

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, August 15, 2023

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August 15, 2023, 5:45pm 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 cutoff for this product was 12pm ET on August 15. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the August 15 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Ukrainian forces conducted counteroffensive operations on at least three sectors of the front on August 15 and reportedly advanced in Luhansk Oblast and western Zaporizhia Oblast. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations in the Bakhmut, Melitopol (western Zaporizhia Oblast), and Berdyansk (western Donetsk-eastern Zaporizhia Oblast) directions.[1] Coordinates published by a Russian milblogger on August 15 indicate that Ukrainian forces have advanced south of Dibrova (7km southwest of Kreminna).[2] Geolocated footage posted on August 14 indicates that Ukrainian forces advanced into Robotyne, and further Russian and Ukrainian reporting published on August 15 suggests that Ukrainian forces have committed additional counteroffensive brigades to the western Zaporizhia oblast area.[3] Ukrainian Colonel Petro Chernyk stated that the Ukrainian counteroffensive is advancing slowly in southern Ukraine because Ukrainian forces must overcome a three-echeloned Russian defensive line.[4] Chernyk stated that the Russian line of defense includes a first line of minefields stretching several kilometers wide; a second line with artillery, equipment, and personnel concentrations; and a third line of rear positions meant to preserve resources.[5] Chernyk noted that Ukrainian counterbattery measures are especially important in order to prevent Russian artillery from targeting Ukrainian mine-clearing equipment.[6] Chernyk's statements are in line with ISW's previous assessments that Russia's doctrinally sound elastic defense is slowing Ukrainian forces' advances in southern Ukraine.[7]

Russian forces conducted a large-scale missile strike against targets mainly in Ukrainian rear areas on the night of August 14-15. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces launched 28 missiles, including four Kh-22 anti-ship missiles, 20 Kh-101/555 air-based cruise missiles, and four Kalibr sea-based cruise missiles, at targets throughout Ukraine on the night of August 14-15 and that Ukrainian air defenses shot down 16 Kh-101/555 and Kalibr missiles.[8] The Ukrainian General Staff also reported that Russian forces launched eight S-300/400 missiles in ground attack mode at targets in Dnipropetrovsk and Zaporizhia Oblasts.[9] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that the missile strikes targeted key enterprises in Ukraine's defense-industrial base.[10] Ukrainian and Russian sources reported that Russian missiles targeted various rear areas of Ukraine, including industrial areas in Dnipropetrovsk, Volyn, Lviv, Cherkassy and Donetsk oblasts.[11] Russian sources claimed that Russian forces struck the Starokostyantyniv airfield in Khmelnytskyi Oblast, although Ukrainian sources did not confirm this strike.[12] Russian sources may

be inflating claims of the strike on Khmelnytskyi Oblast in order to frame Russia as effectively targeting Ukrainian assets associated with Ukraine's counteroffensive capabilities.[13]

The Kremlin is using the Army-2023 forum in Moscow (August 14-20) to foster bilateral military and political relations with other states and posture itself as a reliable and technologically advanced partner. The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that over 77,000 representatives from over 1,500 Russian defense industrial base (DIB) enterprises are presenting over 28,500 defensive and technical developments at the forum, and that representatives from over 82 countries are in attendance.[14] The MoD claimed that Russia conducted 14 bilateral meetings on the first day of the forum.[15] Russian Deputy Defense Minister Alexander Fomin met with officials from Myanmar, Pakistan, Cambodia, Laos, Bangladesh, and Djibouti to discuss bilateral defense relations.[16] The Russian MoD also posted photographs of Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu viewing Iranian, Chinese, and Indian exhibitions.[17] Chinese Defense Minister Colonel General Li Shangfu spoke at the forum to celebrate Russian-Chinese strategic cooperation and to signal Chinese readiness for further cooperation.[18] The Russian MoD featured multiple Iranian drones at the forum.[19] The Russian MoD also postured itself as a viable long-term defense partner and weapons producer by hosting conversations on long term Russian military training, the intended integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into Russian weapons and control systems, the utilization of three-dimensional printing for Russian naval repairs, and the modernization of domestic rescue and underwater equipment.[20]

Russian President Vladimir Putin and Shoigu made largely boilerplate comments framing the Russian government as effectively meeting Russian force generation efforts, portraying Western and Ukrainian resources as limited, and promoting international cooperation against the West. Shoigu claimed on August 15 at the Moscow International Security Conference that the Russian defense industrial base (DIB) has produced various weapons, tanks, armored vehicles, and drones in an amount of time and alleged that Russian and Soviet equipment capabilities surpass Western equipment capabilities.[21] Shoigu claimed that Western sanctions on Russia have helped to increase domestic military equipment production through import substitution at DIB enterprises, part of a longstanding (and inaccurate) Kremlin narrative since 2014 claiming that international sanctions strengthen Russia.[22] Shoigu claimed that in contrast, Ukrainian resources and Western military arsenals are almost completely depleted.[23] ISW continues to assess that Russia has failed to mobilize its DIB to adequately support the war effort, however.[24]

Russian President Vladimir Putin reiterated unsubstantiated claims on August 15 at the Moscow International Security Conference that the West is responsible for "igniting the conflict" in Ukraine.[25] Shoigu and Putin reiterated rhetoric accusing the West of creating instability in Africa, Latin America, and Asia and advocated for deepening Russian defense relations with those countries and the creation of a "multipolar world order." [26] Shoigu also alleged that the West escalated international conflicts including "the situation around Taiwan." [27] Shoigu's reference to Taiwan likely indicates Russia's continued efforts to create a "no limits" partnership between Beijing and Moscow despite China's reservations.

Wagner Group-affiliated sources are undermining private military companies (PMCs) affiliated with the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD). Several Russian and Belarusian insider sources claimed on August 15 that rumors currently circulating about the alleged transfer of Wagner commanders to the Russian MoD's "Redut" PMC are false." [28] The insider sources called the rumors a "dream" of the Russian MoD and denied that any Wagner commanders are transferring to "Redut" and are instead continuing to fulfill tasks as part of Wagner leadership.[29] Wagner affiliated sources and Wagner Group financier Yevgeny Prigozhin previously harshly criticized "Redut" and its

constituent units over the backdrop of Wagner's tensions with the Russian MoD during the Battle of Bakhmut.[30] The acerbic responses of many Wagner-affiliated channels to the allegation that some Wagner commanders may be transferring to "Redut" suggests that Wagner sources have a continued interest in undermining various MoD-associated organs. As ISW reported on August 14, the Russian MoD appears to be struggling to consolidate control of other PMCs associated with Russian businessmen and enterprises, and likely hopes to maintain a grasp on "Redut" despite rhetorical attacks by Wagner affiliated channels.[31]

Wagner Group financier Yevgeny Prigozhin continues to comment on Wagner issues on the African continent to remain active in the information space, but is notably refraining from commenting on the war in Ukraine. A Wagner-affiliated Telegram channel posted an audio recording of Prigozhin on August 15 wherein Prigozhin commented on the alleged arrests of protesters wearing Wagner shirts in Ghana and claimed that the incident proves that Wagner has continued support around the world and in Africa.[32] Wagner channels previously posted an audio clip of Prigozhin discussing the coup in Niger and Wagner's presence in Africa on August 8.[33] Prigozhin appears to be using his limited public addresses to focus on platforming Wagner's interests in Africa as opposed to commenting on the situation in Ukraine or reports of Wagner activity in Russia and Belarus, possibly indicating he is following imposed limitations on his involvement - even rhetorically - with the war in Ukraine.

