

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, May 2

Kateryna Stepanenko, Karolina Hird, and Frederick W. Kagan

May 2, 5:15 pm ET

Russian forces did not conduct any confirmed ground attacks in Ukraine on May 2. The April 30 Ukrainian artillery strike on the Russian command post in Izyum may be continuing to disrupt Russian efforts on the Izyum axis. Russian troops on the Donetsk-Luhansk frontline and Southern Axis continued to regroup, likely in preparation for renewed offensives or to resist or reverse Ukrainian counter-offensives.

Key Takeaways

- **Russian forces did not conduct any confirmed ground attacks along any axes of advance and instead shelled Ukrainian positions on the frontlines.**
- **The April 30 Ukrainian artillery strike on Russian command headquarters near Izyum likely disrupted Russian operations on the Izyum axis and may hinder Russian offensives from Izyum for the next few days.**
- **Russian forces on the Southern Axis continued to regroup and reconnoiter likely in preparation for ground assaults in the direction of Kryvyi Rih, Mykolaiv, and Zaporizhia.**

We do not report in detail on Russian war crimes because those activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We will continue to evaluate and report on the effects of these criminal activities on the Ukrainian military and population and specifically on combat in Ukrainian urban areas. We utterly condemn these Russian violations of the laws of armed conflict, Geneva Conventions, and humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of May 2, 2022, 3:00 PM ET



* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

ISW has updated its assessment of the four primary efforts Russian forces are engaged in at this time:

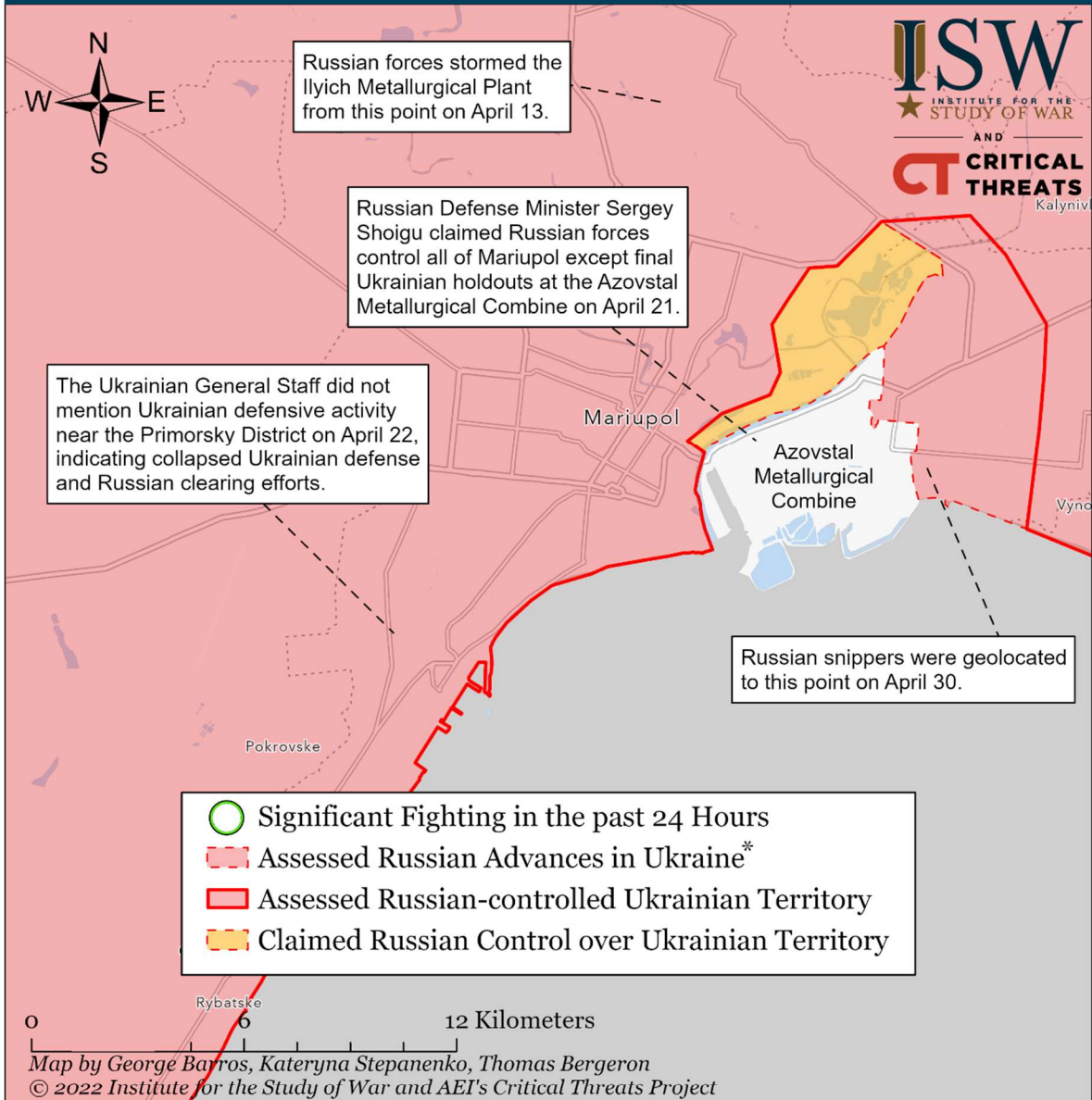
- Main effort—Eastern Ukraine (comprised of two subordinate supporting efforts);
- Supporting effort 1—Kharkiv and Izyum;
- Supporting effort 2—Southern axis;
- Supporting effort 3—Sumy and northeastern Ukraine.

