



MALCONTENT NEWS RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR SITUATION REPORT



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Malcontent News

Russia-Ukraine War SITREP

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SUMMARY – DAY 71

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 2,989 days since Russia first invaded Ukraine on February 27, 2014.

There is a significant amount of uncertainty in today's Situation Report. Both belligerents engaged in the extensive use of artillery and MLRS along the Severodonetsk salient, the Severodonetsk westward offensive, and the Izyum front. It has been challenging to gather reliable social media intelligence and information we can geolocate.

The Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, Valery Zaluzhny, announced on Telegram that the Defense Forces of Ukraine are transitioning to counteroffensive operations in the Kharkiv and Izyum areas. Advisor to the Head of the President's Office Oleksii Arestovych said on Ukraine 24, "A counteroffensive is possible provided that a large number of Western weapons are accumulated, which

will suffice for at least several brigades, fully rearmed, trained, well-coordinated, and after that, there can be an advance. And in terms of timing and deliveries (possibly), it is not earlier than mid-June."

The Pentagon reported yesterday that more than 200 Ukrainian soldiers had been trained on the operation of the M198/M777 155mm Howitzer artillery system, and it is in use in the Donbas. The Pentagon would not confirm if Ukraine received the M198, M777, or the M777A2 variants of the Howitzer. Because the XM982 Excalibur precision munitions require the upgraded software for the M777A2 variant, it is almost certain this is the version used by Ukraine. Today, multiple videos showed Ukrainian troops using the French CEASAR and United States M777 artillery systems in country.

ASSESSMENT: We agree with Arestovych position that a wide-scale counteroffensive will take more equipment and time. The videos that came out today support our assessment that NATO provided artillery with precision munitions is in use by Ukrainian troops. This has likely contributed to the ongoing shift in battlefield momentum.

There were no verifiable changes in territorial control across Ukraine.

Along the Severodonetsk salient, Russian forces attacked Popasna, Oriklivka, Vojevodivka, and Rubizhne. Russian forces were unable to advance.

East of Lyman on the Severodonetsk westward offensive, Russian forces continue to use artillery and MLRS, including the TOS-1 flamethrower system, across a wide area. Most of the fire was concentrated on the forested areas around Torske, Dibrova, Yampil, and east of Lyman. There was no change in territorial control.

Russian forces attempted to occupy Shandryholve northwest of Lyman but were unsuccessful. It was unclear whether the advance came from the northeast along the Severodonetsk westward offensive or from the northwest from the Izyum axis.

On the South Donbas Axis, the increased operational tempo continued around Donetsk. Russian-backed militias

claimed to have captured Tritske, southwest of Horlivka, but available information indicates they were not successful. There was artillery and MLRS fire along the entire front with no change in territorial control

The ceasefire agreement in Mariupol never materialized with the Azovstal Metallurgical Plant in Mariupol under attack by ground forces, artillery, tank fire, and MLRS, including the use of thermobaric weapons. Russian troops are within the 10 square kilometer compound.

There is a lot of uncertainty for areas of control on the Izyum front. Russian forces attacked Shandryholove, attempting an advance from Korovii Yar. It is unlikely they were successful. There was fighting east of Virnopillya, on the northern edge of the Russian Nova Dmytrivka salient. Russian troops defending Nova Dmytrivka, Virnopillya, and Brazhivka are at risk of encirclement.

Russian forces destroyed the pontoon bridge east of Protopopivka. Ukrainian forces fired artillery and possibly MLRS into a wide area east of the Siverskyi Donets River to the western edge of Izyum itself and the settlement of Snizhkivka, south of Izyum. This was likely an expansion of

supply interdiction that started a week ago along the entirety of the western flank.

Russian forces shelled civilians and civilian infrastructure on the edges of Kharkiv city. The ongoing offensives north and east of the city center have reduced the number of attacks.

North of Kharkiv, the bridge over the Kharkiv River in Cherkaski Tyshky was destroyed. There are conflicting reports on who blew it up and why. There are multiple reports that Russian troops retreated from Ruski Tyshky. We observed signs of fighting in Ruski Tyshky in the previous 48 hours.

