

May 2025
Ukraine Monthly Situation Report

CONFLICT DEVELOPMENTS

- **In May 2025, the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation (AFRF) continued to launch attacks in various sections of the front. Having successfully pushed the Ukrainian forces from most of the Kursk oblast, the Russians are attempting to advance their offensive and gain a foothold in villages in Ukraine's Sumy oblast, which is located close to the Ukrainian-Russian border.** The Russians are deploying tactics they successfully used in Eastern parts of Ukraine, namely engaging small groups. Units of the AFRF, who were previously engaged in fighting the Ukrainian Army in the Donetsk province, have been engaged. According to the Ukrainian government, the total losses incurred by Russia as of late April 2025 amount to about [989.000](#) military personnel. Since the beginning of 2025, Russia has lost approximately 200.000 soldiers.
- **Both belligerent parties continue to actively enhance their unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV). For example, [for the first time](#) in Ukraine's history it has downed two Russian SU-30 aircraft with missiles launched from a maritime autonomous guard unmanned robotic system.** Meanwhile, Russia has attacked Kharkiv with an FPV drone equipped with a grenade launcher, thereby outdoing Ukraine in terms of using mid-range FPV drones, in particular, those running on optical fiber. Russia continues to launch strikes on civilians living in the Kherson province. An independent international commission has already documented [300 pieces of video evidence](#), showing the attacks that killed 150 civilians.
- **The AFRF continue to subject Ukrainian settlements to air attacks, using cruise missiles, aerial bombs, and kamikaze drones.** In May the cities of [Kyiv](#), [Kharkiv](#), [Dnipro](#), [Sumy](#), [Bilopillia](#) (a bus evacuating civilians from a combat zone was shelled killing several civilians), [Svitlovodsk](#), [Kherson](#), [Ternopil](#), [Mykolayiv](#), [Zaporizhzhia](#), [Odesa](#), [Bilhorod-Dnistrvskiyi](#), [Izmail](#), [Kropyvnytskyi](#), [Kremenchuk](#), [Pavlohrad](#), [Konotop](#) (the city endured the largest shelling since the beginning of the full-scale invasion), [Makariv](#), [Slovyansk](#), [Kostiantynivka](#), [Pokrovks](#) and other settlements were subject to Russian airstrikes. For their part, the Defence Forces of Ukraine (DFU) used drones to hit Russian defence industry businesses, military airfields, railways, oil refiners as well as command centres.
- **As of mid-May, over [8300 convicted Ukrainians](#) prisoners joined the DFU, with a further 1000 applications under consideration.** This amounts to 20% of the total number of prisoners in custody in Ukraine. The DFU is recruiting individuals convicted for minor crimes including women. As of now over one hundred convicted women have signed contracts with the DFU.
- In light of Russian efforts to enter Sumy province, along with the increased shelling of communities residing close to the Ukrainian-Russian border, [compulsory evacuation](#) from a number of settlements in the Sumy oblast began in May. Compulsory evacuation was also announced in the Synelnykove rayon of the Dnipropetrovsk province.
- **On the evening of 9 May, Russian President, Vladimir Putin [declared a ceasefire](#) from 8 to 11 May, timed with the Victory Day celebrations in Russia.** Since this was not communicated to either Ukraine, nor to its army, a real ceasefire never came into force. Furthermore, Russia refused to prolong the ceasefire for a further 30 days as suggested by the Ukrainian government. At the same time, on 16 May the first (in 3 years) round of [direct negotiations](#) between Ukrainian and Russian delegations took place. The main result was an 1000/1000 exchange of prisoners of war (POWs).

