



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



May 24, 2022



Malcontent News

Russia-Ukraine War SITREP

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SUMMARY – DAY 90

It has been 3,008 days since Russia began its occupation of Crimea on February 27, 2014, and three months since the start of the war in Ukraine.

Yesterday, Russian advances west, north, and south from Popasna, and the artillery barrage of Lyman, created the appearance that Russian and Russia-backed militias were attempting to reach Bakhmut from the east and north. Either that strategy is failing, or Russian forces are trying to chip away at Ukrainian positions and get small encirclements if the opportunity presents itself.

Earlier in the day, Russian forces attempted to move into Severodonetsk through Purdivka and were unsuccessful. There are reports of renewed and intense fighting east of Severodonetsk late on May 24.

Around Popasna, the Russian Air Force flew multiple sorties over Toshkivka, firing on Ukrainian positions. There was no change in territorial control. There wasn't additional intelligence about Zolote from Ukrainian or Russian sources – we take this as an indication that the

settlement is still contested with Russian forces to the south.

On May 23, we reported that Russian forces made incremental gains northwest of Popasna, advancing on Vasylivka and Lypove. We are seeing multiple reports today that these settlements are contested or captured. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces were encroaching on Bilohorivka [Donetsk Oblast], aligning with our May 23 report.

Editor's Note: *Yesterday, our team did a fantastic job analyzing and geolocation social intelligence. We are not seeing new gains beyond what we reported late on May 23. Due to our late publishing time, we may have gotten ahead of other intelligence reports yesterday. 23:30 PDT May 23 is 09:30 May 24 in Kyiv.*

Ukrainian forces withdrew from the Svitlodarsk Bulge, south of Popasna. Russian forces took control of Svitlodarsk.

On the Severodonetsk westward offensive, Russian troops continued to fire artillery and MLRS and launch airstrikes on Lyman. Donetsk People's Republic Head Denis Pushilin

claimed that Russia-backed militias control 40% of Lyman. There wasn't any supporting information to back up the claim.

In the south Donbas to western Zaporizhia, Russian forces continued to strike Avdiivka with artillery and airstrikes. Russian forces appear to be attempting to encircle the industrial town but have had little success advancing around the settlement.

There was sporadic artillery fire along the rest of the line of conflict from Avdiivka to Velyka Novosilka in Donetsk to Hulyaipole and Orikhiv in Zaporizhia. Russian forces focused on Marinka and targeted a historical site in Orikhiv, causing significant damage.

Pro-Russian former intelligence officer Alexander Zhuchkovsky, one of the first columnists to socialize the concept of "denazification of Ukraine,"¹ called the situation for Russia-backed militias on the line of conflict in Zaporizhia "deplorable" and reported a casualty rate of 30% a month.

¹ https://web.archive.org/web/20161113181401/https://vk.com/wall151630709_62156

The tactical situation north of Kharkiv city was unchanged today. Russian forces attempted to push back Ukrainian troops on the outskirts of Nova Kazacha, and fighting continued around Vesele. Fighting for control of Rubizhne [Kharkiv Oblast] and Ternova also continued. Russian artillery shelled the Kharkiv city of Tsyrkuny.

On the Izyum axis, there was little activity, with Russian forces concentrating their logistics and firepower in the Luhansk Oblast and the south Donbas. The Russian Air Force targeted the cities of Kramatorsk and Slovyansk. NASA FIRMS data indicates there was artillery or MLRS fire east of Bukyne. It is unclear which belligerent controls the area.

Russian forces continue to attack settlements in Sumy with artillery, MLRS, and airstrikes.

The Black Sea Fleet has increased activity around Snake Island, adding more resources and troops while enhancing anti-aircraft capability. There are signs that the Ukrainian Air Force had another successful missile or airstrike on the island.

DAILY ASSESSMENT

In our assessment, the situation in the Luhansk Oblast didn't incrementally improve – we believe we got ahead of the available social intelligence. This has created an illusion for the May 24 report that little has happened today.

The more significant change is Russia appears to have abandoned the goal of any encirclement of Severodonetsk. Igor Girkin reported that the main effort has shifted to “force out” Ukrainian troops from the Donbas.²

There have been reports that the T1302 Highway between Bakhmut and Lysychansk has been cut off by Russia-backed militias without evidence.

The 4th Battalion, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Companies of the 107th Rifle Regiment of the Donetsk People's Republic made a video declaring they refuse to “go into a slaughter” with the Luhansk People's Republic.³ The video represented 204 people, implying that the three companies have been reduced by 67%. The soldiers said they don't want to be

² <https://t.me/strelkovii/2583>

³ <https://twitter.com/mdmitri91/status/1529247447230427137>

"cannon fodder," were illegally pressed into service, and many in the ranks were sick and wounded after a three-month tour of duty in Mariupol. This is the second DNR Battalion to refuse to fight in the last 24 hours.

New intelligence indicates that while Russia has improved tactics and logistics in Severodonetsk, this has come at the expense of other axes. Russian forces are in a stalemate against the territorial guard in Kharkiv, frozen in Izyum, and engaged in a modern version of World War I trench warfare across the remaining lines of conflict.

Russian forces are displaying again they can push an offensive for three to five days before their capabilities degrade. Both belligerents are suffering unsustainable losses. Russian military leaders bet big last week with the current offensive. They cannot maintain a protracted offensive nor fall back to previous unsuccessful strategies.

