



**MALCONTENT NEWS
RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR
SITUATION REPORT**



January 17, 2023



Malcontent News

Russia-Ukraine War SITREP

01/17/23 23:59* PST

Malcontent News is an independent group of journalists and researchers in the United States, Canada, Ukraine, Israel, Georgia, and the United Kingdom. We are part of Badon Hill Group, LLC, and operate independently from all entities.

We are funded through Patreon, grants, and donations and aided by volunteers. For media inquiries, you can contact social@malcontentnews.com. For news tips, you can contact our newsroom at tips@malcontentment.com.

[Patrons at the Bronze level or higher](#) can access the annotated Russia-Ukraine War Situation Report (SITREP). Patrons at the Silver level or higher get a monthly Q&A viz Zoom Meeting with our Chief Content Officer or other senior staff.

This update is copyright © 2023, by Badon Hill Group LLC, all rights reserved. Authors: David H. Obelcz, Jeff Davis, and with special thanks to David Batashvili of the [Rondeli Foundation](#) and Linnea Hubbard, the voice of the Russia-Ukraine War Update Podcast.

The reader accepts that the information contained in the Malcontent News Situation Report will not be used for travel, navigation, or personal security assessment. The reader agrees to get real-time information from official channels provided by national, oblast, raion, hromada, city, or local officials and follow their security recommendations.

The assessments and opinions expressed in the Malcontent News SITREP are not representative, endorsed, or reflect the views of the Rondeli Foundation. We are grateful for the foundation's work to assess and verify territorial control changes and their permission to provide maps for our Situation Report.



Contents

SUMMARY – DAY 327	3
DAILY ASSESSMENT	3
TODAY'S WAR IN UKRAINE MAP	5
DONBAS REGION	6
LUHANSK	6
NORTHEAST DONETSK.....	13
SOUTHWESTERN DONETSK.....	22
KHERSON AND ZAPORIZHIA.....	28
BLACK SEA, CRIMEA, MYKOLAIV, AND ODESA REGION	31
WESTERN AND CENTRAL UKRAINE.....	31
NORTH AND NORTHEAST UKRAINE.....	32
RUSSIAN FRONT	34
THEATERWIDE & EXTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS.....	35
RUSSIAN MOBILIZATION AND MILITARY STATUS.....	37
WAR CRIMES AND HUMAN RIGHTS.....	42
GEOPOLITICAL.....	43
ECONOMIC.....	43

SUMMARY – DAY 327

It has been 3,246 days since the occupation of Crimea on February 27, 2014.

DAILY ASSESSMENT

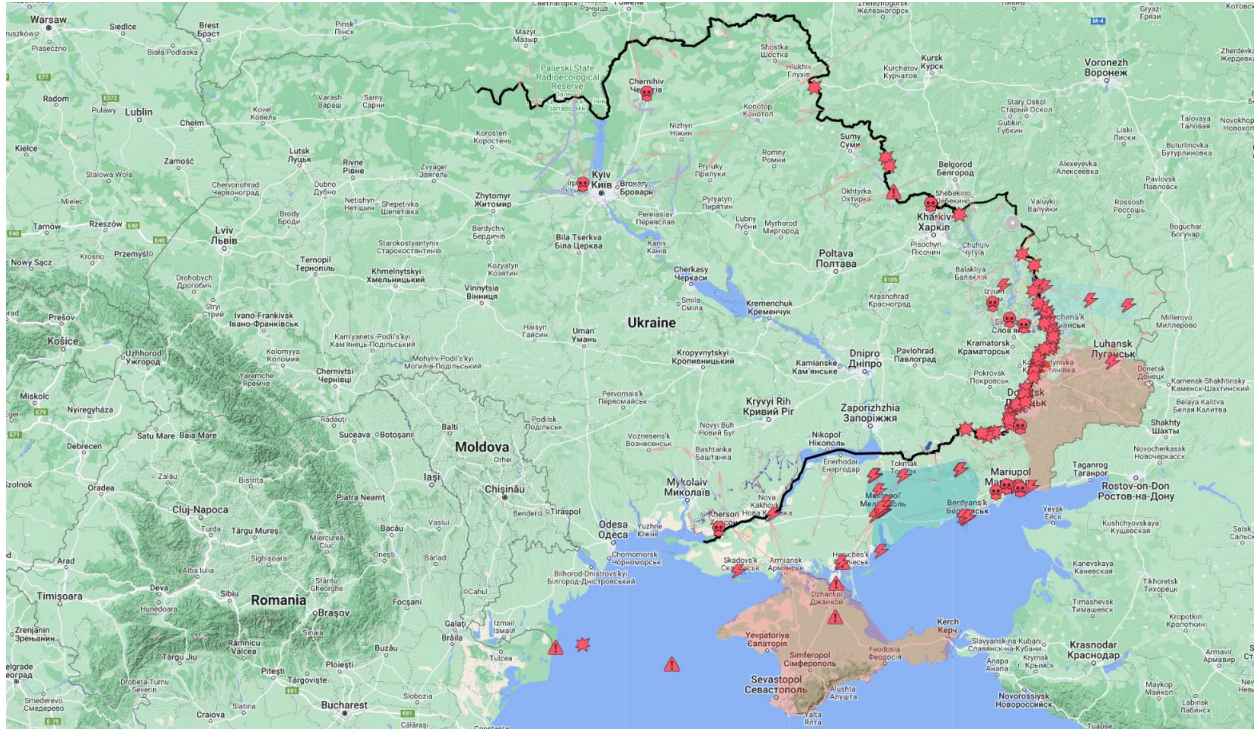
We assess the following:

1. We maintain that the power struggle between military leaders aligned with Russian Minister of Defense Sergey Shoigu versus those aligned to Private Military Company (PMC) Wagner Group head Yevgeny Prigozhin will continue.
2. We maintain the ongoing information warfare between the Russian Ministry of Defense (RMOD) and PMC Wagner is a byproduct of the strife within the Kremlin.
3. We maintain that the current winner of the ongoing infighting between factions loyal to Shoigu versus Prigozhin is Russian President Vladimir Putin, who has shifted negative attention back to the Ministry of Defense while his former caterer.
4. We assess there is a very high risk of punitive missile strikes on civilians and civilian infrastructure from January 19 to 21 and that Russian forces will continue

to target electrical, heating, and potable water infrastructure.

5. We maintain that the risk of a nuclear accident caused by the deenergization of Ukrainian nuclear power plants caused by Russian electrical infrastructure destruction is possible.
6. We maintain that Russian forces led by PMC Wagner Group have taken the initiative on the Soledar-Bakhmut axis but remain largely defensive throughout the rest of Ukraine.
7. We maintain that the Russian military within Ukraine is combat ineffective and can only mount **effective** defensive operations, despite the slow success on the Soledar axis.
8. We maintain there will be a second wave of partial mobilization in the Russian Federation in January or February 2023.
9. We maintain that the threat of Russian forces in Belarus crossing into Ukraine as part of a **major** offensive operation is only a remote possibility.

TODAY'S WAR IN UKRAINE MAP

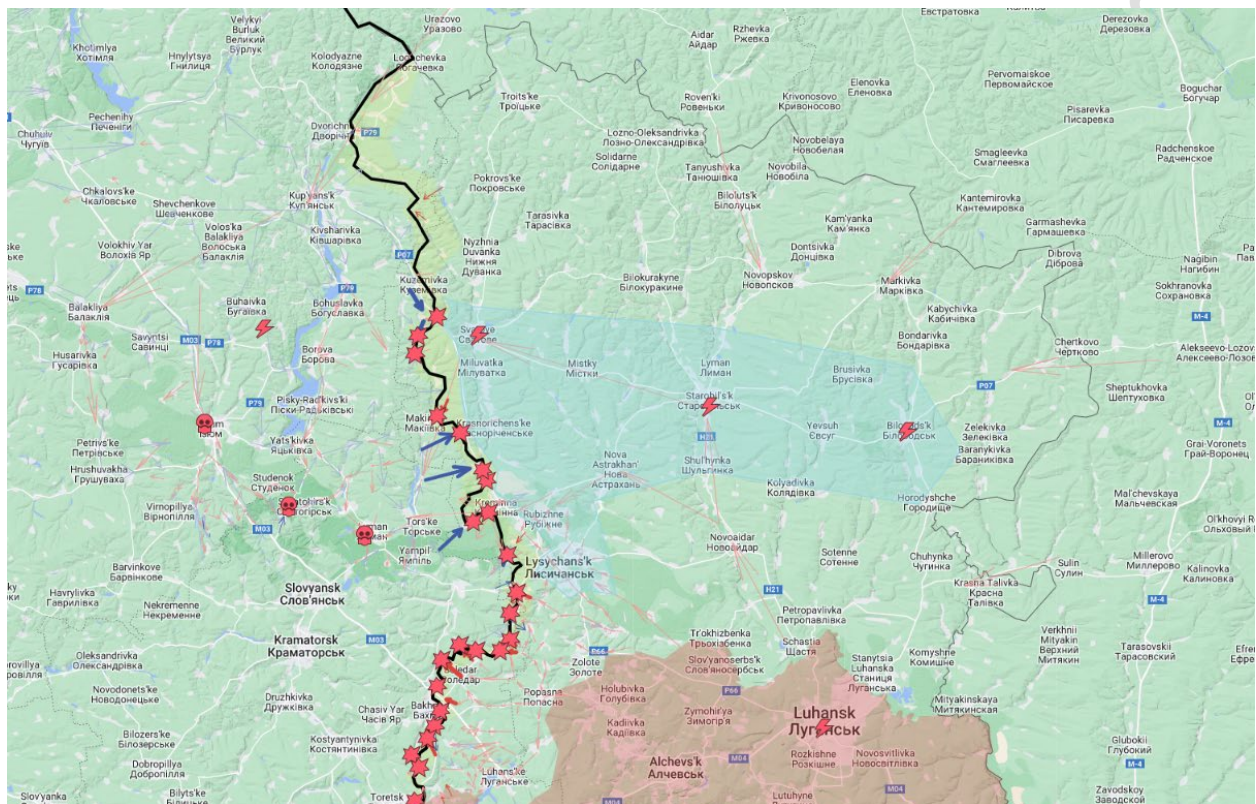


Information about changes made to the map: Red triangles are sites of significant events unrelated to missile attacks, insurgency, or ground combat, such as the sinking of the Moskva and the explosion at Saky Naval Airbase. Based on your feedback, we changed the archived offensive flags to "gray circles." The layer is turned off by default, but you can toggle it on/off in the Map Legend. If you see a settlement name highlighted, like, the link will take you to the exact location explained in the Situation Report.

