

# Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment

Christina Harward, Angelica Evans, Grace Mappes,  
Riley Bailey, and George Barros

March 8, 2024, 6:35pm 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.

Click [here](#) to see ISW's 3D control of terrain topographic map of Ukraine. Use of a computer (not a mobile device) is strongly recommended for using this data-heavy tool.

Click [here](#) to access ISW's archive of interactive time-lapse maps of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. These maps complement the static control-of-terrain map that ISW produces daily by showing a dynamic frontline. ISW will update this time-lapse map archive monthly.

**Note: The data cut-off for this product was 12:30 pm ET on March 8. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the March 9 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.**

**Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky reiterated that a ceasefire in Ukraine would allow Russia to rebuild its forces and means for future offensive operations, as Russia previously did following the start of Russia's 2014 invasion.** Zelensky stated on March 8 that a pause in fighting in Ukraine would pose a serious challenge and problem both to Ukraine and all of Europe.[1] Zelensky noted that Russia would benefit from a pause or ceasefire as Russian forces would use the pause to optimize Russia's military and overall war effort, including by training its soldiers, many of whom deploy to the front line with very little training. Zelensky also stated that Russian forces are suffering from missile, artillery, and drone shortages, so Russia is sourcing these weapons from North Korea and Iran and needs to rebuild its stockpiles. Zelensky stated that Russia similarly benefited from previously freezing the war in 2014 and was able to build up its weapons, accumulate forces, and invade Ukraine again in 2022. ISW continues to assess that any ceasefire in Ukraine would benefit Russia, giving it time to reconstitute and regroup for future offensive operations, optimize command and control, implement lessons learned from experience in Ukraine, and resupply Russian forces in a manner that is exceedingly difficult to do while high-intensity combat is underway.[2] Zelensky also stated that Russian President Vladimir Putin's goal is not just to occupy all of Ukraine, but to deprive Ukraine of its independence and integrate Ukraine into Russia using either force or political means.[3] Kremlin officials, including Putin, have repeatedly indicated that Russia hopes to occupy most, if not all, of Ukraine and eliminate Ukrainian statehood and independence.[4] Putin has also geographically defined historical "Russian" lands - a characterization which the Kremlin has used to justify its full-scale invasion of Ukraine - as encompassing the former Russian Empire and Soviet Union.[5]

**Some Russian forces may have improved their tactical capabilities and leveraged limited tactical surprise during the final weeks of the Russian effort to seize Avdiivka, suggesting that select elements of the Russian military may have internalized tactical adaptations**

**from conducting offensive operations in Ukraine.** Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets published a retrospective on March 8 about the Russian effort to seize Avdiivka in which he stated that Russian forces were able to tactically regroup and shift the tactical focus of their offensive operations from north of the Avdiivka Coke Plant in northwestern Avdiivka to areas near northeastern Avdiivka.[6] Mashovets stated that Russian forces achieved this regrouping and tactical shift without Ukrainian forces fully realizing that the regrouping had shifted Russia’s tactical focus.[7] Russian forces initially began their turning movement through Avdiivka after making tactical gains in northeastern Avdiivka, and Mashovets’ reporting suggests that Russian forces may have advanced in the area due to some tactical surprise.[8] Even limited tactical surprise, in which attacking forces engage defenders at a time, place, or manner for which the defender is unprepared, is a notable development given that both Russian and Ukrainian forces have widespread visibility throughout the frontline.[9] The Russian force’s ability to achieve elements of tactical surprise in such an operating environment with little-to-no concealment is therefore noteworthy. ISW has not observed other recent notable incidents of Russian forces achieving or leveraging tactical surprise. The reported Russian ability to do so near Avdiivka is not necessarily indicative of a wider Russian capability. Russian forces have shown limited tactical-level adaptations on certain sectors of the front, but continued widespread Russian tactical failures throughout Ukraine suggest that the Russian military command has not internalized and disseminated all possible tactical adaptations among all the various Russian force groupings operating in Ukraine.[10]

**Ukrainian Air Force Commander Lieutenant General Mykola Oleshchuk stated on March 8 that Ukrainian forces are regularly targeting Russian fighter aircraft.**[11] Oleshchuk stated that Russian forces continue to conduct guided aerial strikes against Ukrainian frontline positions, but that Russian aircraft “no longer dare” to fly too close to the frontlines and that Ukrainian air defenses recently attempted to strike a Russian aircraft from over 150 kilometers away.[12] Oleshchuk stated that the recent reported downing of Russian A-50 long-range radar detection aircraft and Su-34 and Su-35 fighter aircraft have caused Russian forces to “significantly reduce” the frequency of Russian air strikes in Ukraine.[13] ISW has not observed dispositive evidence that the tempo of Russian unguided glide bomb strikes has decreased, however. *Forbes* recently reported that Russian aircraft are conducting one hundred or more sorties per day to conduct unguided glide bomb strikes on Ukrainian positions at a range of 25 miles (about 40 kilometers), indicating that Russian aircraft are continuing to conduct a relatively high volume of glide bomb strikes in Ukraine despite Ukraine’s claimed shoot-downs of such aircraft.[14]

**Ukraine’s European partners continue efforts to send additional aid and materiel to Ukraine.** Czech officials stated on March 8 that Ukraine’s partners have raised enough funds to purchase the first batch of 300,000 shells to send to Ukraine “in the coming weeks.”[15] The Czech Republic is leading an initiative to purchase 800,000 ammunition shells outside of Europe and deliver them to Ukraine.[16] European Commission Executive Vice President Valdis Dombrovskis stated on March 8 that the European Union (EU) will send the first tranche of 4.5 billion euros (about \$4.9 billion) to Ukraine in March and will send 1.5 billion euros (about \$1.6 billion) in April as part of the EU’s previously announced support package of 50 billion euros (about \$54.7 billion) for 2024-2027.[17]

**The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors approved a resolution calling for Russia’s withdrawal from the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP), undermining Russian efforts to use the IAEA and other international organizations to legitimize its occupation of the plant.**[18] The March 7 IAEA resolution calls

for the urgent withdrawal of all Russian unauthorized military and other personnel from the ZNPP and the return of the ZNPP to full Ukrainian control.[19] The resolution also expresses significant concern for the unstable security situation at the ZNPP during armed conflict, including the lack of qualified personnel, gaps in planned and preventative maintenance, lack of reliable supply chains, vulnerable water supply for cooling the ZNPP's nuclear reactors, and the installation of antipersonnel mines between the ZNPP's internal and external perimeters.[20] The March 6 resolution echoes previous calls from the IAEA on March 3, 2022, September 15, 2022, November 17, 2022, and September 28, 2023.[21] Russian authorities have repeatedly attempted to use Russia's physical control over the ZNPP to force international organizations including the IAEA to meet with Russian occupation officials to legitimize Russia's occupation of the ZNPP and by extension Russia's occupation of sovereign Ukrainian land.[22] The IAEA's March 7 resolution reiterates the IAEA's recognition of Ukraine as the legitimate operator of the ZNPP and undermines the consistent Russian assertion that Russia is the only safe operator of the ZNPP.[23]

