
Snapshot of the day:

General, humanitarian:

- Russia launched a massive missile attack on Ukraine. All 19 missiles and 6 hypersonic Kinzhal missiles were shot down (updated information). Overall, Russia attacked 11 Ukraine's Oblasts over the past day;
- 481 children died, and more than 974 sustained injuries of various degrees of severity due to the Russian aggression against Ukraine;
- A year after extraction, about 2 thousand Azovstal defenders still remain in Russian captivity;
- There are more than 2,500 Russian military personnel at the Zaporizhzhya NPP. It has turned into a fortified military base;
- In Estonia, 44% of Ukrainian refugees aged 20-64 were able to get a job.

Military:

- The Russian military concentrates its main efforts on offensive actions in the Kupyansk, Bakhmut, Avdiivka, and Maryinka directions;
- The Russian forces are trying to intensify their activities in the Kupyansk direction.
- **Possible operation situation developments:**
- Ukrainian Defense Forces will continue to shape the operational space, preparing favorable conditions for a counteroffensive operation;
- The command of the Defense Forces will continue to exert pressure on the enemy's flanks north and south of Bakhmut, forcing the enemy to retreat from the city under the threat of encirclement.
- In the coming days, units of the "Wagner" PMC will attempt to break through the residential area in the western part of Bakhmut and reach the Bakhmut-Khromove highway.
- The enemy would likely deploy reserves in Bakhmut and Avdiivka directions.

International:

- The U.S. would not follow the U.K.'s decision to send longer-range fires to Ukraine, at least for now. The M1 Abrams MBTs for training Ukrainian soldiers are already in Germany.
- Ukraine has joined NATO's Cooperative Cyber Defense Center of Excellence in Tallinn.
- China's MFA is unhappy with signs of support for Ukraine on display at the foreign embassies and international organizations' buildings and offices.
- The E.U. is set to curb Russia's energy exports, particularly refined oil products' reexport via India.
- On the eve of the liberation of Crimea by the UAF, the illegal occupation authorities turned to legal absurdity. They are set to "cancel" a legal act of the non-existent state in the hope it will somehow make the illegal annexation of Crimea legal.

- The wife of former German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder was fired from NRW.Global Business after she, along with her husband in a company of far-right politicians, attended the Russian Embassy on May 9.

Humanitarian aspect

As of the morning of May 16, 2023, over 1,454 children in Ukraine have been impacted by the full-scale armed aggression of the Russian Federation. According to official information from juvenile prosecutors, 481 children have died, and more than 974 have suffered injuries of varying severity.

POWs

Today marks one year since approximately 2,500 defenders of Azovstal in Mariupol were ordered to leave the plant. Based on information from public sources, approximately 500 defenders have been released over the course of the year. This indicates that around 2,000 defenders are still held in captivity, emphasized Natalka Zarytska, the head of the NGO "Council of Women and Mothers - Women of Steel," during a press briefing.

Displaced Ukrainians:

According to the Ministry of Social Affairs of Estonia, 44% of Ukrainian refugees aged 20-64 have successfully secured employment in Estonia. This figure surpasses the average of 30% across the European Union. However, challenges such as limited language proficiency and childcare responsibilities hinder their ability to find employment that aligns with Displaced Ukrainians' education.

Russian attacks

Russia launched another massive attack on Ukraine on the night of May 15 to May 16. The Russian forces attacked Ukraine from the northern, southern, and eastern directions with 6 Kh-47M2 "Kinzhal" aeroballistic missiles, 9 "Kalibr" cruise missiles, as well as 10 land-based missiles (S-400, "Iskander-M"), according to the updated information from General Staff of Ukraine. They were all shot down by Ukrainian air defense.

Additionally, the Russian occupiers used 2 missiles from the S-300 system against civilian infrastructure in Kostiantynivka, Donetsk Oblast.

Overall, the Russian military attacked 11 Ukrainian oblasts over the past day. Some of the consequences include:

- It was the 8th major attack on **Kyiv** since the beginning of May. Debris fell in 5 city districts, resulting in a non-residential building and several automobiles catching fire. Three people were injured.
- The Russian forces conducted 12 shelling attacks on the border areas of **Sumy Oblast** throughout the day. A total of 136 explosions were recorded. In the Novoslobidska community, a power line was damaged, and a private house caught fire. People were not affected.