There are multiple reports of fighting west of Staryi Saltiv in the settlements of Shestakove, Fedorivka, Ukrainka, and Peremoha. Ukrainian forces are attempting to secure the T2104 highway, push Russian forces further north, and threaten Russian Ground Lines of Communication (GLOC).

Russian forces attempted to take Staryi Saltiv back, but the attack was unsuccessful. Russian troops reportedly retreated to Rubizhne (Kharkiv Oblast).

The Ukrainian General Staff reported that four settlements in the northwest part of the Kherson Oblast were liberated but didn't indicate which ones.

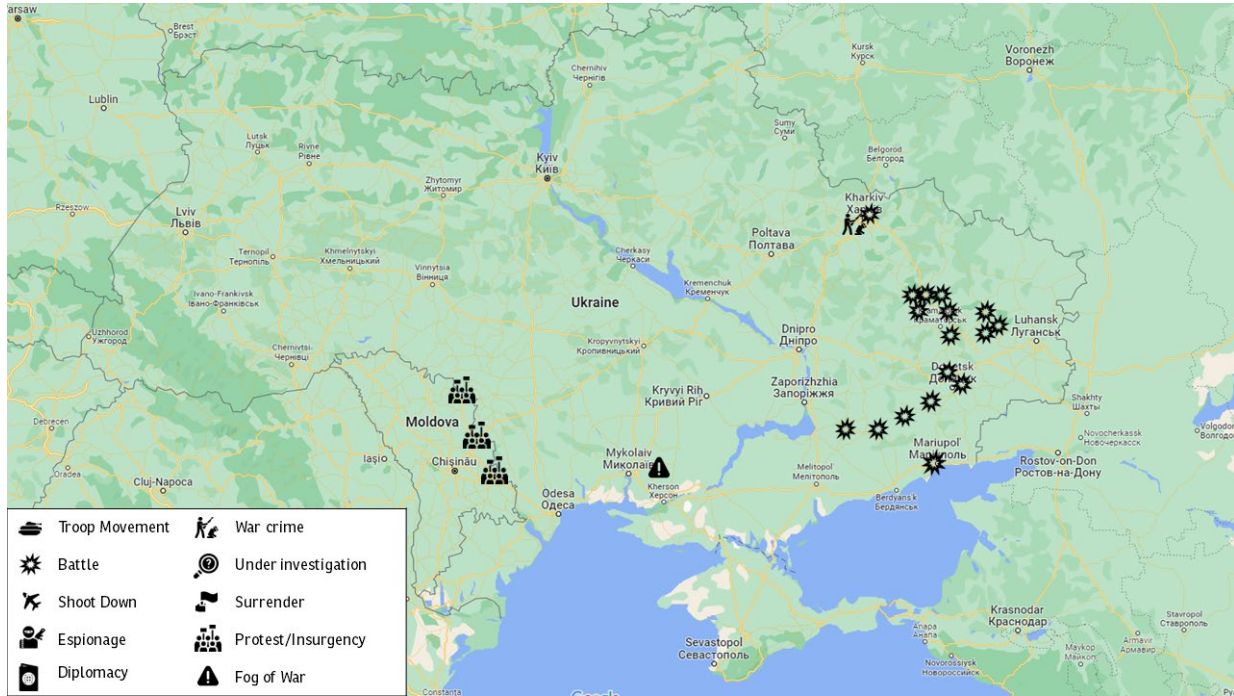
Tensions remain high in Transnistria, where local TV claims there was gunfire at the Kuchurhan border crossing. Ukraine closed the border crossing and blocked the road with concrete blocks and sandbags.

ASSESSMENT: Our position remains unchanged. The Phase 2 offensive to secure eastern Ukraine is over unless Russian forces dramatically change their strategy, which is unlikely. The war in eastern Ukraine has entered a Phase 2A war of attrition.

