



MALCONTENT NEWS RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR SITUATION REPORT



June 17, 2022



Malcontent News

Russia-Ukraine War SITREP

6/17/22 23:45 PDT

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SUMMARY – DAY 114

It has been 3,032 days since Russia occupied Crimea on February 27, 2014.

Russian and Russia-backed militia forces' ability to perform offensive operations within Ukraine could be reaching a culmination point. Despite having an armor and artillery advantage, the lack of supporting infantry has caused offensive operations to falter across all axes.

Outside the Severodoentsk salient, Russian forces have been forced to take a defensive posture and sometimes have to fall back to second and third lines of defense. Offensive operations outside of Severodonetsk are with a platoon to company size forces of mixed troops. Typically Russian VDV airborne forces are leading, supported by Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) or Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) militias, Wagner Group PMC, or Chechen national guard.

Russian forces launched furious ground offensives in Severodonetsk and around Popasna and could not make any progress. A video released today showed Ukrainian

forces fighting in downtown Severodonetsk by Victory Square, likely on June 15, based on weather conditions.

Russian forces attempted to advance on Berostove, Vrubivka, Zolote, and Toshivka but were unsuccessful. Although Russian forces could not secure the T-1302 Highway, a refocus of artillery made parts of the Bakhmut-Lysychansk Highway inaccessible as of Friday evening. The GLOC to Lysychansk through Siversk remains open.

Russian forces attempted another wet crossing at Bilohorivka [Luhansk] with Ukrainian Special Operation Forces (SOF), destroying the pontoon bridge in a night raid.

South of Lyman and along the Severskyi Donets River to Bilohorivka, Russian forces have only been able to exchange artillery with Ukrainian forces. After speculation that Russian troops would attempt to advance on Raihorodok, the offensive has not materialized.

On the South Donbas axis, Ukrainian forces destroyed a second ammunition depot in 24 hours, with the second one located in Donetsk city. Munitions cooking off rained down across the Kyiv District of Donetsk, with officials blaming the impacts on Ukrainian artillery strikes. The ammunition

depot in Khrustalnyi continued to cook off two days after it was attacked, likely by Ukrainian Su-25 ground attack aircraft that flew 60 kilometers behind the line of conflict. Residents were told to stay in their homes, and that “demining” efforts would take at least three days.

Russian forces repositioned troops in Zaporizhia that were massing for an offensive on Orikhiv and Hulyipole to Kherson, Donetsk, and reinforced defenses in Polohy and Vasylivka.¹

In Kherson, Ukrainian forces liberated two more settlements west of Kherson and moved four settlements to contested. There were late reports that the Ukrainian offensive had reached the outskirts of Tomyna Balka, threatening the Ground Line of Communication (GLOC – supply line) west to Stanislav. The Ukrainian air force made multiple airstrikes on Snihurivka, defying Russian efforts to improve air defenses in the oblast.

North of Kharkiv, Russian forces paused operations near Ternova and Rubizhne. Up to two Battalion Tactical Groups (BTG) were removed from North Kharkiv, likely to be

¹ https://t.me/zoda_gov_ua/9234

reassigned to the Donbas. Fighting near Velyki Prokhody continued.

On the Izyum axis, Pro-Russian accounts reported that Ukrainian forces had advanced east of Prydonetske and were starting to interdict Russian GLOCs. Multiple analysts reported Dmytrivka was liberated, which we had coded earlier this week. Ukrainian forces were able to push Russian forces back to the northern edges of Bohordychne while preventing advances on Dolyna.

The Russian rescue tugboat Vasily Bekh was sunk by two Harpoon antiship missiles on June 17 while on a resupply run to Snake Island. The 57-meter-long vessel was armed with a TOR anti-aircraft system on the rear deck. Ten were killed, and another 23 wounded in the sinking. The sinking of the vessel has resupply implications for the Russian garrison on the island.

The remainder of the Black Sea fleet has had to stand off approximately 100 kilometers from the coast of Ukraine. Cruise missiles launched at that distance travel across open water for five to seven minutes, enabling Ukrainian anti-aircraft systems to calculate firing solutions, increasing the interception rate.

DAILY ASSESSMENT

It has been almost two weeks since Russian forces made notable territorial gains by capturing Lyman, Staryi Karvan, and Syvatohirsk. During the same period, Russian troops also made incremental gains toward Slovyansk southeast of Izyum. It has been over three weeks since the siege of Severodoentsk started. Beyond continuing to hold the city's industrial region, Ukrainian forces have been able to defend Metolkine, Borivske, Bila Hora, Ustynivka, and Lisna Dacha, while holding advances from Popasna to meters a day, if successful at all. As recently as June 15, Ukrainian forces were able to advance into the center of Severodonetsk.² The video was geolocated, and the damage was cross-verified by Sentinel One satellite data.³

Despite daily casualty rates that rival World War II battles and a disadvantage in armor, artillery, and air assets, Ukrainian forces aren't just successfully defending a 2,450-kilometer line of conflict – they are increasingly making incremental gains.

² <https://www.tiktok.com/@skynews/video/7110324079571258630>

³ <https://goo.gl/maps/gj3TbiSKwWWgTqR58>

Ukraine holds a significant advantage in light infantry, and not just numerically. Most of the troops are better trained, better equipped, have access to superior battlefield medicine, and have higher morale. Russian troops can't be rotated on many fronts, while Ukrainian forces can. Respite from 24/7 combat improves Ukrainian troops' physical and psychological condition while enabling experienced soldiers to share valuable lessons with fresh troops.

The Russian Ministry of Defense has reportedly been repositioning troops from Enderhodar, which is dealing with an insurgent population, to Melitopol to deal with an insurgent population.⁴ This comes after Russia-backed militia troops were removed from Avdiivka, ending offensive operations there, and removed from the Izyum axis to reinforce combat troops around Severodonetsk. When Russian forces were moved west of Kherson to defend the Kherson-Mykolaiv border to the north, Ukrainian forces started a second counteroffensive on the weakened western front.

Russian forces are increasingly reactive to battlefield conditions, and while Ukraine continues to apply a flexible defense, their forces are increasingly setting the conditions

⁴ https://t.me/zoda_gov_ua/9234

of combat – outside of Severodonetsk. There are reports that the Kremlin fired Colonel-General Andrey Serdyukov, the head of Russian VDV Airborne forces, due to poor performance and unacceptable losses.⁵

The nuance in this assessment is a repeated acknowledgment that Ukrainian forces are suffering significant losses on a daily basis. In the new Phase 3 war of attrition, Ukraine's strategy of holding defensive positions in the Donbas to wear down Russian offensive capabilities appears to be reaping benefits – at a terrible cost of human capital. Some Ukrainian platoons and companies have suffered 95% casualty rates, particularly in the Donbas. It is not to suggest the fighting in Luhansk is less critical than in the rest of Ukraine. Still, when looking at the entire battlefield holistically, Russian forces are straining to hold defensive positions while offensive operations continue to get smaller. In contrast, despite impossible conditions, Ukrainian forces can still hold defensive lines while increasing offensive operations outside of Severodonetsk.

