



MALCONTENT NEWS RUSSIA-UKRAINE SITUATION REPORT

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Malcontent News

Russia-Ukraine War SITREP

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SUMMARY – DAY 543

It has been 3,463 days since Russia occupied the Crimea Peninsula on January 27, 2014, and one year and 178 days since Russia expanded its war against Ukraine. The Ministry of Defense of Ukraine has further tightened operational security (OPSEC). With Russian forces losing the initiative across the theater of war and Moscow's crackdown on sources that "discredit the Russian Federation Armed Forces," information from all sources is limited today. Additionally, outside of Orikhiv, Lyubymivka-Staromlynivka, and the Bakhmut areas of operation (AO), Russian forces have exhausted their combat potential and have mostly switched to spoiling attacks, mobile defense, or purely defensive operations.

- The table of Russian and Ukrainian heavy military equipment losses using information from the Oryx Database was updated on August 21, 2023
- Russian claims that Synkivka was captured and Ukrainian forces blew up bridges over the Oskil River at Kupyansk are false
- Positional fighting continued in Kharkiv and Luhansk
- Fighting continued south of Bakhmut
- Ukrainian forces have pushed Russian troops to the southern edge of Robotyne

- Fuel shortages have gotten worse in occupied Crimea due to disruption of railroad service
- The State Bureau of Investigation of Ukraine (SBI) reported that an explosion on August 19 at the State Research Expert Forensic Center of the Ministry of Internal Affairs that killed four occurred during the examination of an “explosive device”
- Explosions heard near Rostov-on-Don that created panic on Russian social media were sonic booms
- At least one Russian military aircraft was damaged due to a drone attack on the Shaykovka Military Airfield in the Kaluga region
- Russian propagandist and head of Russia Today (RT), Margarita Simoyan, shared pictures of a Ukrainian drone being shot down near her Moscow villa
- Moscow was attacked by up to four drones overnight, causing light damage in the Strogino and Krasnogorsk districts
- Partisans burned a railroad relay cabinet in Moscow, which caused train delays
- Record rainfall in Buryatia washed out a section of the Baikal-Amur Highway and railroad, with repairs scheduled to be completed on August 24
- The United States Department of State advised American citizens in Belarus to leave immediately due to impending border closures

- Anticorruption investigations continue with two military commissar employees in Cherkasy accused of receiving bribes
- A Ukrainian senior military officer is under investigation for continuing to pay soldiers who were under his command even after they left the Ukrainian Armed Forces
- Greece announced it would train Ukrainian pilots to fly F-16s
- Up to 100 Russian Storm-Z penal mercenaries deserted their unit in occupied Staromlynivka
- Private Military Company (PMC) Wagner Group leader Yevgeny Prigozhin released a video allegedly in Africa claiming they are consolidating their efforts on the continent
- WarGonzo's leader Seymon Pegov interviewed two mobiks from Novosibirsk who say they are called murderers back in Russia
- Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov hasn't been seen for three weeks after calling the 2024 Russian elections a waste of resources because the reelection of President Vladimir Putin is a foregone conclusion
- Ukraine is working on providing insurance for commercial ships carrying Ukrainian grain out of Odesa's ports
- Russian oil-based exports continue to plummet

DAILY ASSESSMENT

We assess the following:

1. Our June 2023 assessment that Moscow would continue efforts to dismantle PMC Wagner Group was accurate. This is the last day of this entry.
2. We maintain that the perceived slow progress of the Ukrainian summer offensive, questions about the capabilities of Ukrainian military commanders at the battalion and brigade level, and ongoing anticorruption measures highlighting the problems within the Ukrainian government are unfairly straining Western support.
3. We remain unprepared to declare that the next phase of the summer offensive has started in two operational areas.
4. Despite Ukraine's likely start of the next phase of its summer offensive, we maintain that Western partners are not meeting their promised military training, heavy equipment, and ammunition dates, negatively impacting Ukraine's military capabilities.
5. While acknowledging recent operational successes in Zaporizhzhia, we remain concerned about Ukraine's capacity to turn tactical gains in other areas of operation (AO) into operational success and strategic victories.

6. It is unlikely that Ukraine will execute a wet crossing of the Dnipro River with a battalion-sized or larger force.
7. The growing number of combat ineffective and combat destroyed Russian units is forcing Russian commanders to rotate remaining reserves to hotspots in regions outside their assigned AO.
8. While the threats of aggression from Belarus are subsiding, we maintain that aggressive actions and posturing directed at Poland, Latvia, and Lithuania and by Russia on the Black Sea risk causing an international incident. The soft response by Ukraine's allies has only encouraged Minsk and Moscow to take further risks.
9. Russian President Vladimir Putin's stature, both inside and outside of Russia, remains weakened after the failed Prigozhin Insurrection, and there continues to be a small but very real possibility of another insurrection or coup attempt. Additionally, his weakened political state and Russia's economic uncertainty make doing another wave of formal mobilization more difficult.
10. Our assessment that the Russian Ministry of Defense remains in a chaotic state, incapable of creating mission cohesion between penal units, mobiks, conscripts, elite forces, PMCs, and proxy forces, was

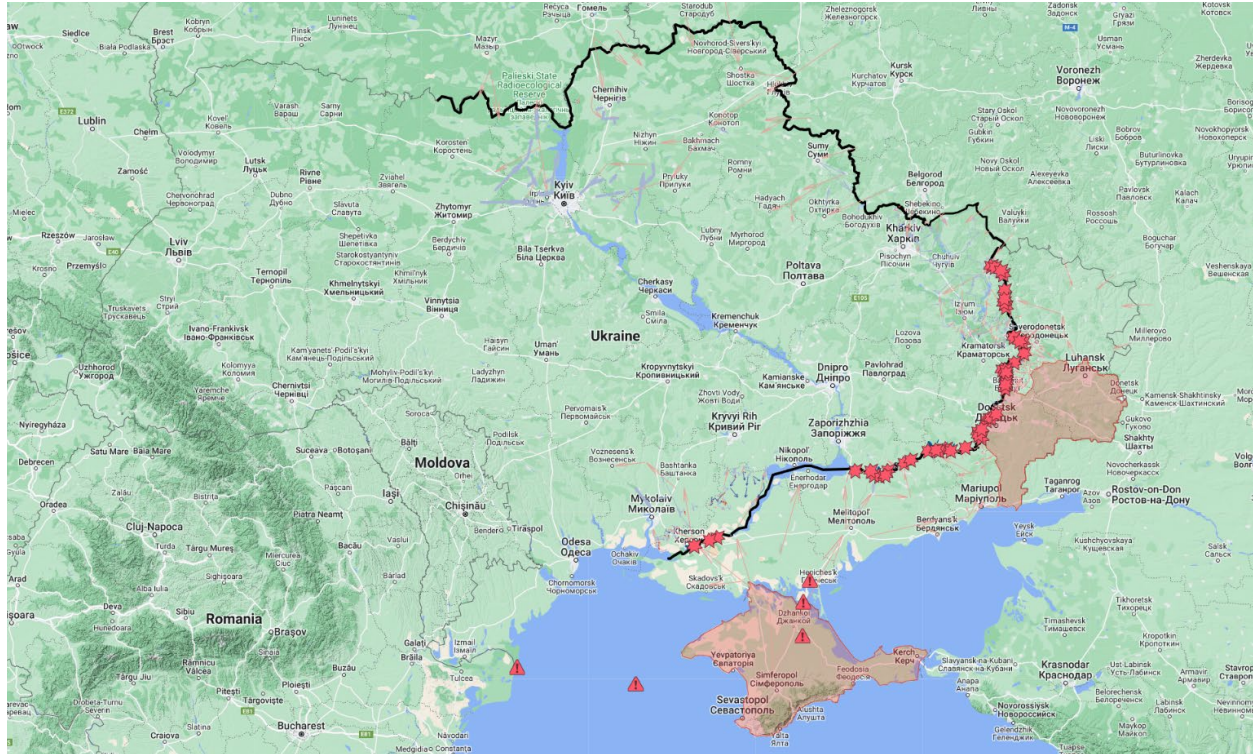
accurate, with *continued* reports of fighting between units, fratricide, and desertions.

11. Mistrust among the command structures of the Russian Ministry of Defense, intelligence, and security community is negatively impacting Russia's ability to wage war within Ukraine.
12. Russian Chief of Staff Valery Gerasimov and Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu are some of the best allies available for the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense due to their acceptance of systemic corruption, political infighting, waste of military resources, and refusal to adapt to the realities within the theater of war.
13. While the possibility of an intentional nuclear accident caused by Russian occupiers at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant remains low, the threat should be taken seriously.

