

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, October 25, 2023

Riley Bailey, Angelica Evans, Nicole Wolkov, Karolina Hird, and Frederick W. Kagan
October 25, 2023, 6:45pm 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 12:30pm ET on October 25. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the October 26 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Ukrainian forces marginally advanced in western Zaporizhia Oblast and continued offensive operations near Bakhmut on October 25. Geolocated footage published on October 24 indicates that Ukrainian forces made further marginal advances west of Robotyne.[1] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces also achieved unspecified partial success west of Verbove (9km west of Robotyne).[2] Ukrainian Ground Forces Spokesperson Lieutenant Colonel Volodymyr Fityo stated on October 24 that Ukrainian forces are conducting offensive operations near Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut) and Andriivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut).[3]

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky noted that Ukrainian forces are preparing for a fall-winter Russian strike campaign against Ukraine after another series of Russian drone strikes on the night of October 24 to 25. Ukrainian military sources reported that Ukrainian air defenses destroyed a total of 11 Russian Shahed-131/136 drones over Khmelnytskyi and Mykolaiv oblasts.[4] Zelensky stated that Ukraine is preparing to defend against a Russian fall-winter strike campaign against Ukrainian energy infrastructure and suggested that Ukraine is planning for its own strikes on Russian military assets in turn.[5] Zelensky stated that the Russian military is aware of Ukraine's intentions to strike Russian military infrastructure in Crimea and Russia and is moving the Black Sea Fleet (BSF) away from Crimea and Russian aircraft further from the Russia-Ukraine border, likely in response to continued Ukrainian strikes against Russian naval and aviation assets.[6]

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu visited an Eastern Grouping of Forces command post in the south Donetsk direction (Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area) on October 25.[7] Shoigu awarded medals to the commanders of the 155th Naval Infantry Brigade (Pacific Fleet) and 810th Naval Infantry Brigade (Black Sea Fleet) and claimed that these units successfully repelled Ukrainian offensive operations.[8] ISW has observed recent claims that elements of the 810th Naval Infantry Brigade are operating in the Kherson direction, however.[9]

The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) confirmed that Lieutenant General Andrei Kuzmenko is the Russian Eastern Grouping of Forces Commander on October 25, likely also confirming Kuzmenko's position as Eastern Military District (EMD) commander.[10] The Russian MoD published footage on October 25 of Russian Defense Minister

Sergei Shoigu meeting with Kuzmenko at a command post in the south Donetsk direction.[11] Kuzmenko's likely appointment as EMD commander is consistent with Russian and Ukrainian sources' speculations in March 2023 that Kuzmenko would replace Colonel General Rustam Muradov as Eastern Military District (EMD) commander.[12]

The Kremlin's support for ultranationalist Russian Orthodox religion and ideology appears to be complicating Chechen Republic Head Ramzan Kadyrov's ability to balance appealing to his Chechen Muslim constituencies with keeping the Kremlin's favor. Kadyrov delivered inconsistent and potentially inflammatory domestic religious messaging on October 24, suggesting that he is struggling to reconcile his enthusiastic support for Russian President Vladimir Putin, who has routinely postured himself as the true protector of the Orthodox Christian faith, and Kadyrov's own persona as a staunch representative of Chechnya's Islamic values. Kadyrov's son Adam recently ignited a notable domestic outcry in Russia against his father after Ramzan touted footage of Adam beating a detainee accused of burning the Quran.[13] Republic of Tatarstan Head Rustam Minnikhanov and Karachay-Cherkess Republic Head Rashid Temrezov awarded Adam Kadyrov for developing "interethnic and interregional unity" and strengthening traditional Islamic values on October 24, an event that Kadyrov used to praise his son further despite the blowback against Adam's actions.[14] Kadyrov likely tried to balance the potentially inflammatory effects of publicly supporting his son's violence with publicly announcing the opening of an Orthodox Church in Chechnya alongside Rosgvardia Head Viktor Zolotov on October 25.[15]

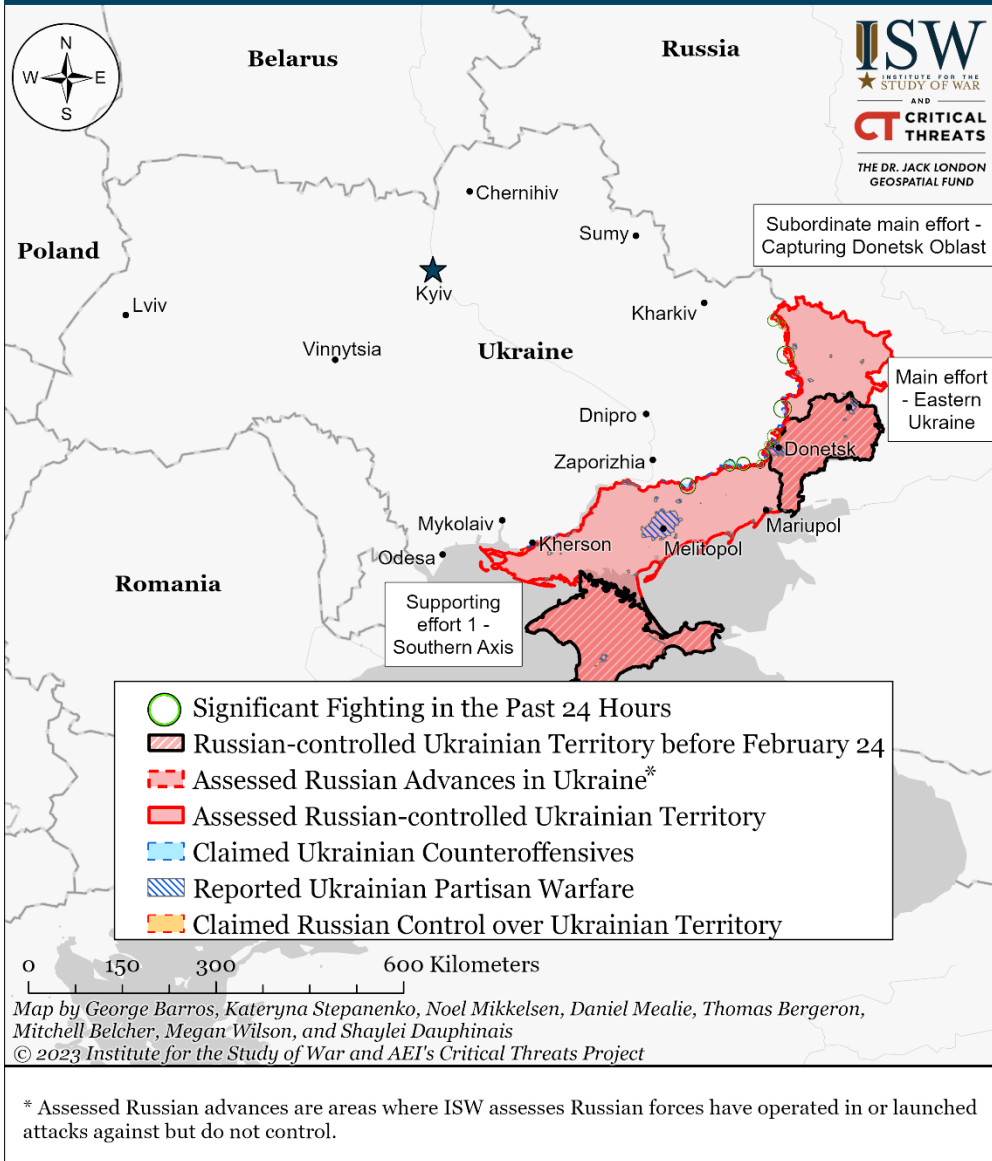
Kadyrov promptly upset whatever informational effects he may have generated in balancing his response to Adam's awards with his meeting with Zolotov by announcing the creation of the "Sheikh Mansur" volunteer battalion. This announcement generated outrage from Russian ultranationalists because "Sheikh Mansur" is also the name of a volunteer battalion comprised of Chechen and Ichkerian volunteers fighting for Ukraine.[16] Sheikh Mansur was a Chechen fighter from the 18th Century who opposed Russian imperial rule. Kadyrov will likely continue to draw the ire of Russian ultranationalists who are increasingly opposed to migrants who come from predominantly Muslim Central Asian countries and other religious minorities in Russia with his continued efforts to appeal to his core Muslim constituencies.[17]