You can visit our war map at <http://www.rusvukrmap.com>

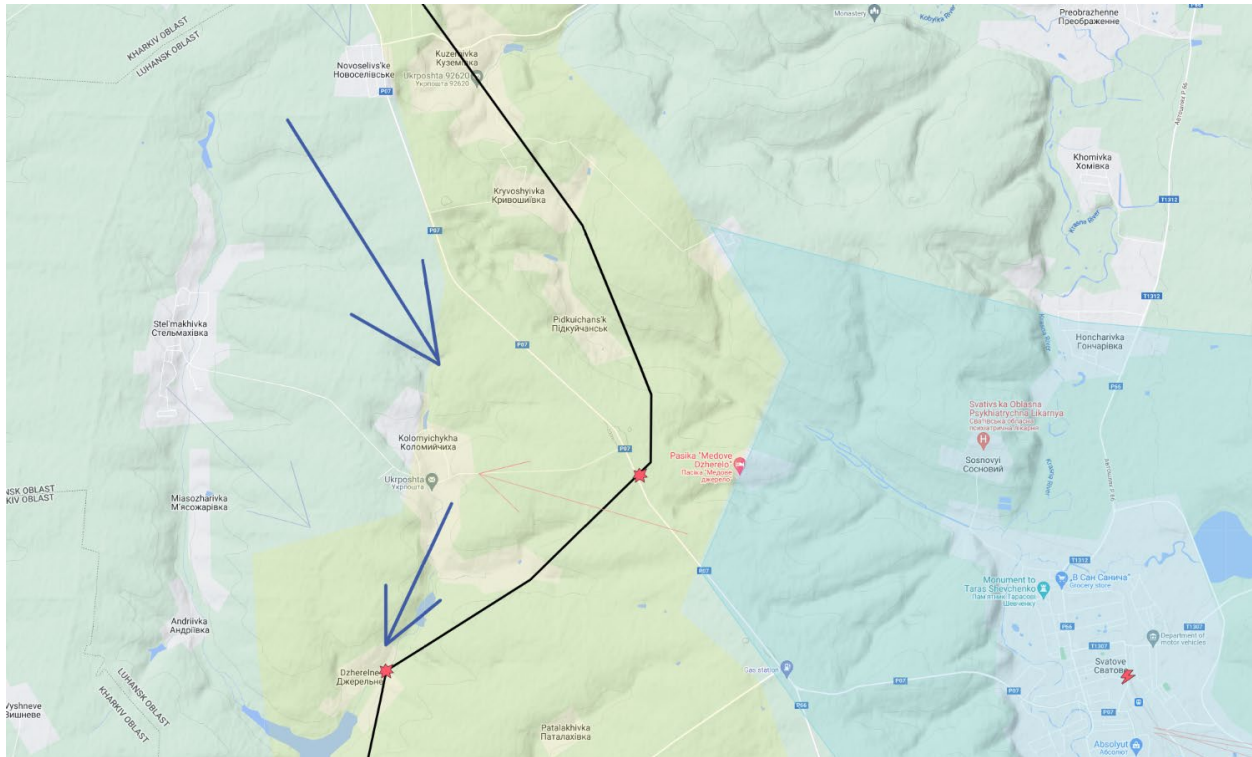
DONBAS REGION

LUHANSK



Russian Objective: Integrate oblast into Russian Federation, hold current defensive lines, and control insurgency

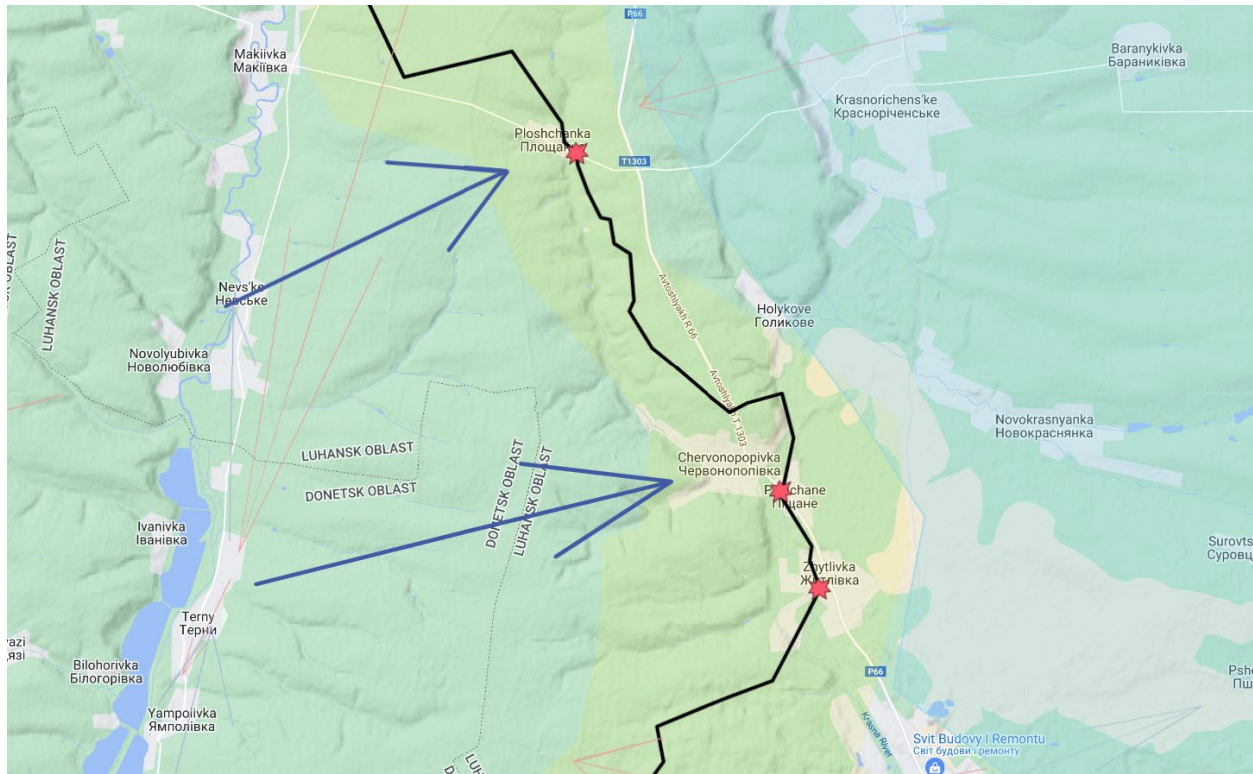
Ukrainian Objective: Break Russian defensive lines, advance on Svatove, Kreminna, and Lysychansk, and support insurgents



For the second day in a row, there was minimal information out of Luhansk and no reports of major fighting.

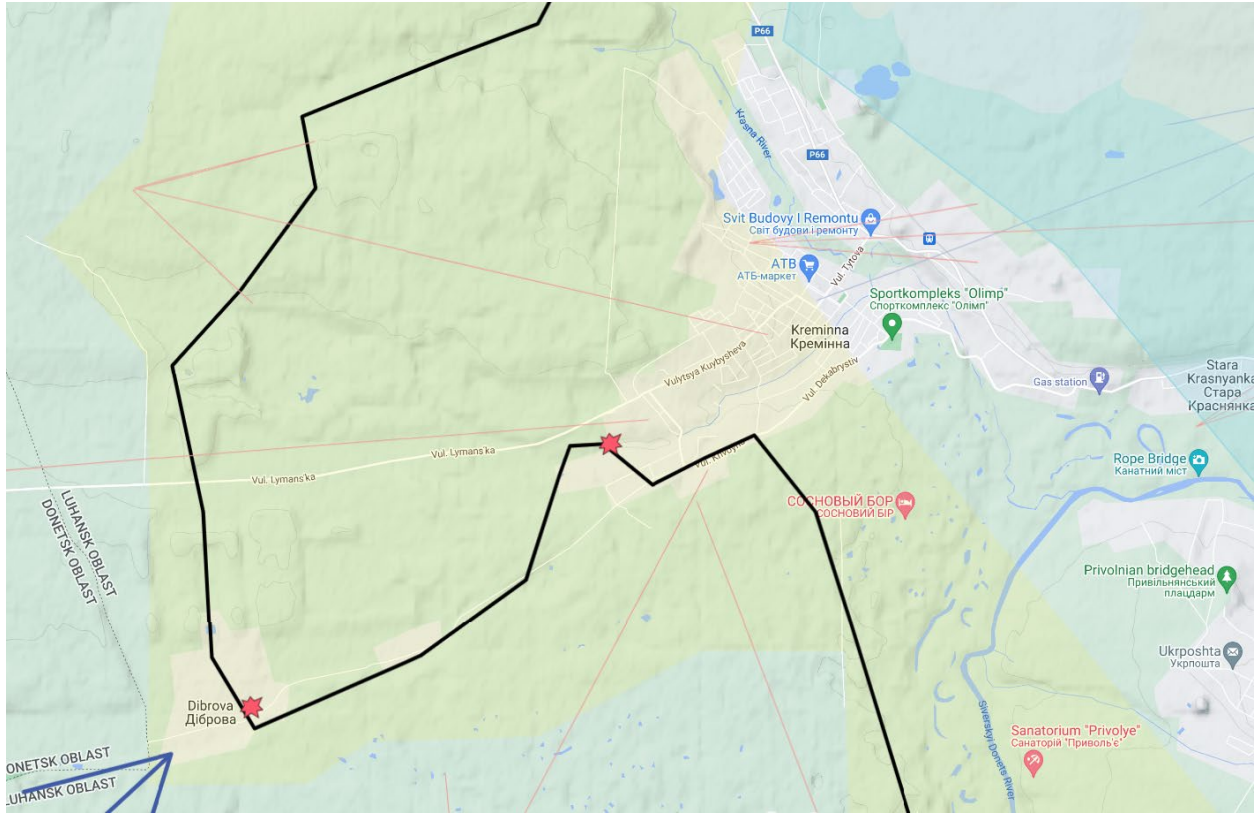
On the Svatove axis, RMOD reported that Ukrainian forces in [Novoselivske](#) were shelled, indicating that they remain within the village on the P-07 Highway.¹

¹ https://t.me/mod_russia/23501 [Russian Government Controlled Social Media Channel]



