



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



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Malcontent News

Russia-Ukraine War SITREP

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SUMMARY – DAY 120

Editor's Note: *In yesterday's report, an editing artifact read, "There is strong evidence that..." We received news of the capture of two settlements as we finished the report, requiring a total rewrite of the summary. As we approached the midnight publishing deadline, our Editor in Chief did not do a reread before publishing. We thank you for your understanding, and the phrase, "There is strong evidence that," should have been removed from the summary.*

Additionally, David Batashvili has not updated the maps to indicate the significant changes in territorial control in the Donbas. We thank you for your understanding.

It has been 3,038 days since Russia occupied Crimea on February 27, 2014.

The Ukrainian military forces have decided to abandon Severodonetsk and are withdrawing their remaining forces from the city. Additionally, Russian forces made significant gains south and southeast of Lysychansk, closing the Zolote salient and advancing within 5 kilometers of the city.

Videos showed Russian forces in Zolote and Hirske. Both belligerents shared videos of captured soldiers. Russia-backed militias captured the settlement of Mykolaivka and advanced into the northern parts of Vrubivka. Multiple reports show that most Ukrainian forces withdrew from Zolote, Hirske, and western Komyshevka. There weren't reports from Russian forces of intense fighting. Poor weather obscured NASA FIRMS data and Sentinel Hub satellite imagery.

Pro-Russian sources claim that Bila Hora and Vovchoiarivka were also captured, but we cannot independently verify this information. Pro-Russian accounts also claim that fighting has already started in the industrial regions of Lysychansk. This appears to be partially correct, but a stretch on where the industrial regions of Lysychansk are located.

The Bakhmut-Lysychansk T-1302 Highway Ground Line of Communication (GLOC – aka supply line) remains severed. Russian forces are in a position to better interdict the Siversk-Lysychansk GLOC.



Ukrainian forces will likely withdraw from Lisna Dacha, Syrotyne, and Voronove as part of the Severodonetsk retreat.

Russian forces launched the first offensive in the south Donbas in weeks, attempting to advance on Shevchenko, Novosilka, Vremivka, and Neskuchne south and west of Velyka Novosilka. There was no change in territorial control.

Russian forces attempted offensives on the Izyum axis toward Slovyansk from Bohorodychne and Dolyna. Neither advance was successful, and Ukrainian forces took prisoners near Dolyna.

There was no new rhetoric from the Kremlin directed toward Lithuania today.

There were no additional reports about Belarusian military activity along the Ukrainian, Polish and Lithuanian borders today.

DAILY ASSESSMENT

We assess the following:

1. We are unsure if the situation in the Severodoentsk salient represents a military decision or a more significant indication that Ukrainian forces have reached a tipping point in defensive capabilities.
2. We can not determine when Russian forces will take full administrative control of Lysychansk.
3. Ukrainian forces in Lysychansk risk having the remaining GLOCs that run through Siversk severed.
4. We maintain Russia's capability for offensive warfare in Ukraine has become deficient due to a lack of light infantry forces.
5. Outside the Luhansk Oblast, Russian forces have been put on a defensive posture.
6. The Russian Ministry of Defense's singular focus on the capture of Severodonetsk is destroying the Russian army's offensive capabilities in Ukraine.

It is hard to define a looming tactical defeat as a victory for Ukraine. Single battles do not define the outcome of a war. Just as Russia suffered a strategic defeat at Kyiv and Chernihiv but did not lose the war, Ukraine likely suffering

a tactical defeat in the coming weeks in Luhansk does not mean Ukraine has lost the war.

Certainly, Ukraine's ultimate goal was to defeat Russian forces in Luhansk and prevent the capture of the administrative boundaries of the oblast. Realistically, the fighting in Luhansk has been a delaying tactic to allow more NATO and Western ally weapons to filter into Ukraine, properly train replacement troops, and maximize combat losses for Russia as long as possible.

Delaying tactic for more weapons to arrive: Ukraine has experienced partial success. Almost 300 155 mm-based artillery pieces have been promised to Ukraine, with more than half already in service. The first four HIMARS systems were put into use in Ukraine during the week of June 20. Enough parts to expand the number of operational Mig-29, Su-25, Mi-8, Mi-17, Mi-18, and Mi-24 aircraft have enabled Ukraine to reestablish air dominance in Kherson and fly sorties deep into Izyum and the Donbas. Ukraine sunk a Russian military vessel using Harpoon missiles. Over 200 tanks from Poland and the Czech Republic are also in service. Ukraine would have benefited from another 30 days of deliveries.

