



# MALCONTENT NEWS RUSSIA-UKRAINE SITUATION REPORT

May 22, 2023 – A



# Malcontent News

## Russia-Ukraine War SITREP

### 5/22/23-A 23:59\* PST

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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 Melitopol.

✔ **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 452**

This is the first update for May 22, 2023. Numerous videos from Russian and Ukrainian sources enabled geolocation and map adjustments and revealed fighting in areas not previously reported.

It has been 3,369 days since Russia occupied the Crimea Peninsula on January 27, 2014, and one year and 86 days since Russia expanded its war against Ukraine.

- 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. Our assessment that Russian partisans fighting in Belgorod were more than a border incursion was accurate, with fighting continuing at the time of publication.
2. There is an extreme risk that Russia will launch a large-scale retaliatory missile strike on Ukrainian civilians and civilian infrastructure over the next 72 to 92 hours, with the scope limited to available inventory.
3. The advance by Russian partisans into Belgorod has thrown the Russian information space into chaos, with rifts between sources opened to the public and infighting among Russian state media and Russian milbloggers between those who are maintaining Kremlin talking points and those providing some transparency on the situation in Belogord.
4. We maintain Private Military Company Wagner (PMC) Group leader Yevgeny Prigozhin's claims that Russian proxy forces have fully captured Bakhmut is dubious.
5. Russian tactics have validated our assessment that the Kremlin has moved to launching a small number of missiles on a more frequent basis and targeting

areas with little military value but are appealing to an internal audience as proof of continued successful operations.

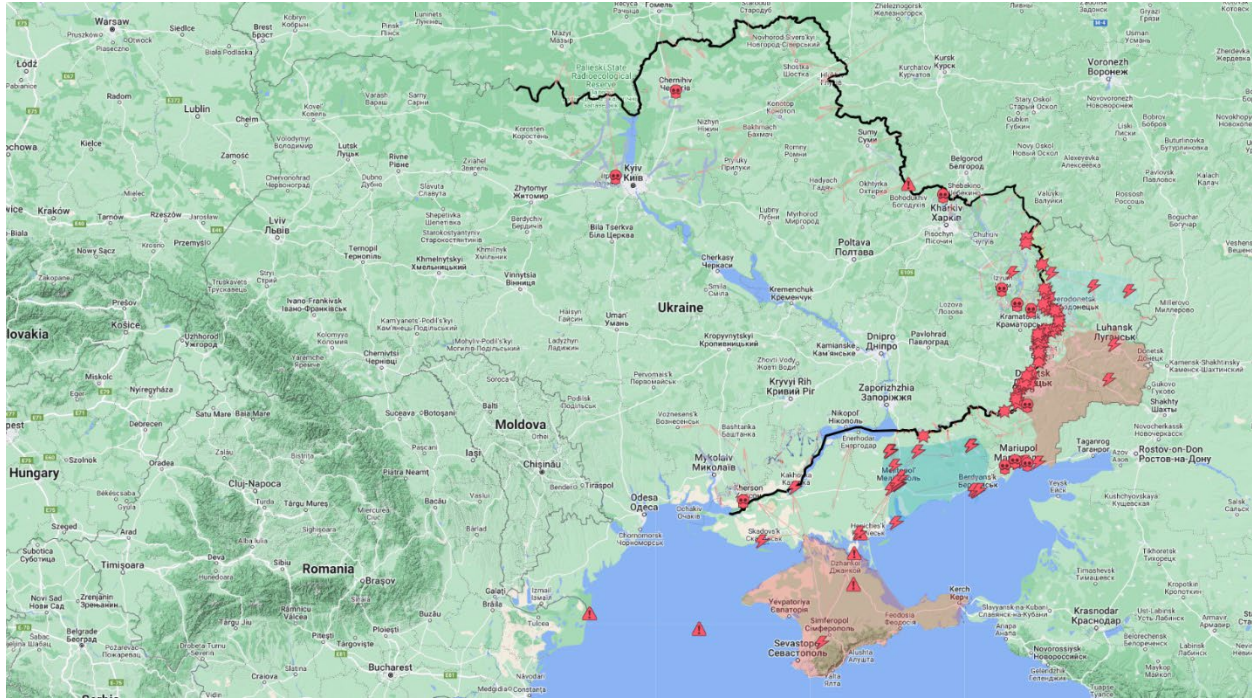
6. The rift between the Russian Ministry of Defense and PMC Wagner Group continues to disrupt Russian military operations in the Soledar and Bakhmut operational areas resulting in territorial losses on the flanks and Prigozhin's announcement that PMC Wagner will withdraw from Bakhmut on May 25.
7. Ukrainian forces have stopped their retrograde operation in Bakhmut and continue to hold two pockets of defensive positions within the city.
8. In preparation for larger offensive operations, Ukrainian forces continue shaping operations on multiple axes, creating panic and uncertainty among gauleiters, Russian administrators, and military leaders.
9. The uncertainty of when and where, or if the Ukrainian counteroffensive has already started, has forced the Kremlin to start deploying their limited and ill-prepared reserve troops in the Dvorichna, Kupyansk, Svatove, Soledar, Bakhmut, Klischiivka, and Marinka Operational Areas to counter ongoing tactical advances by Ukrainian troops.
10. Weather models indicate that bezdorizhzhia will return by the end of May, leaving conditions

unfavorable for significant military operations through June 5.

11. We have identified shaping activity by the Ukrainian Armed Forces in four locations that could indicate a larger attack is being prepared.

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# TODAY'S WAR IN UKRAINE MAP

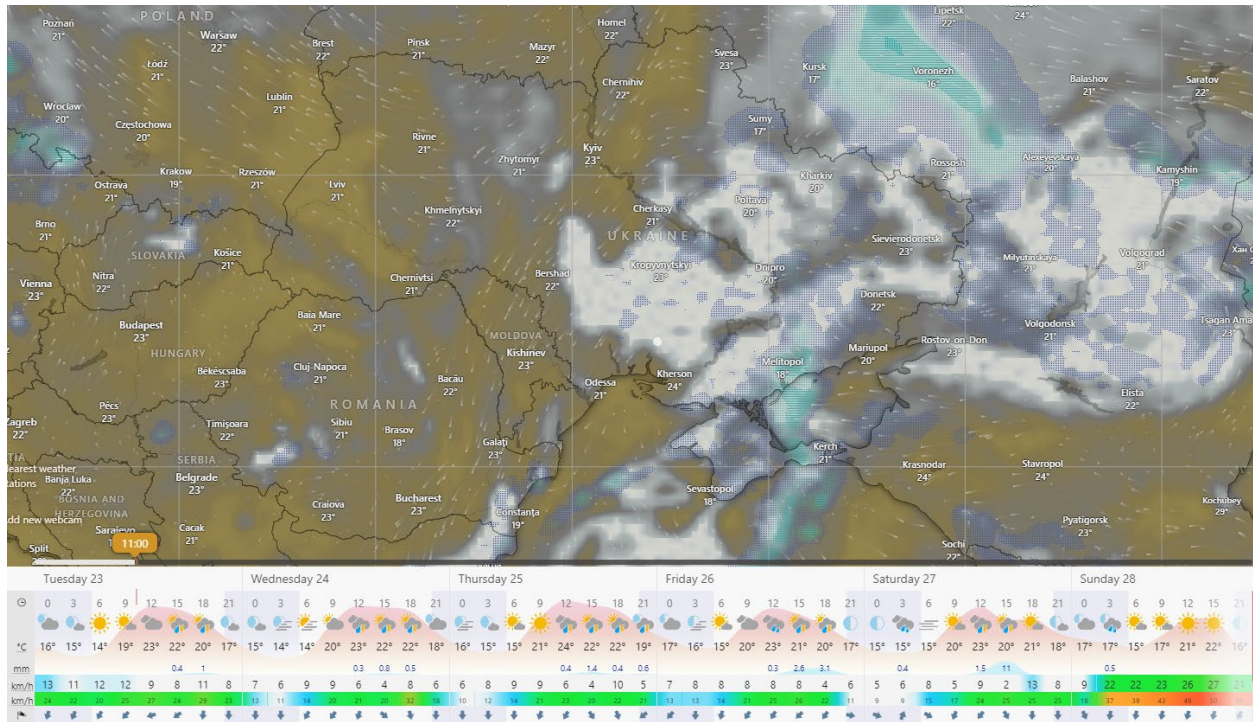


**About the maps:** Red triangles are sites of significant events unrelated to missile attacks, insurgencies, or ground combat, such as the sinking of the Moskva and the explosion at the Saky Naval airbase. Gray circles indicate an area where fighting has ended with no change in the line of conflict. The archived offensive layer is turned off by default, but you can toggle it on/off in the Map Legend. If you see a settlement name highlighted [like this](#), it is a link to our war map that will take you to the location explained in the Situation Report.

