

Kremlin: No Grounds for Optimism on Peaceful Settlement of Ukraine Crisis



In this photo provided by the Ukrainian Emergency Service, fire is seen at the site of a Russian air attack in Pechenihy, Kharkiv region, Ukraine, Aug 18, 2026.

MOSCOW Dispatches) – There are currently no grounds for optimism about a peaceful settlement of the Ukraine crisis due to Ukraine’s position, and Russia’s special military operation is continuing, Kremlin said.

While there is a trend of growing fatigue with support for Ukraine, some countries, including Britain, are doing their utmost to counter the trend and encourage European countries to continue the conflict with Russia, while increasing their own involvement, including direct technological and technical involvement, spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said at a press briefing.

Asked about U.S. President Donald Trump’s special envoy Steve Witkoff and Trump’s son-in-law Jared Kushner’s visit for mediation, Peskov said the US envoys were still busy dealing with other areas of US foreign policy and that no date had yet been set for their visit to Russia.

Meanwhile, Peskov said Rus-

sia greatly appreciates the efforts of all countries that are genuinely seeking to help resolve the Ukraine crisis.

“There are few such countries, but that makes their efforts all the more valuable and important,” he said.

In Crimea, two people were killed and four others injured in Ukrainian attacks, Crimea region head Sergey Aksyonov said.

Separately, three civilians in the Donetsk region were injured in Ukrainian drone attacks, regional head Denis Pushilin noted, adding that three residential buildings, six civil-infrastructure facilities, two trucks and three cars sustained damage.

The Russian Navy has carried out a successful missile test near the country’s Kuril Islands, the Pacific Fleet has said.

The test comes a week after Japan vigorously protested Russian President Vladimir Putin’s first-ever visit to the archipelago, which is partially claimed by Tokyo.

The missile test, which took place near the southern Kurils, involved the Varyag guided missile cruiser, the Omsk nuclear-powered submarine, and a ground-based Bastion surface-to-ship missile system, the Russian Pacific Fleet said in a statement on Thursday.

They fired several types of munitions at a target simulating enemy vessels at a distance of around 300 km (186 miles), with targeting data provided by naval aviation, the fleet said.

Objective control data confirmed the destruction of all targets, it stressed.

Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi reacted to the drills by telling reporters that Tokyo “cannot tolerate moves by Russia to strengthen military power on the four Northern Islands because they go against our country’s stance on the territories.”

Kyodo news earlier reported that Japan had lodged a protest with Russia after Moscow notified it of the upcoming missile test last week.

On Tuesday, the Russian Foreign Ministry summoned Tokyo’s ambassador to Moscow to express a strong protest over “anti-Russian statements” by the Japanese leadership.

After Putin traveled to Iturup, the largest of the Kuril Islands, on August 13, Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi called the trip “absolutely unacceptable” and said it “hurts the feelings of the Japanese people.” Motegi also issued a statement, claiming that the four southernmost islands of the archipelago “are an inherent part of Japan’s territory both historically and under international law.”

Families Protest in Nigeria Over Children Abducted Nearly 100 Days Ago

MAIDUGURI (Reuters) - Parents of children abducted from Nigeria’s northeastern Borno state protested in Uba town on Thursday, demanding the federal government secure their release nearly 100 days after they were taken.

The children were seized from their classrooms on May 15 in Mussa, a community on the fringes of the Sambisa Forest, a long-time stronghold of militants.

The protest underscored families’ frustration as kidnappings persist despite years of military operations against Boko Haram and its Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) offshoot in northeastern Nigeria. While the insurgency

has weakened since its peak, both groups continue to stage attacks on civilians, schools and security forces across Borno and neighboring states.

The abduction was followed by another attack in nearby Lassa on June 29, where 36 students and a teacher also remain captive. Last month, authorities secured the release of schoolchildren abducted by gunmen from schools in southwest Oyo state after nearly two months in captivity.

A police spokesperson said the military is “on top of the situation” but declined further comment, directing enquiries to the military. A spokesperson for the military did not

respond to requests for comment.

“We still have not seen them,” said Chinda Buba, whose child was among those abducted. “We do not know where our children are. We don’t know whether they are healthy or going through difficult conditions.”

Peace Nicolos, whose two children, aged 3-1/2 and 8-1/2, are among the missing, said families lived in constant anxiety.

“We worry every day and struggle to eat,” she said. “We are pleading with the government to rescue them.”

