
Snapshot of the day:

General, humanitarian:

- Over the past day, the Russian army most intensively shelled towns and villages in the Ukrainian-controlled territories of Donetsk and Kherson Oblasts. Overall, 8 Oblasts got attacked;
- 15 more children along with their parents or legal guardians have returned to Ukraine from the Russian Federation;
- The Verkhovna Rada adopted amendments to the state budget increasing defense spending by UAH 537.2 billion (about USD 14.5 billion).
- A meeting of the National Authority for Mine Action approved a plan for demining agricultural land. More than 470.9 thousand hectares of land need inspection for landmines;
- Oleksandr Kamyshyn, chairman of the board of Ukrzaliznytsia, appointed Minister for Strategic Industries;
- President Volodymyr Zelenskyy signed Law “On introducing transparency in defense procurement”.

Military:

- The Russian military continue to focus on offensive actions in the Kupyansk, Lyman, Bakhmut, Avdiivka and Shakhtarsk directions;
- Hostilities have intensified, the number of attacks per day grew almost twice. The highest intensity of hostilities is observed in Donetsk Oblast;
- Russian troops increase the pace of hostilities north of Avdiivka, trying to set conditions for encircling the town, which can be viewed as an attempt to draw Ukrainian units away from other sections of the front.
- The Russian forces have achieved slight advances around Bakhmut;
- **Possible operation situation developments:**
- The Russian forces will not be able to maintain the high pace of hostilities in the Avdiivka direction for a long time, because they do not have the resources for this;
- The advance of the Russian Armed Forces may force the Joint Forces to withdraw from Bakhmut and/or Avdiivka, although this is currently unlikely.
- **Sea:** A drone attack on military facilities in Dzhankoy, occupied Crimea, reportedly destroyed Russian Kalibr missiles meant to attack Ukraine.

International:

- In a show of continuing support, the Japanese Prime Minister made a surprise visit to Kyiv.
- Xi – Putin's comradery is deepening Russia's strategic dependence on China and might affect countries China has tense relations with.
- The U.S. will be speeding up its delivery of Abrams MBTs to Ukraine, opting to send a refurbished older model. The U.K. will send some ammunition, including armor-piercing rounds containing depleted uranium.

Humanitarian aspect:

Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation, the National Police have launched 67,639 criminal investigations into crimes committed by the Russians and their accomplices.

15 Ukrainian children along with their mothers and legal representatives have been returned to Ukraine, said Dmytro Lubinets, the Verkhovna Rada Commissioner for Human Rights. As of now, according to the National Information Bureau, 308 children have returned to Ukraine.

Almost half of the Ukrainian refugees (45%) plan to stay in Poland for a longer period – at least for a year or several years after the end of the war. In March 2022, 31% of war refugees declared their desire to stay in Poland for longer. The majority of refugees, namely 84%, have found work, put their children in kindergartens and schools, opened their own businesses and earn money and get education in Poland. This was found by the survey "War refugees from Ukraine. A Year in Poland", held by the EWL Migration Platform and the Center for East European Studies of the University of Warsaw, commissioned by the Office of the Prime Minister of Poland.

Russian attacks

Over the past day, the Russian army most intensively shelled towns and villages in the Ukrainian-controlled territories of Donetsk and Kherson Oblasts. Overall, 8 Oblasts got attacked, among them:

- Russian forces inflicted a missile strike on Kostyantynivka, **Donetsk Oblast**, damaging private houses, a gas pipeline, and a kindergarten and shelled at least 12 other towns and villages. 2 people died and 3 were injured in the Oblast.
- **Kherson Oblast**: over the past day, the enemy launched 66 attacks, firing 393 shells from heavy artillery and "Grad" MRLS. One person died, and seven were wounded (including one child). In the village of Lvove, Tyagin community, as a result of shelling from a drone, two people standing near the store got leg wounds.
- **Dnipropetrovsk Oblast**: on March 20, the enemy attacked the Nikopol district with drones twice. Shells from drones hit the Marhanets community. There were no deaths or injuries.
- **Zaporizhzhia Oblast**: the occupiers shelled the civilian infrastructure in the area of at least 16 towns and villages. 13 reports on the destruction of private houses (apartments) and infrastructure objects were filed.
- **Kharkiv Oblast**: on Tuesday morning, the occupiers shelled the village of Basovo with mortars. More than 20 hits were recorded. Power lines are damaged and the power supply was cut. At least 12 villages were shelled on Slobozhansk direction, and villages and towns along the contact line were shelled on Kupyansk direction. No victims were reported.

Mine situation

250 thousand square kilometers, which is more than 40% of the territory of Ukraine, are dangerous due to Russian mining. At the end of 2022, the State Emergency Service reported 185 dead and 404 injured by mine explosions since the day of the full-scale invasion, Ukrainska Pravda writes with reference to the Ukrainian authorities.

