

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, October 12, 2023

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October 12, 2023, 8pm 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.

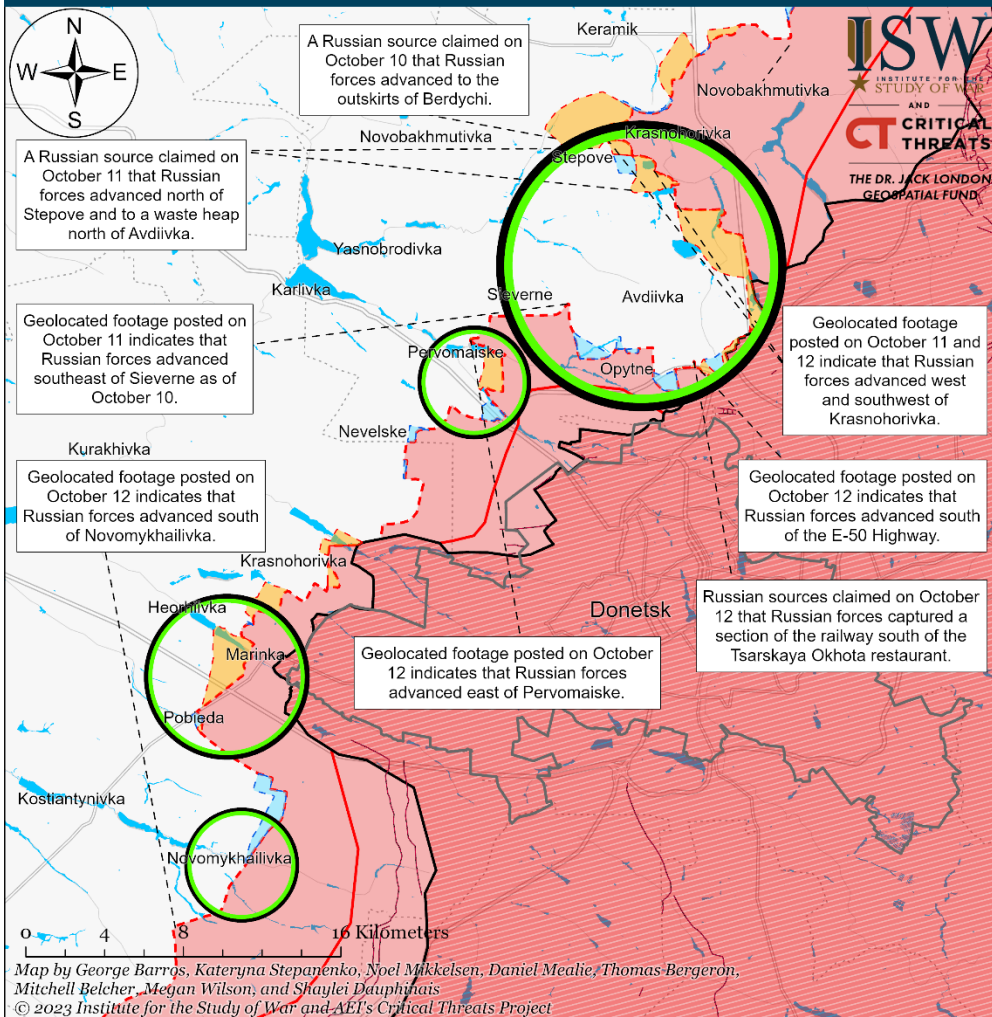
Click [here](#) to access ISW’s archive of interactive time-lapse maps of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. These maps complement the static control-of-terrain map that ISW produces daily by showing a dynamic frontline. ISW will update this time-lapse map archive monthly.

Note: The data cut-off for this product was 2:30pm ET on October 12. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the October 13 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

NOTE: *ISW has added a new section on Russian information operations and narratives to the daily Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, found at the end of the update.*

Russian forces likely launched a significant and ongoing offensive effort around Avdiivka, Donetsk Oblast on October 10. ISW observed Russian forces simultaneously attacking northwest, west, and south of Avdiivka using armored assault groups, rotary wing aircraft, and concentrated artillery starting on October 10.[1] Avdiivka City Military Administration Head Vitaliy Barabash indicated that Russian forces are carrying out assaults with air support in 10 to 12 directions around the settlement.[2] Ukrainian military observers framed Russian offensive operations against Avdiivka as a “major attack” and noted that Russian forces used an unusually high number of armored vehicles in combat.[3] Russian forces’ increased use of armored vehicles and aviation – alongside persistent simultaneous ground attacks – indicates that Russian forces are conducting an offensive effort more significant in scope and intent than ISW previously assessed on October 10 and October 11.[4] **ISW is revising its assessment that Russian attacks around Avdiivka are local efforts intended solely to fix Ukrainian forces but is not prepared to assess the exact objectives and likely outcome of Russian efforts in the Avdiivka direction at this time.**

Assessed Control of Terrain near Donetsk City as of October 12, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



- Donetsk City Limits
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Russian Field Fortifications

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

Russian forces have not secured any major breakthroughs near Avdiivka as of October 12 and are unlikely to immediately cut off Ukrainian forces in the city. ISW estimates that Russian forces have captured 4.52 square kilometers of territory from different directions around Avdiivka since October 10 and that Russian forces are 3.32km away from a Ukrainian ground line of communication (GLOC) along the O0562 highway from the south and 5.25km from the north of Avdiivka, and Russian claims of advances beyond these distances are likely overstated. Russian sources claimed that Russian forces are attempting to create a cauldron around Ukrainian forces in Avdiivka, but quickly acknowledged that current advances are slow.[5] Donetsk People’s Republic (DNR) Head Denis Pushilin claimed that it is too early to discuss a “full-scale [Ukrainian] exodus

from the city” despite some Russian advances in the area.[6] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces have already advanced 12km in the Avdiivka direction despite geolocated footage indicating only that Russian forces made limited advances north west, south, and west of Avdiivka as of October 12 and did not immediately threaten Ukrainian forces with encirclement.[7] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces gained additional ground on a waste heap on Avdiivka’s northern flank near the Avdiivka Coke Plant; seized a section of a railroad south of Avdiivka; and advanced around the city, but ISW cannot confirm these claims at the time.[8] Russian sources also claimed that Russian forces destroyed the Ocheretyne railway station (13km northwest of Avdiivka), which they claimed supports Ukrainian logistics to Avdiivka.[9]

Geolocated footage indicates that Russian forces have likely lost at least a battalion tactical group’s (BTG’s) worth of armored vehicles in offensive operations around Avdiivka. A reliable X (Twitter) user observed on October 12 that Ukrainian forces destroyed 33 Russian armored vehicles and 15 tanks since October 10 near Avdiivka.[10] A Ukrainian reserve officer stated that conservative estimates suggest Ukrainian forces have destroyed a minimum of 36 Russian armored vehicles including tanks, armored personnel carriers, and transport vehicles.[11] A milblogger also claimed that both sides are suffering “significant losses” in operations around Avdiivka.[12] Footage published on October 11 purportedly shows a Russian armored vehicle in a column near Avdiivka falling into a body of water, and geolocated footage published on October 11 and 12 shows Ukrainian forces striking Russian vehicle columns around Avdiivka.[13] This footage indicates that Russian armored forces may not be applying lessons learned from previous offensive operations near Vuhledar in February 2023 or around Kyiv in March 2022, when Ukrainian forces destroyed a disorderly advancing column of Russian armored vehicles.[14] ISW previously reported that Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces operating around Avdiivka were effectively incorporating lessons learned from Russian defensive operations in southern Ukraine.[15] While Russian implementation of lessons learned will vary and Russian forces have achieved some advances in the Avdiivka area which were likely enabled by more effective units, ISW’s October 11 assessment was likely overstated.

