



## Ukraine - Mykhailo Drapaty, the New Commander of the Armed Forces: From the Front Line to the Drone War

Published on 23/07/2026

In the fifth year of a conflict marked by the massive use of technology and constant pressure on the front, the leadership of the Ukrainian armed forces turns a page with a choice that smells of the trenches. The appointment of the forty-three-year-old paratrooper general Mykhailo Drapaty as head of the army — formalized at Mariinsky Palace — brings to the top a commander who has not only studied war on simulation tables but has lived it meter by meter, knowing firsthand the invaluable worth of every single man on the ground.

### The Operational Priority: "Dronization" to Protect Soldiers

Called to take the baton at a time of strong transition, Drapaty immediately set an unequivocal direction for his strategic priorities: to radically accelerate the "dronization" of defense and reform the chain of command. For an officer raised among the harshest lines of fire, technological implementation is not just a tactical response to enemy offensives but the

fundamental tool to reduce human risk, safeguard soldiers' lives, and avoid preventable attrition in pockets of resistance.

His operational path speaks clearly. From the decisive push for the liberation of Kherson to the hot lines of Kharkiv, through the complex sectors of Avdiivka and Bakhmut to the defense of Kryvyi Rih, the new military chief has built a solid reputation as a front-line leader. An officer accustomed to managing extreme emergencies and protecting encircled units, aware that every decision made at the top directly impacts those fighting with mud up to their throats.

## **A Profile of Pragmatism, Self-Criticism, and Respect for the Troops**

What also distinguishes the new generalissimo is a rare pronounced propensity for self-criticism and a sense of responsibility, entirely alien to superficial rhetoric. An ethical and human trait emerged strongly when, in the past, he chose to step back, taking personal responsibility for a tragic missile attack that hit cadets. Faithful to the principle that remaining silent on structural problems means paying a very high price in human lives, Drapaty imposes a line of absolute transparency and closeness to the troops.

## **The Roots of an Icon: From Mariupol to the Legend of Resistance**

To fully understand the depth of this commander, however, one must go back to the origins of the conflict, at the dawn of Donbass in May 2014. At that time, a young major responsible for the 72nd Brigade, he found himself managing the desperate emergency of a group of police officers besieged in a barracks in Mariupol, with streets blocked by civilians and barricades.

It was in that circumstance that, to break the impasse and save his men without waiting for impossible orders, he ordered the armored vehicle to force the blockade between tires and chevaux de frise, opening a decisive breach. An impulsive and extremely protective act of courage that forever consigned him to the collective memory and iconography of Ukrainian resistance, consecrating him long before today as an officer who, before ranks, has always prioritized the safety of his men.