

Three days of calm in Kyiv. Day 1658 of the war

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The situation on the frontline

Russian forces have finally withdrawn from the areas west of the Netrys River and, according to some sources, also from positions between it and the Zherebets River. Confirmation of this information will mean that the breach in Ukrainian defences has been closed, thereby ending the encirclement of Lyman and Sloviansk from the north, and that at least five towns and at least part of Lyman have returned to the control of the defenders (the Russians are still reported to be holding the eastern outskirts of the city). The reason for Russia's decision to abandon the breach must be seen as the Ukrainians' effective disruption of Russian logistics, particularly river crossings, as well as a lack of forces to extend the encirclement. The Russians had found themselves in a similar situation on two previous occasions – in November 2022, when they withdrew from the right-bank part of Kherson Oblast, and in December 2025, when they were driven out of the western part of Kupiansk in Kharkiv Oblast.

The Russians have made significant advances to the south and east of the Sloviansk-Kramatorsk conurbation. They have deepened their encirclement of Dobropillia, which is currently the scene of fighting. Their sabotage and reconnaissance groups (SRGs) have reached Bilozerka, situated north of that town. Druzhkivka is under threat from a two-pronged encirclement, with Russian SRGs reportedly operating less than a kilometre from its borders. According to some sources, Russian forces have finally taken control of the range of hills east of Sloviansk and Kramatorsk and are fighting for the settlements on the outskirts of these towns. On 5 and 6 September, Russian guided aerial bombs struck the two main bridges in Kramatorsk for the first time, seriously damaging one of them and reducing the capacity of the other.

Further neighbourhoods in the centre of Kupiansk have come under Russian control, whilst fighting continues in its southern and western parts. Despite regular counterattacks, Ukraine has so far been unable to disrupt Russian logistics across the Oskil River, suggesting that the Russians have learnt from their failed attempt to capture the town in 2025 and have managed to secure the crossings. The invaders are also reported to be infiltrating Kupiansk-Vuzlovyi – the last major stronghold of Ukrainian resistance on the eastern bank of the Oskil River. Some Russian sources suggested that an encirclement had been completed in the north-eastern part of Kharkiv Oblast (east of Vovchansk); however, the Ukrainian forces

stationed there have not been physically cut off, and the distance between the Russian positions is at least 10 km. The Russians have consolidated their positions south of Orikhiv in Zaporizhzhia Oblast, whilst fighting continues in the eastern part of the town.

Russian air attacks

Between 5 and 7 September, the Russians temporarily suspended their attacks on Kyiv in connection with US President Donald Trump's envoys visiting Russia and Ukraine, whilst the Ukrainians imposed a moratorium on strikes against Moscow. The authorities in Kyiv had announced a ceasefire a day earlier, on 4 September, and at that time accused Russia of breaching the truce, citing attacks on Boryspil and Hostomel airports near Kyiv, as well as the capital's Zhuliany airport. The Ukrainians themselves suspended their operations on 5 September, the day the delegation arrived in Moscow.

From 1 to 4 September, Russia continued its attacks on Kyiv and Kyiv Oblast. Areas neighbouring the Ukrainian capital were also the target of limited strikes on 5 and 7 September. On 6 September, the day of Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner's visit there, attacks on Kyiv Oblast were also suspended. Russian drones mainly targeted warehouse complexes, where damage and fires were reported (in total, at least a dozen or so facilities were hit between 1 and 7 September). On 2 September, the National University of Food Technologies in Kyiv was also targeted, and two days later, the SBU headquarters. 15 people were reportedly injured, whilst on 3 September there were 14 casualties across Kyiv, and 13 on 2 September.

On 8 September, the Russians launched a massive attack on Kyiv and Kyiv Oblast. Damage and fires were reported in five districts of the Ukrainian capital, and at least two businesses were seriously damaged. Two people were killed and ten injured. Damage to logistics infrastructure and strikes on other targets were reported in the Bila Tserkva, Boryspil, Brovary and Fastiv districts. Parts of Kyiv and Kyiv Oblast were cut off from the electricity supply. The Ukrainian Air Force Command (UAFC) selectively reported that Russia had used 32 Kh-101 cruise missiles and that 31 Kh-101 and Iskander-K missiles, as well as two ballistic missiles, had been shot down. OSINT sources initially estimated the number of missiles used by the Russians at 58–60, including at least 22 ballistic missiles and 2 hypersonic missiles, of which 26–27 were reportedly shot down, including two ballistic missiles – North Korean KN-23s – by PAC-3 MSE interceptors over Kyiv. 26 missiles were reported to have struck the Ukrainian capital directly. In addition to Kyiv and Kyiv Oblast, the attack affected a further seven regions, with power cuts occurring in five of them.

