



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



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Malcontent News

Russia-Ukraine War SITREP

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SUMMARY – DAY 126

It has been 18 weeks since the start of the Russia-Ukraine War and 3,044 days since Russia occupied Crimea on February 27, 2014.

The situation in the Severodonetsk salient is complex, with continued reports from Pro-Russian accounts that Ukraine is withdrawing or has withdrawn from the city. There are repeated claims that Ukraine withdrew from Pryvillia. However, no videos, pictures, or state media reports have been produced to back up any of these reports.

There is significant evidence that Russian forces have seized control of parts of the Bakhmut-Lysychansk T-1302 Highway Ground Line of Communication (GLOC – aka supply line).

The line of conflict south and southwest of Lysychansk is little changed in the last 24 hours. Russian forces still control Bila Hora and have likely advanced past the children's hospital and into the residential neighborhoods in the southeastern Lysychansk lowlands. This area is contested, with fighting continuing at the rubber factory.

The battle for control of the gelatin plant has entered its sixth day.

NASA FIRMS data suggests there is intense fighting in Pidlisne. It is unlikely the state of control has changed, and this may represent a spoiling attack by Ukraine to ease pressure over the fight to control the oil refinery.

Russian forces have not been able to advance into the Verkhokamyanka oil refinery. Instead, they flanked the facility to the south, crossed the T-1302 Highway GLOC, and severed it. NASA FIRMS data suggests intense fighting in the eastern part of Verkhokamyanske.

Russian forces also crossed the T-1302 Highway GLOC west of Mykolaivka and advanced into Spirne. The settlement is contested.

The remainder of Russian combat activity was limited to artillery, Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) rockets, airstrikes, and minor skirmishes across the rest of Ukraine.

Kremlin-backed Killnet launched cyberattacks on Norwegian government websites in response to Norway

blocking land and air transit of sanctioned Russian goods to Svalbard. Norway insists it's only enforcing existing sanctions, and port access to the archipelago remains unrestricted.

DAILY ASSESSMENT

We assess the following:

1. The Kremlin has likely taken its rhetoric as far as it will with Lithuania and Norway.
2. Russia continues to focus on securing the Luhansk Oblast at all costs.
3. Russian forces are unlikely to be in a purposeful combat pause across 2,000 kilometers of conflict outside the eastern Donbas, considering Ukrainian forces have advanced five to ten kilometers in the last week in five different locations.
4. The situation for Ukrainian forces in Lysychansk is very fluid. We cannot confirm that Ukraine has started or is preparing a mass withdrawal.
5. If Russian forces have reached Verkhokamyanske, Ukrainian forces in Lysychansk are at significant risk of encirclement.
6. Ukrainian military leaders masterfully managed the timing for withdrawing from the Zolote-Hirske salient

and Severodonetsk – it seems unlikely they will underestimate Russian capabilities.

7. It is highly unlikely that Russian forces will be able to quickly reengage new defensive lines at Siversk, Soledar, Bakhmut, Slovyansk, and Kramatorsk if Ukraine withdraws from the Severodonetsk salient.
8. Ukrainian forces have made measurable progress across five counteroffensives in the last seven to ten days. None of these advances represent strategic or tactical victories.

It has been three days since Igor Girkin declared that Ukrainian forces had already withdrawn from Lysychansk. None of the claims made by Pro-Russian social media accounts and Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) separatist leaders came to fruition today. But just like a broken analog clock, eventually, they will be correct.

Ukrainian forces have made significant gains in the Kherson, Zaporizhia, Donetsk, and Kharkiv Oblasts during the last 7 to 15 days. Russian forces and their proxies outside Luhansk struggle to maintain defensive lines. Ukraine liberated 33 to 38 settlements in June that have been reported and verified.

The key questions remain.

Has Russia reached a culmination point, and if not, how much longer can they lose troops, equipment, and churn through materiel before they do?

Does Ukraine have a significant number of trained troops in strategic reserve that are motivated and awaiting to be armed with NATO weapons? When will those forces be ready?

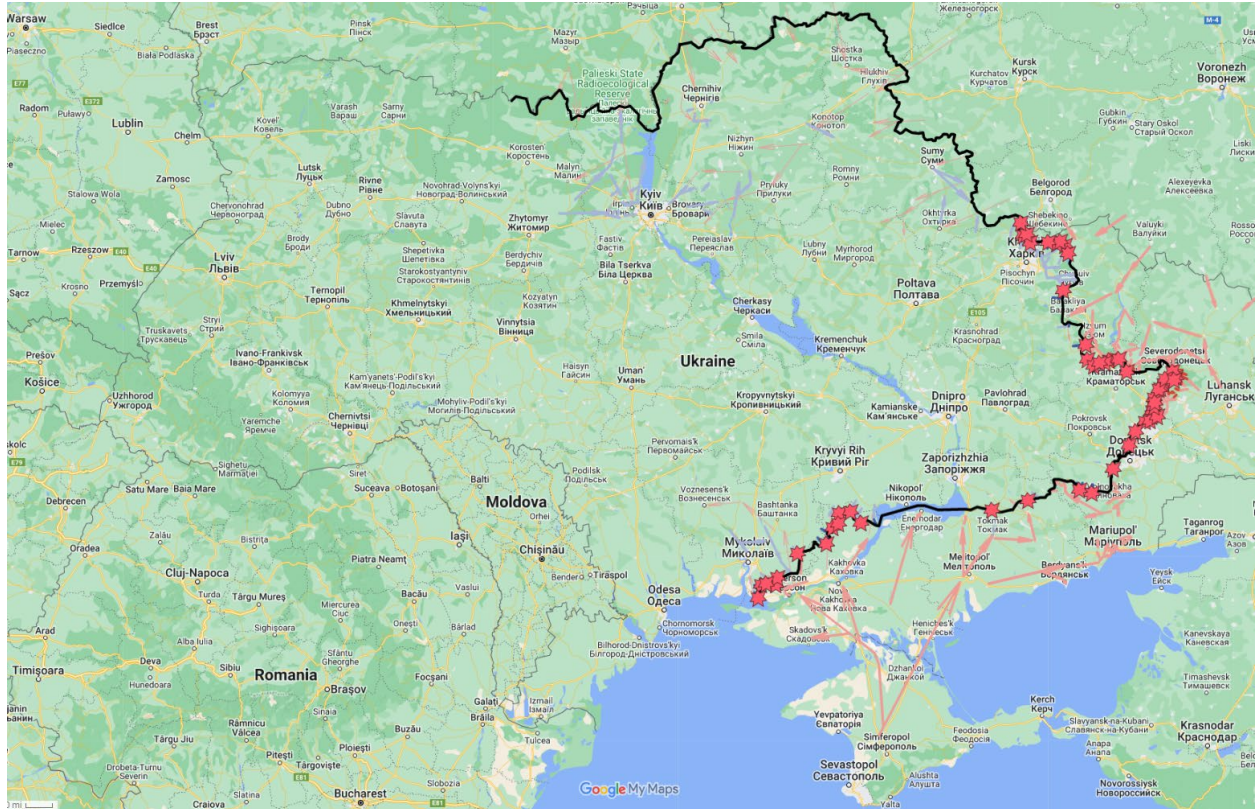
We continue to have concerns about Ukraine's ability to take the initiative in late July or August. Ukraine needs to hold Lysychansk for another 15 to 25 days. We have significant doubts that Ukraine can achieve this.

