



# MALCONTENT NEWS RUSSIA-UKRAINE SITUATION REPORT

August 30, 2023



# Malcontent News

## Russia-Ukraine War SITREP

### 8/30/23 23:59\* PST

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## **SUMMARY – DAY 552**

It has been 3,472 days since Russia occupied the Crimea Peninsula on January 27, 2014, and one year and 187 days since Russia expanded its war against Ukraine. The news cycle was much calmer today.

- Positional fighting continued in Kharkiv and Luhansk, with Russian forces making marginal gains in the Serebryanskyy Woods
- Fighting continued south of Bakhmut at Klishchiivka and Kurdyumivka
- Two Ukrainian Mi-8 helicopters flying to Bakhmut for a combat mission collided near Kramatorsk with the loss of four pilots and two door gunners
- Positional fighting continued in Marinka and near Staromaiorske
- Ukrainian forces have breached the Surovikin Line and are on the western edge of Verbove, but the size of the force remains unclear
- Intense fighting continued southwest and southeast of Roboytne
- At least one Ukrainian cruise missile struck Fedosia and knocked out power

- Satellite imagery showed that the damaged highway sections of the Kerch (Crimean) Bridge had been removed by Russian engineers
- Ukrainian insurgents destroyed the headquarters of United Russia in Nova Kakhovka
- Russian officials claim a drone was shot down over Moscow
- A substation in Moscow was set on fire by partisans
- Video showed that drones attacked Bryansk for the second day in a row
- A drone was downed by electronic warfare near Voeronezh
- Partisans destroyed railroad relay boxes in Ufa, delaying train traffic
- Pictures and satellite images have confirmed two damaged and one destroyed Il-76 transport planes at Pskov
- Self-declared illegitimate President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, had an unscheduled call with Russian President Vladimir Putin
- The National Security and Defense Council (NSDC) of Ukraine has requested that all medical deferments issued since February 24, 2022, be rechecked
- MP Fyodor Venislavsky recommended that exemptions from military service for people who are studying for a second college degree should be ended

- NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg had his powers extended through October 2024
- The European Union is seeking ways to accelerate ammunition shipments to Ukraine
- The F-16 training base in Romania has still not opened
- Germany shipped another package of military aid to Ukraine
- Ukraine has modified the P-360 Neptune antiship missile so it is capable of striking ground targets
- Russian milblogger Andrei Morozov (Murz) revealed that casualties among junior grade and field officers in the Russian Federation Armed Forces are degrading the quality of leadership
- A representative of Private Military Company (PMC) Wagner Group has recommended that mercenaries find other work
- The largest book publishers in Russia have been told to suspend the publication of books that mention PMC Wagner and Yevgeny Prigozhin until "the resonance from his death subsides"
- Colonel General Ramzan Kadyrov restated his loyalty to President Putin as speculation grows that his previous support of Prigozhin could make him a target of the Kremlin
- Miroslava Reginskaya, Igor Strelkov Girkin's wife, complained that when he was transferred from

Lefortov Prison for his hearing, he was seated with Ukrainians

- Girkin's "Angry Patriot Club" announced that he would run for President from prison and released his platform on his Telegram channel
- The Russian Ministry of Defense is reforming one guards motor infantry division, three airborne (VDV) divisions, and developing the 4th Army Corps with mostly mobiks
- Lithuania has summoned the Papal Diplomat due to Poep Francis' statement about the Russian Empire
- Russia's experiment of sending civil airliners to Iran for service and maintenance isn't working out
- The cost of gasoline and diesel fuel in Russia has increased from 42% to 74% in 2023

## **DAILY ASSESSMENT**

We assess the following:

1. Our concern about Ukraine's ability to turn tactical gains into operational success and strategic victories has been tempered by recent successes in the Orikhiv area of operation (AO) and the declining quality of Russian troops.
2. The Russian Ministry of Defense remains in a chaotic state, incapable of creating mission cohesion between penal units, mobiks, conscripts, elite forces, and proxy forces.
3. We maintain that the Russian government has started a purge of the leaders, mercenaries, and employees of PMC Wagner at the direction of President Vladimir Putin.
4. There is a significant possibility of partisan violence within Russia after the killings of Yevgeny Prigozhin and Dmitry Utkin. President Putin's stature, both inside and outside of Russia, remains in a weakened state.
5. The threat of aggression from Belarus is diminished after Prigozhin and Utkin's death. Still, we believe that aggressive posturing directed at Poland, Latvia, and Lithuania, and Russia's threats to blockade the Baltic and Black Seas, risk causing an international incident.



- The continued soft response by Ukraine's allies has only encouraged Minsk and Moscow to take further risks.
6. Russian Chief of Staff Valery Gerasimov and Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu are some of the best allies available for the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense due to their acceptance of systemic corruption, political infighting, waste of military resources, and refusal to adapt to the realities within the theater of war.
  7. The perceived slow progress of the Ukrainian summer offensive, questions about the capabilities of Ukrainian military commanders at the battalion and brigade level, and ongoing anticorruption measures highlighting the problems within the Ukrainian government are unfairly straining Western support.
  8. We maintain that Western partners are not meeting their promised military training, heavy equipment, and ammunition delivery dates, and it is negatively impacting Ukraine's military capabilities.
  9. It is unlikely that Ukraine will execute a wet crossing of the Dnipro River with a battalion-sized or larger force. This is the last day for this entry.
  10. We assess that the growing number of combat ineffective and combat destroyed Russian units has forced commanders to commit strategic reserves meant for a fall counteroffensive into defensive operations. Additionally, due to declining combat

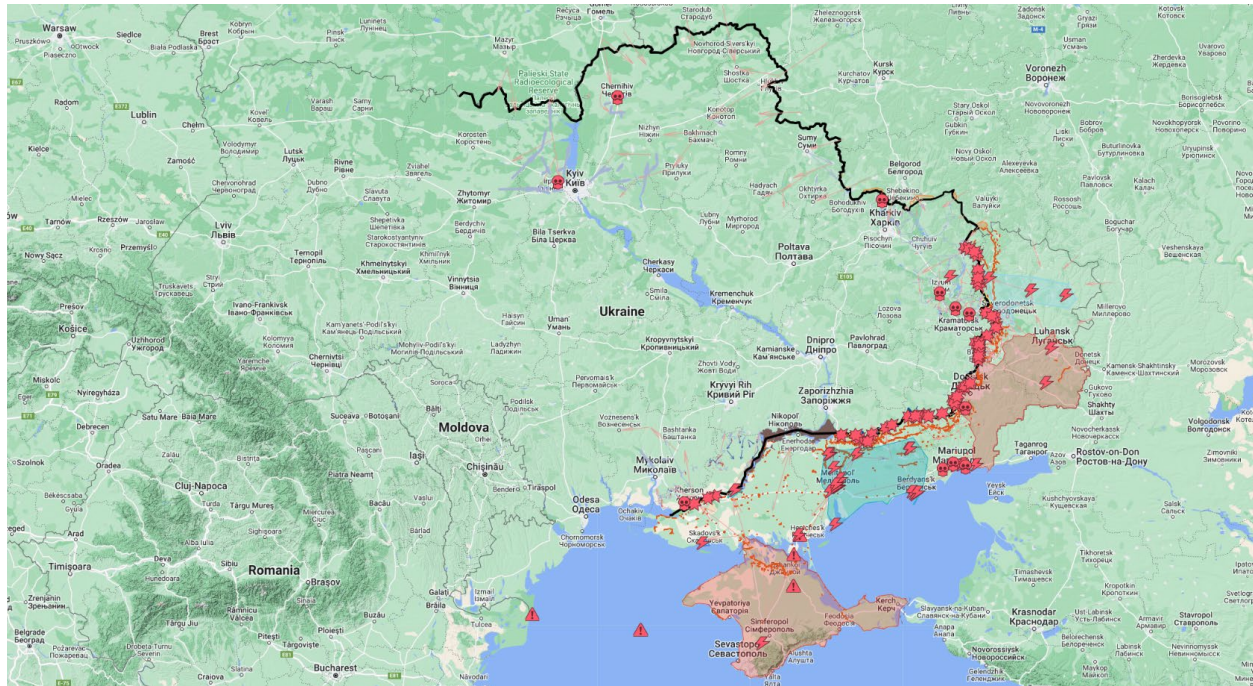
potential, Russian commanders are activating the reserves from the second and third echelons of the Prigozhin and Surovikin Lines.