Key Takeaways:

- **Ukrainian forces marginally advanced in western Zaporizhia Oblast and continued offensive operations near Bakhmut on October 25.**
- **Russian forces conducted offensive operations near Avdiivka on October 25 and made a confirmed advance.**
- **Russian sources claimed on October 25 that Ukrainian forces resumed larger-than-usual ground operations on the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast and maintain positions in several areas on the east bank. Only a handful of Russian sources are currently claiming that Ukrainian forces have resumed larger-than-usual ground operations on the east bank, however.**
- **Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky noted that Ukrainian forces are preparing for a fall-winter Russian strike campaign against Ukraine after another series of Russian drone strikes on the night of October 24 to 25.**

- **Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu visited an Eastern Grouping of Forces command post in the south Donetsk direction (Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area) on October 25.**
- **The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) confirmed that Lieutenant General Andrei Kuzmenko is the Russian Eastern Grouping of Forces Commander on October 25, likely also confirming Kuzmenko's position as Eastern Military District (EMD) commander.**
- **The Kremlin's support for ultranationalist Russian Orthodox religion and ideology appears to be complicating Chechen Republic Head Ramzan Kadyrov's ability to balance appealing to his Chechen Muslim constituencies with keeping the Kremlin's favor.**
- **Russian forces conducted offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove line, near Bakhmut, southwest of Donetsk City, in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area, and in western Zaporizhia but did not make confirmed advances.**
- **Russian National Security Council Deputy Chairperson Dmitry Medvedev claimed that nearly 385,000 people have entered service with the Russian armed forces between January 1 and October 25, 2023.**
- **Russian occupation authorities continue to use medical infrastructure to justify the deportation of Ukrainian children to Russia and to further consolidate control of occupied areas of Ukraine.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of October 25, 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

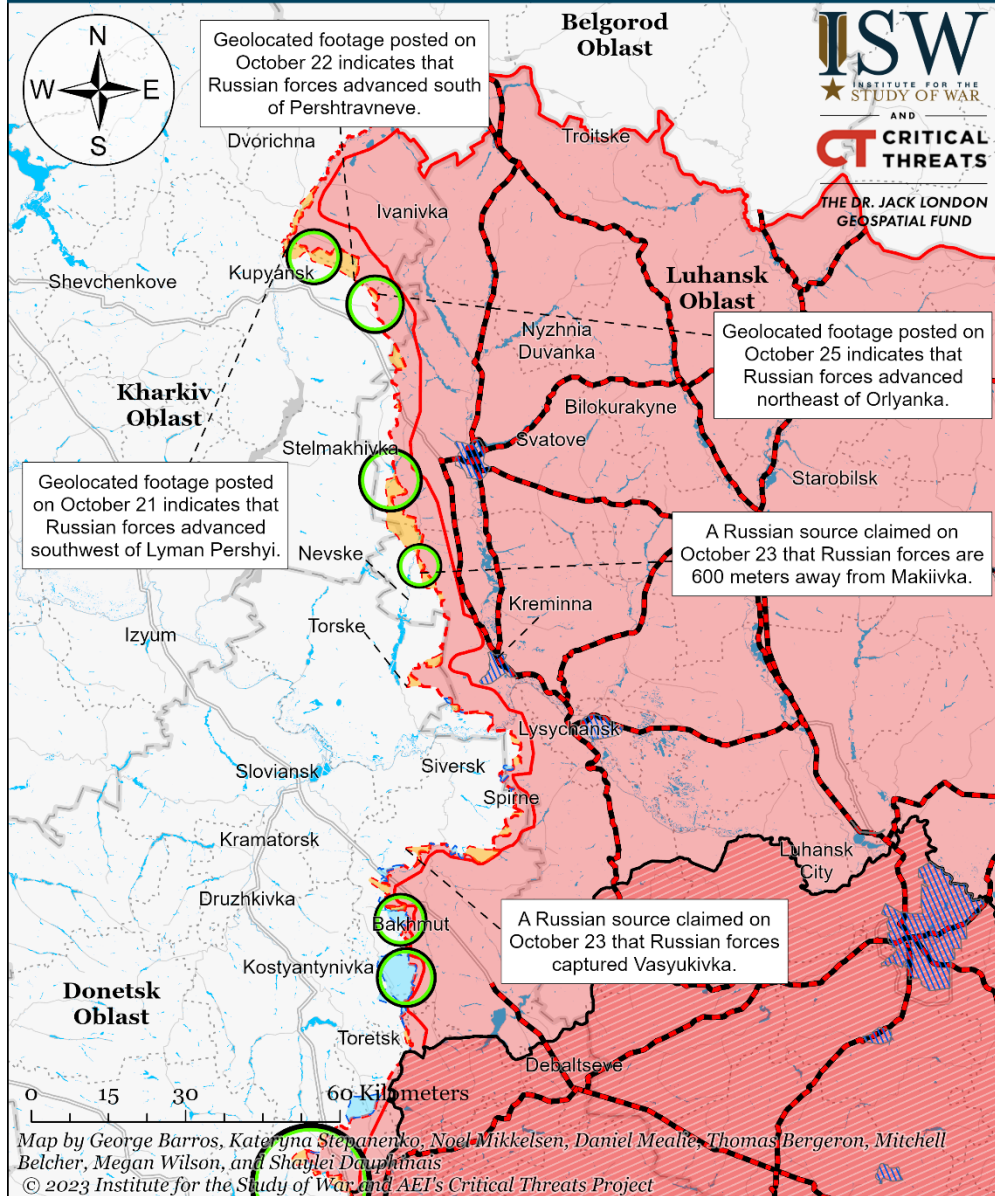
Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

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 along the Kupyansk-Svatove line on October 25 but did not make any confirmed advances. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces captured several unspecified Ukrainian positions in the Kupyansk direction, although ISW has not observed visual evidence of this claim.[18] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Synkivka (8km northeast of Kupyansk), Petropavlivka (7km east of Kupyansk), Ivanivka (20km southeast of Kupyansk), Makiivka (20km southwest of Svatove), and Nadiya (15km west of Svatove).[19] A Russian media aggregator claimed that Russian forces assaulted Ukrainian positions near Kyslivka (20km southeast of Kupyansk) on the evening of October 24.[20]

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on October 25. The Russian MoD claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Synkivka, Tymkivka (18km east of Kupyansk), Ivanivka, Zahoruykivka (16km east of Kupyansk), Nadiya, Dibrova (7km southwest of Kreminna), and Hryhorivka (11km south of Kreminna).[21] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Yampolivka (17km west of Kreminna).[22]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of October 25, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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