HUMANITARIAN DIMENSIONS

- **The scale of Russian war crimes and violence against children in Ukraine increases every day.** As of 26 May 2025, at least 2,590 Ukrainian children were [affected](#) by Russia's full-scale armed aggression against Ukraine. 630 children have been killed with another 1,960 wounded. 169,772 crimes of aggression and war crimes have been [registered](#) thus far. Also, 22,384 crimes against Ukraine's national security have been documented, including high treason, wartime collaboration, sabotage and aiding the aggressor country. In May, new cases of Ukrainian POWs being executed were reported. According to Ukrainian estimates, since the beginning of the full-scale invasion Russia has executed approximately [150 Ukrainian](#) POWs.
- **Russia is violating the Geneva Convention by obstructing the return of the bodies of fallen Ukrainians.** All the Ukrainian POWs that were swapped in May 2025 [required](#) urgent medical treatment. They were also reported to have been tortured, isolated, subjected to psychological pressure and humiliation, which is a flagrant violation of international law and constitutes a war crime. As a result of four rounds of swaps, about 1100 Ukrainian military personnel and another 120 civilians have returned to Ukraine (some of them being the convicted illegally detained on criminal charges that were supposed to return to Ukraine at the very beginning of the invasion to serve their sentences there). In May, a [website](#) was launched in Ukraine that gathers information about the locations where Ukrainian POWs are detained in Russia and in Ukraine's temporarily occupied territories (TOTs). In addition, Ukraine [repatriated](#) 909 bodies of its fallen soldiers, including those that died on Russian territory.
- **Russia continues to deport children, blocking access to information thereof.** As of May 2025, 1,324 children were [returned](#) to Ukraine, 68 of them with the [mediation](#) of Qatar. Russia refuses to share data with international organizations on deported children. According to the Bring Kids Back UA initiative, the actual number of deported children may [exceed](#) 744.000. Moreover, 1,6 million Ukrainian children remain on the TOTs, and subjected to indoctrination and militarisation.
- **Religious structures abroad are the instruments of influence deployed by Russian secret services.** Russian agents disguised as clergy [are exerting](#) influence on refugees in churches located abroad, by promoting pro-Russian narratives and supporting the occupied territories through the structures of the Russian Orthodox Church.
- **Journalists as targets: Russia continues to kill and launch cyber-attacks.** The Ukrainian Institute for Mass Information has [documented](#) 836 crimes committed by Russia against journalists and the media. In April and May 2025, four journalists were killed, with cyber-attacks targeting the media. Overall, since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, 106 media employees have been killed, including 12 while on duty.
- **Russia is deliberately destroying Ukraine's cultural heritage, by looting museums and demolishing infrastructure.** During the occupation of Kherson, the Russian military [stole](#) around 23.000 artifacts from a local history museum, in particular, Scythian and Sarmatian jewelry. A total of 1,453 objects of cultural heritage have either been [destroyed](#) or damaged by Russia. 142 of them are on the list of the objects of national significance. 2,286 facilities of cultural infrastructure have been damaged, with 425 of them destroyed. Three years into the war, 204 artists and 107 journalists have been [killed](#).

- **Russia is systematically turning the school space into a tool of military and propaganda machines.** On the temporarily occupied territory of the Luhansk province, 103 camps of the *Young Army Cadets National Movement* are operating. Over 6.000 children are engaged in their activities. In total, over 47.000 children have been [involved](#) in a propagandist *Movement of the First*, with 1,500 children having [received](#) training in the *Pioneer* centre, where they were taught to become mouthpieces of Kremlin's narratives. In the Donetsk province, orphans are being [taught](#) to serve with the military, which is a blatant violation of international humanitarian law. Schoolchildren are being [forced](#) to study 'Vladimir Zhirinovskiy's' legacy. All these steps are part of the planned militarisation and preparation of the new generations for service in the army of the occupying state.
- **Filtration, pressure, and illegal persecution remain Russia's instruments of control.** A new wave of checks on cars for 'wrong' stickers has swept over Russia. It is aimed at detecting pro-Ukrainian citizens. In the TOTs, the Russians have [intensified](#) efforts aimed at monitoring social networks. People may be arrested or sent to undergo filtration for 'disloyal' posts.
- **Russia is implementing a policy of replacing the population, by relocating 'veterans of the special military operation (SMO)', economic coercion and seizing property.** Russia is actively [relocating](#) the so-called 'veterans of the SMO' to the TOTs, offering them housing and work. This is a new stage of demographic occupation, aimed at displacing the Ukrainian population. In Severodonetsk, a city in the Luhansk province, the occupation authorities have [seized 558 apartments](#), transferring them to the municipal property of the so-called "LPR" where they become 'nationalised property'. In the temporarily occupied city of Mariupol, the Russian occupiers plan to [demolish](#) around 10.000 private homes, which they claim is necessary as many properties are damaged. However, it will clear lead to a further displacement of the local population, as well as allowing the occupiers to take control of the housing market there.

