



# MALCONTENT NEWS RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR SITUATION REPORT



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# Malcontent News

## Russia-Ukraine War SITREP

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## SUMMARY – DAY 131

***Editor's Note:*** Due to the Independence Day holiday in the United States and a relatively quiet day in Ukraine, today's Situation Report will be condensed with guest author Igor Girkin providing the Daily Assessment.

It has been 3,049 days since Russia occupied Crimea on February 27, 2014.

Russian forces have secured the Luhansk oblast. Russian President Vladimir Putin declared victory after the Russian Federation Armed Forces secured the region 131 days after the widescale invasion of Ukraine.<sup>1</sup>

Putin told Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shogui that the units in Luhansk "should rescue [and] increase their combat capabilities."<sup>2</sup>

It took 100 days for Russian, Russian proxy forces, and Russia-backed militias to secure the last 7% of the Luhansk Oblast. The Russian military will likely start to work to

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<sup>1</sup> [Voice of America](#)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/putin-declares-victory-in-eastern-ukrainian-region-of-luhansk>

establish administrative control of Severodoentsk and Lysychansk. The cities of Rubizhne, Severodonetsk, Lysychansk, and Popasna had a combined pre-war population of 293,500. It is estimated that 18,500 civilians remain, with the rest fleeing the area – some into Russia and others into Ukraine. Most of those who stayed behind supported the Russian invasion or were poor, disabled, or didn't want to leave their homes.

In the Siversk region, Russian forces have advanced over the T-1302 Highway and taken partial control of Spirne.

Widescale artillery barrages occurred through the region, including Bilohorivka [Donetsk] and Verkhonkamyanska. Other settlements shelled include Ivano-Daryivka and Berestove.

NASA FIRMS data suggest that the town of Raihorodok has been shelled.

In the Bakhmut-Soledar region, the settlements of Pokrovske and Soledar were shelled.

Fighting continued in the Svitlodarsk bulge for control of the Vuhlehar Power Plant and Russian forces shelling Kodema. Russian forces are attempting to take control of Novoluhanske, southeast of the power plant and on the reservoir's western shore.

Based on this intelligence, we maintain that Dolomitne is contested, and we are coding Novoluhanske as contested.

There were scattered artillery exchanges from Horlivka to Donetsk city to Velyka Novosilka in the Donetsk Oblast and Hulyaipole to Orikhiv in the Zaporizhia Oblast. There were reports of fighting near Rivnopil, but we could not verify the veracity of the reports.

We consider Bilohirya, Luhivske, Novopokrovka, Bahate, and Ukranske, Rivnopil, Pyatkhatky, and Stepove [Zaporizhia] as contested.

In Kherson, Russian forces continue to take a defensive posture and are attempting to slow the broad advance of Ukrainian forces.

Russian forces are attempting to interdict Ukrainian Ground Lines of Communication (GLOC – aka supply lines) and firing artillery, Grad, and Smerch rockets from Multiple Launch Rocket Systems (MLRS).

Russian forces shelled Myrne northwest of Kherson, which would indicate the settlement is contested. There are reports that Pravdyne was liberated, and Myrne and Parysheve are contested. We cannot verify the veracity of these reports. However, the report of Myrne being shelled supports the settlement is contested.

We have previously coded Myrne as contested and will add Parysheve.

Ukraine shelled the Russian-controlled settlements of Shyroka Balka, Sofiivka, and Krytyi Yar.

In the northern region of Kherson, Topolyne, Ivanivka, Knyazivka, Potomkyne, Dobryanka, Trudolyubivka, and Osokorivka were shelled by Russian forces.

Ukraine shelled the Russian-controlled settlements of Sukhyi Stavok, Lozove, Davydiv Brid, Velkya Oleksandrivka, and Novopetrivka.

There are reports that Ukrainian forces are in Lozove. We cannot confirm the veracity of these reports. There was a drone video that showed Russian troops being killed by small arms fire (as a matter of policy, we don't share videos that show combat death recorded in real-time at close range). The distance from the Inhulets River was over 700 meters. There may be Ukrainian Special Operation Forces on the east side of the river, but we don't believe this indicates there is a more significant force in the immediate area.

Russian Ka-52 Alligator attack helicopters fired on Zarichne and Olhyne. On July 3, there was evidence of significant fighting in Olhyne, and we have coded the settlement as contested based on this intelligence update. If Ukrainian forces liberate Olhyne, it will represent the full collapse of the Vysokopillya salient.

In the Mykolaiv Oblast, the settlements of Lupareve, Shevchenkove, Chervona Dolyna, Kobzartsi, Partyzanske,

and Bereznehuvate were shelled. There were no reports of cruise missile attacks.

Northwest of Kharkiv, Ukrainian forces did reconnaissance in force toward Kozacha Lopan from Sosnivka, likely to harass Russian positions. There were no other offensive operations in the area. There was scattered artillery fire along the rest of the line of conflict.

We have changed the map to reflect that Vesele is contested. This update does not represent a new change in territorial control.

