



MALCONTENT NEWS RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR SITUATION REPORT



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Malcontent News

Russia-Ukraine War SITREP

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SUMMARY – DAY 72

It has been 2,990 days since Russia first invaded Ukraine on February 27, 2014.

The Ukrainian counteroffensive north and east of Kharkiv city is the first operation over a broad front conducted by national forces, and it has been successful. Russian forces were pushed back northeast of Kharkiv city along a 22-kilometer front giving up 144 square kilometers of territory in 24 hours. Additionally, Tsyrkuny is contested, with Ukrainian forces taking partial control. Finally, Pechenihiy was liberated again.

At the Severodonetsk salient, Russian forces made small gains north of Severodonetsk, advancing on Vojevodivka. Control of the suburb is contested, with both belligerents claiming to have captured and then liberated the town twice over the last 24 hours. The capture of the settlement would put additional pressure on Ukrainian forces defending Rubizhne.

Russian assaults west of Severodonetsk and Popasnya focused on artillery and MLRS bombardment. There was no change in territorial control.

Along the Severodonetsk westward offensive, Russian forces fire artillery and MLRS into a broad area east of Lyman. The offensive to capture the settlement of Shandryolove was launched from Zelena Doynna and entered its third day. Russian forces made small gains but did not gain control of the town.

On the South Donbas Axis, there was artillery fire along the entire front from Horlivka to Velyka Novosilka and further west into the Zaporizhia Oblast to Huyaipole. Russian forces made small gains southwest of Velka Novosilka but have not taken control of additional settlements.

There was a pause in the fighting in Mariupol, with the United Nations reporting that 500 civilians were evacuated by bus. Russian forces are accused of firing antitank weapons at a group of civilians attempting to leave the city in a car convoy. Fighting continues at the Azovstal Metallurgical Plant and artillery, MLRS, and tank fire. Kremlin Press Secretary Dmitry Peskov declined to answer questions about the planned May 9 Victory Day parade in Mariupol and if it will still happen. Beyond the 1,250 to 1,500 combat-capable Ukrainian marines that remain within Azovstal, credible reports indicate significant insurgent activity in Mariupol.

On the Izyum front, the line of conflict has been fundamentally unchanged for eight days, with Russian forces unable to gain new territory. Ukrainian artillery fire west of Izyum continues to strike at a wide unpopulated area.

Russian forces didn't launch any offensives in the Zaporizhia, Kherson, or Mykolaiv Oblasts.

We cannot verify claims that the Russian frigate Admiral Makarov was hit by a Neptune antiship missile, damaged, or sunk. We have highly reliable intelligence that there was an "incident" on the Admiral Makarov and that it was able to return to Sevastopol, where at least 30 ambulances were waiting.

Tensions remain high in Transnistria, but there were no new developments.

ASSESSMENT: The counteroffensive north and east of Kharkiv city is more significant than initially believed. A salient has formed north of the Kharkiv city from Tsupivka to Peremoha. There is evidence that retreating Russian

forces are being attacked with artillery at the bridge in Prylipka. This is the last eastward connection over the Severskyi Donets River. If Russian troops lose control of the bridge or it's destroyed, they'll be forced to retreat north through Russia.

The Ukrainian military is making a statement about their capabilities in eastern Ukraine by dedicating resources to the Kharkiv counteroffensive. It appears the Ukrainian General Staff believes they have enough force strength to keep the current Russian advance in the Donbas locked in place.

Russian forces likely don't have the option to divert troops from Izyum to slow, stop, or counter the Kharkiv counteroffensive. Only 3 BTGs are defending against widespread interdiction on the westernmost Ground Line of Communication (GLOC). Additionally, Russian military leaders decided to withdraw four combat ineffective Battalion Tactical Groups (BTG) on May 4, with the current line of conflict locked in place.

The Izyum front may be stalled due to the loss of senior military leaders when a command post was attacked in Zabavne on April 30.

Russian forces have not been able to make meaningful territory gains across the Donbas since capturing Zarichne a week ago. Nineteen days after declaring victory in Mariupol, fighting continues at Azovstal, and there is a growing insurgency.

Russian commanders decided to withdraw ten BTGs from Mariupol, storm the Azovstal Metallurgical Factory with the remaining 2,000 troops and left no meaningful resources to control the shattered city. That's in addition to maintaining control of 100,000 people resistant to occupation. Instead of repairing critical infrastructure and winning hearts and minds, Moscow focuses on Stalin-era Russification by replacing Ukrainian/English highway signs with Russian ones.

NATO M777 155mm artillery, Brimstone missiles, and Switchblade drones have entered the battlefield. A flood of NATO and former Warsaw Pact lethal military hardware will be in the hands of trained Ukrainian forces in the next 30 to 40 days.

