



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



January 28, 2023





# Malcontent News

## Russia-Ukraine War SITREP

01/28/23 23:59\* PST

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## **SUMMARY – DAY 339**

It has been 3,257 days since Russia occupied the Crimea Peninsula on February 27, 2014.

### **DAILY ASSESSMENT**

We assess the following:

1. We concur with recent assessments by other analysts that it is highly likely the Russian Federation will launch a new offensive before February 24 to try and deliver a tactical victory before the anniversary of the widescale invasion of Ukraine.
2. We maintain that the significant increase in disinformation and misinformation from Russian sources is being directed by Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Federation Armed Forces, Valery Gerasimov, as part of his hybrid warfare doctrine.
3. The RAND Corporation agreed with our assessment that Ukraine holds the battlefield initiative – while we maintain the exception for the Soledar-Bakhmut axis.<sup>1</sup>

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

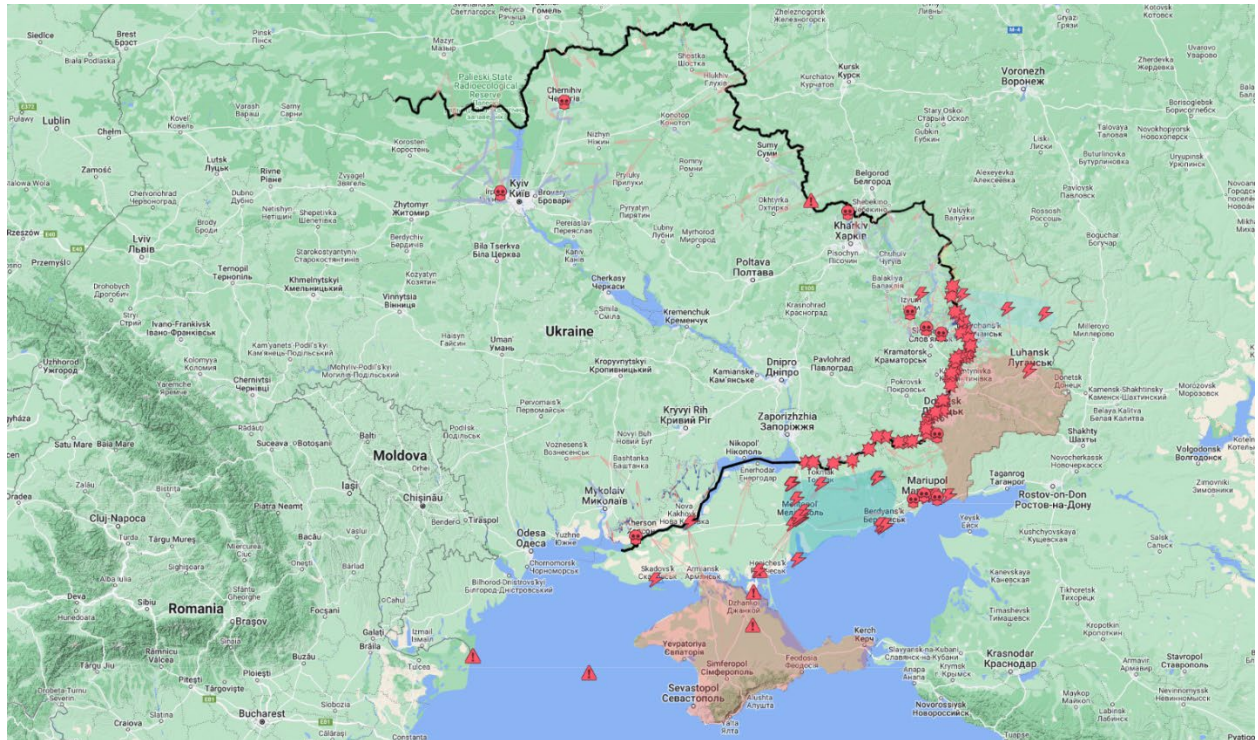
4. We maintain that the Russian military within Ukraine remains combat ineffective and is relying on World War II tactics that Field Marshal Georgy Zhukov would recognize to move the line of conflict.
5. We maintain that the power struggle between military leaders aligned with Russian Minister of Defense Sergey Shoigu versus those aligned to Private Military Company (PMC) Wagner Group head Yevgeny Prigozhin is continuing, and Russian President Vladimir Putin is the largest benefactor.
6. We maintain that punitive missile and drone strikes targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure will continue.
7. We maintain that Russian forces will continue to target electrical, heating, and potable water infrastructure.
8. We maintain that the Russian Federation's inventory of Kalibr cruise missiles is critically low based on the continued decline of launches from the Black Sea Fleet.
9. We maintain that the risk of a nuclear accident caused by the deenergization of Ukrainian nuclear power plants caused by Russian electrical infrastructure destruction is possible.
10. We assess there will be a second wave of partial mobilization in the Russian Federation in February 2023 as an extension of current legal decrees and has

likely started after a statement made by Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov.

11. We assess that the threat of Russian forces in Belarus crossing into Ukraine as part of an offensive operation is negligible.

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# TODAY'S WAR IN UKRAINE MAP



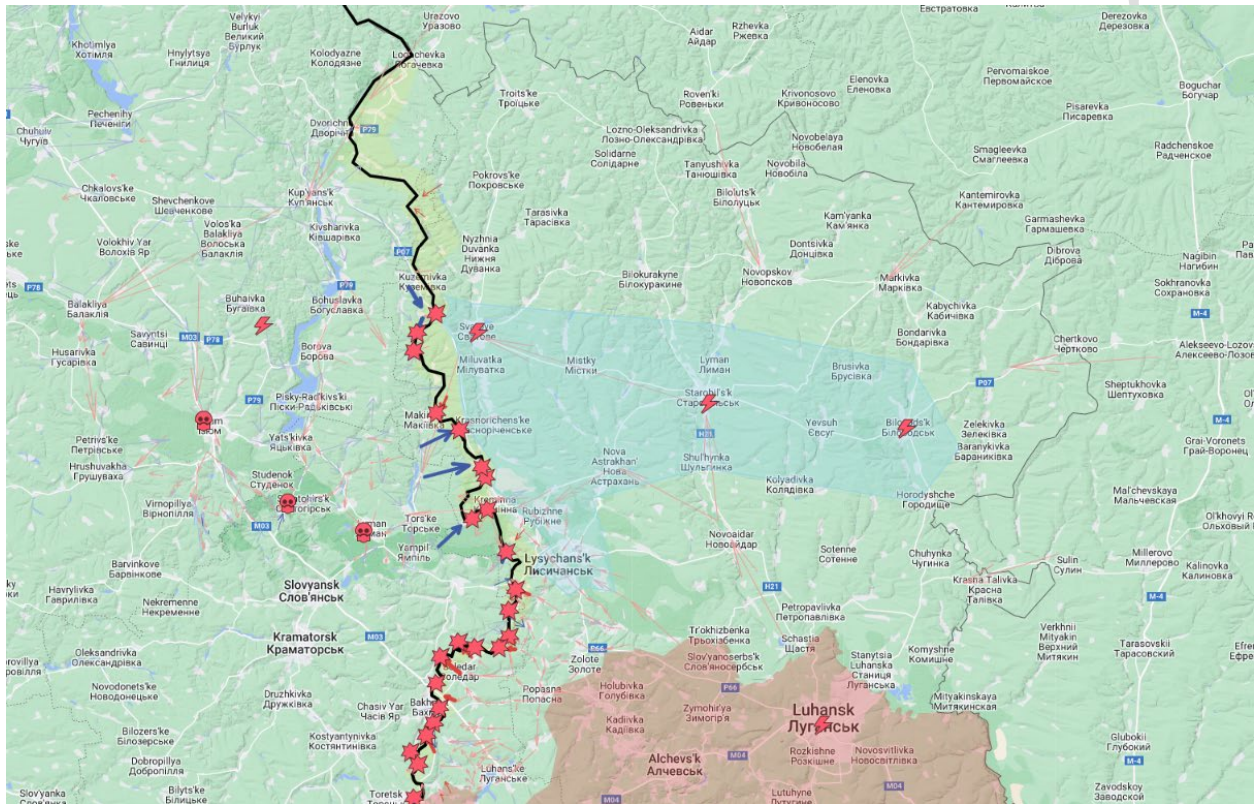
**About the maps:** Red triangles are sites of significant events unrelated to missile attacks, insurgencies, or ground combat, such as the sinking of the Moskva and the explosion at the Saky Naval airbase. Gray circles indicate an area where fighting has ended with no change in the line of conflict. The archived offensive layer is turned off by default, but you can toggle it on/off in the Map Legend. If you see a settlement name highlighted [like this](#), it is a link to our war map that will take you to the location explained in the Situation Report.

