

HIGHLIGHTS

PULSE OF PEACE IN DONBAS



№74, 22–24 February, 2022

RUSSIA LAUNCHES FULL-SCALE OFFENSIVE AGAINST UKRAINE

Early on the morning of February 24, Russian President Vladimir Putin [announced](#) in a video message the start of a "special military operation" against Ukraine, the purpose of which was described as "protecting people who have been subjected to abuse, genocide by the Kyiv regime for eight years," he also placed responsibility for "possible bloodshed" on Ukraine. Russian troops are striking throughout the country, hitting airports, military bases and warehouses, TV towers, and civilian infrastructure. [Fighting](#) is taking place along the entire length of the border with Russia and Belarus. It is reported that the Chernobyl nuclear power plant and areas of the [Kherson](#) and [Sumy](#) regions have been seized. By the end of the day on February 24, 57 Ukrainian military personnel had been killed.

US President Joe Biden [released](#) a statement stressing that only Russia was responsible for the full-scale aggression that had begun, with the US and partners responding together to hold Russia accountable.

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg sharply [condemned](#) Russia's full-scale aggression, stressing that NATO supports Ukraine and is preparing together with the EU and partners to impose tough sanctions against Russia, and noting that Russia has closed the possibility of resolving the conflict diplomatically. He added that NATO was not planning to send troops to fight in the war in Ukraine. An urgent NATO summit is scheduled for February 25 to discuss further steps. The leaders of the European Council and the European Commission, Charles Michel and Ursula von

der Leyen, issued a [joint statement](#) in support of Ukraine, sharply condemning Russia's actions.

Ukraine has [imposed](#) martial law and [severed](#) diplomatic relations with Russia, [calling](#) on other countries to take the same step.

[Protests against Russia's actions](#) are taking place in many countries, including [Russia](#), where they have been [thwarted](#) by police. During the protests, 1,734 people were [detained](#) in 40 Russian cities. The Russian Investigative Committee [issued](#) a warning about responsibility for anti-war actions, and Roskomnadzor (the communications oversight body) [demanded](#) that Russian media write about the war with Ukraine based only on information obtained from official Russian sources. Russian [filmmakers and writers](#), [journalists](#), [scientists](#), [undergraduate and graduate students](#), [municipal deputies](#), and [cultural figures](#) demanded that the war on Ukraine be stopped.

The head of the Russian human rights organization "For Human Rights" Lev Ponomarev launched a petition demanding to stop the war between Russia and Ukraine, in four hours it was [signed](#) by over a hundred thousand people. The human rights activist was [detained](#) in the entrance hall of his house and taken to the police station.

A full review of reactions from Europe, the US and other countries is in the article by [Europeyskaya Pravda](#).

You can follow news about the situation in Ukraine in the [text online](#) of Hromadske TV.

RUSSIA RECOGNIZED THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE "L/DPR".

On February 22, Russia [signed](#) laws ratifying treaties of friendship and cooperation with the "L/DPR". In addition, the Federation Council of Russia [authorized](#) the use of the Russian army abroad. During the session, it was announced that it was about the use of armed forces in the territories of Donbas controlled by the "DPR" and "LPR" groups. Federation Council Speaker Valentina Matviyenko announced that the entry of troops was necessary to "establish peace in Donbas" and "stop the shelling. Russia's agreements with the so-called "L/DPR" assume the joint use of military bases, defense and protection of the borders of the territories controlled by the "L/DPR".

Vladimir Putin [made an address](#) to the Russian population and [noted](#) that Russia was not going to immediately send its troops to certain areas of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, although the day before he [instructed](#) the Russian Ministry of Defense to ensure that the armed forces "perform peacekeeping functions" in the so-called "L/DPR". For the course of events, see the [BBC story](#).

On the same day, Russia [evacuated](#) embassy and consulate personnel in Ukraine. The recognition of the so-called "L/DPR" and Russia's decision to use armed forces drew harsh criticism from other countries and international organizations. European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrel [said](#) that these decisions were illegal and unacceptable, violated international law,

Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty, Russia's own international obligations, and led to further escalation of the crisis. The EU [called](#) on Russia to withdraw its recognition of the so-called "L/DPR".

On February 22, [EU sanctions](#) were [agreed](#) and went into effect the next day against 351 State Duma deputies who voted for an appeal to Vladimir Putin to recognize the "L/DPR," as well as 27 Russian individuals and organizations that played a role in threatening the integrity of Ukraine, a number of banks. Also, a number of transactions with securities of the Russian government and the Central Bank of Russia were banned, the sanctions include restrictions on economic relations with the territories of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, which are not controlled by the Ukrainian government. [The United States](#) and the [United Kingdom](#) also imposed sanctions on the Russian economy. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz [said](#) that he stopped the certification process for the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba [called](#) on the country's partners to increase sanctions pressure on the economy and the entourage of Russian President Vladimir Putin.