

HIGHLIGHTS

PULSE OF PEACE IN DONBAS



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RUSSIA ATTACKS CIVILIAN TARGETS WITH EXTREMELY DANGEROUS WEAPONS

From February 28 to March 2, Kharkiv was [subjected](#) to massive shelling, including multiple rocket launchers and air-to-ground missiles – [residential neighborhoods](#), the center, the regional [administration building](#), a [university](#), and a [hospital](#). The number of casualties is being specified; so far, at least 7 dead and 24 wounded are [known](#) from the shelling of the administration alone, and at least 21 dead and 112 wounded were injured on March 1. Mayor Igor Terekhov said that 87 houses [were damaged](#) as a result of the ongoing shelling on February 28 alone. President Vladimir Zelensky [stressed](#) that Russia has become a terrorist state after a missile strike on the center of Kharkiv. The Conflict Intelligence Team, an independent group of investigators, [stated](#) that Russian aviation used unguided bombs in Kharkiv and the Kharkiv region, the use of which on civilian targets is a war crime.

Photos are [here](#).

Also under heavy fire were [Brovary](#) (Kyiv region), [Mariupol](#) (Donetsk region), [Chernihiv](#), [Akhtyrka](#) (Sumy region), Kyiv, [Zhytomyr](#), [Kherson](#), and other cities. In Kyiv, one of the airstrikes struck a television tower and also affected the Babiy Yar Holocaust memorial center, where hundreds of thousands of Jews were shot by the Nazis during World War II. The Ukrainian Defense Ministry [stated](#) on the same day that Russia was going to create communication disruptions and then start spreading false information about the surrender of the country's leadership in order to break the resistance. On March 2, the [train station](#) came under attack.

[According to The Times](#), Wagner PMC mercenaries are operating in Kyiv at the request of the Kremlin. Russia's war tactics are being analyzed by military experts, who note that [one of the main factors](#) in Russia's change of tactics is the attitude of Ukrainian residents towards the aggressor.

At the same time, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg [noted](#) that the Alliance will not introduce a no-fly zone over Ukraine so that the process "does not turn into a fear of a full-scale war in Europe with the participation of NATO allies. At the same time, Lithuanian ex-president Dalia Grybauskaitė on March 2 [called](#) on the North Atlantic Alliance to join the war for Ukraine, which is defending its independence. She stressed that by remaining a bystander in this war, the West would actually become an accomplice to what the Russian army is doing to Ukraine, and expressed the opinion that if Putin is not stopped in Ukraine, Western countries will still have to fight, but on their own territory. On March 2, US President Joe Biden delivered a State of the State speech to the US Congress, where he said that the US would join forces with its partners to completely isolate Russia from the airspace, as well as continue imposing sanctions. In addition, U.S. troops are being sent to Europe to protect NATO allies and the eastern flank of the North Atlantic Alliance.

Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk [appealed](#) to the Red Cross and the UN in order to obtain a humanitarian corridor to [Volnovakha](#) (Donetsk Region), which is surrounded by the Russian military and is on the brink of a humanitarian disaster. The situation is similar in [Novaya Kakhovka](#) (Kherson Oblast) and a number of other towns.

[According to the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine](#), the armed forces of Belarus, some of which are on the Ukrainian border, have been put on alert.

The Russian Defense Ministry [published](#) a number of reports on the progress of the "military operation" in Ukraine, stating that Russian actions "exclude damage to civilian infrastructure and residential buildings. Only on March 2, a week into the war, Russia officially acknowledged for the first time that 498 of its servicemen [had been killed](#) and 1,597 wounded, and the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine [reported](#) that by the morning of March 3, Russian casualties among its servicemen totaled about 9,000.

At the same time, the General Prosecutor's Office in Russia decided to stop broadcasting and blocked the websites of several [Russian](#) opposition and [Ukrainian](#) media, as well as the [websites](#) of some Ukrainian ministries.

