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New NATO chief in Kyiv as Romania delivers Patriot system to Ukraine

Rutte pledges strong support for Ukraine as he takes NATO reins



Office of the President of Ukraine

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy (right) is embraced by North Atlantic Treaty Organization Secretary-General Mark Rutte, who made a surprise visit to Kyiv on October 3 just two days after taking office.

RFE/RL, RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service and RFE/RL's Romanian Service

A Patriot missile-defense system donated by North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) member Romania has arrived in Ukraine, the two neighbors announced on October 3, as the military alliance's secretary-general, Mark Rutte, made a surprise visit to Kyiv just two days after taking office.

Russian drones and missiles rained down on Kyiv and other Ukrainian regions in the early hours of October 3, and as Mr. Rutte met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy later in the day, air-raid sirens twice blared throughout the capital,

underscoring the situation faced by residents of the capital and other regions of the country.

"I thank every country that helps us with air defense. A special thanks to Romania for the 'Patriot' systems. Together, we can achieve even greater efficiency – we can put an end to Russian terror by jointly taking down 'Shaheds' and missiles," Mr. Zelenskyy said on X, while Romania's Defense Ministry confirmed to RFE/RL that the Patriot system had been delivered.

Speaking after his meeting with Mr. Zelenskyy, Mr. Rutte vowed to help build

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Newly appointed NATO chief Rutte says Ukraine 'a top priority'

Visit comes as Ukraine loses more ground to Russian forces in Donetsk region



Courtesy of Deep State

Invading Russian forces have largely destroyed the Donetsk regional town of Vuhledar, which they took over earlier this month.

by Mark Raczkiewycz

CHICAGO – When the new North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) chief Mark Rutte assumed office, he said Ukraine would be "a top priority" of his mandate. He made Kyiv his first foreign destination on October 3 and met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy only 48 hours after taking office as secretary general.

Mr. Rutte said he wanted to make "crystal clear" his commitment to Ukraine and that "NATO stands with Ukraine."

"Because an independent and democratic Ukraine is vital for peace and stability in Europe. [...] I know from personal experience, with the downing of flight MH17, how

the conflict in Ukraine is not contained to the frontlines," the former Dutch prime minister said in his first speech.

His visit came as Ukraine endures daily Russian drone attacks on residential areas, some of which have been documented to deliberately hunt down civilian targets on the western bank of the Dnipro River in the Ukrainian-controlled part of the Kherson and Zaporizhia regions.

September was the first month when drones were launched daily targeting civilian areas.

Mr. Rutte's surprise visit also coincided with the high military command's

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Ukrainian drones strike Russia as Biden says Kyiv 'will win this war'

Zelenskyy stresses need for battlefield gains ahead of Ramstein meeting

RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service and Current Time

Ukraine's military reported that heavy fighting continued on September 29 following a night of air strikes that included penetration deeper inside Russia by Kyiv's drone arsenal, while U.S. President Joe Biden declared on social media that "Ukraine will win this war."

In its evening briefing, Ukraine's General Staff said that "the Russian invaders are continuing to storm positions of the Ukrainian defenders [with] the occupiers



State Emergency Service of Ukraine (video grab)
Rescuers help a wounded man after a Russian drone strike on a hospital in Ukraine's Sumy region on September 28.

actively attacking in the [strategically important] Pokrovsk and Kurakhove directions."

It added that "about 20 settlements in Chernihiv, Sumy and Kharkiv regions were affected by [Russian] artillery and mortar shelling."

The update came after Ukraine reported multiple injuries from overnight Russian drone attacks in a handful of regions, while Russian defense officials claimed to have shot down 125 Ukrainian drones in the latest reflection of Kyiv's increasing efforts to take the 2 1/2-year-old war to Russian territory.

The governor of Russia's southwestern region of Belgorod said one man had died

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NEWS ANALYSIS

Putin's nuclear blackmail goes doctrinal

by Pavel K. Baev
Eurasia Daily Monitor

Russian President Vladimir Putin announced neither surprising nor radical revisions in Russia's nuclear doctrine on September 25 (Kremlin.ru, September 25). He committed to revising the government's vague document back in June. In the ensuing months, many "patriotic" pundits have advocated various drastic changes, from formalizing the "escalate-to-deescalate" proposition to breaking the non-proliferation regime (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, June 3; Kommersant, September 11). Putin opted for very modest revisions and tried to compensate for this moderation with staged gravitas at his Security Council's so-called "standing conference on nuclear deterrence." The conference had never been known to exist before but this time was covered on prime-time television (Kommersant, September 25; Meduza, September 26). The announced shifts in the justifications for Russia hypothetically resorting to using its vast nuclear arsenal have already been scrutinized minutely, but the timing of Putin's heavy hints and direct threats is indicative of his real intent.

Typically, Putin's attempts at brinkmanship are aimed at influencing key decisions in the U.S.-led coalition on expanding support to Ukraine and providing weapons systems of higher capacity, such as Leopard main battle tanks or M142 HIMARS multiple rocket launchers. The physical arrival of these arms, such as the deployment of the first squadron of F-16 fighters in early August, is invariably ignored, even when equipped with the JSOW glide bombs (Izvestiya, September 26).

Putin's previous surge of nuclear rhetoric was timed to coincide with a meeting between U.S. President Joe Biden and U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer that focused on whether to grant Ukraine permission to use the Storm Shadow air-launched missile

to strike targets deep in Russian territory (Interfax, September 14; see Eurasia Daily Monitor, September 16). The doctrinal revisions were announced as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy held meetings with Mr. Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris, and, perhaps most importantly for Moscow, former U.S. President Donald Trump (Rossiiskaya Gazeta, September 27). An upcoming meeting between Messrs. Biden, Starmer, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and French President Emmanuel Macron will likely invite new threats from Putin (Izvestiya, September 25).

Moscow has rarely responded to long-distance Ukrainian strikes with enhanced nuclear saber-rattling, even to strikes of such spectacular impact as that in Toropets, Tver Oblast, which caused the destruction of a major artillery arsenal (Current Time, September 19). The shocking offensive by Ukrainian troops into Kursk Oblast, which is still ongoing despite Putin's order to push the "bandits" out of Russia's territory, has also seen no nuclear reaction (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, September 3; The Insider, September 27). Kyiv is keen to take advantage of Russia's self-restraint for demonstrating the hollow symbolism of Putin's "red lines" to much consternation among Moscow's hawks (Meduza, September 23; see Eurasia Daily Monitor, September 25). New boundaries drawn in the revised Russian nuclear doctrine will surely be breached without delay by the ways and means that would yet again catch the General Staff by surprise (Carnegie Politika, September 26; NV.ua, September 27).

Disconnected from the battles in the kinetic war, the ups and downs in Russian brinkmanship show a distinct correlation with Ukrainian peace offensives. Mr. Zelenskyy's first peace summit in Bürgenstock, Switzerland, on June 15-16 saw not only a furious Russian diplomatic campaign

(Continued on page 5)

Russia's prospective childfree ban becomes new way to control society

by Ksenia Kirillova
Eurasia Daily Monitor

At the end of September, Russia renewed its consideration of a law forbidding "the childfree ideology" (чайлдфри), referring to people's averseness to having children. The bill, introduced in the State Duma two years ago, was set aside for modifications at the time. While discussions surrounding the bill occurred over the summer, on September 23, reports confirmed that the government "conceptually supports the proposed bill, forbidding propaganda in support of the childfree ideology" (TASS, June 27; RBC, September 23). According to these reports, "the bill is intended to preserve and strengthen traditional family values" and "foresees the establishment of protection against dissemination on the internet, media, films and advertisements of information propagandizing the refusal to have children" (RIA Novosti, September 23). Russia is in a serious demographic crisis, as its death rate rapidly increases due to the war, contributing to Russia's drastic population decline (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, October 24, 2023). The Kremlin can only do so much to improve the birthrate. In order to do so, it turns to its pre-

favored method: repression and control over its citizens.

Experts note that no ban could significantly increase the birthrate in Russia because modern lifestyles and the reproductive inclinations of people are well-established (Forbes.ru, January 30, 2023). In this regard, there are abundant objective reasons for people to refuse to have children in Russia, primarily poverty and war (Istories.media, September 24). According to the Russian research company "Russian Field," 17 percent of childless Russians do not want children due to poverty and unemployment (RussianField.com, August 23). Contrary to the Kremlin's concerns, according to data reported by the General Director of the (state-owned) Russian Public Opinion Research Center, Konstantin Abramov, only 6 percent of Russians think childlessness is an ideal option. This opinion, if stretched, will likely be considered a hostile "ideological" attitude (TASS, September 3).

The authors and supporters of the bill term the childfree ideology "a dangerous instrument of information warfare" (Bashinform.ru, June 28). No organization propagandizing such views exists. Inde-

(Continued on page 7)

NEWSBRIEFS

Croatia backs out of NATO Ukraine mission

The president of Croatia has refused to approve the participation of Croatian soldiers in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's (NATO) mission to support Ukraine, citing concerns about the war spreading toward Croatia and his desire to ensure the safety of the Balkan country. The leaders of NATO member states agreed on a support package for Ukraine during a summit in July. Croatian President Zoran Milanovic initially gave his consent to the package, which will include establishing the NATO Security Assistance and Training for Ukraine (NSATU) to coordinate the provision of military equipment and training for Ukraine by its allies and partners. However, on October 1, Mr. Milanovic refused to approve it. NATO declined to comment on Mr. Milanovic's decision, telling RFE/RL that questions about Croatia's contributions should be directed to Croatian authorities. NATO officials, however, reiterated that newly appointed Secretary-General Mark Rutte had confirmed the alliance's unwavering commitment to supporting Ukraine in its fight against Russian aggression. The NATO package for Ukraine includes the establishment of the NSATU in Germany with logistics hubs across allied territories to facilitate the provision of equipment, training and long-term financial support. The final declaration of the NATO summit said its aim was to "place security assistance to Ukraine on an enduring footing, ensuring enhanced, predictable and coherent support." It will "support Ukraine's self-defense in line with the U.N. [United Nations] Charter" and will not make NATO a party to the conflict. The declaration also outlined an irreversible path toward NATO membership for Ukraine. Mr. Milanovic said Croatia cannot significantly influence or stop the war in Ukraine and involving Croatian forces could endanger the country's security and would not be in Croatia's national interest. Mr. Milanovic, a former prime minister of Croatia who has been president since 2020, has previously expressed similar views, opposing military training for Ukrainian soldiers in Croatia. He also has been critical of Western sanctions on Russia. Croatian Prime Minister

Andrej Plenkovic sharply criticized Mr. Milanovic's decision, describing it as "manipulation" that undermines Croatia's international standing. Mr. Plenkovic rejected Mr. Milanovic's argument that the decision would protect Croatia from involvement in the war, asserting that the refusal merely prevented the deployment of a few Croatian officers to a command in Wiesbaden, Germany. Croatia has been a member of NATO since 2009. (RFE/RL's Balkan Service)

Ukraine withdraws from Vuhledar

The Ukrainian military has confirmed that it is pulling out of the strategic city of Vuhledar in the east as Moscow continues its grinding offensive, while Ukraine's critically important Danube port of Izmayil was again targeted by waves of Russian drone strikes that raised the alarm in neighboring North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) member Romania. "The higher command has given permission for the withdrawal of units from Vuhledar in order to preserve personnel and combat equipment, and take position for further actions," Ukraine's Khortytsia ground forces formation, which commands eastern regions including Donetsk, said in a message on Telegram. Russian forces used repeated attacks on the flanks of the city to exhaust the Ukrainian defenses, threatening to surround the hilltop city, the command said. Moscow's troops, overwhelmingly superior in numbers and equipment, have been slowly advancing in eastern Ukraine despite huge losses, as Ukraine has been desperately appealing to its Western allies to provide it with more advanced weapons and give it permission to strike military objectives deeper inside Russia. Vuhledar, a deserted former mining town with a prewar population of some 14,000, has been at the center of a ferocious battle since the start of Russia's unprovoked invasion in February 2022. The city, perched on a hilltop, has been virtually razed to the ground, but it retains its strategic importance for the protection of Russia's supply routes and could act as a springboard toward Pokrovsk, a communications hub some 50 miles to the

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ADMINISTRATION OF THE UKRAINIAN WEEKLY AND SVOBODA

Walter Honcharyk, administrator
and advertising manager

(973) 292-9800, ext. 3040
fax: (973) 644-9510
e-mail: advertising@ukrweekly.com

Subscription Department

(973) 292-9800, ext. 3040
e-mail: subscription@ukrweekly.com



Consulate General of Ukraine in New York

Individuals, including wounded soldiers who fought to defend Ukraine, take part in Defender Day commemorations in New York's Times Square on October 1.



Consulate General of Ukraine in New York

A woman holds a sign in Ukrainian that says "thank you" during a commemoration of Ukraine's Defender Day in Times Square in New York on October 1.

Ukraine honors soldiers on Defenders Day with nationwide tributes and moments of silence

by Roman Tymotsko

LVIV – Much of Ukraine came to a standstill on October 1 as people around the country stood for a minute of silence to pay tribute to all those who died defending Ukraine's freedom.

The nationwide moment, held at 9 a.m. local time, was part of Defenders Day, a solemn day of remembrance and celebration for those who have died or are still fighting on Ukraine's front lines.

In Kyiv, traffic came to a halt for about 10 minutes as President Volodymyr Zelenskyy awarded soldiers with state honors, noting the courage and sacrifice of Ukraine's defenders amid the ongoing war with Russia. The event underscored the nation's deep gratitude to its heroes, past and present.

In Kyiv, police stopped vehicles near the intersection of Khreshchatyk Street and the Alley of the Heroes of the Heavenly Hundred from 8:55 a.m. to 9:05 a.m.

Mr. Zelenskyy presented soldiers with state awards and battle flags as Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal, foreign ambassadors and members of the country's security and defense forces looked on.

Mr. Zelenskyy emphasized that Defenders Day honors all of the people who ensure Ukraine continues to exist.

"For 951 days, you have been writing history on the battlefield," Mr. Zelenskyy said as he addressed members of Ukraine's



Office of the President of Ukraine

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy addresses individuals who gathered in Kyiv to commemorate Defenders Day, a solemn day of remembrance and celebration for those who have died or are still fighting on Ukraine's front lines.

