



# MALCONTENT NEWS RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR SITUATION REPORT



February 2, 2023





# Malcontent News

## Russia-Ukraine War SITREP

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## Notes on Sourcing Information


**Malcontent News** uses a wide range of sources to create our daily Situation Report, which is the foundation for the Russian-Ukraine War Report Podcast. There are some notable sources that we frequently use and others that we don't. The most common sources currently, or in the past, we have used for the Theater of War section of the Situation Report include the following.


⚠️ **Russian Ministry of Defense Morning Report:** We use the RMOD Morning Report to identify combat reports, shelling locations, and territorial control change claims. We do not consider claims of Ukrainian troops killed, equipment destroyed, or military resources destroyed valid without videos and pictures that can be confirmed by date, time, weather, and geolocation, or third-party confirmation from recognized Western news outlets or trusted Ukrainian sources.


⚠️ **Rybar:** We consider Rybar a mercenary organization because they are staffed by former Russian Ministry of Defense public relations officers who actively provide target information to the Russian military. Their operational budget is \$20,000 a month, while they claim they receive no government funding. We use their reports and maps to identify combat reports, territorial control change claims, and troop movement reports. We do not use claims of Ukrainian troops killed, equipment destroyed, or military resources destroyed because of a documented and historical pattern of producing fabrications. They frequently engage in blatant misinformation and disinformation and consistently deny all Russian war crimes.


⚠️ **War Gonzo:** We consider War Gonzo a mercenary organization because their employees have recorded themselves actively engaging in direct combat, specifically in Marinka. Recently, War Gonzo admitted in their daily report to leveraging the information from the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. They intermix combat reports with their own on a 24-hour delay. We use their reports for **unique claims** about combat, territorial control change claims, and troop movement reports. Although the War Gonzo daily reports are moderately accurate, they occasionally engage in blatant disinformation and misinformation.

 **Readovka:** We consider Readovka to be a Kremlin-aligned propagandist organization. Their daily reports are a word-for-word repeat of the RMOD Morning Report and provide no value to our analysis. They occasionally provide credible information through videos and pictures that can be confirmed by date, time, weather, and geolocation.

 **Igor "Girkin" Strelkov:** We consider Strelkov to be a convicted war criminal who is highly informed, specifically about the situation in the Donbas. We use his combat reports, territorial control change claims, and troop movement information. In the Donbas, we consider his reports to be highly accurate. The fidelity of information he provides in Zaporizhia, Kherson, and Kharkiv appears to come from other social media channels with a history of spreading misinformation and is lower quality. Reports he shares outside of the Donbas provided by units of the Russian Federation 1st Army Corps 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 detailed 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 any 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 information as Russian-assessed, Ukrainian-assessed, and Russian-claimed 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 real-time 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 he was fired from his role as the Chief Advisor to the President of Ukraine. Before being terminated, Arestovych had developed a reputation for providing exaggerated, unverified, and false claims for Ukrainian successes and failures.



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## SUMMARY – DAY 344

***Editor's Note:*** Today's report includes details about sexual assault and violence against children. If you find these topics disturbing, we recommend you skip the War Crimes and Human Rights section.

It has been 3,262 days since Russia occupied the Crimea Peninsula on February 27, 2014, and there were no notable territorial control changes today.

There continues to be no indication of a large-scale Russian offensive from Kreminna. We continue to see some activity that could be interpreted as setting conditions.

The situation north, east, and south of Bakhmut remained stable, with some pockets of good news.

There was almost no fighting in the Toretsk-Niu York, Avdiivka, and Marinka Operational Areas, and Russian forces have not renewed their offensive toward Vuhledar.

President Zelenskyy held a closed-door meeting with some of his top military, intelligence, and security leaders, while



Russian milblogger Strelkov lamented that there is a coming Ukrainian offensive and Russian forces are unprepared.

The conflict between the Kremlin and Private Military Company Wagner Group continued and has a new element to the ongoing Game of Thrones.

## **DAILY ASSESSMENT**

We assess the following:

1. We assess there is an increased probability that Ukrainian forces will launch a significant military operation within the next 72 hours due to President Volodymyr Zelenskyy holding a closed-door meeting of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief with a subset of military, intelligence, and security leaders.
2. We maintain that the battle for the control of Bakhmut has reached a critical phase with the addition of Russian forces to the axis and the ongoing attempt to create a technical encirclement.
3. We concur with recent assessments by other analysts that it is highly likely the Russian Federation will launch a new offensive before February 24 to try and

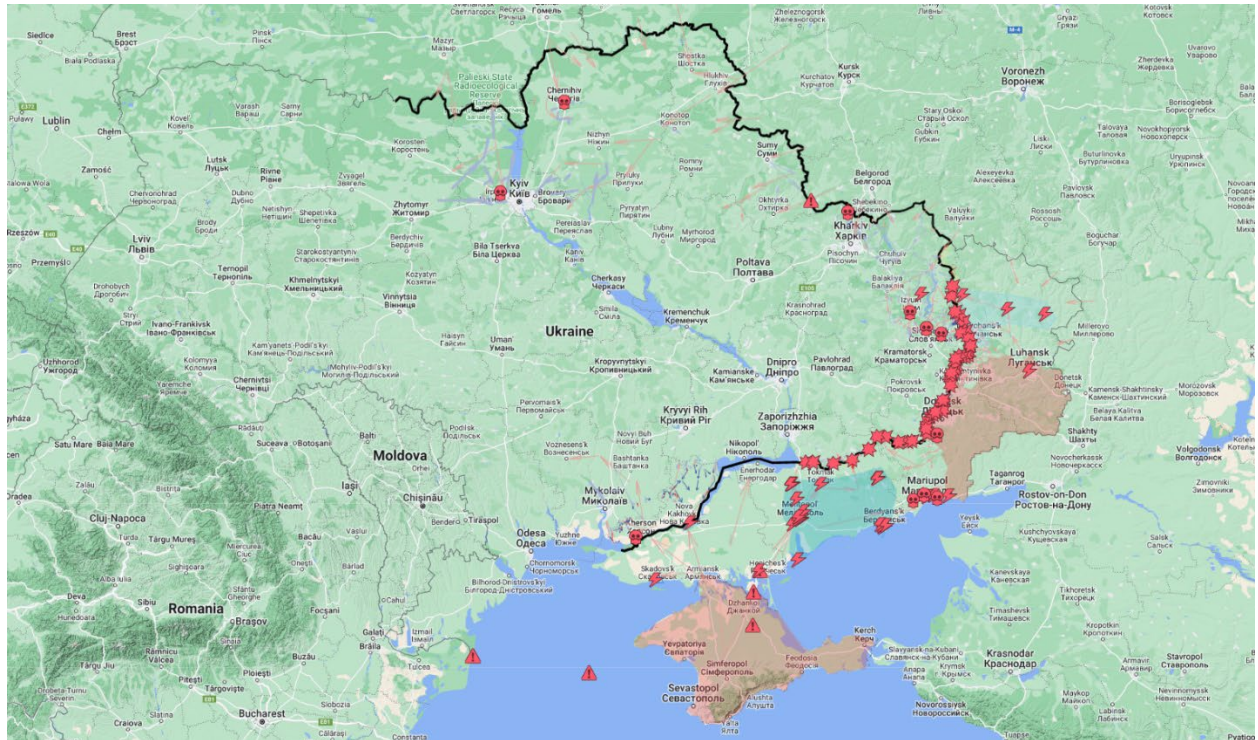
- deliver a tactical victory before the anniversary of the widescale invasion of Ukraine.
4. We maintain that the significant increase in disinformation and misinformation from Russian sources is being directed by Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Federation Armed Forces, Valery Gerasimov, as part of his hybrid warfare doctrine.
  5. The RAND Corporation agreed with our assessment that Ukraine holds the battlefield initiative – while we maintain the exception for the Soledar-Bakhmut axis.<sup>1</sup>
  6. We maintain that the Russian military within Ukraine remains combat ineffective and is relying on World War II tactics that Field Marshal Georgy Zhukov would recognize to move the line of conflict.
  7. We maintain that the power struggle between military leaders aligned with Russian Minister of Defense Sergey Shoigu versus those aligned to Private Military Company (PMC) Wagner Group head Yevgeny Prigozhin is continuing, with Russian President Vladimir Putin benefiting from the political distraction.
  8. We assess that Russia is preparing to launch another punitive missile strike on civilians and civilian infrastructure due to the ongoing rotation of ships in the Black Sea Fleet and a significant increase in

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2023/01/28/7386922/>

- reconnaissance drone activity over Kherson and Mykolaiv.
9. We maintain that Russian forces will continue to target electrical, heating, and potable water infrastructure.
  10. We maintain that the Russian Federation's inventory of Kalibr cruise missiles is critically low based on the continued decline of launches from the Black Sea Fleet.
  11. We maintain that the risk of a nuclear accident caused by the deenergization of Ukrainian nuclear power plants caused by Russian electrical infrastructure destruction is possible.
  12. We maintain that stealth mobilization has started in the Russian Federation due to stop loss orders for active duty troops deployed in Ukraine and mobilization requests from the Kremlin in the occupied territories.
  13. We maintain that the threat of Russian forces in Belarus crossing into Ukraine as part of an offensive operation is negligible, despite contrary claims from Ukrainian and Polish officials.

# TODAY'S WAR IN UKRAINE MAP

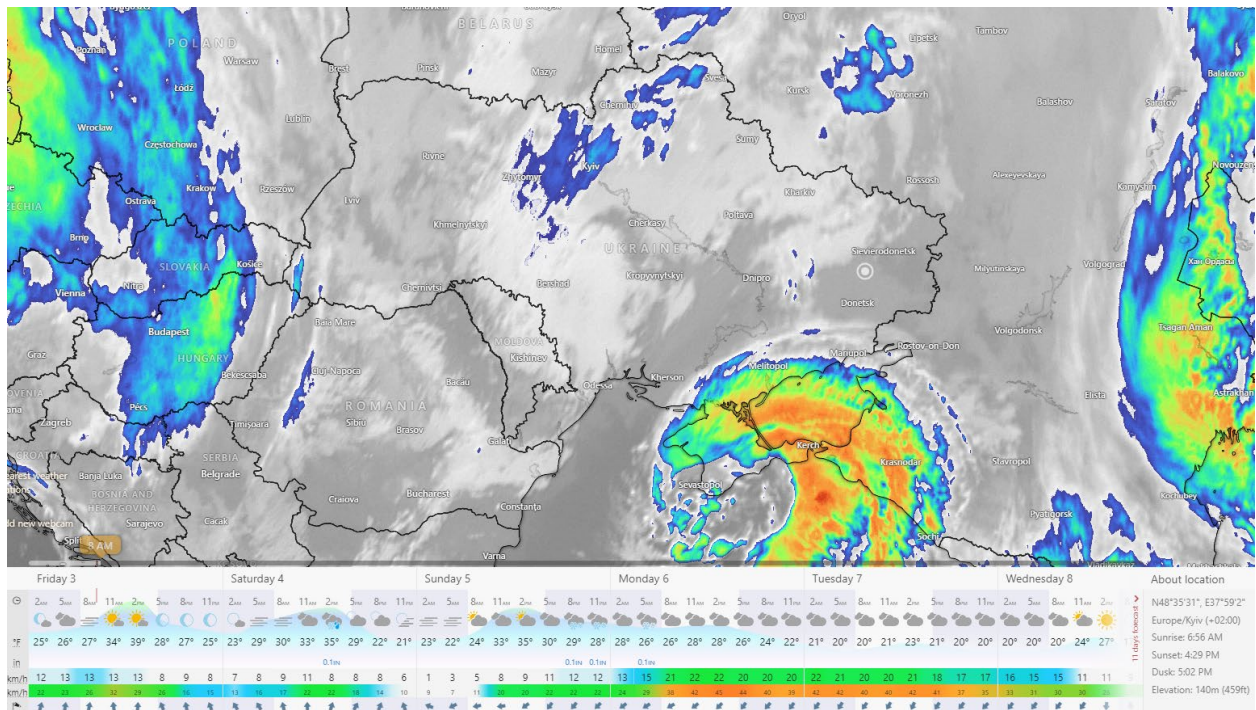


**About the maps:** Red triangles are sites of significant events unrelated to missile attacks, insurgencies, or ground combat, such as the sinking of the Moskva and the explosion at the Saky Naval airbase. Gray circles indicate an area where fighting has ended with no change in the line of conflict. 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.