The additional weapons commitment from NATO is helpful, and it does appear that the Western allies are accelerating arms shipments.

We continue to believe that NATO and Western allies should supply Main Battle Tanks (MBT) to Ukraine, which would be a significant force multiplier in Kherson and Zaporizhia Oblasts.

We remain concerned we are in the Mutual Assured Destruction Instability Paradox, given Russia's unyielding view on Ukraine, its hypocritical stance on European Union sanctions, and its diminishing capabilities through conventional warfare. The decisions emanating from the Kremlin are not geopolitically or militarily sound. So far, Russia has demonstrated that it is full of sound and fury, signifying nothing when threatening nations not called Ukraine.

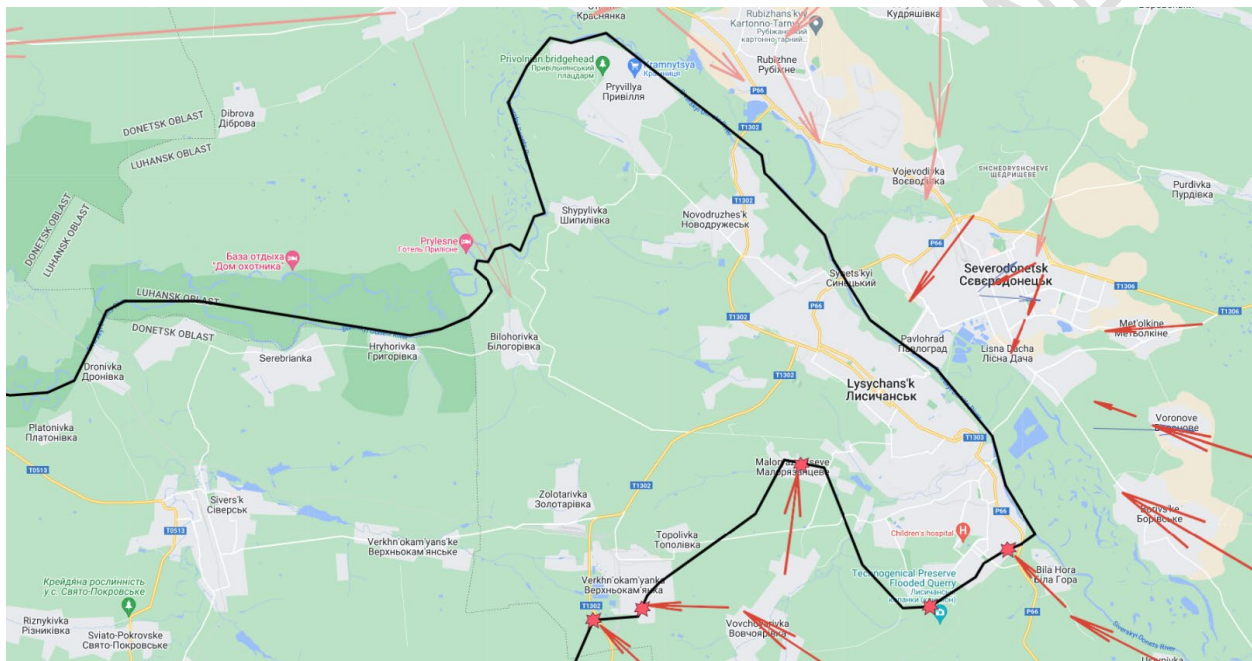
TODAY'S WAR IN UKRAINE MAP



DONBAS REGION

LUHANSK

Severodonetsk Salient

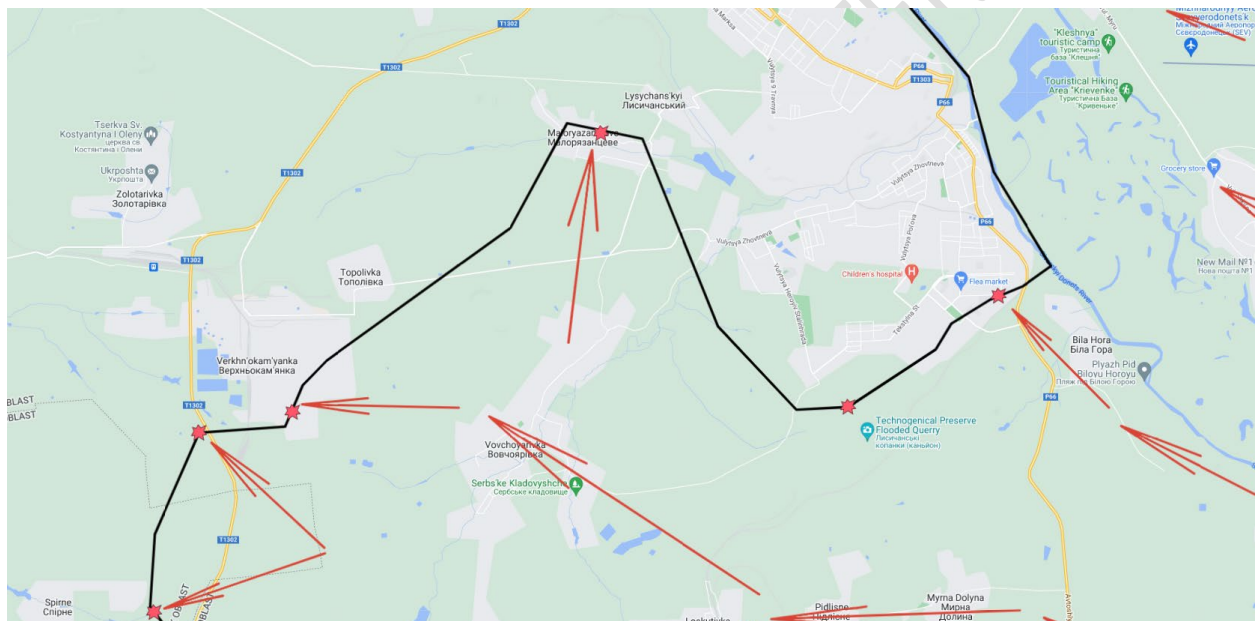


Russian forces only made incremental gains southwest and south of Lysychansk. The territorial gains southwest of the city are significant and put Ukrainian forces at risk of encirclement.

Northwest of Bila Hora, Russian forces made incremental advances deeper into southeastern Lysychansk but

remained contained in the lowlands on the west bank of the Siverskyi Donets River.

Russian forces have likely pushed past School Number 12 and Zavodu Park, reaching the residential neighborhoods north of the children's hospital. There is no evidence that Russian forces have climbed into the city's central areas.