- Russian forces carried out 90 attacks on 14 towns and villages in **Zaporizhzhia Oblast**, resulting in the destruction of 24 civilian objects. No casualties were reported among civilians.
- In **Dnipropetrovsk Oblast**, the Russian invaders targeted the Nikopol district with artillery fire. The Chervonohryhorivka community and Nikopol were subjected to the attack. Nearly 30 shells struck Nikopol, resulting in four people being injured. Multiple fires erupted in the city, causing damage to commercial buildings and infrastructure facilities.
- Russian forces launched a large-scale attack, using artillery, mortars, and aircraft, on populated areas in the Kharkiv, Kupyansk, and Chuhuyiv districts of **Kharkiv Oblast**. Two civilians, a man and a woman, died from artillery shelling in the village of Dvorichna in the Kupyansk district. Additionally, a man sustained injuries from shrapnel and has been hospitalized for treatment.
- Over the past day, Russian forces carried out 80 attacks on **Kherson Oblast**, firing 407 shells from heavy artillery, tanks, UAVs, and aircraft. They shelled the city of Kherson 14 times (60 shells). The Russian military targeted the residential areas in the Oblast and an educational institution in Kherson. Six people, including a child, were injured.
- During the past day, the Russian military carried out 32 attacks on 17 towns and villages in **Donetsk Oblast**. As a result of the Russian attacks, 5 civilians were killed, and 4 were injured over the past day.

Occupied territories

According to the report from the Energoatom, there has been a significant increase in the number of armed Russian occupiers at the **Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (NPP)**. Currently, there are more than 2,500 Russian military personnel stationed there. Furthermore, following what was referred to as "vacations", during which both representatives of the occupation authorities and various documentation and equipment were transported from Enerhodar to the Sea of Azov, the occupiers have now returned to the city. The key services of the invading "regime" have resumed functioning, including Russian bank branches and the local "administration". Only gas stations that have no fuel remain closed.

Operational situation

General conclusion:

- The Russian military concentrates its main efforts on offensive actions in the Kupyansk, Bakhmut, Avdiivka, and Maryinka directions;
- The enemy is attempting to intensify its activity in the Kupyansk direction.

Change in the line of contact (LoC):

- Units of the Ukrainian Defense Forces repulsed over 49 Russian attacks in different directions. Bakhmut and Maryinka remain at the epicenter of hostilities.
- In the Kupyansk direction, the enemy continuously tries to improve its tactical position. It conducted unsuccessful offensive actions in the areas of Synkivka, Novoselivske, Ivanivske, Avdiivka, and Maryinka.

- Airborne units of the Russian Armed Forces reportedly seized Masyutivka in Kharkiv Oblast and established a bridgehead on the western bank of the Oskil River, directly to the west of the village (the information is being verified).
- The Russian forces carried out unsuccessful offensive operations in the vicinity of Hryhorivka, Bohdanivka, Ivanivske, Predtechyne, near Bila Hora, and in Bakhmut. Russian units of the 72nd separate motorized rifle brigade of the 3rd army corps lost their positions southwest of Ivanivske. "Wagner" PMC is concentrating its efforts on clearing a residential area, consisting of single-family homes, in western Bakhmut.
- Units of the Ukrainian Defense Forces try to reach the northwestern outskirts of Klishchiivka.
- Russian troops advanced near Mali Shcherbaky but had no success.
- The Ukrainian Defense Forces fired at the enemy military facilities in Melitopol, Tokmak, Molochansk, Vasylivka, and Polohy using MRLS, including HIMARS.

Change in enemy disposition:

- The 4th separate motorized rifle brigade of the 2nd Army Corps of the 8th Army is engaged in combat in Ivanove area. The 110th separate motorized rifle brigade of the 1st Army Corps of the 8th Army operates in the Nevelske area.
- Approximately 152,000 Russian troops in southern Ukraine continue to defend against a possible Ukrainian counteroffensive.
- Russian troops fortify their positions around Mariupol, especially around the bridges over the Kalmius and Kalchyk Rivers.
- Russian troops have transferred a small missile ship with eight Kalibr missiles into the Sea of Azov to protect the Kerch Bridge.
- The status of the enemy's reserves in the Bakhmut direction is as follows: personnel readiness is up to 70%, while armament and combat equipment readiness are up to 40%. In the Avdiivka direction, personnel readiness is up to 80%, and armament and combat equipment readiness are up to 60%.
- Overall, the enemy's first-line reserves consist of three motorized rifle regiments of the territorial troops, a separate rifle regiment, and seven motorized rifle battalions. "Wagner" PMC has twelve assault units, four of which are non-operational due to personnel losses of up to 60%.

Escalation indicators:

- Russia launched a massive missile attack on Kyiv.

