

ENSURING NATIONAL RESILIENCE IN A LONG-TERM LARGE- SCALE WAR WITH A SUPERIOR ENEMY

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37458/nstf.27.1.4>

Original scientific paper

Received: November 13, 2025

Accepted: March 12, 2026

Viacheslav Semenenko*

Abstract: Ukraine faces unprovoked and illegal military aggression by Russia, representing the culmination of hybrid warfare strategies. This article examines the country's resilience in the context of a long-term, large-scale war with a superior adversary. Drawing upon a nationwide survey and comprehensive analysis, the study highlights the current challenges to national resilience, evaluates the effectiveness of societal and institutional responses, and proposes strategic measures to strengthen Ukraine's

* Viacheslav SEMENENKO, PhD, colonel, Military Academy of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine, ORCID <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5774-0868>

capacity to withstand ongoing aggression. The findings underscore the importance of both domestic mobilization and international support in sustaining national endurance and security.

Keywords: Ukraine, National Resilience, Russian aggression; large-scale war; superior enemy, hybrid warfare.

Introduction

The ongoing conflict in Ukraine has tested the nation's social, political, and institutional resilience against a superior military power. Russia's actions, constituting the final phase of hybrid aggression, have sought not only territorial gains but also the undermining of Ukraine's national cohesion. International support has been instrumental in countering this aggression, reinforcing the moral and strategic legitimacy of Ukraine's defence.

This article builds upon the key points of my recent presentation, focusing on three main areas:

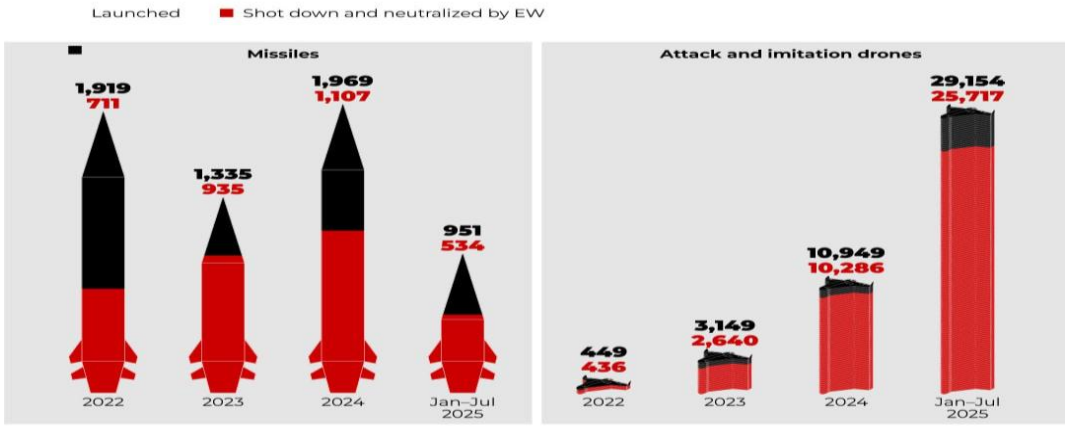
1. The current situation and Russia's attempts to undermine national resilience.
2. An assessment of the current state of national resilience, based on the results of a nationwide survey.
3. Strategies to ensure the continued resilience and defence capacity of Ukraine.

Through this structure, the study provides a comprehensive understanding of Ukraine's resilience

challenges and outlines actionable strategies to maintain national endurance in the face of sustained aggression.

The Current Situation and Russia's Attempts to Undermine National Resilience

During the full-scale war, Russia has launched over 6,000 missiles at Ukraine; of these, 53% were shot down or neutralized by the Defence Forces. It has also launched nearly 48,000 attack and decoy drones, of which 89% were shot down or neutralized. Number of air targets launched and shot down, February 24, 2022– July 31, 2025, is presented on the Figure 1.



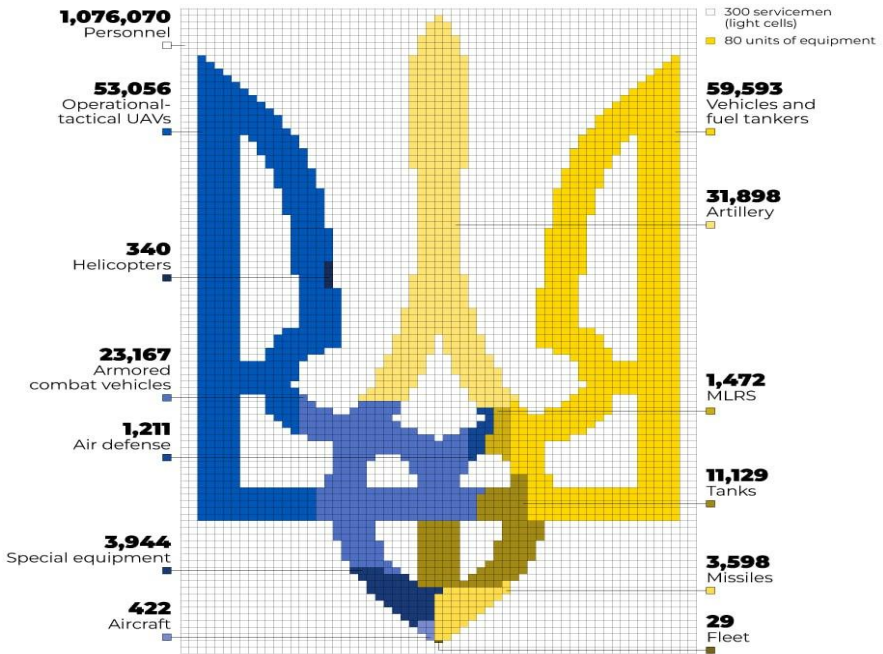
Sources: Air Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

*Except on days when the Air Forces did not provide data.