## [Russia-Ukraine War Report Map](#)

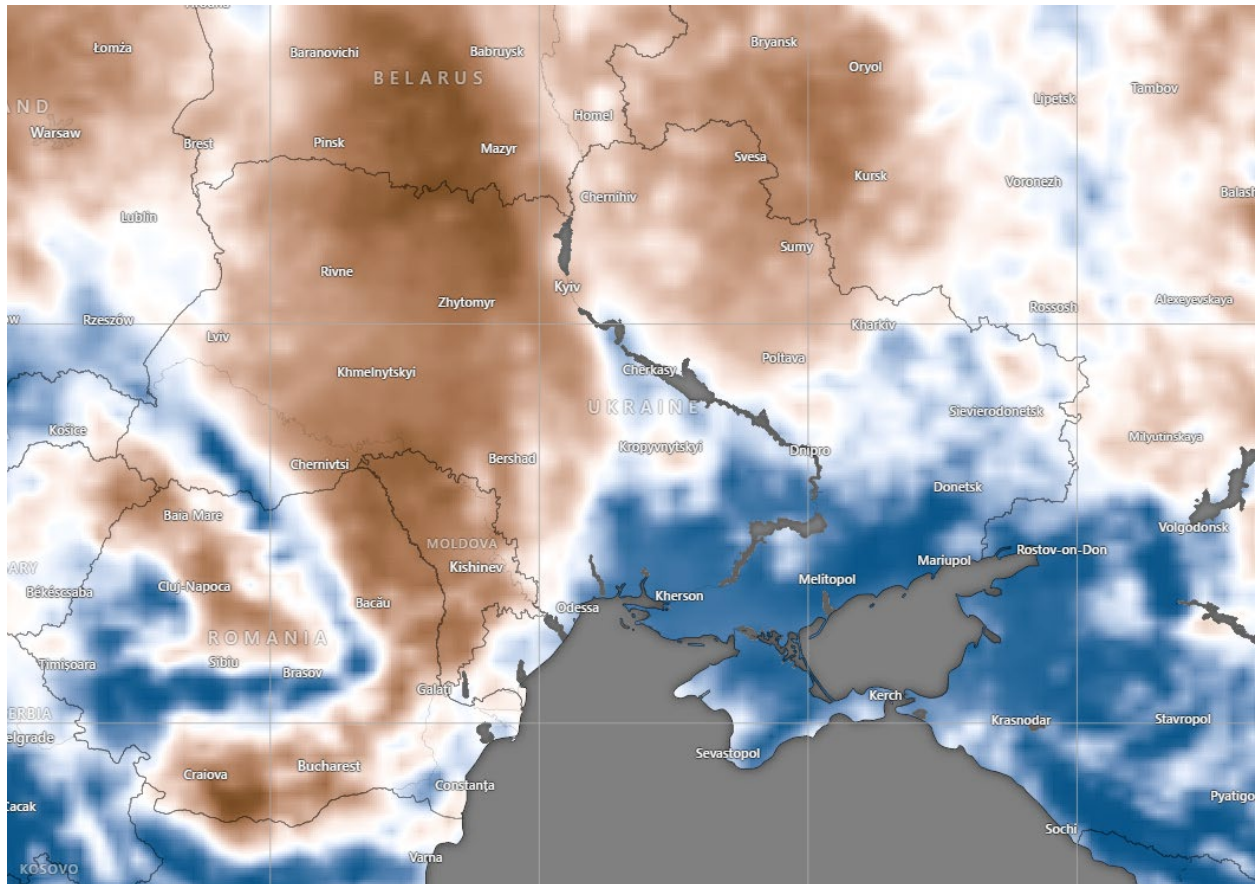


# UKRAINE WEATHER



The ECMWF Euro model forecast predicts rain showers and thunderstorms for the next six days. Rainfall amounts have moderated, but significant rain is expected on Friday and Saturday, and winds as high as 50 kph are expected on Sunday with sunny skies. Highs will be from 19° to 27° Celcius, with lows from 11° to 19°. The full moon is on June 4, the new moon is on June 18, and the longest day of the year is June 21.

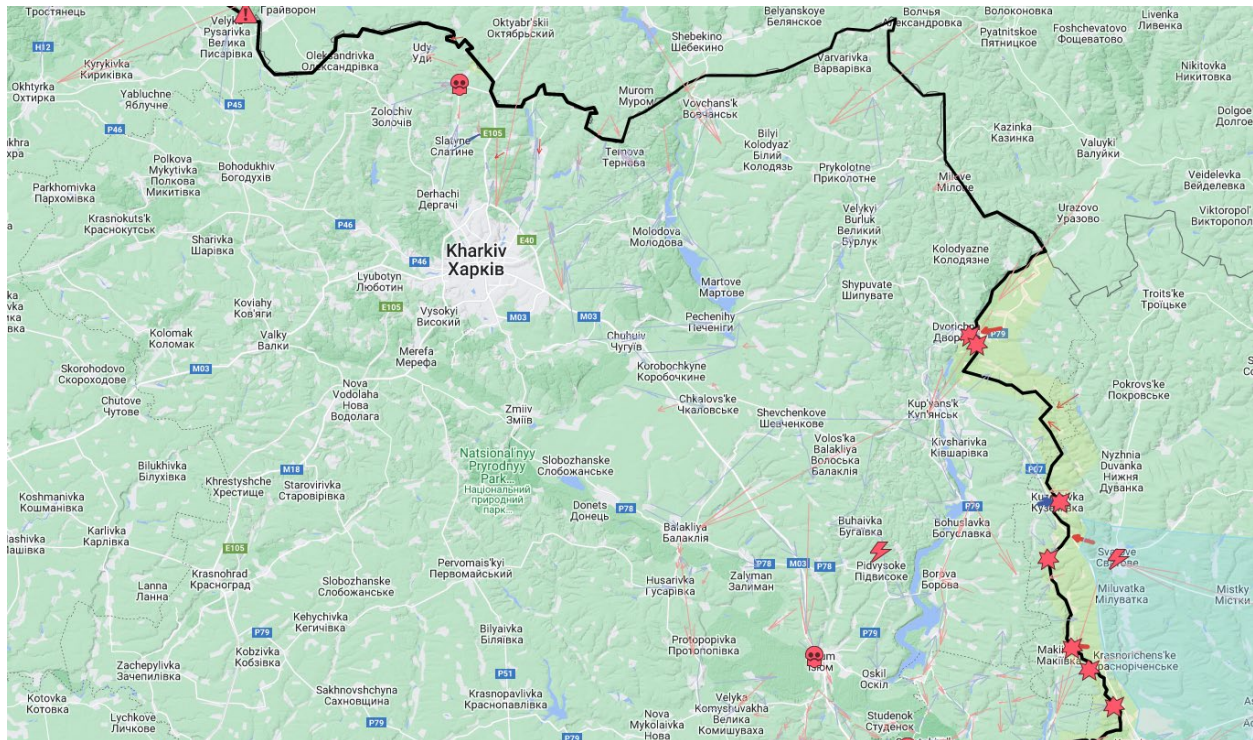
## SOIL SATURATION AND HYDROLOGY



*The May 30, 2023 GFS forecast indicates soil saturation will be from 60% to 100% to 40 centimeters deep in Zaporizhzhia and the Donbas.*

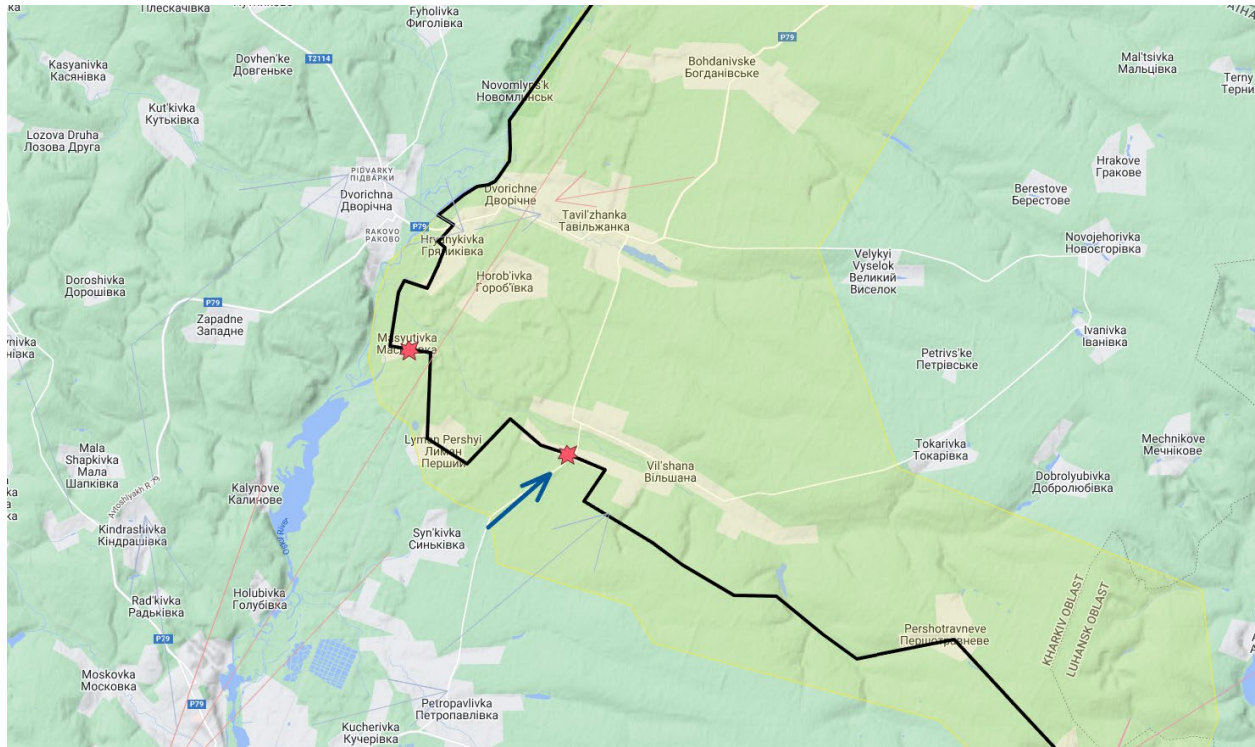
Soil saturation along the line of conflict is at 25% to 65%, with the highest levels near Donetsk. A wet weather pattern will bring bezdorizhzhia back by May 27, with ground conditions progressively worsening through May 29. Conditions for armor and heavy equipment will be unfavorable through June 6, except in the Belogord Operational Area, which will remain dry.

