

Russian attacks on energy systems intensify. Day 782 of the war

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The situation on the frontline

Russian forces have resumed their advance north of Avdiivka: they have advanced to the outskirts of the village of Novokalynove and flanked it from the east, and have also approached Ocheretyne, which is one of the nodal points of the new Ukrainian defence line. They are located about one kilometre from the latter village. Advancing towards Ocheretyne, the invaders' units came out on the Ukrainian flank in the village of Berdychi, the northern part of which is still under the defenders' control. The Russians have also moved west of Avdiivka, pushing the Ukrainians out of their last positions in the village of Pervomayske (for which fighting had been ongoing since the summer of 2022), and from the central part of Semenivka on the western bank of the Durna river. There was also a slight shift in favour of the invaders in the southern part of Krasnohorivka and south of Velyka Novosilka. Clashes have also intensified in Robotyne south of Orikhiv, although there have been no significant changes in the positions of either side.

Contrary to the reports from local sources, **the Ukrainian command in Kyiv denies that it has given up control of Bohdanivka and started fighting in the eastern part of Chasiv Yar** (in the Kanal microdistrict).

Russian air attacks

On 11 April, the invaders carried out another massive air strike against Ukraine's energy sector, the main result of which was the destruction of the Trypilska thermal power plant near Kyiv. In addition, two heating & power plants in Kharkiv (TEC-2 and TEC-3) and various high-voltage substations in the Lviv, Odesa and Zaporizhzhia oblasts were severely damaged. The underground gas storage facility near Stryi in Lviv oblast was hit once more (the Ukrainian side has not reported on the consequences of these attacks). Damage to facilities in industrial areas occurred in Mykolaiv and Selydove in Donetsk oblast. The invaders used a total of 46 rockets (including hypersonic Kinzhals) and 40 drones, of which the defenders claimed to have shot down 18 and 37 to 39 respectively. In addition, in the afternoon of the same day, Russian guided bombs hit a heating & power plant in Sumy.

The Trypilska thermal power plant, which was one of the largest facilities of its kind in Ukraine, used to supply energy to the capital and its surroundings, as well as to the Cherkasy and Zhytomyr oblasts. The owner Centrenergo announced the loss of 100% of its capacity. In March, an attack destroyed the corporation's Zmiivska power plant in Kharkiv oblast, and back in July 2022 hostile forces seized the Vuhlehirska power plant in Donetsk oblast.

According to Ukrainian sources, the destruction of the Trypilska plant was made possible by the invaders' use of a new type of missile. This is the Kh-69, which is a developmental version of the Kh-59 guided air-to-air missiles, but with a much longer range (up to 400 km) and the ability to travel at ceilings below the radar observation field (up to 20 m). In the case of this new type of missile, the Ukrainian side considered the possibility of it being carried by tactical aircraft (whose launches are not covered by the early warning system) to be particularly dangerous. This system informs about the rise into the air of strategic bombers and MiG-31 heavy interceptors carrying Kinzhal missiles.

Russian forces continued their attacks on the enemy forces' immediate hinterland, and launched spot strikes on energy and industrial infrastructure facilities. Kharkiv remains the target of the invaders' missiles and drones (the only day since the start of the month when the city was not attacked was 15 April), while the number of strikes on Zaporizhzhia city has decreased (although the Motor Sich plant was attacked again on 12 April). Energy infrastructure facilities were attacked in the Kherson (12 April), Dnipropetrovsk (12 and 15 April), Mykolaiv (10 and 12 April) and Odesa (10 and 14 April) oblasts. Hostile strikes were also reported from Khmelnytskyi oblast (12 and 16 April) and Kropyvnytskyi and Poltava cities (both on 15 April). In addition, on 10 April, the bridge at Oleksandrivka, south of Odesa, was destroyed. In total, from the evening of 9 April until the morning of 16 April, the Russians used 99 rockets and 93 Shahed-136/131 kamikaze drones (no Shahed attacks were reported on 13 and 15 April). The defenders claimed to have shot down 23 rockets and 86 or 88 drones.

