



Situation Room

** UKRAINIAN CRISIS **

Period under review: from 15 May 2024 to 12 June 2024.

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

Situation analysis recap:

- **(16 May)** Under heavy pressure from Russian forces, Ukraine has withdrawn its troops from several villages in the Kharkiv region. The troops have been moved to more favourable positions in the northeastern part of the region. President Volodymyr Zelensky has cancelled all commitments abroad and postponed all international events planned for the coming days
- **(17 May)** Moscow blamed the US and UK for recent attacks on Russian soil, citing their provision of Western weapons to Ukraine. The Russian foreign ministry warned that the US, UK, EU, and Kiev are "playing with fire" and that such actions will not go unanswered. Russia's ambassador to the UK, Andrei Kelin, stated that the UK is a *de facto* participant in the war due to its military support and intelligence sharing with Kiev.
- **(21 May)** The EU has formally approved a plan to use profits from frozen Russian central bank assets to support Ukraine's defence, allocating 90% to military aid and 10% to other support. The assets are expected to yield €15-20 billion by 2027. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba expressed gratitude but emphasised the need to seize the assets. Russia condemned the plan, predicting unpredictable consequences and insisting the EU would eventually return the "stolen" assets. The G7 collectively froze around \$300 billion of Russian assets after the 2022 invasion, and discussions on their use continue. Ukraine is set to receive the first tranche in July.
- **(26 May)** One of the world's largest management consultancy firms Bain & Company, presented a report on the Russian industrial base on a segment for Sky News. According to their analysis, Russia is producing artillery shells at a rate three times faster and at a quarter of the cost compared to Ukraine's Western allies. This poses a significant challenge for Ukraine, which depends on US and European ammunition supplies to combat Russia's invasion.
- **(29 May)** The Swedish government has announced that it will donate 13 billion Swedish kronor in military aid to Ukraine. This is the largest donation since the start of the war in Ukraine. The Deputy Prime Minister stated that the package includes funding for air defence, artillery ammunition, and armoured vehicles. The Swedish Defence Minister, Pal Jonsson, reiterated that, for the time being, the country excludes the possibility of sending JAS 39 Gripen aircraft to Ukraine and that the Ukrainian side is focusing on the F-16 fighter jet program. Jonsson left the door open on a possible future possibility of sending the Gripen to Ukraine.
- **(31 May)** The German government has announced that it will permit Ukraine to use German weapons to neutralise military targets within Russia. The decision was made after days of discussions about whether Germany is willing to risk being labelled as a party to the war if it does so. The decision is seen as controversial and dangerous as it could potentially lead to an escalation of the war.
- **(31 May)** President of the United States, Joe Biden, has approved the use of American weapons for attacks on targets within Russia for the limited purpose of defending Kharkov. Biden's directive permits the use of weapons

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only for counter-battery fire and retaliatory strikes against Russian forces that are attacking or preparing to attack.

- **(31 May)** Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, during a state radio interview, criticised NATO proposals allowing Ukraine to use Western weapons within Russia, claiming it risks Europe's destruction. He warned that French and NATO plans could escalate the Ukraine war globally. Critics argue his stance favours Russia, allowing it to retain occupied Ukrainian territories and gain further strength.
- **(1 June)** Ukraine and Russia conducted a mutual exchange of 75 prisoners. This was the first prisoner exchange in three months and the fourth between Ukraine and the Russian Federation since the start of the war. In the past, Ukraine has pushed for an "all for all" exchange to occur on a weekly basis. Russian Commissioner for human rights, Tatyana Moskalkova, responded by stating that Kiev is making new demands without justification.
- **(4 June)** At a press conference during a tour of several African states, Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov stated that any French military instructors in Ukraine would be considered legitimate targets by Russian forces. Lavrov noted that regardless of their status, these instructors would be targeted. This was a response to a statement by the head of the Ukrainian armed forces, Oleksander Syrskyi, indicating that French instructors will soon have access to Ukrainian training centres. However, French President Emmanuel Macron has refrained from commenting on these developments, promising to clarify France's position during the commemorations of the 80th anniversary of D-Day
- **(5 June)** Santa Barbara Systems, a General Dynamics subsidiary in Spain refurbishing Leopard tanks for Ukraine, suffered a cyberattack claimed by the pro-Russian hacker group NoName. The distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attack was quickly detected and did not compromise any systems. General Dynamics temporarily disconnected its website for investigation, ensuring sensitive data remained protected. The NoName group often targets countries supporting Ukraine.
- **(6 June)** International Monetary Fund (IMF) spokesperson Julie Kozack stated at a regular press conference that the IMF's executive board will review Ukraine's \$15.6 billion IMF loan program at the representative level in the coming weeks. The program stipulates that Ukraine should restructure its commercial debt, which includes approximately \$20 billion in outstanding international bonds. She said that a new debt sustainability analysis will be published in the report following the review and approval of Ukraine, which will contain more details on how much debt relief is necessary.
- **(7 June)** During the ceremony commemorating the 80th anniversary of D-Day in Normandy, US President Biden emphasises that the United States, NATO, and a coalition of more than 50 countries are standing strong with Ukraine and that, should the coalition fail, Ukraine will be subjugated. In his opinion that would lead to an increased threat level to its neighbour and Europe more broadly, that could find themselves under a Russian attack. At the end of his remarks, he proposed that a failure to aid Ukraine would be encouraging autocratic regimes across the world.

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- **(7 June)** The Russian Foreign Ministry has accused Ukraine of killing women and children through the use of US-supplied HIMARS rockets to shell civilian targets in the Russian region of Belgorod. Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova presented these accusations at a conference on the sidelines of the economic forum in St. Petersburg, stating that fragments of the HIMARS rocket will be used as evidence in potential criminal proceedings.
- **(7 June)** Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal expressed satisfaction with the decision of the European Commission that Ukraine has met all the criteria for starting accession negotiations with the European Union. He further expressed hope that talks could begin by the end of this month. A European Commission spokesperson said that Ukraine and Moldova have taken all necessary steps to start official negotiations. Experts in working groups will now discuss the European Commission's assessment, and EU government ambassadors will review it next week. The 27 EU member states must unanimously agree to adopt the so-called negotiation framework to begin accession negotiations.
- **(10 June)** According to Norway's top general, Eirik Kristoffersen, NATO has two to three years to prepare for a potential Russian conventional attack. He warned that Russia's industrial base is restoring its offensive capacity faster than expected. This urgency highlights Europe's current lack of preparedness. Kristoffersen emphasised the need to rebuild forces and stockpiles while simultaneously supporting Ukraine. Norway, a NATO member since 1949, has increased its defence spending and aims to meet NATO's 2% GDP target by 2024, with it potentially rising to 2.7% by 2030. Norway has committed over \$2 billion to Ukraine and signed a bilateral security agreement pledging another \$1.3 billion in military aid for 2024.

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Review by: **Luka Ružičič Červek**

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