During most of May, Russian forces made slow but steady gains with a more disciplined approach. Improved supply

⁵ https://t.me/Bratchuk_Sergey/13996

and logistics, better coordination between the air force and ground troops, and the strategic use of ground forces to perform offensive operations in targeted areas. Over the past week, we have seen a return to piecemeal troop deployments with questionable strategic goals. The continued drawdown of Russian troops from defensive lines into the Donbas is a flashing warning light that Russia's capability to perform offensive operations with ground troop support beyond localized attacks is coming to an end. Russia's numerical advantage with artillery is the critical differentiator that allows the belligerent to hold the line of conflict. Without experienced light infantry, it is unlikely they will be able to find the breakthrough they have sought for two months.

We assess the following:

1. Russia's capability for offensive warfare in Ukraine is becoming increasingly deficient due to a lack of light infantry forces.
2. The war in Ukraine has reached a state of a locked front.
3. Russian troop movements and the inability to rotate troops from the front lines indicate that staffing of defensive positions has become challenging – even in areas that only require a small presence.

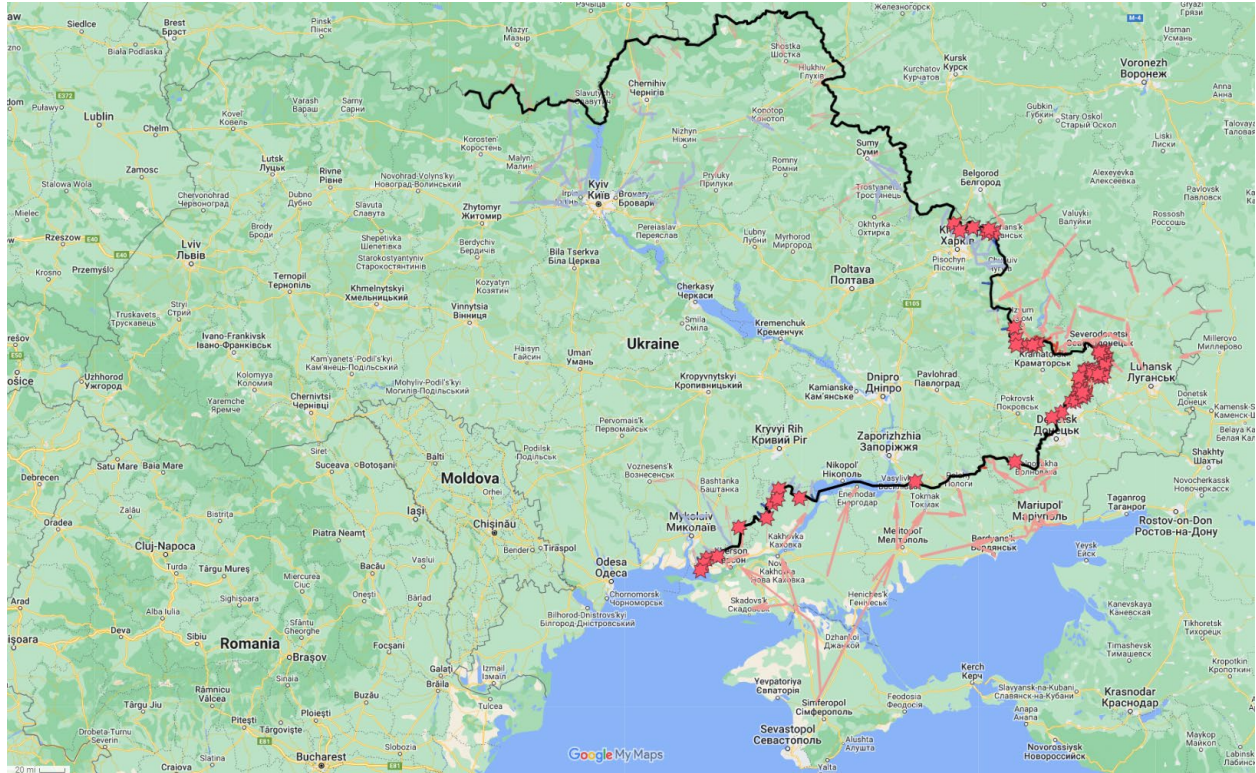
4. If either belligerent becomes incapable of maintaining defensive lines, collapse on that axis or multiple axes will come quickly.
5. We see no indication that Russia will stop concentrating its resources on capturing Severodonetsk.
6. We can no longer determine when **or if** Russian forces will take full administrative control of Severodonetsk.

We maintain Russia does not have enough resources to control and hold territorial gains in the medium and long term without a significant pause in combat operations or a formal declaration of war against Ukraine, coupled with additional mobilization.

We continue to have concerns about Ukraine's ability to take the initiative in late July or August. Ukraine needs to manage its combat losses, and western allies need to accelerate arms shipments to make this possible.

We maintain our concern we are in the Mutual Assured Destruction Instability Paradox, given Russia's unyielding view on Ukraine and its diminishing capabilities through conventional warfare. The decisions emanating from the Kremlin are not geopolitically or militarily sound.

TODAY'S WAR IN UKRAINE MAP

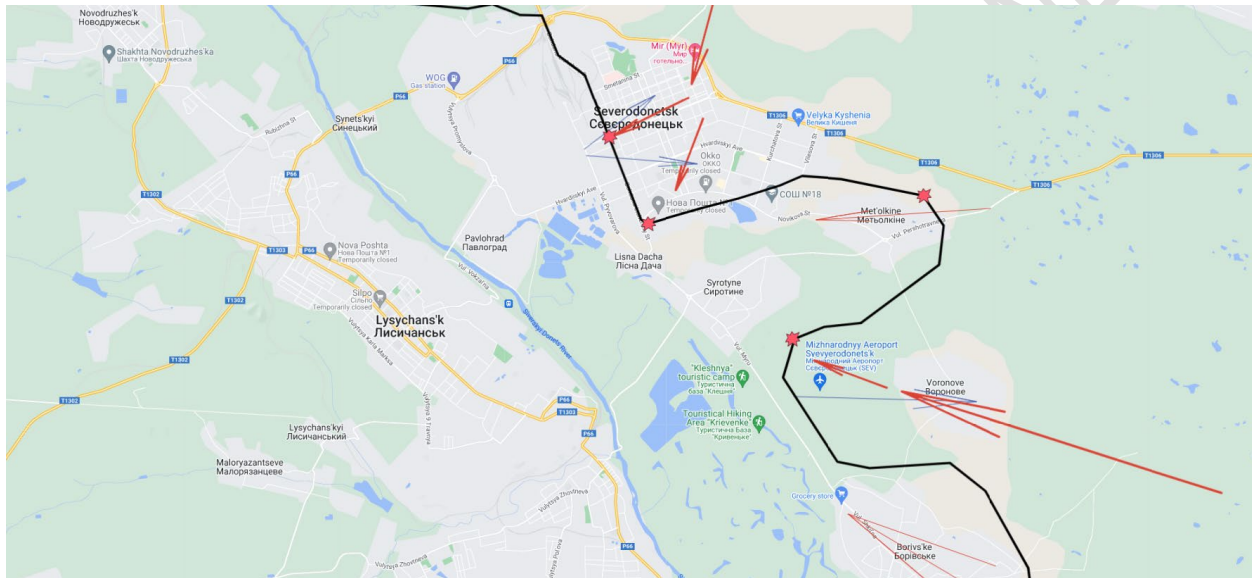


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DONBAS REGION

LUHANSK

Severodonetsk Salient



The situation in Severodonetsk is unchanged, where Ukrainian forces continue to hold defensive positions in the city's industrial region.

