

ANALYSIS | ATHENALAB

Update on the War in Ukraine

Marcelo Masalleras
Director of Research

June 23, 2026



In February 2026, AthenaLab published its fourth annual analysis of the war in Ukraine¹. That document identified a conflict marked by strategic stalemate, sustained Russian initiative along much of the front, and Kyiv's mounting difficulties in replacing casualties amid the clear withdrawal of direct United States support. Four months later, several of these elements persist, while others have evolved significantly. Accordingly, with the caution that conflicts demand, we may be witnessing the beginning of a new phase of the conflict.

This analysis aims to update that assessment by incorporating the most significant developments between February and June 2026. It examines the operational situation at the front, the state of Russia's war effort, and Ukraine's interdiction campaign and drone employment. Finally, it turns to the role of external actors and the prospects for the conflict.

OPERATIONAL AND TACTICAL SITUATION: CONTINUITY AND ADAPTATION

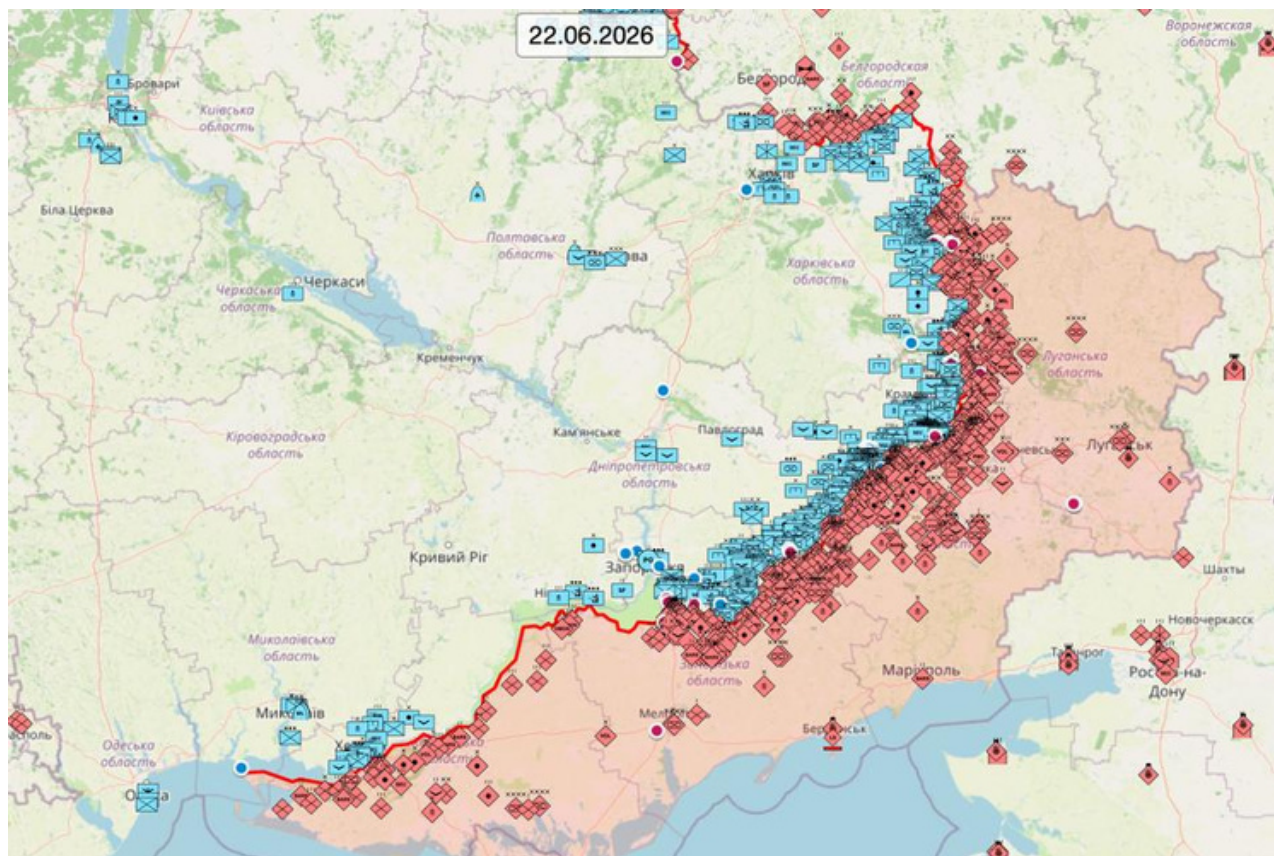
By mid-2026, the contact line remains broadly similar to the pattern described in February, though the tactical dynamic has shifted noticeably. Russia retains the initiative across several sectors of the front, but its rate of advance has fallen steadily and, according to Institute for the Study of War (ISW) data, may be approaching near-total stalemate. Whereas Russian forces advanced an average of roughly 9.76 km² per day during the first four months of 2025, that figure dropped to approximately 4.6 km² per day over the same period in 2026—including infiltration areas—and to just 2.9 km² per day when infiltrations are excluded².

