

# Ukraine Crisis Update: June 25, 2015

**1** On June 16, rebel saboteurs blew up a stretch of railway track in the Luhansk region not far from the front lines. On June 19, a separatist sabotage and reconnaissance group engaged Ukrainian troops near Shchastia, but withdrew shortly afterward. Separatists also fired small arms on the town on June 23rd. On June 23, Separatist forces shelled a camp for engineers and workers constructing defenses near Luhansk in Rodina. Separatists also fired automatic grenade launchers on the Ukrainian positions there. Automatic grenade launchers were also fired at a Ukrainian checkpoint near Rodina.

**2** On June 11, separatists shelled ATO positions along the Bakhmutka highway in Zolote, Trokhizbenka, Krymske, and Novotoshkivske, north and northwest of Luhansk with 122mm artillery. On June 17, three Ukrainian soldiers were wounded after separatists fired on ATO troops traveling from Trokhizbenka to Lobacheve, south west of Shchastia. On June 18, Separatist forces engaged Ukrainian troops near the Sokilnyky, killing three Ukrainians and wounding 14 others. Ukrainian forces repelled a second attack on the next day. On June 19, Separatists fired 152-mm howitzers and 120mm artillery on Zolote, where 2 soldiers were WIA. In the same vicinity, separatists fired MLRS "Grad" missiles at ATO positions in Nizhne. separatists destroyed a bridge along the supply route for ATO positions at Troitske. Interruption of supplies, in addition to consistent shelling and rocket attacks in the area may signal a separatist attack however the continued shelling, sabotage activity, and skirmishing northwest of Luhansk is a potential diversion designed to draw Ukrainian troops on the northern front away from Donetsk and Highway 20.

**3** June 17th-19th: separatists attacked Ukrainian positions near Popasna with heavy artillery and mortars. Separatist forces fired MLRS "Grad" rockets on the city on June 19th and 20th.

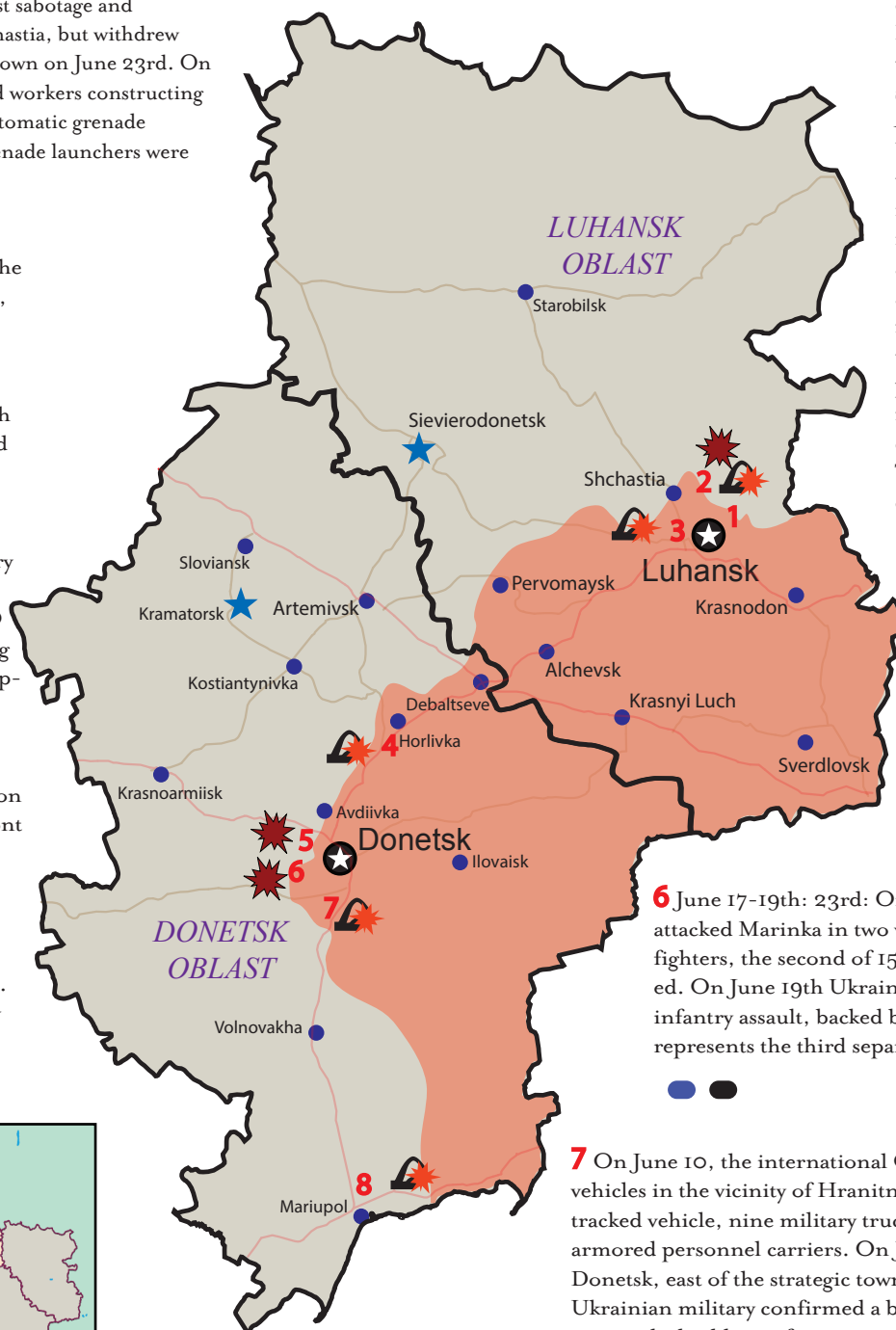
**4** On June 10, the "DNR"-controlled Horlivka came under fire with three civilians killed. Separatist and Ukrainian officials traded blame for the IDF strikes. On June 16th, Ukrainian and rebel forces agreed to a temporary local ceasefire near Horlivka while a damaged water pipeline, supplying water to both cities, was repaired. Separatist forces attacked ATO positions IVO Horlivka with small arms and mortars on Jun 22nd. Ukrainian politician Dmytro Tymchuk reported a build-up of separatist tanks around the town on June 24th. On June 24, the ATO forces recorded a redeployment of seven tanks and two infantry fighting vehicles in the town of Horlivka, north of Donetsk city. The report also recorded approximately 70 militants in the area, and the deployment of 122mm artillery. Ukrainian sources also speculate separatist forces are taking fuel from gas stations in Donetsk for an offensive. The build-up of troops and the redirection of fuel supplies may indicate a looming offensive on ATO positions in the area. A successful separatist attack which drove Ukrainian forces from their positions near Horlivka would enable separatists to push deep behind Ukrainian lines before encountering other fortified areas. The road layout makes the area ideal for a penetration maneuver and difficult for Ukrainians to reinforce.

