

March 1st

A brief overview of the situation

1. **Developments in the conflict.** On 1st March Russian Federation forces aimed at encircling and besieging three of Ukraine's largest cities: Chernihiv, Mariupol, and Kherson. The threat of an offensive by mechanised infantry brigades on Kyiv remains—some of these columns are being relocated to the south (presumably in order to enter the city from the Zhytomyr highway) although at present the Ukrainian army is resisting their entrance to the capital. A leader of the military administration in Kyiv has been appointed, working together with the head of the Kyiv City State Administration. **The Armed Forces of Ukraine have repelled some advances of military columns.** Notably, a Ukrainian "Point-U" (Tochka-U) missile struck Berdiansk airport where Russian hardware had been gathered *en masse*. The first prisoner exchange took place today in the Sumy Region (five Ukrainians for one Russian officer). The conflict has been **internationalised** through the introduction of units of the Belarusian armed forces into combat. Russian troops have **hit the Kyiv TV tower. Babyn Yar Holocaust Memorial complex is located near to the TV tower and this has also suffered significant damage** due to the rocket attack.
2. Actions have been committed that may constitute **war crimes**. These can be grouped into several categories: **indiscriminate rocket attacks on large cities**, in particular, on the central districts of Kyiv, Kharkiv, and Kherson; **precision strikes on basic life-sustaining infrastructure** (utilities, power plants, water supply). As a result of a Russian Federation air strike on Freedom Square in Kharkiv today, at least six people were injured, including one child—the death toll is being determined. In Kherson the Russian military fired at a fire truck which was going to extinguish a fire in the "Fabryka" shopping and entertainment centre building.
3. **Information sphere.** Due to the hit on the TV tower, broadcasting has been partially suspended, limiting the dissemination of information to Ukrainians in many regions. The TV tower is located next to densely populated neighbourhoods in Kyiv.
4. **International support for Ukraine.** International support for Ukraine continues. **A sitting of the European Parliament was held today, which recommended granting Ukraine the status of an EU candidate country.** A total of 637 MEPs gave their affirmative votes, 13 were against, and 26 abstained. **Both financial pressure and the isolation of Russia from Western markets, technologies and investments are continuing.** In particular, BP, the largest shareholder in Russia's Rosneft oil corporation, has announced its withdrawal from the company's share capital where BP's share was 20%. It is probable that China will buy these shares. European unity through support of Ukraine is accompanied by anxiety around the threat of a wider war in Europe.
5. **Humanitarian dimension. The humanitarian crisis is intensifying in those towns and cities where combat operations are taking place.** Hostomel, Irpin, Bucha (towns to the west of Kyiv) are running out of food and medicine; supply chains are broken and there are no humanitarian corridors for the civilian population. **Kyiv may also be experiencing a food crisis due to combat operations.** A similar situation exists in many cities in Ukraine that are under attack or under siege. **The problem of a shortage of medicines for citizens is becoming more urgent; in particular, the availability of insulin for sale in Ukrainian pharmacies is limited.** In Kharkiv, the Russian army fired on a hospital. **There is a mass exodus of refugees to EU countries.** According to preliminary estimates, almost 70,000 Ukrainian citizens arrived in Poland on February 28 alone. According to Filippo Grandi, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, the total number of refugees from Ukraine is already 520,000, and within a few weeks it could grow to 4 million. At the same time, many Ukrainians, especially men, are returning to Ukraine from abroad to join the armed forces.