

March 11th

A brief overview of the situation

- 1. DEVELOPMENTS IN THE CONFLICT.** The main development on March 11th is the report of a provocation on the Ukrainian-Belarusian border, with Russian fighter jets striking at settlements in Belarus - according to some sources. For now, the Ministry of Defense of Belarus refuted this information. However, this might be a tactical move prior to engaging the Armed Forces of Belarus in the war on the Russian side. The Ukrainian intelligence service released information on the intentions of the Russian side to do a provocation in that regard. **According to the service, another provocation is being hatched at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant where the power grid is currently being repaired. Ukrainian cities such as Kharkiv, Mariupol, Chernihiv and Mykolaiv are still being bombed and shelled by the artillery.** The city council of Mariupol stated that the city had already lost 1600 of its inhabitants with the hostilities taking place around the city and in the neighboring settlements. Today, the Main Department of the State Emergency Service of Ukraine and a mosque have been subjected to shelling. Also, the cities of Dnipro, Ivano-Frankivsk and Lutsk have been hit by airstrikes, as well as a number of towns in the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, such as Severodonetsk and Toretsk. Heavy fighting around Izyum and Mariupol have prevented the evacuation of civilians from these cities. **According to the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, Valerii Zaluzhnyi, since the outbreak of the war Russia launched 328 'Iskander' and 'Calibre' rockets on the Ukrainian territory.** At the same time, the advance of heavy armor in the current weather conditions has become more complicated and the Russian armor became a target of the Ukrainian artillery and aviation.
- 2. INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION.** Ukraine continues to be supported, in particular by the US – and on March 11 another package of sanctions has been imposed on Russia. Besides, the US Senate has given final approval to over 13 billion USD Ukraine aid bill. **The American campaign demanding the permission to deliver Polish fighter jets MIG-29 to Ukraine is ongoing. However, for the time being the White House remains against such a step.** Ukraine is also being supported by the majority of the EU countries, especially by Poland. On March 11, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine met with the Polish President Duda in Warsaw. President Zelenskyy delivered a speech on the strong connections that have been established at the informal level between Ukraine and Poland. Despite the refusal to exclude Russia from Interpol, the latter introduced a new procedure for the verification of Russian requests. **Meanwhile, Russia also makes attempts to form a coalition around its own goals. Thus, Lukashenko visited Moscow to meet Putin and express his full support to Russia's actions. The Russian side, supported by China, is also trying to accuse Ukraine of developing biological weapons.** The Russian mission to the UN has requested a meeting of the Security Council on March, 11 in order to discuss the military and biological activities of the US on the territory of Ukraine. The Russian Minister of Defense, Sergei Shoigu, also issued a message according to which about 16 000 Syrians are ready to participate in the war on the Russian side.
- 3. HUMANITARIAN DIMENSION.** Civilian evacuation through 'green corridors' was to take place on March 11 in the Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, Kharkiv and Kyiv oblasts. **However, most of these corridors were blocked by shelling.** Approximately 3000 people have been evacuated from Bucha and Hostomel. There is a constant influx of refugees from Ukraine. As of today, nearly 2,5 million people have left Ukraine, the majority of them through the Polish border. On March 11, the State Border Service of Ukraine stated that Warsaw and Kraków no longer have the capacity to accept new refugees. **Civilians living in the territories temporarily occupied by Russian troops remain terrorized. The mayor of Melitopol, Ivan Fedorov, was kidnapped, as pro-Ukrainian activists in Kherson and Starobilsk.** Russian troops shot at dozens of civilians trying to flee the occupied cities. Hostilities have led previously supporters of Russia to express their readiness to fight and support the Ukrainian army. In particular, the Odesa metropolitan Bishop of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (which belongs to the Moscow Patriarchate), Ahafanhel, made a strong statement against the RF. He has been joined by one of the leaders of the pro-Russian political party, 'The Opposition Platform - For Life', Yuriy Boyko.
- 4. INFORMATION DIMENSION.** Panic is sweeping over Crimea in light of a possible disconnection from the internet. On March, 11 the Russian government announced a gradual disconnection from Instagram. Anti-war demonstrations participants continue to be legally prosecuted in the RF. They are mainly charged with administrative violations. In some cases, priests in Saint Petersburg have been held accountable for anti-war statements made in their churches. There are also cases of students being expelled from universities

for participating in demonstrations with 2000 fines issued in Saint Petersburg alone. Reports about the condemnation of Russian cultural luminaries who spoke against the war in Ukraine are also numerous. Corporate actions are being organized in support of the Russian policy and the Russian army in Ukraine. Today, the Russian government's policy has been supported by railway employees, members of the National Academy of Sciences of the RF and pupils at schools (city of Omsk). The efforts to discredit the Ukrainian army have not stopped. It is indicated that mercenaries are fighting on the 'Nazi side'. Such narratives are then circulated within the Russian media landscape. According to propaganda, the conflict is gradually taking on 'an international dimension' and information is being spread about 'Ukrainian fake factories' that spread Ukrainian propaganda through social networks and context ads in order to sow panic among Russians to please Western countries. One may assume that in doing so, the Kremlin is trying to discredit any information about the course of hostilities and the Russian losses in the war against Ukraine. There is also information about 'Ukrainian radicals controlled by the US security services' hatching plans of provocations by means of chemical weapons. According to the official Russian sources, Kyiv has been pursuing the goal of accusing Russia of such an intention. These publications are massively being spread in the Russian media landscape.