

# Russian invasion of Ukraine



Russian invasion of Ukraine	
Part of the Russo-Ukrainian War (outline)	
	
<p>Military situation as of 5 August 2023 (<a href="#">Detailed map</a>)</p> <p>Controlled by:  Ukraine  Russia </p>	
<b>Date</b>	24 February 2022 – present (1 year, 5 months, 1 week and 6 days)
<b>Location</b>	Ukraine, occasionally also <a href="#">Russia</a>
<b>Status</b>	Ongoing ( <a href="#">list of engagements</a> · <a href="#">territorial control</a> · <a href="#">timeline of events</a> )
Belligerents	
 <a href="#">Russia</a>	 <a href="#">Ukraine</a> <sup>[c]</sup>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪  <a href="#">Donetsk PR</a><sup>[a]</sup></li> <li>▪  <a href="#">Luhansk PR</a><sup>[a]</sup></li> </ul>	
<b>Supported by:</b>  <a href="#">Belarus</a> <sup>[b]</sup>	
Commanders and leaders	
 <a href="#">Vladimir Putin</a>	 <a href="#">Volodymyr Zelenskyy</a>
<a href="#">Aleksandr Dvornikov</a>	<a href="#">Valerii Zaluzhnyi</a>
<a href="#">Gennady Zhidko</a>	<a href="#">Oleksandr Syrskyi</a>
<a href="#">Sergey Surovikin</a>	
<a href="#">Valery Gerasimov</a>	

Units involved	
Order of battle	Order of battle
Strength	
<b>Pre-invasion at border:</b> 169,000– 190,000 <sup>[d][4][5]</sup>	<b>Pre-invasion total:</b> 196,600 military <sup>[9]</sup> 102,000 paramilitary <sup>[9]</sup>
<b>Pre-invasion total:</b> 900,000 military <sup>[6]</sup> 554,000 paramilitary <sup>[6]</sup>	<b>July 2022 total:</b> up to 700,000 <sup>[10]</sup>
<b>In February 2023:</b> + 200,000 newly mobilised soldiers <sup>[7]</sup>	
<b>In May 2023:</b> 300,000+ active personnel in Ukraine <sup>[8]</sup>	
Casualties and losses	
Reports vary widely, see § Casualties for details.	

On 24 February 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine in an escalation of the Russo-Ukrainian War which began in 2014. The invasion has killed tens of thousands on both sides. Russian forces have been responsible for mass civilian casualties and for torturing captured Ukrainian soldiers. By June 2022, about 8 million Ukrainians had been internally displaced. More than 8.2 million had fled the country by May 2023, becoming Europe's largest refugee crisis since World War II. Extensive environmental damage, widely described as ecocide, contributed to food crises worldwide.

Prior to the invasion, Russian troops concentrated near Ukraine's borders, as Russian officials denied plans to attack. Vladimir Putin announced a "special military operation" to support the breakaway republics of Donetsk and Luhansk, whose military forces were fighting Ukraine in the Donbas conflict, claiming the goal was to "demilitarise" and "denazify" Ukraine. Putin espoused irredentist views, challenged Ukraine's right to exist, and falsely claimed that Ukraine was governed by neo-Nazis persecuting the ethnic Russian minority. Russian air strikes and a ground invasion launched at a northern front from Belarus towards Kyiv, a north-eastern front towards Kharkiv, a southern front from Crimea, and a south-eastern front from the Donbas. Ukraine enacted martial law and ordered a general mobilisation.

Russian troops retreated from the northern front by April 2022. On the southern and south-eastern fronts, Russia captured Kherson in March and Mariupol in May after a destructive siege. In April, Russia launched a renewed battle of Donbas. Russian forces continued to bomb military and civilian targets far from the front line, including the energy grid through the winter. In late 2022, Ukraine launched counteroffensives in the south and east. Soon after, Russia announced the illegal annexation of four partly-occupied oblasts. In November, Ukraine retook parts of Kherson Oblast. In February 2023, Russia mobilised nearly 200,000 soldiers for a new offensive in Donbas. In June 2023, Ukraine launched another counteroffensive in the southeast.

The invasion was met with international condemnation. The United Nations General Assembly passed Resolution ES-11/1 condemning the invasion and demanding a full Russian withdrawal. The International Court of Justice ordered Russia to suspend military operations and the Council of Europe expelled Russia.

Many countries imposed sanctions on Russia and its ally Belarus, and provided humanitarian and military aid and sales to Ukraine. Protests occurred around the world, with anti-war protesters in Russia subject to mass arrests and increased media censorship. Over 1,000 companies left Russia and Belarus in response to the invasion. The International Criminal Court (ICC) opened an investigation into possible crimes against humanity, war crimes, abduction of children, and genocide, issuing an arrest warrant for Putin in March 2023.

## Background

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After the Soviet Union (USSR) dissolved in 1991, the newly independent republics of Ukraine and Russia maintained ties. Ukraine agreed in 1994 to sign the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and dismantle the nuclear weapons in Ukraine left by the USSR.<sup>[11]</sup> In return, Russia, the United Kingdom (UK), and the United States (US) agreed in the Budapest Memorandum to uphold the territorial integrity of Ukraine.<sup>[12][13]</sup> In 1999, Russia signed the Charter for European Security, which "reaffirm[ed] the inherent right of each and every participating state to be free to choose or change its security arrangements, including treaties of alliance".<sup>[14]</sup> After the Soviet Union dissolved, several former Eastern Bloc countries joined NATO, partly due to regional security threats such as the 1993 Russian constitutional crisis, the War in Abkhazia (1992–1993) and the First Chechen War (1994–1996).<sup>[15]</sup> Russia's president, Vladimir Putin, claimed NATO members had promised in 1990 not to let any Eastern European countries join, but this is disputed.<sup>[16][17]</sup> At the 2008 Bucharest summit, Ukraine and Georgia sought to join NATO.<sup>[18]</sup> The response from NATO members was divided, with Western European countries worried about antagonising Russia.<sup>[19]</sup> NATO refused to offer Ukraine and Georgia membership, but Jaap de Hoop Scheffer also issued a statement agreeing that both countries will become members of NATO one day.<sup>[20]</sup> De Hoop Scheffer stated "We agreed today that these countries will become members of NATO".<sup>[21]</sup> Putin strongly opposed the NATO membership bids,<sup>[22]</sup> and Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov said Russia would do everything it could to prevent their admittance.<sup>[23]</sup>

## Ukrainian unrest, Russian activity in Crimea and Donbas



Ukraine, with the annexed Crimea in the south and two Russia-backed separatist republics in Donbas in the east

In November 2013, Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovych suddenly cancelled the signing of an association agreement with the European Union (EU), overruling the Ukrainian parliament and instead choosing closer ties with the Russian-led Eurasian Economic Union. Russia had put pressure on Ukraine to reject the agreement.<sup>[24]</sup> This triggered a wave of protests known as Euromaidan, culminating in the removal of Yanukovych in February 2014 and subsequent pro-Russian unrest in eastern and southern parts of Ukraine. Russian soldiers without insignia took control of strategic positions and infrastructure in the Ukrainian territory of Crimea, and seized the Crimean Parliament. In March, Russia organised a controversial referendum and annexed Crimea. This was followed by the outbreak of the war in Donbas, which began in April 2014 when armed Russia-backed separatists seized Ukrainian government buildings, proclaiming the independent Donetsk People's Republic and Luhansk People's Republic.<sup>[25][26]</sup> Russian troops were involved in the conflict.<sup>[27][28][29]</sup> The Minsk agreements signed in September 2014 and February 2015 were a bid to stop the fighting, but ceasefires repeatedly failed.<sup>[30]</sup> A dispute emerged over the role of Russia: Normandy Format members France, Germany, and Ukraine saw Minsk as an agreement between Russia and Ukraine, whereas Russia insisted Ukraine should negotiate directly with the two

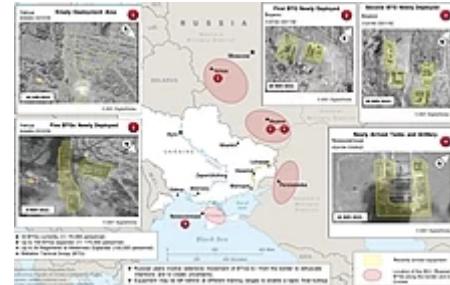
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separatist republics.<sup>[31][32]</sup> In 2021, Putin refused offers from Zelenskyy to hold high-level talks, and the Russian government endorsed an article by former president Dmitry Medvedev arguing that it was pointless to deal with Ukraine while it remained a "vassal" of the United States.<sup>[33]</sup>

The annexation of Crimea led to a new wave of Russian nationalism, with much of the Russian neo-imperial movement aspiring to annex more Ukrainian land to create Novorossiya (New Russia).<sup>[34]</sup> Analyst Vladimir Socor argued that Putin's 2014 speech after the annexation was a "manifesto of Greater-Russia Irredentism".<sup>[35]</sup> In July 2021, Putin published an essay titled "On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians", stating that Russians and Ukrainians are "one people".<sup>[36]</sup> In the build-up to the invasion, Putin claimed that Ukraine was created by the Russian Bolsheviks and that it "never had a tradition of genuine statehood".<sup>[37]</sup> American historian Timothy Snyder described Putin's ideas as imperialism.<sup>[38]</sup> British journalist Edward Lucas described it as historical revisionism.<sup>[39]</sup> Other observers note that the Russian leadership holds a distorted view of modern Ukraine, as well as its history<sup>[40][41][42]</sup> and these distortions have been cemented and propagated through the state policy.<sup>[43]</sup>

## Prelude

In March and April 2021, Russia began a major military build-up near the Russo-Ukrainian border. A second build-up followed from October 2021 to February 2022, in both Russia and Belarus.<sup>[44][45]</sup> Members of the Russian government repeatedly denied having plans to invade or attack Ukraine;<sup>[46][47]</sup> including government spokesman Dmitry Peskov on 28 November 2021, Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov on 19 January 2022,<sup>[48]</sup> Russian ambassador to the US Anatoly Antonov on 20 February 2022,<sup>[46]</sup> and Russian ambassador to the Czech Republic Alexander Zmeevsky on 23 February 2022.<sup>[49][50]</sup>



Russian military build-up around Ukraine as of 3 December 2021

Putin's chief national security adviser, Nikolai Patrushev, is known for his anti-Western views<sup>[51]</sup> and said that the West was in an undeclared conflict with Russia.<sup>[52]</sup> Russia's updated national security strategy, published in May 2021, said that Russia may use "forceful methods" to "thwart or avert unfriendly actions that threaten the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Russian Federation".<sup>[53][54]</sup> Sources say the decision to invade Ukraine was made by Putin and a small group of war hawks or siloviki in Putin's inner circle, including Patrushev and minister of defence Sergei Shoigu.<sup>[55]</sup>

During the second build-up, Russia demanded that NATO sign a treaty barring Ukraine from ever joining NATO, and demanded multinational forces be removed from NATO's Eastern European member states.<sup>[56]</sup> Russia threatened an unspecified military response if NATO followed an "aggressive line".<sup>[57]</sup> These demands were widely seen as non-viable; Eastern European states had willingly joined NATO for security reasons, and their governments sought protection from Russian irredentism.<sup>[58]</sup> A treaty to prevent Ukraine joining would go against NATO's "open door" policy, despite NATO's unenthusiastic response to Ukrainian requests to join.<sup>[59]</sup> NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg replied that "Russia has no say" on whether Ukraine joins, and that "Russia has no right to establish a sphere of influence to try to control their neighbors".<sup>[60]</sup> NATO's official policy is that it does not seek confrontation, and NATO and Russia had co-operated until Russia annexed Crimea.<sup>[61]</sup>

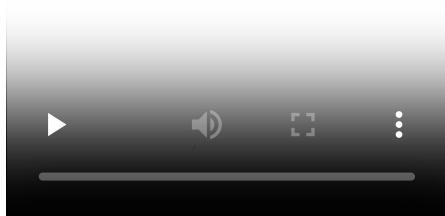
French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz both made efforts to prevent war in February 2022. Macron met Putin but failed to convince him not to go ahead with the invasion. Scholz warned Putin that heavy sanctions would be imposed should he invade Ukraine. Scholz, in trying to

negotiate a settlement, also told Zelenskyy to declare neutrality and renounce aspirations to join NATO; however, Zelenskyy said Putin could not be trusted to uphold such a settlement.<sup>[62]</sup>

## Putin's invasion announcement

On 21 February, Putin made an address announcing that Russia recognized the Russian-controlled territories of Ukraine as independent states: the Donetsk People's Republic and Luhansk People's Republic. The following day, Russia announced it was sending troops into the territories as "peacekeepers",<sup>[63]</sup> while the Federation Council of Russia authorised the use of military force abroad.<sup>[64]</sup>

On 24 February, before 5 a.m. Kyiv time,<sup>[65]</sup> Putin made another address, announcing that Russia was launching a "special military operation", which Business Insider described as "effectively declar[ing] war on Ukraine".<sup>[66][67]</sup> He said the purpose of the operation was to "protect the people" of the Donbas, in the Russian-controlled breakaway republics of Donetsk and Luhansk. He falsely claimed they had been "been facing humiliation and genocide perpetrated by the Kyiv regime".<sup>[68]</sup> Putin also falsely claimed that Ukraine's government were neo-Nazis under Western control, that Ukraine was developing nuclear weapons, and that NATO was building up military infrastructure in Ukraine to threaten Russia.<sup>[69]</sup> He said Russia sought the "demilitarisation and denazification" of Ukraine.<sup>[70]</sup> Putin said he had no plans to occupy Ukraine and supported the right of the Ukrainian people to self-determination.<sup>[69]</sup> Within minutes of Putin's announcement, Russian missiles struck targets throughout Ukraine,<sup>[71]</sup> and Russian troops invaded from the north, east and south.<sup>[72]</sup> Later an alleged report from Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) was leaked, claiming that the intelligence agency had not been aware of Putin's plan to invade Ukraine.<sup>[73]</sup>



Putin's address to the nation on 24 February 2022. Minutes after Putins's announcement, the invasion began.

