



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





Malcontent News Russia-Ukraine War SITREP

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SUMMARY – DAY 48

After a series of minor military actions on April 11, there weren't any significant operations across Ukraine today.

The siege of Mariupol entered its 42nd day. Russian and Russian-backed militias continued a pattern of overstating gains in the city, including claiming again they had entirely captured the main port. Heavy fighting continued in several locations in the besieged city.

Multiple nations indicated they were working with Ukraine to determine the validity of claims Russia launched a chemical weapons attack on the Avostal Metallurgical Factory.

Russian forces continued to shell, bomb, and fire missiles into the civilian areas of Kharkiv. Ukraine's second-largest city was blanketed with hundreds of antipersonnel mines overnight, landing in populated areas.

Russian units continued to consolidate and reinforce their positions in Izyum. A push southward to capture Slovyansk and Kramatorsk is expected in the coming days or weeks.

Poor weather over the Black Sea interfered with Russian naval operations and limited the ability to use drones for surveillance and targeting.

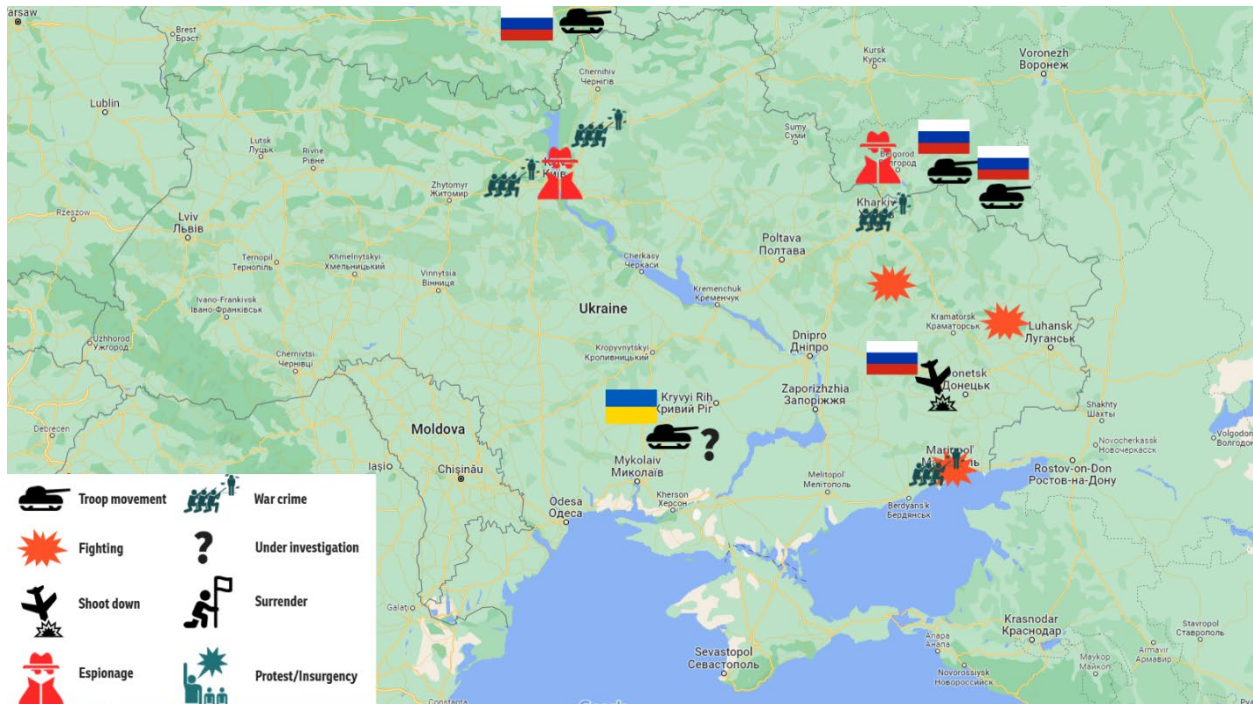
Ukrainian forces continue to target and harass supply lines, convoys, and railroad assets.

ASSESSMENT: Little has changed in the last 24 hours, with Russia continuing to consolidate forces. A larger offensive is expected in the coming days and weeks, but we do not believe it will happen before April 17.

The geopolitical situation in Europe continues to sour, with Russian President Vladimir Putin declaring peace talks with Ukraine reaching a "dead end."

Russia struggles with maintaining the ranks of trained soldiers, experienced leaders and recruiting into the military.