Defending Ukrainian forces are inflicting relatively heavy losses and suppressing Russian logistics near Avdiivka, likely slowing down the Russian pace of advance. A Russian milblogger claimed that the pace of Russian advance had slowed down and Russian forces are now focusing on “quality” attacks after Russian forces endured initial high equipment losses.[16] Geolocated footage published on October 12 shows that Ukrainian forces destroyed a bridge northeast of Avdiivka between Yasynuvata and Horlivka.[17] A Russian milblogger claimed that the bridge’s destruction will negatively impact Russian logistics in the Avdiivka area and that Russian forces will likely face difficulties attempting to repair the bridge due to its proximity to the frontline.[18]

The Russian information space is likely exaggerating the degree of Russian successes on the Avdiivka front and will continue to do so despite military failures or a slow pace of advance. Russian sources are celebrating Russian offensive operations but are largely not reacting to the significant vehicle losses sustained in just a few days of fighting. This muted response is largely inconsistent with prior outcry when Russian forces lost a whole armored vehicle column as the Russian offensive against Vuhledar culminated in February 2023.[19] The milbloggers are likely engaging in self-censorship following the recent arrests of prominent critical information space voices. Many prominent Russian milbloggers also have strong connections to formations in the

Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) People's Militia, many of which are fighting in the Avdiivka area, further providing incentive for milbloggers to censor defeats and exaggerate claimed victories.[20] One prominent milblogger praised the Russian military command for providing information about claimed successes and noted that "this is the first operation in a long time where the [Russian] command tried to create an information cap."[21]

Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations near Bakhmut and in western Zaporizhia Oblast and reportedly advanced in both sectors of the front on October 12. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces achieved some unspecified successes east of Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut) and east of Andriivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut).[22] Ukrainian Eastern Group of Forces Spokesperson Captain Ilya Yevlash stated that Ukrainian forces are continuing offensives in the Bakhmut direction and have advanced several hundred meters in unspecified areas.[23] The Ukrainian General Staff and Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces Spokesperson Colonel Oleksandr Shtupun reported that Ukrainian forces improved their tactical positions west of Robotyne.[24]

Russian "Vostok" Battalion Commander Alexander Khodakovsky advocated for Russian forces to freeze the frontlines in Ukraine in order to replace exhausted mobilized personnel with fresh contract servicemen and launch a renewed offensive effort. Khodakovsky stated on October 12 that Russian forces could conduct a "deliberate final phase" to end the war after replacing tired units with contract servicemen, which aligns with ISW's longstanding assessment that Russian forces will almost certainly take advantage of any short or long-term freeze to refresh their forces and restart fighting at a later date.[25] Khodakovsky also noted that Russian forces will likely face effective Ukrainian defenses and resistance as Russian forces attempt to advance further west into Ukraine. Imprisoned former Russian officer and ardent nationalist Igor Girkin has consistently claimed that a specific faction of the Russian leadership, which Khodakovsky appears to be a member of, has long advocated for freezing the current frontline in Ukraine.[26] Girkin claimed on October 9 that Russian forces will continue to conduct a strategic defense to freeze the frontlines ahead of the Russian presidential elections in March 2024.[27]

Russian forces conducted a series of drone strikes across Ukraine, targeting port infrastructure in southern Ukraine and critical infrastructure in Kharkiv Oblast on the night of October 11 to 12. Ukrainian official military sources reported that Ukrainian air defenses shot down 28 of the 33 Shahed-131/136 drones.[28] Ukrainian Southern Operational Command reported that an unspecified number of Russian drones struck the port area in Odesa Oblast.[29] Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence (GUR) Head Lieutenant General Kyrylo Budanov stated on October 12 that the Russian military is stockpiling weapons intended for strikes against Ukrainian energy facilities and the oil and gas sector.[30] Ukrainian Kharkiv Oblast Administration Head Oleh Synhubov stated that a Russian drone partially damaged a critical infrastructure facility in Kharkiv Oblast and noted that Russian forces will increasingly target the Ukrainian energy sector in the fall and winter.[31] Ukrainian Minister of Energy Herman Halushchenko reported that Ukrainian power engineers are undergoing training in case of massive power outages but noted that it is difficult to predict the scale and impact of Russian attacks on the power system.[32]

The Russian Presidential Administration continues preparations to manage and falsify the March 2024 presidential elections. Russian opposition outlet *Meduza* reported on October 12 that the Russian Presidential Administration may install electronic voting terminals with passport

scanners at polling stations in certain regions of Russia ahead of the presidential election in March 2024.[33] The electronic voting terminals will reportedly allow Russian authorities to collect data about Russian citizens in an electronic database, including data regarding mobilization eligibility and voting habits. *Meduza* noted that Russian authorities first used electronic voting terminals during the Moscow mayoral elections in September 2023. ISW has previously observed the Kremlin manipulate national election results using electronic voting after the September 2021 State Duma elections.[34] Ural Regional State newswire *URA.ru* reported that its sources close to the Russian government claimed that the Russian federal government is closely monitoring the social media accounts of almost 90 current and former Kurgan Oblast politicians who expressed support for deceased Wagner Group financier Yevgeny Prigozhin's armed rebellion in June 2023.[35] Russian authorities have reportedly advised politicians to consider their social media posts carefully ahead of the presidential elections, likely an attempt to encourage self-censorship among politicians.

