

## HIGHLIGHTS

# RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR CHRONICLES

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### OVERCOMING RUSSIA'S WAR AGAINST UKRAINE: STRENGTHENING LINKS BETWEEN POLITICAL DECISION MAKERS AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS IN EUROPE

On November 15-16, the fourth Forum organized by the international civil society platform CivilMPlus was held in Berlin. The central theme of the forum was Russia's war against Ukraine, and the participants paid special attention to the problems and possibilities of strengthening ties between political stakeholders and civil society organizations for a more effective way of dealing with the aggressive war unleashed by Russia.

Among the politicians at the forum were Maksym Yemelyanov, Ukraine's Deputy Ambassador to Germany, Matthias Lüttenberg, a representative of the German Foreign Office and Alexander Slotty, State Secretary for Education, Office of the Mayor of Berlin. From Ukraine, the Head of the War Department of the Office of the Prosecutor General Yuriy Belousov, as well as the Chairperson of the Ukrainian delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe Maria Mezentseva were able to join online. From Brussels, the European politicians Georg Ziegler from the European Commission's Support Group for Ukraine and the deputy head of the Ukraine Unit, representing the EU External Relations Office participated. They all expressed a willingness to cooperate with civil society representatives to work together to overcome the war and to further the reconstruction of Ukraine. The speakers noted that with a difficult winter approaching, the need for unity and cooperation seems even more urgent.

While in European public discourse there are still frequent debates about the necessity and possibility of arms supplies for Ukraine, during the forum many participants repeatedly and unequivocally expressed their support for arms supplies as the only possible tool for resistance against the aggressor. This idea was most directly and clearly expressed by the Ukrainian Deputy Ambassador to Germany, Maksym Yemelyanov: "The best humanitarian aid to Ukraine right now is weapons."

The idea of financial and military support for Ukraine is also advocated by Ukrainian civil society representatives, and their merits and successes were noted by the speakers of the first panel. Oleksandra Matviychuk of the Center for Civil Liberties, this year's Nobel Peace Prize laureate, noted in her welcome speech that Russia's current aggression is directed not only against Ukraine, but against democracy and freedom for all, which means that the fight against the aggressor must be fought together too.

Civil society representatives from other countries – Germany, France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Poland, Slovakia and Russia – were also participants and speakers at the forum. They were able to share their specific expertise and knowledge in a series of roundtables on specialized topics related to the war. Separate discussions on the second day focused on the documentation of war crimes in Ukraine, the situation of Ukrainian society during wartime, life under Russian occupation, Russia's destructive influence on European society, the international presence of Ukraine, the involvement of the Baltic States and the Visegrad Group in supporting Ukraine, and the environmental disaster caused by the war. One of the round tables on the second day was held in an experimental playback theatre format, which was devoted to reflecting on people's lives during war.

In parallel with the start of the conference, an exhibition of artistic comic strips on the lives of activists during Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine opened. The comics were based on the real stories of 14 people who had just started or rebuilt their work in response to the new challenges of war. The inspiring stories of ordinary people facing war can be read in the published [collection](#) in English.

## RUSSIAN TROOPS HAVE LOST OVER 85,000

The Ukrainian military has reached the coast of the Dnipro, allowing it to [control](#) territory close to the Russian-occupied Crimean Peninsula. Russian armed forces aircraft make almost daily [flights](#) in Belarusian airspace, including an aircraft that can carry Kinzhal hypersonic missiles capable of hitting targets throughout Ukraine.

[According](#) to the General Staff of the AFU, the command of the Russian armed forces plans to relocate certain units withdrawn from the right bank of Kherson Oblast to continue combat operations in Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts.

At the same time, the AFU note that there is [no question](#) of a broad Russian offensive, despite the rocket [attacks](#) and heavy [fighting](#) in Donbas.

According to the General Staff of the AFU, Russian troops continue to suffer losses: [as of](#) the morning of November 22, around 85,000 in total. Russia has also lost more than 8000 pieces of [equipment](#) since the start of the full-scale invasion.

## RESTORATION OF KHERSON OBLAST AFTER DE-OCCUPATION

In the de-occupied Kherson Oblast, work continues to restore electricity and communications and 13 humanitarian aid centres have been opened. Hromadske [reports](#) on the humanitarian situation there. The Ukrainian government has [allocated](#) 100 million hryvnia for the restoration of the region. The railway connection with Kherson has been [restored](#). Voluntary [evacuation](#) from the liberated territories of Kherson and Mykolaiv

Oblasts to safer regions of the country has begun, with all related costs being covered by the state.

