

Humanitarian aspect:

As of the morning of July 26, 2022, more than 1,048 Ukrainian children are victims of full-scale armed aggression by the Russian Federation. **The official number of children who have died has not changed in the past day - 358. The number of wounded increased to more than 690.** As a result of enemy shelling on July 25, a 5-year-old girl was injured in Krasnohorivka, Donetsk Region. As a result of a Russian drone exploding on July 25, a 16-year-old boy and 8- and 16-year-old girls were injured in Dubove, Volyn Region. However, the data is not conclusive since data collection continues in the areas of active hostilities, the temporarily occupied areas, and liberated territories.

The bodies of another 25 fallen defenders were returned to Ukraine, reported the Ministry for Reintegration of the Temporarily Occupied Territories. The operation was carried out in cooperation with the Commissioner for Missing Persons, Oleh Kotenko and other law enforcement agencies of Ukraine.

The Russian Federation shelled **Kharkiv** at night. According to Mayor Ihor Terekhov, an explosion occurred near the city center. He added that the occupiers aimed near a building that had nothing to do with military infrastructure. Around 5:00 a.m., the Russians struck civilian infrastructure in Kharkiv's Slobidskyi district. In particular, they hit the roof of a car dealership and open areas. There are no reported casualties. At the same time, the occupiers struck Chuhuiev again. There were strikes on critical infrastructure.

In the morning, a massive rocket attack was carried out on **Mykolaiv**. A critical infrastructure facility and a motor vehicle enterprise were damaged. There were no victims. Districts of the Mykolayiv Region were also shelled, mostly at open areas. However, a residential building was destroyed in Maliivka, Berezhnivatsk community. There is no information about the victims.

There was another rocket attack on civilians and civilian infrastructure in the **Odesa Region**. As a result of the shelling, five residential buildings were destroyed in a resort village in the Bilhorod-Dniester district, and more than 15 recreation resorts, 60 summer cottages, and about 80 trade pavilions were damaged. A village in the Odesa district was also under fire from the occupiers. A resort on the Dniester River suffered significant damage.

According to Minister of Justice Denys Maluska, **Russian prisoners of war** are an important means to return our Ukrainian heroes home [through the exchange]. Russian Federation prisoners of war are divided into two categories: those about whom there is information about the commission of crimes and those about whom there is no such information. For the first category, investigations and trials are conducted; the second category, according to the Geneva Convention, is on the lists for exchange. Before a decision [for exchange] is made, they are mainly engaged in wood processing at classified facilities. Convicted military personnel can also be placed on exchange lists and are considered more valuable, said the Minister of Justice in an interview with Ukrainian media.

Occupied territories:

The Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) revealed Russia's plans for a pseudo-referendum in the occupied territories of Ukraine. The enemy plans to use the so-called pro-Russian organization "Donetsk Republic" to conduct it. This structure already includes more than 1,000 people who hold daily meetings with the population in the temporarily occupied territories. Among them are agitators, bloggers, and "vigilantes" who cooperate with the occupiers. Kremlin curators plan to use controlled media resources to reach more than 50 million viewers from the Russian Federation and eastern Ukraine with their propaganda. In addition, the invaders plan to send over 1,000 "experts" and volunteers to the region.

Operational situation

The 153rd day of the strategic air-ground offensive operation of the Russian Federation Armed Forces against Ukraine continues ('Donbas Defense Operation' in the official Russian terminology). The enemy is trying to establish full control over the territory of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions and maintain the land corridor with temporarily occupied Crimea.

In order to demonstrate their forward presence and constrain the actions of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, the enemy continues to keep separate units of the Russian Federation Armed Forces in the border areas of the Bryansk and Kursk regions. The enemy shelled with artillery Khrynivka and Mykhalchyna Sloboda areas in the Chernihiv region and Tovstodubove, Pisky, Rzasnyi, and Bilopyllia in the Sumy region.

The Belarusian Armed Forces continue to strengthen security in the border areas of the Brest and Gomel regions, and are also involved in combat training activities at military training grounds. They held training on the communication of control points. Aerial reconnaissance by UAVs was noted from Belarusian territory in the directions of Lutsk and Kovel in the Volyn region. The threat remains of missile and air strikes from the territory and airspace of the Republic of Belarus.

