

**January 24th - January 30th, 2023
Ukraine Situation Report**

CONFLICT DEVELOPMENTS

- The Russian army (assisted by private paramilitary groups) continues to advance in the Donetsk and Zaporizhzhia oblasts. Following the destruction and capture of [Soledar](#), Russia focused on capturing [Vuhledar](#), [Mariinka](#), [Chasiv Yar](#), and [Bakhmut](#). These cities are constantly shelled by Russia, particularly with the use of banned ammunition (incendiary and thermobaric). These cities face the same fate as Mariupol, Severodonetsk, and Soledar – total destruction.
- In the Zaporizhzhia oblast, no major Russian [ads](#) were registered. Its army is sustaining heavy losses. According to Ukraine, as of 30 January, the Russian army lost 126.650 [soldiers](#).
- The Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU), continue to carry out [counteroffensive](#) operations near Kreminna and Svatove (the Luhansk oblast). They had previously blocked routes for the delivery of ammunition to the front from the Russian border, which has complicated Russian logistics. This has also led to both Russia and Ukraine using approximately the same number of shells (some days in the summer of 2022 the Russian army fired five times as many shells as the AFU).
- Last week shelling damaged infrastructure and buildings in several Ukrainian cities:
 - o [Kherson](#) (a hospital and entire [residential complexes](#) were destroyed)
 - o [Kharkiv](#) (residential houses were shelled, claiming the lives of several people)
 - o [Zaporizhzhia](#), Hulyaipole, Orikhiv, Kupyansk, Vovchansk, Beryslav, Kramatorsk, [Kostyantynivka](#) (residential houses were shelled)
 - o [Snihurivka](#) (the local history museum was shelled) as well as other settlements and territories of the Chernihiv, Kharkiv, and Sumy oblast located on the Russian border.
- Evacuations from Ukraine’s territories located close to the front line continue. The Ukrainian railway company “Ukrzaliznytsia” has introduced an additional [evacuation](#) train from Pokrovsk to Lviv. Only a small percent of residents (who lived there before the war) remain in many settlements located in the Donetsk oblast.

HUMANITARIAN DIMENSIONS

- According to the official data provided by [juvenile prosecutors](#), 459 children were killed and 917 wounded to varying degree of severity. 14.732 children are considered to have been deported. Over [20.000 Ukrainian civilians](#) are detained in Russian territories. Moreover, thousands of prisoners from Zaporizhzhia have been [transferred to Crimea](#).
- Russia is expected to [mount a decisive offensive](#) in the spring or early summer. In an interview for “My Russian Rights”, the head of the “Rus Sidiashchiaya” (*The Sitting Rus*) Foundation, Olga Romanova, has said that out of 50.000 prisoners recruited by the Wagner private paramilitary group to fight against Ukraine, only 10.000 [remain on the front](#). The Russian military, in particular the

- Wagner group, are currently enlisting [imprisoned Ukrainian citizens](#) who were forcibly taken to prisons in Russia.
- According to the Deputy Minister of Defense of Ukraine, Hanna Malyar, Russian troops are [burning the bodies of their dead en masse](#) in mobile crematories, without identifying and recording its dead soldiers. Since the beginning of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the AFU have killed [4 Russian generals and 52 colonels](#).
 - As a consequence of Russia's invasion and the temporary occupation of territories, [the acreage \(cultivated land\) in Ukraine decreased by 25%](#). The environmental situation in the Donbas is critical: [7 mines](#) are completely destroyed. A total of 115 Ukrainian mines is located in the occupied territories. Equipment has been stolen and taken to Russia in some cases.
 - Russian troops have stolen museum exhibits. For example, [15.000 unique exhibits](#) have been stolen from the Kherson Museum, the largest theft of cultural property since WWII.
 - Education in Ukraine has been complicated by the war. According to a survey, [80% of Ukrainian teachers](#) have increased workloads, while 54% have experienced burnout. Furthermore, in the occupied territories, it is obligatory to adhere to the curriculum set by Russia. According to the Ukrainian General Staff, teachers working in schools of the Kakhovsky rayon in the Kherson oblast refuse to teach students the Russian curriculum. In response, the Russian occupiers are threatening to [forcibly transfer children](#) to the occupied territories of the Kherson oblast.
 - As a result of negotiations carried out in Turkey between the High Commissioners for Human Rights of Ukraine and Russia, Ukraine has handed over a list [of 748 wounded Ukrainian prisoners of war](#) requesting that their state of health and whereabouts be verified.
 - Since the start of the war, Russian troops have damaged [1.206 health care facilities](#) in Ukraine. 171 facilities have completely been destroyed.
 - The volume of Ukrainian crops exported within the framework of the "grain deal" is significantly dropping. Last week from the ports of the Odesa agglomeration 18 ships [exported](#) 664 tons of agricultural produce, which is only a third of the volume exported two weeks earlier.
 - The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) [has inspected](#) Ukrainian nuclear power plants. IAEA Director, Rafael Grossi, said that no military equipment has been detected on the premises of any of the plants. Mr. Grossi's statement refutes Russian claims of "illegal and quite dangerous things located on the premises of these plants". Grossi has also called for the creation of a [zone of protection and nuclear security](#) around the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP).
 - Hungarian politicians have once again raised the question of the [Hungarian minority being oppressed](#) in Ukraine's Zakarpattia region while Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán has made provocative statements regarding Ukraine's agency. In response, a member of the Zakarpattia oblast council, Fedir Sandor, published a post on his Facebook page saying that Russia's network of agents are spreading fake information about Ukraine in Hungary and about Hungary in Ukraine, with a view to [pitting](#) Hungarians living in Zakarpattia against Ukrainians.

