
Snapshot of the day:

General, humanitarian:

- The Russian forces intensified attacks on civilian targets. As a result, 26 people died and 56 sustained injuries on May 3.
- Ukrainian air defenses destroyed 18 out of 24 "Shakhed" drones during the overnight RF attack.
- In April alone, Russia committed 6,139 war crimes in Ukraine, according to President Zelensky.
- RF has refused to exchange civilians with Ukraine without any preconditions, violating international humanitarian law. The Ukrainian Ombudsman is in ongoing communication with his Russian counterpart regarding this matter. Russia is holding approximately 20,000 Ukrainian civilian hostages, based on appeals from their relatives, although the actual number is likely much higher.
- The Russian occupying forces placed military equipment and explosives in the premises of the turbine section of the power unit No. 4 of the Zaporizhzhia NPP.

Military:

- The Russian military concentrates its main efforts on offensive actions in the Bakhmut, Avdiivka, and Maryinka directions;
- On the eve of the Ukrainian Defense Forces' counteroffensive, the Russian military is taking a series of measures to slow down the advance, force the Ukrainian Forces to disperse in different directions, and reduce the potential impact of Russian defeat in their information campaign.
- Russian troops are restoring infrastructure, including the port, to facilitate the perimeter defense of Mariupol.
- **Possible operation situation developments:** In anticipation of the Ukrainian counteroffensive, the command of the Russian troops is trying to gain a foothold on the lines advantageous for defense.

International:

- **"Grain initiative":** In case May 5 negotiations between Ukraine, Russia and Turkey yield no result, grain shipments may be stopped as early as May 18.
- The OSCE has determined that Russia's actions towards Ukrainian children, including deportation, erasure of their identity, and adoption, constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity.
- The U.S. Intelligence Community sees no signs of Russia's preparations to employ nuclear arms.
- Ukraine's President expressed hope that Ukraine will become the 33rd NATO member after the war.
- President Zelensky called on the Parliament of the Netherlands to increase pressure on Russia (sanctions, isolation, and transfer of frozen assets), support Ukraine's NATO

membership bid, and carry on security assistance. Volodymyr Zelensky also hopes that top Russian leadership will face justice in the Hague.

Humanitarian aspect:

President Zelensky stated that during April alone, the Russian forces committed 6,139 war crimes, resulting in the deaths of 207 civilians, including 17 children. In addition, over 400 civilians were injured.

Since the beginning of the full-scale Russian invasion, almost 250,000 internally displaced persons have registered in Kyiv, including more than 45,000 children, the press service of the Kyiv City State Administration reported.

Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs, Kateryna Pavlichenko, stated that 5% of the applications to join the "Offensive Guard," a military unit preparing to storm Russian positions, came from female candidates. However, due to the rigorous physical fitness and training requirements, the percentage of female members in the units is only 2%.

According to Dmytro Lubinets, the Human Rights Commissioner of the Verkhovna Rada, the "all for all" principle applies only to military personnel. Therefore, the exchange of civilians should be done without any preconditions. The Russian Federation, however, refuses to comply with international law and often considers civilians as combatants, such as the case of an SBU pensioner, and refuses to exchange them. Lubinets communicates with his Russian counterpart, Tatiana Moskalkova, on this issue daily. He also stated that Russia is holding approximately 20,000 Ukrainian civilian hostages, based on appeals from relatives of those detained by the Russian army. However, the actual number is likely much higher.

According to Ukrenergo, the past day was challenging for the energy system of Ukraine. The Russian forces launched massive rocket and artillery fire along the entire front line. The equipment of distribution system operators (Oblenergo) in seven Oblasts suffered the most significant damage. However, the main power transmission networks did not suffer any new damage. Due to rocket attacks, more than 6,000 consumers in Kherson were cut off from electricity during the day.

