



MALCONTENT NEWS RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR SITUATION REPORT



November 14, 2022



Malcontent News

Russia-Ukraine War SITREP

11/14/22 23:59* PST

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SUMMARY – DAY 264

It has been 3,170 days since the occupation of Crimea on February 27, 2014.

Your CCO will be traveling on Tuesday and Wednesday, and depending on road conditions and the quality of the Internet, reports may be reduced to combat only for the next two days.

Russian forces have made gains in Donetsk, recapturing Pavlivka and capturing Optyne near the Donetsk International Airport.

Russian forces were reportedly in a full retreat from the east bank of the Dnipro, abandoning the two defensive lines they had built because of contact artillery, rocket, HIMARS, and air strikes by Ukrainian forces.

Belarus may be preparing to mobilize up to 50,000 people by the end of the year, and Russia's stealth mobilization continues.

DAILY ASSESSMENT

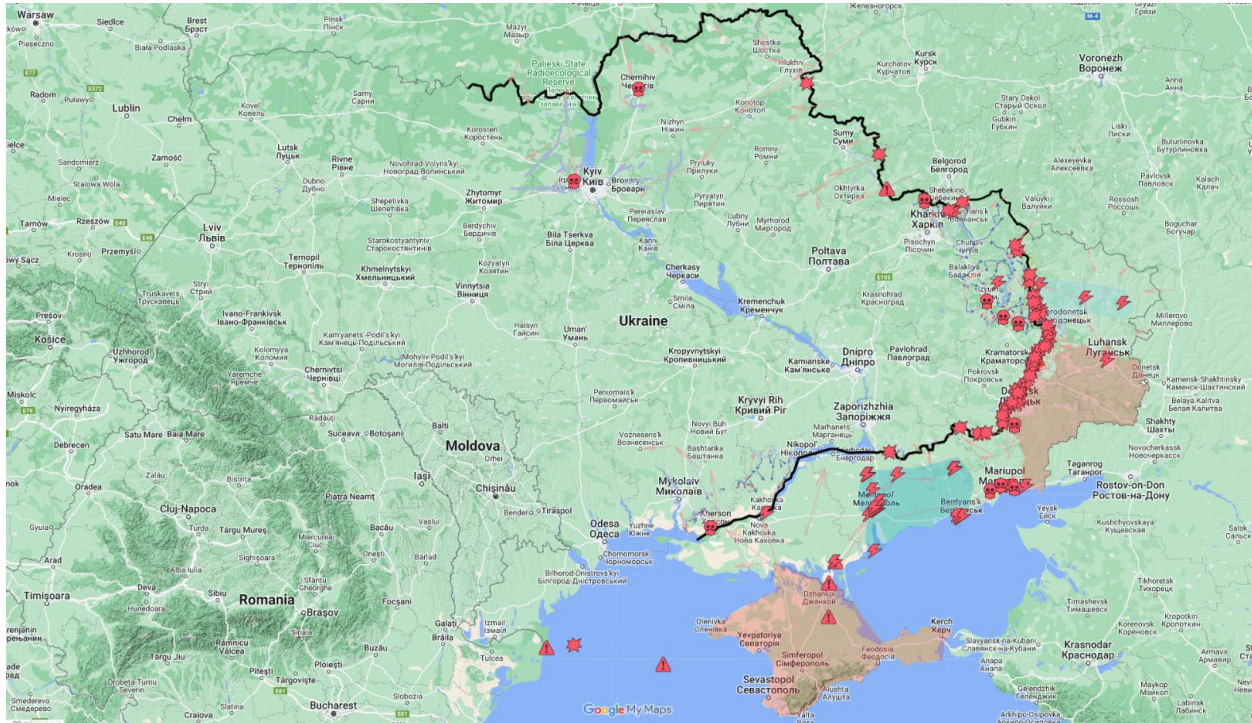
We assess the following:

1. We maintain our assessment that significant war crimes and atrocities will be discovered in Kherson during the coming week.
2. We maintain the slowdown in combat operations on multiple axes as a mirage, with intense fighting creating little progress. Both belligerents have significant military assets they can reallocate to new axes.
3. We maintain that neither belligerent will institute a winter pause.
4. We maintain that President Putin's inner circle is actively targeting Russian Minister of Defense Sergei Shougi for dismissal and replacement due to continued military failures in Ukraine.
5. We maintain that Russian President Vladimir Putin is facing renewed unrest inside and outside the Kremlin. If there continue to be military failures, there is a remote chance Russia could face a regime change.
6. We maintain that the Russian navy's presence in the Black Sea has become irrelevant, with missile carriers reluctant to patrol beyond the immediate coast of Sevastopol.
7. We maintain terror attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure will continue across Ukraine despite the

significantly reduced number of attacks over the last week.

8. We maintain that the Russian military within Ukraine is combat ineffective and can only mount effective defensive operations.
9. We maintain it is likely that the Russian Ministry of Defense will concentrate its available firepower on a small area but will likely return to a combat destroyed state after making marginal gains that they won't be able to leverage into a strategic victory. Further, we assess that this will likely occur on the Donetsk axis.
10. We maintain that the Private Military Company Wagner Group is spread too thin due to its expanding role in the Donetsk oblast and the revelation of crippling battlefield losses.
11. We maintain that Ukraine holds the battlefield initiative, forcing Russian troops to remain in a defensive posture.
12. We maintain that Russian forces in Belarus remain a credible threat for an invasion of western Ukraine, but we now assess the possibility has pushed further out to the next 55 to 85 days.

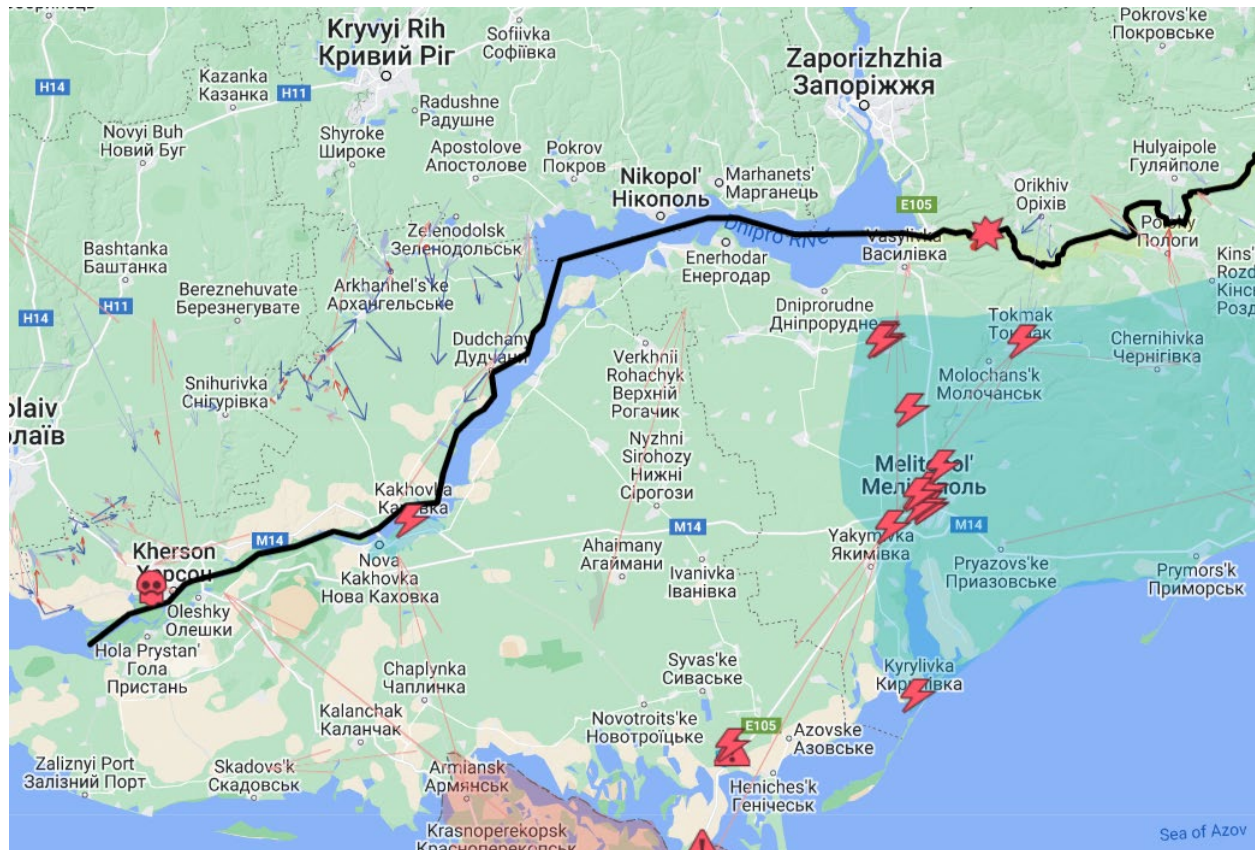
TODAY'S WAR IN UKRAINE MAP



Information about changes made to the map: Red triangles are sites of significant events unrelated to missile attacks, insurgency, or ground combat, such as the sinking of the Moskva and the explosion at Saky Naval airbase. Based on your feedback, we changed the archived offensive flags to “gray circles.” The 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, the link will take you to the exact location explained in the Situation Report.

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

KHERSON AND ZAPORIZHZHIA



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

There continued to be rampant rumors of Ukrainian forces liberated Hola Prystan, Oleshky, and/or Nova Kakhovka on the east bank of the Dnipro River. There has been no evidence to support the claims that any of these towns have been liberated and are under Ukrainian control.