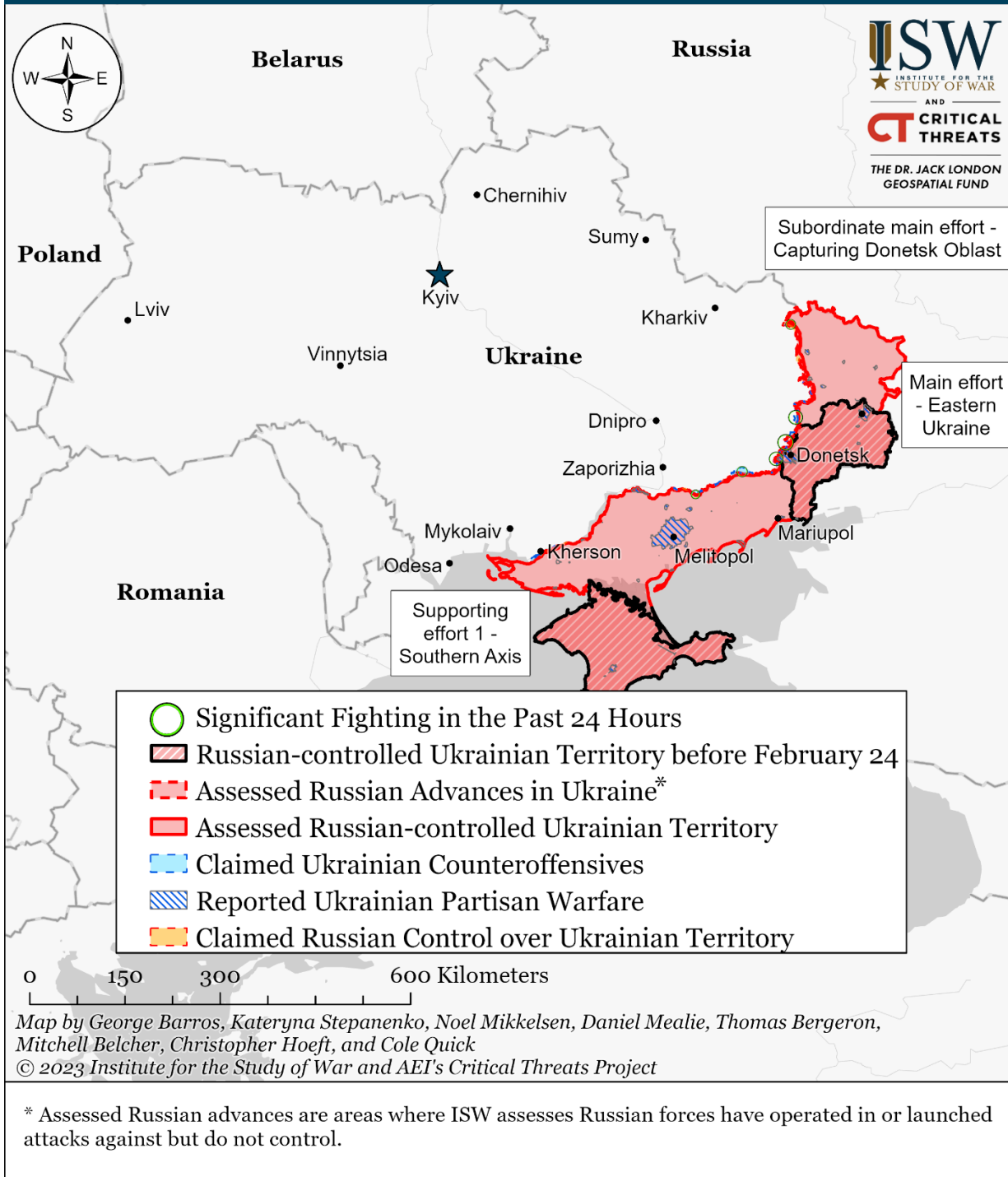
Russian news outlet *Kommersant* reported that Russian authorities are developing a mechanism to fully control and shut off civilian mobile telecommunications networks in the event of a declared emergency, possibly related to pro-Ukrainian cross border raids. *Kommersant* reported on August 15 that Russian authorities are considering amendments to the Russian development strategy for the communications industry that would create a mechanism for law enforcement agencies and civilian communication operators to share frequencies and allow law enforcement agencies to take complete control over jointly used frequencies in the event of a declared emergency.[34] *Kommersant* reported that experts say it is possible that sharing frequencies could also improve the quality of mobile communications "in peacetime" because operators will have access to previously restricted frequencies currently only used by Russian authorities.[35] Russian authorities may hope to institute such mechanisms to exert greater control of communications networks and the wider information space in the wake of recent events such as limited pro-Ukrainian cross-border incursions, wherein civilian communications greatly contributed to panic spreading and undermining the official Russian line of the incidents.[36]

Key Takeaways:

- **Ukrainian forces conducted counteroffensive operations on at least three sectors of the front on August 15 and reportedly advanced in Luhansk Oblast and western Zaporizhia Oblast.**
- **Russian forces conducted a large-scale missile strike against targets mainly in Ukrainian rear areas on the night of August 14-15.**
- **The Kremlin is using the Army-2023 forum in Moscow (August 14-20) to foster bilateral military and political relations with other states and posture itself as a reliable and technologically advanced partner.**
- **Russian President Vladimir Putin and Shoigu made largely boilerplate comments framing the Russian government as effectively meeting Russian force generation efforts, portraying Western and Ukrainian resources as limited, and promoting international cooperation against the West.**