Main effort—Eastern Ukraine

Subordinate Main Effort—Mariupol (Russian objective: Capture Mariupol and reduce the Ukrainian defenders)

Russian forces conducted naval artillery and air strikes on Mariupol while civilian evacuations from the Azovstal Steel Plant continued on May 1 and May 2.¹ Ukraine’s Military Law Enforcement Service reported that over 100 civilians evacuated to Zaporizhia city from Azovstal on May 2, but Ukrainian defenders remain at the plant.² The Russian Defense Ministry claimed that Russian forces saved 80 civilians (whom it falsely asserted had been held hostage at the plant) and that 11 evacuees ”volunteered“ to remain in the Donetsk People’s Republic.³ Continued Russian bombardment of Mariupol belies Moscow’s claims that its forces have secured the city.

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Mariupol as of May 2, 2022, 3:00 ET



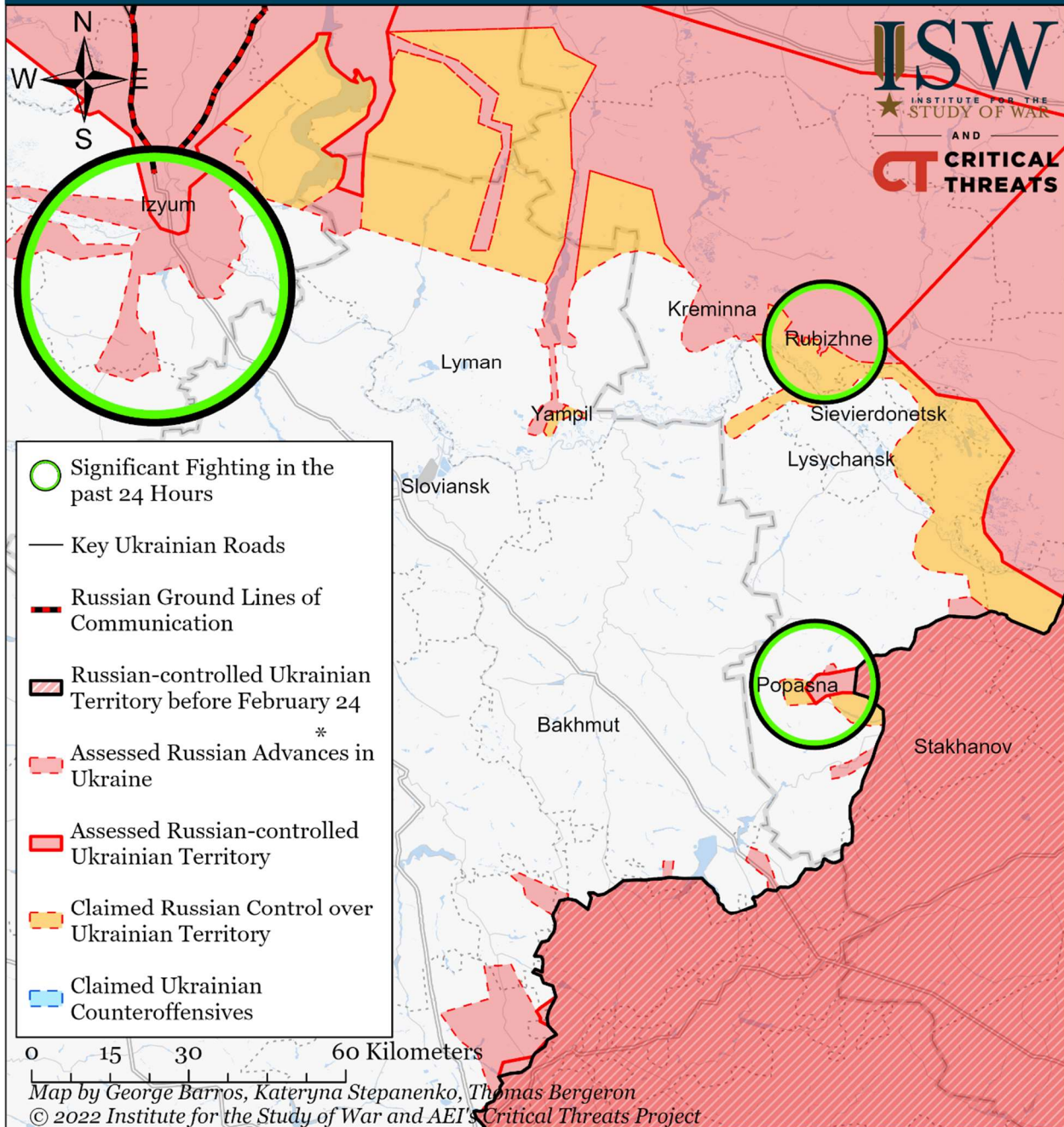
The Kremlin declared victory in Mariupol on April 21 after capturing the city besides Ukrainian holdouts in the encircled Azovstal Metallurgical Combine. Russian forces continued naval artillery and air strikes on remaining Ukrainian defenders at Azovstal on May 2. Ukrainian forces engaged in small-scale street fights in the Left Bank District outside Azovstal on April 27. Russian war reporters filmed some Russian elements redeploying from Mariupol northward on April 24 and April 25. The Ukrainian General Staff notably did not mention Ukrainian defensive activity near the port of Mariupol or Primorsky District on April 22, indicating Russian clearing efforts. The Kremlin will spin the (still incomplete) capture of Mariupol into a major victory in Ukraine to compensate for stalled or failed Russian offensives elsewhere.

