



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



April 28, 2022





# Malcontent News

## Russia-Ukraine War SITREP

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## Contents

SUMMARY – DAY 64 .....	2
KEY EVENTS MAP .....	7
DONBAS REGION .....	8
LUHANSK .....	8
Severodonetsk Salient.....	8
Severodonetsk Westward Offensive.....	9
DONETSK.....	9
SOUTH DONBAS – AZOV SEA.....	10
KHARKIV REGION .....	12
DNIPRO, KHERSON & MYKOLAIV, ZAPORIZHIA REGION .....	16
CHERNIHIV & SUMY REGION .....	19
KYIV REGION .....	19
BLACK SEA & ODESA REGION .....	20
WEST REGION .....	20
THEATERWIDE & EXTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS.....	21
WAR CRIMES AND HUMAN RIGHTS.....	25
GEOPOLITICAL .....	26
ECONOMIC.....	27
DISINFORMATION EVALUATION.....	28

## **SUMMARY – DAY 64**

*The assessments and opinions expressed in the Malcontent News SITREP are not representative, endorsed, or reflect the views of the Rondeli Foundation. We are grateful for the foundation's work to assess and verify territorial control changes and provide maps in the public domain.*

It has been 2,982 days since Russia first invaded Ukraine.

The surge in new territorial control for Russia over the previous 72 hours has stalled out along the Severodentsk Westward Offensive and Izyum axis.

In the Donbas and southern Kharkiv Oblast, Ukrainian forces held the line of conflict along the Severdonetsk Salient, the Severodentsk Westward Offensive, from Donetsk to Hulyaipole, and in Mariupol. Russian and Chechen forces lost ground in Rubihzne and attempted to bypass Popasnya by heading south from Train Station 1.

In Kherson Oblast, Ukrainian forces appear to have liberated Oleksandrivka (southwest of the city of Kherson) while Russian troops occupied Tavrijs´ke.

Russian forces launched offensives from the western flank of the Izyum advance after securing 20 square kilometers of territory around Zavody on April 27. Ukrainian forces successfully regrouped and defended attacks at Velyka Komushevkha and Nova Dmytrivka.

The Russian Air Force flew seven sorties over Mariupol using Tu-22M3 strategic bombers. Reports indicated dozens of FAB1500 bombs were dropped on the Azovstal Metallurgical Plant. Heavy fighting is happening around the plant and at the main port.

Northeast of Kharkiv, Ukrainian forces liberated the suburbs of Lisne and Kutuzivka while advancing into Rus'ka Lozova and Momotove.

Three to five Russian cruise missiles targeted Kyiv striking a block of apartments and a factory. At least ten people were injured. The attack happened while United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, Bulgarian Prime Minister Kiril Petkov, and Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy were meeting in the capital city.

After missiles hit the Zatoka Bridge south of Odesa on Tuesday and Wednesday, train service was restored on April 28.

Ukrainian SOF, assisted by insurgents, destroyed the railroad bridge in Yakymivka between Russian-controlled Melitopol and the Crimean Peninsula. The bridge connects Crimea to the Donbas and the northern half of the Zaporizhia Oblast.

Transnistria has blocked all men ages 18 to 55 from leaving the breakaway republic. The Transnistrian government released an order mobilizing all men in the "nation." The order was dated April 21, four days before the first alleged terrorist attack.

**ASSESSMENT:** It does not appear that Russian forces did an operational pause to consolidate their positions today. Offensives launched out of Izyum and against the Severodonetsk salient were ineffective.

Although Ukrainian forces are, for the most part, fighting for every square kilometer, the defense is coming with a high price tag. Ukrainian forces, notably around Izyum, are

suffering some of the heaviest losses of the war, both in manpower and equipment.

In contrast, there are many reports that Russia and Russian-backed forces such as Wagner Group PMC, DNR, and LNR militias are struggling to find replacement troops in the Donbas. A Russian state media video showed local Pro-Russian militias near Izyum equipped with bolt action World War II era Mosin-Nagant rifles and Cold War steel pot helmets. The ranks included older men and others who appeared malnourished.

In another sign that the offensive isn't moving at the pace that Russian leadership wants, Denis Pushilin, the Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) leader, announced that May 9 celebrations are postponed.

