

HIGHLIGHTS

RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR CHRONICLES

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RUSSIA SHIFTS TROOPS FROM EASTERN TO SOUTHERN UKRAINE

The Russian army is trying to [strengthen](#) its positions in the occupied districts of southern Ukraine by transferring part of its troops from their positions in the east to the Kherson and Zaporizhzhya oblasts. The Russian army is also moving military equipment to the borders of the [Kharkiv](#) oblast by train.

At the same time, [according](#) to the head of the regional military administration (OVA) Oleh Synyehubov, Ukrainian defense forces have liberated 23 localities in the Kharkiv oblast and the process of de-occupying the region continues. [According to](#) experts, Russia's redeployment of forces and the suspension of its offensive in the Slovyansk area, Donetsk oblast, will create an opportunity for Ukrainian forces to launch a counteroffensive on the Iziurm axis.

The shelling of these regions continues. For example, the massive strike on the night of 31 July on [Mykolaiv](#), according to city authorities, was the [heaviest](#) of the war. The number of rockets launched at the city has reached [40](#). During the shelling, the famous Ukrainian millionaire, agricultural businessman and recipient of the "Hero of Ukraine" award Oleksiy Vadatursky was [killed](#) with his wife Raisa. The rocket hit his house.

The situation in the Kherson oblast remains consistently tense. The fighting and its consequences are severe. Settlements in the region have been destroyed, infrastructure damaged, bridges and river banks have been mined and fields have been burned. On 27 July, the Armed Forces of Ukraine (ZSU) struck the [Antonivka](#) Bridge across the Dnipro in Kherson, which is of strategic importance to the Russian occupying forces, as a result of which it is [blocked](#). A total of 46 settlements have been [de-occupied](#) so far in the region. All of the liberated settlements had been badly damaged. Meduza [reports](#) on the situation in Kherson.

An update on the situation on the frontline as of the morning of 2 August can be found [here](#) and a review of the situation in the regions was prepared by [Hromadske](#).

EVACUATION FROM DONETSK REGION HAS BECOME COMPULSORY

The Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine has created a coordinating [office](#), which will organize evacuations from the Donetsk oblast. One of the aims of the evacuation is to prevent a humanitarian disaster in winter. The evacuation will be [compulsory](#): people who do not want to leave must sign a document stating that they understand the consequences of their decision. The first evacuation train has already [arrived](#) in Kropyvnytskyi (Kirovohrad Oblast) and all evacuees have been resettled.

According to Iryna Vereshchuk, head of the Ministry of Reintegration of Temporarily Occupied Territories, there are still 200-220 thousand Ukrainian citizens in the oblast, including 52 thousand children. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky also [called](#) for the evacuation of the region's residents. Seriously ill and injured residents of Ukraine can apply for medical evacuation, [according](#) to the Ukrainian Ministry of Health.

Evacuation is, as before, not always safe: for example, on 1 August in the Kherson Oblast, Russian armed forces [fired](#) an anti-tank missile system at a minibus carrying civilians who had left. In addition, some of the people leaving the temporarily occupied territories end up in Russian filtration [camps](#).

[Hromadske](#) and [Radio Svoboda](#) on what else faces people trying to leave the temporarily occupied territories.

U.S. CONFIRMS UKRAINE'S EFFECTIVE USE OF WEAPONS, AID CONTINUES

The U.S. Defense Department has [said](#) that Ukraine is "very effectively" using military weapons provided by Washington to destroy Russian command and control nodes as well as groups of enemy equipment.

The U.S. also [announced](#) a new \$550 million military aid package for Ukraine. U.S. President Joe Biden signed a memorandum allocating it to Ukraine, and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy thanked his American counterpart "for his leadership and strong support of Ukraine and understanding of the threat to the civilized world from Russia." On 1 August, four additional HIMARS multiple rocket launchers were [delivered](#) to Ukraine.

A third MARS II multiple rocket launcher system, donated by the German Ministry of Defense, [arrived](#) in Ukraine, and Germany also plans to donate 16 [bridge-laying tanks](#) to Ukraine. The country's federal government has [authorized](#) the sale of 100 Panzerhaubitze (PzH) 2000 self-propelled howitzers to Ukraine, but they will take several years to produce.

[Poland](#) is ready to transfer the first eight Crab self-propelled artillery units to Ukraine. The Baykar company will [transfer](#) the Bayraktar unmanned aerial vehicle to Ukraine free of charge, for which Polish residents raised money.

[Norway](#) has donated armored patrol vehicles to Ukraine, and [Great Britain](#) is preparing to donate two mine-resistant ships to Ukraine. [North Macedonia](#) plans to transfer tanks to Ukraine.

