
Snapshot of the day:

General, humanitarian:

- Russian troops continue to shell residential areas, causing casualties among civilians.
- Ukraine is taking some steps towards a counteroffensive, but the start of it will not be officially announced.
- Unannounced IAEA inspections at Khmelnytskyi and Rivne NPPs under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty found no violations on Ukraine's part.
- 740 of Ukraine's mineral deposits, or almost two-thirds, are located in the occupied territories, and the Russian Federation is considering issuing licenses for their development.
- Demining efforts are underway in Dnipropetrovsk Oblast in preparation for the agricultural season.
- The Ukrainian Education Ministry expects a shortage of several million teachers.
- More than half of the Ukrainian respondents consider the restoration of Ukraine's territorial integrity (as of 1991) to be highly probable as a scenario for ending the war, while a third believe it has a moderate probability, and ten percent believe it has a low probability.
- The first official Jewish Rabbinical Chaplain has been appointed to the UAF.

Military:

- The Russian military continue to focus on offensive actions in the Lyman, Bakhmut, Avdiivka and Maryinka directions; in other areas they prepare for a defensive operation.
- The "Wagner" PMC advanced in Bakhmut towards the House of Culture and crossed the railway in central Bakhmut, but failed in their attacks on other areas. Russian forces also made unsuccessful attacks on several locations. They advanced to the H20 highway northeast of Krasnohorivka and near Kruta Balka, Vodyane, and Nevelske. Heavy artillery and air strikes intensified on Bakhmut.
- **Possible operation situation developments:** The Russian forces attempted to advance to the lines favorable for their defense, while in other areas, preparations for defensive operations are ongoing.

International:

- Ukraine has received IRIS-T and Patriot air defense systems, and six Spanish Leopard 2 MBTs are on their way.
- Following harsh criticism from Ukraine, the U.S., and E.U., Brazilian President Lula condemned Putin for the "violation of territorial integrity" of Ukraine.
- The US has expressed concern that Russian President Putin may resort to using tactical nuclear weapons as a part of the "controlled escalation" of hostilities in Ukraine.

Humanitarian aspect:

The Ministry of Social Policy and the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine have successfully implemented a pilot program aimed at providing decompression and social support to

servicemen and their relatives. According to a Ministry of Social Policy report, the program began with the enrollment of 40 servicemen and their families, including spouses or partners and children. The project aims to promote participants' physical and psychological recovery, foster mutual understanding between military personnel and their loved ones, and facilitate their transition to civilian life.

In Dnipropetrovsk Oblast, pyrotechnicians have completed inspecting agricultural lands needing priority demining so that agricultural machinery could start working, said the head of Dnipropetrovsk OMA, Serhiy Lysak. Specialists worked in the Kryvyi Rih district. 2,645 hectares were inspected. In general, according to the head of the OMA, more than 6,000 explosive objects have been defused in Dnipropetrovsk Oblast since the beginning of the war.

The Education Ministry has warned that a shortage of several million teachers is expected even if the Ministry of Education takes all necessary steps to bring Ukrainians back from abroad and integrate those who were under occupation into Ukrainian society.

Russian attacks

The Russian military continued indiscriminately attacking residential areas in Ukraine. Some of the attacks over the past day included:

- On the night of April 19, the Russian forces attacked **Odesa Oblast** with Iranian Shahed-136/131 kamikaze drones. Ukrainian air defense forces destroyed 10 out of 12 enemy drones, the commander of the Air Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, Mykola Oleschuk, said. An impact on a recreational infrastructure facility was recorded.
- In **Zaporizhzhia Oblast**, the communities on the contact line sustained 4 airstrikes, 1 from a UAV, 3 from an anti-aircraft missile, and 93 artillery strikes. At least 20 villages, including the cities of Orikhiv and Hulyaipole, were affected. Law enforcement officers received 21 reports on the destruction of infrastructure facilities.
- On the evening of April 18, the Russians carried out an airstrike on Vovchansk, **Kharkiv Oblast**. Two residential buildings, farm buildings and a market were damaged. As a result of the shelling, a couple aged 68 and 54 were injured. Bodies of two civilians were recovered from under the rubble the next day.
- On April 18, the Russians killed one resident of **Donetsk Oblast** in Bakhmut. Another 13 people in the region were wounded, Pavlo Kyrylenko, the head of the Donetsk regional military administration, said.
 - On April 18, the Russian army carried out 79 attacks on **Kherson Oblast**, firing 350 shells from heavy artillery and UAVs. One person was killed. Russian forces targeted residential quarters in populated areas of the region; they hit the territory of the market and the building of an educational institution in Kherson.

Energy

As of the morning of April 19, the energy system of Ukraine is meeting consumer electricity needs and operating with a capacity reserve. Ukraine also exports electricity to Slovakia, Poland, and Moldova, with minor imports continuing from Slovakia, according to NEC "Ukrenergo." However, the situation remains difficult on the front line, as distribution networks in Donetsk Oblast were targeted by Russian fire on April 18.

Occupied territories

There are 740 mineral deposits on the territory of Ukraine occupied by Russia, the Minister of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources of Ukraine, Ruslan Strelets, said. On April 18, Russian media reported that the Federal Agency for Subsoil Use is considering issuing licenses for subsoil development in the occupied territory. Most of the deposits are coal, but there are also resources used in the aircraft industry and smartphone production. If Russia maintains control over the captured territories, Ukraine will lose access to almost two-thirds of the deposits, including natural gas, oil, and rare earth materials.

Operational situation

General conclusion:

- The Russian military concentrates its main efforts on offensive actions in the Lyman, Bakhmut, Avdiivka and Maryinka directions;
- The Russian forces secure defensive lines in other areas and prepare for possible defensive operations.

Change in the line of contact (LoC):

- Units of the Ukrainian Defense Forces repelled over 60 Russian attacks in different directions. Bakhmut and Maryinka remain in the epicenter of hostilities;
- The Russian forces attacked unsuccessfully in the area of Dibrova, Luhansk Oblast. The Ukrainian Defense Forces repelled the enemy's offensive toward Stupochki. The enemy attacked unsuccessfully in the areas of Stepove, Berdychi, Avdiivka, Severne, Pervomaiske, Nevelske, Maryinka, and Prechystivka of Donetsk Oblast;
- Russian troops attacked unsuccessfully near Synkivka, Spirne, Dvorichna, Chervonopopivka, Kreminna, Torske, Terniv, and Nevske. They carried out assault operations near Makiivka in the direction of Nevske.
- In Bakhmut, units of the "Wagner" PMC advanced closer to the House of Culture. They had success in the area of the railway station and crossed the railway in central Bakhmut. Mercenaries' attacks on Khromove, Ivanivske, and Predtechyne failed.
- The Russian occupiers advanced to the H20 highway to the northeast of Krasnohorivka and near Kruta Balka, Vodyane, and Nevelske. The Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked in the vicinity of Stepove, Novokalynove, Berdychi, Avdiivka, Severne, Pervomaiske and Maryinka.
- Russian troops repulsed the attacks of the Ukrainian Defense Forces near Vuhledar, Pavlivka, and the forest strip north of Mykilske.

Change in enemy disposition:

- Putin met with Colonel-General Lapin and other high-ranking officers to discuss the situation on the front line in Luhansk Oblast. Putin deliberately singled out generals Teplinskiy and Makarevych as commanders of the "South" and "Dnipro" groupings in southern Ukraine and Lapin as the commander in the Luhansk direction. This may indicate that Putin is identifying potential scapegoats before a potential Ukrainian counteroffensive.

- Russian forces are planting mines on the left bank of the Dnipro River in Kherson Oblast.

Escalation indicators:

- Russian troops intensified heavy artillery and air strikes on Bakhmut.

