



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



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# Malcontent News

## Russia-Ukraine War SITREP

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## Contents

SUMMARY – DAY 88 .....	3
DAILY ASSESSMENT .....	5
TODAY’S WAR IN UKRAINE MAP.....	9
DONBAS REGION.....	10
LUHANSK.....	11
Severodonetsk Salient.....	11
Severodonetsk Westward Offensive .....	15
SOUTH DONBAS AND WESTERN ZAPORIZHIA.....	16
KHARKIV REGION.....	16
NORTHERN KHARKIV COUNTEROFFENSIVE.....	17
IZYUM AXIS .....	17
DNIPRO, KHERSON & MYKOLAIV, ZAPORIZHIA REGION .....	18
CHERNIHIV & SUMY REGION.....	18
KYIV REGION .....	19
BLACK SEA & ODESA REGION.....	19
WEST REGION .....	19
THEATERWIDE & EXTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS.....	19
WAR CRIMES AND HUMAN RIGHTS .....	19
GEOPOLITICAL .....	19
ECONOMIC.....	20

## **SUMMARY – DAY 88**

It has been 3,006 days since Russia began its occupation of Crimea on February 27, 2014.

Poor weather, Ukrainian operational security, Russian interference with the Internet and cellular service in occupied regions, and a significant increase in online Russia-based disinformation with paid marketing and bot amplification have hobbled social intelligence gathering.

Maintaining our journalistic standards of accuracy over being first, little has changed in the last 24 hours, with indications the Russian offensive out of Popasna has slowed down. Ukrainian forces moved several eastern suburbs of Severodonetsk to contested and liberated Oleksandrivka.

The Ukrainian General Staff indicated that the Russian advance west from Popasna is likely not as deep into the salient as believed 24 hours ago. This does not reflect new success by the Ukrainian military or failures of the Russian forces, but reality catching up with earlier and exaggerated reports.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy reported that Ukraine is losing approximately 100 soldiers a day in the Donbas, which is likely a realistic assessment. Wounded in action would be an estimated 250 to 300 a day, taking the equivalent of a battalion offline every three days. These are not sustainable losses, even if Russian forces are experiencing a similar number – which would be equally unsustainable.

West of Severodonetsk along the Siverskyi Donets River, there was little activity. Russian and Ukrainian forces traded artillery fire. Reports from the Ukrainian General Staff validated our position that Ozerne, Zakitne, and Dibrova are under Ukrainian control.

In the South Donbas and western Zaporizhia, the operational tempo slowed significantly with only scattered artillery fire along the line of conflict. Social media reports indicated that Russia-backed militias captured Novoselivka southwest of Horlivka. We had assessed this area under Russian control several days ago.

North of Kharkiv, neither belligerent launched offensive operations. Russia-backed militias defended Kozacha Lopan, and there was light fighting at Ternova and

Rubizhne [Kharkiv Oblast]. Artillery fire by Russian forces on civilians and civilian infrastructure continued.

The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukraine had regained control of Oleksandrivka [Kharkiv Oblast] southeast of Izyum. Pro-Russian accounts are reporting the bridging effort at Yaremivka was successful but provided no video or photographic evidence. There is significant confusion on the status of Studenok to the east and Pasika to the south.

There were reports of Russian MLRS striking near Mykolaiv city, with residents advised to stay indoors and away from windows.

Russian forces continue to harass settlements in Chernihiv and Sumy Oblasts on the international border. This is likely to keep Ukrainian units locked in place.

## **DAILY ASSESSMENT**

The Ukrainian tactical situation around Severodonetsk may be marginally better than our assessment from yesterday based on new information from reliable sources. There is

significant evidence that Russian forces have slowed operational tempo. There are several possible reasons, and there is a lack of intelligence to draw a firm conclusion.

- Poor weather and low clouds impacting the Russian air force and drone operations, creating more risk for advancing troops in open terrain
- Russian forces working to consolidate their gains and secure a line of defense before advancing again
- Logistical issues with ammunition, fuel, or other supplies slowing the advance
- Pausing to enable Ground Lines of Communication (GLOC – aka supply lines) to catch up with the advance and create better defenses
- Stiffer Ukrainian resistance as they reach the frontier of less favorable territory for a rapid advance

It is likely a combination of these issues, but any pause or slowing of operational tempo benefits Ukrainian forces. The counterargument? Russia has learned from earlier mistakes of advancing until a near collapse of troop strength and maintaining a tenuous grasp of territorial gains.