[A video released by Russian state media](#) from a drone launched out of Rubizhne skimmed the edges of the Azot Chemical Plant without performing a flyover.⁶

SPECIAL ASSESSMENT: Geolocation information for the video:

- 00:01 - 48°58'52.4"N 38°24'49.3"E - estimated launch point - looking about 120 degrees
- 00:06 - 48°57'54.7"N 38°27'44.2"E - the view is of the twin railroad tracks that go under a highway bridge
- 00:11 - 48°57'49.1"N 38°27'46.5"E - view of the railroad junction, just east of the highway bridge
- 00:38 - 48°57'26.9"N 38°27'35.7"E - view of a tank farm [liquids] and cooling towers – the drone is north of this position and likely over the train tracks on the edge of the Azot perimeter
- 00:47 - 48°58'16.3"N 38°27'24.8"E – the drone has pulled back and shows the same view of the bridge and twin railroad tracks
- 00:50 - 48°58'16.3"N 38°27'24.8"E – the drone is still in the same relative position but has zoomed in the camera to look at 48°57'37.3"N 38°27'01.4"E

⁶ https://twitter.com/spriteer_774400/status/1537915688253132803 [Russian State Media Rating: Misinformation]

- 00:56 - 48°57'54.7"N 38°27'44.2"E – is a repeat of the clip at 00:06 played in reverse

[Another video from Sky News](#) shows intense fighting in the city center by Victory Square on June 15.⁷

[The third video from June 16](#) showed images northeast of Azot. According to NASA FIRMS data, this region has been subject to heavy artillery fire, and the video supports that available data.⁸ The video was geolocated [48°57'39.3"N 38°28'14.1"E] and aligns with weather conditions from the other June 16 video.⁹

Claims of Ukrainian forces mass surrendering at Severodoentsk were untrue. The reports by LNR officials were so outrageous that Pro-Russian social media accounts rebuked the claims.¹⁰

Luhansk Oblast Governor Serhiy Haidai reported that 568 civilians remain trapped in the Azot compound and cannot

⁷ <https://www.tiktok.com/@skynews/video/7110324079571258630>

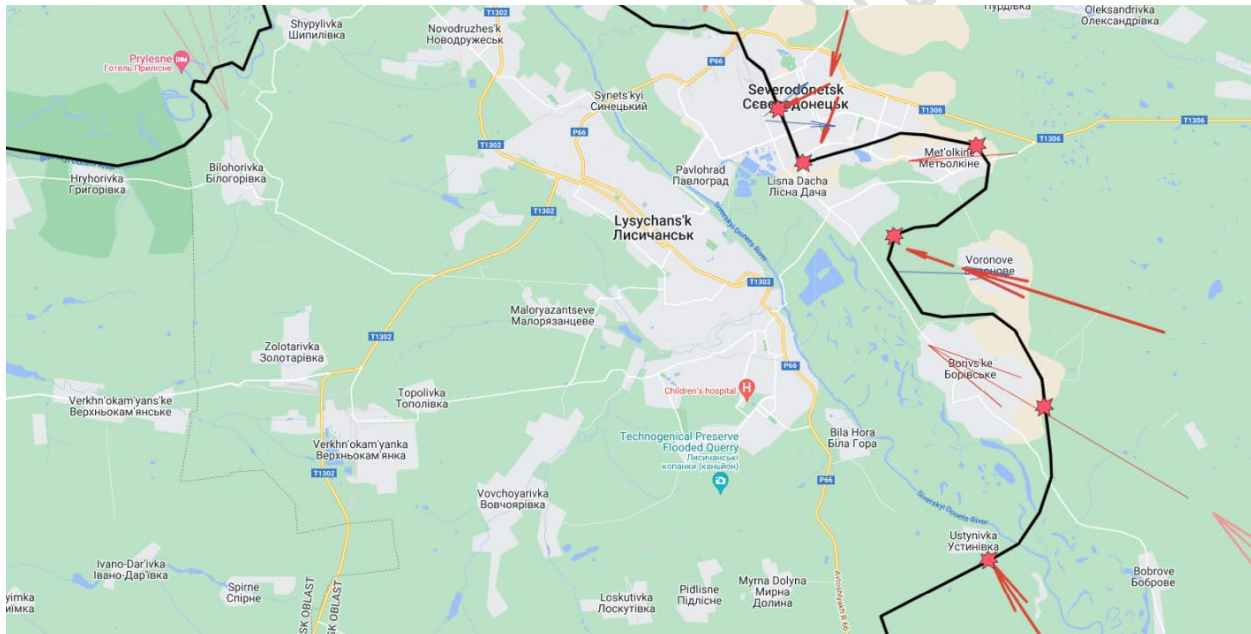
⁸ <https://twitter.com/ilias90sam/status/1537507966928158723> [Russian State Media Rating: Misinformation]

⁹ <https://goo.gl/maps/XZMF7R7JESfbmWCg8>

¹⁰ <https://t.me/intelslava/31415> [Russian State Media Rating: Valid]

be evacuated due to continuous artillery fire by Russian forces.¹¹

Ukrainian forces continue to control the eastern suburbs of Metolkyne, Syrtotyne, Lisna Dacha, Borivske, and the airport at Voronove.^{12 13}



Haidai also reported that the T-1302 Bakhmut-Lysychansk Highway was impassable due to continuous artillery fire.¹⁴ He added that Lysychansk was still fully under Ukrainian

