

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment

Karolina Hird, Grace Mappes, Riley Bailey, Layne Philipson, George Barros, and Layne Philipson, and Frederick W. Kagan

February 3, 7pm ET

Click [here](#) to see ISW's interactive map of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

The Biden administration announced a new \$2.2 billion military aid package to Ukraine on February 3, including precision long-range missiles for HIMARS.¹ The package includes Ground Launched Small Diameter Bombs (GLSDM) that will increase the range of HIMARS to 151km from roughly 80km.² The package also includes Javelin anti-armor systems, two HAWK air defense firing units, regular HIMARS ammunition, and 120mm mortar and 155mm artillery rounds.³

Russian President Vladimir Putin continued his campaign against certain opposition voices in the domestic information space while continuing to platform critical nationalist milbloggers. Moscow authorities announced the arrest of Alexander Gusov, the alleged administrator of the *Novyi Vek* and *VChK-OGPU* Telegram channels, on charges of extortion on February 3.⁴ Independent Russian outlet *OVD Info* claimed that Russian authorities also arrested Oleg Seliverov for charges relating to terrorism after Moscow authorities recently investigated Seliverov for ties to the *Nexta Live* opposition outlet.⁵ Seliverov is an anti-war activist, and *VChK-OGPU* characterizes itself as exposing the “secrets of officials, oligarchs, gangsters, security officials.”⁶ Gusov denied his affiliations with *Novyi Vek* and *VChK-OGPU* on January 26, and Seliverov denied associations with *Nexta Live* on January 28.⁷ *VChK-OGPU* condemned the arrests and claimed that Rostec CEO Sergey Chemezov and Chemezov’s associates influenced the crackdowns.⁸ Putin censored several large opposition outlets in late January 2023, as ISW has previously reported.⁹ Putin likely aims to crack down against opposition outlets that directly oppose Putin’s regime or goals, including anti-war voices, while upholding voices such as nationalist milbloggers who support Putin’s regime and war even as the milbloggers criticize the regime for its poor execution of war aims they regard as insufficient.

Russian officials continue to perpetuate the information operation that the war in Ukraine is a direct threat to Russian security through legislative manipulations. Bryansk and Kursk oblasts announced on February 3 that they are extending the “yellow” level of terrorist threat indefinitely due to a need for enhanced measures to protect and defend Russian territory.¹⁰ Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a decree on January 31 that simplifies the process of implementing terror threat alerts in Russia and allows Russian regions classed as “yellow level” of terrorist threat per Putin’s October 19 martial law decree to indefinitely introduce an elevated “terrorist level.”¹¹ Bryansk and Kursk oblast officials will likely use this new “terror level” regime to escalate law enforcement measures in order to crack down on domestic dissent, partially to present the war in Ukraine as directly threatening Russian domestic security in order to generate continued support for Russian operations.

Key Takeaways

- **The Biden administration announced a new \$2.2 billion military aid package to Ukraine on February 3, including precision long-range missiles for HIMARS.**

- **Russian President Vladimir Putin continued his campaign against certain opposition voices in the domestic information space while continuing to platform critical nationalist milbloggers.**
- **Russian officials continue to perpetuate the information operation that the war in Ukraine is a direct threat to Russian security through legislative manipulations.**
- **Russian forces continued offensive operations along the Svatove-Kreminna line with an intensified pace of operations near Kreminna.**
- **Russian forces continued offensive operations around Bakhmut.**
- **Russian forces did not make any confirmed territorial gains in southern Ukraine.**
- **Western officials reportedly estimate that Russian forces have sustained almost 200,000 casualties in the war in Ukraine.**
- **Russian officials continue to rely on government-organized non-governmental organizations operating in occupied territories to create the veneer of grass roots support for Russian occupation.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of February 3, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



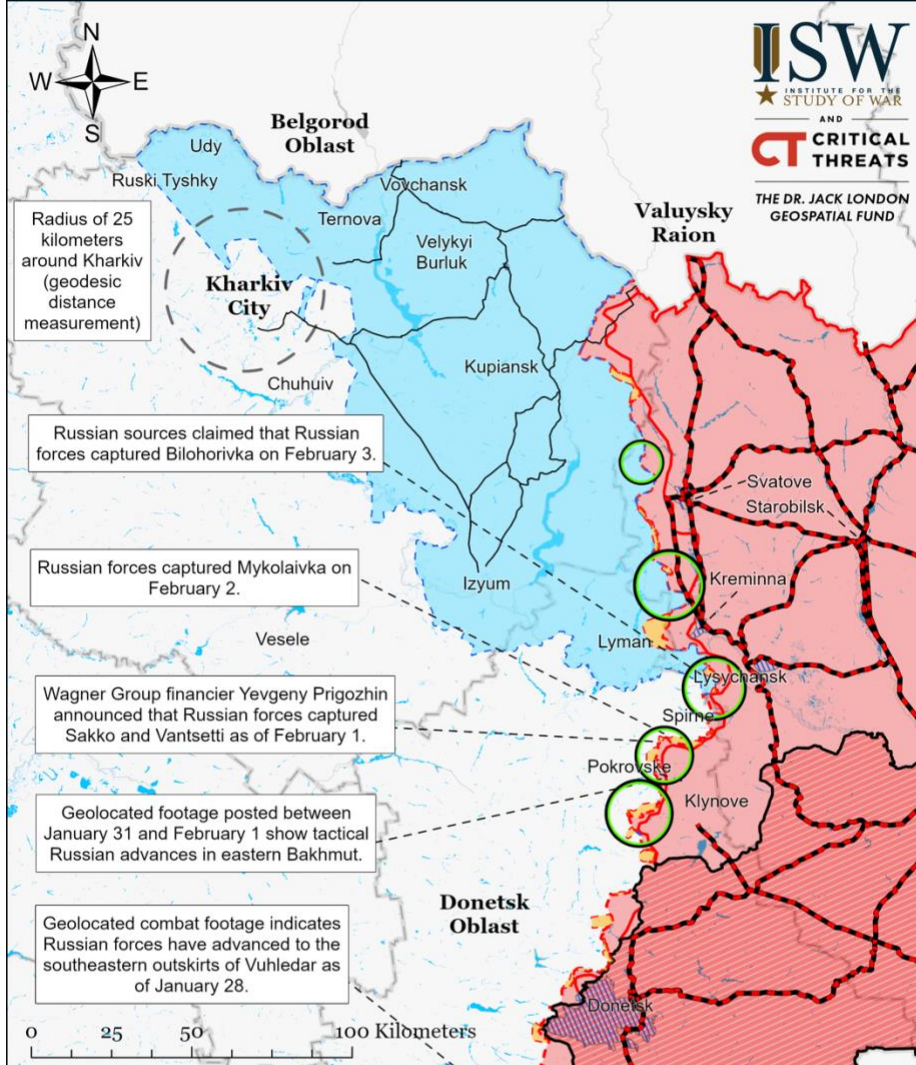
Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Will Kielm, and Mitchell Belcher
© 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

