# Ukrainian forces destroy the last Russian warship in Crimea amid escalating tensions



On May 19, 2024, Ukrainian defense forces claimed to have destroyed the last Russian warship armed with cruise missiles stationed in Crimea. This announcement came as tensions rose in the Kharkiv region, where Ukrainian troops reported intense fighting near Vovchansk, located by the Russian border. Ukrainian gunner Pavlo from the 92nd Separate Assault Brigade remarked on the nonstop attacks, noting the improved situation due to increased ammunition supplies.

Additionally, the Sumy region in northern Ukraine faced power outages after Russian drone strikes targeted energy facilities in the cities of Shostka and Konotop. Emergency services were tasked with restoring electricity. Meanwhile, over 14,000 people have been displaced from Kharkiv due to the ongoing conflict, as stated by the World Health Organization.

The European Union has approved a plan to fund Ukraine's defense through profits from $300 billion in Russian central bank assets frozen in the EU, with the first tranche expected in July 2024. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba has expressed a desire to seize the assets themselves, not just the interest. Concurrently, the US is pushing for a loan using Russian frozen assets worth up to $50 billion for Ukrainian support.

Russian military activities have also escalated, with drills simulating the use of tactical nuclear weapons. These exercises, following statements from Western leaders, involved missile forces in Russia and parts of Ukraine.

In response to these developments, Ukraine’s top national security official Oleksandr Lytvynenko urged the US to lift restrictions on using American-supplied weapons inside Russia to counter Moscow's offensive. He highlighted that such measures could have slowed Russia's advance in the Kharkiv region. Despite tens of thousands of soldiers involved in recent incursions, capturing Kharkiv will require significant Russian manpower, stated Lytvynenko.

Lastly, over 3,000 Ukrainian prisoners have applied to join military efforts under a new law that permits inmates with fewer than three years to serve to enlist, excluding those convicted of serious crimes. Meanwhile, Russian forces continue to advance in Kharkiv, causing substantial displacement and destruction.