We have low confidence that Russian forces can achieve significant encirclements of Ukrainian troops in eastern Ukraine nor make a coordinated advance on Mykolaiv and Kryvyi Rih. We have no belief that the Russian military can do both simultaneously and achieve their military goals.

We remain concerned that we are stuck in the Mutual Assured Destruction Instability Paradox.

KEY EVENTS MAP



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DONBAS REGION

There was no change in territorial control throughout the entire region.

LUHANSK

Severodonetsk Salient

Fighting continued in Rubhizne with no change in territorial control.

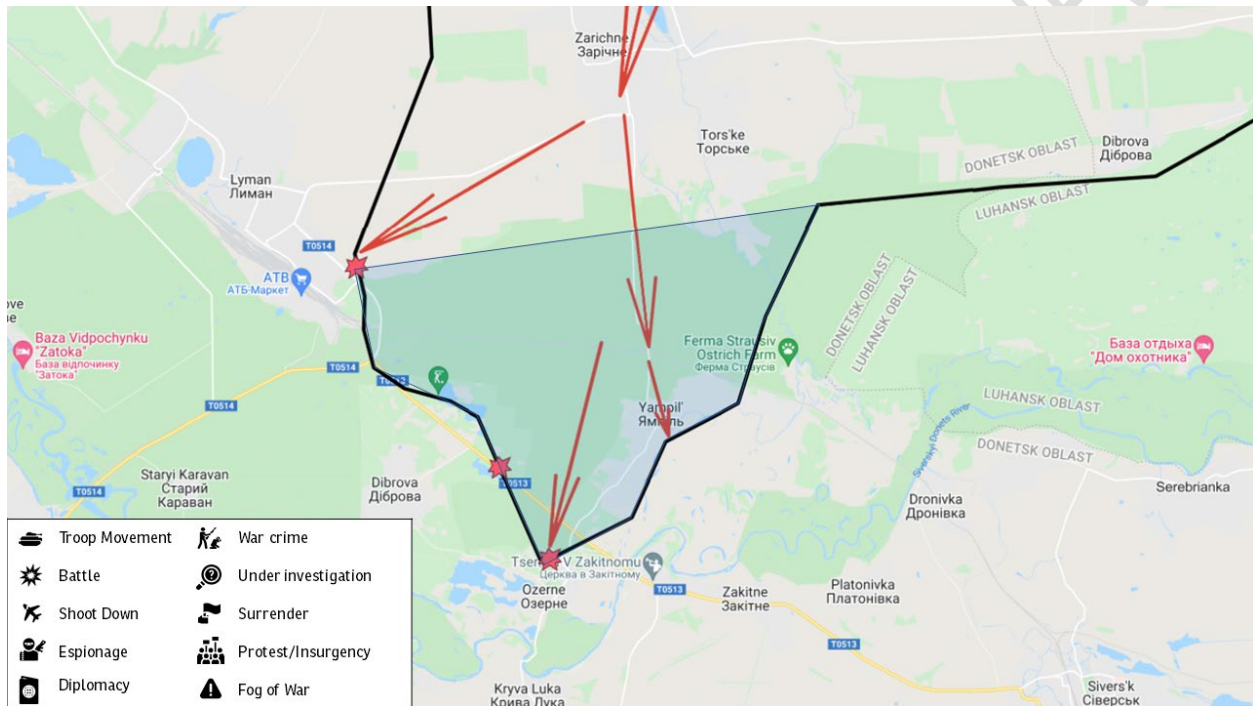
Wagner Group PMC released pictures of the city administration and city hall building. This is 300 meters from Train Station 1, close to the same area they've been operating in for two weeks.¹

Russian forces appear to be probing for weak spots west of Severodonetsk. They attacked at Metolkine and were unsuccessful. During our final editing, it seems they are attacking Purdivka.

¹ <https://twitter.com/5thSu/status/1522415949621903361> [Russian State Media Rating: Valid]

Severodonetsk Westward Offensive

Russian forces fired artillery and MLRS, including thermobaric weapons, in the same areas as on May 4. This indicates there has been no territorial change.





