



Situation Room

**** UKRAINE CRISIS ****

Period under review: from 27 February to 1 March 2022.

[This report is based on publicly available sources to describe a changing situation. Information subject to change.]

Situation analysis recap:

- On the night of 27 February, heavy fighting broke out in Ukraine's second largest city, Kharkiv. Russian troops had already occupied the town, but there was a major counterattack by Ukrainian forces, who, according to the head of the Kharkiv regional administration, Oleg Sinyekhubov, regained control of the town. According to the Ukrainian Ministry of Health, 325 civilians, including 14 children, were killed in the country on this day.
- President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, announced that for the first time the European Union will finance the purchase and delivery of arms to Ukraine. Half a billion euros are expected to be earmarked for this purpose. The European Union, together with the US and the UK, has advocated the exclusion of several Russian banks from the international SWIFT system. This measure would prevent Russia from trading with most of the world and would consequently have a negative impact on the Russian economy.
- On 27 February, Ukrainian President, Volodymyr Zelensky, announced that Ukraine was ready for peace talks with Russian representatives to take place on the Ukrainian-Belarusian border after a telephone conversation with Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko. President Zelensky also received a promise from Lukashenko that Belarusian troops would not cross the Ukrainian border and take part in the offensive.
- Also on 27 February, Russian President, Vladimir Putin, issued an order to increase the readiness of the deterrent forces, which includes units with nuclear weapons. In a statement Putin explained he had decided to make this move because of the "aggressive statements" made by NATO leaders and the various economic sanctions imposed on Russia. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg expressed his concern, but also underlined the seriousness of the situation in the wake of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.
- On 28 February, the fighting continued. Russian troops have taken the Ukrainian city of Berdyansk, an important naval military base with a population of around 100 000. French President, Emmanuel Macron, in a telephone conversation, called on President Putin to protect civilians in Ukraine, while reiterating the international community's demands for a halt to the Russian offensive in Ukraine and an immediate ceasefire. President Putin said that the demilitarisation of Ukraine and Western recognition of Russian sovereignty over the Crimean Peninsula were a precondition for ending the conflict.
- Also on 28 February, peace negotiations between Russian and Ukrainian delegates began at the Ukrainian-Belarusian border. During the negotiations, the Ukrainian Defence Minister, Oleksiy Reznikov, called on Russian troops fighting in Ukraine to immediately lay down their arms.
- On the same day, President Zelensky signed Ukraine's application to join the European Union and called on the EU to fast-track Ukrainian membership. The President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, said that Ukraine belongs to the European Union and wants it to become a member.
- On the night of 1 March, Russian troops entered the southern Ukrainian city of Kherson, while clashes continued in the cities of Kharkiv and Kyiv. President Zelensky reacted strongly to this morning's attack on Kharkiv, describing it as the deliberate destruction of innocent people in a city where there are no military installations. He pointed out that Russia's actions are not in line with any international

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conventions and that President Putin will certainly go to the International Court of Justice in The Hague to answer for war crimes.

- Russian Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov, told a United Nations conference in Geneva that US nuclear weapons deployed in allied countries in Europe should be returned to the US. He also said that the West should not build military facilities in former Soviet states, and accused Ukraine of trying to acquire nuclear weapons, which he said must be stopped immediately. During his speech, which was delivered via videocall as the EU had closed its airspace to Russian planes, a number of ambassadors walked out of the conference in protest. On the same day, NATO Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg, accused President Putin of destroying peace in Europe by invading Ukraine, adding that NATO would defend "every inch of its territory".
- In the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, the main TV tower appears to have been damaged during a Russian missile attack. The Russian Ministry of Defence has previously announced that it would carry out attacks on communications and security installations in the country. According to the satellite imagery, there appears to be an almost 65 kilometres long convoy approaching Kyiv. While it was initially thought to contain tanks and other armoured vehicles, it now appears that, although there are some combat units present within the convoy, it is mainly composed of logistical and supply vehicles. The same sources also report of a new build-up of Russian helicopters and ground vehicles in Belarus, around 30 kilometres from the Ukrainian border.

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