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EUROPE, THE US AND THE WAR IN UKRAINE



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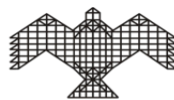
NIAS Europe Studies will focus on capacity building amongst the young scholars, expert lectures by prominent academicians and diplomats, monthly discussions on Europe and a Monthly Dispatch – *Europe Monitor*.

Editor

D Suba Chandran

Assistant Editors

Padmashree Anandhan



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Europe Monitor is an academic initiative started by NIAS Global Politics and the KAS India Office and taken over by NIAS.

The Monthly is an integral part of NIAS Europe Studies. It includes focused commentaries on Europe, short notes and daily updates on contemporary Europe. The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors. They do not purport to reflect the opinions or views of any institutions or organisations.

The Trump-Putin Meeting at Alaska: Hits and Misses

By Abhiruchi Chowdhury

EU-India Free Trade Negotiations: Convergences and Divergences

By Padmashree Anandhan

Third Round of Russia-Ukraine Negotiations in Turkey

By Padmashree Anandhan

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Image Source: Euronews

WAR IN UKRAINE: DAILY UPDATES

By Padmashree Anandhan



Source (Clock-wise): President.gov.ua, Gleb Garanich/Reuters, Kyiv Insider, Ukrainian State Emergency Service, Atlantic Council, NATO

The War in Ukraine section covers the everyday developments from Day 1253 to Day 1224 in four dimensions. First, The War on the Ground. Second, The Moscow View: Claims by Russia. Third, The West View: Responses from the US and Europe. Fourth, The Global Fallouts: Implications of the War in Ukraine.

EM COMMENTS

COMMENT

The Trump-Putin Meeting at Alaska: Hits and Misses

By Abhiruchi Chowdhury

NATO countries pledging to increase defence expenditure, combined with the urge to end the war soon, has pushed Trump to plan for measures against Russia. Thus, signalling a crack in the confidence in Putin.

On 15 August, President of the Russia Vladimir Putin landed in Alaska, US for holding a meeting with US President Donald Trump. The agenda of the meeting was to discuss the war in Ukraine.

The meeting lasted for around three hours. Both the leaders addressed the media briefly. Putin termed the discussion with Trump as “constructive” and “mutually respectful.” Putin urged the European countries and Ukraine to not place any hurdles via “provocation or behind the scenes intrigues” which could backtrack the progress made. President Trump said “there were many, many points that we agreed on. Great progress has been made.”

President Putin, on holding the next meeting with Trump said “next time in Moscow.” To which, Trump replied “I’ll get a little heat on that one, I could see it possibly happening.”

The two leaders did not speak anything about a ceasefire between Russia and Ukraine. After the meeting, as per the White House, Trump held conversation with Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and other NATO leaders.

What is the background?

First, the previous Trump-Putin meetings and their phone conversations on Ukraine. In 2017, during Trump’s first presidency, he met Putin in Germany for the G20 summit. The two leaders had met again in the same year in Vietnam at

an economic forum. In 2018, Putin and Trump held a meeting in Helsinki, Finland after which Trump criticized the reports of interference in US 2016 elections allegedly being carried out from Russia and supported President Putin. Following this, the two leaders came together for the G20 summit in 2018 and 2019 in Argentina and Japan respectively.

On Ukraine, Trump spoke to Putin twice over the phone. After the March phone call, Russia and Ukraine agreed to not attack each other’s energy installations for 30 days. However, soon after the phone call, both Kiev and Moscow blamed each other of carrying out assaults on energy infrastructures. On 12 February, Trump termed his phone conversation with Putin as “lengthy and highly productive phone call.” Trump after the phone call made it sound clear that he will not push Russia in ceding the occupied territories back to Ukraine. His primary objective was to put an end to the ongoing fighting.

Second, Russia’s isolation by the West after 2022. After the war, Russia was expelled from approximately 20 multilateral and regional forums. The meeting in Alaska was the first time that the Russian President met his counterpart in the US since the start of war. Until July, the EU had enforced 18 packages of economic sanctions against Russia. More than 2500 individuals and firms had to bear the brunt of the sanctions. The exclusion was not just

limited to political forums and economic sanctions but also in cultural and sports forums. Moscow has also been sidelined from scientific cooperation of the western countries.

Third, Europe's military assistance to Ukraine. Wherein under the Trump administration, US has been hesitant towards giving military aid, European countries have maintained their backing for Ukraine through military aid packages. In July, Trump had made it clear that it will send American weapons to Ukraine, if they are being paid by the European countries. The EU has contributed EUR 59.6 billion worth military assistance to Ukraine since the beginning of war. In May, Germany under the leadership of new chancellor, had authorized EUR five billion "military aid package" for Ukraine. Following this, Norway and Belgium have allocated EUR 1.5 billion and EUR 1.2 billion for Ukraine whereas Netherlands, UK and Denmark have earmarked around EUR 600 million each.

What does it mean?

First, an unsuccessful meeting for Trump. Before the meeting, Trump had made it clear that Moscow might have to

incur serious repercussions if Putin does not agree to a ceasefire. However, no outcome regarding a ceasefire came out from the meeting. It is absolutely clear that the two leaders did not make any progress, though they have termed the meeting as "productive." Both, Putin and Trump avoided mentioning the areas in which they made progress.

Second, the nearing end of diplomatic isolation of Russia by the West. If the second meeting does take place in Moscow, this would mean European countries would no longer be able to sideline Russia. Further, it would increase the likelihood of countries like Hungary and Slovakia of openly engaging with Russia.

Third, Putin had indirectly warned the European countries to put an end on their military assistance to Ukraine. President Trump might also push the European countries for ending their assistance to Ukraine to achieve a ceasefire in the future meetings. The meeting in Alaska clearly signifies that the future of Ukraine would be decided according to the whims and wishes of Russia and the US.

COMMENT

EU-India Free Trade Negotiations: Convergences and Divergences

By Padmashree Anandhan

With no positive signal from Russia to Trump's 50-day deadline, the US ceasefire mediation efforts have hit a Russian concrete wall with no breakthrough in sight.

On 17 September, the EU proposed a new strategy to improve bilateral relations with India. European Commission President Ursula Von Der Leyen announced the initiative "New Strategic EU-India Agenda." She said: "With our new EU-India strategy, we are taking our relationship to the next level. Advancing trade, investment and talent mobility. Strengthening our joint economic security...Europe is open

for business. And we are ready to invest in our shared future with India."

In response, India's Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal said: "India and the EU complement each other and offer great opportunities on both sides."

Anil Wadhwa, a former Indian diplomat said: “Resolving market access, agricultural tariffs and CBAM is pivotal for unlocking greater trade volume, safeguarding Indian industry, and ensuring EU climate goals do not penalize Indian exporters unfairly.”

The strategy includes five key areas of shared interest. Starting from emerging technologies, clean transition, security and defence, regional connectivity (multilateral cooperation) and mobility cooperation.

What is the background?

First, a brief note on geopolitics. The EU-India Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations, which began in 2007 and were relaunched in 2021, is witnessing a turning point with emerging geopolitical developments. This is leaning more towards the EU as the transatlantic relations become conditional and aim to de-risk from China. India offers a large market, aligning with its democratic values and a secure partner for resilient supply chains. While the EU aids in critical investment, exports and technology transfer, which could help India reach its USD 10 trillion economy target. The negotiations, which were stalled once due to difficulty in reaching a consensus among the political leaders, no longer stand as a barrier. Both are at convergence to counter rising China’s influence and increase economic presence internationally.

Second, the complex road to the EU-India FTA. The trade relations and negotiation process have seen multiple phases for the EU and India. However, it slowly evolved from 1960s when the economic cooperations began. In 1994, the EU-India Cooperation Agreement was established and advanced to a “Strategic partnership” in 2004. During this period, trade in goods expanded from EUR 13.7 billion to EUR 30 billion by 2007. This served as the base to start negotiations for an FTA. In 2013, due to differences over tariffs, services, regulatory standards, agriculture, intellectual property, and mobility, the discussion was stalled till 2021. The talks were relaunched again in 2022 along with negotiations for investment protection and geographical indications. In the past years, the talks have been fast-tracked with increased negotiation rounds and discussion over transparency, regulatory

cooperation, customs and trade facilitation. At the same time, the trade in service have also grown from EUR 30 billion in 2020s to EUR 60 billion by 2023.

Third, significance of the FTA. Conclusion of FTA would showcase how a balanced trade partnership can be executed when the global trade is turning to be more fragmented. It shows possibility of strengthening economic partnerships beyond US and China. For the EU, India would be an alternate for production to reduce its dependence on China. While for India, gaining access to EU’s single market would boost its exports and improve the industrial value. The deal would also help in sustainable development, carbon regulation (CBAM) and digital trade.

Fourth, areas of divergence. The major difference between the EU and India in FTA negotiations is on market access, regulatory standards and services. The EU calls for reduced tariffs on industrial, automobile, wine, and dairy products, combined with strong intellectual property protection and environmental standards. However, India remains cautious on opening up its agricultural, dairy, and domestic manufacturing sectors. India’s concerns are that the deal could undermine the “Make in India” initiative or restrict its ability to regulate digital trade and mobility of personnel. India also seems to seek higher flexibility in the movement of IT and business professionals. While the EU demands commitments on “labour mobility and regulatory equivalence.”

What does it mean?

Winners and losers at the industrial level. The FTA’s pros and cons at the sector level can be found by analysing the competition and tariff factors. For India, textile, apparel, leather, footwear, IT and business sectors are expected to benefit from the market and mobility opportunities of the EU. Whereas automobiles, dairy and agriculture would face increased competition and be affected by reduced tariffs. For the EU, it is expected to be the inverse scenario. However, some frictions could be seen in digital trade and trade regulation.

War in Ukraine: Daily Updates

By Padmashree Anandhan and Fleur Elizabeth Philip



Source (Clock-wise): President.gov.ua, Gleb Garanich/Reuters, Kyiv Insider, Ukrainian State Emergency Service, Atlantic Council, NATO

War in Ukraine Days 1308-1310: Trump calls Russia "Paper Tiger" and Russia counters "we are Real Bears" at the UNGA

WAR ON THE GROUND

On 24 September, addressing the UN General Assembly, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy urged global leaders to act urgently to prevent Russia from triggering a catastrophic arms race driven by drone technology and artificial intelligence. He stated how Moscow is leveraging advanced tech to reshape modern warfare, directly contradicting US President Donald Trump's suggestion that Russia's military might be overstated. Zelenskyy warned that if Vladimir Putin is not stopped, he could escalate the conflict across Europe, stressing that early intervention is far less costly than facing a future where drones could carry nuclear weapons. He welcomed Trump's unexpected support but warned that NATO alone could not guarantee Ukraine's security, pointing to the weakness of international institutions as

a reason the war persists.

On 23 September, at a UN press conference, Zelenskyy warned that Russia is deploying long-range drones into NATO airspace to test the alliance's air defences and identify vulnerabilities. He cautioned that Russian President Vladimir Putin is actively seeking weak points in Europe and among NATO countries as part of a broader strategy to expand the conflict.

THE MOSCOW VIEW Claims by Russia

On 24 September, in response to Trump's comments on Russia's military, calling it "paper Tiger," and asserting that Ukraine could reclaim all of its territory, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov insisted that Ukraine's chances of recapturing occupied regions were unrealistic. He countered Trump's remarks by calling Russia a "real Bear," not a weak force. While acknowledging that the Russian economy was facing "tensions and problems," He made clear it would continue its military campaign

in Ukraine.

On the same day, Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov strongly condemned what he described as the efforts by Kyiv and certain European capitals to prolong the conflict.

On 22 September, Russia's defence ministry claimed that its forces had captured the settlement of Kalynivske in Ukraine's southeastern Dnipropetrovsk region, though Ukraine's military denied these reports, stating that Russian advances had been less significant than claimed. Meanwhile, Ukraine was observed to be conducting counterattacks in parts of the Donetsk region, a key area in the ongoing conflict. On the same day, Putin expressed willingness to extend the New START nuclear arms control treaty with the US for another year, urging Washington to do the same to avoid destabilization and prevent nuclear proliferation as the agreement approaches its February expiration.

THE WEST VIEW

Responses from Europe and the US

On 24 September, US Vice President JD Vance expressed concern that Trump was becoming increasingly frustrated with Moscow over the lack of progress in resolving the Ukraine conflict. Vance stated that Trump feels Russia is not making enough efforts to end the war, warning that continued refusal to negotiate could have severe consequences for Russia. Meanwhile, during a meeting in New York, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio reportedly had a tense exchange with Russia's spokesperson, urging Moscow to halt the violence and take substantial steps toward a lasting resolution.

On 23 September, Trump stated that he believes Ukraine can reclaim all the

territory lost since Russia's 2022 invasion. Posting on Truth Social after meeting Zelenskyy in New York, Trump claimed Russia was in serious economic trouble and criticized its prolonged military campaign, saying a true military power would have won quickly. He argued that Russia's failure to achieve a swift victory was not a sign of strength. Zelenskyy welcomed what he described as a significant shift in Trump's stance on Russia.

