

Ukraine Crisis Update



The following will be periodically updated to reflect important developments associated with the crisis in Ukraine. This report details developments that have occurred over the last 24 hours. Please refer to previous reports for prior developments. Details and locations for individual risk events are available on the Everbridge Visual Command Center (VCC) platform.

All times UTC

Italicized entries indicate reports that are unconfirmed. The fluid and dynamic nature of the situation carries an elevated risk of misinformation and disinformation. The RIMC is cognizant of this, and analysts are working diligently to corroborate the veracity of sources to ensure accurate reporting.

MARCH 3, 2022

2132: Media sources report that the U.S. has opened a direct line of communication with the Russian Defense Ministry to avoid “unintended conflict” near Ukraine.

2028: *Social media posts emerge indicating that sources inside Russia claim Russian borders will be closed within 48, possibly 24, hours amid growing rumors that the Kremlin will declare martial law on March 4, possibly sooner.* **Everbridge Analysis:** Despite denying such plans, it appears increasingly likely that the Kremlin will decide in favor of imposing martial law at least in some major cities on March 4. If imposed, martial law would likely include a complete ban on protest activity in light of recent anti-war demonstrations and calls by opposition politician Alexei Navalny for further such gatherings and civil disobedience. Additionally, mandatory conscription to the military and curfews are possible. Russian authorities would likely also ramp up crackdowns on any media outlets, both foreign- and Russian-owned, that have been spreading information on the war effort in Ukraine that is unaligned with the Kremlin’s intended narrative of the conflict. With regards to the motivation for potentially imposing martial law, a directive of this nature could be a response to a growing rift between Putin and other high-ranking officials in the Kremlin. For instance, there is growing media speculation that some Russian oligarchs who have suffered significant financial losses as a result of Western sanctions and high-ranking government officials could be plotting to use the Ukraine war and strong international condemnation of the invasion as pretext to forcibly remove Putin from power. Thus, the potential martial law declaration could be an attempt by Putin to pre-empt any such attempts.

1948: J.P. Morgan Chase & Co. forecasts that the Russian economy will contract by 35 percent in the second quarter in 2022, and by seven percent overall for the year, due to Western sanctions.

1937: Media sources report that the U.S. has imposed sanctions on Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov.

1814: Western media reports that Russian and Ukrainian delegations have concluded talks, having agreed to commit to establishing humanitarian corridors to evacuate civilians and provide aid, including supplying critical goods like medicine and food, with temporarily localized ceasefires to be enacted around the humanitarian corridors while evacuations and aid provision is ongoing. A third round of talks will be held in the coming days. **Everbridge Analysis:** While the agreement could reduce the risk of civilian casualties and ease deteriorating humanitarian conditions in areas affected by heavy fighting, it also signals the possibility that the Kremlin has agreed to facilitate evacuations before significantly ramping up its military campaign in Ukraine. On Thursday, U.S. defense officials said that Moscow now has 90 percent of its pre-staged combat capabilities in Ukraine, reportedly a 15 percent increase since February 28. When coupled with widespread accounts that Russia has become more aggressive in its artillery and aerial attacks, this suggests that Russian forces could be preparing a more concerted push in the coming days. This could include in southern Ukraine, where advances have been more appreciable and could potentially entail a move on Odesa and/or Mykolaiv, the capture of which would allow Russian forces to link up with troops near Kyiv and effectively cut the country in half, a significant blow to the Ukrainian government.

1656: Moldova formally applies for EU membership. **Everbridge Analysis:** The move is likely an attempt by Chisinau to lower the risk of the Russian offensive in Ukraine possibly spilling over into the breakaway Transnistria region bordering Ukraine, where Russian troops are stationed in support of a separatist government, and potentially further into Moldavian territory. It remains to be seen whether the EU will seek to fast-track Moldova's application to the bloc like Ukraine's considering that the active conflict in Ukraine makes the question of the country's potential membership more time-sensitive than in Moldova's case. By extension, while Moldova's application for EU membership is a significant development that reflects generally growing fears of potential Russian aggression among European governments in light of the Ukraine war, it remains to be seen whether Chisinau's move will have any bearing on the possibility of the Russian military operation in Ukraine spilling over into Moldavian territory.