INFORMATION WARFARE DIMENSIONS

- Since the start of the war, Russian troops have damaged [1.206 health care facilities](#) in Ukraine. 171 facilities have completely been destroyed.
- The Russian information space overflows with stories blaming Ukraine for the humanitarian and environmental problems that have appeared since the beginning of the war. For example, the Presidential Council for Civil Society and Human Rights in Russia has [provided international organizations](#) with information about crimes allegedly committed by the AFU. Ukraine is [accused](#) of threatening the security of the ZNPP. Moscow claims that Ukraine “is not willing to negotiate” the creation of a “security zone around the ZNPP that would operate for 5 months”. This statement was made following explosions near the plant, whose territory is now under Russian occupation.
- The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs [has shared messages](#), claiming that Russia has never been opposed to “equal” negotiations with the West and the EU. However, Moscow claims that the EU “does not focus on its own interests” but is guided by the desire to “please someone across the ocean”. The Kremlin believes that negotiations will take place once Europe becomes aware of this fact. According to Russia, the EU and USA [have lost](#) “their culture of diplomacy”.
- The Hungarian governments decision not to send arms to Ukraine is portrayed by Russia as support for peace. Moscow has [said](#) that peace can be reached “peacefully”.
- Messages giving [additional](#) justification for the need to subject Ukrainian civilian infrastructure to missile strikes are appearing in the Russian information space. For example, the Russian Ministry of Defense [claims](#) that “missile strikes” that have been launched on “the power system of Ukraine” are aimed at disrupting deliveries of “western weapons” and ammunitions for the AFU, as well as to stop Ukrainian military equipment being repaired.
- Russia continues to use anti-Western rhetoric. Meanwhile, a claiming that most countries support Russia, is being promoted both inside and outside Russia.
- Moscow is willing to “foster cooperation with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and BRICS”, claiming that the EU and the West have discredited themselves. Other countries are referred to as “the world’s majority”. Russia is promoting narratives about the [development of Russian integration projects](#) in the post-Soviet space called EurAsEC. Russian newscasts are replete with incessant threats to, and accusations levelled at the West regarding its support for “the war in Ukraine” by “pumping Ukraine with weapons”. According to Kremlin Spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, this [attests to](#) “the West’s direct involvement in the conflict”. Russian officials are [chastising](#) the US leadership, blaming it for the war and saying that “[Trump](#) would solve the conflict in a day, while hostilities would never have happened”. In Russia, the war is presented as just. Russian aggression is portrayed in a way that makes Russia the victim and object of aggression.
- Moscow is coming up with new ways to justify its aggression. It spreads mobilization narratives throughout Russian society claiming that the country needs to be protected from external threats. The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has directly threatened Poland and the Baltic states. The Russian media claims that the steps taken by these countries will have “long-term consequences”.