Russian attacks

Ukrainian air defense successfully intercepted and destroyed 18 "Shakhed" attack drones, as well as a reconnaissance drone, overnight. The Russian forces reportedly used up to 24 "Shakhed" drones in their attacks.

On May 3, the Russian forces intensified their shelling of frontline regions, resulting in the deaths of 26 people, 23 of whom were in Kherson Oblast. The attacks targeted a hypermarket, a supermarket, and the train station throughout the day. In addition, 56 people sustained injuries. May 4-6 were announced as the days of mourning after the victims in **Kherson**.

On the evening of May 4, **Kyiv** was attacked by Russian UAVs. Several explosions were heard, including over downtown of the city. At least one UAV was shot down. No casualties have been reported. Fires were reported in two districts of the city.

On the night of May 4, the Russian forces fired missiles at **Kramatorsk**, causing damage to 15 private houses, a kindergarten, a college, and an administrative building. The city's power and water supply were also cut off. Fortunately, there were no reported casualties or injuries.

Occupied territories

The Russian occupying forces placed military equipment and explosives in the premises of the turbine section of the power unit No. 4 of the **Zaporizhzhia NPP**, the State Inspectorate for Nuclear Regulation said, following the weekly meeting with representatives of the IAEA on May 2.

According to the National Resistance Center of the Ukrainian MOD, the Russian occupation forces are demanding that children as young as 14 obtain Russian passports. Parents who refuse are threatened with fines and the revocation of their parental rights. Additionally, all children born in the occupied territories after September 30, 2022, are registered as Russian citizens.

In an interview with Ukrinform, Tamila Tasheva, the president's representative in **Crimea**, stated that a military administration would be established in Crimea after de-occupation. The first steps would be to ensure security, arrest collaborators, and take other stabilization measures. A transition to a military-civilian administration would likely occur afterwards. Tasheva emphasized the importance of ensuring security and demining before holding elections; thus, the election timing will depend on these circumstances. She also announced plans to conduct a population census to understand the ethnic and social composition of Crimea.

Operational situation

General conclusion:

- The Russian military concentrates its main efforts on offensive actions in the Bakhmut, Avdiivka, and Maryinka directions;
- Prior to the anticipated counteroffensive by the Ukrainian Defense Forces, the Russian military is implementing a range of measures aimed at slowing down Defense Forces' advance, dispersing them in different directions, and minimizing the potential impact of any [Russian] defeat through informational means.

Change in the line of contact (LoC):

- Units of the Ukrainian Defense Forces repelled over 40 Russian attacks in different directions. Bakhmut and Maryinka remain at the epicenter of hostilities;
- The Russian forces conducted an unsuccessful offensive in the area of Bilohorivka in order to find weak points in the Ukrainian defense, attacking in the areas of New York and Severne.
- The enemy conducted unsuccessful offensive operations near Dibrova and tried to advance in the direction of Novoselivske and Serebryansk forest.

- Russian troops advanced closer to the H0506 highway northwest of Khromove and captured the Bakhmut Medical College. Fighting continues near Bohdanivka. "Wagner" PMC detachments advanced in western and southern Bakhmut.
- Units of the 3rd separate airborne assault brigade of the Ukrainian National Guard conducted a successful counterattack and regained control over the section of the highway at Chasiv Yar. Units of the Ukrainian Defense Forces repelled attacks in the Ivanivske and Predtechyne areas. 1.89 km² of Bakhmut remains under the control of the Ukrainian Defense Forces.
- The Russian forces repulsed the counterattack of the Ukrainian Defense Forces in the Oleksandro-Kalynovske area, attacked near Pervomaiske and Novomykhailivka.
- The Ukrainian 54th separate motorized rifle brigade and the 79th separate airborne assault brigade currently hold positions in Maryinka. In recent days, the intensity of fighting in Maryinka has exceeded the fighting in Bakhmut. Despite numerous Russian attacks in the Maryinka and Novomykhailivka districts, Ukrainian forces have successfully repelled them.
- In southwestern Maryinka, units of the 150th Russian motorized rifle division entrenched themselves in the area of the Gorgaz enterprise on the southern outskirts of the town.
- The Defense Forces launched a HIMARS strike, targeting a hotel in Melitopol where officers from the Russian 58th Army were staying at that time. Additionally, the Defense Forces have been carrying out strikes on the enemy's fuel storage sites, artillery, and ammunition depots in the depth of their defenses, as part of the strategy to prepare for a counteroffensive.

