



### Summary (As of 1530 Hrs UTC)

**As of 1 March, maritime ports in Ukraine remain closed as per orders from the Ukrainian military.**

Britain on 28 February ordered its ports to block any vessels that are Russian-flagged or believed to be registered, owned or controlled by any person connected with Russia as it increases pressure on Moscow to halt its invasion of Ukraine. Transport Secretary Grant Shapps has confirmed that Russian vessels are no longer allowed to enter UK ports and any vessel thought to be owned, controlled, chartered or operated by any person connected with Russia should be barred.

Turkey has warned both Black Sea and non-Black Sea countries not to

pass through its Bosphorous and Dardanelles Straits, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu was reported as saying on 28 February. The 1939 Montreux Convention allows Turkey to limit naval transit of its straits during wartime but has a clause that exempts ships returning to their registered base. State news agency Anadolu reported Cavusoglu as saying that “we implemented what Montreux says, and we will do so from now on. There have been no requests for passage through the straits until today.” At least four Russian ships are currently waiting on Turkey’s decision to cross from the Mediterranean.



### On the Ground

**Despite Ukrainian and Russian officials holding talks on 28 February on the Ukrainian - Belarusian border, Russia has continued its assault on Ukraine.**

To date, Moscow has deployed 75% of its invasion force as fighting intensifies across the country. Ukrainian soldiers however are putting up a defence and claim that they have now killed or wounded around 5,700 Russian troops, though this figure cannot be independently verified. In the southern city of Kherson, some Russian forces have managed to enter and have been involved in intense street-to-street fighting with Ukrainian troops. In the east, Russian troops continue to target Ukraine’s second largest city Kharkiv, with officials reporting that at least 10 people have been killed in deliberate shelling of residential areas. In the south-eastern port city of Mariupol, officials have had to cut power and Russian forces have continue to shell the city in an effort to take control and create a land-bridge between their armies in separatist held regions in the east and the annexed Crimea Peninsula. There are continued concerns that Kyiv the capital will fall in the coming days. A massive Russian armoured convoy is heading towards the city, where a Ukrainian defence has held the Russian position about 30 km (19 miles) outside the city centre for several days. On the afternoon of 1 March, Russia warned that it will carry out strikes on the headquarters of the security services and the 72<sup>nd</sup> main PsyOps centre in Kyiv, as it urged locals to evacuate. Russian officials claim that the strikes are being carried out to “prevent information attacks against Russia.” In the north-eastern city of Okhtyrka, up to seventy Ukrainian soldiers have reportedly been killed in a Russian artillery strike.

The ongoing war in Ukraine has created a humanitarian crisis, with the United Nations refugee agency reporting that more than 660,000 people, mostly women and children, have left so far. There are reports of people waiting for up to 60 hours to enter Poland, while queues at the Romanian border are up to 20 km (12 miles) long.



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has appealed to the European Union Parliament for membership of the bloc, saying that it will be stronger with Ukraine in it. On 28 February, the Ukrainian president officially signed an application for Ukraine's membership in the EU, urging it to allow his country's immediate entry under what he described as a "new special procedure," though he did not elaborate. While Ukraine is currently not recognized as an official candidate for EU membership, it has been part of an association agreement with the EU since 2017, in which both parties agreed to align their economies in certain areas and deepened political ties. On 27 February, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen told Euronews that Ukraine is "one of us and we want them in" the European Union. However she suggested that its entry would not be immediate, stating that the process would involve integrating Ukraine's market into that of the EU. On Monday, the leaders of eight EU countries in Central and Eastern Europe gave their support to Ukraine joining the EU. They include Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, the Slovakia and Slovenia.

Russia meanwhile continues to justify its war in Ukraine. Russia's foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told a UN Conference on Disarmament in Switzerland that it is time for US nuclear weapons in Europe to go home. During a pre-recorded message, he disclosed that Russia was ready to talk about strategic stability with the US, but warned that the West must not build military facilities in countries of the former Soviet Union. He also appeared to offer a new justification for Russia's invasion in Ukraine - this time stating that it was to prevent Ukraine acquiring nuclear weapons. As Lavrov began to speak, many ambassadors, led by Ukraine, walked out, including those from the UK, Germany, Australia, Canada, the US and the European Union.

### Advisory

**The security situation across Ukraine remains fluid and is likely to rapidly deteriorate in the coming days. As of 1 March, all commercial operations at Ukrainian ports have been suspended by the order of the Ukrainian military. There are also unconfirmed reports that Russian vessels are blocking access to Ukrainian waters at the northern edge of the Romanian EEZ. Any vessels currently within Ukrainian Ports are advised to leave immediately if deemed safe to do so. Vessels should ensure that they are broadcasting on AIS and clearly state their intentions across VHF. Any vessels challenged by Russian military vessels should comply fully with instructions. Further, MS Risk advises all commercial operators to avoid transiting or any operations within the EEZ of Ukraine or Russia within the Black Sea. No attempt should be made to access the Sea of Azov. Commercial operations within the EEZ of Turkey, Bulgaria and Romania are currently unaffected. As the situation continues to develop in Ukraine, there remains a high degree of uncertainty in regards to the freedom of navigation throughout the wider Black Sea.**



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