



# MALCONTENT NEWS RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR SITUATION REPORT



February 4, 2023



# Malcontent News

## Russia-Ukraine War SITREP

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## Notes on Sourcing Information


**Malcontent News** uses a wide range of sources to create our daily Situation Report, which is the foundation for the Russian-Ukraine War Report Podcast. There are some notable sources that we frequently use and others that we don't. The most common sources currently, or in the past, we have used for the Theater of War section of the Situation Report include the following.


⚠️ **Russian Ministry of Defense Morning Report:** We use the RMOD Morning Report to identify combat reports, shelling locations, and territorial control change claims. We do not consider claims of Ukrainian troops killed, equipment destroyed, or military resources destroyed valid without videos and pictures that can be confirmed by date, time, weather, and geolocation, or third-party confirmation from recognized Western news outlets or trusted Ukrainian sources.


⚠️ **Rybar:** We consider Rybar a mercenary organization because they are staffed by former Russian Ministry of Defense public relations officers who actively provide target information to the Russian military. Their operational budget is \$20,000 a month, while they claim they receive no government funding. We use their reports and maps to identify combat reports, territorial control change claims, and troop movement reports. We do not use claims of Ukrainian troops killed, equipment destroyed, or military resources destroyed because of a documented and historical pattern of producing fabrications. They frequently engage in blatant misinformation and disinformation and consistently deny all Russian war crimes.


⚠️ **War Gonzo:** We consider War Gonzo a mercenary organization because their employees have recorded themselves actively engaging in direct combat, specifically in Marinka. Recently, War Gonzo admitted in their daily report to leveraging the information from the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. They intermix combat reports with their own on a 24-hour delay. We use their reports for *unique claims* about combat, territorial control change claims, and troop movement reports. Although the War Gonzo daily reports are moderately accurate, they occasionally engage in blatant disinformation and misinformation.

 **Readovka:** We consider Readovka to be a Kremlin-aligned propagandist organization. Their daily reports are a word-for-word repeat of the RMOD Morning Report and provide no value to our analysis. They occasionally provide credible information through videos and pictures that can be confirmed by date, time, weather, and geolocation.

 **Igor "Girkin" Strelkov:** We consider Strelkov to be a convicted war criminal who is highly informed, specifically about the situation in the Donbas. We use his combat reports, territorial control change claims, and troop movement information. In the Donbas, we consider his reports to be highly accurate. The fidelity of information he provides in Zaporizhia, Kherson, and Kharkiv appears to come from other social media channels with a history of spreading misinformation and is lower quality. Reports he shares outside of the Donbas provided by units of the Russian Federation 1st Army Corps have greater fidelity.

 **Andrei Morozov:** Morozov is a pro-Russian milblogger and a radio communications and logistics specialist with the Russian 2nd Army Corps. We consider him a provider of high-quality information, especially within his fields of specialty. In the fall of 2022, Morozov was detailed by OMON for up to three weeks due to his content and has had his online material censored by the Kremlin several times over the last 11 months.

 **Private Military Company Wagner Group Social Media:** We consider reports from PMC Wagner of Russian victories as overstating gains and reports of Russian failures, particularly among the Russian Ministry of Defense and the 1st and 2nd Army Corps of the Russian Army, as overstating problems. We do not consider claims of territorial control changes from Wagner as authentic without pictures, videos, or **unique** Russian State Media reports that include a video that can be geolocated.

 **Luhansk People's Republic Joint Center for Control and Coordination:** We only use their reports about large-scale artillery and HIMARS strikes in the occupied territories.

⊖ **Leonid Pasechnik:** We do not use any combat, territorial control changes, troop movements, casualty claims, or equipment destroyed claims from the self-declared leader of the so-called Luhansk People's Republic.

⚠ **Donetsk People's Republic People's Militia:** We only use their reports for videos and pictures that can be confirmed by date, time, weather, and geolocation.

⊖ **Donetsk People's Republic Territorial Defense:** We do not use any combat, territorial control changes, troop movements, casualty claims, or equipment destroyed claims from their public relations and social media channels. They have repeatedly engaged in misinformation and disinformation.

⊖ **Denis Pushilin:** We do not use any combat, territorial control changes, troop movements, casualty claims, or equipment destroyed claims from the self-declared leader of the so-called Donetsk People's Republic.

⚠ **Ramzan Kadyrov:** The contribution and impact of Chechen forces in Ukraine have become minimal, and Akhmat no longer produces large volumes of video content that can be geolocated. We continue to monitor his channels.

✅ **General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine:** We consider the morning and evening reports, specifically combat reports, territorial control changes, and troop movements, from GSAFU to be high quality. The Ukrainian General Staff uses clever wording to create plausible deniability of battlefield failures. Combat reports start with "repelled attacks of the occupant forces in the vicinities of," which negates reporting fighting in areas where territory was lost. Instead of misinformation or disinformation, GSAFU engages in omission. Reports about problems within the Russian military are given more weight if the SBU or GUR reinforces them or if there is added confirmation in the Russian milblogger information space.

✅ **DeepState:** We use the Daily Report from DeepState for combat reports and territorial control changes. They frequently support their claims with geolocated, time, date, and weather-confirmed pictures and videos, making them a high-quality Ukrainian-based source. They occasionally overstate

Russian territorial control claims but never present disinformation or misinformation. Combined with the reports from GSAFU, gaps in combat reports are filled. We support DeepState through their Patreon at \$10 a month.

✔ **Institute for the Study of War:** We occasionally leverage the map and territorial control change information produced by the ISW when there is conflicting data. Their presentation of information as Russian-assessed, Ukrainian-assessed, and Russian-claimed is helpful when our analysts have to make a judgment call due to the absence of verifiable information. We do not copy from their map but take their territorial control information as an additional data point when assessing our own changes.

⚠ **Ivan Fedorov:** We use information about insurgent activity and HIMARS strikes in Zaporizhia provided by Fedorov, the exiled mayor of Melitiopol.

✔ **Vitaly Kim:** When there are reports of potential air raids in Ukraine, we monitor Kim, the Mykolaiv Oblast Administrative and Military Governor, for real-time reports. Kim is consistently one of the first, if not the first, Ukrainian government official to confirm kamikaze drones or missiles have been launched toward Ukraine.

⊖ **Oleksiy Arestovych:** We no longer use the information provided by Arestovych after he was fired from his role as the Chief Advisor to the President of Ukraine. Before being terminated, Arestovych had developed a reputation for providing exaggerated, unverified, and false claims for Ukrainian successes and failures.



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## **SUMMARY – DAY 346**

It has been 3,264 days since Russia occupied the Crimea Peninsula on February 27, 2014.

Fighting was intense in the Svatove, Kreminna, Soledar, and Bakhmut Operational Areas, with little change in the line of conflict. Weather was poor in most areas where there was active fighting, contributing to fewer air strikes and artillery fire missions from both combatants.

Since pre-invasion, the amount of misinformation-disinformation about the Theater and post-February 23 Theater of War created by Russian sources is at the highest level we have seen. Disinformation is foundational to Chief of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces Valery Gerasimov's strategy, and the increase in fake reports started days after he was named the commander of Russian forces in Ukraine.

Behind the optimism expressed by the Kremlin and amplified by many milbloggers and social media accounts, unaffiliated Russian State Media sources (in the West, they would be called independent journalists, but that is impossible in 2023 Russia), PMC Wagner, and milbloggers



more grounded in reality express deep concerns over equipment, staffing, military leadership, and tactics. Some of this commentary is politically motivated by the rift between those loyal to Russian Minister of Defense Sergei Shoigu and "turbo patriots" aligned with Yevgeny Prigozhin. Prigozhin also got into a war of words with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and made a request dripping with snark that has the serious potential not to age well.

Within the Russian Federation, the march toward a modern version of Stalinism continues, with multiple deputies of the State Duma recommending Orwellian legislation. Dmitry Medvedev once again reminded the world that Russia has nuclear weapons; this time, we mean it! This might be Medvedev 😁📺 [responding to the latest United States weapons](#) package to Ukraine, but we're not sure.

## DAILY ASSESSMENT

We assess the following:

1. We no longer assess that Ukrainian forces will launch a significant military operation after President Volodymyr Zelenskyy held a closed-door meeting of

- the Supreme Commander-in-Chief with a subset of military, intelligence, and security leaders on February 2 due to new information about the purpose of the meeting.
2. Ukrainian Deputy Minister of Defense Hanna Malyar confirmed our assessment that Russia's "large-scale" offensive has begun and is not the shock and awe Blitzkrieg that many expected. We assess there remains a significant chance the Russian Federation will launch new offensives in one or more operational directions before February 24.
  3. 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 has escalated due to statements by State Duma deputies. We maintain that the political distraction benefits Russian President Vladimir Putin the most.
  4. We maintain that the battle for the control of Bakhmut has reached a critical phase with the addition of Russian forces to the axis and the ongoing attempt to create a technical encirclement.
  5. We maintain that the significant increase in disinformation and misinformation from Russian sources is being directed by Chief of the General Staff

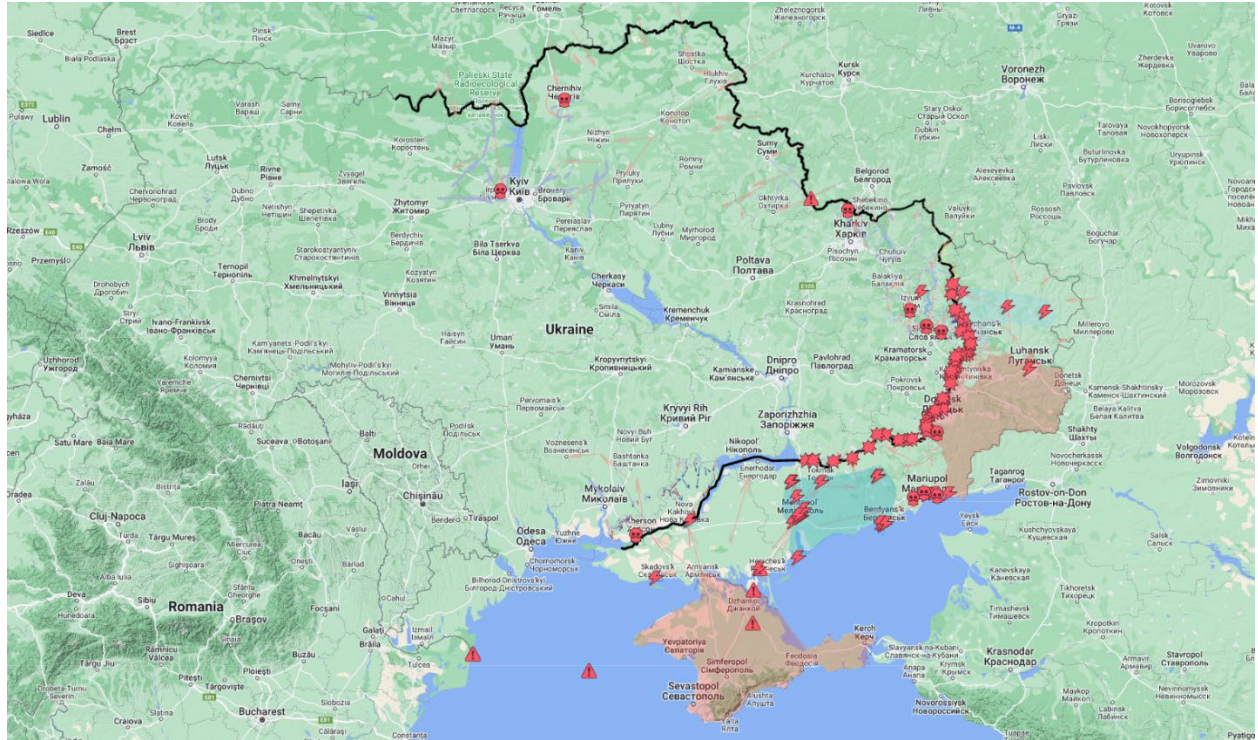
- of the Russian Federation Armed Forces, Valery Gerasimov, as part of his hybrid warfare doctrine.
6. The RAND Corporation agreed with our assessment that Ukraine holds the battlefield initiative – while we maintain the exception for the Soledar-Bakhmut axis.<sup>1</sup>
  7. We maintain that the Russian 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.
  8. We maintain that Russia is preparing to launch another punitive missile strike on civilians and civilian infrastructure due to the ongoing rotation of ships in the Black Sea Fleet.
  9. We maintain that Russian forces will continue to target electrical, heating, and potable water infrastructure.
  10. 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.
  11. 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.