Armed Forces. "You give yourself to keep Ukraine alive, both those who were born a warrior and those who became one. Those who changed their own lives so that our freedom would remain unchanged. Those with a different profession did not want to live under a different flag. Those who said to themselves: I have no other choice because this is my homeland, my Ukraine, so I will defend it," the president said.

Mr. Zelenskyy said he bowed to everyone who brought and is bringing peace in Ukraine closer. He also presented Ukrainian

passports to three foreigners – a soldier from the United States and Georgia, and a military medic from New Zealand – who have been helping the country since 2022.

Mr. Zelenskyy also visited a hospital and presented state awards to soldiers and medics who saved the lives of other defenders.

"You save our defenders. We sincerely thank you and greatly respect your work. We thank you for every life you have saved, and I wish you health," Mr. Zelenskyy said. "Congratulations on your day – the Day of Defenders of Ukraine. Thank you for your

service and defense of Ukraine. Get well, and together to victory."

The Ukrainian postal service also joined in celebrating Defenders Day. Ukrposhta, Ukraine's government-run postal service, issued a unique stamp commemorating Defenders Day, company CEO Ihor Smelyanskyi said.

The illustration for the stamp was created by Ukrainian artist Oleksandr Okhapkin, who works mainly in iconography; one art critic called his work "religious poetry in colors."

The stamp depicts the mother of God, who "envelops and protects those who are now on the front lines defending our land with her homophorion," Mr. Smelyanskyi said.

The image reflects the deep connection between Ukrainian soldiers and their spiritual patroness, he added. The set consists of an "Under the Protection of the Virgin Mary" sheet with six stamps, a "First Day" envelope and a card.

The Ukrposhta chief said the stamp is a charity stamp and he noted that 5 hryvnia from each set sold will go to support the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

On October 1, a new park in honor of border guard heroes and a memorial sculpture, "Heavenly Watch," was opened in the Darnytsia district of Kyiv to mark the day, Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko said.

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Russian drone strike kills top Ukrainian judge after 9 die in attack on another hospital

RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service

A Russian air strike on a private vehicle in the Kharkiv region killed a 61-year-old judge of Ukraine's Supreme Court, local officials said on September 28, while two strikes on a hospital in the border region of Sumy killed at least nine people and injured 12.

The Kharkiv regional prosecutor's office on September 28 said a Russian drone hit a black sedan being used to distribute humanitarian aid, killing the driver and severely injuring three women passengers.

The driver was identified as Leonid Loboyko, a judge in the Cassation Criminal Division of Ukraine's Supreme Court.

"The victim of the cynical attack was a judge of the Supreme Court, who was delivering humanitarian aid to local residents," the prosecutor's office said.

"The staff of the Supreme Court expresses its sincere condolences to the family and friends of Leonid ... sharing their grief and pain from this irreparable loss," the court said on its Facebook page.

"In the hearts of all who knew Leonid Loboyko, the memory of him as kind, wise and sympathetic person will forever remain," the court said.



Ukrainian National Police

Several floors of the hospital in Sumy were destroyed by a Russian strike that killed at least nine people and injured 12.

Separately, Kharkiv Gov. Oleh Synyehubov said that an air strike killed three people and injured at least three more in the village of Slatyne, about 16 miles north of Kharkiv city, with other officials saying Russian forces had fired KAB glide bombs in the attack.

"The enemy hit civilian infrastructure, damaged an educational institution, shops," Mr. Synyehubov wrote on Telegram.

Earlier, Ukrainian Interior Minister Ihor Klymenko said Russia on September 28 launched two strikes on a hospital in the border region of Sumy, killing at least nine people and injuring 12.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy condemned the Sumy strike, saying that Russia was "waging war on hospitals." He said on X that Ukrainian rescuers were "doing everything possible to provide our people

with the help they need."

Mr. Klymenko initially put the death toll at six, including a police officer.

"As a result of the first strike, one person died and several floors of the hospital were destroyed," Mr. Klymenko said on Telegram, adding that, while rescuers were evacuating the patients and staff, Russia launched a second strike.

Mr. Klymenko said it was the second day in a row that Ukrainian police lost personnel. "In Kryvyi Rih, the search continues at the site of yesterday's attack on a police building. According to available information, one more employee may be under the rubble," he said.

Earlier, Ukraine's air force said that its air defenses shot down 69 of 73 drones launched by Russia at Ukrainian regions early on September 28.

Russia also fired two ballistic and two cruise missiles at targets inside Ukraine, the air force said, adding that the two cruise missiles were downed.

Kyiv's military administration said separately that 15 incoming drones were shot down on the outskirts of the Ukrainian capital, with debris falling in one of the city

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The fall of Vuhledar: What it means for Ukraine's beleaguered military

by Mike Eckel
RFE/RL

In late January 2023, a column of Russian vehicles and hundreds of naval infantry ran into a buzz saw of Ukrainian defenses near the Donbas city of Vuhledar, a humiliating defeat that showcased both Ukrainian pluck, but also Russia's frequently ham-handed offensive operations.

Times have changed. On October 2, the Ukrainian military confirmed that it was pulling units out of Vuhledar in the face of a relentless, monthslong offensive by Russian forces along a wide swathe of Ukraine's eastern Donbas region.

If nothing else, it's a sign of how dire things are looking for Ukraine's military.

Here's what you need to know about the fall of Vuhledar.

Yes, you've probably heard of Vuhledar before

Located about 56 miles southwest Donetsk, a Russian-controlled city and the largest city in the Donbas, Vuhledar is a coal-mining town with a preinvasion population of 14,000 with drab Soviet-style apartment blocks set amid a flat, open landscape.

The city is on a relative height of land, making it ideal for staging artillery and rocket systems, to threaten a major east-west highway, called the T-0509, as well as a major rail line.

In November 2022, nine months after the start of the all-out invasion, Russian forces, led by the Pacific Fleet's 155th Naval Infantry Brigade, pushed into Pavlivka, a smaller town just to the south of Vuhledar. That push was a mess for the brigade, with exceptionally high losses, and a group of officers later published a public letter criticizing unit commanders.

About two months later, in late January, Russian naval infantry units attacked Vuhledar – and in the process suffered major losses; with various estimates putting Russian casualties in the several hundreds.

To outside observers, the failed effort was emblematic of the deep problems that the Russian military faced, in particular at the level of unit command, where communications and coordination were sclerotic and disjointed.

So what's going on now?

Since at least the beginning of 2024, Russian forces have been slowly ramping up momentum across the 684-mile



A map shows the territorial control near Vuhledar, Ukraine, as of October 1.

front line, which stretches from Ukraine's northeastern border near Kharkiv, south toward Vuhledar, then west-southwest toward the Kherson region, on the Dnipro River.

In at least three locations, mainly in the Donbas, Russian troops – bolstered by an influx of well-compensated volunteer soldiers – have ground forward, slowly overwhelming Ukrainian defenses in large part by sheer numbers of men and missiles.

In Chasiv Yar, Russian forces have occupied the city's eastern district, but are struggling to cross a canal, to take the remainder of the city. Like Vuhledar, Chasiv Yar sits on relative heights, and controlling it would allow Russian forces to threaten Kostyantynivka, a rail hub city to the southwest. Ukrainian forces rely heavily on the rail hub and a nearby highway to ferry men and supplies in and around the Donbas.

About 50 miles southwest of Kostyantynivka lies another major stronghold for Ukrainian forces: Pokrovsk. Since at least the summer, Russian forces have been increasingly pummeling the city with air strikes – including devastating

and hard-to-defend-against "glide bombs" – while on the ground creeping forward from the east, capturing a string of villages.

Russian forces are now fewer than 3 miles from the N32 highway, which runs from Pokrovsk to Kostyantynivka. Capturing the highway would cut off a major supply line for Ukrainian forces.

But Ukrainian commanders and planners – who had been criticized for not prioritizing building defenses and not accelerating recruitment efforts – managed to bolster lines east of Pokrovsk and slow Russia's advances toward the city over the past two months.

In August, Ukrainian commanders also mounted an audacious cross-border invasion of Russian territory into the Kursk region. It was the largest invasion of Russian territory by foreign troops since World War II.

The effort caught Russia – not to mention all of Ukraine's Western allies – off-guard, and punched another major hole in the perception that Russia's armed forces and command were formidable or wholly competent.

The Kursk effort, which is still ongoing, was aimed in part at drawing Russian forces from elsewhere in the Donbas to thin Russian forces and their Donbas offensive and ease pressure on Ukrainian defenses.

That hasn't happened.

Meanwhile, for its part, Russia appears to have made Vuhledar – also known as Ugledar in Russian – a priority, perhaps as a way to flank Ukraine's defenses of Pokrovsk and draw resources away from the main Russian thrust.

On October 1, prominent open-source analysts, including one with ties to the Ukrainian military, said Russian forces had entered Vuhledar. A day later, the Khortytsia strategic grouping announced that commanders had ordered units to withdraw.

"The higher command has given permission to carry out a maneuver to withdraw units from Ugledar for the purpose of preserving personnel and combat equipment, taking up positions for further actions," it said.

Prominent Russian war bloggers posted videos purporting to show Russian soldiers mounting flags outside city buildings and claiming mopping-up operations were ongo-

(Continued on page 6)

U.S. must prepare for 'long-term' confrontation with Russia: Helsinki Commission

RFE/RL

WASHINGTON – The United States must prepare for a "long-term" confrontation with Russia that won't end when authoritarian President Vladimir Putin departs from the political scene, according to a new report by a bipartisan commission.

Ukraine's defeat of Russia on the battlefield is critical to winning that confrontation, and Washington should do all it can to ensure Kyiv is victorious, the U.S. Helsinki Commission said in its September 30 report.

The commission, which was set up in 1975 to monitor human rights in the Soviet bloc, is composed of 18 lawmakers evenly split between the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate as well as three representatives of the executive branch.

"There will be no hope for a peaceful and stable Russia while it remains engaged in war and occupation of its neighbors," the commission said in the report.

"Ukraine defeating the Russian invaders is a necessary, but not sufficient, step towards not only forcing Russia into significant reflection and reform, but also towards uprooting Russian influence and countering Russian aggression more broadly," the commission said.

The commission's report comes as the future of U.S. military support for Kyiv in its nearly three-year defensive war against Russia is uncertain with a wing of the Republican party, led by presidential candidate Donald Trump, questioning the significant financial commitment.

Congress has allocated \$175 billion to support Ukraine since Russia invaded in February 2022, with the majority of the funding spent at home for weapons production and other goods and services. Ukraine would need another large U.S. aid package early next year if it hopes to drive Russian forces from its territory.

Mr. Trump, who claims to have a good relationship with Putin, has said he will quickly negotiate an end to the war if elected president. With Russia controlling nearly 20 percent of Ukrainian territory, any deal now would likely force Kyiv to make territorial concessions. And without a U.S. or

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) security guarantee, there would be no assurance that Putin wouldn't invade again.

Vice President Kamala Harris, the Democratic candidate, backs aid to Ukraine but it is unclear how much further she is willing to go than her current boss, President Joe Biden. His administration has been criticized by Ukrainian supporters for slow-rolling military aid to Kyiv, giving it enough to survive but not enough to win.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy traveled to the White House last week to present his "victory plan" to Mr. Biden and request permission to strike military targets deep inside Russia with U.S. missiles. The White House did not announce any change in policy following the meeting.

The bipartisan report, led by Helsinki Commission Chairman Joe Wilson (R-S.C.), can be seen as an exhortation for whichever party wins the presidency and controls the House of Representatives and Senate next year to continue aid.

Mr. Wilson is among those Republicans, including Sens. Jim Risch of Idaho and Mitch McConnell of Kentucky, who are ardent Ukraine supporters.

Putin, who has been Russia's preeminent leader for nearly a quarter century, has tried to justify his invasion by claiming that Ukraine has historically belonged to Russia. At the same time, he is attempting to rebuild the Kremlin's sphere of influence in the former Soviet space. He has installed people in power in Russia who share his view to ensure his policies continue beyond his time in office.

"Until Russia can reckon with its imperial history and present, cease using repression and corruption as tools of power, and build governing institutions that are grounded in respect for democracy, human rights and the rule of law, Russia cannot be a responsible international actor. We need to be prepared to contest Russia for the long term," the report said.

The 68-page report also covers other parts of Eurasia, from the Western Balkans to Central Asia.

Russia's war on Ukraine "has motivated Central Asian states to diversify their relations with other countries and

seek alternate economic partners and security guarantees, as well as to strengthen regional cooperation," it said. "These changes offer an opportunity for the United States to increase its engagement in the region to counter Russian influence and to support the efforts of Central Asian states to realign their foreign relations."

With Moscow "determined to maintain its influence through both overt and covert means," the South Caucasus is "at a pivotal moment in its history, standing on the edge of both opportunity and peril," the report said.

The United States "must reassess its approach to the South Caucasus. ... For decades, U.S. policy has been based on a relatively simple understanding: Armenia was seen as a stalwart Russian ally, Georgia as a committed pro-Western partner, and Azerbaijan as a multivector state balancing its relations between the West and Russia. However, recent developments have upended these assumptions, revealing a more complex and fluid geopolitical landscape."

The commission urged the United States to "adopt a comprehensive, sustained strategy that recognizes the Black Sea as a critical theater of competition. A long-term approach should prioritize building a credible deterrent to Russian aggression, supporting democratic governance and rule of law, and fostering regional cooperation frameworks that limit Russia's ability to exploit divisions and vulnerabilities."

In the Western Balkans, meanwhile, "Russia has preyed on internal divisions and flagging U.S. engagement to disrupt the region's integration into Western institutions, including NATO and the E.U. [European Union]," it said. "The U.S. should target poisonous, Russia-affiliated actors in the region who engage in corrupt and destabilizing behavior while redoubling our support for regional security, stability and energy independence."

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UNWLA

The Ukrainian National Women's League of America hosted its 33rd convention on September 13-15 at the Parsippany Sheraton in Parsippany, N.J.

UNWLA holds 33rd convention, honors heritage and advocacy for Ukraine

UNWLA

PARSIPPANY, N.J. – The Ukrainian National Women's League of America (UNWLA) hosted its 33rd convention on September 13-15 at the Parsippany Sheraton in Parsippany, N.J. The event brought together over 175 members and delegates from across the United States to celebrate members' shared heritage, strengthen their advocacy for Ukraine and elect new leaders for the next three-year term.

