

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment

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April 9, 2024, 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 see ISW’s 3D control of terrain topographic map of Ukraine. Use of a computer (not a mobile device) is strongly recommended for using this data-heavy tool.

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 1:30 pm ET on April 9. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the April 10 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Russian state media highlighted Russia and China’s joint effort to combat perceived Western “dual containment” targeting Russia and China during Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov’s meetings with Chinese President Xi Jinping and Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Beijing on April 9. Kremlin newswire *TASS* reported that Wang suggested that China and Russia engage in “dual counteraction” in response to alleged Western attempts at “dual containment” targeting Russia and China.[1] Lavrov claimed that the Russian–Chinese “comprehensive partnership and strategic interaction” have reached an “unprecedented level,” and that Russia and China have mutual international interests and will coordinate to solve internal and external problems.[2] Lavrov claimed that Russian–Chinese relations extend beyond a “military-political alliance of the Cold War” and that both countries are working to create a “multipolar world order” through multilateral formats that include BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).[3] Russia has consistently pushed the idea of a Russian-led “multipolar world order” that imagines Russia as the leader of a coalition of non-Western states in opposition to the US and West.[4] Lavrov claimed that Russia and China will continue to cooperate on anti-terrorism measures and that Russia and China signed another plan for inter-Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) consultations in 2024.[5] The Russian MFA stated that China and Russia “exchanged views” on possible ways to resolve the war in Ukraine, that both sides called international meetings that discuss an end to the war without Russia “futile,” and that Russia “positively” assesses China’s suggestions for an end to the war, likely in reference to the 12-point peace plan that China released in February 2023.[6] The Russian MFA notably did not mention bilateral military or technological cooperation, possibly due to recent reports that China is increasingly helping Russia’s defense industrial base (DIB) and even providing Russia with geospatial intelligence that Russia likely uses to support military operations in Ukraine.[7] ISW continues to assess that the Kremlin continues to be concerned with China’s reticence to participate fully in the Kremlin’s desired no-limits partnership, and that China continues to hold the upper hand in the Russian–Chinese relationship despite recent reports suggesting that China is increasingly willing to assist Russia’s war efforts in Ukraine.[8]

US Central Command (CENTCOM) announced on April 9 that it transferred roughly a brigade's worth of small arms and ammunition seized from Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) to Ukraine on April 4. CENTCOM reported that the US government transferred over 5,000 AK-47s, machine guns, sniper rifles, RPG-7s and over 500,000 rounds of 7.62mm ammunition to the Ukrainian military.^[9] CENTCOM stated that it obtained these munitions on December 1, 2023 through a Department of Justice (DoJ) civil forfeiture claim opened against the IRGC in July 2023.^[10] CNN reported that CENTCOM had already transferred over one million rounds of seized IRGC ammunition to Ukraine as of October 2023.^[11]

The Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) is likely responsible for a drone strike against the Borisoglebsk Airbase in Voronezh Oblast overnight on April 8 to 9. GUR Spokesperson Andriy Yusov told *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL)* that two unspecified drones struck the aviation center in Borisoglebsk, which reportedly trains Russian frontline bomber and attack aviation flight crews, and that preliminary information suggests that the strike damaged unspecified production facilities at the airbase.^[12] Ukrainian outlet *RBK-Ukraine* cited its own source within GUR as confirming that the Borisoglebsk strike was a GUR operation.^[13] Geolocated footage published on April 9 shows one drone striking the airbase.^[14] Russian sources reported that one Ukrainian drone struck the facade of the Chlakov aviation training center near the airbase and another drone struck the same spot an hour later, only damaging the outside of the building.^[15] ISW has not yet observed visual confirmation of the type and extent of damage from the drone strike.

Russian ultranationalist milbloggers continue to employ virulently anti-migrant rhetoric and call for xenophobic domestic policies, but in doing so are exposing the inherent hypocrisy in Russia's treatment of its own indigenous ethnic minority communities. Several ultranationalist milbloggers seized on an April 5 post by the Leningrad Oblast House of Friendship cultural center for awarding the local "Khorezm" Uzbek cultural organization with a grant for its work in "harmonization of interethnic relations and support for small indigenous peoples of Leningrad Oblast."^[16] Several milbloggers retorted that Uzbeks are not indigenous to Leningrad Oblast and questioned why an Uzbek cultural organization received an award from the Leningrad Oblast budget.^[17] One milblogger emphasized that Leningrad Oblast has formally defined Vepsians, Vods, and Izhorians as the ethnic groups indigenous to Leningrad Oblast.^[18] Another Russian milblogger published a post on April 9, which was later amplified by a Telegram channel affiliated with imprisoned Russian former officer and ultranationalist commentator Igor Girkin, calling the domestic situation in Russia a "migration catastrophe," accusing migrants of attacking the Russian domestic rear and of "unleashing ethnic, economic, and religious terror against indigenous citizens of the Russian Federation of all ethnicities."^[19] The milbloggers who criticized the Leningrad Oblast authorities and the post amplified by the Girkin-affiliated channel all narrowly define Muslim migrants from Central Asian countries as an explicit threat to "indigenous Russians."^[20]

This same ultranationalist community, however, has been inconsistent and hypocritical in selectively defining who it believes to be an "indigenous Russian," and the actual indigenous populations of Russia's ethnic minority republics have faced discrimination and poor treatment at the hands of ethnic

Russians, particularly against the backdrop of the war in Ukraine. Russian milbloggers have criticized Tuvans, an ethnic minority group indigenous to Siberia, for using indigenous Tuvan orthography on road signs, while accusing Tuvan activist groups of inciting “ethnic discord” in Russia.[21] The Kremlin has also heavily relied on the more geographically remote and economically disenfranchised Russian federal subjects, many of which are indigenous ethnic minority republics, to disproportionately bear the brunt of mobilization for the war in Ukraine to protect ethnic Russians in major population centers such as Moscow and St. Petersburg from high casualties and the realities of the war.[22] Indigenous Buryat, Kalmyk, Tuvan, and Sakha activist organizations have spoken out against the Kremlin’s heavy reliance on ethnic minority indigenous populations for force generation purposes.[23] Russian authorities have also been trying to undermine cultural identity in the Republic of Tatarstan through amendments to state national policy that remove provisions on “strengthening Tatarstan’s identity.”[24]

Russian ultranationalists’ anti-migrant rhetoric, which has increased exponentially following the March 22 Crocus City Hall terror attack, has exposed gaps in the Kremlin’s already strained relationship with migrant communities within Russia. The Kremlin is likely struggling to balance appeasing the anti-migrant calls of ultranationalist commentators, who comprise a major Kremlin support base, with its reliance on migrants and ethnic minority communities to fill roles both on the battlefield and in the domestic labor economy, as ISW has previously assessed.[25]

The Kremlin will likely be able to leverage a new agreement signed by the Kremlin-affiliated governor of the pro-Russian Moldovan autonomous region of Gagauzia, Yevgenia Gutsul, and a state-owned Russian bank to further its efforts to destabilize Moldovan society, attack Moldova’s democratic government, and prevent Moldova’s accession to the European Union (EU). Gutsul met with Petr Fradkov, the chairman and CEO of Russian state-owned bank Promsvyazbank (PSB), in Moscow on April 9.[26] Petr Fradkov is the son of Mikhail Fradkov, the former long-time director of Russia’s Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR) and current director of the Russian Institute for Strategic Studies.[27] PSB will reportedly open accounts for an estimated 5,000 government employees and 20,000 pensioners in Gagauzia, who will reportedly receive cards for Russia’s Mir payment system, whose operator the US sanctioned in February 2024.[28] Gutsul asked PSB to provide “humanitarian aid” and “additional funding” to Gagauzian pension payments and public sector salaries.[29] Gutsul claimed that Moldovan authorities may detain her upon her return to Chisinau, echoing previous claims by pro-Russian Moldovan actors that Moldovan authorities were going to detain Gutsul in Chisinau following her visit to Moscow in March 2024, though authorities did not detain Gutsul.[30] It is unclear if Gagauzia will be able to implement the agreement with PSB, however. Gagauzian outlet *Notka* reported that the head of the Gagauzian Department of Justice Petr Manol noted that the governor of Gagauzia does not have the power to independently sign international agreements under Moldovan law.[31] The Mir system also does not work in Moldova except in the breakaway republic of Transnistria, the other pro-Russian region of Moldova.[32] Fradkov mentioned that PSB will give “special services at PSB at a separate tariff” to Gagauzian residents’ relatives who live in Russia, but it is unclear if PSB payments to Gagauzian pensioners and public sector employees will only go through the Gagauzian diaspora in Russia.[33]