There also continued to be rumors that Ukrainian forces occupied the Kinburn Spit west of the Black Sea Biosphere Reserve, where Russian troops reportedly retreated to a 4-kilometer defensive line stretching across the neck of the peninsula.¹ Videos showed that Ukrainian DRG squads made a small landing on the spit, performed maneuvers, and departed.² Ukrainian Special Operation Forces (SOF) and DRG units have been operating on the spit almost continuously since the widescale invasion of Ukraine on February 24.

Some Ukrainian milbloggers and social media accounts cited the Russian shelling of Ochakiv as proof that Ukraine was conducting larger-scale operations in the Dniprovskia Gulf. Operation Command South (OCS) has documented the shelling of Ochakiv since August, as we have reported in multiple Situation Reports. The Russian Ministry of Defense and

¹ <https://twitter.com/NLwartracker/status/1592237134446198784>

² <https://twitter.com/GeoConfirmed/status/1592324895035502592>

milbloggers have reported Ukrainian counterbattery on the spit, which we have also covered in multiple Situation Reports.

We maintain that although DRG and SOF units have operated on the peninsula periodically since February 24, there is no indication or proof that Ukrainian forces have started a permanent occupation in the Mykolaiv or Kherson sections of the spit. Thank you for coming to our Ted Talk.

The Russian milblogger community appears to be moving through the stages of grief over the loss of Kherson, leaving denial and moving to anger. Russian milblogger Rybar had a meltdown over Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's visit to Kherson, writing, "We do not want to mobilize reserves properly and demonstrate the art of warfare. We don't want to win. We do not want to do everything for the sake of the result, not the process. We do not want to emerge from the world of sweet dreams that the war is somewhere far away. Similar performances by the President of Ukraine in the **Russian-Kherson** is the most real media slap in the face."³

Editor's Note: Emphasis, Rybar

³ <https://t.me/rybar/41143>

Snark about the stages of grief aside, there are renewed cracks in accepting the Russian Ministry of Defense's decision to retreat from Kherson, which was a strategically correct decision that, in our assessment, Russia waited too long to do in the first place. The photographic and video evidence of a limited number of Russian POWs captured, and a growing inventory of military equipment and ammunition captured, have further damaged the already battered trust between Russian milbloggers and the Kremlin.

The electrical grid on the west bank of the Dnipro for Kherson and large areas of Mykolaiv was completely destroyed by fleeing Russian troops, including critical transformer farms and electrical distribution nodes.⁴ Due to the lack of basic infrastructure, gutted hospitals, mines, unexploded ordnance, and booby traps, Ukrainian officials are appealing for former residents not to return yet.⁵ Passenger rail service was reestablished between Kyiv and Mykolaiv, complicating the situation. The first train was filled with people wanting to return to their homes.

ASSESSMENT: Given the scope of our platforms and how half of

⁴ <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2022/11/14/7376341/>

⁵ [Army Inform Ukraine](#)

our audience is beyond North America, we join the Ukrainian government in appealing to civilians that lived in or near the liberated areas of Mykolaiv and Kherson – it is not yet safe to return. The area is heavily mined, and buildings and homes will need to be cleared one by one, as in Bucha, Irpin, Hostomel, and hundreds of other cities and towns full of booby traps after the Russians retreated. The lack of basic services, including water, electricity, Internet, and cellular communications outside of the cities, could create a dangerous situation during extreme cold or leave someone with no way to request help if they or others become sick or injured. Please follow the instructions of local officials and return when you are told it is safe to do so. You can rebuild your life; you can't regrow a foot or resurrect a dead loved one.

Operational Command South reported that 50 fire missions were carried out mostly on Russian positions on the east bank of the Dnipro River. There were multiple reports of Ukrainian rocket attacks by HIMARS on Russian troop concentrations and equipment in Kalanchak, Skadovsk, Oleshky, Hornostaivka, Dnipro, Chaplynka, and Hola Prystan.^{6 7 8 9} Russian troops used four Lancet kamikaze drones to target Ukrainian military

⁶ <https://twitter.com/UKikaski/status/1592329363437285376>

⁷ <https://twitter.com/EuromaidanPR/status/1592259037437243393>

⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=458822246384617>

⁹ <https://twitter.com/NOELreports/status/1592296576315457536>

equipment in Dudchany.¹⁰ Russia has been effectively using Lancet drones for counterbattery with increasing effectiveness. Russian forces shelled the airport at Chornobaivka on November 13, with Ukraine claiming that abandoned equipment Russian equipment was targeted.¹¹

Russian troops initially reinforced their positions in Hornostaivka, Liybymivka, and Petropavlivka on the east bank of the Dnipro and Novooleksiivka near the Kherson-Crimea administrative border.¹² Russian troops reportedly shelled the occupied town of Hornostaivka on the east bank of the Dnipro because the residents refused to evacuate.¹³

Nataliia Humeniuk of OCS reported that Russian troops had abandoned the first and second defensive lines they built on the east bank of the Dnipro River and were retreating 15 to 20 kilometers back while under intense artillery, rocket, and GMLRS attack.¹⁴ Captain of the First Order Humeniuk claimed the retreat was occurring due to ongoing artillery strikes. Russian troops and collaborators were evacuated from Zaliznyi Port to Skadovsk after local residents refused to evacuate.¹⁵

¹⁰ [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report PM PST](#)

¹¹ [Army Inform Ukraine](#)

¹² https://twitter.com/auditor_ya/status/1591788447379128320

¹³ [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report November 13, 2022 PM PST](#)

¹⁴ <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2022/11/15/7376410/>

¹⁵ <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2022/11/14/7376314/>

Exiled Melitopol mayor Ivan Fedorov reported that the 24th School in the city, which had been converted into a Russian barracks, was destroyed in an explosion, likely caused by a HIMARS strike.¹⁶ ¹⁷ Russian collaborator Dima Trukhin was reportedly in intensive care after being injured in an explosion.¹⁸ It was not clear if he was injured in the blast at the school turned Russian based or in a separate partisan attack.

Russian and Ukrainian military leaders claimed that their opponents were moving reinforcements to the line of conflict in the Zaporizhia oblast. Civilians were rounded up in Melitopol and pressed into slave labor to build defensive positions for Chechen forces.¹⁹ Russian troops are tearing up tarmac and dismantling the stonework of canals to build the structures.

The International Atomic Energy Agency reported the situation at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant is stable.²⁰ They indirectly countered claims by the Russian Ministry of Defense that the plant was shelled last week, stating, “the area has been relatively quiet.”

¹⁶ https://twitter.com/Flash_news_ua/status/1592412365131481089

¹⁷ https://twitter.com/am_misfit/status/1592434593713774593

¹⁸ <https://twitter.com/TWMCLtd/status/1592433757256298496>

¹⁹ <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2022/11/14/7376343/>

²⁰ [International Atomic Energy Agency](#)

Power continues to be supplied to the plant by a single 750 kilovolt (kV) line, and Reactors 5 and 6 are in a hot shutdown state. Energoatom reported they intended to bring Reactor 6 to a low-power state to produce more steam for heat at the plant and Enerhodar but not to produce electricity. Rosatom officials in Moscow refused, citing the unstable power connections – which Russian attacks on the electrical grid have caused. Take all the time you need.

IAEA Director General Rafael Grossi criticized the situation and continued Russian interference with plant operations as a critical safety violation. He also criticized ongoing work by a Russian third-party contractor to modify the dry spent fuel storage without prior authorization by Ukrainian plant operators. IAEA inspectors have been allowed into the work area and verified the security seals on the spent fuel containers had not been broken. It is noteworthy that the Kremlin discontinued all claims about Ukraine making a dirty bomb after the IAEA completed inspections at three locations in early November and reported the claims were unsubstantiated.

There was scattered artillery fire from the Zaporizhia-Donetsk administrative border to Hulyaipole to Orikhiv.^{21 22}

