MALCONTENT NEWS RUSSIA-UKRAINE SITUATION REPORT

May 14, 2023 – A

Malcontent News
Russia-Ukraine War SITREP
5/14/23 23:59* PST

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Notes on Sourcing Information

Malcontent News uses a wide range of sources to create our daily Situation Report, 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.

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🛑**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 of lower quality. Reports he shares outside of the Donbas provided by Russian Federation 1st Army Corps units 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 detained 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 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

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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 Russian-assessed, Ukrainian-assessed, and Russian-claimed information 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 realtime 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 being 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 444

This is the first update for May 14, 2023.

It has been 3,363 days since Russia occupied the Crimea Peninsula on January 27, 2014, and one year and 80 days since Russia expanded its war against Ukraine. After the frenetic pace of information across Ukraine and Russia, today was much quieter.

At the time of publication, neither Rybar nor WarGonzo has released their daily reports, which is highly unusual for both organizations.

- The Daily Assessment will be updated with each report
- Weather and soil conditions will be in the last report of the day
- If an anticipated report is not created, weather and soil conditions will be released as a Flash Report
- Each report will contain unique information and continue in a condensed format

The map is back! War Map

DAILY ASSESSMENT

We assess the following:

1. We assess the Russian Federation has changed its tactics for missile and drone strikes, opting to launch a small number of missiles on a more frequent basis and targeting areas with little military value but appeal to an internal audience as proof of continued successful operations.
2. The rift between the Russian Ministry of Defense and Private Military Company (PMC) Wagner Group continues to disrupt Russian military operations in the Soledar and Bakhmut operational areas.
3. We maintain that Ukrainian forces have ended their retrograde operation.
4. In preparation for larger offensive operations, Ukrainian forces continue shaping operations on multiple axes, creating panic and uncertainty among gauleiters, Russian administrators, and military leaders.
5. We have identified shaping activity by the Ukrainian Armed Forces in four locations that could indicate a larger attack is being prepared.

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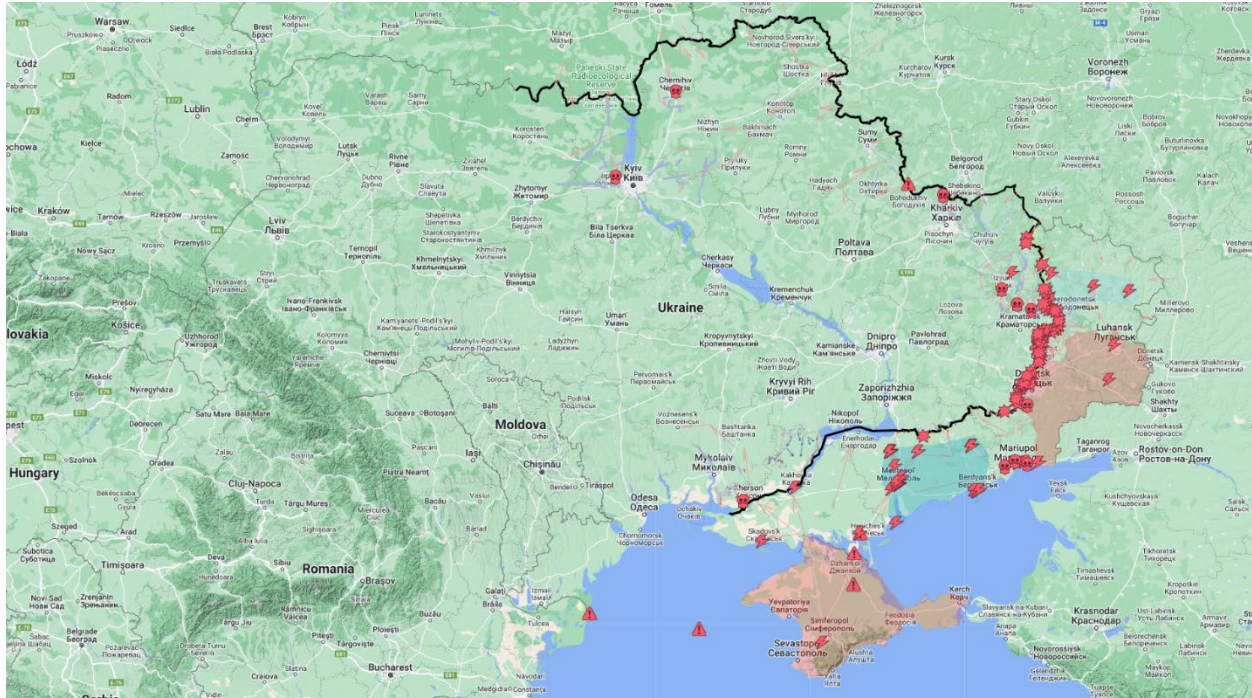
About the maps: Red triangles are sites of significant events unrelated to missile attacks, insurgencies, or ground combat, such as the sinking of the Moskva and the explosion at the Saky Naval airbase. Gray circles indicate an area where fighting has ended with no change in the line of conflict. The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

