

Death of 24 civilians in Donetsk Oblast. Day 1301 of the war

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 The situation on the frontline

Russian forces continue their advance westward on the border between the Dnipropetrovsk and Zaporizhzhia oblasts. They have intensified their activities in the latter, resulting in advances along a 25 km front. However, these advances are relatively slow, and there are no signs that they plan to accelerate in this area. Russia has again also become active in the western part of Zaporizhzhia Oblast. It has captured another town on the Dnipro River, Plavni, and is storming Stepnohirs'k, located further north.

After driving the Ukrainians out of Zarichne, Russia opened the way to Lyman from the north-east (they are less than 8 km away). They also deepened their encirclement of the city from the north-west, where they cut off the main road to it from Kharkiv Oblast. They carried out a diversionary raid on Yampil, located between Lyman and Siversk (they are thought to have entered it in civilian clothes), which is currently under attack. The loss of the latter would directly threaten Siversk – the main supply route to the city currently runs near Yampil. After capturing the village of Oleksandro-Shul'tyne, they advanced to the south-eastern outskirts of Kostiantynivka. They also made progress in the Pokrovs'k conurbation, where Ukraine also achieved territorial successes (the grey zone separating the troops of both sides has shrunk). Fighting continues in the northern part of Kupiansk (according to some sources, Russia controls part of the city centre), which forced Ukrainian forces to withdraw from further positions on the eastern bank of the Oskil River.

On 15 September, the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, Oleksandr Syrskyi, dismissed the commanders of the 17th and 20th Army Corps – Volodymyr Silenko and Maksym Kituhin. As confirmed by the General Staff, this was a consequence of "ineffective command in areas of responsibility, mainly the loss of personnel and territory". The 17th corps was responsible for maintaining the north-western part of the Zaporizhzhia Oblast, where the enemy broke through the defences near the town of Kamianske on the Dnipro River, and the 20th corps was responsible for the western part of Donetsk Oblast on the border with the Zaporizhzhia and Dnipropetrovsk oblasts, where, after breaking through the defences, Russia penetrated deep into the latter. These are the first dismissals since the transition of the Ukrainian land forces to a corps command system (initiated in the spring), which was intended to stabilise the situation on the front and allow Ukraine to regain the initiative.

On 10 September, the Russians carried out another massive air strike on western Ukraine.

Damage to industrial and storage facilities was reported in Berdychiv (the Progres plant was hit), Izmail, Lviv (aircraft repair facilities), Lutsk, Volochysk in Khmelnytskyi Oblast (a branch of the Motor Sich plant), Vinnytsia (aircraft facilities) and Zhytomyr. According to President Volodymyr Zelensky, the attack covered 15 oblasts. According to a statement by the Ukrainian Air Force Command (UAFC), Russia used a total of 415 strike drones or their imitators and 43 ballistic and cruise missiles. The defenders declared that they had neutralised 386 unmanned aerial vehicles and shot down 27 missiles.

Ukrainian railway operator Ukrzaliznytsia announced that Russia has intensified its attacks on key railway junctions.

In recent weeks, their targets have included not only depots and station buildings, but also locomotive depots and power facilities that secure railway traffic. This happened, among other places, on 13 September in Sloviansk. A day later, a depot carrying ammunition was detonated in Kyiv Oblast. Russian drones or rockets struck Ukrainian logistical and industrial facilities in Zaporizhzhia (10 and 16 September; in the second attack, one civilian was killed and 18 were wounded), Kramatorsk (10, 13 and 15 September), Chernihiv (11 and 14 September), Sumy (11, 12 and twice on 16 September; after the penultimate attack, the city was partially cut off from electricity supplies), Dnipro (14 September), Kharkiv (16 September) and the Kyiv region (a large logistics centre is on fire as a result of the attack on 16 September). According to the UAFC, from the evening of 9 September to the morning of 16 September, Russia used a total of 940 unmanned aerial vehicles and 70 missiles (including the massive attack on 10 September). A total of 818 drones were reportedly neutralised and 27 missiles shot down.