The ISW itself warns that Russia's daily rate of advance could conceivably approach zero in the coming months, given that by late May 2026 Russian advances and infiltrations had reportedly fallen to between three and five square kilometers per day³.

This slowdown coincides with a significant rise in the human cost of each square kilometer gained. Indeed, Russian monthly casualties have reportedly outpaced the Kremlin's recruitment capacity since December 2025. Citing Western officials, Bloomberg reported that Russia suffered roughly 9,000 more casualties than it could replace in January 2026 alone, after years in which recruitment matched or exceeded loss rates⁴. Ukrainian sources, such as the "I Want to Live" initiative, estimated that Russia's Ministry of Defense recruited an average of 940 contract soldiers per day during the first quarter of 2026, below the 1,100 to 1,150 per day required to meet its annual target of 409,000 troops⁵.

Nevertheless, in the Donbas, the central axis of Russia's effort for months now, the situation remains difficult for Ukraine, though different from late 2025. Following the fall of Pokrovsk last December and Russia's control of Chasiv Yar since July, the cities of Kramatorsk and Kostiantynivka have been exposed to artillery fire. Russia, however, has failed to exploit these gains operationally, having generated no new maneuvers and proven unable to produce major changes since the winter of 2025⁶. The balance between the territorial gains achieved and the cost of achieving them reflects an operational model whose sustainability is increasingly questionable.

Figure 1. Territorial control as of 22 June 2026



Source: UAControlMap Data Viewer

By contrast, the most significant development of recent months is that, for the first time since the summer 2023 counteroffensive, Kyiv has, in certain periods, managed to recover more territory than it loses. In the last two weeks of February 2026, Ukrainian forces liberated more territory than they ceded, while Russian forces registered a net loss of 116 km² of territory in April 2026⁷. Ukraine's commander-in-chief, General Oleksandr Syrskyi, stated on 15 May that precision strikes, the destruction of Russian reserves, and sustained pressure on assault units have allowed Ukrainian forces to progressively seize the tactical initiative, adding that the number of Ukrainian offensive actions surpassed that of Russian actions by mid-May 2026⁸.

Alongside this, Ukraine has resumed using mechanized equipment in tactical counterattacks, albeit on a limited scale — something considered nearly impossible in 2025 given drone saturation in what is known as the “kill zone” (15 to 25 kilometers from the front). In March 2026, for instance, Ukrainian forces employed armored vehicles in the Oleksandrivka direction, pushing mechanized equipment up to 19 kilometers behind previously observed Russian positions; by 24 May, mechanized counterattacks in the Borova direction placed Ukrainian vehicles two to five kilometers behind Russian lines⁹.

The ISW concludes that, while neither side can yet execute operational maneuver, the combination of stalled Russian advances and Ukraine's limited reintroduction of mechanized maneuver could mark the start of a less positional phase of the conflict. It nonetheless cautions that this window is temporary, since Russia will develop countermeasures over time¹⁰.

This tactical dynamism should not be overstated, since it falls well short of an operational breakthrough along the contact line, and the overall situation remains one of mutual attrition. However, it represents a meaningful shift from the pattern that dominated the conflict since late 2023 and suggests that Russia's initiative now faces a more structural form of erosion that did not exist twelve months ago. Battlefield advantages, as a rule, prove temporary unless exploited and sustained through continued initiative.

It is also worth noting that Ukraine's Armed Forces have improved mobilization not through a massive increase in recruitment, but through better personnel retention achieved via adaptations to the training process, which has stabilized replacement pools in front-line units. According to Jack Watling, senior research fellow at the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI), Ukraine now registers a net positive force flow, allowing brigades to rebuild combat power. Since July 2025, several units have accordingly developed the capacity to integrate infantry, armor, artillery, and unmanned systems into more effective combined-arms packages, which has raised both Russian casualty rates and Ukraine's capacity to hold ground¹¹.

ACCUMULATED RUSSIAN ATTRITION

Since the start of the full-scale invasion, the Kremlin has projected an image of economic and military capacity sufficient to sustain the war indefinitely. That narrative has succeeded even among certain segments of international public opinion. The data available by mid-2026, however, paint a more complicated picture. Accumulated Russian casualties over the course of the conflict exceed one million troops when killed, wounded, and missing are included. In 2025 alone, Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) estimates placed losses at around 415,000 troops, a rate of nearly 35,000 per month. In 2026, that rate has not only failed to decline but, as noted above, the Russian recruitment system's capacity to offset it now shows signs of structural strain unprecedented in the conflict. For the first time, losses consistently outpace replacements.

