

# Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, August 2, 2023

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August 2, 2023, 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.

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 12:00pm ET on August 2. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the August 3 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment. A dispute among prominent voices in the Russian information space highlights the Kremlin's sensitivity to Russian reporting about setbacks in Crimea in particular and possibly in Ukraine in general and has further exposed fault lines within the milblogger community.** A pro-war milblogger accused other prominent pro-war milbloggers who have been critical of the Russian conduct of the war on August 2 of being "imbeciles" who support "provocative publications" and the "frantic criticism of the [Russian Ministry of Defense]" because the milbloggers posted images reportedly showing the aftermath of recent Ukrainian strikes near Sevastopol and on the Chonhar Bridge, which some sources suggested would irresponsibly spread panic.[1] A notorious Kremlin-backed pro-Russian Ukrainian blogger additionally accused one of the critical milbloggers under attack of stealing crowdsourced collection funds meant for Russian forces.[2] Both these specific critiques drew significant attention from other pro-war Russian commentators, many of whom supported the critical channels being attacked for reporting on the Crimea strikes.[3] One milblogger noted that the crux of the issue lies with the fact that these two channels post pictures of purported Ukrainian strikes on Crimea but emphasized that the original images came from Ukrainian Telegram channels.[4] Another prominent milblogger claimed that the dispute over posting images of strikes in Crimea became so intense that it attracted the attention of the Crimean Federal Security Service (FSB) branch and Crimean occupation head Sergey Aksyonov, likely because these entities are interested in preventing panic in Crimea.[5]

**The dispute over these two milbloggers, alongside the accompanying allegations, suggests that the issue of strikes against Crimea is a distinctly neuralgic point in the pro-war Russian information space.** ISW previously noted that following an apparent Ukrainian strike on the Chonhar Bridge on July 29 the vast majority of Russian milbloggers stayed silent with a few select channels simply reposting imagery of the resulting damage in the days that followed.[6] ISW assessed that the lack of milblogger discussion following the Chonhar strike suggests that the Kremlin may have formally directed milbloggers not to cover it.[7] The criticism of the two critical milbloggers' coverage of the Crimean strikes further supports ISW's previous assessment and underlines the fact that coverage of events in Crimea has created substantial tension in the Russian information space. Russian authorities, including the Crimean occupation administration, have a vested interest in restricting the dissemination of information about the strikes and their implications

for Russian logistics through the occupied peninsula due to concerns that this information will cause panic in the population and call into question Russia's ability to effectively secure its occupied territory.

**The highest echelons of the Russian military command may have directed milbloggers to stay silent about problems that can be directly blamed on the Russian military command.** Russian milbloggers' very muted reactions to recent strikes against Crimea contrast sharply with their reactions to recent drone strikes against Moscow. Milbloggers have been relatively vocal in responding to Ukrainian drone strikes on Moscow City in recent days, with some Russian sources directly blaming Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyenin for the strikes due to his administration's failures to secure Moscow's air space.[8] The defense of Russian positions in Crimea, by contrast, is clearly the responsibility of Russian Chief of the General Staff Army General Valery Gerasimov, who is also the overall theater commander in Ukraine. Gerasimov is ultimately responsible for the security of Moscow as well, but he has neither portrayed himself nor been portrayed as directly involved in defending the capital's airspace whereas he, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu, and the Russian military high command in general have made much of their control over the war in Ukraine. The Russian General Staff may fear that milbloggers reporting on Ukrainian attacks against Crimea are fueling negative perceptions of Gerasimov's competence as well as risking stimulating panic on the peninsula, whereas Russian authorities may feel comfortable letting more local officials such as Sobyenin take the fall for attacks on Moscow and other Russian cities. If this hypothesis is valid then the Kremlin's pressure on milbloggers to censor themselves may be confined to pressure to avoid reporting on dramatic events that clearly reflect badly on Gerasimov, Shoigu, or Putin rather than to avoid discussing all negative events.

**Russian forces conducted a drone strike on the night of August 1-2 that destroyed port infrastructure in Odesa Oblast including 40,000 tons of grain.** The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted a Shahed drone strike targeting Kyiv and Odesa oblasts and that Ukrainian air defenses destroyed 23 drones, but an unspecified number of drones struck port infrastructure in Odesa Oblast.[9] *BBC Russia* reported that the Russian strike destroyed 40,000 tons of grain intended for shipment to several African countries, China, and Israel at the Izmail port in Odesa Oblast.[10] The Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs reported on July 31 that Russian forces destroyed 180,000 tons of grain between Russia's withdrawal from the Black Sea Grain Initiative on July 17 and July 26.[11] The Kremlin has repeatedly pledged to send 25,000 to 50,000 tons of grain to six unspecified African countries in the next three to four months free of charge--a fraction of the Ukrainian grain it has destroyed.[12] Russian forces are likely striking grain storage infrastructure while claiming that they are striking military targets, in an attempt to have Russia supplant Ukraine as the supplier of grain to Africa and other states to ensure that Moscow rather than Kyiv benefits financially. The destruction of Ukrainian grain and the disruption of grain shipments following Russia's withdrawal from the grain deal and Russian posturing and threats to attack neutral shipping going to and from Ukraine are also causing grain prices to fluctuate, and the Russians may hope to benefit from higher prices if they can keep Ukrainian grain largely off the global market.

**Russian Airborne Forces (VDV) Commander Colonel General Mikhail Teplinsky announced the formation of up two new VDV regiments and the reestablishment of the 104th VDV Division by the end of 2023.** Teplinsky announced that the existing 31st Guards Separate VDV Assault Brigade will be subordinated to the 104th VDV Division.[13] Teplinsky claimed that one battery of a new artillery brigade (presumably of the 104th Division) is already fighting in

Ukraine. The Russian military has been attempting to stand up multiple new division and army corps-level formations since the end of 2022 when Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu's announced the reconstitution of the Moscow and Leningrad military districts and the establishment of several new formations.[14] Ongoing Russian force generation efforts will likely staff the new VDV formations with new, untrained personnel rather than recruit experienced personnel more typical of the VDV's historical elite status. The UK Ministry of Defense (MoD) reported that the Russian MoD has likely begun staffing its new formations including the new 25th Army Corps (Central Military District), but that Russia is unlikely to recruit enough personnel to staff even one new army-level formation without conducting a general mobilization.[15]

**Teplinsky's announcement indicates that he maintains his position and the public support of the Russian MoD following rumors of his arrest, possibly as a result of his affiliations with the Wagner Group, in mid-July.**[16] Teplinsky credited Shoigu and Russian Chief of the General Staff Army General Valery Gerasimov for strengthening the VDV by forming new units prior to the start of the 2022 full scale invasion of Ukraine in a show of deference.[17] Teplinsky specifically credited Shoigu with provisioning the VDV with modern equipment and helping develop VDV formations.[18] Teplinsky has been hostile to Gerasimov and has previously directed forceful complaints against the seniormost Russian military command, setting a precedent for insubordination among other Russian military commanders.[19] Teplinsky's public appearance and comments in direct support of the MoD command structure indicate that the MoD has coerced Teplinsky into publicly realigning with the MoD following the June 24 rebellion and July rumors of significant military command changes.