**Ukrainian efforts to encourage women to serve in the Ukrainian armed forces continues allowing Ukraine to tap into a wider mobilization base for its war effort.** The Ukrainian Military Media Center reported in honor of International Women's Day on March 8 that over 45,500 women serve in the Ukrainian army as of January 2024, including more than 13,000 women serving in combat roles.[24] Ukrainian officials previously reported that over 5,000 women were actively serving in frontline combat zones as of November 2023.[25] ISW previously noted that Ukraine has not been conscripting women but that Ukrainian women are nonetheless volunteering for military service, including combat roles, and that Ukrainian society appears to be galvanized by a popular desire to defend Ukraine strong enough to bring so many Ukrainian women near and onto the battlefield of their own accord.[26]

**Russian information space actors are intensifying their focus on covering recent events surrounding the governor of the pro-Russian Moldovan autonomous region Gagauzia, Yevgenia Gutsul, and are amplifying Kremlin narratives aimed at destabilizing Moldova to a wider audience.** Gutsul returned from Russia to Chisinau on March 8 without incident and hundreds of supporters gathered to meet her at the airport.[27] US-sanctioned, pro-Kremlin Moldovan politician Ilan Shor claimed on March 7 that Moldovan authorities would arrest Gutsul upon her arrival to Moldova after the Moldovan Prosecutor General's Office publicly stated that Moldovan authorities collected enough evidence to demonstrate Gutsul's involvement in unspecified criminal acts.[28] Kremlin newswire TASS closely followed Gutsul's return to Moldova on March 8, reporting that Gutsul stated that Moldova must have friendly relations with Russia and criticized Moldovan President Maia Sandu after arriving at the Chisinau airport.[29] An abnormally large number of Russian milbloggers reported on Gutsul's return to Moldova and promoted commonplace Kremlin narratives that target the Moldovan government.[30] Such a pattern of activity could indicate a centrally directed Kremlin information operation. ISW continues to assess that the Kremlin's intensified focus on spreading destabilizing narratives regarding Gagauzia after a recent rhetorical focus on Moldova's other pro-Russian region, the breakaway republic of Transnistria, indicates that the Kremlin seeks to use both these regions in information operations to support hybrid operations aimed at sabotaging Moldova's EU accession process.[31]

**A recent Russian state-run poll suggests that the Kremlin aims for Russian President Vladimir Putin's predetermined "support level" to be around 80 percent in the upcoming March 17 presidential election in an effort to portray Putin as legitimately popular and**

**use the March election to legitimize Putin's next term.** The Public Opinion Foundation, a Russian state-owned polling institution, reported on March 7 that roughly 83 percent of Russians surveyed view Putin favorably and that roughly 82 percent plan to vote for him in the upcoming presidential election.[32] The Public Opinion Foundation published the results of another poll on March 5 claiming that 83 percent of Russians plan to vote in the upcoming election.[33] The Public Opinion Foundation's numbers are consistent with recent reporting from Russian opposition outlets suggesting that the Kremlin aims to portray the election as having a 70-80 percent turnout and for Putin to win the election with 80 percent of the votes.[34] The Kremlin is likely using claims of strong voter turnout and support for Putin to set informational conditions to portray Russian society as confidently unified around Putin and his agenda.[35]

