December 6 - December 12, 2022 Ukraine Situation Report

# CONFLICT DEVELOPMENTS

* Efforts by the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation (hereinafter: Russia) (supported by private paramilitary groups) to capture the city of [Bakhmut,](https://t.me/V_Zelenskiy_official/4342) in the Donetsk oblast by shelling it and other cities situated along the line of contact continue. This includes [Soledar,](https://suspilne.media/331590-obmezenna-cin-na-rosijsku-naftu-nabulo-cinnosti-u-ssa-ocikuut-na-znizenna-intensivnosti-boiv-285-den-vijni-onlajn/) [Kostyantynivka,](https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-ato/3632352-vijska-rf-vdarili-raketami-po-kostantinivci-na-doneccini-poskodzena-skola.html) [Kramatorsk](https://novosti.dn.ua/ru/news/338401-chetyre-rakety-udarili-po-kramatorsku-mer-rasskazal-o-posledstviyah), [Mariinka,](https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/rosiya-ukrayina-zahroza-viyny/31703318/lbl0lbi319281.html) [Kurakhove,](https://novosti.dn.ua/ru/news/338477-v-kurahovo-prilet-v-rajone-rynka-mnogo-zhertv) [Zaporizhzhia,](https://gazeta.ua/articles/np/_rosijski-okupanti-atakuvali-zaporizhzhya-povidomlyayetsya-pro-potuzhni-vibuhi/1123852) [Kherson,](https://novosti.dn.ua/ru/news/338848-rossijskie-vojska-atakovali-herson-dvoe-chelovek-pogibli) [Odesa,](https://uc.od.ua/columns/alexvelmozhko/1248151) [Mykolayiv,](https://interfax.com.ua/news/general/877043.html) [Nikopol,](https://tsn.ua/ato/rosiyani-vipustili-po-nikopolyu-ponad-50-snaryadiv-v-ova-rozpovili-pro-naslidki-ataki-foto-2220418.html) [Kryvyi Rih,](https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-ato/3629112-raketna-ataka-na-krivij-rig-pid-udar-potrapiv-promislovij-obekt-e-poranenij.html) [Marhanets.](https://chas.news/news/karta-boiovih-dii-v-ukraini-stanom-na-11-grudnya)
* Other Ukrainian cities have also been subjected to shelling including those of the [Sumy,](https://interfax.com.ua/news/general/877139.html) [Kharkiv,](https://tsn.ua/ato/pracyuvala-aviaciya-opublikovano-naslidki-zruynuvanogo-mirnogo-sela-u-harkivskiy-oblasti-foto-video-1995592.html) [Chernihiv](https://newch.tv/okupanty-za-den-vypustyly-po-terytorii-chernihivshchyny-ponad-20-min-70501/) oblasts located along the Russian border.
* Russia has renewed its attacks with kamikaze [drones,](https://novosti.dn.ua/ru/news/338709-nochnaya-ataka-okkupantov-vozdushnye-sily-sbili-10-iz-15-dronov) possibly due to the warmer weather.
* While Russia has lost over 94.000 soldiers, this does not deter their military leadership from launching non-stop attacks on Ukrainian army positions.
* According to a [statement](https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/news-shmyhal-poshkodzhennya-vysokovoltna-merezha/32169794.html) by Ukraine’s Prime Minister, Denys Shmyhal, Russian attacks have damaged all of Ukraine’s thermal and hydro-power stations. 40% of Ukraine’s high voltage grid has also sustained damage of different degrees.
* Attacks carried out with Iranian drones have left most of the Odesa region residents [without](https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/news-zelenskyy-odeshchyyna-svitlo/32170921.html) electricity. However, Ukraine’s air defense is becoming more effective at repelling Russian attacks. For example, on the night of 7 December, all the 14 kamikaze drones launched by Russia were shot down by the Ukrainian Armed Forces (AFU). Russia is also shelling Ukraine with [Х-55](https://www.unn.com.ua/uk/news/2006883-rosiya-obstrilyuye-ukrayinu-krilatimi-raketami-kh-55-yiyi-zh-pokhodzhennya-skibitskiy) cruise missiles, which Ukraine surrendered to Russia within the framework of the [Budapest Memorandum](https://policymemos.hks.harvard.edu/links/ukraine-budapest-memorandum-1994) in 1994.
* The AFU is mounting a counteroffensive near Kreminna and Svatove. For example, on 12 December alone, the [liberation](https://www.rbc.ua/rus/news/biytsi-kraken-pokazali-k-zvilnyali-kislivku-1670871307.html) of a further two settlements located nearby was reported. In total, the liberation of almost 1890 settlements (occupied by the Russian army in 2022) has been reported.
* Representatives of the occupation administrations continue to be subjected to acts of violence committed by either guerrillas or due to the power distribution process among representatives of these administrations. For example, on 12 December, an [attempt](https://kavun.city/articles/254695/na-hersonschini-zdijsnili-zamah-na-zradnika-vitaliya-bulyuka-scho-narazi-vidomo) on the life of the deputy head of the Russian administration in the Kherson oblast, Vitaliy Bulyuk, was made. Bulyuk’s driver was killed on the spot, with Bulyuk himself admitted to intensive care.

