

## Ukraine Monthly Situation Report January 2026

### CONFLICT DEVELOPMENTS

- The Armed Forces of the Russian Federation (AFRF) keep pushing along key sectors of the front in the Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia and Kharkiv regions, while also attempting to expand their foothold in the Sumy region, particularly near the village of Hrabivske. A frequently employed tactic involves the infiltration of small groups followed by the gradual accumulation of forces behind the first line of defence. This tactic leads to heavy losses during the offensive. **As of the end of January, total Russian military losses exceeded 1,239,000 personnel, including approximately 30,000 casualties sustained during January 2026.** According to [a statement by the newly appointed Minister of Defence, Mykhailo Fedorov](#), the Ukrainian Armed Forces have set a strategic objective of increasing monthly Russian losses to 50,000, which would offset the effects of ongoing army replenishment with personnel.
- **The AFRF continue to carry out strikes against Ukrainian towns and cities using cruise missiles, aerial bombs and kamikaze drones.** In December, attacks targeted [Kyiv](#), [Kharkiv](#), [Zaporizhzhia](#), [Odesa](#), [Dnipro](#), [Sumy](#), [Mykolaiv](#), [Kherson](#), [Lutsk](#), [Vilniansk](#), [Kryvyi Rih](#), [Brody](#), [Ochakiv](#), [Chornomorsk](#), [Pavlohrad](#), [Konotop](#) and [Novhorod-Siverskyi](#), as well as other towns. Throughout January, the primary focus of Russian strikes was the destruction of energy infrastructure, with the aim of leaving major regional centres without electricity, water supply and heating during the coldest period of the year. On 31 January, repeated attacks on the power grid led to a [blackout affecting several regions of Ukraine](#), with the outage also affecting Moldova. Transport infrastructure was also targeted, including [passenger trains](#). **For the second time since the start of the full-scale invasion, Russia launched an Oreshnik ballistic missile**, striking the city of Lviv on 9 January.
- **The use of various types of drones in combat operations is becoming increasingly intense.** For example, Russia has begun actively modifying Geran strike drones, initially equipping them with R-60 missiles and later with [Verba MPADS](#), in order to counter the aircraft used to repel drone attacks. The AFRF have also started using Starlink terminals to control strike drones, enabling more effective circumvention of radio electronic warfare. At the same time, the Ukrainian side is actively developing unmanned ground vehicles (UGV) for the evacuation of wounded personnel and equipment, countering FPV drones and suppressing enemy infantry with fire. In January, the first recorded case of a UGV capturing three Russian soldiers occurred. The Ministry of Defence of Ukraine is launching Mission Control, a drone management system within the DELTA combat ecosystem. This system will integrate all drone operations into a single framework. Ukraine plans to manufacture at least seven million drones in 2026.
- **In January, the forced evacuation of families with children from about 60 settlements in the Zaporizhzhia, Dnipropetrovsk and Chernihiv regions began.** Due to the constant threat of attack, staying in these settlements is dangerous.

- On 9 January, during an exchange of bodies, Ukraine succeeded in returning [the remains of 1,000 deceased soldiers](#). Despite prior agreements and the readiness of the Ukrainian side, no prisoner-of-war exchanges took place in January.
- On 23–24 January, [trilateral talks](#) involving Ukrainian, Russian and US delegations began in Abu Dhabi (UAE). The discussions addressed issues including a potential ceasefire, territorial matters and other related topics. The next round is scheduled for the first week of February.

## HUMANITARIAN DIMENSIONS

- According to [infographics published on the website of the Prosecutor General's Office, as of 30 January, 679 children have been killed and a further 2,347 injured as a result of Russia's full-scale aggression against Ukraine](#). Russia continues to systematically exploit children in the temporarily occupied territories (TOT) through [the recruitment](#) of adolescents for sabotage activities, forced "re-education," [deportation](#) to the Russian Federation and North Korea, and the militarisation of education (including [cadet classes](#) and [UAV training camps](#)). Children are also [involved](#) in militarised and propaganda events and subjected to [forced labour](#) near combat zones. At the same time, a degradation of the educational and social sectors has been recorded, including [unheated classrooms](#), [reduced](#) funding and staff shortages, [disruptions in benefit payments](#) to children with disabilities, and the denial of families' access to basic social services.
- **The ongoing Russian occupation of Crimea poses an existential threat to the Crimean Tatars as an indigenous people through the destruction of their identity and culture and their displacement from the peninsula.** Throughout 2025, Russia used Crimea as a space for repression and illegal detention of civilians, including at least 96 people abducted from the Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions, with the use of torture and incommunicado detention. At least 340 Ukrainian citizens [were held](#) in detention on politically and religiously motivated charges, including 109 defendants in so-called "Crimean Muslim cases," the majority of whom are Crimean Tatars. In occupied Crimea and Sevastopol, up to 88% of politically motivated cases [result in](#) custodial sentences. At least 224 individuals remain illegally imprisoned, including 133 Crimean Tatars.
- **Russian strikes against civilian facilities and transport are turning Ukraine's basic infrastructure into a zone of constant risk.** As a result of Russian attacks, the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant completely [lost](#) external power supply, creating nuclear safety risks and [requiring](#) emergency power restoration. Russia has deliberately targeted civilian objects, including [a passenger train in the Kharkiv region](#), [a humanitarian aid distribution point](#) and [health care facilities](#) in the Kherson region, resulting in civilian deaths and injuries. During attempts to evacuate the border area of the Sumy region, Russian drones [killed](#) a civilian couple with a repeated strike. Massive shelling has also caused extensive damage to civilian, sports and youth infrastructure. Since the start of the full-scale invasion, at least 955 such facilities have been [affected](#).
- **With systematic strikes on energy infrastructure amid severe frost, the Russian Federation is provoking a humanitarian crisis. Cities and households are forced to survive without reliable heating, electricity supply and basic services, which undermines the resilience of society and normal everyday life.** In Kyiv, following Russian attacks, large-scale power and heating outages [continued](#), leaving thousands of buildings without heating and significant parts of the city without electricity. The authorities [extended](#) the school holidays until 1 February, limited outdoor lighting, temporarily [suspended](#) the supply of hot water in order to restore heating, and [prepared](#) to resume