On 22 September, in an emergency UN meeting, Washington's new envoy Michael Waltz pledged to "defend every inch of NATO territory" following a provocative incursion by three Russian MiG-31 fighter jets into Estonian airspace, which led to NATO scrambling its own jets. The breach was denied by Moscow, came shortly after Poland accused Russia of repeatedly violating its airspace with drones during attacks on Ukraine, calling it an "act of aggression." In response, Trump also condemned the airspace violations, affirming his commitment to defend Poland and the Baltic states if tensions with Russia escalate further.

War in Ukraine Days 1302-1307: UNSC to hold emergency meeting to address Russia's airspace violation

WAR ON THE GROUND

On 21 September, Ukraine's military reported that overnight Russian strikes on the southern city of Zaporizhzhia killed two and injured two more. In a separate attack earlier, another was killed and residential buildings and infrastructure were damaged by Russian shelling in Kostiantynivka, located in the Donetsk region, according to the city's Military Administration Chief, Serhii Horbunov.

On the same day, Ukraine's President

Volodymyr Zelenskyy stated that Ukraine had endured over 1,500 strike drones, more than 1,280 guided aerial bombs, and 50 missiles of various types in the past week. He revealed that “thousands of foreign components” were found in Russian weapons and urged for the upcoming 19th EU sanctions package to be “truly painful,” calling on the US to support the European measures. The sanctions package was presented earlier by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

On 20 September, the Ukrainian air force claimed to have used drones to target a key oil infrastructure in Russia’s Samara region, striking the Novokuibyshevsk refinery. The facility is responsible for about 2.5 per cent of Russia’s oil refining and a production and transit station for Urals oil, which accounts for up to 50 per cent of Russian exports. The strikes, which the Russians said killed four people, were part of coordinated attacks that also hit the Saratov oil refinery the same night. Ukraine’s SBU security agency claimed the attacks disrupted several oil pumping stations, aiming to cut off revenue streams that fund Russia’s war effort, vowing that such operations would continue.

On 20 September, Russia launched a large-scale drone and ballistic missile assault on Ukraine overnight. According to the report, killing at least three when a missile armed with cluster munitions hit an apartment building in Dnipro. Other areas such as Mykolaiv, Chernihiv, and Zaporizhzhia were also targeted. Zelenskyy condemned the attacks, accusing the Kremlin of intentionally targeting civilians and critical infrastructure rather than military sites.

On 19 September, Ukraine’s forces

claimed to continue their counteroffensive near two eastern cities. Zelenskyy reported that significant losses were inflicted on Russian troops and a disruption of Russian efforts to capture the logistics hub of Pokrovsk. Ukraine’s military said it had stopped 87 Russian attacks near Pokrovsk, including in Muravka, and Zelenskyy confirmed Ukrainian forces were maintaining positions around Kupiansk in Kharkiv, an area under heavy Russian assault. Zelenskyy also highlighted recent Ukrainian gains, including recapturing seven settlements and clearing nine more near Pokrovsk and Dobropillia.

THE MOSCOW VIEW **Claims by Russia**

On 22 September, a Ukrainian drone strike was reported by Russia-appointed governor on a resort area in Crimea, reportedly killing three and injuring 16. Russia condemned the attacks and as a result, a school in Faros was damaged and fires sparked near Yalta due to falling drone debris. Ukrainian officials are yet to comment.

On 20 September, Russia announced that its forces had captured the village of Berezove in Ukraine’s Dnipropetrovsk region. Meanwhile, Zelenskyy reported “intense actions” around Kupiansk, a strategic rail hub in the northeastern Kharkiv region retaken by Ukraine in 2022. According to the Institute for the Study of War, Ukrainian troops made gains in northern Sumy and near Pokrovsk, while Russian forces advanced in areas of northern Kharkiv, as well as near Lyman, Pokrovsk, Novopavlivka, and Velykomykhailivka. On 19 September, Russia government dismissed a US-based report from Yale’s School of Public Health, which identified over 210 sites across Russia and occupied Ukraine where deported

Ukrainian children are allegedly subjected to forced re-education, including military training and drone manufacturing. The report links these activities to a large-scale deportation program targeting Ukrainian children. The facilities involved range from camps and schools to military bases, medical centers, religious sites, and universities. Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova rejected the report, calling it fabricated and based on unreliable data. Meanwhile, Ukraine accuses Russia of illegally deporting or forcibly displacing more than 19,500 children to Russia and Belarus, violating the Geneva Conventions.

THE WEST VIEW

Responses from Europe and the US

On 21 September, Estonia announced that the UN Security Council would hold an emergency meeting to address Russia's violation of its airspace by fighter jets. The incident occurred after NATO intercepted three Russian MiG-31 jets over the Gulf of Finland, drawing condemnation from NATO and European officials, while Moscow denied the provocation. Germany's air force was also involved in intercepting a Russian Il-20M reconnaissance plane over the Baltic Sea, which had turned off its transponder and ignored contact requests. Estonia's foreign ministry condemned Russia's actions, calling them a "brazen violation." Poland had earlier reported similar incursions by Russian drones in its airspace amid the ongoing conflict with Ukraine. Meanwhile, Donald Trump expressed his disapproval and offered support for defending EU members if Russian aggression escalates.

On 20 September, Czech President Petr Pavel stated that NATO must respond firmly to Russian airspace violations, even suggesting that shooting down

Russian jets could be necessary. He warned that Russia would quickly understand it had crossed a line, emphasizing that "giving in to evil is simply not an option," despite the risk of escalating toward open conflict.

On 19 September, NATO intercepted three Russian MiG-31 fighter jets during a 12-minute violation of Estonia's airspace over the Baltic Sea, condemning Moscow's actions as "reckless," according to Jon Henley and Jakub Krupa. Estonia summoned the Russian envoy to protest the incident, which occurred near Vaindloo island in the Gulf of Finland. The MiG-31s, flying without flight plans, transponders, or notifying air traffic control, were intercepted by Italian F-35 jets stationed in Estonia. Russia denied any incursion. US President Donald Trump expressed disapproval, saying: "I don't love it. I don't like when that happens. Could be big trouble." The European Council president, António Costa, announced that EU leaders will discuss a "collective response" to Russia's airspace violations at a meeting in Copenhagen on 01 October.

On 19 September, the EU proposed accelerating its total ban on Russian natural gas imports to January 2027 as part of its 19th sanctions package against Moscow. European Commission President von der Leyen emphasised the need to cut off fossil fuel revenues fueling Russia's war, noting that most Russian oil imports have already been banned, dropping from 29 per cent in early 2021 to two per cent by mid-2025, with only Hungary and Slovakia still buying Russian oil due to their leaders' pro-Moscow stances. While the US has pushed Europe to stop Russian oil imports, it has not taken similar actions itself, instead imposing tariffs on India over its Russian oil purchases, possibly

influenced by personal tensions between the US and Indian leaders. The EU's new sanctions target refineries, traders, and petrochemical firms in third countries, including China, as well as crypto platforms and Russia's Mir credit card system designed to bypass US networks. Additionally, the package aims to blacklist 118 vessels in Russia's "shadow fleet" of tankers and 45 companies linked to Russia's military industry, with export bans and tighter controls on entities from Russia, China, and India.

War in Ukraine Days 1298-1301:
Russia and Belarus hold Zapad 2025
military exercises

WAR ON THE GROUND

On 16 September, Ukraine officials reported on Russia's overnight strikes killed at least two people and injured dozens more across multiple Ukrainian cities. According to Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and regional officials, one died in Zaporizhzhia, where the attack also caused several fires, while in the southern Mykolaiv region, one person was killed and two others injured. Over 100 drones and about 150 glide bombs were launched by Russia during the assault, targeting central, southern, and eastern Ukraine. Zelenskyy condemned the attacks as "aerial terror" and called for the urgent implementation of a multi-layered air defense system to protect European skies.

On 16 September, following the attacks Zelenskyy urged Western allies to deliver promised air-defense systems and missiles ahead of the approaching winter, stressing that all agreements and contracts must be fully honored. In his evening address, he referenced recent commitments made during meetings in London, Washington, and

Paris, though without naming specific systems or timelines. NATO allies had previously pledged to bolster Ukraine's air defences, particularly with additional Patriot batteries and to provide at least EUR 40 billion in security assistance over the coming year.

On 15 September, Ukraine's Defense Intelligence (DIU) reported that its special forces had successfully located and destroyed a Russian Buk-M3 surface-to-air missile system in the occupied Zaporizhzhia region, near Oleksandrivka in the Melitopol district. The system, valued at USD 40 to USD 50 million was capable of targeting threats from the air, sea, and land. While the claim has not been independently verified, it comes amid a broader escalation in Ukrainian strikes on Russian infrastructure, including attacks on oil refineries and railways aimed at disrupting military logistics and funding. On the same day, Ukraine also claimed responsibility for hitting the Kirishi oil refinery, a major facility located southeast of St. Petersburg and far from the Ukrainian border.

On 13 September, Ukraine's Defence Minister Denys Shmyhal stated that Ukraine will require at least USD 120 billion for its defense in 2026, as the war with Russia enters its fourth year. He emphasized that spending less than Russia would result in losing territory and lives. Currently, Ukraine allocates over a third of its GDP to defence. The costs of the war are steadily rising, with Roksolana Pidlasa, head of the parliamentary Budget Committee, reporting that in 2025, each day of the war costs USD 172 million, up from USD 140 million in 2024.

On 13 September, a fire erupted at an oil production site in Russia's Bashkortostan region following what

the regional governor, Radiy Khabirov, described as a "terrorist attack" involving drones. Khabirov stated that the Bashneft facility was targeted by aircraft-type drones, with one drone being shot down over the site, which led to the fire. The fire was being extinguished, and although there was limited damage, no casualties were reported. The facility is located in the city of Ufa, approximately 1,400 kilometres (870 miles) from the Ukrainian border, though the governor did not specifically mention Ukraine in his statement.

THE MOSCOW VIEW

Claims by Russia

On 16 September, RT reported on Russia and Belarus conducting joint military exercises under the "Zapad" war games. This included rehearsals for launching Russian tactical nuclear weapons and featured the Oreshnik hypersonic missile, according to Belarusian leader Alexander Lukashenko. Minsk reported that 7,000 troops participated on its territory, while Russian President Vladimir Putin, dressed in military attire, claimed a total of 100,000 troops were involved across both countries. Putin said the drills aimed to practice repelling potential threats against the "Union State," a joint political and defense alliance between Russia and Belarus. Held every four years, "Zapad," which means "west" in Russian is seen by Western analysts as a show of force intended to intimidate Europe.

On 15 September, Russia's ambassador to Romania, Vladimir Lipayev, rejected Romania's claims of a Russian drone incursion as a "provocation" orchestrated by Kyiv, calling the accusations "unfounded." He criticised Bucharest for failing to provide a concrete and convincing explanation to

Moscow's inquiries. Romania had reported a breach of its airspace, prompting it to scramble two F-16 fighter jets, though the drone was eventually lost from radar. This marks the second reported incursion into NATO airspace by Russian drones in recent days, following a similar incident in Poland, where drones were shot down with NATO support.

THE WEST VIEW

Responses from Europe and the US

On 16 September, EU member states agreed on new measures to support the long-term return and reintegration of displaced Ukrainians once conditions in Ukraine allow, while also offering pathways to residence status for eligible refugees. Denmark's Immigration Minister Kaare Dybvad Bek emphasized continued EU solidarity amid Russia's ongoing attacks, while highlighting the importance of preparing for Ukraine's eventual rebuilding. Since the 2022 invasion, over four million Ukrainians have found refuge in the EU, with Germany hosting the largest share at over 1.2 million. Many currently benefit from temporary protection status granting access to jobs and social services set to expire in March 2027. The EU has encouraged member states to provide national residence permits based on employment, education, or family ties, provided certain conditions are met.

On 15 September, UK summoned Russia's ambassador over what it called an "unprecedented violation of NATO airspace" after Russian drones breached both Polish and Romanian airspace. A UK Foreign Office spokesperson condemned the incidents as "utterly unacceptable," emphasizing that the UK stands firmly with Poland, Romania, Ukraine, and other NATO allies. Earlier Poland shot down Russian drones, the

first such action by a NATO member during the war, while Romania scrambled jets in response to a separate drone incursion. The UK highlighted NATO's serious response, including increased defences and the deployment of counter-drone technology along its eastern flank, and confirmed that multiple Russian diplomats have been summoned over the provocations.

On 13 September, US President Donald Trump stated that Moscow's war on Ukraine could end if all NATO countries stopped purchasing oil from Russia and imposed tariffs of 50 per cent to 100 per cent on China for continuing to do so. Trump expressed his willingness to impose significant sanctions on Russia, but only if all NATO nations agreed to halt oil purchases from Russia. He criticised NATO for not showing full commitment to ending the war and called it "shocking" that some members, like Turkey, Hungary, and Slovakia, were still buying Russian oil, which he argued weakened the alliance's bargaining power. Trump has previously threatened new sanctions on Russia and secondary sanctions on countries like China and India for buying Russian oil, including a 25 per cent tariff on Indian goods over their continued oil imports from Moscow.