**The Russian MoD officially provided weapons and vehicles to the Belgorod and Kursk Oblast Territorial Defense forces on August 2, reallocating conventional military assets as a part of the Kremlin's efforts to steadily expand Russia's internal security capabilities following the Wagner Group's armed rebellion on June 24.** Russian media reported that the Russian MoD provided machine guns, anti-drone guns, and UAZ vehicles to the Belgorod and Kursk Oblast Territorial Defense forces.[20] Belgorod Oblast Governor Vyacheslav Gladkov stated that Russian authorities provided each of the Belgorod Oblast Territorial Defense's eight battalions with five UAZ vehicles, additional car radios, quadcopters, and anti-drone guns.[21] Kursk Oblast Governor Roman Starovoit also announced that the first batch of weapons arrived in Kursk Oblast and that more weapons will arrive "in the near future." [22] Kremlin Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov reportedly stated that the Kremlin issued the weapons to the Belgorod and Kursk Oblast Territorial Defense forces against the backdrop of attacks from the territory of Ukraine.[23]

**The repeated allocation of additional military assets to Belgorod and Kursk oblasts indicates that the Kremlin is growing increasingly concerned about continued attacks on Russia's border with Ukraine.** Chechen Republic Head Ramzan Kadyrov claimed on June 15 that he deployed Chechen "Akhmat" special forces to Belgorod Oblast to protect the border from raids into Russian territory.[24] Ukrainian officials reported on June 22 that Russian forces transferred several GRU Spetsnaz units to Kursk Oblast to fight pro-Ukrainian Russian partisans.[25] A Kremlin-affiliated Russian milblogger claimed that Russian authorities will store the weapons provided to the Belgorod and Kursk Oblast Territorial Defense forces in a centralized location and noted that it is unclear how the territorial defense forces will be able to access the weapons in an emergency if they are stored in a locked storage facility.[26] The claim that Russian authorities will lock up the weapons

provided to the Belgorod and Kursk Territorial Defense forces, if true, indicates that the Kremlin is attempting to balance the need for increased border security with the need to avoid empowering decentralized military formations that might one day be able to launch an armed rebellion similar to Wagner's actions on June 24.[27] Moscow might also fear the results of large numbers of small arms getting into the hands of poorly trained territorial forces or the general population.

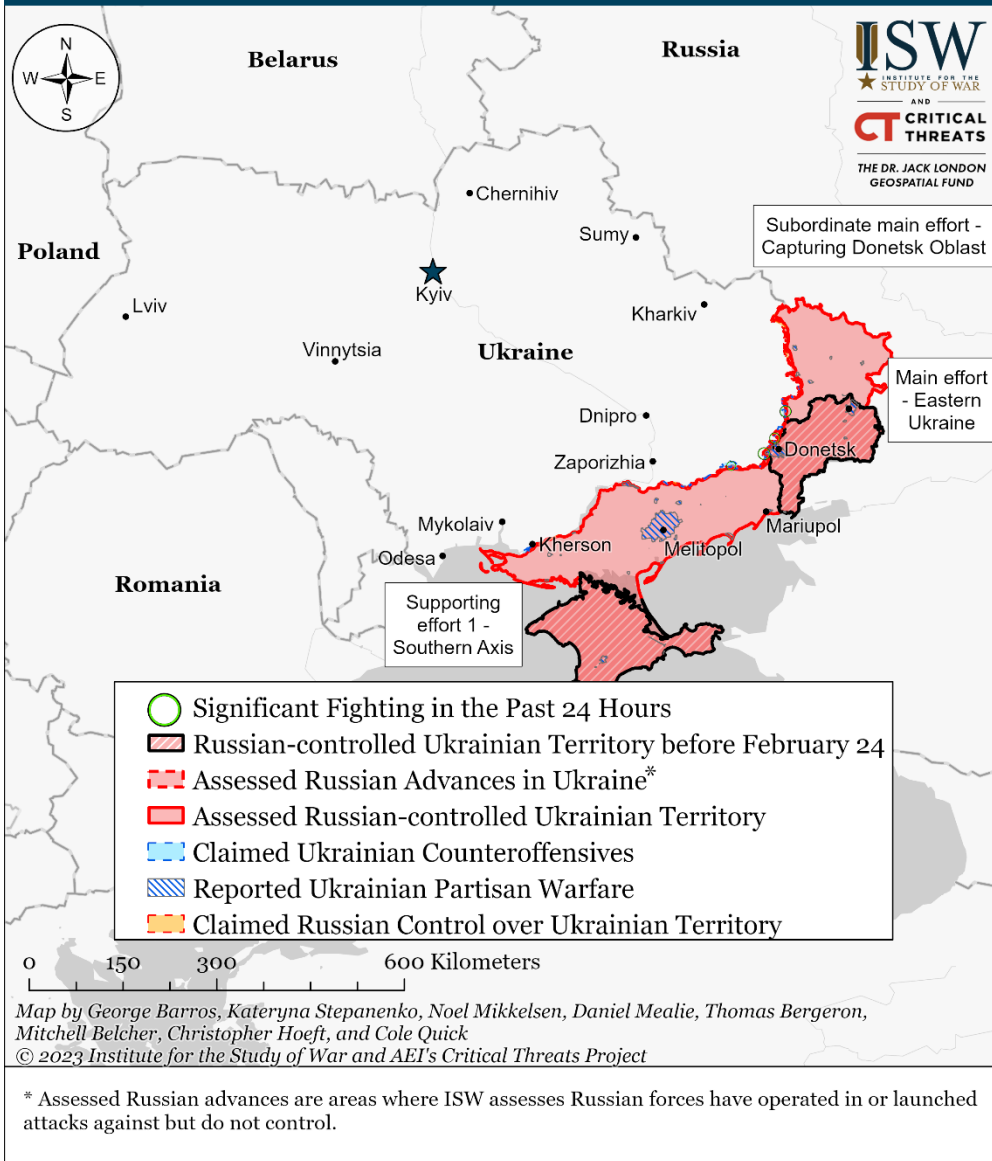
**Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations on at least three sectors of the front and reportedly advanced near Bakhmut on August 2.** The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces conducted offensive operations near Bakhmut and in the Berdyansk (Zaporizhia-Donetsk Oblast area) and Melitopol directions (western Zaporizhia Oblast).[28] A Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces advanced north of Kurdyumivka in the Bakhmut area.[29] Russian sources claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks on the Svatove-Kreminna line in the Lyman direction, near Staromayorske on the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border, and near Robotyne in western Zaporizhia Oblast.[30]