Properly train replacement troops: Ukraine has also experienced partial success. Due to weapons not arriving fast enough, caused mainly by logistical barriers, it is yet to be seen how effective new combat brigades will be. Forces that engaged in Kherson had mixed success. Other newer units deployed around Izyum have been very effective. Ukraine would have also benefited from another 30 days delay.

Maximize combat losses for Russia as long as possible: The Russian Ministry of Defense announced on March 25 that they were starting efforts to capture Severodonetsk. At the time, Russian and Russia-backed militias controlled 93% of Luhansk and 54% of Donetsk. It took 91 days for Russian forces to capture Severodonetsk. As of this writing, Russian forces control 98% of Luhansk and 55% of Donetsk.

The Donbas offensive started on April 10 and reached a high operational tempo on April 18. From March 26 to approximately May 25, Ukrainian forces caused significantly more Russian casualties than Ukraine suffered in defense of the Donbas. Between May 20 and 30, that shifted to parity, and by mid-June, Ukraine was likely suffering significantly higher casualty numbers.

At times in war, an apparent victory is a draw or even a defeat. Not in Santa Ana's worst nightmares would he have envisioned the defeat at San Jacinto after the Battle of the Alamo. Robert E. Lee and Jefferson Davis were very satisfied with the defeat of General Joseph Hooker at Chancellorsville in 1863. However, Lee lost almost 15,000 troops and general Stonewall Jackson in the victory. Two months later, Lee would forever be on the defensive after the defeat in Gettysburg. The Japanese appeared to have scored a decisive victory at Pearl Harbor. The attack ignored the submarine pens, fuel storage depots, dry docks, and didn't target a single American aircraft carrier. Six months later, Japan would suffer a crushing defeat at Midway and be on a defensive posture for the rest of the war.

Is the Luhansk oblast a Pyrrhic victory for Russia? That depends on how both belligerents respond as the region enters a new phase. The simple fact is that the Ukrainian armed forces have primarily stopped the second most powerful army after it crossed its border with only light weapons support through early May. That can be called victory, depending on how you want to define "win."

Russia's military capabilities, primarily for light infantry, are severely degraded. The likely capture of Lysychansk is

weeks away unless Ukraine makes a withdrawal from the city. Severodonetsk had a pre-war population of 120,000 – Lysychansk was home to 95,000 people. It is estimated only 6,000 remain in Severodonetsk and less than 10,000 in Lysychansk. Popasna, home to over 20,000 before the start of the war, was reported to have less than 200 residents by Russian state media. Rubizhne [Luhansk] is allegedly a ghost town with no residents. Wars are not won by capturing dust.

The prudent decision for the Russian Ministry of Defense (MOD) would be an operational pause to resupply, reconstitute and rotate combat troops. It is improbable that Russia will do that. The remaining forces will likely be reconstituted into understaffed Battalion Tactical Groups (BTG) and continue combat operations unabated. The Russian MOD appears to be concerned with the number of military *units* on the map versus the actual capabilities of those units.

The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Private Military Company (PMC) Wagner Group, and Rosgvardia (National Guard) were the primary forces fighting for control of Severodonetsk.¹ By military contract, Rosgvardia is not

¹ [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine - Facebook](#)

supposed to be engaged in frontline fighting. Chechen forces claimed to have captured Metolkine earlier this week, but even Major-General Ramzan Kadyrov is not making videos highlighting Chechen success in Severodoentsk.

The other question is how quickly will Russia redistribute its remaining forces and where will they be sent. Currently, outside of the Severodonetsk salient, Russian forces have to use a rolling defense.

If this feels like an attempt to spin the story of what has been a terrible week for the Ukrainian military, let us be clear. This was the worst week for Ukraine since the surrender at the Azovstal Metallurgical Plant in Mariupol or the discovery of the Bucha massacre. However, the territorial losses of the last 72 hours do not mean the war is lost or the end of Ukraine.

We maintain Russia does not have enough resources to control and hold territorial gains in the medium and long term without a significant pause in combat operations or a formal declaration of war against Ukraine, coupled with additional mobilization.