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Subordinate Main Effort—Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)

Russian forces shelled along the Donetsk-Luhansk frontline and did not conduct any confirmed ground attacks on May 2.⁴ Russian troops continued to focus on completing the seizure of Rubizhne and Popasna.⁵ The Ukrainian General Staff forecasts that Russian troops will likely attempt to use these points to launch an offensive in the direction of Severodonetsk.⁶ The Ukrainian General Staff also stated that Russian forces moved one battalion tactical group (BTG) to the Popasna area to improve their tactical position and prepare to advance toward Severodonetsk.⁷ The Ukrainian General Staff observed that Russian troops are setting conditions to advance on Slovyansk from the Lyman-Siversk frontline, which lies within 25 km to the east of Slovyansk.⁸ This observation is consistent with ISW’s previous reporting of Russian troops making marginal southwestward advances around the Yampil area over the last few days.⁹

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk as of May 2, 2022, 3:00 ET



* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Supporting Effort #1—Kharkiv and Izyum: (Russian objective: Advance southeast to support Russian operations in Luhansk Oblast; defend ground lines of communication (GLOCs) to the Izyum axis)

Russian forces continued to regroup and conduct unspecified offensive operations in the Izyum area, but did not make any confirmed advances on May 2.¹⁰ The April 30 Ukrainian rocket artillery strike on the Russian Airborne (VDV) and 2nd Combined Arms Army command post in the Izyum area may be continuing to disrupt Russian operations along the Izyum axis.