Orbet Lawan Yakubu, representing the traditional ruler of Mussa, said around 45 children remained unaccounted for.

Many Residents in Northwest Indiana Endure Ninth Day Without Power



WASHINGTON (AP) - Tens of thousands of residents in northwest Indiana were in survival mode Thursday as they endured a ninth day without power, throwing out spoiled food, lining up for hot meals and searching for places to charge their phones.

In Gary, Indiana, schools remained closed after the deadly Aug. 11 storm downed trees and power lines. Resi-

dents turned to social media to find open laundromats and working Wi-Fi, while others sought food, diapers and cleaning wipes for low-income neighbors.

Northern Indiana Public Service Co. said 68,000 customers were still without power as of Thursday morning, the majority of them in Lake County beside the Illinois border.

The utility said it has restored power to 306,500 others since Aug. 11. But power is not expected to be fully restored until Tuesday in some places, including Gary, the AP reported.

Courtney Page-Tan, an Indiana University Indianapolis professor who studies community resilience, said health concerns grow each day of a prolonged outage. With many people using generators, poor ventilation can lead to carbon monoxide poisoning. In addition, those reliant on medical devices risk having them lose their charge, while refrigerated food once safe to eat could pose health risks as it spoils.

More than a week after the initial storm, many residents in East Chicago, Indiana, who lost power regained it, but then lost it again.

The utility, NIPSCO, has called the destruction “unprecedented and widespread,” and said crews from around the country have arrived to help repair downed wires, broken poles and damaged equipment.

U.S., South Korean Militaries Wrap Up Drill Early, After North Korea’s Missile Barrage



U.S. military vehicles and Black Hawk helicopters are parked at Camp Humphreys in Pyeongtaek, South Korea, Friday, Aug. 21, 2026.

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — The U.S. and South Korean militaries wrapped up their annual drill six days earlier than initially scheduled on Friday in a conciliatory gesture toward North Korea, though the North said the step isn’t enough to persuade it to return to talks.

U.S. President Donald Trump had earlier abruptly ordered the Pentagon to “substantially reduce” the Ulchi Freedom Shield exercise just before it began Monday. Trump cited what he described as a good relationship with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and South Korea’s refusal to support him over the war in Iran.

South Korea’s military said the Ulchi Freedom Shield, a command post exercise with the U.S., ended on Friday.

This month’s exercise was initially reportedly scheduled to be held in two phases for 11 days in simulation of North Korean attacks — the first

part until Friday on defensive operations and the second part until Aug. 27 on counteroffensive operations. North Korea is extremely sensitive to the duration and size of the drills won’t change their “provocative, aggressive nature.”

South Korea and the U.S. had also planned to hold 14 joint field training exercises during the Ulchi Freedom Shield period. But they’ve agreed to halve them as well, according to South Korea’s military.

Kim Yo Jong, the influential sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, brushed aside Trump’s overture on Wednesday, saying that reducing the duration and size of the drills won’t change their “provocative, aggressive nature.”

The next day, North Korea fired about 10 short-range ballistic missiles toward the sea, apparently following through with its previous threat to respond to the U.S.-South Korean drills that it views as an invasion rehearsal.

Hyundai Motor’s South Korean Union Stages First Full Strike Over Pay



Members of the Korean Metal Workers’ Union chant slogans and raise their fists during a rally outside Hyundai Motor Company headquarters in Seoul, South Korea, August 21, 2026.

SEOUL (Reuters) - Hyundai Motor’s South Korean union staged its first full strike in a decade on Friday after wage talks stalled, as it seeks a higher retirement age and job protections against artificial intelligence and automation.

Striking workers from Hyundai Motor, affiliate Kia Corp and suppliers held a rally outside Hyundai Motor’s headquarters in Seoul, wearing red headbands and chanting demands that included allowing parts suppliers to have direct wage talks with automakers and increasing the retirement age from the current 60.

“The key figures who made Hyundai and Kia the world’s strongest company for 35 or 40 years are now being pushed into contract positions,” Hyundai union leader Lee Jong-cheol said from a stage at the rally.

About 40,000 Hyundai Motor union members are expected to join the walkout on Friday, while around 1,200 to 1,300 union members are set to attend the Seoul rally, a union official said earlier on Friday.

Members of other unions and those affiliated with the umbrella union were also seen joining, bringing the total expected attendance at the rally in the capital to about 3,000, the official added.