We do not report in detail on Russian war crimes because those activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We will continue to evaluate and report on the effects of these criminal activities on the Ukrainian military and population and specifically on combat in Ukrainian urban areas. We utterly condemn these Russian violations of the laws of armed conflict, Geneva Conventions, and humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

- Ukrainian Counteroffensives—Eastern Ukraine
- Russian Main Effort—Eastern Ukraine (comprised of one subordinate and one supporting effort);
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort—Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Supporting Effort—Southern Axis
- Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts
- Activities in Russian-occupied Areas

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kharkiv as of February 3, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Will Kiehn, and Mitchell Belcher © 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AEP's Critical Threats Project

	Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours		Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24		Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
	Key Ukrainian Roads		Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*		Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
	Russian Ground Lines of Communication		Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory		Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare

* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

The Ukrainian Main Defense Intelligence Directorate of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine published an audio intercept on December 22 in which a Russian soldier operating in the vicinity of Chervonopopivka supported reports that Ukrainian forces captured part of the R-66 Kreminna-Svatove road in the vicinity of Zhytlivka (just south of Chervonopopivka). The Ukrainian General Staff has repeatedly reported since November 30 that Russian forces shelled Chervonopopivka, indicating Russian forces no longer control Chervonopopivka. The Russian Ministry of Defense claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attempted to establish a position in Chervonopopivka on November 27, indicating Ukrainian maneuvers near Chervonopopivka. The R-66 runs through Chervonopopivka and the road's capture by Ukrainian forces would be consistent with the evidence presented in the intercepted phone call plus the Ukrainian General Staff's reports.

Ukrainian Counteroffensives (Ukrainian efforts to liberate Russian-occupied territories)

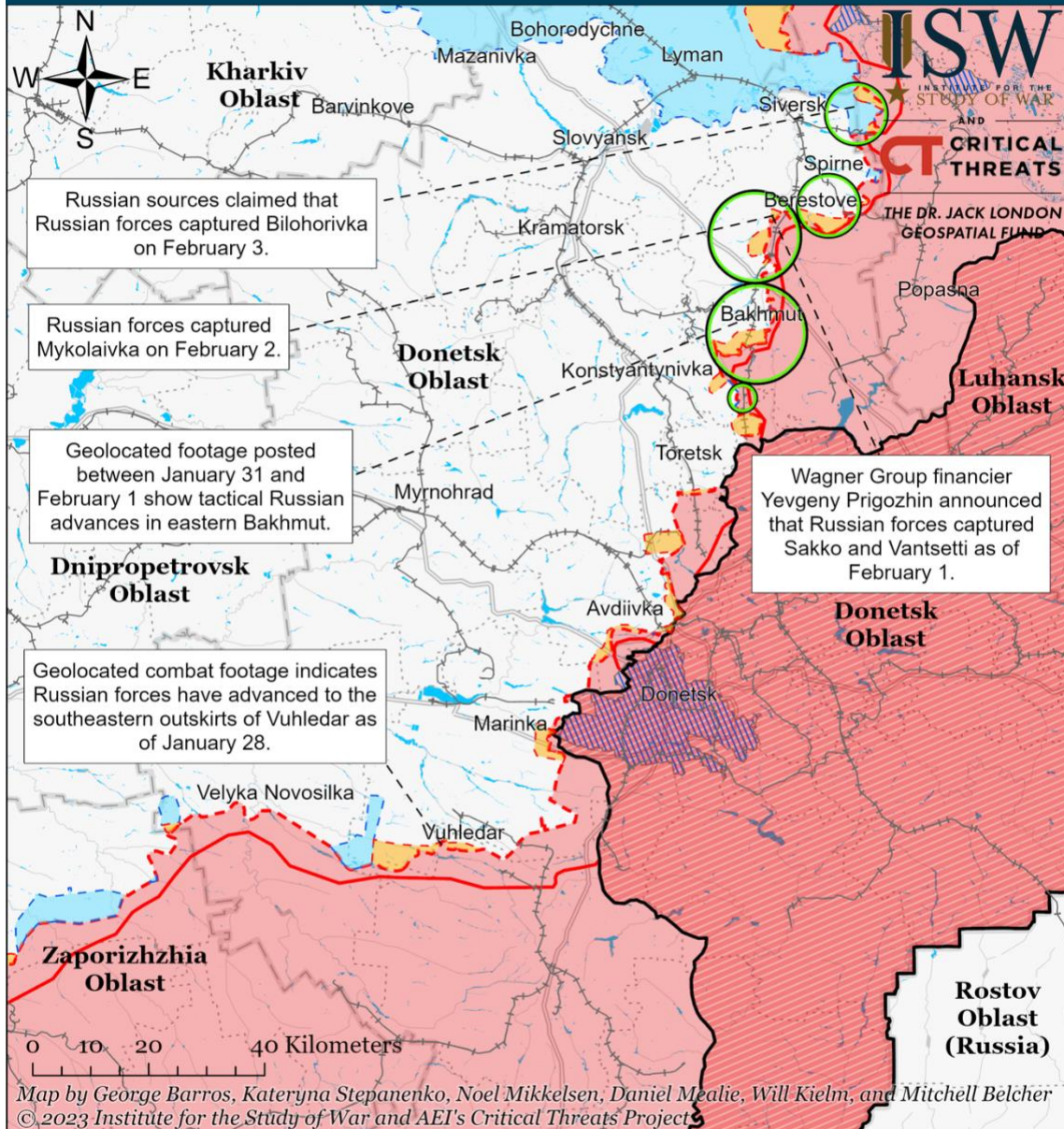
Eastern Ukraine: (Eastern Kharkiv Oblast-Western Luhansk Oblast)