On February 27, Russian President Vladimir Putin [ordered](#) to put Russia's deterrence forces, which include nuclear weapons, on special alert. White House press secretary Jen Psaki [said](#) that this decision was part of Moscow's policy of creating non-existent threats in order to justify further aggression. A Pentagon official told the media that the United States is confident in its ability to protect its allies from the Russian threat. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg also [condemned](#) Putin's decision.

DIPLOMATIC AND LEGAL MEASURES TO COUNTER RUSSIAN AGGRESSION

On February 28, the UN General Assembly began an emergency [meeting](#) on Ukraine based on the "Uniting for Peace" resolution, the eleventh time in UN history. UN Secretary General António Guterres [called](#) for an immediate halt to hostilities, stressing that there was credible evidence of the destruction of residential buildings and other non-military targets. He warned that the war in Ukraine could lead to Europe's worst humanitarian and migration crisis in decades, and added that UN staff are assisting Ukrainians on both sides of the contact line. Read the [rest](#) of the statements here. Ukraine's permanent representative to the UN, Sergey Kyslytsya, [said](#) that the general assembly should demand that Russia stop the invasion and recognize Russia's actions as an act of attack, an aggression against a sovereign independent state, demand that Russia completely and unconditionally withdraw its troops from Ukrainian territory, and recognize Belarus' role in the act of Russian aggression against Ukraine.

Russian Permanent Representative to the UN Vasily Nebenzia said that during the "special operation" Russia is exercising the right of self-defense against a state that seeks to acquire nuclear weapons, and Russia's actions are designed to "restore the principles of the UN Charter to the territory of Donbas and Ukraine and prevent a world war. On March 2, the meeting resulted in a [resolution](#) adopted by an absolute majority of the countries demanding the withdrawal of Russian troops from Ukraine within the internationally recognized borders, as well as refuse to recognize the independence of the so-called "L/DNR.

On February 28, Belarus hosted talks between Russia and Ukraine, the main goal of which was to discuss a ceasefire and cessation of hostilities on the territory of Ukraine. At the end of the negotiations it was [stated](#) that "the parties identified a number of priority topics on which certain decisions were outlined," and it is noted that the next meeting is planned. At the same time, advisor to the head of the Office of the President of Ukraine Mikhail Podolyak [noted](#) that "the Russian side, unfortunately, still has an extremely biased view of the destructive processes it has launched". The second round of talks is expected on March 3.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz called the attack on Ukraine "Putin's war," not the Russian people's, promised to increase German defense spending and stressed that he was not giving up on talks with the Kremlin. The main [thesis](#) of his speech at an emergency meeting of the Bundestag on February 27 is that Russian authorities can no longer count on Berlin's loyalty.

International Criminal Court prosecutor Karim Khan has [initiated](#) an investigation into the Russian invasion of Ukraine. In addition, Ukraine filed a lawsuit against Russia in the International Court of Justice, [demanding](#) "that Russia be held accountable for distorting the concept of genocide to justify the aggression.

On February 28, 2022, Ukraine asked the ECHR to order interim measures against the Russian Federation under Rule 39 of the Rules of Court for "massive human rights violations committed by Russian troops in the course of military aggression against the sovereign territory of Ukraine." In a March 1 [decision](#), the European Court ordered the Russian authorities to refrain from military attacks on civilians and civilian objects and immediately ensure the safety of medical facilities, personnel and

emergency services within the attacked territory. The decision has not been implemented.

