



## Malcontent News Russia-Ukraine War SITREP

5/26/23-A 23:59\* PST

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<u>Patreons at the Bronze level or higher</u> 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.

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#### **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.



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#### **SUMMARY – DAY 456**

This is the first update for May 26, 2023. It has been 3,373 days since Russia occupied the Crimea Peninsula on January 27, 2014, and one year and 89 days since Russia expanded its war against Ukraine.

Monday, May 29, 2023, is a federal holiday in the United States, and we will give the team a well-deserved day off. In the event of major events or World War III, we will summon the writing and analyst team.

- The Daily Assessment will be updated with each report
- Weather and soil conditions will be in the last report of the day
- If an anticipated report is not created, weather and soil conditions will be released as a Flash Report
- Each report will contain unique information and continue in a condensed format

The map is back! War Map



#### **DAILY ASSESSMENT**

## We assess the following:

- 1. Russian tactics have validated our assessment that the Kremlin is launching fewer missiles more frequently due to inventory restrictions and a shift in strategy. These attacks have had little success due to their inability to overwhelm ever-improving Ukrainian air defenses.
- 2. Our assessment that Private Military Company Wagner (PMC) Group leader Yevgeny Prigozhin's claim that Russian proxy forces have fully captured Bakhmut was dubious was accurate, with Prigozhin saying in an interview, "in Bakhmut, they're already actively crawling along the flanks."
- 3. Our May 25 assessment that the Project 18280 surveillance vessel Ivan Khurs likely received "some" damage but was not incapacitated was accurate, with the vessel returning to Sevastopol on May 26 under its own power with no visible moderate to major damage.
- 4. In preparation for larger offensive operations,
  Ukrainian forces continue shaping operations on
  multiple axes, creating panic and uncertainty among

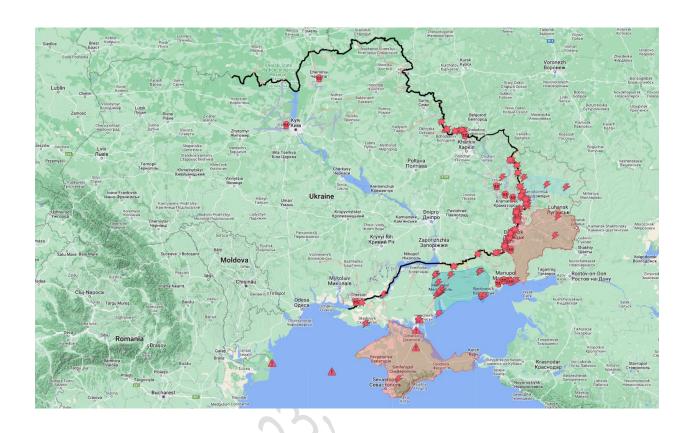
<sup>1</sup> https://twitter.com/VladaKnowlton/status/1662296199339335680



- gauleiters, Russian administrators, and military leaders.
- 5. Weather conditions will be unfavorable for largescale military operations through June 1.
- 6. We have identified shaping activity by the Ukrainian Armed Forces in four locations that could indicate a larger attack is being prepared.
- 7. Our assessment that the border incursions into the Belgorod region were more political in motivation than militarist was accurate, with anger growing among milbloggers, propagandists, Russian state media, area residents, and local government officials who are calling for a change of the political and military leadership in Moscow.



#### **TODAY'S WAR IN UKRAINE MAP**

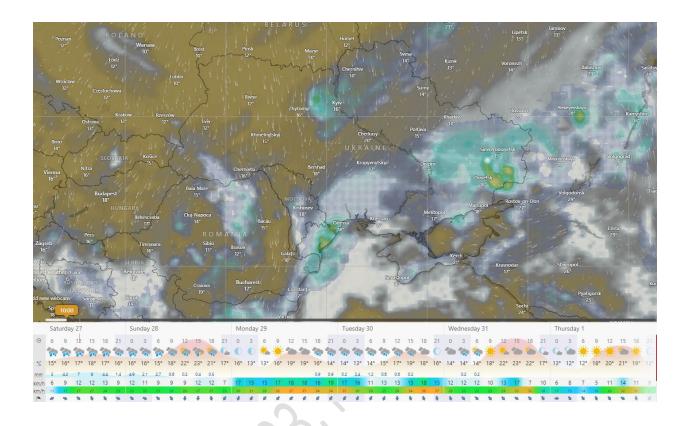


**About the maps:** Red triangles are sites of significant events unrelated to missile attacks, insurgencies, or ground combat, such as the sinking of the Moskva and the explosion at the Saky Naval airbase. Gray circles indicate an area where fighting has ended with no change in the line of conflict. 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 <u>like this</u>, 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



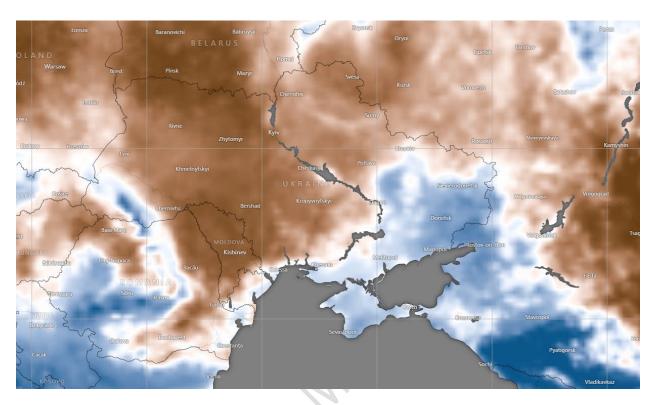
#### **UKRAINE WEATHER**



At the time of publication, bands of heavy rain and thunderstorms had already formed over eastern Ukraine and the Odesa area. Severe thunderstorms, damaging winds, vivid lighting, flash flooding, and tornadoes are possible on May 27 and 28. The ECMWF Euro model forecast predicts that May 29 and June 1 will be dry. Temperatures have moderated further, with highs from 15° to 26° Celcius and lows from 9° to 18°. The full moon is on June 4, the new moon is on June 18, and the longest day of the year is June 21.



#### **SOIL SATURATION AND HYDROLOGY**

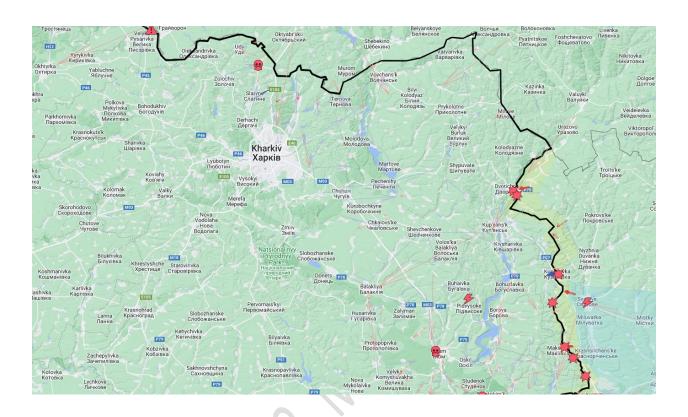


The June 3, 2023 GFS forecast indicates soil saturation will be around 40% in eastern Kherson and up to 90% in Zaporozhia, Donetsk, and Luhansk, to 40 centimeters deep.