The usually polarized United States Congress passed S.3522, the Ukraine Democracy Defense Lend-Lease Act of 2022, in a 417-10 vote. On the same day, United States President Joe Biden requested another \$33 billion in aid for Ukraine - \$20 billion in military weaponry.

Ukraine is just starting to receive a tidal wave of lethal weapon support from three continents. NATO Secretary-

General Jens Stoltenberg said that the organization was prepared to support Ukraine in its war against Russia for “years,” including modernizing its military.

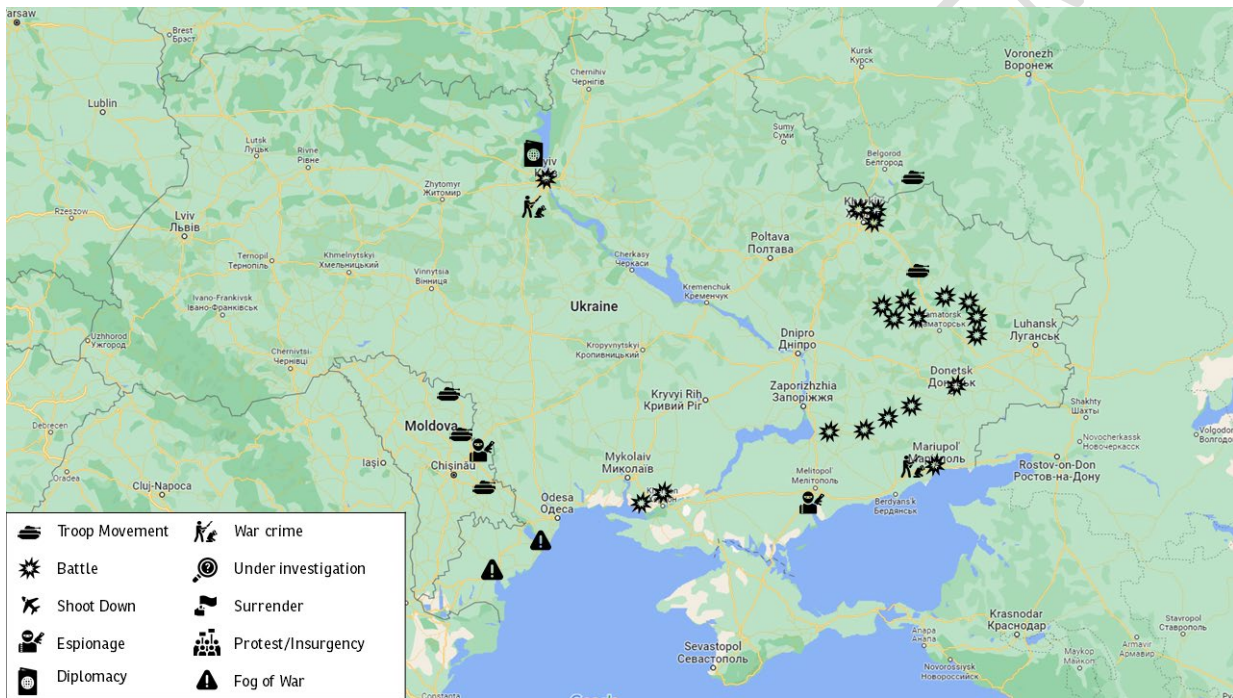
Russian President Vladimir Putin labels the support of Ukraine as “western threats” against Russia and, on April 28, said the Russian army was prepared to deliver “lightning-fast strikes” with strategic weapons.

Russian leadership appears to be giving up on a May 9 Victory Day. It is highly improbable that the Ukrainian armed forces can be handed a significant defeat across eastern and southern Ukraine in the next ten days.

We remain concerned that we are stuck in the Mutual Assured Destruction Instability Paradox and believe the situation has further destabilized in the last 24 hours. An invasion by Transnistrian troops into Ukraine would be very destabilizing in Moldova, where over half a million Ukrainian refugees are located. A panic could spill over into Romania and Bulgaria, creating an environment ripe for accidental conflict.

President Putin has no off-ramp to deescalate the situation and appears to be playing a dangerous game of brinkmanship.

## KEY EVENTS MAP





## DONBAS REGION

There were no territorial changes in the Donbas today.