The current pro-Russian Gagauzian government previously attempted to use Russian money to finance increased pension payments that were part of a campaign promise from a Kremlin-affiliated political candidate, and the new Gagauzia-PSB deal may be part of propaganda efforts to portray Russia as the sole benefactor of the autonomous region. Ilan Shor, a US-sanctioned, pro-Kremlin Moldovan politician who founded the Kremlin-affiliated Shor Party under which Gutsul ran for governor of Gagauzia, promised to increase pensions in Gagauzia and other Shor Party-affiliated Moldovan regions in October 2023 in the lead up to the November 2023 local elections.[34] Moldovan outlet *NewsMaker* reported that a Russian citizen living in Israel, whose name repeatedly appears in documents related to Shor’s various promised deals, transferred 15 million Moldovan lei (about \$850,000) to the Gagauzian regional pension payments account.[35] Gutsul claimed that the Moldovan federal government blocked this money, and a spokesperson for leading Moldovan political Party of Solidarity and Action stated that the money came illegally from an organized crime group and that law enforcement agencies should investigate its origins.[36] The April 9 Gagauzia–PSB deal is noteworthy because Kremlin-affiliated actors are now directly and openly linked to Gagauzian government financial promises. Gutsul highlighted this relationship on April 9, claiming that Russia is the “friend” and “protector” who “saved” Gagauzia.[37] Gutsul also claimed that the Moldovan central government is enacting an “economic blockade” on Gagauzia — similar to language used by Kremlin and Transnistrian actors to promote Kremlin information operations about Tiraspol–Chisinau relations in recent months.[38] The Kremlin may be able to exploit the PSB deal regardless of the deal’s legality or how Moldovan authorities react. If Moldovan authorities prevent the deal from moving forward, pro-Russian Moldovan actors and the Kremlin will likely use the situation to promote the Kremlin’s ongoing narratives targeting the current Moldovan government and to stir up anger in Gagauzia. If the Gagauzian government is able to somehow enact the agreement, however, the Kremlin could use the payments to economically capture a segment of Gagauzia to do the Kremlin’s bidding, or could cut off the payments at a future time of Moscow’s choosing to foment a crisis.

The Kremlin may also hope to use the Gagauzia–PSB deal to recreate the way in which Kremlin-affiliated Moldovan political parties previously influenced Moldovan elections and public opinion. Shor reportedly paid demonstrators to protest against Moldovan President Maia Sandu in 2022, and Moldovan authorities raided Shor Party offices following the Gagauzia gubernatorial election in the summer of 2023 as part of investigations into voter bribery.[39] The Kremlin may hope to use pro-Russian political parties in Moldova and the PSB payments to Gagauzia in similar tactics to influence Moldova’s upcoming elections, particularly the presidential election in late 2024 and parliamentary elections in the summer of 2025.

Russia is reportedly considering creating a new ministry for youth policy and patriotic education, likely as part of an ongoing attempt to instill pro-Kremlin and Kremlin-approved ideology in Russia’s next generation. Russian outlet *Vedemosti* reported on April 9 that four unnamed sources close to the Russian presidential administration stated that Russian authorities are considering creating a new ministry for youth policy and patriotic education that would be formed on the basis of the Russian Federal Agency of Youth Affairs (Rosmolodezh), which would then take over some patriotic education functions from the Ministry of Education.[40] The sources also claimed that the Russian government is considering merging the Ministry of Science and Higher Education with the Ministry of Education (also known as the “Ministry of Enlightenment” in its literal

Russian translation), which the Russian government divided in 2018. Russian opposition outlet *Verstka* reported in October 2023 that the Russian federal budget significantly increased its allocations for funds promoting patriotic education. *Verstka* reported that Russia allocated 43.8 billion rubles for patriotic education in 2023, almost four times the number of funds that Russia allocated to patriotic education in 2022.[41] *Verstka* also noted that Russia increased funding in 2023 to patriotic youth projects including the World Youth Festival and Yunarmia, a military-patriotic movement that instills pro-Russian and militarized ideals in youth in Russia and occupied Ukraine. Russia is likely trying to expand efforts to disseminate pro-Kremlin and Kremlin-approved ideology to create a generation of Russians pliant to the Kremlin's goals, especially as Russia sets domestic information conditions for a long war effort in Ukraine and increasingly postures against the West.

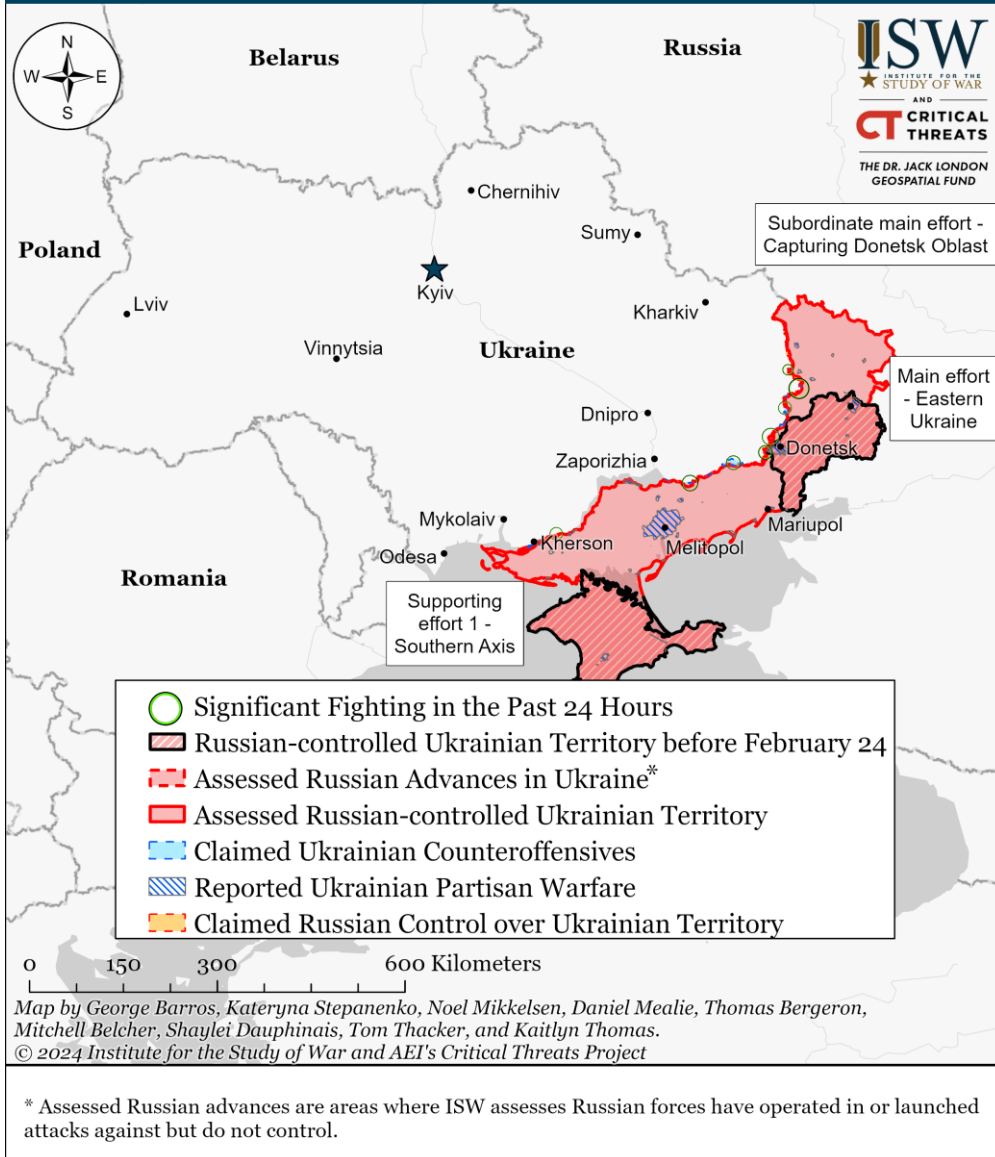
Russian military authorities in Armenia detained another Russian citizen in Armenia, likely in an effort to assert military and political power over Armenia and to challenge Armenia's sovereignty amid a continued deterioration of Armenian–Russian relations. The Armenian branch of the international human rights organization Helsinki Citizens' Assembly in Vanadzor reported on April 9 that Russian military police at the Russian 102nd Military Base in Gyumri, Armenia, detained Russian citizen Anatoly Shchetin in Armenia for desertion and intend to forcibly transfer him to Russia.[42] Helsinki Citizens' Assembly's lawyer Ani Chatinyan told *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's* Armenian service *Radio Azatutyun* that the organization sent a report of the crime to the Armenian Prosecutor General's Office and that Russian law enforcement agencies do not have the right to detain people in Armenia and instead should transfer operations to Armenian law enforcement.[43] The Armenian Prosecutor General's office told *Radio Azatutyun* that it has processed the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly's report in accordance with its procedures. Russian military police at the 102nd Military Base previously detained a Russian citizen in Armenia for desertion in December 2023.[44] Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan responded to the December 2023 arrest in February 2024 and stated that Armenian authorities are investigating the incident and that Armenia “cannot tolerate illegal actions on [its] territory.”[45]

Key Takeaways:

- **Russian state media highlighted Russia and China's joint effort to combat perceived Western “dual containment” targeting Russia and China during Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov's meetings with Chinese President Xi Jinping and Foreign Minister Wang Yi in Beijing on April 9.**
- **US Central Command (CENTCOM) announced on April 9 that it transferred roughly a brigade's worth of small arms and ammunition seized from Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) to Ukraine on April 4.**
- **The Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) is likely responsible for a drone strike against the Borisoglebsk Airbase in Voronezh Oblast overnight on April 8 to 9.**
- **Russian ultranationalist milbloggers continue to employ virulently anti-migrant rhetoric and calls for xenophobic domestic policies, but in doing so are exposing the inherent hypocrisy in Russia's treatment of its own indigenous ethnic minority communities.**

- **The Kremlin will likely be able to leverage a new agreement signed by the Kremlin-affiliated governor of the pro-Russian Moldovan autonomous region of Gagauzia, Yevgenia Gutsul, and a state-owned Russian bank to further its efforts to destabilize Moldovan society, attack Moldova’s democratic government, and prevent Moldova’s accession to the European Union (EU).**
- **Russia is reportedly considering creating a new ministry for youth policy and patriotic education, likely as part of an ongoing attempt to instill pro-Kremlin and Kremlin-approved ideology in Russia’s next generation.**
- **Russian military authorities in Armenia detained another Russian citizen in Armenia, likely in an effort to assert military and political power over Armenia and to challenge Armenia’s sovereignty amid a continued deterioration of Armenian–Russian relations.**
- **Russian forces recently made confirmed advances near Kreminna, west of Avdiivka, and south and southwest of Donetsk City on April 9.**
- **Kremlin officials continue efforts to ease public fears about another possible wave of partial mobilization.**
- **The Russian occupation regime in Crimea is systematically persecuting clergy and parishes affiliated with the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU) in occupied Crimea.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of April 9, 2024, 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 Russian violations of the laws of armed conflict and the Geneva Conventions and crimes against humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

- Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine (comprised of two subordinate main efforts)

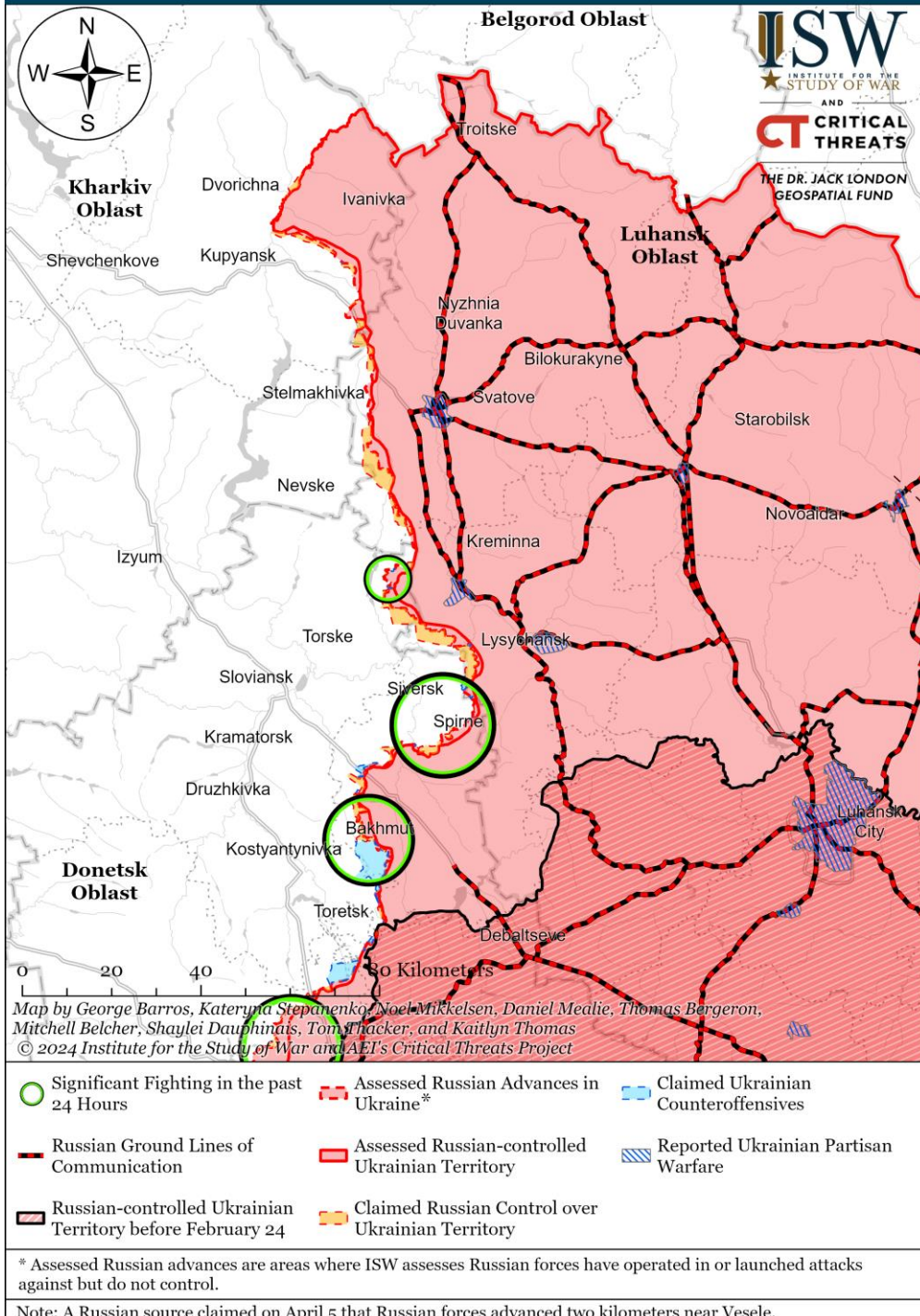
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and encircle northern Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis
- Russian Air, Missile, and Drone Campaign
- Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts
- Russian Technological Adaptations
- Activities in Russian-occupied areas
- Ukrainian Defense Industrial Base Efforts
- Russian Information Operations and Narratives
- Significant Activity in Belarus

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 recently advanced south of Kreminna. Geolocated footage published on April 8 shows that Russian forces made marginal gains in the chalk quarry area south of Bilohorivka (south of Kreminna).[46] A Russian milblogger claimed on April 9 that Russian forces are fighting for tactical heights in the quarry area and managed to capture limited positions in this area – claims consistent with available geolocated footage.[47] Russian sources also claimed that there was heavy fighting near Terny (west of Kreminna), but that Russian forces are losing limited positions to constant Ukrainian counterattacks.[48] The Ukrainian General Staff reported continued unsuccessful Russian attacks southeast of Kupyansk near Kyslivka; west of Svatove near Andriivka; and near Terny.[49] Elements of the Russian 20th Combined Arms Army (formerly of the Western Military District and now of the newly reformed Moscow Military District) reportedly continue to operate in the Lyman direction (west of Kreminna).[50]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of April 9, 2024, 3:00 PM ET

