

# Sitrep: Operation Z

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## By Nightvision for the Saker Blog

The biggest development is the announcement by Russia/Putin of Mariupol's "official liberation." I've written before about how Russia often 'jumps the gun' on announcements, but it's true that the city proper is liberated with the exception of the industrial complex of Azovstal. With that said, there are still upwards of 2000 or more highly trained, fanatical Azov militants and marine remnants of the 36<sup>th</sup> Brigade holed up in the factory, and they have extreme amounts of incentive not to surrender any time soon.

Bizarrely, western media continues to refer to Mariupol as 'besieged' and even Zelensky now claims Mariupol will be taken back soon and that a force is being 'prepared' to liberate the city from Russians. It's hard to discern if this is complete delusion or pure propaganda – maybe a mix of both.

Putin also announced the cancellation of plans to 'storm' the complex in order to reduce risks to Russian servicemen, instead opting to besiege it and starve the Zelensky regime militants out.

DPR flag was hung at the highest point of Mariupol in honor of the liberation:  
<https://www.bitchute.com/video/m28IHMBBOM7F/>

On the topic of sieging the Azovstal, some additional information: Firstly, according to well-connected Aleksandr Sladkov, the sieged Azovstal remnants have around two weeks' worth of food/supplies still left and that they had much more but it was destroyed in Russian strikes. So my original guess was roughly accurate that they could theoretically hold out another week or two, maybe more.

But with that said, the remaining allied forces will not simply stand idly by and 'wait them out'. The tactic will be to continue air and artillery strikes on the factory complex in order to keep the psychological pressure on the Azovites high to accelerate their eventual surrender. So regular combat will continue around the complex, but the troops simply will not attempt to do the job of 'tunnel rats' and storm the 'catacombs' as Putin put it. As you know some enemy forces still maintain positions on the surface, in buildings etc., and those will continue to be engaged and eliminated while the ones deep below wait and fester.

*"The blockade ring around the [Azovstal] plant is now saturated with technical reconnaissance equipment, drones are constantly in the air." We talked with the former chief of staff of the Alfa anti-terror group, Sergey Polyakov, about how to clean up Azovstal from nationalists: If someone leans out of the ground through the exits from bunkers or storm sewers, and even with a mortar, artillery fire opens on him. Whether it be during the day or at night." According to Polyakov, aviation will continue preventive point bombing: Following the fire strikes, our assault groups will move forward. Today they took the Azovstal plant management. And so it will continue: the positions of the enemy will be gnawed out meter by meter. Time is now working for us."*

Meanwhile, the Somali Battalion has already been fully recalled for redeployment back to the Donbass, headed mostly to the Avdiivka frontline.

Chechens also celebrate the liberation:

Russian tankers are happy as well: <https://www.bitchute.com/video/3f78yPPGv9Rh/>

A lot of reconstruction and cleaning up is already happening around Mariupol, administrative services returning and the like. First school classes in some sections as well. Other towns around the region and elsewhere are already de facto integrating into the Russian Federation more and more. For instance passes being issued in Berdiansk for official vehicles are now being registered with a seal that says Zaporizhzhia Oblast, Berdiansk, Russia.



And in liberated LPR cities like Svatove and Starobelsk, LPR license plates for cars are already being issued to replace Ukrainian ones.

A Ukrainian politician has stated the following: *“Ludmila Denisova, Ukrainian Parliament’s Commissioner for Human Rights, says that the Russians are planning to hold an independence referendum in Kherson during May 1-May 10 to create another DNR and LNR like statelet in southern Ukraine. Ballots are reportedly being printed.”*

Also:

*“Crimean Tatars support the inclusion of Kherson and Zaporozhye regions in the Crimean Federal District. The Crimean Tatars proposed to recreate the Crimean Federal District with the inclusion of the south of Ukraine. This statement was made by the head of the regional national-cultural autonomy of the Crimean Tatars Eyvaz Umerov.”*

*“Residents of the Kherson and Azov parts of the Zaporozhye regions of Ukraine, who once belonged to the Tauride province together with Crimea, speak of their desire to return to Russia, because they no longer want to be under the yoke of Ukrainian nationalists*

*“At least 2/3 of the residents of southern Ukraine, in particular, Kherson oblast, parts of Nikolayev oblast and Zaporozhye, would vote in favor of joining Russia, if an appropriate referendum were to be held”, says Crimean senator of the Russian Federation Council Sergei Tsekov*

Today Ukraine threatened that if ‘Russia holds a referendum for the Kherson People’s Republic, then Ukraine will withdraw from all negotiations with Russia.’ Likely Russia isn’t worried.

