
Snapshot of the day:

General, humanitarian:

- The Russian forces attacked 8 Ukrainian regions over the past day, killing at least 2 and injuring at least 10 civilians.
- 466 children died, and more than 943 sustained injuries of various degrees of severity as a result of the Russian aggression against Ukraine.
- 95% of surveyed Ukrainian teenagers believe that Ukraine will win the war. 86% see their future in Ukraine; compared to similar studies conducted before the full-scale invasion, this figure has tripled.
- 46% of respondents completely tolerate Ukrainian refugees abroad, and another 42% agree that they should return to Ukraine; 13% said they would not like to see those who went abroad back in Ukraine.
- After visiting Zaporizhzhia NPP IAEA Head, Raphael Grossi concluded that the station can no longer be made safe due to intensifying hostilities in the area.

Military:

- The Russian military continued to focus its efforts on offensive actions in the Lyman, Bakhmut, Avdiivka and Maryinka directions but somewhat reduced the pace of the offensive in the Bakhmut area;
- The next task for the Russian troops operating in the Avdiivka direction is to reach the area of Severne and Stepove villages;
- The Russian military makes major efforts in the Krasnohorivka area and along the Vodyane-Opytne frontier, where intense battles are ongoing, which decide the fate of the flanking areas of the entire Avdiivka defense area;
- **Possible operation situation developments:**
- Both sides will reduce the intensity of hostilities in the areas of Bakhmut and Avdiivka in order to reduce the consumption of resources to accumulate them for further offensive operations during the spring-summer campaign;
- In the event of an enemy breakthrough into the Orlyivka-Lastochkine-Severne-Tonenke area and advance to the outskirts of Stepove, the situation in Avdiivka will turn like in Bakhmut, leaving the Joint Forces command with a choice of which city to leave, because fighting two major defensive battles simultaneously is impossible due to the lack of resources;

International:

- FSB has taken hostage a U.S. WSJ journalist, accusing him of espionage. The Department of State warned American citizens to leave Russia.
- The U.S. sanctioned an individual for helping Russia acquire North Korean weapons, while a Russian delegation may travel to the country for the same purpose. North Macedonia will provide Ukraine with combat helicopters. Germany delivered armored recovery vehicles, demining tanks, and off-road trucks to Ukraine.

- Sixty-eight percent of Russians support the war; forty-four percent believe that Russia should definitely or rather carry on its military campaign, while more than a quarter are leaning towards diplomatic talks, and one-fifth are for immediate peace talks. Pride for Russia (43%) is the strongest feeling triggered by the Russian war.

Humanitarian aspect:

As of the morning of March 30, 2023, more than 1,409 Ukrainian children are victims of the full-scale armed aggression of the Russian Federation. Of them, 466 children died and more than 943 sustained injuries of various degrees of severity, according to the official information of juvenile prosecutors.

Six children will be forcibly evacuated from Avdiivka, where they live under constant shelling, the head of the City Military Administration, Oleksandr Barabash, said.

As of the week of March 20 - 26, German federal lands reported 209,602 children from Ukraine studying in local schools and vocational schools, Evropeyska Pravda reported with reference to Berliner Zeitung. Compared to the previous week, this number increased by 1,683 people.

95% of surveyed Ukrainian teenagers believe that Ukraine will win the war. 86% see their future in Ukraine, according to the all-Ukrainian sociological study "Teenagers and their life during the war: moods, values, future", commissioned by the charitable foundation "Klub Dobrodiyiv". Compared to similar studies conducted before the full-scale invasion, this figure has tripled, sociologists say.

Russian attacks

The army of the Russian Federation shelled eight regions of Ukraine during the past day, according to the consolidated information from Oblast Military Administrations. As a result, at least 2 civilians died, and at least 10 were injured.

- **Chernihiv and Sumy Oblasts** in the north of Ukraine were shelled several times during the day, but no victims or damages were reported.
- In **Zaporizhzhia Oblast**, the enemy carried out 62 attacks on the civilian infrastructure of at least 13 towns and villages. 27 reports of destruction were filed.
- In **Kharkiv Oblast**, in the Slobozhansk direction, Russian troops attacked the areas of more than 15 villages. In the Kupyansk direction, the areas of 6 villages were subjected to artillery shelling during the day. As a result of the shelling of Vovchansk, Chuhuyiv district, the plant's property was damaged. A residential building was damaged in the village of Podolia, Kupyansk district. Three women aged 69, 75 and 76 were injured and hospitalized.
- In **Luhansk Oblast**, Stelmakhivka, Nevske, Kuzmine and Bilohorivka were subjected to artillery fire. The situation in the region remains difficult.
- In **Donetsk Oblast**, the Russian army shelled 10 towns and villages. Seven residential buildings (including three multi-apartment buildings), a garage, a kindergarten, power lines, and a railway line were damaged. One civilian was killed and 5 people were injured.

