

February 7th - February 13th, 2023
Ukraine Weekly Situation Report

CONFLICT DEVELOPMENTS

- The Russian army, with the assistance of private paramilitary groups, continues to advance in the Donetsk oblast, largely near the cities of Bakhmut and Vuhledar.
- The Russians are amassing their forces and equipment in the Donetsk oblast, as well as continuing to mount attacks on cities located along the front line. This proves that the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation (hereinafter: AFRF) is pursuing one of its top priorities: namely reaching the borders of the Donetsk oblast. However, Russian troops are sustaining heavy losses. Last week the Russian Federation (hereinafter: Russia) lost over 1000 soldiers per day. On some days the number of casualties exceeded 1100. As of 13 February, overall Russian losses amounted to over [138.000 soldiers](#). After severe losses and appeals launched by the families of the soldiers from the Republic of Tatarstan and the Tuva Republic, units of volunteers from these regions [returned home](#). This created new appeals from other Russian soldiers and conscripts deployed in Ukraine's occupied territories to the General Staff of the AFRF, requesting to return to their homes.
- Last week numerous cities located close to the Russian border, including Kherson, Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia, Odesa, Polohy, Orikhiv, Nikopol, Marhanets, Kupyansk, Vovchansk, Beryslav, Kramatorsk, Slovyansk, Vuhledar, Chasiv Yar, and other settlements of the Chernihiv, Kharkiv and Sumy oblasts, were shelled.
- On 10 February, the AFRF mounted another missile and drone attack on Ukraine. [71 cruise missiles](#) were launched. Sixty-one were downed by Ukraine's air defense system. At least 29 C-300 missiles were launched on Ukrainian cities located near the Russian border. On 10-11 February, Russian troops attacked objects of Ukraine's critical infrastructure with loitering munitions. On the first day 20 kamikaze drones were shot down; on the second four were downed.
- According to Ukraine's Prime Minister, Denys Shmyhal, due to constant attacks by Russia, almost [two dozen power units](#) of thermal power plants were damaged. If the occupation of other power objects in the country is also taken into account, Ukraine has temporarily lost 44% of its nuclear generation capacities, 75% of the capacity of its thermal power stations capacities as well as 33% of the capacities of block cogeneration power stations. Every second electrical substation in Ukraine has been attacked by Russia in the past 4 months.

HUMANITARIAN DIMENSIONS

- According to official data [provided by juvenile prosecutors](#), 461 Ukrainian children have been killed with 922 injured to various degrees of severity since the beginning of the invasion. 16.207 children are believed to have been deported. Since the beginning of the invasion, [1762 Ukrainian citizens](#) have returned to Ukraine from Russian captivity. According to the Ministry for Reintegration, Ukraine has received [61 bodies](#) of Ukrainian soldiers who fell in battle. Since the beginning of

This Ukraine Situation Report is prepared in the framework of the project "Building Resilience in Conflict Through Dialogue" funded by the European Union

- February, the “Wagner” private paramilitary group has recruited [about 1200 inmates](#) from prisons in Crimea in order to compensate for the losses.
- [128 children](#) have been returned to Ukraine, who were previously illegally relocated to Russia.
 - According to a statement made by the [Ukrainian Prime Minister](#), Ukraine has lost 44% of its nuclear generation capacities, 75% of its thermal power stations capacities and 33% of the capacities of the block cogeneration power stations, due to the war. Russia has attacked [every second electrical substation](#) owned by the company “Ukrenergo” in the past 4 months. In Odesa, for example, schools were shut down between 7-10 February due to a power outage.
 - In total, Ukrainian troops [fire 5-6.000 artillery shots](#) a day. In peacetime this is the number of munitions produced annually by a peaceful European country.
 - According to Linda Thomas-Greenfield, the United States ambassador to the United Nations, as of now 17 million Ukrainians are in need of humanitarian aid, which effectively constitutes [40% of the country's population](#).
 - The situation at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP) [is deteriorating](#): Russian exploitation of the plant has led to its equipment wearing out, which significantly limits prospects to connect the station to the power grid. The Russians are publicly beating and abducting the plant’s employees. Moreover, Russian troops are drying up the Kakhovka [Reservoir](#) in the Kherson oblast, jeopardizing access to drinking water for thousands of Ukrainians as well as the security of the ZNPP, the biggest nuclear power station in Europe.
 - According to the speaker of the Operation Command “South”, Natalya Humenyuk, the next large-scale Russian missile attack is expected to take place on 24 February. [It has been claimed](#) that since the start of the war in Ukraine, Russian and Belarusian railways have been increasingly subjected to acts of sabotage (rail profiles and control systems have been targeted). This could be an effort by “partisans” to prevent trains from carrying Russian soldiers and military equipment towards the Ukrainian border. Dmytro Klimov and Volodymyr Avramtsev have been sentenced to 22 years in prison for sabotage in Belarus.
 - Footage of [widows of fighters from the so-called 'DPR'](#) receiving fur coats has appeared on the internet. It was published by Igor Girkin’s wife. However, the Russian “Feminist Anti-War Resistance” contacted one of the women in the video, who said that her coat and those of three other participants were taken away.
 - While retreating from the Kherson oblast, the Russian occupiers forgot [a flash drive](#) that contained hundreds of semi-classified documents “for internal use”. It has thus become possible to identify not only units of the AFRF that were stationed in Balakliya during the city’s occupation, but also particular military men who were responsible for recruiting local citizens and locating torture chamber victims.
 - On 12 February, Ukrainian President, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, ratified the decree of the National Security and Defense Council. The decree imposes [sanctions](#) on 200 people who are mainly connected with the Russian energy sector.