While the weather wasn't as severe as on May 25, heavy thunderstorms still moved across Ukraine, increasing soil saturation to 90% in many areas. Severe thunderstorms and torrential rain are possible on May 27 and 28, as well as May 30. If the current models hold, soil saturation will be unfavorable for heavy equipment and armored vehicles through June 8.



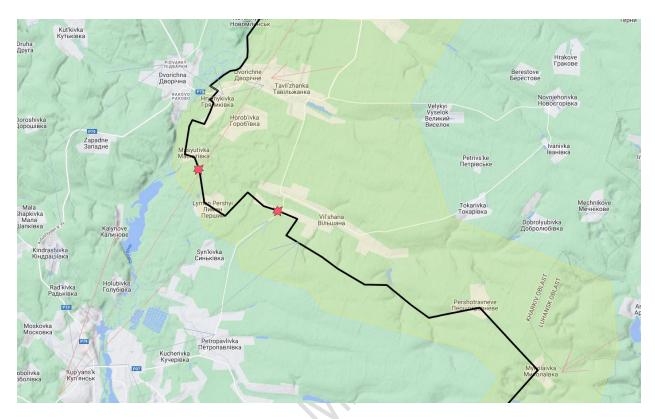
#### **KHARKIV**



**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 Dvorichna and Kupyansk Operational Areas, protect civilians and civilian infrastructure





## **Dvorichna Operational Area**

The General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (GSAFU) and the Russian Ministry of Defense (RMOD) reported continued positional fighting in the area of <u>Masyutivka</u> with no change in the situation.<sup>2 3 4 5</sup>

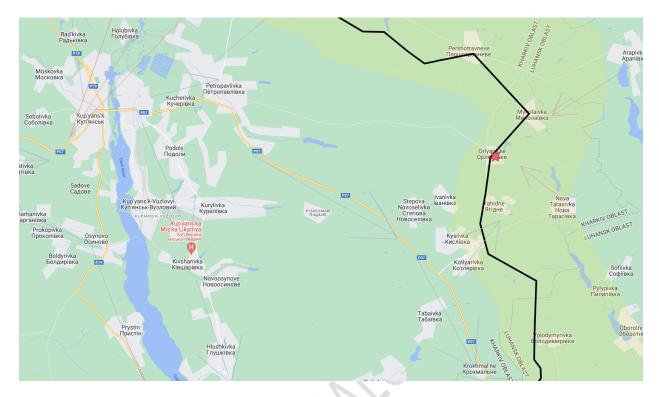
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine - AM Facebook Report

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine - PM Facebook Report

<sup>4</sup> https://t.me/mod russia/26866 [Russian Government Controlled Social Media Channel]

<sup>5</sup> https://t.me/wargonzo/12751





## **Kupyansk Operational Area**

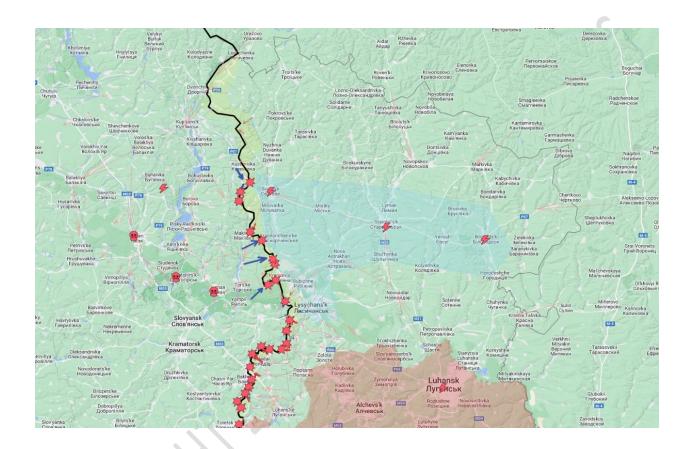
RMOD alleged that Ukrainian surveillance, reconnaissance, and sabotage (DRG) units were operating in the area of <a href="https://linear.com/lvanivka.6">lvanivka.6</a>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> https://t.me/mod\_russia/26866 [Russian Government Controlled Social Media Channel]



## **DONBAS REGION**

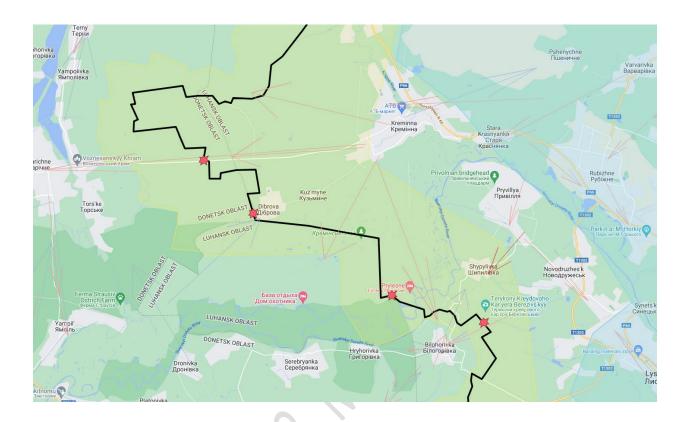
#### **LUHANSK**



**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

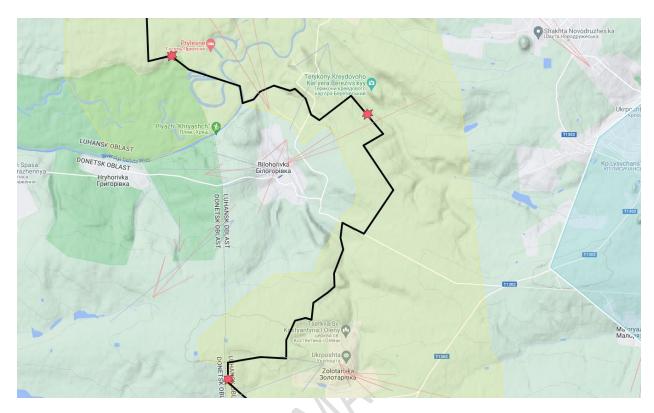




Ukrainian source DeepState reported positional fighting in the Serebryansky Woods in the <u>Siverskyi Donets Flood</u> <u>Plain</u> west of Shypylivka.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> https://t.me/DeepStateUA/16679





## Lysychansk Operational Area

GSAFU reported that Russian forces continued to attempt to recover lost positions east of <u>Bilohorivka</u> without success.<sup>8</sup>

## **Occupied Luhansk**

Russian state media journalist Mariana Batkovna described the situation in the occupied-Popasna region after arriving in the region. "The humanitarian situation there is difficult, especially in Popasna itself. It is a dead city, but people

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – AM Facebook Report

<sup>9</sup> General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine - PM Facebook Report



continue to live there. It is very difficult to get there. People survive on a little humanitarian aid and the military, so help in the form of food kits, hygiene products, and medicines is very necessary there." Popasna was captured on May 8, 2022, and before February 24 of the same year, it was home to 20,000 people. Today less than 200 remain. Russian forces originally wanted to capture Popasna for its railroad infrastructure, but Russian General Alexander Lapin employed a World War II General Zhukov doctrine and leveled the city with artillery, destroying everything, as noted by Batkovna.

