

## Ukraine Situation Report August 24th - August 29th, 2022

### CONFLICT DEVELOPMENTS

- Russian troops continue to gradually advance on the Donetsk oblast. In parallel, they are conducting massive artillery, missile and [air strikes](#) on the settlements located along the frontline, including Avdiivka, Kramatorsk, Kostyantynivka, Bakhmut, [Slovyansk](#), Siversk, Soledar and others. The evacuation of civilians from the Donetsk oblast continues. The Ukrainian government has carried out an obligatory [evacuation](#) from the settlements of the Zaporizhzhia, Kharkiv and Mykolayiv oblasts, located close to the front line. The Russian Federation (hereinafter Russia) is preparing for large-scale military [drills](#) (East-2022), possibly to train and mobilise new soldiers who will eventually be deployed to fight in Ukraine.
- [Mykolayiv](#), Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia, Dnipro, Myrhorod, Sarny (the Rivne oblast), Shepetivka (the Khmelnytskyi oblast), Marhanets, Nikopol, Kryvyi Rih, Orikhiv, Vyshhorod and other cities, as well as settlements in the Sumy oblast located on the Russian border have been subjected to frequent shelling. On 28 August alone some 220 artillery shells were [documented](#) as having hit communities in the Sumy oblast. On 24 August, Ukraine's Independence Day, large-scale airstrikes and a record number of planes taking off from Russian airbases were recorded. On the same day, 25 people were killed, including 2 children, at Chaplyne railway station in the Zaporizhzhia oblast. However, contrary to predictions, Kyiv was not shelled. This could be explained by the visit of Polish President, Andrzej Duda, who arrived on 23 August to attend the high-level second summit of the Crimean Platform, and the visit of UK Premier, Boris Johnson on 24 August.
- The Armed Forces of Ukraine (hereinafter AFU) have launched a counteroffensive in the Kherson oblast. On 29 August several settlements were liberated, including Sukhyi Stavok on the left bank of the Inhulets river. The Russian army is retreating towards Kherson. However, the situation remains too unstable for any concrete conclusions to be drawn. Russian military bases and ammunition depots located on Ukrainian territory (currently under Russian occupation) continue to be shelled. Explosions continue at military bases in Crimea. While Ukraine has not assumed responsibility for them, Russia has not responded to the explosions with a military escalation. Therefore, it is hard to determine whether the AFU is behind the attacks. Meanwhile, the Ukrainian government has taken responsibility for shelling bridges in the Kherson oblast. This step is aimed at undermining Russia's ability to transport military vehicles, equipment and ammunition from Crimea to their military units in the Kherson oblast. At the same time, Russia has started to shell bridges in Mykolayiv, possibly pursuing the same goal.
- In the occupied territories a number of Ukrainian officials (who had defected to the other side) have been killed. This includes Oleksiy Kovalyov, a [member](#) of the Verkhovna Rada, and Oleksandr Kolesnikov, Deputy Head of the State Automobile Inspection of the Russian occupation

administration in Berdyansk. These deaths could be a result of internal conflicts between Russian and pro-Russian groups, or due to the actions of Ukrainian guerrilla fighters.

## HUMANITARIAN DIMENSIONS

- Significant humanitarian challenges in both the occupied territories and in the settlements located close to the front line persist (lack of water, gas, energy, medication, doctors, etc.). Instead of taking care of basic needs in captured territories, the Russian occupation administrations prioritise arrangements (mainly in the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts) for “referendums” on accession to Russia. [14 September](#) has frequently been referred to as the date for the referendums, i.e. after the Russian Election Day.
- Pope Francis’ statement regarding the death of Russian propagandist, Darya Dugina, generated a [negative](#) response from Ukraine (particularly, the country’s Catholic community). The pope referred to Dugina as an innocent victim of war. Ukraine has not assumed responsibility for Dugina’s death. Therefore, her death is not necessarily connected to the Russia-Ukraine war. Ukrainian society believes that it is inappropriate to equate a victim with an aggressor. The Pope’s statement has also jeopardised the co-existence of the Orthodox people and Catholics. Ukrainian society demands that Catholic leaders in Ukraine officially condemn the Pope’s statement.
- Despite the beginning of the new academic year, no final plan for its organisation has been implemented in schools and universities. The organisation of off-line education remains doubtful at many educational facilities which do not have bomb shelters (or dormitories without bomb shelters). Furthermore, a significant number of students have not yet returned to their homes, while the homes of other students have been destroyed. As of the end of August, at least 1112 children have been impacted by Russia’s full-scale war in Ukraine, with 379 children killed and 733 injured.

## POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DIMENSIONS

- [Forecasts](#) for the development of the Ukrainian economy:
  - 1) The course and outcome of the “war of attrition” will impact not only the developments on the battlefield, but it will also result in the introduction of an anti-crisis management model.
  - 2) The Ukrainian government is currently planning to introduce a range of measures to stabilise and revive the country’s economy in an effort to prevent hyperinflation. The inflation rate has significantly increased since the war began. However, hyperinflation should not be feared as the government will control prices. This message was communicated in a new inflation review issued in June 2022 by the Ministry of Economy. Additionally, according to the National Bank of Ukraine,

inflation in Ukraine in 2022 will reach 31%. In 2023 its rate is expected to be 20,7% and in 2024 at 9,4%.