### **Key Takeaways:**

- **A dispute among prominent voices in the Russian information space highlights the Kremlin's sensitivity to Russian reporting about setbacks in Crimea in particular and possibly in Ukraine in general and has further exposed fault lines within the milblogger community. This dispute, alongside the accompanying allegations, suggests that the issue of strikes against Crimea is a distinctly neuralgic point in the pro-war Russian information space.**
- **The highest echelons of the Russian military command may have directed milbloggers to stay silent about problems that can be directly blamed on the Russian military command.**
- **Russian forces conducted a drone strike on the night of August 1-2 that destroyed port infrastructure in Odesa Oblast including 40,000 tons of grain.**
- **Russian Airborne Forces (VDV) Commander Colonel General Mikhail Teplinsky announced the formation of up two new VDV regiments and the reestablishment of the 104th VDV Division by the end of 2023. Teplinsky's announcement indicates that he maintains his position and the public support of the Russian MoD following rumors of his arrest, possibly as a result of his affiliations with the Wagner Group, in mid-July.**
- **The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) officially provided weapons and vehicles to the Belgorod and Kursk Oblast Territorial Defense forces on August 2, reallocating conventional military assets as a part of the Kremlin's efforts to steadily expand Russia's internal security capabilities following the Wagner Group's armed rebellion on June 24.**
- **Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations on at least three sectors of the front and reportedly advanced near Bakhmut on August 2.**
- **The highest echelons of the Russian military command may have directed milbloggers to stay silent about problems that can be directly blamed on the Russian military command.**
- **Ukrainian forces conducted offensive operations on at least three sectors of the front and reportedly advanced in the Bakhmut area.**

- **Russian forces conducted offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove line, near Kreminna, around Bakhmut, and along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line and advanced in some areas.**
- **Russian civilians are increasingly targeting military registration and enlistment centers across Russia as a result of what Russian sources claim are targeted scam calls.**
- **Russian President Vladimir Putin pushed the Kremlin narrative of “Novorossiia” and announced Russian government initiatives to provide books to occupied territories of Ukraine on August 2.**

# Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of August 2, 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)**

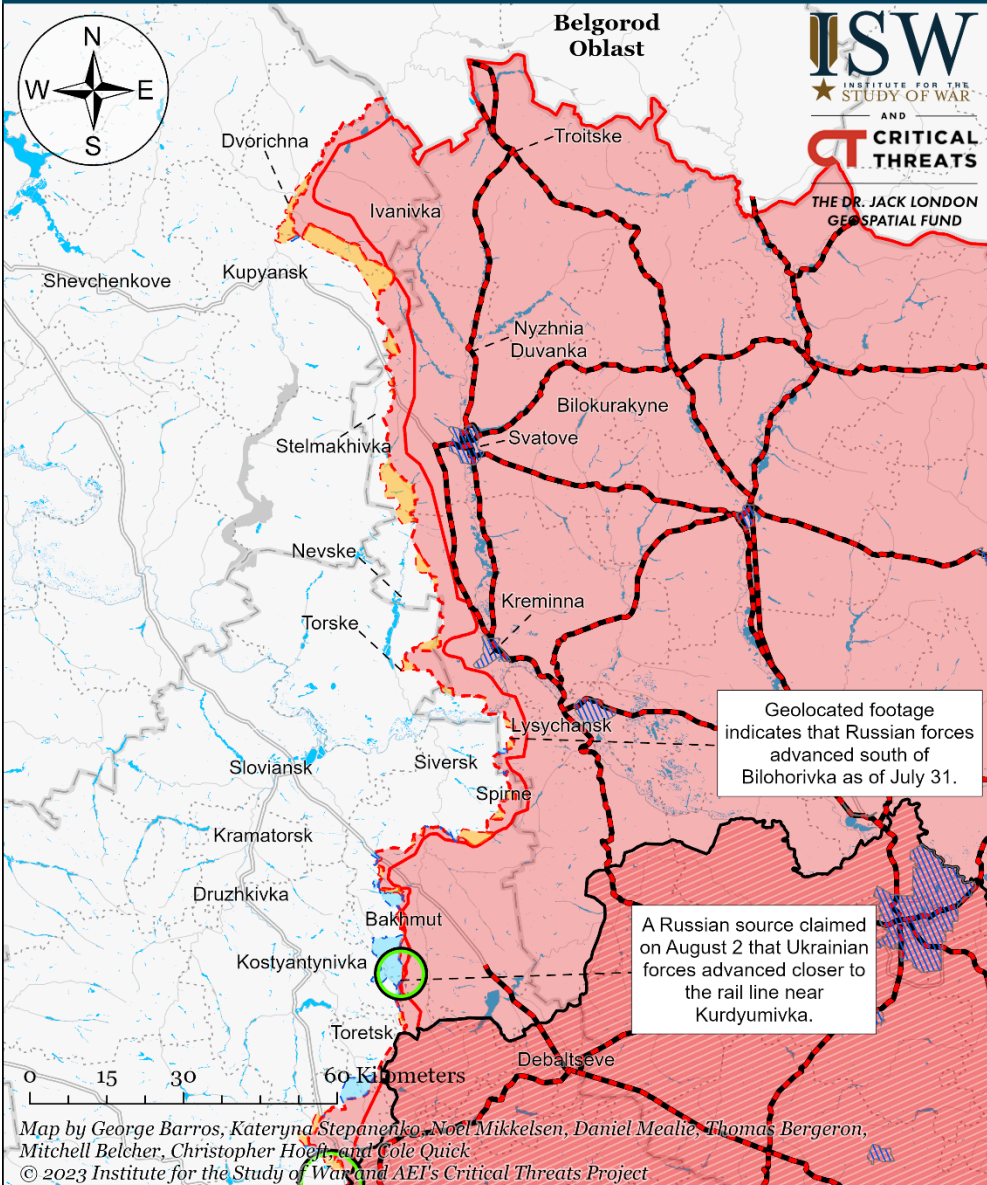
Russian forces continued offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove line and made unconfirmed gains on August 2. Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces continued successful offensive efforts towards Kupyansk, and one milblogger reported that Russian forces advanced up to the eastern bank of the Oskil River near Kalynove (9km northeast of Kupyansk).[31] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that elements of the Western Grouping of Forces, including the 1st Guards Tank Army (Western Military District), improved their tactical positions near Tymkivka (20km due east of Kupyansk), Novoselivske (14km northwest of Svatove), and in a forested area in the Kuzemivka direction (14km northwest of Svatove).[32]