1627: Media sources report that all flights to Armenia from Moscow are either significantly delayed or cancelled altogether.

1544: Russian oil company Lukoil issues statement calling for end to Kremlin's military operation in Ukraine and expressing support for a "resolution through negotiations and diplomatic means." **Everbridge Analysis:** Lukoil's statement marks a rare high-profile display of domestic opposition to Russia's military operation in Ukraine. The developments come after Lukoil's share price fell by 95 percent on the London Stock Exchange on March 2, with the company's owner, Vagit Alekperov, said to have lost as much as US \$13 billion in his personal wealth as a result of the drop. Indeed, these factors suggest Lukoil's statement was financially motivated; however, it could also signal concern among wealthy Russian businessmen and other elites who stand to incur losses of financial and material assets as a result of Western sanctions. These individuals could exert pressure on the Kremlin and possibly even cause it to alter its strategy in Ukraine.

1521: *Media sources allege that Russian lawmakers have submitted to the State Duma draft legislation that would purportedly conscript anyone prosecuted as an anti-war demonstrator to the Russian military and deploy them to the self-proclaimed Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics.*

1516: Media sources report that a Russian plane en route to Yerevan, Armenia from Moscow was diverted and landed in southern Russia, before being sent back to the capital. Media sources subsequently indicate that there are reports of planes on other routes also being diverted, preventing citizens from leaving the country by air. **Everbridge Analysis:** From a practical standpoint, the flight diversions could be an attempt by Russian airlines to avoid losing aircraft to Western leasing companies intent on terminating leases and subsequently repossessing planes upon landing abroad as part of Western sanctions. However, the diversions could also be aimed at preventing a mass exodus of Russians from the country amid its growing isolation and the rapid deterioration of the economy. This would include military-age males, as, according to some speculation, the Kremlin may be planning to introduce mandatory conscription.

1502: Ukrainian officials confirm that Russia-Ukraine negotiations have begun on the Poland-Belarus border. Ukrainian diplomats will reportedly attempt to agree on the establishment of humanitarian corridors to provide essential supplies like food to Ukrainian cities being targeted by Russian forces.

1451: Mayor of Bucha indicates that Ukrainian and Russian forces are clashing between the city and Vozel, located on the western outskirts of Kyiv.

1448: Media reports indicate foreign correspondents are leaving Russia due to fears of martial law being imposed in the coming hours or days. Reports from the correspondents suggest that people are leaving the country en masse.

1448: Canada imposes 35 percent tariffs on Russian and Belarusian imports.

1440: Russian media reports that Russian Defense Minister spokesman Igor Konashenkov has warned that any “foreign mercenaries,” referring to non-Ukrainians joining the war effort in support of Ukraine, who are detained by Russian forces in Ukraine will not be granted prisoner of war status and will face criminal charges.

1413: Media outlets report that Ukraine has banned the export of natural gas from its underground stores. Transit of natural gas through Ukraine is unaffected.

1410: Media reports emerge indicating Georgia has formally applied for EU membership.

1323: Media sources report that Estonian-owned cargo ship Helt has sunk off the coast of Ukraine, with some reports indicating the vessel hit a mine. **Everbridge Analysis:** If the ship was indeed damaged by a mine, the incident would reflect a significant degradation of the security environment on the Black Sea and possibly the Sea of Azov. Those with interests in maritime activities in the area are strongly advised to avoid any transit via the bodies of water due to related security concerns.

1235: Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba claims that Russian troops have allegedly pointed multiple rocket-launching systems in Popovka in Russia’s Voronezh Oblast at Russian territory, which Ukrainian officials allege may reflect preparations for a “false flag” operation accusing Ukrainian forces of attacking Russian territory to justify escalating the Russian attack against Ukraine.

1235: Media outlets report that Swedish furniture manufacturer IKEA has suspended its activities in Russia, including ceasing operations at 17 stores and three production sites, and in Belarus.

1216: Media sources report that Russia’s space agency Roskosmos has suspended deliveries of rocket engines to the U.S. in retaliation for Western sanctions.

1155: Japanese media reports that Japan Airlines Co Ltd and ANA Holdings Inc have cancelled all flights to and from Europe on March 3 and have either cancelled or rerouted flights to the region on March 4 due to safety concerns associated with the war in Ukraine, as the airlines typically use Russian airspace for their flights to Europe.