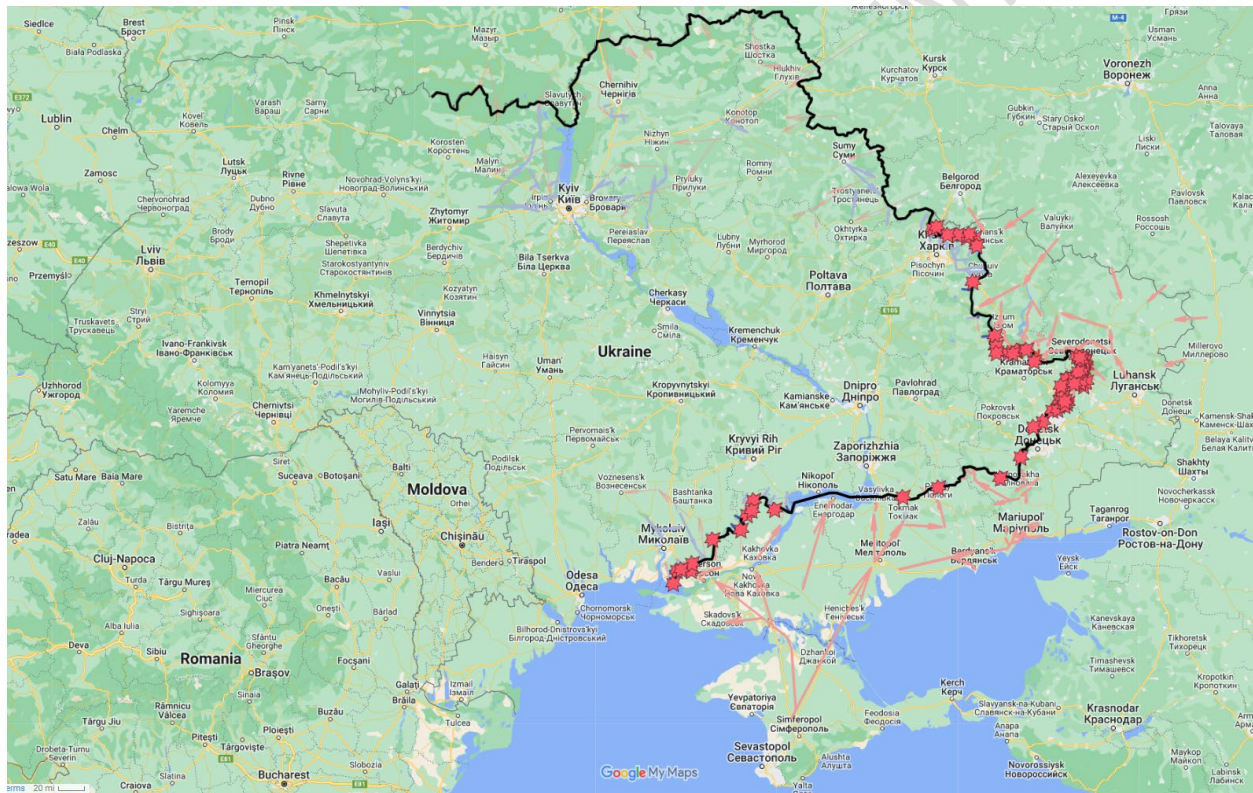
We continue to have concerns about Ukraine's ability to take the initiative in late July or August. Ukraine needs to manage its combat losses, and western allies need to accelerate arms shipments to make this possible. Ukraine cannot suffer significant equipment or troop losses in a withdrawal or surrender in Severodonetsk and Lysychansk. It is incumbent on NATO and Western allies to accelerate and expand heavy weapons shipments to Ukraine and stop blocking the shipment of Main Battle Tanks (MBT) and precision medium-range systems.

We maintain our concern we are in the Mutual Assured Destruction Instability Paradox, given Russia's unyielding view on Ukraine and its diminishing capabilities through conventional warfare. Rhetoric directed toward Lithuania and airspace incursions in Estonia and Denmark are troubling. The decisions emanating from the Kremlin are not geopolitically or militarily sound.

Finally, despite our concerns about the expansion of conflict outside of Ukraine, the Kremlin has repeatedly made it clear its long-term ambitions extend to all of Ukraine and beyond its borders. NATO and Western-allied nations would be well served to assure a true military victory that leaves Ukraine capable of economic and political stability in a post-war environment.

Simply put, the best way to deal with a bully waving a gun in people's faces is for those same people to wrestle the bully to the ground and give him a bloody nose.

TODAY'S WAR IN UKRAINE MAP



DONBAS REGION

LUHANSK

Severodonetsk Salient

The Ukrainian military has decided to end the defense of Severodonetsk and withdraw from the city.² Ukrainian forces continue to hold Syrtoyne, and there were continued reports Ukraine had success in capturing parts of Voronove.³ Earlier on June 23, Luhansk Regional State Administration head Serhiy Haidai reported that Russian forces shelled all three already destroyed bridges in Severodonetsk and the suburb of Pavlograd.⁴ Information about Ukrainian forces in Syrtoyne, Voronove, Lisna Dacha, and Pavlohrad was not provided as part of the withdrawal announcement. Ukraine will lose an unknown number of military vehicles in Severodonetsk, including T-72 MBTs.⁵

In the Popasana area, it was reported that Ukrainian forces withdrew from Zolote and Hirske.⁶ Russian state media nor Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) or Donetsk People's