# KHARKIV



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

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



## Dvorichna Operational Area

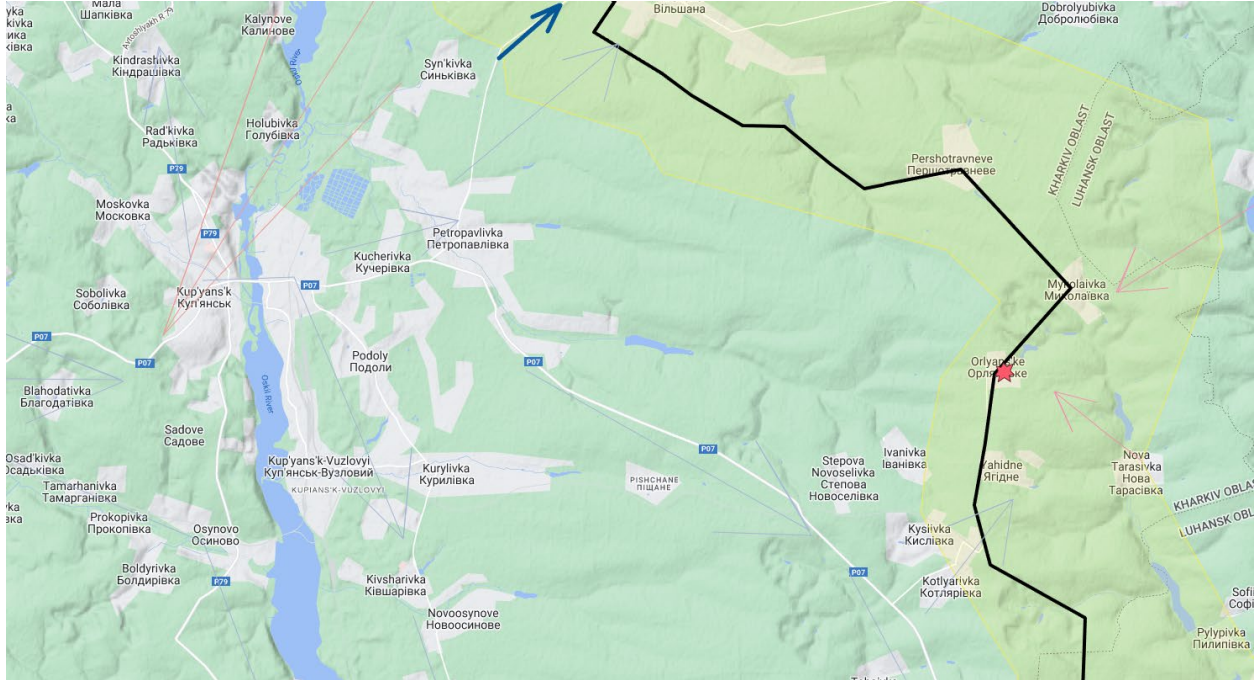
- Ukrainian source DeepState and Russian mercenary milblogger WarGonzo, as well as Kharkiv Oblast Administrative and Military Governor (OVA) Oleg Sinegubov, reported continued and significant fighting in the area of [Masyutivka](#).<sup>1 2 3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://t.me/synegubov/6266?single>

<sup>2</sup> <https://t.me/DeepStateUA/16635>

<sup>3</sup> <https://t.me/wargonzo/12673>



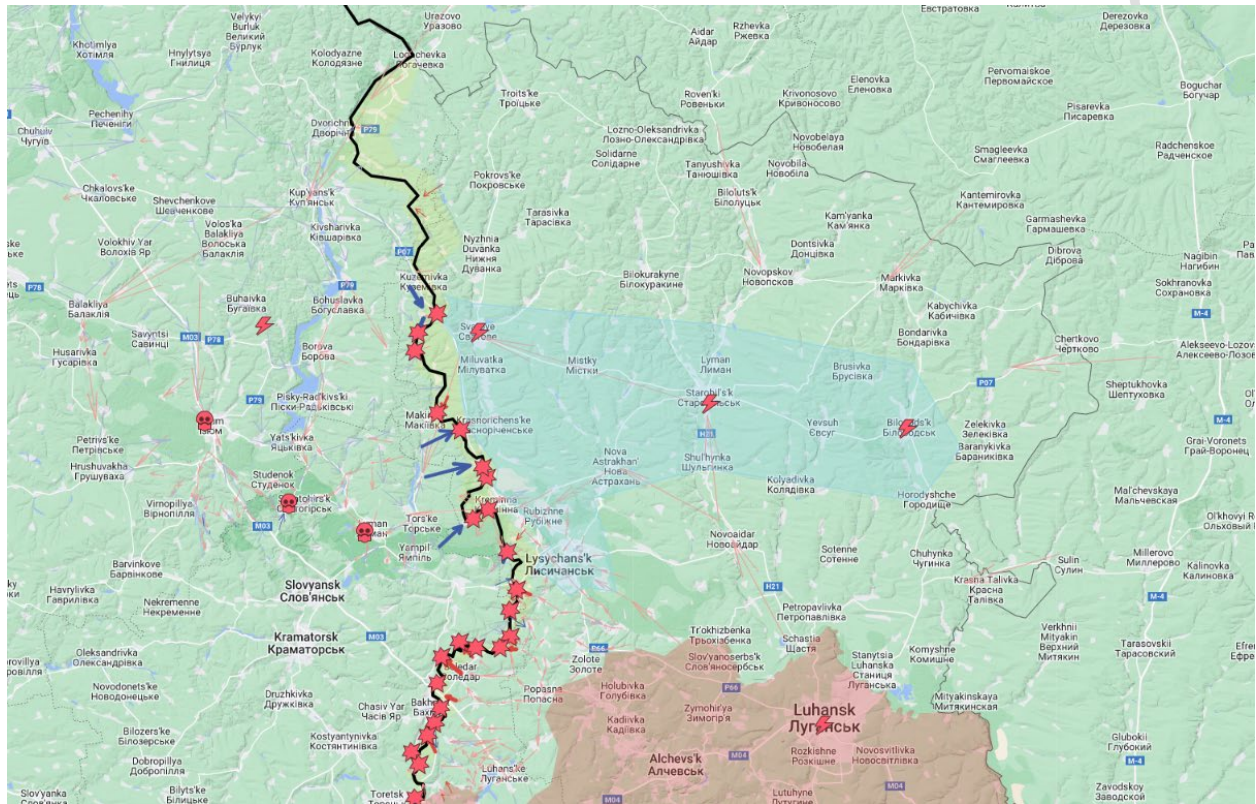


## Kupyansk Operational Area

- The Russian Ministry of Defense (RMOD) reported that Ukrainian surveillance, reconnaissance, and sabotage (DRG) units were operating in the areas of [Orlyanke](#), [Ivanivka](#), and [Kyslivka](#).

# DONBAS REGION

## LUHANSK



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

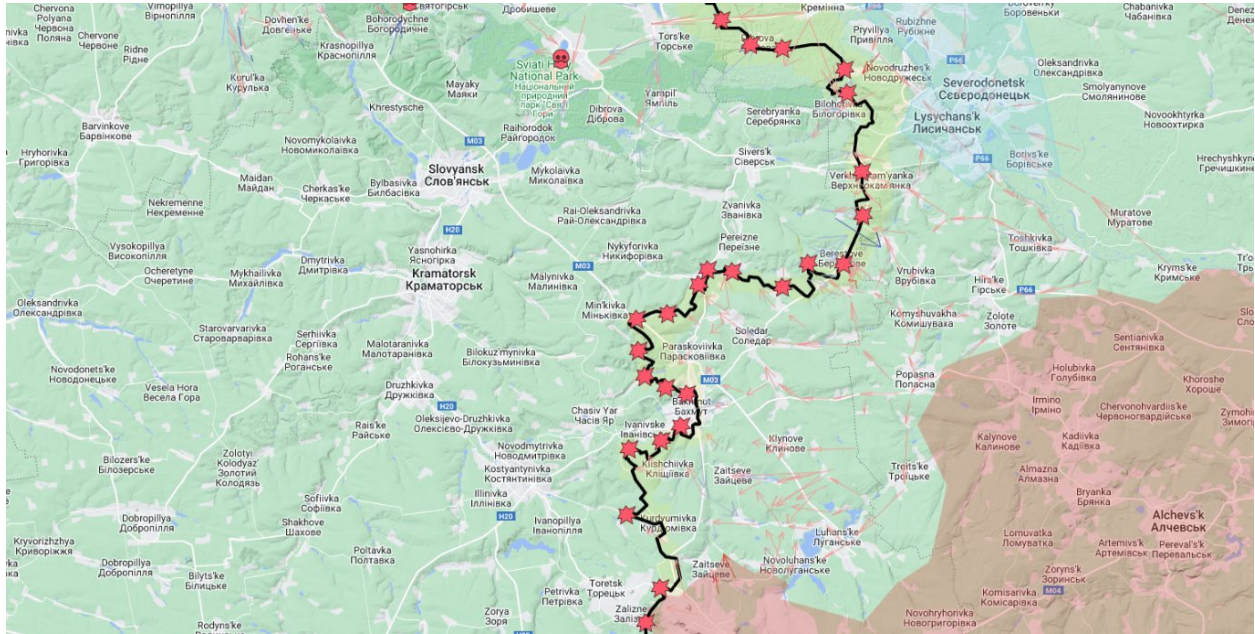
**Ukrainian Objective:** Break Russian defensive lines, advance on Svatove, Kreminna, and Lysychansk, and support insurgents



The situation was stable in the Svatove, Kreminna, Lysychansk, and Siversk Operational Areas.

