
Snapshot of the day:

General, humanitarian:

- The Russian forces again attacked 8 Ukrainian regions, killing civilians and destroying civilian infrastructure;
- 42 Ukrainian military personnel and two civilians returned home from Russian captivity;
- Russia has committed more than 80,000 war crimes in Ukraine; more than 10,000 civilians have died, and more than 13,000 have been injured;
- Russia is working to change the ethnic composition of the occupied Ukrainian territories.

Military:

- The Russian military concentrates its main efforts on offensive actions in the Bakhmut, Avdiivka, and Maryinka directions;
- "Wagner" PMC detachments slightly advanced to the southwest of the Bakhmut-2 railway station. The fiercest fighting continues in southern and western Bakhmut, where the Russian military also slowly advances to the west;
- The "Wagner" PMC units are no longer able to conduct independent combat operations without the support of Russian airborne troops and special forces units.
- **Possible operation situation developments:** The combination of weather conditions, insufficient artillery ammunition, and Russian air superiority prevent any serious mobile operations.

International:

- Xi Jinping called Volodymyr Zelensky and talked about strategic partnership and peaceful intentions without mentioning Russia specifically. Kyiv will send a new ambassador, while Beijing will send an envoy to Kyiv and "other countries" to mediate peace. It's unlikely that Beijing's move will bear fruit, as its position is not aligned with Ukraine's core interests.
- The U.S. House of Representatives will consider a resolution defining Ukrainian victory as restoring its internationally recognized 1991 borders, NATO membership, Ukraine's reconstruction, Russian reparations, and bringing Russia's leadership to justice.
- Norway has expelled fifteen Russian spies, increasing to forty the number of spies kicked off from Europe within a week.
- The majority of Germans support security assistance to Ukraine (73%), while only 22% do not, according to a ZDF poll.

Humanitarian aspect:

Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, Russia has committed more than 80,000 war crimes in Ukraine, more than 10,000 civilians have died, more than 13,000 have been injured, more than 98,000 civilian infrastructure objects have been damaged or destroyed, Ukrainian Prosecutor General Andriy Kostin said. He also added that the World Bank currently estimates the losses from a full-scale war at \$411 billion, and Moscow must pay this amount.

POWs

On April 26, Ukraine and Russia conducted another POW exchange, with 42 Ukrainian military personnel and two civilians returning home, according to the head of the President's Office, Andriy Yermak. Some of the released POWs were reported to have been wounded, and others had been subjected to torture by their Russian captors.

Russian attacks

The Russian Federation army attacked eight Ukraine regions on April 25, and civilians were killed and wounded.

- The Russian military shelled **Chernihiv Oblast** four times during the day. At night, it shelled Chernihiv and Novgorod-Siversky districts with mortars. No victims or destruction were reported.
- In **Sumy Oblast**, on the night and morning of April 27, the Russian forces shelled four territorial communities, damaging several houses. During the day, they continued shelling four border communities, with 70 hits recorded from mortars, artillery, and grenade launchers. The shelling caused damage to electricity grids in Yunakivska and Khotyn communities.
- In **Zaporizhzhia Oblast**, the enemy carried out 67 attacks on 19 communities during the day. There were 37 reports of destruction.
- In **Dnipropetrovsk Oblast**, Russian forces shelled the Nikopol district, resulting in two women - aged 64 and 77 - being injured in Marhanets. In the city, two administrative buildings, eight private houses, apartment buildings, and two farm buildings were damaged. Additionally, twelve farm buildings were also damaged, as well as gas pipelines and power lines. In Nikopol, a private enterprise, a shop, and cars were also damaged.
- On April 27, 17 towns and villages in **Kharkiv Oblast** came under Russian fire. The center of Kupyansk was hit by a rocket attack, which caused significant damage to the building of the local history museum, as well as the courthouse and the administrative building of the Kupyansk City Council. As a result of the attack, two people were killed, and 10 were injured.
- In **Luhansk Oblast**, the Russian forces targeted Ukrainian military positions 90 times throughout the day. Villages of Novoselivske, Nevske, Dibrova and Bilohorivka were hit by artillery fire. The situation in the region remains tense.
- In **Donetsk Oblast**, the Russian forces launched a rocket attack on the city of Druzhkivka during the night, resulting in damage to an apartment building and the police administration building. Three policemen were injured in the attack. Additionally, eight buildings were damaged in Novohrodivka. Throughout the night, Maryinka was subjected to constant shelling, while Kurakhivka was also targeted by enemy fire. In Kostyantynivka, seven houses were damaged. Shelling on the outskirts of Chasiv Yar, Soledar, and Illinivka communities was also reported.
- In **Kherson Oblast**, the Russian forces carried out 75 shellings, with 11 of them directed at the city of Kherson. Residential areas of 28 towns and villages were hit, along with the buildings of two shops and a church. One person was reported wounded as a result of the shelling.

