

March 2025
Ukraine Monthly Situation Report

CONFLICT DEVELOPMENTS

- Throughout March the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation (AFRF) intensified their offensive in the Pokrovsk direction of the Donetsk province, while also stepping up their assault in the Orikhiv and Hulyaipole directions of the Zaporizhzhia province. Both Russia and Ukraine withdrew parts of their reserves from Russia's Kursk province, where the Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU) had earlier retreated from several settlements, including the city of Sudzha, after transferring these reserves to other areas of the frontline on Ukrainian territory. However, the confrontation in the Kursk province continues. After retreating from Sudzha, the AFU eliminated [Marat Tibilov](#), a well-known Russian military figure, and hero. According to the Ukrainian government, the total losses suffered by Russian forces at the end of February, stood at around [915.000](#). In March 2025, Russia lost approximately 40.000 soldiers.
- The AFRF continue to launch strikes on Ukrainian settlements using cruise missiles, aerial bombs and kamikaze drones. Despite the agreements reached in Saudi Arabia on banning strikes on energy facilities, Russia continues regardless. [Ukraine has asked](#) its foreign partners to effectively address this violation. In March, the cities of [Kyiv](#), [Chernihiv](#), [Zaporizhzhia](#), [Kherson](#), [Kherson](#) (for example, [a military hospital](#), which violates international humanitarian law), [Zolochiv](#), [Kropyvnytskyi](#), [Sumy](#), [Odesa](#), [Poltava](#), [Okhtyrka](#), [Dnipro](#), [Pavlohrad](#), [Nikopol](#), [Kupyansk](#), [Izium](#), [Kryvyi Rih](#), [Dobropillya](#), [Kramatorsk](#), [Pokrovsk](#), and other settlements were subject to Russian attacks. Evacuation was announced in several settlements located in Sumy province due to the approaching frontline and constant shelling. Overall, over 2,300 attack *Shahed* drones and over 1,600 unmanned aerial vehicles launched by Russia were shot down in March as well as 35 types of missiles.
- The Defence Forces of Ukraine continue to carry out strikes on Russian oil industry facilities, military staffs, deposits and other objects located on Russian territory as well as on Ukraine's occupied territories. On 19th March, a [statement](#) was released, according to which a number of military facilities in Crimea were hit. This included strikes on 10 Russian radar stations, a C-300CV launcher, two radar command posts, three anti-aircraft systems *Pantsir1*, a tug ship C4236, the tug/supply ship *Fyodor Uryupin* and an Mi-8 helicopter. On the night of 20th March, [one of the most successful attacks](#) since the beginning of 2025 was carried out. Ukraine hit Russia's *Engels* airfield situated in the Saratov province. About 96 cruise missiles (among them X-101) were destroyed. Aviation fuel depots were also hit. This development has significantly reduced Russia's ability to carry out attacks for the next 5-7 weeks, as it will need to replenish supplies. A further strike on 23rd March, resulted in the [destruction](#) of two military helicopters KA-52 and two Mi-8s in Russia's Belgorod province.
- On 19th March, another large Prisoners of War (PoWs) [swap](#) took place between Ukraine and Russia. 175 Ukrainian servicepeople were returned home. This included 22 seriously wounded soldiers whom Russia released as a 'goodwill gesture'.
- On 28th March, the bodies of [909 fallen](#) soldiers were returned to Ukraine. Between 2nd June 2002 until late March 2025, the bodies of approximately [8,000 fallen](#) Ukrainian soldiers were repatriated to Ukraine.