11. Mistrust among the command structures of the Russian Ministry of Defense, intelligence, and security community is negatively impacting Russia's ability to wage war within Ukraine.
12. While the possibility of an intentional nuclear accident caused by Russian occupiers at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant remains low, the threat should be taken seriously.

[Jump to the Action Report.](#)



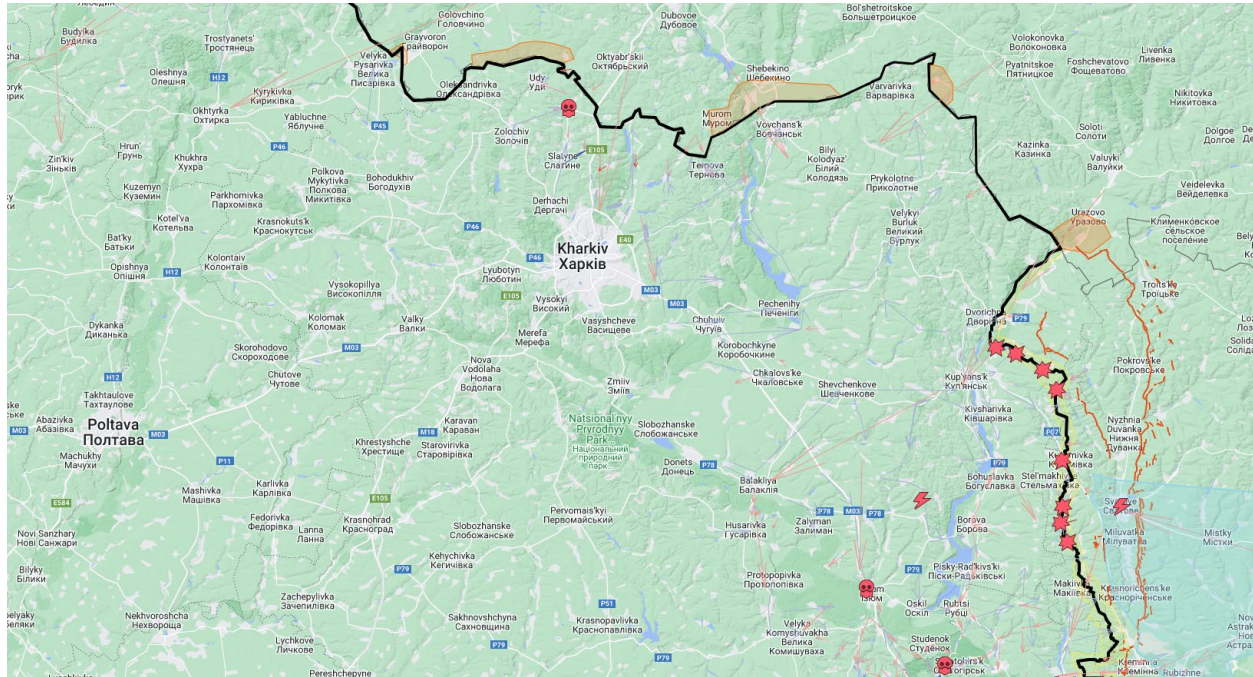
# TODAY'S WAR IN UKRAINE MAP



**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.

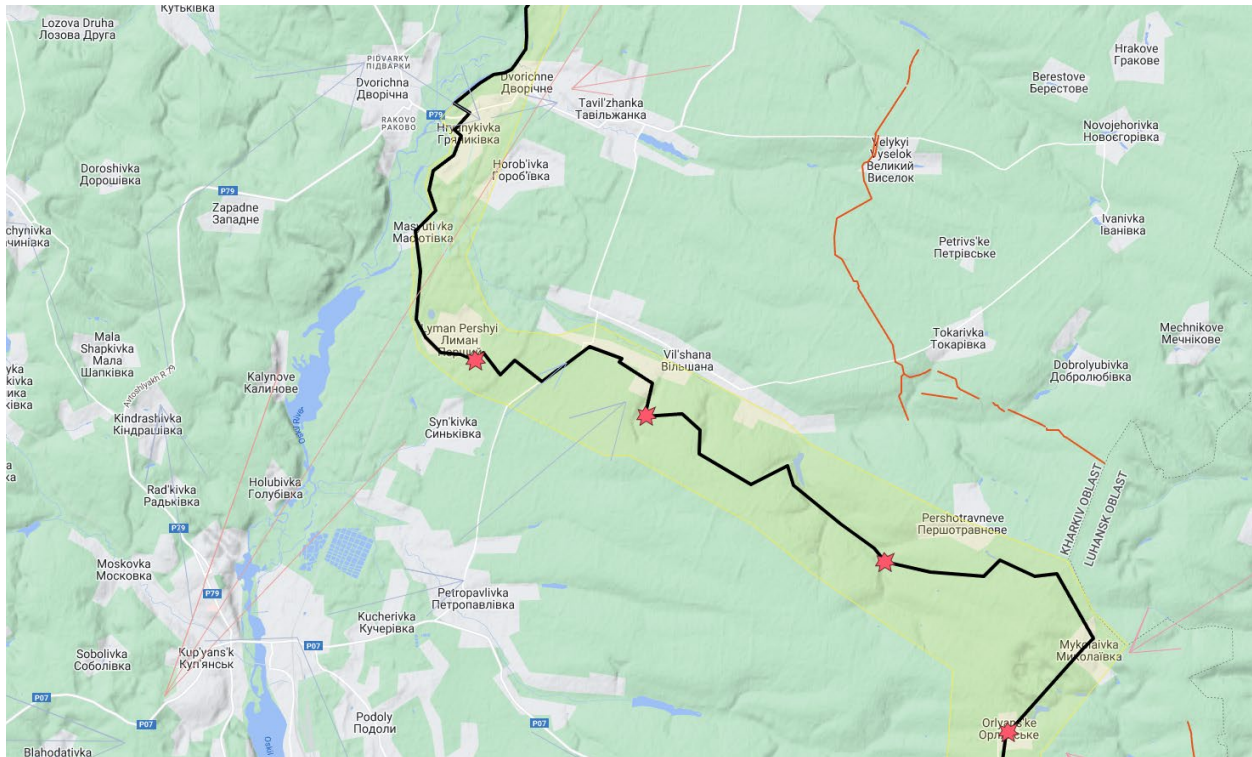
## [Russia-Ukraine War Report Map](#)

# KHARKIV



**Russian Objective:** Defend against the Ukrainian offensive, maximize casualties, 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