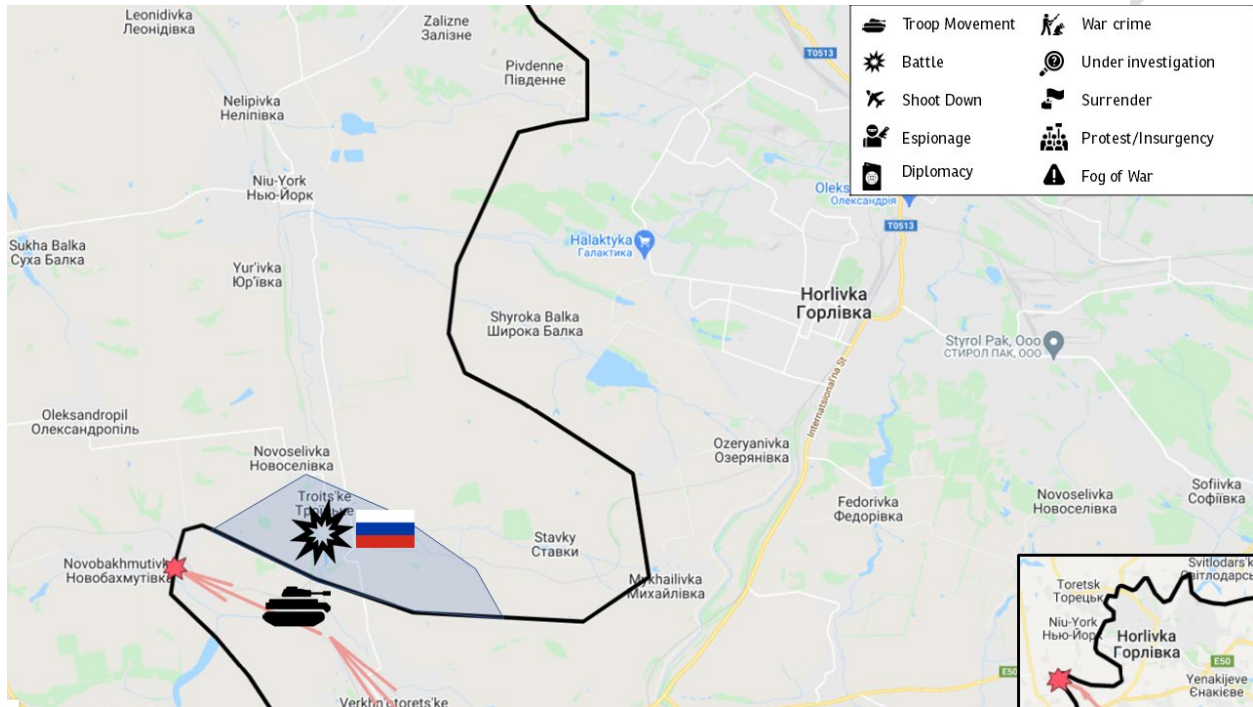
DONETSK TO WESTERN ZAPORIZHIA

Russian forces have started an offensive to capture Marinka targeting civilians and civilian infrastructure on the eastern side of the town. Russia-backed militias have fired on the settlement since May 2, but the intensity has increased significantly today.

Pro-Russian accounts are reporting the settlement of Troitske, southwest of Horlivka was captured.² Russian-produced videos have been made in towns during brief

² <https://twitter.com/Suriyakmaps/status/1522157975447785472> [Russia State Media Rating: Questionable]

occupations despite control not being established. We consider the village contested due to the content of the video.



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.

SOUTH DONBAS – AZOV SEA

Russian ground forces continued their attack within the compound of the Azovstal Metallurgical Plant in Mariupol.³ The compound continued to be attacked by artillery, tanks MLRS, and naval bombardment.

An announced ceasefire and evacuation did not happen today, with Russian forces continuing their attack at 08:00 Moscow time.

The United Nations will attempt to rescue civilians through another convoy on Friday.