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

12. We maintain that stealth mobilization has started in the Russian Federation due to stop loss orders for active duty troops deployed in Ukraine and mobilization requests from the Kremlin in the occupied territories.
13. We maintain that the threat of Russian forces in Belarus crossing into Ukraine as part of an offensive operation is negligible, despite contrary claims from Ukrainian and Polish officials.

# 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>



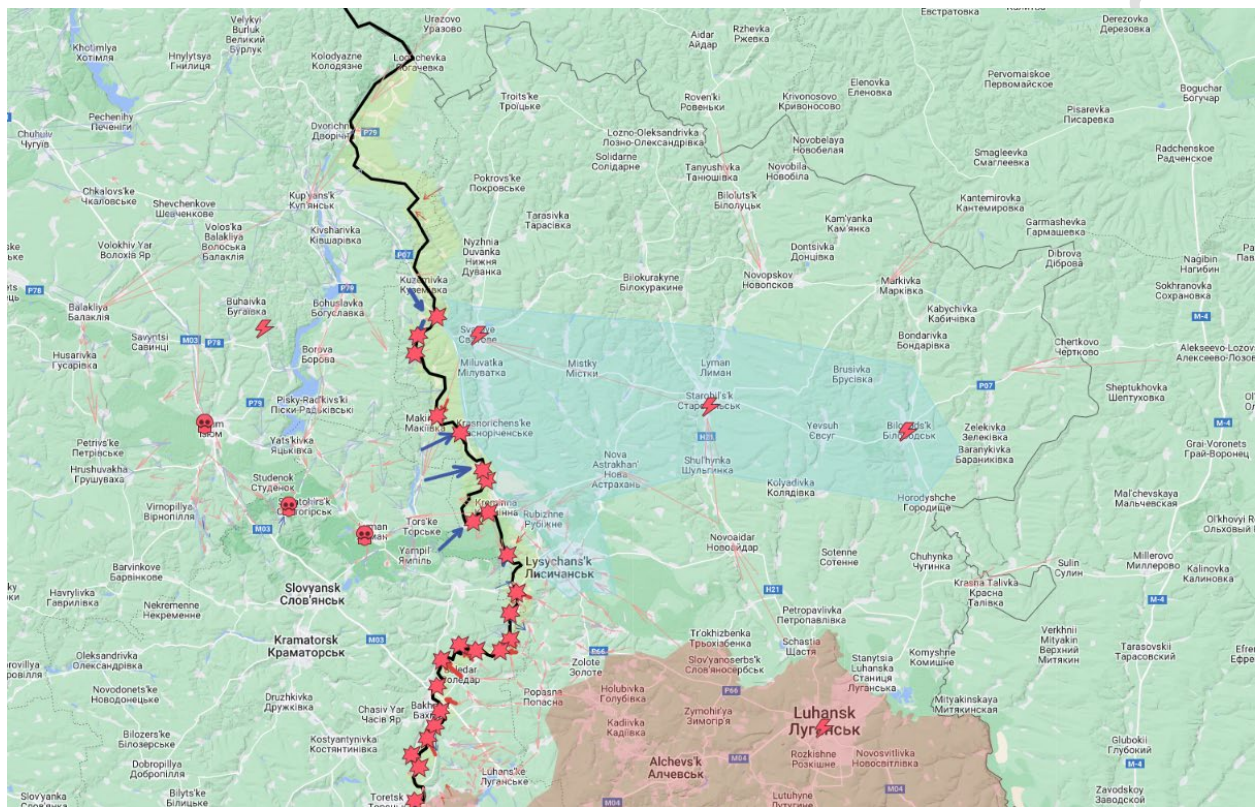


afternoon, with some clearing on Wednesday, followed by the coldest weather of 2023.

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# DONBAS REGION

## LUHANSK

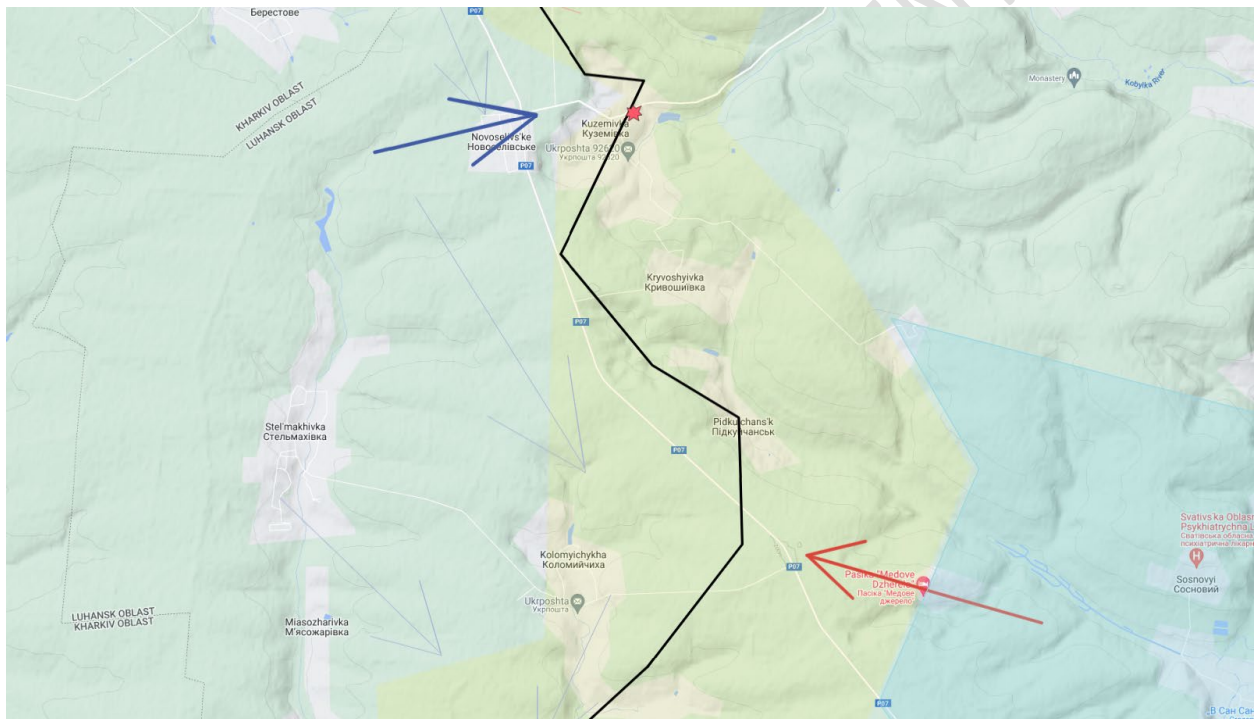


**Russian Objective:** Integrate oblast into Russian Federation, recapture lost territory, and control insurgency

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



We maintain that Russian forces have started their “large scale” offensive in Luhansk. In our assessment, the relatively low operational tempo is caused by many Russian units being critically understaffed and, to a lesser degree, poor weather conditions impacting drone operations for both combatants.

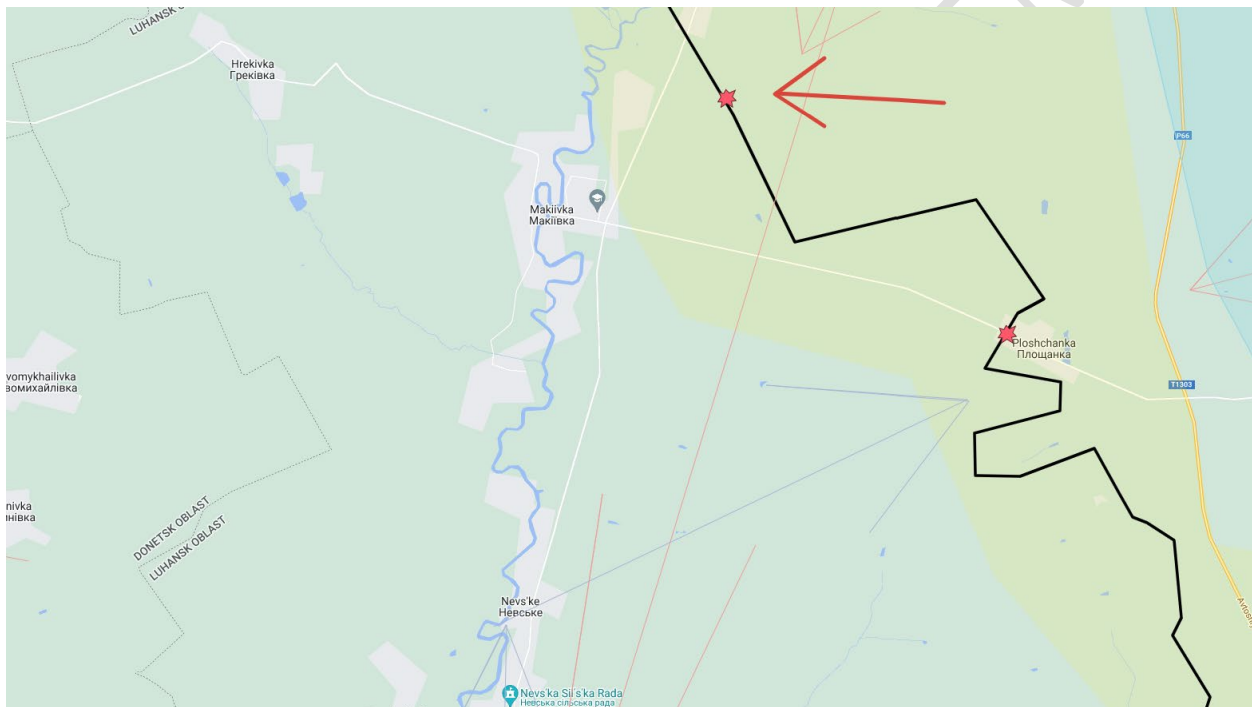


In the Svatove Operational Direction, the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine (GSAFU) reported that [Novoselivske](#) was shelled throughout the day.<sup>3 4</sup> A reader-provided geolocated and weather confirmed video showed