Russian forces conducted a limited ground attack northwest of Svatove and continued offensive operations along the Svatove-Kreminna line on February 3. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian assaults near Stelmakhivka (15km west of Svatove) in Luhansk Oblast.¹² A prominent Russian milblogger claimed on January 2 that Ukrainian forces prepared to repel a Russian attack near the Hryanykivka-Petropavlivka-Synkivka line and that a Ukrainian sabotage and reconnaissance group operated near Kyslivka (26km northwest of Svatove).¹³ The milblogger amplified a news report on February 3 claiming that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian advances into the Svatove-Kreminna area, which the news report called "the tensest part" of the Luhansk front.¹⁴ The news report claimed that the Russian 488th Motorized Rifle Regiment (144th Motorized Rifle Division, 20th Combined Arms Army, Western Military District) regularly fired on Ukrainian positions near the Svatove-Kreminna area.¹⁵ Another milblogger claimed on February 2 that the 144th Motorized Rifle Division conducted successful operations in the Svatove-Kreminna area on February 1 and that Ukrainian forces committed reserves to the area over night.¹⁶ The milblogger also claimed that Ukrainian forces increased their rate of artillery fire and conducted some counterattacks, which Russian forces repelled.¹⁷ The milblogger claimed that Russian forces conducted attacks in an unspecified area along the Svatove-Kreminna line breaking through Ukrainian forces' first line of defense.¹⁸ The milblogger claimed that Russian forces focused on maintaining these new defensive positions and conducted reconnaissance of Ukrainian lines.¹⁹ The milblogger claimed that the Russian 59th Tank Regiment (144th Motorized Rifle Division, 20th Combined Arms Army, Western Military District) conducted successful offensive operations along the Svatove-Kreminna line.²⁰

Russian forces intensified the pace of offensive operations west of Kreminna on February 3. The Ukrainian General Staff reported on February 3 that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian assaults near Nevske (18km northwest of Kreminna) and Bilohorivka (12km south of Kreminna) in Luhansk Oblast.²¹ Ukrainian Eastern Group of Forces Spokesman Serhiy Cherevaty stated on February 3 that Russian forces increased their military activity in the Lyman direction and conducted a record number of artillery strikes (384) and 20 combat clashes.²² A Russian milblogger claimed on February 2 that the 3rd Motorized Rifle Division (20th Combined Arms Army, Western Military District) launched an offensive near the Balka Zhuravka gully northwest of Kreminna.²³ The milblogger also claims that the 144th Motorized Rifle Division broke through Ukrainian defenses by two kilometers toward Yampolivka (16km west of Kreminna) and that Russian assault groups advanced toward Ukrainian positions near Dibrova (5km southwest of Kreminna).²⁴ The milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces retreated to their second line of defense after a Russian attack in the Serebrianske forest (10km southwest of Kreminna).²⁵ Another milblogger claimed on February 3 that Russian forces attempted to advance near Chervonopopivka (5km north of Kreminna) from Ploshchanka (15km northwest of Kreminna) to push Ukrainian forces across the Zherebets River.²⁶ Various Russian sources additionally claimed that Ukrainian troops took control of Bilohorivka. Occupation Mayor of Lysychansk Andrey Skory claimed on February 3 that Ukrainian forces left their positions in Bilohorivka, a claim that other milbloggers amplified.²⁷ Claims on the status of Bilohorivka are conflicting, however. Another milblogger claimed on February 3 that Russian forces attacked Bilohorivka but could not take the settlement.²⁸ Footage posted on February 1 notably shows alleged Russian forces disguised as Ukrainian infantry attacking Ukrainian positions near Bilohorivka.²⁹ If Russian forces dressed in Ukrainian uniforms to attack Ukrainian positions, it would be a violation on the Geneva

Convention on war crimes, which prohibits "making improper use of... the military insignia and uniform of the enemy."³⁰

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of February 3, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Major Railroads
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare

* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

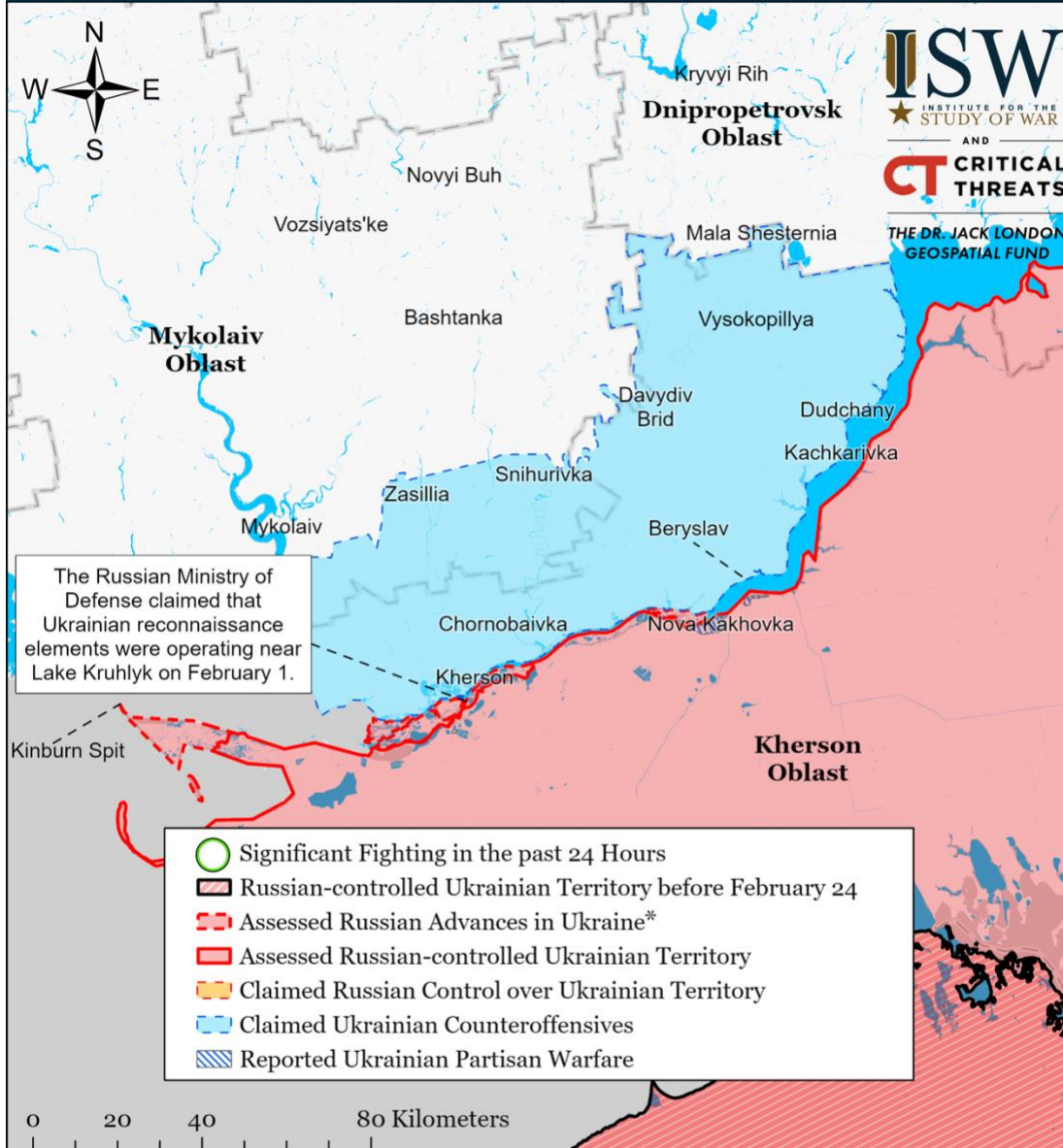
Russian Main Effort—Eastern Ukraine

Russian Subordinate Main Effort—Donetsk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)

Russian forces continued ground attacks around Bakhmut on February 3. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian troops repelled Russian attacks on Bakhmut itself; northeast of Bakhmut near Verkhokamianske, Mykolaivka, Krasna Hora, and Paraskoviivka; and southwest of Bakhmut near Ivanivske and Kurdiuvivka.³¹ Ukrainian Eastern Group of Forces spokesperson Serhiy Cherevaty stated on February 3 that Russian and Ukrainian forces engaged in 23 combat clashes in the Bakhmut area over the course of a day.³² Geolocated footage posted on February 2 confirms that Russian troops have advanced on the eastern outskirts of Bakhmut.³³ A Russian milblogger claimed that Wagner Group forces have expanded their control near the Siniat Plant in eastern Bakhmut.³⁴ Russian sources additionally continued to discuss purported Wagner advanced northeast of Bakhmut in the Mykolaivka-Rozdolivka area about 15km north of Bakhmut.³⁵ Former militant commander and convicted war criminal Igor Girkin noted that Russian operations northeast of Bakhmut are directed at developing an offensive towards Siversk (30km north of Bakhmut).³⁶ Russian milbloggers claimed that Wagner troops southwest of Bakhmut are continuing efforts to advance from the Klishchiivka area towards Ivanivske (5km west of Bakhmut) in order to cut the T0504 Kostyantynivka-Chasiv Yar-Bakhmut highway.³⁷

Russian forces did not conduct any confirmed ground attacks on the western outskirts of Donetsk City or in western Donetsk Oblast on February 3. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces attacked towards Vodiane (on the northwestern outskirts of Donetsk City) but that the pace of hostilities in the Donetsk direction has otherwise decreased.³⁸ Deputy Mayor of Vuhledar (30km southwest of Donetsk City) Maksym Verbovskyi stated that Russian forces are no longer trying to break through Ukrainian defenses around Vuhledar but are instead trying to surround the city from two sides (likely from the south and the east).³⁹ A Russian milblogger noted that the situation around Vuhledar remains very tense and characterized by positional battles.⁴⁰

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of February 3, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

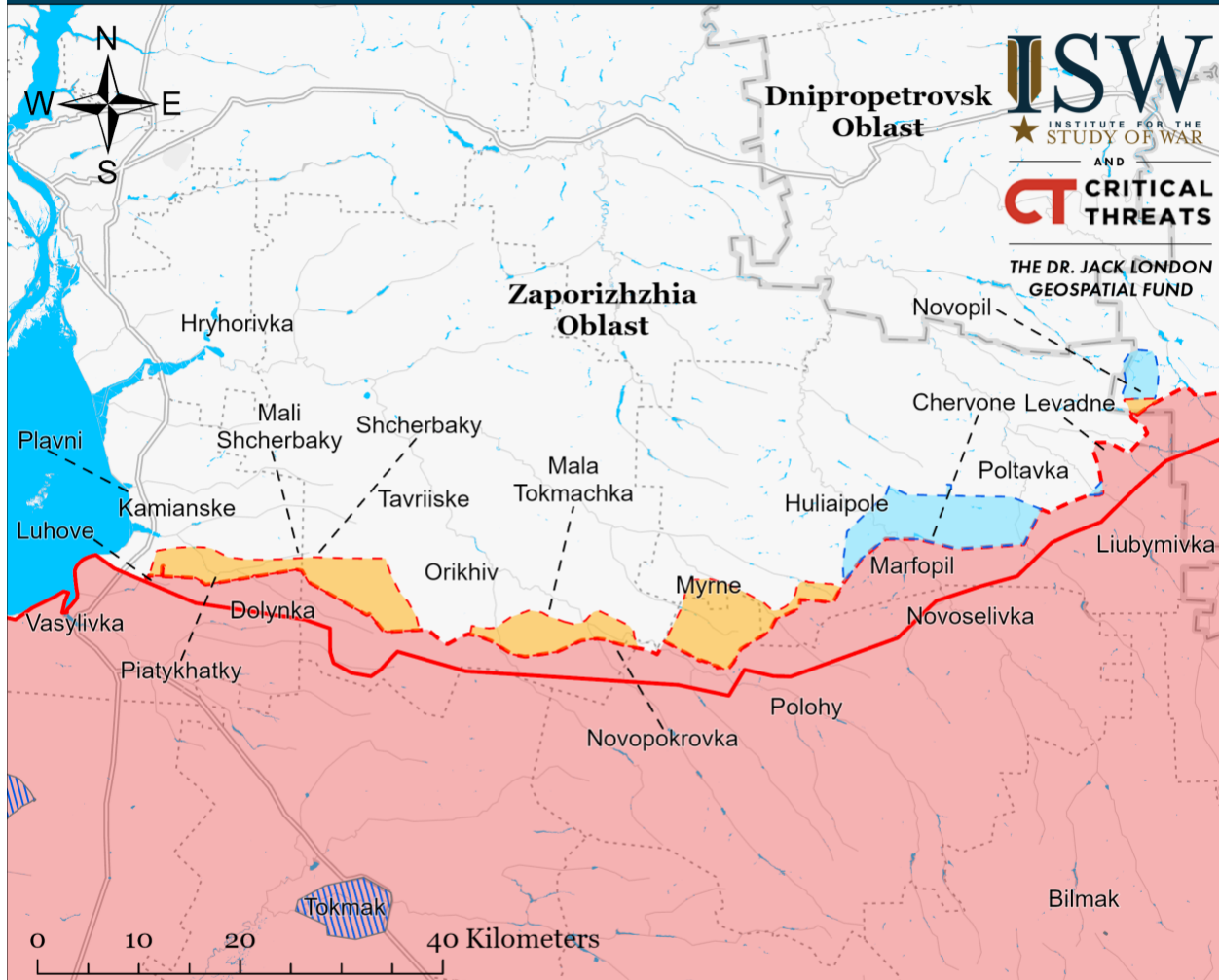


Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Will Kiehm, and Mitchell Belcher © 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