Russian forces attempted to advance on Dolyna and Mazanivka. In Dolyna, they were unsuccessful, and in Mazanivka, they moved the line of conflict to the settlement's northern border. Russian forces attempted to advance on Virnopillya and suffered heavy losses, including up to eight armored vehicles, including four main battle tanks.

Russian forces continue firing at settlements across the international border in the Sumy oblast. A school was destroyed in Esman, and public utility infrastructure was



destroyed in Nova Sloboda. Bilopillia was hit with at least 25 mortar shells and five missiles, injuring two people.

In the Chernihiv oblast, Russian troops also fired across the international border at the settlements of Mkyh and Zalizniy Mist.

A Ukrainian flag was dropped on Snake Island, symbolically taking control of the strategically important dot in the Black Sea.

## **DAILY ASSESSMENT**

We assess the following:

1. President Putin's declaration of "rest" is not a charitable order from a benevolent leader but a tacit admission that Russian, Russian proxy forces, and Russia-backed separatists of the Luhansk and Donetsk People's Republics have exhausted their combat strength and need to reconstitute.
2. Russian forces continue to be pressured in the Kherson oblast and struggle to hold the line of conflict.
3. Germany announced they are providing Ukraine with four additional M270 HIMARS systems and upgraded

the software to work with the Ukrainian fire control systems.

4. Ukrainian forces are using NATO provided guided munitions fired from HIMARS to destroy multiple military targets a day.
5. It is yet to be seen if Ukraine will hold a defensive position in Siversk or fall back to the Slovyansk-Karmatorsk-Soledar-Bakhmut line.

Our unofficial guest author for the Daily Assessment is Igor Girkin. In his defense, Girkin does not know we are including his Telegram post as today's assessment, but Girkin's words mostly echo everything we would have written. We have made light edits for readability and added some editorial comments to provide additional clarity.

1. "Border" front (from borders with Belarus and Kharkiv Oblast):

No substantial changes. The situation is gradually but steadily heating up. Artillery skirmishes, sabotage actions. The enemy is stepping up shelling, and UAV attacks deeper into the Russian territory. The aim is to force Russian Federation Armed Forces (RF AF) to maneuver the available air defense units to cover the cities, weakening

the cover of forces on the frontline and near rears, in addition to “increasing the prestige of the Russian authorities and the President personally among the population of shelled settlements.” Both sides are gradually bringing forces to the border. I predict that at the end of summer (if not earlier), this frontline will become quite active, which, considering the absence of mobilization in Russia, will only be beneficial to the enemy [Ukraine], who can put up a much larger number of “line” detachments and units, even if just light infantry, thanks to their own mobilization.

## 2. Kharkiv frontline – no major changes.

Artillery skirmishes, aviation activities, fights of local significance. Prediction – potentially can become the main place for the upcoming “battle for the initiative.” How it will really turn out – we shall see. In any case, the extended configuration of the frontline will inevitably lead to attempts of one or the other side (or both) to conduct offensive operations with decisive or partial goals.

***Editor's Note:*** *I don't know if we agree with Kharkiv as the “main place for the upcoming battle for the initiative.” This does not align with the stated goals of the Kremlin.*

### 3. Izyum-Sloviansk direction.

The transfer of almost all combat-ready artillery and infantry forces of RF AF, Luhansk People's Republic (LNR), and Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) to Lysychansk led to a local superiority of Ukraine over our forces, as a result of which a series of attacks on Krasnopolye and this general direction were unsuccessful. The enemy, by reinforcing their frontline (despite the battle for Lysychansk) with fresh reserves, managed in several places to return lost tactical positions.

Prediction: the group of RF AF, LDR, and DNR in this direction will be definitely strengthened due to the release of forces after the victory at Lysychansk however, I am not expecting an advance on the Slovyansk line (at least a successful one), since the enemy forces have entrenched well in the terrain, are quite numerous and active. The Ukrainian command (and military-political authorities) are paying special significance to holding the Slovyansk-Kramatorsk region.

### 4. Donetsk frontline. Severisk-Bakhmut section.



At the moment, advancing forces of RF AF, LDR, and DNR are attempting to move forward in the Siversk area "on the shoulders of the retreating enemy [Ukraine]." However, Ukrainian forces prepared here in advance and occupied the new defensive lines with fresh forces, and continues entrenching. Prediction: I am not expecting substantial successes and the breakthrough of the Ukrainian frontline in this area. A gradual fading of the fighting here is probable.

***Editor's Note: I don't know if we agree with a "gradual fading of fighting here."***

## 5. Donetsk frontline. Avdiivka-Markina section.

Positional fights with superiority of Ukraine (the superiority is achieved with good artillery support and the activity of UAVs, both reconnaissance and light strike UAVs). There may be attempts of RF AF command to develop the previously achieved success north of Avdiivka, which will now be much more difficult than during the initial breakthrough of the frontline (which was sacrificed to transfer forces to Severodonetsk-Lysychansk).

***Editor's Note:*** Girkin is particularly frustrated at the end of the offensive north of Avdiivka, which was part of an encirclement attempt. We agree that with the introduction of more and longer-range artillery, and four months to dig in, this will be much harder to achieve.

