

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, August 1, 2023

Karolina Hird, George Barros, Grace Mappes, Nicole Wolkov, Christina Harward, Annika Ganzeveld, and Mason Clark

August 1, 2023, 6:15pm 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 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 cutoff for this product was 1:00pm ET on August 1. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the August 2 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment. The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) accused Ukraine of attempting to attack two Black Sea Fleet patrol boats with unmanned semi-submersibles on August 1. The Russian MoD initially claimed that Ukraine launched three unmanned boats at the “Sergey Kotov” and “Vasily Bykov” Project 22160 large patrol ships in the southwestern part of the Black Sea, about 340km southwest of Sevastopol.[1] The Russian MoD later clarified that the patrol ships were escorting Russian civilian transport ships *en route* to the Bosphorus Strait via the Black Sea and claimed that the patrol ships detected and destroyed all three semi-submersibles.[2] Russian authorities may be amplifying claims of Ukrainian attacks to frame Ukraine as irresponsibly threatening civilian ships in the Black Sea, thereby setting conditions to further escalate naval activity and consolidate control in the Black Sea, though there is no indication that Ukrainian attacks on Russian military targets have threatened civilian vessels.[3] Geolocated images posted on July 31 show the installation of anti-naval drone barriers in Sevastopol Bay, likely as part of the overall Russian effort to increase naval and defensive posturing in the Black Sea.[4]

Ukrainian actors likely conducted another drone strike on Moscow City in the early hours of August 1. Moscow Mayor Sergey Sobyenin claimed that Russian air defense downed several drones flying towards Moscow, and geolocated footage shows that one drone struck the 21st floor of the IQ-Kvartal Tower in central Moscow City.[5] Russian media reported that the target of the strike was the Russian Ministry of Economic Development, located on the IQ-Kvartal Tower's 21st floor.[6] Russian sources claimed that drones previously struck the IQ-Kvartal Tower on the night of July 29 to 30.[7] Social media footage from August 1 additionally shows a drone flying over Moscow suburbs in the Odintsovo district.[8] Several sources suggested that the drones were Ukrainian-made.[9] One Russian commentator accused Sobyenin of neglecting to secure Moscow against such continued drone attacks.[10] Russian authorities will likely struggle to balance the need to quell domestic concern over continuing drone attacks deep within the Russian rear with Russian President Vladimir Putin's continued refusal to fully mobilize Russian society for the war and its corresponding consequences.

The Russian MoD continues to posture Russian Chief of the General Staff Army General Valery Gerasimov as an effective and involved overall theater commander in Ukraine. The Russian MoD posted footage of Gerasimov on August 1 reportedly inspecting a forward command post in western Zaporizhia Oblast and receiving a briefing on Ukrainian operations and Russian defenses in the area.[11] This footage is one of Gerasimov’s first public appearances since Wagner Group financier Yevgeny Prigozhin’s June 24 rebellion and indicates that the MoD continues to publicize Gerasimov’s role as theater commander.[12] Some Russian sources previously claimed that rumored deputy theater commander Colonel General Mikhail Teplinsky replaced Gerasimov as overall theater commander in Ukraine following Wagner’s rebellion, but ISW was unable to verify these rumors and assessed that Gerasimov will likely nominally retain his position in the Russian military.[13] The MoD’s footage notably portrays Gerasimov as the architect of Russian defensive operations in one sector of the Ukrainian counteroffensive in the south, a role that the Russian information space previously attributed to both former deputy commander of the joint grouping of forces in Ukraine Army General Sergei Surovkin and former 58th Combined Arms Army (Southern Military District) Commander Major General Ivan Popov prior to their likely dismissals on June 28 and July 15, respectively, for challenging Gerasimov and the traditional MoD hierarchy.[14]

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko may have signaled his intent to use the Wagner Group to create a foundation for an unspecified Belarusian “contract army.” Lukashenko stated on August 1 that he seeks to retain the Wagner Group within the Belarusian Armed Forces by using experienced Wagner fighters to “more actively create a contract army.”[15] Lukashenko did not provide details on the “contract army’s” organizational structure, planned end strength, or formation timeline, but noted that the Wagner Group currently includes over 30,000 fighters.[16]

Belarus currently does not have a “contract army” or a structure resembling a “contract army,” which in this context likely refers to the Russian term of “kontraktniki,” professional volunteer soldiers rather than conscripts. The Belarusian military does not field any formations above the brigade level and Belarus’ main combat units are six separate brigades (three mechanized, two airborne, and one spetsnaz) primarily staffed by 18-month conscripts and some contract servicemen.[17] The creation of a “contract army” would likely require the creation of a new formation or a significant reorganization of Belarus’ existing brigades and an overhaul of Belarusian training to create a force of long-serving professional soldiers, as Russia previously (and unsuccessfully) attempted to do in the late 2000s and early 2010s. Then-Belarusian Defense Minister Andrei Ravkov previously stated in 2016 that Belarus should not and does not plan to transition away from the traditional staff and cadre system to have a fully contract army.[18]

Two Belarusian helicopters reportedly violated Polish airspace on August 1. Polish officials reported that two Belarusian helicopters entered Polish airspace on August 1 and that Poland will increase its troop presence at the Polish-Belarusian border in response.[19] Lukashenko also dismissed the Polish government for overreacting to news that the Wagner Group deployed a 100-person element closer to the Belarusian-Polish border and claimed that Wagner forces are in Grodno and Brest, rather than near the international border.[20] ISW continues to assess that Wagner forces in Belarus pose no military threat to Poland (or Ukraine, for that matter) until and unless they are re-equipped with mechanized equipment.

Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations on at least three sectors of the front and reportedly advanced near Bakhmut on August 1. Ukrainian officials reported that Ukrainian forces continued gradually advancing near Bakhmut, and a Russian source claimed that Ukrainian forces captured an unspecified height south of Bakhmut near Klishchiivka.[21] Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Malyar reported on August 1 that in the past week, Ukrainian forces captured two square kilometers of territory in the Bakhmut direction and 12 square kilometers in southern Ukraine.[22] Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks against Russian forces along the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area near Staromayorske and Urozhaine and in western Zaporizhia Oblast near Robotyne.[23] The UK Ministry of Defense (MoD) reported that the Russian 58th Combined Arms Army (Southern Military District) in western Zaporizhia Oblast likely struggles with severe fatigue and that elements of the 5th Combined Arms Army (Eastern Military District) south of Velyka Novosilka likely face a high level of pressure to defend the area and feel that the Russian military command should rotate them from the front line.[24] The UK MoD also reported that Russian commanders in southern Ukraine largely struggle with artillery ammunition shortages, a lack of reserves, and challenges with securing the flanks of defending units.

Russian companies not under Western sanctions continue to recruit volunteers to fight in the war in Ukraine. Russian opposition outlet *Vazhnye Istorii* reported that unsanctioned Russian companies Rusal, Novatek, PIK, and Mospromstroy that are affiliated with Russian oligarchs, including Oleg Deripaska, Leonid Mikhelson, Sergei Gordeev, and Mikhail Gutseriev, recruit Russian volunteers to fight in the war in Ukraine.[25] *Vazhnye Istorii* reported that both the Russian MoD and Russian “military industrial complex companies” pay recruits’ salaries, who then serve in the 200th Motorized Rifle Brigade (14th Army Corps, Northern Fleet) and the “Sokol” Volunteer Battalion of the 108th Air Assault Regiment (7th Guards Mountain Air Assault Division).[26] ISW and *Vazhnye Istorii* previously reported that Russian state-owned companies such as Gazprom, Russian Railways, and Roscosmos have contributed to recruitment efforts.[27] Gazprom and Russian Railways are under Western sanctions, however.[28]

Iran is pursuing the construction of drone factories in Belarus and Russia, which will help Russia acquire Iranian drones more readily and provide Iran with numerous economic and military benefits. (NOTE: This text also appeared in the *Critical Threats Project (CTP)*’s *August 1 Iran Update*) Iranian Armed Forces General Staff Chief Major General Mohammad Bagheri called for greater defense industry cooperation between Iran and Belarus during a meeting with Belarusian Defense Minister Lieutenant General Viktor Khrenin in Tehran on August 1.[29] Iranian Defense and Armed Forces Logistics Minister Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Ashtiani signed a military cooperation agreement with Khrenin on July 31.[30] CTP assessed that Ashtiani and Khrenin may have discussed establishing Shahed kamikaze drone factories in Belarus to support the Russian invasion of Ukraine.[31] Ukraine claimed in May 2023 that Iranian engineers are exploring how to convert factories in Gomel, Belarus into drone production facilities.[32] The Biden administration revealed in June that Iran is helping Russia build a drone manufacturing factory in Yelabuga, Tatarstan, Russia.[33] Iran opened an Ababil-2 drone factory in Dushanbe, Tajikistan in May 2022. Bagheri notably attended the opening ceremony of this factory.[34] The production of Iranian drones in Belarus and Russia will benefit both Russia and Iran:

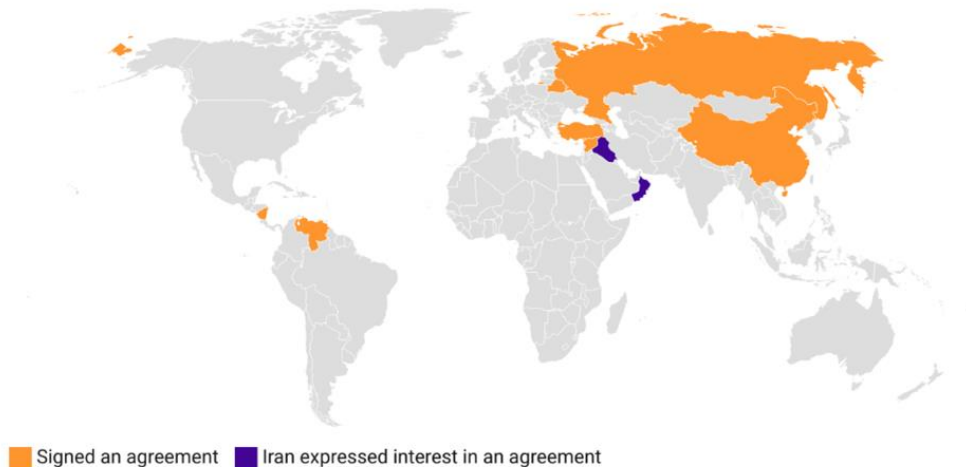
- Russia will benefit by acquiring Iranian drones for its invasion of Ukraine more readily. Israeli and Ukrainian media have noted that the construction of an Iranian drone

factory in Belarus would alleviate the “logistical problems” Russia faces in transporting Iranian drones from Iran to Russia via the Middle East.[35] The Biden administration published a map in June showing Iranian drone transfers from Iran to Russia through the Caspian Sea.[36]

- Iran will benefit by receiving revenue for the Iranian economy. The British Secret Intelligence Service revealed in July that Iran seeks to acquire cash from Russia in return for Iranian drones.[37] Iran is currently facing critical economic conditions, with the value of the rial surpassing 500,000 rials to one US dollar on August 1.[38] The Iran Statistical Center reported on July 25 that Iran’s inflation rate is approximately 47.5 percent.[39]
- Russia can also benefit Iran's military. Western media speculated in late 2022 that Iran might receive Russian Su-35 fighter jets in return for supplying Russia with drones.[40] Iranian military officials have increasingly expressed skepticism at receiving Su-35s in recent months, however.[41] Western media reported in March that Russia provided Iran with advanced surveillance software and cyber weapons in exchange for drones.[42] A high-ranking Israeli military official separately expressed concern in June that Russia is providing Iran with Western weapons captured in Ukraine.[43]

Iran’s close cooperation with Belarus and Russia may stem, in part, because Iran has signed long-term strategic agreements with these countries. The graphic below depicts which countries Iran has signed or is pursuing cooperation agreements with.