ASSESSMENT: Given the history of Russia not honoring ceasefire agreements, we are not surprised the assault did not pause today to facilitate promised evacuations.

Ukrainian marines have held for 14 days since “victory” was declared in Mariupol and 65 days after encirclement. We can no longer assess when or if the defensive forces will collapse, be eradicated, or surrender.

³ <https://twitter.com/AggregateOsint/status/1522217164714913792>

KHARKIV REGION

Russian forces continue to attack civilians and civilian infrastructure in Kharkiv and surrounding suburbs that remain in artillery range.⁴ There is additional information in the **War Crimes and Human Rights** section.

Russian forces attempted to retake Staryi Saltiv but were unsuccessful.⁵

There was heavy fighting northeast of Kharkiv city and west of Staryi Saltiv in Shestakove, Fedorivka⁶, Ukrainka, and Peremoha. We consider all these settlements contested. A video released by a Russian soldier showed a destroyed T-90 Main Battle Tank (MBT) and at least one T-80 MBT. The area was under heavy fire.

The bridge across the Kharkiv River in Cherkaski Tyshky, north of Kharkiv city, was destroyed.⁷ The location has been geo confirmed.⁸ There are conflicting reports on the status of the settlements of Cherkaski Tyshky and Ruski Tyshky.

⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=671073550835978>

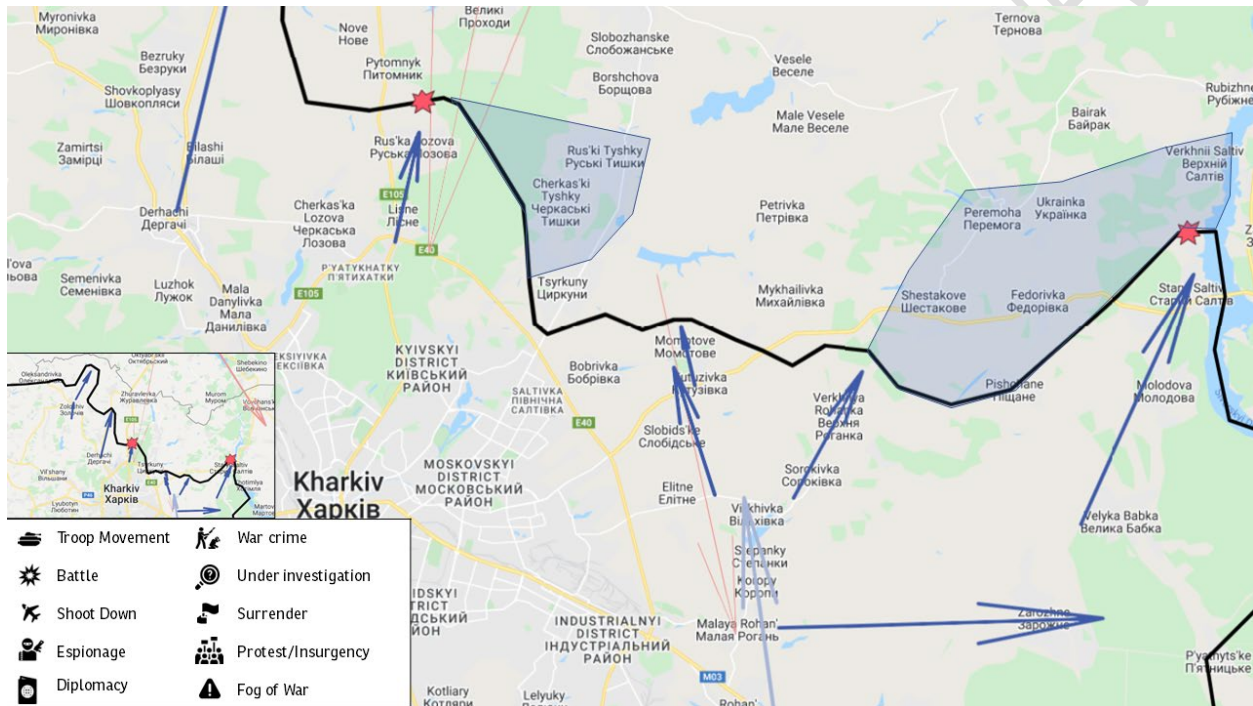
⁵ <https://twitter.com/mhmck/status/1522233333081640960>