**5** June 11-19th: ATO forces targeted areas around the Donetsk Airport, northwest of the city, with artillery fire. Skirmishes and separatist shelling killed 10 Ukrainian soldiers. In the following days, separatist forces fired on Ukrainian positions all across the front line with "Grad" rockets in the vicinity of Avdiivka, Pisky, Marinka, Krasnohorivka, and Opytne.

**6** June 17-19th: 23rd: On the 17th, following shelling and small arms attacks, separatist troops attacked Marinka in two waves under cover of 120mm artillery. The first consisted of 30 separatist fighters, the second of 150. ATO forces repulsed both waves, 10 Ukrainian soldiers were wounded. On June 19th Ukrainian forces repulsed multiple attacks. The forces also repulsed a rebel infantry assault, backed by armored vehicles and using cover fire from artillery. This instance represents the third separatist assault on Marinka this month.

**7** On June 10, the international OSCE monitoring group reported a buildup of separatist military vehicles in the vicinity of Hranitne. According to the OSCE, the vehicles include a short range air defense tracked vehicle, nine military trucks, one SA-8 anti-aircraft system, eight main battle tanks, and 20 armored personnel carriers. On June 17, separatists fired 120mm shells on ATO positions south of Donetsk, east of the strategic town of Volnovakha, which lies along the Donetsk-Mariupol highway. The Ukrainian military confirmed a build-up of separatist armor in the same area. Further north, the OSCE reported a build-up of separatist equipment in Komsomolske. These buildups may be preparation for an assault on Ukrainian positions along the north-south Highway 20, which if successful would split the Ukrainian line threatening the flank of the Ukrainian troops besieging the separatist capital of Donetsk the flank of the Ukrainian forces defending the key port city of Mariupol.

**8** June 11-19th: Separatists shelled ATO positions at Shyrokyne IVO Mariupol with 122mm artillery, a caliber prohibited by the Minsk II accords. One member of the Azov Battalion was killed on June 11th. After a short lull in fighting before June 13th, separatists heavily bombarded Shyrokyne, killing 10 Ukrainian soldiers and wounding at least 20.



- Donetsk People's Republic (DNR)
- Luhansk People's Republic (LNR)
- Ukrainian Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO)
- ☄ Indirect Fire
- ☄ Clash
- ☄ Battle
- Separatist-held Territory
- ★ Regional Admin Center
- ★ Acting Regional Admin Center

**ISW** Walter Keady, Franklin Holcomb, and Maria Snegovaya  
INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF WAR  
 ©2015 by the Institute for the Study of War

Russian backed Separatist forces have launched multiple unsuccessful assaults on Marinka, a Ukrainian held town near Donetsk. The first assault was a two-wave attack on Ukrainian ATO positions in Marinka on the 17th. Another three-wave attack followed the next day. In continued violation of the Minsk II agreements, separatist and ATO forces consistently exchanged artillery fire west of Donetsk and north of Luhansk, along the T1303 Bakhmutka Highway. Both sides are likely trying to dislodge enemy infantry and artillery units from their positions near the capital cities of Donetsk and Luhansk as the Minsk agreement disintegrates. Donetsk is still the Russian main effort. The reorientation of assets toward Luhansk is atypical and likely indicates that the separatists intend to focus their efforts on the northern and western fronts instead of restarting their large scale operations in the south near Mariupol. Ukrainian sources are claiming that rebel presence in the south is decreasing, while troop movements are occurring in Donetsk and Luhansk. The OSCE and ATO intelligence both report build-ups of separatist armor and equipment near Volnovakha and Komsomolske (south of Donetsk) and in Horlivka (north of Donetsk). In the past month, separatists have launched offensives during diplomatic talks in order to seize territory and pressure pro-Ukrainian negotiators to make political concessions to the separatists, including increased sovereignty and permission to hold elections. Redeployments of armor may be an effort to reposition forces for such an assault following the end of the Trilateral Contact Group meeting in Minsk or the Normandy Four meeting in Paris.