



Situation Room

**** UKRAINE CRISIS ****

Period under review: from 12 May 2022 to 23 May 2022.

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

Situation analysis recap:

- On 12 May, the Kremlin branded Finland's plans to join NATO a major threat to Russia and threatened to deploy nuclear weapons on its western borders. Russia has also announced sanctions against 31 Western, mostly energy, companies. Russian bombs were again dropped in Chernihiv, north of Kyiv. Russian troops are reportedly beginning to withdraw from the northern part of the Kharkiv region due to the fierce Ukrainian counter-attack and heavy casualties. The besieged steelworks in Mariupol is still in the hands of fighters from the Ukrainian Azov battalion. Kyiv has proposed to Moscow to replace the most seriously wounded soldiers with Russian prisoners.
- On 13 May, the Ukrainian army announced that it had prevented Russian forces from attempting to cross the Seversky Donets river in eastern Ukraine in an attack, in which the Russian side reportedly lost almost the entire battalion tactical group. Meanwhile, Russian forces continue air strikes against the besieged Azovstal steelworks in Mariupol. Ukrainian President, Volodymyr Zelenski, said he was ready to talk to Putin, but would not agree to an ultimatum.
- On 14 May, Russia suspended electricity supplies to Finland overnight, after the Russian state energy holding Inter RAO announced on Friday that it would cut off supplies to the neighbouring country due to arrears.
- On 15 May, Finland decided to apply for NATO membership. Just a few hours later, the ruling party in Sweden also decided to support NATO membership, paving the way for the country to take the next steps in its membership application. NATO Secretary General, Jens Stoltenberg, said that Finland and Sweden's membership of NATO would show that "aggression does not pay".
- On 16 May, according to the regional governor, Ukrainian troops defending the city of Kharkiv were believed to have reach the Russian border. The allegations have not yet been independently verified, foreign media point out. Meanwhile, President Zelensky says that the Russian special operation has already failed, although he admits that the country does not have the means to drive the Russian troops out of Mariupol.
- On 17 May, EU defence ministers meet in Brussels to endorse further financial assistance to Ukraine for the purchase of arms and military equipment. This is the fourth time that €500 million from a special European fund has been earmarked for Ukraine.
- On 18 May, the Russian Foreign Ministry announced that it was withdrawing its hospitality from 34 French diplomats. They said it was in retaliation after France expelled 35 Russians with diplomatic status in April. 24 Italian and 27 Spanish diplomats were also expelled.
- On 19 May, the UN announced that Russia's invasion of Ukraine could lead to a global food shortage in the coming months. The UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, said that the war had increased food insecurity, especially in poorer countries, due to rising prices. On the same day, the Russian army took Ukrainian fighters from Azovstal into captivity.
- On 20 May, the US accused Russia of holding the world's food supply hostage. In many developing countries, fears of famine exist as President Putin has warned that the Kremlin will not release grain shipments until the West lifts sanctions. On the same day, the Russian army took control of Azovstal, after the surrender of all Ukrainian fighters.
- On 21 May, Russia cut off gas supplies to Finland because it refuses to pay for gas in roubles, as Russia demands. On the same day, President of the United States, Joe Biden, signed into law a bill

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approved by Congress on Thursday, which will provide \$40 billion in aid to Ukraine and its allies for the continued supply of arms and economic support in the fight against Russia. In Ukraine's Donbas region, fierce fighting is ongoing, which has increased fears of further Russian advances after the full capture of Mariupol and the breakthrough at Popasna.

- On 22 May, the Ukrainian government rejected any possibility of a ceasefire with a deal that would have given control of parts of the territory to Russia. Ukraine's chief negotiator, Mykhailo Podolyak, is convinced that this would lead to an even bigger and bloodier Russian offensive in the long run. Martial law in Ukraine has also been extended for 90 days.
- On 23 May, at the World Economic Forum in Davos, President Zelensky called on the international community to do more to rebuild Ukraine, especially its economy. He also stressed the need for additional arms shipments and called for sanctions against Russia. Meanwhile, the Ukrainian General Staff announced that Belarus is to build up its forces and intensify its activities on the border with Ukraine. On the same day, a Russian diplomat of the UN, Boris Bondarev, resigned in protest against the war in Ukraine.

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