

HIGHLIGHTS

PULSE OF PEACE IN DONBAS



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LIBERATION OF NEW TERRITORIES, INVESTIGATION OF CRIMES

President Volodymyr Zelensky [reported](#) that as of May 13, Ukraine had already de-occupied 1,015 settlements in which electricity, water, communications, transportation, and social services have been returned.

The Graty forensic journalism portal [reports](#) on what is now happening in Bucha (Kyiv region) and the progress of the investigation into the killing of civilians by Russian servicemen.

CNN [published](#) surveillance video of a car center near Kyiv. It shows Russian soldiers shooting two civilians in the back and killing them. Journalists were able to identify those killed, according to CNN, the footage was made on March 16. The TV channel identified the military in the video as belonging to the Russian army based on their uniforms, eyewitness testimony and on an analysis of the disposition of forces controlling the territory. "Important Stories" [identified](#) one of the five soldiers who were in the office of the car center near where the murders took place. Presumably, it is 29-year-old Dmitry Lapshakov. Russia has denied any involvement in the mass killings.

CNN journalists also [identified](#) the Russian general who ordered the firing of Smerchies into Kharkiv – he was also the commander of the Russian army group in Syria.

THE WAR SITUATION: HIGH LOSSES OF RUSSIAN TROOPS, CHANGES IN TARGETS IN DONBAS

People who have left Kharkiv and the region since the start of the war are gradually [returning](#). Despite Russia's success in encircling the city in the initial stages of a full-scale war, the occupiers withdrew some of their forces from the region to reorganize and replenish losses, British intelligence [notes](#). At the same time, the bodies of 44 civilians were found under the rubble of a five-story building destroyed by shelling back in early March in the temporarily occupied [Izyum](#), Kharkiv Region. On the night of May 16, soldiers from one of Ukraine's territorial defense battalions pushed back Russian units and [entered the state border](#) with Russia in the Kharkiv region.

Between May 8 and 13, Ukrainian military forces prevented [nine attempts](#) by Russian occupation troops to cross the Seversky Donets River in the Luhansk region. [According to The New York Times](#), the losses of the troops attempting to cross the river are among the largest since the beginning of the war. It is estimated that more than 400 Russian soldiers were killed or wounded there. The General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Armed Forces [notes](#) that the command of the Russian Armed Forces is trying to recruit and replenish troops at the expense of the reserves.

[According to the American Institute for the Study of War \(ISW\)](#), the Russian armed forces have probably abandoned the goal of completing a large-scale blockade of Ukrainian units from Donetsk to Izyum (Kharkiv region), and intend to complete the capture of the Luhansk region, including Severodonetsk and Lisichansk.

The region was badly damaged in the fighting, with a number of settlements almost completely destroyed, including [Popasna](#), whose residents are being forcibly removed to the occupied territories. "Meduza" [describes](#) how the system of "filtration camps" for Ukrainians organized by the Russian military is arranged, and the Ukrainian media Babel [spoke](#) with relatives of people held in the camp.

NEGOTIATIONS TO EVACUATE PEOPLE FROM AZOVSTAL: RUSSIA REJECTS OFFERS

The situation at the blockaded Azovstal plant in Mariupol continues to deteriorate. On May 9, Russian troops continued to [shell it](#), launching [34](#) sorties to do so throughout May 9. The wounded military personnel [need to be evacuated](#) and it is practically [impossible](#) to provide them with medical assistance under the current conditions. Ukraine seeks an [extraction procedure](#) for the wounded fighters, medics and soldiers who continue to defend Azovstal, and is ready to [exchange](#) them for captive Russian servicemen according to the standard rules. At the same time, [according to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky](#), Russia does not agree to any of the many options offered to rescue Ukrainian soldiers. Minister of Reintegration Iryna Vereshchuk [specified](#) that Ukraine is negotiating the evacuation of 38 seriously wounded people, and after that negotiations will take place to rescue the rest.

Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the UN Serhiy Kyslytsya [called](#) for help with the evacuation of the wounded from the area of Azovstal at the UN Security Council meeting. Relatives of the servicemen [appealed](#) to Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan to mediate in this matter. Erdogan's spokesman [confirmed](#) that Turkey is ready to provide a ship for the evacuation, but Moscow does not agree to such a proposal. Another option of a mediator country could be [China](#). The Ukrainian Defense Ministry [stressed](#) that a military de-blockade of Mariupol is impossible at the moment.