[Jump to the Action Report.](#)



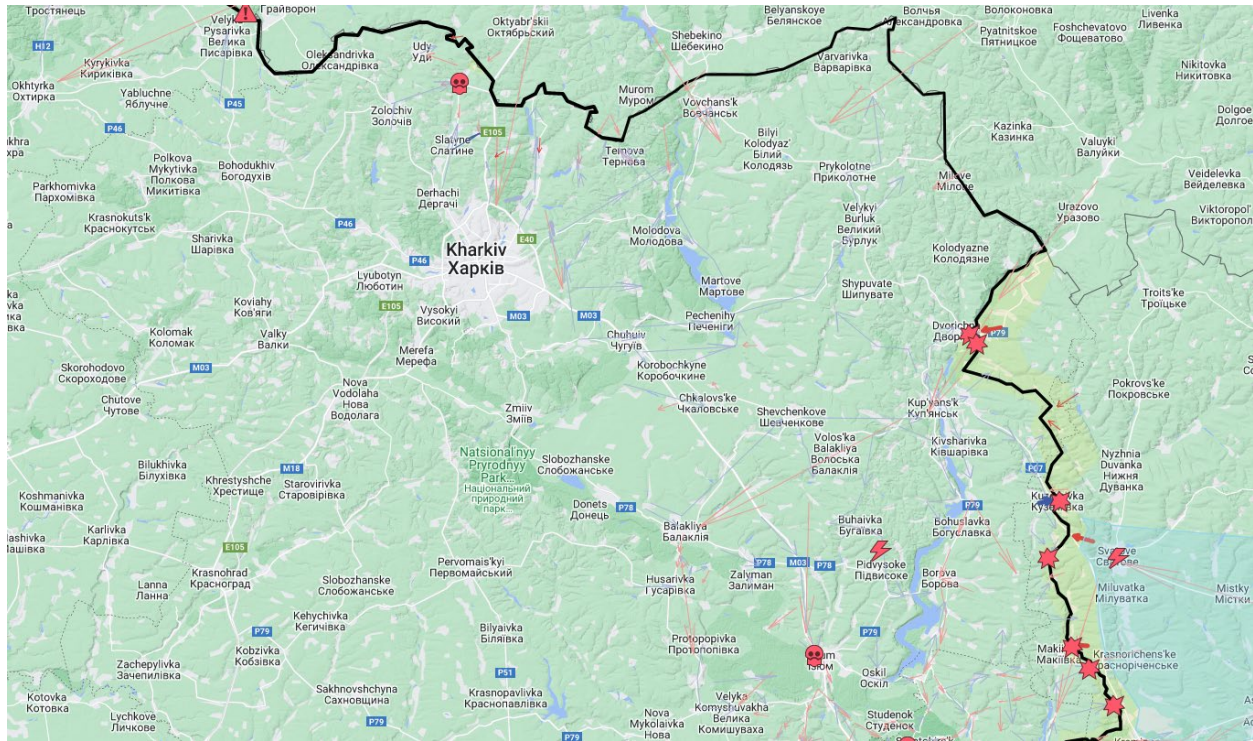
TODAY'S WAR IN UKRAINE MAP



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.

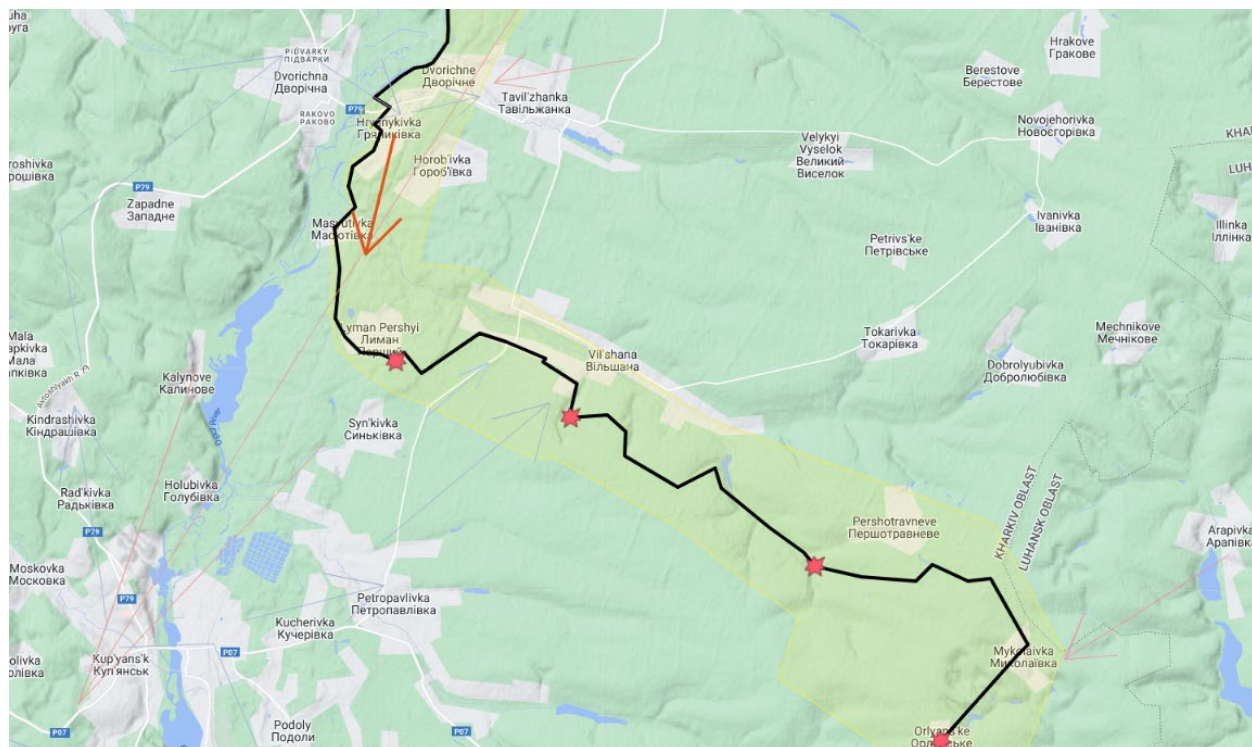
[Russia-Ukraine War Report Map](#)

KHARKIV



Russian Objective: Defend against the Ukrainian offensive, maximize casualties, 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



Dvorychne Operational Area

Fighting continues to be positional northeast of [Synkivka](#), with Ukrainian forces controlling the battlefield. A video released by Russian sources that claimed Synkivka was captured so poorly made that even Russian sources called it a fake.^{1 2} The video was recorded 117 kilometers away in occupied Voronove, a suburb of Severodonetsk. A second claim that Ukraine had blown up the bridges over the Oskil River at Kupyans'k was also fake.³ The video showed a Russian airstrike using a FAB-250 or FAB-500 UPMK glide

¹ <https://t.me/brussinf/6451>

² https://t.me/grey_zone/20124

³ https://t.me/grey_zone/20120

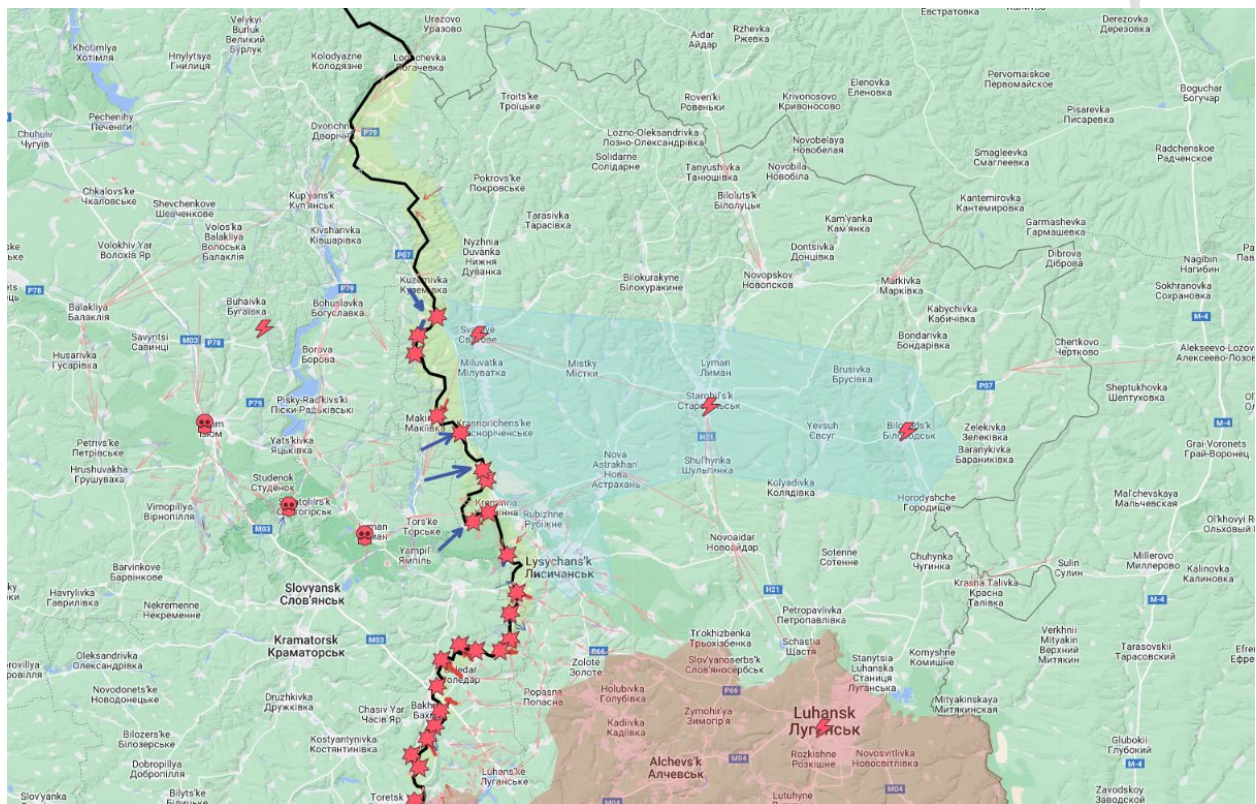


bomb on a pontoon bridge and clearly showed the main bridge over the river was intact.

