



# Briefing Notes Summary

Group 62 – Information Centre for Asylum and Migration

Ukraine – January to June 2025

30 June 2025

## 13 January 2025

### Civilian casualties

According to the media, Ukrainian authorities reported multiple civilian casualties resulting from Russian attacks at the turn of the year: 14 casualties in the Zaporizhzhia region (04.01.25, 08.01.25), five casualties in the Donetsk region (26.12.24, 09.01.25 and 10.01.25), four casualties in the Kherson region (25.12.24, 06.01.25, 09.01.25), three casualties in the city and region of Kyiv (01.01.25 to 03.01.25), two casualties in the Dnipropetrovsk region (24.12.24, 05.01.25) and one casualty each in the Sumy (26.12.24), Chernihiv (03.01.25) and Kharkiv (04.01.25) regions. In addition, the media reported announcements from Russian occupation authorities that civilians had been killed in the Russian-controlled areas of Ukraine as a result of Ukrainian attacks: five casualties in the Donetsk region (04.01.25, 10.01.25), four casualties in the Kherson region (30.12.24, 09.01.25, 12.01.25) and three casualties in the Zaporizhzhia region (04.01.25, 09.01.25). According to UN figures, over 12,300 civilians have been killed since 24.02.22.<sup>1</sup>

### War events, military ombudsman, prisoners of war and recruitment/desertion

The Russian Ministry of Defence reported on 06.01.25 that Russian troops had captured the strategically important small town of Kurakhove in eastern Ukraine. This was also confirmed by the pro-government Ukrainian military channel Deep State. Only a fraction of the original 18,000 inhabitants remained there. Ukraine is now giving top priority to the defence of the heavily contested city of Pokrovsk. Russian troops are trying to bypass the city in the south and cut off the supply routes. According to an AFP analysis of data from the Institute for the Study of War (ISW), Russian forces advanced a total of 4,000 km<sup>2</sup> in 2024, seven times more than in 2023.

According to an analysis conducted by the British Ministry of Defence, the Russian side has made tactical changes to missile and drone attacks on Ukrainian territory. According to the analysis, since August 2024, the Russian armed forces had allowed more time to elapse between attacks in order to build up stocks and had relied "on less frequent, larger waves of attacks rather than more frequent, smaller attacks". Moscow was also increasingly using drones with little or no explosive charges to overwhelm Ukrainian air defences and deceive Ukrainian radar systems.

On 29.12.24, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy announced a presidential decree to establish an ombudsman's office to protect the rights of soldiers and their families. He said this was at the request of the Ukrainian troops, who have hitherto had no direct point of contact and have had to go through the usually lengthy official channels.

According to media reports, another prisoner exchange between the two warring parties took place on 30.12.24 following mediation by the UAE. While Moscow reported that 150 prisoners of war had been exchanged, President Zelenskyy announced that 189 prisoners had been returned to Ukraine, including two civilians. According to the UN Human Rights Office, there are also credible reports that at least 62 Ukrainian prisoners of war have been executed by Russian forces.

According to media reports issued on 02.01.25, there have been numerous cases of desertion during the formation of new Ukrainian troops. The 155th Mechanised Brigade, which was trained in France, was reportedly affected. Independent Ukrainian military experts report that 1,700 soldiers deserted even before they were deployed to the front, with 50 having left training in France. It was reported that among the 5,800 soldiers deployed near Pokrovsk, there were high casualties due to a lack of drone support. The fact that new units were being created instead of replenishing existing troops was also criticised. The Russian advance in eastern Ukraine was therefore attributed not only to Russian superiority, but also to "leadership failures, tactical errors and a lack of coordination" in the Ukrainian armed forces. The Ukrainian military leadership had reportedly already admitted to "problems". The State Bureau of Investigation had launched an investigation into the desertion incidents and the "abuse of power" by a military official.

Against the backdrop of high numbers of Ukrainian men fit for military service fleeing the war and associated illegal border crossings, the Ukrainian police have launched a large-scale operation against people-smuggling gangs, according to media reports published on 10.01.25. In a first phase, the police and secret service have reportedly carried out 600 searches of homes and workplaces across the country in order to dismantle people-smuggling networks.<sup>2</sup>

### **Energy infrastructure**

According to information published by the Ukrainian government on 25.12.24, massive Russian airstrikes on the energy infrastructure took place across the country over the Christmas holidays, causing severe damage in some cases, leading to power and heating outages in some cities that lasted for hours. According to the largest private energy company, DTEK, it was the 13th massive attack to be carried out on the country's energy sector in 2024. According to Energy Minister Herman Halushchenko, the transmission system operator had taken the necessary measures to limit consumption and minimise the negative consequences. According to the National Institute for Strategic Studies in Kyiv, the authorities were trying with some success to minimise power and heating outages. Although there were major problems, it said the worst predictions of 20 hours a day without electricity had not materialised. Outages often lasted less than four hours.

Based on information provided by DTEK on 28.12.24, Ukraine has received its first shipment of liquefied natural gas from the US. This is intended to strengthen the energy security of Ukraine and Europe in view of the expiry of the gas transit agreement with the Russian Federation. Gas transit was completely discontinued on 01.01.25.<sup>3</sup>

### **Judicial sentences, financial aid and the labour market situation**

According to information provided by the Russian court on 29.12.24, a man was sentenced to 20 years in prison on charges of carrying out acts of sabotage on railway installations in Russian-occupied Crimea on behalf of the Security Service of Ukraine, the SBU. Based on information provided by the SBU on 02.01.25, a Ukrainian from the Chernivtsi region was sentenced to 15 years in prison on charges of attempted treason and justification of the Russian attack for attempting to pass on coordinates of critical infrastructure to the Russian armed forces.

The Biden administration has provided Ukraine with further aid in the run-up to the handover to US President-elect Donald Trump, including USD 3.4 billion in budget support to finance government services such as salaries for civil servants, teachers and healthcare staff. Ukraine is also receiving USD 15 billion from the US for social and humanitarian purposes as part of a G7 aid package. Based on information provided by the Ukrainian Ministry of Finance on 30.12.24, Ukraine received around EUR 40 billion in foreign financial aid for the entire year 2024 to support the budget – 30 percent as a grant and 70 percent in the form of loans on favourable terms. According to information provided by the Ukrainian government on 08.01.25, 11 million applications for winter aid payments – UAH 1,000 or around EUR 22 – have been submitted to date. A payment of UAH 1,000/month to teaching staff has also been announced, and this amount will be doubled from September 2025. In January 2025, the approximately four million internally displaced persons are also to receive rent subsidies.

According to the Ukrainian Ministry of Economy, the country has a shortage of up to five million workers due to people fleeing, military service and Russian occupation. Following the collapse of the labour market after 24.02.22, the Work UA platform, for instance, which brings employers and jobseekers together, is once again offering around 110,000 vacancies. According to the platform, the labour market has recovered quantitatively but has also changed geographically and structurally. It adds that while the situation in the frontline regions remains difficult, there is now more work than before the full Russian invasion due to company relocations in western Ukraine.<sup>4</sup>

**20 January 2025**

### **Civilian casualties and compensation programme**

Based on information provided by the responsible regional governor on 17.01.25, at least four people were killed in a Russian missile attack on the city of Kryvyi Rih (Dnipropetrovsk region). According to the Kyiv military administration, at least three people died in a Russian missile attack on the capital on 18.01.25.

According to media reports, a compensation programme was set up for Ukrainians on 16.01.25 to enable them to apply for compensation for the loss of relatives as a result of the Russian war of aggression. Under the programme, the Register of Damage for Ukraine, based in The Hague, which was set up under the auspices of the Council of Europe and is supported by the EU, will now also accept applications for compensation for damage, losses and injuries that have been caused by the Russian invasion, in addition to property damage. Thousands of applications have already been received. The aim is to determine a total amount to obtain reparation payments from the Russian Federation.<sup>5</sup>

### **War events, prisoners of war and recruitment/desertion**

According to Ukrainian military sources, the Russian armed forces are still trying to bypass the eastern Ukrainian transport hub of Pokrovsk to the south in order to gain control of the motorway from there to the city of Dnipro and thus cut off the supply routes to Pokrovsk. There is a threat of encirclement of the Ukrainian troops. Ukrainian media reported renewed Russian drone swarms throughout the country on the nights of 13.01.25/14.01.25 and 15.01.25/16.01.25, including the use of so-called decoy drones or dummy drones with no explosive charges. This is intended to overwhelm Ukrainian air defences or force them to use up valuable ammunition (cf. BN of 13.01.25). According to media reports issued on 15.01.25, the Ukrainian parliament has extended the current martial law and mobilisation until 09.05.25.

According to media reports published on 15.01.25, both warring parties confirmed a fresh exchange of 25 prisoners from both sides, mediated by the UAE. In addition, the human rights ombudspersons of the Russian Federation and Ukraine, Tatyana Moskalkova and Dmytro Lubinets, stated on 16.01.25 that they had exchanged information about the civilians remaining in the Ukrainian-controlled area of the Russian border region of Kursk as well as missing civilians. Lubinets confirmed a joint agreement to "continue the mutual exchange of information regarding the search for missing persons among prisoners of war".

Media reports speak of increasing criticism of the Ukrainian military leadership (cf. BN of 13.01.25). According to these reports, 60,000 military personnel have been reported absent without leave since the start of the Russian full-scale invasion; 30,000 are considered to be deserters. The figures, which, according to the Ukrainian Prosecutor General's Office, rose sharply in 2024, are attributed to structural problems, severe exhaustion and demoralisation. An internal Ukrainian debate has been triggered in particular by Ukrainian journalist Yuri Butusov's published research findings on desertion. The criticism relates, for instance, to the inexperience of new recruits and commanders, to corruption and abuse of power by commanders as well as to internet videos about the harsh approach taken by some conscription authorities. A member of parliament also criticises the lack of basic training. The Ukrainian military commander Oleksandr Syrskyi points to a lack of personnel in the mechanised brigades and insufficient mobilisation capacities, which is why a start has been made on setting up new combat brigades with personnel from the areas of logistics, supply and maintenance.

The nationwide raids that began last week against people-smuggling networks that help draft evaders to flee abroad (cf. BN of 13.01.25) were continued this week, according to a statement released by the authorities on 17.01.25. The Ukrainian police have reportedly searched over 200 private homes and offices in 19 regions.<sup>6</sup>

### **Energy infrastructure**

The authorities report that according to the Ministry of Energy, preventative measures have been taken due to nationwide Russian airstrikes that were carried out on Ukrainian energy facilities on 15.01.25, and the Ukrainian grid operator Ukrenerho has imposed temporary emergency power cuts in six regions. According to the governor, two power plants in the Lviv region were damaged.<sup>7</sup>

### **Judicial sentence and action against collaborators**

According to media reports published on 17.01.25, a former local official and member of parliament from the city of Trostyanets (Sumy region), who was arrested in May 2022, was sentenced to 15 years in prison for high treason and supporting the Russian armed forces. No details were provided.

In a video message released on 18.01.25, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy announced unspecified consequences for supporters of the Russian enemy in their own country: "We are taking action against traitors and all kinds of machinations that weaken our state and our Ukrainian society." In doing so, he also praised the work of the law enforcement authorities, which, according to media reports, had published several unverifiable reports on the arrest of suspected collaborators earlier that day.<sup>8</sup>

### **Humanitarian financial aid and support for returns**

According to media reports published on 13.01.25, the EU Commission has announced new humanitarian financial aid totalling EUR 148 million for Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, with EUR 140 million earmarked for Ukraine. The funds are reportedly earmarked for emergency accommodation, food and medicines, particularly for the people of eastern and southern Ukraine. The other EUR 8 million is to be used to provide for Ukrainian war refugees in the Republic of Moldova.

According to a media report published on 20.01.25, the Ukrainian government wants to achieve the return of war refugees living in Germany by means of so-called "unity hubs". According to a statement issued by the Federal Ministry of the Interior, the hubs are to "act as a point of contact for Ukrainian refugees in Germany, providing cultural opportunities, courses on the German language and culture, assistance with finding jobs in Ukraine and Germany as well as advice on returning to Ukraine voluntarily and helping to rebuild the country". A centre initially planned for Berlin will soon be followed by others in other cities.<sup>9</sup>

## **27 January 2025**

### **Civilian casualties, evacuation situation and attacks on educational infrastructure**

According to media reports published on 20.01.25, one civilian was killed in a Russian attack in Kherson. According to the governor, two people were killed by Russian shelling in the Kharkiv region on 21.01.25. The regional military administration reported that at least one person had been killed in a Russian airstrike in Zaporizhzhia on the night of 23.01.25. As a result of a Russian attack near the capital Kyiv, the responsible military administration reported that three people had been killed on 24.01.25. Based on information released by the Russian occupation authorities on 20.01.25, two people were killed in a Ukrainian missile strike in the village of Bekhtery (Kherson region), located 30 km from the frontline. According to the media, the governor of the Russian-occupied part of the Kherson region reported three civilians killed in the town of Oleshky near the frontline as a result of an artillery attack carried out on 25.01.25.

Ukrainian military sources reported on 21.01.25 that over 200 civilians, including elderly persons, people with disabilities and their careers, remain in the frontline town of Chasiv Yar (Donetsk region), which is under heavy Russian fire. Due to the security situation, it is reportedly no longer possible to organise emergency shelters and distribute food.

According to media reports published on 24.01.25, due to the threat situation in the Kharkiv region, the governor responsible announced the evacuation of 267 children and their families from 16 villages. These are located near the city of Kupiansk, which has been embattled for months.

The NGO Save the Children took the International Day of Education on 24.01.25 as an opportunity to analyse relevant UN reports and pointed to a sharp increase in Russian attacks on Ukrainian educational institutions. According to its report, 576 educational institutions, including schools, kindergartens and universities, were damaged or destroyed in 2024 (2023: 256 institutions). A survey conducted by the aid organisation of 870 parents, teachers and children in the regions of southern, eastern and northern Ukraine revealed that, according to 75 percent of parents, their children receive distance learning and some children no longer go to school at all.<sup>10</sup>

### **War events, recruitment and corruption**

The Ukrainian military reported on 23.01.25 that the Ukrainian positions in the small town of Velyka Novosilka in the southwestern most section of the front in the Donetsk region (near the border with the Zaporizhzhia region)

are under threat of encirclement by Russian troops. According to the pro-government Ukrainian military channel Deep State, Russian troops have broken through another line of defence in the Donbas, increasing the threat to the frontline town of Lyman (Donetsk region). According to media reports published on 22.01.25, the Russian armed forces have expanded their bridgehead to the west of the Oskil River and north of the city of Kupiansk (Kharkiv region), which previously formed a natural barrier to stop the Russian advance.

According to a statement published on 20.01.25, the State Bureau of Investigation of Ukraine, together with the SBU intelligence service, has detained three high-ranking officers, including two generals, who were responsible for the territorial defence of the Kharkiv region. They are accused of failing to adequately defend the region during a Russian offensive in May 2024 and failing to expand defensive fortifications. If convicted, they could face up to 10 years in prison.

Ukraine's human rights commissioner, Dmytro Lubinets, announced on 23.01.25 that he would inform the UN and the International Committee of the Red Cross about a new case involving the alleged killing of prisoners of war by Russian soldiers. According to the Kyiv Prosecutor General's Office, a video from social networks that could confirm the execution of six Ukrainian soldiers in the east of the Donetsk region is to be examined. The Russian side has reportedly not commented on the video.

According to Colonel Pavlo Palisa, the battlefield commander appointed to the Office of the President, recruitment reforms are currently being finalised to enable the recruitment of 18 to 25-year-olds, who are exempt from the mobilisation law. He says the current lowering of the age limit from 27 to 25 cannot compensate for the war losses sustained.