ECONOMIC DIMENSIONS

- [Moody's has maintained Ukraine's pre-default rating.](#) The *Moody's* rating agency has affirmed Ukraine's long-term issuer rating at 'Ca', referring to long-term consequences of the war affecting its economy and finances, as well as to the uncertainty surrounding peace talks with Moscow. According to *Moody's* statement, 'growth prospects remain subdued due to the challenging security conditions, labour shortages and attacks on energy infrastructure'. The agency has also maintained a stable prognosis for Ukraine. On its website, *Moody's* has defined obligations under the 'Ca' rating as 'highly speculative with a **high risk of default or being on the verge of it**, although with possible prospects for partial recovery of the principal amount of the debt and interest'. *Moody's* has **forecast that Ukraine's GDP growth would slow down to 2,5% in 2025** (from 2,9% in 2024), having also added that economic growth would remain 'moderate' in 2026 and 2027. Its competitor, the rating agency *Fitch*, had earlier affirmed Ukraine's long-term foreign-currency issuer default rating at 'restricted default' since the country continues to endure diplomatic tension and significant deterioration of its financial conditions.
- [Ukraine's economy shaking: anemic growth against a backdrop of shrinking foreign aid.](#) Experts from the Ukrainian *Institute for Economic Research and Policy Consulting* believe that despite the sporadic signs of stabilisation, Ukraine's economy remains in an unstable 'hiatus', with the pace of growth being minimal (real GDP has grown by a woeful 0,8% after the first quarter), due to a drastic drop in export of agricultural produce, the threat of a sharp decline in financial aid from the EU (Ukraine has failed to deliver on four indicators in the first quarter of 2025 within the framework of

the Ukrainian instrument - instead of the planned \$5,1 billion Ukraine can only receive \$2,84 billion, should it fail to comply with the expected indicators soon). Whereas some of the sectors show signs of slow decline (with reserves increasing), the critical and unmet indicators of the reform run the risk of reducing the amount of aid for the critically important external financing, which requires Kyiv to embark upon urgent and decisive action with a view to avoiding deeper economic instability.

- **[The pace of capital investment in Ukraine has slackened](#)**. In January-March 2025 the growth of capital investment in Ukraine slowed from 48,1% in the fourth quarter of 2024 to 32,5%. According to the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, in the first quarter of 2025, 123,8 billion UAH of investments were received by the government. The main sources of capital investment in January-March 2025 were the own funds of enterprises and organizations that make up 77,1% of the total investments.
- **[In large Ukrainian cities the prices for one-room apartments are on the rise: analysis of the market](#)**. In several of Ukraine's large cities the price for a one-room apartment has significantly increased on the secondary market. In the past 6 months the owners of such apartments have been raising prices, which reflects a growing demand for and limited supply of housing options in this segment of the real estate market. The most considerable rise in prices has been registered in Ukraine's western regions. According to the data offered by the market, the price on one-room apartments on the secondary market in Ukraine is currently ranging from \$17 000 to \$65 000, depending on the region. The cheapest real estate options of this type are on sale in Zaporizhzhia, where the average price on such apartments stands at \$17 000. Zaporizhzhia is followed by Mykolayiv (with an average price amounting to \$20 000), Kharkiv (\$22 000) and Sumy (\$23 000). The most expensive one-room apartments are on sale in Kyiv, with the average price hitting the \$65 000-mark. In Lviv the average price on this type of apartment stands at \$64 900, in Uzhhorod the price has hit \$61 000, in Chernivtsi a one-room apartment goes for \$52 900 and in Rivne for \$50 000.

INFORMATION WARFARE DIMENSIONS

- **On negotiations and 'peace' exclusively on Russian terms.** Moscow and Kyiv may [pick up](#) negotiations from where they collapsed in 2022. Narratives are being spread by Russia about negotiations in May 2025 'becoming Ukraine's last chance for peace'. Apparently, their collapse will lead Kyiv to surrender (a narrative spread by Dmitry [Medvedev](#), Deputy Chairman of the Security Council of the Russian Federation). At the negotiations in Istanbul the Russian delegation touched on the need to eliminate 'the root cause of the conflict', claiming that 'Russia is ready to [fight](#) forever' (a statement made by Vladimir [Medinsky](#), aide to President Putin). Russia also insists on security guarantees to ensure its security from the influence of the West through Ukrainian military capacities (claimed by Russian Ambassador-at-Large, Rodion [Miroshnyk](#)). Also, Moscow [has said](#) it is not ready to agree to the Vatican City as a place for conducting peace talks with Ukraine. The topic of peace is now being frequently addressed by Russian officials exclusively through the lens of 'peace on Russian terms' (stated by Andrey [Kartapolov](#), an MP), which is to be achieved either through military means or negotiations.
- **On the so-called success gained by Russia. Escalation of war.** [Narratives](#) are being circulated about the invincible 'new' Russian strength - 'Russia has created a new army possessing cutting-edge weapons amid the SMO. Members of the Russian parliament, State Duma, [have made comments](#), claiming that 'an Iskander missile, for example, can reach Berlin from a defence district in Kaliningrad a lot faster'. The war waged by Russia and its stance are being constantly justified in the context of