## Invasion

The invasion began at dawn on 24 February,<sup>[66]</sup> with infantry divisions and armoured and air support in Eastern Ukraine, and dozens of missile attacks across Ukraine,<sup>[74][75]</sup> which reached as far west as Lviv.<sup>[76][77]</sup> The first fighting took place in Luhansk Oblast near Milove village on the border with Russia at 3:40 a.m. Kyiv time.<sup>[78]</sup> The main infantry and tank attacks were launched in four spearhead incursions, creating a northern front launched towards Kyiv from Belarus, a southern front from Crimea, a south-eastern front from the Russian-controlled Donbas, and an eastern front launched from Russia towards Kharkiv and Sumy.<sup>[79][80]</sup> Russian vehicles were marked with a white Z military symbol (a non-Cyrillic letter), believed to be a measure to prevent friendly fire.<sup>[45]</sup>



Military control around Kyiv on 2 April 2022

When the invasion began, Zelenskyy declared martial law in Ukraine.<sup>[81]</sup> The same evening, he ordered a general mobilisation of all Ukrainian males between 18 and 60 years old,<sup>[82]</sup> prohibiting them from leaving the country.<sup>[83]</sup> Wagner Group mercenaries and Chechen forces reportedly made several attempts to

assassinate Zelenskyy. The Ukrainian government said these efforts were thwarted by anti-war officials in Russia's FSB, who shared intelligence of the plans.<sup>[84]</sup> The Russian invasion was unexpectedly met by fierce Ukrainian resistance.<sup>[85]</sup> In Kyiv, Russia failed to take the city as its attacks were repulsed at the suburbs during the battles of Irpin, Hostomel and Bucha. The Russian army tried to encircle the capital, but Ukrainian forces held ground. Ukraine utilised Western arms to great effectiveness, including the Javelin anti-tank missile and the Stinger anti-aircraft missile, thinning Russian supply lines and stalling the offensive.<sup>[86]</sup> The defense of the Ukrainian capital was under the command of Colonel-General Oleksandr Syrskyi.<sup>[87]</sup>

On 9 March, a column of Russian tanks and armoured vehicles was ambushed in Brovary, suffered heavy losses and was forced to retreat.<sup>[88]</sup> The Russian army adopted siege tactics on the Western front around the key cities of Chernihiv, Sumy and Kharkiv, but failed to capture them due to stiff resistance and logistical setbacks.<sup>[89]</sup> On the southern front, Russian forces captured the major city of Kherson on 2 March. In Mykolaiv Oblast, they advanced as far as Voznesensk but were repelled south of Mykolaiv. On 25 March, the Russian Defence Ministry stated that the first stage of the "military operation" in Ukraine was "generally complete", that the Ukrainian military forces had suffered serious losses, and that the Russian military would now concentrate on the "liberation of Donbas".<sup>[90][91]</sup> The "first stage" of the invasion was conducted on four fronts<sup>[92][93]</sup> including one towards western Kyiv from Belarus by the Russian Eastern Military District, comprising the 29th, 35th, and 36th Combined Arms Armies. A second axis, deployed towards eastern Kyiv from Russia by the Central Military District (north-eastern front), comprised the 41st Combined Arms Army and the 2nd Guards Combined Arms Army.<sup>[94]</sup>

A third axis was deployed towards Kharkiv by the Western Military District (eastern front), with the 1st Guards Tank Army and 20th Combined Arms Army. A fourth, southern front originating in occupied Crimea and Russia's Rostov oblast with an eastern axis towards Odesa and a western area of operations toward Mariupol was opened by the Southern Military District, including the 58th, 49th, and 8th Combined Arms Army, the latter also commanding the 1st and 2nd Army Corps of the Russian separatist forces in Donbas.<sup>[94]</sup> By 7 April, Russian troops deployed to the northern front by the Russian Eastern Military District pulled back from the Kyiv offensive, apparently to resupply and redeploy to the Donbas region to reinforce the renewed invasion of south-eastern Ukraine. The north-eastern front, including the Central Military District, was similarly withdrawn for resupply and redeployment to south-eastern Ukraine.<sup>[94][95]</sup> On 18 April, retired Lieutenant General Douglas Lute, the former US ambassador to NATO, reported in a PBS NewsHour interview that Russia had repositioned its troops to initiate a new assault on Eastern Ukraine which would be limited to Russia's original deployment of 150,000 to 190,000 troops for the invasion, though the troops were being well supplied from adequate weapon stockpiles in Russia. For Lute, this contrasted sharply with the vast size of the Ukrainian conscription of all-male Ukrainian citizens between 16 and 60 years of age, but without adequate weapons in Ukraine's highly limited stockpiles of weapons.<sup>[96]</sup> On 26 April, delegates of the US and 40 allied nations met at Ramstein Air Base in Germany to discuss forming a coalition to provide economic support and military supplies and refitting to Ukraine.<sup>[97]</sup> Following Putin's Victory Day speech in early May, US Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines said no short term resolution to the invasion should be expected.<sup>[98]</sup>

Ukraine's reliance on Western-supplied equipment constrained operational effectiveness, as supplying countries feared that Ukraine would use Western-made matériel to strike targets in Russia.<sup>[99]</sup> Military experts disagreed on the future of the conflict; some suggested that Ukraine should trade territory for peace,<sup>[100]</sup> while others believed that Ukraine could maintain its resistance thanks to the Russian losses.<sup>[101]</sup>

By 30 May, disparities between Russian and Ukrainian artillery were apparent with Ukrainian artillery being vastly outgunned by range and number.<sup>[99]</sup> In response to US President Joe Biden's indication that enhanced artillery would be provided to Ukraine, Putin indicated that Russia would expand its invasion

front to include new cities in Ukraine and in apparent retribution ordered a missile strike against Kyiv on 6 June after not directly attacking the city for several weeks.<sup>[102]</sup> On 10 June 2022, Vadym Skibitsky, deputy head of Ukraine's military intelligence, stated during the Severodonetsk campaign that the frontlines were where the future of the invasion would be decided: "This is an artillery war now, and we are losing in terms of artillery. Everything now depends on what [the west] gives us. Ukraine has one artillery piece to 10 to 15 Russian artillery pieces. Our western partners have given us about 10% of what they have."<sup>[103]</sup> On 29 June, Reuters reported that Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines, updating U.S. intelligence assessment of the Russian invasion, said that U.S. intelligence agencies agree that the invasion will continue "for an extended period of time ... In short, the picture remains pretty grim and Russia's attitude toward the West is hardening."<sup>[104]</sup> On 5 July, BBC reported that extensive destruction by the Russian invasion would cause immense financial damage to Ukraine's reconstruction economy stating: "Ukraine needs \$750bn for a recovery plan and Russian oligarchs should contribute to the cost, Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal has told a reconstruction conference in Switzerland."<sup>[105]</sup>



President Volodymyr Zelenskyy with members of the Ukrainian Army on 18 June 2022

## Initial invasion of Ukraine (24 February – 7 April)

The invasion began on 24 February, launched out of Belarus to target Kyiv, and from the northeast against the city of Kharkiv. The southeastern front was conducted as two separate spearheads, from Crimea and the southeast against Luhansk and Donetsk.<sup>[79][80]</sup>

### Kyiv and northern front

Russian efforts to capture Kyiv included a probative spearhead on 24 February, from Belarus south along the west bank of the Dnipro River, apparently to encircle the city from the west, supported by two separate axes of attack from Russia along the east bank of the Dnipro: the western at Chernihiv, and the eastern at Sumy. These were likely intended to encircle Kyiv from the north-east and east.<sup>[75][74]</sup>



Animated map of the Russian invasion from 24 February to 7 April 2022

Russia apparently tried to seize Kyiv quickly, with Spetsnaz infiltrating into the city supported by airborne operations and a rapid mechanised advance from the north, but was unsuccessful.<sup>[106][107][108][109]</sup> Around this time, the United States contacted President Zelenskyy and offered assistance with helping him flee the country, should the Russian Army attempt to kidnap or kill him upon the planned seizure of Kyiv. According to a senior American intelligence official with direct knowledge of the conversation, Zelenskyy reportedly said in response to the request to evacuate, "The fight is here; I need ammunition, not a ride."<sup>[110]</sup> *The Washington Post*, which described the quote as "one of the most-cited lines of the Russian

invasion", was not entirely sure of the comment's accuracy. Reporter Glenn Kessler said it came from "a single source, but on the surface it appears to be a good one".<sup>[111]</sup> Russian forces advancing on Kyiv from Belarus gained control of the ghost towns of Chernobyl and Pripyat.<sup>[112][113]</sup> Russian Airborne Forces attempted to seize two key airfields near Kyiv, launching an airborne assault on Antonov Airport,<sup>[114][115]</sup> and a similar landing at Vasylkiv, near Vasylkiv Air Base, on 26 February.<sup>[116][117]</sup>

By early March, Russian advances along the west side of the Dnipro were limited by Ukrainian defences.<sup>[75][74]</sup> As of 5 March, a large Russian convoy, reportedly 64 kilometres (40 mi) long, had made little progress toward Kyiv.<sup>[118]</sup> The London-based think tank Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) assessed Russian advances from the north and east as "stalled".<sup>[119]</sup> Advances from Chernihiv largely halted as a siege began there. Russian forces continued to advance on Kyiv from the northwest, capturing Bucha, Hostomel, and Vorzel by 5 March,<sup>[120][121]</sup> though Irpin remained contested as of 9 March.<sup>[122]</sup> By 11 March, the lengthy convoy had largely dispersed and taken cover.<sup>[123]</sup> On 16 March, Ukrainian forces began a counter-offensive to repel Russian forces.<sup>[124]</sup> Unable to achieve a quick victory in Kyiv, Russian forces switched their strategy to indiscriminate bombing and siege warfare.<sup>[125][126]</sup>

On 25 March, a Ukrainian counter-offensive retook several towns to the east and west of Kyiv, including Makariv.<sup>[127][128]</sup> Russian troops in the Bucha area retreated north at the end of March. Ukrainian forces entered the city on 1 April.<sup>[129]</sup> Ukraine said it had recaptured the entire region around Kyiv, including Irpin, Bucha, and Hostomel, and uncovered evidence of war crimes in Bucha.<sup>[130]</sup> On 6 April, NATO secretary-general Jens Stoltenberg said that the Russian "retraction, resupply, and redeployment" of their troops from the Kyiv area should be interpreted as an expansion of Putin's plans for Ukraine, by redeploying and concentrating his forces on Eastern Ukraine.<sup>[95]</sup> Kyiv was generally left free from attack apart from isolated missile strikes. One did occur while UN Secretary-General António Guterres was visiting Kyiv on 28 April to discuss with Zelenskyy the survivors of the siege of Mariupol. One person was killed and several were injured in the attack.<sup>[131][132]</sup>

## North-eastern front

Russian forces advanced into Chernihiv Oblast on 24 February and besieged its administrative capital. The next day Russian forces attacked and captured Konotop.<sup>[133][134]</sup> A separate advance into Sumy Oblast the same day attacked the city of Sumy, just 35 kilometres (22 mi) from the Russo-Ukrainian border. The advance bogged down in urban fighting, and Ukrainian forces successfully held the city, claiming more than 100 Russian armoured vehicles were destroyed and dozens of soldiers were captured.<sup>[135]</sup> Russian forces also attacked Okhtyrka, deploying thermobaric weapons.<sup>[136]</sup>

On 4 March, Frederick Kagan wrote that the Sumy axis was then "the most successful and dangerous Russian avenue of advance on Kyiv", and commented that the geography favoured mechanised advances as the terrain "is flat and sparsely populated, offering few good defensive positions".<sup>[74]</sup> Travelling along highways, Russian forces reached Brovary, an eastern suburb of Kyiv, on 4 March.<sup>[75][74]</sup> The Pentagon



The Antonov An-225 Mriya, the largest aircraft ever built, was destroyed during the Battle of Antonov Airport.

"The fight is here; I need ammunition, not a ride."