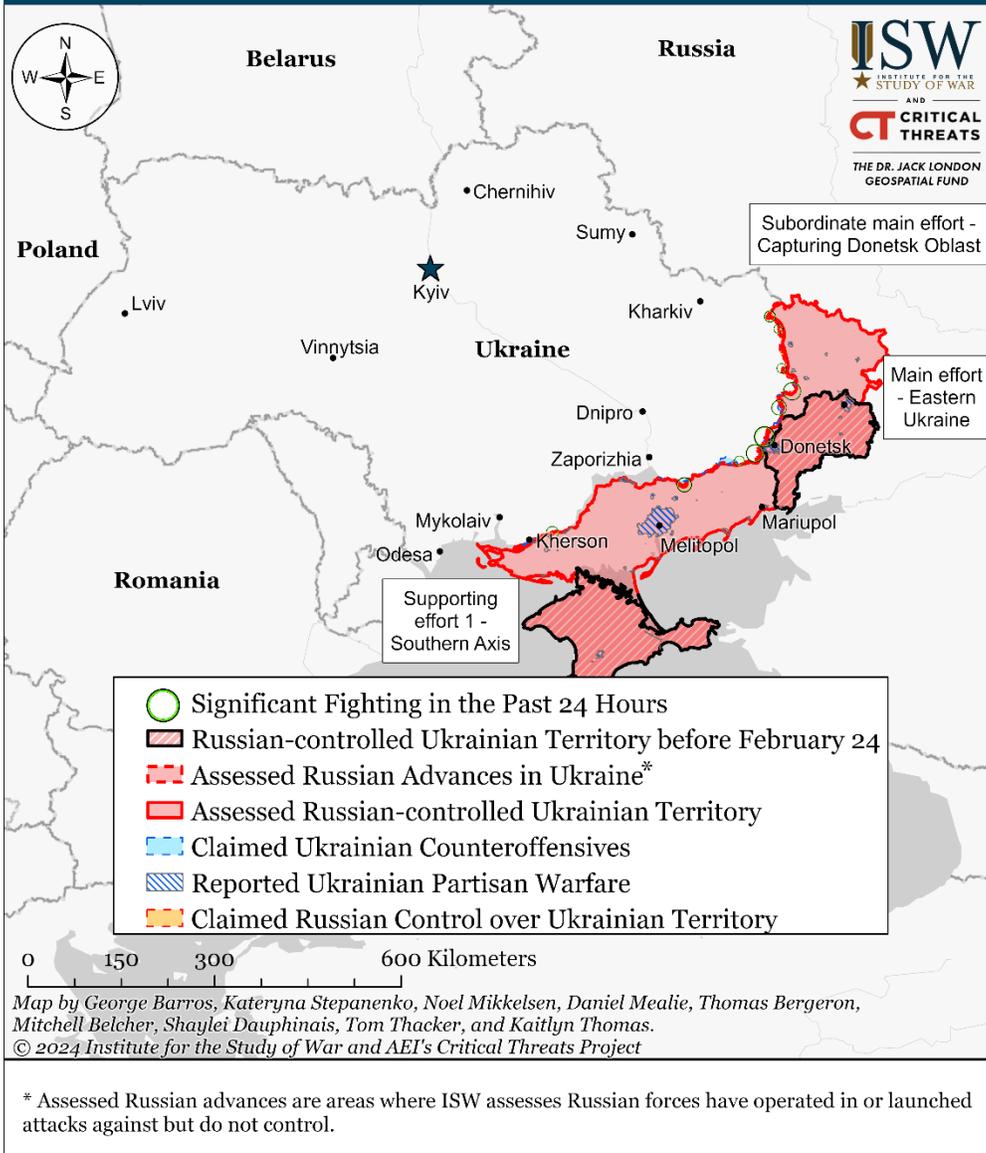
### **Key Takeaways:**

- **Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky reiterated that a ceasefire in Ukraine would allow Russia to rebuild its forces and means for future offensive operations, as Russia previously did following the start of Russia's 2014 invasion.**
- **Some Russian forces may have improved their tactical capabilities and leveraged limited tactical surprise during the final weeks of the Russian effort to seize Avdiivka, suggesting that select elements of the Russian military may have internalized tactical adaptations from conducting offensive operations in Ukraine.**
- **Ukrainian Air Force Commander Lieutenant General Mykola Oleshchuk stated on March 8 that Ukrainian forces are regularly targeting Russian fighter aircraft.**
- **Ukraine's European partners continue efforts to send additional aid and materiel to Ukraine.**
- **The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors approved a resolution calling for Russia's withdrawal from the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP), undermining Russian efforts to use the IAEA and other international organizations to legitimize its occupation of the plant.**
- **Ukrainian efforts to encourage women to serve in the Ukrainian armed forces continues allowing Ukraine to tap into a wider mobilization base for its war effort.**
- **Russian information space actors are intensifying their focus on covering recent events surrounding the governor of the pro-Russian Moldovan autonomous region Gagauzia, Yevgenia Gutsul, and are amplifying Kremlin narratives aimed at destabilizing Moldova to a wider audience.**
- **A recent Russian state-run poll suggests that the Kremlin aims for Russian President Vladimir Putin's predetermined "support level" to be around 80 percent in the upcoming March 17 presidential election in an effort to portray Putin as legitimately popular and use the March election to legitimize Putin's next term.**
- **Russian forces recently made confirmed advances near Avdiivka amid continued positional engagements along the entire line of contact on March 8.**
- **BBC Russian Service and Russian opposition outlet Mediazona published a joint report on March 8 that at least 46,678 Russian soldiers have died in**

Ukraine since the start of the full-scale invasion in February 2022, including at least 1,555 confirmed killed in the past two weeks.

- Unspecified actors, likely Ukrainian partisans, assassinated a Russian occupation official in occupied Berdyansk, Kherson Oblast on March 6.

## Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of March 8, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



***We do not report in detail on Russian war crimes because these 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 the Ukrainian population and specifically on combat in Ukrainian urban areas. We utterly condemn Russian violations of the laws of armed conflict and the Geneva Conventions and crimes against humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.***

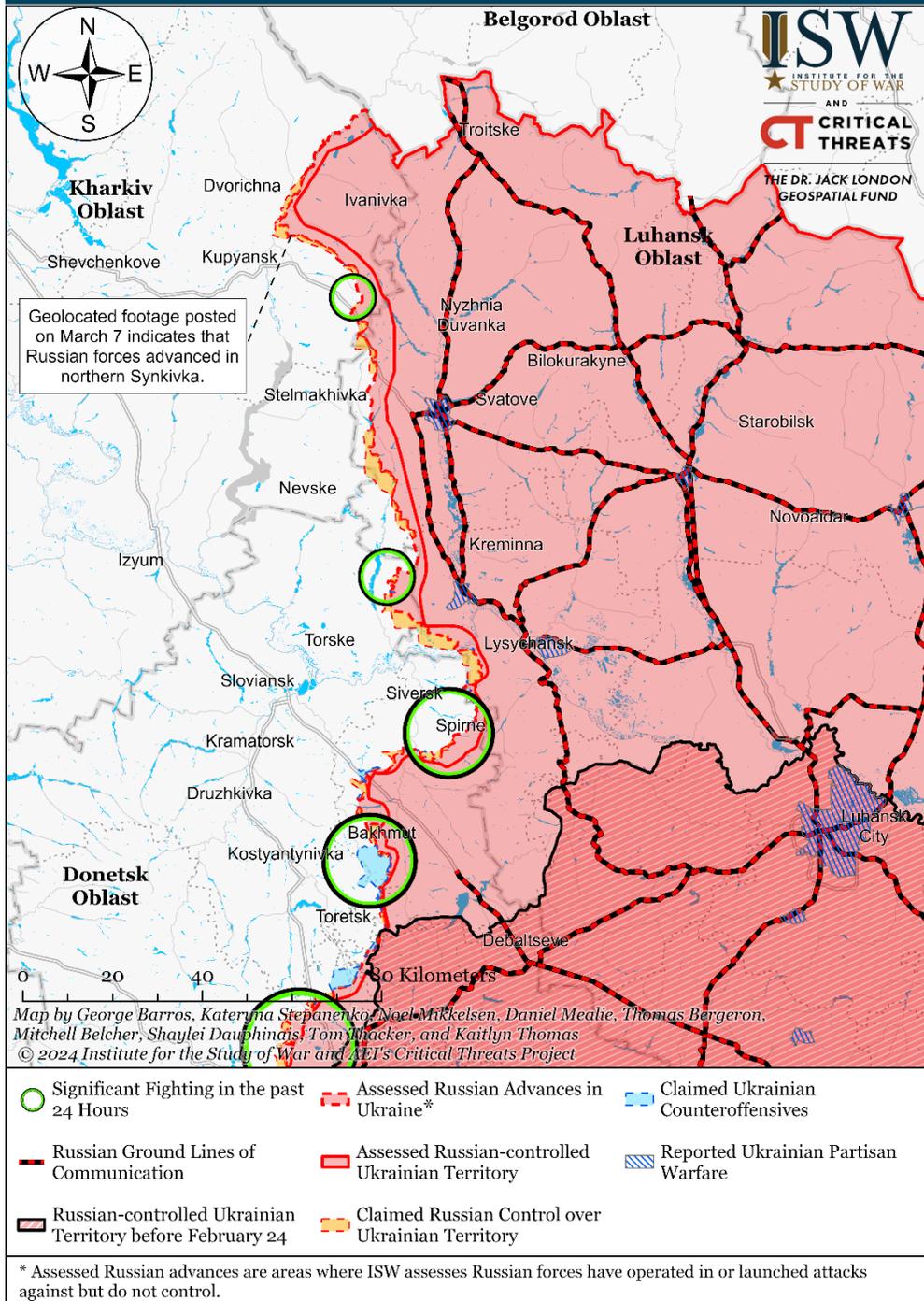
- Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine (comprised of two subordinate main efforts)
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and encircle northern Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis
- Russian Air, Missile, and Drone Campaign
- Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts
- Russian Technological Adaptations
- Activities in Russian-occupied areas
- Ukrainian Defense Industrial Base Efforts
- Russian Information Operations and Narratives
- Significant Activity in Belarus

### **Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine**

#### **Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Luhansk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and northern Donetsk Oblast)**

