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## Steel Front's Systematic Approach to Defence Production and Innovation



In a recent interview with “Direct Channel”, **Oleksandr Myronenko**, Chief Operating Officer of our steel company [Metinvest](#), outlined the strategic evolution of [Rinat Akhmetov's Steel Front](#). As the largest private initiative in

Ukraine assisting the country's defenders, the organisation maintains a singular focus: developing, producing, and providing defensive equipment that saves lives. Since the start of the war, [Rinat Akhmetov](#) and his businesses have allocated over **UAH 14.1 billion (\$368 million)** to meet military and humanitarian needs.

Transitioning from urgent, ad-hoc assistance in 2022 to a highly structured production model, Steel Front now manufactures approximately 50 distinct types of protective equipment. This extensive geographic operation spans from the Kharkiv to the Kherson regions. The initiative produces vital protective screens for a wide array of vehicles, from modern Abrams tanks to Soviet-era equipment, ensuring troops have maximum protection.

A major focus of the initiative is the [construction of advanced underground shelters](#). Moving far beyond the basic field structures of the early war, Metinvest now produces comprehensive underground facilities. These include fully equipped command posts and underground hospitals that meet NATO Role 2 standards. The effectiveness of these structures has garnered international attention, with Western partners examining Metinvest's engineering solutions for potential use in securing borders against russia.

Innovation remains at the core of Steel Front's operations. The engineering teams rely heavily on direct feedback from the frontline to continuously improve their designs. Every piece of equipment undergoes rigorous testing on proving grounds before deployment to ensure maximum efficiency. Among their most unique achievements are the custom protective structures designed for high-value air defence systems, including Patriot and SAMP/T, with current development focused on securing Hawk systems. Furthermore, the initiative remains a major private supplier of both aerial and ground drones for the armed forces.

Maintaining this level of production requires overcoming significant operational challenges, primarily a shortage of personnel. While 11,000 Metinvest employees have joined the armed forces and 8,000 continue to serve, the company has adapted its workforce strategy. Metinvest is actively recruiting and training individuals without prior industrial experience and partnering with technical

institutions, including its own Metinvest Polytechnic. Notably, women are successfully transitioning into roles traditionally held by men, such as driving heavy dump trucks, proving vital to sustaining production levels.

Looking ahead, Steel Front remains resolute in its mission. The immediate plans involve scaling up the [production of vehicle protection](#) and expanding the network of underground facilities, including a large subterranean training centre for pilots. The commitment to Ukraine's defence is unwavering, driven by the knowledge that this continuous, systematic support is essential for preserving the nation and defeating the aggression of russia.