

March 10th
A brief overview of the situation

1. **DEVELOPMENTS IN THE CONFLICT. A lower intensity of hostilities in the recent days may attest to the redeployment of troops and change of tactics undertaken by Russian forces.** This analysis is based on attempts of entrenching, retreat, and fortification in certain territories. This could relate to a shortage of fuel or lower temperatures. In any case a major intensification of hostilities is expected. In particular, the information dimension of the Russian hybrid war is being heightened. A large amount of disinformation is circulating with bots being created to collect data on movement of Ukrainian troops. The intensity of rocket and artillery shelling of Ukrainian cities, such as Kharkiv, Chernihiv, Mariupol, Sumy and Izyum has not decreased. **Coerced mobilization in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine** is still taking place, particularly for pro-Ukrainian citizens who are being sent to the frontline. Russian information sources spread fake news about ‘cauldrons’ in Donbas, claiming that 50 000 of Ukrainian soldiers are encircled. However, no further details about the exact location of the ‘cauldron’ are provided. At the same time, pro-Ukrainian demonstrations continue to take place in the towns that have temporarily been seized by Russian forces. There are no reports about demonstration from pro-Russian residents, which attests to the actual low level of people’s support of the Russian invasion. Cases of kidnapping of Ukrainian activists by the Russian Federal Security Service agents are being registered in Kherson (Oleksandr Tarasov). Activists of the city of Kakhovka have effectively gone in hiding. According to some media, Russian ships have floated off Odessa towards Crimea. This could be explained by the weather conditions (storm) or by a change of plan regarding the offensive. The air terror above Kyiv does not abate. For example, on March 9, air raid sirens went off 9 times, and on March 10, this number dropped to 4.
2. **ENVIRONMENT. The Chernobyl nuclear power plant remains under the control of Russian forces. The electricity has been cut off for over 24 hours.** The Chernobyl nuclear power plant has allegedly been connected to the Belarusian power grid. However, the Ukrainian National Energy Company ‘Ukrenergo’ refuted this information and stated that its specialists can conduct repair work provided the Russian military allows access to the plant. There has also been reports about Russians having mined the territory adjacent to the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power station. In the evening, the Kharkiv Institute of Physics and Technology was hit by a second airstrike. It is on the premises of this Institute that an experimental nuclear reactor is located.
3. **NEGOTIATIONS. The main event was the meeting between the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine and Russia in Antalya.** The negotiations between D. Kuleba and S. Lavrov **have not been crowned with success. Neither an agreement about a 24-hour ceasefire, nor the provision of a humanitarian corridor** near Mariupol have been achieved. However, the Ministers did agree to continue seeking a solution. **The Russian side offered to discuss the launch of a tripartite group consisting of experts from the IAEA** regarding the issues of nuclear objects and ecological problems arising. The negotiations in the Minsk format have shown that ecological issues can actually be discussed even in the context of an impasse on the political track. Lavrov also stated that Russian troops did not bomb a maternity ward. According to him, the ward served as a shelter to nationalists and was targeted for this reason. The overall stance that Russia adopted during the negotiations remains quite rigid and uncompromising. Accordingly, the Ukrainian side is not intent on accepting the Russian terms.
4. **HUMANITARIAN DIMENSION. Work on providing ‘green corridors’ continues to be conducted in 5 directions:** 1) Bucha, Borodyanka, Irpin, Hostomel — Kyiv; 2) Sumy — Poltava; 3) Mariupol — Zaporizhzhia; 4) Volnovakha — Pokrovsk; 5) Izyum — Lozova. According to the data provided by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, over 6 million of Ukrainians have been affected by the war with another 12 million in need of help, which represents a quarter of the entire population of the country. **A humanitarian crisis is arising among internally displaced persons who have moved to other cities of Ukraine (amounting to more than 2 million).** IDPs suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder and run out of financial resources. Tensions with the local population are omnipresent. In light of the invasion of the Russian troops into Ukraine, tension inside the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate is mounting. 15 eparchies have ceased to mention the name of the Patriarch Kirill in their sermons. At the same time some of the eparchies switched to the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (independent of the Moscow Patriarchate). The dynamics of religious actors

are important not only since approximately 70% of the Ukrainians are religious, but also because the ostensible oppression of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate has become one of the formal reasons of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, according to the claims of President Putin.

5. **INFORMATION DIMENSION.** Russian information sources are spreading a narrative about Ukraine not controlling its own army, about weapons being distributed to people and armed criminals terrorizing civilians. The Russian side is also spreading information about Ukrainian nationalists and fascists reneging on agreements regarding humanitarian corridors leading to the RF and Belarus. There is also an increase in the number of fakes about attacks carried out by Ukrainian Nazi on Russian health workers and against civilians. No evidence is being provided on these. Also, there are messages about the Ukrainian side planning to carry out acts of sabotage on civil infrastructure which may lead to manmade disasters. **In doing so the Russian side effectively denies any crimes committed by the Russian army by rhetorically attributing responsibility to the Ukrainian military. All of these claims are not accompanied by any documented cases.** The official spokesperson of the Ministry of Defense of Russia, Igor Konashenkov, has stated that an airstrike on Mariupol was a staged provocation meant to support anti-Russian fury. The Russian internal discourse is also being permeated by narratives, according to which ,the patriotic war for Russia leads to a regain of a superpower status that would launch internal changes in order to achieve self-sufficiency and independence from the West. A distinctive anti-West discourse and denial of effectiveness of the sanctions imposed by the Western countries are still present.