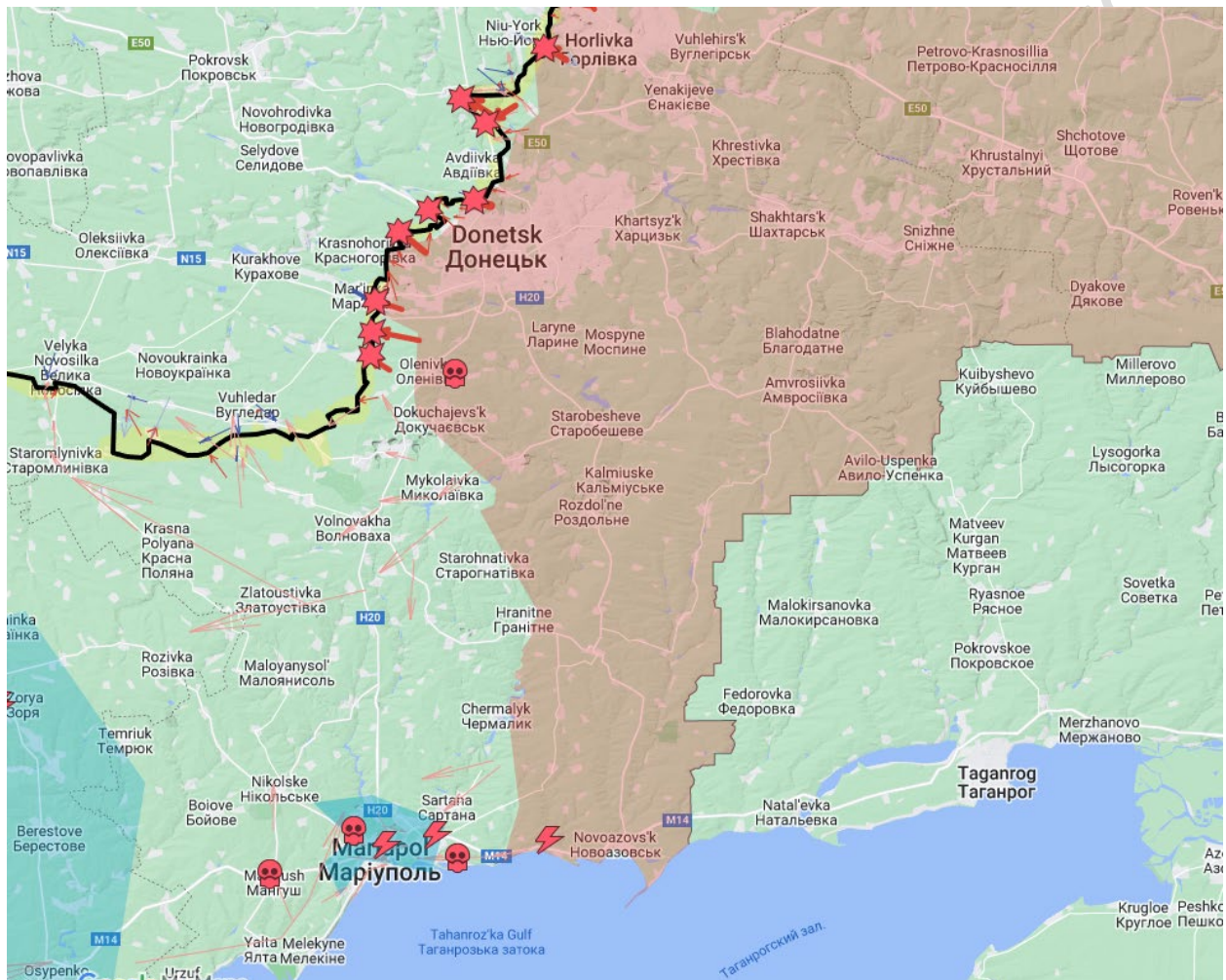
ASSESSMENT: Ukrainian forces wasted no time moving up M142, M270, and MARS II guided multiple launch rocket systems (GMLRS) closer to the Dnipro River and redirected fire on Russian troop, ammunition, and equipment concentrations in Kherson and Zaporizhia. The Russian response has been to move logistics, command, and control assets further southeast. The Russian military has a centralized command structure and relies on hub and spoke logistics that become increasingly ineffective the further away they move from railroad supply nodes. Four days after the liberation of Kherson, the same ruthless efficiency of targeting Russian lines of communication (LOC – supply lines) across the Dnipro is continuing at the same intensity. Russian forces continue to have no meaningful answer to NATO-provided HIMARS.

²¹ [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM PST](#)

²² [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report PM PST](#)

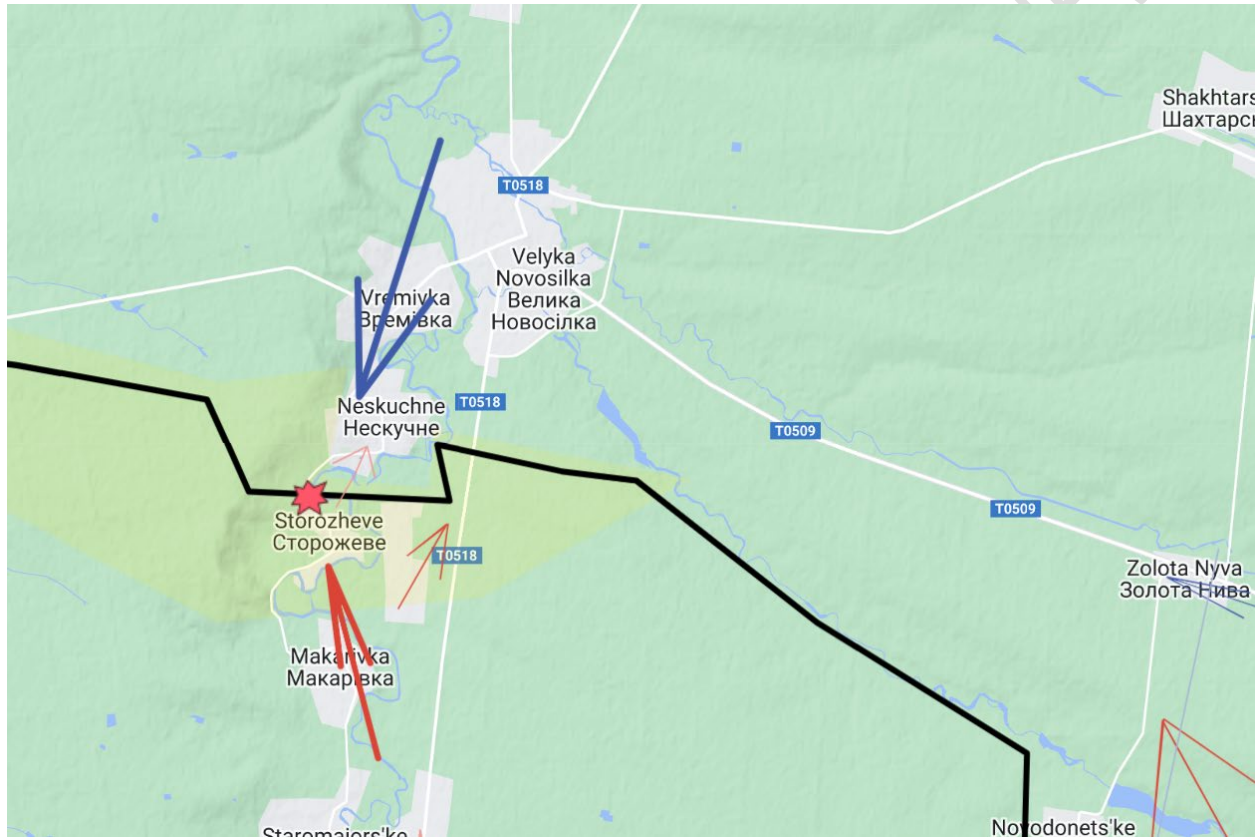
DONBAS REGION

SOUTHWESTERN DONETSK



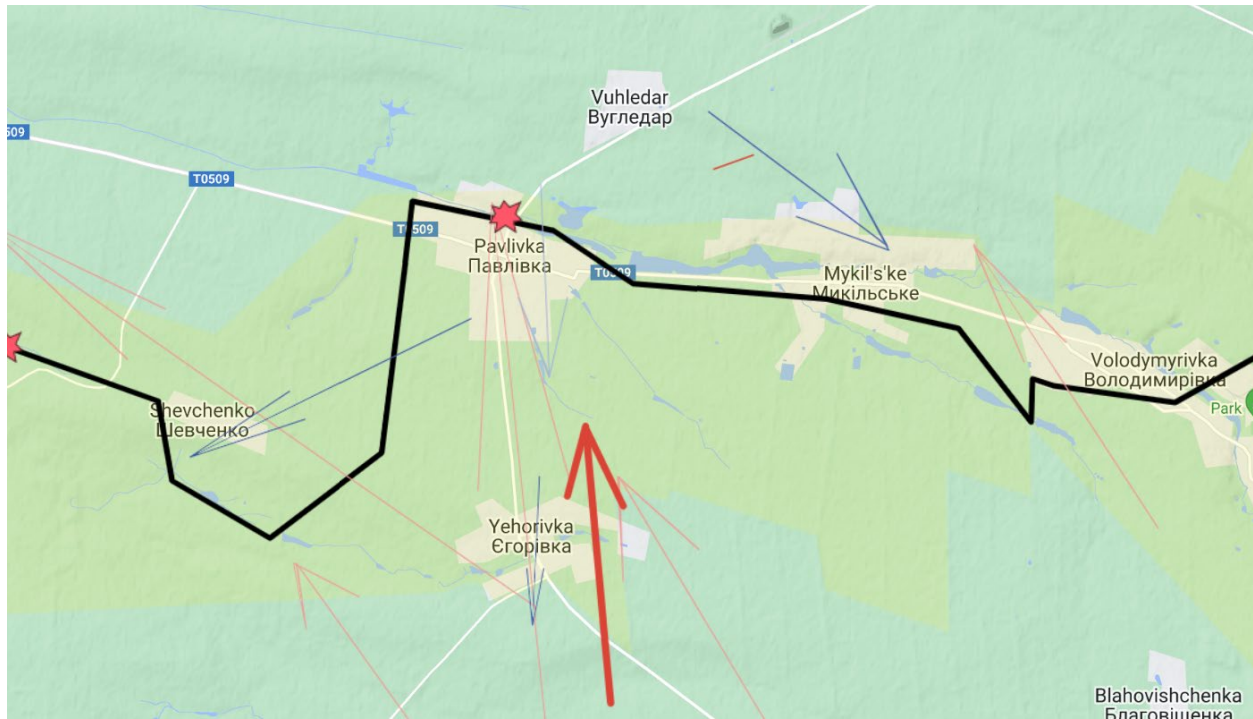
Russian Objective: Integrate the oblast into Russian Federation, capture the rest of the oblast, and bring the insurrection across southwestern Donetsk under control

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 was renewed fighting south of Velyka Novosilka, with Ukrainian forces successfully defending [Vremivka](#).²³

