

Meanwhile in Ukraine

Ukrainian Union of Military and Security

One of the most difficult areas of the front of the war, unleashed by the Russians in Ukraine, is located in the Ukrainian city Avdiivka, in Donetsk region. Supplies into Avdiivka and evacuation from the city are currently difficult, spokesman for the Tavria operational and strategic grouping of troops Dmytro Lykhoviy reported. “In Avdiivka, our units are repositioning to more advantageous locations due to the difficult supply and evacuation situation. The main point is that supplying and evacuating from Avdiivka is challenging. However, we have prepared a backup logistics artery in advance to address this issue,” he said.

According to the spokesman, in terms of manpower, the enemy has increased its forces. They are moving into urban areas where fighting is taking place. The size of the enemy’s assault groups is increasing, with tanks and armored vehicles joining them.

«A large force is currently engaged against our units who are heroically defending Avdiivka,” Dmytro Lykhoviy reported.

Despite the intense difficulties, the Ukrainian military servicemen, police and volunteers manage to evacuate civilians even from the occupied outskirts of Avdiivka. Some of the evacuees are injured or have survived abuse by the Russians. Recently, the Ukrainian Defense Forces, in particular the «White Angel» mission managed to conduct an incredible special operation, as a result of which more than a hundred people have been evacuated from the occupied outskirts of Avdiivka.

According to testimonies, the Russians mistreated the local population. The police have opened a criminal investigation and are now documenting the crimes of the Russian military.

In particular, we are talking about the long-term detention of 13 civilians in a small basement by the Russian military. One of them was a very old lady, who needed care. Russians didn’t even let captured people go outside to the toilet.



Photo:
Residents of Avdiivka saved by the «White Angel» mission.

The Russians took away the phones of the local residents, so it is impossible to keep in touch with them in order to manage their evacuation. But the Ukrainian Defense Forces still find options to remove people from the dangerous territory.



The Avdiivka direction became the site of severe tragedies among the military and the civilian population. But not only Ukrainians are among the victims. A Czech volunteer fighting on Ukraine's side against the Russian army was killed in action over the last weekend. His death was confirmed by the Czech Ministry of Defense.

His position was hit by Russian mortar fire. The volunteer has not been seen since the attack and the place is now occupied by Russian troops.

However, tragedies have become commonplace for Ukraine. Hence, on February 10, as a result of the nighttime Russian drone attack on Kharkiv, a fire in a private house killed a family of five people: a husband and wife and their three little children – seven-year-old, four-year-old and seven-month-old boys.

«The burning temperature was such that the bones and the body of the baby almost turned into ashes. We presume that the mother was holding the children, embracing and pressing them to her chest,» Serhii Bolvinov, Head of the Investigation Department of the Main Department of National Police in Kharkiv Oblast, said.

International affairs

On February 11, the Ukrainian community was extremely worried by the events in Poland. Ukrainian military servicemen were unpleasantly impressed as well. That day near the Dorohusk border crossing in Poland, the blockade participants stopped three Ukrainian trucks and poured grain from them onto the road. We will not give these events a political or economic evaluation, but we consider it necessary to explain why Ukrainians are outraged by the actions of the blockade participants with Ukrainian grain.

Grain for Ukrainians is not just a commodity. According to centuries-old traditions, bread is a sacred product for Ukrainians. But in a country that survived the Holodomor (artificial famine arranged by the Soviet authorities), bread and grain are treated with particular respect.

Modern Ukrainians carry the trauma of post-genocide society. We are the children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren of those who suffered from torture by prolonged hunger. We saw our grandparents hiding food under their pillows

until they died, even when there were no longer any problems with meal.

Even today, in our families, it is not allowed to throw away bread or play with food. We kiss the bread if it falls, and we mentally ask for forgiveness from it and those who were involved in its production.

The Soviet authorities staged three famines in Ukraine — in 1921-1923, 1932-1933, and 1946-1947. The Holodomor of 1932-1933 is recognized as genocide.

The occupation authorities of those years took all edible food from the homes of Ukrainians, and exported these products or left them to rot in warehouses that were strictly guarded. Approaching such warehouses was forbidden on pain of death. Therefore, Ukrainians were forced to cook leather belts, they ate clay from the walls, wooden spoons, grass,



Artwork of Lesia Babliak

peat, and dry corn husks. It was fun for the occupiers to break the pots with even such food in front of the mothers of the children who were dying of hunger.

A total of about 3.9 million died during the Holodomor of 1932-1933. Also, about 600,000 people were not born because of the famine. Millions suffered from diseases caused by prolonged famine. A large number of victims were also among those who resisted the actions of the invaders, as a result of which they were shot or sent to the inhumane conditions of Soviet concentration labour camps.

The actions of the occupiers have not changed even today. Growing crops in Ukraine in the face of constant Russian attacks is a difficult and dangerous thing. Each ton of grain is not only hard work, but also the self-sacrifice of Ukrainian farmers and rescuers. The invaders terrorize farmers in the occupied territories, taking away their crops. They constantly shell Ukrainian fields, causing them to burst into flames. Russia also attacks Ukrainian ports to prevent the maritime export of grain.

When withdrawing from their positions, the Russians densely mine the Ukrainian fields so that they could not be cultivated. During the sowing and harvesting period, almost every day we read in the news about yet another tragic event in which farmers are blown up by Russian mines while harvesting.

The Russians also use the practice of torturing prisoners of war by starvation. Those who manage to return home usually lose up to 50% of their weight.

Therefore, it physically hurts us to contemplate such pictures. We hope that thanks to this short excursion into history and the present, it will be a little easier to understand Ukrainians.

This photo was taken by the rescuers (State Emergency Service of Ukraine) who were involved in extinguishing a fire in the Izyum district, near the village of Andriyivka. A wheat field on an area of 500 square meters was on fire after it was attacked by the Russians.



Standing in defense of their territories, people, the entire civilized world and its values, Ukraine needs aid, resources and weapons. We are grateful to our international partners for the help that continues to arrive and look forward to new supplies.

We welcome the fact that at a meeting of the NATO-Ukraine Council on the sidelines of the North Atlantic Council in Brussels, NATO Defense Ministers have reiterated their commitment to continue military assistance to Ukraine in its efforts to counter Russian aggression.

“Just in the past few days, we have seen new packages of aid announced by Allies including Canada, Finland, and Norway. Covering key capabilities like F-16 equipment and spare parts, as well as air defence. A group of Allies is coming together with the goal of delivering one million drones to Ukraine. 20 NATO Allies have also agreed to form a demining coalition. All of this will help to save Ukrainian lives,” NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said at the press conference.

The positive news of the last few days also includes the decision of Germany to transfer trucks, spare parts, explosives for drones, and other items of military aid, and announcement of Spain to transfer M113 armored vehicles to Ukraine.



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