# Eyes on Russia

**Report 9**
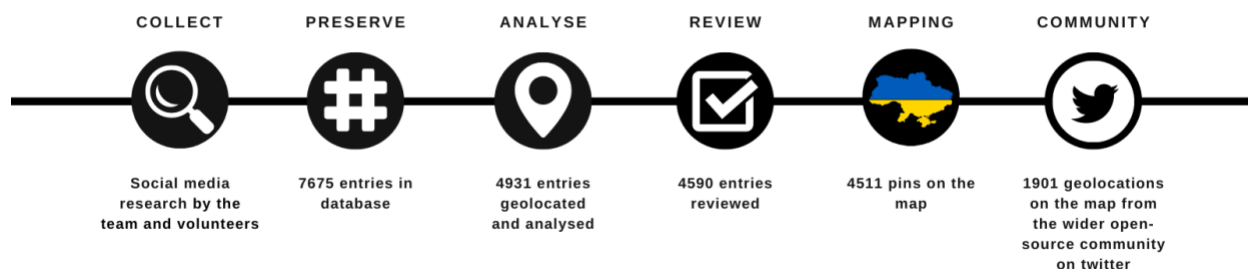
8 June 2022
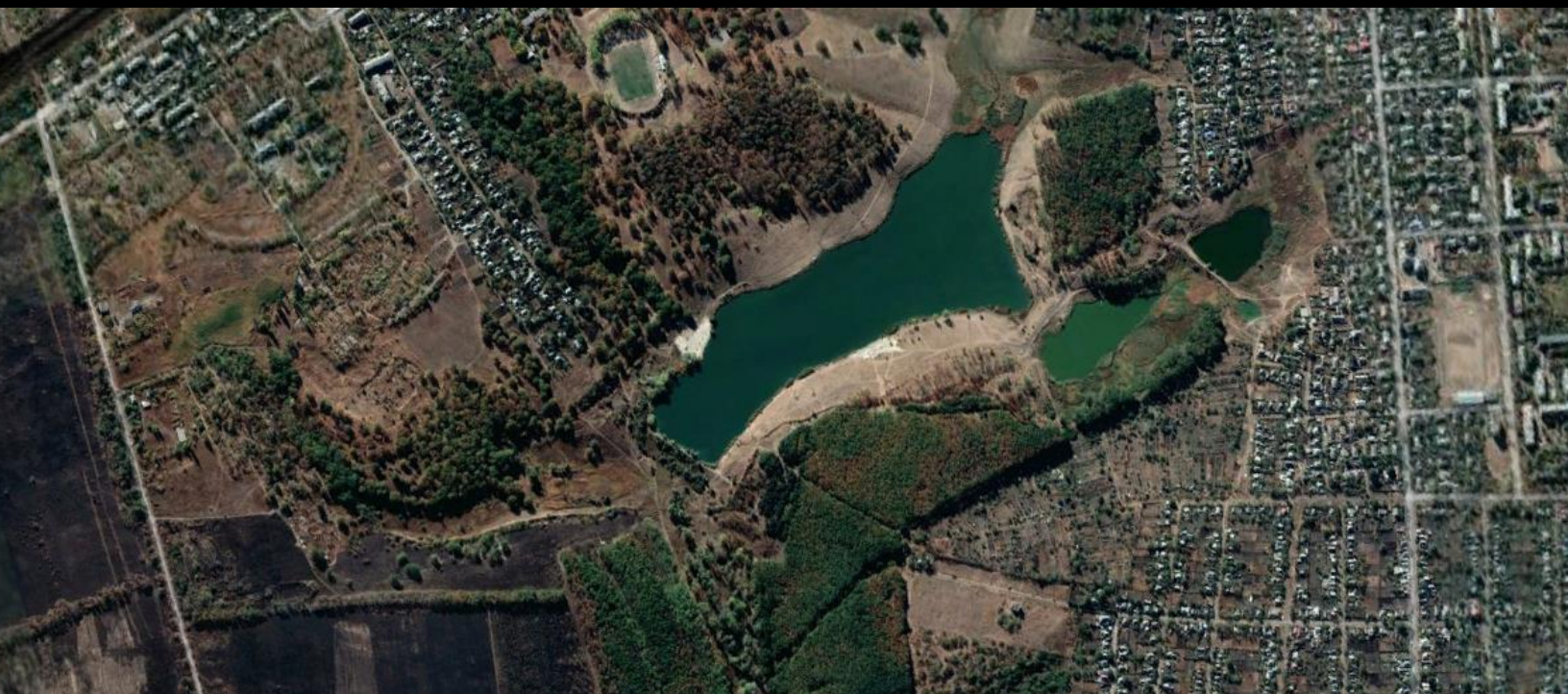
## Eyes on Russia: Report 9