NASA FIRMS data suggest Ukrainian forces have pushed Russian forces south into the residential and commercial areas of Pidlisne. In our assessment, this does not represent a broader counteroffensive. Fighting at the gelatin factory has entered the sixth day, where Ukrainian forces are showing heroic resistance.

Russian forces continued to advance north from Vovchoyarivka and reached Maloryazntseve. NASA FIRMS data suggest that Ukrainian forces have pushed back on the advance, and fighting is happening south of the rock quarry in Vovchoyarivka.



Russian forces have failed to advance into the Verkhokamyanka oil refinery from the southeast. If they have advanced, it is measured in meters. A Russian advance from the south was repulsed on June 28. Today Russian forces flanked the refinery to the south and crossed the T-1302 Highway GLOC.

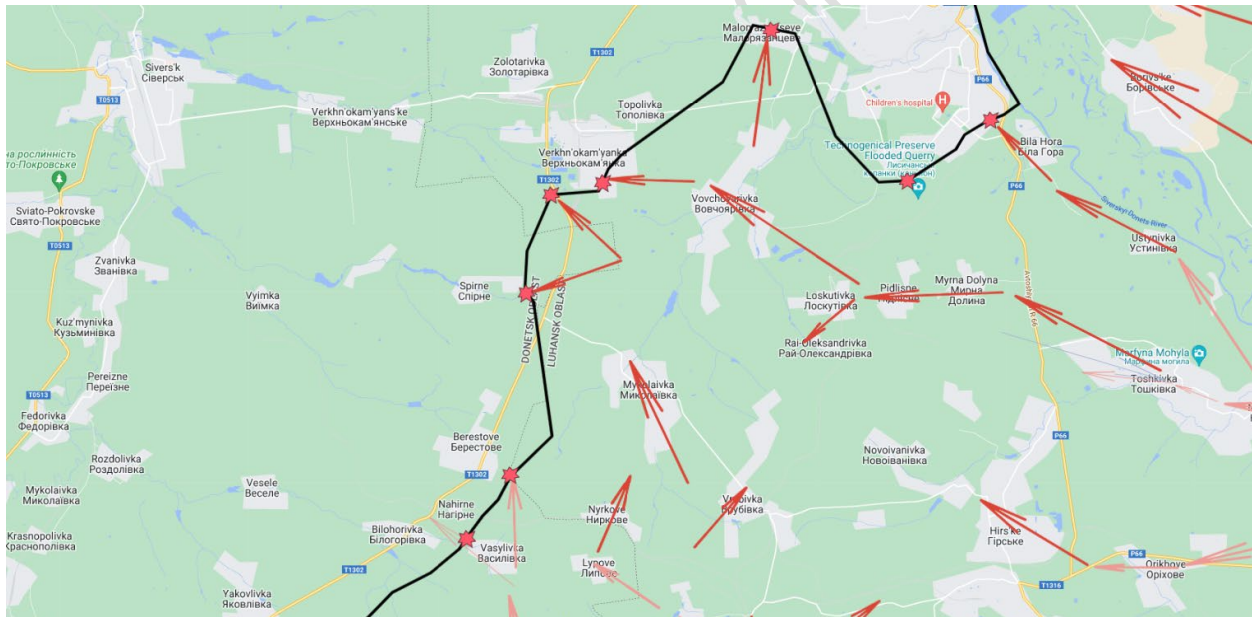
ASSESSMENT: We believe that Ukrainian forces will be unable to restore access to the T-1302 Highway GLOC, and the line between Bakhmut and Lysychansk has been severed.



There continue to be reports that Ukrainian forces have withdrawn from Pryvillya, and Russian forces and its separatist proxies established a wet crossing south of Kreminna. Pro-Russian social media accounts and Russian state media have not provided reports or evidence to support these claims. NASA FIRMS data does show a small area of potential fighting on the west bank of the Siverskyi

Donets River in Pryvillya, but the hot spot has not moved in 24 hours.