- **Wagner Group affiliated sources are undermining private military companies (PMCs) affiliated with the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD).**
- **Wagner Group financier Yevgeny Prigozhin continues to comment on Wagner issues on the African continent to remain active in the information space but is notably refraining from commenting on the war in Ukraine.**
- **Russian news outlet *Kommersant* reported that Russian authorities are developing a mechanism to fully control and shut off civilian mobile telecommunications networks in the event of a declared emergency, possibly related to pro-Ukrainian cross border raids.**
- **Russian forces conducted offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line, near Bakhmut, along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line, and in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area, and reportedly advanced near Svatove and Bakhmut.**
- **Ukrainian forces conducted counteroffensive operations on at least three sectors of the front on August 15 and reportedly advanced in Luhansk Oblast and western Zaporizhia Oblast.**
- **The Russian “Vostok” Battalion, which is notably fighting near Urozhaine claimed on August 15 that Russian forces have entirely lost Urozhaine and blamed a lack of infantry and equipment for the loss of the settlement, but ISW has not yet observed visual confirmation that Russian forces have completely withdrawn from the town.**
- **The Russian federal subject “Bashkortostan Regiment” volunteer formation has reportedly deployed to Ukraine.**
- **Russian authorities continue to integrate occupied Ukrainian territories into the Russian cultural and educational sphere.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of August 15, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



We do not report in detail on Russian war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We will continue to evaluate and report on the effects of these criminal activities on the Ukrainian military and the Ukrainian population and specifically on combat in Ukrainian urban areas. We utterly condemn these Russian violations of the laws of armed conflict, Geneva Conventions, and humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

- Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine (comprised of two subordinate main efforts)
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and encircle northern Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis
- Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts
- Activities in Russian-occupied areas

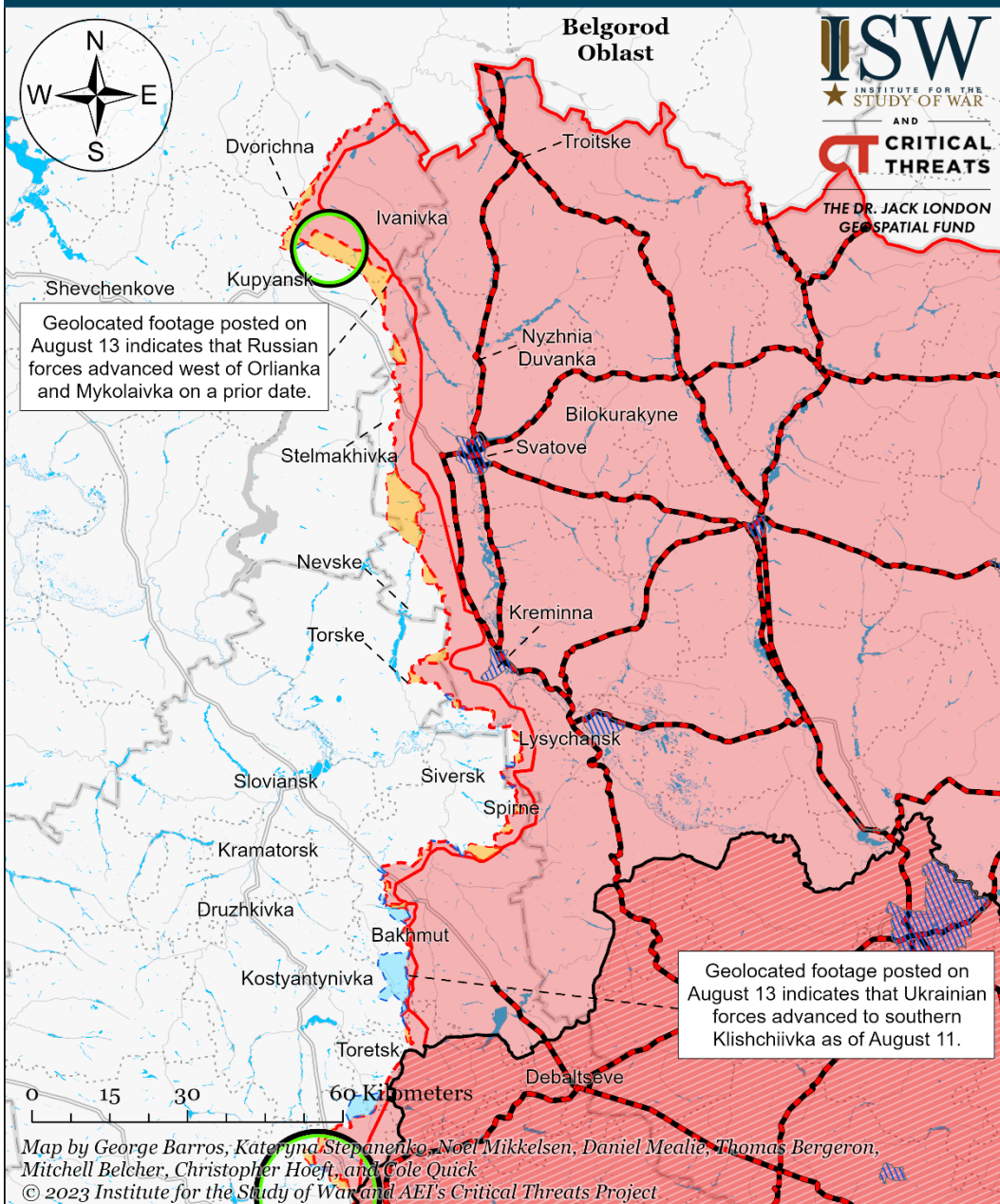
Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Luhansk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and northern Donetsk Oblast)

Ukrainian forces conducted offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kremlinna line and reportedly advanced on August 15. The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted unsuccessful offensive operations near Vilshana (15km northeast of Kupyansk), Synkivka (8km northeast of Kupyansk), Novoselivske (14km northwest of Svatove), Novoyehorivka (15km southwest of Svatove), Bilohorivka (12km south of Kremlinna), Rozdolivka (31km southwest of Kremlinna), Kuzmyne (3km southwest of Kremlinna), and Vesele (31km south of Kremlinna).[37] Russian Western Grouping of Forces Spokesperson Sergey Zybinsky claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Synkivka, the Mankivka tract (roughly 15km east of Kupyansk), the “Usa forest” (likely between Synkivka and Lyman Pershyi), and Novoselivske.[38] Russian Central Grouping of Forces Spokesperson Alexander Savchuk claimed on August 14 that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked in the Svatove direction.[39] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Svatove and unsuccessfully launched small-scale attacks near Karmazynivka (13km southwest of Svatove) on August 15.[40] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Torske (15km west of Kremlinna) and the Serebryanske forest area (10km southwest of Kremlinna).[41] Coordinates published by a Russian milblogger indicate that Ukrainian forces have advanced south of Dibrova (7km southwest of Kremlinna).[42]

Russian forces conducted offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kremlinna line and reportedly advanced on August 15. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful offensive operations southeast of Vilshana and east of Petropavlivka (7km east of Kupyansk).[43] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces are advancing near Synkivka.[44] Other Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces conducted offensive operations near Synkivka, Andriivka (15km west of Svatove), Bilohorivka, and Vesele.[45] A Russian milblogger claimed on August 14 that positional battles are ongoing near Bilohorivka and that Russian forces are intensely attacking Ukrainian forces in the Serebryanske forest area.[46] A Russian source claimed that units from the Russian 123rd Motorized Rifle Brigade (2nd Luhansk People’s Republic Army Corps) are operating in the direction of Siversk (18km southwest of Kremlinna).[47]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of August 15, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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

