

Friday to Sunday, April 1st-3rd, 2022 Ukraine Situation Report

CONFLICT DEVELOPMENTS

- The Ukrainian army has freed the entire territory of the Kyiv oblast from troops of the Russian Federation (hereinafter: Russia), and despite minor clashes, Russian troops have retreated to Belarus. Ukraine has thus regained control of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant and reparations have started. As retreating, the Russian army took Ukrainian National Guard soldiers guarding the plant as hostage.
- Russia has continued relocating parts of its troops and equipment to the territory of Sumy, Donetsk, and Luhansk oblasts in an attempt to gain a foothold in the territories and to prevent Ukraine from launching counterattacks.
- Examples of recent military developments include:
 - Sumy oblast: Russian forces have destroyed the strategically important bridge crossing the river of Seym linking the city of Sumy to the northern part of the oblast.
 - Kharkiv oblast: Russian forces have captured the city of Izyum.
 - Zaporizhzhia, Kherson, and Chernihiv oblasts: Ukraine has regained control of several settlements in the oblasts.
- According to the mayor of Chernihiv, Russian forces have besieged half of the city and destroyed 70% of its infrastructure.
- Ukrainian cities across the country including Mariupol, Kharkiv, Odesa, Mykolayiv, Poltava, Dnipro, Kryvyi Rih, Shepetivka, Pavlohrad, Myrhorod, Kremenchuk, Severodonetsk, Lysychansk, Rubizhne, and Kreminna continue to be subject to shelling. Recent conflict developments underscore that no Ukrainian region has been spared from airstrikes and rocket attacks.
- According to the Ministry of Finance of Ukraine, the country incurs losses worth approximately 10 billion USD for each month of war.

HUMANITARIAN DIMENSIONS

- Russian troops and secret service actors continue to terrorize representatives of local authorities and pro-Ukrainian activists in the territories under Russian control.
- The military is alleged to have committed war crimes and human rights violations targeting civilians in Mariupol and other cities.
- Russian forces have abducted the mayor of Tavriysk in Kherson oblast, Mykola Rizak, and the Head of the Nova Sloboda amalgamated community in Sumy oblast, Oleksii Shybayev. The mayor of Beryslav in the Kherson oblast and the mayor of Snovsk in the Chernihiv oblast have been released. In addition, two priests in the Kherson oblast have been abducted, with one released the same day.
- Four mayors in the Luhansk oblast are known to have agreed to collaborate with Russian forces. The head of the village council of Motyzhyn in the Kyiv oblast, Olha Sukhenko, is reported to have refused collaboration and was thus executed together with her husband and son.
- Russian forces opened fire to disperse pro-Ukrainian rallies in Enerhodar and Kakhovka.
- Mobile and internet connection are no longer available in Enerhodar.
- The shelling of a gas pipeline has cut almost the entire territory of the Luhansk oblast off from gas supplies.
- The Siverskiy Donets river has flooded following the destruction of a dam by Russian.
- Signs of war crimes committed by Russian soldiers have been uncovered in areas freed from its control. These signs include destroyed and ransacked residential buildings, evidence of torture and the arbitrary killings of civilians, stranded dead bodies, and mined civilian cars. The cemetery in Trostyanets is also reportedly mined. Evidence regarding the alleged violations is being collected and registered by Ukrainian officials and civilians in order to support an international criminal trial against Russia.
- Russian forces have damaged approximately 800 educational institutions and 53 cultural sites since the beginning of the invasion. Out of educational institutions, 71 are located in Kyiv.
- Demining, repairing of infrastructure, and re-establishment of food and medication supplies have started in the liberated territories.
- Several Ukrainian schools and universities have resumed teaching. However, admission procedures to Ukrainian universities remain largely unclear.

- The sowing season has begun in 21 oblasts. The yield of the harvest will depend on the intensity of hostilities and is feared to decrease 25-30% compared to the last year.
- Several evacuation operations were carried out during the weekend. 42 evacuation buses carrying more than 6000 civilians from Mariupol, Berdyansk, and other cities successfully embarked from Berdyansk for Zaporizhzhia. More than 1200 people have reported to have escaped Berdyansk and Melitopol in private vehicles.
- 86 Ukrainian prisoners of war, among whom 15 were women, have been released.
- The number of refugees who have fled Ukraine since the beginning of hostilities has exceeded 4.1 million.
- According to UNICEF, about 60% of Ukrainian children have been displaced. Actual figures are presumed to be higher.

INFORMATION DIMENSIONS

- Recently the official discourse reigning over Russia has taken on a more manipulative and dictatorial dimension towards Ukraine. The Russian information space is seeing increasingly hostile narratives against Ukraine referring to Ukraine as 'pure evil' and as a country with no right to exist in its present form. The targeting of Ukrainian civilians is being legitimized with statements claiming that civilians are to pay for supporting the Ukrainian regime.
- Criticism of the negotiations between Ukraine and Russia has not subsided. Official sources of the Russian government continue communicating that the goals of the 'special operation' will be fully achieved before any concessions are to be made.
- The Russian Ministry of Defence and the Federation Council continue to dismiss accusations regarding violations of humanitarian and human rights law in Bucha in the Kyiv oblast. Russian military officials claim that the inhabitants of Bucha were free to move and that Russian forces provided civilians with humanitarian aid. Images and eyewitness accounts of the atrocities alleged to have been committed by Russian forces are said to be fabricated by Ukraine.
- Ukrainian officials are being compared with Nazi leaders in the Russian public discourse. A specific comparison has been made with the Nazi politician Joseph Goebbels who is known to have spread the narrative of Soviet atrocities during 1941-1945.
- Russia continues to accuse the Ukrainian army of shelling the Temporarily Occupied Territories of the Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts.
- Russian sources continue to accuse the West of inciting hostilities.
- During his Sunday sermon, Patriarch Kirill, the Patriarch of Moscow and all Rus', reiterated that no violations of humanitarian and human rights law have been committed by Russian forces in Ukraine. According to the Patriarch, Russia is a peaceful nation, Russians and Ukrainians one peoples, and enemy forces are seeking to turn Russians and Ukrainians against each other.
- Narratives regarding Ukrainian prisoners of war joining the so-called Army of the Donetsk People's Republic have been spread and prisoners have been reported to be forced to clear rubble caused by shelling in Mariupol. At the same time, Russian officials have disseminated narratives reflecting WWII memories of German prisoners used as labour in the USSR.
- The Russian government has continued its crack-down on individuals opposing the war in Ukraine. Speaker of the State Duma, Vyacheslav Volodin, has called leaders of state cultural institutions condemning the 'special operation' to resign.