

HIGHLIGHTS

PULSE OF PEACE IN DONBAS



28 January–3 February, 2022

THE SITUATION ON THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN BORDER REMAINS CONTROVERSIAL

On 29 January, the Russian Defence Ministry [announced](#) a partial withdrawal of troops from the Western Military District bordering Ukraine after the "completion of the training exercise".

On 31 January, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba, commenting on the announcement, [stressed](#) that it was premature to give any assessment of Russia's intentions.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki [said](#) that the United States would no longer call a potential Russian invasion of Ukraine "inevitable". According to her, the word served as an unintended signal. Meanwhile, US State Department spokesman Ned Price, in a briefing, [called](#) for strengthening NATO's eastern flank against the Russian threat. According to him, the diplomatic way of resolving the situation around Ukraine has not worked as expected at the moment. The State Department spokesman noted that the United States and its allies are still preparing for possible Russian aggression.

At the same time, [according to the Pentagon](#), Russia continues to build up its military forces near Ukraine's borders. The latest satellite images by Maxar Technologies [show](#) an increase in the number of Russian troops and military equipment in Belarus, occupied Crimea, and the Western Military District bordering Ukraine.

[According to the Washington Post](#), citing anonymous US officials, Russia has developed a plan to create a pretext to invade Ukraine. According to it, a video will

be mounted in which the Ukrainian military is allegedly attacking civilians. It is noted that officials will not release direct evidence so as not to compromise their sources and methods. The possibility of such a development was later [confirmed](#) by Pentagon spokesman John Kirby.

INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE INTENSIFIES

On February 1, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson visited Ukraine, with the main topic being countering Russia's ongoing hostile activities, including troop build-ups. During talks with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, Boris Johnson [stressed](#) Britain's support for Ukraine in the face of continued Russian aggression that poses a threat to peace and security in the region, adding that any further Russian interference would have dire humanitarian consequences. Volodymyr Zelensky [thanked](#) Great Britain for its support, stressing the effectiveness of preventive measures of deterrence, in particular the development of the law on strengthening sanctions. A joint [statement](#) was adopted at the end of the meeting.

On February 2, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte held talks in Kyiv. One of the topics of discussion was the situation on the borders of Ukraine. President Volodymyr Zelenski and Prime Minister Mark Rutte stressed the importance of a peaceful settlement, noting that dialogue and diplomacy carried out in various formats, such as the OSCE and NATO, played a crucial role in this process. Prime Minister Mark Rutte also reaffirmed support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity in the face of Russia's continued aggression. A joint [statement](#) was adopted at the end of the meeting.

Security and achieving peace in Ukraine were the main topics of the meeting between Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Zelensky [thanked](#) Erdogan for his consistent support for Ukrainian sovereignty and for his initiative to mediate between Kyiv and Moscow on the way to ending the war in Donbas. In turn, the Turkish president stressed that Turkey continues to support Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and welcomed diplomatic ways to de-escalate the situation on the borders. The Ukrainian media Fokus [covers](#) the course and outcome of the meeting.

Commenting on the [visits](#) of the leaders of Britain, Poland, Turkey and the Netherlands to Ukraine, analysts [note](#) that these meetings do not cancel the threats to Ukraine from Russia, but can postpone attempts to realize Moscow's goals for an indefinite future, and call these visits a diplomatic declaration that these states are ready to go beyond statements as part of their support for Ukraine.

US AND NATO PUBLISHED TEXTS OF RESPONSES TO RUSSIAN SECURITY REQUIREMENTS

The Spanish newspaper El País [published](#) the text of the US and NATO's response to the proposals on security guarantees. The texts refer to proposals that had already been heard at the official level or had already been written about by the

media, citing sources – in particular, to potential agreements on limiting nuclear weapons and the scale of military exercises. Thus, the US response reiterated its commitment to the "open door" policy of NATO and its readiness to consider agreements with Russia, which are of bilateral interest, as well as to discuss interpretations of the OSCE principle of indivisibility of security, to which Russia referred in its proposals. In addition, the US warned that further Russian military build-up or aggression against Ukraine would lead to retaliation by Washington and its allies.

NATO in its response stated that it did not want confrontation with Russia, but would not compromise on the principles on which the alliance was founded. The text stressed that all states have the right to choose security agreements "without external interference."

The Russian media Meduza publishes a translation of the [US](#) and [NATO](#) responses. The Pentagon [confirmed](#) the authenticity of the text. According to Pentagon spokesman John Kirby, the leaked information confirms that there is no difference between the US position in the closed negotiating process and its public statements. The Kremlin [declined to comment](#) on the publication. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov earlier [said](#) that Moscow does not want wars, but will not allow its interests to be ignored. He said that Russia is preparing various reactions to the US and NATO's response on security guarantees, with Russian President Vladimir Putin making the final decision. Putin [said](#) that he was not interested in a negative scenario of events around Ukraine, so Russia will continue negotiations on security guarantees. At the same time, he noted that the United States and NATO in their written responses to Russia on long-term legal security guarantees ignored Russia's basic requirements. According to Russian presidential spokesman Dmitry Peskov, the timing of Vladimir Putin's official reaction to the US and NATO responses to Moscow's proposals on security guarantees is unknown.

Experts from the Carnegie Moscow Center and the European Council on Foreign Policy are [analyzing](#) the progress of the negotiations on the European security architecture.