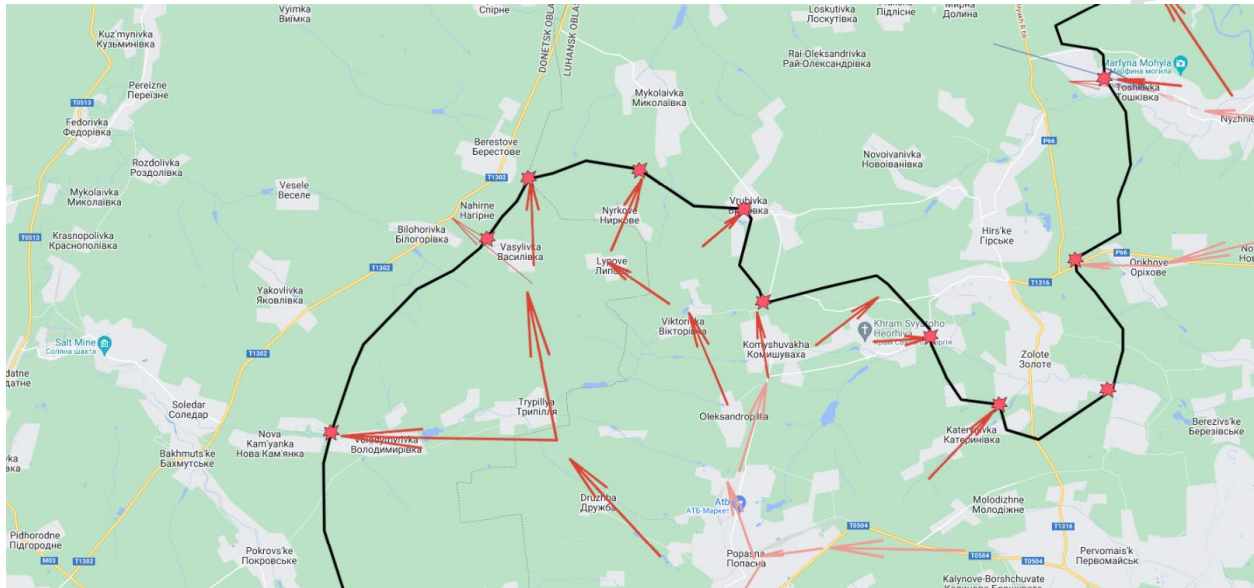
¹¹ <https://twitter.com/KyivIndependent/status/1537846510133583879>

¹² <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/342084208104664>

¹³ https://t.me/Pravda_Gerashchenko/26002

¹⁴ [BBC News](#)

control, and there were alternative GLOCs to the Severodonetsk salient.



From Popasna, Russian forces only attempted to advance on Berestove and finalize severing the T-1302 Bakhmut-Lysychansk Highway and were unsuccessful.¹⁵ The General Staff of Ukraine also reported a reconnaissance force attempted to advance into Hirske but was unsuccessful. The remainder of Russian offensive operations was limited to artillery and Multiple Rocket Launch Systems (MLRS) of Pokrovske, Bilohorivka, and Mykolaivka.

¹⁵ [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine - Facebook](#)

The General Staff also reported that Ukrainian forces repulsed an attack on Nyrkove, which would indicate the settlement was liberated.¹⁶ We consider the settlement contested until there is further evidence.

Despite previous insistence by the Russian Ministry of Defense that T-62 tanks would not be used in offensive operations nor be used out of Zaporizhia or Kherson, [Russian T-62 tanks were recorded](#) advancing toward Vrubivka.¹⁷

ASSESSMENT: In our daily assessment, we identified that Russian forces had returned to ad hoc offensive operations that didn't appear to be strategically connected. It is quite possible that there was an essential objective in Pokrovske, but directing artillery fire away from other more critical advances to secure the Severodonetsk salient demonstrates this renewed lack of focus. The use of T-62 tanks hundreds of kilometers away from their intended area and in theaters that the Russian Ministry of Defense insisted would not see the tanks in action is an additional indication of the equipment and human capital shortages Russian forces are facing.

¹⁶ <https://t.me/spravdi/10932>

¹⁷ <https://twitter.com/ralee85/status/1537959058606465030>

Additionally, a tactical pause after yesterday's failed advances aligns with previous Russian tactics from Popasna. Since May 8, Russian forces have slowed operations for 36 to 72 hours to consolidate forces and make fresh attempts at advances.

Pro-Russian social media account Rybar reported that ammunition continued to cook off in Krasnyi Luch.¹⁸ [A video showed widespread destruction](#) from ammunition that exploded in civilian neighborhoods adjacent to the weapons cache, with munitions laying in yards and on the road. Officials have asked residents to stay in their homes for the next three days so the area can be "demined."

Lyman Axis

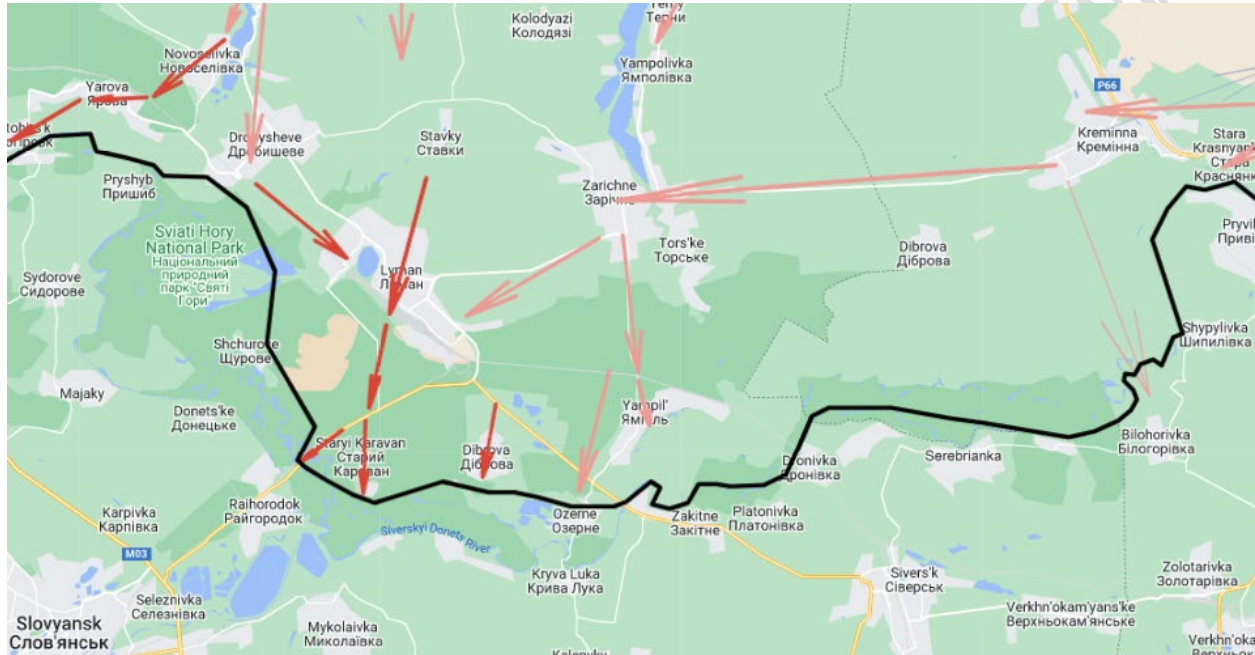
Russian forces attempted a third wet crossing of the Siverskyi Donets River at Bilohorivka [Luhansk] at the exact location of the two previous attempts [48°57'01.2"N 38°13'35.0"E].¹⁹ Ukrainian SOF [was able to destroy the bridge](#) after mining it during a nighttime raid.²⁰

¹⁸ <https://t.me/rybar/34050> [Russian State Media Rating: Valid]