You can visit our war map at <http://www.rusvukrmap.com>



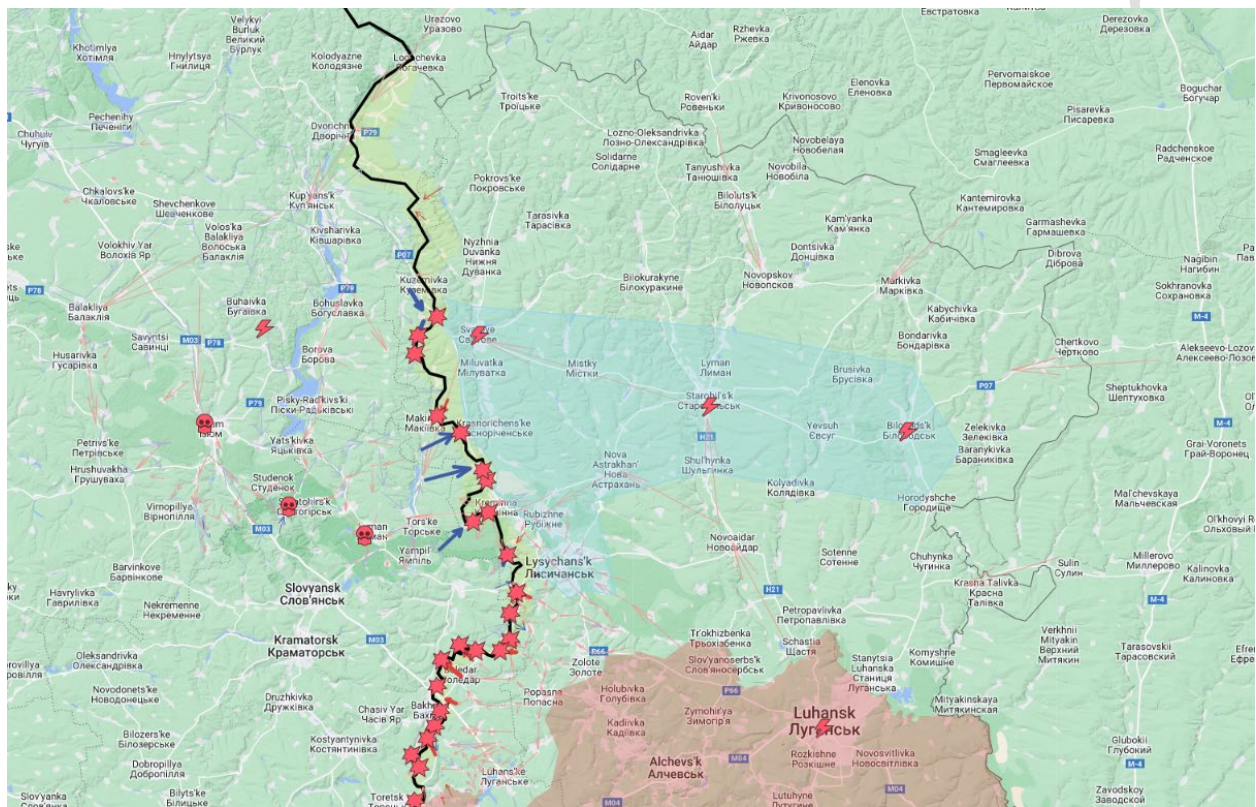
# UKRAINE WEATHER



Central and northern Ukraine is cloud-covered with snow in the Kyiv and Chernihiv regions. A significant coastal storm has moved over Crimea, causing rain, freezing rain, sleet, and snow in southern Zaporizhia and coastal areas to Mariupol. The Russian-occupied regions of the Donbas cleared up, and there will be clear skies for part of Friday and Saturday evening. Weather conditions will decline, with temperatures between 0 and -10 Celcius, cloud cover, and periods of snow through Wednesday.

# DONBAS REGION

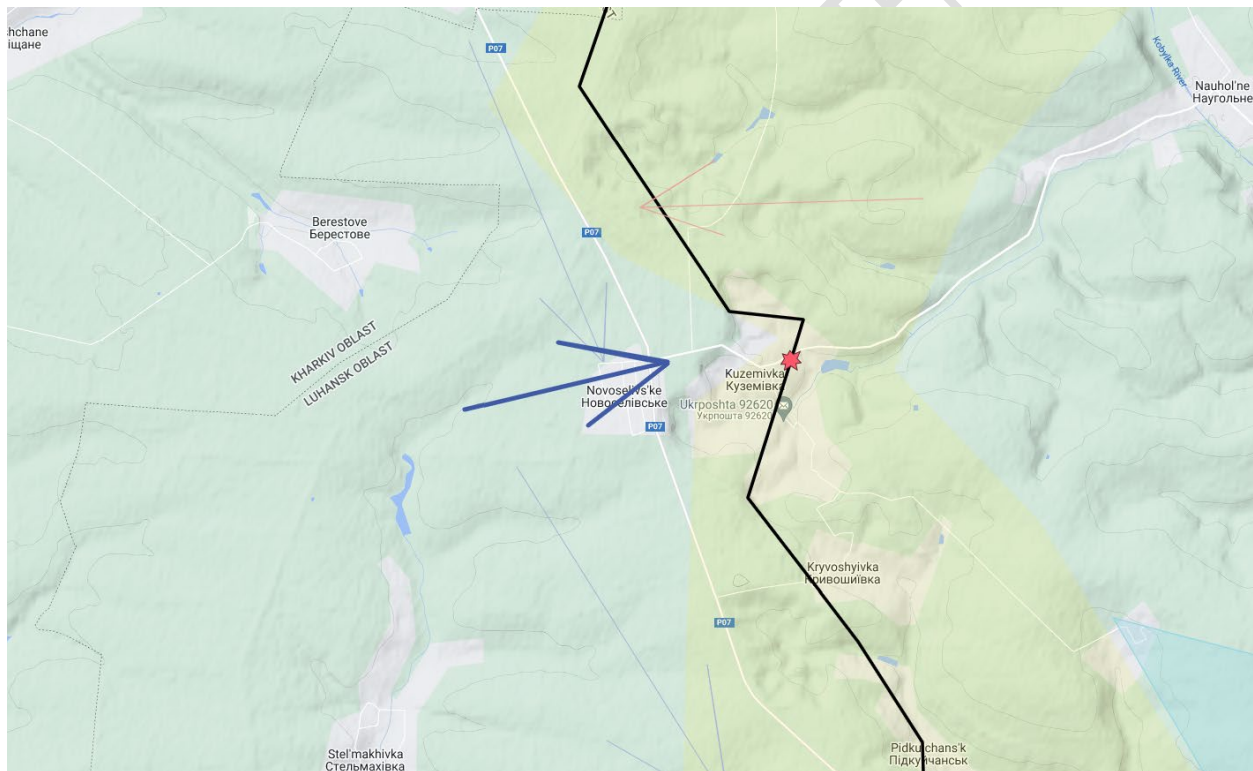
## LUHANSK



**Russian Objective:** Integrate oblast into Russian Federation, recapture lost territory, and control insurgency

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

There continues to be no indication of a large-scale Russian offensive in the Kreminna Operational Area. Artillery activity has increased, and there was another missile strike on Kramatorsk, but it remains unclear if this punitive targeting of civilians or meant to disrupt logistics and Ground Lines of Communication (GLOC – supply line) to Siversk, Bakhmut, or both.

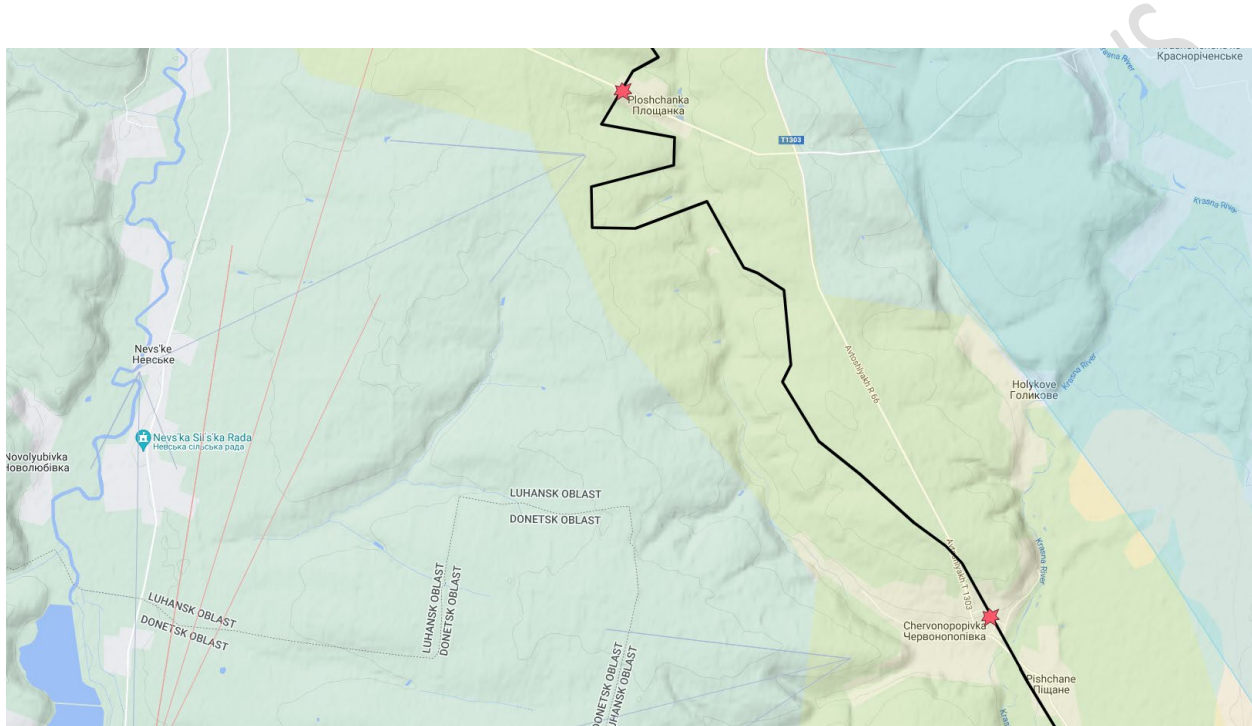


In the Svatove Operational Direction, the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (GSAFU) reported a Russian attack on [Novoselivske](#) was repulsed.<sup>2</sup> The Russian Ministry