² <https://t.me/luhanskaVTSA/3723>

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

⁴ <https://t.me/luhanskaVTSA/3716>

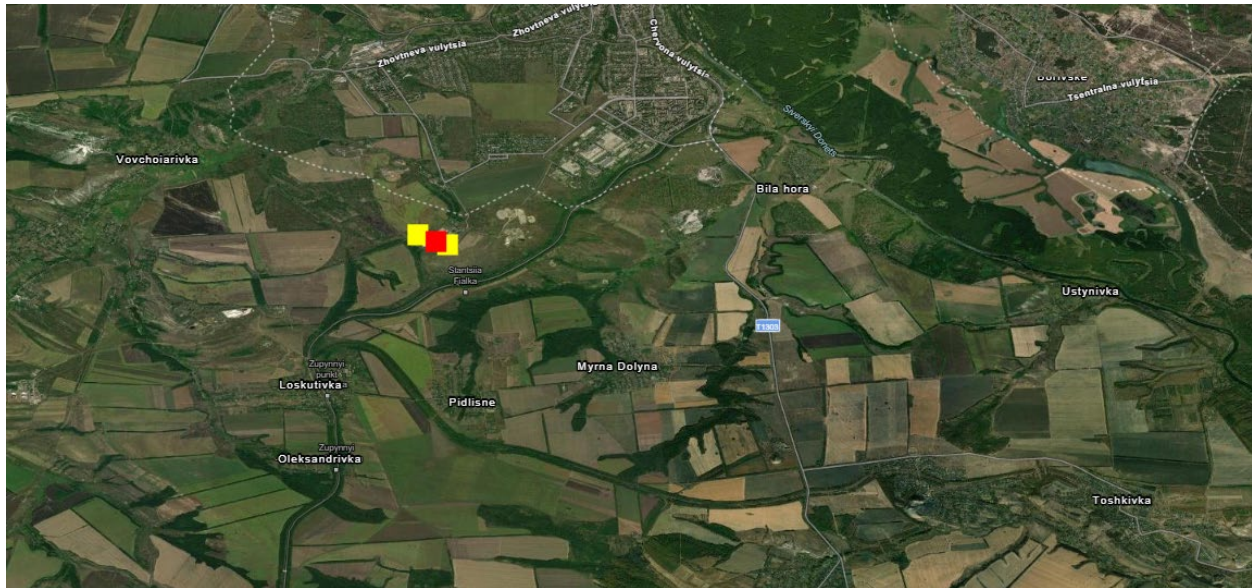
⁵ <https://twitter.com/raging545/status/1540012063065612288>

⁶ <https://twitter.com/mhmck/status/1540058370740215809>

Republic (DNR) released videos or pictures showing large-scale prisoners of war. Both belligerents published videos and pictures of captured forces in the region. NASA FIRMS data did not indicate there was extensive fighting in the salient.

Members of the Russian 1st Army Corps captured Mykolaivka, east of the T-1302 Highway and 15 kilometers south of Lysychansk. Russian forces attempted to capture Vovchoyarivka but failed.

Pro-Russian account Rybar reported there was fighting in the industrial districts of Lysychansk itself. It appears this is "technically" accurate, with NASA FIRMS data suggesting there is fighting at a gelatin factory north of Loskutivka. The factory has a Lysychansk address but is located at the extreme southern edge of the city. There is no evidence of widespread fighting in the southeastern parts of Lysychansk.



The General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine reported Spirne and Berestove were under artillery and MLRS fire. This is likely the interdiction point on the T-1302 Highway GLOC with Spirne on the western side of the road. A French news story published on June 17 exposed Ukrainian positions in Spirne in a major failure of Operational Security (OPSEC).⁷ At the 00:26 second mark, the journalist is on a ridge in Spirne, looking southeast toward Berestove near the ridge at 48°46'52.6"N 38°17'08.5"E.⁸ The singular large tower among the row of powerlines is unique to the terrain, and Spirne sits at a higher elevation.

⁷ <https://twitter.com/MalcontentmentT/status/1540085812640944129>

⁸ <https://goo.gl/maps/B9rrVyAAdsi5M2W9A>

ASSESSMENT: This news story and the terrible OPSEC by the journalist and Ukrainian military likely impacted Russian military strategy at Berestove.

