

HIGHLIGHTS

PULSE OF PEACE IN DONBAS



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U.S. RENEWS LEND-LEASE PROGRAM, EU CALLS FOR PROVISION OF ALL NECESSARY WEAPONS TO UKRAINE

U.S. President Joe Biden has [ordered](#) \$100 million in additional military aid to Ukraine, which will include defense goods and services, military training and education. The UK is [handing over](#) ambulances to Ukraine to replace those destroyed during military operations, as well as [plans](#) to hand over Mastiff armored vehicles. On April 7, the U.S. Senate unanimously passed legislation to [start](#) a lend-lease program for Ukraine, a program that operated during World War II. The [bill](#) must be approved by the House of Representatives and signed by the American president. Its passage will allow U.S. President Joe Biden's administration to provide Ukraine with arms and equipment more effectively. The potential of the lend-lease program is being [analyzed](#) by the Atlantic Council.

Bloomberg [reported](#), citing sources, that European diplomatic chief Josep Borrell called on European Union countries to urgently provide Ukraine with all necessary weapons. It is noted that a decision must be taken in the coming days, not weeks. The EU shares the view that the military campaign in eastern Ukraine will be crucial, and there is only a short window to prepare and obtain the necessary weapons. German Foreign Minister Annalena Berbock [said](#) at the April 11 EU Council meeting that European partners should step up military support for Ukraine, including with heavy weapons. She also noted the importance of investigating war crimes in Ukraine, adding that Germany has allocated an additional 1 million euros for on-site investigations and the recording of testimonies.

Slovakia [announced](#) the transfer of S-300 air defense systems to Ukraine, as well as [negotiations](#) on the sale of 16 Zuzana self-propelled artillery units.

Canada [has budgeted](#) \$400 million for military assistance to Ukraine and another \$800 million for loans.

NATO AND RUSSIA: FROM COOPERATION TO STRENGTHENING BORDERS

NATO members are ready to continue providing Ukraine with the defense assistance it needs to fight a full-scale Russian invasion, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg [said](#) on April 5. He noted that Russia is not giving up on its ambitions in Ukraine, and NATO expects a decisive stage of the war, the Russian army's attempts to seize the entire Donbas and create a land passage to occupied Crimea, in the near future. Bloomberg [reports](#) that some NATO countries are ready to help the Ukrainian army learn to use more modern weapons that meet Alliance standards, as NATO countries' stocks of Soviet weapons may run out and the Russian-Ukrainian war may drag on.

On April 6-7, NATO foreign ministers met in Brussels to discuss the current security situation. On April 6, British Foreign Secretary Liz Truss [announced](#) the end of the era of cooperation between NATO and Russia, and called on the partners to strengthen sanctions against Russia and provide Ukraine with weapons. On April 7, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba attended the meeting and [called](#) on NATO countries to immediately implement plans to help Kyiv: although the battle for Donbas is already underway, it has not yet reached its maximum scale.

The New York Times, quoting high-ranking Western officials, [writes](#) that the North Atlantic Alliance is divided into two camps: some, in particular Poland and the Baltic states, advocate a complete break with Russia, while others suggest maintaining ties with it. NATO is currently [working](#) on a plan for a permanent military presence on the eastern border to defend against possible Russian aggression. According to Alliance Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, NATO is "in the midst of a fundamental transformation" involving adaptation to Russian actions.

EU IMPOSES FIFTH SANCTIONS PACKAGE, UKRAINE ANNOUNCES FULL EMBARGO ON RUSSIAN IMPORTS

On 5 April, the European Commission proposed to [impose](#) a fifth package of sanctions against Russia in connection with war crimes committed by the Russian armed forces in Bucha and the Kyiv Region. On 9 April, the EU Council [approved](#) the sanctions. In particular, the EU bans imports of Russian coal, imposes a complete ban on transactions with four Russian banks, and bans Russian vessels and operators from entering the ports of EU countries. In total, sanctions are imposed against 217 individuals and 18 legal entities. There is no consensus among EU countries about the ban on imports of Russian oil and gas. For example, Germany is blocking an immediate halt to Russian oil imports, [The Wall Street Journal reported](#).

On April 7, members of the European Parliament passed a [resolution](#) demanding that EU member states impose a total embargo on the purchase of oil, coal, gas and nuclear fuel from Russia. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said the oil embargo would still be discussed. Britain has [banned](#) all investment in Russia and frozen the assets of Sberbank, imposed a series of individual sanctions, restrictions on imports and exports of goods, and pledged to stop all imports of Russian coal and oil by the end of 2022.

