
Snapshot of the day:

General, humanitarian:

- Ukrainian air defense shot down 21 UAVs launched by the Russian Federation. 18 of them were shot down over Kyiv Oblast. Falling debris damaged two residential buildings in Kyiv;
- To date, Russian armed forces killed 482 children in Ukraine and injured more than 980;
- 17.6 million Ukrainians are in need of humanitarian aid; this is approximately 40% of the country's population;
- Russian occupying authorities started preparations for September all-Russian elections in the occupied territories of Ukraine;
- Partisan activity is observed in the occupied Luhansk Oblast.

Military:

- Ukrainian counterattacks near Bakhmut thwarted encirclement by Russian forces and redirected their resources to defend against the advancing Ukrainian troops, in line with the Ukrainian command strategy.
- Russian forces have increased ground attacks along the Avdiivka-Donetsk line following a period of reduced activity. The enemy's aviation continues to conduct frequent airstrikes in the tactical zone, particularly in the Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions.
- **Possible operation situation developments:**
- The enemy will announce the capture of Bakhmut in the coming days and will transition to a defensive stance in the Kupiansk, Bakhmut, Avdiivka, and Maryinka directions.
- To eliminate the threat posed by the Defense Forces on the Siversky Bulge, the enemy command need to swiftly conclude the battles in Bakhmut and commence troop redeployment in the northern and northwestern directions.
- In the case the Russian command decides to develop an offensive in the direction of Siversk and Sloviansk, one should expect the deployment of its operational reserves north of Bakhmut; the transfer of the Russian reserves will face a lack of transportation.

International:

- Volodymyr Zelensky summed up his meetings with G7 leaders: "Defense: weapons, air defense, fighter jets... The peace formula. Long-term programs to support Ukraine. Finance and economy."
- Volodymyr Zelensky and Narendra Modi discussed Ukraine's Peace Formula. "For me, it [the war] is an issue of humanity. I will assure you that India and I, personally, will do everything we can to resolve it," the Indian PM said.
- Sergey Lavrov is not happy Ukraine is at the G7 summit where Russia used to be. He expressed his dissatisfaction that the Group's decisions are aimed at constraining Russia.
- Ukraine's Minister of Defense says that next week Ramstein's meeting will focus on air defense, not fighter jets.
- Russian diplomats are talking about the escalation ladder again. Keir Giles nailed the apparent incongruity of the U.S. and U.K. stance: London sees escalation as an empty

charade, whereas Washington, D.C. still regards it as a limiting factor for providing fighter jets to Ukraine.

Humanitarian aspect

During the full-scale invasion, the Russian armed forces killed 482 children in Ukraine and injured more than 980, the Prosecutor General's Office reported.

As a consequence of the full-scale Russian invasion, approximately 17.6 million Ukrainians, equivalent to around 40% of the country's population, are in dire need of humanitarian assistance, according to Dmytro Shkrabatovskyi, Chairman of the Board of the Ukrainian Federation of Food Banks.

According to the Coordinating Headquarters for the Treatment of Prisoners of War, Russian authorities are coercing captive Ukrainians to contact their relatives and falsely claim that the Russian side has submitted their names for exchange, but Ukraine is refusing to accept them. The Headquarters strongly emphasizes that this is a blatant act of manipulation.

Russian attacks

Russian forces continued attacking peaceful Ukrainian cities, towns, and villages. On the night of May 20, the Air Force of the Armed Forces of Ukraine destroyed 20 Shahed-136/131 type attack drones and the Merlin-VR reconnaissance drone launched by the Russian invaders. Specifically, Kyiv Oblast was targeted by 18 Shahed drones.