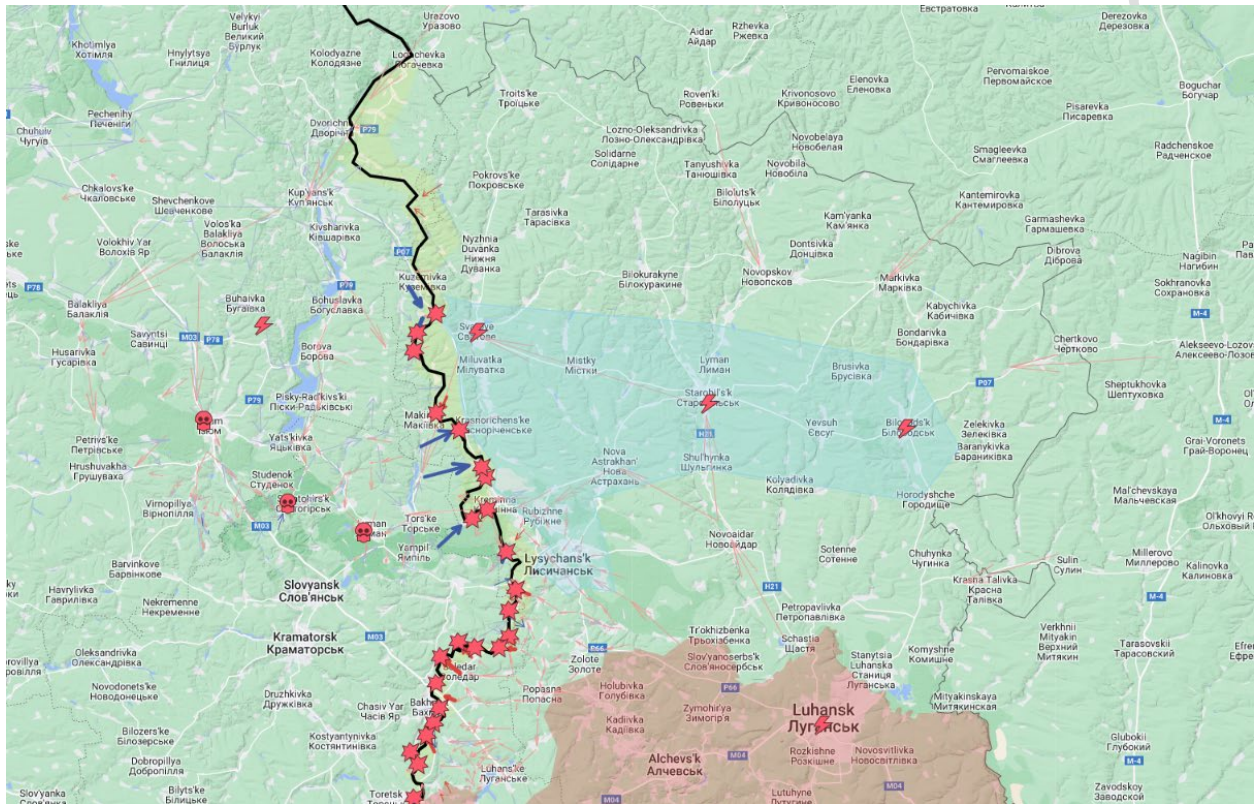
## Dvorichna Operational Area

Ukrainian forces made marginal gains northeast of [Synkivka](#), pushing Russian troops back to the edge of Lyman Pershyi.<sup>1</sup> The Russian Ministry of Defense (RMOD) claim of repulsing the attack is false.

<sup>1</sup> [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/29934](https://t.me/mod_russia/29934) [Russian Government Controlled Social Media Channel]

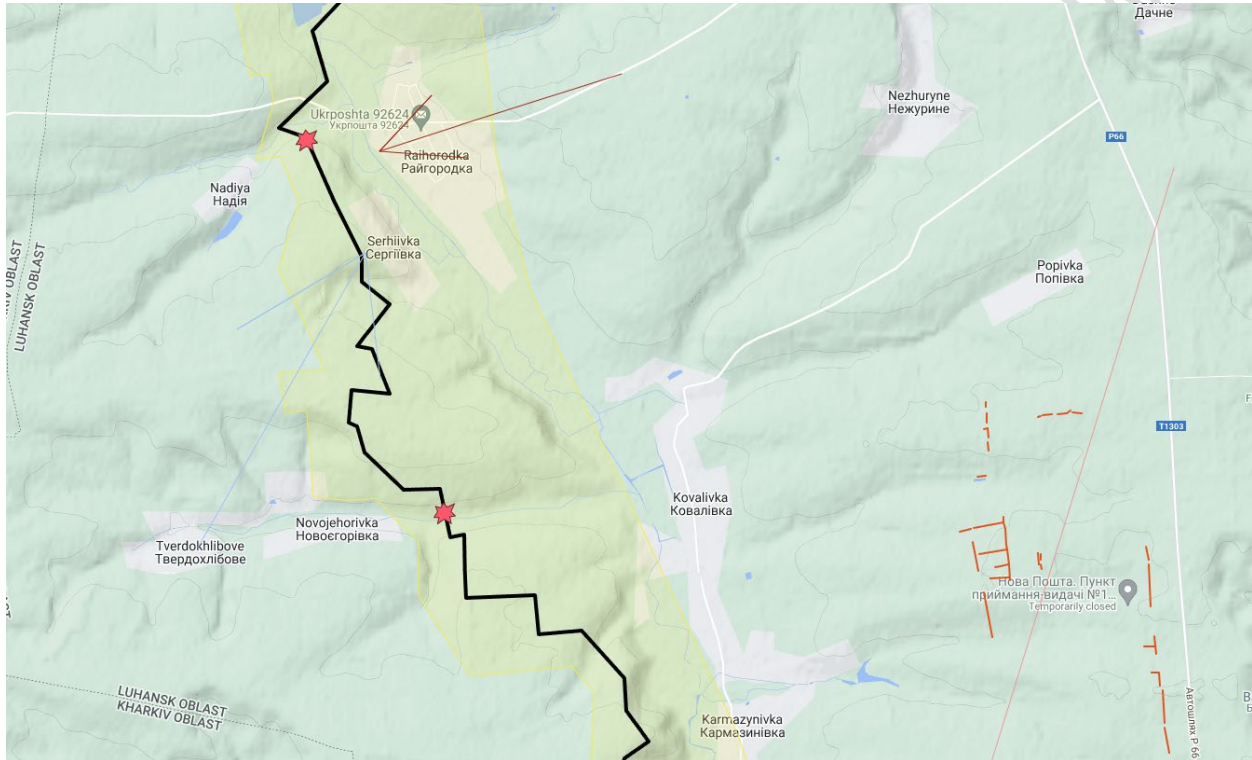
# DONBAS REGION

## LUHANSK



**Russian Objective:** Defend against the Ukrainian offensive, maximize casualties, control insurgent activity, set conditions to capture the rest of the region, and support the September 2023 elections

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



## Svatove Operational Area

Positional fighting continued near Raihorodka, with a Russian attack, supported by the Russian Aerospace Forces (VKS), near [Novojehorivka](#), which was repulsed, and Ukrainian forces on the offensive near [Serhiivka](#).<sup>2 3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/29934](https://t.me/mod_russia/29934) [Russian Government Controlled Social Media Channel]

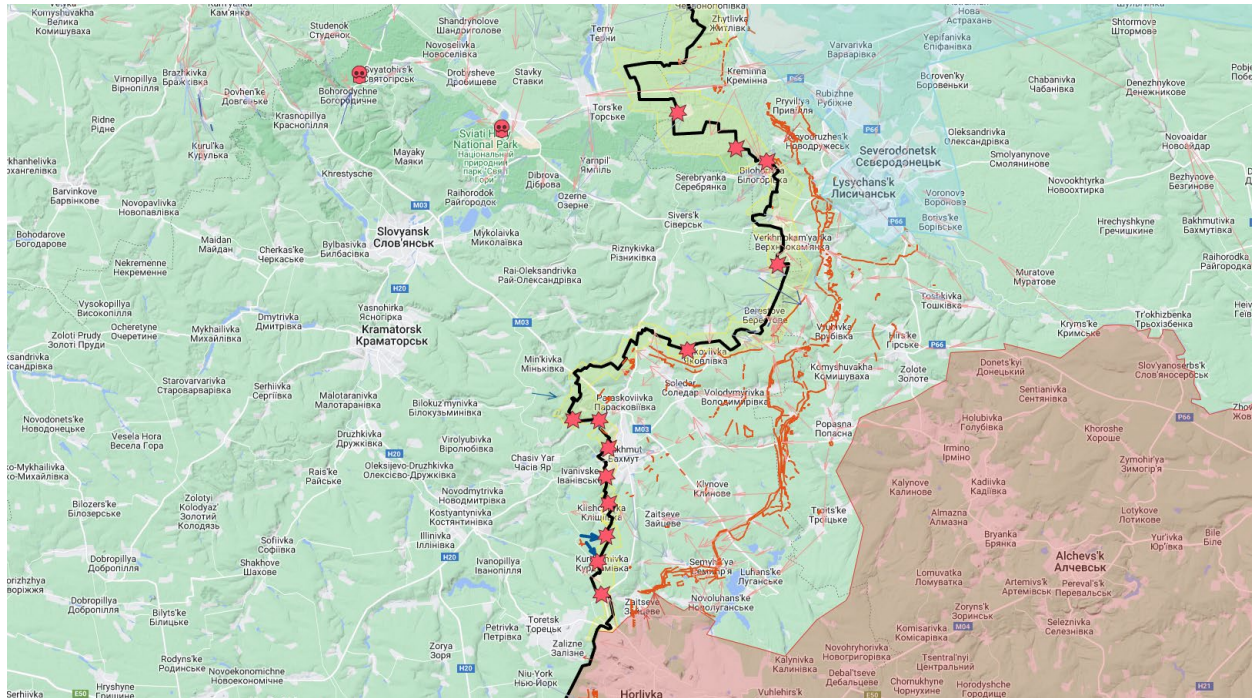
<sup>3</sup> <https://t.me/landforcesofukraine/11521>