The model built on financial incentives—including cash bonuses and debt forgiveness—has reached visible limits. While it attracts unskilled soldiers, it fails to meet the demand for technical specialists such as drone operators, systems engineers, and maintenance personnel. The civilian sector and the defense industry itself, which offers competitive pay, absorb these profiles instead. As a result, many combat units incorporate troops with severely reduced or incomplete training before deploying them to the line.

Russian forces' loss of Starlink access, already noted in Working Paper No. 37, also worsened after SpaceX abruptly cut service on 1 February, further exacerbating Russian command-and-control problems. While this was not the primary enabling factor behind Ukraine's winter-spring 2026 counterattacks—Ukraine had already planned those operations beforehand, launching them on 29 January—it can be considered a catalyst that reinforced battlefield preparations already underway, while also forcing Russian drone operators to use more visible antennas that are correspondingly easier to detect and strike.¹² The Kremlin's ban on using Telegram as a tactical coordination tool compounds this problem.

Jack Watling argues that the Russian military command did not appear to grasp how dependent its units had become on the app to manage logistics and personnel. Moreover, the order banning it without offering a viable alternative produced unforeseen negative effects¹³

On the economic front, the situation continues to deteriorate beyond what authorities appear willing to admit. For 2026, Russia's federal budget allocates roughly 40% of its resources to defense and security¹⁴. Projections point to marginal GDP growth, and the fiscal deficit for the first four months of 2026 reached its highest level since the start of the full-scale invasion. The Central Bank maintains restrictive interest rates of around 16% to contain inflation that exceeds the official 6% figure¹⁵. The structural labor shortage, worsened by mobilization and emigration, squeezes the private sector and limits industrial expansion.

The hydrocarbons sector —the financial backbone of the war effort— shows a growing impact. Ukrainian strikes have affected approximately 25% of Russia's oil refining capacity¹⁶, forcing Russia to redirect refining capacity toward domestic consumption at the cost of export revenue. Ukraine's campaign against Russian oil terminals has also caused temporary reductions in port export capacity at Primorsk, Novorossiysk, and Ust-Luga¹⁷

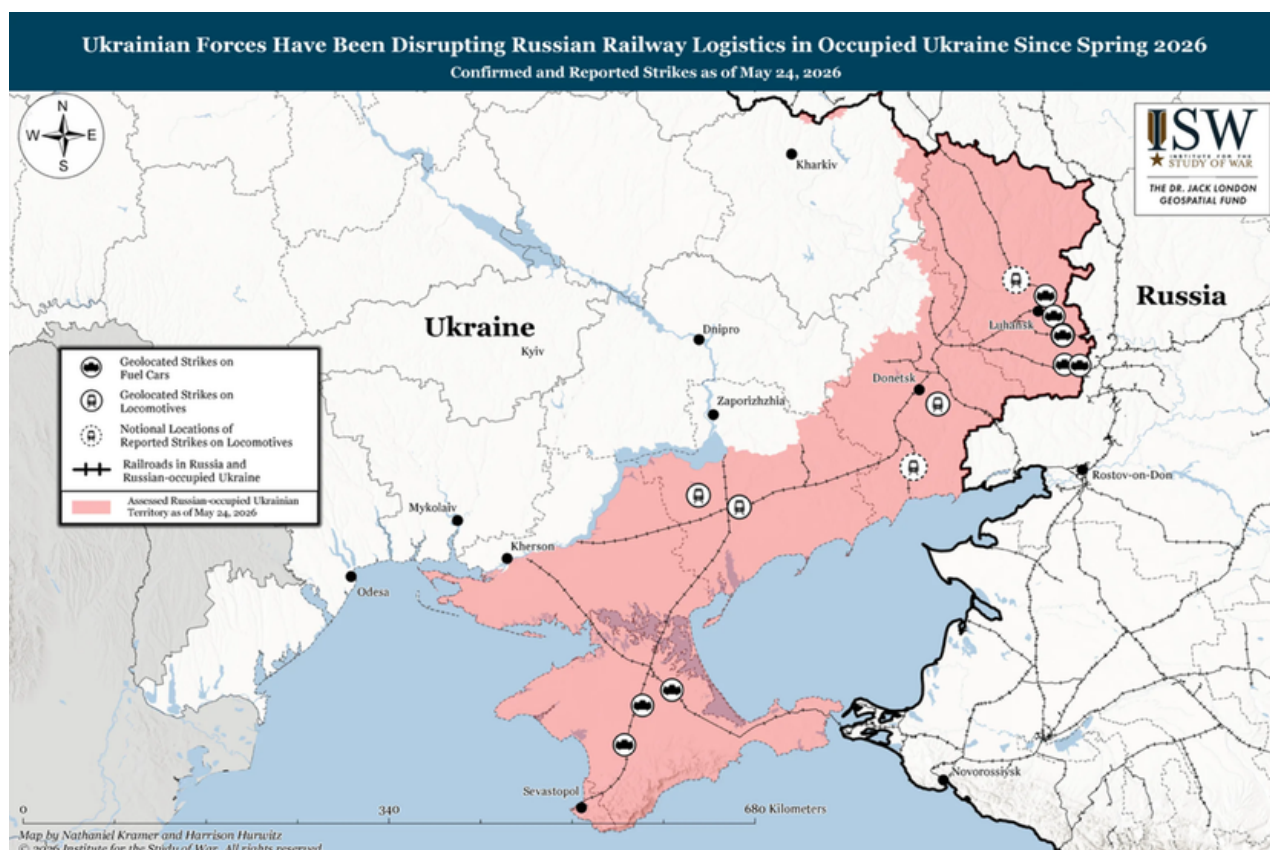
As a result, segments of Russia's financial and business elite have begun voicing the first public criticism of the government's management of the war economy¹⁸, a phenomenon that, while still nascent, was absent from earlier years' analyses. None of these elements point to an imminent collapse, since the Russian economy has proven more resilient than anticipated in 2022. But the accumulation of these problems, together with growing dependence on China as an economic and technological enabler, are trends that already affect, or will eventually affect, the Kremlin's strategic position over the medium and long term.

