
Snapshot of the day:

General, humanitarian:

- The Russians launched another massive missile attack on Ukraine during the night. 29 of 30 sea-launched, air-launched, and land-based cruise missiles were shot down. In the last 24 hours, 16 Ukrainian Oblasts were affected by attacks from Russian forces. There are killed and wounded civilians.
- The energy infrastructure has been affected after the intense overnight shelling, resulting in power outages in over 20 towns and villages.
- Ukraine is determined to liberate Crimea, Volodymyr Zelensky told the leaders of the Crimean Tatar community, commemorating the 79th anniversary of the deportation of the Crimean Tatar people from the peninsula by the Stalin regime.

Military:

- The Ukrainian Defense Forces are effectively conducting active defense in the Bakhmut and Avdiivka areas. Meanwhile, the Russian military command has practically ceased offensive operations in the Avdiivka area due to the diminished combat capabilities of the 1st Army Corps, which is operating in that direction.
- The enemy remains determined to capture Bakhmut and will gradually shift towards a defensive stance in the Kupyansk, Bakhmut, Avdiivka, and Maryinka directions.
- The Ukrainian Defense Forces will persist in shaping the operational environment, creating favorable conditions for future counteroffensive operations.

International:

- Ukraine's Foreign Minister has outlined three key priorities: maintaining sanctions pressure on Russia, acquiring Western fighter jets for Ukraine, and establishing a clear pathway for Ukraine's membership in NATO.
- Former Swedish PM called to overcome the "trauma of Bucharest" and abandon any doubts regarding Ukraine's future membership in NATO.
- NATO Secretary-General expects defense ministers to discuss the F-16 issue in June.

Russian attacks

Overall, during the night, the Russians launched 30 sea-launched, air-launched, and land-based cruise missiles at Ukraine. 29 of them were shot down. Additionally, the air defense forces successfully intercepted 2 attack UAVs of the Shahed-136/131 type and 2 reconnaissance UAVs.

In the past 24 hours, Russian forces have launched attacks on 16 Ukrainian Oblasts

Consequences of the attacks:

- In the morning, the Russians shelled **Khmelnitskyi Oblast** (in the west of Ukraine), causing damage to an infrastructure object. No casualties were reported.

- Missiles and drones heading towards **Kyiv** during the night were successfully intercepted. No casualties were reported. In Kyiv, fragments fell in the Desnianskyi and Darnytskyi districts. The Darnytskyi district suffered the most significant damage, with a fire occurring in the territory of a garage cooperative, which has already been extinguished. Preliminary information indicates that the enemy carried out the attack using X-101/555 type cruise missiles, followed by the deployment of reconnaissance drones.
- On Thursday night, **Odesa** was also targeted by a large-scale missile strike. The spokesperson of the oblast military administration reported that the air defense forces successfully intercepted most of the missiles over the sea. However, an industrial facility was hit during the attack. As a result, one person died, and three others were injured.
- In the morning, during an air raid alarm in **Zhytomyr Oblast**, three enemy rockets hit a field outside the populated areas. Another missile was intercepted. Debris damaged a summer kitchen and a shed in a private home. There were no casualties or injuries reported.
- The air defense forces successfully intercepted a missile in the airspace of **Vynnytsia Oblast**.
- In **Kirovohrad Oblast**, the air defense forces destroyed a cruise missile in the sky over the Oleksandriya district and a drone in the Kropyvnytskyi district. The missile's warhead exploded on the territory of private residential property, causing damage to three houses. Debris from the downed drone hit one of the objects, resulting in a fire outbreak. Residents of nearby houses were evacuated.
- The Russians also targeted the village of Tsyrkuny in **Kharkiv Oblast** with the S-300 surface-to-air missile system. A 52-year-old local resident was killed. Two other civilian men sustained injuries. Two residential houses in the village were completely destroyed, while 13 private houses and 14 outbuildings were damaged.
- In **Mykolaiv Oblast**, the Russian forces targeted a workshop for manufacturing wooden products. The fire has been extinguished.
- In **Zaporizhzhia Oblast**, the enemy carried out a total of 90 attacks in the past day, including 82 instances of artillery shelling, seven attacks using multiple rocket launchers, and one airstrike. Thirty-one objects were destroyed. A resident of Hulyaipole was killed as a result of the shelling. In Stepanohirsk, three men sustained injuries during enemy attacks.
- Yesterday, the Russian army attacked the Nikopol district of **Dnipropetrovsk Oblast** with three artillery shells. The Myrivska community sustained significant damage, including a multi-apartment building, 11 private estates, an outbuilding, an apiary, two vehicles, six gas pipelines, seven power lines, a post office, two cultural institutions, a kindergarten, a clinic, an agricultural enterprise, and a store. In the Marhanets community, an agricultural firm was damaged.
- During the past day, two people were killed, and five others were injured in **Donetsk Oblast**. The shelling affected at least 19 towns and villages in the region, involving the use of S-300 surface-to-air missile systems, BM-30 Grad multiple rocket launchers, and artillery. Twenty residential buildings, a company building, a cultural palace, radar equipment, two railway tracks, a garage, two utility structures, a railway crossing building,

two power transmission lines, a transformer substation, two gas pipelines, and two workshops of the railway depot of Ukrzaliznytsia were damaged.