The one-day strike illustrates growing labor unrest in South Korea following the election of pro-labor liberal President Lee Jae Myung last year.

It follows a series of partial walkouts since late July that have disrupted production of 55,200 vehicles worth over 2.3 trillion won (\$1.67 billion), according to Yonhap News Agency estimates.

The labor action adds to challenges facing the automaker, which in July said it expected to miss its global sales target this year, amid growing Chinese competition in Europe and falling sales in South Korea.

The union’s demand to raise the mandatory retirement age is in line with President Lee’s pledge to gradually increase the limit in one of the world’s fastest-ageing countries.

The union is also seeking to raise bonuses to 800% of monthly base salary from 750%, and has demanded guarantees to protect jobs as the company adopts AI and automation.

Hyundai, which owns humanoid robot maker Boston Dynamics, has said it plans to deploy humanoid robots at its U.S. plant in Georgia from 2028, with the aim of expanding their use across its production sites.

Union officials said AI would be a potential threat not only to production jobs but also research and engineering posts at automakers.

“Even if AI is introduced, we are prepared to fight it — and prepared to win. We are concerned about the future generation,” Kim Byung-chul, a Hyundai Motor worker and vice president of the Korean Metal Workers’ Union, told Reuters.

Hyundai Motor union spokesperson Kim Jin-wook said the union was open to resuming wage talks, but would discuss further strike plans if the management failed to come up with “forward-looking proposals.”

Hyundai Motor said it was committed to finding solutions through dialogue.

News in Brief

JAKARTA (Reuters) - Indonesia will develop its defense industry with Chinese support, as the two countries agreed to expand joint drills and deepen military technology cooperation on Friday after talks between their defense and foreign ministers in Jakarta. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Defense Minister Dong Ju and their Indonesian counterparts Sugiono and Sjafrie Sjamsosedin discussed bilateral ties across several meetings, including their second 2+2 meeting and the inaugural China-Indonesia Comprehensive Strategic Dialogue.

ISLAMABAD (AFP) - Former Pakistan prime minister Imran Khan was transferred back to jail early on Friday, hours after being taken to a hospital for court-ordered medical checks, the government said. The Supreme Court ordered on Tuesday that Khan, Pakistan’s most popular politician, be taken to the private Shifa International Hospital in the capital Islamabad within 48 hours for treatment, after his lawyers petitioned the court over concerns that his health was poor. The ex-cricket captain and his wife Bushra Bibi, who is also his spiritual guide, were both sentenced late last year to 17 years in prison.

JUNEAU, Alaska (AP) — Two U.S. Army Corps of Engineers employees were among eight killed in a small plane crash near the site of a remote aircraft-tracking radar in western Alaska, the U.S. military said. The agency had chartered the plane, which crashed at about 11:45 a.m. Thursday near its destination, the Cape Newenham Long Range Radar Site Airport, approximately 450 miles (725 kilometers) west of Anchorage, Alaska, officials said. The two pilots and six passengers were not immediately identified. National Transportation Safety Board investigators were traveling to the scene Friday. The twin-engine Cessna 441 had taken off from the Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport, the Federal Aviation Administration said Friday.

ABUJA (Reuters) - At least 50 people, mostly children, died after an overloaded boat capsized on Thursday in Nigeria’s northwest Sokoto state, witnesses said. The accident took place near Gorau in Goronyo local government area and rescue efforts are continuing, said Abdulkadir Yusuf, an area manager at the National Inland Waterways Authority. A Reuters witness saw 50 bodies, many wrapped in mats and traditional cloths, lying in the forecourt of a community mosque ahead of their burial in Gorau later on Thursday. Deadly boat accidents are relatively common in Nigeria, where overcrowding, poor maintenance and weak enforcement of safety regulations often contribute to disasters on the country’s rivers and waterways, particularly during the rainy season.

CAPE TOWN (Xinhua) – South Africa has returned ancestral remains and the mortal remains of two Namibian political prisoners during a solemn repatriation ceremony in Cape Town, the country’s legislative capital. Two rooms were filled with ivory-colored coffins, side by side, each draped with the Namibian flag. The mortal remains of 84 indigenous people had been held at the Iziko South African Museum for more than 100 years and were said to have been used for “scientific reasons.” Chairperson of the Council of Iziko Museums of South Africa Marvin Mdhululi said: “They entered the South African Museums as objects of race-based pseudo-scientific research,” aimed at portraying indigenous communities as having inferior attributes and status.