
Snapshot of the day:

General, humanitarian:

- Over the past day, the Russian military attacked 9 Oblasts of Ukraine, killing at least 11 and wounding more than 20 civilians;
- As of April 15, 2023, 469 children died, and more than 948 sustained injuries in Ukraine due to Russian aggression;
- The Russian occupation authorities digitize the conscription of Ukrainian citizens in Zaporizhzhia Oblast.

Military:

- The Ukrainian Defense Forces continue to experience a critical shortage of EW systems, anti-aircraft defense systems, artillery shells, and heavy infantry weapons;
- The vast majority of the Russian special operations and airborne units are staffed by conscripts from the reserve, which indicates a significant loss of the enemy's ability to conduct operational intelligence, assault and high-mobility actions.
- The Air and Space Force of the Russian Armed Forces expanded the use of FAB-500 high-explosive aerial bombs with the gliding and correction module outside the operational zone;
- **Possible operation situation developments:**
- In the short term, the Ukrainian Defense Forces will adhere to their chosen strategy of inflicting maximum losses on the enemy in close combat in the areas where the primary efforts are concentrated, which is partly explained by the lack of artillery ammunition;
- Adherence to the tactics of short-term rotations of units in Bakhmut will allow the Defense Forces to inflict maximum losses on the enemy while minimizing their own, to create a qualitative advantage of fresh forces over the exhausted aggressor.

International:

- Mike Pence implicitly criticized Donald Trump and some other Republicans' stance on Ukraine by rejecting the false dichotomy that the U.S. must choose between "prosperity at home and security abroad."
- The majority of Americans support Ukraine's membership in NATO and believe that the defense of Ukraine is "vital" to American national interests.
- The Polish PM criticized Germany and France for not opening their "military depots and arsenals to supply Ukraine" and willingness to see a "quick cease-fire ... almost at any price."
- Richard Haass and Charles Kupchan argued a new Strategy in Ukraine, which is de facto a way to justify pressure on Ukraine for a "compromise" for an illusory "lasting peace."
- Lula da Silva criticized the U.S. for "encouraging" war and called to start talking about "peace."

Humanitarian aspect:

As of the morning of April 15, 2023, more than 1,417 Ukrainian children suffered due to the full-scale armed aggression of the Russian Federation. According to the official information of juvenile prosecutors, 469 children died and more than 948 sustained injuries of various degrees of severity.

The total estimated environmental damage already exceeds UAH 1.9 trillion or more than USD 52.2 billion. However, it is still being determined, because the government has no access to the mined and occupied territories, said Minister of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Ukraine Ruslan Strilets.

The Ministry of Family and Social Policy of Poland said that from March to December 2022, entrepreneurs submitted 784,500 applications for simplified access to the labor market for citizens of Ukraine who arrived in the country as refugees after February 24, 2022. Two-thirds of employees were women (66%), mostly aged 35-44. Half of the workers from Ukraine do simple physical work. Among them, 37% found work in the service sector, and 34% at industrial enterprises. Much fewer Ukrainian citizens were employed in the transport industry and logistics (15% each) and trade or construction (7% each). Generally, Polish logistics and construction sectors experience a lack of personnel. According to the Polish Association of Employers in the Construction Industry, the number of Ukrainian citizens employed in construction during the war years decreased by two-thirds. In 2022, it amounted to 127,000 people.

Russian attacks

The army of the Russian Federation shelled nine regions of Ukraine on April 14, killing and wounding civilians.