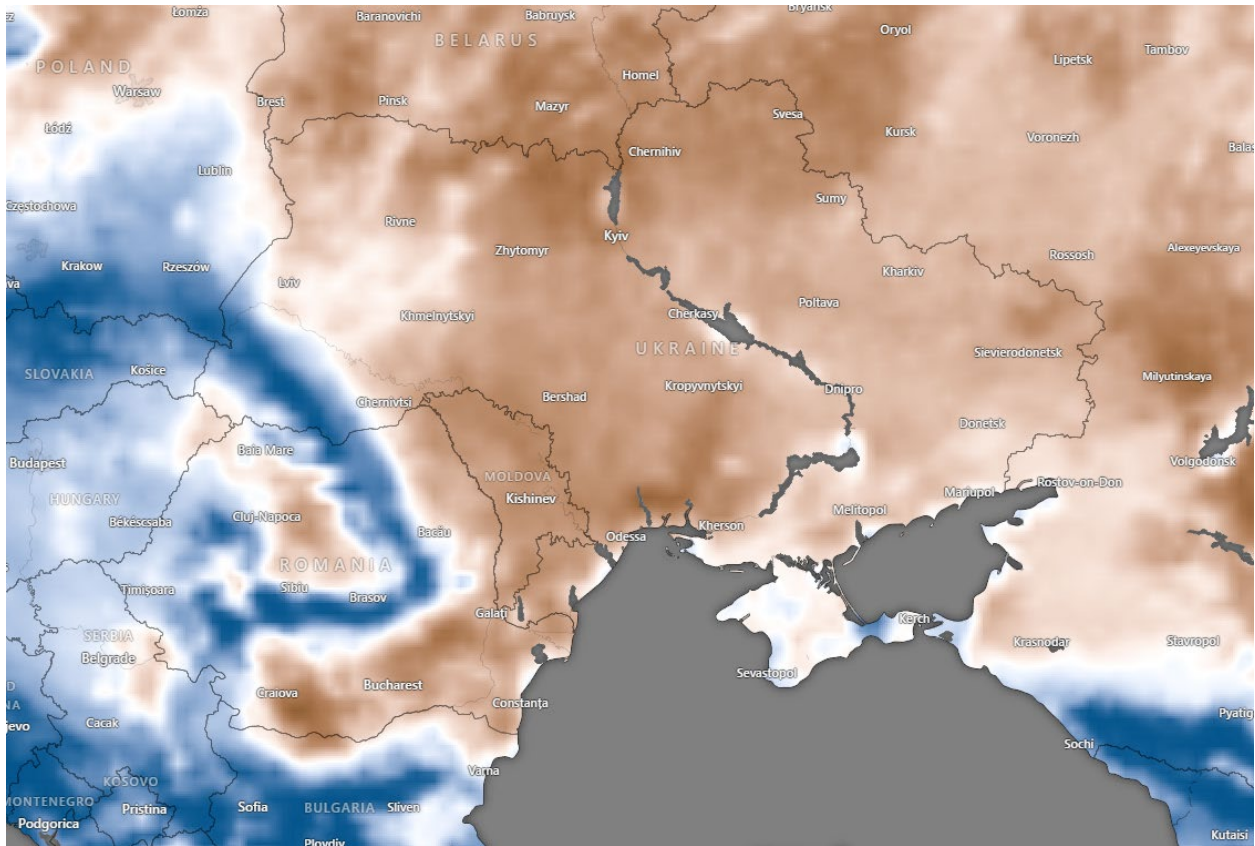Russia-Ukraine War Report Map

UKRAINE WEATHER
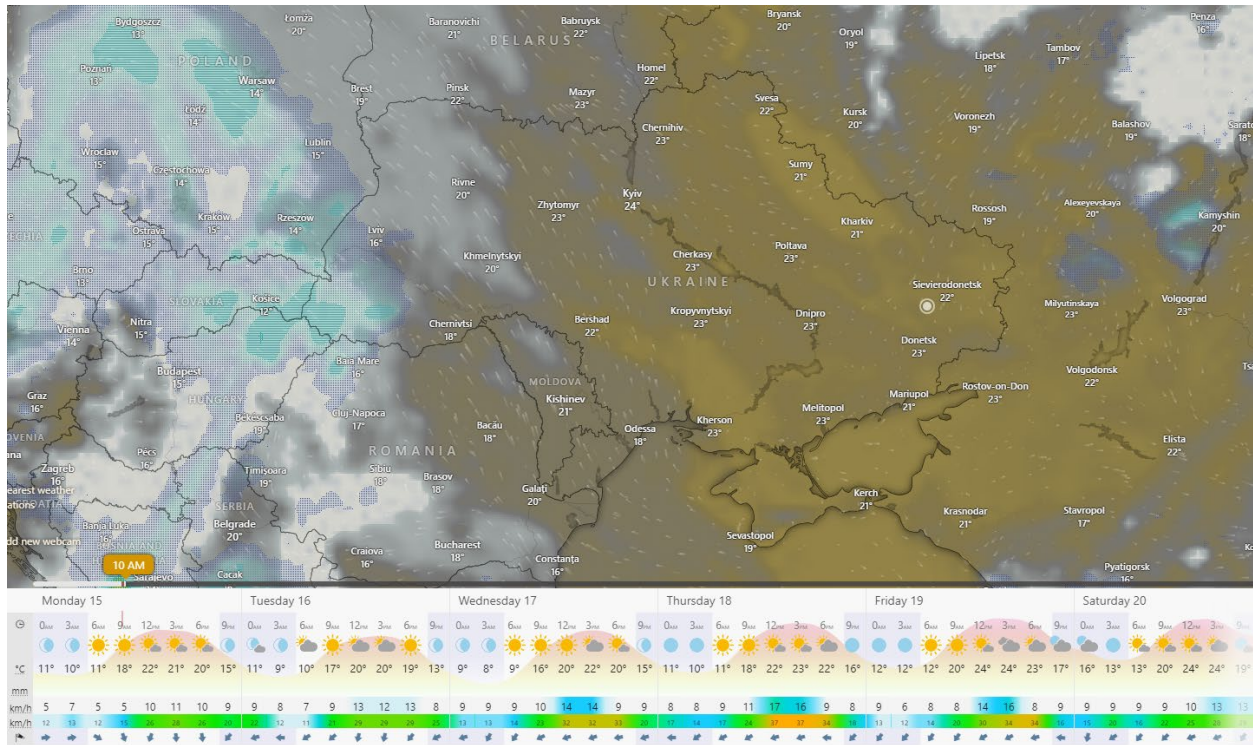
The ECMWF Euro model forecast is unchanged, with sunny and seasonable weather in eastern Ukraine through May 20. Highs will be from 17° to 27° Celcius, with lows from 5° to 16°. Winds up to 40 kph are possible overnight on Thursday. The new moon is on May 19, and the full moon is on June 4.

SOIL SATURATION AND HYDROLOGY

May 22, 2023 GFS forecast indicates soil saturation will be from 20% to 35% to 40 centimeters depth in Zaporizhia and the Donbas.

Soil saturation along the line of conflict is at 35% to 60%, with no rain in the forecast through May 20. Ground conditions are now favorable for armored vehicles and mobility along the entire line of conflict.

KHARKIV
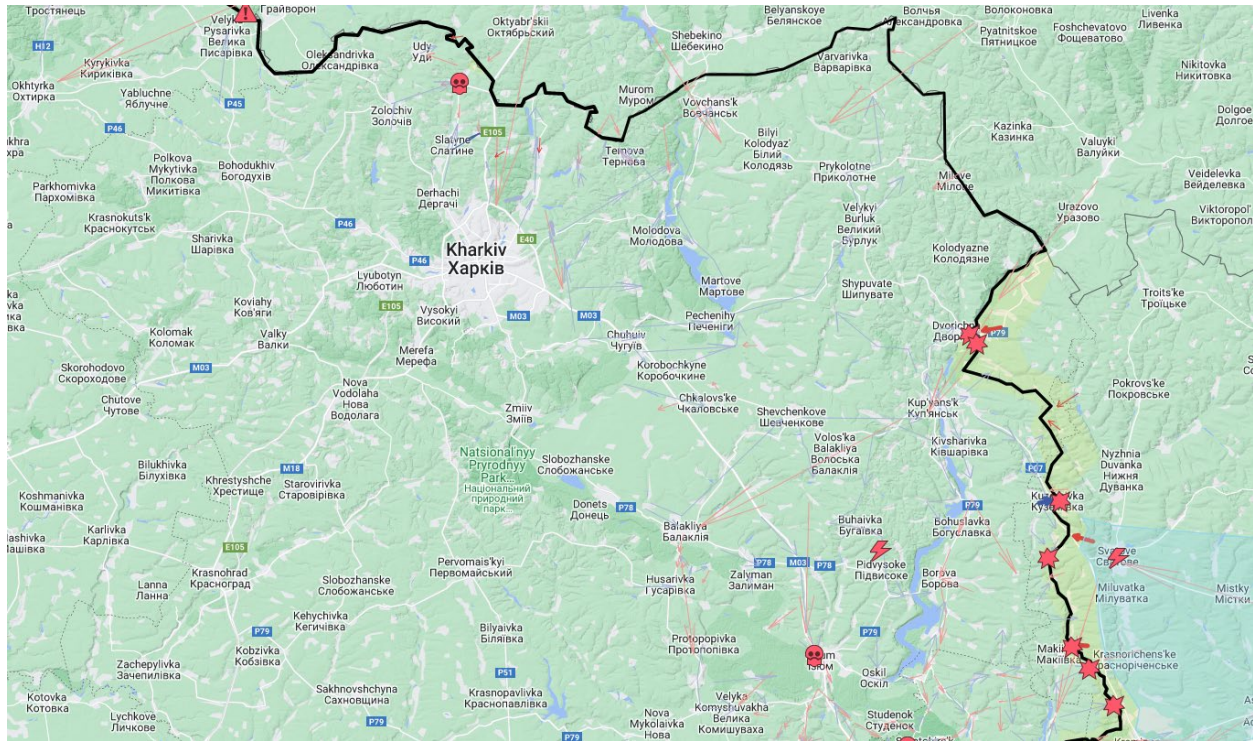
Russian Objective: Prepare for the Ukrainian offensive, hold current defensive lines, and terrorize Ukrainian civilians near the line of conflict