Russian troops continued to send additional military equipment to Ukraine. Satellite images showed that the Russian military removed 60 self-propelled guns 2c7 Pion from the 9th arsenal in Omsk. At the beginning of April, there were 170 self-propelled guns in the arsenal, and only 135 at the beginning of June.

The enemy continues to face problems repairing combat vehicles, as evidenced by at least 300 damaged vehicles (tanks, armored personnel carriers, other vehicles) at the repair and restoration plant near Barvinok, Belgorod region.

Russian forces are specifically mobilizing surgical personnel and other medical personnel to work on the front lines and in the occupied cities of the Donbas. In addition, they have created mobile medical dispensaries in the occupied towns of the Donetsk region, where residents are allegedly forced to donate blood for Russian troops.

The morale and psychological state of the personnel of the invasion forces remain low, and the enemy is demoralized. In some directions, the Russian command is throwing manpower into battle without being covered by armored vehicles. This way, officers keep their equipment in working order and try to take revenge on their subordinates for deliberately disabling their weapons. Such a sabotage tactic [disabling their weapons] is widespread among the occupiers' foot-soldiers to not participate in combat.

Kharkiv direction

Zolochiv-Balakleya section: approximate length of combat line - 177 km, number of BTGs of the RF Armed Forces - 10, an average width of combat area of one BTG - 17.7 km;

Deployed BTGs:

- *north of Kharkiv - 7 BTGs from 1st and 6th armies, 11th Army Corps, and 1st Army Corps of so-called DPR,*
- *in the area of Malynivka - 3 BTGs from 29th and 36th armies,*
- *operational reserve of the grouping in the area of Olkhovatka, Russia: 9 BTGs from 1st and 20th armies and Airborne troops.*

The enemy is conducting combat operations with the aim of holding the occupied lines and preventing the advance of Ukrainian troops. They shelled Ukrainian Defense Forces positions from tanks and barrel and rocket artillery in the areas of Kharkiv, Udy, Verkhniy Saltiv, Malynivka, Borshcheva, Pytomnyk, Sosnivka, Ruski Tyshki, Petrivka, Dementiivka, Rubizhne, Duvanka, Mospanove, Ruska Lozova, Chuguiv, Klugino-Bashkyrivka, Svitlychne, Pryshyb and Slatine. They carried out airstrikes near Zalyman, Mospanove, Prudyanka, and Petrivka.

Russian troops suffered losses during a failed ground assault attempt from Tsupivka to Dementiivka.

In the Izyum area, the enemy shelled the areas of Bohorodychne, Dibrovne, Dolyna, Adamivka, Mazanivka, Barvinkove, and Karnauhivo. They carried out an airstrike near Yavirskyi. The invaders are trying to replenish their losses of manpower and equipment.

Kramatorsk direction

Balakleya - Kostiantynivka section: approximate length of the combat line - 300 km, the number of BTGs of the RF Armed Forces - 54, the average width of the combat area of one BTG - 5.6 km;

Deployed BTGs:

- *in the area of Izyum - 20 BTGs from 1st, 20th, 35th, and 36th armies, 11th Army Corps, 106th airborne division,*
- *in the area of Lysychansk - 7 BTGs from 5th, 8th, and 41st armies, 2nd, and 7th brigades of Rosguard; 2nd Army Corps of the so-called LPR;*
- *in the area of Popasna - 17 BTGs from 1st, 5th, 8th, 41st, and 58th armies, 68th Army Corps, 1st Army Corps of the so-called DPR, 2nd Army Corps of the so-called LPR;*
- *reserve (in Starobilsk district) - 2nd, 41st armies, and 201st military base.*

Enemy units restock ammunition and fuel. The enemy shelled with artillery Ukrainian Defense Forces positions near Kryvya Luka, Zakitne, Dronivka, and Platonivka. Russian troops launched rocket and artillery strikes on Kramatorsk.

In the **Siversk** direction, the enemy is concentrating its main efforts on trying to improve the tactical position and creating conditions for an offensive on Siversk. They shelled Ukrainian Defense Forces positions near Siversk, Verkhnyokamyanske, Zvanivka, Hryhorivka, Ivano-Daryivka, Spirne, Berestove, Bilohorivka; and used aviation near Hryhorivka and Serebryanka. The enemy's attempts to capture Berestove and advance near Spirne and Ivano-Daryivka ended in their retreat. Ukrainian troops successfully repelled enemy attacks in the areas of Spirne and the National Nature Park Svyati Hory and pushed the enemy back.