Citing Ukrainian media, the DPA news agency reported on 21.01.25 that the chief psychiatrist and vice-chairman of the central medical commission that decides on fitness for military service had been arrested on suspicion of corruption. According to the report, the Ukrainian SBU intelligence service had established that the arrested man had significantly increased his assets since 2022. Large numbers of men in Ukraine have gained exemption from military service, which has repeatedly led to cases of corruption being uncovered.<sup>11</sup>

### **Energy infrastructure**

According to the regional governor, a Russian airstrike carried out in Zaporizhzhia on the night of 23.01.25 damaged energy facilities, among other things, which is why around 20,000 people were cut off from electricity and heating supplies. Members of the energy suppliers' repair brigades, who had attempted to repair the damage after an initial attack, were reportedly also injured in a second wave of attacks. According to a statement issued on 22.01.25 by Ukraine's First Deputy Prime Minister Yulia Svyrydenko, 1,200 Russian attacks have been carried out on Ukrainian energy facilities since 24.02.22, including over 800 attacks on substations, distribution lines and power lines, over 250 attacks on power generation plants and more than 30 on gas facilities.<sup>12</sup>

### **Support for returns**

According to a media report published on 20.01.25, the Ukrainian government wants to achieve the return of war refugees living in Germany by means of so-called "unity hubs" (cf. BN of 20.01.25). During a visit to Berlin last week, Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister Oleksiy Chernyshov, who as Minister for National Unity is also responsible for the return of refugees, therefore assured those willing to return that they would be deferred from military service if they took up work in "critical sectors" such as the defence industry, the energy sector and in reconstruction.<sup>13</sup>

## **03 February 2025**

### **Civilian casualties**

According to media reports published on 28.01.25, two people were killed by Russian artillery fire in the Donetsk region. According to the authorities, at least nine people died as a result of a Russian drone strike carried out on the northeastern Ukrainian city of Sumy on 30.01.25. According to the emergency services, 14 civilians in the central Ukrainian city of Poltava, three police officers in the Sumy region and one person in Kharkiv were killed by Russian airstrikes on 01.02.25.<sup>14</sup>

### **War events, abuses in the military administration, violence against military personnel and recruitment**

According to media reports, several parts of the country, including the western Ukrainian Carpathian foothills, were attacked by Russian combat drones on the night of 27.01.25, targeting infrastructure facilities in particular and causing fires in some areas. According to the Ukrainian air force, 54 of the more than 100 drones were shot down. A further 39 were drones without explosives used to deceive air defences, which were electronically disabled.

While the heavy fighting in eastern Ukraine continues and Ukrainian defences remain under pressure, Russian troops are attempting to conquer several islands in the Dnipro estuary in order to establish a bridgehead, according to media reports published on 27.01.25. The river flows into the Black Sea west of the city of Kherson.

According to media reports, there is a dispute in the Ukrainian government over the procurement of weapons. Following criticism by Defence Minister Rustem Umerov of the Defence Procurement Agency, which was set up to coordinate arms purchases and combat corruption, Deputy Defence Minister Dmytro Klimenkov was dismissed. According to a statement issued by the National Anti-Corruption Bureau on 28.01.25, an investigation was subsequently launched against Umerov for abuse of power after a supervisory authority accused him of refusing to renew the agency management's contracts following a dispute with them. According to reports, Umerov's criticism was aimed at the leaking of contracts and information by the agency's management in addition to inadequate equipment and unreliable ammunition supplies. The G7 states called on the Ukrainian authorities to resolve the dispute quickly.

In another case, according to media reports published on 29.01.25, Kyiv's mayor Vitali Klitschko criticised the current high level of interference by the military administration in the affairs of the city administration, which he said was being comprehensively destabilised as a result. The criticism was thus also indirectly aimed at President Zelenskyy, who had replaced the head of the Kyiv military administration at the beginning of the year.

Meanwhile, President Zelenskyy has announced a further modernisation of the armed forces. The formation of army corps is intended to drive forward the development of combat brigades and strengthen defence capabilities. At least one person died on 01.02.25 as a result of an explosion at a Ukrainian army recruitment centre in the western Ukrainian city of Rivne. According to the responsible governor, there was no air raid warning over the city at the time. No further details were given as to the cause of the explosion. The media also reported another explosion that occurred on 02.02.25 near a recruitment centre in Pavlohrad (Dnipropetrovsk region), in which one person was injured. In addition, according to information issued by the public prosecutor's office, a man in the Poltava region shot and killed a recruiting officer who was taking conscripts to a training centre on 01.02.25. After the man attempted to flee with a conscript, both were reportedly captured by the police, according to the authorities. In view of these incidents, Major General Mykhailo Drapaty, commander of the Ukrainian Ground Forces, lamented growing violence against military personnel behind the front line and called for a swift and tough response from the state.

According to media reports published on 02.02.25, a discussion is taking place in Ukraine about lowering the conscription age from 25 to 18 in light of the lack of soldiers. Most of the population are reported to be against this. According to a statement issued by the deputy head of the Office of the President, Colonel Pavlo Palisa, young men are to be motivated to do military service with one-year contracts and with permission to enter and leave the country freely afterwards. He said that adequate military training was also to be guaranteed in the contract. The quality of training had previously been criticised.<sup>15</sup>

### **Energy infrastructure**

According to media reports published on 01.02.25, the national energy operator Ukrenerho reported emergency power outages in several regions due to Russian missile strikes carried out on the night of 01.02.25. The regions reportedly affected were Kharkiv, Sumy, Poltava, Donetsk, Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia and Kirovohrad.<sup>16</sup>

### **Judicial sentences**

According to the public prosecutor's office, a woman from the Kharkiv region was sentenced to 11 years in prison on 27.01.25 for passing on information about air defence systems and supporting the Russian invasion on social media. In addition, a Russian citizen was sentenced to 10 years in prison for spying on the Ukrainian military in the city of Kharkiv.<sup>17</sup>

## **Financial aid**

After US President Donald Trump halted almost all foreign humanitarian programmes for 90 days, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy announced a review of the humanitarian programmes that had previously been financed by the US, according to media reports published on 28.01.25. According to Zelenskyy, some humanitarian projects run by Ukrainian and international organisations have been discontinued. Others have announced their closure. He said the government could provide some of the required funds from public finances. Priority for support would be given to projects relating to children, veterans and the protection of the infrastructure. Zelenskyy also emphasised that military support was not affected by the spending freeze.<sup>18</sup>

## **10 February 2025**

### **Civilian casualties**

In Izium (Kharkiv Oblast), which had been occupied by Russian forces at the beginning of the full-scale invasion, at least five people died in a Russian missile strike carried out on 04.02.25, according to media reports; numerous others were injured. On the same day, local authorities reported one death each from Russian shelling in the Dnipropetrovsk region and in the city of Kherson. According to rescue services, two people were killed by Russian shelling that took place in the Donetsk region on 05.02.25. On the same day, according to the local governor, one person died in a Russian missile strike on the port of Odesa.<sup>19</sup>

### **War events; execution of Ukrainian prisoners of war; attacks on recruitment centres**

According to media reports, after months of heavy fighting, the Russian side is claiming the capture of the mining town of Toretsk and the village of Orikhovo-Vasylivka (both in Donetsk Oblast), which is located near Chasiv Yar and on a road leading to the city of Sloviansk, which is also Ukrainian-controlled. Toretsk is reportedly the largest settlement that Russian forces have succeeded in capturing since the capture of Avdiivka (cf. BN of 19.02.24). In general, the fighting in eastern Ukraine had intensified again on 08.02.25 after days of low intensity, it was reported. The city of Pokrovsk and its surroundings (Donetsk Oblast) were the focus of Russian assaults.

Ukraine is also said to have succeeded in intercepting Russian glide bombs for the first time. However, this reportedly requires complex means. Glide bombs are dropped beyond the range of air defences.

In an interview given on 04.02.25, which was picked up by other media, President Volodymyr Zelensky declared that he was prepared to negotiate directly with Russian President Vladimir Putin under certain conditions. He qualified his own decree from September 2022, which had declared direct talks with Putin impossible. He said the condition was that the US and Europe also be involved in the negotiations.

In the same interview, Zelenskyy provided updated information on Ukraine's own losses. He stated that the Ukrainian armed forces had now suffered 45,100 casualties since 24.02.22, and that 390,000 soldiers had been injured. Reference is made to the widespread assumption that both sides in the war are exaggerating the enemy's losses and downplaying their own. Western intelligence services reportedly estimate that around 100,000 Ukrainian soldiers have been killed and that more than twice that number have been killed on the Russian side.

According to media reports, the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine declared on 03.02.25 that it had recorded the executions of a total of 79 Ukrainian prisoners of war by Russian troops since August 2024. It had reportedly also documented the execution of an injured Russian soldier by Ukrainian forces in 2024. To establish its findings, it had reportedly analysed videos from Ukrainian and Russian sources and had also interviewed witnesses. It said there had been an "alarming increase" in executions carried out by Russia, although no comparative figures were provided. The mission reportedly also attributes the increase to impunity enshrined in law and encouragement by well-known personalities.

In an exchange of prisoners of war, 150 soldiers on each side were able to return to Ukraine and the Russian Federation, it was reported on 06.02.25 with reference to both sides.

On 05.02.25, one person died when they triggered an explosion at an army recruitment centre in the Chernivtsi region. Four other people were injured. There had already been several previous attacks on recruitment infrastructure and personnel (cf. BN of 03.02.25). According to the police, the number of such attacks across the country in 2025 has totalled nine so far.<sup>20</sup>

### **US foreign aid freeze, demand for access to natural resources**

An agency report names the areas in Ukraine affected by the freeze on US foreign aid. According to the report, USAID-funded development projects in the area of electricity supply and other critical infrastructure as well as the expansion of border crossings to the EU are affected. Since 24.02.22, American development aid has totalled EUR 4.8 billion to date, with humanitarian aid amounting to EUR 2.5 billion. In addition, the US has so far provided EUR 29 billion in budget aid to Ukraine. In response to US President Trump's freeze order, President Zelenskyy announced a review of the humanitarian programmes that had previously been financed by the US (cf. BN of 03.02.25). However, the US administration had resumed arms deliveries after pausing them for several days the previous week, it was reported on 04.02.25.

In the meantime, Trump has stated that Ukraine must grant the US access rights to natural resources, particularly rare earth minerals, in return for the extensive aid. It should be noted that a significant proportion of Ukraine's mineral resources are located in Russian-controlled or frontline areas. According to experts, this is a potential incentive for Russia to continue the war, not only because of the geo-economic potential for Russia itself but also to prevent investment in Ukrainian deposits and thus in the Ukrainian economy.<sup>21</sup>

## **17 February 2025**

### **Civilian casualties; psychological stress due to war**

According to local authorities, one person was killed in an attack on Kyiv on 12.02.25, which caused damage in at least four districts. On the morning of 14.02.25, media reported that one person had been killed in Kramatorsk (Donetsk Oblast) and two had been killed in the Kherson region as a result of Russian attacks. On 15.02.25, it was reported that the previous day another person had been killed in the Kherson region and two people had been killed in the Zaporizhzhia region by Russian glide bombs.

According to the alliance of German aid organisations "Aktion Deutschland Hilft" (Germany Helps Campaign), the need for psychosocial support has risen sharply in view of the humanitarian situation. The three years of war have had an impact on people's mental health. The risk of developing post-traumatic stress disorder or other mental health problems is particularly high among children.<sup>22</sup>

### **Occupied territories: prison conditions in Crimea**

UN expert Alice Jill Edwards has criticised the lack of care for Ukrainian prisoners in the Crimea annexed by Russia, media reported on 10.02.25. Due to torture, violence and poor prison conditions, some of the eight cases of civilian prisoners she examined in detail revealed life-threatening health problems. Referring more generally to the occupied Ukrainian territories, Edwards explained that "torture continues to be carried out in an organised and systematic way" there by Russia.<sup>23</sup>

### **War events; recruitment of young men**

On the night of 14.02.25, according to its own sources, Russia carried out a coordinated attack on Ukrainian military airfields, harbours and drone production sites as well as fuel depots.

According to the Institute for the Study of War (ISW), the Russian side recently advanced near Toretsk (Donetsk Oblast). According to its own statements and observations by ISW, Ukraine, in turn, was able to advance against Russian troops near Pokrovsk (Donetsk Oblast). According to ISW, a slowdown in Russian offensives south and southwest of Pokrovsk has been observed over the past two weeks. It says this could be due to the fact that the Russian side intends instead to prioritise its efforts in the region on Kostyantynivka, an important Ukrainian defensive position, in the spring, but also due to the success of Ukrainian drone attacks on Russian units.

In order to counteract the shortage of soldiers, 18 to 24-year-old men are to be attracted into the army through high pay and additional bonus payments for one-year contracts, according to reports. Despite mobilisation, this age group has not yet been called up for military service. This is reportedly due to the risk of massive, long-term demographic effects. The staggered total bonus, half of which is only to be paid on leaving, reportedly amounts to UAH one million (approx. EUR 22,900, as at 17.02.25).<sup>24</sup>

### **Energy infrastructure**

The additional safety structure, known as the New Safe Confinement (NSC), at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant was damaged by the impact of a drone on 14.02.25. According to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the subsequent fire delayed the repair of the damage. However, it said that no particular leakage of radioactivity was measured. IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi described the incident as very serious. A Ukrainian drone attack and mutual recriminations for the failure to carry out the planned rotation within the IAEA mission were also recently reported from the immediate vicinity of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant.

In Mykolaiv, tens of thousands of residents had no heating or electricity following a Russian attack on a thermal power plant on 14.02.25/15.02.25, according to reports citing the government.<sup>25</sup>

### **Efforts to achieve a ceasefire**

US President Donald Trump and US Secretary of Defence Pete Hegseth have caused uncertainty and anger in Ukraine, as well as in their own country and among Western partners, with their own initiatives and statements on achieving a ceasefire. On 12.02.25, Trump reportedly stated that he had spoken to Russian President Vladimir Putin and then to Volodymyr Zelenskyy on the phone. He held out the prospect of a possible bilateral meeting with Putin in Saudi Arabia. Trump announced immediate peace negotiations and a ceasefire in the "not too distant future". For his part, Hegseth considered it an unrealistic goal to fully restore Ukraine to its internationally recognised borders. He said NATO membership was not an option.

According to commentators, this could also have an impact on the morale of the population in the occupied territories, who are hoping for a return to Ukrainian control and may even risk pass on information about Russian troops. In a joint declaration, the five largest EU member states, the United Kingdom, the European Commission and the European External Action Service declared their support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. They said that the aim must be to put Ukraine in a position of strength. Ukraine and Europe must be involved in all negotiations. In the meantime, according to media reports, the US administration has announced that Ukraine will have a seat at the negotiating table, but not Europe. However, the US has reportedly asked European states what security guarantees they could provide for Ukraine. US Vice President J.D. Vance reportedly also told Zelenskyy at a meeting at the Munich Security Conference that the US wanted a sustainable and lasting peace, not one that would lead to renewed conflict within a few years.<sup>26</sup>

### **Sanctions against former president**

On 13.02.25, Zelenskyy issued a decree imposing sanctions against Petro Poroshenko, his immediate predecessor in office. The previous evening, according to reports, Zelenskyy declared in his TV address that money "earned through the sale of Ukraine, Ukrainian interests and Ukrainian security" must be blocked and used to protect Ukraine. He said Poroshenko's assets, telephones and internet access in Ukraine had been blocked and his state honours withdrawn. His pro-Western European Solidarity party reportedly responded with a protest in parliament. The person concerned himself reportedly described the measure as politically motivated and as a blow to the previous unity that had existed and was needed in the war against Russia.

