

**June 27th - July 10th, 2023  
Ukraine Situation Report**

**CONFLICT DEVELOPMENTS**

- **The Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU) continue their counteroffensive in several directions.** The Ukrainian army is advancing south of Bakhmut, while taking the city under [fire control](#). Also, according to Ukrainian officials, over 169.000 square kilometers have been liberated in Ukraine's Southern region. At the same time, the Russian army continues to advance in other areas of the front, attacking Ukrainian positions in Lyman, Avdiivka, Mariinka and Kupyansk directions. Ukraine's President, Volodymyr Zelenskyy has reiterated that Ukraine will only participate in peace talks once the AFU have reached the country's internationally recognized borders. [According](#) to the UK's Defence Secretary, Ben Wallace, since the start of summer the AFU managed to liberate much more territory than Russians captured during the entire winter. Meanwhile, Serbia's [president](#), Aleksandar Vučić, announced that a conflict is going to escalate in Kosovo following the massive assault carried out by the AFU massive on Russian positions.
- Ukraine is rapidly stepping up the [pace](#) of weapons and ammunition production. A [Rheinmetall](#) plant is going to be opened in the next few months. A further plant to produce [Bayraktar](#) unmanned aerial vehicles is also under construction.
- According to the Ukrainian government, **the Russian Federation's (Russia) total losses** are now [234.000](#) soldiers killed
- **In the past two weeks air, missile and artillery attacks impacted** [Mykolayiv](#), [Sumy](#), [Lviv](#) (intense shelling of the city raised questions about the need to strengthen air defense and arrange bomb shelters even in the cities located in the rear), [Kherson](#), [Zaporizhzhia](#), [Orikhiv](#) (4 people were killed after an attack on a school where humanitarian help was being distributed), [Lyman](#) (9 people were killed during one attack alone on 8 July), [Kramatorsk](#) (an attack claimed the lives of [10 people](#), while 60 people sustained injuries in a cafe in the city center), [Kostyantynivka](#), [Kryvyi Rih](#), [Nikopol](#), [Inhulets](#) (a school was destroyed), [Pervomayskiy](#) (at least 38 people were injured following an attack on 4 July), [Ochakiv](#), [Komyshuvakha](#) (a school was destroyed) and other settlements located close to the Russian border in Chernihiv, Kharkiv and Sumy provinces.
- **In Sumy province civilians are expected to be [evacuated](#) from a 5-kilometer zone along the state border due to increased shelling.** This is a preventative measure taken by the Ukrainian government to ensure people's safety. However, this also leads to a new wave of IDPs in the liberated regions and a growing burden on central and local budgets.
- **The Russian army continues to subject Ukrainian settlements to missile and drone attacks.** On the night of 28 June, Ukrainian air defenses [downed](#) 6 Russian strike drones. On the night of 30 June, Russia attacked Ukraine with 13 strike drones, of which 10 were [shot down](#) (also, 4 ballistic C-300 missiles were fired and not downed). On the night of 2 July, all three "Caliber" cruise missiles launched by Russia were shot down as well as 8 kamikaze drones. On the night of 3 July, 13 out of 17 Iranian kamikaze drones were [shot down](#). On the night of 6 July, 10 cruise missiles were fired at

Ukraine, with 7 of them [downed](#), while on the night of 7 July, 12 out of 18 kamikaze drones were [neutralized](#). On the night of 8 July, 5 drones were destroyed (some of the drones [could not](#) be downed by the Ukrainian air defense).

