

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, May 19, 2023

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May 19, 2023, 7:30pm 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 3pm ET on May 19. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the May 20 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

A Ukrainian official stated that Russian forces have concentrated most of their available reserves to the Bakhmut area and slowed Ukrainian counterattacks in the past 24 hours. Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Malyar stated on May 19 that Russian forces concentrated most of their reserves in the Bakhmut direction, which has slowed the rate of Ukrainian advances.^[1] Malyar also stated that Ukrainian forces continue to counterattack on the northern and southern outskirts of Bakhmut and advanced 500 meters on one flank and 1,000 meters on the other.^[2] Some Russian milbloggers celebrated the slowed Ukrainian rate of advance and claimed that the Ukrainian forces are unable to sustain prolonged localized counterattacks around Bakhmut.^[3] Russian forces on Bakhmut's flanks likely remain weak, however; Wagner Group financier Yevgeny Prigozhin continued to criticize the Russian 4th Motorized Rifle Brigade (2nd Luhansk People's Republic Army Corps) on May 19 for retreating from defensive lines southwest of Ivanivske (6km west of Bakhmut).^[4] **Ukrainian counterattacks near Bakhmut have notably likely eliminated the threat of a Russian encirclement of Ukrainian forces in Bakhmut and forced Russian troops to allocate scarce military resources to defend against a limited and localized offensive effort, as Ukrainian command likely intended.**

Russian forces conducted another series of drone and missile strikes across Ukraine on the night of May 18 to 19. Ukrainian military sources reported that Russia launched six Kalibr cruise missiles and 22 Shahed-131/136 drones at Ukraine from the direction of the Black Sea.^[5] The Ukrainian General Staff noted that Ukrainian air defenses shot down 16 drones and three Kalibr missiles, despite the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD)'s claim that Russian forces struck all intended targets.^[6] Dnipropetrovsk Oblast Head Serhii Lysak reported explosions near Kryvyi Rih following Russian strikes in the area.^[7] Ukrainian Main Intelligence Directorate (GUR) representative Vadym Skibitsky noted that the recent uptick in Russian drone and missile strikes, as well as artillery strikes along the entire frontline, are meant to disrupt Ukrainian counteroffensive plans and preparations.^[8] ISW previously assessed on May 14 that the recent increase in Russian strikes on Ukrainian rear areas is likely part of a new air campaign premised on degrading Ukrainian counteroffensive capabilities in the near term.^[9] Skibitsky additionally noted that Russia can only produce 25 Kalibr cruise missiles, 35 Kh-101s, two Kinzhals, and 5 ballistic 9M723 Iskander-Ms per

month.^[10] Considering that Russian forces have launched missile strikes at rear areas of Ukraine on a near daily-basis thus far in May, it is likely that they are rapidly expending their stocks of precision munitions, potentially at a rate that exceeds production capabilities.

President Joe Biden reportedly informed G7 leaders on May 19 that Washington will support a joint effort to train Ukrainian pilots on F-16s and other fourth generation aircraft. This decision marks a sharp turn in US policy vis a vis fourth generation aircraft in Ukraine and follows Biden’s meetings with various G7 leaders in Hiroshima, Japan on May 19. *Yahoo News* relatedly reported on May 18 that Ukrainian pilots outperformed standard Pentagon expectations for F-16 training time in a flight simulator and would be able to operate F-16s in only four months as opposed to the anticipated 18 months, citing an internal US Air Force assessment.^[11]

The Kremlin reportedly spent 3.1 trillion rubles (approximately \$38.7 billion) in an undisclosed section of the Russian budget in 2023, likely to fund the war and maintain occupied territories in Ukraine. Independent Russian news outlet *The Bell* reported that the Russian Ministry of Finance released data on May 16 on budget expenditures since the start of 2023 amounting to a total of 11.9 trillion rubles (\$148.5 billion) with only 8.8 trillion rubles (\$109.8 billion) accounted for in Russia’s public budget, leaving 3.1 trillion rubles – over a quarter of Russia’s expenditures – unaccounted for.^[12] *The Bell* reported that most undisclosed budget items account for defense, national security, and law enforcement, and that some may fall onto social and other expenditures in occupied Ukraine. *The Bell* also reported that the unspecified spending is higher than in the same time period in previous years. ISW continues to assess that the Russian economy will struggle to meet the needs of the large-scale war that the Russian military is fighting in Ukraine and to sustain its occupation of Ukrainian territories.^[13]