We assess the following:

1. We wrote the obituary for Phase 2 of the war too soon, but this is the final gasp of Phase 2
2. The situation in the Severodonetsk salient continues to slowly deteriorate, with Russian forces making slow

progress and significantly hampering the primary Ukrainian Ground Line of Communication (GLOC)

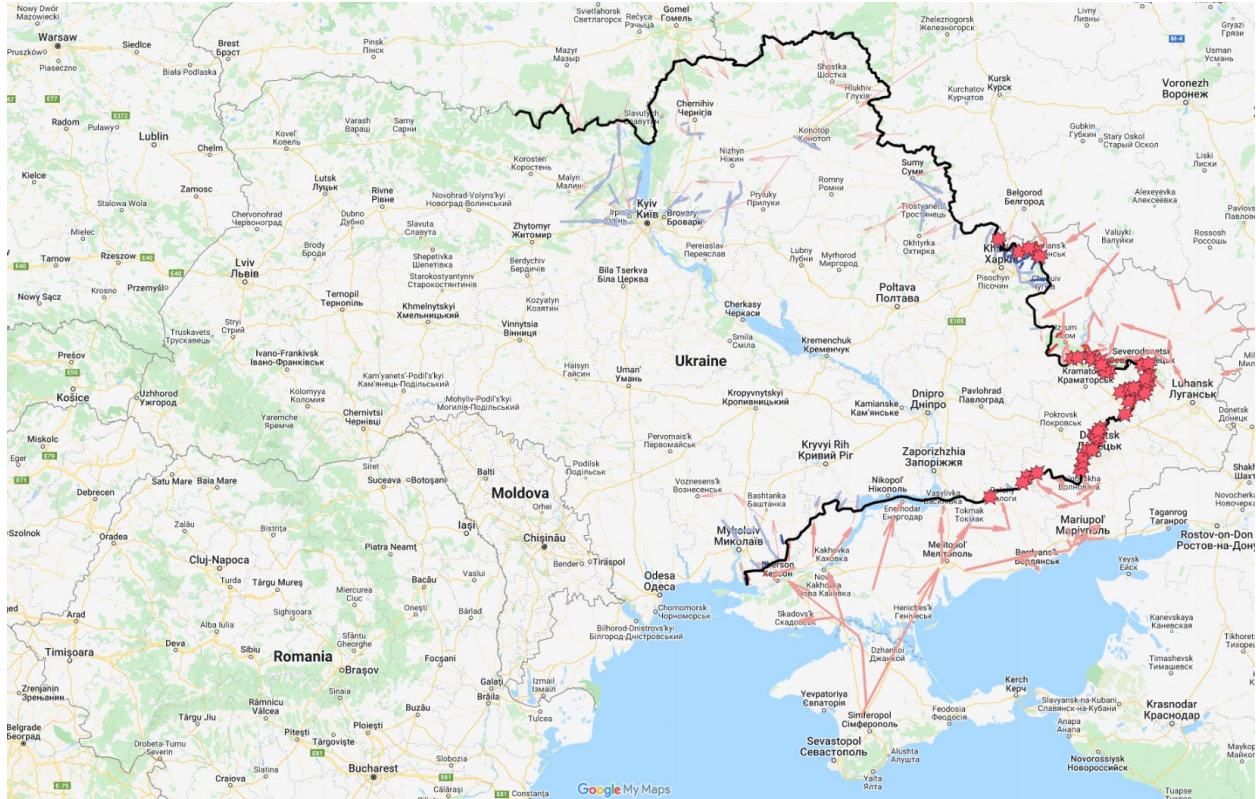
3. If Russia is successful in Luhansk, they will need an operational pause to hold the new territory, and they will use these gains to launch a renewed attack further west
4. A 21st Century version of World War I trench warfare continues along most of the line of conflict between Ukraine and Russia, with artillery used as the primary weapon
5. Russia has more to gain and lose during the next few days in the Luhansk Oblast than Ukraine
6. Despite an expansion of military activity on multiple fronts in the last 24 hours, the main goal for Russia is the capture of Severodonetsk
7. Russian military leaders will accept Ukrainian forces withdrawing or being pushed out as a victory versus encirclement

We maintain Russia has enough resources to capture the Severodonetsk region. We do not believe that Russia has enough resources to control and hold territorial gains in the medium and long term without a significant pause in combat operations when the current offensive is over.

We further assess that Ukraine will have the resources and capability to take the initiative along multiple axes within 20 to 35 days.

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TODAY'S WAR IN UKRAINE MAP



DONBAS REGION

Ukrainian forces were able to defend their positions around Severodonetsk.

Russian forces were able to secure the Svitlodarsk Bulge.

Russia-backed militias made a ground assault on Lyman backed by airstrikes and artillery fire.

LUHANSK

Severodonetsk Salient

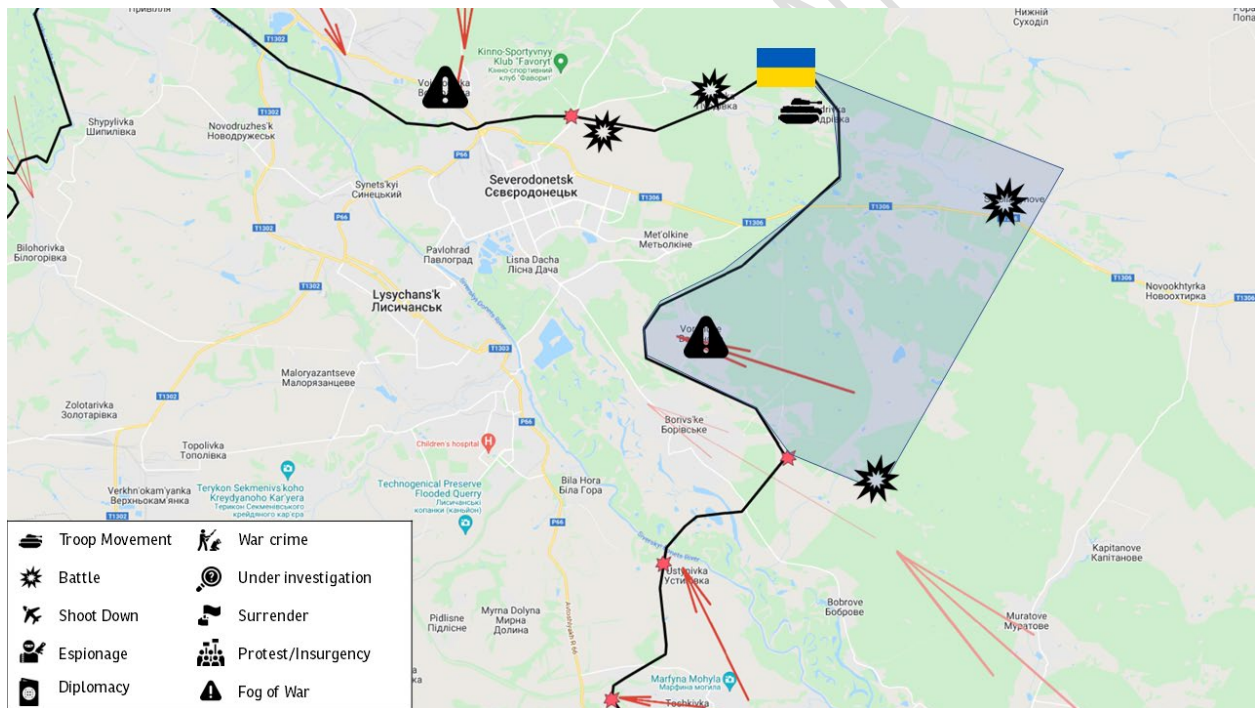
The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces tried to advance on Ukrainian positions around Severodonetsk and were unsuccessful.⁴ Reporter Anastasia Volkova called Severodonetsk the "second Mariupol," describing terrible conditions.⁵ Water, electricity, natural gas, sewer, and the Internet are out for most of the city. There is only one functioning hospital with almost no supplies and is under constant threat of attack. Dozens of

⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/324304813215937>

⁵ <https://twitter.com/MaximEristavi/status/1529013754658181120>

new casualties arrive a day, with little ability to provide medical care.

Members of the 3018 Ukrainian National Guard [NMU] Rapid Response Brigade released a video from Severodonetsk sharing their stories and expressing their high morale and readiness to fight.⁶



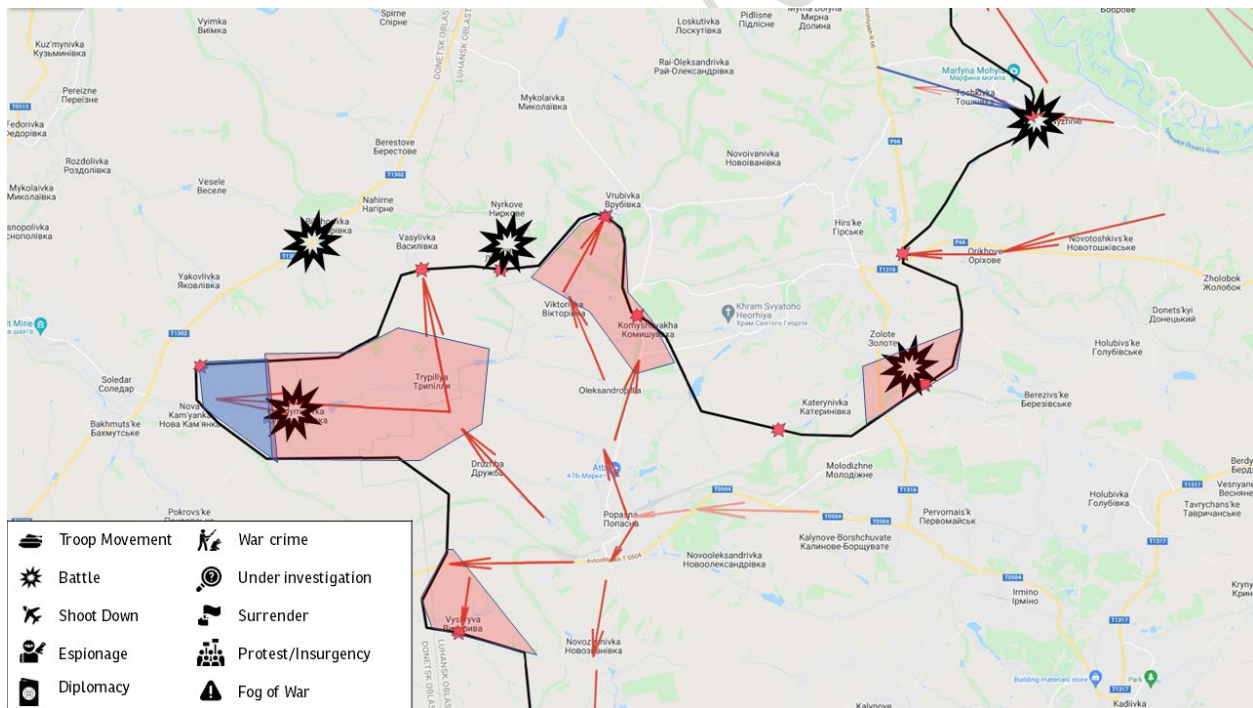
There was little change around Popasna. Russian forces made small gains toward Vasylivka and Lypove.⁷

⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UaASFxcuwrY>

⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/324304813215937>

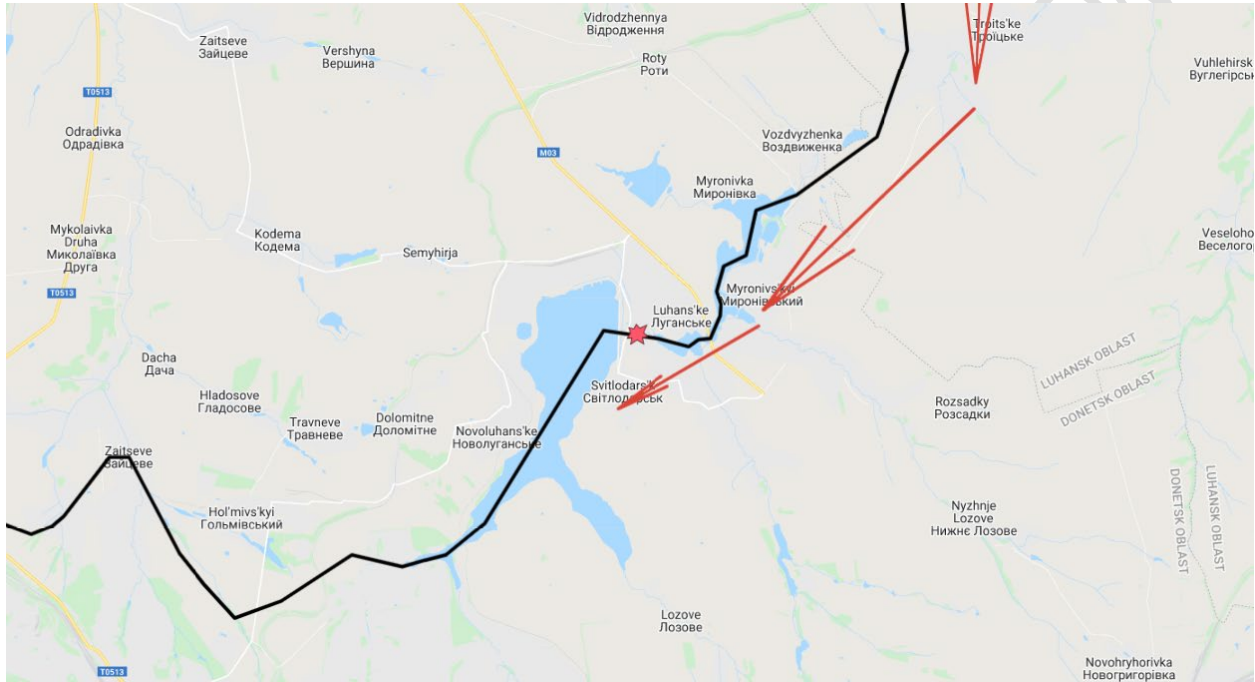
Russian VDV airborne troops were hit by Ukrainian artillery north of Volodymyrivka.⁸ While retreating, they had to abandon an Infantry Fighting Vehicle (IFV) that got stuck.⁹ (viewer discretion advised)