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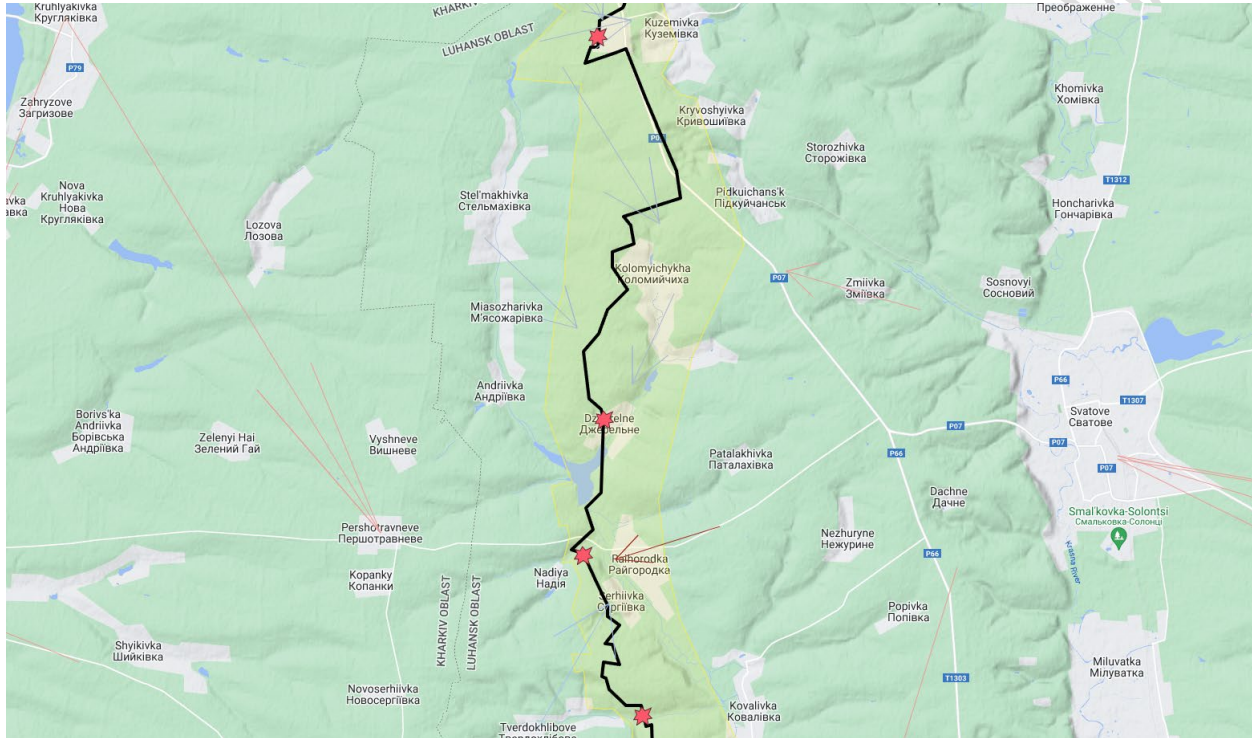
DONBAS REGION

LUHANSK



Russian Objective: Defend against the Ukrainian offensive, maximize casualties, control insurgent activity, set conditions to capture the rest of the region, and support September 2023 elections

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

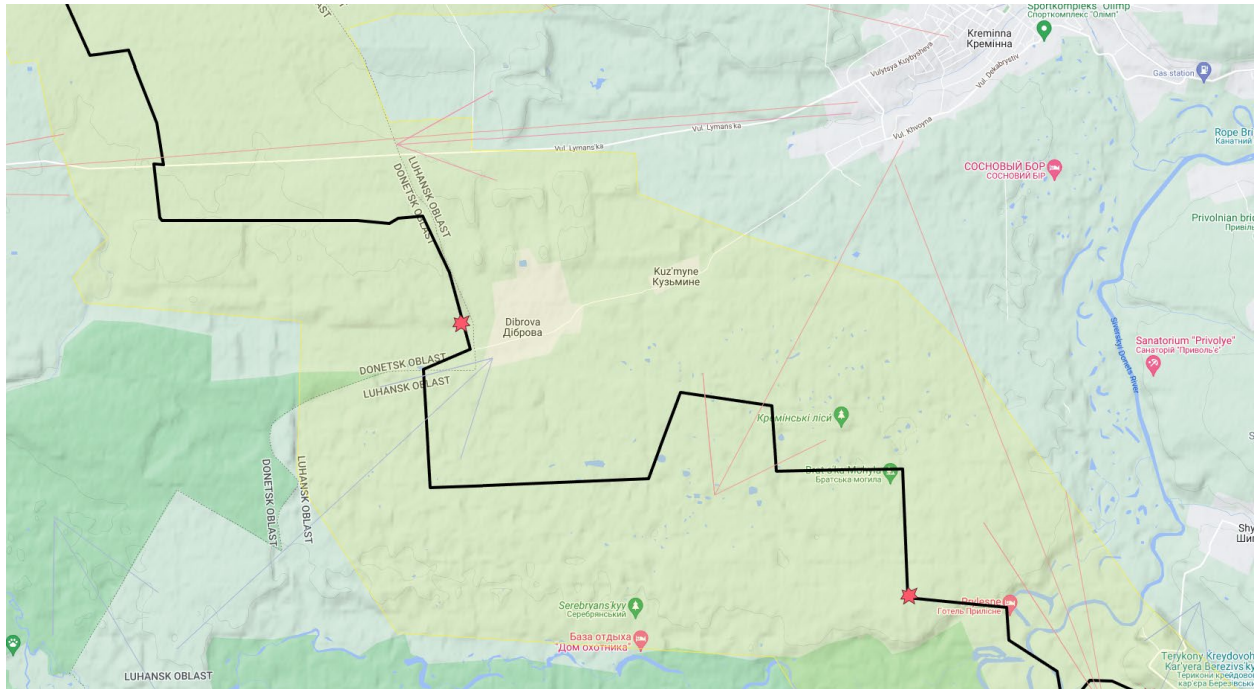


Svatove Operational Area

Russian sources reported mutual fighting in the area of [Novoselivske](#) with no significant changes.^{4 5}

⁴ https://t.me/mod_russia/29643 [Russian Government Controlled Social Media Channel]

⁵ <https://t.me/wargonzo/14490>



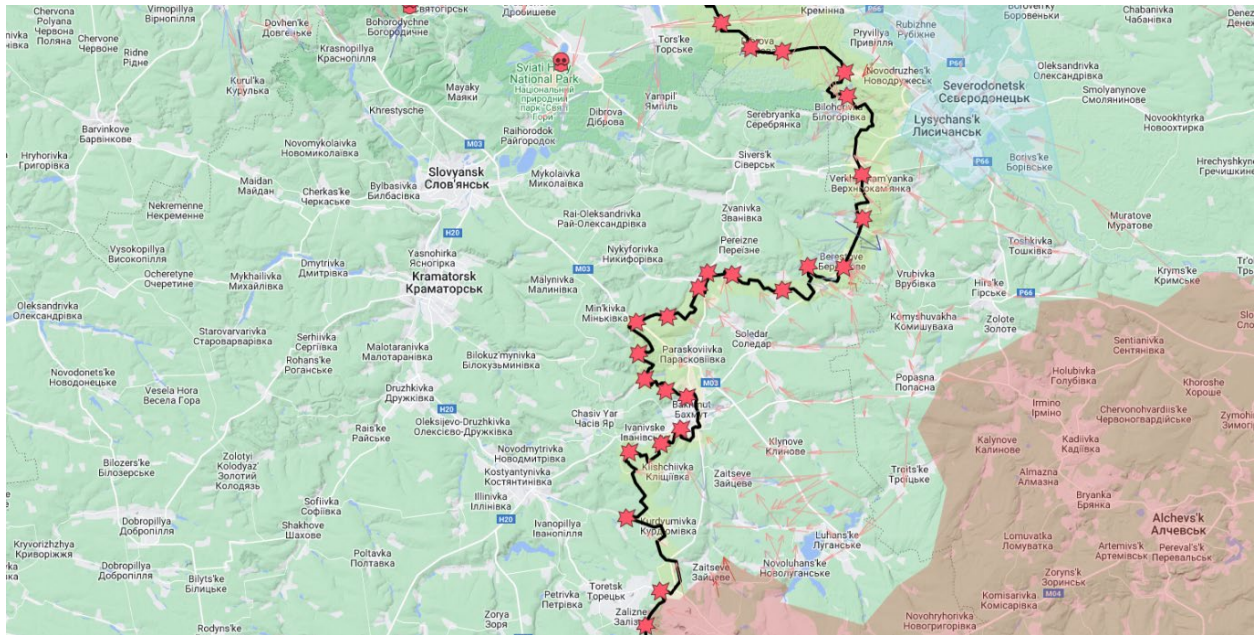
Kreminna Operational Area

Positional fighting and artillery duels continued in the [Serebryansky Woods](#) near Dibrova.^{6 7}

⁶ https://t.me/mod_russia/29644 [Russian Government Controlled Social Media Channel]