Key Takeaways:

- **Russian forces likely launched a significant and ongoing offensive effort around Avdiivka, Donetsk Oblast on October 10, and ISW is revising its initial assessment these attacks are a limited effort to fix Ukrainian forces.**
- **Russian forces have not secured any major breakthroughs near Avdiivka as of October 12 and are unlikely to immediately cut off Ukrainian forces in the city.**
- **Geolocated footage indicates that Russian forces have likely lost at least a battalion tactical group's (BTG's) worth of armored vehicles in offensive operations around Avdiivka.**
- **The Russian information space is likely exaggerating the degree of Russian successes on the Avdiivka front and will continue to do so despite military failures or a slow pace of advance.**
- **Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations near Bakhmut and in western Zaporizhia Oblast and reportedly advanced in both sectors of the front on October 12.**
- **Russian "Vostok" Battalion Commander Alexander Khodakovsky advocated for Russian forces to freeze the frontlines in Ukraine in order to replace exhausted mobilized personnel with fresh contract servicemen and launch a renewed offensive effort.**
- **Russian forces conducted a series of drone strikes across Ukraine, targeting port infrastructure in southern Ukraine and critical infrastructure in Kharkiv Oblast on the night of October 11 to 12.**
- **Russian forces conducted offensive operations near Kupyansk, along the Svatove-Kreminna line, near Bakhmut, near Avdiivka, around Donetsk City, in the Donetsk-Zaporizha Oblast border area, and in western Zaporizhia Oblast and advanced in some areas.**
- **Russian Security Council Deputy Chairperson Dmitry Medvedev stated on October 12 that the Russian military has recruited more than 357,000 contract, volunteer, and conscripted military personnel since January 1, 2023.**
- **Russian authorities continue to persecute religious communities in occupied Ukraine as part of ongoing Russian efforts to destroy the Ukrainian identity.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of October 12, 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 Information Operations and Narratives

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 near Kupyansk on October 12 and made limited gains. Geolocated footage published on October 12 indicates that Russian forces made limited gains southwest of Orlyanka (22km east of Kupyansk).[36] Russian sources claimed that Russian forces advanced to Krokhmalne (25km southeast of Kupyansk), near Synkivka (8km northeast of Kupyansk), and captured several unspecified positions near Lyman Pershyi (12km northeast of Kupyansk).[37] ISW has not observed evidence of these claims, however. A Ukrainian military observer stated that elements of the Russian 138th Motorized Rifle Brigade (6th Combined Arms Army, Western Military District) made limited advances from the Lyman Pershyi direction towards Synkivka, though Ukrainian officials have not confirmed this report.[38] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks near Synkivka and Ivanivka (20km southeast of Kupyansk).[39] The Ukrainian military observer reported that elements of the Russian 26th Tank Regiment (47th Tank Division, 1st Guards Tank Army) unsuccessfully attacked along the Yahidne-Ivanivka line (20-22km southeast of Kupyansk).[40] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces attacked near Kyslivka.[41] Ukrainian Eastern Group of Forces Spokesperson Captain Ilya Yevlash stated that Russian forces are concentrating offensive operations in the Synkivka and Ivanivka directions and are transferring artillery and personnel to the Kupyansk-Lyman direction.[42]

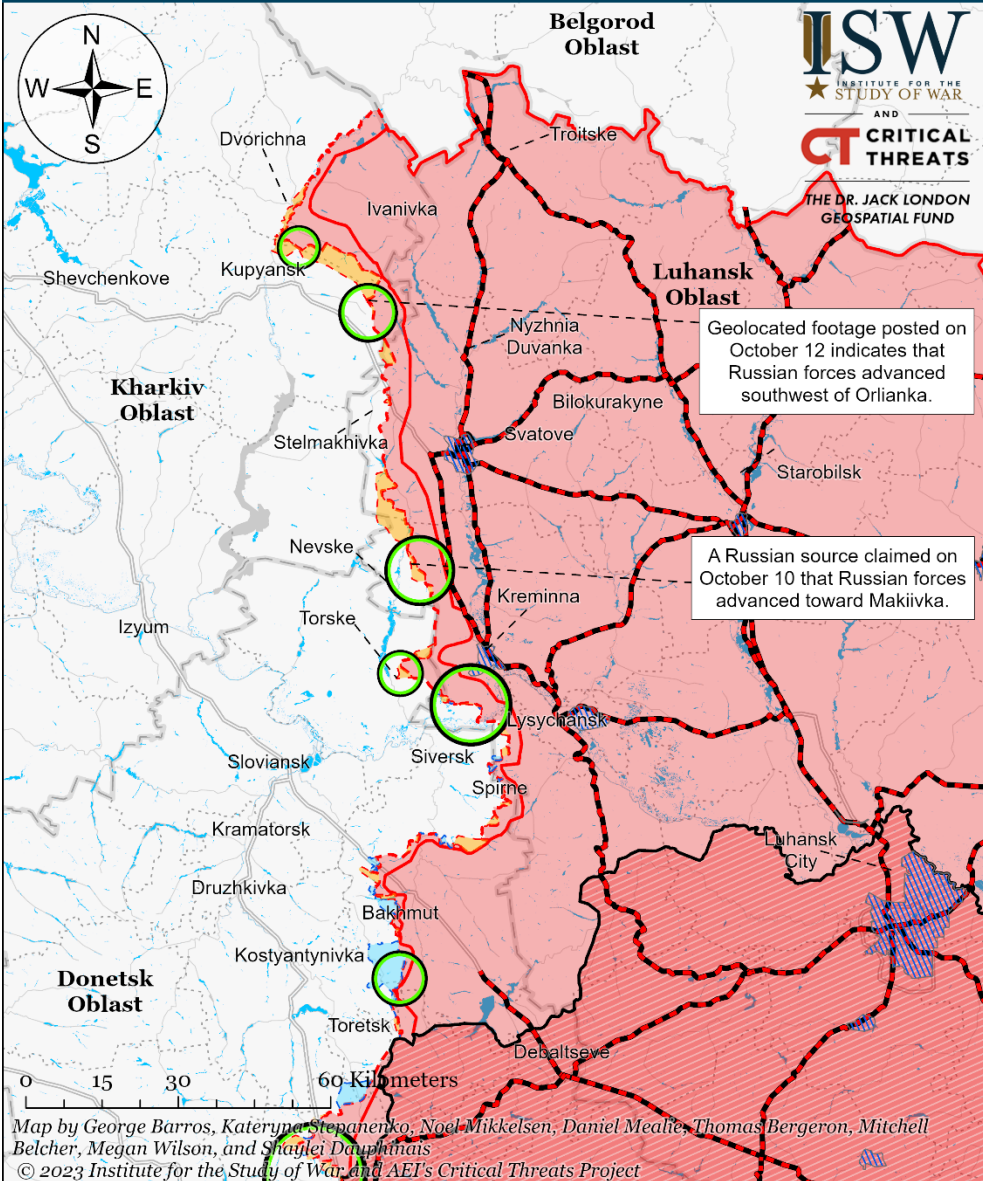
The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed on October 12 that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Synkivka and Ivanivka.[43]

Russian forces conducted offensive operations along the Svatove-Kreminna line on October 12 but did not make any confirmed or claimed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks near Makiivka (22km northwest of Kreminna), Torske (14km west of Kreminna), and the Serebryanske forest area (10km southwest of Kreminna).[44] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces attacked from Dibrova (7km southwest of Kreminna).[45] Yevlash stated that the Russian military has concentrated forces in the Makiivka direction and is also focusing offensive operations near Nevske (18km northwest of Kreminna) and the Serebryanske forest area.[46] Ukrainian Luhansk Oblast Administration Head Artem Lysohor reported that Russian forces have intensified ground operations in the Serebryanske forest area.[47] The Ukrainian military observer stated that elements of the Russian 237th Tank Regiment

and 252nd Motorized Rifle Regiment (both of the 3rd Motorized Rifle Division, 20th Combined Arms Army, Western Military District) are operating near Makiivka and that elements of the 228th Motorized Rifle Regiment (90th Tank Division, Central Military District) have become more active in the Serebryanske forest area.[48]

The Russian MoD claimed on October 12 that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Makiivka, Yampolivka (17km west of Kreminna), Dibrova, Torske, and the Serebryanske forest area.[49]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of October 12, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Megan Wilson, and Shaylei Daughnais
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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.