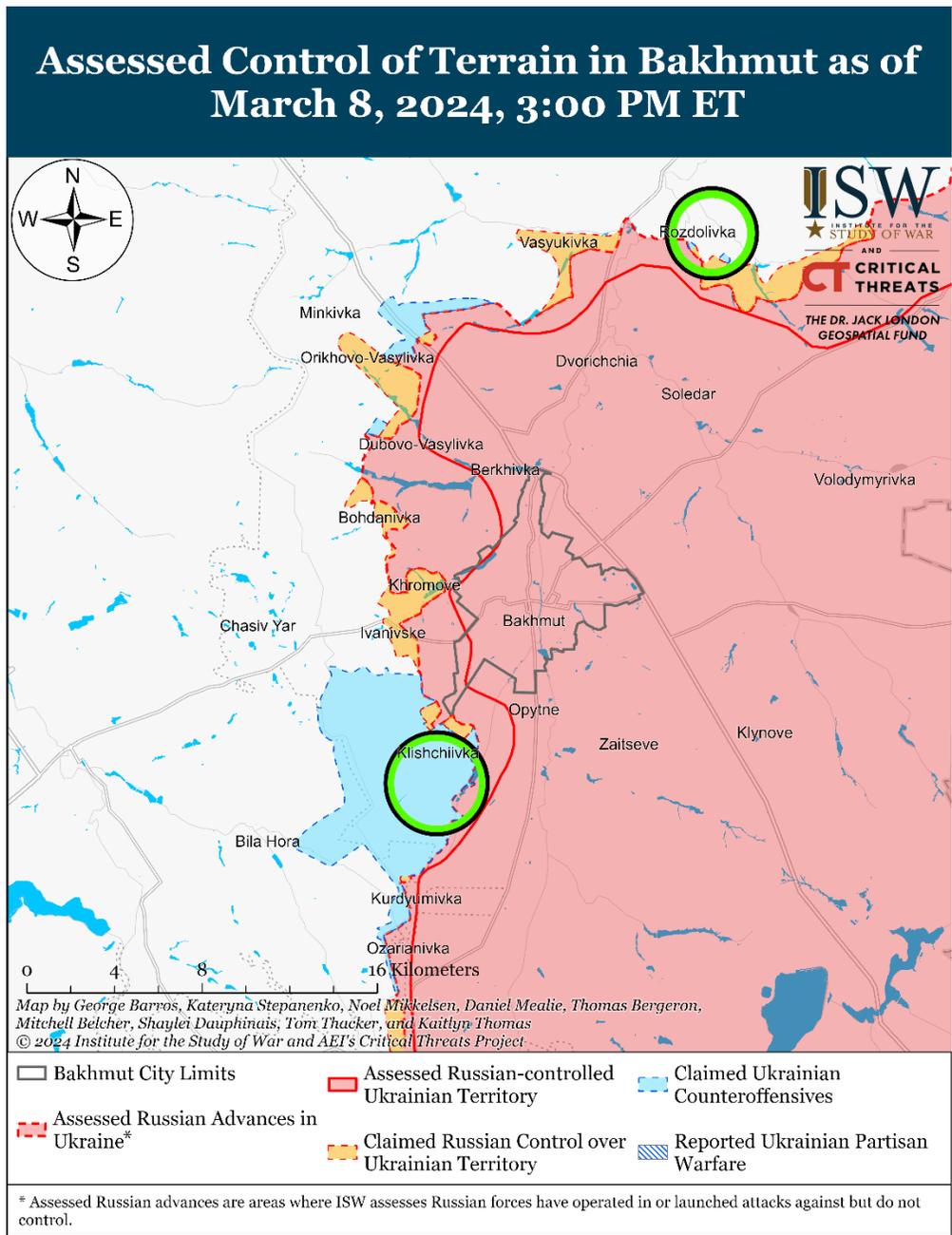
Positional engagements continued along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on March 8, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline in this area. Ukrainian and Russian sources stated that positional engagements continued northeast of Kupyansk near Synkivka and Kyslivka; west of Kreminna near Terny and Yampolivka; and south of Kreminna near Bilohorivka (12km south of Kreminna).[36] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced near Synkvivka, but ISW has not observed visual confirmation of this claim.[37] Elements of the Russian 123rd Motorized Rifle Brigade (2nd Luhansk People’s Republic (LNR) Army Corps) are reportedly operating near Bilohorivka.[38]

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of March 8, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



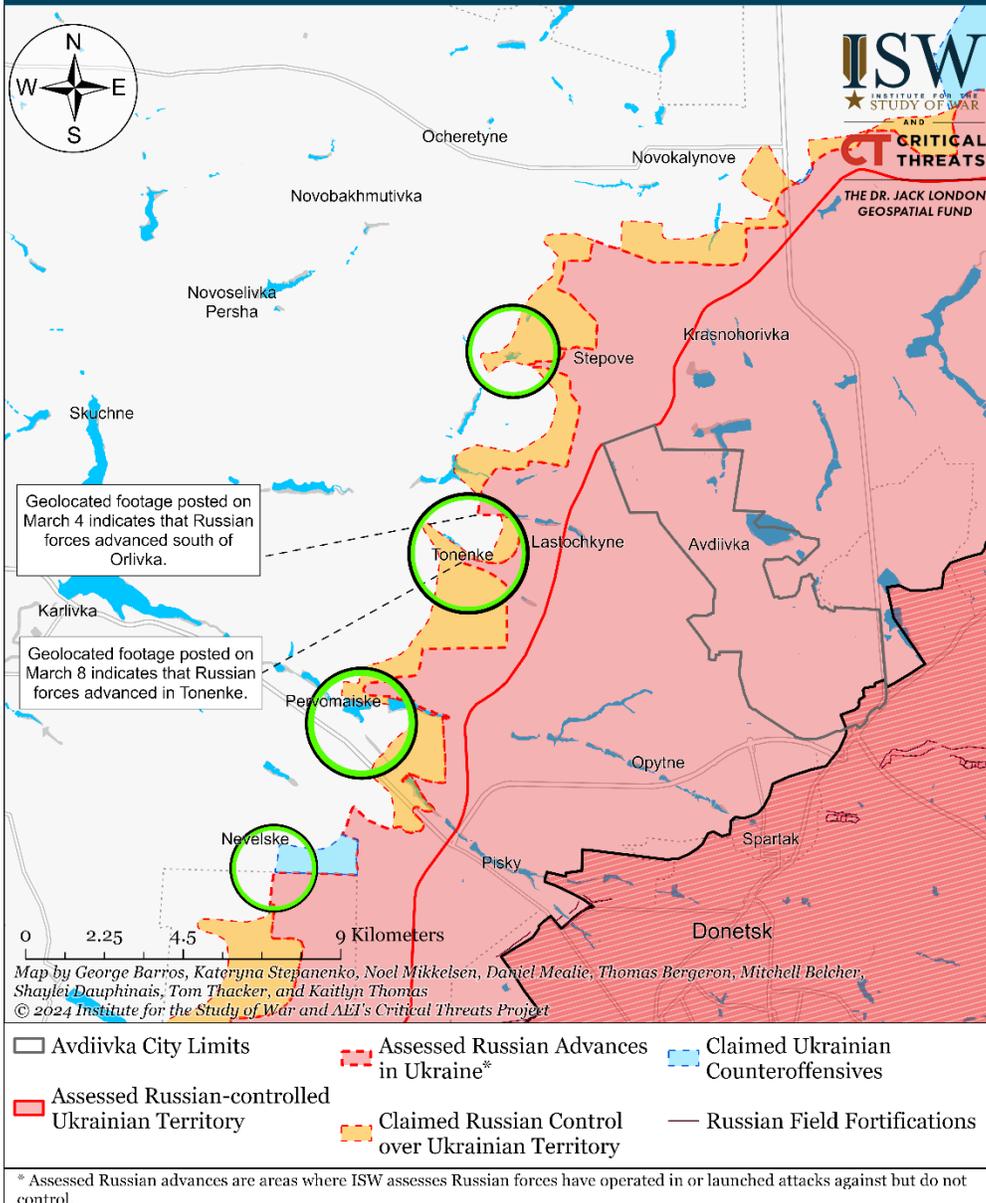
**Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Donetsk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)**