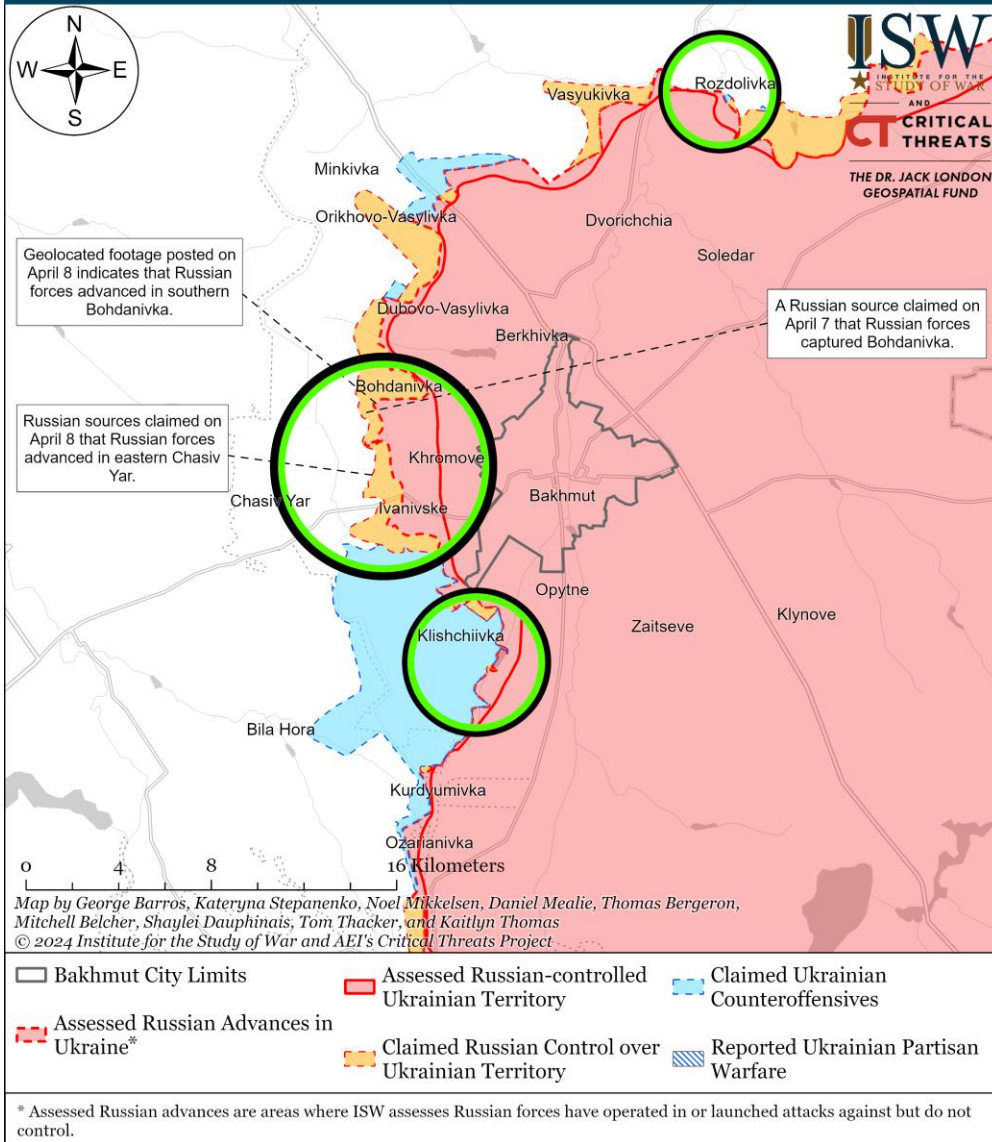


Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Donetsk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)

Positional fighting continued near Bakhmut on April 9, but there were no confirmed changes to the

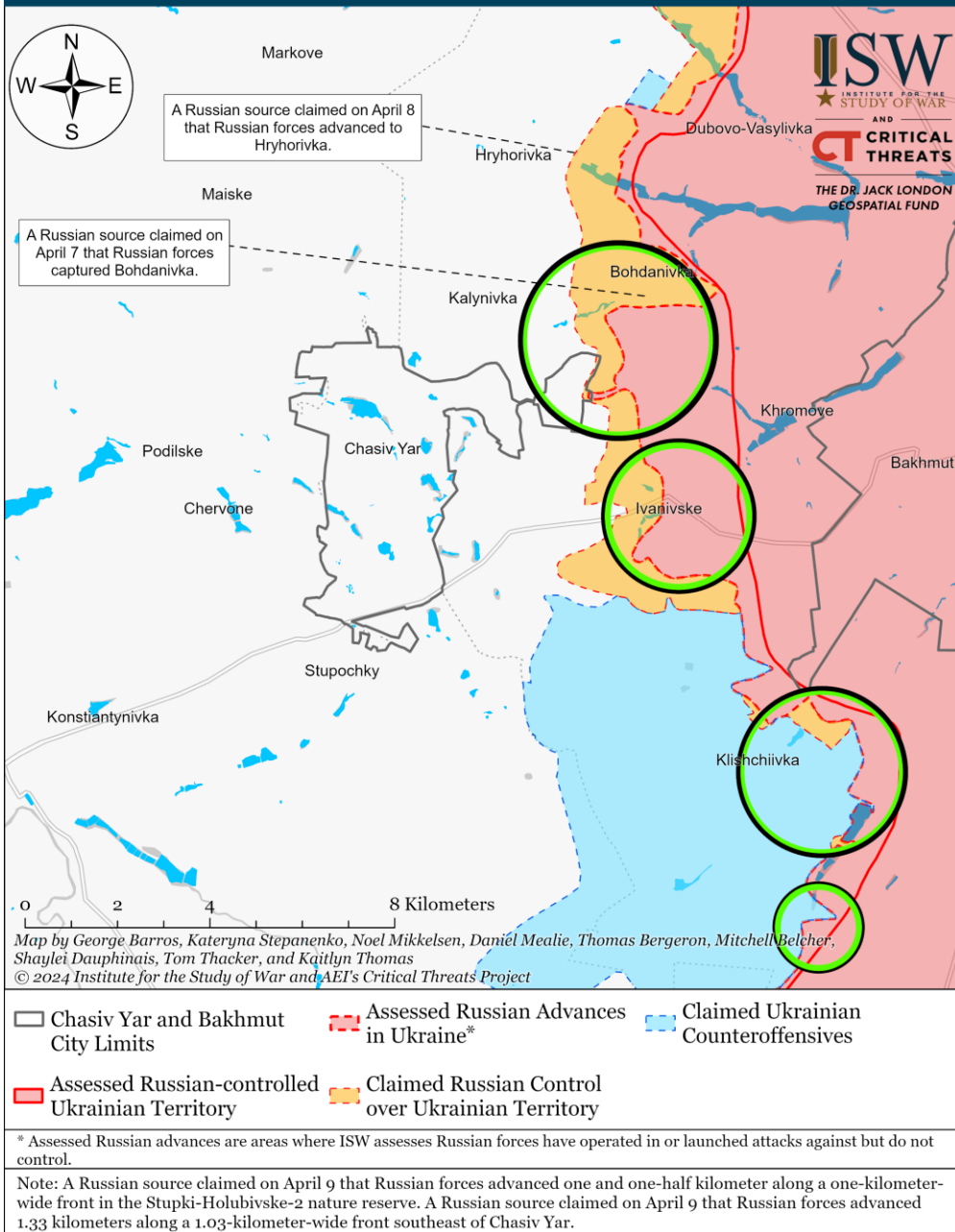
frontline. Some Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces completed the capture of Bohdanivka (northwest of Bakhmut) and are advancing towards Kalynivka (west of Bohdanivka), while other milbloggers claimed that some Ukrainian forces still remain in Bohdanivka.[51] Russian milbloggers also claimed that Russian forces advanced south and southeast of Chasiv Yar, including up to one kilometer in depth and 1.5 kilometers in width in the Stupcky-Holubovskyi 2 nature reserve to the southeast of Chasiv Yar, and further into Kanal Microraion directly east of Chasiv Yar.[52] ISW has not observed visual confirmation of these Russian claims, however. The Ukrainian Khortysia Group of Forces Spokesperson Lieutenant Colonel Nazar Voloshyn stated that Russian forces continue high numbers of infantry assaults east of Chasiv Yar and that Russian forces transport infantry on infantry fighting vehicles (IFVs) to conduct dismounted assaults on Ukrainian positions with artillery and air support.[53] Positional fighting continued northeast of Bakhmut near Verkhokamyanske, Spirne, and Rozdolivka; west of Bakhmut near Novyi (immediately east of Chasiv Yar); and southwest of Bakhmut near Stupochky, Klishchiivka and Andriivka.[54] Elements of the Russian 11th Airborne (VDV) Brigade are reportedly fighting south of Chasiv Yar, and elements of the 98th VDV Division and either the “Hispaniola” Volunteer Assault Brigade (Russian Volunteer Corps) or the “Hispaniola” private military company (PMC) are reportedly fighting east of Chasiv Yar.[55] Elements of the Russian 150th Motorized Rifle Division (8th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Southern Military District [SMD]) are reportedly operating in the general Bakhmut direction.[56]

Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of April 9, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



Russian forces appear to be conducting heavy glide bomb strikes against Ukrainian positions to enable further advances towards Chasiv Yar, similar to the way that Russian forces conducted glide bomb strikes against Avdiivka leading to its capture in February 2024.[57] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian Aerospace Forces [VKS] Su-25 attack aircraft are conducting heavy FAB-250 guided glide bomb strikes against Ukrainian fortifications in Chasiv Yar and are also using S-8 and S-13 missiles to support ground elements of the 98th VDV Division in assault operations.[58] Other milbloggers widely amplified footage of Russian glide bomb strikes on Chasiv Yar and of Russian fixed-wing aircraft dropping bombs near Russian infantry positions west of Bakhmut while flying at a low altitude.[59] Another milblogger claimed that Russian rotary-wing aircraft conducted strikes southwest of Bakhmut near Kurdyumivka and Klishchiivka on April 9.[60]

