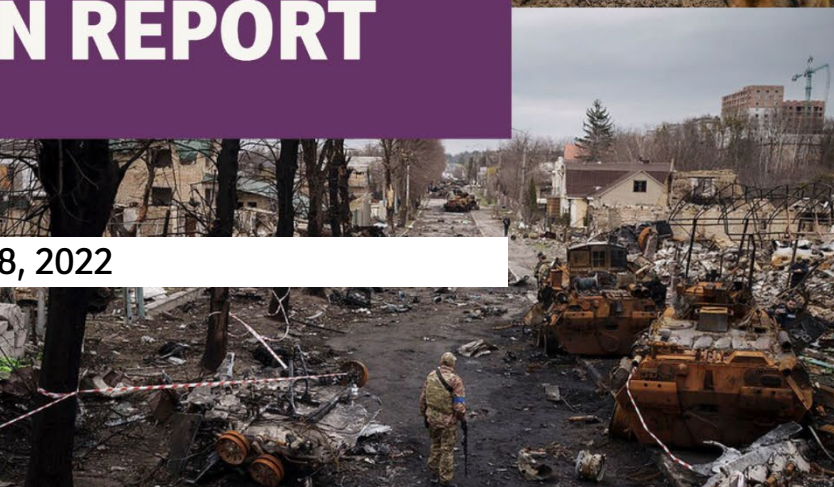




**MALCONTENT NEWS
RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR
SITUATION REPORT**



May 18, 2022



Malcontent News

Russia-Ukraine War SITREP

5/18/22 22:30 PDT

Malcontent News is an independent group of journalists and researchers located in the United States, Canada, Ukraine, Israel, Georgia, and the United Kingdom. We are part of Badon Hill Group, LLC, and operate independently from all entities.

We are funded through Patreon, grants, donations, and aided by volunteers. For media inquiries, you can contact social@malcontentnews.com. For news tips, you can contact our newsroom at tips@malcontentment.com.

[Patreons at the Bronze level or higher](#) get access to the annotated Russia-Ukraine War Situation Report (SITREP). Patreons at the Silver level or higher get a monthly Q&A viz Zoom Meeting with our Chief Content Officer or other senior staff.

This update is copyright © 2022, by Badon Hill Group LLC, all rights reserved. Authors: David H. Obelcz, Jeff Davis, and with special thanks to David Batashvili of the [Rondeli Foundation](#)

The assessments and opinions expressed in the Malcontent News SITREP are not representative, endorsed, or reflect the views of the Rondeli Foundation. We are grateful for the foundation's work to assess and verify territorial control changes and their permission to provide maps for our Situation Report.



Contents

SUMMARY – DAY 84	3
DAILY ASSESSMENT	5
TODAY’S WAR IN UKRAINE MAP.....	9
DONBAS REGION.....	10
LUHANSK.....	11
Severodonetsk Salient.....	11
Severodonetsk Westward Offensive	12
DONETSK TO WESTERN ZAPORIZHIA.....	13
SOUTH DONBAS – AZOV SEA.....	16
KHARKIV REGION.....	19
NORTHERN KHARKIV COUNTEROFFENSIVE.....	19
IZYUM AXIS	21
DNIPRO, KHERSON & MYKOLAIV, ZAPORIZHIA REGION	23
CHERNIHIV & SUMY REGION	23
KYIV REGION	24
BLACK SEA & ODESA REGION.....	24
WEST REGION	24
THEATERWIDE & EXTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS.....	25
WAR CRIMES AND HUMAN RIGHTS	26
GEOPOLITICAL	27
ECONOMIC.....	27

SUMMARY – DAY 84

It has been 12 weeks since the start of the Russia-Ukraine War and 3,002 days since Russia began its occupation of Crimea on February 27, 2014.

Russian forces dramatically increased the targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure across Ukraine across the entire line of conflict along with Chernihiv and Sumy Oblasts. There is a lack of clarity on if and where Ukrainian forces are east of the Siverskyi Donetsk River, east of Kharkiv.

Russian forces have at least 14 Battalion Tactical Groups (BTG) attacking the Severodonetsk Salient from Kreminna to Popasna. Russian troops are exerting tremendous pressure on Ukrainian lines of defense but could not gain control of additional settlements. On May 17, Russian forces took control of Orikhove, north of Popasna. Russian forces also made a slight advance west of the town.

Pro-Russian social media accounts and bloggers are overstating the tactical situation around Lyman. Russian forces have advanced closer from the north, but reports of Yarola and Drobysheve under Russian control are false.

Statements that Russian troops crossed the Siverskyi Donets River at Yampil and the Ground Line of Communication (GLOC – aka supply line) to Lysychansk are cutoff are also false.

On the South Donbas and Zaporizhia front, Russian forces have advanced on Novoselivka Druha, but the settlement remains contested. The breakthrough of Ukrainian lines last week has made little progress. From Donetsk city to Hulyaipole and Orikhiv in the Zaporizhia Oblast, Russian forces have employed artillery, MLRS, and airstrikes but did not attempt any offensive operations.

After 956 Ukrainian marines, national guard, territorial guard, and police surrendered as part of a preplanned prisoner of war swap in Mariupol, Russian forces restarted airstrikes and artillery fire on the Azovstal Metallurgical Plant. There are reports that insurgents in Melitopol assassinated several high-ranking Russian officials, and a Russian armored train was successfully attacked.

Ukrainian forces liberated the settlement of Dementiivka north of Kharkiv, 8 kilometers from the Russian border and 12 kilometers from the last major border crossing controlled by Russian west of the Siverskyi Donets. Pro-

Russian social media accounts claim that Ukrainian forces now control Zarichne.