Positional fighting continued in the Bakhmut area on March 8. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces are conducting assaults within Ivanivske and attempting to push Ukrainian forces from positions in the western part of the settlement.[39] Positional fighting continued northeast of Bakhmut near Rozdolivka; northwest of Bakhmut near Bohdanivka; southwest of Bakhmut near Klishchiivka and Andriivka; and south of Bakhmut near Pivdenne and Niu York.[40] Elements of the Russian 200th Motorized Rifle Brigade (Northern Fleet) are reportedly operating near Chasiv Yar (west of Bakhmut).[41]



Russian forces recently advanced northwest and west of Avdiivka amid continued positional fighting in the area. Geolocated footage published on March 8 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced to windbreaks east of Berdychi (northwest of Avdiivka).[42] Additional geolocated footage published on March 8 indicates that Russian forces advanced within northwestern Tonenke (west of Avdiivka).[43] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces maintain positions on the western outskirts of Berdychi and Orlivka (west of Avdiivka) and that Russian forces have recently shifted assaults towards the southern outskirts of Orlivka instead of trying to advance directly into the settlement from the east.[44] Other Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces are counterattacking near Berdychi and forced Russian forces to retreat from unspecified positions near Tonenke.[45] Positional fighting continued northwest of Avdiivka near Stepove and Semenivka; west of Avdiivka near Orlivka; and southwest of Avdiivka near Pervomaiske and Nevelske.[46]

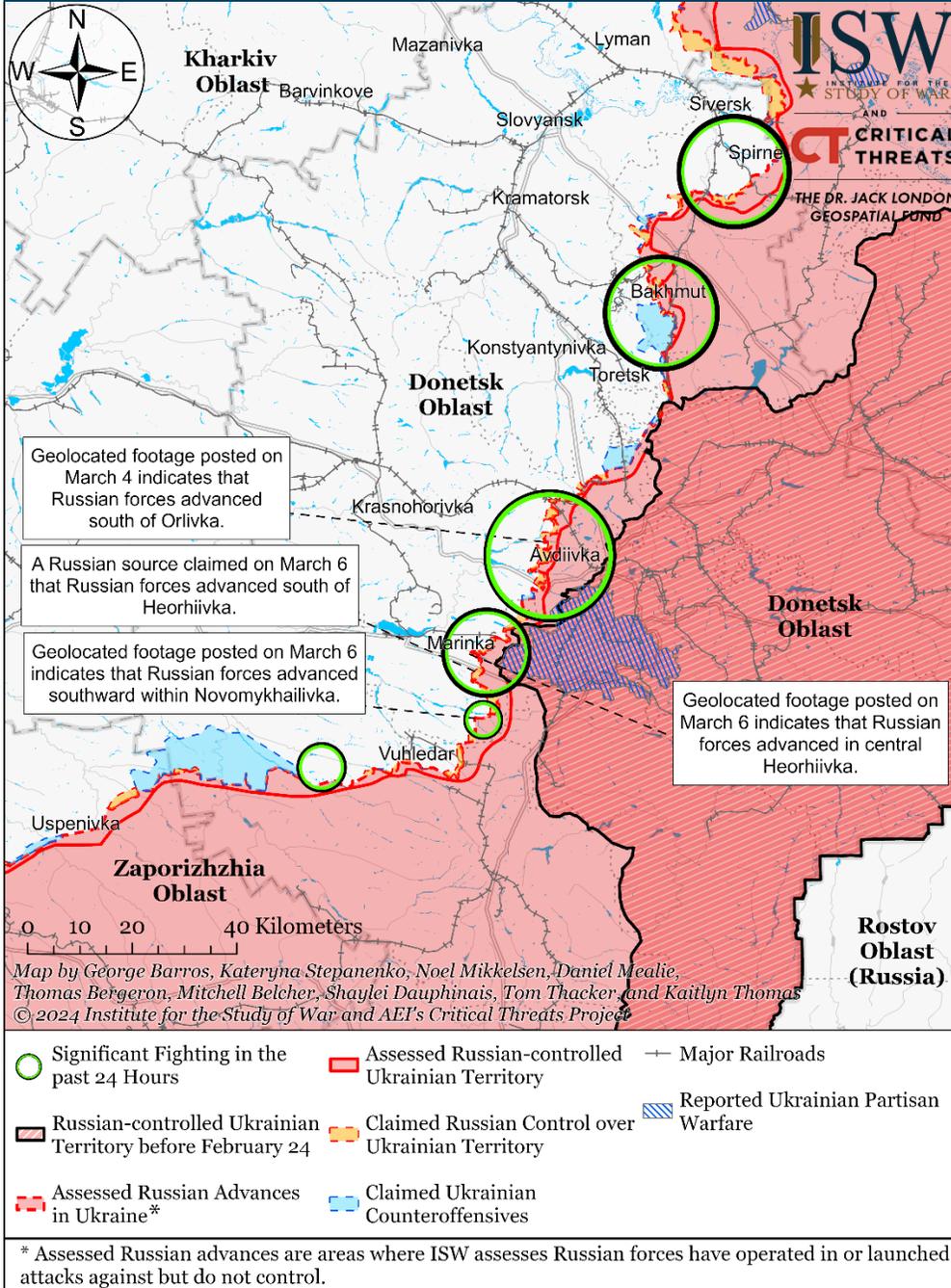
## Assessed Control of Terrain near Avdiivka as of March 8, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