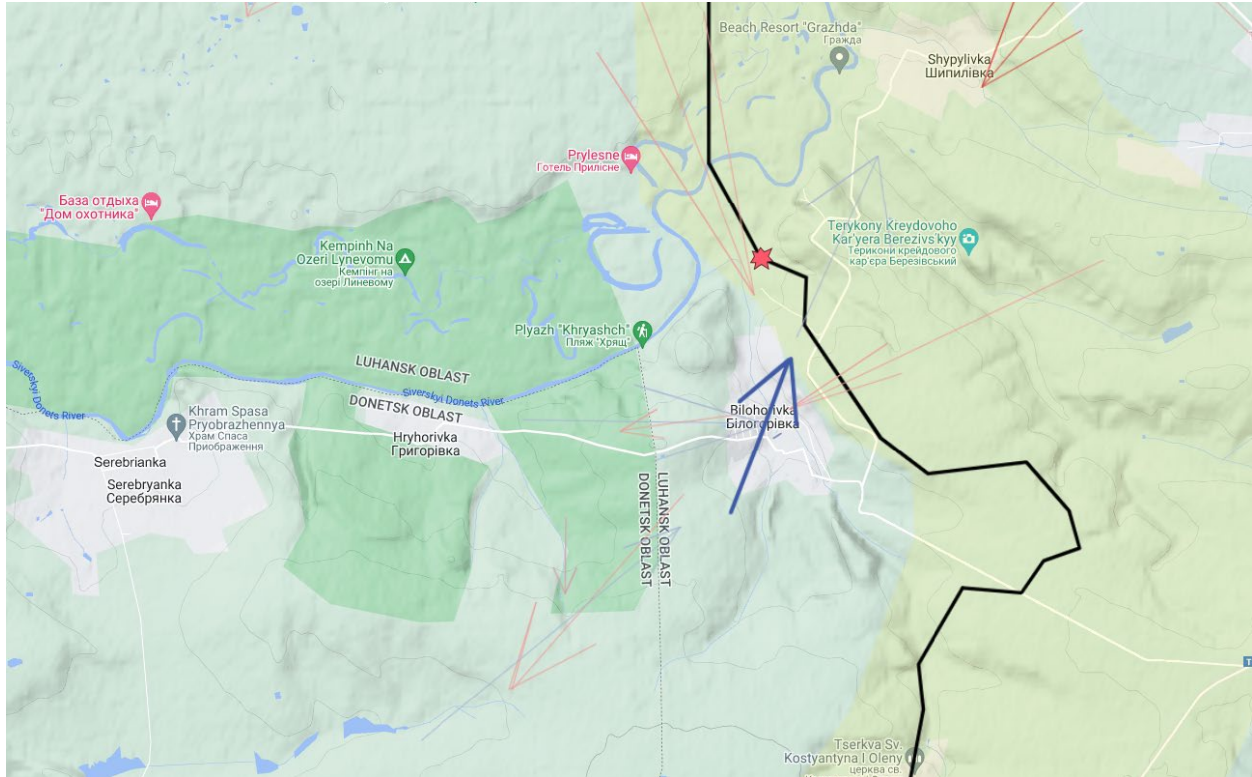
Mercenaries with War Gonzo appeared to have lightly edited the January 16 AM report from the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and made it their own. There were two areas where they deviated from the Ukrainian report, including the Kreminna axis, claiming Russian forces launched another counteroffensive on [Chervonopopivka](#).²

² <https://t.me/wargonzo/10370>



RMOD also reported fighting in Dibrova, with a video supporting the claim. Based on the information, we adjusted the line of conflict.³

³ https://t.me/mod_russia/23501 [Russian Government Controlled Social Media Channel]



On the Lysychansk axis, the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine reported continued fighting “in the area of” [Bilohorivka](#) [Luhansk].⁴ War Gonzo claimed that Russian forces stopped trying to advance from the north and attacked from the southeast, attempting to retake lost positions. This validates our map update from January 16.⁵ Although Serhei Haidai, Luhansk Oblast Administrative and Military Governor, did not report on a specific direction, he did claim that Russian forces were attempting to recapture lost positions.⁶





⁴ [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEST](#)

⁵ <https://t.me/wargonzo/10370>

⁶ <https://t.me/luhanskaVTSA/8027>

Otherwise, the situation was described as stable by Haidai, and Russian sources did not make any specific claims of major changes.⁷

ASSESSMENT: Both belligerents likely have entered a short operational pause for troop rotation, resupply, and reconstitution. We do not believe the reduction in fighting due to the battle reaching a culmination point or becoming a stalemate.

Our team geolocated a video of  [Russian military equipment moving through Luhansk](#) in and out of the Kreminna axis.⁸ A small military convoy was  [rallying in Novookhtyrka](#), about 45 kilometers from Kreminna via Severodonetsk. The video showed more military equipment  [near the main bus depot](#) in Severodonetsk and  [near St. Nicholas Temple Chapel](#) in Vojevodivka on the P-66 Highway Ground Line of Communication (GLOC – supply line) between Kreminna and Severodonetsk.^{9 10 11} In

⁷ <https://t.me/luhanskaVTSA/8027>

⁸ <https://twitter.com/PStyleOne1/status/1615429565064810496>

⁹ <https://twitter.com/MalcontentmentT/status/1615525170265075713>

¹⁰ <https://twitter.com/MalcontentmentT/status/1615527099267452929>

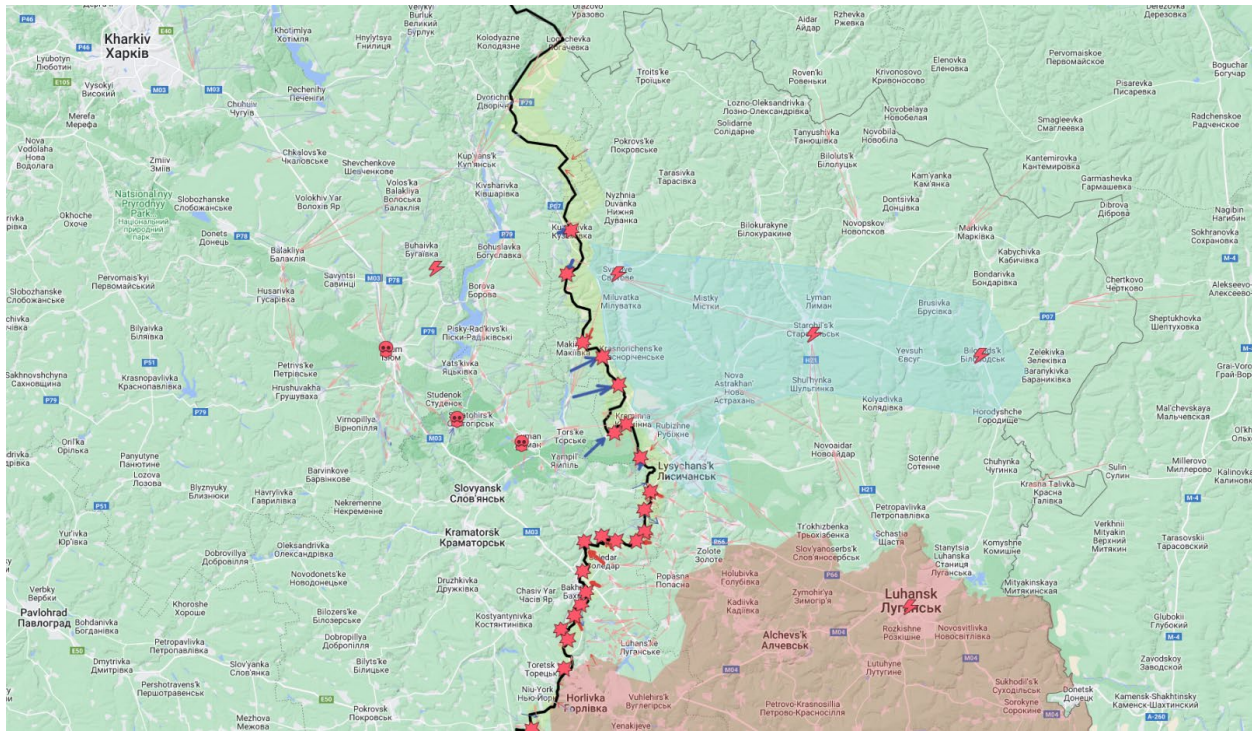
¹¹ <https://twitter.com/MalcontentmentT/status/1615531736129232896>



Vojevodivka, military equipment was moving towards and away from the front.