And now there’s word that Kharkov too may eventually be allowed to hold a referendum, giving us a clue as to Russia’s ultimate vision for Kharkov Oblast.

*“Following the stabilization of the situation in the liberated territories of the Kharkov region, a referendum or a poll of citizens can be held on the political future of the region, head of the interim political administration of the liberated Kharkov region, told RIA Novosti.”*

Rustam Minnekaev, deputy commander of the Central Military District of Russia has stated that the goal of Phase 2 is to capture Donbass and create land corridor to Crimea. Then Peskov reaffirmed the goal to integrate most of the southern areas of Ukraine into the 'Russian space'.

*'Minnekayev also said that controlling southern Ukraine would open "another way to Transnistria," where he claimed "there are also instances of oppressing the Russian-speaking population."*



It's looking more and more likely that some version of the map above is the minimum of what will come about as a result of the SMO. I say minimum because there is no indication whatsoever that Phase 2 is the "final phase", simply that these are roughly the objectives of Phase 2. There may very well be further phases to capture the rest of Ukraine, although even if/when captured, Russia will most likely not incorporate those territories but rather conduct regime change and thorough de-militarization/de-nazification on the remaining rump-state of Ukraine to make sure it cannot be a threat ever again.

In other news, a group of Communist Party deputies led by Gennady Zyuganov proposed a bill to the State Duma to change the national flag of Russia. They propose to replace the white-blue-red stripes with the Soviet red banner with a hammer and sickle. Doubtful that this will work but they are clearly trying to ride the new wave of patriotism.

Also, Russia will increase the production of Kalibr missiles.

*"This conclusion is made by the analyst "InformNapalm" Anton Pavlushko on the basis of data discoveries.*

*He cites information that the UEC-Saturn plant in the Russian city of Rybinsk, Yaroslavl Region, is recruiting up to 500 new employees due to "increase in production volumes." It is at this plant that engines for Caliber missiles are produced.*

*And then our Western friends got excited, because according to their version, Russia has long since run out of missiles, and there is nothing to produce new ones from."*

With that said there appears to be sabotage strikes aimed at stopping these efforts as yesterday an important military research facility in Russia suddenly burned down with 7 dead and 20-30 injured. It happened in the same day that a large chemical plant also caught fire under suspicious circumstances.

<https://www.zerohedge.com/geopolitical/large-deadly-fire-breaks-out-russian-defense-research-facility>