Ukrainian forces conducted limited counterattacks along the Kupyansk-Svatove line and did not make claimed or confirmed advances on August 2. A Russian milblogger warned that the Ukrainians are accumulating forces in the area in preparation for a large counterattack.[33] The Russian MoD claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Novoselivske, and a Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked north of Kuzemivka.[34]

Russian forces continued offensive operations near Kreminna on August 2 and made confirmed gains. Geolocated footage posted on August 2 shows that Russian forces made marginal advances south of Bilohorivka (10km south of Kreminna) around July 31.[35] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces continue successful attacks on Ukrainian positions west of Kreminna near Torske and southwest of Kreminna in the Serebryanske forest area.[36] Russian Center Group of Forces Spokesperson Alexander Savchuk additionally claimed that elements of the Russian Center Group of Forces captured seven Ukrainian strongholds near Karmazynivka (28km northwest of Kreminna) and Chervonopopivka (6km northwest of Kreminna).[37]

Ukrainian forces conducted limited counterattacks near Kreminna but did not make any claimed or confirmed advances on August 2. Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks between Svatove and Kreminna on the Raihorodka—Karmazynivka line (roughly 30km northwest of Kreminna).[38] The Russian MoD claimed that Russian troops repelled unsuccessful Ukrainian ground attacks northwest of Kreminna near Novovodyane, west of Kreminna of Torske, and southwest of Kreminna in the Serebryanske forest area.[39] Russian sources noted that Ukrainian forces continue continuous and unsuccessful attacks against Russian positions in the Serebryanske forest area.[40]

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of August 2, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



- 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.

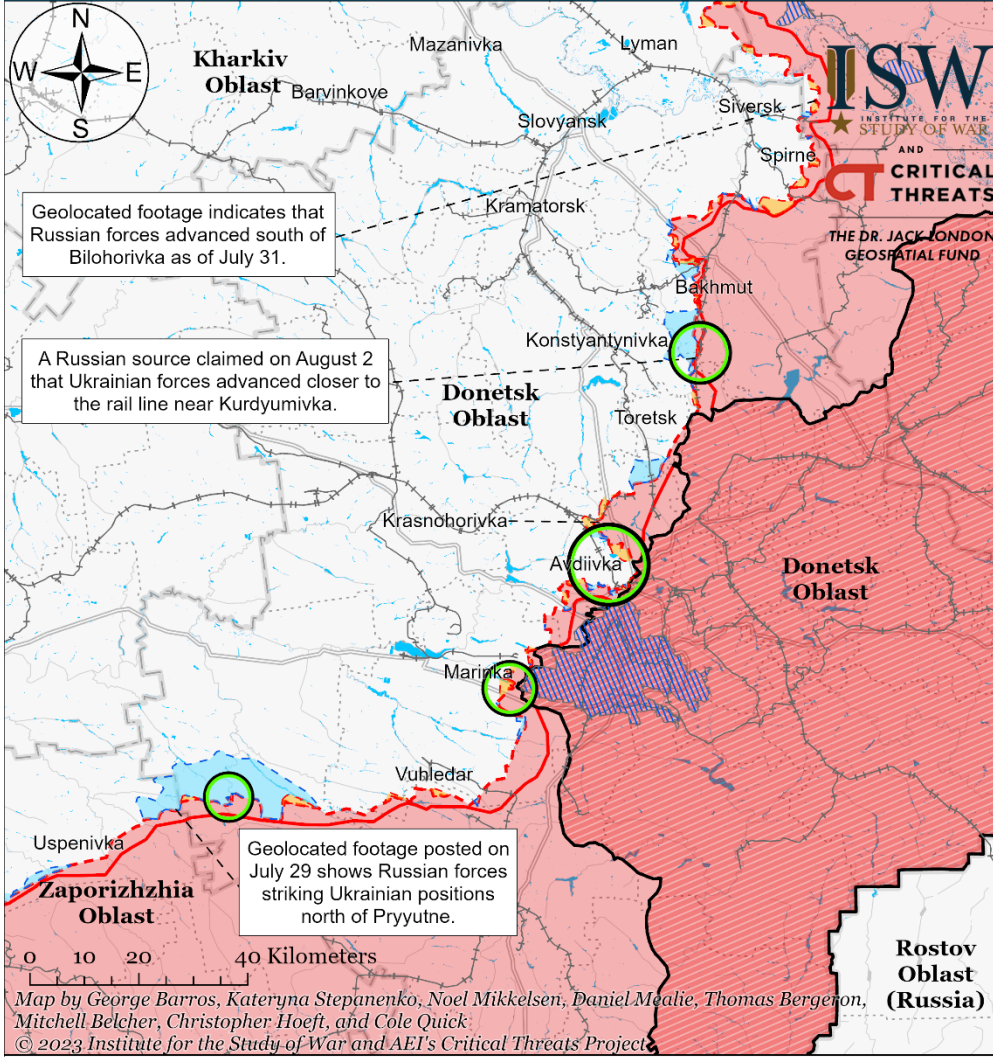
Note: A Russian source claimed on July 31 that Russian forces advanced to the shoreline of the Oskil River. The Russian Ministry of Defense claimed on July 30 that Russian forces advanced 300 meters in the direction of Novoselivske.