## LUHANSK

### *Severodonetsk Salient*

Intense fighting continued in Rubizhne, where Russian and Chechen forces launched an offensive that failed, with reports of very heavy troop losses.<sup>1</sup>

Russia-backed militias fighting in Popasna appear to be attempting to bypass the city center and move south of Train Station 1. A new video from Russian state media sources shows no territorial gains, with the video shot in the exact locations as yesterday.<sup>2 3</sup>

Interviews and video show local militia forces equipped with Soviet-era equipment, including AK-74 rifles and SSh-68 surplus steel helmets.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://twitter.com/mdmitri91/status/1519466321502740482>

<sup>2</sup> <https://twitter.com/ZOONewsTV/status/1519605471568867328> [Russian State Media Rating: Valid]

<sup>3</sup> <https://twitter.com/Hetreeli/status/1519711266151014400> [Russian State Media Rating: Valid]



### *Severodonetsk Westward Offensive*

Russian forces were unable to make any progress on the Severodonetsk Westward Offensive. The line of conflict remains unchanged.

## **DONETSK TO WESTERN ZAPORIZHIA**

There was scattered fighting and artillery barrages along the entire line of conflict from Horlivka to Velyka

Novosilka and further west into the Zaporizhia Oblast to Huyaipole. There were no territorial changes, and Russian troops have made little progress over the last ten days.

Ukrainian forces destroyed an oil depot in the city of Donetsk.<sup>4</sup>

## **SOUTH DONBAS – AZOV SEA**

Ukrainian Marines reported that the Azovstal Metallurgical Plant was heavily bombed overnight, collapsing the field hospital.<sup>5</sup> (viewer discretion advised). Russian state media released a video showing continued fighting northeast of the factory after the air attacks.<sup>6</sup> The footage appears to be staged but counters the narrative that Mariupol has been fully captured over a week ago.

NASA FIRMS data showed renewed fighting within the main port of Mariupol. It has been reported that 100 to 200 Ukrainian forces have continued to operate in the area.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://twitter.com/NotWoofers/status/1519892130235301889>

<sup>5</sup> <https://twitter.com/CanadianUkrain1/status/1519648275464400898>

<sup>6</sup> <https://twitter.com/RALee85/status/1519807219319152645> [Russian State Media Rating: Questionable]



Despite assurances from President Putin to the UN Secretary-General Guterres that they had agreed in principle on evacuating Mariupol, Russian leadership continues to block all efforts.<sup>7</sup>

Late on April 28, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov issued another demand of unconditional surrender for the soldiers in Mariupol.<sup>8</sup>

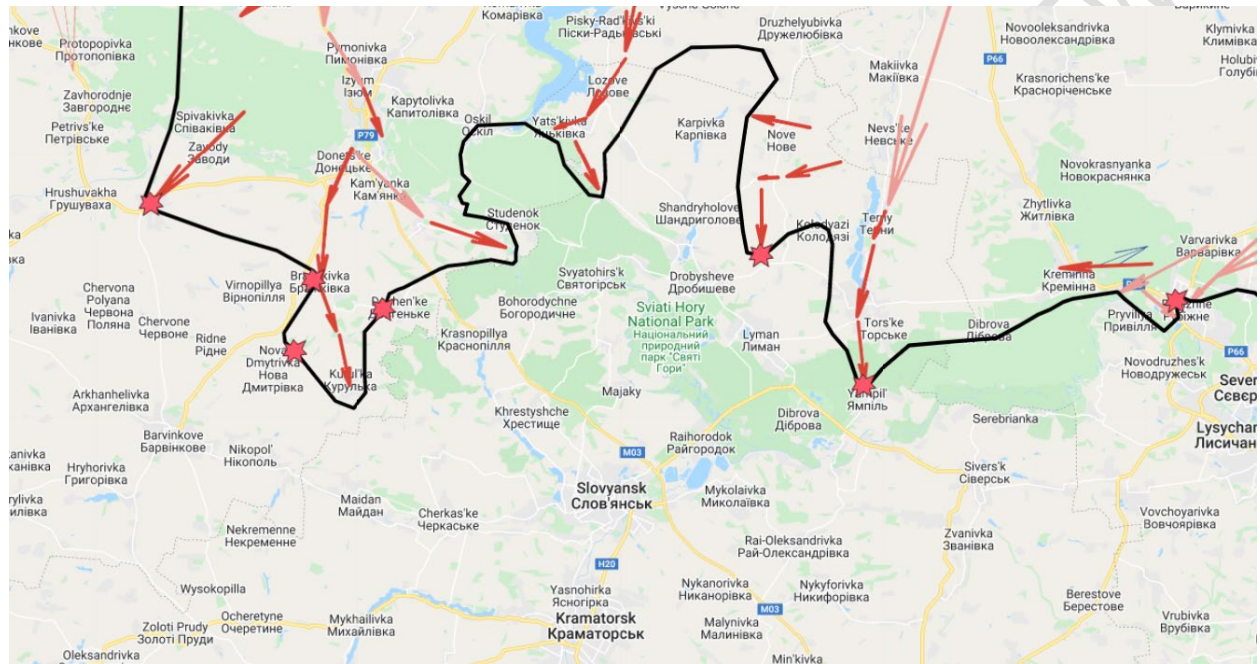
<sup>7</sup> [Reuters](#)