Russian forces have been unable to advance south from Izyum and have focused resources on supporting the Severodonetsk westward offensive. Ukrainian forces have significantly increased supply interdiction and attacks on Russian bases and assets.

Russian forces continue to build defenses and concrete fortifications in Kherson, Mykolaiv, and Zaporizhia Oblasts. Offensive operations have been limited to artillery exchanges, skirmishes, and aerially reconnaissance.

Russia has reestablished a small garrison on Snake Island.

DAILY ASSESSMENT

The Ukrainian tactical situation around Severodonetsk has deteriorated in the last 48 hours as Russian troops continue to advance to the outskirts of the nearly abandoned city. The situation is similar at Lyman, where Russian forces are advancing on two axes, but the settlement is not at imminent risk of capture.

Ukrainian forces have been stretched to the limit in defense of the Luhansk Oblast but are maintaining the line of conflict. Russia has gone all-in to capture Luhansk and dedicated almost all its available reserves to the offensive.

North and east of Kharkiv, Ukrainian troops, mostly the Kraken Group and territorial guard, are pushing Russian forces further north and appear to have successfully crossed to the east bank of the Siveskyi Donetsk River. It still isn't clear where or how they crossed the river or the size of the force.

Russian forces have dramatically expanded cross-border shelling in Chernihiv and Sumy Oblasts and targeted civilian infrastructure across Ukraine. This is almost certainly an attempt to hold Ukrainian forces in place and prevent additional troops from moving to defend Siverskydonetsk and pressure Izyum.

Supply logistics issues are hampering Ukrainian forces on the front lines. The problem is the last mile and a lack of trucks to streamline the delivery of ammunition.

We maintain the following:

1. Phase 2 of the war in Ukraine is over
2. Without a general mobilization of the Russian military and a formal declaration of war, Russia will likely work to secure Luhansk and Kherson Oblasts and parts of the Donetsk and Zaporizhia Oblasts to establish a land bridge with Russia
3. If this becomes the new goal, Russia is highly likely to use these territorial gains to launch a renewed invasion of Ukraine in the future
4. If Russia can press for a ceasefire with new territorial gains, they will attempt a new invasion after reconstituting the military and use hybrid warfare to create a more favorable international climate
5. A 21st Century version of World War I trench warfare continues¹ along most of the line of conflict between Ukraine and Russia, with artillery used as the primary weapon
6. The Russian military continues to prioritize the killing of civilians and the destruction of civilian infrastructure, wasting critical military resources on non-critical targets

¹ <https://twitter.com/mdmitri91/status/1527026768426811392>

7. Russian forces can still make territorial gains by concentrating power in small target areas

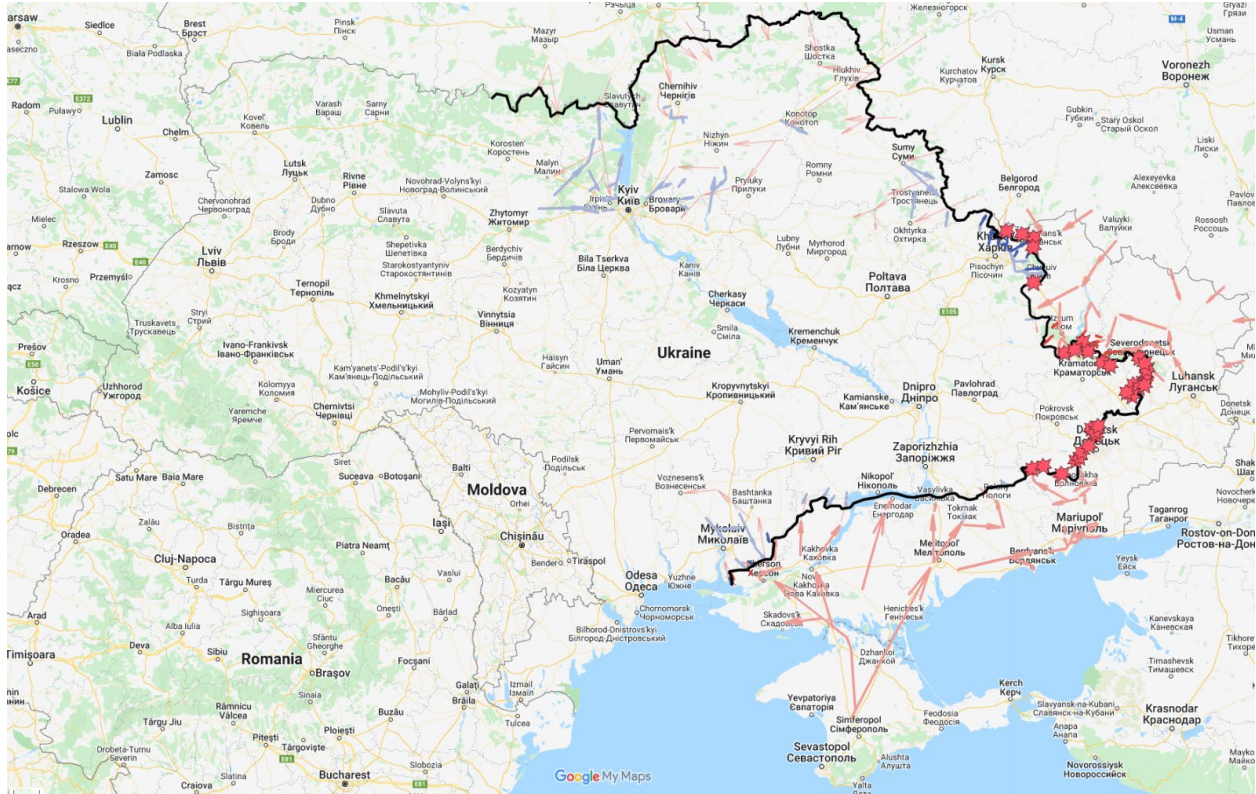
We maintain Russia has enough resources if used strategically to capture the Severodonetsk region. We believe the current advances are not due to a strong strategic plan but achieved by brute force. We do not believe that Russia has enough resources to control and hold that territory in the medium and long term.²