Iran: Strategic Agreements with Partner States



Map: AEI's Critical Threats Project • Source: Author's Research • Created with Datawrapper

Key Takeaways:

- **The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) accused Ukraine of attempting to attack two Black Sea Fleet patrol boats with unmanned semi-submersibles on August 1.**
- **Likely Ukrainian actors conducted another drone strike on Moscow City in the early hours of August 1.**

- **The Russian MoD continues to posture Russian Chief of the General Staff Army General Valery Gerasimov as an effective and involved overall theater commander in Ukraine.**
- **Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko may have signaled his intent to use the Wagner Group to create a foundation for an unspecified Belarusian “contract army.”**
- **Two Belarusian helicopters reportedly violated Polish airspace on August 1.**
- **Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations on at least three sectors of the front and reportedly advanced near Bakhmut on August 1.**
- **Russian companies not under Western sanctions continue to recruit volunteers to fight in the war in Ukraine.**
- **Iran is pursuing the construction of drone factories in Belarus and Russia, which will help Russia acquire Iranian drones more readily and provide Iran with numerous economic and military benefits.**
- **Russian forces conducted offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line, near Bakhmut, on the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line, in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area, and in western Zaporizhia Oblast on August 1 and made advances in certain areas.**
- **Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations on at least three sectors of the front on August 1 and advanced near Kreminna and Bakhmut.**
- **The Russian Cabinet of Ministers granted Russian volunteer fighters and Donetsk People’s Republic and Luhansk People’s Republic (DNR and LNR) militia fighters (*opolcheniye*) veteran status on August 1.**
- **Russian occupation authorities continue to deport children from occupied regions of Ukraine to Russia under the guise of education and rehabilitation programs.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of August 1, 2023, 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 these Russian violations of the laws of armed conflict, Geneva Conventions, and 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 Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts
- Activities in Russian-occupied areas

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)

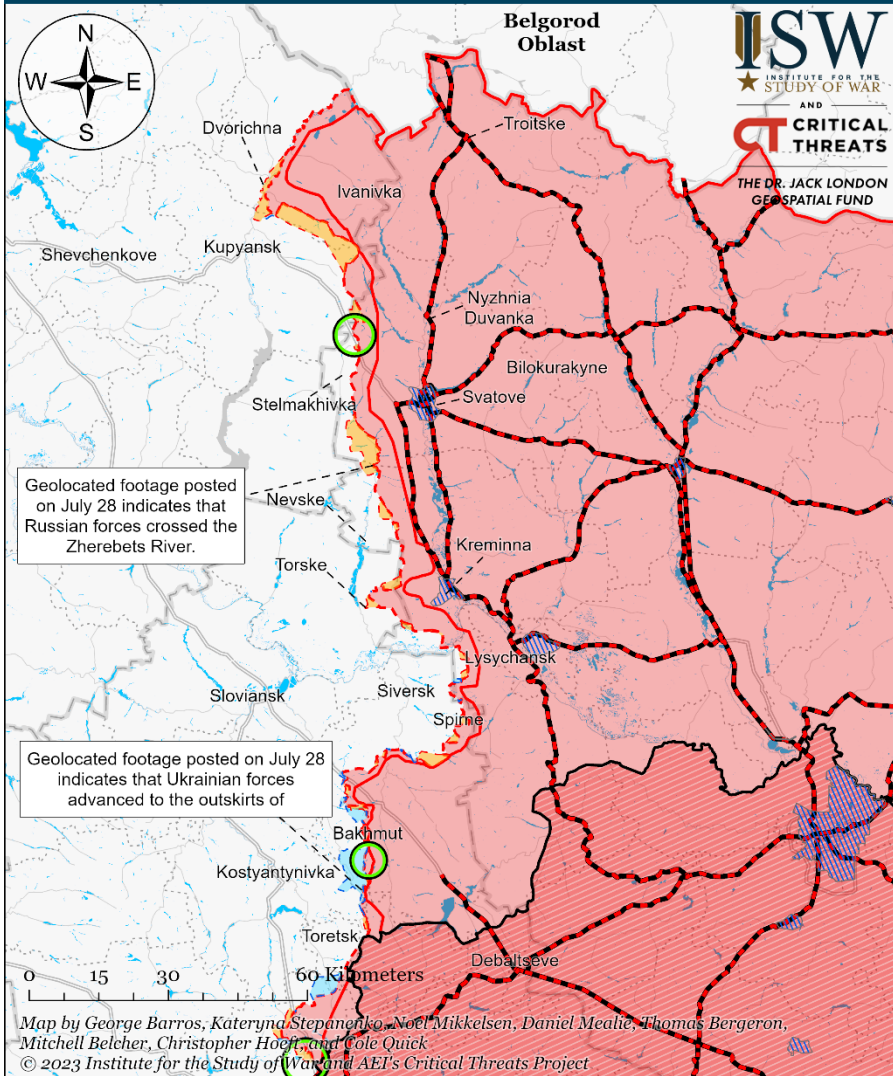
Russian forces conducted offensive operations in the Kupyansk direction and made unconfirmed limited gains on August 1. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces captured a Ukrainian defensive position in an unspecified area in the Kupyansk direction.[44] Ukrainian Kharkiv Oblast Head Oleh Synehubov reported that Russian forces are increasing assaults in the Kupyansk direction, but that Ukrainian forces repel them.[45] Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Malyar reported that Russian forces have concentrated forces along the Kharkiv-Luhansk Oblast border in order to draw Ukrainian forces away from the Bakhmut area.[46] A Russian milblogger claimed that elements of the 1st Guards Tank Army (Western Military District) are successfully fixing Ukrainian forces in Kharkiv Oblast that Ukraine intended to deploy elsewhere along the frontline.[47]

Russian forces conducted offensive operations in the Svatove area and made unconfirmed gains on August 1. The Russian MoD and other Russian sources claimed that Russian forces made limited advances near Kuzemivka (13km northwest of Svatove) and along the Raihorodka-Karmazynivka line (12-14km southwest of Svatove).[48] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces attacked near Berestove (20km northwest of Svatove) in an attempt to cut off the N26 (Svatove-Kupyansk) highway and bypass Ukrainian fortified areas in Novoselivske (16km northwest of Svatove).[49] Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted offensive operations near Svatove and did not advance on August 1. The Russian MoD and other Russian sources claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Svatove, Berestove, Raihorodka (12km west of Svatove), Novoyehorivka (15km southwest of Svatove), and Karmazynivka (13km southwest of Svatove).[50]

