



Situation Room

**** UKRAINE CRISIS ****

Period under review: from **16 February 2022** to **24 February 2022**.

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

Situation analysis recap:

- On 17 February, US President Joe Biden, warned again of the danger of a Russian invasion, which he believed would start in the coming days. He claimed that Russia had not yet withdrawn any of its troops from the Ukrainian border. On the contrary, there seemed to be a build-up of more ground troops, air force, and even blood supplies. At the UN Security Council, US Secretary of State, Anthony Blinken, called on Russia to renounce its belligerent actions and publicly declare that it will not attack Ukraine. On the same day, OSCE reported an increase in shelling in Eastern Ukraine. It reported 189 ceasefire violations in the Donetsk region and 402 violations in the Lugansk region. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg has described such developments as worrying, as there are believed to be a number of Russian officers among the pro-Russian separatists who could provide a pretext for Russia's attack on Ukraine. He also said that this was not the first time Moscow had tried to find a pretext for an invasion.
- On 18 February, President Biden expressed his belief that the Russian President, Vladimir Putin, had already decided to attack Ukraine, and that the main target of the attacks would be the capital, Kiev. On the same day, the leader of the pro-Russian separatists in Donetsk, Denis Pushilin, announced a mass evacuation of civilians to neighboring Russia, while accusing Kiev of planning an attack on the separatist region. President Putin said he had noticed a worsening of the situation in Eastern Ukraine and called on the authorities in Kiev to start negotiations with separatist leaders.
- On 19 February, Russia and Belarus took part in military exercises to test the reliability of strategic nuclear weapons. The Russian military tested ballistic and cruise missiles, including the Zircon and Kinzhal hypersonic missiles. On the same day, US Vice President, Kamala Harris, said that US forces were ready to defend every inch of NATO territory and threatened Russia with massive sanctions, should it attack Ukraine.
- On 19 February, the leader of the separatist Donetsk region, Denis Pushilin, signed a decree on the full mobilisation of troops and called on reservists to come in for military training. A similar action has taken place in the Lugansk region, where men aged 18-55 are not allowed to leave the area. On the same day, Ukraine reported two of its soldiers had been killed and four wounded during outbursts of fighting in Eastern Ukraine.
- On 20 February, Russia and Belarus announced the extension of the "Allied Determination 2022" military exercise which was due to conclude on that day. The reason given by the Belarusian Defence Minister, Viktor Khrenin, was the escalation of the situation in Eastern Ukraine. Around 30,000 Russian and Belarusian troops remain in Belarus, along with Spetsnaz special forces, Su-35 warplanes and S-400 missile defence systems. On the same day, President Putin and French President, Emmanuel Macron, agreed in a telephone conversation to de-escalate tensions over Ukraine. This was followed by a telephone conversation between Macron and the Ukrainian President, Volodymyr Zelensky, in which they called for an immediate ceasefire in the east of the country.
- On 20 February, British Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, also issued warning concerning the imminent Russian invasion of Ukraine also saying that the attack, in some sense, had already begun. He also referred to US intelligence, indicating that there are currently around 190,000 Russian troops on the Ukrainian border, including rebel fighters in the separatist regions of Ukraine.

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- On 21 February, President Putin signed a decree recognising the separatist and self-proclaimed Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg condemned Russia's decision. In a statement, he said that such a decision undermines the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, and recalled that in 2015 the UN Security Council, which includes Russia, reaffirmed full respect for the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of the Ukrainian state. He reiterated that Russia was trying to create an excuse to attack Ukraine. The German Chancellor, Olaf Scholz, the British Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, and the US President, Joe Biden, expressed similar views of President Putin's decision.
- On 21 February, President Putin ordered the deployment of Russian troops to the separatist regions of Donetsk and Lugansk, officially labelling them as peacekeepers. On the same day, the UN Security Council held an emergency meeting on the Ukraine crisis. The UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, called the decision a flagrant violation of the UN Charter.
- On 22 February, NATO Secretary General reiterated his call on Russia to take the diplomatic route, warning that this is the most dangerous moment for European security in this generation. On the same day, President Biden announced new sanctions against Russia, far more extensive than those imposed in 2014, when Russia seized the Crimean Peninsula. He also warned that the Russian invasion had already begun. The package of sanctions against Russia, which are expected to come into force in the next few days, was also announced by the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen.
- The Secretary of the Ukrainian National Security Council, Oleksiy Danilov, has called on the Ukrainian Parliament to declare a state of emergency within the next 48 hours. On the same day, Ukraine also started mobilising reservists aged between 18 and 60. In addition to the 250,000-strong regular army, Ukraine has around 200,000 reservists.
- On 24 February, reports emerged that Russian troops entered Ukraine at several points. This move was preceded by a speech by President Putin in which he announced a 'special military operation'. Russian missiles have been hitting important infrastructure points in many cities across Ukraine. Many people are fleeing from the city of Kiev.

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