

September 27 - October 31, 2022
Ukraine Monthly Situation Report

CONFLICT DEVELOPMENTS

- The attempt to annex the territories occupied by the Russian Federation (hereinafter: Russia) has led to a further escalation in several areas. For instance, since 10 October, a perpetual, large-scale shelling of Ukrainian energy infrastructure objects has been underway. This has caused serious [damage](#) to more than 40% of these objects. Ukraine has managed to down a sizable number of missiles and drones, thanks in particular to the air defense systems delivered by the West. However, the quantity of these systems is insufficient to completely neutralize the damage caused by the attacks. The official pretext for the escalation was an explosion on the Kerch bridge, which Russia accused Ukraine of carrying out, despite the fact that the bridge was well protected and that the truck on which the explosion took place was travelling from Russian territory.
- Large-scale missile and drone attacks by Russia on Ukrainian cities, in particular on Kyiv, take place on a daily basis. These attacks lead to emergencies and temporary electricity blackouts throughout all of Ukraine's regions. For example, on 22 October, large swathes of the Khmelnytskyi, Rivne, Volyn, Cherkasy and Mykolayiv oblasts were cut off from electricity. This led to 1.4 million people being [plunged](#) into darkness. Rolling blackouts continue to be implemented across Ukraine. Settlements located close to the front line are being shelled by artillery and air defense missiles. Bakhmut, one of the largest cities in the Donetsk oblast, is to a considerable extent, demolished. Its [infrastructure](#) has been completely destroyed, to the point of being beyond repair.
- As a consequence of the shelling of Ukrainian energy objects, the [export](#) of electricity to European countries has been suspended, which threatens their energy safety. Thus, this war is not only about testing the resilience of energy infrastructure, but also about Europe's energy security. At the same time, after an alleged Ukrainian attack on Russian ships near Sevastopol on 20 October, Russia announced its withdrawal from the "grain agreement", which risks jeopardizing international food security. Should the export of grain collapse, the Ukrainian agricultural sector will not only incur heavy financial losses from unfulfilled sales, but it will also experience a storage crisis, as some crops are still being harvested.
- The Kremlin accuses Ukraine of trying to make "a dirty nuclear bomb". This claim has been reiterated by Russian politicians, including the Minister of Defense at different international platforms and in private conversations with international colleagues.
- The counteroffensive of Ukraine's Armed Forces [stalled](#) in the second half of October. This was partly connected to weather conditions and partly due to the arrival of numerous newly mobilized Russian soldiers and conscripted residents of Ukraine's occupied territories. Nevertheless, some settlements have been liberated in the Luhansk, Donetsk, and Kherson oblasts. At the same time, the emergency evacuation of the Russian occupation administration continues as well as the relocation of civilians from the right bank of the Dnipro River in the Kherson oblast. On 19 October, Russian President,

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Vladimir Putin, [announced](#) the introduction of martial law in those Ukrainian territories currently under Russian occupation. While the Russian army's counteroffensive in the Donetsk and Kharkiv oblasts continues, its progress has been insignificant.

HUMANITARIAN DIMENSIONS

- The Ukrainian government is taking several measures aimed at stabilizing the liberated territories in the Kherson, Kharkiv, Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. For example, in addition to the local authorities starting to implement their activities (military and civilian administrations, law enforcement units, police, prosecutor's office, courts), mobile connection and access to the Internet are also being reestablished, as well as access to banking and post services, pensions, and electricity in villages of the Kherson oblast. Access to gas in the East, and the re-establishment of transport links with the liberated settlements and settlements located along the frontline are also underway. Currently, the main challenge concerns the heating requirements of civilians living in the liberated territories during the winter. The government is trying to promptly restore the heating infrastructure in towns (especially in schools and hospitals). It has also started to provide free firewood to households in regions located close to combat zones. The State Forest Resources Agency of Ukraine has set up an online shop "[Firewood Available](#)", where Ukrainian citizens can purchase firewood online. The humanitarian situation in both the occupied territories and in the settlements located along the front line remains catastrophic (lack of water, gas, energy, and medicines). [Lootings](#) of buildings and [car thefts](#) continue, as well as the abduction of pro-Ukrainian people. Furthermore, the [persecution](#) of representatives of religious organizations that are banned in Russia continues to take place.
- In October, about 18 thousand Ukrainians were [evacuated](#) from Ukraine's occupied territories and dangerous zones. However, opportunities to leave the temporarily occupied territories are quite scarce due to Russia having effectively banned any corridors for evacuation vehicles from the Kherson and Zaporizhzhia oblasts.
- Russian aggression is not only aimed at military, but also at civilian objects. In particular, Russia targets residential houses and private homes. The damage caused to Ukraine's energy infrastructure ahead of winter is happening in parallel with Russian politicians, and even religious leaders calling for genocide to be committed against Ukrainians. However, these callous acts have failed to bring about widescale panic or led to Ukrainian's fleeing the country en masse. It has also not resulted in an increase in exchange rates. On the contrary, these strikes have [driven](#) Ukraine to further strengthen its defense capabilities. Furthermore, there are no signs that trust in the Ukrainian authorities has diminished. Moreover, Ukraine's reluctance to agree on any compromise with Russia has allegedly led to the Ukrainian government [refusing](#) to participate in any kind of political talks with Russia as long as Putin remains President. The only negotiations that take place are related to prisoner swaps. During the eighth month of the war over 210 Ukrainian soldiers and civilians were swapped. In addition, on 20 October a decree signed by Ukraine's President announcing the implementation of a further package of [sanctions](#) against 2507 physical persons and 1374 legal entities, the vast majority are citizens of Russia or Russian residents.