Russian forces shelled the abandoned oil refinery outside Lysychansk for the fourth time.¹⁰



⁸ <https://goo.gl/maps/WQbaJBytoQFkjSR28>
⁹ <https://twitter.com/RALee85/status/1529173207475015681>
¹⁰ <https://twitter.com/DemeryUK/status/1529012936592740352>

Ukrainian forces withdrew from the Svitlodarsk Bulge to prevent encirclement.¹¹ Ukrainian forces moved northwest to aid the defense of Bakhmut.



Severodonetsk Westward Offensive

Russian forces continued to attack Lyman, firing artillery, MLRS, and attacking the city with airstrikes.¹²

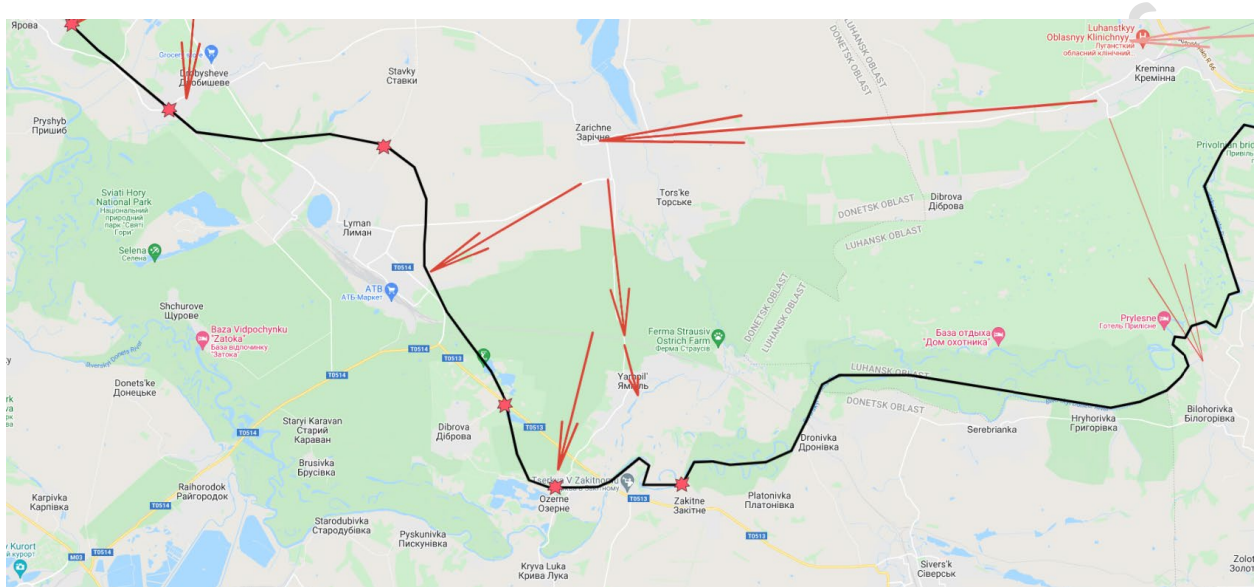
Administrative Head of the Donetsk People's Republic Denis Pushilin claimed that Russia-backed militias control half of Lyman.¹³ There wasn't any additional information provided

¹¹ <https://twitter.com/IAPonomarenko/status/1529048430030594048>

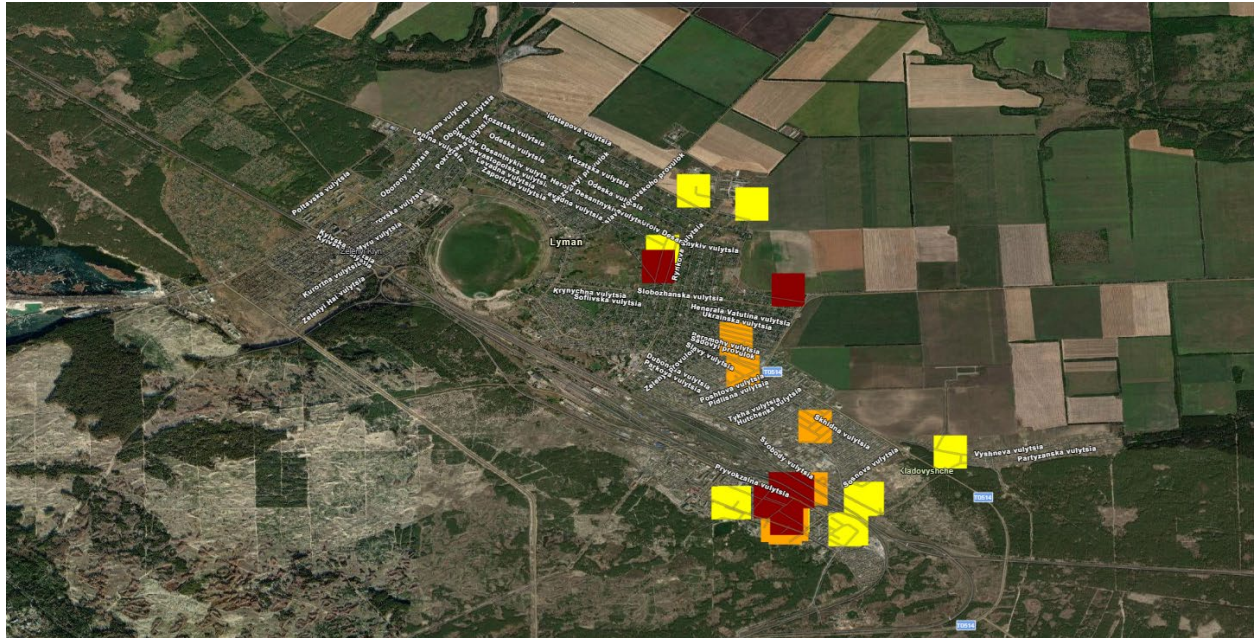
¹² <https://twitter.com/Osinttechnical/status/1529224250342928386>