Occupied territories

The occupying Russian forces and their proxies in the temporarily occupied territory "sentenced" Andriy Petrenko, a serviceman of the 36th separate marines brigade of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, to 22 years of imprisonment. According to the Verkhovna Rada Commissioner for Human Rights, Dmytro Lubinets, the Russians claimed Petrenko had murdered a civilian with a sniper rifle during the defense of Mariupol in March 2022. They used Russian legislation during the trial. Lubinets called the trial fake and said it constituted a war crime and will entail no legal consequences.

Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Malyar has stated that Russia is attempting to change the ethnic makeup of the population in the temporarily occupied regions of Ukraine. In particular, in **Luhansk Oblast**, the Russian government has initiated large-scale resettlement from the remote areas of the Russian Federation of a significant number of people of various nationalities, mainly economically disadvantaged. The local occupation administrations provide them with all possible support, including immediate accommodation for families, employment, affordable loans to purchase housing and business development. Meanwhile, the Russian occupiers continue to deport local residents, especially those suspected of being pro-Ukrainian, to the Russian Federation under various pretexts.

Operational situation

General conclusion:

- The Russian military concentrates its main efforts on offensive actions in the Bakhmut, Avdiivka, and Maryinka directions;
- Russian troops are trying to displace the Ukrainian Defense Forces from their positions in the Serebryansk Forest area in order to create conditions for further attacks in the Lyman direction.
- The Wagner PMC units are no longer able to conduct independent combat operations without the support of Russian airborne troops and special forces units.

Change in the line of contact (LoC):

- Units of the Ukrainian Defense Forces repelled over 39 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 Bohdanivka, Khromove, Klishchiivka, Severne, Pervomaiske, Maryinka;
- The enemy managed to level the front line in the Ploschanka area by attacking with four infantry chains. Fighting continues in the areas of Chervonopopivka and Serebryansk Forest. Russian troops have advanced in the direction of Nevske, Makiivka, in the area of Bilohorivka, and to the east of Spirne, capturing Karmazynivka. The occupiers continue to fortify their positions in the Kupyansk direction.
- The Ukrainian Defense Forces managed to expand the defense perimeter in the Spirne area.
- "Wagner" PMC units have made slight advances to the southwest of the Bakhmut-2 railway station. The most intense fighting continues in southern and western Bakhmut,

where the enemy is also slowly advancing to the west. There have been increased clashes near Orikhovo-Vasylivka and Novomarkove. Russian airborne units attacked in the Gromov area in an attempt to cut off the T0506 highway, but were stopped.

- Defense Forces repelled Russian ground attacks near Bohdanivka, Novomarkove, Khromove, and Klishchiivka. The Defense Forces also managed to push back the enemy from Stupochky in the area of the old quarry all the way to the eastern bank of the canal west of Klishchiivka.
- Russian forces advanced to the east in the direction of Nevelske.
- The Ukrainian Defense Forces repelled Russian ground attacks near Novokalynove, Stepove, Severne, Pervomaiske, Maryinka, and Novomykhailivka. Units of the Ukrainian Defense Forces in the Avdiivka area pushed the Russian forces away from the railway track north of the city, and successfully counterattacked on the outskirts of Severne.