classes on 2 February in hybrid formats. Due to the risk of repeated blackouts, regions (including Mykolaiv) [are switching](#) schools to emergency scenarios with generators, online learning and reduced kindergarten hours in case of prolonged outages. Massive attacks by the Russian Federation on 27 January [resulted](#) in the destruction of homes and social infrastructure and injuries to civilians, [forcing](#) the authorities to expand access to Points of Resilience and introduce flexible curfew rules to support critical services. UNICEF and IFRC have explicitly [described](#) the situation as families living in a "survival mode" amid ongoing strikes and cold weather. A survey conducted by Helsi [recorded](#) chronic stress, anxiety and declining motivation, with low levels of professional assistance sought. The UN data confirms the increase in humanitarian losses: 2025 [became](#) the deadliest year for civilians since 2022, with 2,514 killed and 12,142 injured primarily as a result of Russian attacks, while media monitoring [shows](#) that Russian propaganda is seeking to normalise strikes on energy infrastructure and shift responsibility for their humanitarian consequences away from Russia.

- **The Kremlin is instrumentalising religion to justify the war and is systematically destroying freedom of religion in the TOT.** In January, a coordinated propaganda campaign [was observed](#) involving Russian public institutions and controlled churches, mass violations of the rights of believers, and the effective [elimination](#) of Ukrainian religious communities in occupied Crimea through repression and destruction of churches.
- As a result of Russian aggression in Ukraine, 307 cultural heritage sites and 261 cultural infrastructure facilities have been [destroyed or damaged](#). In January, sites included in the UNESCO World Heritage List [were damaged](#) during a large-scale Russian missile and drone attack on Kyiv.
- **Russian occupation authorities are systematically depriving the civilian population in the TOT of basic living conditions through pressure and degradation of essential services.** In the TOT of the Luhansk and Donetsk regions, [housing confiscations](#) continue alongside massive layoffs in the [energy sector](#), disruptions to [water](#), [electricity](#), [heating](#) and [communication services](#), [denial](#) of health care to individuals without Russian passports, and [rising](#) unemployment. These practices deprive local populations of their livelihoods and undermine community resilience. At the same time, the occupation authorities [are intensifying](#) repression and control ranging from searches, detentions and information blockades to the deliberate denial of health care and the use of a degraded healthcare system as a tool of coercion. These actions [have resulted](#) in deaths and a humanitarian crisis.

## ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL DIMENSIONS

January 2026 became one of the most challenging periods for Ukraine's energy system and rear-area infrastructure. Massive shelling using a combination of weapons (drones, cruise missiles and ballistics, including the renewed use of Oreshnik missiles) caused critical stress across all spheres of life. As of January 2026, the impact of the destruction can be described using the following indicators:

- **Trade deficit and GDP:** Due to damage to ports and energy facilities, GDP growth slowed significantly in January. The IMF and the World Bank have revised their growth forecasts for 2026 to **2.0%** (down from the previously expected 4.5–5%). The trade deficit has widened due to the need for critical imports of energy equipment and fuel.

- **Inflationary pressure:** Rising production costs driven by the use of generators and disruptions to logistics chains accelerated inflation. At the beginning of 2026, inflation is projected at **7.6–9.7%**, which is above the target.
- **Energy deficit and state of emergency:** On 14 January 2026, **a state of emergency was declared in the energy sector**. Due to the destruction of key thermal power plants (particularly near Kharkiv) and damage to distribution networks, millions of people were left without heating and water supply amid freezing temperatures.
- **Humanitarian vulnerability:** The UN launched a humanitarian appeal for **\$2.31 billion** to support 4.1 million of the most vulnerable people. Internal migration increased again due to the impossibility of sustaining basic living conditions in frontline and powerless cities (Kryvyi Rih, Kharkiv, Odesa).
- **Political consolidation against fatigue:** Despite the difficult conditions, as of January 2026, more than **80% of Ukrainians** continue to perceive the war as a struggle for the survival of the nation, opposing territorial concessions in exchange for fragile security guarantees.

