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Over 100 Iran attack drones destroyed in storage depot by 6 Israeli drones Feb 18

03.21.22

Satellite images show Iran drone warehouse decimated in Israeli-linked attack

Footage shows what Tehran initially called an 'industrial storage depot', later confirmed to be a drone facility, before and after strike attributed to Israel last month

Yossi Yehoshua | Published: 03.21.22, 23:10

Satellite footage released on Monday revealed the extent of damage of a drone attack attributed to Israel on an Iranian drone warehouse last month.

Tehran initially reported that a fire had broken out at an "industrial storage depot" in the province of Kermanshah in western Iran.

According to foreign media reports, six Israeli drones carrying a large number of explosives took part in the attack on the warehouse, causing great damage to the facility and its surroundings.

Over 100 Iranian attack drones were reportedly destroyed in the attack, dealing a significant blow to the drone fleet of the country's powerful Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) paramilitary group.

Iran's Nour news agency reported in February that "a fire broke out in a storage space that holds engine oil and other flammable substances in an IRGC base... and there was extensive damage to an industrial storage depot."

Iran said the fire was extinguished, and that teams were dispatched to the location to investigate the source of the fire.

Iran's Supreme National Security Council reported no casualties in the incident.

Following the same attack on the drone factory, the Iranians responded by launching missiles towards civilian targets in Erbil, the Kurdish capital and most populated city in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The Iranians claimed that their accurate missiles hit an Israeli Mossad training camp and killed Israeli officers and soldiers.

Last week, Iran's state media reported that the IRGC launched in response a dozen ballistic missiles that struck alleged Israeli "strategic centers" in Iraq's northern Kurdish regional capital of Erbil in the early hours of Sunday while warning the Jewish state of a "harsh response" if it retaliates.

"Any repetition of attacks by Israel will be met with a harsh, decisive and destructive response," the IRGC said in a statement reported by state media.

The missiles caused only material damage and one civilian was injured, the Kurdish interior ministry said. An Iraqi security official said the missiles were manufactured in Iran.

03.21.22

Russians target west Ukraine with cruise missiles, EU discussing oil sanction

03.21.22

Russians target west Ukraine with cruise missiles, EU ministers discuss further sanction Kyiv authorities announce curfew to be in place from Monday evening to Wednesday morning as EU ministers call for sanctions on Russian oil industry; Borrell says Russia committing war crimes

Agenies| Published: 03.21.22, 13:48

Authorities in Odesa accused Russian forces on Monday, of carrying out a **strike on residential buildings** in the outskirts of town, the first such attack on the **Black Sea port city**.

The city council said there were no casualties although the strike caused a fire. "These are residential buildings where peaceful people live," Mayor Gennadiy Trukhanov was quoted as saying. Russia denies targeting civilians.

The Russian Defense Ministry said its air forces hit a Ukrainian military facility in the Rivne region, some 300 kilometers (186 miles) **West of Kyiv**, with **cruise missiles**. Rivne local authorities who confirmed the attack, did not say how many people were killed or injured in the strike.

In Kyiv, authorities imposed a **curfew** to come into effect on Monday evening and continue until Wednesday morning. Late on Monday, Russian bombing of the city killed at least eight people when a **shopping center took a direct hit** and dozens of buildings in its surroundings were damaged from the explosion.

The **Kremlin** said on Monday that **peace talks** between Russia and Ukraine had **not yet** made any **significant progress**.

Moscow has **accused Kyiv of stalling peace talks** by making **proposals unacceptable** for Russia. **Ukraine** has said it is willing to negotiate but **will not surrender** or accept Russian ultimatums.

Speaking to reporters on a conference call, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said **significant progress** in the talks still **had to be made** for there **to be a basis for** a possible **meeting between** President Vladimir **Putin** and his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr **Zelensky**.

"For us to speak of a meeting between the two presidents, homework has to be done. Talks have to be held and their results agreed upon," Peskov said. "There has been **no significant progress so far**."

Peskov also reiterated claims that **Russia was showing more willingness** than Ukrainian negotiators to work toward an agreement at the talks.