- In **Mykolaiv Oblast** on Thursday night, the enemy fired mortar shells along the coastal strip of the Ochakiv community. There are no casualties.
- In **Kherson Oblast**, the Russian invaders carried out 45 instances of shelling during the day, firing 216 shells. One person died and another was injured. In addition, the Russian forces launched an airstrike on industrial enterprises in Beryslav, hitting production facilities. About 15 residential buildings were also damaged by the blast wave. An injured man was taken to the hospital.

Justice for war crimes

The Security Service of Ukraine charged in absentia the head of the Russian Federal Air Transport Agency, Aleksandr Neradko, the SBU reported. The Russian official is charged under the article "on the preparation and conduct of war", which provides for a punishment of up to 15 years in prison.

Occupied territories

According to the Ukrainian General Staff, Russian invaders continue to pressure Ukrainian citizens and violate human rights in some villages of the temporarily occupied **Crimea**. In particular, in Krasnoperekopsk, FSB officers conduct active counter-intelligence measures that involve humiliating filtering procedures, stripping, interrogations, beating civilians, etc.

After visiting the **Zaporizhzhia NPP**, IAEA Head Raphael Grossi noted that, although a group of IAEA experts has been working at the plant's territory since September of last year, the situation remains unstable. "It is obvious that military actions are intensifying in this region. Therefore, the station cannot be protected," Grossi said.

Operational situation

General conclusion:

- The Russian military concentrates its main efforts on offensive actions in the Lyman, Bakhmut, Avdiivka and Maryinka directions but somewhat reduced the pace of the offensive in the Bakhmut area;
- The next task for the Russian troops operating in the Avdiivka direction is to reach the area of Severne and Stepove villages, which will mean the partial cutting of communications used to supply the Ukrainian Joint Forces in the Avdiivka direction;
- The Russian military makes significant efforts in the Krasnohorivka area and along the Vodyane-Opytne frontier, where intense battles are ongoing, which decide the fate of the flanking areas of the entire Avdiivka defense district;
- The Russian command seeks to advance from Pisky and Vodyane in the direction of Netaylove through Pervomaiske and to the north simultaneously with attacks from the Vodyane - Opytne frontier. The goal is to push back units of the Ukrainian Joint Forces in the Nevelske area in order to prevent a possible counterattack from the Pervomaiske - Nevelske frontier.

Battleline:

- Units of the Ukrainian Defense Forces repelled over 60 Russian attacks in different directions. Bilohorivka, Bakhmut, Avdiivka, Maryinka and their suburbs remain at the epicenter of hostilities;
- The Russian forces attacked unsuccessfully near Stelmakhivka and Vyimka of Luhansk Oblast; Orikhove-Vasylivka, Novokalynove, Stepove, Avdiivka, Pivnichne, Pervomaiske, Maryinka of Donetsk Oblast;
- The Russian troops concentrate their primary efforts in the Lyman direction. They attacked Bilohorivka, launched unsuccessful ground strikes near Krokhumalne, Novoselivske, Stelmakhivka, Verkhnyokamianske, Vyimka, and Berestove, and unsuccessfully attacked Ukrainian positions near Terny, Nevske, and Makiyivka. Troops of the 6th Army attacked the positions of the Ukrainian Defense Forces in the Kupyansk area. The enemy's tactics remain textbook, i.e., an infantry attack supported by many armored vehicles. Near the Siversky Donets River, south of Kreminna, sabotage and reconnaissance groups from the 3rd separate SOF brigade are active.
- Russian units advanced in southern and southwestern Bakhmut. Units of the Russian Armed Forces built up their positions to the north and south of the city. They attacked near Khromove, Ivanivske and unsuccessfully advanced in the areas of Orikhovo-Vasylivka, Bohdanivka, Ivanivske, Predtechne, and Ozeryanivka. The Ukrainian Joint Forces continued their attempts to repel the Russian troops from the T0504 highway.
- Units of the 57th separate motorized rifle brigade, 217th parachute airborne regiment of the 98th airborne division, 317th parachute airborne regiment of the 106th airborne division, and four assault detachments of the "Wagner" PMC operate directly in the city of Bakhmut and in its northern and southern outskirts. The 4th, 123rd and 126th separate motorized rifle brigades of the 2nd Army Corps operate north of the city. Units of the 132nd separate motorized rifle brigade of the 1st Army Corps deployed in the direction of Mayorsk - Pivnichne.
- The Russian troops have advanced north of Vodyane and Vesele, they are successful in Pervomaiske and are developing an offensive near Nevelske. The enemy had no success in Novokalynove, Krasnohorivka, Stepove, Severne, and Maryinka areas.
- The following units operate in the Avdiivka direction:
 - 132nd separate motorized rifle brigade in the direction of Novobakhmutivka – Novokalynove – Keramik;
 - 136th separate motorized rifle brigade, 109th separate rifle regiment and 207th separate rifle battalion of mobilization reserve of the 1st Army Corps in the direction of Novoselivka Druga - Novokalynove;
 - 114th separate motorized rifle brigade of the 1st Army Corps in the direction of Krasnohorivka - Stepove;
 - 200th separate motorized rifle brigade of the 14th Army Corps of the Northern Fleet on the directions Opytne – Avdiivka, Vodyane – Severne, Vodyane – Pervomaiske;
 - 9th separate motorized rifle brigade of the 1st Army Corps in the direction of Pisky - Pervomaiske;