Figure 1: Number of missiles and drones launched by Russians and shot down by Ukrainian defence forces

We have withstood more than 6,000 missiles and 48,000 drones, and our defenders destroy the occupiers daily. Ukrainians stand firm. On August 24, 2025, we marked the 34th anniversary of Ukraine’s independence amid a large-scale, protracted existential war. The people of Ukraine and the Ukrainian Armed Forces are fighting to preserve Ukraine’s independence and to ensure it is

never lost again. Our Defence Forces have inflicted losses on Russian forces amounting to over 1 million personnel and nearly 190,000 items of military equipment (Figure 2).



Source: General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, data as of August 24, 2025.

Figure 2: Russian losses over 3,5 years of war

In the summer of 2025 alone, Russian forces lost approximately 94,000 personnel and 32,000 items of equipment. They did not reduce the intensity of hostilities or the scale of their missile and drone terror against Ukraine. During the three summer months of 2025, Ukraine experienced over 4,000 air-raid alerts; Russia launched nearly 600 missiles and 16,000 drones against the country. Results of the Russian–Ukrainian war during the summer months of 2025 are presented on the Figure 3.



Figure 3: Summer 2025: frontline results

Over 3,000 Ukrainian civilians were killed by Russia in 2024–2025 (Figure 4). This figure 4 does not include those killed in frontline areas, where data cannot be obtained. June 2025 was the deadliest month during this period. We do not include data from 2022–2023, as it is both incomplete and likely significantly understated. To this day, we still do not know the exact number of people killed in Mariupol or other destroyed cities.

Ukraine's energy facilities are a strategic target for Russia. In 2025, the number of Russian attacks increased. By late summer, strikes against the energy sector intensified, heightening the risk of power outages in the fall and winter. Russia continues to attack the energy system (Figure 5).

Number of civilians killed and wounded as a result of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2024-2025, persons

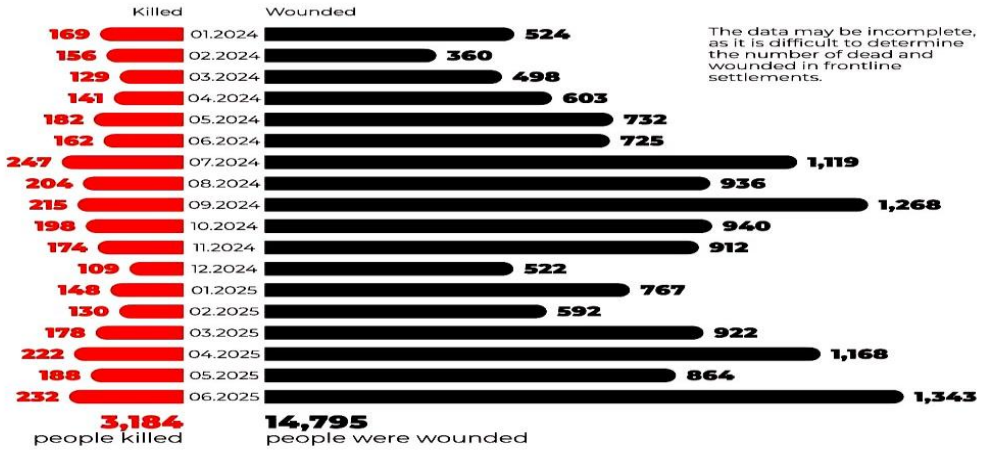


Figure 4: Number of civilians killed and wounded as a result of Russia’s full-scale invasion

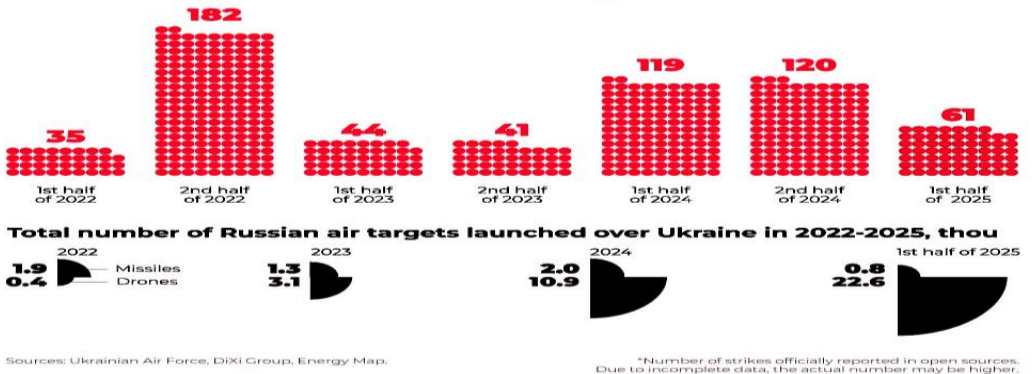


Figure 5: Number of Russian attacks on Ukrainian energy facilities in 2022-2025

Claims in parts of Europe that Ukraine is to blame because it “should not have attacked” the Druzhba oil pipeline or Russian oil refineries are incorrect. Russian strikes do not depend on Druzhba, nor do they depend on Ukraine’s attacks on Russian oil refineries.

Russia's objective is to plunge Ukraine into darkness and cold—this is a routine tactic in its way of war. It is futile to assume that Ukraine's restraint or specific actions will either deter Russia or appease it. After years of evidence, this should be understood; do not succumb to narratives based on selective “leaks”.

On the night of August 28, Russia launched its largest attack on Kyiv in recent years. More than 600 drones and missiles were launched simultaneously, approaching from all directions. We simulated the propagation of a blast wave through buildings and urban canyons; the screen shows fragments of the model (Figure 6).