"Those (countries) who can should use their influence over Kyiv to make it more accommodating and constructive at these talks," he said.

Meanwhile EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said Russia was committing many war crimes. "A massive war crime is happening in Mariupol," he said.

The foreign ministers of Lithuania and Ireland said the EU should step up sanctions on Russia to target its lucrative energy sector.

Speaking before a meeting of EU ministers, they urged further sanctions against Russia's energy sector.

"Looking at the extent of the destruction in Ukraine right now, it's very hard to make the case that we shouldn't be moving in on the energy sector, particularly oil and coal," Irish Foreign Minister Simon Coveney said.

The Kremlin said Europe would be hit hard in the event of an embargo on Russian oil, striking the continent's energy balance, but would not affect the United States. "Such an embargo would very seriously impact the global oil market, very badly impact energy balance on the European continent," Peskov told reporters on a daily conference call.

03.21.22

Gantz urges US to help Ukraine & keep Iran Revolutionary Guard on terror list

03.21.22

Gantz urges U.S. to keep Iran's Revolutionary Guard on terror list

Defense minister calls Tehran's nuclear program a 'global and regional' problem that poses an existential threat to Israel; joins Bennett is claiming Israel will not be bound by any deal with Iran

Yossi Yehoshua | Published: 03.21.22, 13:33

Defense Minister Benny Gantz on Monday joined the call to keep Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps on the United States' list of terrorist organizations, all while calling for further cooperation with Washington.

His comments came days after Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and Foreign Minister Yair Lapid, issued a joint statement, lamenting Washington's plans to remove the Revolutionary Guard from its notorious list as part of a series of concessions meant to revive the tattered 2015 nuclear agreement with Iran.

Speaking at a Ynet "People of Israel" conference, Gantz said the IRGC is "a terror organization and should be viewed as such".

"The second thing that is important to understand is that we need to coordinate our actions and positions with the U.S. and voice them in unequivocal ways," he said. "I think that in the end, our strategic relations with the United States, the West and other countries in the region, should not be conducted over Twitter... That's what I'm doing. I am in touch with American officials and travel to countries which have relations with Israel and those who don't," he said.

The defense minister described Iran as more than a "regional problem," adding that Tehran and its nuclear ambitions are a "global issue and an existential threat to Israel".

Gantz also criticized what looks to be imminent revival of the 2015 nuclear agreement between world powers and Iran.

"This agreement is not a good one, it has several shortcomings, which we emphasize in our working groups with the Americans."

The defense minister also reiterated Bennett's claims that Israel will not be bound by any agreement with Iran.

"We are not a party to this agreement. The prime minister said we are not a party to this agreement, I tell you we are not a party to this agreement. We will ultimately keep our destiny in our hands and not in the hands of the world. "

The defense minister also addressed Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's virtual speech at the Knesset on Sunday, in which he implied Israel was sitting on the fence vis-à-vis the Russian-Ukrainian war.

"The man is leading the struggle of his life... He spoke from his heart and from his absolute depth. I will not get into an argument about everything he said, because I'm putting his address into a context of strategic leadership.

"It is important to be clear - the State of Israel is on the right side. It is against the violence in Ukraine, it is in favor of West's position and it is doing everything in its power in the right way to help Ukraine."

03.21.22

Zelensky miffed on Iron Dome denied, praises Israel & urges talks in Jerusalem

03.21.22

Zelensky praises Israel's mediation efforts, urges talks in Jerusalem

Speaking overnight after slamming Israel's refusal to supply Kyiv with the Iron Dome missile defense system and its failure to impose sanctions on Russia, president says Ukraine grateful for Bennett's efforts

Agencies| Updated: 03.21.22, 07:39

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Sunday that Israel was undertaking many efforts to arrange top-level peace talks between his country and Russia and suggested they might take place in Jerusalem.

Zelensky, speaking in his daily video appeal to Ukrainians after addressing Israel's parliament by video link, said Prime Minister Naftali Bennett had been trying to act as an intermediary between Kyiv and Moscow.