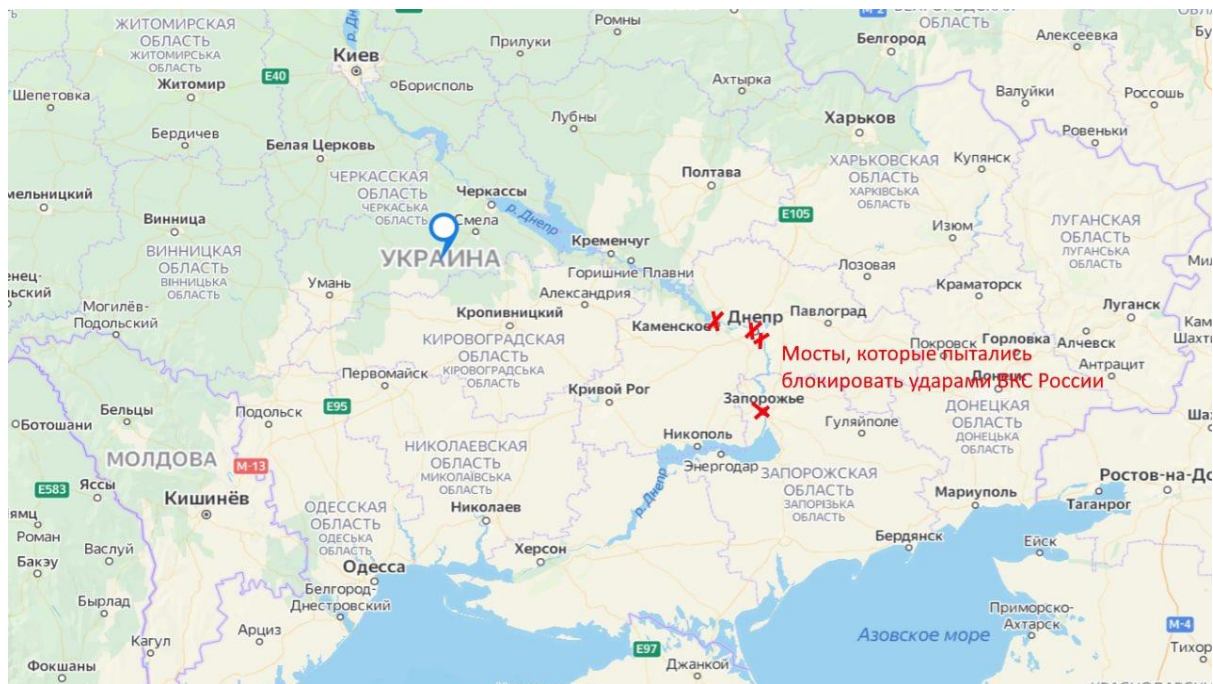
But not to be left out, the U.S. suffered its own humiliation. A B-1B lancer, one of the U.S.'s most advanced supersonic bombers worth \$300 million, burned down during routine maintenance. The whole fleet was grounded last year to investigate problems with the fuel system – I guess they never managed to fix them. The whole fleet seems in trouble.

Another interesting development, in the Donbass a member of the OSCE was arrested for espionage.

OSCE employee detained <https://twitter.com/Cyberspec1/status/1517456096956276736>

More and more reports recently have come to light showing how deviously the OSCE has been operating. One report said that OSCE officials even provided artillery fire correction for the AFU forces by leaving cameras on their cars in the vicinity which transmitted feeds to the AFU. The organization has truly been exposed as a clandestine operation for the West akin to the White Helmets.

On the war front, Russia has begun bombing rail infrastructure, this time striking bridges and railways in Zaporizhzhia and Dnieperpetrovsk to hamper AFU resupplies.



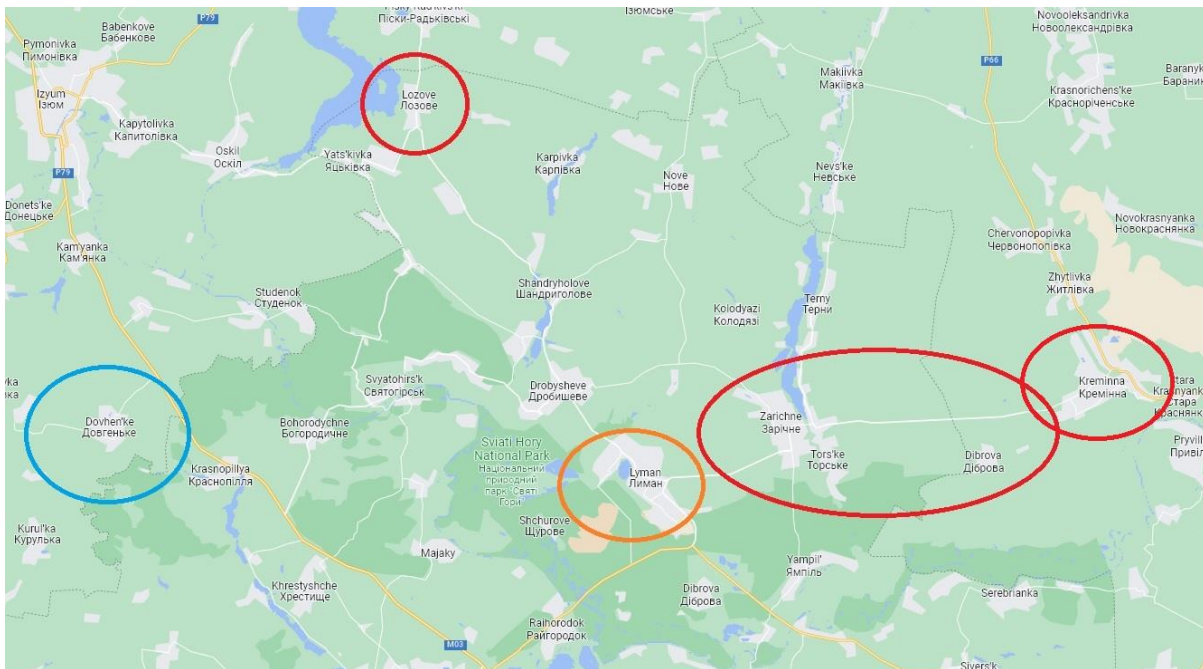
*“BREAKING: A Russia strike in the north of Mykolaiv Oblast has killed up to 80 Ukrainian soldiers and destroyed 23 Armoured vehicles, including a command post.”*