The helplessness of the Russian command regarding the organization of attacks is noted: the enemy tank units, with no support from motorized rifle units, go towards Ukrainian defenses, which are well stocked with anti-tank means. This leads to significant losses of the enemy's armored vehicles.

The enemy grouping Vostok is comprised of up to eight battalion tactical groups (BTGs), composed of:

- 24th separate SOF brigade,
- 394th motorized rifle regiment of the 2nd separate motorized rifle brigade of the 2nd Army Corps,
- 7th separate motorized rifle brigade of the 1st Army Corps (the last two are manned at about 50%);
- and up to 1.5 BTGs from the Wagner private military company;
- the general command is from the C2 post of the 127th motorized rifle division.

During the last week, the main focus of this grouping was an attempt to improve the tactical position and gain a foothold on the exit lines to resume a large-scale offensive to capture Bakhmut, a breakthrough to Siversk, and close approaches to Slovyansk.

Due to the steady defense of the Ukrainian units, the enemy advanced only to a distance of 2 km along the Siverskyi Donets between Bilohorivka and Serebryanka, after which the Ukrainian Defense Forces counterattack drove the enemy back to Bilohorivka, and later knocked them out of the area south of Serebryanka and Hryhorivka, pushing the grouping advanced units to Siverskyi Donets.

The largest losses in battles in this direction were suffered by the enemy 1st separate motorized rifle brigade of the 1st Army Corps, 4th separate motorized rifle brigade of the 2nd Army Corps, PMC Wagner, rifle battalions of the mobilization reserve of the so-called People's militia corps. BTGs composed of the 39th and 55th separate motorized rifle brigades and 80th tank regiment also suffered losses. In terms of personnel numbers and combat equipment, they are now equal more to reinforced companies than to BTGs.

In the **Bakhmut** direction, the enemy is concentrating its main efforts on trying to improve the tactical position and creating conditions for an offensive on Soledar. The enemy shelled the positions of the Ukrainian Defense Forces with artillery in the areas of Yakovlivka, Soledar, Bakhmutske, Pokrovske, Kostyantynivka, Vesela Dolyna, Zaytseve, Vershyna, Semihirya, Kodema, Travneve, Mayorsk, Novoluhanske, Bilogorivka, Ivanovske, Kurdyumivka, Bakhmut,

and New York. They carried out airstrikes near Soledar, Pokrovske, New York, Vesela Dolyna, and the territory of the Vuhlehirsk thermal power plant (TPP).

The enemy assault on the Semihirya area ended with losses and retreat. Enemy units are trying to advance in the direction of Pokrovske; fighting continues. The enemy tried to attack in the directions Klynove - Pokrovske and Volodymyrivka - Pokrovske, but suffered losses and retreated. In the area of the Vuhlehirsk TPP, enemy units wedged into the Ukrainian defense and are trying to gain a foothold in the captured positions.

A tactical group that operates in the direction of the main attack consists of the 10-11 BTGs of the 76th Air assault division, 31st separate airborne assault brigade, 57th separate motorized rifle brigade, 61st separate marines brigade, and 6th motorized rifle regiment of the 2nd Army Corps. Its efforts are focused on the directions Volodymyrivka - Bakhmutske and Volodymyrivka - Pokrovske. In the same direction, another 5-6 BTGs from the 60th separate motorized rifle brigade, 155th separate marines brigade, 100th separate motorized rifle brigade of the 1st Army Corps, and 26th and 218th tank regiments are concentrated in the combat restoration area.

Most likely, their current task is to reach the Bakhmutske-Pokrovske frontier with a further breakthrough in the direction of Krasna Hora and Paraskiivka and cutting off the Bakhmut-Sloviansk highway. Currently, this tactical group is not able to take control of Pokrovske and Bakhmutske, for which it is unsuccessfully fighting.

Another enemy tactical group, consisting of up to 4-5 BTGs of the 5th separate motorized rifle brigade, 11th motorized rifle regiment of the 1st Army Corps and two BTGs of the PMC Wagner, is trying to support the main forces from the direction of Klynove. It is attacking Ukrainian Defense Forces positions in the Pokrovske area from the south and, simultaneously, trying to move through Vesela Dolyna to Opytne south of Bakhmut and operating from the side of the Vershyna to Kodema and Semihirya.