UKRAINE NEEDS ABOUT €600 BILLION TO RECOVER, EU WILL COVER A SIGNIFICANT PART

As of May 10, the total amount of direct documented [damage](#) to Ukraine's infrastructure as a result of the destruction during the war was already more than \$94.3 billion, or nearly 2.8 trillion hryvnas. The total losses of Ukraine's economy due to the war range from \$564 billion to \$600 billion. These are both direct and indirect losses - reduction of GDP, cessation of investments, outflow of labor force, additional expenses on defense and social support.

Valdis Dombrovskis, vice-president of the European Commission, [stated](#) that Ukraine needs about 500-600 billion euros for reconstruction after the war. He promised that the EU would cover a "significant" part of this amount. He noted that a proposal linking this support to structural reforms that Ukraine may need as an EU candidate will be made available later. This amount is likely to increase as the war continues.

Ruslan Stefanchuk, speaker of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, [notes](#) that Russia will have to rebuild everything that was destroyed in Ukraine as a result of the war. Ukraine's state authorities are currently continuing to assess the losses for Russia's reparations. If Russia refuses to pay, the costs will be covered by funds from arrested Russian property. On May 10, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine [approved](#) a document, according to which all Russian assets on the territory of Ukraine are transferred to state ownership. Economic Pravda offers its [analysis](#).

LEND-LEASE FROM THE U.S., AID FROM THE EU, RUSSIA RECOGNIZED AS A TERRORIST STATE

On May 9, U.S. President Joe Biden [signed](#) the Ukraine Lend-Lease and Democracy Protection Act, giving him expanded authority to transfer or lease defense assets to Ukraine to protect civilians from Russian military invasion and for other purposes.

On May 10, the U.S. House of Representatives [approved](#) a new aid package for Ukraine worth nearly \$40 billion; the document is currently awaiting consideration by the U.S. Senate. The vote could [take place](#) on May 18.

The U.S. [has suspended](#) the imposition of a 25% duty on Ukrainian steel and steel products.

The Seimas of Lithuania [recognized](#) Russia as a terrorist state and stated that its troops are committing massive war crimes on the territory of Ukraine. A [similar resolution](#) is [proposed](#) to the US Senate. [According to David Arahamia](#), a member of the Ukrainian delegation at negotiations with Russia, it will symbolize Russia's complete "disqualification" from the civilized world.

The Czech Senate [recognized](#) the crimes committed by the Russian army in Ukraine as genocide of the Ukrainian people.

The European Union [will pay](#) the second tranche of emergency macrofinancial aid for Ukraine in the amount of 600 million euros by May 20. It has also agreed to create transport "[solidarity lines](#)" to help Ukraine export agricultural products.

The G7 countries plan to provide Ukraine with 30 billion euros of financial support during the war, with the final decision yet to be made, [Spiegel wrote](#).

THE EU DISCUSSES THE TERMS OF THE BAN ON RUSSIAN OIL

The international working group on sanctions against Russia ("Ermak-Makfol group") [presented](#) the Road Map of energy sanctions. The experts support a complete embargo of Russian oil and give recommendations for a gradual introduction of the ban to minimize disruption in the market. The document also mentions additional sanctions to prevent circumvention of restrictions imposed on the energy sector and notes the importance of disconnecting Russia from financial flows from gas exports.

The European Union [plans](#) to spend about 195 billion euros over the next 5 years to ensure energy independence from Russia. At the same time, the EU is [considering](#) providing financial compensation to Hungary for Prime Minister Viktor Orban to sign the sixth package of sanctions against Russia. The money could be channelled as part of the EU's new energy strategy. The current proposal for an embargo on Russian oil stipulates that Hungary will be able to continue buying Russian oil until the end of 2024, but the country says it needs more time to reduce its dependence on Russian oil. Hungarian Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó [said](#) that the European Union's ban on Russian oil will cost Hungary 700 million euros.

The European Commission has prepared revised recommendations for EU companies to buy Russian gas, the European Commission said at a closed meeting on May 13, [Bloomberg said](#), citing participants in the meeting. Some European Union countries [support](#) the possibility of agreeing to delay the ban on Russian oil for the sake of introducing other proposed sanctions. At that, Germany [plans](#) to stop importing Russian oil by the end of the year, even if the European Union fails to agree on a general ban as part of the next package of sanctions.