We have low confidence that Russian forces can achieve significant encirclements of Ukrainian troops in eastern

Ukraine nor make a coordinated advance on Mykolaiv and Kryvyi Rih. We have no belief that the Russian military can do both simultaneously and achieve their military goals.

The Reverse Side of the Medal (RSOTM) Telegram channel, run by Wagner Group PMC military contractors, declared Russia needs to deploy 600,000 to 800,000 troops to win the war in Ukraine.¹ Our analysts published a similar number, 660,000, on March 16.

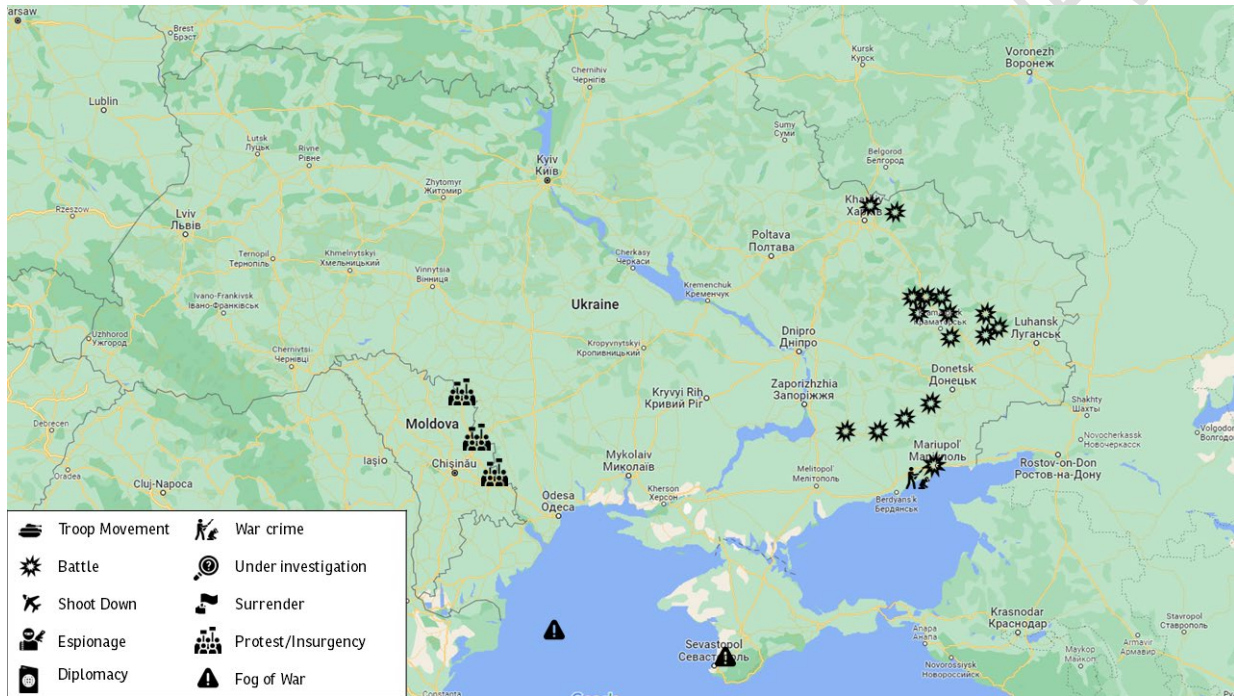
We expect Russian forces to launch widespread attacks between May 7 and May 9 to provide **something** as a propaganda victory. It is possible pockets of Ukrainian forces could be overrun, but we have no confidence Russia can maintain territorial gains.

We now believe that the Phase 2 offensive is over. The extensive use of widespread artillery attacks by both belligerents over the last three to four days provides a proof point the war has entered Phase 2A, a war of attrition.

¹ <https://twitter.com/RALee85/status/1522712443134357507?s=20>

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

KEY EVENTS MAP



DONBAS REGION

There were minor changes in territorial control in the Severodentsk salient and the Severodonetsk westward offensive.