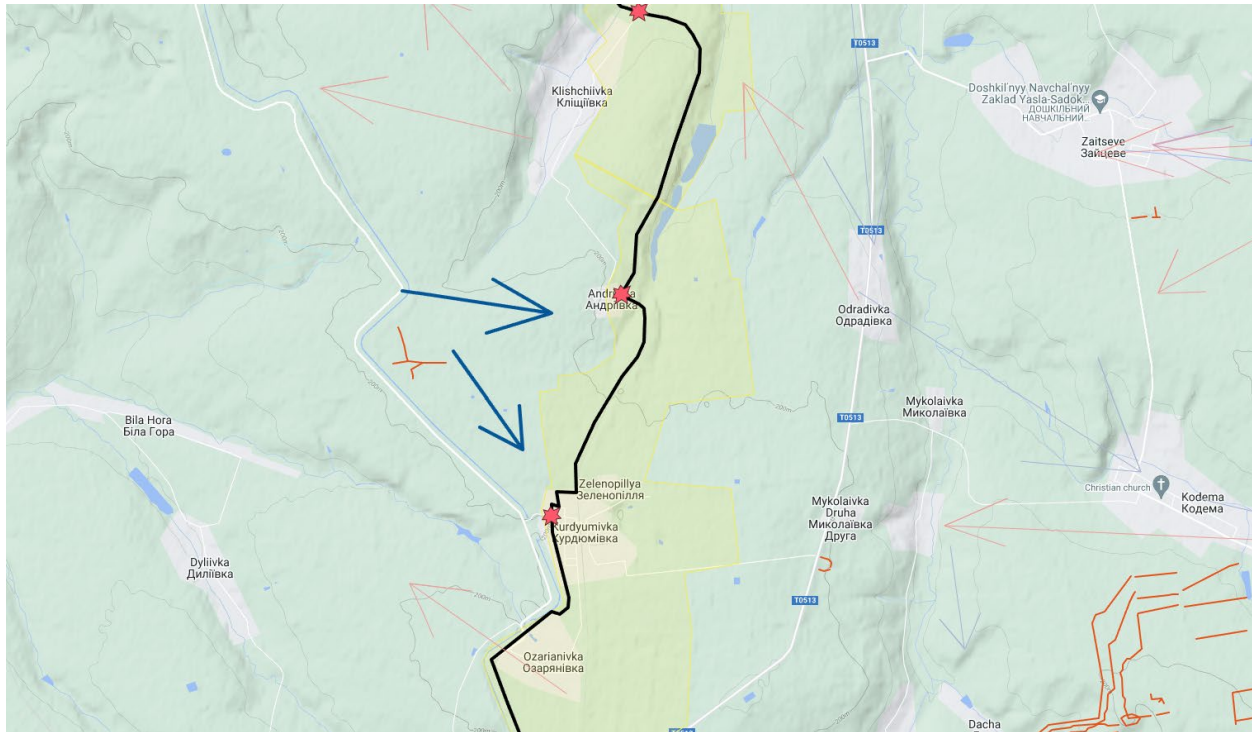


# NORTHEAST DONETSK



**Russian Objective:** Complete the capture of Bakhmut, set conditions to attack Kramatorsk, Slovyansk, and Siversk, and capture the entire region, set conditions for September 2023 elections

**Ukrainian Objective:** Defend Siversk and Bakhmut, collapse the Russian flanks while maximizing casualties, draw Russian reserves into the Bakhmut and Soledar operational areas, push into the Luhansk oblast, and minimize civilian casualties



## Klishchiivka Operational Area

Intense fighting continued in [Klishchiivka](#), where Russian and Ukrainian forces continued to trade positions in the center of the settlement.<sup>6</sup> Fighting for control of the railroad grade south of [Avdiivka](#), in the northwest corner of [Kurdyumivka](#), and the western edge of [Ozarianivka](#) continued.<sup>7</sup> We updated the map, removing the gray area west of the Siverskyi Donets-Donbas Canal west of Ozarianivka.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://t.me/wargonzo/14696>

<sup>7</sup> <https://t.me/landforcesofukraine/11521>

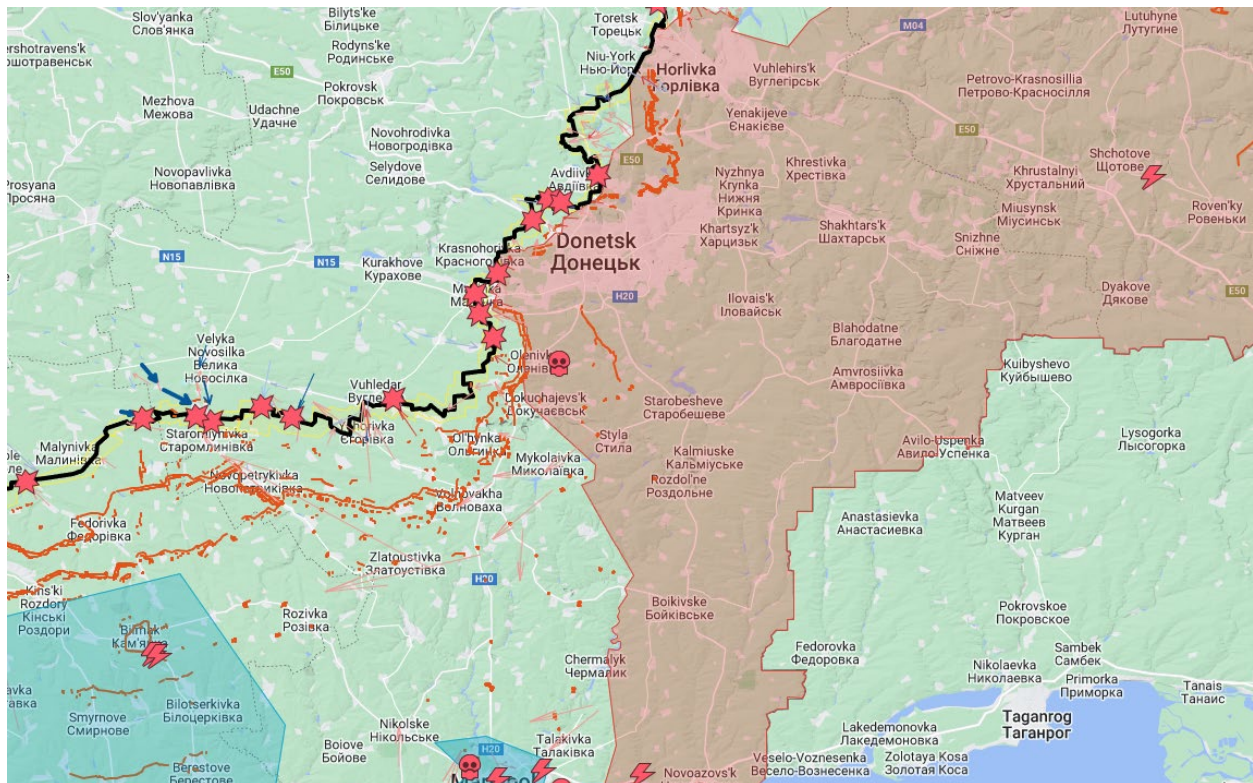
Near Kramatorsk, two Ukrainian Mi-8 helicopters with the 18<sup>th</sup> Separate Army Aviation Brigade, flying a combat mission to Bakhmut, collided midair. The pilots, co-pilots, and door gunners in both rotorcraft were killed instantly.<sup>8 9</sup> The cause of the crash is under investigation.