The documentation of war crimes committed during the occupation of the Kherson Oblast continues. More than 460 of them have already been documented and 11 [places of detention](#) organized by the Russian armed forces have been found in the de-occupied territory of the region, of which at least four premises were used for [torture](#). [Hundreds of people](#), including [minors](#), were reportedly held there. At least 63 people were [killed](#) after being tortured. A [report](#) on the organization of the investigations is published by the forensic journalism portal Graty.

## NATO RECOGNIZES RUSSIA AS A TERRORIST STATE

The NATO Parliamentary Assembly has [recognized](#) Russia as a terrorist state and called for the creation of an international tribunal. The resolution also includes clauses on increasing arms supplies to Ukraine and developing concrete steps for its accession to NATO.

The resolution was supported by all 30 of the alliance's member states. The head of Ukraine's permanent delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Yehor Cherniev, [noted](#) that a tribunal would mean that not only the perpetrators of war crimes, but also the country's top leadership to be condemned.

## ABOUT HALF OF UKRAINE'S POWER SYSTEM DOWN, INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS INVOLVED IN RESTORATION

The restoration of critical infrastructure damaged by a series of targeted Russian attacks continues. As of the evening of November 17, more than [10 million](#) Ukrainian residents were without electricity due to scheduled and emergency blackouts as a result of shelling. Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal [stated](#) that almost 50% of Ukraine's energy system was out of service. At the same time however, the situation with the power supply [is not](#) an emergency: the Ministry of Energy of Ukraine [noted](#) that it is difficult, but manageable. [According](#) to energy experts, the blackout regime may last until March 2023.

[The EU](#) will provide Ukraine with additional energy equipment and emergency aid, including energy supplies, materials for shelter, first aid supplies, protective clothing, firefighting equipment, tankers and buses. Almost 2500 generators have already arrived from [Germany](#). [According](#) to Ukraine's economic minister, partners plan to allocate \$17 billion next year to rebuild its destroyed infrastructure, including roads, bridges and energy facilities. [Politico](#) and [The New York Times](#) report on Ukraine's energy recovery.

## RESULTS OF THE RAMSTEIN GROUP'S MEETING AND OTHER MILITARY ASSISTANCE

On November 16, the seventh meeting of the Ukraine Defense Contact Group (the so-called Ramstein format) was held. Ukrainian Defense Minister Oleksiy Reznikov [called](#) the development of an integrated and echeloned Ukrainian air defense system the main topic of the meeting. At the end of the meeting, Ukraine's partner countries pledged new [aid](#)

packages. [Sweden](#) is giving a \$287 million aid package, which includes air defense systems, Spain is giving two more Hawk launchers and missiles, Canada is giving a \$500 million aid package, Germany is giving Ukraine air defense systems, artillery and ammunition for MLRS, Greece is giving Ukraine ammunition, and Poland is giving Ukraine artillery, ammunition and short-range air defense.

In addition, the United States, the Netherlands and the Czech Republic are working together to modernize 90 tanks for Ukraine.

U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin [stressed](#) that the allied countries also intend to maintain the momentum of aid during the winter so that Ukraine can continue to intercept the initiative on the battlefield.

Also, in addition to the Ramstein commitments, [Canada](#) will provide about \$34 million in military aid to Ukraine, these funds will be used to continue providing satellite imagery, high-resolution drone cameras and winter gear. [Great Britain](#) will provide anti-aircraft units and radar stations to counter kamikaze drones, as well as long-range [missiles](#). [Germany](#) has provided Ukraine with additional anti-aircraft ammunition and armoured vehicles, [France](#) with two Crotale short-range surface-to-air missile systems and two multiple rocket launchers, and [Luxembourg](#) with off-road vehicles. [Lithuania](#) is donating ammunition to Ukraine and expanding its training program for Ukrainian soldiers, while its civil society has raised funds for another [maritime drone](#) for the Ukrainian Special Maritime Forces.

A new aid package of more than 55 million euros has been announced by [Finland](#). And [Israel](#) has agreed to fund strategic materials to assist Ukraine's military efforts. Haaretz notes that a payment of several million dollars was transferred to a NATO member state, and then that country purchased strategic materials and sent them to Ukraine.

## RUSSIA HAS LOST 90% OF THE EUROPEAN OIL MARKET

[The EU](#) plans to introduce a price cap on Russian oil by December 5, completing the relevant regulations, said European Commissioner for Energy Policy Kadri Simson. In this case, Bloomberg [wrote](#) that Russia has lost 90% of the key European oil market even before the embargo – the country's weekly income from oil trade fell to its lowest level since early January. It is planned that at the end of November, the EU will present a new package of [sanctions](#) against Russia and Belarus. In addition, the EU has [frozen 68 billion](#) euros worth of Russian assets since the full-scale invasion began and is exploring legal options to confiscate them.

