

**Ukraine Monthly Situation Report  
December 2025**

**CONFLICT DEVELOPMENTS**

- In December, the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation (AFRF) took partial control of Pokrovsk in the Donetsk region and Dobropillia in the Zaporizhzhia region. **Meanwhile, the Ukrainian Defence Forces drove most Russian units out of [Kupiansk](#), in the Kharkiv region**, which the Russian military and political leadership repeatedly claimed to have captured completely. The remaining Russian troops in the city are surrounded and attempts to relieve them have been unsuccessful. **According to the Ukrainian side, the total losses of Russian troops by the end of November amounted to [about 1,209,000](#) servicemen, including nearly 418,000 irrecoverable and sanitary losses in 2025 alone. [Over 10,000](#) AFRF servicemen have been taken prisoner since the start of the full-scale invasion.**
- **The AFRF continue to attack Ukrainian settlements with cruise missiles, aerial bombs and kamikaze drones.** In December, [Kyiv](#), [Kharkiv](#), [Zaporizhzhia](#), [Odesa](#), [Dnipro](#), [Lutsk](#), [Cherkasy](#), [Chernihiv](#), [Sumy](#), [Kherson](#), [Mykolaiv](#), [Voznesensk](#), [Bila Tserkva](#), [Uman](#), [Kryvyi Rih](#), [Pavlohrad](#), [Sloviansk](#), [Kramatorsk](#), [Kremenchuk](#), [Okhtyrka](#), [Burshtyn](#), [Fastiv](#) and other settlements were attacked. Attacks primarily target energy infrastructure, leaving hundreds of thousands of homes without electricity, heat and water during cold weather. The AFRF have also been actively attacking port infrastructure. For example, on 24 December, [sunflower oil leaked](#) into the Black Sea due to the destruction of a tank at Pivdennyi Seaport.
- In total, in 2025 the AFRF launched more than 60,000 guided aerial bombs, 2,400 missiles of various types and more than 100,000 strike drones at Ukraine. There have been more than 4,500 attacks on the Ukrainian energy system.
- **In December, there were several attacks on Russian combat aircraft and the navy.** For instance, a MiG-29 was shot down at the Kacha military airfield on 4 December; a MiG-31 carrying munitions was destroyed at the Belbek airfield on 18 December; and two Su-27s were shot down at the same airfield on 20 December. On the night of 21 December, two Su-30 aircraft caught fire near Lipetsk. An Il-38N anti-submarine warfare aircraft was destroyed at the Yeysk air base. Then, on 15 December, an underwater drone reached the Russian Black Sea Fleet base in Novorossiysk unnoticed and [hit a Varshavianka-class submarine](#). On 19 December, the Project 22460 (Rubin-class) Okhotnik patrol boat was hit. **The destruction of the shadow tanker fleet, oil production platforms in the Caspian Sea and oil refineries in various Russian cities is also continuing.** Due to Ukraine's strikes and sanctions imposed by its partners, Russian oil prices dropped to \$33.17 on some days. At the same time, an increasing number of importers around the world are refusing to purchase Russian oil products.
- In December, several more war crimes committed by Russian troops were recorded, including the [shooting of three prisoners of war](#) near Pokrovsk and a further three near Huliaipole.
- **In December, Ukraine managed to return the bodies of 1,003 fallen soldiers.** There were no prisoner-of-war exchanges, but five civilian Ukrainians who were previously held in Belarus were returned. Overall, the Lukashenko regime handed over 114 people to Ukraine in December, most of

whom are civilian Belarusian political prisoners. Additionally, 67 civilians were returned from the territory of the Russian Federation and the temporarily occupied territories (TOT) of Ukraine.