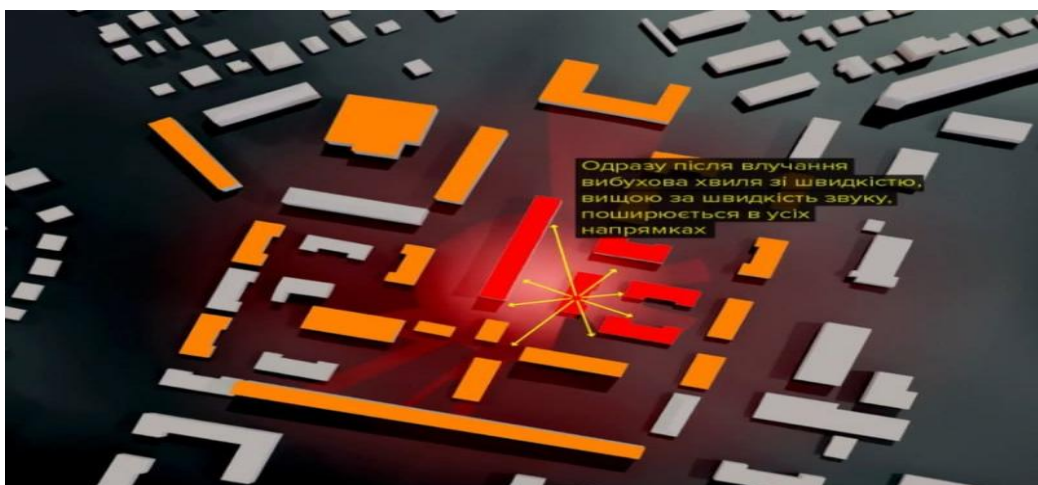


Figure 6: Iskander missile strike on a densely populated area of Kyiv (1)

This phenomenon has, unfortunately, become commonplace in modern Ukrainian life, both for the military and for civilians. When an explosion occurs in open space, the blast wave spreads spherically; when it encounters obstacles, it ricochets (for example, off walls), amplifying destructive effects. The blast wave

destroys, maims, and kills; casualties and damage not caused by the detonation itself are most often the result of the blast wave. It is the blast wave that we usually hear and feel when the Russians launch another attack on our homes.

One missile (most likely a North Korean KN-23 ballistic missile) devastated an entire residential neighborhood in Kyiv's Svyatoshyn District. Its warhead weighs about 500 kilograms, and the total missile mass exceeds 3 tons. A total of 13 people were killed and more than 90 were injured. The surrounding neighborhoods experienced the full force of a half-ton explosive blast.

The blast wave propagated radially; its magnitude diminished with distance, though local effects depended on building characteristics, open spaces, and structure placement. In the central zone, where overpressure was greatest, partial and complete structural failures (walls and roofs) were recorded (Figure 7).

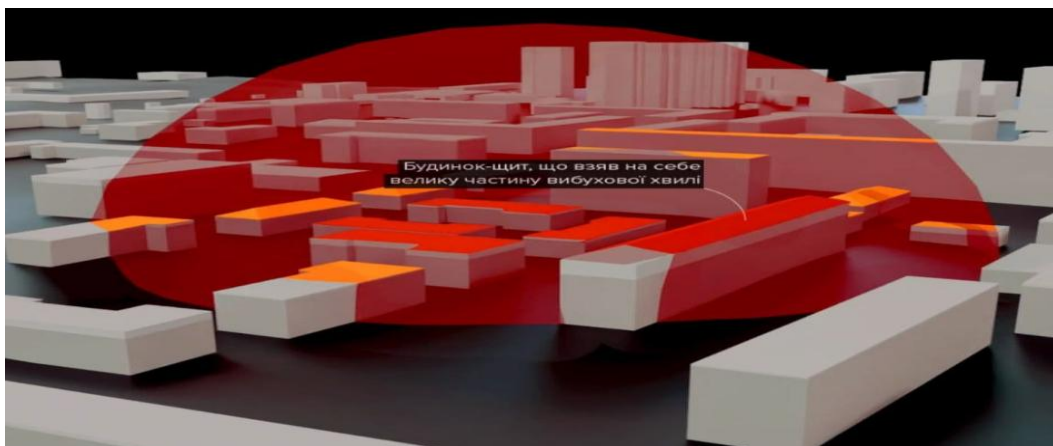


Figure 7: Iskander missile strike on a densely populated area of Kyiv (2)

Adjacent to the epicenter stood a long nine-story brick building facing the blast with its façade. All interior furnishings were destroyed, as if pulverized. Windows were blown out on both sides of the building—the side facing the blast and the opposite side—frames included. Windows were blown out in buildings within approximately a 50–100-meter radius of the epicenter. The directionality of the blast is traceable on façades: primary damage on faces oriented toward the epicenter, with secondary traces on other sides. Side streets, courtyards, and passageways acted as channels for wave propagation. The unfortunate positioning of this building partially shielded structures on one side of the epicenter, absorbing much of the initial energy.

Practical advice for European residents: do not attempt to outrun a blast wave; its velocity is too high. Seek solid cover or lie prone with feet toward the detonation, cover your head with your hands, and open your mouth to reduce barotrauma risk by equalizing pressure.



Figure 8: Consequences of the missile strike

Thirty-one drones and missiles have entered Polish airspace during the full-scale war, yet NATO has not treated these incidents as an armed attack. On September 10, Russia crossed another red line. Sources differ on the number of drones over Poland: the newspaper Rzeczpospolita reports 23, while Polish authorities cite 19. Russia is rapidly scaling up drone production; increased attacks on European countries should be expected.