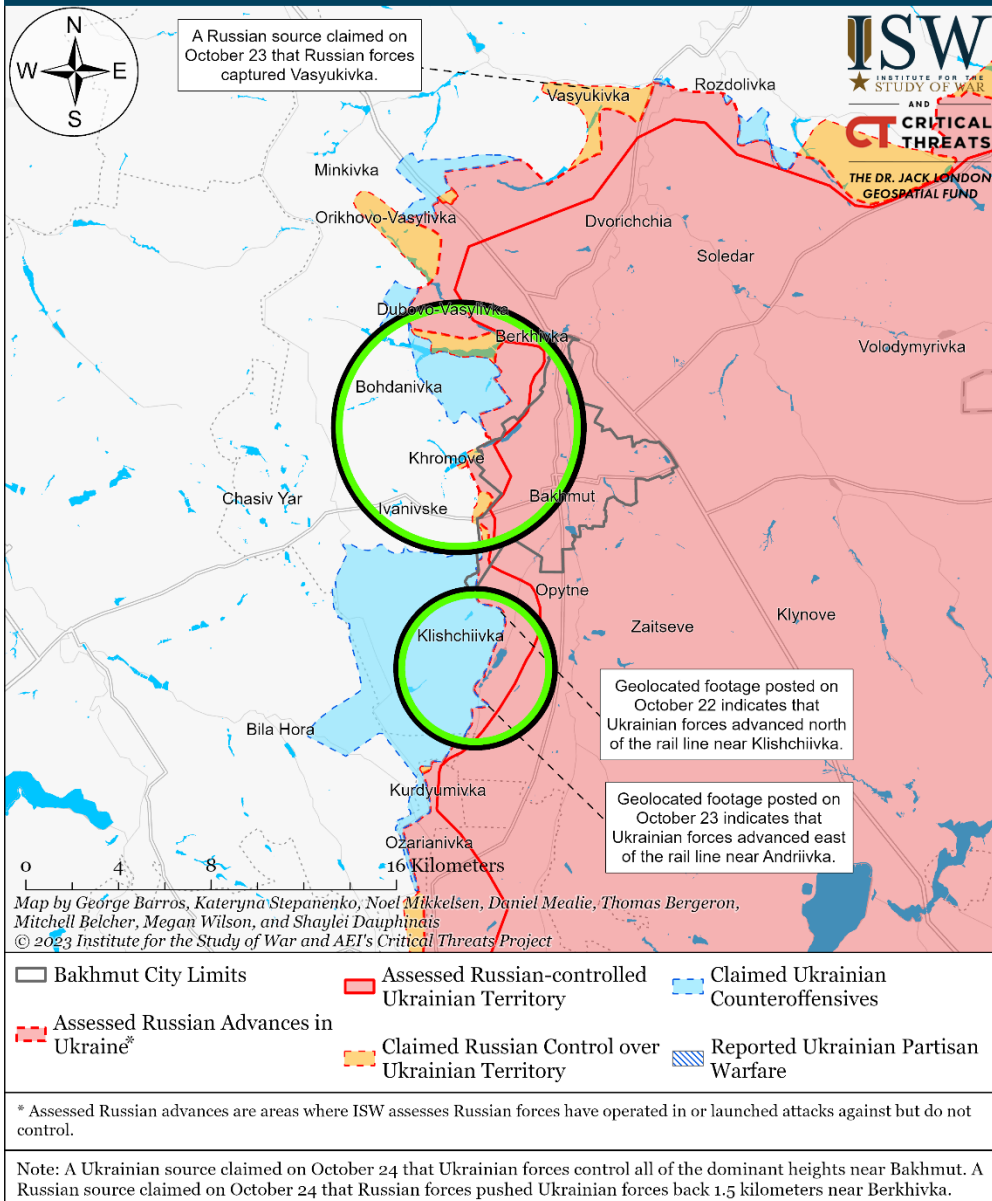
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

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 near Bakhmut on October 25 but did not make any claimed or confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Bakhmut direction.[23] Ukrainian Ground Forces Spokesperson Lieutenant Colonel Volodymyr Fityo stated on October 24 that Ukrainian forces are conducting offensive operations near Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut) and Andriivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut).[24] Fityo stated that fighting also occurred near Khromove (immediately west of Bakhmut).[25] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Maloyllinivka (4km north of Bakhmut), Andriivka, Kurdyumivka (13km southwest of Bakhmut), and Pivnichne (20km southwest of Bakhmut).[26]

Russian forces conducted unsuccessful ground attacks near Bakhmut on October 25. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks near Bohdanivka (6km northwest of Bakhmut), Ivanivske (6km west of Bakhmut), Klishchiivka, and Andriivka.[27] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces counterattacked near Berkhivka (4km north of Bakhmut).[28] Russian sources amplified footage on October 25 claiming to show elements of the Russian 58th Spetsnaz Brigade (1st Donetsk People’s Republic [DNR] Army Corps) operating in the Bakhmut direction.[29]

Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of October 25, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



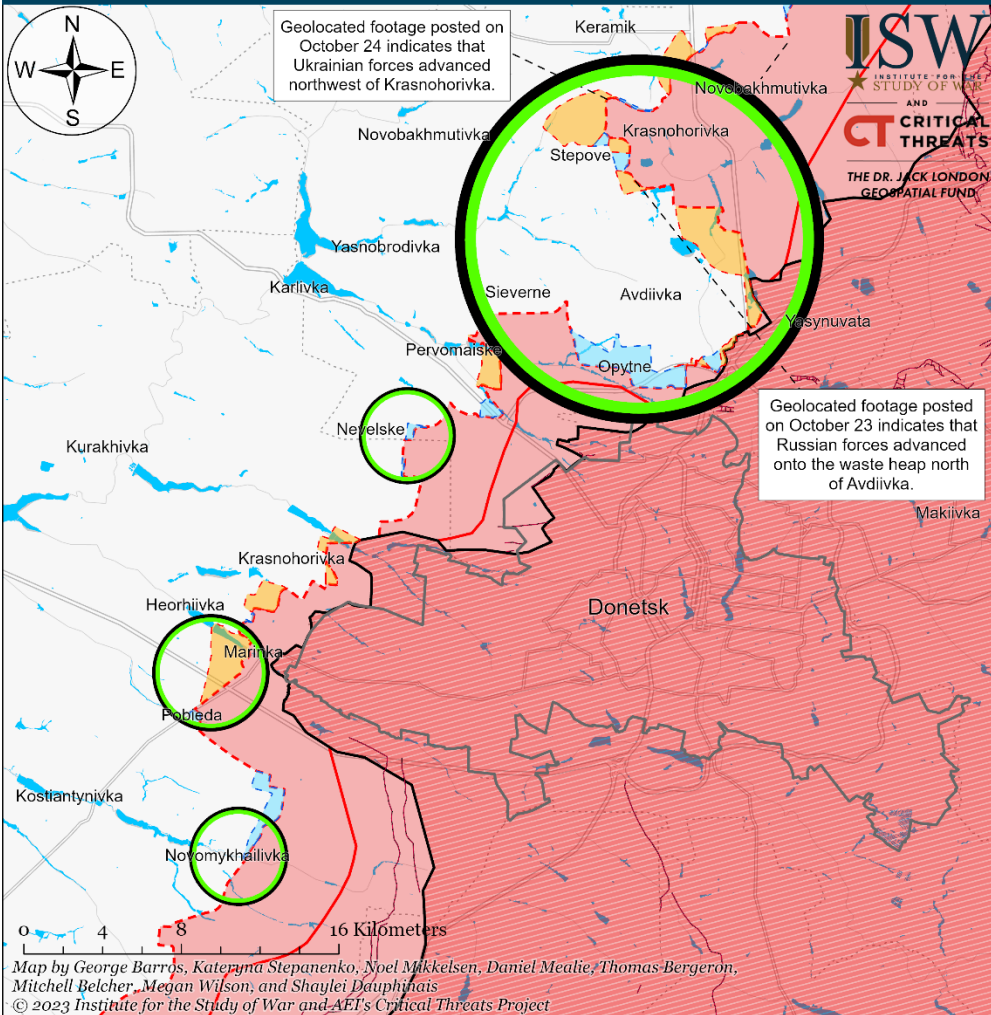
Russian forces conducted offensive operations near Avdiivka on October 25 and made a confirmed advance. Geolocated footage published on October 24 indicates that Russian forces advanced northwest of Krasnohorivka (5km northwest of Avdiivka).[30] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Stepove (3km northwest of Avdiivka), Avdiivka, Tonenke (5km west of Avdiivka), Sieverne (6km west of Avdiivka), and Nevelske (13km southwest of Avdiivka).[31] Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces Spokesperson Colonel Oleksandr Shtupun stated on October 24 that the frequency of Russian assaults near Avdiivka has decreased.[32] A prominent Russian milblogger claimed on October 25 that Russian forces achieved “serious tactical success” on the approaches to Avdiivka and near Stepove and advanced to the railway line north of

