

HIGHLIGHTS

RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR CHRONICLES

No.108, 23-29 August, 2022



UKRAINE ANNOUNCES COUNTEROFFENSIVE IN THE SOUTH

The Kakhovka task force of the Armed Forces of Ukraine [announced](#) on August 29 that the AFU had broken through the first line of defence in the Kherson Oblast, launching an offensive in many directions in the south of the country. The [situation](#) in the temporarily occupied territory of the Kherson Oblast is not easy, earlier the AFU had destroyed practically all major bridges with HIMARS missile attacks and the Russian army was cut off from supplies of weapons and personnel from the territory of Crimea. CNN, citing US officials, [noted](#) that the AFU is creating conditions for a “serious counteroffensive”.

According to a [statement](#) by the Ukrainian Minister of Defence Oleksii Reznikov, the “worst-case scenario” of the war has past and the Ukrainian armed forces are at the stage of stabilizing the whole frontline. He believes that Ukraine is on the threshold of a new phase of the war with the beginning of the counteroffensive campaign, and one of the main threats is the risk of “fatigue syndrome” in the international community.

HIGHEST NUMBER OF AIR-RAID ALARMS ON INDEPENDENCE DAY IN UKRAINE

On Ukraine's Independence Day, August 24, 189 air-raid sirens were [sounded](#) in Ukraine, the highest number since the full-scale Russian invasion began. 58 inhabited areas were [attacked](#). The largest attack was on the [Chaplyne](#) railway station (Dnipropetrovsk Oblast), where four passenger carriages caught fire as a result of the shelling. At least 25 people were [killed](#) and 31 wounded.

The Russian Ministry of Defence [alleged](#) the attack had destroyed a military train and 10 pieces of military equipment and killed more than 200 Ukrainian military personnel. However, a reporter from [The Associated Press](#) found no evidence of claims that Ukrainian soldiers were among those killed in the Russian missile strike, while confirming that there were children among the casualties.

The UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Ukraine Denise Brown [said](#) that civilians and civilian infrastructure must be protected during war and called on "all parties without exception to adhere in good faith to their obligations under international humanitarian law," without mentioning who exactly was behind the Chaplyne strikes. Her position was [criticized](#) by the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry.

After a one-day pause and reconstruction works at the Chaplyne railway station after the shelling, Ukrzaliznytsia (Ukrainian Railways) [resumed](#) the evacuation of people from the territory of Donbas.

Since the compulsory evacuation began on August 2, and as of August 26, 9,606 people, including 1,785 children, have [left](#) the Donetsk Oblast. A total of [75%](#) of residents have been evacuated from the region, with about 350,000 residents remaining in the Ukrainian-controlled part of the region. Hromadske collected [data](#) about the mandatory evacuation. Minister of Reintegration of Temporarily Occupied Territories of Ukraine Iryna Vereshchuk [said](#) that residents of part of the Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia and Mykolaiv Oblasts are in line to begin mandatory evacuation.

SECOND SUMMIT OF THE CRIMEA PLATFORM

The second summit of the Crimea Platform, which was held on August 23 online, was [attended](#) by 60 countries. In their final [statement](#), they condemned the annexation of the peninsula by Russia and noted the importance of restoring Ukraine's territorial integrity. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that the return of Crimea to Ukraine would be the biggest anti-war step in Europe, and Ukraine is already strong enough for this return.

The Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine will soon hold [hearings](#) on a strategy for the de-occupation and reintegration of Crimea.

Ukrainian Prime Minister Denis Shmyhal [said](#) that Ukraine estimates losses from the temporary occupation of Crimea to be \$118 billion.



DISCUSSIONS ON VISA RESTRICTIONS AND NEW SANCTIONS CONTINUE

The heads of foreign affairs committees of the parliaments of seven EU member states - Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland, Poland, the Czech Republic and Denmark - issued a joint [statement](#) calling for new sanctions against Russia.

In particular, the European Union is preparing to complicate and raise the cost of travel for Russian citizens, the Financial Times [reported](#). [It is known](#) that at the informal meeting of EU foreign ministers, the Czech Republic's proposal to completely suspend the agreements on a simplified visa regime with Russia and Belarus will be discussed, but no official decision will be made - it will take at least a few weeks to prepare. At the same time the governments of Germany and France stood together [against](#) a visa ban for all Russians to enter the EU - they presented their respective position to the EU ministers meeting in Prague on August 30 and 31. Hungary has [no plans](#) to restrict visas for Russians and opposes new sanctions. The idea of a total visa ban is [not supported](#) by Josep Borrell, head of the European Union Foreign Affairs Office.



Photo: HIMARS rocket system/[Wikimedia](#)

U.S. GIVES UKRAINE BIGGEST MILITARY AID TRANCHE

U.S. President Joe Biden has agreed a new \$6 billion aid package for Ukraine: three billion for [defence](#) assistance and three for [financial](#) assistance through the World Bank. The new military funding will be [aimed](#) at helping Ukraine secure its medium- and long-term defence. This is the largest single tranche that the U.S. has allocated to support Ukraine's defence. Among other things, the package [includes](#) six additional NASAMS surface-to-air missile systems with munitions to destroy Russian cruise missiles.

The US Army has also awarded a [contract](#) to a military-industrial corporation to develop these surface-to-air missile systems, and they are expected to be handed over to Ukraine.

In addition, the U.S. presidential administration is [reportedly](#) planning to give an official name to the military assistance mission to Ukraine in the coming weeks and appoint a general in charge of supplying aid and training to the Ukrainian military, which may indicate a long-term funding plan.