War in Ukraine Days 1296 & 1297:
NATO leaders pledge defence to protect Poland's airspace after Russian drone breach

WAR ON THE GROUND

On 12 September, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called for a unified European air defence system. He urged the creation of an effective air shield across the continent. He noted that Ukraine has already proposed a coordinated plan for joint airspace protection, stressing that only collective

European efforts can ensure security, especially as drone threats continue to grow. Highlighting the ongoing joint Russian-Belarusian military drills in Belarus, Zelenskyy warned that these exercises could be a rehearsal for future Russian aggression.

Following the Russian drone breach into Poland's airspace, Zelenskyy criticised Western and global leaders for their inaction, some of which were intercepted by Poland and its NATO allies. In his daily address, he stated that while there have been plenty of statements, meaningful action is lacking. Zelenskyy warned that Russia is deliberately testing boundaries and monitoring how NATO forces respond to its provocations.

On the same day, several Ukrainian and Western analysts stated that Russia employed the Gerbera drone primarily as a decoy to overwhelm Ukraine's air defences, though it is also used for reconnaissance or as an attack drone carrying a small warhead. While China denies supplying materials for use against Ukraine, evidence of such shipments has been documented, drawing international criticism for its support of Vladimir Putin's war. Additionally, Ukrainian intelligence reports that the Gerbera contains smuggled electronic components from US and European manufacturers, despite export restrictions to Russia.

THE MOSCOW VIEW

Claims by Russia

On 12 September, Russia reported Ukrainian drone attacks at a training center at the Russian-occupied Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant. On the same day, after sending drones into Polish airspace, Russia demanded Poland to reopen its border with Belarus, where joint Russian-Belarusian

military exercises are underway, warning of unspecified “consequences” if it does not comply. Poland’s Prime Minister Donald Tusk had closed the border on Tuesday in response to the “very aggressive” Zapad exercises and increasing provocations from the allied authoritarian regimes.

THE WEST VIEW

Responses from Europe and the US

On 12 September, Germany announced it will “extend and expand” its role in NATO’s air policing program by doubling its Eurofighter jet contribution to four and extending their mission over Polish airspace by 2025. France’s President Emmanuel Macron pledged to send three Rafale fighter jets to help protect Poland and NATO’s eastern flank alongside allies. Meanwhile, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, and Sweden each summoned their Russian ambassadors to protest the recent drone incident.

On 12 September, thousands gathered in Bratislava to protest against the earlier meeting between Slovakia’s pro-Putin Prime Minister Robert Fico and Russia’s President Vladimir Putin in Beijing. Despite the ongoing war, Fico has not visited Kyiv or any affected areas in Ukraine, and has consistently advocated for “normalizing” relations with Russia.

On 11 September, the US State Department approved a USD 1.07 billion sale of advanced air-to-air missiles and related equipment to NATO ally Finland, which shares a lengthy border with Russia. The deal still requires approval from the US Congress.

On the same day, the EU lowered the price cap on Russian oil from USD 60 to USD 47.60 per barrel starting in October. This move comes against the

US, while Russia and its buyers continue to circumvent the cap. Richard Bronze of Energy Aspects noted that sanctions coordination between the US and other G7 nations had largely collapsed under the Trump administration. However, change may be on the horizon, as European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen announced the EU is considering a faster phase-out of Russian fossil fuels as part of new sanctions.

On 11 September, the UK is set to begin mass production of low-cost, Ukrainian-designed interceptor drones to support Ukraine in countering Russian UAV attacks. Defence Secretary John Healey will unveil the project, marking the first initiative under a new technology-sharing agreement with Kyiv, at the Defence and Security Equipment International (DSEI) trade show in London. Following talks with defence officials from Poland, Italy, France, and Germany, Healey also condemned Russia’s “reckless” violation of Polish airspace.

On the same day, Germany’s Defence Minister Boris Pistorius told the parliament that the drones entering Polish airspace were deliberately directed on that path and did not need to take that route to reach Ukraine. He dismissed the possibility of a navigational error, emphasizing there was no reason to believe it was accidental. Pistorius also noted that Poland reported the drones were armed, indicating that a dangerous incident could have occurred at any moment.

On 11 September, Poland’s government reported on a drone incident in its airspace involving Russia’s Gerbera UAVs.. These inexpensive, long-range drones are reportedly assembled in

Yelabuga, Russia, using kits from a Chinese supplier, as per Ukrainian intelligence. Constructed from lightweight materials such as plywood and foam, the Gerbera drones are powered by a rear motor and propeller, resembling the Iran-supplied or Russian-made Shahed drones.

GLOBAL FALLOUTS

Implications of the War

On 11 September, the New Zealand government lowered its price cap on Russian crude oil from USD 60 to USD 47.60 a barrel, aligning its policy with Canada, Britain, and the EU. Foreign Minister Winston Peters described this as a strategic move to reduce crucial oil revenues that fund Putin's illegal war against Ukraine. Additionally, New Zealand imposed new sanctions targeting 19 individuals, entities, and ships linked to Russia, focusing on those involved in chemical weapons, disinformation, shadow fleets, alternative payment systems, and facilitators connected to North Korea and Iran.

War in Ukraine Day 1295:

Russia's glide bomb attacks kills 23 in Donetsk region

WAR ON THE GROUND

On 09 September, a Russian glide bomb struck the village of Yarova in Ukraine's Donetsk region. The attack killed at least 21, injuring nearly two dozen others. The local governor, Vadym Filashkin, urged residents to flee to safer areas while rescue operations were still underway. Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy condemned the attack as "brutally savage" and called for stronger international sanctions against Russia. He emphasized that such attacks on civilians must not go unanswered, urging global action from the US, Europe, and the G20. The strike, which

occurred near the front lines of the ongoing conflict, is part of Russia's broader military offensive in the region. The UN has estimated that over 12,000 civilians have been killed since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022. According to Ukraine's Interior Ministry, most of the victims were elderly, with 23 of the dead being pensioners. Initially, the death toll was reported at 21, with many others injured. The Ukrainian military confirmed that the attack was carried out using a glide bomb, a long-range weapon designed to strike deeper into Ukrainian territory and challenge its defences.

THE MOSCOW VIEW

Claims by Russia

On 09 September, Russia's Defense Ministry reported that the Ukrainian army had lost over 1,485 troops in various frontline areas during the past 24 hours. The losses were spread across different military groups, with the highest toll of 515 troops in the Battlegroup Center's area, followed by more than 240 troops in the Battlegroup South, 265 in the Battlegroup East, and smaller losses in other regions. The report detailed a series of strikes by Russian forces across multiple sectors, including the destruction of tanks, armored vehicles, artillery, cars, electronic warfare stations, and ammunition depots. The Russian military claimed to have targeted Ukrainian units, including mechanized brigades, National Guard forces, and territorial defense brigades, in areas such as Sumy, Kharkov, Donetsk, and Zaporozhye regions, inflicting heavy equipment losses and further disrupting Ukrainian operations.

On the same day, Governor Vyacheslav Gladkov reported that the Ukrainian military launched large-scale drone

strikes on Russia's Belgorod Region, deploying a total of 79 drones along with multiple munitions. Several districts were targeted, including Belgorodsky, Borisovsky, Valuysky, and Veidelevsky, with varying degrees of damage. The Grayvoronsky district was hit particularly hard, enduring 17 munitions and eight drone strikes. Civilian casualties were reported, with an injured man treated after a drone strike in Novaya Tavolzhanka. Despite the scale of the attacks, Gladkov emphasized the effectiveness of the region's air defenses, which intercepted several drones and minimized further damage.

THE WEST VIEW

Responses from Europe and the

US On 09 September, EU foreign affairs Chief Kaja Kallas announced that EU member states have provided unprecedented support to Ukraine, with nearly EUR 169 billion in financial aid since Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022. Of that, over EUR 63 billion has been allocated for military support. Kallas highlighted that EUR 25 billion in military aid had already been delivered in 2023, marking the highest annual amount to date. EU countries have also contributed significant supplies of ammunition, meeting 80 per cent of their target of two million rounds, with plans to reach 100 per cent by October.

On the same day, Germany launched a significant defense initiative to provide Ukraine with several thousand long-range drones, valued at EUR 300 million, in a bid to disrupt Russian operations deep behind the front lines. The program, which will be carried out in collaboration with Ukrainian defense firms, aims to enhance Ukraine's capabilities to weaken Russia's military infrastructure. Germany's Defense Minister Boris Pistorius emphasized

that this initiative would help Ukraine mount an effective defence. UK Defense Minister John Healey also announced that the UK would continue supplying long-range one-way attack drones, vital for Ukraine's defense. The UK will fund the delivery of thousands of these drones over the next 12 months, further strengthening its long-standing partnership with Ukraine.

On 09 September, Tino Chrupalla, co-leader of Germany's far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party, suggested that Ukraine shares some responsibility for the escalation of Russian attacks in the ongoing war. This comes after the meeting between US President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin in Alaska. Chrupalla pointed to Ukrainian strikes on Russia's Druzhba oil pipeline, which also affects Hungary and Slovakia, as evidence of Ukraine's provocative actions. The AfD, Germany's largest opposition party, has been critical of the country's support for Ukraine, with Chrupalla accusing the European Union of exacerbating the conflict by supplying arms to Kyiv.

War in Ukraine Day 1294:

Heavy drone and missile strikes reported in Russia-occupied Donetsk region

WAR ON THE GROUND

On 08 September, Ukraine's military confirmed that Russia launched an Iskander ballistic missile over the weekend, damaging a Ukrainian government building in Kyiv. Chief of Staff to President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Andriy Yermak, discussed the attack with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio. The attack marked the first use of the Iskander missile in the war, leaving a "gaping hole" in the building, as noted by the European Union's Ambassador to

Ukraine, Katarina Mathernova, who added that the building was spared further destruction only because the missile failed to fully detonate. The Iskander missile has been widely deployed by Russia in attacks across Ukraine.

THE MOSCOW VIEW **Claims by Russia**

On 08 September, Denis Pushilin, the Russia-appointed leader of the occupied parts of Ukraine's Donetsk region, claimed that Ukrainian forces had carried out heavy drone and missile strikes on two cities in the area, resulting in two deaths and 16 injuries. Pushilin reported on Telegram that Donetsk, the region's main city, and Makiivka, an industrial town to the north, were targeted. Ukrainian officials have yet to comment on the attacks. Russian news agencies cited security sources in the occupied territories, stating that at least 20 drones were involved in the assaults, and air defense systems had been activated in response.

On 08 September, Russia's President Vladimir Putin awarded the Order of Courage to General Valery Gerasimov, the overall commander of Russia's war in Ukraine, even though Gerasimov is the subject of an international arrest warrant for alleged war crimes linked to the invasion. As chief of the general staff of Russia's armed forces, Gerasimov is a key figure in shaping Russia's modern warfare strategy. He was sanctioned by the US shortly after Russia's invasion in February 2022 and was later targeted by the International Criminal Court (ICC), which issued an arrest warrant for him and former defense minister Sergei Shoigu in June 2023. They are accused of directing attacks on civilian infrastructure and causing excessive harm to civilians, particularly through missile strikes on Ukraine's electric grid

between October 2022 and March 2023. Russia, which does not recognize the ICC's authority, defends these strikes as targeting legitimate military assets. Gerasimov received the prestigious decoration for "courage, bravery, and dedication" in military service, according to a decree posted on Russia's official legal acts website.

On 08 September, Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov stated that Russia has no intention of seeking revenge against Western countries that cut ties and imposed sanctions over the Ukraine conflict. Lavrov emphasized that Russia does not plan to "take revenge or vent anger" on companies that sided with Western governments in supporting Ukraine, describing hostility as a poor approach. He added that if former Western partners "come to their senses," Russia would be open to cooperation, but would take into account the companies' past actions and their potential risks to Russia's economy and security.

THE WEST VIEW **Responses from Europe and the US**

On 08 September, Estonia's foreign ministry announced summoning the Russian embassy's charge d'affaires to formally protest after a Russian MI-8 helicopter violated the country's airspace. The incident occurred on Sunday near Vaindloo Island in the Gulf of Finland, with Estonia, a NATO member and strong supporter of Ukraine, calling it the third such violation this year. Estonian Foreign Minister Margus Tsahkna described the breach as a serious violation of international law.

On 08 September, the EU's top sanctions envoy, David O'Sullivan, held a meeting with US officials. This follows Donald Trump's statement that he was

prepared to take further action against Russia over the war in Ukraine. O'Sullivan met with US counterparts as both Europe and the US seek to impose tougher measures on Russia's military operations after its largest-ever air attack on Ukraine. Ahead of the meetings, European Council President António Costa praised transatlantic cooperation on sanctions and emphasized that the US remains firmly committed to supporting Ukraine.

War in Ukraine Days 1292 & 1293: **Russia launches massive drone and rocket strike on Kyiv**

WAR ON THE GROUND

On 07 September, Ukraine's military reported that Russia carried out its largest aerial assault since the start of the war. According to the report, Russia had launched 805 drones and 13 missiles overnight, with air defences intercepting most but leaving nine missile impacts and 56 drone strikes across Ukraine. A government building in Kyiv housing ministers' offices was hit for the first time, damaging its roof and upper floors, Prime Minister Yulia Svyrydenko confirmed, stressing that while structures can be rebuilt, "lost lives cannot be returned." The strikes come as diplomatic efforts continue, with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy expressing readiness to meet Vladimir Putin but rejecting his invitation to Moscow, instead suggesting the Russian leader come to Kyiv.