Moscow Mayor Sergey Sobyenin announced that he will run for reelection as a member of Russian President Vladimir Putin’s United Russia Party for the first time, prompting criticism from select Russian ultranationalists. Russian “Civil Solidarity” movement head Georgy Fedorov argued on May 19 that Sobyenin’s United Russia candidacy suggests that “all political processes in Russia are now only possible in the pre-existing political party system,” that Russia is set to experience “great turbulence,” and that Russia’s “non-systemic opposition has been crushed.”^[14] Former Russian officer and ardent ultranationalist Igor Girkin amplified Georgy’s statements and sarcastically called United Russia the “party of crooks and thieves,” a well-known slogan used by Russian opposition figure Alexey Navalny.^[15] Sobyenin has held the post of Moscow Mayor nominally as an independent since 2010, although his United Russia candidacy is likely simply a public formalization of his longstanding relationship with United Russia, as Sobyenin has been a member of the party since 2001. United Russia likely seeks to buttress its own popularity (which stands around 45% in Moscow) with that of Sobyenin, who has polled at 74%.^[16] These select ultranationalists likely responded to Sobyenin’s announcement to critique what they view as United Russia’s attempt to monopolize support amongst the Russian ultranationalist constituency and were likely not genuinely reacting to the loss of an independent figure. The Kremlin may additionally have publicly linked Sobyenin to United Russia to remove a nominally independent figure, regardless of his actual independence. ISW previously assessed that the Kremlin will likely attempt to solidify United Russia as the definitive pro-war party during elections in 2023 and 2024, and Russian ultranationalist communities with their own political ambitions may increasingly seek to undercut these efforts.^[17]

A Ukrainian source reported that elements of two spetsnaz brigades of the Main Directorate of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation (GRU) have deployed to border areas of Kursk Oblast in order to conduct counter-sabotage activities and provocations. The Ukrainian Resistance Center stated on May 19 that the 3rd and 22nd Guards Special Purpose brigades have deployed to Tyotkino, Kursk Oblast to prevent cross-border Ukrainian partisan activities, carry out cross-border provocations, and raise the morale of Russian forces.^[18] ISW has previously assessed that such Russian deployments to border areas are likely an attempt to fix a portion of Ukrainian forces to border regions and disperse them from critical frontline areas.^[19] Elements of the 3rd Guards Special Purpose Brigade have been previously reported near the Kreminna area of Luhansk Oblast, while elements of the 22nd Guards Special Purpose Brigade were reportedly active in the Orikhiv area in western Zaporizhia Oblast.^[20] It is unclear why Russian leadership may have made the decision to remove such elements from active sectors of the frontline to Russian rear areas, and it may be possible that these units suffered previous losses in recent operations and have been withdrawn and redeployed in order to rest and refit. The deployment of these units to border areas is unlikely to have the desired informational or operational effects.

Key Takeaways

- **A Ukrainian official stated that Russian forces have concentrated most of their available reserves to the Bakhmut area and slowed Ukrainian counterattacks in the past 24 hours.**
- **Ukrainian counterattacks near Bakhmut have notably likely eliminated the threat of a Russian encirclement of Ukrainian forces in Bakhmut and forced Russian troops to allocate scarce military resources to defend against a limited and localized offensive effort, as Ukrainian command likely intended.**
- **Russian forces conducted another series of drone and missile strikes across Ukraine on the night of May 18 to 19.**
- **President Joe Biden reportedly informed G7 leaders on May 19 that Washington will support a joint effort to train Ukrainian pilots on F-16s and other fourth generation aircraft.**
- **The Kremlin reportedly spent 3.1 trillion rubles (approximately \$38.7 billion) in an undisclosed section of the Russian budget in 2023, likely to fund the war and maintain occupied territories in Ukraine.**
- **Moscow Mayor Sergey Sobyanin announced that he will run for reelection as a member of Russian President Vladimir Putin's United Russia Party for the first time, prompting criticism from select Russian ultranationalists.**
- **A Ukrainian source reported that elements of two brigades of the Main Directorate of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation (GRU) have deployed to border areas of Kursk Oblast in order to conduct counter-sabotage activities and provocations.**
- **Russian sources claimed that Russian troops continued offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove line.**
- **Russian forces continued to conduct ground attacks in the Bakhmut area and slightly increased their tempo of ground attacks along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line.**

- **Ukrainian officials stated that Russian forces are preparing defenses by flooding fields in Russian occupied Zaporizhia Oblast.**
- **Russian Security Council Deputy Chairman Dmitry Medvedev claimed that the Russian military has recruited 117,400 contract personnel in volunteer formations since January 1, 2023.**
- **The Russian State Duma adopted the final reading of a draft law authorizing regional elections under martial law.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of May 19, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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

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

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.