Western countries, including [Denmark](#), Italy, [Sweden](#), [Spain](#), [Latvia and Estonia](#) continue to expel Russian diplomats en masse.

A new package of restrictions [imposed](#) by the United States includes a ban on investment in Russia, sanctions against Alfa Bank and Sberbank, a number of [airlines](#) and individuals.

Also, the U.S. [said](#) that it will not participate in the meetings of the G20, if Russia is present at them.

New Zealand [imposes](#) trade sanctions against Russia in the form of a 35 percent duty on all imports, as well as extending existing sanctions to industrial products closely related to strategic Russian industries.

Belgium has [blocked](#) Russian financial transactions totaling €196.4 billion and frozen assets worth €2.7 billion.

The Cayman Islands, a major offshore center, has [frozen](#) about €7.3 billion in assets linked to Russia.

On April 10, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine imposed a complete [embargo](#) on imports of Russian goods, legally sealing the de facto cessation of trade relations with Russia. According to the Economics Ministry, the ban on Russian imports will block \$6 billion in foreign currency revenues to Russia annually.

STATE AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS CONTINUE TO INVESTIGATE RUSSIA'S WAR CRIMES

The international human rights organization Amnesty International has [published](#) new evidence of war crimes that took place during the occupation by the Russian military of parts of Ukraine's Kyiv region. People interviewed by Amnesty International spoke of extrajudicial executions, violence, including sexual violence, and mass intimidation of civilians in the region. Prosecutor General Iryna Venediktova [said](#) that Russian occupants committed sexual violence against all gender and age groups of Ukrainian residents. It is noted that law enforcement and government agencies together with public organizations began to develop an algorithm to provide victims with all possible types of assistance. So far, the Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine has [identified](#) over 500 Russian military personnel who committed war crimes in Ukraine, with at least 5.6 thousand cases classified as war crimes. The global initiative "Tribunal for Putin," a joint effort of several dozen civil society organizations, has [documented](#) 1,188 episodes of Russian war crimes committed in Ukraine. The systemic and widespread nature of war crimes indicates

that Russia uses war crimes as a tactic of warfare, experts of the initiative emphasize.

IN THE KYIV REGION CONTINUES THE IDENTIFICATION OF THOSE KILLED DURING THE OCCUPATION OF THE CITIES

The assessment of the situation in the Kyiv region liberated from Russian occupation forces continues. On 8 April, the [exhumation](#) of bodies from mass graves discovered there began in Bucha. The head of Bucha, Anatoliy Fedoruk, [stated](#) that almost 90 percent of the people killed in the city had bullet wounds, not shrapnel wounds. By April 8, 163 locals had been [identified](#), about half of the bodies found in the city. Satellite images [prove](#) that the bodies of murdered civilians in Bucha appeared on the streets more than three weeks ago, when the city was under the occupation of Russian troops. The New York Times [published an aerial video](#) showing how a Russian armored vehicle killed a cyclist in Bucha with several shots. After the city was liberated, a dead body was found near the bicycle in the same place. Similar information comes from other settlements liberated from the Russian army.

[According to Der Spiegel](#), German intelligence intercepted radio messages from the Russian military confirming that the mass killing of civilians was not accidental but a deliberate strategy to suppress possible resistance. Day by day the number of bodies discovered is increasing and several mass graves have already been discovered. In the village of Makarov, at least 132 bodies of dead locals were [discovered](#), and in the village of Buzova a mass grave with the bodies of dozens of tortured and murdered people was [discovered](#).

Over the 35 days of the Russian occupation in Gostomel, Kyiv region, more than 400 people went missing, [according to the head of the Gostomel settlement military administration](#). A video from the liberated city is [here](#), and Hromadske [tells](#) the story of a woman who managed to escape from Gostomel during the occupation. Oleksiy Kuleba, head of the humanitarian staff of the Kyiv region, [said](#) that after the Russian occupation, almost nothing remained of the urban settlement of Borodyanka in the Kyiv region. [According to Ukrainian Interior Minister Denis Monastyrsky](#), Borodyanka is one of the most destroyed settlements in the region. As of the morning of April 8, the bodies of [26 residents](#) were found dead under the rubble of three houses, while some 200 residents of the village were still [missing](#) as of the same day. Photos from Borodyanka – [here](#). The situation in [Irpen](#) and [other localities](#) in the region is similar. It is [reported](#) that during the week in the liberated territory of the Kyiv region, specialists have deactivated about 11 thousand ammunition, including extensions and mines. The State Service for Emergency Situations of Ukraine [notes](#) that a total of about 300 thousand square kilometers of the territory of Ukraine in need of inspection and humanitarian demining. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky [said](#) that due to the actions of the Russian army, Ukraine's territory is currently one of the most contaminated with mines in the world. He believes that this, also, should be regarded as a war crime by Russian forces.