The Centre for Information Resilience's "Eyes on Russia" Project maps, documents and verifies significant incidents related to Russian aggression toward Ukraine. Each week, CIR investigators collate, geolocate, and verify information appearing on social media and claims made by parties to the conflict. Our latest findings can always be found on this Twitter thread.

CIR contextualizes these details amid the discourse and developments of the week. The footage and imagery is added to the Russia-Ukraine Monitor Map, which policymakers, journalists, and other OSINT researchers can use to track the conflict. As part of this effort, CIR publishes regular written summaries of its research, detailing verified troop and equipment analysis, influence operation narratives, and broader updates. This is the ninth of such regular reports. The first report can be read here.

The Centre for Information Resilience (CIR) is an independent, non-profit social enterprise dedicated to exposing human rights abuses, countering disinformation, and combating online behaviour harmful to women and minorities.

We believe, at a time of heightened tension, that journalists and policymakers should have easy access to verified information. The Eyes on Russia Project will aim to empower its audiences with analysis and facts on which they can rely.

If you require further information, please do get in touch at hello@info-res.org.

| COLLECT | PRESERVE | ANALYSE | REVIEW | MAPPING | COMMUNITY |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Social media research by the team and volunteers | 7675 entries in database | 4931 entries geolocated and analysed | 4590 entries reviewed | 4511 pins on the map | 1901 geolocations on the map from the wider open-source community on twitter |

# 1. Executive Summary

- Since 18 May, CIR has observed ongoing efforts by the Russian military to mount its offensive on East Ukraine. In particular, the Kremlin has focused its efforts on the city of Popasna, as forces seek to capture Severodonetsk, in the Luhansk region.[1]

- As part of Russian attacks across Ukraine, and following a prolonged siege on the city of Mariupol, approximately 200 bodies were discovered in the basement of a residential building.

- CIR has recently published a report that details the ongoing targeting of schools in Russian attacks on Mariupol. The report covers 36 schools and uses open-source methods to verify their damage. The full report can be accessed here.

In the information sphere, CIR has noted several developments:

- On 28 May, documents surfaced of instructions to Russian forces on how to engage with the Ukrainian population. Importantly, Russian soldiers are ordered to promote disinformation narratives emanating from the Kremlin, and propogate the narrative that Russia is seeking to protect Ukrainians.

- On 20 May, narratives emerged surrounding the claim that the recent outbreak of monkeypox is due to U.S biolabs in Ukraine. This narrative reinforces previous claims by the Kremlin about the use of biolabs in Ukraine to circulate Covid-19 and target Russia.

- On 12 May, Russian news network TASS claimed that Ukraine is re-writing history books. Several social media accounts amplified this claim, in a bid to further bolster the Kremlin's assertion that the Ukrainian government is anti-Russian.

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[1] https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/5/24/russia-ukraine-war-200-bodies-found-under-the-rubble-in-mariupol/

## 2. Noted Narratives

Since 18 May, CIR has continued to observe the promotion of Kremlin based conspiracy theories across social media platforms, with an attempt to spread disinformation online about the legitimacy and rationale behind its ongoing invasion and occupation of Ukraine.

Developments in the disinformation sphere have included the following:

- **Russian military talking points to Ukrainians**

On 28 May, documents surfaced showing instructions for Russian forces on how to engage with the Ukrainian population.[2]

The document provided Russian soldiers with disinformation narratives that could be used to justify their occupation of Ukraine.

The documents showcased the efforts of the Kremlin to propagate its narrative amongst Ukrainian civilians that are occupied by its forces.