## MISSILE CRASH IN POLAND DURING RUSSIA'S MISSILE STRIKES ON UKRAINE: THE PROGRESS OF THE INVESTIGATION

On November 15, during a large-scale Russian missile attack on Ukraine, a missile fell on the village of Przewodow in Poland. Two people were killed as a result of the explosion. Poland's Foreign Ministry initially [said](#) the missile was Russian-made, but there was no exact information as to who [launched](#) it, and after consultations with international partners

in Poland [noted](#) that there was no evidence that the missile was launched by the Russian armed forces.

The Russian Defense Ministry [stated](#) that the missile could not be Russian because there had allegedly been “no strikes on targets near the Ukrainian-Polish border by Russian weapons,” and described the incident as a provocation to escalate the situation.

Three unnamed U.S. officials later [told](#) The Associated Press that preliminary reports suggested that a Ukrainian air defense missile had fallen in Poland in an attempt to shoot down a Russian missile.

NATO [stressed](#) that preliminary reports say it was a Ukrainian air defense missile, but that it was not Ukraine's fault: responsibility lies with Russia, which is fighting the war. Any measures may be taken after the investigation is completed. The [US](#) issued a similar statement, noting that Ukraine had the right to defend itself against an attack on it.

Ukraine [is trying](#) to establish all the details of the explosion in the Polish border village, and its specialists were allowed to investigate the circumstances.

The Office of the President of Poland [said](#) it did not consider the explosion an attack, but an accident, and the incident did not cause tension between Kyiv and Warsaw. For the time being, they [decided](#) not to apply Article 4 of the NATO treaty, which states that joint consultations should be held in case of a threat to the territorial integrity or security of any of the member states.

## THE “GRAIN AGREEMENT” HAS BEEN EXTENDED

The “grain initiative” has been [extended](#) for another 120 days. The UN and Turkey are still guarantors of its implementation. Ukraine’s [proposal](#) to extend it for one year and to add the port of Mykolaiv to it is also under consideration. Since its signing in July 2022, the initiative has [shipped](#) about 11 million tonnes of grain from Ukrainian ports.

## DEBUNKING FAKES

### RUSSIA CLAIMS THAT THE COURT IN THE HAGUE ALLEGEDLY FAILED TO CONFIRM ITS INVOLVEMENT IN THE CRASH OF FLIGHT MH17

On November 17, the District Court in The Hague announced the [verdict](#) in the case of the Boeing flight MH17, which was shot down in the skies over Donbas in 2014. Despite the availability of the court’s [text](#) online and the unambiguous nature of the judgments it contains, Russian media stated that “the crash of MH17 was [not directly linked](#) to Russia,” and that “the court found Ukraine to be the main [culprit](#).” All these claims are false.

The Russian citizens Igor Girkin, Sergey Dubinsky, and the Ukrainian citizen Leonid Kharchenko were found guilty. They were sentenced to life imprisonment, and must pay compensation of more than 16 million euros to the relatives of the victims.

The court also acknowledged that Russia had controlled the so-called “DPR” since at least May 2014, many of its then leaders had Russian citizenship, experience in the Russian armed forces, close ties with Russia, and, in particular, regular contacts with high-ranking

officials of the Russian Federation. It was also noted that the plane was shot down from a Buk surface-to-air missile system from the territory of Russian-occupied Pervomaiskyi.

“The court therefore concludes that the Russian Federation gave the DPR financial assistance, provided and trained troops and supplied arms and other goods. From mid-May 2014 onwards, the Russian Federation furthermore had a decisive influence on appointments in senior positions within the DPR and was involved in coordinating military actions as well as in performing military actions on Ukrainian territory,” the judgment states. The court clearly outlined Russia's role in what happened and stressed its responsibility for shooting down MH17.

The Russian Foreign Ministry [rejected](#) the verdict and called it a political order. The media of the country [point out](#) that the convicted Russian citizens will not be extradited to the Netherlands. Thus, the dissemination of such fake statements about the Hague court judgment is part of the Russian narrative about the country's alleged non-involvement in the events in Donbas.

The Ukrainian Foreign Ministry called the court's judgment “a landmark event on the way to establishing justice and ensuring the inevitability of punishment for the crimes committed,” and stressed that Russia will also bear responsibility because its transfer of the Buk complex to the so-called “DPR” is a violation of international law.

“The transportation of the lethal weapons into Ukrainian territory is one of the key pieces of evidence in Ukraine's lawsuit against Russia, which is currently being considered by the UN International Court of Justice,” the Foreign Ministry stressed. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy [said](#) that those who ordered the crime should also be convicted.

The court in The Hague may announce additional [results](#) of the investigation about the members of the team that led the Buk launcher and those who let it come from Russia to Ukraine in spring 2023.