- Falling UAV debris damaged 2 residential buildings, a service station, and cars in four districts of **Kyiv**. There were no casualties.
- The Russian military carried out 92 attacks on 16 towns and villages of **Zaporizhzhia Oblast**, mostly located along the contact line. 9 civilians were injured.
- Russian forces attacked 11 towns and villages in **Donetsk Oblast** with aviation, missiles, and artillery over the day, damaging residential buildings and civilian infrastructure. 2 civilians died and 2 were injured in the Oblast.
- The Russian military shelled at least 21 towns and villages in **Kharkiv Oblast**, killing one civilian and injuring another one. Demining operations are ongoing in the region. Pyrotechnics of the State Emergency Service examined more than eight hectares of territory and diffused 82 explosive objects.
- On May 20, around 4:00 a.m., the Russian military once again shelled Beryslav, **Kherson Oblast**. The shell hit a private house. A man and a woman died under the rubble. A man was also injured due to an attack on Kindiyka near Kherson.

Occupied territories

According to Ivan Fedorov, the legally elected mayor of **Melitopol (Zaporizhzhya Oblast)**, which is currently occupied by Russian forces, the Russian authorities are preparing to conduct Russian elections in the city in September of this year. On Monday, the preliminary voting for the "United Russia" party will commence, as they have established a branch in the temporarily occupied Melitopol. Around a hundred candidates have registered and will be selected through the

preliminary voting process before participating in the local elections. Similar activities are taking place in other occupied areas as well.

According to Roman Vlasenko, the Head of the Sieverodonetsk District Military Administration, there is a partisan movement observed in **Luhansk Oblast**, although it is less active than Ukraine would like to see. There were cases of blown-up rails, distribution of leaflets, trolling of the occupation authorities and the Russian military with inscriptions and flags, and, most importantly, informing the Armed Forces of Ukraine about the movements and locations of units, military equipment, and warehouses of the occupation army.

Operational situation

General conclusion:

- The Russian military concentrates its main efforts on offensive actions in the Lyman, Bakhmut, Avdiivka, and Maryinka directions;
- Counterattacks launched by the Ukrainian Defense Forces near Bakhmut effectively neutralized the threat of encirclement by Russian forces and compelled them to divert military resources towards defending against the advancing Ukrainian troops, aligning with the strategic foresight of the Ukrainian command.
- The intensification of strikes by Russian UAVs and missiles, as well as artillery attacks along the entire front line, aims to disrupt the plans and preparation for the counteroffensive of the Defense Forces.

Change in the line of contact (LoC):

- Units of the Ukrainian Defense Forces repulsed over 29 Russian attacks in different directions. Bakhmut and Maryinka remain at the epicenter of hostilities.
- Russian forces conducted unsuccessful offensive actions in Bilohorivka, Ivanove, Bila Hora, Novokalynove, Stepove, Avdiivka, Pervomaiske, Severne, Maryinka, and Novomykhailivka areas. Armed clashes took place in the districts of Tymkivka and Synkivka. Ukrainian Defense forces have lost control over a tactically significant area of height west of Masyutivka; fighting continues along the frontier between Masyutivka and Lyman Pershyi. The enemy advanced in the area of the Serebryansk Forest near Shipylka and attacked near Nevske and Makiivka, but had no success.
- The enemy units have reached the southeastern outskirts of Khromove and displaced the Defense Forces from the western neighborhood of Bakhmut. Detachments of the "Wagner" PMC have advanced to the entrance of Bakhmut on the T0504 highway, connecting Bakhmut and Chasiv Yar.
- The Ukrainian Defense Forces continued their offensive on the northern and southern outskirts of Bakhmut and advanced 500 m on one flank and 1,000 m on the other; they recaptured several lost positions in the Bilohorivka area with a successful counterattack.
- A HIMARS strike by Ukrainian Defense Force destroyed up to 10 Russian T-90 tanks east of Maryinka.
- Units of the Ukrainian Defense Forces counterattacked near Solodke, trying to advance to the village's southeast toward the H20 highway to Volnovakha.

Change in enemy disposition:

- The 3rd and 22nd separate SOF brigades concentrated in the Tyotkino village area, Kursk Oblast, to prevent cross-border activities of Ukrainian partisans, carry out cross-border provocations, and raise the morale of Russian troops. Units of the 3rd separate SOF brigade were spotted in the Kreminna area, and the 22nd separate SOF brigade was spotted in Orikhiv, Zaporizhzhia Oblast. The brigades have likely completed restoring their combat capability after the losses suffered and are gradually being drawn into combat operations.