THE PROCEDURE FOR UKRAINE'S ACCESSION TO THE EU HAS BEEN INITIATED

On February 28, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy appealed to the European Union regarding Ukraine's accession through a special procedure and signed a statement to this effect. By March 1, the heads of eight EU countries [advocated](#) granting Ukraine the status of an EU candidate country. They called on the EU member states to consolidate political support for Ukraine at the highest level and to enable the EU institutions to take steps to grant Ukraine immediate candidate status. They also reaffirmed their full solidarity with Ukraine and its people. The European Parliament approved a [resolution](#) recommending that EU member states work to grant Ukraine candidate status, condemning Russia's war against Ukraine and demanding that Russia withdraw all of its troops from Ukrainian territory. EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell [said](#) that Ukraine had a clear European perspective, with the main goal at the moment being the joint fight against Russian aggression. On March 1, the European Union officially [began](#) the application procedure for accession - Ukrainska Pravda [tells](#) about its progress. Against the background of the war with Russia, support for Ukraine's accession to the European Union and NATO among Ukrainians is the [highest](#) in the history of polls: 86% of respondents support Ukraine's accession to the EU, while 76% are in favor of joining NATO.

NEW ROUND OF SANCTIONS

The European Union introduced [sanctions](#) against 26 Russian oligarchs and officials, including the press secretary of the Russian President Dmitry Peskov, [announced](#) the disconnection of seven Russian banks from SWIFT and a ban on euro deliveries to Russia. The [UK](#) also announced a new wave of sanctions, including freezing the assets of a number of Russian banks and banning Russian ships from using ports, while [Australia](#) announced a package of personal sanctions, and Japan imposed sanctions on Vladimir Putin and supported the disconnection of Russian banks from SWIFT.

[The EU](#) and the US have closed their airspace to aircraft from Russia, a decision also joined by [Switzerland](#). Turkey [announced](#) the closure of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles for the passage of warships. The EU also [banned](#) Russian propaganda channels Russia Today and Sputnik from its territory.

Canada [announced](#) its refusal to buy Russian oil. The World Bank [stops](#) its programs in Russia.

In addition, the EU will [finance](#) the purchase and delivery of weapons for Ukraine. This decision was called unprecedented by the head of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen.

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION IN UKRAINE AND WAR CRIMES COMMITTED BY RUSSIA

More than 677,000 Ukrainian refugees, [according to the UN](#), have left Ukraine, and more than [half](#) have gone to Poland. The number of internally displaced persons is unknown. Ukrainian human rights organizations published a [statement](#) calling on Ukraine's neighbors to open their borders to citizens of all countries forced to flee the war, regardless of whether they have visas. Doctors [talk](#) about the situation in Ukraine and medicine during the war.

[According to the Ukrainian Ministry of Health](#), as of the evening of February 28, 352 civilians had been killed, including 16 children, and another 2,040 civilians, including 45 children, had been wounded.

Amnesty International [stated](#) that Russia is lying by saying that it only uses high-precision weapons in Ukraine. Human rights activists note that the Russian invasion of Ukraine was marked by indiscriminate attacks on civilian areas and strikes on facilities protected under international humanitarian law, and the Russian military demonstrated a blatant disregard for civilian life by using ballistic missiles and other explosive weapons with wide-area effects in densely populated areas. The International Partnership for Human Rights [published](#) Truth Hounds' analysis of serious violations of international civil law committed by Russia in the first 48 hours of the attack on Ukraine.

The Bellingcat investigative project [stated](#) that Russian troops use cluster munitions when shelling Ukrainian cities, including residential areas, which cause large area damage and are especially dangerous for civilians.

Protests against military action continue around the world. A [petition](#) demanding an end to the war in Ukraine has garnered more than a million signatures. Mikhail Khodorkovsky [announced](#) the creation of an anti-war committee in Russia.

Open anti-war letters were signed by over 250 Russian municipal deputies, [graduates](#) of [Russia's leading universities](#), representatives of the [educational community](#), and over [160 Nobel laureates](#). All the letters are available on the [website](#). Historians who study the Holocaust published a [statement](#) about the war and the rhetoric of the Russian authorities, condemning the Russian authorities' misuse of the term "genocide" and their attempt to justify aggression by identifying the Ukrainian state with the Nazi regime.