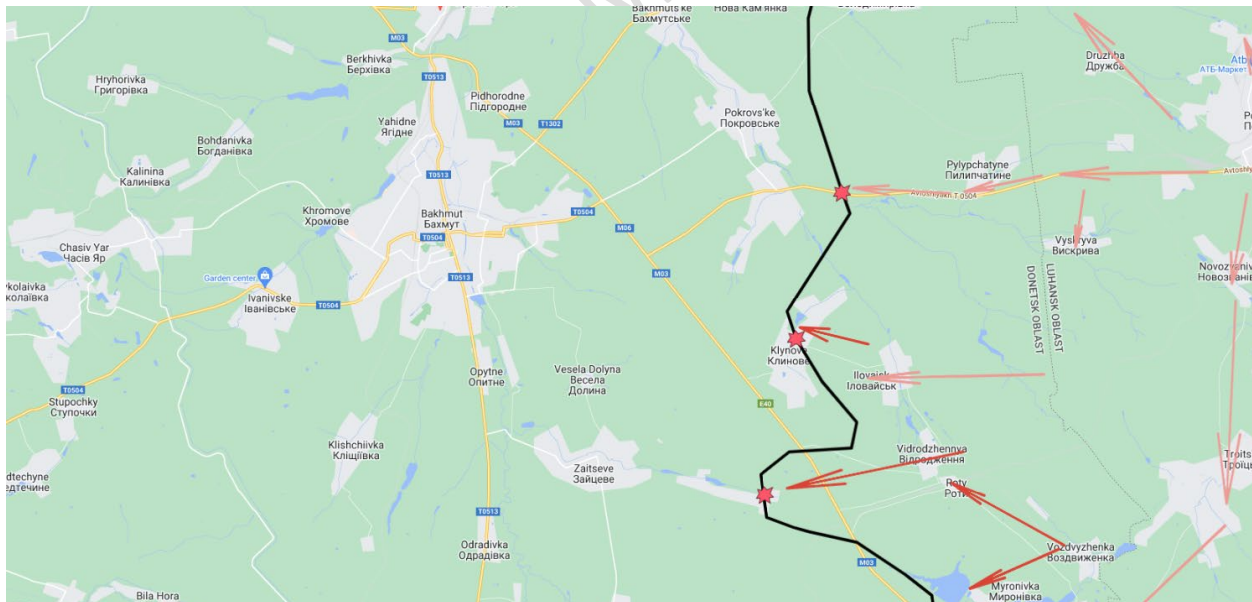
Russian forces made a second crossing of the T-1302 Highway GLOC west of Mykolaivka and have a tenuous hold of the eastern edge of Spirne. Even if Ukrainian forces push Russian troops back at Verkhnokamyanka, it is unlikely they can move the line of conflict east far enough to reestablish the supply route.



A platoon-size group of Russian soldiers attempted to advance on Berestove and were decimated.

A further indication that Russian forces continue to move west, Ivano-Darivka and Vyimka were shelled. Both settlements are well west of the T-1302 Highway GLOC. The settlements are likely part of a secondary GLOC for Ukrainian troops advancing east from Siversk. Additionally, Rozdolivka was shelled, which is west of Vesele [Doentsk] and Bilohorivka [Donetsk].

Russian forces did not attempt any significant advances east of Bakhmut. The settlement of Vershyna was shelled, as was Bakhmut. Fighting for control of Klynove continues with no change in territorial control.



The General Staff of the Ukrainian Armed Forces reported that the Russian air force attacked Ukrainian positions in

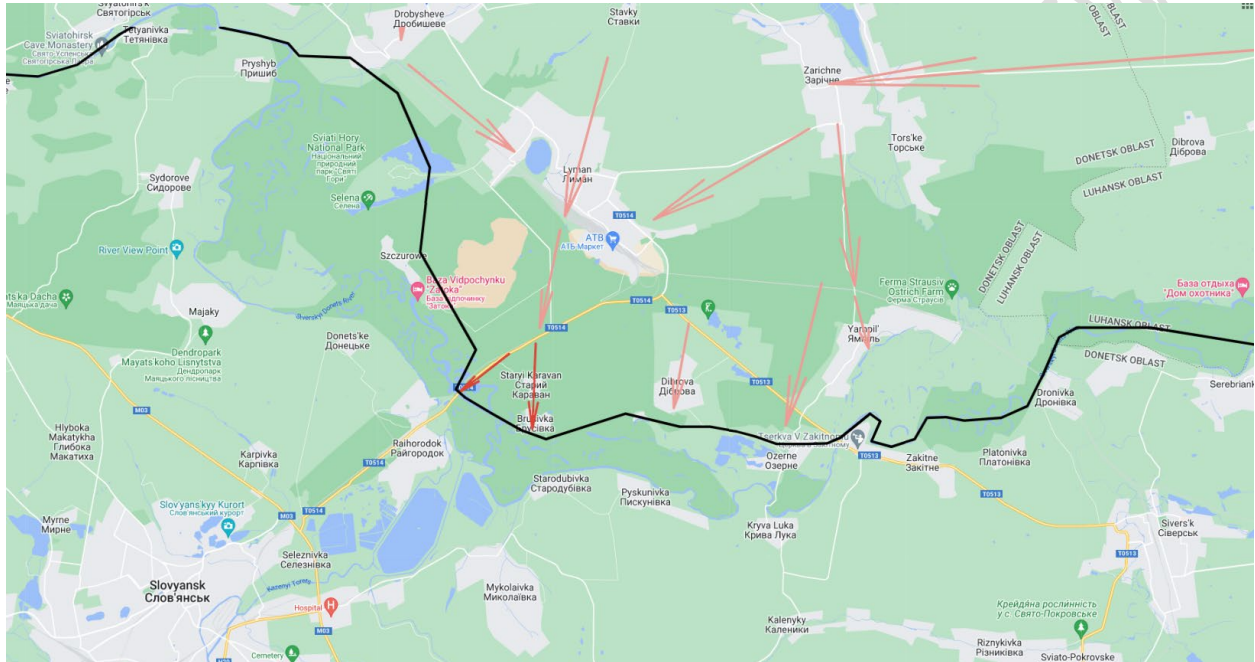
Vidrodzenna. There hasn't been an update on the salient that extends over the E-40 highway from the village for quite some time. The report suggests that Ukrainian forces may have collapsed the small budge and pushed to the east of the E-40.

There was no update on the status of the Svitlodarsk bulge. NASA FIRMS data suggests that there is fighting in Dolomitne, supporting our assessment from June 28 that control of Novoluhansk and Travneve is contested.



