

**March 2024
Ukraine Monthly Situation Report**

CONFLICT DEVELOPMENTS

- **The Russian army continues to advance in the Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia and Kharkiv provinces.** The Ukrainian army continues to shell Russian military facilities and oil-refining facilities in Crimea and in Ukraine's other occupied territories, as well as those located in the territories close to the Russian border. On 24 March, the Russian reconnaissance ship *Ivan Khurs* was [damaged](#), along with two large landing ships, the *Yamal* and *Azov*. A patrol ship, the *Sergey Kotov*, was destroyed. This enables Ukraine to significantly reduce Russia's ability to dominate the Black Sea, and potentially lift the blockade of Ukraine's seaports.
- According to the Ukrainian government, as of the end of March **the overall losses incurred by Russian troops** amounted to over [440.000](#) soldiers killed.
- **The Russian army continues to launch massive strikes on Ukrainian settlements, to damage or destroy energy infrastructure.** The cities of [Kyiv](#), [Kharkiv](#), [Lviv](#), [Odesa](#), [Kherson](#), [Mykolayiv](#), [Zaporizhzhia](#), [Sumy](#), [Lyman](#), [Konotop](#), [Izium](#), [Pokrovsk](#), [Kurakhove](#), [Kryvyi Rih](#), [Myrnohrad](#), [Kupyansk](#), [Vovchansk](#) have been subjected to Russian attacks, as well as other settlements located across Ukraine and close to the Russian border in the Chernihiv, Kharkiv and Sumy provinces. In several settlements of the Kharkiv and Donetsk provinces, forced mobilisation was announced due to the constant risk of Russian air strikes. Russian attacks are increasingly entering the airspace of Ukraine's neighbours countries. For example, on 24 March, a missile violated [Polish](#) airspace. On 28 March, the debris of a third drone was discovered on [Romania's](#) territory.
- Following large-scale attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure facilities, a sizable part of the generating capabilities of the Ukrainian energy system have been damaged. As a result, a power outage schedule has been [introduced](#) in several provinces (Kharkiv, Odesa, Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia and Kirovohrad) . The Dnipro Hydroelectric Power Plant (DHPP) has sustained considerable damage, in particular, the DHPP's dam. At some thermal power stations, for example, at Zmiiv, Burshtyn and Ladyzhyn, [all energy blocks](#) have been damaged. It will take a lot of time to repair them. The Ukrainian government expects to face electricity [problems](#) during the summer, especially given the fact that Russian attacks are continuing almost daily.
- A mobilisation campaign in Ukraine is continuing. The Commander-in-Chief of Ukraine's Armed Forces, Oleksandr Syrskyi, stated in an [interview](#) that the number of mobilised people will be less than 500.000 people, as previously announced. At the same time, laws have been passed on the [demobilisation](#) of conscripted soldiers and on re-examination of the [physically limited fit for military service](#), which may improve the situation with future mobilisation by contributing to the transparency of the process.
- The process of exchanging the bodies of fallen soldiers continues. On 15 March, 100 bodies of fallen Ukrainian soldiers were [returned](#) to Ukraine. On 29 March, a further 121 bodies were [returned](#).

HUMANITARIAN DIMENSIONS

- **According to the official information provided by juvenile prosecutors, since the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion, [over 1810 Ukrainian children have been affected](#).** As of the morning of 30 March, 2024, 537 children were killed and over 1273 wounded with different degrees of severity. The majority of children have been affected in the following provinces: Donetsk - 524, Kharkiv - 343, Kherson - 149, Kyiv - 130, Dnipropetrovsk - 125, Mykolayiv - 103, Zaporizhzhia - 100. 128,872 war

crimes and crimes of aggression have been [documented](#), as well as 16,847 crimes against national security. After two years of war, the number of [people with disabilities](#) in Ukraine has grown by 300.000 .