Change in enemy disposition:

- The occupying forces formed "Assault" units in each brigade/regiment, reinforced by tanks, heavy flamethrower systems, mortars and anti-tank units;
- The 155th marine brigade of the Pacific Fleet reappeared in the area of Vuhledar after restoring its combat readiness, but only partially combat-ready.

Escalation indicators:

- The Russian Aerospace Forces focused their efforts on supporting ground forces in the Bakhmut area, mostly using unguided rockets and guided missiles S-25 (240 mm guided version of the unguided rocket S-24).

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.
- The combination of weather conditions, insufficient artillery ammunition, and Russian air superiority prevent any serious mobile operations.

Azov-Black Sea Maritime Operational Area:

- There are currently 13 Russian ships at sea, patrolling the areas near the coast of Novorossiysk and Crimea. Two corvettes and two Project 636.3 submarines, equipped with Kalibr missiles, are located in the firing position near Novorossiysk. These vessels can potentially carry up to 24 Kalibr missiles.
- A patrol ship (near the Kerch Bridge) and two landing craft are in the Sea of Azov.
- The enemy's aviation continues flights from the Crimean airfields of Belbek, Saky, Dzhankoy, and Hvardiyske over the sea. In the air, there is an activity of tactical aviation from the side of the Azov and Black Seas, as well as temporarily occupied territories, which carry out air strikes on the territory of Zaporizhzhia and Kherson Oblasts using guided bombs of the KAB type.
- Nine fighter aircraft from the Saky and Belbek airfields were involved in monitoring the surface and air situation in the northwestern part of the Black Sea waters. Control of the

air situation and management of tactical aviation over the Azov Sea waters was carried out by the A-50U and Il-22 AWACS aircraft.

- The Russian forces are actively defending the left bank of Kherson Oblast, setting up defensive lines and mining areas in anticipation of a possible landing. They are paying special attention to mining the banks of the Konka and Dnipro rivers. There have been cases of local residents being injured or killed by Russian mines when trying to access the water.
- The Russians continue to shell residential areas and positions of the Ukrainian Defense Forces on the right bank of the Dnipro River, conduct aerial reconnaissance using UAVs, and partially redeploy existing forces.
- The enemy create fortification engineering and earthwork defensive structures along the western coast of the Black Sea and in the northern regions of Crimea.
- On April 24, the newest Turkish amphibious assault ship Anadolu (L400), departed from the coast of Istanbul and entered the waters of the Black Sea, making it the largest aircraft carrier to have entered those waters. The ship was officially accepted into the Turkish Navy on April 10 and was seen off the coast of Istanbul on April 16.
- Anadolu is a light aircraft carrier capable of carrying out amphibious operations. Attacking the enemy's coast can be carried out using amphibious assault ships, landing craft, and hovercraft with marines on board. In the future, it was planned to deploy up to 10 F-35B (vertical or short takeoff and landing) aircraft on this ship. At present, the flight deck of Anadolu accommodates attack helicopters and the latest versions of rotary-wing Bayraktar drones and an experimental unmanned Kızılelma fighter equipped with Ukrainian AI-322F aviation engines produced by Ivchenko-Progress company.

Russian operational losses from 24.02.22 to 26.04.23

Personnel - almost 188,410 people (+640);

Tanks 3,692 (+4);

Armored combat vehicles – 7,162 (+11);

Artillery systems – 2,877 (+14)

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

Anti-aircraft warfare systems - 292 (+1);

Vehicles and fuel tanks – 5,792 (+8);

Aircraft - 308 (0);

Helicopters – 294 (0);

UAV operational and tactical level – 2,440 (+3);

Intercepted cruise missiles - 911 (0);

Boats/ships – 18 (0).