*Figure 1* (below) shows the screenshots of the document

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[2] https://twitter.com/SlavaMalamud/status/1530360278168240129/photo/1

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | отступающие полиция и администрации подрывали подстанции и им выходит все равно на свое же население!<br><br>Вариант 2. Весь север Украины обесточили по приказу начальства из Киева. | | |
| 6 | «Вы украинцы или русские?» | Мы и украинские и русские, но главное, что мы православные и делить нам нечего. | При вступлении в споры, приводим пример гейпарадов, раскол православия, продажу земли иностранцам, биолаборатории. | Да! Мы русские – во избежание конфронтации не уместно. 9 лет пропаганды приравняли образ русского к образу захватчика. Образ православного - чистый. |
| 7 | Не обвиняем во всем «хохлов», «Украину». | Обвиняем марионеток Порошенко, Зеленского и их кукловодов США. | Первично, до формирования госаппарата и законодательной базы, мы будем вынуждены с понятиями «Украина», «украинец». | Вызывать конфликты по национальному признаку категорически не желательно. |
| 8 | «Мы пришли, теперь будет порядок», «мы наведем порядок» | «Мы временно поможем народу (местному населению) найти среди ваших людей (односельчан, горожан) тех, порядочных, добросовестных, кто хочет помочь своим согражданам и взять ответственность. | Необходимо, чтоб население брало ответственность за свой населенный пункт. | |

*Figure 1: A document showing instructions to Russian soldiers on how to deal with Ukrainian civilians.*[3]

- **Ukraine is rewriting history in schoolbooks**

A picture of a book allegedly found at a Ukrainian primary school by Russian occupiers has been shared across different social media platforms, claiming that Ukraine is using "cheap neo-Nazi propaganda" to replace the country's history in schoolbooks.

This narrative originated in a piece published on 12 May by the Russian state agency TASS.[4] Although the TASS article did not include the image that was later syndicated through social media platforms, it generated the content of the narrative.

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[3] https://twitter.com/SlavaMalamud/status/1530360278168240129/photo/1
[4] https://tass.com/politics/1450307/

The article stated that Russia's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Vasily Nebenzya, showed this book during a session at the UN Security Council to prove that history and geography books have been modified in Ukrainian schools for indoctrination purposes and to exclude the history of the Soviet Union.[5]

The syndication of this narrative was carried out predominantly on Twitter,[6] Telegram,[7] and VK[8] in Russian,[9] Spanish[10] and Portuguese languages.[11]

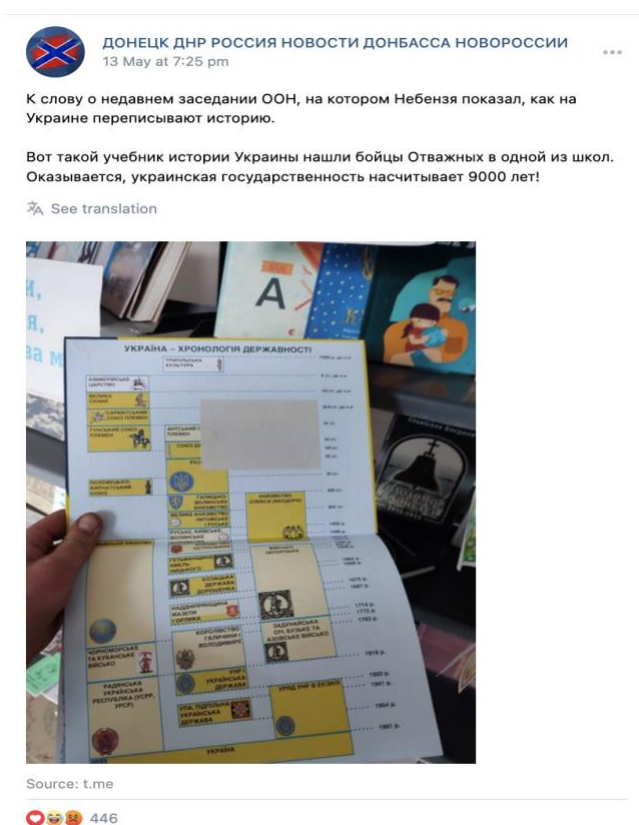It was also shared in several Russian forums, including 9111.ru, a Russian social network for lawyers.[12]