1141: French President Emmanuel Macron finishes a call with President Putin. French officials indicate that during the call Putin vowed “no let-up” in the invasion of Ukraine. Macron’s aides reportedly suggest Putin indicated he plans to seize all of Ukraine and that the Kremlin might add to its demands at future negotiations if Kyiv stalls de-escalation talks.

Everbridge Analysis: The reports suggest that today’s negotiations on the Poland-Belarus border are highly unlikely to result in a ceasefire. Additionally, as Kyiv reportedly plans to request the establishment of humanitarian corridors to ensure supply of essential goods to besieged cities and those being targeted by Russian troops, it appears likely that the Russian delegation will make new demands in exchange for potentially agreeing to establish the corridors.

1127: Media sources report that the London Stock Exchange has suspended trading 28 companies with ties to Russia, including Russian majority state-owned energy company Gazprom and Russia’s second-largest lender Sberbank. The Exchange stated that the suspension was prompted by Western sanctions and the resultant drop in the companies’ share prices.

1036: Russian-state media reports that Japanese automaker Suzuki, following other car manufacturers, will stop deliveries of cars and motorcycles to Russia.

1034: Media sources report global communications company and satellite operator OneWeb has suspended all satellite launches from Russia’s Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan.

1023: Estonian media reports that the Board of the Chamber of Agriculture and Commerce has indicated that Estonian farmers and food producers are at significant risk of having their operations be disrupted by the war in Ukraine and related sanctions on Russia and Belarus, as the majority of fertilizers used in Estonia are imported from Russia and Ukraine, tractors are usually purchased from Belarus, and animal feed from Ukraine.

0930: Ukraine appeals to the IAEA to request that NATO restrict the airspace over its nuclear power plants to protect against potential acts of nuclear terrorism, according to Ukraine's energy ministry. **Everbridge Analysis:** As of this writing, there has been no indication of any specific, credible risk of nuclear terrorism in terms of Russian troops deliberately attacking nuclear power plants in Ukraine as a means of placing pressure on Kyiv to force its surrender. This is supported by the fact that Zaporizhzhya power plant's capture by Russian forces did not result in any noticeable upticks in radiation levels or disruptions to the plant's operations, according to media sources. Kyiv's appeal to NATO is therefore most likely purely precautionary. Furthermore, NATO is unlikely to abide, as the requested restriction of airspace would entail NATO aircraft operating over Ukraine, which would certainly be perceived by Russia as the Alliance becoming directly involved in the conflict, likely prompting a Russian military response against NATO.

0927: *Unconfirmed statistics emerge suggesting that 16,000 foreign born people have volunteered and travelled to Ukraine in order join its defensive forces.*

0856: Videos emerge showing a diesel storage facility in Chernihiv burning after alleged Russian shelling.

0836: *The Ukrainian armed forces update their figures on the total Russian losses to-date. The new statistics suggest that Russia has lost 9,000 troops, 217 tanks, 30 fixed wing aircraft, 31 helicopters, 900 armored personnel carriers, 90 artillery pieces, 42 multiple rocket launchers, 11 anti-aircraft systems, 374 "fighting vehicles", 2 boats, 60 cisterns, and 3 UAVs. The figures have not been independently verified.*

0826: *The Commander in Chief of the Ukrainian armed forces, Lieutenant General Valerii Zaluzhnyi, reports that Ukrainian air defense troops have shot down a Russian Su-30 fighter jet near Irpin.*

0813: Satellite imagery shows residents queueing in multiple Ukrainian cities to purchase food and other basic supplies.

0809: *Reports emerge of a large Russian naval presence in the Black Sea, off the coast of Crimea. Among the group of vessels are several landing craft, prompting speculation that an amphibious assault near Odesa may soon be underway. Media sources subsequently report that several Russian warships have departed from Crimea and appear to be headed towards Odesa. Everbridge Analysis:* Over the past few days, reports of an alleged imminent amphibious assault against Odesa have surfaced periodically and been subsequently proven false. However, Russian forces have been gaining ground in southern Ukraine relatively steadily and have slowly advanced westward along the coast towards Odesa, suggesting that it cannot be ruled out that Russian troops could target the critical port city in the coming days, possibly hours. The assault would likely include both an amphibious attack from the Black Sea and a subsequent attack by Russian ground troops, although as of this writing Russian ground troops remain a considerable distance away from Odesa.