- **Chernihiv Oblast** was attacked three times. An airstrike on the Novgorod-Siversky district, probably with guided air bombs, was recorded. A peat briquette plant was damaged. One person is injured.
- In **Sumy Oblast** yesterday, the Russians attacked at least 6 communities during the day. Six explosive devices of the VOG type were dropped in the city of Seredyno-Buda. One private home and three cars were damaged. "Grad" MLRS were fired at the Bilopillia community. A man was hospitalized with injuries.
- In **Zaporizhzhia Oblast**, 15 villages on the contact line came under enemy fire. The invaders launched 55 artillery strikes, four airstrikes, one attack from a drone and one from an anti-aircraft missile. 16 reports of destruction were filed.
- In **Dnipropetrovsk Oblast**, the aggressor fired heavy artillery at the Nikopol district at night. 10 impacts were recorded. No casualties or injuries were reported.
- At least 21 towns and villages in **Kharkiv Oblast** came under Russian fire. During the day, the enemy massively shelled Vovchansk of the Chuhuyiv district. The medical facility was damaged, and a 62-year-old employee was injured. At least two people in two different communities suffered from mine explosions.
- In **Luhansk Oblast**, Novoselivske, Stelmakhivka, Nevske and Bilohorivka were subjected to artillery fire.
- In **Donetsk Oblast**, 11 people died, including a two-year-old child, and 22 people were injured due to a massive missile attack on Kramatorsk, Kostiantynivka and Sloviansk. In

Kostyantynivka and Kramatorsk, a hospital, school, high-rise and private residential buildings were damaged, but there were no casualties.

- In **Mykolaiv Oblast**, the Russian military pounded Ochakiv with anti-aircraft guns and heavy artillery, the water area and the coast. There is damage to infrastructure facilities.
- In **Kherson Oblast**, the Russian invaders carried out 96 shellings during the day, firing 447 shells from heavy artillery and UAVs. Kherson was shelled nine times. Eight people were injured. Another 47 people were evacuated from the territory liberated from the Russians.

Occupied territories

Russian occupation authorities have created an electronic register of conscripts and plan to issue electronic summonses in the temporarily occupied territories of **Zaporizhzhia Oblast**. The only way to avoid this is to evacuate. More than 2,000 people left Melitopol in the last two weeks, said the legally elected Melitopol Mayor Ivan Fedorov

Operational situation

General conclusion:

- The Russian military concentrates its main efforts on offensive actions in the Lyman, Bakhmut, Avdiivka and Maryinka directions;
- The Ukrainian Defense Forces continue to experience a critical shortage of EW systems, anti-aircraft defense systems, artillery shells, heavy infantry weapons (mortars, automatic grenade launchers, large-caliber machine guns);
- The vast majority of special operations and airborne units of the Russian Armed Forces are staffed by conscripts from the reserve, which indicates a significant loss of the enemy's ability to conduct operational intelligence, assault and high-mobility actions.

Battleline:

- Units of the Ukrainian Defense Forces repelled over 56 Russian attacks in different directions. The fiercest battles continue for Bakhmut and Maryinka;
- The Russian forces attacked unsuccessfully in the areas of Dibrova and Bilohorivka of Luhansk Oblast; Novokalynove, Pervomaiske, Maryinka of Donetsk Oblast;
- Russian troops conducted unsuccessful offensives south of Dibrova and near Bilohorivka; they unsuccessfully tried to advance in the direction of Torske and Nevske; heavy fighting continues near Makiivka;
- The Ukrainian Defense Forces conducted reconnaissance near Vilshany, Tymkivka, and Krokhmalne.
- "Wagner" PMC units achieved minor successes in northwestern Bakhmut, advanced in southwestern Bakhmut, and conducted assault operations near Khromove and Bohdanivka. Russian troops attacked Predtechyne and advanced to the eastern outskirts of Nevelske, Novokalynove, Opytne and Kruta Balka.
- Units of the Ukrainian Defense Forces repelled Russian attacks in Bakhmut, in the area of Bohdanivka and Predtechyne, near Novokalynove, Severne, Pervomaiske and Maryinka; they control the T0504 Bakhmut - Ivanivske - Chasiv Yar highway.

Change in enemy disposition:

- The 22nd separate SOF brigade of the Russian Armed Forces and two more SOF brigades lost approximately 90-95% of their personnel in the battles in Ukraine; out of 900 servicemen that comprised the 346th separate SOF brigade at the beginning of the invasion, 125 remained.
- The remnants of the 40th separate marines brigade remain in the Vuhledar area.
- "Volunteer" airborne battalion "Saha Botur", manned by mobilized servicemen from Yakutia, is deployed in the Enerhodar area.
- The "volunteer" Cossack battalion "Terek", manned by mobilized personnel from the Stavropol Krai, operates on the Kinburn spit.