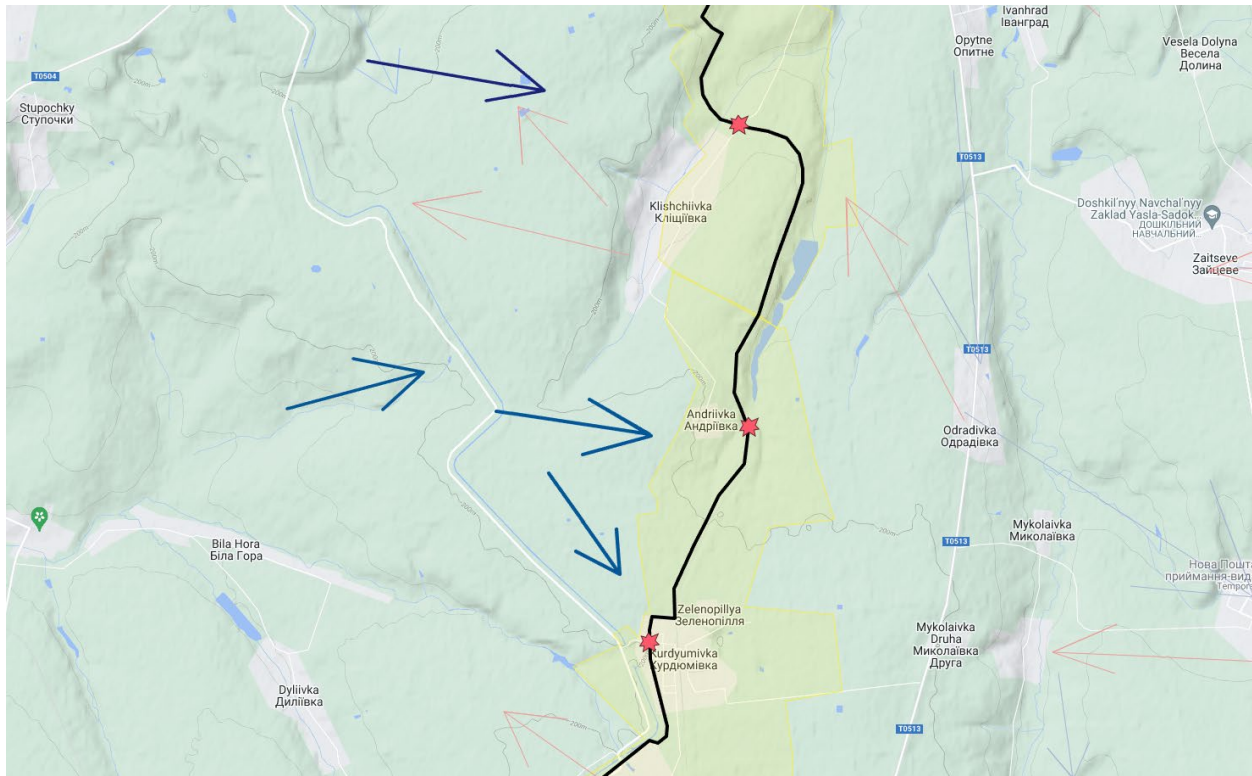
⁷ <https://t.me/wargonzo/14490>

NORTHEAST DONETSK



Russian Objective: Complete the capture of Bakhmut, set conditions to attack Kramatorsk, Slovyansk, and Siversk, and capture the entire region, set conditions for September 2023 elections

Ukrainian Objective: Defend Siversk and Bakhmut, collapse the Russian flanks while maximizing casualties, draw Russian reserves into the Bakhmut and Soledar operational areas, push into the Luhansk oblast, and minimize civilian casualties



Klishchiivka Operational Area

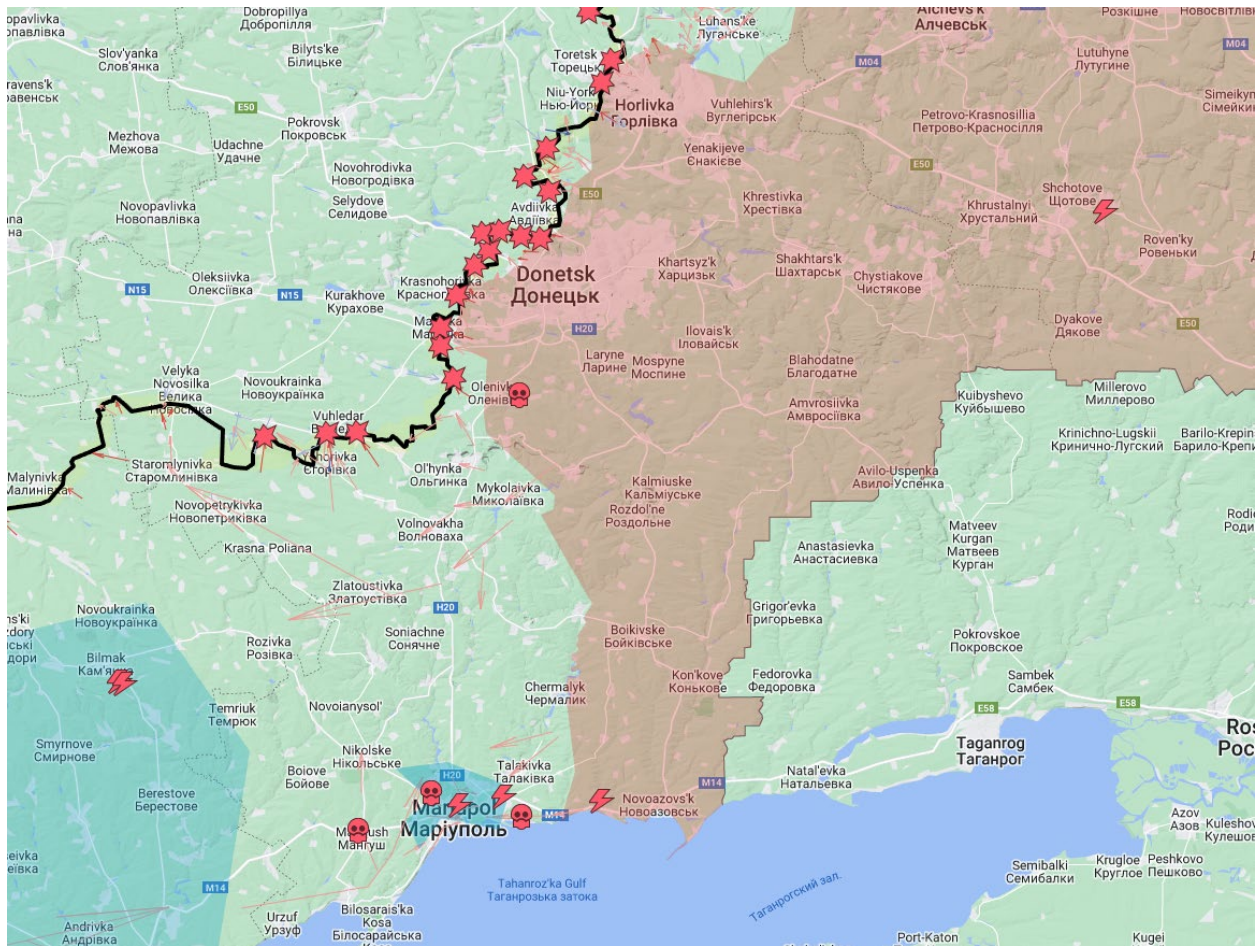
Mutual fighting continued in [Klishchiivka](#) and near [Andriivka](#).^{8 9 10} The situation remains unchanged, with Ukrainian forces occupying southern Klishchiivka and the high ground to the west and Russian forces in the northeast corner of Klishchiivka and east of the railroad grade. Andriivka remains a no man's land in the gray area.

⁸ <https://t.me/landforcesofukraine/11289>

⁹ <https://t.me/DeepStateUA/17416>

¹⁰ <https://t.me/wargonzo/14490>

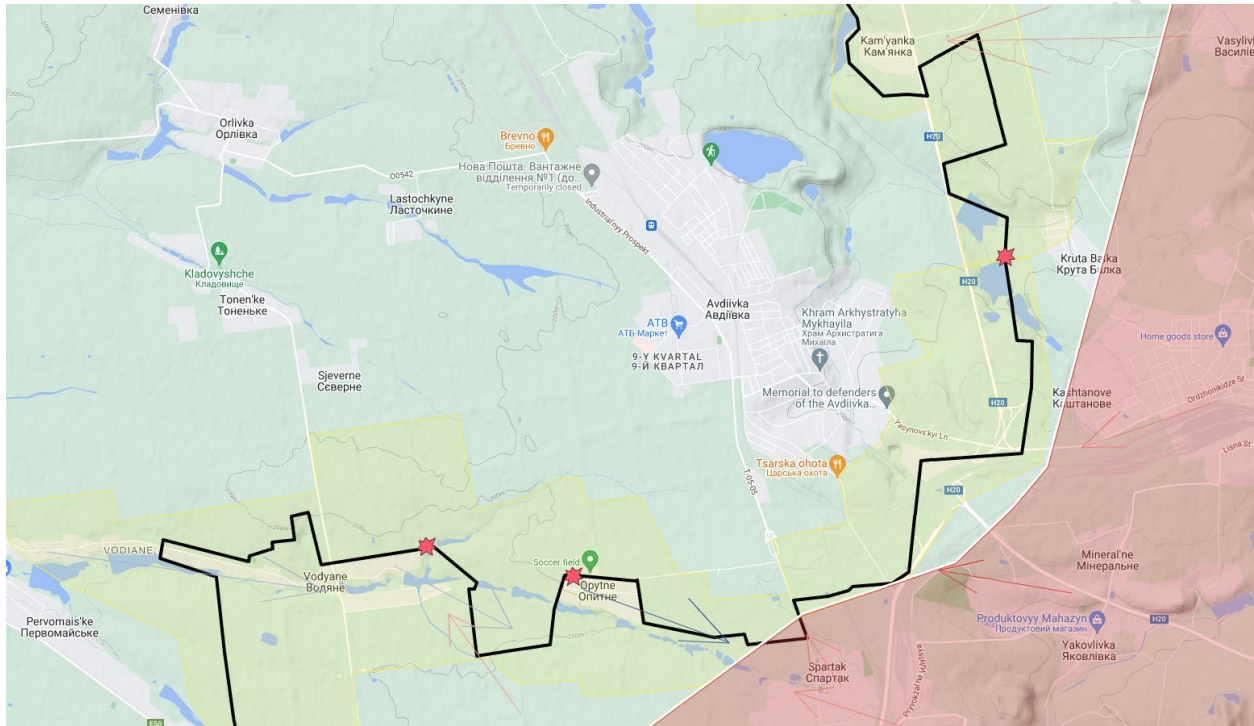
SOUTHWESTERN DONETSK



Russian Objective: Defend against the Ukrainian offensive, maximize casualties, set conditions for September 2023 elections, capture the remainder of the oblast

