

**November 1 - December 5, 2022
Ukraine Monthly Situation Report**

CONFLICT DEVELOPMENTS

- The Russian army's efforts to capture the city of Bakhmut in the Donetsk oblast continued. This is currently one of the hotspots along the front line. The Russian army is actively deploying fighters from the "Wagner" private paramilitary group and several other groups which are drafting new soldiers predominantly from Russian prisons. Sanctions have been imposed on Yevgeniy [Prigozhyn](#), Head of the "Wagner" group. The FBI listed him on their most wanted list in November. According to Ukraine, the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation (hereinafter: Russia) are sustaining heavy losses on the front. About [91.000](#) Russian soldiers have been killed in battle alone, while Ukraine (according to official data), has lost approximately [13.000](#). In the north of the Luhansk oblast, the Armed Forces of Ukraine (hereinafter: AFU) have successfully pushed back the Russian army from Ukrainian territory near Kreminna and Svatove.
- The AFU's main success story in their November counteroffensive was the liberation of the right bank of the Kherson oblast including Kherson city itself, which was the only administrative capital captured by Russia in 2022. On 14 November, President Zelenskyy [visited](#) the city to participate in the official Ukrainian flag-raising ceremony. While retreating, the Russians looted the city, stealing collections from local museums and libraries, as well as destroying many infrastructure objects, which left Kherson and part of the oblast without water, electricity, and heating. In early December Ukraine managed to restore the electricity and water supply for a significant number of citizens. However, repair work is ongoing. Kherson is repeatedly subjected to shelling, which has led to tens of deaths and the destruction of residential and energy infrastructure. The Russians have also blown up more than five bridges crossing the Dnipro and Inhulets rivers in an effort to stall Ukraine's counteroffensive.
- Russia continues to launch massive missile and artillery strikes on Ukrainian cities. The targeting of Donetsk, Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia, Dnipropetrovsk, Mykolayiv, Odesa, Sumy, and Kyiv oblasts, as well as objects of critical energy infrastructure in other oblasts has been prioritized. According to a statement by the Ministry of Interior of Ukraine, since the beginning of the war only [3% of strikes](#) have hit military objects. The majority targeted residential houses, civilian and energy infrastructure, educational and cultural facilities, religious buildings, etc. In total, 32.000 civilian objects have been damaged.
- On 15 November the most devastating (since 24 February) missile strike on Ukrainian cities took place. Russia launched over [100 missiles](#). [Power outages](#) in all power blocks of the nuclear power plants located in the government-controlled territory of Ukraine, following the massive missile strike on 23 November (about 70 cruise missiles and 10 drones), led to a countrywide blackout, as well as in neighboring [Moldova](#). Massive shelling on 5 November (over 70 cruise missiles) also caused significant damage to Ukrainian energy objects.
- A string of massive missile strikes targeting objects of critical infrastructure have tested Ukraine's resilience and ability to recover independently after a blackout. Among other things, Ukraine has demonstrated:

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- 1) The ability to successfully cope in the event of a breakdown of mobile and internet connections throughout the country. It is important to expand the number of communication and internet channels at the national, regional, and local level, in particular, by using Starlink terminals.
 - 2) The ability to restore the power supply within a unified management system. It is important not only to restore a unified system of power supply, but also to promote the development of autonomous (macro-regional) systems of power supply.
 - 3) The ability of Ukrainian banks to restore operations in the event of a power supply crisis and intermittent connection.
 - 4) The ability of the government, infrastructure companies and the local authorities to cooperate to overcome a power, heating and water supply crisis on the level of cities and amalgamated territorial communities.
- Strikes on Ukraine's critical infrastructure have underlined Russia's diminishing superiority over the AFU on the battlefield as well as the genocidal side of Russia's war on Ukraine (the European Parliament has designed Russia a state sponsoring terrorism). Additional expenses and the need to draw on limited financial resources to restore objects of critical infrastructure have paved the way for a new "infrastructure and energy Rammstein". An alliance of democratic countries has teamed up to support Ukraine in reacting to and managing the power, heating, and water supply crisis.
 - Nine months into the war, two of Ukraine's neighbors were shelled. On 15 November, two missiles landed on the territory of [Poland](#) (it is still unclear, whether this was a Russian missile or a missile launched by Ukraine's air defense system, with the two sides blaming each other). On 5 December, a missile (probably launched from Russia) landed on the territory of [Moldova](#). Thus, the precision of Russian strikes is deteriorating, jeopardizing the lives of citizens not only from Ukraine but also from other countries. This could be down to a lack of high-precision missiles, given Russia has already used most of its available missiles in the war. During November the intensity of attacks on Ukrainian territories with kamikaze drones plummeted. This may have been caused by a delay in delivery as well as bad [weather](#) which reduces the effectiveness of drones. While not deploying nuclear weapons, Russia continues to use other types of banned weapons, including [chemical weapons](#), anti-personnel mines, white phosphorus munitions, etc.
 - Ukraine tries to asymmetrically react to Russian terror. The Ukrainian army has managed to inflict damage on a small number of important military objects located deep in Russian territory. Russia is gradually losing its "strategic depth", facing strikes on its military infrastructure deep behind its front lines (the Crimean Peninsula, the base of the Russian Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol as well as on Russia's Novorossiyskaya Bukhta, Engels and Dyagilevo airbases). In November President Zelenskyy announced the creation of a fund for the creation of a "[sea drones fleet](#)" that would be able to patrol Ukraine's waters. The first drones have already been purchased thanks to the financial support of Ukraine's allies, particularly, Lithuania.
 - Prisoners of war (PoW) swaps continue to take place. A total of 1319 Ukrainian soldiers have returned to Ukraine, as well as a number of civilians. Almost 150 Ukrainians were returned in November alone.

HUMANITARIAN DIMENSIONS

- According to official data provided by [juvenile prosecutors](#), 443 children have been killed and 852 wounded of varying degrees of severity. 13028 children are believed to have been deported.
- Ukraine considers sanctions as a first step towards seizing frozen Russian assets and transferring them to Ukraine to compensate for the damage caused by the war, including the restoration of destroyed infrastructure. On 5 December, the Ukrainian government drew-up a list of over 900 objects that are directly owned by Russia. Accordingly, Ukraine seeks to strengthen cooperation with international partners to coordinate [the sanctions policy](#) and the search for final beneficiaries of the Russian assets in question.
- In November the first steps towards the creation of a Special international tribunal for the crime of aggression against Ukraine took place. Ukrainian diplomats and experts are inviting representatives of the international community to take part in the creation of the tribunal. The unprecedented nature of this crime requires the establishment of a separate institution, as existing institutions do not have a mandate for the crime of aggression.
- Ukraine has called for the [indefinite extension](#) of the “grain deal” for the export of Ukrainian produce via the Black Sea as well increasing the number of ports used within the deals framework. Since 1 August, [444 ships](#) have left Ukrainian ports, exporting 10,3 million tons of Ukrainian produce to countries in Africa, Asia, and Europe.
- On 23 November, Kyiv lived through the first blackout in its history. The city’s authorities are [preparing for the worst-case scenario](#), i.e. complete lack of water, heating and electricity.
- According to the United Nations (UN), [4,75 million Ukrainians](#) have been registered as refugees in European countries.
- In November, the Ukrainian law-enforcement agencies (the Secret Service of Ukraine) conducted a number of [searches](#) on the premises of religious organizations of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC), which were affiliated with the Russian Orthodox Church until May 2022. In parallel to this, the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine has taken several restrictive measures regarding UOC representatives. In particular, sanctions were imposed on the most controversial pro-Russian bishops and priests. These steps per se cannot lead to critical consequences. They are mainly symbolic. However, they have provoked strong public response in Ukraine.
- Since 24 February, over 20.000 Ukrainians (both soldiers and civilians) have been either forcibly relocated or abducted. Torture chambers set up by Russia, have been discovered in seven Ukrainian oblasts, with the majority found in the Kharkiv (25) and Kherson (14) oblasts.
- Russian troops seem to be preparing to [leave the premises](#) of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP). They have been using it as a military base and have mined all its buildings. Representatives of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) have been denied the access to the plant by the Russian organization “Rosenergoatom”.
- Investigators of the Ukrainian national police have opened over [45,6 thousand](#) criminal cases related to crimes committed by Russian troops. Since the beginning of the war, at least 2,8 million Ukrainian citizens have been either [deported](#) or forced to move to Russian territories.