It also took control of a massive secret underground arsenal in the Kharkov region, which is said to be the largest in all of Ukraine. [https://twitter.com/MarQs\\_/status/1517549948048494594](https://twitter.com/MarQs_/status/1517549948048494594)

This underground bunker has a storied history, reportedly built in WW1 to supply the Russian army and was used strategically in WW2 as well. There appears to be thousands of tons of built up armaments, including western artillery ammo, etc that is now seized by the RF.

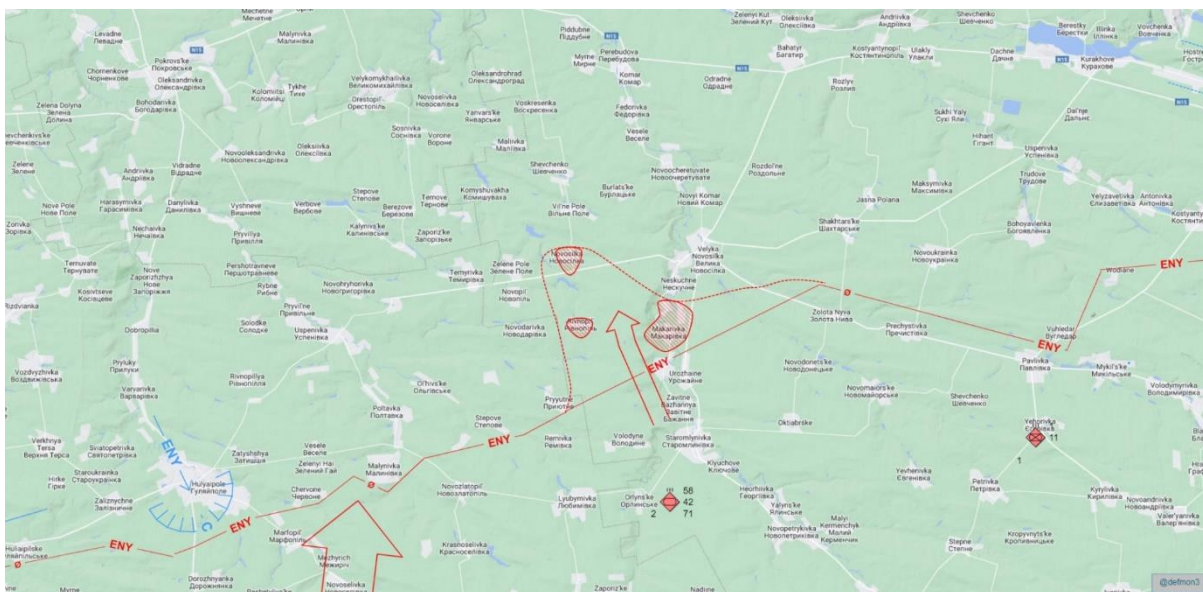
[https://twitter.com/MarQs\\_/status/1517547827664232448](https://twitter.com/MarQs_/status/1517547827664232448)

On the frontlines, the most significant advances occurred in the north where it's now being reported by the Ukrainian side that Russia has in fact taken Lozove which is a key city on the way to Lyman which itself is the final key strategic city to encircling Slavyansk, as Lyman controls important transportation corridors in the region.