## **POLITICAL DIMENSIONS**

- **Zelenskyy's Ukrainian [doctrine](#) implies a strategic positioning and a bid for a second term.** President Zelenskyy has presented Ukraine's new doctrine and proposed holding a nation-wide discussion of it. He has also listed the 5 main points of the doctrine: the philosophy of Ukraine's victory, the global nature of Ukraine's security, the politics of heroes, the politics of justice, and transformation of the past 10 years. Under pressure from society to better communicate post-war plans, recovery and reconstruction, the Office of the President is prioritizing the initiative and guaranteeing that the President will take a leading role in the debates regarding the future, while also polishing Zelenskyy's image as of not only a wartime leader, but also a leader of Ukraine's future recovery and development. This is Zelenskyy's bid for a second term in office. Given that he has put forward the Development Doctrine, he is ready to fight for its future implementation. This process also involves the member of his cabinet who all have medium-term project proposals and proposals for the country's post-war recovery.
- **A survey conducted in Poland, with Ukrainian asylum seekers, has [shown](#) that approximately 88% of them are planning to return to Ukraine.** 93% are ready to do so on the condition that security will be restored in Ukraine. 90% find the lack of problems with basic services important. 79% have said that their return will depend on the end of the war, while 52% place importance on the support they will receive for their return and reintegration.
- The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs [has accused](#) Kyiv of "systematically damaging" the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP), and warned the world of the possible consequences of a catastrophe at the plant. Zelenskyy, while talking about the Russians, said, "If they are going to lose even more of the initiative than they have already, they will take some additional steps to make the world fear a global nuclear disaster and to terminate all combat activities". In other words, Russia is [exploiting](#) the situation around the ZNPP as a tool for forcing negotiations and freezing the war. This is in line with the Russian strategy of ensuring a war of attrition. Russia's political goal is to win time. By exposing Russia's plans, the Ukrainian government is getting ahead of the curve, trying to draw attention of the international community to the fact that in case Russia suffers further setbacks on the front, the Kremlin is ready to repeat the Chernobyl disaster at Ukrainian nuclear power plants.
- The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has said that it deems the extension of the Black Sea grain deal (which was reached last year to allow the export of Ukrainian crops from Ukrainian sea ports) possible. Therefore, Russia de facto is aware of its ultimatum (reconnection of the Russian Agricultural Bank to SWIFT, import of agricultural spare parts into Russia, reactivation of the ammonia pipeline Tolyatti-Odesa) teetering on the brink of failure. Theoretically, Ukraine could export grain from Great Odesa without reaching an agreement with Russia in the hope that Moscow will not attack its ships. However, the destruction of the Kakhovka Dam and the landmines planted

at the ZNPP show that Russia is more than capable of doing this. Ukrainian experts believe that Turkish naval vessels will [accompany](#) the ships through “the grain corridor”, should Russia withdraw from the agreement. However, the “corridor” will not be fully operational in either July, or August, due to the negotiations on its future.

## **HUMANITARIAN DIMENSIONS**

- According to the official data [provided by](#) juvenile prosecutors, 494 children have been killed and over 1051 injured with various degrees of severity. 19.474 children are believed to have been deported. Last [week](#) 45 soldiers and 2 civilians returned to Ukraine from Russian captivity. Since the beginning of the war 2.576 Ukrainians have [returned](#) from Russian captivity.
- [According](#) to the UNESCO, Russia’s attack on Lviv on 6 July, which claimed the lives of 10 people and inflicted injuries on 48 civilians, violated the World Heritage Convention and the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict
- The destruction of the Kakhovka Dam has caused at least 2-billion USD direct damage, while the Dam itself is [turning into](#) a river.
- In total, the damage incurred on Ukraine’s [housing stock](#) has exceeded 54 billion USD. 8,6% of the whole housing stock area of Ukraine has been affected.
- According to a [survey](#) conducted by the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, the vast majority of Ukrainians (78%) have close relatives or friends who have sustained injuries or died due to the Russian invasion. A survey aimed at analyzing support for NATO and EU membership has [revealed](#) a record level of support. 92% of Ukrainians want their country to become a member of the EU, while 89% support NATO membership.
- Wagner mercenaries will [cease](#) to fight in Ukraine. This decision was made after their leader, Yevgeniy Prigozhyn, refused to sign the agreement approving his paramilitary group being subordinated to the Russian Ministry of Defense. Nevertheless, even though the Wagner group is no longer engaged in combat on Ukrainian territory, Russia has [introduced](#) air assault brigades and professionals, as well as new units, while the Wagner group has begun handing over heavy weapons for the Russian regular army.
- In Mariupol, the Russian occupiers are checking [teenagers](#) for membership in pro-Ukrainian movements. Filtration measures have been reinforced. The Mayor of Melitopol, Ivan Fedorov, has [said](#) that on the premises of a former children’s sanatorium in Melitopol, the Russians have constructed a crematorium where the bodies of dead Russian soldiers are burnt. The Russians have also started planting [landmines](#) at the objects of critical infrastructure in the occupied parts of the Zaporizhzhia province. They have recently [stationed](#) their military equipment and personnel in a church, kindergarten and a shelter for minors.
- The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has [claimed](#) that there is no ground for the extension of the Black Sea grain deal that expires on 17 July. The Ministry alleges that the grain deal has become a purely commercial activity for Ukraine, with grain only exported well off countries. Turkish President

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, has offered to [support](#) for the extension of the grain deal for another three months.