The convention kicked off with a warm welcome as members and delegates gathered, many reuniting with friends they had not seen in many years. The energy was palpable as the first day began with an official opening ceremony led by UNWLA President Natalie Pawlenko.

The lighting of the traditional "Tree of Life" symbolized the organization's enduring mission of advocacy, education, cultural preservation and humanitarian aid efforts.

Ms. Pawlenko reflected on the critical role that the UNWLA has played in supporting Ukraine, particularly since Russia launched an unprovoked war of aggression against the country in February 2022.

Throughout the convention, members engaged in lively discussions and planned future initiatives to further strengthen the UNWLA's efforts in advocating for Ukraine on the international stage.

Keynote speaker Paul Grod, president of the Ukrainian World Congress, emphasized the importance of diaspora organizations such as the UNWLA in uniting efforts globally to support Ukraine. He praised the UNWLA's work as a model for advocacy, noting that its leadership is recognized worldwide as being exemplary.

One of the most emotional moments of the convention came during the presentation of the first-ever UNWLA "Spirit of Ukraine Award."

Ambassador Oksana Markarova, Ukraine's envoy to the United States, was deeply honored to receive the award, which she dedicated to all Ukrainian women fighting for the country's freedom.

The second award was given to Oksana Bilonozir, Ukraine's former minister of culture, for her relentless support of soldiers and prisoners of war. The third award recognized the



Members of the National Executive Committee of the Ukrainian National Women's League of America are seen during the organization's 33rd convention.

World Federation of Ukrainian Women's Organizations (WFUWO) team at the United Nations for their decades of advocating for Ukraine's human rights on the global stage.

The cultural richness of the Ukrainian diaspora was showcased throughout the event with performances by Ukrainian artists, including soprano Alla Rodina of the National Opera of Ukraine and singer Bria Blessing, who is not of Ukrainian descent, though she enchanted attendees with her flawless Ukrainian and heartfelt performances.

Day two of the convention featured important discussions on leadership, led by Prof. Jerry Flynn of Rutgers Business School. He focused on transformational leadership, particularly during times of crisis, offering valuable insights as the organization continues its critical work in support of Ukraine.

Attendees also took part in plenary sessions, approving by-law amendments and electing new national officers and



Ukrainian National Women's League of America President Natalie Pawlenko (left) stands beside Ukraine's Ambassador to the United States Oksana Markarova, who was among the inaugural recipients of the UNWLA's Spirit of Ukraine Award.

standing chairs for the upcoming term.

Ms. Pawlenko was elected for a second three-year term as UNWLA national president.

The convention ended on a high note with Sunday's closing session. New resolutions were adopted to guide the organization's work over the next three years. As members bid farewell, they left energized and committed to expanding the UNWLA's advocacy, educational, and humanitarian efforts for Ukraine.

With a legacy approaching 100 years, the UNWLA continues to stand at the forefront of supporting Ukraine and preserving Ukrainian heritage in the U.S. The convention's theme –

"Heritage and Strength: We Advocate, Educate, Cultivate, and Care" – will guide the organization as it navigates the challenges ahead.

Putin's...

(Continued from page 2)

of sabotage but also an escalation of nuclear rhetoric, most notably at the St. Petersburg Economic Forum (Fontanka.ru, June 7; Forbes.ua, June 18; see Eurasia Daily Monitor, June 20). This time, Putin's posturing aimed to disrupt Mr. Zelenskyy's address to the United Nations General Assembly centered on the proposal for the second peace summit (Kommersant, September 25; RIAC, September 26). Moscow resolutely rules out any possibility of participating in this summit, but may have difficulty derailing it, as India has begun to cautiously signal its interest in hosting the summit (RBC, September 21; NV.ua, September 24).

The resonance of rhetoric decrying nuclear threats among countries in the Global South is clearly a major concern for the Kremlin, as it is constantly on the lookout for opportunities to spread its influence in other parts of the world (Russia in Global Affairs, September 1). The official recognition of North Korea's nuclear status, necessitated by Pyongyang's readiness to sustain the supply of artillery shells to depleting Russian stocks, is upsetting for many stakeholders in the global nuclear non-proliferation regime (The Moscow Times, September 26). Russian leadership

grants extraordinary importance to ensuring the success of the BRICS (a loose political-economic grouping originally consisting of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) summit scheduled for October 22-24 in Kazan, Tatarstan. These strategic calculations could compel Putin to tone down his nuclear saber-rattling in the couple of weeks preceding the gathering (RIAC, September 25).

The key to the BRICS summit's success is held by China's President Xi Jinping, who confirmed his intention to partake but has signaled his disapproval of Putin's cavalier attitude toward nuclear matters in various subtle ways (RBC, September 12). Beijing is promoting the proposition for an international treaty prohibiting the first use of nuclear weapons. Russia's revisions to its nuclear doctrine do not fit with this initiative (RIAC, September 27).

Experts in Moscow evaluate China's displeasure with the utmost attention and tend to conclude that it will remain superficial so that no negative consequences for the evolving strategic partnership are to be expected (Rossiiskaya Gazeta, September 26). Such opinions are underpinned by the assessments of China's sustained efforts at strengthening its own nuclear capabilities, including the recent test launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile (Kommersant, September 25). The Russian program of such tests has been significantly curtailed, and

the explosion of the RS-28 Sarmat missile in a silo at the Plesetsk Cosmodrome in the Arkhangelsk Oblast is a significant setback, about which the Kremlin remains in denial (Meduza, September 25).

Putin's nuclear brinkmanship follows an oscillating pattern. The announcement of revisions in the nuclear doctrine is supposed to mark an upswing in Russia's attempts at nuclear coercion. The Kremlin hopes that these revisions will reinforce Western fears of Russia's nuclear capabilities to influence the proceedings of the Ramstein format meeting. An ensuing pause in nuclear rhetoric timed for demonstrating responsible statesmanship on the eve of the BRICS summit is also reasonably predictable.

The sequence of Ukrainian long-distance strikes is set to continue, but these increasingly spectacular hits – whether by domestically produced or Western-supplied weapons – will make little difference in Russia's nuclear maneuvering across the political space of the long war. Like every aging autocrat, Putin is highly egocentric and cannot comprehend that his blatant blackmail makes it impossible for Western leaders to yield.

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THE UKRAINIAN WEEKLY

Poisoning Ukraine's rivers

The horrors of Russia's war on Ukraine and Ukrainians seem to have no limits. Russian President Vladimir Putin, who is wanted on a warrant issued by the International Criminal Court, has seen his military relentlessly bomb Ukrainian hospitals, energy facilities, first aid convoys carrying civilians who were injured in missile attacks and unarmed first responders who were doing nothing more than trying to rescue innocent civilians buried under rubble following Russian glide bombs attacks on their homes. But Putin's perverse desire to eradicate and kill the people of Ukraine has reached a new low.

The deliberate poisoning of the Desna River in Ukraine by Russia is an unforgivable act of ecological terrorism. This assault on nature has turned one of Europe's cleanest rivers into a lifeless wasteland, leaving hundreds of miles of aquatic ecosystems devastated. The suspected release of toxic chemicals from a Russian factory into the Seym River, which feeds into the Desna, has killed fish, mollusks, and other species across the river's entire length. Such a deliberate and calculated act is a stark reminder of Russia's willingness to wage war not just against the Ukrainian people, but also against the environment that sustains them.

The scale of destruction is staggering. Ukrainian officials estimate that over 400 miles of river have been rendered biologically dead. What used to be a thriving aquatic habitat, filled with catfish, carp and countless other species, has become a contaminated wasteland. The river's oxygen levels plummeted to near zero, suffocating fish and other riverine life. The horrifying imagery of lifeless fish clogging the banks of the Desna is a testament to the senseless cruelty of this attack. In Slabyn, a village in the Chernihiv region, volunteers in protective gear had to haul out 44 tons of dead fish to prevent further contamination and public health risks.

This incident is not an isolated event but part of a broader strategy of environmental warfare. It recalls the Russian military's destruction of the Kakhovka reservoir last year, which resulted in catastrophic flooding and widespread environmental damage. From burning forests to threatening nuclear facilities, Moscow's campaign against Ukraine increasingly targets natural resources as well as civilians. Russia's actions in the Desna River show a blatant disregard for international norms and a willingness to inflict long-lasting environmental damage as a means of pressure and terror.

Serhiy Zhuk, the head of Chernihiv's ecology inspectorate, accurately described this disaster as an act of "ecocide," a term that signifies the intentional destruction of an environment. He points out that this is Europe's first "completely dead river," an unprecedented calamity that could take years, if not decades, to remedy. Rebuilding infrastructure or homes is a monumental task, but nature's recovery is even slower and more uncertain, especially under continued threats. The Desna, once a symbol of Ukrainian natural beauty and cultural heritage, is now a graveyard of poisoned waters.

The Kremlin's intentional poisoning of a river that serves as a key water supply for millions, including the Kyiv region, is a crime that cannot be tolerated. Ukraine's response has been to take every possible measure to mitigate the damage, from using compressors to pump oxygen into the Desna to imposing strict bans on fishing and water use. Yet these efforts can only do so much when faced with an enemy willing to exploit nature itself as a weapon.

The deliberate poisoning of rivers, the destruction of wildlife, and the use of ecological sabotage as a war tactic are crimes that demand swift and unequivocal condemnation from world leaders. International bodies, environmental organizations, and concerned nations must urgently act to hold Russia accountable for its actions. The response must go beyond verbal condemnation; it should include sanctions, diplomatic pressure and legal proceedings to ensure that such heinous acts of ecocide are not repeated.

Oct.
13
2023

Turning the pages back...

Last year, on October 13, 2023, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) unanimously adopted a resolution calling on member states to "recognize Vladimir Putin as illegitimate after the end of his current presidential term and to cease all contacts with him, except for humanitarian and peaceful ones."

The resolution said that Putin, who has ruled the country in one form or another since 2000, "has turned the Russian Federation into a de facto dictatorship." PACE said that unanimous support for the resolution came from among the 306-seat organization, which has 46 European member nations, including non-European Union members.

Russia, the resolution described, has a president who has remained in office for an extremely long term (with the potential to extend his rule to 2036 after amending the constitution) that lacks any checks and balances, such as a strong parliament, an independent judiciary, free media and a vibrant civil society. In 2022, after its invasion of Ukraine, Russia's membership in PACE and its parent organization, the Council of Europe, were suspended. To avoid being expelled, Russia instead announced that it would withdraw from PACE.

"This, coupled with growing repression against internal opponents and Russia's actions in Ukraine, underscores the cost of unchecked presidential power," PACE representatives said in a joint statement. The restoration of democracy in Russia is in the interest of not only the Russian people but also of Europe and the whole world, the organization underscored.

PACE also reaffirmed its support for the establishment of an international criminal tribunal to hold the Russian leadership, including Putin, accountable for "the original crime

(Continued on page 13)

The fall of Vuhledar...

(Continued from page 4)

ing. The Ukrainian General Staff's morning update on October 2 made no mention of Vuhledar.

Making matters worse for Ukraine were reports that parts of the 72nd Mechanized Brigade – which has defended the city for around two years now – had been surrounded, and were in danger of capture.

"I don't want to say they're surrounded, but the situation is difficult, and the pull-back is challenging. That's the best way to put it," Ukrainian military analyst Denis Popovych told Current Time.

So how bad is Vuhledar's fall for Ukraine anyway?

The loss of the city will ratchet up pressure on Ukrainian defenses in Pokrovsk, though first Russian forces will have to battle to take full control of a reservoir outside of Kurakhove, which lies north of Vuhledar and south of Pokrovsk.

Some analysts, including the Washington-based Institute for the Study of War, downplayed the significance of the city's capture. Others noted that the withdrawal would deprive Ukraine of the ability to threaten Russian positions to the east and south.

"In principle, any withdrawal worsens any situation," David Handelman, an Israeli military analyst, told RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service. "Speaking concretely, if you look at the map where it is on the front line, Vuhledar, as compared with Pokrovsk, poses a threat to Russian positions. For a long time, Vuhledar was a boot on the throats of the Russian Army on this front."

"If Russians are able to remove this boot from this neck, it will ease their positions," he said.

Pavlo Lakiychuk, a Ukrainian military analyst, says it's an open question whether Russian forces will be able to continue their momentum, particularly given that summer weather is ending, giving way to rains that turn Ukrainian fields into impossibly muddy obstacles.

"Autumn is looming, the situation will be difficult both for the enemy and for us," he told RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service. "If they can expand their advantage on the wave of their success in taking [Vuhledar], open up their battlefield, it's possible they will have further advances to the northwest."

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Russian drone...

(Continued from page 3)

districts.

"As a result, a nonresidential building was damaged. No information on casualties was received," the administration said in a message on Telegram.

The latest round of Russian attacks came a day after Mr. Zelenskyy met with Republican presidential candidate and former U.S. President Donald Trump amid tensions over what critics call the ex-president's pro-Russian stance.

Mr. Zelenskyy, in a Fox News interview broadcast on September 28, said he received "very direct information" from Mr. Trump that, if he won the November presidential election, he would support Kyiv in its war with Russia.

"I don't know what will be after elections and who will be the president. ... But I've got from Donald Trump very direct information that he will be on our side, that he will support Ukraine," Mr. Zelenskyy said.

Mr. Zelenskyy, who also met with Mr. Trump's November rival, Vice President Kamala Harris, and current President Joe Biden during his U.S. trip, said, "I don't want to be involved in the election period. ... I don't want to lose one or another part of

Americans."

Following his meeting with the Ukrainian leader, Mr. Trump repeated his claim that he would be able to rapidly end the war.

"I think if we win [in November], I think we're going to get it resolved very quickly," he said. Mr. Trump did not elaborate on his strategy to end the war.

Prior to the meeting, U.S. media had speculated that the session might not take place after Mr. Trump took offense to Mr. Zelenskyy's comments in a magazine interview that stated Mr. Trump "doesn't really know how to stop the war."

Mr. Zelenskyy presented Mr. Biden and Ms. Harris with his "victory plan," a strategy to end the war about which little detail is known.

The United States, Ukraine's main supporter, and Western allies have given Kyiv billions of dollars in military aid and other assistance while also slapping several rounds of sanctions on Moscow.