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# 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



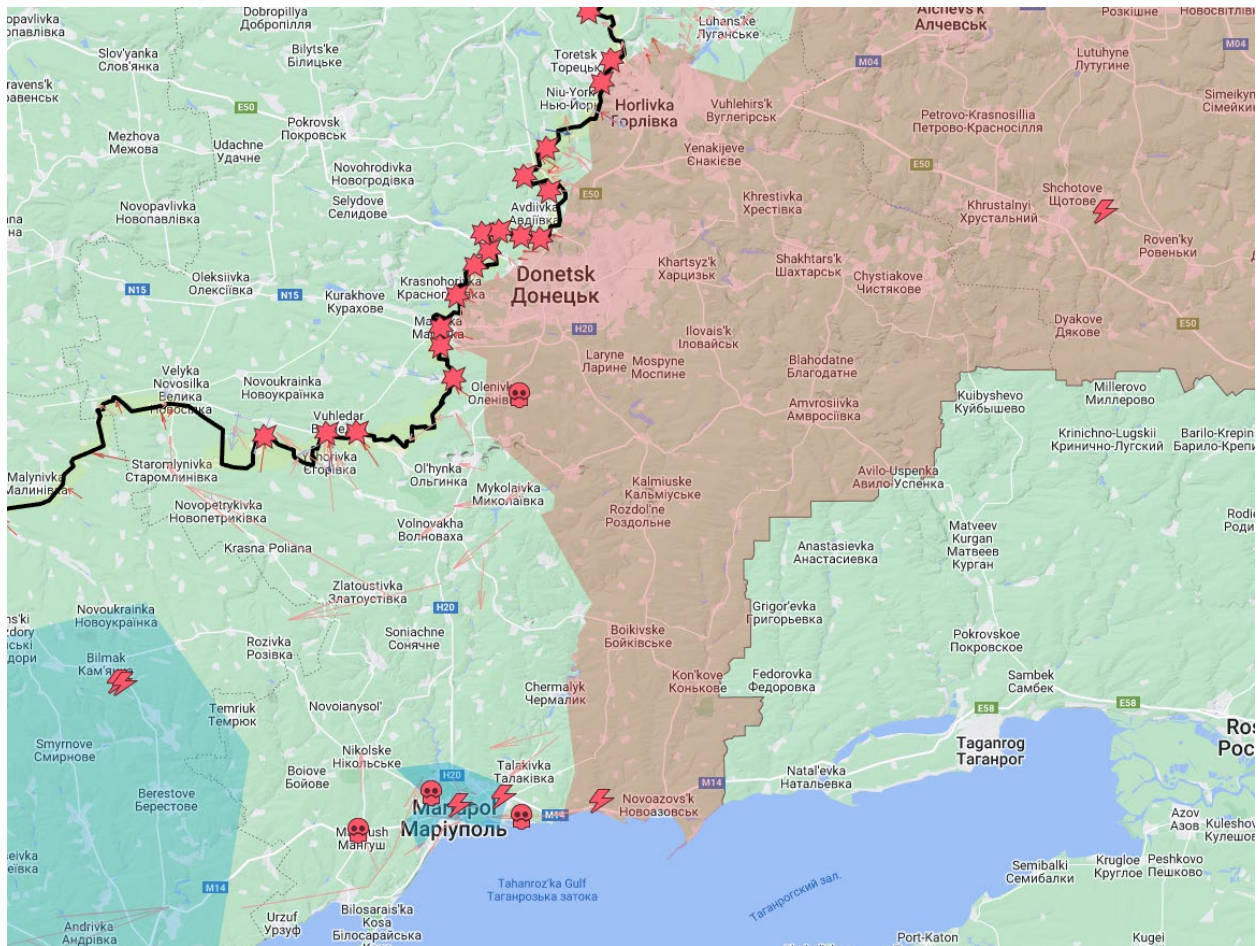
statute area  [was under continued shelling by Russian troops](#) – we coded this area as still under Ukrainian control on May 21.<sup>4</sup>

- We estimate that Ukrainian forces maintain control of approximately 1.00 square kilometers of Bakhmut (.48 square miles) divided into two pockets, or roughly 1.80% of the city, which is 41.6 square kilometers.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://twitter.com/small10space/status/1660584081199964160>