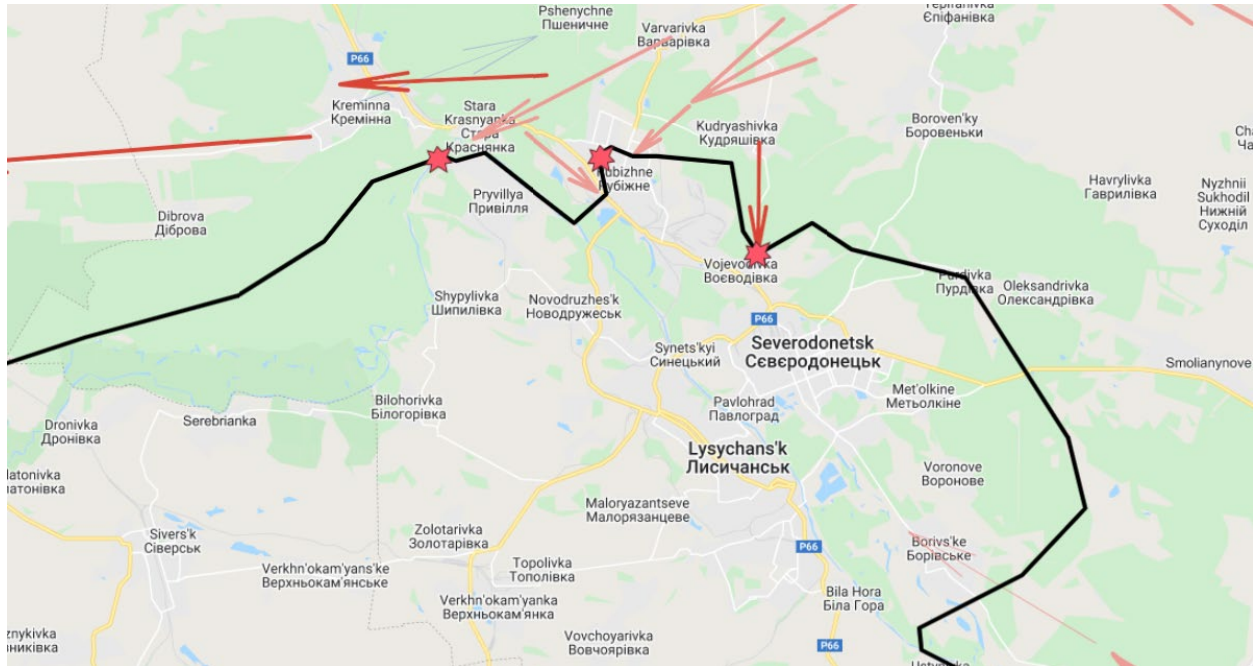
LUHANSK

Severodonetsk Salient

Fighting continued in Rubhizne with no change in territorial control. Russian, Chechen, Wagner Group Private Military Company (PMC), and Russian-backed militias fired artillery and MLRS on the western outskirts of Severodonetsk. The suburb of Vojevodivka went through two cycles of capture and liberation. We believe control is contested.

Russian forces are likely trying to bypass Rubhizne from the east and interdict Ukrainian GLOC, preventing resupply, troop rotation, and reinforcements.

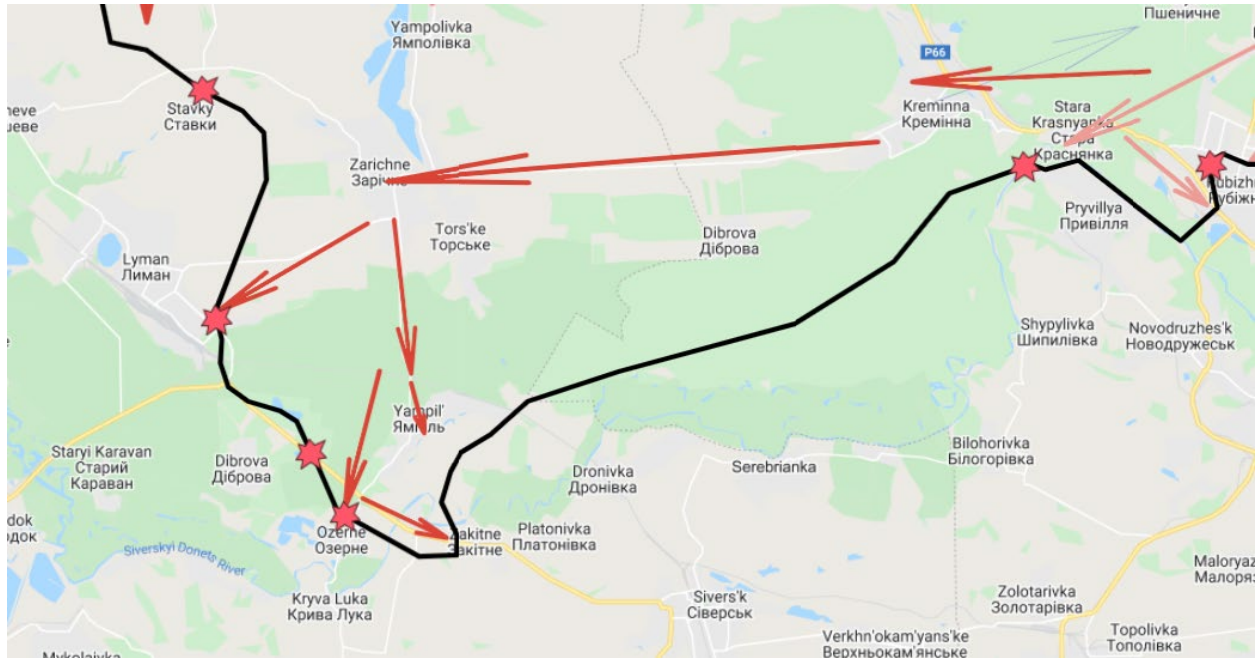
There was continued fighting in Popasna and Oriklove with no territorial control change.