Change in enemy disposition:

- Russian forces are restoring infrastructure, including the port, which is necessary for their defense perimeter of Mariupol.

Escalation indicators:

- Russian "Sturm" detachments, including those from the 13th tank regiment of the 4th tank division and the 1st motorized rifle regiment of the 2nd motorized rifle division of the 1st tank army of the Western Military District, have arrived in Ivanovo, Kursk Oblast, and Yamny, Bryansk Oblast. It is alleged that they have been provided with military uniforms of the Armed Forces of Ukraine to conduct false flag operations in border districts.
- Russian troops of the 1st army corps of the 8th army are regrouping west of Novobakhmutivka;
- Russian troops launched powerful air and artillery strikes on the western bank of the Dnipro in Kherson Oblast.

Possible operation situation developments:

- In the short-term perspective, the Ukrainian Defense Forces will adhere to their chosen strategy of inflicting maximum damage on the enemy in close combat on the main concentration areas.

- In anticipation of the Ukrainian counteroffensive, the command of the Russian troops is trying to gain a foothold on the lines advantageous for their defense.

Azov-Black Sea Maritime Operational Area:

- As of May 4, 7 Russian ships were patrolling the areas near the coast of Crimea. Among them, there were two carriers of Kalibr missiles, with the potential to carry up to 16 missiles. During the night of May 3 to 4, many Russian Navy ships (11) went to sea, including 4 ships capable of carrying up to 32 Caliber missiles. This could be related to the recent drone explosion over the Kremlin complex in Moscow.
- In Novorossiysk, there are currently 37 military vessels and boats, which include the Admiral Makarov frigate, six amphibious assault ships, a Project 636.3 submarine, one Buyan-M corvette, and one patrol ship.
- In Sevastopol, 42 enemy surface ships and boats are at the docks; in Kerch - 2 ships; in Feodosia - 5.
- Russian aviation continues to fly from the Crimean airfields of Belbek, Saky, Dzhankoy and Hvardiyske over the sea. 8 fighter aircraft from Belbek and Saki Air Force Bases, namely two Su-27/30, four Su-30SM, and two MiG-29K, were involved in monitoring the surface and air conditions in the northwestern part of the Black Sea. Control of the airspace and operational-tactical aviation over the Azov Sea was carried out by A-50U and Il-22 AWACS aircraft.
- On the night of May 4, 15 Shahid-136 kamikaze drones attacked Odessa. Regrettably, three of the drones hit their intended target, which was a dormitory of an educational institution. The debris of the downed drones had inscriptions that read "For Moscow" and "For the Kremlin".
- **"The Grain Initiative"**
- The Turkish Defense Minister, Hulusi Akar, announced that on Friday, May 5, Deputy Defense Ministers from Ukraine, Turkey, and Russia will meet in Istanbul to discuss extending the "grain initiative." If the negotiations are unsuccessful, grain shipments could be halted as early as May 18.
- The Ukrainian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dmytro Kuleba, accused Russia of wanting to sabotage the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which had allowed Ukraine to export grain through the ports of Odesa. In an interview with the Moldovan TV channel TV8, Kuleba stated that if negotiations with Russia and Turkey fail, grain shipments could be halted as early as May 18, causing harm to the countries of the Global South and the world's food security. Meanwhile, during the 39th week of the initiative (April 24-30, 2023), only 450.3 thousand tons of agricultural products were exported through the Odesa ports, a 31% decrease from the previous week. Only 11 ships were loaded, which is 4 less than the previous week, making it the lowest number of weekly shipments this year.
- The "grain corridor" remains inefficient due to the Russian side's obstruction of vessel inspections, which are not carried out daily. Sometimes the Russian side refuses to confirm any vessel from the list agreed upon with the UN and Turkey. For Ukraine to conduct full-scale exports, either the Russian side must resume normal operations or free navigation must be restored.