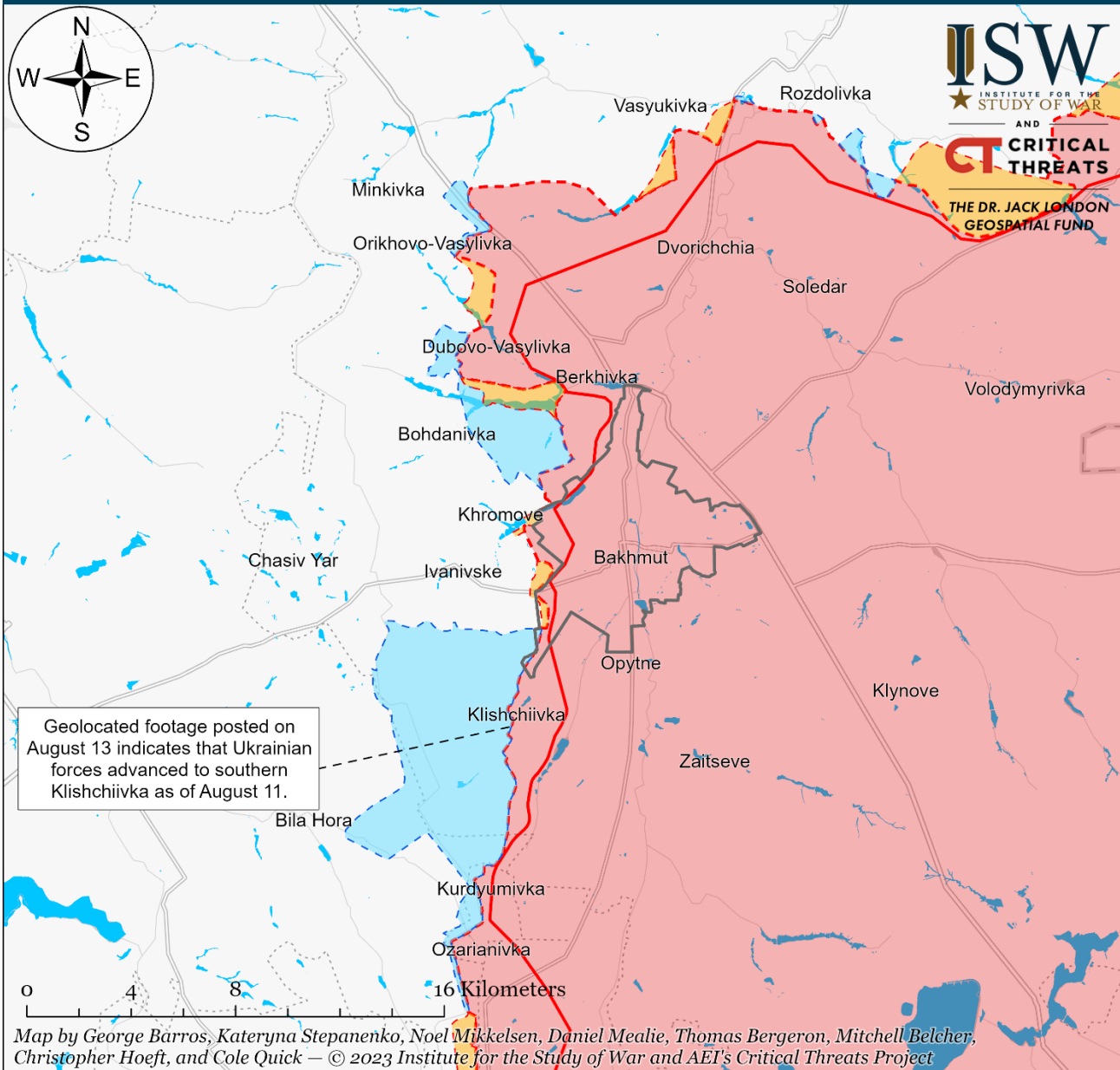
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

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 and did not make any claimed or confirmed advances on August 15. Russian milbloggers reported ongoing fighting on the Klishchiivka-Kurdyumivka-Andriivka line (all 5-11km south of Bakhmut).[48] One milblogger claimed that the Russian situation in this area is unstable because Ukrainian forces control dominant heights and forest areas surrounding important settlements.[49]

Russian forces continued offensive operations near Bakhmut and reportedly advanced on August 15. Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces counterattacked near Klishchiivka and Andriivka.[50] Some milbloggers claimed that Russian forces recaptured unspecified positions in southern Klischiivka, but one milblogger claimed the Russian attacks were unsuccessful.[51]

Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of August 15, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



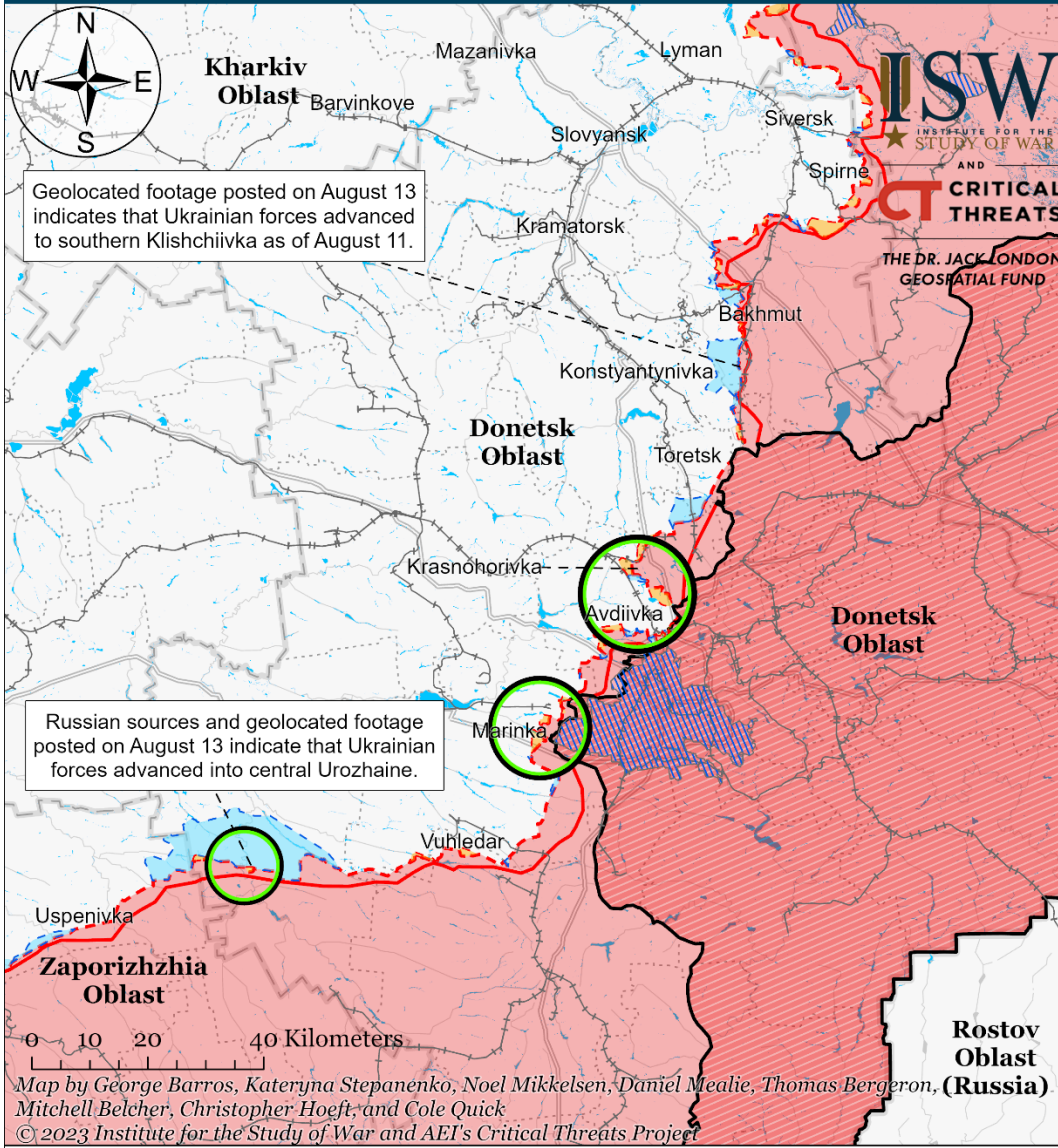
Bakhmut City Limits	Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory	Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*	Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory	Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare

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

Note: Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Malyar claimed on August 14 that Ukrainian forces captured three square kilometers in the past week and 40 square kilometers total in the Bakhmut direction.

Russian and Ukrainian forces continued to skirmish on the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line and did not advance on August 15. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian ground attacks south of Avdiivka and near Marinka (immediately southwest of Donetsk City) and Krasnohorivka (22km southwest of Avdiivka).[52] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian ground attacks near Krasnohorivka (8km north of Avdiivka) and Nevelske (14km southwest of Avdiivka).[53]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of August 15, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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

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

Note: Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Malyar claimed on August 14 that Ukrainian forces captured three square kilometers in the past week and 40 square kilometers total in the Bakhmut direction. Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Malyar claimed on August 14 that Ukrainian forces achieved some success in the Urozhaine direction.

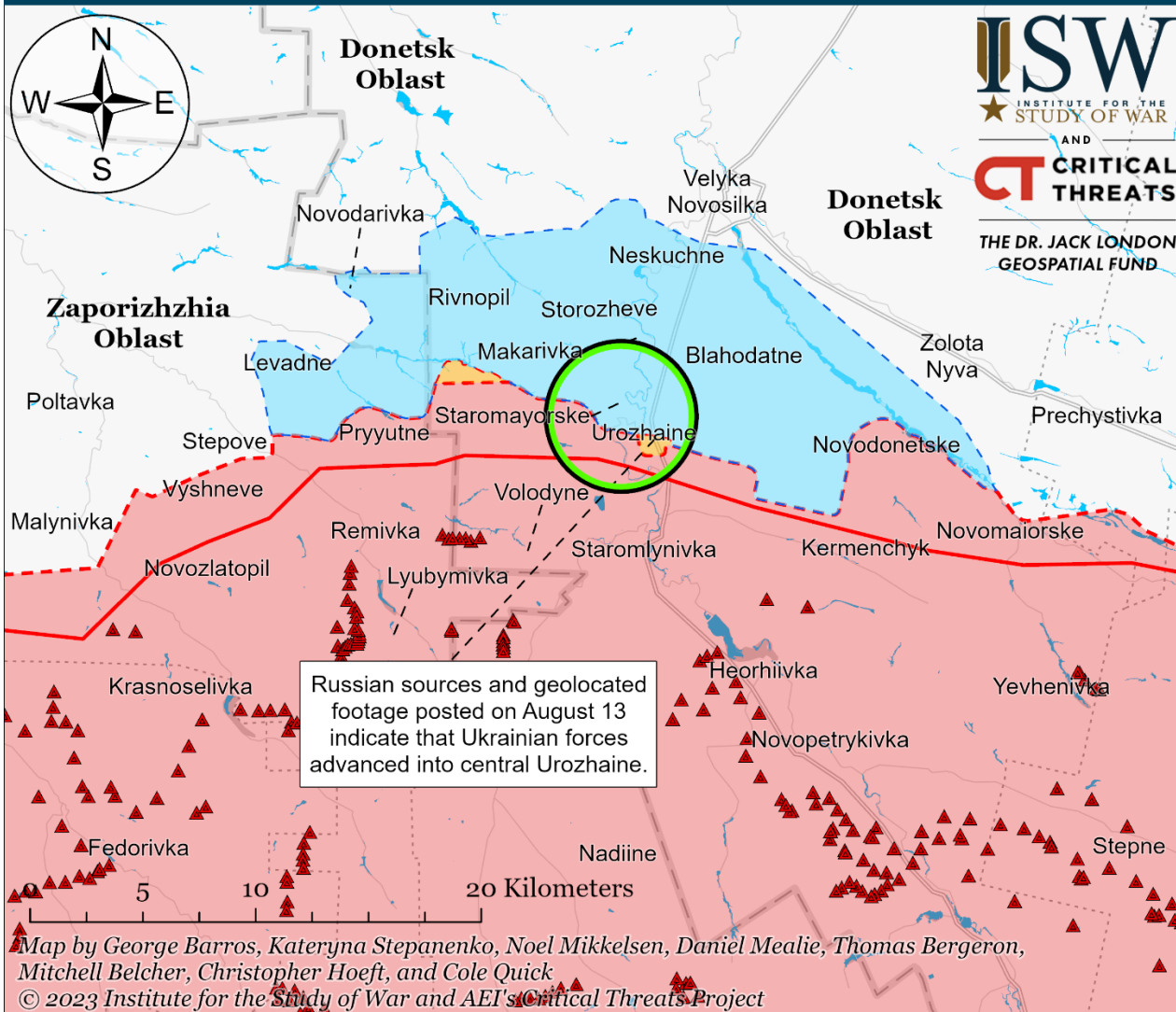
Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions and secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes)

Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on August 15. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian troops are continuing offensive operations in the Berdyansk direction (Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area).[54] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces are attacking in and around Urozhaine (9km south of Velyka Novosilka), and most Russian sources emphasized that Ukrainian troops only hold positions in northern Urozhaine, while the rest of the settlement remains a contested “gray zone,” though as ISW has previously noted, Russian sources often describe Ukrainian-held territory as “gray zone” to minimize the reported scale of Russian losses.[55]