- Throughout the day, the enemy launched a total of 90 shelling attacks on **Kherson Oblast**, firing 529 projectiles, including three shelling incidents (8 projectiles) targeting Kherson. Three people, including one child, were killed, and eight others, including a child, were injured. The shelling also damaged a school in the city. The villages of Kozatske and Vesele continue to be subjected to shelling from various weapons. As a result, seven private houses were damaged, and one person was injured in Kozatske. During the mortar shelling in Beryslav, a medical facility was impacted, causing injury to a local resident. Residential buildings and a post office in Tyahynka, Beryslav district, were damaged due to shelling. The power grid in Kizomyts has also been affected. Near Mala Oleksandrivka, a local resident was injured when a Russian mine detonated.

Energy:

Following the intense overnight shelling, the impact on the energy infrastructure has led to power outages in more than 20 towns and villages, according to the Ministry of Energy's press service.

- Due to the shelling, aerial power transmission lines were disconnected in Khmelnytskyi Oblast. Three settlements in the region are without electricity, affecting 1.7 thousand consumers.
- Recent heavy shelling also caused power outages in two settlements in Zaporizhzhia Oblast and three settlements in Mykolaiv Oblast.
- In Kherson Oblast, 15 settlements experienced power loss, affecting nearly 12 thousand consumers. However, power has been restored in all these areas.
- In Donetsk Oblast, several aerial power lines were also disrupted. As a result, five settlements and over 20 thousand subscribers are currently without electricity. Furthermore, a mine, with several people inside, was also affected.
- Due to previous shelling incidents, there are still consumers in Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, Sumy, Kharkiv, Kherson, and Chernihiv Oblasts who remain without electricity.

Occupied territories:

According to reports from Russian media, the occupation authorities in Crimea have announced the temporary suspension of train services on the Simferopol-Sevastopol route. This decision was made following a sabotage incident [explosion] on the railway, which resulted in the derailment of five wagons with grain in the Simferopol district.

Operational situation

General conclusion:

- The enemy is focusing its primary efforts on carrying out offensive operations in the Kupyansk, Bakhmut, Avdiivka, and Maryinka directions.
- The Ukrainian Defense Forces are effectively carrying out active defense in the Bakhmut and Avdiivka areas.
- The Russian military command has practically halted offensive operations in the Avdiivka area due to the depletion of combat capabilities of the 1st Army Corps, which is operating in that direction.

Change in the line of contact (LoC):

- The units of the Defense Forces have repelled over 36 enemy attacks in various directions. The areas of Bakhmut and Maryinka remain at the center of the hostilities.
- The enemy conducted unsuccessful offensive operations in the areas of Masyutivka, Novoselivka, Stelmakhivka, Nevske, Bilohorivka, Ivanivske, and Maryinka.
- The 252nd motorized rifle regiment of the 3rd motorized rifle division, part of the 20th Army of the Western Military District of the Russian Federation, repelled two attacks by the Ukrainian Defense Forces in the Chervonopopivka area. The artillery of the 20th Army launched strikes on the bridge over the Zherebets River in Makiyivka.
- Units of the "Wagner" PMC made gradual advancements in the southwestern outskirts of Bakhmut and the northwest of Bakhmut, specifically in the areas near the Bakhmut-Khromove highway, Orikhovo-Vasylivka, and Mynkivka.
- The enemy carried out about 80 artillery strikes on the Kherson Oblast in an attempt to disrupt the potential counteroffensive of the Defense Forces. Units of the 8th Artillery Regiment of the 22nd Army Corps of the Russian Black Sea Fleet were involved in a large-scale artillery shelling of the city of Kherson.

Change in enemy disposition: not identified

Escalation indicators:

- The Russian Federation has completed state qualification tests of the wheeled self-propelled artillery system 2c43 "Malva." The company "Techmash" (part of the "Rostekh" conglomerate) has commenced serial production of the "Broneboynik" air-launched missile for Su-25 attack aircraft, Mi-8 helicopters, and other air platforms capable of launching unguided rockets.

Possible operation situation developments:

- The enemy will not cease its efforts to seize Bakhmut and will gradually transition to a defensive posture in the Kupyansk, Bakhmut, Avdiivka, and Maryinka directions.
- Ukrainian Defense Forces will continue to shape the operational space, preparing favorable conditions for counteroffensive operations.