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

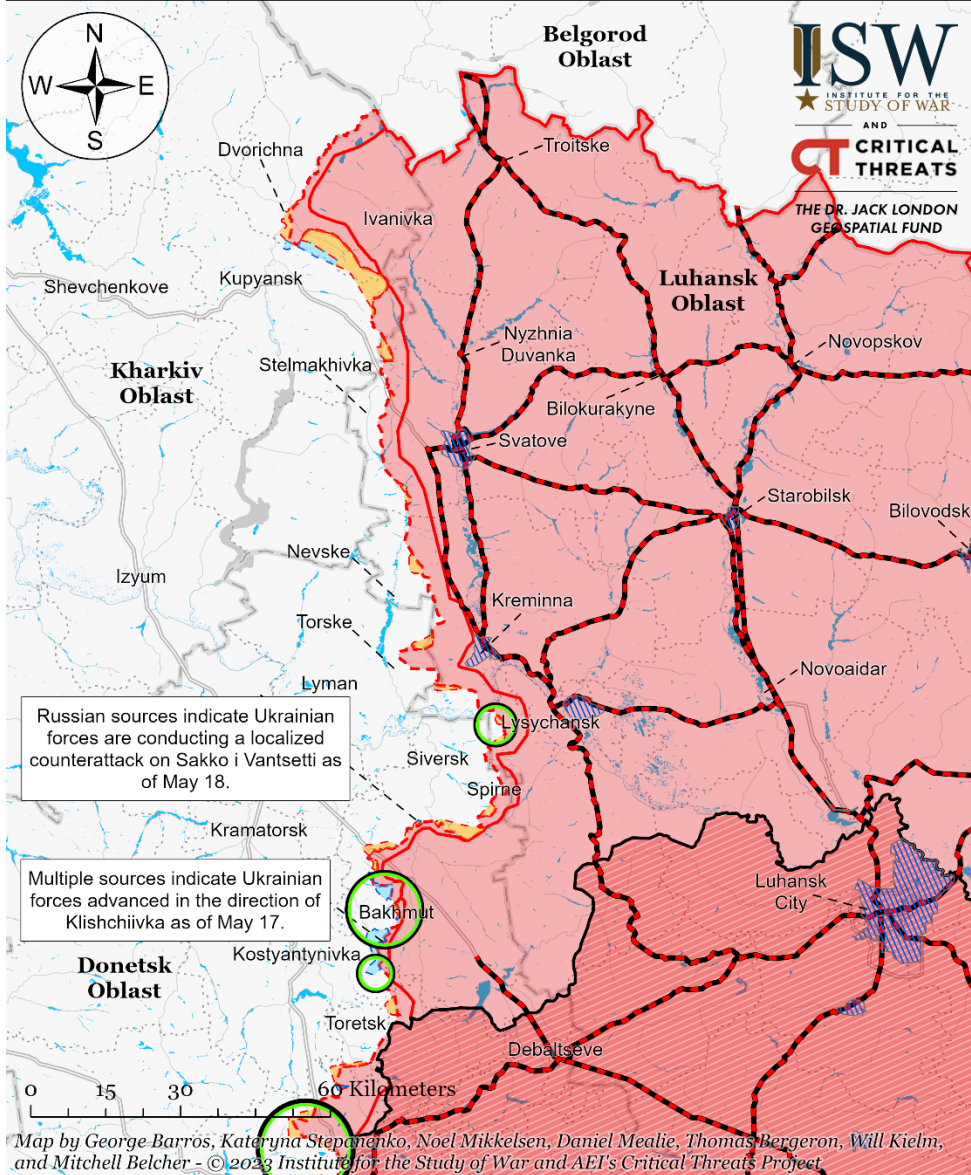
Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

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 sources claimed that Russian troops continued offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove line on May 19. The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Western Group of Forces units (primarily from the Western Military District) disrupted Ukrainian sabotage and reconnaissance groups near Tymkivka (18km east of Kupyansk) and Synkivka (10km northeast of Kupyansk).[\[21\]](#) A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces lost control over a tactically significant area of high ground west of Masyutivka (13km northeast of Kupyansk) and that battles are ongoing along the line of contact between Masyutivka and Lyman Pershyi (11km northeast of Kupyansk).[\[22\]](#) Geolocated combat footage posted on May 19 shows Ukrainian forces striking Russian positions near Masyutivka.[\[23\]](#) Another Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces attacked Novoselivske, 14km northeast of Svatove.[\[24\]](#)

Russian forces continued limited ground attacks near Kreminna on May 19. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian troops conducted unsuccessful offensive operations near Bilohorivka (10km south of Kreminna).[\[25\]](#) A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted a counterattack near Bilohorivka and recaptured several unspecified lost positions in the area.[\[26\]](#) The milblogger additionally claimed that Russian forces advanced in the Serebrianske forest area near Shyplivka (10km south of Kreminna) and attacked west and northwest of Kreminna near Nevske (18km northwest) and Makiivka (22km northwest).[\[27\]](#)

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of May 19, 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: 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.