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- Russian troops engage in marauding, stealing property from shops and private houses (the “Chumak” plant, which is the largest plant for processing tomatoes in Central and Eastern Europe, is one example. The Russian occupiers stole equipment worth 36 million UAH). The Russians also loot objects of cultural value ([more than 10.000 exhibits](#) have been stolen from the Oleksiy Shovkunenko Kherson Regional Art Museum).

INFORMATION WARFARE DIMENSIONS

- **Russian retreat in the Kherson region. “People’s war”.** The Russian media failed to mention Russian President, Vladimir Putin, when analyzing the withdrawal of Russian troops from Kherson. In a live session on 9 November, Russian Minister of Defense, Sergei Shoigu, [ordered](#) Russian troops to withdraw from Kherson to the left bank of the Dnipro. However, on 14 November, Putin’s Press-Secretary, Dmitry Peskov, referred to Kherson as a Russian city. “Withdrawal” is presented in Russia’s official media as a necessary relocation of troops to save the lives of Russian soldiers. In official narratives Russia compares the withdrawal to wars of the past (mentioning Kutuzov’s retreat from Moscow in 1812, which arguably helped the Russian general win the war). At the same time, representatives of Russian far-right groups don’t accept the withdrawal, criticizing the official rhetoric. Some Russian bloggers [see](#) it as a military defeat but blame Putin rather than the Russian military. Many people in Russia believe that “a city of the Russian Federation has been [abandoned](#)”. Messages are being spread about the “people’s war” and an all-Russian mobilization.
- **Shelling of Ukrainian civilian infrastructure.** In November Russia’s official media was justifying the shelling of Ukrainian energy and civilian infrastructure. Russian official sources circulated numerous [messages](#) informing Russian society of air raid sirens going off throughout Ukraine, which had never been the case before in Russian media. Official and semi-official Russian social media sources [approved](#) of the shelling of civilian infrastructure in Ukraine. Headlines in the Russian media [read](#) “Ukraine is going to freeze”. The Russian media also publish sarcastic articles about ways and means to improve energy efficiency and stay warm. Moscow denies hitting the Polish city of Przewodów, which is located close to the Ukrainian border. According to Russia, this was a Ukrainian provocation.
- **Political justification for the destruction inflicted on the Ukrainian power system.** At the end of November Russian officials and politicians (Dmitry Peskov) claimed that the destruction of Ukrainian civilian and energy infrastructure was justified because “the Ukrainian army is shelling Donbas”. The Russians were also spreading narratives about the successful shelling of Ukrainian energy [infrastructure](#), claiming that Ukrainian technicians are not able to repair the damage, which (so Russians think) has angered Ukrainian society. This, according to the Russians, proves that their tactics are working. The strikes (in particular, on 7 bridges crossing the Dnipro) on Ukrainian civilian infrastructure were also discussed in the Russian information space. [Statements](#) regarding the need to continue shelling Ukrainian infrastructure, were made by Russian politicians and the head of the occupation authorities (Vladimir Konstantinov).
- **Preferable social sentiment of Ukrainians.** New narratives and messages were spread about Ukrainians being livid at their government following the shelling of civilian infrastructure, as well as stories about

Ukrainian society feeling dissatisfied with the authorities. The Russian official media claim that Ukraine has a dire humanitarian situation, a lack of electricity and food in Kyiv, as well as the [inability](#) of the Ukrainian government to rise to these challenges. Russian media emphasize that residents of Ukrainian cities are [short](#) of bread. There are also numerous stories claiming that “Ukrainian cities have been [plunged](#) into the Middle Ages”, with residents of Kyiv and Lviv preparing to engage in marauding and murder. There are also claims that food prices in Ukraine have [doubled](#). The Russian media has also been [reflecting](#) on the competition between Zelenskyy and Zaluzhnyi.

