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Russia's frontline advances slowing. Day 1560 of the war

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The situation on the frontline

Russian forces continued their slow advance along most sections of the front. They made the most significant progress in Zaporizhzhia Oblast, where they captured further towns west of Huliaipole. This is disputed by Ukrainian military sources, who claim that fighting for these areas is still ongoing. The situation for the defenders in Kostiantynivka is becoming increasingly serious. They currently have uncontested control only over the northern and partly the western sections of the town, whilst the Russian presence in the centre is shown by Ukrainian air strikes on the area. The encirclement of Kostiantynivka from the east and west has also intensified. East of Sloviansk, fighting continues for the strategic town of Rai-Oleksandrivka, the eastern part of which is most likely under Russian control. They have also captured further towns in the border areas of the Kharkiv and Sumy oblasts, which the Ukrainian command also denies.

Ukrainian forces have intensified attacks on Russia's land transport link with Crimea, the so-called 'Novorossiya' route, disrupting logistics. As a result of the destruction of vehicles, mainly tankers, traffic on the route between Taganrog and Chonhar is severely hampered, and fuel rationing for private use has been introduced on the peninsula. On 1 June, Dmytro Pletenchuk, spokesperson for the Ukrainian Navy Command, reported that Ukraine had gained control of key supply routes to occupied Crimea. However, Ukrainian actions have not yet forced the Russians to divert frontline supplies to the Kherson and Zaporizhzhia oblasts to other routes, which would mainly mean the bridge over the Kerch Strait.

On **30 May, a drone struck the machine room of Unit 6 of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant in Enerhodar, which is under Russian occupation** (separated from Ukrainian positions by the Dnipro River). The preceding week saw the most intense drone attacks to date on the city, including areas where power plant personnel reside. Furthermore, there was a prolonged communication blackout in the city and at the power plant, which was most likely the result of the use of electronic warfare systems. On 28 and 31 May, the International Atomic Energy Agency confirmed this – without attributing responsibility – expressing concern over the disruption of communications at the power plant "as a result of increased military activity" and a strike on one of its main facilities.

May 2026 ended with Russia making its smallest monthly territorial gains in three years. The actual changes are difficult to assess due to the widening discrepancies in the reports

of Ukrainian and Russian OSINT sources. Most observers confirm the slowdown, but differ regarding its scale. DeepState, Ukraine's largest analytical project, estimated that territorial changes in May amounted to a mere 14 km^2 in Russia's favour. In contrast, the US Institute for the Study of War (ISW) echoes Kyiv's official narrative. According to its estimates, Ukrainian forces regained more territory in May than they lost – over 250 km^2.

Russian air attacks

On the morning of 2 June, the Russians carried out another massive air strike, targeting primarily Kyiv and the major cities in the immediate rear of the front line. In Kyiv, at least several dozen civilian buildings were damaged, including nine apartment blocks. Five people were killed and 58 were injured. Among the targets hit were the headquarters of the state-owned defence conglomerate Ukroboronprom and one of Eastern Europe's largest innovation and modern technology parks – UNIT.city. As a result of damage to the power infrastructure, 140,000 customers in three of the city's raions were left without electricity. In Dnipro, at least nine people were killed, including a child, and 35 were injured. 56 buildings and an unspecified business were destroyed or damaged. In Zaporizhzhia, damage to an industrial facility was reported; in Poltava Oblast, a business was affected; and in the Kyiv and Chernihiv oblasts, warehouses were hit. In Kharkiv, three districts were affected by the destruction, and ten people were injured. The attack also affected Sumy and Kamianske in Dnipropetrovsk Oblast. In the latter, the target was most likely a local hydroelectric power station. The Ukrainian Air Force Command (UAFC) reported that 602 of the 656 Russian strike drones had been neutralised and 40 of the 73 missiles shot down, including 11 ballistic missiles. None of the eight Zircon hypersonic cruise missiles were shot down; the UAFC had mistakenly classified them as ballistic missiles.