⁶ <https://twitter.com/Osinttechnical/status/1522322489514373120> [Russian Produced Media Rating: Valid]

⁷ https://twitter.com/spook_info/status/1522181303050948608

⁸ <https://goo.gl/maps/3Rjz8BcLHTqPGcZu5>

We reported the possibility of fighting in Ruski Tyshky two days ago, with Ukrainian troops possibly crossing the wooded area east of Ruska Lozova. We consider Cherkaski Tyshky and Ruski Tyshky contested until we receive further information.



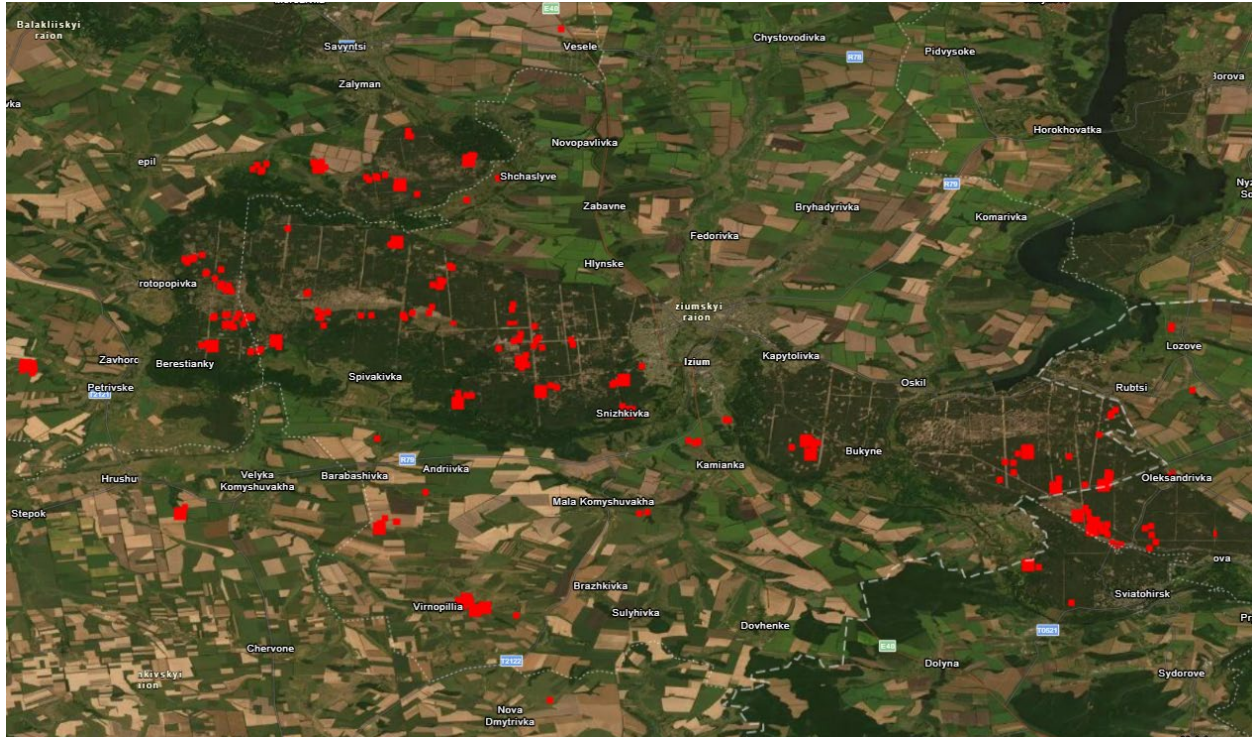
NASA FIRMS data indicated a dramatic expansion of fighting east Protopopivka with Ukrainian artillery and/or MLRS striking a large area from the Siverskyi Donets River to the western edge of Izyum. The Russian-controlled settlements of Snizhivka, Kamyanka, Prydonetske, and Myrna Dolyna came under fire. Farm roads that lead due west from Izyum have been under continuous fire for almost 24 hours.