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

<sup>4</sup> [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report PM EEST](#)

Russian troops in [Kuzemivka](#) being hit by drone-dropped IEDs. The Russian troops were east of the line of conflict on our war map, validating territorial control. The video is graphic, and some may find it disturbing. You can watch it by ⚠️ 📺 [clicking here](#).<sup>5</sup>

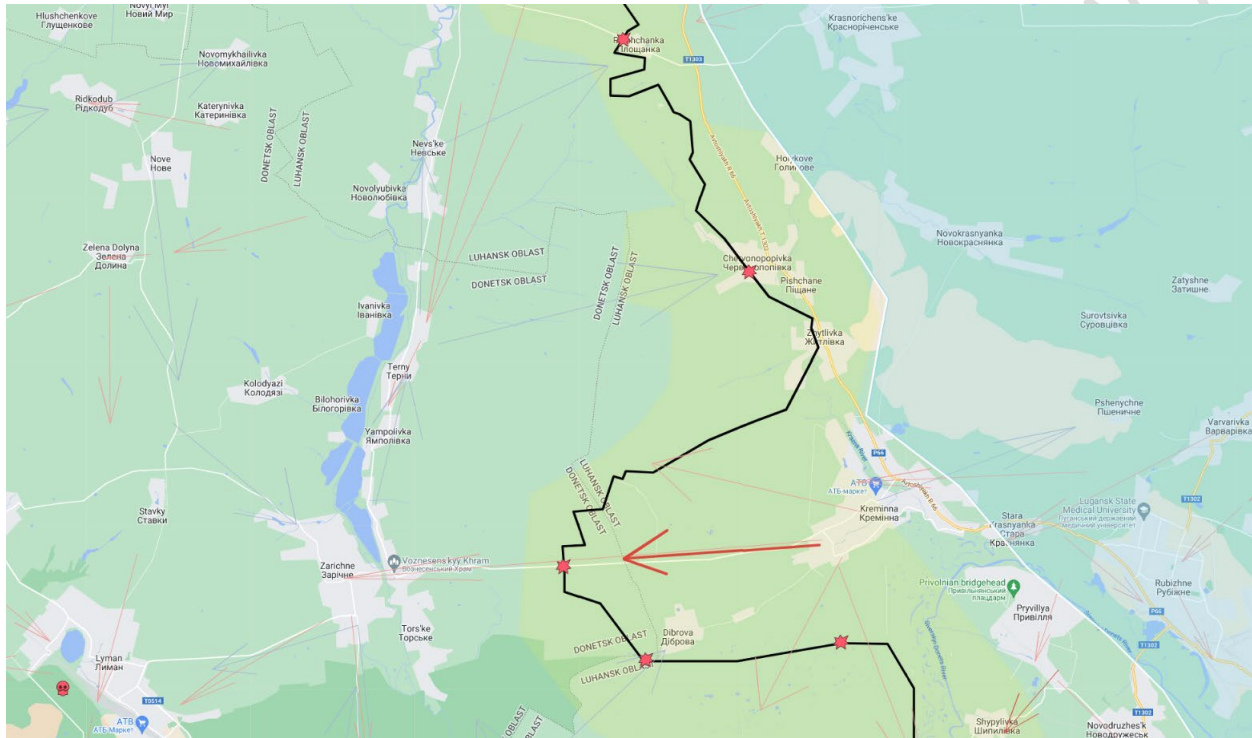


Russian forces appear to be attempting to split the Ukrainian offensive lines between the Svatove and Kreminna Operational Areas, with attacks in the direction

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<sup>5</sup> <https://twitter.com/lovebob/status/1622086346629173249>

of [Hrekivka](#) and [Nevske](#).<sup>6 7</sup> Russian troops are likely attempting to bypass the Ukrainian stronghold in Makiivka.



In the Kremienna Operational Area, there were no reports of significant fighting, with combatants trading artillery and rockets fired by multiple launch rocket systems (MLRS) in the areas of [Ploshchanka](#) and [Chervonopopivka](#).<sup>8 9</sup> Ukrainian sources reported continued fighting near [Kremienna](#) concentrated in the forested areas to the northwest, west,

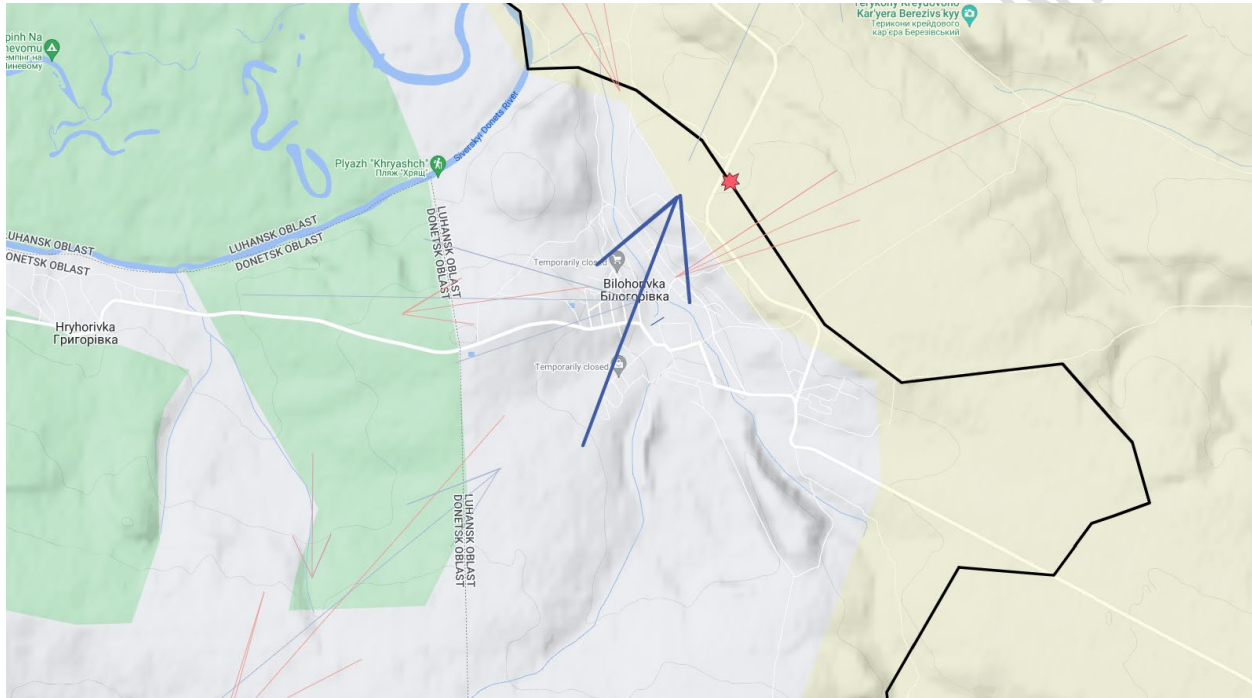
<sup>6</sup> [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEST](#)

<sup>7</sup> <https://t.me/rybar/43281> | <https://t.me/rybar/43282>

<sup>8</sup> [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEST](#)

<sup>9</sup> [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report PM EEST](#)

and south.<sup>10 11</sup> There were no reports of large-scale fighting near [Dibrova](#) or further south in the Serebryansky Woods area, with Russian and Ukrainian sources reporting exchanges of artillery fire.<sup>12 13</sup>



The Russian Ministry of Defense (RMOD) reported that Ukrainian positions in [Bilohorivka](#) [Luhansk] were shelled, and mercenaries with War Gonzo wrote that fighting

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

<sup>11</sup> <https://t.me/DeepStateUA/15442>

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

<sup>13</sup> [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/23952](https://t.me/mod_russia/23952) [Russian Government Controlled Social Media Channel]



continued, with Russian forces unable to make new progress.<sup>14 15</sup>

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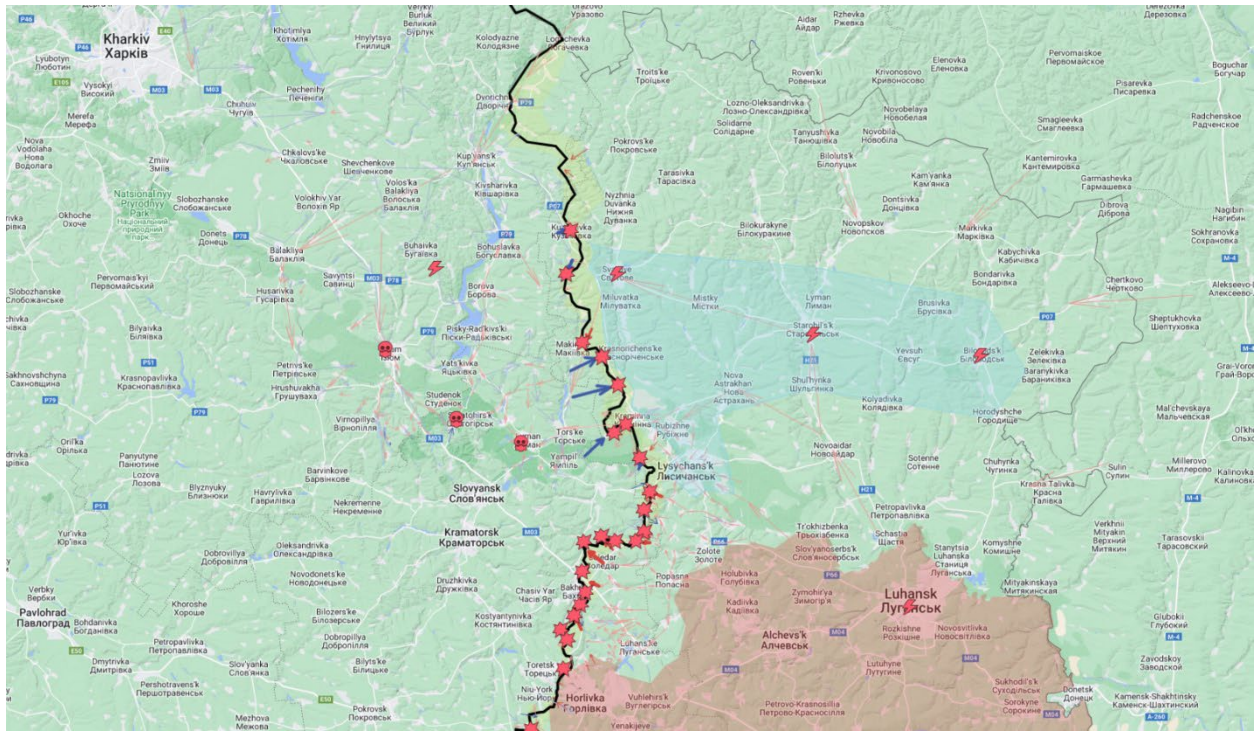
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<sup>14</sup> [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/23952](https://t.me/mod_russia/23952) [Russian Government Controlled Social Media Channel]

<sup>15</sup> <https://t.me/wargonzo/10698>



# NORTHEAST DONETSK





**Russian Objective:** Capture the entire region and integrate the oblast into Russian Federation

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

**SPECIAL ASSESSMENT:** This is an example of misinformation-disinformation being spread. On January 31, Russian milblogger Vysoky Govorit claimed the Russian 144th Guards Motor Rifle Division had advanced to within

2.5 kilometers of Yampolivka in the Kreminna Operational Area – a claim we rejected. There have been no further claims in the area until today, when Govorit wrote, “The assault detachments of the Smolensk and Bryansk infantry, secretly reaching the forward positions of the Ukrainian, destroyed the enemy personnel with a short lightning attack and took possession of the trophies. It is noteworthy that mostly people from the Lviv region were destroyed.”