Possible operation situation developments:

- The enemy will not cease their efforts to capture Bakhmut and gradually transition to a defensive posture on the Lyman, Bakhmut, Avdiivka, and Maryinka fronts. They may prepare an offensive operation to capture Kupyansk, which they could potentially launch simultaneously with the start of the Defense Forces' counteroffensive.
- Ukrainian Defense Forces will continue to shape the operational space, preparing favorable conditions for counteroffensive operations.

- The command of the Defense Forces in the area of Bakhmut will continue to exert pressure on the enemy's flanks north and south of Bakhmut, forcing the enemy to retreat from the city under the threat of encirclement.
- In the coming days, units of the "Wagner" PMC will attempt to break through the residential area in the western part of Bakhmut and reach the Bakhmut-Khromove highway.
- In the Bakhmut direction, the enemy may deploy reserves consisting of up to two motorized rifle battalions within a day; within 48 hours, they can deploy a motorized rifle regiment of two battalion-size of territorial troops and four separate motorized rifle battalions of the mobilization reserve.
- In the Avdiivka direction, the enemy may deploy reserves consisting of up to one separate motorized rifle brigade within a day; within 48 hours, they can deploy two motorized rifle regiments of the territorial troops and six rifle battalions of the mobilization reserve.

Azov-Black Sea Maritime Operational Area:

- During the night of May 15 to 16, there was a change in the number of Russian Navy ships in the Black Sea. Three ships equipped with Kalibr missiles set sail, carrying a total of 24 missiles. During the night, they launched a missile attack on Ukraine, firing 9 Kalibr missiles. However, all of these missiles were successfully intercepted and shot down by the Air Defense Forces of Ukraine, with 4 of them being neutralized in Mykolaiv Oblast.
- On the afternoon of May 16, there were 11 Russian ships at sea. They patrol the areas near the coast of Crimea and the Russian Krasnodar Krai. One ship was on duty near the Kerch Strait Bridge. 2 missile carriers carry a total of up to 8 Kalibr missiles.
- Russian aircraft maintains its operations from the Crimean airfields of Belbek, Saky, Dzhankoy, and Hvardiyske, conducting flights over the sea. Specifically, 10 fighter aircraft from Belbek and Saki Air Force Bases were deployed to monitor surface and air conditions in the northwestern part of the Black Sea. The A-50U and Il-22 AEW&C aircraft were responsible for overseeing the air situation and managing operational-tactical aviation activities over the waters of the Sea of Azov.

The "Grain Initiative"

- Ukraine expressed concerns about the potential termination of the Grain Agreement on May 18. During a briefing, Olga Trofimtseva, Ambassador-at-Large of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stated that conflicting signals had been received regarding the agreement's future, which was discussed during talks in Turkey the previous week. She noted that the overall situation has not changed significantly, and there is ambiguity surrounding the extension of the "grain agreement." Moscow has threatened to withdraw from the agreement on May 18 unless specific demands aimed at removing obstacles to exporting Russian grain and fertilizers are met. Trofimtseva commented, "Such a rupture, an exit (of Russia) from the grain initiative is possible, but for everyone, and first of all for the Russian side, it will mean an escalation of the situation, and they will make it more difficult for themselves to take a further negotiating position."
- Ukraine exported 2.5 million tons of agricultural goods in April, despite the slowdown in the use of the grain corridor (this volume is twice lower than in August-September 2022).

- In the meantime, UN Humanitarian Coordinator Martin Griffiths emphasized that efforts to extend the "grain initiative" would persist in the days ahead. Griffiths made this statement on May 15 during a UN Security Council meeting discussing the situation in Ukraine.
- Currently, two vessels from the "Grain Initiative" are being loaded with agricultural products at the ports of Odesa. In the coming days, they will set course towards the Bosphorus.
- It should be noted that last week Turkish diplomats made progress in the agreement on releasing all Turkish cargo ships from Ukraine. About 50 foreign vessels have been blocked in Ukrainian ports since February 24 last year. The agreement will require Russia to provide assurances that it will not engage in hostile actions against foreign ships during their departure from the ports. If the release of the Turkish ships is successful, it could potentially serve as a precedent for other foreign vessels that were blocked in Ukrainian ports due to actions by the Russian Federation. However, it remains unclear whether the agreement will address the return of vessels seized by Russia in Mariupol in June and July of the previous year.

Russian operational losses from 24.02.22 to 16.05.23

Personnel - almost 199,800 people (+520);

Tanks - 3,762 (+3);

Armored combat vehicles – 7,348 (+12);

Artillery systems – 3,150 (+13)

Multiple rocket launchers (MLRS) - 562 (0);

Anti-aircraft warfare systems - 316 (0);

Vehicles and fuel tanks – 6,048 (+14);

Aircraft - 308 (0);

Helicopters – 294 (0);

UAV operational and tactical level – 2,732 (+12);

Intercepted cruise missiles - 970 (0);

Boats/ships – 18 (0).