**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 offensive operations in the Bakhmut area on August 2 and reportedly advanced in the area. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces conducted offensive operations south of Bakhmut.<sup>[41]</sup> A Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces attacked several Russian positions along the Andriivka-Kurdyumivka line (8km to 13km southwest of Bakhmut) and advanced north of Kurdyumivka.<sup>[42]</sup> The milblogger claimed that the situation in Bakhmut has stabilized and that Russian and Ukrainian forces are engaged in positional battles near Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut).<sup>[43]</sup> Another milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted unsuccessful counterattacks near Mayorske (20km south of Bakhmut).<sup>[44]</sup>

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of August 2, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



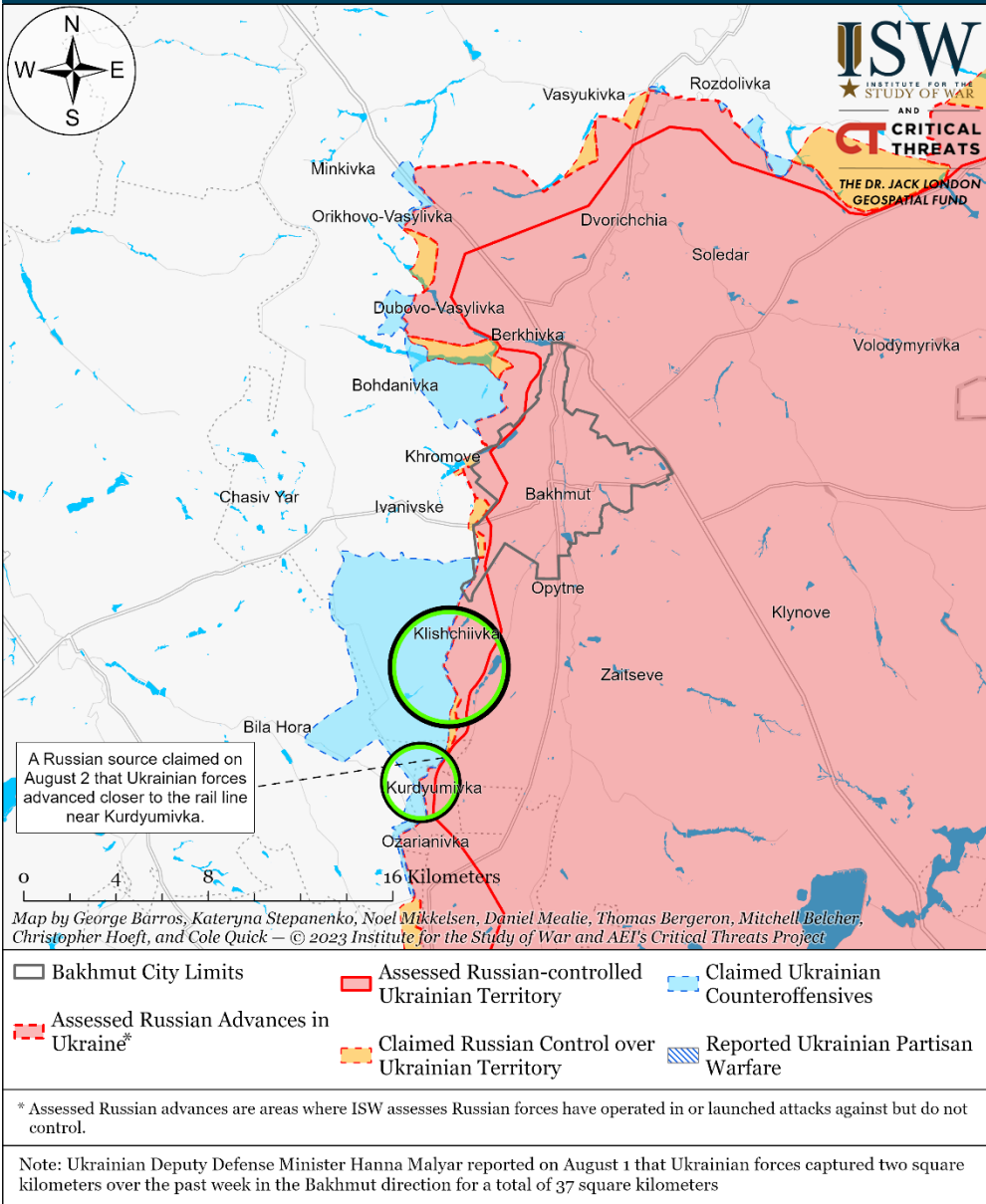
- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine\*
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Major Railroads
- 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: Russian sources claimed on August 1 and 2 that Russian forces control the surrounding heights of Staromayorske. 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.

Russian forces continued ground attacks in the Bakhmut area on August 2 and did not make claimed or confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful offensive operations north and west of Klishchiivka, south of Andriivka, and northwest and west of Kurdyumivka.<sup>[45]</sup> The Ukrainian General Staff also reported that Russian forces retreated from positions south of Andriivka.<sup>[46]</sup> A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces counterattacked north and west of Klishchiivka.<sup>[47]</sup> Ukrainian Eastern Group of Forces Spokesperson Colonel Serhiy Cherevaty reported that Russian forces have increased the intensity of their artillery fire in the Bakhmut direction.<sup>[48]</sup> A Russian milblogger amplified footage on August 2 claiming to show elements of the 57th Motorized Rifle Brigade (5th Combined Arms Army, Eastern Military District) operating in the Bakhmut direction.<sup>[49]</sup> The suggestion that an element of the 5th Combined Arms Army, which is predominantly operating in western Donetsk Oblast, has partially deployed to the Bakhmut area suggests that Russian forces may be rushing disparate elements to the area to hold the defense unless the milblogger simply misidentified the unit.

# Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of August 2, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



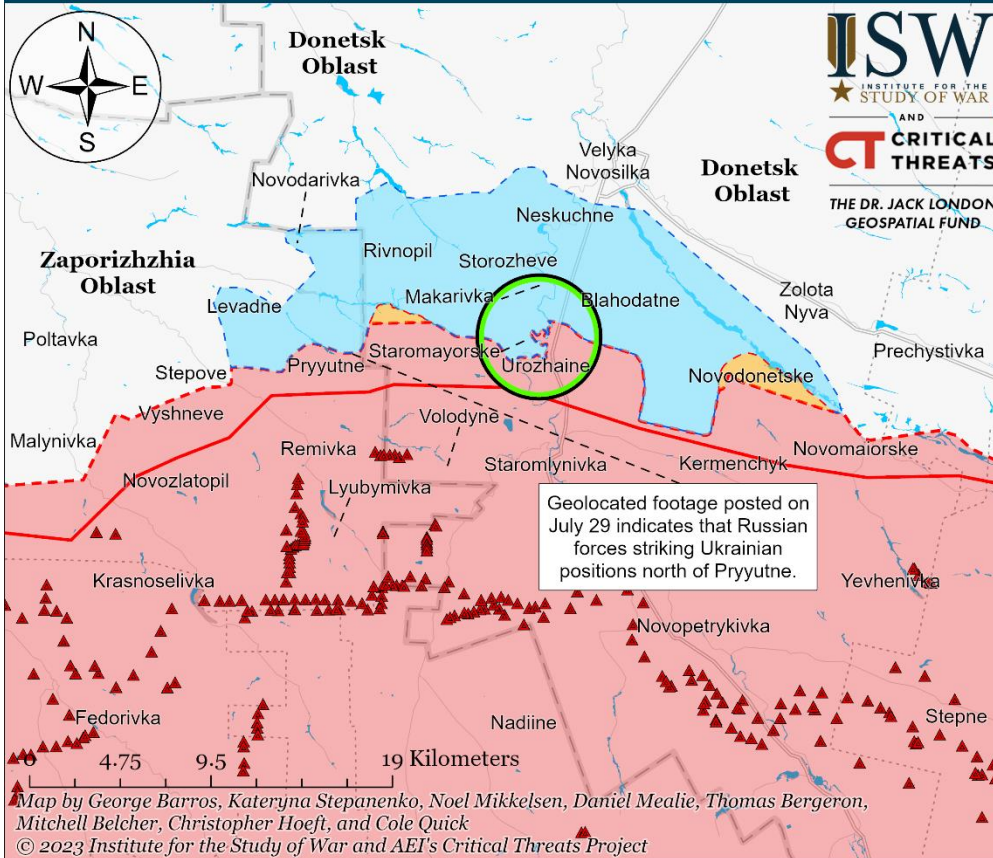
Ukrainian forces reportedly conducted ground attacks along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line on August 2 and did not make claimed or confirmed advances. The Russian MoD claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Krasnohorivka (22km southwest of Avdiivka), Marinka (27km southwest of Avdiivka), and Staromykhailivka (19km southwest of Avdiivka).[50] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted unsuccessful counterattacks near Marinka.[51] Another milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces are entrenched in positions near Nevelske (13km southwest of Avdiivka) and are attempting to advance near Novomykhailivka (36km southwest of Avdiivka).[52]

Russian forces continued ground attacks along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line and made confirmed advances in the area as of August 2. Geolocated footage published on August 1 shows that Russian forces advanced north of Vodyane (8km southwest of Avdiivka).[53] The Ukrainian General Staff claimed that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian ground attacks near Avdiivka and Marinka.[54] A Russian media aggregator and a milblogger claimed that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Marinka and Pobieda (5km southwest of Donetsk City).[55]

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

Ukrainian forces conducted counteroffensive operations in the western Donetsk-eastern Zaporizhia Oblast area and did not make any confirmed or claimed advances on August 2. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces conducted counteroffensive operations in the Berdyansk direction (western Donetsk-eastern Zaporizhia Oblast area).[56] The Russian MoD and other Russian sources claimed that Russian forces repelled a Ukrainian attack near Urozhaine (9km south of Velyka Novosilka) and west of Staromayorske (9km south of Velyka Novosilka).[57] A Russian news aggregator claimed that positional battles are ongoing near Staromayorske.[58]

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around the Vremivka Salient as of August 2, 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: Russian sources claimed on August 1 and 2 that Russian forces control the surrounding heights of Staromayorske. 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.

Russian forces conducted limited ground attacks in the western Donetsk-eastern Zaporizhzhia Oblast area and did not make any confirmed or claimed advances on August 2. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attempted to restore lost positions east and west of Staromayorske and north of Urozhaine.[59] Some Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces hold the northern part of Staromayorske, while Russian forces control the heights and the fields south of Staromayorske and all of Urozhaine.[60] One Russian milblogger claimed that most of Staromayorske remains contested, however.[61]

Ukrainian forces conducted counteroffensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast and did not make any confirmed or claimed advances on August 2. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces conducted counteroffensive operations in the Melitopol direction (western Zaporizhia Oblast).[62] The Russian MoD and other Russian sources claimed that Russian forces repelled small Ukrainian attacks near Robotyne (10km south of Orikhiv) and Pyatykhatky (25km southwest of Orikhiv).[63] Zaporizhia Oblast occupation official Vladimir Rogov claimed that Russian forces repelled a Ukrainian advance of up to 10 personnel and a mine clearing vehicle with armored vehicle support near Robotyne and a platoon-sized Ukrainian attack and one tank near Pyatykhatky.[64] Another milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted an attack in the Mala Tokamachka-Bilohirya direction (9-16km southeast of Orikhiv).[65] Footage published on August 2 purportedly shows elements of the Russian 1430th Motorized Rifle Regiment of Territorial Troops (TRV) operating near Robotyne.[66]

