private collections have already been documented.

### **Russian attacks**

As of 9:00 a.m. Tuesday, March 15, the Russian army shelled eight regions of Ukraine over the past day; there were killed and wounded civilians.

Some of the consequences:

- The enemy shelled several border communities in **Sumy Oblast**. In the morning, a Russian helicopter attacked Seredyno-Budy with rockets. A private residential building was damaged.
- On March 14, the enemy shelled the civilian infrastructure of 14 towns and villages of **Zaporizhzhia Oblast**. 9 reports were received about the destruction of housing and infrastructure facilities.
- The enemy constantly shelled the Nikopol district of **Dnipropetrovsk Oblast** on March 14. Pokrovsk, Nikopol, and Marhanets communities were attacked by heavy artillery and anti-aircraft fire. In the Pokrovsk community, a store and a private enterprise, 10 houses and 5 outbuildings, a minibus, cars, gas pipelines and power lines were damaged. A private enterprise and six homes were damaged in Nikopol. Yesterday afternoon, Ukrainian defenders shot down an enemy drone over Dnipropetrovsk Oblast. On March 15, the Russian military shelled residential buildings in Marhanets. According to local authorities, preliminary two civilians were killed and five wounded. The explosions damaged seven high-rise buildings and four private houses.
- The Russian military shelled 15 towns and villages in the Slobozhansk direction of **Kharkiv Oblast**. During the day, Russian troops massively shelled Vovchansk, Chuhuyiv district. The fire and rescue department buildings, enterprises, medical facility, and residential buildings were damaged. The projectile hit the car, killing the female passenger on the spot. The driver was hospitalized with shrapnel injuries. Also, yesterday, enemy shelling damaged private residential buildings and infrastructure facilities in Kolodyazne village of Kupyansk district, killing a civilian. A 58-year-old man received a shrapnel wound in Dvorichna. An explosive device wounded a tractor driver in Vovchii Yar, Izyum district. On March 15, Russian troops hit a civilian infrastructure facility in **Kharkiv**. According to preliminary data, no victims were reported. There is no military or infrastructural facility near the place of the Russian shelling impact —only residential buildings and urban infrastructure, said the Mayor of Kharkiv, Ihor Terekhov.
- In **Donetsk Oblast**, one person died, and 16 were injured during the past day. Yesterday, the enemy used missiles, including Kh-58, mortars, artillery, and Grad anti-aircraft

missiles, carried out an airstrike, and struck with S-300 air defense systems. At least 15 towns and villages were under the Russian fire. 19 residential buildings (including 10 high-rise buildings), the building of "Donbas Gardens" LLC, a kindergarten, two cars, premises of the Savings Bank, a museum, and two office premises were damaged. Six private houses were damaged in Kostyantynivka; one person was injured. On Wednesday morning, the Russian army shelled Halytsynivka village with anti-aircraft missiles. The school building was damaged.

- The enemy launched 78 attacks on **Kherson Oblast** on March 14, firing 396 shells from heavy artillery and "Grads". They shelled Kherson seven times. 27 shells hit residential quarters, private and apartment buildings, and the territory of the enterprise. Four people were injured. The Russians also shelled the St. Nicholas Church in Kherson. 74 people were evacuated from the territory of Kherson Oblast, liberated from Russian troops.

## **Energy**

Network restrictions are in effect in Kyiv and Kyiv Oblast, Zhytomyr, Kharkiv, Poltava and Sumy Oblasts. In the event of an increase in electricity consumption, blackouts may apply, reports Ukrenergo. There are no restrictions in other regions.

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## **Operational situation**

### **General conclusion:**

- The enemy concentrates its main efforts on conducting offensive operations in the Lyman, Bakhmut, Avdiivka, Maryinka, and Shakhtarsk directions;
- The Russian Armed Forces failed to capture Bakhmut;
- The incident with the downing of a UAV of the US Air Force over the Black Sea will not lead to an escalation of a direct conflict between Russia and the USA.

### **Battleline:**

- Units of the Defense Forces repelled more than 90 enemy attacks in various directions.
- The enemy unsuccessfully conducted offensive actions in the Yahidne, Khromove, Orikhovo-Vasylivka, Kamianka, Nevelske, Novokalynove, Severne, Pervomaiske, Novomykhailivka, Pobyeda, and Vodyane of the Donetsk Oblast.
- The enemy conducted several unsuccessful attacks near Dvorichna, Hryanykivka, Nevske, Chervonopopivka, Dibrova, Bilohorivka, and Berestove; they made insignificant advances in the direction of Novoselivske, in the area of Terny and Yampolivka. Russian aviation and infantry attacked the positions of the Defense Forces near Yahidne.
- Russian troops advanced along Sadova Street in the south of Bakhmut. "Wagner" PMC mercenaries seized the "Vostokmash" plant in the northern part of the AZOM complex; its other detachments are trying to advance to the Khromove-Bohdanivka line.
- Enemy units advanced east of Krasnohorivka in the Avdiyivka direction.
- In the Shakhtarsk direction, Russian troops captured Neskuchne.

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

- Military units of the 3rd motorized rifle division of the 20th Army operate in the Svatove area.

**Escalation indicators:** not detected

**Possible operation situation developments:**

- In the short term, the enemy will concentrate its efforts in the areas between Bakhmut and Bilohorivka and in the Kreminna-Lyman direction.