Volodymyr Zelenskyy, allegedly 25 February 2022, Associated Press

confirmed on 6 April that the Russian army had left Chernihiv Oblast, but Sumy Oblast remained contested.<sup>[137]</sup> On 7 April, the governor of Sumy Oblast said that Russian troops were gone, but left behind rigged explosives and other hazards.<sup>[138]</sup>

## Southern front

On 24 February, Russian forces took control of the North Crimean Canal. Troops used explosives to destroy the dam that was blocking the river, allowing Crimea to obtain water from the Dnieper which had been cut off since 2014.<sup>[139]</sup> On 26 February, the siege of Mariupol began as the attack moved east linking to separatist-held Donbas.<sup>[136][140]</sup> En route, Russian forces entered Berdiansk and captured it.<sup>[141]</sup> On 1 March, Russian forces attacked Melitopol and nearby cities.<sup>[142][143]</sup> On 25 February, Russian units from the DPR moves on Mariupol and were defeated near Pavlopil.<sup>[144][145][146]</sup> By evening, the Russian Navy reportedly began an amphibious assault on the coast of the Sea of Azov 70 kilometres (43 mi) west of Mariupol. A US defence official said that Russian forces might be deploying thousands of marines from this beachhead.<sup>[147][148][149]</sup>



A destroyed Russian BMP-3 near Mariupol, 7 March 2022

The Russian 22nd Army Corps approached the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant on 26 February<sup>[150][151]</sup> and besieged Enerhodar in order to assume control.<sup>[152]</sup> A fire began,<sup>[153]</sup> but the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) stated that essential equipment was undamaged.<sup>[154]</sup> Despite the fires, the plant recorded no radiation leaks.<sup>[155]</sup> A third Russian attack group from Crimea moved northwest and captured bridges over the Dnieper.<sup>[156]</sup> On 2 March, Russian troops won a battle at Kherson; this was the first major city to fall to Russian forces in the invasion.<sup>[157]</sup> Russian troops moved on Mykolaiv, attacking it two days later. They were repelled by Ukrainian forces.<sup>[158]</sup> On 2 March, Ukrainian forces initiated a counter-offensive on Horlivka,<sup>[159]</sup> controlled by the DPR since 2014.<sup>[160]</sup>

After renewed missile attacks on 14 March in Mariupol, the Ukrainian government said more than 2,500 had died.<sup>[161]</sup> By 18 March, Mariupol was completely encircled and fighting reached the city centre, hampering efforts to evacuate civilians.<sup>[162]</sup> On 20 March, an art school sheltering around 400 people, was destroyed by Russian bombs.<sup>[163]</sup> The Russians demanded surrender, and the Ukrainians refused.<sup>[179][180]</sup> On 24 March, Russian forces entered central Mariupol.<sup>[164]</sup> On 27 March, Ukrainian deputy prime minister Olha Stefanishyna said that "(m)ore than 85 percent of the whole town is destroyed."<sup>[165]</sup>

Putin told Emmanuel Macron in a phone call on 29 March that the bombardment of Mariupol would only end when the Ukrainians surrendered.<sup>[166]</sup> On 1 April, Russian troops refused safe passage into Mariupol to 50 buses sent by the United Nations to evacuate civilians, as peace talks continued in Istanbul.<sup>[167]</sup> On 3 April, following the retreat of Russian forces from Kyiv, Russia expanded its attack on Southern Ukraine further west, with bombardment and strikes against Odesa, Mykolaiv, and the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant.<sup>[168][169]</sup>

## Eastern front

In the east, Russian troops attempted to capture Kharkiv, less than 35 kilometres (22 mi) from the Russian border,<sup>[170][171]</sup> and met strong Ukrainian resistance. On 25 February, the Millerovo air base was attacked by Ukrainian military forces with OTR-21 Tochka missiles, which according to Ukrainian officials, destroyed several Russian Air Force planes and started a fire.<sup>[76][77]</sup> On 28 February, missile attacks killed

several people in Kharkiv.<sup>[172]</sup> On 1 March, Denis Pushilin, head of the DPR, announced that DPR forces had almost completely surrounded the city of Volnovakha.<sup>[173]</sup> On 2 March, Russian forces were repelled from Sievierodonetsk during an attack against the city.<sup>[174]</sup> Izium was reportedly captured by Russian forces on 17 March,<sup>[175]</sup> although fighting continued.<sup>[176]</sup>

On 25 March, the Russian defence ministry said it would seek to occupy major cities in Eastern Ukraine.<sup>[177]</sup> On 31 March, the Ukrainian military confirmed Izium was under Russian control,<sup>[178][179]</sup> and PBS News reported renewed shelling and missile attacks in Kharkiv, as bad or worse than before, as peace talks with Russia were to resume in Istanbul.<sup>[180]</sup>

Amid the heightened Russian shelling of Kharkiv on 31 March, Russia reported a helicopter strike against an oil supply depot approximately 35 kilometres (22 mi) north of the border in Belgorod, and accused Ukraine of the attack.<sup>[181]</sup> Ukraine denied responsibility.<sup>[182]</sup> By 7 April, the renewed massing of Russian invasion troops and tank divisions around the towns of Izium, Sloviansk, and Kramatorsk prompted Ukrainian government officials to advise the remaining residents near the eastern border of Ukraine to evacuate to western Ukraine within 2–3 days, given the absence of arms and munitions previously promised to Ukraine by then.<sup>[183]</sup>

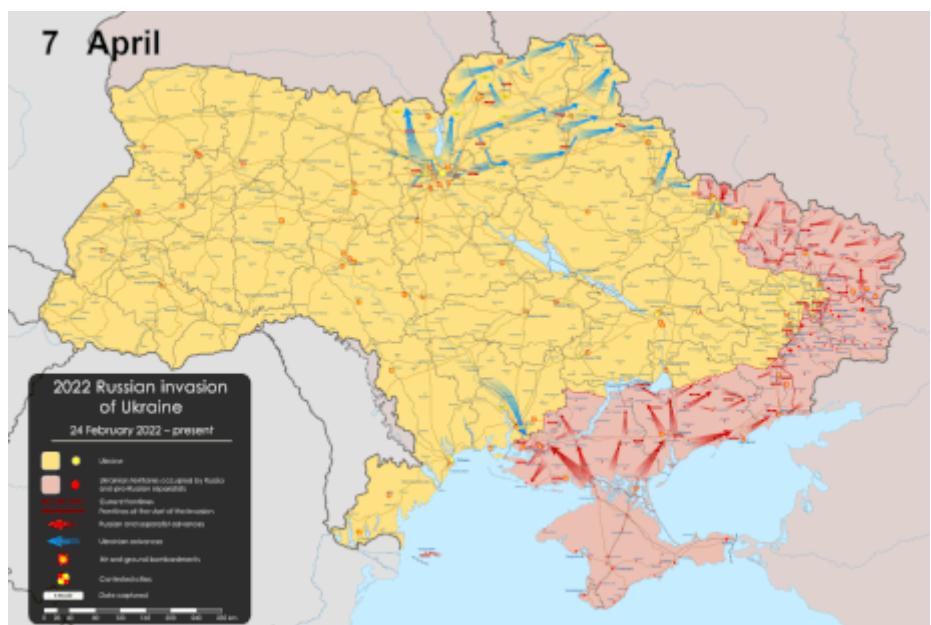


Russian bombardment on the outskirts of Kharkiv, 1 March 2022

## Southeastern front (8 April – 5 September)

By 17 April, Russian progress on the south-eastern front appeared to be impeded by opposing Ukrainian forces in the large, heavily fortified Azovstal steel mill and surrounding area in Mariupol.<sup>[184]</sup>

On 19 April, *The New York Times* confirmed that Russia had launched a renewed invasion front referred to as an "eastern assault" across a 480-kilometre (300 mi) front extending from Kharkiv to Donetsk and Luhansk, with simultaneous missile attacks again directed at Kyiv in the north and Lviv in Western Ukraine.<sup>[185]</sup> As of 30 April, a NATO official described Russian advances as "uneven" and "minor".<sup>[186]</sup> An anonymous US Defence Official called the Russian offensive "very tepid", "minimal at best", and "anaemic".<sup>[187]</sup> In June 2022 the chief spokesman for the Russian Ministry of



Animated map of the Russian invasion from 7 April to 5 September 2022

Defence Igor Konashenkov revealed that Russian troops were divided between the Army Groups "Center" commanded by Colonel General Aleksander Lapin and "South" commanded by Army General Sergey Surovikin.<sup>[188]</sup> On 20 July, Lavrov announced that Russia would respond to the increased military aid being received by Ukraine from abroad as justifying the expansion of its special military operation to include objectives in both the Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions.<sup>[189]</sup>

Russian Ground Forces started recruiting volunteer battalions from the regions in June 2022 to create a new 3rd Army Corps within the Western Military District, with a planned strength estimated at 15,500–60,000 personnel.<sup>[190][191]</sup> Its units were deployed to the front around the time of Ukraine's 9 September Kharkiv oblast counteroffensive, in time to join the Russian retreat, leaving behind tanks, infantry fighting vehicles, and personnel carriers: the 3rd Army Corps "melted away" according to Forbes, having little or no impact on the battlefield along with other irregular forces.<sup>[192][193]</sup>

## Fall of Mariupol

On 13 April, Russian forces intensified their attack on the Azovstal Iron and Steel Works in Mariupol, and the Ukrainian defence forces that remained there.<sup>[194]</sup> By 17 April, Russian forces had surrounded the factory. Ukrainian prime minister Denys Shmyhal said that the Ukrainian soldiers had vowed to ignore the renewed ultimatum to surrender and to fight to the last soul.<sup>[195]</sup> On 20 April, Putin said that the siege of Mariupol could be considered tactically complete, since the 500 Ukrainian troops entrenched in bunkers within the Azovstal iron works and estimated 1,000 Ukrainian civilians were completely sealed off from any type of relief in their siege.<sup>[196]</sup>

After consecutive meetings with Putin and Zelenskyy, UN Secretary-General Guterres on 28 April said he would attempt to organise an emergency evacuation of survivors from Azovstal in accordance with assurances he had received from Putin on his visit to the Kremlin.<sup>[197]</sup> On 30 April, Russian troops allowed civilians to leave under UN protection.<sup>[198]</sup> By 3 May, after allowing approximately 100 Ukrainian civilians to depart from the Azovstal steel factory, Russian troops renewed non-stop bombardment of the steel factory.<sup>[199]</sup> On 6 May, *The Telegraph* reported that Russia had used thermobaric bombs against the remaining Ukrainian soldiers, who had lost contact with the Kyiv government; in his last communications, Zelenskyy had authorised the commander of the besieged steel factory to surrender as necessary under the pressure of increased Russian attacks.<sup>[200]</sup> On 7 May, the Associated Press reported that all civilians were evacuated from the Azovstal steel works at the end of the three-day ceasefire.<sup>[201]</sup>

After the last civilians evacuated from the Azovstal bunkers, nearly two thousand Ukrainian soldiers remained barricaded there, with 700 injured; they were able to communicate a plea for a military corridor to evacuate, as they expected summary execution if they surrendered to the Russians.<sup>[202]</sup> Reports of dissent within the Ukrainian troops at Azovstal were reported by *Ukrainskaya Pravda* on 8 May indicating that the commander of the Ukrainian Marines assigned to defend the Azovstal bunkers made an unauthorised acquisition of tanks, munitions, and personnel, broke out from the position there and fled. The remaining soldiers spoke of a weakened defensive position in Azovstal as a result, which allowed progress to advancing Russian lines of attack.<sup>[203]</sup> Ilia Somolienko, deputy commander of the remaining Ukrainian troops barricaded at Azovstal, said: "We are basically here dead men. Most of us know this and it's why we fight so fearlessly."<sup>[204]</sup>



A children's hospital in Mariupol after a Russian airstrike

On 16 May, the Ukrainian General staff announced that the Mariupol garrison had "fulfilled its combat mission" and that final evacuations from the Azovstal steel factory had begun. The military said that 264 service members were evacuated to Olenivka under Russian control, while 53 of them who were "seriously injured" had been taken to a hospital in Novoazovsk also controlled by Russian forces.<sup>[205][206]</sup> Following the evacuation of Ukrainian personnel from Azovstal, Russian and DPR forces fully controlled all areas of Mariupol. The end of the battle also brought an end to the Siege of Mariupol. Russia press secretary Dmitry Peskov said Russian President Vladimir Putin had guaranteed that the fighters who surrendered would be treated "in accordance with international standards" while Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in an address that "the work of bringing the boys home continues, and this work needs delicacy—and time". Some prominent Russian lawmakers called on the government to deny prisoner exchanges for members of the Azov Regiment.<sup>[207]</sup>

## Fall of Sievierodonetsk and Lysychansk

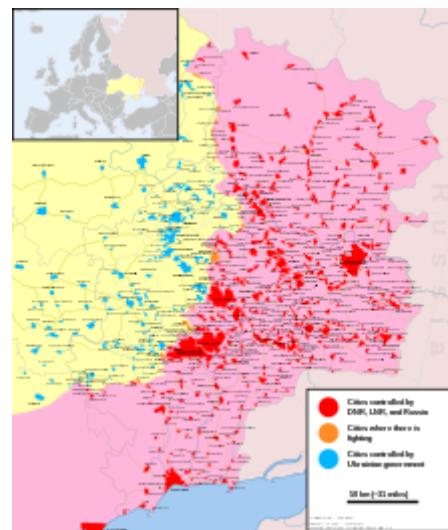
A Russian missile attack on Kramatorsk railway station in the city of Kramatorsk took place on 8 April, reportedly killing at least 52<sup>[208]</sup> and injuring 87 to 300.<sup>[209]</sup> On 11 April, Zelenskyy said that Ukraine expected a major new Russian offensive in the east.<sup>[210]</sup> American officials said that Russia had withdrawn or been repulsed elsewhere in Ukraine, and therefore was preparing a retraction, resupply, and redeployment of infantry and tank divisions to the south-eastern Ukraine front.<sup>[211][212]</sup> Military satellites photographed extensive Russian convoys of infantry and mechanised units deploying south from Kharkiv to Izium on 11 April, apparently part of the planned Russian redeployment of its north-eastern troops to the south-eastern front of the invasion.<sup>[213]</sup>

On 18 April, with Mariupol almost entirely overtaken by Russian forces, the Ukrainian government announced that the second phase of the reinforced invasion of the Donetsk, Luhansk and Kharkiv regions had intensified with expanded invasion forces occupying of the Donbas.<sup>[214]</sup>

On 22 May, the BBC reported that after the fall of Mariupol, Russia had intensified offensives in Luhansk and Donetsk while concentrating missile attacks and intense artillery fire on Sievierodonetsk, the largest city under Ukrainian control in Luhansk province.<sup>[215]</sup>

On 23 May, Russian forces were reported entering the city of Lyman, fully capturing the city by 26 May.<sup>[216][217]</sup> Ukrainian forces were reported leaving Sviatohirsk.<sup>[218]</sup> By 24 May, Russian forces captured the city of Svitlodarsk.<sup>[219]</sup> On 30 May, Reuters reported that Russian troops had breached the outskirts of Sievierodonetsk.<sup>[220]</sup> By 2 June, *The Washington Post* reported that Sievierodonetsk was on the brink of capitulation to Russian occupation with over 80 per cent of the city in the hands of Russian troops.<sup>[221]</sup> On 3 June, Ukrainian forces reportedly began a counter-attack in Sievierodonetsk. By 4 June, Ukrainian government sources claimed 20% or more of the city had been recaptured.<sup>[222]</sup>

On 12 June, it was reported that possibly as many as 800 Ukrainian civilians (as per Ukrainian estimates) and 300–400 soldiers (as per Russian sources) were besieged at the Azot chemical factory in Severodonetsk.<sup>[223][224]</sup> With the Ukrainian defences of Severodonetsk faltering, Russian invasion troops began intensifying their attack upon the neighbouring city of Lysychansk as their next target city in the