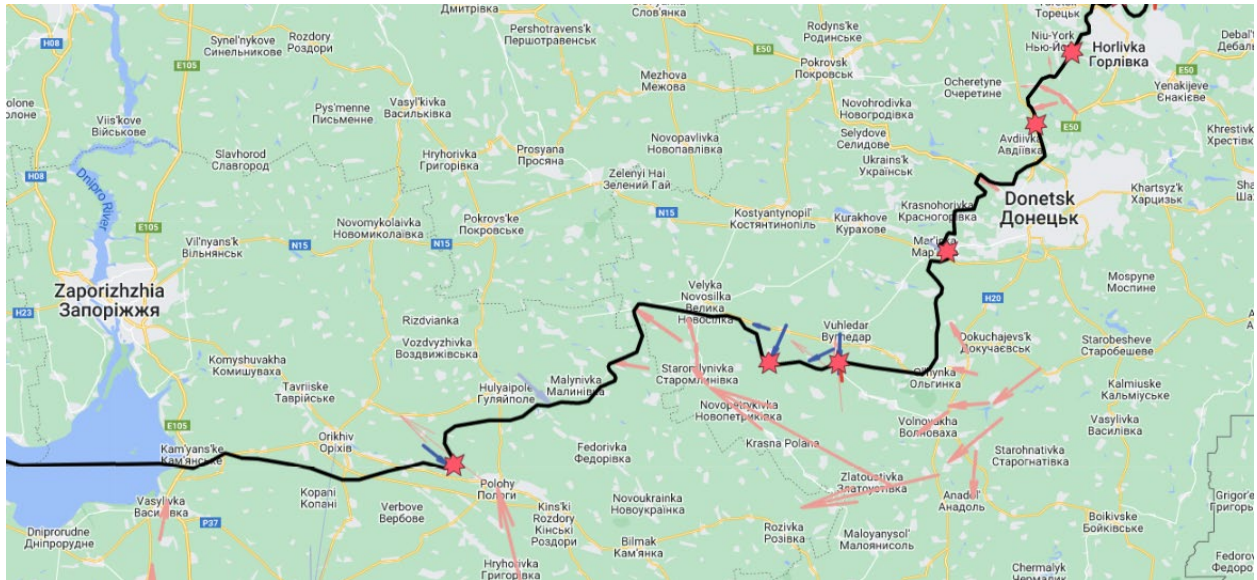
Lyman Axis

There weren't any major combat operations around Lyman on June 28.



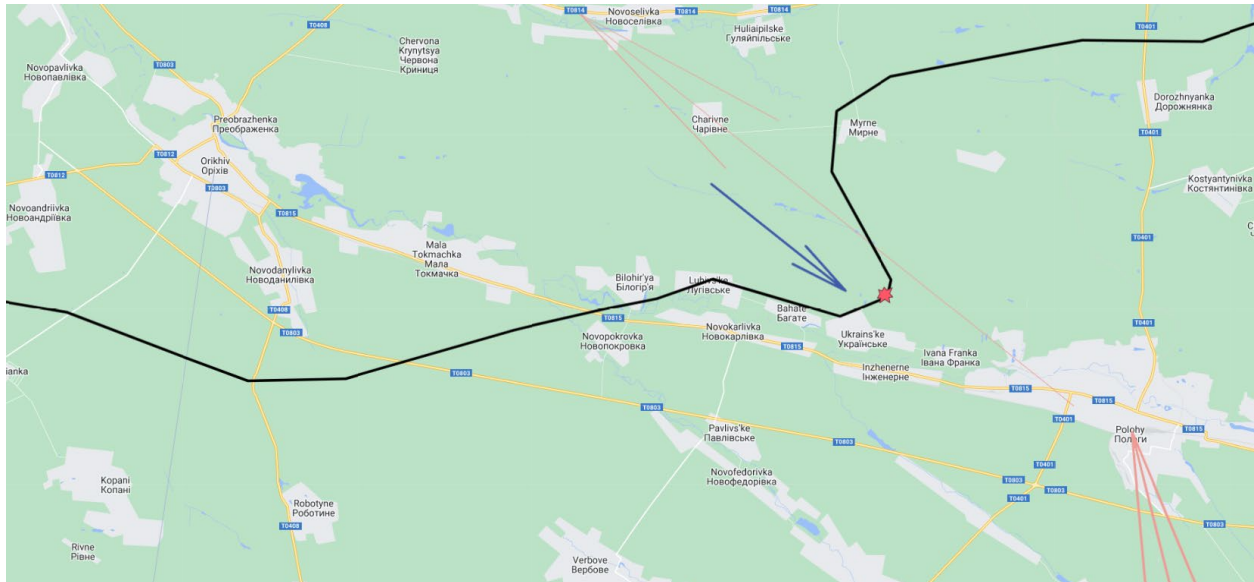
SOUTH DONBAS AND WESTERN ZAPORIZHZHIA

There were scattered artillery exchanges from Horlivka to Donetsk city to Velyka Novosilka in the Donetsk Oblast and Hulyaipole to Orikhiv in the Zaporizhia Oblast.



The Ukrainian counteroffensive in the direction of Polohy was confirmed today, and Ukrainian forces have advanced to within 5 kilometers of the Russian-occupied settlement.

Our assessment of potential contested settlements on June 26 – 27 was reasonably accurate. Bilohirya, Luhivske, Novopokrovka, Bahate, and Ukraniske are now contested and Charivne has been liberated. Additionally, the General Staff of the Ukrainian armed forces reported that the Ukrainian troops' positioned near Inzhererne were fired upon by Russian artillery.