## HUMANITARIAN DIMENSIONS

- **Russian aggression has been accompanied by targeted crimes against Ukrainian children.** According to an [infographic](#) published on the Prosecutor General's Office website, 677 children have been killed and 2,313 more have been injured as a result of Russia's full-scale invasion. Officially, 19,546 children have been [verified](#) as deported or forcibly displaced, and only about 1,900 of them have been returned. More than 5,300 criminal proceedings on crimes against children are currently under procedural documentation. Additionally, 52 civilians, including children, were [forcibly](#) transferred from a border village in the Sumy region to the Russian Federation. Meanwhile, Ukraine [continues to return](#) abducted children with the support of international partners under the Bring Kids Back UA initiative. Ukraine regularly reports on successful rescue operations from TOT and is increasing international pressure for the children's unconditional return.
- **Russia continues to use the destruction of culture as a tool of war and memory erasure.** In Ukraine, 1,630 cultural heritage sites and 2,437 cultural infrastructure facilities in 18 regions have been [destroyed](#) or damaged, with nearly 500 completely destroyed. Since the beginning of the full-scale war, 245 artists and 119 media professionals have been [killed](#), indicating the targeted destruction of the cultural and informational elite. In December, Russian troops again [shelled](#) the Kherson Local History Museum. The museum was looted during the occupation, and about 23,000 exhibits were [stolen](#) from its collections.
- **As a result of Russia's systematic attacks, Ukraine's environment is suffering large-scale destruction:** confirmed environmental damage from the full-scale war has [exceeded](#) €6.01 trillion, including over €773 billion in the [Luhansk region](#). Strikes on the port infrastructure in the Odesa region caused sunflower oil to leak into the [Sukhyi Estuary](#) and the [Black Sea](#), harming birds. After the 1 December attack in Ovidiopol, a fire at an oil depot [released](#) nearly 20 tonnes of pollutants. In the Vinnytsia region, fuel oil [spilled into](#) the Southern Bug River. In the Chernihiv region, UAV strikes caused soil and air pollution, resulting in losses ranging from [millions](#) to [hundreds](#) of millions of hryvnias. In the Kharkiv region, total environmental damage since 2022 has [exceeded](#) €531 billion, including the 2025 strike on Karazin University that [caused](#) €1.9 billion in ecosystem damage. Ecological collapse is occurring in the TOT: in Luhansk, toxic wastewater is being [discharged](#) into the Lohan River; in Mariupol, there are [oil spills](#) and systematic discharges of untreated wastewater into rivers and the Sea of Azov.
- **The Russian Federation's occupation model is exacerbating the humanitarian and environmental crises by replacing basic governance with propaganda projects and ignoring security and water supply issues.** In occupied Mariupol, amid a water crisis and the pollution of seas and rivers, the occupiers are [promoting](#) "tourism" and expanding the embankment while downplaying the real water shortage. In the occupied Donetsk region, attacks by stray dogs are [linked](#) to the destruction of utilities and the failure of basic management functions. In occupied Crimea, the water crisis is [worsening](#): in 2025, the volume of water in reservoirs decreased by 34 million cubic metres, the Izobilne reservoir is critically low, and water supply schedules have been introduced in Alushta.
- **The aggressor country is destroying the basic systems of life in the TOT.** In the Donbas TOT, miners [complain](#) about mine closures, decreased production and unpaid wages. This leaves people without

livelihoods, especially against the backdrop of the Russian Federation's actual liquidation of the coal industry. Basic functions are failing: "restored" houses are being [destroyed](#) in Siverskodonetsk, notaries are in short supply, the only microdose pharmacy for children in Donetsk has [closed](#), medicine is degrading ([first-year students](#) are working in Luhansk hospitals, and emergency care is being [refused](#) in Skadovsk to those without a "residence permit"). The water crisis in the Donetsk region is accompanied by [punitive raids](#) and the draining of [reserves](#). Access to cash is [restricted](#) in Melitopol. In Sevastopol, the "water supply system" is [damaging](#) housing amid signs of corruption. In Dniprorudne, power surges disrupt the boiler room, [leaving](#) people without heat. Teachers' salaries are systematically [delayed](#), and their payment is tied to loyalty.