A meeting of the National Authority for Mine Action approved a plan of measures for demining agricultural land for sowing, the press service of the Ministry of Defense reported. First of all, survey and demining will be carried out in regions where the problem of land contamination is the most urgent, and the clearing of fields is the most economically justified. Agricultural lands in Mykolaiv and Cherkasy Oblasts were recognized as the most economically justified. More than 470.9 thousand hectares of land are subject to inspection and, if necessary, demining.

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;
- The highest intensity of hostilities is observed in Donetsk Oblast;
- Russian troops increase the pace of hostilities north of Avdiivka, trying to set conditions for encircling the town, which can be viewed as an attempt to draw Ukrainian units away from other sections of the front.

Battleline:

- Units of the Ukrainian Defense Forces repelled over 120 Russian attacks in different directions. Bakhmut remains the epicenter of hostilities;
- The Russian forces attacked unsuccessfully in the direction of Novoselivske, Luhansk Oblast, Bohdanivka, Ivanivske, Predtechne and Severne. Minkivka, Vasyukivka, Zaliznyanske, Bakhmut, Hryhorivka, Ivanivske, Oleksandro-Shulytne, Diliivka, New York, Orikhovo-Vasylivka, Pryvillya, Chasiv Yar, Berdychi, Avdiivka, Severne, Pervomaiske and Novomykhailivka of Donetsk Oblast were shelled.
- The aggressor's troops advanced to the outskirts of Makiivka, achieved minor successes southwest of Ploschanka, advanced west of Chervonopopivka and unsuccessfully stormed Makiivka and Yampolivka.
- The Russian forces advanced in southwestern and northern Bakhmut and between Bohdanivka and Khromove.
- The Russian military advanced in the direction of Berdychi, advanced to the west of Krasnohorivka and captured Stepove. "Wagner" PMC detachments fight at five points on the T0504 Kostyantynivka - Chasiv Yar - Bakhmut highway and advance towards the road itself.
- In the Avdiivka area, the Russian military lost about three companies of personnel during the assault, however, it advanced near Vodyane. Russian troops try to bypass Avdiivka from the north along the Krasnohorivka-Stepove line. They have captured Kamianka, entered the southwestern outskirts of Avdiivka itself, and are fighting near the Palace of Technology and Sports and in the 9th quarter.
- Units of the 20th motorized rifle division of the 8th Army launched unsuccessful attacks in the Maryinka area.

Change in enemy disposition:

- The information about the formation of the 94th regiment from the mobilized citizens of the Russian Federation on the territory of the Republic of Belarus is being verified.

Escalation indicators:

- An almost twofold increase in the number of attacks per day;
- An increase in the number of airstrikes in the Avdiivka direction, air bombardment strikes are gradually replaced by missile-bomb attacks. The number of Kh-59, Kh-101, Kh-555 and S-300 missiles launched by the enemy has increased significantly.

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;
- The Russian forces will not be able to maintain the high pace of hostilities in the Avdiivka direction for a long time, because they do not have the resources for this;
- The advance of the Russian Armed Forces may force the Joint Forces to withdraw from Bakhmut and/or Avdiivka, although this is currently unlikely.

Azov-Black Sea Maritime Operational Area:

- The number of Russian ships at sea has decreased over the past day due to weather conditions. 12 ships and vessels of the Russian Federation patrol the Black Sea far off the coast of Crimea. Among them are two Kalibr missile carriers (up to 19 missiles on board). The probability of a missile threat is high since the Russian Federation regularly uses tactical aviation based in Crimea. On March 20, the Russian Federation launched an anti-radar missile in the direction of Mykolaiv Oblast to hit Ukrainian air defense forces.
- **Locations of ships of the Russian Navy** as of the morning of March 21 (in the middle of the day on March 21, three ships went to sea):
- Black Sea:
 - Frigate "Admiral Essen", "Admiral Makarov", two submarines project 636.3 (one under repair), patrol ship "Vasily Bykov", corvette "Eysk", reconnaissance ship "Priazovye" are in Sevastopol;
 - Two submarines pr.636.3, submarine "Alrosa", frigate "Pytlivyy", patrol ships "Pavel Derzhavin" and "Sergei Kotov" are in Novorossiysk;
 - Corvettes pr. 21631 "Vyshniy Volochyok", "Grayvoron" and "Ingushetia" - Feodosia;
 - "Zyklon", "Askold" corvettes are in Kerch;
 - Reconnaissance ship "Ivan Hurs" is 180 km northwest of Zonguldak (Turkey).
- Sea of Azov:
 - Patrol ship "Dmitry Rogachev" Black Sea Fleet is in the northern part of the Kerch Strait;
- Location of large amphibious ships:
 - Landing ships "Azov" (repair), "Nikolay Filchenkov" (repair), "Novocherkassk" (repair), "Cesar Kunikov" Black Sea Fleet, "Kaliningrad" (repair) are in Sevastopol;
 - Orsk landing craft is in Feodosia;
 - Landing ships "Pyotr Morgunov", "Georgy Pobedonosets", "Olenegorskiy Gorniyak", "Minsk", "Korolyov" are in Novorossiysk;
 - Amphibious ship "Yamal" is in the northeastern part of the Kerch Strait.
- 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 18 combat sorties were

made over the past day. Su-27, Su30SM, MiG-29K aircraft from the Belbek and Saki airfields were involved in monitoring the surface and air situation in the northwestern part of the Black Sea.