ISW recoded the northeast section of Velykyi Potomkin Island in Kherson Oblast from reported Ukrainian counteroffensives to Russian claims based on Russian milblogger reports and video footage published on January 5 that claimed Russian forces recaptured that part of the island where Ukrainian forces placed a flag on January 2. ISW cannot confirm if Russian forces recaptured the same positions as Ukrainian forces as of January 5. A Russian milblogger claimed on January 3 that the island is in a gray zone because Russian forces are still operating in the northern part of the island. Geolocated footage published on January 2 does show Ukrainian forces striking Russian positions on an adjacent island east of Velykyi Potomkin Island, which indicates that Russian forces are still operating within the Dnipro River delta areas.

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhzhia as of February 3, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



ISW
INSTITUTE FOR THE
STUDY OF WAR
AND
**CRITICAL
THREATS**
THE DR. JACK LONDON
GEOSPATIAL FUND

Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Will Kielm, and Mitchell Belcher
© 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives

* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Supporting Effort—Southern Axis (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions and secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes)

Russian forces did not make any confirmed territorial gains on the southern axis on February 3.⁴¹ Ukrainian officials continue to include a possible Russian offensive in the southern direction within their forecast cone as of February 3. Head of the Ukrainian Joint Coordination Press Center of the Southern Forces Nataliya Humenyuk stated that Russian forces continue to focus their efforts in eastern Ukraine but that Russian forces have not ruled out the possibility of an “unexpected” secondary offensive in the south.⁴² Ukrainian Joint Press Center of the Tavriisk Direction Defense Forces spokesperson Oleksiy Dmytrashkivskyi stated that Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered Russian forces to seize Zaporizhzhia City by March 31, 2023 and that Russian forces conducted operations to implement Putin’s order, likely referring to localized ground attacks in Zaporizhzhia Oblast in late January 2023.⁴³ Ukrainian officials and Russian sources did not report that Russian forces conducted ground attacks in southern Ukraine on February 3.⁴⁴ Russian sources claimed that the front line in Zaporizhzhia Oblast has not changed, and that Russian and Ukrainian sabotage and reconnaissance groups continue to operate along the front line.⁴⁵

A Russian source claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted limited raids near Kruhlyi and Dovhyi islands south of the Kinburn Peninsula on February 2 and 3, the first reported instance of Ukrainian forces reaching the area south of the Kinburn Peninsula since Russian forces initially captured it.⁴⁶ ISW has not observed footage or Ukrainian reporting to back up this claim, however. The source claimed that Ukrainian forces increased the number of raids across the Dnipro River since late January 2023, in order to fix Russian forces to the east (left) bank of the Dnipro River in Kherson Oblast.⁴⁷

Russian forces continued routine artillery strikes west of Hulyaipole and in Dnipropetrovsk, Kherson, and Mykolaiv oblasts on February 3.⁴⁸ Ukraine’s Southern Operational Command warned on February 3 that Russian forces increased the number of Kalibr missile carrying ships in the Black Sea and are preparing for another wave of missile strikes.⁴⁹

Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts (Russian objective: Expand combat power without conducting general mobilization)

Western officials reportedly estimate that Russian forces have sustained almost 200,000 casualties in the war in Ukraine. *The New York Times* reported on February 2 that US and other Western officials stated that fighting around Bakhmut, Donetsk Oblast has increased an already high Russian casualty count, with hundreds of personnel reportedly dying or being injured in the Bakhmut area daily.⁵⁰ Norwegian Defense Chief General Eirik Kristofferson stated on January 22 that Russian forces had suffered 180,000 casualties in Ukraine, although he noted that there is much uncertainty regarding these estimates.⁵¹ US Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Mark Milley stated on November 10, 2022 that US officials estimated that over 100,000 Russian servicemembers had died or been injured in Ukraine.⁵² The increase in these western estimates between November 2022 and January 2023 may reflect an overall adjustment in Western estimates of Russian casualties and not just new Russian casualties in previous months. *The New York Times* reported that Western officials stated that thousands of Russian convict volunteers have died in the Bakhmut area, supporting independent Russian outlet *Meduza*’s reporting that over 80 percent of the Wagner Group’s reported 40,000 convict volunteers are either dead or missing.⁵³ The high Russian casualty count for the war in Ukraine continues to have deleterious effects on the Russian military’s combat effectiveness and is likely in part prompting Russian

officials to pursue a second wave of mobilization as the Russian military prepares for future offensives in Ukraine.

Russian milbloggers continue to claim that the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) is planning on formally integrating Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republic (DNR and LNR) forces into the Russian military. A prominent Russian milblogger claimed on February 2 that the Russian MoD is transforming LNR and DNR formations into regular brigades, battalions, and regiments.⁵⁴ Russian sources had previously claimed that Russian President Vladimir Putin's presentation of battle banners to the DNR 1st Army Corps and the LNR 2nd Army Corps formations on December 31, 2022 meant that these formations had officially become parts of the Russian Armed Forces.⁵⁵ The Russian MoD may be restructuring LNR and DNR formations into new regular Russian formations to help support Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu's proposed reforms to increase the number of Russian military personnel and create new maneuver divisions.⁵⁶ The possible Russian restructuring would likely require that these LNR and DNR formations pull out of frontline positions in Ukraine for a time, either indicating that the Russian military intends to replace these formations with other Russian formations or that the restructuring effort would draw forces away from certain parts of the line.