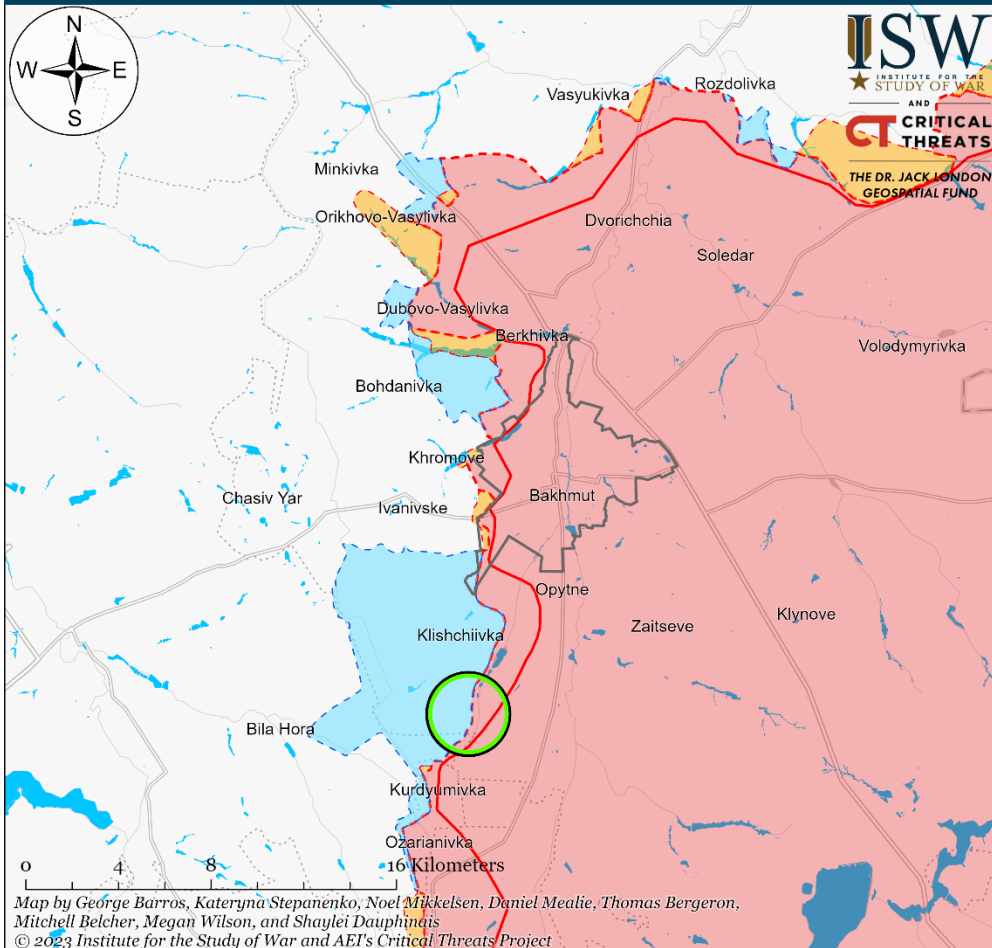
Note: A Russian source claimed on October 11 that Russian forces advanced approximately 1.5 kilometers in the Ivanivka and Kyslivka directions. A Russian source claimed on October 9 that Russian forces advanced up to one kilometer near Makiivka. Russian milbloggers claimed on October 8 that Russian forces are entrenched 600 meters east from Makiivka.

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 counteroffensive operations in the Bakhmut direction on October 12 and reportedly advanced. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces achieved some unspecified successes east of Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut) and east of Andriivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut).[50] Ukrainian Eastern Group of Forces Spokesperson Captain Ilya Yevlash stated that Ukrainian forces continue offensive operations in the Bakhmut direction and have advanced several hundred meters in unspecified areas.[51] The Russian MoD claimed that Russian forces repelled three Ukrainian attacks near Klishchiivka, and Russian milbloggers reported that Russian forces also repelled Ukrainian attacks near Andriivka and Ozaryanivka (12km southwest of Bakhmut).[52]

Russian forces continued to counterattack Ukrainian positions around Bakhmut on October 12 but did not make confirmed territorial gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks in the Andriivka area.[53] A Russian moblogger claimed that a “Storm” detachment of airborne (VDV) elements seized an unspecified Ukrainian position in the Bakhmut direction.[54]

Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of October 12, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



- Bakhmut City Limits
- ▭ Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- ▭ Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- ▭ Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- ▭ Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- ▭ Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare

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

Note: Ukrainian Eastern Group of Forces Spokesperson Captain Ilya Yevlash stated on October 12 that Ukrainian forces advanced several hundred meters in the Bakhmut direction.

Russian forces continued attacking Ukrainian positions near Avdiivka on October 12 and made limited advances. Geolocated footage published on October 11 and October 12 indicates that Russian forces advanced west and south of Krasnohorivka (about 5km north of Avdiivka), just south of the E-50 highway (1.5km south of Avdiivka’s southernmost outskirts), and east of Pervomaiske (9km northwest from Donetsk City).[55] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces seized a dominant height located at a waste heap on Avdiivka’s northern flank near the Avdiivka Coke Plant, entered Stepove (about 5km northwest of Avdiivka), and captured a section of a railway immediately south of Avdiivka.[56] Russian milbloggers claimed that fighting is ongoing in Stepove, near the northeastern outskirts of Berdychi (9km northwest of Avdiivka), and on Avdiivka’s southern