"Of course, Israel has its interests, strategy to protect its citizens. We understand all of it," said Zelensky, seated at a desk in his trademark khaki T-shirt.

"The prime minister of Israel, Mr. Bennett is trying to find a way of holding talks. And we are grateful for this. We are grateful for his efforts, so that sooner or later we will begin to have talks with Russia, possibly in Jerusalem.

"That's the right place to find peace. If possible."

Earlier, Zelensky addressed Israeli lawmakers in a live video address and torched Israel for its reluctance to join the international sanctions against Russia and provide the

Ukrainians with military assistance, namely its **refusal to sell Kyiv its Iron Dome missile defense system.**

"Everybody knows that your missile defense systems are the best and that you can definitely help our people, save the lives of Ukrainians, of Ukrainian Jews," he said. "We can ask why we can't receive weapons from you, why Israel has not imposed powerful sanctions on Russia or is not putting pressure on Russian business. Either way, the choice is yours to make, brothers and sisters, and you must then live with your answer, the people of Israel."

In the past week, **Bennett** has intensified his efforts to bring the two sides together and has **spoken on several occasions to both Zelenskiy and Russian President Vladimir Putin.** **Last week, he flew in secret to Moscow to meet the Kremlin leader.**

Zelenskiy, who is Jewish, also addressed again the Russian accusation that he heads an administration that espouses "Nazism".

Switching from his usual Ukrainian to Russian in his remarks, he said: "Russian propagandists have a tough job on their hands today. For the first time, a Ukrainian president spoke to the parliament of Israel and, by video recording, to the people of Israel, a Ukrainian accused of Nazism by Moscow.

"This very fact already proves that things are not as Moscow says."

Zelensky sought to draw a comparison between Russia and the Nazis, noting that the date of Russia's invasion of Ukraine — **February 24** — **was also the date on which the Nazi party was founded in Germany in 1920.**

He raised the ire of some lawmakers, with some going as far as accusing him of trying to rewrite history and whitewash Ukrainians' part in the extermination of Jews.

03.20.22

Hezbollah recruited Israeli Arabs for arms trafficking & terrorist missions preparing Iran

03.20.22

Hezbollah recruited Israeli Arabs for Iran missions, officials reveal
Shin Bet and Israel Police nabbed the 4 residents of northern Galilee on suspicion of attempting to smuggle arms and drugs, carry out kidnappings, and provide info on 'sensitive' sites, with the goal of forming Hezbollah 'sleeping cell'

Yoav Zitun, Ahiya Rabad | Published: **03.20.22**, 11:17

Israeli authorities arrested **four Israeli Arabs** from north who are said to have been **recruited by the Hezbollah** terror group under the auspices of **Iranian intelligence**, it was revealed Sunday.

The Shin Bet domestic security service and the Israel Police **arrested** the four residents of northern Galilee **last month**.

Two of the four suspects met several times in Turkey with Lebanese arms and drug smugglers operating on behalf of Hezbollah, and were asked to smuggle weapons into Israeli territory in order to establish a dormant cell of Hezbollah operatives.

The suspects were **also asked to assist in abducting Israelis**, providing information about **targets for missile attacks**, and locating appropriate **points for crossing and smuggling** along the Israeli-Lebanese border.

Two of the suspects - Sultan Atallah, 55, from the village of Yarka and Rami Shami, 33, from the village of Jadeidi-Makr - then **approached two others** - Sami Gizwai, 56, from Yarka and a 40-year-old resident of Akbara, **to help them** with their activities. Together, they conducted inspections near the northern Israeli border to locate suitable points of entry for Hezbollah operatives.

According to Israel Police, the four suspects were **arrested and transferred to Shin Bet for further questioning**.

"During the investigation, they handed over the location of an MP5 submachine gun," said the police in a statement. "The interrogating officers were able to form an evidentiary case against Sultan Atallah and Rami Shami, suspected of contacting a foreign operative agent, **providing service to a terrorist organization, conspiracy, an attempt to import weapons and arms trafficking**.

"The suspect **who helped them** will be charged with the crimes of **conspiracy and trafficking, carrying and transporting of weapons**."