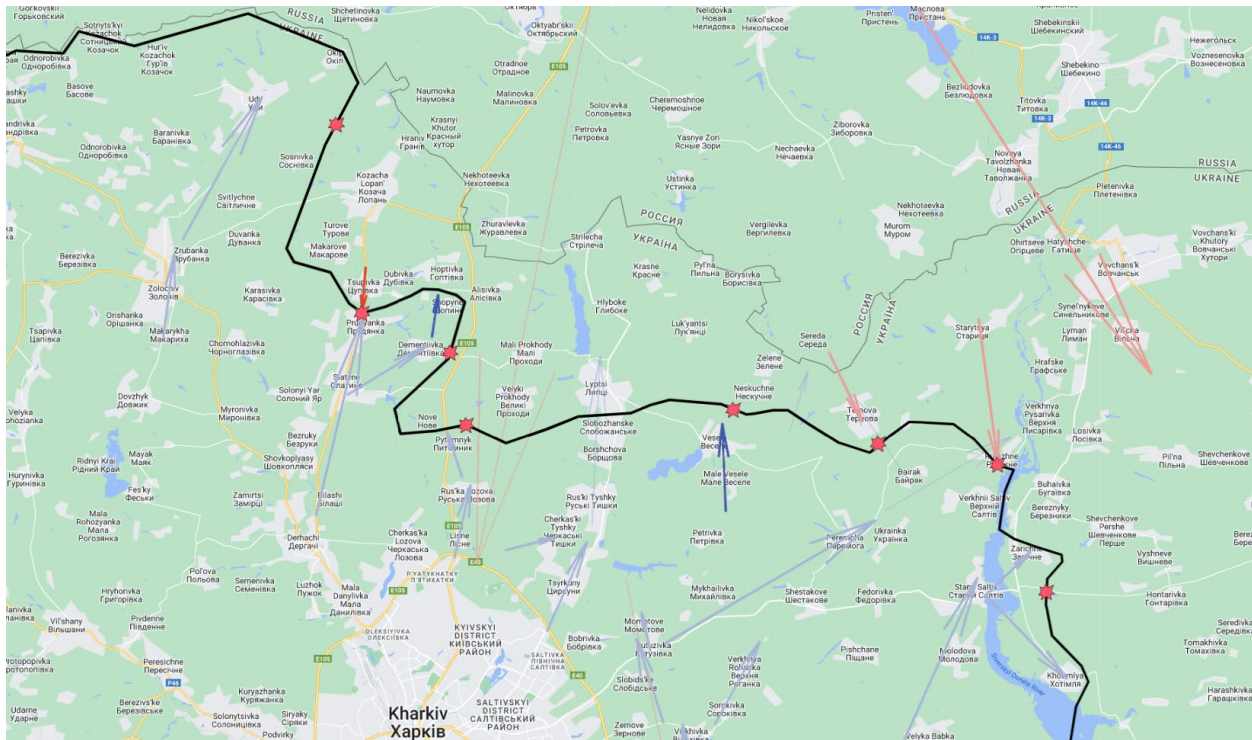
We continue to consider Rivnopil, Pyatkhatky, and Stepove [Zaporizhia] as contested.

KHARKIV REGION

NORTHERN KHARKIV COUNTEROFFENSIVE

There wasn't any significant military action in this region that we can report about without violating Operational Security (OPSEC).

We consider the settlements of Hrakove, Nova Hnlytysa, Chkalovske, Doslidne, Rtyschchivka, and Zaliznychne contested.



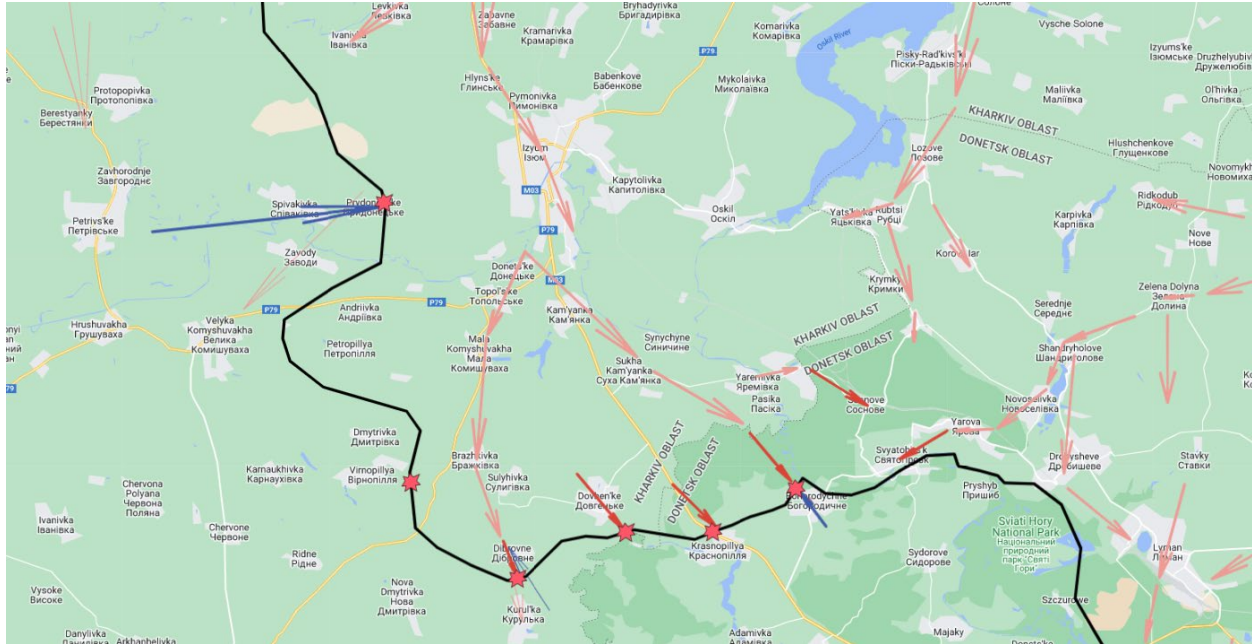
IZYUM AXIS

There wasn't any significant military action in this region that we can report about without violating Operational Security (OPSEC).