KEY EVENTS MAP



DONBAS REGION

Fighting continues in the city of Mariupol, which has been under siege for 42 days. Social media claims that Russia controls the main port appears to be false, with social media post showing heavy fighting in the port during the day on April 12.¹ The Russian armored vehicles in the video were geolocated at the southwestern edge of the port.² Russian troops have been in this area since April 9. Video showing intense shelling north of the port was shot from

¹ <https://t.me/faceofwar/18430>

² <https://goo.gl/maps/qgm2fS6Hj32UxUNw8>

the westernmost pier.³ The blue and yellow cranes in the foreground are visible along with the warehouses to the north.

NASA FIRMS data supports the geolocation, showing fighting on the north end of the main port and in the line of sight of the video clip. Available data does not indicate the port is under Russian control.

Chechen forces retreated out of Rubhizne and took up defensive positions along the northeast corner of the settlement. Fighting in Popasnya and Sevrodonetsk continued, contained mainly to exchanges of artillery fire.

³ <https://goo.gl/maps/M9bjSJgxdAHqhjNu6>



The Russian artillery barrage reportedly destroyed the area attacked in the video. Evacuating civilians report that Russian forces now control the area north of the port.⁴

After a video emerged that members of the Ukrainian 36th Brigade had surrendered on April 11, another video was published on April 12 from the unit declaring they had not abandoned their positions.⁵

⁴ <https://twitter.com/leonidragozin/status/1513965619833716743>

⁵ <https://twitter.com/michaelh992/status/1513785370361610244>

Russian State Media showed a T-72 tank dragging an American flag behind it.⁶

ASSESSMENT: We are equally confused.

CHEMICAL WEAPONS ATTACK INVESTIGATION: A video has emerged from Mariupol interviewing two of the three reported casualties from an alleged chemical weapons attack on April 11.⁷ Both complained about breathing problems and a loss of motor skills. A soldier interviewed had swollen eyes that he would not open.

Witnesses reported seeing a white cloud similar to smoke heavier than air. The soldier said he had a “sweet taste” in his mouth as orders to put on gas masks were given.

There is a lengthy thread by Don Kaszeta on Twitter, a CBRN expert.⁸ The thread was created before the video and explains the challenges of proving or disproving claims of a chemical weapons attack.

⁶ <https://twitter.com/Osinttechnical/status/1513890722415583243>

⁷ <https://twitter.com/InnaSovsun/status/1513892358223548423>

⁸ <https://twitter.com/DanKaszeta/status/1513798406849933313>

A senior defense official with the United States Department of Defense stated the Pentagon was taking the accusation "very seriously."⁹

OPINION: We do not have a CBRN expert we can consult with, but none of the commonly used chemical weapons create a "sweet taste" in the mouth.

ASSESSMENT: The United States, United Kingdom, and Ukrainian officials are investigating. It is doubtful a toxicology screening and report can be done. In our evaluation, a final determination is weeks away.

ASSESSMENT: We cannot make a reasonable assessment of when Mariupol will fall into the hands of Russian control. We believe that when the Ukrainian resistance collapses, it will come quickly.

In Luhansk, Chechen forces withdrew out of Rubizhne and are now digging in outside the settlement in a defensive position.^{10 11} Geolocation authenticates the video and puts

⁹ [United States Department of Defense](#)

¹⁰ <https://twitter.com/MapsUkraine/status/1513777903099600899>

¹¹ <https://twitter.com/TheStudyofWar/status/1514014544653283329>

the troops at the city's northeast corner in a wooded area by a packing factory.¹²

Pro-Russian social media accounts report artillery barrages on Popasnaya and claim they attacked Ukrainian positions.¹³ Russian state media, Russia Today, was reporting within Popasnaya, and one of their reporters was lightly injured by shrapnel.¹⁴

OPINION: If Russia was firing on Ukrainian positions, and Russia Today was in Popasnaya, and one of their reporters was hit by shrapnel, that would mean...

In Severodonetsk, Russian forces continue to target civilians and civilian infrastructure.¹⁵ France 24 visited a group of 300 people living underground who don't have the financial resources to leave the city.

The International Red Cross reported they did a delivery in Severodonetsk to an underground shelter with 300 people

¹² <https://goo.gl/maps/McPUuhpjRnsfuHXU6>

¹³ <https://twitter.com/Navsteva/status/1513996638808948736> [Russian State Media - Disinformation]

¹⁴ https://twitter.com/small_float/status/1513972925577187338

¹⁵ https://twitter.com/France24_fr/status/1513810063890255879

to deliver food and medical supplies. They also said they evacuated two people who required hospitalization.¹⁶

Ukraine continues to control Kreminna after liberating the settlement on April 8. The town was shelled and bombed by the Russian Air Force.¹⁷

The Air Force Command of Ukraine reported a Russian airplane was shot down over Donetsk on April 12. The wreckage is possibly a Su-25 ground attack aircraft.¹⁸

KHARKIV REGION

In Kharkiv, shelling and missile strikes primarily targeted civilians and civilian infrastructure on April 12.^{19 20} The settlement of Babai, southwest of Kharkiv, was shelled.²¹

Russian forces worked to reinforce their positions around Izyum.

