

## HIGHLIGHTS

# PULSE OF PEACE IN DONBAS



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RUSSIA DRAWS RESERVE FORCES TO DONBAS, UKRAINIAN ARMED FORCES COUNTERATTACK IN A NUMBER OF AREAS OF THE FRONT

[In the south of Ukraine](#), the confrontation between the Armed Forces of Ukraine and the Russian occupants is taking place mainly at the level of artillery duels, while in the [Kherson region](#) the Ukrainian troops managed to launch a counteroffensive.

[According to Valery Zaluzhnyy](#), commander-in-chief of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, the Russian armed forces have concentrated their main efforts in the north of Luhansk Region, where they massively use artillery. Despite a tenfold fire advantage of the Russian forces, the Ukrainian armed forces continue to hold their positions. By the end of the week, the Ukrainian armed forces had launched a counteroffensive in certain areas of Donbas, and the Russian offensive in Severodonetsk was successfully halted. At the same time, street battles continue in the city, accompanied by constant bombardment. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky [noted](#) that fighting is going on "literally for every meter," in addition, the Russian army is trying to bring reserve forces to Donbas – this was also [stated](#) by British intelligence. Russian forces continue to try to advance toward Slavyansk and have made gradual progress, the U.S. Institute for the Study of War (ISW) said. However, their attacks are [limited](#) to narrow fronts and tied to roads.

On the situation in the regions according to regional administrations as of the morning of June 13, see [here](#).

## UKRAINIAN FORCES HAVE LIBERATED OVER 1,000 TOWNS AND VILLAGES

The Office of the President of Ukraine [said](#) that more than 1,000 towns and villages in Ukraine had been de-occupied and more than 370 settlements had been cleared of mines.

Healthcare and educational institutions resumed their work in almost half of the de-occupied cities, and mobile and Internet services resumed in about two-thirds.

The police returned to work in 64 per cent of the liberated territory and 70 per cent of road and 45 per cent of rail services have resumed. Stores have reopened in more than 600 settlements. [According to the State Border Guard Service of Ukraine](#), the flow of people entering the country has already exceeded the number of those leaving the country for a month.

[Volunteers](#) do much of the work to restore normal life in the de-occupied territories and supply the Ukrainian Armed Forces.

## THE EU HAS REACHED THE FINISH LINE ON THE POSSIBLE GRANTING OF CANDIDATE STATUS FOR UKRAINE'S ACCESSION

On June 11, the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, [arrived](#) in Kyiv; the talks [finalized](#) the assessment of Ukraine's application for EU membership. The European Commission is preparing the conclusion for the EU member states to grant Ukraine the status of candidate to the Union, this work will be completed by the end of this week.

The head of the European Commission added that Ukraine is expected to strengthen the rule of law and fight corruption, while the EU is [on the verge of making a historic decision](#) on Ukraine.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenski [announced](#) the beginning of the final stage of the "big diplomatic marathon" to consider granting Ukraine EU candidate status. The process should be completed in a week and a half, during which time a large number of negotiations with European leaders are planned. Volodymyr Zelenski [stressed](#) that a possible refusal to grant Ukraine candidate status would work against Europe. Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine Ruslan Stefanchuk [said](#) that if the EU refuses to grant Ukraine candidate status, Russia will get a message that it can "move on with impunity".

The head of the European Parliament's foreign affairs committee, David McCallister, [said](#) that the European Parliament would [recommend](#) EU leaders to grant Ukraine candidate status. The foreign ministers of a number of countries also issued a joint [statement](#) calling for Ukraine to vote in favor of this status.

At the same time, the EU countries demonstrate a range of opinions on the possibility of accepting Ukraine. A number of countries are not ready to unconditionally support granting candidate status to Ukraine; an overview of the situation was prepared by [European Pravda](#).

For [France](#), it is crucial that a decision on candidate status for Ukraine not weaken the EU and not put Ukraine in a state of limbo.