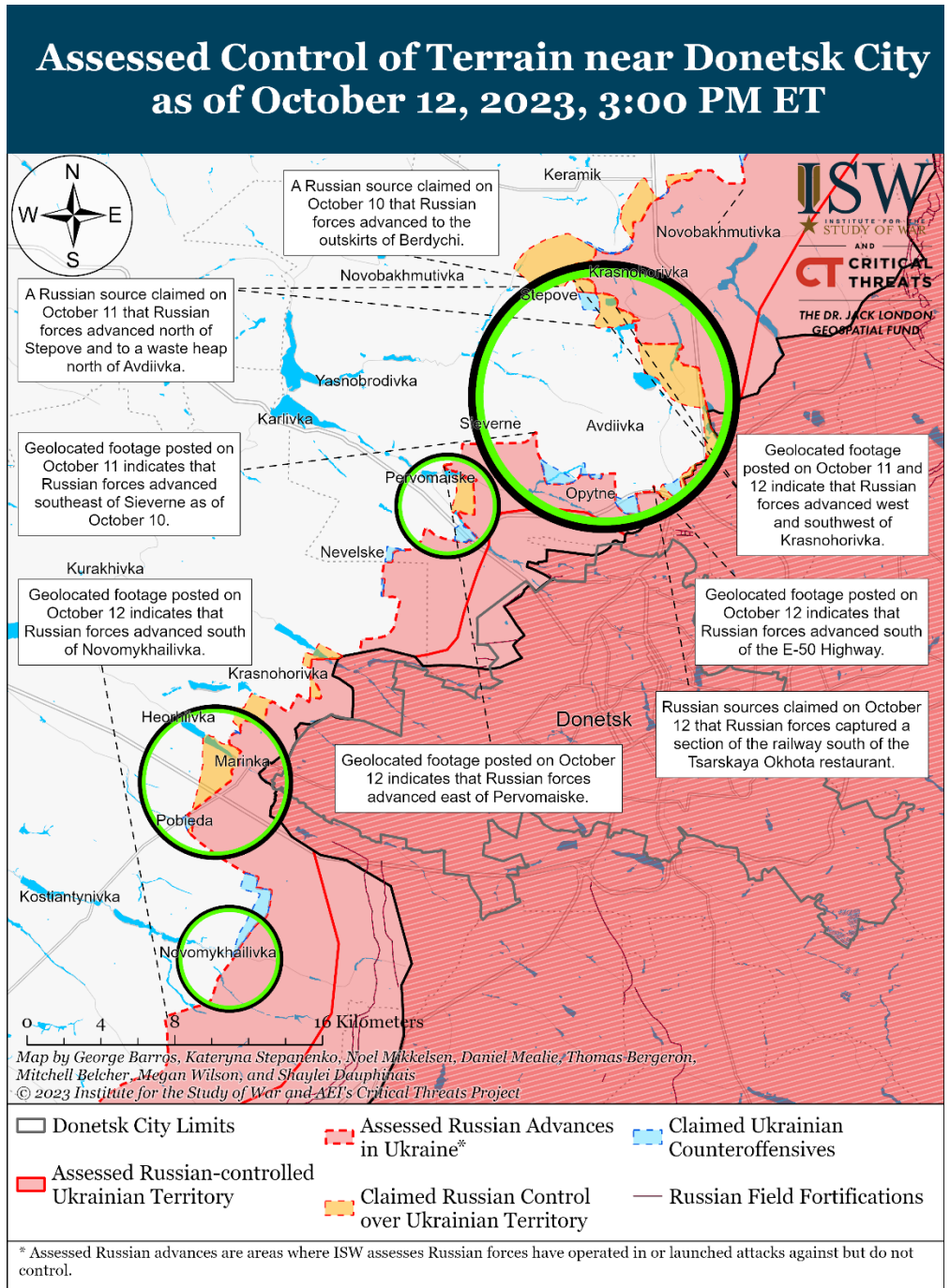
outskirts.[57] A Russian milblogger claimed that a Russian armored assault group broke through Ukrainian defenses southeast of Sieverne (5km west of Avdiivka) and that battles are ongoing west of Vesele (5km north of Avdiivka) where Russian forces made unspecified progress.[58] The milblogger added that Russian forces are also attacking north of Vodyane (6km west of Avdiivka). Another milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced near Sieverne, attempted to advance towards Keramik (10km north of Avdiivka), and carried out offensive operations near Stepove.[59] Ukrainian military officials reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks on Avdiivka; near Stepove, Lastochkyne (4km northwest of Avdiivka), Tonenke (5km northwest of Avdiivka), and Nevelske (14km southwest of Avdiivka); southeast of Sieverne; and south of Pervomaiske.[60]

Russian and Ukrainian forces exchanged strikes on logistics routes near Avdiivka. Russian sources also claimed that Russian forces destroyed the Ocheretyne railway station (13km northwest of Avdiivka).[61] Ukrainian forces heavily damaged a bridge between Russian-occupied Horlivka and Yasynuvata, which likely supports Russian logistics towards Avdiivka.[62] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian occupation officials may struggle to repair the bridge due to its proximity to the frontline.[63]

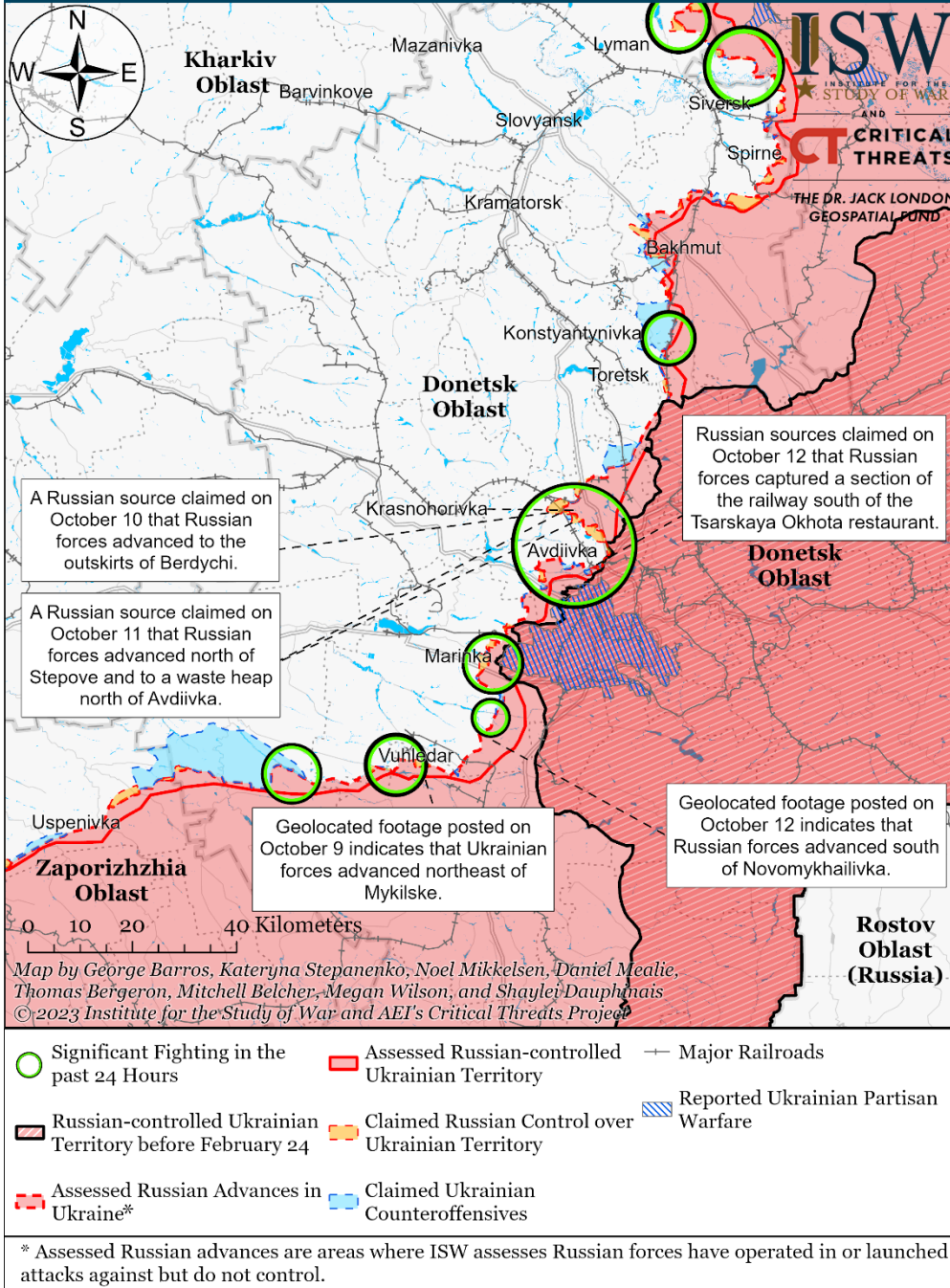
Russian forces continued assaults west and southwest of Donetsk City on October 12 and made marginal advances. Geolocated footage published on October 12 indicates that Russian forces made limited advances south of Novomykhailivka (12km southwest of Donetsk City).[64] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled more than 10 Russian attacks near Marinka (just west of Donetsk City), Pobieda (5km southwest of Donetsk City), and Novomykhailivka.[65]