- [According](#) to the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), during the recent inspection at the ZNPP, no signs of land-mining activities were detected. Previously, Russia did [not grant](#) international observers access to some areas of the plant.
- Grigoriy Karasin, the head of the Committee for International Affairs of the Federation Council, has said that Russia has transferred around [700 000](#) children to Russia from Ukraine in the last few years. [According](#) to the Ministry for Reintegration of the Temporary Occupied Territories of Ukraine, there is accurate information confirming that about 19.393 children were illegally deported to Russia. In addition, according to the results of a [survey](#), 1.148 children have been subjected to Russia's "preliminary guardianship", although officially only 380 children are believed to have been mentioned in this regard.
- In a settlement Hornostaivka, in the Kherson province, the Russian occupiers are depriving [the locals](#), who have entered the territories controlled by the Ukrainian government or who have been killed in combat, of their homes. These homes are marked with a sign saying "the property of the Russian Federation". The Russian occupiers have also confiscated the homes of Enerhodar's citizens in order to encourage other Russians to work at the ZNPP. For example, during a meeting at ZNPP on 6 July [held](#) between Sergei Kirienko (first deputy head of the Russian president's administration) and the collaborator, Yevgeniy Balitskiy, the issue of encouraging Russians to come from Russia to work at the plant was discussed. They agreed to house 4500 Russians in the homes taken away from those Ukrainians who fled Enerhodar.

### **INFORMATION WARFARE DIMENSIONS**

- **Lack of unity regarding the support for Ukraine. Fiasco of the West.** There is a growing number of [publications](#) in the Russian media about the "inability" of the West to make decisions about Ukraine's membership in NATO. At the same time, the Russian media glosses over the paradox of the so-called "special military operation" (SMO) beginning due to Ukraine's alleged potential membership in the Alliance. Russia is referred to in the media not as a country that cannot lose, but as the one, "that does not know what a defeat is".
- **The West is growing tired of the confrontation with Russia.** Russia's official media are spreading narratives claiming that the USA is becoming tired of supporting Ukraine. It is claimed that the USA was preparing for a blitzkrieg and are not ready to provide Ukraine with weapons in the long term. "By [demilitarizing](#) Ukraine, we have also managed to significantly demilitarize the USA". "By pursuing the goals of the SMO in Ukraine, Russia is undermining US power". [Messages](#) are galore about the Biden Administration becoming increasingly weary of dealing with Ukraine, despite Volodymyr Zelenskyy's diplomatic efforts and international visits. Maria [Zakharova](#), the spokeswoman of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, claimed that ex-US officials conducted secret negotiations with Russian Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, is false. Moscow continues to assert that the EU economy is deteriorating due to the [sanctions](#) imposed on Russia, claiming that "in their effort to destroy

- Russia's economy the West was ready to wreak havoc on the economic welfare of their own citizens". The Kremlin claims that the EU is becoming weary of Ukraine and that the price of [supporting](#) the country is quite high considering inflation and the West's internal problems. While Russian narratives denounce Washington's [move](#) to provide Ukraine with cluster ammunition, they also claim that this step [will not change](#) the situation on the battlefield.
- **"Our cause is just". "The goals of the SMO remain unchanged"**. Russia is spreading narratives aimed at justifying Putin's SMO. The narratives claim that it is the "only possible decision in this situation to save Russia, preserve and strengthen its sovereignty, which was questioned by the aggressive strategy of globalists and NATO leadership". Moscow declares that the operation will continue until the goals of the SMO are achieved (which [implies](#) "full control over Ukraine's political space"). The Russian media spread the idea mooted by Leonid [Slutsky](#) about the "denazification and demilitarization of Ukraine", which will happen "after Russia's victory".
  - **About negotiations. "If you want a war, you will get it"**. Kremlin Spokesman, Dmitri Peskov [believes](#) that the goals of the SMO can be reached by different means. As of now, he sees no grounds for negotiations. At the same time, narratives are being fed to Russian society (presumably voiced by [Hervé Juvin](#), a member of the European Parliament), according to which "peace in Ukraine" can only be reached on Russian terms. Negotiations for the settlement of the conflict are currently not possible — this was [said](#) by Konstantin Gavrillov, the head of the Russian delegation in Vienna which deals with the issues of military security and weapons control. He said, "If you want a war, you will get it". Leonid [Slutsky](#) has said that there is no ground for holding peace talks with Ukraine because Kyiv is following order from the West.
  - **"Everything under control", "the government is as strong as never before"**. Moscow emphasizes the strength of the Russian government and its control over the situation. The Kremlin promotes [the narratives](#) about Russia's enemies failing to reach their goals of weakening Russia. On 7 June, a piece of news was spread about Putin [meeting](#) Prigozhyn and commanders of the Wagner group on 29 June, claiming that the situation is under control. The Russian media have also circulated the [results](#) of a survey conducted by the Russian Public Opinion Research Center, which claims that 76% of Russians believe that Putin is [working well](#). Overall, the tone of the messages about the progress of the SMO is victorious, just like the social and economic situation in Russia.
  - **Integration of the "new territories" into Russia**. The start of the election campaign in Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson provinces has been announced. Candidates will be revealed from 24 July onwards. The campaign is due to last until mid-August. A [decision](#) has been made to "reduce the period of the election campaign". Russia resorts to the same propaganda with a reverse effect when addressing the issue of accusations levelled at Russia regarding its violations of humanitarian law, in particular, the deportation of children. For example, the deputy "governor of Kherson province" has joined the [commission](#) of the "parliamentary investigation into the crimes committed by the Kyiv regime regarding children".
  - **Shelling Ukrainian civilian infrastructure**. A massive missile strike on Lviv, on 7 July, has been [approved of](#) by Russian propaganda. In Russia it is referred to as an attack on the military, equipment