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<sup>8</sup> [https://t.me/ukrarmed\\_forces/6178](https://t.me/ukrarmed_forces/6178)

<sup>9</sup> <https://t.me/suspilnenews/23823>

## SOUTHWESTERN DONETSK



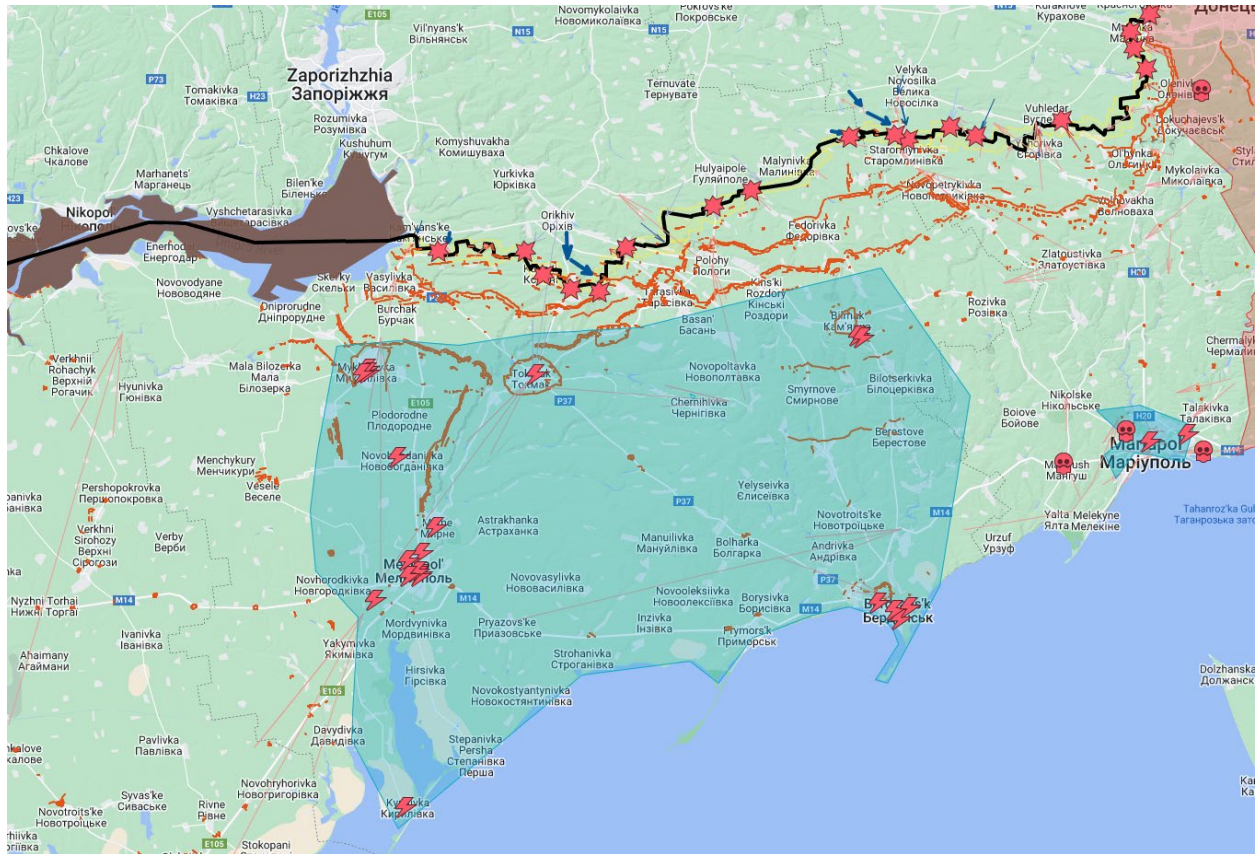
**Russian Objective:** Defend against the Ukrainian offensive, maximize casualties, set conditions for September 2023 elections, capture the remainder of the oblast

**Ukrainian Objective:** Set conditions for larger offensive operations, find and exploit Russian defensive weaknesses, destroy troop concentrations and command and control sites, interdict supplies, and disrupt logistics

## **Toretsk-Niu York, Adviiivka, Marinka, Vuhledar, and Staromlynivka Operational Areas**

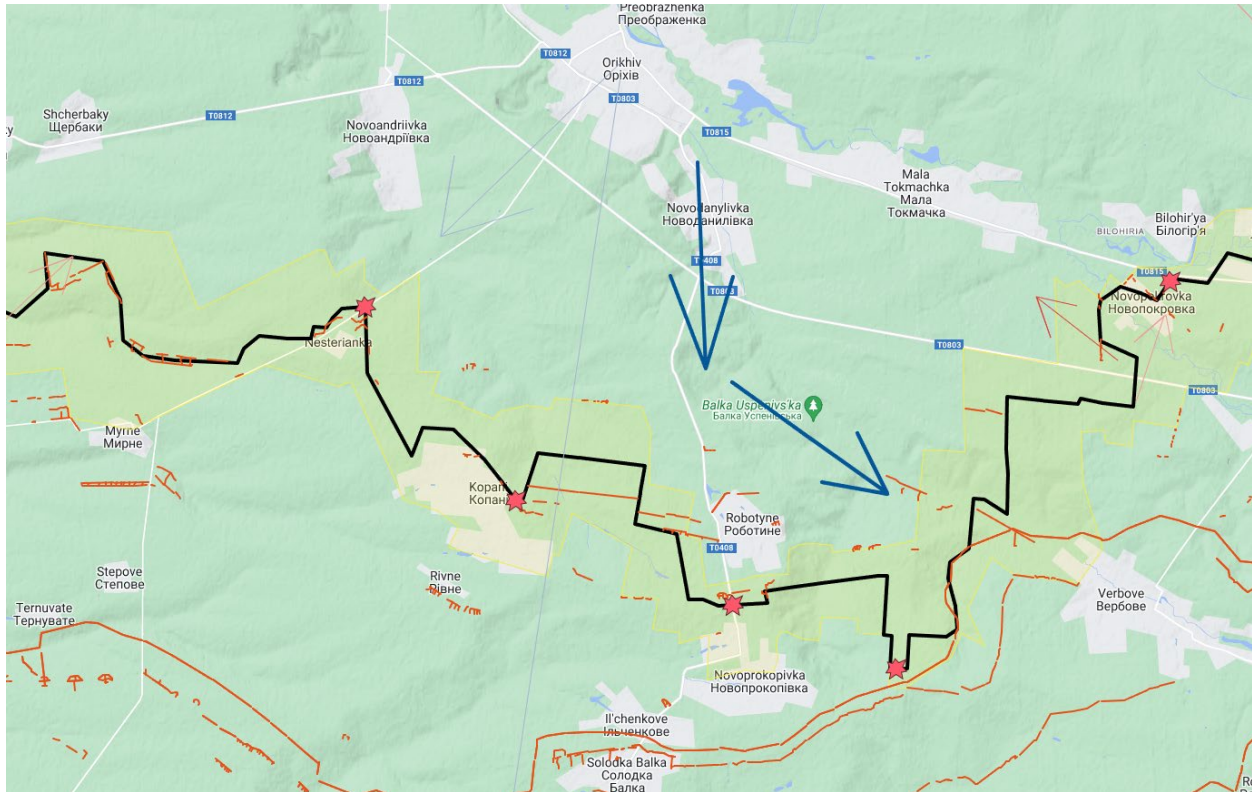
Positional fighting continued in [Marinka](#), south of [Staromaiorske](#), and Ukrainian troops continued pushing Russian troops back toward [Voldyne](#).

# ZAPORIZHIA



**Russian Objective:** Defend against the Ukrainian offensive, maximize casualties, set conditions for September 2023 elections, capture the remainder of the oblast, and terrorize Ukrainian civilians with continued attacks

**Ukrainian Objective:** Exploit weaknesses on the line of conflict, break Russian defensive lines, liberate Russian-occupied areas, and protect civilians