- **Russian values.** Russian internal discourse is teeming with views on traditional Russian values that considerably differ from western ones (ban on gay propaganda, approval of traditional religious values). On 9 November, Putin signed a [decree](#) on spiritual heritage, including Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and Judaism as integral parts of Russian historical and spiritual heritage, with Christianity playing a leading role (“on approving the foundation of the state policy on preserving and promoting Russian traditional spiritual and moral values”). On 12 November, Dmitry Medvedev, Deputy Chair of Russia’s Security Council, [said](#) that Russia is fighting against NATO and the Western world all by itself. Western countries are accused of implementing unfair sanctions policies towards Russia.
- **Rejection of Ukrainian identity.** Narratives rejecting Ukrainian identity and sovereignty continue to be spread. Medvedev [said](#) that Kyiv is an old Russian city and must be retaken.
- **“New Russian territories”.** The Russian media is actively spreading narratives and messages about “new Russian territories”. The Russian government held consultations concerning the development of the Zaporizhzhia oblast, while Putin issued relevant “decrees”.
- Russia accuses the AFU of repressing the residents of the Kherson oblast, claiming that Kyiv may [set up](#) filtration camps and kill collaborators. These messages are actively spread in Crimea. However, Russia [denies](#) any responsibility for the humanitarian catastrophe in Kherson following the withdrawal of its troops and the destruction of civilian infrastructure. Russian media also [reported](#) that the Investigative Committee of Russia has opened more than 2000 cases regarding crimes carried out by Ukraine against its citizens since 2014.
- **Mobilization.** Official media in Russia continues to highlight the steps taken to support the conscripted, in particular, in Russian regions. It is claimed that financial support is offered to families and mothers of the conscripted ([introduction](#) of [privileges](#), etc.). Putin once again [ordered](#) regional governors to pay compensation to families of the military. He also met mothers and widows of mobilized soldiers. They were clearly hand-picked.
- **Nuclear threat.** The number of outrageous narratives regarding nuclear retaliation has decreased in official Russian discourse. According to [comments](#) made by Russian officials (in particular, Dmitry Peskov), nobody in Russia is seriously considering “the use of nuclear weapons”. It is claimed that the EU is creating unnecessary tension around this issue. Russia accuses Ukraine of mounting “attacks” on the ZNPP.
- **The terrorist threat regime** has been extended in Russian regions that border Ukraine. Ukrainians are being accused of preparing terrorist attacks on Russian territory. The Russian authorities are clamping down on residents of Crimea for speaking against the war and for using symbols of the Ukrainian state.

- **Peace talks.** Russia has again [spoken](#) about the inconsistency of Ukraine regarding peace talks. Russians have hinted that, “a change of climate” could possibly influence Ukraine’s position (shelling of the Ukrainian power system and the ensuing humanitarian crisis). Russian officials are heavily [criticizing](#) Zelensky’s proposal for public peace talks with Russia. At the same time, the Russian media [claim](#) that the US “forces the Ukrainian regime to engage in negotiations” with Russia. Ukraine is being blamed for “derailing peace talks”. On 28 November, Dmitry Peskov said ([in a comment](#) about the Vatican’s initiative to offer a platform for peace talks) that “Ukraine does not need any platforms”.
- **International isolation of Russia.** The Russian media claims that “the G20 summit failed to fully isolate Russia”. Apparently, the summit [revealed](#) a split between the West and other countries. Russia’s stance on the document signed after the summit is presented as “the search for a compromise”. The EU is being criticized by Russian media for delivering energy to Ukraine. According to Russian messages, EU residents are up in arms about “energy deliveries to a corrupted country”, [demanding](#) “the Nuremberg trial for EU leaders”. Putin also [said](#) that the “risky and unprofessional policies” of western countries lead to the imbalance in the world food system. Weapon deliveries to Ukraine and other types of support, which contribute to the prolongation of the war, are also being criticized by Russia. The meetings of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) are [favorably](#) portrayed in Russian media as examples of successful Russian policies.