

**April 4th - April 10th, 2023**  
**Ukraine Weekly Situation Report**

**CONFLICT DEVELOPMENTS**

- The Russian army continues its [offensive](#) predominantly in the Donetsk oblast, where it is attempting to encircle Bakhmut, Mariinka, Lyman and Avdiivka. According to the Ukrainian government, overall losses incurred by the Russian Federation (hereinafter: Russia) amount to approximately [179.000](#) soldiers killed. In the Zaporizhzhia and Kherson oblasts, as well as in Crimea, Russia is constructing fortifications in preparation for Ukraine's counteroffensive. Russia is also destroying fertile lands in the Zaporizhzhia oblast. [Fortifications](#) (dragons' teeth, trenches) and densely mined areas prevent Ukraine from carrying out agricultural work. This will result in a [decline in harvest](#). There are signs that local citizens are preparing for an [evacuation](#) to Russian territories, as well as Ukrainian citizens who live in the occupied territories, being [drafted](#) into the Russian army. The possibility of Belarus being directly involved in the war is increasing, along with the country's further integration into Russia in exchange for [security guarantees](#).
- On the night of 4 April, 17 [kamikaze drones](#) were launched on Ukraine, with 14 of them downed by the Ukrainian air defense. Last week several cities, including Kherson, [Zaporizhzhia](#), Kharkiv, Nikopol, Marhanets, Orikhiv (a [bread factory](#) was shelled), Stanislav, [Beryslav](#), Velykyi Burluk, Kupyansk, Kramatorsk (a local [cemetery was subjected to shelling](#)), Vuhledar, Kurakhove, Druzhkivka, Kostyantynivka, Slovyansk and other settlements of the [Chernihiv](#), [Kharkiv](#), and Sumy oblasts located close to the Russian border were subjected to Russian attacks. Kyiv continues to face the threat missile attacks. This is in part due Ukraine having an insufficient stock of the munitions needed to operate western air defense systems. Meanwhile, Ukraine is [shelling](#) military objects in the occupied territories, in particular, in Melitopol and Feodosiya.
- During the heating season, which ended last week, Russians fired over [1200 missiles and drones](#) at key Ukrainian energy objects. According to different estimates, a total of 4700 missiles have been launched on Ukraine's territory. Russia continues to attack objects of [cultural heritage](#), [natural reserves](#), as well as damaging the [environment](#) in general, along with [educational facilities](#) and religious buildings.
- Ukrainian MPs have voted for a bill to reintroduce [payments](#) of 30.000 UAH for the military. These payments were previously abolished for some military categories. Implementing the decision involves additional expenditures of some 60 billion UAH a month.
- The Ukrainian government has approved the Ministry for Veterans initiative regarding the [transition](#) from military service to civilian life, based on NATO practices. Veterans will participate in relevant rehabilitation programmes and retraining after their service ends.

## HUMANITARIAN DIMENSIONS

- According to the official data provided by the [juvenile prosecutors](#), 468 children have been killed and over 947 wounded with various degrees of severity. 19.349 children are considered to have been deported. [31 deported children](#) have been returned to Ukraine. However, it has been reported that with each mission the length of time that Ukrainian families (who want to return their children) spend being interrogated by the Russian Federal Security Service is increasing. Since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, about [50% of children in Ukraine](#) have been forced to abandon their homes. In total, Ukrainian citizens who have been deported from Ukraine under the pretext of evacuation, have been relocated to [55 Russian regions](#). Ukraine's Ministry of Justice has opened [five thousand](#) cases against collaborators.
- In Ukraine, the price of the so-called "Easter basket" has increased by [20,9%](#). Eggs are now 92% more expensive. The reason for this increase is the devastation inflicted on the Ukrainian economy and families, production cuts, more expensive energy sources and the more complicated process of internal movement of production. Given that [37% of Ukrainians](#) have lost their jobs due to the war, the purchase of food products for Easter (a major Orthodox holiday) has become more expensive.
- Violation of international humanitarian law continue unabated. For example, in Rostov-on-Don, Russian courts are trying to convict [a Ukrainian soldier](#) for "killing a civilian" in Mariupol. This is the first such case to be settled in a Russian court, and not in Ukraine's occupied territories.
- According to Dariya Zarivna, the communications advisor of the Office of the President, Ukraine offered Russia a full [exchange of all Muslim POWs](#) ahead of Ramadan. However, Russia rejected the offer.
- According to Dmytro Lubinets, Ukraine's Human Rights Ombudsman, [2.500 prisoners](#) from Ukraine's occupied territories have been relocated to Russia. Mr. Lubinets reported that Russia is trying to draft these prisoners into illegal military groups, including the "Wagner" group.
- According to Forbes, Russia has launched approximately [4750 missiles worth 16 billion USD](#) since the beginning of the war. According to the Russian Ministry of Finance, the "gap" in the Russian budget amounts to [85 billion USD for 12 months](#). After the first quarter of 2023 Russian income from oil and natural gas sales dropped by [45%](#). This is mainly a result of the sanctions imposed by the G7 countries.
- Based on data obtained by the State Environment Inspection in the Luhansk oblast, over [26 thousand hectares](#) of forest has been destroyed in the oblast due to the war. The damage caused to the environment in the Luhansk oblast exceeds [475 billion UAH](#). Direct losses inflicted by Russia are estimated to reach [750 billion USD](#). The complex demining process in Ukraine will cost [37,4 billion USD](#).
- The forced passportization of the residents of the occupied territories of the Zaporizhzhia oblast continues. For example, in the city of [Tokmak](#) the Russian occupation "authorities" demand that residents hand in their Ukrainian passports and birth certificates (which Russians claim will be returned) in order to receive Russian passports. The occupation administration of the Zaporizhzhia oblast has set up ["mobile groups" for passportization](#) that go door-to-door, encouraging residents

