

Monday, March 21st, 2022
Ukraine Situation Report

CONFLICT DEVELOPMENTS

- . Rocket attacks targeting civilian infrastructure continue. A recent example of such an attack is the firing of a ballistic missile destroying a shopping mall and several neighbouring buildings in Kyiv.
- . The army of the Russian Federation (hereinafter Russia) has carried out attacks in Eastern Ukraine in cities including Avdiivka, Mariupol, Severodonetsk, and Lysychansk. These attacks have relied on the forceful mobilization of the inhabitants of the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts.
- . Despite the shelling of Mykolayiv, the Ukrainian army has been able to continue counter-attacks against Russian troops in the oblast.
- . The Ukrainian army has been able to restore control over the strategically important village of Makariv in the Kyiv oblast. Despite the strategic gain, almost every other building in the oblast has either been destroyed or damaged.
- . The last few days have seen the slowing down of Russia's aviation activity, which speaks for the high efficiency of the air defence activities of the Ukrainian army over Kharkiv and Kyiv.

POLITICAL DIMENSIONS

- . Another round of negotiations between Russia and Ukraine took place on Monday. The negotiations seem to have concluded at an impasse with little signs of Russia willing to reach any compromise in relation to its demands. President Zelensky commented on the standoff by noting that the demands from Russia can only be filled by the complete exterminating of all Ukrainians.
- . The initiative announced by Slovenia regarding the relocation of embassies of EU member states back to Kyiv has been met with optimism in Ukraine. So has the announcement of the intentions of UK Prime Minister Johnson to visit Kyiv.

ECOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS

- . An ammonia tank was shelled in the Northern town of Novoselytsya creating a significant leakage of hazardous chemicals. The situation has since been brought under control, yet the extent of damage depends on weather patterns. Civilians have been ordered to take cover.
- . Spring floods may exacerbate the negative consequences of the recent detonation of the dam on the Irpin river. Despite the weather-related risks, the destruction of the dam may prove critical for the defence of Kyiv.
- . Solidarity rallies have been held at all Ukrainian nuclear power plants in support of the staff of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power station and the citizens of the nearby city Enerhodar currently besieged by the Russian forces.
- . The sowing season has begun in Odessa, Mykolayiv and other southern oblasts. Should the agricultural season and related spring preparations be thwarted, some countries especially in the Middle East risk facing famine due to the significant role of Ukraine as an exporter of grain to the region. An event like this could ignite a wave of displacement in the Middle East having ripple effects across countries and continents.

HUMANITARIAN DIMENSIONS

- . Humanitarian or so-called 'green corridors' continue to be opened and the government of Ukraine has established financial support programs for internally displaced persons. In parallel, the Russian government continues to evacuate Ukrainians to Russia and as of now, 2389 children are known to have been transferred from the temporarily occupied territories to Russia.
- . The Russian troops continue to aggravate the humanitarian crisis in the occupied territories, with recent examples of such activities including the use of flash-bang grenades in Kherson and the shooting of civilians to disperse a pro-Ukrainian rally.

- . The occupying power has kidnapped the head of the Tsyrkuny village council, Mykola Sykalenko, in Kharkiv oblast. The mayor of Beryslav, Oleksandr Shapovalov, and a local activist have been abducted in Kherson oblast. In addition, the death of the 96-year-old Holocaust survivor, Borys Romanchenko, in recent shelling in Kharkiv has been noted as a grave symbolic loss.
- . Military repression and attacks in Southern Ukraine including the towns of Melitopol, Nova Kakhovka, and Henichesk show no signs of abating. Also, attempts by the Russian forces have been undertaken to establish the, so-called, Kherson People's Republic in order to legitimize Russian presence in the region.
- . Shelling in Kyiv continues to intensify. Since the beginning of the invasion, about 70 buildings have been damaged. The destroyed shopping mall in Kyiv housed one of the most significant centres for grocery logistics critical in supplying a significant part of Kyiv with food. The destruction of the mall could account for deliberate targeting of food infrastructure.
- . The Russian army is known to have shelled 135 hospitals so far. These attacks have claimed the lives of 6 Ukrainian health care workers and wounded 16 people. A psychiatric ward came under fire on Monday in Mykolayiv.
- . Settlements in the Zhytomyr and Rivne oblasts south-west of Kyiv have also been subjected to shelling, which may signal the preparation of the invasion in the direction of Volyn.
- . Russian naval artillery has fired at residential buildings in Odessa. 5 ships carrying grains have been hijacked at the Berdyansk seaport and towed to an unknown destination.
- . According to some sources, Russian airborne forces have landed in Berdyansk, south from Mariupol. Russia is using the Sea of Azov as a transport artery, having successfully pushed the Ukrainian troops away from the entire coast.

INFORMATION DIMENSIONS. RUSSIAN PROPAGANDA.

- . Russia has continued to disseminate narratives regarding the mistreatment of Russian prisoners of war (PoW) held by the Ukrainian forces. The Russian Investigation Committee is pressing charges against Ukrainian TV hosts and activists due to the negative reporting of PoW held by Russia and the bombing of Ukrainian cities.
- . New stories have appeared in regional Russian media regarding fallen soldiers in Ukraine. The Russian information space continues to feature fascist statements alleged to come from the political leadership of Ukraine. Mention of humanitarian violations or civilian killings by Russian troops are few or non-existent in the Russian media landscape. However, allegations regarding violations committed by the Ukrainian Armed Forces, including the shelling of humanitarian corridors in the city of Mariupol have been recorded. The assumed motive behind such communications is the demoralization of the Ukrainian army by the Russian forces.
- . Russian or Russia-based protestors opposing the war have been detained across Russia. The "A Just Russia - For Truth" faction of the Russian parliament is actively searching for individuals publicly opposing the war. Such individuals have been referred to as traitors and enemies and the individuals caught are expected to be forwarded to the Investigation Committee headed by Aleksandr Bastrykin.
- . Information about Ukrainian and American laboratories hosting biological weapons are being actively spread across Russian media. A draft resolution has been registered in the Russian State Duma regarding the launch of a committee tasked to investigate the activities conducted in these laboratories.