¹³ <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/36680>

to support the claim, and Pushilin declared on May 23 that Ukrainian forces had moved to the “outskirts of the southern side of Lyman.”

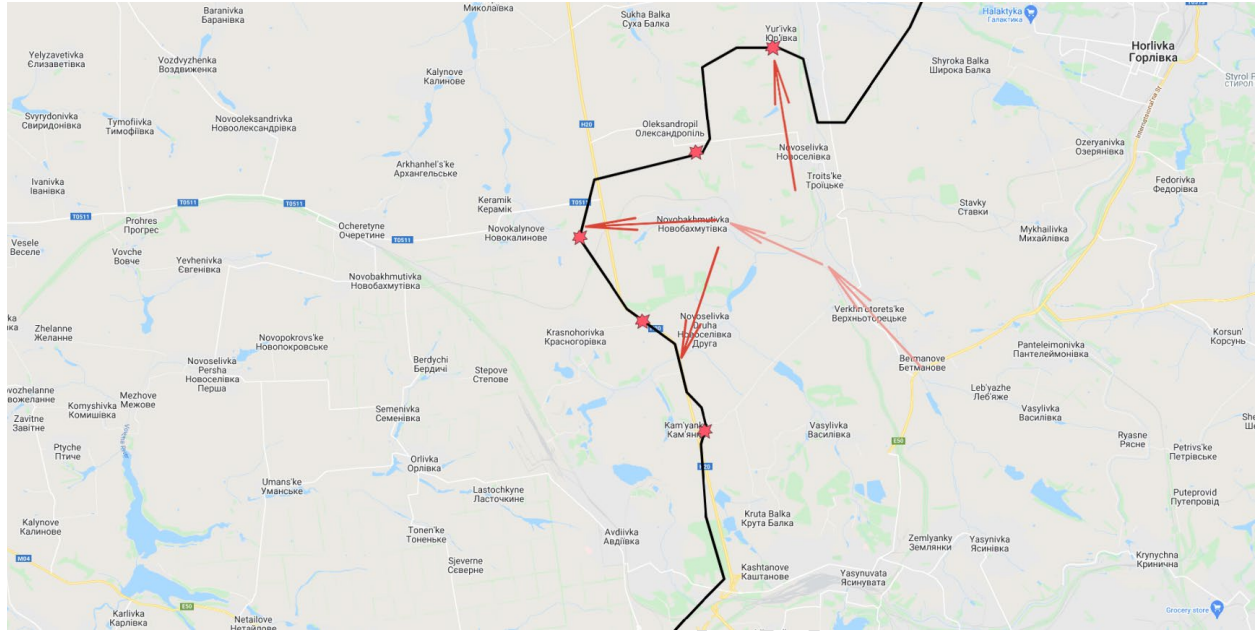


NASA FIRMS data indicate that artillery strikes are in the same areas as May 23, which does not support Russian forces controlling the northern half of the town of 20,500 residents.



There weren't any other significant changes along the line of conflict, with Russian forces concentrating most of their combat power in the Luhansk Oblast.

SOUTH DONBAS AND WESTERN ZAPORIZHIA



Near Donetsk city, Russian forces continued to shell Ukrainian positions.¹⁴ Evacuations of civilians started due to the heavy attacks.¹⁵ DNR Military Spokesperson Eduard Basurin said that Russia-backed militias don't plan to attack the city head-on but bypass it and attempt to encircle the troops defending the enclave.¹⁶