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



# DONBAS REGION

## LUHANSK

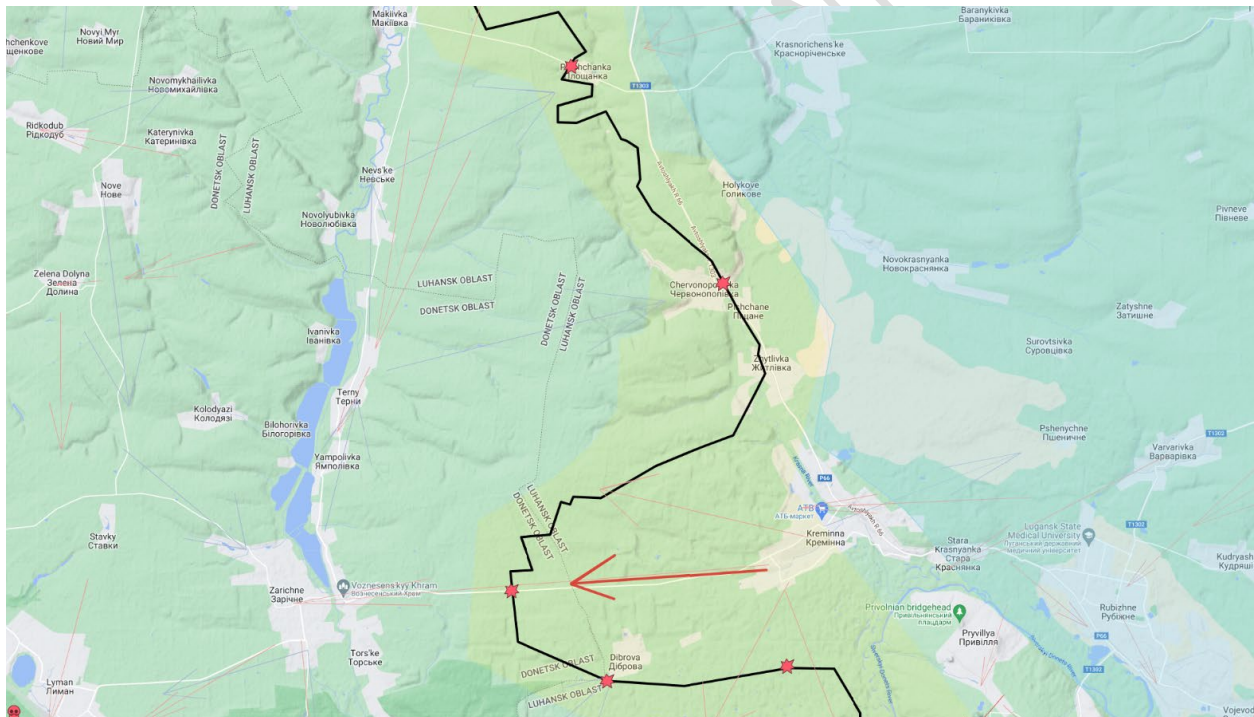


**Russian Objective:** Integrate oblast into Russian Federation, hold current defensive lines, and control insurgency

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



Several geolocated videos have emerged in the last 24 hours that have caused changes to the line of conflict. On the Svatove axis, there was a rare agreement in the reports from the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (GSAFU) and the Russian Ministry of Defense (RMOD) that Ukrainian positions in [Novoselivkse](#) were shelled.<sup>2 3 4</sup>





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

<sup>3</sup> [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report PM EEST](#)

<sup>4</sup> [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/23799](https://t.me/mod_russia/23799) [Russian Government Controlled Social Media Channel]

On the Kreminna axis, there were only reports of shelling in the areas of [Chervonpopivka](#), [Kreminna](#), and [Dibrova](#).<sup>5 6 7</sup>

A geolocated video showed Russian positions west of Kreminna toward Torske [Donetsk]  [under artillery fire](#).<sup>8</sup> The video showed Russian forces holding a defensive position at the tip of a forested area, which they used to cover advances along the axis. Based on this new intelligence, we moved the line of conflict west by 6.5 kilometers. Russian forces likely gained this territory 10 to 14 days ago during a counteroffensive push, but this is the first time there has been visual proof.

Another video showed  [a Russian BMPT Terminator armored fighting vehicle](#) (AFV) east of Dibrova and south of Kreminna.<sup>9</sup> Russia has less than 20 Terminators in inventory, and the AFV was designed for urban warfare from lessons learned in Syria. The Terminators arrived in Ukraine in June, but until this week, the only videos shared were of vehicles in transit or staged combat. Based on improved intelligence, we moved the line of conflict south, away from the edge of Kreminna. Russian forces have

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<sup>5</sup> [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEST](#)

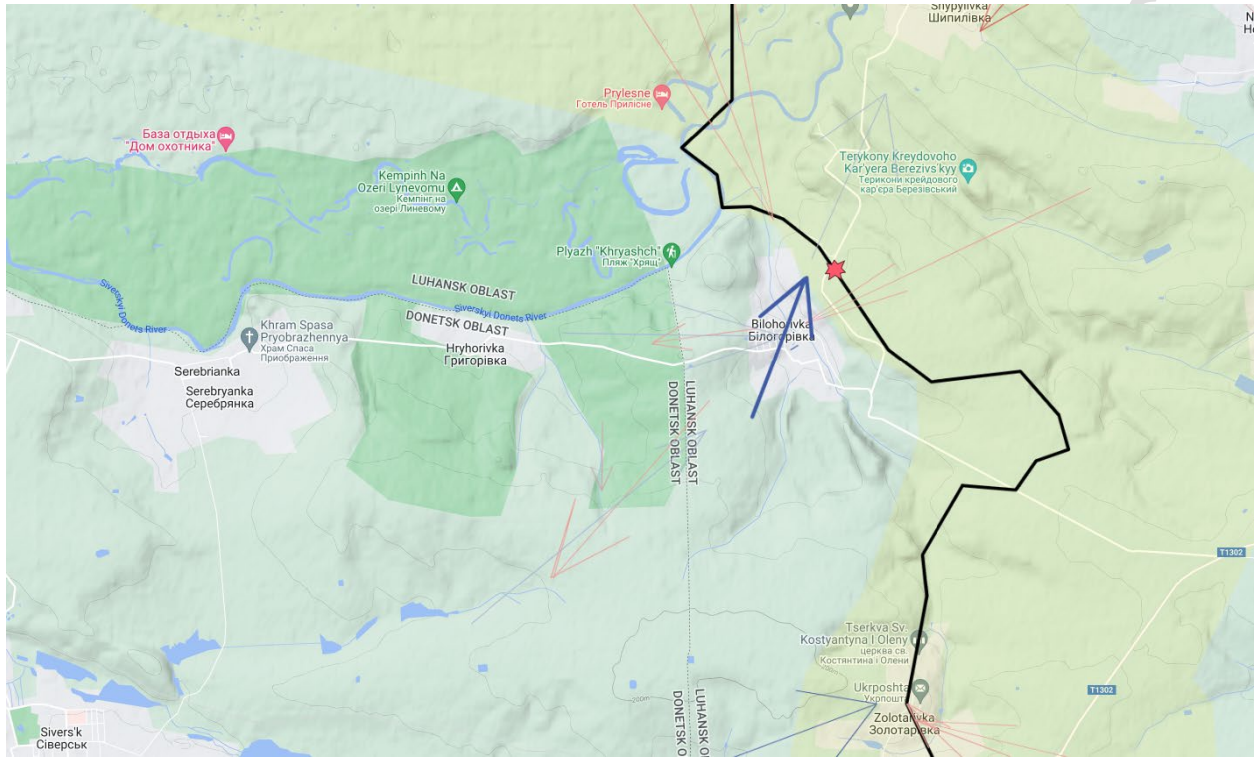
<sup>6</sup> [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report PM EEST](#)

<sup>7</sup> <https://t.me/wargonzo/10556>


<sup>8</sup> <https://t.me/DeepStateUA/15347>

<sup>9</sup> <https://t.me/DeepStateUA/15355>

moved pushed the line of conflict back to the positions they held in late December.