UKRAINE'S INTERDICTION CAMPAIGN

One of the most significant elements of recent months —and one that partly explains the slower Russian advance— is Ukraine's interdiction campaign deep inside Russia. Kyiv has consolidated a strategy aimed at logistically isolating Russian assets, with particular emphasis on the Crimean peninsula and on energy and industrial infrastructure. On one hand, Ukraine is conducting a bombing campaign against medium-range targets; on the other, it is striking deeper into Russian territory.

Regarding the first, Ukraine is carrying out an interdiction campaign at distances of 50 to 150 kilometers, apparently aimed at disabling the Trans-Tauris link and the Melitopol-Mariupol highway¹⁹ Since May 2026, Ukrainian forces have targeted Russia's main ground lines of communication in the occupied oblasts of Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson, particularly along the T-0509 (Mariupol-Donetsk) and M-14 highways, which together with the M-18 connect Rostov-on-Don with Crimea via Mariupol, Berdiansk, and Melitopol²⁰ Geolocated footage from May shows Ukrainian forces striking with drones tanker trucks and other military vehicles at distances beyond 160 kilometers²¹ This has forced Russian authorities in occupied territories to restrict civilian truck traffic along these routes²²

Figure 3. *Ukrainian strikes on Russia's rail network in occupied territories*



Source: Institute for the Study of War

Kyiv has also extended its interdiction campaign to the Russian rail system. Geolocated videos from March and April 2026 show Ukrainian drones striking at least ten freight trains and tanker cars, primarily in the Luhansk oblast, along with strikes in Donetsk and Zaporizhzhia²³. Given Russia's heavy reliance on its rail network for operational logistics, and considering that the state-owned Russian Railways has faced a personnel and locomotive shortage crisis since 2025, this campaign could further degrade Russia's ability to project its industrial capacity in delivering equipment, fuel, and other materiel to the battlefield²⁴.

All of this comes against the backdrop of Russia's Black Sea Fleet having been rendered practically neutralized as an operational force. The use of long-range unmanned surface vehicles (USVs) forced the Russian fleet to withdraw to ports farther from the Black Sea²⁵, limiting Russia's ability to project naval power and to protect its own coastal facilities.

Similarly, Ukrainian forces have extended their strategic strike capability to targets far from the border, reaching refineries roughly 1,750 kilometers inside Russia²⁶. In June 2025, Operation "Spiderweb" marked a watershed moment, destroying or damaging a significant number of Russian strategic bombers at their bases and reducing Moscow's capacity to launch coordinated strikes against Ukrainian energy infrastructure. Actions of this kind carry a dual effect: material damage to Russia's war capacity and political damage to the narrative of control the Kremlin projects to its own population. Ukraine also carried out highly symbolic strikes against facilities in St. Petersburg, including an oil terminal and the Kronstadt naval base, headquarters of the Baltic Fleet Command, timed to coincide with that city's Economic Forum, mere hours before its opening. In these strikes, Ukrainian weapons succeeded in damaging the corvette Boikiy, which was in dry dock at the naval base²⁷. Actions of this nature can hardly avoid damaging the image of stability and normalcy the Russian government seeks to project to its domestic audience and to potential foreign investors.