HUMANITARIAN DIMENSIONS

- **According to the official information provided by juvenile prosecutors, as of 28th March, at least 2,447 Ukrainian children were [affected](#) by Russia's full-scale invasion.** 606 children have been killed, with over 1841 sustaining injuries of various degrees of severity. For example, 365 civilians were killed in Sumy province, including 18 children. 982 civilians, including 58 children, were injured. In the Kherson province, 39 children were [killed](#), with 190 people injured. Also, in Kherson province, 74 criminal cases were opened related to the deportation and forcible displacement of children. In 29 cases, the deportation of 735 children under the age of 18 was confirmed. The Russian occupiers [deported](#) another 39 Ukrainian children from the temporarily occupied territories of the Luhansk province to the Moscow province, having isolated them from the Ukrainian language, culture and identity. In total, Ukraine [has brought back](#) 1,247 children. However, at least 1,6 million Ukrainian children remain under Russian control.
- **Russia continues to destroy the Ukrainian cultural elite.** In the wake of the war, 185 Ukrainian artists, 100 media workers (among them, foreign journalists) have been [killed](#). After 11 years of Russia's war, at least 239 Ukrainians working in the field of literature (including famous writers and individuals working in the book publishing sector) have been killed. The Russian occupiers [have stolen](#) at least 164 archaeological rarities, as well as carrying out a campaign to distort history and destroy Ukrainian identity through museum propaganda.
- **Russia is deliberately launching cyberattacks on Ukraine's critical infrastructure to undermine informational security, disrupting the flow of services provided for Ukrainian citizens and weakening the functioning of government institutions.** On 23rd March, Ukrainian Railways were [subjected](#) to a massive cyberattack, in which typical Russian tactics were used. The attack temporarily disabled the online ticket sales system. The attack showed signs of a terrorist attack aiming to inflict as much damage as possible on Ukrainian society. The investigation into the large-scale attack on the Ukrainian Ministry of Justice's state registers, on 19th December 2024, also [confirmed](#) the involvement of Russian hackers, and led to tougher cybersecurity legislation. In March 2025, a new wave of cyberattacks on defence enterprises and the Ukrainian Defence Forces was [registered](#). During the attacks, hackers tried to obtain access to information through compromised accounts.
- **As a result of Russian aggression, Ukraine is suffering from a massive loss of ecosystems and biodiversity.** After the Kakhovka Dam was blown up in June 2023, toxic elements began [evaporating](#) from its bed, which poses a threat to the population's health and the ecosystems located in the lower regions of the Dnipro River. In addition, the large 4000 ton fuel-oil spill into the Black Sea in December 2024, following two Russian tankers colliding [is still killing](#) sea animals, while beaches in Sevastopol remain [contaminated](#). The Russian occupiers have rejected proposals of foreign aid, preferring to employ students to eliminate the results of the accident. However, they do not provide them with the necessary protective clothing. The total cost of the environmental damage inflicted on Ukraine has [exceeded](#) 85 billion EUR. Luhansk province alone has [lost](#) about 618 billion UAH due to fires, contamination and flooded mines. The Russian occupiers have also [stolen](#) rare animals from the *Askania-Nova* biosphere reserve, located in the Kherson province. Furthermore, they have allowed tens of animals to die and violated the water regime on its territory, which risks the loss of a unique reserve.

- **Ukraine continues to work on bringing back the bodies of fallen defenders despite the scope of military losses inflicted by Russia's aggression.** As of 28th March 2025, the bodies of 909 fallen soldiers from six frontline areas and from Russian morgues were [brought back](#).
- **The world honoured the victims of Russian war crimes on the anniversary of the liberation of the city of Bucha.** On 31st March 2025 (the 3rd anniversary of the liberation of Bucha from Russian occupiers), an international summit, *Bucha-2025*, [was held](#), in which President Zelenskyy, and other representatives of Ukraine's leadership, and 17 European parliamentarians participated. During 30 days of occupation in 2022, the Russian military killed 1,800 civilians, including 43 children, and destroyed 3,800 buildings, committing over 9,000 war crimes.

INFORMATION WARFARE DIMENSIONS

- **About narratives and the 'peace' exclusively on Russian terms. Rejecting Ukrainian identity as such.** Russia's political leadership (through Kremlin Spokesman, Dmitry [Peskov](#)) claims it is ready to continue with its so-called 'special military operation' (SMO) since Ukraine rejects any negotiations. For his part, Russian President Vladimir Putin has [said](#) that a peace agreement between Russia and Ukraine can be based on the Istanbul agreements, claiming that a similar statement also came from Washington. On the eve of another round of negotiations involving Russian and Ukrainian delegations in Saudi Arabia on 23-24 March, an interview with Putin's ex-advisor, Vladislav Surkov, was published in a French media outlet. Surkov [referred](#) to Ukraine as an 'artificial quasi-state', adding that Russia's strategic goals have not changed and that the tactical ones are being modified according to the process of the implementation of the Kremlin's grand strategy. He also said that Russia will expand to wherever God guides it.
- **'A ceasefire'.** Ukraine's leadership is continually being criticised by Russia's official media for its inability to adhere to agreements, for its illegitimate nature and for violating agreements. On 19th March, the Russian Ministry of Defence [claimed](#) that a few hours after a conversation between the Russian and US Presidents took place, and which ended with a decision to cease strikes on energy facilities, Ukraine sent three unmanned aerial vehicles to attack an oil facility in Krasnodar Krai. At the same time, Russia denies launching strikes on Ukraine. However, according to Dmitry [Peskov](#), Putin has not revoked his order to cease attacks on Ukrainian energy infrastructure. Furthermore, Russia's Ministry of Defence [issued a statement](#) on 19th March, saying that 'strikes were carried out on the infrastructure of Ukrainian military airfields, drone depots, ammunition and military equipment'. Verification of the data on the targets of Russian missiles and drones seems all but impossible. Russia is constantly [blaming](#) Ukraine for violating the 'ceasefire' on energy facilities. According to Peskov, 'Putin has not cancelled his order to launch strikes on energy infrastructure objects due to the violation of the agreements on a 30-day break on the part of the AFU'.
- **External governance in Ukraine. 'A buffer zone in Ukraine'.** Narratives are being promoted by the Russians regarding the need to eliminate the state administration in Ukraine and Ukrainian sovereignty. On the night of 28th March, Russian President Vladimir Putin met with sailors of the *Arkhangelsk* submarine at Murmansk, [mooting](#) the idea of having provisory external governance established in Ukraine under the aegis of the UN, USA, European countries and Russian partners to ensure presidential elections in the country. Putin also said that after this step is taken, Russia may engage in negotiations to end the war. Following this statement, Russian politicians began to emphasize (despite criticisms from abroad) the importance and acceptability of the idea of 'external