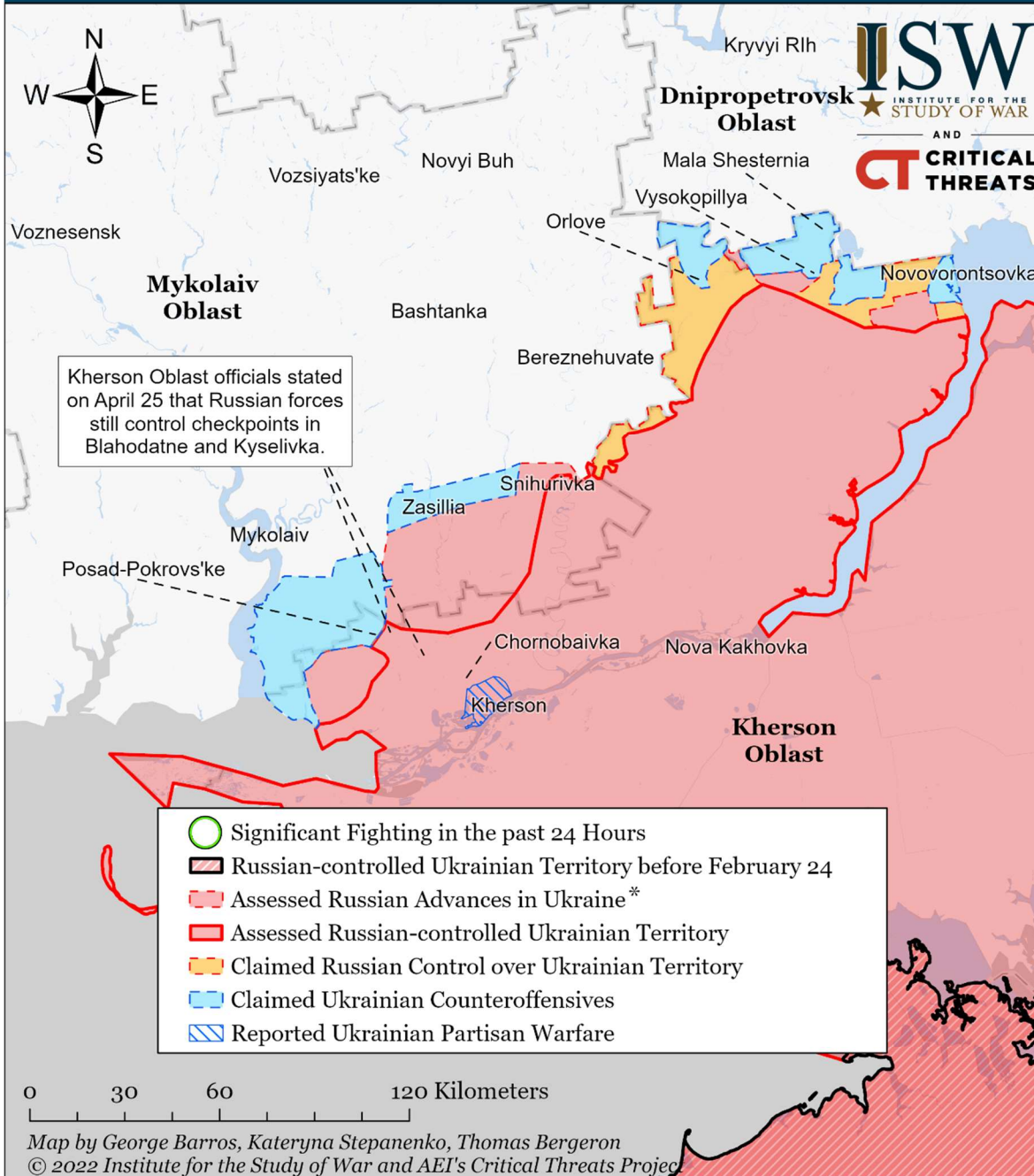
Russian troops, including elements of the 6th Combined Arms Army and Baltic and Pacific Fleet coastal troops, continued to shell Kharkiv City and surrounding settlements.¹¹ Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Malyar notably stated that Ukrainian forces suffered significant losses when they took control of Ruska Lozova (less than 10 kilometers north of Kharkiv City), suggesting that Russian troops saw sufficient value in this location to fight hard to hold it.¹²

Supporting Effort #2—Southern Axis (Objective: Defend Kherson against Ukrainian counterattacks)

Russian forces continued to regroup, reconnoiter, and concentrate logistics on May 2, likely in preparation for ground assaults on Ukrainian position in the directions of Mykolaiv, Kryvyi Rih, and Zaporizhia.¹³ The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces deployed an unspecified artillery unit to Tokmak that will likely support Russian attempts to seize Orihiv, Zaporizhia Oblast.¹⁴ Orihiv is on the intersection of several major highways, and its seizure could allow Russian forces to push toward Zaporizhia city as well as Donetsk. Russian forces also reportedly established an equipment repair shop in an occupied Zaporizhia Oblast settlement.¹⁵