Russian forces attacked Ukrainian positions north of [Bilohorivka](#) [Luhansk] and could not move the line of conflict.<sup>10</sup>

The Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) Joint Center for Control and Coordination (JCCC) shared pictures after the January 27 HIMARS strike on Novoaidar, claiming  [a](#)

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

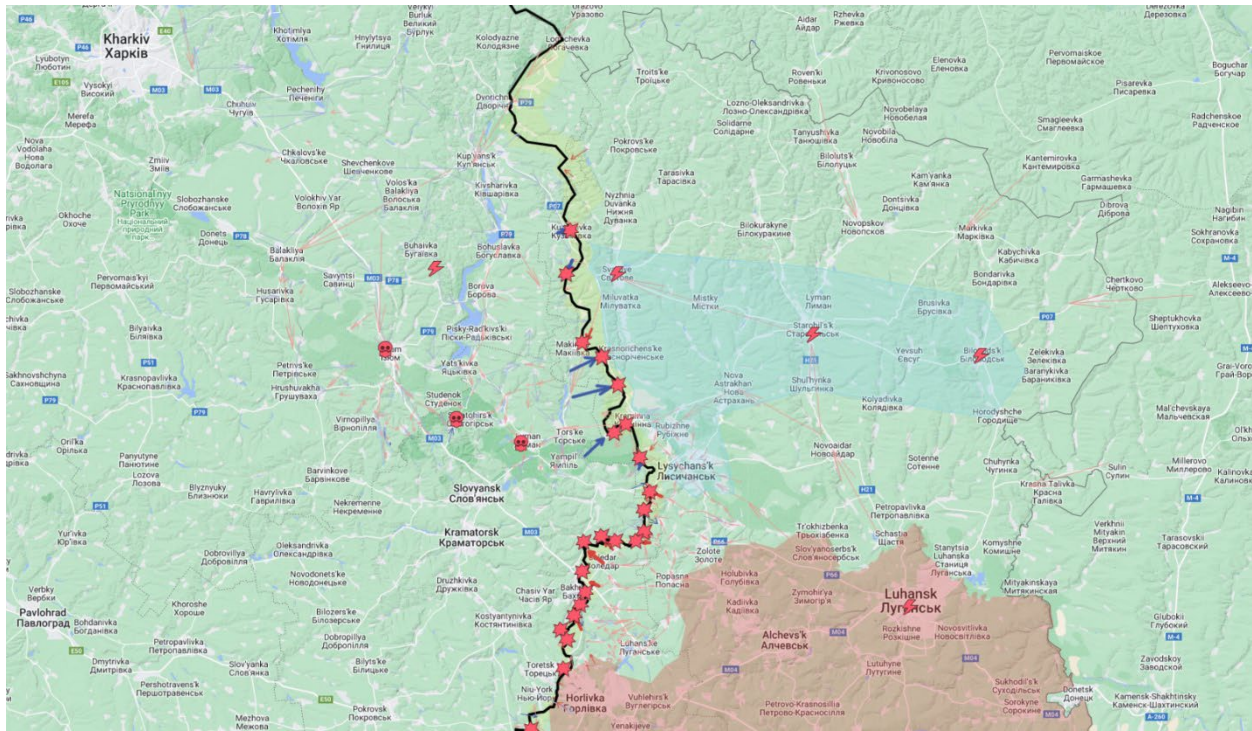


[hospital with civilians was hit](#). One report claimed 38 were wounded, while others claimed 14 were killed and 24 were wounded. We cannot validate the claims and have provided extensive documentation that many civilian hospitals in occupied Luhansk have been co-opted for military-only use.<sup>11</sup> As with all accusations of war crimes, in the absence of evidence, we support the full investigation of claims and civil or military justice intervention if a crime was committed, regardless of the belligerent.

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<sup>11</sup> [https://t.me/LPR\\_JCCC/8011](https://t.me/LPR_JCCC/8011)

# NORTHEAST DONETSK

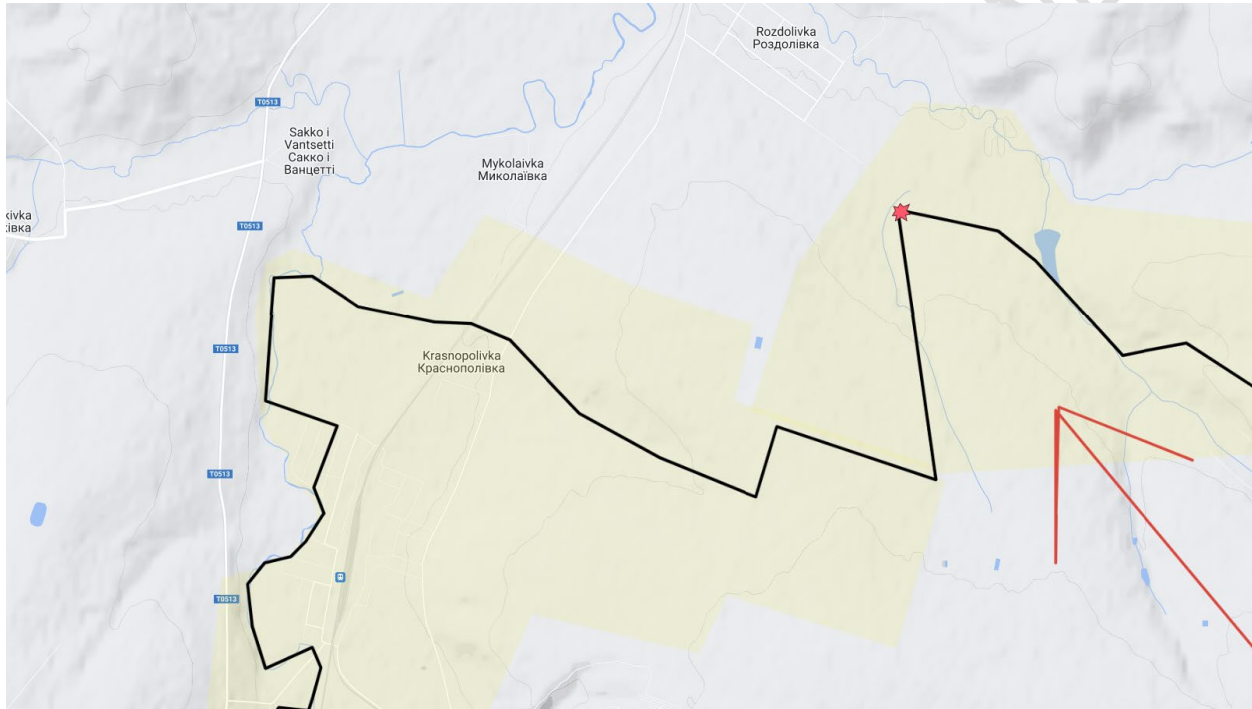


**Russian Objective:** Integrate oblast into Russian Federation, defend against Ukrainian advances toward Luhansk, capture Bakhmut

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

**Errors and Omissions:** *In the January 27 Situation Report, an editing artifact confused some of our readers. "We did note any evidence that supports Russian claims of*

*advances toward the edge of Ivanivske" should have read, "We did **not see** any evidence that supports Russian claims of advances toward the edge of Ivanivske." We thank you for your understanding.*



On the Soledar axis, Russian forces supported by PMC Wagner continued attempts to advance from Krasnopolivka in the directions of [Sakko I Vantsetti](#), [Mykolaivka](#), and [Rozdolivka](#).<sup>12 13 14</sup> Russian forces have reached the Bakhmutovka River, west of Krasnopolivka, and are

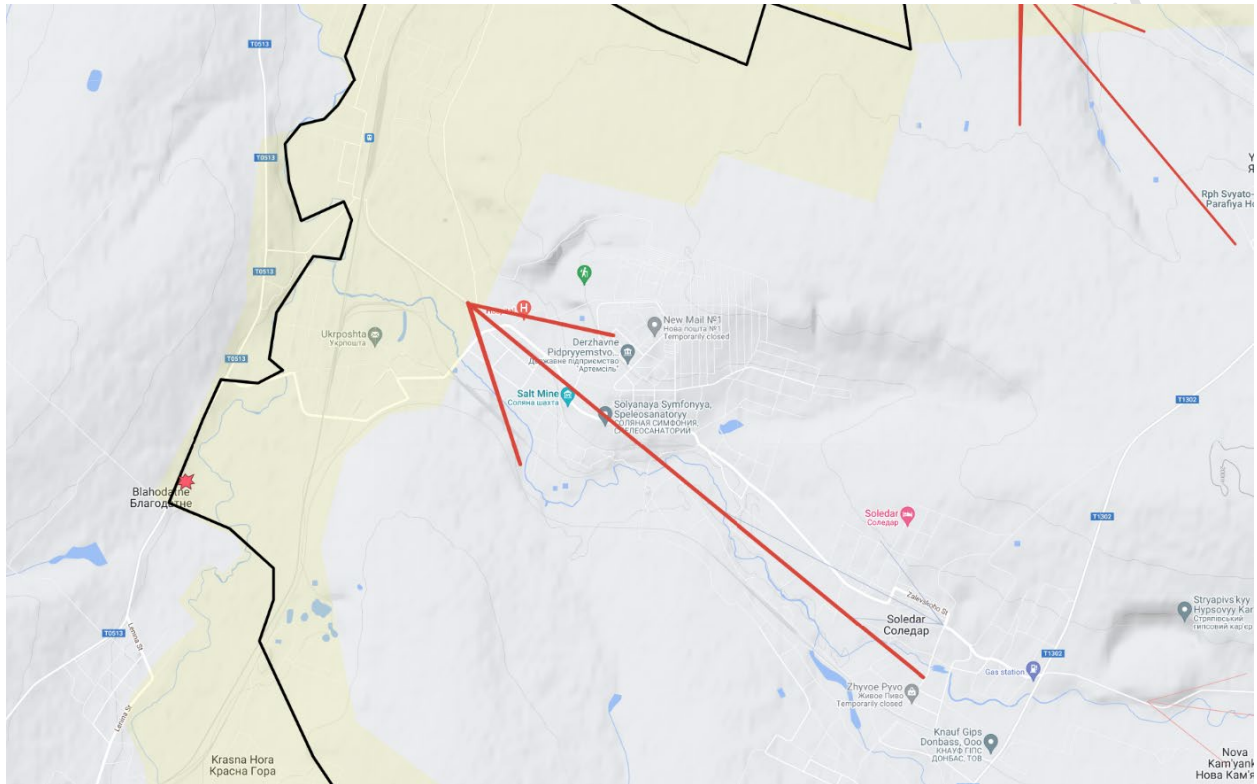
<sup>12</sup> [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEST](#)

<sup>13</sup> <https://t.me/DeepStateUA/15356>

<sup>14</sup> <https://t.me/wargonzo/10556>



attempting to use the tree line to advance north along the railroad tracks.