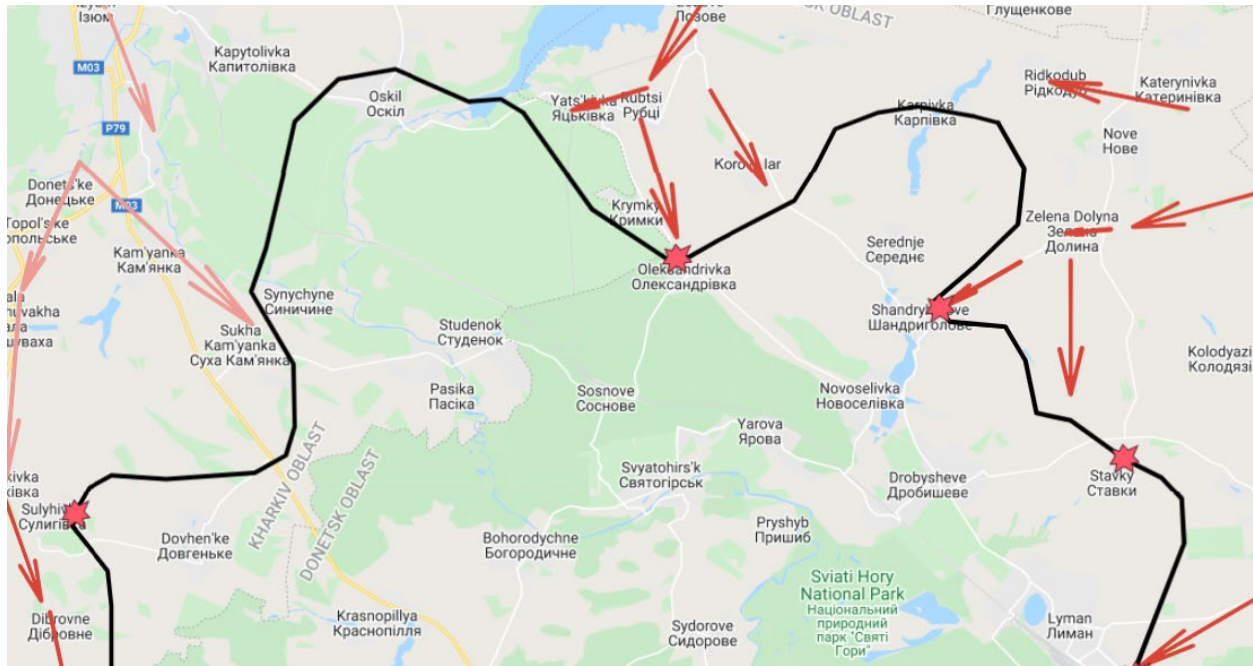
Severodonetsk Westward Offensive

There was a minor change in territorial control on the western tip of the Russian offensive and southeast from Torske. We maintain the southern part of Torkse, and all of Yampil are contested.

Russian forces continued to fire artillery and MLRS, including thermobaric weapons, in the same areas as on May 4 and 5. Russian troops made no attempts to gain new territorial control towards Lyman.



Russian forces attempted to capture Shandryholove for the third day but were unsuccessful. We verified the attacks were launched from Zelena Dolyna. Russian troops have advanced approximately 2 kilometers southwest since the small offensive started.



DONETSK TO WESTERN ZAPORIZHIA

Russia's attempt to capture Markina on May 5 was unsuccessful. The reports that Russian troops had captured Troitske were untrue, and we've moved the settlement back under Ukrainian control.

There was scattered fighting and artillery barrages along the entire line of conflict from Horlivka to Velyka Novosilka and further west into the Zaporizhia Oblast to Huyaipole.

SOUTH DONBAS – AZOV SEA

Russian ground forces continued their attack outside and within the compound of the Azovstal Metallurgical Plant in Mariupol.² The compound continued to be attacked by artillery, tanks MLRS, and naval bombardment.

The United Nations announced they were able to evacuate approximately 500 civilians from the Azovstal factory on May 5.³ Russian forces are accused of firing antitank weapons at least one car attempting to evacuate with the convoy. More information is in the **War Crimes and Human Rights Section**.

The United Nations will attempt to rescue civilians through another convoy on Saturday. The Ministry of Defense ceasefire agreement is from 08:00 to 16:00 Moscow time.