Military control around Donbas as of 24 March 2023: pink highlights areas held by the DNR, LNR, and Russia, yellow highlights areas held by the Ukrainian government.

invasion.<sup>[225]</sup> On 20 June it was reported that Russian troops continued to tighten their grip on Severodonetsk by capturing surrounding villages and hamlets surrounding the city, most recently the village of Metelkine.<sup>[226]</sup>

On 24 June, CNN reported that, amid continuing scorched-earth tactics being applied by advancing Russian troops, Ukraine's armed forces were ordered to evacuate the Severodonetsk; several hundred civilians taking refuge in the Azot chemical plant were left behind in the withdrawal, with some comparing their plight to that of the civilians at the Azovstal steel works in Mariupol in May.<sup>[227]</sup> On 3 July, CBS announced that the Russian defense ministry claimed that the city of Lysychansk had been captured and occupied by Russian forces.<sup>[228]</sup> On 4 July, The Guardian reported that after the fall of the Luhansk oblast, that Russian invasion troops would continue their invasion into the adjacent Donetsk Oblast to attack the cities of Sloviansk and Bakhmut.<sup>[229]</sup>

## Kharkiv front

On 14 April, Ukrainian troops reportedly blew up a bridge between Kharkiv and Izium used by Russian forces to redeploy troops to Izium, impeding the Russian convoy.<sup>[230]</sup>



Saltivka residential area after the battle of Kharkiv on 19 May 2022

On 5 May, David Axe writing for Forbes stated that the Ukrainian army had concentrated its 4th and 17th Tank Brigades and the 95th Air Assault Brigade around Izium for possible rearguard action against the deployed Russian troops in the area; Axe added that the other major concentration of Ukraine's forces around Kharkiv included the 92nd and 93rd Mechanised Brigades which could similarly be deployed for rearguard action against Russian troops around Kharkiv or link up with Ukrainian troops contemporaneously being deployed around Izium.<sup>[231]</sup>

On 13 May, BBC reported that Russian troops in Kharkiv were being retracted and redeployed to other fronts in Ukraine following the advances of Ukrainian troops into surrounding cities and Kharkiv itself, which included the destruction of strategic pontoon bridges built by Russian troops to cross over the Seversky Donets river and previously used for rapid tank deployment in the region.<sup>[232]</sup>

## Kherson-Mykolaiv front

Missile attacks and bombardment of the key cities of Mykolaiv and Odesa continued as the second phase of the invasion began.<sup>[185]</sup> On 22 April, Russia's Brigadier General Rustam Minnekayev in a defence ministry meeting said that Russia planned to extend its Mykolaiv–Odesa front after the siege of Mariupol further west to include the breakaway region of Transnistria on the Ukrainian border with Moldova.<sup>[233][234]</sup> The Ministry of Defence of Ukraine described this intention as imperialism, saying that it contradicted previous Russian claims that it did not have territorial ambitions in Ukraine and that the statement was an admission that "the goal of the 'second phase' of the war is not victory over the mythical Nazis, but simply the occupation of eastern and southern Ukraine".<sup>[233]</sup> Georgi Gotev, writing for Reuters on 22 April, noted that occupying Ukraine from Odesa to Transnistria would transform it into a landlocked nation without any practical access to the Black Sea.<sup>[235]</sup> On 24 April, Russia resumed its missile strikes on Odesa, destroying military facilities and causing two dozen civilian casualties.<sup>[236]</sup>

On 27 April, Ukrainian sources indicated that explosions had destroyed two Russian broadcast towers in Transnistria, primarily used to rebroadcast Russian television programming.<sup>[237]</sup> At the end of April, Russia renewed missile attacks on runways in Odesa, destroying some of them.<sup>[238]</sup> During the week of 10 May,

Ukrainian troops began to take military action to dislodge Russian forces installing themselves on Snake Island in the Black Sea approximately 200 kilometres (120 mi) from Odesa.<sup>[239]</sup> On 30 June 2022, Russia announced that it had withdrawn troops from the island after objectives were completed.<sup>[240][241]</sup>

On 23 July, CNBC reported a Russian missile strike on Ukrainian port Odesa stating that the action was swiftly condemned by world leaders, a dramatic revelation amid a recently U.N. and Turkish-brokered deal that secured a sea corridor for grains and other foodstuff exports.<sup>[242][243]</sup> On 31 July, CNN reported significant intensification of the rocket attacks and bombing of Mykolaiv by Russians also killing Ukrainian grain tycoon Oleksiy Vadaturskyi in the city during the bombing.<sup>[244]</sup>

## Zaporizhzhia front

Russian forces continued to fire missiles and drop bombs on the key cities of Dnipro and Zaporizhzhia.<sup>[185]</sup> On 10 April, Russian missiles destroyed the Dnipro International Airport.<sup>[245][246]</sup> On 2 May, the UN reportedly evacuated about 100 survivors from the siege at Mariupol with the cooperation of Russian troops, to the village of Bezimenne near Donetsk, from whence they were to move to Zaporizhzhia.<sup>[247]</sup> On 28 June, Reuters reported that a Russian missile attack was launched upon the city of Kremenchuk north-west or Zaporizhzhia detonating in a public mall and causing at least 18 deaths while drawing condemnation from France's Emmanuel Macron, among other world leaders, who spoke of it as being a "war crime".<sup>[248]</sup>



The Russian missile attack on a shopping mall in Kremenchuk was called a "war crime" by French president Emmanuel Macron on 28 June 2022.

On 7 July, it was reported that after the Russians captured the nuclear plant at Zaporizhzhia earlier in the invasion, they installed heavy artillery and mobile missile launchers between the separate reactor walls of the nuclear installation, using it as a shield against possible Ukrainian counterattack. A counterattack against the installed Russian artillery sites would not be possible without the risk of radiation fallout in case of near misses.<sup>[249]</sup> On 19 August, Russia agreed to allow IAEA inspectors access to the Zaporizhzhia plant from Ukrainian-held territory, after a phone call between Macron and Putin. A temporary ceasefire around the plant still needed to be agreed for the inspection.<sup>[250][251]</sup>

Russia reported that 12 attacks with over 50 artillery shells explosions had been recorded at the plant and the staff town of Enerhodar, by 18 August.<sup>[252]</sup> Also on 19 August, Tobias Ellwood, chair of the UK's Defence Select Committee, said that any deliberate damage to the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant that could cause radiation leaks would be a breach of Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty, according to which an attack on a member state of NATO is an attack on all of them. The next day, United States congressman Adam Kinzinger said that any radiation leak would kill people in NATO countries, which would be an automatic activation of Article 5.<sup>[253][254]</sup>

Shelling hit coal ash dumps at the neighbouring coal-fired power station on 23 August, and ash was on fire by 25 August. The 750 kV transmission line to the Dniprovska substation, which was the only one of the four 750 kV transmission lines that had not yet been damaged and cut by military action, passes over the ash dumps. At 12:12 p.m. on 25 August the line cut off due to the fire below, disconnecting the plant and its two operating reactors from the national grid for the first time since it started operating in 1985. In response, reactor 5's back-up generators and coolant pumps started up, and reactor 6 reduced generation.<sup>[255]</sup>

Incoming power was still available via the 330 kV line to the substation at the coal-fired station, so the diesel generators were not essential for cooling reactor cores and spent fuel pools. The 750 kV line and reactor 6 resumed operation at 12:29 p.m., but the line was cut by fire again two hours later. The line, but

not the reactors, resumed operation again later that day.<sup>[255]</sup> On 26 August, one reactor restarted in the afternoon and another in the evening, resuming electricity supplies to the grid.<sup>[256]</sup> On 29 August 2022, an IAEA team led by Rafael Grossi went to investigate the plant.<sup>[257]</sup> Lydie Evrard and Massimo Aparo were also in the leadership team. No leaks had been reported at the plant before their arrival but shelling had occurred days before.<sup>[258]</sup>

## Russian annexations and occupation losses (6 September – 11 November 2022)

On 6 September 2022, Ukrainian forces launched a surprise counteroffensive in the Kharkiv region,<sup>[259]</sup> beginning near Balakliia.<sup>[260]</sup> This counteroffensive was led by General Syrskyi.<sup>[261]</sup> By 12 September, an emboldened Kyiv launched a counteroffensive in the area surrounding Kharkiv with sufficient success for Russia to publicly admit to losing key positions in the area. *The New York Times* reported on 12 September that the success of the counteroffensive dented the image of a "Mighty Putin", and led to encouraging the government in Kyiv to seek more arms from the West to sustain its counteroffensive in Kharkiv and surrounding areas.<sup>[262][263]</sup> On 21 September 2022, Vladimir Putin announced a partial mobilisation.<sup>[264][265]</sup> He also said that his country will use "all means" to "defend itself". Later that day, minister of defence Sergei Shoigu stated that 300,000 reservists would be called on a compulsory basis.<sup>[266][264]</sup> Mykhailo Podolyak, the adviser to the president of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy, said that the decision was predictable, and was an attempt to justify "Russia's failures".<sup>[267]</sup> British Foreign Office Minister Gillian Keegan called the situation an "escalation",<sup>[268]</sup> while former Mongolian president Tsakhia Elbegdorj accused Russia of using Russian Mongols as "cannon fodder".<sup>[269][270]</sup>



Animated map of the Russian invasion from 5 September 2022 to 11 November 2022

## Russian annexation of Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia oblasts

In late September 2022, Russian-installed officials in Ukraine organised referendums on annexation of occupied territories of Ukraine, including the Donetsk People's Republic and the Luhansk People's Republic in Russian occupied Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts of Ukraine, as well as the Russian-appointed

military administrations of Kherson Oblast and Zaporizhzhia Oblast. Denounced by Ukraine's government and its allies as sham elections, the official results showed overwhelming majorities in favor of annexation.<sup>[271]</sup>

On 30 September 2022, Vladimir Putin announced the annexation of Ukraine's Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions in an address to both houses of the Russian parliament.<sup>[272][273]</sup> Ukraine, the United States, the European Union and the United Nations all denounced the annexation as illegal.<sup>[274]</sup>

## Zaporizhzhia front

On 3 September 2022, an IAEA delegation visited the nuclear power plant at Zaporizhzhia and on 6 September a report was published documenting damage and threats to the plant security caused by external shelling and the presence of occupying troops in the plant.<sup>[276][277]</sup> On 11 September, at 3:14 a.m., the sixth and final reactor was disconnected from the grid, "completely stopping" the plant. The statement from Energoatom said that "Preparations are underway for its cooling and transfer to a cold state".<sup>[278]</sup>



Damage to a residential building in Zaporizhzhia following an airstrike on 9 October 2022. Putin has been labeled a war criminal by international experts.<sup>[275]</sup>

In the early hours of 9 October 2022, the Russian Armed Forces carried out an airstrike on a residential building in the city of Zaporizhzhia, killing 13 civilians and injuring 89 others.<sup>[279][280][281][282][283]</sup>

## Kherson counteroffensive

On 29 August, Zelenskyy advisedly vowed the start of a full-scale counteroffensive in the southeast. He first announced a counteroffensive to retake Russian-occupied territory in the south concentrating on the Kherson-Mykolaiv region, a claim that was corroborated by the Ukrainian parliament as well as Operational Command South.<sup>[284][285][286][287][288]</sup>



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, participating in reraising the Ukrainian flag in Kherson a few days after the city's liberation

On 4 September, Zelenskyy announced the liberation of two unnamed villages in Kherson Oblast and one in Donetsk Oblast. Ukrainian authorities released a photo showing the raising of the Ukrainian flag in Vysokopillia by Ukrainian forces.<sup>[289][290]</sup> Ukrainian attacks also continued along the southern frontline, though reports about territorial changes were largely unverifiable.<sup>[291]</sup> On 12 September, Zelenskyy said that Ukrainian forces had retaken a total of 6,000 square kilometres (2,300 sq mi) from Russia, in both the south and the east. The BBC stated that it could not verify these claims.<sup>[292]</sup>

In October, Ukrainian forces pushed further south towards the city of Kherson, taking control of 1,170 square kilometres (450 sq mi) of territory, with fighting extending to Dudchany.<sup>[293][294]</sup> On 9 November, defence minister Shoigu ordered Russian forces to leave part of Kherson Oblast, including the city of

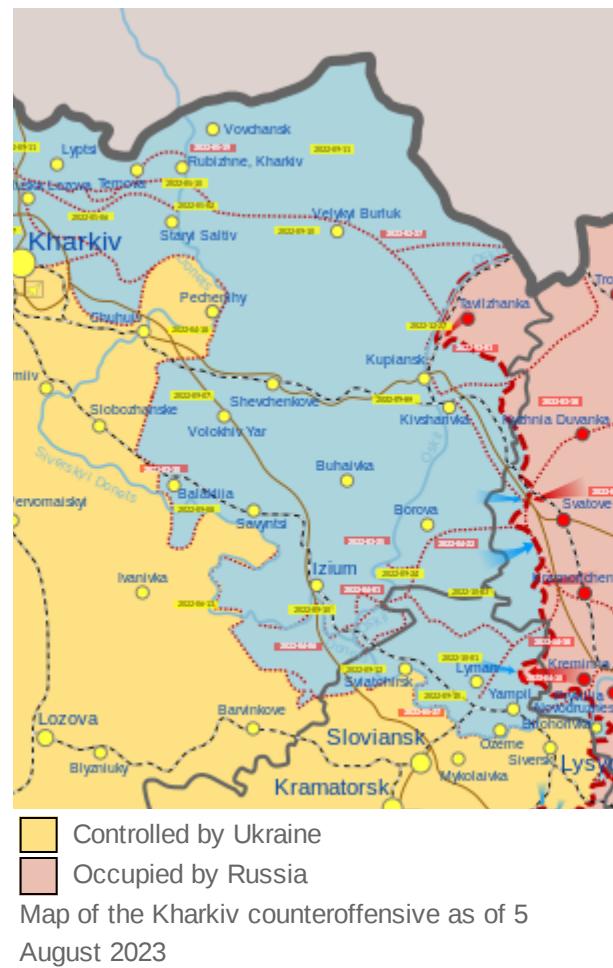
Kherson, and move to the eastern bank of the Dnieper.<sup>[295]</sup> On 11 November, Ukrainian troops entered Kherson, as Russia completed its withdrawal. This meant that Russian forces no longer had a foothold on the west (right) bank of the Dnieper.<sup>[296]</sup>