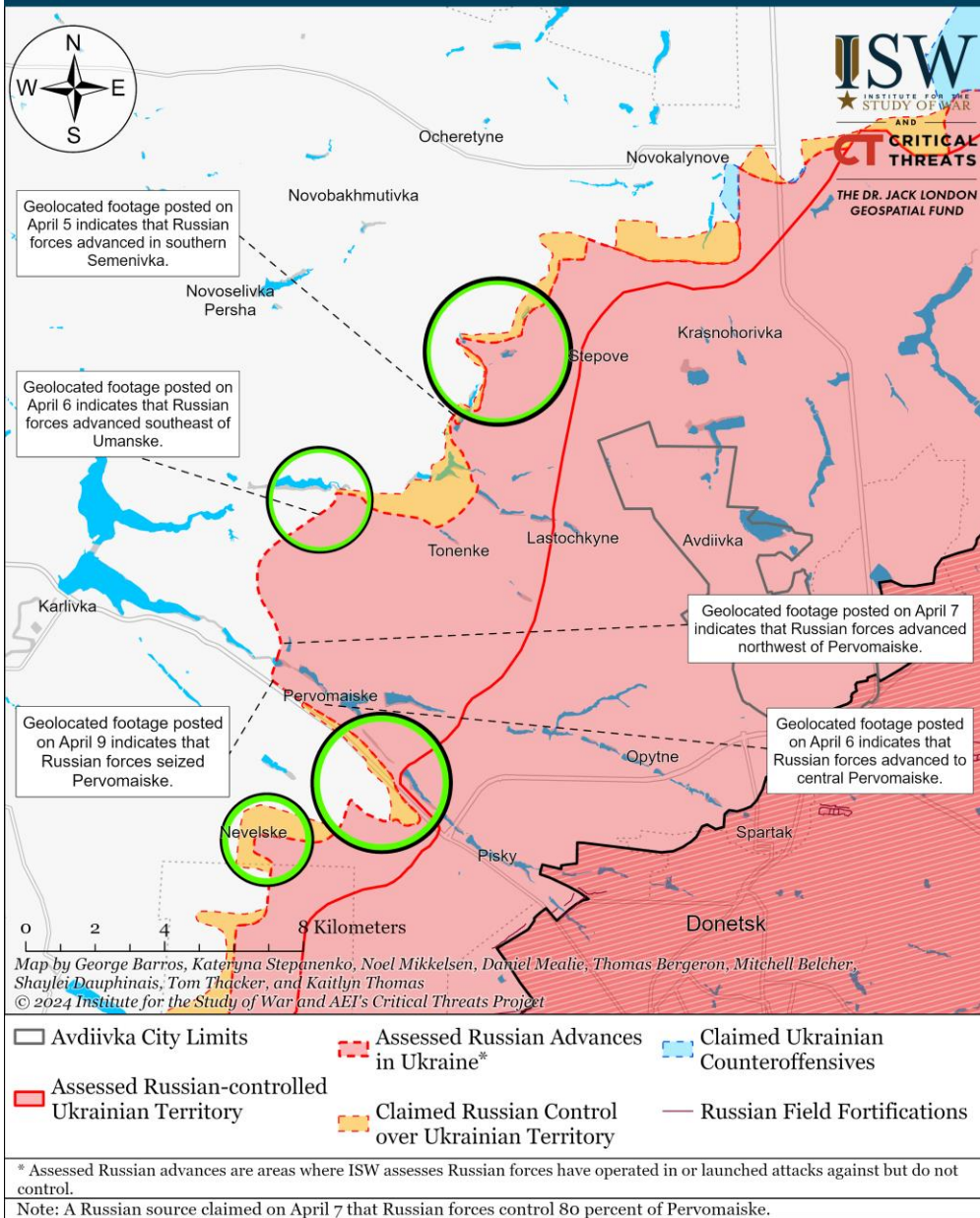
Assessed Control of Terrain near Chasiv Yar as of April 9, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



Russian forces recently advanced west of Avdiivka and likely captured Pervomaiske (southwest of Avdiivka) as of April 9. Geolocated footage published on April 9 shows elements of the Russian 9th Motorized Rifle Brigade (1st Donetsk People's Republic [DNR] Army Corps [AC]) raising a flag in western Pervomaiske, and Russian sources claimed that Russian forces captured the settlement after Ukrainian forces withdrew.[61] Other milbloggers claimed that Russian forces have not yet fully captured Pervomaiske, however.[62] Additional geolocated footage published on April 9 shows that Russian forces advanced in fields northeast of Netylove (immediately west of Pervomaiske).[63] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced northward along Tsentralna Street in

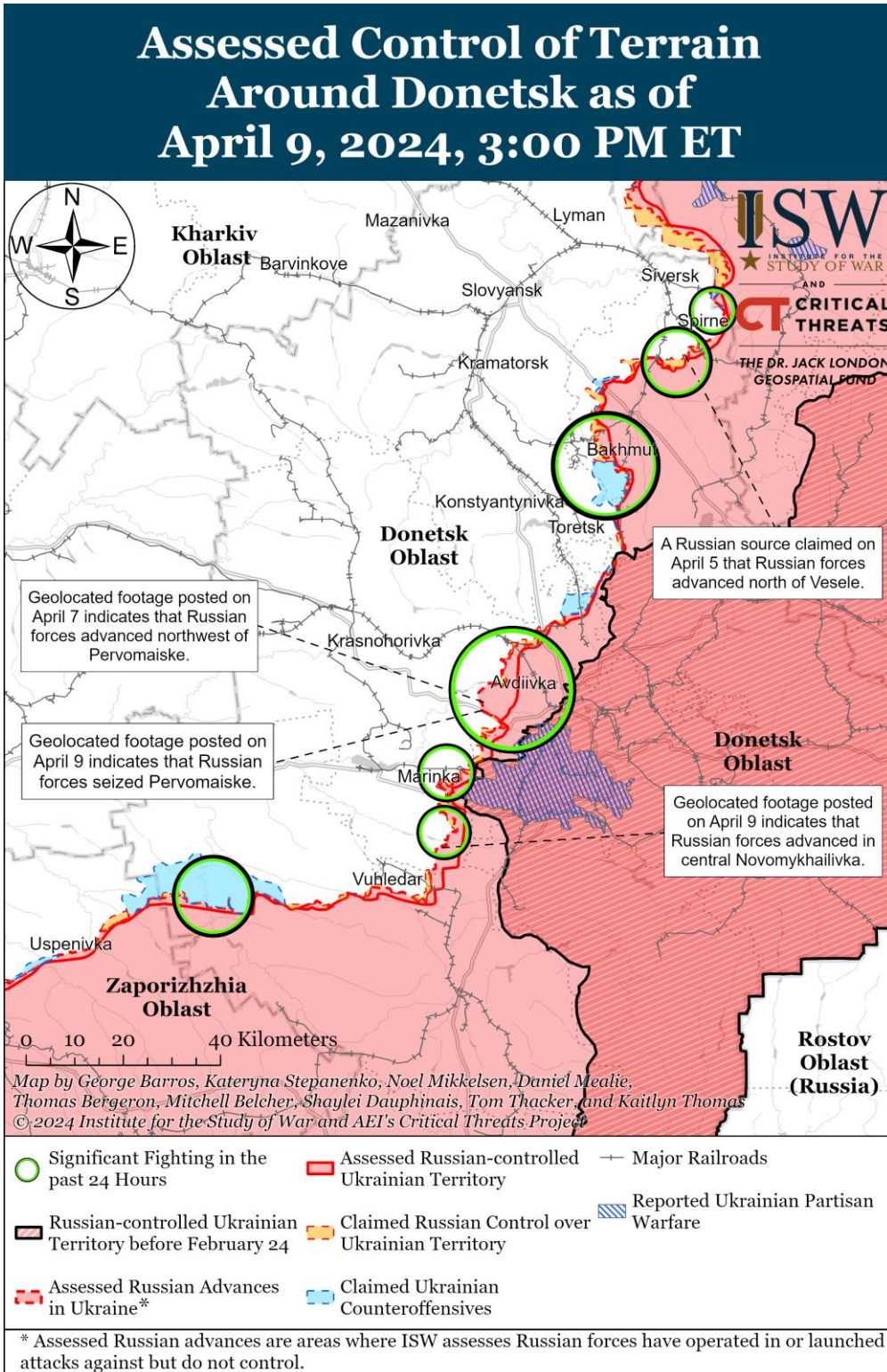
Semenivka and in fields west of Tonenke (both west of Avdiivka), as well as southeast of and in Novokalynove (northwest of Avdiivka).[64] Fighting also continued northwest of Avdiivka near Novobakmutivka and Berdychi; west of Avdiivka near Umanske; and southwest of Avdiivka near Nevelske.[65] A Ukrainian soldier operating in the Avdiivka direction stated that Russian forces are attempting to take Semenivka by attacking in groups of five to seven infantrymen both from the east and from the north.[66] The soldier stated that Russian forces have not conducted a mechanized attack near Semenivka in recent days and usually use IFVs to transport small infantry groups to the frontline for infantry-led ground assaults. The soldier also stated that the Russian VKS conducts 25-30 KAB glide bomb strikes per day in the Avdiivka direction. Elements of the Russian 15th Motorized Rifle Brigade (2nd CAA, Central Military District [CMD]) are reportedly fighting in Berdychi; elements of the 30th Motorized Rifle Brigade (2nd CAA, CMD) are reportedly fighting in Semenivka and to the south near Orlivka; elements of the Russian 1st Motorized Rifle Brigade (1st DNR AC) supported by elements of the 428th Motorized Rifle Regiment, which is reportedly attached to the 90th Tank Division, and 6th Tank Regiment (90th Tank Division, 41st CAA, CMD) are reportedly fighting in the Tonenke-Umanske and Orlivka-Umanske directions; and elements of the 110th Motorized Rifle Brigade (1st DNR AC) are reportedly fighting in Nevelske.[67]