Azov-Black Sea Maritime Operational Area:

- During the night of May 17th to May 18th, the enemy conducted another missile strike against Ukraine, involving naval missile carriers that launched 6 Kalibr missiles.
- As of the afternoon of May 18th, there were 8 enemy ships at sea. They were patrolling areas near the coast of Crimea and the Krasnodar Krai. One of them (a Project 636.3 submarine) is a carrier of Kalibr missiles. One ship is on duty near the Kerch Strait Bridge.
- The enemy's aviation continues its flights over the sea from the Crimean airfields of Belbek, Saky, Dzhankoy, and Hvardiyske. Eight 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.

- As of May 17, the following were detected on the territory of the Dzhankoy airfield (Crimea): 45 units of aviation equipment, including 4 Su-25 aircraft, 41 helicopters (including 21 Mi-8, 11 Mi-28, 2 Mi-24, 6 Ka-52, 1 Mi-26), and 17 air defense systems (including 15 Pantsir96K6 missile systems).

The "Grain Initiative"

- Ukraine's Ambassador to Turkey, Vasyl Bodnar, stated that the "grain deal" does not cater to any of Russia's needs. He explained, "The agreement itself does not satisfy any of Russia's needs. The agreement provides mechanisms for the operation of the grain corridor from Ukrainian ports to international markets. What Russia is currently trying to "attach" are issues related to the ammonia pipeline, the lifting of sanctions on banks and organizations involved in grain and fertilizer trade. These issues are still under discussion." The diplomat pointed out that the UN had signed an agreement with the aggressor country and a corresponding memorandum to facilitate the resolution of these issues. Therefore, discussions regarding these demands are ongoing, while the grain initiative is intended to function separately, as the document for it was signed in a different format.

Russian operational losses from 24.02.22 to 18.05.23

Personnel - almost 201,100 people (+510);

Tanks - 3,773 (+2);

Armored combat vehicles – 7,373 (+8);

Artillery systems – 3,198 (+32)

Multiple rocket launchers (MLRS) - 563 (+1);

Anti-aircraft warfare systems - 318 (0);

Vehicles and fuel tanks – 6,073 (+6);

Aircraft - 308 (0);

Helicopters – 294 (0);

UAV operational and tactical level – 2,759 (+11);

Intercepted cruise missiles - 990 (+8);

Boats/ships – 18 (0).

Ukraine, general news

"We continue our work in order to liberate Crimea. It will happen for certain - its full-fledged return to Ukraine's state system," Ukraine's President told the leaders of the Crimean Tatar community, commemorating the 79th anniversary of the deportation of their people from the peninsula by the Stalin regime.

Crimea, which has been home to many nations for more than two millennia, was annexed by the Russian Empire in 1783. In 1944, Stalin forcefully deported the entire Crimean Tatar population as a social engineering move. With Ukraine regaining its independence in 1991, the Crimean Tatars and other deported ethnic communities had the opportunity to return. Moscow's attempt to illegally annex Crimea in 1994 failed, but it succeeded in 2014. As a visible minority, the

Crimean Tatars once again became targets of repression and intimidation by the Russian occupation authorities. Liberation of Crimea is not only about a restoration of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, thus, supremacy of international law. Along with the crucial precondition for the security of Ukraine, the Black Sea, and MENA regions, it's a historical justice to the indigenous people and other ethnic groups who suffer from Russia's illegal annexation and repressive regime.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine called on the world to recognize the deportation of the Crimean Tatars in 1944 as genocide. The Ministry urges its partners to acknowledge the genocide and demands that Russia cease human rights violations in the temporarily occupied Crimea and immediately release all political prisoners.

International diplomatic aspect

"Ukraine needs first to win with Russia on its terms - the West must maintain unity on upholding sanctions on Russia and perhaps designing new ones, we need to build unity on delivering modern fighter jets to Ukraine and Ukrainian membership in NATO," Ukraine's Foreign Minister told the PISM Strategic Ark conference. "Ukraine expects a concrete algorithm for its accession to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, not a Membership Action Plan," Dmytro Kuleba said. "The Membership Action Plan is not needed to move further in its integration with the Alliance; the case of Sweden and Finland proved it," Bogdan Klich, a Polish Senator, echoed the words of the Foreign Minister.

Karl Bildt believes the Vilnius summit needs to overcome the "trauma of Bucharest." While he acknowledges that the summit may not result in an immediate invitation for Ukraine, he thinks the allies should abandon "any doubt that membership will come one day." "Ukraine's security is key to European stability, and that will remain the case for decades. Resisting aggression and safeguarding Europe are the reasons why NATO was created in the first place. At stake in Vilnius is not just Ukraine's future but also that of the alliance," the former Swedish PM wrote.

"We constantly discuss the question of whether modern Western fighters are needed – both within NATO and with Ukraine. I expect that this topic will be discussed at the meeting of NATO defense ministers in June," Jens Stoltenberg said in an interview with Spiegel.

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