It sounds ominous for Ukraine.

This great battle resulted in one Ukrainian soldier being killed 7 kilometers away from Yampolivka. How do we know that? Because Russian milblogger Vladlen Tatarsky shared pictures from the same attack, which undermined Govorit's claims. The trophies included less than ten single-use antitank weapons and a grenade launcher. The pictures are NSFW, and some may find them disturbing. To view the images, you can   [click here](#).<sup>16</sup>

The best misinformation and disinformation are rooted in truth because it is harder to disprove. Govorit's claims are “factual.” There was an attack on a forward position in the

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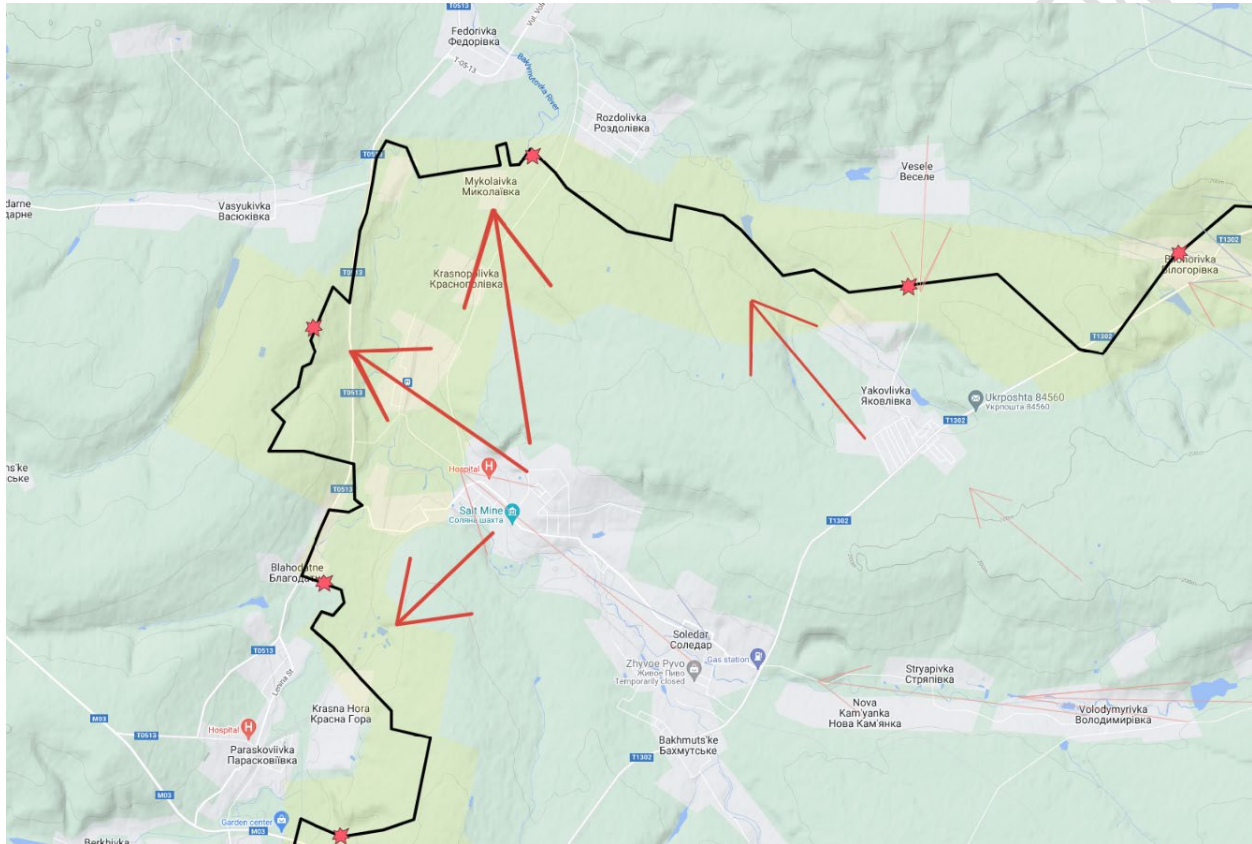
<sup>16</sup> <https://t.me/vladlentatarsky/19039>

Yampolivka direction, equipment was captured, and a lone Ukrainian soldier from the Lviv area was killed. But Govorit's earlier claim of being 2.5 kilometers away is untrue. The use of the word "personnel" and the dead being "mostly" from Lviv painted a picture of a much larger offensive action. This was a skirmish, likely between squad sized units. The problem is that Russian social accounts amplify it, and well-meaning Ukrainians and their supporters share the same information in doom posts without investigating the full story.





In the Siversk Operational Area, Russian forces continued attempts to advance on [Verkhnyokamianske](#) and [Spirne](#) without success.<sup>17 18</sup>



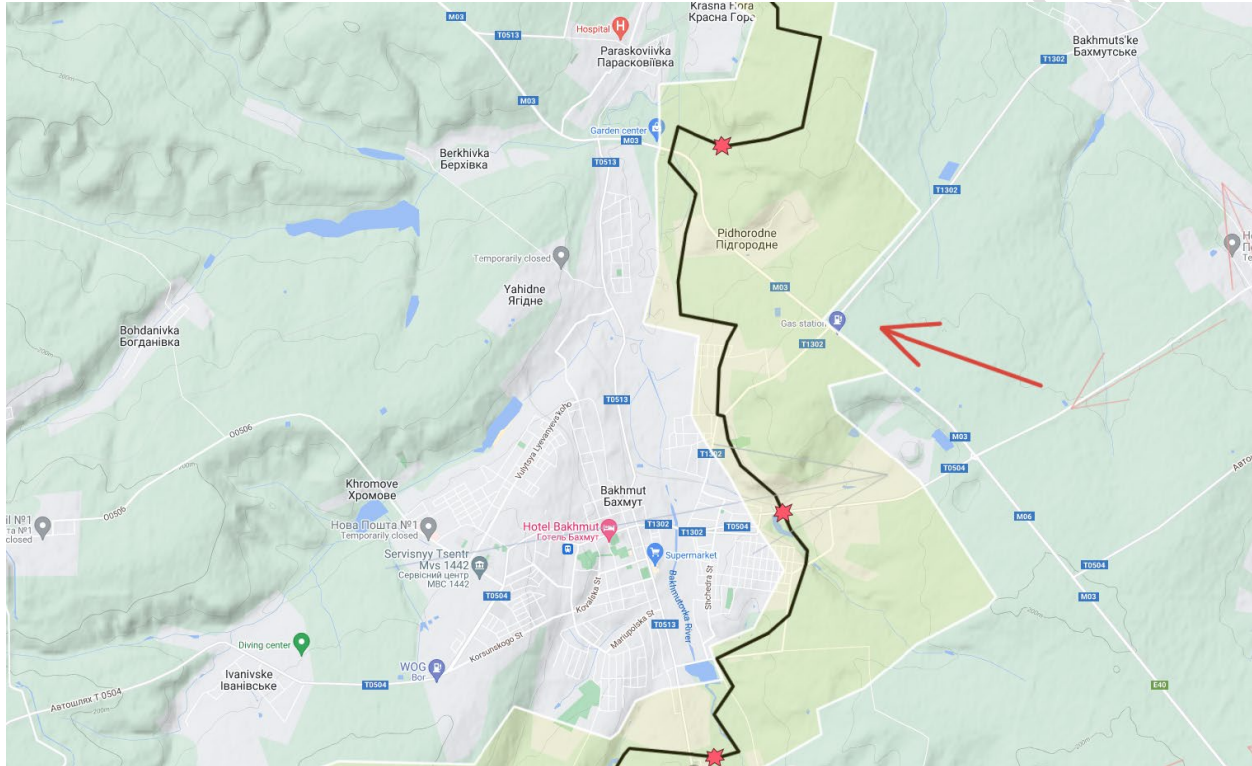
In the Soledar Operational Area, the composite forces of PMC Wagner and Russia continued attempts to advance on Vasjukivka and [Rozdolivka](#), with no change in the situation.<sup>19</sup> Heavy fighting for control of [Krasna Hora](#)

<sup>17</sup> [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEST](#)

<sup>18</sup> <https://t.me/wargonzo/10698>

<sup>19</sup> <https://t.me/rybar/43281> | <https://t.me/rybar/43282>

continued, with Ukrainian forces maintaining their defensive lines.<sup>20 21 22 23</sup>



In the [Bakhmut](#) Operational Area, there were numerous social media claims of intense fighting along the entire eastern perimeter from Paraskoviivka to the edge of Opytne.<sup>24 25 26 27</sup> A claim spread across the Internet that

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

<sup>21</sup> <https://t.me/DeepStateUA/15442>

<sup>22</sup> <https://t.me/rybar/43281> | <https://t.me/rybar/43282>

<sup>23</sup> <https://t.me/wargonzo/10698>

<sup>24</sup> [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEST](#)

<sup>25</sup> <https://t.me/DeepStateUA/15442>

<sup>26</sup> <https://t.me/rybar/43281> | <https://t.me/rybar/43282>

<sup>27</sup> <https://t.me/wargonzo/10698>

PMC Wagner had captured the northern part of Bakhmut, and Ukrainian forces were withdrawing from the city. The source of the claim was the Outpost Telegram channel, which wrote, "There are minor changes at the front. Wagner PMC units cleared the northern quarters of the city. There is information that the Ukrainian military personnel received the order to leave, but so far there is no weighty evidence."<sup>28</sup>

Despite explicitly stating there wasn't supporting evidence, a game of telephone started on the Internet, with the report morphing into, "Ukraine is withdrawing." At the time of publication, PMC Wagner channels hadn't claimed they controlled the northern part of Bakhmut.