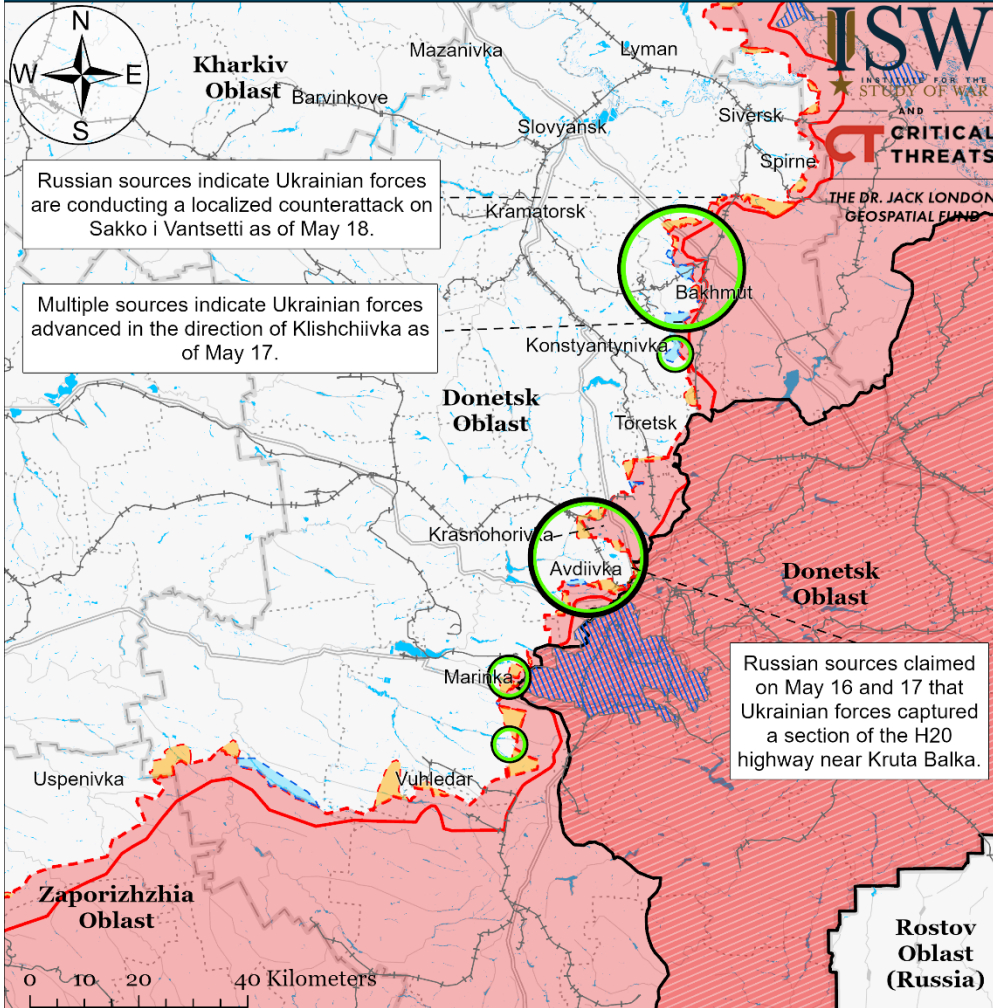
Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Donetsk Oblast (Russian Objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)

Russian forces continued to conduct ground attacks in the Bakhmut area on May 19. Russian milbloggers made varied claims that Wagner Group forces made either some advances within or completely cleared a Ukrainian fortified area in western Bakhmut on May 18 and 19.[\[28\]](#) Geolocated footage suggests that Ukrainian forces maintain positions in the fortified area as of May 18, however.[\[29\]](#) A milblogger claimed on May 19 that Wagner forces also advanced towards the entrance to Bakhmut on the T0504 Bakhmut-Chasiv Yar highway in the southwestern part of the city.[\[30\]](#) The Ukrainian General Staff reported continued fighting in Bakhmut and that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful offensive operations towards Ivanivske (6km west of Bakhmut) and Bila Hora (14km southwest of Bakhmut).[\[31\]](#) Various voices in the Russian information space are prematurely declaring that Wagner forces have completed the capture of Bakhmut on May 19, drawing ire from other dominant voices.[\[32\]](#) ISW has observed no indication that Ukrainian forces are conducting a controlled withdrawal from their remaining positions inside the city or that Wagner assaults imminently threaten to capture all remaining Ukrainian positions.

Russian forces slightly increased their tempo of ground attacks along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line on May 19 following a week-long slowdown. The Ukrainian General Staff reported on May 19 that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful ground attacks near Novokalynove (8km north of Avdiivka), Stepove (2km north of Avdiivka), Avdiivka, Sieverne (5km west of Avdiivka), Pervomaiske (11km southwest of Avdiivka), Marinka (27km southwest of Avdiivka), and Novomykhailivka (36km southwest of Avdiivka), a notably greater number of settlements than the Ukrainian General Staff has listed over the past week.[\[33\]](#) A Russian source claimed that there were no significant changes in the Avdiivka direction and that Russian forces made marginal advances in western Marinka as of May 18.[\[34\]](#) The source also claimed on May 19 that Ukrainian forces increased their rate of artillery fire in the Avdiivka area.[\[35\]](#) Russian independent investigative outlet *Vazhnye Istorii* (iStories) reported that a Ukrainian HIMARS strike destroyed up to 10 Russian T-90 tanks east of Marinka on an unspecified date.[\[36\]](#)

A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted a counterattack near Solodke (32km southwest of Donetsk City) in western Donetsk Oblast on May 19.[\[37\]](#) The source claimed that Ukrainian forces are attempting to advance southeast of the settlement towards the H20 highway to Volnovakha but did not specify an outcome of the attack. Ukrainian forces have recently conducted limited and localized counterattacks in western Donetsk Oblast.[\[38\]](#)

