After brief ceasefire in May, the war continues with no end in sight

Latest UK Defence Intelligence update on the battlefield situation in Ukraine.

On Monday, May 4, Russia's Defense Ministry announced a unilateral two-day ceasefire in Ukraine to mark May 9, Victory Day, when Nazi Germany surrendered to the Soviet Union and the other Allies in World War II. Since 2023, Ukraine has celebrated May 8 as its Day of Remembrance and Victory over Nazism in World War II 1939-1945, and on May 8, President Trump announced that Russia and Ukraine had agreed to a three-day ceasefire on May 9-11. The agreement included a provision to carry out an exchange of 1,000 prisoners-of-war from each side.

Following the conclusion of the ceasefire, the war resumed on May 12, and since then it has continued with no end in sight. As Tuesday's British Defence Intelligence map of the battlefield situation indicates, the Russian forces continue to attack toward the city of Sumy in northeastern Ukraine and at a number of points along the contact line between the forces in eastern and southeastern Ukraine from the area south of Kupiansk to the area south of Lyman and Siversk toward the cities of Sloviansk and Kramatorsk in the northern portion of Donetsk region, toward the area in the easternmost portion of Dnipropetrovsk region south of Pokrovsk, and in the area near the junction of Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson regions in southeastern Ukraine. Meanwhile, as the green arrow in the map indicates, the Ukrainian forces continue to attack the Russian forces at the southeastern corner of Dnipropetrovsk region, and they continue to attack the Russian forces at a number of other locations along the contact line as well.

Tuesday's map, when compared with the previous map for May 12, the day the war resumed after the ceasefire, shows very little change in the territory held by the Ukrainian and Russian forces over the past month. However, the comparison does indicate that the Russian forces have advanced to the north and west of Pokrovsk and the neighboring city of Myrnohrad in the western portion of Donetsk region while the Ukrainian forces appear to have taken back most if not all of Lyman in the

northern portion of Donetsk region. These changes, as limited as they are, suggest the focus in the war for both sides at this point may be, at least in part, on securing specific portions of territory prior to a ceasefire that sooner or later will be agreed and that, when agreed, will presumably freeze the front line.

On Monday evening, Gen. Oleksandr Syrskyi, the Commander-in-Chief of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, said that in May the Ukrainian forces had taken more territory than the Russian forces had taken, marking the first monthly net decline in Russian advances since 2023. He said the Ukrainian forces had retaken nearly 100 square kilometers (39 square miles) more than they had lost along the front line in May, bringing the total gains of the Ukrainian forces since the start of 2026 to more than 600 square kilometers (232 square miles). But Syrskyi made it clear that the situation along the long front line in eastern Ukraine continues to be difficult. He said the heaviest fighting was taking place in the Pokrovsk area; the Oleksandrivka sector, which lies at the junction of the Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, and Dnipropetrovsk regions; and in the Huliaipole sector in the Zaporizhzhia region.

As the war on the ground continues after the brief ceasefire last month, so too Russia's war in the air continues with drones, cruise and ballistic missiles, including its new intermediate-range hypersonic Oreshnik ballistic missile, which reaches a speed of Mach 10 (over 7500 miles per hour) and is obviously exceptionally difficult, if not impossible, to intercept. On April 30, the Ukrainian Air Force had reported that Russia had fired 6,663 drones and 141 missiles at Ukraine in what it said was the most intense month of aerial attack in the war. Those totals, as high as they were, were exceeded in May. On June 1, the Ukrainian Air Force reported that in May Russia had fired 8,150 long-range drones and 211 missiles at various targets in Ukraine. Many of those drones and missiles hit civilian facilities rather than military targets, and damaged or destroyed residential buildings and public utilities in Kyiv and other cities and killed or wounded many men, women, and children.

Today Russia's war against Ukraine continues on the ground and in the air – and does so, unfortunately, with no end in sight.

David R. Cameron
June 12, 2026