*Figure 2 (above): A post shared on VK on 13 May, a day after TASS' article, showing a picture of the alleged history book.[13]*

5 https://twitter.com/DaniilSuspended/status/1525817689255690240/photo/1/
6 https://twitter.com/DaniilSuspended/status/1525817689255690240?s=20&t=T9LoAzKB6vT17kLhE7IyUw
7 https://t.me/ChalecosAmarill/10303/
8 https://vk.com/wall-50332460_3098390/
9 https://tgstat.ru/channel/@SolovievLive/106704/
10 https://t.me/ChalecosAmarill/10303/
11 https://vk.com/wall-50332460_3098390?lang=pt/
12 https://www.9111.ru/questions/7777777771898821/
13 https://vk.com/wall-50332460_3098390

One of the accounts endorsing this narrative on social media was blogger Boris Rozhin (alias Colonel Cassad) through his Telegram channel.[14]

Rozhin is a pro-Kremlin activist based in Sevastopol. He is very active on Russian social media, with a solid follower base and a high engagement rate.

Rozhin has been exposed previously by organizations at the forefront of disinformation research[15] for sharing manipulated pictures through his LiveJournal profile.[16]

- **Here Comes the Monkeypox**

From the beginning of the monkeypox outbreak, CIR has identified and monitored increasing disinformation narratives claiming that the virus was created at a US Biolab.

This narrative is recycled from Covid-19 disinformation and, in the pro-Kremlin disinformation environment, it strengthens the "US biolabs" disinformation narrative, which CIR has covered extensively in previous reports.[17]

Russian state-affiliated outlets such as TV Centre (ТВ Центр) and Izvestia (Известия) have directly linked monkeypox to the invasion.

For example:

- In a piece published on 20 May, TV Centre[18] defended that the outbreak "of this previously unknown virus" coincided with the start of the "special military operation" because monkeypox was leaked, accidentally or intentionally, from a US Biolab, where it was created as a biological weapon to fight Russia.

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[14] https://t.me/s/boris_rozhin?before=48475/
[15] https://stratcomcoe.org/pdfjs/?file=/publications/download/russias_footprint_nb8_2020_nato_stratcom_coe.pdf?zoom=page-fit
[16] https://colonelcassad.livejournal.com/
[17] https://www.info-res.org/post/eyes-on-russia-report-5/
[18] https://www.tvc.ru/news/show/id/240617

- On 28 May, Izvestia announced that Igor Kirillov, commander of the Russian NBC Protection Troops, had called on the World Health Organisation to investigate the links between the US Biolabs and monkeypox.[19]
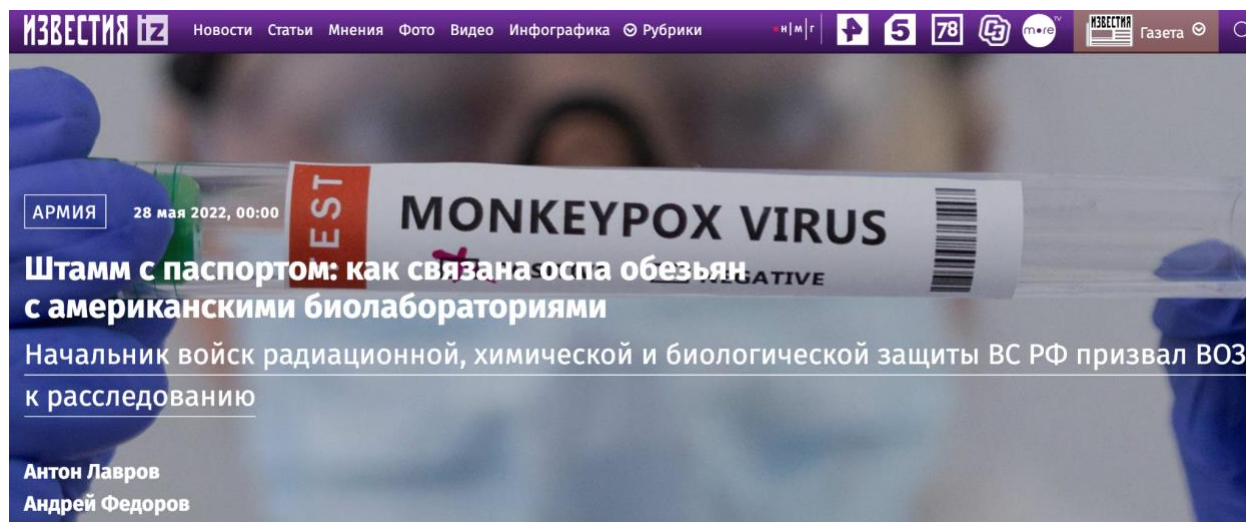