Poroshenko, whose assets are said to amount to over USD one billion, is regarded as one of Zelenskyy's main opponents, also in the event that the presidential election, which has not yet been held due to martial law, can take place.

The decree is reportedly also directed against the oligarchs Ihor Kolomoyskyi, Konstantin Zhevago and Hennadiy Boholyubov as well as the pro-Russian politician Viktor Medvedchuk. Among other things, their assets have also been frozen. Kolomoyskyi is in custody (cf. BN of 11.09.23), while the other three are abroad.<sup>27</sup>

## **24 February 2025**

### **Civilian casualties**

According to the governor of the Donetsk region, two people died in the city of Bilytske on 16.02.25. One person was killed in the embattled city of Pokrovsk on 17.02.25. In Kostyantynivka, also located in Donetsk and close to the frontline, one person was killed by a Russian attack on 18.02.25, and two people were killed by Russian glide bombs on 19.02.25. Thirty-four houses were damaged in the attacks. A large proportion of the population had already left the city. One person died in the neighbouring village of Predtechyne. Also, in Kostyantynivka five people

died on 20.02.25 as a result of Russian attacks; two other people were killed in the villages of Mykolaivka and Vesele, according to the governor. Also, on 22.02.25 one person died in Kostyantynivka in another glide bomb attack. Civilians were also killed in Russian attacks carried out in other regions. On 15.02.25, one person was killed in the Nikopol district (Dnipropetrovsk Oblast), it was reported on 17.02.25. According to the local military administration, one person died in Orikhiv (Zaporizhzhia region) on 17.02.25. Two people died in the Kherson region and two in Kupiansk (Kharkiv Oblast) on 19.02.25, according to the respective regional governor. On 20.02.25, two people died in the Kherson region, two people died in the Nikopol district (Dnipropetrovsk) and one person died in Huliaipole (Zaporizhzhia Oblast), again according to the respective regional governor. According to local authorities, one person was killed in a drone attack outside Kyiv on 22.02.25. In Kryvyi Rih (Dnipropetrovsk Oblast), one person was also killed by a drone attack on the night of 23.02.25, according to the authorities. They said it was the most massive Russian drone attack to date. The end result as reported on 24.02.25 was a total of 267 drones counted across the country and a total of four people killed. It was also reported on 24.02.25 that, according to the regional governor, one person had died in Russian attacks carried out in the Kherson region.<sup>28</sup>

### **War events**

Today marks the third anniversary of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in the war that has been ongoing since 2014.

According to an analysis of its own database by the American NGO Armed Conflict Location & Event Data (ACLED), Russian attacks targeting the civilian population have increasingly shifted from artillery and rocket fire to drone and airstrikes in the past three years of the war (2022, 2023, 2024). It says that while the estimated number of casualties from such attacks was highest in 2022, it had risen by 16 percent year on year to around 1,600 in 2024.

Russia claimed the capture of the settlement of Fyholivka in the east of the Kharkiv region on 17.02.25, the villages of Novosilka and Nadiivka in the Donetsk region on 21.02.25 and the village of Novolyubivka, one of a few under Ukrainian control in the Luhansk region, on 23.02.25. According to reports, Russia makes almost daily announcements about the capture of smaller settlements, which is rarely commented on by Ukraine and cannot immediately be independently verified.<sup>29</sup>

### **Efforts to end the war; US-Ukrainian relations**

With regard to a possible end to the Russian war of aggression, there has been a flurry of statements recently, centred on bilateral initiatives between the US and Russia as well as the impact on Ukrainian-US relations.

According to media reports, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy declared that, in view of bilateral meetings held between representatives of Russia and the US, including both foreign ministers in Saudi Arabia, he would not recognise any results of their negotiations that emerged to the exclusion of Ukraine. In his view, the US wanted to achieve a quick success in the form of a ceasefire. However, a ceasefire was not a victory. He said that for Ukraine, it was about its own fate for several generations. It was also reported that the majority of Ukrainian politicians rejected the idea of a ceasefire out of concern that it would give Russia time to arm itself.

It was reported that at the meeting in Riyadh which took place on 18.02.25, it was agreed that negotiators would be appointed for such talks. On 17.02.25, the US envoy to Ukraine, Keith Kellogg, said that the decision on a peace agreement would not be imposed, but would be taken by Zelenskyy and the Ukrainian people. On the same day, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov expressed his country's position: Russia did not want to give up rare earths (cf. BN of 10.02.25) or the Russian-speaking population in the occupied territories.

In response to criticism from Ukraine for not having been invited, US President Donald Trump held the Ukrainian leadership at least partly responsible for both the Russian invasion and the continuation of the war. In response to these and other statements, Zelenskyy accused Trump of being trapped in a Russian disinformation bubble. Trump responded by calling Zelenskyy a "dictator without elections".

On 17.02.25, the British newspaper The Telegraph reported on the American draft agreement between the US and Ukraine on the exploitation of rare earths and raw materials, as well as on the use of ports and infrastructure. According to the agreement, the US would be entitled to 50 percent of Ukrainian revenues from these sectors and 50 percent of the financial value of licences to third parties. The author speaks of an "economic colonisation of Ukraine, in legal perpetuity". According to other media reports, the talks and the exchange of drafts for a raw materials agreement were continuing despite the bilateral tensions. Zelenskyy reportedly criticised the lack of American security guarantees, among other things.

Meanwhile, European efforts to play a role of their own in ending the war appear unsuccessful, according to media reports. In particular, there is disagreement regarding a possible peacekeeping mission in Ukraine.<sup>30</sup>

### **Energy infrastructure**

Following a massive drone strike against the energy infrastructure in the Odesa region on 18.02.25, the authorities reported that 160,000 residents there were left without heating and electricity.<sup>31</sup>

## **03 March 2025**

### **American-Ukrainian relations; efforts to end the war**

The already strained relations between the US and Ukraine were further damaged during President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's visit to Washington on 28.01.25 in what observers described as an unprecedented altercation. US President Donald Trump and Vice President J.D. Vance accused Zelenskyy of "ingratitude" and "gambling with world war three" in front of the cameras during their reception in the Oval Office. Zelenskyy had actually travelled there to sign the agreement on US access to Ukrainian natural resources that has recently been the subject of intensive negotiations (cf. BN of 17.02.25 and 24.02.25). This did not take place due to Zelenskyy's visit being cut short. According to reports, Trump subsequently declared that Zelenskyy was not ready for peace.

The question was raised in many places as to whether the US would now completely cease its previously significant support for Ukraine and what further increased pressure the US would now exert on Ukraine to make concessions. It was reported that the Speaker of the US House of Representatives had expressed the expectation that Zelenskyy would resign as President if he did not "come to his senses". National Security Advisor Mike Waltz was reported to have also said similar things. The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) reportedly warned on 01.03.25 that an end to American support for Ukraine could decisively change the balance of power in Russia's favour. Even before the meeting, it had been reported that Trump was not planning to involve his country in any peacekeeping forces on Ukrainian territory or provide security guarantees.

Against this backdrop, heads of government from around 18 countries and leading representatives of the EU and NATO met on 02.03.25 at the invitation of the United Kingdom. British Prime Minister Keir Starmer expressed his confidence that the US could be won over as a reliable partner for securing European security guarantees after all. He stated that discussions had centred in particular on British-French proposals for a ceasefire plan between Ukraine and Russia, which still had to be specified. He said that, initially, a ceasefire "in the air, on the seas and in the energy infrastructure", that is to say, excluding ground combat, was to apply for one month.

The split between the US and large parts of Europe on the Ukraine issue had already emerged in the UN bodies on 24.02.25, according to media and UN reports. In the UN Security Council, the draft resolution S/RES/2774 (2025) introduced by the US was adopted with 10 votes in favour, including Russia's, while the remaining five Security Council members Denmark, France, Greece, Slovenia and the United Kingdom abstained. The resolution reportedly called for a swift end to the conflict and a lasting peace between the two warring parties. It was reported that the European countries had criticised the failure to designate Russia as the aggressor and the lack of reference to state sovereignty and territorial integrity. A few hours earlier, two non-binding resolutions had been adopted in an emergency session of the UN General Assembly. A Ukrainian-European draft resolution (A/RES/ES-11/7) was supported by 93 countries, while 65 abstained and 18 voted against. The latter included the US, Russia and Hungary as an EU member state. The American draft resolution (A/RES/ES-11/8), which originally reflected the same position as the UN Security Council resolution, was amended by European supplementary proposals. In the end, 93 countries voted in favour, 73 abstained, including the US, and eight rejected it, including Russia.<sup>32</sup>

### **Civilian casualties**

In Kostyantynivka (Donetsk Oblast), civilians have once again become victims of daily Russian attacks (cf. BN of 24.02.25). According to the regional governor Vadym Filashkin, a strike with three glide bombs killed at least five people on 26.02.25. Filashkin was reported to have repeatedly called on the remaining residents to leave the city. The following civilian casualties were also reported in the Donetsk region as a result of Russian attacks: on 24.02.25, one person killed in Sloviansk; on 25.02.25, one person killed and numerous injured in Kramatorsk and another person killed in Yampil; on 26.02.25, one person killed in Pokrovsk; on 28.02.25 and 01.03.25, a total of six people killed without location information and on 02.03.25, one person killed in Kramatorsk.

Russian rocket launchers killed one person in the Kharkiv region on 25.02.25. According to the local governor, Russian shelling killed one person in the Kherson region on both 25.02.25 and 26.02.25. According to the military administration, one person died in a Russian drone strike on a bus in Kherson on 02.03.25, and another of the passengers was critically injured. One person was killed in drone strikes on the Kyiv region on 25.02.25, and two were killed on 26.02.25. According to local reports, one person was killed by debris from Russian drones in Odesa on 28.01.25.<sup>33</sup>

### **War events**

According to media reports, the Ukrainian army claimed the recapture of the settlement of Kotlyne west of the long-contested city of Pokrovsk (Donetsk Oblast) on 26.02.25. The ISW had reportedly concluded that Russia had abandoned the capture of Pokrovsk (cf. BN of 17.02.25) and also assumed that the city would not be surrounded at present, also in view of Ukrainian resistance. It was reported that Russia had instead claimed the capture of several settlements in the Donetsk region. According to a Ukrainian analysis group, Russian troops occupied 192 km<sup>2</sup> in February 2025, the third consecutive month in which they occupied less additional territory than in the previous month.<sup>34</sup>

### **Energy infrastructure**

On the occasion of the third anniversary of the full-scale Russian invasion, Energy Minister Herman Halushchenko stated on 24.02.25 that Russia had carried out more than 30 mass strikes on Ukraine's energy infrastructure over the past three years. He said that despite this and despite the occupation of territories hosting power generation facilities producing a total of 18 gigawatts of generation, including in particular the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, the energy system continued to function. According to further media reports, the US State Department has cancelled a US Agency for International Development (USAID) initiative to restore the energy grid following Russian attacks. USAID had invested several hundred million USD in this so far, a local official said. He added that Ukraine's economy had so far proved resilient despite Russia's war, which was also aimed at destroying it, particularly thanks to USAID. Meanwhile, Italy has reportedly pledged USD 13.5 million for the Ukrainian Energy Support Fund, which will also be used to support the restoration of the energy infrastructure.<sup>35</sup>

## **10 March 2025**

### **American-Ukrainian relations: military aid, efforts for a ceasefire**

On 03.03.25, US President Donald Trump ordered an immediate halt to US military aid to Ukraine until further notice. It was reported that this step followed the altercation during the visit of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to Washington on 28.02.25 (cf. BN of 03.03.25). Trump reportedly did not want to resume military aid until he saw that Ukraine was committed to peace negotiations. According to reports, the halt in military aid also affects weapons and ammunition worth over USD 1 billion that have already been ordered or are in the process of being delivered. According to estimates, these arms deliveries, which were initiated under the Biden administration, would have enabled the Ukrainian army to continue fighting at a similar level for around six months. In particular, there were reportedly now fears of a significant weakening of the air defences due to the lack of American Patriot systems and therefore Russian attacks on strategic targets such as energy infrastructure and arms factories. It was unclear whether the training of fighter jet pilots was also affected by the halt.

On 05.03.25, the director of the US foreign intelligence agency, CIA, confirmed that the US had temporarily halted intelligence sharing with Ukraine, which is seen in reports as a further increase in pressure on Ukraine. For its part, the United Kingdom will reportedly continue to provide Ukraine with intelligence information, but will not pass on directly any information coming from the US. According to further media reports, the US technology company Maxar has also blocked Ukrainian access to its satellite imagery service at the request of the US government.

According to further media reports, Ukraine and the US are planning talks on ending the war, which will take place in Saudi Arabia on 10.03.25. Meanwhile, the Kremlin has rejected the Franco-British proposal for a temporary ceasefire. It also became known that Trump's entourage had had contacts with leading Ukrainian opposition politicians. It was denied that the removal of Zelenskyy was also discussed. Zelenskyy's predecessor and rival Petro Poroshenko (cf. BN of 17.02.25) confirmed his involvement and stated that he had refused Trump's call for elections if the war continued. Opposition politician Yulia Tymoshenko was reported to have reacted similarly.<sup>36</sup>

### **Civilian casualties**

Four people died in Russian attacks in the Kherson region on 02.03.25, it was reported the following day, citing the regional governor. Also, on 02.03.25 two people were killed by Russian attacks in Pokrovsk (Donetsk region), according to the regional governor there. However, there is no report of a person killed in Kramatorsk (Ukrainian-controlled part of the Donetsk region) on 02.03.25 in a summary of that day's events (cf. BN of 03.03.25). According to the governor, one person was killed by a Russian attack on Pokrovsk on 03.03.25. A Russian glide bomb killed one person in the Zaporizhzhia region on 03.03.25, as reported by the responsible governor. On 04.03.25, one person died in the Kherson region in Russian attacks on a total of 29 settlements, according to its governor. On the same day, one person died in a suburb of Odesa, which, with its port infrastructure, has recently been the target of daily Russian drone and missile attacks, according to a report published on 07.03.25. The energy supply is reportedly severely restricted. On 05.03.25, a Russian missile hit a hotel in Kryvyi Rih (Dnipropetrovsk region). According to the regional governor, the attack killed two and injured a further 28 people. According to media reports published on 06.03.25, one person died in Russian attacks in the Sumy and Kharkiv regions, respectively. According to the authorities, at least 11 people were killed and 30 were injured in Russian attacks on the city of Dobropillya (Donetsk region) on 07.03.25. According to media reports published on 08.03.25, there were further fatalities in the region in Pokrovsk (one), near Kostyantynivka (two) and Kurakhove (one) as well as in Bohodukhiv (three, Kharkiv region).<sup>37</sup>

### **War events**

According to reports published on 03.03.25, the Ukrainian military admitted, without providing specific figures, that it had suffered losses on 01.03.25 in a Russian attack on a military training area over 100 km from the front. The reports stated that an unconfirmed source had quoted a total of 32 killed and 153 injured military personnel. Army chief Mykhailo Drapatyi announced that those responsible for the unit's inadequate air defence would be severely punished. He said that an investigation into negligence had been initiated. Meanwhile, according to media reports published on 08.03.25, thousands of Ukrainian soldiers in the Russian region of Kursk are threatened with encirclement. In addition, the Russian Ministry of Defence reportedly announced that it had captured parts of the Ukrainian region of Sumy, which borders the Kursk region, for the first time since 2022.<sup>38</sup>

### **Energy infrastructure**

According to Energy Minister Herman Halushchenko, the electricity and gas infrastructure in several Ukrainian regions was damaged by massive Russian attacks on the night of 07.03.25. He said that the regions affected included Kharkiv, Ternopil, Poltava and Odesa. Repair teams were working to repair the damage. According to the Russian Ministry of Defence, air, sea and land-based weapons systems were used for the attacks. Against this backdrop, President Zelenskyy called for a partial ceasefire in the air and at sea as a first step.<sup>39</sup>

## **17 March 2025**

### **Efforts for a ceasefire**

According to media reports, the American delegation under US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and the Ukrainian delegation, including the head of the Presidential Office, Andriy Yermak, Foreign Minister Andriy Sybiha and Defence Minister Rustem Umerov, met for negotiations in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on 11.03.25. The US's aim was to establish what concessions Ukraine was prepared to make. It was reported that the Ukrainian side declared its willingness to agree to an immediate 30-day ceasefire. Sybiha reportedly also told the US that the European partners would have to take part in future peace negotiations. According to President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, the US proposal for a ceasefire not only refers to airstrikes with missiles, drones and bombs as well as attacks in the Black Sea but also covers the entire frontline. According to the joint declaration, the ceasefire could be extended by mutual agreement, which in turn would depend on agreement and implementation by the Russian Federation (RF). The declaration stated that it was of particular importance for Ukraine that the US made military aid and intelligence information available again with immediate effect. Security guarantees were reportedly not part of the negotiations. The American side reportedly also reiterated plans for a minerals agreement that could give the US a 50 percent share of the revenue from the sale of Ukrainian mineral resources. According to US President Donald Trump, the agreement would offer implicit security guarantees by linking the economic interests of the US with the security of Ukraine. Trump has reportedly also hinted at financial consequences if the Kremlin does not support

such a ceasefire. According to Rubio, the US was seeking unconditional Russian consent. Kremlin advisor Yuri Ushakov had reportedly already expressed scepticism on 13.03.25, saying that such a ceasefire would merely give Ukraine time to recover from the pressure exerted by the Russian troops.