0754: The Latvian armed forces report that 90 drones have been delivered to Ukraine.

0740: Media outlets report that separatist forces from the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic engaged in the ongoing Russian assault against Mariupol have stated that the attack will continue until the city surrenders. Outages of water, electricity, and heating have been reported in the besieged city of Mariupol as a result of the attack, which has been ongoing since March 2. **Everbridge Analysis:** Mariupol remains under attack by Russian and Russian-backed forces from all directions. At the time of this writing, Ukrainian forces continue to fend off the assault and remain in control of the city; however, it appears Mariupol is at risk of capture. Such a scenario would further reduce Kyiv's maritime access and help propel a Russian advance on Kyiv.

0720 Sumy has been struck by shelling, some reportedly hitting the military faculty building at Sumy State University. According to Sumy Regional State Department Dmitry Zhivitsky, five people have sustained injuries.

0715: *Media outlets report that the General Staff of the Ukrainian Army has claimed it is in possession of documents*

regarding the Russian invasion plan that were left behind by retreating Russian soldiers. The alleged plans suggest that the Kremlin approved the war plan on January 18 and that the invasion was originally planned to begin on February 20 and end by March 6. **Everbridge Analysis:** If confirmed, the development would indicate that Moscow had made the decision to attack Ukraine more than a month before the start of the so-called “special military operation.” This, in turn, would suggest that the Kremlin’s attempts towards a diplomatic solution prior to February 24 were merely superficial and reinforce doubt as to its intentions in the March 3 negotiations and any others that follow. Additionally, the abbreviated war timeline seems to highlight earlier speculation that Russia is keen on avoiding a protracted, costly conflict in Ukraine. As such, the Kremlin could either significantly ramp up its assault in the near future in hopes of accelerating Kyiv’s surrender, or potentially consider more limited objectives as opposed to the more maximalist positions it has established previously.

0702: Media reports emerge indicating that Hungarian Prime Minister Victor Orban has announced he will not veto EU sanctions on Russia, stating that the “unity of the EU is paramount” with regards to punitive measures against Russia.

0659: UK Ministry of Defense publishes intelligence assessment indicating that the main body of a Russian military column that has been approaching Kyiv remains more than 30 kilometers (18 miles) away from the city after being delayed by strong Ukrainian resistance, congestion, and mechanical failures. Elsewhere, Russian forces have continued to shell Kharkiv, Chernihiv, and Mariupol but the cities remain under Ukrainian control. The intelligence report appears to cast some doubt on previous reports regarding alleged Russian control of the city of Kherson, stating that “some” Russian troops have entered the city but that the military situation remains unclear.

0635 News outlets state that Russian troops are in Kherson after forcing their way into the council building. Restrictions have been imposed on the city with a nightly curfew between 2000 and 0600 local time with vehicles transporting food, medicines and other necessities permitted to enter the city.

0515 United Nations Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi states that at least one million Ukrainians have fled the country since Russia’s invasion began seven days ago.

0245 Sources indicate that Okhtyrka and Kharkiv sustained heavy damages after Russian shelling overnight. In Kharkiv, Russian strikes hit at least three schools and Kharkiv’s Assumption Cathedral. In Okhtyrka, dozens of residential buildings were destroyed.

0015 Residential area of Izyum has been struck by Russian military shelling. According to deputy mayor Volodymyr Matsokin, at least six civilians have been killed after shelling struck an apartment building and a private house.

0001 The International Criminal Court (ICC) has confirmed it is opening an investigation into possible war crimes in Ukraine after 38 countries formally referred reports of atrocities, the largest referral the court has ever received.

UK Government Assessment of Russian Offensive in Ukraine



Source: UK Ministry of Defense

<https://twitter.com/defencehq/status/1499370960973086721?s=21>



Tactical Resolution Team contextual layers for the ongoing crisis in Ukraine are available for clients within our VCC platform. For more information contact your customer success manager or account team.