- **According to the National Police of Ukraine, following the liberation of Bucha, police officers unearthed the bodies of 422 civilians killed by the Russians.** In total, 1,190 bodies of Ukrainians have been discovered in the Bucha rayon, however the police are still searching for missing people. Around one thousand civilians killed by Russia had a violent death. 514 residents of the Kyiv province are considered missing. This is likely to include victims of violent deaths. 180 bodies remain unidentified.
- **Between 1 January to 1 April 2024, Russian troops fired more than 180 missiles and drones at Kyiv.** This includes hypersonic, cruise and ballistic missiles, as well as attack drones. Russia has recently started to target Ukraine's energy infrastructure again, with a significant number of its air attacks targeting energy facilities. On 22 March, the Russian occupiers carried out their largest combined attack (since the full-scale invasion) on Ukraine's energy system. On the night of 29 March, Russia launched [the most destructive missile attack](#) on Ukraine's energy and fuel facilities. This has [led to](#) damages amounting to at least \$100 million USD. Almost all the missiles, drones and precision-guided missiles (97% of them), that have been launched on Ukraine since the beginning of 2024, have hit [civilian and infrastructure facilities](#). Only 3% of Russian weapons have hit military facilities.
- **An environmental tragedy in the Black Sea: death of dolphins and Black Sea pigs (azovka) due to Russia's military activities.** In, March [several dozen dolphins died](#) in the bays of Sevastopol and other shores of the temporarily occupied Crimea, not far from Novorossiysk and the coast of the Krasnodar Krai in Russia. Some of the dolphins suffered a concussion, having apparently been negatively impacted by Russia's use of sonars. Black Sea pigs have also been washed up on the shores of Odesa and Bulgaria. They were killed in the waters of the Black Sea occupied by Russia, with the current pushing them to the coast. This proves that Russian submarines and vessels are the main factor behind the ongoing deaths of rare cetaceans in the areas near Crimea and Novorossiysk. Russia's use of sonars has resulted in the death of up to 50.000 cetaceans in the Black Sea.
- **Russian aggression continues to destroy Ukraine's historical and cultural heritage.** Russia is using excavators to destroy a historical landmark in Mariupol, in the Donetsk province. The *Did* (*the Ukrainian for 'old man' or 'grandfather'*) mound, which dates back to 5000 BCE, is being destroyed. As a result of [a Russian air attack on Kyiv](#), part of a building of the Kyiv Boychuk State Institute of Decorative Art And Design has been destroyed.

ECONOMIC DIMENSIONS

- **Expectations of the business sector and systematic economic risks.** According to the National Bank of Ukraine, the Index of Expectations for Business Activities (IEBA) has [grown](#): in March 2024 it stood at 52% (in February - 47,5%). Across sectors, the index stands at: industry - 51% (in February - 48,3%), construction - 53,5 % (in February - 43,7%), trade - 55,1% (in February - 53,5%), services - 50,6% (in February - 45,3%). At the same time, the following factors continue to constrain the development of the business sector: a) intensifying air attacks on critically important facilities and a risk of a [full blackout](#); b) decreasing pace of international funding; c) economic and trade blockade of Ukraine's western borders.
- **Intensifying Russian air attacks on critical infrastructure, Ukraine's energy infrastructure facilities.** According to Ukraine's Ministry of Energy, the attacks have resulted in damaged energy infrastructure facilities (facilities used for generating and distributing energy) at least in 8 provinces - Vinnytsia, Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, Khmelnytskyi, Zaporizhzhia, Odesa, Dnipropetrovsk and Kharkiv. During the

attacks, the Russians have disabled around 2000 MW of generation. Ukraine is forced to import energy from Romania, Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, and Moldova for the domestic system to work on a stable basis. Ukraine has managed to prevent a blackout. However, should these attacks continue, a **system crash is quite possible**.

- **Continuing economic and trade blockade of Ukraine's western borders.** The Ukrainian budget has suffered a 7.7-billion UAH [shortage of tax payments](#) caused by the blockade imposed by Polish protesters at the highways leading to border checkpoints.