(With reporting by Reuters)

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Yet another example of why the U.S. needs a strong, prosperous Ukraine

Dear Editor:

I'd like to share with you some not well-publicized information I gleaned from this week's Advocacy Summit of the American Coalition for Ukraine. Although the well-documented Russian influence campaign to discredit Ukraine increasingly claims the opposite, there are many ways the Russian invasion directly hurts us in the U.S.

Disrupted and delayed clinical trials in Ukraine are a clear example. Ukraine participated in a huge number of oncology trials in the period before Russia's 2022 invasion, as noted in STAT News (February) and Nature (September 2023). A lack of

new cancer trials since then has a global health ripple effect that we feel, as we search for the next generation of cancer medicines.

American companies are still conducting clinical research in Ukraine and, with the help of Ukrainian researchers, are going to heroic lengths to keep trials on track. It's just another example that we can share to show why the U.S. needs a strong, prosperous and safe Ukraine to help advance the next generation of medicines. It will benefit all of us while advancing American clinical research leadership.

Roman Goy, M.D.
Catonsville, Md.

Ukrainian drones...

(Continued from page 1)

in the town of Shebekino, near the Ukrainian border.

Russia's Defense Ministry suggested Ukrainian cross-border attacks were increasingly focused on its Volgograd region, to the east of the Kursk region where Ukrainian forces launched a surprise incursion in July that is thought to have captured around 540 square miles of Russian territory.

One of the attacks in Volgograd was reportedly near a major ammunition warehouse in Kotluban that had previously been targeted, but it was unclear if there was any damage.

On the diplomatic front, Mr. Biden posted on social media videos of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's recent visit to the White House and stated that "Ukraine will win this war."

"And the United States will continue to stand beside them every step of the way," Mr. Biden added.

Ukraine's military meanwhile said its air defenses had shot down 15 of 22 Russian attack drones detected in at least four regions of the country overnight, and said five more of those drones were thwarted by other "countermeasures."

The head of the Ukrainian military administration in the southern region of Zaporizhia, Ivan Fedorov, said high-rise buildings and private homes had been struck overnight and "there may be people under the rubble."

"Fourteen people were wounded in Zaporizhia today after a Russian strike. Debris removal has been continuing all day and two people were rescued from the rubble," he wrote on Telegram.

Zaporizhia has recently seen near-daily destruction and injuries from air strikes.

"About a hundred glide bombs are being launched by Russia against Ukraine every day. This is a constant reminder to all our partners who can help that we need more range for Ukraine, we need more air defense for Ukraine, we need more sanctions against Russia," Mr. Fedorov said.

The area hosts Europe's largest nuclear

power plant, which has been under Russian occupation since early in the 31-month-old full-scale invasion.

On September 28, Ukrainian officials said Supreme Court justice Leonid Loboyko was killed in a Russian attack on his vehicle while he was delivering humanitarian aid to residents of a village in the northeastern Kharkiv region.

The Ukrainian General Staff said around one-quarter of the 165 combat clashes in the previous 24 hours took place in the region around Pokrovsk, the strategic frontline city in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region where Russia is said to have been advancing in recent months.

RFE/RL cannot independently confirm reports by either side of battlefield developments or casualties in many areas of the heaviest fighting.

Meanwhile, Mr. Zelenskyy once again acknowledged the "very, very difficult" situation his military is facing after his air defenses were forced to destroy multiple waves of Russian drones targeting the capital, while Russian President Vladimir Putin used a state holiday to repeat a pledge to achieve his aims in Ukraine.

Following a meeting on September 30 with top commanders, Mr. Zelenskyy said that "reports on each of our frontline sectors, our capabilities, our future capabilities and our specific tasks: The situation is very, very difficult."

"Everything that can be done this autumn, everything that we can achieve must be achieved," he said in his nightly video address.

Mr. Zelenskyy stressed the importance of the upcoming Ukraine Defense Contract Meeting at the U.S. Ramstein Air Base in Germany and stressed the need to make gains ahead of the gathering to assure Western allies of Ukraine's ability to make battlefield gains.

"It depends on everyone in the Ukrainian team. Now we have to work as hard as we can before Ramstein," he added, referring to the scheduled October 12 meeting.

On the battlefield, Serhiy Popko, the head of the military administration in Kyiv, said there had been no damage after "waves" of incoming attack drones were destroyed over the course of a five-hour air

alert in the city that began around 1 a.m. local time on September 30. It was the 10th Russian air attack on the Ukrainian capital this month.

The Kyiv regionwide military administration commander, Ruslan Kravchenko, said later that debris from destroyed drones fell in six districts but caused no casualties and only minor damage.

In Russia, Putin vowed to achieve his goals in Ukraine in a September 30 video message to coincide with the anniversary of his unilateral declaration in 2022 purporting to annex four Ukrainian regions partly controlled by Russian troops.

The United Nations has passed multiple resolutions confirming Ukraine's territory and sovereignty since Russia invaded and annexed Crimea in 2014 and launched its support of separatists in eastern Ukraine eight years before the full-scale invasion began in February 2022.

"The truth is on our side," Putin said in the message. "All goals set will be achieved."

The Russian government on September 30 announced plans to increase defense spending by some 30 percent in 2025 as the long war in Ukraine – initially anticipated by the Kremlin to be a short, swift and victorious invasion – has dragged on for 31 months.

A draft budget indicated that Russia plans to raise defense spending next year to 13.5 trillion rubles (\$145 billion), diverting more resources to the war in Ukraine even as the country's economy continues to stagger in the face of Western sanctions.

Putin also signed a decree on a regular fall recruitment of males for mandatory military service, with some 133,000 men aged 18-30 expected to join Russia's forces. Putin has been reluctant to announce extra, irregular mobilizations, fearing a mass exodus of men to other countries similar to what happened following his decree in September 2022 in the early months of the war.

Unprecedented Western military and other support for Ukraine has continued despite fears of "Ukraine fatigue" among backers and Moscow's persistent efforts to undermine European unity.

Ukrainian Foreign Affairs Minister Andriy Sybiha traveled on September 30 to

Budapest to attempt to bolster support in Hungary, which despite being a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and European Union member, has been reluctant to back Ukraine's war against Russia.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban is the only E.U. leader to have maintained close ties with Putin following Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022 and has not provided military assistance.

During a news conference, Mr. Sybiha pushed back on remarks by counterpart Peter Szijjarto, who stated that Hungary would support any initiative that would achieve peace in Ukraine, a worrisome stance for Kyiv, which has flatly rejected any initiatives by Moscow that would require it to surrender sovereign territory to Russia.

Mr. Sybiha said he hoped Budapest would continue to support "Ukrainian initiatives," which hold that Russia must remove all troops from Ukraine.

Ukrainian defenders have prevented Russian forces from fully capturing the four regions in Putin's September 2022 annexation declaration: Luhansk, Donetsk, Kherson and Zaporizhia.

In August, Ukrainian troops launched a cross-border incursion into Russia's western Kursk region in what Kyiv has said is an effort to gain a better foothold for peace talks and to bring the war home to Russians.

After the initial wave of drone attacks on September 30, air defense forces were again put into action in the Kyiv region shortly before 9 a.m.

The Ukrainian military administrator in the southern port city of Kherson said Russia appears to have been targeting critical infrastructure there overnight, damaging a gas pipeline, an administrative building, and residential buildings.

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Russia's...

(Continued from page 2)

pendent journalists fear that, in practice, this repression could affect anyone who publicly admits that they are not yet ready to have children (Istories.media, September 24). A similar situation arose previously following a ban on the non-existent "movement in support of non-traditional sexual relations," which made it possible to recognize any representative of the LGBT community or people who sympathize with them as an "extremist" (Istories.media, November 17, 2023).

The new law is not so much intended to increase the birthrate in Russia as it is to create conditions for the legal persecution of anyone who has mentioned that, for one reason or another, they do not desire to have a child any time soon. This particularly wide reach is becoming characteristic of contemporary Russian repressive laws. These laws are intended to both combat dissidents and spread fear by increasing the number of people who risk being charged with a criminal or an administrative offense. In other words, the Kremlin's ever-expanding regulations rely on fear of prosecution to control behavior, assuming that citizens in turn will do their best to avoid charges (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, July 10, August 7, 14). For example, in September, an inhabitant of Tyumen Oblast was charged with treason because he

worked as a programmer in a foreign organization (Kommersant.ru, September 19).

Such laws, combined with their extremely broad interpretation, are an excellent way to control people. Law enforcement agencies and the special services can blackmail a person by initiating a criminal case against them, demanding money or "services" (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, June 27, July 29). If those who have consciously chosen the path of dissidence are resistant to such pressure, the Kremlin will feel provoked, leading ordinary people to become the target of yet another repressive law – and subsequently succumb more easily to blackmail.

Notably, having children does not guarantee the absence of repression from a law such as this. The Russian government has often held leverage over families by taking their children away. In 2017, independent journalists wrote that guardianship authorities most often take children not from socially disadvantaged parents who altogether lack the ability to take care of their children but from poor people, even in cases where living conditions are not dangerous for the child. There are also frequent cases when, after fires, the state has not provided sufficient compensation to the victims, and social services, instead of helping the affected families, have taken their children away (Novaya Gazeta, January 20, 2017).

Since the beginning of the full-scale war on Ukraine, taking children has become another way to put pressure on dissidents. The most high-profile case of this was

when the state sent 13-year-old Masha Moskaleva to a juvenile detention center after she drew an anti-war picture in an art class at school. A case was opened against Masha's father under the article on "discrediting the army," and he was placed under house arrest. The girl was first sent to an orphanage and then handed over to her mother, who had previously refused to take the child for several years. In a letter to his daughter, Masha's father told her to go with any relative that would be willing to take her instead of staying in state custody, as it would be safer, likely due to the nature of his "crime" (Svoboda.org, April 8, 2023).

Another means of keeping society under control is the immense debt many Russians have, which is only growing. In September, the Central Bank of Russia raised the interest rate to 19 percent, and other banks are following its example (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, August 20). Despite this, individuals continue to borrow hundreds of billions of rubles a month – and companies, trillions. The Russian population's income has recently been growing, so people are trying to get ahead of price increases by buying as much as possible (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, August 1, 20). Experts warn, however, that income growth will slow next year, making repaying loans more difficult (Istories.media, September 25). One of the main motives for many contract soldiers who have signed up to be sent to the war on Ukraine was to be able to repay debts, creating a perverse incentive for the

Russian government to keep its citizens in debt (YouTube.com, April 29).

Manipulating public opinion is the ultimate means of keeping ordinary people under control. Recently, Russian propagandists claim that the problem in Russian society is not the loss of everyday joys of life, such as enjoying entertainment, bars or movie theaters – which they make a point to claim is continuing as usual, especially in the occupied territories of Ukraine – but that people who do not pay attention to the war are not involved in the "great historical test that is being carried out before their eyes" (Vzglyad, September 26). This includes the overwhelming majority of Russians, against most of whom the Kremlin could easily launch a targeted campaign of harassment. This technique was used, for example, against the participants of the "almost naked" party, whose organizers then not only recorded "repentant" videos, but also began traveling to the Donbas, including occupied Mariupol (see Eurasia Daily Monitor, January 17; Svoboda.org, May 3). The Kremlin's consideration of a law banning "childfree ideology" reinforces the general sentiment of a lack of rights in Russia and will make people even more dependent on the state to avoid persecution and repression.

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SCAN TO RESERVE TICKETS



For questions and to learn about sponsorship opportunities, please contact Oksana Cromley at 773.235.8462, or at ocromley@ucufoundation.org.

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STAND WITH UKRAINE



Chicago CYM branch holds Day of Sports as part of its 75th anniversary celebrations

by Mark Raczkiewycz

CHICAGO – Youth members of the second oldest U.S. branch of the Ukrainian American Youth Association (CYM) had the chance to learn about six different sports during a September 28 afternoon that featured boxing, table soccer, floor hockey, table tennis, chess and indoor soccer.

It was the latest event held by the Mykola Pavlushkov Chicago branch of CYM and was part of the organization's 75th anniversary celebrations. The group will also have a gala marking the milestone on October 19, during which time it will hold its triennial three-day national congress and executive board elections in Chicago.

In total, 62 children participated in the sports day event. Of that number, 25 were members of the oldest age group, 30 were young members and seven were in the youngest cohort of CYM members.

Part of the organization's mission – besides its slogan of "God and Ukraine" – is to emphasize "the physical aspect of life and to stay active," said Olena Vasilik, who heads the Chicago CYM branch.

The event was part of CYM's multi-faceted approach to "keeping Ukraine at the top of our minds, adherence to traditions and ... holding cultural events," she added.

Lifelong CYM member Mario Kolody, who sits on the branch's audit committee, organized the afternoon event, which he said also sought to bolster the Chicago branch's institutional memory of always promoting sports.

Founded in 1949 by mostly political refugees in the wake of World War II, CYM in the city immediately had clubs that played volleyball, chess, table tennis and track and field, he said.

"And then later in 1952 with the influx of more immigrants," soccer was added and a team called Wings Sports Club was formed that played "in the national soccer league – the oldest in the U.S.," Mr. Kolody said.

The soccer team still exists and a hockey team briefly existed in the 1970s, he said.

"As things change, and interests change, we change with the times as well," Mr. Kolody said. "Sports is an intricate part of CYM. ... It fosters teamwork, creates discipline, responsibility and teaches life lessons of defeat and victory."

Picture stands were laid out throughout the event that offered a visual timeline of the sports pedigree instilled at the CYM branch as it evolved over the decades.

The carefully planned series of events leading up to the group's diamond anniversary was designed to be inclusive and involve all age groups. Participants were divided into six groups and took part in rotating sports sessions every 17 minutes.

Over the year, for example, the branch held a pysanky writing workshop, youth members knitted camouflage nets for Ukraine's military, and a trivia night and bourbon and wine tasting events were held for adults.

"When we began planning two years ago, we wanted to involve all age groups and to hold cultural, patriotic and sports events," said Alexandra Gorodiski-Gaschler, who heads the group's 75th anniversary committee.

Showing her excitement of the events' successes so far, she said, "It's great to see so many youths participate in so many activities that allow them to grow."

Before the anniversary banquet, a youth dance titled Mavka (nymph of the woods) will be held on October 12 for people aged 12-18.

An educator by profession, Ms. Gorodiski-Gaschler noted that "learning is multimodal – culture is important and sports is as well; ... It's about what they love doing, which is why two years ago we started the peewee Wings soccer team."