At a meeting of the defence ministers of the five leading European military powers, the UK, Germany, Italy, Poland and France, in Paris on 12.03.25, the formation of a "reassurance force" that would guarantee peace in Ukraine in the event of an agreement was discussed, according to media reports. According to the reports, 15 countries are prepared to form a contingent of up to 30,000 troops to permanently secure Ukraine's airports, seaports and infrastructure.

In this regard, with reference to a statement issued by the Russian Foreign Ministry, it is reported that sending European peacekeeping troops to Ukraine would mean entering into a "direct armed conflict" with the RF. According to reports, 25 Western heads of state and government, the so-called "coalition of the willing", met on 15.03.25 under the leadership of British Prime Minister Keir Starmer to discuss further support for Ukraine and putting more pressure on the RF in the run-up to possible peace negotiations.

According to reports, Russian President Vladimir Putin replied on 14.03.25 that he supported the US proposal in principle, but at the same time he demanded a number of clarifications and conditions that would obviously rule out a rapid end to hostilities. According to Putin, many important details still needed to be clarified. He said that an agreement should lead to lasting peace and address the underlying causes of the conflict. The representatives of the RF and the US would now have to discuss the proposal. According to media reports, President Zelenskyy called Putin's response "manipulative". He said the latter was trying to either delay practical implementation or make it impossible. Meanwhile, President Putin has reportedly called on the hard-pressed Ukrainian troops in the Russian region of Kursk to surrender. In addition, it is reported that President Trump has stripped US special envoy Keith Kellogg, whom Moscow considers to be pro-Ukrainian, of his responsibility for the RF. In future, he will reportedly only be responsible for Ukraine.<sup>40</sup>

### **War events**

The commander-in-chief of the Ukrainian armed forces, Oleksandr Syrskyi, has indicated a partial withdrawal of his troops in the Russian border region of Kursk, according to reports issued on 13.03.25. At the same time, the Ukrainian army is reportedly attempting to quickly establish defence lines near the border in order to prevent a further Russian advance on Ukrainian territory. The military administration of the Sumy region has reportedly also ordered the forced evacuation of several villages near the border. According to the Institute for the Study of War (ISW), the Russian army has recaptured around 70 percent of the Russian territory that was occupied by Ukraine in the summer of 2024. According to the Russian army command, 430 Ukrainian soldiers have been captured.

Amid media reports of the depletion of Ukrainian stocks of ATACMS missiles supplied by the US, the US intends to resume deliveries of long-range missiles shortly after they have been modernised to better counteract Russian jammers.

Following military setbacks, President Zelenskyy has replaced Chief of the General Staff Anatoliy Barhylevych with his deputy Andriy Hnatov, according to media reports published on 16.03.25. In future, Barhylevych is to oversee the reform processes in the armed forces as Inspector General in the Ministry of Defence.<sup>41</sup>

### **Civilian casualties**

According to the governor, six people were killed in Russian attacks in the Donetsk region on 11.03.25. A Russian missile attack on Kryvyi Rih (Dnipropetrovsk region) claimed one life, according to media reports published on 12.03.25. According to the governor, a Russian airstrike on the port of Odesa on 12.03.25 killed four Syrians on a ship that was being loaded with wheat for export. On 14.03.25, according to reports issued by the responsible regional governors, residential areas in Kryvyi Rih and Kherson were hit by Russian airstrikes. While 13 people were injured in Kryvyi Rih, one person was killed in Kherson. According to media reports published on 16.03.25, at least one person died in a Russian drone attack in the city of Iziom (Kharkiv region). According to reports published on 17.03.25, one civilian was also reported killed in Myrnohrad (Donetsk region) and another in the Sumy region.<sup>42</sup>

### **Energy infrastructure and environmental damage**

According to the energy provider DTEK, Russian airstrikes carried out on the night of 15.03.25 severely damaged power plants in the Dnipropetrovsk and Odesa regions and in some cases led to power outages. With reference to an unspecified research study, the blasting of the Kakhovka dam in 2023 triggered a "toxic time bomb", according

to reports published on 14.03.25. According to the study, sediments containing 83,000 tonnes of heavy metals such as lead, cadmium and nickel were exposed.<sup>43</sup>

### **ECtHR judgement on riots during the 2014 Maidan Revolution**

Bloody riots and a catastrophic fire during the 2014 Maidan Revolution between pro-Russian and pro-European groups in Odesa claimed 48 lives. In its judgement, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) has now found that the Ukrainian authorities violated the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). According to a press agency report published on 13.03.25, the fire brigade, police and other administrative bodies did not prevent or stop the violence or do what they could to save the people in the barricaded trade union building in Odesa that was burning at the time.<sup>44</sup>

## **24 March 2025**

### **Efforts for a ceasefire**

According to media reports, during a telephone conversation between Presidents Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin on 18.03.25, the US reportedly sought a pause in attacks on energy infrastructure targets on the condition that Ukraine would do the same. It was reported that in response, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy voiced his support for a temporary halt to attacks on the energy supply. According to the Kremlin, Putin gave the order to halt the attacks on Ukrainian energy facilities after the telephone call. A general ceasefire had reportedly not been agreed. It was reported that negotiations on a ceasefire in the Black Sea are planned, however. It was reportedly also agreed that the two sides would exchange 175 prisoners of war each on 19.03.25. In the process, 23 seriously injured Ukrainian soldiers were also transferred. According to the Kremlin, during the phone call, Putin demanded an end to military and intelligence support for Ukraine by the US and its allies as a condition for a complete ceasefire. According to reports, Western and Ukrainian political commentaries and analyses see the phone call as a defeat for Trump. The reports state that Putin is playing for time and Trump could become the Russian president's accomplice. Reportedly, only Moscow's statement referred to the Russian conditions for a complete ceasefire, but not Washington's statement. According to the Institute for the Study of War (ISW), Putin's demands are tantamount to a "Ukrainian capitulation".

In a phone call between Presidents Trump and Zelenskyy that took place on 19.03.25, the first conversation since the altercation in the White House, the US President reportedly proposed the takeover of Ukrainian power plants by the US. According to Zelenskyy, however, they only discussed one power plant – the Russian-occupied Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant.

Meanwhile, according to media reports published on 19.03.25, President Putin has made further demands of Ukraine. The reports state that Ukraine must recognise the loss of Crimea and the regions of Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson. They add that if Ukraine fulfils Russia's present demands quickly, Russia will not lay claim to Odesa and other regions.

According to media reports, further bilateral talks between the US and Ukraine and between the US and the Russian Federation (RF) at expert level have been announced for 23.03.25 and 24.03.25 in Riyadh. For Zelenskyy, the talks will reportedly focus initially on the ceasefire limited to energy facilities, with the Ukrainian President emphasising the importance of including civilian infrastructure. Lists of infrastructure objects that fall under the heading of civilian infrastructure are reportedly being prepared in order to avoid misunderstandings. According to the Kremlin, the US-Russian negotiations should primarily focus on an initiative for safe shipping in the Black Sea with regard to the safe transport of grain.<sup>45</sup>

### **Civilian casualties and UN report on crimes against humanity**

According to media reports, one person was killed in airstrikes in Kupiansk (Kharkiv region) on 19.03.25. According to reports, one person was killed in Russian attacks in each of the Kherson and Dnipropetrovsk regions on 20.03.25. According to media reports published on 22.03.25, two people were killed the previous day in Russian attacks in Zaporizhzhia and Krasnopillya (Sumy region), respectively, and one person was killed in Kostyantynivka (Donetsk region). According to the governor, three civilians were killed in Pokrovsk (Donetsk region) on 22.03.25. Ukrainian authorities report at least seven dead in Kyiv after Russian attacks carried out on 23.03.25.

According to current UN data, the Russian Federation has committed crimes against humanity in Ukraine, specifically enforced disappearances and torture. According to media reports published on 14.03.25 and 19.03.25, the UN Human Rights Council's Commission of Inquiry on the war in Ukraine reports a "large-scale and systematic attack on the civilian population". It states that the crimes were "committed as part of a state-coordinated policy [...] in all provinces of Ukraine where areas were brought under Russian control". According to the report, the Russian authorities targeted people whom they perceived as a threat or who refused to co-operate with them. It says civilians were arrested and taken to detention centres in the occupied territories or in the Russian Federation. It states that there, some of them were subjected to torture and sexualised violence. It says that many victims are missing. Some have reportedly died in captivity. The report adds that the Russian Federation has also failed to report the whereabouts of missing persons. With reference to a report published by the UN Human Rights Office, media coverage indicates that at least 669 children were killed and a further 1,833 injured in the period from 24.02.22 to 31.12.24. According to this report, a total of 89 percent was killed by large-area explosive weapons. Forty children were reportedly killed by mines and unexploded ordnance.

The report further states that the UN Human Rights Office has also received credible reports that Ukrainian minors were enticed to commit acts of sabotage with money. Everything reportedly points to those responsible having links to the Russian Federation. With reference to reports issued by the Ukrainian public prosecutor's office, at least 11 young people between the ages of 13 and 17 have reportedly been arrested in connection with acts of sabotage. The reports say they were contacted via social media and encouraged, for example, to set fire to vehicles belonging to Ukrainian military personnel or to railway installations. They were reportedly promised money if they recorded video evidence of their actions.<sup>46</sup>

### **War events**

According to media reports published on 18.03.25, which refer to unconfirmed information from the Russian Ministry of Defence, Russian troops have broken through Ukrainian defence lines approximately 50 km southeast of the city of Zaporizhzhia. The reports say that the Ukrainian side has stated that the fighting is still ongoing.<sup>47</sup>

### **Energy infrastructure**

Following the telephone conversation between Presidents Trump and Putin, there were further Russian attacks on Ukraine's energy and civilian infrastructure, according to media reports published on 19.03.25. According to these reports, the city of Sloviansk (Donetsk region) was partially cut off from the power grid following damage to the electricity supply. A hospital in Sumy was reportedly also hit, as was the energy infrastructure of the state railways in the Dnipropetrovsk region. Russian drone attacks on Odesa carried out on 20.03.25 reportedly caused damage to civilian infrastructure and power cuts in some parts of the city. According to media reports published on 19.03.25, the Russian side in turn pointed to Ukrainian drone attacks on Russian oil infrastructure. According to the reports, both warring parties accused each other of undermining the agreement to temporarily cease attacks on energy infrastructure.<sup>48</sup>

### **Russian decree on the residence status of Ukrainian citizens**

According to reports, President Putin issued a decree on 20.03.25 in which he calls on Ukrainian citizens living "in Russia without a residence permit" to "settle their legal status" by 10.09.25. This will reportedly put pressure on Ukrainian citizens in the Russian Federation and in the Russian-occupied territories of Ukraine to take on Russian citizenship. According to the reports, this will force Ukrainian citizens who refuse Russian passports and citizenship to leave the occupied territories, for example. The reports add that Ukraine has reported this illegal practice to the International Criminal Court.<sup>49</sup>

## **31 March 2025**

### **Efforts for a ceasefire**

Following media reports that the talks between the US, the Russian Federation (RF) and Ukraine in Saudi Arabia ended on 24.03.25 without agreement on a clearly defined ceasefire being reached, the negotiating parties agreed on a "cessation of the use of force" in the Black Sea on 25.03.25. However, the Russian Federation reportedly took the view that a maritime ceasefire would only come into force if the sanctions on Russian agricultural exports were

eased. The reports said that in addition to the lifting of sanctions, the Russian Federation was also demanding access to the international Swift banking system. It was reported that President Donald Trump promised to review the Russian conditions. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy reportedly then made it clear that the agreements did not require any easing of sanctions and would come into force immediately. According to further reports, Zelenskyy also expressed his distrust of the Russian side and criticised statements made by US envoy Steve Witkoff, who described the staged referendums in the Ukrainian territories occupied by the Russian Federation as legitimate. Zelenskyy said that the US administration was also constantly changing the conditions with regard to a proposed raw materials agreement with the US. According to reports, the new US proposal, which was not outlined in detail, would deprive Ukraine of "part of its sovereignty" and force the country to "repay all US aid received", which is why Zelenskyy was reportedly sceptical about an agreement under completely different conditions. Should Ukraine refuse the deal, Trump said, it would face "big problems".

Meanwhile, the EU has reportedly indicated that it will only lift sanctions if there is an "unconditional withdrawal of all Russian forces" from Ukraine. According to media reports published on 27.03.25, President Putin has put forward the suggestion of a transitional administration for Ukraine with UN involvement, which aims to remove Zelenskyy from the presidency. Washington has reportedly rejected this, citing compliance with the Ukrainian constitution. President Trump is reported to have threatened the Russian Federation with new tariffs on oil products if the Kremlin blocks his ceasefire initiatives.<sup>50</sup>

### **Civilian casualties**

According to media reports, 88 people were injured in a Russian rocket attack on the city of Sumy on 24.03.25. According to media reports published on 25.03.25, the governor of the Russian-occupied region of Luhansk announced that six people had been killed in a Ukrainian artillery attack the previous day. According to reports, four people were killed in various Russian drone attacks on the night of 26.03.25; more precise location details are not available. According to a media report published on 28.03.25, two people died as a result of a Russian attack on the city of Kherson. Also, on 28.03.25 at least four people were killed and 19 injured in a Russian drone attack on the city of Dnipro, according to the regional governor responsible. According to the governor, two people died and 25 were injured in a Russian drone attack on civilian infrastructure and a military hospital in Kharkiv on 29.03.25. According to reports, the UN Human Rights Commissariat has pointed out that the fighting has intensified in parallel with the ceasefire negotiations and that the number of victims in the first three months of 2025 has increased by 30 percent compared to the same period in 2024.<sup>51</sup>

### **War events**

According to the Commander-in-Chief of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, Oleksandr Syrskyi, the Russian army is stepping up its attacks along the northeastern border with the aim of penetrating the Sumy region. According to unconfirmed information released by the Russian Ministry of Defence on 29.03.25, Russian forces have captured settlements in the regions of Zaporizhzhia, Donetsk and Sumy. Ukraine is reportedly expecting increased Russian efforts to advance in the coming weeks, particularly on the eastern and southern fronts.<sup>52</sup>

### **Energy infrastructure, financial aid and economic situation**

Following hints from President Trump regarding a possible takeover of Ukrainian power plants by the US (cf. BN of 24.03.25), the Russian Foreign Ministry stated that the occupied Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant was a Russian facility, according to media reports published on 26.03.25. A transfer of control to Ukraine or another country was therefore impossible.

