

**April 11th - April 17th, 2023**  
**Ukraine Weekly Situation Report**

**CONFLICT DEVELOPMENTS**

- The Armed Forces of the Russian Federation (hereinafter: AFRF) continue their counteroffensive, aided by private paramilitary groups, in the Donetsk oblast. They are attempting to encircle Bakhmut, Mariinka, Lyman, and Avdiivka. Clashes are taking place inside Bakhmut and other cities. According to the Ukrainian government, as of 17 April Russia had lost some [183.000](#) soldiers. In Russia, a campaign has been launched aimed at sending draft e-papers to citizens. This could point to preparations for a further mobilization wave.
- Russia not only violates the rules of war, but it also records videos of its own war crimes. This was confirmed after [a video](#) (one of many) was released containing the violent execution of a Ukrainian prisoner of war (PoW).
- Unlike during the Christmas period, Russia did not send a formal request to negotiate a holiday ceasefire for the Easter period. Shelling, missile and drone attacks continued over the Easter holidays, during which an 18-year-old girl and a 17-year-old boy [died](#). Russian troops are using guided [bombs](#) along the entire front line, targeting objects of Ukraine's civilian infrastructure in particular. In Ukraine's occupied territories, for example in [Mariupol](#), buildings damaged during Russian offensives are being demolished. The buildings are often destroyed with the bodies of those killed during Russian attacks still inside. The Armed Forces of Ukraine (hereinafter: AFU) have confirmed the presence of a [70-kilometer](#) trench line dug out by Russians near Melitopol.
- Last week several cities including [Kherson](#), [Zaporizhzhia](#), [Slovyansk](#), [Kostyantynivka](#), [Kurakhivka](#), [Orikhiv](#), [Komyshyvakha](#), [Nikopol](#), [Beryslav](#), [Snihurivka](#), [Vovchansk](#), as well as other settlements of the Chernihiv, Kharkiv, and Sumy oblasts located close to the Russian border were shelled.
- A year has passed since the Russian Black Sea Fleet's flagship warship the "Moskva" was sunk. According to a statement by the representative of the AFU, Natalia Humenyuk, Ukraine continues to take measures aimed at [pushing](#) the Russian fleet out of the Black Sea.
- In the Lviv oblast, the All-Ukrainian Center for Prosthetics, Rehabilitation, and Mental Aid has been opened for people who have been affected by military action. Around 3000 people a year are expected to use the services of the Center, which are free.
- According to the [estimates](#) of the Ministry of Defense of Great Britain, demining Ukrainian territories will take up to 10 years. With the onset of spring and an increase in the number of people engaged in agricultural activities, the risk of civilians being blown up by mines has increased. The situation in the liberated territories, particularly in the Kherson and Kharkiv oblasts, is the most perilous. Today Ukraine is the most heavily [mine](#)-contaminated country in the world.
- Oleksii Danilov, Secretary of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine, has denied [statements](#) made by advisor to the President about the Russians using Chinese weapons. "Were Chinese weapons to pop up in Ukraine, we would issue a relevant statement. We have scrutinized every part of the weapons in question, including studying the countries whose components were

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used in them. We will send them a formal note, asking them why this has happened and insist that it ends. Currently we have no evidence of Chinese weapons being used on the front.”