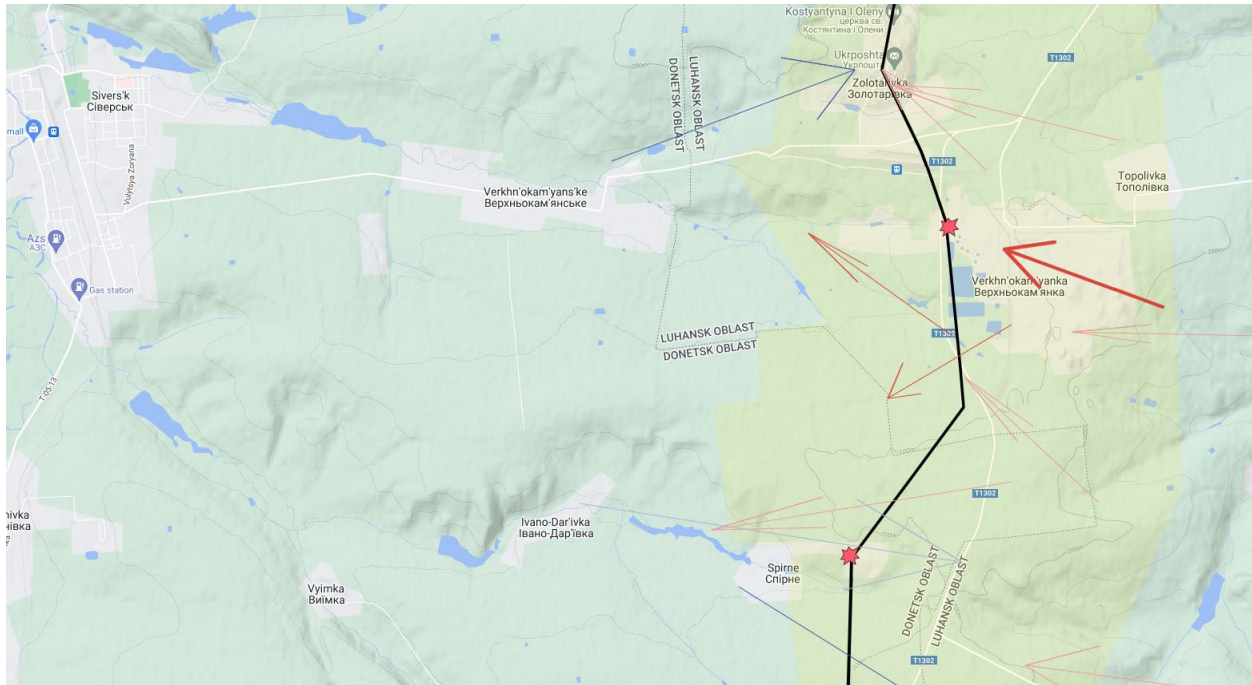
COPYRIGHT 2022, MALCONTENT NEWS

NORTHEAST DONETSK



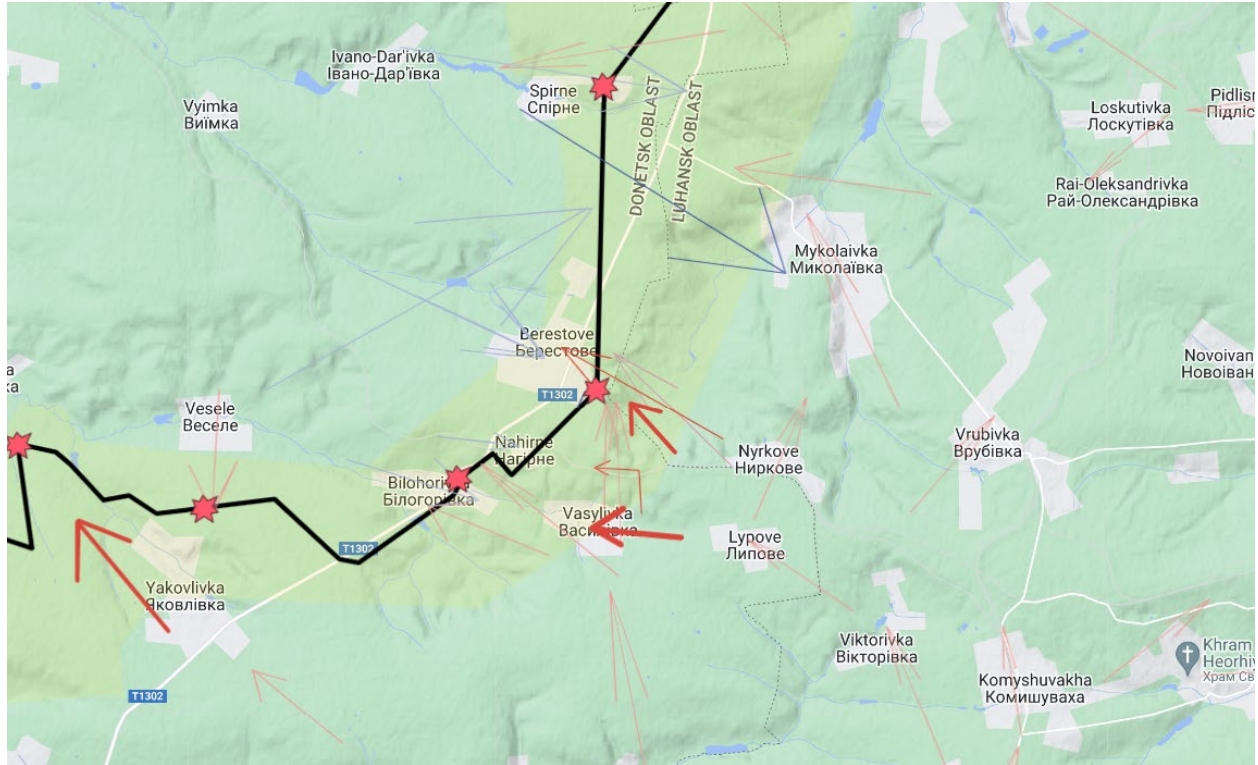
Russian Objective: Integrate oblast into Russian Federation, defend against Ukrainian advances toward Luhansk, capture Bakhmut-Soledar

Ukrainian Objective: Defend Bakhmut-Soldar, push into the Luhansk oblast, and minimize civilian casualties



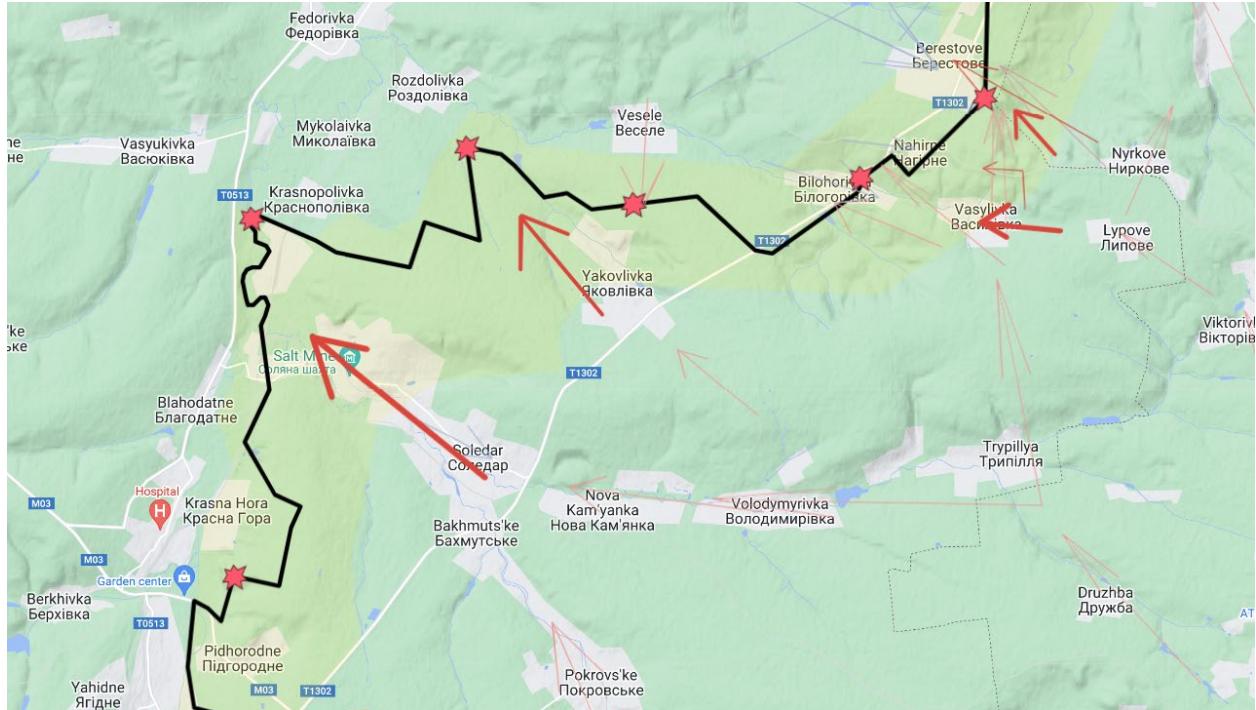
On the Siversk axis, GASFU reported that Russian forces continued to attack [Verkh'okamyanske](#) and [Spirne](#) from the Luhansk-Donetsk administrative border.¹²

¹² [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEST](#)



Further south, fighting erupted near Bilohorivka [Donetsk], with Ukrainian forces holding their defensive positions. The tiny but strategically located village on the T-1302 Highway, which exists in name only, has been contested for eight months.¹³

¹³ [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEST](#)




PMC Wagner's social media channels released a statement saying, "Mine Number 7 was completely liberated," and claimed [Soledar](#) is fully captured – a week after Prigozhin claimed his mercenary forces captured the town.¹⁴ Mercenaries with Rybar claimed "clean up continues," while GASFU reported Ukrainian forces repelled an attack "in the area" of Soledar.¹⁵ ¹⁶ We maintain Soledar is under Russian control and Ukrainian forces withdrew to the west.

¹⁴ https://t.me/TK_Union/25188

¹⁵ [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEST](#)

¹⁶ <https://t.me/rybar/42783>

GASFU reported continued fighting “in the area” of Sil', which doesn't leave a lot of places where battles could be going on beyond [Sil'](#), or the area just to the north.¹⁷

Between Soledar and [Krasnopolivka](#), a graphic video that is NSFW and some viewers may find disturbing, showed Ukrainian artillery and mortar units directed by drones killing dozens of Wagner mercenaries attempting to hide in a poorly constructed trench line. You can watch the video by  [clicking here](#).¹⁸

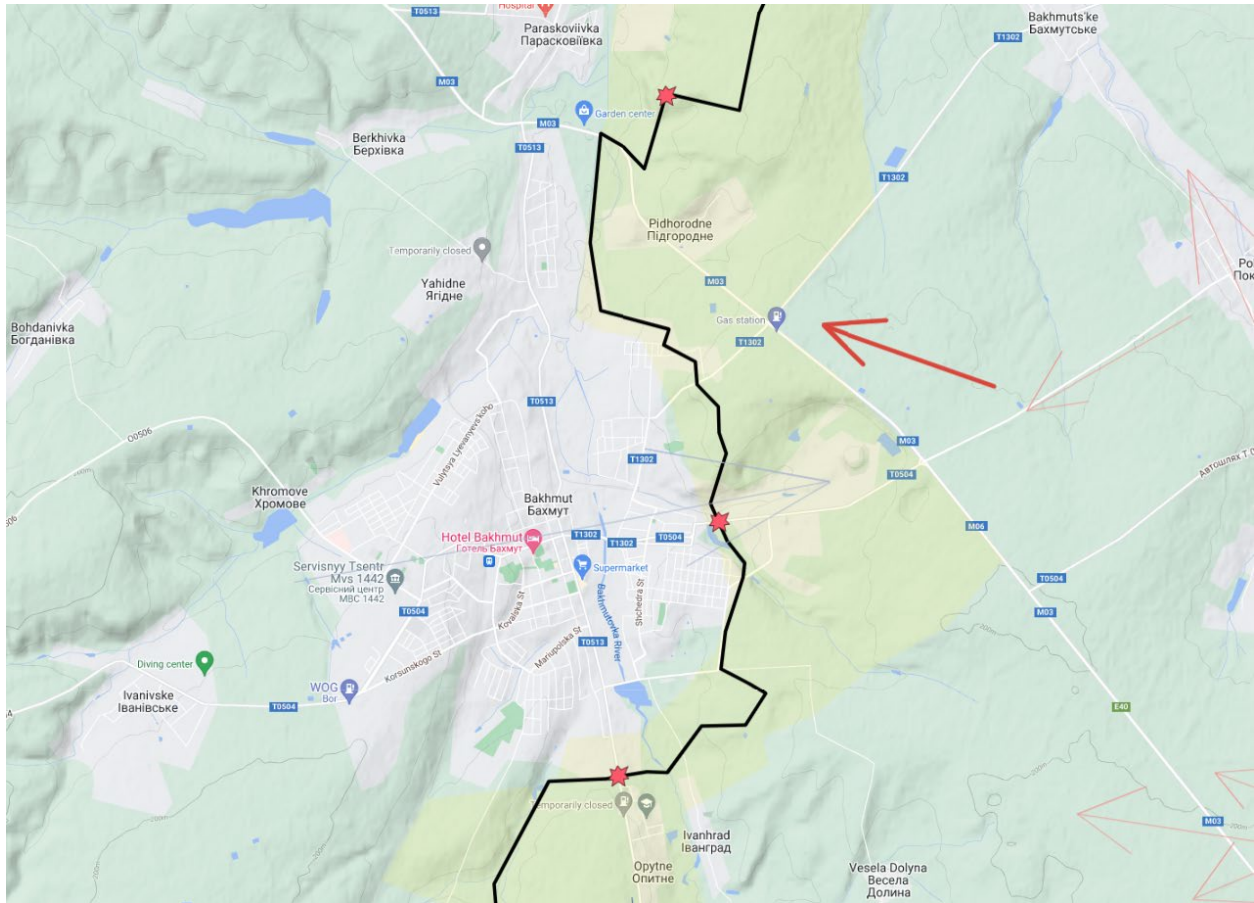
SIDEBAR: What makes the trench poorly constructed is the lack of 45 and 90-degree angles, which would prevent creating shooting lanes, if ground forces breached the trench, and the lack of any bunkers along its length, providing nowhere to hide from accurate artillery fire or fragmentation rounds.