According to media reports, both the Ukrainian and the Russian side continue to accuse each other of attacking energy targets and thus violating their respective pledges to suspend attacks for 30 days retroactively from 18.03.25. According to Ukrainian sources, the Russian Federation has attacked at least eight energy facilities since 18.03.25. It is reported that Moscow, in turn, reserves the right not to honour the agreement in the event that Ukraine continues to violate it.

According to a media report published on 28.03.25, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs announced that over EUR 7 million will be made available to Ukraine to repair its energy infrastructure. According to media reports, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) announced on 28.03.25 that, following a review, there was no longer anything standing in the way of a disbursement of USD 400 million to Ukraine for budget support. Although

economic growth would continue to slow in 2025, the Ukrainian economy had remained stable to date despite difficult conditions, according to the IMF.<sup>53</sup>

### **Judicial sentences**

According to media reports published on 26.03.25, a Russian military court in Rostov-on-Don has sentenced 23 Ukrainian prisoners of war to prison terms of between 13 and 23 years for attempted subversion and membership of a terrorist organisation. According to the reports, in addition to fighters from the Azov regiment, men and women who were employed as drivers, cooks or warehouse workers were also sentenced. Eleven of the 23 people were reportedly sentenced in absentia as they had already returned to Ukraine as part of a prisoner of war exchange programme. The reports said that the Ukrainian human rights commissioner, Dmytro Lubinets, described the sentence as illegal, as prisoners of war were combatants and not criminals. The Russian Federation had reportedly classified the unit as a terrorist organisation.<sup>54</sup>

## **07 April 2025**

### **Efforts to reach a ceasefire**

According to the Institute for the Study of War (ISW), a general ceasefire is unlikely to be reached between the two warring parties in the near future. The Russian Federation (RF) was attempting to block a temporary ceasefire in the Black Sea in order to stall efforts towards a general ceasefire and extract additional concessions from the west. Whilst Moscow was unable to accept the US ceasefire proposals in their current form, President Trump was considering imposing secondary sanctions on all oil coming out of Russia. According to reports, the Kremlin referred to the peace efforts as “very complex” and a “longwinded process”. Russia was however said to still be keen on cooperating with the USA and establishing bilateral relations. For this reason, according to media reports, Washington received the Russian Presidential Envoy on Investment, Kirill Dmitriev, who has long since been subject to sanctions and who is lobbying in the ceasefire negotiations for sanctions to be lifted. According to media reports, there are no plans as yet for a personal meeting between Presidents Trump and Putin. According to US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, President Trump was not “going to fall into the trap of endless negotiations” with the RF. According to media information, the RF is not mentioned in the list of countries published by Trump on 02.04.25 on which high tariffs are to be imposed. The US Administration is said to justify this with the ongoing negotiations. On the other hand, according to a fact sheet released by the White House, a 10 % levy is to be imposed on Ukraine. As to the planned Ukraine-US agreement on raw materials, Ukraine wished to submit a counterproposal to the US draft, and continued to hope that the project could be linked to US security guarantees.<sup>55</sup>

### **Civilian victims**

According to information from the regional governor, one person each died in Russian attacks on 31.03.25 and 02.04.25, respectively, in the Zaporizhzhia Region. According to media information of 03.04.25, at least four people were killed in Kryvyi Rih (Dnipropetrovsk Region) as a result of a Russian rocket attack. According to information from the authorities, at least five people were killed and more than 30 were injured by Russian drone attacks in the night of 03-04.04.25 in Kharkiv. According to media information of 04.04.25, one person died in the Sumy Region in a Russian drone attack. In a further Russian rocket attack on President Zelenskyy’s hometown of Kryvyi Rih on 04.04.25, according to media information, the number of casualties rose to 20, including nine children. At least 70 people were said to have been injured. According to information from the responsible regional governor, the rocket struck a residential area with a playground, whilst the Russian Defence Ministry stated that large numbers of Ukrainian soldiers and their foreign trainers had been killed with a “high-precision strike”. According to the Mayor of Kyiv, Russian rocket attacks in the night of 05-06.04.25 caused one casualty in the capital city.<sup>56</sup>

### **War events**

Quoting Russian military observers, the media reporting on 02.04.25 refers to the blasting of a Russian dam by Russian armed forces in the Belgorod Region in the immediate vicinity of the Ukrainian border. This was intended to prevent the relocation of Ukrainian tanks. The Ukrainian side referred to the territory as contested, and did not comment on any possible advance into the Russian border territory of Belgorod. The Russian Defence Ministry is

reported to have stated that its troops had advanced in the Sumy Region. The Ukrainian side had rejected this, alleging Russian disinformation.

According to reports, the NATO allies have already pledged more than 20 bill. EUR in military aid to Ukraine in the first quarter of 2025. The Allies are said to have provided support to the tune of 50 bill. EUR in the entire previous year.<sup>57</sup>

### **Energy infrastructure**

Whilst according to media reports, the RF on 31.03., 02.04. and 05.04.25 accused Ukraine of firing at Russian energy installations in the Bryansk and Kursk border regions, as well as in other regions in western Russia, and submitted a list of Ukrainian violations of the agreed ceasefire in energy infrastructure attacks to the USA, the UN and the OSCE, Ukraine in turn accuses the RF of similar violations. Ukraine claims to have attacked exclusively military targets. The Ukrainian side is hence said to be demanding that the sanction pressure on the RF be stepped up, referring to attacks on an electricity substation in the Sumy Region, a power line in the Dnipropetrovsk Region, and a thermal power plant in Kherson. The 30-day suspension of the attacks which has been in force since 18.03.25 is a moratorium mediated by the USA, and not a formal contractual agreement. Each side has accused the other of failing to comply with the ceasefire from the outset.<sup>58</sup>

### **Financial aid**

According to media information of 01.04.25, Ukraine has received a further 3.5 bill. EUR instalment from the “Ukraine Facility” support programme, which totals 50 bill. EUR and is set to run until 2027. The amount, which is conferred partly as a loan and partly as a grant, could help to maintain the country’s macroeconomic stability, according to Prime Minister Shmyhal.<sup>59</sup>

## **14 April 2025**

### **Ceasefire efforts**

According to reports, the USA and the Russian Federation (RF) resumed talks in Istanbul on 10.04.25 on the normalisation of their respective diplomatic missions. The US State Department stated explicitly that no political or security issues had been discussed, and that the war in Ukraine had “absolutely not” been on the agenda.

According to media reports, plans to deploy troops in Ukraine were discussed at a further meeting of the “Coalition of the Willing” on 10.04.25 in view of any future peace agreement reached with the RF. Little progress was said to have been made on the question of stationing foreign troops on Ukrainian soil, as only a small number of European governments were willing to make their own soldiers available. The considerations were said to have moved towards securing airspace and maritime routes. It is said to remain unclear what form any deployment of European ground forces might take. There was overriding concern that any troop deployment in Ukraine to protect a ceasefire could quickly become a conflict with the RF. A UN mandate would probably be rejected by the RF as a permanent member of the UN security council. A consensus had been reached that it could probably not be done without US support. President Trump had however not signalled any readiness to make US troops available. According to reports, 21 billion EUR in additional military support was approved for Ukraine at a later meeting of the Ukraine defence contact group.

According to reports, a meeting held in St. Petersburg on 11.04.25 between the US president’s special envoy for the RF, Steve Witkoff, and president Putin ended without any result being announced. Also, on 11.04.25 according to media reports, US and Ukrainian government representatives exchanged proposals on the planned raw materials agreement. The USA is reported to have demanded control of a crucial pipeline in Ukraine used to send Russian gas to Europe. According to media reports of 12.04.25, US special envoy to Ukraine, Keith Kellogg, has now proposed that Ukraine be partitioned into control zones, also entailing areas of responsibility being allotted to British and French forces.<sup>60</sup>

### **Civilian victims**

According to information from the responsible regional governor of 09.04.25, one civilian was killed as a result of a Russian attack in Kharkiv Oblast. According to media reports of 10.04.25, four people died in Russian attacks in Donetsk Oblast, and one person each in Kherson Oblast and in the city of Dnipro. According to information from

the governor, one civilian died in each of Dnipropetrovsk, Zhytomyr and Kherson Oblasts in Russian attacks in the night of 10-11.04.25. On 12.04.25, according to information from the governor, one person died in a Russian drone attack in Kherson Oblast. According to official Ukrainian information, at least 34 people were killed and 117 injured in a massive Russian missile attack on the city of Sumy on 13.04.25.

According to UN information, at least 12,910 civilians, including 682 children, have been killed since Russia's fully-fledged invasion of Ukraine on 24.02.22. Almost 30,700 people had additionally been injured up to the end of March 2025, a large number of unrecorded cases also being presumed.<sup>61</sup>

### **War events**

According to media reports, President Zelenskyy said on 07.04.25 that Ukrainian forces were operating in Russia's Belgorod border region. The Russian military had accordingly acknowledged that Ukrainian ground attacks had taken place in the region as early as March. According to the DeepState military blog, Ukrainian troops had occupied a 13 sq km area there. According to Zelenskyy, the incursion into Russia's Kursk and Belgorod territories served to protect the Ukrainian border regions of Sumy and Kharkiv. According to media information, Russia's Defence Ministry thereupon stated on 10.04.25 that its forces had captured a village in the Sumy Oblast. It is furthermore reported, referring to both warring parties, that Russian troops are increasingly applying pressure on the last Ukrainian defence forces in the largely Russian-occupied Luhansk Region. According to media information, the Commander-in-Chief of the Ukrainian armed forces, Oleksandr Syrskyy, points to an increase in troop strengths and new offensive activities on the part of the Russian forces in the Sumy and Kharkiv Oblasts in order to create a buffer zone along the Russian-Ukrainian border in Kharkiv, Sumy and Chernihiv Oblasts.

According to reports of 08.04.24, President Zelenskyy sought clarification from the Chinese government after two Chinese nationals were captured fighting with Russian forces in the Donetsk region, and at the same time accused Moscow of trying to involve China in the conflict "directly or indirectly". According to Zelenskyy, passport details had been obtained of at least 155 fighters from China. The Chinese Foreign Ministry rejected the claim that further Chinese nationals were involved as "groundless", and stressed its efforts to find a political solution. Whilst Moscow had refuted any Chinese involvement in the conflict, Washington regarded the incident as "disturbing". According to official US information, they are however said to be Chinese mercenaries without direct links to the Chinese government.

Referring to the analysis carried out by a Ukrainian air force expert, the number of military projectiles used in Russian attacks on Ukraine has increased since 2022. Air defences were able to shoot down 90 % of the cruise missiles and 95 % of the combat drones. There was less success when it came to shooting down ballistic missiles since there were insufficient numbers of the US Patriot systems that were needed for this purpose.

According to media information of 10.04.25, Ukrainian human rights commissioner Dmytro Lubinez is once more accusing Russia of killing prisoners of war. A corresponding video, filmed by a drone, is said to show the execution of four Ukrainian soldiers near to a village in Zaporizhzhia Oblast.<sup>62</sup>

### **Energy infrastructure**

According to media reports, both Ukraine and the RF continue to accuse one another of committing violations of the agreement to halt attacks on the energy infrastructure.

According to government information of 12.04.25, Ukraine continues to seek solutions to repair the damage caused by a Russian drone attack to the Chornobyl nuclear power plant. The drone attack of 14.02.25 is said to have punched a large hole in the new containment structure's outer cover and exploded inside.<sup>63</sup>

### **Financial aid**

According to media reports of 09.04.25, Ukraine is to receive further financial aid to the tune of 1 bill. EUR. This is said to be a loan that is to be repaid with interest income from the holding of Russian state assets frozen in the EU.<sup>64</sup>

**28 April 2025**

### **Conditions for a ceasefire**

According to media reports of 19.04.25, US President Trump, without naming a specific timeline, has threatened to cease his attempts to mediate between Ukraine and the Russian Federation (RF) if no agreement is reached “very shortly”. According to media information of 22.04.25, in the face of increasing impatience on the part of the US administration, President Putin suddenly appears to be open to engaging in bilateral talks with Ukraine for the first time since Russia’s full-scale invasion, after having previously once more called for presidential elections to be held in Ukraine and repeatedly referred to President Zelenskyy as holding office illegitimately. According to reports, the talks about a possible ceasefire that had been scheduled to be held in London with foreign ministers on 23.04.25 were downgraded to a meeting with lower-level officials after US Secretary of State Rubio pulled out at short notice. The cancellation was reportedly prompted by Zelenskyy’s rejection of a US proposal that the USA might formally recognise Russian control over the peninsula of Crimea, which the Ukrainian President referred to as a breach of both the Ukrainian constitution and of the Trump administration’s 2018 Crimea statement calling on the RF to end its occupation of Crimea. According to media sources, the US proposals would mean freezing the current frontline, tolerating de facto Russian control of almost all occupied Ukrainian territories, and renunciation of the Ukrainian goal of NATO membership. In return, the USA would take back the sanctions imposed on the RF.

Whilst according to reports of 23.04.25, the EU reacted to this with astonishment, and the Ukrainian government is seen as being willing to negotiate, but not to capitulate, US Vice President Vance is said to have unequivocally reaffirmed Washington’s expectations once more: Either both sides accept the US proposals, or the USA will withdraw from the negotiation process. According to media assessments and political analyses, the US proposals brought Washington into line with the Kremlin’s ideas, whilst Kyiv would only receive promises, such as a “robust security guarantee” provided by European countries, evidently with no US participation, and reconstruction aid, without any indication as to who was to foot the bill. Kyiv is said, by contrast, to be continuing to call for strong US security guarantees, and according to media information of 26.04.25 is working on a counterproposal to the US plans which no longer mentions that the entire territory occupied by the RF is to be restored to Ukraine in full, and also no longer insists on the country joining NATO. After talks that took place between Trump and Zelenskyy on the side-lines of Pope Francis’ funeral in the Vatican on 26.04.25, and in view of ongoing Russian airstrikes, President Trump is said to have expressed doubts as to whether Putin is seeking peace, and to have threatened to impose fresh sanctions on the RF. The Kremlin was said to have then indicated its willingness to engage in direct and unconditional negotiations with Ukraine.<sup>65</sup>

### **Civilian victims**

According to media information of 14.04.25, at least four persons were killed as a result of Russian shelling in and around the city of Kupiansk (Kharkiv oblast). On 15.04.25, media reported two civilian fatalities in Zaporizhzhia and Donetsk oblasts. According to media sources, at least five people were killed in a Russian drone attack in Dnipro on 16.04.25. On the same day, a Russian attack in Kherson had claimed the life of one person. According to information from the governor of 17.04.25, two people died in Nikopol (Dnipropetrovsk oblast) as a result of Russian shelling. According to reports, one person each was killed by Russian attacks in Kharkiv and Sumy in the night of 17.-18.04.25. According to information from the government, a Russian missile attack on 18.04.25 caused one fatality and injured 112 people. On the same day, one person also apparently died in a Russian drone attack in Sumy. According to official sources of 18.04.25, two persons were killed in a Russian drone attack in Kherson oblast. According to reports from the responsible mayor, a Russian missile attack on Kharkiv on the same day caused one fatality and injured 54. According to media reports, at least three were killed in Russian attacks in Kherson oblast on 21.04.25. According to information from the governor, nine people were killed in a Russian drone attack in the city of Marhanets (Dnipropetrovsk oblast) in the night of 22.-23.04.25. According to information from the governor, three persons had previously died on 22.04.25 in a drone attack on the city of Myrnohrad (Donetsk oblast) and one person in a missile attack in Zaporizhzhia. On 23.04.25, the responsible governor reported one death caused by Russian bombing in Sloviansk (Donetsk oblast). According to media reports, a Russian missile strike on 24.04.25 led to at least twelve fatalities and injured 90. According to official sources, three persons died in Russian airstrikes in the night from 24.-25.04.25 in the city of Pavlohrad (Dnipropetrovsk oblast). Russian drone attacks killed one person each in Kamianske and Nikopol (Dnipropetrovsk oblast) in the night of 25.-26.04.25, according to media reports.