It appears the Victory Day parade planned for Mariupol has been canceled. During a press conference at the Kremlin, Press Secretary Peskov evaded a question about the parade

² https://twitter.com/nexta_tv/status/1522473758165979138

³ <https://twitter.com/UNGeneva/status/1522527593798324226>

saying, "The time will come to mark Victory Day in Mariupol."⁴

ASSESSMENT: Ukrainian marines have held for 15 days since "victory" was declared in Mariupol and 66 days after encirclement. We can no longer assess when or if the defensive forces will collapse, be eradicated, or surrender. We believe that the small contingent of Russian troops left in Mariupol will attempt an all-out assault on May 7 or May 8 in an attempt to eliminate all resistance by Victory Day.

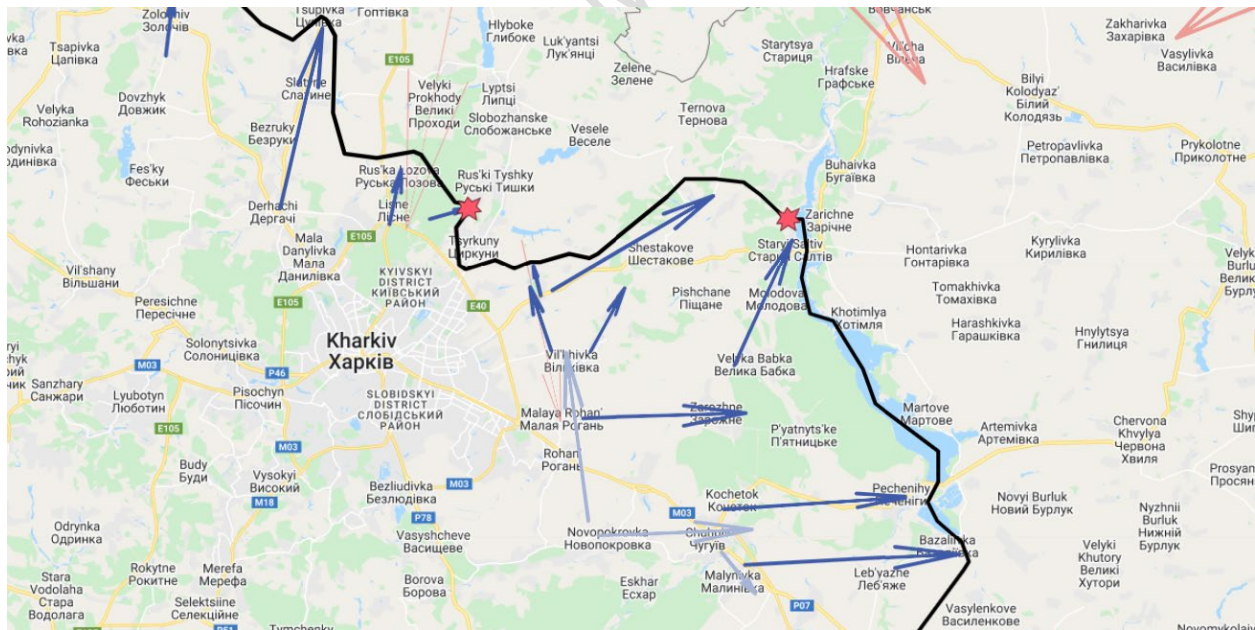
The removal of all but 2 BTGs from Mariupol despite the city not being pacified and a belligerent force controlling a central part of the city is another indication that Russia does not have enough combat effective troops to succeed the Donbas.

⁴ <https://twitter.com/SamRamani2/status/1522533968754757634>

KHARKIV REGION

NORTHERN KHARKIV COUNTEROFFENSIVE

Ukrainian forces launched a more expansive counteroffensive north and east of Kharkiv, liberating over 144 square kilometers of contiguous territory in the last 24 hours. The Ukrainian General Staff reported the towns of Oleksandrivka (northeast of Kharkiv city on the T2104 Highway), Fedorivka, Ukrainka, Shestakovo, and Peremoha were liberated. Ukraine has taken back control of the T2104 Highway from Kharkiv to the Severskyi Donets River.



Our assessment that Ukrainian forces were advancing on Ruski Tyshky and Cherkaski Tyshky from Ruska Lozova was correct. The town of Cherkaski Tyshky is in disputed control, with Ukrainian forces controlling the western half.

With the bridge over the Kharkiv River destroyed, Russian troops can only retreat to the east. Russian forces in Tsyrkuny are cut off from their GLOC and are at risk of encirclement with limited options for retreat routes.