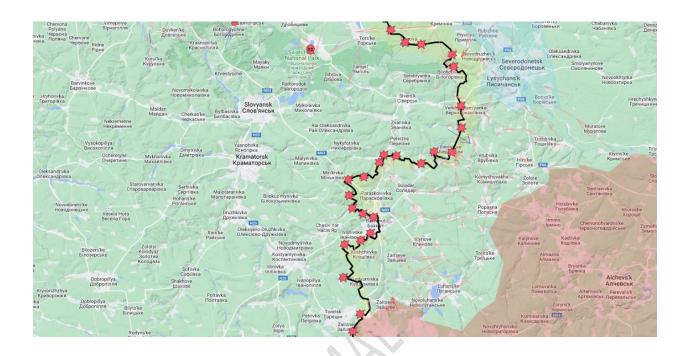
The situation is similar in Severodonetsk, where a video recorded on May 25 showed that in the 11 months since Russian forces captured the city, almost no work had been done to repair civilian housing and infrastructure.

<sup>10</sup> https://t.me/maryananaumova/1323

<sup>11</sup> https://t.me/itsdonetsk/76990



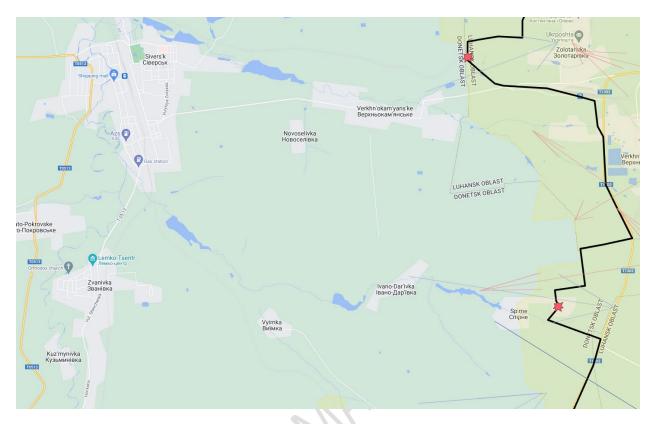
#### **NORTHEAST DONETSK**



**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



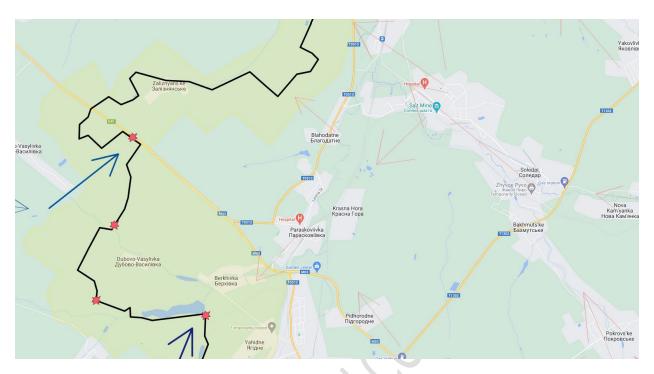


### **Siversk Operational Area**

A geolocated video showed that Russian forces had recaptured the gas compressor station east of <u>Spirne</u> within the last seven to ten days. The video displays the rare burrowing Russian T-90 main battle tank that tries to hide underground when frightened. Four <u>drone-delivered</u> <u>grenades were dropped on the MBT</u>, destroying the vehicle. Based on this new intelligence and terrain analysis, the war map was updated.

<sup>12</sup> https://twitter.com/Osinttechnical/status/1662261185012543488





## **Soledar Operational Area**

Ukrainian forces made significant gains in the last 24 hours in the Soledar direction, with Russian troops falling back up to one kilometer from Orikhovo-Vasylivka in the direction of Zaliznyanske. Russian mercenary milblogger Rybar reported, "Near Bakhmut, Ukrainian troops continue to make flank counterattacks on the positions of Russian units in the Orekhovo-Vasilevka area. Under the onslaught of the enemy, the defenders [Russia – Ed.] withdrew in a northeasterly direction up to one kilometer." Russian mercenary milblogger WarGonzo claims that Ukrainian forces have captured the heights north of Orikhovo-

<sup>13</sup> https://t.me/rybar/47615



Vasylivka, and reached the M-03 Highway Russian Ground Line of Communication (GLOC – supply line). <sup>14</sup> Nikolai Dyakonov, a Russian nationalist and fighter in the Donbas since 2014, said, "The situation in the Soledar direction is very difficult. The enemy is constantly making attempts to break through. Our detachments of Cossacks do not allow the enemy to even approach our positions. The enemy is trying to find weak spots, using artillery, tanks, and kamikaze UAVs." <sup>15</sup> Deputy Commander of the so-called Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) OMON forces, Colonel Alexander Khodakovsky, wrote, "The guys on the flanks of Bakhmut are fighting desperately and do not allow the enemy, who is more effective than us in the field, to achieve great superiority." <sup>16</sup>

Based on the four independent Russian reports, the relative quality of maps from WarGonzo, and terrain analysis, we have moved the line to the M-03 Highway.

Ukrainian forces also advanced in the direction of <u>Dubovo-Vasylivka</u> from the west advancing through a forested track.

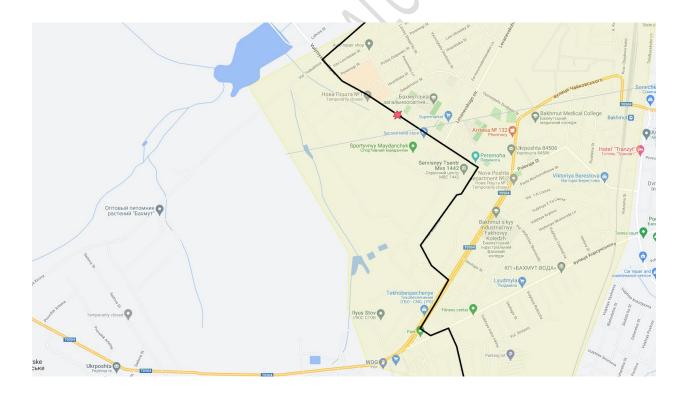
16 <sub>V</sub>

<sup>14</sup> https://t.me/wargonzo/12751

<sup>15</sup> https://t.me/sashakots/39930



ASSESSMENT: Two Russian salients have formed on the northern flank of Bakhmut — a smaller one north of Orikhovo-Vasylivka and a larger one with the hamlet of Dubovo-Vasylivka at its center. If WarGonzo is accurate, and we have given their report more weight, the smaller salient is untenable. The poorly trained and underequipped Russian forces in Dubovo-Vasylivka are at a disadvantage due to terrain, and further Ukrainian advances on the M-03 Highway could force another RMOD report of a "withdrawal to more advantageous positions."