Last week a Russian convoy moving on the Kupyansk-Vesele-Izyum GLOC was attacked by Ukrainian artillery at Oleksandrivka [Kharkiv - 49°27'35.7"N 37°16'18.4"E].¹ This

¹ https://twitter.com/666_mancer/status/1540368413645803527

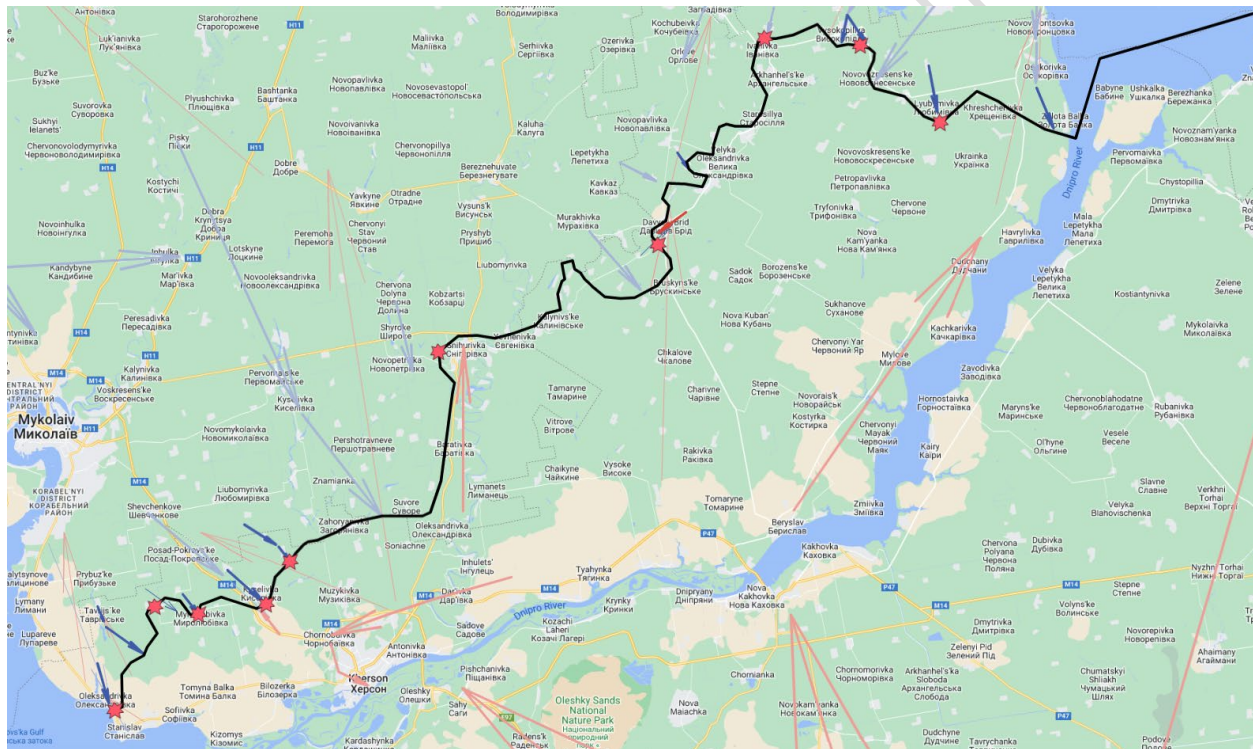
attack was significantly further northeast of earlier interdiction activity by Ukrainian forces.



NASA FIRMS data suggest there was multiple artillery, MLRS, or High Mobility Rocket Artillery System (HIMARS) strikes on the city of Izyum. NASA FIRMS data also suggest that multiple targets were hit in the forests south of Oskil.

DNIPRO, KHERSON & MYKOLAIV, ZAPORIZHIA REGION

There wasn't any significant military action in Kherson that we can report about without violating Operational Security (OPSEC).



Sentinel-2 L2A satellite imagery coupled with NASA FIRMS data strongly suggests Ukraine has achieved control of Kyselivka, northwest of Izyum. NASA FIRMS is indicating there is significant fighting south of Kyselivka. Sentinel-2 L2A showed fires in Chornobaivka on the edge of Kherson

International Airport and the Kherson city suburb of Stepanivka. Cloud cover obscured Klapala.



On the northern edge of the Kherson Oblast, Sentinel-2 L2A showed multiple fires in the south part of Ivanivka. It is our assessment this strongly suggests Russian forces are under pressure to hold control of the settlement. There were thin clouds over the town, which made it challenging to evaluate the artillery pattern to determine if it was Ukrainian or Russian artillery strikes.



As of this writing, there were reports that missiles had been fired in the direction of Mykolaiv and air raid sirens were on. We have no additional details at the time we went to press.

CHERNIHIV & SUMY REGION

Russia shelled the settlement of Krasnopillya in the Sumy Oblast on June 29.² There is more information in the **War Crimes and Human Rights** section. The settlements of

² <https://twitter.com/KyivIndependent/status/1542291088987258880>

Turya and Luhivka were shelled, and an airstrike hit Uhroidy.³

KYIV REGION

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

BLACK SEA & ODESA REGION

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

WEST REGION

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

ASSESSMENT: We believe the chances that Belarus will launch a ground invasion of Ukraine remain extremely remote.

³ [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine - Facebook](#)

THEATERWIDE & EXTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS

After Turkey lifted its veto against Sweden and Finland joining NATO, the two Nordic nations were officially invited to join the defensive alliance.⁴ The invitation is a formality and is a de facto acceptance of their formal applications to become NATO members.

Although specifics of the deal reached between Turkey, Sweden, and Finland were not announced in detail, Turkey likely fulfilled most of its demands. Finland and Sweden agreed to lift arms embargoes they had previously imposed on Turkey, toughening their laws against Kurdish militant activists that Ankara deems to be terrorists and addressing Turkish extradition requests for suspected Kurdish fighters.

Turkish officials had demanded that the United States sell F-35 aircraft as part of the requirements to accept Finland and Sweden into NATO, a requirement United States officials were vehemently against. Turkey possesses Russian S-400 anti-aircraft systems, and the sale of F-35s was considered a national security risk. In a compromise, Turkey may be able to purchase upgraded F-16 fighter planes. While the F-16 does not possess stealth technology,

⁴ [CNBC](#)

the most modern version of the aircraft is considered a Generation 4.5 fighter.

Russian President Vladimir Putin dismissed Sweden and Finland joining NATO as "no problem."⁵ "We don't have problems with Sweden and Finland as we do with Ukraine," Putin told a news conference in the Turkmenistan capital of Ashgabat.