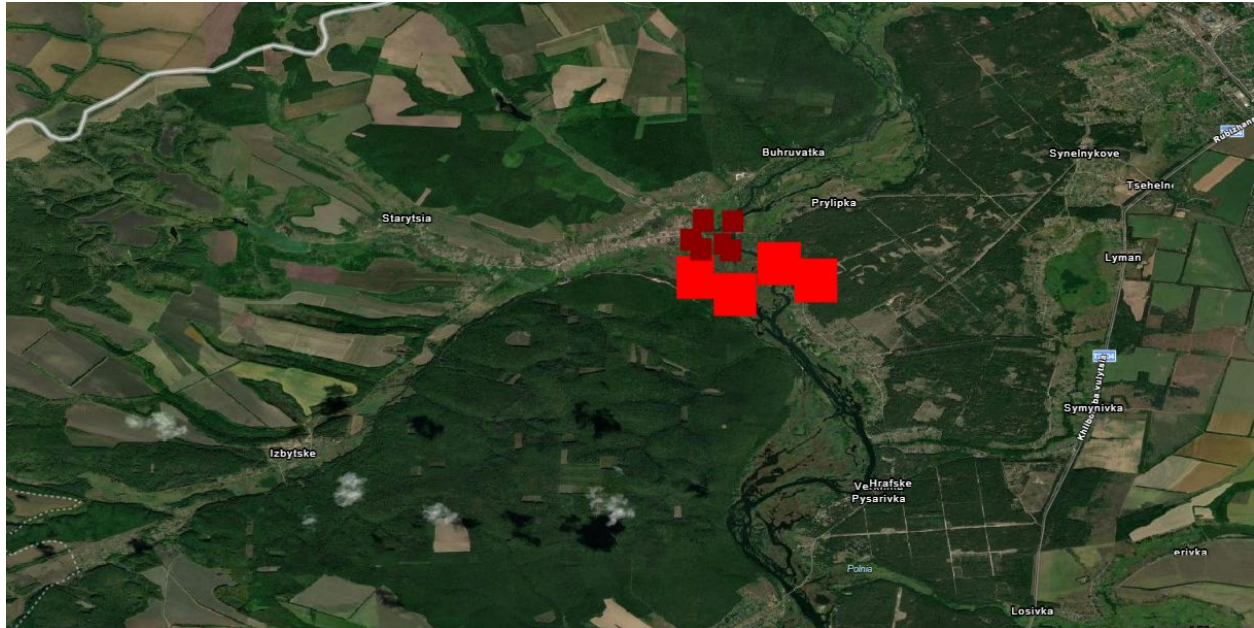
Additionally, Pechenihy is considered fully liberated again and under Ukrainian control.

A salient is forming from Tsupivka to Peremoha, about 36 kilometers across and 10 kilometers deep. Ukrainian forces are likely to continue the counteroffensive to eliminate the bulge and move Russian troops out of tube artillery range of Kharkiv city.

We are moving Ruski Tyshky to Russian-controlled.

NASA FIRMS data indicated that Ukrainian forces are attacking the retreating Russian troops west of Prylipka.

The last bridge over the Siverskyi Donets River that Russia still controls is in the settlement.



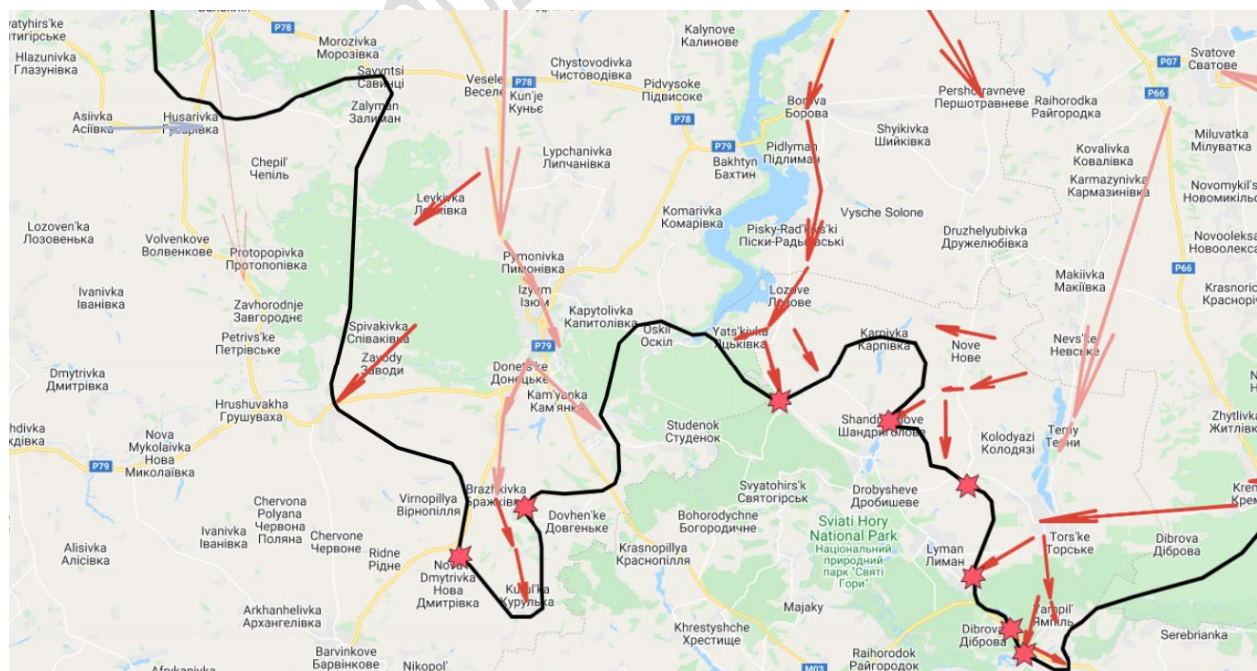
ASSESSMENT: The relief of Kharkiv from constant artillery fire will be a relief and morale-boosting victory for Ukraine. The current advance won't impact GLOC supporting Izyum but could serve as a springboard to advance on the strategic city of Kupyansk.