The “Vostok” Battalion, which is notably fighting in the area, claimed on August 15 that Russian forces have entirely lost Urozhaine and blamed a lack of infantry and equipment for the loss of the settlement, but ISW has not yet observed visual confirmation that Russian forces have completely withdrawn from the town.[56] The discrepancy between Russian claims regarding Urozhaine likely indicates that Russian forces have largely withdrawn from the core of the settlement to positions on its outskirts. However, Ukrainian forces have likely not yet established full control of central or southern Urozhaine, where limited skirmishes for control are likely ongoing. Russian Eastern Group of Forces Spokesperson Oleg Chekhov additionally claimed that Ukrainian troops unsuccessfully tried to advance southeast of Novodarivka and north of Pryyutne (both about 15km southwest of Velyka Novosilka).[57]

Russian forces conducted limited ground attacks in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on August 15 and did not make any claimed or confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful offensive operations near Urozhaine.[58] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian troops additionally counterattacked near Staromayorske but did not specify an outcome of the attack.[59] A Russian milblogger posted footage reportedly showing fighters of the 503rd Battalion of the 1st Donetsk People’s Republic (DNR) Army Corps near Novodonetske (15km southeast of Velyka Novosilka) and claimed that they have been defending the area for nearly two months.[60]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around the Vremivka Salient as of August 15, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



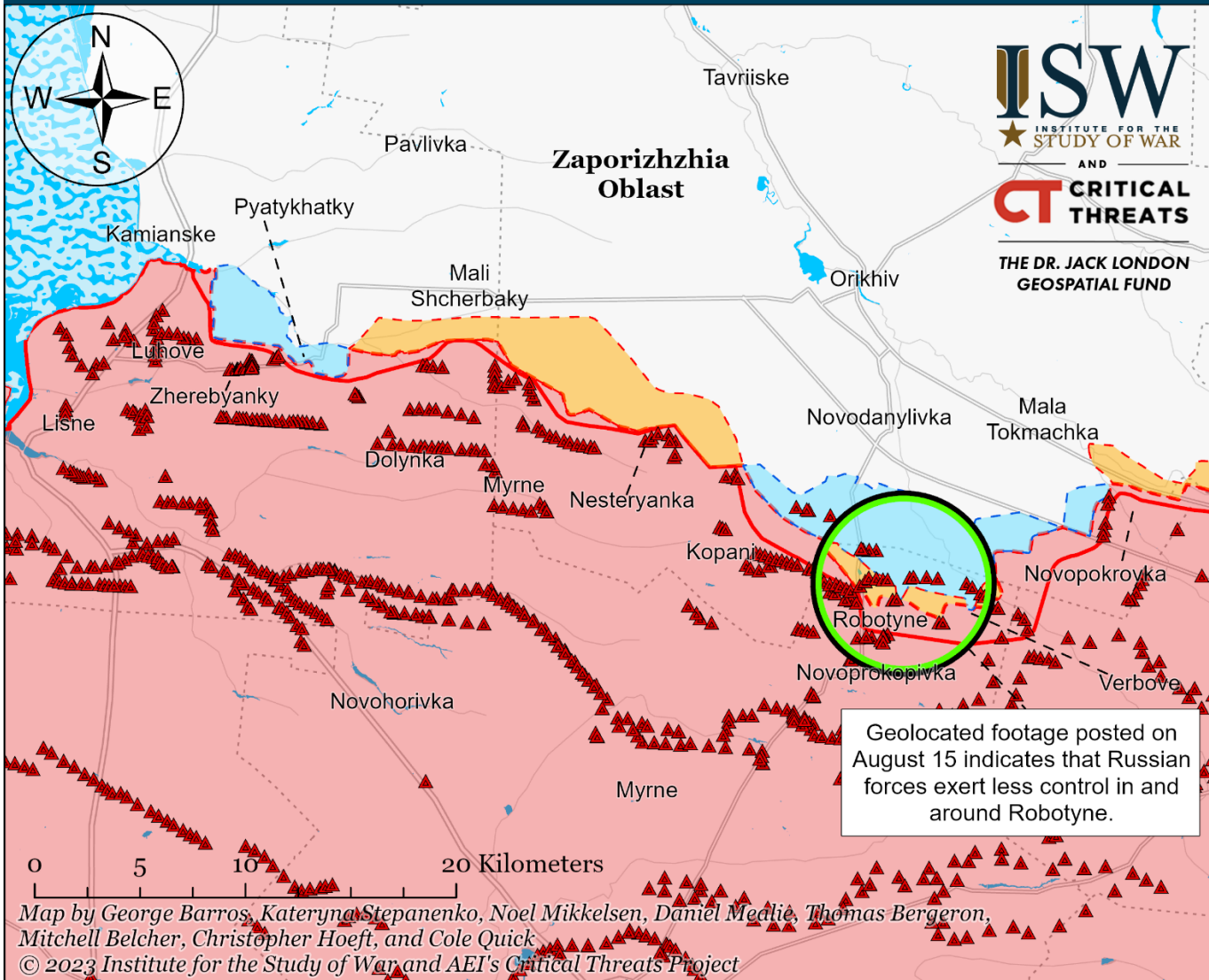
- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Russian Field Fortifications
- Assessed Russian Advances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

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

Note: Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Malyar claimed on August 14 that Ukrainian forces achieved some success in the Urozhaine direction.

Ukrainian forces continued advancing in western Zaporizhia Oblast on August 15. Geolocated footage posted on August 14 reportedly shows Russian forces striking a group of five to seven Ukrainian personnel sheltering in a building in central Robotyne (15km south of Orikhiv), indicating that Ukrainian forces have advanced into the settlement.[61] Russian sources, however, claimed that the footage is of a failed Ukrainian attack on Robotyne two weeks ago, and emphasized that Russian forces repelled the Ukrainian attack.[62] Even if the footage is two weeks old, the presence of Ukrainian troops within the center of occupied Robotyne suggests that Russian control of the settlement is likely tenuous and contested. Geolocated footage posted on August 15 shows Ukrainian forces operating Western-provided equipment north of Robotyne, confirming Ukrainian and Russian reports that Ukraine may have recently deployed new counteroffensive brigades to the western Zaporizhia Oblast area.[63] Russian sources additionally claimed that Ukrainian forces launched an unsuccessful attack on Robotyne overnight on August 14 to 15, but that Russian forces repelled the attack.[64] Zaporizhia Oblast occupation head Yevgeny Balitsky claimed that Ukrainian forces are launching continued attacks against Robotyne with groups of between 40 to 100 personnel daily.[65]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Pyatykhatky and Robotyne as of August 15, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