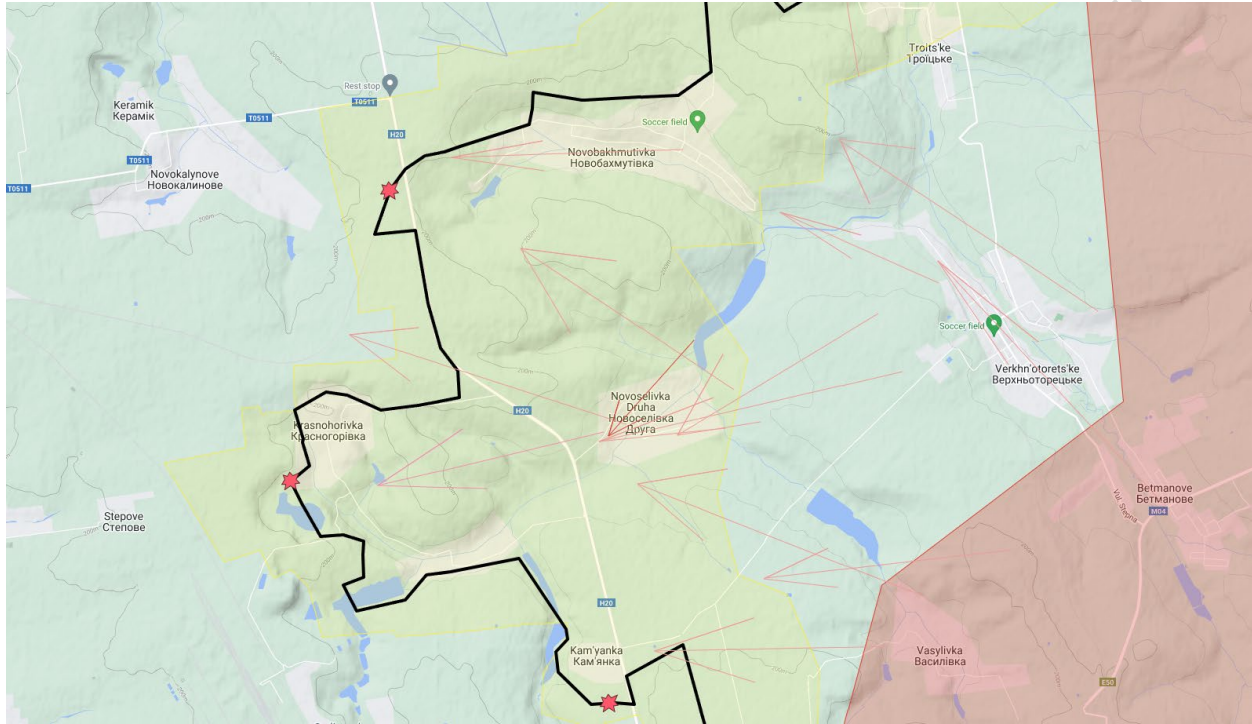
# SOUTHWESTERN DONETSK



**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



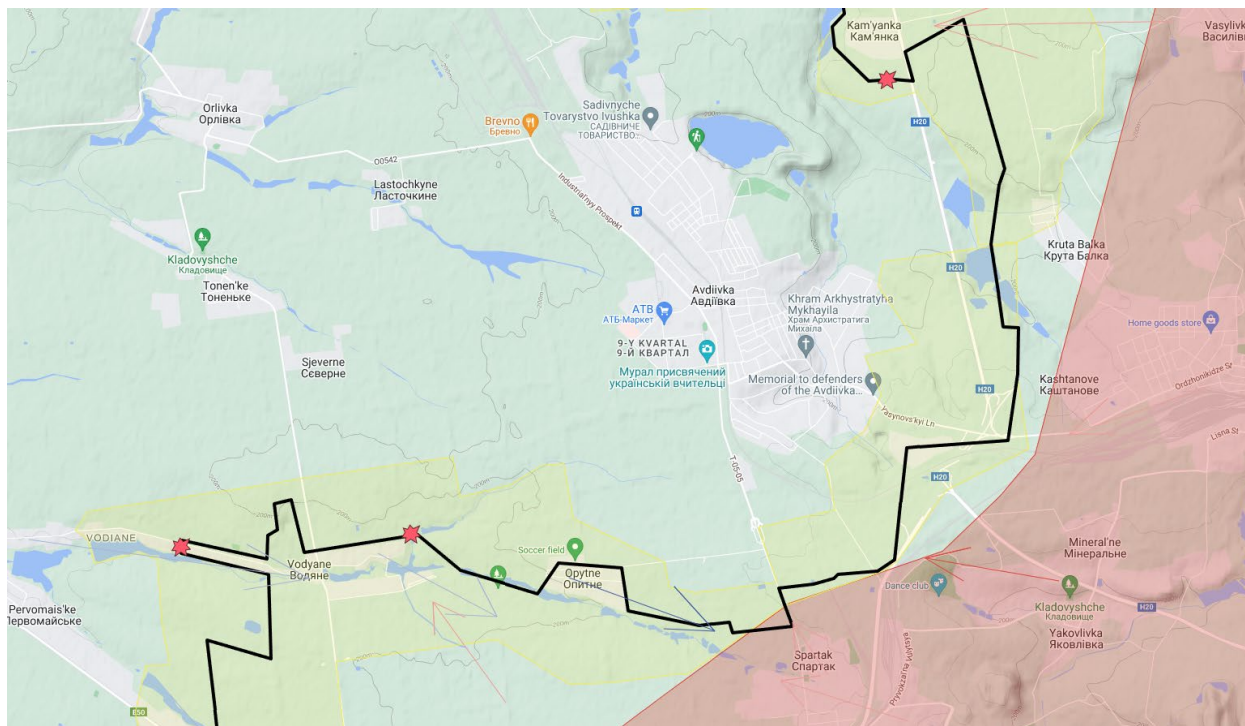
## Avdiivka Operational Area

- The Russian 1st Army Corps attempted to advance past the railroad tracks east of [Novokalynove](#) and was unsuccessful.<sup>5 6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report](#)

<sup>6</sup> <https://t.me/wargonzo/12673>



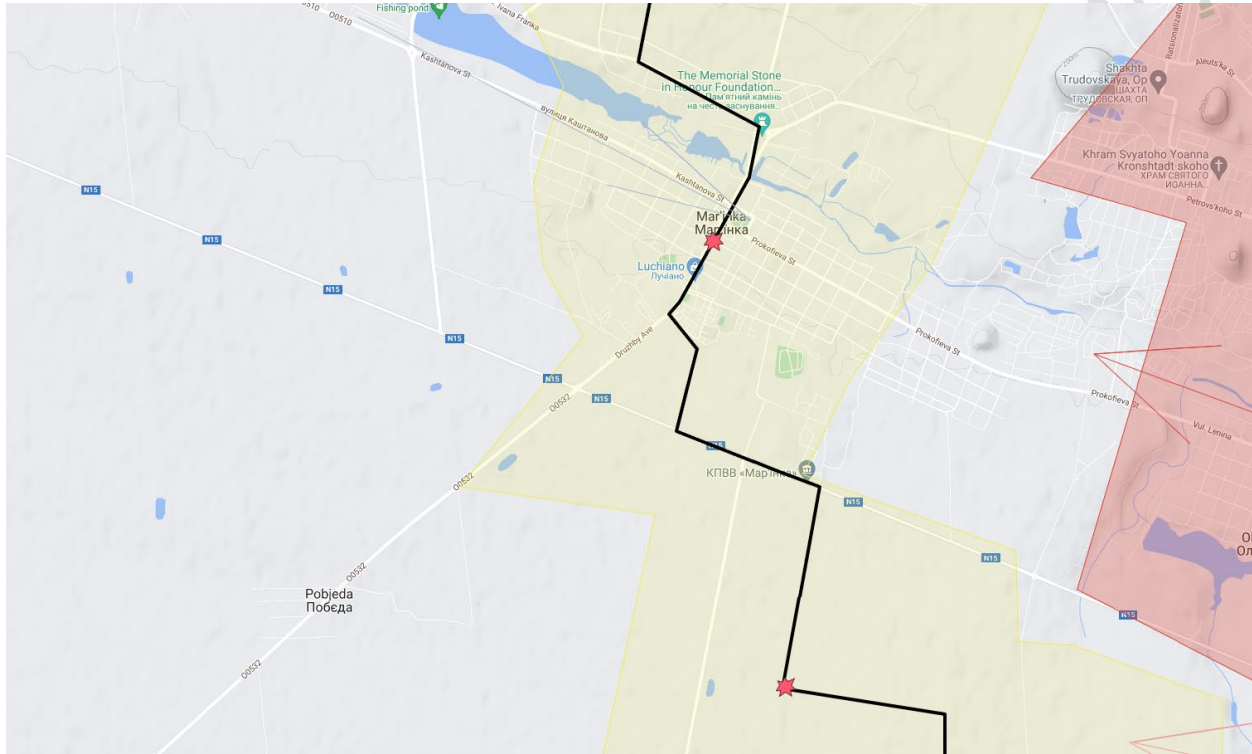


- WarGonzo reported that Russian forces attempted to advance on [Avdiivka](#) from Vesele, suffered losses, and returned to their defensive positions.<sup>7</sup>
- GSAFU reported that the Russian 1st Army Corps troops continued their attempts to advance toward [Sjeverne](#) through the no man's land north of Vodyane, suffered heavy losses, and retreated to established defensive positions.<sup>8</sup>
- Russian special forces, part of the Storm unit, attempted to advance on [Pervomaiske](#), and it ended in

<sup>7</sup> <https://t.me/wargonzo/12673>

<sup>8</sup> [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report](#)

disaster with seven Ukrainian soldiers  [capturing 22 members of the Storm Battalion.](#)<sup>9 10</sup>



## 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, with no change in the situation.<sup>11 12</sup>

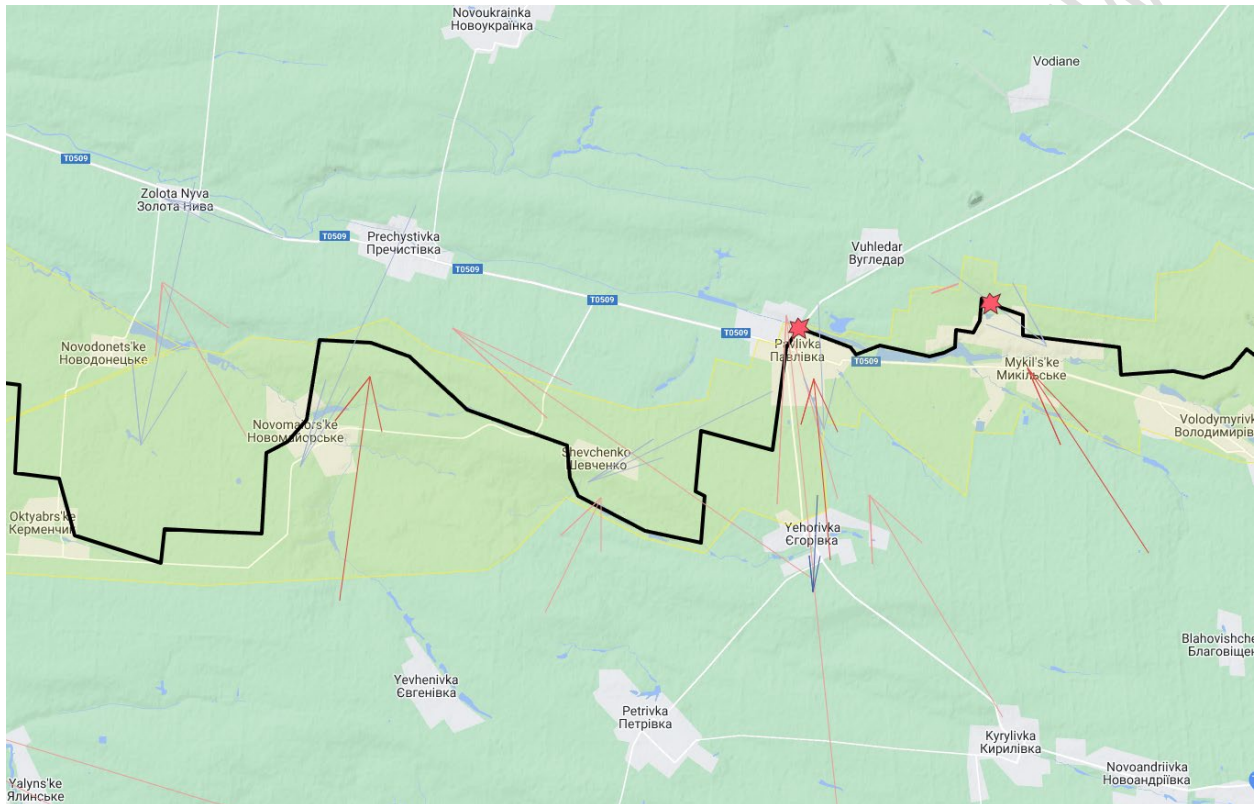
<sup>9</sup> <https://t.me/zaborzp/44755>

<sup>10</sup> <https://t.me/DeepStateUA/16635>

<sup>11</sup> [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report](#)