A Russian source reported continued fighting near [Krasna Hora](#).¹⁹

¹⁷ [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEST](#)

¹⁸ <https://t.me/DeepStateUA/15229>

¹⁹ <https://t.me/rybar/42783>



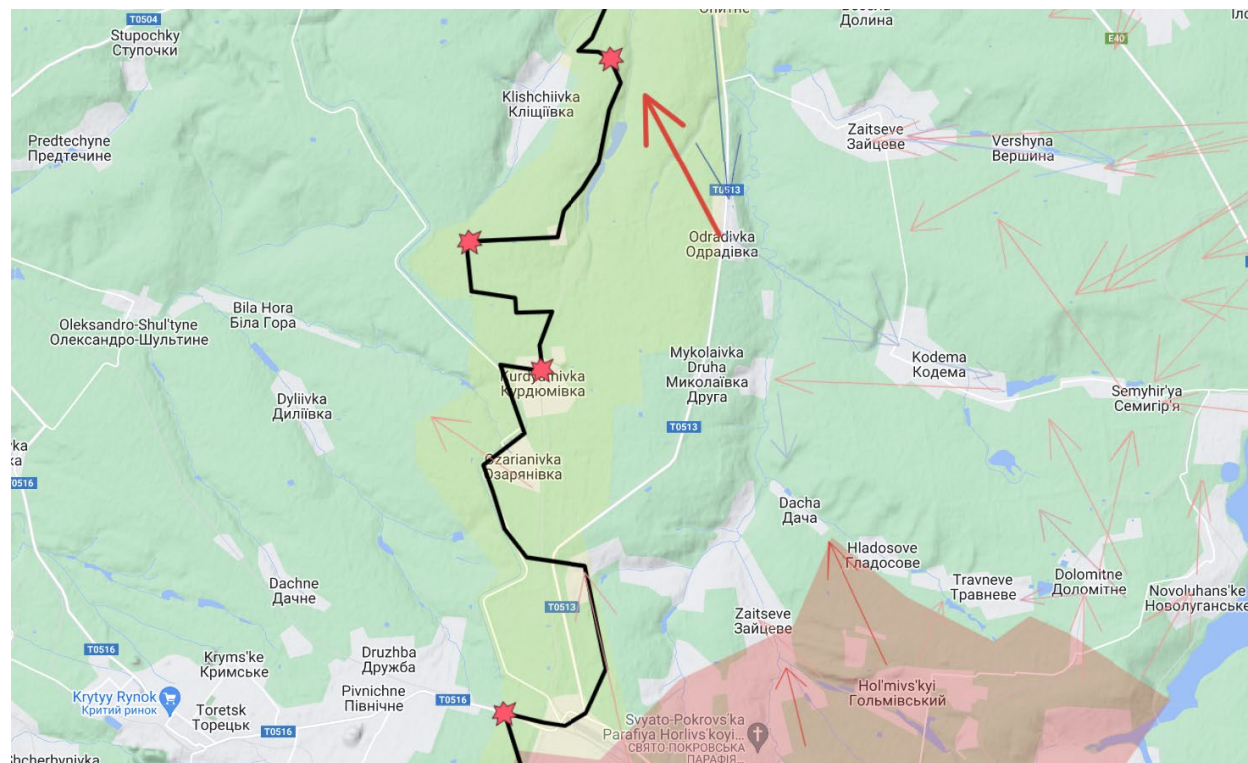
Fighting continued northeast, east, and southeast of [Bakhmut](#), with Russian forces pushing on Ukrainian defenses.^{20 21 22} Ukrainian video showed what was likely [Switchblade 300 anti-personnel kamikaze drones](#) striking Wagner mercenaries in a trench near the recycling sorting center.²³

²⁰ [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEST](#)

²¹ <https://t.me/rybar/42783>

²² <https://t.me/wargonzo/10370>

²³ <https://t.me/DeepStateUA/15233>



Prigozhin of PMC Wagner directly denied claims by Russian and Ukrainian sources that Russian-aligned mercenaries had captured part or all of [Klishchiivka](#). "Probably, this is our Russian tradition - always try to run ahead of the locomotive. Therefore, so many bodies remain on the rails," he wrote.

"Klishchiivka was not taken. There are tough fights. Indeed, we have [had] some success. As I said, the crowds of talkers running ahead of the engine do a lot of harm to the guys who die. Therefore, at the moment, a significant part of

Klishchiivka is under the enemy [Ukraine]. When the units of the Wagner Group release her, I will inform you."²⁴

Mercenaries with Rybar, who falsely claimed days ago that Klishchiivka was surrounded and being cleansed, must have gotten the memo, writing today, "The advancement of units of the RF Armed Forces is complicated by many strongholds, terrain, and constant enemy artillery fire."²⁵

This counters the narrative from Ukrainian sources and at least one significant online analyst that the village is all but lost.²⁶ There aren't any pictures or videos for the open-source intelligence community to use for geolocation, and the absence of information creates rumors. We moved the line of conflict southwest of Opytne and tweaked the area of no man's land on our war map. We maintain our assessment that Russian success in this area has been exaggerated, and Prigozhin validated our January 16 conclusion. "If PMC Wagner or Russian troops reached the settlement, there would be picture reports."

²⁴ https://t.me/grey_zone/16674

²⁵ <https://t.me/rybar/42783>

²⁶ <https://t.me/DeepStateUA/15234>

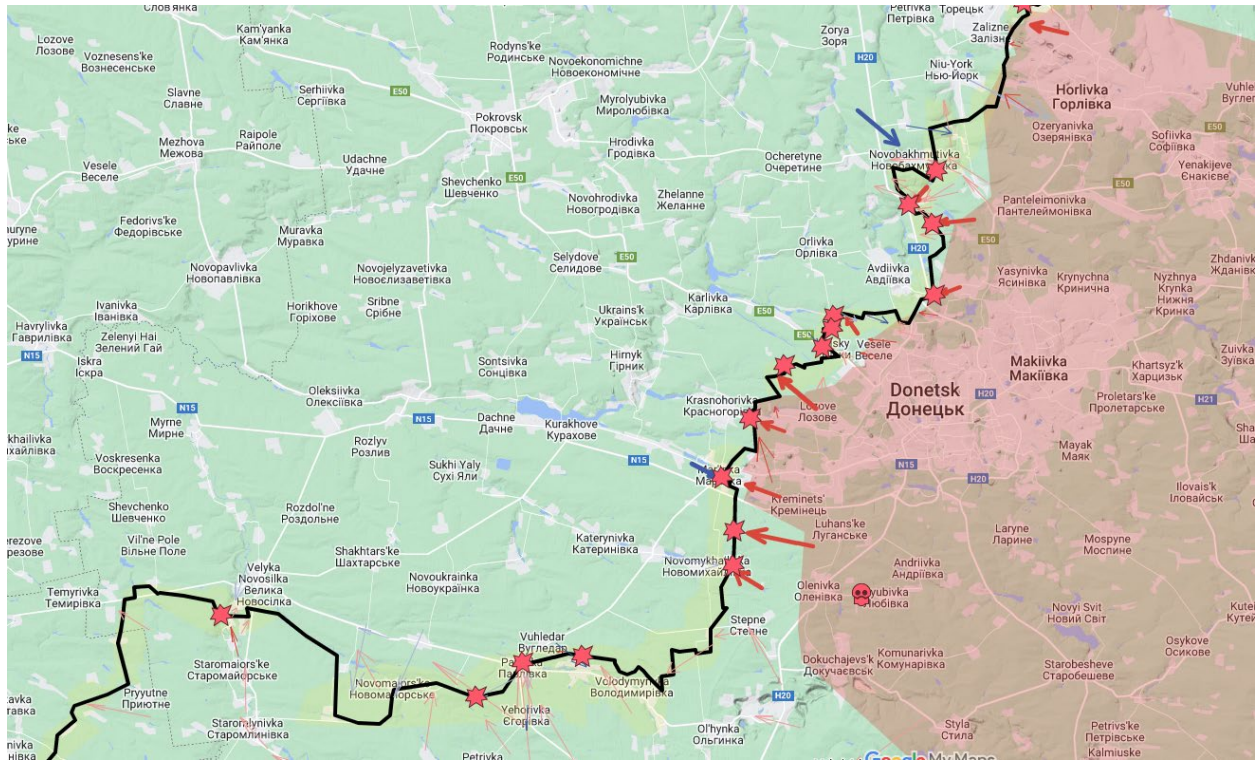
GASFU reported that the town of [Predtechyne](#) was successfully defended. Based on the reports from PMC Wagner and a similar report of fighting “in the area” from last week, we believe this was a squad or platoon-sized reconnaissance or DRG unit trying to move through patches of forested areas that were discovered.²⁷

In Kramatorsk, the industrial area was hit by Grad or Smerch rockets, or S-300 missiles used for a ground attack. There was  [significant damage](#), but no injuries were reported.²⁸

²⁷ [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEST](#)