Escalation indicators:

- Russian forces have slightly intensified their ground attacks along the Avdiivka-Donetsk line after a week of slowdown. The enemy's aviation maintains a high intensity of airstrikes in the tactical zone on the main effort directions, particularly in Zaporizhzhia and Kherson Oblasts.

Possible operation situation developments:

- The enemy will announce the capture of Bakhmut in the coming days and will transition to a defensive stance in the Kupyansk, Bakhmut, Avdiivka, and Maryinka directions.
- Ukrainian Defense Forces will continue to shape the operational space, preparing favorable conditions for counteroffensive operations.
- To eliminate the threat posed by the Defense Forces on the Siversky Bulge, the enemy command needs to swiftly conclude the battles in Bakhmut and commence troop redeployment in the northern and northwestern directions.
- If the enemy command decides to launch an offensive towards Siversk and Sloviansk, we should expect the deployment of their operational reserves north of Bakhmut (2-3 battalions from the 57th Separate Motorized Rifle Brigade and the 51st parachute airborne regiment of the 106th Airborne Division within the first day, followed by an additional 6 battalions from the mobilization reserve of the 2nd Army Corps within the next 48 hours).
- The enemy will encounter logistical challenges due to insufficient transportation capacity to redeploy their reserves.

Azov-Black Sea Maritime Operational Area:

- The Russian navy continues the constant rotation of ships at sea, periodically increasing the number of "Kalibr" missile carriers in the areas of firing positions. As of the afternoon of May 20, there were 3 Russian ships at sea. They patrol the areas near the coast of Crimea and the Russian Krasnodar Krai. One of them (a submarine) carries up to 4 Kalibr missiles. One ship is on duty near the Kerch Strait Bridge.
- The enemy's aviation continues its flights over the sea from the Crimean airfields of Belbek, Saky, Dzhankoy, and Hvardiyske. Five fighter aircraft from Belbek and Saki Air Force Bases were deployed to monitor surface and air conditions in the northwestern part of the Black Sea. The A-50U and Il-22 AEW&C aircraft were responsible for overseeing the air situation and managing operational-tactical aviation activities over the waters of the Sea of Azov.

The "Grain Initiative"

Inspections of vessels heading to Ukrainian ports under the "grain initiative" were suspended on May 7 due to the Russian side's position in the Joint Coordination Center (JCC). Inspections have now resumed, but only for two ports. Deputy Minister of Community Development, Territories, and Infrastructure of Ukraine, Yuriy Vaskov, stated that Russia agreed to resume inspections at the ports of Odesa and Chornomorsk but refused to inspect vessels heading to the port of Pivdenny. Currently, 62 vessels are waiting in line for inspection, some of them for several months.

Vaskov confirmed that no vessels participating in the initiative have arrived in Ukrainian ports since the Barbados-flagged DSM Capella vessel carrying 30,000 tons of corn departed from the port of Chornomorsk to Turkey on May 17. With the normal functioning of the "grain initiative", Ukraine is ready to export 6 million tons of agricultural products per month from three ports. However, since November, Russia has been finding new reasons to limit exports and suspend the grain initiative. As a result, from the beginning of May to May 17, less than 1 million tons were exported, and in April, only 2.7 million tons were exported.

Vaskov noted that the vessels waiting the longest in line would be given priority for entrance inspections. If they pass the inspections today, they can be in Ukrainian ports in two days' time.

Russian operational losses from 24.02.22 to 20.05.23

Personnel - almost 202,430 people (+670);

Tanks - 3,781 (+4);

Armored combat vehicles – 7,382 (+5);

Artillery systems – 3,229 (+19)

Multiple rocket launchers (MLRS) - 564 (0);

Anti-aircraft warfare systems - 325 (+6);

Vehicles and fuel tanks – 6,103 (+20);

Aircraft - 308 (0);

Helicopters – 294 (0);

UAV operational and tactical level – 2,801 (+32);

Intercepted cruise missiles - 2801 (+32);

Boats/ships – 18 (0).