The next 24 to 48 hours won't decide the war, but it will likely determine if the near stalemate at Severodonetsk will continue. It is also yet to be seen if Russian forces can maintain a sustained offensive utilizing all available resources in a coordinated way for more than a few days.

There continues to be a lot of activity northwest, west, and south of Izyum. An information deficit remains, making it challenging to evaluate the tactical and strategic situation along the entire axis.

We assess the following:

1. We wrote the obituary for Phase 2 of the war too soon, but this is the final gasp of Phase 2
2. Our assessment that Russia would work to secure Luhansk Oblast was correct
3. If Russia is successful in Luhansk, they will need an operational pause to hold the new territory, and they will use these gains to launch a renewed attack further west
4. A 21st Century version of World War I trench warfare continues along most of the line of conflict between Ukraine and Russia, with artillery used as the primary weapon



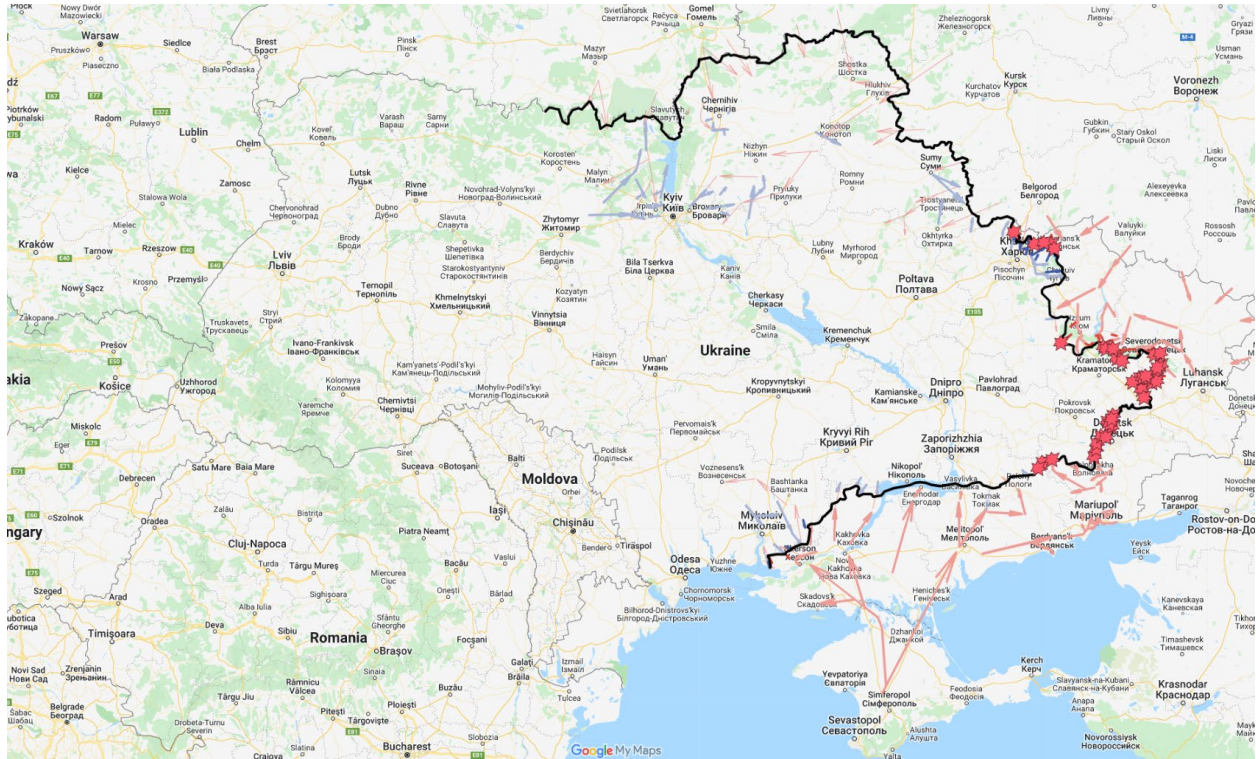
## 5. Russia has more to gain and lose in the next two to five days in the Luhansk Oblast than Ukraine

We maintain Russia has enough resources to capture the Severodonetsk region. We are intrigued by the current operational pause. If this is the extent of a major offensive, Russian forces will have a challenging time consolidating their new gains. Stopping here won't degrade Ukrainian GLOC enough to collapse the defense due to supply issues.