¹⁹ <https://goo.gl/maps/7hwcrG7AXiYoJ1nB8>

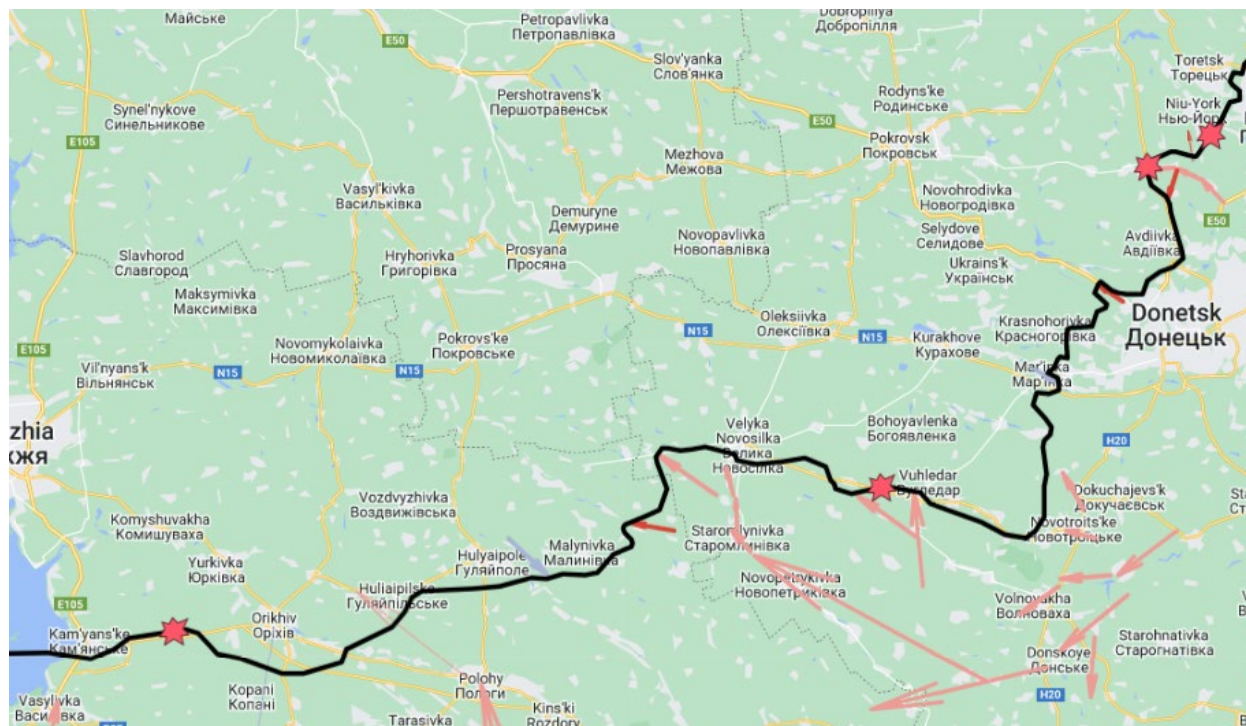
²⁰ https://twitter.com/Blue_Sauron/status/1537337254464655362

There weren't any major combat operations around Lyman on June 17. Russian forces did not start an anticipated advance on Raihorodok from Staryi Karavan.



SOUTH DONBAS AND WESTERN ZAPORIZHIA

There were scattered artillery exchanges and airstrikes from Horlivka to Velkya Novosilka in Donetsk and Hulyaipole to Orikhiv in Zaporizhia.



Ukrainian forces destroyed an ammunition depot in Donetsk.²¹ The depot was located in the Kyiv District of the city. Ammunition cooking off launched in different directions, sparking multiple fires.

We continue to consider Rivnopil contested.

Russian forces have pulled back to concentrate on defensive positions in Vasylivka and Polohy.²² A fire erupted at the Coagulant Chemical Plant in Polohy on June

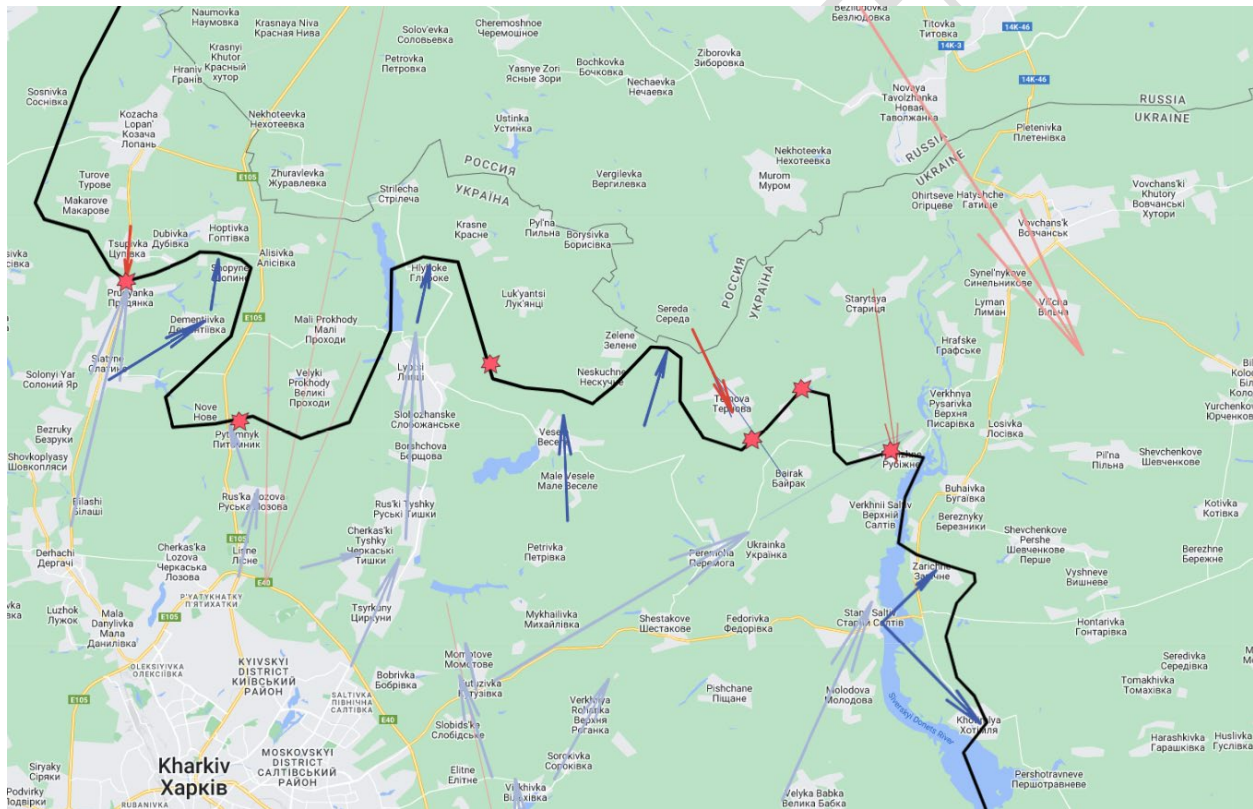
²¹ https://twitter.com/antiputler_news/status/1537838349427396608

²² https://t.me/zoda_gov_ua/9234

16.²³ There was no information on if this was due to military action, insurgents, or an industrial accident.