Positional fighting continued west and southwest of Donetsk City on March 8. Russian milbloggers claimed on March 7 and 8 that Russian forces maintain positions in southern Krasnohorivka (west of Donetsk City) and recently advanced along Lermontova Street.[47] ISW has not observed recent confirmation of Russian advances within Krasnohorivka following Ukrainian statements that Ukrainian forces pushed Russian forces out of southern Krasnohorivka on February 27.[48] A Russian milblogger claimed on March 8 that Russian forces control half of Heorhiivka (west of Donetsk City), although ISW has not observed visual confirmation of this claim.[49] Several Russian milbloggers claimed on March 7 and 8 that Ukrainian forces regularly counterattack west of Donetsk City near

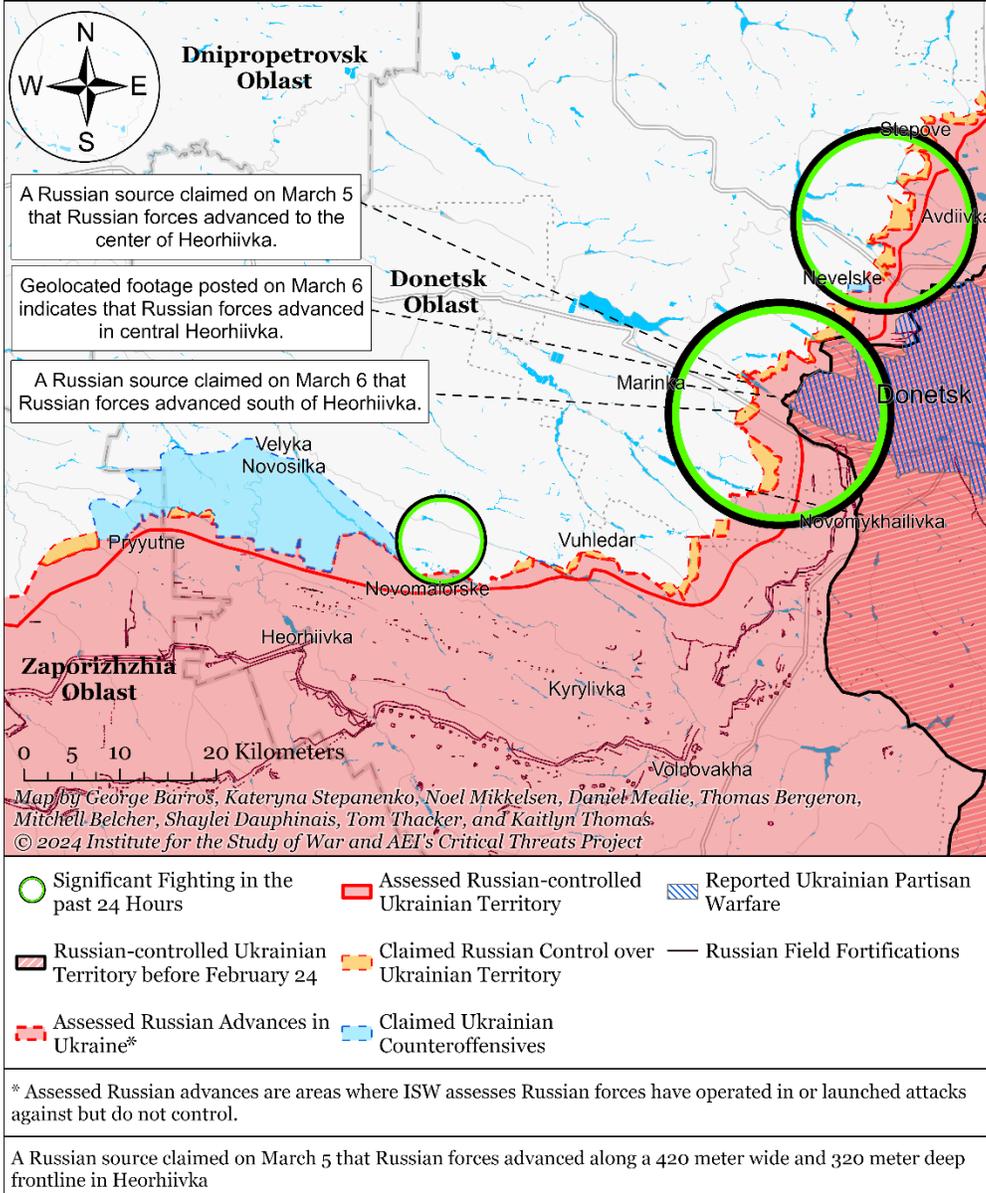
Krasnohorivka and Marinka and southwest of Donetsk City near Novomykhailivka and Pobieda.[50] Positional fighting also continued near Heorhiivka.[51] Elements of the Russian 5th Motorized Rifle Brigade (1st Donetsk People's Republic [DNR] Army Corps [AC]) and the 150th Motorized Rifle Division (8th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Southern Military District [SMD]) are reportedly operating near Heorhiivka.[52]

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of March 8, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



Positional fighting continued near Vodyane (east of Velyka Novosilka) in western Donetsk Oblast on March 8.[53] Elements of the Russian 40th Naval Infantry Brigade (Pacific Fleet) are reportedly operating south of Velyka Novosilka near Urozhaine.[54]

# Assessed Control of Terrain in Western Donetsk Oblast as of March 8, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



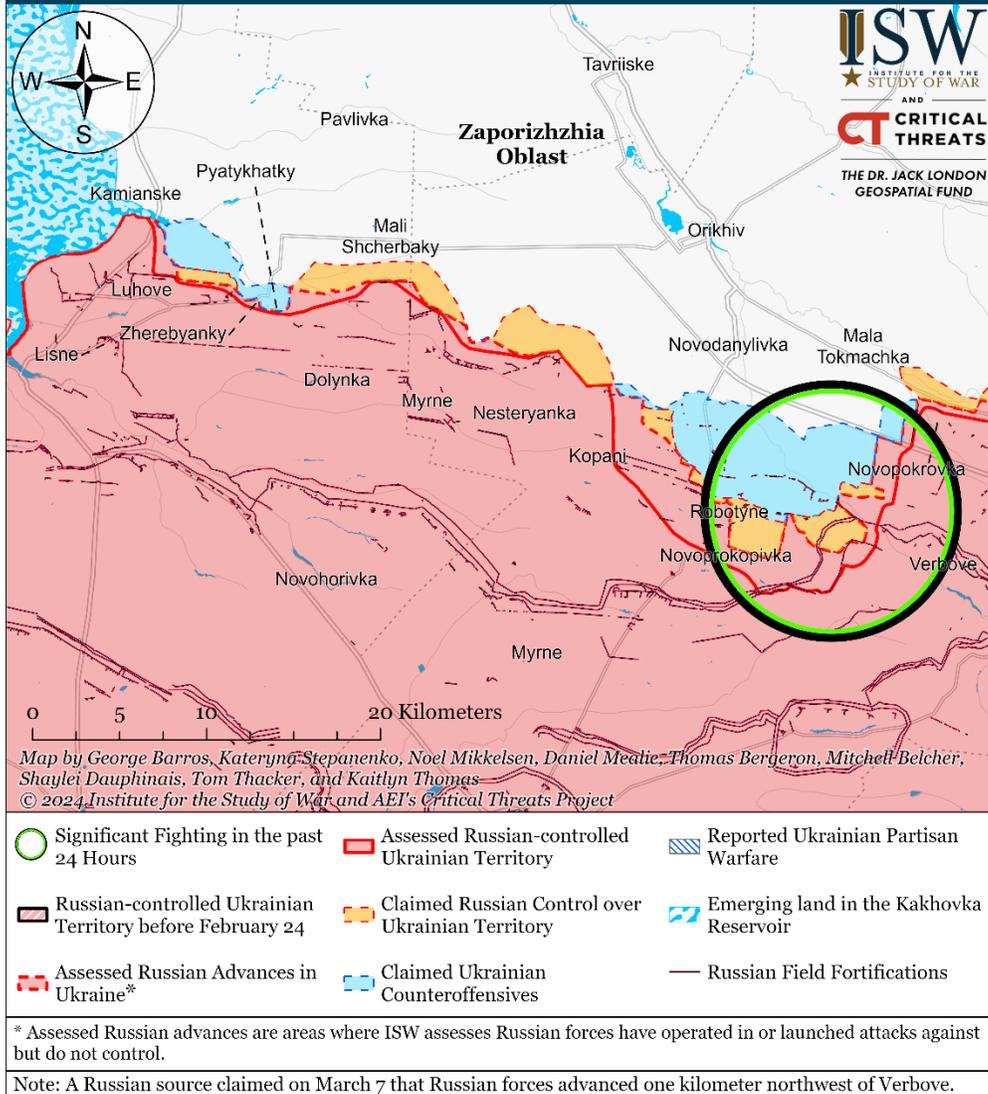
## **Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions and secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes)**

