

# Ukraine Crisis Update: September 3, 2015

**1** August 26-29: Separatists launched indirect fire on Ukrainian military positions and civilian areas just east and northeast of Mariupol prior to the implementation of a short-term ceasefire on September 1.

**2** August 26-28: Separatists launched an attack from a “Grad” multiple launch rocket system (MLRS) on the Ukrainian-held village of Bohdanivka east of the highway on August 26. Separatists clashed with Ukrainian forces near the village on August 28. Separatists launched heavy indirect fire on Ukrainian positions east of the highway between the strategic government-held port city of Mariupol and separatist-held Donetsk city prior to a short-term ceasefire on September 1.

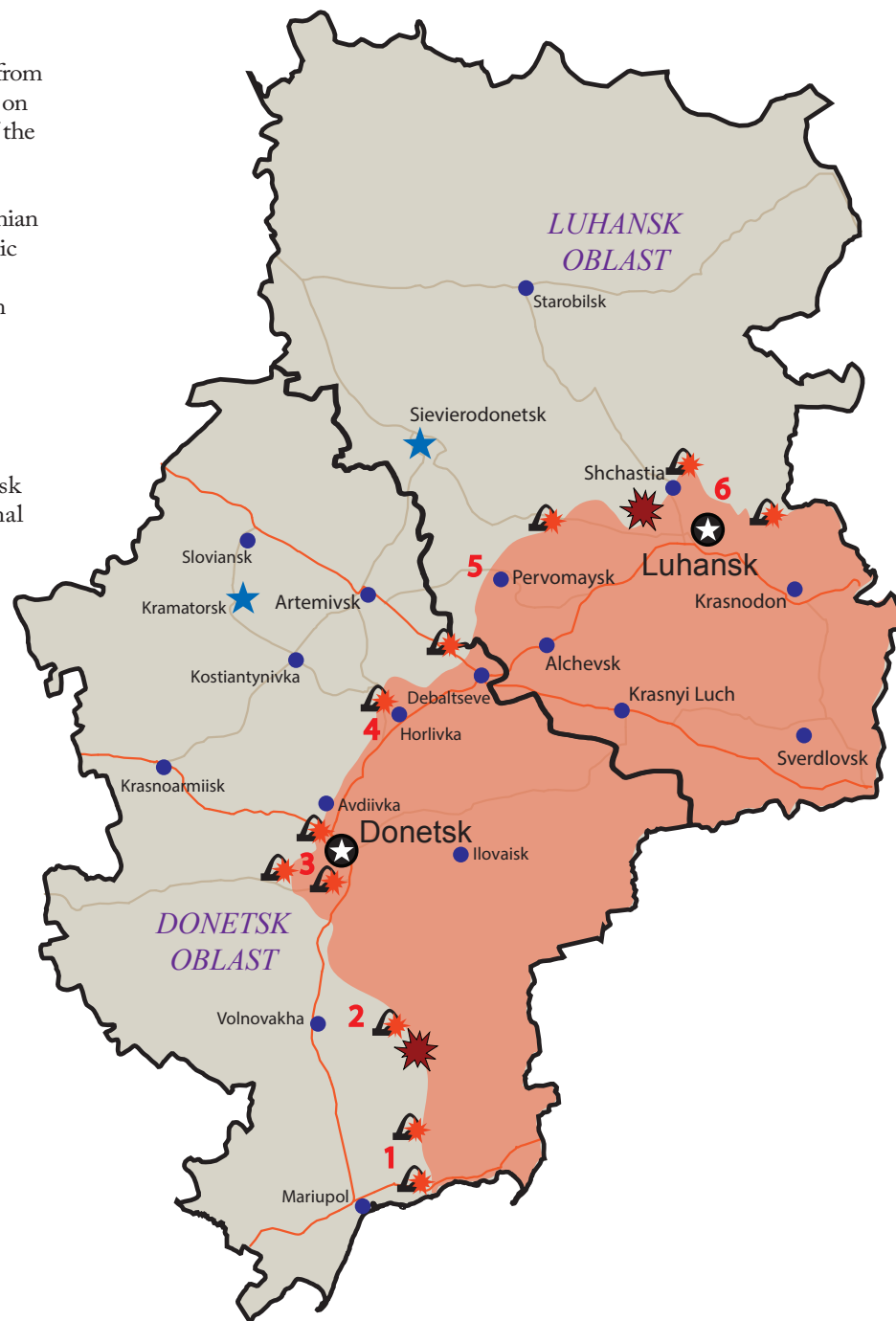
**3** August 26-September 2: Separatist forces fired “Grad” MLRS on the Ukrainian-held village of Opytne, near the DNR-held Donetsk Airport on August 27. The OSCE international monitoring mission recorded indirect fire coming into Donetsk city prior to September 1. Separatist forces continued to launch indirect fire on Ukrainian positions outside Donetsk city prior to the implementation of a short-term ceasefire on September 1. The DNR claimed three civilians were killed in the shelling between August 28 and 29.