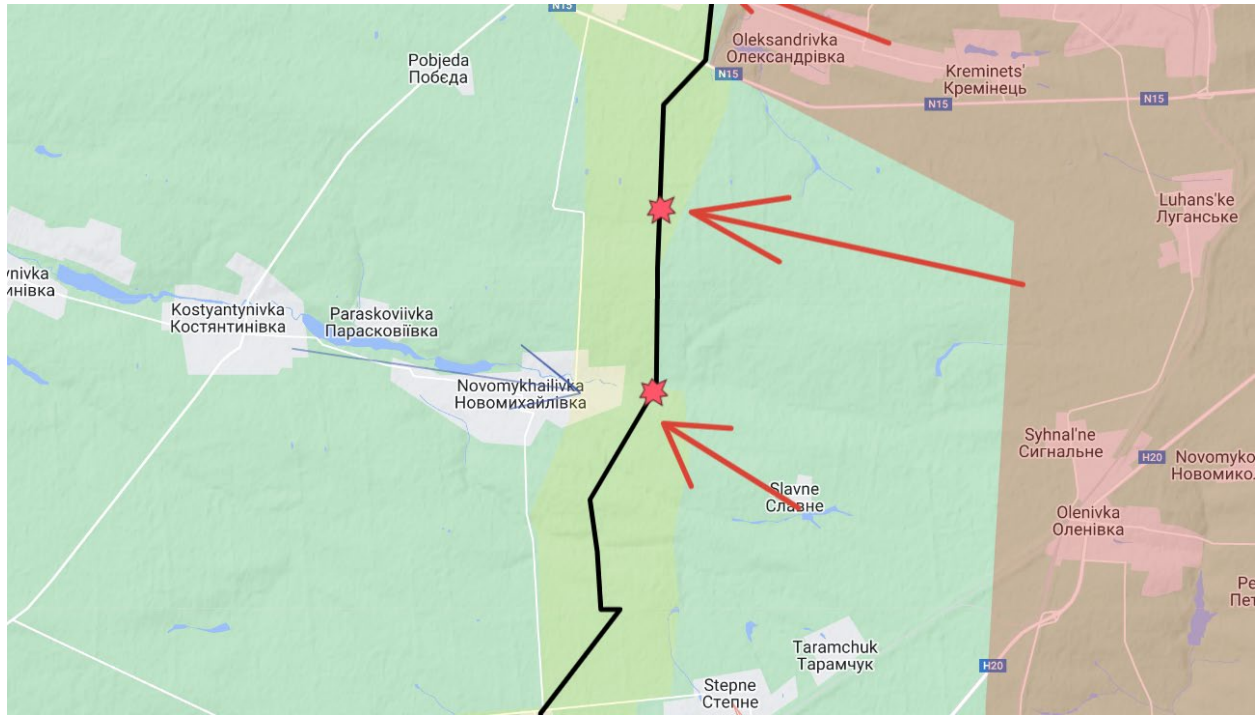
²³ [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report PM PST](#)



Russian and Ukrainian sources reported that the 155th Naval Infantry of the Russian Federation recaptured [Pavlivka](#), which Ukraine had liberated on August 3.²⁴ ²⁵ Both sources reported that the town is unoccupied and obliterated after almost three weeks of continuous fighting. Russian forces remain within the first two blocks of the town and south of the river. They cannot advance because no defensible positions are left, and Ukraine is maintaining significant artillery fire. A video from the Donetsk People's Republic Peoples Militia showed significant Ukrainian losses and at least one soldier being taken as a prisoner of war.

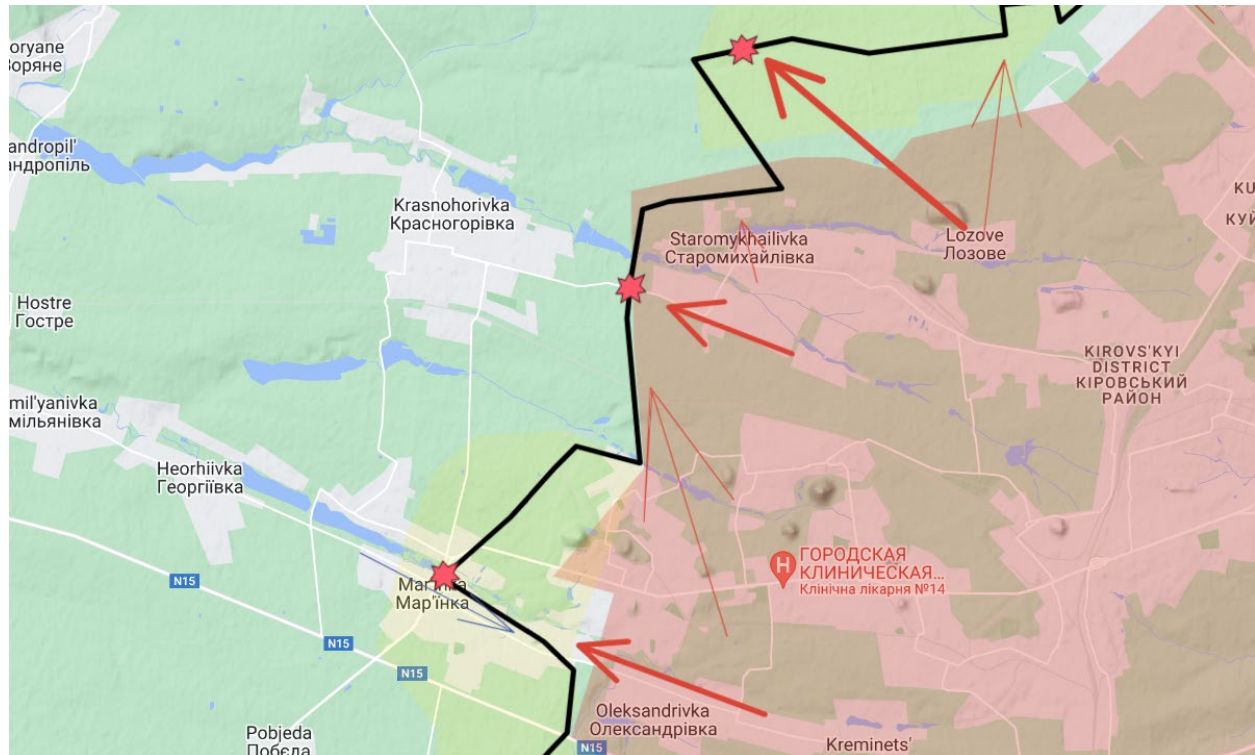
²⁴ <https://t.me/s/DeepStateUA>

²⁵ <https://t.me/rybar/41158>



GSAFU reported that the 1st Army Corps of the DNR continued to play the greatest hits of 2014, with ongoing fighting east of [Novomykhailivka](#) and no change in the situation.²⁶

²⁶ [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report PM PST](#)

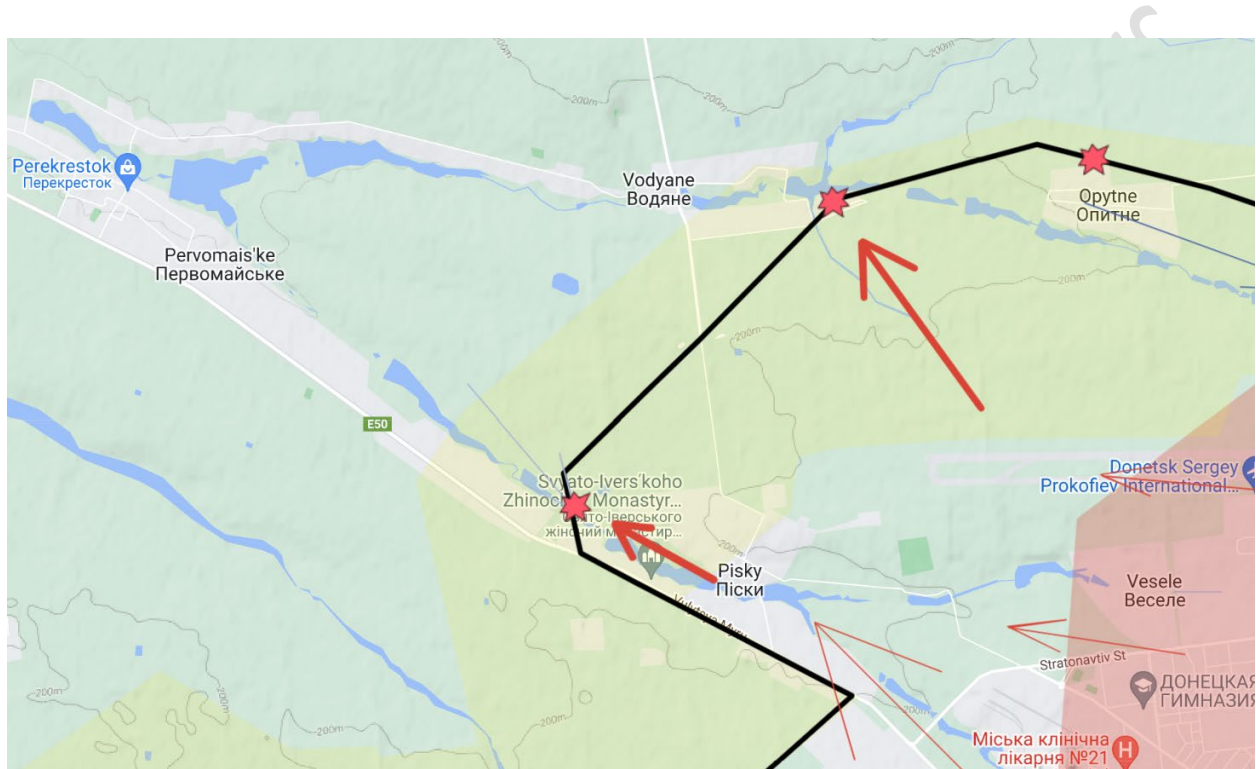


The situation in [Marinka](#) is reported to be difficult after four months of almost continuous shelling.^{27 28} Russian forces flattened the city by applying General Georgy Zhukov's doctrine of intense artillery barrages followed by light infantry charges. The process is repeated until advancing poorly equipped light infantry is no longer attacked. DNR light infantry was met by Ukrainian artillery and troops, suffered heavy losses, and returned to the city's eastern part. Intense artillery fire followed the retreat. Russian troops also attempted to flank