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

- The number of enemy ships at sea changed dynamically during the last day due to the Russian Su-27 fighter jets downing the American MQ-9 Reaper drone. After the drone's fall, 17 surface ships of the Russian Navy were deployed to search for its remains.
- As of the second half of March 15, 13 enemy ships of various classes were at sea, carrying out tasks south of the Crimean peninsula. Among them are three surface and one underwater carrier of Kalibr missiles; they can carry up to 28 Kalibr missiles (but probably the number of missiles is much less).
- One patrol ship 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. A total of 34 combat sorties were carried out over the past day. On March 14, four Su-24M aircraft (Saki airfield, Crimea) launched a missile attack on Odesa from the sea with 4 Kh-31P anti-radar missiles. All missiles were shot down by air defense and fell into the sea.

**"Grain initiative".**

- Ukraine exported almost 24.5 million tons of food during the "grain agreement". It is valid until March 18. However, the parties' positions regarding the term of its extension differ. Exports could have been significantly higher if not for the Russian side's delays in inspecting vessels in the Bosphorus strait. In particular, in February, due to Russian interference with the work of the Joint Coordination Center in Istanbul, only 149 inspections were conducted out of the planned 296. This situation leads to traffic jams at the entrance to the Bosphorus, where 120-140 vessels are idle. Currently, Russia proposes extending the agreement for only 60 days, and further prolongation of the document depends on "progress" regarding its agricultural exports, particularly fertilizers, and the supply of ammonia through the Tolyatti-Odesa pipeline. Ukraine and the UN emphasize that such a position contradicts the agreement's text, which provides for its extension by 120 days. The state of affairs regarding including Mykolaiv ports into agreement is also unclear. On March 14, Turkey announced that negotiations for continuing the "grain agreement" considering the parties' demands are ongoing.

**Russian operational losses from 24.02.22 to 15.03.23**

Personnel - almost 161,520 people (+980);

Tanks - 3,492 (+8);

Armored combat vehicles – 6,799 (+10);

Artillery systems – 2,528 (+9);

Multiple rocket launchers (MLRS) - 502 (+7);

Anti-aircraft warfare systems - 262 (+2);

Vehicles and fuel tanks – 5,377 (+10);

Aircraft - 304 (0);  
Helicopters – 289 (0);  
UAV operational and tactical level – 2,132 (+12);  
Intercepted cruise missiles - 907 (0);  
Boats/ships – 18 (0).

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### **Ukraine, general news**

95.8% of Ukrainians trust the Armed Forces of Ukraine; volunteers, national guardsmen and rescuers are also in the top 5 most trusted institutions, according to a survey conducted by the Razumkov Center in February-March 2023. The level of trust in volunteer organizations [civilian organizations providing help to the Armed Forces] is 87.9%, and in [military] volunteer units is 87.2%. Ukrainians highly trust the National Guard (85.7%) and the State Emergency Service (85.4%). 82.9% of respondents trust President Zelensky.

In January-February 2023, Ukraine's trade turnover amounted to \$16.6 billion, which is 30% less than in the same period of 2022, reported the press service of the State Customs Service. It is noted that in January-February 2023, most goods were imported to Ukraine from China, Poland and Turkey. Most goods from Ukraine were exported to Poland, Romania and China. Of the total volume of imported goods, 71% were machines, equipment and transport, fuel and energy products, and chemical industry products. Food, metals and their products, machines, equipment and transport are in the top three in export volumes.

### **International diplomatic aspect**

"The United States assesses that Russia continues to maintain an offensive biological weapons program in violation of its obligations under the Biological Weapons Convention," a State Department spokesperson said. Ned Price said that the "Kremlin has for many years now peddled false claims about biological weapons to create mistrust in the peaceful global efforts and public health institutions that counter biological threats," including the disinformation campaign about "biological weapons laboratories in Ukraine" to justify its illegal war against the country.

While Russia's Secretary of the National Security Council hopes to recover the downed U.S. MQ-9, a pair of RAF and German Typhoon fighter jets carried out the first joint NATO Air Policing interception. The pair of Typhoon jets were scrambled to escort the IL78 Midas, which was flying between St Petersburg and Kaliningrad exclave after it failed to communicate with air traffic control in Estonia. The deliberate attack on the U.S. MQ-9 should cause more difficulties for Russian military aircraft to operate in international airspace. The language about the "reckless, environmentally unsound and unprofessional manner" of the Russian pilots is most likely perceived by Russians as there would be no consequences; therefore, such behavior is a new normal, and it's time to provoke the West further.

According to Polish media, the Polish counterintelligence agency detained six people, allegedly operating in the interest of Russian intelligence services. The Polish officers discovered hidden cameras on routes and railway junctions near the airport in Jesionka, which has been an essential gateway for the Western assistance being provided to Ukraine.

Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson said he was hoping for "rapid ratification" of NATO membership for his country following elections in Turkey on May 14. It may be well so, for there are chances that Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, a united opposition leader, might replace Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, a longstanding leader of the country. Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu is leading four polls with the highest score of 57.1% and the lowest of 55.1%, while the current head of state gets from 42.9% to 44.9%. The ruling party and its allies may get 40% in the parliamentary elections, while the united opposition is up to 43%. One of the key tasks for a new president would be to restore a more vivid role of the Parliament and to mend its relations with the West.

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