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/4/28/ukraine-fm-denounces-kyiv-attack-as-heinous-act-liveblog>



## KHARKIV REGION

Along the Izyum axis, Russian forces attempted to advance from two of the three columns.



The first column that recaptured Zavydy on April 27 and overran Ukrainian positions could not continue its advance. Russian attacks on Velyka Komushevkha and Nova Dmytrivka were pushed back by Ukrainian defenders, who consolidated defensive positions overnight.

The second column advancing southeast toward Slovyansk was unable to capture Pasika.

The third column advancing south along the eastern shore of the Oskil River could not move west to Oskil or east toward Zarichne.

Russian state media released a video showing troops being resupplied in the Izyum area.<sup>9</sup> Local militias are armed with World War II bolt-action Soviet rifles and occupying a school. Many are older and in poor physical condition for combat troops.



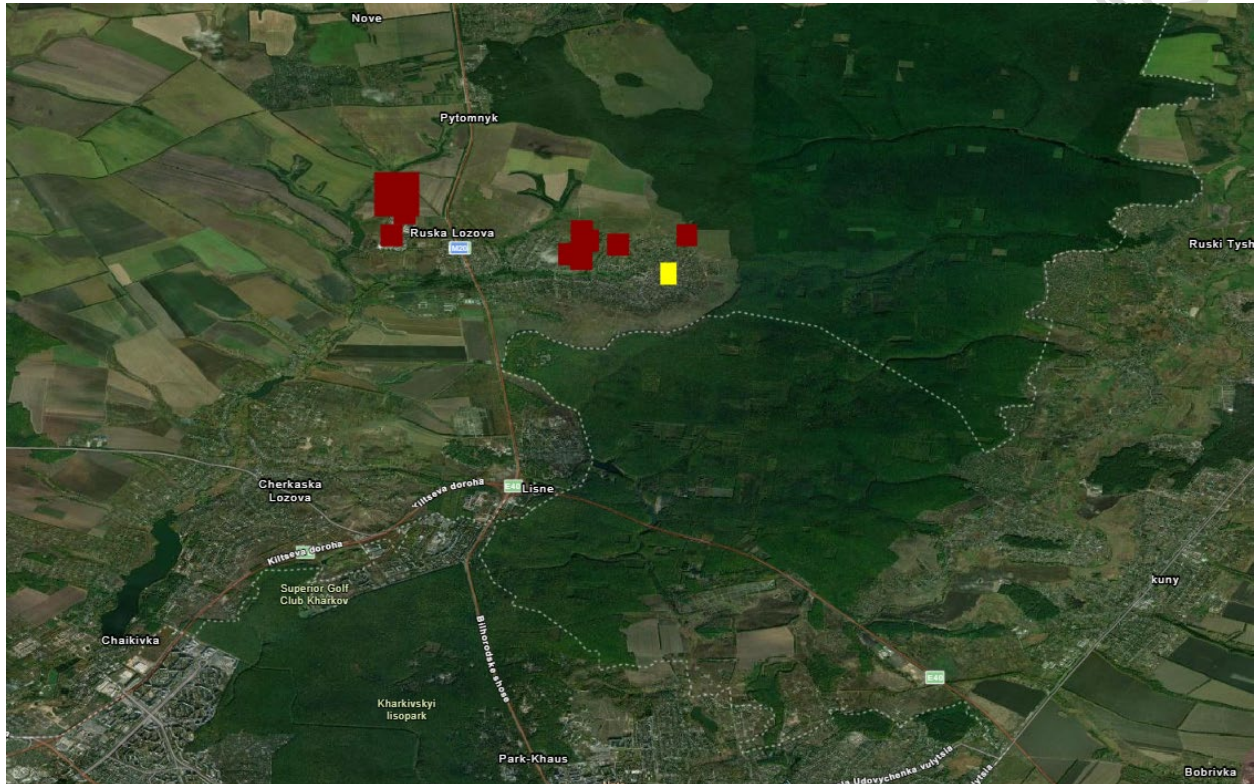
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<sup>9</sup> <https://twitter.com/Lastkombo/status/1519793327817826306>