<sup>2</sup> [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEST](#)



of Defense (RMOD) reported that Ukrainian positions were shelled.<sup>3</sup>



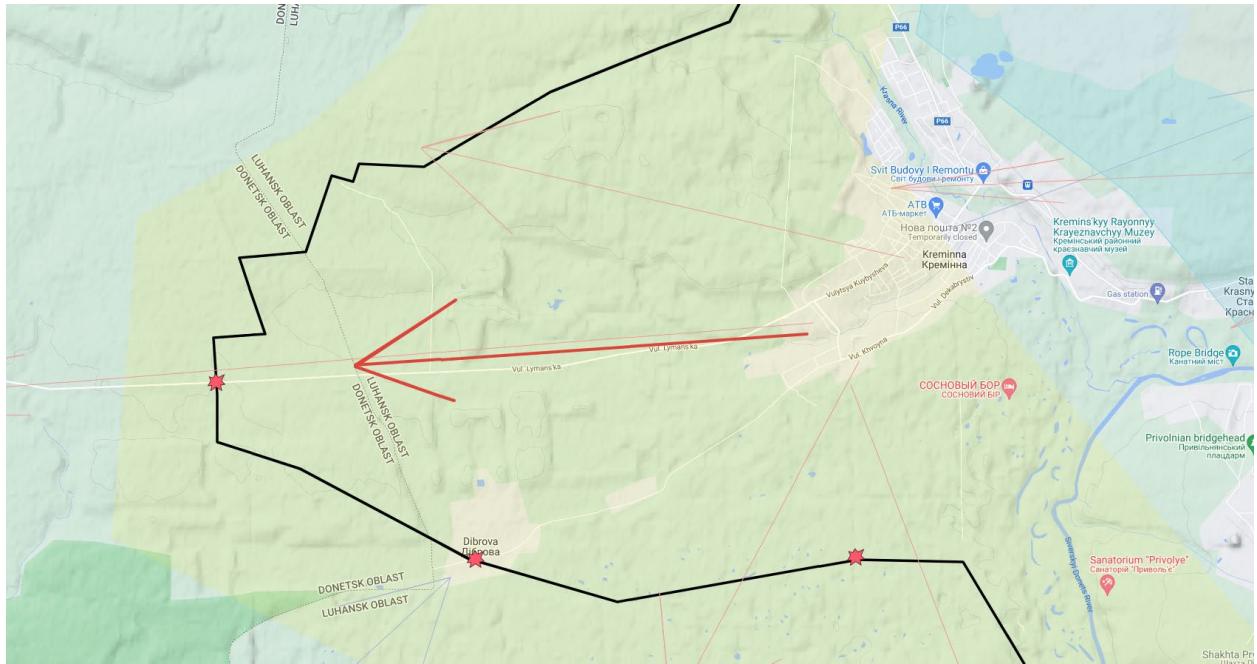
In the Kreminna Operational Direction, Ukrainian forces repelled attacks in the areas of [Ploshchanka](#), [Nevske](#), and [Chervonpopivka](#).<sup>4 5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/23918](https://t.me/mod_russia/23918) [Russian Government Controlled Social Media Channel]

<sup>4</sup> [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEST](#)

<sup>5</sup> [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/23918](https://t.me/mod_russia/23918) [Russian Government Controlled Social Media Channel]





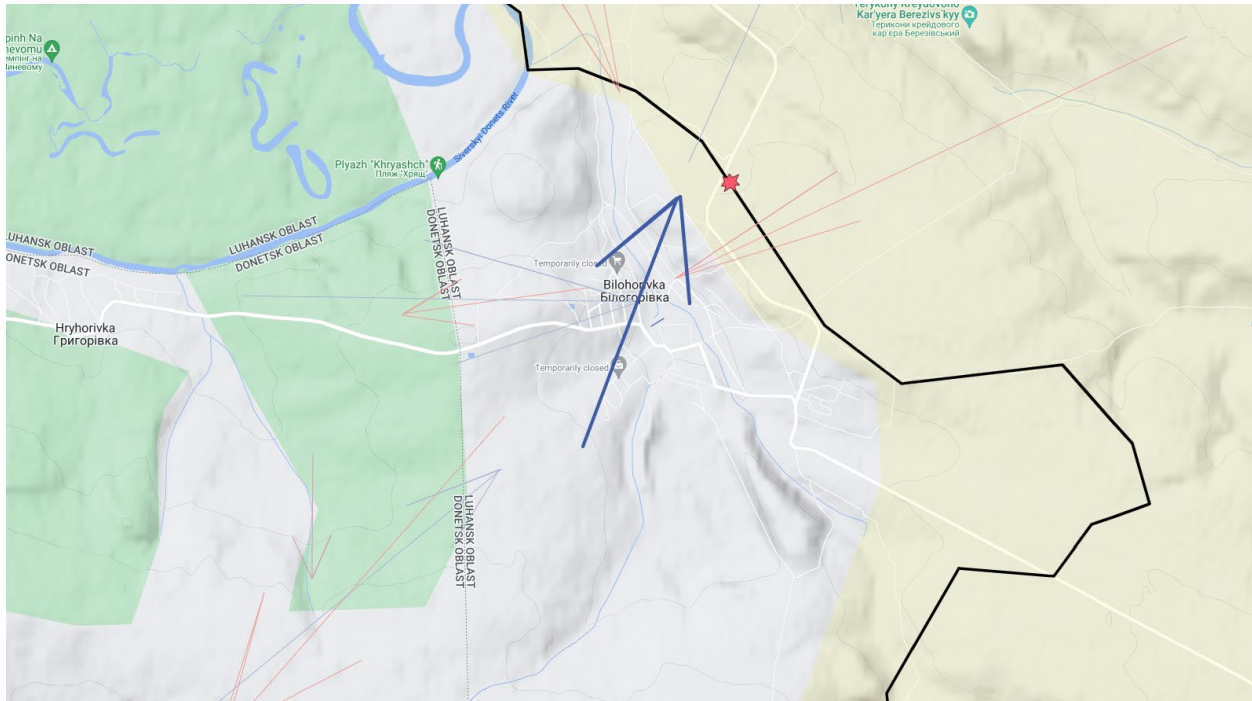
Russian and Ukrainian sources reported fighting in the forested areas near [Dibrova](#) and [Kuzmyne](#). While operational tempo increased, it has not reached the level to support the predictions of a “major Russian offensive.”<sup>6 7 8 9</sup> We did not update the map despite multiple reports of fighting in the area of Kuzmyne, as we maintain our assessment that territorial control is very fluid in the Serebryanskyy Woods and changes multiple times a day.

<sup>6</sup> [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEST](#)

<sup>7</sup> <https://t.me/DeepStateUA/15411>

<sup>8</sup> [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/23918](https://t.me/mod_russia/23918) [Russian Government Controlled Social Media Channel]

<sup>9</sup> <https://t.me/rybar/43220>



There were false reports started by Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) officials that Ukrainian forces were forced to withdraw from [Bilohorivka](#) [Luhansk]. GSAFU reported that a Russian attack was successfully repulsed, and mercenaries with War Gonzo denied the claim, writing, "In the Luhansk direction, the same fate befell the offensive operations near Bilohorovka – [it] didn't succeed."<sup>10 11</sup>

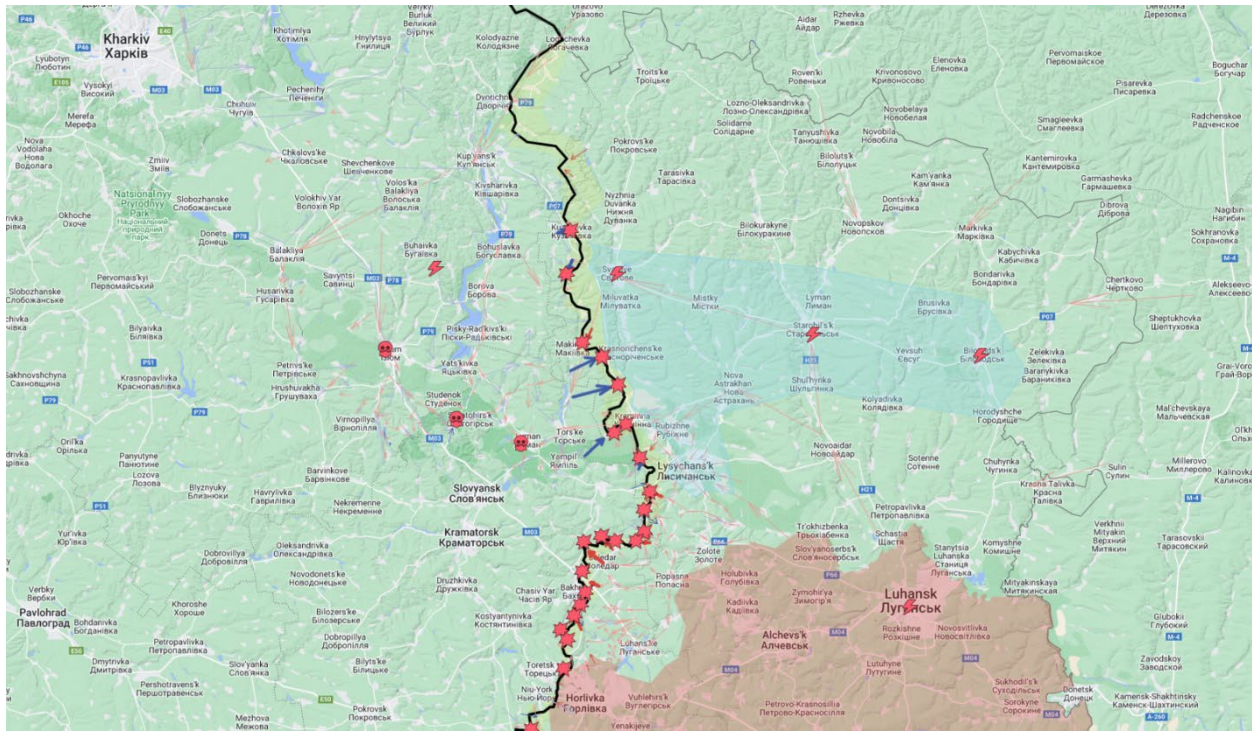
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<sup>10</sup> [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEST](#)