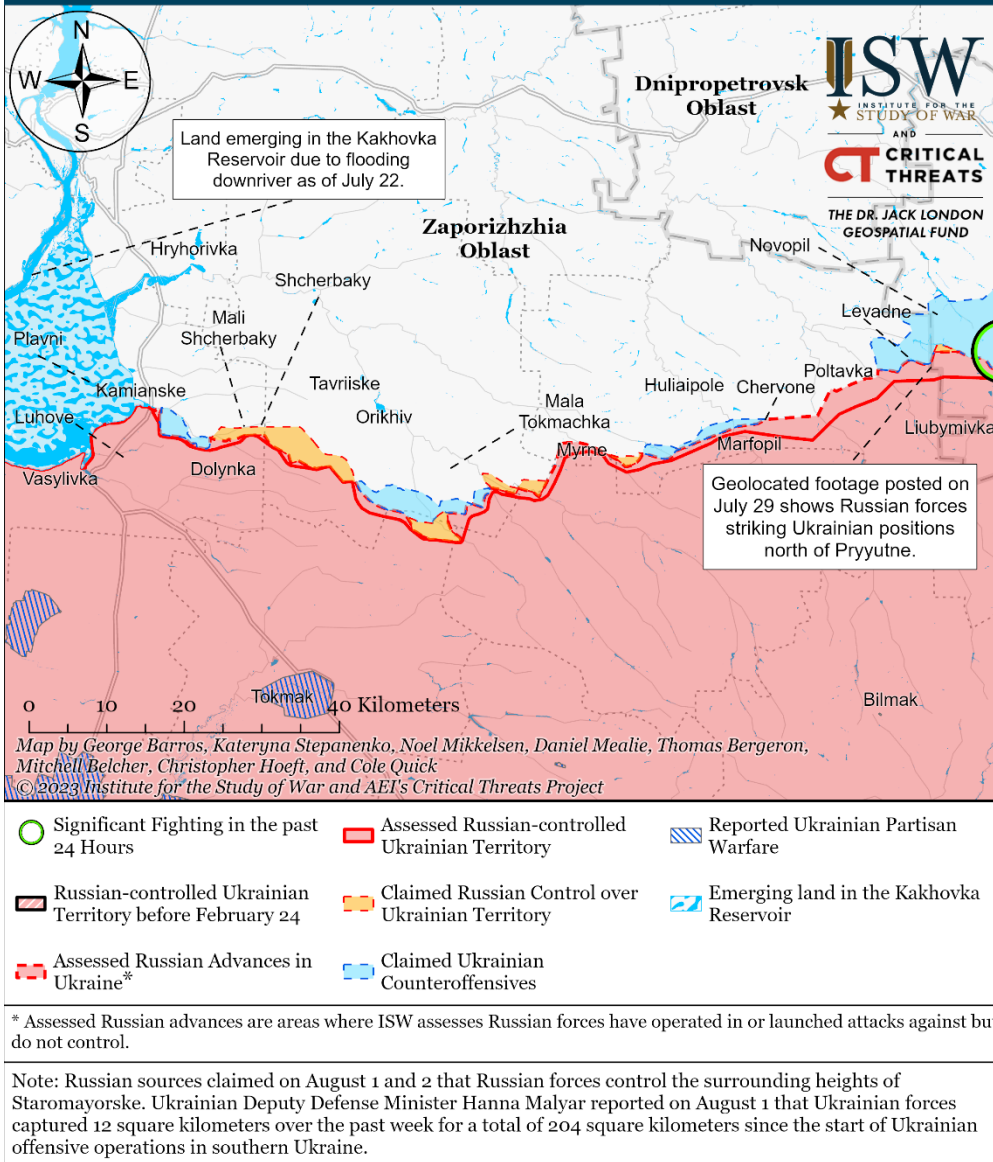
# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Pyatykhatky and Robotyne as of August 2, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



A Russian source claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted a missile strike on occupied Crimea. A Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed on August 2 that Ukrainian forces launched a missile strike on the Hvardiiske airfield (about 15km north of Simferopol), but that the missile fell near the airfield.[67]

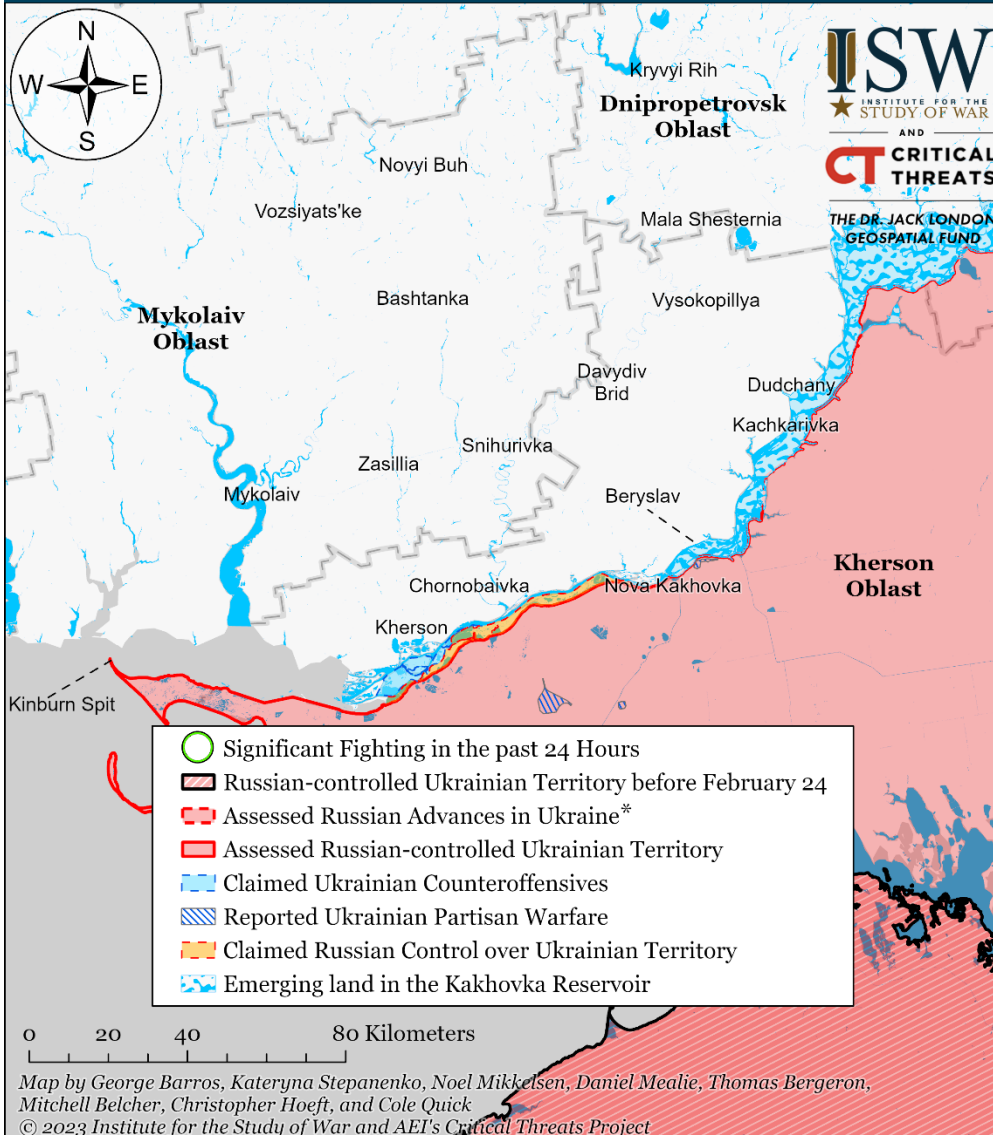


# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhia as of August 2, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