Positional engagements continued in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast on March 8. Russian sources claimed that Russian forces captured several unspecified positions northwest of Verbove (east of Robotyne) and advanced one kilometer in depth from Verbove towards Robotyne, although ISW has not observed visual evidence of these claims.[55] Positional fighting continued near Robotyne and west of

Verbove.[56] Elements of the Russian 42nd Motorized Rifle Division (58th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Southern Military District [SMD]) are reportedly operating near Robotyne.[57]

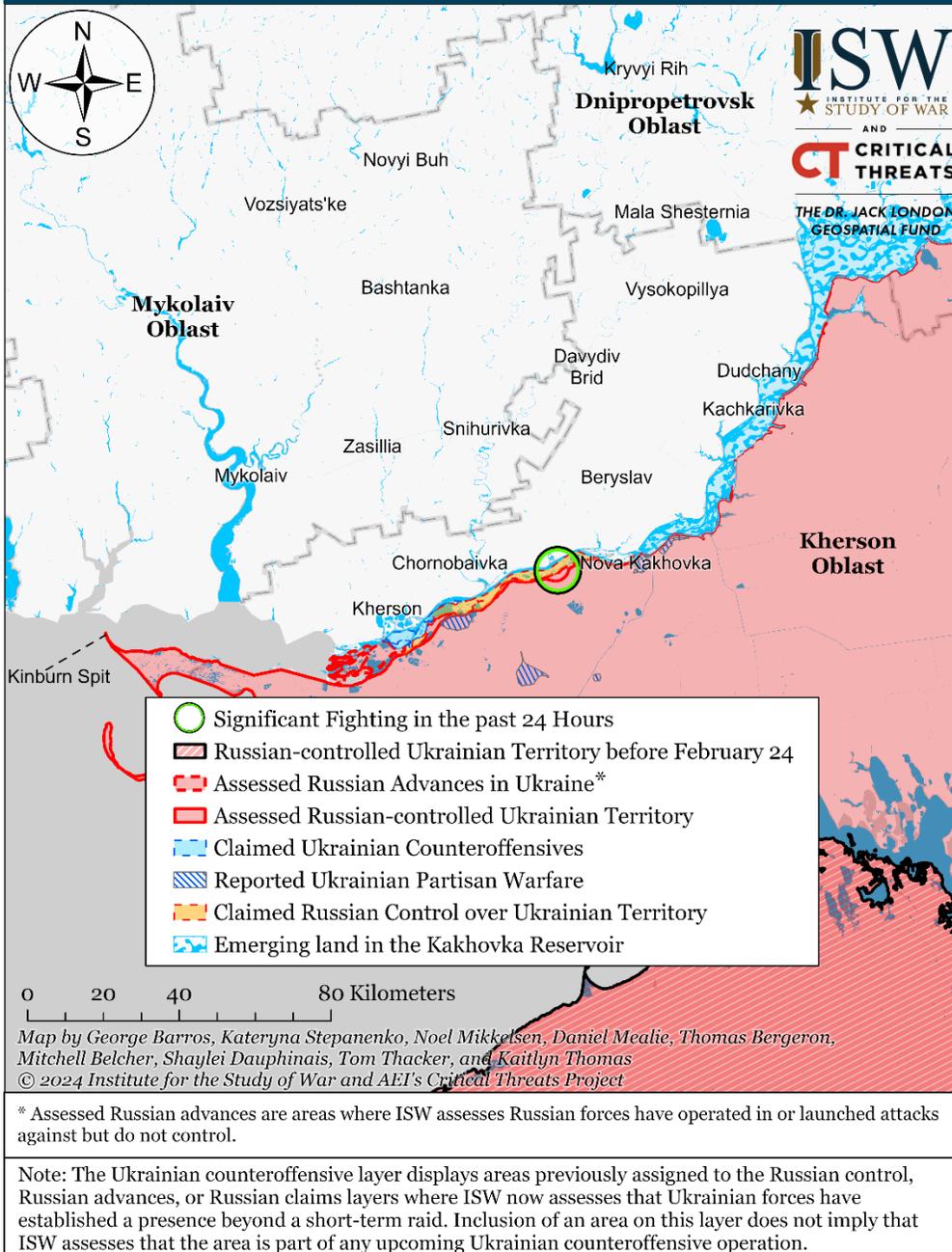


# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Pyatykhatky and Robotyne as of March 8, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



Positional engagements continued in east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast, particularly near Krynky, on March 8.[58] Ukrainian Southern Operational Command Spokesperson Colonel Nataliya Humenyuk reported that Russian forces have constructed a multi-layered defense in the Kherson direction and that Russian forces continue to mine the left bank due to fears of future Ukrainian advances.[59]

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of March 8, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



## **Russian Air, Missile, and Drone Campaign (Russian Objective: Target Ukrainian military and civilian infrastructure in the rear and on the frontline)**

The Ukrainian Air Force reported on March 8 that Russian forces launched an S-300 anti-aircraft guided missile, two Kh-32 guided missiles, and 37 Shahed-136/131 drones at targets in Ukraine overnight on March 7-8.[60] Ukrainian air defenses reportedly downed 33 Shahed drones over