Escalation indicators:

- The Air and Space Force of the Russian Armed Forces expanded the use of FAB-500 high-explosive aerial bombs with the gliding and correction module outside the operational zone, striking the areas of Sumy, Hulyaipole, Orikhiv, Beryslav and Kherson.

Possible operation situation developments:

- In the short term, the Ukrainian Defense Forces will adhere to their chosen strategy of inflicting maximum losses on the enemy in close combat in the areas where the primary efforts are concentrated, which is partly explained by the lack of artillery ammunition;
- Adherence to the tactics of short-term rotations of units in Bakhmut will allow the Defense Forces to inflict maximum losses on the enemy while minimizing their own at the same time, to create a qualitative advantage of fresh forces over the exhausted aggressor.

Azov-Black Sea Maritime Operational Area:

- There are 10 Russian ships at sea. They patrol the areas near the coast of Novorossiysk and Crimea. Among them are two submarines of *project 636.3*, carriers of Kalibr missiles, located in the area of the firing position southeast of Sevastopol and near Gelendzhik. Two submarines may carry up to 8 Kalibr missiles.
- Locations of the main ships of the Russian Navy in the Black Sea (except for amphibious ships):
 - Submarine *pr. 636.3* – 30 km south of Gelendzhik;
 - Submarine *pr. 636.3* - south of Sevastopol.
 - Submarine "Alrosa", frigates "Pytlivyy", "Ladny", patrol ship "Vasily Bykov", reconnaissance ship "Ivan Hurs", corvette "Eysk" - Sevastopol;
 - frigate "Admiral Makarov", corvettes "Vyshnyi Volochyok", "Grayvoron", "Ingushetia", submarine *pr. 636.3*, patrol ship "Pavel Derzhavin" - Novorossiysk;
 - corvettes "Zyklon", "Askold" - Kerch;
 - patrol ship "Sergei Kotov" - 150 km northeast of Cape Sinop (Turkey);
 - reconnaissance ship "Priazovye" - 120 km north of Zonguldak (Turkey);
 - The frigate "Admiral Essen" and the diesel-electric submarine of *pr. 636.3* are being repaired in Sevastopol.
- Sea of Azov:
 - Patrol ship "Dmitry Rogachev" - the northern part of the Kerch Strait.

- Russian aviation significantly intensified its flights from the Crimean airfields of Belbek, Saky, Dzhankoy and Hvardiyske over the sea. 15 fighter aircraft from Belbek and Saki Air Force Bases were involved in monitoring the surface and air conditions in the northwestern part of the Black Sea. 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.
- Over the past week, 23 ships left Ukrainian ports as part of the "**grain initiative**". They had almost a million tons of grain and other foodstuffs on board.

Russian operational losses from 24.02.22 to 15.04.23

Personnel - almost 181,550 people (+460);

Tanks - 3,653 (+3);

Armored combat vehicles – 7,073 (+4);

Artillery systems – 2,785 (+1)

Multiple rocket launchers (MLRS) - 535 (0);

Anti-aircraft warfare systems - 283 (0);

Vehicles and fuel tanks – 5,646 (+6);

Aircraft - 307 (0);

Helicopters – 293 (0);

UAV operational and tactical level – 2,339 (0);

Intercepted cruise missiles - 911 (0);

Boats/ships – 18 (0).

International diplomatic aspect

"We must resist the temptation to put what is popular over what is wise, and resist the politics of personality and the lure of populism unmoored to timeless conservative values," former Vice President Mike Pence argued for leaving behind the rhetoric of the 45th POTUS at the Republican National Committee's spring donor retreat in Nashville. He implicitly criticized Donald Trump and some other Republicans' stance on Ukraine by rejecting the false dichotomy that the U.S. must choose between "prosperity at home and security abroad," which is a "pretty small view of the greatest nation on earth." Meanwhile, some MAGA Republicans pushed a narrative that Jack Teixeira, the accused Pentagon leaker, is a hero and whistleblower, not a traitor, for he revealed the "truth" about the Russia-Ukraine war. Though the cases are strikingly different, some went as far as to compare Jack Teixeira to Alexander Vindman, former Director for European Affairs for the United States National Security Council, who triggered the impeachment of the 45th POTUS.

