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The Russians are again destroying Ukraine's energy sector. Day 1000 of the war

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The situation on the frontline

Russian forces have entered Kupiansk from the north-east. The aggressor is trying to gain access to the Sievierodonetsk-Kharkiv road, which provides supplies to Ukrainian troops east of the Oskil River. Maintaining the road and bridge is a basic condition for maintaining the Ukrainian defences in the area (the crossing to the south, at Kruhliakivka, was blocked by Russia a few weeks ago).

Russian troops occupied the eastern part of Kurakhove and blockaded it from the north. The villages on the Kurakhove Reservoir, including the outlet of the bridge leading to the town centre, came under their control. Ukrainian units fighting south of it and east of the Kurakhove-Velyka Novosilka road came under the threat of encirclement. At the same time, Russia made further advances north-east and south-west of the latter town. Seven kilometres remain to the border of the Dnipropetrovsk Oblast.

The Russian advance to the west and north of Selydove is underway. Russia's actions demonstrate that cutting the last road leading south from Pokrovsk – to Kurakhove and Velyka Novosilka remains its main objective (7 km remains). Russia has made slight progress in Zaporizhzhia Oblast – south of Orikhiv and east of Huliaipole. South of Chasiv Yar, however, Ukraine has recaptured some positions. Some of their troops were cut off in the north of the Kursk Oblast intrusion area, as confirmed by information from operations organised by Ukrainian special forces to retrieve individual groups of soldiers from the encirclement.

Russian air attacks

On 17 November, the Russians launched their largest missile attack since August, with Ukraine's energy infrastructure as the main target. Destruction or damage to critical infrastructure was reported – in chronological order – from Volyn, Vinnytsia (the next day it was revealed that the Ladyzhyn Thermal Power Plant had been damaged and taken out of service), Rivne (a high-voltage substation), Zaporizhzhia, Kryvyi Rih and also the Ivano-Frankivsk (as a result of damage to the Burtshtyn Power Station, the heating was turned off), Lviv and Kyiv oblasts. According to unofficial data, the road at the Kremenchuk

hydroelectric dam in the Poltava region was damaged. Odesa and Odesa Oblast suffered the most severe damage: more than 720,000 consumers had no electricity, and parts of the city and its surroundings were also cut off from water and heat supplies. The railway operator Ukrzaliznytsia announced the partial suspension of electric trains. The aggressor's rockets also hit the Yaremcha area of Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast (there is conflicting information about their target) and the Kulbakino airport near Mykolaiv. The Ministry of Energy has appealed to everyone in Ukraine not to spread information about the impact of the attack.

According to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), several substations protecting the nuclear power plants were damaged (four were shut down). As a result, power production at seven of the nine active reactors was reduced (to between 40–90% of capacity). The Khmelnytskyi and Rivne power stations suffered the biggest drops. The restoration of heat, power and water supplies in the Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, Rivne and Vinnytsia oblasts took more than 24 hours, and related work in Odesa Oblast was not completed by midday on 19 August (last material update). The attack resulted in relatively few civilian casualties, with several dead and 10–20 injured across the country.

According to Ukrainian data, Russia used 120–130 rockets in the attack, of which Ukraine claimed to have shot down 102–112. It is also thought it used 90 Shahed/Geran drones and similar types, of which 42 were to be destroyed, while 41 were described as locally lost. For the first time in the history of Ukrainian missile strike communications, Ukraine announced greater effectiveness against missiles than drones, which are much easier to target and shoot down. Some Ukrainian observers estimated the actual effectiveness of the air defence at 25–30%. Not counting the measures used in the 17 November attack, between the evening of 12 November and the morning of 19 November, Russia used – according to Ukrainian data – 14 missiles (Ukraine reported that it shot down six) and 359 drones (195 are thought to have been destroyed and 148 locally lost).

Prior to and after the massive rocket attack, the Russians continued to strike major cities in the enemy's military rear. Parts of Odesa were cut off from heating by a drone attack on 14 November. On 18 November, an Iskander-M missile hit residential buildings in the city, killing ten and injuring 55. For the first time, the Ukrainian Air Force Command admitted that this occurred as a result of air defence countermeasures (it is thought that the Russian missile was been hit, causing it to change course). A tragic attack also occurred on 17 November in Sumy, where an exploding missile killed 12 and injured 68 people. The city temporarily lost its power suppdue to a strike on the energy infrastructure a few hours later (18 November). Critical infrastructure facilities in Zaporizhzhia were damaged in strikes on 13, 16, 18 and 19 November. The result of the latter two was that parts of the city were cut off from electricity and heating supplies. On 13, 14 and 18 November, Russia attacked Kharkiv (using drones and guided aerial bombs) and Mykolaiv (using a ballistic missile) on 16 November.

Ukrainian operations against Russia

On 19 November, the Ukrainian General Staff reported that the 1046th Material and Technical Security Centre near Karachev in the Bryansk region had been hit and the

ammunition stored there was destroyed. The Ukrainian Centre for Countering Disinformation, in turn, reported that it was the 67th Arsenal of the Main Missile and Artillery Board of the Russian Defence Ministry, located there, which had already been attacked in October. According to Ukrainian commentators, ATACMS missiles were officially used in the strike for the first time. At present, there is a lack of material confirming its purpose and effects.

Ukraine's repeated drone attacks on Russian territory were unsuccessful. Their targets included Moscow (18 November), the 'Kupol' plant in Izhevsk (17 November) and the Krymsk military air base in Krasnodar Krai (15 November).