#### **Bakhmut**

Neither combatant reported significant fighting, but a geolocated video from the Ukrainian 93rd Mechanized Brigade "Kholodnyi Yar" confirmed that PMC Wagner and Russian forces do not have full control over Bakhmut. 17 l8 19 DRG units were operating in the apartment buildings on the western side of Yuvilenya Street. They were able to drive a civilian sedan on the dirt road on the edge of Bakhmut past Levanevskogo Street and exit in the direction of the Ilyus Stov complex. Based on this new intelligence, we adjusted the war map, moving the block of apartments at Levanevskogo and Yuvilenya Streets to contested and the line of conflict one block east. We don't believe this represents a significant change from May 21, as we have previously assessed that PMC Wagner had not fully captured Bakhmut.

PMC Wagner leader Prigozhin confirmed that Wagnerites continue withdrawing from Bakhmut, saying, "Yes, absolutely right. Today, the Ministry of Defense is...fulfilling the agreements and is actively changing my fighters in positions. Therefore, from June 1, Bakhmut will completely come under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of

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<sup>17</sup> https://twitter.com/bobwaltzer/status/1662206607105851393

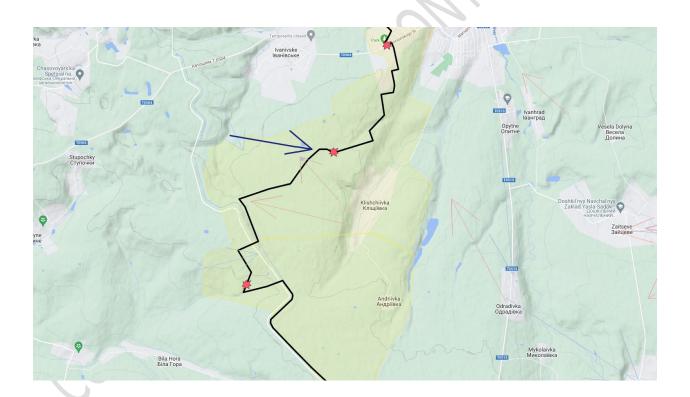
<sup>18</sup> General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine - AM Facebook Report

<sup>19</sup> https://t.me/DeepStateUA/16679



Defense. We are leaving in an organized and planned way to field camps for reformation, staffing, and additional training."<sup>20</sup>

Our decision not to update the area of Ukrainian control on May 25 was sound. Ukrainian forces hold approximately 1.50 square kilometers of Bakhmut (.58 square miles) or roughly 2.80% of the city.



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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> https://t.me/concordgroup\_official/1062



### Klishchiivka Operational Area

WarGonzo reported that Russian attempts to retake lost positions south of <u>Ivanivske</u> were unsuccessful.<sup>21</sup> East of <u>Predtechyne</u>, WarGonzo claimed that Ukrainian forces were <u>east of the Siverski Donets-Donbas Canal</u> and advancing toward <u>Klishchiivka</u>, putting more pressure on the Russian forward operating base located in the settlement. GSAFU reported that Russian forces attempted to counterattack but were unsuccessful.<sup>22</sup>

Near Klishchiivka, a geolocated drone video recorded earlier in the week showed fleeing Russian troops taking raw water from the Siverskyi-Donets Donbas Canal, which was little more than a muddy slough at the time of recording.<sup>23</sup>

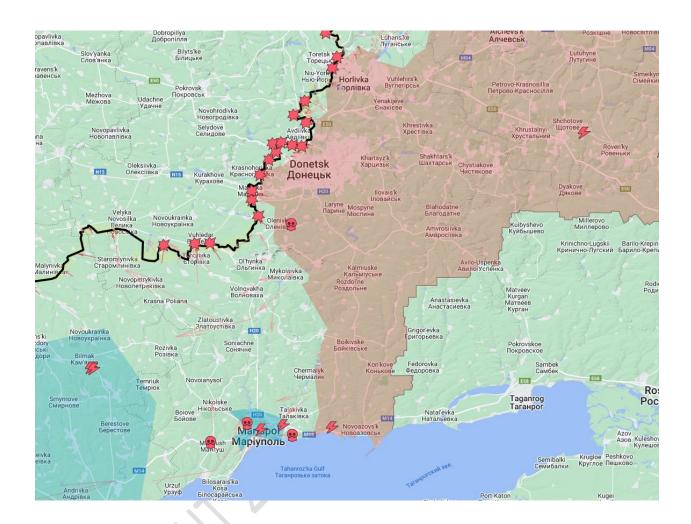
<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> https://t.me/wargonzo/12751

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine - AM Facebook Report

<sup>23</sup> https://twitter.com/i/status/1661349867606638593



#### **SOUTHWESTERN DONETSK**

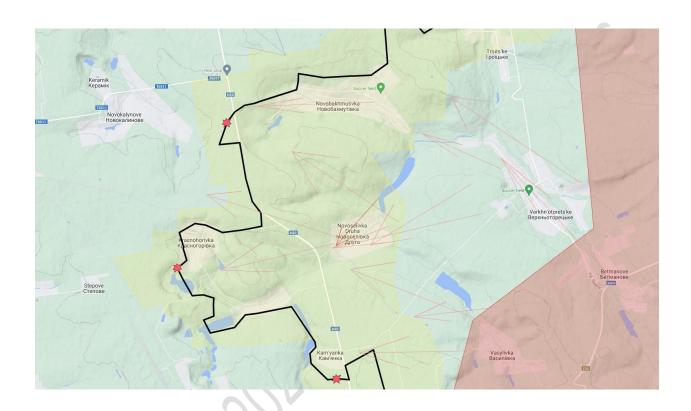


**Russian Objective:** Prepare for the Ukrainian offensive, consolidate gains made during the winter offensive, and set conditions for September 2023 elections

**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

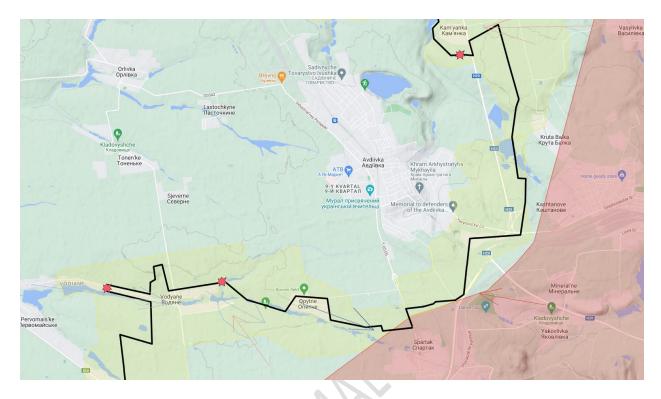


## Avdiivka Operational Area

The 1st Army Corps tried to expand their positions near the Krasnohorivka Plateau, suffered losses, and returned to their defensive positions.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine - AM Facebook Report