On 07 September, Ukraine's drone forces claimed responsibility for striking the Druzhba oil pipeline in Russia's Bryansk region, with commander Robert Brovdi saying the attack caused "comprehensive fire damage" and sharing infrared footage showing explosions and smoke. Russian authorities have not commented, and

the claim cannot be independently verified. The pipeline, which supplies Russian oil to Hungary and Slovenia, has been repeatedly targeted by Ukraine in recent months as part of its campaign against Russian energy infrastructure, leading to disruptions amid Moscow's ongoing full-scale invasion.

On 07 September, Zelenskyy condemned Russia's massive overnight drone and missile attack on Kyiv, which killed at least four people and damaged government buildings. He said he expected a strong response from the US and broad action from Ukraine's partners. He confirmed speaking with France's President Emmanuel Macron to coordinate diplomatic efforts, strengthen defences, and prepare next steps with allies. While Macron reiterated France's solidarity with Ukraine and commitment to achieving a just and lasting peace, Zelenskyy stressed that emergency services were still working at the attack sites, with additional casualties reported in Sumy and Chernihiv. Calling the strikes a "deliberate crime" that prolongs the war at a time when diplomacy could already have begun. The Russian attacks on Kyiv killed three, while igniting fires across the city, including in a government building, officials said. Mayor Vitali Klitschko reported that the strikes began with drones before missile attacks.

THE MOSCOW VIEW **Claims by Russia**

On 07 September, according to local authorities, Ukrainian drone strike ignited a blaze at the Ilsky oil refinery in Russia's southern Krasnodar region. The fire, which affected one processing unit and spread across several square meters, was swiftly extinguished. Officials reported no casualties, with refinery staff evacuated to shelters as

emergency crews secured the site.

THE WEST VIEW

Responses from Europe and the US

On 07 September, US President Donald Trump announced that European leaders will travel to Washington for talks on ways to resolve the Russia-Ukraine war, while also confirming that he plans to hold another conversation with Russian President Vladimir Putin soon. This comes after, Russia launched its largest rocket and drone assault on Ukraine since the full-scale invasion in 2022. Trump said he is prepared to impose new sanctions on Moscow, though he stopped short of specifying what measures might be included. US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent echoed this stance, stressing that Washington is working closely with European allies to intensify pressure on Russia, highlighting a “very productive” call between Vice President JD Vance and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen. Trump has also suggested that sanctions could extend to countries continuing to purchase Russian oil, with India already facing so-called secondary tariffs, underscoring his push to target one of Moscow’s main sources of revenue.

On the same day, Poland’s government said its own and allied aircraft were activated to safeguard its airspace after Russian strikes hit western Ukraine near the border, with air defences and radar put on high alert. Meanwhile, in a move to ease rare tensions, the remains of Poles killed by Ukrainian nationalist insurgents in World War II were buried in western Ukraine, following Poland’s earlier approval to exhume them in the former Polish village of Puzniki.

War in Ukraine Day 1282:

European leaders and Trump condemn Russia's missile attacks on Kyiv

WAR ON THE GROUND

On 28 August, Ukrinform reported that Ukraine’s Air Force said Russia launched 629 drones and missiles overnight the second-largest aerial barrage of the war including 598 drones, 31 missiles, two Kinzhal hypersonic weapons and nine ballistic missiles, with strikes reported at 13 locations across Ukraine. On 28 August, Kyiv’s military administration reported that at least 18 people, including four children, were killed in Russia’s latest strikes on the Ukrainian capital, with rescue teams still searching the rubble of destroyed buildings, meaning the death toll could rise further.

On 28 August, the US State Department approved an USD 825 million arms deal with Ukraine, including 3,350 Extended Range Attack Munition (ERAM) long-range air-launched cruise missiles, GPS guidance kits, spare parts and support equipment, with funding coming from US foreign military aid and NATO allies Denmark, the Netherlands and Norway. The ERAMs, which can strike targets up to 400 km away, would significantly expand Ukraine’s strike capability, though it is unclear if their use against Russian territory will be restricted, as with US-supplied ATACMS. The State Department said the sale strengthens US security interests by supporting Ukraine’s stability, but the package still requires congressional approval.

THE WEST VIEW

Responses from Europe and the US

On 28 August, European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen condemned Russia’s latest strikes on Kyiv, saying missiles landed just 50 meters from the EU delegation office, proving the Kremlin will “stop at nothing to terrorize Ukraine,” while announcing a 19th sanctions package and measures to

use frozen Russian assets for Ukraine's defense and reconstruction; she also pledged full solidarity with frontline EU states. France's President Emmanuel Macron likewise denounced the barrage of 629 missiles and drones as "terror and barbarism," reaffirming France's unwavering support for Ukraine. Von der Leyen added that Putin must come to the negotiating table if he is serious about peace, stressing the need for a just and lasting settlement with strong security guarantees for Ukraine after Russian strikes in Kyiv damaged an EU office; she noted she had spoken with both Zelenskyy and Trump about the situation.

On the same day, Germany's Chancellor Friedrich Merz said that it was "obvious" Zelenskyy and Putin would not hold a summit, despite earlier US assurances. Standing alongside French President Emmanuel Macron, Merz noted that their cabinets would review Russia's invasion of Ukraine given the absence of a meeting, which had been suggested during recent talks between Presidents Trump and Putin in Washington. He strongly condemned Russia's overnight strikes on Kyiv, saying the attacks once again revealed Moscow's "true face." In a post on X, he joined other European leaders in denouncing the assault, emphasizing that Germany condemns the targeting of civilians "in the strongest terms."

On the attacks, Germany's Defence Minister Boris Pistorius condemned Russia's latest strikes on Kyiv as a "terrible attack," saying they prove President Vladimir Putin has no interest in peace or even a ceasefire, only in continuing his imperialist aggression. He stressed that Germany's support for Ukraine is ongoing and long-term, not a direct reaction to individual attacks, noting Berlin will keep providing and

expanding military aid in the months and years ahead.

On 28 August, the White House said that Trump was "not happy" but "not surprised" by Russia's latest overnight attack on Kyiv, which killed at least 15 and damaged multiple buildings, including the British Council and EU offices. Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt noted that Russia and Ukraine have been at war since 2022.

On the same day, Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan expressed willingness to facilitate high-level peace talks between Ukraine and Russia, recalling Turkey's role in past negotiations that achieved prisoner swaps but no ceasefire. Erdogan also pledged that Turkey, as a NATO member, would help strengthen Ukraine's security once a peace deal is reached, according to a statement from the Turkish presidency.

On 28 August, the New York Times reported that Russia or its proxies have been flying surveillance drones over eastern Germany, particularly in Thuringia, to track routes used by the US and allies for transporting weapons to Ukraine, possibly to aid sabotage efforts and support Russian troops. Pistorius said he was not surprised, noting that while drones over ports and rail facilities are concerning, the Bundeswehr is not tasked with monitoring civilian territory. Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov dismissed the report as likely "another newspaper fake," arguing Germany would not have stayed silent if it were true.

War in Ukraine Days 1280-81:

Ukraine reports largest missile strike on Kyiv

WAR ON THE GROUND

On 27 August, Ukraine's President

Volodymyr Zelenskyy condemned Russia's latest large-scale strike on Kyiv. He said: "Russia chooses ballistics instead of the negotiating table. It chooses to continue killing instead of ending the war." He urged fresh, tougher sanctions, saying: "Russia must feel accountable for every strike, for every day of this war."

At least 10 were killed and 38 injured in a massive Russian airstrike on Kyiv as per the reports. Kyiv's mayor Vitali Klitschko confirmed emergency services were deployed, while journalists reported hearing powerful blasts and seeing tracer fire as Ukrainian defenses intercepted drones and missiles. Explosions were also reported in Sumy, Dnipro, and Zaporizhzhia, as authorities urged citizens across to take shelter.

On the same day, Ukraine military confirmed for the first time that Russian forces have entered the Dnipropetrovsk region, with fighting ongoing near Dnipro, fourth-largest city. While Ukraine's general staff denied Moscow's claims of fully capturing the villages of Zaporizke and Novogeorgiivka. The development marks an escalation, as Dnipropetrovsk had previously been spared heavy fighting and is not among the five regions Russia has illegally annexed.

On 26 August, Zelenskyy reported on the meeting with military leadership to assess the situation at the frontline and along border areas, particularly in Sumy and Kharkiv regions, stressing that conditions there were being shaped by Ukraine's own forces. He added that attention was also focused on Donetsk and Zaporizhzhia, with discussions centered on additional supply needs.

THE MOSCOW VIEW

Claims by Russia

On 27 August, the Kremlin said that peace negotiations over Ukraine must remain confidential to avoid jeopardizing progress. Russia spokesperson Dmitry Peskov emphasized that while the recent Alaska summit between Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump represented a breakthrough, publicly discussing potential compromises could undermine the process. Peskov echoed that any direct talks must be "properly prepared" to be effective, stressing that Russia still prefers a political and diplomatic resolution to the war.

On the same day, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov reiterated Russia's stance that Zelenskyy's expired presidential mandate complicates his legitimacy in negotiations.

On 27 August, Russian air defence forces claimed intercepting 27 Ukrainian drones overnight, including 15 over Rostov Region. Acting Governor Yury Slusar said around 250 square meters of the roof were destroyed and 15 residents evacuated, though no injuries were reported. Fragments from downed drones also damaged homes, cars, and power lines in multiple districts. Slusar stressed that civilian safety remained the top priority.

THE WEST VIEW

Responses from Europe and the US

On 27 August, Germany's Chancellor Friedrich Merz warned that "Russia is and will remain, for the long term, the greatest threat to freedom, peace and stability in Europe" as his cabinet approved a draft bill to expand the ranks of military volunteers, leaving open the possibility of reviving conscription, suspended since 2011. Meanwhile, defense firm Rheinmetall inaugurated Europe's largest munitions plant in Unterlüß, northern Germany is

expected to produce 350,000 artillery shells annually by 2027.

On 27 August, US Secretary of State and acting National Security Advisor Marco Rubio held a virtual meeting with EU foreign ministers to discuss Ukraine and possible steps toward a ceasefire. Participants included UK Foreign Secretary David Lammy, Ukraine's Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha, Finland's Foreign Minister Elina Valtonen and EU foreign policy Chief Kaja Kallas. Sybiha emphasized US President Trump's "peacemaking leadership" and stressed that security guarantees for Ukraine must be concrete, legally and binding covering military, diplomatic, legal, and other areas.

On the same day, Finland's President Alexander Stubb said he hoped Trump's patience with Putin would soon run out, warning that the Russian leader was using a "typical delaying tactic" to avoid meeting Zelenskyy. Stubb stressed that Finland and other European countries "will do everything we can to achieve lasting peace."

War in Ukraine Days 1280-81:
Ukraine reports largest missile strike on Kyiv

WAR ON THE GROUND

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THE WEST VIEW

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War in Ukraine Days 1277-78:

Zelenskyy vows to build secure and peaceful country on 34th Independence Day

WAR ON THE GROUND

On 24 August, Ukraine marked its 34th Independence Day. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Kyiv highlighted the blue-and-yellow flag as a symbol of freedom for those freed from Russian captivity and a sign of hope for Ukrainians still under occupation. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen also greeted: "We are with you, for as long as it takes. Because a free Ukraine means a free Europe." Germany's Chancellor Friedrich Merz stressed on Berlin's ongoing support for Kyiv in its defense against Russian military aggression. He said: "As the country marks Independence Day, we stand firmly by their side — today and in the future." Canada's Prime Minister Mark Carney, visited Kyiv for Independence Day, and called for an immediate ceasefire in Ukraine, saying a truce was essential "to stop the killing." Along with

Zelenskyy, Carney stressed that Russia had no say in Ukraine's future security guarantees, which must be defined by Kyiv and its partners. He condemned Moscow's invasion, warning that unchecked aggression could spread, and emphasized that NATO views support for Ukraine as part of collective defense.

On the same day, Russia and Ukraine conducted another prisoner swap, exchanging military personnel and civilians in one of the few consistent outcomes of ongoing diplomatic efforts to end the war. Russia reported receiving 146 Russian soldiers and claimed the same number were returned to Ukraine, though Kyiv did not confirm figures. Among the Ukrainians released were journalist Dmytro Khyliuk, abducted in 2022, and former Kherson Mayor Volodymyr Mykolayenko, who spent over three years in captivity.

THE MOSCOW VIEW **Claims by Russia**

On 24 August, Russia's Defense Ministry claimed that its forces captured the Donetsk villages of Sredneye and Kleban-Byk on Saturday, pushing closer to the strategic town of Kostiantynivka, though Ukraine denied losing ground and reported recapturing nearby Zeleny Gai amid ongoing clashes, with battlefield claims from both sides unverified.