MAJORITY OF THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL MEMBERS HAVE EXPRESSED SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE

On 28 January, US ambassador to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield [said](#) that the United States would initiate a meeting of the UN Security Council in connection with the build-up of Russian troops on the Ukrainian and Belarusian borders. She noted that amid Russia's deployment of more than 100,000 troops on the Ukrainian border and other destabilizing actions, diplomatic efforts continue and the UN Security Council is the most important platform for diplomacy. On January 31, UN Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo [said](#) that the international organization welcomed efforts for dialogue, called for refraining from provocations and continuing to work to find a diplomatic solution to the crisis. The US [warned](#) Moscow against further escalation, noting that in case of an invasion of Ukraine, the response would be strong and swift. The US also called the

concentration of Russian forces near Ukraine the largest troop mobilization in Europe in decades. US President Joe Biden said in a related [statement](#) that the US at the meeting "described in detail the nature of the Russian threat to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity," as well as the implications of this threat for the entire modern international order.

Ukraine's permanent representative to the UN, Serhiy Kyslytsya, stressed that Kyiv was not planning military operations in Donbas and Crimea, but was only in favor of a peaceful settlement of the conflict.

For his part, Russian permanent representative to the UN Vasily Nebenzya [called](#) the talks about the possibility of war between Russia and Ukraine "provocative" and the meeting "US interference in Russia's internal affairs".

[According to the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry](#), the UN Security Council meeting was an important step to contain a new wave of armed aggression by Russia. The overwhelming majority of the UN Security Council members expressed their undivided support for Ukraine, stating that the Russian build-up of offensive weapons and capabilities near Ukraine's state border was unacceptable and urging Russia to reduce tensions. The Ukrainian side called on Russia to confirm its statements about the absence of intentions of armed aggression with practical actions, in particular withdrawal of troops and ceasefire. It is noted that despite Russia's attempt to obstruct the meeting, the Council managed to properly demonstrate a responsible attitude towards preventive diplomacy.

The session was [covered](#) by "Suspilne". No draft resolution was adopted as a result of the UN Security Council discussion, but during the procedural voting it was decided to hold a meeting on the threat of armed confrontation between Russia and Ukraine on February 18.

The speaker of the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry, Oleh Mykolenko, [noted](#) that Ukraine plans to convene a debate at the UN General Assembly in February on the situation in the temporarily occupied territories, and stressed that Ukraine uses Russia's intention to hold a Security Council briefing on February 17 on non-compliance with the Minsk agreements to present facts about Russia's failure to fulfill its obligations in the peaceful settlement of the armed conflict.

THE UK, SWEDEN, CANADA, SWITZERLAND, AND THE US SET UP A PARTNERSHIP FUND TO SUPPORT UKRAINE

Against the backdrop of escalation, partner countries are increasing military, economic, and technical assistance to Ukraine.

On February 2, the ambassadors of [Great Britain](#), [Sweden](#), [Canada](#), [Switzerland](#), and the [US](#) chargé d'affaires signed a [memorandum](#) on the creation of a partnership fund "For a Strong Ukraine". The initial size of the fund is 35 million pounds (UAH 1.3 billion). The fund plans to work on long-term support of communities affected by Russia's armed aggression, prevent further escalation and prepare for unhindered social, economic and political reintegration of the temporarily occupied territories. A number of pilot projects aimed at supporting local most vulnerable communities,

strengthening civil-military cooperation and improving energy efficiency in Luhansk and Donetsk regions have already been [preliminarily approved](#). In eastern and southern Ukraine, the Fund will improve communication capabilities to counter disinformation and promote inclusive dialogue. Minister for Reintegration of the Temporarily Occupied Territories of Ukraine Iryna Vereshchuk [stressed](#) that the purpose of the fund is to show people that Ukraine wants and can help them, including together with foreign partners.

RUSSIANS COLLECT SIGNATURES AGAINST THE WAR WITH UKRAINE

Representatives of the Russian intelligentsia, celebrities and ordinary citizens started [collecting signatures](#) against Russia's war with Ukraine and the West. A [statement](#) open for signature was published on the website of the "Echo Moskv", its authors believe that the war with Ukraine and the West is not only inconsistent with Russia's interests, but also poses a threat to its very existence. According to the authors of the statement, Russians are trying to impose the idea of a "holy war with the West" instead of developing the country and improving the standard of living of its residents, with citizens effectively becoming hostages to the criminal adventurism that Russia's foreign policy line is turning into. The authors declare that the policy based on the promotion of the idea of war is immoral, irresponsible and criminal, and the actions of the Russian leadership lead to the formation of a mass anti-war movement in Russia. More than 5,000 people have already [signed the statement](#) so far. "Donbas Realii" [tells](#) about Russians who support Ukraine and oppose the war.

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Last autumn, CivilMPlus prepared a roadmap document for the new German government urging the new political elite to closely watch developments in eastern Ukraine and maintain playing a leading role in the peaceful resolution of the conflict. German policy should stop following the logic of wishful thinking based on the approach that Russia is proceeding with modernization and transformation. By invading Ukraine, Russian leadership posed a serious threat to the European peace order, international law, and human rights standards. German decision-makers should not ignore this when engaging in bilateral relations with Russia.

The German government should stand ready to continue exerting political and diplomatic pressure against the Russian leadership because of the violation of the international law and support the expansion of corresponding sanctions.

We've shared this document with a circle of stakeholders from the current German government and are now releasing it to the public.

The text of the document is available in [English](#), [German](#), [Ukrainian](#) and [Russian](#).