INFORMATION WARFARE DIMENSIONS

- **About the readiness to conduct peace talks. The narrative of peace talks only on Russian terms.** In one of his many interviews ahead of the Russian Presidential elections, Putin [said](#) that peace negotiations are possible solely on Russian terms, taking into account the current reality and security guarantees for Russia. He has also said that Russia is ready for a nuclear war from a military perspective.
- **The narrative about the so-called 'special military operation' (SMO) as a 'sacred war' of the 'Russian people' against the West. 'Ukraine as a Russian zone of influence'. 'Spiritual space of Russia'.** On 27 March, the World Russian People's Council of the Russian Orthodox Church (WRPC) was held. In the [Decree XXV](#) of the WRPC entitled called "*The Present and Future of the Russian world*", the 'SMO' is referred to as 'a new stage of the national liberation fight of the Russian people against the criminal Kyiv regime and the collective West'. Patriarch Kirill has [referred](#) to the 'SMO' as Russia's fight for identity and real sovereignty that are being encroached on by western countries. After the end of the SMO, the entire territory of Ukraine will be part of Russia's zone of influence. The Decree also states that from a moral and spiritual perspective, the SMO is a Holy war in which Russia and its people are defending the single spiritual space of the Holy Rus', accomplishing the mission against someone who is constraining others, protecting the world from the onslaught of globalism and a victory of the West that has succumbed to Satanism'. Family values and the development of Russia as a separate civilization are being promoted. The deputy head of the WRPC, a Russian businessman named Konstantin Malofeev, in a [speech on 24 March](#) (talking to Russian media about the use of nuclear weapons in Ukraine) suggested 'ending the war' by giving Ukrainians 48 hours to leave Ukraine.
- **Elections. The narrative of 'elections in historical lands of Russia and 'new territories' having taken place'.** In official Kremlin propaganda there have been numerous remarks related to Russia's 17 March being held in Russia's 'historical lands' and in the 'new regions' in the occupied territories of Ukraine. Putin has [spoken](#) about the 'courage' of election commissions in Ukrainian provinces. Russia has also [claimed](#) that the West cannot but acknowledge Putin as the legitimate president despite the elections having been held in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.
- **Terrorist attack in the Crocus City. Accusations levelled at the Ukrainian government.** Russia is constantly talking about the so-called 'Ukrainian trace' in the organisation of a terrorist attack at the Moscow Crocus City, concert hall. On 25 March, Putin [said](#) that the 'Nazi Kyiv regime' was involved in the attack. The Secretary of the Security Council, Nikolai [Patrushev](#), as well as the head of the Federal Security Service, Alexandr Bortnikov, have also [claimed](#) that 'the West' and Ukraine are involved in the attack. The Investigative Committee of Russia also [stated](#) on 28 March that according to information which was extracted from technical devices belonging to the suspects in the attack, Ukraine has a connection to the terrorist group.

- **Air attack on energy infrastructure. ‘Strategic destruction of Ukraine’s defences’. ‘Retaliation strikes’.** Russia is constantly [spreading](#) propaganda about attacks on Ukrainian energy and natural gas infrastructure, along with the destruction of ammunition depots and equipment provided by the West. Moscow has claimed that it carried out 57 missile strikes from 23-30 March, using ‘[high-precision](#)’ weapons and hitting the so-called ‘military facilities’ in Ukraine. At the same time, Russian official messages contain no mention of the destruction of civilian infrastructure and civilian victims following the attacks. The Russian information space is full of messages about the military achievements of the Russian Armed Forces, in particular, near [Avdiivka](#). The Russian security forces spread information about ‘[retaliation strikes](#)’ on Ukrainian territory from 16-22 March ‘in retaliation for the attacks on our territories, the attempts to break through and capture Russian settlements situated on the Ukrainian border’. At the same time, the Russian Ministry of Defence [does not mention](#) the seizure of Russian settlements by the Russian Volunteer Corps.
- **Air attacks on Belgorod. The Russian Volunteer Corps (RVC). The narrative of Russia punishing traitors without a statute of limitations and wherever they are. The situation is under control.** Russian propaganda sources are spreading narratives about Russia controlling the situation in Belgorod province (a message spread by Sergei [Shoigu](#)). Putin has [said](#) that Russia will punish traitors without limitations and wherever they are. He drew parallels between the RVC and the army of General Vlasov during WWII. Narratives are also being promoted about Polish mercenaries and mercenaries from other countries joining the ranks of the RVC. Military actions in Belgorod province are explained by Russian [propaganda sources](#) as an attempt to derail the Russian presidential elections.
- **Russian narratives attempting to discredit Ukrainian political leadership.** Narratives about the illegitimate nature of Zelenskyy’s presidential tenure are constantly circulated by Russia. Moscow emphasizes a decline in Zelenskyy support, claiming that the President no longer has an overwhelming majority in the Rada due to him establishing a ‘[authoritarian regime](#)’. Russia continues to [accuse](#) Ukraine’s leadership of the terrorist attack at the *Crocus City* concert hall in Moscow.