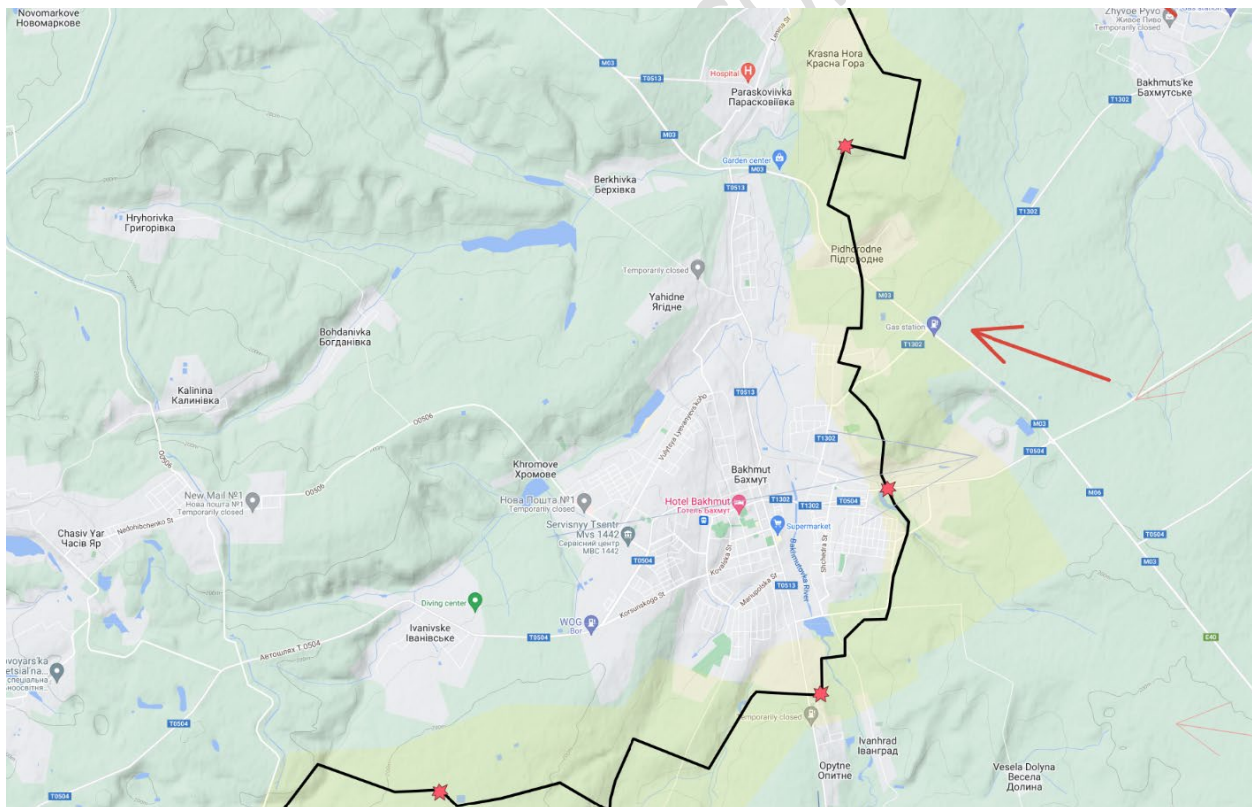
PMC Wagner channels reported their forces were storming [Blahodatne](#), with Wagner head Yevgeny Prigozhin later claiming the settlement was captured, and clearing of Ukrainian forces continued.<sup>15 16</sup> Ukrainian source DeepState reported the settlement was captured while mercenaries with Rybar and War Gonzo used language indicating that fighting continued but that PMC Wagner held the initiative

<sup>15</sup> [https://t.me/grey\\_zone/16877](https://t.me/grey_zone/16877)

<sup>16</sup> <https://t.me/vrogov/7377>

in the town.<sup>17 18 19</sup> We adjusted the map to show the settlement under Russian control.

Fighting continued in [Krasna Hora](#) with Ukrainian forces holding their defensive positions, which will be more challenging with the capture of Blahodatne to the north.<sup>20 21 22</sup>



<sup>17</sup> <https://t.me/DeepStateUA/15356>

<sup>18</sup> <https://t.me/rybar/43074>

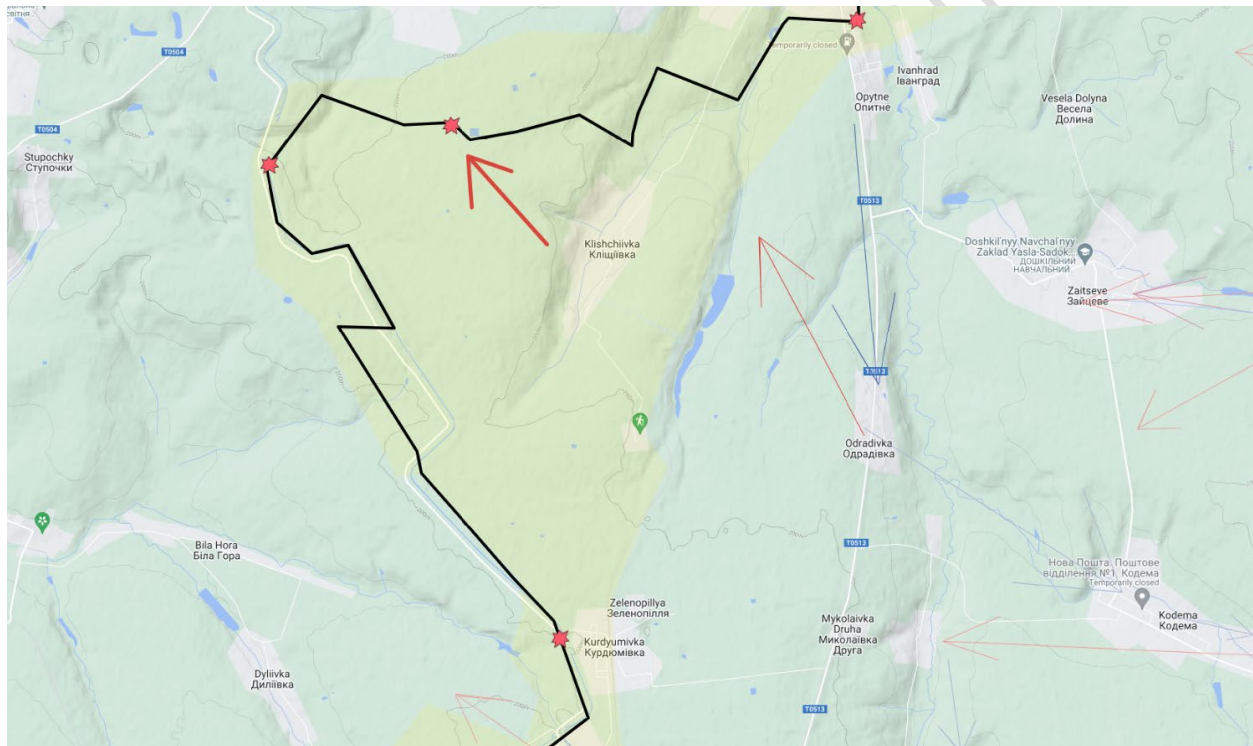
<sup>19</sup> <https://t.me/wargonzo/10556>

<sup>20</sup> [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEST](#)

<sup>21</sup> <https://t.me/rybar/43074>

<sup>22</sup> <https://t.me/wargonzo/10556>

On the [Bakhmut](#) axis, fighting continued on the city's northern and eastern edges.<sup>23</sup> <sup>24</sup> <sup>25</sup> Rybar reported that Russian forces continued attempts to advance toward [Paraskoviivka](#), which GSAFU reported on January 27.