The interdiction campaign certainly does not resolve the conflict, but there are indications it has concretely altered the operational balance. So far, it has forced Russia to divert resources from the front toward defending its own territory, is affecting its economic base, and is progressively limiting its capacity to sustain its current offensive tempo. The temporary advantage these intermediate-range strike capabilities provide is that they will eventually face countermeasures and Russian adaptation. Kyiv therefore has a favorable window that it must continue to exploit, while seeking new alternatives capable of generating the asymmetries needed to break a balance that has so far tended to favor the invader.

TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION IN DRONE DEVELOPMENT

One of the most significant changes in the conflict over the past twelve months is the consolidation of unmanned systems as a decisive battlefield weapon, one that has become a major cause of casualties. According to estimates from the Ukrainian officials responsible for employing these systems, drones today are estimated to cause between 70% and 80% of casualties at the front²⁸. While this figure must be weighed in perspective and within the specific context of this conflict, including limited access to other weapons systems, it is essential to observe and draw conclusions from it. Bearing in mind the particularities of each conflict, the evolution in the design and use of unmanned systems means that reconnaissance and strike capabilities once requiring costly manned aircraft can now be performed, albeit with limitations, by comparatively low-cost systems²⁹.

Among the relevant factors that have enabled the success of these operations are clear improvements in range and precision, and, notably, in scaling the production of these new models. The Hornet, for example, is a low-cost fixed-wing system with a range of 150 kilometers, developed through a partnership between Ukraine and the American company Swift Beat LLC; reportedly equipped with artificial intelligence and Starlink satellite connectivity, it can allegedly operate in environments saturated with electronic warfare (EW) interference and at extended ranges³⁰. Its unit cost of approximately \$6,000 contrasts with longer-range drones such as the FP-2, capable of striking targets at 320 km with payloads of up to 200 kilograms³¹, illustrating the diversification of Ukrainian capabilities according to target type and required range.

Ukraine has embraced accelerated innovation, front-line feedback, and a decentralized rear-area production model. The country counts more than 500 companies dedicated to drone production, which lets it iterate designs in weeks rather than years and adjust rapidly to Russian countermeasures, particularly those involving electronic warfare . This ecosystem contrasts with the traditional defense acquisition and innovation³² model, typically structured around long-term, multi-year procurement programs and a small number of major contractors — though that model responds to a different set of requirements and urgencies³³.

Alongside conventional unmanned attack vehicles, Ukraine's development of systems that integrate artificial intelligence (AI) capabilities, designed to operate in heavily jammed electronic environments, has gained particular importance. These are joined by fiber-optic-guided unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV), which are immune to electronic interference, making them particularly effective at short range within the “kill zone”³⁴. These advances may also extend to coordinating drone swarms through AI integration. In February 2026, for instance, Ukraine managed to concentrate between 300 and 400 drones simultaneously in a limited sector, generating temporary, localized drone superiority and significantly increasing the odds of a successful strike³⁵.

Figure 3. *Total strikes on Russian targets reported by Ukrainian forces using unmanned systems*



Source: Institute for the Study of War

In the maritime domain, as noted earlier, Ukrainian USV (unmanned surface vehicles) — families such as Sea Baby and Magura — have been decisive in neutralizing the Russian Black Sea Fleet as an operational force, forcing its withdrawal to more distant ports and reducing its power-projection capacity. This same logic extends to ground robotic systems, increasingly used for casualty evacuation, logistical resupply, and, to a lesser extent, direct combat tasks in the contact zone, reducing personnel exposure in the most lethal sector of the front.³⁶

