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## **russia launches fourth drone attack in five days on Ukrainian food exports**

### ***росія вчетверте за п'ять днів атакувала головний український порт на Дунаї***

*Як пише «The Guardian», росія продовжує бомбардування Ізмаїла, головного українського порту на Дунаї, звідки завантажувалося зерно на кораблі, які вивозили вантажі через територіальні води Румунії, Болгарії та Туреччини. Путін з липня відмовився від чорноморської зернової ініціативи, яка була висунута за посередництва ООН та Туреччини, щоб забезпечити безпечний прохід суднам, які перевозять українське зерно. Крах чорноморської зернової ініціативи викликав різке зростання світових цін, що прямо позначилося на гуманітарних постачаннях до районів потенційного голод. Президент Туреччини Р. Т. Ердоган не зміг переконати путіна повернутися до угоди на зустрічі в Сочі.*

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/sep/07/russia-launches-fourth-drone-attack-in-five-days-on-ukrainian-food-exports>

Bombings around Izmail, main port along Danube river, lasted three hours and injured two truck drivers, Odesa governor says

Russia has maintained its bombing campaign against Ukrainian food exports with the fourth drone attack in five days on grain silos and other infrastructure around the port of Izmail along the Danube river.

The governor of the Odesa region, Oleh Kiper, said Thursday's attack lasted three hours, and the general prosecutor's office said two truck drivers were hurt and several homes were damaged by blast waves. The Ukrainian military said agricultural facilities were damaged but did not give details.

Vladimir Putin has sought to cut off Ukrainian exports of cereals since July when he walked away from the Black Sea grain initiative which had been brokered by the UN and Turkey to allowed safe passage for ships carrying Ukrainian grain. The collapse of the initiative caused a spike in global prices with a direct impact on humanitarian supplies to areas of potential famine, but the Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan failed to persuade Putin to return to the agreement at a meeting on Monday in the Russian resort of Sochi.

A cargo ship and a Ukrainian coastguard vessel on the Danube–Black Sea canal.

Turning food into a weapon: how Russia resorted to one of the oldest forms of warfare  
Russia has focused bombing raids on Izmail, the main Ukrainian port along the Danube, from where grain has been loaded on to ships which have taken cargo out through Romanian, Bulgarian and Turkish territorial waters, as well as westwards by river to the rest of Europe.

The bombing of grain facilities came as the Kremlin criticised the US for its decision to supply depleted uranium tank rounds to Ukraine, calling it a “criminal act”.

Sergei Ryabkov, a deputy foreign minister, said it was “a reflection of Washington's outrageous disregard for the environmental consequences of using these kind of munitions in a war zone”.

Russia has several depleted uranium weapons in its arsenal. According to the Berlin-based International Coalition to Ban Uranium Weapons, there have been multiple reports of Russian use of such weapons in Ukraine, but they have not so far been verified.

Depleted uranium rounds are effective in piercing armour. They are not banned under international law but there are health concerns over their use. They are less radioactive than natural unrefined uranium, and the International Atomic Energy Agency has found radiological risk to the people is not significant in situations where there is depleted uranium in the general environment. However, the IAEA also found there is a potential risk of radiation effects for individuals who come into direct contact with such fragments or ammunitions.

The delivery of US depleted uranium weapons was announced at the start of a visit to Ukraine by the US secretary of state, Antony Blinken. On the second day of the trip on Thursday, Blinken visited Yahidne, part of the northern Chernihiv region which was occupied by Russia during the first weeks of the war. He was shown a school basement, where Russian forces kept dozens of villagers captive for a month.

“This is just one building ... [but] this is a story we’ve seen again and again,” Blinken said.

Blinken also met president Volodymyr Zelenskiy and other top officials, in part to hear how Ukraine’s counteroffensive against Russian forces is going. In recent weeks, unnamed US officials have expressed disappointment in the speed and tactics of the offensive, which has infuriated Ukrainian officials.

Blinken said the slow pace of the counteroffensive was understandable.

“The Russians had a lot of time in this case to prepare for the counteroffensive. They put thousands, tens of thousands of mines in place,” he told NBC News in Kyiv, according to a transcript of the interview.

“Other defensive fortifications, the Ukrainians are working their way through it. But at the end of the day, they have a determination. They have a desire that I think will outmatch whatever the Russians put into this,” he said.

The remarks were echoed by Mykhailo Podolyak, an adviser to Zelenskiy, who told the Guardian in Kyiv that once the Russian defensive lines were breached, the offensive would start to move much quicker.

“It’s not the same Russia that was in Kharkiv and Kherson last year, they ran away quickly, now they understood that they had to invest in serious defences ... We will get through these lines, and as soon as we do so we will see a very different situation,” he said.

... added that the size and strength of Russia’s defensive lines was also an indicator that the Kremlin has scaled back its war ambitions and with the exception of a few local areas has no plans to attempt major offensive actions.

“They don’t have the reserves, the resources or the desire for further advances. The main thing they want to do is keep the lines fixed. They don’t want to go forward but they also don’t want to allow retreat as that will start the process of the disintegration of the country,” he said.

Zelenskiy has undertaken a big political shake-up this week, firing defence minister Oleksiy Reznikov, who had headed the ministry since before the outbreak of full-scale war. The ministry had been plagued by corruption scandals in recent months.

“We need more trust. Trust in the decisions that are being made, trust in the procurement that is carried out, trust in the supplies,” Zelenskiy told the new minister, Rustem Umerov, on Thursday. Umerov, a skilled negotiator known to have strong contacts in the Middle East and Turkey, said he aimed to strengthen Ukraine’s international alliances and to develop “probably even unexpected partnerships”.

In the eastern city of Kostiantynivka, close to the frontlines, funerals began on Thursday for those killed during a strike on a crowded market the previous day.

Mykola and Natalia Shyrai, a married couple who had been selling flowers at the time of the strike, were buried in a village near Kostiantynivka. The strike killed 16 people and injured 32.

Blinken said the attack was a reminder of “what Ukrainians are living with every day.”