*Figure 3: A screenshot of the article shared by daily broadsheet newspaper Izvestia on 28 May, claiming a direct connection between monkeypox and the US Biolabs.[20]*

This narrative is likely to grow as the number of monkeypox infections rise.

- **Ukraine is Attacking Humanitarian Convoys**

CIR has identified narratives on Kremlin aligned channels, promoting news that Ukraine is attacking humanitarian convoys in Melitopol.[21][22]

The city is currently occupied by the Russian forces, and has seen resistance efforts escalate in recent days.[23]

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[19] https://iz.ru/1341170/anton-lavrov-andrei-fedorov/shtamm-s-pasportom-kak-sviazana-ospa-obezian-s-amerikanskimi-biolaboratoriiami
[20] https://iz.ru/1341170/anton-lavrov-andrei-fedorov/shtamm-s-pasportom-kak-sviazana-ospa-obezian-s-amerikanskimi-biolaboratoriiami
[21] https://t.me/swodki/106762.
[22] https://t.me/swodki/106658.
[23] https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/bomb-hits-russian-occupied-ukraine-city-melitopol-russian-ukraine-officials-2022-05-30/.

The telegram channels attempt to portray these resistance efforts as targeted attacks by so-called 'saboteurs.' This narrative attempts to build on Kremlin assertions that they are fighting a war of liberation against 'nazis' and 'the new world order.'

As a result, these channels attempt to portray the resistance efforts against the Russian occupation as irrational and unjustified.



**Основные итоги СВО на Украине за 30 мая 2022 года**

■ На **Харьковском направлении** ВС РФ возвращают инициативу.
— ВСУ отброшены на рубеж **Дергачи — Циркуны**.
— Нанесены удары ВС РФ по **Питомнику, Старому Салтову, Золочеву** и самому **Харькову**.

■ На **Донбассе** союзные силы планомерно развивают успех.
— Под Лиманом взяты **Диброва** и **Брусовка**, установлен контроль над трассой на **Райгородок**.
— Продолжается наступление на **Богородичное**.
— Занята половина **Северодонецка**.
— В **Камышевахе** расширена зона контроля вокруг ж/д станции.

■ В **Мелитополе** произошел теракт во время раздачи гуманитарной помощи.

■ На **Николаевско-Херсонском направлении** ВСУ прощупывают оборону ВС РФ.
— Сорвано наступление на **Высокополье** и **Давыдов Брод**.
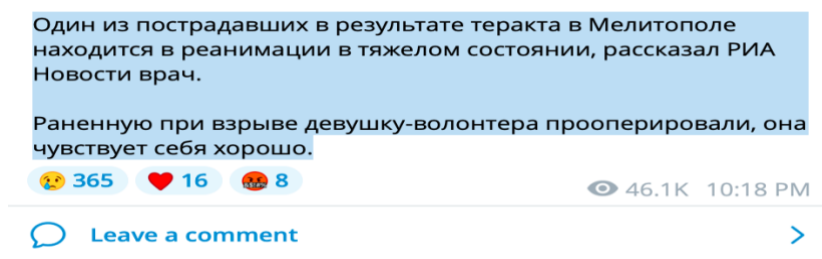— Уничтожен КП оперативного командования «Юг» ВСУ в **Новом Буге**.

*Figure 4: A screenshot taken on 30 May, showing a Telegram channel alleging that attacks have been carried out against humanitarian convoys in Melitopol.[24]*



Один из пострадавших в результате теракта в Мелитополе находится в реанимации в тяжелом состоянии, рассказал РИА Новости врач.

Раненную при взрыве девушку-волонтера прооперировали, она чувствует себя хорошо.