Avdiivka.[33] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces are advancing from Krasnohorivka to Novokalynove (7km north of Avdiivka).[34] Russian forces largely claimed that Russian forces controlled the Avdiivka waste heap, as did a Ukrainian military observer.[35] Ukrainian Avdiivka City Military Administration Head Vitaly Barabash denied claims that Russian forces control the Avdiivka waste heap and stated that the waste heap is a contested “gray area.”[36] Another Ukrainian military observer claimed on October 25 that Wagner Group remnants are fighting near Avdiivka, although ISW has not observed evidence of former Wagner fighters operating near Avdiivka.[37]

A Ukrainian reserve officer published satellite imagery on October 23 and confirmed that the Russian military lost over 109 military vehicles near Avdiivka between October 10 and 20.[38] The reserve officer stated that the majority of Russian losses were primarily armored fighting vehicles, such as BMP-1 and BMP-2s and MT-LBs; T-72, T-64, and T-80 tanks; BTR armored personnel carriers; and other transport vehicles. The reserve officer stated that Russian vehicle losses around Avdiivka have surpassed Russian vehicle losses during the failed Siversky Donets crossing in May 2022 and will likely surpass Russian vehicle losses in the Vuhledar area between November 2022 and April 2023. The reserve officer stated that Russian forces may have lost around a dozen additional vehicles excluded from the final count due to inconsistent imagery and noted that two unspecified independent sources estimate that Russian forces have lost around 200 military vehicles near Avdiivka.

A Russian milblogger claimed on October 24 that Ukrainian forces counterattacked and pushed Russian forces from Berdychi (10km northwest of Avdiivka).[39]

Assessed Control of Terrain near Donetsk City as of October 25, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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

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.

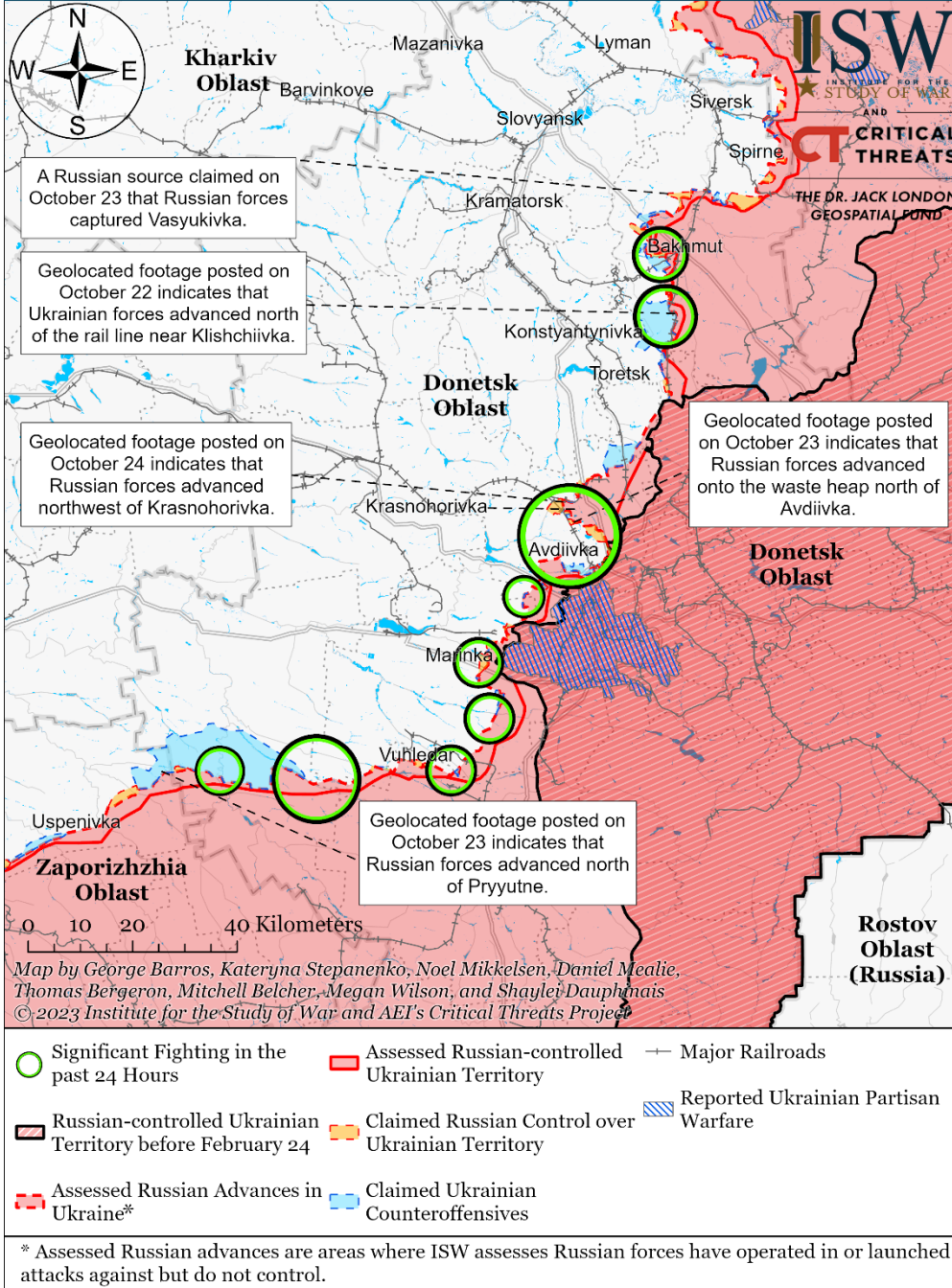
Note: A Russian source claimed on October 23 that Russian forces advanced almost 2 kilometers near Avdiivka. A Ukrainian source claimed on October 23 that Ukrainian forces pushed Russian forces back 200 meters near Opytne. A Ukrainian source claimed on October 22 that Russian forces advanced 1.5 kilometers in depth along a one kilometer wide front north of Avdiivka.

Russian forces conducted ground attacks southwest of Donetsk City on October 25. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Marinka (immediately southwest of Donetsk City), Pobieda (5km southwest of Donetsk City), and Novomykhailivka (10km southwest of Donetsk City) on October 25.[40]

Ukrainian forces did not conduct any claimed or confirmed attacks southwest of Donetsk City on October 25.

