

## HIGHLIGHTS

# PULSE OF PEACE IN DONBAS



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### REPRESSION AND DESTRUCTION OF INFRASTRUCTURE CONTINUE IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

Russian troops have taken control of the regional center and a number of settlements in the Kherson region. According to the Ukrainian Armed Forces' General Staff, they want to reach the region's administrative border. Kherson is the only regional center that the Russians have managed to capture since the beginning of the large-scale invasion, and the repression of civilians continues in the region. The story of one of the dead Kherson residents is told by the Ukrainian media [Babel](#). As of May 1, it is planned to introduce [Russian rubles](#) in the occupied Kherson region.

The Russian armed forces are [removing and destroying](#) medical infrastructure in the occupied territories, and because of this there is a shortage of medics, and residents cannot receive proper care in hospitals. Among those taken away are ventilators to deal with COVID-19. The Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine [notes](#) that Russian occupation forces exported to Russia several hundred thousand tons of grain from the temporarily occupied territories in Luhansk, Donetsk, Kherson and Zaporizhyya regions. In Kherson Oblast and part of Zaporizhyya Oblast, mobile and Internet service providers were [cut off](#) in order to leave the local population without access to truthful information about the course of the war and make Russian propaganda the only source of information. At the same time, Russian information resources began spreading fakes, claiming that the Ukrainian authorities had ordered the connection to be shut down. Communications were only [restored](#) a few

days later by connecting redundant power channels. In addition, the occupation "administration" of temporarily occupied Kherson [stated](#) that it planned to block social media for local residents.

## RUSSIA CONSIDERS THE POSSIBILITY OF CREATING A QUASI-FORMATION CALLED "YUZHNAJA RUS" IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

Russia is considering the scenario of creating a quasi-formation called "YUZHNAJA RUS" (Southern Russia) in the temporarily occupied Ukrainian territories, according to an intercepted document [made public](#) by the Scheme project (Radio Liberty). "We are building our state on the basis of understanding the historical and genetic kinship and unity of the triune "Russian" people: Ukrainians, Belarusians and Russians, brotherly friendship and mutual assistance," the authors of the "manifesto" state. However, the document does not specify on which particular territories of Ukraine it is planned to create Southern Russia. Using metadata, journalists determined that the document was most likely created on April 16 by the deputy head of the central executive committee of the United Russia party.

At the same time, the Russian propaganda agency RIA Novosti published an [article](#) "What Russia Should Do to Ukraine," which called for repression and ethnic cleansing of the Ukrainian population. Mikhail Podolyak, advisor to the Office of the President of Ukraine, [commented](#) on the publication, noting that it officially and publicly records calls for mass murder, a war crime to be investigated in international jurisdictions.

## MORE THAN 1,200 BODIES OF DEAD CIVILIANS FOUND IN KYIV REGION, IDENTIFICATION OF WAR CRIMINALS ONGOING

As of May 2, 1202 bodies of Ukrainian civilians killed by the occupants [have been found](#) in the Kyiv region. About 300 more people were missing. Ukrainian law enforcement authorities have [named suspects](#) of crimes against civilians in the Bucha Kyiv region. The project "Slidstvo.info" [tells](#) about one of them.

A photo report about how Bucha lives a month after liberation from the occupation can be found [here](#). A story about what is happening in the village of [Demidov](#) in the Kyiv region, which was flooded to hold back the advance of the Russian armed forces, can be found [here](#).

On May 4, there was a presentation of the [project](#) "Russian War Criminals," which systematized information about more than 138 thousand Russian military personnel present in Ukraine and the crimes they committed.

## UKRAINE INSISTS ON INCLUDING WOMEN IN THE LISTS FOR HOSTAGE EXCHANGES

On April 28, the seventh prisoner of war [exchange](#) took place between Ukraine and Russia: 45 Ukrainian citizens were released - 13 officers and 20 soldiers (5 were wounded), as well as 12 civilians. Another [exchange](#) took place on April 30, as a result 7 servicemen and 7 civilians returned to Ukraine. The Minister of Reintegration of the Temporarily Occupied Territories of Ukraine Iryna Vereshchuk [noted](#) that Ukraine would refuse to conduct the exchange if women were not included in the lists. The Ukrainian Parliament Commissioner for Human Rights Lyudmyla Denisova [notes](#) that those who returned from Russian captivity speak of humiliation and inhumane conditions of detention.

## VISIT OF THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL TO UKRAINE

UN Secretary-General António Guterres visited Ukraine on 29 April and met Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. During the meeting, they [talked](#) about the food crisis provoked by Russia, the unblocking of Ukraine's ports and the situation in Mariupol. António Guterres noted the need to organize evacuation for the residents of blockaded Mariupol.