KHARKIV REGION

NORTHERN KHARKIV COUNTEROFFENSIVE



Russian forces did not attempt to advance from near Ternova and Rubizhne [Kharkiv] on June 17. Ukraine

²³ https://twitter.com/suspilne_news/status/1537522112730210305

continued counteroffensive operations in Velyki Prokhody.²⁴ Elements of the Ukrainian 40th Artillery Brigade destroyed Russian armored vehicles hidden in the treeline. This area has been under continuous attack since June 13.²⁵

Russian reconnaissance forces attempted covert operations in Dementiivka but were unsuccessful.²⁶

IZYUM AXIS

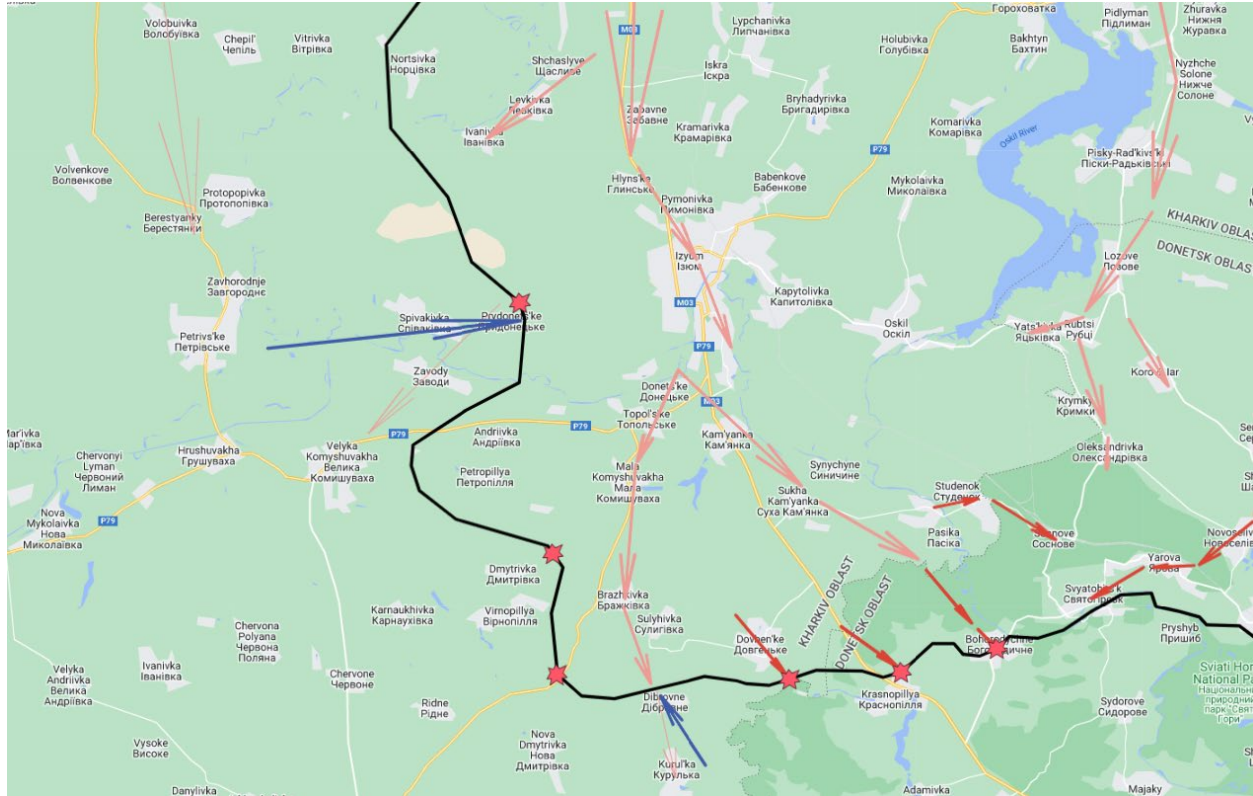
Pro-Russian social media account Rybar reported that Ukrainian forces continued to advance west and northwest of Izyum and were interdicting Russian GLOC from the city.²⁷ Rybar also reported on a second wet crossing established by Ukrainian forces at Protopovika. We were aware of this crossing on June 14 and elected not to report it at the time. The crossing was still intact on June 17. Sentinel One Hub LSA-2 satellite imagery showed fires less than 1000 meters from the city limits of Izyum.

²⁴ <https://twitter.com/Osinttechnical/status/1537989187722391553>

²⁵ <https://twitter.com/Archer83Able/status/1536387301785362432>

²⁶ <https://twitter.com/Flash43191300/status/1537832224011210752>

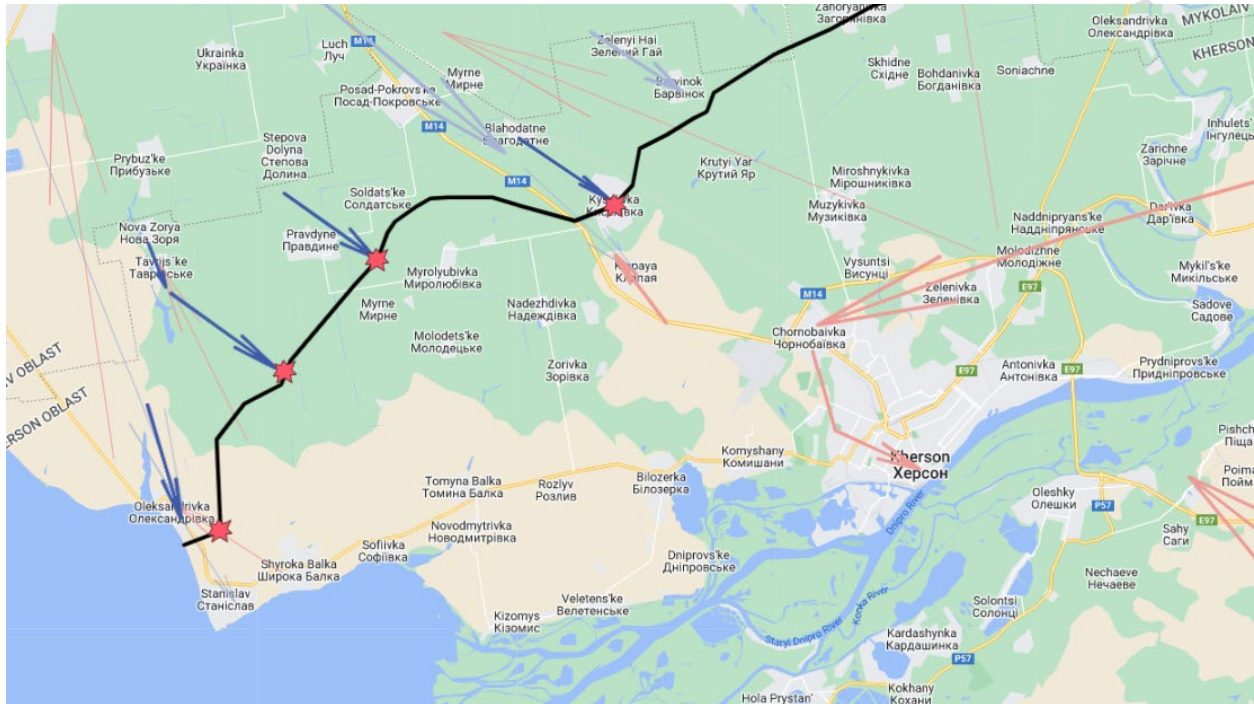
²⁷ <https://t.me/rybar/33956> [Russian State Media Rating: Misinformation about Zolote]



The Ukrainian General staff reported that Dmytrivka, southwest of Izyum, was liberated. We had coded the settlement under Ukrainian control last week. Ukrainian forces reestablished partial control of Bohorodychne, pushing Russian forces back to the northwest edge of the settlement.²⁸

²⁸ https://twitter.com/ukraine_map/status/1537632318877319169

DNIPRO, KHERSON & MYKOLAIV, ZAPORIZHIA REGION



The Ukrainian counteroffensive in Kherson continued to advance west of Kherson city. The settlement of Oleksandrivka [Kherson] was liberated.

