

**Humanitarian aspect:**

**As of the morning of September 21, 2022, more than 1,155 Ukrainian children are victims of full-scale armed aggression by the Russian Federation**, Prosecutor General's Office reports. The official number of children who have died and been wounded in the course of the Russian aggression is 391, and more than 764 children, respectively. However, the data is not conclusive since data collection continues in the areas of active hostilities, temporarily occupied areas, and liberated territories.

Head of the President's Office, Andriy Yermak, confirmed that **215 Ukrainian heroes were returned from Russian captivity in the POW exchange**. Among them are 124 officers and 108 soldiers of "Azov."

According to preliminary reports, the exchange took place in Chernihiv Oblast, bringing home to Ukraine defenders of Azovstal. The list includes the head of the patrol police of Mariupol, Mykhailo Vershynin, Kateryna "Ptashka" Polishchuk, Denys "Radis" Prokopenko, Dmytro "Volyna" Volontyrets, Svyatoslav "Kalyna" Palamar, Dmytro "Orest" Kozytskyi (the press officer of the "Azov" regiment, whose photos have gone viral all over the world). Also, among released are 10 foreigners who fought for Ukraine and were threatened with death penalty [by Russian/proxy forces]. They are already in the city of Riyadh.

President Zeleskyy said that five commanders who defended Mariupol will remain in Turkey until the end of the war under the personal protectorate of Turkish President Recep Erdogan.

According to preliminary reports, Ukrainian defenders were exchanged for some Russian POWs captured during the Kharkiv retreat and Russian pilots. According to media reports, Ukraine exchanged Viktor Medvedchuk for defenders of Azovstal.

During the past day, the Russian military shelled **Zaporizhzhya Oblast** (Zaporizhzhya and Polohy districts). As a result, 23 objects of civil infrastructure were damaged. 3 injured civilians in Zaporizhzhya were reported.

"Energoatom" reported that the Russians again shelled the Zaporizhzhya NPP at night. As a result, the communication equipment of power unit No. 6 was damaged, and its unit transformer and auxiliary transformers were turned off. The diesel generators of the power unit are switched off and transferred to the alternation mode.

In **Sumy Oblast**, Russian forces fired 13 artillery shells at the Esman community of Russia last night. No civilian victims were reported.

The Russians continue to shell along the entire front line in **Donetsk Oblast**, from the border with the Zaporizhzhya Oblast to the border with Luhansk Oblast. The Volnovaha, Pokrovsk (12

wounded), and Bakhmut districts of the Oblast were under fire. A football field was destroyed in Bakhmut. In Toretsk, the administration building was damaged due to the enemy artillery fire.

During September 20-21, the enemy shelled Mykolaiv (1 wounded) and Bashtan districts of the **Mykolayiv Oblast**. A critical infrastructure facility was damaged in Shevchenkove and a power line in Yavkino.

Around 2:00 a.m., the enemy struck the Kholodnohirsky district of **Kharkiv** - 1 wounded. Two residential high-rise buildings were damaged. According to the city mayor Igor Terekhov, people were blocked at one building due to the strike; Emergency Service rescued 10 people. Additionally, an industrial building was partially destroyed.

During the past day, the enemy shelled villages of **Kharkiv Oblast**, close to the borders with the Russian Federation and the contact line. In Hrushivka, two killed and ten injured civilians, including 4 children, were reported.

In **Dnipropetrovsk Oblast**, the Russians shelled the residential quarters of Nikopol (1 injured) and Kryvyi Rih districts at night. In Nikopol, more than 20 high-rise apartment buildings and private houses, cars, gas and power lines, a local bakery, a kindergarten, a library, and several shops were damaged.

In the afternoon of September 21, Russians shelled Nikopol (1 dead, 2 wounded) and Synelnykiv districts again; they hit an infrastructure facility and an agricultural enterprise, head of Dnipropetrovsk military administration, Valentyn Reznichenko, said.

In the liberated Cossacha Lopan in the **Kharkiv Oblast**, two more Russian torturers [chambers] were found. They were arranged in the basements of the station and the store.

Bodies of 320 civilians and 18 military of the Armed Forces of Ukraine were exhumed in **Izium**. According to the Ukrainian media, the prosecutor of the Kharkiv region Oleksandr Filchakov and the head of the district administration, Stepan Maselsky, most of the bodies with mine-explosive injuries. Also, very many with numerous bone fractures. Some have been tortured.