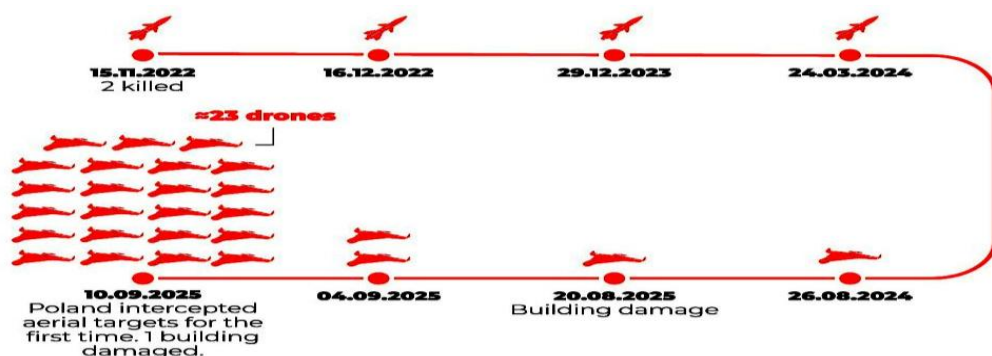


Figure 9: Incidents of missiles and drones entering Polish territory

Assessment of the Current State of National Resilience: Results of a Nationwide (All-Ukrainian) Survey

From September 2 to 14, 2025, a nationwide public opinion poll was conducted on issues related to national resilience. A total of 1,023 respondents were surveyed. The survey covered adult citizens of Ukraine (aged 18+) residing in territories controlled by the Government of Ukraine at the time of fieldwork.

In this part the main findings and conclusions are presented. An absolute majority of Ukrainians, 76%, believe victory is achievable if sanctions are properly

enforced and Ukraine receives sufficient weapons and funding. By contrast, 15% believe that even under such conditions Ukraine would not be able to win. The remaining 9% were undecided.

For reference:

Conditional Plan Proposed by Europe and Ukraine

- Ukraine receives reliable security guarantees from Europe and the United States, including steady supplies of weapons and funding in sufficient quantities, as well as protection of Ukrainian airspace from Russian attacks
- The current front line is frozen; Russia retains control of occupied territories, though Ukraine and the international community do not officially recognize this control
- Ukraine advances toward accession to the European Union
- Sanctions against Russia remain in place until a stable peace is established and the risk of renewed large-scale aggression disappears

Conditional Plan Advocated by Russia:

- The United States and Europe lift all sanctions on Russia
- The Russian language gains official status in Ukraine
- Ukraine significantly reduces its armed forces and limits armaments

- Ukraine permanently renounces NATO membership, and Western countries cease supplying weapons to Ukraine
- Russia claims the right to determine Ukraine’s security guarantees and to act as one of Ukraine’s security guarantors
- Ukraine withdraws its troops from the parts of Donetsk Oblast it currently controls (e.g., Kramatorsk, Sloviansk, and other cities)
- Ukraine officially recognizes Crimea, Donetsk, and Luhansk Oblasts as part of Russia and irrevocably renounces them
- Russia retains control over the occupied parts of Kherson and Zaporizhzhia Oblasts

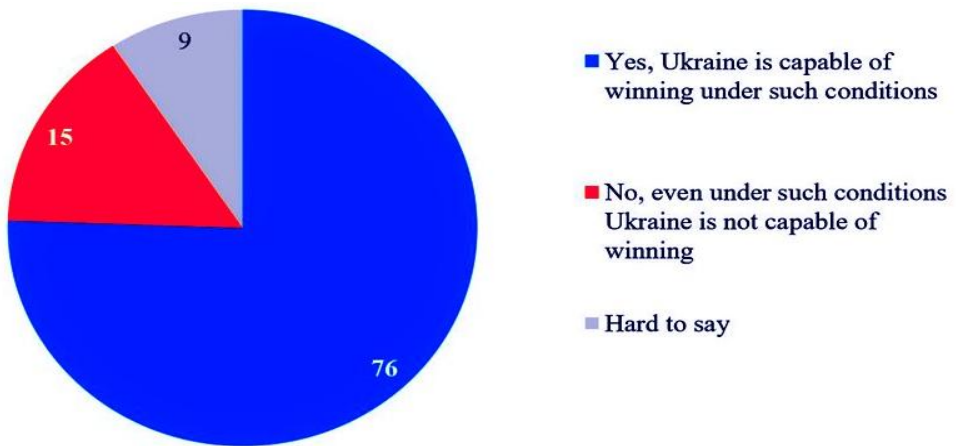


Figure 10: Perceptions of Europe-Ukraine and Russia’s conditional peace plans and their implications for Ukraine

If Russia's plan were to become a reality, 65% of Ukrainians would consider it unsuccessful for Ukraine.

Only 7% would consider it a more or less complete success, and there are another 19% who would consider it a 50/50 success and failure.

In the case of the Europe and Ukraine plan, 30% would consider it a more or less complete success, while another 44% would consider it a 50/50 success for Ukraine. Only 18% would consider it a failure for Ukraine.

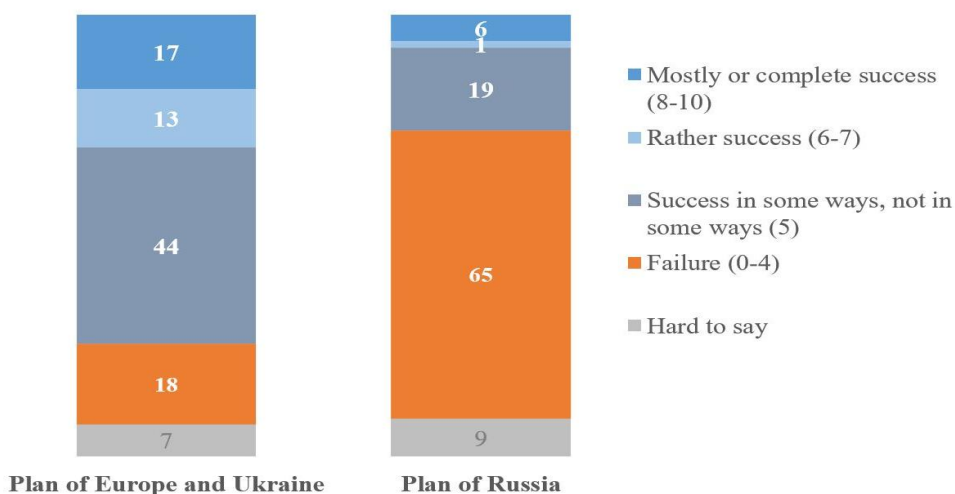


Figure 11: Society's readiness to accept plans to end the war

This Figure shows expectations regarding whether Russia would attack again if a peace deal were reached (Figure 12). Under Russia’s plan, 69% think Russia would attack again; another 16% rate the likelihood as 50/50; only 7% think Russia would not attack again under those conditions. At the same time, 56% believe that even if the Europe–Ukraine plan were implemented, Russia would attempt another attack; 28% assess the probability as 50/50; only 10% believe Russia would not