[Austria](#) is ready to support granting Ukraine candidate status in the EU only on condition that the same decision will be made in relation to Moldova and the Western Balkan countries. At the same time, [Denmark](#) and the [Netherlands](#) will make a decision taking into account the opinion of the European Commission.

German Bundestag speaker Bärbel Bas [called](#) for granting Ukraine the status of an accession candidate, noting that the EU should do everything possible to ensure "as fast as the EU treaties allow" accession.

Andreas Umland, an expert at the Stockholm Center for East European Studies (SCEEUS), [stresses](#) that granting even "potential candidate" status, although Ukraine aspires to much more, could change the 30-year-old situation of international uncertainty: the security zone between the West and Russia, as well as its satellites, would become less gray.

[According to media reports](#), Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and French President Emmanuel Macron will visit Ukraine on June 16, on the eve of the European Commission's conclusion on the candidacy, to confirm the three major

European countries to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

## THE "DPR" SENTENCED TO DEATH THREE FOREIGNERS SERVING IN THE ARMED FORCES OF UKRAINE

The so-called "DPR" for the first time [sentenced](#) to death three foreigners - a Moroccan citizen and two British citizens who fought in the Armed Forces of Ukraine and were captured. The so-called "DPR" court accused them of "mercenaryism and committing acts aimed at seizing power and overthrowing the constitutional order".

The Ukrainian Armed Forces General Staff [notes](#) that all foreigners and stateless persons participating in combat operations in Ukraine have signed a contract with the Armed Forces, and therefore, according to international norms, they are subject to the legal status of combatants. At the same time, the Geneva Conventions of 1949 oblige to treat captured servicemen humanely. Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova [called](#) the convicts "mercenaries" and said that they allegedly have no right to the status of prisoners of war.

The Ukrainian Foreign Ministry [noted](#) that this "trial" in the occupied Ukrainian territories was legally null and void, adding that the Ukrainian government was making efforts to release all captive servicemen. The Prosecutor-General's Office of Ukraine [launched](#) a pre-trial investigation into this "verdict". [According to Vadym Denisenko, advisor to the Minister of Internal Affairs of Ukraine](#), the "trial" of the so-called "DPR" over foreigners who took part in military actions as part of the Ukrainian army is aimed at increasing Russia's stakes in the negotiation process.

The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) [condemned](#) and called as a war crime the death sentence that was announced in the "DPR" of three foreigners. UN Secretary General Stéphane Dujarric, a spokesman for the UN secretary general, said the organization has always opposed the death penalty in all circumstances and will continue to do so. "We call for the detained combatants to be

granted international protection and to be treated in accordance with the Geneva Conventions," he added. The secretary general of the Council of Europe [condemned](#) the sentences as contrary to pan-European human rights principles. The international human rights organization Amnesty International [called](#) the "death sentences" a farce that violates the Geneva Convention relative to the treatment of prisoners of war.

British Foreign Secretary Liz Truss [condemned](#) the actions of the occupiers and stressed that the British citizens "under sentence" were prisoners of war. The German government sharply [criticized](#) the death "sentences," saying they were a clear example of Russia's disregard for international law. U.S. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken [expressed](#) grave concern about the "sentences" of foreigners serving in the Ukrainian army, calling on Russia and its controlled forces to respect international humanitarian law, including the rights and protections afforded to prisoners of war.

## RUSSIA HOLDS MORE THAN 2,500 UKRAINIAN PRISONERS OF WAR

On June 10, the 11th prisoner-of-war exchange [took place](#), in which four Russian citizens were exchanged for five Ukrainian citizens.

The exact number of prisoners of war from either the Ukrainian or the Russian side is unknown. At the same time, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky [confirmed](#) that over 2,500 Ukrainian servicemen defending Mariupol were in captivity. Russian media [reported](#) that more than a thousand Ukrainian servicemen who surrendered in Mariupol have been transferred to the territory of the Russian Federation for investigative measures. "The head" of the so-called "DPR" [stated](#) that they will not participate in the exchange, a "tribunal" is planned and a possible death penalty ruling is possible.