South of Bakhmut, we made significant changes to the line of conflict but marked a large area as no man's land due to a lack of pictures or videos that would clarify the situation west of [Klishchiivka](#). We moved the line to the Siverskyi

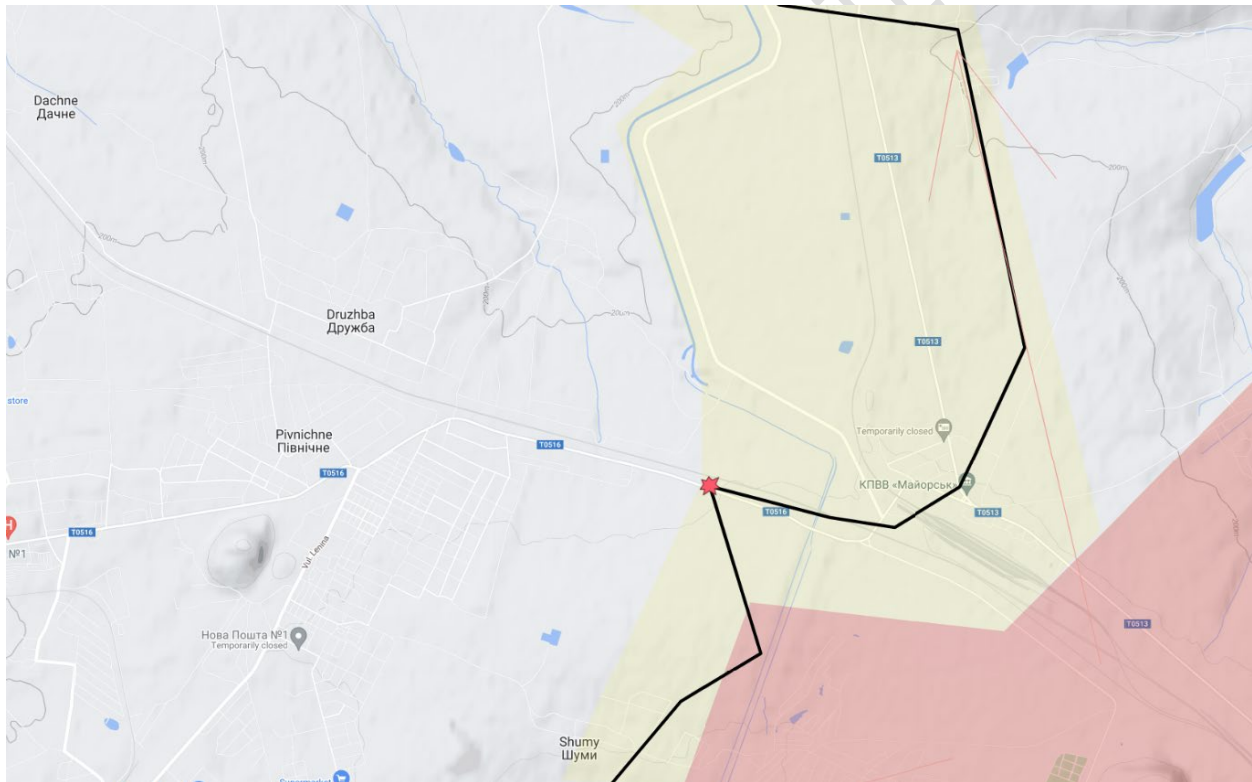
<sup>23</sup> [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEST](#)

<sup>24</sup> <https://t.me/rybar/43074>

<sup>25</sup> <https://t.me/wargonzo/10556>






Donetsk Donbas Canal west of Klishchiivka, acknowledging repeated reports of Russian forces and PMC Wagner advancing toward [Stupochky](#) and [Ivanivske](#) despite a lack of visual evidence. GSAFU reported that Russian attacks in the areas of Klishchiivka and Ivanivske were repulsed, with one Russian source reporting that fighting continued west of Klishchiivka.<sup>26 27</sup>



<sup>26</sup> [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEST](#)

<sup>27</sup> <https://t.me/rybar/43074>

On the Toretsk axis, GSAFU reported that a Russian attack in the direction of [Druzhba](#) was unsuccessful.<sup>28</sup>

On the southern Ground Line of Communication (GLOC - supply line) that supports Bakhmut, Kostyantynivka was hit by  [multiple Russian S-300 anti-aircraft missiles](#) used for a ground attack.<sup>29</sup> The attack landed in  [residential areas](#)  [damaging apartments and homes](#), which reportedly killed three and wounded 14.<sup>30 31 32</sup>

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

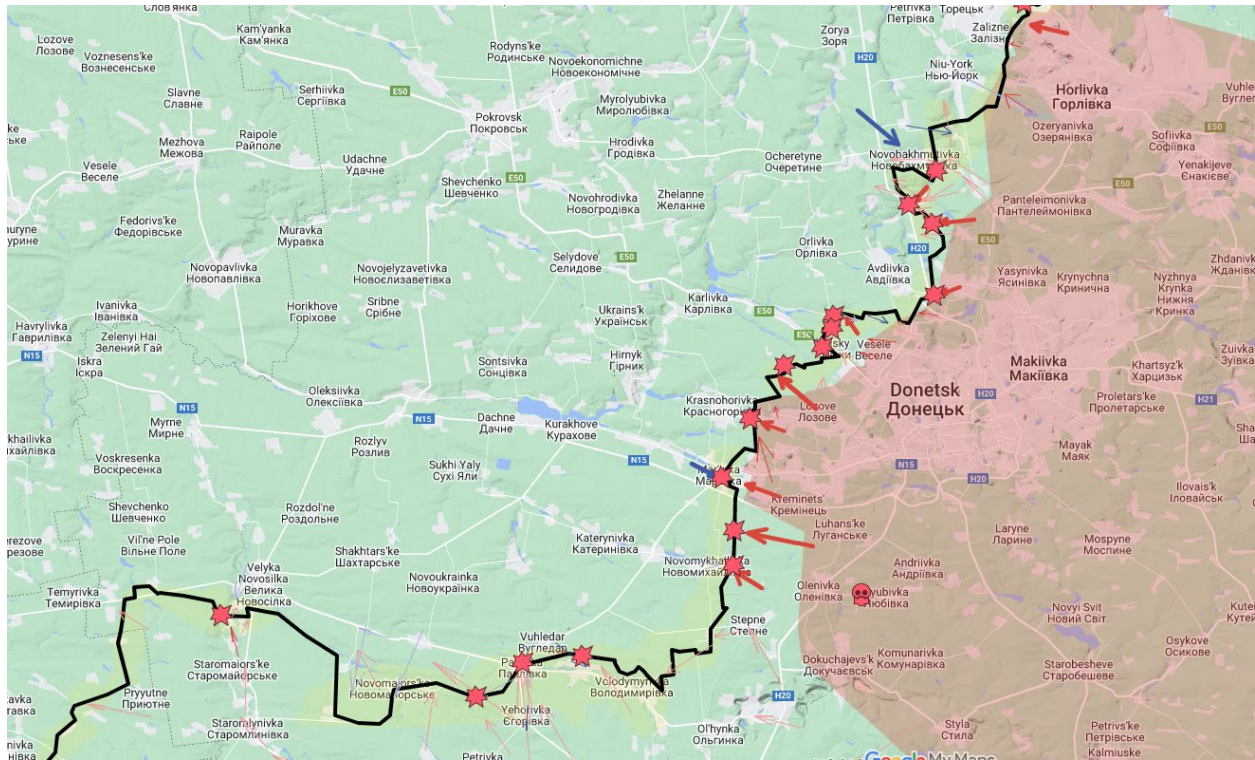
<sup>29</sup> <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/74221>

