Situation Room

** *UKRAINIAN CRISIS* **

Period under review: from **20 June 2022** to **30 June 2022**.

[This report is based on publicly available sources to describe a changing situation. Information subject to change.]

Situation analysis recap:

- Russian attacks are concentrating on the southeastern agriculture and logistics hubs. The most intense battles in Ukraine are still taking place in the east, but fighting has been picking up in the north and south of the country as well. In northern Ukraine, Russia has stepped up the shelling of the city of Kharkiv.

- Russian and pro-Russian forces have captured all of Sievierodonetsk, including the Azot chemical plant, which marks a significant victory for Russia since the fall of Mariupol. In addition, Russia's military continues to grind away at Ukrainian defences in the east, pushing toward the city of Lysychansk. Capturing Sievierodonetsk and Lysychansk would see Russia claim full control of the Luhansk region.

- Ukrainian forces reportedly struck Russian positions on Snake Island in the Black Sea, destroying Russian fortifications and equipment on the island. In addition, Ukrainian forces are continuing to launch counteroffensive operations along the Kherson-Dnipropetrovsk axis and are pressurising Russian forces in Kherson City. Moreover, Russian forces conducted unsuccessful offensive operations west of Izyum and north of Slovyansk.

- The G7 summit, hosted by this year's German G7 presidency, took place from 26 to 28 June in Schloss Elmau, Bavaria. The working sessions of the summit focused on various topics, such as the global economy, partnerships for developing countries, foreign and security policy – especially the Russo-Ukrainian war, sustainability, food security, multilateralism, and digital transformation.

- NATO's Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg has said that NATO aims to increase the strength of its rapid reaction force from 40,000 to 300,000 troops.

- On Monday, 20 June, the EU High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy Josep Borrell called Russia's blockade of Ukrainian ports, which severely hampers grain exports from Ukraine, a war crime. He stressed that Russia will have to answer if it continues to block grain exports. Borrell backed United Nations efforts to have Russia lift the blockade of Ukrainian ports.

- Russia said on Tuesday, 21 June that two Americans, who were fighting for Ukraine, had been captured. Furthermore, Kremlin's spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said they would not be covered under the Geneva Convention because they are considered mercenaries. Earlier this month, three other foreign fighters received death sentences in a trial in Russian-backed separatist territory in Ukraine.

- US Attorney General Merrick Garland visited Ukraine on Tuesday for discussions with Ukraine's top prosecutor on suspected Russian war crimes.

- On Wednesday, 22 June, the Kremlin threatened to retaliate against Lithuania for blocking some goods headed to Kaliningrad. A Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson said the retaliation would not be diplomatic but practical, raising fears of a confrontation between Russia and NATO.

- European Union leaders approved on Thursday, 23 June Ukraine's candidacy to join the 27-nation bloc. Ukraine applied shortly after Russia invaded the country on 24 February.

- On Thursday, the Pentagon announced an additional $450 million in security assistance for Ukraine, including four additional High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems. Ukraine considers the long-range weapon system critical in beating back Russian forces. This latest wave of security assistance comes on top of the $1 billion in weaponry recently announced by the White House.

- On Saturday, 25 June, Russia has announced that it is set to deliver Iskander-M tactical missile systems, which are capable of carrying nuclear warheads, to Belarus in the coming months.
- On Saturday, chief of Ukraine's General Staff Valeriy Zaluzhnyi said that US-supplied HIMARS rocket systems are already working and hitting targets in Russian-occupied parts of Ukraine.
- A Russian missile hit into the top floor of a 9-story apartment building in Kyiv on Sunday, 26 June, killing one person and injuring several more. The attack in Kyiv was just one of dozens of long-range Russian strikes that targeted places in northern and western Ukraine over the weekend. Some Russian attacks were aimed at military facilities.
- The United Nations warned on Monday, 27 June that the war in Ukraine could allow illegal drug production to flourish.
- Two Russian missiles hit a crowded shopping centre in the central Ukrainian city of Kremenchuk on Monday, killing at least 16 people and wounding 59. President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said more than 1,000 people were in the mall at the time of the attack.
- Microsoft reported that Russian state-backed hackers have targeted organizations in 42 countries allied with Ukraine. The report identified the US as the top target, followed by Poland, a key logistics hub for aid to Ukraine. Hackers succeeded at infiltrating networks 29% of the time, and at least a quarter of those intrusions resulted in stolen data. Microsoft said the key targets were governments, but also included think tanks, humanitarian groups, IT companies, and energy and other critical infrastructure suppliers.
- UNESCO raised the number of Ukrainian heritage sites damaged in the war to 152. Of that total, nearly half are religious buildings. The rest include historical buildings, monuments, cultural centres, museums and libraries. Most of the damaged sites are located in the Donetsk, Kharkiv and Kyiv regions. Ukraine is home to seven UNESCO World Heritage Sites but none have been damaged so far. The destruction of heritage sites is considered a war crime.
- From 28 June to 30 June, the NATO 2022 Summit took place in Madrid. During the summit the leaders of the member states confirmed the new NATO Strategic Concept, a document which sets guidelines and strategies for the next decade.

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