Combined, the events "ultimately bring CYM members of all generations together in many different ways," and some members come back who have lost touch with the scouting organization. The group aims "to have four generations" of Ukrainians take part, she said.



Courtesy of the Chicago branch of CYM

Pictured on September 28 are CYM Chicago Sports Day committee members (from left to right) Mark Raczkiewycz, Chris Bertucci, Matej Gaschler, Mario Kolody, Jaroslaw Gorodiski, Zenon Lysysk and Adrianna Odomirok.



The youngest group of CYM Chicago members hold athletic equipment on the third floor of the scouting group's branch in the Ukrainian Village neighborhood of the city on September 28.

Coinciding with the anniversary gala, which will feature a multimedia presentation, dinner and dance, will be a congress that will include elections for the national CYM board.

That congress is when different CYM branches "get to compare notes and see what works in their area," Mr. Kolody said.

Changing the group's uniforms, which many deem outdated, is on the agenda, he added.

Overall, "when I speak of my ties to CYM, it helps me to stay connected to my

Ukrainian roots and language," Ms. Visilik, who is serving a third one-year term, said. "We'll have discussions on the state of CYM in the U.S."

Several Chicago CYM members look forward to joining fellow members in Germany next year where the international organization's 100th anniversary will be observed.

Editor's note: The author of this story was also a member of the CYM Chicago Sports Day organizing committee.

Ukraine honors...

(Continued from page 3)

The memorial and the park were opened with the support of patrons to commemorate the fallen heroes of the 10th Mobile Border Guard Detachment "Dozor."

"We thank the soldiers fighting for every inch of Ukrainian land, protecting the sky above us from air threats. The real strength is only in the nation's unity and its focus on the main goal," Mr. Klitschko said.

The Alley of the Heroes of the Heavenly Hundred was opened on the same day in Kyiv's Nyvky Park. Placards at the alley feature the names and photos of 40 defenders who died at the front fighting to maintain Ukraine's independence. Those individuals were residents of the Shevchenkivskyi district of Kyiv.

"The alley will now be here permanently; I think this is the first stage of honoring [them]. We will keep updating it because, unfortunately, our soldiers continue to die in this war," said Oleksandr Popovtsev of the Shevchenkivskyi District State Adminis-

tration in Kyiv.

Relatives of those who died at the front, friends and military personnel came to the opening ceremony to honor the memory of the soldiers and their heroic deeds. People came with flowers and held yellow and blue flags. After the opening ceremony, participants laid flowers at the monument to honor those who died fighting for their country.

Defenders Day was also commemorated across the Atlantic Ocean, as members of the Ukrainian community, wounded soldiers and representatives of the Consulate General of Ukraine in New York gathered in Manhattan's Times Square to honor the country's heroes, according to the Consulate General of Ukraine in New York.

Those who gathered in New York expressed gratitude to those who sacrificed everything for Ukraine's freedom and they remembered those who gave their lives for the country.

"Thanks to each defender we can go about our daily lives – work, create, relax and raise our children. Your courage inspires us all!" the Consulate General of Ukraine in New York wrote on Facebook.



The oldest youth group of Chicago CYM members try their skills at table soccer, also colloquially known as fusbol, on September 28.



Chris Bertucci (center) leads an introductory course in boxing for Chicago CYM members on September 28 during an afternoon of athletic events ahead of the scouting organization's 75th-anniversary celebrations

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We apologize if anyone's name was omitted inadvertently.



Metropolitan Archbishop Borys Gudziak (back row, center) of the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia stands with participants of the first session of the 2024 Roma Pryma Bohachevsky Ukrainian Dance Camp at the Ukrainian National Foundation's Soyuzivka Heritage Center in Kerhonkson, N.Y., on August 3.



Andrew Nynka

The good witch casts a spell on a fellow performer during intermission of the adaptation of the Wizard of Oz titled "Dorothy and the Ruby Slippers," which was the recital performance of the first session of the 2024 Roma Pryma Bohachevsky Ukrainian Dance Camp held at the Ukrainian National Foundation's Soyuzivka Heritage Center in Kerhonkson, N.Y., on August 3.

Soyuzivka Heritage Center hosts 2024 Roma Pryma Bohachevskva dance camps



Dorothy beams with joy after trying on her ruby slippers during an adaptation of the Wizard of Oz titled "Dorothy and the Ruby Slippers," which was the recital performance of the second session of the 2024 Roma Pryma Bohachevsky Ukrainian Dance Camp held at the Ukrainian National Foundation's Soyuzivka Heritage Center in Kerhonkson, N.Y., on August 17.

by Andrew Nynka

KERHONKSON, N.Y. – The 2024 Roma Pryma Bohachevsky Ukrainian Dance Camp, held at the Ukrainian National Foundation's Soyuzivka Heritage Center in Kerhonkson, N.Y., hosted over 200 participants, including refugees from war-torn Ukraine. Thanks to a donation from the Ukrainian National Association (UNA), which covered their room and board, the children from Ukraine were able to participate in the camp and experience the enriching cultural program.

The two sessions of dance camp for children aged 8-16 were run by camp director Ania Bohachevsky-Lonkevych. The first session took place on July 21-August 3, while the second session took place on August 4-17. Both sessions concluded with a final recital comprised of two acts – the first included various Ukrainian dances, while the second was an adaptation of the Wizard of Oz titled "Dorothy and the Ruby Slippers."

Metropolitan Archbishop Borys Gudziak of the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia, who attended the recital for the first session of camp on August 3, spoke of the importance of Ukrainian culture and dance at a time when Russian President Vladimir Putin continues to wage a brutal full-scale war intent on eradicating everything Ukrainian.

"For me personally, what happens here at this camp, which brings together youth,



Participants of the 2024 Roma Pryma Bohachevsky Ukrainian Dance Camp perform the traditional dance Hopak at the Ukrainian National Foundation's Soyuzivka Heritage Center in Kerhonkson, N.Y., on August 3.

parents, friends, it is a great testament to our resilience," the archbishop said in Ukrainian.

"This dance shows that – in our community and through our community to a broader world, at a time when Putin's Russia is trying to stamp out everything Ukrainian – we resist with body and soul," Archbishop Gudziak said in English. "Our culture, our people are wounded, but we are unbroken and we are going to dance our way to the victory of God's truth."

According to Roman Wasylyk who emceed both recital performances, session one of the camp had 78 children and 37 counselors, totaling 115 participants. Of that number, 25 children were second-generation dancers – meaning that one or both of their parents took part in the camp when they were children – and 22 children attended the camp for the first time.

Mr. Wasylyk said the second session had 90 campers, 39 counselors and 11 senior counselors for a total of 140 participants.

Of that number, 23 were second-generation campers and 25 were first-timers. Some children and counselors took part in both sessions of the camp.

Among this year's participants were children from Ukraine who have been displaced from their homes by Russia's war on their country. During the camp's final recital for both sessions of camp, Ukrainian National Association (UNA) President and CEO Roman Hirniak announced that the UNA would provide scholarships for some 19 children from Ukraine who attended the camp.

"At this time, not only would I like to congratulate and thank Pani Ania [Bohachevsky Lonkevych] for continuing her investment in our future by preserving the legacy of her mother Pani Roma [Pryma Bohachevsky] and the countless number of individuals who now carry that legacy, but to also congratulate you – our moms and dads – for bringing the young ladies and gentlemen who are performing today to

this picturesque resort, enrolling them into the 2024 Ukrainian Dance Camp and confirming your investment in preserving our culture, our tradition and our future. And, most importantly, thank you to our children – our dancers, our future – for the Kodak moments you are giving us today and for being our sunshine. You are truly what makes us a great and noble people," Mr. Hirniak said.

"It is my privilege to announce that, in cooperation with Pani Ania [Bohachevsky-Lonkevych], I have arranged for the UNA to cover all room and board costs for all of the young ladies and gentlemen in this session of her таїп [camp] who are here as refugees from their war-torn homeland, our Україна [Ukraine]," said Mr. Hirniak, who made a similar announcement during the second recital for all Ukrainian refugee children who attended the second session of camp.

"Rest assured that you have my commitment as well as those of my colleagues that the UNA will continue in those efforts, continue to make investments in our future and continue to advance the betterment of the lives of all of our children," Mr. Hirniak said.

Speaking in Ukrainian, Ms. Lonkevych, the camp's director, addressed the many parents who gathered to watch the concluding performance of the camp's first session at Soyuzivka on August 4.

"Sincere and grateful thanks to all the parents who bring their wonderful, beautiful children to camp. Without your children, we would not have these camps. It is our honor and privilege to work with your dear children, and it is our pleasure," Ms. Lonkevych said.

A large gallery of pictures from both sessions of the camp can be found online at <https://galleryukrweekly.com/>.



Participants of the 2024 Roma Pryma Bohachevsky Ukrainian Dance Camp perform the traditional welcoming dance Pryvit at the Ukrainian National Foundation's Soyuzivka Heritage Center in Kerhonkson, N.Y., on August 3.

Chornomorska Sitch and UACCNJ co-host golf fundraiser to benefit Ukrainian causes

by Bo Kucyna

POMPTON PLAINS, N.J. – The Ukrainian Athletic Educational Association Chornomorska Sitch and the Ukrainian American Cultural Center of New Jersey (UACCNJ) once again combined efforts to run their annual golf outing, which was held on September 14 at Sunset Valley Golf Course in Pompton Plains, N.J. The event was a great success with all proceeds generated from the event going to benefit children and humanitarian aid for Ukraine.

The weather and course conditions were perfect for the 104 golfers who showed up to demonstrate their golf skills. The format for the outing was a four-man scramble (best ball) competition.

There were some very competitive scores posted for the day, but the team of Mike Zawadiwskyi, Mykola Zawadiswskyi, Danylo Holowaty and Brian Lattanzio turned in the best score for the Open Division with a 9-under par.

The Senior Division also proved to be equally competitive with two teams posting scores of 6-under par and sharing the honors. Jarema Kochan, organizer of the outing, captained one team with Yuri Kobziar, Peter Strutynsky and Don Zalucky. The co-champion team golfers included Roman Hirniak, Alex Popovich, Steve Nahorniak and Nichola Salata.

The outing also challenged the golfers with closest to the pin and long drive competitions. The closest to the pin honors went to Nestor Paslawsky, who nestled his shot within 6-feet-2 inches of the par 3 15th hole. The longest



The winning team of golfers in the Senior Division of (from left to right) Alex Popovich, Roman Hirniak, Nick Salata and Steve Nahorniak are seen during the Chornomorska Sitch/UACCNJ golf outing on September 14 at Sunset Valley Golf Course in Pompton Plains, N.J.

drive competition went to Mike Panycia who bombed his drive down the fairway of the ninth hole, out-distancing all other 103 golfers.

After the last putt was sunk, golfers made their way to the Ukrainian Cultural Center in Whippany, N.J., where great food, drink and camaraderie were shared.

At the gathering, Mr. Kochan thanked all golfers who came out to support the event and all of the volunteers who helped in preparing and executing the event, as well as the many sponsors who make the event a success every year.

Lastly, he thanked and presented the microphone to Kathy Kucyna, who prepared a slide presentation and spoke about how some proceeds from last year's golf outing were used to help children in Ukraine.

The slideshow included pictures of the recipient children in Ukraine and reminded all who were present that the proceeds generated from the event are once again going to a good cause.

The outing festivities closed with two final fundraising activities. Mr. Popovich kindly donated some of his golf memorabilia for auction to raise funds to aid children and support humanitarian causes for Ukraine.

The winner of the 50/50 raffle was announced with thanks going to Michael Zawadiwskyi, who donated \$500 of his winnings to the children of Ukraine.

Additional information about Chornomorska Sitch and the Ukrainian American Cultural Center of New Jersey can be found by visiting their respective websites, www.sitchsports.com or www.uaccnj.org. Sitch also has an online journal, Nash Sport (Our Sport), managed by Bo Kucyna that can be found online at [https://nashsport.org](http://nashsport.org).

Turning...

(Continued from page 6)

[of] enabling all other war crimes and crimes against humanity." The scope of the investigation should span from February 2014 with the illegal annexation of Crimea, the war in the Donbas region and the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 (MH17) over Ukraine, the organization said.

Although non-legally binding, the PACE resolution was

seen as influential in decision-making at the national level of other states. In October 2022, PACE described Russia's government as a "terrorist regime" and previously called on the United Nations Security Council to discuss "consideration of Russia's place" in that body.

Maria Mezentseva, head of Ukraine's permanent delegation to PACE, hailed the resolution as "a significant step toward ensuring that no one will regard [Putin's] next term as serious and legitimate," and she hoped that the measure would be copied by other international structures, "such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Parliamentary

Assembly, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe [OSCE] Parliamentary Assembly."

In a move that reiterated PACE's commitment to Ukraine, the organization voted on October 12 to recognize the Holodomor as a genocide of the Ukrainian people. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called it "a message that justice is inevitable for all past and present Moscow crimes."

Source: "PACE calls on its members to declare Putin illegitimate," by Roman Tymotsko, *The Ukrainian Weekly*, October 27, 2023.

