



Summary (As of 1530 Hrs UTC)

As of 17 March, Ukrainian ports remain closed as the war in Ukraine has severely impacted shipping in the Black Sea and has had broad consequences for international transport and global supply chains.

Advisory

MS Risk continues to advise any vessels currently within Ukrainian Ports to leave immediately, if it is deemed safe to do so. Vessels should ensure that they are broadcasting on AIS and clearly state their intentions across VHF. In the event that any vessel is challenged by Russian military vessels, they are advised to comply fully with instructions. MS Risk further advises all

commercial operators at this time to avoid any transit or operation within the EEZ of Ukraine or Russia, notably in the vicinity of the Crimean Peninsula within the Black Sea. As of 17 March, the Black Sea ports of the Russian Federation are functioning normally. All transit inbound Western terminals should be made out with Ukrainian and Russian EEZ south of the Crimean Peninsula. While Commercial operations within the EEZ of Turkey, Bulgaria and Romania remain unaffected at this time, the Romanian Ministry of Defence has announced that Russian military vessels are diverting and stopping commercial ships en-route to Ukrainian ports north of Romania's EEZ. Consequently, such vessels are advised to void transiting within 50 nautical miles of the north-east extremity of the Romanian EEZ. Any vessels transiting through this region are advised to maintain close contact with national and local maritime authorities. Any incidents or suspicious activity should be reported via their respective national channels and to the local maritime authorities.



On the Ground

On day 22 Russian advances have slowed in recent days amidst rising casualties, though troops continue their attempts to encircle and cut off the capital Kyiv. Ukrainian officials are hoping to open nine humanitarian corridors from several cities across the country, including Mariupol, over the course of Thursday.

In **Kyiv**, large areas around the city remain under the control of Ukrainian forces, particularly in the south of Kyiv. Within the city, Ukrainian generals report that they are focused on keeping Russian artillery out of range of the city centre. On Thursday, at least one person died and three others were injured after the debris of a downed missile hit a residential apartment in Kyiv. On Wednesday, Ukrainian forces were able to repel several Russian attacks on north-western Kyiv, and no attacks were made on the northeast outskirts of the city. In the southeast of Ukraine, civilians remain trapped in the port city of **Mariupol**, which has been encircled by Russian forces and which continues to come under heavy fire. The pocket of resistance in the city has continued to shrink. Ukraine has accused Russian forces of bombing a theatre in the city where civilians were sheltering. Officials have indicated that around 1,200 people were in the bomb shelter in the theatre at the time of the attack on Wednesday, and casualties remain unknown. Officials have indicated that the bomb shelter has withstood the bombing, with local officials now working on getting people out. A Ukrainian MP has stated that the theatre was deliberately targeted by Russian bombers, despite a large message warning of the presence of children being visible from the sky. Meanwhile, the city has continued to be targeted by Russian shelling, with more than 30,000 people estimated to have fled Mariupol already. Russian media have reported that on Thursday, another 13 buses carrying around 300 refugees arrived across the border in Russia's Rostove region. Mariupol is experiencing the worst humanitarian disaster, with food, water,

Ukraine Crisis Update (17 March 2022)



electricity and other key supplies cut off for the past two weeks. Ukrainian officials say that at least 2,400 civilians have been killed in the city so far. In the northeast, in **Sumy**, Russian troops have almost surrounded the city and have bombed vital infrastructure and cut off supply routes. In the regions of **Donetsk** and **Luhansk**, fighting has continued. The mayor of the eastern city of **Merefa**, just outside Ukraine's second city of Kharkiv, has accused Russian troops of shelling a residential area in the city, destroying a school, culture centre and several private properties. Veniamin Sitov told local media that the strike occurred around 03:30 local time (01:30 GMT). No civilian casualties were reported, though Sitov claimed that several soldiers were killed. In **Kharkiv**, shelling of civilians has continued though the city is unlikely to surrender unless Russian troops succeed in surrounding it, a goal that so far, they have been able to achieve. The regional governor has reported that since Wednesday, as many as 53 civilians were reportedly killed by Russian forces in the northern city of **Chernihiv**. According to Vyacheslav Chaus, local authorities have been working to restore power, water and gas supplies to parts of the city despite the continued shelling. The governor also announced another round of talks with Russian troops to organize a humanitarian corridor to evacuate civilians from the city, which is located 150 km (90 miles) northwest of Kyiv.