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- As of 31 October, at least 1253 Ukrainian children were affected by the war. 430 children were killed with 823 wounded. Children continue to be forcibly relocated from the occupied territories in the Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson oblasts. Russia has failed to make any clear plans for their return.

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DIMENSIONS

- Although Ukraine can no longer engage in peace talks with Vladimir Putin, Russia has repeatedly offered to hold talks at different levels, but without any concrete proposals. However, these offers were sent not to Ukraine, but to Washington. This is in keeping with Russia's policy of rejecting Ukraine as a policy subject. It also allowed Russia to accuse some other adversaries of their failures. For example, the Kremlin has frequently mentioned the role played by the United Kingdoms (UK) intelligence agencies in supporting Ukraine. Also, Russian public speakers have increasingly started to switch from the rhetoric of "denazification" to that of "desatanization", and the fight against the LGBT. The official Russian discourse is increasingly taking the form of Orthodox fundamentalism. Ukraine has actively started to support the liberation movements of the peoples living in Russian territories. On 18 October, Ukraine recognized the independence of the Chechen Republic of [Ichkeria](#).
- It is possible that Ukraine will officially recognize Belarus as an occupied state.
- The Ukrainian government approved the [draft 2023 budget](#) to be submitted for the second reading. It is anticipated that the need for external funds will remain critical. The government has also made a few conservative changes to its prognosis regarding the increase in GDP for 2023 (3,2% instead of 4,6%). The inflation rate forecast has been lowered from 30% to 28%. The Ukrainian budget is expected to receive 1.3 trillion UAH, while its expenses will amount to 2.6 trillion UAH. Ukraine's top priority is its security and defense, to which over 1 trillion UAH will be allocated, which makes up 18% of the country's GDP. It is also forecast that in order to eliminate the deficit of the 2023 state budget, which is expected to be as high as 20% of the country's GDP, the government will have to attract 38 billion USD.
- A string of international conferences took place related to the economic recovery of Ukraine in the postwar period. In particular, the potential "Marshall Plan" for Ukraine was complemented by:
 - an idea expressed by President Zelenskyy regarding the introduction of a "[financial Rammstein](#)" for Ukraine: "There is a need for a single and permanent coordination center that would provide financial support for Ukraine. It should resemble the "Rammstein-3 Defense Contact Group";
 - a proposal to launch a mechanism for [compensating](#) Ukraine for the damaged inflicted by Russia, by the using the latter's frozen/seized assets (Zelenskyy's speech at the International conference of experts dedicated to the recovery of Ukraine, which took place in Berlin);
 - an idea for implementing the [Plan](#) for dynamic recovery under the aegis of the G7 countries with EU member states taking the lead (George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies);

- a plan for the launch of an International [trust fund](#) for Ukraine's recovery.