²⁷ <https://t.me/s/DeepStateUA>

²⁸ [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report PM PST](#)

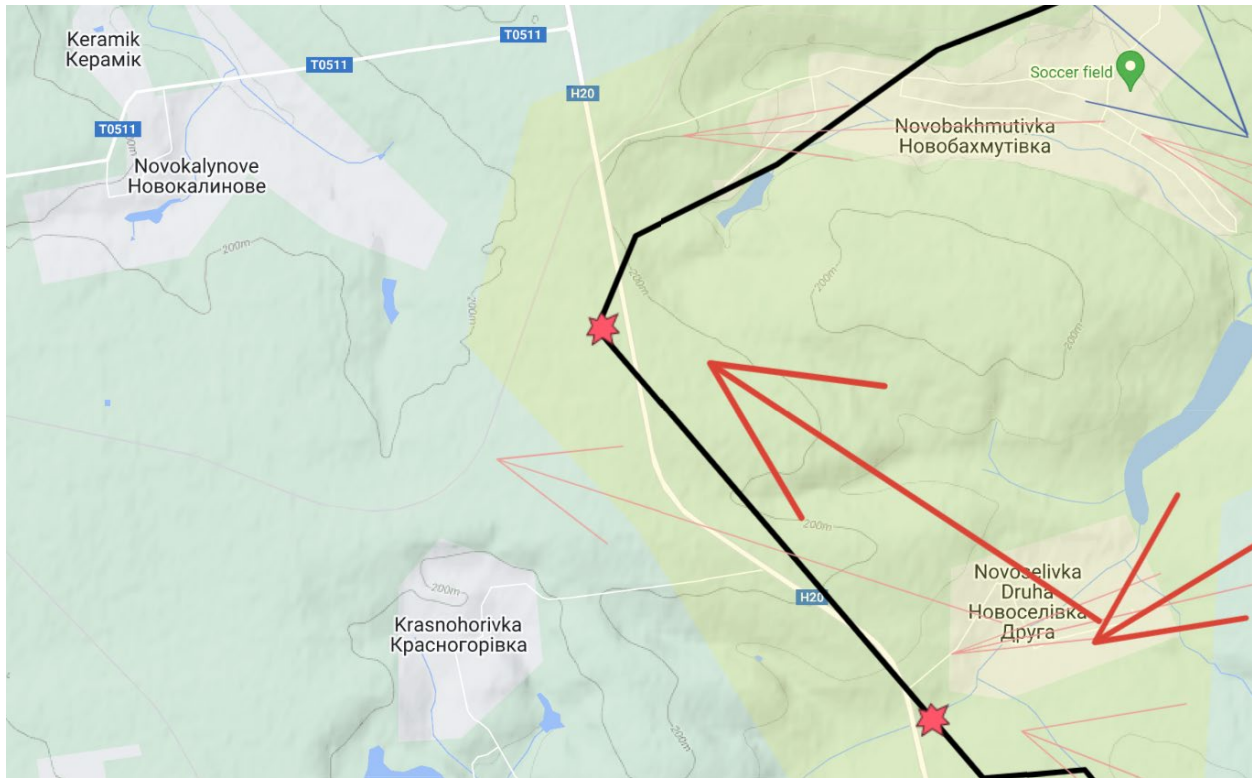
Marinka by attacking [Krasnohorivka](#), but did not advance into the town.



The DNR People's Militia released an almost four-minute video showing their forces had captured [Optyne](#).²⁹ Positional fighting for control of [Pervomaiske](#) continued.³⁰

²⁹ https://t.me/nm_dnr

³⁰ [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report PM PST](#)



Russian forces attempted to advance on [Novokalynove](#) and flank the Ukrainian stronghold of Krasnohorivka to the north. The DNR 1st Army Corps attempted the same strategy at the peak of their prior advance between August 20 to 23.

ASSESSMENT: Ukrainian forces' combat capabilities will be tested on the northern and southern flanks of Avdiivka based on the current state of the Russian advance. We maintain that the Russian Ministry of Defense lacks the quality of leadership and force strength to capitalize on the ongoing marginal gains.

The DNR People's Militia public relations channel claimed their forces destroyed two self-propelled howitzers, eight tanks, and 20 units of "armored and automotive vehicles" without evidence.³¹ The losses would result in a second combined arms battalion being completely destroyed in 48 hours, crippling a Ukrainian brigade. A video showed [three Ukrainian M-113 armored personnel carriers](#) (APC) being destroyed outside of Bakhmut (which would be included in the DNR report).³²

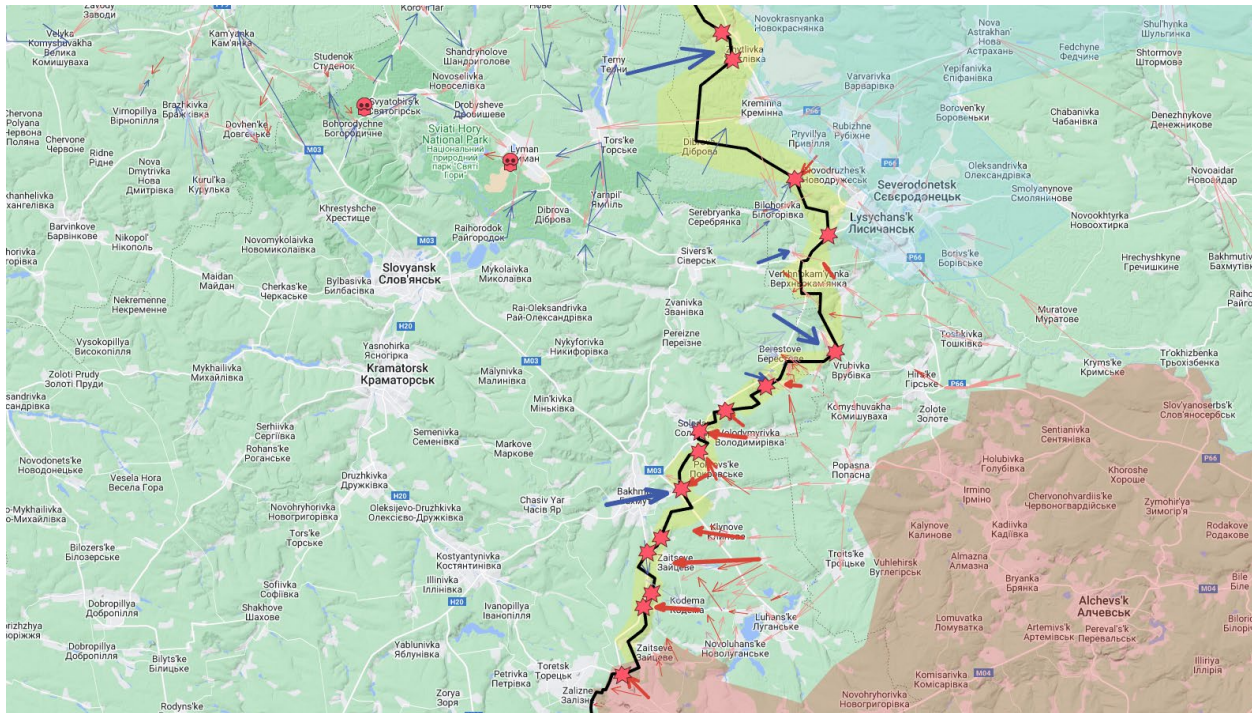
ASSESSMENT: This is still a far cry from the 56 vehicles claimed to be destroyed between November 13 and 14. Given the history of the Russian Ministry of Defense and how the DNR People's Militia has no issues with showing grizzly videos of dead Ukrainian troops, the lack of video evidence raises doubts about the combat claims. Additionally, 60 Ukrainian troops were reportedly killed. The destruction of eight tanks, two SPGs, and 20 armored vehicles in the last 24 hours would have produced a bare minimum of 94 casualties. Finally, the Russian MOD reported that 18 "armored and automotive vehicles" were destroyed theaterwide on November 14, with our analyst team being as generous as possible with the definition of "vehicle."³³ No pictures or videos? Time to apply math and science.

