

**Friday-Sunday, April 15th-17th, 2022**  
**Ukraine Situation Report**

**CONFLICT DEVELOPMENTS**

- Troops of the Russian Federation (hereinafter Russia) have continued to launch airstrikes and shell Ukrainian cities and villages across the country with an emphasis on eastern and southern regions. The following cities were among those targeted by Russian troops over the weekend:
  - [Kyiv](#)
  - [Kharkiv](#) – reported use of [cruise missiles](#)
  - [Mariupol](#)
  - [Mykolayiv](#)
  - [Lviv](#)
  - [Odesa](#)
  - [Pavlohrad](#)
  - [Brovary](#)
  - [Vyshneve](#)
  - [Izium](#)
  - [Oleksandriya](#)
  - [Vasylivka](#)
  - Several settlements in the [Chernihiv](#), [Sumy](#) and [Poltava](#) oblasts
- On Monday 18, the Russian army entered the strategically significant town of [Kreminna](#) in the Luhansk oblast. Despite the invasion, Russian forces do not have complete control of the town.
- Several settlements in the Luhansk oblast have been under continuous shelling for the past days. These settlements include:
  - Severodonetsk – targeting of [gas pipeline](#)
  - Lysychansk – targeting of [oil refinery](#)
  - Rubizhne
- According to the Head of the Severodonetsk Civil and Military Administration (administrative centre of government-controlled Luhansk oblast), 70% of Severodonetsk has been destroyed.
- The ongoing siege and the severe destruction of Mariupol's infrastructure have continued without significant lulls in hostilities. Ukrainian officials have made it clear that no negotiations nor concessions will be made to Russia as long as Mariupol is under attack.
- Attacks launched in eastern Ukraine by Russian forces have been accompanied by massive [airstrikes](#), underscoring the scale of the ongoing [offensive](#). Ukrainian forces have launched a counteroffensive in the Kharkiv oblast.
- Ongoing conflict dynamics and the increasing level of hostilities continue to negatively impact a growing number of settlements. These developments risk culminating in a humanitarian catastrophe resulting in waves of refugees and large-scale civilian casualties.
- Demining efforts continue across Ukraine, including in the [Zhytomyr](#) and [Sumy](#) oblasts. Despite the efforts, incidents of civilians hit by Russian mines have been reported.
- An [exchange](#) of prisoners of war took place on Friday 15. The exchange was implemented in accordance with the 4x5 format (Ukraine extradited four Russian prisoners of war in exchange for five Ukrainian prisoners of war). According to Ukrainian sources, approximately 700 Ukrainian soldiers and at least 1000 civilians continue to be held in Russian [detention](#).
- According to estimates, 2500-3000 Ukrainian soldiers have been killed since the beginning of the Russian invasion.