Assessed Control of Terrain near Avdiivka as of April 9, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



Russian forces recently advanced west and southwest of Donetsk City. Geolocated footage published on April 8 shows that Russian forces made gains along Vatutin Street in southeastern Krasnohorivka (west of Donetsk City) following a mechanized assault with roughly two platoons.[68] Geolocated footage published on April 9 shows Ukrainian forces counterattacking in the same area on Vatutin Street, indicating that Ukrainian forces regained their positions following the initial Russian mechanized assault.[69] A Ukrainian officer fighting in a brigade deployed near Krasnohorivka noted that Russian forces conducted a total of seven assaults in this between April 8 and 9 and that by the morning of April 9, the Ukrainian counterattack had destroyed seven pieces of unspecified Russian equipment.[70] Geolocated footage published on April 9 shows that Russian forces have also advanced

westward along Tsentralna Street in Novomykhailivka (southwest of Donetsk City).[71] Ukraine's Airborne Assault Forces Command noted that Ukrainian forces have destroyed over 18 Russian vehicles of varying types in Novomykhailivka in the past three days, including three tanks and eight combat vehicles.[72] Ukrainian and Russian sources reported continued positional engagements west of Donetsk City near Heorhiivka and southwest of Donetsk City near Novomykhailivka and Pobieda.[73]

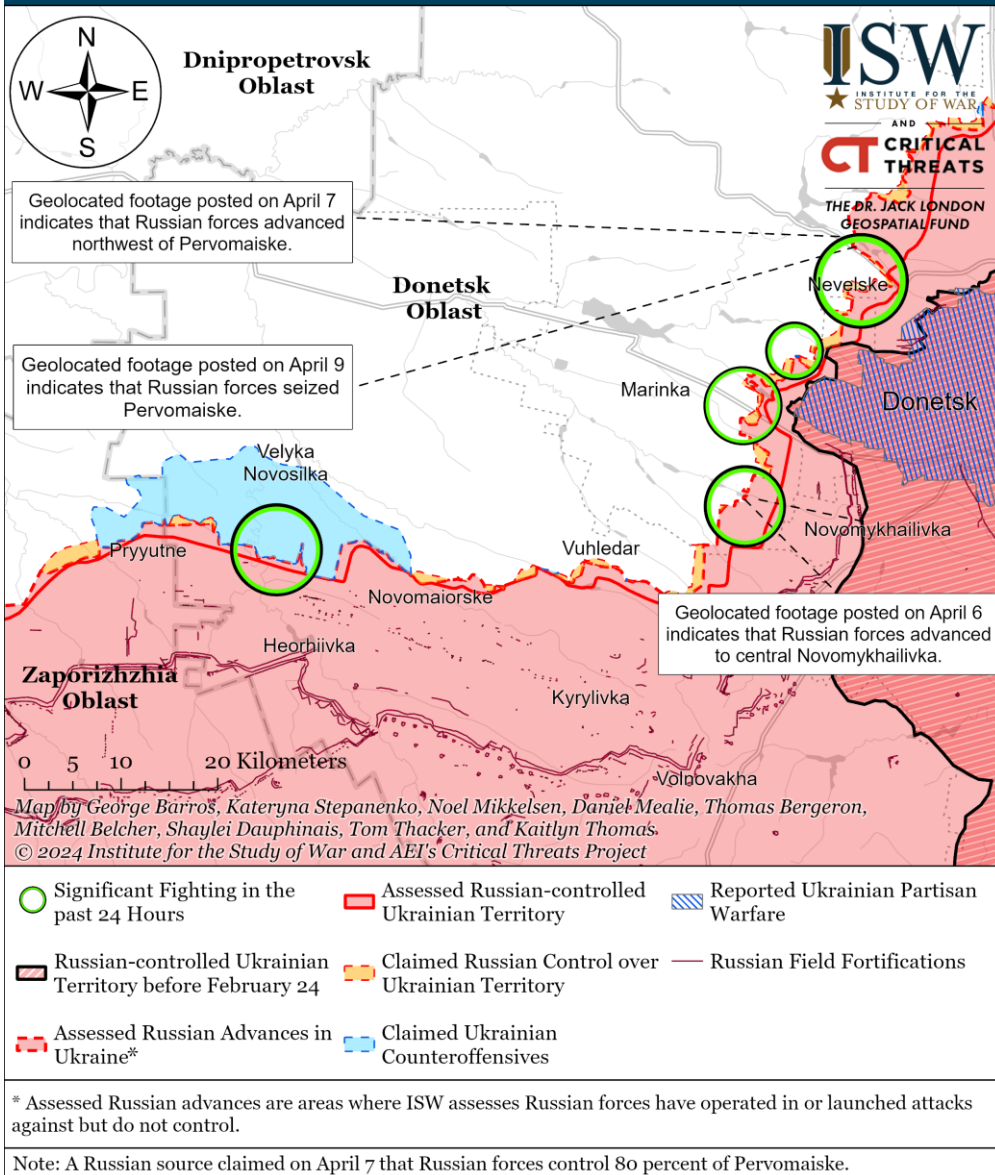


Limited positional engagements continued in the Donetsk–Zaporizhia Oblast border area on April 9, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline. Ukrainian military sources reported continued positional engagements near Urozhaine and Staromayorske (both south of Velyka Novosilka).[74] Elements of the 11th Air Force and Air Defense Army (Russian Aerospace Forces [VKS] and Eastern Military District [EMD]) reportedly continue conducting unguided glide bomb strikes against Ukrainian positions near Vuhledar.[75] Elements of the 14th Spetsnaz Brigade are reportedly operating near Pryyutne (southwest of Velyka Novosilka).[76]

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

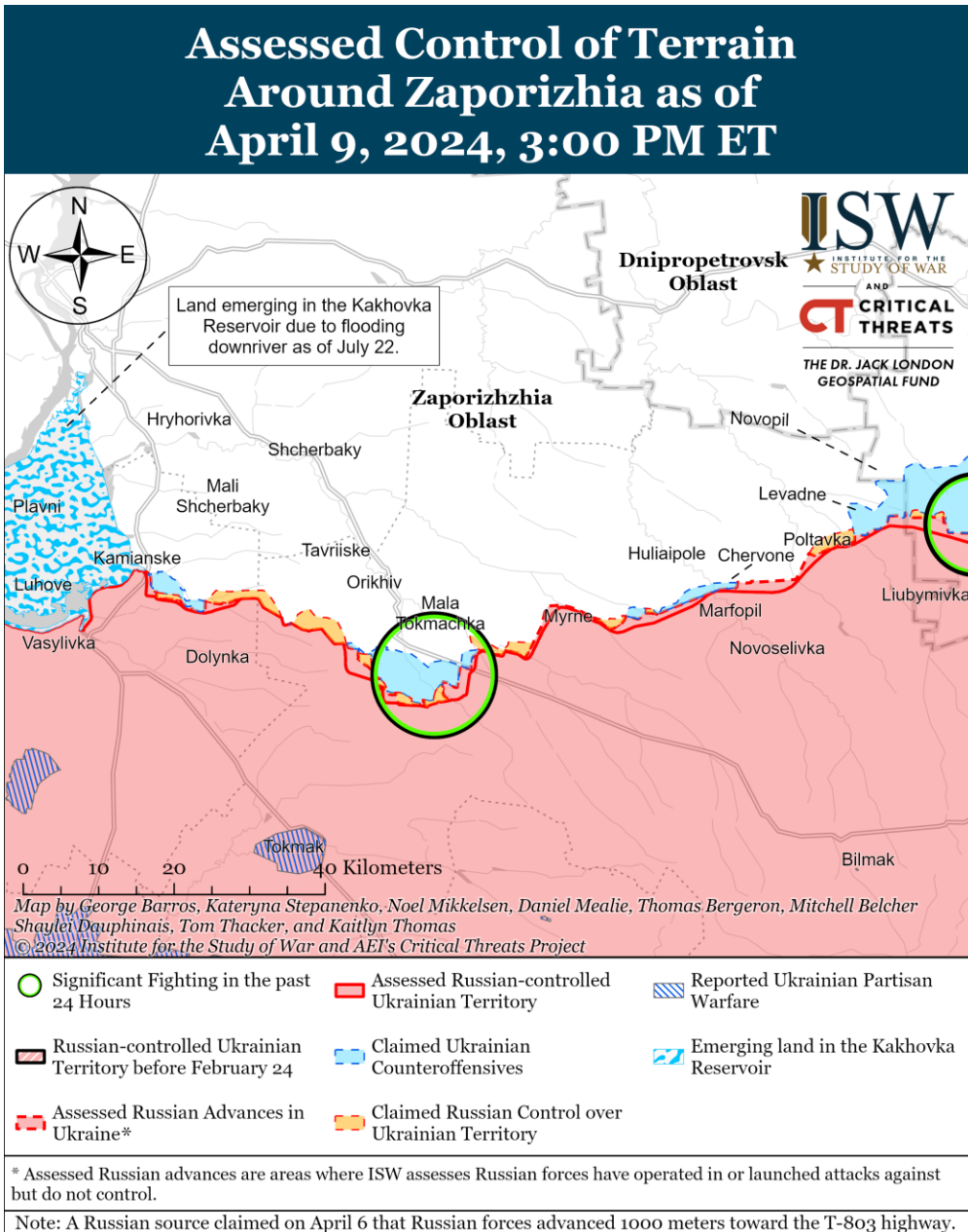
Positional engagements continued in western Donetsk Oblast on April 9, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline. Positional engagements continued near Robotyne; Mala Tokmachka (northeast of Robotyne); and northwest of Verbove (east of Robotyne).[77] Elements of the Russian 7th Airborne (VDV) Division reportedly continue operating near Verbove; and elements of the Russian 42nd Motorized Rifle Division (58th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Southern Military District [SMD]) reportedly continue operating near Robotyne.[78]