The initial investigation revealed that Hezbollah recruited the suspects for the benefit of the Iranian intelligence, using **drug dealers in Lebanon** who **run smuggling operations** into Israel.

Atallah and Shami, who had previously been convicted of smuggling drugs, were in contact with Hassin Shith - a Lebanese smuggler connected to Hezbollah who had previously served time in an Israeli prison. The two met with him and another smuggler, Akram Shith, in Turkey between 23 and 30 November 2021.

At the meeting, he **asked the two to smuggle arms to Israel and to place them in hiding spots, which later would be picked up by other Hezbollah recruits** in Israel. The two were also asked whether they have the ability to execute terrorist attacks in Israel independently.

Atallah, according to Shin Bet, realized that Shith was a Hezbollah operative due to the unusual nature of his requests. **He said that Iran wants to regain control of the area and seeks to get back at Israel for its actions against it.**

To do so, the **Iranians wanted to transfer weapons to terrorist "sleeper cells" in Israel in order to arm them, and when the time comes, they would be ordered to commit attacks on senior Israeli officials, military officers, and politicians**. The two were **also asked to carry out kidnappings of Israelis**.

Atallah was promised a very high amount of money if he could assist in abducting people from Israel, whether by himself or by providing information on a suitable target for the abduction. The Hezbollah operatives also asked Atallah to help locate "sensitive" sites within Israel for missile attacks.

A senior member of the Shin Bet said, "this affair demonstrates the efforts of Iranian terrorist sources to exploit the Arab and Druze citizens of Israel. We call upon civilians who receive terror calls to report this to the authorities and avoid a situation in which they are involved in such operations."

03.20.22

Zelensky says Russia wages 'terror' in Mariupol, thousands deported to Russia

03.20.22

Zelensky says Russia wages 'terror' in Mariupol, thousands deported to Russia
Hundreds of thousands trapped in southern port city as Russians reported to deport residents to Russia; British intelligence claims Russian 'pursuing a strategy of attrition' after Ukrainian resistance of invasion
Reuters| Updated: 03.20.22, 08:28

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Russia's siege of the port city of Mariupol was "a terror that will be remembered for centuries to come", while local authorities said thousands of residents there had been taken by force across the border.

"Over the past week, several thousand Mariupol residents were deported onto the Russian territory," the city council said in a statement on its Telegram channel late on Saturday.

Reuters could not independently verify the claim.

Russian news agencies have said buses have carried several hundred people Moscow calls refugees from the strategic port on the Sea of Azov to Russia in recent days.
Air raid sirens sounded across major Ukrainian cities early on Sunday but there were no immediate reports of fresh attacks.

Some 400,000 people have been trapped in Mariupol for more than two weeks, sheltering from heavy bombardment that has severed central supplies of electricity, heating and water, according to local authorities.

Rescue workers were still searching for survivors in a Mariupol theatre that local authorities say was flattened by Russian air strikes on Wednesday. Russia denies hitting the theatre or targeting civilians.

Russia's defense ministry said on Friday that its forces were "tightening the noose" around Mariupol and that fighting had reached the city center.

In a late night broadcast, Zelensky said the siege of Mariupol would "go down in history of responsibility for war crimes".

"To do this to a peaceful city... is a terror that will be remembered for centuries to come." Still, he said, **peace talks** with Russia **were** needed **although** they were **"not easy and pleasant"**.

Russian forces have taken heavy losses since Feb. 24, when President Vladimir Putin launched what he calls a "special operation" aimed at demilitarizing Ukraine and purging it of what he sees as dangerous nationalists. Ukraine and the West say **Putin launched an aggressive war of choice**.

Long columns of **troops that bore down on** the capital **Kyiv** **have been halted** in the suburbs.

British intelligence believes Russia has been taken aback by Ukraine's resistance to its invasion and is now "pursuing a strategy of attrition", said Britain's defense attach to the United States.

Zelensky said the **Ukrainian front line** was "simply **littered with the corpses of Russian soldiers**."

Reuters could not independently verify the veracity of the comments.