- 5th separate motorized rifle brigade of the 1st Army Corps, 102nd motorized rifle regiment of the 150th motorized rifle division of the 8th Army - in the direction of Maryinka - Kurakhove.

Change in enemy disposition:

- Units of the 14th separate SOF brigade of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation were spotted in the Vuhledar area.
- Planned recruitment of conscripts for military training and retraining of reserve servicemen are ongoing in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Belarus.

Escalation indicators:

- The Air and Space Forces of the Russian Federation carried out an air strike with guided air bombs on Beryslav from the Su-35 aircraft.

Possible operation situation developments:

- The development of the situation in the areas of Bakhmut and Avdiivka will impact the further course of the war for both sides in view of the scope of hostilities and the consumption of resources. It already affects the course of operations in other directions and the strategic planning by the warring parties during the spring-summer campaigns;
- Both sides will reduce the intensity of hostilities in the areas of Bakhmut and Avdiivka in order to reduce the consumption of resources to accumulate them for further offensive operations during the spring-summer campaign;
- The Russian forces will try to develop their tactical success north of Bakhmut into an operational one, resulting in increased pressure in the direction of Hryhorivka, on Orikhovo-Vasylivka and in general along the road to Slovyansk in the direction of Pryvillya. Reserves of at least two brigades should be expected to be deployed in this direction;
- In the event of an enemy breakthrough into the Orlyivka – Lastochkine – Severne – Tonenke area and advance to the outskirts of Stepove, the situation in Avdiivka will turn to be like in Bakhmut, leaving the command of the Joint Forces with a choice of which city to leave, because fighting two major defensive battles at the same time is impossible due to the lack of resources;
- The appointment of a new commander of the troops of the Eastern Military District, Lieutenant General Serhiy Kuzmenko, a representative of the military-scientific circles, may change the Russian tactics in the Shakhtarsk direction.

Azov-Black Sea Maritime Operational Area:

- The number of Russian ships at sea over the past day is 4. Due to stormy conditions, they patrol the Black Sea off the coast of Crimea. Among them is one *project 636.3* submarine, a Kalibr missile carrier (up to 4 missiles on board), located in firing positions southeast of Sevastopol.
- One patrol ship is in the Sea of Azov.
- Russian aviation continues to fly from the Crimean airfields of Belbek, Saki, Dzhankoy and Hvardiyske over the northwestern part of the Black Sea. A total of 12 combat sorties were

made over the past day. Control of the air situation and operational-tactical aviation over the waters of the Sea of Azov was carried out by the A-50U and Il-22 AEW&C aircraft.