governance'. According to Kremlin ally Viktor [Medvedchuk](#), the introduction of temporary governance would offer Ukraine a chance to save itself. Russian propaganda [opines](#) that Russia will insist on 'a buffer zone in Ukraine' that must include the Ukrainian cities of Odesa, Mykolayiv, Kryvyi Rih, Dnipro, Kharkiv, Sumy and Chernihiv. In such a scenario, Russia would be able to control much more of Ukraine's 'old' territories than those that Moscow already controls. Russian representatives have [announced](#) the establishment of such a buffer zone in Sumy province.

- **Cooperation with the US. 'Restoring relations', by 'settling' the so-called 'Ukrainian conflict'.** Russian propaganda has undergone a considerable shift in its narrative towards the US. Nowadays Moscow positively assesses the US, emphasising the pros of cooperation and the restoration of relations between Washington and Moscow to 'settle the Ukrainian crisis'. Russia insists that American elites have to understand that contacts and consultations between the two countries are more valuable than the desire to inflict a strategic defeat on Russia (a claim made by Dmitry [Medvedev](#), Deputy Chairman of the Russian Security Council). Maria [Zakharova](#), Spokesperson of the Russian Foreign Ministry, has said that while establishing contacts with the US, Russia will closely watch the deeds and steps of its counterpart, realistically assessing the chances of resetting bilateral relations. Russia sees statements made by representatives of Donald Trump's administration as encouraging. Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sergey [Lavrov](#), has said that 'the master of the White House has said himself that one of the original causes of the conflict was NATO's enlargement and attempts to engage Ukraine in it'.
- **Predominance of anti-European statements about participation in a peace settlement in Ukraine.** Narratives spread by Russian official media outlets are distinctly anti-European, with Moscow taking frequent swipes at the EU. The EU is accused of [Russophobia](#), in particular, regarding the details of the EU plan to rearm itself and support Ukraine. Moscow insists on being able to take measures in the event of the EU's militarization (voiced by Dmitry [Peskov](#)). He has also said that such a stance 'is at odds with the effort put into achieving a settlement of the conflict in Ukraine'.
- **Discrediting Ukrainian political leadership and the Ukrainian army.** The Russian [Ministry of Defence](#) has accused Ukraine's leadership of 'purposefully carrying out attacks on energy infrastructure facilities, in particular, the international ones located on Russian soil despite Ukrainian President, Volodymyr Zelenskyy's statements'. Messages are being circulated non-stop about the 'illegitimacy' of the Ukrainian leadership. Russia is constantly promoting narratives of Ukrainian [losses](#) in the [Kursk](#) province despite the official rhetoric of Russian forces having fully pushed out the AFU from the province. The Russian media continues to gloss over the advances of the AFU in Belgorod province, etc.
- **The so-called 'integration' of the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine - Crimea, Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson provinces.** Various narratives are being spread in an attempt to justify the occupation of Crimea. [According](#) to the Russian Public Opinion Research Center, many Russian citizens continue to support this occupation. 73% of Russians believe it is in Russia's favour, while 74% believe that Crimea is successfully developing as part of the Russian state. Another narrative about Crimea's occupation and how it has become 'a powerful symbol of Russia's renaissance as a state able to stand up for its interests' is being promoted. 84% of Russians support this statement and the decision to restore historical justice (85% of Russians opine that Russia is on the right path). Pride is the feeling that most Russians (48-57%) have been sharing since Crimea's occupation. The majority of Russians believe in the peninsula's potential, claiming that Crimea is an unassailable fortress (75% of them agree that Crimea and Sevastopol play a key role in ensuring Russia's security).

- On 20th March, Putin signed a [decree](#) 'On certain features of the legal status of particular categories of citizens and stateless persons in the Russian Federation'. This decision effectively bans Ukrainian citizens residing in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine from living in the territories occupied by Russia without being forced to acquire Russian citizenship. As a result, thousands of Ukrainian passport holders have found themselves in a vulnerable and uncertain situation. This goes, first of all, for the regions that were occupied and annexed by Russia in October 2022. Ukrainian citizens must leave Russian territory by 10th September 2025, should they fail to settle the issue of their Russian citizenship or at least begin to undergo the relevant procedure.