Only twelve percent of Americans believe that the defense of Ukraine is not "vital" to American national interests. In contrast, almost two-thirds (56%) believe it is "vital," according to a poll of Redfield & Wilton Strategies on behalf of Newsweek. Twenty-two percent neither agree nor disagree with the statement. Over half of Americans support Ukraine's membership in NATO, while only ten percent do not support it, and almost a third (26%) are indifferent about it.

"All [the allies in NATO] want Ukraine to win but not necessarily to the same extent... Germany and France want a quick cease-fire ... almost at any price," the Polish PM criticized the allies in his speech at the Atlantic Council. He believes the two countries haven't opened their military depots and arsenals to supply Ukraine. It is particularly striking with ideas Emmanuel Macron voiced while in Beijing that Europe (at least France for sure) wants strategic autonomy (from the U.S.) and doesn't want to be dragged into somebody's war (an invasion of Taiwan). Besides signaling Xi Jinping's possible rifts between some old Europeans and Americans, Emmanuel Macron implicitly showed that he does not see the Russia-Ukraine war as a European war where it is worth investing heavily in victory. France greatly helps Ukraine and even stopped calling to save Putin's face and negotiate "peace." But it's ranked 12th in terms of weapons supply in real terms (€0.699 bn) and 26th in terms of the share of the GDP (0.027%).

Richard Haass and Charles Kupchan argued for a new Strategy in Ukraine, which, they believe, would lead from the "battlefield to the negotiating table." Their "two-pronged strategy" is "aimed at first bolstering Ukraine's military capability and then, when the fighting season winds down late this year, ushering Moscow and Kyiv from the battlefield to the negotiating table." They called on the West to "immediately expedite the flow of weapons to Ukraine and increase their quantity and quality. The goal should be to bolster Ukraine's defenses while making its coming offensive as successful as possible, imposing heavy losses on Russia, foreclosing Moscow's military options, and increasing its willingness to contemplate a diplomatic settlement." They admit that this "diplomatic gambit may well fail," for the sides may keep fighting (which is highly likely) despite significant losses. But "as the war's costs mount and the prospect of a military stalemate looms, it is worth pressing for a durable truce [favoring Russia under the current circumstance], one that could prevent renewed conflict and, even better, set the stage for a lasting peace [a strange phrase if Ukraine fails to liberate its internationally recognized territory and Russia remains in a revisionist mode]." The strategists are calling on the West to "recognize these [a possible bloody stalemate and inability of Ukraine to liberate all territories and of Russia to win the war] realities without sacrificing its principles." However, it is difficult to preserve the integrity of Western principles until after the status quo ante bellum (pre-2014) is in place.

Moreover, the proposal looks insincere because the West is not ready to provide Ukraine with the weapons Ukraine has requested, and in quantities it needs to have the upper hand in the counteroffensive (like long-range fires, Western fighter jets, etc.). Even if all self-drawn red lines were crossed and the weapon systems were delivered in the shortest possible time, Ukraine would not be able to employ it in the coming spring-summer counteroffensive, for it requires training of the military personnel at a vast scale, military drills for combined operations and redrafting plans for a different counteroffensive with those capabilities. A highly unlikely approach of "all you wish at once," which would replace the current "quite enough for limited goals" and previous "too little too late," doesn't seem to be a strategically wise solution.

"The United States needs to stop encouraging war and start talking about peace; the European Union needs to start talking about peace so that we can convince Putin and Zelensky that peace is in the interest of everyone and that war is only interesting, for now, to the two of them," Lula

da Silva said after meeting his friend Xi Jinping. "I have a theory that I have already defended with Emmanuel Macron, with Olaf Scholz of Germany, and with Biden, and yesterday, we discussed at length with Xi Jinping. It is necessary to constitute a group of countries willing to find a way to make peace," Lula said, who believes that Putin and Zelensky are equally guilty of the war, which the U.S. had "instigated" for.

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