Ukrainian Objective: Liberate the northeastern corner of the oblast, hold defensive lines in the Dvorichna and Kupyansk Operational Areas, protect civilians and civilian infrastructure
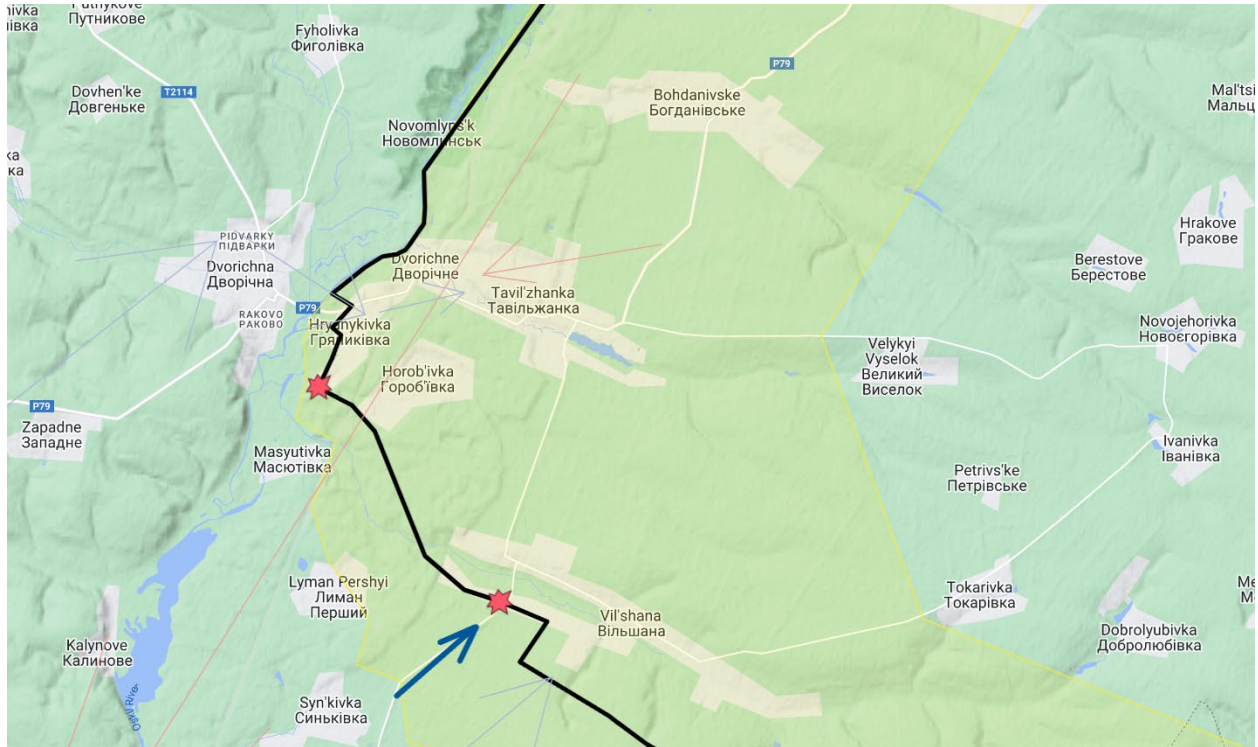
Dvorichna Operational Area

- The General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (GSAFU) reported the Russian forces launched multiple attacks in the direction of <u>Masyutivka</u> but were unable to advance to new positions[1] [2]
- Russian forces also attempted to advance on <u>Synkivka</u> but were unsuccessful[3]

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[1] <u>General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEDT</u>
[2] <u>General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report PM EEDT</u>
[3] <u>General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report PM EEDT</u>
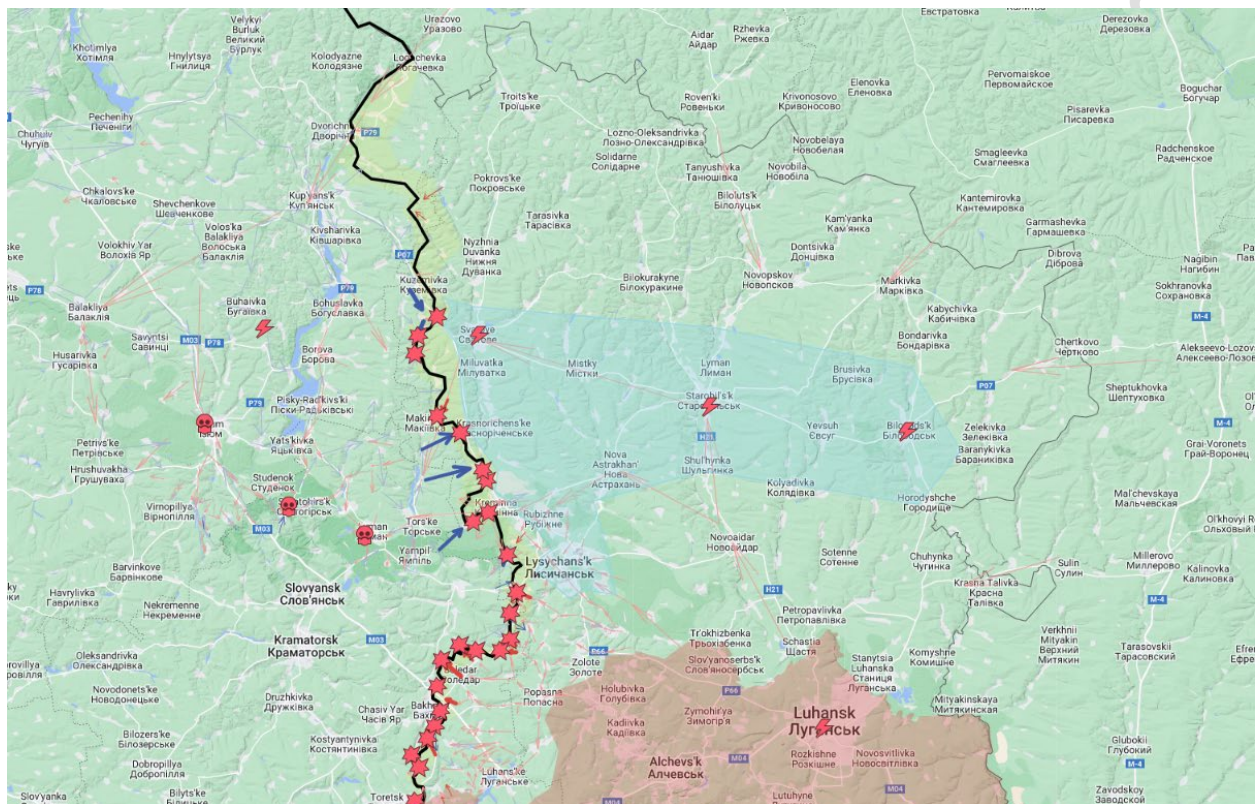
             Monday, May 15, 2023
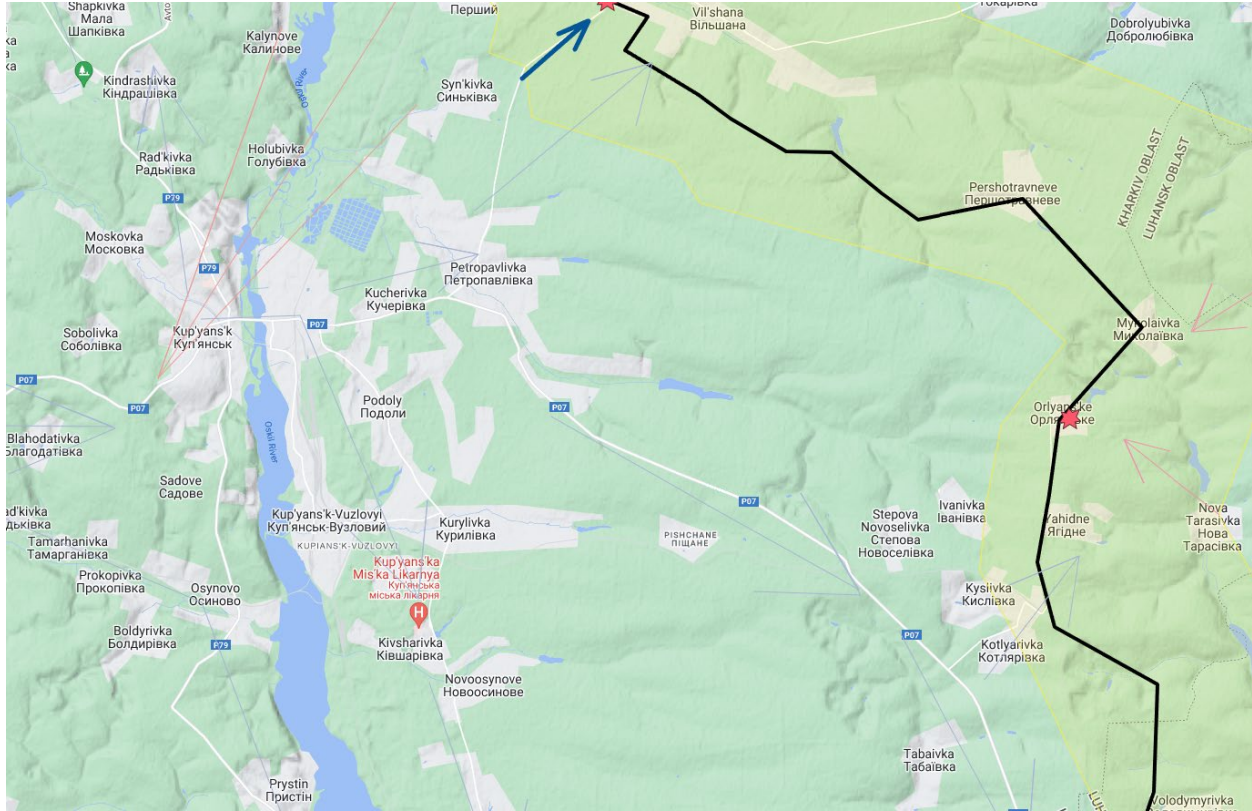
Kupyansk Operational Area