We further assess that Ukraine will have the resources and capability to take the initiative along multiple axes within the next 25 to 40 days. Ukraine will have to work to resolve logistical issues to maintain operational tempo.

We remain concerned that we are stuck in the Mutual Assured Destruction Instability Paradox.

² <https://twitter.com/mdmitri91/status/1527026764404359169>

TODAY'S WAR IN UKRAINE MAP



DONBAS REGION

Russian forces made minor territorial gains.

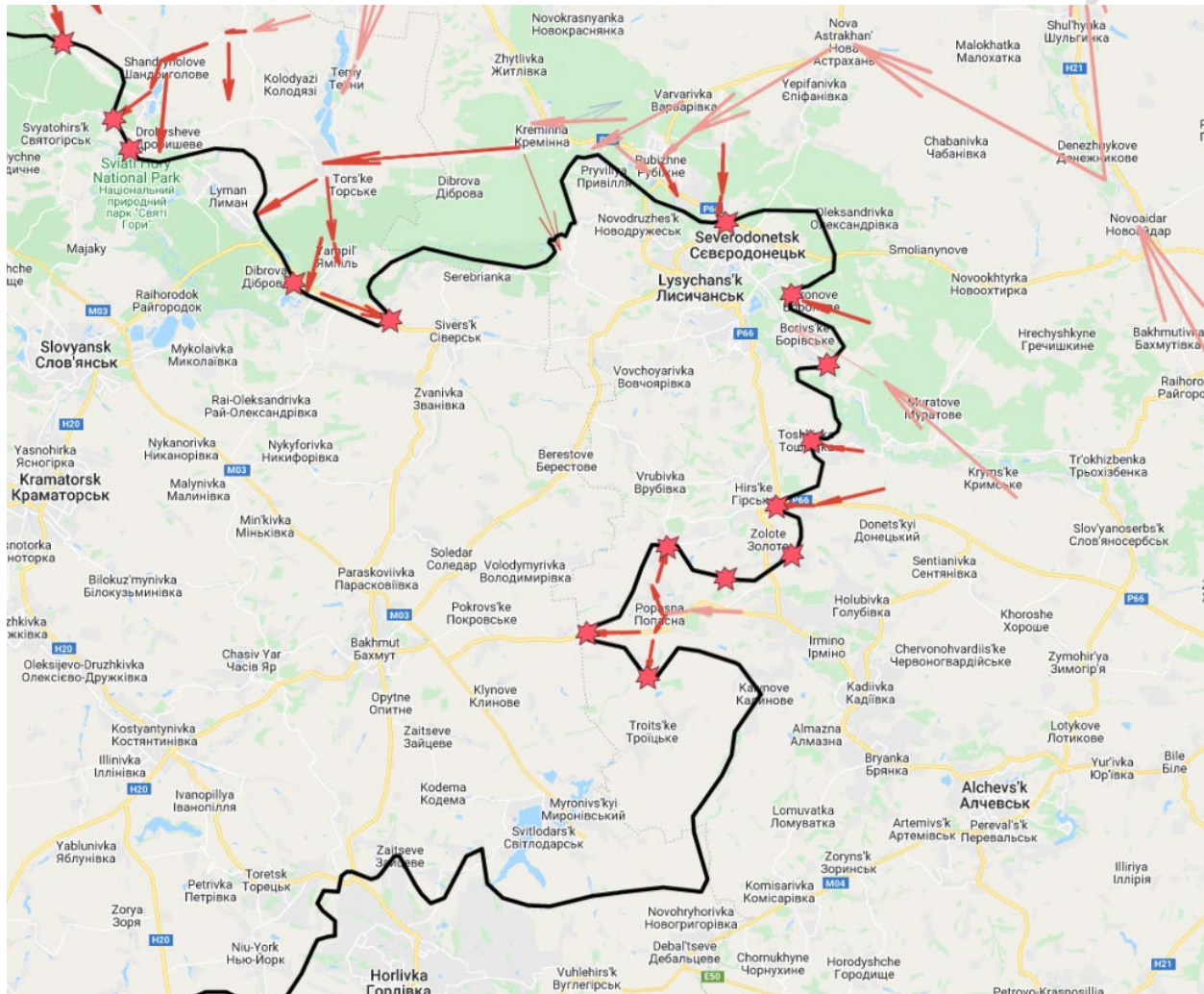
Russian forces restarted artillery fire and airstrikes on the Azovstal Metallurgical Plant.

There are reports that spontaneous protests in Russia-controlled Luhansk, Rovenky, and Donetsk have erupted by members of the families of persons who were forcibly mobilized into the ranks of the Russian occupation forces. Protesters are demanding the return of loved ones sent to fight. The dissatisfaction is growing due to lack of progress, high casualties, and the Russian government refusing to pay restitution and disability for people killed or wounded in action.³

³ <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/319830030330082>

LUHANSK

Severodonetsk Salient



Russian forces did not attempt to advance on Severodonetsk, using artillery along a static line of conflict and probing Ukrainian positions.