attack again. Thus, although the Europe–Ukraine plan may receive majority approval, it is perceived with restraint and not as an unequivocal success; expectations of renewed Russian aggression persist. By contrast, Russia’s plan is perceived largely as a failure for Ukraine, with high expectations of a subsequent Russian attack.

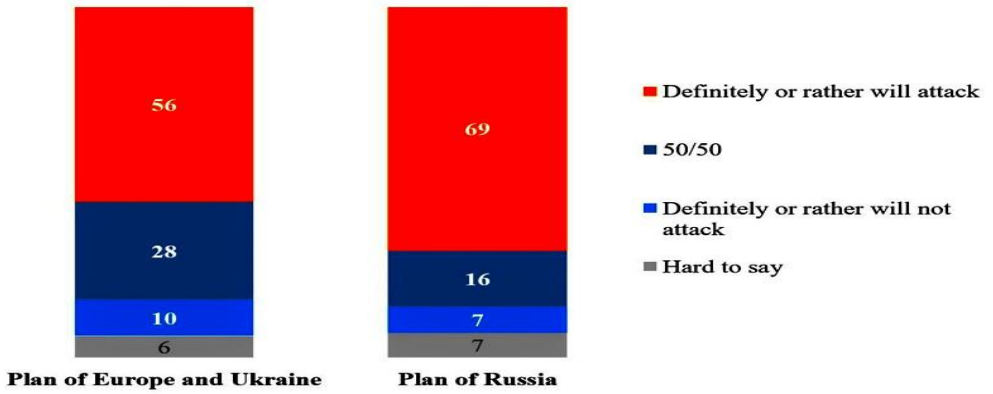


Figure 12: Will Russia try to attack again?

Although many Ukrainians criticize the current government, 63% hold favourable views of the United States in general, and 90% hold favourable views of ordinary Americans living in the United States. The United States remains a strategically important partner; reports in the media about possible restrictions on weapons supplies are therefore a source of concern. In March 2025, after weapons supplies ceased, we first asked how Ukraine should act in a scenario without U.S. support; we have now repeated this question. An absolute majority-76%-believe that even without U.S. support, Ukraine should continue fighting together with its European allies. Only 14% believe that under such conditions Ukraine should agree to any demands from

Russia. Since March 2025, willingness to continue fighting has decreased slightly, but the change is negligible; Ukrainians’ views on this question have scarcely shifted in recent months.

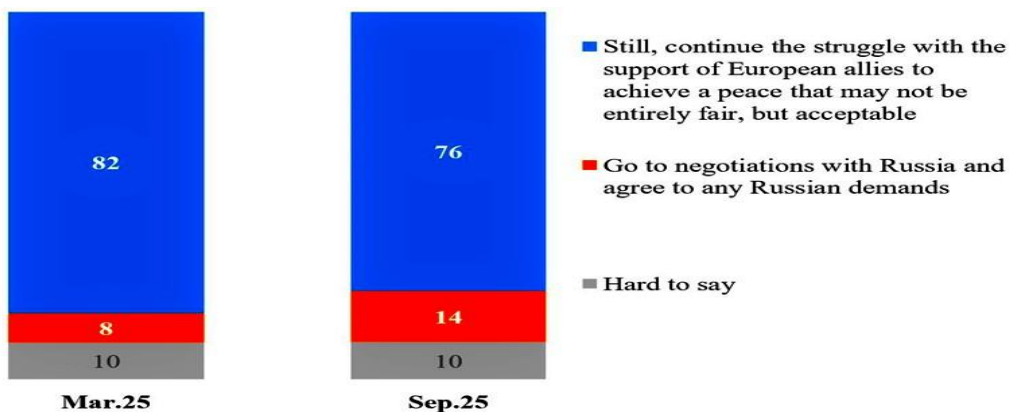


Figure 13: If the USA stops all support, what option would be better for Ukraine?

Amid intensified diplomatic efforts by the current U.S. administration, some foreign observers (predictably, in our view) inferred that Ukrainians expect an imminent end to the war. We, sociologists and citizens of Ukraine, have not had such an observation. To test this, we asked: when, in Ukrainians’ view, might the war end (Figure 14)?

Only 18% expect the war to end by the end of 2025; 27% cite 2026; 32% say 2027 or later; 23% answered “don’t know”. Meanwhile, a majority of Ukrainians (61%) state they are ready to endure the war for as long as necessary; a further 4% are ready to endure for about a year.

Twenty-one percent indicate a shorter period (six months or several months), a share that has remained practically unchanged in recent months. Among those

expecting the war to end this year, 41% are ready to endure as long as necessary; among those expecting completion in 2026, 63%; among those expecting 2027 or later, 74%; among “don’t know” respondents, 61%.