😢 365  ❤️ 16  😡 8          👁 46.1K  10:18 PM

💬 Leave a comment                              ❯

*Figure 5: A screenshot taken on 30 May, showing a Telegram channel alleging that attacks have been carried out against humanitarian convoys in Melitopol.[25]*

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[24] https://t.me/swodki/106762.
[25] https://t.me/swodki/106658.

- **There are still Nazis in Ukraine**

CIR analysts have continued to observe the promotion of Kremlin disinformation about the existence of Nazis in Ukraine.

These narratives have been continuously circulated on Telegram channels that are supportive of the Russian war effort.[26]

Recent narratives provide imagery of active Ukrainian fighters making their way across Ukraine to fight against Russian forces.

The videos attempt to frame these soldiers as Nazis and as representation of Ukraine as a whole. In turn justifying the Russian attacks and occupation across the country.
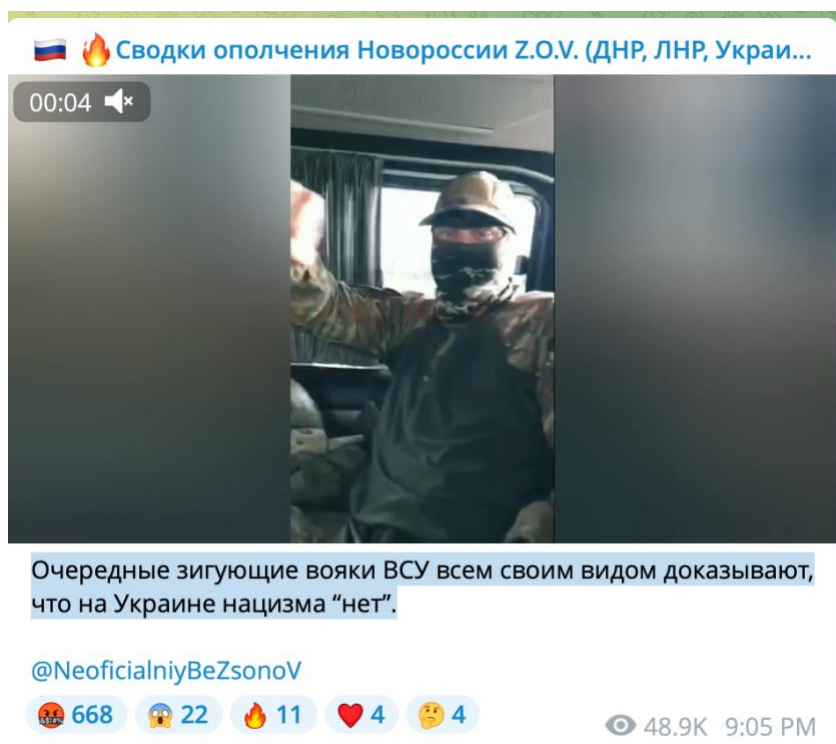


*Figure 6: A screenshot taken on 29 May, showing a Telegram video claiming that Ukrainian soldiers are Nazis.[27]*

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[26] https://t.me/swodki/105382.
[27] https://t.me/swodki/105382.

# 3. Military Movements

Since the launch of the invasion, CIR has moved from tracking troop movements in Russia and Belarus to coverage of, *inter alia*, attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, weapons and equipment used by Russia, and Russian losses. Ukrainian troop movements are not reported as they are not the aggressor country and highlighting their positions may assist their adversary.

Since 18 May, Russian forces have continued their attempts to mount an offensive on East Ukraine.

To this end, the Russian military has been targeting the town of Popasna as they seek to capture Severodonetsk in the Luhansk Region.

However, Russian efforts have faced significant Ukrainian resistance with reports that Russia is now seeking to make use of old T-62 Tanks to continue its invasion.[28]

Additionally, reports by Ukraine's General Staff suggest that Russia will seek to resume its offensive from Yampil toward Lyman.[29]

Below are some notable examples that were verified and geolocated by CIR's investigators:

- On 28 May, Russian forces conducted artillery strikes on Ukrainian forces in Adviika
- On 27 May, Russian forces were moving an armoured convoy over the Zherebets River into the occupied Donbas city of Lyman
- On 26 May, Russian forces were identified moving North through Popasna
- On 25 May, Russian forces were identified in North-West Lyman
- On 24 May, Russian forces were identified in Snizhne, with heavy military equipment.