Fighting continued east of [Paraskoviivka](#), with reliable reports that Russian forces made small gains.<sup>29 30 31</sup>

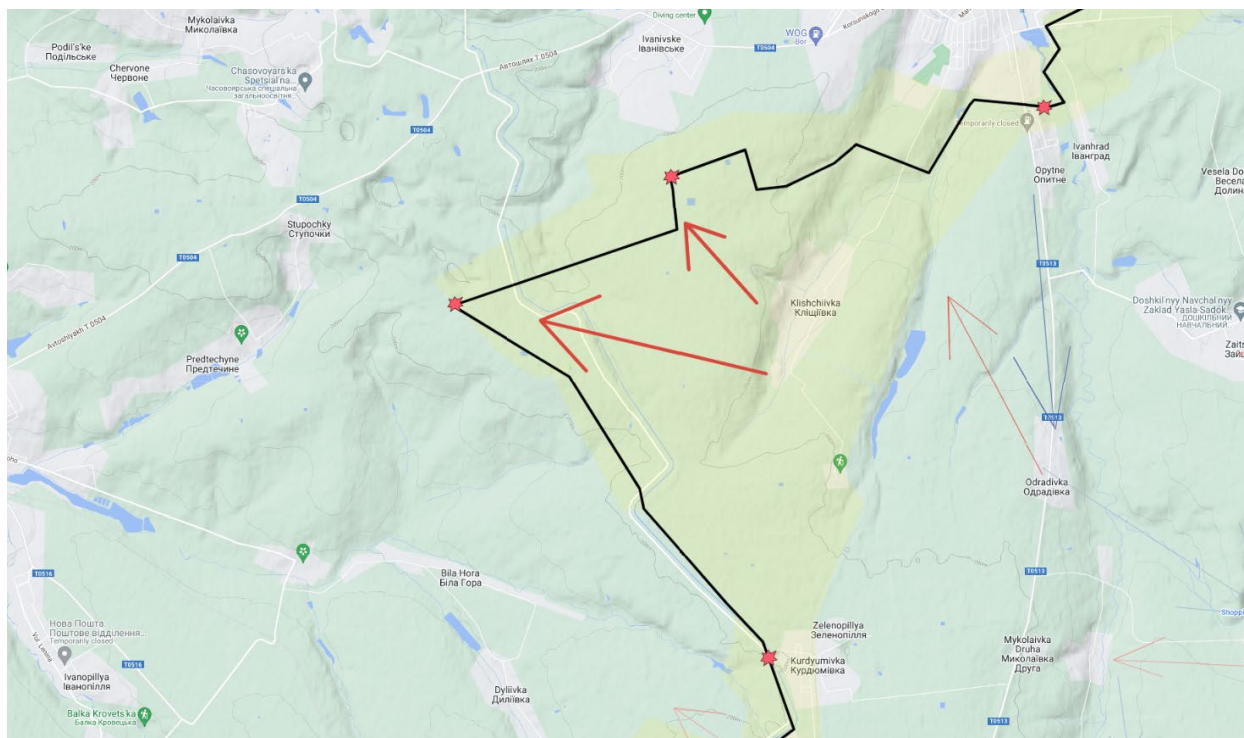
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<sup>28</sup> <https://t.me/vorposte/34657>

<sup>29</sup> [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEST](#)

<sup>30</sup> <https://t.me/DeepStateUA/15442>

<sup>31</sup> <https://t.me/rybar/43281> | <https://t.me/rybar/43282>



In the Kostyantynivka Operational Direction, heavy fighting continued west of Klischchiivka, with PMC Wagner and Russian forces pushing towards [Ivanivske](#) and along the Siverskyi Donetsk-Donbas Canal toward [Chasiv Yar](#) (which some sources report as an advance toward Stupochky).<sup>32 33</sup> There were reliable reports that Russian forces had advanced up to 500 meters toward the T-504 Highway, a vital Ground Line of Communication (GLOC – supply line) that PMC Wagner reported yesterday was not under Russian fire control.

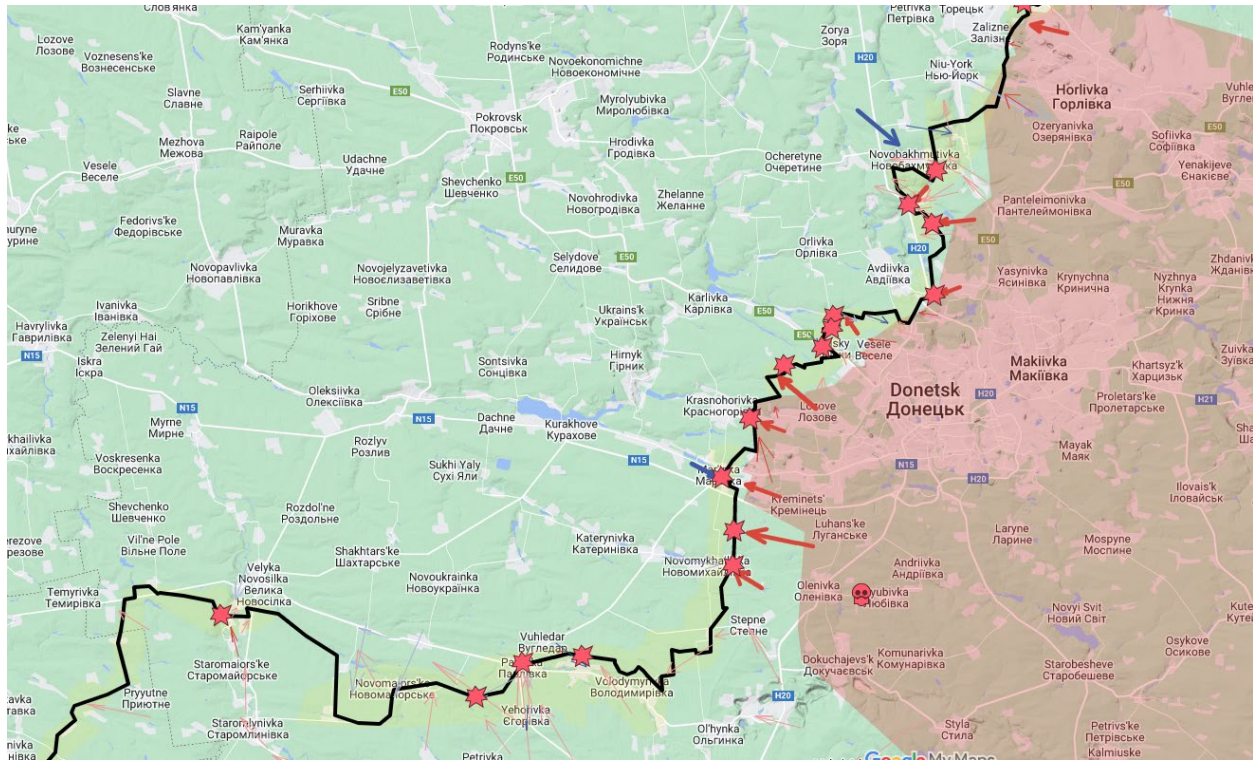
<sup>32</sup> [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEST](#)

<sup>33</sup> <https://t.me/DeepStateUA/15442>

<sup>34</sup> <https://t.me/rybar/43281> | <https://t.me/rybar/43282>

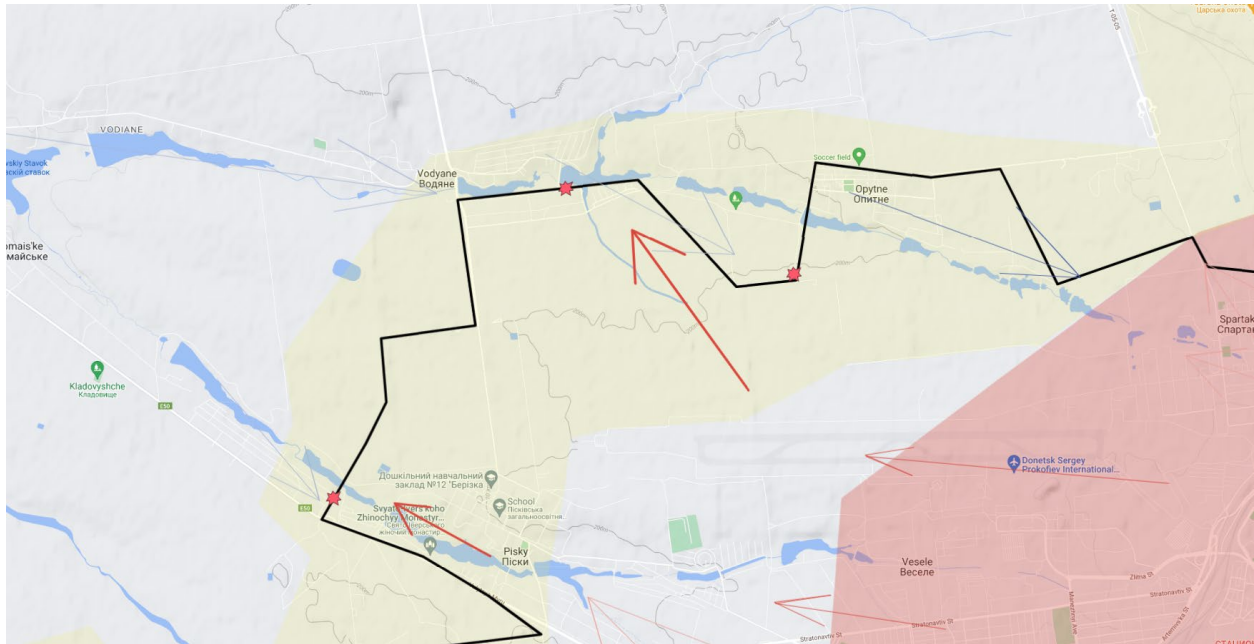
<sup>35</sup> <https://t.me/wargonzo/10698>

# SOUTHWESTERN DONETSK



**Russian Objective:** Capture the entire region, integrate the oblast into Russian Federation, 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