## **Kharkiv counteroffensive**

Meanwhile, Ukrainian forces launched another surprise counteroffensive on 6 September in the Kharkiv region,<sup>[259]</sup> beginning near Balakliia.<sup>[260]</sup> This counteroffensive was led by General Syrskyi.<sup>[261]</sup> By 7 September, Ukrainian forces had advanced some 20 kilometres (12 mi) into Russian occupied territory and claimed to have recaptured approximately 400 square kilometres (150 sq mi). Russian commentators said this was likely due to the relocation of Russian forces to Kherson in response to the Ukrainian offensive there.<sup>[297]</sup> On 8 September, Ukrainian forces captured Balakliia and advanced to within 15 kilometres (9.3 mi) of Kupiansk.<sup>[298]</sup> Military analysts said Ukrainian forces appeared to be moving towards Kupiansk, a major railway hub, with the aim of cutting off the Russian forces at Izium from the north.<sup>[299]</sup>

On 9 September, the Russian occupation administration of Kharkiv Oblast announced it would "evacuate" the civilian populations of Izium, Kupiansk and Velykyi Burluk. The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) said it believed Kupiansk would likely fall in the next 72 hours,<sup>[300]</sup> while Russian reserve units were sent to the area by both road and helicopter.<sup>[301]</sup> On the morning of 10 September, photos emerged claiming to depict Ukrainian troops raising the Ukrainian flag in the centre of Kupiansk,<sup>[302]</sup> and the ISW said Ukrainian forces had captured approximately 2,500 square kilometres (970 sq mi) by effectively exploiting their breakthrough.<sup>[303]</sup> Later in the day, *Reuters* reported that Russian positions in northeast Ukraine had "collapsed" in the face of the Ukrainian assault, with Russian forces forced to withdraw from their base at Izium after being cut off by the capture of Kupiansk.<sup>[304]</sup>

By 15 September, an assessment by UK's Ministry of Defence confirmed that Russia had either lost or withdrawn from almost all of their positions west of the Oskil river. The retreating units had also abandoned various high-value military assets.<sup>[305]</sup> The offensive continued pushing east and by 2 October, Ukrainian Armed Forces had liberated another key city in the Second Battle of Lyman.<sup>[306]</sup>



## **Winter stalemate, attrition campaign and military surge (12 November 2022 – 7 June 2023)**

After the end of the twin Ukrainian counteroffensives, the fighting shifted to a semi-deadlock during the winter,<sup>[307]</sup> with heavy casualties but reduced motion of the frontline.<sup>[308]</sup> Russia launched a self-proclaimed winter offensive in eastern Ukraine, but the campaign ended in "disappointment" for Moscow,

with the offensive stalling and gains being limited.<sup>[307][309]</sup> Analysts variously blamed the failure on Russia's lack of "trained men", and supply problems with artillery ammunition, among other problems.<sup>[307][309]</sup> Near the end of May, Mark Galeotti assessed that "after Russia's abortive and ill-conceived winter offensive, which squandered its opportunity to consolidate its forces, Ukraine is in a relatively strong position".<sup>[310]</sup>

On 7 February, *The New York Times* reported that Russians had newly mobilised nearly 200,000 soldiers to participate in the offensive in the Donbas, against Ukraine troops already wearied by previous fighting.<sup>[311]</sup> The Russian private military company Wagner Group took on greater prominence in the war,<sup>[312]</sup> leading "grinding advances" in Bakhmut with tens of thousands of recruits from prison battalions taking part in "near suicidal" assaults on Ukrainian positions.<sup>[309]</sup>

In late January 2023, fighting intensified in the southern Zaporizhzhia region, with both sides suffering heavy casualties.<sup>[313][314]</sup> In nearby southern parts of Donetsk Oblast, an intense, three-week Russian assault near the coal-mining town of Vuhledar was called the largest tank battle of the war to date,<sup>[315]</sup> and ended in disaster for Russian forces, with Ukrainian commanders and the British Ministry of Defense saying that Russia had lost "at least 130 tanks and armored personnel carriers" during the battle, and "a whole Russian brigade was effectively annihilated", respectively.<sup>[315][316]</sup>

## Battle of Bakhmut

Following defeat in Kherson and Kharkiv, Russian and Wagner forces have focused on taking the city of Bakhmut and breaking the half year long stalemate that has prevailed there since the start of the war. Russian forces have sought to encircle the city, attacking from the north via Soledar. After taking heavy casualties, Russian and Wagner forces took control of Soledar on 16 January 2023.<sup>[317][318]</sup> By early February 2023, Bakhmut was facing attacks from north, south and east, with the sole Ukrainian supply lines coming from Chasiv Yar to the west.<sup>[319][320][321]</sup>

On 3 March 2023, Ukrainian soldiers destroyed two key bridges, creating the possibility for a controlled fighting withdrawal from eastern sectors of Bakhmut.<sup>[322]</sup> On 4 March, Bakhmut's deputy mayor told news services that there was street fighting in the city.<sup>[323][324]</sup> On 7 March, despite the city's near-encirclement, *The New York Times* reported that Ukrainian commanders were requesting permission from Kyiv to continue fighting against the Russians in Bakhmut.<sup>[325]</sup>

On 26 March, Wagner Group forces claimed to have fully captured the tactically significant Azom factory in Bakhmut.<sup>[326]</sup> Appearing before the House Committee on Armed Services on 29 March, General Mark Milley, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, reported that, "for about the last 20, 21 days, the Russia have not made any progress whatsoever in and around Bakhmut". Milley described the severe casualties being inflicted upon the Russian forces there as a "slaughter-fest".<sup>[327]</sup>



Ukrainian soldier in a trench during the Battle of Bakhmut



View of western Bakhmut during the battle, 5 April 2023

By the beginning of May, the ISW assessed that Ukraine controlled only 1.89 square kilometres of the city, less than five percent.<sup>[328]</sup> On 18 May 2023, *The New York Times* reported that Ukrainian forces had launched a local counteroffensive, taking back swathes of territory to the north and south of Bakhmut over the course of a few days.<sup>[329][330]</sup>

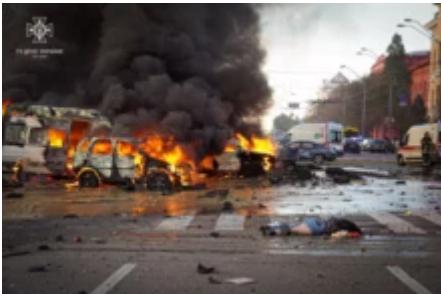
## 2023 counteroffensive (8 June 2023 – present)

In June 2023, Ukrainian forces gradually launched a series of counteroffensives on multiple fronts, including Donetsk Oblast, Zaporizhzhia Oblast, and others.<sup>[331][332][333]</sup> On 8 June 2023, it was reported that counteroffensive efforts were focused near settlements such as Orikhiv,<sup>[334]</sup> Tokmak,<sup>[335]</sup> and Bakhmut.<sup>[336]</sup> However, the counteroffensive operations have so far faced stiff resistance from Russia,<sup>[337]</sup> with the American think tank ISW labeling the Russian defensive effort as having "an uncharacteristic degree of coherency".<sup>[338]</sup> By 12 June, Ukraine reported its fastest advance in seven months, claiming to have liberated several villages and advanced a total of 6.5 km. Russian military bloggers also reported that Ukraine had taken Blahodatne, Makarivka and Neskuchne, and were continuing to push southward.<sup>[339]</sup>

On 24 June, the Wagner Group launched a brief rebellion against the Russian government, capturing several cities in western Russia largely unopposed before marching towards Moscow.<sup>[340]</sup> This came as the culmination of prolonged infighting and power struggles between Wagner and the Russian Ministry of Defense.<sup>[341]</sup> After around 24 hours, the Wagner Group backed down and agreed to a peace deal in which Wagner's leader Yevgeny Prigozhin would go into exile in Belarus, and his forces would be free of prosecution.<sup>[340]</sup> On 27 June, the UK's Ministry of Defence reported that Ukraine were "highly likely" to have reclaimed territory in the eastern Donbas region occupied by Russia since 2014 among its advances. Pro-Russian bloggers also reported that Ukrainian forces had made gains in the southern Kherson region, establishing a foothold on the left bank of the Dnipro river after crossing it.<sup>[342]</sup>

## Missile attacks and aerial warfare

Aerial warfare began on the first day of the invasion. By September, the Ukrainian air force was still at 80% of its prewar strength and had shot down about 55 Russian warplanes.<sup>[343][344]</sup> By late December, 173 Ukrainian aircraft and UAVs were confirmed to have been shot down, whereas Russia had lost 171 aircraft. With the beginning of the invasion, dozens of missile attacks were recorded across both Eastern Ukraine and Western Ukraine.<sup>[74][75]</sup> Dozens of missile strikes across Ukraine also reached as far west as Lviv.<sup>[76][77]</sup> Starting in mid-October, Russian forces launched massive missile strikes against Ukrainian infrastructure, intending to knock out energy facilities throughout the country.<sup>[345]</sup> By late November, hundreds of civilians had been killed and wounded by the attacks,<sup>[346]</sup> and millions of civilians had been left without power due to rolling blackouts.<sup>[347]</sup>

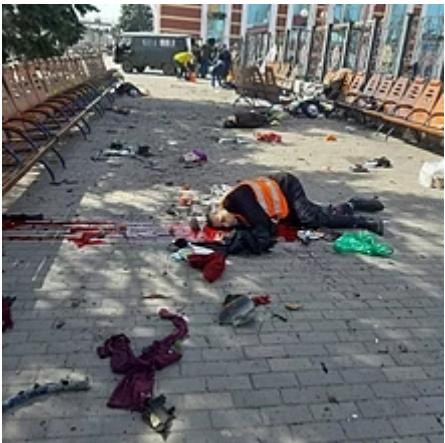


A street in Kyiv following Russian missile strikes on 10 October 2022

In December, several attacks on Dyagilevo and Engels air bases in Western Russia were allegedly carried out by drones launched from Ukraine causing 10 casualties in addition to heavily damaging two Tu-95 aircraft.<sup>[349][350]</sup>

## Attacks in Crimea

On 31 July 2022, Russian Navy Day commemorations were cancelled after a drone attack reportedly wounded several people at the Russian Black Sea Fleet headquarters in Sevastopol.<sup>[351]</sup> On 9 August 2022, there were large explosions reported at Saky Air Base in western Crimea. Satellite imagery showed that at least eight aircraft were damaged or destroyed. The cause of the explosions is unknown, but may have been long-range missiles, sabotage by special forces or an accident;<sup>[352]</sup> Zaluzhnyi claimed on 7 September that it had been a Ukrainian missile attack.<sup>[353]</sup>



Dead bodies on 8 April 2022, after the Kramatorsk railway bombing. Ukraine has identified more than 600 suspected war criminals from Russia, including Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu.<sup>[348]</sup>

The base is located near the town of Novofedorivka, which is popular with tourists. Queues to leave the area formed at the Crimean Bridge after the explosions.<sup>[354]</sup> A week later there were explosions and a fire at an arms depot near Dzhankoi in northeastern Crimea, which Russia blamed on "sabotage". A railway line and power station were also damaged. According to the Russian regional head, Sergei Aksyonov, 2,000 people were evacuated from the area.<sup>[355]</sup> On 18 August, explosions were reported at Belbek Air Base, north of Sevastopol.<sup>[356]</sup> On the morning of 8 October 2022, the Kerch Bridge, which links occupied Crimea with Russia, partially collapsed due to an explosion.<sup>[357]</sup> On 17 July 2023, there was another large explosion on the bridge.<sup>[358]</sup>



## Russian attacks against Ukrainian civilian infrastructure

After the October 2022 Crimean Bridge explosion Russia blamed Ukraine for the blast, and launched retaliatory missile strikes against Ukrainian civilian areas.<sup>[359]</sup> Russia has continued to carry out waves of strikes on Ukrainian electrical and water systems since.<sup>[360]</sup>

On 16 October, *The Washington Post* reported that Iran was planning to supply Russia with both drones and missiles.<sup>[361]</sup> On 21 November, the Ukrainian defense ministry said that according to reports in the Israeli press, Israel might respond by transferring short-range and medium-range missiles to Ukraine.<sup>[362]</sup> On 18 October 2022 the U.S. State Department accused Iran of violating UN Resolution 2231 by selling Shahed 131 and Shahed 136 drones to Russia,<sup>[363][364]</sup> agreeing with similar assessments by France and the United Kingdom. Iran denied sending arms for use in the Ukraine war.<sup>[365][366]</sup> On 22 October France, Britain and Germany formally called for an investigation by the UN team responsible for UNSCR 2231.<sup>[367]</sup> On 1 November, CNN reported that Iran was preparing to send ballistic missiles and other weapons to Russia for use in Ukraine.<sup>[368]</sup> On 21 November, CNN reported that an intelligence assessment had concluded that Iran planned to help Russia begin production of Iran-designed drones in Russia. The country making the intelligence assessment was not named.<sup>[369]</sup>

By 29 December, the Biden administration stated through diplomatic entreaties that Iran would need to curtail its supply of drones to Russia being used in its invasion of Ukraine, under the alternative that the United States would be compelled to redouble its supply of anti-drone missile intercept technology to Ukraine in order to nullify Iranian drone weaponry currently being deployed against Ukraine.<sup>[370]</sup>