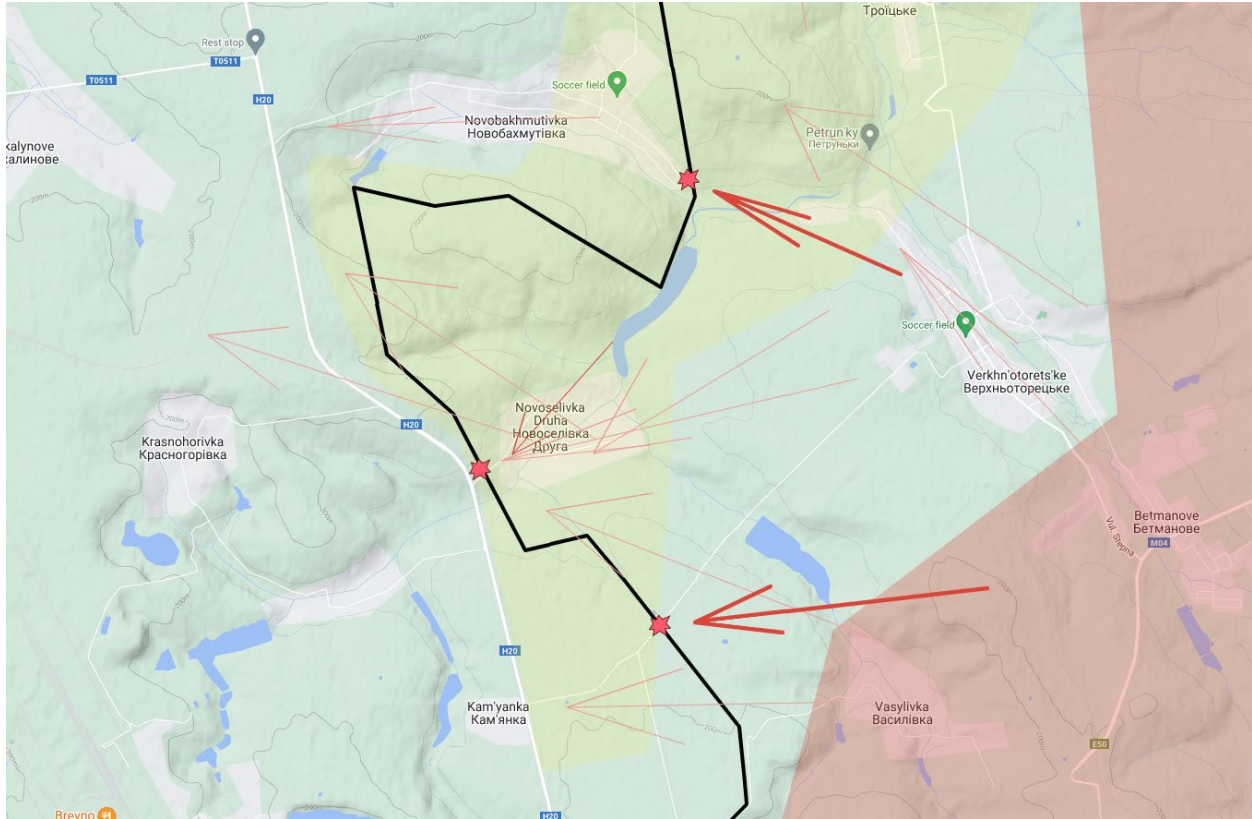
²⁸ https://t.me/pavlokyrylenko_donoda/6305

SOUTHWESTERN DONETSK



Russian Objective: Integrate the oblast into Russian Federation, capture the rest of the oblast, and bring the insurrection across southwestern Donetsk under control

Ukrainian Objective: Lock Russian military assets in place, defend the existing line of conflict while finding and exploiting weaknesses, destroy troop concentrations and command and control sites, interdict supplies and disrupt logistics

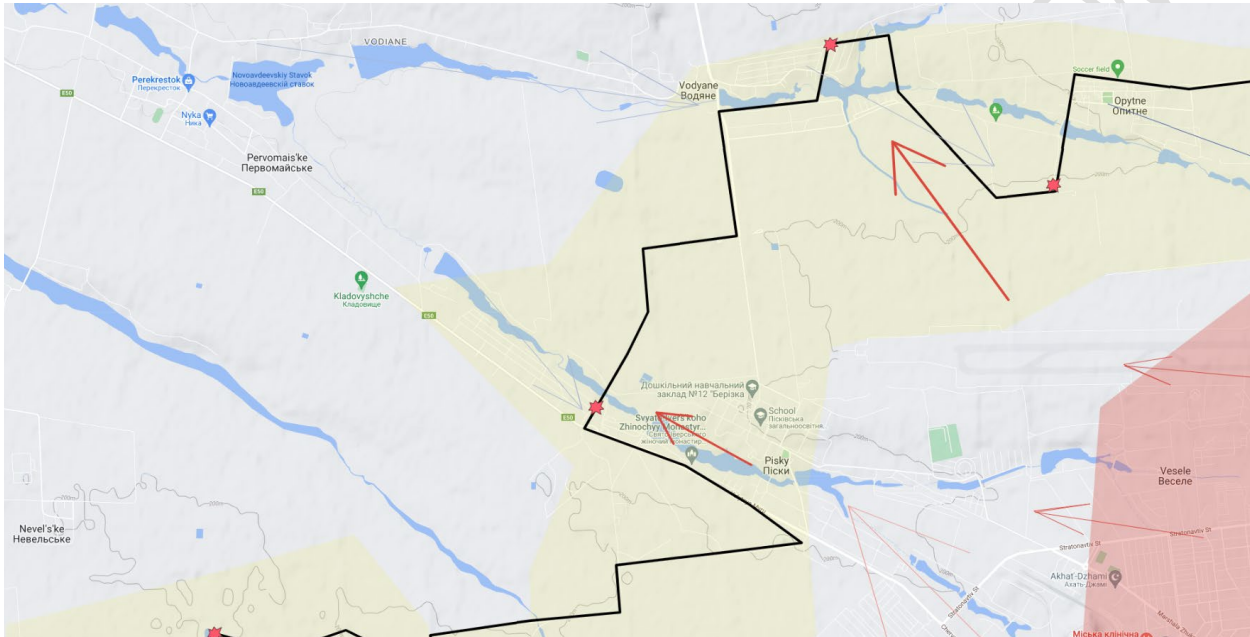


We're replaying the greatest hits of the Donetsk People's Republic today.

On the Avdiivka axis, the 1st Army Corps of the Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) made another attempt to cross the H-20 Highway near [Kamyanka](#) and was unsuccessful.²⁹

²⁹ [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEST](#)

Pavlo Kyrylenko, Donetsk Oblast Administrative and Military Governor reported only sporadic artillery fire on Avdiivka.

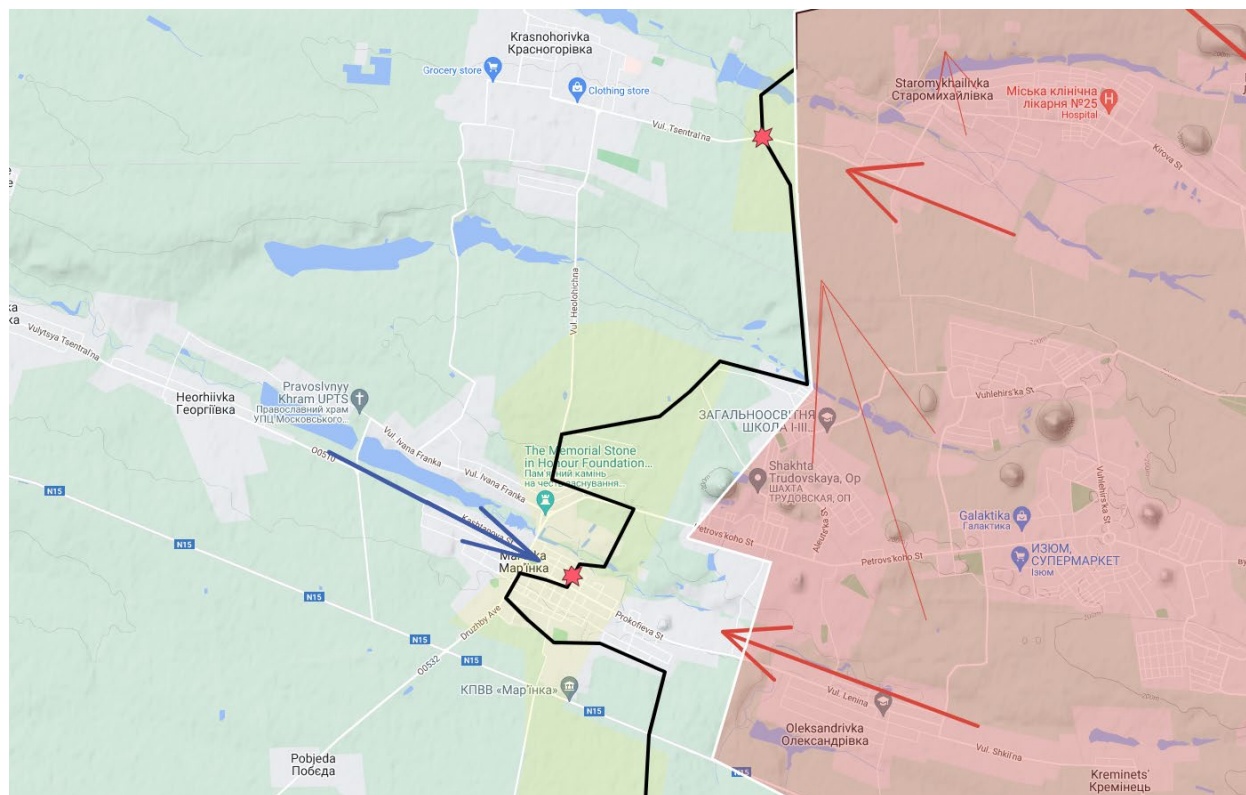


South of Avdiivka, there was no change in the situation. Elements of the 1st Army Corps tried to advance out of [Opytne](#) (north of the Donetsk International Airport), fighting continued in [Vodyane](#), and separatists failed to advance in [Pervomaiske](#). Russian forces also failed to move closer to the Ukrainian firebase at [Nevel'ske](#).^{30 31 32}

³⁰ [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEST](#)

³¹ <https://t.me/DeepStateUA/15234>

³² <https://t.me/rybar/42783>





On the Marinka axis, the self-declared leader of the DNR, Denis Pushilin, claimed that Ukrainian forces had been pushed out of the center of [Marinka](#) and were in the western outskirts. We have lost count of how many times he has made this claim since August 21.³³ Pushilin's track record of not being as accurate as a broken clock didn't stop Rybar from echoing the claim without mentioning the source.³⁴ To be clear, we dismiss Pushilin's claim and consider it disinformation. GASFU reported that Ukrainian forces maintained their defense lines.³⁵ DNR separatists


³³ https://t.me/TK_Union/25175

³⁴ <https://t.me/rybar/42783>

³⁵ [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEST](#)

fought positional battles near [Pobjeda](#), with no change in the situation.³⁶

Insurgents in Mariupol reported significant Russian troop movements through and around the city. In the morning, a  [convoy of seven main battle tanks](#) (MBT) moved through the city toward Berdyansk in Zaporizhia.³⁷ Later in the day, a group of 12 MBTs, five self-propelled howitzers (SPG), and 15 trucks carrying Russian troops  [arrived from Russia](#), while another eight T-62M MBTs and two SPGs arrived from the Berdyansk area.³⁸

