

Russians enter Dnipropetrovsk region. Day 1224 of the war

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The situation on the frontline

Russian forces have entered Dnipropetrovsk Oblast. Fighting is underway for the village of Dachne south of Novopavlivka, which, according to some sources, has already been occupied. These reports are refuted by official Ukrainian sources, according to whom the invading troops are not present in Dnipropetrovsk Oblast. The Russians have also reached the border of this oblast north-west of Velyka Novosilka, where they have seized the village of Shevchenko and the largest lithium deposits in Europe which are in its vicinity. They also made further advances to the south and west of Pokrovsk (according to some sources, they seized Belgiyka, located less than two kilometres from the city limits), as well as to the south and east of Kostiantynivka and to the north-east of Siversk.

Russia's incursion into Dnipropetrovsk Oblast should be seen as it securing operations in Donetsk Oblast. It continues to push Ukrainian forces out of the border areas between Pokrovsk and Velyka Novosilka (they have seized another four towns there in a week, including Shevchenko), which they will not be able to achieve without pushing Ukraine out of some positions just inside Dnipropetrovsk Oblast. It is very unlikely that the Russians will continue their advance deeper into it – at least until they have taken control of the 11 villages still under Ukrainian control in Donetsk Oblast between Pokrovsk and Velyka Novosilka.

The intensity of Russia's operations in Zaporizhzhia Oblast has increased and, according to local Ukrainian sources, it (Russia) is directing additional units to this section of the front. The Russians have re-entered the Dnipro River town of Kamianske, through which the road from Melitopol to Zaporizhzhia runs (it is about 30 km to the latter from there), and its southern part has most likely passed entirely under Russian control. By contrast, it has made no further advances in the region of Orikhiv and Huliaipole, where renewed fighting had occurred in previous weeks.

Russian air attacks

On 29 June the invaders carried out their largest attack on Ukraine to date (in terms of the number of aerial weapons used). According to Ukrainian sources, they used a total of 537 drones and missiles in it (477 and 60 respectively), exceeding 500 for the second time (they used 501 drones and missiles on 9 June). Ukraine declared 211 drones and 38 missiles shot

down, with 225 drones and one missile locationally lost without negative consequences. The most severe damage occurred in Drohobych, where 21 hits were reported, mainly on the local refinery. The electricity supply was temporarily cut in the city and residents were ordered to stay at home due to atmospheric pollution. Hits were also confirmed at the Kremenchuk refinery, Zaporizhzhia plant, Poltava railway station and the surrounding railway infrastructure, and Kulbakyne air base near Mykolaiv. Damage was also reported from the Cherkasy, Ivano-Frankivsk and Ternopil oblasts.

A massive attack on Ukrainian industrial infrastructure occurred on 27 June. Russia is thought to have used 363 drones and 12 missiles in it, 211 and six of which were shot down respectively, with 148 drones reported to have been locationally lost. Damage was reported from Zaporizhzhia, Odesa (two people were killed and 17 wounded when an apartment block was damaged) and the city of Samar north-east of Dnipro (five killed and 25 wounded). Samar was attacked once again within three days. On 24 June, 22 people were killed in the assault on this city and Dnipro, and 328 wounded (including 20 and 314 in Dnipro respectively), making this attack the most tragic for the capital of Dnipropetrovsk oblast since the start of full-scale aggression. Between the evening of 24 June and the morning of 1 July, Russian drones and/or missiles also struck Kharkiv (25, 28 and 29 June), Kryvyi Rih (30 June), Odesa (30 June), Sloviansk (30 June) and Zaporizhzhia (25 June and 1 July), with their targets being mainly industrial facilities. Taking into account both massed attacks, Russia used a total of 1,134 strike drones and their imitators and 78–81 missiles. Ukraine claimed to have shot down 561 drones and 44–48 missiles, with 463 drones locationally lost.