Last time we reported Kreminna and Torske area falling to RF forces (red circles on the right). But now there is reported fighting either in or on the outskirts of Lyman. Several buildings in Lyman were recorded on fire and sounds of loud gunfire exchanges as well, so Lyman appears to be in the crosshairs next.

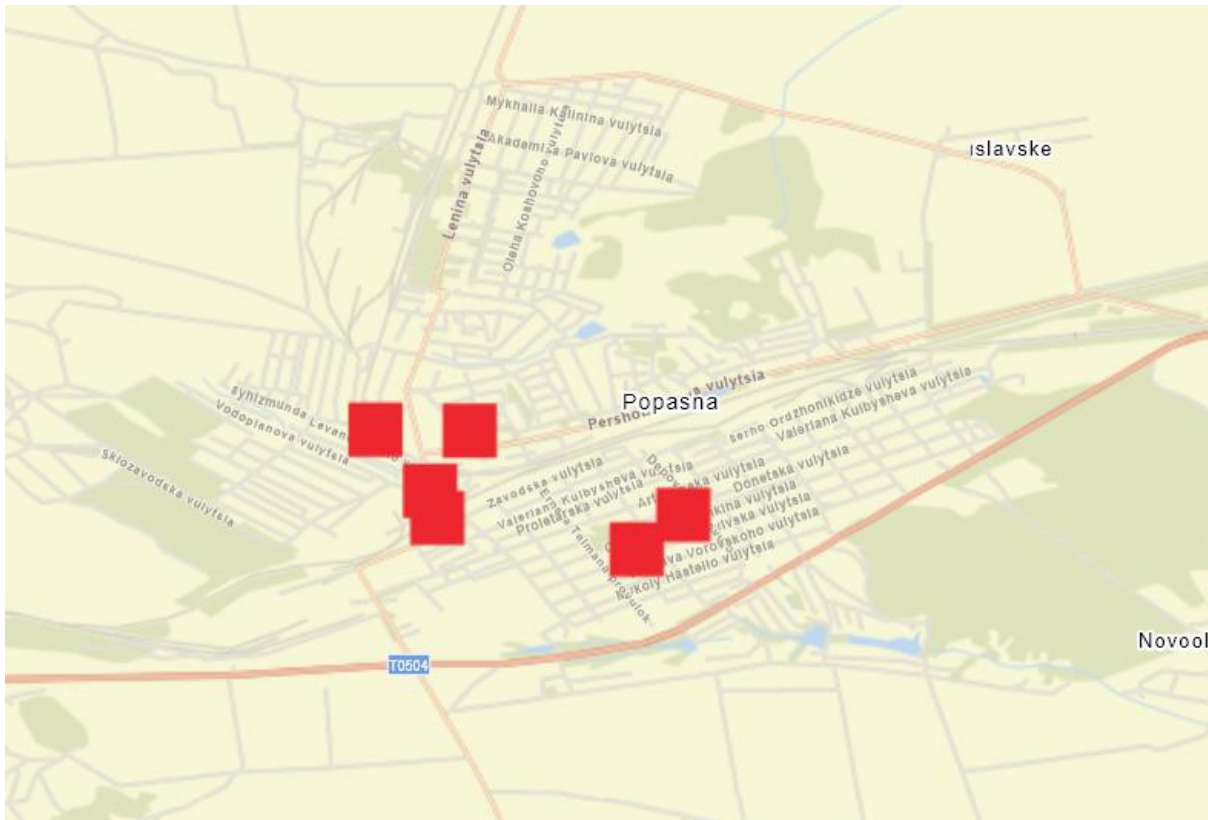
However on the Izyum front to the west, RF forces still have not been able to break through to Dovhen'ke (blue circle) as that forested area continues to be a problem with hidden Ukrainian units making breakthrough difficult.



