
Snapshot of the day:

General, humanitarian:

- The Russian military attacked 9 Ukrainian Oblasts over the past day; at least three people are reported killed and 15 wounded;
- Only collaborators are evacuated from Kamianka-Dniprovska in the Vasylivka district of Zaporizhzhia Oblast, making local residents fear possible provocations with mass casualties;

Military:

- The Russian military focuses its main offensive efforts on the Bakhmut, Avdiivka, and Maryinka directions. There has been an increase in Russian fire activity near Vuhledar, which indicates preparations for new attacks. However, the enemy does not have the necessary combat potential for any significant offensive in the Vuhledar direction.
- The Russian forces built up fortifications around Sieverodonetsk and other large cities and roads in the occupied Luhansk Oblast;
- **Possible operation situation developments:** Ukrainian Defense Forces plan to establish support bridgeheads on the left bank of the Dnipro River before launching a counteroffensive. The Russian forces are expected to focus their efforts on Bakhmut, Avdiivka, and Maryinka and attempt to launch new offensives in the Vuhledar area.

International:

- Sergey Lavrov used the U.N. Security Council to push propaganda narratives against the U.S., which he sees suitable to score points with the developing nations and try to justify the genocidal war against Ukraine. He met a strong response from the democratic nations and expected support from the PRC representative.
- Sweden joins Germany in expelling Russian spies.
- The Kremlin has launched a new element of blackmail and threatened the deployment of missile types that were prohibited by the INF Treaty.
- South Africa may quit the ICC to host Vladimir Putin when he arrives for the BRICS summit this summer.
- Popular opposition to the Russian presence is growing in Georgia.

Humanitarian aspect:

Russian attacks

During the past 24 hours, the Russian military launched attacks on nine regions of Ukraine, including Chernihiv, Sumy, Zaporizhzhia, Dnipropetrovsk, Kharkiv, Donetsk, Luhansk, Mykolayiv, and Kherson Oblasts.

- Two people died, and another 13 were wounded due to Russian shelling in **Donetsk Oblast**. The Russian occupiers also killed a civilian woman in **Kharkiv Oblast**, heads of relevant Oblast Military Administrations reported. Wounded civilians are also reported in **Zaporizhzhia and Kherson Oblast**.

- On the morning of April 25, the Russian military attacked the Museum of Local History building in Kupyansk, **Kharkiv Oblast**. One person was killed, 10 people were injured, and at least 2 people were under the rubble, the head of Kharkiv OMA Oleh Synehubov reported.

Occupied territories

The National Resistance Center of the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense reported an increase in efforts by the Russian occupying authorities in **Crimea** to identify members of the Ukrainian resistance. The Russian occupiers are conducting searches of the apartments of those suspected of disloyalty, even in the owners' absence.

The Russian occupation authorities have started evacuating from Kamianka-Dniprovska in the Vasylivka district of **Zaporizhzhia Oblast**, but only the collaborators are allowed to leave. A young family was not allowed to sign up for the evacuation, according to the head of the Nikopol district military administration, Yevhen Yevtushenko. Local residents fear that the occupiers may carry out a provocation with mass casualties before their departure in order to blame Ukraine for it.

Operational situation

General conclusion:

- The Russian military concentrates its main efforts on offensive actions in the Bakhmut, Avdiivka, and Maryinka directions;
- The increased Russian fire activity near Vuhledar indicates preparations for new attacks;
- The enemy lacks the combat potential necessary for any significant offensive in the Vuhledar direction.

Change in the line of contact (LoC):

- Units of the Ukrainian Defense Forces repelled over 43 Russian attacks in different directions;
- Heavy fighting continues for the city of Bakhmut. The Russian forces carried out unsuccessful offensive actions in the direction of Novomarkove, Khromove, Novokalynove, Stepove, Severne, Pervomaiske, Maryinka, Novomykhailivka;
- The Ukrainian defense forces have advanced to the northeast of Verkhnyokamianske and to the southeast of Bilohorivka. They make efforts to repel the Russian invaders from the Khromove - Chasiv Yar road;
- The Russian military unsuccessfully attacked near Nevske, Makiivka and did not succeed in Bakhmut. Russian attacks were repulsed near Hryhorivka, Ivanivske, Krasnohorivka, Nevelske, and Keramik. Positional battles continued near Orikhovo-Vasylivka. The aggressor managed to advance somewhat to the northwest of Vodyane and improve its tactical position near Velyka Novosilka.