MARIUPOL BLOCKADE, THREAT OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS

Mariupol, where about 90% of all buildings have been completely destroyed, has been under blockade for more than a month, with all entrances to the city closed by the Russian military and access from the sea blocked. Constant shelling of the city continues, and the mayor of Mariupol, Vadim Boychenko, [talks](#) about the situation there. According to preliminary estimates, some 10,000 civilians have been killed in the city. The Mariupol City Council [notes](#) that to conceal the scale of the crimes, the Russian occupation forces began using mobile crematoria in the city.

On April 11, representatives of the so-called "Donetsk People's Republic" [threatened](#) to use chemical weapons against Ukrainian units that had fortified themselves at the Azovstal steel plant in Mariupol. Later, representatives of the Azov unit [said](#) that chemical weapons had been used and that three people with symptoms of chemical poisoning had been injured. The USA and the [UK](#) said that they were checking this information. The Ukrainian Defense Ministry is also [checking](#) these reports and warns that the risk of Russian troops using chemical weapons remains high. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky [said](#) that he takes such a threat as seriously as possible and believes it is necessary to form such a package of potential sanctions against Russia so that not even a word about the use of weapons of mass destruction from the Russian side will be heard any more.

The practice of Russian troops forcibly transporting Mariupol residents, including patients and hospital personnel, to the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine and in Russia [continues](#). Currently, local authorities are forming a single database of illegally removed people, [according to the mayor](#) of the city, their number is at least 40 thousand people. The Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights, Lyudmila Denysova, [reported](#) that over 400 of them are being held in a closed-type guarded institution in the Penza region and their freedom of movement is restricted. In addition, Russia carries out the practice of forced passportization in relation to illegally exported residents of Ukraine.

The Security Service of Ukraine [warns](#) that the Russian armed forces are preparing for a large-scale provocation in Mariupol to accuse Ukraine of killing civilians. The plan is reportedly to [collect](#) the bodies of Mariupol residents killed by the Russians in one place and present them as mass casualties of Ukrainian troops, while the theses that "Ukrainians are using civilians as human shields" are already spreading in the media space. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky [notes](#) that Ukraine's position in the eastern regions and negotiations with Russia depend on the success of the defense of Mariupol as a whole.

RUSSIA EXPELLED FROM THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

A meeting of the UN Security Council was held on April 5. In his [speech](#), Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky called for taking away from Russia, currently a permanent member of the Council, the right to veto decisions that concern the war in

Ukraine: "It is obvious that the key institution of peace, which should ensure the enforcement of any aggressors to peace, simply cannot work effectively. He called for immediate reform of the UN system, adding that Ukraine is ready to provide a platform for one of the main offices of the renewed security system. The key points from Zelensky's speech are [here](#). Amid revelations of evidence of atrocities committed by the Russian military in Ukraine, the [U.S.](#) and [Britain](#) have called for Russia's expulsion from the UN Human Rights Council. U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations Linda Thomas-Greenfield said Russia's membership poses a danger because the country uses the Council as a platform to spread propaganda.

On April 7, the UN General Assembly [expelled](#) Russia from the Human Rights Council. Immediately after the vote, Russia [announced](#) that it was terminating its membership on the Human Rights Council ahead of schedule. Gennady Kuzmin, Russia's deputy permanent representative to the UN, [stressed](#) that he viewed the adopted resolution suspending Russia's membership "as an unlawful and politically motivated step aimed at demonstratively punishing a sovereign state.