Hromadske [published](#) an overview of the weapons from the partners.

NEW SANCTIONS AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT AGREEMENTS

Ukraine is [aiming](#) to make a 15–20-billion-dollar deal with the International Monetary Fund by the end of the year.

European Commissioner for Energy Kadri Simson has [said](#) that as early as this week, the European Union will be able to double exports of Ukrainian electricity. Commercial trade will help Ukraine [compensate for its](#) loss of income.

The European Union has transferred one billion euros of exceptional microfinancial aid to Ukraine. The first installment of 500 million euros has already arrived in the account of the National Bank. It is part of a package of support for Ukraine to address the financial consequences of the war totalling 9 billion euros, which is aimed at financing urgent budgetary expenditure.

[Belgium](#) has frozen more than 50 billion euros worth of Russian assets. The [USA](#) has expanded its sanctions list. Active work is also being [carried out](#) inside Ukraine: the Verkhovna Rada has registered the draft resolution №7573, which proposes to impose personal sanctions against several thousand Russian citizens who are systematically and actively supporting the war against Ukraine.

RUSSIA REQUIRES EACH REGION TO FORM BATTALION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE WAR

The Russian Defense Ministry [has announced](#) a military exercise from 30 August to 5 September and stated that it is supposedly not conducting a covert mobilization. At the same time, intelligence from the Ukrainian Defense Ministry [reported](#) that Russia has been actively rolling out a campaign in which [each](#) of the [country's regions](#) has been obliged to form and fund a new battalion to participate in the war against Ukraine. This is an attempt to compensate for the losses of the Russian armed forces and avoid an unwanted declaration of mobilization. Recruitment also takes place through private military companies, [far-right associations](#), the Rosgvardia (the National Guard of Russia) and the "L/DNR".

The General Staff of the ZSU [reports](#) 41,170 killed Russian servicemen as of August 2, and [according](#) to the U.S. presidential administration, over 75,000 Russian members of the armed forces have been killed or wounded since the start of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Russian statistics have not been officially updated since March 25, but over 5,000 deaths have been [confirmed](#) from open sources alone.

Russian servicemen who refused to participate in the war are being [held](#) in camps in the territories of the so-called "L/DNR" and are being tortured and [ill-treated](#). The families of the missing servicemen have [appealed](#) to officials to find them, but they

receive no real answer, and [wounded](#) servicemen are not receiving the payments they have been promised.

Meduza [reports](#) that the Russian presidential administration has prepared new guidelines on how propaganda should talk about the war.

ORGANIZING PRISONER EXCHANGES: UKRAINE SIMPLIFIES IT, RUSSIA COMPLICATES IT

Russian prisoners of war in Ukraine [are divided](#) into two categories: those, where there is no evidence that they have committed war crimes are held until there are requests for exchange. Criminal cases are opened against those prisoners who have committed war crimes, an investigation is conducted and they are sentenced, but they can also be exchanged for Ukrainian prisoners of war. The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine [approved changes](#) to the procedure for exchanging POWs against whom a criminal case has been opened or who have been sentenced. Now, a POW is exempted from punishment, if a decision to exchange has been made.

On 29 July, the Kyiv appeals court [changed](#) the sentence of Vadim Shishimarin, the first Russian prisoner of war to be sentenced in Ukraine for a crime against a civilian. His sentence was changed from life imprisonment to 15 years in prison.

During the process of prisoner exchange, Russia pays special attention to members of the military from Chechen battalions, the Ukrainian Ministry of Justice [said](#), and residents of poor regions are least likely to be on the exchange lists. Radio Svoboda [reports](#) on how POW camps are organized in Ukraine.

DEBUNKING FAKES

RUSSIA CLAIMS SHELLING OF OLENIVKA PRISON COLONY BY UKRAINE, EXPERTS POINT TO RUSSIA'S RESPONSIBILITY

An explosion on the night of 29 July, which blew up the former penal colony in the village of Olenivka (temporarily occupied territory of the Donetsk Oblast), destroyed a building where Ukrainian prisoners of war were being held, in particular defenders of the Azovstal steelworks in Mariupol. Russian propagandists claimed that the Ukrainian Armed Forces allegedly attacked because of "testimonies" that the POWs had begun to give. It was claimed that the strike was carried out by HIMARS multiple rocket launchers, [killing](#) 50 people and wounding 73.

Claims of Russian propaganda about the attack by the ZSU on the colony in Olenivka are a fake.

