



MALCONTENT NEWS RUSSIA-UKRAINE SITUATION REPORT

May 4, 2023



Malcontent News

Russia-Ukraine War SITREP

5/04/23 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.

[Patreons at the Bronze level or higher](#) can access the annotated Russia-Ukraine War Situation Report (SITREP). Patreons 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, Katie Livingstone, Oskar Hallgrímsson, Ryan Evans, Michael Hering, and special thanks to David Batashvili of the [Rondeli Foundation](#), Ana Ras, Spanish Editor in Chief, Robert Gaudette, Editor in Chief, 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 realtime 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.


Notes on Sourcing Information


Malcontent News uses a wide range of sources to create our daily Situation Report, the foundation for the Russian-Ukraine War Report Podcast. There are some notable sources that we frequently use and others that we don't. The most common sources currently, or in the past, we have used for the Theater of War section of the Situation Report include the following.


⚠️ **Russian Ministry of Defense Morning Report:** We use the RMOD Morning Report to identify combat reports, shelling locations, and territorial control change claims. We do not consider claims of Ukrainian troops killed, equipment destroyed, or military resources destroyed valid without videos and pictures that can be confirmed by date, time, weather, and geolocation, or third-party confirmation from recognized Western news outlets or trusted Ukrainian sources.


⚠️ **Rybar:** We consider Rybar a mercenary organization because they are staffed by former Russian Ministry of Defense public relations officers who actively provide target information to the Russian military. Their operational budget is \$20,000 a month, while they claim they receive no government funding. We use their reports and maps to identify combat reports, territorial control change claims, and troop movement reports. We do not use claims of Ukrainian troops killed, equipment destroyed, or military resources destroyed because of a documented and historical pattern of producing fabrications. They frequently engage in blatant misinformation and disinformation and consistently deny all Russian war crimes.


⚠️ **War Gonzo:** We consider War Gonzo a mercenary organization because their employees have recorded themselves actively engaging in direct combat, specifically in Marinka. Recently, War Gonzo admitted in their daily report to leveraging the information from the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. They intermix combat reports with their own on a 24-hour delay. We use their reports for **unique claims** about combat, territorial control change claims, and troop movement reports. Although the War Gonzo daily reports are moderately accurate, they occasionally engage in blatant disinformation and misinformation.

 **Readovka:** We consider Readovka to be a Kremlin-aligned propagandist organization. Their daily reports are a word-for-word repeat of the RMOD Morning Report and provide no value to our analysis. They occasionally provide credible information through videos and pictures that can be confirmed by date, time, weather, and geolocation.

 **Igor "Girkin" Strelkov:** We consider Strelkov to be a convicted war criminal who is highly informed, specifically about the situation in the Donbas. We use his combat reports, territorial control change claims, and troop movement information. In the Donbas, we consider his reports to be highly accurate. The fidelity of information he provides in Zaporizhia, Kherson, and Kharkiv appears to come from other social media channels with a history of spreading misinformation and is of lower quality. Reports he shares outside of the Donbas provided by Russian Federation 1st Army Corps units have greater fidelity.

 **Andrei Morozov:** Morozov is a pro-Russian milblogger and a radio communications and logistics specialist with the Russian 2nd Army Corps. We consider him a provider of high-quality information, especially within his fields of specialty. In the fall of 2022, Morozov was detained by OMON for up to three weeks due to his content and has had his online material censored by the Kremlin several times over the last 11 months.

 **Private Military Company Wagner Group Social Media:** We consider reports from PMC Wagner of Russian victories as overstating gains and reports of Russian failures, particularly among the Russian Ministry of Defense and the 1st and 2nd Army Corps of the Russian Army, as overstating problems. We do not consider claims of territorial control changes from Wagner as authentic without pictures, videos, or **unique** Russian State Media reports that include a video that can be geolocated.

 **Luhansk People's Republic Joint Center for Control and Coordination:** We only use their reports about large-scale artillery and HIMARS strikes in the occupied territories.

⊖ **Leonid Pasechnik:** We do not use any combat, territorial control changes, troop movements, casualty claims, or equipment destroyed claims from the self-declared leader of the so-called Luhansk People's Republic.

⚠ **Donetsk People's Republic People's Militia:** We only use their reports for videos and pictures that can be confirmed by date, time, weather, and geolocation.

⊖ **Donetsk People's Republic Territorial Defense:** We do not use combat, territorial control changes, troop movements, casualty claims, or equipment destroyed claims from their public relations and social media channels. They have repeatedly engaged in misinformation and disinformation.

⊖ **Denis Pushilin:** We do not use any combat, territorial control changes, troop movements, casualty claims, or equipment destroyed claims from the self-declared leader of the so-called Donetsk People's Republic.

⚠ **Ramzan Kadyrov:** The contribution and impact of Chechen forces in Ukraine have become minimal, and Akhmat no longer produces large volumes of video content that can be geolocated. We continue to monitor his channels.

✅ **General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine:** We consider the morning and evening reports, specifically combat reports, territorial control changes, and troop movements, from GSAFU to be high quality. The Ukrainian General Staff uses clever wording to create plausible deniability of battlefield failures. Combat reports start with "repelled attacks of the occupant forces in the vicinities of," which negates reporting fighting in areas where territory was lost. Instead of misinformation or disinformation, GSAFU engages in omission. Reports about problems within the Russian military are given more weight if the SBU or GUR reinforces them or if there is added confirmation in the Russian milblogger information space.

✅ **DeepState:** We use the Daily Report from DeepState for combat reports and territorial control changes. They frequently support their claims with geolocated, time, date, and weather-confirmed pictures and videos, making them a high-quality Ukrainian-based source. They occasionally overstate Russian territorial control claims but never present disinformation or

misinformation. Combined with the reports from GSAFU, gaps in combat reports are filled. We support DeepState through their Patreon at \$10 a month.

✔ **Institute for the Study of War:** We occasionally leverage the map and territorial control change information produced by the ISW when there is conflicting data. Their presentation of Russian-assessed, Ukrainian-assessed, and Russian-claimed information is helpful when our analysts have to make a judgment call due to the absence of verifiable information. We do not copy from their map but take their territorial control information as an additional data point when assessing our own changes.

⚠ **Ivan Fedorov:** We use information about insurgent activity and HIMARS strikes in Zaporizhia provided by Fedorov, the exiled mayor of Melitiopol.

✔ **Vitaly Kim:** When there are reports of potential air raids in Ukraine, we monitor Kim, the Mykolaiv Oblast Administrative and Military Governor, for realtime reports. Kim is consistently one of the first, if not the first, Ukrainian government official to confirm kamikaze drones or missiles have been launched toward Ukraine.

⊖ **Oleksiy Arestovych:** We no longer use the information provided by Arestovych after being fired from his role as the Chief Advisor to the President of Ukraine. Before being terminated, Arestovych had developed a reputation for providing exaggerated, unverified, and false claims for Ukrainian successes and failures.



SUMMARY – DAY 434..... 7

 DAILY ASSESSMENT 8

TODAY'S WAR IN UKRAINE MAP..... 10

UKRAINE WEATHER 11

 SOIL SATURATION 12

THIS DAY IN HISTORY..... 13

KHARKIV..... 14

DONBAS REGION 17

 LUHANSK 17

NORTHEAST DONETSK 22

 SOUTHWESTERN DONETSK..... 41

ZAPORIZHIA..... 47

BLACK SEA, CRIMEA, MYKOLAIV, AND ODESA REGION 49

WESTERN AND CENTRAL UKRAINE..... 50

NORTHERN AND NORTHEASTERN UKRAINE..... 52

RUSSIAN FRONT **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

THEATERWIDE & EXTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS **Error!**
Bookmark not defined.

RUSSIA VS. UKRAINE HEAVY EQUIPMENT LOSSES..... **Error!**
Bookmark not defined.

SUMMARY – DAY 434

It has been 3,353 days since Russia occupied the Crimea Peninsula on January 27, 2014, and one year and 70 days since Russia expanded its war against Ukraine.

This is an abbreviated report due to the situation in Bakhmut.

The map is back! [War Map](#)

DAILY ASSESSMENT

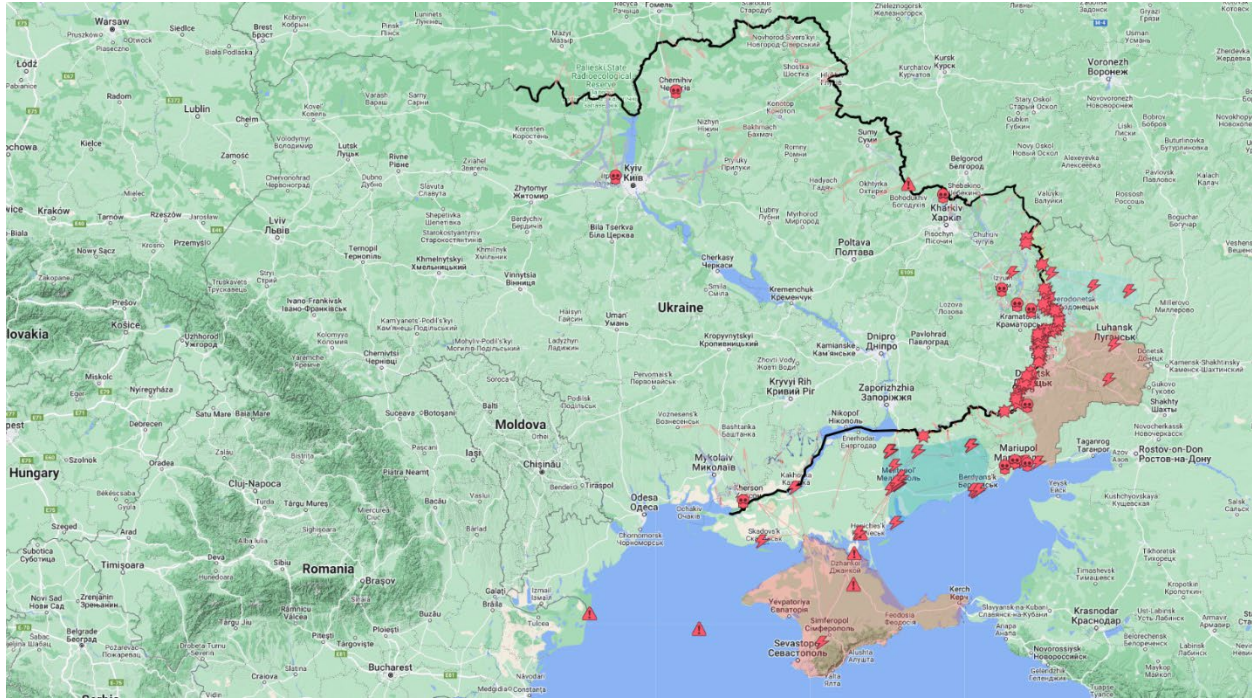
We assess the following:

1. The rift between the Kremlin and Private Military Company (PMC) Wagner Group has ruptured, with Yevgeny Prigozhin announcing Private Military Company Wagner Group is withdrawing from Bakhmut on May 10.
2. Ukrainian forces continue shaping operations on multiple axes in preparation for larger offensive operations.
3. Long-range weather models continue to indicate that ground conditions will be favorable for larger offensive operations using armor and mobility by May 10.
4. We maintain that Ukrainian forces continue to set conditions to complete its retrograde operation in Bakhmut and end its defense of the city, but with the fracture between Russia's most competent fighting force and the Kremlin, we need more information before we can conclude that Ukraine will achieve victory.
5. The Russian Federation Armed Forces are combat ineffective and have exhausted their combat potential, with an increasing number of Russian leaders,

analysts, and milbloggers claiming that this includes the Bakhmut Operational Area.

6. We maintain there is an extremely high risk of a retaliatory missile attack on Ukraine on or before May 9.
7. There is significant evidence that Ukrainian forces successfully intercepted a Kh-47 Kinzal hypersonic missile.
8. Public perception of the 'special military operation' in Russia has taken a series of critical blows with the drone attack on the Kremlin, Prigozhin's announcement, and the probable interception of a Russian wonder weapon.