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of May 19, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

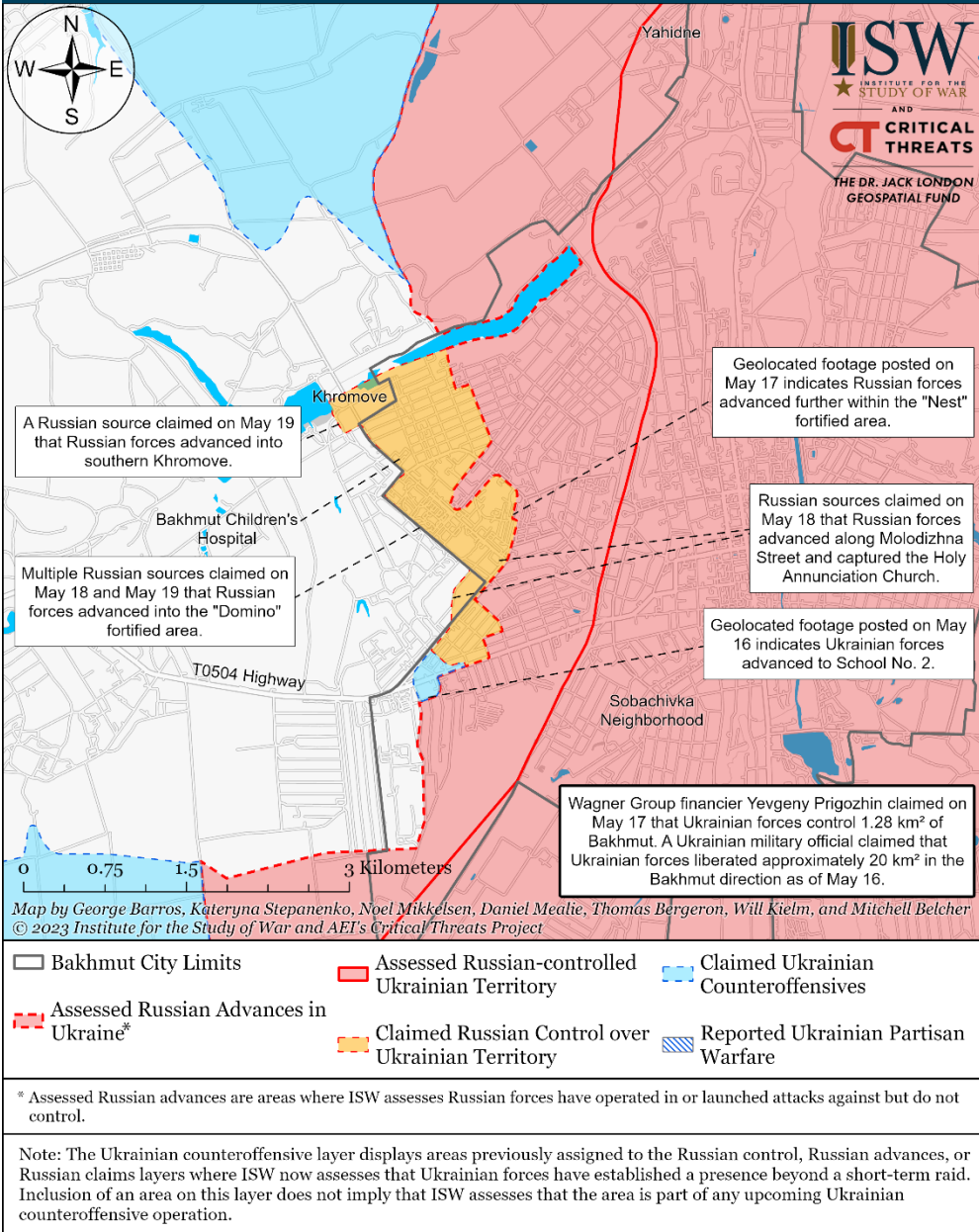


- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- + Major Railroads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

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Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of May 19, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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

Ukrainian Zaporizhia Oblast Military Administration and Ukrainian Melitopol Mayor Ivan Fedorov reported on May 18 and 19 that Russian forces are preparing for an anticipated Ukrainian counteroffensive by flooding the fields of Vasylyvskyyi raion (about 35km south of Zaporizhzhia City) and Yakymivskyyi raion (in the Melitopol area).^[39] ISW previously reported on Russian efforts to