On 15 November 2022, Russia fired 85 missiles at the Ukrainian power grid, causing major power outages in Kyiv and neighboring regions. A missile, initially reported to be Russian and later claimed to be "Russian-made", crossed into Poland, killing two people in Przewodów, which led to the top leaders of Poland holding an emergency meeting.<sup>[371]</sup> The next day, US president Joe Biden stated that the missile that struck Polish territory was 'unlikely' to have been fired from Russia.<sup>[372]</sup> On 31 December, Putin ordered an extensive and large missile and drone attack upon Kyiv accompanied by his declaration that he intends to increase the diplomatic and military ante of the war against Ukraine for all Russians to now be a "sacred duty to our ancestors and descendants".<sup>[373]</sup>

On 10 March 2023, *The New York Times* reported that Russia has converted its massive missile attacks of Ukraine towards the preferred use of hypersonic missile systems, which are more effective in evading conventional Ukrainian anti-missile defenses which were proving useful against conventional, non-hypersonic Russian missile systems.<sup>[374]</sup>

## Naval blockade and engagements

Ukraine lies on the Black Sea, which has ocean access only through the Turkish-held Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits. On 28 February, Turkey invoked the 1936 Montreux Convention and sealed off the straits to Russian warships not registered to Black Sea home bases and not returning to their ports of origin. This prevented the passage of four Russian naval vessels through the Turkish Straits in late February.<sup>[375][376][377]</sup> On 24 February, the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine announced that an attack on Snake Island by Russian Navy ships had begun.<sup>[378]</sup> The guided missile cruiser *Moskva* and patrol boat *Vasily Bykov* bombarded the island with their deck guns.<sup>[379]</sup> When the Russian warship identified itself and instructed the Ukrainian soldiers stationed on the island to surrender, their response was "Russian warship, go fuck yourself!"<sup>[380][381]</sup> After the bombardment, a detachment of Russian soldiers landed and took control of Snake Island.<sup>[382]</sup>

Russia stated on 26 February that US drones supplied intelligence to the Ukrainian navy to help target Russian warships in the Black Sea, which the US denied.<sup>[383]</sup> By 3 March, the Ukrainian frigate *Hetman Sahaidachny*, the flagship of the Ukrainian navy, was scuttled in Mykolaiv to prevent its capture by Russian forces.<sup>[384][385][386][387]</sup> On 14 March, the Russian source RT reported that the Russian Armed Forces had captured about a dozen Ukrainian ships in Berdiansk, including the Polnocny-class landing ship *Yuri Olefirenko*.<sup>[388]</sup> On 24 March, Ukrainian officials said that a Russian landing ship docked in Berdiansk – initially reported to be the *Orsk* and then its sister ship, the *Saratov* – was destroyed by a Ukrainian rocket attack.<sup>[389][128][141]</sup> In March 2022, the UN International Maritime Organization (IMO) sought to create a safe sea corridor for commercial vessels to leave Ukrainian ports.<sup>[390]</sup> On 27 March, Russia established a sea corridor 80 miles (130 km) long and 3 miles (4.8 km) wide through its Maritime Exclusion Zone, for the transit of merchant vessels from the edge of Ukrainian territorial waters south-east of Odesa.<sup>[391][392]</sup> Ukraine closed its ports at MARSEC level 3, with sea mines laid in port approaches, until the end to hostilities.<sup>[393]</sup>



Commemorative stamp about the phrase Russian warship, go fuck yourself!



The Russian Black Sea flagship *Moskva* was sunk on 14 April 2022, reportedly after being hit by two Ukrainian Neptune anti-ship missiles.

The Russian cruiser *Moskva*, the flagship of the Black Sea Fleet, was, according to Ukrainian sources and a US senior official,<sup>[394]</sup> hit on 13 April by two Ukrainian Neptune anti-ship cruise missiles, setting the ship on fire. The Russian Defence Ministry confirmed the warship had suffered serious damage due to a munition explosion caused by a fire, and said that its entire crew had been evacuated.<sup>[395]</sup> Pentagon spokesman John Kirby reported on 14 April that satellite images showed that the Russian warship had suffered a sizeable explosion onboard but was heading to the east for expected repairs and refitting in Sevastopol.<sup>[396]</sup> Later on the same day, the Russian Ministry of Defence stated that Moskva had sunk while under tow in rough weather.<sup>[397]</sup> On 15 April, Reuters reported that Russia launched an apparent retaliatory missile strike against the missile factory Luch Design Bureau in Kyiv where the Neptune missiles used in the *Moskva* attack were manufactured and designed.<sup>[398]</sup> On 5 May, a US official confirmed that the US gave "a range of intelligence" (including real-time battlefield targeting intelligence)<sup>[399]</sup> to assist in the sinking of the *Moskva*.<sup>[400]</sup>

In early May, Ukrainian forces launched counterattacks on Snake Island. The Russian Ministry of Defense claimed to have repelled these counterattacks. Ukraine released footage of a Russian Serna-class landing craft located in the Black Sea being destroyed near Snake Island by a Ukrainian drone.<sup>[401][402]</sup> The same day, a pair of Ukrainian Su-27 conducted a high-speed, low level bombing run on Russian-occupied Snake Island; the attack was captured on film by a Baykar Bayraktar TB2 drone.<sup>[403]</sup> On 1 June, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov asserted that Ukraine's policy of mining its own harbours to impede Russia maritime aggression had contributed to the food export crisis, stating that: "If Kyiv solves the problem of demining ports, the Russian Navy will ensure the unimpeded passage of ships with grain to the Mediterranean Sea."<sup>[404]</sup> On 30 June 2022, Russia announced that it had withdrawn troops from the island in a "gesture of goodwill".<sup>[240]</sup> The withdrawal was later officially confirmed by Ukraine.<sup>[405]</sup>

## Command

The supreme commanders-in-chief are the heads of state of the respective governments: President Vladimir Putin of Russia and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine. Putin has reportedly meddled in operational decisions, bypassing senior commanders and giving orders directly to brigade commanders.<sup>[406]</sup> Ukraine's top military commander responsible for defence in the war is the commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, General Valerii Zaluzhnyi.<sup>[407]</sup> On Zaluzhnyi's leadership of the Ukrainian military, Milley has opined: "[He] has emerged as the military mind his country needed. His leadership enabled the Ukrainian armed forces to adapt quickly with battlefield initiative against the Russians."<sup>[408]</sup> Russia started its invasion with no overall commander, starting its so-called "special military operation" without expectation of serious resistance or a real war. Commanders of four military districts were each responsible for their own offensive campaign.<sup>[407]</sup>



Russian President Vladimir Putin meeting with Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu in April 2022, after Russia's defeat at the Battle of Kyiv

After initial setbacks, commander of the Russian Southern Military District Aleksandr Dvornikov was placed in overall command on 8 April 2022, while maintaining responsibility for his own campaign. Russian forces improved their focus on the protection of supply lines by advancing slowly and methodically. They also benefited from the centralised command under Dvornikov.<sup>[409]</sup> However, continued failures to achieve military objectives led to multiple changes in overall command, all while continuing to fulfill the responsibilities of other posts, with commander of the Eastern Military District Gennadii Zhidko (Eastern Military District, 26 May – 8 October 2022), commander of the southern grouping of forces Sergei Surovikin (8 October 2022 – 11 January 2023), and commander-in-chief of the

Russian Armed Forces Valerii Gerasimov (from 11 January 2023) successively having the role added to their responsibilities.<sup>[407]</sup> Russian president Putin may have personally rotated leaders through the top position to avoid responsibility for failures and prevent any one commander from claiming victory (like the tensions between Stalin and Zhukov after WWII).<sup>[410]</sup>

Russia has suffered a remarkably large number of casualties in the officer ranks, including quite a few generals.<sup>[411]</sup>

## Nuclear threats

Four days into the invasion, President Putin placed Russia's nuclear forces on high alert, raising fears that Russia could use tactical nuclear weapons against Ukraine, or a wider escalation of the conflict could occur. During April, Putin and Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov made a number of threats alluding to the use of nuclear weapons against Ukraine and the countries supporting Ukraine.<sup>[412][413]</sup> On 14 April, CIA director William Burns said that "potential desperation" in the face of defeat could encourage President Putin to use tactical nuclear weapons.<sup>[414]</sup> In response to Russia's disregard of safety precautions during its occupation of the disabled former nuclear power plant at Chernobyl and its firing of missiles in the vicinity of the active Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, on 26 April President Zelenskyy called for an international discussion on regulating Russia's use of nuclear resources, stating: "no one in the world can feel safe knowing how many nuclear facilities, nuclear weapons and related technologies the Russian state has ... If Russia has forgotten what Chernobyl is, it means that global control over Russia's nuclear facilities, and nuclear technology is needed."<sup>[415]</sup> In August, shelling around the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant developed into a crisis, prompting an emergency inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency. Ukraine has described the crisis as an act of nuclear terrorism by Russia.<sup>[416]</sup> On 19 September, CNBC reported that Biden's response to Russian uncertainties about its lack of combat success in its invasion stating: "President Joe Biden warned of a 'consequential' response from the U.S. if Russian President Vladimir Putin were to use nuclear or other non-conventional weapons... Asked what he would say to Putin if he was considering such action, Biden replied, 'Don't. Don't. Don't.'"<sup>[417]</sup> Following his statement made on 19 September, Biden appeared before the United Nations on 21 September and continued his criticism of Putin's nuclear sabre-rattling, stating that Putin was "overt, reckless and irresponsible... A nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought."<sup>[418]</sup> In January 2023, Graham Allison, writing for Time, presented a seven-point summary of Putin's hypothetical intention to deploy tactical nuclear weapons in Ukraine.<sup>[419]</sup> In March 2023, Putin announced plans to install Russian tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus.<sup>[420]</sup>



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy with Ukrainian servicemen defending the city of Bakhmut in December 2022

## Ukrainian resistance

Ukrainian civilians resisted the Russian invasion, volunteering for territorial defence units, making Molotov cocktails, donating food, building barriers such as Czech hedgehogs,<sup>[421]</sup> and helping to transport refugees.<sup>[422]</sup> Responding to a call from Ukraine's transportation agency, Ukravtodor, civilians dismantled or altered road signs, constructed makeshift barriers, and blocked roadways. Social media reports showed spontaneous street protests against Russian forces in occupied settlements, often evolving into verbal altercations and physical standoffs with Russian troops.<sup>[423]</sup> By the beginning of April, Ukrainian civilians began to organise as



Civilians in Kyiv preparing Molotov cocktails, 26 February 2022

guerrillas, mostly in the wooded north and east of the country. The Ukrainian military announced plans to launch a large-scale guerrilla campaign to complement its conventional defence against the Russian invasion.<sup>[424]</sup>

People physically blocked Russian military vehicles, sometimes forcing them to retreat.<sup>[423][425][426]</sup> The Russian soldiers' response to unarmed civilian resistance varied from reluctance to engage the protesters<sup>[423]</sup> to firing into the air or directly into crowds.<sup>[427]</sup> There have been mass detentions of Ukrainian protesters, and Ukrainian media has reported forced disappearances, mock executions, hostage-taking, extrajudicial killings, and sexual violence perpetrated by the Russian military.<sup>[428]</sup> To facilitate Ukrainian attacks, civilians reported Russian military positions via a Telegram chatbot and Diia, a Ukrainian government app previously used by citizens to upload official identity and medical documents. In response, Russian forces began destroying mobile phone network equipment, searching door-to-door for smartphones and computers, and in at least one case killing a civilian found with pictures of Russian tanks.<sup>[429]</sup>

As of 21 May 2022, Zelenskyy indicated that Ukraine had 700,000 servicemembers on active duty combating the Russian invasion.<sup>[430]</sup> Throughout 2022, Ukraine withdrew soldiers and military equipment deployed to United Nations peacekeeping missions, such as MONUSCO in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, back to Ukraine.<sup>[431]</sup>

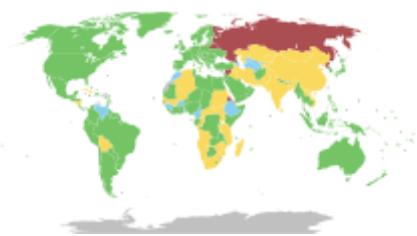
## International aspects

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### Reactions

The invasion received widespread international condemnation from governments and intergovernmental organisations.<sup>[432]</sup> On 2 March 2022 and on 23 February 2023, 141 member states of the UN General Assembly voted for Russia to immediately withdraw, while only five and seven member states, respectively, including Russia, voted against the resolutions.<sup>[433]</sup> Political reactions to the invasion included new sanctions imposed on Russia, which triggered widespread economic effects on the Russian and world economies.<sup>[434]</sup> The European Union and other Western governments financed and delivered humanitarian and military aid to Ukraine. The bloc also implemented various economic sanctions, including a ban on Russian aircraft using EU airspace,<sup>[435]</sup> a ban on certain Russian banks from using the SWIFT international payments system, and a ban on certain Russian media outlets.<sup>[436]</sup> Reactions to the invasion have varied considerably across a broad spectrum of concerns including public response, media responses, peace efforts, and the examination of the legal implications of the invasion.