TODAY'S WAR IN UKRAINE MAP

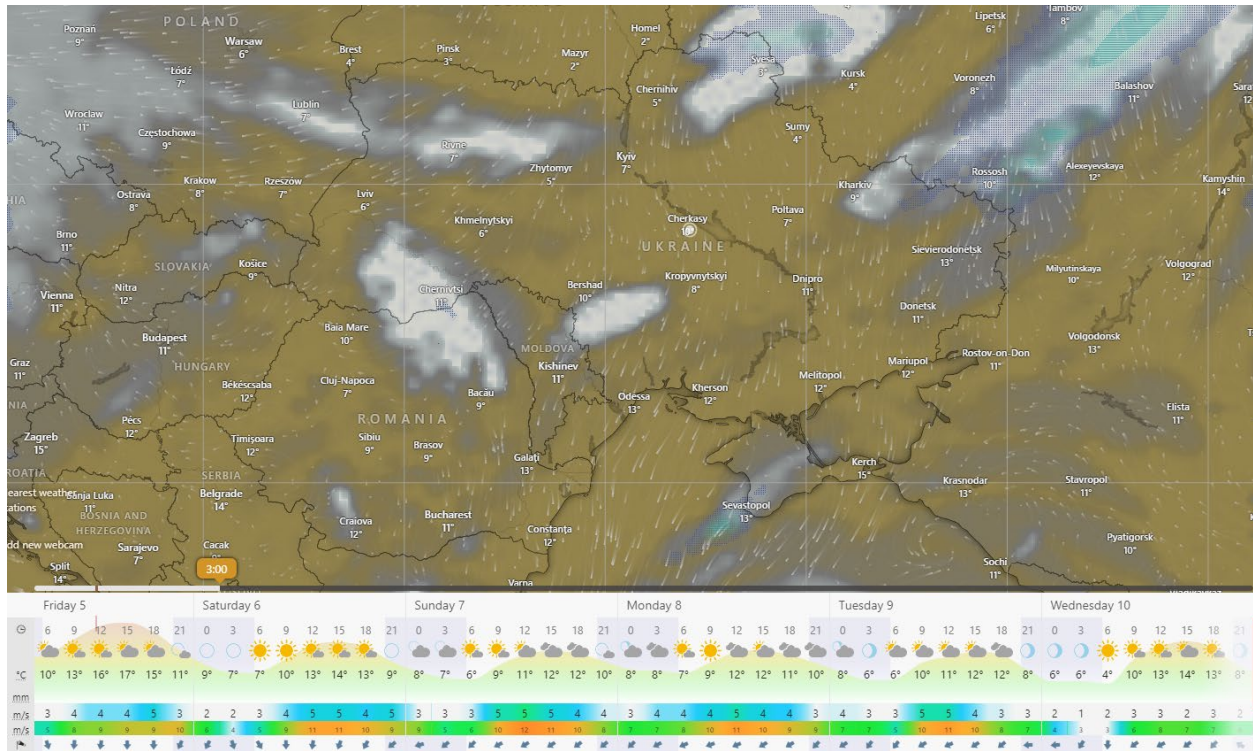


About the maps: Red triangles are sites of significant events unrelated to missile attacks, insurgencies, or ground combat, such as the sinking of the Moskva and the explosion at the Saky Naval airbase. Gray circles indicate an area where fighting has ended with no change in the line of conflict. The archived offensive 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 this](#), it is a link to our war map that will take you to the location explained in the Situation Report.

[Russia-Ukraine War Report Map](#)

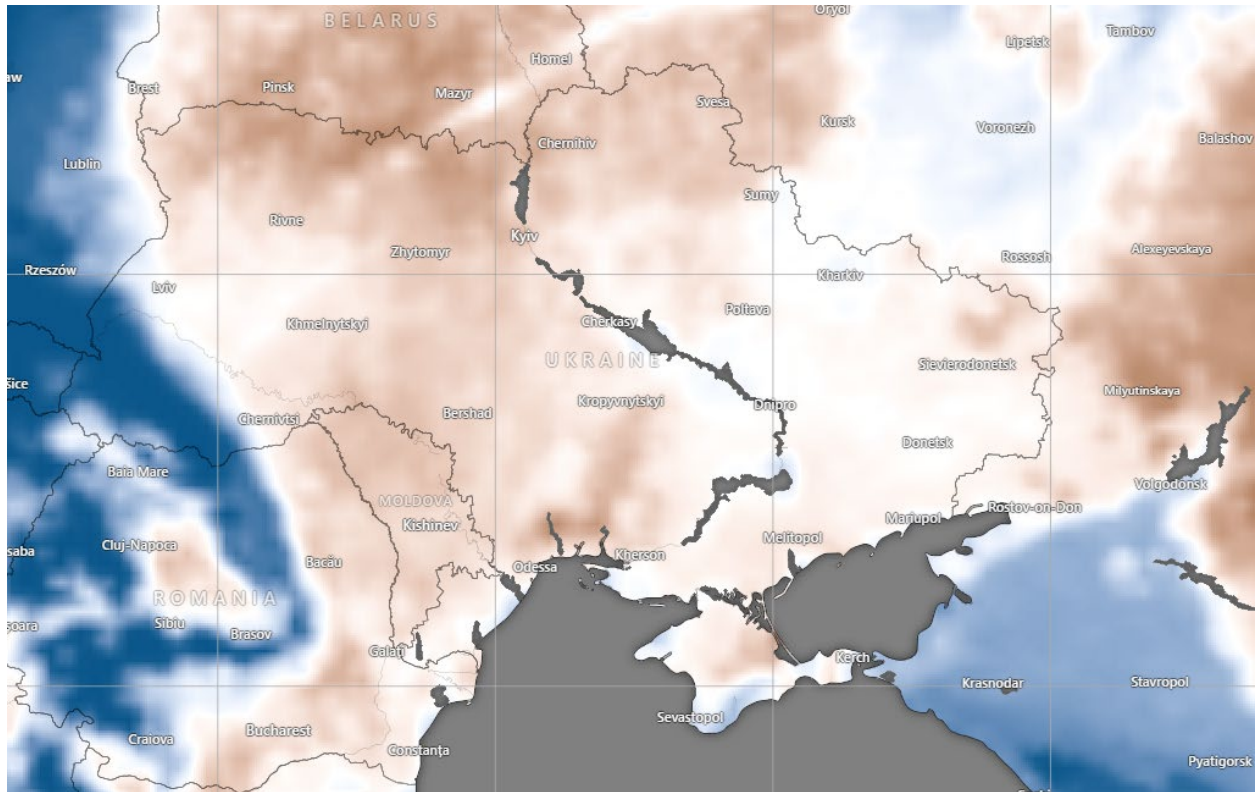


UKRAINE WEATHER



The current ECMWF Euro weather has no significant rain in the forecast through May 10. Sunny and warm weather will give way to cooler and mostly cloudy conditions next week. Lows will be from 2° to 10° Celcius, with daytime highs from 9° to 25°. The coolest weather will be on Wednesday. Winds will be up to 15 meters per second (55 kph/35 mph) Saturday through Monday, accelerating soil drying.

SOIL SATURATION AND HYDROLOGY



May 12, 2023, GFS forecast showing a complex picture with 40% to 50% soil saturation to 40 centimeters depth in Zaporizhzhia and the Donbas.

Soil saturation along the line of conflict is at 60% to 80%, with no significant rain in the forecast through May 10. Ground conditions will be favorable for heavy equipment and armor theaterwide by May 9. The Kakhovka Dam is at a record level, with occupation officials concerned that a smaller dam could fail, with the potential to flood occupied parts of Zaporizhzhia, including Enerhodar.

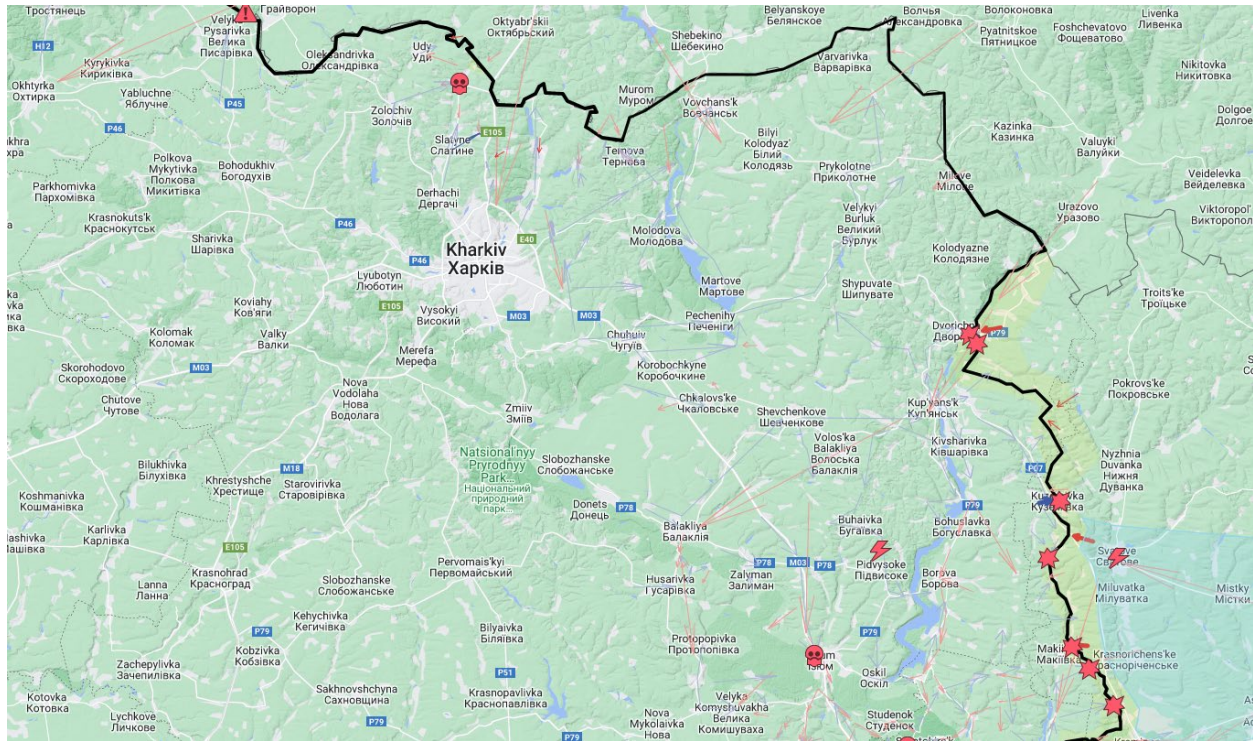


THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Paused

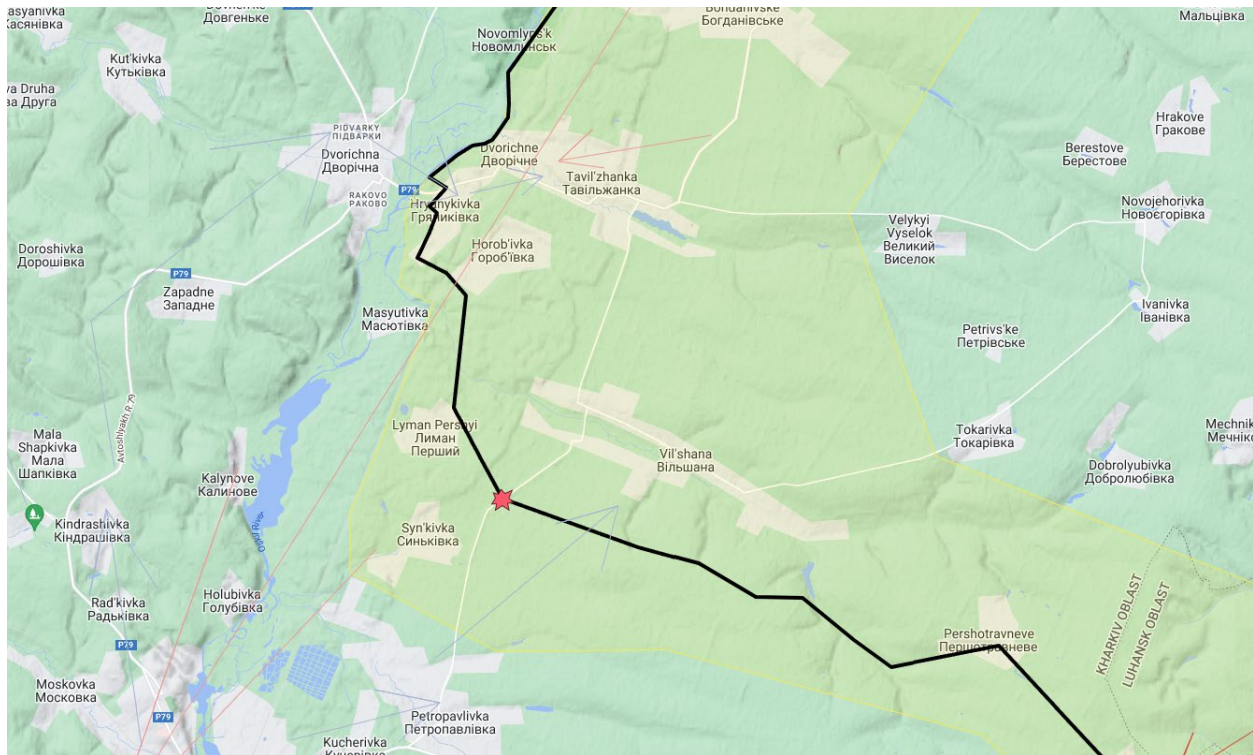
COPYRIGHT 2023, MALCONTENT NEWS

KHARKIV



Russian Objective: Prepare for the Ukrainian offensive, hold current defensive lines, and terrorize Ukrainian civilians near the line of conflict