On the same day, Kursk's acting governor Alexander Khinshtein, condemned a Ukrainian drone strike on the Kursk Nuclear Power Plant as a grave threat to nuclear safety and a breach of international conventions. Russian officials said the attack sparked a fire that was quickly extinguished without casualties, though it damaged an auxiliary transformer and cut unit three's output by 50 per cent.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov accused Western nations of deliberately trying to "block" peace talks on Ukraine, saying they were searching for pretexts to stall negotiations. He also criticized Zelenskyy for "obstinately" demanding an immediate meeting with Russia's President Vladimir Putin while setting conditions that hinder progress.

THE WEST VIEW **Responses from Europe and the US**

On 24 August, US President Donald Trump's envoy Keith Kellogg attended Ukraine's Independence Day celebrations in Kyiv, where Zelenskyy awarded him the Order of Merit, 1st degree. This comes as Ukraine seeks stronger US backing to end Russia's invasion, Zelenskyy vowed to build a secure and peaceful country and stressed that Ukraine's future rests in its "own hands" while being respected globally as an equal.

On the same day, US Vice President JD Vance said that Russia had made "significant concessions." In an interview, he said that Moscow has accepted it cannot install a puppet regime in Kyiv and has acknowledged the need for security guarantees protecting Ukraine's territorial integrity.

On 24 August, Norway's Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Støre announced that Norway will provide about EUR 594 million to supply Ukraine with air defense systems, working jointly with Germany to deliver two Patriot systems with missiles. The funding will also cover air defense radars from German firm Hensoldt and systems from Norway's Kongsberg.

War in Ukraine Day 1276:
EU approves EUR four billion financial aid

WAR ON THE GROUND

On 22 August, Ukraine military claimed targeting a key pumping station on the Druzhba oil pipeline, which supplies fuel from Russia to Europe, disrupting oil deliveries to Hungary and Slovakia, the last EU countries still receiving Russian oil. The Hungarian and Slovak governments alerted the European Commission, warning that Russian oil supplies could be halted for up to five days due to the damage. In a joint letter, Foreign Ministers Péter Szijjártó and Juraj Blanár stated that the physical and geographical realities mean that without this pipeline, the safe oil supply to their countries is no longer feasible.

THE MOSCOW VIEW

Claims by Russia

On 22 August, Russia's President Vladimir Putin said he sees "light at the end of the tunnel" in Russia's ties with the US after his meeting with US President Donald Trump. He expressed confidence in Trump's leadership to restore relations but noted progress would also hinge on NATO and other Western countries.

On the same day, Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov stated that Putin would only meet with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy when a suitable "agenda" for the talks is established, adding that no meeting is planned at the moment. In an interview with NBC, Lavrov emphasized that the agenda is not yet ready for such a summit. Meanwhile, Zelenskyy, reiterated his willingness to meet with Putin, accusing Russia of actively trying to block the meeting. He expressed that, unlike Russia, Ukraine was not afraid to engage in discussions with world leaders.

THE WEST VIEW

Responses from Europe and the US

On 22 August, NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte emphasized the need for "robust security guarantees" for Ukraine during a visit to Kyiv. He stressed that these guarantees would be crucial to ensuring that Russia never attempts to seize Ukrainian territory again. Rutte highlighted ongoing efforts to define these assurances, noting that while it was premature to predict the exact outcome, the US would likely play a significant role in the agreement. Zelenskyy added that security guarantees would involve contributions from partners and outline the future structure of Ukraine's military, though it is still uncertain who will provide specific forms of support, such as personnel, intelligence, or funding.

On 22 August, the EU approved an additional EUR four billion in financial aid to Ukraine, which was made possible after Ukraine rescinded a controversial law that threatened the independence of its anti-corruption agencies. EU officials emphasized that anti-corruption reforms and the rule of law are essential for Ukraine's future integration into the EU. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen reaffirmed the EU's strong support for Ukraine, stating that the aid reflects their commitment to both Ukraine's recovery and its future as a sovereign, democratic country.

War in Ukraine Days 1274-75:

Drone and missile attacks reported across Kyiv, Lyiv, Dnipropetrovsk and Kherson regions

WAR ON THE GROUND

On 21 August, President of Ukraine reported on Volodymyr Zelenskyy announcement of a new missile test. According to the report, Ukraine has successfully test-launched a new long-range cruise missile called Flamingo,

capable of striking targets up to 3,000 kilometres (1,864 miles) away. He described it as Ukraine's most advanced missile to date and the mass production is expected to begin from February.

On 21 August, Zelenskyy condemned a Russian missile strike on a US-owned electronics firm Flex in Ukraine's Zakarpattia region. He said the strike, injured 19, and criticised Russia for its reluctance to end the war. Zelenskyy added that both sides are bracing for further fighting, highlighting Russian troop build-ups and Ukraine's preparations.

On the same day, Ukrinform reported that Russian strikes on Ukraine's western city of Lviv which killed one, wounded and damaged 26 homes. Meanwhile attacks in Dnipropetrovsk damaged businesses, homes, and gas lines, and later shelling in Kherson left one dead and over a dozen injured.

On 20 August, The Guardian reported on Russia launching new set of drone and missile attacks across Ukraine. As per the report, the explosions were reported in Kyiv, where three were reported dead and four wounded in an artillery strike on a market in Kostiantynivka. Additionally, another 14 civilians, including children, were injured in shelling in the Sumy Oblast. In the south, a "massive" drone strike was reported in Odesa, sparking a major blaze at a fuel and energy facility, injuring one. On the same day, Ukraine claimed to have struck drones into Russia, hitting the Novoshakhtinsk oil refinery in the Rostov region, where large fires and explosions were reported.

THE MOSCOW VIEW

Claims by Russia

On 21 August, Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said President Vladimir

Putin was willing to meet Zelenskyy but was doubtful on the talks. This was mainly questioning the Ukrainian president's legitimacy, as elections stand suspended. He stressed any summit must be thoroughly prepared by experts and ministers.

On 20 August, Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov warned that any attempt to develop security guarantees for Ukraine without Moscow's involvement would be "a utopia, a road to nowhere." He stressed that Russia "cannot agree" to international security arrangements excluding it. His comments come as NATO defence chiefs held meeting to discuss on possible guarantees. This follows the meeting with US President Donald Trump. While several Western leaders, including Germany's Friedrich Merz, suggested direct Putin-Zelenskyy talks could happen, Lavrov said such a summit must be "meticulously prepared." He reiterated Moscow's rejection of NATO membership for Ukraine or any deployment of Western troops there, and accused European leaders of making "clumsy attempts" to sway Trump's position without offering constructive proposals.

THE WEST VIEW

Responses from Europe and the US

On 21 August, US President Donald Trump set a two-week deadline to evaluate Russia-Ukraine peace talks. He said the US might opt "a different tack" towards Russia afterward. However, he has repeatedly failed to meet past timelines.

On the same day, Lithuania government imposed a no-fly zone along part of its border with Belarus near Vilnius after multiple drones from that direction crash-landed in its territory. The Defense Ministry said the step was necessary to protect society and civil

aviation, warning that any aircraft entering the 90-kilometer restricted zone, which extends up to 12,000 feet, risk interception. The measure, in place since 14 August, follows incidents in July when drones crossed from Belarus.

On 20 August, NATO's top military leaders held a virtual meeting to discuss Ukraine's future security guarantees. The discussion included Italian Admiral Giuseppe Cavo Dragone, 32 defence chiefs, including NATO's supreme allied commander Europe, US Gen. Alexis Grynkeiwich. Ukraine currently demands robust Western-backed military assurances to prevent future Russian aggression, with Zelenskyy calling for "strong security guarantees" for a lasting peace. European allies are exploring the creation of a multinational force to underpin any settlement, backed by a coalition of 30 countries including Japan and Australia. However, Trump has ruled out deploying US troops to Ukraine, while Russia objects NATO forces in Ukraine.

On 20 August, US Vice President JD Vance said that Europe must carry the "lion's share" of the burden for Ukraine's future security guarantees. He reiterated that the US would only support efforts to end the war but would not take the lead. In an interview, Vance argued that Europe should step up because the conflict was taking place on its continent and directly affected its security. He said: "No matter what form this takes, the Europeans are going to have to take the lion's share of the burden...and the President has been very clear they're going to have to step up."

On the same day, Poland's authorities reported on a Russian-made Shahed drone explosion in a village of Osiny in eastern Poland, located 100 km from

Warsaw. According to the report, the blast damaged nearby buildings, but no casualties were reported. Poland's military reported confirming no airspace violations from Ukraine or Belarus, and observation found that the object was a Russian drone used in Moscow's war on Ukraine. Civilian and military teams are investigating and the area is secured.

War in Ukraine Day 1273:

Coalition of Willing members discuss on advancing security guarantees for Ukraine

WAR ON THE GROUND

On 19 August, Ukraine's President Zelenskyy announced that Ukraine will work on finalizing the security guarantees it seeks from its allies, with ongoing coordination among national security advisors. During a meeting in Washington with European leaders and US President Donald Trump, Zelenskyy emphasized the importance of these guarantees. Trump stated that he had discussed the issue with Russian President Putin, who agreed to the guarantees despite opposing Ukraine's NATO membership. According to Trump, these security assurances would come from various European countries in coordination with the US.

On 19 August, Ukrinform reported on a Ukrainian drone strike disrupting power in Russian-occupied parts of Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia region. According to Moscow-appointed governor Yevgeny Balitsky, Kyiv still controls the region's main administrative center and has previously targeted power infrastructure in Russian-held zones. The Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant though inactive, remains unaffected with cooling and monitoring remain

operational to ensure safety.

THE MOSCOW VIEW

Claims by Russia

On 19 August, Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov emphasized that any potential meeting between Russia's President Vladimir Putin and must be "thoroughly prepared." He said that such high-level talks should not be arranged hastily or for media attention. He reiterated Moscow's commitment to resolving the conflict through both bilateral and trilateral formats and stressed that long-term agreements must consider Russia's security interests and the rights of Russian-speaking populations in Ukraine.

On the same day, former Russian President Dmitri Medvedev criticised Europe's support for Zelenskyy. He claimed that European leaders failed to "outmaneuver" Trump during recent talks. His remarks comes after Trump's assurance to Zelenskyy that the US would support security guarantees as part of any future peace deal, with Zelenskyy noting that such plans could be formalized within the next week to ten days.

THE WEST VIEW

Responses from Europe and the US

On 19 August, Trump announced that Zelenskyy and Putin are in the process of arranging a meeting aimed at ending the war. In an interview, he acknowledged the strained relationship between the two leaders but expressed hope for progress, emphasizing that the ongoing conflict involves "too much killing" and must come to an end. He also suggested that Putin might not be willing to make a deal to end the war in Ukraine, despite earlier optimistic remarks. Trump also urged Zelenskyy to show flexibility in negotiations. While ruling out US troop commitments as

part of security guarantees, Trump indicated that Washington might support European efforts with other forms of assistance, particularly air support.

On the same day, Switzerland and Austria, both neutral and non-NATO countries, expressed willingness to host a potential peace summit between Putin and Zelenskyy. Despite Putin facing an ICC arrest warrant over the illegal transfer of Ukrainian children. Switzerland's Foreign Minister Ignazio Cassis stated that immunity could be granted for peace talks purposes. While France's President Emmanuel Macron proposed Geneva for its neutrality, though both Swiss and Austrian options may face resistance from Moscow due to strained relations. Meanwhile, the US has pitched the possibility of having it in Budapest as a possible location for a tripartite summit.

On 19 August, NATO military leaders are expected to meet to discuss the future of Ukraine. This comes as the US and Europe push for concrete plans on security guarantees for Kyiv. NATO Military Committee Chairman Admiral Giuseppe Cavo Dragone highlighted the ongoing diplomatic efforts for peace in Ukraine. Meanwhile, the Coalition of the Willing met online and agreed to have their planning teams coordinate with US counterparts in the coming days to advance security guarantee plans for Ukraine.

War in Ukraine Day 1272:

Europe showcases unity for Ukraine in talks with Trump

WAR ON THE GROUND

On 18 August, following the meeting held between Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and European

leaders with US President Donald Trump at the White House, a Ukraine peace deal remains elusive. In the meeting, Trump ruled out an immediate ceasefire and acknowledged that, despite all sides preferring a ceasefire to pave the way for lasting peace, it was not possible.

On the same day, Zelenskyy said that security guarantees for Ukraine are expected to be finalized within 10 days, including a USD 90 billion US weapons package and an agreement for the US to purchase Ukrainian-made drones. Earlier reports suggested Ukraine would commit to purchasing USD 100 billion worth of US weapons, financed by Europe, in exchange for American security guarantees under a peace deal with Russia, while a simultaneous USD 50 billion plan would see drones co-produced by Ukrainian firms and US partners.

On 18 August, debris from downed Ukrainian drones caused fires at an oil refinery and on the roof of a hospital in Russia's Volgograd region, local authorities said Tuesday. According to Governor Andrei Bocharov reported that firefighters were working to contain the blazes, adding that no injuries had been reported so far.

On 18 August, Russian strikes were reported on Kharkiv and Zaporizhzhia killed at least 10. In southern Ukraine, a drone attack damaged an Azerbaijani-owned oil depot in Odesa for the second time in two weeks, while Ukraine retaliated by hitting a Russian oil pumping station in Tambov, disrupting flows through the Druzhba pipeline to Slovakia and Hungary, both countries seen as close to Moscow.