Russian forces conducted limited ground attacks in the Kreminna area and made unconfirmed advances on August 1. Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces captured a fortified area near Chervonopopivka (5km northwest of Kreminna) and advanced near Torske (14km west of Kreminna) and Serebryanske forest area (10km south of Kreminna).[51]

Ukrainian forces conducted limited ground attacks in the Kreminna area and made advances on August 1. Geolocated footage published on August 1 shows that Ukrainian forces made limited gains southeast of Kuzmyne (2km southwest of Kreminna).[52] The Russian MoD and other Russian sources claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Dibrova (6km southwest of Kreminna), the Serebryanske forest area, and Bilohorivka (32km south of Kreminna).[53]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of August 1, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Russian Ground Lines of Communication
- 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 are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Note: A Russian source claimed on July 31 that Russian forces advanced to the shoreline of the Oskil River. The Russian Ministry of Defense claimed on July 30 that Russian forces advanced 300 meters in the direction of Novoselivske. The Russian Ministry of Defense claimed on July 28 that Russian forces penetrated three kilometers into Ukrainian defensive lines near Zhytlivka. The Russian Ministry of Defense claimed on July 28 that Russian forces advanced 1.5 kilometers into Ukrainian defenses in the Svatove direction. A Ukrainian source claimed on July 28 that Ukrainian forces advanced over 1200 meters in the Bakhmut direction. A Russian source claimed on July 28 that Russian forces advanced several kilometers along a 12 kilometer front from Serhiivka to Novovodyane. The Russian Ministry of Defense stated on July 27 that the Russian Center Grouping of Forces advanced 12 kilometers in the Lyman direction and three kilometers near Serhiivka. A Russian source claimed on July 27 Russian forces advanced more than one kilometer per day in the Svatove direction.

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

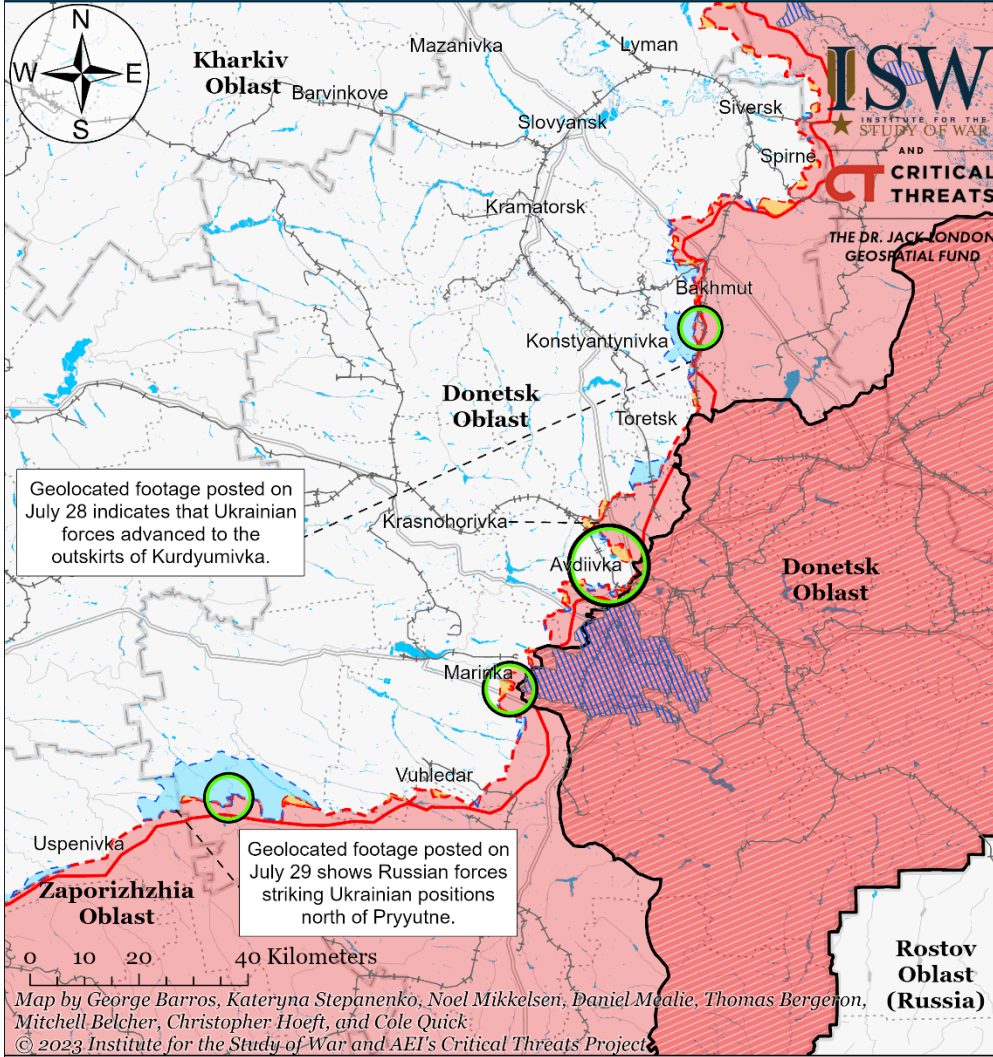
Ukrainian forces continued limited offensive operations in the Bakhmut direction and reportedly advanced on August 1. Ukrainian officials reported that Ukrainian forces continue advancing in the Bakhmut direction and that Russian forces are unsuccessfully defending against Ukrainian attacks.[54] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces captured an unspecified height near Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut) on July 31.[55] Some Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces changed tactics and are now operating smaller assault groups on the Andriivka-Klishchiivka line (8km southwest of Bakhmut).[56] Another Russian milblogger noted that the situation in Bakhmut “is suspiciously quiet” and that there is almost no movement on the ground.[57]

