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The world's attention is on Gaza, and Ukrainians worry war fatigue will hurt their cause

Увага всього світу прикута до Гази, і українці хвилюються, що втома від війни зашкодить їхній справі

Репортерка Ганна Аргірова зазначає, що так, як увага всього світу прикута до сектору Гази, українці побоюються, що поєднання глобальної втоми, конкуруючих політичних програм та обмеженості ресурсів призведе до зменшення допомоги їх збройним силам, що завдасть шкоди спроможності країни витримувати конфронтацію з росією. Коли менеджер з розвитку волонтерського фонду «Шлях до України» Тимофій Постоюк та його друзі з Нідерландів організували онлайн-проект зі збору коштів для України, пожертвування хлинули з усього світу, допомагаючи закупити необхідне обладнання для ЗСУ. Вони зібрали майже 147 000 дол. - гроші, на які підтримали 13 бригад і надали транспортні засоби, у тому числі 15 пікапів, три позашляховики, машину швидкої допомоги та дрон. Т. Постоюк зазначив, що після початку війни між Ізраїлем і Хамасом команда очікувала зниження пожертв, але не такою мірою. За його словами, вперше в історії фонду пожертвування зсередини України перевищили пожертвування з-за кордону.

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ap-middle-east-russia-israel-hamas-b2449584.html>

With the onset of the war between Israel and Hamas, the world's attention has swung away from the nearly 2-year-old conflict in Ukraine

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When Tymofii Postoiuk and his friends set up an online fundraising effort for Ukraine, donations poured in from around the globe, helping to purchase essential equipment for Ukrainian armed forces.

As the fighting with Russia wore on and war fatigue set in, the donations slowed down, but money continued to come in steadily. Then the Israel-Hamas war broke out on Oct. 7.

With the start of another major conflict, social media networks including X, formerly known as Twitter, were flooded with news from the Middle East. "Our fundraising posts and updates simply get lost in between those tweets," Postoiuk said.

The result has been a broad shift in the world's attention away from Ukraine to the fighting in Gaza — a trend that worries many Ukrainians. They fear that a combination of global fatigue, competing political agendas and limited resources will result in less aid for their military, hurting the country's ability to sustain its confrontation with Russia.

"The longer we talk about our war, the less interest it holds for people," said 21-year-old Ivan Mahuriak, who lives in Lviv in western Ukraine. Like many other Ukrainians, he feels as if the world stopped paying attention to the war in Ukraine even before the Hamas attack on Israel.

The fatigue, he said, arises from the fact that dynamics on the ground are significantly less than in 2022, when Ukrainian armed forces managed to completely or partially push Russians out of several regions.

"In some places, the front line is still. But that doesn't mean that nothing is happening," he said. His brother, two cousins, several colleagues and friends are in the Ukrainian military and continue to fight Russian troops.

This year's much-touted counteroffensive, which took off in June, has progressed at a much slower pace, with Ukrainian troops struggling to dislodge Russians who are entrenched in captured territory. Additional U.S. funding for Ukraine is jeopardized by political fights in Washington, where the new war consumes attention at the highest levels.

Divisions over Ukraine have also emerged in the European Union, which says it cannot provide all the munitions it promised. EU summits and other high-level global meetings now tend to focus on the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza.

United States President Joe Biden has made a point of linking U.S. support for Israel and Ukraine, saying both are vital for national security. Biden's secretary of transportation, Pete Buttigieg, paid an official visit to Ukraine on Nov. 8 to show that the U.S. commitment has not wavered.

"The fact that I am here is one way to demonstrate that, in addition to the great concern and attention that we have toward what is going on in the Middle East, we have as much attention, focus and commitment as we have ever had right here to Ukraine," he said, standing outside of St. Michael's Church in Kyiv.

But many Ukrainians are worried.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy acknowledged the fatigue earlier in November. "Yes. A lot of people, of course, in the world are tired," he said in an interview on NBC's "Meet the Press."

The war in the Middle East also presents an opportunity to Russian President Vladimir Putin by taking the spotlight off Ukraine.

"Of course, Russia is very happy with this war," Zelenskyy added.

Millions of Ukrainians are burdened by the realization that the war Russia initiated in their country won't end any time soon.

"No matter how frightening it may sound, I am preparing myself for the fact that this war will last my entire life," said Zoya Krasovska, a 34-year-old resident of Lviv, who says her greatest fear is that allies will divert resources to other conflicts.

"It's akin to receiving a diagnosis of an incurable illness, where you don't stop living because of it, but you live with the awareness that it is with you forever," Krasovska said.

Unlike 2022, when morale was high despite power outages, disrupted water service and blackouts, this year Ukrainians face the frustration of the slow counteroffensive and shortages of sophisticated weapons. Domestic politics have become a greater focus.

Postoiuk, a Netherlands-based development manager for the Way to Ukraine fund, said the team expected a decline in donations, but not to this extent. Since the Israel-Hamas war broke out, it takes at least twice as long to raise enough money to buy a car for the army — usually \$8,000 to \$14,000.

Through their work, they have collected nearly \$147,000 — money that supported 13 brigades and provided vehicles that included 15 pickups, three SUVs, an ambulance and a drone.

For the first time in the history of the fund, donations from within Ukraine have exceeded those from abroad, he said.

Ukraine's "war for independence is simply not on the agenda anymore, at least for now," he said.

Ivan Bezdudnyi, a 26-year-old from Kyiv, is consumed by the war in his country. For the past two years, he has been involved in documenting Russian war crimes. Little has changed for him personally since the outbreak of the war in the Middle East.

He does not worry that diminishing interest will affect Ukraine's war for long.

"When the wave of interest in Israel and Hamas subsides, and I tend to think it won't last long ... the level of attention we had will remain," he said. "Maybe not as high as in February or March of last year, but probably higher than it is now."

Associated Press writers Lori Hinnant in Paris and Samya Kullab in Kyiv, Ukraine, contributed to this report.