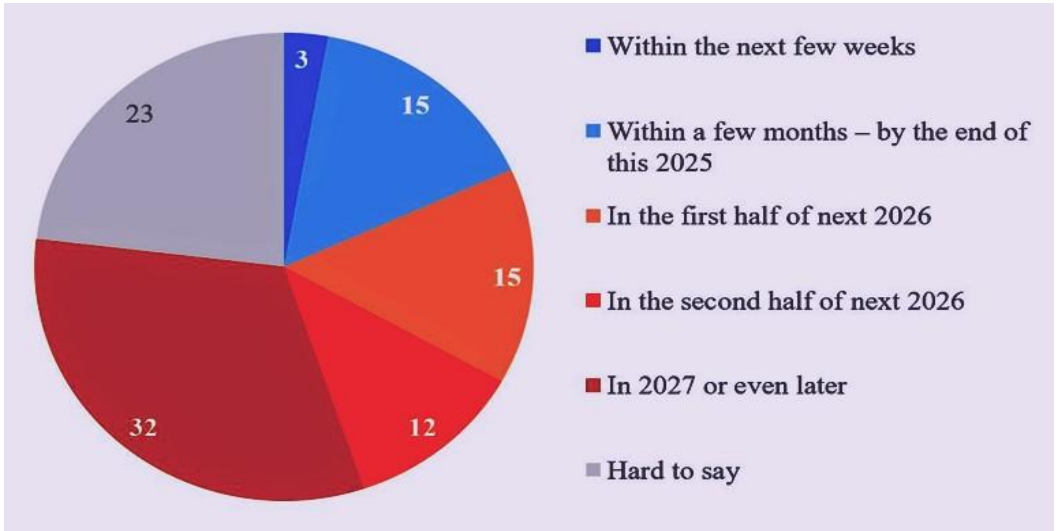


Figure 14: When might the war end?

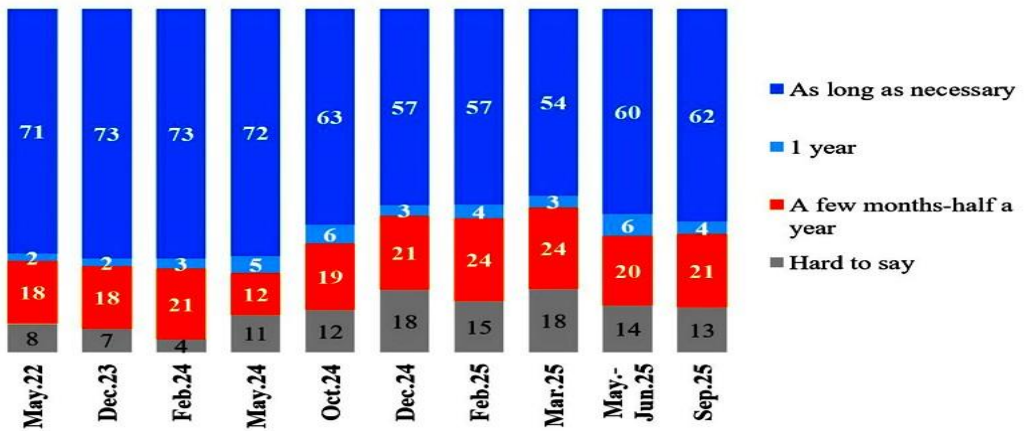


Figure 15: Ukrainians are prepared to endure the war

Among Ukrainians (men and women aged 18+), 54% report being “definitely” or “rather” ready, if necessary, to join the Defense Forces and take up arms to defend Ukraine; 23% are “definitely” ready and 31% are “rather” ready. Fifteen percent are “rather not” ready and 23% are “definitely not” ready (i.e., 38% not ready in total, though only a portion categorically reject such readiness). For cross-national comparison (Gallup, 2023): Poland—45%; United States—41%; Germany—23%; United Kingdom—33%; EU countries overall—32% (not all countries surveyed). For the same period in Ukraine, the comparable figure was 62%[4].

For Ukrainians, the question is not hypothetical but concrete; accordingly, responses likely align more closely with actual behavior.

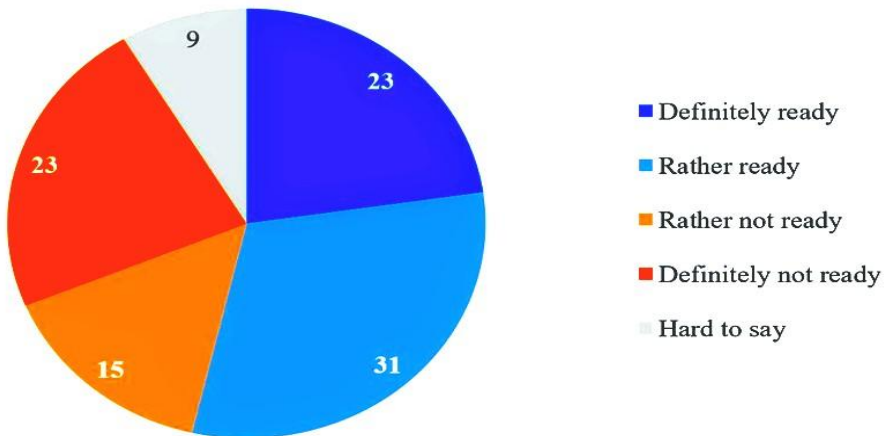


Figure 16: Readiness to defend Ukraine (1)

This slide shows willingness to defend Ukraine with arms by gender and age; among men under 60, a majority (60–64%) are ready to join the Defense Forces if necessary.

It is important to emphasize that a substantial share of Ukrainian women are also ready, if necessary, to defend Ukraine with arms as part of the Defense Forces.

