

Russian missiles strike Kyiv again. Day 628 of the war

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Russian forces made slight advances on the south-eastern outskirts of Avdiivka and on the western side of the railway line north of that town (in the area of the village of Stepove). The invaders also entered Klishchiivka south-west of Bakhmut, pushing back the defenders from the railway line which links that town with Horlivka. They also expanded the area which they control north-west of it (in the area of the Berkhivka reservoir). The Ukrainians attempted to widen their bridgehead on the left bank of the Dnieper and, using the part of Krynky under their control as a base, to lead a strike towards the road from Oleshky to Nova Kakhovka, which the Russians have been using as a local supply line, but without much success. In its communiqués the Ukrainian General Staff continues to note high enemy activity in other areas; around Marinka the number of attacks reaches 25 per day, whereas in the other directions the figure fluctuates between 4 and 18; on 10 November alone, however, the Russians carried out 35 assaults on Ukrainian positions in the area around Avdiivka. Local reports indicate that adverse weather conditions have slowed the overall pace of operations.

On 14 November, a Russian missile struck Kropyvnytskyi in Kirovohrad oblast, and kamikaze drones struck targets in Khmelnytskyi oblast. The Ukrainian Air Force Command reported that the invaders used an Iskander-M ballistic missile and nine Shahed-136/131 drones, seven of which were shot down. The day before, Mykolaiv oblast was targeted by a missile attack (damage was reported in the town of Rybakivka), and six Shaheds struck in the Izium area of Kharkiv oblast (of which the defenders claimed to have shot down four). The city of Kharkiv was attacked on 12 November, while on 11 November, after a pause of 52 days, Russian missiles struck Kyiv again. One was said to have been shot down, but at least two hit the left bank of the capital. The Ukrainian side reported the use of ballistic missiles by the enemy, but did not specify what type. The impact of two missiles “between two localities” and damage to 18 buildings and a business as a result of the shockwave was also reported from Kyiv oblast. On 11 November, Dnipropetrovsk oblast was the target of a massive kamikaze drone attack; damage was reported from there, as was the downing of five of the seven Shaheds which the Russians used. On 10 November, Russian missiles (twice) and then kamikaze drones struck Odesa city and oblast; it was reported that the port infrastructure was hit and three people were wounded. According to the Ukrainian General Staff, the invaders used an Oniks cruise missile and 31 Shahed-136/131 drones, of which the defenders were reported to have shot down 19. A summary of the Staff’s reports shows that between 10 and 13 November, the invaders used a total of 17 ballistic and cruise missiles to attack Ukraine. Beginning on 11 November, the anniversary of the liberation of Kherson, the city came under massive shelling and bombardment for three days. Two

people were killed and 10 injured.

On 10 November, the Ukrainians launched another attack on occupied Crimea. The surface drones they used damaged two landing craft utilities in Chornomorsk, the *Project 1176 Akula* and the *Project 1177 Serna*. Ukrainian military intelligence issued conflicting reports; some said the vessels had actually been sunk. A fuel base in Feodosia was also supposed to have been targeted by Ukrainian strikes, but no hits were confirmed; the Russians reported that they had destroyed two kamikaze drones. On 9 November Sevastopol was unsuccessfully attacked. On the same day, reports also appeared in the Ukrainian media that a HIMARS launcher had hit the location of an FSB subunit in Skadovsk in the occupied part of Kherson oblast. Five officers were said to have been killed and 15 wounded, while some sources reported that several high-ranking officers had been eliminated.

On 13 November, the heads of the defence ministries of the Netherlands and Romania, Kajsa Ollongren and Angel Tîlvăr, opened the European F-16 Training Centre (EFTC) at Feteşti airbase in Romania. Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky later announced that its operation had begun. In contrast Colonel Yuri Ihnat, a spokesman for the Ukrainian Air Force Command, stated that “no training is starting in Romania” as the Centre was “still under construction”. On 10 November, the Ukrainian General Staff reported that the training of 30,000 Ukrainian troops in the UK as part of Operation Interflex, which Britain has been leading since June 2022, had been completed before the scheduled deadline of the end of this year. In total, the British have provided training for 52,000 Ukrainian servicemen since 2014. On 13 November, the Associated Press reported that France plans to train 7000 Ukrainian soldiers both on its territory and in Poland by the end of this year. The US, on the other hand, has already trained 18,000 personnel, mostly in Germany, and is still training 1000 more.

On 13 November, Germany’s defence minister Boris Pistorius confirmed media reports that Berlin planned to increase the amount of its military support to Ukraine in the 2024 budget to €8 billion. In doing so, he indicated that the German government wanted to avoid the situation which arose earlier this year when the funds allocated were spent very quickly. Two days earlier, *Bild* revealed that most of the €4 billion originally agreed to be spent on military aid in 2024 had been diverted to already approved projects, with only €120 million left for the German defence ministry to distribute. Also on 11 November Martin Jäger, the German ambassador in Kyiv, announced that Ukraine will receive two more IRIS-T air defence systems by the end of 2023 (three have been handed over so far).