Russian forces conducted limited offensive operations in the Bakhmut area and did not advance on August 1. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful ground attacks west and south of Klishchiivka to recapture lost positions.[58]

Ukrainian forces reportedly conducted limited offensive operations on the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line and did not advance on August 1. The Russian MoD claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian ground attacks near Sieverne (6km west of Avdiivka) and Marinka (immediately southwest of Donetsk City).[59]

Russian forces continued limited offensive operations on the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line and did not advance on August 1. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian ground attacks near Avdiivka, Marinka, and Pobieda (5km southwest of Donetsk City).[60] A Russian milblogger also reported unsuccessful Russian ground attacks near Marinka and Pobieda.[61]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of August 1, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

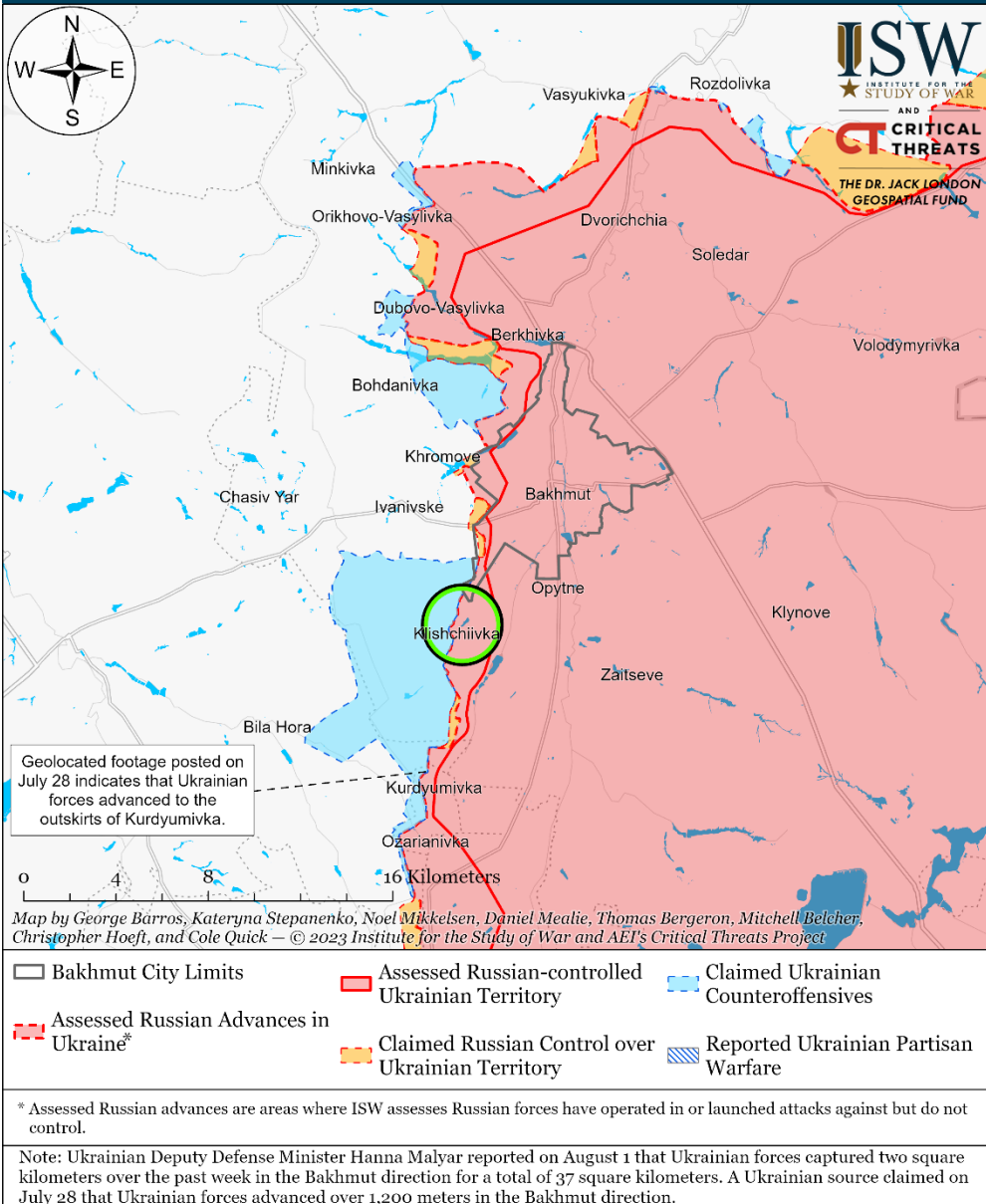


- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Major Railroads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

Note: Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Malyar reported on August 1 that Ukrainian forces captured two square kilometers over the past week in the Bakhmut direction for a total of 37 square kilometers. The Russian Ministry of Defense claimed on July 28 that Russian forces penetrated three kilometers into Ukrainian defensive lines near Zhytlivka. A Ukrainian source claimed on July 28 that Ukrainian forces advanced over 1,200 meters in the Bakhmut direction. A Ukrainian source reported on July 28 that Ukrainian forces advanced within 10 to 12 kilometers of the first Russian defensive line in the Berdyansk direction. The Russian Ministry of Defense stated on July 27 that the Russian Center Grouping of Forces advanced 12 kilometers in the Lyman direction.

Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of August 1, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



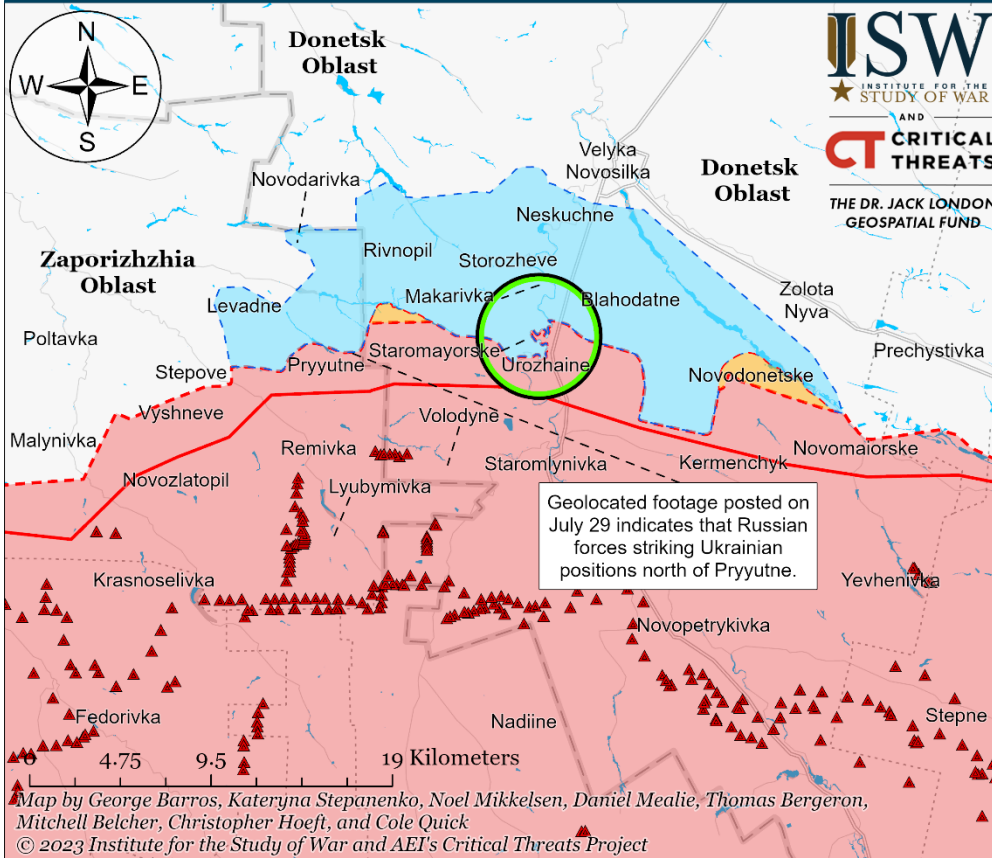
Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions and secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes)

Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area and did not make any confirmed advances on August 1. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Berdyansk direction (western Donetsk-eastern Zaporizhia Oblast border area).[62] The Russian MoD claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked Russian forces near Staromayorske (9km south of Velyka Novosilka).[63] A Russian source

claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attempted to cross the dry riverbed between Staromayorske and Urozhaine (9km south of Velyka Novosilka).[64]

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area and did not make any confirmed advances on August 1. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attempted to restore lost positions east of Staromayorske.[65] Russian sources claimed that Russian forces attacked Ukrainian forces in the Staromayroske area.[66] One Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces control the heights around Staromayorske, and another milblogger reported that Russian forces still control Urozhaine despite Ukrainian attacks towards the settlement.[67]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around the Vremivka Salient as of August 1, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



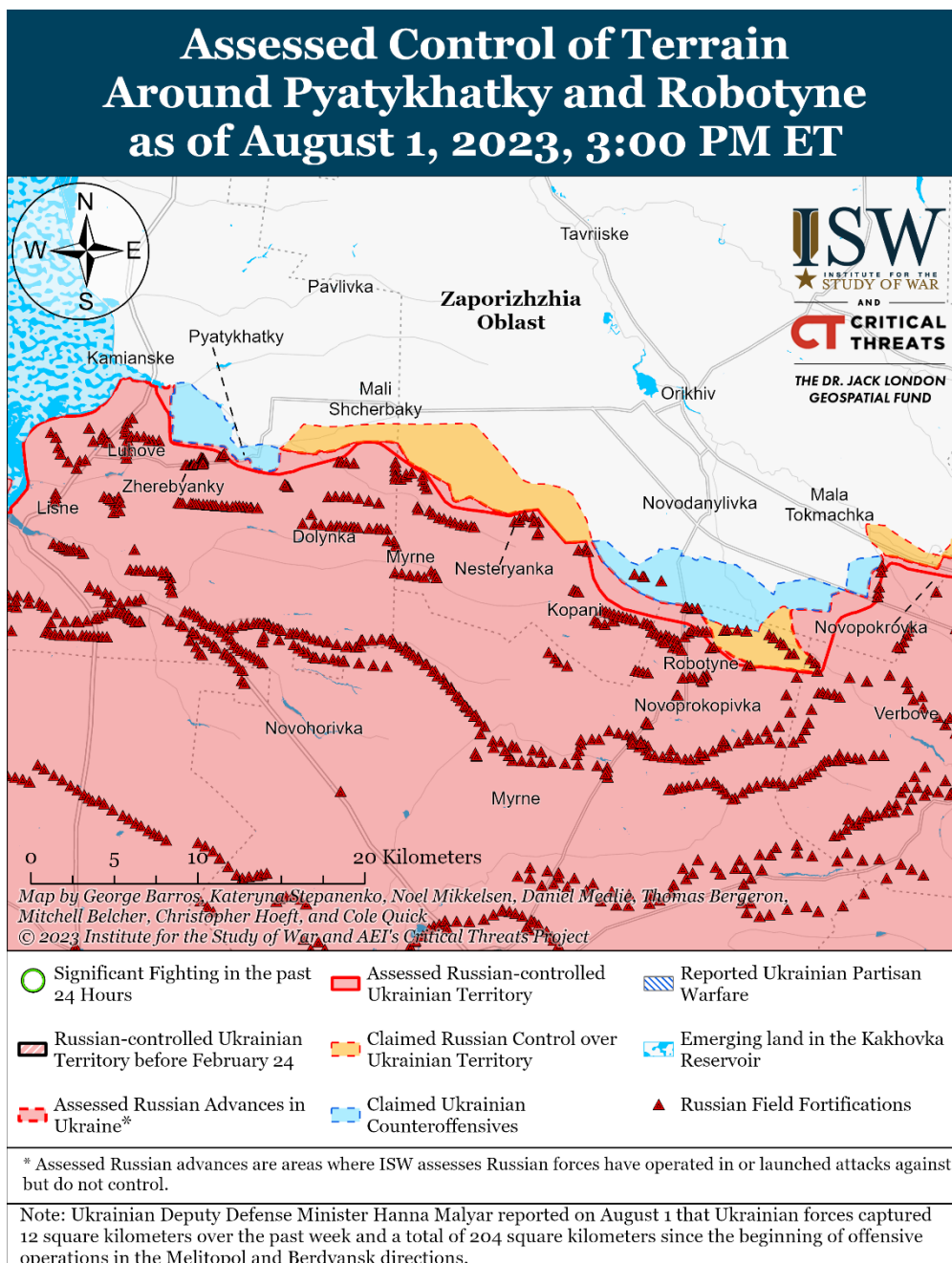
	Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours		Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory		Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
	Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24		Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory		Russian Field Fortifications
	Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*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