DNR officials reported a machine-building plant in Khartsyzk was destroyed in a rocket attack fired by HIMARS. No casualties were reported, with one picture showing a room full of mattresses, furniture, and  [possible cases for antitank or MAPMAD weapons](#) leaning on the back wall.³⁹


Pushilin, who is under increasing pressure from people living in occupied Donetsk due to problems with heat,

³⁶ [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEST](#)

³⁷ <https://t.me/andriyshTime/5973>

³⁸ <https://t.me/andriyshTime/5985>

³⁹ <https://t.me/itsdonetsk/52432>

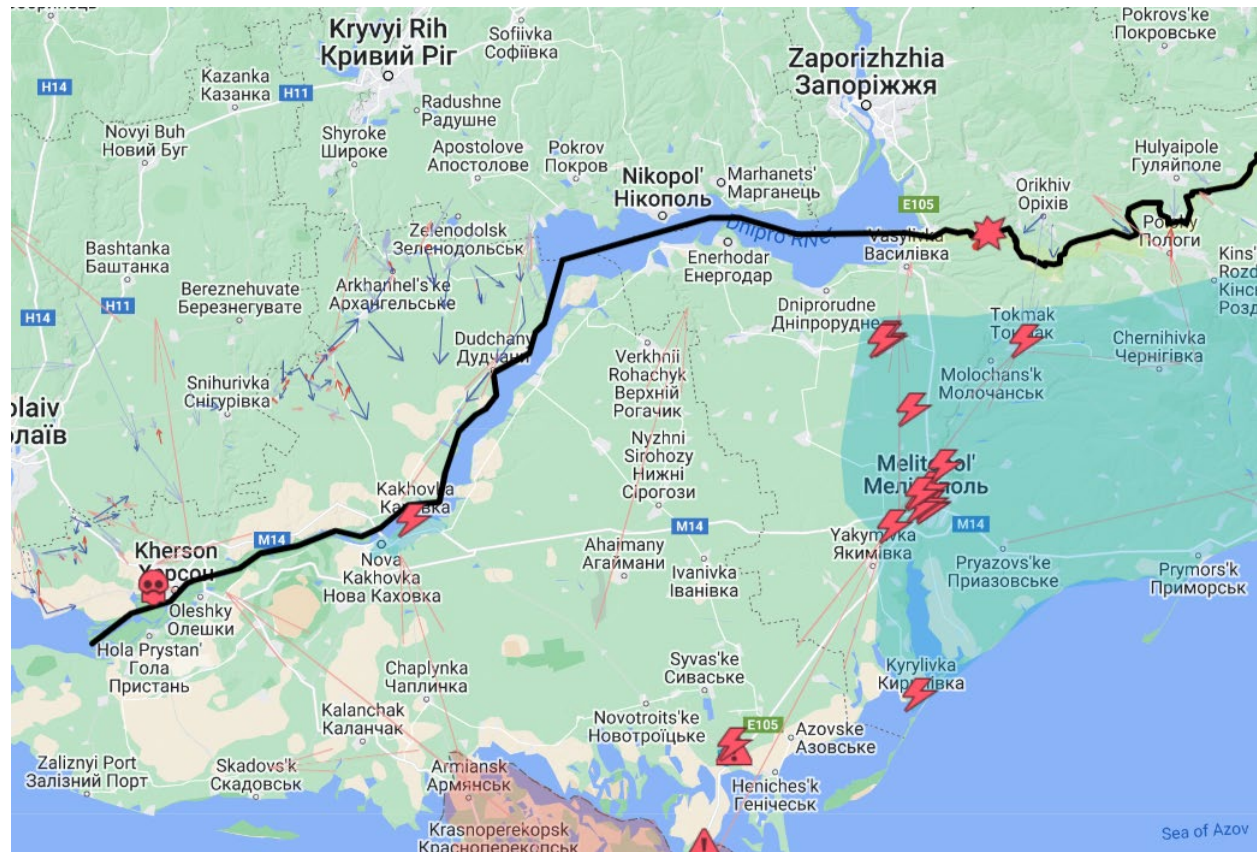
water, electricity, Internet, and food prices,  [held a conference today](#). He ordered that any employees or leaders responsible for providing heat to areas where the system has failed will be forced to live in those zones until heat is restored.⁴⁰

After banning the entry of private vehicles by Russian military mobs and volunteer fighters yesterday, the Russian military has ordered all residents of the DNR to register their vehicle information with the local commissariat.⁴¹

⁴⁰ https://t.me/TK_Union/25195

⁴¹ <https://t.me/andriyshTime/5976>





KHERSON AND ZAPORIZHZHIA



Russian Objective: Prevent Ukrainian offensive into Kherson and Zaporizhzhia, integrate captured territory into the Russian Federation, break civilian will with continued terror attacks

Ukrainian Objective: Liberate Russian-occupied areas, prevent further Russian advances, exploit weaknesses on the line of conflict, and protect civilians

There was mutual shelling on the west and east banks of the Dnipro, with Russian forces launching the largest number of fire missions to date on free Ukraine.^{42 43} Russian forces hit the areas west of the Dnipro 102 times, striking the city of Kherson 36 times, killing one and wounding two.⁴⁴

Russian artillery units used thermite munitions  [throughout the day](#) on  [Kherson](#),  [Antonivka](#), and  [Beryslav](#).^{45 46 47 48} Stanislav, at the mouth of the Dnipro on the Dniprovska Gulf was also shelled.

Yaroslav Yanushevich, Kherson Oblast Administrative and Military Governor, reported that the water utility facilities in Kherson were shelled, including the administration building, machine room, and oxygenation station.⁴⁹ The [children's puppet theater](#) was heavily damaged during the barrage.⁵⁰

⁴² [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEST](#)

⁴³ [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report PM EEST](#)

⁴⁴ <https://t.me/khersonskaODA/3119>

⁴⁵ <https://t.me/hueviyherson/33061>

⁴⁶ <https://t.me/hueviyherson/33136>

⁴⁷ <https://t.me/hueviyherson/33120>

⁴⁸ <https://t.me/hueviyherson/33113>

⁴⁹ <https://t.me/khersonskaODA/3123>

⁵⁰ <https://t.me/hueviyherson/33100>

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) reported that the 330 kV (kilovolt) powerline was disconnected for several hours so that plant operators could perform scheduled maintenance. The work was completed as planned, and the line was re-energized.⁵¹ Director General Rafael Grossi stated he was continuing talks with Kyiv and Moscow, with the IAEA still trying to establish a demilitarized zone around the plant and facilitate the withdrawal of Russian and Chechen forces from ZNPP.

Otherwise, Russia and Ukraine exchanged sporadic artillery fire from the Zaporizhia-Donetsk administrative border to Hulyaipole to Orikhiv.^{52 53}

⁵¹ [International Atomic Energy Agency](#)

⁵² [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEST](#)

⁵³ [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report PM EEST](#)

BLACK SEA, CRIMEA, MYKOLAIV, AND ODESA REGION

The composition of the Black Sea Fleet did not change, with 16 ships on patrol, including six surface vessels and one Kilo-class submarine capable of launching Kalibr cruise missiles.⁵⁴ The current flotilla can launch up to 44 missiles, with Operational Command South (OCS) believing that the vessels are armed with 30 Kalibrs.

WESTERN AND CENTRAL UKRAINE

Russian Objective: Launch terror attacks on civilians in an attempt to maximize casualties by deprivation of heat, water, and medical services and break morale

Ukrainian Objective: Deter attacks, and protect civilian lives

There weren't any significant developments in this region.

⁵⁴ <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/70965>

NORTH AND NORTHEAST UKRAINE


Russian Objective: Lock Ukrainian military resources into place and launch terror attacks on civilians in an attempt to break morale and maximize casualties by deprivation of heat, water, and medical services

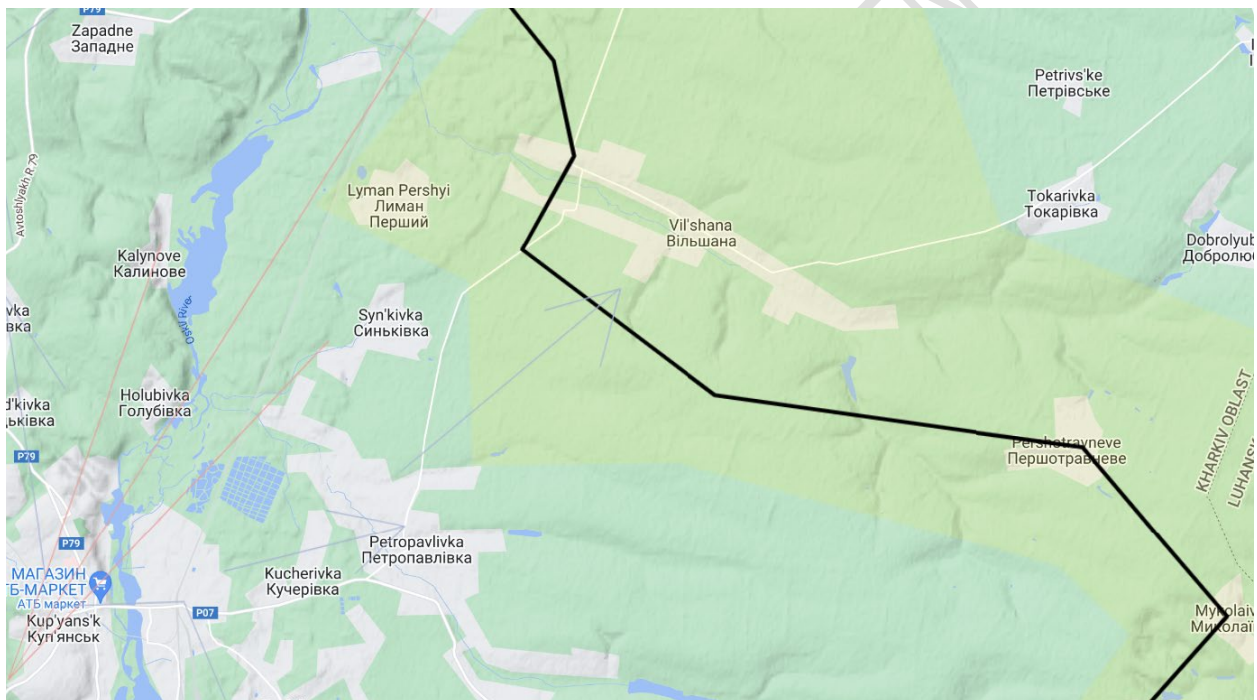
Ukrainian Objective: Complete the liberation of the Kharkiv oblast, maintain the integrity of the international border, deter attacks, and protect civilian lives

The IAEA reported that on January 14, a Russian missile struck the Kyiv Research Institute, causing a fire where a decommissioned research reactor is stored. The spent fuel for the reactor is stored onsite. There were no injuries or release of radiation, and the IAEA had inspected the location late last year at the behest of the Kremlin after falsely claiming Ukraine had developed a dirty bomb at the location.⁵⁵

An Airbus Helicopters H225 (previously known as a Eurocopter EC225 LP Super Puma) crashed in the residential neighborhood of Brovary, near the international

⁵⁵ [International Atomic Energy Agency](#)

airport, which remains closed to commercial traffic.⁵⁶ There was a large fire burning at the time of publication, and as the fire was being brought under control,  [pictures of the wreckage](#) showed what appeared to be the flight crew section of the 24-passenger rotorcraft, which was completely destroyed in the crash.⁵⁷



In Kharkiv, RMOD made another claim of fighting near Vilshana, reporting a Ukrainian DRG or reconnaissance unit

⁵⁶ <https://twitter.com/Archer83Able/status/1615611192243781634>

⁵⁷ <https://twitter.com/Archer83Able/status/1615611862220947456/photo/1>

was engaged in fighting in [Lyman Pershyi](#).⁵⁸ We can't verify the report.