Ukrainian operations against Russia

On 13 April, Ukrainian rockets hit the Luhansk Machine Building Plant, damaging one of the buildings. According to Kyiv, the command post of the Russian 'Centre' group of forces was hit. Reports vary, but the Ukrainians used two or three Storm Shadow/SCALP cruise missiles. **On 10 April, Ukrainian drones carried out another attack on the Novoshakhtinsk refinery in Rostov oblast** (which they had previously attacked in March). One of the four drones used fell on the site, but did not cause significant damage. It was also confirmed that as a result of the Ukrainian-led strike on the Borisoglebsk aviation plant the day before, the roof of one of the buildings there had collapsed.

Western support for Ukraine

On 15 April, Prime Minister Petr Fiala stated that the Czech Republic had concluded a contract to send the first 180,000 artillery shells for Ukraine, but did not disclose any further details. In contrast, the new German military support package (announced on 10

April), included 6000 155-mm rounds.

Germany plans to transfer a third Patriot system battery to Kyiv, the defence ministry in Berlin announced on 13 April. In turn, on 9 April, the US State Department approved maintenance services and the sale of spare parts for Hawk systems worth a total of \$138 million. **Washington was also expected to approve the delivery of 22 F-16 fighters to Ukraine via Norway**, along with spare engines, spare parts and trainers. Some of the machines are not airworthy, and would be treated as additional sources of spare parts. It is likely that no more than 12 aircraft remain operational; Norway was supposed to have sold these back to the US in December 2021.

The 'Drone coalition' has announced new drones for the Ukrainian army. A meeting of the coalition's leadership group was held on 15 April, during which Canada pledged to provide Kyiv with 450 SkyRanger multi-role drones (deliveries of which will begin this summer), and Germany promised another batch of Vector 211 reconnaissance drones. The Netherlands, in cooperation with Denmark and Germany, confirmed its intent to contract RQ-35 Heidrun drones worth €200 million. €3 million for the production of FPV drones for Ukraine is to be provided by Lithuania. Vectors (16 units) and Heidruns (30) are also included in the new German military support package.

Another security agreement has been concluded. On 11 April in Riga, the presidents of Ukraine and Latvia signed an agreement on security cooperation and long-term support. For Kyiv, this is the ninth agreement of its kind. Under it, Latvia commits to assist Ukraine in the reconstruction of the country, protecting critical infrastructure facilities, demining, as well as with cyber-security and drones. It has pledged to provide military assistance worth 0.25 per cent of its GDP annually (more than €100 million) between 2024 and 2026.

Ukraine's military potential

On 11 April, the Ukrainian parliament passed a law modifying certain legal acts regarding the rules for mobilisation and military service in wartime. The most important change is the requirement for all persons subject to mobilisation duty (including those residing abroad) to update their personal data, including their places of residence, within 60 days of the new legislation coming into force. **Potentially, this will allow for the records concerning men of mobilisation age to be updated – on condition that potential draftees do not avoid giving the updated information at the military recruiting centres.** The law does not set severe penalties for failure to comply with this obligation. On 16 April, it was signed by the speaker of parliament, and is now awaiting the President's signature.

The expansion of fortifications along the front line and the border with the Russian Federation is ongoing. On 12 April, Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal announced that the government had set aside an additional 3.88 billion hryvnia (just under \$100m) for the construction of fortifications, mainly in the Sumy and Kharkiv oblasts. In total, since the beginning of the year, Ukraine has allocated almost 30 billion hryvnias (around \$750m) for this purpose.

In the Belgorod, Bryansk and Kursk oblasts bordering Ukraine, the Russian Federation's ministry of defence is to form a group of forces named 'North'. It is to be formed on the basis of the existing border protection grouping, and will comprise units of the 11th Army Corps (AC) from the Kaliningrad oblast (minus the 7th Mechanised Regiment), the 138th Mechanised Brigade (MB) from the 6th Combined Arms Army (of the Leningrad Military District), and probably the 25th MB and selected units of the newly-formed 44th AC in Karelia. According to Ukrainian assessments, this group is expected to eventually comprise 46,000–48,000 troops and be equipped with 350–360 tanks, 860 armoured combat vehicles, 940–950 artillery (barrel) systems of 100-mm calibre and above, 110–120 multiple rocket launchers, and four to six ballistic missile launchers.