EXTERNAL ACTORS

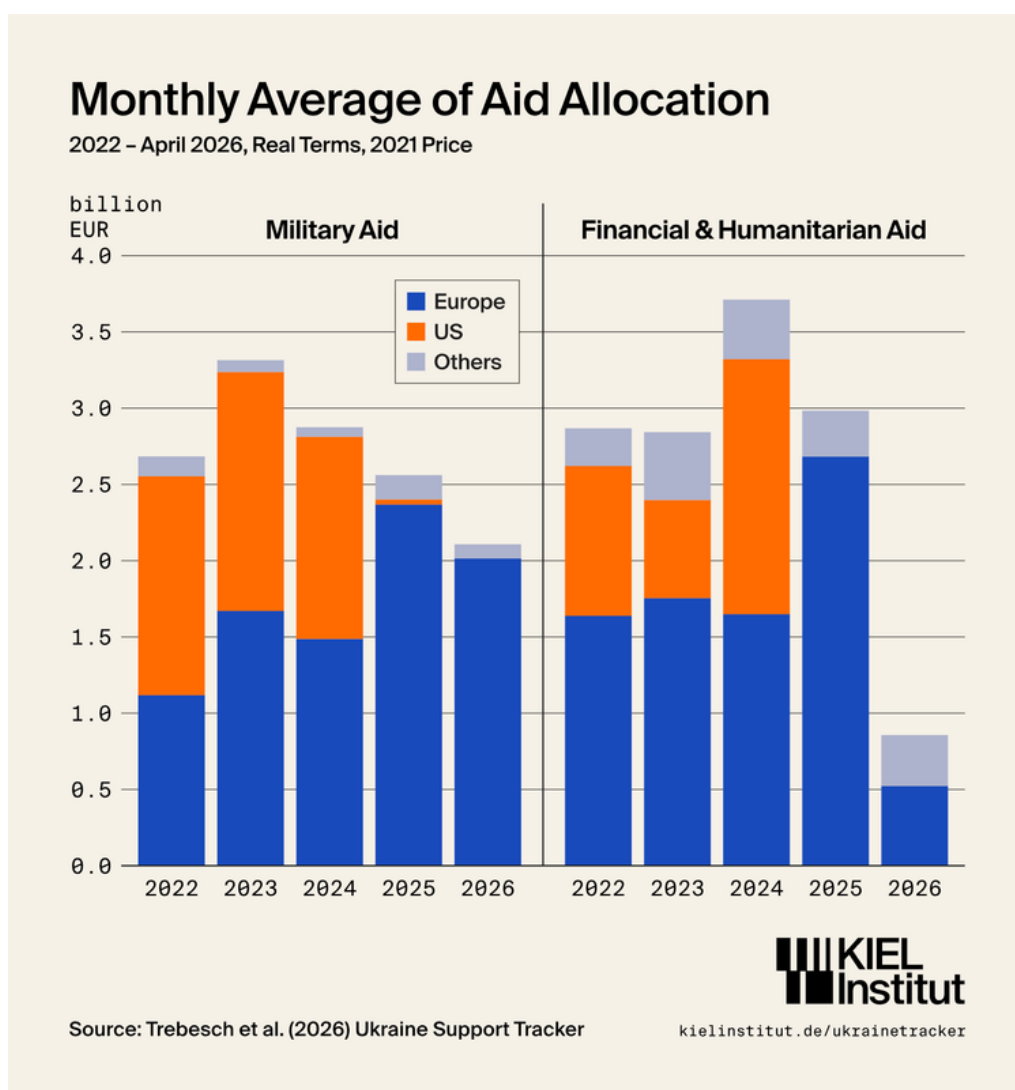
External actors have played, and will continue to play, a decisive role in the conflict. For Kyiv, financial and military support has not merely enabled it to fight; without it, Ukraine could not have sustained operations, particularly during the war's early years. That dependence has certainly diminished over time, yet it remains indispensable for accessing the financial resources that keep the government running, as well as irreplaceable components such as high-caliber ammunition, interceptor missiles, and inputs for its defense and intelligence industry.

Russia's case runs in the opposite direction. At the start of operations in 2022, its military power appeared almost limitless. Weapons systems that seemed highly sophisticated but never materialized on the battlefield compounded a progressive depletion of significant stockpiles, that had allowed it to replace its heavy losses. Today, the picture looks very different, and dependence keeps growing. North Korea, Iran, and above all China have become key pieces of the war effort, both as suppliers of war matériel and as outlets for hydrocarbon exports that are vital to an increasingly fragile economy.

Since 2025, however, Washington's shifting attitude toward the war and its NATO allies has generated tension and uncertainty. The United States' posture today remains marked by ambivalence between pressing for a negotiated solution—one that often appears to favor Moscow—and continuing support, albeit with a clearly diminished direct role compared to previous years. Pressure on Europe to raise defense spending and assume greater responsibility for supporting Ukraine must also be weighed against Washington's Middle East operations under way since 28 February. The military campaign against Iran proved longer than initially estimated and demanded a logistical effort that consumed large quantities of munitions critical to the strategic balance in the Indo-Pacific, as well as to sustaining the war in Europe.