Ukrainian sources reported that Russian parallel military formations are continuing prison recruitment efforts. The Ukrainian General Staff reported on February 3 that an unspecified paramilitary company recruited up to 1,000 prisoners from correctional facilities in Novosibirsk Oblast over the last week.⁵⁷ ISW previously assessed that a smaller reported decrease in the Russian prison population since November 2022 may suggest that the Wagner Group's prison recruitment campaign has slowed in recent months.⁵⁸

Russian occupation authorities in Crimea announced that they plan to fund the provisioning of Russian servicemembers through the nationalization of Ukrainian property. Occupied-Crimea Head Sergey Aksyonov stated on February 3 that his administration will use all funds from the sale of nationalized property of Ukrainian businessmen to equip Russian personnel from Crimea who are participating in the war.⁵⁹ Crimea occupation officials' use of these funds to support the provisioning of Russian soldiers suggests that the occupation administration may be struggling to fund its obligations to support the war effort elsewhere in occupied Ukraine.

Russian occupation officials continue to amplify claims that specific groups of foreign volunteers are serving in Russian volunteer formations to portray Russia as less internationally isolated. Zaporizhia Oblast Occupation Head Yevgeny Balitsky posted photos of Russian Presidential Administration First Deputy Chief Sergey Kiriyenko meeting with volunteers of the Pavel Sudaplatov Volunteer Battalion and reiterated claims that some of the volunteers are Serbian and Turkish nationals, although ISW has not observed any confirmation of this claim.⁶⁰ Zaporizhia Oblast Occupation Deputy Vladimir Rogov claimed that volunteers from over 40 countries are ready to volunteer with Russian formations operating in Ukraine and called upon the Russian government to solve logistics issues that are supposedly preventing these volunteers from reaching Ukraine.⁶¹ Russian officials are likely promoting these claims to signal to specific foreign countries that those countries have domestic constituencies that have pro-Russian views and to present Russia as not being internationally isolated due to the war in Ukraine.

Activity in Russian-occupied Areas (Russian objective: consolidate administrative control of and annexed areas; forcibly integrate Ukrainian civilians into Russian sociocultural, economic, military, and governance systems)

Russian officials continue to rely on government-organized non-governmental organizations operating in occupied territories to create the veneer of grass roots support for Russian occupation. The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported on February 3 that Russian officials have financed non-governmental organizations directly from the Russian federal budget and have instructed them to mimic humanitarian and civilian society roles in occupied territories.⁶² The Resistance Center reported that the Kremlin has been funding the organization "Volunteers of Victory" since 2015 and has tasked it with agitating the public to support Russian occupation.⁶³ A medical organization with links to Russian occupation officials has reportedly been sending Russian doctors to conduct medical examinations that support Russia's ongoing medical relocation scheme for children and other residents in occupied territories.⁶⁴ The Resistance Center also reported that the Kremlin is trying to create a propagandistic network in Luhansk Oblast similar to the Soviet Komsomol through an organization called "Representatives of the Russian Union of Youth in the Luhansk People's Republic (LNR)."⁶⁵

Russian officials are likely trying to cement further control over banking systems in occupied territories. Russian occupation officials announced on February 3 that Russian Promsvyazbank acquired PSB Donetsk LLC Bank and PSB Luhansk LLC Bank.⁶⁶ LNR Head Leonid Pasechnik stated that Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered the acquisition through a decree.⁶⁷ Russian officials are likely trying to cement control over banking systems in occupied territories ahead of a likely increase in Russian investments associated with preferential loans and mortgages for occupied territories.

Ukrainian partisans assassinated former police officer and Russian occupation Ministry of Internal Affairs official Yevgeny Kuzmin with an improvised explosive device (IED) while Kuzmin was in his car in Enerhodar, Zaporizhzhia Oblast, on February 3.⁶⁸

Russian officials are continuing to intensify measures to incorporate occupied territories into the Russian education apparatus, partially through efforts to deport Ukrainian youth to Russia. The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported on February 3 that Russian forces are taking high school students from occupied territories to Russia in order to sit for the Unified State Exam, a series of exams Russian high-school students must pass to enter college or university.⁶⁹ The Center reported that Russian officials took 50 eleventh graders from their homes in occupied Lysychansk, Luhansk Oblast, to Yelabuga, Tatarstan, to prepare for and sit for their annual academic exams and promised them free education at Russian universities.⁷⁰ Former Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) Ambassador to Russia Rodion Miroshnik claimed on February 3 that Russia delivered 28,000 textbooks and manuals to occupied Luhansk Oblast to support preparations for the Unified State Exam.⁷¹

Russian occupation authorities continue to target Ukrainian children in an effort to consolidate societal control of occupied territories. Kherson Occupation Head Vladimir Saldo stated on February 3 that his administration will establish two Suvorov cadet classes promoting military education and Russian history in occupied Skadovsk, Kherson Oblast, and noted that he is confident that other occupied settlements will follow suit despite the program supposedly not being compulsory.⁷² Saldo emphasized that it is vital to provide children in occupied territories with a (Russian) military and patriotic upbringing, indicating that cadet classes are likely intended to further augment efforts to erase Ukrainian cultural identity.⁷³

Significant activity in Belarus (ISW assesses that a Russian or Belarusian attack into northern Ukraine in early 2023 is extraordinarily unlikely and has thus restructured this section of the update. It will no longer include counter-indicators for such an offensive.

ISW will continue to report daily observed Russian and Belarusian military activity in Belarus, but these are not indicators that Russian and Belarusian forces are preparing for an imminent attack on Ukraine from Belarus. ISW will revise this text and its assessment if it observes any unambiguous indicators that Russia or Belarus is preparing to attack northern Ukraine.)

Russian aircraft that deployed to Belarusian airfields under the rubric of joint tactical aviation exercises in January 2023 reportedly are not returning to Russia despite the exercises' official conclusion on February 2. Independent Belarusian monitoring organization The Hajun Project reported that Russian forces have not yet begun redeploying Russian aircraft in Belarus back to Russia as of February 2.⁷⁴ The Hajun Project also reported that large Russian military convoys with over 20 pieces of heavy equipment were observed on the M1 highway in transit from Baranavichy to Stolbtsy and from the Russian-Belarusian border to Orsha, Vitebsk Oblast, Belarus, on February 2.⁷⁵ The Project reported that at least four Russian S-300/S-400 air defense systems were observed in transit near Ziabrouka, Gomel Oblast, on February 2.⁷⁶

Belarusian maneuver elements continue conducting exercises in Belarus. A tank platoon of the Belarusian 6th Separate Mechanized Brigade conducted live fire exercises at the Gozhsky Training Ground in Grodno Oblast on February 3.⁷⁷ Unspecified motorized rifle elements of the Belarusian 120th Separate Mechanized Brigade conducted live fire exercises with BMP-2 armored personnel carriers at a training ground near Barysaw, Minsk Oblast, on February 3.⁷⁸ Unspecified elements of the Osipovichi-based Belarusian 51st Artillery Brigade deployed to an unspecified training ground for exercises on February 3.⁷⁹

Note: ISW does not receive any classified material from any source, uses only publicly available information, and draws extensively on Russian, Ukrainian, and Western reporting and social media as well as commercially available satellite imagery and other geospatial data as the basis for these reports. References to all sources used are provided in the endnotes of each update.