Ukrainian operations against Russia

Ukrainian military intelligence (HUR) and the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) reported successful attacks against enemy military aviation and air defences on Russian territory and in occupied Crimea. On 26 June, the HUR's special unit 'Prymary' ('Ghosts') was said to have destroyed four radiolocation stations and an S-400 system launcher on the peninsula. A day later, Marinovka airfield in Volgograd Oblast was claimed as the target of a joint action by the Special Operations Forces and the SBU, with four Su-34 frontline bombers allegedly destroyed or damaged. On 28 June, SBU drones were said to have destroyed three helicopters – an Mi-8, Mi-26 and Mi-28 – and a Pantsir-S1 self-propelled anti-aircraft system at Kirovsk airfield in Crimea. These reports have not been confirmed by satellite imagery or any other source. It cannot be ruled out that they are purely part of Kyiv's information warfare and are intended to maintain the belief that Ukrainian special services are effective in a Russian-controlled area.

The drone attack on 1 July is thought to have resulted in a fire on the premises of one of the companies in Izhevsk. On the same day, Ukrainians also struck occupied Luhansk, where a fuel base caught fire (according to some sources, Storm Shadow missiles were used in the attack).



Western support for Ukraine

The Netherlands will provide Ukraine with a new military support package, worth €175 million, and has signed contracts worth €500 million with companies there for drone production. This was announced on 24 June by the Dutch defence ministry. This package will include 100 drone detection radars and 20 unmanned vehicles for the evacuation of wounded, to be delivered by the end of the year. €80 million will be contributed to the international drone coalition. According to Ukrainian Defence Minister Rustem Umerov, deliveries from contracts concluded by the Netherlands with Ukrainian companies are also expected to take place this year. A day later, the **Norwegian government announced the allocation of nearly €550 million for Kyiv to purchase drones from Ukrainian manufacturers, among others.**

A new UK military aid package includes the delivery of 350 anti-aircraft missiles for Raven systems, with £70m of interest earmarked from frozen Russian assets. The tranche was announced on 25 June by UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer. Five more Raven systems are due in Ukraine (eight were previously delivered). Funding for the new package has been drawn from the £4.5 billion approved by London earlier this year. It also forms part of a £1.6bn contract in March this year for the delivery of 5,000 missiles.

On 26 June, the handover of two Tripartite mine destroyers to the Ukrainian Navy took place in Zeebrugge, Belgium. The formerly Belgian-owned 'Narcis' became the 'Mariupol' and the ex-Dutch 'Vlaardingen' became the 'Melitopol'. At the end of the year, one more such vessel is due to enter the country – the Dutch "Makkum", which is to be renamed "Henichesk". On 30 June, 'Mariupol' and 'Melitopol', together with the mine destroyers 'Cherkasy' and 'Chernihiv' (Sandown class) received from the UK in 2022, went to sea to take part in the NATO Sea Breeze 2025 exercise.

Ukraine's military potential

On 24 June, **Volodymyr Zelensky stated that the potential of the country's defence industry exceeded \$35 billion** and includes almost 1,000 types of products – from artillery systems and armoured vehicles to modern drones and guided missiles. Speaking at a plenary session of the Defence Industry Forum at the NATO summit in The Hague, the president pointed out that around 40% of this potential lacks adequate funding, limiting its exploitation. As an example, he cited the capacity to produce more than 8 million drones per year – however, this capability is not being realised due to insufficient support. He also pointed out that Kyiv is open to extensive cooperation in the defence sector – including the exchange of technology and experience – with countries that actively support it. Zelensky also mentioned that talks are underway on launching defence production abroad and preliminary agreements on the subject have already been reached with several countries (including Denmark, Norway, Germany, Canada, the UK and Lithuania).

A day later, **the Ukrainian government approved a bill on amendments to the state budget for 2025, which envisages a 449 billion hryvnia increase in spending s (approximately \$10.7 billion), mainly for the security and defence sector.** Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal stressed that an additional 412.4 billion hryvnias (about \$9.8 billion) is foreseen for defence. The biggest beneficiary of the changes is the defence ministry, which will receive 310.8 billion hryvnias (about \$7.4 billion). Of note is the increase in funding for the HUR, which will

receive 4.5 billion (about \$108 million), while only 1.6 billion (over \$38 million) will go to the SBU. According to the government, the budget changes are a response to the need to increase its own arms purchases, as Kyiv is currently receiving less military equipment from its foreign partners than planned.

