

Ukraine Situation Report September 27th - October 3rd, 2022

CONFLICT DEVELOPMENTS

- Russia's counteroffensive in the Bakhmut direction of the Donetsk oblast continues, with the shelling of Bakhmut and other settlements located along the front line, including Kramatorsk, Slovyansk, Chasiv Yar, Avdiivka, Siversk and Kurakhove. Missile strikes have also hit other Ukrainian cities, including Odesa, Dnipro (a bus depot was destroyed, with over 100 buses obliterated), Mykolayiv, Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia, Kryvyi Rih (the city's airport was destroyed), Marhanets, Orikhiv, Nikopol and other settlements, as well as communities in the Sumy and Chernihiv oblasts located on the Russian border. The [shelling](#) of a convoy of civilian cars attempting to evacuate, near Zaporizhzhia led to the death of 31 people with, 70 wounded. While Russia continues to deploy Iranian kamikaze drones, the Ukrainian army manages to shoot down 80% of them. At the same time, the Russian Federation (hereinafter: Russia) is paying a high price for its war in Ukraine, , having lost [60.000](#) soldiers.
- Russian President, Vladimir Putin, has made a further statement concerning the possible use of nuclear weapons. Representatives of Ukraine's political [leadership](#) take these threats seriously. Ukraine is working on a strategy to counter possible nuclear strikes, while the international community is being called upon to deter Russia from using unconventional weapons.
- While Belarus continues to support Russia's military aggression, other countries that have defense pacts with Russia (in particular, [Kazakhstan](#)) avoid taking Russia's side in the war by not recognizing the annexation of occupied territories.
- The Ukrainian army's counter-offensive in in the Kherson oblast continues, with territories on the right bank of the Dnipro (northern parts of the oblast) being liberated. A second Ukrainian counteroffensive is unfolding in northern areas of the [Kharkiv](#), Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. The city of [Lyman](#) has been liberated. Some of the liberated settlements have returned to Ukrainian control just after Russia held the official ceremony celebrating their annexation. In other words, from a Russian perspective, this development is an actual reconquest of "Russian territories". However, the Kremlin is unable to counter such developments. Nevertheless, the Russia media and authorities continue to insist on the annexation of these territories, calling for a switch to the Russian ruble as well as promoting the integration of territories that stand a high chance of returning to Ukraine's control.
- Modern weapons continue to be delivered to Ukraine by its partners. For example, on 1 October a new law on lend-lease came into force in the USA. On 2 October, a new Ukrainian anti-submarine ADA-class [corvette](#) the "Hetman Ivan Mazepa" was launched in Turkey. However, in recent months Russia has been the biggest supplier of weapons to Ukraine. As of today, Ukraine has captured almost four hundred tanks and large quantities of other types of equipment.

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HUMANITARIAN DIMENSIONS

- The humanitarian situation in both the occupied territories and in the settlements located along the front line, remains catastrophic. People are experiencing a lack of water, gas, energy and medicine. The issue of destroyed homes remains critical. As of today, the state application [Dia](#) has already received over 275.000 requests regarding homes that have been damaged or destroyed as a result of Russia's invasion.
- According Serhiy Shkarlet, Ukraine's Minister of Education and Science, [education/schooling](#) is taking place in both classrooms and online in 7,714 schools attended by over 2 million and 126,500 schoolchildren. For safety reasons, another 5,198 schools only offer the offline format.
- The priorities of the 2023 State Budget include social programs, [support](#) for pensioners and internally displaced persons (IDPs). The budget's strategic priorities are those related to strengthening Ukraine's defense.
- Civilians, in particular political activists, officials and representatives of the authorities continue to be abducted in the occupied territories. For example, on 1 October the head of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant was [abducted](#). He was detained for three days before being released on 3 October.
- As of the morning of 3 October, at least 1200 Ukrainian children were affected by Russian aggression in Ukraine. 416 children have been killed with 784 wounded.
- On 29 September, during a further prisoner swap, six prisoners of war returned to Ukraine, including 4 soldiers and 2 civilians.

ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DIMENSIONS

- In response to Russia's annexation of occupied territories, Ukraine has refused to conduct any [negotiations](#) with the Kremlin while Putin remains President. Still, in the past Kyiv has made this red line, while subsequently calling on Russia to enter into peace negotiations.
- Ukraine has applied for accelerated NATO membership. Several NATO member states have already [supported](#) this step. The application is also a symbolic demonstration of unity between Ukraine's political leadership (President, government, and parliament). As of today, 83% of Ukrainians [back](#) NATO membership, while 81% of Ukrainian citizens believe that latest military achievements are the result of the [cooperation](#) between Ukraine and the West.
- Ukraine has filed a lawsuit against Russia at the International Court of Justice. Steps are being taken to have Russia recognized as a [terrorist state](#). [Sanctions](#) against Russian citizens are being strengthened. Russian assets are being nationalized in Ukraine.
- The Ukrainian government has allocated 1 billion 409 million UAH (*about 35 million USD*) to acquire a stock of strategic [material reserves](#) in order to respond promptly to the challenges of heat and water supply. Ukraine is preparing for a challenging heating season. Russia is likely to carrying

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outacts of sabotage against the Ukrainian energy system. The government is calling on people to [economize](#) on energy during winter.