# HUMANITARIAN DIMENSIONS

* According to official data provided by [juvenile prosecutors](https://www.facebook.com/pgo.gov.ua/posts/523554819807356), 443 Ukrainian children have been killed with 855 wounded of varying degree of severity since the beginning of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. 13.124 children are believed to have been deported.
* On 6 December, an exchange of prisoners of war (POW) between Kyiv and Moscow took place. 60 Ukrainians were exchanged for 60 Russians. The bodies of [49 fallen soldiers](https://prm.ua/ukraina-povernula-tila-49-polehlykh-zakhysnykiv/) were returned to Ukraine.
* [1888](https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/news-zelenskyi-okupovani-naseleni-punkty/32166424.html) Ukrainian settlements have been liberated so far.
* Representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross [visited Ukrainian prisoners of war](https://i-ua.tv/news/73599-mizhnarodnyi-komitet-chervonoho-khresta-vidvidav-ukrainskykh-viiskovopolonenykh) detained by Russia. They checked their health conditions and passed on news from their families.
* Eight months into the war, [300.000](https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/news-mediazona-hromadyanstvo-rosiji-ukrajinci/32169469.html) Ukrainians have received Russian citizenship. According to the Ukrainian government, these people are believed to have been “forcefully relocated”, meaning they were also forced to accept Russian passports.
* The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR), Völker Türk, said that the situation in Ukraine is close to becoming a humanitarian catastrophe, with [17,7 million people](https://ipress.ua/news/v_oon_rozpovily_pro_gumanitarnu_katastrofu_v_ukraini_336937.html) requiring humanitarian aid as a consequence of Russia’s invasion.
* A further torture chamber has been uncovered in the Kherson oblast. Ukrainian investigators have found material evidence (in particular, [a list of 122 Ukrainians](https://lb.ua/society/2022/12/06/538246_hersonshchini_prokuratura_viyavila_shche.html) that were detained in the building). More and more [residents of Kherson](https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/skhemy-deokupovanyy-kherson/32165900.html) are making testimonies about Russian torture chambers. For example, they talk about what they have witnessed, including seeing those individuals hired by Russian troops to subject Ukrainian prisoners of war to torture by using electric currents, gas masks and cables (for strangulations).
* In the Kherson oblast the Russian occupiers have looted [agricultural businesses](https://kurkul.com/news/32058-na-hersonschini-okupanti-rozgrabuvali-silgosppidpriyemstva). In addition, the prosecutor’s office in the oblast documented the large-scale killing of animals. For example, most of the chickens at one of Kerson’s largest poultry farms (housing over 4 million birds) were found dead. During Russian occupation, the chickens were not fed, while proper sanitary conditions were not maintained.
* Repression of employees at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant has intensified. On 8 December, the head of the plant’s management, Oleksiy Trebenkov, and his deputy, Yuriy Andropov, were [beaten](https://expres.online/podrobitsi/rashisti-posilili-represii-proti-pratsivnikiv-zaporizkoi-aes-energoatom) in front of their colleagues and subsequently taken to an unknown destination. The shift supervisor, Kostyantyn Beyner, who is directly responsible for nuclear and radiation security at the plant, was detained and locked up in the basement. The goal of the Russian occupiers is to make the plant’s pro- Ukrainian employees loyal to them, as well as demonstrate to their bosses that the Ukrainian employees support Russia’s fascist and terrorist acts.