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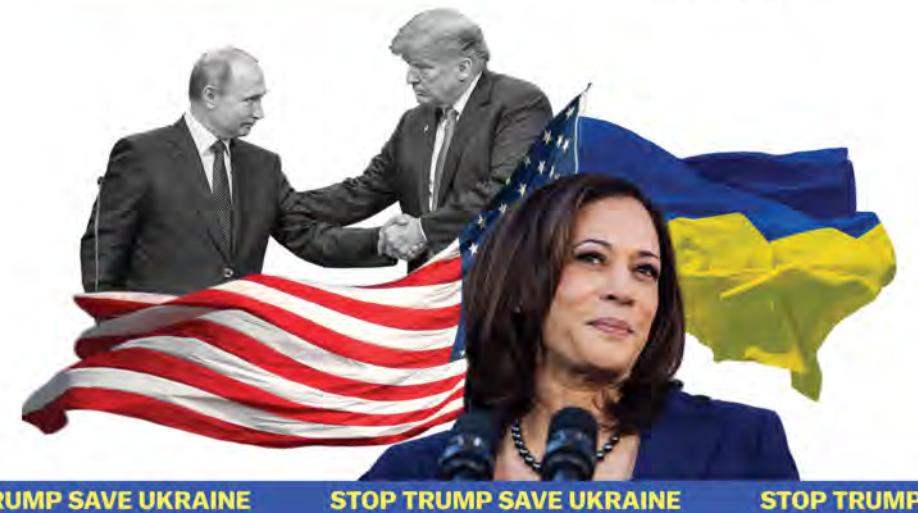
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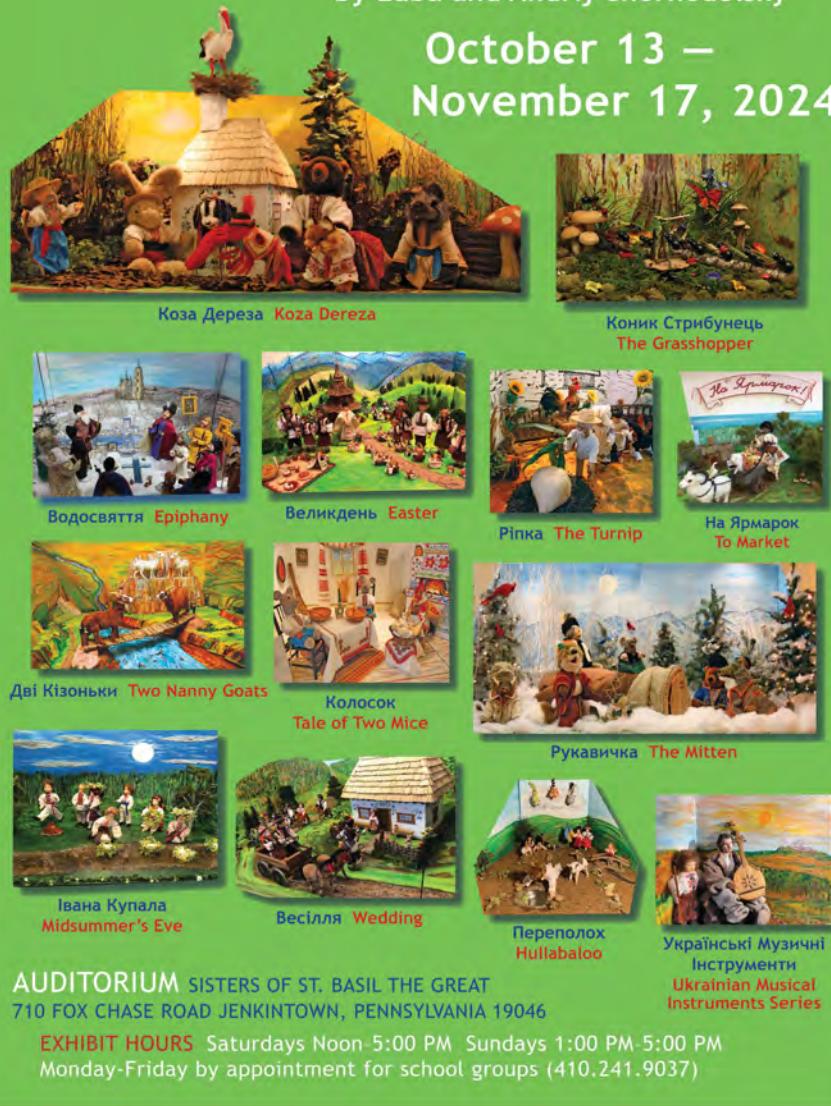


UKRAINIAN FOLKTALES AND TRADITIONS for CHILDREN

A DIORAMA EXHIBITION

by Luba and Andrij Chornodolsky

October 13 – November 17, 2024



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NEWSBRIEFS

(Continued from page 2)

north that Moscow has been eying for months. Russian Telegram channels posted videos of troops waving the Russian flag over shattered buildings. As ferocious fighting rages in the east, Russia continued pounding Ukrainian cities and economic infrastructure with relentless drone strikes and shelling. Early on October 2, Russian drones again struck Ukraine's Danube port of Izmayil, on the border with Romania, which has been Kyiv's only gateway to exporting its grain and other produce. Two people, including a Turkish citizen, were wounded in the attack on Izmayil, Oleh Kiper, the governor of the Odesa region, said on Telegram. "The Russians' target was port and border infrastructure. Two men, truck drivers, were wounded, one of them a citizen of Turkey. Currently, the injured are in moderate condition in the hospital," Mr. Kiper wrote. "Russia continues to wage war against grain and global food security," Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister Oleksiy Kuleba wrote on Telegram, reporting damage to the grain facility and administrative buildings at the Orlivka border crossing with Romania. Romanian authorities issued a drone alert for the public early on October 2 in Tulcea County on the border. The Romanian Defense Ministry, meanwhile, said NATO scrambled two Spanish

F-18 and two Romanian F-16 jets from bases in southeastern Romania to monitor the situation for several hours. "During this time interval, Romania's radar surveillance system did not detect the penetration of the drones involved in the attack on the Ukrainian targets into the national air-space," the ministry said in a statement. In the southern Kherson region, a Russian drone strike on a shuttle bus in Antonivka killed one person and wounded another, regional Gov. Oleksandr Prokudin reported on Telegram. (RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service)

Largest mass execution of Ukrainian soldiers

Ukraine's Prosecutor-General's Office has initiated an investigation into what it describes as the "largest mass execution" of Ukrainian "prisoners of war" by Russian troops since the start of Moscow's full-scale invasion more than 31 months ago. According to an official statement published on the office's Telegram channel, Russian forces allegedly killed 16 Ukrainian "prisoners of war" near the villages of Mykolayivka and Sukhiy Yar in the Pokrovsk district of the Donetsk region. Videos circulated on various Telegram channels appear to show Ukrainian soldiers, freshly captured by Russian troops, emerging from a forested area. After the prisoners have lined up, Russian forces appear to open fire. The videos then appear to show Russian soldiers approaching those who were only wounded and shoot-

ing them again at close range with machine guns. The videos have not been independently verified. Under international humanitarian law, executing soldiers who have surrendered is considered a war crime. "This is the largest reported case of the execution of Ukrainian POWs on the front line and yet another indication that the killing and torture of prisoners of war are not isolated incidents," Ukraine's Prosecutor-General Andriy Kostin said on X. "This is a deliberate policy of the Russian military and political leadership," he said. Ukraine's Commissioner for Human Rights Dmytro Lubinets said he had contacted both the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross over the deaths, citing violations of the Geneva Conventions, which govern the treatment of prisoners of war. The incident is not the

first time that such allegations against Russian soldiers have surfaced. In September, CNN released two videos purportedly showing Russian military personnel executing Ukrainian soldiers as they were surrendering. The footage, filmed by drones and provided by Ukrainian military intelligence, included audio transcripts that seemingly captured the order to execute the soldiers. Ukraine's Prosecutor-General's Office informed CNN then that it was currently investigating at least 28 cases involving the murder of Ukrainian prisoners of war since Russia launched its full-scale aggression against its neighbor in February 2022. Russia has yet to respond to the accusations. Earlier in August, Danielle Bell, the head of mission for the

(Continued on page 15)

Newly appointed...

(Continued from page 1)

announcement that Ukraine lost another town, Vuhledar in the Donetsk region, to invading Russian forces who have incessantly bombarded the pre-war population center of about 15,000 for some 30 days.

Preceding the assault, Russia had earlier this year taken over the Donetsk regional towns of Vodyane and Konstaynivka, the latter of which Ukraine relinquished on August 27, which was the beginning of the end for Vuhledar.

Waves of Russian soldiers and artillery barrages combined with air superiority have overwhelmed outmanned Ukrainian forces who have had to withstand what they call constant "meat grinder" assaults.

"Some Russian sources expressed doubts that Russian forces will be able to rapidly advance and achieve operationally significant breakthroughs immediately after seizing Vuhledar," the Washington-based Institute for the Study of War (ISW) said in a daily war update.

"Russia's seizure of Vuhledar is unlikely to fundamentally alter the course of offensive operations in western Donetsk Oblast, largely because Vuhledar is not a particularly crucial logistics node," ISW said.

Ukraine's drone advantage over Russia is what provides a semblance of balance and compensates for Kyiv's disadvantage in weaponry.

Ukraine produces 4 million drones each year, Mr. Zelenskyy said on October 1, whereas Kremlin dictator Vladimir Putin has said that Russia plans to increase drone production 10-fold this year to 1.4 unmanned aerial vehicles, according to the ISW.

Next year's budget foresees \$7 billion allocated for the procurement of weapons and military equipment, Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal said on October 2, marking a 65 percent increase over the previous year.

In a speech delivered on September 30, Putin said that "all the intended goals [of the war] will be achieved," though he did not mention that an October 1 deadline to retake territory lost to invading Ukrainian forces in the Kursk region will have expired.

His new deadline to retake the lost territory has reportedly been extended to two more weeks.

Meanwhile, Russia has been incessantly bombing the border town of Vovchansk in the Kharkiv region where a group of invading forces were beaten out of a chemical plant. Russia had taken over swaths of the population center during a counteroffensive that commenced in May only to see it retaken by Ukrainian forces in late September.

"The chemical plant acted as a Russian stronghold, enabling tactical operations on the Vovcha River," British Defense



Courtesy of the Rubizh Brigade

A soldier from the Rubizh National Guard rapid response brigade stands on alert near the front line.

Intelligence said earlier this week. "Its loss will likely limit opportunities for Russian ground forces to advance in Kharkiv Oblast."

Additionally, Kyiv's control over the border town plant "will facilitate counter-offensives in the north of the city to push the Russian ground forces towards the Ukraine-Russia border," the British agency said.

Execution of Ukrainian POWs probed

The "most massive case" of Ukrainian military captives being lethally shot by Russians is being investigated by Prosecutor General Andrii Kostin.

His office said it is investigating drone footage of 16 Ukrainian soldiers being allegedly shot at a tree line near the Donetsk regional town of Pokrovsk on October 1.

"After they lined up in a row, the occupiers deliberately opened fire to kill them. The wounded, who showed signs of life, were finished off at close range with automatic gunfire," the Prosecutor-General's office said.

'Ecocide' reported of Dnipro tributary Desna

Russia is accused of poisoning about 373 miles of the longest tributary of the Dnipro River with chemicals, rendering the Desna River that flows through the Chernihiv region "dead," a dispatch in the London-based Guardian reported earlier this week.

"Not a single organism survived. This is unprecedented. It's Europe's first completely dead river," said Serhiy Zhuk, head of Chernihiv's ecology directorate.

Russia is "sending rockets through the air, burning our forests and threatening to blow us up with nuclear bombs. You can rebuild a bridge or a school. It takes longer, unfortunately, for wildlife to recover," he told the Guardian.

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NEWSBRIEFS

(Continued from page 14)

United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, said that 95 percent of Ukrainian soldiers captured by Russia face torture. (RFE/RL's Current Time, Russian and Ukrainian services)

U.S. citizen pleads guilty in Moscow

Stephen Hubbard, a 72-year-old U.S. citizen, has pleaded guilty in a Moscow court to charges of mercenary activity for receiving money to fight for Ukraine against invading Russian forces, Russian state-run media reported, which his family members immediately questioned. "Yes, I agree with the indictment," the RIA Novosti news agency quoted Mr. Hubbard as saying in the courtroom during the hearing on September 30. Prosecutors have alleged that Mr. Hubbard signed a contract with a Ukrainian territorial defense unit in the town of Izyum as Russia launched its ongoing invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. The prosecution said Mr. Hubbard agreed to fight for Ukraine for \$1,000 a month and

allegedly received training, weapons and ammunition. Mr. Hubbard was detained by Russian soldiers on April 2, 2022. The U.S. Embassy in Moscow has not commented on the situation due to what it called privacy restrictions. Last week, the same court placed Mr. Hubbard, a native of Michigan, in pretrial detention until at least March 26, 2025. Mr. Hubbard's previous pretrial restrictions remain unknown as there were no reports or official statements about his arrest or how he ended up in Moscow. Mr. Hubbard's sister, Patricia Fox, and another relative expressed doubts about the man's reported confession, telling Reuters that he was pro-Russian and could not take up arms to fight against Russians, especially at his age. "He is so nonmilitary. He never had a gun, owned a gun, done any of that. ... He's more of a pacifist," Patricia Fox told Reuters by phone, adding that she talked to her brother last time in September 2021. Ms. Fox confirmed earlier reports by Russian media, saying that Mr. Hubbard moved to Ukraine in 2014 and lived there for a time with a Ukrainian woman. She added that Mr. Hubbard split with his girlfriend and moved to the town of Izyum in Ukraine's

eastern region of Kharkiv, where he stayed alone. Ms. Fox also said that in late May 2022, three months after Russia launched its ongoing full-scale war on Ukraine, she saw a video distributed by a YouTube channel with just over 100 subscribers, on which she recognized her brother, saying he witnessed Ukrainian armed forces "shelling Izyum for propaganda purposes and to create panic among local residents." In the video, Mr. Hubbard answers questions by a person not seen on camera, saying that he understands why Russian President Vladimir Putin sent troops into Ukraine and expresses hope that the war will end soon. It was not clear in what circumstances and where the video was taken. Moscow has been accused of targeting U.S. citizens by detaining them on trumped-up charges to later use as bargaining chips in talks to bring back Russians convicted of crimes in the United States and other Western nations. At least 10 U.S. citizens, including Mr. Hubbard, remain behind bars in Russia after a prisoner swap on August 1 involving 16 people that Moscow agreed to free in exchange for eight Russians convicted of crimes and

serving prison terms in the United States and Europe. U.S. citizens RFE/RL journalist Alsu Kurmasheva, Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich and former U.S. Marine Paul Whelan were among those released by Russia. (RFE/RL, with reporting by RIA Novosti and Reuters)

Criminal case against opposition lawmaker

Russia has opened a criminal case against opposition politician Lev Shlosberg, one of the few Kremlin critics publicly opposed to the war on Ukraine still at large in the country. Mr. Shlosberg, deputy leader of the Yabloko party, said officers on October 2 searched his apartment and the apartment of his father in the northwestern city of Pskov. His father was interrogated but released. Russia's Investigative Committee has accused Mr. Shlosberg of failing to disclose his status as a "foreign agent" in public statements – a criminal offense punishable by up to two years in prison. Moscow has waged a relentless crackdown on independent politicians and dissent since launching its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. It

(Continued on page 17)

New NATO chief...