Ukrainian Objective: Set conditions for larger offensive operations, find and exploit Russian defensive weaknesses,

destroy troop concentrations and command and control sites, interdict supplies, and disrupt logistics

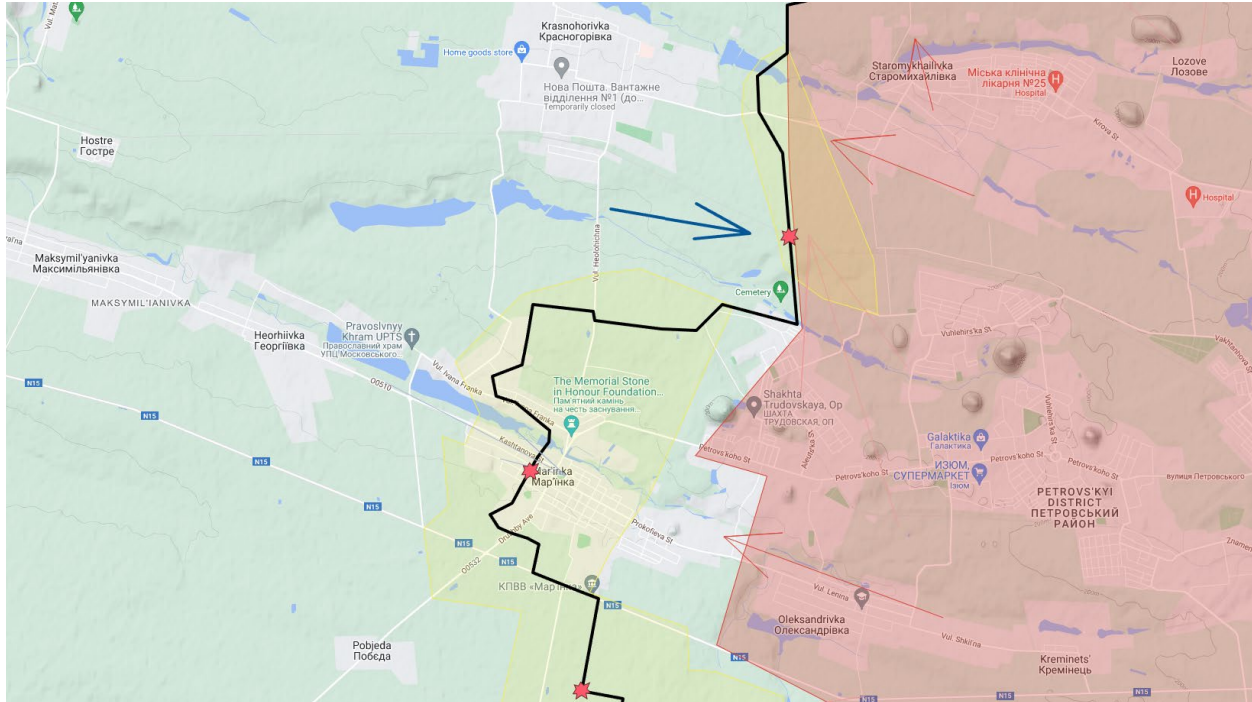


Avdiivka Operational Area

Russian forces holding defensive positions between [Pervomaiske](#) and the Ukrainian firebase at [Nevelske](#) were harassed and hit with artillery.^{11 12}

¹¹ <https://t.me/DeepStateUA/17416>

¹² https://t.me/mod_russia/29643 [Russian Government Controlled Social Media Channel]

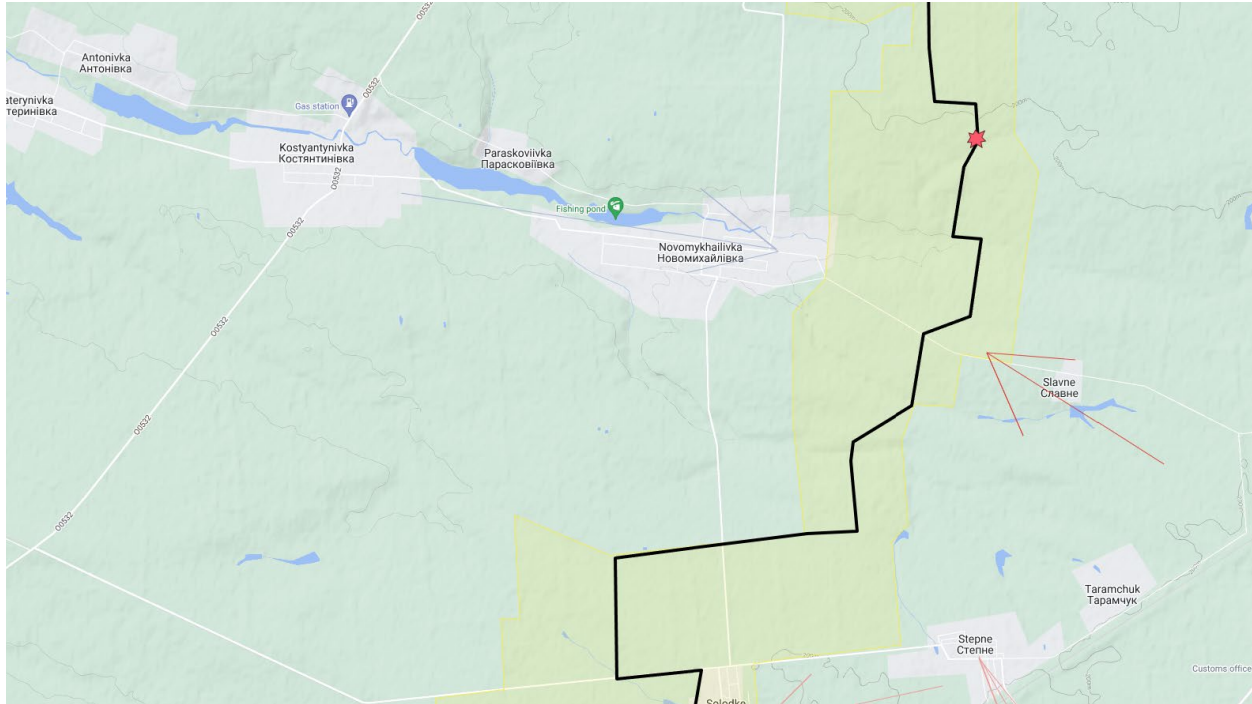


Marinka Operational Area

Positional fighting was reported east of [Krannohorivka](#), and Russian forces continued harassment attacks and probes of Ukrainian defenses in [Marinka](#). The Russian air force and army aviation (VKS) were active in the OA.^{13 14}

¹³ https://t.me/mod_russia/29643 [Russian Government Controlled Social Media Channel]

