



Situation Room

**** UKRAINE CRISIS ****

Period under review: from **09 February 2022** to **16 February 2022**.

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

Situation analysis recap:

- On 10 February, as tensions on the Ukrainian-Russian border increase, Lithuania sent US-made anti-aircraft missiles and Stinger missile systems to Ukraine. At the end of January 2022, all three Baltic States have already expressed their support for Ukraine in the event of a Russian invasion.
- Also on 10 February, a new phase of joint Belarus-Russian military exercises, known as Allied Resolve 2022, started in Belarus and is scheduled to last until 20 February. Some experts believe that Russian President Vladimir Putin will make his decision regarding any offensive military action in Ukraine at the conclusion of the exercise, as he will have the option of either sending Russian troops back home or sending them towards Ukraine. 10 February also saw representatives of the Normandy Format meet in Berlin, but no agreement was reached. The Russian Ministry of Defence announced that the S-400 anti-missile systems are on combat alert in the Brest region of Belarus. Ukrainian President, Volodymyr Zelensky, has described the exercises as mere psychological pressure.
- On 11 February, US President Joe Biden called on all US citizens currently in Ukraine to leave the country immediately. He reiterated that he would not send US troops to Ukraine in the event of an invasion. The UK, the Netherlands, Norway, Denmark, Latvia, Estonia, Japan and South Korea have also decided to encourage citizens to leave Ukraine.
- On 12 February, Germany, Belgium, Denmark, Slovenia, Australia and New Zealand also encouraged their citizens to leave Ukraine. Russia has asked some of its diplomatic staff to leave the country. Russia also began a new series of military exercises in the Black Sea, involving more than 30 vessels from its Black Sea Fleet.
- Presidents Biden and Putin spoke on the phone on 12 February. The US president again warned his Russian counterpart that the US would implement tough sanctions in the event of Russian invasion. The talks made no progress, although both leaders committed themselves to continuing diplomatic talks. French President, Emmanuel Macron, also spoke to President Putin on the same day, but they did not reach any major agreements.
- On 13 February, President Biden held a phone conversation with President Zelensky. He reiterated his support for Ukraine and pledged the help of the US and its allies in the event of a Russian invasion. Zelensky has stated, however, that Western warnings of an imminent Russian invasion are exaggerated and are only escalating tensions.
- On 14 February, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz visited Kiev to meet with President Zelensky. He stated that Germany will continue to provide assistance to Ukraine, but also pointed out that there is no question of Ukraine joining NATO at this stage. Mr Zelensky described the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline as a Russian geopolitical weapon and called on all Ukrainian citizens who have left the country out of fear, to return to their homeland. The G7 finance ministers announced their readiness to impose economic and financial sanctions against Russia in the event of an invasion.
- On 15 February, Russia announced a partial withdrawal of a number of troops from the Ukrainian border. Scholz, who met with Putin on the same day, labelled this a good sign. On the other hand, Biden and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, expressed scepticism about the withdrawal, as there has not yet been an official confirmation from Moscow. They have also warned that the possibility of an attack still exists and that the roughly 150.000 Russian troops who are close to Ukraine, are still in dangerous positions. Russia reiterated that it would continue the practice of

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military exercises in its territory. The Russian Duma called on President Putin to recognise the independence of the Ukrainian separatist regions of Donetsk and Lugansk, in violation of the Minsk 1 and Minsk 2 ceasefire agreements. NATO Secretary General said in a statement that such a move would be viewed as a renewed violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

- On 15 February, the websites of the Ukrainian Ministry of Defence and the Ukrainian Armed Forces were struck by a cyber-attack that also affected the state-owned savings banks Oschadbank and Privat, the two largest financial institutions in the country.
- On 16 February, NATO Defence Ministers met to discuss the longer-term reinforcements of the Allied Forces in Eastern Europe. In addition to the reinforcements in the Baltic States and Poland, they discussed a French-led deployment in Romania, while Bulgaria, Slovakia and Hungary are also under consideration for increased deployments. The Secretary General pointed out that despite Russian assurances that troops were to withdraw from the Ukrainian border, no such withdrawal was in sight and warned that the threat of war remains high.

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