Russia continued its air strikes against Ukrainian energy, logistics, transport and industrial infrastructure, mainly in the frontline and border regions. Russian drones, and occasionally missiles, struck (among other places) Zaporizhzhia (on the evening of 26 May and twice during the day on 30 May and 1 June), Kharkiv (1 June), Chernihiv (27 and 31 May and 1 June), Dnipro (27 and 31 May), Odesa and the surrounding port cities (on 27, 28 and 29 May and 1 June) and Sumy (on 30 May and 1 June). On 28 and 30 May, Naftogaz reported further serious damage to gas extraction and processing infrastructure in the Poltava, Kharkiv and Sumy oblasts respectively. As a result of the attack on Odesa Oblast on 29 May, a Turkish vessel flying the Vanuatu flag was hit, and one of the drones crashed onto the roof of a block of flats in Galați, Romania. On 30 May, in Shostka in Sumy Oblast, a massive drone attack damaged the local railway infrastructure, and the station building was completely destroyed. On 27, 30 and 31 May, fuel companies and depots in Rivne Oblast were attacked, and on 31 May, transport and energy infrastructure in Zhytomyr Oblast (in Korosten and Ovruch). According to some sources, on 27 May, a Kinzhal hypersonic missile (detected by the UAFC) struck the main Ukrainian air force base in Starokostiantyniv. According to Ukrainian data, from the evening of 26 May to the morning of 2 June, the Russians deployed a total of 1,982 drones (1,826 of which were reportedly neutralised) and 84 missiles (the UAFC reported shooting down 45).

Ukrainian operations against Russia

Ukraine continued to strike targets within the Russian fuel complex, and as a result of the attack on 29 May, the Lukoil refinery in Volgograd suspended operations. This was the second successful attack on this refinery this year (the previous one, which forced a halt to production, took place in February). Fires caused by strikes or the crash of a drone also occurred at the Tuapse terminal in Krasnodar Krai (27 May), the Yaroslavl-3 pumping station in Yaroslavl Oblast and the port of Temryuk in Krasnodar Krai (29 May), the Kurgannnefteprodukt terminal in Taganrog in Rostov Oblast and the fuel depot in Armavir in Krasnodar Krai (30 May), the refinery in Saratov, the fuel depot in Matveyev Kurgan and the pipeline production and control station in Kirov Oblast (31 May), and the Ilsky refinery in the Krasnodar Krai (2 June). Furthermore, according to the 412th 'Nemesis' Unmanned Systems Brigade, two tanks at the oil terminal in Feodosia were hit on 30 May.

From January to May this year inclusive, Ukrainian drones struck 16 Russian refineries, including eight large ones, Bloomberg reported on 1 June. Some of the facilities were attacked several times. On 28 May, *Novaya Gazeta* reported that, as a result of the attacks, 11 refineries were either out of operation or had reduced production. Of the transhipment ports, the terminal in Tuapse was the most severely damaged; it has not received any tankers since 23 April. These are being redirected to other Black Sea oil ports, mainly Novorossiysk. Depending on the criteria used, the Russian fuel complex comprises between 32 and 38 large refineries and around 80 smaller ones. Two-thirds of these are located in the European part of Russia and are therefore potentially within range of Ukrainian strikes. Throughout 2025, the Ukrainians managed to damage 21 large refineries to varying degrees (a record 14 were hit in August), and 24 since the start of the attacks, resulting in periodic suspensions or reductions in production.

On 28 May, off the Turkish Black Sea coast, Ukrainian maritime drones attacked three tankers belonging to the 'shadow fleet'. In the case of the 'James II', flying the Palau flag, the drone's warhead failed to detonate. There is no information on the outcome of the attack on the tankers 'Altura' and 'Velora', flying the Sierra Leone flag. According to Turkish media, none of the crews were injured. One day earlier, Sevastopol was the target of a massive attack and, according to the local administration, 30 buildings were damaged there. The General Staff and the Security Service of Ukraine reported successful attacks on military facilities on 28 and 29 May. A radar station in Feodosia in occupied Crimea, an "important electronic reconnaissance facility" in the Temryuk area, and two Tu-142 anti-submarine aircraft and an Iskander-M missile launcher in the Taganrog area were reportedly hit. Meanwhile, according to the 422nd Unmanned Systems Regiment, on 31 May, the general cargo ship 'Leonid Pestrikov' was hit in occupied Berdiansk.