The SBU detained a group of Kyiv residents who were handing over the positions of the thermal power plant to the enemy to disrupt the heating season.

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### **Operational situation**

*It is the 210th day of the strategic air-ground offensive operation of the Russian Armed Forces against Ukraine (in the official terminology of the Russian Federation – "operation to protect Donbas"). The enemy continues to concentrate its efforts on establishing full control over the territory of Donetsk Oblast, organizing defense and maintaining control over the captured territories, and disrupting intensive actions of the Ukrainian troops in certain directions.*

*The enemy fired at the positions of the Ukrainian Defense Forces along the contact line. Russian military takes measures to regroup troops in different directions, deploys reserves, and conducts aerial reconnaissance.*

Over the past day, the Russian military launched 8 missile strikes and 35 air strikes, and carried out more than 120 rounds of MLRS fire at targets on the territory of Ukraine, in violation of the norms of international humanitarian law and laws and customs of war. The infrastructure of over 50 Ukrainian towns and villages was damaged, including Oskil, Slovyansk, Siversk, Oleksandrivka, Soledar, Bakhmut, Velyka Novosilka, Vremivka, Vuhledar, Stepne, Zaporizhzhya, Nikopol, and Ochakiv. By striking at the city of Mykolaivka, the enemy tried to hit the Slovyansk TPP. Russian shelling was also recorded in the areas of Zalizniy Mist, Mykhailove, and Huta-Studenetska in Chernihiv Oblast and Sosnivka, Holyshivske, Yunakivka, and Turya in Sumy Oblast. The threat of Russian air and missile strikes throughout the territory of Ukraine persists.

Forced mobilization of local residents continues in the temporarily occupied parts of Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts to replenish the personnel losses of the units of the Russian forces. The Russian occupation forces detained men of conscription age and sent them to assembly points to be dispatched as replenishment to the units that had suffered losses in battles with the Ukrainian Defense Forces.

During the past 24 hours, the Ukrainian Air Force carried out more than 20 strikes on the Russian positions, hitting 19 areas of Russian manpower and military equipment concentration and two anti-aircraft missile systems positions. In addition, Ukrainian air defense units destroyed one Su-25 and four enemy UAVs.

Over the past day, Ukrainian missile forces and artillery have hit 40 enemy targets, including 20 areas of Russian personnel, weapons, and military equipment concentration, 13 artillery firing positions, and 7 ammunition depots.

**The morale and psychological state of the personnel of the invasion forces remain low.**

#### **Kharkiv direction**

- *Zolochiv-Balakleya section: approximate length of combat line - 147 km, number of BTGs of the RF Armed Forces - 10-12, the average width of the combat area of one BTG - 13.3 km;*
- *Deployed enemy BTGs: 26th, 153rd, and 197th tank regiments, 245th motorized rifle regiment of the 47th tank division, 6th and 239th tank regiments, 228th motorized rifle regiment of the 90th tank division, 1st motorized rifle regiment, 1st tank regiment of the 2nd motorized rifle division, 25th and 138th separate motorized rifle brigades of the 6th Combined Arms Army, 27th separate motorized rifle brigade of the 1st Tank Army, 275th and 280th motorized rifle regiments, 11th tank regiment of the 18th motorized rifle division of the 11 Army Corps, 7th motorized rifle regiment of the 11th Army Corps, 80th separate motorized rifle brigade of the 14th Army Corps, 2nd and 45th separate SOF brigades of the Airborne Forces, 1st Army Corps of so-called DPR, PMCs.*

The Russian forces shelled the positions of the Ukrainian troops with tanks, mortars, barrel and rocket artillery in the areas of Veterynarne, Hoptivka, Hlyboke, Derhachi, Hrushivka, Kupyansk, and Kamianka.