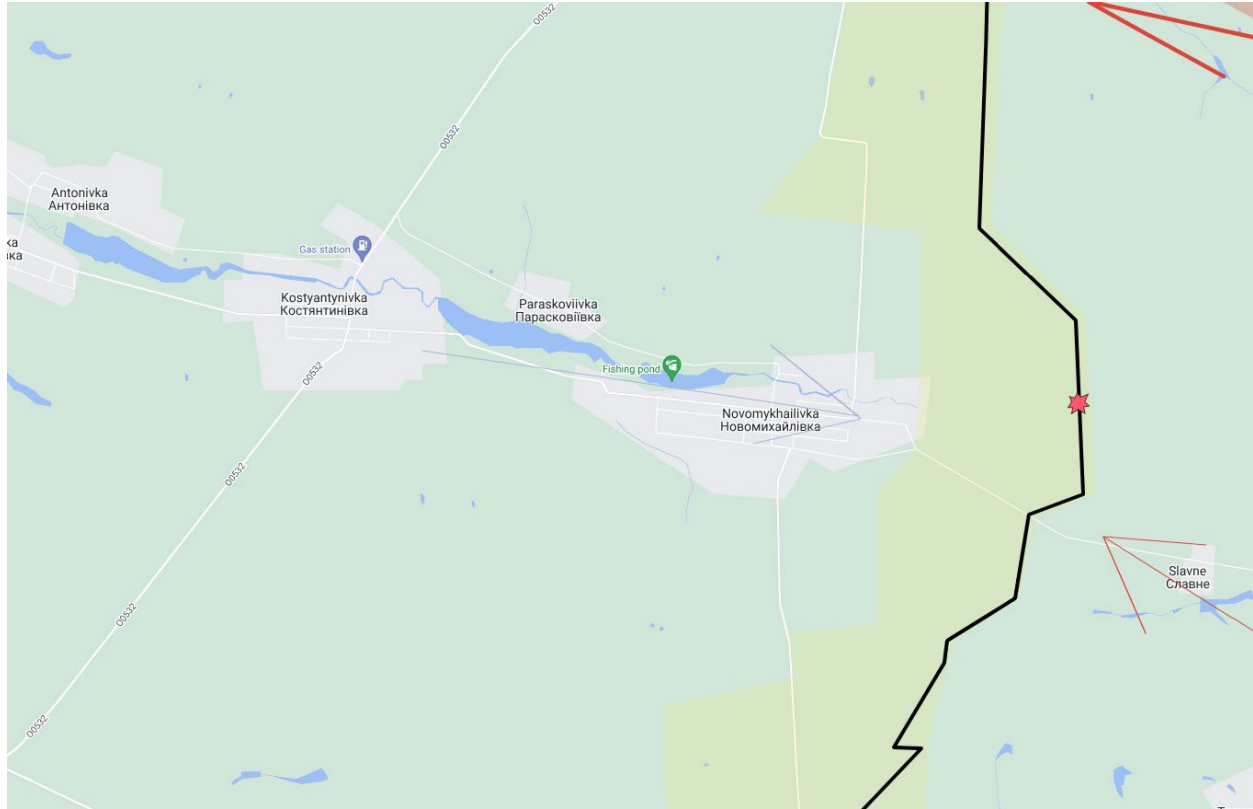


In the Avdiivka Operational Area, the only fighting reported was another failed armored advance by the Russian 1st Army Corps toward the Ukrainian firebase at [Nevlske](#).<sup>36</sup> Donetsk Oblast Administrative and Military Governor Pavlo Kyrylenko reported that Avdiivka was massively shelled during the morning.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> <https://t.me/DeepStateUA/15442>


<sup>37</sup> [https://t.me/pavlokyrylenko\\_donoda/6585](https://t.me/pavlokyrylenko_donoda/6585)






In the Vuhledar Operational Area, mercenaries with War Gonzo reported that the Russian 1st Army Corps was attempting to bypass Novomykhailivka by attacking from the north in the direction of [Paraskoviivka](#). Yes, there are now two Paraskoviivkas in Donetsk on the line of conflict.

Excuse me. I must go to the basement and release a primal scream.

Insurgents in Mariupol reported that 14 trucks with  [ammunition left the city in the direction of Berdyansk](#) while

ten buses with Russian mobiks went to the Mangush raion.<sup>38</sup> Think that's fake news? In stunning operational security (OPSEC) failure, Russian state media photographer Dima Yagodkin had his pictures published of the troop and ammunition movements. Yagodkin and the agency that published his photos  [didn't scrub the EXIF data](#) providing time and location data.<sup>39</sup>

Insurgents also reported that a firebase with MLRS had been created near the ruins of the Illyich Steel Factory, and Russian troops are being billeted at a closed shopping mall in the Port District.<sup>40</sup>

The Kyiv District of occupied Donetsk was  [hit by up to ten Grad or Smerch rockets](#) fired by MLRS,  [causing extensive damage](#) throughout  [the area](#). There were reports of casualties, and rescue operations were ongoing.<sup>41 42 43</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> <https://t.me/andriyshTime/6423>

<sup>39</sup> <https://t.me/andriyshTime/6415>


<sup>40</sup> <https://t.me/andriyshTime/6421>

<sup>41</sup> <https://t.me/itsdonetsk/55504>

<sup>42</sup> <https://t.me/itsdonetsk/55523>

<sup>43</sup> <https://t.me/itsdonetsk/55534>



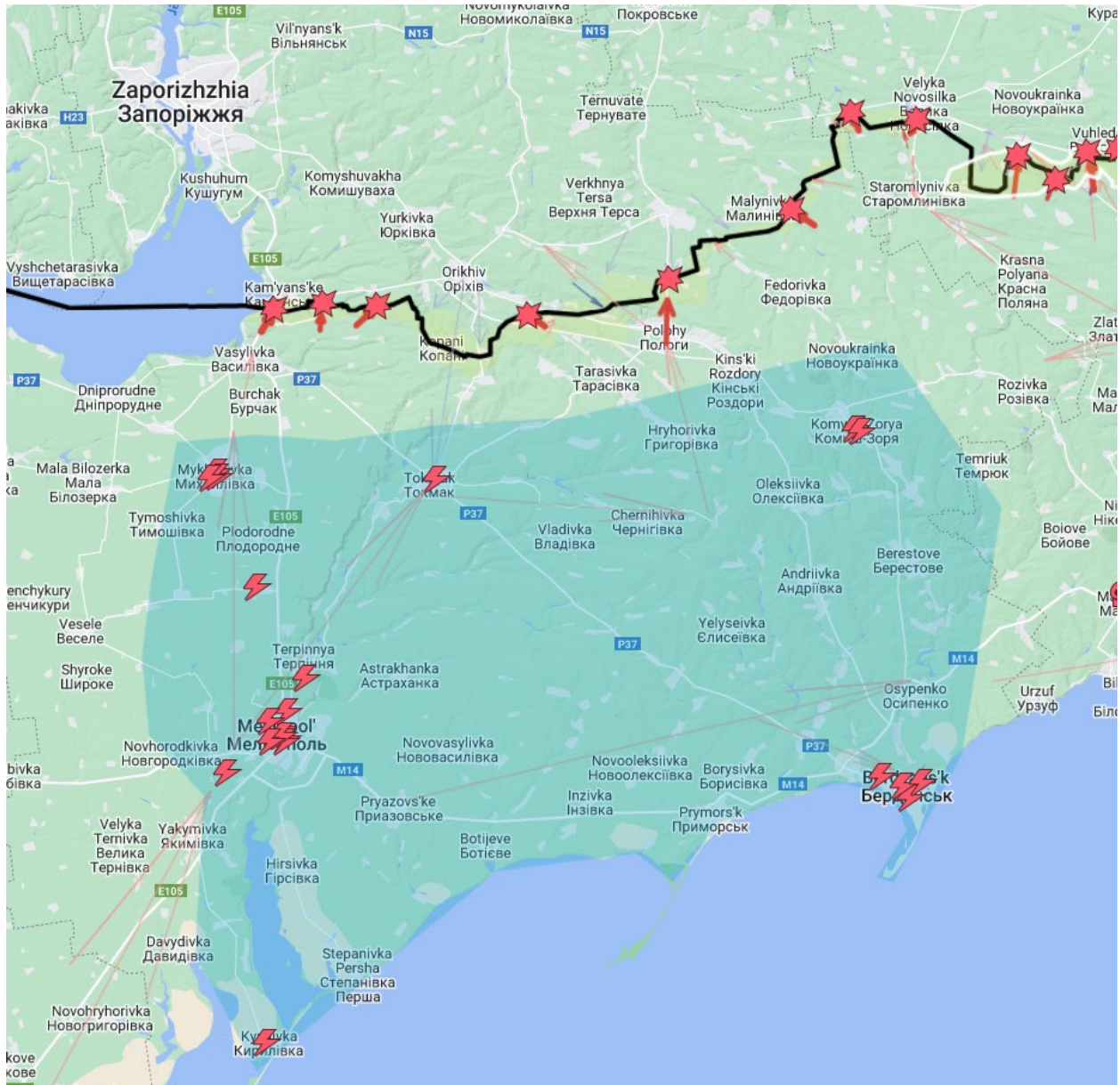
During what can now be called the failed offensive to capture Vuhledar, Russian losses of reserve forces were even worse than initially reported. Satellite images show that a staging area for Russian troops and equipment in Kyrylivka, 14 kilometers from Vuhledar,  [was obliterated by a rocket attack](#) by HIMARS on January 29.<sup>44</sup>

Both combatants claim that reserve forces, artillery, and armor are being brought into the region, believing the other is preparing another large-scale attack.

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<sup>44</sup> [https://twitter.com/Tatarigami\\_UA/status/1622110372932079616](https://twitter.com/Tatarigami_UA/status/1622110372932079616)

# ZAPORIZHIA



**Russian Objective:** Prevent a Ukrainian offensive into Zaporizhzhia, integrate captured territory into the Russian Federation, capture the remainder of the oblast

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

The situation at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant is unchanged.

Russian occupation officials in the Melitopol raion confirmed there was a massive Internet outage. Internet provider Media reported that a critical line that serves the area was experiencing "an emergency situation," and repairs were ongoing.<sup>45</sup>


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

There was not any information shared on Black Sea Fleet deployments. New reports of increased activity of Russian Orlan-10 drones in the Kherson oblast indicate that planning for another missile strike is ongoing.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> <https://t.me/vrogov/7476>

<sup>46</sup> <https://t.me/hueviyherson/34237>

The accident at the  [Usatovo electrical substation](#) caused catastrophic damage to the already battered transformer farm.<sup>47</sup> Engineers reported it could take months to repair. Because 500,000 households and businesses are without power, DTEK has been forced to decentralize electrical generation. Minister of Energy Herman Galushchenko told reporters, “All critical infrastructure has been restored. Therefore, the city will have water and heat. About a third of consumers already have electricity...[and]...31 powerful generators are already on their way to Odesa.”<sup>48</sup>

## 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

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<sup>47</sup> <https://t.me/itsdonetsk/55493>

<sup>48</sup> [https://t.me/energoatom\\_ua/11791](https://t.me/energoatom_ua/11791)

In Kherson, Russian and Ukrainian forces continued mutual shelling across the Dnipro River.<sup>49</sup> <sup>50</sup> Russian-occupied Hola Prystan  [was shelled](#), and Russian forces released a video of  [MLRS firing from Kakhovka](#) across the Dnipro River.<sup>51</sup> <sup>52</sup>

## 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

In the Sumy oblast, the hromadas of Velyka Pysarivka and Nova Sloboda were hit by Russian airstrikes. Nine unguided