Ukrainian Objective: Liberate the northeastern corner of the oblast, hold defensive lines in the Dvorychna and Kupyansk Operational Areas, protect civilians and civilian infrastructure

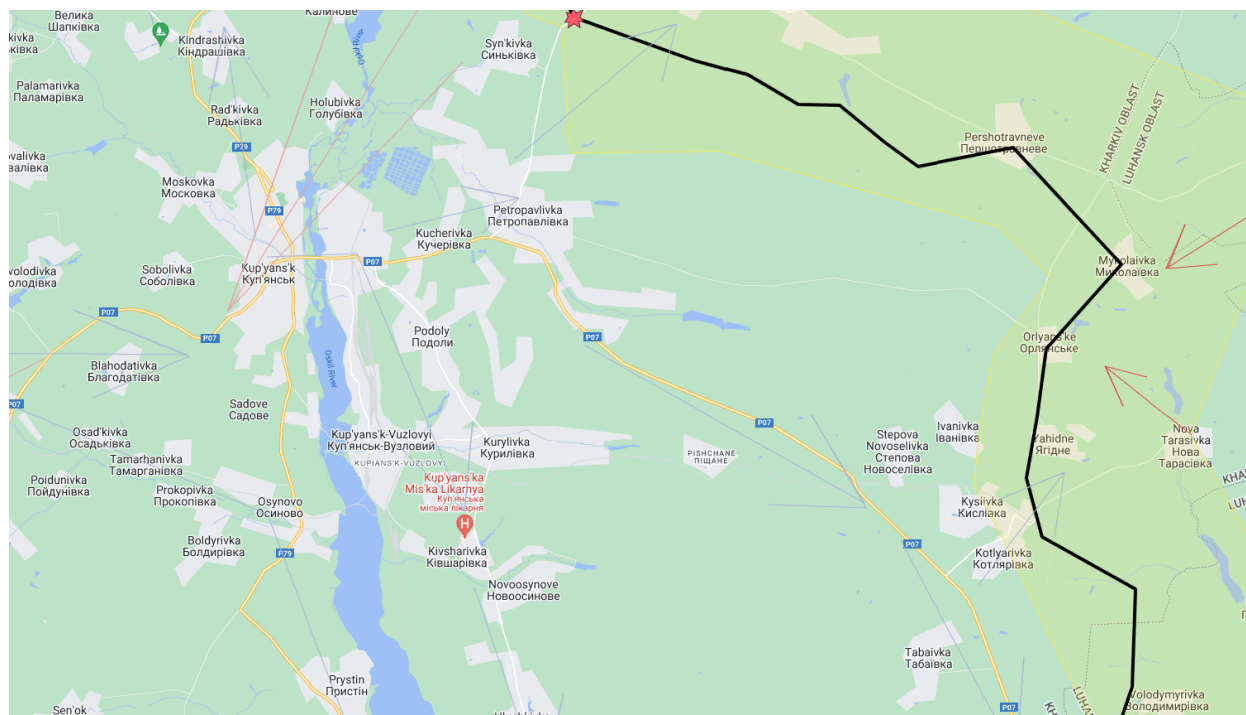


In the Dvorichna Operational Area, the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (GSAFU) reported that [Lyman Pershyi](#) was shelled for the seventh day in a row.^{1 2} The Russian Ministry of Defense (RMOD) reported that Ukrainian surveillance, sabotage, and reconnaissance (DRG) units were operating in the area of [Synkivka](#).³

¹ [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEDT](#)

² [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report PM EEDT](#)

³ https://t.me/mod_russia/26167 [Russian Government Controlled Social Media Channel]



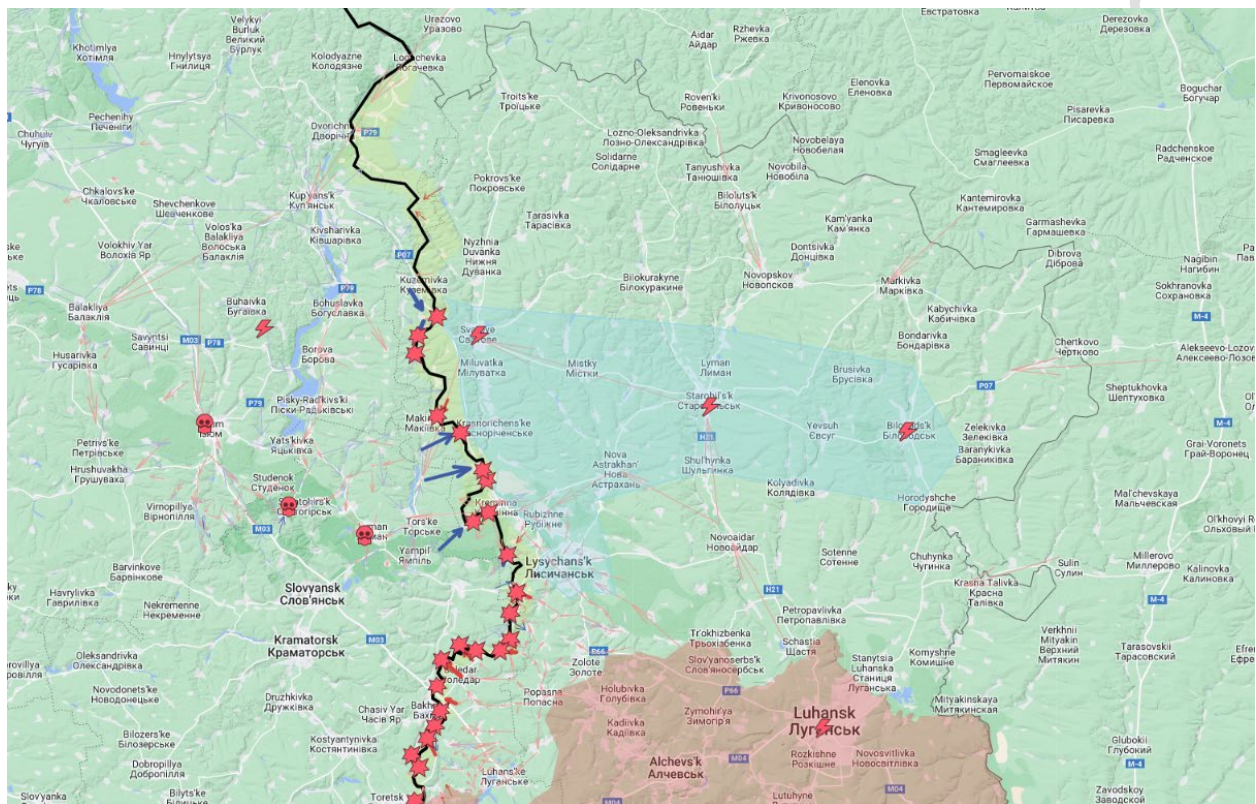
In the Kupyansk Operational Area, RMOD reported that Ukrainian DRG units were operating in the areas of [Orlyanske](#) (Timkovka), [Ivanivka](#), and [Kyslivka](#).⁴

ASSESSMENT: Russian sources continue to report a high level of activity by Ukrainian forces along the line of conflict in Kharkiv over the last two to three weeks. In our assessment, this is part of ongoing shaping operations for future offensive operations but does not prove that a large-scale offensive will be launched in this area.

⁴ https://t.me/mod_russia/26167 [Russian Government Controlled Social Media Channel]

DONBAS REGION

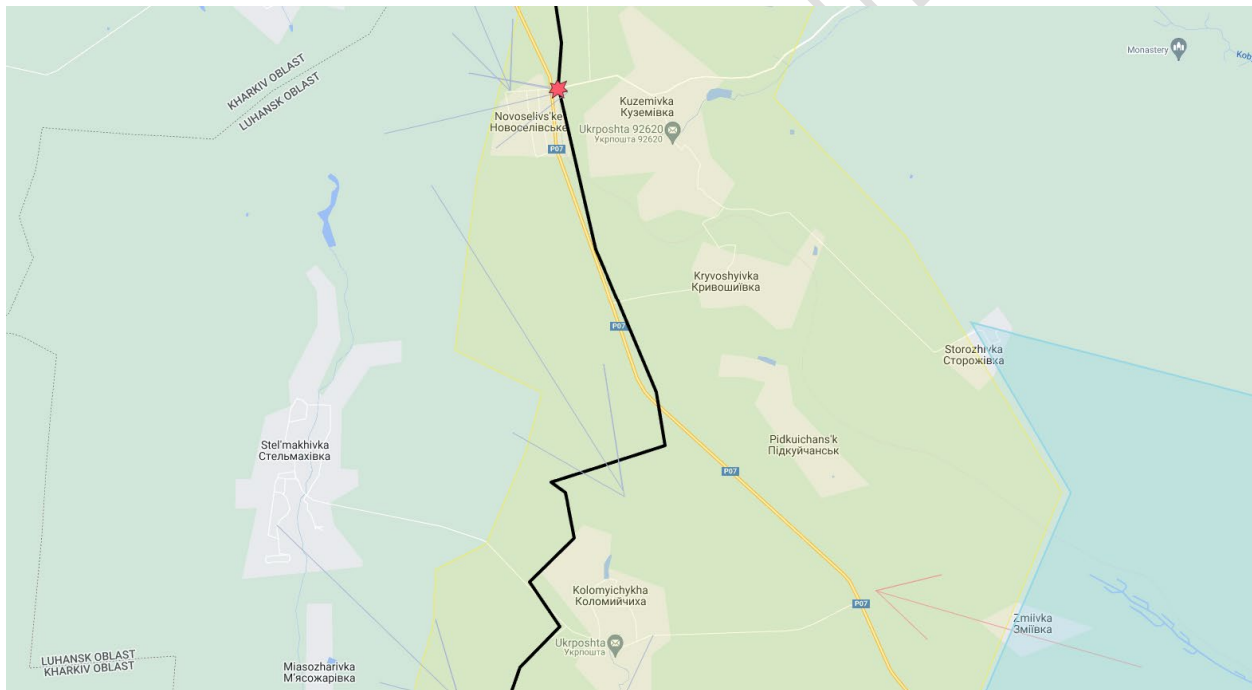
LUHANSK



Russian Objective: Prepare for the Ukrainian offensive, prevent further Ukrainian advances, control insurgent activity