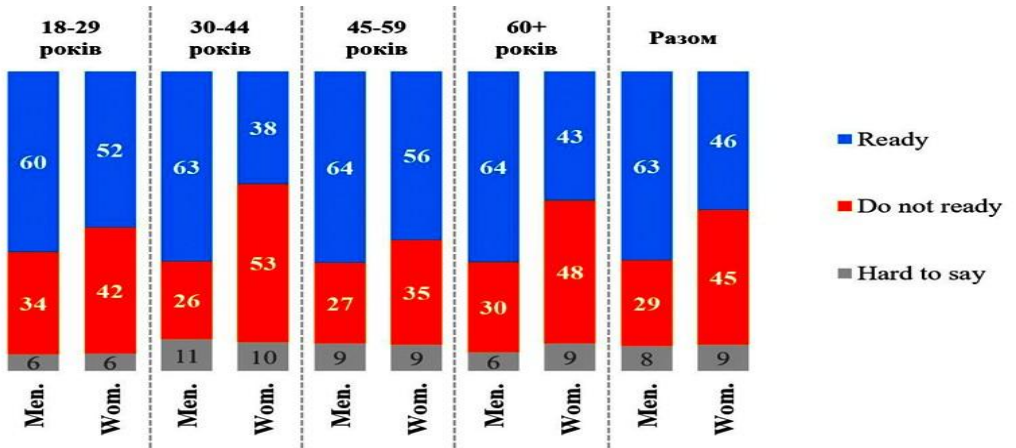


Figure 17: Readiness to defend Ukraine (2)

Strategies to Ensure National Resilience

In this part of the article, we consider what we regard as the principal strategies to sustain Ukraine’s national resilience amid a protracted war. Today, Ukrainians are shedding blood on the battlefield not only for Ukraine, but for Europe and for democracy as a whole. As the U.S. President aptly noted, “I believe that Ukraine, with the support of the European Union, is capable of fighting and restoring all of Ukraine’s territory”.



Figure 18: US President Donald TRUMP, September 23, 2025

New missile for Ukraine — the United States may supply the ERAM missile, developed rapidly for Ukraine’s needs, with an approximate range of 463 km. Together with systems provided by leading European countries, these missiles could affect the operational situation at the front and, collectively, bolster national resilience.

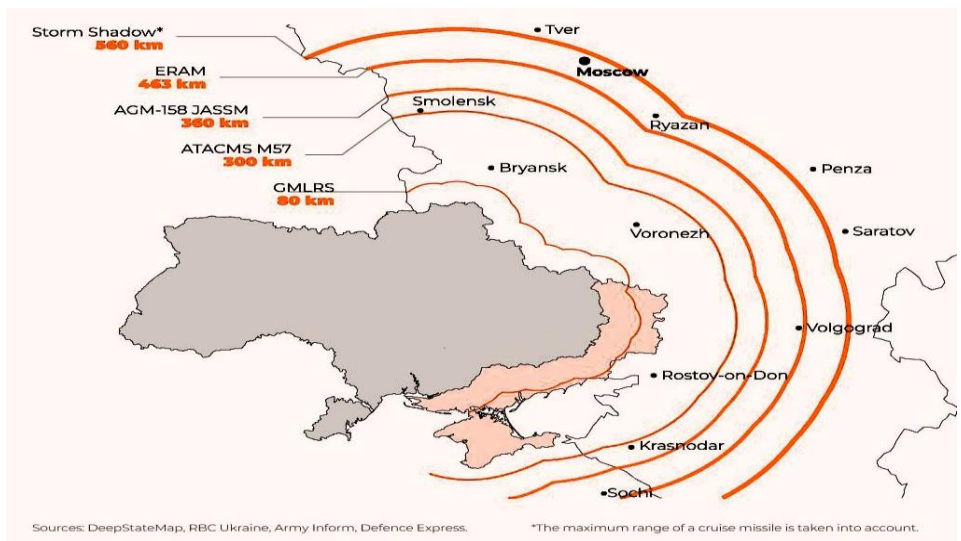


Figure 19: Range of western missiles given to Ukraine

Foreign investment in Ukraine rebounded after the initial wartime decline, but 2024 was less successful than 2023; a return to 2021 levels has not yet occurred, and investors are adjusting their priorities.

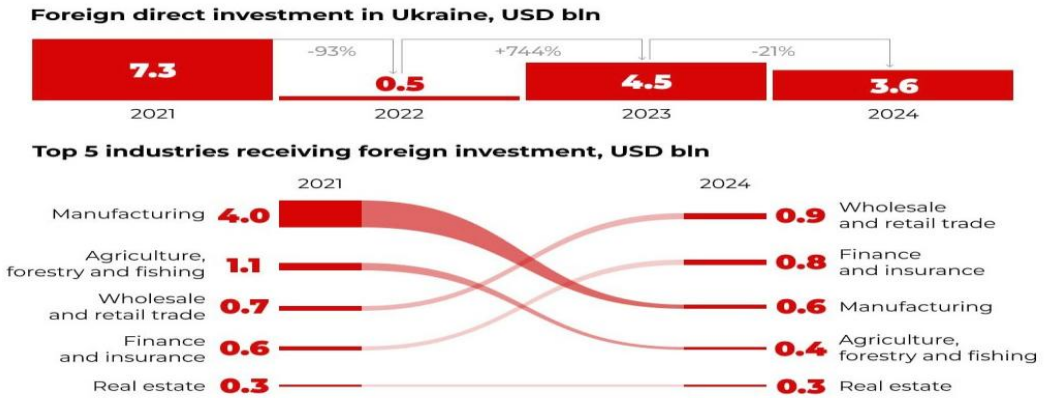


Figure 20: Foreign investment in Ukraine

Ukraine is opening its market to modern weaponry proven in prolonged combat operations. Ukrainian systems will be exported to Europe, the United States, the Middle East, and Africa—identified by manufacturers as priority markets. Priority goes to supplying the Ukrainian military; surplus production can be exported, and export revenues will fund critical shortfalls, particularly long-range missiles.

Ukraine’s reconstruction is the largest infrastructure project in Europe since the continent’s post-World War II recovery. Ukraine cannot accomplish it alone; partner countries are already assisting. European countries have contributed UAH 25 billion to Ukraine’s reconstruction, with France contributing the most.