Whereas analysts described Europe in 2025 as adopting a largely reactive posture, shaped by uncertainty over the American commitment, the evidence available by June 2026 points to greater consolidation of European support, both quantitatively and politically. From a financial standpoint, the Kiel Institute for the World Economy's Ukraine Support Tracker shows that Europe has overtaken the United States as the leading provider of bilateral assistance to Ukraine, both in cumulative terms and in new support commitments³⁷ The Kiel Institute highlights, in particular, Germany's growing role as the leading individual European donor, alongside the sustained contributions of the United Kingdom and the Nordic and Baltic states — the latter with contributions proportionally very high relative to their GDP³⁸

Figure 4. *Support for Ukraine, 2022-2026*



Fuente: Ukraine Support Tracker, Kiel Institut

This rise in aid has not been free of internal tensions within Europe's own security architecture. One example of the vulnerabilities NATO perceives occurred in Romania, where an undetermined number of drones of unidentified origin flew over installations near the Ukrainian border, prompting a response from allied fighter jets and reopening the debate over the effectiveness of the Alliance's deterrence mechanisms against low-intensity, hard-to-attribute incursions³⁹. The episode can be read as a symptom that NATO has yet to resolve satisfactorily how to respond to hybrid threats that fall short of the threshold of a conventional attack but progressively erode the confidence of states on the eastern flank⁴⁰.

On the political front, the debate over Ukraine's path toward European integration has gained new momentum. Former Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba has publicly argued that Ukraine's European Union membership should be treated as an immediate strategic objective rather than a long-term aspiration contingent on the war's end, contending that an accelerated accession process would send a decisive political signal, both to Moscow and to the Ukrainian population, about the irreversible nature of the country's European orientation⁴¹. German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, for his part, has emerged as one of the main proponents of this agenda within the Union, advocating for an accelerated accession process and for mechanisms that would let Ukraine benefit from certain European economic instruments even before completing formal accession⁴².

China, meanwhile, continues to play a significant role in the conflict, one that remains ambiguous but has changed little. For Russia, Beijing has cemented its position as the principal economic and technological enabler of the war effort, supplying dual-use goods, electronic components, and alternative markets for Russian energy exports, partially offsetting the effect of Western sanctions. For Ukraine, China represents a source of components indispensable to drone development, yet — despite its declared neutrality — Kyiv views Beijing as favoring Moscow, a perception that reflects clear diplomatic frustration.

Taken together, these elements suggest that the most significant update relative to Working Paper No. 37 is not merely quantitative — a greater volume of European aid, as documented by the Kiel Institute —, but also qualitative, as Europe has moved from a posture of accompanying American leadership to one of greater prominence, both in financing Ukraine's war effort and in shaping the debate over Ukraine's institutional path toward the European Union, while also helping manage the transatlantic security framework.⁴⁴

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

- The tactical and operational evolution of the war in Ukraine has reached a point at which the defenders have significantly altered the dynamic that prevailed between 2023 and 2025.
- The combination of political determination, necessity, and innovation has driven Ukraine to build a defense industry that leads in the production and use of unmanned vehicles and artificial intelligence, a capacity that has allowed it to survive, offset asymmetries, generate windows of opportunity, threaten Russia at the heart of its political power and even export capabilities, as observed toward the Middle East in recent months.
- Ukrainian adaptability generates battlefield advantages, but these are not permanent and must be exploited to the fullest before Russia manages to develop effective countermeasures. This dynamic has remained a constant throughout the war.
- The combination of Russia's frontline stalemate, economic and demographic attrition, and the consolidation of Ukrainian initiative through effective medium- and long-range strikes may be generating conditions for a ceasefire more favorable than at any point in the past four and a half years.
- No evidence currently indicates that Russia is willing to negotiate in good faith, but the accumulation of internal pressures could alter that calculation over the medium term should current trends persist. Putin will most likely try first to exploit any sign of fatigue in Western support before accepting terms that would amount to an implicit admission of failure, opting instead to sustain the war effort while waiting for a more favorable shift in the Western political context.

- Europe has assumed a far clearer and more decisive role in supporting Ukraine. The United States, however, remains irreplaceable in areas such as intelligence sharing and the provision of key systems such as interceptor missiles, which its transatlantic partners finance.
- Regrettably, none of the elements reviewed here point to an imminent ceasefire, and nothing indicates the war will end this year; operations will therefore continue, exacting a toll on civilian and military lives alike. The difference is that Ukraine can now strike, and is striking, deep inside Russian territory.
- What the evidence available by June 2026 does suggest is that the strategic balance has shifted, modestly but perceptibly, in a direction more favorable to Ukraine. Whether this trend consolidates or reverses will depend largely on Ukraine's capacity to sustain its current technological edge and on the willingness of its partners — particularly European ones — to maintain, and even increase, the level of support that has enabled this shift.

