

**Thursday, March 24th, 2022**

## **Ukraine Situation Report**

### **CONFLICT DEVELOPMENTS**

- . A month has passed since the beginning of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation (hereinafter: Russia). The past days have seen the nature of confrontations between the two forces shift from strategic manoeuvring towards trench warfare. Location where Russian troops are making advances are limited to Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts. Despite these advances, the progression of the troops has come at heavy losses.
- . Russia has sought to damage checkpoints near Slavutych, where personnel of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant reside.
- . The Ukrainian army continues to conduct counterattacks, particularly around Kyiv. Ukrainian forces have also attacked three Russian ships docked at the Berdyansk port, destroying one and damaging two.
- . The first exchange of prisoners of war and captured civilian sailors took place today, 24<sup>th</sup> of March.
- . Video appeals have been published by Russian soldiers who surrendered themselves to the Ukrainian Army. The video appeals are the first of their kind since the beginning of hostilities.
- . Russian troops continue to shell civilian infrastructure and residential blocks in Kyiv, Chernihiv, Kharkiv (post office and humanitarian aid center), Mariupol, Okhtyrka (the most densely populated neighbourhood in town), Irpin, Rubizhne, Lysychansk, Bakhmut and other cities.
- . A Russian journalist working for The Insider, an independent and investigative news media, has been killed in shelling in Kyiv.
- . According to the Head of the Luhansk Oblast State Administration, several settlements have been shelled with white phosphorous bombs.
- . Russian troops have captured Svatove and have gained partial successes in Popasna and Rubizhne in the Luhansk oblast.
- . 1200 Russian rockets have been launched into or in Ukraine since the beginning of the invasion.

### **HUMANITARIAN DIMENSIONS**

- . Russian forces continue to aggravate the humanitarian crisis in the occupied territories, cracking down on the local population. According to reports from Kherson and Melitopol, teachers are being forced by Russian forces to teach in Russian and to use Russian curriculums in schools. The enforced curriculum has been noted to feature anti-Ukrainian content.
- . The populations living in the occupied territories continue to be forcefully deported to Russian territories. According to estimates, over 400 000 civilians have been deported since the beginning of hostilities. Out of these, 84 000 are children.
- . The war has resulted in 44% of Ukrainian families being temporarily divided. Out of these, more than half or 54% are from eastern Ukraine, with western Ukraine following with 39% of families divided due to the war.
- . 50% of families with children have been divided, the highest percentage among all age categories.
- . 19% of Ukrainians have left their town or village due to the war, with the majority forced on the move from eastern Ukraine. Out of the ones forced on the move, 93% plan to return once the security situation allows.
- . The Head of the Kherson Oblast Music and Dramatic Theatre, Oleksandr Knyha, has been abducted in Oleshky.
- . The resistance movement in Kherson remains strong and a gigantic Ukrainian flag has been hoisted over the building of the city council.

- . The opening of an office of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Rostov has been met with negative sentiments. According to Ukrainians, the operations conducted by the ICRC contribute to the deportation of Ukrainians into Russia and subject individuals to the risk of detention.

## **INFORMATION DIMENSIONS**

- . Rallies are being held in Russia and in Crimea in support of President Putin's policy and actions in Ukraine. The rallies are being organized by the Union of Russian Women and rayon administrations, including those located in Crimea. Memorials featuring the letter "Z" are being erected.
- . At the same time, the feedback of Russian citizens on these commemorative events shared on social networks seems to be restrained.
- . According to Russian sources, the Russian ruble is being circulated in the Kherson oblast. Citizens are reportedly being forced to make payments in the currency.
- . Russian authorities are moving forward with establishing Russian military and civil administrations in the temporarily occupied territories in order to 'restore order and implement control over the home front'.
- . Narratives are being spread about Ukraine having missed out on its realistic chance to become an independent state (according to a statement made by the Director of the Information and Press Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russian, Maria Zakharova).
- . Traditional official narratives continue to be spread within Russian official rhetoric about Russia's fight against Ukrainian "neo-Nazi".
- . Russian opposition media continues to disseminate information regarding Russia's military losses. For example, the secretary of the Union of the Committees of Soldiers' Mothers of Russia, Valentina Melnikova, has underscored the legitimacy of the figures published by Ukrainian sources regarding Russia's losses.
- . Regional media and social media sources continue to spread information regarding funerals held in Saratov, Krasnoyarsk, Norilsk, and Yekaterinburg for fallen Russian soldiers.
- . At the central level, narratives regarding war crimes alleged to have been committed by the Ukrainian military, in particular in Chernihiv. These narratives are accompanied by news reports on Ukraine's unwillingness to evacuate its citizens, disregarding the will of the citizens to relocate to Russian territories. Based on these reports and should the humanitarian crisis deepen, it is likely that Russia will continue to relocate inhabitants of the Chernihiv oblast to its territories.