On the same day, the German Chancellery announced it would send Ukraine a further 10 Leopard 1A5 tanks (in cooperation with Denmark and the Netherlands), 14 Bandvagn 206 articulated tracked carriers, five ambulances on a Bronco ATTC tracked chassis, one WISENT 1 armoured recovery vehicle on a Leopard 1 tank chassis, four HX81 trucks with trailers, 16 Mercedes-Benz Zetros trucks, three passenger off-road vehicles, 13 MAN TGS trucks, 10 Vector reconnaissance drones, 14 Ground Observer 12 counter-battery radars, 1020 155-mm artillery shells and 1.33 million rounds of small arms ammunition. In addition, the delivery of a further five Bronco ATTC ambulances was announced.

On 10 November, the Lithuanian Ministry of Defence announced the handover to Ukraine of two NASAMS air defence launchers which Lithuania had purchased from Norway. In addition, the Norwegian defence ministry provided a service package for the NASAMS

transferred to Ukraine by Lithuania. On the same day, the Estonian defence ministry announced the country would transfer a field hospital to Ukraine jointly with Iceland, together with German-supplied means of transport.

On 10 November, the Ukrainian Centre for Countering Disinformation warned of a Russian operation aimed at undermining the cohesion of the country's military and political leadership. It noted the distribution of 'election' leaflets in Ukraine encouraging support for the Commander-in-Chief of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, Valerii Zaluzhnyi, in his alleged rivalry with President Zelensky.

On 11 November, the *Washington Post* and *Der Spiegel* published a joint article which quoted anonymous Ukrainian and European officials as saying that Colonel Roman Chervinsky, a member of Ukraine's Special Operations Forces, was responsible for coordinating the operation in which sections of the Nord Stream 1 and 2 pipelines were destroyed in September 2022. According to the authors of the publication, Chervinsky had received orders from senior officers who reported to Zaluzhnyi. The report suggested that these senior military officers did not inform the president about the planned special operations. After the text was published, Chervinsky denied his involvement in blowing up the pipelines, and stressed that the speculation was being disseminated by Russian propaganda. The article was not commented on by government officials. Chervinsky himself, who in the past has criticised the president and his entourage for leaving the country ill-prepared for war and acting in favour of the Russians, is currently in custody in Kyiv. He has been charged with conducting an unauthorised operation last July to bring a plane piloted by a Russian military officer to a Ukrainian airport. After he was given the location of the airstrip, it was destroyed by a rocket attack.

On 11 November, the Ukrainian defence ministry reported that it would oblige all suppliers of fuel to the army to colour diesel red and petrol green. This procedure will enable the quick identification of the types of fuel, and make its illegal resale less likely.

Also on 11 November, according to Ukrainian military intelligence, saboteurs blew up a post office building in occupied Melitopol where representatives of the Federal Security Service and the National Guard were holding a meeting. The explosion allegedly killed at least three Russian officers.

On 12 November, rallies under the slogans 'We demand demobilisation' and 'It's time for others' were held in several Ukrainian cities (Kyiv, Dnipro, Khmelnytskyi, Ternopil, Lviv and Chernivtsi). They were attended by relatives of soldiers who have been at the front for a long time but who have not been rotated out. The demonstrators stressed that the soldiers are exhausted and that due to staff shortages, the command wants to keep them at the front at all costs. Those gathered launched a petition to Zaluzhnyi demanding the demobilisation of soldiers who have been at the front for more than 18 months.

On 13 November, deputy defence minister Natalia Kalmykova announced that a recruitment project for the armed forces had been launched in conjunction with the recruitment company Lobby X. This project will allow anyone interested in joining up to choose a specific unit and position where their civilian experience will be most useful. She pointed out that the army needs people with a variety of experiences, from those who can operate grenade launchers or mortars to programmers and cooks. The measures taken are part of the implementation of the 'Concept for Military Personnel Policy to 2028' which defence

minister Umierov signed at the beginning of November.

Commentary

- The continuation of the delivery of new air defence systems to Ukraine as a priority in recent weeks indicates that Kyiv's partners now take seriously the threat that the Russians will renew their attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure. However, reports so far suggest that (at least for the time being) this is not a priority on the list of Russian targets – except in the frontline and border regions, where local infrastructure of this type is consistently being destroyed, mainly by artillery fire. Instead, the invaders are seeking to limit the operation of the remnants of Ukraine's air power (especially aircraft capable of carrying Storm Shadow/SCALP cruise missiles) as much as possible, and to destroy ammunition stocks. The Ukrainian side explains the Russian failure to renew attacks on energy infrastructure on the scale seen last year as the enemy saving its kamikaze missiles and drones for future use. However, the Ukrainian Air Force Command is not ruling out the possibility that the invaders will change their tactics to carry out fewer but more intensive attacks during the winter.
- Reports appearing periodically in the Western press suggesting friction between the President of Ukraine and the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces have so far not been borne out by the facts. Rumours are being circulated in the Ukrainian press that the president, in consultation with the defence minister, intends to make personnel changes in the army and thus punish the commanders responsible for the failure of the counter-offensive. The defence ministry denies these reports, and has called for "information hygiene". It emphasises that the Russian disinformation apparatus is involved in promoting the idea of a conflict between Zelensky and Zaluzhnyi, and has been making extensive efforts to fuel public disillusionment with the effects of President Zelensky's policies.