## HUMANITARIAN DIMENSIONS

- According to the official information provided by the [juvenile prosecutors](#), 470 children have died, while 948 children have been injured with various degrees of severity. 19.384 children are believed to have been deported. [24 children](#) from the Kherson oblast have returned home after being illegally detained by the Russian occupiers. According to volunteers from the rescue team, this was one of their most challenging missions: the Russians subjected the children to a 13-hour interrogation, subsequently forcing them to take part in a propaganda video.
- The bodies of 82 [soldiers](#) were returned to Ukraine.
- According to the [data](#) provided by Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR), since 24 February 2022, 8.490 civilians have been killed in Ukraine, with 14.244 wounded.
- On the evening of 11 April, the pro-Russian media shared a video which shows Russian soldiers [cutting off](#) the head of a Ukrainian prisoner of war. Following the execution Russian soldiers (wearing a white armband, which is one of the occupiers' identifying symbols) show on camera the bulletproof vest of the killed Ukrainian soldier with badges of honor (a trident like symbol). The Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, Dmytro Lubinets, called on the UN and the International Committee of the Red Cross to investigate this human rights violation. CNN later reported on a further [video](#) featuring executed Ukrainian soldiers. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR) had previously made a statement announcing that it had documented the extrajudicial execution of [another 15 Ukrainian prisoners of war](#) by the Russian military.
- Russia is making arrangements to [block the staff members](#) of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (hereinafter: ZNPP). Fearing the upcoming Ukrainian counteroffensive, Russian troops are bringing large amounts of water and food to the plant. The possibility of them preventing ZNPP staff leaving after one of their shifts cannot be ruled out. Russia took similar measures at the start of the war when the staff of the Chornobyl Nuclear Power Plant were prohibited from leaving the premises.
- The Russians are transferring [children from Enerhodar](#) (a city close to the ZNPP) to occupied Crimea. Information about the ongoing evacuation of children until 20 April is being circulated throughout schools and kindergartens. The evacuation is being carried-out with vehicles that are normally used by ZNPP personnel.
- The language issue continues to be hotly discussed. According to a statement made by Taras Kremen, the State Language Protection Commissioner, entrepreneurs offering online services must maintain their social media accounts in Ukrainian. Nevertheless, “versions in other languages may also coexist along with the Ukrainian version”.
- Approximately [82% of Ukrainian soldiers](#) wounded or sick, return to service following treatment.

- According to the Ministry for Communities, Territories and Infrastructure Development of Ukraine, as of 17 April, the “grain deal” was at risk of [being suspended](#). Russia again blocked the inspection of the ships stationed in the Bosphorus.
- According to the Mayor of Mariupol, over [20.000 residents](#) of the city have been killed following Russia’s occupation. In the village of Lisne, located in the Mariupol rayon, the Russian’s have [evicted all of the local residents](#) for the purpose of setting up a military base for the AFRF.
- The Russians continue to [cut down forests](#) in Ukraine’s occupied territories of Ukraine. The goals of deforestation are twofold: commercial gains and strengthening defensive positions. In March 2022, the Russian Minister of Defense, Sergei Shoigu, wrote a [letter to Vladimir Putin](#), saying that the Ukrainian wood, which would not be required for defense, would be sold to fund the war.
- [Forcible](#) passportization continues to be pursued by Russia in the occupied territories of the Zaporizhzhia oblast. The locals are forced to write applications asking for their Ukrainian citizenship to be renounced.
- A Russian court in Rostov-on-Don will [examine](#) the criminal case against five Ukrainian PoWs charged with “planning explosions at humanitarian aid distribution points” in the occupied city of Melitopol.

## **ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DIMENSIONS**

- According to Oleksii Danilov, [Secretary](#) of the National Security and Defense Council, Russia’s immediate priority is to destabilize Ukraine from inside. However, how this will be done remains to be seen. Experts from the National Platform for Resilience and Social Cohesion believe that in order to strengthen Ukraine’s internal stability, the government would require not only a foresight prognosis, but also a concrete Action Plan aimed at enhancing social cohesion: supporting mutual trust between the authorities and society and promoting vertical and horizontal social cohesion.
- The National Bank of Ukraine together with the International Monetary Fund (hereinafter: IMF) has [sent a request](#) for a separate block of technical assistance related to virtual assets and digital technologies. Ukraine has also launched one of the progressive mechanisms for testing solutions aimed at introducing digital technologies, working with virtual assets and innovative fintech developments — the so-called regulatory sandbox, similar to those in Singapore, Great Britain, Switzerland, and the United States. The goal is for Ukraine to catch-up with modern banking technologies.
- Artem Lysohor has been [appointed](#) the head of the Luhansk Oblast Military Administration, while Volodymyr Artyukh was appointed the head of the Sumy Oblast Military Administration. In addition, last week Ukrainian President, Volodymyr Zelenskyy established 19 [military administrations](#) in the territory of the Zaporizhzhia oblast.