Guterres [said](#) that the UN, in coordination with the Ukrainian government, could pay cash aid to Ukrainian citizens - 1.3 million Ukrainians could receive such payments by the end of May.

## U.S. PASSES LEND-LEASE BILL: UKRAINE'S SECURITY COMMITMENTS WILL BE LONG-TERM

On April 28, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a [bill on lend-lease](#) and democracy protection in Ukraine. It was [supported](#) by 417 representatives and only 10 voted against it. The document must now be signed by U.S. President Joe Biden. The text of the document says that the US president will be granted expanded powers to transfer or lease to Ukraine defence assets to protect civilians from Russian military invasion and for other purposes.

According to a [Politico article](#), the Lend-Lease bill reflects attitudes in the United States and other Western countries. They believe that Ukraine's security commitments must be long-term. How a similar law helped defeat Germany in World War II and what we can count on now - in the [article](#) of Hromadske.

## THE SIXTH PACKAGE OF EU SANCTIONS AND A GRADUAL BAN ON RUSSIAN OIL IMPORTS

On 4 May, the EU [announced](#) the sixth package of sanctions against Russia. The document contains a list of high-ranking military and other individuals who committed war crimes in Bucha, Kyiv Region. It is also proposed to disconnect three Russian banks from SWIFT, including the largest one, Sberbank. In addition, three large

Russian state broadcasters spreading propaganda will be banned from operating in the EU. Bloomberg [notes](#) that a new package of sanctions also includes a ban on Russian real estate deals.

In addition, the European Commission proposes to gradually ban imports of Russian oil. The Wall Street Journal [reported](#) that under new sanctions EU will have to refuse to buy Russian crude oil for 6 months and stop importing oil products from Russia until the end of 2022. Hungary and Slovakia, which are heavily dependent on imports of petroleum products, will be given 20 months to gradually reduce Russian imports. At the same time, the speaker of the Hungarian government Zoltan Kovacs [said](#) that he opposed the oil embargo, even despite the permission of the EU to postpone it. At the same time, Poland [plans](#) to convince Hungary to support sanctions against Russia, and is [ready to help Germany](#) to refuse Russian oil, thanks to the capacity of the oil refinery in Gdansk. On May 4, German Economy Minister Robert Habeck [announced](#) that Germany is ready for an embargo on Russian oil.

Earlier, The Guardian [calculated](#) that during two months of full-scale war in Ukraine, Russia almost doubled its revenues from energy sales to EU countries, with Germany being the largest importer. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba [called](#) on partners not to delay the embargo on Russian energy resources, stressing that those who oppose these steps actually become accomplices to Russia's crimes in Ukraine.

For the sixth sanctions package to work, it must be approved by the EU Council. Josep Borrell, head of European diplomacy, [expressed hope](#) that this could happen on May 10.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov [said](#) that the talks with Ukraine included the issue of lifting sanctions against Russia. However, this was [denied](#) by advisor to the head of the Ukrainian presidential office and a member of the Ukrainian delegation Mykhaylo Podolyak.

The sanctions imposed by the West against Russia in response to its full-scale invasion of Ukraine will not be lifted until Moscow reaches a peace agreement with Ukraine on the latter's terms, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz [said](#).

Great Britain [adopted](#) a new package of sanctions against Russia that affects 63 Russian citizens and organizations, including the media company VGTRK, and bans the export of British services to Russia.

[Australia](#) imposed sanctions on 110 more people, including 34 pro-Russian fighters from the so-called "L/DPR" and 76 members of the Russian State Duma.

## SHELLING OF UKRAINIAN REGIONS CONTINUES

Over the past week, Russian shelling of Kharkiv and the Kharkiv region has continued. As a result of the April 28 [shelling](#), at least five people were killed and eleven more were wounded. By May 5, Ukrainian armed forces had launched a [counteroffensive](#) in the Kharkiv region. Life in Kharkiv is [reported](#) by the BBC.

On April 29, the Ukrainian Armed Forces liberated the village of Ruska Lozovaya in Kharkiv Oblast, a strategically important settlement located on the Kharkiv-Belgorod

highway, from Russian occupation forces. It was from there that Russian troops targeted Kharkiv's civilian infrastructure and residential areas during the occupation. The shelling in Kyiv on the evening of April 28 and hitting a 25-story residential building injured [10 people](#), including a Radio Svoboda journalist who [died](#). The shelling began immediately after negotiations between Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and UN Secretary General António Guterres ended.

On April 29, two [evacuation buses](#) in the locality of Popasna were shot at by Russian armed forces in the Luhansk region, one of which was later [found](#) empty with traces of blood, while the other was not found. On April 30 alone, Russian occupation troops opened fire 19 times on residential neighborhoods in towns and villages of [Luhansk Oblast](#).