<sup>12</sup> <https://t.me/wargonzo/12673>

- Russian mercenary milblogger Rybar reported that Ukrainian forces went on the offensive east of [Pobjeda](#) but did not indicate an outcome.<sup>13</sup>



## Vuhledar Operational Area

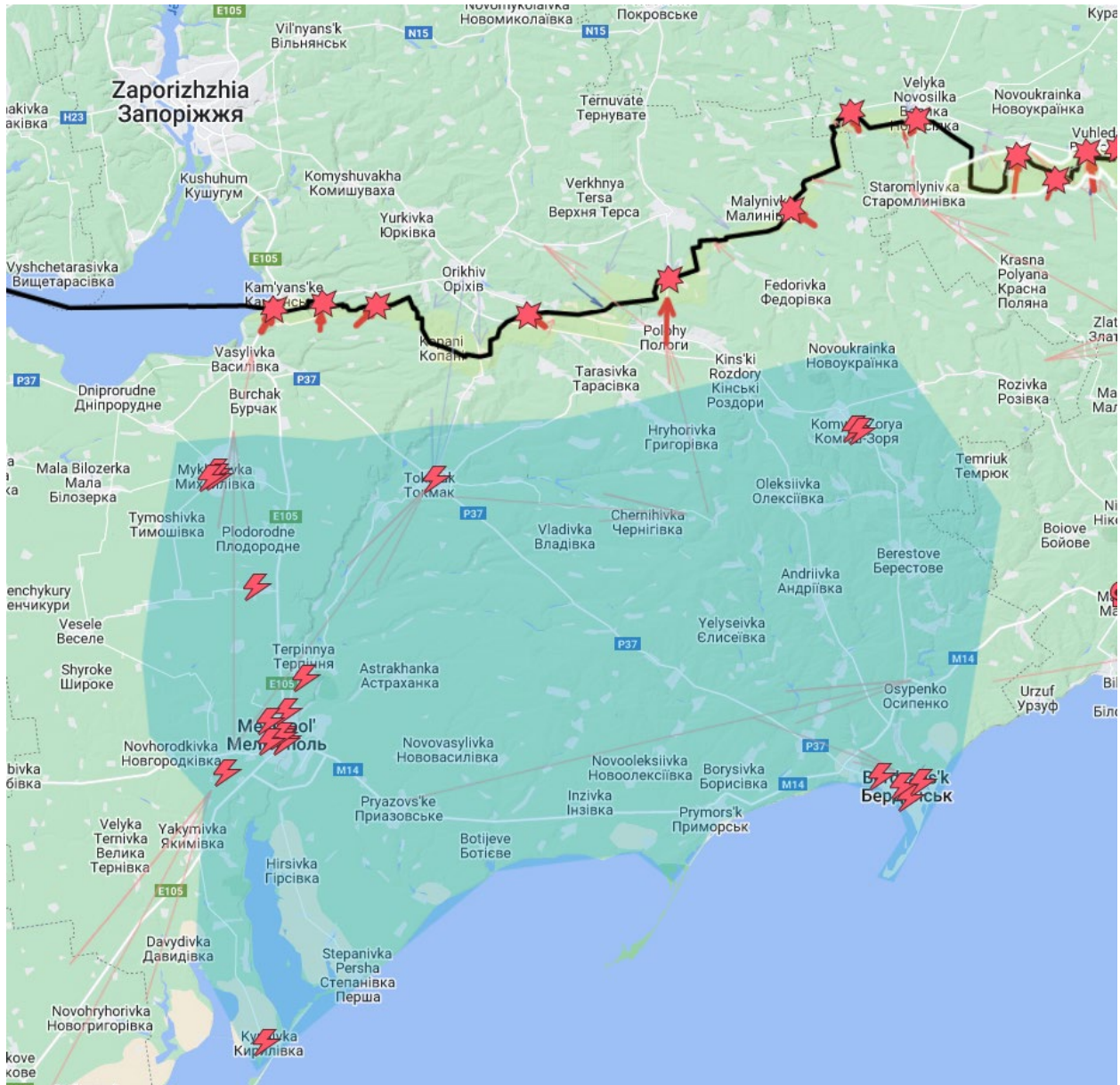
- RMOD reported that Ukrainian DRG units were operating in the area of [Novodonetske](#).<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> <https://t.me/rybar/47438>

<sup>14</sup> [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/26750](https://t.me/mod_russia/26750) [Russian Government Controlled Social Media Channel]

# 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 88 fire missions, three airstrikes, and three drone attacks on 20 settlements along the line of conflict.<sup>15</sup>

## Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant

- The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) reported that the 750 kilovolt (kV) power line, which was disconnected due to damage caused by a Russian cruise missile attack, was reconnected.<sup>16 17</sup>
- Rosatom's claims that they were moving all six reactors to a cold shutdown state on May 8 appear to have been untrue, with the IAEA reporting that Reactor 5 was in hot shutdown at the time of the outage and safely moved to cold shutdown during the power loss.
- All 20 backup diesel generators started normally, with plant operators shutting down 12 when it was

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<sup>15</sup> <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/97539>

<sup>16</sup> [International Atomic Energy Agency](https://www.iaea.org/)

<sup>17</sup> <https://t.me/znppatom/1676>

determined they were not needed – Rosatom officials reported a 23-day supply of diesel fuel on-site.

- IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi called for stepped-up efforts to restore the ZNPP's backup power lines and reiterated the need for the IAEA team at the site to gain access to the nearby Zaporizhzhia Thermal Power Plant (ZTPP), which has yet to be granted despite assurances by Russian state nuclear company Rosatom. The ZTPP operates its 330 kV open switchyard, through which backup power has previously been provided to the ZNPP.
- Rosatom said Reactor 5 was being returned to hot shutdown to provide steam for plant operations.

## **BLACK SEA, CRIMEA, MYKOLAIV, AND ODESA REGION**

The situation is stable.

## 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

The situation is stable

## NORTHERN AND NORTHEASTERN UKRAINE

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

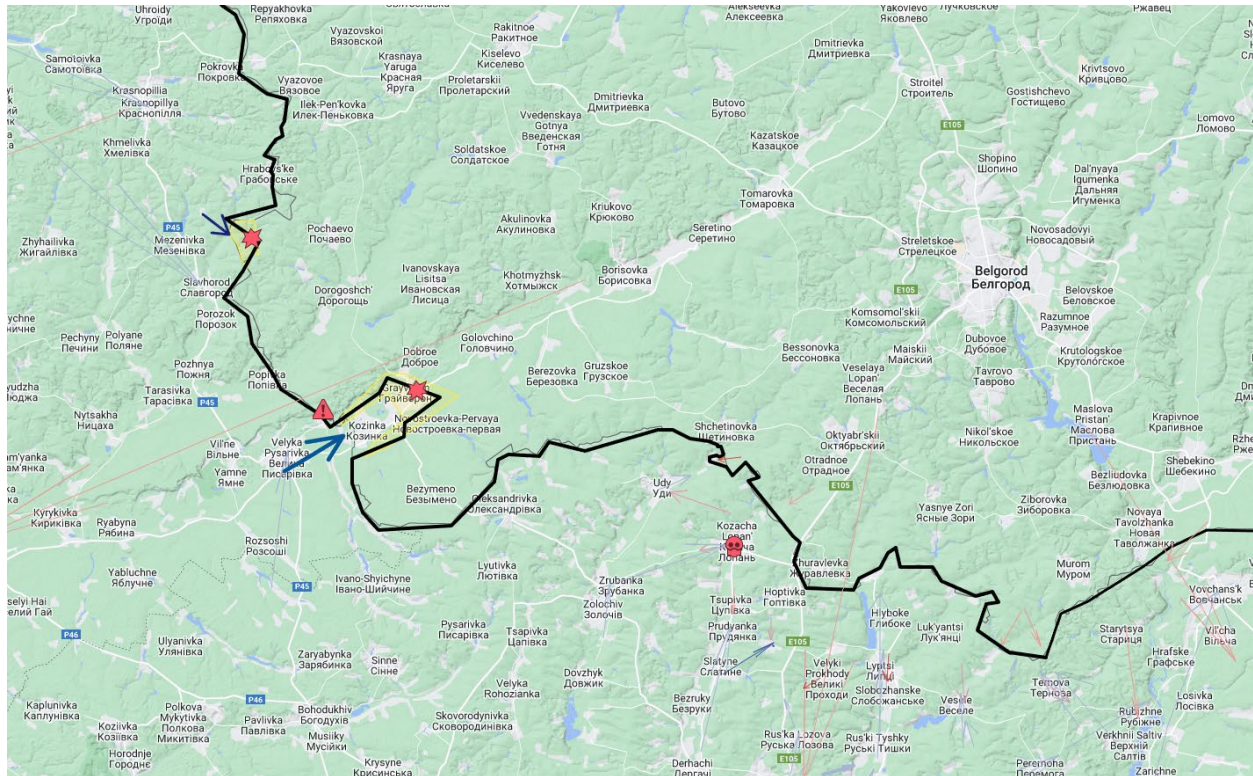
**Ukrainian Objective:** Complete the liberation of the Kharkiv oblast, maintain the integrity of the international border, deter attacks, and protect civilian lives

## Sumy

- Sumy Oblast OVA announced, "The enemy has significantly intensified firing on the territory of certain border hromadas of the Okhtyrka District. In order to prevent the deaths of people in these hromadas, measures are being taken to ensure the safety of residents, including the transportation of those who want to go to safe places. These hromadas are provided with transport. The situation in the region is under control. Please keep calm and use only official sources of information, in no case spread rumors and fakes."
- Okhtyrka was almost wiped from the map in March 2022 and is 50 kilometers west of ongoing Russian partisan fighting in Belgorod, with a direct Ground Line of Communication (GLOC – supply line) to the Russian border crossing on the T-1705 Highway.
- We have not documented extensive shelling this far from the Russian border, and Okhtyrka would be on the outer limits of the capabilities of FAB-500S-E UPMK glide bombs.