### **Kramatorsk direction**

- *Balakleya - Siversk section: approximate length of the combat line - 184 km, the number of BTGs of the RF Armed Forces - 17-20, the average width of the combat area of one BTG - 9.6 km;*
- *252nd and 752nd motorized rifle regiments of the 3rd motorized rifle division, 1st, 13th, and 12th tank regiments, 423rd motorized rifle regiment of the 4th tank division, 201st military base, 15th, 21st, 30th separate motorized rifle brigades of the 2nd Combined Arms Army, 35th, 55th and 74th separate motorized rifle brigades of the 41st Combined Arms Army, 3rd and 14th separate SOF brigades, 2nd and 4th separate motorized rifle brigades of the 2nd Army Corps, 7th separate motorized rifle brigade of the 1st Army Corps, PMCs.*

The enemy shelled Ukrainian Defense Forces with tanks, mortars, barrel and jet artillery in the Donetsk, Studenok, Yarova, Tetyanivka, Bohorodychne, Pryshyb, Shchurove, Stary Karavan, Raihorodok, Mykolaivka, Rozdolivka, Oleksandrivka, and Hryhorivka districts.

The destruction of the enemy commandant's office in Svatove, Luhansk Oblast, where the enemy organized a headquarters and ammunition depot, was confirmed.

### **Donetsk direction**

- *Siversk - Maryinka section: approximate length of the combat line - 235 km, the number of BTGs of the RF Armed Forces - 13-15, the average width of the combat area of one BTG - 17 km;*
- *Deployed BTGs: 68th and 163rd tank regiments, 102nd and 103rd motorized rifle regiments of the 150 motorized rifle division, 80th tank regiment of the 90th tank division, 35th, 55th, and 74th separate motorized rifle brigades of the 41st Combined Arms Army, 31st separate airborne assault brigade, 61st separate marines brigade of the Joint Strategic Command "Northern Fleet," 336th separate marines brigade, 24th separate SOF brigade, 1st, 3rd, 5th, 15th, and 100th separate motorized rifle brigades, 9th and 11th separate motorized rifle regiment of the 1st Army Corps of the so-called DPR, 6th motorized rifle regiment of the 2nd Army Corps of the so-called LPR, PMCs.*

The enemy fired at the positions of the Ukrainian Defense Forces near Siversk, Verkhnyokamianske, Vyimka, Vesele, Bilohorivka, Yakovlivka, Soledar, Bakhmut, Odradivka, Mykolaivka Druga, Zaitseve, Sukha Balka, Yuryivka, New York, Berdychi, Avdiivka, Vodyane, Krasnohorivka, Maryinka, Paraskoviivka, Novomykhailivka, and Pervomaiske.

During the day, Ukrainian troops repelled enemy attacks in the areas of Vesele, Kurdyumivka, Mykolaivka Druga, Bakhmut, Zaitseve, Mayorsk, Pervomaiske, Maryinka, and Novomykhailivka.

### **Zaporizhzhya direction**

- *Maryinka – Vasylivka section: approximate length of the line of combat - 200 km, the number of BTGs of the RF Armed Forces - 17, the average width of the combat area of one BTG - 11.7 km;*
- *Deployed BTGs: 36th separate motorized rifle brigade of the 29th Combined Arms Army, 38th and 64th separate motorized rifle brigades, 69th separate cover brigade of the 35th Combined Arms Army, 5th separate tank brigade, 37 separate motorized rifle brigade of the 36th Combined Arms Army, 135th, 429th, 503rd and 693rd motorized rifle regiments of the 19th motorized rifle division of the 58th Combined Arms Army, 70th, 71st and 291st motorized rifle regiments of the 42nd motorized rifle division of the 58th Combined Arms Army, 136th separate motorized rifle brigade of the 58 Combined Arms Army, 46th and 49th machine gun artillery regiments of the 18th machine gun artillery division of the 68th Army Corps, 39th separate motorized rifle brigade of the 68th Army Corps, 83th separate airborne assault brigade, 40th and 155th separate marines brigades, 22nd separate SOF brigade, 1st Army Corps of the so-called DPR, and 2nd Army Corps of the so-called LPR, PMCs.*

The enemy did not take active actions. However, the Russian forces shelled with artillery Novopil, Vremivka, Velyka Novosilka, Novoukrayinka, Prechystivka, Vuhledar, Pavlivka, Volodymyrivka, Zaliznychne, Gulyaipole, and Chervone.