## INFORMATION WARFARE DIMENSION

- **Discrediting Ukraine's NATO integration.** Russian official media are [criticizing](#) Ukraine's NATO membership aspirations.
- **Split in the Western world regarding Ukraine's support.** The [leak](#) of documents from Pentagon is interpreted as the US signaling its opposition to further finance Ukraine as well as a warning to Kyiv about the futility of continuing hostilities with Russia, and that the time has come to go to negotiations.
- Referring to western media, the Russian media promotes stories about Ukraine [concealing](#) information and lying about the developments in Bakhmut. Russia claims (while referring to "British citizens") that Ukraine is being defeated militarily. The Kremlin also maintains that the West will soon [stop support](#) for Ukraine due to internal social and economic issues.
- **Western threats to Russian security.** The Russian media claims that Russia is countering "the military and industrial conglomerate of NATO and Ukraine". Narratives abound about Russia fighting the West, with the latter threatening Russia's security. Also, [articles](#) written by the head of the "Wagner" paramilitary group, Yevgeny Prigozhyn, are being shared, offering his take on the geopolitical situation. The articles are quoted in official Russian media outlets (e.g., TASS). Among other things, one of the articles [claims](#) that the West is interested bleeding Russia dry, and not in a quick victory. The Kremlin believes that the war against the West may be protracted, and that Russia must become "a reborn military mammoth". Moscow claims that the West is willing to render Russia "[politically fragmented](#)". At the same time, another narrative claims that there is a split between the USA and EU regarding their stand on a further geopolitical situation (the visit of Emmanuel Macron to China being a case in point).
- **Discrediting Ukraine's leadership (accusations of corruption, undemocratic management, ceding Ukrainian regions to Poland).** Narratives about Zelenskyy and his entourage being [corrupted](#) in view of the support coming from the West are being promoted and refer to European politicians. The refusal to import Ukrainian grain by [Poland and Hungary](#) is presented as a split within the EU regarding support for Ukraine. Russia claims that Poland "[has given Ukraine the cold shoulder](#)". According to some narratives, there is a possibility of a conflict between Zelenskyy and "regional elites", with the former having [effectively declared war](#) on regional managers in an attempt to build a strong vertical power. Furthermore, ahead of Zelenskyy's visit to Poland, the Russian media claimed that the Ukrainian President was intent on "[ceding](#)" Western Ukraine to Poland.
- **Integration of the "new territories" of Russia.** The Russian media is spreading information about the recovery of Mariupol and the visit of the Deputy Head of the Administration of the President to the city, Sergey Kirienko, on the eve of Easter. The Russian media has also shared messages about the [opening](#) of new cathedral in the occupied territories of the Kherson oblast, which was attended by the Russian military.
- **Russian special path, traditional values.** Russian MPs have come up with an [initiative](#) to deprive those Russians who criticize the country of their citizenship. Narratives about traditional Russian values and the increasing influence of the Russian Church in Russia (400 bishops) are being promoted

- (the Easter [address](#) by Patriarch Kirill). Putin said that the Russian Orthodox Church (hereinafter: ROC) helps Russians [find](#) their “spiritual foundation”.
- **Reprisals against believers in Ukraine.** Russian messages related to pressure exerted on and “reprisals” conducted against the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate are galore. Official church courses offered by the ROC cite statements of patriarchs from different countries ([Serbia](#), [Montenegro](#), [Lithuania](#)) referring to crimes in Ukraine against believers. The situation is referred to as “Ukraine captured by [Nazis](#)”. The Russian media use narratives containing the words “demons” and “satanism” when referring to Ukrainian citizens, etc.
  - **We do not abandon our own. Social support for the families of those fighting in the “special military operation” (hereinafter: SMO).** The potential “partial mobilization” is gathering pace. On 14 April, the President Putin signed a law on the digitalization of military registration in Russia. According to the law, a register will be established to keep track of those Russians liable for military service, based on the state information resource. The law [requires](#) the duplication of traditional draft papers by their digital equivalents. These digital documents will be sent via the State Services portal. Traditionally, narratives about different types of social “[support](#)” provided to those fighting in the SMO at the regional level and the support offered by Russian citizens ([Buryatia](#), [Tver](#), etc.). At the same time, when speaking about the prospects of a second wave of partial mobilization, Kremlin Spokesman, Dmitriy Peskov, [said](#) that there were no changes in the Kremlin's position on this matter.
  - **The Russian army’s victories and success stories and the losses incurred by the AFU.** The Russian media continuously spreads official messages about successes of the Russian army on the front and the destruction of Ukraine’s military potential. Many narratives revolve around the battle of [Bakhmut](#). Russia is [sceptical](#) (referring to Western countries) about Ukraine’s potential counteroffensive which is likely to [start](#) at the end of April.