<sup>11</sup> <https://t.me/wargonzo/10680>



# NORTHEAST DONETSK



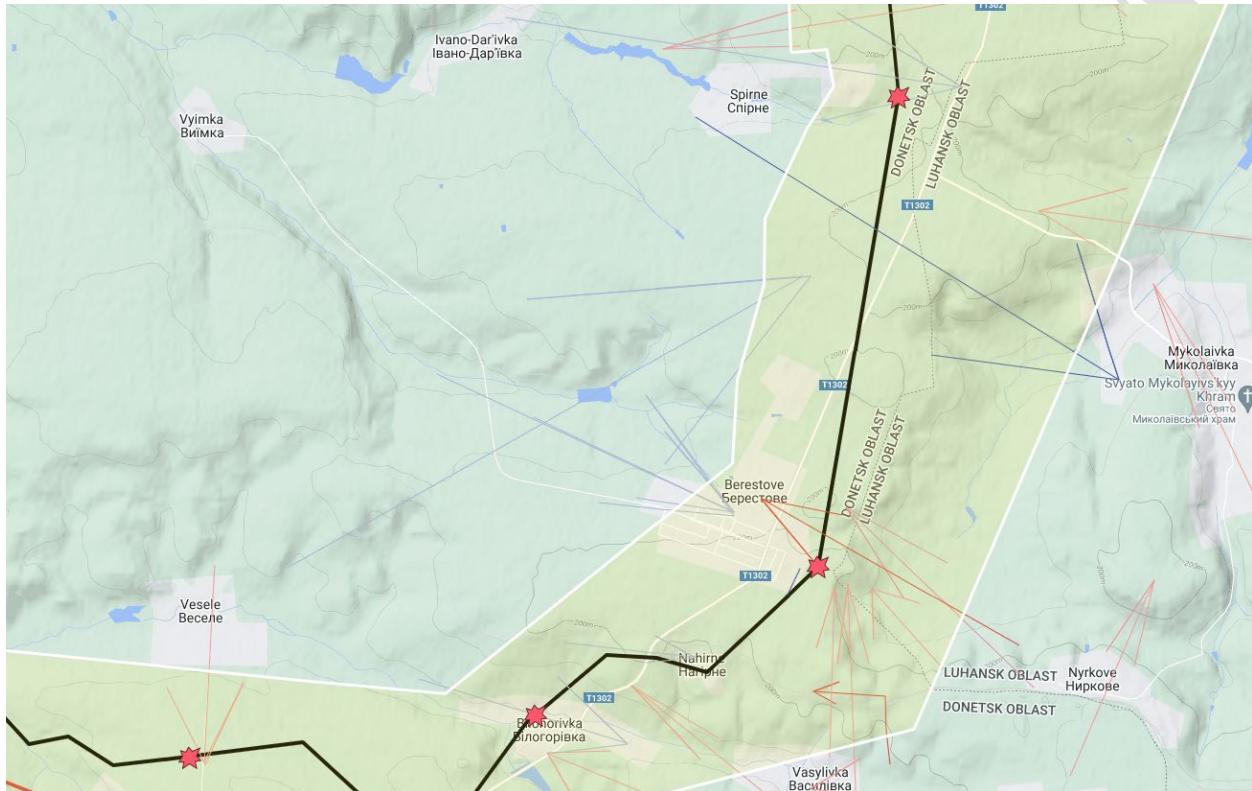
**Russian Objective:** Capture the entire region and integrate the oblast into Russian Federation

**Ukrainian Objective:** Defend Siversk and Bakhmut, push into the Luhansk oblast, and minimize civilian casualties

Rybar's claims that Russian forces had almost reached Yampolivka was just a repackaging of Russian milblogger Vysoky Govorit's claims from February 1. There remains no evidence that the Russian 144th Guards Motor Rifle Division



advanced up to 7.5 kilometers between January 31 and February 1.<sup>12</sup>



In the Siversk Operational Area, Russian and Ukrainian forces were pushing and pulling. Russian forces again tried to advance on [Spirne](#), with War Gonzo taking a glum tone declaring, "weakness has not yet been found."<sup>13 14</sup> Based on the repeated reports of Russian failures in this area, we did terrain analysis, moved the line of conflict to the east, and

<sup>12</sup> <https://t.me/rybar/43220>

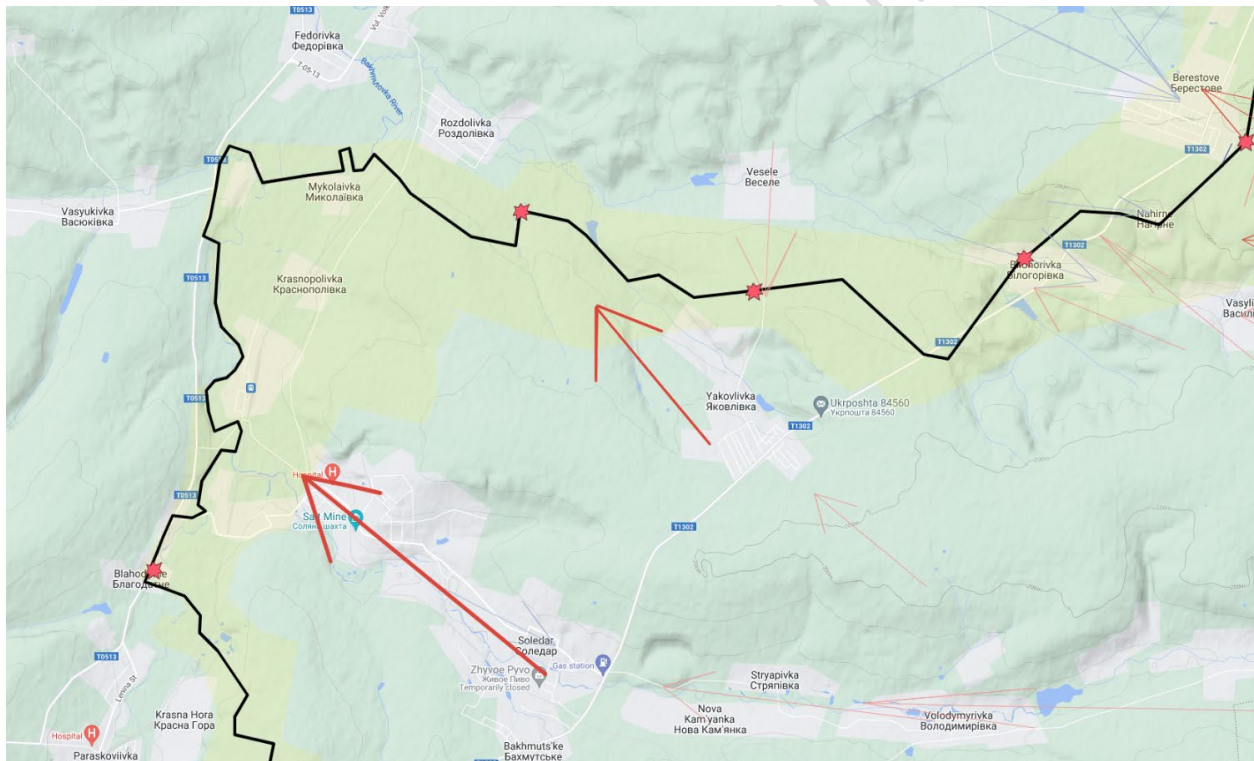
<sup>13</sup> [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEST](#)

<sup>14</sup> <https://t.me/wargonzo/10680>



reduced the gray area to only the easternmost section of the settlement. This does not represent new territorial gains.<sup>15</sup>

Further south, GSAFU reported a Russian attempt to advance from the western edges of [Bilohorivka](#) [Donetsk] was unsuccessful.



In the Soledar Operational Area, composite forces from PMC Wagner and Russia attempted to advance toward

<sup>15</sup> [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEST](#)

Vasyukivka from Sakko I Vantsetti, while  PMC Wagner captured the hamlet of Mykolaivka.<sup>16 17 18 19 20</sup>



Ukrainian forces continue to effectively defend Krasna Hora from attacks by PMC Wagner and Russian forces attempting to advance south from the Blahodatne and to the west from Pidhorodne in the direction of Paraskoviivka.<sup>21 22</sup> Seymon Pegov of War Gonzo must have

<sup>16</sup> [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEST](#)

<sup>17</sup> <https://t.me/DeepStateUA/15411>

<sup>18</sup> <https://t.me/wargonzo/10648>

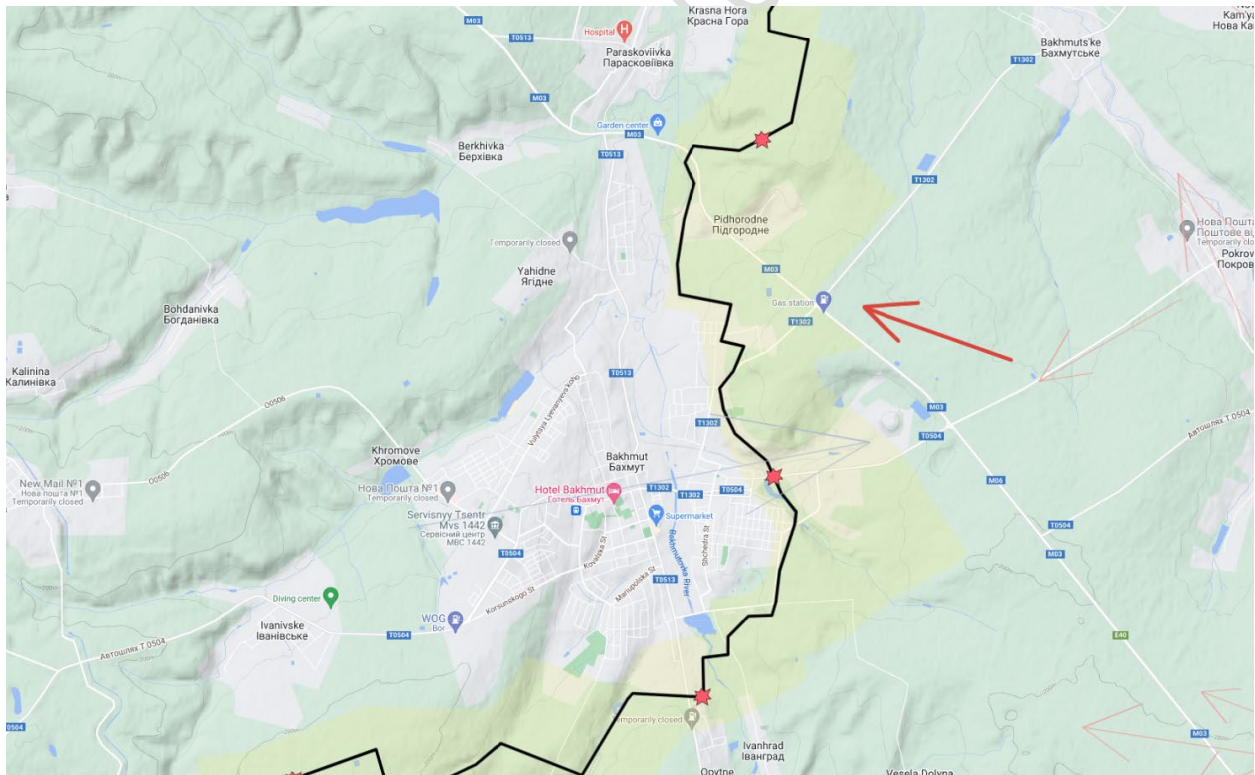
<sup>19</sup> <https://t.me/rybar/43220>

<sup>20</sup> [https://t.me/grey\\_zone/16970](https://t.me/grey_zone/16970)

<sup>21</sup> [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEST](#)

<sup>22</sup> <https://t.me/DeepStateUA/15411>

been depressed today, expressing frustration at the lack of progress toward Krasna Hora, declaring, "Here, the Armed Forces of Ukraine are quite successfully defending themselves."<sup>23</sup> Based on recent reports, we did a terrain analysis and pulled back the line of conflict, which we had to the eastern edge of the settlement. We find it unlikely that Ukrainian forces would be able to hold the town this long doing house-to-house fighting. While the line is further east than many other war maps, we find it equally unlikely that PMC Wagner units are sitting in open fields.




<sup>23</sup> <https://t.me/wargonzo/10648>



In the [Bakhmut](#) Operational Area, fighting continued on the city's northern, northeastern, and southern edges.<sup>24 25 26 27</sup>

Ukrainian forces continued to hold defensive lines east of [Paraskoviivka](#), with War Gonzo indicating that weaknesses had not been found.<sup>28 29</sup>

On the southern edge of Bakhmut, a Ukrainian source reported that Russian troops had  [established positions in the city](#). A geolocated video showed that we had already assessed the area as being on the line of conflict, eliminating the need to update the map.<sup>30</sup> Rybar did not mention the meat packing or champagne factories, and we saw no claims of Russian capture or Ukrainian forces pushing Russian troops back.