Ukraine, general news

Three weeks after the launch of the defense-tech cluster Brave1, over 120 ideas submitted by Ukrainian engineers have been received. At least 20 of them will become a game-changer for the front, Deputy Prime Minister for Innovation, Development of Education, Science and Technology - Minister of Digital Transformation Mykhailo Fedorov said.

Ukraine's agricultural production in 2023 will decrease by 10% compared to last year, said First Deputy Minister of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine Taras Vysotskyi, but productivity, export of products and operation of the domestic market will be preserved.

International diplomatic aspect

"We are coordinating our positions with our partners and preparing new joint steps. Defense: weapons, air defense, fighter jets. We engage as many countries and leaders as possible for the sake of Ukraine. The peace formula. Long-term programs to support Ukraine. Finance and economy," Ukraine's President summed up his meetings with G7 leaders in Hiroshima, Japan. Volodymyr Zelensky thanked Prime Minister Rishi Sunak for the leadership of the U.K. in the international fighter jets coalition (IFJC). While meeting Emmanuel Macron, Volodymyr Zelensky stressed the importance of France's support for the IFJC and the country's participation in the training mission for Ukrainian pilots. Volodymyr Zelensky expressed his gratitude to Olaf Scholz for the significant increase in security assistance. Ukraine's President thanked Giorgia Meloni for the assistance and discussed furthering Ukraine's air defense capabilities and Italy's possible role in the IFJC.

On the sidelines of the G7 summit, President Volodymyr Zelensky met with the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the first time since the all-out invasion. "The war in Ukraine is a big issue for the whole world. It has also had many effects on the whole world. But I don't consider it to be just an issue of economy or politics. For me, it is an issue of humanity," the Indian PM said. "I will assure you that India and I, personally, will do everything we can to resolve it," he added. Volodymyr Zelensky thanked Narendra Modi for India's support and outlined Ukraine's Peace Formula. Narendra Modi tried to influence Vladimir Putin last September during the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit in Samarkand. "I know that today's era is not of war, and we have talked to you many times over the phone on the subject that democracy and diplomacy and dialogue are all these things that touch the world," Modi told Putin then. "We want all of this to end as soon as possible," he added. Yet, despite diplomatic rhetoric, India indirectly helps Russia cope with international isolation and sanctions. The bilateral trade has increased sharply and reached \$44 billion in 2022-2023. Russia is India's 5th largest trade partner after the U.S., China, UAE, and Saudi Arabia. While India's own export to Russia is only \$2.8 billion, Russia's export of oil to India increased tenfold. In addition to saving some \$5 billion due to huge discounts related to sanctions and oil price cap, India is reexporting oil to Europe and elsewhere. New Delhi showed no sign of reducing security cooperation with Moscow.

Russia's Foreign Minister expressed his dissatisfaction with the former G8, which expelled Russia for its aggression against Ukraine, "Look at the decisions that are being discussed and adopted today in Hiroshima at the G7 summit and which aim to deter Russia and the People's Republic of China. It is not hidden that the existence of Russia as an independent center is incompatible with achieving the goal of the global dominance of the West." "The task was set loudly and openly – to defeat Russia on the battlefield, but not to stop there, but to eliminate it as a geopolitical competitor," he added. In Sergey Lavrov's view, Russia has the right to any actions it deems necessary, regardless of their violation of the norms and principles of international law.

When asked about the possibility of decisions regarding fighter jets at the upcoming meeting of the Defense Consultative Group at Ramstein next week, Ukraine's Minister of Defense stated,

"Ground systems - from MANPADS to powerful Air Defence batteries - and missiles for them are always in focus. We will talk about this."

Russia's Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Grushko reacted on the fighter jet coalition news, "We see that the Western countries are still adhering to the escalation scenario. It involves enormous risks for themselves. In any case, this will be taken into account in all our plans, and we have all the necessary means to achieve the set goals." "The U.S. and U.K. support to Ukraine are running in different gears because the U.K. sees Russia's 'escalation' threats as the empty charade they are, while the top echelons of the U.S. leadership refuse to do so and cling to their fear of hurting Putin's feelings," Keir Giles of Chatham House commented on apparent incongruity of the U.S. and U.K. stance on fighter jets.

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