Project K penal units from Russian Minister of Defense Sergei Shoigu's PMC Storm-Z attempted to advance through the no man's land north of **Vodyane** but could not take new positions.<sup>25</sup> The 1st Army Corps attempted to advance on Pervomaiske from the south, suffered heavy losses, and returned to their defensive positions.<sup>26</sup>

In Karlivka, Ukrainian emergency services stabilized the situation at the Karlovske Reservoir Dam, which was destroyed by a Russian S-300 antiaircraft missile used for a

<sup>25</sup> https://t.me/DeepStateUA/16679

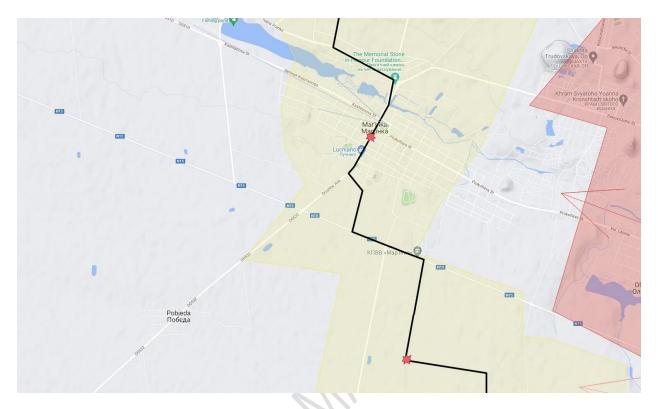


ground attack on May 25.27 Six villages were impacted downstream, and the Voycha River reached its crest. Twenty-six people lost their homes due to flooding.

ASSESSMENT: The Geneva Convention was modified after World War II due to the Axis and Allied targeting of dams that killed thousands, mostly civilians. A combatant defending its territory can destroy dams to slow an enemy's advance or use flood waters as a weapon if it doesn't intentionally endanger civilians. An attacking force is forbidden to target dams, and their destruction could be considered a war crime.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>27</sup> https://t.me/pavlokyrylenko\_donoda/8147





## Marinka Operational Area

Checks the calendar and sees it is a day that ends in "Y." Fighting for Marinka continued within the remains of the city and the area around it.<sup>28</sup> <sup>29</sup> <sup>30</sup> New photos of Marinka look like a post-nuclear apocalypse, with only foundations, rubble, and a few standing walls showing where civilization used to be.31

General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – AM Facebook Report
 General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – PM Facebook Report

<sup>30</sup> https://t.me/wargonzo/12751

<sup>31</sup> https://t.me/itsdonetsk/76940



#### **Occupied Donetsk**

Russian propagandist Evgeniy Poddubny, quoting the DNR Ministry of Internal Affairs, reported that Mariupol was hit by two Storm Shadow cruise missiles, despite denials by Russian milbloggers. Insurgents filmed how access to the Azovstal part of the city was closed and reported one of the cruise missiles hit the Russian troop-occupied Azovstal Hotel. At the time of publication, recovery operations were still ongoing. 33

Insurgents also reported on troop movements and other activities in the Mariupol raion. Russian infantry fighting vehicles and troops were transported in the direction of Berdyansk, while tanks were moved in the direction of Volnovakha. In Babakh-Taram, Russian mobiks were sent to a ten-day accelerated training program before deployment.

In occupied Donetsk, railroad lines in the Budonivskyi District were shelled by Ukrainian forces, amaging railroad cars. 35

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<sup>32</sup> https://t.me/epoddubny/16104

<sup>33</sup> https://t.me/andriyshTime/10146

<sup>34</sup> https://t.me/andriyshTime/10116

<sup>35</sup> https://t.me/itsdonetsk/76910



The former building of the Donetsk National Technical University was in hit by several rockets fired by HIMARS, causing significant damage. 36 37 38 The university moved to Pokrovsk in 2014, and through February 2022, the building was used as a private, unaccredited college run by previous administrators, providing fake diplomas that were not recognized by any other university. After Russia expanded its war on Ukraine on February 24, 2022, the Ministry of Defense of the so-called DNR took over the building.

But wait, there's more. After the HIMARS strike, DNR officials brought milbloggers and press members to the school, giving them interior and exterior access. During the briefing, the school came under a mortar attack.39 Based on the shared video clip capturing one of the impacts, our analysts believe they were 82 or 120 mm caliber.

**ASSESSMENT:** Based on geolocation, the nearest possible Ukrainian firing position was 11 kilometers away, out of range of Soviet-era, Russian Federation, and NATO-

<sup>36</sup> https://t.me/itsdonetsk/76719

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>37</sup> https://t.me/itsdonetsk/76711

<sup>38</sup> https://t.me/itsdonetsk/76715

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>39</sup> https://twitter.com/golub/status/1662025045433098241



provided 82 and 120 mm mortars. Based on this information and analysis, we believe that Russian forces shelled the former school while the press was there as a false flag.

The Green Plaza area of Donetsk also was shelled, was shelled, was shelled, was significant damage. The attack caused a fire, which was brought under control by the Ministry of Emergency Situations. We have a significant damage. We was shelled, was she

<sup>40</sup> https://t.me/itsdonetsk/76771

<sup>41</sup> https://t.me/itsdonetsk/76763

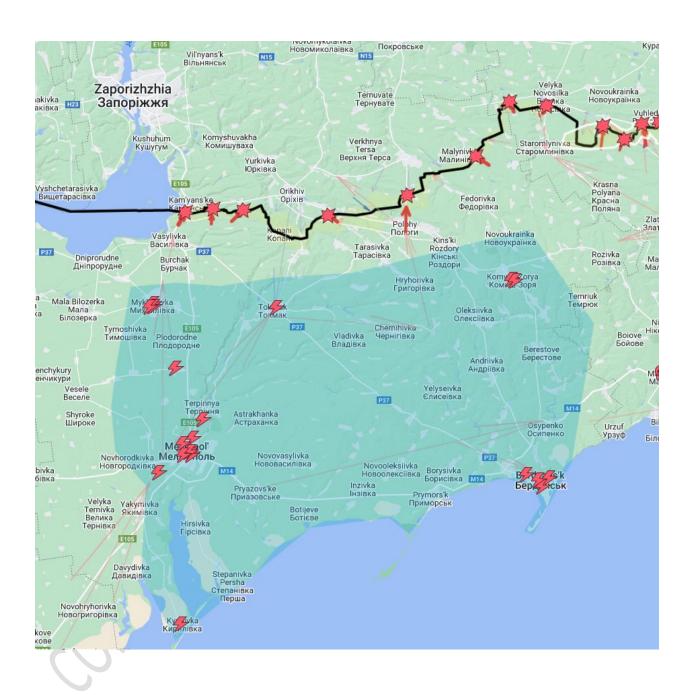
<sup>42</sup> https://t.me/itsdonetsk/76784

<sup>43</sup> https://t.me/itsdonetsk/76784

<sup>44</sup> https://t.me/itsdonetsk/76771



#### 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

## Free Zaporizhia

Russian forces conducted 98 fire missions on 16 settlements along the line of conflict, targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure.<sup>45</sup>

