

Ukraine Crisis Update (8 March 2022)



Summary (As of 1500 Hrs UTC)

As of 7 March, the Joint War Committee (JWC) at Lloyd's of London has updated the Russian and Ukrainian sections of the northern Black Sea and Sea of Azov to its list of areas with an elevated likelihood of war, piracy or terrorism.

- Sea of Azov and Black Sea waters enclosed by the following boundaries:
 - On the west, around Romanian waters, from the Ukraine-Romania border at 45° 10.858'N, 29° 45.929'E to high seas point 45° 11.235'N, 29° 51.140'E
 - Thence to high seas point 45 11.474'N, 29 59.563'E and on to high seas point 45 5.354'N, 30 2.408'E
 - Thence to high seas point 44 46.625'N, 30 58.722'E and on to high seas point 44 44.244'N, 31 10.497'E
 - Thence to high seas point 44 2.877'N, 31 24.602'E and on to high seas point 43 27.091'N, 31 19.954'E
 - And then east to the Russia-Georgia border at 43° 23.126'N, 40° 0.599'E
- All inland waters of Ukraine
- Inland waters of Russia within the following areas:
 - Crimean Peninsula
 - River Don, from Sea of Azov to vertical line at 41° E
 - River Donets, from River Don to Ukraine border
- All inland waters of Belarus south of horizontal line at 52° 30' N



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 8 March, the Black Sea ports of the Russian Federation are functioning normally. All transit inbound Western thermals 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

Day 13 since Russia's invasion of Ukraine began. In the last 24 hours, Ukrainian cities have continued to come under heavy shelling from Russian forces with civilians prevented from fleeing. Several humanitarian corridors have been created though there are concerns that Russian forces will continue to shell those fleeing.

To date, more than two million people have fled Ukraine as refugees. So far, Poland has welcomed over 1.2 million refugees, Hungary 191,000, Slovakia 141,000, Moldova 83,000, Romania 82,000, Russia 99,300 and Belarus 453. The UN has indicated that more than 183,000 people have moved on from these countries to others in Europe. In the last 24 hours, people have been leaving the cities of Irpin, near Kyiv, and Sumy, where an airstrike killed at least 21 people on 7 March. They have been fleeing via evacuation routes, which have been agreed between the two sides. Ukraine however has reported that Russia has been disrupting evacuation routes in a number of regions. In Mariupol, both the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry's spokesman Oleg Nikolenko and the Ukrainian Defence Ministry have accused Russian forces of shelling the humanitarian corridor out of the key southern city. In Sumy, an evacuation column has arrived in Poltava region, which is located further away from the Russian border. The corridor is due to remain open until 19:00 GMT today. In Bucha, the head of the Kyiv regional administration, Oleksiy Kuleba, has reported that Russian forces are sabotaging an evacuation effort from the district, which is located in the Kyiv region. Kuleba disclosed that "the district is preparing for mass evacuation of people and humanitarian aid supply. A ceasefire is necessary for this."

The UN has reported that to date, at least 1,207 civilians have been killed in Ukraine, though it acknowledges that this figure is likely to be significantly higher. Hundreds have been injured, with the UN reporting that most of those injured are the result of "airstrikes and explosive weapons," with "hundreds of residential buildings" destroyed in cities across the country. One journalist is also reported to have been killed. The UN has also expressed concern about the "arbitrary detention" of pro-Ukrainian supporters in areas under Russian military control, as well as violence against those considered to be pro-Russian in Ukrainian government-controlled territories.

Ukraine's defence ministry has reported that a senior Russian military commander, Maj-Gen Vitaly Gerasimov 41st Army chief of staff, has been killed in a battle on the edge of the eastern city of Kharkiv. Reports say that he died along with other Russian officers. So far Russia has not commented, but if confirmed, he would be their second officer of his rank to be killed.

Regional and International Reporting

The UK's Ministry of Defence has reported that since February, there has been an intensification of Russian accusations that Ukraine is developing nuclear or biological weapons. The MoD reports that while there are "long-standing narratives," they are likely being amplified "as part of a retrospective justification for Russia's invasion of Ukraine." The Ukrainian military meanwhile has accused Russia of resorting to psychological warfare, stating that groups of Russian forces have been carrying out propaganda work in occupied territories in a bid to influence locals.

Russia has threatened to close its main gas pipeline to Germany if the West goes ahead with a ban on Russian oil. Europe currently relies on Russia for about 40% of its gas. However, there is belief that such a move by Russia could be detrimental to itself as the country would not be able to supply that same gas to another market, such as China, due to the nature of the pipeline system. The problem for Europe is that the options for additional gas supplies remain limited. Gas exporters like Algeria and Norway are at capacity, consequently it would require other economies, like China, Japan and Korea to agree to take less LNG in order to provide Europe with additional supplies. This has caused tensions amongst European countries, with some calling for Russian oil and gas to be banned, while others remaining more cautious. As of the afternoon of 8 March, the US is expected to impose a ban on US imports of oil from Russia as punishment for its invasion of Ukraine. Officials have indicated that the announcement of the

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ban is likely to occur on 8 or 9 March. The US will make the move unilaterally as EU countries have significantly more exposure to Russian energy than the US. US officials have decided that given the extreme political pressure at home, they can move without the coalition and not create issues. It is also understood that UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson will announce that the government intends to reduce Russian gas and oil imports over time. This comes after the British Prime Minister disclosed on 7 March that while the world could not simply stop using oil and gas from Russia, it could accelerate the transition away from it.

Russia meanwhile has announced that all corporate deals with companies and individuals from “unfriendly countries” will now have to be approved by a government commission. Moscow announced on 7 March that it has approved a list of countries and territories taking “unfriendly actions” against Russia, its companies and citizens in the wake of economic sanctions over the Ukraine war. According to a government statement, the list includes Albania, Andorra, Australia, Great Britain, including Jersey, Anguilla, British Virgin Islands, Gibraltar, all EU member states, Iceland, Canada, Liechtenstein, Micronesia, Monaco, New Zealand, Norway, South Korea, San Marino, North Macedonia, Singapore, United States, Taiwan, Ukraine, Montenegro, Switzerland and Japan.

US officials are reporting that Russia may be trying to recruit Syrian mercenaries to fight in Ukraine. A Senior US defence official has disclosed, “we find that noteworthy that (Russian President Vladimir Putin) believes that he needs to rely on foreign fighters to supplement what is a very significant commitment of combat power inside Ukraine as it is.” In 2015, Russia launched a military campaign in support of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. On 7 March, the Wall Street Journal, citing US officials, reported that the Russian military had in recent days been recruiting fighters from Syria “hoping their expertise in urban combat can help take Kyiv.” Last month, Syrian activist-run Deir Ezzor 24 news network reported that Russia was offering Syrians in government-controlled areas salaries of between US \$200 - \$300 to “go to Ukraine and operate as guards” for six months.

During a virtual meeting with French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, Chinese President Xi Jinping described the situation in Ukraine as worrying and called for “maximum restraint.” The Chinese leader disclosed that the priority should be preventing the situation in Ukraine from spinning out of control, adding that the three countries should jointly support peace talks between Russia and Ukraine. While China enjoys close diplomatic relations with Russia, Beijing has neither condemned nor condoned the action against Ukraine. China did however abstain from a UN Security Council vote condemning the invasion.



About MS Risk

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- Training
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- Crisis management
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VIRTUAL SECURITY DIRECTOR SERVICE

- For clients lacking a full-time security executive

References are always available.

More information is found at www.msrisk.com

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