On Saturday, Russia said its hypersonic missiles had destroyed a large underground depot for missiles and aircraft ammunition in the western Ivano-Frankivsk region. Hypersonic weapons can travel faster than five times the speed of sound, and the Interfax agency said it was the first time Russia had used them in Ukraine.

A spokesperson for the Ukrainian Air Force Command confirmed the attack, but said the Ukrainian side had no information on the type of missiles used.

Neutral status

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said Moscow **expected its operation** in Ukraine to **end with the signing of a comprehensive agreement** on security issues, including Ukraine's **neutral status**, Interfax reported.

Kyiv and Moscow reported some progress in talks last week toward a political formula that would guarantee Ukraine's security, while keeping it outside NATO, though each sides accused the other of dragging things out.

Zelensky has said Ukraine could accept international security guarantees that stopped short of its longstanding aim to join NATO. That prospect has been one of Russia's primary stated concerns.

The Ukrainian president, who makes frequent impassioned appeals to foreign audiences for help, told an anti-war protest in Bern on Saturday that Swiss banks were where the "money of the people who unleashed this war" lay and their accounts should be frozen. Ukrainian cities "are being destroyed on the orders of people who live in European, in beautiful Swiss towns, who enjoy property in your cities. It would really be good to strip them of this privilege," he said in an **audio address**.

Neutral **Switzerland**, which is not a member of the European Union, has fully **adopted EU sanctions** against Russian individuals and entities, including orders to freeze their wealth in Swiss banks.

The **EU** measures are part of a wider sanctions effort by Western nations aimed at **squeezing Russia's economy and starving its war machine**.

U.S. President Joe Biden warned his Chinese counterpart, Xi Jinping, on Friday of "consequences" if Beijing gave material support to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. On Saturday, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said China stood on the right side of history over the Ukraine crisis and that its position was in line with the wishes of most countries. "China's position is objective and fair, and is in line with the wishes of most countries. Time will prove that China's claims are on the right side of history," Wang told reporters, according to a statement published by his ministry on Sunday.

03.20.22

Zelensky cites war crimes; civilian shelters bombed, thousands taken to Russia

03.20.22

School bombed in Ukraine city; Zelensky cites war crimes

Some 400 civilians said to be sheltering in art school, which local officials say was destroyed in the bombing with many believed to be trapped in the rubble in worst hit Ukraine city

Associated Press| Updated: 03.20.22, 12:35

Ukrainian authorities said the Russian military bombed an art school where about 400 people had taken refuge in the port city of Mariupol, where President Volodymyr Zelensky said an unrelenting siege by Russian troops would go down in history for what he said were war crimes.

Local authorities said the school's building was destroyed and people could remain under the rubble. There was no immediate word on casualties. Russian forces on Wednesday also bombed a theater in Mariupol where civilians were sheltering, authorities have said.

"To do this to a peaceful city, what the occupiers did, is a terror that will be remembered for centuries to come," Zelensky said in his nightly video address to the nation.

Mariupol, a strategic port on the Azov Sea, has been under bombardment for at least three weeks and become a symbol of the horror of Russia's war in Ukraine. Local authorities have said the siege has cut off food, water and energy supplies, and killed at least 2,300 people, some of whom had to be buried in mass graves. Russian forces have surrounded the battered city and pushed deeper into it in recent days. Heavy fighting shut down a major steel plant and local authorities pleaded for more Western help Saturday.

"Children, elderly people are dying. The city is destroyed and it is wiped off the face of the earth," Mariupol police officer Michail Vershnin said from a rubble-strewn street in a video addressed to Western leaders that was authenticated by The Associated Press.

The fall of Mariupol, the scene of some of the war's worst suffering, would mark a major battlefield advance for the Russians, whose advance is largely stalled outside other major cities more than three weeks into the biggest land invasion in Europe since World War II. In the capital, Kyiv, at least 20 babies carried by Ukrainian surrogate mothers are stuck in a makeshift bomb shelter, waiting for parents to travel into the war zone to pick them up. Some just days old, the babies are being cared for by nurses who cannot leave the shelter because of constant shelling by Russian troops who are trying to encircle the city.