¹⁶ https://twitter.com/ICRC_ua/status/1513938403376648198

¹⁷ <https://twitter.com/Hromadske/status/1513554888013369345>

¹⁸ <https://espreso.tv/zsu-zbili-rosiyskiy-litak-na-donechchini>

¹⁹ <https://twitter.com/Archer83Able/status/1513883924124127235>

²⁰ <https://twitter.com/Osinttechnical/status/1513966005936173062>

²¹ [Ukrinform](#)

Russian State Media released a video of a column of vehicles crossing a pontoon bridge over the Siverskyi Donets River outside of Izyum.²² Another video on April 9 showed a column of Russian T-80 tanks moving towards the pontoon bridge crossing.²³ Using geolocation to identify the location and direction, Ukrainian forces ambushed the column, destroying at least four tanks and capturing one.²⁴

DNIPRO, KHERSON & MYKOLAIV REGION

There weren't any significant military engagements in the region.

Head of the Kryvyi Rih Military Administration Oleksandr Vilkul stated that 15 settlements in the northern part of Kherson had been liberated. He did not elaborate on which villages, and we cannot independently verify this claim.²⁵

ASSESSMENT: We believe that the Ukrainian General Staff is not interested in liberating Kherson due to the challenges of defending the location. Because some Russian BTGs have retreated out of the Mykolaiv Oblast, eight battalions are

²² <https://twitter.com/Nfe5o1Z/status/1513526835484966912> [Russian State Media Content]

²³ <https://twitter.com/RALee85/status/1512909170680512512>

²⁴ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OrSeG6wOhAk>

²⁵ [Ukrinform](#)

defending Kherson. These units are locked in place as long as the threat of liberation for the city continues.

CHERNIHIV & SUMY REGION

There wasn't any significant military activity across the region today.

KYIV REGION

There weren't any significant military operations in the Kyiv region.

BLACK SEA & ODESA REGION

Poor weather conditions in the Black Sea and the Azov Sea prevented the Russian Black Sea Fleet from performing combat operations. Winds off the coast of Odessa were 35 to 40 KPH with higher gusts, while winds in the Azov Sea were as high as 55 KPH with higher gusts.



ASSESSMENT: We believe there is no longer a threat of an amphibious assault landing at or near Odesa.²⁶

ASSESSMENT: We believe there is no threat of the Russian peacekeeping force in Transnistria invading Ukraine.

WEST REGION

There wasn't any significant military activity today.

ASSESSMENT: We believe there is no longer a threat of a Belarusian invasion into Western Ukraine.

ASSESSMENT: We believe there is only a limited possibility Russia will attempt to remove or replace some of the peacekeeping forces in Transnistria.

²⁶ <https://twitter.com/BackAndAlive/status/1513532515088277504>

THEATERWIDE & EXTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS

Russian Colonel Alexander Bespalov, the 59th Guards Tank Regiment commander, was killed in action on or around March 22.²⁷

United States President Joe Biden is expected to announce \$750 million in additional military aid to Ukraine on Wednesday.²⁸ There are indications the package could include Reaper or Predator drones.²⁹

The railroad bridge over the Nezhegol River in Belgorod Oblast, located 7 kilometers from the Ukrainian border, was badly damaged in an apparent act of sabotage.³⁰ The rail line was a key route for Russian troops attempting to move into the Donbas.

²⁷ <https://twitter.com/Danspiun/status/1513907154222260226>

²⁸ <https://twitter.com/idreesali114/status/1513981860510113797>

²⁹ <https://twitter.com/DanLamothe/status/1514023542630801415>

³⁰ <https://twitter.com/mhmck/status/1513846849928667138>

Maxar released satellite images of Russian forces massing Soloti³¹ and Biriuch,³² Russia, just east of the Ukrainian border.

The British Ministry of Defense reported that Russian forces in Belarus that were being held in place to lock Ukrainian forces around Kyiv and Chernihiv are being withdrawn. It is believed the troops are being moved to fight in eastern Ukraine.³³

WAR CRIMES AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Russia fired missiles filled with antipersonnel mines across civilian areas of Kharkiv.³⁴ Explosive ordnance disposal experts fanned out to detonate hundreds of devices across the city. It was reported that some mines were on timers and self-detonated through the day. The intentional placement of landmines in civilian areas is considered a war crime. The distribution of landmines without mapping their locations is also considered a war crime.³⁵

³¹ <https://twitter.com/LucasFoxNews/status/1514013039225278464/photo/1>

³² <https://twitter.com/LucasFoxNews/status/1514026607303876613/photo/2>

³³ <https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1513746649113403397/photo/1>