Due to the successful actions of the Ukrainian Defense Forces, the enemy continues to suffer losses in manpower and equipment. In particular, as a result of Ukrainian strikes on enemy personnel and military equipment concentration areas on September 19, were hit:

- the concentration of enemy personnel in the Polohy district (more than 20 people);
- an ammunition warehouse, five units of military equipment, and more than 20 military personnel in the Melitopol district;
- 10 units of military equipment and more than 10 servicemen in the area of Kamianka

#### **Kherson direction**

- *Vasylivka–Nova Zburiyivka and Stanislav section: approximate length of the battle line - 252 km, the number of BTGs of the RF Armed Forces - 27, the average width of the combat area of one BTG - 9.3 km;*
- *Deployed BTGs: 114th, 143rd, and 394th motorized rifle regiments, 218th tank regiment of the 127th motorized rifle division of the 5th Combined Arms Army, 57th and 60th separate motorized rifle brigades of the 5th Combined Arms Army, 135th, 503rd and 693rd motorized rifle regiments of the 19th motorized rifle division, 70th, 71st and 291st motorized rifle regiments of the 42nd motorized rifle division, 51st and 137th parachute airborne regiments of the 106th parachute airborne division, 7th military base of the 49th Combined Arms Army, 16th and 346th separate SOF brigades.*

There is no change in the operational situation.

#### **Kherson-Berislav bridgehead**

- *Velyka Lepetikhka – Oleksandrivka section: approximate length of the battle line – 250 km, the number of BTGs of the RF Armed Forces – 22, the average width of the combat area of one BTG – 11.8 km;*

● *Deployed BTGs: 108th Air assault regiment, 171st separate airborne assault brigade of the 7th Air assault division, 4th military base of the 58th Combined Arms Army, 429th motorized rifle regiment of the 19th motorized rifle division, 33rd and 255th motorized rifle regiments of the 20th motorized rifle division, 34th, and 205th separate motorized rifle brigades of the 49th Combined Arms Army, 224th, 237th and 239th Air assault regiments of the 76th Air assault division, 217th and 331 Air assault regiments of the 98th Air assault division, 126th separate coastal defense brigade, 127th separate ranger brigade, 11th separate airborne assault brigade, 10th separate SOF brigade, PMC.*

Enemy shelled more than 25 towns and villages along the entire line of contact, particularly Vysokopillya, Myrolyubivka, Karierne, Novohryhorivka, Bilohirka, Blahodativka, Andriivka, Zorya, Shevchenkove, Ternovi Pody, Pravdyne, and Myrne.

#### **Azov-Black Sea Maritime Operational Area:**

*The forces of the Russian Black Sea Fleet continue to project force on the coast and the continental part of Ukraine and control the northwestern part of the Black Sea. The ultimate goal is to deprive Ukraine of access to the sea and connect unrecognized Transnistria with the Russian Federation by land through the coast of the Black and Azov seas.*

After the storm in the Black Sea ended, the number of enemy ships at sea significantly increased. Currently, there are 11 warships at sea providing reconnaissance and blocking navigation in the Azov-Black Sea waters. Among them are three cruise missile carriers. Up to 24 Kalibr missiles can be ready for a salvo.

Russian missile and artillery attacks on Odesa, Mykolaiv, and Ochakiv have resumed. On the night of September 20, the port of Ochakiv was attacked by two Iranian-made kamikaze drones for the first time. The mine hazard on the Black Sea coast of southern Ukraine remains relevant.

Russian aviation continues to fly from the Crimean airfields of Belbek and Hvardiyske over the northwestern part of the Black Sea. Over the past day, 12 Su-27, Su-30, and Su-24 aircraft from Belbek and Saki airfields were involved. In addition, a large concentration of helicopters is observed at Crimean airfields, namely more than 70 in Dzhankoy and 7 in Kirovske.

Amphibious ships are in the ports of Novorossiysk and Sevastopol for replenishment and scheduled maintenance. There are no indications of preparation for an amphibious assault on the southern coast of Ukraine.

All 4 submarines of project 636.3 are at their main base in Novorossiysk.

#### **Russian operational losses from 24.02 to 21.09**

Personnel - almost 55,110 people (+300);

Tanks – 2,227 (+11);

Armored combat vehicles – 4,748 (+24);

Artillery systems – 1,340 (+17);



Multiple rocket launchers (MLRS) - 318 (0);  
Anti-aircraft warfare systems - 168 (0);  
Vehicles and fuel tanks – 3,610 (+27);  
Aircraft - 253 (+1);  
Helicopters – 217 (0);  
UAV operational and tactical level - 932 (+7);  
Intercepted cruise missiles - 239 (0);  
Boats / ships - 15 (0).