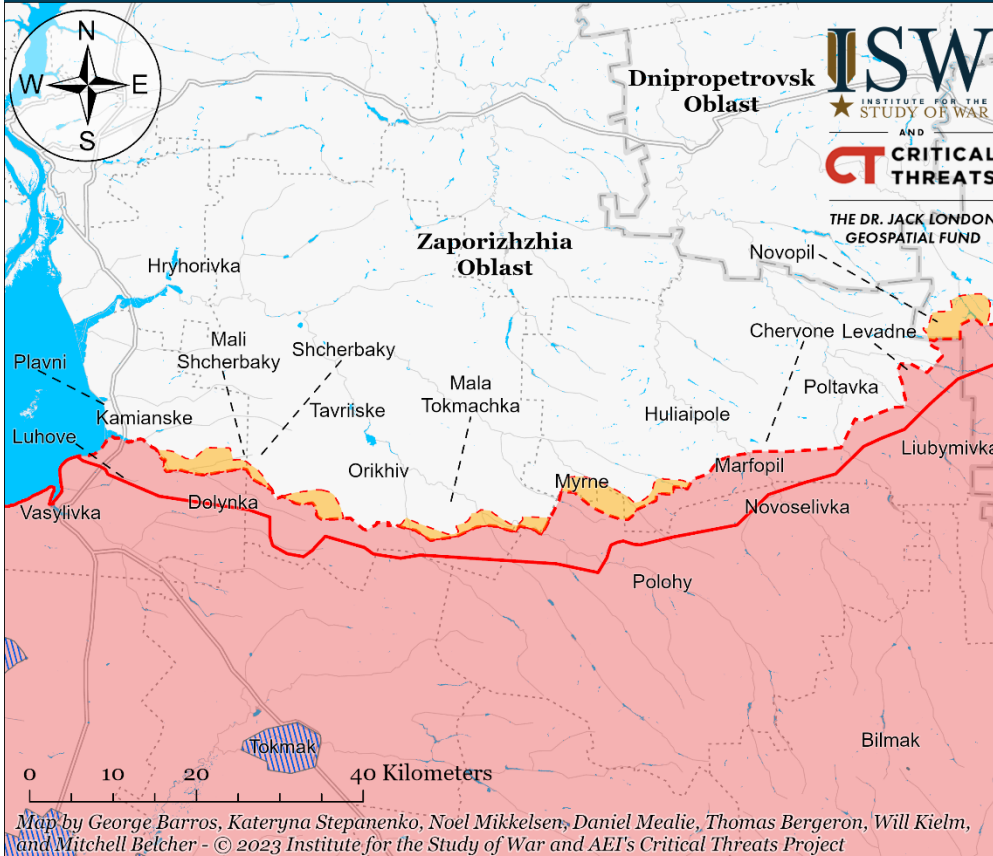
flood the area near the Kakhovka Reservoir in a misguided attempted to bolster defensive preparations.[\[40\]](#)

Russian forces continue to endanger the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP). *Reuters* reported on May 19 that Russian forces have been enhancing defensive positions in and around the ZNPP by reportedly laying mines, digging trenches, and establishing firing positions on top of some ZNPP buildings.[\[41\]](#) International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director General Rafael Grossi stated on May 19 that unspecified actors fired on the ZNPP and called on the combatants not to use the ZNPP as a military base.[\[42\]](#)

Russian sources claimed on May 19 that Ukrainian drones targeted Russian occupied Crimea. Crimean occupation head Sergey Aksyonov claimed that Russian forces shot down four Ukrainian drones north of Dzhankoy and one near Solone Ozero.[\[43\]](#) ISW has not observed visual evidence of downed drones in Crimea.

The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) published footage on May 19 purportedly showing Russian Minister of Defense Sergei Shoigu visiting a forward command post of an unspecified formation of the Eastern Group of Forces (Eastern Military District) in the Zaporizhia direction.[\[44\]](#) Shoigu met with the Eastern Group of Forces commander – whom the MoD did not name – and headquarter officers and instructed them to continue to conduct reconnaissance and presented awards to servicemen. Putin reportedly dismissed Russian Eastern Military District (EMD) Commander Colonel General Rustam Muradov in March or April 2023, but the Russian MoD has not confirmed either Muradov's dismissal or the appointment of his replacement.[\[45\]](#) The MoD likely posted this footage in order to posture coherency in the command and control of the EMD, who are responsible for a large sector of the front in southern Ukraine.

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhzhia as of May 19, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