Ukraine, general news

Oleksiy Danilov, Secretary of the National Security and Defense Council, emphasized that under martial law, no elections, including parliamentary and presidential elections, can be held in Ukraine. He further expressed his view that representatives from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) should refrain from instructing Ukraine on its course of action, as the country adheres to its Constitution and will follow its provisions. Danilov's statement was a response to the remarks made by Tinie Cox, President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, who suggested that Ukraine should proceed with holding parliamentary and presidential elections even in the context of martial law.

International diplomatic aspect

Pentagon Press Secretary Air Force Brig. Gen. Pat Ryder rejected the notion that the U.S. may follow the U.K. decision to provide Ukraine with longer-range fires. The General announced the

arrival of thirty-one M1 Abrams training tanks to Grafenwoehr in Germany for subsequent training of Ukrainian tank crews. He expects those crews to arrive and begin training within the next couple of weeks. Meanwhile, around 500 Ukrainian soldiers are presently engaged in combined arms training at the Grafenwoehr and Hohenfels training areas in Germany. About 10,700 Ukrainian soldiers have completed training and returned to the front lines, including 6,100 who have completed small arms training, 4,000 who have completed specific platform training, and 600 who have completed staff training.

Ukraine has joined NATO's Cooperative Cyber Defense Center of Excellence in Tallinn. NATO's partners provided significant assistance to Ukraine, which was crucial on the eve of the all-out invasion and the first months. At the same time, Ukraine gained valuable experience in cyber defense, which will contribute to the security of its partners.

As the Chinese "peace" envoy arrived in Kyiv, the Foreign Ministry of China released a notice advising embassies and international organizations based in Beijing to refrain from using the outer walls of their buildings for propaganda and to "avoid causing conflicts between states." The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) considers displays of support for Ukraine, such as the #StandWithUkraine signs, as forms of "political propaganda." This demand from the Chinese MFA, coupled with the relentless missile attack on Kyiv by their [Russian] partner "without limits," serves as an interesting introduction to an impartial "peace" brokering mission. So far, Beijing has refrained from condemning Russia's attack on Ukraine's capital.

"If diesel or gasoline is entering Europe ... coming from India and being produced with Russian oil, that is certainly a circumvention of sanctions, and member states have to take measures," European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said. Despite the E.U.'s ban on all seaborne imports and a total ban on imports of refined oil products, Russia managed to boost its energy export since the all-out invasion. According to data from the International Energy Agency, Moscow exported 8.3 million barrels per day of crude and refined oil in April. Russia has shifted its energy exports towards China and India, with India reexporting a significant portion of the refined oil from Russia to Europe.

On the eve of the liberation of Crimea by the UAF, the illegal occupation authorities turned to legal absurdity. "In political terms, of course, we did everything in 2014, but in legal terms... For this, it is necessary to give a legal assessment of the process of transferring the Crimean region from the RSFSR [Soviet Russia] to the Ukrainian SSR [Soviet Ukraine]. This process was politically insignificant; it was carried out with the grossest violation of the Constitution of the USSR. Our return has already taken place, and this political and legal misunderstanding [by decree of 1954] must be put an end to once and for all," the so-called speaker of the Crimean parliament said. Besides the illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014, the Russian Federation's Prosecutor General's Office later acknowledged the transfer of Crimea to the Ukrainian SSR as "unconstitutional." This action not only disregards the violations of the U.N. Charter, the Helsinki Final Act, the Budapest Memorandum of 1994, and the Agreement on Friendship between Ukraine and Russia, which explicitly recognized Ukraine's borders, but it also disregards the constitutions of both Ukraine and Russia. It was a judicial "innovation" that the Prosecutor General's Office, not the

Constitutional Court, considered anything unconstitutional. Now, the illegal authorities of the Russian Federation are mulling over canceling a legal act of a non-existent state.

Soyeon Schröder-Kim, the wife of former German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, has been dismissed from her position at NRW.Global Business following her and her husband's attendance at a reception held at the Russian Embassy on May 9. The company "repeatedly pointed out to Schröder-Kim that representatives should not speak out on politically sensitive topics, particularly regarding Russia's war of conquest against Ukraine." Ex-German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder, a devoted friend of Putin, and his wife attended the Embassy along with politicians from the right-wing populist Alternative for Germany (AfD) party Tino Chrupalla and Alexander Gauland.

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