The Russian MoD continues to accuse Ukraine of attacking Russian vessels in the Black Sea, likely in an attempt to set conditions to escalate Russian naval activity and increase Russian control over the Black Sea. The Russian MoD claimed that an unspecified Russian naval vessel destroyed a Ukrainian unmanned boat that attacked the Russian naval vessel while it was escorting a civilian transport ship in the southwestern part of the Black Sea.[68]

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of August 2, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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

Note: The Ukrainian counteroffensive layer displays areas previously assigned to the Russian control, Russian advances, or Russian claims layers where ISW now assesses that Ukrainian forces have established a presence beyond a short-term raid. Inclusion of an area on this layer does not imply that ISW assesses that the area is part of any upcoming Ukrainian counteroffensive operation.

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

Russian civilians are increasingly targeting military registration and enlistment centers across Russia as a result of what Russian sources claim are targeted scam calls. Russian opposition media outlet *Meduza* reported that arsonists made 28 attempts to set fire to military registration and enlistment offices primarily in Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Kazan between July 29 and August 2.[69] Other affected cities include Feodosia, occupied Crimea; Severodvinsk, Arkhangelsk Oblast; St. Petersburg and Vsevolozhsk, Leningrad Oblast; Mozhaisk and Podolsk, Moscow Oblast; Aginskoye, Trans-Baikal Krai; Rossosh, Voronezh Oblast; Omsk; Kopeysk and Verkhneuralsk, Chelyabinsk Oblast; Volsk, Saratov Oblast; Kaluga; Ulan-Ude; Volgograd; Nizhnekamsk, Tatarstan; Stavropol; Nakhodka, Primorsky Krai; and Khabarovsk.[70] Russian sources claimed that many of the attackers corresponded with “curators” who claimed to be Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) officers, who directed the arsonists to attack the military registration and enlistment offices.[71] The “curators” reportedly claimed that scammers stole the arsonists’ money and stored the funds in the military registration and enlistment offices, and Russian sources claimed that the “curators” targeted elderly Russian civilians.

The Russian government will provide legal combat veteran status to private military company (PMC) personnel who fought in Ukraine in a significant victory for pro-Wagner Group voices. Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin signed resolutions on August 1 clarifying rules on issuing combat veteran status to fighters contracted with organizations assisting the Russian military, including PMCs, who fought in occupied Donbas since February 24, 2022, and occupied Kherson and Zaporizhia oblasts since September 30, 2022.[72] Wagner financier Yevgeny Prigozhin has long advocated for legal combat veteran status and other Russian government benefits for PMC personnel already afforded to conventional Russian military personnel, and this provision is notable following Prigozhin’s June 24 rebellion.[73]

The Russian MoD reportedly continues recruitment efforts in penal colonies as part of crypto-mobilization efforts. Russian opposition outlet *Mobilization News* reported that the MoD recruited 30 women from the IK-7 penal colony in Lipetsk Oblast under two-year contracts to perform unspecified tasks.[74]

### **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 President Vladimir Putin pushed the Kremlin narrative of “Novorossiia” and announced Russian government initiatives to provide books to occupied territories of Ukraine on August 2. Putin began a videoconference with Russian government officials on August 2 by discussing the integration of Russian occupied territories in Ukraine into the “all-Russian cultural space” as “the primordially Russian lands of the Donbas and Novorossiia returned home to their native [land].”[75] Putin announced that the Russian government will print and deliver more than 2.5 million books from a government-approved list to libraries and schools in occupied territories of Ukraine.[76] The President’s Reserve Fund will finance the program and the Presidential Administration will oversee its implementation.[77]

Russian authorities are using public goods and services to further force passportization efforts in occupied territories of Ukraine. Russian Minister of Digital Development Mikhail Shadayev

announced on August 2 that citizens in Russia and in Russian occupied territories in Ukraine will be able to access digital books through a smartphone application after registering their Russian passport with a public library.[78] This program requires citizens to obtain Russian passports and register with local authorities in order to receive certain public goods and services and is an iteration of previous seemingly-innocuous measures in which Russian authorities have required Ukrainian citizens to register and interact with government entities in order to receive social benefits or official Russian documents.[79] These regulations enable Russian authorities to increase their control over occupied territories in Ukraine.

Russian authorities continue efforts to indoctrinate and strengthen control over the youth population in Russia and in occupied territories of Ukraine. Russian Minister of Education Sergey Kravtsov announced that the Russian government has recently updated the history textbooks for 11th grade students in Russia and in occupied territories in Ukraine to cover more contemporary topics such as the “reunification of Crimea and Sevastopol,” “the 2014 coup d'état in Ukraine,” and “the causes and course of the ‘special military operation’” in Ukraine.[80]

Russian authorities continue to deport or threaten to deport Ukrainian citizens to Russian territory. Ukrainian Kherson Oblast Military Advisor Serhiy Khlan reported that Russian authorities in occupied territories in Kherson Oblast are threatening Ukrainian citizens with deportation to Russia if they do not obtain Russian passports.[81] The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported on August 2 that Russian authorities in occupied territories of Ukraine have plans to relocate 10,000 Ukrainian children to camps in Russia.[82] The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported that deported Ukrainian children are often victims of crimes in these camps, highlighting a camp in Anapa, Krasnodar Krai where Ukrainian children have faced sexual assault.[83] These reports of abuse parallel previous reports on the mistreatment of deported Ukrainian children in state-sponsored orphanages in Crimea.[84] ISW has previously reported on numerous instances of Russian occupation officials deporting Ukrainian children to Russia.[85]

**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.**

Nothing significant to report.

**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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