INFORMATION WARFARE DIMENSIONS

- In response to Russia's annexation of occupied territories, Ukraine has refused to conduct any [negotiations](#) with the Kremlin while Putin remains President. Still, in the past Kyiv has made this red line, while subsequently calling on Russia to enter into peace negotiations.
- Anti-western and anti-American narratives continue to be commonplace in the Russian media landscape. The Kremlin promotes the idea of the Slavonic world and Russian values.
- Russia tried to annex the occupied territories in the Donetsk, Luhansk, Kharkiv and Zaporizhzhia oblast in an expedited manner. On 29 September, Putin signed decrees concerning the recognition of independence of the [Kherson](#) and [Zaporizhzhia](#) oblasts. Originally, this step was planned for 3-5 October. On 30 September, agreements were signed [on the accession](#) of these Ukrainian oblasts into Russia. Putin's speech was full of anti-Western narratives. He claimed that the West threatens and undermines Russia, while also accusing the US and the UK of blowing up the Nord Stream pipelines. He spoke about the historical ties between Ukrainian territories and Russia. Critics of Putin from the Russian opposition [said](#) that his speech was full of anti-colonial rhetoric, pro-Soviet narratives, reflections on the use of nuclear weapons and criticism of the West. Russian [officials](#) refer to current developments as "historic".
- Russian officials are [speaking](#) about the "reunification of Russian territories". On 3 October Russia's State Duma [adopted](#) laws on the accession of Ukrainian oblasts into Russia as "new subjects of the Russian Federation". According to the laws, the "DPR" and "LPR" will retain their status of "republics" and their current names. Russian will be the official language in the two "republics". The Kherson and Zaporizhzhia oblasts will become part of Russia as separate subjects. They will retain their oblast status. The boundaries of the republics and oblasts will be determined by their borders "at the time of their accession to Russia". The Kremlin is determined to take measures aimed at ensuring the integration of these territories into Russia's economic, legal, cultural and educational spheres.
- Russia dismisses negotiations aimed at ending the war. Putin [said](#) that Russia would resume talks with Ukraine but that it would not discuss the choice made by the residents of Donbas, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson oblasts. According to him, they have become Russian citizens forever. The Kremlin also said that Russia will protect its territories "with every means available to us", and that the West has no moral right to contest the results of the referendums.
- Analysts loyal to the Kremlin are [spreading](#) anti-Western messages. This includes a narrative that the West's anti-Russian agenda may change due to the existential crisis in Europe, and a rapid replacement of Western European elites (Leaders of the European Commission, European Council and EU member states, etc.) supporting Ukraine.

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- Moscow is criticizing Ukraine's application for NATO membership. Moscow claims that NATO is not [interested](#) in "fighting Russia", but that the Alliance wants to destroy the "Slavonic world" by exploiting Ukraine.
- Representatives of Russian far-right groups are disseminating anti-Western and anti-government narratives. Special focus is placed on the situation inside Russia. Russia's military leadership is being reprimanded by the far-right. Annexation took place against a backdrop of Russian troops finding themselves encircled by the Ukrainian armed forces in Lyman. The inaction of Russian military commanders provoked a barrage of criticism from Russian far-right groups on social networks and Telegram channels. However, it is not Putin who is criticized, but the Russian Ministry of Defense and army generals. The necessity of using nuclear weapons in response to Ukrainian advances in the "Russian territories" of the recently annexed oblasts, is also being discussed by far Russian far-right groups. Furthermore, Russia's leadership has been criticized for being silent on the attacks launched by the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the Belgorod oblast (the village of Valuyki and military bases).
- Aggressive anti-Western [rhetoric](#) is on the rise. It is being employed by "opinion leaders" who are using historical narratives and messages popular back in the era of Ivan the Terrible, when the Grand Duchy of Moscow was drawn into a conflict with Western nations.
- The crisis seems to have affected Russia's political elites. [Criticism](#) of Russia's military leadership, by Chechen leader, Ramazan Kadyrov and Yevgeny Prigozhyn, founder of the "Wagner" paramilitary group is evidence of this. These messages are interpreted as direct criticism of Putin ("the Russian state border is no longer well-defined", "today we are celebrating, tomorrow we are retreating"). Russian social networks are being flooded with countless conspiracy theories about infiltration at the highest echelons of the Russian government.
- According to Russian analysts, even based on the official surveys, Russian society [is experiencing](#) anxiety (69%). The criticism of Russian [propagandists](#) about the overall situation in Russia is quite noteworthy. At the same time, in no way does it point to any major shift in Russian attitudes to the war in Ukraine. It seems that Russians are reluctant to fight in a war that threatens their safety.
- "Partial mobilization" in Russia continues. Russian opposition channels refer to it as "mogilizatsiya" (a Russian play on words, where "mogilizatsiya" (the act of burying a dead body) derives from "mobilizatsiya" (mobilization) - translators' note). Mobilization in occupied Crimea, the Bryansk oblast, the Tuva Republic, the Adygeya Republic, Dagestan and Chechnya was [brought to an end](#) last week. Mobilization measures were adopted against the backdrop of protests in Russian regions. Protesters took to the streets in [Dagestan](#) and the [Tuva Republic](#). Local authorities have been criticized, with anti-Russian slogans chanted. According to analysts, "mobilization" is not popular with Russian citizens. Only - 30% of Russians support it. Russian men are fleeing the country. Based on [information](#) shared by independent media and internet resources, from 21-27 September, at least 188.000 Russian citizens emigrated to Georgia, Kazakhstan and Finland. About 98.000 went to Kazakhstan, over 53.000. Finland accepted at least 37.000 Russians. Yet, not all these Russians are

against the war. Their primary goal was to avoid being conscripted into the army. The majority are well-off representatives of Russian middle class.