- The Russian Ministry of Defense (RMOD) reported that Ukrainian surveillance, reconnaissance, and sabotage (DRG) units were operating near Ivanivka[4]

[4] https://t.me/mod_russia/26560 [Russian Government Controlled Social Media Channel]

DONBAS REGION

LUHANSK

Russian Objective: Prepare for the Ukrainian offensive, prevent further Ukrainian advances, control insurgent activity

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

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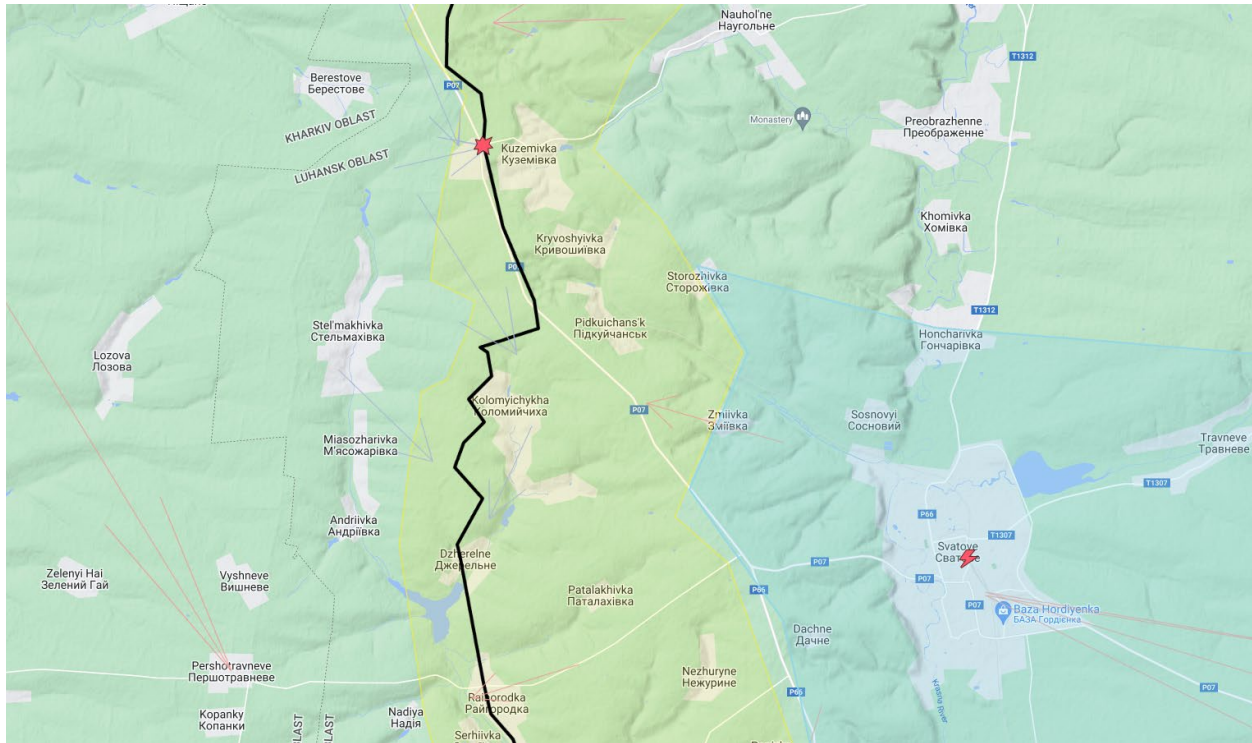
Svatove Operational Area

- Russian military milblogger Rybar reported that Ukrainian forces had secured the village of [Kuzemivka](#) and then denied the claim 40 minutes later[5]
- Rybar then reported that the confusion was caused because Kuzemivka is unoccupied by terrain, and Ukrainian units were attempting to operate in the village and then denied that any territorial control changes had occurred – we did not update the map

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[5] https://t.me/rybar/47090

- GSAFU reported that Russian offensives in the direction of [Novoselivske](#) and east of [Stelmakhivka](#) failed[6]

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[6] [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEDT](#)

NORTHEAST DONETSK
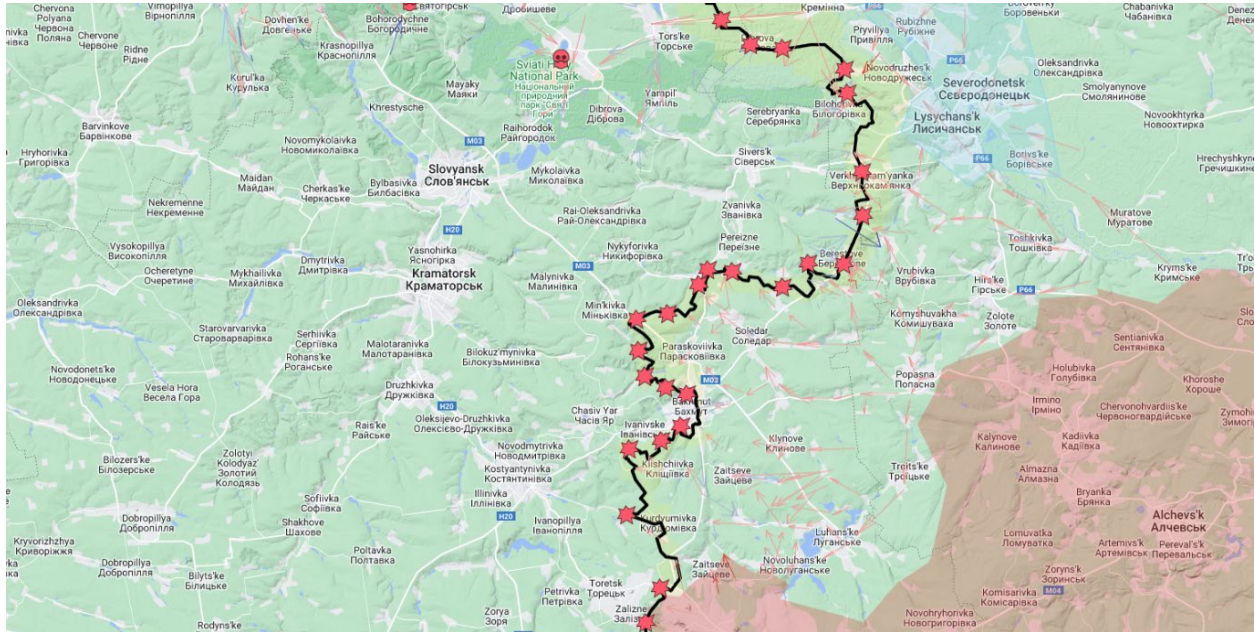
Russian Objective: Capture Bakhmut, set conditions to attack Kramatorsk, Slovyansk, and Siversk, and capture the entire region

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

Bakhmut Operational Area

- PMC Wagner leader Prigozhin again suggested that if the Russian Ministry of Defense does not better train

and equip, and value soldiers, 📺 <u>it could spark a revolution</u> within Russia[7]

- RMOD reported completing 107 fire missions in the Bakhmut operational area, and Russian army aviation and Airforce (VKS) completed 24 close air support sorties[8]
- We estimate that Ukrainian forces maintain control of 2.6 square kilometers of Bakhmut (1.01 square miles), or roughly 6.25% of the city, which is 41.6 square kilometers, with PMC Wagner making marginal gains in the north districts