Zaporizhzhya direction

Konstantynivka - Nikopol section: approximate length of the line of combat - 310 km, the number of BTGs of the RF Armed Forces - 22, the average width of the combat area of one BTG - 14 km;

Deployed BTGs:

- *from 8th, 58th armies, Airborne troops, 1st Army Corps of the so-called DPR, and 2nd Army Corps of the so-called LPR*

The enemy did not conduct active actions. They shelled the Ukrainian Defense Forces positions near Avdiyivka, Zelene Pole, Orikhiv, Shcherbaky, and Kamianske; conducted aerial reconnaissance with UAVs; and carried out airstrikes in the areas of Kamiana, Shevchenko, Vesele, and Poltavka.

Russian troops are equipping trenches on the territory of the Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant (NPP) and hiding military equipment in residential areas. They partially restored the operation of the concrete plant in Melitopol to strengthen the defense lines and firing

positions and are reconstructing the airfield. Attempts to restore the airfield will take at least 21-28 days.

Kherson direction

Nikopol - Stanislav section: approximate length of the battle line - 252 km, the number of BTGs of the RF Armed Forces - 13, the average width of the combat area of one BTG - 19 km;

Deployed BTGs:

- *from 8th and 59th armies, 7th Air assault division, 1st Army Corps of so-called DPR, and 2nd Army Corps of so-called LPR*

The enemy continues to defend themselves and concentrate efforts on preventing the advance of Ukrainian troops. They shelled Ukrainian Defense Forces positions with artillery, carried out airstrikes near Velyke Artakove, Kaluha, and Olhyne, and conducted aerial reconnaissance with UAVs. Russian troops are building a pontoon bridge across the Inhulets River near Darivka.

Ukrainian forces destroyed the command post of the 785th separate special unit of the Russian National Guard and two ammunition depots.

Azov-Black Sea Maritime Operational Area

No significant change in the situation in the sea.

Russian Black Seas Fleet (BSF) ships continue operations at sea to isolate the northwestern part of the Black Sea and are ready to launch missile strikes on maritime and coastal targets of Ukraine.

The Admiral Makarov frigate and one missile corvette are at sea on combat duty in the area 10 km south of Sevastopol. Their total volley is up to 16 Kalibr missiles.

A sea minesweeper and three boats conduct anti-sabotage patrol on the Sevastopol raid.

A missile boat (project 12411, with Mosquito missiles) took a position on the traverse of the exit from the Donuzlav Lake (in Crimea).

Most of the large landing ships are in the ports of Sevastopol and Novorossiysk. There are no signs of preparation and formation of landing forces on the ships.

Enemy aviation continues to fly over the northwestern part of the Black Sea.

On July 26, the Russian forces fired 13 Kh-35 missiles from the Black Sea at Zatoka (Odesa region). At least 15 Su-35 and Su-30 SM fighters were used to strike Odesa. Some of the missiles were shot down by the Ukrainian air defense.

Mykolaiv also came under fire. The enemy used S-300 air defense systems located in the temporarily occupied Kherson region.

The total combat losses of the enemy from 24.02 to 26.07 approximately amounted to

Personnel - almost 39,870 people (+170);

Tanks - 1,737 (+7);
Armored combat vehicles - 3,959 (+9);
Operational tactical missile systems - 4 (0);
Artillery systems - 880 (+4);
Multiple rocket launchers (MLRS) - 258 (+1);
Anti-aircraft warfare systems - 117 (+1);
Vehicles and fuel tanks - 2,835 (+3);
Aircraft - 222 (0);
Helicopters - 189 (+1);
UAV operational and tactical level - 722 (+3);
Intercepted cruise missiles - 174 (0);
Boats / ships - 15 (0).

Ukraine, general news:

7,000 women joined the army after the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine. Currently, Ukraine has one of the highest numbers of women in the Armed Forces among NATO member states, Deputy Minister of Defense Hanna Malyar said.

