As the war continues, Ukraine negotiators give U.S. new proposals.

UK Defence Intelligence map of the battlefield situation in Ukraine.

For the past two months, the map of the battlefield situation in Ukraine that has been periodically prepared and released by the British Defence Intelligence service has remained unchanged. As a result, the most recent map of the battlefield situation in Ukraine, issued last Wednesday, is identical in every respect to the maps the service issued in July and earlier this month. The fact that nothing has changed in the Defence Intelligence map of the battlefield situation in Ukraine since then suggests the extent to which – and notwithstanding the fact that troops on both sides are being killed and wounded every day – the war on the ground in eastern Ukraine has to a very large extent become a stalemate in which, at most, very small pieces of territory are being taken or lost from day to day and week to week.

As has been the case over the past two months, the Russian forces continue to attack toward the city of Sumy in northeastern Ukraine and at a number of points along the contact line between the forces in eastern and southeastern Ukraine, from the area south of Kupiansk to the area west of Kostyantynivka toward the cities of Sloviansk, Kramatorsk and Druzhkivka in the northern portion of Donetsk region, toward the area along the eastern boundary of Dnipropetrovsk region between Pokrovsk and Dobropillia, and in the area near the junction of Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson regions in southeastern Ukraine. And as the green arrow indicates, the Ukrainian forces continue to attack the Russian forces at the southeastern corner of Dnipropetrovsk region. On Wednesday, President Zelenskyy said that since January Ukraine has taken back 745 square kilometers (288 square miles) of territory that includes 26 settlements in the Oleksandrivka sector (marked by the green arrow in the map) where the Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia and Donetsk regions converge.

Meanwhile, the Russian drone and missile attacks continue every night, and every night Ukrainian civilians are wounded or killed in the attacks. The UN Human

Rights Monitoring Mission Ukraine (HRMMU) said on Thursday that at least 437 Ukrainian civilians were killed and 2,610 injured in Russian drone and missile attacks in July, a 30 per cent increase over the numbers killed or injured in June and a 70 per cent increase over the numbers killed or injured in July 2025. The Mission said that during the first seven months of 2026, conflict-related violence in Ukraine resulted in 12,477 civilian casualties (1,839 killed and 10,638 injured) – a 44 per cent increase compared with the same seven-month period in 2025, when there were 8,650 civilian casualties (1,434 killed and 7,216 injured), and more than double the 5,748 civilian casualties (1,188 killed and 4,560 injured) in the same seven-month period in 2024.

With at least 54 civilians killed and 202 injured in July, Kyiv was one of the hardest-hit cities in Ukraine as Russia significantly increased its use of ballistic and cruise missiles in its air attacks. Russia launched at least 429 missiles in July, more than double the number in June, and many of them hit buildings in Kyiv. In the deadliest strike of the month, at least 30 civilians were killed and 104 injured on July 2 when Russia launched 74 missiles and almost 500 long-range drones, most of them at Kyiv.

The UN Mission reported that long-range weapons – specifically, missiles and drones – remained the leading cause of Ukrainian civilian casualties in July, accounting for 38 per cent of the 1,150 casualties (183 killed and 967 injured). The number of civilian casualties from aerial bombardments increased by 143 percent in July to 858 (105 killed and 753 injured) from the 353 in June, when 45 were killed and 308 injured. Short-range drones near the frontline caused 27 per cent of the casualties (111 killed and 710 injured). The UN Mission has verified that since the war began in February 2022 at least 16,874 civilians, including 820 children, have been killed and 51,273, including 3,126 children, have been injured as a result of the Russian drone and missile attacks.

In his televised address last Tuesday evening, President Zelenskyy reported that Ukraine's Defense Intelligence believes Russia is preparing to announce, after its September 18-20 election, that there will be an additional mobilization (i.e., draft) of several hundred thousand Russians by the end of the year and another mobilization of the same number in 2027. He also reported that Russia used ballistic missiles provided by North Korea in an attack on Zaporizhzhia that killed six and wounded 19. And he reported that Russia has received and is preparing to deploy more North Korean troops to the front lines of its ground attack.

In his address Tuesday evening, President Zelenskyy said Ukraine's negotiating team had reported back to him and "We have conveyed our proposals to the American side. And the U.S. can help strengthen our defense, first and foremost with air defense and put pressure on Russia so that its plans are different – to prepare for an end to the war rather than prolonging it." Undoubtedly the two most difficult issues remain the territorial issue and the security issue. The former involves, of course, the Ukrainian territory now held by the Russian forces – in particular, much of the Ukrainian regions of Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson, all of which Russia formally annexed in September 2022. The proposed framework

reportedly would halt fighting along the existing front lines and establish demilitarized buffer zones from which troops would be withdrawn. Kyiv is also seeking increased U.S. and international pressure on Moscow.

President Zelenskyy didn't provide any details about the proposals conveyed by Ukraine's negotiators to the U.S. and President Trump didn't say anything publicly about them. But it's quite likely the American presidential envoys, Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, who were in Moscow earlier this year, will at some point in the near future make their first trip of the year to Kyiv and then another trip to Moscow.

In the meantime, the 36 states that have agreed to participate in the Coalition of the Willing that will attempt to maintain Ukraine's security on the ground and in the air if and when a ceasefire is agreed continue to prepare for that work, and in late July British Lt. Gen. Tom Bateman took over from a French colleague as the operational commander of the Multinational Force-Ukraine (MNF-U), the formal title of the Coalition. The talks that many hope will produce a ceasefire haven't yet taken place and appear to be on hold for the time being as both sides focus on the battle for territory in Ukraine. But an important step in that direction may soon be taken if the proposals Ukraine conveyed to the U.S. lead to a resumption of talks between the representatives of Ukraine and Russia.

David R. Cameron
August 17, 2026