Possible operation situation developments:

- In the short-term perspective, the Ukrainian Defense Forces will adhere to their chosen strategy of inflicting maximum losses on the enemy in close combat in the directions where the main efforts are concentrated, partially due to a shortage of ammunition for artillery.
- The Russian military prepares to conduct a defensive operation.

Azov-Black Sea Maritime Operational Area:

- There are currently 9 Russian ships patrolling the waters near the coast of Novorossiysk and Crimea, including one corvette and two Project 636.3 submarines equipped with Kalibr missiles. These ships are located in firing positions near Crimea and Novorossiysk and may carry up to 16 Kalibr missiles in total.
- The main carriers of Kalibr strike missiles are currently located in Novorossiysk.
- There are old Soviet-built ships and ships under repair in Sevastopol. On the evening of April 19, 2023, automatic weapons were fired, and air defense missiles were launched in Sevastopol. The reasons for this are not known.
- Russian aviation significantly intensified its flights from the Crimean airfields of Belbek, Saky, Dzhankoy and Hvardiyske over the sea. 12 fighter aircraft from Belbek and Saki airfields were involved in monitoring the surface and air conditions in the northwestern part of the Black Sea. The monitoring of the aerial situation and command of operational-tactical aviation over the Azov Sea were conducted by the A-50U and Il-22 AWACS aircraft.
- **"The Grain initiative"**. The average number of ships arriving per day at the 3 ports of the Odesa region within the "grain corridor" is one of the indicators of the escalation in the Black Sea region.
 - In September 2022, it was equal to 5.9 vessels per day;
 - in October 2022 – 5.1;
 - in November 2022 – 3.3;
 - in December 2022 – 3.2 vessels per day;
 - in January 2023 – 2.8;
 - in February 2023 – 2.5;
 - in March 2023 – 2.8;
 - In the period April 1-17, 2023 – 2.2 vessels per day.
- In November 2022, the number of vessels that received permits from the Joint Coordination Center in Istanbul for sailing to Ukrainian ports decreased from 5.9 to 3.3 (almost 2-fold) following an attack by air and sea drones on the Russian Black Sea Fleet warships in the Sevastopol bays on October 29, 2022, which resulted in damage to several ships. Despite this, the UN and Turkey declared that the agreement remained valid, and UN and Turkish inspectors continued to inspect the ships and permit them to continue their movement without the participation of a representative from Russia. The Ministry

of Defense of the Russian Federation later announced that Russia was resuming participation in the Black Sea grain initiative.

- Unlike in October-November 2022, when a drone attack on Sevastopol caused a significant decrease in vessel permits to Ukrainian ports, nothing similar happened in March-April 2023. Therefore, Moscow's decision to slow down grain traffic is likely due to other reasons. One possible factor could be the upcoming presidential elections in Turkey, scheduled for May 14, 2023, which nearly coincides with the May 18 deadline set by the Russian Federation for the extension of the "grain corridor" (although other participants believe that the agreement was extended until July 18).

Russian operational losses from 24.02.22 to 19.04.23

Personnel - almost 183,750 people (+620);

Tanks 3,665 (+4);

Armored combat vehicles – 7,110 (+12);

Artillery systems – 2,819 (+9)

Multiple rocket launchers (MLRS) - 538 (0);

Anti-aircraft warfare systems - 285 (0);

Vehicles and fuel tanks – 5,692 (+16);

Aircraft - 308 (0);

Helicopters – 293 (0);

UAV operational and tactical level – 2,376 (+23);

Intercepted cruise missiles - 911 (0);

Boats/ships – 18 (0).

Ukraine, general news

President Volodymyr Zelensky visited the border of Ukraine with Belarus and Poland in Volyn Oblast and thanked the Ukrainian border guards for their protection of the state.

According to Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Malyar, Ukraine will not publicly announce the start of a counteroffensive as such information is confidential and related to military plans. Nevertheless, Malyar acknowledged that some offensive actions are already underway.