Critical infrastructure and logistics in Odesa Oblast remain constant targets of Russian attacks. From the evening of 1 September until the morning of 8 September, strikes took place daily. On 2 September, 350,000 customers in Odesa Oblast were periodically cut off from the electricity supply, and there were also disruptions to the functioning of critical infrastructure. A day later, a block of flats in Odesa was damaged, leaving 17 residents injured. On 4 September, the port of Chornomorsk was the target of a massive attack, followed two days later by Izmail. On 6 September, the terminal and the Orlivka border crossing with Romania on the Danube were damaged once again. Some sources reported

damage to several more ships in the ports of Chornomorsk, Pivdennyi and Odesa.

On 5 September, the Kametstal metallurgical complex in Kamianske, in Dnipropetrovsk Oblast, was severely damaged. According to OSINT sources, it was struck by eight ballistic missiles, and the extent of the damage forced a complete shutdown of operations. Five workers were killed and five were injured. Further attacks, mainly on warehouse complexes and industrial facilities, took place in, amongst other places, Dnipro (2, 3, 5, 6 and 8 September; three people were killed and 16 injured in the first two attacks), Kropyvnytskyi (3 September), Mykolaiv (4, 5 and 6 September), Zaporizhzhia (daily from 4 to 7 September), Poltava (5 September) and Kharkiv (7 September). On 3 September, Naftogaz reported that the Russians had simultaneously attacked several gas extraction and processing plants in the Poltava and Kharkiv oblasts. Enemy drones also damaged warehouses and businesses in the Khmelnytskyi (2 and 5 September) and Zhytomyr (4 and 5 September) regions. According to the Ukrainian Air Force Command (UAFC), between the evening of 1 September and the morning of 8 September, the invaders deployed a total of 1,090 strike drones, of which 890 were neutralised. Official data (mainly from regional military administrations) and OSINT sources indicate that the Russians used at least 75 missiles during this period, of which 27–33 were shot down.



Ukrainian operations against Russia

Ukrainian drones struck a refinery in Ust-Luga in Leningrad Oblast on 1 September, in Ryazan on 6 September, and in Saratov on 8 September. Meanwhile, on 4 September, a chemical plant in Sterlitamak, Bashkortostan, was attacked, resulting in fires. On 8 September, Engels-2 airport in Saratov Oblast was also targeted. The Kirishinefteorgsintez (Kinef) refinery in Leningrad Oblast, which was damaged on 30 August, suspended production for the third time in 2026, as reported by Reuters on 2 September. This had previously occurred following strikes on 26 March and 5 May. In August this year, seven of the 22 refineries that had been attacked suspended operations either completely or partially. On the same day, the Ukrainian Ministry of Defence released its own figures, according to which 12 refineries, two chemical plants, three terminals and/or large fuel depots, and two defence enterprises were damaged in August.

Sochi, in Krasnodar Krai, was targeted twice by Ukrainian attacks. On 3 September, the offshore support vessel 'Nefrit' was reportedly hit in the harbour basin, and a day later, a Rosneft fuel depot was struck, causing a fire on the premises. Strikes also occurred in an air defence unit's area, where, according to some sources, two S-300 launchers and three helicopters were hit (two of them – a Ka-52 and a Mi-28 – were reportedly destroyed). On 7 September, two Russian Su-35 fighter jets collided over Kursk Oblast. The pilot of one of them was killed. According to the Ukrainian General Staff, military installations in Sevastopol were struck on 3 September, in Rostov Oblast on 6 September, and a railway bridge over the North Crimean Canal was struck on 7 September.

Russian operations against Ukraine

On 1 September, the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) reported the arrest in Sloviansk of a man who, whilst collaborating with Russian military intelligence, had been passing on the locations of targets for air strikes on the city and its surroundings. On 4 September, a married couple were detained in Kharkiv on similar charges; they had been gathering information on the deployment of military units and energy infrastructure facilities. On 7 September, a soldier from one of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU) artillery brigades was arrested in Mykolaiv Oblast on suspicion of collaborating with the Russian FSB and assisting in the targeting of Russian missile and drone strikes in southern Ukraine.

Western support for Ukraine

On 2 September, the Spanish Minister for Foreign Affairs, José Manuel Albares, stated that his country would supply Ukraine with an undisclosed number of missiles for the Patriot air defence systems.

On 3 September, the German news portal Handelsblatt reported that production of over 5,000 strike drones for Ukraine had begun at the facilities of the Airlogix and Auterion joint venture in Bavaria. The order is financed by the German government and is worth approximately 300 million euros.