Ukrainian military observer Konstyantyn Mashovets reported on October 12 that Russian military command has committed elements of the Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) 1st Army Corps, 8th Combined Arms Army (CAA) of the Southern Military District (SMD), and 68th Army Corps (Eastern Military District [EMD]) to the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line.[66] Mashovets stated that Russian military command deployed the main forces of the 1st DNR Army Corps and significant elements of the 8th CAA to the Avdiivka direction and that Russian forces will likely further expand efforts to advance near and south of Avdiivka. Mashovets stated that Russia is concentrating forces of the 68th Army Corps in the direction of Marinka and Kurakhove (38km southwest of Avdiivka). Mashovets stated that the Russian 114th Separate Motorized Rifle Brigade (1st DNR Army Corps) unsuccessfully attacked along the Krasnohorivka-Novokalynove (8-11km northwest of Avdiivka) line, from Kamyanka (5km northeast of Avdiivka) towards Avdiivka's northern outskirts, and from Kruta Balka (4km northeast of Avdiivka) to Avdiivka's eastern outskirts and successfully attacked along the Krasnohorivka-Stepove (8km northwest of Avdiivka) line. Mashovets reported that the Russian 1st Motorized Rifle Brigade (1st DNR Army Corps) unsuccessfully attacked from Spartak (4km south of Avdiivka) towards the southern outskirts of Avdiivka and towards Sieverne (6km west of Avdiivka). Mashovets stated that the Russian 9th Motorized Rifle Brigade (1st DNR Army Corps) advanced in the Vodyane-Sieverne (7km southwest to 6km west of Avdiivka) direction and in the Pisky-Pervomaiske (8-11km southwest of Avdiivka) direction. Mashovets noted that the Russian 5th Motorized Rifle Brigade (1st DNR Army Corps) unsuccessfully attacked from Staromykhailivka (19km southwest of Avdiivka or immediately west of Donetsk City) to Krasnohorivka (22km southwest of Avdiivka). Mashovets stated that the Russian 33rd Motorized Rifle Regiment (20th Motorized Rifle Division, 8th CAA, SMD) unsuccessfully attacked in the Oleksandrivka-Novomykhailivka (immediately southwest of Donetsk City to 10km southwest of Donetsk City) direction. Mashovets added that the Russian 255th Motorized Rifle Regiment (20th Motorized Rifle Division, 8th CAA,

SMD) unsuccessfully attacked in the direction of Oleksandrivka (immediately south of Donetsk City) and Pobieda. Mashovets noted that the Russian 5th Motorized Rifle Brigade and the 103rd Motorized Rifle Regiment (150th Motorized Rifle Division, 8th CAA) unsuccessfully attacked Marinka. Mashovets stated that the Russian 39th Motorized Rifle Brigade (68th Army Corps) advanced in the Slavne-Novomykhailivka (10km southwest of Donetsk City) direction.



Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of October 12, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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

The Ukrainian General Staff and Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces Spokesperson Colonel Oleksandr Shtupun reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks southeast of Vuhledar in western Donetsk Oblast on October 12.[67]

Ukrainian forces continued limited offensive operations along the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on October 12 and did not advance. A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Pryyutne 15km southwest of Velyka Novosilka).[68] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces reduced their offensive activity in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area over the past day.[69]

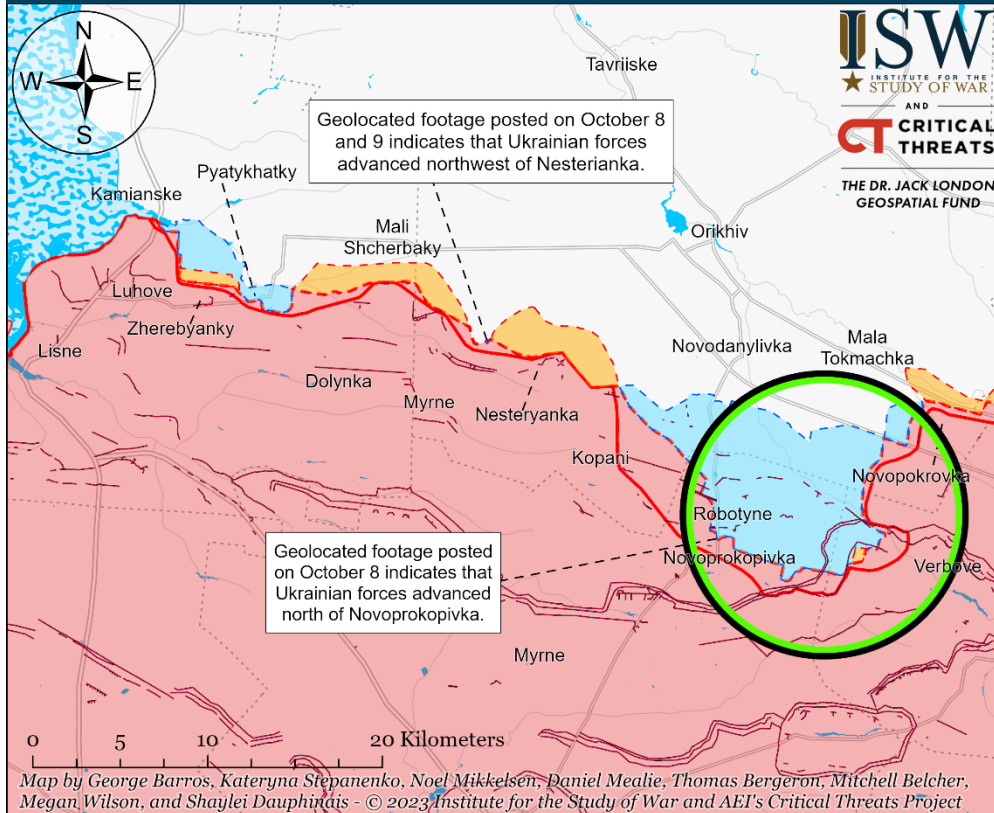
Russian forces conducted offensive operations along the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border and reportedly marginally advanced on October 12. A Russian milblogger claimed that elements of the 36th Combined Arms Army (Eastern Military District) slightly advanced near Urozhaine (9km south of Velyka Novosilka).[70] Another milblogger claimed that Russian forces attacked Ukrainian positions near Novodonetske (12km southeast of Velyka Novosilka).[71]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around the Vremivka Salient as of October 12, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Ukrainian forces reportedly marginally advanced in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast on October 12. The Ukrainian General Staff and Shtupun reported that Ukrainian forces improved their tactical positions west of Robotyne.[72] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces attacked near Novoprokopivka (13km south of Orikhiv) and Novokarlivka (18km southeast of Orikhiv).[73] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks on the Robotyne-Kopani line (5km northwest of Robotyne) and near Verbove (18km southeast of Orikhiv).[74] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces reduced their tempo of offensive operations in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast.[75]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Pyatykhatky and Robotyne as of October 12, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