- **The Grain Initiative**

- A grain caravan of six ships set off from the Odesa coast towards the Black Sea Straits on March 30. It was led by the 225-meter dry cargo ship SANTA MARIA and the DIAMOND T tanker, which left yesterday afternoon from the port of Pivdenny. They are followed by another 225-meter bulk carrier XIN YU and the SANITA S vessel, which departed from Chornomorsk. SERENITY IBTIHAJ left from the port of Pivdenny, and MISS LAILA left from Odesa port. Also, today, dry cargo PS QUEEN left Pivdenny but remained standing at the anchorage at the point of caravan formation. During the day, four bulk carriers approached the Odesa coast to be loaded.
- Overall, since August 1 last year, 855 ships have left the ports of Greater Odesa, exporting more than 26 million tons of Ukrainian agricultural products.
- Turkey and the UN officially stated that the "grain initiative" was extended for 120 days, not for 60, as Moscow claimed. This was announced by the Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of Ukraine to Turkey Vasyl Bodnar.
- Romanian Agriculture Minister Petre Dăbuleț said that, according to the European Commission, farmers from Poland, Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria and Slovakia lost 417 million euros due to the influx of cheaper Ukrainian grain into their markets. He also added that the Commission intends to pay compensation of 56.3 million euros to Polish, Bulgarian and Romanian farmers, and the final decision is expected on March 30. Romania and Poland are negotiating with the European Commission to introduce tracking mechanisms for Ukrainian grain exports to protect the interests of local farmers amid an influx of cheap imports. The heads of Poland and Romania's governments said at a business conference in Bucharest that their governments are working on solutions to this issue together with the EU.

Russian operational losses from 24.02.22 to 30.03.23

Personnel - almost 177,290 people (+560);

Tanks - 3,610 (+1);

Armored combat vehicles – 6,974 (+8);

Artillery systems – 2,671 (+12)

Multiple rocket launchers (MLRS) - 526 (0);

Anti-aircraft warfare systems - 278 (+1);

Vehicles and fuel tanks – 5,518 (+11);

Aircraft - 306 (0);

Helicopters – 291 (0);

UAV operational and tactical level – 2,239 (0);

Intercepted cruise missiles - 911 (0);

Boats/ships – 18 (0).

Ukraine, general news

According to a Kyiv International Institute of Sociology survey, 46% of respondents completely tolerate Ukrainian refugees [abroad], and another 42% agree that they should return to Ukraine.

At the same time, 13% said they would not like to see those who went abroad back in Ukraine. In general, 90% of Ukrainians sympathize with refugees living abroad and do not condemn them.

International diplomatic aspect

Right after publishing an article about the poor state of the Russian economy, Russian counterintelligence arrested a WSJ journalist accusing him of espionage. "In the strongest possible terms, we condemn the Kremlin's continued attempts to intimidate, repress, and punish journalists and civil society voices," the Department of State said. The U.S. citizens are advised to depart Russia immediately, for there's the "danger posed to the U.S. inside the Russian Federation." "This is very typical Russian behavior, and that is to grab Americans, use them as leverage — in this case a reporter — make spurious allegations against them and detain them, you know, potentially for long periods of time," Rep. Adam Schiff said, pointing to Moscow's practice of hostage-taking.

The U.S. Treasury has sanctioned one individual for attempting to facilitate arms deals between Russia and North Korea. While Russia may send a delegation to North Korea to secure ammunition and weapons supplies, the government of North Macedonia decided to provide Ukraine with an undisclosed number of combat helicopters, likely Mi-24. Germany delivered two Bergepanzer 3 armored recovery vehicles, two demining WISENT 1 tanks, twenty-four Zetros off-road trucks, and more.

Two-thirds of Russians follow the developments of the situation in Ukraine, according to a Levada Centre poll. Sixty-eight percent of respondents support the actions of the Russian army in Ukraine, while twenty-three percent rather or do not support them. The most adamant supporters of the war are older Russians, who watch TV news (79%) and support Vladimir Putin (81%). Forty-four percent believe Russia should definitely or rather carry on its military campaign, while more than a quarter are leaning towards diplomatic talks, and one-fifth are supporting immediate peace talks. Pride for Russia (43%) is the strongest feeling triggered by the Russian war, followed by anxiety and fear (39%). One-tens of Russians are either shocked or angry, or ignorant.

Russia, relevant news

The global grain trader Viterro has officially announced that it will stop exporting Russian grain starting July 1 of 2023 and is discussing the sale of its assets in the Russian Federation.

Russian Prime Minister Mishustin signed a resolution prioritizing Russian domestic electronics in public procurement; foreign equipment will be considered only if there are no competitors from Russia.

Centre for Defence Strategies (CDS) is a Ukrainian security think tank. We operate since 2020. We publish this brief daily. If you would like to subscribe, please send us an email at cds.dailybrief@gmail.com

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

Please note, that we subscribe only verified persons and can decline or cancel the subscription at our own discretion

We are an independent, non-government, non-partisan, and non-profit organisation. More at www.defence.org.ua

Our Twitter (in English) - https://twitter.com/defence_centre Our Facebook (in Ukrainian) - <https://www.facebook.com/cds.UA>

Our brief is for information only and we verify our information to the best possible extent