¹ <https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/3287992/biden-administration-announces-additional-security-assistance-for-ukraine/>;

<https://www.defense.gov/News/Transcripts/Transcript/Article/3288141/pentagon-press-secretary-brig-gen-pat-ryder-holds-an-on-camera-press-briefing/>

² <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/ukraines-new-weapon-will-force-russian-shift-2023-02-02/>;

<https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/3287992/biden-administration-announces-additional-security-assistance-for-ukraine/>;

<https://www.defense.gov/News/Transcripts/Transcript/Article/3288141/pentagon-press-secretary-brig-gen-pat-ryder-holds-an-on-camera-press-briefing/>

³ <https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/3287992/biden-administration-announces-additional-security-assistance-for-ukraine/>;

<https://www.defense.gov/News/Transcripts/Transcript/Article/3288141/pentagon-press-secretary-brig-gen-pat-ryder-holds-an-on-camera-press-briefing/>

⁴ https://t.me/rian_ru/193018; <https://t.me/readovkanews/51908>; <https://t.me/readovkanews/51904>

⁵ <https://ovd dot news/express-news/2023/02/03/v-moskve-prishli-s-obyskom-k-antivoennomu-aktivistu-ego-zaderzhali>; <https://www.rbc dot ru/politics/03/02/2023/63dd610f9a79476c2afc01e6>

⁶ <https://ovd dot news/express-news/2023/02/03/v-moskve-prishli-s-obyskom-k-antivoennomu-aktivistu-ego-zaderzhali>; <https://t.me/VCHKOGPU>;

⁷ <https://t.me/bazabazon/15529>; <https://t.me/bazabazon/15565>

⁸ <https://t.me/vchkogpu/36369>

⁹ <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-january-26-2023>

¹⁰ <https://tass.com/defense/1571065>; https://t.me/gubernator_46/2442

¹¹ <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-january-31-2023>

¹² <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0QTR5VMieV5KQZxGx5ve8kk836WNf8N2CFEFTbmEfrMYCnS155a1D6x22UsoJDdUI>

¹³ <https://t.me/rybar/43218>

¹⁴ <https://t.me/rybar/43228>; https://t.me/anna_news/46036

¹⁵ <https://t.me/rybar/43228>; https://t.me/anna_news/46036

¹⁶ <https://t.me/vysokygovorit/10684>

¹⁷ <https://t.me/vysokygovorit/10684>

¹⁸ <https://t.me/vysokygovorit/10684>

¹⁹ <https://t.me/vysokygovorit/10684>

²⁰ <https://t.me/vysokygovorit/10684>

²¹ <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0QTR5VMieV5KQZxGx5ve8kk836WNf8N2CFEFTbmEfrMYCnS155a1D6x22UsoJDdUI>

²² https://suspilne.com/media/373769-u-kievi-rozpocinaetsa-samit-ukraina-es-proctergamble-vnesli-u-spisok-sponsoriv-vijni-345-den-vijni-onlajn/?anchor=live_1675372635&utm_source=copylink&utm_medium=ps

²³ <https://t.me/rybar/43218>; <https://t.me/rybar/43220>

²⁴ <https://t.me/rybar/43218>; <https://t.me/rybar/43220>

²⁵ <https://t.me/rybar/43218>; <https://t.me/rybar/43220>

²⁶ <https://t.me/wargonzo/10680>

²⁷ <https://t.me/readovkanews/51890>; https://t.me/boris_rozhin/77100; <https://t.me/strelkovii/3858>

²⁸ <https://t.me/wargonzo/10680>

²⁹ https://t.me/supernova_plus/17140 ; <https://twitter.com/MOCentrists/status/1620843178005004288> ; <https://twitter.com/Danspiun/status/1621566607108542464?s=20&t=iEjrZHUODmsAaxt1ZpMYIQ>

³⁰ <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/war-crimes.shtml>

³¹ <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0QTR5VMieV5KQZxGx5ve8kk836WNf8N2CFEFTbmEfrMYCnS155a1D6x22UsoJDdUI>

³² https://suspilne.com/media/373769-u-kievi-rozpocinaetsa-samit-ukraina-es-proctergamble-vnesli-u-spisok-sponsoriv-vijni-345-den-vijni-onlajn/?anchor=live_1675372635&utm_source=copylink&utm_medium=ps

³³ https://twitter.com/auditor_ya/status/1621492166798213120;
<https://twitter.com/aleksander21966/status/1621200216752885761>;
<https://twitter.com/neonhandrail/status/1621237895653888000>

³⁴ <https://t.me/rybar/43218>; <https://t.me/rybar/43220>

³⁵ <https://t.me/rybar/43218>; <https://t.me/rybar/43220>; <https://t.me/wargonzo/10680>

³⁶ <https://t.me/strelkovii/3858>

³⁷ <https://t.me/rybar/43218>; <https://t.me/rybar/43220>; <https://t.me/wargonzo/10680>

³⁸ <https://t.me/wargonzo/10680>

³⁹ <https://suspilne.com/media/374336-popri-tiznevij-sturm-rosiani-ne-zajsli-zastupnik-mera-pro-situaciu-v-vugledari/>

⁴⁰ <https://t.me/rybar/43220>

⁴¹ https://t.me/mod_russia/23934; <https://t.me/wargonzo/10680>; <https://t.me/vrogov/7470>;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0qTcjqkqvJfR6pCFt9kUv4yCm7Hs1jKtom8oQA1gfAHpLcj9cJE2vrotx5qdQPX8el>;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0QTR5VMieV5KQZxGx5ve8kk836WNf8N2CFEFTbmEfrMYCnS155a1D6x22UsoJDdUI>; https://t.me/zoda_gov_ua/16390