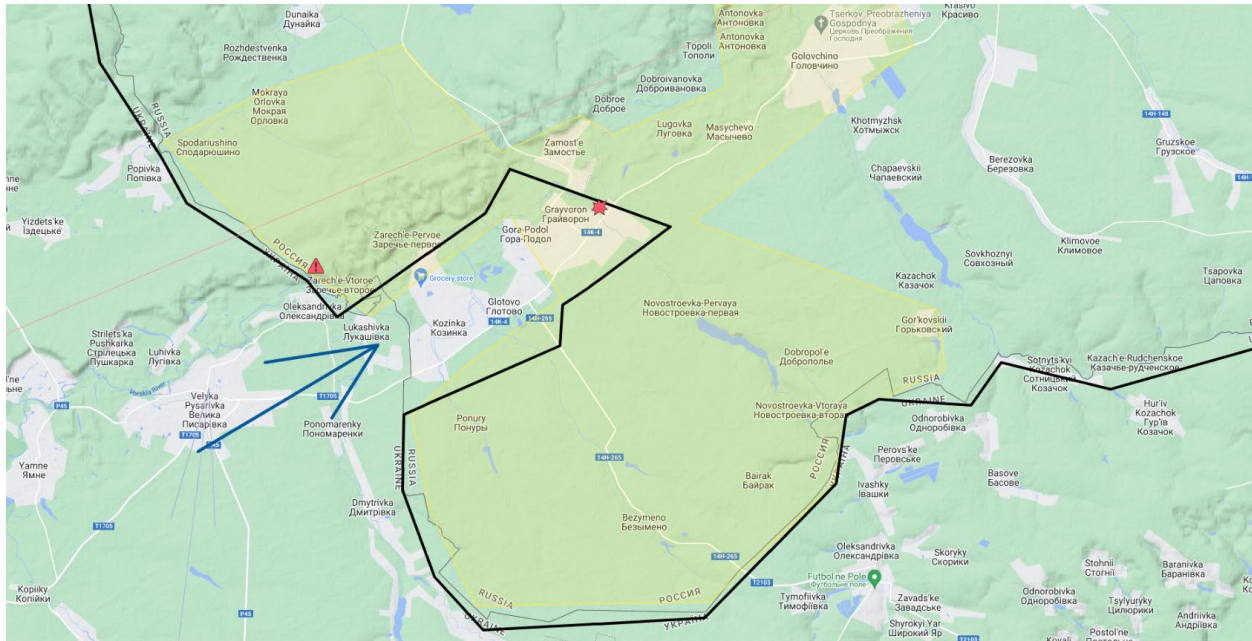


# RUSSIAN FRONT



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

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



## Belgorod Operational Area

- The Russian partisan incursion has expanded, with Belgorod Regional Governor Vyacheslav Gladkov reporting that a 45-kilometer stretch of the Russian-Ukrainian border has been evacuated from Spodariushino to Gorkovskii and claimed that artillery strikes were occurring as far east as Golovchino, 18-kilometers from the Russian-Ukraine border.<sup>18</sup>
- Russian state media agency Baza reported fighting continued in Kozinka and Glotovo and that power, water, Internet, and cellular service were out.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> <https://t.me/vvgladkov/2269>

<sup>19</sup> [https://t.me/belgorod\\_informant/4330](https://t.me/belgorod_informant/4330)

- Residents were hiding in their basements due to the fighting and Russian shelling in the border region and couldn't be evacuated.
- Governor Gladkov released a statement, writing, "There is information that in those settlements that the enemy entered, there are two wounded civilians. So far, the security forces have not been able to reach them. Task number one this morning. I hope that we will be able to evacuate them as soon as possible and deliver them to a medical facility. There have been no civilian deaths to date. All necessary actions on the part of law enforcement agencies are being carried out. We are waiting for the completion of the counter-terrorist operation that was announced yesterday."<sup>20</sup>
- Russian officials reported that an 82-year-old woman died during the evacuation of Grayvoron, but it was unrelated to military activity.<sup>21</sup>
- Gladkov implemented the Edelweiss Protocol, a quasi-martial law declaration restricting travel, activating all Ministry of Internal Affairs employees, and providing additional extra-judicial powers.<sup>22</sup>
- The Ministry of Internal Affairs, essentially the police department, has been given responsibility for fighting against the Russian partisans because there isn't a


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<sup>20</sup> <https://t.me/vvgladkov/2266>

<sup>21</sup> <https://t.me/vvgladkov/2266>

<sup>22</sup> <https://t.me/Crimeanwind/30864>

significant Rosgvardiya presence in Belgorod and only a small contingent of border guards who were quickly overwhelmed.



- The Russian 74th Separate Guards Motor Rifle Brigade is reportedly being deployed as a rapid response force, but there is no evidence they have arrived in the area.
- Reinforcements of the Free Russian Legion and the Russian Volunteer Corps have  [occupied the Grayvoron Border Crossing facility](#) with dozens of fresh troops arriving and building defensive positions in broad daylight, unconcerned about Russian artillery or airstrikes.<sup>23</sup>
- Russian partisans of the Free Russian Legion currently control [Kozinka](#) and [Glotovo](#), with [Zareche-Pervoe](#), [Gora-Podol](#), and [Grayvoron](#) contested.
- In Glotovo, Russian partisans  [captured a BTR-82 armored personnel carrier](#) and took one POW.<sup>24</sup>
- Partisans [also captured a T-72 tank](#) and flew the Ukrainian flag to provide friend or foe markings due to the Russian Z invasion markings painted on the sides and top.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> <https://twitter.com/Militarylandnet/status/1660929685872582656>

<sup>24</sup> [https://t.me/grey\\_zone/18752](https://t.me/grey_zone/18752)

<sup>25</sup> <https://twitter.com/officejsmart/status/1660724040842072064>

- A Russian partisan MaxxPro Infantry Mobility Vehicle  [suffered minor damage and was abandoned](#) in Glotovo.<sup>26</sup>
- Multiple Russian sources dismissed Russian state media claims that 39 partisans had been killed and several taken prisoner, with rumors and false claims consuming Russian social media channels and milbloggers.<sup>27</sup>
- We verified that Russian forces fighting against the partisans on May 22 had eight wounded requiring hospitalization, one killed, and three taken prisoner.<sup>28</sup>
- Panicked residents recorded themselves  [trying to break into a locked bomb shelter](#) they were told to evacuate to, with one declaring, "Tell Governor Gladkov he is a bitch!"<sup>29</sup>
- In early 2023, we called out the poorly constructed defensive line established by Russia on the Ukraine-Belgorod border, comprised of half-height dragon teeth that were not buried into the ground, cabled together, or protected by razor wire, and lacked trenches and minefields along most of the line. The construction was backed by PMC Wagner and cost 10

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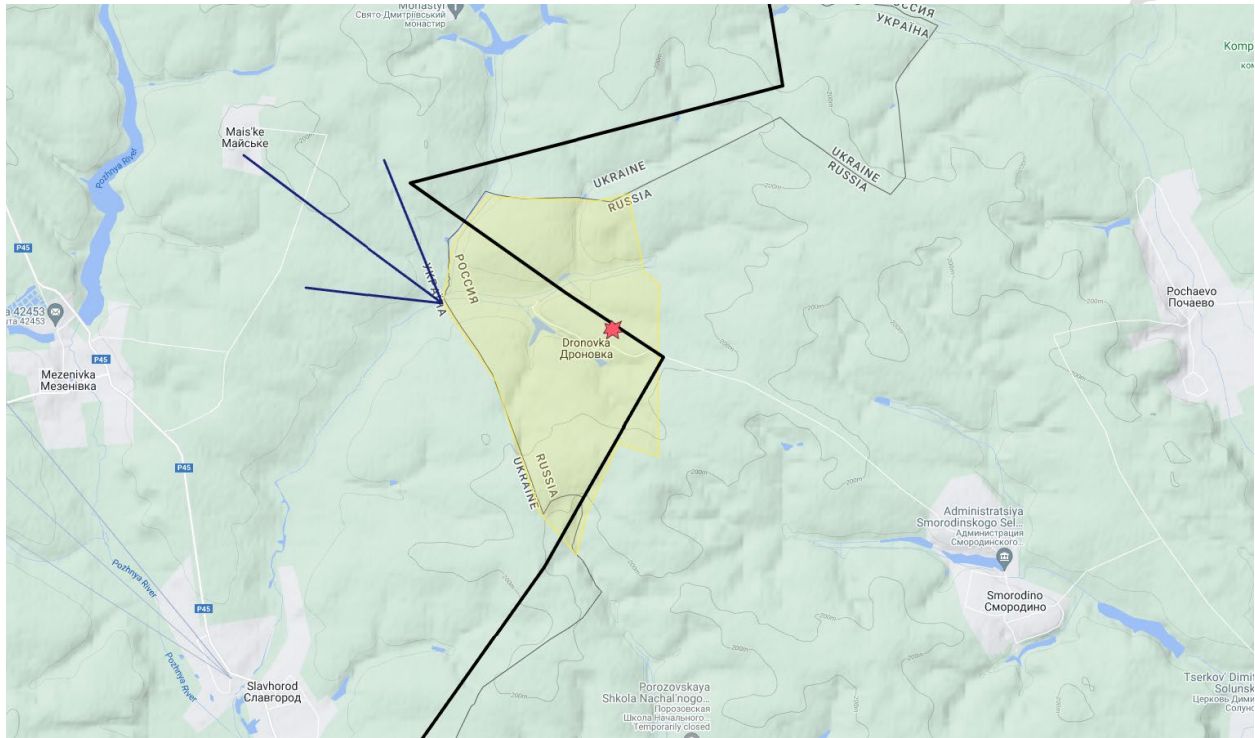
<sup>26</sup> <https://twitter.com/oryxspioenkop/status/1660729246581510147>