On April 30, Russian troops launched a missile attack on the [Odessa airport](#) and on May 2 on [Odessa](#), damaging infrastructure in the city, including one religious building. There were deaths and injuries.

On May 3, at least 10 people were killed and 15 others wounded as a result of Russian occupants' shelling of Avdiivka coke plant (Donetsk region). On the same day, a missile strike [damaged](#) a number of infrastructure facilities in Lviv, as well as an infrastructure facility in [Transcarpathia](#). In addition, attacks struck [six railway stations](#) in central and western Ukraine.

On May 5, the Russian army [shelled](#) Kramatorsk, injuring 25 people. Nine residential buildings, a school, and civilian infrastructure were damaged.

As of the morning of May 5, Russia [had lost](#) approximately 24,700 troops in the war against Ukraine. [According to British intelligence](#), Russia's current target is the key cities of Odessa, Kherson and Mariupol, which would allow full control of Ukraine's access to the Black Sea and sea lines of communication.

The Pentagon [said](#) that Russian airstrikes on important infrastructure were intended to prevent Ukraine from receiving military aid from the West, but that Russia's plans failed.

Mykhaylo Podolyak, adviser to the head of the Ukrainian presidential office, [said](#) that Ukraine would defend itself by any means, in particular by strikes on depots and bases on Russian territory. U.S. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken [said](#) during an address to the Senate that Ukraine should decide for itself whether to strike Russian military facilities.

## MARIUPOL: EVACUATION OF CIVILIANS FROM AZOVSTAL TO UNOCCUPIED PART OF UKRAINE, RUSSIAN FILTRATION CAMPS OPERATE IN NEIGHBORING VILLAGES

The entire city of Mariupol remains blockaded for more than two months. According to preliminary estimates by local authorities, 20,000 residents have died as a result of Russian actions.

Ukrainian servicemen and a number of civilians remain blockaded at the Azovstal plant in the city. On the night of April 28, an [operating room collapsed](#) there as a result of the aerial bombardment: wounded military personnel who were being

treated were killed, and about 100 people were repeatedly contused. On April 28, the Pentagon [noted](#) that part of the Russian occupation forces had begun to withdraw from the Mariupol area, while shelling of the city, which was not under Russian control, continued.

On April 30, Russia [said](#) that 25 people had been evacuated from the plant and a dozen others from houses nearby; their whereabouts are unknown at the moment. Earlier, Reuters [reported](#) that dozens of civilians were evacuated from Mariupol Azovstal plant in a convoy of cars with UN symbols to the village of Bezimyannoye in Donetsk Region, 30 kilometers from Mariupol. This settlement is temporarily controlled by the occupants.

On May 1, the [evacuation](#) of civilians from the territory of Azovstal began. David Arahamiya, a member of the negotiating group with Russia, [noted](#) that the possibility of evacuating civilians from Azovstal appeared for the first time since the start of the blockade of the plant; the evacuation was carried out with the support of the UN and the International Committee of the Red Cross. Also on May 2, people from other districts of Mariupol left. And on May 3, the first group of civilian Ukrainians, who left on May 1, [arrived in Zaporizhia](#). On May 4, 344 people were evacuated as part of the Mariupol humanitarian corridor.

Several hundred people [remain](#) on the territory of Azovstal, including the wounded, border guards, military units of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, and civilians.

On May 4, Ukrainska Pravda, citing sources, [reported](#) that the Russians had broken through to the Azovstal plant, and the Ukrainian Armed Forces general staff [confirmed](#) the resumption of the offensive by the Russian armed forces. Deputy Defense Minister Anna Malyar [confirmed](#) that the situation at the Azovstal plant remained complicated.

Mariupol authorities [received](#) details and video confirmation from Russian occupation troops' filtration camps in villages near the city. A few weeks ago, all men living in several districts - about 2,000 people - were forcibly removed by the Russian armed forces to the villages of Bezimyannoye and Kazatskoye for "filtration". They were not allowed to take their personal belongings with them and their passports and other identification documents were taken away. They were not allowed to leave the territory where they were forcibly placed without a Russian military convoy.

## AID TO UKRAINE

The German parliament has [approved](#) supplies of heavy weapons to Ukraine. The document, titled "Defending Peace and Freedom in Europe - Comprehensive Support for Ukraine," was supported by an overwhelming majority and allows the federal government to "deliver effective, including heavy weapons and sophisticated systems through Germany" to Ukraine. Arms exports will be discussed in close cooperation with NATO partners.