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[7] https://twitter.com/NatalkaKyiv/status/1657934437974175744
[8] https://t.me/mod_russia/26560 [Russian Government Controlled Social Media Channel]
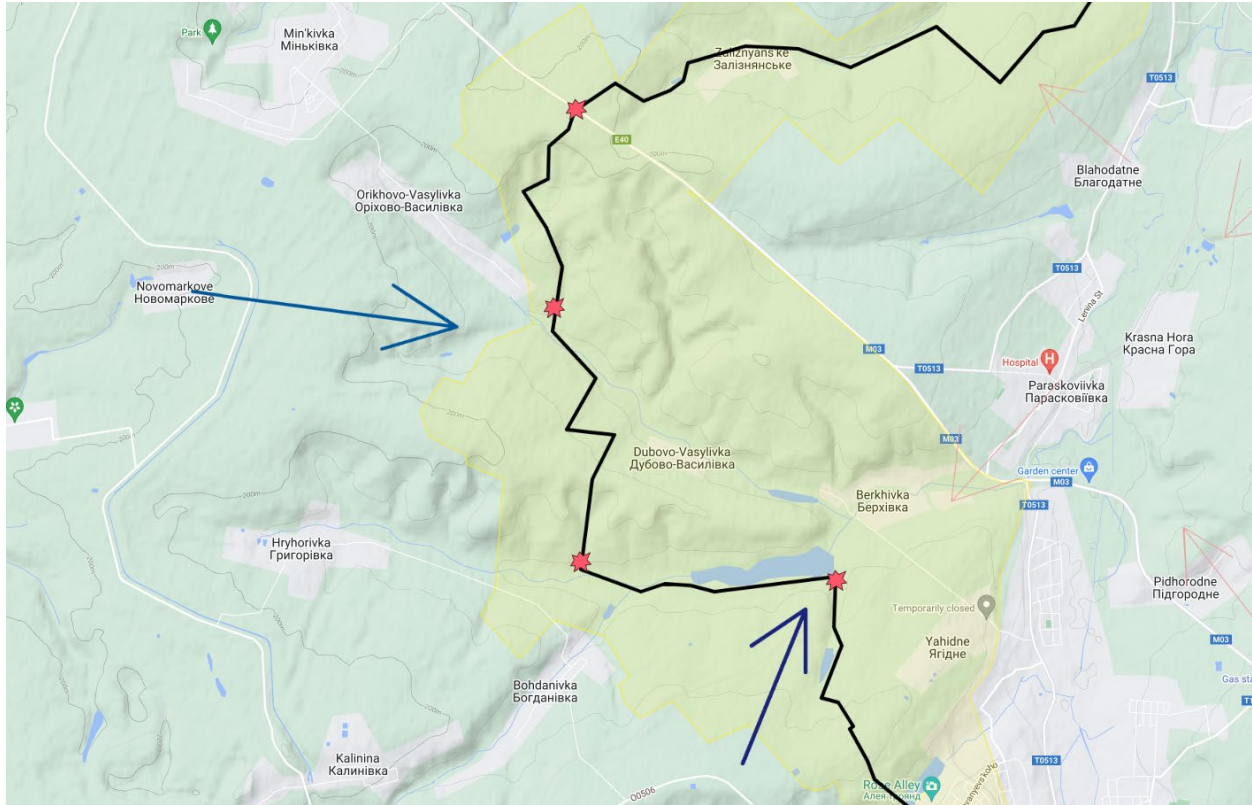
Northwest Bakhmut

- GSAFU reported that Russian-aligned forces attacked in the direction of [Hryorivka](#), [Bohdanivka](#), and [Khromove](#) with no change to the situation[9] [10] [11] [12]

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[9] [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEDT](#)
[10] [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report PM EEDT](#)
[11] https://t.me/DeepStateUA/16557
[12] https://t.me/mod_russia/26560 [Russian Government Controlled Social Media Channel]

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Northern Bakhmut

- There was conflicting information on the situation in northern Bakhmut, with PMC Wagner making territorial gains in the direction of the Children's Hospital
- There were multiple claims of fighting at or near the supermarket on Levanevskoho Street, and claims of fighting on or south of Victory of Donbas Street[13] [14]
- We extended the line of conflict to the Victory of Donbas Street while expanding the gray zone to the

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[13] https://t.me/brussinf/5981
[14] https://t.me/rybar/47090
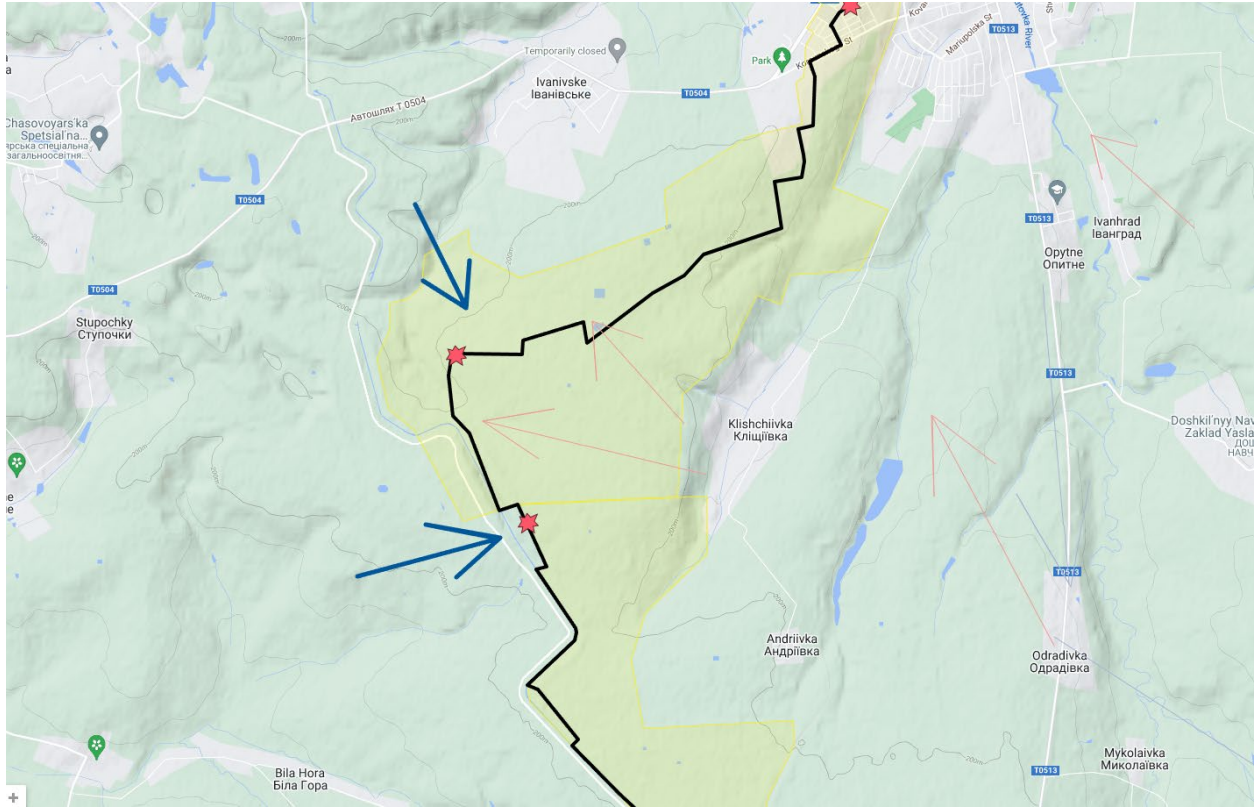
supermarket north of the T-506 Highway in west-central Bakhmut
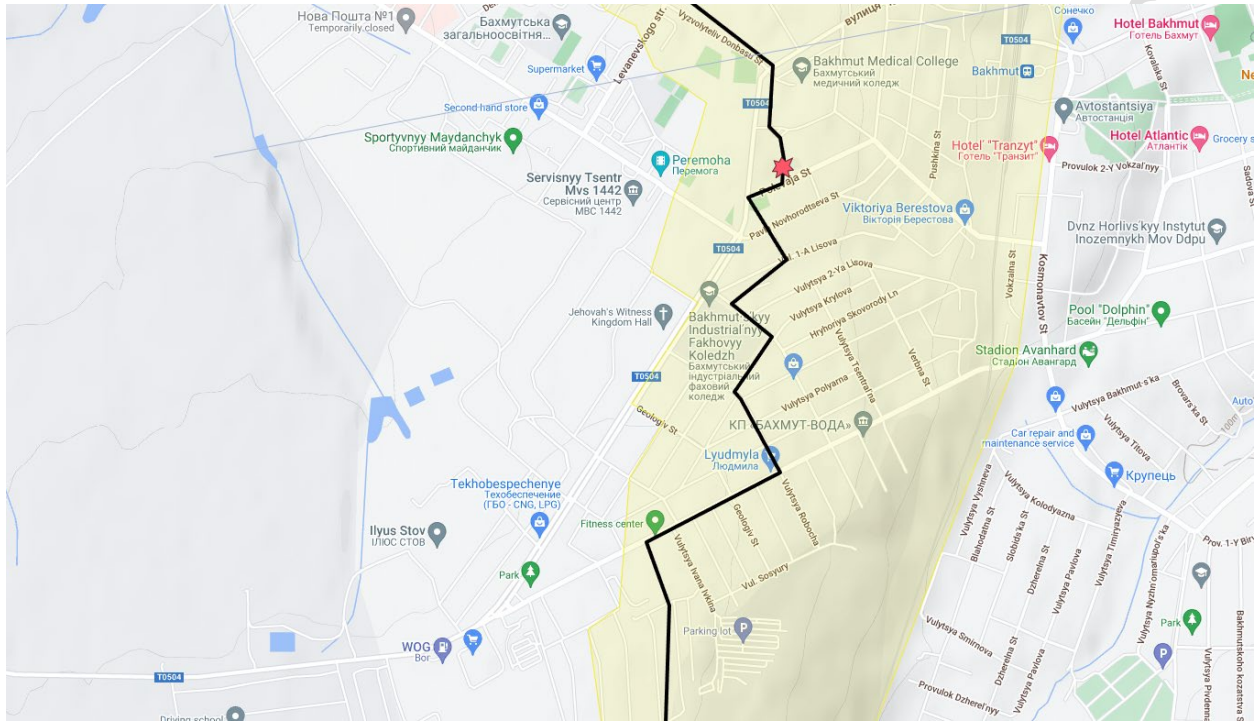
West-Central and Southern Bakhmut