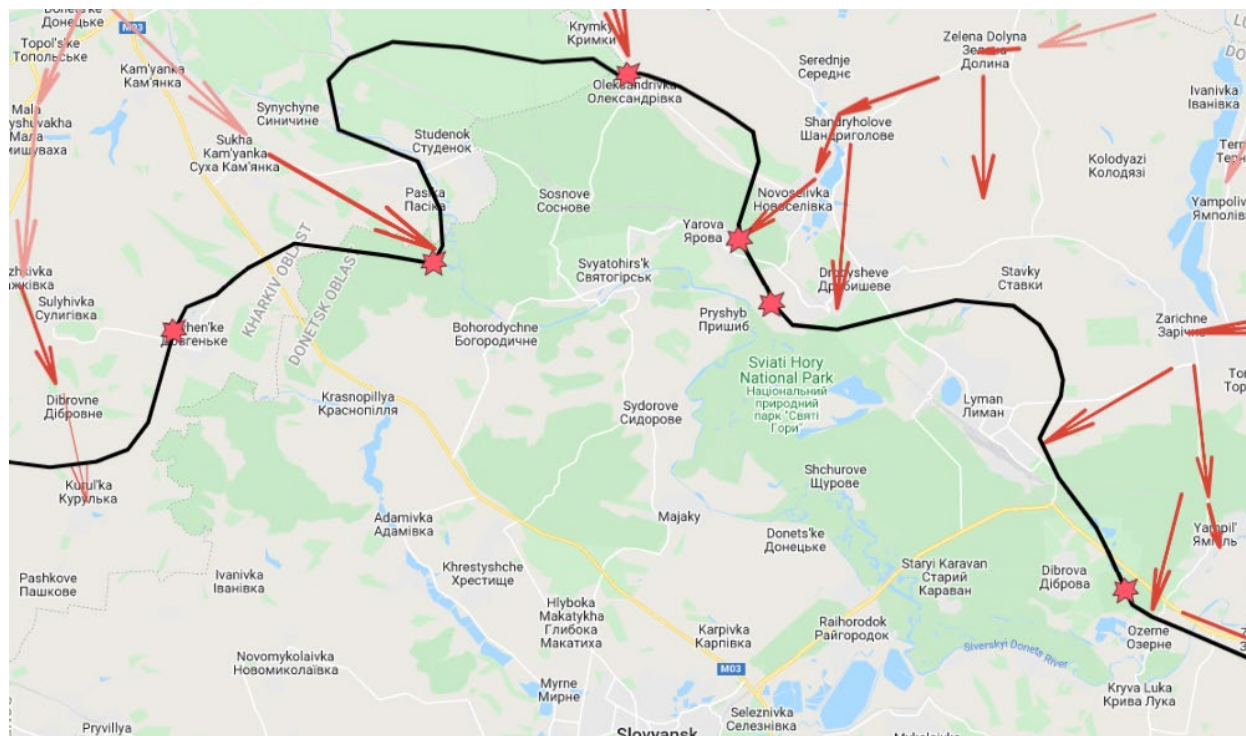
The aggregated force of Russian, Wagner Group PMC, Chechen, and Russia-backed militias were able to occupy Orikhove and Novozvanivka on May 17 near Popasna. A small advance toward Bakhmut was made, and the city is now within Russian artillery range. An artillery barrage on the town targeted civilians and civilian infrastructure. There is more information in the **War Crimes and Human Rights** section.

Pro-Russian accounts released a video showing replacement troops being oriented in Luhansk. Half were ill-equipped, and it appeared from the content of the video they were untrained in operating as a squad and weapons handling.⁴

Severodonetsk Westward Offensive

Russian forces occupied Derylove on May 17 – although the settlement is not strategic. The settlements of Drobysheve and Yarova remain contested. Russian forces are attacking Lyman on two sides but have not surrounded the settlement.

⁴ <https://twitter.com/ilias90sam/status/1527001931012616193> [Russian State Media Rating: Valid]