Details also began to emerge about a rocket attack that killed as many as 40 marines in the Black Sea port city of Mykolaiv on Friday, according to a Ukrainian military official who spoke to The New York Times. It wasn't clear how many marines were inside at the time, and rescuers continued searching the rubble of the barracks.

A senior Ukrainian military official, who spoke to the Times on condition of anonymity to reveal sensitive information, estimated that as many as 40 marines were killed, which would make it one of the deadliest known attacks on Ukrainian forces during the war. Meanwhile the Russian military reported Sunday that it had carried out a new series of strikes on Ukrainian military facilities with long-range hypersonic and cruise missiles. The Russian Defense Ministry's spokesman, Maj. Gen. Igor Konashenkov, said a Kinzhal hypersonic missile hit a Ukrainian fuel depot in Kostiantynivka, a city near Mykolaiv. The Russian military said Saturday that it used a Kinzhal for the first time in combat to destroy an ammunition depot in Diliatyn in the Carpathian Mountains in western Ukraine.

Russia has said the Kinzhal, carried by MiG-31 fighter jets, has a range of up to 2,000 kilometers (about 1,250 miles) and flies at 10 times the speed of sound. Pentagon press secretary John Kirby said Saturday that the U.S. couldn't confirm the use of a hypersonic missile in Ukraine.

Konashenkov said Kalibr cruise missiles launched by Russian warships from the Caspian Sea were also involved in the strike on the fuel depot in Kostiantynivka and were used to destroy an armor repair plant in Nizhyn in the Chernihiv region in northern Ukraine.

Despite the siege in Mariupol and the geographic scope of Russia's assault, many remained struck by Ukraine's ability to hold back its much bigger, better-armed foe. The United Kingdom's Defense Ministry said Ukraine's airspace continued to be effectively defended.

"Gaining control of the air was one of Russia's principal objectives for the opening days of the conflict and their continued failure to do so has significantly blunted their operational progress," the ministry said on Twitter.

Russia is now relying on stand-off weapons launched from the relative safety of Russian airspace to strike targets within Ukraine, the British ministry said.

Estimates of Russian deaths vary widely, but even conservative figures are in the low thousands. Russia had 64 deaths in five days of fighting during its 2008 war with Georgia. It lost about 15,000 in Afghanistan over 10 years, and more than 11,000 in years of fighting in Chechnya.

Russia's number of dead and wounded in Ukraine is nearing the 10% benchmark of diminished combat effectiveness, said Dmitry Gorenburg, a researcher on Russia's

security at the Virginia-based CNA think tank. The reported battlefield deaths of four Russian generals, out of an estimated 20 in the fight, signal impaired command, Gorenburg said.

Russia would need 800,000 troops, almost equal to its entire active-duty military, to control Ukraine long-term in the face of armed opposition, said Michael Clarke, former head of the British-based Royal United Services Institute, a defense think tank.

"Unless the Russians intend to be completely genocidal, they could flatten all the major cities, and Ukrainians will rise up against Russian occupation, there will be just constant guerrilla war," said Clarke.

U.N. bodies have confirmed more than 847 civilian deaths since the war began, though they concede the actual toll is likely much higher. The U.N. says more than 3.3 million people have fled Ukraine as refugees.

Evacuations from Mariupol and other besieged cities proceeded along eight of 10 humanitarian corridors that Ukraine and Russia agreed to on Saturday Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk said, and a total of 6,623 people left.

Vereshchuk said planned humanitarian aid for the southern city of Kherson, which Russia seized early in the war, could not be delivered because the trucks were stopped along the way by Russian troops.

Ukraine and Russia have held several rounds of negotiations aimed at ending the conflict but remain divided over several issues, with Moscow pressing for its neighbor's demilitarization and Kyiv demanding security guarantees.

Around Ukraine, hospitals, schools and buildings where people sought safety have been attacked.

A satellite image from Maxar Technologies released Saturday confirmed earlier reports that much of the theater in Mariupol was destroyed. It also showed the word "CHILDREN" written in Russian in large white letters outside the building.