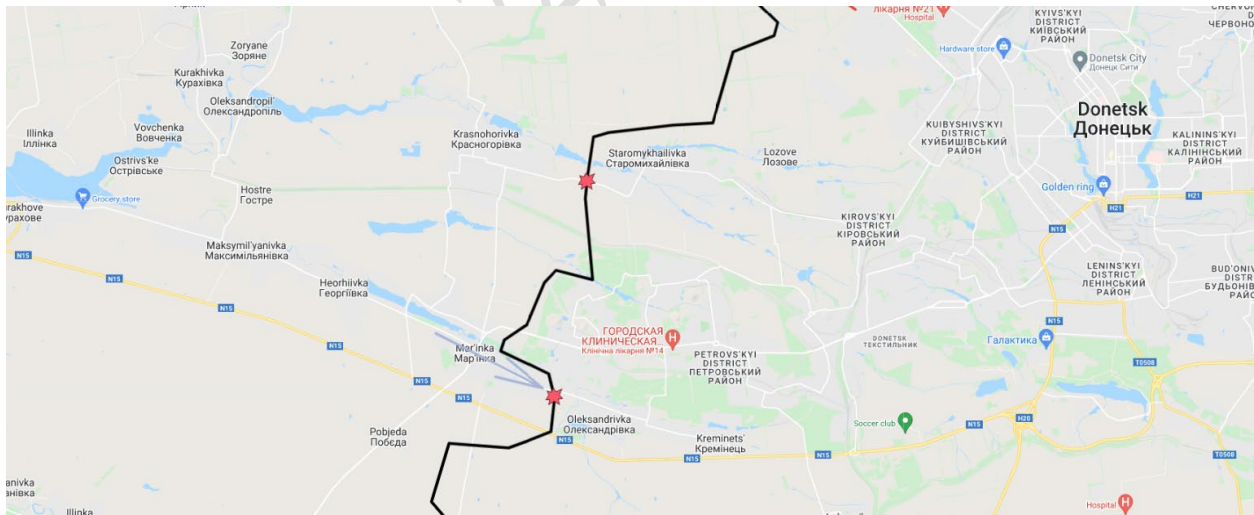
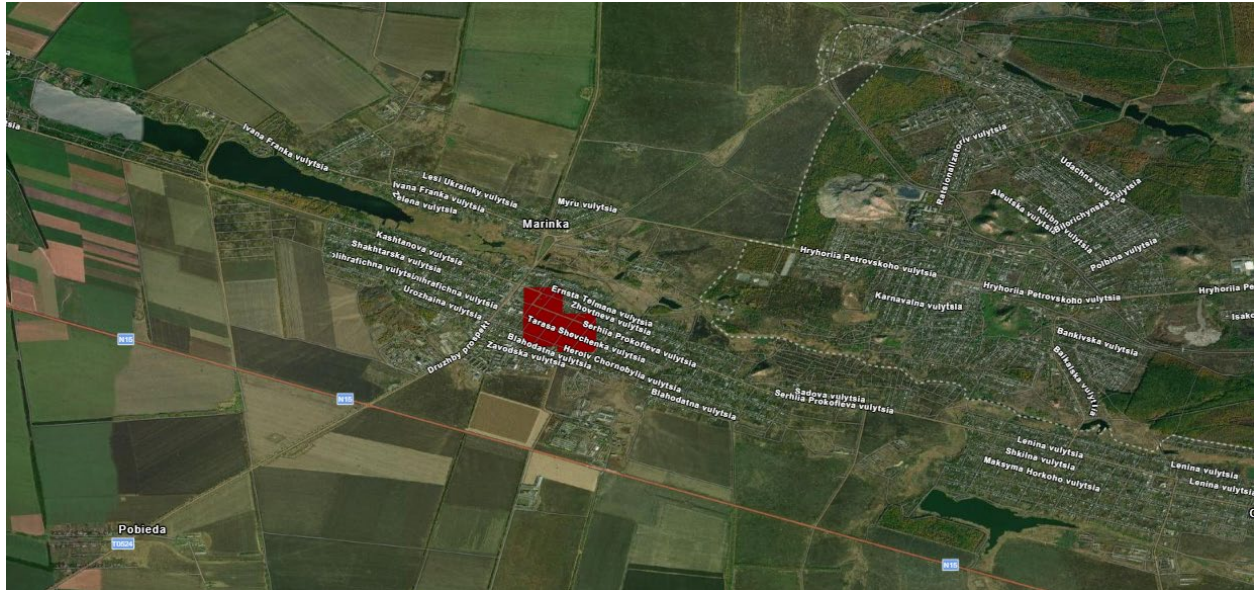
Further south on the line of conflict, Russian forces continue to shell Marinka with NASA FIRMS indicating

¹⁴ <https://twitter.com/Flash43191300/status/1529094874229792769>

¹⁵ <https://twitter.com/ChristopherJM/status/1529112836944846848>

¹⁶ <https://twitter.com/ZHUKOVZZ/status/1529065319418908672> [Russian State Media Rating: Report valid, attached map disinformation]

widespread fires. Ukrainian forces destroyed Russian armored vehicles attempting to advance on the town.¹⁷



¹⁷ <https://twitter.com/UAWeapons/status/1529111411489636358>

There was sporadic fighting along the rest of the line of conflict from Marinka to Velyka Novosilka in Donetsk to Hulyaipole and Orikhiv in Zaporizhia.¹⁸ Russian forces targeted a historical and culturally significant building in Orikhiv. There is more information in the **War Crimes and Human Rights** section.

Former Kremlin intelligence officer Alexander Zhuchkovsky was critical of the situation for Russia-backed militias defending the line of conflict in Zaporizhia. He criticized an earlier report by Vladlen Tatarzkiy, which praised the performance of DNR forces while hinting at the poor conditions.

Tatarzkiy wrote, "Yesterday in "Vecherniy Vladlen" he mentioned that the front line to the west of Volnovakha and all the way to the Dnipro [River] is terra incognita. There are no permanently working journalists there because it is inconvenient to get from Donetsk, and no one wants to live there in broken-down villages."¹⁹

¹⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/324304813215937>

¹⁹ <https://t.me/vladlentatarsky/13842>

While Tatarzkiy's assessment was positive, Zhuchkovsky was blunt, echoing the position of other Pro-Russian supporters such as Igor Girkin.

"The guys have been under hurricane shelling for almost a month without the ability to raise their heads. Sat in the dust. Movement on any transport only in the dark - during the day there is little chance of surviving: it will instantly copy the drone and give the enemy artillery a target. Our artillery is simply not there now, only occasionally Russians who come for a short time beat. That is, there is almost no counter-battery fight at all, and enemy mortars and MLRS feel complete impunity."

"Why is this happening? From the point of view of military leaders, this is not a priority direction - it does not require, in their opinion, a large concentration of forces and means, and it is enough, allegedly, for the deaf defense of reservists with light small arms; they really have nothing heavier than DShK '[World War II-era Soviet heavy machine gun]."

"The enemy went to the breakthrough once. To the credit of our guys, this local offensive was repulsed with the help of plentiful desperate automatic-machine-gun fire on green