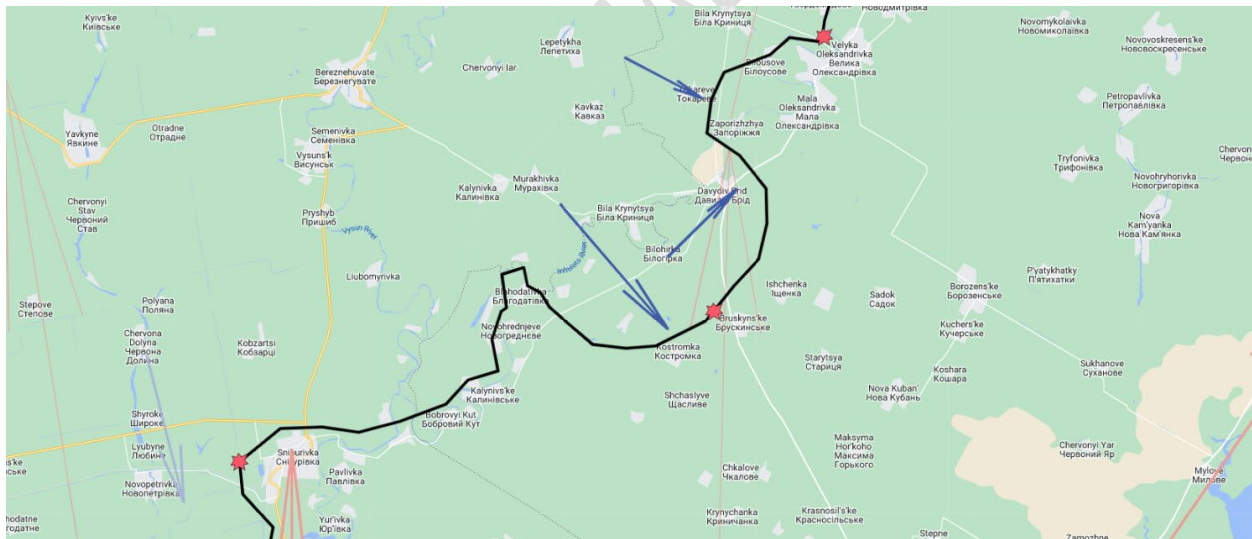
On June 9, Ukrainian forces destroyed Russian positions in Myrne.²⁹ There were reports on June 16 that the settlement

²⁹ https://twitter.com/walter_report/status/1535020292594188289

was contested. There are indications the village was liberated on June 17.³⁰

Ukrainian forces continue to control 50% of Kyselivka, where fighting continues.

Fighting in the critical transit hub of Snihurivka continued. There were reports that the Ukrainian air force fired on Russian positions.³¹



Ukrainian forces continue strengthening their positions on the Inhulets River bridgehead at Davydiv Brid. Sentinel One

³⁰ <https://twitter.com/NLwartracker/status/1537784532174348288>

³¹ <https://t.me/rybar/34029> [Russian State Media Rating: Valid]

LSA-2 satellite imagery suggests Ukrainian and Russian forces have fought near Shchaslyve, south of Kostromka.

CHERNIHIV & SUMY REGION

Ukrainian intelligence officers arrested a man accused of collaborating with Russian forces in Sumy and sharing Ukrainian military position information.³² The man faces life in prison if convicted.

Russian forces fired propaganda shells into the Chernihiv Oblast loaded with leaflets addressing the people of Chechenya.³³ The leaflets said in part, "Citizens of the Chechen Republic! They're trying to engage you in armed confrontation with federal troops."

Editor's Note: *We're just as confused as our readers. Old munitions?*

³² <https://twitter.com/bigSAC10/status/1537935768844242944>

³³ https://t.me/ukrpravda_news/19214

KYIV REGION

There wasn't any significant military action in this region.

BLACK SEA & ODESA REGION

The Russian navy project 22870 rescue tugboat Vasily Bekh was hit by two Harpoon missiles and sunk while in transit to Snake Island.^{34 35} A Bayraktar TB-2 drone [recorded the attack](#). The video indicates that anti-aircraft missiles added to the tug to provide defensive capabilities exploded shortly after the second missile hit.

The Vasily Bekh measured 57 meters long and 14 meters wide and was commissioned in 2017. It was designed for ocean recovery and tow duties. It was capable of limited search and rescue operations, at-sea repairs, firefighting, and could support dive operations down to 60 meters. The vessel had a TOR anti-aircraft system added to the rear deck.

³⁴ <https://twitter.com/CovertShores/status/1537712120757903360>

³⁵ <https://twitter.com/KyivIndependent/status/1537937598554832896>

The boat was being used as a resupply vessel for Snake Island. There were 33 onboard, with reports stating ten were killed and 23 wounded.



In our Flash Report on June 17, we assessed that Russia would attempt to strike Odesa with cruise missiles in retaliation and would be unsuccessful.³⁶ Russia fired two Onyx cruise missiles from Crimea in the direction of Odesa, and both were intercepted.^{37 38}

³⁶ [The Malcontent - Patreon](#)

³⁷ <https://twitter.com/Flash43191300/status/1538028878702161926>

³⁸ [Ukrinform](#)

WEST REGION

There wasn't any significant military action in this region.

ASSESSMENT: We believe the chances that Belarus will invade Ukraine remain extremely remote.

THEATERWIDE & EXTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS

During his second visit to Ukraine, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson proposed that the United Kingdom could start a military training program for Ukrainian forces for up to 10,000 troops every 120 days.^{39 40}

A day after touring Irpin, Germany Chancellor Olaf Scholz pledged that weapons promised to Ukraine would be delivered "in time."⁴¹

Heavy weapons to Ukraine will be delivered to Ukraine after the service members of the Armed Forces of Ukraine

³⁹ <https://twitter.com/SamRamani2/status/1537833195403624448>

⁴⁰ <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-politics-61842137>

⁴¹ [Ukrinform](#)

undergo training, the Chancellor specified, noting that the deliveries will include anti-missile systems and MLRS.

"We will deliver an anti-ballistic system which is able to save Odesa or Kyiv. We also decided together with the United Kingdom and the United States that we will deliver multiple rocket launchers," he said.