On 9 September, a Russian guided aerial bomb struck Yarova in the Lyman area of Donetsk Oblast, causing heavy civilian casualties.

The strike occurred at a time when pensions were being paid out at the local post office. At least 24 people were killed and 19 were injured.

On 12 September, Ukrainian drones struck Russia's largest oil port, Primorsk, in Leningrad Oblast, damaging two tankers (the Custo and the Cai Yun, flying the Seychelles flag). In total, the Ukrainians used at least 221 unmanned aerial vehicles that day (the number of drones shot down was reported by the Russians), and in addition to the oil port, a fuel depot in Smolensk was also hit. **As a result of the attacks on 13 and 14 September, fires broke out at two more refineries,** in Novo-Ufimsky in Ufa (Bashkortostan) and in Kirishi (Leningrad Oblast). According to Reuters, one of the main processing units at the latter was damaged, resulting in a partial suspension of operations, with repairs expected to take up to a month. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that on 16 September, the refinery in Saratov was hit (this would be another strike on this facility this year) and a fire broke out in the area. This information has not yet been confirmed by other sources.

On 10 September, Ukrainian military intelligence (HUR) is thought to have carried out an attack on a Russian rescue ship of the MPSV07 project in the Black Sea.

HUR announced

this the following day. According to its report, the vessel was conducting radio-electronic reconnaissance in the vicinity of Novorossiysk. A Ukrainian drone is thought to have destroyed the equipment used for this purpose, which resulted in the ship being sent for costly repairs. **A day later, the Ukrainian Navy is thought to have damaged the Black Sea Fleet's communications hub in Sevastopol**, as reported by its command three days later. These reports have not yet been confirmed by other sources.

On 13 and 14 September, HUR and Special Operations Forces carried out a joint attack on railway infrastructure in Russia. The targets were strategic railway lines which Russia uses to supply occupation forces in the Kharkiv and Sumy directions. In one of the strikes on the St. Petersburg-Pskov line, a train was derailed, destroying 15 fuel tankers.

On 14 September, HUR hackers carried out a massive DDoS attack on the Russian Federation's digital election resources. The operation took place during local elections in 19 regions of the country (including occupied Sevastopol). As a result of the action, there were serious disruptions to electronic voting systems and a temporary shutdown of key digital services.

On 16 September, the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) launched a three-day counterintelligence operation in Lviv. The operation aims to prevent acts of sabotage and terrorism, neutralise Russian intelligence and increase the safety of residents in the context of the ongoing military aggression. Residents can expect restrictions on city traffic, increased document and vehicle checks, and searches of public spaces aimed at detecting dangerous objects.

Western support for Ukraine

On 9 September, the 30th meeting of the Ramstein format contact group of countries providing military support to Ukraine took place. German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius announced that the process of transferring two new Patriot batteries, jointly financed with Norway (Oslo announced this on 24 August), is underway. It is thought that Ukraine has already received the first launchers. He also recalled the conclusion of contracts with local companies for the production of several thousand drones of various types with a total value of €300 million. His Canadian counterpart, David McGuinty, announced that by the end of the year, Kyiv would receive all 50 armoured combat support vehicles (ACSVs) that Ottawa had promised in 2023. The first eight vehicles were delivered to Ukraine via Poland. A day later, Ukrainian Defence Minister Denys Shmyhal summarised the meeting, recalling the commitments made by the EU and 15 European countries independently. He also announced that Poland would deliver 10,000 rounds of 155 mm calibre ammunition the following week.

Sweden will provide Ukraine with its 20th military aid package. It is worth \$836 million. This was announced on 11 September by Defence Minister Pål Jonson. It includes 18 Archer self-propelled howitzers (bringing the total number delivered to the Ukrainian army to 44), 155 mm artillery ammunition, radar stations and maritime drones. Over the next two years, Sweden plans to allocate \$7.47 billion for military aid, primarily for purchases from Swedish industry, including additional Archer self-propelled howitzers. **Estonia intends to continue its military support at a level of at least 0.25% of GDP, i.e. over EUR 100 million**

per year, according to Defence Minister Hanno Pevkur. He emphasised that most of the funds will be spent on products from domestic companies.