Assessed Control of Terrain in Western Donetsk Oblast as of April 9, 2024, 3:00 PM ET

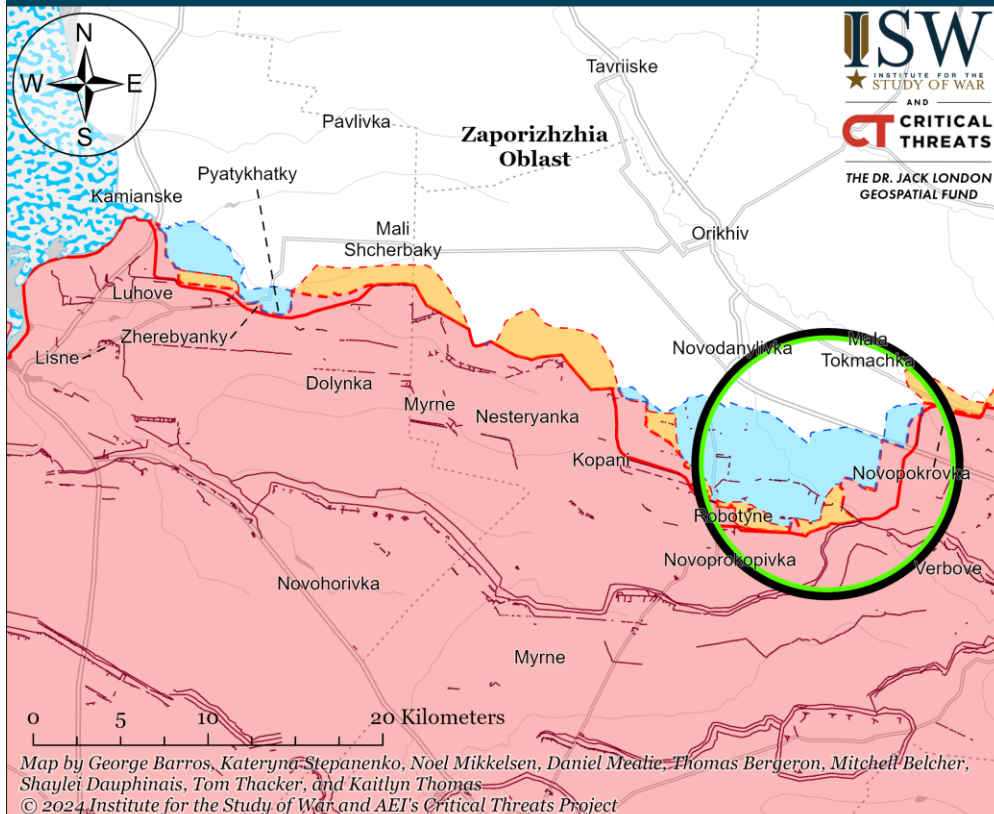


Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) Spokesperson Andriy Yusov reiterated on April 9 that Ukraine is not involved in any military strikes or operations against the Russian-occupied Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP) in Enerhodar, Zaporizhia Oblast, and stated that this renewed wave of accusations against Ukraine is a Russian provocation.[79] Ukrainian nuclear energy operator Energoatom stated on April 8 that Russia has accused Ukraine of conducting drone attacks against the ZNPP to obfuscate an incident that may have already occurred at the hands of Russian personnel or to conceal Russian intentions to conduct an operation at the ZNPP.[80] ZNPP occupation authorities claimed on April 9 that Ukrainian forces conducted a drone strike on the ZNPP's training center, adjacent to the ZNPP, marking the third consecutive day of accusations that Ukrainian forces conducted a drone strike against the ZNPP.[81] Kremlin newswire TASS reported that Russia called for

a meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Board of Governors to discuss the alleged Ukrainian drone strikes and later confirmed that the meeting will convene on April 11.[82] TASS also reported that Russian Presidential Administration Deputy Head Sergei Kiriyenko visited the ZNPP on April 9 to meet with ZNPP occupation officials and assess the current state of the ZNPP.[83]



Assessed Control of Terrain Around Pyatykhatky and Robotyne as of April 9, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



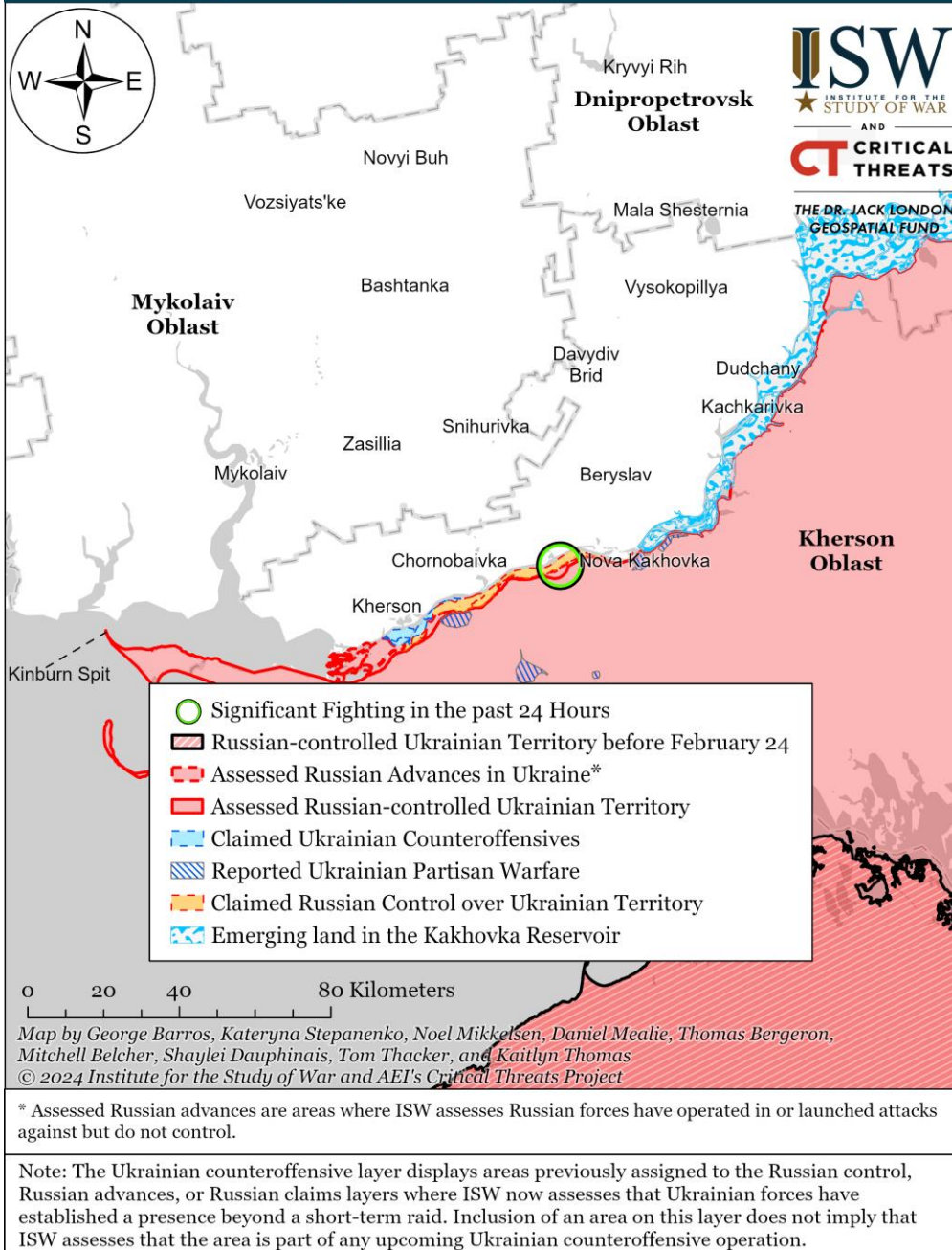
Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours	Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory	Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24	Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory	Russian Field Fortifications
Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*	Claimed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

* 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 April 6 that Russian forces advanced 1000 meters toward the T-803 highway.