Russian lawyer Nikolai Polozov, who defends citizens of Ukraine convicted in Russia, [noted](#) that such statements have nothing in common with the law, and all decisions are made in the Kremlin. At the same time, the "tribunal" is necessary for propaganda in order to demonstrate, in the absence of real military victories, some kind of achievements of Russia. He stressed that the use of torture and the death penalty against Ukrainian prisoners of war is a crime, and added that no state or international body would recognize the results of such a "tribunal. The review of the situation with Ukrainian prisoners of war is [published](#) by Hromadske.

The Commissioner for Human Rights in the Russian Federation Tatyana Moskalkova spreads [statements](#) about the alleged unwillingness of Ukrainian prisoners of war to participate in the exchange. The Ministry of Defense of Ukraine [stresses](#) that this information is untrue.

The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine [proposes](#) to amend the Criminal Code for the procedure of exchange of prisoners of war. Thus, in the bill №7436 it is proposed to close criminal proceedings and release the military from punishment if it was decided to exchange him, and send the convict to serve his sentence if the exchange did not take place.

There are also situations when military personnel after the exchange will be detained again during combat operations in Ukraine - in this case they will be sent to serve the full term of their sentence.

A [special camp](#) has been set up in western Ukraine for prisoners of war who are not to be exchanged in the near future. Minister of Justice of Ukraine Denis Maliuska notes that the conditions of detention of Russian prisoners of war comply with the norms of the Geneva Convention.

In addition, on June 8, the bodies of dead servicemen were [exchanged](#) according to the [formula](#) 58 to 50. Among others, it was possible to return the bodies of 37 dead defenders of Azovstal. In addition to the Ministry of Reintegration of the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, the Main Intelligence Directorate of the Ministry of Defense, the Security Service of Ukraine, the Ukrainian Armed Forces General Staff, and other security agencies were also involved in the operation. The process of returning the bodies of fallen Ukrainian servicemen [continues](#).

## THE SELF-ISOLATION OF RUSSIA IS REINFORCED BY LEGISLATIVE MEASURES AND PROPAGANDA

Almost half of the residents of Ukraine have relatives living in Russia, and only in 13% of discussions with residents of Ukraine they condemn the actions of the Russian authorities – this is [stated](#) in a survey conducted by the research panel "Own opinion" company research.ua. It is noted that about a quarter of acquaintances of Russians quote theses of Russian propaganda and the same number of people try to avoid discussing the topic of Russia's war against Ukraine.

The isolation of Russia from the system of international law is also increasing. For example, the State Duma [voted](#) for a bill that would make it impossible for Russia to comply with judgments of the European Court of Human Rights issued after March 15, 2022. In addition, the Russian General Prosecutor's Office will only be able to make monetary compensation payments under the ECHR judgments handed down before March 15, 2022, in rubles to accounts in Russian banks. The consequences of the adopted law for Russia are [described](#) by the Memorial Human Rights Center.

## MILITARY AID TO UKRAINE: RESULTS OF THE WEEK

German government speaker Steffen Heibach [said](#) that Germany would provide Ukraine with anti-aircraft systems, self-propelled howitzers and multiple rocket launchers, but the delivery date for the weapons is still unknown for organizational and security reasons.

[Lithuanians](#) have purchased four modern Estonian-made drones for Ukraine.

[Slovakia](#) will upgrade military equipment for Ukraine, and [Norway](#) has transferred heavy weapons to Ukraine and provided training on their use for the Ukrainian Armed Forces. [Poland](#) has signed one of the largest arms contracts with Ukraine in 30 years, an agreement worth [about \\$630 million](#).

[The U.S.](#) has given Ukraine the first billion dollars in economic support from a new \$40 billion aid package, with another \$7.5 billion coming soon. In addition, the U.S. and allies are working to provide Ukraine with anti-ship missiles and systems to strengthen the country's coastal defense, [Voice of America reported](#), citing a White House official.