On 4 September, the Ukrainian Ministry of Defence announced that deliveries of Saab 340 Erieye (ASC 890) early warning aircraft had been taking place since March 2024, following Sweden's announcement in May 2024 that it would donate them. Following the ministry's announcement, audiovisual material confirming the presence of the Erieye in Ukraine began to appear on social media.

On 4 September, a meeting of the Secretariat and the Air Force Capabilities Coalition groups was held in Kyiv, attended by representatives from Ukraine, the Netherlands, Denmark, the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada. Five main priorities for assistance to Ukraine were agreed: the development of aviation infrastructure, personnel training, the maintenance of existing aviation capabilities, the development of the helicopter component, and increased industrial cooperation.

On 7 September, the European Commission approved Ukraine's request to purchase US interceptor missiles for the Patriot air defence systems. Kyiv had requested €2 billion for this purpose from the EU's €90 billion loan facility.

On 8 September, the UK announced the allocation of £100 million under the US arms procurement mechanism (Prioritised Ukraine Requirements List, PURL), to be used to supply Ukraine with PAC-3 MSE anti-missile missiles for the Patriot system. Furthermore, it was reported that London has so far this year supplied Ukraine with 25,000 of the 120,000 various unmanned systems promised for this year.

Ukraine's military potential

On 6 September, *The New York Times* published an article in which, citing government audits and court documents, it reported that in 2024 alone, Ukraine lost approximately \$1.2 billion as a result of fraud, abuse and the mismanagement of defence contracts. According to the newspaper, seven of the ten largest Ukrainian military contractors were awarded new contracts despite facing criminal proceedings, failing to fulfil previous contracts or facing allegations of corruption. The Pavlohrad Chemical Plant was cited as an example: it supplied the army with thousands of defective mortar rounds, yet received further contracts despite the identified problems. Auditors also found that 18 companies entered into new contracts even though they had failed to fulfil previous obligations, and six of them had not fulfilled any contracts at all. obligations, and six of them had not fulfilled any contracts at all.

On 2 September, the Office of the President of Ukraine published a decree by Volodymyr Zelenskyy appointing Sviatoslav Zaits as Commander of the Land Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. In 2014, Zaits commanded a reconnaissance company of the 25th Airborne Brigade during the Russian aggression in Crimea; he subsequently served as chief of staff and deputy commander of the 8th Corps, and in April 2026 he assumed command of the 20th Army Corps.

On 2 September, the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (AFU), Mykhailo Drapatyi, published *the Principles of AFU Leadership and Army Development in Wartime*. The document sets out the principles for leading the army and its priorities, including: stabilising the front and seizing the initiative, reform of the system for the recruitment, training, rotation and discharge of personnel; the integration of operations across different branches of the armed forces; accelerating the adaptation and implementation of innovations; transformation of command structures; and the delegation of authority and responsibility to lower levels of command. Drapatyi requires commanders to provide an accurate assessment of the situation, to act independently and to take responsibility for their decisions, whilst staff are required to minimise unnecessary bureaucracy and to align processes with the needs of the troops.

Russia's military potential

On 7 September, Oleg Ivashchenko, head of the Main Intelligence Directorate of the Ministry of Defence (HUR), stated that Russia's financial situation would allow it to continue waging war against Ukraine into the years 2027–2028. He identified a severe labour shortage, a growing federal budget deficit and the deteriorating situation in the banking sector as the main problems facing the Russian economy. At the same time, he noted that Russia still has sufficient resilience to continue its military operations.

On 1 September, Prime Minister Sergiy Koryukha announced that the government was introducing a strict regime of budgetary austerity measures to raise approximately 70 billion hryvnias, all of which will be channelled into defence. Koryukha also pointed out that Ukraine needs \$27 billion in emergency funding from its partners to cover the defence budget deficit. He attributes the rise in defence spending to the increasing costs of technological warfare and the intensification of Russian air strikes.

On 1 September, Ruslan Stefanchuk, Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada, stated that parliament had prepared a solution enabling plenary sessions to continue during prolonged air raid alerts. Mobile workstations for all MPs have been set up in the Rada building's shelter, and a backup system utilising personal mobile devices has been developed for electronic voting.

On 2 September, the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelensky, announced the preparation of new rules for responding to Russian air strikes, including changes to the warning system. The warning system is to be divided into two levels: yellow, generally indicating the threat of drone attacks, and red, concerning a missile threat, including ballistic missile attacks and massive strikes.

On 7 September, the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology (KIIS) published the results of a public opinion poll, according to which as many as 71% of Ukraine's residents consider themselves happy, whilst 16% say they are unhappy. Among those surveyed, 31% described themselves as definitely happy, 40% as rather happy, and 11% gave an ambiguous response of 'yes and no'.