- Personnel changes continue to take place in Ukraine's state institutions. Last week President Zelenskyy appointed [new heads](#) of the Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson oblasts state administrations. Two of them had previously served in the Security Service of Ukraine (hereinafter: SSU), with the other one previously working in the National Police. The former head of the National Police was appointed Minister of Interior. The acting head of the SSU is now the permanent head.
- Ukraine continues to implement the use of digital instruments, while also extending the list of services that can be used in the "Dia" application. Modern technologies are also actively used during hostilities, which has enabled the Minister for Digital Transformation, Mykhailo Fedorov, to say that Ukraine has the [edge over](#) Russia in cyber warfare.

INFORMATION WARFARE DIMENSIONS

- Anti-American narratives are being spread, referring to the US President as a terrorist [accused of](#) "blowing up the North Stream gas pipeline" (statement made by Duma Speaker, Vyacheslav Volodin). Threats are being made [against](#) the USA by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Russia emphasizes a lack of unity among European countries regarding support for Ukraine. Moscow cites the position of Hungarian Prime Minister, Viktor [Orbán](#), while also drawing attention to comments made by Italian Prime Minister, George Meloni, who stated that Zelenskyy's invitation to France was [inappropriate](#) as it violated EU's cohesion and unity.
- Anti-Ukrainian narratives are being promoted regarding Ukraine's EU integration and growing fatigue of some European countries from the support provided for Ukraine. Moscow is discrediting Zelenskyy's visit to the United Kingdom, France, and Belgium. The Russian media has likened Zelenskyy to "[indigenous](#) people being presented with beads". Official Russian media narratives claim that many citizens in European countries are disgruntled with Zelenskyy's visit, as the French are being "[dragged into the conflict with Russia](#)". Russia claims that the EU is [disgruntled](#) with Ukraine in general. Russian officials also [maintain](#) that people in Britain are against "financing" Ukraine. Zelenskyy's [clothes](#) and appearance are mocked. Moscow considers that Zelenskyy's outfit insults senior European politicians. Russia is also [promoting](#) the narrative that Ukraine is unable to defeat Russia without Western assistance. To substantiate its argument about Ukraine fatigue in the West, the Kremlin circulates stories about some EU countries (Austria) [refusing](#) to train Ukrainian soldiers. The Russian information space also promotes Viktor Medvedchuk's statement alleging that "[Nazists](#)" are working among the rank and file of Ukraine's leadership.
- Moscow is constantly talking about the possible use of nuclear weapons in response to the threats issued by the West. The Russian media claims that the West is considering [transferring nuclear](#) weapons to Ukraine. Russian propagandist Vladimir Solovyov [contemplates](#) the possibility of a nuclear strike by Russia in response to "threats posed to the country". Russia claims that the deliveries of western weapons to Ukraine [are pushing](#) the world to the brink of an "apocalypse".
- Narratives about the discrimination of national minorities in Ukraine are being spread, in particular, of [reprisals](#) taken against the Hungarian minority.

- In the context of “the Russian offensive” Moscow promoted the idea that the Russian army can [take](#) Kyiv, should Chechen Leader, Ramzan Kadyrov issue such an order. Moscow is constantly sharing [information](#) about [losses](#) incurred by the Ukrainian army as a result of the [success](#) of the ongoing offensive of the Russian army.
- Russian Senator Vladimir Dzhubarov suggested that the "great event" on 23 February will be the surrender of Ukraine, while Kadyrov claimed that Russia is [not fighting Ukraine at full capacity](#).
- The large-scale missile strikes on objects of Ukrainian civilian infrastructure are barely covered in the Russian media. Moscow occasionally mentions “explosions in Dnipro” and Kherson, as well as [air raid sirens](#) going off in Ukraine.
- The Russia media is vigorously covering [corruption](#) stories in Ukraine, in particular those related to the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense. The potential dismissal of Defence Minister, Oleksiy Reznikov and the head of President Zelenskyy’s Cabinet, Andrei Yermak, is discussed.
- Russia continues to emphasize the integration of the occupied Ukrainian regions into its social and economic space. Putin has once again [called](#) for the synchronization of economic indicators with “Russian regions” over the next 10 years. The transitional period has been set until 2026.
- The regime of internal isolation and control over the spread of information is being established in Russia. Alternative narratives are being promoted. The [launch](#) of the automatized system “Okulus” has been announced, which detects violations of the Russian legislation in images and video materials (the Federal Service for Supervision of Communications, Information Technology and Mass Media).
- Kremlin Spokesman, Dmitry Peskov has dismissed information about a [second](#) wave of mobilization in Russia. On 9 February, the recruitment of inmates from Russian prisons [halted](#). However, draft measures are being carried out across Russian regions. [Social](#) aid is being offered to the participants of the “special military operation”.
- Representatives of Russian ultra-right groups are circulating materials to their networks criticizing the capacity of the Russian army and its generals, to effectively plan a counteroffensive. For example, the war criminal, Igor [Girkin](#), informed his subscribers about the Russian defeat at Vuhledar, blaming it on the efficient Russian military leadership.
- Official Russian media channels have started promoting narratives about the futility of peace talks with Zelenskyy due to him being a “fascist”. Kadyrov [believes](#) that negotiations can only take place once Russia forces Ukraine to accept concessions. Meanwhile, Peskov stated that negotiations have not yet taken place because of “an [order](#)” from Ukraine’s bosses, suggesting that the West is reluctant to hold peace talks with Russia. Valentina Matviyenko, Speaker of the Russian Federation Council, has [called](#) on Kyiv to look for a peace formula that takes Russia’s interests into account, so that “Ukraine does not lose its statehood”. In parallel, Viktor Medvedchuk’s statement about “the death of the Minsk agreements” and about Ukraine having completely lost its agency and “statehood” [is being circulated](#).