

**January 10th - January 16th, 2023  
Ukraine Situation Report**

**CONFLICT DEVELOPMENTS**

- Despite sustaining heavy losses, the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation (AFRF) managed to capture most of the city of Soledar in the Donetsk oblast, with the assistance of private paramilitary groups. For the first time the Russian Ministry of Defense acknowledged the support provided by these groups, despite the fact that these groups have no legal right to operate in the Russian Federation (Russia). The Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU) have been forced to withdraw to the western part of the city. The city of Bakhmut continues to be defended. Furthermore, the AFU are making gradual advances in the Luhansk oblast. According to open-source data, the Russian army has lost 1647 officers alone.
- The united group of Russian and Belarussian troops have begun joint military drills, with fighter jets. According to the [General Staff](#) of the AFU, as a result the AFRF have strengthened their fighting aviation group in Belarus under the guise of joint military drills.
- On 14 January, Russia launched a further large-scale missile and drone attack on Ukraine. 38 missiles of different types were launched, with 25 of them downed by the Ukrainian air defense system. For the first time the Ukrainian capital (Kyiv) was shelled by C300/C400 missiles. These missiles were previously used in the shelling of Kharkiv and some other cities located along the front line and the Russian border. As a result of a missile strike, a residential high-rise apartment block was hit on 14 January in Dnipro. [236 flats](#) were completely destroyed, claiming the lives of 30 residents. Over 70 people were injured with a further 40 missing. On 15 January, Russia shelled the premises of the [Red Cross](#) in Kherson, which led to a serious fire.
- Last week numerous Ukrainian cities, including Kyiv, Kharkiv, Odesa, Kherson, Kryvyi Rih, Dnipro, Vinnytsia, Khmelnytskyi, Zaporizhzhia, Nikopol, Marhanets, Avdiivka, Kurakhove, Bakhmut, Vuhledar, and Lyman as well as and Ukrainian territories located close to the Russian border were shelled.
- Debris of a Russian missile was found in the territory of [Moldova](#).

**HUMANITARIAN DIMENSIONS**

- According to official data provided by [juvenile prosecutors](#), 455 children have died with 897 wounded to various degrees of severity. 13899 children are believed to have been deported. As of now [2,4 million Ukrainians](#) are living in either damaged or destroyed (by shelling) homes. According to the United Nations (UN), the Russian army has carried out [745 attacks](#) on healthcare facilities in Ukraine. The country's infrastructure has sustained losses amounting to [127 billion USD](#).
- The overall number of torture chambers discovered in the liberated territories has reached [49](#), with 25 found in the Kharkiv oblast alone.

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- According to a survey, [96% of Ukrainians](#) trust the AFU with the Security Service of Ukraine (SSU) coming in second with 63%. Trust in the SSU has doubled since last year.
- Since the beginning of the war more than 600 Russian agents and spies have been exposed. For example, the SBU neutralized a [group of Russian agents](#). This included officials of the Cabinet of Ministers and the Ukrainian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. In addition, some [2.300 criminal proceedings](#) have been opened regarding high treason and espionage. The AFU has executed [77% of the “prisoners”](#) from the Wagner paramilitary group who were drafted to fight against Ukraine.
- The Ukrainian and Russian Commissioners for Human Rights agreed on the exchange of 40 [prisoners of war](#) (PoW). It has also been reported that the two sides are working on a large-scale swap that would include [1000 PoW](#). The Ukrainian Parliament’s Commissioner for Human Rights has handed over a list of 800 PoW to his Russian counterpart. Russia’s list included 200 names.
- According to UN Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, [Rosemary A. DiCarlo](#), Russia shows no signs of terminating its hostilities in Ukraine. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has documented 18,096 civilian victims since the beginning of Russia’s invasion. A further 6,952 deaths and 11,144 cases of wounded civilians have also been registered. However, according to DiCarlo, the actual numbers are likely much higher.
- According to the Head of the State Nuclear Regulatory Inspectorate of Ukraine, Oleh Korikov, the operation of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant has effectively reached its limits. The power plant has practically been transformed into a Russian military and repair base. It is not producing any power, but consuming it, with the operations of all of its six blocks suspended. [1500 of the plant’s employees](#) who refused to accept Russian passports have been denied access to the plant.
- In view of the dire economic situation in Ukraine, food prices increased by an average of [by 34,4%](#) in December 2022 compared to the same month of 2021. This indicator exceeds the rate of general inflation which stands at 26,6%.
- The amount of environmental damage inflicted on Ukraine by Russia cannot be overestimated. Three million hectares of forest have been damaged. 20% of territories of natural reserves are being polluted. The costs of the environmental damage inflicted by Russia has reached a staggering [1, 35 trillion UAH](#).
- Almost [4.5000 unemployed people](#) have been engaged in the “Army of Recovery” project in nine Ukrainian regions. The project aims at rebuilding Ukraine through engaging citizens in socially useful work for a minimal fee. The project was launched at the end of September 2021, with a budget of 29 million UAH, to remunerate the workers.