³¹ https://t.me/nm_dnr/9412

³² <https://twitter.com/UAWeapons/status/1592144966620676098>

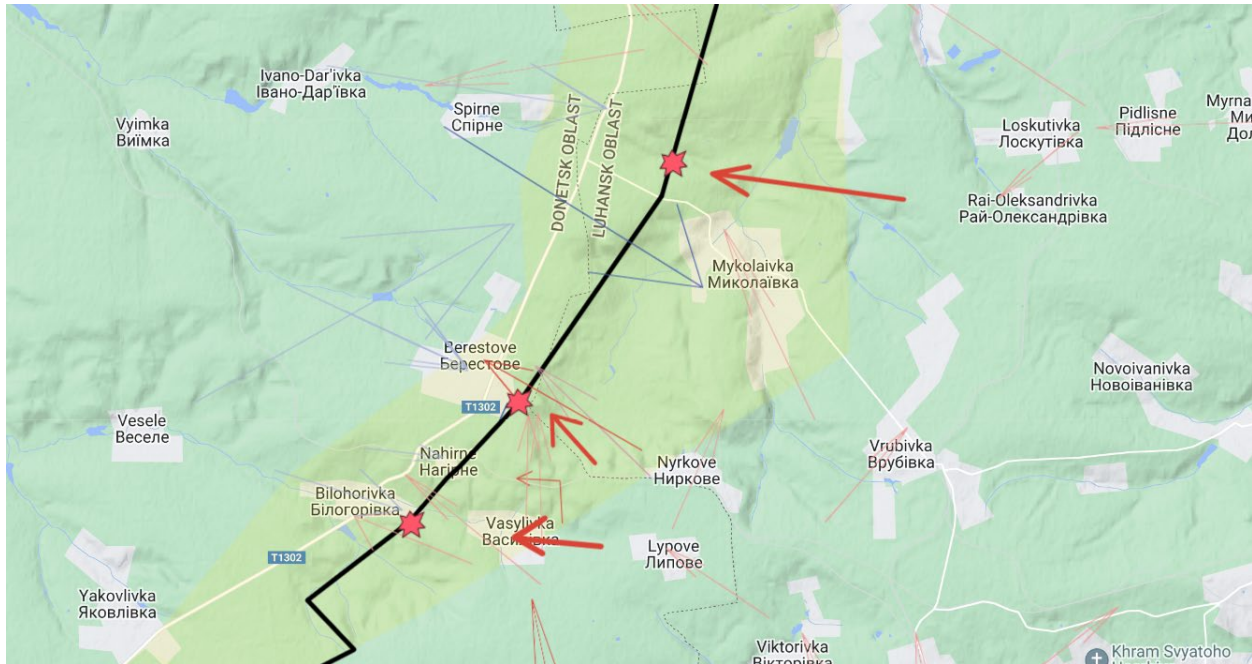
³³ https://t.me/s/mod_russia

NORTHEAST DONETSK



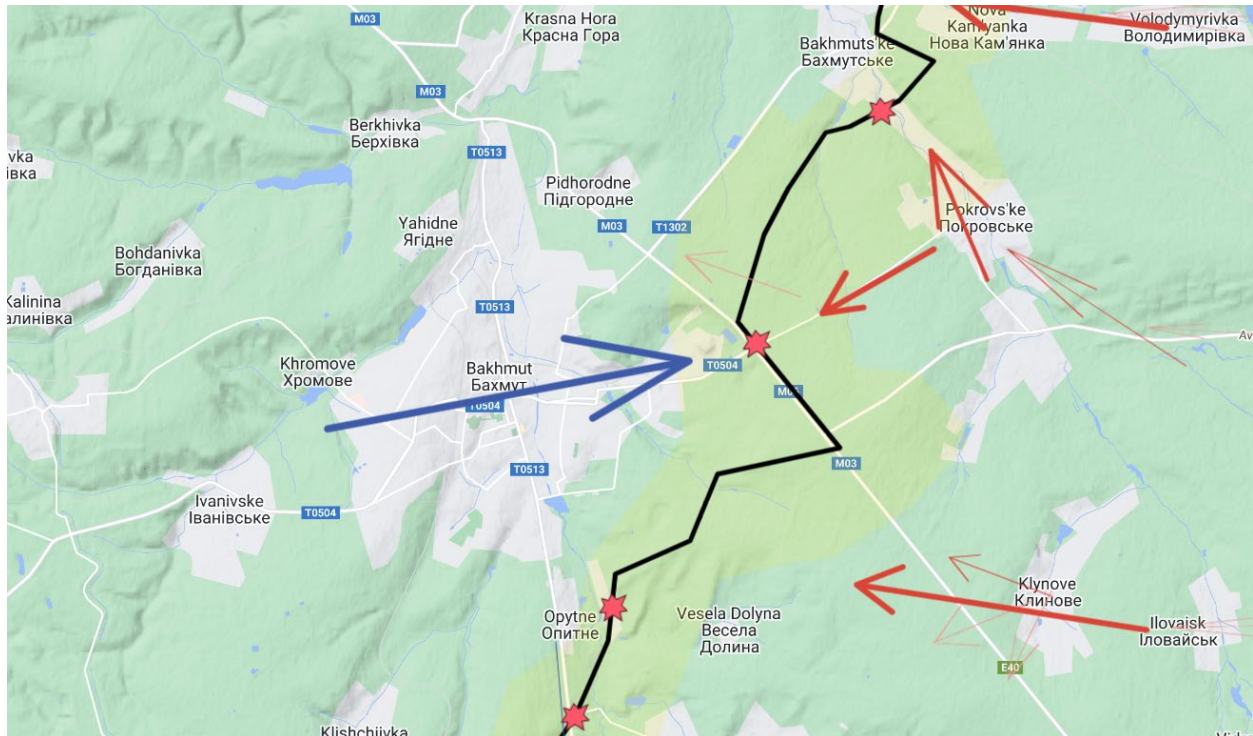
Russian Objective: Integrate oblast into Russian Federation, defend against Ukrainian advances toward Luhansk, capture Bakhmut/Soledar

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



Fighting for control of [Bilohorivka](#) [Donetsk], led by the Private Military (PMC) Company Wagner Group, continued. The settlement remains a no man's land.³⁴

³⁴ [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report PM PST](#)



While fighting for Soledar and Bakhmut remains heavy, the operational tempo has slowed significantly.

ASSESSMENT: PMC Wagner units are now spread across a 60-kilometer front from Bilhorivka in Luhansk to Mykolaivka Druha south of Bakhmut. The area they are defending or attacking has more than doubled since the beginning of October. Combined with an estimated loss of 80 to 100 mercenaries a day per Yevgeny Prigozhin, it is unsurprising that the offensive operations to capture Bakhmut and Soledar have bogged down.

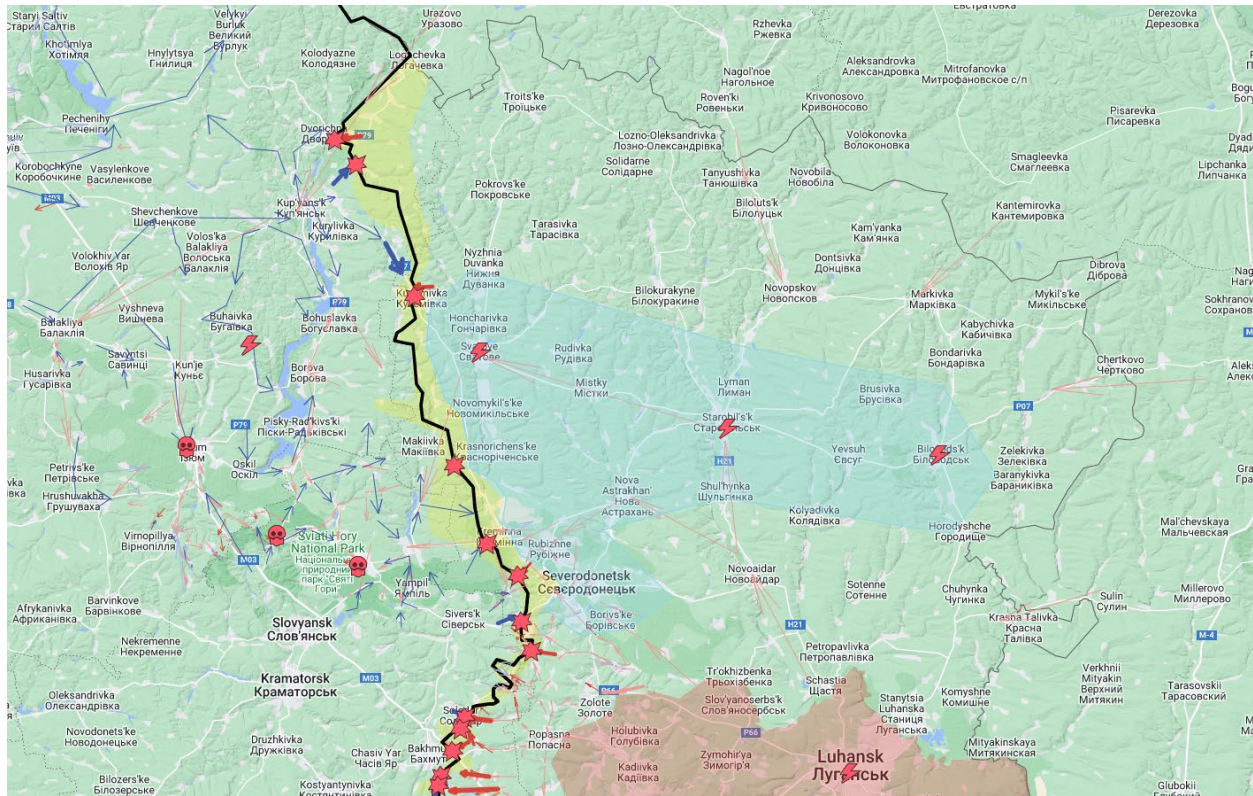
Fighting continued southeast of Soledar in [Bakhmutske](#) and east of [Bakhmut](#).³⁵ The Russian milbloggers we follow did not mention any combat operations on the axis. The State Border Service of Ukraine claimed that Russian drones dropped K-51 grenades on Ukrainian positions, releasing CS gas.³⁶ Although CS, also known as teargas, is frequently used by civilian police forces worldwide, it is considered a chemical weapon and is prohibited from being used on the battlefield. Ukrainian troops used CBRN protocols and held their positions, and one grenade failed to detonate, enabling the confirmation that CS gas was used.