⁴² <https://armyinform.com.ua/2023/02/03/na-pivdenomu-napryamku-vorog-postijno-manevruye-ale-my-gotovi-do-bud-yakogo-rozvytku-podij-gumenyuk/>

⁴³ <https://armyinform dot com.ua/2023/02/03/uprodovzh-mynuloyi-doby-na-tavrijskomu-napryamku-rosijski-vijska-vtratyly-ponad-dvi-roty-osobovogo-skladu-vbytymy-ta-poranenymy/>

⁴⁴ https://t.me/mod_russia/23934; <https://t.me/wargonzo/10680>; <https://t.me/vrogov/7470>;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0qTcjqaqJfR6pCFt9kUv4yCm7Hs1jKtom8oQA1gfAHpLcj9cJE2vrotx5qdQPX8el>;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0QTR5VMieV5KQZxGx5ve8kk836WNf8N2CFEAFtbmEfRMYCnS155a1D6x22UsoJDdUl>; https://t.me/zoda_gov_ua/16390

⁴⁵ <https://t.me/wargonzo/10680>; <https://t.me/vrogov/7470>

⁴⁶ <https://t.me/rybar/43238>

⁴⁷ <https://t.me/rybar/43238>

⁴⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0qTcjqaqJfR6pCFt9kUv4yCm7Hs1jKtom8oQA1gfAHpLcj9cJE2vrotx5qdQPX8el>;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0QTR5VMieV5KQZxGx5ve8kk836WNf8N2CFEAFtbmEfRMYCnS155a1D6x22UsoJDdUl>; https://t.me/mod_russia/23934; <https://t.me/rybar/43218>;
<https://t.me/voenkorkotenok/44977>; <https://t.me/rybar/43224>; <https://t.me/wargonzo/10680>;
<https://t.me/mykolaivskaODA/4211>; https://t.me/zoda_gov_ua/16390; https://t.me/Yevtushenko_E/2385;
https://t.me/Yevtushenko_E/2385; https://t.me/mykola_lukashuk/3395

⁴⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/OperationalCommandSouth/videos/2185804834939334/>

⁵⁰ <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/02/us/politics/ukraine-russia-casualties.html>

⁵¹ <https://t dot co/ce8DTq1OFi>

⁵² <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/11/10/number-russian-troops-killed-injured-ukraine/>

⁵³ <https://meduz dot io/news/2023/01/23/rus-sidyaschaya-iz-50-tysyach-zaklyuchennyh-zaverbovannyh-chvk-vagnera-na-fronte-ostalis-tolko-10-tysyach-ostalnye-libo-pogibli-libo-dezertirovali> ;
<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/02/us/politics/ukraine-russia-casualties.html>

⁵⁴ https://t.me/Sladkov_plus/7148

⁵⁵ https://t.me/miroshnik_r/10066 ; <https://t.me/NeoficialniyBeZsonoV/20973> ; https://t.me/mod_russia/23079 ;
https://t.me/boris_rozhin/74109

⁵⁶ <https://isw.pub/UkrWar011723>

⁵⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0qTcjqaqJfR6pCFt9kUv4yCm7Hs1jKtom8oQA1gfAHpLcj9cJE2vrotx5qdQPX8el>

⁵⁸ <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-february-1-2023>

⁵⁹ <https://t.me/Aksenov82/2074>

⁶⁰ <https://t.me/BalitskyEV/756> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-february-2-2023>

⁶¹ <https://t.me/vrogov/7461>

⁶² <https://sprotyv.mod dot gov.ua/2023/02/03/merezha-psevdogromadskyh-ruhiv-na-tot/>

⁶³ <https://sprotyv.mod dot gov.ua/2023/02/03/merezha-psevdogromadskyh-ruhiv-na-tot/>

⁶⁴ <https://sprotyv.mod dot gov.ua/2023/02/03/merezha-psevdogromadskyh-ruhiv-na-tot/> ;
<https://isw.pub/UkrWar011323>

⁶⁵ <https://sprotyv.mod dot gov.ua/2023/02/03/merezha-psevdogromadskyh-ruhiv-na-tot/>

⁶⁶ https://t.me/glava_lnr_info/735 ; https://t.me/glava_lnr_info/736; <https://t.me/readovkanews/51906> ;
<https://t.me/pushilindenis/3146>

⁶⁷ https://t.me/glava_lnr_info/735

⁶⁸ <https://sprotyv.mod dot gov.ua/2023/02/03/v-energodari-pidirvaly-zradnyka/>;
<https://t.me/readovkanews/51883>; <https://t.me/readovkanews/51884>; <https://t.me/readovkanews/51885>;
<https://t.me/readovkanews/51887>; <https://t.me/vrogov/7449>; <https://t.me/vrogov/7450>;
<https://t.me/vrogov/7451>; <https://t.me/vrogov/7452>; <https://t.me/vrogov/7455>;
https://twitter.com/auditor_ya/status/1621468422520422402;
https://twitter.com/Ukraine_Twi/status/1621402699680858113;
https://twitter.com/auditor_ya/status/1621492184301051905;

<https://twitter.com/Cosmonaut19/status/1621491795162181633>; <https://t.me/kommunist/15448>;
https://t.me/miroshnik_r/10382; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/44965>; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/44968>
⁶⁹ <https://sprotyv.mod.gov.ua/2023/02/02/okupanty-vyvozyat-starshoklasnykiv-z-tot-do-rf-dlya-skladannya-shkilnyh-ispytiv/>
⁷⁰ <https://sprotyv.mod.gov.ua/2023/02/02/okupanty-vyvozyat-starshoklasnykiv-z-tot-do-rf-dlya-skladannya-shkilnyh-ispytiv/>
⁷¹ https://t.me/miroshnik_r/10380
⁷² https://t.me/SALDO_VGA/353
⁷³ https://t.me/SALDO_VGA/353; https://t.me/SALDO_VGA/354
⁷⁴ <https://motolko.help/en-news/belarusian-hajun-military-activity-on-the-territory-of-belarus-on-february-2/>
⁷⁵ <https://motolko.help/en-news/belarusian-hajun-military-activity-on-the-territory-of-belarus-on-february-2/>
⁷⁶ <https://motolko.help/en-news/belarusian-hajun-military-activity-on-the-territory-of-belarus-on-february-2/>
⁷⁷ <https://t.me/modmilby/22313>
⁷⁸ <https://t.me/modmilby/22322>
⁷⁹ <https://t.me/modmilby/22323>