<sup>30</sup> <https://t.me/itsdonetsk/54311>

<sup>31</sup> <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/74166>

<sup>32</sup> <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/74166>

## SOUTHWESTERN DONETSK

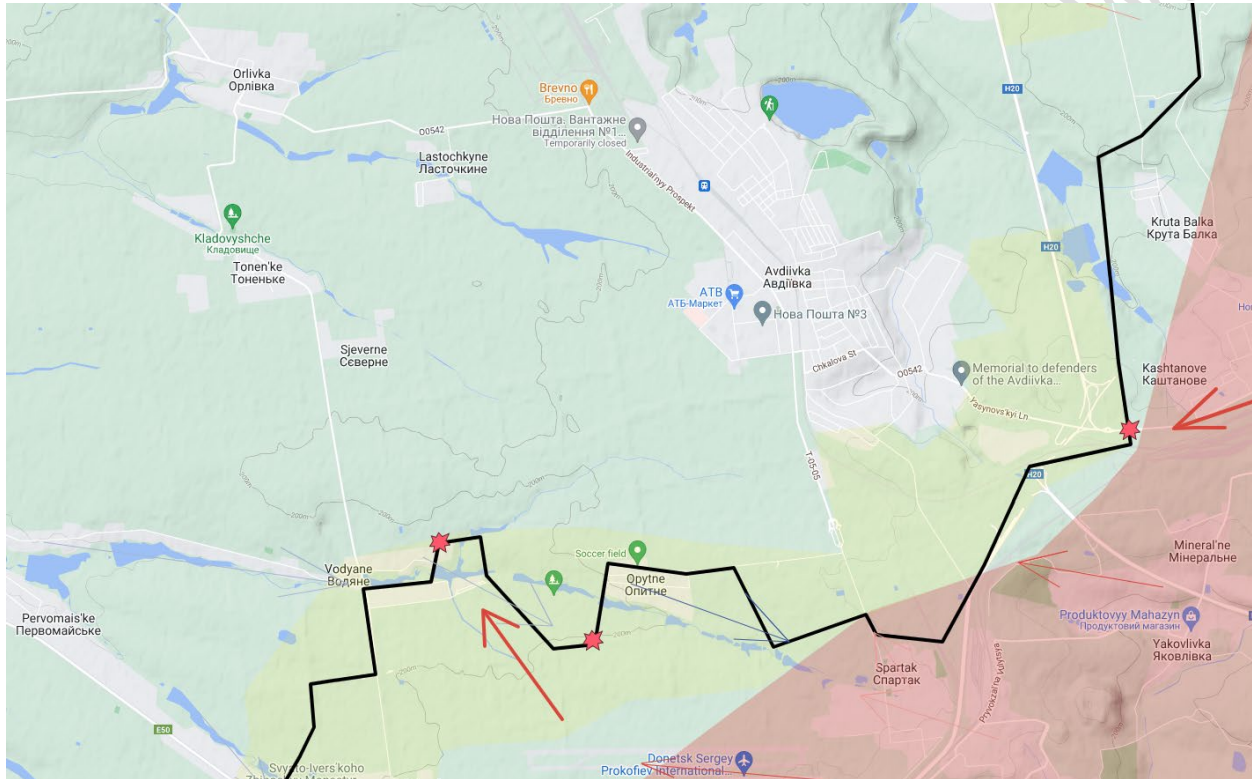


**Russian Objective:** Integrate the oblast into Russian Federation, capture the rest of the oblast, and bring the insurrection across southwestern Donetsk under control

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



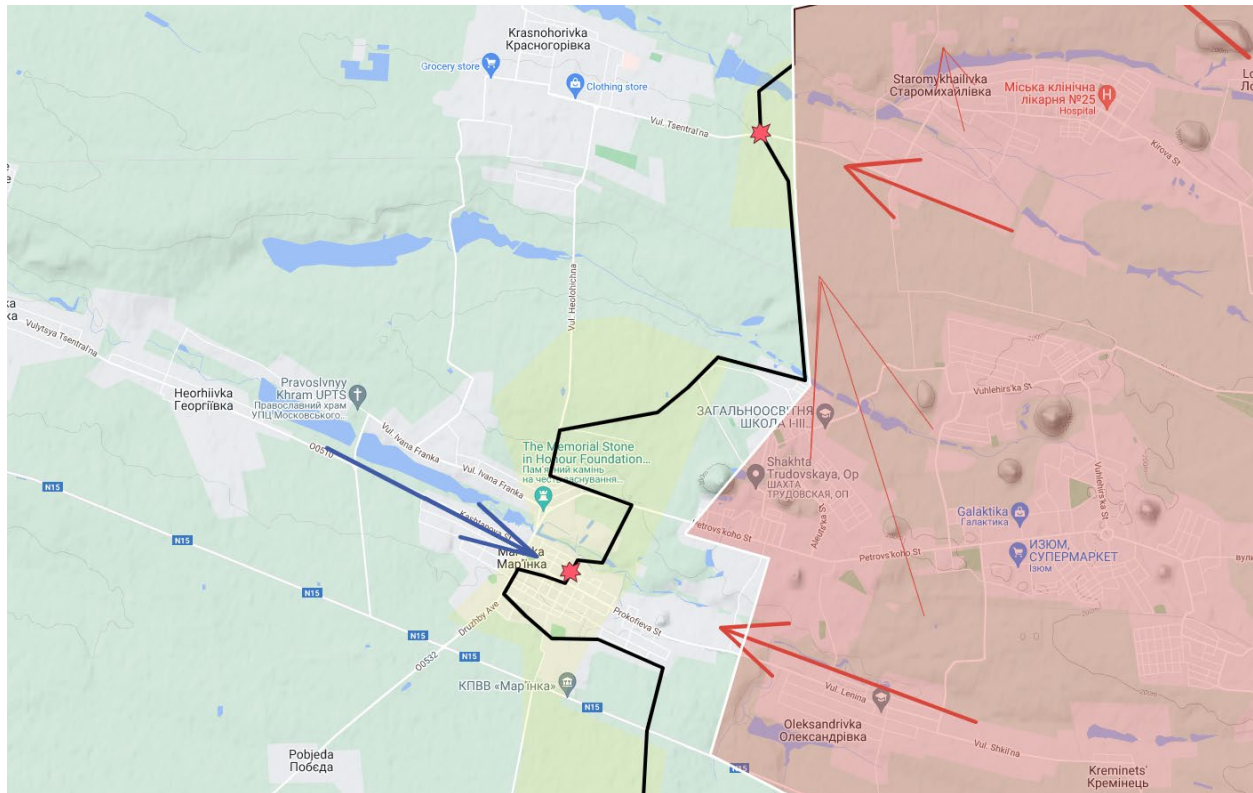
There continued to be only positional fighting on the Avdiivka and Marinka axis, with the Russian 1st Army Corps concentrating artillery on Avdiivka, Marinka, and Vuhledar.



GSAFU reported that Ukrainian forces repelled another attack on [Vodyane](#), while War Gonzo reported another Russian attempt to advance on the Ukrainian firebase at [Nevelske](#).<sup>33 34</sup>

<sup>33</sup> [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEST](#)

<sup>34</sup> <https://t.me/wargonzo/10556>

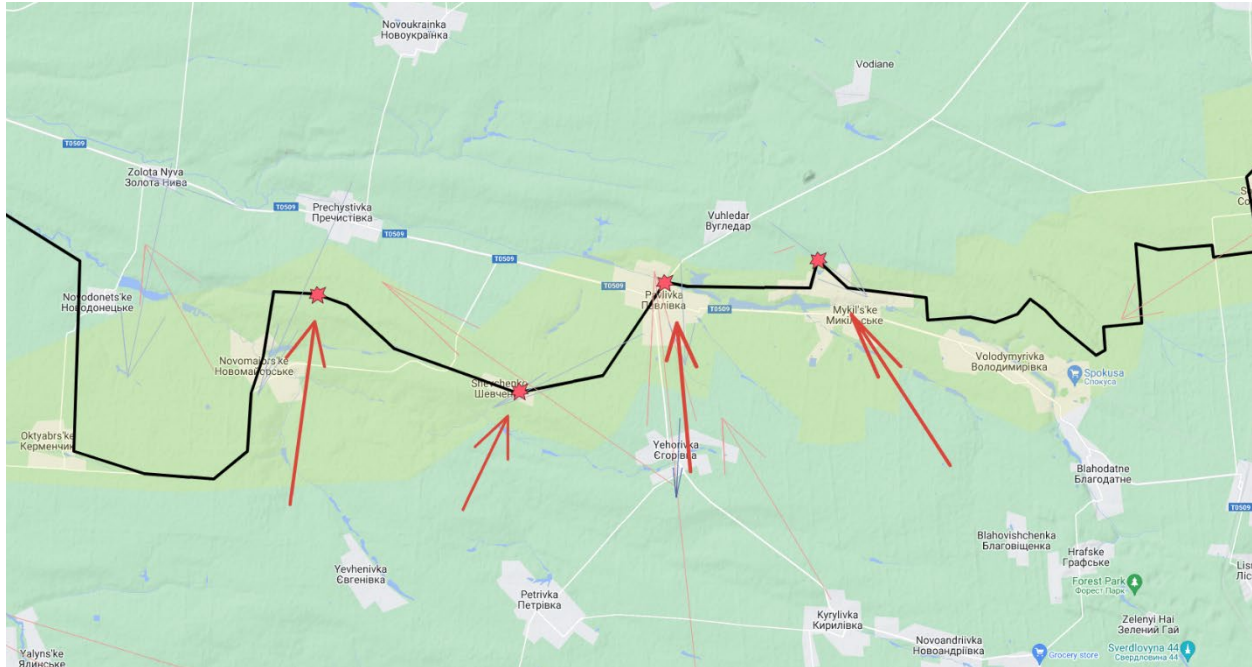


Fighting in the center of [Marinka](#) continues despite War Gonzo's repeated claim that Russian forces have control of 85% of the settlement.<sup>35 36</sup> In the January 27 Situation Report, we shared multiple videos and pictures that dispute the claim and show Russian forces continue to target the center of the town. Russian forces with the 1st Army Corps failed to advance on [Pobjeda](#).<sup>37</sup>

<sup>35</sup> [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEST](#)

<sup>36</sup> <https://t.me/wargonzo/10556>

<sup>37</sup> [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEST](#)



On the [Vuhledar](#) axis, Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Khodakovsky of the 11th Motor Infantry Brigade of the Russian 1st Army Corps did not release an update. GSAFU reported that Ukrainian forces were able to repulse continued attacks, while War Gonzo wrote that Ukrainian forces held a "serious line of defense here and are deploying reinforcements."<sup>38 39</sup> RMOD was vague in its morning report, only saying that Russian forces had advanced to more advantageous positions.<sup>40</sup>