Ukraine, general news

The State Property Fund (SPF) has reported that it transferred 902 million UAH received from privatization in the first quarter of 2023 to the state budget, which is the highest figure in the last 10 years. According to the press service of the SPF, the average amount brought in from privatization during the first quarter of the past decade was UAH 234 million.

International diplomatic aspect

After a long wait, Xi Jinping made a phone call to Volodymyr Zelensky, and the timing seems right for Beijing. Zelensky has appointed a new ambassador to China, and Xi promised to send the Special Representative of the Chinese Government on Eurasian Affairs, a former ambassador to Moscow, to Kyiv and "other countries," presumably Russia and France. "Mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity is the political foundation of China-Ukraine relations," the press release reads. The Chinese MFA reported Zelensky as saying that the "Ukrainian side is committed to the one-China policy and hopes to advance all-round bilateral cooperation with China, open up a new chapter in Ukraine-China relations, and jointly safeguard world peace and stability." "I believe that this call, as well as the appointment of Ukraine's ambassador to China, will give a powerful impetus to the development of our bilateral relations," Volodymyr Zelensky tweeted without praising Xi's "peace" efforts.

The Chinese statement on the call between Xi Jinping and Volodymyr Zelensky didn't mention Russia, despite its aggression on Ukraine. "There is no winner in nuclear wars. On the nuclear issue, all relevant parties must stay calm and exercise restraint," the statement omits to mention only the P5 country that has been increasingly practicing nuclear saber-rattling since 2014. However, the statement implicitly criticized the U.S. for "adding oil to the fire" and insisted that "dialogue and negotiation are the only viable way forward." "On the Ukraine crisis [the Chinese euphemism for the Russian war of aggression], China always stands on the side of peace. Its core stance is to facilitate talks for peace," so Xi urged to "seize the opportunity and build up favorable conditions for the political settlement of the crisis." Though this time, the Chinese leader didn't elaborate on the necessity for "big powers" to negotiate security architecture that addresses "legitimate" concerns of all states (Russia's veto power over European nations' right to join NATO), he expressed hope that "all parties would seriously reflect on the Ukraine crisis and jointly explore ways to bring lasting peace and security to Europe through dialogue."

"We note the readiness of the Chinese side to make efforts to establish the negotiation process," Russia MFA's spokesperson said. The Elysée Palace responded by stating that France "encourages all dialogue that contributes to a resolution of the conflict [in Ukraine] in accordance with the fundamental interests of Ukraine and international law." Sergio Mattarella, the President of Italy, declared, "The defense of the independence, liberty, and territorial integrity of Ukraine is a fundamental value for all the countries of the world who believe in the freedom of peoples and persons. Everyone wants peace, but it must be just peace that respects Ukraine's integrity."

Representative Joe Wilson has introduced a draft resolution titled "Expressing the Sense of the House of Representatives on Ukraine's Victory," which has been co-sponsored by eighteen Representatives. The document affirms that it is the policy of the United States to support Ukraine in achieving victory against the invasion and restoring its internationally recognized 1991 borders. The draft calls for securing "peace brought by Ukrainian victory" by integrating Ukraine into NATO. The Congress declares that the United States must work with its allies and partners to ensure that Russia pays reparations to Ukraine, the global community helps to rebuild it,

Russia's leadership is held accountable for this war of aggression, and there is justice for the victims of crimes committed by Russia.

Norway is the third European country that has expelled Russian spies within the last several days. In total, forty Russian spies will return home from Norway, Germany, and Sweden.

According to a ZDF poll, most Germans favor providing the same level of security support for Ukraine (45%) or increasing it (28%), with only 22% against such support. The strongest supporters of maintaining or increasing aid are the Greens (40%), Social Democrats (37%), and Christian Democrats (30%), while only four percent of the far-right (AfD) support this position.

Russia, relevant news

In retaliation for freezing assets by the United States and its allies, Russia has placed two companies owned by the Finnish state utility Fortum Oyj and the German utility Uniper SE under temporary state administration, Bloomberg reports.

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