- to obtain Russian passports. On many occasions the locals are pressurized into agreeing, including using verbal threats and brute force.
- The forced abductions of civilians by the Russian occupiers continue. For example, in the occupied city of Starobilsk in the Luhansk oblast, searches of the homes of those suspected of supporting Ukraine are carried out. As a result, [people are illegally](#) taken to an unknown location, never to be seen again. Moreover, the Russian military has taken [four employees of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant](#) to an unknown location. The individuals in question were (according to Energoatom), loyal to the occupation management of the plant, having signed contracts with the fake “Operating Organization of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant”. Furthermore, the Russian occupiers shot at an [ambulance](#) in Beryslav, in the Kherson oblast.
  - According to Ukraine, a police and counter-intelligence regime is being vigorously established in the occupied territories of the Kherson oblast. For example, in the Hornostaivka rayon, the Russians are carrying out [raids](#) to check whether the mobile phones of the local population contain photos, videos or “banned” content. During these raids, the occupiers take note of personal data, and conduct searches in the houses.
  - Inhumane treatment by the members of the private paramilitary “Wagner” group was visible near a building in Bakhmut, where a [human head was impaled in public](#), with the scythe put against a nearby tree.
  - The Russians are committing crimes of illegal acquisition and management of occupied lands. For example, in the occupied Berdyansk rayon they are forcing the locals to [“register” their plots of land](#). Failing to do so results in the confiscation of these plots “in favor of the state”. In fact, these lands are simply being stolen by Russian occupants.
  - The Russian military movement [“Young Army Cadets”](#) has announced the beginning of the preparation of the so-called “young correspondents” (future pro-Russian propagandists) in the occupied territories of the Kherson oblast. According to the head of the Kherson center of the “Young Army Cadets”, ten teenagers have allegedly agreed to study to become propagandists.
  - According to the permanent representative of the President of Ukraine in Crimea, Tamila Tasheva, during the nine years of the peninsula’s occupation, [500-800.000 Russian citizens](#) have relocated there. After the liberation of Crimea, a process of “forcible deportation” will be initiated.
  - Tumultuous developments (especially in Ukraine’s western regions) that are taking place around the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which has historically and ecclesiastically functioned in unity with the Moscow Patriarchate. The local authorities are making decisions to revoke the right of the UOC MP to use plots of land. Conflict and occasional clashes are taking place between supporters and opponents of the Church. It is unclear whether the government can keep the situation under control. At the same time, on 7 April, President Zelenskyy participated in the first official [iftar](#). In doing so, Zelenskyy emphasized the readiness of the government to support both Muslim and other communities of Ukraine if they support the country. On the other hand, the Russian administrations continue to [persecute](#) residents of Ukraine’s occupied territories on the basis of their religion.

## ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DIMENSIONS

- The Head of the parliament committee on Finance, Taxes and Customs Policy, Danylo Hetmantsev, believes that the operations of the [Bureau for Economic Security](#) will be reformed by the end of 2023, with the assistance of international partners.
- The relevant committee of the Verkhovna Rada (Ukraine's Parliament) has recommended adopting the 6504 [bill](#) on the service at local authorities. The bill offers increased opportunities for local authorities and the transparency of their work. The bill should also clarify the procedures for holding open tenders, while also introducing mechanisms for career growth and distinguishing between the status of local civil servants and elected officials.
- The language issue continues to cause tensions, especially amid martial law, general stress, and impatience from Ukraine's population. Last week heated discussions took place regarding further language policy, particularly in the education field. The discussions were [initiated](#) by the newly appointed Minister of Education, Oksen Lisovyi, following a clash at one of the universities when a female professor dismissively spoke about Ukrainian as a language of instruction.
- In some East-European countries [indignation](#) is growing regarding the transfer of Ukrainian grain through their territories. Instead of being moved outside the EU, the grain was being stored on Polish and Hungarian territory, which created unwelcome competition for local farmers.