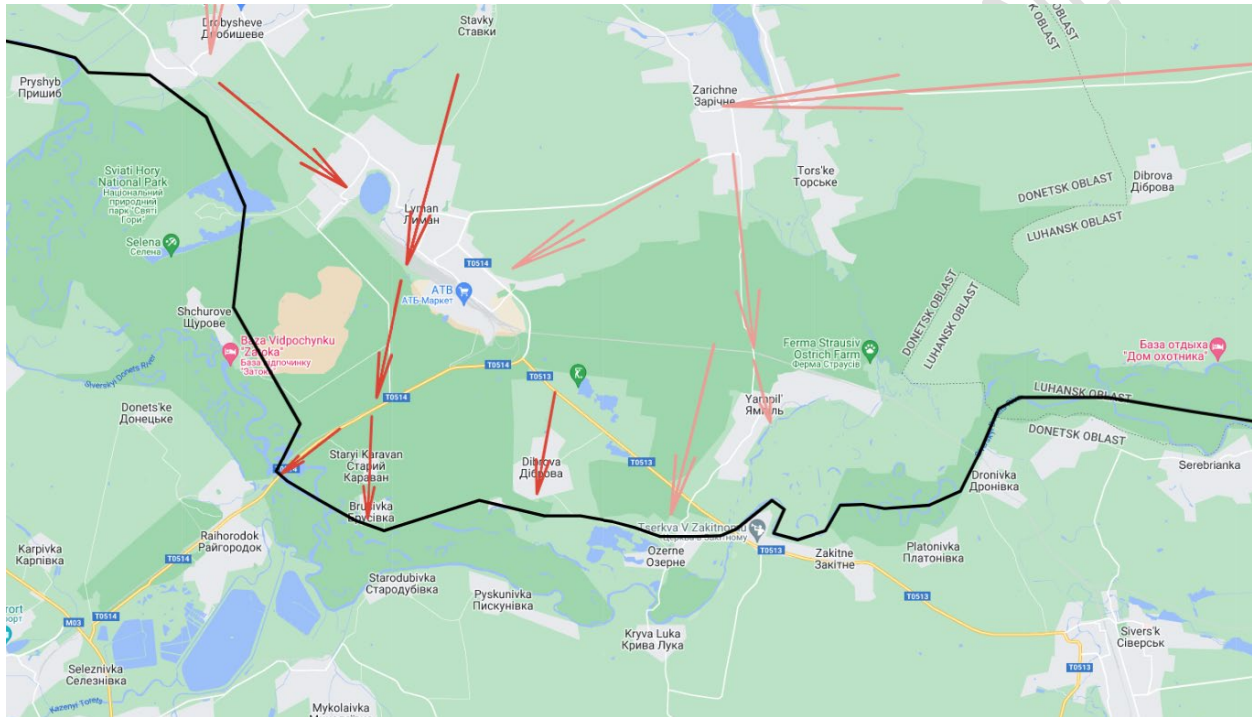
The city of Lysychansk is under constant and indiscriminate shelling and MLRS strikes by Russian forces.⁹



⁹ <https://t.me/luhanskaVTSA/3716>

Lyman Axis

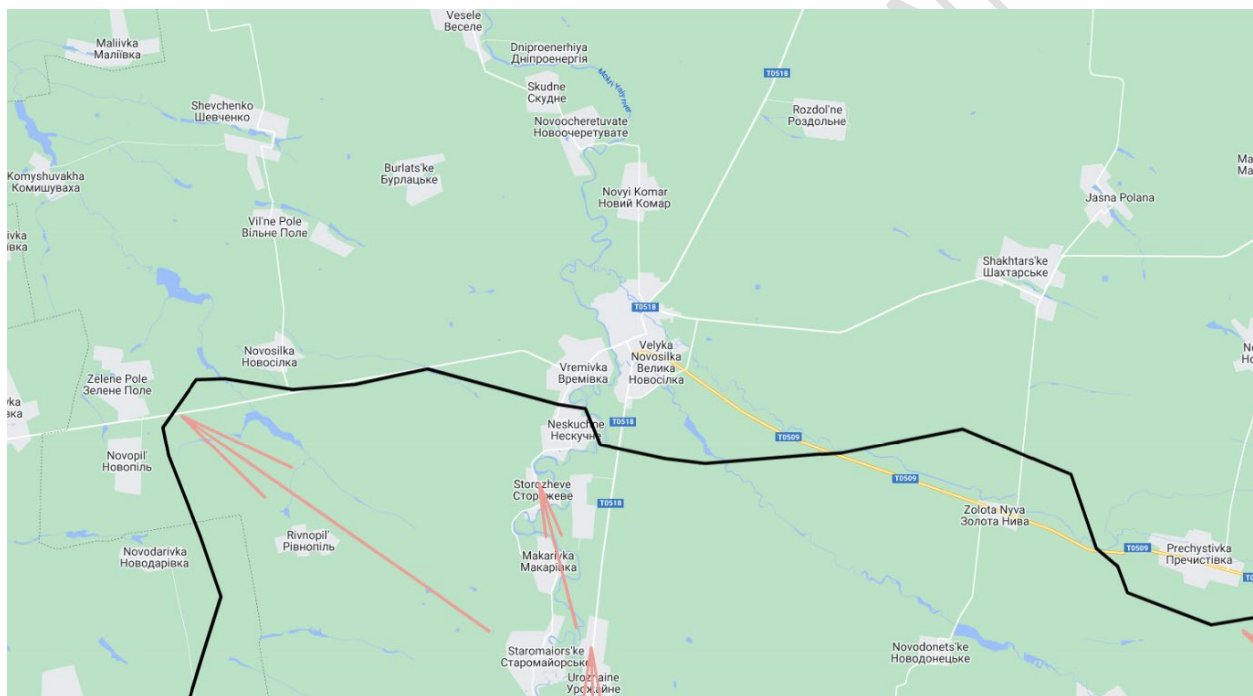
There weren't any major combat operations around Lyman on June 23. Russian forces did not launch any offensive operations along the axis.