**4** August 26-August 30: Separatist continued to engage Ukrainian forces outside the DNR stronghold of Horlivka. The intensity of attacks in the area substantially decreased in connection with the short-term September 1 ceasefire.

**5** August 26-September 3: Separatists continued to launch attacks primarily with grenade launchers and small arms near the “Bakhmutka” highway in western Luhansk Oblast, as well as the highway between separatist-held Debaltseve and government-controlled Artemivsk. Separatist forces continued to launch small arms attacks on September 1-3 as well as at least one mortar attack on the “Bakhmutka” highway on September 2 despite the short-term September 1 ceasefire agreement.

**6** August 26-September 2: On September 2, separatist forces ambushed a Ukrainian combined military and civilian patrol designed to combat smuggling across the front line between separatist and government-held Luhansk Oblast. Two members of the patrol were killed and six injured in the ambush, which involved sniper fire and the detonation of a landmine near the government-held frontline town of Shchastia. The incident was the most significant separatist attack since the start of the short-term September 1 ceasefire.

**7** August 31: Far-right groups launched a violent riot outside Ukraine’s parliament building in Kyiv as a majority of MPs gave their initial backing to constitutional amendments acknowledging the special status of separatist-held Donbas. Over 120 Ukrainian national guardsmen and police securing the building were injured and three were killed in a grenade attack. The ultranationalist paramilitary group “Pravyi Sektor” supported the rioters by blockading the main road leading to parliament. A fighter from the “Sich” battalion, a volunteer special police unit with ties to the far-right, is suspected of carrying out the grenade attack while on leave from the front line.



- 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



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Russian-backed separatists initially abided by a short-term ceasefire beginning September 1, which was designed to reduce the number of civilian casualties during the first week of the Ukrainian school year. Separatist forces reduced the number of indirect fire attacks in the days leading up to the truce, to which Russia, Ukraine, and the separatists agreed on August 26 during talks regarding the implementation of the larger February “Minsk II” ceasefire agreement. The separatists refrained from launching significant heavy artillery attacks on September 1-2. However, separatists ambushed a Ukrainian combined military and civilian counter-smuggling team on the front line in Luhansk Oblast on September 2, killing two and injuring up to six. Persistent separatist attacks such as this since the signing of “Minsk II” cast doubt on the potential for the September 1 ceasefire to last. This ambush suggests that fighting may return to the high intensity witnessed in August before the end of the week.

The dip in separatist attacks along the front line coincided with a lethal far-right riot in Kyiv over parliament’s initial backing of constitutional amendments that would acknowledge the special status of separatist-held Donbas. Demonstrators clashed with Ukrainian security forces outside the parliament building in protest of the legislation, which they claimed was an unnecessary and even traitorous concession to Russia and the separatists. An on-leave member of a Ukrainian volunteer special police battalion with ties to the far-right was detained as the primary suspect behind a grenade attack during the riot, which killed three national guardsmen. The far-right “Pravyi Sektor” paramilitary group, an active but unofficial participant in Ukraine’s “Anti-Terrorist Operation” in Donbas, also supported the riot by blockading the major road leading to the building. While far-right political parties rather than far-right volunteer units appeared to be the driving force behind the riot, the incident suggested that some ATO volunteers may still weigh political loyalties above the chain of command.