THE MOSCOW VIEW **Claims by Russia**

On 18 August, in an opinion RT claimed

that the talks between Trump and the EU leaders exposed a shifting balance in the Ukraine conflict. According to the report, Washington appeared less aligned to Ukraine and Brussels and more open to Moscow's terms. While EU leaders pushed for sanctions, arms, and firm security guarantees, Trump withheld support for their narrative, signalling waning US enthusiasm for continued entanglement. The backdrop of Trump's recent Alaska meeting with Putin loomed large, as Moscow pressed for Ukrainian neutrality and demilitarization while Europe insisted on strengthening Kyiv's defences. With Russia advancing on the ground, EU and Ukrainian leverage is shrinking, leaving them scrambling to influence talks that Trump now appears to control. The report concludes saying the summit did not achieve a breakthrough; however, the EU and Ukraine are losing momentum while Moscow sets the pace.

On 18 August, in an opinion, RT reported that the Alaska summit between Trump and Putin was widely a turning point in global diplomacy, undermining the EU's narrative that Russia is isolated and exposing Brussels' diminished role. Despite years of sanctions, Putin was welcomed with full honours in the US, signalling Washington's readiness to engage Russia directly while sidelining Europe and Ukraine. The report highlighted the meeting as Trump's intent to seek pragmatic solutions to end the war, casting Zelenskyy as a weakened figure with little leverage. For Putin, it showcased his enduring diplomatic stature and ability to command respect as a leader of a major power. The report also includes the African view on the summit. It was interpreted as proof that only true sovereignty and strength earn recognition in international affairs, reinforcing hopes for a multipolar world

beyond Western dominance.

THE WEST VIEW

Responses from Europe and the US

On 18 August, The Guardian published key takeaways on the Trump-EU and Zelenskyy summit. First, the possibility of long-resisted direct talks between Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Vladimir Putin, with Trump even proposing a trilateral meeting. Second, agreement that security guarantees for Ukraine are essential, though details remain vague. Third, Trump's portrayal of himself as a global peacemaker and lastly the strong economic dimension, with Ukraine's prospective USD 90 billion US weapons purchase and a USD 50 billion drone deal.

On 18 August, during the meeting with Trump, European leaders stressed unity. Germany's Chancellor Friedrich Merz warned that Ukraine must not be forced to give up Donbas, likening it to the US surrendering Florida. He insisted that all of Europe must participate in security guarantees since the issue concerns the continent's political order. France's President, Emmanuel Macron said Trump believed a peace deal with Putin was possible but warned sanctions would intensify if Russia refused. UK's Prime Minister Keir Starmer hailed "real progress," citing two key outcomes: joint US-European work on security guarantees for Ukraine and an agreement for a bilateral Zelenskyy-Putin meeting, followed by a trilateral with Trump, ensuring Ukraine remains central in talks on territory, prisoners, and the return of children.

War in Ukraine Days 1270-71:

Europe draws a red line saying Ukraine will receive foreign military support without Russian interference

WAR ON THE GROUND

On 17 August, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy welcomed the decision to include security guarantees for Ukraine in a potential peace deal. This comes as he prepares to meet US President Donald Trump. He stressed that such guarantees must be "very practical," ensuring protection on land, in the air, and at sea, and developed with European participation.

On 17 August, Institute for the Study of War reported that Russia was unlikely to quickly capture the remaining parts of Donetsk Oblast, as it has failed to do so despite over a decade of fighting. Putin's claim that Russia could rapidly seize the entire region if the war continues is false; Moscow's campaign to take Donetsk has been ongoing since 2014 and remains incomplete. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky stressed that Russia's repeated attempts over the past 12 years have failed, with its forces still bogged down in battles for several towns and cities since the 2022 full-scale invasion. Analysts assess that fully seizing Donetsk would take Russia years of difficult campaigns rather than a swift victory.

THE MOSCOW VIEW

Claims by Russia

On 17 August, Russia's envoy to international organizations in Vienna, Mikhail Ulyanov, said that Moscow agrees any future peace deal must include security guarantees for Ukraine. He insisted that Russia would also require credible assurances. He noted that while EU leaders stress the need for reliable guarantees for Kyiv, Moscow has the "equal right" to expect its own.

On the same day, Russia's Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov briefed Turkey and Hungary on the Trump-Putin

summit in Alaska, which ended without a plan to resolve the Ukraine war, Moscow said Saturday. Turkey continues to balance ties with both Kyiv and Moscow, while Hungary maintains close relations with Russia despite EU criticism. After the call, Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijjarto voiced hope for a peaceful settlement, stressing that a durable resolution is vital for peace and security in Central Europe.

THE WEST VIEW

Responses from Europe and the US

On 17 August, Deutsche Welle reported on top European leaders, including France's President Emmanuel Macron, Germany's Chancellor Friedrich Merz, Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, UK's Prime Minister Keir Starmer, NATO's Secretary General Mark Rutte, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, and Finland's President Alexander Stubb, will Zelenskyy at the White House. They are expected to discuss a US-backed plan and push against any land swap rewarding Moscow's aggression and press Trump for clarity on what security guarantees the US is prepared to offer Kyiv as part of a possible settlement.

On 17 August, in an interview, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio dismissed Russia's President Vladimir Putin's "long historical complaint" about the roots of the Ukraine war in after the Trump-Putin talks. He insisted the focus to be on whether fighting can be stopped and under what terms. Rubio acknowledged the difficulty of compromise, saying both sides would have to give and get something.

On 17 August, Von der Leyen announced the red lines for Ukraine peace talks. She stated that Kyiv must remain free to defend itself and receive foreign military support without Russian

interference. Speaking with Zelenskyy, she said Ukraine should become a "steel porcupine" to deter future invasions and welcomed US readiness to join NATO in providing security guarantees, stressing Europe's commitment to share the responsibility.

On 16 August, Macron urged unity between the US, Europe, and Ukraine ahead of Trump-Zelenskyy talks, warning that showing weakness to Russia would invite future conflicts. Speaking after a meeting of the UK- and France-led "Coalition of the Willing," he stressed the need for a united front and pressed the US on its readiness to back security guarantees for Kyiv. Macron also reiterated that decisions on Ukraine's future and Europe's security must involve their respective authorities.

War in Ukraine Days 1267-69:

Ukraine military claims recapturing six villages in Dobropillia city in Donetsk region

WAR ON THE GROUND

On 15 August, Ukraine claimed responsibility for a long-range drone strike on a supply ship near Astrakhan, in the Caspian Sea, ahead of the Trump-Putin talks. The partially sunken vessel, located at the port of Olya, was allegedly carrying drone components and ammunition from Iran, specifically for Shahed-type drones.

On the same day, the Ukrainian military claimed to have taken back six villages in the east that Russia had recently captured during a rapid push toward Dobropillia. Russian forces advanced quickly earlier, breaching Ukrainian defences, but Ukraine's first Corps of the National Guard, including the Azov unit, halted the enemy's progress over the past three days. Despite regaining territory, Dobropillia remains under

continuous drone and artillery attacks from Russian forces.

On 14 August, according to Donetsk governor Vadym Filashkin, Ukraine's forces claimed to have stabilized the front lines in eastern Ukraine near Dobropillia, where Russian troops had recently made a significant push. Russian infantry had advanced roughly 10 kilometres toward Ukraine's main defensive line, sparking concerns of a broader breakthrough aimed at pressuring Kyiv into territorial concessions. Despite the stabilization, Ukraine ordered further evacuations from the nearby town of Druzhkivka and four surrounding villages due to the ongoing threat, with nearly 1,900 children still in the area. Meanwhile, Russian forces claimed to have captured the village of Iskra and the town of Shcherbynivka in Donetsk, a region Moscow declared annexed in 2022.

On 14 August, Russia and Ukraine exchanged 84 prisoners. This comes after a series of prisoner swaps that have freed hundreds of individuals this year. Zelenskyy confirmed that the exchange included both military personnel and civilians, with some Ukrainians having been detained since as early as 2014. He also noted that the swap included defenders of Mariupol, the port city that fell to Russian forces in 2022.

On 13 August, Ukrinform reported on fire in an oil refinery from debris from Ukrainian drones in the Russian city of Volgograd. According to regional governor Andrey Bocharov, there were no casualties and firefighters responded swiftly. Russia's defence ministry reported that air defence systems intercepted and destroyed 44 Ukrainian drones overnight, including nine in the Volgograd region.

THE MOSCOW VIEW

Claims by Russia

On 15 August, just hours before the Trump-Putin summit, Russia launched a ballistic missile strike on Ukraine's Dnipropetrovsk region, killing one person and injuring another, according to regional governor Serhiy Lysak. The attack damaged a truck and a minibus in the Dnipro district and caused a fire. The city of Dnipro, a key logistics hub for Ukrainian forces, has been a frequent target due to its strategic importance.

On 15 August, RT reported on a Ukrainian drone attack on Kursk region killing one and injuring 12 others. According to acting governor Aleksandr Khinshtein, the blast shattered windows in nearby buildings and a school, and residents were temporarily relocated to a school with authorities providing shelter and supplies. Similar drone strikes in Rostov-on-Don injured at least 15, including children.

On the same day, RT reported on Ukraine shelling several apartment blocks in the Russian city of Donetsk, killing at least one person and injuring three others. Denis Pushilin, head of the Donetsk People's Republic, reported that the strike damaged two residential buildings and a school. Rescue efforts recovered one person from the rubble, with reports that an 18-year-old woman was trapped under a collapsed structure. Russian officials accused Ukraine of planning provocations to sabotage the summit.

THE WEST VIEW

Responses from Europe and the US

On 14 August, Trump expressed confidence that Putin was open to a deal on Ukraine. Although his remark about Putin and Zelenskyy potentially "divvying things up" likely raised

concerns in Kyiv. He estimated a 75 per cent chance of success at the upcoming Alaska meeting, suggesting economic sanctions may have pushed Putin toward seeking an end to the war. Trump also emphasized his resolve ahead of the talks, asserting that he would not let Putin outmanoeuvre him and would quickly assess whether the meeting would be productive.

On 13 August, Germany announced a EUR 500 million military aid package for Ukraine, consisting of equipment and munitions sourced from the US. According to NATO's Secretary General Mark Rutte, it was key move to help Ukraine defend against Russian aggression. Germany's foreign and defence ministries highlighted that the aid would focus on critical air defence systems to counter ongoing Russian airstrikes that continue to claim civilian lives. Additionally, the Netherlands and Sweden pledged significant support.

On 13 August, UK's Prime Minister Keir Starmer welcomed Zelenskyy to London. Starmer expressed optimism about a potential ceasefire in Ukraine, noting that for the first time in over three years, there is now a viable path toward ending the conflict. He credited recent efforts by the Trump and said Ukraine's military supporters, known as the "coalition of the willing," had prepared both for a possible ceasefire and for increasing pressure on Russia through sanctions if necessary.

War in Ukraine Day 1266:
26 EU member states jointly call for "Just

WAR ON THE GROUND

On 12 August, Ukraine's military denied Russian forces claims of breaching into Pokrovsk and Dobropillia in Donetsk

Oblast. The military stressed that small infiltrations would not mean "control of territory." Ukraine's officials acknowledged intense fighting in the area, with Russian troops engaging from three sides and leaving only a 15-kilometer supply corridor. According to the reports in Ukrinform, limited Russian advances are confirmed while Ukrainian forces aim to prevent Pokrovsk and nearby Myrnohrad from being encircled.

On 12 August, Ukraine's military claimed to have retaking Stepne and Novokostiantynivka villages in Sumy Oblast. This follows the earlier recapture of Bezsalivka village. According to Commander Oleksandr Syrskyi, Ukrainian forces are conducting active operations and making advances despite difficult fighting. Russia's 2025 offensive in Sumy aims to create a "buffer zone," but Ukrainian mapping sources estimate Russian control in the region at about 200 square kilometres, within roughly 114,000 square kilometres occupied across.

On the same day, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy condemned Russia's demand for Ukraine to withdraw from the remaining 30 per cent of the Donetsk region it controls as part of a potential ceasefire. He told US officials relayed the Kremlin's position ahead of Trump-Putin meeting. Zelenskyy warned that such a pullout would give Russia a launchpad for further offensives toward Zaporizhzhia, Dnipro, and Kharkiv, stressing that territorial issues are "inseparable" from security guarantees.

THE MOSCOW VIEW **Claims by Russia**

On 12 August, RT reported that a Russian strike on 21 July targeting Ukrainian military intelligence training

camp near Kropyvnytskyi had killed a minimum of 15 foreign fighters and wounded over 100. The attack occurred while recruits were gathered for lunch, and casualties reportedly included nationals from the US, Colombia, Denmark, and Taiwan. While Ukraine's military confirmed the strike and some losses, it withheld exact figures. Russia's Defence Ministry claimed strikes on multiple Ukrainian and foreign combatant positions but did not specifically mention the camp.