The intensity of Ukrainian attacks on targets in Russia and deep within the occupied territories has decreased. In the last week of May, the Ukrainians used an average of 100–200 strike drones per attack wave – under half as many as in the middle of the month. The highest number – 405 in a 24-hour period (the figure reported by the Russian Ministry of Defence as having been shot down) – was used in total during the daytime attacks on 30

May and the night-time attacks on 31 May.

Russian operations against Ukraine

Russian services continue to recruit Ukrainian residents to identify targets both behind the front lines and deep within Ukrainian territory. On 26 May, the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) reported the arrest of a woman from Donetsk Oblast who was allegedly collecting and passing on data to Russia regarding the deployment of Ukrainian troops. A resident of Poltava was arrested on 1 June on the same charge. Both suspects were recruited via the Telegram social media platform. On 27 May, the SBU announced the arrest in Odesa of a clergyman of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate, who was alleged to have been working for the Russian military intelligence service GRU. According to the investigation, the suspect passed on coordinates to the Russians which were used to carry out air strikes.

On 29 May, the SBU reported that it had dismantled a smuggling ring attempting to deliver materials for terrorist attacks to Odesa. Officers detained four people whilst they were attempting to deliver the cargo to the port area in Odesa. Among the items seized was a strike drone equipped with explosives and a fibre-optic control system.

Russia's military potential

On 28 May, the Russian government approved a mechanism which allows private companies to independently purchase large-calibre weapons and air defence equipment: anti-aircraft artillery, unmanned turret systems, radars, electronic warfare equipment and specialised vehicles. This option applies exclusively to companies operating within the general air defence system under the supervision of the Russian Ministry of Defence, and the equipment is immediately transferred to designated military units or mobile fire groups. Previously (from March 2026), companies protecting fuel and energy facilities and strategic infrastructure from drone attacks were able to receive small arms for temporary use from the National Guard (Rosgvardiya). Russia is emulating Ukrainian solutions introduced from the end of 2025. By May this year, 24–29 (depending on the source) Ukrainian companies had joined the unified state air defence system under the control of the Air Force.

In 2026, Russian orders for Shahed drones exceeded 100,000 units, Vadym Skibitskyi, deputy head of Ukrainian military intelligence, reported on 1 June. He used the collective term derived from the name of the Iranian prototype to describe all strike drones and their imitators (with the dominant models being Geran versions 1 to 5 and Gerbera). He compared this year's order with that of 2024, when the Russians were set to sign for 12,000 drones of this category. Scant reports on the production of Ukrainian strike drones suggest that Ukraine, together with its supporting nations, may produce a similar or even greater number this year.

On 28 May, the Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs launched a special website, *stoprussianrecruiters.org*, aimed at exposing the Russian recruitment system for participation in the war against Ukraine. The website publishes information on the geographical locations of Russian recruiters, the methods employed to recruit foreigners, and individuals acting in the Kremlin's interests in various countries around the world. According to data from the "I Want to Live" Coordination Centre, which informs Russian soldiers about the possibility of surrendering, the identities of over 28,000 foreigners who signed contracts with the Russian armed forces have so far been established, and over 5,000 of them have been killed. The ministry emphasised that hundreds of foreigners from over 48 countries, who were recruited by Russia, are currently being held captive in Ukraine. The Russian services are reportedly ramping up the recruitment of economic migrants, the unemployed and people from socially vulnerable groups from countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Diplomatic missions and cultural projects, including the so-called 'Russian Houses', are being used for recruitment.

Western support for Ukraine

On 26 May, **the Dutch Ministry of Defence announced the delivery of 60 Toyota Hilux pick-ups to Ukraine.** On the same day**, the Canadian company Roshel announced that over the past year it had delivered more than 700 armoured vehicles and MRAPs of various types to Ukraine.** These deliveries are funded by the Canadian government and undisclosed donors. Furthermore**, the Canadian company Sentinel and the Ukrainian company Airlogix will establish a joint venture, Airlogix-Sentinel, as part of the Build with Ukraine programme.** It will manufacture **Ukrainian unmanned aerial vehicles in Canada for the Ukrainian Armed Forces**.