³⁵ [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report PM PST](#)

³⁶ [KMU Ukraine](#) – Government Website

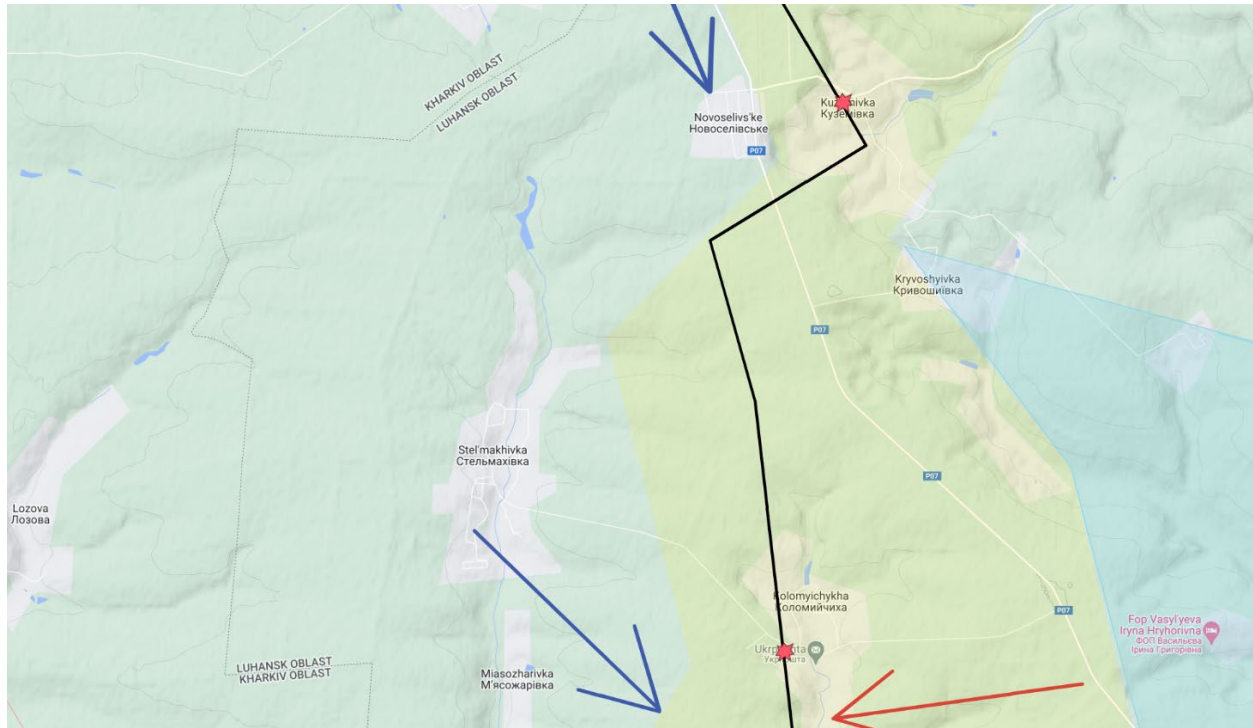


LUHANSK



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

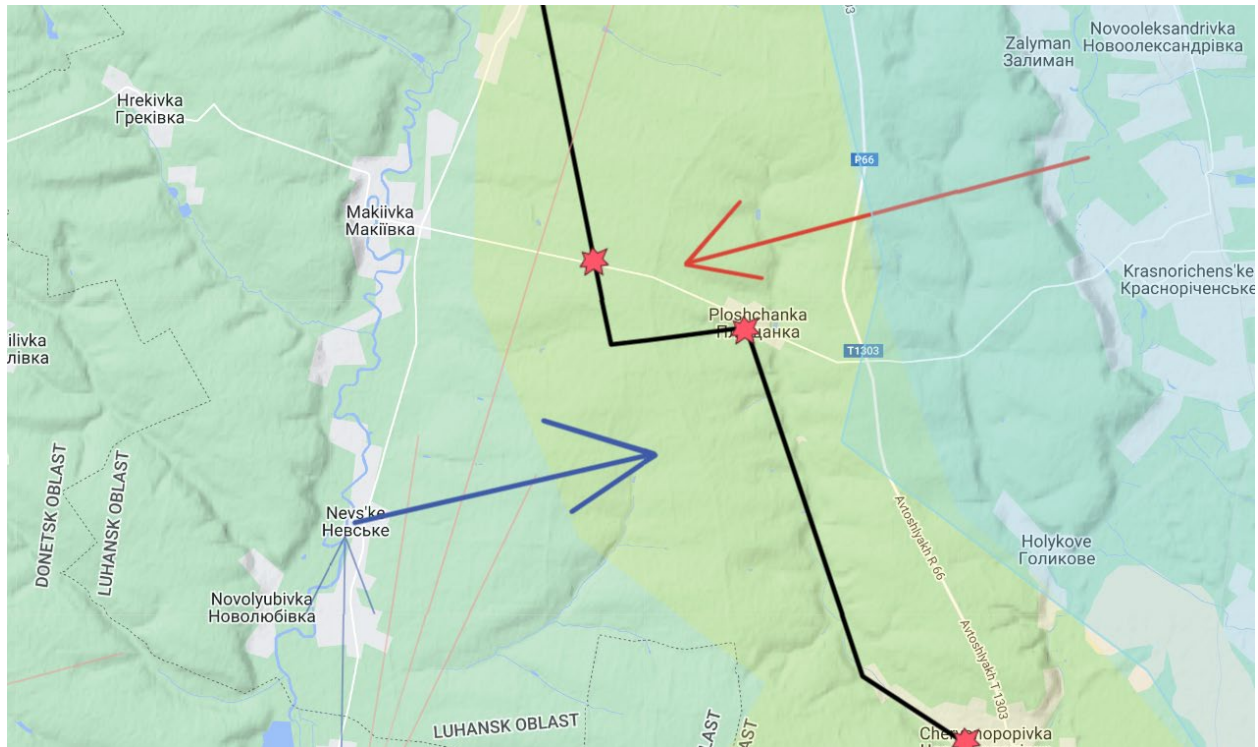
Ukrainian Objective: Break Russian defensive lines, advance on Svatove, Kremlinna, and Lysychansk, and support insurgents



Russian and Ukrainian sources reported mutual fighting in [Novoselivske](#).^{37 38}

³⁷ https://t.me/s/mod_russia

³⁸ [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report PM PST](#)



Russian mercenaries with War Gonzo reported the situation was “difficult in [Ploshchanka](#), with Ukrainian forces advancing from [Makiivka](#) and trying to seize control of the P-66 Highway Ground Line of Communication (GLOC – supply line).

GSAFU claimed that Russian forces had ordered the evacuation of all civilians from Kreminna, Rubizhne, and Severodonetsk. While ordering the evacuation, they were inventorying available housing to quarter Russian mobiks.³⁹ The same forced relocation as part of the genocide of Ukrainian people occurred in Kherson under the same justification and using the martial

³⁹ <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2022/11/14/7376325/>

law declaration to force relocation to Russia – as in the pre-2014 Russian borders Russia.

Serhei Haidai, Luhansk Oblast Administrative and Military Governor reported that fighting was moving closer to Kreminna and Rubizhne, with local residents reporting they could hear the constant sound of fighting.⁴⁰ His report aligns with our observation that while the line of conflict is moving back and forth, Ukrainian forces continue to make steady easterly progress toward Svatove, Kreminna, and Lysychansk.

⁴⁰ <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2022/11/15/7376400/>

CHERNIHIV, KHARKIV, AND SUMY REGION

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

Up to eight S-300 anti-aircraft missiles used for a ground attack landed in the Seredyna-Buda hromada in the Sumy Oblast.⁴¹ A Russian helicopter also flew a combat sortie and dropped bombs in the same area. Two homes and a business were badly damaged. Russian forces also target an object of critical civilian infrastructure in the Sumy oblast, injuring several people.

⁴¹ <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2022/11/14/7376319/>

KYIV REGION

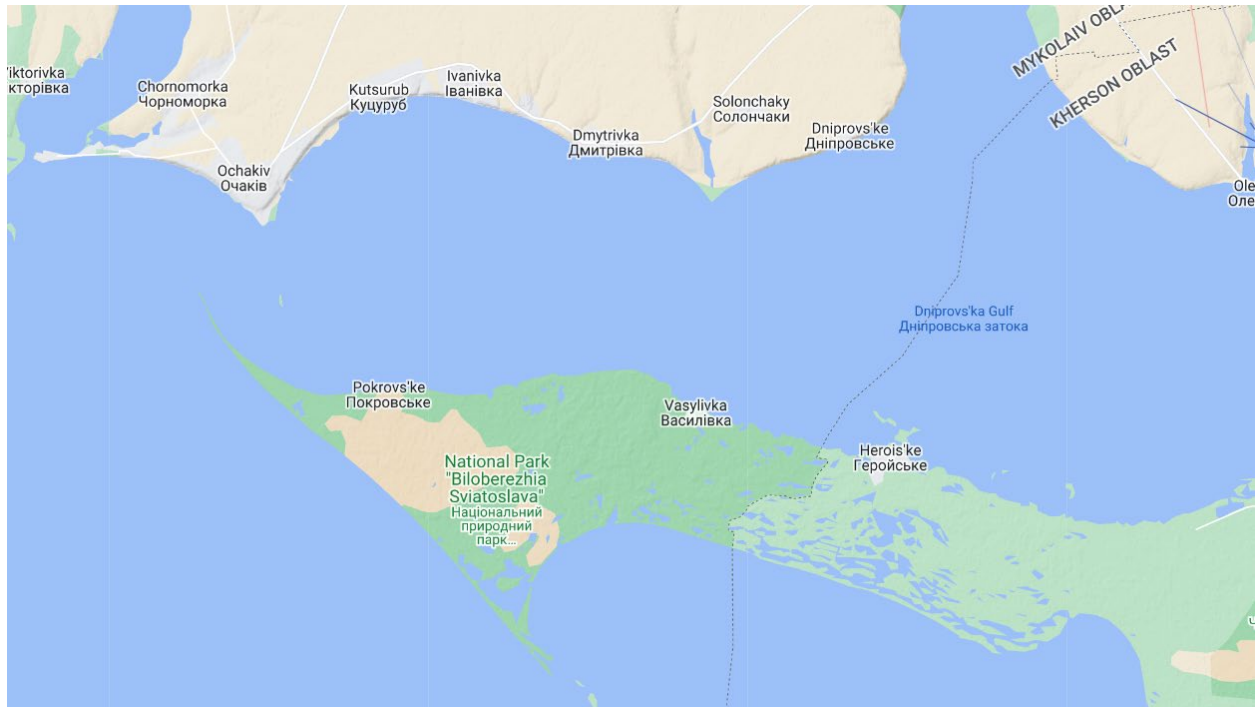
Russian Objective: Launch terror attacks on civilians in an attempt to maximize casualties by deprivation of heat, water, and medical services and break morale

Ukrainian Objective: Deter attacks, and protect civilian lives

There wasn't any significant fighting reported in this region.