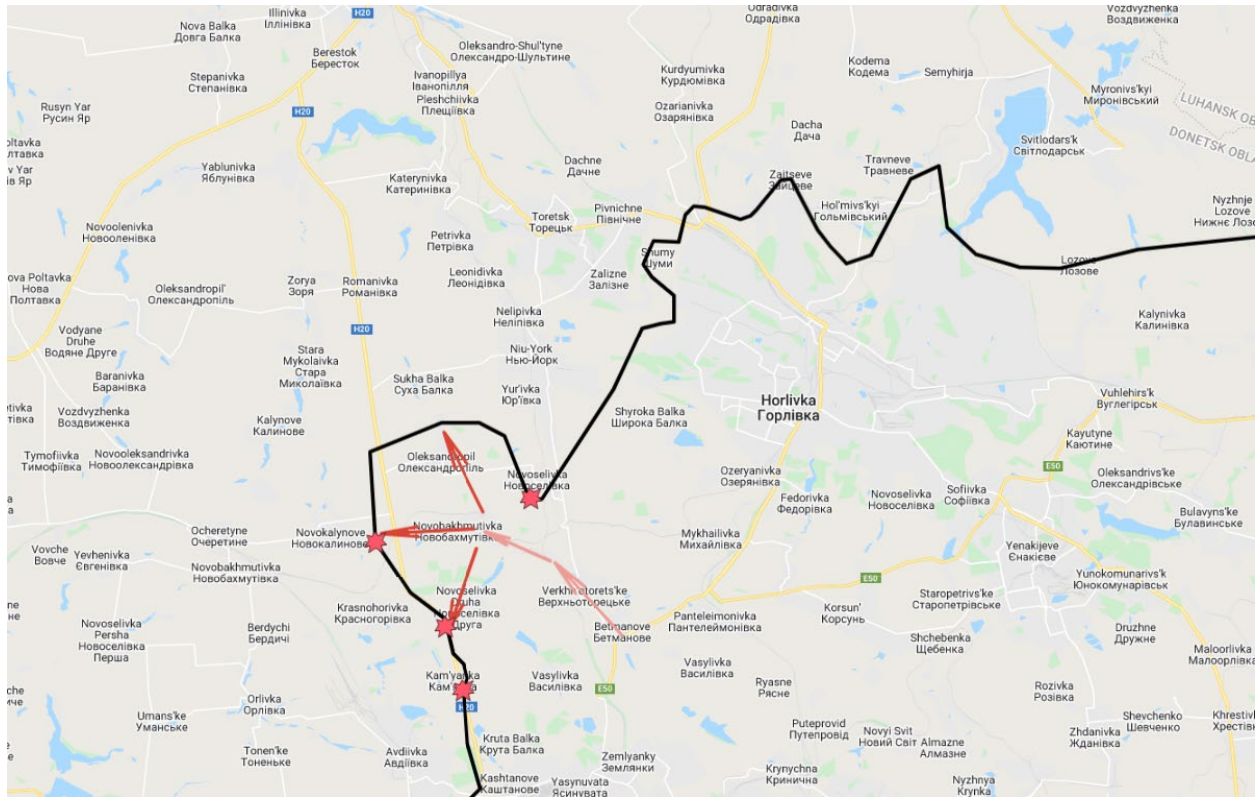
DONETSK TO WESTERN ZAPORIZHIA

Russian forces continued to shell Ukrainian-controlled areas from Horlivka to Velyka Novosilka and further west into the Zaporizhzhia Oblast to Hulyaipole and Orikhiv.

The Ukrainian General Staff reported an attack on Avdiivka was unsuccessful, which is supported by social media reports.^{5 6} Russian forces also attempted to secure Novoselivka and Novobakhmutivka but were unsuccessful.

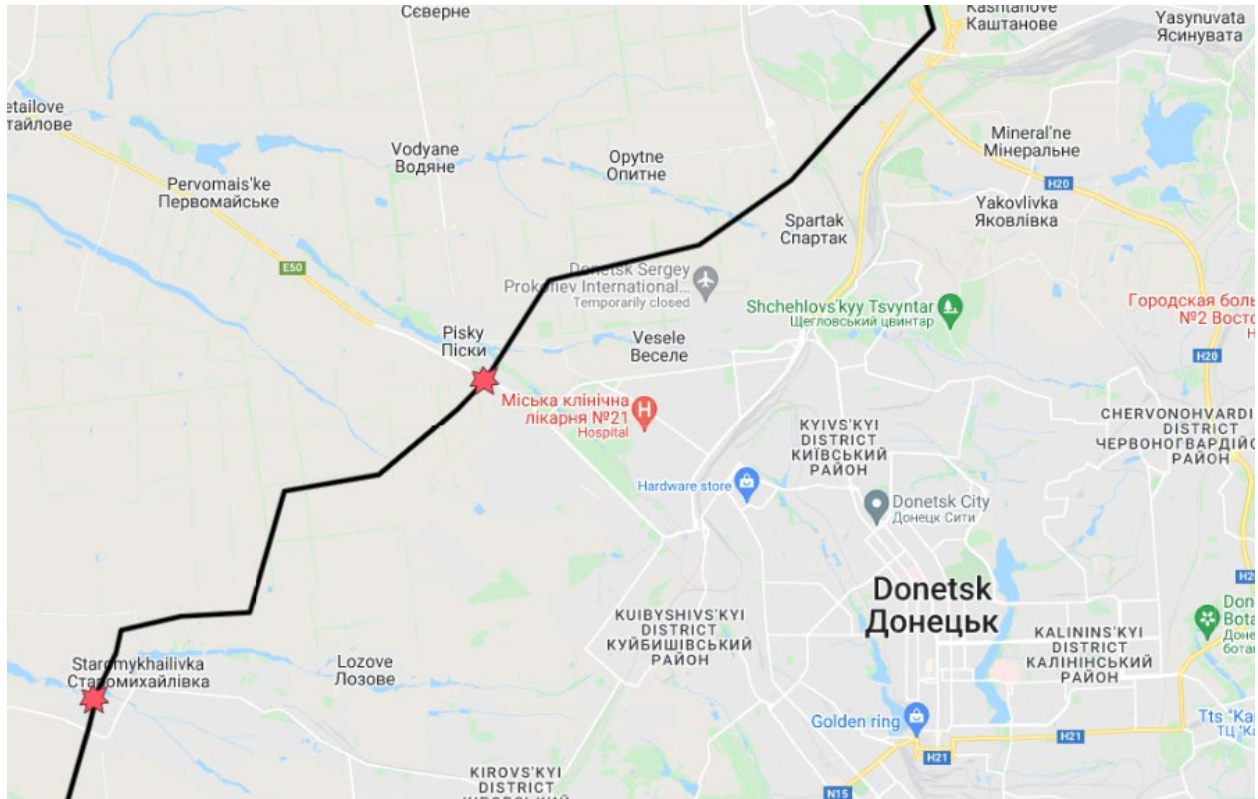
⁵ <https://twitter.com/VigilantinfoN/status/1527101231981662209>