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

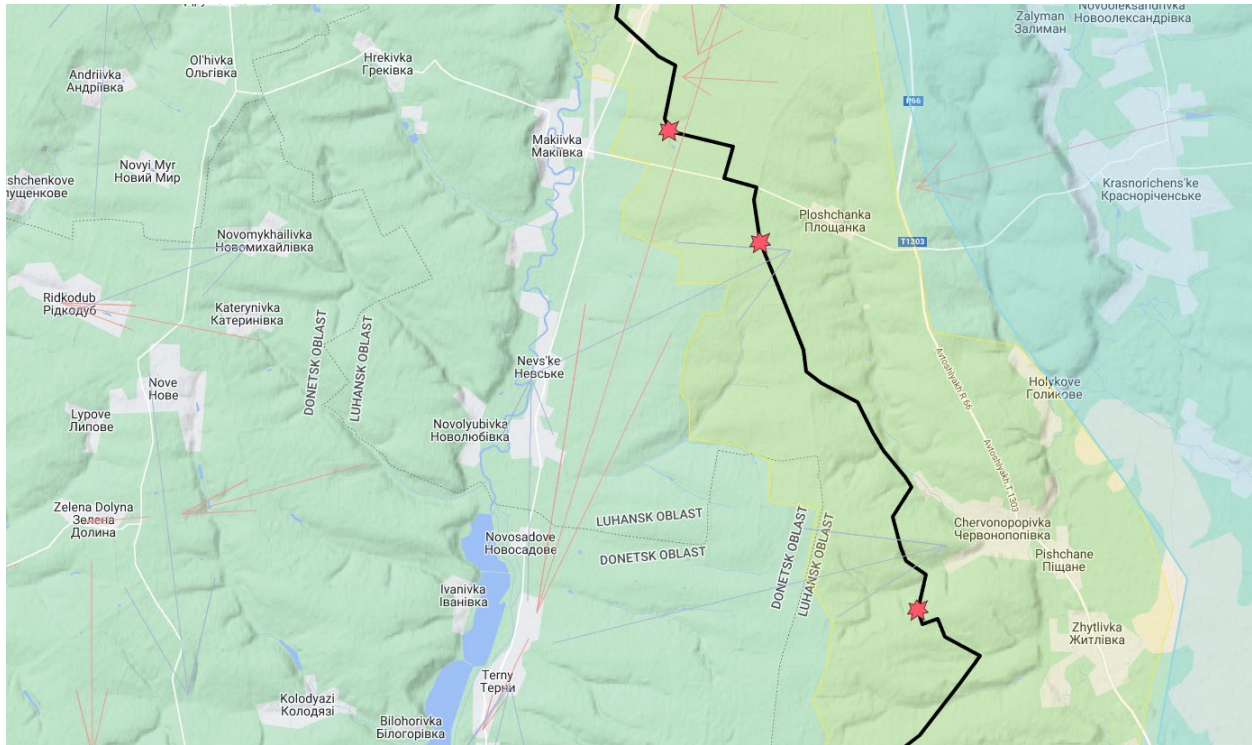
Fighting remains very limited in Luhansk, with a further increase in Russian artillery strikes. Operational Command East (OKE) spokesperson Serhiy Cherevaty reported that Russian units fired 605 artillery rounds, mortars, and grad rockets, and the Russian Airforce (VKS) carried out 16 airstrikes from Dvorichna to Bilohorivka.⁵



In the Svatove Operational Area, RMOD reported Ukrainian DRG activity in the area of [Stelmakhivka](#).⁶

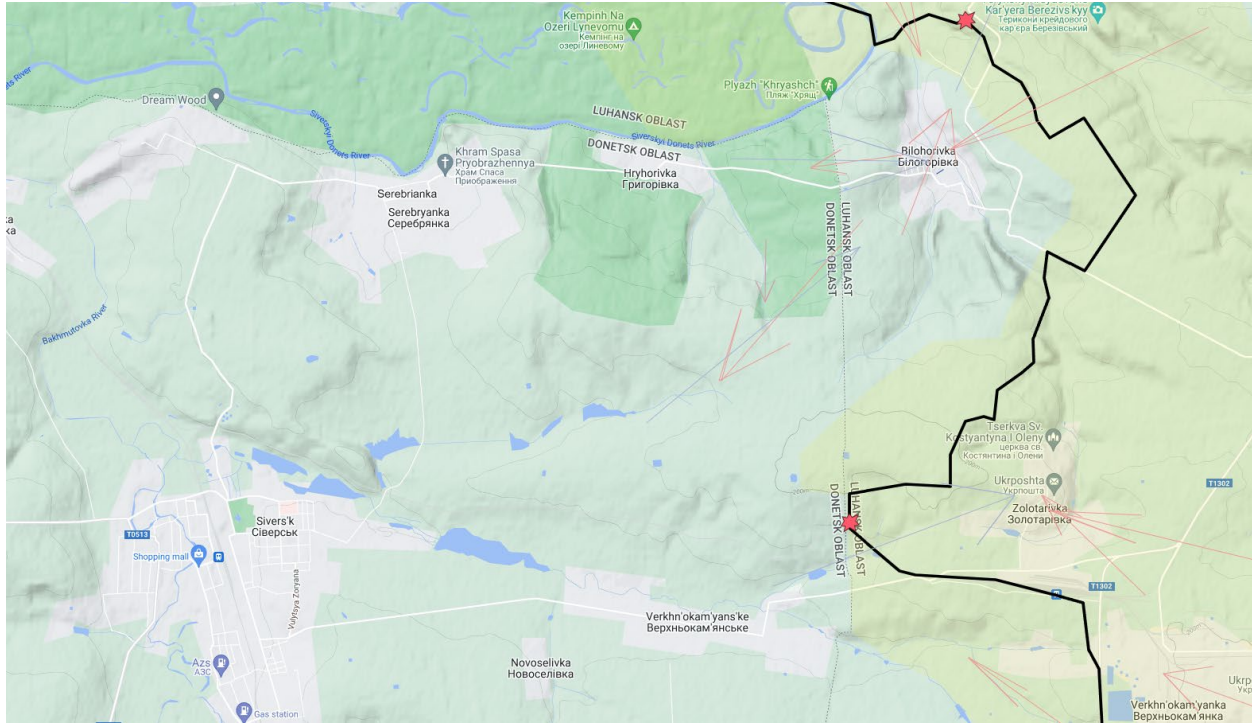
⁵ <https://t.me/luhanskaVTSA/10247>

⁶ https://t.me/mod_russia/26167 [Russian Government Controlled Social Media Channel]



In the Kremiinna Operational Area, Russian mercenary milblogger Rybar reported continued positional fighting in the area of [Makiivka](#) with no change in the situation.⁷ There was no other significant fighting reported north of the Siverskyi Donets River.

⁷ <https://t.me/rybar/46624>




In the Lysychansk Operational Area, Russian forces probed Ukrainian defenses east of [Bilohorivka](#) [Luhansk], took losses, and returned to their defensive positions.⁸ Rybar claimed that Russian forces established a “toe hold” at the [pumping station](#) southeast of Bilohorivka, but there wasn’t a second source to support the claim or geolocated visual information.⁹ Due to the low reliability of reports from Rybar in 2023, we did not adjust the map.

The so-called Luhansk People’s Republic (LNR) Joint Center for Control and Coordination (JCCC) shared pictures

⁸ [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEDT](#)

⁹ <https://t.me/rybar/46624>

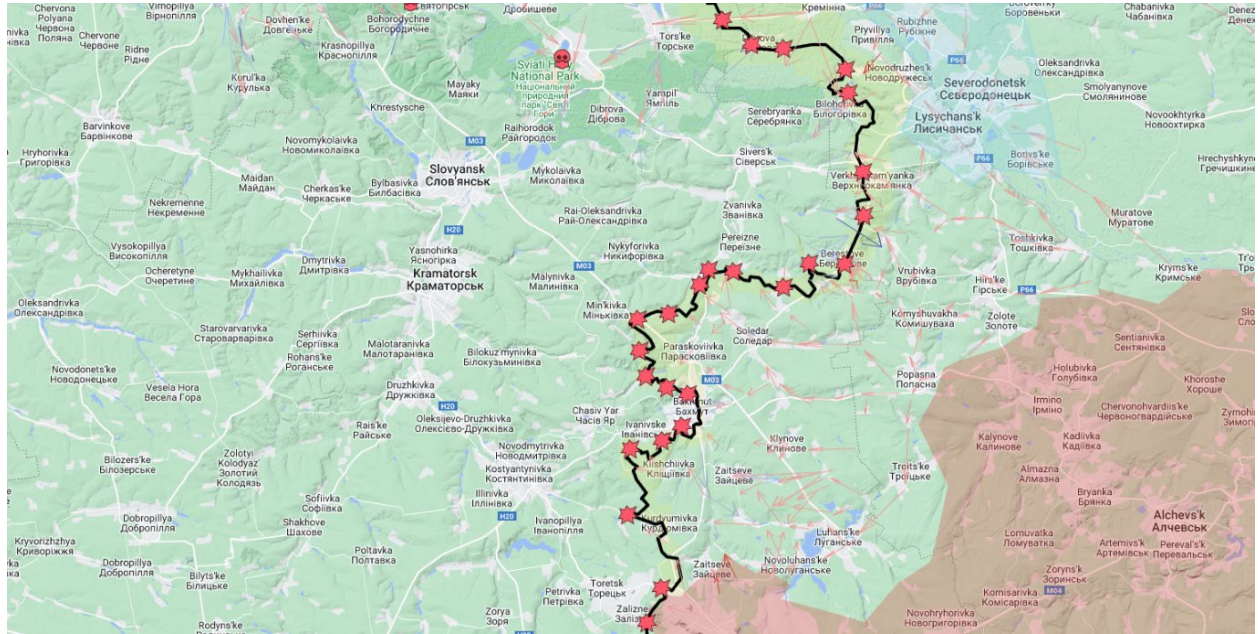
from the HIMARS strike on Alchevsk, reporting that  [a meat packing plant had been destroyed](#).¹⁰ Another HIMARS strike was reported by the JCCC in Rubizhne, claiming a single rocket had been used, striking an area of communal garages.¹¹ There was no other information at the time of publication.

We had previously assessed that Russian offensive operations had culminated in the Svatove, Kreminna, Lysychansk, and Siversk Operational Areas. Russian combat operations are now managed by regular Russian units, mostly mobiks, supported by more experienced BARS units, the remains of the 2nd Army Corps, and poorly equipped units of Chechen Akhmat. We have seen no indications of additional Russian troops and equipment being brought into this region.

¹⁰ https://t.me/LPR_JCCC/8234

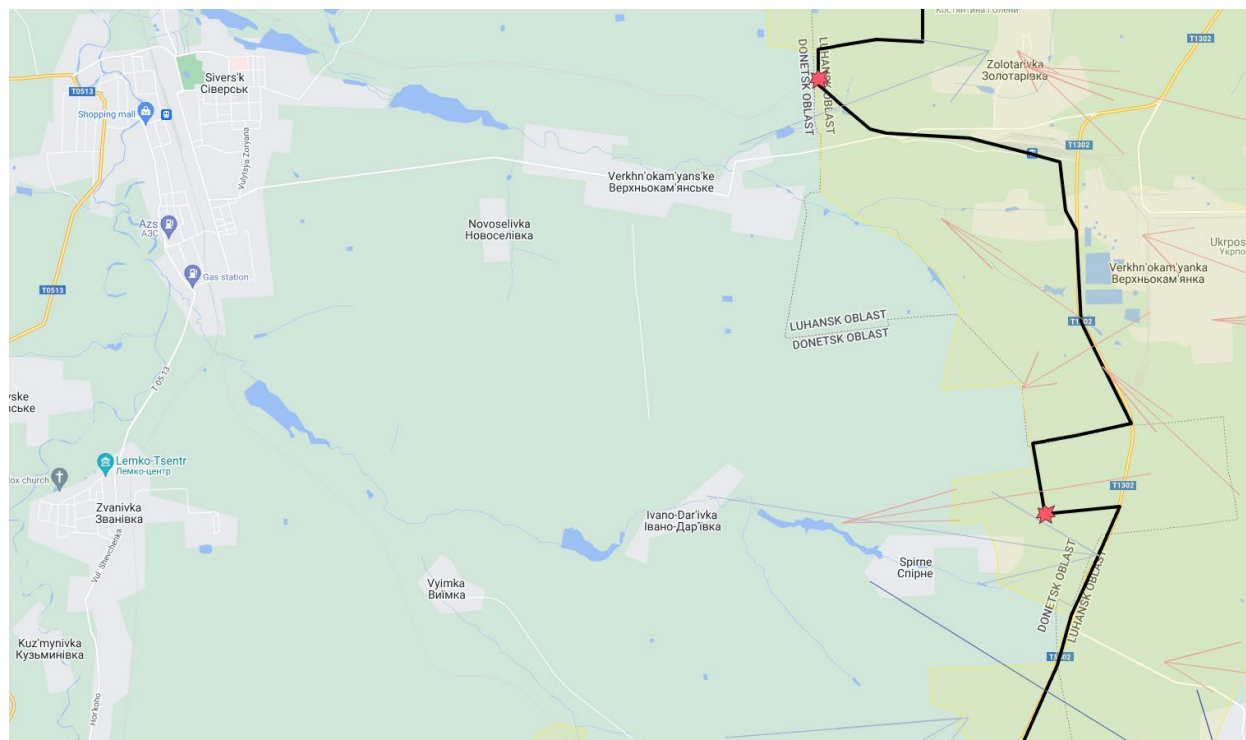
¹¹ https://t.me/LPR_JCCC/8239

NORTHEAST DONETSK



Russian Objective: Capture Bakhmut, set conditions to attack Kramatorsk, Slovyansk, and Siversk, and capture the entire region

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



In the Siversk Operational Area, our earlier assessment that Chechen Akhmat forces being moved to the Forward Line of Friendly Troops (FLOT) in [Spirne](#) was a sign that Russian forces were combat ineffective in the region was accurate. The Chechen forces were pushed out of the [gas compressor station](#) they occupied ten days ago, with a geolocated Russian video showing the area was shelled by Russian artillery.¹² GSAFU reported a Russian attack to the southwest of Spirne that failed.¹³ This was likely in the [tree lines and drainage](#), where fighting over poorly engineered defensive positions has occurred since March.

