



Situation Room

**** UKRAINE CRISIS ****

Period under review: from 25 March 2022 to 28 March 2022.

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

Situation analysis recap:

- On 25 March, Russian military forces carried out several missile and air strikes in the vicinity of Kyiv, Kharkiv and other Ukrainian cities. Street clashes continue in Mariupol, Russian troops are reportedly moving closer and closer to the city centre. A missile attack on a theatre in Mariupol reportedly killed around 300 civilians, according to the United Nations. According to their own figures, more than 1081 civilians have died since the invasion began, but the actual number is probably even higher. Ukrainian President, Volodymyr Zelensky, said in a speech that Ukrainian troops had dealt "heavy blows" to Russian forces. According to the report, some 16,000 Russian soldiers have been killed. On the same day, European Union leaders and US President Joe Biden agree to supply the EU with 50 billion cubic meters of US liquefied natural gas per year. On the same day, the Russian army started military exercises in the Kuril Islands, between Russia and Japan. Russia withdrew from peace talks with Japan after Japan imposed sanctions against Russia. The two countries have still not signed an official peace treaty to end the Second World War, largely due to territorial disputes over the Kuril Islands.
- On 26 March, Russian forces shelled the city of Lviv, in western Ukraine, which until then had not been the target of as much fighting as other cities around the country. On the same day, President Biden met with the Ukrainian Foreign Minister, Dmytro Kuleba, and the Ukrainian Defence Minister, Oleksiy Reznikov, in Poland. He also met the Polish President, Andrzej Duda. Biden stressed the importance of Article 5 of the NATO alliance, which states that an attack on one NATO member state is an attack on all of them. He said that the US considered this article a "sacred commitment" and stressed the importance of cooperation and unity among the members of the Alliance. On a visit to Poland, President Biden upset the Russian President, Vladimir Putin, by saying that Putin should not stay in power. On the same day, Moscow announced that the first stage of the "special military operation" in Ukraine has been achieved. President Putin is now expected to switch the focus towards gaining control of Ukraine's south-eastern Donbas region.
- On 27 March, the self-proclaimed People's Republic of Lugansk in eastern Ukraine, led by pro-Russian separatists, announced that a referendum on joining Russia could be held soon, but the Ukrainian side claims that the referendum has no legal basis in the occupied territory. On the same day, President Zelensky spoke for more than 90 minutes with some Russian independent media outlets, to which he said that he would not negotiate with Russia if the topic of the talks was demilitarisation or denazification. At the same time, he also said that the Russian invasion of Ukraine was worse than the wars in Chechnya, because, he said, Russia was wiping out Russian-speaking towns and cities from the face of the earth. President Zelenski again called on Poland to send aircraft and tanks to Ukraine. He said that only one percent of NATO's tanks and aircraft are enough to help Ukraine.
- On 28 March, Ukraine halted the evacuation of civilians from besieged towns. The Mayor of Mariupol, Vadim Boychenko, warned that the city was on the brink of a humanitarian catastrophe and that it should be fully evacuated immediately. On the same day, President Biden assured that the US is not seeking a change of power in Russia, although he had said the day before that President Putin must not remain in power. Kremlin spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, said that they would continue to monitor President Biden's words, as they could damage relations between Russia and the US. Ahead of the new round of negotiations, President Zelensky said that Ukraine would insist on its independence and

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territorial integrity. On the condition that the decision is approved on the referendum and the security in Ukraine is guaranteed, President Zelensky is also ready to negotiate on the country's neutrality.

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