The U.S. Department of Defense has [expanded](#) the use of naval vessels for the delivery of

weapons to Ukraine – the ships can carry much more cargo, allowing Ukraine to build a larger arsenal for future combat operations.

Britain [announced](#) a new £54 million aid package for Ukraine, including that Ukraine will receive 850 handheld microdrones, which the British will buy together with Norway. Britain will also [give](#) Ukraine underwater drones that will defuse Russian mines in waters near the Ukrainian coast. [Slovakia](#) plans to transfer infantry fighting vehicles to Ukraine. The Office of the President of Ukraine also [expects](#) the transfer of Western air defence systems as early as this autumn - in particular, [Germany](#) has confirmed its readiness to do so.

At the same time, they have noticed signs of the activation of Russian spies after the United States and Germany announced the training of the Ukrainian military in the use of Western weapons, as [reported](#) by Der Spiegel.

IAEA HAS SENT DELEGATION TO THE ZAPORIZHZHIA NPP

On August 23, the UN Security Council again held a meeting on security at the seized Zaporizhzhia NPP, convened by Russia to blame Ukraine. However, during the meeting, Russia's actions were severely criticized, particularly by [Norway](#) and [Ireland](#), in addition to Sergei Kyslytsya, Ukraine's permanent representative to the UN, [stressing](#) that the entire world demands that Russian troops withdraw from the NPP and return it to Ukraine's control.

On August 25, the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP) was completely [disconnected](#) from the power grid for the first time in its history. This was due to shelling by the Russian armed forces, which caused [fires](#) in the [ash pits](#) of the Zaporizhzhia thermal power plant, located next to the plant. [Backup](#) diesel generators were working at the plant. A day later, [two power units](#) were restored, and Zaporizhzhia NPP continues to operate in the Ukrainian energy system.

After the Zaporizhzhia NPP was completely disconnected from the power grid, IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi announced the need to urgently visit the plant. The IAEA assembled a group of [experts](#) for the visit, most of them from “neutral countries” that did not support either side in Russia's war against Ukraine or maintained contacts with Russia. On August 29, the delegation [went](#) to the ZNPP - it is [expected](#) that the inspection could take place by September 5. The involvement of safety experts will allow the IAEA to assess the consequences of the ZNPP shelling and potentially use the findings to bring those responsible to justice. It is unclear whether Russia will openly or overtly oppose the visit. On August 26, during the UN conference on revising the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, Russia [blocked](#) the adoption of the final declaration because its draft [criticized](#) the occupation of the Zaporizhzhia NPP by the Russian military.

ANTI-WAR PROTESTS IN RUSSIA

Russian authorities continue their unprecedented crackdown on the anti-war movement: Meduza and OVD-Info presented a [report](#) about six months of repression against media and civil society who protest against the war effort. According to the publication, at least 16,437 arrests were made in connection with anti-war protests between February 24 and August 17. 224 people were involved in criminal anti-war cases and 3,780 in administrative cases for discrediting the army.

DEBUNKING FAKES

RUSSIAN MEDIA CLAIMS PENSIONERS BEING MOBILIZED BY UKRAINE, SILENT ON HIDDEN MOBILIZATION IN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Reports are circulating in the Russian media ([1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#)) that the AFU is planning to mobilize pensioners. The reports cite the former Chairman of the Foreign Intelligence Service of Ukraine, Mykola Malomuzh, who allegedly stated this in an interview.

These allegations are a fake – Ukraine is not mobilizing pensioners and this was not discussed in the interview.

In the [interview](#) with Mykola Malomuzh, it was about the mobilization of military reserves to prepare for a counterattack: “Now we need to prepare a strategic offensive. And for this purpose we have to prepare very powerful reserves. I emphasize once again that we are mobilizing a very large number of military personnel, especially those in the reserves with military experience.” According to Ukrainian [legislation](#), military reserve conscripts are “citizens who are fit for military service on health grounds in peacetime or wartime and have not reached the age limit for being in the reserves”, and the age limit for being in the reserves depends on the military rank. During martial law, citizens aged 18 to 60 years old can be [mobilized](#), and in the case of high-ranking officers - up to 65 years old. And the [retirement](#) age for men is 60 years old provided the minimum number of pension insurance contributions have been made.

Thus, the pension age and the age limit for staying in the reserves are the same. The spread of this fake news by Russia's propaganda media probably aims to distract the audience's attention from the hidden mobilization in Russia and its expenditure on the war.

Thus, Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a [decree](#) to increase the Russian army by 137,000 troops to 1.15 million personnel. The changes are to take effect from 2023.

However, according to analysts from the American [Institute](#) for the Study of War (ISW) and British [intelligence](#), this new policy will not significantly increase the combat power of the Russian army and most likely indicates the unlikelihood of a full mobilization order.

[According](#) to the Chief Directorate of Intelligence of the Ukrainian Defence Ministry, Russia is increasing its mobilization reserves and plans to mobilize about 90,000 additional servicemen in the near future.

As [estimated](#) by Forbes, within the 6 months since the beginning of the full-scale invasion, Russia has lost more than 12 thousand pieces of equipment amounting to a total of \$16.6 billion.



To receive news about the Russian-Ukrainian war subscribe [HERE](#).

This newsletter is a product of the international civil society platform CivilMPlus and is prepared within a project “Dialogue for understanding and justice: Strengthening civil society's contribution to conflict management, democratic and regional development and the preparation of safe reintegration in eastern Ukraine”. The project is implemented with the financial support of the German Federal Foreign Office.