

## **Monday, March 28th, 2022**

### **Ukraine Situation Report**

#### **CONFLICT DEVELOPMENTS**

- The Armed Forces of Ukraine have regained control over some of the territories captured by the Russian Federation (hereinafter: Russia) since the beginning of the invasion. Within the last 24 hours, the town of Irpin and other settlements in the Kharkiv and Kherson oblasts have been regained.
- Rocket attacks targeting Mariupol, Lutsk, Zhytomyr, Izyum, Rubizhne, and Severodonetsk continue, with an oil depot hit in Lutsk. Chernihiv remains besieged and subject to continued shelling.
- Russian troops have destroyed several bridges in the Chernihiv oblast.
- Russian forces are potentially seeking to deepen their hold of the already captured territories, without attempting to further their advances. Russia is presumably seeking to prevent Ukrainian counterattacks.
- There is a threat of the shelling of Ukrainian cities from the Black Sea.
- A sea mine has been detected on the Bulgarian coast. Ukraine and Russia continue to accuse each other of placing mines in the Black Sea.
- Information regarding fires in the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone has not been confirmed.
- Fierce hostilities are taking place in the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts where Russian troops are attempting to reach the administrative borders of the oblasts. Residents of the temporarily occupied territories of the Donetsk and Luhansk oblast (hereinafter - TOTDLO) have been forcefully deployed to the military.

#### **POLITICAL DIMENSIONS**

- Ukrainian and Russian delegations arrived in Istanbul on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> to conduct a round of face-to-face negotiations. Negotiations are to start on Tuesday the 29<sup>th</sup>.
- Kremlin press secretary, Dmitry Peskov, has said that a meeting between President Putin and President Zelensky is not to be expected, confirming that Russia is not planning to halt the invasion. Negotiations are thus unlikely to result in an end to hostilities.
- President Zelensky has identified compromises he would be willing to discuss during the negotiations, including confirming Ukraine as a zone free from nuclear weapons in exchange for security guarantees.
- The Ukrainian pro-Russian parliamentary faction, Opposition Platform – For Life, has suspended its activities until the end of hostilities.
- Ukrainian society and political circles have voiced their appreciation for the return of the ambassador of Slovenia to Ukraine, Boštjan Lesjak, to Kyiv. Other European ambassadors are hoped to follow suit.

#### **HUMANITARIAN DIMENSIONS**

- The humanitarian crisis in the territories occupied by Russia and in the areas seeing active hostilities is deepening. For the first time in several days, no humanitarian corridor was agreed upon on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> due to the threat of shelling and abduction of refugee convoys then taken to Russian territories.
- According to data provided by the local authorities, 5000 people have been killed during the last month in Mariupol. 120 000 civilians are estimated to be in urgent need of evacuation from the city.
- Following Russian shelling and airstrikes on Kharkiv, 1 177 apartment buildings have been destroyed.
- A school has been shelled by the Russian rocket launcher BM-21 Grad.
- About 1/3 of the citizens of Kharkiv have fled the city.
- Nearly 300 buildings have been damaged or destroyed in Kyiv. More than 1000 wounded have been admitted to hospitals and 300 civilians have been killed.
- Two high-voltage lines have been damaged near Kyiv. The lines supply electricity to the residential areas of Bilychi, Borshchahivka, Vynohradar, Vitryani Hory, and Pushcha-Vodytsya with a total population of approximately 82 000 people.
- Abductions of mayors and representatives of local cities and authorities continue. As of now, 20 officials are being held by Russian forces, with some possibly killed.
- Russian troops have destroyed the office of the Permanent Representative of the President of Ukraine in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea.

## INFORMATION DIMENSIONS

- Stories about Ukrainian soldiers torturing Russian prisoners of war are being spread in Russian and Russian-backed media.
- The Kremlin denies all accusations made by Ukraine regarding the spreading of disinformation in Russia and abroad.
- Citizens of Russia and the Autonomous Republic of Crimea refute official statements regarding the successful management of price fluctuations. Citizens are sharing news of soaring food prices across social networks.
- In some Russian regions, citizens are being charged with criminal, instead of administrative, offences when spreading content not in line with official Russian narratives. This is specifically being seen in Krasnodar Krai.
- The Russian Federal Service for the Supervision of Communications, Information Technology and Mass Media (hereinafter: Roskomnadzor) has banned Russian media from publishing a recent interview with President Zelensky conducted by several Russian journalists.
- Novaya Gazeta has received a second warning from Roskomnadzor. Following the warning, no further content is to be published online, on social media networks or in print until the so-called special operation in the territory of Ukraine has been completed.
- Private websites managed by journalists opposing Russian policies have been blocked. Alexander Nevzorov is among the targeted journalists.
- Russian regional media continues to publish information regarding the funerals of Russian soldiers killed in Ukraine. Information regarding fallen soldiers is being shared in, for example, Orenburg as well as in some cities in Tatarstan and Saratov.
- Narratives accusing the Ukrainian army of committing crimes against civilians remain unchanged.
- Russia is disseminating information regarding the delivery of humanitarian aid to the TOTDLO and the employment of Ukrainian refugees in Crimea.
- Representatives of the United Russia faction of the Russian parliament have submitted a bill proposing to recognize Ukrainian Russian speakers as citizens of Russia. The proposed bill also includes peoples who have historically lived in Russian territories as entitled to Russian citizenship. The list of peoples includes representatives of Belarusian and Ukrainian people as well as a number of indigenous peoples.