Russian operational losses from 24.02.22 to 04.05.23

Personnel - almost 192,590 people (+650);
Tanks - 3,707 (+5);
Armored combat vehicles – 7,216 (+17);
Artillery systems – 2,962 (+16)
Multiple rocket launchers (MLRS) - 547 (+3);
Anti-aircraft warfare systems - 304 (+4);
Vehicles and fuel tanks – 5,886 (+21);
Aircraft - 308 (0);
Helicopters – 294 (0);
UAV operational and tactical level – 2,523 (+18);
Intercepted cruise missiles - 947 (0);
Boats/ships – 18 (0).

Ukraine, general news

Ukraine has no intention of attacking Transnistria and respects the sovereignty of its neighboring countries, including Moldova, said the Minister of Foreign Affairs Dmytro Kuleba. However, Ukraine is keeping its troops on the border with Transnistria as a deterrent against potential threats.

International diplomatic aspect

"Numerous and overlapping violations of the rights of the children deported to the Russian Federation have taken place. Not only has the Russian Federation manifestly violated the best interests of these children repeatedly, it has also denied their right to identity, their right to family, their right to unite with their family as well as violated their rights to education, access to information, right to rest, leisure, play, recreation and participation in cultural life and arts as well as right to thought, conscience and religion, right to health, and the right to liberty and security," the OSCE Moscow Mechanism mission of experts reported to the OSCE Permanent Council. "Its findings are strong: Russia's actions are called war crimes and crimes against humanity. I insist that Russia must return our stolen children and be held accountable," Ukraine's Foreign Minister tweeted. Russia has been accused of deporting Ukrainian children under the pretext of "security," subjecting them to temporary stays at camps aimed at indoctrination, and facilitating their adoption by Russian parents. However, experts have found that Russia does not actively promote the return of Ukrainian children, and instead creates obstacles for families seeking to retrieve their children. "Russia's intention is clear. It is attempting to forcibly and permanently alter the demographic makeup of Ukraine," the U.K. acting Ambassador to the OSCE said.

The U.S. Director of National Intelligence told the Senate Armed Services Committee that it is "very unlikely" that Russia would use nuclear weapons against Ukraine. This statement comes in response to a recent surge of rumors on Russian social media about the supposed preparation of nuclear-capable missiles for potential use.

"We are realistic and know we will not be in NATO during the war. But during the war, we want to get a very clear message that we will be in NATO after the war," Ukraine's President said during the joint conference with the Dutch Prime Minister.

"The Hague is a city associated with international law in the world. It is becoming a real hub of justice. Justice for all victims of aggression and other international crimes," Ukraine's President told the Netherlands' Parliament. Volodymyr Zelensky has urged the Netherlands to increase efforts aimed at isolating Russia, imposing sanctions, and using frozen assets in the interests of Ukraine. The Ukrainian President also called on the Netherlands to support Ukraine's NATO membership bid. "This summer, Europe will have a historic opportunity to cut off oxygen to Russian revanchism once and for all. The July NATO summit is the time and format that makes it possible to eliminate security uncertainty in Europe." He also thanked the Netherlands for security assistance and appealed to carry it on. "The more powerful weapons and longer-range fire, the more lives are saved from daily enemy strikes."

Eurostat has reported that in 2022, the domestic demand for natural gas in the European Union (EU) decreased by 13.2% to 13.72 million terajoules. This decrease can be attributed to the coordinated measures suggested by the European Commission to reduce the EU's dependence on Russian gas.

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