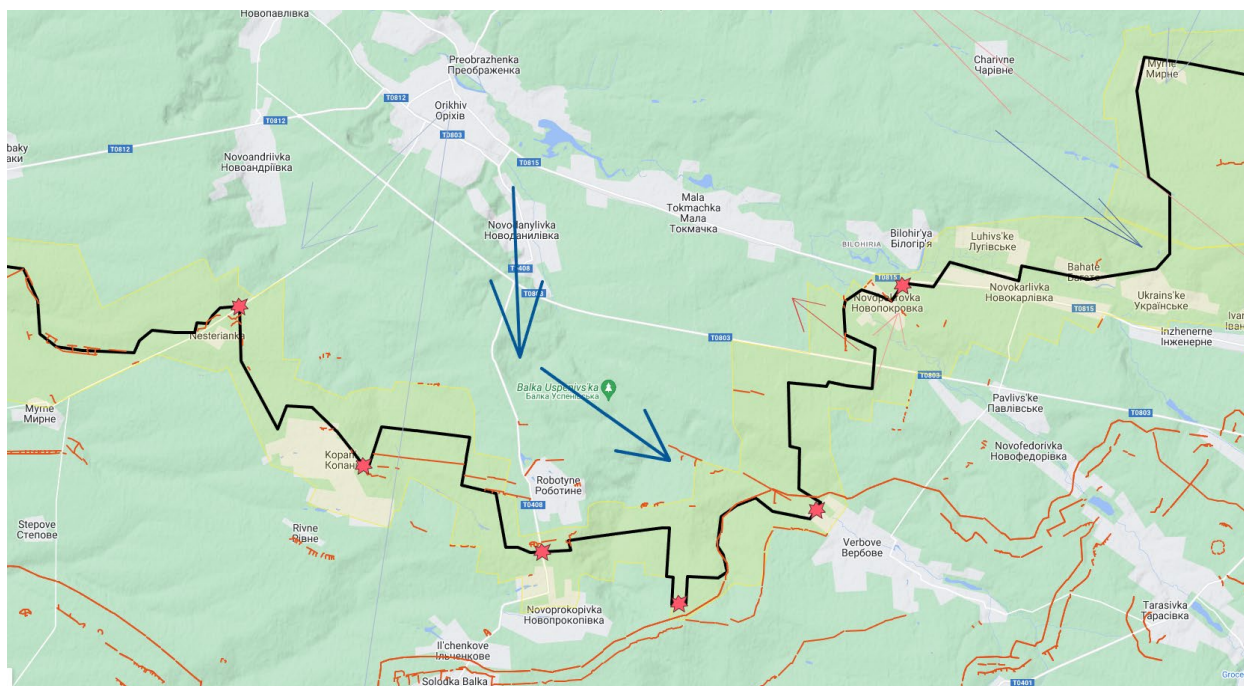
## Free Zaporizhzhia

Brigadier General Alexander Tarnavskiy reported that Ukrainian forces executed 1,204 fire missions in Zaporizhzhia and eastern Kherson.<sup>10</sup>



Ukrainian forces  [captured another group of Russian soldiers](#).<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> <https://t.me/otarnavskiy/220>

<sup>11</sup> <https://t.me/zaborzp/52457>



## Orikhiv Operational Area

Ukrainian forces  [advanced into the northwestern corner](#) of [Verbove](#), passing the antitank ditch and dragon teeth.<sup>12</sup> <sup>13</sup> Currently, there is only light infantry in the area. A second geolocated video, allegedly from a Russian soldier, claimed that Russia was  [shelling the southeastern part](#) of Verbove.<sup>14</sup> The video also showed two Ka-52 helicopters providing close air support (CAS), rotorcraft that Ukraine does not operate. Despite the geolocation by multiple sources, we are very skeptical that

<sup>12</sup> <https://twitter.com/moklasen/status/1696799698399396243>

<sup>13</sup> [https://t.me/ukrarmed\\_forces/6173](https://t.me/ukrarmed_forces/6173)

<sup>14</sup> <https://twitter.com/PStyle0ne1/status/1696970061058048510>



the video hasn't been manipulated in some way. We did not make any map changes.

Russian forces tried to advance out of [Novopokrovka](#) in the direction of Mala Tokmachka without success, and fighting continued southeast and west of [Robotyne](#).<sup>15</sup>

### **Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant**

There was no update on the situation at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant.

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


### **Black Sea**

There was no report on the composition of the Black Sea Fleet. Operational Command South (OKS) reported that a Buyan-M Class missile carrier, capable of launching up to eight Kalibr cruise missiles, was on patrol.<sup>16</sup>



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<sup>15</sup> <https://t.me/landforcesofukraine/11521>

<sup>16</sup> <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/112394>

Russian reports of sinking four Ukrainian speedboats and killing up to 50 naval infantry troops were very exaggerated. A Russian Su-27  [struck one vessel with its 30 mm cannon](#), wounding one marine rescued by Ukrainian troops in another vessel.<sup>17</sup>

## Occupied Crimea

A Ukrainian cruise missile, possibly a modified Soviet-era Tu-141 reconnaissance drone,  [struck Fedosia](#).<sup>18</sup> Russian officials claimed the missile was shot down, but a  [blue flash, followed by a power outage](#), occurred after an explosion.<sup>19</sup> Occupation officials claim that debris hit powerlines, causing the power failure.

Analyst Brady Africk shared images from Planet Labs showing  [the state of the Kerch \(Crimean\) Bridge](#) on July 30 and August 4, 13, and 30.<sup>20</sup> On August 30, the damaged highway section was removed, indicating that Russian engineers are close to installing the replacement section. The images also show that the July 17 attack damaged the railroad section. Russian officials expect to have the

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<sup>17</sup> <https://twitter.com/markito0171/status/1697140961644593515>

<sup>18</sup> [https://t.me/ukrarmed\\_forces/6179](https://t.me/ukrarmed_forces/6179)

<sup>19</sup> <https://twitter.com/revishvilig/status/1696973816423936025>

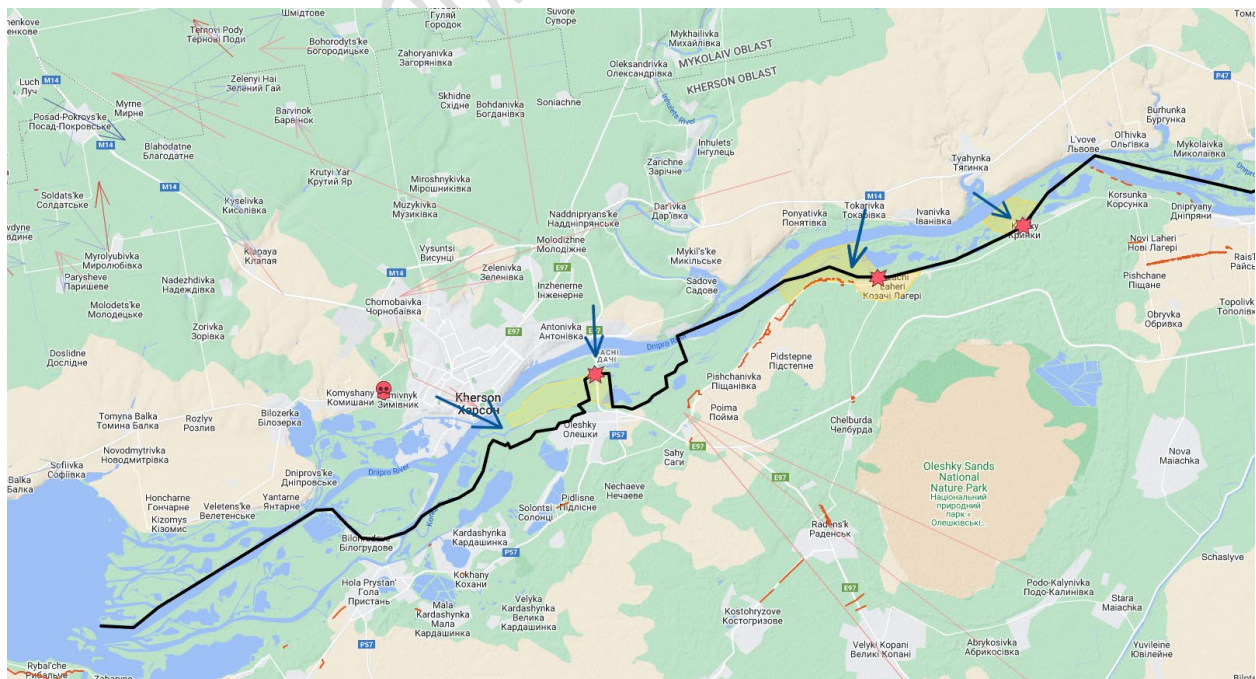
<sup>20</sup> <https://twitter.com/bradyafr/status/1696919456159801667>

highway partially reopened by September 15 and all repairs completed by November 1.

## KHERSON

**Russian Objective:** Prevent Ukrainian advances into eastern Kherson, terrorize the civilian population in free Kherson, prepare the region for illegitimate elections in September 2023, and maintain GLOCs to Zaporizhzhia

**Ukrainian Objective:** Deter attacks on Ukrainian civilians, lock Russian troops and military assets in place, and protect civilian lives



## **Free Kherson**

There weren't any significant developments.

## **WESTERN AND CENTRAL UKRAINE**

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

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


There weren't any significant developments.