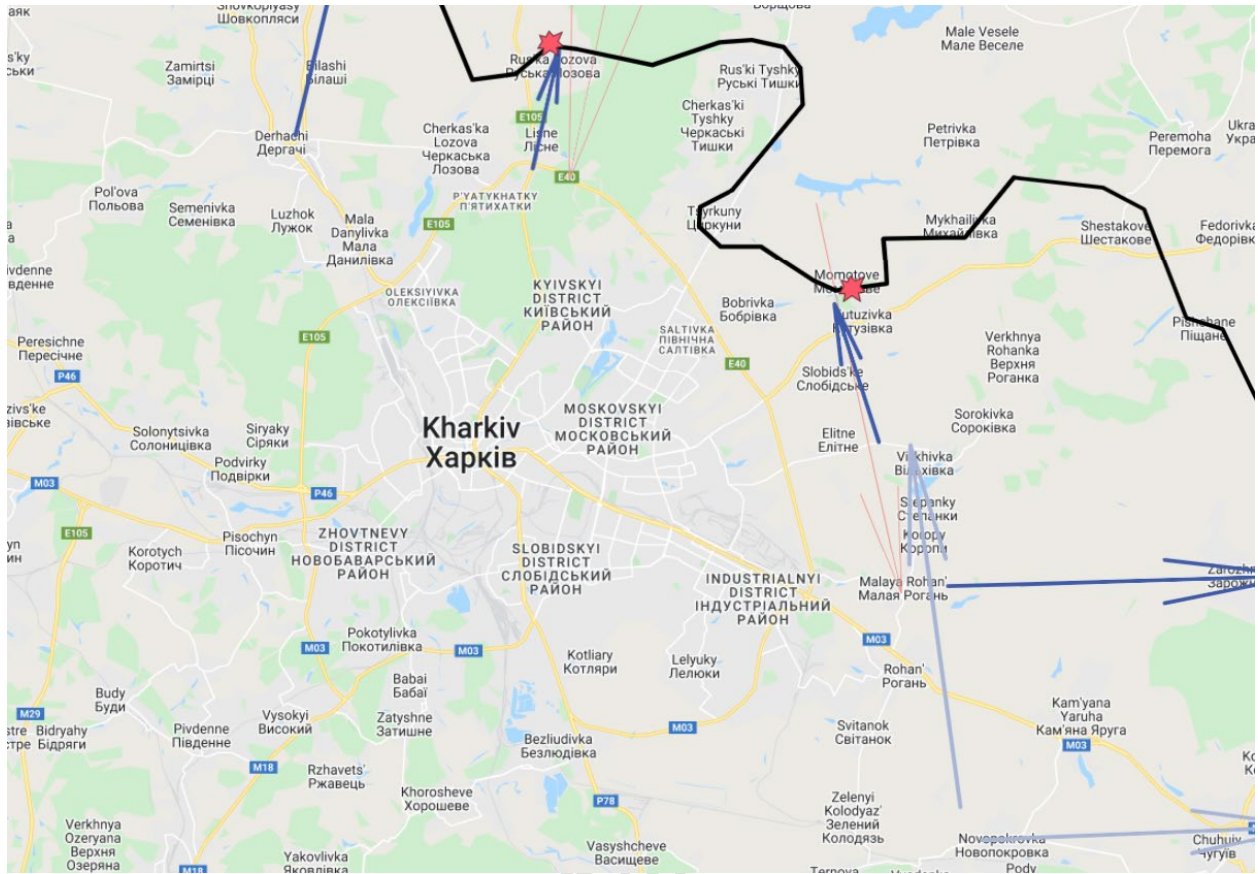


Northeast of Kharkiv, Ukrainian forces liberated the suburbs of Lisne and Kutuzivka while advancing into Rus'ka Lozova and Momotove. NASA FIRMS data indicated there was intense fighting in Rus'ka Lozova.