We do not believe that Russia has enough resources to control and hold territorial gains in the medium and long term without a significant pause in combat operations when the current offensive is over.

We further assess that Ukraine will have the resources and capability to take the initiative along multiple axes within 25 to 40 days.

# TODAY'S WAR IN UKRAINE MAP



## **DONBAS REGION**

Ukrainian forces were able to push Russian and Russian-backed separatists from the eastern outskirts of Severodonetsk.

Operational tempo north, south, and west of Popasna has slowed down, and there is growing evidence that Russian territorial gains were overstated late last week.

There was no attempt to advance on Lyman, and operational tempo slowed significantly across the south Donbas and into western Zaporizhia.

A Russian Air Force Su-25 was shot down in the Luhansk Oblast. The location was not specified and cannot be geolocated.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://twitter.com/Osinttechnical/status/1528450549091340288>



## LUHANSK

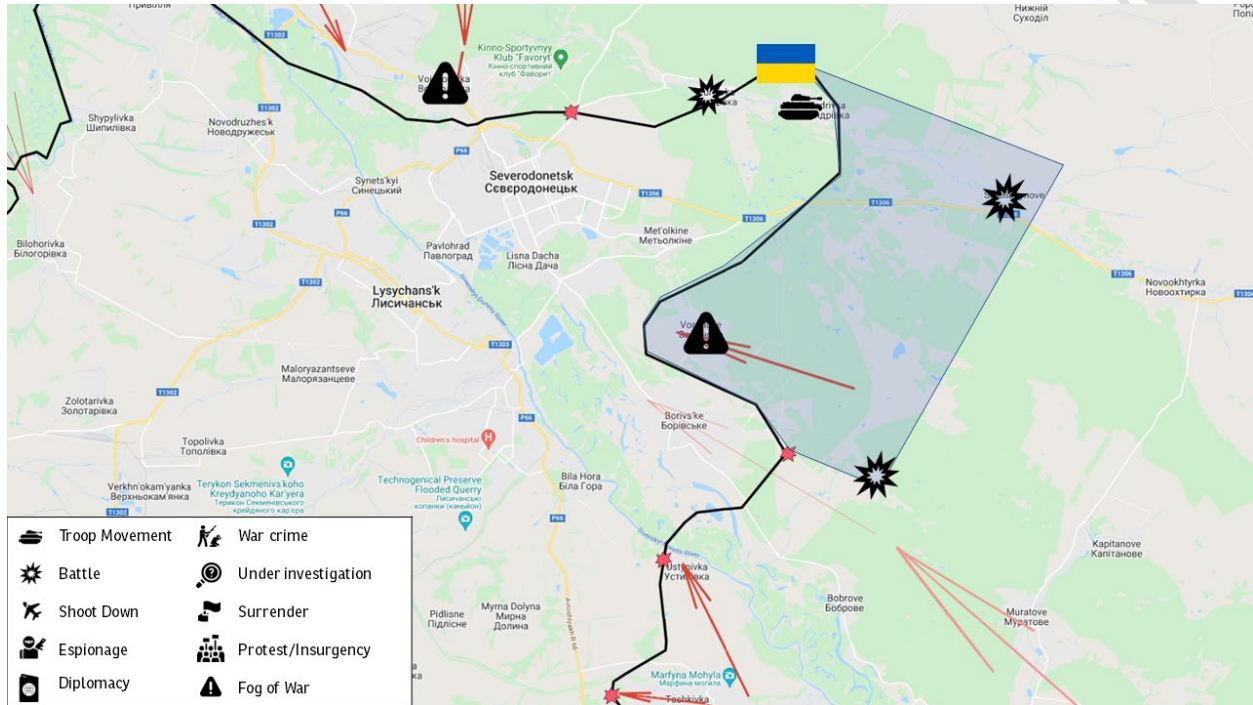
### *Severodonetsk Salient*

The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled an attempt to capture Olkesandrivka [Luhansk Oblast – east of Severodonetsk], which was unsuccessful.<sup>2</sup> The settlement of Purdivka is contested, and there are conflicting reports on the status of Voronove. Pro-Russian accounts claimed Voronove was captured on May 15 and

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/322822433364175>

claimed it was captured again on May 22.<sup>3</sup> Other sources consider the status unknown.<sup>4</sup>



**ASSESSMENT:** Given the significant evidence that operational tempo was reduced today, we believe Voronove is contested. The new information pushes Russian troops 7 kilometers east and 2 to 3 kilometers south of the city limits.

