



Situation Room

**** UKRAINIAN CRISIS ****

Period under review: from 1 December 2022 to 21 December 2022.

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

Situation analysis recap:

- US basketball star Brittney Griner was freed on 8 December after nearly 10 months in Russian detention and following months of negotiations. Her release came in exchange for the US handing over convicted Russian arms dealer Viktor Bout.
- On 11 December, Ukraine hit targets in the Russian-occupied city of Melitopol, including a church reported to be used as a Russian military base. Officials said Ukrainian forces used long-range artillery to reach targets in the city.
- On the same day, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky had a phone call with US President Joe Biden, French president Emmanuel Macron, and Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan, in an apparent stepping up of diplomacy over the ongoing Russian invasion.
- The US Department of Defense and the White House are finalising plans to deploy Patriot air-defence batteries to Ukraine, with final administration approval of the move expected in the coming weeks. The surface-to-air guided missile system can target aircraft and missiles.
- Russia launched waves of attacks on Kyiv, including larger strikes on 14, 16, and 19 December. Ukraine said it managed to shoot down many of the incoming explosive drones, but some caused fairly serious damage, leaving three areas without power supply.
- On 14 December, EU lawmakers approved about €18 billion in financing for Ukraine and more sanctions on Russia. The aid package followed pledges earlier in the week from dozens of countries and global institutions to support Ukraine with more than €1 billion in winter relief funds, helping the country with power, heat, food, and medical supplies.
- On 15 December, Senior Ukrainian officials said Russian President Vladimir Putin is preparing for a major new offensive in the new year. The fear of a wider military offensive deepened on 19 December, when President Putin visited Belarus to meet President Alexander Lukashenko. Press Secretary of the President of Russia Dmitry Peskov dismissed the idea that Putin will be pushing for Minsk to take a more active role in the war.
- On 20 December, President Zelensky visited the frontline city of Bakhmut. The purpose of the visit was to meet military representatives and hand out awards to soldiers.
- On the same day, Kyiv's regional governor Oleksiy Kuleba said 80% of the region was without electricity due to the shelling by the Russian military.
- On 21 December, President Zelensky posted on his Twitter account he is on his way to the US to "strengthen resilience and defense capabilities of Ukraine." In what is his first trip abroad since Russia invaded Ukraine in February, Zelenskyy will reportedly meet with President Joe Biden in the White House for an announcement of a new package of military aid for Ukraine, including advanced Patriot batteries. He is also expected to address the US Congress.

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