**Prospects for a conflict settlement:** The January escalation reduced hopes for a quick diplomatic solution. European capitals, including Paris and Berlin, have increased pressure on Russia while intensifying negotiations on 'future peace formats,' where the EU would be a direct participant in order to prevent the Kremlin from imposing its will.

- **Deadlock in the UAE:** 1) The United States is ready to sign a security guarantee agreement only after Ukraine agrees to sign an agreement on the withdrawal of troops from Donbas. 2) Kyiv wants to cease hostilities immediately, while Moscow links any pause on the frontline to the prior conclusion of a comprehensive agreement. 3) Moscow categorically rejects the presence of NATO forces in Ukraine and is making demands regarding its own security interests. 4) Control over the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant: the United States proposed dividing control between the three parties; Zelensky agreed to a 50-50 formula with the United States, while Russia wants to share control with Kyiv or Washington.
- **Response to nuclear blackmail:** Russia's use of medium-range ballistic missiles near NATO borders (such as the shelling of the Lviv region) has led to increased Alliance intelligence and accelerated deployment of its own missile defence systems in Eastern Europe.

**Outlook for 2026:** Ukraine's economy is expected to remain in a "survival and adaptation" mode. A key factor of resilience will be the ability of Ukraine and its partners to ensure greater energy autonomy (decentralised power generation) ahead of the next heating season.

## **RUSSIAN NARRATIVES AND INFORMATION WARFARE**

- **Nuclear threats.** Against the backdrop of peace talks, Russian officials have resorted to traditional nuclear threats. They claim that the deployment of any military contingent in Ukraine – both by European countries and NATO as a whole – is unacceptable to Russia. "Come, and then it will be like this," added Deputy Chair of the Security Council **Medvedev**, attaching a video recording of an Oreshnik missile strike on the Lviv region on 9 January. Narratives about the direct logic of 'nuclear escalation' (the public statement about the possibility of strikes on European capitals/countries like

Warsaw and London by [Karaganov](#)) **were also spread**. Russia is signalling its readiness to escalate and to "factor in" the nuclear capabilities of Western countries as a means of intimidation and deterrence aimed at reducing support for Ukraine. Within Russia's propaganda space, scenarios involving strikes on European countries and capitals are increasingly normalised as a "rational" instrument of influence.

- **Negotiations and "peace" on Russian terms.** Russia publicly declares a "long-term peace," while in practice it means peace exclusively on Russian terms, simultaneously justifying the continuation of the war with some "objectives." Peace is possible only if Ukraine accepts Russian terms, in particular the withdrawal/loss of control over territories and recognition of the imposed 'realities.' Russian officials consider [that it is inappropriate to disclose](#) the idea of the so-called "Anchorage formula" (with a reference to a territorial component). Further escalation is accompanied by narratives about the EU countries as security threats to Russia. The Russian discourse is increasingly shaped by clerical influence, presenting Russia as a "defender of traditional values" and explaining the hostility from the West ([Patriarch Kirill](#)), depicting the Russian president as an "[Orthodox leader](#)" ([Patriarch Kirill](#)).
- **Denial of Ukrainian identity.** Russian narratives about an 'artificial' Ukraine are being introduced, in particular, 'national identity in Ukraine is camouflage' ([Zakharova](#)), normalisation of the statement that Ukrainian statehood/borders are conditional, and the occupied territories are already 'not part of Ukraine' and there is [no](#) Ukrainian identity there.
- **TOT / "territorial realities" as a precondition for "settlement".** Demands are being made that the Armed Forces of Ukraine must leave Donbas as one of the preconditions for settlement ([Peskov](#)) against the backdrop of negotiations between the delegations of the US, Russia and Ukraine in the UAE on 23 January. Russia presents any negotiations as possible only after the withdrawal of Ukrainian forces from Donbas (in fact, an ultimatum demanding territorial concessions). There are widespread [narratives](#) that peace/"settlement" is contingent upon the legal recognition of the annexed territories as "subjects of the Russian Federation" (Donetsk/Luhansk, Kherson/Zaporizhzhia regions, Crimea). Russian so-called war correspondents and bloggers [are amplifying](#) the maximalist goal: Donbas/"Novorossiya" as "Russian", which the Russian Federation will reclaim "in any case", while simultaneously exerting pressure on Ukrainian society ("return to Russia.")
- **Justification of strikes on Ukrainian civilian infrastructure.** There is no mention of the deep humanitarian crisis in the country, the suffering of millions of civilians caused by Russian strikes on the energy infrastructure. Instead, attacks on civilian infrastructure are framed as "responses," "retaliation" or "military necessity," with the aim of normalising such strikes and deflecting responsibility. "It was a retaliatory strike; the objectives were achieved" – the official framework of the [Ministry of Defence](#) of Russia. There is dehumanisation of Ukrainians: "they need a shot/treatment" as a justification for violence and contempt for the victims ([Medvedev](#)). "Strikes on energy infrastructure are aimed at weakening combat capability" (rationalisation of attacks on critical infrastructure) ([Zhuravlev](#)), legitimisation of terror against the rear, attempt to demoralise the population, pressure on the Ukrainian authorities and partners.