¹² <https://t.me/DeepStateUA/16467>

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



In the Bakmut Operational Area, there is significant news that could have a considerable impact on the trajectory of the Russia-Ukraine War.

Early on May 4, PMC Wagner leader Yevgeny Prigozhin released a two-minute and very graphic video attacking Russian Ministry of Defense Sergei Shoigu and the Commander of Operations in Ukraine, General Valery Gerasimov. Standing in front of dozens of dead Wagnerites with their boots removed and soaked in blood, he made his most damning statement yet directed against the Kremlin.

Editor's Note: Prigozhin's statement is laced with profanity and homophobic slurs. Some may find the content offensive, but we believe providing his complete statement is important.

"These are guys from PMC Wanger who died today. The blood is still fresh. Film all of them! Now listen to me fucking bitch. These are someone's fathers and someone's sons. And these asses who are not giving us ammunition, these bitches, will be eating their own guts in Hell. Faggots! We have a 70% ammo deficit. Shoigu! Gerasimov! Where is the fucking ammo?! Look at them, bitch. You scumbags are

sitting in expensive clubs. Your children enjoy life, filming YouTube videos. You think you are the masters of this life and that you have the right to control their lives. You think that if you have stockpiles of ammo, you have a right to this. The calculations are simple. If there is an ammunition request, we get five times less. They came here as volunteers and are dying for you to get a free ride in your offices with Redwood. Consider this!"


After his statement, the camera panned back over a field of bodies. The video is NSWV, not for children; some may find it disturbing and offensive. You can watch the original, translated video by   [clicking here](#).¹⁴

A few hours later, Russian milblogger Dmitry Steshin wrote that the situation within PMC Wagner is poor and morale is low, including among those who have already completed their contracts. "I could not fully watch Prigozhin's video of the dead 'Wagnerites.' Yesterday I met a militiaman I know from the first wave. He said they had stopped gathering for the holidays. Any get-together turns into mourning for fallen comrades and then slowly morphs into a scandal about 'what are we doing / have done wrong.' This is unbearable. My personal martyrology would not fit into a

¹⁴ <https://twitter.com/wartranslated/status/1654263136529141766>

form for posting to Telegram, so I just try not to think about it."

Editor's Note: Confession – I had to look up the word "martyrology." It is a religious term from the Roman Catholic church, and it is the cataloging of the martyrs and saints by the dates of their feats.

While preparing the Situation Report for May 4, Prigozhin  [made a second statement with senior personnel of the PMC](#). Wagner's leader announced that his forces would withdraw from Bakhmut on May 10.¹⁵

"I appeal personally and on behalf of the Wagner PMC Commanders' Council. On behalf of Wagner fighters, I appeal to the head of the General Staff, the Minister of Defense, the commander-in-chief, and the people of Russia. On 15 March [2022 – **Ed.**], when the 'Special Military Operation' did not go according to the plan, we were asked to help. On 19 March, the units arrived from Africa, fully equipped, and entered the fight from the get-go."

¹⁵ <https://twitter.com/wartranslated/status/1654412610069037057>

ASSESSMENT: Prigozhin's claim that PMC Wagner entered the theater of war in Ukraine on March 19, 2022, is accurate.

"We went straight to the most difficult area, the center of the Popasna strong point, and by May 9, we captured the settlement."

ASSESSMENT: This is also accurate. During that period, up to 60,000 artillery shells, mortars, and grad rockets were being fired along the line of conflict just in the Severodonetsk and Hirske-Zolote Operational Areas.

"Then, in order to save the army, which ran with shame from Izyum and Lyman, we took a frontline of over 130 kilometers long and held off the enemy onslaught."

ASSESSMENT: This is partially accurate. PMC Wagner forces were one of the main forces in Izyum and withdrew without a fight with the rest of the Russian military. Wagner indeed took over 130 kilometers of the line of conflict in Luhansk and Donetsk. We had accurately assessed that Wagner would be incapable of maintaining a long-term defense due to the size of their force, which was also accurate.

"On 8 October 2022, in order to give the army a breather, in order to pull all enemy forces on us, sacrificing our lives, we began the 'Bakhmut meatgrinder' operation. In this meatgrinder, we showed success and great results. It made some actors, near-military bureaucrats from the Ministry of Defense; it made them 'jelly.'"

ASSESSMENT: Wagner had a large presence in the Svitlodarsk Bulge and the Soledar Operational Area before October 9, but Prigozhin likely is marking the date when his mercenaries withdrew from the Kreminna and Lysychansk Operational Areas to Bilohorivka in Donetsk. Wagner did not demonstrate "great results" until January 2023, advancing an average of 25 to 40 meters a day from August 2 to December 27.

Editor's Note: He really did say "jelly" and not "jealous."

"This is why we were put on the so-called artificial shell hunger. The latter is freely available in stockpiles. We were receiving no more than 30% of our needs, which is why our losses were much higher than they were supposed to be, but we kept going forward."

ASSESSMENT: In February 2023, after the Kremlin became concerned with Prigozhin's growing populist appeal and outspoken criticism of Minister of Defense Shoigu, PMC Wagner was cut off from all ammunition. During that time, Prigozhin made his first threat to withdraw from Bakhmut and made another video showing a field of Wagnerite corpses. After his statement, multiple Russian field commanders and milbloggers publicly complained that Wagner received preferential treatment for months and more ammunition than other Russian units. Our team repeatedly provided evidence that Prigozhin and Wagner were not being singled out after ammunition shipments resumed and were receiving the same allocation as the rest of the Russian military. In our assessment, Prigozhin and Wagner had become accustomed to World War II-style tactics of massive artillery barrages followed by human wave assaults to storm shattered Ukrainian defensive positions. We further assessed that Wagner would have to change tactics and face the reality of the austerity of what has become dwindling resources. Further, beyond two weeks in February, and even now, there is no evidence of an ammunition shortage among Wagner or the Russian forces supporting them.

"A month ago, they stopped giving us ammo, and we receive no more than 10%. We were planning to capture the settlement of Bakhmut by 9 May 2023."

ASSESSMENT: The Russian Ministry of Defense has shown an obsession with the mythology of historic dates, and this claim is likely untrue. In early January, Prigozhin predicted Bakhmut's capture by early March. In mid-March, with the advance on Bakhmut slowing, Prigozhin said that the final capture wouldn't come until April, and never until today, mentioned a self-imposed or Kremlin-imposed deadline of May 9. In our assessment, this claim of a planned victory on Victory Day is directed at the Russian population.

"But after seeing this, the near-military bureaucrats stopped any supplies from 1 May to prevent us from doing so. Because they think they'll go down in history as victors while shaking fat bellies."

ASSESSMENT: Yevgeny Prigozhin appears to have figured out the real story. We had previously assessed that the news the Russian Ministry of Defense was taking over the defensive and offensive operations on the flanks of Bakhmut was bad news for PMC Wagner. In other areas of intense fighting, like Severodonetsk, proxy forces for Russia do the bulk of the light infantry heavy assault work. In Severodonetsk, it was the 1st and 2nd Army Corps of the so-called Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republic, Chechen Akhmat, Syrian volunteers, and South Ossetia. During that

period, the Russian Ministry of Defense and propagandists referred to the assault forces as "allied troops," a term that hasn't been used since the summer of 2022. The 1st Army Corps relies on the forced mobilization of Russian troops into their ranks, and the 2nd Army Corps remains combat destroyed, as does Chechen Akhmat. There are no more Syrian volunteer forces or South Ossetians. But when victory was declared over Luhansk, that honor went to the Kremlin and Colonel General Alexander Lapin. Prigozhin and Colonel General Ramzan Kadyrov would wage a public political war against Lapin, resulting in his dismissal and pro-Wagner General of the Army Sergei Surovikin being assigned to command the Russian forces in Ukraine. As Prigozhin became an increasing liability, Surovikin was dismissed in January 2023 and was replaced by Russian Chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov. In our assessment, the plan has always been to render PMC Wagner combat destroyed and for the Kremlin to claim victory on the remains of mercenaries.

"They already went there as cowards. I officially declare to the head of the General Staff [*Gerasimov – Ed.*] and the commander-in-chief [*Valdimir Putin – Ed.*] my lads will not be taking senseless and unjustified casualties in Bakhmut without ammo. Thus, from 10 May 2023, we're leaving the settlement of Bakhmut. We just need to take two and some more kilometers out of 45. But if, due to your petty

jealousy, you don't want the gift of victory of taking Bakhmut to the Russians, that is your problem. I'm asking the head of the General Staff to sign a military order. Not a single paper was signed to our name throughout the whole war because the leadership is afraid of taking responsibility, both during the offensive and the withdrawal."

ASSESSMENT: This is a shocking statement given the Kremlin's known financial payments to PMC Wagner. There have been numerous complaints of no orders or documentation from the Kremlin but only up to a company level.

"Thus, we're waiting for a military order to withdraw from Bakhmut. Despite the fact we almost ran out of ammo, we will stay in Bakhmut until May 9 just so that on this sacred for all the people of Russia celebration [*Victory Day – Ed.*], the brilliance of the Russian army is not shamed. Then, we will withdraw to the rear camps after 400 days of hard work. And in these rear camps, we'll be waiting until we will be again needed by the people of Russia. I think this will happen very soon because you're unable to manage

what you've been assigned. You will see my official address in the official press service. Thank you. That's it."¹⁶

Within minutes of Prigozhin's statement, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said that the Kremlin had already seen Prigozhin's statement, but he had nothing to say in response. "I cannot comment on it because it concerns the course of the 'Special Military Operation.'"¹⁷

Prigozhin's press service released a shorter statement than his video. "I am officially appealing to the chief of the General Staff, the minister of defense, the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, and the people of Russia. I declare on behalf of the fighters of the Wagner PMC, on behalf of the command of the Wagner PMC, that on 10 May, we will be forced to transfer positions in the settlement of Bakhmut to the units of the Ministry of Defence and withdraw the remnants of the Wagner PMC to the rear camps to lick our wounds. I am withdrawing the Wagner PMC units because, with no ammunition, they are doomed to a senseless death."¹⁸

¹⁶ <https://twitter.com/wartranslated/status/1654412610069037057>

¹⁷ <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2023/05/5/7400787/>

¹⁸ <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2023/05/5/7400787/>

PMC Wagner's statement was reported in the Russian version of TASS. Which reported, "Units of PMC "Wagner" on May 10 will transfer positions in Artemovsk (Ukrainian name - Bakhmut) to the troops of the Russian Defense Ministry in order to save personnel from losses and "lick their wounds" in the rear camps. This was stated on Friday by the founder of Wagner PMC Yevgeny Prigozhin, whose appeal was published in the Telegram channel of his press service."¹⁹

ASSESSMENT: If we accept what Prigozhin says as all true, and PMC Wagner has not received any ammunition since May 1, even if the Ministry of Defense capitulates, they have not demonstrated the logistical capabilities to move significant ammunition in under 96 hours. Further, since February, we had assessed that May would be devastating for PMC Wagner as the bulk of their penal units would reach the end of their six-month contracts and rotate back to Russia. Wagner is also facing pressure in Sudan and Mali, which is why we've been monitoring those events. Prigozhin's operations in Africa are far more profitable than Ukraine can ever be. In our assessment, this decision is not driven by ammunition shortages, which there appears to be no shortage of. This is a problem of high casualties, no way to replace their losses, and the high

¹⁹ [https://tass \[dot\] ru/politika/17684453](https://tass.ru/politika/17684453) [RIA Controlled Russian State Media]

monetary cost of continuing large-scale combat operations in Bakhmut.