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<sup>24</sup> [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEST](#)

<sup>25</sup> <https://t.me/DeepStateUA/15411>

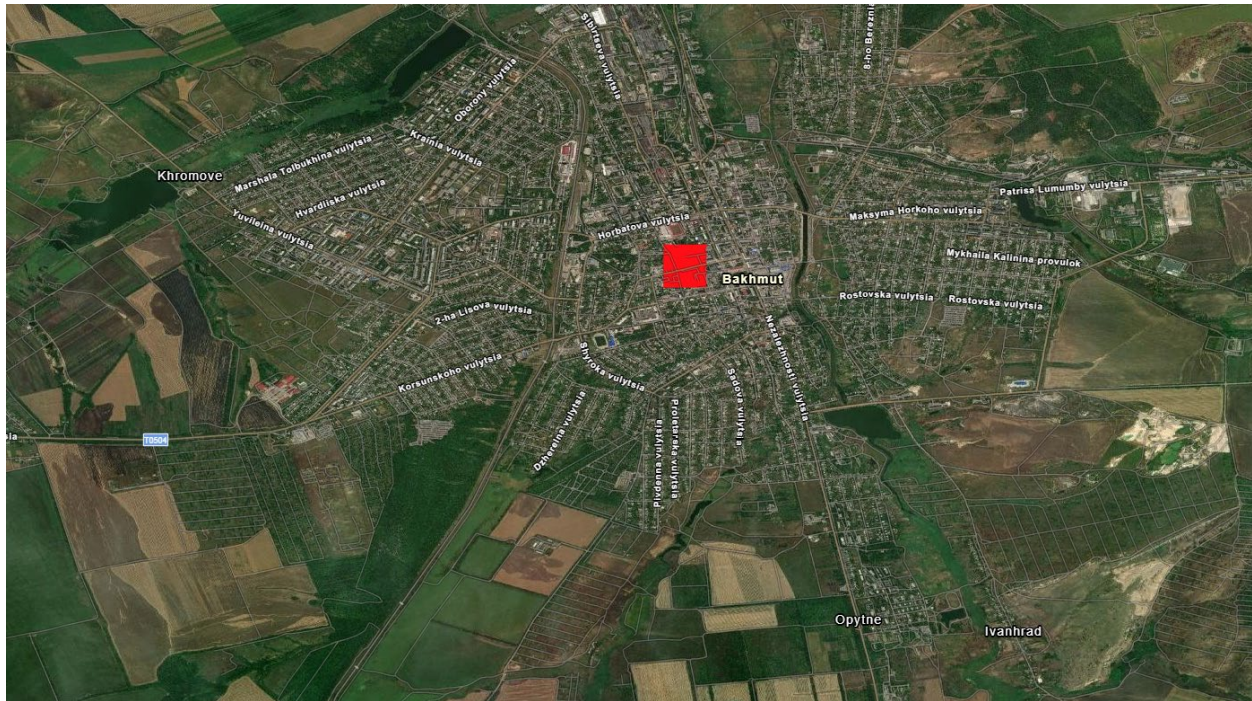
<sup>26</sup> <https://t.me/wargonzo/10648>

<sup>27</sup> <https://t.me/rybar/43220>

<sup>28</sup> [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEST](#)

<sup>29</sup> <https://t.me/wargonzo/10648>

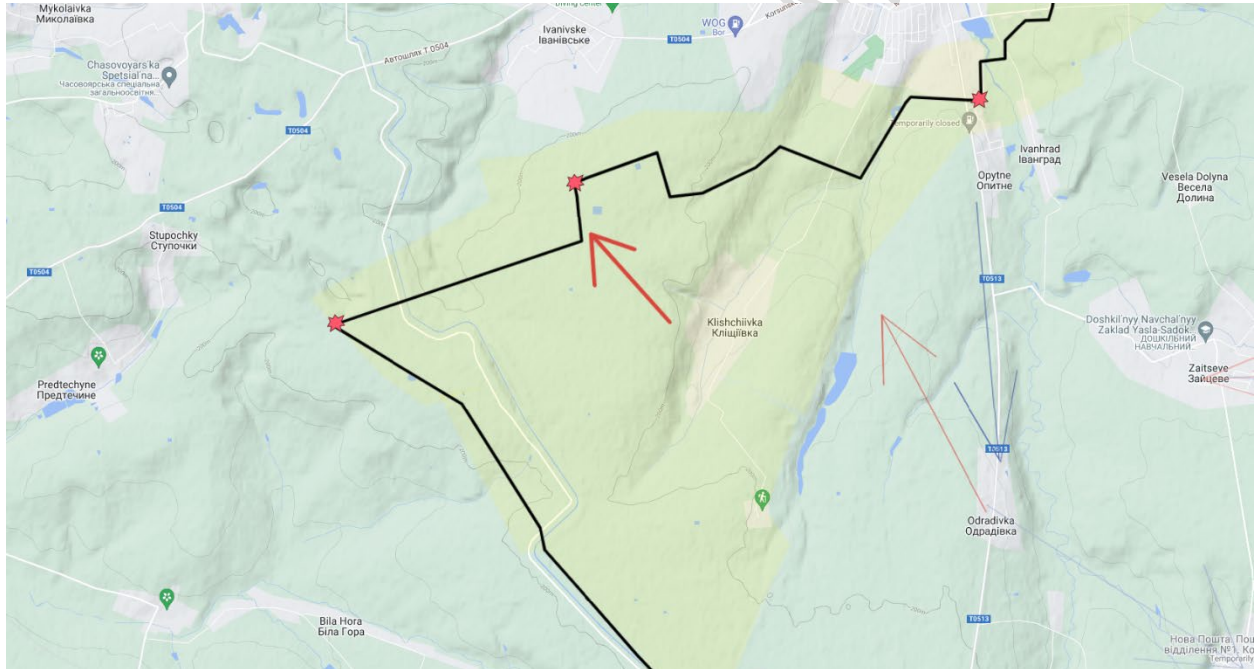
<sup>30</sup> <https://t.me/DeepStateUA/15407>



NASA Fire Information for Resource Management Systems (FIRMS) showed a significant thermal anomaly in the city center in the vicinity of the Department of Youth Policy and Children's Affairs building.

**ASSESSMENT:** Apartment buildings and businesses surround the area. With Russian troops repeatedly complaining about insufficient artillery support, we don't understand why the Russian Federation continues to waste military resources on civilian targets beyond their intent is genocidal.

Our favorite FSB Colonel, convicted war criminal, Kremlin pariah, PMC Wagner target, and failed mobik Igor "Girkin" Strelkov was in full doomer mode – again. "I'm not even sure that Bakhmut will be [captured] in the near future. And if it [is], then it means that the Armed Forces of Ukraine will sacrifice it in the same way...they sacrificed (for the sake of gaining time and preserving shock reserves) Severodonetsk and Lysychansk."<sup>31</sup>



In the Kostyantynivka Operational Direction, the situation was unchanged. The most intense fighting in Ukraine

<sup>31</sup> <https://t.me/strelkovii/3855>



continues to be west and north of [Klishchiivka](#).<sup>32 33 34 35</sup> PMC Wagner's social media channels shared an update reporting that the Ukrainian T-504 Highway GLOC has not been severed and is not under Russian fire control.<sup>36</sup>

**ASSESSMENT:** While this is the first positive report for Ukrainian forces in the Bakhmut Operational Area since mid-January, and PMC Wagner's role is diminished after the heavy losses suffered capturing Soledar, additional Russian forces continue to be added to the offensive effort. The situation remains very difficult, even though it has stabilized over the last 72 hours.

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<sup>32</sup> [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEST](#)

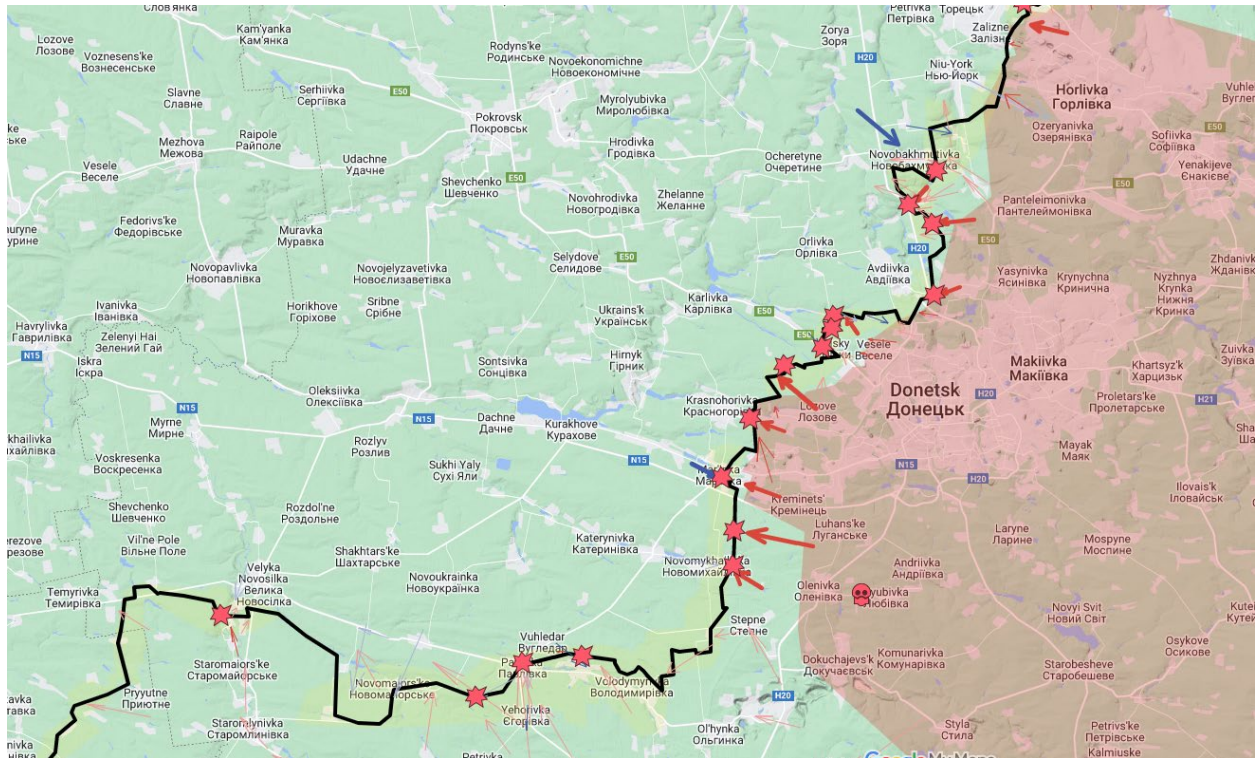
<sup>33</sup> <https://t.me/DeepStateUA/15411>