Change in enemy disposition:

- The President of the Russian Federation dismissed (via decree) Colonel-General R. Muradov of the Eastern Military District, Colonel-General O. Dvornikov of the Southern

Military District, and Colonel-General O. Zhuravlev of the Western Military District from their positions.

- In the Kupyansk direction, the Russian military continues to fortify positions in some areas;
- The Russian forces built up fortifications around Sieverodonetsk and other large cities and roads in the occupied Luhansk Oblast;
- Units of the 177th marines regiment of the Caspian Flotilla were spotted near Dorozhnyanka, Zaporizhzhia Oblast;
- Units of the 127th motorized rifle division of the 5th Army of the Eastern Military District also operate in the Zaporizhzhia direction;
- Detachments of the "Wagner" PMC arrived on the eastern bank of Kherson Oblast to perform police functions.

Escalation indicators:

- Russian aircraft made an extensive series of strikes on Vuhledar; they increased the intensity of fire strikes from covered positions;
- The enemy continues to build fortifications, prepare anti-tank defenses and mine positions in the Novopavlivka and Orihiv directions.

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 on the directions of the concentration of the main efforts.
- Ukrainian defense forces will create support bridgeheads on the left bank of the Dnipro on the eve of the counteroffensive;
- The Russian forces will concentrate their efforts in Bakhmut, Avdiivka, and Maryinka and try to resume active offensive actions in the Vuhledar area;
- A temporary ceasefire in Ukraine and prolonging the war will only benefit the Russian Federation, allowing it to restore its forces and reduce Western support for Ukraine.

Azov-Black Sea Maritime Operational Area:

- There are currently seven Russian ships patrolling the areas near the coast of Novorossiysk and Crimea, two of which are project 636.3 submarines that are carriers of Kalibr missiles. The submarines are located in the area of the firing position near Novorossiysk and may carry up to eight Kalibr missiles.
- A patrol ship (near the Kerch Bridge) and two landing craft are in the Sea of Azov.
- Russian aviation continues to fly from the Crimean airfields of Belbek, Saky, Dzhankoy and Hvardiyske over the sea. 7 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 management of operational-tactical aviation over the waters of the Sea of Azov was carried out by the A-50U DRLV and Il-22.

"The Grain initiative".

- Russia continues to obstruct the functioning of the Grain Deal by delaying the ship inspections and coordination of their passage through the safe corridor. If in September 2022, 5.9 ships arrived daily at three Ukrainian ports (Odesa, Pivdenny, Chornomorsk), then in April 2023, there were only 1.9 ships.
- UN Secretary-General António Guterres conveyed his concerns to Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov regarding the challenges the Joint Coordination Center faces in its daily activities related to the "grain agreement". Guterres also handed Lavrov a letter addressed to Vladimir Putin, which included proposals to improve and expand the agreement in line with the positions expressed by the parties and the risks to global food security. A similar letter was sent to Ukraine and Turkey.
- On April 25, the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation accused Ukraine of violating the "grain agreement" by allegedly using Ukrainian naval drones to attack Sevastopol through the "grain corridors." The Ministry claimed that on March 23 and April 24, 2023, Ukraine attacked the base of the Black Sea Fleet of the Russian Federation in the city of Sevastopol using "unmanned boats". The Ministry stated that the "unmanned boats" were launched from the water area of the port of Odesa designated for implementing the "Black Sea initiative." The deployment allegedly occurred in the area of the humanitarian corridor, which is also used to export agricultural products from Ukrainian ports. The Russian Ministry of Defense claims that these events endanger the next extension of the "grain agreement" after May 18 because Ukraine violated written commitments not to use the humanitarian corridor and Ukrainian ports for hostilities against the Russian Federation. These accusations are similar to those made after the drone attack on Russian ships in the Sevastopol raid on October 29.

Russian operational losses from 24.02.22 to 25.04.23

Personnel - almost 187,770 people (+690);

Tanks 3,688 (+5);

Armored combat vehicles – 7,151 (+12);

Artillery systems – 2,863 (+14)

Multiple rocket launchers (MLRS) - 539 (0);

Anti-aircraft warfare systems - 291 (+2);

Vehicles and fuel tanks – 5,784 (+31);

Aircraft - 308 (0);

Helicopters – 294 (0);

UAV operational and tactical level – 2,437 (+24);

Intercepted cruise missiles - 911 (0);

Boats/ships – 18 (0).

Ukraine, general news

An international working group consisting of the Head of the Office of the President of Ukraine, Andriy Yermak, and former US Ambassador to Russia, Michael McFaul, has proposed a plan to further strengthen sanctions against Russia.