The first Russian news reports that the colony was hit appeared [10 hours](#) after the attack, citing [information](#) from the so-called "DNR," from which it followed that the shelling was not from the HIMARS system. The American Institute for War Studies (ISW) [noted](#) that the fire damage in Olenivka, shown by the Russian propaganda news agency RIA Novosti, was not the sort caused by the HIMARS, and there was no confirmation that footage of HIMARS missile fragments had been found in Olenivka.

The General Staff of the ZSU [stated](#) that the killing of prisoners had been deliberately carried out by the Russian military in order to accuse Ukraine of committing "war crimes" and also to cover up the torture of prisoners. They also confirmed that the ZSU had not launched rocket and artillery strikes near the village of Olenivka.

Mykhailo Podolyak, head adviser to the President of Ukraine, [stressed](#) that there were no operational military targets for the Ukrainian army in Olenivka, and the scale and speed of the Russian propaganda campaign indicated that it was a planned Russian action.

According to Ukrainian officials, the shelling is only one version of what happened; another version is that an explosive device went off. A joint [statement](#) from the Ukrainian security services described the incident in the colony as a terrorist act, a military provocation and a classic false flag operation to cover up war crimes, discredit the ZSU, disrupt supplies of Western weapons and increase social tension in Ukrainian society. According to the information obtained by the Security Service of Ukraine, intercepted telephone conversations confirm the responsibility of the Russian armed forces for the explosions in the prison colony.

[According](#) to Ukrainian intelligence, Ukrainian POWs were transferred to the building, where the explosion was heard, several days ago. Its purpose is described as to "conceal the facts of the total embezzlement of funds allocated for the maintenance of Ukrainian prisoners of war", as well as increasing social tension in Ukraine. The mercenaries of PMC Wagner and its owner Yevgeny Prigozhin are said to be responsible for its organization, and the bombing was not coordinated with the Russian Ministry of Defense. Also noteworthy is the statement of the so-called "Ombudsman" of the so-called "DNR," which [reported](#) that only prisoners were affected by the explosion in Olenivka.

The Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine [launched](#) an investigation into the violation of the laws and customs of war. International experts who cooperate with the Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine [noted](#) in their preliminary conclusions that the fire was caused by thermobaric weapons. The Coordinating Office for the Treatment of Prisoners of War [demanded](#) that Russia provide lists of the dead and wounded, return the bodies for proper burial and provide medical assistance to the victims. The Ombudsman for Human Rights in Ukraine reported that the Russian armed forces [agreed](#) to return the bodies of the dead "upon completion of the investigation." Ukraine currently has [no](#) confirmed lists of the prisoners killed in Olenivka.

The Ukrainian human rights organization Media Initiative for Human Rights [has been trying](#) to establish the circumstances of the explosion. According to their sources, there was no shelling of the prison colony's territory on 28 July. They see that it was an explosion that was the cause of the destruction and the deaths of prisoners.

Analysts from the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) have stated that Russia was responsible for the strike on the prison colony in Olenivka. According to satellite images [published](#) by the American company Maxar Technologies before and after the explosions in the colony, only one building was damaged in the attack, and its walls were not destroyed and there were no shell craters around it. This indicates that the destruction of the prison was the result of either a single point of impact or an explosion inside the colony, writes ISW. Military experts point out that if Ukraine

attacked Olenivka with other weapons, the satellite images would also show collateral damage, including craters and damaged buildings. [Politico](#) cited two U.S. officials as saying that according to the U.S. assessment, no traces of a HIMARS strike were found on the territory of the colony. As one of the newspaper's sources noted, the data indicates that Kyiv was not responsible for the attack.

In addition, Bellingcat and other open source data experts have [noted](#) that a large number of graves were dug a few days before the events in Olenivka.

The Insider notes that part of the propaganda discourse regarding the situation in Olenivka also features claims that Western countries are allegedly keeping silent about what is happened, and the publication [refutes](#) these claims.

The EU [condemned](#) Russian atrocities and stressed that those responsible for war crimes will be brought to justice. The UN has expressed its [willingness](#) to send experts to investigate. The Latvian Foreign Minister has [called](#) for the European Union to designate Russia a state sponsor of terrorism.

The Russian Defense Ministry [stated](#) that “in the interests of an objective investigation,” UN and ICRC experts were invited to visit the POW colony, but the Red Cross [stressed](#) that Russia did not allow their representatives into the colony.

A few hours after the news of the explosions, the Russian embassy in Great Britain posted on its social networks stating that Ukrainian prisoners of war from the Azov battalion deserved the death penalty.

The Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs [stressed](#) that Russian diplomats were complicit in war crimes and should also be held responsible.

Relatives of Ukrainian POWs [called](#) on the international community to respond to the terrorist attack on the Olenivka prison colony and [recognize](#) Russia as a state sponsor of terrorism.