The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Vodyane (5km northeast of Vuhledar) on October 25.[41]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of October 25, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

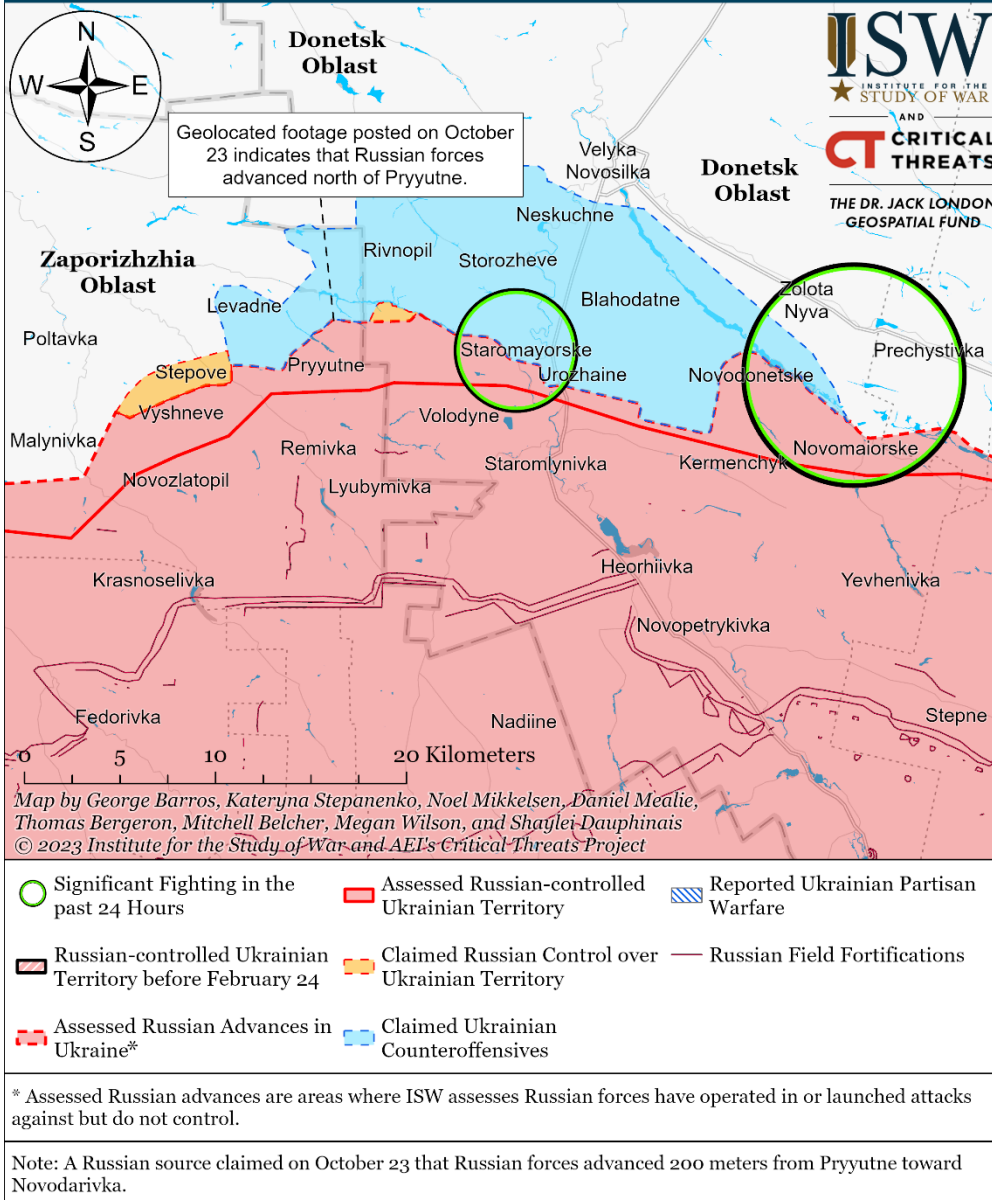


Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions and secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes)

Ukrainian forces did not conduct any confirmed or claimed ground attacks in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on October 25.

Russian forces continued limited ground attacks in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on October 25 but did not make any confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful offensive operations near Novoukrainka (18km east of Velyka Novosilka), Prechystivka (19km southeast of Velyka Novosilka), Staromayorske (9km south of Velyka Novosilka), and Zolota Nyva (11km southeast of Velyka Novosilka).[42] Zaporizhia Oblast occupation deputy Vladimir Rogov claimed that Russian forces successfully attacked near Pryyutne (14km southwest of Velyka Novosilka) and Novodarivka (15km southwest of Velyka Novosilka) and advanced 200 meters.[43] Russian milbloggers also claimed that Russian forces advanced north of Pryyutne, and one Russian milblogger claimed that elements of the 394th Motorized Rifle Regiment (127th Motorized Rifle Division, 5th Combined Arms Army, Eastern Military District) occupied a Ukrainian stronghold in the area.[44] A Ukrainian military observer stated that elements of the 394th Motorized Rifle Regiment and the 60th Motorized Rifle Brigade (also of the 5th Combined Arms Army, Eastern Military District) conducted unsuccessful offensive actions along the Pryyutne-Zavitne Bazhannya line (14km southwest to 11km south of Velyka Novosilka).[45] Rogov claimed that Russian forces also conducted successful assaults near Novodonetske (12km southeast of Velyka Novosilka) and Novomayorske (18km southeast of Velyka Novosilka), although another milblogger described Russian assaults near these settlements as unsuccessful.[46]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around the Vremivka Salient as of October 25, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



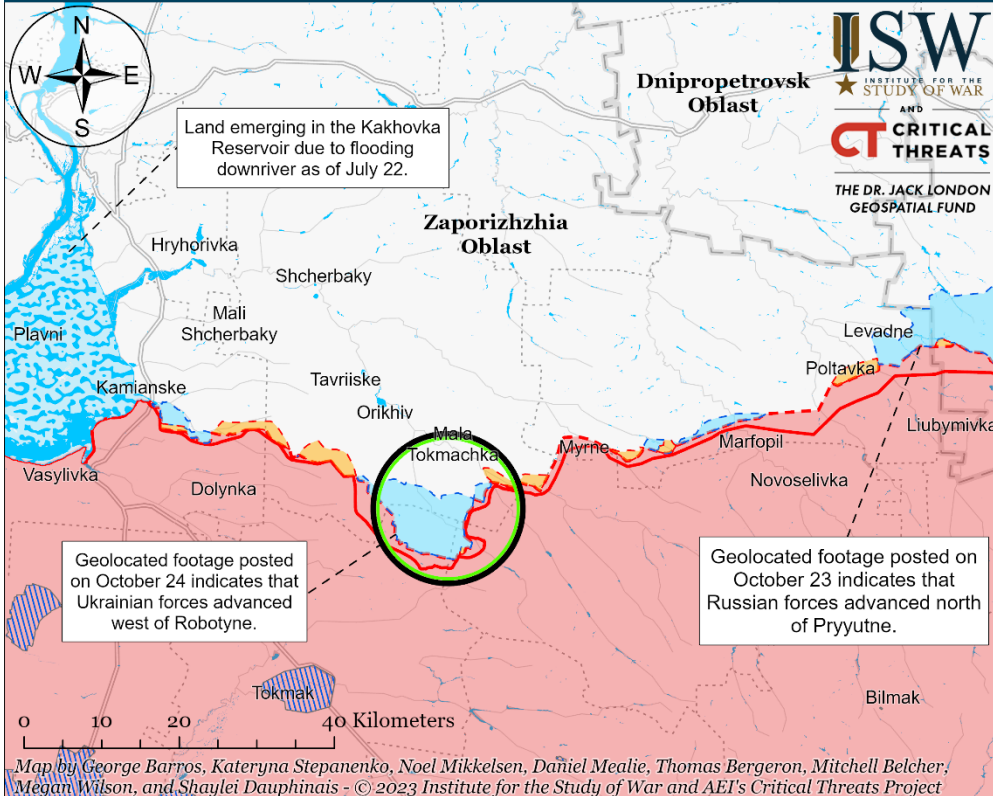
Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast on October 25 and made confirmed gains. Geolocated footage published on October 24 indicates that Ukrainian forces made further advances west of Robotyne.[47] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Melitopol (western Zaporizhzhia Oblast) direction and achieved partial success west of Verbove (9km west of Robotyne).[48] A Ukrainian military observer claimed that Russian forces withdrew from the northwestern outskirts of Novopropkivka (3km south of Robotyne), although ISW has not yet seen any visual confirmation of this claim.[49] The Russian MoD and other Russian sources claimed that Russian forces repelled

small mechanized Ukrainian groups near Robotyne, Novopropkivka, and Verbove.[50] A Russian milblogger claimed that two Ukrainian sabotage and reconnaissance groups reached Russian positions near Verbove on the night of October 24 to 25 before Russian forces repelled them.[51]