On 26 May**, the *Financial Times* reported that the Czech initiative to purchase artillery ammunition for Ukraine had lost half of its international donors, with the number of countries funding the programme falling from 18 to 9.** This decline is said to be due to a shift in political direction in Prague following the swearing-in of Andrej Babiš as prime minister. According to Czech President Petr Pavel, the initiative will continue, albeit at a slower pace.

On 28 May, during President Volodymyr Zelensky's visit to Sweden, it was announced that **Ukraine would purchase 20 of the latest JAS-39 E/F Gripen fighter jets, along with a training package, spare parts and armaments, for approximately €2.5 billion. The funds come from a €90 billion EU loan to Ukraine.** The relevant implementing agreement to the framework agreement signed in October last year (see '*Russian soldiers in the centre of Pokrovsk. Day 1343 of the war*') is currently being negotiated and is due to be signed later this year, with deliveries of these aircraft set to begin in 2030. **In addition, the Swedish Prime Minister announced the transfer of 16 older JAS-39 C/D Gripen fighter jets to Ukraine, along with an extensive package of training, spare parts and armaments (including Meteor long-range air-to-air missiles).** The donation is valued at €2.3 billion, with deliveries scheduled for early next year.

On 29 May**, Japan announced that it would send four liaison officers to the NSATU** (NATO Security Assistance and Training for Ukraine) **mission** and **contribute $11.8 million towards the purchase of US military equipment for Ukraine under the so-called** Prioritised Ukraine Requirements List (PURL). This marked a significant shift in Japan's policy since aid to Ukraine had not previously included military matters.

On 29 May, the **Finnish** Ministry of Defence **announced the delivery of a 33rd military aid package to Ukraine** (no details provided). The cost of replenishing Finnish stockpiles following this donation is expected to amount to €128 million, and the total value of all donations to date stands at €3.4 billion.

In its annual report to the UN on the export and import of arms and military equipment for 2025 Bulgaria declared that it had sold 22 T-72 tanks, 40 MTLB armoured personnel carriers and 38 D-30 howitzers to the Czech Republic, and 18 2S1 *Gvozdika* howitzers and three MTLBs to the United Kingdom, which those countries subsequently transferred to Ukraine.

The war and the internal situation in Ukraine

According to data from Olena Kondratiuk, Deputy Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, there are currently around 7,000 Ukrainian prisoners of war in Russian captivity. Over 95% of them are reportedly subjected to torture, psychological abuse and brutal treatment. Since the start of the full-scale invasion, Ukraine has managed to recover over 9,000 of its citizens from Russian captivity, including more than 400 civilians. Furthermore, it is possible that between 10,000 and 20,000 Ukrainian civilians are being held in Russia.

According to a poll by the Rating sociological group, 73% of Ukrainians believe that the Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU) are defending not only the Ukrainian people but also other European nations in the war. A different view is held by 23% of respondents, who state that the AFU are protecting Ukraine alone. At the same time, the majority of Ukrainians would support the Ukrainian army's participation in the defence of selected European countries in the event of a Russian attack. The highest level of support is for Lithuania – 63% of respondents would be 'in favour', and 33% 'against'. 62% would support their Armed Forces' involvement in Latvia, 61% in Estonia, 60% in Moldova, 59% in Finland, and 58% in Poland; 37% of respondents would be against this involvement in the case of Poland.

The situation in the occupied territories

According to a statement published on 26 May by the Ukrainian Military Intelligence (HUR), the Russian occupation is leading to a progressive deterioration of the demographic situation in the occupied territories. In the occupied part of Donetsk Oblast, the birth rate was projected to be 9.9‰ in 2025, which is 2.4 times lower than the Russian average. Alongside the decline in the local population, there is a shift in the demographic structure of the occupied territories. This is the result of a deliberate policy of relocating Russian officials and migrants from Central Asia, the Caucasus and Africa to the occupied

territories. This process is supported by preferential mortgages and the allocation of land to Russian citizens.