⁶ <https://twitter.com/cathy39637692/status/1527102862823661568>



Ukrainian forces pushed back an attack launched from Vesele, just 9 kilometers from Russia-controlled Donetsk city. Earlier claims by Pro-Russian accounts that Troitske is occupied were untrue.⁷

⁷ <https://twitter.com/GarryP40090847/status/1526943496422170625>



There are reports that Ukrainian forces shelled Russian-controlled Yasinovataya, a suburb of Donetsk city.⁸

Russian forces destroyed a school building in Yehorivka. There were no reports of injuries.⁹

⁸ <https://twitter.com/DemeryUK/status/1526993723644592128>

⁹ <https://twitter.com/GirkinGirkin/status/1526957240460226568>



Russian forces continue to fire artillery at civilians and civilian infrastructure in Orikhiv.

SOUTH DONBAS – AZOV SEA

Russian state media reported that 959 Ukrainian marines, Azov Battalion members, national guard, territorial guard,

and police officers surrendered from the Azovstal Metallurgical Plant On May 16-17.¹⁰

Russian State Media reported that all defenders surrendered, and an unknown number, including the military leaders, remained in the factory. The Ukrainian General Staff said that Russia renewed shelling and launched multiple airstrikes on the factory.¹¹

There are reports that Russian civil engineers attempted to repressurize the public water system in Mariupol, causing street flooding due to significant, unaddressed damage.¹²

The Mariupol City Council reports a tank of concentrated hydrogen sulfide solution was leaking at the plant and could cause environmental damage.¹³

ASSESSMENT: Hydrogen sulfide is highly corrosive and extremely toxic. We find it unlikely there is a severe leak at the plant.

¹⁰ <https://twitter.com/KyivIndependent/status/1526868221046964233>

¹¹ <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/319830030330082>

¹² <https://twitter.com/brianmcarsales/status/1527014867613503488>

¹³ <https://www.newsweek.com/mariupol-steel-plant-bomb-leaks-ukraine-1707820>

ASSESSMENT: Ukrainian marines have held for 27 days since “victory” was declared in Mariupol and 78 days after encirclement. We cannot access if Russian forces will cease bombardment and ground assaults on the Azovstal Metallurgical Plant or when the final holdouts will surrender.

Insurgents have increased activity in Melitopol. An explosive charge damaged one of Russia's infamous “armored trains” operating in the region since the early weeks of the war.¹⁴ The attack is said to have damaged two railroad cars carrying Russian soldiers and left the train stranded.¹⁵ There are reports backed by Western intelligence that the insurgency has grown fierce, with assassinations, car bombings, and disappearances of Ukrainians who aligned themselves with Russian occupiers and Russian military officers.¹⁶

¹⁴ https://twitter.com/Gerashchenko_en/status/1526891771870978048

¹⁵ [Mirror of the Week via Yahoo!News](#)