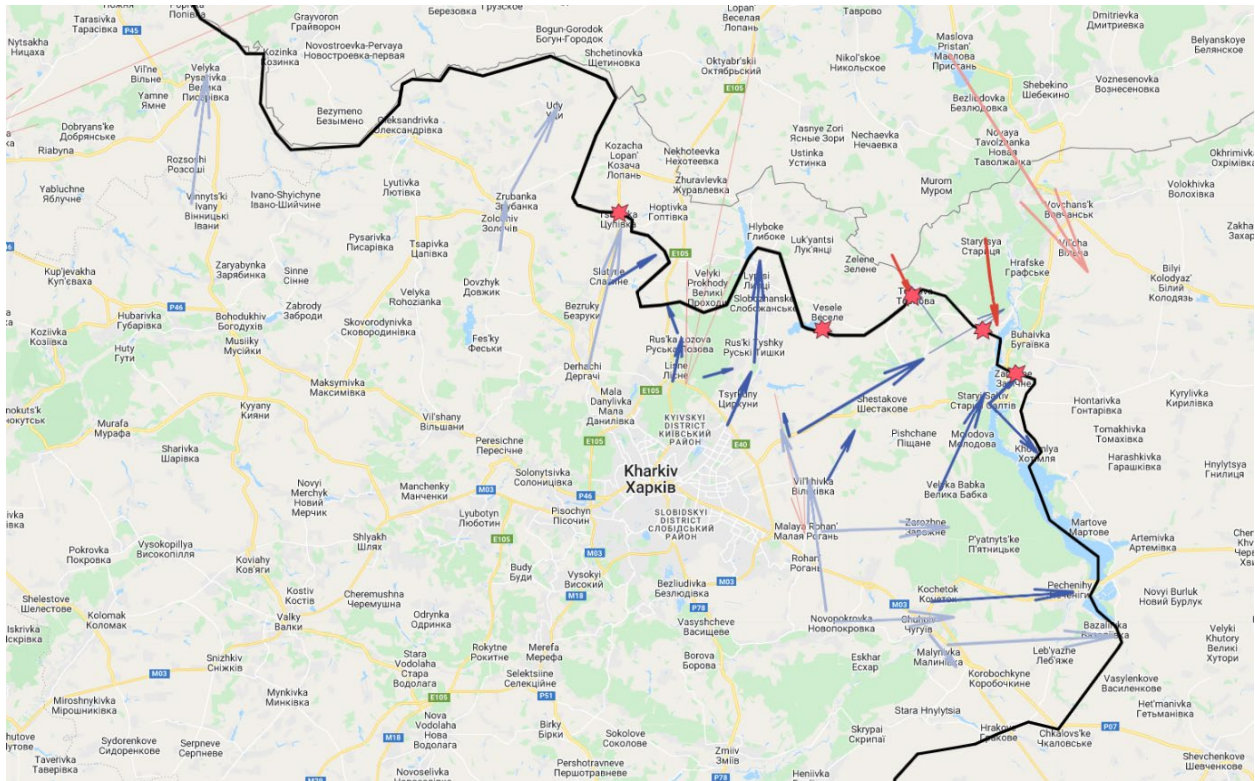
grass. But the battalion's monthly losses are huge - about 30% of the personnel (fortunately, most of them are 300 [wounded in action]). There are people who have literally gone crazy - this happens among unmotivated untrained reservists."

"So not everywhere is such a rosy picture, as they write to Tatarsky. However, this is a completely normal everyday life of the war, unfortunately. It's just that some reservists were lucky to be on duty on a safe seaside highway in the fresh air and fresh fish (there's no reproach here, it's better to put freshly mobilized ones to check documents, and not send them to hell), others were unlucky to live in the ground under hurricane shelling without the hope of surviving until dark."

"I hope the fighters in those broken-down villages will soon be allowed to breathe - they have been on the front lines without getting out since the end of February, they have passed Mariupol - they will be taken out in rotation or at least they will now strengthen the battalion with artillery."

KHARKIV REGION

NORTHERN KHARKIV COUNTEROFFENSIVE



There was only sporadic fighting north of Kharkiv city with no changes in territorial control.

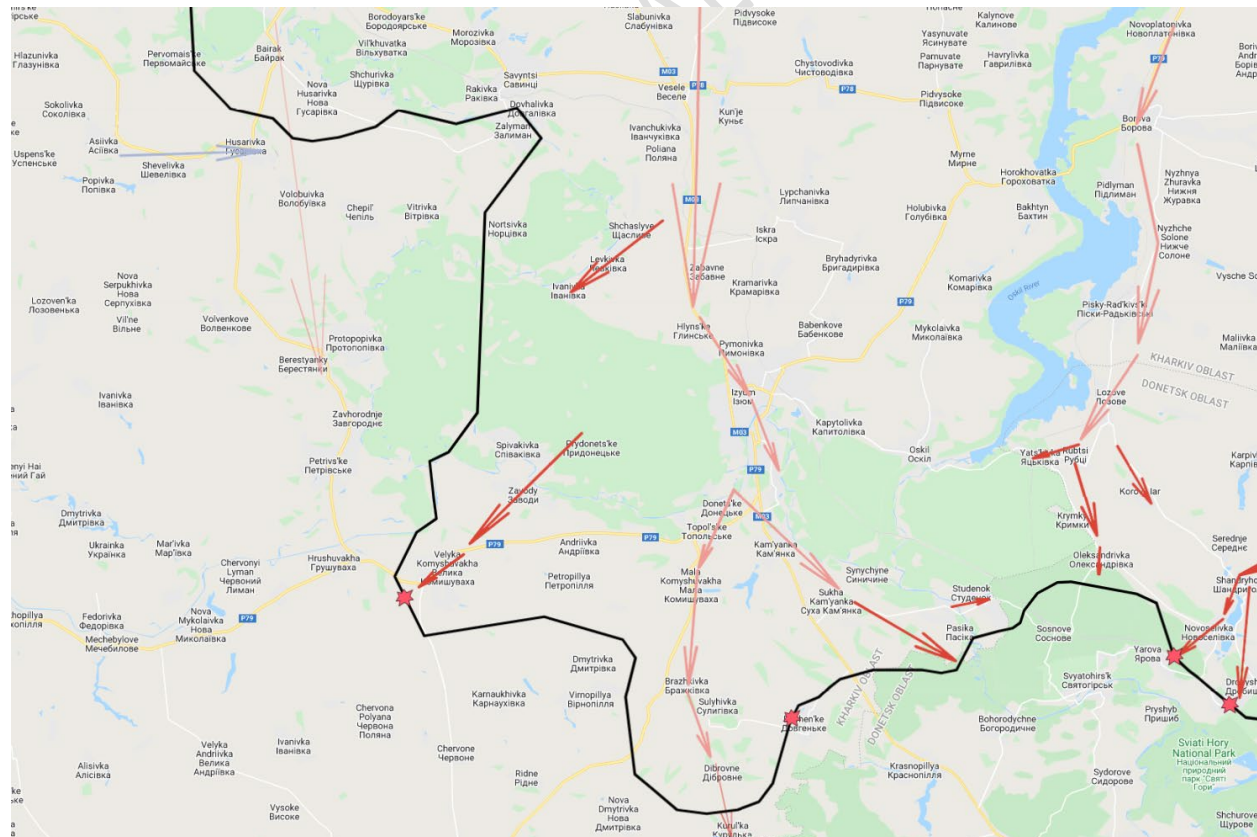
Reports indicated that Ternova remains contested.²⁰ We've adjusted our map to show that change. Due to a lack of additional reports, we consider Rubizhne [Kharkiv Oblast] contested.