In separate news, Colonel-General Mikhail Mizintsev, fired from the post of Deputy Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation last week, became one of the deputy commanders of the Wagner Group under the command of Dmitry Utkin on May 4. Pro-Wagner Telegram channel Gray Zone wrote, "After Sergei Shoigu dismissed him, Yevgeny Prigozhin said that the council of commanders of the Wagner Group decided to offer him the aforementioned position. He accepted the offer. Having become not the first and clearly not the last general who had little place among the bureaucracy and sycophancy."^{20 21}

Just a few hours later, PMC-Wagner aligned Russian war correspondent Alexander Simonov reported that General Mizintsev toured the positions of PMC Wagner in Bakhmut and listened to area commanders.²² It was after this tour that Prigozhin made his announcement.

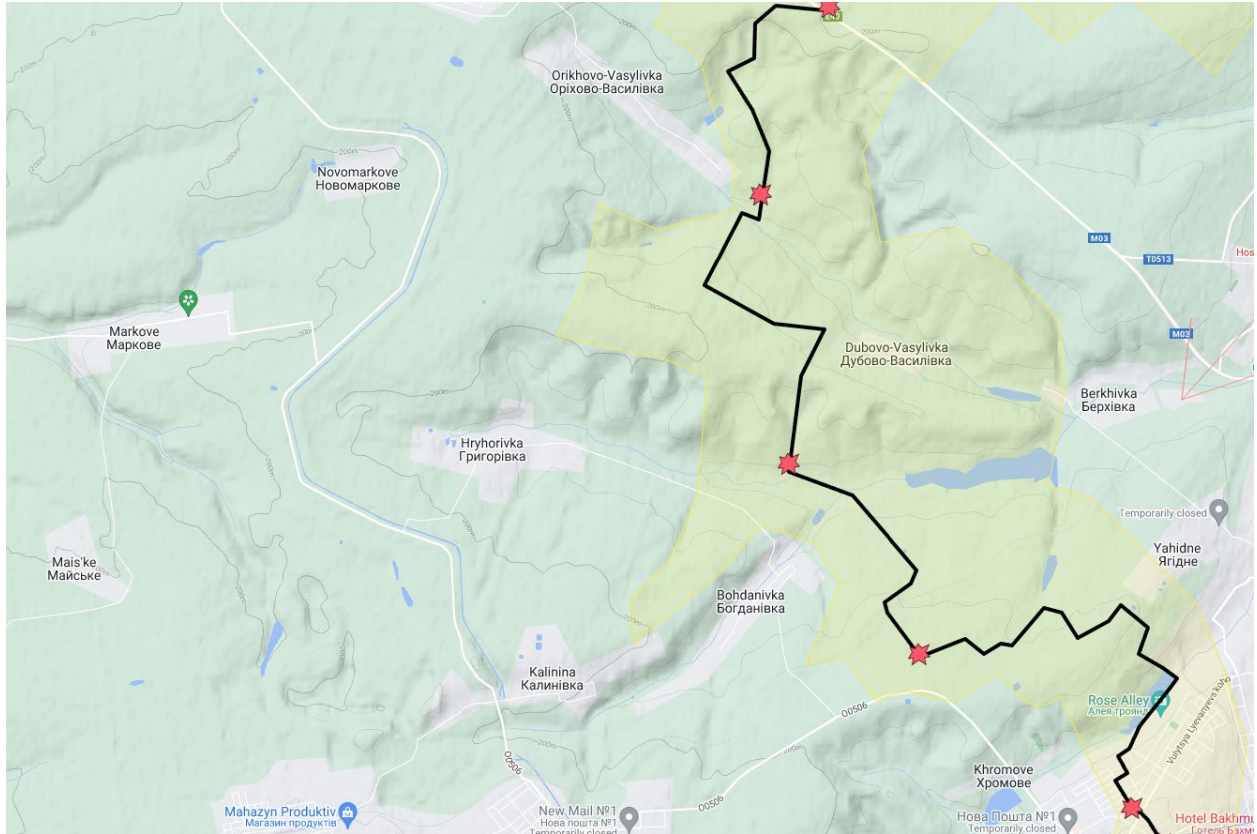
²⁰ https://t.me/grey_zone/18515

²¹ <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/94801>

²² <https://t.me/brussinf/5934>

In our final assessment, our prediction that Prigozhin's February 3 mocking of Ukrainian President Zelenskyy to fight to the last man in Bakhmut would age terribly was accurate. It is yet to be seen if Bakhmut will be Ukraine's Stalingrad, clinging to 6% to 8% of the city's western edge. The Russian Ministry of Defense does not have deep reserves and has shown an aversion through modern history, not just in Ukraine, to put the lives of ethnic Russians in the line of fire. Their job has been to accept the victory fought for by their lessers.

Our confidence is high that this is not political theater or an idle threat. Wagner's withdrawal from Bakhmut will devastate Russian morale, both on and off the battlefield. But the Kremlin will score a political victory that further cements President Putin's power with elections coming in 2024. The transfer is unlikely to go smoothly if the Russian Ministry of Defense permits it. If Wagner isn't permitted to withdraw, we have high confidence that they will move to strategic defense and end offensive operations.



In northwestern Bakhmut, GSAFU reported PMC Wagner attempted to advance in the direction of [Markove](#) and was unsuccessful.²³ Fighting continued near [Bohdanivka](#), with no change in the situation.²⁴ ²⁵

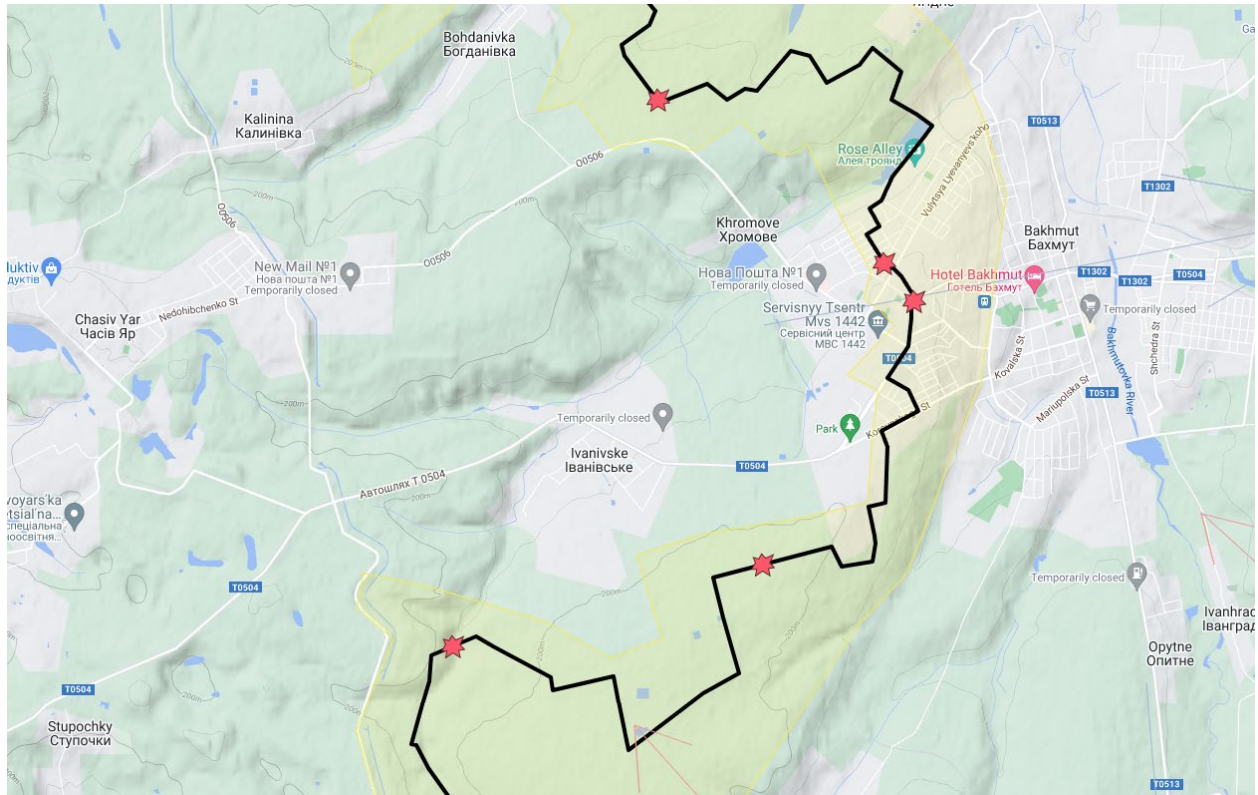
²³ [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report PM EEDT](#)

²⁴ [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report PM EEDT](#)

²⁵ <https://t.me/wargonzo/12302>



There was no reported fighting near Khromove, but NASA Fire Information for Resource Management Systems (FIRMS) showed significant heat anomalies on the T-506 Highway Ground Line of Communication (GLOC – supply line).



In the rest of [Bakhmut](#), fighting was reported as intense but positional.^{26 27 28} Rybar and Russian mercenary milblogger WarGonzo only made passing references to the operational situation.


RMOD reported they executed 57 fire missions in the Bakhmut Operational Area and army aviation, and the VKS executed six close air support sorties.²⁹ Video showed that

²⁶ [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEDT](#)



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

²⁸ <https://t.me/DeepStateUA/16461>

²⁹ https://t.me/mod_russia/26167 [Russian Government Controlled Social Media Channel]

Bakhmut was being intensely shelled, with  [fires across the areas occupied by Ukrainian forces](#).³⁰

ASSESSMENT: There is no evidence that Wagner is suffering from an ammunition shortage, and only 48 hours ago, Prigozhin was bragging he had secured enough small arms and ammunition to equip one-million men.

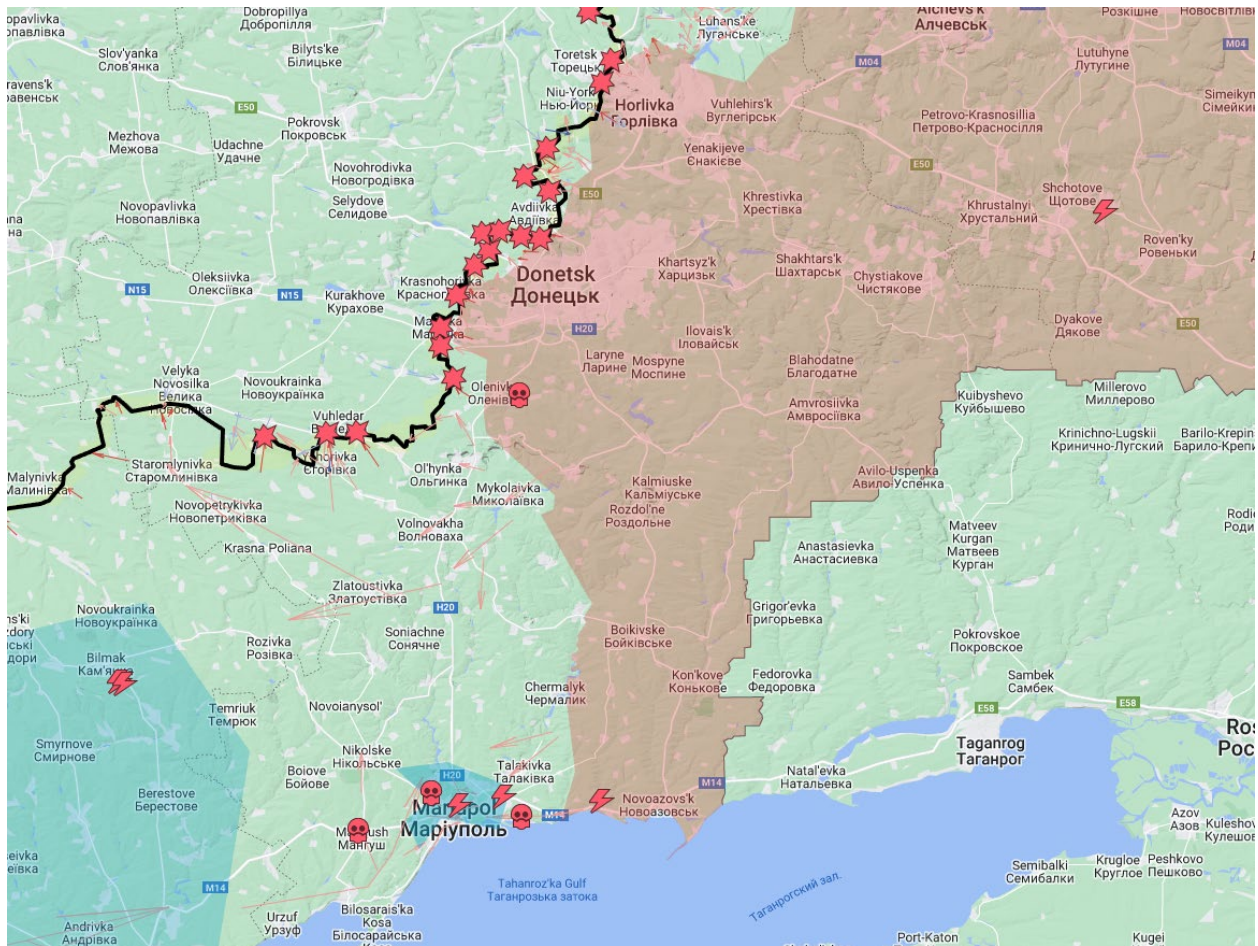
In Kramatorsk, one Russian S-300 anti-aircraft missile used for a ground attack hit the area  [near the Vocational College of Industry](#), which has been repeatedly targeted.³¹ The second missile landed in a more remote area,  [damaging a water main](#) that supplies the old part of the city. Engineers were working on repairs.³²