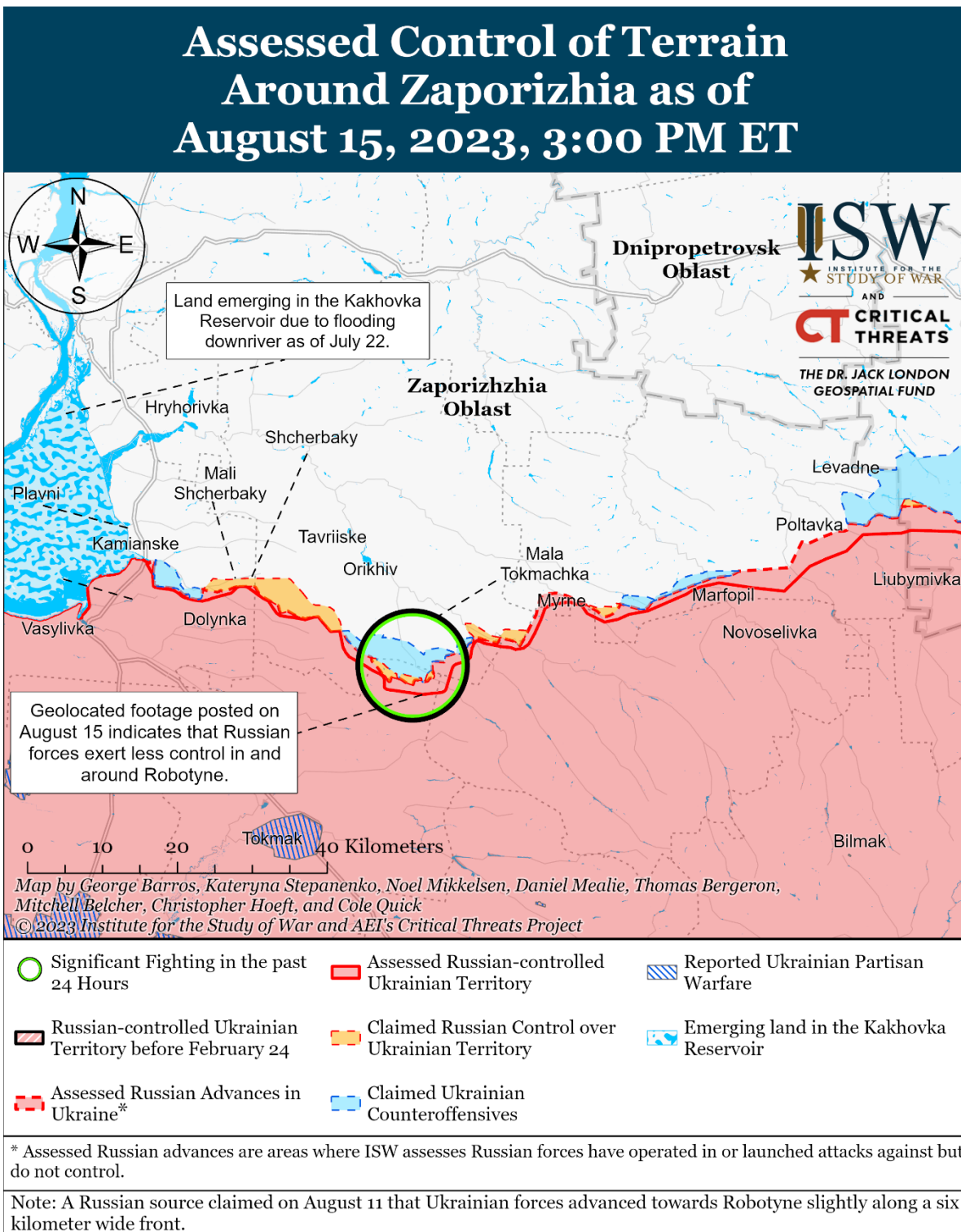


Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours	Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory	Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24	Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory	Emerging land in the Kakhovka Reservoir
Assessed Russian Advances in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

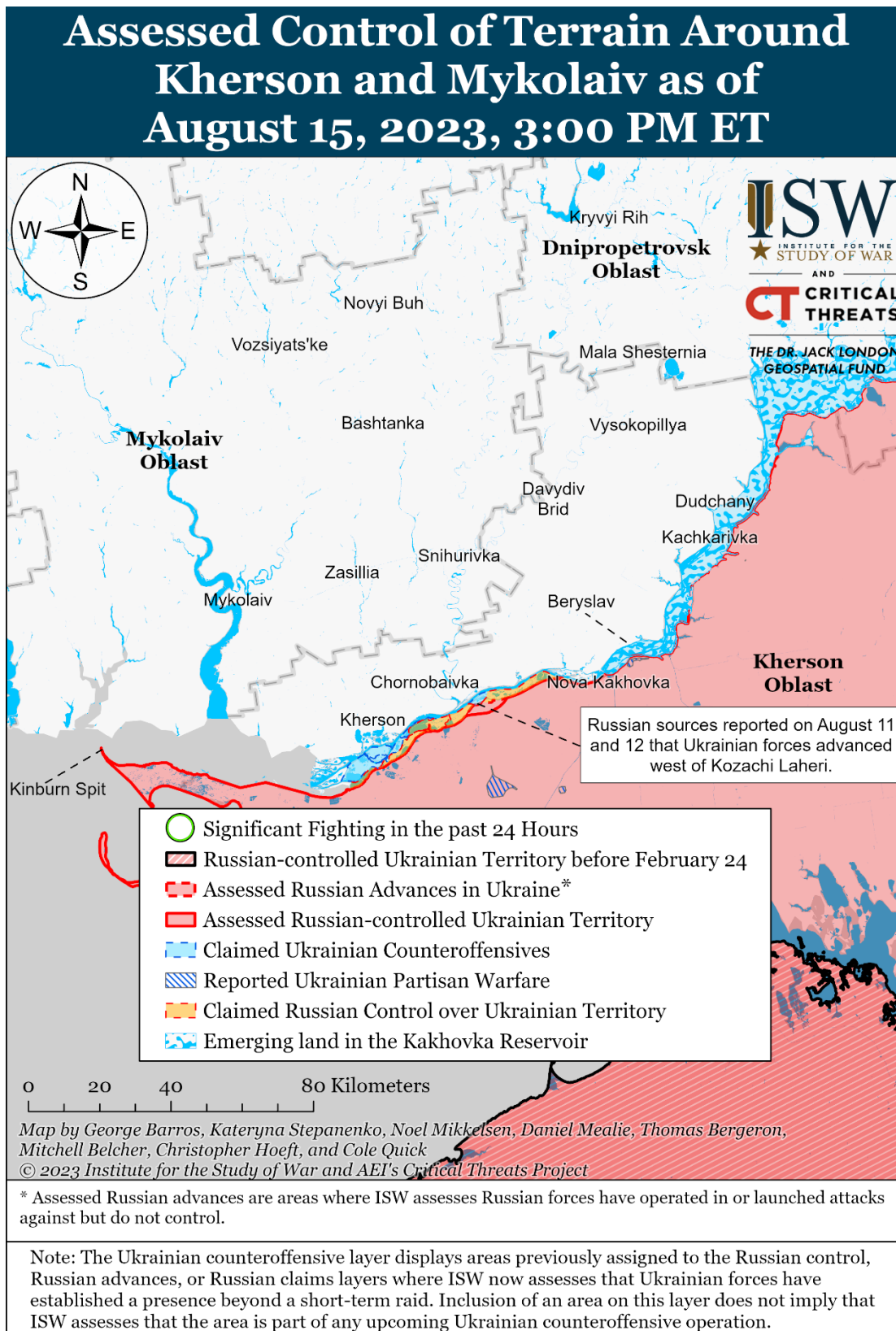
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Note: A Russian source claimed on August 11 that Ukrainian forces advanced towards Robotyne slightly along a six kilometer wide front