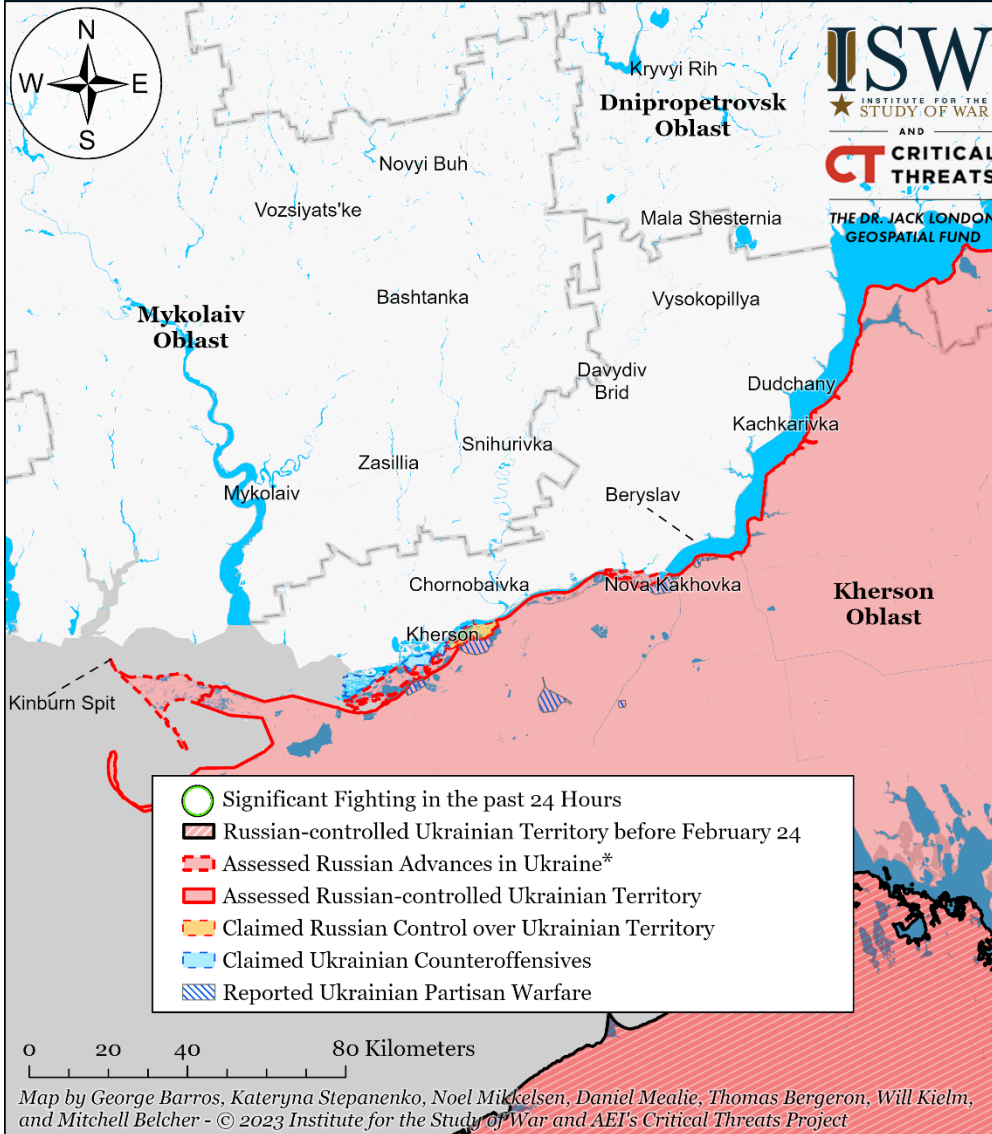


- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Claimed Ukrainian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

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

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Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of May 19, 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.

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

Russian Security Council Deputy Chairperson Dmitry Medvedev claimed on May 18 that the Russian military has recruited 117,400 contract personnel into volunteer formations since January 1,

2023.[\[46\]](#) ISW has not observed confirmation of this figure, but it is possible that the Kremlin’s focus on the expansion of regionally based volunteer battalions in recent months has produced 117,400 recruited personnel.

The Kremlin continues to rely on regional officials to recruit contract servicemembers. Russian opposition outlet *Verstka* reported on May 19 that Russian regional officials in the Siberian Federal District began receiving personal orders to participate in the recruitment of contract servicemembers and that there are discussions that regional industry ministers and deputy prime ministers will receive quotas for recruitment.[\[47\]](#) One of *Verstka*’s sources reportedly stated that the Kremlin’s first and main task for regional officials is to recruit contract servicemembers.[\[48\]](#)

The United States, Australia, and G7 member states have imposed a new round of sanctions against Russia as of May 19.[\[49\]](#) The United Kingdom (UK) government sanctioned 86 individuals and entities connected to Russian theft of Ukrainian grain, advanced military technology, and remaining revenue sources.[\[50\]](#) The new UK sanctions also target individuals and entities connected to Russian nuclear energy company Rosenergoatom’s support for Russian military efforts.[\[51\]](#) The US sanctions, in coordination with G7 member states and other partners, target 22 individuals and 104 entities involved in Russian sanctions evasion, critical technology supply chains, future energy extraction capabilities, and financial services.[\[52\]](#)

The Russian defense industrial base (DIB) is reportedly relying on intermediaries in Kazakhstan to acquire microelectronics and drones. German outlet *Der Spiegel* reported that Russian drone seller Celestial Mechanics receives drones from Kazakh enterprise Aspan Arba and that Russian company “Stack” imports microelectronics from Kazakh supplier “Da Group 22,” which sources its microchips from German company Elix-st.[\[53\]](#)

The Russian Federal State Statistic Service (Rosstat) released new demographic data that continues to highlight demographic anxieties in Russia. Rosstat’s statistics purportedly show that up to 1 million 20–40-year-old men left Russia to fight in Ukraine or to flee the country.[\[54\]](#) Rosstat reportedly highlighted that this figure accounts for five percent of the male population who are of reproductive age.[\[55\]](#) ISW has previously assessed that Russian nationalist figures will continue to weaponize intensely nationalist rhetoric in response to substantial demographic impacts within Russia associated with the war in Ukraine.[\[56\]](#)