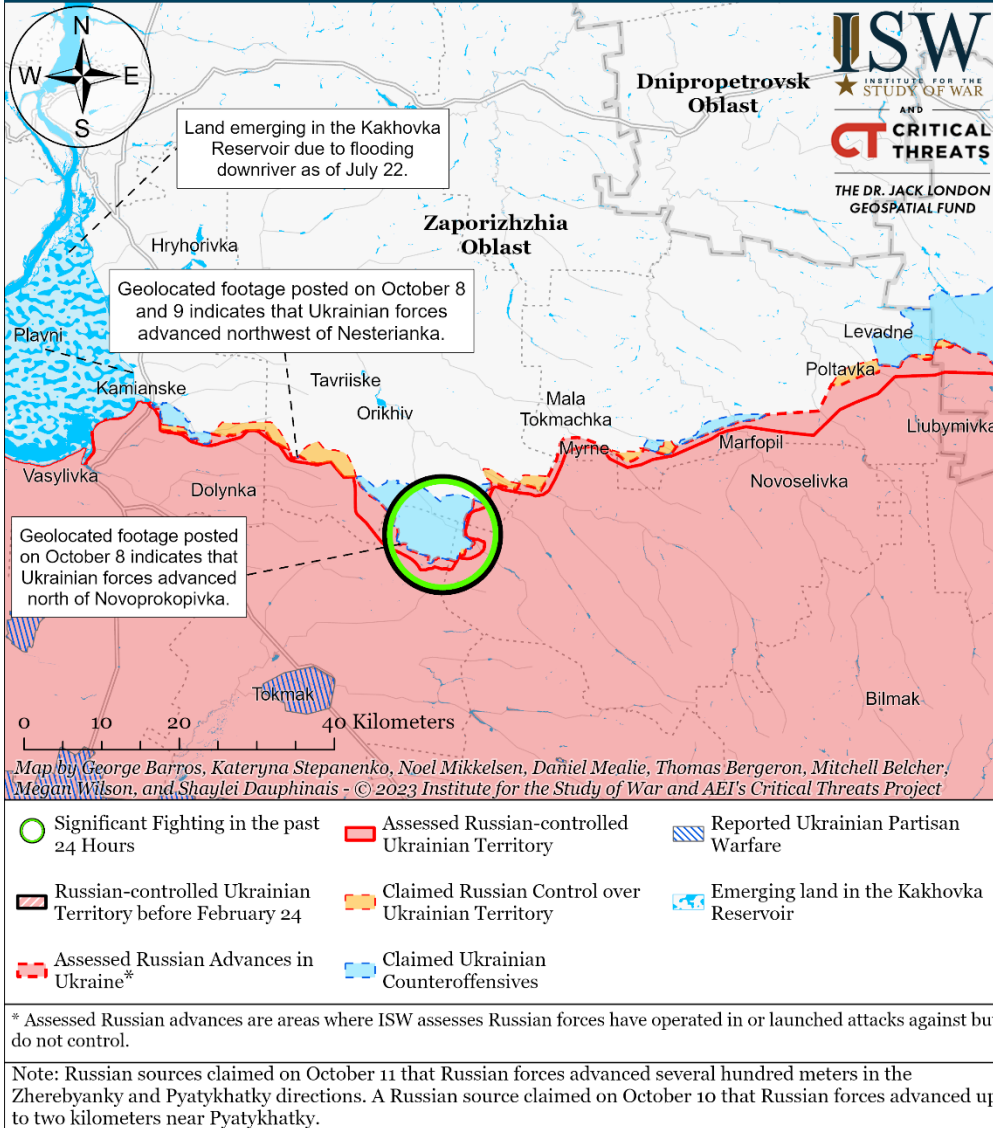
- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Emerging land in the Kakhovka Reservoir
- Assessed Russian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

* 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 October 11 that Russian forces advanced several hundred meters in the Zherebyanky and Pyatykhatky directions. A Russian source claimed on October 10 that Russian forces advanced up to two kilometers near Pyatykhatky.

