

HIGHLIGHTS

PULSE OF PEACE IN DONBAS



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WARMING OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH GERMANY

On 5 May, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy [had a phone conversation](#) with his German colleague Frank-Walter Steinmeier. Earlier media [reported](#) that the Ukrainian side refused to hold a meeting with the German president, among the reasons cited was Germany's support for Russia, with Volodymyr Zelenskyy saying that the Ukrainian presidential office [had not received](#) an appeal from the German presidential office regarding the visit.

The German presidential press office [said](#) both presidents called the conversation "very important and very good," and misunderstandings from the past disappeared. Frank-Walter Steinmeier expressed solidarity, respect and support for the Ukrainian people's fight against the Russian invaders, and noted that Germany has supported Ukraine financially, economically and militarily since the war began. Zelensky and Steinmeier agreed to maintain close contact.

The head of the Ukrainian presidential office, Andriy Yermak, [noted](#) that Germany remains a significant ally of Ukraine, and that Russia's hopes of splitting the unity of Europe in support of Ukraine are not justified.

On May 8, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky [held](#) a meeting in Kyiv with the president of the Bundestag of the Federal Republic of Germany, Bärbel Bas. The sides discussed first of all further German defense assistance to Ukraine, as well as the strengthening of sanctions against the Russian aggressor. Volodymyr Zelensky thanked Germany for supporting the sovereignty and territorial integrity, financial

support for Ukraine's economy and called on it to play a leading role in the reconstruction of Ukrainian territories destroyed by the Russian army.

UKRAINE DECLARES COMPLETE EVACUATION OF CIVILIANS FROM AZOVSTAL, UKRAINIAN ARMED FORCES CONTINUE RESISTANCE

Ukrainian army soldiers remain at the Azovstal plant in besieged Mariupol, holding the city's defenses, with Russian units partially breaking into the plant's territory on May 4. Fighting with them continues, the city is under siege and subject to missile and air attacks. [According to British intelligence](#), Russia's renewed attempts to take, rather than just blockade, the Azovstal plant and fully seize Mariupol were probably due to the approach of May 9.

By the morning of May 6, nearly 500 people had been evacuated from Mariupol and Azovstal with UN support, according to the head of the Office of the President [Andrei Yermak](#) and UN Secretary General [Antonio Guterres](#). [According to Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk](#), the Russian side repeatedly [violated](#) the ceasefire during the evacuation. On May 7, the Ukrainian authorities [reported](#) that they had managed to evacuate all women, children and the elderly. At the same time, President Volodymyr Zelensky [said](#) that the next stage involved the evacuation of medics and the wounded. He stressed that the authorities are looking for opportunities to evacuate the military as well, engaging "influential countries" as intermediaries.

On May 8, Mariupol defenders held a [briefing](#) from the blockaded Azovstal. They noted that more than 25,000 residents of the city were killed in the Russian army's attacks on Mariupol, and there are currently several hundred wounded people in need of medical care in the plant's shelters. However, it is impossible to confirm that all civilians have been evacuated from the territory of the plant, since there is no special equipment to remove the rubble. The military said that it considered surrender unacceptable and called on any country other than Russia to intervene to ensure the evacuation. A summary of the briefing is [here](#). Activists and a number of NGOs created a [petition](#) to the UN and leaders around the world calling for the rescue of people stranded in Mariupol. Mikhail Podolyak, adviser to the head of the Office of the President of Ukraine, [said](#) that Ukrainian officials are in touch with the city defenders and are calculating all possible formats for evacuating people, stressing that the issue of de-blockading the city is the sole purview of the armed forces.

THE SITUATION IN DONBAS IS DETERIORATING: EVACUATION FROM LUHANSK REGION IS NO LONGER POSSIBLE

Russian troops do not stop trying to establish full control over Donetsk and Luhansk regions. Pavel Kyrylenko, head of the Donetsk Regional Military Administration, [stated](#) that 334 civilians have been killed and 1,013 wounded in the Donetsk region since Russia began its full-scale invasion. However, it is currently impossible to

establish the exact number of casualties in Mariupol and Volnovakha. The Spektr newspaper [reports](#) on the situation in Kramatorsk and other cities that the Russian army is trying to encircle.

The situation in Severodonetsk (Luhansk region) continues to deteriorate. Despite constant chaotic shelling and the approach of Russian troops trying to encircle the city, 15,000 residents remain in it. On May 6, only three people [agreed to evacuate](#). The head of the Severodonetsk civil-military administration, Oleksandr Struk, [notes](#) that Russian troops continue their attempts to attack the city, and about 80% of the infrastructure has been damaged.

On May 7, the Russian armed forces [dropped](#) a powerful aerial bomb on a school building in the village of Belogorovka in Luhansk Region, where 90 people were hiding from shelling.

[According to preliminary reports](#), 60 people were killed by the strike. Bombing of an oil refinery in Lisichansk [continues](#).

On May 8, the head of the Luhansk Regional Administration, Sergey Gaidai, [stated](#) that it was no longer possible to evacuate from Luhansk Region due to incessant shelling of the Lysychansk-Bakhmut highway.