## INFORMATION WARFARE DIMENSIONS

- **A split in the Western world over support of Ukraine. Criticism regarding the EU weapons delivery to Ukraine.** The Russians continue to push messages about large-scale rallies in different countries ([Germany](#)) against the supply of arms to Ukraine. Anti-western narratives, particularly anti-Polish ones are also prolific. Russia claims that Poland is intent on reestablishing the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth and is [hatching](#) plans for expansion into Ukraine.
- **Victories of the Russian army and the losses incurred by the AFU.** The Russian media is spreading fake information about the achievements of the Russian army on the front, about the destruction of the infrastructure of the Ukrainian military in different Ukrainian regions ([Kherson](#) and [Kharkiv](#) oblasts).
- **Discrediting the Ukrainian army.** Russia is systematically spreading messages discrediting the AFU, claiming that they have collapsed. Messages are being circulated referring to US media, which allegedly claims that Ukraine has been beset by [panic](#) in view of the military draft, and a lack of [munitions](#) for the Ukrainian air defense system.
- **Discrediting Ukraine's political leadership, rejecting the existence of Ukraine as such.** Narratives are being promoted accusing Ukraine of resorting to [terrorist attacks](#) in Russian territories (the murder of the Russian blogger, Tatarsky). Official Russian media outlets liken President Zelenskyy to war [criminals](#) in Kosovo. Some narratives claim that the Hungarian minority is facing [reprisals](#) from the Ukrainian government. In parallel to this, the Russian media claims that "[Ukraine will have disappeared as a state by the end of this year](#)" due to the dire social and economic situation. Dimitry

Medvedev, Deputy chairman of the Security Council of Russia, refers to Ukraine as part of Russia that “[can hardly be understood](#)”, for example, by American society.

- **“We do not abandon our own”, social support of the families of those fighting in the SMO.** Russia is constantly sharing messages about the [support](#) provided for the “participants of the SMO” at the regional level and by Russian citizens. The war is presented as a war of all people. At the same time, Putin says that the [support](#) to those fighting in the SMO and their families will be the state’s top priority.
- **Readiness for negotiations (political and diplomatic solution).** Kremlin Spokesman, Dmitry [Peskov](#) said that there are no initiatives regarding an Easter ceasefire.
- **Economic growth of Russia.** Russian media continue to reiterate messages about Russia’s economic growth, and the growing number of companies. For example, according to some [messages](#), the number of commercial organizations registered in Russia as newly created, stood at 62.800 in the first quarter of 2023, more than 17.1% than in the first quarter of 2022 (53.700 thousand). The current devaluation of the Russian ruble [is being interpreted](#) as a reaction to the export income obtained after the “maximum” oil prices were introduced. According to the Deputy Head of the Central Bank of Russia, the situation will improve in the future.
- **Persecuting the Orthodox in Ukraine (Russian church).** Russia is spreading narratives about [reprisals](#) against the Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine. Russia refers to the decision of the communities, which used to belong to the Moscow Patriarchate, to switch to the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, as “the fatal error of Zelenskyy”, which can undermine his position in Ukraine. The situation is being interpreted as a battle against Russians, Russian speaking citizens and Russian influence in Ukraine more generally.
- **A split in the West regarding support for Ukraine. Criticism regarding supplies of weapons to Ukraine by the EU countries.** Anti-western narratives are being spread including regarding arms supplies to Ukraine by EU countries. Russia [claims](#) that these weapons will be used by extremist groups.
- **Expansion into the “new regions” of Russia. “We do not abandon our own”. Integration of “the new regions” into Russia.** Russia is actively spreading stories about the integration of “the new regions”. For example, President Putin has [spoken](#) about the accelerated establishment of federal institutions, [Russian law-enforcement units](#) in the occupied Luhansk oblast. Certain youth organizations are being established in the territories of the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. Additional [measures](#) aimed at the integration of educations have been suggested, e.g. those that would deal with the exams passed by students from the occupied territories in Russia or Crimea.
- **Extension of Russia. A new “allied state”.** Narratives about the further development of cooperation between Russia and Belarus abound. For example, at the meeting of the [state council](#) of Belarus and Russia, Putin and Belarusian President, Alexander Lukashenko talked about the development of cooperation, integration programs and security sector.