The sale of four Gray Eagle combat drones from the United States has been paused, with Pentagon officials worried that sensitive surveillance equipment could fall into Russian hands if one of the drones was shot down or captured.⁴²

"Technology security reviews are a standard practice for the transfer of U.S. defense articles to all international partners. All cases are reviewed individually on their own merit. Through the established process, national security concerns are elevated to the appropriate approving authority," said Pentagon spokesperson Sue Gough.

Slovenia reported they have exhausted their military stockpiles and can no longer transfer weapons to

⁴² [Reuters](#)

Ukraine.⁴³ In the latest tranch, officials agreed to send 35 Infantry Fighting Vehicles (IFV) and small arms.

A Russian Su-25 crashed during a training flight near Belgorod, Russia.⁴⁴ It is reported the aircrew was able to eject safely.

WAR CRIMES AND HUMAN RIGHTS

The United Nations reported that officially, more than 10,000 civilian casualties have occurred since February 24 in Ukraine.⁴⁵

Some 4,509 people had been killed and 5,585 injured as of midnight in Kyiv (21:00 GMT) on June 16, the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) said in its daily update. The dead include 294 children.

“Most of the civilian casualties recorded were caused by the use of explosive weapons with a wide impact area,

⁴³ https://twitter.com/nexta_tv/status/1537926505048682505

⁴⁴ <https://twitter.com/PrzemekShura/status/1537700570584256512>

⁴⁵ [AL Jazeera](#)

including shelling from heavy artillery and multiple launch rocket systems, and missile and air strikes," the statement said. The actual figures are probably much higher.

Ukrainian medic and athlete Yuliia Paievska was released to Ukraine on June 17.⁴⁶ Better known by her World of Warcraft name Taira, Paievska became famous when the Associated Press released a video of her work in Mariupol from the start of the war to March 15. The 256GB of video was recorded on a GoPro and smuggled out of the city on a microSD card hidden in a tampon.

Paievska and her colleague were captured on March 16. Despite video evidence showing her treating and protecting Russian soldiers, the Kremlin portrayed her as a nationalist Nazi with the Azov Battalion. Paievska's husband, Vadim Paznov, said he had talked to her on the phone, and she was on her way to Kyiv.

There was no information on the status of her colleague.

⁴⁶ <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/yuliia-paievska-russia-frees-captive-medic-who-filmed-mariupol-horror/>

Russian state media released a video of Americans Alexander Drueke, 39, and Andy Tai Ngoc Huynh, 27, who are part of the Ukrainian foreign legion and were captured near Kharkiv.⁴⁷ Both made statements under apparent duress. In a brief statement, Huynh made pro-Russian comments while Drueke said he was against the war.

Six Republican United States senators [wrote a letter to TikTok CEO Shou Zi Chew](#), asking for an explanation on why Russian propaganda was allowed to proliferate on the platform while other creators were barred.⁴⁸

Editor's Note: You don't say.

"Alarmingly, recent reports indicate TikTok's non-enforcement of its own purported moderation policies has allowed Russian state media to flood the platform with dangerous pro-war propaganda. No company should find itself in the position of amplifying the Kremlin's lies, which fuel public support for Russia's war of choice in Ukraine."

Editor's Note: You don't say.

⁴⁷ [ABC News](#)

⁴⁸ [Senate Letter to TikTok](#)

GEOPOLITICAL

The European Commission recommended Ukraine become a candidate for European Union membership.⁴⁹

"We all know that Ukrainians are ready to die for the European perspective," Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said. "We want them to live with us, the European dream."

The decision will be left up to EU leaders, who will vote at a summit in Brussels next week. Some leaders have already shown their support for Ukraine's joining the bloc.

Moldova was also granted candidate status. Georgia's application was rejected, with the nation told that if needed to address critical issues before it would be considered.

Responding to the news of Ukraine's EU candidacy, the Kremlin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, said that Russia was aware of the "intensification of discussions" and that it was "observing in the most careful way."

⁴⁹ <https://news.yahoo.com/european-commission-recommends-ukraine-eu-candidacy-154317354.html>

Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev rebuked Russian President Vladimir Putin during the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum on June 17. Pressed by a reporter from Russia Today, part of the RIA, Tokayev said Kazakhstan doesn't recognize "quasi-state territories which, in our view, is what Luhansk and Donetsk are."

There'd be "chaos" in the world if hundreds of new countries emerged, even as there is a conflict between the legal principles of territorial integrity of states and the right of people living in them to self-determination, he added.

Putin defended the slow pace of the "special military operation" in Ukraine during a speech, where he stated that the era of "unipolar" rule was over.

Editor's Note: First, I believe China does not share the view that the United States has unipolar control of the globe. Second, did President Putin admit that Russia is no longer a superpower?

Putin claimed Russia was “forced” to invade Ukraine and said he would push ahead with the four-month-old war despite facing fierce resistance by Ukrainian forces and significant losses of men and equipment.⁵⁰

The Russian president lashed out at the United States for its role in global affairs, saying Washington considers itself “God's emissary on Earth.”

He said Russia would be playing a greater role in what he called an emerging new world order.

“Nothing will be as it used to be in global politics,” he said.

He also dismissed the West’s sanction regime, saying predictions of economic collapse in Russia have been grossly overstated.

⁵⁰ <https://www.rferl.org/a/russia-putin-invasion-ukraine-speech-economic-forum/31903157.html>

ECONOMIC

Russian Coca-Cola bottler HBC AG was deleting its stock, and once exhausted, the company was permanently withdrawing from Russia.⁵¹ Questions arose after Coca-Cola was on sale at the McDonald's replacements in Russia, despite the company's earlier claims of suspending sales in Russia.

Once the stock is depleted, Zug, Switzerland-based Coca-Cola HBC, an independent company, will "no longer produce or sell Coca-Cola or other brands of the Coca-Cola Company in Russia," Atlanta-based Coca-Cola said.

Russian company Gazprom slashed natural gas deliveries to France and Italy.⁵² France's gas network operator GRTgaz said Friday it hadn't received any gas since Wednesday. Italy's state energy company Eni said it only received half its requested shipments on Friday, the third day of a shortfall in deliveries.

⁵¹ [Reuters](#)

⁵² <https://www.politico.eu/article/russia-put-gas-squeeze-france-italy/>

Russia is warning that the gas squeeze could get even worse.

"I do not rule out that there will be serious problems in the European market this year, especially in terms of passing the fall and winter period," Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak said Friday, according to Interfax.

In recent weeks Russia's gas export monopoly Gazprom has cut off gas deliveries to Poland, Bulgaria, Finland, the Netherlands, and Denmark.

The rouble declined, closing at 58 to 1 US dollar.

Oil prices plummeted today due to growing concerns of a global recession and demand destruction. WTI crashed to \$109 per barrel, and Brent crude dropped to \$113. United States RBOB wholesale gasoline dropped to \$3.79 a gallon for August delivery. (\$1.00 a liter).

Chicago SRW Wheat Futures for September 2022 delivery also declined to \$1.04 per bushel.