- Russia continues to threaten the West with the WWII scenarios. The Deputy Chair of Russia's Security Council, Dmitry Medvedev, said that it is highly unlikely that military equipment would save "[the old and feeble West](#)" from WWII.
- The Russian media is highlighting the lack of unity among EU member states vis-à-vis their support for Ukraine. Stories about Hungarians coming under pressure in Ukraine, and skirmishes in Zakarpattia are plentiful. Moscow quotes Hungarian officials ([Orbán](#)) who state that further military support for Ukraine by EU member states is tantamount to entering the war. A further statement by [Orbán](#) about "Germany's position on the war" following Berlin's decision to send tanks to Ukraine, is also being quoted by Russia. Many Russian narratives focus on problems in Zakarpattia. The Russian media circulates [messages](#) from Hungarian politicians concerning "Hungarians coming under pressure in Ukraine". Official Russian media quotes the "Hungarian media" vis-à-vis the [rights of Hungarians](#) being violated during the conscription campaign in Ukraine. Russia is placing particularly stress on the forced enrolment of Hungarians into the AFU claiming that "[Hungarians are forced](#) to hide from military recruitment officers in lofts". The Russian media is also circulating [comments made by some German politicians](#) on the military aid provided to Ukraine. Russia's official media presents their reflections as having major sway on public opinion in EU member states regarding Ukraine.
- Moscow continues to inform Russian society about the Russian army's achievements and victories. Narratives [are being spread](#) about the West fighting Russia through Ukrainians until "the last Ukrainian standing", Ukraine being [exhausted](#) from the Russian army and how the "West fears the escalation of the Ukrainian conflict into trench warfare in the style of the WWI". Russian officials are gradually beginning to refer to the "special military operation" as [World War I](#) for Ukraine, i.e. a World War I-style artillery battles with a stagnant front line.
- At the official level Russia is pursuing the policy of the "reintegration" of the "new territories". For example, Putin has instructed the Russian government to [adopt](#) social and economic development programs for the Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. Putin believes that "these Russian subjects will reach the average Russian standards of life no later than 2030". At the same time, Putin has entrusted the government with tasks in the field of economic development and the improvement of the country's health care system (the [introduction](#) of the term of the medical resident into the legislation)
- The Russian information space hosts many narratives discrediting Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and his government. For instance, Zelenskyy is accused of corruption. To substantiate their claims, the Russian media refers to statements made by foreign politicians and [opinion leaders](#) (such as Former Microsoft CEO, Bill Gates). Russia is promoting a narrative about the Ukrainian government "being the most corrupted government in the world". Russian narratives also claim that the EU is suffering from Zelenskyy fatigue, assessing his "[behavior](#)" as negative. The Kremlin believes that US control over the aid provided for Ukraine testifies to Washington's [loss](#) of trust in Zelenskyy. At the same time, Russian officials also accuse the Ukrainian President of "begging for weapons". Medvedev has made several [insulting comments](#). Russia maintains that Zelenskyy and "his cronies" are weak and [fully dependent](#) on the West. Official Russian media is spreading the ideas of

controversial Ukrainian political researchers on the need to [impeach](#) Zelenskyy for his “violation of the Constitution”.

- Moscow explains the legitimacy of the war by drawing on historical narratives about “Russia’s fight against Fascism”. Russia claims that it is fighting Nazism or “Neo-Nazism”. Putin has spread a few [narratives](#) of his own, accusing Ukraine of “Nazism” and carrying out “ethnic cleansing”.

ECONOMIC DIMENSIONS

- Personnel changes have been made in Ukrainian political circles. The Deputy Head of the Office of the President, Kyrylo Tymoshenko, and the heads of 5 military and civil administrations oblasts have stepped down. Such a démarche could be connected to recent scandals, in particular around army supplies and the lavish lifestyle and foreign trips of some Ukrainian officials and MPs. Ukraine is experiencing a [deficit in personnel](#). The future of 8 Ukrainian ministers is open to question.
- Russia has suggested legitimizing Ukraine’s occupation by taking symbolic steps. For example, the military and civil administration of the Kherson oblast has been renamed the oblast administration. Vladimir Lipandin has become head of the occupation police in the Kherson province.
- [The National Bank of Ukraine](#) expects Ukraine’s GDP to grow by 0,3% in 2023, by 4,1% in 2024 and by 6,4% in 2025. The blockade of Ukraine’s ports needs to be lifted for the country’s economy to recover. This would secure \$20 billion for Ukraine, which would also incentivize economic recovery. Before the war, mining and metallurgical exports provided jobs for 530.000 Ukrainians, amounting to at least \$21 billion in revenues.
- The Ukrainian government [has abolished](#) the simplified tax system, annulling the united tax of 2% for businesses, and reintroducing the pre-war tax system. This decision is related to Ukraine’s committed to the IMF to increase the amount of tax revenues into the state budget.
- Missile attacks have topped the list of problems faced by businesses in Ukraine. Since October 2022, the number of the companies that are members of the European Business Association and whose activities have been [affected by missile strikes](#) has risen from 47% to 89%. The vast majority of companies have reported [drops in revenues](#): 29% of businesses have registered losses of 20%, 54% of them said that their losses amounted to 21% or more, whereas only 6% of the businesses reported no major change in their operations.
- The Ministry of Economy of Ukraine has recommended the Ukrainian government to revoke [47% of permits and licenses](#). This only applies for the permits and licenses that fall under the purview of the Ministry of Economy.