Russian forces counterattacked in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast on October 25 but did not make any confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks near Verbove and southeast of Mala Tokmachka (10km northeast of Robotyne).[52] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces counterattacked on a Ukrainian flank near Novopropkivka (12km northeast of Robotyne) but did not specify an outcome.[53]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhzhia as of October 25, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



ISW
INSTITUTE FOR THE
STUDY OF WAR
AND
**CRITICAL
THREATS**
THE DR. JACK LONDON
GEOSPATIAL FUND

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

- 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

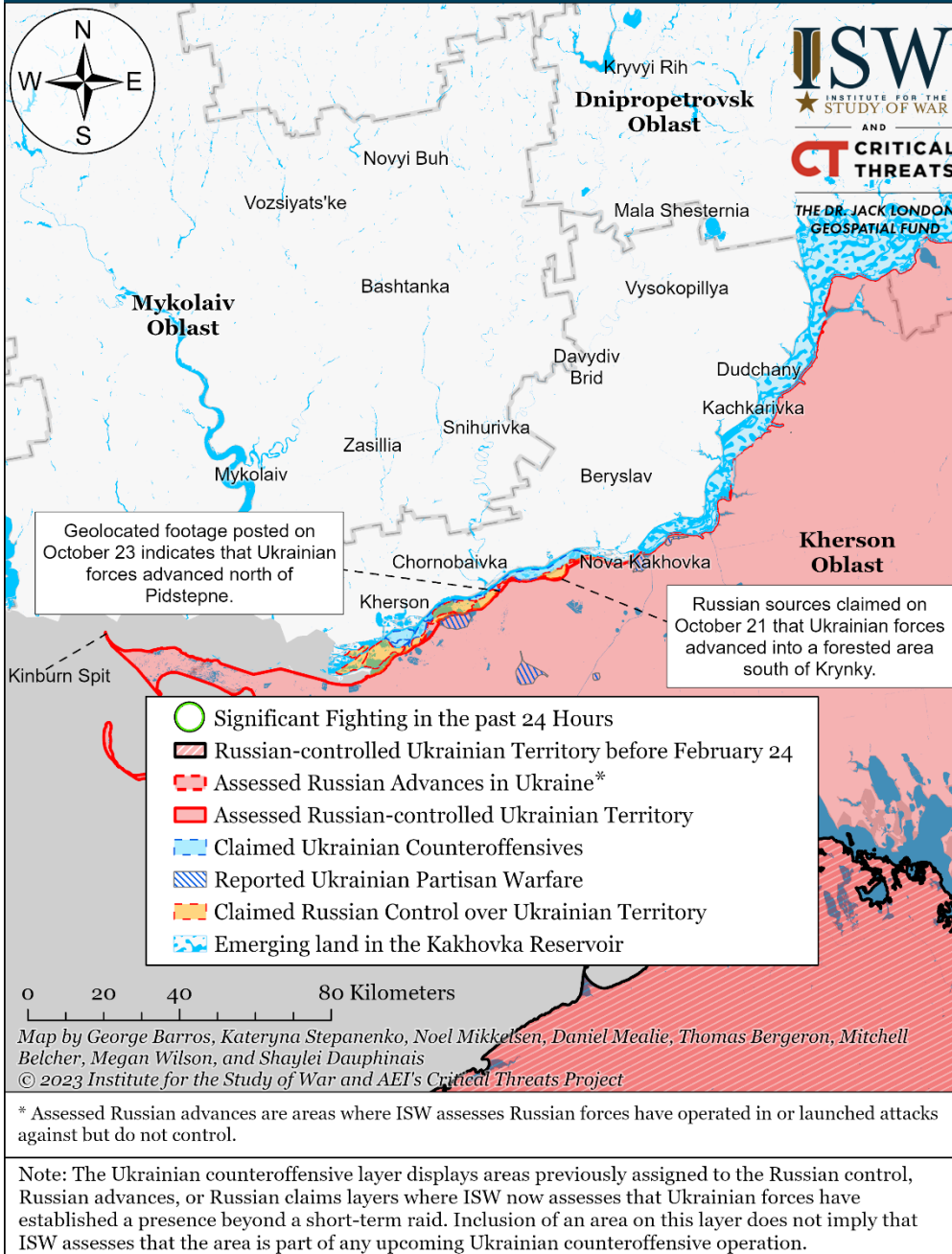
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Note: A Russian source claimed on October 24 that Russian forces advanced 200 meters near Pryyutne and Novodarivka.

Russian sources claimed on October 25 that Ukrainian forces renewed larger-than-usual ground operations on the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast and maintain positions in several areas on the east bank. Russian sources continued to claim that Ukrainian forces maintain positions in Krynyky (30km northeast of Kherson Oblast and 2km from the Dniro River) and near the Antonivsky railway and roadway bridges.[54] A prominent Russian milblogger who has been closely following Ukrainian activities along the Dniro River and on the east bank claimed that elements of the Russian 810th Naval Infantry Brigade (Black Sea Fleet) pushed Ukrainian forces out of Krynyky and that Ukrainian forces resumed larger-than-usual ground operations from positions in the marshes north of Oleshky (7km south of Kherson City and 4km from the Dniro River) on the night of October 24.[55] The prominent milblogger claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian “assault groups” that attempted to move towards Pishchanivka (14km east of Kherson City and 3km from the Dniro River), Poyma

(12km east of Kherson City and 4km from the Dnipro River), and Pidstepne (18km east of Kherson City and 4km from the Dnipro River).[56] The prominent milblogger claimed that a Ukrainian assault group reached the northern part of Pishchanivka but that Russian forces pushed them out of the settlement.[57] Another milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces advanced from the Antonivsky railway bridge closer to Pidstepne.[58] ISW has not observed any visual evidence indicating that Ukrainian forces have advanced further on the left bank and only a handful of Russian sources are currently claiming that Ukrainian forces have resumed larger-than-usual ground operations on the east bank.

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of October 25, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces targeted rear Russian areas in occupied Crimea on October 24. Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces targeted occupied Sevastopol with missiles and that residents heard explosions and Russian air defenses activating in the area.[59] Sevastopol occupation governor Mikhail Razvozhayev claimed on October 24 that Russian electronic warfare (EW) complexes downed a Ukrainian drone over Crimea and that reports of explosions were connected to routine Russian military activities in the Sevastopol area.[60]

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

Russian National Security Council Deputy Chairperson Dmitry Medvedev claimed that nearly 385,000 people entered service with the Russian armed forces between January 1 and October 25, 2023.[61] Medvedev claimed that 305,000 servicemembers are contract soldiers, 80,000 are volunteers, and that over 1,600 people sign service contracts on a daily basis.[62] Medvedev also reported that Russia will form an army corps, seven motorized rifle divisions, 19 brigades, 49 regiments, and one flotilla over the course of 2024 as part of ongoing large-scale Russian military reforms.[63] The figures presented by Medvedev are likely in part reflective of these ongoing military reforms, as Russia is trying to recruit and train personnel to staff new formations up to the corps and army level.[64] It remains highly unlikely, however, that Russia will be able to fully staff these formations to their doctrinal end strength.

Russian President Vladimir Putin oversaw a training exercise involving the Russian Strategic Deterrence Forces on October 25. The Kremlin reported that Putin and the Russian National Defense Control Center supervised training and coordination of the ground, air, and sea components of Russian nuclear deterrence forces that included practical test launches of ballistic and cruise missiles.[65] Strategic Deterrence forces launched a "Yars" intercontinental ballistic missile from the Plesetsk test cosmodrome in Kamchatka Krai, a "Sineva" ballistic missile from a strategic nuclear-powered missile submarine in the Barents Sea, and various air-launched cruise missiles from Tu-95MS long-range aviation aircraft.[66] Russian Strategic Deterrence Forces conduct regular training exercises involving their ground, air, and sea components, and these components did not demonstrate any notably new capabilities.