SOUTH DONBAS AND WESTERN ZAPORIZHIA

There were scattered artillery exchanges and airstrikes from Horlivka to Velkya Novosilka in Donetsk.

Russian forces attempted to improve their positions around Velyka Novosilka by attacking Shevchenko, Novosilka, Vremivka, and Neskuchne.¹⁰ A ground attack on Shevchenko implies that Russian forces advanced 7 kilometers before being repulsed and would have likely broken through at least the first line of Ukrainian defenses.



There were artillery exchanges in Zaporizhia from Hulyaipole to Orikhiv.

¹⁰ [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine - Facebook](#)

We have recoded Rivnopil as under Russian control, given the offensive launched from Novosilka. We continue to code Pyatkhatky as contested.

KHARKIV REGION

NORTHERN KHARKIV COUNTEROFFENSIVE

Russian forces did not launch any offensive operations north of Kharkiv. There has been no change in territorial control.

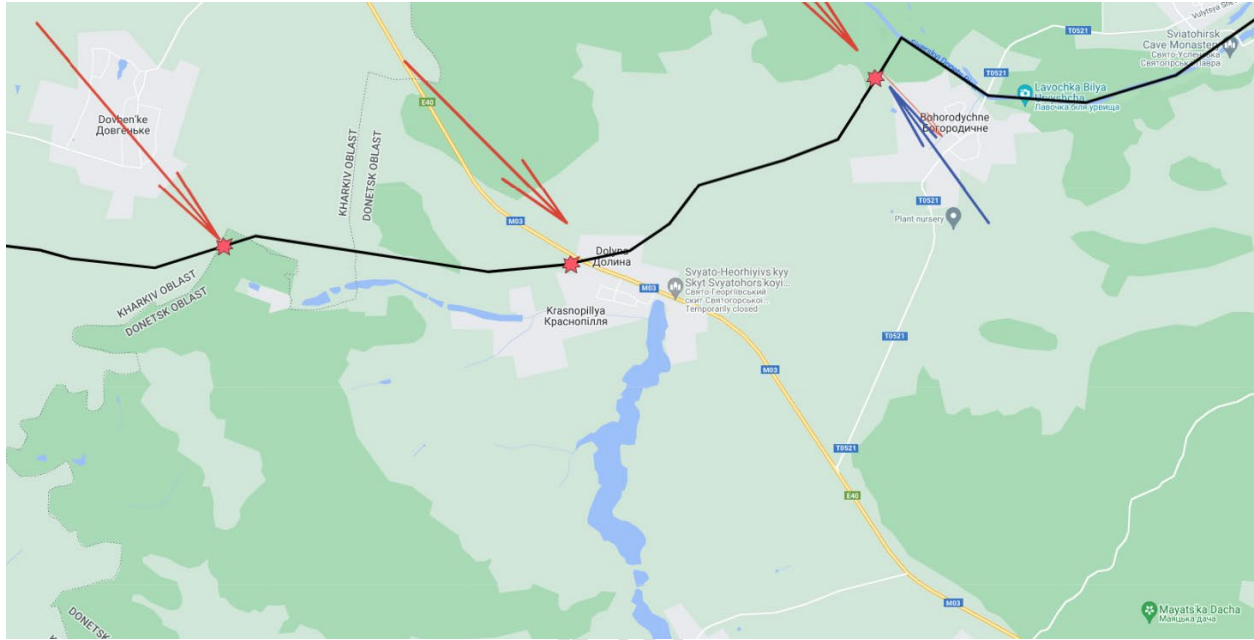
Russian forces continue to shell civilians and civilian infrastructure north of Kharkiv and within the city itself.