Russian volunteers and security contractors continue their efforts to increase the production of electronic warfare (EW) systems. The Russian Business Espionage Counteraction Laboratory, an information security contractor, stated on May 19 that it is organizing a meeting on May 26 for Russian developers of small EW systems to show off promising prototypes. The laboratory claimed that it will evaluate product performance in conjunction with the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD), Russian special services, and Wagner Group representatives.[\[57\]](#) Russian outlet *RIA Katyusha* claimed on May 18 that it is in the final stages of producing its own electronic warfare station which it previously crowdsourced on its Telegram channel.[\[58\]](#) *RIA Katyusha* claimed that it will be sending the electronic warfare systems to an unspecified regiment from Tver Oblast operating in the Svatove direction.[\[59\]](#)

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)

The Russian State Duma adopted the final reading of a draft law on May 18 authorizing regional elections under martial law.^[60] The law states that the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) and Russian MoD must approve elections in territories under martial law, as well as allows Russian occupation authorities to reduce the duration of voting and establish other unspecified features of voting.^[61]

Russian occupation authorities continue to forcibly deport Ukrainian children to Crimea under the guise of summer vacations. A Russian source stated on May 18 that children receiving treatment at a psychological and social rehabilitation center in occupied Melitopol, Zaporizhia Oblast, are participating in restful activities in Yevpatoriya, Crimea.^[62]

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

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

The Belarusian Ministry of Defense (MoD) reported on May 19 that Belarusian military leadership will hold the annual meeting “Military Security and State Defense” with Belarusian oblast, military recruitment oblast, and Minsk city administration heads in Gomel on May 16 to discuss joint operations and improve weapons handling skills.^[63] Belarusian Special Operations Commander Major General Vadim Denisenko stated that Belarusian forces have revised the training program for reservists which would allow them to reach service requirements in a short amount of time.^[64]

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

[1] <https://t.me/annamaliar/765>

[2] https://suspilne dot media/480544-poskodzenij-patriot-polagodili-ta-povernuli-v-strij-pid-bahmutom-ta-marinkou-zapekli-boi-450-den-vijni-onlajn/?anchor=live_1684497507&utm_source=copylink&utm_medium=ps

- [3] <https://t.me/milchronicles/1939>
; <https://t.me/milchronicles/1940>; https://t.me/boris_rozhin/86244;
https://t.me/boris_rozhin/86239
- [4] https://t.me/concordgroup_official/997
- [5] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0YQznhqzyg69EAbcTMPonoUx8dcoHedM7QA6TPxGjXk5UGVaNtaant44R6nr1701Gl>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidou7m9CwfuG8TNjQRypGa7cmk48ESwgybrSz6q1UMAtAQUALnuhQC2ih8QD6sojAAol>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0BmwkMAiBygu3sYXJMvdaP6UNuAQDhreFacQQqcHSmj9m3XYxjwveNu4VUFpBbVCvl>; <https://t.me/astrapress/27377>; <https://www.facebook.com/JointForcesCommandAFU/posts/pfbid02jfrUCwGSCY68nQU4tZnSZd2LuAjCQkZfiCNkNm7tTQ8fW7fXKDYNxEw9dS8xLaLnl>; <https://t.me/kpszs/2524>
- [6] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidou7m9CwfuG8TNjQRypGa7cmk48ESwgybrSz6q1UMAtAQUALnuhQC2ih8QD6sojAAol>; https://t.me/mod_russia/26686
- [7] <https://t.me/dnipropetrovskaODA/4705>
- [8] <https://gur.gov.ua/content/obstrilamy-rosiia-khoche-zirvaty-kontrnastup.html>
- [9] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar051423>
- [10] <https://www.rbc.ua/rus/news/polyuvannya-patriot-ta-zriv-kontrnastupu-1684444380.html>
- [11] <https://news.yahoo.com/exclusive-us-could-train-ukrainian-pilots-to-fly-f-16s-in-4-months-184136820.html>
- [12] <https://thebell.io/sekretnye-raskhody-byudzheta-prevysili-3-trln-rublej>
- [13] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounders/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-february-9-2023>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounders/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-march-16-2023>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounders/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-february-1-2023>;
- [14] <https://www.interfax.ru/russia/902186> <https://t.me/strelkovii/4932>; https://t.me/georgy_fedorov/1849
- [15] <https://t.me/strelkovii/4931> ; <https://t.me/strelkovii/4932>;
- [16] <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/05/19/moscow-mayor-aligns-with-pro-putin-party-for-re-election-bid-a81201>
- [17] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar041523>
- [18] <https://sprotyv.mod.gov.ua/rosijske-gru-pryslalo-spetspryznachentsiv-dlya-dyversij-na-kordoni-z-ukrayinoyu/>
- [19] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar050323>
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