

Summary (As of 1530 Hrs UTC)

As of 2 March, maritime ports in Ukraine remain closed as per orders from the Ukrainian military.

On the Ground

Over the past 24 hours, intense fighting has occurred in the northern, eastern and southern regions of Ukraine, with the key cities of Kharkiv and Kherson being targeted by Russian artillery. In Kharkiv, a missile struck a police quarters and a university building during the morning hours of 2 March, killing at least four people. In the southern region of Ukraine, Russian military forces appear to be making more concrete gains. In Kherson, Russia claims to have taken control of the strategic Black Sea port city, though local authorities claim that the city remains under Ukrainian control. The mayor of the strategic city of Mariupol has disclosed that the city is under constant shelling and there are concerns that large numbers of people may be dead. In Kyiv, a huge convoy of Russian armoured vehicles is about 25 km (15 miles) from the capital in the northern region of the country. During the evening hours of 1 March, Russian missiles targeted a TV tower in the city, killing at least five people and leaving five others injured. Broadcasts were briefly disrupted. Ukrainian officials report that a Russian missile strike overnight killed at least 2 people in the city of Zhytomyr, which lies 120 km (75 miles) west of Kyiv. The strike, aimed at an airbase in the city, hit nearby residential homes.



Reports have emerged in recent days that morale amongst Russian troops is declining, as its push into Ukraine has been slower than initially desired by Russia. A senior US defence official reported on 1 March that Russia's military move on Kyiv has stalled as its forces struggle with basic logistics challenges, including shortages of fuel and food, with some units appearing to be gripped by low morale. The official noted that "one reason why things appear to be stalled north of Kyiv is that the Russians themselves are regrouping and rethinking and trying to adjust to the challenges that they've had." The official noted that while it was unclear whether the convoy itself had stalled, it was not making much progress, adding, "the Russians themselves have been surprised by some of the morale problems that they're experiencing and I think they're none too pleased about the logistics and sustainment challenges they've had." Images circulating on social media over the past few days have shown Russian tanks and military vehicles idled on the side of roads, with some appearing to have run out of fuel. The US official also disclosed that the US has seen indications of some Russian units surrendering without a fight, though how many troops this includes is difficult to verify.

On the ground Ukrainian authorities have reported that more than 2,000 civilians have been killed so far in Russia's invasion, which began nearly a week ago. The UN however reports that at least 136 civilians have been killed since Russia's invasion began last Thursday, with thirteen children believed to be amongst those killed. Liz Throssell, a spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, has warned that the real death toll is likely to be much higher, adding that most of the casualties came as a result of heavy artillery shelling, airstrikes, and other wide-impact explosives. The UN reports that about 400 people have been injured in the fighting so far. Ukraine claims that to date, it has killed 5,840 Russian troops. The total Russian losses being claimed by Ukraine so far also include 30 aircraft, 31 helicopters, up to 211 tanks, 862 armoured patrol vehicles, 85 artillery systems, 9 anti-aircraft systems, 60 fuel tanks, 355 vehicles, and 40 MLRS rocket launchers (captured). The invasion of Ukraine has also

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resulted in a humanitarian crisis with almost 870,000 people have fled Ukraine. Hungary is now the second country after Poland in terms of the numbers of Ukrainian refugees, with 116,348 arriving as of 2 March. Poland has welcomed 453,982, Moldova 79,315, Slovakia 67,000 and Romania 44,540. Meanwhile 341 Ukrainians have fled to Belarus, while 69,600 have travelled elsewhere in Europe.

Russian state news agency TASS has reported that peace talks will resume on the evening of 2 March between Russia and Ukraine, with Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov stating, “our delegation will be ready to continue talks.” It follows a first round of talks that were held on 28 February on the Ukraine-Belarus border, though those talks failed to reach any resolution. Reports say that Putin’s aide Vladimir Medinsky will once again be the chief negotiator for Russia. There are concerns however that given Russia’s unrealistic demands on Ukraine, it is only participating in the talks to show the world that it is doing something in terms of finding a solution to the war, but that in reality, Putin is not interested and will likely not backdown at this point. Ukraine has said that it hopes that the talks can establish a ceasefire and Russia’s withdrawal of its forces. Meanwhile Ukrainian intelligence has been quoted in the Ukrayinska Pravda news that Russia wants to declare former Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovych, who was ousted during anti-government protests in 2013 - 2014, as the new leader of Ukraine. Sources report that Yanukovych is now in Minsk. He fled to Russia in 2014. The newspaper has reported that the Kremlin may be preparing a media operation or campaign to bring Yanukovych back to Ukraine, or to publish an address from him to the Ukrainian people. This is in line with a report from the UK from January, which stated that Moscow was plotting to install a pro-Moscow figure to lead Ukraine’s government. At the time, the UK Foreign Office named former Ukrainian MP Yevhen Murayev as a potential Kremlin candidate.