Russian authorities continue efforts to secure additional social benefits for Russian servicemembers and their families. United Russia Party General Council Secretary Andrey Turchak, who is also the head of the Duma working group on "Special Military Operation" issues, reported on the results of the working group to Putin on October 25.[67] Turchak highlighted several social benefits that the Russian government is extending to participants in the war and their families, including free travel to medical examinations, increased social pensions for those awarded the Order of St. George award for military service, and free travel for the family of a deceased servicemember to the place of their burial, amongst others.[68] Turchak reported that 20 different types of social assistance are in place in 63 Russian federal subjects and additionally outlined several new proposals to Putin.[69]

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 occupation authorities continue to use medical infrastructure to justify the deportation of Ukrainian children to Russia and to further consolidate control of occupied areas of Ukraine. Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) Head Denis Pushilin claimed that 70 children from occupied Donetsk Oblast have undergone surgical procedures at the Russian Research Institute of Emergency Pediatric Surgery and Traumatology in Moscow since 2022.[70] Pushilin notably did not specify how many of the children returned to occupied Donetsk Oblast following their procedures, and ISW has observed a pattern of Russian officials deporting children to Russia under the guise of medical or psychiatric necessity and failing to return them to their homes in Ukraine.[71] Pushilin reported that Russian

doctors from the Research Institute also arrived in occupied Donetsk Oblast to train new doctors and conduct surgical procedures.[72]

Russian occupation administrations continue programs to forcibly militarize Ukrainian children living in occupied areas. The Russian Kherson Oblast occupation administration reported on October 25 that 12 schoolchildren from Skadovsk took an oath of allegiance "to strengthen the power of the Russian state" and become cadets.[73] The Kherson Oblast occupation Ministry of Education praised the resumption of the cadet movement amongst school-aged children for expanding Russian military-patriotic values.[74]

Unknown actors, potentially Ukrainian partisans, conducted an attack against a Russian soldier in occupied Zaporizhia Oblast with an improvised explosive device (IED) on October 23.[75] The Zaporizhia occupation branch of the Russian Investigative Committee stated on October 25 that it has opened a case on "committing a terrorist act" in connection with an incident wherein unspecified actors planted an IED under the car of a Russian serviceman in Berdyansk that then detonated, killing the soldier.[76]

Russian Information Operations and Narratives

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu claimed on October 25 that Russian forces have downed 24 Ukrainian aircraft in the past five days, likely an inflated claim that is part of an ongoing effort to portray Russian operations as successful by overstating Ukrainian losses.[77] A Russian milblogger criticized Shoigu's figure and noted that Russian forces would have destroyed the entire Ukrainian air force several times since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine began if the Russian MoD's reporting on Ukrainian aviation losses were accurate.[78]

The Russian MoD claimed on October 25 that Russian air defense systems downed two ATACMS within the past day, though ISW has not observed any reports of ATACMS strikes since the October 17 ATACMS strike on a Russian airfield in occupied Berdyansk, Donetsk Oblast.[79] Russian officials previously claimed that Russian air defense systems could intercept HIMARS rockets and Storm Shadow missiles shortly after their provision to Ukraine, though ISW has yet to observe visual confirmation of Russian forces intercepting either system.[80]

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)

The Belarusian Ministry of Defense (MoD) reported on October 25 that a mechanized unit of the Belarusian 6th Separate Guards Mechanized Brigade conducted fire training at the Gozhsky training ground in Grodno Oblast.[81]

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/dva_majors/27954 ; <https://x.com/TuiteroMartin/status/1716956937831518333?s=20> ; <https://x.com/TuiteroMartin/status/1716957493924962535?s=20>

[2] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02hP2xhzwctEpu6P66y9fVS6pjSfHDkb8hLFThd4gH8YSbN2WA8CLXmyHf2DSaPsh3l>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidopvRSJuZAS5mZfGt8DdpaFXTViyBVymyH7TuRQBsbqwYBj8r7owo99bBYTnjaJQrRl>

[3] <https://suspilne dot media/601573-rosijska-armia-vtratila-bataljon-svoih-vijskovih-nabahmutskomu-ta-limano-kupanskomu-napramkah-za-dobu/>

[4] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02Sy071zjGiGhmpBHHGb33g6pcdzHH3jbjN9up6vXZyY84f15PkkuroTcvJgcQJq8ul>; ; https://t.me/SJTF_Odes/1922

[5] https://t.me/V_Zelenskiy_official/8350

[6] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/special-edition-campaign-assessment-ukraine%E2%80%99s-strike-campaign-against-crimea> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar100423> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar101723> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar092523> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar083023>

[7] https://t.me/mod_russia/31792

[8] https://t.me/mod_russia/31797

[9] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-22-2023>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-10-2023> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-11-2023> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-18-2023>

[10] https://t.me/mod_russia/31792

[11] https://t.me/mod_russia/31792

[12] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-march-28-2023> ; <https://understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-april-30-2023>

[13] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar100723> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar092623>

[14] https://t.me/RKadyrov_95/4038 ; https://t.me/rashid_temrezov/4060 ; <https://ria dot ru/20231025/kadyrov-1905118753.html> ; https://t.me/prigozhin_2023_tg/4369; <https://meduza>

dot io/news/2023/10/25/glava-karachaevo-cherkesii-nagradil-ordenom-15-letnego-adama-kadyrova-za-vklad-v-ukreplenie-traditsionnyh-islamskih-tsennostey

[15] https://t.me/RKadyrov_95/4036

[16] https://t.me/prigozhin_2023_tg/4361 ; https://t.me/prigozhin_2023_tg/4367 ; <https://t.me/rsotmdivision/11471> ; https://t.me/Alekhin_Telega/8380 ; https://t.me/prigozhin_2023_tg/4364 ; https://t.me/Dead_heads/541 ; https://t.me/grey_zone/21406 ; <https://t.me/milinfoolive/109249> ; https://t.me/grey_zone/21407 ; https://t.me/Topaz_Penetrator/7021 ; https://t.me/grey_zone/21408 ; https://t.me/grey_zone/21409

[17] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-24-2023> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar102223> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar102223>

[18] https://t.me/dva_majors/27962

[19] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02Syo71zjGiGhmpBHHGb33g6pcdzHH3jbjN9up6vXZyY84f15PkkuroTcvJgcQJq8ul> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidopvRSJuZAS5mZfGt8DdpaFXTViyBVymyH7TuRQBsbqwYBj8r7owo99bBYTnjaJQrRl> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02hP2xhwctEpu6P66y9fVS6pjSfHDkb8hLFThd4gH8YSbN2WA8CLXmyHf2DSaPsh3l>

[20] <https://t.me/readovkanews/68310>

[21] https://t.me/mod_russia/31801 ; https://t.me/mod_russia/31806 ; https://t.me/mod_russia/31808

[22] https://t.me/russian_airborne/2333

[23] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02Syo71zjGiGhmpBHHGb33g6pcdzHH3jbjN9up6vXZyY84f15PkkuroTcvJgcQJq8ul>

[24] <https://susplne dot media/601573-rosijska-armia-vtratila-bataljon-svoih-vijskovih-na-bahmutskom-ua-limano-kupanskom-ua-napramkah-za-dobu/>

[25] <https://susplne dot media/601573-rosijska-armia-vtratila-bataljon-svoih-vijskovih-na-bahmutskom-ua-limano-kupanskom-ua-napramkah-za-dobu/>

[26] https://t.me/mod_russia/31806 ; https://t.me/mod_russia/31807 ; https://t.me/mod_russia/31810