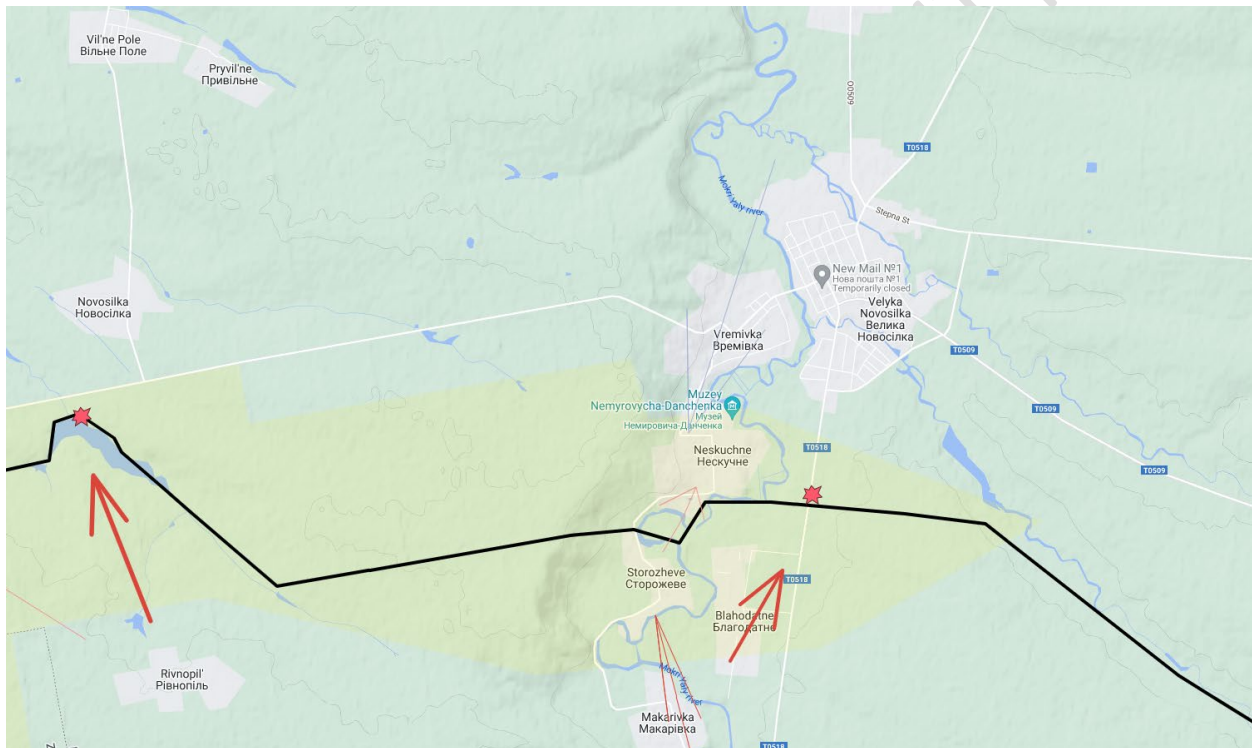
<sup>38</sup> [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEST](#)

<sup>39</sup> [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEST](#)

<sup>40</sup> [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/23799](https://t.me/mod_russia/23799) [Russian Government Controlled Social Media Channel]



Another Russian attempt to advance on [Prechystivka](#) was unsuccessful.<sup>41</sup> RMOD claimed Russian forces had partial success advancing on [Novomairske](#), which we had previously assessed as contested and largely under Russian control.<sup>42</sup>






On the Velyka Novosilka axis, RMOD repeated its claim without evidence that Russian forces continued to advance toward [Novosilka](#).<sup>43</sup>

<sup>41</sup> [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEST](#)

<sup>42</sup> [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/23799](https://t.me/mod_russia/23799) [Russian Government Controlled Social Media Channel]

<sup>43</sup> [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/23799](https://t.me/mod_russia/23799) [Russian Government Controlled Social Media Channel]

Insurgents in Mariupol reported that Russian forces have set up a Forward Operating Base (FOB)  [for Mi-8/Mi-17 helicopters](#) at the Azovstal Metallurgical Plant, with ten sorties flown out of the FOB. A new batch of dragon teeth moved through the city, and up to 3,000 fresh mobiks have been rotated to Volnovakha, south of Vuhledar.<sup>44</sup>

Multiple Russian sources reported Russian-occupied Ilovaisk was hit with  [up to seven rockets fired by HIMARS](#), targeting  [the railroad station](#).<sup>45</sup> We accurately assessed on January 24 that photos shared by Russian State Media showing that an earlier HIMARS strike was only partially successful would lead to a second strike. It is reported, but unconfirmed, that the strike coincided with the arrival of a train with military equipment and Russian troops.<sup>46</sup> Electrical service to power trains in the area was disrupted, and poor weather conditions complicated the Ministry of Emergency Situations' response.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> <https://t.me/andriyshTime/6247>

<sup>45</sup> <https://t.me/itsdonetsk/54401>

<sup>46</sup> <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/74227>

<sup>47</sup> <https://t.me/itsdonetsk/54416>

Local officials in occupied Donetsk claimed that HIMARS destroyed a warehouse in the Kirovsky District.<sup>48</sup>

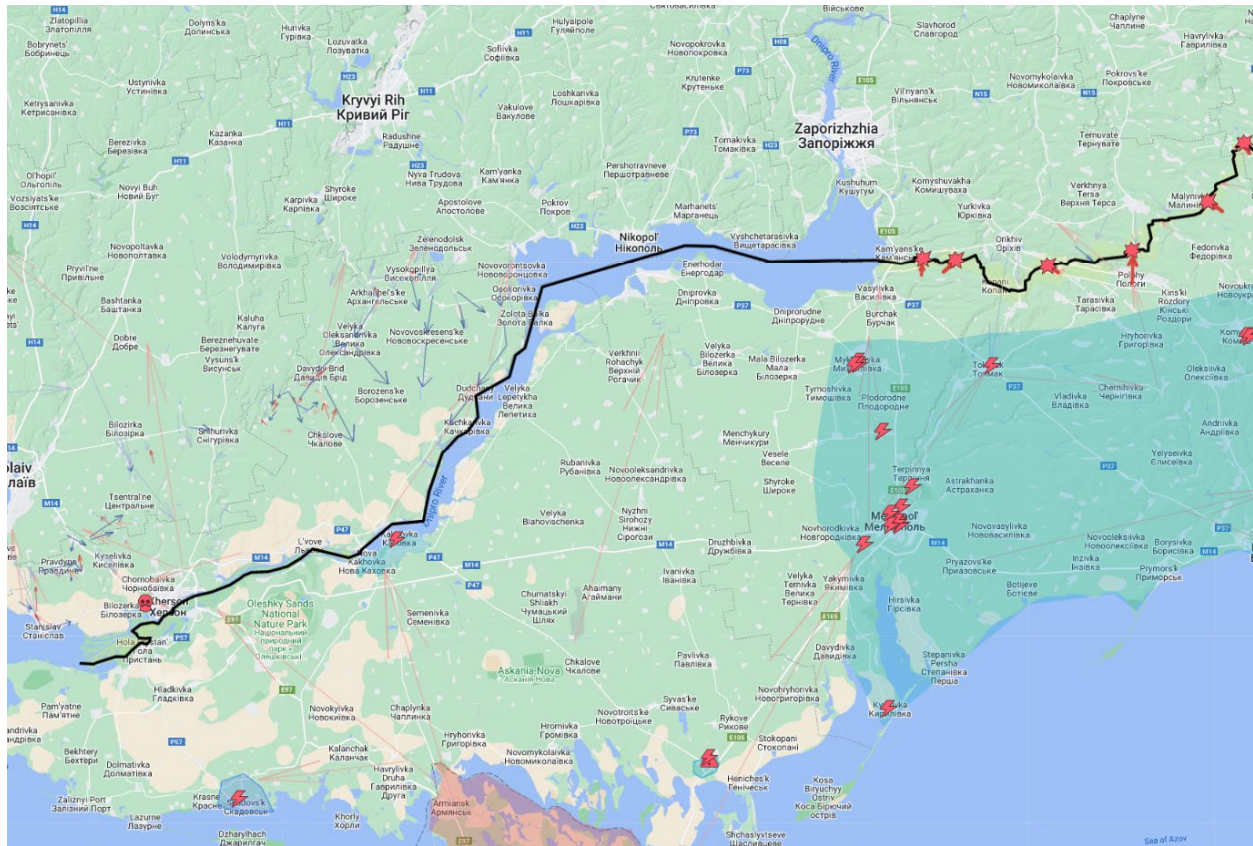
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<sup>48</sup> <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/44807>



# KHERSON AND ZAPORIZHIA



**Russian Objective:** Prevent Ukrainian offensive into Kherson and Zaporizhzhia, integrate captured territory into the Russian Federation, break civilian will with continued terror attacks