On April 18, 2023, unannounced inspections by the IAEA were successfully conducted at the Rivne NPP and the Khmelnytskyi NPP within the framework of the agreement between Ukraine and the IAEA on the application of safeguards according to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. The purpose of inspections was to verify the absence of undeclared nuclear material. There was no criticism from the IAEA inspectors, the Ukrainian State Nuclear Regulatory Inspectorate reports.

According to a recent Razumkov Centre poll, more than half of Ukrainian experts, diplomats, and civil servants believe there is a high probability of restoring Ukraine's territorial integrity (as of 1991) as a scenario of ending the war. A third think this scenario has a moderate probability, and only 10% believe it has a low one. When it comes to talks between Ukraine and Russia after the liberation of seized territories, 55% of respondents see a moderate likelihood, but only 7.5%

believe it's highly likely, while a third thinks it has a low probability. Most respondents (70%) believe that talks starting with a de facto frozen frontline are highly unlikely, with only 5% believing it is possible.

Regarding security guarantees for Ukraine, most respondents (92.5%) believe that NATO membership is a sufficient condition, followed by trust in strong Ukraine's defense capabilities (90%), E.U. membership (85%), and degrading Russia's warfighting capabilities (75%). Only a third still believe in a security guarantee agreement (without a commitment to Article 5 alike). When it comes to countries that provide support to Ukraine, Poland is named the top country (97.5), followed by the U.S. (95), the U.K. (92.5), Lithuania (82.5), and Latvia (65). Germany (47.5) is ranked seventh, followed by France (27.5), Slovakia (20), and Czechia (20).

This is the first time an official Jewish Rabbinical Chaplain has been appointed to the Ukrainian Armed Forces. Congratulations, Rabbi David Milman," Chief Rabbi of Ukraine Moshe Azman tweeted.

International diplomatic aspect

According to Spiegel, Germany has delivered the second IRIS-T air defense system to Ukraine. "Today, our beautiful Ukrainian sky becomes more secure because Patriot air defense systems have arrived in Ukraine," Ukraine's Defense Minister tweeted. In addition, six Leopard 2 MBTs Spain agreed to donate to Ukraine were spotted in the port of Santander.

After a cold shower from Ukraine, the U.S., and E.U., Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva has condemned Russia's "violation of territorial integrity." Lula's top foreign policy adviser characterized his boss' criticism as "absurd." "We have several points of convergence (with Russia), but at various times Brazil condemned... the invasion of Ukraine," Celso Amorim said. He didn't mention that it was Jair Bolsonaro's government who vocally condemned Russia and voted in favor of the U.N. General Assembly's resolutions on Russia's aggression (March 2, 2022) and on "Principles of the Charter of the United Nations underlying a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine" (February 23, 2023). However, the leftist Dilma Rousseff's government abstained from the resolution on the territorial integrity of Ukraine (March 27, 2014). "We applaud the position from China, and we have also held talks with Brazil on this, and these are very useful proposals because they can help to share ideas and help resolve problems," Sergey Lavrov said while in Caracas. "We hope the regime in Kyiv respects the rights of Crimea; we already know the West is demanding that Crimea is returned," he said.

Russia, relevant news

Russian dictator Vladimir Putin may use tactical nuclear weapons as a part of "controlled escalation" of hostilities in Ukraine, US Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman has warned NATO allies. She stressed that monitoring the situation is very important and promised that the US would share more intelligence data with its allies to increase awareness.

According to the Russian publication Mediazona, in some Russian school textbooks, mentions of Kyiv were removed from the sections about Kyivan Rus. The publication verified changes in the 4th and 6th-grade history books. Also, the Russian authorities are preparing instructions for teachers that "clarify the role of Kyiv" in the history of Russia. According to the interlocutor of the publication at the "Prosveschenie" publishing house, these materials will reach the schools by the end of spring and be used in the next academic year.

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