According to reports, Russian airstrikes on 27.04.25 caused three fatalities in Kostiantynivka (Donezk oblast) and one in Pavlohrad.<sup>66</sup>

### **War events, arms, prisoner exchange, dismissal of a governor, sabotage**

According to media information of 16.04.25, Ukraine has extended martial law for another three months up to 06.08.25. According to a statement by President Zelenskyy, Ukraine manufactures 40 percent of the arms used in support of its defensive war itself. The Ukrainian arms industry is said to be currently employing around 300,000 people. At the same time, citing reporting by Ukrainian security and intelligence agencies, Zelenskyy accused China of supplying arms and of Chinese nationals being involved in weapons production on Russian territory. The Chinese foreign ministry had dismissed the accusations as “groundless”.

According to reports, on 19.04.25 President Putin ordered at short notice and bilaterally a temporary halt to the fighting for Easter (19.04.25, 6 p.m. – 20.04.25, 12 p.m.) out of “humanitarian considerations”. President Zelenskyy also stated his willingness. Russia was said not to have commented on Zelenskyy’s proposal to halt strikes on civilian infrastructure for 30 days. Both sides had subsequently accused one another of violating the “Easter truce”. On 19.04.25, a total of 500 prisoners of war had been swapped in a further prisoner exchange.

On 15.04.25, according to reports, the governor of Sumy oblast, Volodymyr Artyukh, was dismissed after he made comments implying that the Russian attack on 13.04.25 in which 34 people died, most of them civilians (cf. BN of 14.04.25), had targeted a military gathering. The governor had previously confirmed such a gathering in honour of soldiers in the city at the time of the attack.

According to media reports, the Security Service of Ukraine SBU stated on 16.04.25 that it had detained nine people, including five juveniles, accused of sabotage on behalf of Russia. It was said that the explosives seized were intended to be used in attacks on residential and railway infrastructure, amongst other targets.<sup>67</sup>

### **Energy infrastructure**

According to media reports, the Kremlin stated on 18.04.25 that the 30-day moratorium on attacks on energy infrastructure had expired. Both warring parties had accused one another of breaches of the agreement up to the end. President Zelenskyy is said to have accused the RF of reducing the number of strikes on Ukrainian energy facilities during this period, whilst stepping up attacks on civilian infrastructure instead.<sup>68</sup>

## **05 May 2025**

### **Efforts to reach a ceasefire and conclusion of a minerals deal with the USA**

According to reports of 29.04.25, president Zelenskyy called for an immediate month-long ceasefire, which the Kremlin however rejected, after president Putin unilaterally announced a three-day truce (08.05.-10.05.25) to mark the 80th anniversary of the victory of the Soviet Union in the second world war, and stated that said Kyiv should follow his example. President Trump was said to be calling for not only a temporary truce, but a “permanent” ceasefire. According to media reports, US secretary of state Marco Rubio has called on both sides to put forward “concrete proposals”, as the USA would otherwise give up on mediation. According to media sources of 30.04.25, the Kremlin for its part dampened expectations of a quick peace due to the complex nature of the conflict. A readiness had been signalled to enter into direct talks with Ukraine, but no response had yet been forthcoming from Kyiv. According to media sources of 02.05.25, foreign minister Andriy Sybiha clearly indicated his government’s red lines, stating that Ukraine would not accept “peace at any price”, or “any restriction of sovereignty of any kind” when it came to plans to join NATO.

According to media reports of 01.05.25, the USA and Ukraine have concluded a raw material deal for mining Ukrainian minerals. According to Ukrainian deputy prime minister and economics minister Yulia Svyrydenko, the agreement contained a joint investment fund for reconstruction in the country. The fund would be divided equally between the two countries, and give both sides equal voting rights. Ukraine would pay in 50 percent of the income from future licenses or raw materials sales, and the USA could make their contribution to the fund with military aid. There would be no changes to the ownership of state-owned companies. According to prime minister Denys Shmyhal, Ukraine would retain “full control of its mineral, infrastructural and natural resources”. In contradistinction to Trump’s original demands, Ukraine would also not have to pay back any debt for previous arms or financial aid from the USA. Whilst Kyiv was hoping for a transfer and development of technologies, it remained

unclear where the investment was to come from, as Trump would have to offer investors attractive conditions. What is more, 40 % of the resources are said to be located in areas under Russian control. The agreement also did not contain the robust security guarantees for which Ukraine had called. The USA was instead merely “supporting Ukraine’s efforts to obtain security guarantees needed to build lasting peace”. The agreement was to be ratified in the coming weeks, and then further technical details clarified, before the fund could start its work. According to media sources of 01.05.25, once the raw materials agreement had been concluded, the US administration informed Congress of its intention to certify a licence for the export of defence articles to Ukraine to the tune of 50 million USD or more.<sup>69</sup>

### **Civilian victims**

According to information from the responsible regional governor, one person was killed in a Russian drone strike on 29.04.25 in Dnipro. According to reports, two people died in Odessa in the night of 30.04-01.05.25, also as the result of a Russian drone strike. According to the governor appointed by Moscow, seven people were killed in a Ukrainian drone strike in the town of Oleshki in the Russian-occupied part of Kherson oblast. According to official Ukrainian sources, on 03.05.25 two people were killed by Russian artillery fire in Donetsk oblast. On the same day, one person was apparently killed in Kherson by a Russian drone strike. According to media sources of 03.05.25, two civilians died in a Russian attack near to Pokrovsk (Donetsk oblast). Furthermore, one fatality was reported after a Russian airstrike in Kupiansk (Kharkiv oblast). On 04.05.25, media reported further Russian attacks in which two persons were killed in the village of Komar and one in the town of Myrnohrad (both Donetsk oblast).<sup>70</sup>

### **War events**

After president Putin had previously congratulated Russian forces on driving out all Ukrainian troops from the Kursk border region in western Russia, he stated on 29.04.25 according to media reports that Ukrainian soldiers still remained there. According to Ukrainian military sources, their own troops were still in the Russian border regions of Kursk and Belgorod. According to information from the commander-in-chief of the Ukrainian armed forces of 01.05.25, Russian forces have since considerably intensified the fighting in the Pokrovsk area (Donetsk oblast). This strategically-important town has been the scene of intensive fighting for months. According to information from the Ukrainian military of 01.05.25, Russian forces have attempted to establish a bridgehead in the estuary of the Dnipro (Kherson oblast). It had however been possible to prevent them landing.<sup>71</sup>

### **Energy infrastructure**

According to a media report of 30.04.25, Russian state-owned company Rosatom is not ruling out cooperation with the USA in the occupied Ukrainian nuclear power plant in Zaporizhzhia, were the country’s leadership to take such a decision. US president Trump had previously proposed that the USA take over operation of the plant and generate electricity both for the Ukrainian-controlled and the Russian-occupied areas.<sup>72</sup>

### **Financial aid**

According to media reports of 30.04.25, the cuts in international aid by the Trump administration, but also by other governments, were also impeding UN humanitarian aid for people in Ukraine. Operations in Ukraine were therefore to be reprioritised, according to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), thus attaching key importance to people near the frontline, evacuations, emergency response after strikes, and aid to the most vulnerable among the internally displaced people. In January, the UN had appealed for \$2.63bn in funding to assist 6 million people who need aid in Ukraine. Under the new conditions, it was now a matter of reaching 4.8 million people with \$1.75bn.<sup>73</sup>

## **12 May 2025**

### **Ceasefire efforts**

After president Putin according to reports called for Ukraine to honour a three-day ceasefire for the Victory Day events (08.05.-10.05.25), and rejected president Zelenskyy’s proposal for a 30-day ceasefire, Kyiv has accused the Kremlin of not being serious about peace. According to reports, a Ukrainian opposition MP was quoted as stating: “Ukraine is saying nothing officially, but has also joined the ceasefire. The armed forces have received the

appropriate orders.” According to media reports, both sides subsequently accused one another of violating the ceasefire. After a phone call between presidents Trump and Zelenskyy on 08.05.25, Trump reportedly called for a 30-day unconditional ceasefire, and threatened to impose further sanctions were it not to come about. One day previously, US vice president Vance had called for direct negotiations between the two warring parties and criticised Russia for “asking too much”.

After a meeting of the heads of state and government of the UK, France, Germany and Poland, together with president Zelenskyy, in Kyiv on 10.05., during which a joint phone call was also made to US president Trump, according to reports an ultimatum was issued to the Russian Federation (RF) to agree to a 30-day ceasefire with Ukraine from 12.05.25 onwards or face increased sanctions, including against the energy and banking sectors. President Putin is said to have thereupon rejected a ceasefire, but in turn to have proposed holding direct negotiations with Ukraine in Istanbul on 15.05.25 to negotiate on a ceasefire. After this in turn had been rejected by the European allies as “far from sufficient”, Trump had called on Zelenskyy to meet Putin in Türkiye. On 11.05.25, president Zelenskyy told the Russian president that he was willing to meet him on 15.05.25 in Istanbul, and was now awaiting a response from Moscow. It was seemingly not clear if Zelenskyy was conditioning his journey to Istanbul on the ceasefire holding from 12.05.25 onwards. The Kremlin had also avoided comment on this matter so far. The Russian side had in the meantime resumed attacks on Ukraine on 11.05.25 after the three-day ceasefire, to which both sides had not adhered at all times.

According to media information, the Ukrainian parliament ratified on 08.05.25 the minerals deal between Ukraine and the USA (cf. BN of 05.05.25). This means that technical agreements will still have to be drawn up in the coming weeks and signed by both parties.<sup>74</sup>

#### **Civilian victims**

According to official Ukrainian sources, three people died on 05.05.25 as a result of Russian fire in Sumy oblast. According to information from Kyiv’s mayor Vitali Klitschko, two persons were killed on 07.05.25 in a Russian drone strike on Kyiv. According to official information of 08.05.25, one person died in Russian attacks in Sumy oblast and six in Donetsk oblast. According to media information of 09.05.25, one person died as a result of Russian attacks in each of Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson oblasts. According to Ukrainian official sources of 11.05.25, one civilian died in Kherson on that day, and a total of three persons had lost their lives in Sumy oblast in the preceding days.<sup>75</sup>

#### **Prisoner exchange, espionage and sanctions stemming from use of CS gas**

According to media information, 205 prisoners of war from each side were swapped on 06.05.25. The exchange had come about with mediation from the UAE.

According to media reports of 09.05.25, the Ukrainian security service SBU has arrested two former Ukrainian soldiers accused of spying for Hungary. They are reported to have collected information on Ukrainian defensive capacities and air defences in Ukraine’s southwestern Zakarpattia oblast, which is home to a Hungarian minority. The rights of the Hungarian minority are said to have been a bone of contention between Ukraine and Hungary for some time.

According to reports of 06.05.25, the Council of the EU has prepared a new sanctions regulation which, for the first time, formally accuses the RF of using CS gas during attacks in 2024 in Dnipropetrovsk oblast. This move is reportedly based on two reports by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons which were published at Ukraine’s request in November 2024 and February 2025, respectively. CS is a tear gas which is prohibited by Article 1 of the Chemical Weapons Convention.<sup>76</sup>

#### **Meeting of foreign ministers in Ukraine: special tribunal and defence**

According to reports, an informal meeting of the Ukrainian foreign minister with the foreign ministers of the EU member states held in Lviv in western Ukraine on 09.05.25 decided to formally endorse the establishment of a Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine. The international tribunal would have its seat in The Hague. According to the EU’s *High Representative for Foreign Affairs* Kaja Kallas, the tribunal is to “ensure that those most responsible for the aggression against Ukraine are held accountable”. The EU had also approved 1 billion EUR from the proceeds of frozen Russian assets for the Ukrainian arms industry.<sup>77</sup>

## 19 May 2025

### Ceasefire efforts

According to media reports, the first direct negotiations between representatives of Ukraine and the Russian Federation (RF) in more than three years took place in Istanbul on 16.05.25. There had originally been hopes that talks would take place on the previous day, attended by presidents Zelenskyy, Putin and Trump, as well as president Erdoğan in a mediatory role as host. After it had remained unclear for a prolonged period whether the presidents of the RF and the USA would attend, both of them ultimately stayed away, so that at the highest level there was only a meeting between Zelenskyy and Erdoğan, who is said to have good relations with both sides in the war. A European ultimatum to the RF which was to be used to urge president Putin to first of all agree to a 30-day ceasefire from 12.05.25 onwards, and then come to the negotiating table in Türkiye on 15.05.25, had been ignored by the Kremlin, stating: “You can’t talk to Russia like that”. The EU was already preparing a fresh package of sanctions against the RF. President Trump, whose motives for cancelling – Trump had initially considered stopping over in Türkiye as part of his trip to the Gulf States – remained unclear, stated during his journey back to Washington: “Nothing’s going to happen until Putin and I get together.”

Against this background, according to media reports, the negotiations of 16.05.25 were ultimately set to take place at non-senior level. Whilst Ukraine wished to see a 30-day ceasefire as the basis for negotiations on a long-term peace agreement, the Russian side continued to be interested in “eliminating the causes of the conflict”, and hence in achieving its maximum demands, including insisting that Ukraine completely retreat from Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson oblasts. As a result of the brief negotiations held on 16.05.25, Vladimir Medinsky stated after the first meeting that it would be possible to continue the talks. The two sides had initially agreed on an exchange of 1,000 prisoners of war each. President Zelenskyy had called for international pressure on the RF to be maintained, as well as for tougher sanctions. According to media reports, US president Trump intends to talk to president Putin on the telephone on 19.05.25. In the run-up to the planned call, the leading European heads of state and government also called on Trump to impose new sanctions on the RF. The Kremlin had previously stated that it was working on a list of conditions for a ceasefire.<sup>78</sup>

### Civilian victims

According to media sources, at least three persons were killed on 13.05.25 in Russian bombing raids in Kharkiv oblast. A Russian missile strike on 14.05.25 near the town of Sumy caused three fatalities according to information from the governor. According to official Ukrainian sources, at least nine people died in a Russian drone attack on a minibus on 17.05.25 near the town of Bilopillia (Sumy oblast). According to media information of 19.05.25, one person died in Kyiv and one in Kherson oblast in the largest wave of Russian drone attacks on Ukraine so far.<sup>79</sup>

### War events and planned military manoeuvres

The Russian airstrikes continued in the past week according to reports, after the Kremlin had de facto rebuffed the Ukrainian proposal of a 30-day ceasefire and whilst the efforts to engage in peace talks in Istanbul continued. According to media sources of 13.05.25, the commander-in-chief of the Ukrainian armed forces, Oleksandr Syrskyy, stated that the heaviest fighting was taking place in Donetsk oblast, in particular in the Pokrovsk area, as well as in the Kursk border region in Russia.