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### **Ukraine, general news**

Despite the war, 47% of businesses, member companies of the European Business Association, expect growth in 2023, according to the results of the EBA survey. 28% of business executives expect to maintain business performance at the current level in 2023, and 25% expect their business to deteriorate (last year, there were only 2%). Most companies expect a positive financial result next year. 58% of respondents expect income growth in hryvnia, and 43% - in real terms. At the same time, 31% expect an increase in income in hryvnias up to 10%. 31% of executives predict a fall in hryvnia income, 36% in real terms.

### **International diplomatic aspect**

Vladimir Putin's order of a partial mobilization of reservists means three things. Firstly, he has no interest in stopping the war, contrary to Turkish President Erdogan's impression during the recent talks with Putin. He is set to play the zugzwang to the final move.

Secondly, Putin has indirectly admitted his failure to achieve any satisfactory results on the battlefield. There's no logic in calling some 300,000 reservists against the Russian Defence Ministry's claims of losing only about 6,000 out of 190,000 invasion forces deployed in February. In fact, the Kremlin has already failed to cope with the losses by carrying out covert mobilization of forced-to-sign contract conscripts, coerced draftees from the occupied territories, volunteers of far-right nationalists, Russian and foreign mercenaries, and convicted criminals. So-called partial mobilization is aimed at prolonging the agony on the battlefield while pleasing the hardliners.

Even if mobilization succeeds in terms of the numbers, it will have every chance to fail in quality. The Russian Armed Forces cannot provide good military training because experienced officers are either already killed in action or engaged in the fighting. Without proper training, the new troops wouldn't change much on the battlefield against more trained, equipped, and motivated Ukrainian forces. The underperformance of new forces would have a devastating effect on the morale of exhausted remaining troops leading to their further collapse. It turned out that only a tiny spearhead invasion force was well-equipped and armed, but it has gone. The remaining troops are poorly dressed, equipped, and armed. So, Moscow will find it extremely difficult to provide newly generated forces with the necessary stuff.

Finally, Vladimir Putin made a giant step toward the collapse of his regime. A large part of intoxicated with propaganda society might not fill the streets with protests, but neither would they head to the military recruitment points. At the same time, those threatened with drafting into the military are trying to flee the country or publicly protest. Some 1,335 people have been arrested in anti-mobilization protests in 38 cities across Russia in a single day, according to OVD-Info, a Russian NGO.

Pleasing those who advocate escalation and the "final solution to the Ukrainian question," Putin violated his social contract with the rest. Unless ethnic minorities and Russians from the depressed regions bore the bloody price for Putin's geopolitical adventurism, it was acceptable for better-off, predominantly Caucasian inhabitants of the big cities. Once happy with "Russia's" Crimea, they no longer delighted with the prospects of fighting "Putin's" war. Now it's personal. Some of the most qualified labor force (IT specialists, engineers, etc.) might be pulled out of the shaky economy to operate the remaining sophisticated weaponry. Given the brain drain, suffocated by the sanction's economy, significantly backfired energy weaponization, and denied access to technology, the Russian economy will accelerate its downfall trajectory fall.

For two decades, Putin has eliminated any mechanisms of channeling dissatisfaction (free and fair elections). He put himself at the heart of the isolated system, playing a paramount role in balancing the interest of various groups. Now, Putin is losing his ability to sustain the system and satisfy antagonistic forces. It wouldn't be a surprise if Vladimir Putin lost his power in the coming weeks or months. He has been trying to avoid a repetition of "the greatest geopolitical tragedy" (the collapse of the Soviet Union, in his words). Still, he might find himself in the position of a ruler of a defeated Russian Empire before the Bolshevik revolution. However, this time there is no either a powerful ideology to consume huge, declassified masses or professional revolutionaries to lead them. The system is about to blow itself up from within, and it will degrade Moscow's ability to hold all the Russian Federation's territories, not to mention the occupied territories.

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*Centre for Defence Strategies (CDS) is a Ukrainian security think tank. We operate since 2020 and are involved in security studies, defence policy research and advocacy. Currently all our activity is focused on stopping the ongoing war.*

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