Reuters has reported that four large Russian warfare ships have been spotted sailing close to the Japanese islands of Honshu and Hokkaido as they travelled West, possibly towards Europe. Pictures published by Japan's defence ministry depict what looked like military trucks situated on the deck of one of the passing vessels.

Ukraine has reported that the mayor of Melitopol has been released in exchange for nine Russian prisoners. Mayor Ivan Fedorov had allegedly been held hostage by Russian troops for more than five days.

In its latest intelligence assessment on Thursday morning, the UK's Defence Ministry reported that Russia's offensives in Ukraine have "largely stalled on all fronts," noting that Russian forces have "made minimal progress on land, sea or air in recent days, and they continue to suffer heavy losses." The assessment went on to say that "Ukrainian resistance remains staunch and well-coordinated. The vast majority of Ukrainian territory, including all major cities, remains in Ukrainian hands." The Ukrainian military meanwhile has reported that Russia's tactics have now switched to aerial attacks, with forces bombing and shelling civilian populations as they have been "unsuccessful" in their ground operations. While Moscow has to date only recorded some 500 troop casualties, US intelligence estimates it to be closer to 7,000 personnel. On Wednesday, the MoD disclosed in its intelligence assessment that Russia's military has probably had to resort to using older and less precise weapons, which are more likely to result in civilian casualties, adding that Russia probably resorted to using such weapons as a result of failing to achieve its military objectives.

Ukrainian officials estimate that to date, at least 107 children have been killed and more than 120 wounded since Russia invaded Ukraine, with most fatalities reported in Kyiv, Kharkiv, Donetsk, Chernihiv, Sumy, Kherson, Mykolaiv and Zhytomyr regions. Officials have also reported that over 410 educational institutions have been damaged by shelling, with 63 of them fully destroyed, and at least 11 hospitals have been shelled. The UN has to date confirmed the deaths of 729 civilians in Ukraine, though the actual number is expected to be far higher.

Refugees continue to cross the borders into neighbouring countries. The Polish Border Guard Agency reported on Thursday morning that some 1.95 million people have crossing into Poland since the war began. On Wednesday alone, 60,000 people crossed the border, according to the border agency, down 11% from Tuesday. As of 06:00 GMT on Thursday, 12,000 people had crossed, down from 13,600 during the same period the previous day. Hungary has said that it expects to see a "bigger wave of refugees" arriving in the country next week from Ukraine. During a visit to a crossing point near Hungary's border with Ukraine and Romania, Prime Minister Viktor Orban disclosed that additional border guards would be posted there next week to handle the increased influx. As of 14 March, some 263,888 Ukrainians have crossed the border into Hungary. On Wednesday, an advisor to the prime minister told Hungarian media that officials were expecting to receive over 900,000 refugees by the end of the war, though over the past week, the number of refugees arriving in the country has fallen considerably.

Talks between Ukraine and Russia are continuing, with the Kremlin stating that its negotiators are putting colossal energy into talks to reach a potential peace deal with Ukraine. However, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov criticized inaction on the part of Kyiv's delegation, stating, "we do not see a similar zeal from the Ukrainian side." He added that while elements of a potential 15-point peace deal, which was revealed by the Financial Times on Wednesday, "are on the agenda," he noted that overall the report was incorrect.



Several officials have branded Putin a 'war criminal.' This comes after US president Joe Biden on Wednesday called the Russian leader a "war criminal" for the first time during a discussion on the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. The move is likely to escalate diplomatic tensions between the two countries, with the Kremlin labelling Biden's comments "unacceptable and unforgivable rhetoric" and also accused the US of killing "hundreds of thousands of people around the world." Poland's deputy foreign minister, Marcin Przydacz is the latest to condemn Putin as a war criminal. He disclosed that Wednesday's theatre bombing in Mariupol was another sign that Russian forces were resorting to more brutal tactics, adding that he agreed with Biden's characterization of the Russian leader. Ukrainian Defence Minister Oleksiy Reznikov has also urged European leaders to also recognize Putin as a war criminal.