The invasion received widespread public condemnation internationally, while in some countries, particularly in the Global South, there was public sympathy or outright support for Russia, due in part to distrust of US foreign policy.<sup>[437][438]</sup> Protests and demonstrations were held worldwide, including some in Russia and parts of Ukraine occupied by Russia.<sup>[439]</sup> Calls for a boycott of Russian goods spread on social media platforms,<sup>[440]</sup> while hackers attacked Russian websites, particularly those operated by the Russian



UN General Assembly Resolution  
ES-11/1 vote on 2 March 2022  
condemning the invasion of Ukraine  
and demanding a complete  
withdrawal of Russian troops

<span style="background-color: #32CD32; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"></span>	In favour
<span style="background-color: #A52A2A; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"></span>	Against
<span style="background-color: #FFDAB9; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"></span>	Abstained
<span style="background-color: #ADD8E6; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"></span>	Absent
<span style="background-color: #BDBDBD; border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"></span>	Non-member

government.<sup>[441]</sup> Anti-Russian sentiment against Russians living abroad surged after the invasion.<sup>[442][443]</sup> In March 2022, Russian President Putin introduced prison sentences of up to 15 years for publishing "fake news" about Russian military operations,<sup>[444]</sup> intended to suppress any criticism related to the war.<sup>[445]</sup>

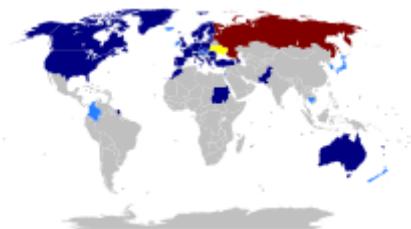
According to the Economist Intelligence Unit in 2023, 31 percent of the world's population live in countries that are leaning towards or supportive of Russia, 30.7 percent live in neutral countries, and 36.2 percent live in countries that are against Russia in some way.<sup>[446]</sup>

By October 2022, three countries—Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia—had declared Russia a "terrorist state".<sup>[447]</sup> On 1 August, Iceland became the first European country to close its embassy in Russia as a result of the invasion of Ukraine.<sup>[448]</sup>

The invasion prompted Ukraine,<sup>[449]</sup> Finland and Sweden to officially apply for NATO membership.<sup>[450]</sup> In April 2023, Finland was accepted as a member of NATO.<sup>[451]</sup>

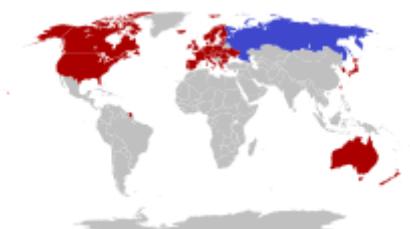
## Foreign involvement

Although Ukraine is not a member of NATO and does not have any military alliance with the United States or with any NATO nation,<sup>[22]</sup> the Kiel Institute tracked \$155.9 billion from 41 countries and European Union institutions in financial, humanitarian, and military aid to Ukraine from 24 January 2022 to 24 February 2023.<sup>[452]</sup> NATO is coordinating and assisting member states in providing billions of dollars in military equipment and financial aid to Ukraine.<sup>[453]</sup> The United States has provided the most military assistance, having committed over \$29.3 billion from 24 February 2022 to 3 February 2023.<sup>[454][e]</sup> Many NATO allies, including Germany, have reversed past policies against providing offensive military aid in order to support Ukraine. The European Union for the first time in its history supplied lethal arms and has provided €3.1 billion to Ukraine.<sup>[457]</sup> Bulgaria, a major manufacturer of Soviet-pattern weapons, has covertly supplied more than €2 billion worth of arms and ammunition to Ukraine, including a third of the ammunition needed by the Ukrainian military in the critical early phase of the invasion; Bulgaria also provides fuel supplies and has, at times, covered 40% of the fuel needs of the Ukrainian armed forces.<sup>[458]</sup>



- Countries sending lethal military equipment
- Countries sending non-lethal military aid
- \* ■ Russia \* ■ Ukraine

Foreign involvement in the invasion has been worldwide and extensive, with support ranging from foreign military sales and aid, foreign military involvement, foreign sanctions and ramifications, and including foreign condemnation and protest.<sup>[460][461]</sup> The US has adopted a policy of "no boots on the ground" in Ukraine.<sup>[462]</sup> Western countries and others imposed limited sanctions on Russia when it recognised the separatist people's republics as independent nations. When the attack began, many other countries applied sanctions intended to cripple the Russian economy.<sup>[463]</sup> The sanctions targeted individuals, banks, businesses, monetary exchanges, bank transfers, exports, and imports.<sup>[460][461]</sup>



- Countries on Russia's "Unfriendly Countries List". The list includes countries that have imposed sanctions against Russia for its invasion of Ukraine.<sup>[459]</sup>

Belarus has allowed its territory to be used by Russia to stage part of the invasion, as well as be used for launching Russian missiles into Ukraine.<sup>[464]</sup>

In March 2023, *Politico* reported that Chinese state-owned weapons manufacturer Norinco shipped assault rifles, drone parts, and body armor to Russia between June and December 2022, with some of the shipments going through via third-countries including Turkey and the United Arab Emirates.<sup>[465]</sup> According to the United States, Chinese ammunition has been used on battlefields in Ukraine.<sup>[466]</sup> In May 2023, the EU identified that Chinese and the UAE firms were supplying weapon components to Russia.<sup>[467]</sup>

In June 2023, US military intel suggested Iranians provided UAV production material to Russians.<sup>[468]</sup>

## International arrest warrants

The International Criminal Court (ICC) opened an investigation into possible crimes against humanity, war crimes, abduction of children, and genocide during the invasion.<sup>[469][470]</sup> On 17 March 2023 the ICC issued a warrant for Putin's arrest,<sup>[471][472][473][474][475]</sup> alleging that Putin held criminal responsibility in the illegal deportation and transfer of children from Ukraine to Russia during the Russian invasion of Ukraine.<sup>[476][477][478]</sup> It was the first time that the ICC had issued an arrest warrant for the head of state of one of the five Permanent Members of the United Nations Security Council<sup>[471]</sup> (the world's five principal nuclear powers).<sup>[479]</sup>

## Casualties

Combat deaths can be inferred from a variety of sources, including satellite imagery of military action.<sup>[480]</sup> Both Russian and Ukrainian sources are believed to inflate casualty numbers in opposing forces, while downplaying their own losses for the sake of morale. RAND researcher Dara Massicot said that Russia underreports its own losses to a greater degree than Ukraine.<sup>[481]</sup> Russian news outlets have largely stopped reporting the Russian death toll.<sup>[482][483][484][485]</sup> Russia and Ukraine admitted suffering "significant" and "considerable" losses, respectively.<sup>[484][485]</sup> BBC News reported that Ukrainian claims of Russian deaths included the injured.<sup>[486][487][488]</sup> Agence France-Presse and independent conflict monitors could not verify Russian and Ukrainian claims of enemy losses and suspected that they were inflated.<sup>[489]</sup>



Ukrainian soldiers killed in the Russo-Ukrainian War in 2022

The number of civilian and military deaths is impossible to determine precisely in the fog of war.<sup>[490][480]</sup> On 12 October 2022, the independent Russian media project iStories reported that more than 90,000 Russian soldiers had been killed, been seriously wounded, or gone missing in Ukraine, citing sources close to the Kremlin.<sup>[491]</sup> The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) estimates the number of civilian casualties to be considerably higher than the figure the United Nations has been able to certify.<sup>[492]</sup> On 16 June 2022, the Ukrainian Minister of Defence told CNN that he believed that tens of thousands of Ukrainians had died, adding that he hoped that the true death toll was below 100,000.<sup>[493]</sup> In the destroyed city of Mariupol alone, Ukrainian officials believe at least 25,000 have been killed;<sup>[494]</sup> but investigations of morgue records indicate many more,<sup>[495]</sup> and some bodies remain uncollected.<sup>[496]</sup>

By 16 April 2023, *The New York Times* reported that documents in the 2023 Pentagon document leaks estimated 189,500 to 223,000 Russian casualties and 124,500 to 131,000 Ukrainian casualties.<sup>[497]</sup>

### Confirmed casualties

Breakdown	Numbers	Time period	Source
Civilians	<b>9,083</b> killed, <b>24,862</b> wounded <sup>[f]</sup> <b>(718</b> killed, <b>2,521</b> wounded in DPR/LPR areas)	24 February 2022 – 18 June 2023	United Nations <sup>[498]</sup>
<b>Ukrainian forces</b> (ZSU, NGU, SBGS, PSMOP)	<b>10,000</b> killed, <b>30,000</b> wounded	24 February – 3 June 2022	Ukrainian government <sup>[499][500]</sup>
<b>Ukrainian forces</b> (ZSU)	<b>13,000+</b> killed	24 February – 2 December 2022	Ukrainian government <sup>[501]</sup>
<b>Russian forces</b> (VSRF, Rosgvardiya, FSB, FSO, PMCs Wagner, Redut & others)	<b>26,801</b> killed (confirmed by names)	24 February 2022 – 30 June 2023	BBC News Russian & Mediazona <sup>[502]</sup>
<b>Russian forces</b> (Donetsk & Luhansk PR)	<b>11,000+</b> killed	24 February 2022 – 23 June 2023	BBC News Russian & Mediazona <sup>[502]</sup>

### Estimated and claimed casualties

Breakdown	Numbers	Time period	Source
Civilians	<b>9,000<sup>[503]</sup>–16,502<sup>[504]</sup></b> killed <sup>[g]</sup>	24 February 2022 – 17 January 2023	Ukrainian government
	<b>42,000</b> killed	24 February 2022 – 21 May 2023	US estimate <sup>[505]</sup>
	<b>1,499</b> killed, <b>4,287</b> wounded (in DPR/LPR areas)	17 February 2022 – 22 June 2023	DPR <sup>[h]</sup> and LPR <sup>[509][510]</sup>
<b>Ukrainian forces</b> (ZSU, NGU, SBGS)	<b>20,000</b> killed, <b>130,000</b> wounded	24 February 2022 – 21 May 2023	US estimate <sup>[505]</sup>
<b>Russian forces</b> (VSRF, Rosgvardiya, FSB, FSO, PMCs Wagner, Redut & others, DPR & LPR)	<b>50,000</b> killed, <b>180,000</b> wounded	24 February 2022 – 21 May 2023	US estimate <sup>[505]</sup>
	<b>69,600+</b> killed, <b>243,400+</b> wounded	24 February 2022 – 23 June 2023	BBC News Russian & Mediazona estimate <sup>[502]</sup>
	<b>248,490</b> losses <sup>[i]</sup>	24 February 2022 – 4 August 2023	Ukrainian government <sup>[515][516]</sup>
<b>Russian forces</b> (VSRF, Rosgvardiya, FSB, FSO, PMCs Wagner, Redut & others)	<b>52,000+</b> killed, <b>183,300+</b> wounded	24 February 2022 – 23 June 2023	BBC News Russian & Mediazona estimate <sup>[502]</sup>

## Prisoners of war

Official statistics and estimates of prisoners of war (POW) have varied.<sup>[517]</sup> In the initial stages of the invasion, on 24 February, Oksana Markarova, Ukraine's ambassador to the US, said that a platoon of the 74th Guards Motor Rifle Brigade from Kemerovo Oblast surrendered, saying they were unaware that they had been brought to Ukraine and tasked with killing Ukrainians.<sup>[518]</sup> Russia claimed to have captured 572

Ukrainian soldiers by 2 March 2022,<sup>[519]</sup> while Ukraine claimed 562 Russian soldiers were being held as prisoners as of 20 March,<sup>[520]</sup> with 10 previously reported released in a prisoner exchange for five Ukrainian soldiers and the mayor of Melitopol.<sup>[521][522]</sup>

A report by *The Independent* on 9 June 2022 cited an intelligence report estimating that more than 5,600 Ukrainian soldiers had been captured, while the number of Russian servicemen being held as prisoners had fallen to 550, from 900 in April, following several prisoner exchanges. In contrast, *Ukrainska Pravda* claimed 1,000 Russian soldiers were being held as prisoners as of 20 June.<sup>[523]</sup>

The first large prisoner exchange took place on 24 March 2022, when 10 Russian and 10 Ukrainian soldiers, as well as 11 Russian and 19 Ukrainian civilian sailors, were exchanged.<sup>[524][525]</sup> On 1 April 86 Ukrainian servicemen were exchanged<sup>[526]</sup> for an unknown number of Russian troops.<sup>[527]</sup>

On 25 August 2022, research conducted by the Humanitarian Research Lab of the *Yale School of Public Health* and the *Conflict Observatory* was published which reported the identification of some 21 filtration camps in and around Russian-controlled Donetsk oblast, run by Russian and Russian allied forces and used for Ukrainian "civilians, POWs, and other personnel". These camps were allegedly used for four main purposes: as registration points; as camps and other holding facilities for those awaiting registration; as interrogation centers; and as "correctional colonies" (i.e., prisons). At Olenivka prison, one of the identified camps, the disturbed earth seen in imagery was said by researchers to be consistent with graves. Kaveh Khoshnood, a professor at the Yale School of Public Health, said: "Incommunicado detention of civilians is more than a violation of international humanitarian law—it represents a threat to the public health of those currently in the custody of Russia and its proxies. The conditions of confinement documented in this report allegedly include insufficient sanitation, shortages of food and water, cramped conditions, and reported acts consistent with torture."<sup>[528]</sup>



Ukrainian soldiers released during the exchange between Ukraine and Russia on 6 May 2023

In March 2023, UN human rights commissioner Volker Türk reported that more than 90% of the Ukrainian POWs interviewed by his office, which could only include those who were released from Russia, said in Russia "they were tortured or ill-treated, notably in penitentiary facilities, including through so-called – it is an awful phrase – 'welcoming beatings' on their arrival, as well as frequent acts of torture throughout detention."<sup>[529]</sup>

In April 2023, several videos started circulating on different websites purportedly showing Russian soldiers beheading Ukrainian soldiers.<sup>[530]</sup>

## Impacts

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### Humanitarian impact

The humanitarian impact of the invasion has been extensive and has included negative impacts on international food supplies and the 2022 food crises.<sup>[531]</sup> The invasion has also had a negative impact upon the cultural heritage of Ukraine,<sup>[532]</sup> with over 500 Ukrainian cultural heritage sites, including cultural

centers, theatres, museums, and churches, having been impacted by "Russian aggression", and Ukraine's Minister of Culture calling it cultural genocide.<sup>[533]</sup> The deliberate destruction and looting of Ukrainian cultural heritage sites in this way is considered a war crime.<sup>[534][535]</sup>

The Russian attacks on civilians, causing mass civilian casualties and displacement, have been characterized as "genocide" and "democide".<sup>[536]</sup>