Kirovohrad, Odesa, Kherson, Mykolaiv, and Kharkiv oblasts.[61] Ukraine's Prosecutor General's Office reported that Russian forces struck Chuhuiv, Kharkiv Oblast with an S-300 missile, and Ukraine's Southern Operational Command reported that Russian Shahed drones struck infrastructure in Odesa Oblast.[62] Ukrainian Air Force Command Spokesperson Oleksandr Olekhnovych reported that Russian forces are increasingly relying on ballistic missiles to conduct strikes.[63]

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

The *BBC Russian Service* and Russian opposition outlet *Mediazona* published a joint report on March 8 that at least 46,678 Russian soldiers have died in Ukraine since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022.[64] The *BBC Russian Service* and *Mediazona* noted that the campaign for Avdiivka, ongoing localized offensive efforts west of Avdiivka, and ongoing fighting in Luhansk Oblast have precipitated a surge in confirmed Russian casualties. The actual number of Russians killed in action is likely much higher than *BBC Russian Service* and *Mediazona's* estimate due to natural delays in casualty reporting in the open-source information space and the fact that a number of deaths will remain publicly unconfirmed. *Mediazona* and opposition outlet *Meduza* recently estimated that between 66,000 to 88,000 Russian military personnel died in Ukraine between February 2022 and December 2023.[65]

Russian authorities continue to conduct raids targeting migrants likely in support of force generation efforts. Russian opposition outlet *Mobilization News* reported on March 8 that Russian law enforcement raided a warehouse of Russian online retail giant Wildberries in Yekaterinburg, in which Russian authorities detained over 30 migrants.[66] *Mobilization News* reported that Russian authorities are sending the migrants to military registration and enlistment offices.

### **Russian Technological Adaptations (Russian objective: Introduce technological innovations to optimize systems for use in Ukraine)**

German outlet *BILD* reported on March 7 that Russia has begun mass producing its FAB-1500-M54 unguided glide bomb.[67] *BILD* noted that the FAB-1500-M54 weighs over 1,500 kilograms, has a payload of 675 kilograms, has a reported range of over 70 kilometers, and uses satellite or laser-based technology, reportedly to strike targets with an accuracy of 20 meters. *BILD* noted that the FAB-1500-M54's destruction radius exceeds 200 meters, however, which *BILD* states makes the FAB-1500-M54 a low-accuracy and high-damage bomb.

### **Ukrainian Defense Industrial Efforts (Ukrainian objective: Develop its defense industrial base to become more self-sufficient in cooperation with US, European, and international partners)**

**Note: ISW will be publishing its coverage of Ukrainian defense industrial efforts on a weekly basis in the Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment. ISW will continue to track developments in Ukrainian defense industrial efforts daily and will refer to these efforts in assessments within the daily Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment and other ISW products when necessary.**

*ISW is not publishing coverage of Ukrainian defense industrial efforts today.*

**Activities in Russian-occupied areas (Russian objective: Consolidate administrative control of annexed areas; forcibly integrate Ukrainian citizens into Russian sociocultural, economic, military, and governance systems)**

**Note: ISW will be publishing coverage of activities in Russian-occupied areas twice a week in the Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment. ISW will continue to track activities in Russian-occupied areas daily and will refer to these activities in assessments within the daily Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment and other ISW products when necessary.**

Russian law enforcement continues crackdowns against Crimean Tatars in occupied Crimea. The Ukrainian Presidential Representation in Crimea reported on March 5 that Russian occupation officials searched 10 homes of Crimean Tatars in occupied Bakhchisarai and Dzhankoi raions.[68] The Ukrainian Permanent Representative to Crimea reported that Russian authorities detained 10 Tatar religious and activist figures and are charging most of these figures with participating in a “terrorist” organization.[69] Russian sources claimed that the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) uncovered a cell of the Hizb ut-Tahrir organization (an Islamist fundamentalist political organization that has historically been active in Central Asia and Crimea and is banned in Russia), however. Russian authorities have historically targeted Crimean Tatar communities to consolidate social control over occupied Crimea, promoting the claim that anti-Russian sentiment is extremist or terrorist activity by affiliating it with Hizb ut-Tahrir.[70]

Unspecified actors, likely Ukrainian partisans, assassinated a Russian occupation official in occupied Berdyansk, Kherson Oblast on March 6. Russian and Ukrainian sources reported that unspecified actors planted and detonated a bomb in or near a car in occupied Berdyansk, killing occupation election commission member and Berdyansk occupation deputy mayor for economy, agriculture, and finance Svetlana Samolienko.[71]

**Russian Information Operations and Narratives**

Russian sources, including a Kremlin-affiliated Russian milblogger, continued to criticize Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and portray Armenia as weak on March 8 for Armenia’s decisions to distance itself from Russia.[72]

Veteran Russian propagandist and *RT* editor-in-chief Margarita Simonyan misconstrued warnings from the American and British embassies in Russia about a possible terrorist attack in Moscow to insinuate that the US and the United Kingdom would be complicit in any terrorist attack against Russia.[73] This information operation seeks to promote the Kremlin narrative that the West poses a threat to Russia as part of ongoing Kremlin efforts to justify Russia’s war in Ukraine.

**Significant activity in Belarus (Russian efforts to increase its military presence in Belarus and further integrate Belarus into Russian-favorable frameworks and Wagner Group activity in Belarus)**

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky stated on March 8 that Russian President Vladimir Putin “fully controls” the Belarusian government and military and stated that de facto Russian control over Belarus is “diplomatic occupation.”[74]

**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.**

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[1] [https://t.me/OP\\_UA/11681](https://t.me/OP_UA/11681) ; <https://suspilne dot media/701374-zelenskij-pauza-u-vijni-velika-problema-dla-ukraini-ta-vsiei-evropi/>

[2] <https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-march-1-2024> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar112723> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar122722> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar12232022> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-november-22-2023> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar110423> ; <https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-january-26-2024>

[3] <https://www.pravda dot com.ua/eng/news/2024/03/8/7445575/> ; [https://t.me/OP\\_UA/11681](https://t.me/OP_UA/11681)

[4] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-january-17-2024> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-march-4-2024> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar022224>

[5] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-november-28-2023> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-february-19-2024> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar112823>

[6] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1688> ; <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1689> ; <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1690> ;

[7] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1688> ; <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1689> ; <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1690> ;

[8] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1688> ; <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1689> ; <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1690> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar021524> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar021424> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar021324>

[9] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar110123>

[10] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar110123> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar022424>

[11] <https://t.me/MykolaOleshchuk/222> ; <https://armyinform dot com.ua/2024/03/08/mykola-oleshhuk-peredbachaye-shho-u-rosijskij-aviacziyi-mozhlyvyj-sabotazh/>

[12] <https://t.me/MykolaOleshchuk/222>

[13] <https://t.me/MykolaOleshchuk/222>

[14] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar030524>

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