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[28] https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/5/26/timeline-week-13-of-russias-war-in-ukraine.
[29] https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/5/26/timeline-week-13-of-russias-war-in-ukraine/

### *Civilian Casualties and Infrastructure Damage*

Attacks on civilians, civilian buildings, and other infrastructure have continued to take place by Russian forces ([please see CIR map](#)).

Since 18 May, civilian casualties have continued to be discovered in the wake of mass shelling by Russian forces.

On 24 May, workers in Mariupol found 200 bodies in the basement of an apartment building.[30]

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has wrought mass damages to civilian infrastructure across the country. On 24 May, The Kyiv School of Economics reported that damaged infrastructure from Russian attacks amounts to $100bn.[31]

Below are some notable examples that were verified and geolocated by CIR's investigators:

- On 28 May, Russian forces targeted civilian infrastructure in Donbass
- On 27 May, Russian shelling damaged the Artemisil Plant in Soledar, Donetsk Oblast
- On 25 May, Russian shelling caused widescale destruction to residential neighbourhoods in Dolyna, Donetsk Oblast
- On 23 May, Russian shelling resulted in civilian casualties in Nikolaevka, Donetsk Oblast
- On 23 May, Russian shelling damaged a nursery school in Novoyakovlivka, Zaporizhia Oblast

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[30]https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/5/24/russia-ukraine-war-200-bodies-found-under-the-rubble-in-mariupol/
[31] https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/5/26/timeline-week-13-of-russias-war-in-ukraine/

## Russian Military Movements



*Figure 7: A satellite imagery taken on 28 May, showing widescale damage in Popasna and Russian military convoys along the road; geolocated to 48.639411, 38.367022.*



*Figure 8: A satellite imagery captured on 27 May, showing Russian military movement over the Zherebets River, towards the Donbass city of Lyman; geolocated to 49.02093, 37.9531.*

*Figure 9: A screenshot taken on 31 May, showing drone footage from 23 May of a Russian ammunition truck struck by Ukrainian forces; geolocated to 48.268313, 37.849233.*



*Figure 10: A screenshot taken on 31 May, of drone footage from 23 May showing Russian losses following Ukrainian shelling; geolocated to 47.78257, 36.59624.*

## Civilian Infrastructure Damage



*Figure 11: A screenshot taken on 29 May, of a video from 28 May showing civilian infrastructure damage as a result of Russian shelling; geolocated to 48.911525, 38.419259.*