(Continued from page 1)

and maintain Western support for Ukraine as it battles to repel Russia's full-scale invasion, launched by the Kremlin in February 2022.

"Ukraine is closer to NATO than ever before," he said, noting that recent steps taken by the alliance are helping to "build a bridge to NATO membership."

Highlighting the risk to NATO members such as Romania that border Ukraine, Russian drones again struck the critically important Ukrainian port of Izmayil just across the Danube River, prompting Bucharest to scramble F-16 fighter jets to monitor the situation late on October 2.

"We confirm that the Patriot system has arrived in Ukraine," Constantin Spinu, a spokesman for Romania's Defense Ministry, told RFE/RL on October 3, after the government in Bucharest last month passed a bill needed for the transfer of the system to Kyiv.

Under the bill, Romania grants Ukraine the right of free use of the system.

Kyiv has been desperately urging its Western allies to supply more modern weapons and air-defense systems that would help it on the one hand to protect its skies and on the other hand allow it to strike military targets deeper inside Russia to prevent Moscow's forces from launching attacks on Ukraine from a safe distance.

Early on October 3, Ukrainian air defenses shot down 78 Russian drones over 15 regions – Kyiv, Cherkasy, Vinnytsia, Khmelnytskyi, Kirovohrad, Zhytomyr, Poltava, Chernihiv, Kherson, Odesa, Kharkiv, Sumy, Dnipro, Rivne and Ivano-Frankivsk – the air force reported.

The head of the Ukrainian capital's military administration said on Telegram that 15 drones were downed over Kyiv. Drone debris fell on the capital's Desnyanskiy district without causing injuries or damage during the attack, which lasted for more than five hours, Serhiy Popko said.

Separately, a source in the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) told RFE/RL that Ukrainian drones overnight attacked the Borisoglebsk military airfield in Russia's Voronezh region. The airfield, some 150 miles from the border, has been used by Russia to launch missile attacks on Ukraine.

The source, who spoke under the condition of anonymity, said satellite monitoring showed that four fires were burning on the airfield's perimeter.

Russia's Defense Ministry, meanwhile, said 113 Ukrainian drones were shot down

overnight over the Belgorod, Voronezh, Kursk and Bryansk regions. The highest number of drones, 73, were intercepted over Belgorod, the ministry said.

Ukraine, whose civilian and energy infrastructure has been battered by relentless Russian drone and missile strikes since the start of Moscow's unprovoked invasion in February 2022, has in turn begun to launch its own drone strikes on military facilities deeper inside Russia.

Meanwhile, Mr. Rutte immediately pledged his strong support for Ukraine as he took over as the head of NATO on October 1 at a pivotal time in the military alliance's history as Russia's full-scale invasion of its neighbor approaches the 1,000-day mark.

Mr. Rutte, the longest-serving prime minister in the history of the Netherlands, met with outgoing Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg at NATO headquarters in Brussels, where they laid a wreath to fallen personnel from the alliance as they were surrounded by the flags of its 32 member countries.

They then proceeded into the great hall where top-level North Atlantic Council meetings are held, with Mr. Stoltenberg, who leaves after a decade at NATO's helm, presented him with a Viking gavel to use when chairing meetings.

"There can be no lasting security in Europe without a strong, independent Ukraine," Mr. Rutte told the hall in his first speech in office, giving an affirmation of the commitment made by the organization's leaders in 2008 that "Ukraine's rightful place is in NATO."

"We have to make sure that Ukraine prevails as a sovereign, independent, democratic nation," Mr. Rutte told reporters afterward.

NATO, founded in 1949 to deter and defend against any attack on its members in Western Europe by the Soviet Union, has found itself back in the diplomatic spotlight due to the war in Ukraine and a Russia, led by its autocratic president, Vladimir Putin.

Mr. Rutte appears to enjoy close relations with Mr. Zelenskyy.

As Dutch prime minister, he helped get F-16 fighter aircraft sent to Ukraine, secured stronger European Union economic sanctions on Moscow despite Dutch dependency on trade, and helped move Ukraine along the path toward E.U. membership.

The Ukrainian leader applauded Mr. Rutte's taking the helm of the alliance, saying he "looks forward to working" together to strengthen Euro-Atlantic security as Ukraine continues on its path towards full-

fledged NATO membership.

"Only together, Ukraine and its allies, can we truly guarantee a peaceful, stable and secure Europe," he said in a post on X.

But Mr. Rutte, the 57-year-old Hague-born politician known for his affable manner, faces the tricky question of whether Ukraine will get an invitation to join NATO.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters in Moscow that Putin knew Mr. Rutte well from previous meetings and that no change in policy is expected.

"Our expectations are that the North Atlantic alliance will continue to work in the same direction in which it has been working," he said.

"At one time, there were hopes for the possibility of building good pragmatic relations – at least, such a dialogue was conducted – but subsequently we know that the Netherlands took a rather irreconcilable position, a position on the complete exclusion of any contacts with our country," Mr. Peskov added.

Adding to the balancing act, Mr. Rutte takes over NATO just over a month before the United States, the alliance's biggest funding source, holds a presidential election between Democratic Vice President Kamala Harris and Republican Donald

Trump.

The former president has been critical of NATO and has not said whether he wants Kyiv to come out victorious in repelling the Kremlin's invasion. Ms. Harris has supported continuing to send arms to help Ukraine fight back.

"I know both candidates very well. ... I will be able to work with both. Whatever is the outcome of the election," Mr. Rutte said.

"I worked for four years with Donald Trump. He was the one pushing us to spend more [on defense], and he achieved because indeed, at the moment, we are now at a much higher spending level than we were when he took office," Mr. Rutte added, noting that Ms. Harris had a "fantastic record" as vice president and is "a highly respected leader."

(With reporting by Rikard Jozwiak, Reuters and AP)

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The Corporate Board of Directors of The Ukrainian National Association

announces that its

NEW ENGLAND DISTRICT FALL ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

will be held on

Saturday, October 26, 2024 at 1:30 p.m.

in the conference room

of the Ukrainian American Cultural Center

5 Commerce Drive Cromwell CT 06416

Obligated to attend the organizational meeting are District Committee Officers, and Officers from the following Branches:

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All UNA members and guests are welcome to attend the meeting

Meeting will be attended by a member of the UNA Board of Directors:

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Christine D Melnyk, Vice President

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Ukrainian pro sports update

by Ihor N. Stelmach

Ukraine advances in Futsal World Cup

Ukraine beat the Netherlands 3-1 in the round of 16 on September 24 at the 2024 FIFA Futsal World Cup. With the win, the Ukrainian national futsal team advanced to the tournament's quarterfinal round where they easily took care of Venezuela 9-4 on September 29. The win marked the first time Ukraine made it to the semifinal of the tournament since 2012.

Ukraine had already beaten the Netherlands 4-2 in the main qualifying round. The matches, played in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, saw Mykhailo Zvarych score first in the sixth minute giving the blue-and-yellow a 1-0 lead at the half. Said Bouzambou equalized for the Dutch in the 29th minute only to have the Ukrainians regain the lead for good two minutes later on a goal by Andrii Melnyk. In the final minutes, the Netherlands played with a fifth field player, but they were unable to score while Melnyk added a second tally to complete the 3-1 victory.

Several futsal analysts said the Ukraine's 9-4 win over Venezuela was perhaps the team's best-ever performance at the FIFA event. Danyil Abakshyn registered a hat trick and added three assists while goalkeeper Oleksandr Sukhov scored a goal and won player of the match honors. Coach Oleksandr Kosenko, who tallied an own goal against Brazil in the 2004 edition of the tournament, got a shot at revenge in the semifinal against Brazil.

Ukraine, however, lost its semifinal against Brazil 3-2 on October 2.

Ukraine wins 5 medals in acrobatic gymnastics

Ukrainian athletes won five medals (one gold, two silver and two bronze) at the 29th FIG Acrobatic Gymnastics World Championships held on September 19-22 in Guimaraes, Portugal, placing them fourth in the medal standings and fifth in overall medals. Ukraine had 20 competitors, most of any country, participating in the event. Twenty-nine countries had 218 athletes competing in Portugal with 11 nations winning medals in 16 total

events.

Ukraine's gold medal was won by Bohdan Ivanyk and Anastasiia Semenovych in the mixed pair dynamic event. Ukraine won silver medals in the mixed pair combined and women's pair combined events and bronze medals in the men's balance and men's combined events.

Dynamo Kyiv loses Europa League opener

Seria A Italian football club Lazio's emphatic first-half performance led them to a convincing 3-0 victory over Dynamo Kyiv in a September 25 UEFA Europa League opening match played in Hamburg, Germany. Lazio struck quickly with Boulaye Dia nailing a clinical finish into the corner in the fifth minute, sparking the host Dynamo club. Despite plenty of possession time in promising positions, clear-cut opportunities proved to be at a premium.

The visitors took control of the contest with two goals in as many minutes. Fisayo Dele-Bashiru powered a finish into the top corner in the 34th minute and Dia added his second of the match with a close-range header. The final 20 minutes saw the action get ugly with a player from each team receiving a red card.

Dynamo Kyiv's woes were compounded when they lost defender Brayan Ceballos to what looked like a serious thigh injury early in the match. Lazio goalkeeper Ivan Provedel made several key saves to preserve the clean sheet, including an impressive stop from a dipping Volodymyr Brazhko free kick.

Dynamo next plays an away match against the Bundesliga's TSG Hoffenheim on October 3. Thirty-six clubs each play eight matches in the league phase.

Celtic eliminate Vorskla Poltava

Celtic women made it two straight over Ukraine's Vorskla Poltava, winning the second leg 2-0 and going 3-0 on aggregate in the playoff round of the women's Champions League. After a scoreless opening half, Emma



Ukrainian Association of Football/FIFA
Ukraine's futsal team celebrates its 9-4 win over Venezuela on September 29 in the quarterfinal round of the FIFA Futsal World Cup in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. Ukraine lost to Brazil 3-2 in the semifinal on October 2.

Lawton and Shannon McGregor scored second-half goals to give the Scottish champions a victory over the Ukrainians. Vorskla came close in the 81st minute when Yana Kotyk had her shot deflected wide of the net and Viktoriia Radionova blazed her attempt well over the bar with five minutes left to play.

The match was played on September 26 at Excelsior Stadium in Airdrie, Scotland, due to Russia's war on Ukraine.

International wrestling federation eases sanctions

The United World of Wrestling (UWW) updated rules for the participation of athletes from Russia and Belarus in competitions, allowing them to compete as neutral athletes without national symbols so long as they do not support Russia's ongoing war on Ukraine.

The official announcement by the UWW came on September 25. Only proof of direct participation in the war

(Continued on page 19)

Ukrainian pro hockey update: the 2024 NHL

by Ihor N. Stelmach

Ducks pick Procyshyn in third round

The Anaheim Ducks used the second of their three third-round picks (68th overall) in the 2024 National Hockey League (NHL) Draft to select Ukrainian forward Ethan Procyshyn of the Ontario Hockey League's (OHL) North Bay Battalion. The 6-foot-2, 187-pound center/right wing's primary assets are his physicality and his decision-making in transition.

In 62 regular season games, he played more of a secondary role with North Bay where he scored 15 goals and 36 points in 2023-2024.

Procyshyn plays with a high motor making it difficult for opponents to outskate him. He pressures the puck and forces poor decisions from puck-carriers. His slick hands allow him to capitalize on those errors, letting him feed his teammates through open lanes.

In 2024-2025, he should see an increased role with the Battalion, and the Ducks will be closely monitoring his progress and how well he seizes that opportunity.

Scouting reports tout his high hockey intelligence that comes with a relentless work ethic. His size lets him wreak havoc in front of opposing goalies, and, in addition to being strong offensively, he is very willing to play a defensive game. He does need to improve his speed and develop more of a mid-to-long-range shot if he hopes to progress further.

Senators select Carter Yakemchuk ninth overall

Ukrainian Carter Yakemchuk is an offensive defenseman, having led all Western Hockey League rearguards with his 30 goals in 2023-2024. He is also the ultimate stay-at-home blueliner.

Most elite young hockey players leave home in their mid-teenage years, often moving in with billet families or living in school dormitories. This was not the case with Yakemchuk, who grew up in Calgary, Alberta, where as a 15-year-old he played for the Calgary Flames' AAA team. He

was drafted by the Calgary Hitmen in the 2020 Western Hockey League (WHL) bantam draft. He has been sleeping in the same bed for most of his life, surrounded by his family.

The youngest of three hockey-playing brothers, he fell in love with the sport at an early age and had to learn to defend himself, being the smallest who was often picked on by his older brothers, which made him stronger and helped him develop some toughness.

Now 6-foot-3 and almost 200 pounds, his growth spurt came late, as he measured 5-foot-9, 150 pounds at the bantam draft.

He transitioned into playing a heavier game in juniors, ending the 2023-2024 season fifth among the WHL's penalty minutes leaders with 120.

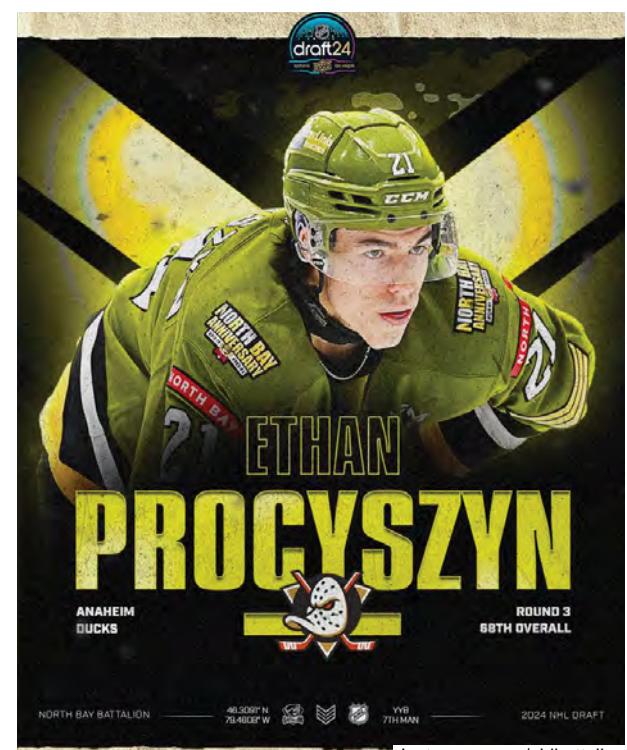
Yakemchuk started getting noticed during his second WHL season when he tallied 19 goals and 28 assists in 2022-2023. He represented Canada at the World Under-18 tournament that summer, helping his country rally to win a bronze medal.