According to media sources of 16.05.25, the RF and Belarus are preparing major military manoeuvres planned for September 2025 under the name of “Zapad-2025” (“West 2025”), which according to a statement by Russian defence minister Andrey Belousov is to serve to “repel aggression against the Union State” [note: this refers to Belarus]. The Russian military presence in Belarus already increased considerably shortly before the start of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24.02.22, as part of joint military manoeuvres.<sup>80</sup>

## 26 May 2025

### Ceasefire efforts

According to media reports, the call between presidents Trump and Putin on 19.05.25 ended with no major results. Trump is said to have subsequently claimed that the two warring parties would start ceasefire negotiations immediately. He had particularly stressed that the Russian Federation (RF) and the USA wanted to do “largescale

TRADE”, and that the war in Ukraine had to come to an end for that to happen. In his opinion, Putin wanted to end the war. Trump had gone on to state that the USA would continue their mediation efforts for the time being. If there was no progress, he would “simply withdraw”, since it was not his war.

The Kremlin was however reported to have stated that no timeline for such negotiations had been discussed, and that the US president had merely stressed his interest in reaching an agreement quickly. With regard to ending the fighting, the RF wished to start setting out a “memorandum on a possible future peace accord” with Ukraine. Putin emphasised the need to find the most effective path to peace, for which both countries would have to make compromises which were satisfactory for both sides. According to reports, president Zelenskyy thereupon accused Russia of “trying to buy time” to continue the war, and ruled out withdrawing his troops from the Ukrainian territories claimed by Moscow. According to an assessment by the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) of 20.05.25, the RF is trying to expand its list of demands when it should be preparing to make concessions. According to media information of 19.05.25, Zelenskyy had previously ordered a permanent national negotiation group to be set up.

As a reaction to the result, the EU has stated according to reports that it would increase the pressure on the RF through further sanctions and “closely coordinate” the negotiation process. On 20.05.25, the EU accordingly adopted its 17th round of sanctions against the RF, and is preparing another. President Zelenskyy considered that efforts would have to be undertaken so that the USA also adopted sanctions in the future, after president Trump had previously rejected further sanctions against the RF. According to media sources on 22.05.25, a broad cross-party majority has since formed in the US Senate in favour of strict sanctions in the event of the RF refusing to enter into peace negotiations. According to media information of 23.05.25, the G7 finance chiefs also came out in favour of further ramping up sanctions in a communiqué released at their summit in Canada.

According to media reports of 23.05.25, president Putin has announced the creation of a buffer zone along the border with Ukraine, which has been interpreted in Kyiv as a rebuttal of peace efforts and rejected. It was initially left open as to where the boundaries of the zone were located and how far it was to reach into Ukraine.

After, according to media reports, Ukraine – and the capital Kyiv in particular – was hit last week by the largest salvo of Russian attacks so far, causing several fatalities, Trump sharply criticised the Russian president for this, and stated that he was considering imposing further sanctions.<sup>81</sup>

### **Civilian victims**

According to media reports of 20.05.25, at least one civilian was killed in a Russian attack in Siversk (Donetsk oblast). According to official sources on 21.05.25, a Russian attack on Sumy oblast killed two civilians. According to reports of 23.05.25, three people each died in Russian attacks in Donetsk and Kherson oblasts. According to media sources on 22.05.25, one person each was killed after Russian attacks in Kharkiv and Kherson oblasts. According to statements by regional authorities, a total of 13 civilians were killed from 23.05. to 24.05.25 as a result of Russian airstrikes on large parts of Ukraine. According to these reports, amongst others three people died in a missile attack on the port infrastructure in Odessa. Four fatalities had also been reported from Khmelnytskyi oblast, and three from Zhytomyr oblast. Interior minister Ihor Klymenko stated that a total of twelve people had lost their lives in Russian drone and rocket attacks in the night of 24.05. to 25.05.25, including three children in the Kyiv region.<sup>82</sup>

### **War events, attempts to avoid recruitment and prisoner exchange**

According to media reports of 22.05.25, president Zelenskyy spoke of ongoing heavy fighting around Pokrovsk, whilst the Russian side claims to have penetrated Ukrainian lines between Pokrovsk and Kostiantynivka (Donetsk oblast). Fighting was also reported to be ongoing along the border between Sumy oblast in Ukraine and Kursk oblast in Russia. According to the military governor of Sumy oblast on 20.05.25, the population is being evacuated from more than 200 localities near the Russian border. 52,000 out of 86,000 civilians have reportedly been brought to safety so far. It is reported, citing military experts, that the oblast, which has come under increasing Russian fire, might be one of the potential targets of any Russian summer offensive. According to president Zelenskyy on 21.05.25, Ukrainian units are continuing to fight in the Russian territories of the neighbouring Kursk and Belgorod oblasts near the border in order to protect the cities of Sumy and Kharkiv. According to a statement from the Ukrainian National Guard of 21.05.25, six soldiers were killed in a Russian missile strike against a military training ground in Shostka (Sumy oblast).

According to media sources on 21.05.25, Ukrainian border protection authorities have prevented some 49,000 men of military service age from leaving the country since February 2022. Roughly 45,000 were reported to have been apprehended directly at unofficial crossing points, or in checks carried out further inland. The investigating

authorities are said to have initiated more than 7,000 sets of criminal proceedings, albeit the courts had only handed down 400 sentences. Forged documents and foreign passports had been used in the illegal border crossing attempts, or there had been attempts to cross the contact line between Ukrainian and Russian forces.

According to reports, the prison exchange agreed in the negotiations in Istanbul was completed between 23.05. and 25.05.25. Each side reportedly handed over a total of 1,000 prisoners of war in three phases. Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov is said to have stated that terms for a peace settlement would be sent to Ukraine once the prisoner swap was complete.<sup>83</sup>

### **Humanitarian situation and support for the pensions system**

According to an assessment by the head of Caritas International of 26.05.25, supply chains in Ukraine are still working, but the problems are getting bigger. 40 % of the population are now said to rely on humanitarian aid. The social protection system is said to be “completely overstretched”, and war invalids had to wait for extended periods for medical treatment and rehabilitation.

The Canadian finance minister stated on 20.05.25 at the G7 finance ministers meeting that his country intends to help Ukraine build a pension system along Canadian line.<sup>84</sup>

### **Former politician murdered**

According to media reports of 21.05.25, Andriy Portnov, a former Ukrainian politician, close adviser and deputy head of the office of pro-Russian former president Viktor Yanukovych, has been murdered in Madrid. Portnov was said to have been accused amongst other things of having been involved in drawing up a draft law on the criminal prosecution of participants in the Euromaidan protests of 2013/14.<sup>85</sup>

## **02 June 2025**

### **Ceasefire efforts**

According to media sources of 28.05.25, part of the US administration’s peace plan involves recognising Crimea as a legitimate Russian territory. The US administration’s Ukraine envoy, Keith Kellogg, is said to have called on Moscow to finally present the announced peace process memorandum. The Russian foreign ministry had responded that the draft, which would present the principles for an agreement and the conditions for a possible ceasefire, was still being worked on and would be presented to the Ukrainian government once it was ready. Foreign minister Lavrov would furthermore soon be announcing further direct negotiations with Ukraine, whilst at the same time emphasising that the central demand for a neutral status of Ukraine would be maintained. Renewed direct negotiations between representatives of Ukraine and Russia are to take place in Istanbul on Monday, 02.06.25.<sup>86</sup>

### **Civilian victims**

According to media reports, the Russian Federation (RF) flew its largest airstrike on Ukraine to date in the night of 31.05. to 01.06.25, amongst other things with 472 drones and mock drones, killing two persons. According to Ukrainian sources, one fatality was reported in each of Kherson and Zaporizhzhia oblasts.

Six persons are said to have been killed in airstrikes in the night of 25. to 26.05.25, two each in Kupiansk (Kharkiv oblast) and Mykolaiv, as well as one person each in Kherson and Sumy oblasts. According to official sources of 27.05.25, one fatality was reported for each of Donetsk and Sumy oblasts, after Russian airstrikes. According to information from the governor of 28.05.25, a further fatality was caused by a Russian strike in Kharkiv oblast. Ukraine is said to have attacked two Russian railway lines in the night of 31.05. to 01.06.25. According to media reports, these had been acts of sabotage carried out by the Security Service of Ukraine (SSU), which is said to have planted explosives on the railway lines. This is said to have caused bridges to collapse in Kursk and Bryansk oblasts near the border. According to Russian sources, a motorway bridge had been blown up and had fallen onto a railway line in Bryansk oblast, causing a train with 388 passengers to derail. According to media reports, there were seven fatalities and 69 wounded. A railway bridge is said to have been blown up in Kursk oblast as a freight train was passing over it. The train driver is said to have been injured.<sup>87</sup>

### **War events and armaments**

According to information from the governor of Sumy oblast of 26.05.25, Russian troops have seized four previously evacuated villages in the area close to the border to the RF in order to create a “buffer zone” on Ukrainian territory. According to media sources of 28.05.25, president Zelenskyy had spoken of 50,000 Russian soldiers who had been brought together for an offensive on Sumy oblast. According to reports, military experts also consider Sumy oblast to be a potential target for a Russian summer offensive. In view of fears of a major Russian offensive, the authorities have ordered the evacuation of eleven more villages in Sumy oblast. According to Ukrainian sources, this increases the number of localities in the oblast which have been vacated to 213. Problems are also said to be caused by a Russian breach between Pokrovsk and Toretsk which reportedly threatens the city of Kostiantynivka and as a consequence would bring the RF closer to taking the entire Donetsk oblast. According to an analysis by the Institute for the Study of War (ISW), the latest series of massive Russian airstrikes (23.05.25-26.05.25) has pursued the psychological goal of weakening Ukraine’s resistance and deterring western allies from providing further support. According to media sources of 26.05.25, Ukraine’s foreign intelligence service considers it to have been proven that China has supplied machinery and gunpowder to twenty Russian armaments manufacturers. China had rejected the allegations. According to reports, the EU cites a classified report by the German foreign ministry, seen by German media outlets, that China is responsible for “approximately” 80 percent of the circumventions of sanctions against the RF, something which Beijing denies.

According to media sources of 27.05.25, president Zelenskyy intends to further expand Ukraine’s armaments production. Investment agreements are reportedly being prepared with European partners in order to move further military production into the country. The focus here was on unmanned and long-range weapons.

According to media reports, on the occasion of president Zelenskyy’s official visit to Germany on 28.05.25 in Berlin, federal chancellor Merz agreed to provide Ukraine with further military support to the tune of 5 billion EUR. According to Merz, Germany is funding a considerable share of Ukraine’s Starlink coverage. There were also plans to work together in armaments production and to enable Ukraine to manufacture long-range weapons. In the night of 30.05. to 31.05.25, according to the Ukrainian military intelligence service HUR, a track bed was deliberately blown up, causing a Crimea-bound freight train to derail near Zaporizhzhia. According to media reports, this is said to have severed a major logistical transport artery of the Russian military in the occupied territories.

According to Ukrainian sources, a Russian missile attack on a training unit of the Ukrainian Army on 01.06.25 left at least twelve dead and injured 60. General Mykhailo Drapatyi, the commander of the Ukrainian Army, thereupon announced his immediate resignation.

According to media sources, on 01.06.25 the Security Service of Ukraine (SSU) attacked several strategic Russian airbases deep inside Russia. FPV drones are said to have been used to destroy several strategic Russian bombers in Murmansk and Irkutsk oblasts. According to the Russian defence ministry, the FPV drones are said to have been launched from trucks parked in the immediate vicinity of the airbases. In an official statement by the SSU of 01.06.25, 41 bombers, and hence 34 percent of the RF’s strategic bombers, valued at roughly seven billion USD, are said to have been destroyed in the attack. According to independent analysts, the operation was the heaviest attack on the Russian air force to date. The attacked military airfields are said to constitute parts of the RF’s nuclear deterrent infrastructure. According to military bloggers, Russian nuclear doctrine dictates that an attack on these systems constitutes grounds for the deployment of nuclear weapons.<sup>88</sup>

### **Ukrainian “informants” working for Russia detained**

According to the Security Service of Ukraine (SSU), a total of eleven persons were detained in the week from 26.05. to 30.05.25 who are said to have been working for Russia. According to information from 27.05.25, for instance, a network of five young “agents”, including minors, is said to have been uncovered. They are said to have been active as “informants” for the RF in several Ukrainian oblasts to support Russian attacks. In the same period, two persons apprehended in 2024 are said to have been sentenced to 15 years’ imprisonment for treason in accordance with Art. 111.2 of the Criminal Code for their activities for Russian services.<sup>89</sup>

**16 June 2025**

### **Ceasefire efforts**

According to media reports of 03.06.25, the second round of talks between Ukraine and the Russian Federation (RF) in Istanbul had also ended on the previous day without any agreement being reached on a ceasefire. Instead, agreement was reportedly reached on a renewed step-by-step exchange of 1,000 prisoners of war each (severely wounded soldiers and those under the age of 25), as well as of the remains of 6,000 killed soldiers. Ukraine is said to have also submitted a list of 400 abducted children that it wants returned home, and suggested that the talks should reconvene at presidential level at the end of June 2025. The Russian side had submitted a memorandum at the talks containing its maximum demands vis-à-vis Ukraine. The RF had responded to Ukraine's call for a 30-day ceasefire by citing the need for a "complete withdrawal" of Ukrainian forces from Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson oblasts, which are partly occupied by the RF. The document was said to also require amongst other things the internationally-binding recognition of these four oblasts, as well as of Crimea, as Russian territories, the lifting of all economic sanctions against the RF, a "neutral" Ukraine, and hence the abandonment of its aspirations to join NATO, an end to western arms supplies, and a waiver of any claims for reparations against the RF. President Zelenskyy had thereupon called on US president Trump to push the Russian leadership to agree to a ceasefire by imposing strong sanctions.