- There were no reported territorial changes[15]

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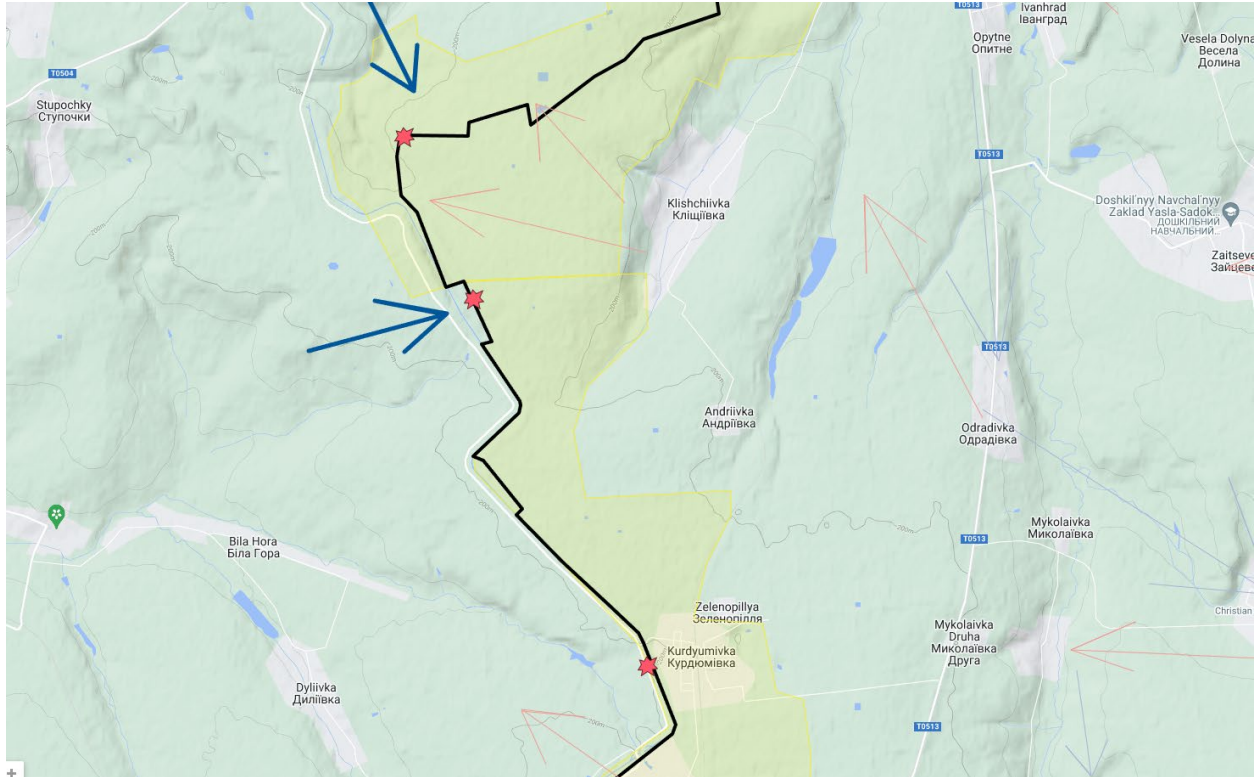- South of [Ivanivske](#), Russia and Ukrainian sources,
  including PMC Wagner, reported that Russian troops
  withdrew from the Ivanivske forest, liberating up to 10
  kilometers of remote territory but securing high
  ground east of Klishchiivka that overlooks an open
  lowland[16] [17] [18]

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[16] https://t.me/brussinf/5981
[17] https://t.me/DeepStateUA/16557
[18] https://t.me/rybar/47090

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Klishchiivka Operational Direction

- PMC Wagner continued attempts to restore lost positions on the west bank of the Siverskyi Donets-Donbas Canal east of [Stupochky](#) without success[19]

- RMOD reported that the commander of the 4th Motorized Rifle Brigade of the 2nd Army Corps, Colonel Vyacheslav Makarov, was killed in action on May 13 in [Klishchiivka](#) while personally leading the Russian defense[20]

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[19] [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEDT](#)
[20] https://t.me/mod_russia/26560 [Russian Government Controlled Social Media Channel]

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- The Kremlin also reported that the Deputy Commander of the Army Corps for Military-Political Work – also known as a political officer – Colonel Yevgeny Brovko was killed in action by shrapnel while leading his troops during a Ukrainian attack[21]
- The death of a political officer leading troops in combat is significant because military-political work units are used as barrier troops in the second echelon to maintain discipline, prevent retreats, return deserters to their units, and threaten forces with imprisonment, execution, or make examples of Russian troops to maintain control
- **ASSESSMENT:** The use of barrier troops led by a senior officer indicates there is a shortage of personnel and a breakdown in command and control
- Russian forces attempted to repulse the Ukrainian advance toward Klishchiivka with an attack in the direction of Predtechyne, which was unsuccessful[22]
- GSAFU reported an attack by Russian-aligned forces near Bila Hora failed to regain lost positions[23]

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[21] https://t.me/mod_russia/26560 [Russian Government Controlled Social Media Channel]
[22] General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEDT
[23] General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEDT

SOUTHWESTERN DONETSK
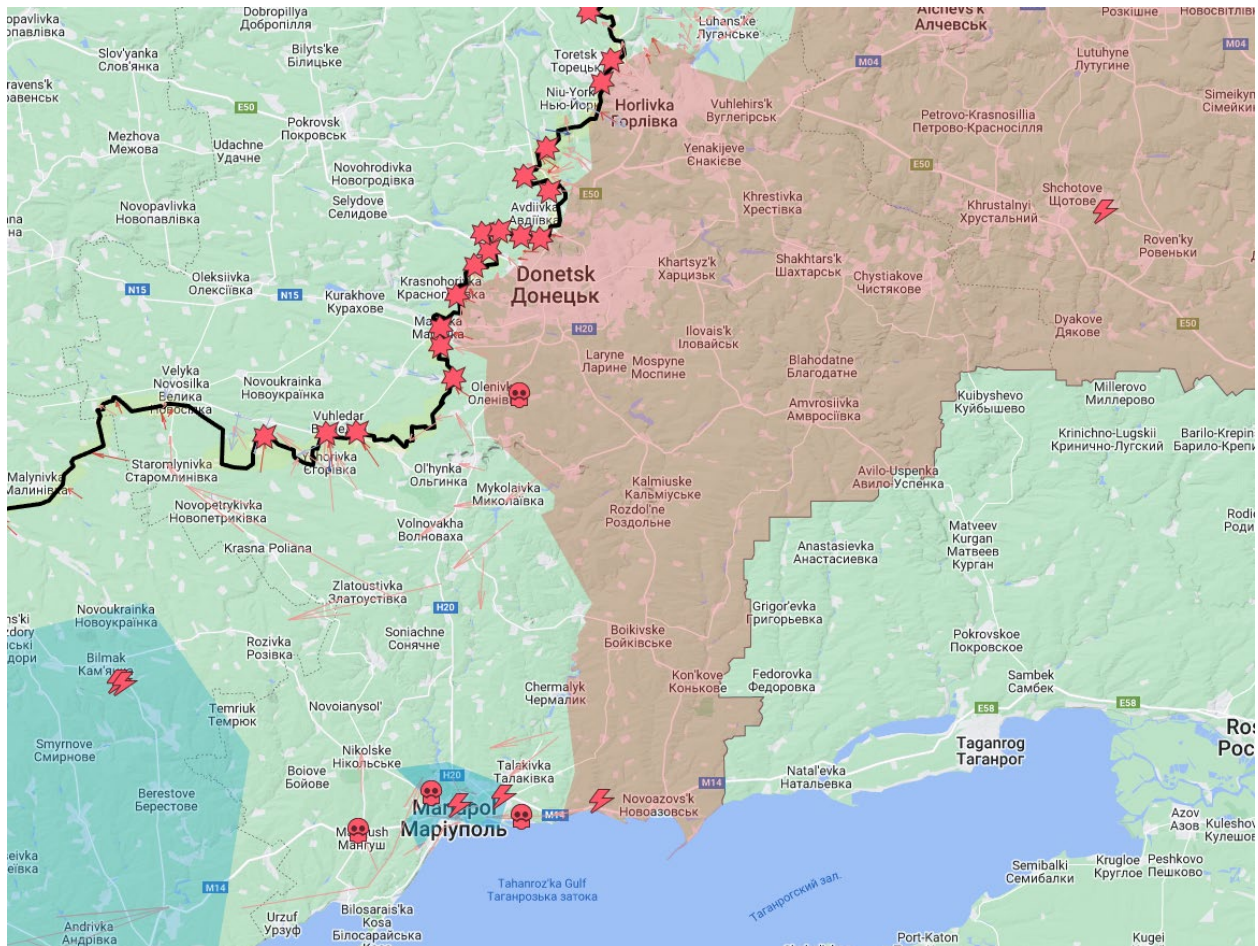
Russian Objective: Prepare for the Ukrainian offensive, consolidate gains made during the winter offensive, and set conditions for September 2023 elections

Ukrainian Objective: Lock Russian military assets in place, defend the existing line of conflict while finding and exploiting weaknesses, destroy troop concentrations and

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command and control sites, interdict supplies, and disrupt logistics

Avdiivka Operational Area

- There were only reports of localized positional fighting near [Avdiivka](#)[24]

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[24]
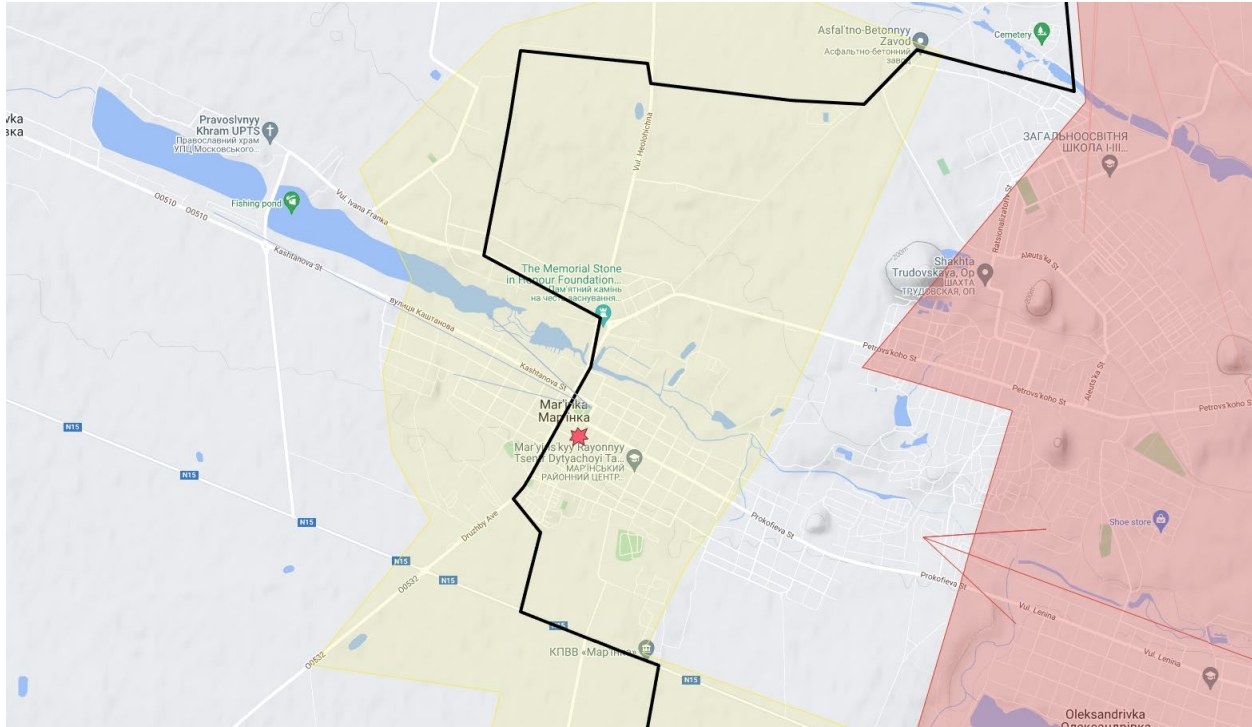
Marinka Operational Area

- Fighting for [Marinka](#) was limited to positional fighting with no change in the situation[25] [26]