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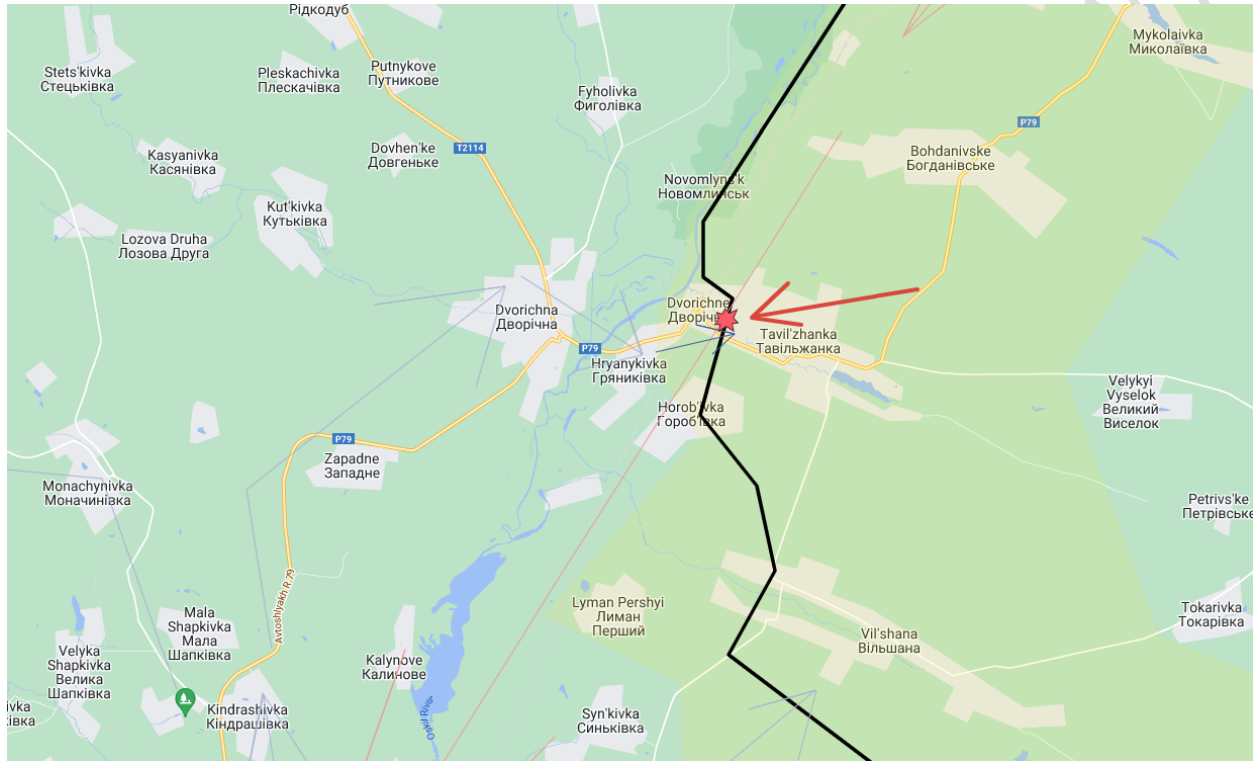
<sup>49</sup> [General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine – Facebook Report AM EEST](#)

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

<sup>51</sup> <https://t.me/hueviyherson/34269>

<sup>52</sup> <https://t.me/hueviyherson/34256>

rockets hit a village near Nova Sloboda, damaging two homes.<sup>53</sup>



In the Dvorichna Operational Area, Russian and Ukrainian sources reported significant fighting in Dvorichne on the east bank of the Oskil River.<sup>54 55 56</sup> RMOD claimed the settlement had been captured, while Rybar reported fighting was ongoing. GSAFU had reported on Friday that Russian forces had set charges to the bridges, dam, and

<sup>53</sup> <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2023/02/4/7387960/>

<sup>54</sup> <https://t.me/DeepStateUA/15442>

<sup>55</sup> [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/23952](https://t.me/mod_russia/23952) [Russian Government Controlled Social Media Channel]

<sup>56</sup> <https://t.me/rybar/43281> | <https://t.me/rybar/43282>

other infrastructure in Tavilzhanka. These actions would be consistent with preparing for a withdrawal.

**ASSESSMENT:** Ukraine has significant military resources in the Kupyansk Operational Area, and we have reported throughout January that this region is more active than reported. We had mapped Dvorichne as a no man's land, so there was some surprise that Ukraine had control of the settlement before today.

Two Russian S-300 anti-aircraft missiles used for a ground attack struck the Kyiv District of Kharkiv, causing extensive damage to the O. M. Beketov Kharkiv National University of Urban Economy and a second missile striking an apartment building.<sup>57</sup> A security guard at the university was injured, and four apartment building residents, including an 83-year-old pensioner, were wounded.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2023/02/5/7387974/>

<sup>58</sup> <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2023/02/5/7387987/>

## RUSSIAN FRONT

Local reports from the Belgorod federal district claimed that Tsapova, Tishanka, and Krasnoe were shelled.<sup>59</sup> There was no other information.

## THEATERWIDE & EXTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS

**BREAKING NEWS:** Multiple Ukrainian news outlets are reporting that Ukrainian Defence Minister Oleksii Reznikov will leave his post, and Kyrylo Budanov, Head of the Defence Intelligence Directorate of Ukraine (GUR), will be named the new head of the Defense Ministry. Reznikov is expected to be named the new Minister of Justice, with the current minister, Denys Maliuska, tapped to be the ambassador to a European country.<sup>60</sup>

**FLASH ASSESSMENT:** This was almost certainly the closed-door topic during the second meeting of the Supreme Commander-in-Chief on February 2.

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<sup>59</sup> <https://t.me/belgorod01/31252>

<sup>60</sup> <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2023/02/5/7387980/>



Someone change the sign because it had been zero days since the Kremlin threatened to use nuclear weapons. Dmitry Medvedev, who couldn't possibly be upset about the new military aid package the United States announced on Friday, was in rare form, declaring, "Those who argue that sending weapons to Ukraine will contribute to the start of negotiations are wrong, the result will be just the opposite. There will be no negotiations in this case. There will only be retaliation strikes. And if Ukraine tries to strike at Crimea, all of Ukraine, which remains under the rule of Kyiv, will burn. The President of Russia spoke quite definitely about this. We do not set ourselves any restrictions, and depending on the nature of the threats, we are ready to use all types of weapons."<sup>61</sup> <sup>62</sup>

President Putin?

Yes, what is it Olga?

President Xi of China is on line four, and he sounds very upset.

Blyat! Did someone talk about nukes again?

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<sup>61</sup> [https://t.me/grey\\_zone/16989](https://t.me/grey_zone/16989)

<sup>62</sup> <https://t.me/Crimeanwind/21824>

I'd rather not say, Mr. President.

Tell him I'm busy watching CNN and Americans freaking out about his balloon.

Medvedev wasn't done, making another veiled nuclear threat hours later. "Crimea is Russia, an attack on Crimea is an attack on Russia and an escalation of the conflict. The Ukrainian gang of drug addicts must understand that retaliation with any kind of weapons is inevitable for such attacks."<sup>63</sup>

Who wants to tell Medvedev that Ukraine has already attacked Crimea – multiple times?

The Ukrainian Office of the President responded to Medvedev, stating, "International law is clear. Ukraine can liberate its territories using any tools. Crimea is Ukraine. Therefore, the threats of Russian officials about 'retaliation strikes' are only a fixation of the intention to commit

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<sup>63</sup> <https://t.me/Crimeanwind/21790>

massacres and an attempt to scare in the traditional style of the Russian Federation. Always ignore Medvedev."<sup>64</sup>

President Putin – President Xi on line four again, and he said the balloon line wouldn't work a second time.

Blyat!

Ukrainian Deputy Minister of Defense Hanna Malyar and the Institute for the Study of War confirmed our assessment from February 4 that Russia has likely gone "all in," with the main thrust starting in Luhansk.<sup>65</sup> Malyar said, "This week, the Russian occupying forces threw all their forces into breaking through our defenses and the encirclement of Bakhmut, launched powerful offensive actions in the Lyman direction. But thanks to the resilience of our soldiers, they did not succeed."<sup>66</sup>

Malyar's assessment is more positive than ours, but we agree with her point that Russia has committed most of its combat-ready forces in multiple directions in the last week with little to show for it beyond gains in the Soledar

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<sup>64</sup> <https://t.me/Crimeanwind/21824>

<sup>65</sup> <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2023/02/5/7387969/>

<sup>66</sup> <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/75817>

Operational Area. ISW made the same observation our team has made. The transfer of the elite units of the Russian Federation Armed Forces to the Kreminna Operational Area and the continued obsession with capturing Bakhmut have come at the expense of combat operations on all other axes. We maintain that Ukraine has deep reserves and has not committed to any axis.

Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada People's Deputy Yaroslav Zheleznyak of the (Parliament) will extend martial law and general mobilization. The new extension will take effect after February 19 and is expected to last 90 days. This is the fifth extension since the first declaration on February 24, 2022.<sup>67</sup>

There was more war of words, this time between Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and PMC Wagner Group leader Yevgeny Prigozhin. On Friday, Zelenskyy declared, "No one will hand over Bakhmut. We will fight as long as we can."

Prigozhin responded on his social media channels, "Dear Vladimir Alexandrovich, many people are asking you to

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<sup>67</sup> <https://t.me/Crimeanwind/21790>

withdraw troops from Bakhmut. Do not do that. Bakhmut is the main event of this war. We must keep fighting. You will show cowardice. You will no longer be respected. The Ukrainian people will not forgive you for surrendering Bakhmut to the private military structure of the Wagner Group. Resist. Fight to the end."<sup>68</sup>

***Editor's Note:*** History is littered with similar declarations that end up aging like room-temperature milk in the sun.

Prigozhin's comment drew outrage from an unlikely source – Russian milblogger Andrei Morozov.<sup>69</sup> "The price on the entire front from Marinka to Kreminna is paid by brigades and regiments of the LNR and DNR. In addition to the "mobiks," often only the officers of battalions, regiments, brigades, and artillerymen remained. The infantry companies have already changed their staff a couple of times, at least in a year. [In some], the fourth squad [full replacements – **Ed.**] is fighting."

"Serviceable armor is a rarity...[and]...the "stormtroopers" often do not know how to shoot normally from issued

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<sup>68</sup> [https://t.me/grey\\_zone/16986](https://t.me/grey_zone/16986)

<sup>69</sup> <https://t.me/wehearfromyanina/1319>

weapons or use the group and assault weapons. [e.g., rocket launchers, MANPADS, machine guns, etc. – **Ed.**]

“They have no armor, no communication, or normal artillery support, and they die. And they are ordered to go forward. And they die – no significant results in your area.”


“The only result of these absolutely monstrous losses, which lowered the combat [power] of our infantry...is that the Ukrainians cannot transfer forces to Bakhmut from other sectors...for sufficiently powerful counterattacks, and the mercenaries can [only] work "one way," gradually squeezing Bakhmut from the flanks.”

“So the retention of Bakhmut for the Armed Forces of Ukraine is an operation in terms of the effectiveness of the destruction of our personnel comparable to Volnovakha and Mariupol. [These attacks] absorbed almost the entire...composition of the infantry companies of DNR available on February 24.”

“In a couple of months, you and all the others who are now looking forward to the imminent capture of Bakhmut will applaud Prigozhin again, as in the case of Izyum and Kherson. And men of military age will be caught along the

streets in Russia in the same way they are caught in [occupied] Ukraine, and as a year ago, in the spring, they were caught in the LNR and DNR."