The UN Security Council will hold an emergency meeting on Thursday to address the escalating humanitarian crisis in Ukraine. The meeting was called by the US, Britain, France, Ireland, Norway and Albania, and follows an increase in shelling on civilian areas in recent days.

Regional and International Reporting

Germany

President Zelensky received a standing ovation for his 10-minute address to the Bundestag, Germany's parliament on Thursday. During his speech, he appealed to MPs to help stop Russia's war. While he thanked Germany for its assistance, he told lawmakers that their support "came too late to stop the war."

UK

The UK has announced that it will deploy its Sabre anti-air missile system to Poland, along with 100 troops. The troop deployment will be for a short period of three to six months. A Ministry of Defence spokesman disclosed that the Sabre missile system was being sent to protect Poland and was purely for defensive purposes. Defence Secretary Ben Wallace made the announcement during a visit to Warsaw on Thursday, which comes as NATO moves to bolster security of its eastern flank following the invasion in Ukraine.

Russia

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov has criticized a ruling at the International Court of Justice, which ordered Russia to halt its invasion of Ukraine. He disclosed that the court had not seen any evidence to support the Kremlin's justification for the war, adding that Ukraine was committing genocide against Russian-speakers in the eastern region of the country. He stated that Russia "will not be able to take this decision into account," adding that both parties - Russia and Ukraine - must agree for the ruling to be implemented. Peskov has also echoed comments made on Wednesday night by Putin and attacked some Russian citizens, who he said have shown themselves to be "traitors," pointing to those who have resigned from their jobs or fled the country. During a speech to the Russian people on Wednesday night, Putin claimed that his so-called special military operation is going to plan. He again attempted to justify Russia's military action, framing it as an act of self-defence. He also discussed the fight at home, notably the international sanctions which are impacting the country's economy and which could lead to social unrest. He discussed inflation and unemployment rising, and denounced what he called traitors.

US

The US has set up an international task force to hunt down and seize the assets of Russian elites and oligarchs. According to the US Treasury Department, the group includes Australia, Britain, Canada, Japan, France, Italy and the European Commission. The US Treasury Department has said that "in the last three weeks alone, information provided by US law enforcement to foreign partners has helped detain several vessels controlled by sanctioned individuals and entities," adding that the seized ships are worth "hundreds of millions of dollars." The members of the working group have been given a list of fifty individuals to focus their investigations on.

Reports indicate that the US is sending 100 killer-drones to Ukraine as part of a huge military aid package that was announced by the Biden administration on Wednesday. A US military source has disclosed that the weapons system is the Switchblade 300 - which is a backpack-worn weapon known to US forces as a "kamikaze drone."



About MS Risk

MS Risk is a privately-owned company domiciled in the Isle of Man. It is underwritten by a syndicate of Lloyd's of London for special risks case management in all jurisdictions. It also acts as retained advisors to syndicates in the Lloyd's of London specialty risk insurance markets: kidnap for ransom, extortion, hijack, illegal detention, illegal war tax, malicious product tamper, terrorism, political and war risk.

MS Risk is always mindful and compliant to legislation and guidelines on the use of private security services including, but not limited to the US FCPA (1977), UK Bribery Act (2010), Canadian Bill C-48 (2007), ASX 8 Corporate Governance Principles, and the World Bank/IFC Voluntary Principles on the Use of Government and Private Security Forces. MS Risk is a signatory of the Swiss government's International Code of Conduct. It is transparent and compliant to market expectations on legal and ethical conduct in the performance of services.

MS Risk has a dedicated team of researchers, a 24/7 hotline service, and a pool of trained and experienced consultants to support client needs.

MS Risk supports clients in a variety of business sectors with the following services:

SECURITY CONSULTING

- Risk assessments and intelligence reporting
- Planning and management
- Due diligence and investigations

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

- Interim security
- Training
- Special assignments

CRISIS RESPONSE

- Crisis management
- Business continuity management
- Hostile operations support to commercial interests

VIRTUAL SECURITY DIRECTOR SERVICE

- For clients lacking a full-time security executive

References are always available.

More information is found at www.msrisk.com

24 hr Contact Information:

Email: operations@msrisk.com