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[25] [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEDT](#)
[26] [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report PM EEDT](#)
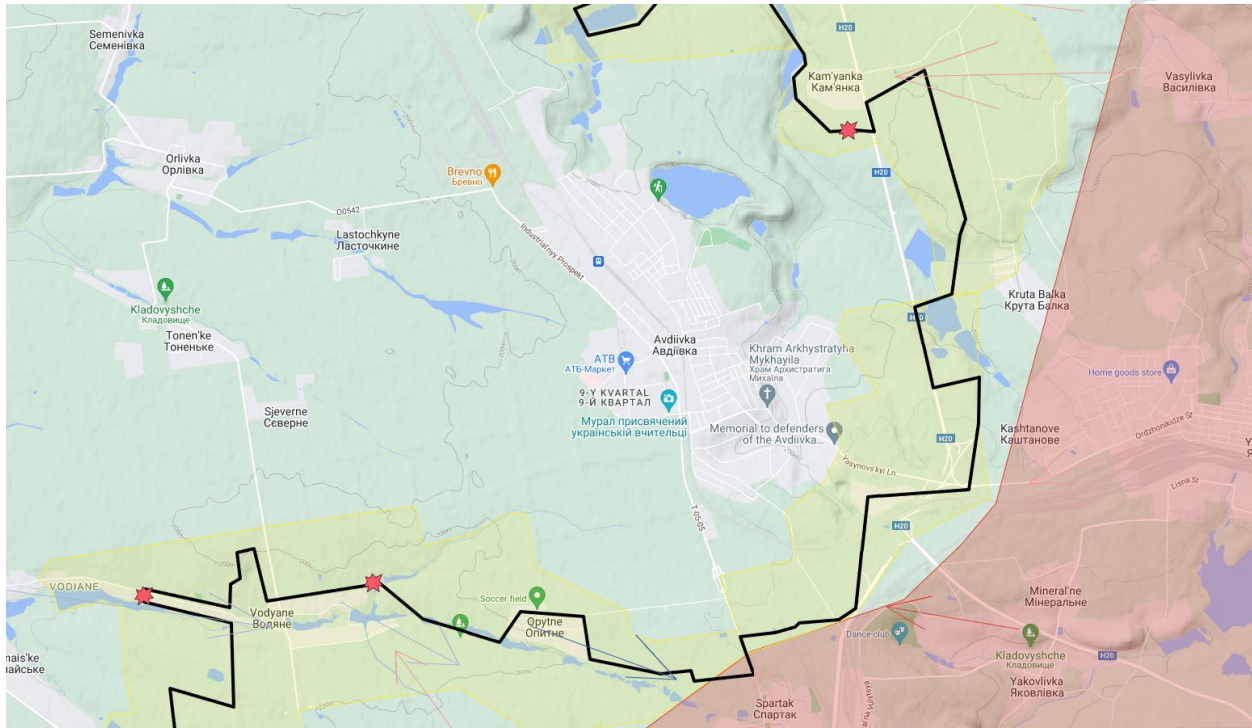
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ZAPORIZHIA
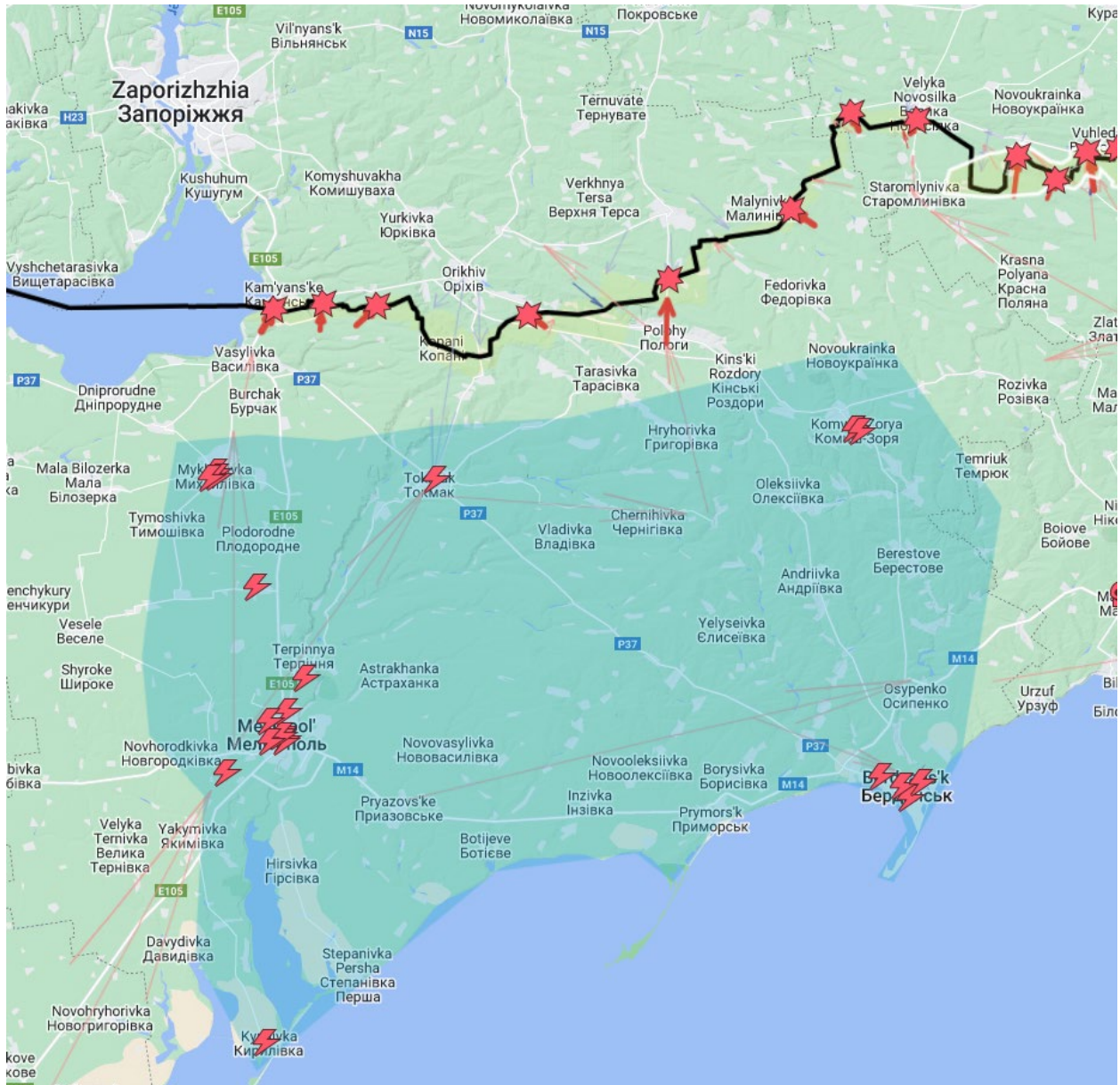
Russian Objective: Prepare for a Ukrainian offensive, and terrorize Ukrainian civilians with continued attacks

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

Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant

- No update

BLACK SEA, CRIMEA, MYKOLAIV, AND ODESA REGION

Black Sea

- Operational Command South (OKS) reported that Black Sea Fleet has ten vessels on patrol, including two frigates and one Kilo-class submarine capable of launching up to 18 Kalibr cruise missiles[27]

WESTERN AND CENTRAL UKRAINE

Russian Objective: Launch terror attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure to break morale

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[27] https://t.me/our_odessa/47294

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Ukrainian Objective: Deter attacks, and protect civilian lives

No major activity

NORTHERN AND NORTHEASTERN UKRAINE

Russian Objective: Lock Ukrainian military resources into place and launch terror attacks on civilians in an attempt to break morale

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

No major activity

RUSSIAN FRONT

No major activity

THEATERWIDE

- Russian milblogger Andrei Morozov, who has provided accurate assessments on Russian military readiness in the past, commented on Ukraine's current strategy, writing, "It is interesting for the enemy *[Ukraine – **Ed.**]* to force ours to fight in an uncomfortable configuration in several places, on their own terms, with the complete dominance of their UAVs in the air and the 'Mavics' of the Russian Federation Armed Forces from the store firmly planted on the ground, with which our units were completed to the best of their ability at the expense of volunteers. This will provide the enemy with maximum efficiency in destroying our manpower with artillery and tanks, occasionally used as assault guns. *[The counteroffensive – **Ed.**]* will not be instantaneous, contrary to the expectations of our public. It has to be a combination of several long moves. The degree of success of our defense at this stage is determined and will be determined not by how much territory was left or not left but by how much the enemy knocked out

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our personnel. The enemy is now very interested not in advancing forward but in the depletion of our units."[28]

- **ASSESSMENT:** We have maintained that through Russia's winter offensive, Ukraine was attempting to maximize Russian casualties through the "defender bonus," which is a military unit on defense generally suffers fewer casualties than a military unit in an offensive with a ratio typically between 1:3 to 1:7 defending on numerous variables
- Ukrainian Airforce spokesperson Colonel Yuriy Ignat accused Russia of launching missiles in or through Moldovan and Transnistria air space, using terrain to conceal the initial trajectories[29]
- Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, continuing his diplomatic trip across Europe, said that a "fighter coalition" was being established to secure modern Western combat aircraft to Ukraine[30]

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[28] https://t.me/wehearfromyanina/1904
[29] https://t.me/ukrarmed_forces/3259
[30] https://t.me/itsdonetsk/74292

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RUSSIA VS. UKRAINE HEAVY EQUIPMENT LOSSES

Russian and Ukrainian visually confirmed heavy equipment losses sourced from the [Oryx Database](#) from February 24, 2022, to May 14, 2023. 10,232 Russian vs. 3,264 Ukrainian

Equipment	Russian Losses	Ukrainian Losses	Ratio	Change
Main Battle Tanks	1823	191	9.54:1	⇧
Medium Duty Tanks	124	305	0.41:1	—
Armored fighting Vehicles	846	270	3.13:1	⇩
Infantry Fighting Vehicles	2324	532	4.37:1	—
Armored Personnel Carriers	306	258	1.18:1	⇩
MRAPs	43	55	0.78:1	—
Infantry Mobility Vehicles	186	297	0.65:1	—
Command and Communications Vehicles	238	12	19.83:1	⇩
Engineering Vehicles	303	55	5.51:1	⇩
Towed Artillery	203	121	1.68:1	⇧
Self-Propelled Howitzers/Mortars	389	148	2.63:1	⇩
MLRS	196	45	4.35:1	⇧
SAMs	111	112	0.99:1	⇩
Mobile Radars	31	59	0.53:1	—
EW/ECW	36	2	18.00:1	—
Winged Aircraft	82	66	1.24:1	⇧
Helicopters	87	29	3.00:1	⇧
Naval Vessels	12	26	0.46:1	—

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