# **Occupied Zaporizhia**

Exiled Mayor of Melitopol, Ivan Fedorov, reported that Ukrainian forces attacked the Pryazovske airfield southeast of Melitopol and claimed an ammunition depot was destroyed. We cannot independently verify the claim.<sup>46</sup>

During the early morning of May 27, at least one Storm Shadow missile struck Berdyansk at the Chemist Recreation Center, which was converted into a Russian military base. Multiple videos and pictures show a fire in the area.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>45</sup> https://t.me/zoda gov ua/19037

<sup>46</sup> https://t.me/ivan fedorov melitopol/2094

<sup>47</sup> https://t.me/zaborzp/45053



The independent journalist organization Crimean Investigator reported that the May 25 Storm Shadow missile strike at the Azovkabel Plant in Berdyansk killed five and wounded a dozen Russian troops. 48 There were multiple claims that an S-300 antiaircraft system and ammunition were destroyed in the attack. Local residents reported that ammunition cooked off for over 12 hours. The sounds of detonation echoed throughout the night and continued into Friday morning. Russian forces intercepted one of the cruise missiles, with the debris causing light damage at the Ivan Bohun Evangelical Church.

Large areas of occupied Zaporizhia, including Melitopol, Berdyansk, Tokmak, and Enerhodar, lost Internet and cable TV service. At the time of publication, the Internet had been partially restored in some areas but at significantly reduced speeds. 49 50

# **Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant**

The Defense Intelligence Directorate of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine (GUR) claimed that Russian forces were planning a major provocation at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP), including intentionally leaking

<sup>48</sup> https://t.me/investigatorua/5679

<sup>49</sup> https://t.me/vrogov/9791

<sup>50</sup> https://t.me/vrogov/9792



radioactive materials with the intent to blame the incident on a Ukrainian attack.<sup>51</sup> <sup>52</sup> "Russians sabotaged today's planned rotation of the staff of the IAEA monitoring mission. They aim to provoke the international community and conduct a detailed investigation requiring a ceasefire. Russians are going to use this so desirable pause for the regrouping of the occupational personnel and to stop the Ukrainian counteroffensive."

**ASSESSMENT:** The truth matters. There was no evidence to support the claim, and the world community is already suspicious of Rosatom and its operation. We did not report on this claim earlier today because, in our assessment, it is misinformation or a psychological operation.

# BLACK SEA, CRIMEA, MYKOLAIV, AND ODESA REGION

## **Black Sea**

Ukrainian Lieutenant General Vyacheslav Nazarkin of Operational Command South (OKS) reported that seven vessels of the Black Sea Fleet were on patrol, including one

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>51</sup> GUR [Ukrainian Government Website]

<sup>52</sup> https://t.me/energoatom\_ua/13288



frigate, capable of launching up to eight Kalibr cruise missiles. 53 54 55

Shortly after we published the May 25 Situation Report, a video from a reliable source showed the Russian surveillance ship <u>Ivan Khurs returning to port</u> in Sevastopol. <sup>56</sup> Despite furious denials from the Twitterarti, satellite images of Sevastopol from May 26, 2023, showed the <u>Ivan Khurs moored at its berth</u>. <sup>57</sup> While there is no visible moderate or major damge, it does not mean that the sensitive electronic systems are unharmed or that there is no damage below the waterline.

ASSESSMENT: The Russian Ministry of Defense claimed after the May 24, 2023 attack that the Ivan Khurs would continue its patrol but instead beelined for Sevastopol. Due to the unscheduled return, the vessel likely suffered some damage, or at least one crewmember was injured enough to require a return to port.

<sup>53</sup> https://t.me/Crimeanwind/31281

<sup>54</sup> https://t.me/Nazars look/14384

<sup>55</sup> https://t.me/operativnoZSU/98147

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>56</sup> https://twitter.com/MalcontentmentT/status/1662164225807224832

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>57</sup> https://twitter.com/MT\_Anderson/status/1662199951596883968



The Ukrainian Navy commissioned the Hyurza class armored litoral patrol boat, Bucha, a near-shore, river, and estuary patrol craft. 58 59 The Commander-in-Chief of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, General Valery Zaluzhny, was part of the senior military delegation attending the vessel's commissioning.

## **Occupied Crimea**

The Internet and cable TV outage in occupied Zaporizhia originated in Crimea, knocking out service to large areas of the Russian-occupied peninsula. Advisor to the illegitimate head of Crimea, Oleg Kryuchkov, said that an "accident" to one of the networks of a major Internet provider is what caused the outage.<sup>60</sup>

In what is the closest to a full admission by Ukraine that the nation led the attack that almost completely destroyed the Crimean Bridge on October 8, 2022, the head of the Ukrainian Security Service (SBU), Vasily Malyuk, said, "In accordance with the norms of our current legislation and international customs, and traditions of warfare, given that

<sup>58</sup> https://t.me/ShrikeNews/8699

<sup>59</sup> https://t.me/operativnoZSU/98148

<sup>60</sup> https://t.me/dva\_majors/16005



it was a logistical route and we were obliged to cut off the enemy — certain measures [were] carried out."61

#### **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 Kherson**

Russian forces conducted 45 fire missions firing 193 artillery rounds, mortars, Grad and Smerch rockets, drone-delivered IEDs, and bombs, with the city of Kherson targeted twice. One person was killed when Russian forces shelled Antonivka.

<sup>61</sup> https://t.me/Crimeanwind/31374

<sup>62</sup> https://t.me/khersonskaODA/6179

<sup>63</sup> https://t.me/kherson\_non\_fake/7595



#### **NORTHERN AND NORTHEASTERN UKRAINE**

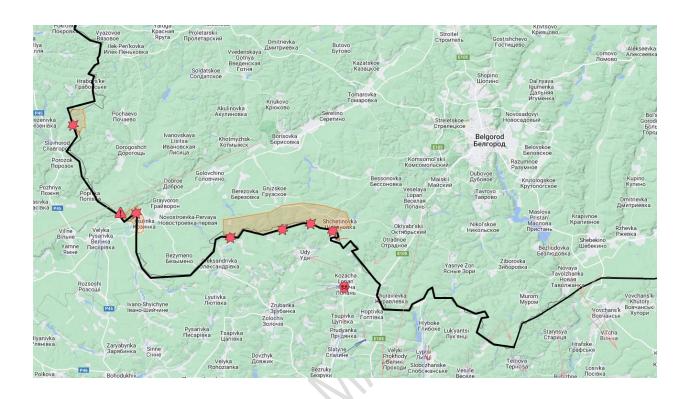
**Russian Objective:** Lock Ukrainian military resources into place and launch terror attacks on civilians in an attempt to break morale

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

The region was stable.