Alternatively, Ukrainian forces could keep pushing northeast and attempt to liberate Vovchansk. Capturing the town would cut off the shortest road route from Belgorod to Izyum.

If the NASA FIRMS data is accurate and Russian troops are retreating from northern Kharkiv Oblast, Russian commanders are faced with a difficult choice. If they believe that keeping Kharkiv partially surrounded is critical to achieving success in Eastern Ukraine, they will need to transfer troops from the Izyum front.

IZYUM AXIS

There was no change in territorial control or significant offensive operations. Ukrainian and Russian forces traded artillery and MLRS fire across the whole axis. Russian troops have been unable to advance a single kilometer in eight days and are experiencing heavy losses.



ASSESSMENT: The lack of progress south of Izyum could be caused by losing senior military officers on April 30, when a command post in Zabavne was attacked. Major General Andrey Simonov was reportedly killed in the attack.⁵

We anticipate significant offensive operations between May 7 and 9, with Victory Day looming.

DNIPRO, KHERSON & MYKOLAIV, ZAPORIZHIA REGION

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

CHERNIHIV & SUMY REGION

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

⁵ <https://euromaidanpress.com/2022/05/02/ukrainian-forces-hit-russian-command-post/>

KYIV REGION

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

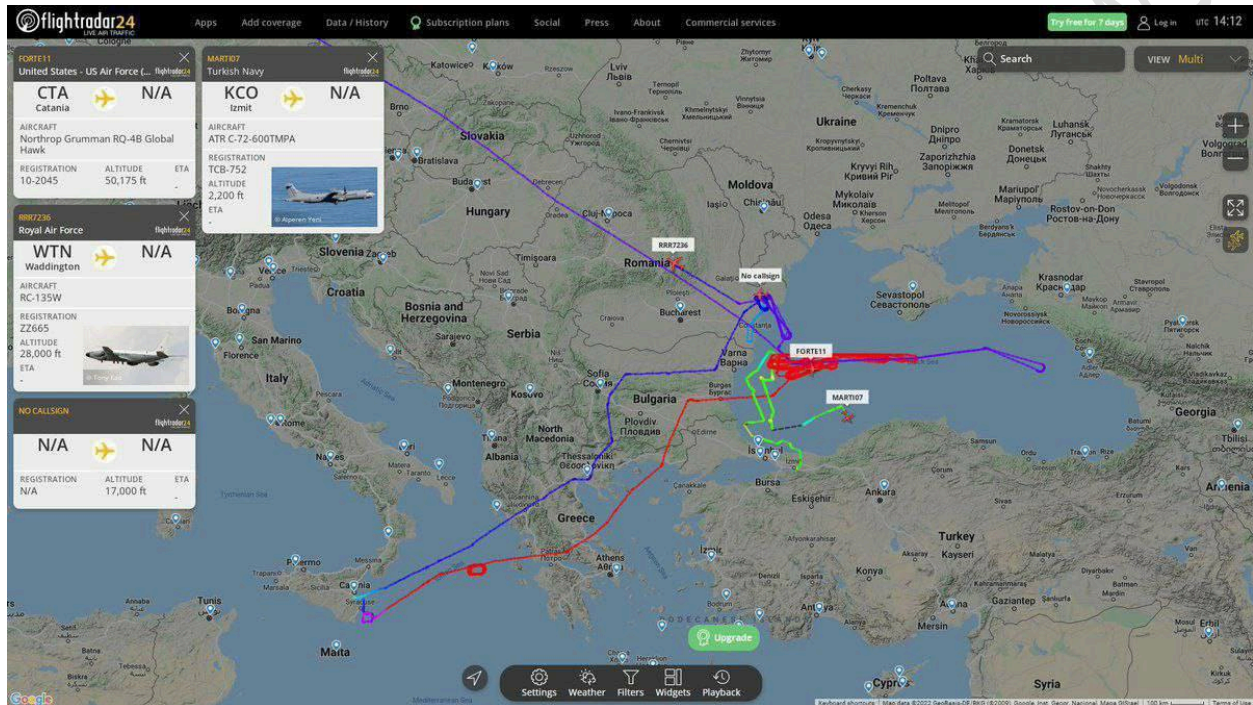
BLACK SEA & ODESA REGION

There continues to be conflicting information on the status of the Russian frigate Admiral Makarov. On May 5, reports indicated that the warship, the newest member of the Black Sea fleet launched in 2017, had been hit by a Neptune land-to-sea antiship missile. After researching the claims, we concluded that this was likely a disinformation campaign.