IZYUM AXIS

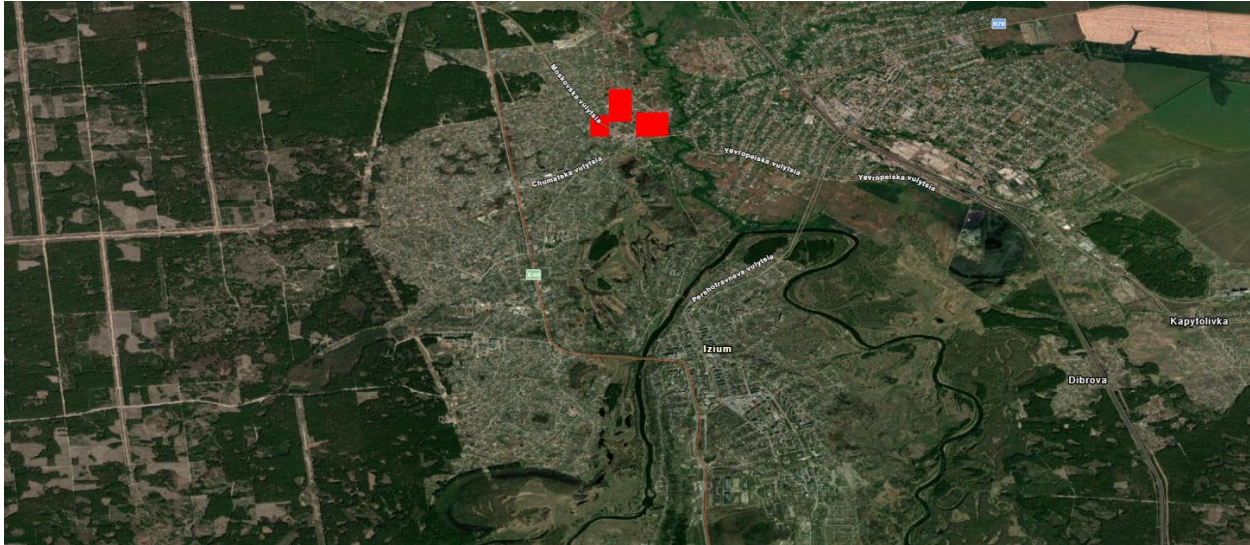
Russian forces attempted to advance into the settlements of Dolyna and Bohorodychne and were unsuccessful. Ukrainian forces took Russians as prisoners of war in Slovyanskyi.¹¹ We geolocated the video at 48°58'15.7"N

¹¹ <https://twitter.com/MalcontentmentT/status/1540152911618985984>

37°25'50.4"E. The prisoners were coming from west to east and were likely captured in Dolyna.



NASA FIRMS data suggests that Russian administrative centers within Izyum were hit by artillery or MLRS. There were indications of multiple fires in the northern part of the city near the post office, where Russian forces have consolidated command and control operations.



DNIPRO, KHERSON & MYKOLAIV, ZAPORIZHIA REGION

There were no reports of significant fighting in the Kherson Oblast, with engagement limited to artillery, MLRS, and airstrikes. Both belligerents report that they are consolidating forces for renewed offensive operations.

ASSESSMENT: We have significant concern that the Ukrainian offensive on the east bank of the Inhulets River has collapsed. Neither belligerent has reported on activity in the area for almost a week. NASA FIRMS data has indicated hot spots only along the west and east bank of the river. Russian forces renewed targeting of civilians in the Dnipropetrovsk Oblast on June 22 indicates they are no longer in a defensive posture. Additionally, Russian forces

have a repeated pattern of punitive action against civilian targets after territorial losses.

Russian forces targeted civilians, and civilian infrastructure in Hrechani Pody and Shyroke on June 23 with Grad rockets fired from MLRS. There were no casualties reported.¹²

CHERNIHIV & SUMY REGION

Dmytro Zhyvytskyi, head of Sumy Oblast Military Administration, reported that the settlement of Yunakivka was hit by 30 Grad rockets fired by Russian MLRS, in addition to using thermite munitions.¹³

Editor's Note: Thermite is commonly confused for white phosphorus. Russian forces have been accused of using white phosphorus multiple times, with evidence indicating it has been used on two occasions. All other incidents have been thermite.

The settlement of Seredyna-Buda was hit by 20 mortar shells fired from across the border, with no reports of

¹² <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2022/06/24/7354350/>

¹³ <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2022/06/24/7354336/>

injuries. A Russian combat drone dropped a mortar shell on Krasnopillia.

KYIV REGION

Oleksii Gromov, deputy head of the Main Operative Directorate of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, reported that two spies had been arrested.¹⁴

"Two Ukrainian citizens have been detained in Kyiv, having been found in possession of photos of the capital's railway infrastructure. A woman who had photographs of roadblocks has been detained in the Shevchenkovskiy District. A man suspected of collaborating with militants from the so-called LNR/DNR has been detained in the Dniprovskiy District."