<sup>27</sup> [https://t.me/shot\\_shot/51756](https://t.me/shot_shot/51756)

<sup>28</sup> <https://t.me/vchkogpu/38651>

<sup>29</sup> <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/97475>

billion roubles, and Russian partisans reportedly drove around a gap in the dragon teeth.<sup>30</sup>




- Members of the smaller Russian Volunteer Corps were reportedly fighting in [Dronovka](#).
- Russian state media was quick to identify several members of the Russian Volunteer Corps involved in the attack as a former FSB agent and a wanted criminal and known Neo-Nazi involved in the March 2, 2023 border incursion in Bryansk and were both

<sup>30</sup> <https://t.me/Crimeanwind/30806>

reportedly killed by the Russian Ministry of Defense almost three months ago.<sup>31 32</sup>

## Belgorod

- Ukrainian drone-delivered IEDs were  [dropped on the Russian Federal Security Service \(FSB\) building](#) and the Ministry of Internal Affairs headquarters in Belgorod. There were unconfirmed reports of casualties, and we will provide an update on the situation if we learn more.<sup>33 34</sup>
- Russian milbloggers hyperfocused on the situation in Belgorod while complaining about the lack of coverage for Bakhmut.
- Russian propagandist Alexander "Sasha" Kots wrote, "There are a number of questions to which there are no answers. More precisely, they are there, but they are very unpleasant. That is why no one gives them. What about the technical equipment of the border, surveillance systems, tracking, and traffic detection? What about the mining of potentially dangerous areas? What about antitank weapons? Why has the enemy's armored group quietly penetrated deep into our territory? Do we feel sorry for the border guards

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<sup>31</sup> [https://t.me/shot\\_shot/51754](https://t.me/shot_shot/51754)

<sup>32</sup> [https://t.me/shot\\_shot/51757](https://t.me/shot_shot/51757)

<sup>33</sup> <https://t.me/itsdonetsk/76070>

<sup>34</sup> <https://t.me/Crimeanwind/30907>

without antitank guided missiles and rocket-propelled grenades?"<sup>35</sup>

- Our favorite FSB Colonel, convicted war criminal, Kremlin pariah, and failed mobik brought the snark, writing, "Specialists from Hogwarts College write that there were simply not enough Faberge pyramids on the Belgorod front. Or they were incorrectly installed - without taking into account the position of Mars relative to Jupiter. Because of that, the defensive magic didn't work."<sup>36</sup>
- PMC Wagner leader Yevgeny Prigozhin stated through the Concord Group, "I can tell you what is going on, there is a lack of management and sawing off *[embezzlement – Ed.]* of state money. Instead of dealing with the security of the state, some are sawing off money, while others are fooling around. There is no management, no desire, and no individuals who are willing to defend their country. I have repeatedly talked about this in Belgorod and Kursk regions. Unfortunately, the situation is still the same."<sup>37</sup>
- Other milbloggers like Rybar, after declaring Russian partisans had advanced up to 10 kilometers into Russia, falsely claimed that the attack had ended and that anti-government Russian forces were pushed back

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<sup>35</sup> <https://t.me/sashakots/39849>

<sup>36</sup> <https://t.me/strelkovii/4998>

<sup>37</sup> [https://t.me/concordgroup\\_official/1018](https://t.me/concordgroup_official/1018)



into Ukraine, while others dismissed all claims of fighting in the area as fake.

- When asked about the events in Belgorod, the United States Department of State spokesperson Matthew Miller said, "I think it's important to remind the world that Russia started this war. Ukraine has the right to decide how it wants to conduct its military operations. But the aggressor in this war is Russia."<sup>38</sup>

## Bryansk

- Bryansk Regional Governor Aleksandr Bogomaz also implemented the Edelweiss Protocol due to the lack of a rapid response force and Rosgvardiya in the border region.<sup>39</sup>

**ASSESSMENT:** The emperor has no clothes. We had previously assessed that up to 95% of Russia's active military ground forces are in Ukraine or supporting the Russian military actions within Ukraine. A relatively small group of Russian partisans with minimal heavy weapons and no air support have advanced up to 10 kilometers into Russia along the Ukrainian border in an area Russian milbloggers have written multiple warnings would be

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<sup>38</sup> <https://t.me/Crimeanwind/30890>

<sup>39</sup> [https://t.me/ukrarmed\\_forces/3562](https://t.me/ukrarmed_forces/3562)

attacked by a much larger force. These are “little green men,” with Ukrainians throwing back at Russian social media the exact same talking points used to justify and obfuscate Russian aggression in 2014. American “Humvees” and MaxxPros are available on the open market – just as Putin claimed in 2014, Russian troops weren’t in the Donbas, and the weapons being used could be easily acquired. Even the Kremlin’s message of calling Ukrainians “terrorists” is working against them, forcing Russian state media to label Russian partisans as terrorists as well. Ukrainians are calling the area “liberated” by partisans the Bilhorod People’s Republic, and even a Wikipedia entry was created.

We have documented for months how Russian artillery and mortar units have fired 50 to 200 shells a day into the Sumy Oblast, including recently targeting Velyka Psyarivka. The critical question has to be asked, where did those artillery and mortar units go? There are reports of Russian artillery and Grad rockets fired by multiple launch rocket systems (MLRS) being used against the partisans. Still, it appears to have little effect, and Russian partisans are strengthening their positions, contrary to Russian state media and official claims.

It is admittedly unlikely that the few Russian forces remaining to respond will start defecting, potentially sparking broader unrest. But, the question has to be asked, how much appetite do Russian troops have to fight against Russian partisans who have no qualms with them, only with the Putin regime? This is a different threat; almost prophetically, it is "turbo patriots" being supported by Ukraine causing the instability.

The wellspring of Vladimir Putin's power is his core message of making Russia great again and that only he can lead Russia forward as the visionary protector. Thousands of villagers in Belgorod have no more illusions about who can and can't protect them. While "don't say war laws" can be used to suppress the message of what is happening, if the activity of partisans expands, it will get harder to control if the advance expands and if Russian troops refuse to fight against Russians or defect, the information space will quickly spiral out of control.

Decades of corruption in Moscow that never ended after the collapse of the Soviet Union have left the Russian armed forces underfunded. While Russian troops in Ukraine are fighting with S-60 anti-aircraft guns, M-12 antitank guns, and AK-74s while wearing Ssh-68 helmets and operating T-54/55/62 tanks, the optics will be bad if RMOD can

suddenly find modern equipment to attack their own citizens.

The instability within Russia has been growing for months. It started with graffiti, ribbons, and posters, advanced to small border incursions for mocking selfies to show how porous the border is, then sabotaged railroad infrastructure. Now you have Russians killing Russians and occupying 46 square kilometers in under 24 hours – an area larger than Bakhmut.

This is not a good omen for how Russia will respond to a Ukrainian counteroffensive if a company of partisans accomplished in 24 hours what took PMC Wagner three months in Bakhmut. For Ukraine, this is part of shaping operations for the larger offensive. If partisan territorial control continues to expand, some of the Russian reserve forces positioned to defend against the 33 combat brigades lurking in Ukraine will have to be allocated to Bryansk and Belogorod to defend the border.

## THEATERWIDE

- Ukrainian air defenses downed six out of six Shahed-136 kamikaze drones launched by Russian forces.<sup>40</sup>
- The Defence Intelligence Directorate of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine (GUR), Major General Kyrylo Budanov, appealed for Russian troops to surrender, saying, "For more than a year now, the Kremlin regime has not been able to achieve any of the goals it set at the beginning of the invasion of Ukraine. I am appealing to Russian servicemen, to those who were lucky enough to survive the meat grinder and the beaten-up trenches – it's going to get even worse. You have a choice: to die or to save your life."<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/97535>

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2023/05/22/7403308/>

## RUSSIA VS. UKRAINE HEAVY EQUIPMENT LOSSES

*Russian and Ukrainian visually confirmed heavy equipment losses sourced from the [Oryx Database](#) from February 24, 2022, to May 18, 2023. 10,324 Russian vs. 3,374 Ukrainian*

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