## HUMANITARIAN DIMENSIONS

- Evacuations from the frontlines of the conflict in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts continue to be carried out. Despite grave humanitarian needs, inconsistency regarding the opening of humanitarian corridors remains a pressing issue. No humanitarian corridors were opened on April 18.
- The Russian army [shelled](#) an evacuation convoy in the Kharkiv oblast on April 15, killing 10 and wounding several.
- Staff of the [French](#) and Italian embassies have returned to Kyiv.
- A parliamentary delegation from Georgia has visited Bucha and Irpin.
- The past days have seen a decrease in the number of people leaving Ukraine and an increase in the number of individuals returning to the country, with figures from the beginning of the week reporting 1 million returnees. Despite the trend, ongoing conflict dynamics might rapidly reverse the flow of people.
- Since the beginning of hostilities and as of April 18, approximately 90 educational institutions have been destroyed and 920 damaged. More than 200 [sites](#) of cultural heritage have been destroyed or severely damaged.
- According [to the Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine](#), 200 children have been killed and over 360 wounded since the beginning of the invasion.
- Ukrainians are increasingly afraid that [religious buildings](#) will be targeted by Russian troops before or during the Orthodox Easter on Sunday 24.
- [1,4 million](#) individuals residing in eastern Ukraine lack access to drinking water. The city of [Mykolayiv](#) has been cut off from water supplies for a week.
- Abductions targeting pro-Ukrainian activists and local politicians continue. Russian forces have, for example, abducted the Head of the Novouspenivska Village Council in the Zaporizhzhia oblast, Ivan Senyk, for the second time, and the 16-year-old son of the Head of the Zaporizhzhia Rayon State Administration, Oleh Buryak. Ukrainian [police officers](#) and staff of the State Emergency Services have also been targeted by abductions and arbitrary detention.
- Ukrainian officials have called on the international community to increase its support for monitoring efforts seeking to document and process the numerous cases of alleged violations of humanitarian law, arbitrary detentions, forced deportations, and targeting of civilians and local authorities.
- Evidence regarding Russia organising a referendum in May in the Kherson oblast is being circulated and the planned referendum is expected to be similar to the one held in the Crimea in 2014. Russia has claimed that it has no intentions of occupying the Kherson oblast for the long term, however, a potential referendum calls for heightened attention from both Ukrainian officials as well as EU parties.

## INFORMATION DIMENSIONS<sup>1</sup>

- Russian official sources continue to spread information regarding the economic resilience of Russia and Russian military accomplishments in Ukraine. The official narrative maintained that the negative impact of the sanctions has been mostly felt in the West – a [claim reiterated by](#) Press Secretary, Dmitry Peskov, on April 17. Furthermore, Russia has voiced threats against the EU economy, and [according](#) to Deputy Chairman of the Security Council of Russia, Dmitry Medvedev, Russia's defaults on external obligations may result in hyperinflation with the potential of cascading into a European financial crisis.
- Russian sources continue to deny violations of humanitarian law committed by Russian troops and reporting on Russian military losses remains scarce. However, the Russian government has published

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<sup>1</sup> The insights have been derived with the help of a search run on Semantrum (semantrum.net). The program enables the analysis of more than 1000 Russian media sources.

information on the monetary support given to the families of Russian soldiers killed in Ukraine. News about the sinking of Moskva has hardly been disseminated by Russian official sources.

- President Vladimir Putin has [announced the granting of the honorary title](#) 'Guards Brigade' to the 64th Motorized Infantry Brigade. The Brigade was stationed in Bucha, in the Kyiv oblast, and is suspected to have carried out the alleged atrocities and war crimes committed in the town.
- Russian sources have spread messages regarding the [final steps](#) of crack down on Mariupol, where units of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and "national battalions" remain besieged. The Russian Ministry of Defence has also [claimed](#) that hundreds of foreign mercenaries from EU countries are fighting in Mariupol. The claims are supported by other narratives disseminated by Russian sources regarding foreign mercenaries fighting alongside Ukrainian troops originating, [in particular](#), from the United Kingdom. Russian official sources have also published statistics regarding the number of mercenaries from, for example, the EU countries and Georgia.
- On April 18, the Ministry of Defence of Russia [reported](#) on the destruction of military objects and infrastructure, including significant amounts of weaponry across Ukraine.
- The militarization of youth groups continues to accelerate in Russia. The government-funded youth organization Young Army Cadets and school children are being rallied to support the military operation taking place in Ukraine, and, for example, the Young Army Cadets from the Rostov oblast have expressed their support for Russia's actions in Ukraine. In addition, Russian authorities continue to engage budget-sector employees in efforts that support the invasion.
- Russian political leadership has continued to take active steps to exploiting religious sentiments to legitimizing hostilities carried out in Ukraine. For example, Patriarch Kirill of Moscow has [called](#) the Russian society to support its leadership in order to help turn things for the better and prevent "dark thoughts from obscuring our spiritual state". At the same time, the Ukrainian government is being referred to as satanic.