mobilisation values. Moscow is promoting [narratives](#) about 'Russia's victory over Ukraine being a victory over dark forces', over the de-secularised West, whereas Russia [finds itself](#) on the point of a historic victory'. The Administration of President Putin has [updated](#) the image of the state coat of arms on its official website and on the Kremlin's official pages on social networks, restoring Orthodox crosses on the crowns of the two-headed eagle and the state.

- **'Ceasefire'. 'Buffer zone', 'cordon sanitaire' in Ukraine and the announcement of the capture of new Ukrainian territories.** Russian public discourse has not welcomed the news of a ceasefire, which is [interpreted](#) as offering Ukraine 'respite' to 'recover its military potential' (a message spread by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs). Kremlin Spokesman, Dmitry [Peskov](#) has said that 'one cannot speak the language of ultimatum with Russia'. During the talks in Istanbul the Russian delegation addressed the issue of 'eliminating the root cause of the conflict', claiming ([Medinsky](#)) that 'Russia is ready to fight forever'. Russia also insists on security guarantees to ensure its security from the influence of the West through Ukrainian military capabilities (claimed by Rodion [Miroshnyk](#)). Russia has begun [its offensive](#) in Sumy province, while also massively shelling a number of Ukrainian cities.
- In late May, the Russian information space launched a [narrative](#) stating the 'SMO will continue until victory' despite Ukraine's proposals for a ceasefire. Putin's visit to the Kursk oblast on 20 May was interpreted in this way. During this trip Putin [joked](#) about capturing Ukraine's Sumy province and annexing it to Russia 'for the sake of Russia's security'. Additionally, Dmitry Medvedev [stated that](#) out that if western military supplies to Kyiv continue, the buffer zone/cordon sanitaire could extend to more than 90 percent of Ukraine's territory.
- **Denying Ukrainian identity and statehood.** Russian propaganda media narratives [abound](#) about 'Ukraine becoming Moscow's pillar of support, as was the case with Chechnya. However, to achieve this Russia will have to defeat Ukraine and keep it as a state'. Russian media also demand a 'reset' of the Ukrainian state for the benefit of Russia. Moscow insists on creating a '[union state](#)' which Ukraine, apparently, should join. Russia keeps promoting the narrative that rejects the existence of the Ukrainian identity, claiming that Austria and Poland 'invented the Ukrainian language so as to mentally drag away Ukrainians from the Russian people' (a statement made by Margarita [Simonyan](#)). Russian propagandists [claim](#) that 'Russia's main demand during a future round of talks will focus on dismantling the ideological and humanitarian policies pursued by Ukraine' (language, culture, identity). The Russian Orthodox Church has introduced a new holiday in its calendar in [remembrance](#) of Prince Volodymyr's baptism. This holiday is represented as a watershed in the history of Russian statehood.
- **North Korea in the war.** Putin has [thanked](#) the North Korean army for helping defeat Ukrainian forces in the Kursk oblast. The Secretary of the Russian Security Council, Sergei Shoigu, has [expressed](#) his gratitude to North Korean soldiers for protecting the oblast as if it was their own homeland.
- **'Crimea', 'New regions'.** Russia is promoting the narrative about Ukraine being unable to represent the interests of its citizens living in the southern and eastern parts of the country (Foreign Minister, Sergei [Lavrov](#)). The Russian media is also swarming with stories claiming that Russia finds it unacceptable that USA could *de jure* acknowledge 'only Crimea as Russian', and not include the so-called '[new regions](#)' of Ukraine's eastern and southern regions occupied by Russia. According to other manifestations of Russian propaganda, the occupied territories are enjoying economic [growth](#), citing Russian development companies operating in East and South Ukraine.
- To ensure the production capacity, education and use of human resources on the occupied territories of Ukraine in the long run, the Russian government has [allocated](#) a billion rubles to

establish education and production clusters, in particular, in Crimea, Sevastopol and 'the so-called new regions'.

- **Discrediting Ukraine's political leadership.** Against a backdrop of negotiations held in Istanbul, the Russian information space is as usual full of rhetoric on apparently 'terrorist Ukrainian leadership supported by the West' (a statement made by Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman, Maria [Zakharova](#) and other Russian officials).