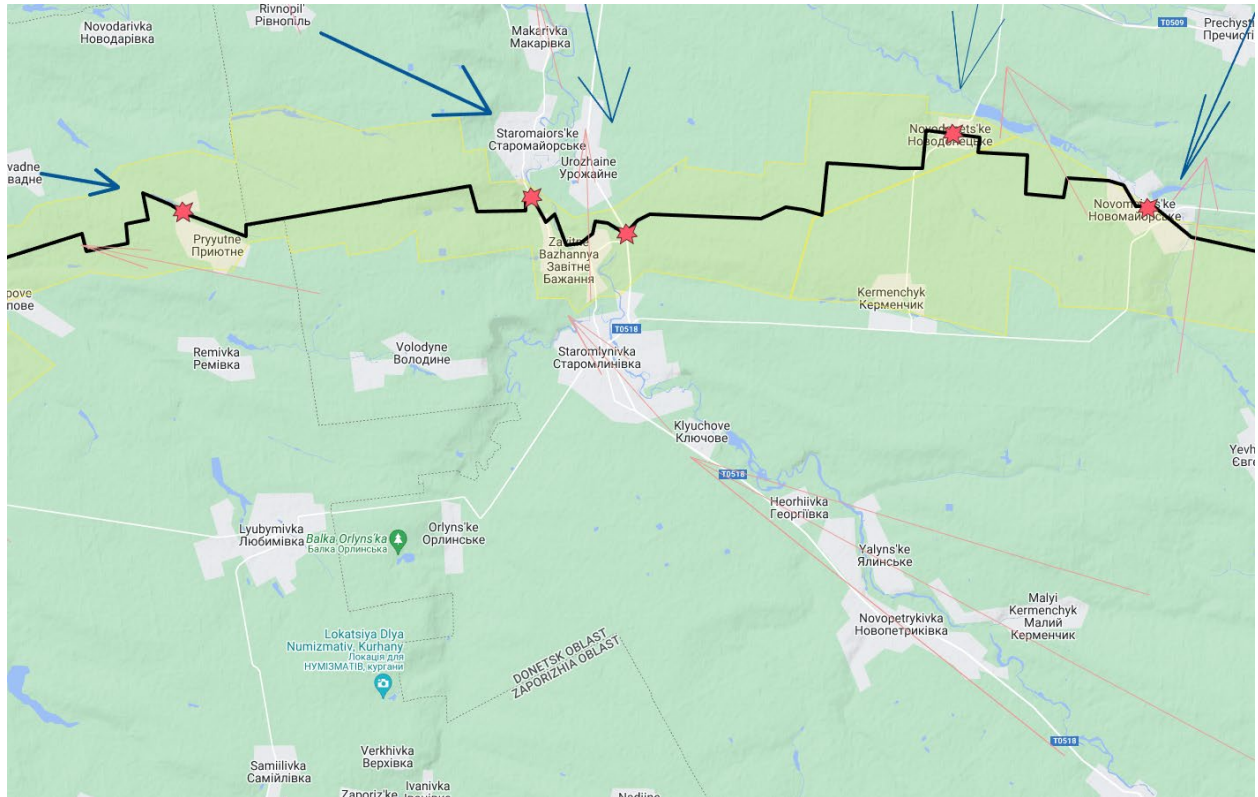
¹⁴ <https://t.me/landforcesofukraine/11289>



Vuhledar Operational Area

Supported by the VKS, Russian forces attacked Ukrainian positions east of [Novomykhalivka](#), suffered losses, and retreated to their defensive positions.¹⁵

¹⁵ <https://t.me/landforcesofukraine/11289>



Lyubymivka-Staromlynivka Operational Area

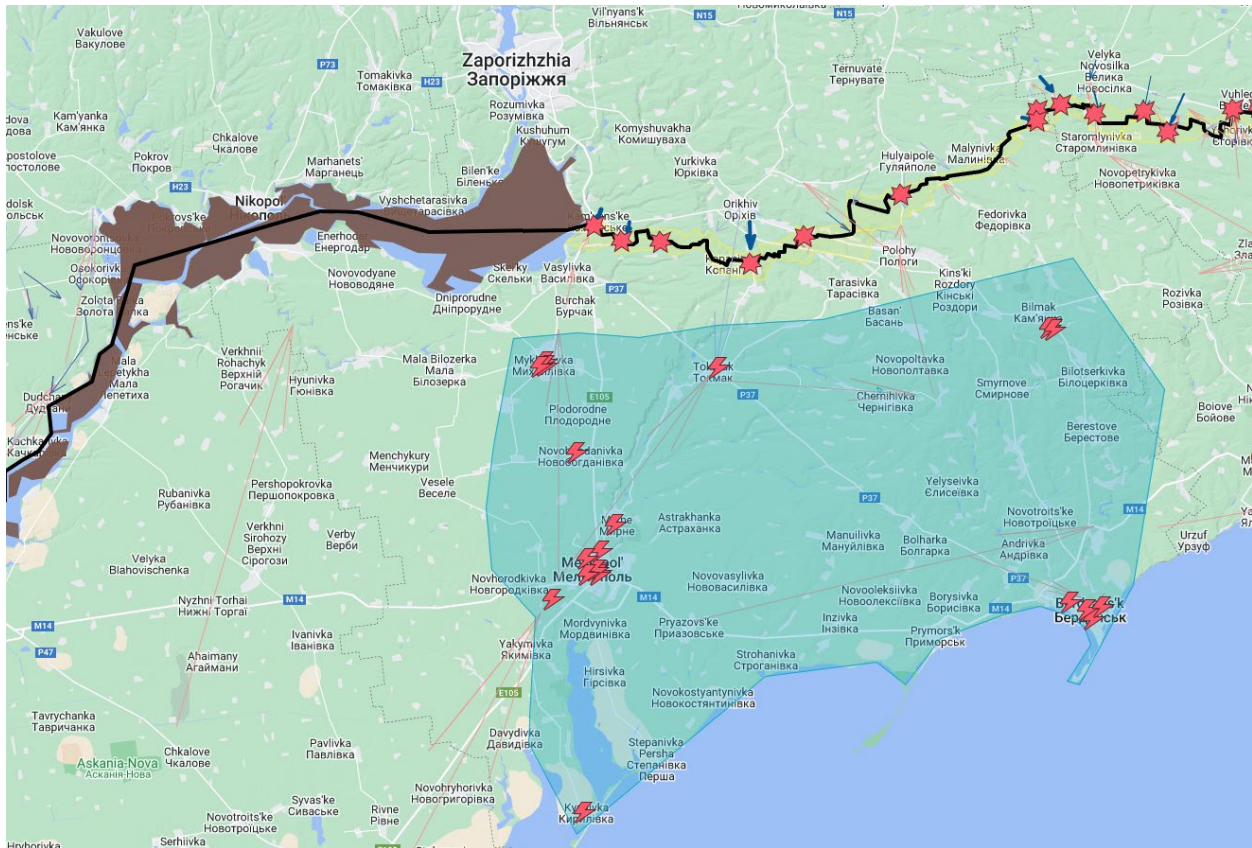
The only report of significant fighting came from Russian mercenary milblogger WarGonzo, who reported a Russian counterattack in the direction of [Urozhaine](#) was unsuccessful.¹⁶ An Open Source Intelligence group in Georgia (the nation) reported a significant increase in the number of social media posts in Russia reporting deceased members of the 247th Parachute Regiment (VDV), which was combat ineffective in mid-July with unit members rioting due to losses. They were redeployed without reconstitution and continue to operate despite being in a

¹⁶ <https://t.me/wargonzo/14490>

combat destroyed state. Among the dead is Major Maxim Garmashov, Deputy Battalion Commander of the 247th Air Assault Regiment, 7th VDV Division.¹⁷ Garmashov was killed in action on August 16.

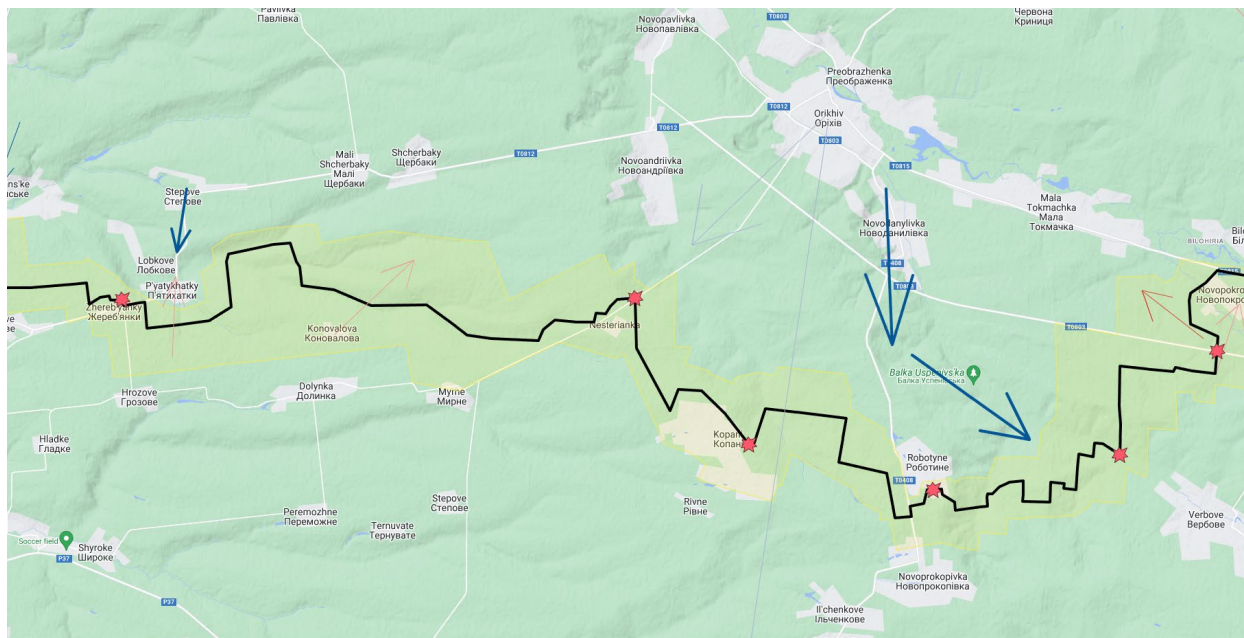
¹⁷ <https://t.me/OSINTGeorgia/6675>

ZAPORIZHIA



Russian Objective: Defend against the Ukrainian offensive, maximize casualties, set conditions for September 2023 elections, capture the remainder of the oblast, and terrorize Ukrainian civilians with continued attacks

Ukrainian Objective: Exploit weaknesses on the line of conflict, break Russian defensive lines, liberate Russian-occupied areas, and protect civilians