- The Ukrainian government has adopted a [bill](#) simplifying the procedures for the acquisition of land rights and for the start of construction for projects aimed at economic recovery. The bill will shortly be registered in the parliament. During the period of martial law as well as the recovery period, entrepreneurs who implement projects included in the List of Economic Recovery Projects will receive the most favorable conditions for investment.
- These include:
  - a reduction of the terms of acquisition of rights to the land plot - from 18 to 3 months
  - the right to own a plot of land will be acquired without an auction, without the provision of land management documentation and with guarantees against land alienation.
- The Head of the Federation of Metallurgists of Ukraine, Serhii Bilenkyi, has [said](#) that lifting the blockade of Ukrainian ports for the export of metal products would result in a financial gain of over 600 million USD a month. This would give the metal industry an opportunity to ramp up production and start tackling the serious crisis that has engulfed to sector due to Russia's invasion. The Ukrainian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs believe that metal exports through Ukrainian ports will secure a lucrative source of foreign money, which will help lower the exchange rate of the American dollar and keep it within the accepted limits.
- The political situation in Ukraine continues to be plagued by conflicts. The opposition accuses the ruling party of [prosecuting](#) a famous military and political figure, Serhii Kryvonos. The decision to bestow awards (timed to coincide with the Independence Day) on people from President Zelenskyy's team has also been sharply criticised.

## INFORMATION WARFARE DIMENSIONS

- An increase of the Russian army has been ordered. On 25 August Russian President, Vladimir Putin [signed](#) a decree increasing the size of the Russian Armed Forces by 137.000 soldiers. The decree will come into force on 1 January 2023. According to the decree, the total staff of the army will be increased to 2039758 people (1150628 will be soldiers). Hidden mobilisation in Russia continues. Russian citizens living in country's far-flung regions are encouraged to fight in the war. For example, the authorities of the Nenets Autonomous Okrug [have increased](#) the amount of the one-time payment for joining the special military operation from 100 to 300 thousand rubles.
- Russia continues to relentlessly [accuse](#) Ukraine of "shelling" the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power plant by sharing relevant messages through military and civil administrations established by its army in Ukraine.
- Ukraine continues to be shelled from Belarusian territory. On 25 August, President Alexander Lukashenko [said](#) that Belarusian planes had been converted to carry nuclear weapons. The President [wished](#) Ukrainians "a peaceful sky" on Ukraine's Independence Day.

*This Ukraine Situation Report is prepared in the framework of the project "Building Resilience to Conflict Through Dialogue", funded by the European Union*

- Narratives are being spread accusing Ukraine of murdering Dariya Dugina, the daughter of one of Russia's far-right ideologists, Alexander Dugin. It took the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) two days to allegedly discover that that "the crime [was prepared and committed](#) by the Ukrainian special services", although Russia has failed to provide any hard evidence to corroborate the allegation. The Kremlin is comparing the crime to those "committed by completely deranged thugs from ISIS in Syria". Ukraine is being accused of terrorism and of organising terrorist attacks. Dariya Dugina is portrayed as a "saint" who has died for Russia.
- On Ukraine's Independence Day the Kremlin spread anti-Ukrainian narratives claiming that the 31st anniversary of Ukraine's independence is actually "the independence from common sense". Russia claims that Ukraine is not an independent country, but is rather under the complete control of the West and being ruled by the Western agents, etc.
- In the Russian information space messages are being [disseminated](#) about Russia's readiness to discuss the possibility of negotiations with Ukraine, on the condition that Ukraine surrenders, reduces the size of its army and completes the process of its denazification. In particular, Leonid Slutsky, Leader of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, and Chairman of the State Duma Committee on International Affairs frequently resorts to this sort of rhetoric.
- Russia continues to issue [reports](#) about its army's achievements in the Kherson and Mykolayiv oblasts, as well as in other regions. Ukraine is accused of using weapons delivered by the West to shell civilian infrastructure in the Donetsk oblast. At the same time, Moscow fails to mention the damaged military infrastructure in Crimea and the southern areas of the Kherson oblast. Ukraine is also accused of resorting to "indiscriminate shelling" of civilian infrastructure in the Kherson oblast.
- Russia dismisses information related to military threats to Crimea. Instead, it emphasises that the peninsula is on the list of the "ten most tourist-attractive regions of Russia". The "Crimean Platform" summit is [likened](#) to the gathering of a terrorist gang and its accomplices.
- [Narratives](#) are being spread about the so-called "Ukrainian punishers". Arrangements are being made to begin the trial of Ukrainian prisoners of war. [According](#) to the speaker of the Russian State Duma, Vyacheslav Volodin, "soon Ukrainian Nazis will be brought to trial. Those war criminals who have been killing, raping, destroying, and keeping civilians of the Donbas region in fear, will be prosecuted. It is crucial to make the trial public. Everyone is waiting for it". The position of the Ukrainian government in this regard is being completely ignored.