RUSSIAN TROOP WITHDRAWAL, MISSILE SHELLING CONTINUES

On April 7, the Pentagon [confirmed](#) that Russia had completely withdrawn its troops from the Kyiv and Chernihiv regions, noting that the reason for this was preparations to concentrate forces in Ukraine's eastern regions. At the same time, the U.S. sees signs that Russia is seeking to recruit over 60,000 troops, recruits and mobilized reservists, CNN [writes](#). In addition, the Armed Forces of Ukraine have taken control of virtually the entire [Mykolaiv region](#), but shelling [continues](#). The Dnipropetrovsk region was subjected to multiple attacks from the air, an oil depot and factory, and an [airfield](#) were [destroyed](#). The mayor of Dnipropetrovsk, Boris Filatov, [recommended](#) that residents who had left the area should not return for the time being, and that the women, children, the elderly and those not involved in industrial enterprises and critical infrastructure should evacuate. Deputy Prime Minister of Ukraine Iryna Vereshchuk also [urged](#) people to evacuate from certain areas of Kharkiv, as well as Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, as it will be almost impossible to do so once the occupants launch a new offensive. Shelling of these regions continues: thus, among other things, in Donetsk region, Russian troops [shelled](#) a place where humanitarian aid was distributed, and in [Luhansk region](#), [residential areas](#) of cities. Also in the Luhansk region, there were two leaks of [nitric acid](#) due to shelling and damaged cisterns. At the same time, Kharkiv mayor Igor Terekhov [urged](#) residents not to panic and assured that the city is well armed and prepared for defense. There are [no plans](#) to carry out mass evacuation of the population from Kharkiv.

On 11 April, the Ukrainian Defence Ministry [said](#) that Russia had almost completed preparations for a new offensive operation in Donbas, and military actions may intensify in Donetsk and Luhansk regions in the near future. For a summary of the Ukrainian Armed Forces' General Staff on the morning of April 12, [click here](#).

RUSSIAN SHELLING OF THE RAILWAY STATION IN KRAMATORSK

On April 8, Russian troops used a Tochka-U system to shell the Kramatorsk railway station (Donetsk region), where about [4,000 people were present](#) at the time, most of them women, children, and the elderly, waiting to be evacuated. At least 57 people were [killed](#), including five children, and 114 were wounded. Witnesses to the shelling told [Hromadske](#) about it. On the same day, the station was closed to receive trains, and [emergency evacuations](#) are being conducted in the city by private and communal vehicles. As of April 11, [up to 45,000 people](#) remain in Kramatorsk.

Russian propaganda media [published](#) news reports that the Russian Army was eliminating " Ukrainian Armed Forces fighters" at the station, which were later deleted. The Russian Defense Ministry [attempted](#) to blame Ukraine for the attack, while the Conflict Intelligence Team [notes](#) that these accusations do not stand up to criticism. The Pentagon also [confirmed](#) that the missile attack on the train station was carried out by Russian troops.

DIPLOMATIC VISITS IN SUPPORT OF UKRAINE

On April 8, the president of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, and the head of European diplomacy, Josep Borrell, arrived in Ukraine. They [visited](#) Bucha and then went for talks with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. Volodymyr Zelenski [expressed](#) his conviction that Ukraine and the European Union share common values of protecting freedom and rights, and thanked them for their support in supplying weapons to Ukraine, as well as for the EU sanctions policy against Russia.

The President of the European Commission handed Volodymyr Zelenski a questionnaire for EU accession. Deputy Prime Minister for European and Euro-Atlantic Integration Olga Stefanyshyna [noted](#) that Ukraine might be granted candidate status for accession to the European Union in June 2022. Furthermore, Josep Borrell [announced](#) the resumption of the work of the European Union Delegation in Kyiv.

On 9 April, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson [arrived](#) in Kyiv. During his meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenski, he [discussed](#) strengthening support for Ukraine. After the talks, Boris Johnson [announced](#) a new package of financial and military assistance.

At a joint briefing, Boris Johnson [stressed](#) that Britain would continue to increase sanctions pressure on Russia and provide assistance to Ukraine, while Britain would not limit itself to freezing assets or sanctions against Russian oligarchs: the goal is to influence Russia's ability to use its energy resources.

REFUGEE SITUATION

As of April 10, [according to the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees](#), the number of people forced to leave Ukraine exceeded 4.5 million. Since the beginning of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has [recorded](#) the deaths of 1,793 civilians in Ukraine, and another 2,439 were wounded. However, the organization notes that the actual number of casualties is much higher, as information from some places where intense fighting has taken place is delayed and many reports are still awaiting confirmation.