<sup>3</sup> <https://twitter.com/Ukraine66251776/status/1528540035825516550> [Russian State Media Rating: Unreliable]

<sup>4</sup> <https://twitter.com/WarMonitor3/status/1527972271251398656>

The Ukrainian General Staff also reported fighting for control of Oskolonivka, which is southeast of Voronove.<sup>5</sup> The area of Ukrainian control southeast of Severodonetsk is likely more extensive than previously thought.<sup>6</sup>

Assessing the location of Russian forces north, south, and west of Popasna is a challenge.

On May 20, Ukrainian forces fired artillery on a Russian position in Volodymyrivka near the center of town.<sup>7</sup> The Ukrainian General Staff reported On May 22 fighting in the settlement and at Trypillya. Additionally, a reliable report of "fighting east of Stryapivka" supports that Volodymyrivka is contested. Additionally, Stryapivka is likely under Ukrainian control.

On May 20, a Russian convoy was destroyed in Komyshuvakha. There has been no other evidence that Russian forces control the settlement.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://goo.gl/maps/aCd2bTtTVdBGKaUa9>

<sup>6</sup> <https://t.me/luhanskaVTSA/2787>

<sup>7</sup> <https://twitter.com/UAWeapons/status/1527766199328817153>

The Ukrainian General Staff reported fighting in Vasylivka and Toshkivka, which is on the known line of conflict.



A credible report indicated that Russian forces took Ukrainian troops as prisoners of war in Viktorivka.<sup>8</sup> This confirms that the settlement is under Russian control.

**ASSESSMENT:** Evaluating reliable reports from Russian and Ukrainian leaders, geolocation of videos and pictures from May 20 and May 21, and numerous reports of fighting

<sup>8</sup> <https://t.me/milinfoLive/83768>

further east and southeast of Severodonetsk has created two conclusions.

Russian forces have been significantly exaggerating their positions east of Severodonetsk, leading to the current offensive. On May 18, Russian state media released a video showing Ukrainian positions being attacked in Vojevodivka.<sup>9</sup> We were confused because Russian forces claimed they controlled this area, and the video showed a wide area of fires from an MLRS attack. The footage showed one damaged Ukrainian armored vehicle and a likely destroyed one from a secondary explosion.

The extension of Ukrainian troops further east and southeast of Severodonetsk has exposed a larger salient, potentially having more Ukrainian troops at risk of encirclement.

### *Severodonetsk Westward Offensive*

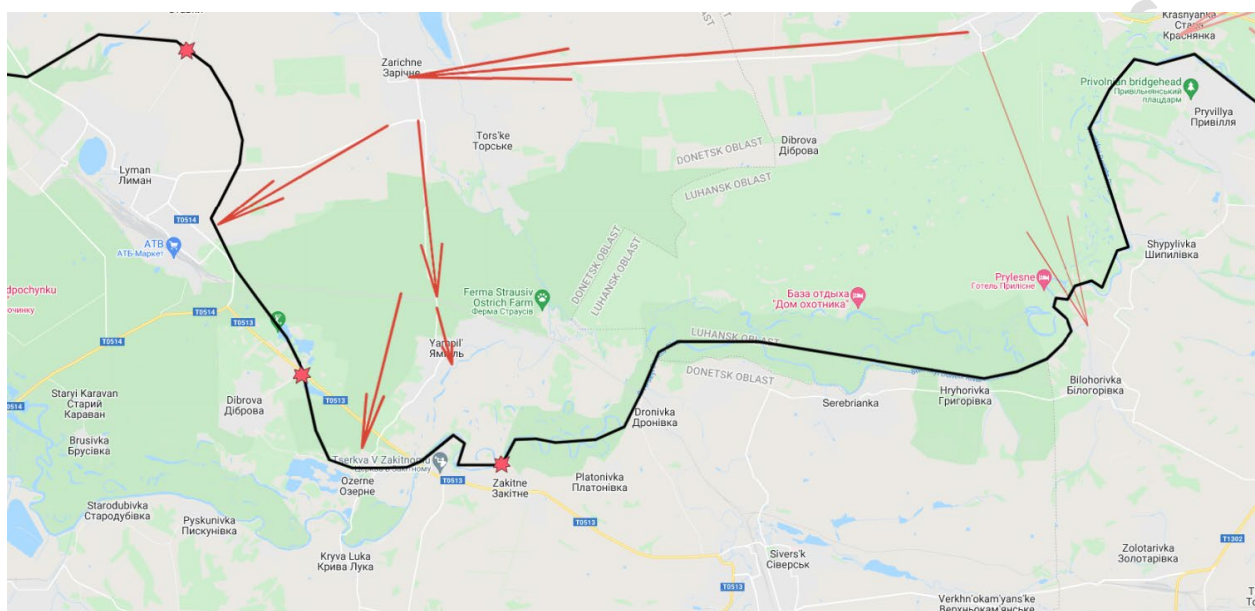
There were not any significant changes along the line of conflict. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian

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<sup>9</sup> <https://t.me/milinfoLive/83571>



forces are building up a troop concentration for another attempt to advance on Lyman.<sup>10</sup>



## SOUTH DONBAS AND WESTERN ZAPORIZHIA

There weren't any significant military operations along the entire line of conflict. We had previously assessed Novoselivka under Russian control.

## KHARKIV REGION

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/322822433364175>

## **NORTHERN KHARKIV COUNTEROFFENSIVE**

There was only sporadic fighting north of Kharkiv city with no changes in territorial control. Russia-backed militias have regained full control of Kozacha Lopan.

Russia-backed militia forces from Luhansk were operating in the area of Rubizhne [Kharkiv Oblast], indicating the settlement is back under Russian control.<sup>11</sup>

## **IZYUM AXIS**

Pro-Russian accounts are claiming Russian forces successfully bridged at Yaremivka with no additional supporting information.

Cloud cover has obscured NASA FIRMS data and prevented drone imaging from providing additional assessment.

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<sup>11</sup> [https://t.me/mvdlnr\\_official/835](https://t.me/mvdlnr_official/835)

## **DNIPRO, KHERSON & MYKOLAIV, ZAPORIZHIA REGION**

There wasn't significant activity in this region.

In Enehordar, the mayor collaborating with the Russian occupiers was critically injured by an Improvised Explosive Device (IED).<sup>12 13</sup>

## **CHERNIHIV & SUMY REGION**

Russian forces fired artillery and MLRS into settlements along the border in the Sumy Oblast.<sup>14</sup>

Russian forces also shelled the settlement of Senkivka in the Chernihiv Oblast.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> <https://twitter.com/georgewbarros/status/1528498003262291968>

<sup>13</sup> <https://t.me/entime2022/394>

<sup>14</sup> <https://twitter.com/sumynvu/status/1528343642204774400>

<sup>15</sup> <https://twitter.com/KyivIndependent/status/1528394540662591490>

## **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.

## **THEATERWIDE & EXTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS**

There weren't any significant developments today.

## **WAR CRIMES AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

Ukrainian police exhumed two more bodies in the Kyiv Oblast, raising the total of civilians killed under questionable circumstances to 1,290. The bodies belonged to an older woman killed in February due to artillery. Russian troops executed her 27-year-old grandson in

March. Community members in Buzova buried their bodies.<sup>16</sup>

## GEOPOLITICAL

Polish President Andrzej Duda has become the first foreign leader to speak in person to Ukraine's parliament in Kyiv.<sup>17</sup> He received a standing ovation as he declared that only Ukrainians themselves could decide their future.

## ECONOMIC

The Sokolov-Sarybai Mining Production Association (SSGPO) has ended shipping iron ore to Russia, claiming that sanctions have made continued shipments impossible.<sup>18</sup> Firms in Kazakhstan have no obligation to implement international sanctions against any person or entity in Russia. However, many are wary of contagion from damage to their trade with foreign buyers or their reputations if they do business with Russian companies.

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<sup>16</sup> <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2022/05/22/7347756/>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-61542091>

<sup>18</sup> <https://eurasianet.org/amid-sanctions-kazakh-firm-stops-supplying-russian-steelworks>

SSGPO was shipping 7 to 8 million metric tons of ore annually to Russia before terminating shipments.

Lithuania halted all Russian gas, oil, and electricity imports on May 22. They became the first Eurozone country to end reliance on Russian energy sources.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> <https://twitter.com/KyivIndependent/status/1528311349285163009>