## 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

### Kyiv

British newspaper The Guardian released a video showing a  [Russian missile or drone striking Kyiv](#), or a low altitude intercept, on the night of August 29 – 30.<sup>21</sup> The debris caused significant damage to an Auchan Hypermart (similar to a Super Walmart). Auchan management said the damage is extensive and was evaluating if part of the store could be reopened while the damaged section is rebuilt.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> <https://t.me/uniannet/109822>

<sup>22</sup> <https://t.me/uniannet/109846>

## RUSSIAN FRONT

**Russian Objective:** Stabilize government control and civil order, prevent further insurrection, repel Russian partisan attacks, secure the state border

**Ukrainian-Backed Russian Partisan Objective:** Motivate other Russians to fight against the Putin regime, accelerate the downfall of the Russian government, foment civil unrest

### Moscow

Russian state media reported that a Ukrainian drone was shot down over the Voskresensky District of Moscow. The air raid caused officials to enter Carpet Mode, where any aircraft is considered hostile. Domodedovo and Vnukovo Airports were closed as part of the protocol.<sup>23</sup>

An electrical substation near the Reutov Railway Station was sabotaged by partisans, who set the switch cabinet on fire.<sup>24</sup> Investigators found the fence around the substation


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<sup>23</sup> <https://t.me/bazabazon/21030>

<sup>24</sup> [https://t.me/shot\\_shot/56339](https://t.me/shot_shot/56339)

had been breached, and a rag stuffed into the switch box and lit on fire.

## Bryansk

There was another  [drone attack in Bryansk](#).<sup>25</sup> At the time of publication, there was no other information.

## Voronezh

Russian officials claim they downed a Ukrainian kamikaze drone using electronic warfare in a village 22 kilometers from Voronezh.<sup>26</sup>

## Ufa

Partisans destroyed a relay cabinet that controls railroad switches on the Chernikovka-Shaksha line in Ufa, delaying rail service for hours.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/112401>

<sup>26</sup> [https://t.me/shot\\_shot/56347](https://t.me/shot_shot/56347)

<sup>27</sup> [https://t.me/shot\\_shot/56331](https://t.me/shot_shot/56331)

## Pskov

Clouds obscured part of the airfield, but satellite images produced by Planet Labs confirmed the drone rain on August 29 damaged [at least two Il-76 transport aircraft](#).<sup>28</sup> Pictures from the airport showed fires gutted a third Il-76.

## Oryol

The drone that was shot down in the Oryol region had  [stickers from PMC Wagner Group on it](#).<sup>29</sup>

## BELARUSIAN FRONT

The self-declared leader of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, had an unscheduled phone call with Russian President Putin. The press service of the Belarusian leader notes that during the conversation, "topical topics on the bilateral agenda, as well as acute issues of the regional and international situation" were discussed.<sup>30</sup>


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<sup>28</sup> <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/112398>

<sup>29</sup> <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/112378>

<sup>30</sup> <https://t.me/rusbrief/150430>



Ten  [OTRK Iskander-M mobile launchers](#) from Russia arrived in Belarus at Osipovickhy Station.<sup>31</sup> It is reported this is part of the military aid package that Putin pledged during the spring of 2023.

## THEATERWIDE

The National Security and Defense Council (NSDC) of Ukraine is considering having all medical deferments and waivers issued by the commissariat since February 24, 2022, reviewed. An ongoing investigation of the Ukrainian mobilization system has found widespread corruption. Ukrainian officials are furiously purging the government of corrupt officials as part of their requirements to join the European Union.<sup>32</sup>

Ukrainian MP Fyodor Venislavsky, the presidential representative of the Verkhovna Rada, recommended canceling providing deferments to people studying to receive a second college degree. "We understand that there are abuses. I think that it is absolutely fair to limit oneself to one higher education in war conditions. If a person

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<sup>31</sup> <https://t.me/The3rdForceUA/19486>

<sup>32</sup> <https://t.me/uniannet/109847>

receives a third or fourth higher education, then this cannot be a reason for a delay during martial law."<sup>33</sup>

Ukrainian Air Forces spokesperson, Colonel Yuriy Ignat, expects Russia to target Ukraine's energy infrastructure during the winter, but with less intensity than last year.<sup>34</sup>

"The Russian Federation cannot afford to use such a number of missiles against Ukraine as last fall and winter, while the occupiers will probably bet on Shahed-type kamikaze drones."

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said that the extension of his powers in July was the last one, and he will end his tenure as the Secretary-General in October 2024.<sup>35</sup>

Josep Borrell, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, wants to speed up the delivery of artillery munitions to Ukraine. So far, EU nations have provided 224,000 artillery rounds and over 2,300 missiles – despite having a target of one. Slovakia suggested they have the skills and capacity to refurbish and modernize out-of-date munitions. ""If

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<sup>33</sup> <https://t.me/uniannet/109823>

<sup>34</sup> <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/112344>

<sup>35</sup> <https://t.me/uniannet/109864>

member states are unable to provide more from their stockpiles, this is only an incentive for them to increase production capacity and do so faster and better," Borell told the press.<sup>36</sup>

Romania and the Netherlands have finally agreed to create the much-hyped F-16 training center. "Romania and the Netherlands agreed to create a base for the training of Ukrainian pilots on F-16 fighters and the corresponding maintenance of these aircraft at one of the training centers on the territory of Romania," said the Minister of Defense of the Netherlands Kaisa Ollongren during a press conference in Spain.<sup>37</sup>

Germany has shipped another military aid package to Ukraine, which included,<sup>38</sup>

- 10 Leopard 1A5 tanks
- 1 TRML-4D radar
- 16 Vector reconnaissance drones
- 4 HK81 tank transporters
- More than 13 million rounds of small arms ammunition

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<sup>36</sup> <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2023/08/31/7417799/>

<sup>37</sup> <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/112358>

<sup>38</sup> [https://t.me/ukrarmed\\_forces/6176](https://t.me/ukrarmed_forces/6176)

Ukraine has modified its internally-developed P-360 Neptune antiship missiles to hit ground targets.<sup>39</sup> In April 2023, engineers developed a ground guidance system that uses GPS. The missile is equipped with an infrared homing sensor for inertial guidance. The system searches for the target based on a preloaded image and then makes its final approach.

The table for equipment losses was **updated on August 21, 2023**, and includes the losses suffered during the Prigozhin Insurrection of June 23 – 24.

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<sup>39</sup> [https://t.me/ukrarmed\\_forces/6171](https://t.me/ukrarmed_forces/6171)

## RUSSIA VS. UKRAINE HEAVY EQUIPMENT LOSSES

Russian and Ukrainian visually confirmed heavy equipment losses sourced from the [Oryx Database](#) from February 24, 2022, to August 21, 2023. 11,791 Russian (including [Chef's Rebellion](#)) vs. 4,206 Ukrainian

Equipment	Russian Losses	Ukrainian Losses	Ratio	Change
<b>Main Battle Tanks</b>	2108	268	7.87:1	↓
<b>Medium Duty Tanks</b>	145	351	0.41:1	—
<b>Armored fighting Vehicles</b>	949	308	3.08:1	—
<b>Infantry Fighting Vehicles</b>	2680	698	3.84:1	—
<b>Armored Personnel Carriers</b>	343	325	1.06:1	—
<b>MRAPs</b>	46	142	0.32:1	↓
<b>Infantry Mobility Vehicles</b>	202	359	0.56:1	—
<b>Command and Communications Vehicles</b>	247	16	15.43:1	↑
<b>Engineering Vehicles</b>	335	74	4.52:1	↑
<b>Towed Artillery</b>	283	148	1.91:1	—
<b>Self-Propelled Howitzers/Mortars</b>	499	206	2.42:1	↓
<b>MLRS</b>	256	50	5.12:1	↑
<b>SAMs</b>	162	127	1.28:1	↑
<b>Mobile Radars</b>	43	73	0.59:1	↑
<b>EW/ECW</b>	50	4	12.50:1	↑
<b>Winged Aircraft</b>	86	69	1.25:1	↑
<b>Helicopters</b>	109	32	3.41:1	↑
<b>Naval Vessels</b>	13	27	0.48:1	—

## RUSSIAN MOBILIZATION, MOBIKS, AND MIR



A representative of PMC Wagner Group recommended that mercenary employees find another source of temporary or permanent work. "Guys, the situation is extremely difficult. Several tens of thousands of trained fighters are ready to work and are ready to defend their homeland, but due to certain circumstances, they are not letting us in yet. We are now forced to look for options for work in Africa and the Middle East. The situation there is also difficult. We have tough competition in the face of the Ministry of Defense and the Russian Guard, who are also trying to enter there with similar activities that we conducted...we will try to provide work to our employees. When and to what extent is still unknown. Therefore, either wait or look for other ways to make money."<sup>40</sup>