BLACK SEA & ODESA REGION

South Operational Command for Ukraine reported they launched another missile strike on Snake Island, destroying

¹⁴ <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2022/06/23/7354240/>

an anti-aircraft system. We cannot independently verify the report.¹⁵

WEST REGION

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

ASSESSMENT: We believe the chances that Belarus will invade Ukraine remain extremely remote.

THEATERWIDE & EXTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS

Ukrainian officials reported the first High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS) have arrived in Ukraine.¹⁶

Ukrainian Defence Minister Oleksii Reznikov did not state if the systems are already in theater.

The United States Department of Defense announced they would be sending an additional four HIMARS to Ukraine as part of a new \$450 million aid package. United States officials say the first four HIMARS systems have arrived in

¹⁵ <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2022/06/24/7354350/>

¹⁶ [Reuters](#)

Ukraine.¹⁷ The new aid package includes 18 unspecified patrol boats, HIMARS munitions, and 155mm ammunition for artillery.

United States Congressional Representative Adam Kinzinger (R-Illinois) has introduced a bill that would allow the United States to begin training Ukrainian pilots and ground support crews on the operation of the F-15 multirole fighter and F-16 fighter aircraft.¹⁸

"The Ukrainian military needs our immediate assistance, especially with air assets," said Kinzinger.

Since the start of the war, Ukrainian officials have requested additional military aircraft, particularly fighter airplanes. Efforts by Poland and Slovakia to transfer planes have been blocked for administrative and political reasons. Unofficially, it is believed that Bulgaria disassembled over a dozen Su-25 aircraft and shipped them to Ukraine as parts. Bulgarian officials have never confirmed the transfer. Ukraine also received a significant shipment of Mig-29 parts, which enabled the nation to restore a significant number of airframes. The provider of the parts

¹⁷ <https://www.defenseone.com/threats/2022/06/us-sending-more-himars-artillery-ukraine/368556/>

¹⁸ <https://www.yahoo.com/video/us-congressmen-introduce-bill-train-131300180.html>

was never officially identified. Germany confirmed earlier this week that they provided Mig-29 parts to Ukraine.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy reportedly wants to replace his spy chief, Ivan Bakanov.¹⁹ Bakanov and his subordinates are increasingly taking the blame for the fall of Kherson, which was captured after little resistance.

General Serhiy Kryvoruchko, head of Kherson's SBU directorate, allegedly ordered his officers to evacuate Kherson before Russian troops even arrived, going against President Zelenskyy's direct order.

WAR CRIMES AND HUMAN RIGHTS

There weren't any significant developments today.

GEOPOLITICAL

The European Union has officially granted candidate status to Ukraine and Moldova.

¹⁹ <https://www.politico.com/news/2022/06/23/zelenskyy-top-spy-security-failures-00041794>

President Zelenskyy wrote on Telegram, "It is officially recognized that Ukraine is not a bridge, not a pillow between the West and Russia, not a buffer between Europe and Asia, not a sphere of influence, not a "gray" zone, not a transit territory. Not the border between orcs and elves. Ukraine is a future equal partner for at least 27 EU countries. Ukraine is a candidate for accession to the European Union!"

Moldovan President Maia Sandu wrote, "Historic day for Moldova! European Union Member States have granted us the EU candidate status. An unequivocal and strong signal of support for our citizens and Moldova's European future. We are grateful and committed to advancing on the path of reforms."²⁰

Vladimir Chizhov, Russia's ambassador to the European Union, told the RIA, "We consider the E.U. enlargement process to be negative — hostile, in fact — in relation to Russian national interests."²¹

²⁰ [TRT World](#)

²¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/06/23/world/russia-ukraine-war-news>

ECONOMIC

United States-based Cisco and Nike announced their plans to exit Russia permanently.²² In an e-mail, Cisco stated, "We have now made the decision to begin an orderly wind-down of our business in Russia and Belarus."

Nike suspended operations in Russia on March 3. On June 23, the Portland, Oregon-based company announced that it would not be reopening its branded stores and would be closing all operations.

The rouble "official" exchange was steady at 54 to 1 US dollar.

Oil prices were steady, with WTI crude holding at \$104 a barrel and Brent declining slightly to \$110. United States RBOB wholesale gasoline fell six cents to \$3.75 a gallon (99 cents a liter).

Chicago SRW Wheat futures dropped to 95 cents a bushel for September 2022 delivery. The price is down 33% from a

²² [Reuters](#)



peak of \$1.42 a bushel earlier in the year but still 20 cents higher than pre-war prices.

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