[27] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02Syo71zjGiGhmpBHHGb33g6pcdzHH3jbjN9up6vXZyY84f15PkkuroTcvJgcQJq8ul> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02hP2xhwctEpu6P66y9fVS6pjSfHDkb8hLFThd4gH8YSbN2WA8CLXmyHf2DSaPsh3l> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidopvRSJuZAS5mZfGt8DdpaFXTViyBVymyH7TuRQBsbqwYBj8r7owo99bBYTnjaJQrRl>

[28] https://t.me/russian_airborne/2333; https://t.me/vdv_ZA_teplinsky/220

[29] <https://t.me/RVvoenkork/55510> ; https://t.me/nm_dnr/11168

[30] <https://x.com/TonyaLevchuk/status/1716874455849349206?s=20>; <https://x.com/klinger66/status/1716896456802726195?s=20>

[31] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02Syo71zjGiGhmpBHHGb33g6pcdzHH3jbjN9up6vXZyY84f15PkkuroTcvJgcQJq8ul> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02hP2xhzwctEpu6P66y9fVS6pjSfHDkb8hLFThd4gH8YSbN2WA8CLXmyHf2DSaPsh3l>

[32] https://armyinform.com_dot_ua/2023/10/24/blyzko-2400-osib-ta-pivtory-sotni-odynycz-bronetehnyky-vtratyly-rosiyany-za-ostanni-pyat-dib-na-donechchyni/

[33] <https://t.me/wargonzo/16002>

[34] <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4272>

[35] <https://t.me/wargonzo/16002> ; https://t.me/z_arhiv/25390 ; <https://t.me/voenkorkhayrullin/1846>; <https://twitter.com/GirkinGirkin/status/1717033140286333034> ; <https://t.me/voenkorkotenok/51525> ; <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1345> ; <https://t.me/readovkanews/68310>

[36] https://suspilne_dot_media/602109-terikon-rosiani-ne-kontroluut-nacalnik-mva-pro-situaciu-navkolo-avdiivki-ta-rizik-otocenna/

[37] <https://www.facebook.com/butusov.yuriy/posts/pfbidocJw4HSLiDNHdBCVYbQantvMcxZ5qxMscPqq48Eo3y5nLpS5fufbWcf9mycU2nMzFl>

[38] https://twitter.com/Tatarigami_UA/status/1716492677875748978

[39] <https://t.me/voenkorkotenok/51525>

[40] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02Syo71zjGiGhmpBHHGb33g6pcdzHH3jbjN9up6vXZyY84f15PkkuroTcvJgcQJq8ul> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02hP2xhzwctEpu6P66y9fVS6pjSfHDkb8hLFThd4gH8YSbN2WA8CLXmyHf2DSaPsh3l>

[41] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02Syo71zjGiGhmpBHHGb33g6pcdzHH3jbjN9up6vXZyY84f15PkkuroTcvJgcQJq8ul>

[42] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02Syo71zjGiGhmpBHHGb33g6pcdzHH3jbjN9up6vXZyY84f15PkkuroTcvJgcQJq8ul> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02hP2xhzwctEpu6P66y9fVS6pjSfHDkb8hLFThd4gH8YSbN2WA8CLXmyHf2DSaPsh3l>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0pvrRSJuZAS5mZfGt8DdpaFXTViyBVymyH7TuRQBsbqwYBj8r7owo99bBYTnjaJQrRl>

- [43] <https://t.me/vrogov/12615>
- [44] https://t.me/voin_dv/5650
- [45] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1343>
- [46] <https://t.me/vrogov/12615> ; <https://t.me/wargonzo/16002>
- [47] https://t.me/dva_majors/27954 ;
<https://x.com/TuiteroMartin/status/1716956937831518333?s=20> ;
<https://x.com/TuiteroMartin/status/1716957493924962535?s=20>
- [48] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02hP2xhzwctEpu6P66y9fVS6pjSfHDkb8hLFThd4gH8YSbN2WA8CLXmyHf2DSaPsh3l>;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidopvRSJuZAS5mZfGt8DdpaFXTViyBVymyH7TuRQBsbqwYBj8r7owo99bBYTnjaJQrRl>
- [49] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1343>
- [50] https://t.me/mod_russia/31807
; https://t.me/mod_russia/31812 ; https://t.me/dva_majors/27962 ; <https://t.me/batalyon15/3183>
- [51] <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4260> ; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4257>
- [52] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02hP2xhzwctEpu6P66y9fVS6pjSfHDkb8hLFThd4gH8YSbN2WA8CLXmyHf2DSaPsh3l>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidopvRSJuZAS5mZfGt8DdpaFXTViyBVymyH7TuRQBsbqwYBj8r7owo99bBYTnjaJQrRl> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02Sy071zjGiGhmpBHHGb33g6pcdzHH3jbjN9up6vXZyY84f15PkkuroTcvJgcQJq8ul>
- [53] https://t.me/russian_airborne/2333
- [54] <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4262> ; https://t.me/dva_majors/27962 ; https://t.me/mod_russia/31807 ; https://t.me/mod_russia/31812 ;
- [55] <https://t.me/rybar/53601>
- [56] <https://t.me/rybar/53601>
- [57] <https://t.me/rybar/53601>
- [58] <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4256>
- [59] <https://t.me/rybar/53586> ; https://t.me/dva_majors/27962 ; https://t.me/boris_rozhin/101901
- [60] <https://t.me/razvozhaev/4312>; <https://t.me/severrealii/20898> ;
<https://t.me/RVvoenkor/55497>

- [61] <https://iz dot ru/1595026/2023-10-25/medvedev-soobshchil-o-385-tys-postupivshikh-na-sluzhbu-v-vs-rf-kontraktnikov-i-dobrovoltcev>
- [62] <https://iz dot ru/1595026/2023-10-25/medvedev-soobshchil-o-385-tys-postupivshikh-na-sluzhbu-v-vs-rf-kontraktnikov-i-dobrovoltcev>
- [63] <https://iz dot ru/1595026/2023-10-25/medvedev-soobshchil-o-385-tys-postupivshikh-na-sluzhbu-v-vs-rf-kontraktnikov-i-dobrovoltcev>
- [64] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar100823>; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar092523>;
<https://isw.pub/UkrWar090323>
- [65] <http://kremlin dot ru/events/president/news/72591>; https://t.me/mod_russia/31815; https://t.me/mod_russia/31817 ; https://t.me/mod_russia/31818 ; https://t.me/mod_russia/31819;
- [66] <http://kremlin dot ru/events/president/news/72591>; https://t.me/mod_russia/31815; https://t.me/mod_russia/31817 ; https://t.me/mod_russia/31818 ; https://t.me/mod_russia/31819;
- [67] https://t.me/turchak_andrey/1486
- [68] https://t.me/turchak_andrey/1486
- [69] https://t.me/turchak_andrey/1486
- [70] <https://t.me/pushilindenis/3950>
- [71] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-july-12-2023>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-august-20-2023>; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar010723>; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar011323>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-april-9-2023>;
<https://isw.pub/UkrWar060223>
- [72] <https://t.me/pushilindenis/3950>
- [73] https://t.me/VGA_Kherson/14976
- [74] <https://t.me/depobrherson/3005>
- [75] https://t.me/sledcom_zaporozhye/239 ; https://twitter.com/666_mancer/status/1717141145157865806 ; <https://t.me/astrapress/41060>; <https://t.me/vrogov/12618> ; <https://t.me/readovkanews/68321>
- [76] https://t.me/sledcom_zaporozhye/239
- [77] https://t.me/mod_russia/31797 ; https://t.me/mod_russia/31798

[78] <https://t.me/milinfoolive/109279>

[79] https://t.me/mod_russia/31807 ; <https://t.me/vrogov/12633> ;
https://t.me/russkiy_opolchenec/38427 ; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/51537>
; <https://t.me/readovkanews/68330> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar101923> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar101823>

[80] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-august-6-2023> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-november-16>

[81] <https://t.me/modmilby/33207>