Ukraine's Operational Command "South" said that Russian forces did not attempt ground offensives in southern Ukraine on May 2 but conducted periodic artillery and mortar shelling and reportedly launched a third rocket strike on the bridge leading over the Dniester Estuary to Romania.¹⁶ Ukrainian forces claimed to have struck Russian ammunition depots in Chornobaivka, Kherson Oblast, on May 2; a video post on social media may corroborate that claim, but ISW cannot verify it with greater confidence.¹⁷ Ukrainian forces also destroyed two Russian Raptor-class patrol boats that reconnoitered the Danube River delta on May 2.¹⁸ There were no significant situational changes in Transnistria.¹⁹

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of May 2, 2022, 3:00 PM ET



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Note: We recoded assessed Russian advance west of Snihurivka from Chervone and Novopetrivka to Ukrainian counteroffensives given this territory likely had to be liberated to support the April 27 counteroffensive on Shyrokye, Novopetrivka, and Lyubin. ISW will update our maps once we can verify more data.

Supporting Effort #3—Sumy and Northeastern Ukraine: (Russian objective: Withdraw combat power in good order for redeployment to eastern Ukraine)

There were no significant activities on this axis in the past 24 hours.

Immediate items to watch

- Russian attacks from Izyum will likely be at least temporarily disrupted by the attack on Russian command post in the area.
- Russian forces will likely attempt to starve out the remaining defenders of the Azovstal Steel Plant in Mariupol.
- Russian forces may be preparing to conduct renewed offensive operations to capture the entirety of Kherson Oblast in the coming days.

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- ¹ <https://t.me/mariupolnow/8805>; <https://t.me/mariupolnow/8816>
- ² <https://armyinform.com.ua/2022/05/02/ponad-100-lyudej-evakujovanyh-z-azovstali-prybuly-do-zaporizhzhya/>
- ³ https://t.me/mod_russia/15063
- ⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/307651304881288>; <https://armyinform.com.ua/2022/05/02/zagarbnyky-obstrilyuyut-harkiv-nastupayut-u-napryamkah-barvinkovogo-ta-slovyanska/>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/307229161590169>; https://t.me/pavlokyrylenko_donoda/3231
- ⁵ <https://t.me/luhanskaVTSA/2205>; <https://t.me/luhanskaVTSA/2199>; https://t.me/RKadyrov_95/2008; <https://twitter.com/GeoConfirmed/status/1520803234293633026>; <https://t.me/millnr/8324>
- ⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/307229161590169>
- ⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/307229161590169>
- ⁸ <https://armyinform.com.ua/2022/05/02/zagarbnyky-obstrilyuyut-harkiv-nastupayut-u-napryamkah-barvinkovogo-ta-slovyanska/>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/307651304881288>
- ⁹ <https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-may-1>
- ¹⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/307651304881288>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/307229161590169>; <https://t.me/romandonik/2854>; https://twitter.com/666_mancer/status/1521043273367887874; https://twitter.com/666_mancer/status/1521043544034709504; <https://twitter.com/GirkinGirkin/status/1521004936259059713>; <https://twitter.com/GirkinGirkin/status/1521003912253349889>; <https://twitter.com/GirkinGirkin/status/1521004936259059713>; https://twitter.com/Blue_Sauron/status/1521020014815502336; https://twitter.com/Blue_Sauron/status/1521020101947973633
- ¹¹ <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/307651304881288>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/307229161590169>; <https://armyinform.com.ua/2022/05/02/zagarbnyky-obstrilyuyut-harkiv-nastupayut-u-napryamkah-barvinkovogo-ta-slovyanska/>; <https://t.me/synegubov/3056>
- ¹² <https://www.facebook.com/ganna.maliar/posts/2146572858835078>
- ¹³ <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/307651304881288>
- ¹⁴ https://t.me/zoda_gov_ua/7232; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/307651304881288>
- ¹⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/307651304881288>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/307651304881288>
- ¹⁶ <https://t.me/stranaua/39672>; <https://t.me/epoddubny/10280>; https://t.me/Bratchuk_Sergey/11089
- ¹⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/alexey.arestovich/posts/5424517464278956>; <https://t.me/hueviyherson/18009>; https://twitter.com/666_mancer/status/1521057546123063297; <https://twitter.com/Militarylandnet/status/1521059714649497601>; <https://t.me/stranaua/39660>
- ¹⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=382370703816214>; <https://twitter.com/GeoConfirmed/status/1521059558432690176>; <https://www.facebook.com/okPivden/videos/518002416459912/>
- ¹⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/307651304881288>