- **Russia is consolidating its control over the TOT through symbolic Russification and the legalised confiscation of Ukrainian property.** A monument to Catherine II and Catherine Square are being [prepared](#) in Luhansk. The Kremlin is [launching](#) the Effective Region project, which involves the appointment of "curators" to exert complete control over the occupation administrations. The State Duma has [legalised](#) the confiscation of "mismanaged" housing in the TOT until 2030, with the intention of transferring it to imported personnel. The "restored" Drama Theatre [opened](#) in Mariupol, serving as a means of silencing war crimes and promoting Russification. In Crimea, "sports" facilities on Ai-Petri were [constructed](#) by individuals close to the authorities and are being legalised. In the Luhansk region, the "privatisation" of Ukrainian state property, valued at a minimum of 120 million rubles, is [planned](#) for 2026.
- **The Kremlin is forming a mobilisation reserve for the TOT by combining educational, financial and church influences.** In the Luhansk region, military commissariats and the military personnel are [pressuring](#) high school students to sign contracts or enrol in Russian military universities. Children are being [forced](#) to join paramilitary organisations and documents are being altered to make it difficult for them to return. In Donetsk, people with outstanding debts are being [pressured](#) to "close" their loans by signing contracts to serve on the front lines. In Crimea, children were [shown](#) how to use weapons at the Saky church, with the participation of the Crimea Combat Army Reserve (BARS Crimea).
- **The occupation authorities of the Russian Federation are establishing total control over the lives of civilians.** From 2017 to 2025, 10,727 human rights violations were [recorded](#) in Crimea, including 7,166 violations against Crimean Tatars, as well as 486 political prisoners and those persecuted. Mobile communications and the Internet have been [blocked](#) in Lysychansk, Siverskodonetsk and Rubizhne for years. Filtration checks are being [carried out](#) in Simferopol under the guise of "exercises". In the Donetsk region's TOT, phone numbers are being [blocked](#) en masse and SIM cards are being forced to be re-registered requiring several hours of queuing.

## ECONOMIC DIMENSIONS

- **Russia's strikes on Ukraine's energy infrastructure in late 2025 transformed the landscape of the country's resilience. While the primary issue had previously been a shortage of electricity, by 2026, concerns shifted to the systemic reliability of industrial nodes and the ability of the rear to function amid ongoing "energy fragmentation". Below are 10 new vulnerabilities affecting the resilience of the rear and the military-industrial complex in 2026.**
- **[Lack of manoeuvring capacities \(TPPs/HPPs\).](#)** As a result of the late 2025 attacks, the generation base shifted toward nuclear power plants. Nuclear power plants cannot quickly change their

capacity. During the morning consumption peak, military-industrial enterprises must shut down lines because the grid lacks "fast" megawatts to cover the surge. There is a risk of accidents related to frequency fluctuations in the power grid.

- [Vulnerability of the "last mile" of high-voltage networks](#). Even when generation is available, delivering energy to specific defence clusters through broken 750 kV pooling substations remains a bottleneck. Experts predict a transition to local microgrids.
- [Critical dependence on imports of components for energy repairs](#). The stock of Soviet transformers has been depleted. Switching to Western equipment requires manufacturing time of 6 to 12 months.
- [Erosion of logistics chains due to railroad disruptions](#). Massive attacks on traction substations are forcing a switch to diesel locomotive traction, which is slower and more expensive.
- [Vulnerability of underground production facilities to flooding and ventilation issues](#). Ukraine is actively moving its military-industrial complex underground. However, these facilities critically depend on an uninterrupted power supply for their drainage and ventilation systems.
- [Staff shortages in the rear infrastructure](#). Constant repairs while under fire lead to the departure of the most qualified power and mechanical engineers due to death or exhaustion.
- [Cyber-physical attacks on control systems](#). Integrating thousands of small generators and solar stations into a single network creates thousands of new entry points for Russian hackers to exploit, potentially causing a cascading blackout.
- [Financial instability of defence contracts](#). Due to the fall in GDP resulting from the energy crisis (with a growth forecast of only 1–2%), it will be more difficult for the budget to fund long-term developments in 2026.
- [Vulnerability of fuel and lubricants warehouses](#). The increased focus on generators is raising the demand for diesel. Consequently, the AFRF are shifting their attack focus to oil depots to cut off the country's "backup" power supply.
- [Psychological fatigue of strategic enterprise staff](#). Life in a "work by candlelight – home without heat" mode reduces labour productivity and the accuracy with which complex systems (such as drones and missiles) are produced.