<sup>34</sup> <https://t.me/wargonzo/10648>

<sup>35</sup> <https://t.me/rybar/43220>

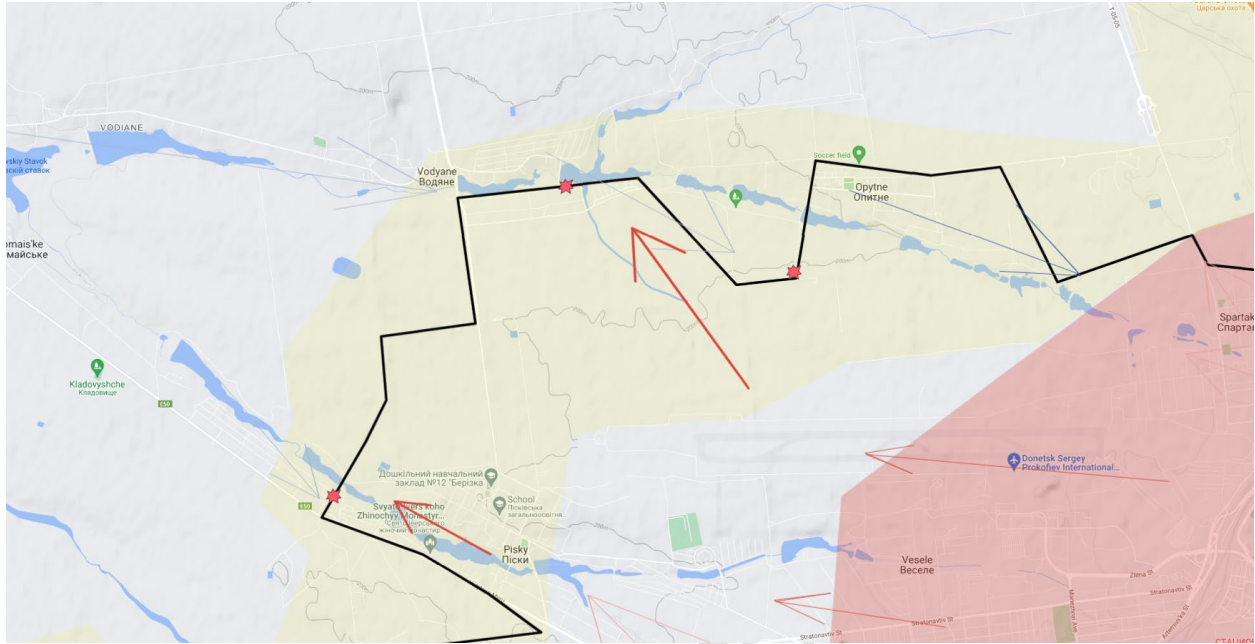
<sup>36</sup> [https://t.me/grey\\_zone/16971](https://t.me/grey_zone/16971)

## SOUTHWESTERN DONETSK



**Russian Objective:** Capture the entire region, integrate the oblast into Russian Federation, and bring the insurrection across southwestern Donetsk under control

**Ukrainian Objective:** Lock Russian military assets in place, defend the existing line of conflict while finding and exploiting weaknesses, destroy troop concentrations and command and control sites, interdict supplies, and disrupt logistics

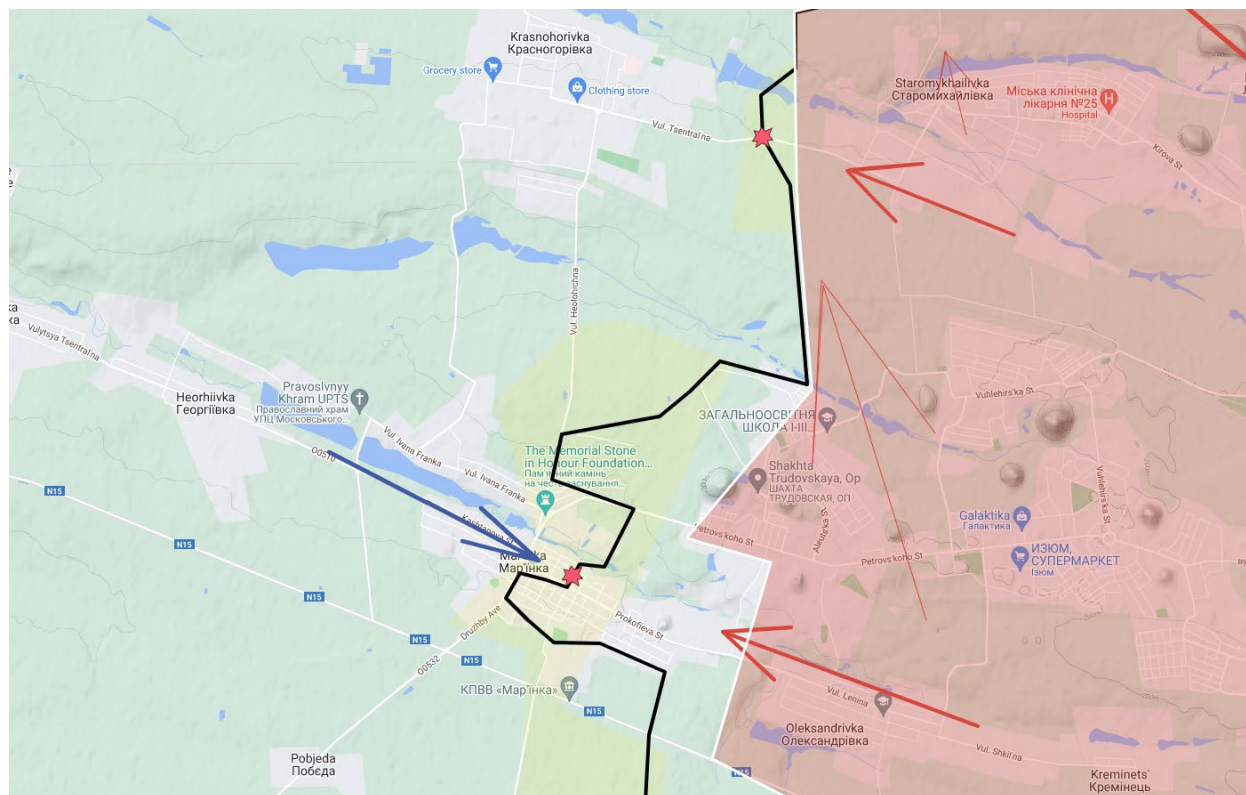


In the Avdiivka Operational Area, only light positional fighting occurred in [Opytne](#) (by the Donetsk International Airport) and [Vodyane](#).<sup>37 38</sup>

<sup>37</sup> <https://t.me/DeepStateUA/15411>

<sup>38</sup> <https://t.me/wargonzo/10648>





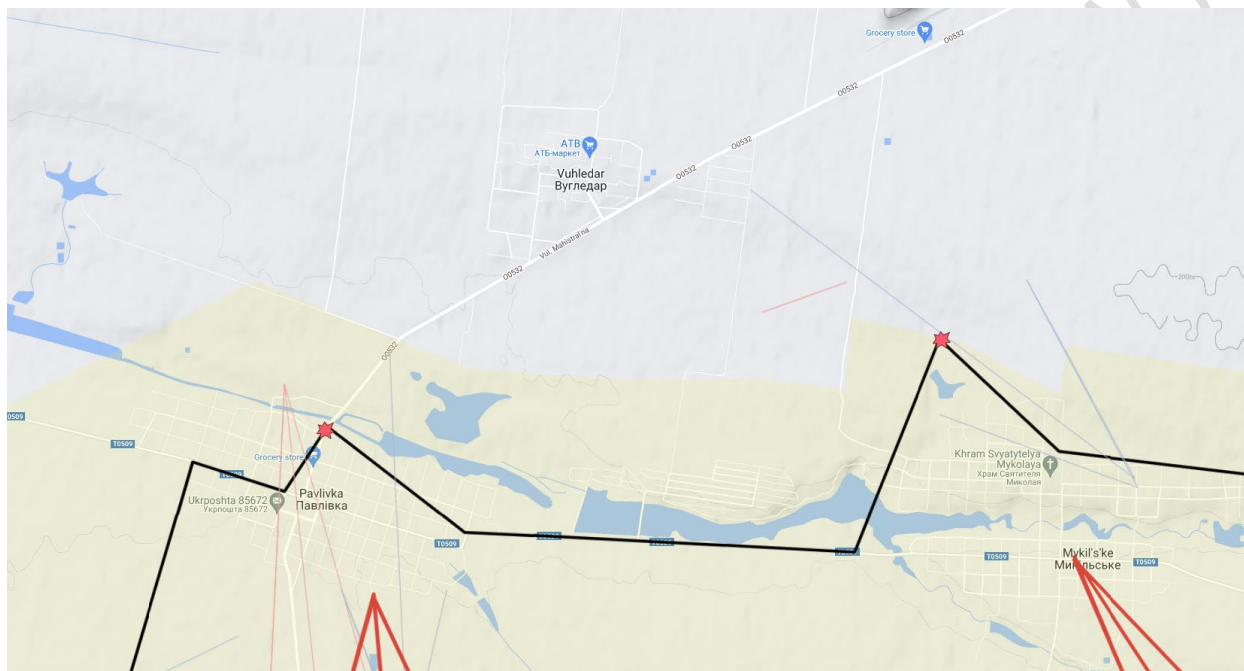
In the [Marinka](#) Operational Area, only War Gonzo reported continued fighting in the city, stating "ongoing battles in the city limits."<sup>39</sup> Pavlo Kyrylenko, Donetsk Oblast Administrative and Military Governor said there was only isolated shelling.<sup>40</sup>

**ASSESSMENT:** We believe War Gonzo is attempting to find an off-ramp after repeated claims that 85% of the settlement was under Russian control. On February 2,

<sup>39</sup> <https://t.me/wargonzo/10648>

<sup>40</sup> [https://t.me/pavlokyrylenko\\_donoda/6543](https://t.me/pavlokyrylenko_donoda/6543)

several Ukrainian and Russian sources went out of their way to declare there was no fighting in Marinka.



In the [Vuhledar](#) Operational Direction, the Russian offensive toward the city remains stalled.<sup>41 42 43</sup> Ukrainian milblogger and military reserve officer Tatarigami reported that there continued to be numerous small attacks during the daytime with no progress achieved.<sup>44</sup> Ukrainian military expert Oleksandr Kovalenko reported that members of Russian Minister of Defense Sergei Shoigu's private military company, Patriot, were in the area but had not participated

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<sup>41</sup> [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/23918](https://t.me/mod_russia/23918) [Russian Government Controlled Social Media Channel]

<sup>42</sup> <https://t.me/rybar/43220>

<sup>43</sup> [https://twitter.com/Tatarigami\\_UA/status/1621396802120437761](https://twitter.com/Tatarigami_UA/status/1621396802120437761)

<sup>44</sup> [https://twitter.com/Tatarigami\\_UA](https://twitter.com/Tatarigami_UA)

in any fighting.<sup>45</sup> We agree with Tatarigami's assessment that Shoigu's PMC was moved into the area as a planned propaganda photo opportunity after Vuhledar was captured to tarnish Yevgeny Prigozhin's image further.<sup>46</sup>

Pro-Ukrainian milblogger Tom Cooper wrote a detailed analysis of the failed Russian offensive, which started setting conditions on January 24. There are estimates that the Russian 155<sup>th</sup> Naval Infantry Brigade suffered 200 to 230 killed-in-action (KIA). The estimated wounded would be an additional 500 to 575, making losses almost as bad as the attack on Pavlivka in the fall.