On 12 August, in a phone call, Russia's President Vladimir Putin thanked North Korean leader Kim Jong-un for Pyongyang's support in Ukraine. He highlighted North Korea's role in recapturing Russia's Kursk Region, which Ukrainian forces had seized last August, and commended the "courage, heroism and selflessness" of North Korean soldiers. The operation was linked to a June 2024 bilateral treaty including mutual defence clauses, and both leaders reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening cooperation under their strategic partnership and maintaining direct contacts.

THE WEST VIEW

Responses from Europe and the US

On 12 August, EU leaders of 26 member states issued a joint statement reaffirming support for Ukraine. They stressed that any peace must respect international law, Ukraine's sovereignty, and territorial integrity, with no changes to borders by force. They insisted that peace talks cannot occur without Ukraine's participation and should follow a ceasefire or reduced hostilities. Citing the larger impact of the war on European security, the leaders pledged continued political, financial, humanitarian, military, and diplomatic aid, along with sanctions on

Russia. The EU also committed to supporting Ukraine's self-defence capabilities, future security guarantees, and its path toward EU membership.

On the same, Hungary remained outside the statement. Later in a joint statement, Trump stated aim of ending the war but stressed that any deal must uphold international law, Ukraine's sovereignty, and its territorial integrity. The White House called out the upcoming meeting between Trump and Russia's President Vladimir Putin in Alaska as a "listening exercise," emphasizing it will help Trump better understand ways to end the war in Ukraine.

On 12 August, Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban rejected a declaration urging Ukrainian and European participation in peace talks. He argued that it was wrong to set conditions for a meeting to which EU leaders were not invited and called it "sad." Orban said issuing instructions from the sidelines would be worse and suggested that for similar dialogues, such as an EU-Russia summit. Orban has long contrasting to EU measures against Moscow. His remarks come ahead of Friday's Trump-Putin meeting in Alaska, which will exclude Ukraine and European representatives.

On 12 August, Russia and Belarus will hold joint military drills in Belarus in mid-September. According to Belarus's defence ministry, the drill will test their readiness to repel potential aggression. President Alexander Lukashenko dismissed Baltic and Polish fears of an attack as "nonsense" but agreed to move the exercises away from the EU border. Belarus has been Russia's closest ally and allowed to launch an assault on Kyiv from its territory in 2022.

War in Ukraine Day 1265:
Ukraine continues long-range strikes
while Russian forces speeds up to
advance in Pokrovsk city says ISW

WAR ON THE GROUND

On 11 August, the Institute for the Study of War reported that Ukraine continued its long-range drone strikes against Russian defence industrial targets. According to Ukrainian Security Service (SBU) sources, Ukrainian forces hit the Arzamas Instrument-Making Plant in Nizhny Novgorod Oblast, which produces components for Kh-32 and Kh-101 missiles. The photos showed damage and footage of a fire at the plant. Nizhny Novgorod Governor Gleb Nikitin confirmed drone attacks on industrial zones in the region, reporting one worker killed and two injured in Arzamassky Okrug. The recent drone attacks by Russian forces have intensified, targeting Ukrainian ground lines of communication (GLOCs) near the rear to speed up advances toward Pokrovsk. The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) observed that Russia's drone tactics are effectively carrying out battlefield air interdiction by hitting key supply routes. Russian forces have improved their use of first-person view (FPV) drones to strike the T-0514 Dobropillya-Lyman highway and have also targeted vehicles on the T-0515 highway near Rodynske. The continuing long-range drone attacks are forcing Ukrainian forces to reroute, stretching their supply lines and complicating their defensive efforts that depend on steady equipment and troop movement.

On 11 August, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's chief of staff, Andriy Yermak reported his call with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio. Yermak stressed that Ukraine's priority is a just and lasting peace, requiring an unconditional ceasefire before

substantive talks and greater pressure on Russia to take concrete steps.

On 11 August, ahead of the US-Russia summit in Alaska, Zelenskyy raised concern that the talks with US President Donald Trump could lead to pressure on Ukraine to give away territory. He argued that Russia was prolonging the war and must face stronger global pressure. He said: "Concessions do not persuade a killer," calling his stance both moral and rational. On the same day, during a call with India's Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, Zelenskyy briefed him on Russian attacks and stressed that any decisions on Ukraine must include Kyiv. He -urged India to support sanctions, particularly limiting Russian energy exports, to curb its war financing.

THE MOSCOW VIEW

Claims by Russia

On 11 August, Russian military reported that its air defences shot down seven Ukrainian drones over Moscow. Three reportedly died from Ukrainian drone strikes in the Tula, Nizhny Novgorod, and Moscow regions. On the same day, Russian air defences claimed to have shot down 59 Ukrainian drones across multiple regions, including several targeting Moscow. Moscow Mayor Sergey Sobyenin reported that an additional seven drones were destroyed near the capital, with no casualties or damage reported. Ukrainian drones struck areas near the Russian border and deep inside Russia, hitting regions such as Belgorod, Bryansk, Kaluga, Nizhny Novgorod, Crimea, and others.

THE WEST VIEW

Responses from Europe and the US

On 11 August, Germany's Chancellor Friedrich Merz invited Trump, Ukrainian President Zelenskyy, NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte, and

several European leaders to a virtual meeting to discuss on Ukraine ahead of the Trump-Putin summit. According to the German chancellery, the talks will address the war's current situation, options for increasing pressure on Russia, and preparations for potential peace negotiations, including territorial and security issues.

On 11 August, Trump expressed having "constructive" talks with Russia's President Vladimir Putin aimed at securing a Ukraine ceasefire. He criticized Zelenskyy's refusal to consider territorial concessions, remarking there would "be some land swapping going on." He indicated that the US aims to help Ukraine regain some economically and strategically important territories currently held by Russia during peace negotiations. He mentioned that Russia controls "some very prime territory," likely referring to the Zaporizhzhia and Kherson oblasts, which are crucial due to their access to the Black Sea and the Dnipro River. Control of these areas is vital for Ukraine's export economy, especially agricultural products and minerals, and also impacts military defence since the Dnipro River serves as a natural barrier. Russia's control over this would mean a strategic advantage for future offensives.

On 11 August, UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer and Canada's Prime Minister Mark Carney said Ukraine must be part of any peace process between the US and Russia, stressing that its future should be based on freedom, sovereignty, and self-determination. While EU foreign policy chief Katja Kallas urged "transatlantic unity" to support Ukraine and pressure Russia, calling it essential to ending the war and preventing future aggression in Europe. After the virtual meeting of EU foreign ministers, she said member states back

any US efforts toward a "just peace," while the EU readies more sanctions on Russia, additional military aid for Ukraine, budgetary support, and continued backing for Ukraine's EU membership.

On 11 August, in the virtual meeting held between the EU foreign ministers assured unwavering support for Ukraine, signalling both the US and Moscow that Europe remains a crucial player in any future peace deal. However, no major new measures were discussed, the EU highlighted its leverage from frozen Russian central bank assets and extensive sanctions to military, financial, and political aid for Kyiv, and a potential role as security guarantor.

War in Ukraine Days 1261-64:

"The path to peace in Ukraine cannot be decided without Ukraine," says Europe ahead of Trump-Putin talks

WAR ON THE GROUND

On 10 August, Ukraine's military claimed to have struck two oil refineries deep inside Russia. One of them is located in the Saratov region and another in Ukhta, Komi Republic. According to Saratov's governor, Roman Busargin, the damage to an industrial site and one death from the drone attack.

On 09 August, after talks with the UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer and France's President Emmanuel Macron, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called on Ukraine's allies to take "clear steps" toward sustainable peace. Meanwhile, national security advisors from the US, EU, and UK gathered in the UK to align their positions ahead of the upcoming Putin-Trump summit. Zelenskyy emphasised

the importance of not allowing Russia to deceive again, though he gave no further details. Macron also stressed that Ukraine must be central to any discussions about its future, highlighting that the country's security and freedom have been at stake for over three years, and that Europeans must play a role in reaching a solution.

On the same day, Ukraine's Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha firmly rejected reports suggesting that Kyiv might be asked to cede control of the eastern Donetsk and Luhansk regions to Russia in ongoing US-Russian peace talks. Emphasizing that Ukraine deserves a "just peace" grounded in international law and respect for its territorial integrity, Sybiha insisted that Russia should not be "rewarded" for initiating the war, especially as the Kremlin continues its attacks on civilians and shows no real interest in ending the conflict.

On 09 August, Zelenskyy, ahead of the Trump-Putin meeting firmly stated that Ukraine will never cede territory to Russia, emphasizing that the country's constitution already defines its territorial integrity. Zelenskyy stressed that Ukrainians are defending their land and deserve a "worthy peace," but any peace agreement made without Ukraine's involvement is doomed to fail. He reaffirmed Ukraine's readiness for real solutions and cooperation with Trump and other partners to achieve lasting peace.

On 07 August, Ukraine's military launched drones on Afipsky oil refinery in Russia's Krasnodar region. As per Russia's Defence Ministry, it shot down nine Ukrainian drones in the area. The scale of the refinery damage is unclear. Still, market sources warned the attack could curb throughput, potentially

increasing Russia's crude exports in August as the Kremlin plans to boost shipments from western ports. The strike follows earlier Ukrainian attacks earlier in August on Rosneft's Ryazan and Novokuibyshevsk refineries, which forced shutdowns.

On 06 August, Ukraine's Defence Minister Denys Shmyhal appreciated the US' latest military aid package, worth USD 104 million, which includes equipment, repairs, and technical support for M777 howitzers. It also covers USD 99.5 million, covers transportation, cargo consolidation, and other logistical services. Shmyhal said the packages will strengthen Ukraine's defence and bolster regional security.

THE MOSCOW VIEW **Claims by Russia**

On 10 August, Russian officials reported on Ukraine's drone strikes on Tula, Nizhny Novgorod and Moscow, resulting in the death of three and injuring several. The attacks targeted residential and industrial areas, with two fatalities and two injuries reported in Tula and one death and two injuries in Nizhny Novgorod. Russian air defences claimed to have shot down 59 drones during the attacks, including several over Tula and Moscow.

On 07 August, Russia's President Vladimir Putin said that a meeting with Zelenskyy is not yet possible. He insisted that the necessary conditions have not been met and that Moscow believes negotiations have not reached the "final phase." His remarks came shortly after Zelenskyy again urged face-to-face talks to end the war.

On 06 August, Russia's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Yuri Ushakov said that talks between Putin and US envoy Steve Witkoff was "useful and constructive."

According to the report, the talks focused on the Ukraine conflict and prospects for improving US-Russia relations.

THE WEST VIEW

Responses from Europe and the US

On 10 August, the US ambassador to NATO, Matthew Whitaker, said that Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy might attend the upcoming US-Russia summit in Alaska, where President Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin are set to meet. Whitaker emphasized that any deal to end the war must have the agreement of all involved parties, highlighting the importance of including Kyiv in negotiations. While he acknowledged that inviting Zelenskyy is a possibility, Whitaker noted that the final decision rests with Trump, and no official decision has been made yet.

On 10 August, following the call with Zelenskyy over the weekend, European leaders from Germany, France, Italy, Poland, Britain and Finland and EU Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen said: "The path to peace in Ukraine cannot be decided without Ukraine," On the same, Germany's government cautioned the US against making any deals "over the heads of Europeans and Ukrainians." Chancellor Friedrich Merz expressed hope to include Zelenskyy in the discussions. Merz stressed that territorial issues should never be negotiated or decided solely between Russia and the US without involving Europe and Ukraine.

On the same day, US Vice President JD Vance, said that he does not believe it would be productive for the Russia's and Ukraine's presidents to meet ahead of Trump. In an interview with the Fox News, he said: "We're at a point now where we're trying to figure out, frankly, scheduling and things like that, around

when these three leaders could sit down and discuss an end to this conflict."

On 09 August, in a joint statement, seven European leaders voiced support for Trump's efforts to end Russia's war in Ukraine. The statement was signed by the leaders of France, Italy, Germany, Poland, the UK, Finland, and the European Commission, stressing that any diplomatic solution must safeguard Ukraine's and Europe's security, uphold the principle that borders cannot be changed by force, and start negotiations from the current line of contact. The leaders reaffirmed Ukraine's right to determine its future and their commitment to its sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity.

On 09 August, European officials, in coordination with Ukraine submitted a counter-proposal to Russia's ceasefire plan ahead of the 15 August war talks between Trump and Putin in Alaska. According to The Wall Street Journal report, the plan rejects Trump's suggestion of immediate territorial swaps, instead demanding a ceasefire as the first step. It calls for any territorial exchanges to be reciprocal and for any land concessions by Kyiv to be backed by stronger security guarantees.

On 09 August, the UK Ministry of Defence reported that Russian forces likely captured around 500–550 square kilometers (about 200 square miles) of Ukrainian territory in July. As per the report, most advances occurred in Donetsk oblast, where Russian troops pushed northeast and southwest of Pokrovsk to encircle the town and cut supply lines, resulting in nearly full Russian control south of Pokrovsk. While no significant progress was noted in Sumy oblast near Russia's Kursk and Belgorod regions over the past two weeks. Ukrainian counterattacks and

ongoing Russian losses appear to have disrupted Moscow's plans to create a buffer zone.

07 August, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen stated her talks with Zelenskyy on steps toward negotiating a peace deal, Ukraine's future EU membership, and postwar reconstruction.