International diplomatic aspect

FM Sergey Lavrov arrived in New York to promote the Kremlin's propaganda narratives at the UN, with two main goals. Firstly, he aimed to criticize the West, specifically the US, to score points with developing nations. "Let's call a spade a spade. Nobody allowed the Western minority to speak on behalf of all humankind," Lavrov stated. Secondly, he attempted to justify Russia's war in Ukraine "Russia has clearly explained the tasks that it pursues within the framework of a special military operation: to eliminate the threats created by NATO for years to our security directly on our borders and to protect people who have been deprived of their rights proclaimed by multilateral conventions, to protect them from direct threats of extermination and expulsion from the territories publicly declared by the Kyiv regime where their ancestors lived for centuries," he said. Between the harsh words about the West and Ukraine, Lavrov talked about multilateralism as he sees it – the exclusive role of Russian states alike to do whatever is feasible.

Representatives from various countries have criticized Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's propaganda narratives and justification of Russia's war in Ukraine.

- "Mr. Minister Lavrov, what better result can this discussion have than the determination of your country to stop military aggression against Ukraine according to the decision of the International Court of Justice of the United Nations on March 16, 2022?" Ecuador's Permanent Representative to the U.N. asked a rhetorical question. Ambassador Hernan Perez Loose refuted Lavrov's claim that Russia adheres to the U.N. Charter and promotes multilateralism by stating that "none of the pretexts invoked to attack Ukraine in violation of the U.N. Charter has legal merit, not one of them.
- "A Russian generation has lost its future, and the Russian Government can't even explain why. Russia's justifications for the war - defeating Nazis and defending against bioweapons – are obvious falsehoods. Russia's claims to Ukraine's territory will never be recognized. For all of Mr. Lavrov's claims about effective multilateralism, I see nothing effective nor multilateral in Russia's foreign policy," the Permanent Representative of the U.K. to the U.N. said.
- "Russia simply wants to redraw international borders by force, in violation of this very U.N. Charter. This does not just concern Ukraine or Europe. It concerns all of us. Because today it's Ukraine. But tomorrow, it could be another country. Another small nation is invaded by its larger neighbor. And what would we want this council to do in response? Sit on our hands? No. It is the very reason the U.N. Charter was written in the first place," U.S. Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield said.

Expectedly, the PRC Permanent Representative echoed Russia's call for "improving global governance systems," with Ambassador Zhang Jun citing grievances against the growing belligerence and malign actions against his country. He criticized the unilateral sanctions imposed by the United States and other countries outside the council mandate, claiming that they are intended to maintain their hegemony, technology, gold monopoly, and ideology.

"Five people who are employed at the [Russian] embassy have been asked to leave [Sweden] as a result of activities that are incompatible with the Vienna Convention on diplomatic relations," a Swedish Foreign Ministry Statement reads. Stockholm's decision follows Berlin's move to expel Russian spies operating under diplomatic cover.

The Kremlin, in what appears to be a coordinated effort with Beijing, has introduced a new element of blackmail by threatening to deploy missile types that were prohibited by the INF Treaty. While Russia had been covertly violating the treaty since the Obama Administration, it was the Trump Administration that ended it. Russia then claimed to adhere to a "unilateral moratorium" on deploying ground-based medium-range and shorter-range missiles in certain regions. Vladimir Ermakov has stated that their adherence to the moratorium will depend on the specific parameters of U.S. missiles' range. He also accused the United States and its allies of having destabilizing military programs that are making Russia's moratorium increasingly fragile in the Asia-Pacific region and in Europe.

South Africa's President announced that the country will withdraw its membership from the International Criminal Court, in accordance with the decision made by the governing African National Congress over the weekend. The decision was influenced by the ICC's warrant for Vladimir Putin, who is expected to attend the BRICS summit in Johannesburg this summer. However, the parliamentary process for withdrawing from the ICC is lengthy and may not be completed in time for Putin's arrival.

Russia, relevant news

According to a recent survey by the Center for Sociological Research of the International Republican Institute (IRI), 79% of people in Georgia are in favor of canceling the visa-free regime for citizens of the Russian Federation. The poll also found that most Georgians are opposed to the presence of Russians in their country, including registering businesses and purchasing real estate by Russians.

Vladimir Putin has signed a decree on retaliatory measures that can be taken in case of the seizure of Russian assets abroad. The decree allows for the temporary management of the property of foreign companies in Russia as a response to any similar actions taken against Russian assets.

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