The British Ministry of Defense Defense Intelligence Directorate believes that Russian forces will launch another large offensive.<sup>47</sup> Cooper claims that the Russian [mobiks moved from Mariupol to Volnovakha](#) were attacked by rockets fired by HIMARS on the same day they arrived – January 28, which is why the current offensive fizzled out on January 31.<sup>48 49</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> [https://twitter.com/Tatarigami\\_UA/status/1621396805324869632](https://twitter.com/Tatarigami_UA/status/1621396805324869632)


<sup>46</sup> [https://twitter.com/Tatarigami\\_UA/status/1621396806637690881](https://twitter.com/Tatarigami_UA/status/1621396806637690881)

<sup>47</sup> <https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1620312860294357000>

<sup>48</sup> <https://t.me/andriyshTime/6247>

<sup>49</sup> [Malcontent News Russia-Ukraine War Report – January 28, 2023](#)

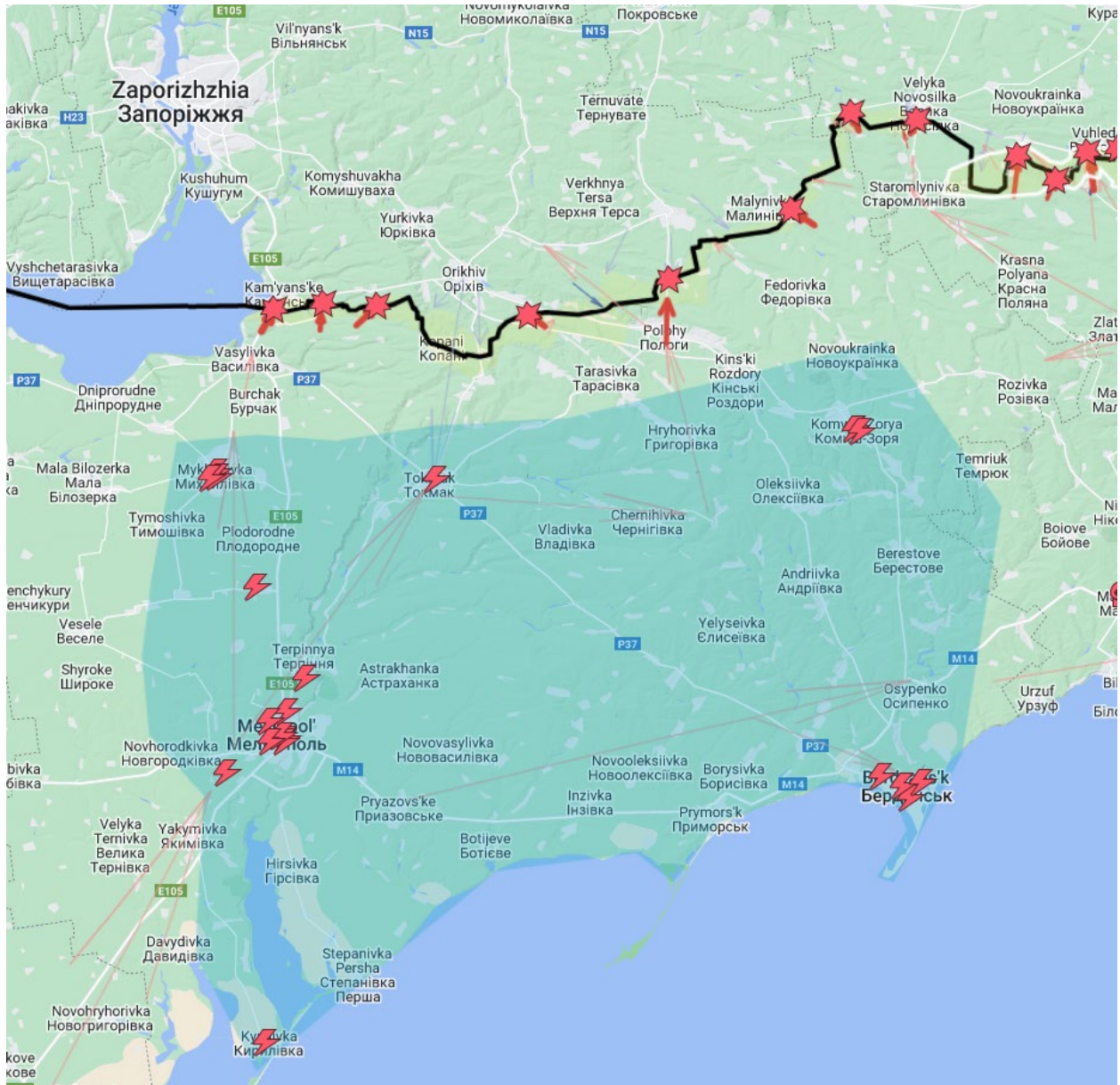


In Russian-occupied Mariupol, insurgents reported several  [explosions rocked the Ilyich Ironworks area](#).<sup>50</sup>

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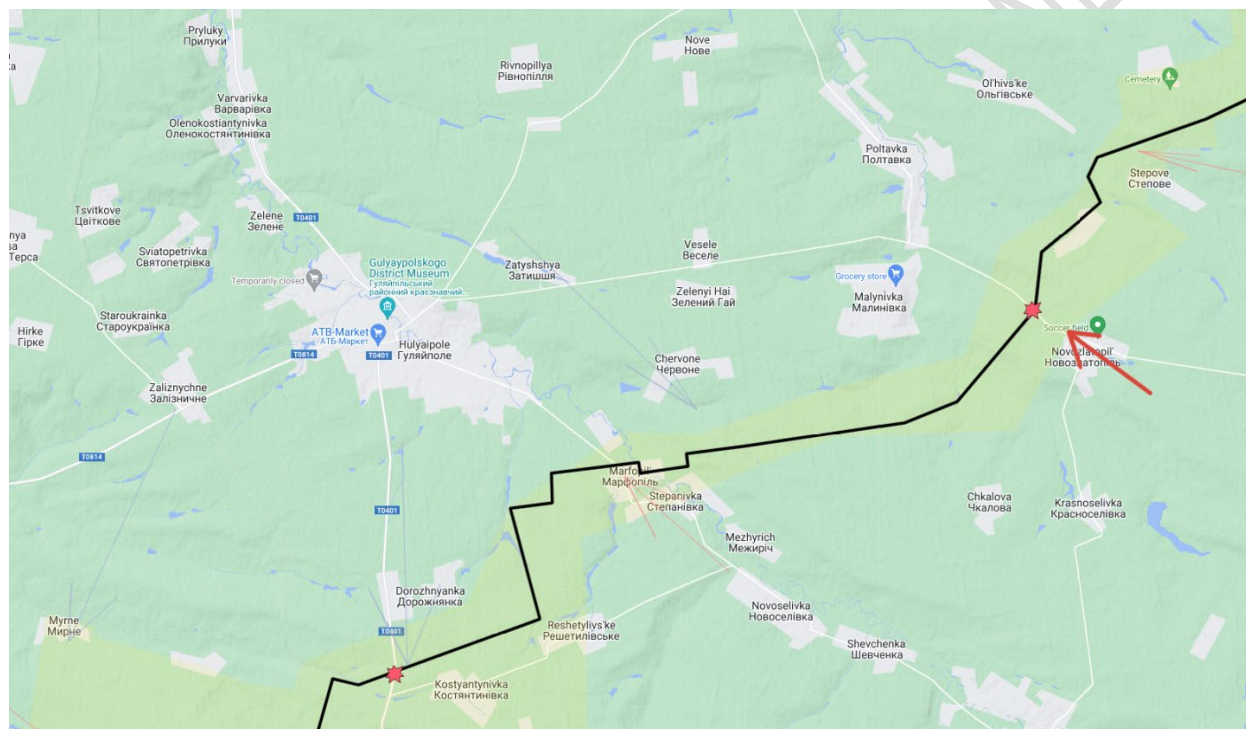
<sup>50</sup> <https://t.me/andriyshTime/6388>

# ZAPORIZHIA



**Russian Objective:** Prevent a Ukrainian offensive into Zaporizhzhia, integrate captured territory into the Russian Federation, capture the remainder of the oblast

## Ukrainian Objective: Liberate Russian-occupied areas, prevent further Russian advances, exploit weaknesses on the line of conflict, and protect civilians



In the Hulyaipole Operational Area, RMOD claimed Russian troops attacked [Poltavka](#).<sup>51</sup> Rybar made a generic claim of Ukrainian and Russian DRG and reconnaissance units operating in parts of Zaporizhia, adding some credibility to the RMOD report.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>51</sup> [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/23918](https://t.me/mod_russia/23918) [Russian Government Controlled Social Media Channel]

<sup>52</sup> <https://t.me/rybar/43220>



The oil and fuel storage tanks in Russian-occupied Novobohdanivka were reportedly hit by rockets fired by HIMARS and burned for hours after the attack.<sup>53</sup>

In the morning, two large explosions were reported at the Refma factory in Melitopol, which Russian forces have used as a logistical center. Pictures from insurgents [showed a column of smoke rising](#) in the factory area.<sup>54</sup> In the evening, four more explosions were reported in the city center.<sup>55</sup>

The situation at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant is unchanged. Russian State Media agency TASS reported that a car bomb planted by insurgents exploded in Enerhodar, killing a police officer.<sup>56</sup>

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

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<sup>53</sup> [https://t.me/ivan\\_fedorov\\_melitopol/1287](https://t.me/ivan_fedorov_melitopol/1287)

<sup>54</sup> <https://t.me/hueviyherson/34040>

<sup>55</sup> [https://t.me/ivan\\_fedorov\\_melitopol/1282](https://t.me/ivan_fedorov_melitopol/1282)

<sup>56</sup> [https://tass \[dot\] ru/proisshestviya/16952355](https://tass [dot] ru/proisshestviya/16952355)

Operational Command South (OCS) reported the Black Sea Fleet had ten ships on patrol, including one missile carrier capable of launching up to eight Kalibr cruise missiles.<sup>57</sup> The rotation of missile carriers probably means reloading activity is occurring at Sevastopol. However, sea conditions were bad in the eastern Black Sea, and the reduction of Black Sea ships on patrol could be weather related.

## WESTERN AND CENTRAL UKRAINE

**Russian Objective:** Launch terror attacks on civilians in an attempt to maximize casualties by deprivation of heat, water, and medical services and break morale

**Ukrainian Objective:** Deter attacks, and protect civilian lives

In Kherson, Russian and Ukrainian forces continued mutual shelling across the Dnipro River.<sup>58</sup> <sup>59</sup> Russian forces executed 65 fire missions on free Ukraine, targeting the city of Kherson 13 times, causing 11 casualties.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/75303>





<sup>58</sup> [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEST](#)

<sup>59</sup> [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report PM EEST](#)

<sup>60</sup> <https://t.me/khersonskaODA/3488>

Komyshany was repeatedly shelled, killing two people and wounding five. There was a picture that some may find graphic of one of the fatalities. You can view the image by

  [clicking here](#).<sup>61</sup>

In Kherson, Russians  [intentionally targeted the Epicenter Shopping Mall](#), and  [attacked residential areas](#).<sup>62</sup> The complex is massive and would be equivalent to Home Depot, Costco, Ikea, and the largest grocery store you've ever been in having a baby. A fire erupted after the shelling,  [causing fireworks](#) in one of the stores  [to detonate](#).<sup>63</sup> <sup>64</sup> We're not in denial that ammunition was at the mall – watch the videos – that's fireworks.

**ASSESSMENT:** Listeners and readers may be asking themselves, "is this the third time an area with conventional fireworks stored has been hit by Russian artillery?" Yes, and we're a bit mystified about why stores with fireworks are now targeted, but we have a working theory that we're not ready to share.