INFORMATION WARFARE DIMENSIONS

- Narratives circulating in Russia in October were primarily focused on the so-called imperial orthodox fundamentalism. Russia has been spreading messages about its fight for traditional values and opposition to the western imposed liberal order. The Kremlin has also initiated efforts in the sphere of religion. During the [24th](#) summit of the World Russian People's Council, Patriarch Kirill said that he considered Vladimir Putin as "a fighter against the Antichrist". According to Kirill, Putin is fighting against a unipolar world which threatens to pave the way for the arrival of the absolute ruler, i.e. Antichrist. According to Kirill, the Antichrist will bode the end for the entire world. One of the signs of an approaching apocalypse is (according to Kirill) euthanasia, LGBT marriages and genetic experiments. Putin also spoke [extensively](#) about the family values that Russia is fighting for. On 20 October, a number of bills were submitted to the State Duma regarding the ban on "LGBT propaganda", which provides for administrative liability. These bills are [referred to](#) as a "great military victory". According to Moscow's rhetoric, it is for these family values that Russia is fighting. Russian government experts talk about a new goal pursued by Russia in Ukraine, namely "desatanization". This shift was mentioned in speeches and an [article](#) issued by Dmitry Medvedev, Deputy Chairman of Russia's Security Council. For example, he referred to Hasidic Jews as a sect.
- Overall, Russian narratives about Ukraine have become increasingly vociferous. Russian official sources have been [reporting](#) the "shelling of Ukrainian infrastructure", as well as [informing](#) Russian citizens about air raid sirens wailing in Ukraine due to Russian actions, which was not previously the case. The attacks on Ukraine's civilian infrastructure received [positive](#) feedback in Russian official and semi-official media on social networks. [Headlines](#) in some of the Russian media declared "How Ukraine Is Going To Freeze", while also publishing ironic pieces on effective ways to reach energy efficiency, etc. Russian TV shows have started informing their viewers about the "shelling of Ukraine", in particular, its civilian infrastructure, and claiming that "worse things are in store". Multiple messages are being spread highlighting the usefulness of Russia's actions. These range from the decrease in Ukrainian capacity to defend itself to Russia's revenge for "Donbas, the Kerch bridge, etc.". The Russian media is accentuating the need to demonstrate their country's strength. Narratives emphasizing the "fairness of retaliation" are being circulated. Russian Senator, Boris Bondarev, has [claimed](#) that the shelling of Ukrainian critical and civilian infrastructure would lead to a weakened Ukrainian defense, and [expedite](#) the special military operation. Chechen leader, Ramzan Kadyrov has [said](#) that he is very satisfied with Russian tactics, including shelling. Russian propagandists have [approved](#) of the shelling and other decisions made by the Commander-in-Chief of the special operation, Sergei Surovikin. It has also been [claimed](#) that such attacks would "plunge Ukrainians into shock", as long as they are regularly and accurately conducted.

- In the information space Russia has started calling for genocide to be committed against Ukrainians and for the destruction of the country. Calls have also been [made](#) during TV shows to “drown Ukrainian children”.
- Analysts close to the Kremlin are [spreading narratives](#), claiming that the shelling of Ukrainian cities and objects of energy and civilian [infrastructures](#) have boosted Putin’s ratings. Russian liberal experts also [believe](#) that over the course of the war not a single anti-war movement has evolved in Russia, with the exception of a relatively weak reaction to the mobilization measures shown by certain societal groups. According to [surveys](#), 72% of Russians believe that the country is moving in the right direction. 18% of the respondents take a different view. 78% support the annexation of new territories, while 16% of respondents do not approve of this.
- Partial mobilization continues. Originally, this process was nicknamed “mogilizatsiya” (*a play on words “mobilize” and “put someone into grave” - translator’s note*) in Russia’s opposition media. Regional protests also took place. However, by the end of October they diminished. According to official data, as of 21 October, 260.000 soldiers were [conscripted](#) into the Russian army. Almost 50 military recruitment offices in some Russian regions were [set](#) on fire. However, there are almost [2.000](#) such offices throughout Russia. According to the independent Russian media, almost 700.000 Russians have [fled](#) Russia, although the authorities reject this information. The authorities of national republics in Russia have claimed that they would fulfill the mobilization task (the Republic of [Adygea](#)). Relevant centers are being set up in the [Altai Republic](#) and other Russian regions. The Russian media is actively emphasizing the social payments provided to the relatives of mobilized soldiers. It has also been reported that [part](#) of the newly conscripted soldiers have already been sent to the frontline (including volunteers). The Russian media is paying particular attention to social payments made by local authorities to the families of those mobilized (payouts, a flexible system of loans and compensation).
- Moscow is also deploying narratives aimed at mobilizing Russian society. The war against Ukraine is being [referred](#) to as a path to the “restoration of Russian unity”, from which Russia veered 100 years ago. According to Moscow, Ukraine – as a country hostile to Russia - must be destroyed. On 22 October, the Deputy Head of the Administration of President Putin, Sergei Kiriyenko, [said](#) that Russia would definitely win the military, economic and psychological war. He also said that this war needs to become the war of all Russian people. The narratives of revanchism merit particular mention. On 27 October, Putin [said](#) that Ukrainians and Russians are one people, and that Ukraine was created by Russia. He also declared that a difficult decade lies ahead for the whole world, as a consequence of the current crisis.
- Putin signed a [decree](#) on 19 October, announcing the introduction of martial law in the territories of the so-called Luhansk and Donetsk People’s republics as well as in the Zaporizhzhia and Kherson oblasts. In his address, Putin [referred](#) to Ukraine’s political leadership as “Neo-Nazis” and Banderites, accusing them of organizing terrorist attacks. During the period of martial law all power in the Kherson oblast [will](#) *de jure* and *de facto* be transferred to the Russian military. Semi-oppositional