Western support for Ukraine

On 17 November, Western media (*The New York Times*, *Le Figaro*) reported on the agreement to use US ATACMS ballistic missiles and British and French Storm Shadow/SCALP-EG cruise missiles against targets within Russia. The following morning, the coverage began to become more nuanced (*Le Figaro* changed the consent to use into a discussion on the issue in the text of the article), with quoted representatives of the three countries' governments mostly shying away from commenting on the news and emphasising that the consent was still under consideration. Part of the media coverage indicated that it related to the use of these missiles in the Kursk region. On 19 November, President Joe Biden's approval for the use of missiles against Russia was confirmed by US Secretary of State Advisor Brian A. Nichols. However, he did not provide any details. (For more see '*Ukraine gets 'green light' to attack Russian territory with Western-made missiles*').

On 13 November, Pentagon spokesperson General Patrick S. Ryder reported on the status of US military support pledges to Ukraine. Since Congress passed the next tranche of financial assistance in April this year, the Americans were to provide Kyiv with 83% of the promised 155 mm calibre artillery ammunition and missiles for the HIMARS, Patriot and NASAMS launchers, 67% of the remaining air defence assets (mainly missiles for the HAWK and Stinger launchers) and 60% of other means of destruction (including aerial bombs and 105 mm calibre ammunition). Ryder also revised his deputy Sabrina Singh's earlier information on the remaining funds to be used for Ukraine's military support – he estimated it at $9 billion (Singh said $6 billion). By contrast, in an interview with Ukrainian radio on 16 November, Volodymyr Zelensky stated that Kyiv had received about half of the promised weapons from the US.

Ukraine's military potential

On 19 November, President Zelensky presented a 10-point Plan for Ukraine's Internal Resilience to parliament, describing the assumptions and objectives of the country's foreign, economic and security policies. He stated, among other things, that **the government was not preparing to lower the mobilisation age in the country**, although the defence ministry and military command would be able to encourage men aged 18–25 to serve on contract. He announced an increase in local arms production, including closing contracts with armaments plants to produce at least 3,000 cruise missiles (including long-range Neptunes)

by the end of next year, as well as 30,000 long-range drones. He revealed that Ukraine has produced more than 2.5 million artillery and mortar shells of 60–155 mm calibres this year.

Zelensky's speech does not introduce new elements which would that the government intends to radically change its approach to state defence policy. Annexes detailing the planned measures are due to be published in December. The most important tasks are: to normalise the situation in the Ukrainian Armed Forces, improve the quality of training of the mobilised, and to increase the efficiency of arms and ammunition production. The abandonment of the inclusion of men aged 18–25 in the mobilisation confirms that, due to the risk of provoking social discontent, the president has decided not to take into account the demands formulated by the military.

On 13 November, **Ukraine's foreign ministry responded to speculation by *The Times* newspaper by denying that Kyiv was capable of producing nuclear weapons in the event of a hypothetical reduction in military aid by the United States**. It stressed that Ukraine complies with the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), that it does not possess or and is not developing the technology to build these weapons and does not intend to acquire them. Kyiv works closely with the IAEA, whose monitoring does not allow the use of nuclear material for military purposes.

On 15 November, the Ukrainian government announced that it had completed **an audit of enterprises which have the status of being strategically important to the state's defence effort** (it allows deferral of mobilisation for their employees), but did not present the results. Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal said only that from 1 December a new procedure would be introduced for granting entities the privileged status of 'key to the economy', agreed by the defence and economy ministries. One of the conditions for granting this will be that companies guarantee an average salary at least 2.5 times the minimum salary. The booking procedure will take place through the state electronic services app 'Diia', which is expected to reduce the practice of fictitious employment. For those who already have 'employee' deferrals, a transition period until 28 February and a requirement to reapply for status is being introduced.

President Zelensky, in an interview with Ukrainian Radio, admitted that the situation at the front is difficult, that the soldiers are tired, and that until the reserve brigades are equipped with weapons and equipment, rotation on the front line will not be possible. Commenting on the course of military recruitment, he shied away from providing information on its scale after the mobilisation age was lowered from 27 to 25 in April this year. At the same time, he criticised the secretary of the National Security and Defence Council, Oleksandr Lytvynenko, for making the mobilisation plans public – at the end of October, he stated that the next stage of mobilisation was to include 160,000 men, which would allow the military units to be 85% full.

Russia's military potential

On 13 November, **Vladimir Putin signed a decree de facto reducing compensation for frontline injuries**. Unlike the previous solution, which entitles every injured person to 3 million roubles (approximately $30,000), only the severely injured will now receive this amount. The amount of the payment for lightly wounded soldiers will be 1 million roubles,

and soldiers who suffered “minor injuries” will receive 100,000 roubles. A day later, the one-off benefit for soldiers who received disability status as a result of their wounds was raised to 4 million roubles (about $40,000). Those who became disabled before the decree came into force are also entitled to receive this amount.

Russian operations against Ukraine

On 15 November, **Ukrainian counterintelligence reported the detention of a Russian military intelligence agent**. He was a lieutenant colonel, commander of one of the units of the Special Operations Forces of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, recruited by the enemy even before the full-scale war began. In the spring of 2024, after a long period of ‘dormancy’, he was remotely activated. He was tasked with relaying the plans the Defence Forces have for combat and diversionary activities behind Russian army lines. He faces life imprisonment and confiscation of property.

Work on this text was completed on 19 November, after 999 full days of the war.