On the southern front, no major advances but the key strategic town of Velyka Novosilka continues to be encircled with settlements on its western flank falling to RF forces.

Meanwhile Nasa Fire Map continues to show the fires moving progressively westward in Popasna, which is a good sign and confirmation that allied forces are in fact pushing out the AFU from the city. I say 'allied forces' specifically here because Popasna is said to have a

combination of LPR troops, Chechens redirected from Mariupol, and Russian Wagner PMC forces operating concurrently.



France, by the way is now intending to send these artillery systems to Ukraine [https://twitter.com/Global\\_Mil\\_Info/status/1517553156430962688](https://twitter.com/Global_Mil_Info/status/1517553156430962688)

A few important words on tactics. We've spoke before about how the conflict in Ukraine is becoming Syrianized in the tactics of the AFU who, having most of their heavy weapons/armor destroyed, are mostly now relying on small bandit groups/DRG's riding around on tacticals (small pickup trucks with larger caliber machine guns in the back) in the manner of ISIS. Like this:

But the hunter is fast becoming the hunted because Russia's own saboteur groups are now increasingly ambushing these small, roving bandit teams:

Keep in mind, the AFU does have some armor and heavy weapons left, but most of them are tied to the strategically important cities they are defending, and they do not have the fuel or logistical capabilities to utilize their armor in any sort of maneuvering force action or real military operations/advances. They are hidden mostly in and around cities like Kharkov, Nikolayev, etc. Any armor that roams outward is very quickly destroyed by RF forces. And even still, in the urban agglomerations there is not a lot of it relatively speaking.

Another important point that must be made. In the early parts of the SMO, a big deal was made by Kiev around this mythical partisan mobilization that was set to take place. Glorious campaigns of patriotic partisan fighters were heralded in various posters and clips, Molotov cocktail campaigns were paraded on western news channels and we were told that every Ukrainian citizen would rise up against the Russian invader. Each day there was a new announcement, such as Zelensky's bid to pay citizens tens of thousands \$\$\$ of dollars (funded by the West / CIA of course) for anyone who can kill/capture a Russian soldier or demonstrably destroy a Russian tank or armored vehicle. Similarly, upwards of \$1 million dollars was offered to Russian servicemen who would defect and turn over their tank or plane to the AFU.

Not only did any of this ever take place, in fact we saw last time that it was the AFU itself who began selling their tanks to the Russians for Rubles. But the main point to be made is that the giant, widespread partisan uprising was in fact a complete and utter failure. Not only is the vast

majority of the Ukrainian citizenry utterly apathetic/ambivalent towards their own armed forces, but there are more and more signs of internal uprisings and new anti-Kiev regime partisan 'underground cells' being formed in cities like Nikolayev and Kharkov. One in Kharkov even released a video, their faces masked, promising an uprising against the AFU forces holding them hostage, once Russian forces begin fully taking the city.

Other footage like this continues to emerge:

Showing angry civilians booting out their failing AFU goons from their cities.

The truth is, the longer the conflict goes on, the *more* the Ukrainian citizenry turns against their own forces and government, not only because of mounting evidence of the AFU's crimes against their own citizens/civilians but simply because they tire of the war and were never passionate about the utterly corrupt Zelensky regime and its criminal military forces anyway.

After the initial one or two Molotov videos against RF troops in the first week of the war, we never again saw any citizens attacking Russian troops and in fact see the opposite each day. Now whenever we see new Russian missile strikes filmed by Ukrainian citizens, it's very often accompanied by a complete ambivalence or even quiet jubilation from the people filming.

It has to be recognized that the grand promised awakening of the Ukrainian state, and the large scale partisan uprising was a complete failure – just hollow psyop attempts from the Zelensky regime.