## **INFORMATION WARFARE DIMENSIONS**

- A number of personnel changes have been implemented in the General Staff of the Russian “special military operation” (SMO). Valeriy Gerasimov, Head of the General Staff of Russia’s Armed Forces, has been [appointed](#) Commander-in-Chief of Russian troops fighting in the SMO. Gerasimov replaced Sergei Surovikin who has now become his deputy. The Russian Ministry of Defense [said](#) that by

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- appointing a higher ranking military official as the commander of the SMO, it is responding to the extended scale of tasks within of the framework of the operation.
- Kremlin Spokesman, Dmitry Peskov has [dismissed](#) all information about the Ministry of Defense and the “Wagner” group being at loggerheads.
  - Russia continues to adopt victorious rhetoric among its citizens. On 12 January, the Russian Ministry of Defense claimed that Russian troops took Soledar, as well as claiming that control over this city would disrupt the supply lines of Ukrainian troops in Artemovsk (or Bakhmut, as it is known in Ukraine). Russian officials (Viktor Vodolatsky and other MPs) have [presented](#) “the liberation of Soledar” as a turning point in the war putting Russia on the “[verge of a major victory](#)” in Ukraine. They believe that the capture of the city will have [significant geopolitical consequences](#). Some Russians go as far as to claim that the capture of Soledar means the “[defeat of the West](#)”. On 15 January, Putin added to the stream of victorious narratives, [declaring](#) that the SMO was showing, “positive dynamics” and that everything was going according to plan. On 16 January Russia began circulating messages about the remarkable victory of the Russian army over the AFU which was chaotically [withdrawing](#) from Soledar, leaving weapons behind.
  - The Russian media is devoting significant attention to reports about heavy equipment being supplied to Ukraine (Leopard tanks). Russian official sources view this step as the EU entering the war and predict that WWII to break out in Europe. Russia also claims that “[the crisis will be prolonged](#)”. According to Dmitry [Medvedev](#), Deputy Chairman of the Russian Security Council, the supply of T-72 or Leopard tanks to Ukraine will not help Kyiv. The same message has been [spread](#) by Dmitry Peskov who claims that the tanks would prolong the duration of the SMO, while its goals would nevertheless be achieved.
  - The Russian information space continues to be awash with articles and messages stressing that the goals of the SMO remain unchanged. Dmitry Peskov has [spoken](#) about the “liberation of Russian territories in the Donbas”.
  - The Russians have criticized the meeting between the Presidents of Ukraine, Poland, and Lithuania in Lviv. Dmitry Medvedev has [spoken](#) dismissively about the three countries and their common history. Ukrainian statehood continues to be denied by the Kremlin. Russia refers to Ukraine as “an artificial state”.
  - Russia is vigorously [denying](#) that war crimes were committed by the Russian army in Ukraine (e.g., in Bucha). Instead, Moscow is intent on holding Ukraine accountable through “a tribunal on Ukrainian disinformation”. Russia also continues to reject any information on reprisals taken against pro-Ukrainian civilians in the Zaporizhzhia oblast.
  - The media is sharing the comments made by the advisor to the Office of the President of Ukraine, Oleksii Arestovych, who said that the Ukrainian air defense system was allegedly to blame for the destruction of the residential high-rise apartment block in Dnipro, which claimed the lives of 30 people, including two children, and injured over 70. According to some Russian media outlets, this tragedy was [caused](#) by gas explosion. However, in its 14 January daily report, the Russian Ministry of Defense [confirmed](#) the missile attack on Ukraine, stating that all goals were achieved. The Ministry

did not comment on the tragedy in Dnipro. Russia's state media outlets (RIA Novosti and TASS) have not [published](#) a single word about the Russian attack. There has been complete silence. The "Vesti" news outlet followed suit. Nor have there been any mentions on NTV, which belongs to "Gazprom Media". On 16 January, Dmitry Peskov [said](#) that the destruction in Dnipro was caused by the Ukrainian air defense system.

- The Kremlin continues to talk about [negotiations](#) and their geopolitical nature, the defense of Russia and the need for peacebuilding missions to appear in Ukraine. An article written by Putin's friend, the head of the oppositional faction of the Ukrainian parliament, Viktor Medvedchuk (currently living in Russia), has been published. Medvedchuk writes about the need for negotiations and security guarantees for Russia from the West. He claims that the West is to blame for the war. Dmitry Peskov mentioned the popularity of this article on 16 January but leaving the question of a meeting between Putin and Medvedchuk unanswered. In parallel, "Russian experts" are reflecting on the "[potential advent](#)" (or even existence) of "a peace movement" in Ukraine. Russian opposition factions believe that such a movement already exists, but its voice remains unheard due to the "censure of the Ukrainian information space". Russian are promoting the narrative that the SMO is not a war but the "[defense of Russian security](#)".
- Conscription in Russia continues. The Russian government continues to encourage those mobilized in the SMO to continue fighting by offering them [double work experience](#), [rehabilitation](#), [payments](#), and [free food for the children of the conscripted](#).
- Russia is clamping down on dissenting views. Different strata of Russian opinion leaders are engaging in punishing "internal enemies", "liberals" and those speaking against the war or who have left Russia. For example, the Presidential Council for the Development of Civil Society and Human Rights (HRC) plans in the near future to develop a position in connection with proposals on the need to introduce responsibility for "[various kinds of traitors](#)". The [Russian State Duma](#) is working on the introduction of punitive measures for those who fled Russia ([confiscation of property](#)).
- The Kremlin continues to discredit the Ukrainian government. Russia continues to talk about a political crisis and conflict in Ukraine. Narratives about disagreements between members of the Ukrainian political leadership are being promoted, as well as [conflicts between](#) Valery Zaluzhny, Head of Ukraine's Armed Forces and President Zelenskyy. "[Analytical](#)" articles about the authoritarian character of Zelenskyy and the increasing competition between him and Ukrainian oligarchs are being published. Moscow claims that Zelenskyy is a corrupted president and the West is fully aware of this fact. According to the Kremlin, all this should lead to the collapse of "the Ukrainian regime" in the future. As an antithesis to "Ukrainian conflicts" [narratives](#) glorifying Russian stability are being circulated. Valentina Matviyenko, head of the upper chamber of the Russian parliament, has said that the state system of Russia is not under any threat since it is perfect.