- At Hvardiyske, Dzhankoy and Saki airfields military transport aircraft of the Russian Air Force landed to deliver personnel. Control of the air situation and the enemy's operational-tactical aviation in the southeastern part of Ukraine was carried out by the A-50U AEW&C aircraft, which was on duty over the Sea of Azov.
- In the evening of March 20, drones attacked certain military facilities in the occupied Crimea, in particular in the city of Dzhankoy. It is reported that one of the drones destroyed the Kalibr missiles, which were on the railway platforms being transported to Sevastopol. It is likely that these missiles were intended for the next missile attack on Ukraine from ships and submarines.

Russian operational losses from 24.02.22 to 21.03.23

Personnel - almost 165,700 people (+960);

Tanks 3,552 (+15);

Armored combat vehicles – 6,879 (+10);

Artillery systems – 2,586 (+9)

Multiple rocket launchers (MLRS) - 507 (0);

Anti-aircraft warfare systems - 270 (0);

Vehicles and fuel tanks – 5,428 (+12);

Aircraft - 305 (0);

Helicopters – 290 (0);

UAV operational and tactical level – 2,167 (+7);

Intercepted cruise missiles - 907 (0);

Boats/ships – 18 (0).

Ukraine, general news

On Tuesday, March 21, the Verkhovna Rada appointed Oleksandr Kamyshyn, chairman of the board of Ukrzaliznytsia, as the Minister for strategic industries. 312 MPs voted in favor. Pavlo Ryabikin, who held this position since November 4, 2021, was fired the day before - he can become the ambassador of Ukraine to China.

The Verkhovna Rada adopted amendments to the state budget increasing defense spending by UAH 537.2 billion (about USD 14.5 billion). UAH 518 billion is directed to the needs of the military, namely, financial support, food, and the production and purchase of UAVs.

President Volodymyr Zelensky signed Law No. 8381 on introducing transparency in defense procurement.

International diplomatic aspect

The Japanese Prime Minister made a surprise visit to Ukraine. Fumio Kishida visited Bucha, a town that embodies the worst atrocities Russia has committed across Ukraine. Besides a gesture of continuing strong support, the head of the Japanese government discussed the current needs and post-war reconstruction. So far, Japan has provided Ukraine with \$1.6 billion in assistance. The host of the G7 summit in Hiroshima has invited the Ukrainian President to participate virtually. It's more than symbolic that the Japanese PM is visiting Kyiv while the CPP Chairman is welcomed in Moscow. It's a kind of Allies of Freedom vs. Axis of unfreedom that is being shaped before our eyes.

After two days of talks, Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin radiate friendship and partnership. The sides published Joint Statement on Deepening Russian-Chinese Relations of Comprehensive Partnership and Strategic Cooperation Entering a New Era and the Joint Statement on the Development Plan for Key Areas of Russian-Chinese Economic Cooperation until 2030. Putin has prized deepening bilateral cooperation, particularly trade. The bilateral turnover of goods surged one third and reached \$185 billion. Russia increased its commodities' export and payments in national currencies. Putin voiced plans to build a new "Power of Siberia" with 50 bcm and showed interest in PRC participation in developing the Northern Sea Route, a signature project for the Kremlin. However, there are deepening dependencies behind the rise of trade and economic interaction. While in 2022, PRC accounted for nearly 30% of Russian exports and 40% of its imports, Russia accounted for only 3% of the PRC's exports and imports. PRC – U.S. trade in goods is almost fourfold large (\$690 billion). Russia was China's second-largest supplier of crude oil (17% of total imports), while it accounted for 35% of Russia's exports. With increasing dependence on PRC goods and technologies, Russia will be more attentive to Beijing's economic whims and foreign and security policies that might affect countries China has tense relations with.

The U.S. will be speeding up its delivery of Abrams MBTs to Ukraine, opting to send a refurbished older model (M1A1) instead of a new one (M1A2) that requires up to a year to produce and ship. The U.K. will send some of the ammunition for the Challenger 2 MBTs, which includes armor-piercing rounds which contain depleted uranium. Hopefully, this move will unblock a supply of cluster munition to Ukraine, which isn't a party of any prohibiting conventions, to counter Russia's wide use at the battlefield.

Russia, relevant news

Russia conducts covert mobilization and prepares for additional mobilization. About 20,000 people are mobilized every month, a representative of the Main Intelligence Directorate of the Ukrainian MOD Andriy Yusov said. He stressed the low morale of the Russian troops. Yusov is convinced that if it weren't for the blocking units, most of the Russian mobilized would have tried to escape from the battlefield.

According to the Russian publication Meduza, sources close to the Administration of the Russian president note that the Kremlin still does not fully understand how to "ensure the safety" of the president in the new conditions when he can theoretically be detained under the Hague warrant in 123 countries.

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