Now as allied forces grind down the AFU, each day the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense posts new claims of Russian losses which are never backed up with visual evidence. Here and there a photo of an empty tank is posted but never any bodies. Meanwhile, our side continues to show incontrovertible proof of massive, horrific losses on the AFU side in the new pushes. Here's a few new videos. You can tell they're recent because the AFU are wearing the new green armbands after they started switching from blue in many regions.

Very graphic (18+) <https://www.bitchute.com/video/kVufOX6Z2vMd/> (includes a liquidated British mercenary)

We see repeated reports of entire units of the AFU being wiped out, and our side actually has the hard proof in the form of clear photos and videos. It's clear that the AFU is losing thousands of troops a week. In fact yesterday's report was over 400 killed just that day alone. There was 300+ killed a few days ago as well in the many strikes that occurred.

And these are just the dead, there are dozens of new prisoners every day. In the last day alone I can't count the amount of new prisoner videos that are flooding telegram, mostly from the Popasna and Donbass fights. I'd estimate at least 100+ prisoners in the past two days based on the avalanche of new photos/videos.

On that note, one final thing. It's become sadly obvious that the sheer propaganda from their own commanders is what's keeping the rest of the AFU from laying down their arms. Here's a report from a day ago:

*"Since the beginning of the military operation and the appearance of Ukrainian prisoners, many of them tell how the Ukrainian command intimidated them with inhuman torture in Russian captivity. They were convinced that Russian officers would torture them, cut them with belts, burn them alive, etc. Having been taken prisoner, they were surprised at the humane attitude towards their miserable skins. However, there are cases when Ukrainian soldiers, believing in the stories of their commanders, try to commit suicide in order not to be captured by Russian "sadists"."*

And such a true story emerged yesterday when two new prisoners were captured, one of them said how their own commander shot himself in the head when the Russian forces approached. However this commander missed and the bullet went through his jaw – he survived and was treated in captivity. There's a photo of him floating around, I'll post if I can find it again.

*"The photo shows a Ukrainian officer who was captured with his fighters in the area of n. Staromayorskoe village (DPR). But he believed in the tales of his command about torture and*

*decided to leave for another world quickly. He tried to shoot himself, putting the muzzle of his machine gun to his chin, but he chose the wrong trajectory – and the bullet went through the jaw. Now he has to be treated. But this suicide will now be able to make sure that the military-political leadership of Ukraine are liars and traitors.”*

The irony is that the Ukrainians are terrified to surrender to the Russians because their command lies to them of the ‘barbarity’ of the Russians with claims they are brutally torturing and killing all captives, hiding the truth from them that it’s in fact their own side that’s doing that to Russian POWs. And the same tactic is used on civilians in besieged cities like Kharkov to keep them from rising up or evacuating. They shoot all civilians who try to leave then say it’s the Russians who are shooting all cars on the road.

I’ll leave with a few final videos. There’s been people constantly asking whether Russian forces have night time capabilities, nightvision, FLIR, etc, etc. Here’s some new videos showing Russian special forces taking out Ukrainian positions at night:

And lastly, I was made aware that last month India tested a Sukhoi launched Brahmos missile on one of their decommissioned Navy ships. Check the photos of the damage here:

<https://i.postimg.cc/2SxHmkcL/FQ8cz-Aua-AAAPLzz.jpg>

<https://i.postimg.cc/TP7CLkXR/FQ8cz-Ava-UAlt-V4c.jpg>

<https://i.postimg.cc/QMxfd2w4/FQ8cz-Bba-IAE9u-K.jpg>



It looks nothing like the minor fire damage we see on the Moskva from the portholes and torpedo tubes as I’ve outlined last time: <https://i.postimg.cc/QCbBCyRm/FQI-Q5e-KXIAg-Or-AZ-2.jpg> Yet it matches every other real missile hit like the USS Stark and other ships. Moskva is the odd-ball out that looks nothing like the others.

Sure the Brahmos is a larger missile, but Ukrainians claim multiple Neptunes hit the Moskva. Just more food for thought and further evidence that the Neptune strikes are unlikely as the cause of the Moskva’s sinking.