³⁰ <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/94691>

³¹ https://t.me/pavlokyrylenko_donoda/7796

³² https://t.me/kramatorsk_rada/11311

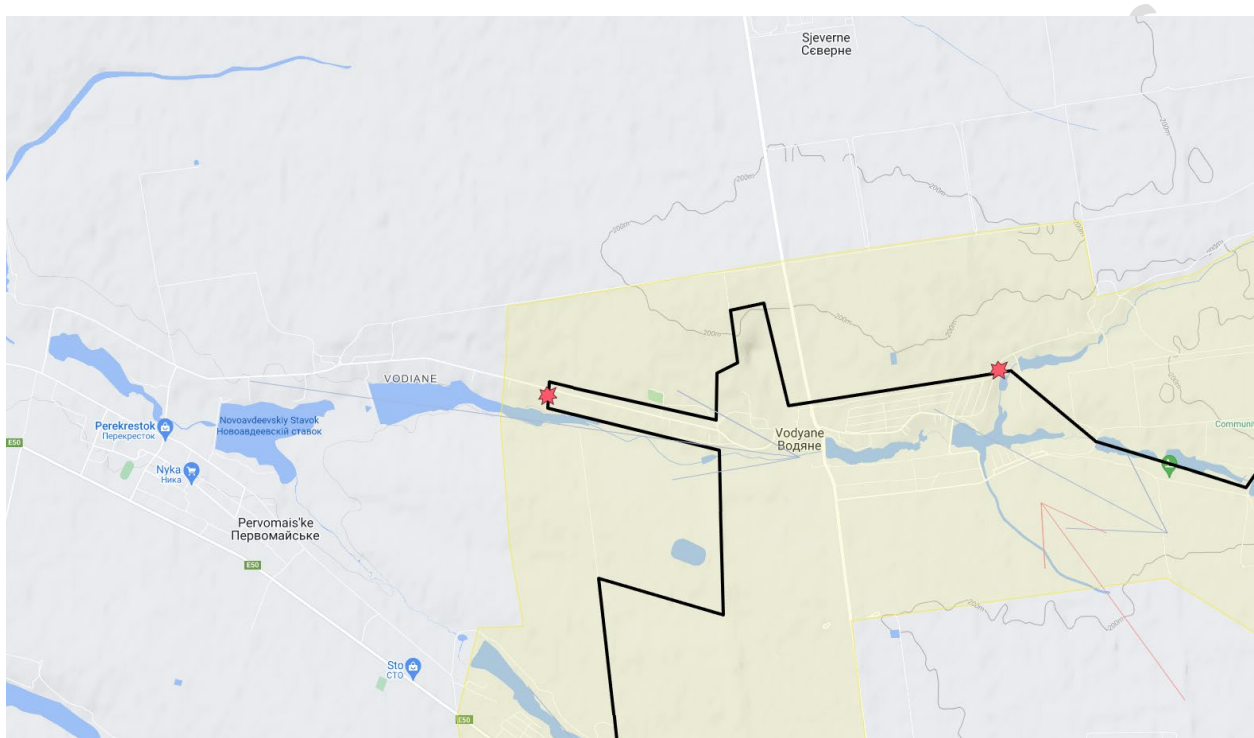
SOUTHWESTERN DONETSK



Russian Objective: Prepare for the Ukrainian offensive, consolidate gains made during the winter offensive, and set conditions for September 2023 elections

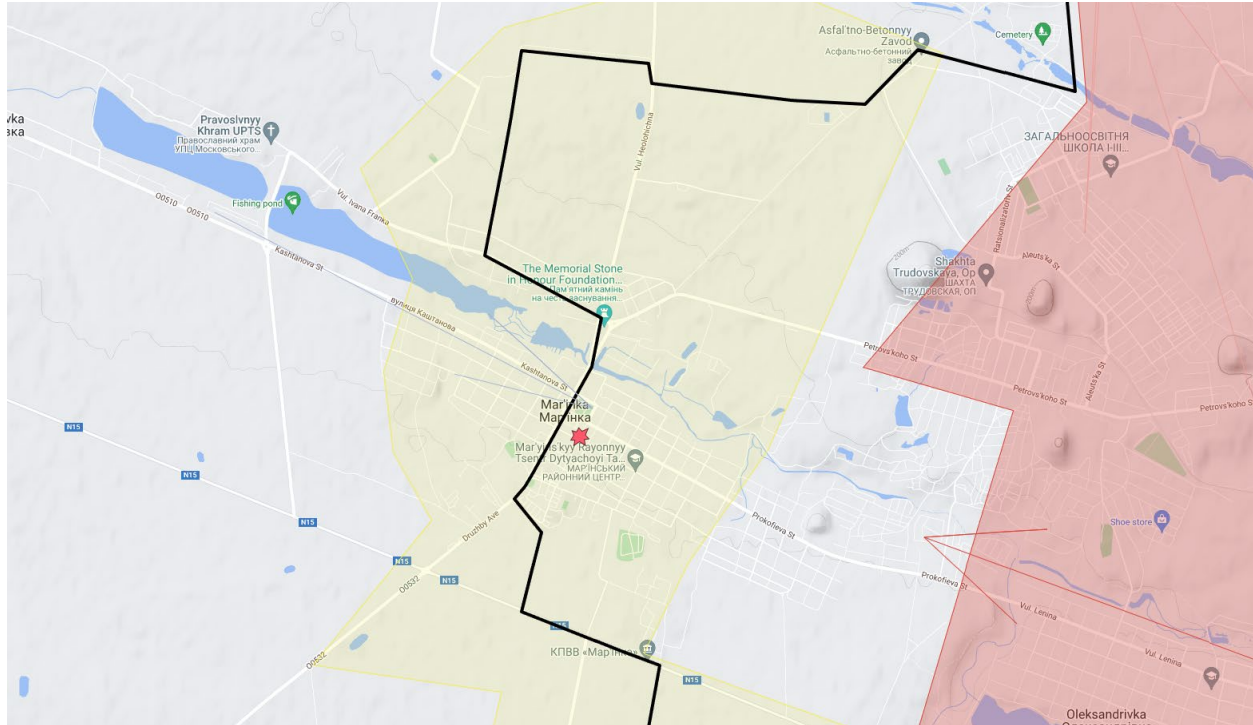
Ukrainian Objective: Lock Russian military assets in place, defend the existing line of conflict while finding and exploiting weaknesses, destroy troop concentrations and

command and control sites, interdict supplies, and disrupt logistics



In the Avdiivka Operational Area, the only reported combat was in the no man's land between [Sjeverne](#) and [Vodyane](#).³³

³³ [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEDT](#)



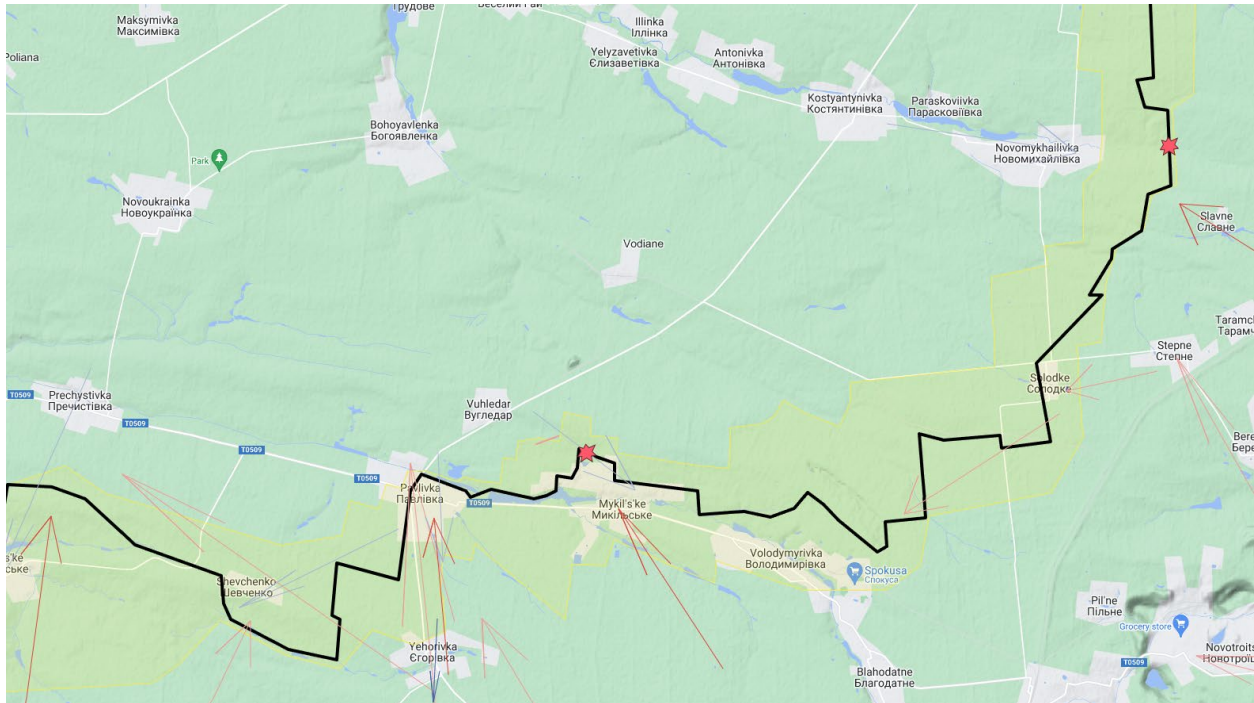
In the [Marinka](#) Operational Area, there was confirmation that the 1st Army Corps had advanced to Druzby Avenue. Based on the new intelligence, we updated the war map.^{34 35}
^{36 37} Ukrainian-aligned analysts DeepState claimed that a group of Russian troops were captured during today's fighting.

³⁴ [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEDT](#)

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

³⁶ <https://t.me/DeepStateUA/16461>

³⁷ <https://t.me/wargonzo/12302>



In the Vuhledar Operational Area, Russian forces attempted to advance on [Novomykailivka](#), suffered losses, and returned to their defensive positions.³⁸


Our favorite FSB Colonel, convicted war criminal, Kremlin pariah, and failed mobik Igor Girkin reported that Ukrainian forces went on the offensive near Vuhledar. "Heavy fighting is going on there; our units are pushed back to the outskirts of the village of [Mykilske](#)."

³⁸ [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEDT](#)

Rybar also claimed that Ukrainian forces attacked using reconnaissance in force, advanced as Girkin reported, but ultimately were repulsed.³⁹ We did not update the map and are awaiting additional information.