The Kyiv City Prosecutor's Office announced that the deputy head of the Central Military Medical Commission of the Medical Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine was notified of pending charges of receiving bribes. The unnamed person is accused of charging \$5,000, requiring payment in United States currency, to issuing false medical deferments for military service.<sup>70</sup>

After the January 25-26 drone and missile strikes on Ukraine, GSAFU reported that two Russian missiles failed in flight. It appears there is confirmation of one failure, with the remains of a Kh-101 cruise missile found near Ulan-Khol. The missile was  [neutralized by explosive ordnance disposal](#) (EOD), and NASA FIRMS confirmed a thermal anomaly 8 kilometers from the settlement.<sup>71</sup>


Germany authorized the transfer of Leopard 1 medium duty tanks (MDT), last built in 1984, to Ukraine. Up to 160 tanks could be refurbished, with 29 requiring minimal

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<sup>70</sup> <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/75592>

<sup>71</sup> [https://twitter.com/bayraktar\\_1love/status/1621229776378728450](https://twitter.com/bayraktar_1love/status/1621229776378728450)

reconditioning and another 59 that could be ready before the end of the year. The Leopard 1 had a 105 mm Royal Ordnance L7A3 L/52 rifled gun with a maximum range of 5,000 meters. At the height of the Cold War, Leopard 1 MDTs would have battled the Russian T-72. Although Germany has a deep reserve, ammunition is no longer in production, which is a major problem. Brazil has a significant supply, but the South American nation's newly elected President, Lula da Silva, rejected a request from German Chancellor Olaf Scholz to provide the shells to Ukraine.<sup>72</sup>

Canada loaded the first four Leopard 2 tanks it is donating to Ukraine on military transports in Halifax,  [which departed on Saturday](#) for the transatlantic flight to Europe.<sup>73</sup>

On Friday, the United States Department of Defense announced a new \$1.75 billion military aid package to Ukraine.<sup>74</sup> The aid package includes:

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<sup>72</sup> <https://t.me/itsdonetsk/55447>

<sup>73</sup> <https://t.me/operativnoZSU/75867>

<sup>74</sup> [United States Department of Defense](#) [United States Government Controlled Website]



- Additional ammunition for High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS)
- Additional 155 mm artillery shells
- Additional 120 mm mortar rounds
- 190 heavy machine guns with thermal imagery sights and ammunition for air defense against UAVs
- 181 Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles
- 250 Javelin anti-armor systems
- 2,000 anti-armor rockets
- Ottawa-compliant Claymore anti-personnel mines
- Demolition munitions
- Cold weather equipment
- 2 HAWSK air defense launchers
- Antiaircraft guns and ammunition
- Equipment to integrate Western air defense launchers, missiles, and radars with Ukraine's air defense systems
- Air defense generators
- Counter-Unmanned Aerial Systems (EW and/or ECM)
- Four air surveillance radars – type unspecified
- 20 counter-mortar radars
- Spare parts for counter-artillery radars
- Precision-guided rockets – type unspecified, but there are multiple reports they are GLSDB with a range of 150 kilometers
- Secure communications equipment
- Medical supplies

- Funding for training, maintenance, and sustainment (unspecified on what systems)

## **RUSSIAN MOBILIZATION AND MILITARY STATUS**

In the Novosibirsk federal district of Russia, up to 1,000 convicts were recruited to fight in Ukraine, according to a report by GSAFU. It was unclear if the recruitment effort was being done by RMOD, PMC Patriot, PMC Wagner, or a combination.

Russian government officials appear to be in a competition to determine who can out-Orwell each other as the nation embraces a 1984 version of modified Stalinism. Trust us; this is not a snarky statement.

State Duma Deputy Biysultan Khamzayev proposed forcibly chipping officials vacationing abroad and equipping them with satellite sensors - "for their own safety" since "international counterintelligence works professionally."<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> <https://t.me/itsdonetsk/55422>

State Duma Deputy Maxim Ivanov believes that "healthy and strong men" arriving in "employment centers" (e.g. they are unemployed and looking for a new job) should be mobilized on the spot so that "valuable specialists" don't get mobilized instead.<sup>76</sup> Ivanov added that at a recent visit to an employment center, at least 50 men who were fit and of military age could have been mobilized on the spot.

State Duma deputy Oleg Matveychev of the United Russia Party (Putin's political party) believes that 2023 will be a dangerous year, and "turbo patriots" could start mass protests due to the slow progress "in their opinion" of the "special military operation."

Matveychev said, "The only danger for our state is a turbo-patriotic Maidan with slight leftism and talk at the same time about corruption. This is exactly the way to get people out."

"Let's say, once again, something like Izyum...happens," he continued, "and another hysteria. We go out into the streets, we remove the 'thief Shoigu,' and the story begins. Moreover, they will certainly want someone in the

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<sup>76</sup> <https://t.me/itsdonetsk/55372>

presidential election who will push something turbo-patriotic if there is such a candidate. Everything is purely according to the Maidan scenario."


The idea that you could be too patriotic and question dear leader, sorry President Putin, in any capacity is viewed as a threat on the surface is shocking. However, Matveychev declared that in 2022 Russia had defeated the Communists and liberals to only the dark corners, where they no longer have a voice. Autocratic societies need enemies to survive, and the leadership will never stop looking for enemies – like the "turbo patriotic."

Who could Matveychev be talking about? They think Shoigu is a thief, is politically a little left of President Putin, has a fervent following that would take to the streets if he asked, has political ambitions, and has spoken out against government corruption.

If you said Yevgeny Prigozhin, congratulations, but Matveychev turbo patriots go beyond a single man. Despots always need enemies.

FSB agent and Russian Orthodox Church Patriarch Kirill Gundyaev has banned the word "peace" in prayers and ordered it changed to "victory."

How is the war going against Oceania, brother? Think we need to adjust our tinfoil hats? Keep reading because Hollywood couldn't come up with tonight's script report.



On August 27, a video of former Russian army captain Igor Mangushev appeared of him on stage making a speech  [while holding a skull](#) that he claimed came from a Ukrainian soldier at Azovstal. Mangushev spewed racism and hatred, suggested he would turn the skull into an ashtray, and declared that all Ukrainians must be killed.<sup>77</sup>

Among his many claims, Mangushev says he is the inventor of the "Z" iconography and, since leaving the army, became a senior leader with PMC Wagner.

On Saturday, Mangushev was shot in the head, with propagandists initially claiming he was shot in combat near Svatove in Luhansk. Very graphic pictures have been shared of Mangushev in the hospital with a through-and-

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<sup>77</sup> [https://twitter.com/den\\_kazansky/status/1563753741697916928](https://twitter.com/den_kazansky/status/1563753741697916928)

through head wound and on a ventilator. The pictures are NSFW, are not for children, and some may find them disturbing. To view them, you can   [click here](#).

Russian milblogger Morozov wrote that Mangushev was not shot in combat but by another Russian.<sup>78</sup> Later in the day, Russian sources reported that Mangushev was shot at close range with a 9 mm handgun in Kadiivka, not in Svatove.<sup>79</sup> There are unconfirmed reports with weight that Mangushev was targeted in a mafia-style hit gone bad as a warning to PMC Wagner and its leader Priigozhin.

Mangushev is not expected to survive.

All of the above – the last 24 hours.


A 42-year-old mobik gunner assigned to a VDV unit in Volnovakha saw enough at Vuhledar and walked away from his post, being reported as AWOL on February 1. He was picked up at the border crossing at Grekovo-

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<sup>78</sup> <https://t.me/wehearfromyanina/1324>

<sup>79</sup> <https://t.me/Crimeanwind/21806>

Timofeevka after raising suspicion and was handed over to the military police.<sup>80</sup>

In the Moscow region, families of mobiks received an aid package from the Ministry of Defense –  [10 kilograms of potatoes and 10 kilograms of carrots](#).<sup>81</sup>

Russian administration of Yevpatoriya in occupied Crimea refused to buy thermal sights for mobiks from their city who have deployed to Ukraine. Officials told Russian authorities that the city doesn't have the budget.<sup>82</sup>

Video recorded in the late fall emerged showing a  [Kadyvorite blocking unit](#) preventing Russian ethnic-minority mobiks from the Central or Eastern Districts from retreating. Some of the mobiks are unarmed, while others only have light weapons and are ordered to return to the front by the better-equipped Chechens.<sup>83</sup>

A group of penal mercenaries who served with PMC Wagner reached their six months of service and received their


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<sup>80</sup> <https://t.me/itsdonetsk/55377>

<sup>81</sup> <https://t.me/Crimeanwind/21772>

<sup>82</sup> <https://t.me/Crimeanwind/21755>


<sup>83</sup> <https://t.me/Crimeanwind/21833>

pardons in a ceremony in Russia. From the thousands brought to Ukraine from June to mid-August,  [less than 100 were in the room](#) to receive their promised release.<sup>84</sup>

All is going to plan.

## WAR CRIMES AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Peter Reed, a 33-year-old medic from New Jersey who was a volunteer doing civilian evacuations in Bakhmut, was killed instantly when a Russian artillery shell hit a marked ambulance he was driving as it left the city. Peter was a US veteran who fought in Mosul, Iraq.<sup>85</sup>

Russian forces shelled the Ukrainian town of Pokrovsk with Urgan rockets  [armed with cluster munitions](#) and struck civilian areas – over 30 homes were damaged, but miraculously, no one was killed.<sup>86</sup>

Search and rescue operations in Kramatorsk ended at the site where an Iskander short-range ballistic missile (SRBM)

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<sup>84</sup> [https://t.me/grey\\_zone/16976](https://t.me/grey_zone/16976)



<sup>85</sup> <https://twitter.com/SangarKhaleel/status/1621559397041246208>

<sup>86</sup> <https://t.me/readovkanews/51955>



hit an apartment block on February 1. The strike killed four and wounded 18, with rescuers saving two from the rubble.<sup>87</sup>

In Mariupol, Russian occupation officials have banned Valentine's Day celebrations. Children will be tasked with writing cards and thank you letters to the troops. Additionally, the Russian Orthodox Church announced that all Protestant and non-Russian Orthodox churches (Greek, Ukrainian, Egyptian) are banned, and their churches have been closed.<sup>88</sup>

Videos from this morning's POW exchanges were published. As we reported on January 3,  [116 Ukrainians – 114 enlisted, two officers](#), and  [63 Russians](#) – were released.<sup>89 90</sup>

## GEOPOLITICAL

Georgian President Nona Mamulashvili said that 8% of the total population of Georgia are now Russians who fled

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<sup>87</sup> [https://t.me/pavlokyrylenko\\_donoda/6572](https://t.me/pavlokyrylenko_donoda/6572)

<sup>88</sup> <https://t.me/Crimeanwind/21831>


<sup>89</sup> <https://t.me/andriyshTime/6413>

<sup>90</sup> <https://t.me/readovkanews/51955>

mobilization. She feels they represent a national security threat and claims they are not behaving as guests to the nation. Georgia currently allows people to stay for up to one year without a visa, but they are considering modifying the laws to force the Russian refusniks out.<sup>91</sup>

## ECONOMIC

The new price ceiling for Russian crude oil and refined gasoline has been set. The new limits will take effect on February 5, with crude oil capped at \$45 a barrel and gasoline limited to \$100 a barrel (63 cents a liter).<sup>92</sup>

Price ceilings, insurance requirements, and sanctions be damned, in the Russian port city of Kerch, a tanker with  [identification markings covered by tarps](#) was being loaded with oil.<sup>93</sup> None of us know enough about shipping vessels to determine if it is a food-grade oil or petrochemicals.

Prime Minister of Norway Jonas Haar Støre Norway vowed to increase its support to Ukraine during a speech to parliament. "Last year, we provided Ukraine with more

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<sup>91</sup> <https://t.me/Crimeanwind/21763>

<sup>92</sup> <https://t.me/readovkanews/51943>

<sup>93</sup> <https://t.me/Crimeanwind/21811>

than 10 billion Norwegian kroner for civil and military support. We are now strengthening this support, and we will make an even greater contribution to the repair and reconstruction of the damaged infrastructure."

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