On 06 August, US President Donald Trump said his special envoy Steve Witkoff had made "great progress" in talks with Putin in Moscow. He called the meeting "highly productive," offering no details. Trump said he had briefed some European allies afterward and claimed there was a consensus that the Ukraine war must end, with the US working toward that goal in the coming weeks.

War in Ukraine Day 1260:
Ukraine troops makes advances in
Pokrovsk direction says ISW

WAR ON THE GROUND

On 05 August, Ukrinform reported that Russia's drone strike across eastern Ukraine had killed six and injured at least a dozen more. According to the report, a major assault on railway infrastructure in Lozova left a passenger train destroyed, a station damaged, and a railway mechanic dead. Kharkiv's governor confirmed two deaths and rerouted several trains, while Ukraine's President Zelenskyy reported that 25 Shahed drones had struck civilian sites, injuring 10. Ukraine's air force reported that Russia launched 46 drones and one ballistic missile in total. While, two more were killed at an agricultural site in Sumy, and in Zaporizhzhia in a drone strike.

On 05 August, Deutsche Welle reported on the introduction of an amnesty law in

November 2024 where over 29,000 Ukrainian military deserters voluntarily returned to service. The law applies only to first-time offenders and developed in coordination with the military. However, desertion remains a serious issue, with more than 122,000 new cases reported between November 2024 and August 2025, and over 224,000 since Russia's full-scale invasion began in February 2022 though actual figures may be higher. Zelenskyy noted that the military recruits about 30,000 new soldiers monthly, roughly offsetting losses from casualties, captures, and desertions.

On the same day, Zelenskyy described his recent call with US President Donald Trump as "productive," highlighting discussions on ending the war, increasing sanctions on Russia, and finalizing a US-Ukraine drone production agreement. He noted that Trump was fully aware of ongoing Russian attacks on Ukrainian cities and warned Russia's President Putin to make peace by 08 August or face harsher sanctions. He also called the pending drone deal one of the strongest of its kind, stating that Ukraine is ready to finalize it.

THE MOSCOW VIEW

Claims by Russia

On 05 August, Russia government announced it may soon deploy intermediate-range missiles, ending a self-imposed moratorium that came into practise after the collapse of the 1987 INF Treat. Missiles with ranges between 500 and 5,500 kilometres are banned under the treaty. The US withdrew from the treaty in 2019, accusing Russia of violating its terms. Initially, Russia pledged to maintain the ban unless the US stationed similar missiles near Russian territory. However, Russia's foreign ministry has now declared that

all such restrictions are lifted, with Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov stating that Moscow reserves the right to act as needed without prior notice.

THE WEST VIEW

Responses from Europe and the US

On 05 August, The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) reported that Ukrainian forces recently made advances near Pokrovsk, a target Russian troops have sought to capture since at least July 2024. Meanwhile, Russian forces have made progress near Kupyansk, Siversk, Toretsk, and Velykomykhailivka. Russia claimed to have captured the village of Sichneve in the east-central Dnipropetrovsk region, though it is yet to be verified.

On 05 August, Trump stated that falling global oil prices could compel Putin to end the war in Ukraine. He argued that a further USD 10 drop per barrel would severely strain Russia's already weak economy. In an interview with CNBC, Trump reiterated his 08 August deadline for Putin to move toward peace or face harsher US sanctions. He also highlighted efforts to pressure India and China to curb their imports of Russian oil. Trump attributed the declining prices to increased global production, particularly from OPEC and its partners, suggesting they are ramping up output in part to maintain favorable ties with the US.

War in Ukraine Day 1259:

The Netherlands pledges EUR 500 million to purchase US military equipment for Ukraine

WAR ON THE GROUND

On 04 August, a Russian strike on a railway station in Lozova, eastern Ukraine, killed a mechanic and injured four workers, according to Ukrainian

Railways, which reported that several trains were rerouted following the attack. According to Lozova's mayor, Sergiy Zelensky, it was the most intense assault on the city since the war began, noting that two children were also injured and residential areas were damaged. Meanwhile, two more people were wounded in a separate Russian drone attack on the Zaporizhzhia region.

On 04 August, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said he visited troops in the Kharkiv region near the Russian border and discussed the use of drones in combat. He reported that Ukrainian forces had observed the involvement of mercenaries from China, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, and several African countries fighting alongside Russian forces, adding, "We will respond."

On 04 August, Ukraine's government announced that six individuals, including a lawmaker, a government official, and a National Guard commander, have been charged with embezzling funds related to the purchase of military drones and jamming equipment. Anti-corruption authorities revealed a scheme involving inflated contracts and kickbacks, with the National Anti-Corruption Bureau estimating that bribes amounted to around 30 per cent of the contract value. One drone contract alone, valued at USD 240,000, was reportedly overpriced by about USD 80,000.

THE MOSCOW VIEW

Claims by Russia

On 04 August, the Kremlin called for restraint in nuclear rhetoric following a heated exchange between former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and US President Donald Trump. Medvedev had issued a nuclear threat after Trump shortened a deadline for

Russia to begin ceasefire talks with Ukraine. In response, Trump revealed that two US nuclear submarines had been repositioned to “appropriate regions.” Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov urged caution, emphasizing Russia's commitment to nuclear non-proliferation and dismissing Trump's comments as unlikely to influence Moscow's stance.

THE WEST VIEW

Responses from Europe and the US

On 04 August, the Netherlands pledged EUR 500 million to purchase US military equipment for Ukraine, becoming the first NATO country to support a new initiative called the NATO Prioritised Ukraine Requirements List (PURL), aimed at supplying Kyiv with urgently needed weapons. Defence Minister Ruben Brekelmans confirmed the package includes Patriot missiles and components, while NATO chief Mark Rutte praised the move and urged other allies to join. The US ambassador to NATO, Matthew Whitaker, expressed confidence that more countries would soon follow the Dutch lead, with deliveries expected to begin rapidly in the coming weeks. This aligns with US President Donald Trump's suggestion that the US would supply arms funded by European states.

On 04 August, Trump's special envoy, Steve Witkoff, is expected to visit Moscow just days before Trump's Friday deadline for Russia to show progress in ending the war in Ukraine or face heightened US sanctions. Trump stated that Witkoff would travel on 05 or 06 August and emphasized the key message to Russia: “Get a deal where people stop getting killed.” Meanwhile, sources in Kyiv indicated that Trump's Ukraine envoy, Keith Kellogg, is likely to visit Ukraine later in the week, potentially aligning with Witkoff's

Moscow trip.

On the same day, Trump announced that he would significantly increase tariffs on Indian goods in response to India's continued purchases of Russian oil, accusing the country of profiting by reselling the oil on global markets while ignoring the human toll in Ukraine. Posting on Truth Social, Trump criticized India's actions and confirmed plans to raise tariffs, following an earlier 25 per cent tariff imposed last Friday. In response, India condemned the move as “unjustified” and pledged to protect its national interests.

War in Ukraine Days 1255-58:

Russia targets drones across Krasnodar and Black Sea regions

WAR ON THE GROUND

On 03 August, Ukraine's air force reported that Russia launched 76 drones and seven missiles overnight, with Ukrainian defences managing to shoot down 60 drones and one missile, while the remaining drones and six missiles struck targets in eight locations. Meanwhile, Russia's defence ministry claimed its forces intercepted 93 Ukrainian drones, including one over the Krasnodar region and 60 over the Black Sea.

On 03 August, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy announced that Ukraine and Russia had agreed to exchange 1,200 prisoners following their latest talks in Istanbul in July. He stated that both sides were still finalizing the lists of individuals to be swapped, aiming to “unblock the return of our civilians,” and confirmed that preparations for another meeting.

On 03 August, according to regional governor Ivan Fedorov, a Russian strike

on the town of Stepnohirsk in Ukraine's south-eastern Zaporizhzhia region killed three. He stated that the attack also destroyed private homes. The report is yet to be verified.

On 02 August, according to the city's military administration, Russia launched a missile strike on Kyiv. This latest attack follows the deadliest airstrike on Kyiv, which killed at least 31 people, including five children, and injured over 150.

On 02 August, Ukraine said it carried out drone strikes on military targets and a gas pipeline in Russia on Friday night, killing three people and injuring two, according to Russian officials. Ukraine's SBU security service claimed the attacks hit a military airfield in Primorsko-Akhtarsk, igniting a fire in an area used to store Iranian-made Shahed drones, and also targeted a defense-linked company in Russia's Penza region.

On 01 August, the NABU and the SAP (Ukraine's anti-corruption bodies) revealed a scheme involving the systematic embezzlement of budget funds meant for the defense forces by local authorities. The fraud involved inflating prices for electronic warfare and drone equipment, with around 30 per cent of the contract values being siphoned off. Those implicated include a member of parliament, district and city officials, National Guard members, and defense company executives. So far, NABU has made four arrests but has not disclosed the identities of those detained.

On 31 July, the death toll from Russia's deadliest airstrike this year on Kyiv climbed to 31 after rescuers found over a dozen more bodies in the rubble of a collapsed apartment building. Among the victims were five children, including

a two-year-old, President Zelenskyy confirmed as the rescue operation ended. The attack involved over 300 drones and eight missiles, injuring 159 people.

On 31 July, Ukraine's parliament passed a new law restoring the independence of two key anti-corruption agencies, effectively reversing legislation adopted the previous week that had sparked the largest public protests since Russia's full-scale invasion. Demonstrators gathered outside the parliament in Kyiv, chanting "the people are the power" as the bill was approved.

THE MOSCOW VIEW **Claims by Russia**

On 03 August, Russia's local authorities reported that a Ukraine's drone attack in Russia's Volgograd region caused a fire at a railway station building and damaged a power line. According to regional governor Andrei Bocharov, an unexploded drone also landed on the railway tracks near Archeda station, but no track damage was found.

On 03 August, a Ukrainian drone strike ignited a fire at an oil depot in Sochi in southern Russia. According to the report from the local authorities, the blaze, sparked during an overnight attack on the Ilsky refinery near Krasnodar, engulfed two oil tanks and required over 120 firefighters to bring it under control.

On 02 August, Russia's defence ministry reported that its air-defence systems shot down 112 Ukrainian drones over Russian territory, including 34 drones over the Rostov region. During the attacks, one person died in the Samara region. Acting Governor Yuri Sliusar, in the Rostov region, a guard was killed in a drone strike that also caused a fire at an industrial facility. He added that the

military successfully repelled a large-scale air assault across seven districts.

On 02 August, Russia's President Vladimir Putin stated his desire for a "lasting and stable peace" in Ukraine but didn't indicate any readiness to make concessions. He emphasized that peace must rest on "solid foundations" that satisfy both Russia and Ukraine and guarantee their security. In response to US President Donald Trump, he remarked that "all disappointments arise from inflated expectations," suggesting skepticism about external demands or hopes.

On 31 July, Russian military claimed to have captured Chasiv Yar, a key military hub in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region, though Kyiv denied the town had fallen. Zelenskyy dismissed the claim as "Russian disinformation," insisting Ukrainian forces were still holding their positions. Military analyst Oleksandr Kovalenko acknowledged Russian control over the northern and eastern parts of the town but said intense fighting continued in the west, where the situation remained "very difficult."

THE WEST VIEW

Responses from Europe and the US

On 03 August, US President Donald Trump announced that his special envoy, Steve Witkoff, may travel to Russia. He warned that if Moscow does not agree to a ceasefire in Ukraine by 08 August, the US will impose sanctions. Speaking to reporters, Trump acknowledged Russia's skill in evading such measures, saying, "They're wily

characters and they're pretty good at avoiding sanctions, so we'll see what happens."

On 03 August, Trump's deputy chief of staff, Stephen Miller, criticized India for continuing to purchase oil from Russia. He found it "unacceptable" for India to fund the war through oil purchases, and highlighted that India is nearly on par with China in importing Russian oil—calling it "an astonishing fact." Indian officials, however, reportedly said they will continue purchasing Russian oil despite the US pressure.

On 02 August, Trump announced on Truth Social that he deployed nuclear-capable submarines to "appropriate regions" as a response to what he called "highly provocative statements" by Russia's former president Dmitry Medvedev. Trump's move signals a heightened military posture amid the tense rhetoric between the two sides.

On 01 August, EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas condemned Russia's attacks as "depraved," sharing an image of the EU flag at half mast. She emphasized that "more weapons for Ukraine and tougher sanctions on Russia are the fastest way to end the war," adding that rapidly boosting Ukraine's air defenses is a top priority.

About the authors

Chittrothu Vaihali

Ms Chittrothu is an undergraduate student in the Department of Political Science at St. Ann's College for Women. She is currently working as a research intern at NIAS. Her interests are in contemporary Europe and East Asia.

Merin Treesa Alex

Ms Alex is a postgraduate student of International Studies at Stella Maris College, Chennai. She is currently working as a research intern at NIAS. Her interests are in contemporary Europe, and Latin America.

Padmashree Anandhan

Ms Anandhan is a Project Associate at the National Institute of Advanced Studies. As part of the NIAS Europe Studies, her research focuses on issues relating to politics, protests, Brexit, economy, maritime and NATO' operations. Her larger research interest includes studying peace, conflict and global initiatives taken towards the ocean in Europe.

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