# INFORMATION WARFARE DIMENSIONS

* Stories are being spread about the sustainability of Russia’s military might and the effectiveness of their nuclear weapons systems. The question of Russia using a nuclear weapon (for the purpose of Russia’s [defense](https://www.interfax.ru/russia/875831)) is back in the Russian media. The nuclear weapons issue is addressed in numerous meetings involving President Putin, human rights activists, and journalists. The Russian President [speaks](http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/70061) about “a disarming nuclear strike”, and the ability of Russia to deploy such a strategy. The Russian media also writes about Russia having an effective nuclear weapon in its arsenal. The question of the need to [change](https://www.mk.ru/politics/2022/12/12/peskov-otvetil-naschet-izmeneniya-yadernoy-doktriny-rossii.html) Russia’s nuclear doctrine “according to the context” is also being explored following the [strikes](https://www.mk.ru/politics/2022/12/11/putin-nameknul-zapadu-ob-obezoruzhivayushhem-udare-strakh-poteryali.html) by “unmanned aerial vehicles” on Russian airports that are used to bomb Ukrainian cities. Nuclear weapons are [referred to](https://www.interfax.ru/russia/875649) by Russian media as a guarantee of Russian integrity (according to Dmitry Medvedev, Deputy Chairman of the Security Council of Russia). In addition, messages are being shared about Russia increasing the production of weapons to “counter the countries of the western bloc” which [support](https://tass.ru/politika/16561953) “the Kyiv regime” (according to Medvedev).
* Russia [is justifying](https://www.interfax.ru/russia/875984) and legitimizing missile strikes on Ukraine’s civilian energy infrastructure by claiming it is a response to Ukraine’s actions. For example, the damaged Kerch bridge (as claimed by Putin).
* The Russian media is also awash with various publications claiming that the EU will experience [more difficulties](https://ria.ru/20221211/bezhentsy-1837846421.html) in hosting refugees due to internal economic challenges and [refugee fatigue](https://www.ft.com/content/cf00788c-2799-4d4e-9158-666d1a31ca26). Russia claims there will be “throngs of Ukrainian refugees”, joining the ranks of marginal groups of society and the [homeless.](https://ria.ru/20221205/bezhentsy-1836526255.html)
* The Russian media is also spreading encouraging [messages](https://www.interfax.ru/russia/875938) about payments made to conscripted soldiers and their families.
* Russia dismisses any evidence of war crimes against Ukrainian civilians that were committed during the Russian occupation of several parts of the Kherson oblast. For example, Moscow is promoting narratives about Ukraine having [staged](https://ria.ru/20221212/provokatsiya-1838099381.html) murders of civilians and blaming Russia. For example, Russia claims that the Security Service of Ukraine is shooting civilians to stage “the removal of bodies only to issue a statement later on, stating that the killed Ukrainian citizens have fallen “victims to Russian repression”.
* Russia is stepping-up the dissemination of anti-western narratives (e.g., those regarding the mortal threat posed by the West to Russia’s existence). Nikolai Patrushev, Secretary of the Security Council of Russia, [claims](https://www.interfax.ru/russia/876040) that the USA and NATO’s long-term objective is to weaken and destroy Russia at any cost. The Kremlin also maintains that Washington has been fighting Russia in Ukraine for a long time. Putin [has spoken](http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/70057) about the failed security system and the aggressive expansion of NATO towards Russia. Moscow is spreading narratives about the [growing](http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/70057) number of threats posed by NATO and the USA to Russia. Russian official media claims that the preparation of the USA to wage war on Russia is an accomplished fact. At the same time, Moscow insists on the ineffectiveness of the western weapons used by the AFU, and the lack “of any achievements of Ukrainian troops on the front”.
* Narratives about the ongoing success of the Russian army on the front are being spread. Russia claims that its troops [are advancing](https://tass.ru/armiya-i-opk/16569211) in the [Donetsk](https://tass.ru/armiya-i-opk/16564793) direction, [destroying](https://tass.ru/armiya-i-opk/16569617) [Ukraine's military equipment](https://www.interfax.ru/russia/875962) and [liquidating](https://tass.ru/armiya-i-opk/16569247) its soldiers.
* Mobilization rhetoric continues to be deployed, including messages about the need to engage volunteers in the protection of Russia. In Russian regions located close to the Ukrainian border “people’s [battalions](https://www.interfax.ru/russia/875617)” (in [Kursk](https://www.interfax.ru/russia/875840) and [Belgorod](https://www.interfax.ru/russia/875617)) and people’s squads are being established. Their goal is to help the Russian military protect the motherland from aggression. The Russian media spreads narratives about the threats posed to Russia and the need for an “all-Russian mobilization” to counter aggression against the country. Russia is presented as a victim that must effectively stand up to its enemies (the West, NATO, and the USA).
* Russia accuses Ukraine and President Zelenskyy of either derailing peace talks or being reluctant to hold them. Russian officials (in particular, Dmitry Medvedev) [claim](https://www.interfax.ru/russia/876008) that Zelensky's refusal to negotiate will make it easier for Russia to achieve the goals of the “special military operation”.