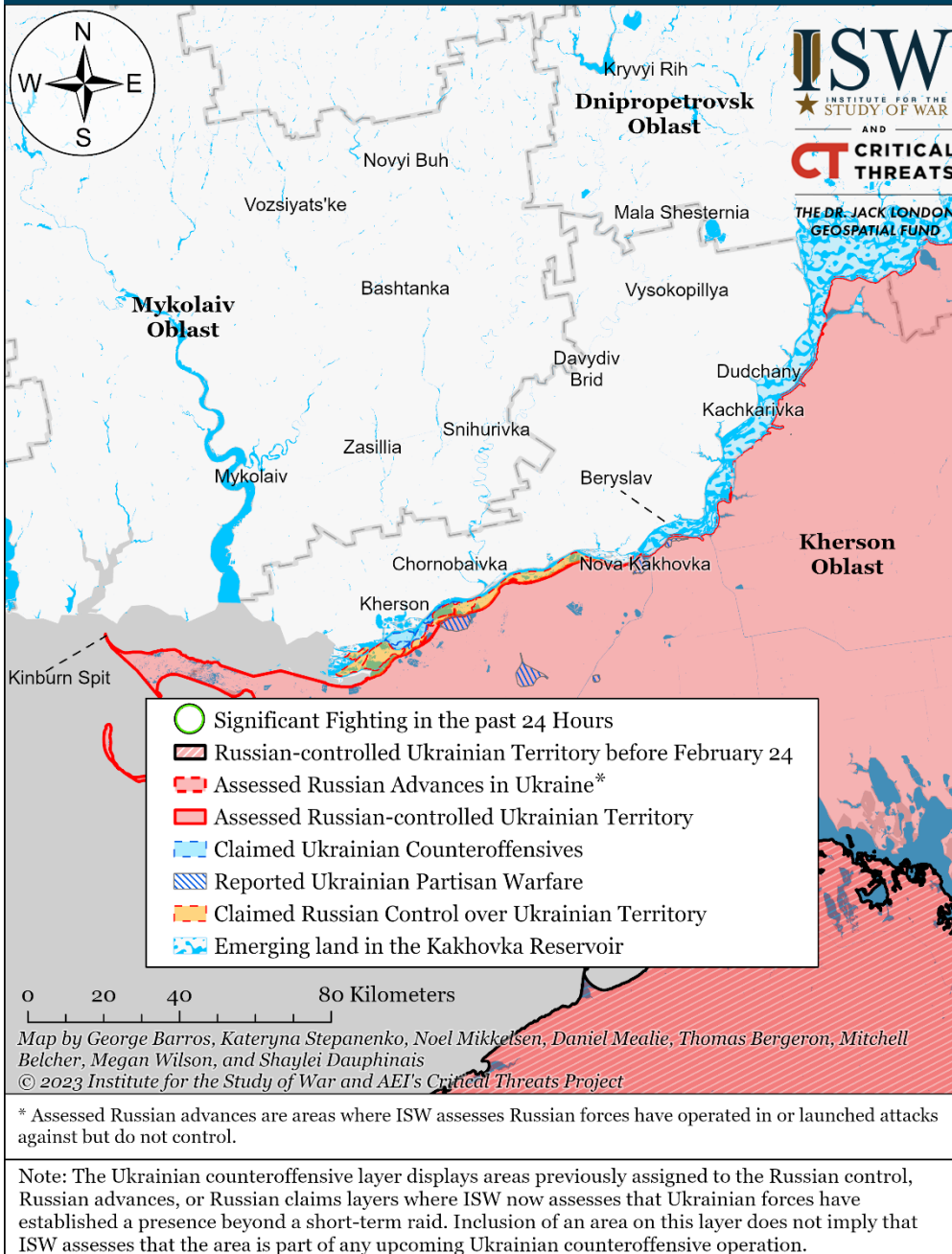
Russian forces conducted limited unsuccessful offensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast on October 12. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful ground attacks near Robotyne and Verbove.[76] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces counterattacked near Verbove.[77]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhzhia as of October 12, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Russian milbloggers continue to discuss Ukrainian operations across the Dnipro River in Kherson Oblast. A Russian milblogger claimed that artillery fire by the Russian “Dnepr” Grouping of Forces repelled a Ukrainian sabotage and reconnaissance group attempting to land on Velykyi Potemkin island south of Kherson City.[78] Another milblogger expressed continued concern that Ukrainian forces are preparing for a broader offensive operation in the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast.[79]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of October 12, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Some Russian sources denied reports that the Russian patrol ship *Pavel Derzhavin* sustained damage near occupied Sevastopol in the Black Sea on October 11.[80] Ukrainian Naval Forces Press Secretary Captain Third Rank Dmytro Pletenchuk stated on October 12 that *Pavel Derzhavin* sustained damage on October 11, but that Pletenchuk could not discuss the circumstances of the damage.[81]

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

Russian Security Council Deputy Chairperson Dmitry Medvedev stated on October 12 that the Russian military has recruited more than 357,000 contract, volunteer, and conscripted military personnel in total since January 1, 2023.[82] Medvedev expressed hope that Russian authorities will be able to maintain this recruitment pace. It is unclear exactly what categories of servicemen this number encompasses, despite Medvedev's attempt to clarify. Medvedev notably claimed on September 26 that Russia had recruited over 325,000 contract personnel since January 1, updating Russian President Vladimir Putin's prior claims of 300,000 personnel on September 15 and 280,000 personnel on September 12.[83]

Occupation authorities reportedly continue attempts to mobilize Ukrainian citizens in occupied Ukraine. The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported on October 12 that occupation authorities are considering mobilizing 2,500 eligible residents in occupied Crimea by the end of 2023.[84] The Ukrainian Resistance Center claimed that the "Department of Training and Conscription of Citizens for Military Service of the Military Recruitment Center of the Republic of Crimea" is developing a mobilization plan for future use.

Russian authorities continue to highlight and celebrate the claimed accomplishments of Russian defense industrial base (DIB) enterprises. Russian DIB enterprise Uralvagonzavod provided another batch of armored vehicles to the Russian MoD on October 11, including new T-90M tanks and T-72B3M tanks with additional armor.[85] Russian Deputy Prime Minister for Industry and Trade Denis Manturov praised Uralvagonzavod for producing reportedly modern, reliable, and high-quality armored vehicles.

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

Russian authorities continue to persecute religious communities in occupied Ukraine as part of ongoing Russian efforts to destroy the Ukrainian identity. The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported on October 12 that Russian authorities are forcing dioceses of the Kremlin-affiliated Ukrainian Orthodox Church Moscow Patriarchate (UOC MP) to join the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) and are replacing UOC MP priests who refuse to cooperate with ROC priests.[86] ISW has repeatedly observed the ROC forcibly integrating UOC MP dioceses, despite the fact that UOC MP is not an independent religious organization but an extension of the ROC and the Kremlin.[87] The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported that Russian authorities have also installed ROC representatives in other religious communities in occupied Ukraine, particularly independent Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU) communities in Mariupol, occupied Donetsk Oblast.[88] These representatives are reportedly collecting information on non-ROC parishioners and clergy members and providing that information to Russian special services. Russian authorities have conducted systemic religious persecution against OCU dioceses and religious minorities in occupied Ukraine since the start of the war.[89]

Ukrainian Melitopol Mayor Ivan Fedorov stated that occupation authorities continue to indoctrinate Ukrainian minors into Russian political-military structures in occupied Ukraine. Fedorov stated that occupation authorities are teaching Ukrainian high school students how to operate drones and weapons in schools.[90] Fedorov stated that occupation authorities have started a branch of the

Russian youth political-patriotic education program “Yunarmia” for local high school students in occupied Melitopol, Donetsk Oblast, and Fedorov stated that Russian forces will prepare and transport students in Yunarmia to serve on the front with Russian forces. ISW has previously assessed that new Yunarmia formations are unlikely to enter combat for some time as the organization recruits volunteers ages eight to eighteen, however.[91]

Russian Information Operations and Narratives:

NOTE: ISW continues to assess that the Kremlin has and will continue to exploit the Hamas attacks in Israel to advance several Russian information operations about Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. However, ISW has notably not observed any evidence – and does not assess – that the Kremlin supported, directed, or is involved in the Hamas attacks.

Russia continues defensive posturing in Central Asia amid the war in Ukraine. Russian President Vladimir Putin visited the Russian military airbase in Kant, Kyrgyzstan on October 12 to mark the 20th anniversary of its establishment.[92] Kyrgyz President Sadyr Japarov announced on October 12 that the Kyrgyz parliament ratified an agreement with Russia to create a unified air defense system on October 11.[93] *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty’s* Kyrgyz service *Radio Azattyk* reported that Putin’s visit to Kyrgyzstan is his first trip abroad since the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued a warrant for his arrest on March 17, 2023.[94] Kyrgyzstan signed the ICC’s Rome Statute in 1998 but has not ratified or acceded it.[95]

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)

Nothing significant to report.

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.

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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