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

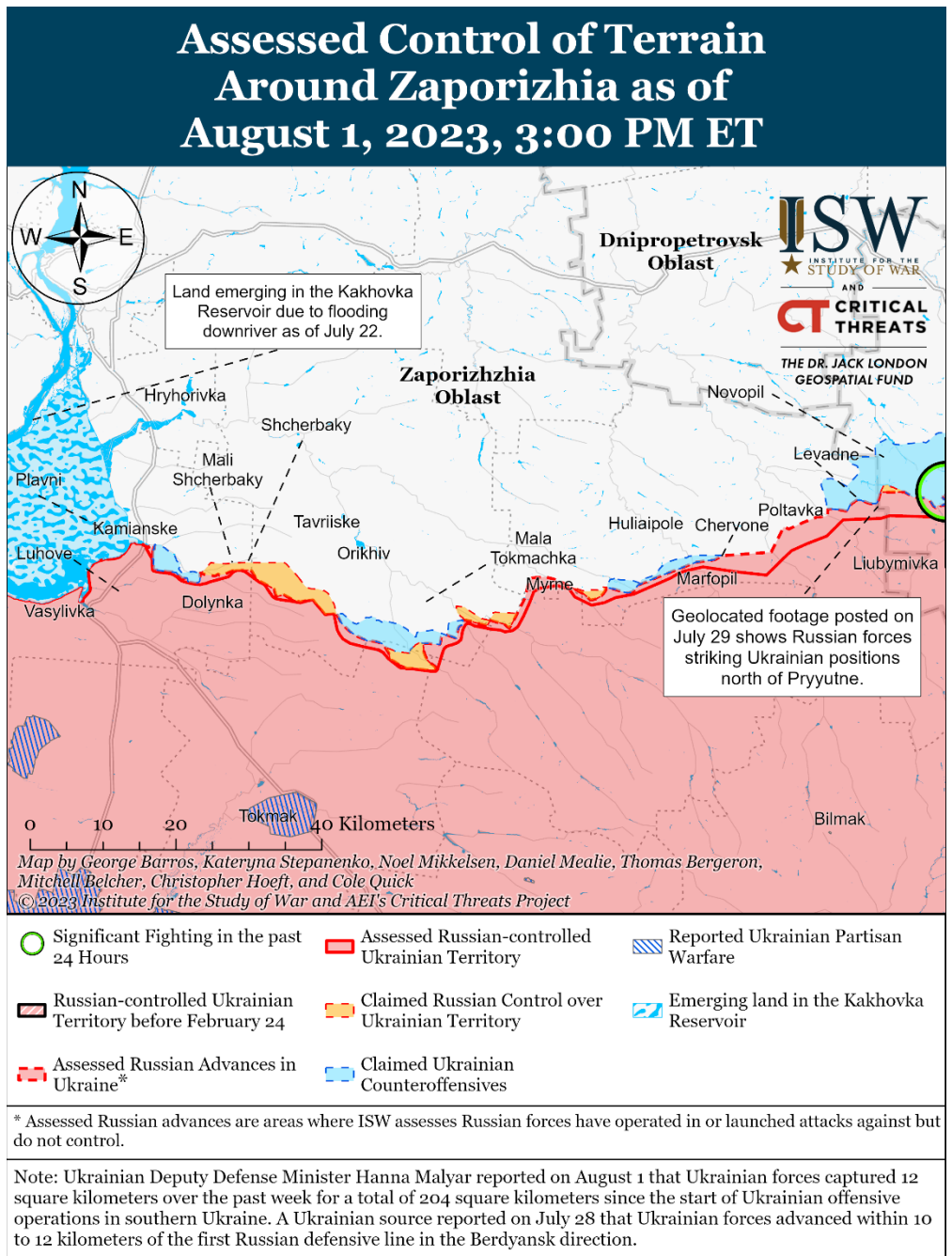
Note: Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Malyar reported on August 1 that Ukrainian forces captured 12 square kilometers over the past week for a total of 204 square kilometers since the start of Ukrainian offensive operations in southern Ukraine. A Ukrainian source reported on July 28 that Ukrainian forces advanced within 10 to 12 kilometers of the first Russian defensive line in the Berdyansk direction.

Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast and did not make confirmed advances on August 1. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Melitopol (western Zaporizhzhia Oblast) direction.[68] Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked Russian forces near Robotyne (10km south of Orikhiv) and that elements of the 42nd Motorized Rifle Division (58th Combined Arms Army, Southern Military District) and the 70th Guards Motorized Rifle Regiment (42nd Motorized

Rifle Division, 58th Combined Arms Army, Southern Military District) repelled the attack.[69] A Russian source claimed that Ukrainian forces are attacking Russian positions in the Robotyne area with foot mobile infantry wave attacks without armored vehicle support, whereas other Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces continued utilizing small assault groups for limited attacks (and Ukrainian forces are highly unlikely to be conducting “wave” attacks comparable to the previous use of that term to describe Russian tactics in Bakhmut).[70] The lack of consensus in the Russian information space as to the size of this purported Ukrainian attack near Robotyne suggests that Ukrainian forces are most likely continuing to conduct limited attacks in this area. A Russian milblogger also claimed that Ukrainian reserves are moving from Kherson Oblast to Zaporizhzhia Oblast.[71]