and foreign “mercenaries”. There is no mention of 10 civilian casualties, 50 destroyed houses and tens of injured civilians.

- **Criticizing the return of the Azov battalion commanders from Turkey.** The Russian media are fulminating about the return of the Azov battalion commanders from Turkey to Ukraine. Russia believes that Ankara’s decision to hand over the commanders of the nationalist Azov battalion, (banned in Russia and recognized as a terrorist organization), who have been living in Turkey and allow them to return to Ukraine is a violation of previously reached agreements. Also, Viktor [Bondarev](#) from the Federation Council asserts that the statements about the accelerated procedure of Ukraine’s NATO accession testify to Turkey changing from a neutral country to an adversary. Dmitri Peskov has [said](#) that Putin did not have a call with Erdoğan after Zelenskyy’s visit to Turkey.
- **Nuclear threats. “The West can push Ukraine to another man-made Chernobyl disaster”.** Russia denies being involved in the explosion at the Kakhovka Dam. Its media draw parallels between this incident with “[escalating](#)” threats regarding the provocations at the ZNPP in Enerhodar. According to Moscow, such provocations are planned by Ukraine with the assistance of Western countries.
- On 3 July, Dmitri Medvedev [shared](#) messages, which claims that there is no global taboo on using nuclear weapons, as they have already been deployed in wars. On 5 July, Medvedev [said](#) that any war can rapidly come to an end by either signing a peace agreement, or by resorting to something that was done by the USA in 1945, after they used nuclear weapons against Japanese cities where civilians were living. On 7 July, a Russian Ambassador to the US, Anatoly [Antonov](#), said that there were no grounds for “reducing the threat of a nuclear provocation” by Kyiv. He also called on the western countries to “influence the terrorist Ukrainian government”. On 9 July, Medvedev [said](#) that Russia could launch a strike on nuclear targets in Eastern Europe, should an attempt to attack the Smolensk Nuclear Power Plant with NATO missiles take place.
- **Discrediting Ukraine and the Ukrainian government. “The West is being dragged into an escalated confrontation with Russia”.** Traditionally, Russian narratives depict “the Nazi nature” of the Ukrainian government. Nikolai Patrushev, Head of Russia’s Security Council, has [said](#) that “the Kyiv regime, while preparing terrorist and sabotage attacks on Russian soil, are using the methods of Hitler’s secret services”. Maria [Zakharova](#), Spokeswoman of the Russian Foreign Ministry, believes that “the Kyiv government is preparing the Ukrainian territory for the western occupation”. Valentina Matviyenko has made a [statement](#) about a Report being sent to parliaments on the use of fighting mosquitos (mosquitos, mites and lice) that were produced in special American military laboratories located in Ukraine.
- **Discrediting the Ukrainian army. “Time works against the AFU”.** Russia is spreading narratives about Ukraine’s failed counteroffensive and claiming that “[time works against the AFU](#)”. Moscow believes that the AFU should have achieved more gains prior to the Vilnius NATO summit. Russian media [refer](#) to the counteroffensive as an “impasse” for Ukraine and “a total failure”. In Moscow’s opinion, Ukrainians are used as cannon fodder in the battle to demonstrate success ahead of the [summit](#). The AFU are being accused of [maltreating](#) Russian prisoners of war. This is being looked into by the Russian Investigative Committee.

- **About victories and success of the Russian army. The losses of the AFU.** The Russian media never tires of spreading [disinformation](#) from the Russian Ministry of Defense about the “[fruitless](#)” attacks mounted by the AFU. The Russian Minister of Defense, Sergei Shoigu, has said that the Russian military manage to [stem](#) the tide of the Ukrainian forces’ advance.