³⁴ <https://twitter.com/dwnnews/status/1514047214590386178>

³⁵ <https://twitter.com/dwnnews/status/1514047214590386178>

In Havronshchya, west of Kyiv, the remains of a family of four, including a toddler, were found on the roadside. Their vehicle was riddled with machine gunfire.^{36 37} (NSFW, not for children, viewer discretion strongly advised)

A 64-year old civilian driving a personal vehicle struck an antitank mine in Krasne, south of Chernihiv. The driver was killed in the blast.³⁸

The Ukrainian National Police reported Rubizhne, Popasna, Severodonetsk, and parts of Lysychansk were without running water.³⁹ Severodeontsk is also without electricity or natural gas. Russian and Chechen artillery continue to target civilians and civilian infrastructure. (NSFW, viewer discretion advised)

GEOPOLITICAL

Russian President Vladimir Putin declared the peace talks between Russia and Ukraine had reached a "dead-end"

³⁶ <https://twitter.com/kargolow/status/1513861431652925442>

³⁷ <https://twitter.com/dkaleniuk/status/1513849708204150789>

³⁸ <https://espreso.tv/na-chernigivshchini-legkovik-naikhav-na-protitankovu-minu-vodiy-zaginu>

³⁹ [Ukrainian National Police](#)

while continuing to profess that all was going to plan for the special military operation in Ukraine.⁴⁰

The war will "continue until its full completion and the fulfillment of the tasks that have been set," Putin said. He added Russia was forced to invade Ukraine to protect ethnic Russians in the Donbas.

An adviser to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy took issue with Putin's claims on Twitter: "Russia claimed their goal...is to 'protect people in Donbas.' Right now mobile crematoria are burning people's bodies in #Mariupol, the second largest city of the region. Those who survived are dying from starvation. What are you 'protecting' them from? From life?"

President Biden addressed the highest United States inflation rate since 1981, calling it the "Putin price hike."⁴¹

"Your ability to fill up your tank, none of it, should hinge on whether a dictator declares war and commits genocide a half a world away," Biden added.

⁴⁰ <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2022/04/12/ukraine-russia-invasion-live-updates/7284726001/>

⁴¹ <https://twitter.com/CBSNews/status/1513988895893069831>

When asked for clarification, Biden doubled down, stating he intended to use the word genocide.

"It's become clearer and clearer that Putin is trying to wipe out the idea of being Ukrainian," Biden said.

Ukraine's security service announced they arrested pro-Russian politician Viktor Medvedchuk.⁴² Medvedchuk had been under house arrest when the war started and escaped on February 28. He was charged with treason in May 2021 for attempting to loot national resources and supporting terrorism in Russian annexed Crimea. When he was arrested, he wore Ukrainian military fatigues and was masquerading as a soldier.

Russian President Putin is the godfather to Medvedchuk's daughter. In 2013 he compared the European Union to the Nazi Third Reich and was accused of being involved in suppressing the Euromaidan protests in 2014.

Medvedchuk's treason charge came after he was accused of channeling money from his Russia-based refinery to separatists in the Donbas. Three days after his arrest in May 2021, Russian authorities liquidated the company

⁴² <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-61089039>

Novye Proekty, which was allegedly the proxy to channel funds into Crimea and the Donbas.

President Zelenskyy offered to exchange Medvedchuk for all Ukrainian prisoners of war.⁴³ If the Ukrainian government had collapsed during the open weeks of the war, Medvedchuk would have been declared the de facto leader by Moscow.

ECONOMIC

The rouble was steady at 83.50 to 1 United States dollar.

WTI rose to \$100 a barrel, and Brent jumped to \$105. Wholesale gasoline climbed 14 cents to \$3.16 a gallon after briefly dropping below \$3.00 yesterday.

DISINFORMATION EVALUATION

A disinformation campaign is circulating on social media reporting that 1,000 members of the Ukrainian 36th Marine

⁴³ [Reuters](#)

Brigade surrendered on April 12.⁴⁴ This cannot be confirmed. Due to the apparent false reports of the surrender of members of the 36th Brigade on April 11, and the maximum size of a battalion is typically 1,200 to 1,400 troops, it is improbable that 1,000 members surrendered.

A video circulating on social media alleges that Chechen soldiers shoot a woman screaming in the background in Mariupol.⁴⁵ This is likely disinformation using selective editing. The more extended version of the video on YouTube continues to have the woman screaming after the gunshot is fired, with no pitch or change of tone. The video does not prove nor disprove a person was being maltreated.

⁴⁴ <https://twitter.com/NuestralraSLG/status/1513971173587140608> [Russian State Media Content]

⁴⁵ <https://twitter.com/avalaina/status/1513503286476906500>