²⁰ <https://twitter.com/DefMon3/status/1529119796268351488>

IZYUM AXIS

There weren't any major combat operations by either belligerent on the Izyum Axis.

ASSESSMENT: It is likely probable that Ukraine has relocated artillery that was harassing the western GLOC to support the defense of Lyman and the Severodonetsk salient.



DNIPRO, KHERSON & MYKOLAIV, ZAPORIZHIA REGION

The city of Mykolaiv was hit by a Russian cruise missile that struck a civilian area.²¹



²¹ <https://twitter.com/HromadskeRadio/status/1529103860022796290>

CHERNIHIV & SUMY REGION

Russian forces shelled the settlements of Boyaro-Lezhachi and Tolstodubovo in the Sumy Oblast.²²

²² <https://t.me/truexanewsua/48195>

KYIV REGION

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

BLACK SEA & ODESA REGION

There was significant activity around Snake Island by the Black Sea Fleet. Seven vessels were operating in the area of the island.²³ A self-propelled floating crane was at the main pier. The Serna-class landing ship sunk earlier in the month appears to remain just offshore. A supply ship, an anti-saboteur vessel, a landing craft towed by a tug, and two Serna-class landing ships were visible.

Snake Island now has ten vehicles on it. There is evidence that there have been additional air or missile strikes on the island, with further damage to buildings.²⁴

WEST REGION

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

²³ <https://twitter.com/OAlexanderDK/status/1529210162656911360/photo/1>

²⁴ <https://twitter.com/ArtisanalAPT/status/1529198144159989765/photo/1>

THEATERWIDE & EXTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS

A platoon from the Ukrainian 115th Brigade that made a video complaining about conditions have been arrested by the Ukrainian government.²⁵ In a video that included 20 members of the unit, they complained about a lack of equipment and that they felt abandoned by Ukrainian leadership.²⁶ The 115th is positioned in Severodonetsk, which has experienced intense fighting for months.

Russian President Vladimir Putin claims that Russia will have 50 new advanced nuclear missiles capable of “annihilating its enemies” online in the fall.²⁷ Putin Boasting about the new ICBMs at a summit in Sochi, saying the west should “speak to us more politely” due to the new capabilities.²⁸

Russia Today, one of the most-watched “news shows” on Russian state media, made threats of nuclear war again.²⁹

²⁵ <https://twitter.com/Cyberspec1/status/1529253262691405825>

²⁶ <https://twitter.com/Cyberspec1/status/1527232753757921281>

²⁷ <https://twitter.com/newsmax/status/1529232372486443009>

²⁸ <https://twitter.com/newsmax/status/1529232372486443009>

²⁹ <https://twitter.com/KevinRothrock/status/1528998672763076608>

On the same day his new government was sworn in, Hungary's President Viktor Orban declared he was assuming emergency powers so he can respond faster to the war in Ukraine.³⁰ Orban has been reelected for the fourth time as President of the former Warsaw Pact nation. Despite Hungary being a member of NATO, Orban is seen as friendly to Russia, has been accused of moving toward authoritarianism while ruling over a backsliding democracy, and being antisemitic.

"The world is on the brink of an economic crisis," Orban also said in the video, reiterating that Hungary must stay out of the war in Ukraine and "protect families' financial security."

In Moscow, an arsonist set the Russian Orthodox Church of Peter & Paul on fire. The Church is located about 2 kilometers from the Kremlin.³¹ The Russian Orthodox Church has aligned itself with President Putin and taken a pro-war stance while advocating genocide.

³⁰ [Reuters](#)

³¹ <https://twitter.com/igorsushko/status/1529201014938537984>

WAR CRIMES AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Russian forces targeted the Orikhiv Town Hall, which is also the Heinrich Janzen House. Johann Heinrich (Ivan Andreievitch) Janzen built two large steam-powered flour mills in Orikhiv and encouraged Mennonite business leaders to follow his example. In 1874 he was elected mayor, a role he served until 1889. His mansion was donated after his death and became city hall. The building survived World War II and Russification under Stalin.



Petro Andriushchenko, an advisor to the exiled city mayor of Mariupol, reported that 22,000 civilians died during Russia's 83-day siege of the port city.³²

Workers attempting to clear Mariupol of debris found 200 corpses in the rubble of a collapsed building. The bodies were recovered from a basement, where people had likely congregated to escape artillery or air raids.³³

GEOPOLITICAL

Russian state media lashed out at former president Donald Trump and his followers, calling them fascists.³⁴ On Russia One, they defended their actions in Ukraine while calling out the hypocrisy of America following a fascist leader. They condemned "make America great again," wearing Trump clothing and hats, and Trump's hate speech to American liberals.

Editor's Note: The irony is so – ironic. Restoring themselves to former Soviet glory, Z everywhere, and hate speech against minorities, Ukrainians, and anyone who even

³² <https://twitter.com/luliiaMendel/status/1529317303602532352>

³³ [Associated Press](#)

³⁴ <https://twitter.com/MalcontentmentT/status/1529261283689631750>

questions what Russia is doing. The United States has serious problems with a nascent movement toward authoritarianism, but this is almost detached from reality.

Former Moldovan President Igor Dodon was arrested and accused of treason for taking bribes from Moscow.³⁵

The Kremlin said it was concerned about the arrest of one of its allies in the country.

"Of course, we are concerned," Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said in a conference call with reporters. "We hope that Dodon's rights will be respected."

ECONOMIC

The rouble strengthened again to 57 for \$1.

Energy prices rose slightly, with WTI crude at \$111 per barrel and Brent at \$115. United States wholesale gasoline futures dropped to \$3.85 (\$1.02 per liter).

³⁵ <https://www.dw.com/en/moldovan-ex-president-detained-for-alleged-graft-treason/a-61913546>



Wheat futures dropped slightly, at \$1.15 per bushel for July 2022 delivery.

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