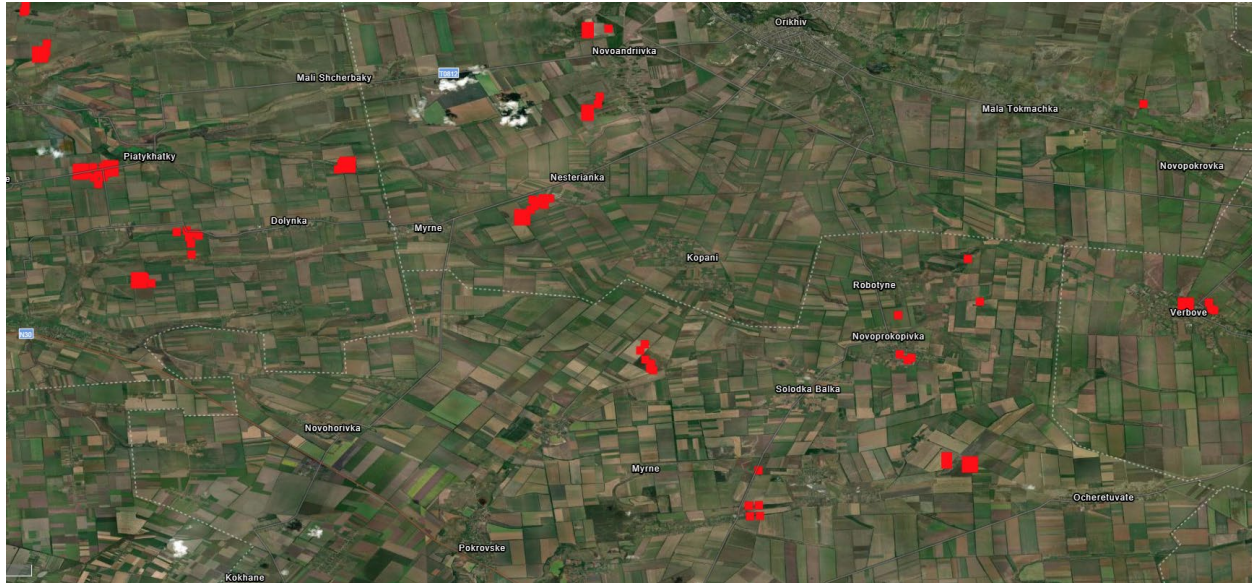


Orikhiv Operational Area

Russian forces have been pushed to the southern edge of [Robotyne](#), with fighting still ongoing in a cluster of homes in the southeastern corner of the settlement. Ukrainian and Russian forces continue to trade control of defensive positions on a six-kilometer-wide front between Robotyne and Verbove, with Ukraine holding the initiative.¹⁸ The General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (GSAFU) reported the Russian VKS launched airstrikes on Robotyne.¹⁹

¹⁸ <https://t.me/wargonzo/14490>

¹⁹ <https://t.me/landforcesofukraine/11289>



NASA Fire Information for Resource Management System (FIRMS) indicated that Russian positions in Verbove, Novoprokopivka, Nesterianka, Zherbyanky, and on the Russian ground line of communication between Zherbyanky and Nesterianka were under intense artillery fire by Ukrainian forces. NASA FIRMS also suggested that the main fighting at Robotyne had moved to the southern edge of the settlement. This is the first time since October 2022 that artillery activity has been so active that the line of conflict can be visualized on FIRMS.

The Ukrainian 46th Brigade reported fighting continued in the area of [Kopani](#) and [Nesterianka](#).²⁰

²⁰ <https://t.me/odshbr46/1283>

Shahed-136 kamikaze drones attacked the city of Zaporizhzhia on the night of August 21 – 22, causing light damage to four highrise apartment buildings from the concussions caused by air defenses and falling debris. No injuries were reported.²¹

Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant

There was no update on the status of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has not released an update since August 11.

BLACK SEA, CRIMEA, MYKOLAIV, AND ODESA REGION

Black Sea

Operational Command South (OKS) reported three missile carriers assigned to the Black Sea Fleet were on patrol, including two frigates and one submarine capable of launching up to 20 Kalibr cruise missiles.²²

²¹ <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2023/08/22/7416542/>

²² <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/111025>



Occupied Crimea

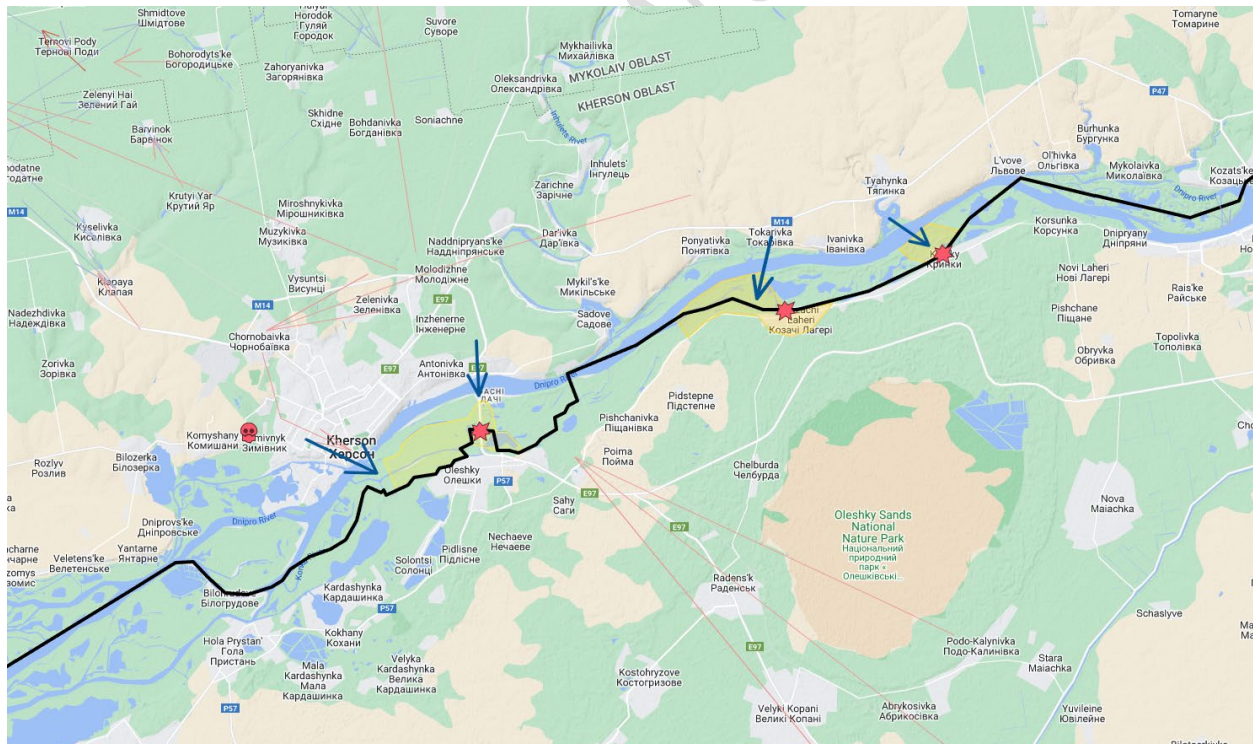
Fuel shortages in occupied Crimea were getting worse due to delays in railroad shipment of gasoline and diesel fuel.

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KHERSON

Russian Objective: Prevent Ukrainian advances into eastern Kherson, terrorize the civilian population in free Kherson, prepare the region for illegitimate elections in September 2023, and maintain GLOCs to Zaporizhzhia

Ukrainian Objective: Deter attacks on Ukrainian civilians, lock Russian troops and military assets in place, and protect civilian lives



Ukrainian forces maintain their forward operating bases along a 42-kilometer stretch between the Dnipro and Konka Rivers. GSAFU reported that the village of Dachi was attacked by the Russian VKS, verifying that Ukrainian forces remain on the Dnipro's left (east) bank.²³

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

There wasn't any major activity in this region.

NORTHERN AND NORTHEASTERN UKRAINE


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

²³ <https://t.me/landforcesofukraine/11289>

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

Chernihiv

A Shahed-136 kamikaze drone hit civilian infrastructure in the Chernihiv region near the Belarusian border. There was no other information at the time of publication.²⁴


Ukrainian officials published a photo that provided concrete evidence that an  [Iskander-K ballistic cruise missile](#) was used to attack the Drama Theater on August 19, killing seven and wounding 174, with 41 people still hospitalized.²⁵ The criminal investigation into Russia's war crime and potential negligence by organizers of a drone exhibition is ongoing.²⁶

²⁴ <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/111033>

²⁵ <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/111009>

²⁶ <https://t.me/suspilnenews/23559>

Kyiv

The SBI of Ukraine has opened a criminal investigation into the death of four State Research Expert Forensic Center employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Ukraine. On the morning of August 19, an explosive device being examined  [detonated, causing extensive damage](#) the building and killing the four experts.²⁷ The explosive device should have been inert before being brought to the facility.