¹⁶ <https://twitter.com/MattiasSvea/status/1526952788055425025>

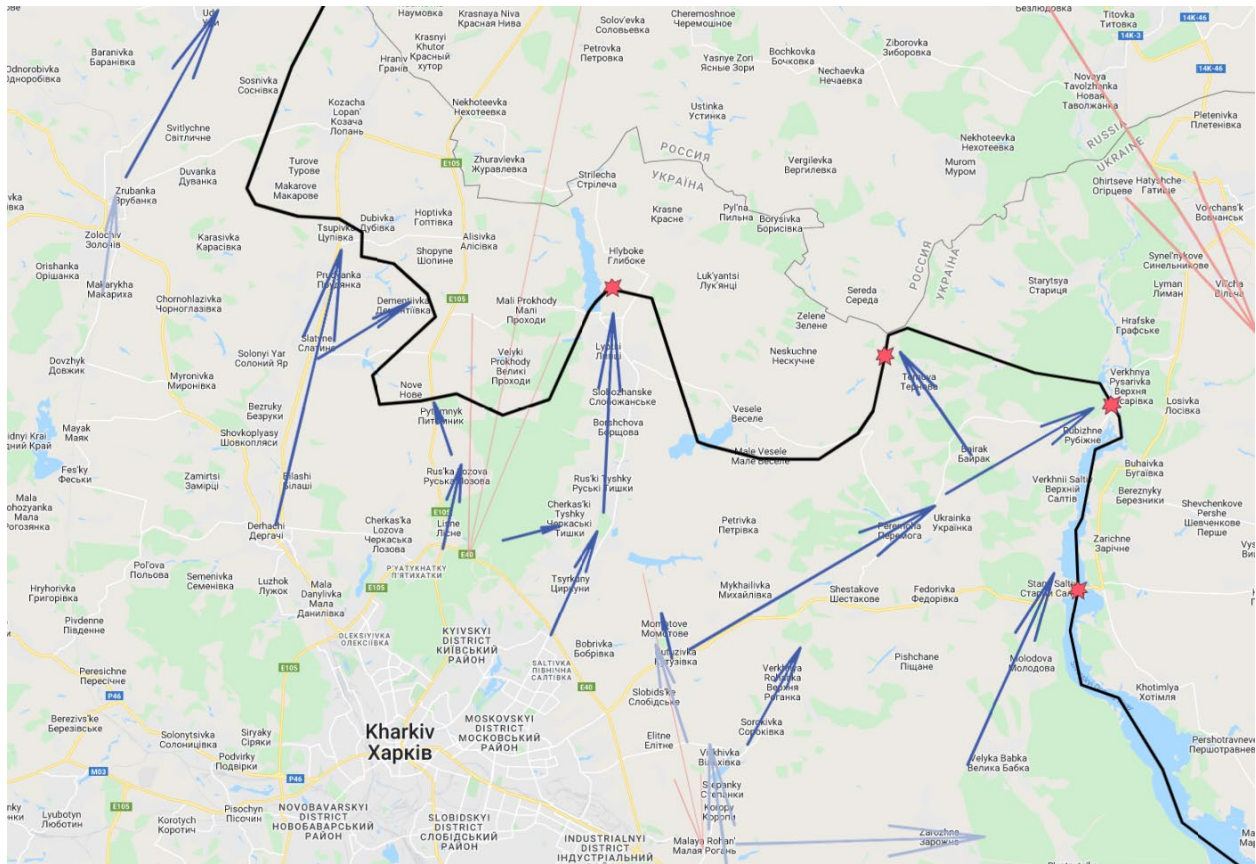
KHARKIV REGION

NORTHERN KHARKIV COUNTEROFFENSIVE

Ukrainian forces liberated the settlement of Dementiivka, north of Kharkiv and 12 kilometers from the border crossing at Nekhoteyevka, Russia.¹⁷ This is the only major border crossing Russia controls west of the Siverskyi Donets River in the Kharkiv Oblast. Ukrainian forces are six kilometers away from a concentration of Luhansk People's Republic militia members encircled by Ukrainian forces to the south and Russian troops refusing to allow them to cross the Russian border from the north.

Russian forces are fighting at Ternova, along the Russian border.

¹⁷ <https://twitter.com/KyivIndependent/status/1526988884026040320>



There is confirmation that Ukrainian forces have crossed the Siveskyi Donets River east of Kharkiv and multiple reports they now control the settlement of Zarichne.^{18 19}

Russian troops continue to shell civilians and civilian infrastructure north of Kharkiv.

¹⁸ <https://twitter.com/MalcontentmentT/status/1527095930146521088>

¹⁹ <https://twitter.com/Anapurnaiii/status/1527100466693283840> [Russian State Media Rating: Misinformation]

ASSESSMENT: Russian forces will attempt to hold the salient north of Kharkiv and continue to attack Ukrainian positions, civilians, and civilian infrastructure. We do not believe Russia has the resources to reinforce these positions. We are now convinced that Ukrainian forces have established a bridgehead on the east of the Siveskyi Donets River.

IZYUM AXIS

Russian forces did not launch any attacks along the line of conflict while firing artillery and MLRS on Ukrainian positions.

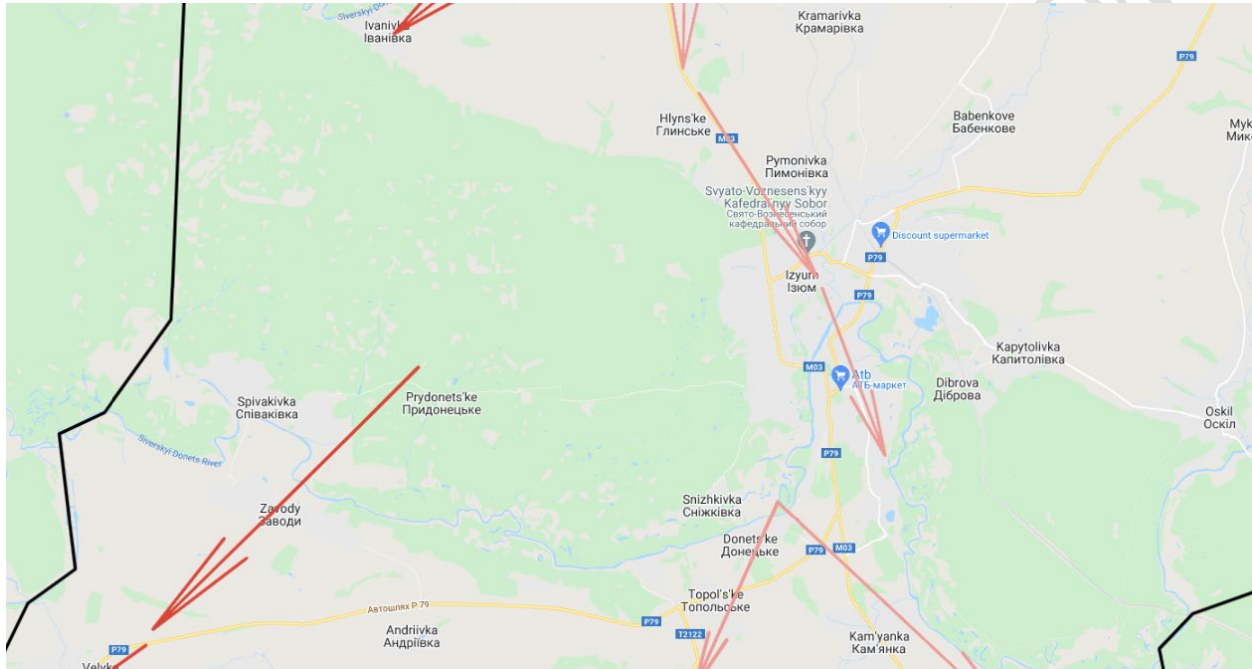
Ukrainian forces have significantly increased supply interdiction and attacks on Russian positions behind Izyum.