Positional engagements continued in the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast on April 9, including near Krynyk, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline.[84]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of April 9, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Russian air defense destroyed a Ukrainian Neptune anti-ship missile over the Black Sea off the coast of occupied Crimea on the night of April 8 to 9.^[85]

Russian Air, Missile, and Drone Campaign (Russian Objective: Target Ukrainian military and civilian infrastructure in the rear and on the frontline)

Russian forces conducted a series of missile and drone strikes against Ukraine on April 8, overnight on April 8 to 9, and on April 9. Ukrainian Zaporizhia Oblast Head Ivan Fedorov reported that Russian forces struck an industrial facility in Zaporizhzhia City with an unspecified missile on April 8.[86] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed on April 8 that Russian forces destroyed a warehouse and production workshop for heavy drones in Zaporizhzhia City with an Iskander missile.[87] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces launched 20 Shahed-136/131 drones from occupied Cape Chauda, Crimea and Primorsko-Akhtarsk, Krasnodar Krai and four S-300 missiles from occupied Donetsk Oblast on the night of April 8 to 9.[88] Ukrainian forces reportedly shot down all of the drones over Mykolaiv, Odesa, Kherson, Dnipropetrovsk, Poltava, Vinnytsia, and Lviv oblasts. Ukraine's Southern Operational Command stated that Russian drones targeted critical infrastructure in southern Ukraine, and the Ukrainian Energy Ministry stated that Russian struck energy infrastructure in Poltava and Lviv oblasts.[89] Ukrainian officials reported that Russian unspecified missiles struck civilian infrastructure in Poltava Oblast.[90] The Ukrainian Ministry of Internal Affairs stated that four Russian S-400 missiles struck and damaged civilian infrastructure in Druzhkivka, Donetsk Oblast overnight, and Donetsk Oblast Head Vadym Filashkin reported that Russian forces conducted airstrikes on Kostyantynivka, Donetsk Oblast with unspecified projectiles.[91] Kharkiv Oblast Head Oleh Synehubov reported that Russian forces struck civilian enterprises near Kharkiv City with KAB bombs.[92]

Ukraine's Southern Operational Command reported that Russia conducted a missile strike, likely with an Iskander-M missile, against a coastal area of Odesa Oblast on the afternoon of April 9.[93]

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

Kremlin officials continue efforts to ease public fears about another possible wave of partial mobilization. Russian State Duma Defense Committee Chairperson Andrei Kartapolov claimed on April 9 that there will be no mobilization in May 2024 under any circumstances and that the set period of time for mobilization callups has "passed." [94] Kartapolov claimed that current Russian recruiting efforts are sufficient, likely in reference to Russia's various ongoing crypto-mobilization schemes, which reportedly generate between 20,000–30,000 troops per month.[95] Kartapolov may have been responding to an April 9 claim by a Russian milblogger that Russians should prepare for another wave of mobilization in May.[96] ISW continues to assess that Russia appears to have successfully leveraged its ongoing crypto-mobilization efforts to make up for increased manpower losses.[97]

Russian Technological Adaptations (Russian objective: Introduce technological innovations to optimize systems for use in Ukraine)

Russian forces are reportedly using tanks reinforced with large metal sheets to protect against Ukrainian drone strikes. The Ukrainian Khortytsia Group of Forces posted footage on April 8 of a Russian mechanized assault with roughly two platoons near Krasnohorivka, Donetsk Oblast, and

Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces used a “turtle tank” — a tank covered in metal sheets on all sides — during the assault.[98] Some Russian sources claimed that it was a T-72 tank upon which Russian forces had welded KMT-4 or KMT-6 mine trawls (plough).[99] Russian forces reportedly added the metal sheets to protect the tank from Ukrainian drone strikes, but the metal sheets severely limited the movement of the tank’s turret and the tank’s general mobility.[100]

Ukrainian Defense Industrial Efforts (Ukrainian objective: Develop its defense industrial base to become more self-sufficient in cooperation with US, European, and international partners)

ISW is not publishing coverage of Ukrainian defense industrial efforts today.

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)

The Russian occupation regime in Crimea is systematically persecuting clergy and parishes affiliated with the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU) in occupied Crimea. Ukraine’s Permanent Presidential Representative in Crimea reported on April 9 that Russian occupation authorities dismantled the dome of the Cathedral of the Holy and Equal-to-the Apostles Prince Volodymyr and Princess Olga in occupied Simferopol on April 8.[101] This cathedral is the Cathedral of the Crimean Diocese of the OCU, and the Ukrainian government attempted to transfer rights for the diocese to the Ukrainian representative of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea in October 2022 to protect the rights of OCU minorities in occupied Crimea.[102] Ukraine’s Permanent Presidential Representative in Crimea noted that between the first Russian invasion of Crimea in 2014 and the full-scale invasion in 2022, the number of OCU religious communities in occupied Crimea, including parishes, missions, and monasteries, decreased from 49 to seven.[103] Russian occupation authorities have also reportedly illegally mobilized OCU clergy to fight in the Russian Armed Forces. ISW has previously written at length about Russia’s persecution of religious minorities in occupied Ukraine and assessed in 2023 that the Kremlin particularly views the OCU as schismatic from the Kremlin-controlled Russian Orthodox Church (ROC), seeking to eradicate it from occupied areas.[104]

Russian occupation authorities are likely capitalizing on recent increased anti-migrant sentiment following the March 22 Moscow terror attack to increase law enforcement crackdowns against migrants in occupied Ukraine. The Russian Federal Security Service’s (FSB) Donetsk People’s Republic (DNR) directorate reported on April 9 that Russian law enforcement detained 20 migrants in occupied Mariupol for the “failure to comply with the rules of entry” that require documentation for migrants to work in Russia and Russian-occupied territories.[105] Russian authorities will reportedly deport eight of the detained migrants. Russian occupation authorities have relied largely on migrant workers to restore the infrastructure that Russian forces destroyed during combat operations in occupied Ukraine, including by actively recruiting them to work in occupied Ukraine. Raids on migrant communities in occupied Ukraine are symptomatic of the migrant worker dynamic, as well as recent Russian law enforcement efforts to more harshly police communities considered vulnerable to extremist activity.[106]

Russian occupation authorities continue efforts to Russify occupied areas by gradually asserting legal and physical control over occupied Ukraine and eradicating access to Ukrainian language and culture. Kherson Oblast occupation governor Vladimir Saldo stated on April 7 that the Russian State Budgetary Institution “Kherson Avtodor” plans to replace 80 Ukrainian-language road signs in occupied Kherson Oblast with Russian-language road signs by the end of 2024.[107] The Luhansk People’s Republic (LNR) militia also reported on April 9 that Luhansk Oblast occupation authorities are working to remove Ukrainian satellite dishes to remove access to Ukrainian language news and gain further control over the information space in occupied areas.[108] The removal of Ukrainian satellite dishes and their replacement with the “Ruskiy Mir” television satellite will further allow Russian occupation authorities to disseminate anti-Ukrainian and pro-Russian propaganda throughout occupied areas of Ukraine.[109]

Russian Information Operations and Narratives

The Kremlin continues to baselessly accuse Ukraine of involvement in terrorist acts in order to discredit the Ukrainian government and military and undermine Western support for Ukraine. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov claimed that Russian occupation authorities allowed International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) access to the ZNPP because Russian officials knew that Ukrainian forces would attempt to conduct “provocations” against the ZNPP.[110] Russian Ministry Foreign Affairs (MFA) Second Department of Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Director Alexei Polishchuk stated that Russia does not have a statute of limitations on alleged Ukrainian terrorist attacks committed in Russia since 2022 and reiterated demands that Ukrainian authorities arrest and extradite people allegedly involved in these acts.[111]

Russian officials continue to falsely implicate the West as sponsoring terrorism following the Kremlin’s intelligence and law enforcement failure to prevent the March 22 Crocus City Hall terrorist attack. The Russian Investigative Committee announced on April 9 that it opened a criminal case against unspecified senior US and NATO officials for allegedly financing unspecified terrorism.[112] The Russian Investigative Committee claimed that US and NATO officials have been financing terrorist attacks in Russia and against Russian assets abroad “in recent years.” ISW remains confident that Islamic State (IS) conducted the Crocus City Hall attack and has yet to observe independent reporting or evidence to suggest that an actor other than IS was responsible for or aided the attack.[113] Russian law enforcement and intelligence responses in the North Caucasus — such as a counterterrorism raid in the Republic of Dagestan on March 31 — and intensified measures targeting Central Asian migrants in Russia are further evidence that Russian authorities actually assess that the terrorist threat emanates from Russia’s Central Asian and Muslim minority communities instead of Ukraine.[114]

Russian authorities continue to make false claims about US initiatives supporting Ukraine to undermine continued US military support for Ukraine. The Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (SVR)

claimed on April 9 that US authorities are recruiting several hundred Mexican and Columbian citizens from US prisons to fight in Ukraine and that US officials plan to continue recruiting foreign citizens for the Ukrainian military.[115]

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.

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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