²⁷ <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/110992>

RUSSIAN FRONT

Russian Objective: Stabilize government control and civil order, prevent further insurrection, repel Russian partisan attacks, secure the state border

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

Rostov

Social media in the Rostov region erupted in panic after several loud explosions rocked the region. It turned out sonic booms caused them.²⁸





Kaluga


In the morning, an uncrewed aerial vehicle (UAV) struck the Shaykovka Military Airfield in the Kaluga Region. It was reportedly another quadcopter attack, and an aircraft "not in use" was damaged, according to the same people that called a Tu-22M3 strategic bomber burning to the ground

²⁸ <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/110951>

as “damaged.”²⁹ ³⁰ Tu-22M3 bombers have operated from Shaykivka, launching missile strikes on Ukraine.³¹

Moscow

At least two drones attacked Moscow, with light damage reported in the Strogino and Krasnogorsk districts.³² In Strogino, it appeared the drone was intercepted by air defenses, with the concussion  [setting off car alarms](#).³³ A blurred video released by Russian state media suggests that the drone  [struck the city](#).³⁴ In Krasnogorsk, at least two highrise apartment buildings have light to moderate damage, including windows blown out and two balconies knocked off one building. Debris from the drone  [littered the street](#), and it was unclear if the drone was disabled by electronic warfare or  [crashed in the area](#).³⁵ ³⁶

Partisans  [destroyed another railroad relay cabinet](#) in Moscow, causing delays in rail service.³⁷

²⁹ https://t.me/ukrarmed_forces/5998

³⁰ <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/111007>

³¹ <https://t.me/vchkogpu/41046>

³² <https://t.me/vchkogpu/41056>

³³ <https://twitter.com/i/status/1693788203721834594>

³⁴ <https://twitter.com/i/status/1693781349763547482>


³⁵ <https://twitter.com/igorsushko/status/1693790245077271027>

³⁶ <https://twitter.com/i/status/1693790483233865836>

³⁷ https://t.me/shot_shot/55848

Russian propagandist Margarita Simonyan and head of the Russian state media agency Russia Today, formerly known as RT, decided that operational security (OPSEC) didn't matter and complained on social media that a drone was shot down near her villa in Knyazhe Ozero, outside of Moscow.³⁸ In the post, she shared the likely location of her home, and the smoke rising in the distance was used to geolocate where the drone was likely shot down. This data will help Ukrainian forces improve future drone attacks.³⁹

Buryatia

Record rainfall caused a dam to collapse in the Buryatia region. The flood washed away sections of the Baikal-Amur highway,  [including road and railway bridges](#).⁴⁰ The destroyed dam is being filled in, and the railway track of the washed-out section of the Baikal-Amur highway is being restored. The rail line will be disabled at least until August 24, impacting military and civilian logistics in the region.

³⁸ <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/111026>

³⁹ <https://t.me/vchkogpu/41034>

⁴⁰ <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/110959>

BELARUSIAN FRONT

On Monday, the United States Embassy in Minsk, Belarus, posted on Twitter (X) that all U.S. citizens should “depart the country immediately.”⁴¹ The advisory was issued because Lithuania closed two border crossings on August 18, and Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia are discussing all border crossings by the end of August. If the closures happen, the only way a U.S. national can leave Belarus is through Russia.

THEATERWIDE

Minister of Energy for Ukraine Herman Halushchenko said the energy grid would be ready for the winter. “If there will be blackouts, they will result from attacks on our power system and will be temporary.” Russia is widely expected to restart its terror attacks on civilian infrastructure in the fall.⁴²

In the Cherkasy region, a military commissar employee and two accomplices are accused of receiving a \$3,000 bribe. A

⁴¹ https://twitter.com/Gerashchenko_en/status/1693652885739815256

⁴² <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/111022>

manager within the commissariat, a healthcare worker, and a civilian were notified they were under investigation. One has been detained, while two others have a pending court hearing. The trio was allegedly paid \$3,000 so that an unnamed person who was mobilized would be listed as a conscript. While the individual would still be serving in the armed forces, conscripts are barred from joining combat units, even if they volunteer.⁴³

A Colonel in the Armed Forces of Ukraine from Mykoliav was notified they were under criminal investigation for continuing to pay some of his subordinates even though their military service had ended.⁴⁴ Over 5.4 million hryvnia was improperly paid, and collection action is ongoing. The SBI did not indicate if the payments continued due to dereliction of duty or intentional misconduct.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy announced that Greece is joining the fighter plane coalition and will help train F-16 pilots.⁴⁵

⁴³ <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/111014>

⁴⁴ <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/110958>

⁴⁵ <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/111019>



The table for equipment losses was **updated on August 21, 2023**, and includes the losses suffered during the Prigozhin Insurrection of June 23 – 24.

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RUSSIA VS. UKRAINE HEAVY EQUIPMENT LOSSES

Russian and Ukrainian visually confirmed heavy equipment losses sourced from the [Oryx Database](#) from February 24, 2022, to August 21, 2023. 11,791 Russian (including [Chef's Rebellion](#)) vs. 4,206 Ukrainian

Equipment	Russian Losses	Ukrainian Losses	Ratio	Change
Main Battle Tanks	2108	268	7.87:1	↓
Medium Duty Tanks	145	351	0.41:1	—
Armored fighting Vehicles	949	308	3.08:1	—
Infantry Fighting Vehicles	2680	698	3.84:1	—
Armored Personnel Carriers	343	325	1.06:1	—
MRAPs	46	142	0.32:1	↓
Infantry Mobility Vehicles	202	359	0.56:1	—
Command and Communications Vehicles	247	16	15.43:1	↑
Engineering Vehicles	335	74	4.52:1	↑
Towed Artillery	283	148	1.91:1	—
Self-Propelled Howitzers/Mortars	499	206	2.42:1	↓
MLRS	256	50	5.12:1	↑
SAMs	162	127	1.28:1	↑
Mobile Radars	43	73	0.59:1	↑
EW/ECW	50	4	12.50:1	↑
Winged Aircraft	86	69	1.25:1	↑
Helicopters	109	32	3.41:1	↑
Naval Vessels	13	27	0.48:1	—


RUSSIAN MOBILIZATION, MOBIKS, AND MIR


Rosgvardia Special Purpose Mobility Units (OMON) are searching for up to 100 Storm-Z penal soldiers who fled from occupied Staromlynivka as Ukrainian forces advance closer to the logistics and supply node on the Surovkin Line's second echelon.⁴⁶ Storm-Z is a quasi-private military company that reports to the Russian Ministry of Defense and is controlled by Minister of Defense Sergei Shoigu. The lack of discipline, fratricide, and desertion has plagued the PMC since its formation in February 2023.

PMC Wagner Group leader Yevgeny Prigozhin released a video  [claiming he was in Africa](#) and that Wagner Group was consolidating its operations on the continent.⁴⁷ While he hinted that Wagnerites are still operating worldwide, the available evidence shows that a large reorganization in Belarus is not happening. All Wagner mercenaries were ordered out of Ukraine by the Russian Ministry of Defense, and the last active Wagner base in the Rostov region was closed on July 30. The PMC also suspended all recruiting "indefinitely" and is facing financial challenges after the failed June 23, 2023 insurrection.

⁴⁶ <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/111040>

⁴⁷ https://twitter.com/Gerashchenko_en/status/1693693122532802850

WarGonzo leader Seymon Pegov interviewed two mobiks from Novosibirsk and probably didn't get the responses he hoped for. The pair said that when they were in Moscow wearing their uniforms, people moved away from them, and  [called them "murderers" for fighting in Ukraine](#).⁴⁸ There have been other reports from other soldiers who have rotated back to Russia and went through the same experience.

On the talk show, This Evening with Vladimir Solovyov, the Russian propagandist insisted that Moscow  [use tactical nuclear weapons on Ukraine](#).⁴⁹ As the panel discussion became heated, one of Solovyov's guests exclaimed, "For God's sake, this is our territory!" Solovyov responds, "This isn't our territory yet. It's occupied by lowlives!"⁵⁰

Presidential press secretary Dmitry Peskov has not publicly appeared for three weeks. His last press briefing was on August 4th, and on August 6th, the New York Times wrote that Peskov said, "Our presidential election is not a real democracy, but an expensive bureaucracy," adding, "Putin

⁴⁸ <https://twitter.com/wartranslated/status/1693533407454572789>

⁴⁹ <https://youtu.be/7lxwBh5wDF0>

⁵⁰ <https://twitter.com/VladaKnowlton/status/1693755717361205349>

will be re-elected next year with more than 90% of the vote." When asked about the status of Peskov, the Kremlin claimed he was on an unannounced vacation with ~~Igor Strelkov Girkin and Sergey Surovikin~~ and would return in two days.⁵¹

ECONOMIC

Kyiv is working on a solution to provide insurance to cargo ships transporting grain, meal, and edible oils through the Black Sea. The Financial Times wrote that the Ukrainian government is in discussions with Ukrainian and international banks and insurance groups, including Lloyd's of London.⁵²

Bloomberg reported that Russian oil and refined oil product sales, except for aviation fuel, plummeted during the first three weeks of August.⁵³ Part of the problem is the price for most Russian energy products exceeds the price cap, making legitimate sales difficult and closing the gap between the Russian discount rate and regular spot market prices. By August 18, petroleum product exports were down

⁵¹ <https://t.me/rusbrief/147245>

⁵² <https://t.me/ShrikeNews/10056>

⁵³ <https://t.me/rusbrief/147283>

14%, at the lowest level since July 2022. Shipments to China, Singapore, and Turkey declined, and crude oil shipments to Pakistan were terminated. We had reported in July that India was reducing shipments because of a glut in supply.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ <https://t.me/rusbrief/147283>

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 only use their reports to identify combat locations. We no longer consider their territorial control changes due to a three-month pattern from June to August 2023 of repeated publication of blatant disinformation and a years-long pattern of denying 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.