In 2023-2024, playing on the league's youngest squad, he received an invitation to the Top Prospects Game and finished the season setting a new Hitman franchise record with 30 goals by a defenseman. The NHL Central Scouting's final draft rankings put Yakemchuk as the No. 11 top prospect in the 2024 NHL Draft.

The right-handed D-man is known for having a laser shot and can get pucks through to the net. He needs to get stronger in his defensive game and become a better skater.

The Ottawa Senators are banking that he will do just that having selected the young Ukrainian with the ninth overall pick in the 2024 NHL Draft. Rated as the sixth best defenseman, Ottawa's scouts had him in their sights all along. The consensus was that the club took the best player available and drafted a player it needed.

If Yakemchuk elects not to return to Calgary for his final



Ethan Procyshyn, 18, was picked in the third round, 68th overall, by the National Hockey League's Anaheim Ducks in the 2024 NHL Draft after coming from the Ontario Hockey League's North Bay Battalion.

junior season, then he would join Brady Tkachuk and Zach Ostapchuk as Ukrainians playing in Canada's capital city in 2024-2025.

Ottawa is building their defensive corps around Jake Sanderson and they have added an offensive defenseman with tons of upside. He's been compared to Edmonton's Evan Bouchard who excelled in the Oilers' run through the

(Continued on page 19)

Men and women of Vorskla Poltava FC fight through adversity to compete internationally

by Ihor N. Stelmach

The Ukrainian city of Poltava, some 200 miles east of Kyiv, lies in the heart of a country mired in the wretched realities of war. But the men and women of Vorskla FC play on. The city's population of some 350,000 has grown a bit since Ukrainians fleeing the war from other regions relocated there. Natives from Kharkiv, Dnipro, Sumy and other areas now live in Poltava.

The city cannot host a UEFA Champions League match, so the women's Vorskla FC team found itself traveling to play their home match against Celtic at Albert Bartlett Stadium in Airdrie, Scotland, on September 21. They would play their away game on the same pitch five days later. The winners of the two-legged contest qualify for the Champions League (Vorskla FC was one of 24 teams to qualify for Round 2). The stadium in Airdrie reverberated as drums beat and fans roared their support. Life in Poltava, meanwhile, is full of danger.

Air raid sirens wail constantly, disrupting the ordinary flow of life. However, locals say they have grown accustomed to the daily dangers of war. This includes athletes who know they must train, play and do their part to help Ukraine's Armed Forces.

Such stoicism in the face of danger cannot hide the damage done to the city or conceal the grief over lost lives. Poltava has been damaged by Russian missiles, bombs and drones and many civilians have been killed and wounded.

The team received support in Airdrie from a small group of Ukrainians waving flags in the stands. Most of them were displaced from their homeland, finding temporary refuge from the conflict in Scotland. Most of the players have returned to Poltava.

When Russian troops first invaded



The Vorskla Poltava FC women's team poses for a photo with trainers and coaches before the team's September 26 match against Scottish club Celtic in the second round of the UEFA Champions League.

Ukraine, training and competing disappeared as everyone focused on helping the army and displaced citizens from eastern Ukraine. In time, when the Ukrainian military successfully drove the Russians a significant distance away, training and competitive play resumed.

The Vorskla men's and women's teams were eventually relocated to the western Ukrainian cities of Uzhhorod and Lviv where they played the first year. Later, the two teams would return to Poltava. Today the conditions are safe enough to resume full-time training, though players still retreat to the closest shelter when air raid sirens sound.

The team is unified by a shared national identity and joint strife. The Vorskla women's squad mainly consists of Ukrainian players, each of whom feels a tremendous responsibility to their country and fans.

This is especially so when they compete on the international stage, which allows the

players to remind the world about Vladimir Putin's war on Ukraine and the horrific atrocities committed against the Ukrainian people.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has said that, although Ukraine's path to victory will be difficult, Ukrainians will never lose faith that they will win the war.

The Vorskla Poltava women's team hoped to make history after its matches with Celtic.

High in the stands was a cluster of Ukrainian fans shouting their support, their very presence a vivid reminder of the tragic times that have befallen their nation. Several were refugees in Scotland who fled the war from the Poltava region. Grateful and respectful to Scotland for a temporary home, they were excited and emotional to see a team from their homeland live and in person.

A critical football match played out in front of them. Celtic defeated Vorskla FC 1-0 on September 21 and won the second match by a score of 2-0 on September 26.

(Based on reporting by Mail Online.)

Ihor Stelmach may be reached at ihorjelia@sbcglobal.net.

NEWSBRIEFS

(Continued from page 15)

has used the foreign agent law to silence those who oppose the government and the war. Anybody designated a foreign agent must attach a lengthy disclaimer to all public statements, including social media posts. They are also required to submit financial reports to Russian authorities. Mr. Shlosberg, 61, is accused of "repeatedly publicly distributing materials without indicating they were created or spread by a foreign agent." He has denied breaking the law. "I do not consider myself guilty of committing the crime of which I have been accused," he said

on Telegram. In social media posts and broadcasts on YouTube, Mr. Shlosberg has repeatedly said the war is a "tragedy," lamented the loss of life and called for peace. He has also expressed support for political prisoners jailed inside Russia. Mr. Shlosberg is a rare example of a figure who opposes the war on Ukraine and the government but has stayed in the country. He has already been fined in the past for violating the foreign agent law and for allegedly "discrediting" the Russian Army. Yabloko founder and former longtime party leader Grigory Yavlinsky declared his support for Mr. Shlosberg on October 2. "I wish him freedom and strength," he said on Telegram. (RFE/RL, with reporting by AFP and dpa)



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OUT & ABOUT

Through December 22 Chicago	Art exhibit, "Agency: Craft in Chicago from the 1970s-1980s and Beyond," Ukrainian Institute of Modern Art, www.uima-chicago.org	October 12 Chicago	75th anniversary celebration of Plast Ukrainian Scouting Organization (Chicago), "On the Avenue," Ukrainian National Museum, Plastonthavenue@gmail.com or 312-282-7017
October 8 Storrs, CT	Concert, "With Ukraine in Our Hearts," featuring violinist Solomiya Ivakhiv, cellist Garrett Adkins and pianist Melvin Chen, University of Connecticut, Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts, 860-486-4226	October 12 New York	Presentation, "From Poland to Ukraine: Culture and Crisis," with Marcin Potrowski and Jack Marcin, Ukrainian Institute of America, www.ukrainianinstitute.org
October 8 Washington	Performance, "Hope of Ukraine," National Ballet of Ukraine, with Ukrainian Shumka Dancers, The Kennedy Center, www.kennedy-center.org	October 13 through November 17 Jenkintown, PA	Exhibit, "Ukrainian Children's Stories and Ethnographic Diorama Exhibition," by Luba and Andrij Chornodolsky, Ukrainian Educational and Cultural Center, www.ueccphila.org
October 9 Cambridge, MA	Presentation by Alex Averbuch, "He Was His Wife: Ahatanhel Krymsky's Queer Life," Harvard University, https://huri.harvard.edu	October 13 New Brunswick, NJ	Performance, "Hope of Ukraine," National Ballet of Ukraine, with Ukrainian Shumka Dancers, State Theater New Jersey, www.stnj.org
October 9 Philadelphia	Performance, "Hope of Ukraine," National Ballet of Ukraine, with Ukrainian Shumka Dancers, Miller Theater, www.ensembleartsphilly.org	October 14 Red Bank, NJ	Performance, "Hope of Ukraine," National Ballet of Ukraine, with Ukrainian Shumka Dancers, Hackensack Meridian Health Theater at the Count Basie Center, www.ticketmaster.com
October 10 Boston	Performance, "Hope of Ukraine," National Ballet of Ukraine, with Ukrainian Shumka Dancers, Boch Center Shubert Theater, www.ticketmaster.com	October 15-16 New York	Performance, "Hope of Ukraine," National Ballet of Ukraine, with Ukrainian Shumka Dancers, New York City Center, www.nycitycenter.org
October 10 Cambridge, MA	Book talk with Oksana Lutsyshyna, "Love Life," Harvard University, https://huri.harvard.edu	October 16 Cambridge, MA	Presentation by Oleksii Reznikov, "A Negotiated Peace Between Ukraine and Russia: A Realistic Prospect or a Dangerous Delusion?" Harvard University, https://huri.harvard.edu
October 10 New York	Literary evening with George Butler, Ukrainian Institute of America, www.ukrainianinstitute.org	October 17 New York	Presentation by Ostap Slyvynsky, "A Ukrainian Dictionary of War," Columbia University, http://harriman.columbia.edu
October 11 Lansdale, PA	Golf outing, Ukrainian Congress Committee of America, Pinecrest Country Club, registration@ucca.org or 212-228-6840		
October 11-13 Kulpsville, PA	Congress of Ukrainians in America, Ukrainian Congress Committee of America, Holiday Inn Lansdale-Hatfield, www.ucca.org or registration@ucca.org		
October 11 Chicago	Art exhibit, "Divine Gardens," featuring works by Svitlana Moiseieva and Volodymyr Podlevsky, Ukrainian National Museum, www.ukrainiannationalmuseum.org		
October 12 Englewood, NJ	Performance, "Hope of Ukraine," National Ballet of Ukraine, with Ukrainian Shumka Dancers, Bergen Performing Arts Center, www.ticketmaster.com		

Pro hockey...

(Continued from page 16)

2024 Stanley Cup Playoffs. Yakemchuk needs to build more strength and get more athletic to maximize his game at the NHL level, but he has a great foundation of skill on which to build.

Luchanko not caught up in NHL Draft buzz

Ukrainian Jett Luchanko was not getting caught up in the hype of the 2024 NHL Draft in Las Vegas. He was planning on wearing a grey suit with a red tie, nothing flashy. He let his mom select the walk-up song that would play when his name was called (She picked "Don't Stop Me Now" by Queen). He let his parents handle tickets for family and friends coming to support him.

Luchanko was in the No. 19 spot in most final rankings of this year's NHL Draft prospects, although some said he was picking up momentum in the week leading up to the Draft's first round on June 28.

He impressed at the Scouting Combine earlier in June, which came right after his strong international performance at the U-18 World Championship where he tallied seven points in seven games for Team Canada's gold medal-winning team.

The 17-year-old center scored 74 points (20 goals) for the Ontario Hockey League's Guelph Storm in 2023-2024, playing in all 68 regular season games, compared to just 46 games in his first year. He learned how to take care of his body, including by

stretching and exercising on off days.

He inherited a bigger role on his team this past season and played with several really good players, seeing time on the power play, resulting in his increasing his point total by 60 compared to 2022-2023 (14 points).

Luchanko considers his speed to be his greatest asset. He worked hard on increasing his explosiveness and quickness heading into the NHL Draft.

Growing up, he was a big fan of Detroit Red Wings star Pavel Datsyuk, studying his style of play by watching YouTube videos of the Hall of Fame player. His NHL role model is Montreal Canadiens captain Nick Suzuki, who is also from London, Ontario, and a Guelph alumna.

The young Ukrainian interviewed with 28 out of the NHL's 32 teams at this year's scouting combine, drawing tremendous interest from almost every organization. The Philadelphia Flyers moved back one spot in the first round of the 2024 Draft and selected with the 13th pick the 5-foot-11, 187-pound Luchanko. Aside from Morgan Frost, the center ice position is the thinnest area in the organization.

Luchanko will get an opportunity to give the Flyers a lift by playing in the middle during the team's ongoing rebuild. The team also wants to identify and develop a high-end center to play with 19-year-old winger Matvei Michkov, a top prospect from Russia.

(Based on reporting by The Hockey News, Flo Hockey, TSN, NBC Sports Philadelphia and The Hockey Writers.)

Entries in "Out and About" are listed free of charge. Priority is given to events advertised in The Ukrainian Weekly. However, we also welcome submissions from all our readers. Items will be published at the discretion of the editors and as space allows. Please send e-mail to mdubas@ukrweekly.com.

Ukrainian pro...

(Continued from page 16)

against Ukraine or public statements in support of the war by wrestlers or support staff are grounds for not allowing athletes to compete.

Athletes from Russia and Belarus who are members of the Russian Armed Forces, the Rosgvardia and other security forces but who have not expressed support for or participated in the war in Ukraine will be able to participate in international tournaments.

The UWU will also review all cases of suspended athletes and decide on their admission to future competitions in accordance with the new criteria.

Dementyev wins two medals in Para-cycling

The 2024 UCI Para-cycling Road World Championships (road cycling for athletes with a physical disability) took place in Zurich, Switzerland, on September 21-29. Ukrainian Yehor Dementyev won a gold medal in the 90.2-kilometer road race C5 with a time of 2:15:02 seconds. He added a bronze medal in the 29.9-kilometer time trial. Pavlo Bal won bronze in the 57.8-kilometer

meter road race H5 to give Ukraine a total of three medals.

Kalinina prematurely ends her season

Anhelina Kalinina became the second Ukrainian tennis star to end her 2024 season early due to health issues. She joins Elina Svitolina who also hopes to be ready for the 2025 Women's Tennis Association (WTA) Tour. After losing to qualifier Rebecca Sramkova 4-6, 0-6 in the first round of the China Open on September 25, Kalinina ended her season prematurely. She cited continued health issues as her reason for retiring for the rest of the year.

Ranked No. 48 at the time of her decision, Kalinina started the year well, defeating Emma Raducanu at the Qatar Open in February and Aryna Sabalenka in Miami a month later. The 27-year-old was later knocked out early in both the French Open and Wimbledon. Svitolina defeated her in the second round at the U.S. Open. Kalinina pulled out of the 2024 Olympics because of a cold she caught in Paris.

(Based on reporting by UAF, Flashscore, Foot Italia, The Scotsman, Celtic FC.com, UNN and Express.)

Ihor Stelmach may be reached at ihorgenia@sbcglobal.net.



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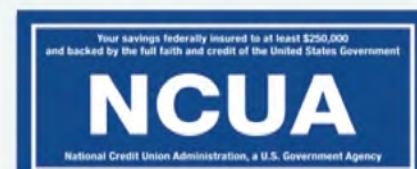
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