Shelling of civilians and civilian infrastructure continued in the city, but the steady advances are providing some relief for the non-combatant population.





## DNIPRO, KHERSON & MYKOLAIV, ZAPORIZHIA REGION

Shelling and rocket fire continued south of Mykolaiv and Kryvyi Rih, with no change in territorial control.



With support from insurgents, Ukrainian SOF destroyed a key railroad bridge in Yakymivka.<sup>10</sup> The bridge connects the Crimean Peninsula with the Donbas and the northern parts of the Zaporizhia Oblast.

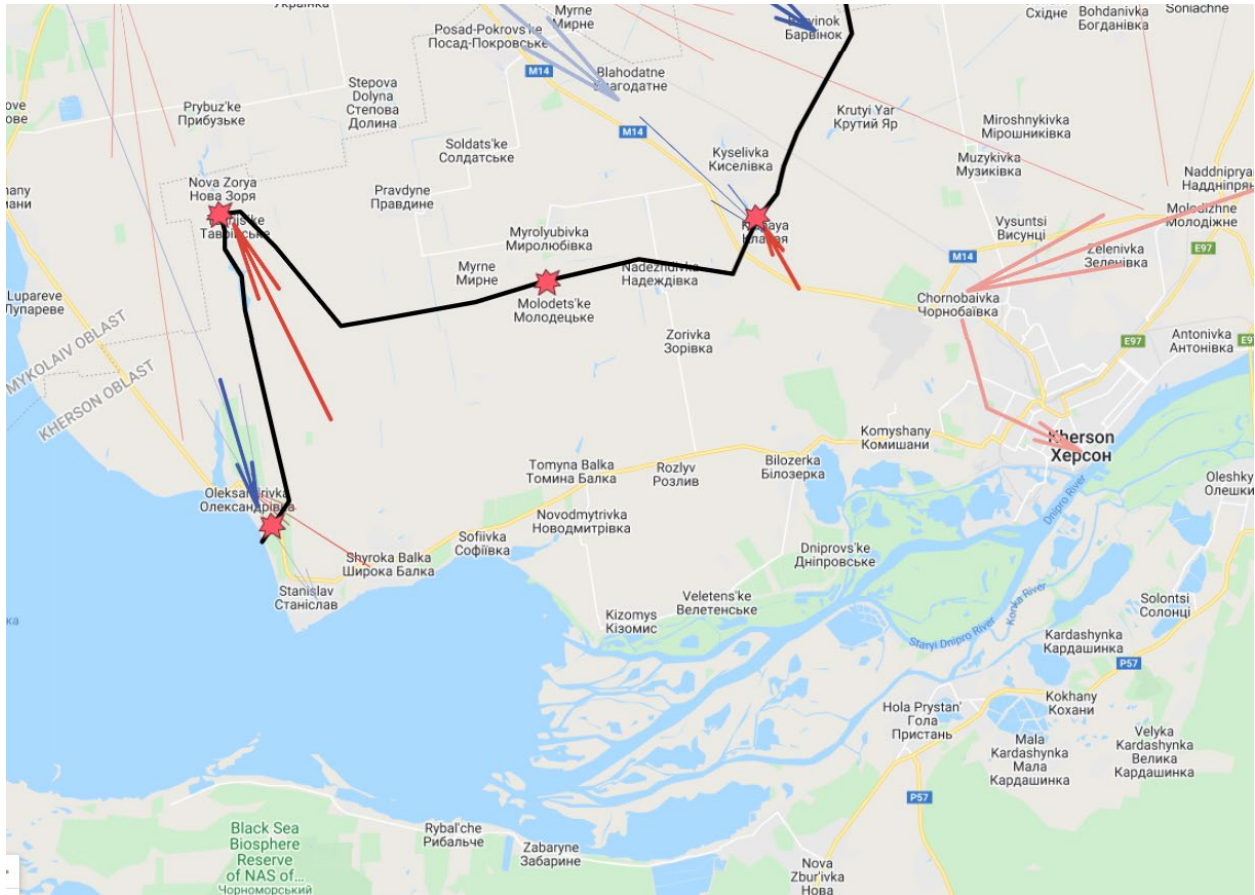
The settlements of Novodanylivka and Orikhiv were under heavy fire, with Russian forces targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure. The region has come under frequent attacks since March.