Rybar and Russian milblogger Alexander Kots reported that Ukrainian forces also attacked [Pavlivka](#).^{40 41}

In Russian-occupied Mariupol, insurgents are reporting a reduction in troop and material movement. Reportedly a radar complex that was in Manhush has been relocated to the city, and more work to bolster defensive structures in the Mariupol raion is ongoing.⁴²

Why does the People's Militia of the DNR put out these videos? The most recent claim is "Ukrainian nationalists suffer heavy losses." You can see three or four Ukrainian troops in the graining thermal imaging video. The video has been edited/cut at the point of the explosion, and  [the blast is nowhere near where the troops were](#) and then end scene.⁴³

³⁹ <https://t.me/rybar/46624>

⁴⁰ Kots <https://t.me/sashakots/39634>

⁴¹ <https://t.me/rybar/46624>

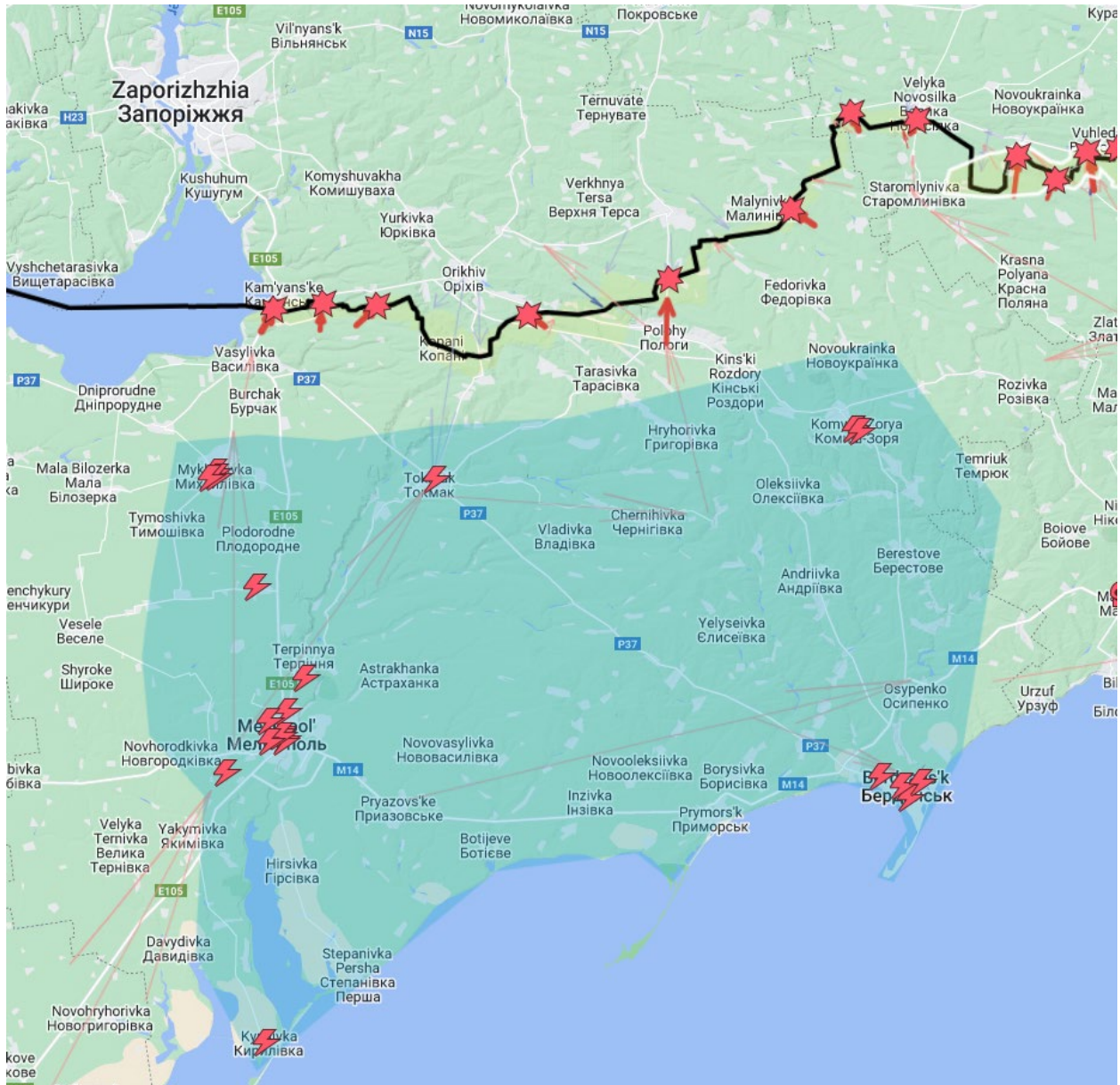
⁴² <https://t.me/andriyshTime/9341>

⁴³ <https://t.me/itsdonetsk/72172>

Occupied Donetsk officials are considering implementing a curfew on May 9 and possibly extending it to May 12 due to concerns of "significant provocations" planned by Ukrainian forces.⁴⁴

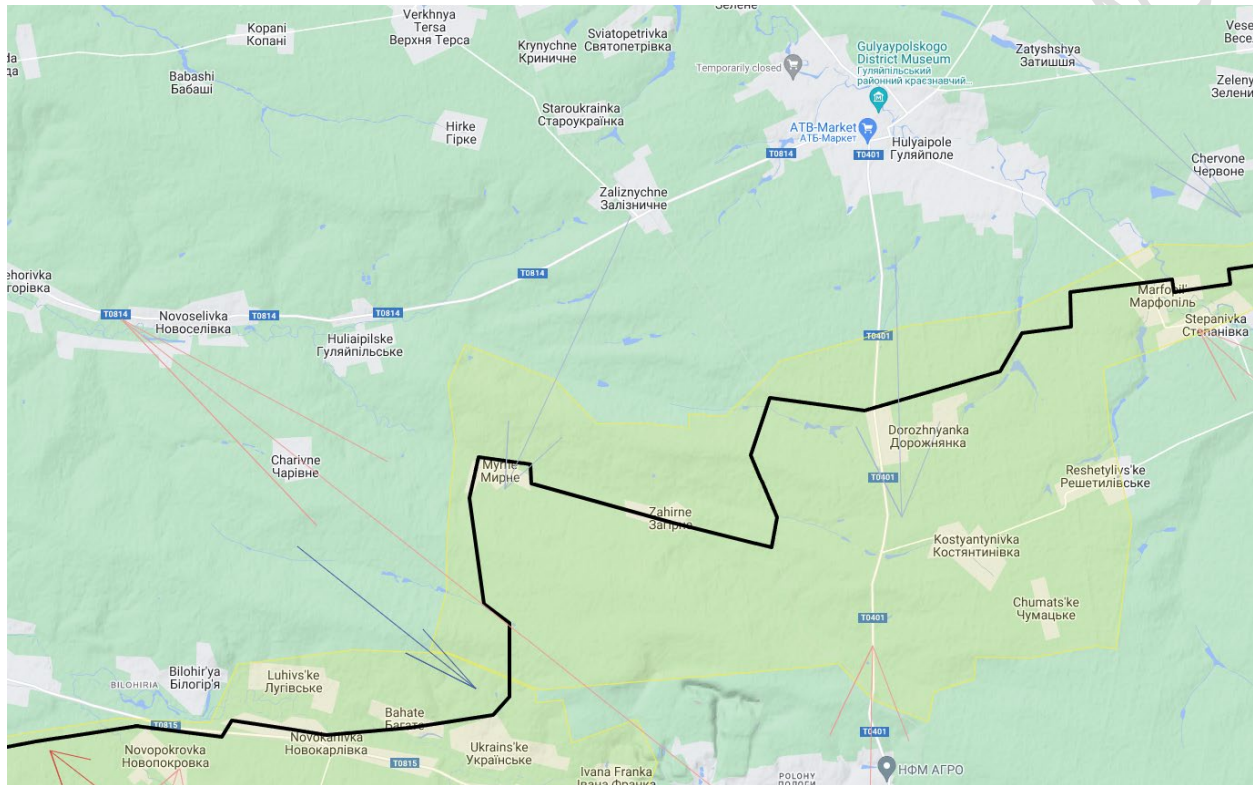
⁴⁴ <https://t.me/itsdonetsk/72262>

ZAPORIZHIA



Russian Objective: Prepare for a Ukrainian offensive, and terrorize Ukrainian civilians with continued attacks

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



In the Hulyaipole Operational Area, WarGonzo reported that Ukrainian forces attacked [Myrne](#) using reconnaissance in force.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ <https://t.me/wargonzo/12302>

Russian forces carried out 84 fire missions, three airstrikes, three drone attacks, and two missile strikes along the line of conflict in Zaporizhia.⁴⁶

There was no update on the status of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant

BLACK SEA, CRIMEA, MYKOLAIV, AND ODESA REGION

Operational Command South (OKS) reported that Black Sea Fleet had reduced its deployment to seven vessels, including two frigates capable of launching up to 16 Kalibr cruise missiles.⁴⁷

In occupied Crimea, Russian appointed mayor of Sevastopol, Mykhailo Razvozhaev, claimed that a Ukrainian drone was shot down near Belbek Military Airfield.⁴⁸

The illegitimate governor of occupied Crimea, Yuri Gotsanyuk, announced that inspection capacity would be

⁴⁶ https://t.me/zoda_gov_ua/18592

⁴⁷ https://t.me/Nazars_Look/13999

⁴⁸ <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/94769>

increased to support 250 additional cars a day on both sides of the Crimean Bridge.⁴⁹ He added that a decision on permitting heavy trucks on the bridge has not been made.

WESTERN AND CENTRAL UKRAINE

Russian Objective: Launch terror attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure to break morale

Ukrainian Objective: Deter attacks, and protect civilian lives

Free Ukraine on the west bank of the Dnipro continued to be pounded. Russian forces executed 95 fire missions using 538 artillery rounds, mortars, Grad rockets, drone-delivered IEDs, and indirect tank fire.⁵⁰ The city of Kherson was targeted five times and hit by 21 munitions, wounding two.^{51 52}



⁴⁹ <https://t.me/Crimeanwind/29713>

⁵⁰ <https://t.me/khersonskaODA/5568>

⁵¹ <https://t.me/olexandrprokudin/438>

⁵² <https://t.me/khersonskaODA/5581>

ASSESSMENT: There is no Russian ammunition shortage, including in Bakhmut. Russian forces fired one less shell compared to May 3.

Video shows  [two FAB-500S-E UMPK bombs hitting Beryslav](#).⁵³ Russian sources claim that a fuel depot and/or ammunition depot was destroyed but did not have a consistent story, hinting that milbloggers were guessing at the target. The bombs landed in an industrial area on the city's western edge, near the solar power plant. A third bomb overshot the city and  [landed in an empty field](#) without exploding.⁵⁴



⁵³ <https://t.me/sashakots/39630>

⁵⁴ <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/94804>

NORTHERN AND NORTHEASTERN UKRAINE

Russian Objective: Lock Ukrainian military resources into place and launch terror attacks on civilians in an attempt to break morale

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

Ukrainian forces were forced to  [shoot down their own Bayraktar TB-2 drone](#) after operators lost communications, and it started to fly in the direction of the government quarter.⁵⁵ The debris crashed into a  [residential neighborhood, sparking a fire](#).⁵⁶

Ukrainian officials released a statement about the incident. "On May 4, around 20:00 in the Kyiv region, during a scheduled flight, the Bayraktar TB2 UAV lost control. Since the uncontrolled presence of UAVs in the sky of the capital could lead to undesirable consequences, it was decided to use the calculations of mobile fire groups. It's a pity, but

⁵⁵ <https://t.me/itsdonetsk/72298>

⁵⁶ <https://t.me/itsdonetsk/72299>

this is technology, and such cases happen. It is probably a technical malfunction, and the reasons are being established. There were no casualties or injuries as a result of combat operations and the fall of UAV wreckage."⁵⁷

There is significant evidence that Ukrainian air defenses shot down a Kh-47 Kinzhal hypersonic missile on May 4.⁵⁸ The allegedly invincible missile isn't a true hypersonic weapon but a modified Iskander-M short-range ballistic missile that can be air-launched. Kyiv residents reported a large explosion, but no damage or fires were reported in the city. Pictures of debris from a downed missile are consistent with the Kh-47 Kinzal, but further analysis will be required. The United States Patriot Missile system has intercepted SRBMs like the Iskander's predecessor, the Tochka-U, better known as the Scud missile, during Desert Storm I and II.⁵⁹

In the Sumy Oblast, Russian forces carried out 14 attacks on the Ukrainian border, striking the hromadas of Yunakivka, Bilopillia, Khotin, Miropillia, Krasnopilla, Shalyhyne, Nova Sloboda and Velykopysarivka.⁶⁰ Five artillery shells struck Yunakivka damaging a home.

⁵⁷ <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/94798>

⁵⁸ [Defense Express](#)

⁵⁹ https://gulflink.health.mil/scud_info/scud_info_refs/n41en141/Patriot.html

⁶⁰ <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2023/05/5/7400750/>

Bilopillia was hit by seven mortars and eight artillery rounds, damaging two homes. In Khotin, ten mortars damaged the palace of culture and two homes. Sixteen mortars struck Nova Sloboda, wounding a civilian.

COPYRIGHT 2023, MALCONTENT NEWS