In Kupyansk, the Kupiansk Motor Transport Vocational College was destroyed when the facility was hit by an S-300 anti-aircraft missile used for a ground attack.⁵⁹ There were no injuries reported.

RUSSIAN FRONT

Rybar claimed that Shebekino was shelled, while local Telegram and Russian state media channels in the Belogord federal district reported – nothing.⁶⁰ Russian Telegram channel Gelgorod Number 1 wrote, “What happened during the night? Fortunately, everything was calm.”⁶¹

⁵⁸ https://t.me/mod_russia/23501 [Russian Government Controlled Social Media Channel]

⁵⁹ <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2023/01/17/7385269/>

⁶⁰ <https://t.me/belgorod01/30508>

⁶¹ <https://t.me/rybar/42783>

THEATERWIDE & EXTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS

BREAKING NEWS: Internal Affairs Minister of Ukraine Denys Monastyrsky, his deputy Yevhen Yenin, and State Secretary Yurii Lubkovich were killed in the Brovary helicopter crash.⁶² ⁶³ Nine people were reported aboard the rotorcraft, and there were no survivors. Another nine people on the ground, including three children, were killed, with 29 injured, including 15 being treated at area hospitals.

The helicopter reportedly took off near dawn while electricity was out in the region and was flying in dense fog. There are no indications that the craft was shot down.

DTEK reported that the January 14 missile attack on Ukraine damaged nine different thermal power plants and three major substations.⁶⁴ At one power plant, one of the turbine decks was destroyed. The situation with power has somewhat improved, with six oblasts reporting they were experiencing emergency outages, down from nine reported yesterday.

⁶² <https://t.me/irpininlife/7610>

⁶³ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-64315594>

⁶⁴ <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2023/01/17/7385279/>

Hryhorii Tsekhmistrenko, a Ukrainian-born Canadian citizen from British Columbia, was killed in action on January 14. He and his wife moved to Kyiv in January 2022. After the war broke out, he volunteered as a medic.⁶⁵

President Putin submitted a draft law to the State Duma that will terminate the international treaties of the Council of Europe – removing the Russian Federation from the earlier agreements.⁶⁶ It was announced that Putin would make a major speech on January 18, the 80th anniversary of breaking the siege of Leningrad.

Presidential Advisor Aleksey Arestovich submitted his resignation on January 17 to the Head of the President's Office, Andriy Yermak, where it was immediately accepted. Arestovich crossed a bridge too far with his latest unsubstantiated claim that Ukrainian air defenses deflected the Kh-22 missile that struck a Dnipro apartment complex. The gaffe-prone Arestovich wrongly claimed on two occasions that ships of the Russian Black Sea fleet had been sunk, broke operational security more than once, and

⁶⁵ <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2023/01/17/7385305/>

⁶⁶ <https://t.me/itsdonetsk/52473>

shared misinformation about the operational situation in Kherson.

The Netherlands and the United States are discussing providing Ukraine with a third Patriot missile defense battery. While some sources have reported that the United States approved the transfer, at the time of publication, officials from both nations have only reported ongoing dialog.⁶⁷

There are rumors that Germany may approve the transfer of up to 15 Leopard 2 tanks, which won't arrive until October 2023, on the condition that the decision is made – now.

RUSSIAN MOBILIZATION AND MILITARY STATUS

Russian social media channels claimed that Putin's speech would be about a major policy change concerning the war in Ukraine and hinted or outright claimed that another round of mobilization, if not full mobilization and martial law, would be announced.

⁶⁷ <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2023/01/17/7385320/>

Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov denied that Putin's January 18 speech would include a new wave of mobilization or a "regime change" and that any reports claiming this are "rumors" that should be ignored.⁶⁸ Putin is making his speech in St. Petersburg, called Leningrad during the 1942-43 Nazi siege and where PMC Wagner's headquarters are located. At the time of publication, a Russian Tu-214SR "doomsday plane" was circling St. Petersburg, hinting that President Putin had arrived in the city.

While Peskov may be technically correct that a new wave of mobilization won't be announced, that is only a technicality because the Duma never passed legislation ending the partial mobilization that began on September 21.⁶⁹ The Kremlin can announce a continuation of the current policy without passing new legislation.

Russian milblogger Vladlen Tatarsky shared a short video of  [members of the Russia Imperial Movement \(RIM\)](#) promoting the Crew Russia Telegram channel. In July 2022, we published  [an in-depth investigation into the RIM](#) and

⁶⁸ https://t.me/TK_Union/25194


⁶⁹ <https://t.me/Crimeanwind/20444>

its connection to the now-defunct United States Neo-Nazi organization Atomwaffen. The Russia Imperial Legion, which is the mercenary training arm of RIM, was declared a white nationalist terrorist organization by the United States in April 2020 for providing terrorist training to United States citizens. The Russia Imperial Legion, not to be confused with the BARS-13 Russian Legion, had up to 4,000 Neo-Nazi mercenaries fighting for Russia, reporting to PMC Wagner's command structure. Most of that force was successfully denazified by Ukrainian troops during the opening months of Russia's large-scale invasion.

On the subject of PMC Wagner, Sergey Mironov, who leads the "A Just Russia" faction, addressed the State Duma calling for the legalization of PMC Wagner. In Russia, private militias are illegal, but "paramilitary clubs" are not.

Approved paramilitary clubs are controlled by the Voluntary Society for Cooperation with the Army, Aviation, and Navy (DOSAAF). DOSAAF was created in the 1950s by the Soviet Union to promote a healthy lifestyle and teach the history of Russian military glory. Organizations such as the RIM and their militia arm, the Russia Imperial Legion, operate under the DOSAAF umbrella and the blessing of

the Kremlin.⁷⁰ Further indicating that the rift between Shoigu and Prigozhin is growing and factionalized, Mironov told the Duma, "the Russian army has much to learn from the Wagner PMC in training recruits."⁷¹

Russian Minister of Defense Sergei Shoigu was reportedly in Ukraine.  [Video from Russian state media](#) showed Shoigu receiving a briefing from Lieutenant General Rustam Muradov, commander of the Eastern Military District, and presenting medals to Russian soldiers.⁷² General Evgeniy Nikiforov, responsible for the defense of Kreminna and Svatove and the fourth Western Military District commander in 10-1/2 months, was at the meeting via video conference.⁷³ Everyone in the video was clean-shaven with perfect haircuts and uniforms, although General Nikiforov appeared to need a pot of coffee with a Redbull chaser.

Shoigu said that from 2023 to 2026, the Russian military should be able to increase its size from approximately 900,000 soldiers in 2021 to 1.5 million. This was previously announced in mid-December as part of a broader set of

⁷⁰ [Malcontent News](#)

⁷¹ <https://t.me/Crimeanwind/20456>

⁷² https://t.me/TK_Union/25176

⁷³ <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2023/01/17/7385184/>

military reforms announced by President Putin, which will bring the Russian Ministry of Defense back to the future. Moscow has already dropped the concept of having battalion tactical groups (BTG) and is moving its unit and command and control structure to a 1970s Soviet-era style.

Tartensky shared a post from Andrey Medvedev (not the Wagner commander who fled to Norway), which claimed civilian vehicles are being blocked from entering Ukraine by Russian border agents because mobiks are arriving in their personal vehicles, and this has been causing - problems. However, the ban extends beyond Russian military units supplementing transport with civilian vehicles and includes volunteers, who sometimes have no other way (according to Medvedev) to get to the "special military operation" zone.⁷⁴

Does anyone care to guess what is happening to the confiscated vehicles?

All is going to plan.

⁷⁴ <https://t.me/vladlentatarsky/18694>

WAR CRIMES AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Ukrainian officials reported that after 69 hours of rescue operations, the search for survivors in Dnipro has ended. The January 14 missile strike killed 45, including six children, with the youngest victim just one year old. Rescuers pulled 39 from the rubble alive, and four of the missing were found to already be in hospital.⁷⁵

A former Wagner Group fighter named Andrey Medvedev has defected to Norway and requested political asylum, according to Vladimir Osechkin, founder of the human rights group Gulagu.net. We had previously reported that Medvedev was the unit commander of Yevgeny Nuzhin, a Wagner mercenary who was executed with a sledgehammer in November. At the time of his execution, Medvedev was reported as missing and wanted by Wagner for desertion.

Medvedev claims he tried to cross into Finland twice without success and then headed north, crossing near the village of Nikel on January 12, with dogs tracking him. Medvedev says after crossing into Norway, he pounded on the door of the first house he found and explained in

⁷⁵ <https://t.me/dnipropetrovskaODA/3067>

broken English for them to call the authorities so he could be taken into custody.

Medvedev allegedly signed a contract with PMC Wagner in July 2022 and fled four months later. Wagner founder Prigozhin dismissed Medvedev as a Norwegian citizen nobody, which was untrue with the defector holding a Russian passport. Medvedev says he wants to cooperate with war crime investigators and is being held in custody for now.

GEOPOLITICAL

There weren't any significant developments.

ECONOMIC

The rouble was unchanged, with an exchange rate of 69 for 1 US dollar.

Western oil prices ticked upward, with WTI crude increasing to \$81 a barrel and Brent rising to \$87. Russian Urals crude plunged to an "official" price of \$51 a barrel. United States

wholesale RBOB gasoline on the spot market was up a nickel to \$2.57 a gallon (68 cents a liter).

Dutch TTF Natural Gas Futures rose to 59 euros per megawatt hour for February and March 2023 delivery.

Chicago SRW Wheat Futures inched up to \$7.50 a bushel for March 2023 delivery.