The United Kingdom will manufacture Ukrainian interceptor drones. The contract for the first batch of 1,000 unmanned aerial vehicles, resulting from earlier agreements between the British Prime Minister and President Zelensky, was signed by Defence Minister John Healey. His Ukrainian counterpart Denys Shmyhal announced this on 11 September. All machines manufactured in the UK will be delivered to the Ukrainian defence forces. On the same day, Shmyhal also announced that on 9 **September, a site had been designated in Ukraine for the construction of ammunition plants by the German company Rheinmetall.** The head of the ministry met in London with the company's director, Armin Papperger, who announced four major investments in Ukraine from the end of 2022 (the ammunition factory was to be launched as early as 2023). So far, Rheinmetall has opened a plant there to repair German-supplied cars and lighter armoured vehicles. **On 10 September, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced that Kyiv would be granted a €6 billion loan "in advance" for the production of unmanned aerial vehicles.**

On 11 September, the Norwegian Armed Forces announced the start of the first training course for Ukrainian military personnel at Camp Jomsborg, located at the Nowa Dęba training ground in Podkarpackie. The facility was built this summer and is intended for basic and specialist training, as well as for the exchange of experience. This initiative is intended to replace Norway's previously planned formation, training and equipping of a Ukrainian brigade, which was largely abandoned due to negative experiences with the 155th Mechanised Brigade formed in France. Germany was also supposed to create a unit of this level for the defenders. Some Ukrainian media outlets reported false information that the Norwegians had created a new training ground in Poland from scratch.

Ukraine's military potential

On 14 September, Roksolana Pidlasa, chair of the Ukrainian Supreme Council's budget committee, stated **that the 2026 budget would include at least USD 120 billion for defence purposes**, but only half of this amount would be covered by the country's own funds. Kyiv intends to finance the other half with the support of foreign partners. Pidlasa added that the current cost of military operations has risen to \$172 million per day. Expenditure includes soldiers' salaries, ammunition, weapons, as well as benefits for the wounded, families of the fallen, and support for the missing.

Russia's military potential

On 11 September, General Oleksandr Syrskyi warned of an intensifying **technological race in the construction of unmanned aerial systems.** He emphasised that Russia is adapting and copying proven Ukrainian technologies, including interception drones, while increasing the strike range of its own unmanned aerial vehicles.

On 12 September, the Ukrainian website Slidstvo.info, citing HUR materials, reported that **between July 2022 and mid-July 2025, 1,031 Belarusian citizens joined the Russian army**

as contract soldiers. Journalists estimate that more than 10% of Belarusian mercenaries have been killed, and a further 8% are considered missing.

The war and the internal situation in Ukraine

On 11 September, **the Ukrainian police stated that the protracted war had forced changes in the activities of local criminal groups.** They are increasingly abandoning the smuggling of goods in favour of organising the illegal transfer of men seeking to avoid mobilisation. According to police data, in 2022, the cost of such a “service” was approximately \$3,000, while in 2023–2024, prices rose to between \$10,000 and even \$20,000 per person, depending on the method of crossing the border (on foot or by car).

On 11 September, a spokesperson for the Bieszczady Border Guard Unit announced that, between 28 August and 3 September, 6,100 men aged 18–22 arrived in Podkarpackie from Ukraine, while 2,000 left for Ukraine. According to Border Guard data, during this period, over 4,600 young Ukrainians entered the Lublin Voivodeship, and 1,300 left. **The recorded increase is the result of a decision issued by the Ukrainian government at the end of August allowing men aged 18 to 22 to travel abroad.** Some of them will take advantage of the change in regulations to avoid being drafted into the army in the future.