On the Belarussian side of the border, Lukashenko has announced that Belarus will double its troop numbers on its southern border with Ukraine, adding that the five tactical battalion groups on the border will go up to ten over the next two days. He told his security council that “these are highly trained mobile groups that are ready to stop any provocation and any military action against Belarus,” calling the mobilisation “a preventative action” that would “prevent the penetration of (Ukrainian) radicals and weapons into the country.”

In Russia, jailed Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny has called for daily demonstrations across Russia and beyond. Navalny, who has spent a year behind bars after surviving a poison attack that he blames on the Kremlin, went on trial last month on new charges that could see his prison time extended by more than a decade. In a series of tweets, he stated, “We - Russia - want to be a nation of peace. Alas, few people would call us that now.” He noted however that Russians should “at least not become a nation of frightened silent people” who “pretend not to notice the war.” He went on to say, “it’s the third decade of the 21st Century, and we are watching news about people burning down in tanks and bombed houses,” “we are watching real threats to start a nuclear war on our TVs.” He also depicted Putin as an “obviously insane tsar.” In recent days, protests have occurred across Russia, with many calling for Russia’s invasion of Ukraine to end. Police however have cracked down on demonstrations, with the OVD-Info protest-monitoring group reporting that some 6,840 people have been detained at anti-war protests since the invasion began on 24 February. The Kremlin however has continued its propaganda as authorities crack down on independent news coverage of what the Kremlin describes as its “special military operation” in Ukraine. On the evening of 1 March, authorities took independent radio station Ekho Moskvy off the air and blocked access to the website of leading independent internet TV channel Dozhd. In recent days, authorities have also sent threatening letters to a number of independent media demanding that they take content about the war in Ukraine down or be blocked. According to the demands, media are not allowed to use words such as “war” and “invasion” and must not include “unverified” (ie. Not from official state sources) information about civilian casualties and killed and injured troops. On 2 March, the BBC reported news of photographs suggesting primary school children being arrested by police in Moscow for laying flowers at the Ukrainian embassy and for holding signs saying, “no to war.” Images circulated of children with officers behind metal bars, perhaps in a police vehicle, and then in a police station, holding their flowers and placards. The images have since been confirmed by the Nobel prize-winning newspaper Novaya Gazeta, which has reported that the children have since been released. News of the “detention” of primary school children appears to show the increasingly draconian measures that the Kremlin appears to be utilizing in a bid to control the war narrative.

Sanctions imposed on Russia continue to have their effect on ordinary Russian citizens. As of 2 March, Russian citizens can no longer leave the country with more than US \$10,000 in foreign currency on hand after Putin made

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the declaration in a decree. Also of 2 March, stock market trading on the Moscow Exchange has been suspended for a third day in a row, Russia's central bank confirmed in a statement, adding that it would allow a limited range of operations for the first time this week. This comes after the rouble slumped to a record low and Russian companies listed overseas saw their share prices slide.

The United States has banned Russian planes, including both Russian owned and operated aircraft, from America's airspace as of late 1 March. During his State of the Union Address on Tuesday, US President Joe Biden disclosed that "Putin may circle Kyiv with tanks, but he will never gain the hearts and souls of the Ukrainian people." Ukraine's envoy to the US was given a standing ovation at the address. To date, the US has committed the release of US \$350 million worth of weapons to Ukraine, supplies worth US \$54 million in humanitarian assistance, it has removed selected Russian banks from the global Swift messaging system, restricted the Russian central bank from defending the rouble, and has joined a trans-Atlantic task force to freeze and seize oligarchs' assets. The White House has also asked Congress for an additional US \$6.4 billion in emergency assistance over the next few months, with President Biden once again emphasizing that the US would not send troops to engage with Russians in Ukraine.

As the West continues to impose harsh sanctions on Russia, a number of Western companies have cut ties with Russia. Boeing and ExxonMobil are the latest, while Nike has made its products unavailable for sale by website or app in Russia. Boeing announced on 1 March that it would suspend all major operations in Moscow, adding that the US airplane maker will no longer provide technical support or maintenance, or parts, for Russian aircraft. The company on 28 February closed its office in Kyiv and halted its pilot training operations in Moscow. Airbus, the European plane maker, has also announced that it has stopped providing support services to Russian airlines and supplying spare parts to the country. Both Boeing and Airbus account for the vast majority of Russia's passenger aircraft fleet. Energy firm ExxonMobil has also announced that it will discontinue operations in Russia and end further reinvestments there. A statement confirmed that it would exit all projects, including the large oil and gas venture on Sakhalin Island in Russia's Far East. Shell and BP have also made similar moves in recent days.

Advisory

The security situation across Ukraine remains fluid and is likely to rapidly deteriorate in the coming days. As of 2 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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24 hr Contact Information:

Email: operations@msrisk.com