Marcelo Masalleras
Director of Research

June 23, 2026

NOTES

¹ John Griffiths and Marcelo Masalleras, "Working Paper No. 37. Four Years of War in Ukraine: New Geopolitical Scenarios", AthenaLab, 24 February 2026.

² Institute for the Study of War (ISW), "Ukraine's Intermediate-Range Strike Campaign and New Mechanized Attacks Herald the Start of a New Phase of the War", 25 May 2026.

³ Institute for the Study of War.

⁴ Institute for the Study of War.

⁵ Institute for the Study of War.

⁶ Institute for the Study of War.

⁷ Institute for the Study of War.

⁸ Institute for the Study of War.

⁹ Institute for the Study of War.

¹⁰ Institute for the Study of War.

¹¹ Michael Kofman and Jack Watling, "Ukraine's Turning Point: Front-Line Realities in Early 2026", The Russia Contingency with Michael Kofman, in <https://open.spotify.com/episode/6YX37c4ODI4v8cM5z0j3Fr>, 20 May 2026.

¹² Institute for the Study of War.

¹³ Michael Kofman and Jack Watling.

¹⁴ Michael Froman, "A Turning Point in Ukraine", in Council on Foreign Relations, 5 June 2026.

¹⁵ Seth Stodder, "How Ukraine Has Turned the Tide", in Foreign Policy / Atlantic Council, 5 June 2026.

¹⁶ Lawrence Freedman, "How much damage is Steve Witkoff causing? Can NATO help open the Strait of Hormuz?", Comment is Freed, 23 May 2026.

¹⁷ Lawrence Freedman, "Is time running out for Putin? Ukraine's Micawber strategy", Comment is Freed, 1 May 2026.

¹⁸ Lawrence Freedman, "Is time running out for Putin? Ukraine's Micawber strategy."

¹⁹ Mick Ryan, "The Interdiction War: How Ukraine Is Cutting Russia's Southern Lifelines, plus Xi's Big Week", in Futura Doctrina, 24 May 2026.

²⁰ Institute for the Study of War.

²¹ Institute for the Study of War.

²² Institute for the Study of War.

²³ Institute for the Study of War.

²⁴ Institute for the Study of War.

²⁵ Michael C. Horowitz, Erin D. Dumbacher y Lauren Kahn, “How Ukraine’s Drone Innovation Reversed Russia’s Momentum”, in Council on Foreign Relations, 12 June 2026.

²⁶ Mick Ryan.

²⁷ Patrick Bishop and Roger Moorhouse, with Helene von Bismarck, “407. Black Smoke Over St Petersburg: Ukraine Targets Putin’s ‘Russian Davos’”, Battleground, in <https://podcasts.apple.com/in/podcast/407-black-smoke-over-st-petersburg-ukraine-targets/id1617276298?i=1000772027251&l=pa>, 5 June 2026.

²⁸ David Kirichenko, with Oz Katerji, “Drone masters – How Ukraine reinvented modern warfare”, This Is Not A Drill with Gavin Esler, in <https://podcasts.apple.com/es/podcast/drone-masters-how-ukraine-reinvented-modern-warfare/id1593634121?i=1000767577877>, 13 May 2026.

²⁹ David Kirichenko.

³⁰ Institute for the Study of War.

³¹ Sam Skove, “The New Weapon Behind Ukraine’s Battlefield Success”, in Foreign Policy, 3 June 2026.

³² Michael C. Horowitz, Erin D. Dumbacher and Lauren Kahn, “How Ukraine’s Drone Innovation Reversed Russia’s Momentum”, in Council on Foreign Relations, 12 June 2026.

³³ Michael C. Horowitz, Erin D. Dumbacher and Lauren Kahn.

³⁴ Sam Skove, “The New Weapon Behind Ukraine’s Battlefield Success”, in Foreign Policy, 3 June 2026.

³⁵ Institute for the Study of War (ISW), “Ukraine’s Intermediate-Range Strike Campaign and New Mechanized Attacks Herald the Start of a New Phase of the War”, 25 May 2026.

³⁶ David Kirichenko.

³⁷ Christoph Trebesch et al., “Ukraine Support Tracker”, Kiel Institute for the World Economy, updated 2026.

³⁸ Christoph Trebesch et al.

³⁹ Mathew Schmidt and Phillips O’Brien, “Warcast: Why is NATO still scared of Russia’s shadow fleet – even after the threats from drones?”, Warcast, June 2026.

⁴⁰ Mathew Schmidt y Phillips O’Brien.

⁴¹ Mathew Schmidt y Phillips O’Brien.

⁴² Mathew Schmidt y Phillips O’Brien.

⁴³ Christoph Trebesch et al.

⁴⁴ Christoph Trebesch et al.