Thousands of soldiers from France, Great Britain, the United States, China, Poland and other countries are now fighting on the side of Ukraine. Each soldier has a different motivation, Hromadske [collected](#) their stories.



The United States is studying the possibility of adding Russia to its list of countries sponsoring terrorism, U.S. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken [said](#). The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine [supported](#) an appeal to the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate calling for Russia to be recognized as a state sponsor of terrorism.

Canada's lower house of parliament officially [recognized](#) Russia's actions during the invasion of Ukraine as genocide – the relevant resolution was passed unanimously.

The U.S. House of Representatives [passed a bill](#) providing for the confiscation of assets of Russian subsanctioned entities and individuals, and containing provisions that the confiscated funds must be transferred to Ukraine. To take effect, the bill must be passed by the Senate and signed by US President Joe Biden. The head of the Ukrainian presidential office, Andriy Yermak, [stressed](#) that the bill is a framework, does not establish a mechanism, but lays down the political will of Congress and is the first step towards the upcoming confiscation of Russian assets in favor of Ukraine.

U.S. President Joe Biden [has asked](#) Congress to allocate an additional [\\$33 billion](#) in aid to Ukraine, most of which will go to defense. According to Reuters' sources, they want more than \$20 billion for defense aid, \$8.5 billion for direct economic aid, and \$3 billion for humanitarian aid and food supplies. Also, the White House wants to use frozen Russian assets to support Ukraine.

In addition, Ukraine will [receive](#) an additional 495 million euros from the World Bank's trust fund.

The U.S. [has begun additional training](#) for the Ukrainian Armed Forces at U.S. military facilities in Germany. Pentagon spokesman John Kirby [said](#) that Germany was one of the sites which the USA used to train the Ukrainian Armed Forces outside Ukraine. Information about the others was not disclosed.

U.S. Congressman Adam Kinzinger [proposes](#) using the U.S. army in Ukraine if Russia uses chemical, biological or nuclear weapons, a proposal he introduced in Congress in a general [resolution](#). For the initiative to work, it must be passed by the House of Representatives, the Senate, and then approved by the president. It is unknown how long the consideration will last.

On May 3, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson [announced](#) a new £300 million package of support for Ukraine. In particular, Britain plans to send anti-ship missile systems, armored vehicles, artillery detection radars, drones and humanitarian aid in the coming weeks. Johnson also stressed that Britain is trying to "strengthen Ukraine so much that no one else dares to encroach on it," and is ready to do everything possible to win Ukraine.

Ukraine and Great Britain have legally [secured](#) the abolition of import duties and tariff quotas in bilateral trade by signing a corresponding agreement. It will be valid for 12 months, but may be extended by agreement between the parties for a new term.

European Council President Charles Michel [supported](#) the confiscation of assets of Russians who are under sanctions in order to use them to compensate for the damage caused by Russia's war against Ukraine, noting that from a legal point of view, the process is long and not easy. He noted that he had instructed the legal service of the European Council to find a legal solution in accordance with the

principles of the rule of law that would facilitate and make possible the confiscation of such assets.

## RUSSIA'S PLANS FOR "VICTORY DAY" MAY 9: THE MEDIA CLAIM THE POSSIBILITY OF MOBILIZATION OR ANNEXATION OF THE SO-CALLED "L/DPR"

CNN, citing U.S. officials, [writes](#) that Russia may officially declare war against Ukraine on May 9 instead of a "special operation," which would be the occasion for a broad mobilization of Russian reserve forces. Other options for Russia to use the symbolic meaning and propaganda value of Victory Day include annexing the occupied territories of Luhansk and Donetsk regions in eastern Ukraine, stepping up the offensive against Odessa, or declaring full control over Mariupol.

U.S. Ambassador to the OSCE Michael Carpenter [noted](#) that the U.S. had intelligence that Russia would attempt to annex the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine in mid-May and then follow a similar scenario in the Kherson region.

Russian Security Council Secretary Nikolay Patrushev [said](#) that it was necessary to ensure the reliable operation of the emergency warning system in the southern regions of the Russian Federation and to bring bomb shelters into proper condition.

The head of Ukrainian Defense Ministry intelligence Kirill Budanov said that the goal of the occupiers was to win by May 9, but they would not be able to achieve it – indirectly [acknowledged](#) by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. Kirill Budanov [believes](#) that Russia is preparing to openly announce the mobilization of people for the war against Ukraine.

[According to Ukrainian intelligence](#), Russia is preparing for a cholera epidemic in regions bordering Ukraine, the purpose of which could be to accuse Ukraine of using biological weapons.

Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, at least six Russian regions have seen arson attacks on military commissariats, the BBC Russian Service [reported](#), citing reports from Russian media and telegram channels.