Editor's Note: Wasn't preventing NATO expansion to the Russian border one of the key reasons Russia launched the "special military operation" in Ukraine?

Just hours after Russia said he had no issues with Finland and Ukraine, he threatened NATO and the two Nordic nations with a proportional response if additional military infrastructure was added. Then, a few hours after, he called it "a purely destabilizing factor."⁶

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, the host of this week's NATO summit, said the alliance was delivering a

⁵ [France 24](#)

⁶ <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/06/29/russia-ukraine-live-updates.html>

strong message to President Vladimir Putin, "You will not win."

Earlier, Sanchez said that Russia would be identified as NATO's "main threat" in its new strategic concept for the coming decade.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg echoed Sanchez's sentiment saying, "We'll state clearly that Russia poses a direct threat to our security."

German Chancellor Olaf Sholz, who appears to have removed some roadblocks in providing heavy weapons to Ukraine after viewing Bucha and Irpin firsthand, said that NATO allies would continue to supply Ukraine with the weapons its needs for as long as necessary.

At the NATO Summit in Madrid, Ukrainian military representative Igor Zhovkva renewed Ukraine's intent to join the NATO alliance.⁷

⁷ <https://www.eurointegration.com.ua/eng/news/2022/06/29/7142280/>

"Today, during the war, it is difficult to say that Ukraine does not meet NATO standards, whether in terms of strategy or tactics of military actions. Ukraine is at war not with the world's second army but not with the weakest one. And we prove every day that we are compatible with NATO standards," he said.

The United Kingdom unveiled an additional one billion pounds of military aid to Ukraine. The new tranche will include sophisticated air-defense systems, drones, electronic warfare equipment, and "thousands of pieces of vital kit" for Ukrainian soldiers.

Vladimir Dzhubarov, the First Deputy Chairman of the Committee of the Federation Council on International Affairs, said that the "blockade" of Kaliningrad Oblast could lead to an armed conflict with Russia.⁸

"According to Article 4 of our Constitution, the Russian state is obliged to protect its territory and ensure its security. If we feel that this security is violated and we are threatened with the loss of territory, then, of course, we

⁸ <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2022/06/29/7355426/>

will take extreme measures, and nothing will stop us," Dzhubarov said during an interview.

"We now have an agreement that paves the way for Finland and Sweden to join NATO," Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said Tuesday at the Madrid summit, hailing the "historic decision."

Before the NATO Summit started, Stoltenberg declared that the alliance would boost the number of troops on "high alert" by over 700% to 300,000.⁹

United States President Joe Biden said that the United States was changing and increasing its defensive posture in Europe. The United States Navy will station more destroyers in Spain, add two squadrons of F-35 fighters in Britain, and assign the United States 5th Army Headquarters to Poland in a historic move.

The Kremlin threatened Norway over transit restrictions on sanctioned Russian cargo sent to Svalbard. Like Lithuania, Norway is blocking road and rail transit of sanctioned Russian goods. Svalbard is 1,000 kilometers from the

⁹ [Reuters](#)

northern tip of Norway, and transit to the small settlements on the planet's most northern habitable area is done by aircraft and ship. Norway, which has sovereignty over the Svalbard archipelago, entered a treaty in 1920 that permits Russia to share the natural resources available, including significant coal deposits.

Russia accused Norway of trying to starve out the Russian residents. Norway has not blockaded access to the islands, and Russia still has port access. Additionally, Russian and Norwegian citizens can access the islands without travel visas and intermingle in a cluster of villages on the largest island.

Russia escalated the situation on June 28, accusing Norway of violating the 1920 Svalbard Treaty. Russia's foreign ministry said on Wednesday that it had summoned Norway's charge d'affaires and threatened "countermeasures" and retaliation. The ministry also called NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg, who is Norwegian, their "number one" enemy on the planet.

Shortly after the Russian foreign ministry announcement, Norway's government and business computer systems were subject to a Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attack.¹⁰

WAR CRIMES AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Russia and Ukraine made the largest prisoner exchange since the start of the War in Ukraine.¹¹ Russia released 144 Ukrainian soldiers facilitated by the separatists of the Donetsk People's Republic, including 95 who surrendered at Azovstal in Mariupol.

Of the 95 Azovstal defenders released, almost half were among the Azov Regiment. Among the 144 released included a member of the national police force. Ukrainian officials reported that many of the released prisoners have serious injuries: gunshot and shrapnel wounds, explosives-related injuries, burns, fractures, and amputated limbs. All of them are receiving proper emergency medical and psychological care.

¹⁰ [Reuters](#)

¹¹ <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2022/06/29/7355430/>

Russia's attack on Krasnopilla killed one person and wounded three, according to Sumy Oblast Governor Dmytro Zhyvytskyi.

A six-year-old girl was among the victims of the cruise missile attack on Mykolaiv on the morning of June 29 local time. Her body was found face down, buried in the rubble. (NSFW, not for children, viewer discretion is strongly advised – [you can view the photo here](#))

The search for victims from the Russian cruise missile strike on Kremenchuk continues, with authorities reporting that 20 are still missing. Addressing a crowd at St. Peter's Square in Rome, Pope Francis said, "Every day I carry in my heart a road and a martyr's Ukraine, which continues to be scourged by barbaric attacks, such as on the shopping center in Kremenchuk. I pray that this crazy war may end soon, and I call again to persevere without tire of praying for peace. The Lord will open the paths of dialogue that people either do not want or cannot find. Let them not neglect the suffering Ukrainian population."

GEOPOLITICAL

Ukraine broke all diplomatic ties with Syria after the Middle Eastern nation announced it would recognize Donetsk and Luhansk as independent republics.¹²

ECONOMIC

The rouble was essentially unchanged on Wednesday, trading at 53 for 1 US dollar.

Oil prices declined but remained in a narrow trading range of \$100 to \$120 a barrel. WTI crude dropped to \$110 a barrel while Brent fell to \$116. RBOB United States wholesale gasoline dropped to \$3.73 a gallon. (99 cents a liter)

SRW Chicago wheat futures dropped a penny, falling to 93 cents a bushel for September 2022 delivery.

¹² <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2022/06/29/7355482/>