Russian forces continued defensive operations in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast and did not conduct any claimed or confirmed ground attacks in the area on August 15. The UK Ministry of Defense (MoD) reported that the Chechen “Vostok-Akhmat” Battalion is committed to defensive operations in the Orikhiv area under the command of the 42nd Motorized Rifle Division (58th Combined Arms Army, Southern Military District).[66]



A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces continued targeting Ukrainian positions on the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast on August 15.[67] The milblogger reported that Russian drones and artillery struck Ukrainian positions near the Antonivsky Bridge and west of Kozachi Laheri.[68]



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

The Russian federal subject “Bashkortostan Regiment” volunteer formation has reportedly deployed to Ukraine. Bashkortostan Republic Head Radiy Khabirov announced on August 15 that the “Bashkortostan Regiment,” consisting of about 2,500 personnel, completed combat training in Samara Oblast and deployed to fight in Ukraine.[69] Vice Speaker of Kurultai State Assembly of Bashkortostan Rustem Akhmadinurov reported on August 3 that there are 12 volunteer units subordinated to the “Bashkortostan Regiment.”[70] ISW has previously observed that four volunteer battalions subordinated to the “Bashkortostan Regiment” including the “Sergei Zorin,” “Vatan,” “Shaimuratov,” and “Dostavalov” formations have deployed to Ukraine.[71]

Russian authorities are reportedly threatening civilians who fail to appear at military registration and enlistment offices with administrative charges via text message. Several Russian opposition outlets reported on August 14 that the military registration and enlistment office in Moskovsky Raion, St. Petersburg sent text messages to draft-age civilians ordering them to appear at the office and warning that Russian authorities may charge those who fail to appear with “administrative offenses.”[72] The Russian opposition outlets also reported that a source in the Moskovsky Raion administration stated that the text message is not equivalent to an electronic summons, so Russian authorities therefore should not hold citizens liable for failing to appear at military registration and enlistment offices based on the text message and claimed that the text message is intended to verify personal data before the fall conscription cycle.[73]

Russian occupation authorities continue to force Ukrainian civilians in occupied Ukraine into Russian military service. Ukrainian officials reported on August 15 that Russian occupation authorities ordered all men employed at state-owned enterprises in occupied Starobilsk, Luhansk Oblast to pass medical examinations and register for Russian military service.[74]

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

Russian authorities continue to integrate occupied Ukrainian territories into the Russian cultural and educational sphere. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that the occupation administration opened a school in Bekhteri, Kherson Oblast that will teach a Russian curriculum.[75] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian authorities are forcing children from Obloi, Tendrivske, Zburivka, and Novochnomorya, Kherson Oblast to study at this school by threatening parents with administrative punishments if their children do not attend.[76]

Russian occupation authorities are continuing efforts to consolidate control of the legal system of occupied areas and integrate it into the Russian legal sphere. The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported that Ukrainian hackers broke into the email of Russian Judge Natalya Sumachakova, a member of the Russian High Qualification Board of Judges (VVKS), and discovered a list of 55 judicial nominees being considered for commission in Russian sham courts in occupied Ukraine.[77] These judges will likely be used to fill out Russian-controlled court systems in occupied areas, thus allowing Russia greater legal leverage over local court systems ahead of the approaching regional elections.

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).

Chinese Defense Minister Colonel General Li Shangfu will reportedly visit Belarus on August 16 to 18. The Belarusian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Li will visit Belarus on August 16 to 18 and meet with Belarusian defense officials to discuss bilateral military cooperation.[78]

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko dismissed a senior Belarusian military official from his post on August 14. Lukashenko dismissed Belarusian Deputy Chief of the General Staff and Chief of the Main Organization and Mobilization Directorate Major General Vladislav Budnik from his post due to his age and transferred Budnik to the Belarusian military reserve.[79]

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.

[1] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02GhgnmQQ8Yugv2qkSx33QFuFMnynWQAF2hgCP4Kjc2vEXnXVWwo4HNoJgM9ynx9nl>

[2] <https://t.me/rybar/50756>

[3] <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/51302> ; https://t.me/orly_rs/4319 ; https://t.me/ZA_FROHT/20871; <https://twitter.com/Militarylandnet/status/1691375518761840640?s=20>; https://t.me/z_arhiv/24056; <https://twitter.com/hugeglassofmilk/status/1691402172213198848?s=20>; https://t.me/ZA_FROHT/20871; <https://twitter.com/hugeglassofmilk/status/1691404679081590784?s=20>; https://t.me/rusich_army/10391; <https://t.me/rybar/50742> ; <https://t.me/rybar/50740?single> ; https://t.me/rusich_army/10392; https://t.me/WarArchive_ua/3935

[4] https://armyinform.com_dot_ua/2023/08/14/petro-chernyk-shho-vplyvaye-na-temp-nashogo-nastupu-na-pivdni/

[5] https://armyinform.com_dot_ua/2023/08/14/petro-chernyk-shho-vplyvaye-na-temp-nashogo-nastupu-na-pivdni/

[6] https://armyinform.com_dot_ua/2023/08/14/petro-chernyk-shho-vplyvaye-na-temp-nashogo-nastupu-na-pivdni/

[7] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-june-21-2023> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-june-15-2023> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-june-10-2023> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-june-8-2023>

- [8] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoHbzx2wTSWT57SUAugpZw4TxG7afe9FwhmDS19fVAATrMG1Ra2vD6psP1VbLuQK4Kl>; <https://t.me/kpszsu/4282>
- [9] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoHbzx2wTSWT57SUAugpZw4TxG7afe9FwhmDS19fVAATrMG1Ra2vD6psP1VbLuQK4Kl>; <https://t.me/kpszsu/4282>
- [10] https://t.me/mod_russia/29318
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