RUSSIA MAY RESORT TO PROVOCATIONS ON MAY 9

The National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine [predicts](#) an increased risk of intensified shelling by May 9 and urges residents not to ignore air-raid alarms. In many regions a long curfew is introduced.

It is noted that on May 9 there is a possibility of provocations from Russia, including in the [temporarily occupied regions of Ukraine](#). The Main Directorate of Intelligence of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine [assumed](#) that Russian President Vladimir Putin was preparing to announce a general mobilization of Russians on May 9 and recognize the state of war with Ukraine. However, this did not happen. According to Western analysts, the official events timed to coincide with "Victory Day" will be a [warning](#) to Ukraine's partner countries about Russia's nuclear potential.

Read about the situation in the regions by the morning of May 9 [here](#).

THE TENTH PRISONER EXCHANGE HAS TAKEN PLACE

[According to the SBU](#), as of 5 May, Ukraine had carried out nine prisoner exchanges with Russia, which resulted in the release of 324 citizens of Ukraine. Another [exchange](#) took place on May 6, another 41 people were returned to Ukraine, including 11 women - 28 military and 13 civilians. Among those released was the head of the Cathedral of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine. At the same time, about 500 people are illegally held by the Russian armed forces in the temporarily occupied territories of Kherson Oblast alone, as [reported](#) by the Ukrainian presidential representative in Crimea Tamila Tasheva.

G7 COUNTRIES PLEDGED TO GRADUALLY DECLARE AN OIL EMBARGO AND HOLD PUTIN ACCOUNTABLE

On 8 May, the meeting of the G7 leaders was attended by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. In his [address](#), Volodymyr Zelensky called on the "G7" countries to completely cut off export-import relations with Russia, to include all Russian officials, employees of security agencies and judges into the sanctions lists, as well as visa restrictions for Russian citizens. At the end of the meeting, the G7 leaders noted that they would continue to support Ukraine by providing military and financial aid. They [said](#) they would commit to phase out or ban Russian oil imports, continue restrictions on Russian banks, continue efforts to repel Russian propaganda, and ban key services to Russia to increase isolation in all sectors of its economy. In addition, individual sanctions against Russian financial elites will continue and intensify. The leaders pledged to make every effort to bring Russian President Vladimir Putin and others responsible for war crimes to justice.

In addition, on May 8, the White House [announced](#) new U.S. sanctions against Russia, which, in particular, will affect major Russian TV channels, the industrial sector, as well as prohibit Americans to provide financial services to Russians. Click [here](#) for a list of sanctioned individuals.

Discussions continue on a new package of EU sanctions that would include a gradual ban on Russian oil imports. However, [according to Bloomberg](#), agreements on a new package of sanctions were not reached at the May 8 meeting of EU ambassadors. Hungary [continues to block](#) the possibility of banning oil imports, which delays the adoption of the entire package.

The European Commission proposed to freeze the funds of the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Kirill, stored on the territory of the European Union, Reuters [reported](#), citing unnamed officials. The Slidstvo.info project earlier [found out](#) that one of the key roles in the forced removal of Ukrainian civilians to the territory of Russia is played by the Russian Orthodox Church, which coordinates its actions with the Russian security services.

WESTERN COUNTRIES CONTINUE AID TO UKRAINE

On 7 May, US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken [announced](#) that he would allocate additional aid to Ukraine – [arms](#) and equipment from the US Department of Defense stocks worth 150 million dollars. He stressed that the U.S. would continue to supply Ukraine with weapons to defend the country, provide direct financial support, support documentation of evidence of Russian war crimes, and continue to put pressure on the Russian economy.

Estonia promises to help Ukraine with the restoration of the Zhytomyr region and de-mining of the liberated territories, as well as fully supports Ukraine's EU candidate status, Estonian Foreign Minister Eva-Maria Liimets [said](#) at a press conference.

[Canada](#) will also provide military aid to Ukraine in the amount of about 40 million dollars.

UN SECURITY COUNCIL ADOPTS RESOLUTION ON PEACE IN UKRAINE

The UN Security Council met on the night of 6 May to discuss the issue of maintaining peace and security in Ukraine. The Ukrainian representative to the UN, Serhiy Kyslytsya, [said](#) that Russia was creating a food crisis not only in Ukraine but also in other countries and suggested that it was done on purpose. He called on the international community to strengthen economic sanctions against Russia. British spokeswoman Barbara Woodward [said](#) that Russia's killing of Ukrainian civilians was deliberate.

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres [said](#) that the meeting resulted in the first official [statement](#) on the situation in Ukraine. However, there was no mention of war, conflict or invasion by Russian troops. In the statement, the Security Council "expresses its deep concern for the maintenance of peace and security of Ukraine" and "recalls that all member states have undertaken, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the obligation to settle their international disputes by peaceful means. The text of the statement was drafted by Norway and Mexico, but was negotiated by consensus, including with the participation of Russia.