Russian troops abandoned their positions in Oleksandrivka (the one southwest of Kherson). We consider the settlement contested, given how often control changes. Russian forces occupied the village of Tavrijs´ke. There was fighting in

<sup>10</sup> <https://goo.gl/maps/AyiM7nSW3UUHnXtW8>

# Klapaya, on the outskirts of Kherson city, with no change in territorial control.



Puppet leaders in the Kherson Oblast announced there would not be a referendum on May 1, and the oblast will become part of the Russian Federation on May 1.



## CHERNIHIV & SUMY REGION

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

## KYIV REGION

Today, three to five cruise missiles were fired at Kyiv while UN Secretary-General Guterres and Bulgarian Prime Minister Petkov visited the Ukrainian capital. Missiles hit the Shevchenkivs'kyi district, striking an apartment building and a factory. Ten civilians are reportedly injured in the attack.





## **BLACK SEA & ODESA REGION**

There Zatoka Bridge was reopened to railroad traffic on April 28. Ukrainian forces expect the bridge to be attacked again.

**ASSESSMENT:** We believe that an amphibious landing by Russian forces in the Bilhorod-Dnistrovskyi region of Odesa is remote. Ukrainian troops have been provided with antiship weapons, in addition to the Ukrainian Neptune system, and are receiving real-time intelligence from NATO.

**ASSESSMENT:** We believe a land invasion by Russian forces backed by Transnistrian militia is possible but unlikely.

## **WEST REGION**

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

## THEATERWIDE & EXTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS

Transnistria declared that men between 18 to 55 could not leave the breakaway republic and had been mobilized for military duty.<sup>11</sup> The memo, dated April 21, was written the day before Lieutenant General Rustam Minnekayev said that Russia could open a land corridor to Transnistria after securing the southern regions of Ukraine.<sup>12</sup>

On April 17, The Russian Ministry of Defense claimed that Romania had sent hundreds of mercenaries into Ukraine.<sup>13</sup> Of graver concern, on April 21, DNR leader Pushilin claimed that Romanian had breached Mariupol and inserted 1,500 mercenaries into the Azovstal Metallurgical Plant.<sup>14</sup>

Today, Russian state media accused Romania of mobilizing its military to "Romania is covertly redeploying its forces to Moldova in order to jointly attack the unrecognized Transnistria Republic."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> <https://twitter.com/sentdefender/status/1519739069273677825>

<sup>12</sup> [The Guardian](#)

<sup>13</sup> <https://tass.com/defense/1438799> [Russian State Media]

<sup>14</sup> <https://twitter.com/visegrad24/status/1517125522903506945>

<sup>15</sup> <https://english.pravda.ru/news/world/151533-romania/> [Russian State Media]

**ASSESSMENT:** Russian leadership has a high probability of attempting a false flag operation that could try to pull Transnistria, Moldova, and Romania into a broader war.

In a 417-10 vote, the United States House passed Senate Bill 3522, the Ukraine Democracy Defense Lend-Lease Act of 2022."<sup>16</sup> The measure will head to President Biden's desk.

The law will enable the United States to provide military aid and equipment to Ukraine and other Eastern European countries impacted or threatened by Russian aggression. The World War II measure, initially passed in 1940, is credited with aiding Great Britain and the Soviet Union during the darkest days of Europe from 1940 to 1942. The original lend-lease program provided \$50 billion in military aid to 31 nations.

Repayment for the equipment is based on a promise to pay much later or return the equipment after use. The debt could be waived or reduced. It also cuts administrative red tape, making it easier to provide military aid.

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<sup>16</sup> [Reuters](#)

The Lend-Lease Act will enable the White House to support Eastern Europe through September 30, 2023.

President Biden also asked for another \$33 billion in military support for Ukraine from Congress. The request would provide \$20 billion in defense spending for Ukraine and U.S. allies in the region. Additionally, it would provide \$8.5 billion to keep the Ukrainian government running and be able to pay government salaries. Another \$3 billion would go to humanitarian food programs and refugee aid. It would also provide incentives to American farmers to grow wheat and other grain crops to fill the gap created by Ukraine's crop production reductions due to the war and Russian confiscation.

Russian Foreign Minister Dmitry Peskov said that providing weapons to Ukraine posed a threat to the security of Europe.<sup>17</sup>

"In itself, the tendency to pump weapons, including heavy weapons, to Ukraine and other countries are actions that threaten the security of the continent and provoke instability," Peskov told reporters.