# **RUSSIAN FRONT**



**Russian Objective:** Repel Russian partisans out of Belgorod, stabilize the border, and maintain civil order

**Ukrainian-Backed Russian Partisan Objective:** Motivate other Russians to fight against the Putin regime, accelerate the downfall of the Russian government



## **Belgorod**

A drone-delivered IED is struck the Federal Migration Office in Maisky, with no casualties reported. 64 65

#### **Russian Front**

Near Morozovsk Airfield in the Rostov Region, Russian air defense may have shot down their own aircraft, with a video showing air defense intercepted – something. 66 The military airfield is out of range of all known Ukrainian weapons and would be off-limits for a Storm Shadow strike. Regional Governor Vasily Golubev claimed that a Ukrainian missile was shot down, but in our analysis, the video is inconsistent with a missile being intercepted. 67

Russian milblogger Two Majors joined a growing chorus of Russian voices criticizing the Kremlin and its approach to border security. "The military department will say that everything is fine, the situation is under control, or they will make everyone (border guards, Russian guard, local residents) except themselves. The suitability of the entire military leadership must be raised. Calmly, without the buildup of the situation. For some reason, it turned out that

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<sup>64</sup> https://t.me/shot shot/52005

<sup>65</sup> https://t.me/rybar/47611

<sup>66</sup> https://twitter.com/i/status/1661817733040709649

<sup>67</sup> https://t.me/shot\_shot/51945



the vaunted dragon's teeth (billions of roubles) were not on the border but on 'frontiers favorable for defense.' In addition, the border service has not yet been provided with everything necessary to detect the movement of troops and equipment to our borders, which have long become the front line."<sup>68</sup>

Rubbing salt in the wounds, the Free Russian Legion (FPL) released a video showing the events on May 22 during the border incursion, including Russian border guards fleeing from the smaller Ukrainian forces, Russian military equipment damaged and destroyed, and Russian forces being hit by drone directed artillery fire.<sup>69</sup>

#### Russia

Russian milblogger Vitaly Kiselyov reported a Russian citizen was detained in Gelendzhik "who was planning an explosion at a law enforcement facility." When the man was arrested, the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) claimed he had already produced an explosive device.

<sup>68</sup> https://t.me/dva\_majors/15727

<sup>69</sup> https://twitter.com/i/status/1662142493557768211



In Moscow, the FSB claimed they stopped a sabotage attempt that would have blown up a gas station in the Khoroshevo-Mnevniki area near Zhivopisnaya Street.<sup>70</sup>

Two railroad relay stations were set on fire at the Zanevsky Post-1 train station in St. Petersburg. One of the cabinets burned out completely. The Ministry of Internal Affairs claims the cabinets had been left open before the attack.<sup>71</sup>

Addressing a story reported by the New York Times, John Kirby, spokesperson for the United States National Security Council, told CNN the White House could not confirm if the Ukrainian SBU organized the May 1 Moscow drone attack in Red Square. "We simply cannot say which groups are conducting operations on their own, whether they are connected to Ukraine or not. And of course, we cannot confirm the information in the article of The New York Times newspaper about this particular attack on the Kremlin."<sup>72</sup>

<sup>70</sup> https://t.me/shot shot/51989

<sup>71</sup> https://t.me/shot shot/51980

<sup>72</sup> https://t.me/operativnoZSU/98019



#### **THEATERWIDE**

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy held a meeting of the Stakva with a public readout. Saying during his evening address, "The questions are obvious. The front line, our defense, our active actions, providing our soldiers with weapons and ammunition, equipment...During this week, we have also made substantial progress in providing modern aircraft for Ukraine, which will become a key component of our defense in the sky. We are moving faster in defense modernization than could have been predicted six months ago."<sup>73</sup>

Ukrainian National Security and Defense Council Secretary Oleksiy Danilov told the BBC that Ukraine "has no right to make a mistake" when the nation launches its offensive, since this is a "historic opportunity" that "we cannot lose." According to him, the Armed Forces of Ukraine will launch an offensive when the commanders calculate that "we can get the best result at this stage of the war." Danilov also dismissed the suggestion that the counteroffensive had already begun, saying that "the destruction of Russian command centers and Russian military equipment" has

<sup>73</sup> https://t.me/V\_Zelenskiy\_official/6379



been the task of the Ukrainian Armed Forces since February 24 last year.<sup>74</sup>

**ASSESSMENT:** We maintain that Ukrainian shaping operations started on April 20, when the first troops occupied part of the east bank of the Dnipro River near Kherson.

Ukraine formally requested Germany provide its Airforce with Taurus cruise missiles, which have a range of 500 kilometers.<sup>75</sup>

United States Senator Lindsey Graham (SC-R) advocated for more lethal weapons for Ukraine after visiting with President Zelensky. "The sooner long-range ATACMS missiles and cluster munitions are provided, the more territory they will be able to regain and the fewer lives will be lost," Graham said, adding that these weapons could make "probable success at the front greater and...accelerate the withdrawal of Russian troops from the territory of Ukraine."

<sup>74</sup> https://t.me/Crimeanwind/31387

<sup>75</sup> https://t.me/itsdonetsk/76981



"Why haven't we provided long-range weapons yet? I intend to inform my fellow senators that it is necessary to encourage the Biden administration to provide ATACMS to the Armed Forces of Ukraine."<sup>76</sup>

United States law prevents the sale or transfer of cluster munitions to other nations but can be overridden by Presidential authority. Ukraine has asked for cluster munitions to be disassembled for the bomblets and repurposed to make drone-delivered IEDs and improve lethality.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>76</sup> https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2023/05/26/7404093/



# **RUSSIA VS. UKRAINE HEAVY EQUIPMENT LOSSES**

Russian and Ukrainian visually confirmed heavy equipment losses sourced from the <u>Oryx Database</u> from February 24, 2022, to May 18, 2023. 10,324 Russian vs. 3,374 Ukrainian

Equipment	Russian Losses	Ukrainian Losses	Ratio	Change
Main Battle Tanks	1839	193	9.53:1	_
<b>Medium Duty Tanks</b>	126	307	0.41:1	_
Armored fighting Vehicles	852	270	3.16:1	仓
Infantry Fighting Vehicles	2334	537	4.35:1	Û
Armored Personnel Carriers	308	259	1.18:1	Û
MRAPs	44	55	0.80:1	仓
Infantry Mobility Vehicles	186	300	0.62:1	Û
Command and Communications Vehicles	240	12	20.00:1	仓
Engineering Vehicles	305	57	5.35:1	Û
<b>Towed Artillery</b>	210	121	1.74:1	仓
Self-Propelled Howitzers/Mortars	397	152	2.61:1	Û
MLRS	202	45	4.48:1	仓
SAMs	114	112	1.02:1	仓
Mobile Radars	32	59	0.54:1	_
EW/ECW	36	2	18.00:1	_
Winged Aircraft	82	66	1.24:1	
Helicopters	87	29	3.00:1	_
Naval Vessels	12	26	0.46:1	_



# **RUSSIAN MOBIKS, MOBILIZATION, AND MIR**

On May 25, almost two-dozen convicts who recently underwent a ten-day military training course were being prepared to be deployed to the forward line of friendly troops (FLOT) near Svatove. The penal unit soldiers deserted with their weapons, stealing a Kamaz truck. In the occupied territories of Luhansk, OMON, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and FSB are trying to find the rioters.<sup>77</sup>