Russian forces fired on eight cities and villages in the eastern Donetsk region between Friday and Saturday, Ukraine's national police said. Dozens of civilians were killed or wounded, and at least 37 residential buildings and facilities were damaged including a school, a museum and a shopping center.

In the western city of Lviv, Ukraine's cultural capital, which was hit by Russian missiles on Friday, military veterans were training dozens of civilians on how to handle firearms and grenades.

"It's hard, because I have really weak hands, but I can manage it," said one trainee, 22-year-old Katarina Ishchenko.

The Mariupol city council claimed Saturday that Russian soldiers had forcibly relocated several thousand city residents, mostly women and children, to Russia. It didn't say where, and AP could not immediately confirm the claim.

Zelensky adviser Oleksiy Arestovych said the nearest forces that could assist Mariupol were already struggling against "the overwhelming force of the enemy" and that "there is currently no military solution to Mariupol."

Zelensky on Sunday ordered 11 political parties with links to Russia, the largest of which has 44 out of 450 seats in the country's parliament, to suspend activities during the period of martial law.

"Activities by politicians aimed at discord and collaboration will not succeed," he said in the address.

03.19.22

Talk peace now or suffer for generations, Ukraine's Zelensky tells Russia

03.19.22

Talk peace now or suffer for generations, Ukraine's Zelensky tells Russia

Russia reports using hypersonic missile against Ukrainian targets for first time since fighting broke out; Britain says Russia now pursuing strategy of attrition as Moscow's achievement remain scant

Ynet ,Reuters| Published: 03.19.22, 19:11

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky called on Saturday for comprehensive peace talks with Moscow to stop its invasion of Ukraine, saying it would otherwise take Russia "several generations" to recover from its losses in the war.

He also urged Switzerland to do more to crack down on wealthy Russian oligarchs who he said were helping wage war on his country with their money.

British intelligence meanwhile warned that Russia, frustrated by its failure to achieve its objectives since it launched the invasion on Feb. 24, was now pursuing a strategy of attrition that could intensify the humanitarian crisis.

Russian forces have taken heavy losses and their advance has largely stalled since President Vladimir Putin launched the assault, with long columns of troops that bore down on Kyiv halted in its suburbs.

But they have laid siege to cities, blasting urban areas to rubble, and in recent days have intensified missile attacks on scattered targets in western Ukraine, away from the main battlefields.

Zelensky, who makes frequent impassioned appeals to foreign audiences for help for his country, told an anti-war protest in Bern that Swiss banks were where the "money of the people who unleashed this war" lay and their accounts should be frozen.

Ukrainian cities "are being destroyed on the orders of people who live in European, in beautiful Swiss towns, who enjoy property in your cities. It would really be good to strip them of this privilege," he said in an audio address.

Neutral Switzerland, which is not a member of the European Union, has fully adopted EU sanctions against Russian individuals and entities, including orders to freeze their wealth in Swiss banks.

The EU measures are part of a wider effort by Western nations aimed at squeezing Russia's economy and starving its war machine. In an address earlier on Saturday, Zelensky urged Moscow to hold peace talks now. "I want everyone to hear me now, especially in Moscow. The time has come for a meeting, it is time to talk," he said in a video address. "The time has come to restore territorial integrity and justice for Ukraine. Otherwise, Russia's losses will be such that it will take you several generations to recover."

Britain's defense attaché to the United States said British intelligence believes Russia has been taken aback by the Ukrainian resistance to its assault and has so far failed to achieve its original objectives.

"Russia has been forced to change its operational approach and is now pursuing a strategy of attrition" likely to involve the "indiscriminate use of firepower resulting in increased civilian casualties", Air Vice-Marshal Mick Smeath said in a statement. Putin, who calls the action a "special operation" aimed at demilitarizing Ukraine and purging it of "Nazis", told a rally on Friday in Moscow that all of the Kremlin's aims would be achieved.

On Saturday, Russia said its hypersonic missiles had destroyed a large underground depot for missiles and aircraft ammunition in the western Ivano-Frankivsk region. Hypersonic weapons can travel faster than five times the speed of sound and the Interfax agency said it was the first time Russia had used them in Ukraine.