An ammunition depot was destroyed in Balakliya, in the northeast region of the Izyum axis.²⁰

A Russian electronic warfare station with supporting combat equipment was destroyed in Hlynske, six

²⁰ <https://twitter.com/TpyxaNews/status/1526950827335852034>

kilometers north of Izyum.²¹ An anti-aircraft site with supporting vehicles was also destroyed by Ukrainian artillery on May 17.²²



A Russian Su-34 was shot down near Kupyansk, deep within Russian-controlled territory.²³

ASSESSMENT: It remains challenging to get a clear picture of the Izyum axis situation. Russia now has five BTGs on the western flank. Still, two of them, the infamous 64th Separate Motorized Rifle Brigade and the 76th Guards Air

²¹ https://twitter.com/Blue_Sauron/status/1526992526711857152

²² https://twitter.com/Arslon_Xudosi/status/1526527403690020872

²³ <https://twitter.com/mdmitri91/status/1527037737303433223>

Assault Division, have suffered significant losses since they arrived in Ukraine.

DNIPRO, KHERSON & MYKOLAIV, ZAPORIZHIA REGION

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

CHERNIHIV & SUMY REGION

Russian cruise missiles struck a military training building in Desna, Chernihiv Oblast.²⁴ The attack killed eight people, and the training center was destroyed in the attack.

Russian forces carried out a significant attack on the border town of Seredyna-Buda in the Sumy Oblast. Fighting was reported to have lasted two hours. Later in the day, Russian forces shelled an additional unnamed settlement in the Sumy Oblast from across the international border.²⁵

²⁴ <https://twitter.com/WARUKRAINE2022/status/1527042854610165760>

²⁵ <https://twitter.com/sumynvu/status/1526972018171822089>

KYIV REGION

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

BLACK SEA & ODESA REGION

Russia has reestablished a garrison on Snake Island with a "few dozen people." They have been placed there to provide anti-aircraft support.²⁶

ASSESSMENT: We believe a land invasion by Russian forces backed by Transnistrian militia is unlikely.

WEST REGION

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

²⁶ <https://twitter.com/mdmitri91/status/1527026770800689153>

THEATERWIDE & EXTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS

Finland and Sweden submitted their formal applications to join NATO on May 18 and are already facing resistance. Croatia and Turkey object to their membership.²⁷

President Zoran Milanović said on Wednesday that he would instruct Croatia's Permanent Representative to NATO, Ambassador Mario Nobile, to vote against the admission of Finland and Sweden to the alliance until the election law in Bosnia and Herzegovina is amended.

Milanović believes that Croatia should not cease making Finland's and Sweden's membership of NATO conditional on the issue of the equality of Bosnia and Herzegovina Croats in elections.

"That is not an act against Finland and Sweden, but it is for Croatia," Milanović said.

Turkey's ambassador to Sweden told officials in Stockholm that the Scandania country must cut its ties with a Syrian Kurdish militia, or its attempt to join NATO will be

²⁷ [Total Croatia News](#)

blocked.²⁸ Turkey views the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG) as a terrorist organization.

On May 16, the United States Senate completed one of three procedural votes to approve a \$39.8 billion aid package for Ukraine.²⁹ The measure passed 81-11 with all "no" votes from the Republican party. Senator Rand Paul wanted an inspector general to oversee the funds but declined an offer from Senate leaders to hold an amendment vote on his proposal. Rewriting the bill to satisfy Paul's request would delay authorization even longer. The United States will run out of funds on May 19 to aid Ukraine if the measure does not pass and get to President Joe Biden's desk.

WAR CRIMES AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Russian forces shelled the city of Bakhmut in the Donbas, targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure. Five people were killed on May 17, including a child.³⁰

Human Rights Watch released a report documenting Russian atrocities and war crimes in the Kyiv and Chernihiv

²⁸ <https://www.ft.com/content/d4fbc603-dae5-4a65-8c8f-093d6f8da918>

²⁹ [Reuters](#)

³⁰ <https://twitter.com/KyivIndependent/status/1527016989511847937>

Oblasts during the occupation in March. The investigation identified 32 summary executions, nine unlawful killings, six disappearances, and seven cases of torture.³¹

Satellite images have located a fourth mass grave, this one within Mariupol. The gravesite was a subject of Associated Press pictures on March 15, the same day the reporters were evacuated.³² Another mass grave site has expanded so quickly that there are no longer markers or records on who is buried there.³³

GEOPOLITICAL

The United States embassy in Kyiv officially reopened, with diplomats returning to the Ukrainian capital. The United States would not report on the security detail, but typically it would comprise members of the United States Marine Corps.³⁴

ECONOMIC

³¹ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/05/18/ukraine-executions-torture-during-russian-occupation>

³² https://twitter.com/pravda_eng/status/1526283860492836865

³³ <https://twitter.com/WarInUkraine22/status/1526240160949719040>

³⁴ <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/05/18/russia-ukraine-live-updates.html>

Head of the Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) Denis Pushilin admitted that over 60% of all buildings in Mariupol are damaged beyond repair and will have to be torn down. Additionally, he reported the factory would be torn down after its capture.

Azovstal was one of the most extensive steel and iron plants in Europe generating billions of dollars in economic revenue.

Pushilin claims the area will be turned into a technology park and Mariupol converted into a resort city on the Black Sea. The funding would come from Russia and be overseen by Chechen officials.

The rouble improved to a near-record exchange rate of 63 for 1 US dollar. Russia took draconian banking measures to artificially prop up the currency and prevent a flood of roubles from leaving the country.

Oil prices were mixed, with WTI flat and Brent increasing in price. WTI held steady at \$114 a barrel while Brent crude rose to \$114. United States wholesale gasoline futures reached \$4.00 a gallon. (\$1.06 a liter)