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<sup>61</sup> <https://t.me/khersonskaODA/3471>

<sup>62</sup> <https://t.me/hueviyherson/34160>

<sup>63</sup> <https://t.me/hueviyherson/34155>

<sup>64</sup> <https://t.me/hueviyherson/34154>



Russian forces also  [shelled the Beryslav raion](#).<sup>65</sup>

## NORTH AND NORTHEAST UKRAINE

**Russian Objective:** Lock Ukrainian military resources into place and launch terror attacks on civilians in an attempt to break morale and maximize casualties by deprivation of heat, water, and medical services

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

The border areas of Sumy were hit by 120 mortar and artillery shells, striking the hromadas of Shalyhyne, Esman, Bilopillia, and Seredyna-Buda. There were no injuries or significant damage reported.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> <https://t.me/hueviyherson/34147>

<sup>66</sup> <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/75462>

## **RUSSIAN FRONT**

There wasn't any significant activity in this part of the Theater of War.

## **THEATERWIDE & EXTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS**

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy held a meeting of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief, first with his full military, intelligence, and security staff, and then a closed-door meeting with a smaller group of leaders.

"I held a [staff] meeting today, for the first time in a dual format," Zelenskyy said in his evening address. "First...we discussed the situation on the contact line, Russia's attempts to increase pressure in [the] Donbas, [and] supplying the army. [Also discussed was – ed.] training personnel and other issues that are in the constant attention of the staff.

"And then, in the afternoon, an additional meeting of the staff members in a reduced format for a particularly important conversation."<sup>67</sup>

Publicly announced closed-door meetings of the staff of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief are unusual, and two to three days before the Kharkiv and the Kherson counteroffensives, President Zelenskyy held closed-door meetings with no read-out provided.

On the same day, failed mobik Strelkov claimed that a large Ukrainian offensive was coming and Russian forces were unprepared.<sup>68</sup>

"To organize...a strategic victory over the Armed Forces of Ukraine, the leadership of the Russian Federation...is currently doing **nothing**. [Emphasis, Strelkov – Ed.] While the enemy is openly and stubbornly preparing to inflict new strong blows on us soon."

He adds that even if Russian forces are successful against the next Ukrainian counteroffensive, it will only be a "short

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<sup>67</sup> <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2023/02/2/7387698/>

<sup>68</sup> <https://t.me/strelkovii/3855>

respite for the Armed Forces of Ukraine in case they fail...I hope to be wrong. But the information that I have at my disposal does not cause optimism."

Well, now we're intrigued, but we've shared everything we know, so you're waiting to find out just like us.

Russian President Vladimir Putin reportedly put Valery Gerasimov on an unrealistic timetable, ordering the rest of Luhansk and Donetsk to be captured by March.<sup>69</sup> While the Main Intelligence Directorate of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine (GUR) has made similar claims, command generals in the Russian Federation have been fired after missing other alleged deadlines. Lapin reportedly received the same order with a September 15, 2022 deadline and was dismissed on October 8. Surovikin reportedly also received the same order with a December 31, 2022 deadline and was demoted on January 11, 2023.

Anti-corruption-related arrests, firings, and investigations of business leaders and government officials are continuing at a torrid pace in Ukraine. There are so many reports that we can't possibly share them all. You can watch this video

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<sup>69</sup> <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/75286>



of the equivalent of  [\\$1 million in cash hidden in the home](#) of former deputy minister of defense Oleksandr Myronuik.

Belarusian officials claimed that the joint air force exercises with the Russian Federation have ended, and Russian aircraft have returned to their home bases.<sup>70</sup> GSAFU said the claim was a lie, and the Russian warplanes remained at Belarusian airfields.<sup>71</sup>

Ukrainian Minister of Defense Oleksii Reznikov said Kyiv was prepared to give security guarantees that, if provided so-called long-range missiles, Ukraine will not use them to attack the territory of Russia. That's the old school, pre-2014 Russia. Reznikov then threw some snark at the Kremlin, adding, "The Armed Forces have enough targets in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine."<sup>72</sup>

***Editor's Note: Ballistic missiles that can only strike targets less than 1,000 kilometers away are considered short-range, while cruise missiles with a range between 300 to 500 kilometers are considered short-range. While many***

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<sup>70</sup> <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2023/02/2/7387634/>

<sup>71</sup> <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2023/02/2/7387665/>

<sup>72</sup> <https://t.me/The3rdForceUA/14849>

*refer to ATACMS as a “long-range” missile, it is still considered short-range in military terms.*

Politico and CNN reported that the United States could allow other nations to transfer F-16 fighter planes to Ukraine, but it was unlikely Washington D.C. would provide them directly.<sup>73 74</sup>

French President Emmanuel Macron reversed course and said he would instruct his Ministry of Defense to work out the issues of supplying Leclerc main battle tanks (MBT) to Ukraine.<sup>75</sup> In our assessment, France may need to step in to fill the gap created by Spain after discovering that only six Leopard 2A4s could be made combat-ready.

Ukrainian Defense Attaché in the United States Boris Kremenetskyi said the 70 Ukrainian soldiers who are in training to operate the Patriot missile air defense system are ahead of schedule and could finish their training “in a few weeks.”<sup>76 77</sup> Yes, we had the same thought, but our Chief Content Officer was told by an insider that, no, Ukrainian

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<sup>73</sup> <https://t.me/The3rdForceUA/14848>

<sup>74</sup> <https://t.me/itsdonetsk/55130>

<sup>75</sup> <https://t.me/DeepStateUA/15403>

<sup>76</sup> <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/75497>

<sup>77</sup> <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/75320>

forces had not already started training before the transfer of Patriot systems was announced.

Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani said that the SAMP/T anti-aircraft missile complex that Italy and France have agreed to provide could be ready for deployment within the "next two months."<sup>78</sup>

It is expected that the European Union will announce on February 3 that the economic bloc will double the number of Ukrainian troops receiving military training, with plans to support 30,000 recruits in 2023.<sup>79</sup>

## **RUSSIAN MOBILIZATION AND MILITARY STATUS**

Hey! Remember on February 1 when we shared that PMC Wagner Group leader Prigozhin sent a letter to Vasily Piskarev, Chairman of the Committee of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, asking to prohibit government officials from international travel and to open up sweeping corruption probes? Remember how we said it was only political theater to shame the Kremlin?

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<sup>78</sup> <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/75435>

<sup>79</sup> <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/75353>

Remember how we said it would be dead on arrival in the Duma?

Guess what? Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said, "the initiative is not being discussed in the Kremlin."<sup>80</sup>

We're confident that's a lie, and Prigozhin's letter was almost certainly discussed using numerous swear words between fits of derisive laughter.

Russia released a video of its latest wunderwaffe, tracked  [battle robots meant to hunt down](#) and destroy NATO-provided tanks!<sup>81</sup> Videos showed a robot moving into a warehouse, and Russia claimed they were already in the Donbas. You know where this is going. Geolocation of the video showed that the robot is in the Russian city of Tagarnog, which was part of Ukraine until 1924.<sup>82</sup>

GSAFU reported that an undersized battalion of 300 Russian contract soldiers couldn't leave Ukraine because of the current Kremlin stop-loss order.<sup>83</sup> The soldiers have

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<sup>80</sup> <https://t.me/itsdonetsk/55223>

<sup>81</sup> <https://twitter.com/temafey/status/1621118492333457408>

<sup>82</sup> <https://t.me/DeepStateUA/15410>

<sup>83</sup> [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report PM EEST](#)



another problem. Because their contract has ended, their not getting pay, housing, food, or other assistance. Roof, heat, medical care, and food if you surrender.

GSAFU also reported that Russian mobilization efforts were occurring in occupied Donetsk, with all public sector organizations in Horlivka ordered to submit lists of persons eligible for mobilization with the commissariat.<sup>84</sup>

In the city of Luhansk, advertisements are running on social networks looking to hire morgue workers. Job opportunities include porters and cleaners for full-time and weekend work. No experience is required, and the first day is probationary.<sup>85</sup>

All is going to plan.

## WAR CRIMES AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Ads are starting to appear on social media offering child pornography using kidnapped Ukrainian children.<sup>86</sup> One ad

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<sup>84</sup> [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report PM EEST](#)

<sup>85</sup> <https://t.me/luhanskaVTSA/8298>

<sup>86</sup> <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/75454>

offered videos of a sexual nature with a boy who appeared to be less than six years old for \$3,500. When investigators corresponded with the handler, they said the available children “are from Ukraine and have no relatives.”

Donetsk Oblast Governor Kyrylenko reported that two Russian missiles struck Kramatorsk for the second time in less than 24 hours. Thirteen two-story apartment buildings, a children’s medical clinic, a school, and a parking garage were damaged. Five people were injured.<sup>87</sup>

The European Commission will transfer an additional 2,400 generators to Ukraine, European Commission Ursula von der Leyen announced during a press conference with President Zelenskyy.<sup>88</sup>

Ukrainian Colonel Oleksiy Dmytrashkivskyi reported that ten marines with the Russian 155th Naval Infantry Brigade were taken prisoner near Vuhledar and have been tentatively identified as being involved in the March 2022 atrocities in Bucha and Irpin.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/75373>

<sup>88</sup> <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/75392>

<sup>89</sup> <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/75338>

## GEOPOLITICAL

The Washington Post claimed that United States Central Intelligence Agency Director William Burns secretly traveled to Moscow in January after meeting with President Zelenskyy in Kyiv, attempting to broker a peace deal. Burns, allegedly speaking on behalf of United States President Joe Biden, proposed Ukraine surrender 20% of its territory to end the war, with Moscow and Kyiv refusing the deal. The Post added that the roadblock to providing Ukraine with main battle tanks dissolved when the negotiations failed.<sup>90 91</sup> Washington has denied the claim.

The European Union Parliament adopted a resolution to start the work on Ukraine's accession to the EU.<sup>92</sup>

The Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs named four Russian diplomats as persona non grata, ejecting them from Vienna.<sup>93</sup> Deputy Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation Yevgeny Ivanov told the Russian State Media agency TASS that Moscow was working on a response.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2023/02/2/7387690/>

<sup>91</sup> <https://t.me/Crimeanwind/21664>

<sup>92</sup> <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/75410>

<sup>93</sup> <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/75302>

<sup>94</sup> <https://tass.ru/politika/16953753> [Russian State Media Controlled Website]

The President of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić, said his nation would not join and would maintain a policy of neutrality.<sup>95</sup>

The United States joined Ukraine, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia in calling for the non-admission of athletes from Russia and Belarus to the 2024 Olympics.<sup>96</sup>

## ECONOMIC

The EU Council released another 500 million euros of economic aid and 45 million euros for military assistance to Ukraine.<sup>97</sup> Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said he was grateful for the support from the EU.

Jonas Haar Støre, Prime Minister of Norway, pledged to increase Ukraine's financial assistance in 2023. "Last year, we provided Ukraine with more than 10 billion kroner for civil and military support," he said. "We will make an even greater contribution to the repair and reconstruction of the damaged infrastructure."<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> <https://t.me/itsdonetsk/55175>

<sup>96</sup> <https://t.me/Crimeanwind/21663>

<sup>97</sup> <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/75427>

<sup>98</sup> <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/75397>



The rouble was extremely volatile, swinging from an exchange rate of 70 to 75 for 1 US dollar in today's session, indicating that an entity is dumping the Russian currency.

Western oil prices continued downward, with WTI crude falling to \$76 a barrel and Brent dropping to \$82. Russian Urals crude dropped to an "official" price of \$54 a barrel. United States wholesale RBOB gasoline on the spot market dropped on the first day of February, hitting \$2.44 a gallon (65 cents a liter).

Dutch TTF Natural Gas Futures climbed slightly, with March 2023 rising to 58 euros per megawatt hour and April 2023 futures at 59.

Chicago SRW Wheat Futures declined to \$7.57 a bushel for May 2023 delivery.