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Further advances by Ukrainian troops. 223rd day of the war

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Russian forces are conducting artillery and rocket fire on enemy army positions and facilities along the entire length of the front line and individual localities, including Dnipro, Kharkiv, Kramatorsk, Sloviansk, Zaporizhzhia, Nikopol, Mykolaiv and Bila Tserkva. The aggressor maintains offensive capabilities only in the Donetsk section. The Ukrainian army was expected to conduct an effective defence at all points of the Russian advance.

The Ukrainians continue their successful counter-offensive on the southern section of the front from two directions towards Kherson – along the Dnieper river, moving along roads T0403 and T2207. On the former direction, they seized the following towns: Khreshchenivka, Ukrainka, Biliaivka and Zolota Balka. Intense fighting is taking place in the village of Dudchany (according to unconfirmed information, it has already been seized by the Ukrainians). In the other direction, they have managed to gain control of the villages of Velyka and Mala Oleksandrivka, as well as Davydiv Brid – a critical junction point on the road to Nova Kakhovka. The Russians are to form a defence line at the height of Mylove–Borozenske, aiming to prevent Ukrainian troops from surrounding Beryslav and Nova Kakhovka.

In the Kharkiv Oblasts, the Ukrainian army is conducting effective assaults. The General Staff of Ukraine has confirmed the liberation of Borova, Bohuslavka and Borivske Andriyivka, and, according to local media reports, the villages of Iziumske and Olhivka, which means that the Russian army's defence line on the Oskil river has been broken. The Ukrainian forces continue advancing towards the town of Svatove. They will likely attempt to recapture it from two directions: Kupiansk in the west and Lyman in the south. The Russians are preparing a defence on the Svatove – Kreminna line to retain control of the R-66 route, which is crucial for supplying their troops. Its seizure will enable the Ukrainian army to attempt to retake Sievierodonetsk and halt the enemy offensive on the Donetsk section of the frontline.

The US President announced the adoption of another military aid package for Ukraine – worth $625 million. It will include: four more HIMARS launchers, 200 MaxxPro armoured vehicles, 16 155 mm calibre howitzers, 1,000 155 mm remotely operated anti-tank mine shells, 30,000 120 mm mortar rounds, obstacle deployment equipment and anti-personnel ammunition. Joe Biden reiterated in a telephone conversation with Volodymyr Zelensky that the US would support Ukraine "for as long as it take".

Financial problems are mounting for the Russian defence ministry, which cannot provide adequate equipment for mobilised troops. On 4 October, Moscow decided to impose an obligation on local authorities and state enterprises to purchase goods at the request of the

Ministry of Defence (MoD). According to the document, the ministry's central bodies, military districts, military territorial bodies (including military commissariats) and institutions subordinate to the MoD will be able to make requests for the purchase of, among others: uncrewed aerial vehicles, radio communication equipment, electronics, night vision devices, drone detection equipment, vehicles, uniforms, medicines or food.

The Russian military authorities are trying to limit the wave of men subject to mobilisation abroad. Wanting to avoid a surge in anti-mobilisation sentiment, they have not imposed a total ban on leaving the country. However, they have decided to use preventive measures, i.e. the establishment of mobile military commissions at border crossings. Their staff handed out mobilisation summonses to those who did not have the appropriate certificate from the military commission confirming a regularised service relationship. The introduction of controls has caused queues of many kilometres at the crossings with Estonia and Latvia in the Pskov Oblasts. Based on estimates provided by the services of the countries receiving Russians, the total number of people who left the country after 21 September exceeded 300,000.

On 5 October, Russian Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev, at a meeting with Sevastopol authorities, discussed the issue of ensuring security in Crimea. He stressed that an analysis of the situation indicated an increased threat of acts of sabotage by Ukrainian special services targeting transport infrastructure. The likelihood of using uncrewed aerial vehicles to destroy or damage critical infrastructure facilities has also increased. Patrushev pointed out that ensuring a high level of security is hampered by entrusting the protection of facilities to insufficiently qualified individuals.

A day earlier, on 4 October, Alyaksandr Lukashenka met with executives of the armed forces and security ministries. He confirmed that Belarus participated in a 'special military operation' in Ukraine. He stressed, however, that the army was not involved in the fighting and that its heightened activity was to prevent the conflict from spreading to Belarus, as well as a potential strike on its territory under the guise of a special military operation involving Poland, Lithuania and Latvia. Lukashenka said that Ukraine continues provocative activity near the border, maintaining a grouping of 15,000 troops. He once again denied reports that mobilisation would be announced in the country. Pointing to the difficulties this process faces in Russia, he recommended checking mobilisation capacities (including verification of those subject to military service) and continuing to train reservists.

Commentary

- The advances of Ukrainian troops in the Kharkiv and Kherson oblasts testify to the deepening personnel problems of the Russian army. The defeats on the southern section of the front are the result of the depletion of the combat potential of the 126th Coastal Defence Brigade (mechanised), which has not been rotated since March. The defence in the Kharkiv section is being carried out primarily with the remaining units of the 1st Guards Armoured Brigade and the 144th Mechanised Division of the 20th Army of the Western Military District significantly weakened by the enemy's September counter-offensive. The hastily implemented so-called partial mobilisation will not bring about the change expected by the Kremlin. The first units have already been redeployed to Ukraine (including to the defence of Svatove) without the announced prior preparation and

training, which makes one doubt their combat potential and ability to offer effective resistance to the determined Ukrainian army. The situation for Russian forces is adverse. If it continues to worsen, Moscow is likely to threaten to use nuclear weapons and intensify attacks to disrupt electricity and gas supplies.

- The course of mobilisation in Russia shows that the military structures were not prepared for it, both in terms of organisation and financial aspects. Moscow's decision to carry out ad hoc supplies of equipment for the army by local authorities and other state actors signals that the armed forces have not built up sufficient material reserves in advance. The soldiers' essential equipment in uniforms, communications or tactical devices is far from satisfactory. As a result, people who are ill-prepared and ill-equipped are being sent to the front, which will have an impact on Russian combat capabilities.

- Lukashenka's orders to check the functioning of the mobilisation system and to continue the training of reservists show that the Belarusian army is being kept in a state of heightened combat readiness. Its main tasks are to tie up Ukrainian forces along the border and to ensure that residing Russian units can continue air attacks on Ukraine. Lukashenka openly admits that Belarus is a participant in a 'special operation', and uses this to discipline the public by scaring them with an alleged military threat from Ukraine, Poland and the Baltic states.

Map. Progress of Ukrainian troops in liberating occupied territories (as of 5 October 2022)