A spokesperson for the Ukrainian Air Force Command confirmed the attack, but said the Ukrainian side had no information on the type of missiles used.

Ukrainian authorities said on Saturday they had not seen any significant shifts over the past 24 hours in front line areas, noting the cities of Mariupol, Mykolaiv and Kherson in the south and Izyum in the east continued to see the heaviest fighting.

'Know how to fight'

Ordinary Ukrainians have joined the effort to defend their country, such as at a training facility in Odessa, a picturesque, multicultural Black Sea port, where young urban professionals were learning about handling weapons and applying first aid.

"Every person should know how to fight, how to make medicine," said 26-year-old graphic designer Olga Moroz.

More than 3.3 million refugees have fled Ukraine through its western border, with around 2 more million displaced inside the country. Ukraine has evacuated 190,000 civilians from frontline areas via humanitarian corridors, Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk said on Saturday.

"I'll go (to Germany) for three weeks but I hope I can go home after that," said Olga Pavlovska, a 28-year-old refugee in the Polish town of Przemyśl, hoping Zelenskiy's calls for comprehensive peace talks will end the invasion.

Hundreds of thousands have been trapped in the port city of Mariupol for over two weeks with power, water and heat supplies cut off. Bodies amid the rubble are a common sight. Local officials say fighting has reached the city center and heavy shelling kept humanitarian aid from getting in.

Rescue workers were still searching for survivors in a Mariupol theatre that authorities say was flattened by Russian airstrikes on Wednesday. Russia denies hitting the theatre and says it is not targeting civilians.

The Ukrainian prosecutor general's office said on Saturday that 112 children had been killed since the invasion began.

Russia last acknowledged on March 2 that nearly 500 of its soldiers had been killed and has offered no updates since. Ukraine says the number by now has reached many thousands. Reuters has not been able to independently verify the death toll.

Interfax quoted Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov as saying Moscow expected its operation in Ukraine to end with a signing of a comprehensive agreement on security issues, including Ukraine's neutral status.

Kyiv and Moscow reported some progress in talks this week towards a political formula that would guarantee Ukraine's security, while keeping it outside NATO, though both sides accused each other of dragging things out.

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Ynet-News, Mar 18, 2022 – Friday

03.17.22 – Th- - - News Placed in Mar 17 spot – Thursday

US may drop Iran Guard as terrorist to remove sanctions

03.17.22 – Th- - - News Placed in Mar 16 spot – Wednesday

Russia bogged down, blasting Ukraine 4th week, peace talks by video 4th day

03.16.22 – We- - - News

Portugal grants citizenship to descendants of Jews expelled during medieval Inquisition

03.16.22 – We- - - News

Russia media censorship blocks two Israeli websites calling Ukraine a war

03.16.22 – We- - - News

Israel announces shelter, assistance, medical & social program for Ukraine refugees

03.16.22 – We- - - News

Zelensky calls on US Congress for more Russia sanctions, defense aid

03.16.22 – We- - - News

Ukraine inflicts Russian forces every hour, a variant status for possible compromise

03.15.22 – Tu- - - News

Israeli court to rule on displacement of West Bank Palestinians after 22 years of petitions

03.15.22 – Tu- - - News Placed in Mar 15 spot – Tuesday

EU PM's of Czech Republic, Poland & Slovenia meet in Kyiv to support Ukraine

03.14.22 – Mo- - - News

Israeli websites (denial-of-service) attack for an hour by Iranian hackers

03.14.22 – Mo- - - News Placed in Mar 18 spot – Friday

International sanctions imposed to freeze assets of top Russians, upheld by Israel

03.14.22 – Mo- - - News

Zelensky adviser says peace talks in Jerusalem 'realistic' as late as May

03.14.22 – Mo- - - News

Israel to allow Ukraine refugees with relatives in country to stay until it's safe

03.14.22 – Mo- - - News

Civilians began to leave besieged city, forces still fail to capture any big cities

03.14.22 – Mo- - - News

Polish center near Auschwitz opens doors to refugees fleeing Ukraine war