## Refugee crisis

The war caused the largest refugee and humanitarian crisis within Europe since the Yugoslav Wars in the 1990s,<sup>[537][538]</sup> the UN described it as the fastest-growing such crisis since World War II.<sup>[539]</sup> As Russia built up military forces along the Ukrainian border, many neighbouring governments and aid organisations prepared for a mass displacement event in the weeks before the invasion. In December 2021, the Ukrainian defence minister estimated that an invasion could force three to five million people to flee their homes.<sup>[540]</sup>

In the first week of the invasion, the UN reported over a million refugees had fled Ukraine; this subsequently rose to over eight million by 31 January 2023.<sup>[541][542]</sup> On 20 May, NPR reported that, following a significant influx of foreign military equipment into Ukraine, a significant number of refugees are seeking to return to regions of Ukraine which are relatively isolated from the invasion front in south-eastern Ukraine.<sup>[543]</sup> However, by 3 May, another 8 million people were displaced inside Ukraine.<sup>[544]</sup>

Most refugees were women, children, the elderly, or people with disabilities.<sup>[545][546]</sup> Most male Ukrainian nationals aged 18 to 60 were denied exit from Ukraine as part of mandatory conscription,<sup>[547][548]</sup> unless they were responsible for the financial support of three or more children, single fathers, or were the parent/guardian of children with disabilities.<sup>[549]</sup> Many Ukrainian men, including teenagers, opted to remain in Ukraine voluntarily in order to join the resistance.<sup>[550][551]</sup>

Regarding destinations, according to the UN High Commission for Refugees, as of 13 May, there were 3,315,711 refugees in Poland, 901,696 in Romania, 594,664 in Hungary, 461,742 in Moldova, 415,402 in Slovakia, and 27,308 in Belarus, while Russia reported it had received over 800,104 refugees.<sup>[552]</sup> As of 23 March, over 300,000 refugees had arrived in the Czech Republic.<sup>[553]</sup> Turkey has been another significant destination, registering more than 58,000 Ukrainian refugees as of 22 March, and more than 58,000 as of 25 April.<sup>[554][555]</sup> The EU invoked the Temporary Protection Directive for the first time in its history, granting Ukrainian refugees the right to live and work in the EU for up to three years.<sup>[556]</sup> Britain has accepted 146,379 refugees, as well as extending the ability to remain in the UK for 3 years with broadly similar entitlements as the EU, three years residency and access to state welfare and services.<sup>[557]</sup>



Ukrainian refugees in Kraków protesting against the war, 6 March 2022



Protest against the Russian invasion of Ukraine, organised by political youth organisations in Helsinki, Finland, 26 February 2022

According to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Russia has engaged in "massive deportation" of over 1.3 million Ukrainian civilians, potentially constituting crimes against humanity.<sup>[558][559]</sup> The OSCE and Ukraine have accused Russia of forcibly moving civilians to filtration camps in Russian-held territory, and then into Russia. Ukrainian sources have compared this policy to Soviet-era population transfers and Russian actions in the Chechen War of Independence.<sup>[560][561]</sup> For instance, as of 8 April, Russia claimed to have evacuated about 121,000 Mariupol residents to Russia.<sup>[561]</sup> Also, on 19 October, Russia announced the forced deportation of 60,000 civilians from areas around the line of contact in Kherson oblast.<sup>[562]</sup> RIA Novosti and Ukrainian officials said that thousands were dispatched to various centers in cities in Russia and Russian-occupied Ukraine,<sup>[563]</sup> from which people were sent to economically depressed regions of Russia.<sup>[564]</sup> In April, Ukraine's National Security and Defence Council secretary Oleksiy Danilov said Russia planned to build "concentration camps" for Ukrainians in western Siberia, and that it likely planned to force prisoners to build new cities in Siberia.<sup>[565][566][j]</sup>

## Long-term demographic effects

Both Russia and Ukraine were facing the prospect of significant population decline even before the war, having among the lowest fertility rates worldwide and, in the Ukrainian case, considerable emigration. Russia had a fighting-age (18- to 40-year-old) male population more than four times higher than Ukraine's and slightly higher birth rates, while the willingness to fight was more pronounced in Ukraine.<sup>[568]</sup>

Several sources have pointed out how the war is considerably worsening Ukraine's demographic crisis, making significant shrinking very likely.<sup>[569][570]</sup> A July 2023 study by the Vienna Institute for International Economic Studies stated that "[r]egardless of how long the war lasts and whether or not there is further military escalation, Ukraine is unlikely to recover demographically from the consequences of the war. Even in 2040 it will have only about 35 million inhabitants, around 20% fewer than before the war (2021: 42.8 million) and the decline in the working-age population is likely to be the most severe and far-reaching." The study took different scenarios, from a "best case" (end of the war in 2023 without much further escalation) to a "worst case" (end of the war in 2025 with further escalation) into account. Flight from war affects especially the southern and eastern regions and especially educated women of child-bearing age and their children. With an estimate of more than 20% of refugees not returning, study author Maryna Tverdostup concludes that this will lead to long-term shrinking and will significantly impair the conditions for reconstruction.<sup>[571]</sup>

Since February 2022, hundreds of thousands of Russians have left their country, with estimates ranging from 370,000 to over 700,000. Combined with mobilization, this might have removed roughly between half a million and one million working-age males from Russia's population.<sup>[572][573]</sup> Studies report that this will have a demographic effect especially in Russia lasting much longer than the conflict will take place, and much longer than Putin will remain president.<sup>[574][575][576][577]</sup>

According to BBC:<sup>[578]</sup>

They come from different walks of life. Some are journalists like us, but there are also IT experts, designers, artists, academics, lawyers, doctors, PR specialists, and linguists. Most are under 50. Many share western liberal values and hope Russia will be a democratic country one day. Some are LGBTQ+. Sociologists studying the current Russian emigration say there is evidence that those leaving are younger, better educated and wealthier than those staying. More often they are from bigger cities.

According to Johannes Wachs, "The exodus of skilled human capital, sometimes called brain drain, out of Russia may have a significant effect on the course of the war and the Russian economy in the long run."<sup>[579]</sup>

## Environmental impact

Based on a preliminary assessment the war has inflicted USD 51 billion in environmental damage in both territories. According to a report by the Yale School of the Environment, some 687,000 tons of petrochemicals have burned as a result of shelling, while nearly 1,600 tons of pollutants have leaked into bodies of water. Hazardous chemicals have contaminated around 70 acres of soil, and likely made agricultural activities temporarily impossible.<sup>[580]</sup> Around 30% of Ukraine's land is now littered with explosives and more than 2.4 million hectares of forest have been damaged.<sup>[581]</sup>



An explosion due to the shelling of a tank filled with nitric acid during the Battle of Severodonetsk, 31 May 2022

According to Netherlands-based peace organization PAX, Russia's "deliberate targeting of industrial and energy infrastructure" has caused "severe" pollution, and the use of explosive weapons has left "millions of tonnes" of contaminated debris in cities and towns.<sup>[582]</sup> In early June 2023, the Kakhovka Dam, under Russian occupation, was damaged, causing flooding and triggering warnings of an "ecological disaster."<sup>[583]</sup>

The Ukrainian government, international observers and journalists have described the damage as ecocide.<sup>[584][585][586][587]</sup> The Ukrainian government is investigating more than 200 war crimes against the environment and 15 incidents of ecocide (a crime in Ukraine).<sup>[588][26][589]</sup> Zelenskyy and Ukraine's prosecutor general Andriy Kosti have met with prominent European figures (Margot Wallstrom, Heidi Hautala, Mary Robinson and Greta Thunberg) to discuss the environmental damage and how to prosecute it.<sup>[590][591][26]</sup>

## Peace efforts

Peace negotiations between Russia and Ukraine took place on 28 February,<sup>[593]</sup> 3 March,<sup>[594]</sup> and 7 March 2022,<sup>[595]</sup> in an undisclosed location in the Gomel Region on the Belarus–Ukraine border,<sup>[596]</sup> with further talks held on 10 March in Turkey prior to a fourth round of negotiations which began on 14 March.



As of January 2023, Russian President Vladimir Putin cited recognition of Russia's sovereignty over the annexed territories (pictured) as a condition for peace talks with Ukraine.<sup>[592]</sup>

On 13 July, the Ukrainian foreign minister Dmytro Kuleba stated that peace talks are frozen, Ukraine must first recapture all the lost territories in the east of the country, and then the time for negotiations will come.<sup>[597]</sup> On 19 July, former Russian President and current Deputy head of the Russian Security Council, Dmitry Medvedev, said: "Russia will achieve all its goals. There will be peace – on our terms."<sup>[598]</sup>

Putin's spokesperson Dmitry Peskov and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said that any peace plan can only proceed from Ukraine's recognition of Russia's sovereignty over the regions it annexed from Ukraine in September

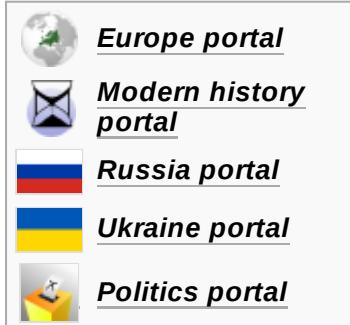
2022.<sup>[599][600]</sup> By 29 December, following the Russian declared annexation of multiple Ukrainian oblasts, hopes for Ukrainian peace talks with Russia dimmed significantly with Russia taking a hardline position that the full Russian occupation of the four oblasts would be non-negotiable under any circumstances.<sup>[601]</sup> In addition, Zelenskyy announced that Ukraine would not hold peace talks with Russia while Putin was president and signed a decree to ban such talks.<sup>[602][603]</sup> In January 2023, Putin's spokesperson Peskov said that "there is currently no prospect for diplomatic means of settling the situation around Ukraine."<sup>[604]</sup>

In May 2023, UN Secretary-General António Guterres said peace negotiations to end the Russo-Ukrainian War were "not possible at this moment", saying it was clear that Russia and Ukraine "are completely absorbed in this war" and "are convinced that they can win."<sup>[605]</sup>

In June 2023, Ukrainian Defense Minister Oleksii Reznikov said that the peace plans presented by China, Brazil and Indonesia are attempts at mediation on behalf of Russia, saying that "they all currently want to be mediators on Russia's side. That's why this sort of mediation currently doesn't fit for us at all because they aren't impartial."<sup>[606]</sup> He said that Ukraine is willing to accept China as a mediator for peace talks between Russia and Ukraine only if Beijing could convince Russia to withdraw from all the territories it had occupied.<sup>[607]</sup>

## See also

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- [Outline of the Russo-Ukrainian War](#)
- [2020s in military history](#)
- [List of interstate wars since 1945](#)
- [List of invasions and occupations of Ukraine](#)
- [List of ongoing armed conflicts](#)
- [List of wars between Russia and Ukraine](#)
- [Post-Soviet conflicts](#)
- [Russian emigration following the Russian invasion of Ukraine](#)
- [2022 Russia–Ukraine tornado outbreak — Tornado outbreak affecting both countries during the conflict.](#)
- [Red Lines in the Russo-Ukrainian War](#)

## Notes

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- a. The Donetsk People's Republic and the Luhansk People's Republic were Russian-controlled puppet states that declared their independence from Ukraine in May 2014. In 2022 they received [international recognition](#) from each other, Russia, Syria and North Korea, and some other partially recognised states. On 30 September 2022, after [a referendum](#), Russia declared [it had formally annexed both entities](#).

- b. Russian forces were permitted to stage part of the invasion from Belarusian territory.<sup>[1][2]</sup> Belarusian territory has also been used to launch missiles into Ukraine.<sup>[3]</sup> See also: [Belarusian involvement in the Russian invasion of Ukraine](#)
- c. See § [Foreign involvement](#) for more details.
- d. Including military, paramilitary, and 34,000 separatist militias.
- e. By early September 2022 the US had given 126 M777 howitzer cannons and over 800,000 rounds of 155 mm ammunition for them.<sup>[455]</sup> By January 2023 the US had donated 250,000 more 155 mm shells to Ukraine. The US is producing 14,000 155 mm shells monthly and plans to increase production to 90,000 shells per month by 2025.<sup>[456]</sup>
- f. Confirmed figure by source, not final (confirmations ongoing), estimates are higher.
- g. See [table here](#) for a detailed breakdown of civilian deaths by oblast, according to Ukrainian authorities.
- h. The DPR stated 1,285 of its civilians were killed and 4,243 wounded between 1 January 2022 and 22 June 2023,<sup>[506][507]</sup> of which 8 died and 23 were wounded between 1 January and 25 February 2022,<sup>[508]</sup> leaving a total of 1,277 killed and 4,220 wounded in the period of the Russian invasion.
- i. The Ministry of Defence of Ukraine uses the terms "combat losses" and "liquidated".<sup>[511]</sup> According to the BBC, these figures include wounded soldiers,<sup>[486][487]</sup> while others interpret the figures to be referring to only those killed.<sup>[512][513][514]</sup>
- j. Most likely, new cities meant new industrial cities in Siberia, the construction plans of which were announced by Shoigu in the fall of 2021.<sup>[567]</sup>

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## **Further reading**

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## External links

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- [The UN and the war in Ukraine](https://unric.org/en/the-un-and-the-war-in-ukraine-key-information/) (<https://unric.org/en/the-un-and-the-war-in-ukraine-key-information/>) at the United Nations
  - Think Tank reports on the invasion of Ukraine (<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/documents-publications/library/library-blog/posts/think-tank-reports-on-the-invasion-of-ukraine/>) at the Council of the European Union
  - Russian invasion of Ukraine (<https://news.google.com/topics/CAAqLAGKliZDQkFTRmdvTkwyY3ZNVEZ5Y0dSaWNXcDZjeEIGWlc0dFlwSW9BQVAB>) at Google News
  - Ukraine conflict updates (<https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/ukraine-conflict-updates>) at the Institute for the Study of War
  - Interactive Map: Russia's Invasion of Ukraine (<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/36a7f6a6f5a9448496de641cf64bd375>) at the Institute for the Study of War
  - Interactive Time-lapse: Russia's War in Ukraine (<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/733fe90805894bf8562d90b106aa895>) at the Institute for the Study of War
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