Russian forces conducted offensive operations in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast and did not make confirmed advances on August 1. A Russian source claimed that Russian forces attacked Ukrainian forces near Robotyne.[72] The source claimed that Russian forces in this area are rotating out and those that have been fighting for many days are resting.[73] Russian forces in this area have notably likely gone extended periods of time without rotation.[74] A Russian milblogger claimed that the Russian “Klinok” sniper group is operating near Robotyne.[75] The “Klinok” sniper group, also known as the “Nemtsa” Group and the “Brothers of Putin,” is allegedly part of the 58th Combined Arms Army (Southern Military District), which is known to be operating in this area.[76]



Russian sources continue to discuss purported Ukrainian attempts to cross the Dnipro River. A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces attempted to expand their presence on the Antonivsky Bridge and to land on islands in the Dnipro River delta.[77]



Ukrainian forces reportedly struck a Russian training camp in Kherson Oblast. A Russian milblogger

claimed that Ukrainian forces struck a Russian training camp on Dzharylhach Island (in the Black Sea 70 km southeast of Kherson City) and that Ukrainian frontline positions are at least 60km from the training camp, suggesting that Ukrainian forces conducted the strike with long-range high-precision munitions.[78] The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported that Ukrainian citizens in the area provided information to the Ukrainian armed forces about the location of the camp.[79] Russian troops recently established the camp to allow for Russian forces to undergo rehabilitation and recovery and to increase the training level of troops.[80]

Russian forces shelled civilian areas in Kherson City on August 1. The Ukrainian Ministry of Health reported that Russian shelling hit the Kherson City Clinical Hospital, and Kherson Oblast Military Administration Head Oleksandr Prokudin reported that Russian forces shelled Kherson City 61 times on August 1.[81]

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

The Russian Cabinet of Ministers granted Russian volunteer fighters and Donetsk People’s Republic and Luhansk People’s Republic (DNR and LNR) militia fighters (*opolcheniye*) veteran status on August 1. The new policy grants combat veteran benefits to DNR and LNR fighters who fought in Ukraine since May 11, 2014, and Russian volunteer fighters who fought in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts since February 24, 2022, and in Zaporizhia and Kherson oblasts since September 30, 2022.[82] The Kremlin likely seeks to continue supporting DNR and LNR militia veterans and incentivize more Russians to join volunteer units.

Russian opposition outlet *Verstka* published an investigation on July 31 that revealed that Russia imported approximately \$502 million worth of sanctioned dual-use computer chips, \$171 million in airplane components, and \$5 million in precision machining tools since the beginning of 2023. The investigation found that a network of Russian companies and international sanctions evasion partners based in Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Uzbekistan, Iran, Turkey, China, India, Italy, Germany, Thailand, Taiwan, and Hong Kong helped import sanctioned goods supporting Russia’s defense manufacturing.[83]

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

Russian occupation authorities continue to deport children from occupied regions of Ukraine to Russia under the guise of education and rehabilitation programs. The Kherson Oblast occupation Ministry of Education and Science announced that Russian authorities sent students from occupied Henichesk to the Sokol Children and Youth Recreation Center in Kaluga Oblast for “health improvement and education.”[84] Zaporizhia Oblast occupation head Evgeny Balitsky stated that his administration sent children from occupied Zaporizhia to “rest” in Saratov Oblast and thanked the Saratov Oblast administration for its assistance in arranging the program.[85] Donetsk People’s Republic (DNR) Head Denis Pushilin confirmed that girls from occupied Donetsk Oblast are “resting” at a children’s camp in Anapa, Krasnodar Krai.[86] Kremlin-appointed Children’s Rights Commissioner Maria Lvova-Belova claimed on July 31 that Russian authorities have sent over 700,000 children to Russia, a large portion of which are likely being illegally and coercively transferred under the guise of such education and rest programs.[87]

Russian occupation authorities are incentivizing residents of occupied Ukraine to permanently relocate to occupied Crimea. Sevastopol occupation governor Mikhail Razvozhayev announced on August 1 that the Russian Territorial Development Fund transferred 234.2 million rubles (about \$2.5 million) to the Sevastopol occupation administration for the provision of applications for the purchase of residential premises for residents of Kherson Oblast who relocated to Sevastopol.[88] Russian occupation authorities may hope to use the promise of financial incentives to coax Ukrainian citizens to move to Sevastopol and other areas of occupied Crimea, which Ukrainian residents register with Russian federal organs such as the Territorial Development Fund.

Russian authorities are preparing for the 2024 presidential elections in occupied areas of Ukraine. The Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation announced on July 31 that the Russian Presidential Council will contribute to the integration of occupied Kherson Oblast into the electronic voting system during the 2024 presidential elections.[89] The Civic Chamber additionally noted that voters will be able to utilize “mobile voting” mechanisms instead of traveling to designated voting stations and reported that there are currently 14 territorial election commissions and 233 precinct election commissions operating in the occupied part of Kherson Oblast.[90]

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).

ISW will continue to report daily observed Russian and Belarusian military activity in Belarus, as part of ongoing Kremlin efforts to increase their control over Belarus and other Russian actions in Belarus.

Wagner Group personnel continue to arrive in Belarus. Independent Belarusian monitoring organization *The Hajun Project* reported that the 14th Wagner convoy with more semi-trailer trucks arrived in Belarus on August 1.[91] More Wagner Group convoys may arrive in Belarus over the next 96 hours; Wagner Group financier Yevgeny Prigozhin reportedly ordered all Wagner personnel currently on rest and recuperation to arrive at Wagner’s field camps in Belarus no later than August 5.[92]

The Wagner Group in Belarus is reportedly expanding its footprint in Asipovichy. *The Hajun Project* reported that Wagner forces began using the Belarusian military storage warehouse (28.5537827°E 53.2687449°N - approximately 15 km south of the Wagner field camp in Tsel) located near Poplavy, Asipovichy, since around July 18, 2023.[93] *The Hajun Project* shared satellite images reportedly showing recent activity at this warehouse between July 17 and 24.[94]

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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