The pontoon bridge at Protopopivka was destroyed.⁹ There are one to two other crossings available.

Russian forces continued their attempts to capture Oleksandrivka and Shandryolove but were unsuccessful. Russian troops attempting to capture Oleksandrivka have suffered heavy losses.

⁹ <https://twitter.com/Nrg8000/status/1522241989001248768>



The Ukrainian General Staff reported, "Due to heavy losses, Russian enemy withdrew units from the 4th Tank Division of the 1st Tank Army and the 106th Airborne Division."¹⁰ This represents four Battalion Tactical Groups (BTG), reducing the number of available units on the Izyum front to 18. These units were not at full strength and have likely been withdrawn with 30% to 50% losses. Four Russian BTGs are equivalent to one Ukrainian brigade.

¹⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/310047714641647>

Russian forces are attacking civilians and civilian infrastructure in Kramatorsk.¹¹

DNIPRO, KHERSON & MYKOLAIV, ZAPORIZHIA REGION

The Ukrainian General Staff reported four villages were liberated in the northwest part of the Kherson Oblast but did not indicate which ones.¹²

Other analysts, such as the Institute for the Study of War, consider Bohorodytske, Novokyivka, Zahoryanivka, and Petrivka as possibly liberated. In the absence of additional information, we will consider these settlements contested.

CHERNIHIV & SUMY REGION

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

¹¹ <https://twitter.com/chefjoseandres/status/1522244018666680322>

¹² <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/309676658012086>

KYIV REGION

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

BLACK SEA & ODESA REGION

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

ASSESSMENT: We no longer believe there is any chance of an amphibious landing by Russian forces in the Bilhorod-Dnistrovskyi region of Odesa.

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

WEST REGION

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

THEATERWIDE & EXTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS

Finnish officials reported that they received security assurances from the United States, United Kingdom, France, and Germany if they applied for NATO membership.¹³ Finland and Sweden are both expected to announce their decisions later this month.

WAR CRIMES AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Workers at the Feldman Ecopark in Kharkiv continued to evacuate zoo animals when the park came under fire from Russian artillery. A 15-year-old volunteer was killed in the attack, and two other civilians were wounded.¹⁴ The intentional targeting of civilians and civilian infrastructure is a war crime. The destruction of cultural, scientific, and educational areas is a war crime.

GEOPOLITICAL

Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett released a statement saying Russian President Vladimir Putin apologized for the words of Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov on Sunday.¹⁵ During an interview with an Italian reporter,

¹³ <https://twitter.com/charlyjisp/status/1522221253293228032>

¹⁴ https://twitter.com/nexta_tv/status/152227702874640384

¹⁵ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-61339749>

Lavrov said that Nazi leader Adolf Hitler had "Jewish blood."

On Tuesday, Lavrov escalated the situation after multiple Israeli officials demanded an apology. Lavrov accused the Israeli government of being pro-Nazi due to their support of the Ukrainian government.

By Wednesday, the situation had reached a crisis in Israel with protests and people destroying Russian flags.

In Thursday's statement, Bennett's office said that he had accepted Putin's apology and "thanked him for clarifying his attitude towards the Jewish people and the memory of the Holocaust."

ECONOMIC

The rouble was steady at 65 to 1 US dollar.

Oil and gasoline prices were unchanged from yesterday. WTI closed at \$108 a barrel, Brent at \$110, and United States wholesale gasoline at \$3.65 a gallon.

DISINFORMATION EVALUATION

There were multiple social media reports that the Russian missile frigate Admiral Makarov was hit by a Ukrainian Neptune missile and possibly sunk. These reports are untrue and were sparked by a single random post on Telegram.