## 6. Donetsk frontline. South section.

Not changes. Pretty much the same situation as in the north. I predict only positional fights in the nearest future.

## 7. Zaporizhia frontline.

Positional fights, artillery skirmishes. Increasing activity of Ukrainian sabotage groups [aka – special forces operations] in the near and far rears of our troops. Potentially one of the possible directions of the enemy offensive.

***Editor's note:*** We strongly agree.

## 8. Kherson frontline.

No changes. At the forefront – gradually increasing shelling by Ukrainian artillery. The line of contact has not been formed everywhere [it is constantly changing], in some sections the defense of both sides has local nature (inside localities). One of the most likely directions of the "battle for the initiative."

***Editor's Note:*** We strongly agree that this will likely be the next battle for the initiative, and Ukraine appears to be setting conditions.

General points:

### 1. Ukrainian Armed Forces.

Throughout the past month, Ukraine has been continuously increasing the number of troops and equipment in all directions, both active and [in reserve] thus creating a steady superiority in manpower, artillery, and armored vehicles at many of those.

***Editor's Note:*** Girkin is not saying Ukrainian forces have more total pieces of artillery and armored vehicles. He is

*saying that Ukraine is holding significant amounts of equipment in reserve, and we agree with that assessment.*

At the same time, Ukraine continued forming strategic reserves, limiting their deployment into battle even at the peak of the Severodonetsk-Lysychansk battle.

As a new element of the Ukrainian tactic, special attention is paid to the destruction by rocket artillery [HIMARS] and unmanned aviation [Bayraktar TB-2 drones] of essential rear facilities and RF AF, LDR, and DNR. [The targets are] large ammunition stockpiles that were not sufficiently or not at all covered by air defence forces.

***Editor's Note: S300 antiaircraft systems will be ineffective at stopping rockets launched from HIMARS systems due to their speed and size.***

The local superiority in [human capital] allowed Ukraine to take up previously abandoned territories in many sections without a fight, complicating the tactical situation of our units and formations active in those areas.



***Editor's Note:*** This references the regions west and northwest of Izyum.

Apparently, the emphasized defensive nature of the battle for Severodonetsk-Lysychansk from the Ukrainian side was deliberate. Battles were simply dragged out with an aim to win as much time as possible and inflict maximum losses on the Russian strike group. After losing the main positions was a foregone conclusion, the command of Ukraine managed to withdraw the core of the defending forces and avoid encirclement of even the smallest part of them – both in Severodonetsk and Lysychansk and Zolote-Hirske. At the same time, however, most of the defender's equipment was irreversibly lost.

***Editor's Note:*** Equipment in Lysychansk, Severodonetsk, and Zolote-Hirske.

Conclusion: Ukraine is concluding preparation for its own active operations in one or more directions. Will Ukraine first wait for the new attack of RF AF or carry out their actions in a proactive manner – I will not be predicting this.

## 2. Our troops.

The offensive potential of the strike group that took Lysychansk is almost fully exhausted. Continuing the advance without a sufficient operational pause necessary for replenishment and rest of the troops may lead to additional large losses without significant results.

***Editor's Note:*** Girkin wrote this before the Putin announcement of providing "rest" to the troops in Luhansk.

Regrouping and determining the next offensive targets is necessary, as well as taking measures to repel probable enemy attacks.

Russian troops are experiencing growing difficulties in confrontation with Ukraine on a tactical level due to increasing enemy superiority in [human capital] and the increase in modern combat equipment available to them.

A lack of replenishment and the impossibility of rotation (especially for the mobilized units of LDR and DNR who have been on the frontline for three to four months without rotation) leads to a slow but constant decrease in the actual combat readiness and morale of our units.

Formations are currently on defense (while the morale of those who suffered heavy losses but still advancing assault formations remains high).

The military-political authority of Russia cannot allow itself to gain a foothold in positions and give the initiative fully into the hands of Ukraine, since dragging out the hostilities in these conditions will only lead to an increase in Ukraine's strength and weakening of our strength. Therefore I'm expecting deployment into combat of prepared reserves in a new offensive operation as part of the "battle for the initiative" immediately after some short operational pause.

***Editor's Note: We agree.***

Conclusion for May-June:

The "Second Stage of the Special Military Operation" ended without the complete achievement of the set goals. The group of Ukrainian forces in the Donbas is not defeated and not completely driven out of its territory. [Russian forces] only managed to defeat and push out a part of the Ukrainian group from the [salient] along the Siverskyi Donets River, liberating the LNR territory.

The operation demonstrated that the Russian “peacetime army” even significantly strengthened by LDR and DNR forces and [proxy troops from Chechnya and Private Military Companies] is not able to complete the objective of the complete defeat of Ukrainian forces and the victorious conclusion of the so-called special military operation.

Delay in mobilization in the Russian Federation may, in the coming months, lead to a crisis in some regions of the Ukrainian frontline, while further ignoring the inability mentioned above will negatively impact the situation on a strategic scale.