International diplomatic aspect:

The EU reaches a deal to ration gas, fearing further Russian cut-off. A draft European law designed to lower demand for gas by 15% from August 2022 through March 2023. Though the regulation foresees the possibility of triggering a 'Union alert' on the security of supply, meaning setting the gas demand reduction mandatory, it also specified several conditions for exemptions and requests for a derogation. "Germany made a strategic error in the past with its great dependency on Russian gas and faith that it would always flow constantly and cheaply," said German Vice Chancellor and Economy Minister Robert Habeck. "But it is not just a German problem."

Meanwhile, the wife of a former German counsellor Gerhard Schröder told Spiegel that he was in Moscow to negotiate a gas deal. Before that, Gerhard Schröder himself said to the journalist of the German NTVDe that he was in Moscow for a vacation. "The Federal Chancellery was not and is not involved in the implementation of a trip by Gerhard Schröder to Moscow," reacted a German government spokesman.

While Russia unilaterally reduced the gas supply to the EU to 20% of the pipeline's capacity, Gazprom increased the pressure on the Urengoy-Pomary-Uzhhorod gas pipeline without warning. "Sabotage and diversion" called those actions of Gazprom an energy expert Mikhail Krutikhin. He implied that Gazprom wanted to cause an accident on Ukrainian territory, recalling a similar case of the Turkmenistan pipeline in 2009.

While the Russian war rages on in Europe, Sergey Lavrov is on a propaganda mission in Africa. He is trying to promote general anti-Western narratives, including the one that the Western sanctions, not the Russian war, are the primary cause of soaring food prices and looming hunger. Many African leaders don't condemn Russia's aggression against Ukraine, instead accusing the US and NATO. The Russians are exploiting anti-colonial sentiments, saying that

Russia has "never colonised" any African country and supports Africans in their struggle against western "neoimperialists".

The Russian messages are gaining traction, pushing the European governments to increase their engagement with leaders on the continent and countering Russian propaganda. President Emmanuel Macron is touring three African nations as he set the continent as a "political priority" of his presidency. Along with increased activities of the Russian diplomats in African countries and IPSO campaigns on social media, the Kremlin is set to establish the first bureau of Russia Today (RT). This major Russian media propaganda outlet was pushed out of Europe.

Russia, relevant news:

Russian media reports that the Tetra Pak company is leaving the Russian Federation and severing all ties with its local subsidiary enterprise. The company specializes in producing food packaging, and the sanctions imposed on the Russian Federation prevent the full use of its production line and compliance with all standardization protocols.

In the Russian Federation, production of ferrous metallurgy may drop by 20-30% by the end of the year. According to Russian media, the cost of production during this period increased by almost 50%, and production fell by 20-50% only in June. Head of the Ministry of Industry and Trade, Denys Manturov, says that the profitability of Russia's metallurgical enterprises is falling sharply, as well as the loading of production capacities.

Sanctions have severely depressed Russian metallurgy: importing steel into the Asian region is difficult and unprofitable, and supplies to Africa and Latin America in terms of volume are meager. Moreover, there is no need for steel inside the country either: automobile manufacturing, railway engineering, and industrial construction are at a standstill.

The Russian Federation's ferrous metallurgy includes more than 1,500 enterprises and organizations, 70% of them are city-forming backbone enterprises, and the number of employees is more than 660,000. A 30-40% drop in production will lead to mass layoffs.

During the days the "Forum of the Free Peoples of Russia" was being held, the Kremlin imposed an additional military obligation on the regions. All 85 subjects of the federation (including Crimea and Sevastopol) are obliged to form and finance one volunteer battalion each to participate in the war with Ukraine. But, as reported by the Ukrainian Armed Forces General Staff, not all regions are ready to fill battalions with the local population. Moscow recruits residents from Central Asia to its battalion, traditionally luring them with generous pay.

Great Britain introduced new personal sanctions. Great Britain has sanctioned another 42 people who support Russia's war against Ukraine. The Russian Federation Minister of Justice of Kostyantyn Chuichenko, his deputy Oleg Svyridenko, editor-in-chief of Sputnik International Anton Anisimov, and 29 governors were added to the "black list."

Also under sanctions were the nephews of Russian billionaire Alisher Usmanov, British propagandist Graham Phillips, and a number of representatives of the pseudo-statelets, the so-called Luhansk People's Republic (LPR) and Donetsk People's Republic (DPR).

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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