## RUSSIAN NARRATIVES AND INFORMATION WARFARE

- **About negotiations, "peace" exclusively on Russian terms.** Russia generally blames Ukraine and the EU for the potential failure or lack of progress in peace talks with the U.S. The key narrative is that the Ukrainian President does not want peace because he "wants to keep power". Meanwhile, Russia rejected the Christmas truce proposed by Ukraine and its partners, stating that Russia "is seeking peace, not a truce, which would be another deception and brainwashing" (Russian Spokesman D. [Peskoy](#)). The Russian Federation continues to discuss Ukraine's "neutral status", particularly about political choices. They point out that this understanding aligns with the United States' position: "The understanding reached by Moscow and Washington on Ukraine is that it should return to a neutral, non-nuclear and non-aligned status" (Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs S. [Lavrov](#)). Russia also refers to "protection of national minorities" and conditions regarding the Russian language in Ukraine (S. [Lavrov](#)).
- In early December, Kyiv officials and the EU were accused of potentially disrupting the peace process. According to Kremlin narratives, they are not interested in long-term peace because it

would mean "political survival". "Kyiv and the EU are only interested in a truce to rearm the Ukrainian army" (O. [Voloshyn](#)).

- After the meeting between U.S. President Donald Trump and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Russia accused Ukraine of allegedly attacking Russian President Vladimir Putin's residence in Valdai, pointing out that "Russia will strengthen its negotiating position" (D. [Peskov](#)), and that Ukraine is allegedly [disrupting](#) the negotiation process, torpedoing the "[peace initiatives of Russia and the United States](#)".
- **"Nuclear threats", an attempt to escalate. Amidst "peaceful" statements by Russia,** the self-proclaimed President of Belarus, A. [Lukashenko](#), announced the deployment of 10 Oreshnik missile systems and their active combat duty in early December. He also declared further development of the military and military-technological cooperation with Russia, particularly in [missile construction](#). Mass propaganda [sources](#), such as Russia 1, periodically spread messages from [Sergey Karaganov](#), Chairman of the Presidium of the Council for Foreign and Defense Policy, that "Russia's non-use of nuclear weapons in resolving the Ukrainian conflict is partly excessive humanity" and that it will eventually be necessary to actively use nuclear deterrents.
- **Complete denial of Ukrainian civil and national identity. Temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine.** The narrative of "historical Russian lands" continues to spread in relation to the TOT, particularly Donbas (V. [Putin](#)). Narratives about the oppression of the Russian language, "change of linguistic identity", which the President of Ukraine and his wife are accused of (Director of the Information and Press Department M. [Zakharova](#)), have been actively spreading, referring to the so-called [oppression](#) of Russian-speaking citizens of Ukraine. Many [narratives](#) about the harassment of Orthodox religious communities in Ukraine and the celebration of Christmas on 25 December instead of 7 January are presented in Russia as "[disrespect for Christians](#)".
- **"Regarding the so-called successes of the Russian Federation". Escalation of hostilities. Shelling of Ukraine's energy infrastructure and Ukrainian cities.** [Narratives](#) about Russia's plans for a further offensive in Ukraine, particularly in relation to Kyiv, Odesa and other cities with populations over one million, continue to circulate. One narrative claims that "a military decision will be made by the end of 2026 and that Russia will achieve a military victory". The massive strikes on Ukrainian civilian infrastructure are presented as strikes on facilities that "[support the Ukrainian Armed Forces](#)", "retaliation" and "countering foreign mercenaries", while not mentioning civilian casualties and the millions of citizens deprived of heat and light in winter due to massive attacks and shelling.
- **Discrediting the Ukrainian political leadership.** Narratives continue to spread that the war is allegedly only due to the Ukrainian side's desire to remain in power. Direct threats to life and security are publicly proclaimed (Deputy Chairman of the Security Council D. [Medvedev](#)).