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<sup>17</sup> [Reuters](#)



Russian President Putin speaking to parliamentarians in St. Petersburg, told them, "If someone decides to intervene in current events [in Ukraine] from the outside and creates unacceptable strategic threats for Russia, then [they] must know that our response, our retaliatory strikes, will be lightning-fast, quick. We have all the tools for this - such that no one else can boast of right now. And we won't brag - we'll use them if needed! And everyone should know about it! All decisions in this regard have already been made."<sup>18</sup>

German lawmakers overwhelmingly voted to provide Ukraine with heavy weapons and "complex systems." The measure passed with broad support across most political parties, 586-100. Only the far-right Alternative for Germany party voted against the petition, calling it almost equal to a declaration of war.

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<sup>18</sup> <https://news.yahoo.com/putin-threatens-lightning-fast-strikes-135038698.html>

## WAR CRIMES AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Ukraine announced that ten Russian soldiers had been charged with war crimes connected to their actions in the city of Bucha.<sup>19</sup>

According to the Ukrainian president, the soldiers are from the 64th Motorized Rifle Brigade of the Russian Ground Forces.

“Their surnames are known. It is established what they did. We know all the details about them and their actions,” Zelenskyy said. “And we will find everyone – just as we will find all the other Russian thugs who killed and tortured Ukrainians, who tormented our people, who destroyed houses and civilian infrastructure in Ukraine.

One civilian was killed and two wounded when their vehicle ran over an antitank mine in Pochebyn.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> <https://news.yahoo.com/zelenskyy-says-first-russian-soldiers-225454010.html>

<sup>20</sup> <https://twitter.com/Liveuamap/status/1519716928817876992>

## **GEOPOLITICAL**

UN Secretary-General Guterres toured the suburbs of Kyiv, including Bucha, where Russia is accused of war crimes.<sup>21</sup>

“When I see those destroyed buildings, I imagine my family in one of those houses now destroyed and black. I see my granddaughters running in panic,” he told reporters in Borodyanka, northwest of the Ukrainian capital, from beside the wreckage of apartment blocks.

“The war is an absurdity in the 21st century – the war is evil and when you see these situations, our heart of course stays with the victims, our condolences to their families. But our emotions – there is no way a war can be acceptable in the 21st century.”

The International Atomic Energy Association has opened an investigation into the accusations that Russian cruise missiles flew directly over the nuclear power plant in Yuzhnoukrainsk, Ukraine, on April 16.

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<sup>21</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/4/28/un-chief-guterres-in-ukraine-visit>

## ECONOMIC

German officials said the nation was prepared to embargo Russian oil imports after dramatically slashing the nation's dependency.<sup>22</sup>

German representatives said they would pull back their prior objections to a total Russian oil embargo as long as Berlin would have time to find alternatives to Russian supplies.

The pivot from Germany follows a new deal with Poland that will allow it to import oil from other global suppliers through Gdansk, a Polish port in the Baltic Sea, government officials announced Wednesday.

India may have agreed to buy discounted Russian oil, but India-based ONGC is having difficulty finding oil tankers to ship the cargo.<sup>23</sup> Russian "Sokol" oil has to be shipped by ice-grade tankers, and shipping companies don't want the reputational hit for the perceived support of Russia.

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<sup>22</sup> [Business Insider](#)

<sup>23</sup> [Reuters](#)



The shrinking market for Russian oil is hitting production hard, where internal documents forecast a 17% drop compared to last year. It would be the lowest level of oil production for Russia since 2003.<sup>24</sup>

The rouble was steady at 73 to 1 dollar.

Oil and gasoline prices increased significantly with industry concern that Europe could embargo Russian oil imports. WTI jumped to \$105 a barrel, while Brent crude moved to \$107. United States gasoline futures increased 26 cents to \$3.50 a gallon.

## DISINFORMATION EVALUATION

Russia has been dragging the wreckage of a Bayraktar TB-2 combat drone around Ukraine and taking pictures of it, claiming it is another drone shot down.<sup>25 26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> [Reuters](#)

<sup>25</sup> <https://twitter.com/azyakancokkacan/status/1519808099032481792>

<sup>26</sup> <https://twitter.com/OAlexanderDK/status/1519722297141121024>