



## Situation Room

### **\*\* UKRAINIAN CRISIS \*\***

**Period under review:** from **20 March 2022** to **24 March 2022**.

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

### **Situation analysis recap:**

- Thursday 24 March marks one month since Russia invaded Ukraine.
- Thousands more people were able to escape cities under attack this week, but many remain trapped as humanitarian corridors keep failing. Intense fighting continues over several key places, including the capital of Kyiv and the port city of Mariupol. The latest Western intelligence reports and military analyses indicate that Russian forces remain stalled across much of the Ukrainian battlefield four weeks after the invasion began. NATO estimates that between 7,000 and 15,000 Russian soldiers have been killed in a month of fighting in Ukraine.
- Between 24 February and 22 March, more than 650 residential buildings have been destroyed across Ukraine, while around 3,780 have suffered varying degrees of damages.
- Ukrainian troops have pushed back invading Russian forces by several kilometres to the east of Kyiv, while to the northwest of the city, the Russians appear to be digging defensive positions instead of trying to continue their advance on Ukraine's capital.
- Authorities in Mariupol have said Russian troops have forcibly deported several thousand residents of the city to Russia.
- Belarus has told Ukraine to cut its diplomatic presence in the country because of unfriendly actions and meddling in Belarus's internal affairs. Kyiv has condemned the action and promised a proper response.
- Moscow is expelling some of American diplomats in response to the US expulsion of 12 Russian diplomats at the United Nations on 28 February.
- Slovenian prime minister Janez Janša said on 20 March that Slovenia would send some diplomats back to Kyiv. According to Janša, the Slovenian diplomats volunteered to return because Ukraine needs direct diplomatic support.
- Qin Gang, the Chinese ambassador to the United States, said on 20 March that China would not send weapons and ammunition to support Russia's war in Ukraine and that Beijing would do everything to de-escalate the crisis.
- Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky commented on 20 March that he would reject any peace agreement requiring that Ukraine recognize the independence of two Russian-backed separatist regions, but suggested that there could be a model of understanding to be reached on the territories.
- Russia said on 20 March it had used advanced long-range missiles to hit three military facilities in different parts of Ukraine.
- Ukrainian president Zelensky said on 21 March that any deal agreed in peace negotiations to end the war with Russia will be submitted and decided by the Ukrainian people through a referendum.
- US president Joe Biden warned US companies on 21 March of evolving intelligence that Russia is considering cyberattacks against critical targets as the war in Ukraine continues.
- According to the Russian Science and Higher Education Ministry on 21 March, Russian government instructed Russian academics to avoid scientific conferences abroad this year.
- On 22 March, Kyiv and Moscow agreed on a deal to set up nine humanitarian corridors. The agreement does not cover the besieged south-eastern city Mariupol, but includes routes out of Luhansk, where a ceasefire has been announced.

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- On 22 March, the United Nations refugee agency have said 3.5 million people have fled Ukraine since Russia launched an invasion. As of 23 March, the World Health Organisation verified 64 attacks on healthcare institutions in Ukraine, leading to 15 deaths and 37 injuries. In addition, according to the Ukraine Ministry of Education and Science, 548 educational facilities have been damaged out of which 72 have been destroyed.
- The US government suggested on 23 March that members of Russian forces have committed war crimes in Ukraine by hitting civilian targets. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the conclusion was based on an in-depth review of information from public and intelligence sources. He added the attacks have resulted in nearly 5,000 civilian casualties.
- NATO announced a doubling of its military presence near Ukraine on 23 March and said the alliance would help the Ukraine prepare for possible chemical, biological and even nuclear threats from the Russian invaders. NATO has also warned Russia against using chemical weapons in Ukraine.
- The UN Security Council voted down a Russian resolution on 23 March that said there was a growing humanitarian crisis in Ukraine leaving millions in need of food, water and shelter but failed to mention it was Russia's invasion that had caused it. Thirteen of the 15 members on the council voted against the resolution. China was the only country on the council to support it.
- German Chancellor Olaf Scholz told German lawmakers on 23 March that a boycott of Russian oil and gas would have severe economic and social consequences in Germany and the rest of Europe. Scholz also vowed to end Germany's reliance on Russia for its energy as quickly as possible.
- Leaders of NATO and the G-7 held emergency summit in Brussels on Thursday, 24 March. The leaders plan to announce new sanctions against Russia and new humanitarian aid for Ukraine.
- After more than three weeks without being able to leave the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in northern Ukraine, 64 workers were able to be rotated out on Sunday.
- Russia will sell its natural gas to "unfriendly" countries in roubles only. President Vladimir Putin said the country will stop accepting euros and dollars from European or American gas buyers.
- Google said some people in Russia were now having difficulty accessing the Google News app and website. Russian internet regulators had blocked Google News and accused Google of reporting false information about Russia's invasion of Ukraine.
- Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov has told CNN in an interview that Russia would only use nuclear weapons if its very existence were threatened.
- Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban has asked the European Commission to disburse all European Union funds allocated to the country including a loan under the Recovery and Resilience Facility to help handle the Ukrainian refugee crisis.
- Very high fertilizer prices have farmers worldwide scaling back its use and reducing the amount of land they are planting. The conflict, which involves two countries that together produce nearly one-third of the world's wheat, helped push the grain global price up 21%. Some agricultural industry experts are warning of a coming global food shortages crisis. Tens of millions of people, from Europe to Asia, Africa to the Middle East, are expected to go hungry this year.

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