New sanctions against legal entities and individuals were also adopted by [Great Britain](#), [New Zealand](#), [Japan](#) and [Latvia](#).

SCENARIOS FOR THE END OF THE WAR: EXPERT OPINIONS

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba [said](#) that Ukraine has changed its vision of victory in the war with Russia: in case Ukrainian troops succeed in the battle for Donbas, the state will operate to liberate the remaining occupied territories.

[According to former U.S. Ambassador to Ukraine and director of the Atlantic Council Eurasia Center John Herbst](#), Russian President Vladimir Putin will have to admit that the "special military operation" was a failure. There are two possible scenarios for the end of the war: the first is a cease-fire along the contact line, with the risk that Russia will retain the territories it occupied before February 24, and the second is the cessation of all offensive operations and withdrawal of Russian troops from the entire territory of Ukraine. According to a number of experts, winning the war includes three components: the return of Russian armed forces to the borders as of February 23, the U.S. agreeing to make long-term commitments to fully restore Ukrainian sovereignty - that is, the return of Crimea and Donbas, and the return to Ukraine of residents who had been kidnapped and forcibly removed to Russia.

"Hromadske" [collected](#) the opinions of Western experts on the possibilities of predicting the end of the war and the importance of military assistance from partners for this purpose. The Washington Post [reports](#) that the U.S. presidential administration has developed internal guidelines for intelligence officials to share data with Ukraine, which prohibit the transfer of information about Russia's top military leadership and targets outside Ukraine. The purpose of the guidelines is to avoid increasing tensions between Washington and Moscow.

DEBATE OVER UKRAINE'S ACCESSION TO THE EU

On 9 May, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky [said](#) that the second part of the completed questionnaire for Ukraine's candidate status for EU membership had been handed over. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said that a decision could be made as early as June. Hungary's newly elected president Catalina Novak also [announced](#) her support for granting Ukraine candidate status. At the same time, Russia's deputy permanent representative to the UN, Dmitriy Polyanskiy, [said](#) that Russia's position on Ukraine's accession to the EU had changed, now being opposed there.

[According to French President Emmanuel Macron](#), the process of joining the European Union may take several decades, he suggests creating a new organization for democratic European countries which are not members of the EU. His idea was [supported](#) by German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, while German Foreign Minister Annalena Berbock [said](#) that Germany insisted on Ukraine's full membership in the European Union. Mykhaylo Podolyak, adviser to the head of the Ukrainian presidential office, [criticized](#) Macron's proposal as an attempt to offer Ukraine an alternative to EU membership. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba [said](#) that such forms of cooperation were not suitable for Ukraine and that it would be a "deception" on the part of the EU if Ukraine did not receive candidate status for accession in June.

REPRESSIONS AGAINST ANTI-WAR ACTIVISTS AND THE MEDIA CONTINUE IN RUSSIA

Russian President Vladimir Putin delivered his Victory Day [speech](#) on May 9. Despite speculation, he did not officially declare war or announce mobilization, but once again accused Western countries and NATO of abandoning the dialogue Russia had allegedly called for. According to him, Russia "delivered a preemptive strike against aggression," and the decision to go to war was timely and the only correct one. [According to the Ukrainian Defense Ministry's Main Intelligence Directorate](#), Russia has changed its propaganda narratives due to military setbacks: Russian media now describe the war as a confrontation with EU and NATO countries.

After Russia's invasion of Ukraine began, Russian law enforcement agencies repeatedly reported the detention of suspected terrorist operatives who were allegedly linked to Ukrainian security services or "Ukrainian nationalists." The FSB [said](#) it had detained a resident of Kursk Oblast "who was preparing terrorist attacks in coordination with Ukrainian special services."

Roskomnadzor [continues](#) to block Internet resources covering the war to make it more difficult for Russian residents to access objective information about the real situation, but resistance to government propaganda continues. Between May 13 and 15 alone, there were [three attempts](#) to set fire to military recruitment centers in the country, and a total of [at least 11](#) since the start of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Radio Svoboda [reports](#) on anti-war protests in Kuban. On May 9, more than a hundred people were [detained](#) for anti-war pickets in Russia, and about [2,000 cases](#) were opened under the article "discrediting" the Russian army. A report from the Belgorod region, where authorities regularly report about alleged shelling from Ukraine, can be found [here](#).