BLACK SEA, CRIMEA, MYKOLAIV, AND ODESA REGION

There was one Russian submarine capable of firing four Kalibr cruise missiles on patrol. Pictures have emerged suggesting that the radar array of the missile frigate Admiral Essen, which has remained in port since the October 29 unmanned surface vessel (USV) attack on Sevastopol, is damaged. Our contact had reported that one of the missile frigates had its radar array damaged by shrapnel. Under normal circumstances, a replacement would be easily accessible. Due to sanctions, the Russian Ministry of Defense may not be able to source new parts, partially blinding the ship. No one has been able to produce pictures of the starboard side of the missile frigate Admiral Makarov, which also remains in port.



Grad rockets fired by MLRS and launched from the Kinburn Spit struck [Ochakiv](#).⁴² Russian sources claim the port was targeted while Ukraine attempted an amphibious landing on the Kinburn Spit, and several Ukrainian vessels were destroyed. As previously noted, we maintain intense skepticism that a significant landing occurred.

⁴² <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=458822246384617>

WESTERN & 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

Russian forces continued to fire Grad rockets on the hromadas of Nikopol, Chervonohryhorivka, and Marhanets in the Dnipropetrovsk oblast.⁴³ Over 60 rockets struck the communities, with Nikopol suffering the most damage. Power and natural gas infrastructure was damaged, and engineers were working to make repairs.

RUSSIAN FRONT

A Russian milblogger claimed the border towns of Kozinka, Borki, Tetkino, Popovo, Lezhachi, and Zamosc were shelled and attacked by drones. They did not report any injuries from the

⁴³ <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2022/11/15/7376377/>

attack, but pictures showed a large fire in Kozinka after a fuel depot for diesel fuel was struck.^{44 45}

THEATERWIDE & EXTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS

Belarusian officials reportedly ordered the creation of 50,000 documents to call up conscripts into military service.⁴⁶ The mobilization will allegedly start before the end of November and is slated to be completed by December 31. Ukrainian officials consider Belarus an occupied nation and self-declared President Alexander Lukashenko a puppet of the Kremlin. We have previously assessed that an invasion of western Ukraine targeting Rivne and Lviv is possible during the upcoming winter months.

Dmytro Lubinets, the Ukrainian Parliament's Commissioner for Human Rights, appealed to Oleksii Reznikov, the Minister of Defence of Ukraine, to restore the accreditation of Ukrainian and foreign journalists who covered the events in Kherson immediately after the liberation.⁴⁷ Six journalists from CNN, Sky News, an Italian news agency, and Ukraine had their credentials

⁴⁴ <https://t.me/rybar/41156>

⁴⁵ https://twitter.com/bayraktar_1love/status/1592128370837688322

⁴⁶ <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2022/11/14/7376320/>

⁴⁷ <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2022/11/14/7376283/>

revoked for reporting from Kherson less than 24 hours after liberation. Lubinets accurately pointed out that journalist access to combat zones is an accepted international norm, and the Ukrainian military should support the press. Ukrainian military leaders pushed back, saying the decision-making capacity for press access lies with the military, not civilian administration.

ASSESSMENT: Given the history of more than one journalist organization breaking operational security resulting in Ukrainian troops being killed and losing their positions in June, we can understand the hesitancy of the Ukrainian armed forces. Russian forces also targeted journalists resulting in almost two-dozen deaths, which dropped dramatically after the unspoken “15 kilometers from fighting” rule was implemented. In this case, the reporters did not put themselves in mortal danger and did not break operational security. They did take advantage of the ongoing chaos caused by the rapid Russian retreat, would have almost certainly been cleared to pass through multiple military checkpoints, or were embedded with advancing Ukrainian units. As conflict journalists, we understand the need to protect OPSEC and frequently call out the failures of Russian state media. However, the truth matters, and we agree with the Ukrainian Parliament’s Commissioner for Human Rights that the accreditation should be restored in this particular case due to the historical significance of the moment

and no apparent harm caused. Journalists also have to walk a fine line between chasing a story and maintaining the pillars of ethical standards, including minimizing harm.

A video from Ukrainian forces showed an [infantry fighting vehicle intentionally striking](#) the half-height dragon teeth Russian troops had set up as barriers to slow or trap armored vehicles.⁴⁸ The concrete pyramids, which aren't buried and are apparently hollow, did nothing to slow the IFV down. You should watch the video.

RUSSIAN MOBILIZATION & MILITARY STATUS

Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a decree that enables the Russian Armed Forces to conscript dual-passport holders and foreign nationals living in Russia under a work permit. The change indicates the Russian Ministry of Defense is still having a hard time filling its ranks, and the forced conscription of foreign nationals into Russian ranks will likely cause more tension among personnel. No word on if Steven Segal is ready to go all – Steven Segal in Ukraine.

⁴⁸ https://twitter.com/bayraktar_1love/status/1592153855105826818

Putin also signed a decree demobilizing university students in the Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) and DNR. Family members have been pressuring the governments of the LNR and DNR, as well as the Kremlin, to return students and teachers that were forcibly conscripted over the summer. Despite the decree, reports of forced conscription of students of adult age continued in the illegally annexed regions.

A Russian Il-76 transport was photographed in the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad loading 150 convicts that had joined PMC Wagner with the promise of money, murder, and a pardon if they survive a six-month contract fighting in the Hunger Games.⁴⁹ The life expectancy of a Wagner penal mercenary is nine days. May the odds ever be in your favor.

The United States awarded a \$500 million contract to Lockheed Martin to replenish the ammunition supply for HIMARS and to provide continued support to Ukraine.⁵⁰ The United States has provided 38 M142 HIMARS launchers to Ukraine since late June, and the Pentagon claims not a single launcher has been damaged or destroyed by Russian forces. Other nations have supplied M142, M270, and MARS II launchers that use the same munitions.

⁴⁹ <https://twitter.com/igorsushko/status/1592071510176731137>

⁵⁰ <https://twitter.com/JackDetsch/status/1592208541414481923>

WAR CRIMES AND HUMAN RIGHTS

A day after praising the video showing the alleged execution using a sledgehammer of Wagner's penal mercenary turned traitor Yevgeny Nuzhin, PMC Wagner leader Yevgeny Prigozhin now claims the video shows the CIA killing of one of its field assets.⁵¹ Prigozhin says the color of the stone used in the video “isn't available in Russia,” the flashes of uniforms of two unseen people are American, and there is no cursing in the statement. He claims Nuzhin was imprisoned 27 years ago under the direction of the United States Central Intelligence Agency.

The execution was praised by Prigozhin, the ranks of PMC Wagner, and ultra-nationalists within Russia and their supporters. Russian ultra-nationalists want to return to Stalinism and increasingly see Putin and the Kremlin leaders he has surrounded himself with as weak, ineffective, and corrupt. It is unclear to us why Prigozhin has reversed course. We have elected not to share the video due to its graphic nature, but it is not hard to find on social media using some obvious keywords.

⁵¹ <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2022/11/15/7376416/>

GEOPOLITICAL

The United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution holding Russia accountable for multiple violations of international law and responsible for paying reparations to Ukraine. Ninety-four delegates voted in favor of the measure, 14 voted against it, and 72 abstained. Surprise “yes” votes included Afghanistan, Hungary, Mexico, Somalia, and Turkey. Israel abstained, and the Bahamas joined nations such as North Korea, Nicaragua, Belarus, and Russia in voting no.

At the G20 Summit in Bali, Ukrainian President Zelenskyy referred to the confab as the G19 in a deliberate snub to the Russian Federation.⁵² "There are and cannot be any excuses for nuclear blackmail," Zelenskyy said while attending the summit virtually. "I thank you, dear G19, for making this clear. However, please use all your power to make Russia abandon nuclear threats."

United States President Joe Biden, also at the G20 Summit, said there would be no negotiations or peace deals made without Ukraine sitting at the table and the nation dictating the terms of its future. Zelenskyy told the G20 delegates that there would

⁵² <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2022/11/15/7376379/>

be no Minsk III agreement, as its enforcement would be impossible, and Russia would only use a ceasefire as an excuse to consolidate and restore combat power and attack again in the future.

ECONOMIC

The rouble was unchanged, with an exchange rate of 60 for 1 US dollar.

Oil prices continued to slide, with WTI crude falling to \$86 a barrel and Brent dropping to \$93. United States wholesale RBOB gasoline on the spot market fell to \$2.52 per gallon for November contracts. (67 cents a liter)

Dutch TTF Gas Futures for December 2022 remained highly volatile, skyrocketing to 127 euros per megawatt hour. January 2023 contracts were also up over 10%, trading at 132 euros.

Chicago SRW Wheat Futures climbed to \$8.27 a bushel for March 2022 contracts.