On 29 June, **President Zelensky signed a decree on Ukraine's withdrawal from the Ottawa Convention**, an international treaty banning the use, production and stockpiling of anti-personnel mines. The document (also known as the Mine Ban Treaty) was signed by Ukraine in 1999 and ratified six years later.

On 30 June, **the editor-in-chief of the Censor.net portal Yuri Butusov drew attention to serious irregularities related to the construction of fortifications on the frontline**. He pointed out that despite the huge outlay – some 30–35 billion hryvnias (nearly \$1 billion) – most of the fortifications are not used by the military. It currently uses only 1–2% of these structures, and many of them are unnecessary and unsuitable for the real needs on the front line. According to him, the problem is the lack of a single centralised unit responsible for planning and coordinating the construction of fortifications. He added that they mostly serve soldiers in the second and third lines, and battles are rarely fought in these places.

Russia's military potential

On 26 June, South Korea's National Intelligence Service (NIS) confirmed earlier information that **North Korea intends to send around 6,000 military personnel to Kursk Oblast** as early as July or August. This is to include 1,000 sappers and 5,000 military construction workers, who will be involved "in the reconstruction of damaged infrastructure in the affected areas". In exchange for military support, it is thought that North Korea would receive air defence systems, radio-electronic warfare equipment and technology for the production of drones, space rocket engines and guidance systems from Russia.

On 27 June, France's Le Monde reported that **Russia was increasing the production of Geran combat drones used in attacks on Ukraine and, to this end, was recruiting women from Africa, Latin America and South Asia** under the guise of participating in 'training projects'. The women, aged 18–22, from Uganda, Mali, Cameroon, Sierra Leone, Botswana, Zimbabwe and South Sudan, among others, are sent to a special economic zone in Yelabuga, Tatarstan, where they are employed to assemble the drones. Recruitment is carried out through social media, Russian embassies in African countries and local intermediaries. Over time, the programme has also included women from Latin America and South Asia.

On 29 June, **Ukraine's Foreign Intelligence Service announced that Russia was planning to develop transport infrastructure in annexed Crimea in cooperation with Chinese companies**. According to the information obtained, the head of the peninsula's occupation administration, Sergei Aksyonov, announced preliminary agreements with Chinese business representatives on the construction of the Kerch seaport and infrastructure around Lake Donuzlav, where the Russian naval base is located. There are also plans to build a railway line and expand the transport network. The China State Construction Engineering Corporation (CSCEC), one of the largest Chinese construction companies specialising in infrastructure projects, is mentioned among the potential contractors. The estimated cost of

the investment is around \$10 billion.

On 30 June, the Ukrainian ground forces command conveyed that **most of the information about incidents related to the malfunctioning of military commissions that emerged in June was disinformation using deepfake techniques. These reports are part of a psychological effort** to create public discontent. As many as 220 (86%) of them turned out to be false or manipulated. Only 36 (14%) were confirmed. As part of disciplinary proceedings, one person was suspended and five were taken to court. There are currently 30 official investigations into cases of misconduct at military commissions.

Also on 30 June, material published by the Financial Times, citing information from the Ukrainian secret services, indicated that **Russia is increasingly recruiting Ukrainian teenagers for espionage and sabotage activities. Young people, who are offered financial benefits, are encouraged to hand over the coordinates of military units or to set fire to critical infrastructure facilities and plant explosives in them.** According to the SBU, more than 700 people linked to espionage and sabotage activities have been detained since spring 2024, some 175 of whom were under the age of 18. The problem is so serious that the authorities are running a nationwide information campaign – warnings are being sent out en masse via SMS, placed on billboards, and advertising spots are being broadcast on trains. An educational video for teenagers has also been produced, showing how to avoid the pitfalls of hostile services. Recruitment is carried out through the Telegram, Discord, WhatsApp and Viber apps. In June, the SBU also warned of a new tactic from the adversary – Russian agents are impersonating Ukrainian officials to pressure children into sabotage activities.