Russian experts [claim](#) that this effectively makes “mobilization in Russia a permanent phenomenon”, leading to Putin’s consolidation of power in regions as well as helping him quell protests. The Kremlin has also announced that “a special status will be [attached](#) to the territories where around 20 million people reside” and that “power will be transferred to the special authorities created for the duration of the martial law, the so-called “military and civilian administrations””. On 21 October Putin [signed](#) a decree launching the coordination council tasked with responding to the needs that have arisen during the special military operation. The decision has apparently been made to strengthen coordination between the federal and regional authorities.

- Russia continues to deploy the rhetoric of “integration of new regions”, i.e. occupied Ukrainian territories after the attempt to annex them at the end of October 2022. On 13 October, Dmitry Medvedev [said](#) that the vertical of power has to be reestablished in the new regions. On the same day, the need to evacuate residents of the Kherson oblast was declared. The Russian governor of the Kherson oblast, Volodymyr Saldo, [appealed](#) to the Russian government to support him in evacuating residents of the oblast to Russian territories. [According](#) to Russia’s vice-prime minister, Marat Khusnullin, residents of the Kherson oblast would be provided with free accommodation in other Russian regions. If the so-called Russian deputy head of the Kherson oblast administration, Kirill Striemousov, is to be [believed](#), such a step would help the military “clear” the territory. However, it may only mean that those officials (and their families) who back the Russian occupation, will be evacuated. In general, alternative YouTube channels have been critical of imposing an additional social burden on Russian regions. On 28 October it was announced that “[the evacuation is over](#)”. Russia attempts to “integrate” Ukrainian regions into not only the Russian “electoral system”, but also into its educational and religious spheres. On 13 October the Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church [recognized](#) the Rovenky Diocese as one of its subjects due to its inability to hold a dialogue with the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Moscow Patriarchate.
- The rhetoric of mobilization continues to be deployed by the Russian media against a backdrop of a failure to achieve a major breakthrough on the front line. At the same time, the Armed Forces of Ukraine are accused of shelling Russian territories. Moscow tries to shift focus onto the [shelling](#) of Russian settlements (in the Belgorod oblast) located on the Ukrainian border by the Ukrainian army. The Russian media has also reported that fortifications were being erected in the Belgorod oblast. Russia claims that Ukraine is intent on using “biological weapons”.
- Messages calling for negotiations with the West are being circulated against a backdrop of anti-western rhetoric. According to the Russian media, such negotiations are to be [held](#) taking Russian interests fully into account. Any hint of Ukraine being a subject of international law (or even EU countries is [rejected](#) as “negotiations are to be conducted with the USA” (according to Dmitry Peskov). On 31 October, the Russian Ministry of Defense announced that the movement of all ships through the safe corridor (referred to as “the Black Sea initiative”) would be suspended until all details related to the terrorist attack on Russian warships and civilian ships at Sevastopol were clarified.

- Russian media is spreading information about an acute energy crisis in EU countries and their economic decline. A large number of Russian narratives target Europe and the cynicism shown by the European Commission. Russian officials (mainly in Crimea) referred to the reaction of their European counterparts to the shelling of Ukraine as a “commotion in a cesspool”.
- On their Telegram channels Russian far-right groups call for the use of nuclear weapons against Ukraine and its army. At the Valdai Forum held on 27 October, Putin remained silent after being asked about a potential nuclear strike on Ukraine. The Ukrainian political leadership is being accused of hatching plots, making “a dirty nuclear bomb” to drop on Russia and then accusing the Kremlin of such an attack.