On May 6, there was new data and information which indicated there was a high probability of an "incident." The United States, British, Turkish, and eventually Russian intelligence-gathering assets converged in the same area off of Snake Island. Resources operating over the Black Sea are routine, but so many aircraft (and one ship) loitering in the same tight airspace is unusual.

Russian, United States, and Ukrainian military leaders declined to comment. Two Ukrainian politicians have claimed the Admiral Makarov was sunk. The Ukrainian

General Staff made no mention of any naval incident in either May 6 update. Russian Press Secretary Peskov said he had no information about an attack on any vessel.⁶



United States Department of Defense Press Secretary John Kirby said, "We've been looking at this all day," adding they had no additional information.

There is a very credible report late on May 6 that the Russian frigate was badly damaged in an undisclosed "incident" but was able to sail back to Sevastopol overnight

⁶ [Maritime Executive](#)

under its own power.⁷ The report added that over 30 ambulances transferred “badly injured” crewmembers to a military hospital.

ASSESSMENT: We believe this report is highly credible. There was significant evidence that an incident happened in the western Black Sea late on May 5 that caught the attention of multiple militaries. It is possible an antiship missile hit the vessel. Another possibility is that Admiral Makarov struck a mine.

If the Admiral Makarov is badly damaged, it will be hard to conceal long-term.

ASSESSMENT: We believe a land invasion by Russian forces backed by Transnistrian militia remains possible but is remote.

WEST REGION

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

⁷ <https://twitter.com/OSINT88/status/1522742457317961728>

THEATERWIDE & EXTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS

United States President Joe Biden announced another \$150 million in military aid to Ukraine. The package includes 25,000 rounds of 155mm ammunition, counter-artillery radar, jamming equipment, and spare parts.⁸

The White House announced that President Biden would sign the Ukraine Democracy Lend-Lease Act on May 9.⁹

Video of the first use of a United States Switchblade 300 kamikaze drone in Ukraine was released today. The antipersonnel version of the drone made a direct hit in front of the narrow slit of a machine gun bunker. The drone fired metal pellets into the bunker, wounding or killing anyone inside. The video demonstrates how precise the weapon system is, with two to three Russian soldiers outside of the bunker able to run away.¹⁰

There is a large fire burning in Kursk, Russia. The cause and exactly where has not been determined.¹¹

⁸ [Associated Press](#)

⁹ <https://twitter.com/OstapYarysh/status/1522617758973845504>

¹⁰ <https://twitter.com/RALee85/status/1522573394855743488>

¹¹ <https://twitter.com/visegrad24/status/1522698270010716161>

WAR CRIMES AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Russian forces are accused of firing on a vehicle in Mariupol carrying evacuees, killing one person, and badly wounding six.¹²



GEOPOLITICAL

Barbel Bas, President of the German Parliament, will be visiting Kyiv on May 8 to meet with Ukrainian President

¹² <https://twitter.com/Hromadske/status/1522558296233709569>

Volodymyr Zelenskyy.¹³ President Zelenskyy extended an invitation to German Chancellor Olaf Scholz to visit Kyiv on May 9. Scholz is already scheduled to meet with French President Emmanuel Macron in Berlin on May 9, so it is unlikely the Chancellor can accept the invitation.

Belarus President Alexander Lukashenka told the Associated Press that he was doing everything possible to stop Russia's war against Ukraine.¹⁴

"But I am not immersed in this problem enough to say whether it goes according to plan, like the Russians say, or like I feel it. I want to stress one more time, I feel like this operation has dragged on," Lukashenka said during the nearly 90-minute interview at the Independence Palace in Minsk.

Lukashenka also said it would be "unacceptable" to use nuclear weapons in the conflict, but he couldn't say if Russia has such plans.

¹³ <https://twitter.com/KyivIndependent/status/1522604325796777987>

¹⁴ <https://www.rferl.org/a/lukashenka-ukraine-war-ap-interview/31835763.html>

"Whether or not Russia is capable of that -- is a question you need to ask the Russian leadership."

ECONOMIC

The rouble declined slightly to 67 to 1 US dollar.

Oil and gasoline prices climbed higher, with WTI closing at \$110 a barrel, Brent at \$113, and United States wholesale gasoline jumping to \$3.82 a gallon. (\$1.01 per liter)

DISINFORMATION EVALUATION

No update