The largest Russian book publishers were reportedly warned not to publish Yevgeny Prigozhin's biography "until the resonance from his death subsides." The ban allegedly extends to books that mention PMC Wagner or Prigozhin, including several already in publication about the siege of Bakhmut. "First of all, we are talking about books about the capture of Bakhmut, not directly about the biography of

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<sup>40</sup> <https://t.me/rusbrief/150460>

Prigozhin himself. But the publishers were going to sell these books with Prigozhin's photo on the cover."<sup>41</sup>

While Prigozhin had to be buried in what one Russian pundit called a "special funeral operation," Neo-Nazi Dmytry Utkin and the person that gave Wagner its name because Wagner was Hitler's favorite musical artist, was interned at the  [prestigious Mytishchi cemetery outside Moscow](#).<sup>42</sup> People paying their respects  [included uniformed Russian soldiers](#).<sup>43</sup>

Speculation started to grow that Colonel General Ramzan Kadyrov could be removed in the widening Kremlin purge due to his active and vocal support of PMC Wagner and Prigozhin from August 2022 to April 2023. Kadyrov worked with Prigozhin to   [create a smear campaign against Colonel General Alexander Lapin](#) in the fall of 2022.<sup>44</sup>

"Today, I was amused by the reflections of unfinished political scientists offended by Russia in foreign publications, who prophesy a quick death for me. I will not tire of repeating once again, and I will say it again with

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<sup>41</sup> <https://t.me/rusbrief/150458>

<sup>42</sup> [https://twitter.com/Mike\\_Eckel/status/1697162698075566352](https://twitter.com/Mike_Eckel/status/1697162698075566352)

<sup>43</sup> [https://twitter.com/Mike\\_Eckel/status/1697179944592216069](https://twitter.com/Mike_Eckel/status/1697179944592216069)

<sup>44</sup> [Malcontent News](#)

pride: I am an infantryman of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief of Russia and do not belong to myself. I belong to a religion, Motherland, and its interests. And I am ready to fulfill any order of Vladimir Vladimirovich, even if the result is death. Yes, I can die suddenly when I find out that there is someone more devoted than me in the matter of respect for our president, to whom, by the way, I owe my life. And not once, but twice."<sup>45</sup>

Igor Streklov Girkin's wife, Miroslava Reginskaya, complained that Russian officials transported Girkin from Lefortov Prison to a Moscow court, where he was with Ukrainian prisoners. She accused officials of endangering her beloved war criminal's life.<sup>46</sup>

Girkin's Angry Patriot Club announced they would support his nomination as a candidate for the Russian presidency in the upcoming 2024 elections.<sup>47</sup> Last month, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said the upcoming elections were necessary but pointless because Putin will win with 90% of the vote.

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<sup>45</sup> [https://t.me/RKadyrov\\_95/3858](https://t.me/RKadyrov_95/3858)

<sup>46</sup> <https://t.me/rusbrief/150463>

<sup>47</sup> <sup>47</sup>



Posting from his prison cell in Lefortov, Girkin accepted the nod and wrote his platform, eviscerating President Putin.<sup>48</sup> Here is the full text in glorious Girkinspeak dripping with sarcasm.

**"My advantages in comparison with the current president in the conditions of the [special military operation]:**

**1. The president refuses to lead military operations [and] considers himself incompetent in military affairs. I consider myself more competent in military affairs than the incumbent president and definitely more than the incumbent defense minister, so I could fulfill the duty of the supreme commander-in-chief as required by the Constitution of the Russian Federation.**

**2. Our president is an extremely gullible person; for 8 years, he was led by the nose together and separately by Obama, Trump, Macron, Merkel, Poroshenko, and Zelenskyy. They drove in Minsk and in the Normandy format, in Istanbul, and many other places. For my part, I can say since 2014, I have never called those people who led the incumbent president by the nose as dear and respected partners. On the contrary, I never believed them for a penny.**

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<sup>48</sup> <https://t.me/strelkovii/6317>

3. The current president is too kind. When the 'special military operation' began a year and a half ago, he was able to quickly make sure that he was led by the nose not only by respected Western and Kyiv partners but also by the leaders of our law enforcement agencies, intelligence, and the military-industrial complex. It turned out that neither the country, the army, nor the industry of Russia are ready for war, and the so-called Ukraine is not at all a straw man in military terms. Nevertheless, all the heads of these structures (as well as others, for example, the Central Bank) remained in their places and continue to amaze us with their incompetence. I'm not at all so kind, which I can prove in practice.

4. Our president has a lot of friends of billionaires and other businessmen, whom he cannot (according to the above kindness and breadth of soul) refuse anything. As a result, the export of capital from the Russian Federation continues, and military production is growing much more slowly than the capital of the president's friends is growing. I don't have a single friend, even a millionaire tight with entrepreneurial friends. In general there are few friends, and basically, all of them are not rich people. Accordingly, I will not have to give in to the wishes of my friends to the detriment of the Russian economy.

5. Vladimir Vladimirovich is a highly moral person, always true to his word and firmly fulfilling the promises given to those who brought him to power in the late nineties. I have

promised nothing to anyone and can, therefore, ignore all the personal guarantees of all the presidents of the Russian Federation from 1991 to the present if I consider that this is useful for the people and the state.

6. I'm not as athletic and healthy as Vladimir Vladimirovich was at my age, so I won't be able to bother you, dear voters, purely physically for more than 20 years, even if I suddenly have a desire to mess with you after the military crisis and its most severe consequences.

Therefore, I always treat such information throws, which are so cheaply designed to sow discord within our country, with disdainful indulgence."

**ASSESSMENT:** The Russian FSB would have never let Girkin write that from his prison cell without approval from a higher echelon. While on the surface, it appears Girkin signed his own death warrant, in our assessment, Alexei Navalny is in the most danger. Navalny just added another 19 years in a strict regime penal colony to his sentence, and the Kremlin needs another faux voice of opposition, just as Stalin did to create the illusion that there is still room to

criticize the Kremlin. Girkin is likely moving into this dissident role.

Russia claims it is reforming or creating fire divisions and one army corps, including the 6th Guards Motor Rifle Division, 44th Airborne Division, 104th Airborne Division, 70th Airborne Division, and the 4th Army Corps. All of these will be VDV in name only, comprised mostly of mobiks. They will benefit from the stronger leadership of the VDV, and Russia needs more grunts with guns to take and hold territory. It is highly unlikely these formations will be equipped as standard divisions and mostly comprised of light infantry units supported by older equipment.

## **GEOPOLITICS**

Lithuania summoned the Papal diplomat because Pope Francis stated last week that Russians should be proud to be the "heirs" of the "great Russian empire," sparking outrage in Ukraine.<sup>49</sup> The Vatican walked back the Holy See's statement and tried to issue a clarification.

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<sup>49</sup> <https://t.me/uniannet/109855>

While China, Russia, and India are arguing over China's latest map, the Kremlin snubbed Brazil's offer to send representatives of the Brazilian Center for Investigation and Prevention of Aeronautical Accidents (CENIPA) to investigate the "crash" of Prigozhin's private jet.<sup>50</sup> The offer is more than political. The Embraer Legacy 600 jet is built in Brazil and has a near-flawless safety record. Moscow told San Paulo that Russia would not adhere to international investigative standards "at the moment."

## ECONOMIC

On April 5, Aeroflot flew an Airbus A330 to Tehran, Iran, for service and maintenance to dodge international sanctions. The passenger plane was supposed to return to service in September, but Mahan Air told Aeroflot representatives the plane won't be airworthy until spring 2024.<sup>51</sup>

The cost of motor fuel has increased dramatically in Russia in 2023 and even more so in the occupied territories of Ukraine. Diesel fuel is up 42%, AI-92 RON gasoline is up 71%, and AI-95 RON is up 74%.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> <https://www.politico.eu/article/russia-yevgeny-prigozhin-death-plane-crash-investigation/>

<sup>51</sup> <https://t.me/rusbrief/150472>


<sup>52</sup> <https://t.me/itsdonetsk/97820>





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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 only use their reports to identify combat locations. We no longer consider their territorial control changes due to a three-month pattern from June to August 2023 of repeated publication of blatant disinformation and a years-long pattern of denying 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 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

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.