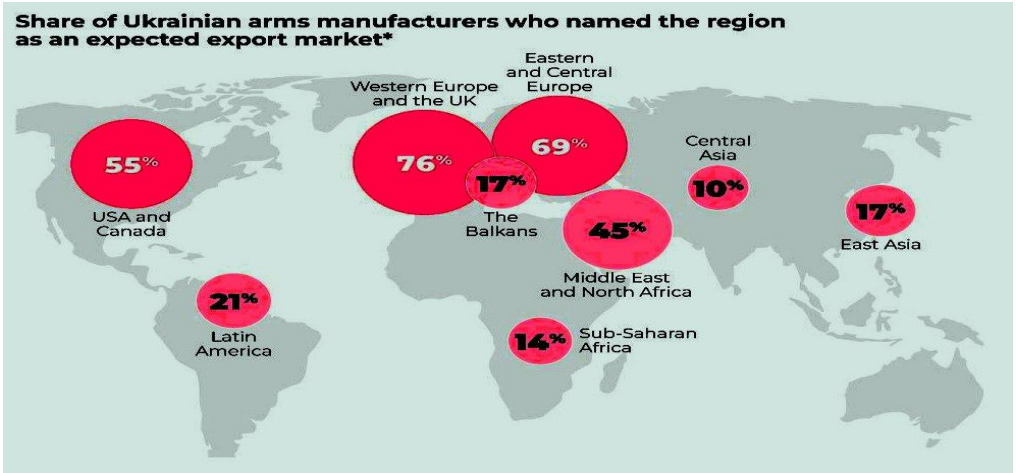


Figure 21: Europe will be main buyer of Ukrainian weapons



Figure 22: 516 mln euro for Ukraine’s reconstruction from other countries

Russia’s wartime expenditures are roughly equivalent to its revenues from energy exports. Therefore, only the Armed Forces of Ukraine, coupled with effective oil sanctions, can constrain Russia’s capacity to wage war.

Estimated Russia's oil and gas export revenues*



Sources: Russia Fossil Tracker, Mirror of the week

Estimated Russian war expenditures against Ukraine*



*From February 24, 2022, to August 19, 2025.

Figure 23: Russians war expenses = revenues from energy exports

By 2030, Ukraine's wind-power capacity is projected to reach the equivalent of six nuclear power units; currently, it is slightly above the equivalent of two units.



Figure 24: Forecast of wind capacity in terms of nuclear power plant units

Conclusions

Each of the above issues requires continuous monitoring, clarification, and systematic analysis. However, in our view, three key conclusions should be emphasized.

1. Ukrainians continue to believe in the possibility of victory. They consider resistance to Russia not hopeless and maintain confidence that, despite the enemy's scale and brutality, Ukraine can prevail.
2. At the same time, Ukrainians are not asking allied countries to deploy their troops to Ukraine.
3. Ukraine calls for effective sanctions against Russia and adequate supplies of weapons and financial assistance—support that should have been provided back in 2014, let alone 2022, given the obligations of several countries under the Budapest Memorandum.

Whereas in 2022 Ukrainians held romantic expectations regarding allied support, pragmatism now prevails. Good intentions must be supported by power in new world security architecture.

Literature

1. Viacheslav Semenenko. Russia's Total War: A Challenge and a Threat to Europe. / Viacheslav Semenenko, Andrii Ivashenko // National Security and the Future. - 2022. - Vol. 23. No 2. Access mode: <https://doi.org/10.37458/nstf.23.2.2>.
2. Military Aspects of Countering Hybrid Aggression: Ukrainian Experience. NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION. SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ORGANIZATION. AC/323 (SAS-161) TP/999. STO TECHNICAL REPORT. TR-SAS-161. www.sto.nato.int.
3. Viacheslav Semenenko. Military Aspects of Countering Hybrid Aggression: Ukrainian Experiences / Viacheslav Semenenko, Valery Frolov // NATIONAL SECURITY AND THE FUTURE. Volume 24, No. 1, 2023. Access mode: <https://nsf-journal.hr/online-issues/focus/id/1417#.ZEIBOM7P23A>.
4. Khoma, N., Kresina, I., Nikolaiev, O., & Patalakha, V. (2025). National resilience of Ukraine: Content and security strategy in the context of a war and post-war recovery. Lviv Polytechnic National University. <https://eppd13.cz/wp-content/uploads/2025/2025-12-3/06.pdf>
5. Kudelia, S. (2022). The Ukrainian state under Russian aggression: Resilience and resistance. Current History. <https://www.academia.edu/93046000>
6. United Nations. (2025, January). Resilience of Ukrainians remains high, as UN maps aid and reconstruction needs for 2025. UN News. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/01/1158871>
7. Міністерство оборони України. (2022–2025). Щоденні зведення щодо втрат ворога та обстрілів. <https://www.mil.gov.ua>
8. Центр стратегічних комунікацій України. (2025). Аналітика щодо атак на енергосистему та цивільну інфраструктуру. <https://spravdi.gov.ua>

- 9.Київський міжнародний інститут соціології (КМІС). (2025, вересень). Національна стійкість та очікування громадян щодо війни. <https://kiis.com.ua>
- 10.Rating Group Ukraine. (2025). Громадська думка щодо сценаріїв завершення війни та міжнародної підтримки. <https://ratinggroup.ua>
- 11.European Union. (2025). EU Sanctions Map: Measures against Russia. <https://www.sanctionsmap.eu>
- 12.Міністерство оборони США. (2025). ERAM missile specifications and delivery plans for Ukraine. <https://www.defense.gov>
- 13.Jane's Defence Weekly. (2025). Ukraine's defense exports and battlefield-tested systems. <https://www.janes.com>
- 14.Міністерство економіки України. (2025). Звіт про інвестиції та відновлення інфраструктури. <https://www.me.gov.ua>
- 15.World Bank. (2025). Ukraine Recovery and Reconstruction Needs Assessment. <https://www.worldbank.org>