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

Russian and Ukrainian forces traded claims of intentional strikes on Civilians, with mutual shelling along the Dnipro continuing.<sup>49 50</sup> A video showed Bersylav in free Ukraine being  [shelled with thermite munitions](#) delivered by Grad rockets fired by multiple launch rocket systems  [\(MLRS\) stationed in Kakhovka](#).<sup>51</sup> Kakhovka was hit by counterbattery fire, and Russian sources claimed Ukrainian artillery  [intentionally targeted a hospital](#) in Nova Kakhovka.<sup>52 53 54</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEST](#)

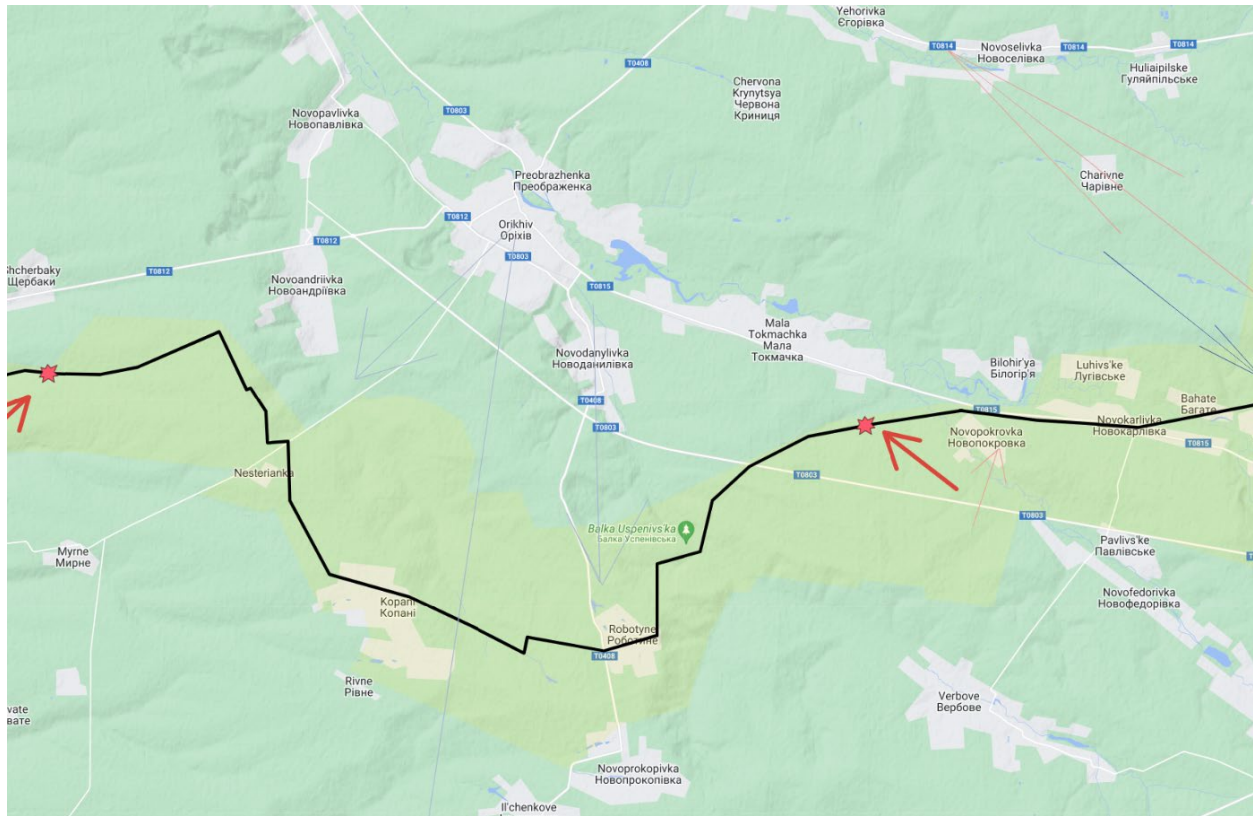
<sup>50</sup> [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report PM EEST](#)

<sup>51</sup> <https://t.me/hueviyherson/33799>

<sup>52</sup> <https://t.me/itsdonetsk/54370>

<sup>53</sup> <https://t.me/hueviyherson/33749>

<sup>54</sup> <https://t.me/itsdonetsk/54370>



In Zaporizhia on the Orikhiv axis, RMOD claimed Russian forces launched an attack on [Luhivske](#), which we currently have coded as no man's land.<sup>55</sup> We did not update the map because no other sources claim there is fighting in this area.

The situation at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant is unchanged.

<sup>55</sup> [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/23799](https://t.me/mod_russia/23799) [Russian Government Controlled Social Media Channel]



Otherwise, artillery, rockets, and tank fire were exchanged from the Zaporizhia-Donetsk administrative border to Hulyaipole, Orikhiv, and west to Kamyanske.<sup>56 57</sup>

***Editor's Note:*** *If there continue to be combat reports from Zaporizhia, we will move Kherson to Western and Central Ukraine and Zaporizhia into its own section.*

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

Operational Command South (OCS) reported the Black Sea Fleet had 16 ships on patrol, including four missile carriers capable of launching up to 20 Kalibr cruise missiles.<sup>58</sup> The number of ships on patrol increased despite poor weather and sea conditions.

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<sup>56</sup> [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEST](#)

<sup>57</sup> [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report PM EEST](#)

<sup>58</sup> <https://t.me/Crimeanwind/21271>

## WESTERN AND CENTRAL UKRAINE

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

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

There weren't any significant developments in this region.

## NORTH AND NORTHEAST UKRAINE

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

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

Seredyna-Buda in Sumy oblast was heavily shelled, causing extensive damage to a sports complex, a school, and 26 homes. There were no injuries despite the ferocity of the strike.<sup>59</sup>

## **RUSSIAN FRONT**

There weren't any significant developments in this region.

## **THEATERWIDE & EXTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS**

The Ukrainian Air Force reported that they have started preparing airfields and infrastructure to support F-16 fighter aircraft. The calls to provide Ukraine with modern fourth-generation fighters are growing inside and outside the nation, including former United States Secretary of Defense Mark Esper.<sup>60</sup>

Admiral Rob Bauer, Chair of the NATO Military Committee, said the NATO alliance was prepared for a Russian attack. "This is an important signal for Russia...That we are

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<sup>59</sup> <https://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2023/01/28/7386961/>

<sup>60</sup> <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/74188>



prepared if they decide to go after NATO. If there is a red line, then it is the Russians crossing our borders," Bauer said. He added that NATO nations should ramp up civilian and military industrial production and move to a "war economy in peacetime" to counter Russia's efforts to rearm. Bauer warned that Russia's ambition does not stop at the Ukrainian border and is driven by Putin's desire to restore the pre-Soviet borders of Russia.<sup>61</sup>

The United States has opened a hotline to report the misuse of American military or humanitarian aid. The Ukraine Oversight Interagency Working Group is composed of three offices of inspectors general, the US Department of Defence (DoD), the US Department of State, and USAID. The web portals are in English and Ukrainian and are being promoted in the US, Europe, and Ukraine. The 2023 \$1.7 trillion omnibus spending bill included \$42 million for oversight of United States aid.<sup>62</sup>

There were reports that an ammunition factory in Isfahan, Iran, and an oil refinery in Azarshahr was targeted by drones, causing explosions and fires at both facilities. Iranian state media claimed that the drone attack on Isfahan was foiled by anti-drone nets and air defenses and

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<sup>61</sup> <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2023/01/28/7386967/>

<sup>62</sup> <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2023/01/28/7386948/>

did not acknowledge the  [explosions and fire at the oil refinery](#).<sup>63 64</sup>

## RUSSIAN MOBILIZATION AND MILITARY STATUS

Our favorite FSB Colonel, convicted war criminal, Kremlin pariah, and failed mobik Igor "Girkin" Strelkov announced he would pass on PMC Wagner founder Yevgeny Prigozhin's offer to become a mercenary.

On his Telegram channel, Strelkov wrote he had talked with Wagner Group's Andrey Nikolayevich Troshev about organizing a meeting and a potential move to Luhansk. Earlier the same day, Prigozhin continued to mock Strelkov, which became a bridge too far. "The last public speech by Mr. Prigozhin, in which a stream of outright lies was addressed to me, completely excludes the possibility of my participation in the PMC," Strelkov wrote. "I will not be able to serve under the leadership of a man who openly accused me of betraying Russia. Not to mention the dirty insults that accompanied these accusations."

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<sup>63</sup> <https://t.me/readovkanews/51577>

<sup>64</sup> <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/74232>

## WAR CRIMES AND HUMAN RIGHTS

There weren't any significant developments that weren't previously noted.

## GEOPOLITICAL

Former General Petr Pavel was elected President of the Czech Republic in a national election with 70% participation.<sup>65</sup> The charismatic Pavel backs the continued support of Ukraine.

The President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, declared the EU's unconditional support of Ukraine. "We support Ukraine without any ifs, ands, or buts. Ukraine is fighting for our common values, fighting for respect for international law and the principles of democracy, and therefore Ukraine must win this war."

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<sup>65</sup> <https://t.me/informnapalm/15369>