There is a similar situation in Volnovakha, with 28 armed mobiks escaping from the front in three stolen military vehicles and reportedly hiding in the Kurchatova Kalmiuska District of Mariupol. 78 79 At the time of publication, officials in the so-called DNR reported that "some" of the rioters had been arrested. 80

Russian outlet 161 reported another 39 former convicts had deserted a Storm-Z training camp in occupied Lysychansk. Russian officials believe they will attempt to flee through the Rostov region. Russian opposition publication Gulag.net predicted that PMC Wagner would work to disrupt Project K

<sup>77</sup> https://t.me/luhanskaVTSA/10793

<sup>78</sup> https://t.me/andriyshTime/10108

<sup>79</sup> https://t.me/andriyshTime/10114

<sup>80</sup> https://t.me/itsdonetsk/76798



training of Shoigu's PMC Storm-Z to discredit the Russian Minister of Defense further. We had previously assessed that the rift between PMC Wagner and the Kremlin is impacting Russian military operations.<sup>81</sup>

Luhansk Oblast Administrative and Military Governor, Artem Lysohor, claims that in the so-called Luhansk People's Republic (LNR), some members of the 2nd Army Corps have not been paid since December 2022.<sup>82</sup> Records were sometimes falsified to show that LNR soldiers and mobiks were paid. The previously allocated funds have reportedly disappeared.

Belgorod Region Governor Vyacheslav Gladkov reported that the commander of the Preobrazhensky battalion, Yuri Gaevoy, was killed in action during the cross-border incursion on May 22-23. Gaevoy is not a recognized member of the Russian Armed Forces, so his family is not entitled to survivor benefits. Governor Gladkov said his wife would receive a one-time payment of three-million roubles from the regional budget.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>81</sup> https://t.me/Crimeanwind/31347

<sup>82</sup> https://t.me/luhanskaVTSA/10794

<sup>83</sup> https://t.me/shot\_shot/51973



We want to extend our congratulations to Russian propagandist and RT reporter Andrey Rudenko for earning the red stop sign of shame from our analyst team. In the last 48 hours, Rudenko released two videos that were so poorly staged, so badly acted, that even Russian sources are openly mocking them as fakes.

People's Exhibit A - shows staged combat that is so poorly done they don't use practicals, and PMC Wagner channel Gray Zone was compelled to write two paragraphs outlining everything wrong with the video.84

People's Exhibit B - another video from Rudenko allegedly showing a German doctor harvesting organs from Ukrainians in acting so badly and production quality so low, the worst Hallmark Channel Christmas movie is easier to watch.85

Here is the review from one Russian milblogger. "In this video, poor Taras is looking for a wounded brother and goes into the operating room to find foreign doctors there, gutting his partner for organs. Fine acting, a divine foreign accent, gay statements from a security guard so busy

<sup>84</sup> https://t.me/ptsr\_team/4766

<sup>85</sup> https://t.me/grey\_zone/18859



poking at the phone that they did not see Taras going to the operating room. And Taras walks around with the GoPro turned on. Do you really have such crooked hands? Better not do anything at all; just f\*\*\*\*\* don't do your second-rate stink. Or do them to make your commander happy, but do not throw this shameful game into the information space."

Outrage over repeated Ukrainian incursions into Belgorod and Berdyansk is growing. Russian source hard blog wrote, "The Kursk, Bryansk, and Belgorod regions are attacked by the Armed Forces of Ukraine on a daily basis. There are drones, artillery, and entry into [Russian] territory. In Moscow, of course, it is not felt there, so what if they attacked the Kremlin once with drones? The kohkols [A slur for Ukrainians - Ed.] feel the courage of impunity. In all three regions, there are people ready to defend their regions. There are also former gunners. But there is nothing to defend. And the warehouses are full of weapons. But for some unknown reason, the state is preoccupied with anything from grain deals to discussing the hypothetical future of Ukraine, but not with the fact that the country's territory is under attack. Wake up! Every shell that falls on our land is a nail in the coffin of people's trust in the state. It is the first and most important task of the state to protect the people. And you demonstrate every day that you are failing to do so. Worse, you do not allow others to do it. This is the highest level of betrayal of the country's



interests...People can tolerate everything except your organizational impotence, bureaucratic idiocy, and criminal inactivity. And most importantly, your cowardice and unwillingness to take responsibility. Are you afraid to give people guns? Cretins. What you should be afraid of is that the people will find their own weapons and defend their land, but then not only from the khohols but also from the incompetent."

The author behind the Veterans Notes Telegram channel expressed frustration with the situation in Belgorod, writing, "For two hours, the khohols [A Russian slur for Ukrainians - Ed.] have been shelling the Belgorod region, I barely managed to [get] out of Murom. Meanwhile, there are serious problems in Moscow; there are no free tables in pubs, as they report in local channels. One country, you say?"<sup>87</sup>

Posters have started to appear across Belgorod with a picture of Yevgeny Prigozhin declaring, "Strong leader, not a bunker coward" and "Strength. Confidence. Stability," exposing what we have repeatedly assessed is the political ambitions of the PMC Wagner leader and growing

<sup>86</sup> https://t.me/Hard\_Blog\_Line/8910

<sup>87</sup> https://twitter.com/wartranslated/status/1662241503299731457



frustration among what the Russian State Duma calls "turbo patriots."88

## **WAR CRIMES AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

According to Russian military milblogger Rybar, Russian forces intentionally targeted a psychiatric hospital in Dnipro with S-300 antiaircraft missiles used for a ground attack because members of the Ukrainian armed forces might have been receiving treatment in the facility. <sup>89</sup> The missile attack heavily damaged the building, which suffered a direct hit. There was no evidence in the numerous graphic videos of any military personnel in the facility.

These videos are NSWF and not for children; viewer discretion is advised.

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You can 🛕 📺 <u>click here</u>.91

You can <u> click here</u>.92

<sup>88</sup> https://t.me/Crimeanwind/31377

<sup>89</sup> https://t.me/itsdonetsk/76818

<sup>90</sup> https://t.me/itsdonetsk/76780

<sup>91</sup> https://t.me/itsdonetsk/76773

<sup>92</sup> https://t.me/itsdonetsk/76782



The missile strike wounded 32 people, including eight medical workers, a toddler, and a child. Twelve of the wounded are hospitalized. Two people were killed, and the ruins are still being searched. Three people remain missing, and searchers have found body fragments that they've collected for DNA analysis. 4

A missile also hit a veterinarian clinic specializing in neurosurgery, wounding animals. It is reported that a man died under the rubble. According to rescue workers, a fire covering 200 square meters broke out, with staff removing the animals, some burned and suffering shrapnel wounds, from the burning building.<sup>95</sup>

<sup>93</sup> https://t.me/mykola lukashuk/4744

<sup>94</sup> https://t.me/suspilnenews/21096

<sup>95</sup> https://twitter.com/i/status/1662155877913067525