After the Ukrainian attacks on Russian air force bases (cf. BN of 02.06.25), according to reports Trump urged president Putin in a call on 04.06.25 not to retaliate. He did not however believe that Putin could be dissuaded, and said at the same time that it might be better to let both sides "fight for a while", instead of immediately seeking peace. Trump had also not yet decided whether he would approve the sanctions against the RF that the US senate was considering. After a wave of Russian drone and missile strikes on Kyiv and Odessa on 10.06.25, according to media reports the European Commission proposed an 18th package of sanctions against the RF, according to which amongst other things the price of Russian crude oil was to be reduced from 60 to 45 USD per barrel. President Zelenskyy is said to have called at a meeting of the heads of state and government from twelve countries in southeastern Europe in Odessa on 11.06.25 for the pressure on Moscow to be stepped up, and to have pointed out that the Kremlin's military planners also had their eyes on the borders of the Republic of Moldova and of Romania. In another call between presidents Trump and Putin on 14.06.25, according to reports Putin indicated his readiness to hold a fresh round of peace talks with Ukraine after 22.06.25, once the sides had completed exchanging prisoners. President Zelenskyy did not mention whether Ukraine would agree to another round of talks, and had expressed a fear with a view to the conflict between Israel and Iran that the USA might scale back military aid for Ukraine in favour of Israel as a result. The sharp rise in global oil prices following the Israeli strike on Iran would also benefit the RF and bolster its military capabilities in the war in Ukraine, making it necessary to implement an effective price cap on Russian oil exports.<sup>90</sup>

### **Civilian victims**

According to media reports, three persons were killed by Russian fire in Donetsk oblast, and two in Kharkiv oblast, on 02.06.25. According to information from the governor, at least four people died on 03.06.25 in the city of Sumy and two in Kharkiv oblast as a result of Russian attacks. According to official sources on 05.06.25, five people were killed by a Russian drone attack in the northern Ukrainian city of Pryluky (Chernihiv oblast). According to the mayor of Kyiv, four persons were killed in the night of 05.06. to 06.06.25 as a result of Russian attacks on the capital. Also, on 06.06.25 according to reports two people each died in Chernihiv and in Lutsk in northwestern Ukraine (Volhynia oblast). According to official sources, two persons lost their lives in Kherson and three in Kharkiv in Russian attacks in the night of 06.06. to 07.06.25. Local authorities reported a Russian attack on 08.06.25 with one fatality in Dnipropetrovsk oblast. According to media reports, massive drone attacks in the night from 09.06 to 10.06.25 claimed one life in Kyiv and two in Odessa. On 11.06.25, local authorities reported at least two deaths following a Russian drone attack on Kharkiv. On 13.06.25, media reported two persons killed in Donetsk oblast and one dead each in Kherson and Zaporizhzhia oblasts. Media reports reported on 14.06.25 one civilian killed in each of Donetsk and Zaporizhzhia oblasts as a result of Russian attacks.<sup>91</sup>

### **War events**

According to media reports of 13.06.25, Russian troops have already seized 190 km<sup>2</sup> of territory in the north of Sumy oblast, and have advanced to a position 20 km from the city of Sumy. Citing official Russian sources and

Ukrainian open source mapping services, this now places the city within range of Russian artillery. President Zelenskyy is said to have countered such claims, stating that Russian troops had only advanced 7 km over the border and had been pushed back, but provided no further details and offered no proof of Ukrainian advances in the area. According to the head of Pluriton, an aid organisation running shelters, the number of displaced people arriving in Sumy city was increasing. According to media reports of 11.06.25, the Russian defence ministry had announced that Russian troops had reached the west of Donetsk oblast and were now advancing towards Dnipropetrovsk oblast, as also suggested by the pro-Ukrainian map service Deep State. According to the Institute for the Study of War (ISW), the RF had reportedly gained control of almost 19 % of Ukrainian territory by late May 2025. According to ISW, Russian forces have therefore advanced in the north of Sumy oblast and near to the cities of Kupiansk (Kharkiv oblast), Siversk, Chasiv Jar and Toretsk (Donetsk oblast). According to the Ukrainian Deputy Chief of Staff in the Presidential Office Pavlo Palisa, citing Ukrainian intelligence sources, Russia had planned further offensives into 2026, and along with establishing a buffer zone in the north, also aimed to sever Ukraine's access to the Black Sea. According to Ukrainian defence minister Rustem Umerov, the western allies had declared their willingness at the Ukraine defence contact group in Brussels to pay for defence manufacturing by Ukrainian companies in allied countries. US defence secretary Pete Hegseth had meanwhile announced on 10.06.25 that US military aid for Ukraine would be reduced in the next defence budget, which might impact the supply of air defence systems.<sup>92</sup>

### **Energy infrastructure**

Media outlets reported in the period from 03.06. to 05.06.25, citing Russian authorities and news agencies, of Ukrainian drone attacks cutting electricity to the entire Russian-held part of Zaporizhzhia and Kherson oblasts, with 700,000 people being affected. The damage to a transformer substation and a high-voltage line had however not impacted the electricity supply to the deactivated Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant.<sup>93</sup>

### **Ukrainian refugees in the EU**

According to reports of 13.06.25, the EU has extended protection for Ukrainian war refugees by an additional year, up to March 2027.

According to media reports of 06.06.25, citing the German Federal Office of Civil Protection and Disaster Assistance (BBK), roughly 4,300 Ukrainian patients had been treated across Europe since the start of the full-scale Russian invasion in 2022. This means that more than 1,500 people from Ukraine have been taken to German hospitals.<sup>94</sup>

## **23 June 2025**

### **Ceasefire efforts**

According to media reports of 17.06.25, president Zelenskyy announced said that he was seeking to buy a US defence package, including new air defences. Discussions that had been planned to take place on this with president Trump at the G7 summit had however been cancelled because of Trump leaving early. Zelenskyy furthermore stated at the summit that he was ready for peace negotiations and an unconditional ceasefire, and that this would require applying pressure on the Russian Federation (RF). According to reports, the Ukrainian president showed his concern over future military aid for his country in light of the Israeli-Iranian conflict. An order had been placed with the Biden administration for 20,000 missiles with special technology against kamikaze drones. The Trump administration had now delivered the drones to the Middle East, as the Ukrainian defence minister had recently informed him. According to media sources, president Trump is now also hesitating to join further sanctions against the RF because they would cost a lot of money.

According to media reports, president Putin stated on 19.06.25 that he was only ready to meet with his Ukrainian counterpart during a "final phase" of the negotiations. He then repeated his accusation that Zelenskyy was not Ukraine's legitimate president. Putin was also said to have spoken at the International Economic Forum in St. Petersburg in favour of continuing the negotiations between the RF and Ukraine, two rounds of which had already been held in Istanbul and which were to be continued after 22.06.25. Zelenskyy thereupon declared his readiness to meet Putin in any format, even if the latter had overstepped his constitutional mandate by at least three periods of office. According to media reports, Putin furthermore stated at the forum that he considered Russians and Ukrainians to be one people, and in that sense the whole of Ukraine to thus be "ours". He also did not intend to seize the city of Sumy, but did not fundamentally rule this out as part of a bid to carve out a buffer zone.<sup>95</sup>

### **Civilian victims**

According to media reports of 17.06.25, a Russian drone and missile strike on several districts of Kyiv killed at least 28 and wounded more than 150. A single missile strike on a residential building reportedly claimed the lives of 23 people. Also, on 17.06.25 according to reports at least two people were killed by a Russian airstrike in Odesa. Media reported on 19.06.25 that one person had been killed in a Russian artillery barrage on Kostyantynivka (Donetsk oblast). Another person died according to official sources in the night of 19.06. to 20.06.25 in a drone strike on Odesa. The Ukrainian authorities reported one fatality for each of Sloviansk (Donetsk oblast) and Nishyn (Cherniv oblast) on 22.06.25 after Russian strikes. At least five people lost their lives in another massive drone attack on Kyiv according to official sources of 23.06.25. This brings the total number of confirmed civilian fatalities since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022 to more than 13,000, citing UN sources.<sup>96</sup>

### **War events and prisoner exchange**

According to reports, president Zelenskyy on 19.06.25 appointed brigadier general Hennadij Shapovalov as the new commander of the Ukrainian land forces, after major-general Mykhailo Drapatyi announced his resignation following a Russian strike on a military training area in which several soldiers were killed (cf. BN of 02.06.25). According to media sources, the commander-in-chief of the Ukrainian armed forces, Oleksandr Syrskyi, announced in a public statement on 22.06.25 that he intended to strengthen the "scale and depth" of strikes on the RF. Ukrainian authorities have since reported on 23.06.25 that three people were killed in a Russian missile strike on a military training area in Kherson oblast.

According to information from the Ukrainian government, the RF on 16.06.25 returned the bodies of 1,245 killed soldiers to Ukraine. This completed the last phase of an agreement to return 6,000 killed soldiers. Both sides also announced on 19.06.25, without stating numbers, that they had carried out a further exchange of prisoners of war, these being seriously ill and wounded soldiers. According to the Russian defence ministry, the exchange of prisoners of war and bodies was to be continued in future. After Ukraine had reportedly handed over to the Russian side at the latest round of negotiations in Istanbul a list of 400 children who Ukraine is asking to be returned, according to president Zelenskyy the RF had offered to swap the kidnapped Ukrainian children for Russian prisoners of war, which Zelenskyy regarded as being in breach of international law.<sup>97</sup>

### **Energy infrastructure**

According to a media report of 20.06.25, energy minister Herman Halushchenko announced his intention to increase gas imports six-fold to 4.6 billion km<sup>3</sup> in 2025 against the background of Russian strikes on Ukrainian gas production plants. Contracts had so far been concluded for 2.9 billion km<sup>3</sup>. The report estimates annual gas consumption at 19 billion km<sup>3</sup>, citing figures from 2023.

According to a statement by the International Atomic Energy Agency, Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, which is occupied by the RF, "cannot start operating again as long as this large-scale war continues". The plant had too many issues with cooling water and its need for electricity supplied from offsite sources.<sup>98</sup>

### **New citizenship regime planned and new prosecutor general appointed**

According to media sources of 17.06.25, Ukrainians are to be able to hold multiple citizenship in future, now that the Ukrainian parliament has supported a bill allowing this in the first reading. Parliament is said to have also asked the constitutional court to review the document. Dual or multiple nationality is currently not recognised in Ukraine. In the context of Ukraine facing a demographic crisis as a result of millions of Ukrainians having left the country because of the war, and birth rates which have reached historical lows, the new law is said to pave the way not only for Ukrainian refugees abroad (as per August 2024: 6.7 million) to retain their citizenship, but also to encourage individuals of Ukrainian origin to apply for Ukrainian citizenship. Even before the full-scale Russian invasion, the Ukrainian diaspora had been widespread around the world. The government would be compiling a list of countries whose citizenship could be obtained by eligible Ukrainians. The law would also simplify the procedures for children born to Ukrainian parents abroad, and for Ukrainians who acquire additional citizenship through marriage. The report goes on to state that foreigners wishing to obtain Ukrainian citizenship would have to pass an exam demonstrating their knowledge of the country's language, history and constitution. People from "aggressor states" and countries that did not recognise Ukraine's territorial integrity are not to be eligible. Grounds for losing citizenship could be for instance receiving a Russian passport or serving in the Russian armed forces.

According to reports of 21.06.25, president Zelenskyy has appointed the fourth prosecutor general in his presidency in the person of Ruslan Kravchenko. He is said to be replacing Andriy Kostin, who resigned back in the autumn of 2024 because of a scandal relating to invalidity pensions wrongly awarded to prosecutors.<sup>99</sup>

## **30 June 2025**

### **Ceasefire efforts**

At a meeting between presidents Trump and Zelenskyy on the side-lines of the NATO summit in The Hague on 25.06.25, according to media reports the US president indicated that he was considering providing more of the Patriot missiles needed to defend against mounting Russian strikes on Ukraine. Trump reportedly left open the possibility of providing more military aid, and also announced that he wanted to speak with president Putin soon about ending the war. NATO secretary general Rutte had assured the support of the whole of NATO, including the USA, for keeping Ukraine in the fight against the Russian Federation (RF), in order to reach a peace deal – or a ceasefire – that is lasting and durable. Europeans would be responsible for a larger share of Ukraine’s military aid in the future, and there would still be a large American involvement. According to reports, the summit statement did not include a reference to Ukraine joining NATO, due in large part to US resistance.

According to reports, the heads of state and government of the EU decided at the summit in Brussels on 26.06.25 to extend sanctions on Russia for another six months, and – with the exception of Hungary – declared their willingness to continue to support Ukraine’s path towards EU membership. It had not however been possible to agree on a new package of sanctions due to a blockage by Slovakia.<sup>100</sup>

### **Civilian victims**

According to media reports of 24.06.25, the death toll from Russian drone and missile strikes in the night of 22.06. to 23.06.25 in Kyiv and the surrounding area has risen to at least ten. On 24.06.25, according to information from the governor, 22 persons were killed in Dnipropetrovsk oblast. At least 20 people reportedly died in Dnipro alone, and more than 300 were wounded. There had been two more deaths in the nearby town of Samar. According to further media reports of 24.06.25, more fatalities were reported from Kherson (4), Sumy (3) and Donetsk (4) oblasts following Russian attacks. According to information from the responsible governor of 26.06.25, one person was killed by Russian guided bombs in Kherson oblast. On 27.06.25, at least five persons were killed in a renewed Russian airstrike on the town of Samar (Dnipropetrovsk oblast), according to information from the governor. On the same day, the governors of Kharkiv and Donetsk oblasts furthermore reported one person killed in each oblast following Russian attacks. According to information from the regional governor, two people were killed in a Russian drone strike on Odesa in the night of 27.06. to 28.06.25. Also, on 28.06.25 media reported that two people had lost their lives in Donetsk oblast, and one person in Kherson oblast. In the night of 28.06. to 29.06.25, according to reports Ukraine was hit by the biggest Russian airstrikes so far. 60 missiles were reportedly launched, and 475 out of 477 drones were shot down or lost. According to official sources, three deaths were reported, but without stating details. Two more persons had lost their lives as a result of Russian fire. According to official Russian sources, one person was killed in a Ukrainian drone strike on the town of Bokovo-Khrustalne in the Russian-controlled part of Luhansk oblast on 29.06.25.<sup>101</sup>

### **War events and withdrawal from Ottawa Convention**

According to a statement by Ukraine’s top military commander, Oleksandr Syrskyi, of 26.06.25, the Ukrainian forces have been able to halt the Russian advance in Sumy oblast and stabilise the frontline near to the Ukrainian-Russian border. Ukrainian units had been able to retake some of the territory that had previously been occupied by using active defence tactics. Syrskyi is also said to have ordered the lines of defence in the oblast to be expanded more quickly. There was furthermore a need to accelerate the expansion of “anti-drone corridors” – consisting of physical barriers such as nets – in order to be able to provide better protection to Ukrainian troops and logistics routes. Syrskyi had furthermore pointed to Russian attacks on the town of Kostyantynivka aimed at taking the entire Donetsk oblast. According to reports of 27.06.25, the authorities called on the population in the area of Kherson oblast close to the front to prepare for prolonged power cuts, after a Russian attack had impacted on important energy systems.

Also, on 26.06.25 the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons stated that it had found teargas banned for use in war when analysing seven samples submitted by Ukraine. This made it the third time that the watchdog had confirmed the use of CS gas in battle areas.

According to media reports, there was a renewed prisoner of war exchange on 26.06.25 – albeit no numbers were specified – which once more took place at the border between Belarus and Ukraine. According to the Ukrainian coordination agency for the treatment of prisoners of war, the majority of the Ukrainian soldiers had been taken prisoner in 2022 in the defence of Mariupol.

According to reports of 29.06.25, president Zelenskyy has signed a decree to pull Ukraine – similarly to the Baltic states – out of the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines, in reaction to the RF's use of such mines en masse against military and civilians in Ukraine.<sup>102</sup>

### **Council of Europe: special tribunal for crimes against Ukraine**

According to media reports of 26.06.25, president Zelenskyy and Council of Europe secretary-general Alain Berset have signed an accord to establish a special tribunal for crimes against Ukraine. The body aims to hold the Russian political and military leadership to account, and is to be headquartered in The Hague. It could also try defendants in absentis, but not heads of state and government and foreign ministers as long as they enjoy legal immunity. The International Criminal Court in The Hague is responsible for punishing war crimes, but is unable to act against the RF for the “crime of aggression”, i.e. the decision to attack Ukraine. The special tribunal is to now close this legal loophole. The Russian foreign ministry is said to have announced that it would not recognise rulings of the special tribunal, and that it would regard the accession of any state as a hostile act.

The White House's office of management and budget has now recommended cutting funding for several programmes which investigate war crimes over the world and hold those responsible to account, including in Ukraine. The decision is however not yet final, as the state department could file an appeal.<sup>103</sup>

### **Anti-corruption activities and release from detention**

According to media reports of 24.06.25, the national anti-corruption bureau of Ukraine (NABU) suspects sitting deputy prime minister Oleksii Chernyshov of receiving a 345,000 USD kickback in a property development scheme while he was serving as minister of regional development. Chernyshov is said to have denied the accusation and stated that he would not be resigning from his post.

According to reports, Ukrainian journalist Vladyslav Yesypenko from Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) was released on 20.06.25 after more than four years of Russian detention in Crimea. The grounds for the prison sentence were alleged espionage and possession of explosives, which he had denied. Yesypenko reportedly also stated that he had been tortured, including with electric shocks, to force a confession. He had furthermore been denied access to independent lawyers for a month after his arrest.<sup>104</sup>

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