*Figure 12: A screenshot taken on 30 May of a shop on fire in Kharkiv following Russian shelling; geolocated to 50.034928, 36.222391.*
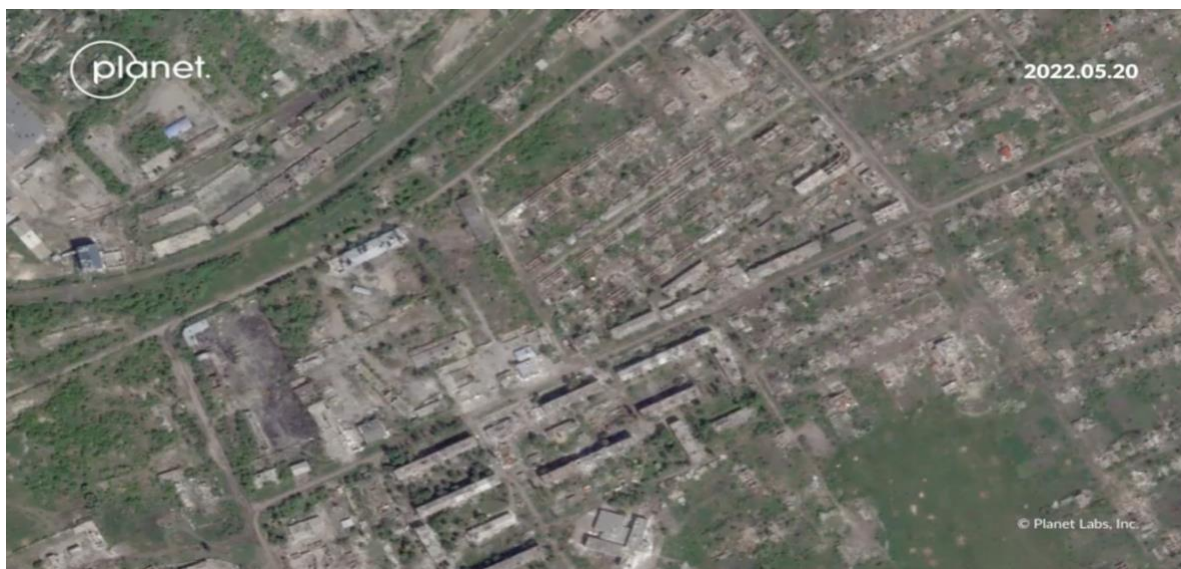
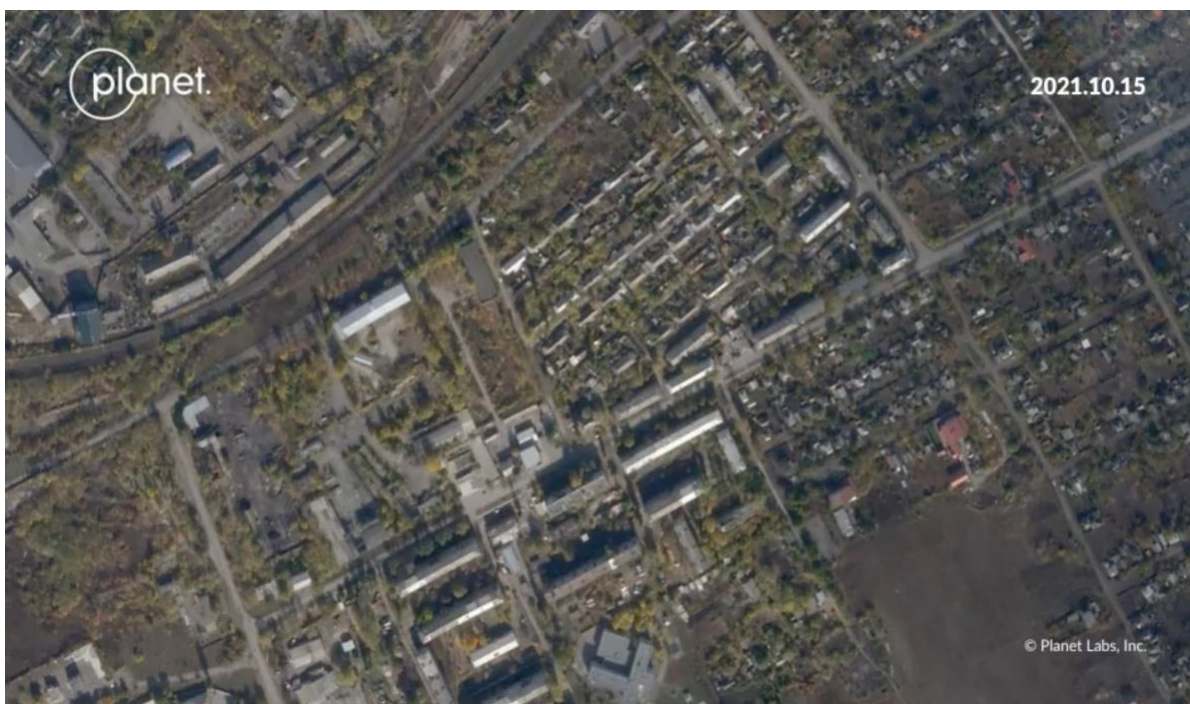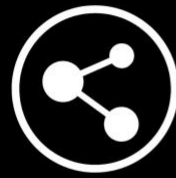*Figure 13: Satellite Imagery from 20 May, showing widescale damage in Popasna following Russian shelling.[32]*



*Figure 14: Satellite Imagery from 15 October 2021, showing Popasna before the beginning of the Russian invasion.[33]*

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[32] https://twitter.com/Cen4infoRes/status/1529062020145979394.
[33] https://twitter.com/Cen4infoRes/status/1529062020145979394.

Centre for Information Resilience