

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, August 26, 2023

Riley Bailey, Nicole Wolkov, Grace Mappes, Christina Harward, and Mason Clark

August 26, 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 12:15pm ET on August 26. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the August 26 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

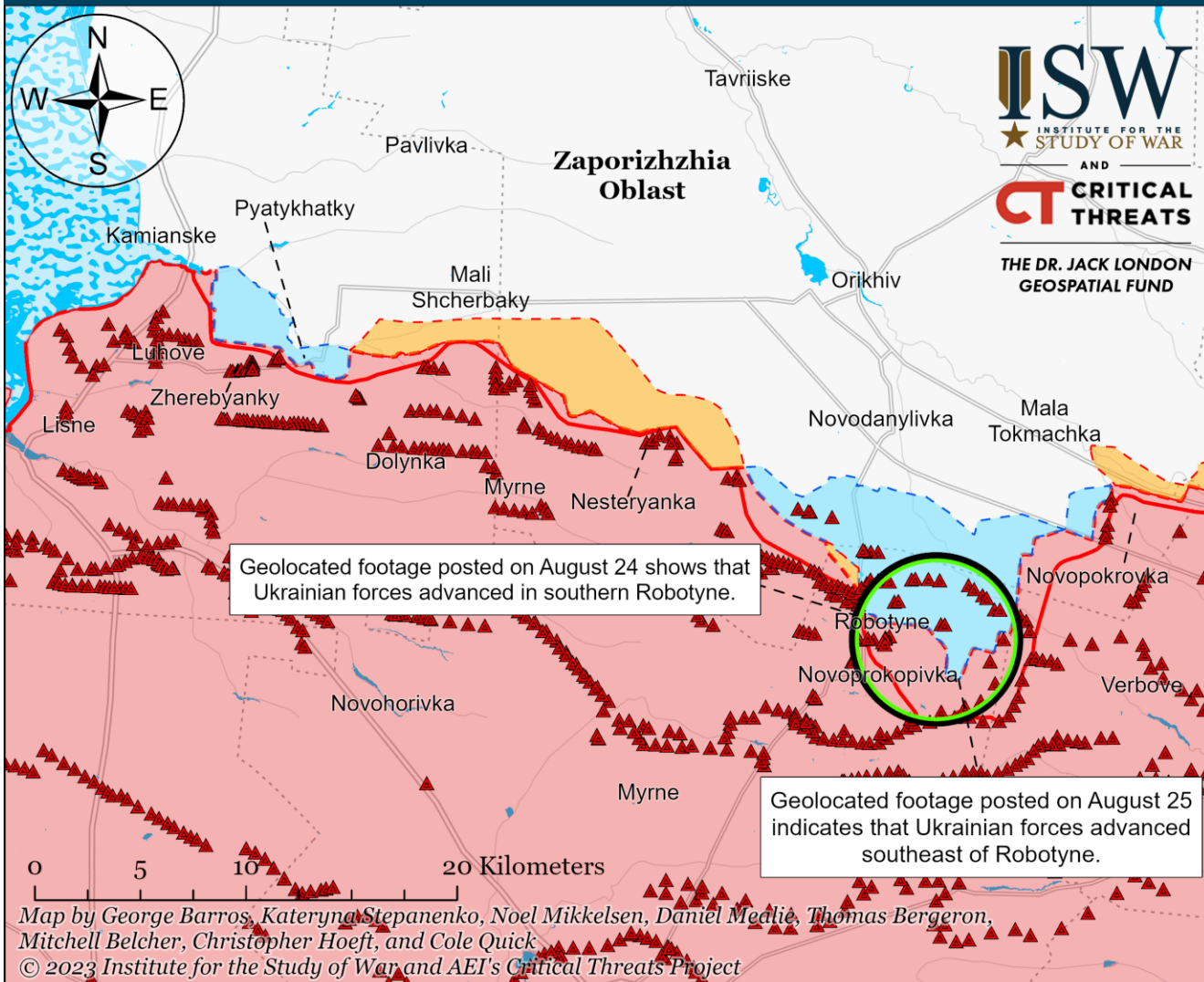
Ukrainian forces have made further tactically significant gains in western Zaporizhia Oblast, and several Ukrainian and Russian sources reported that Ukrainian forces are advancing through what Ukrainian and US sources suggested may be the most challenging series of prepared Russian defensive positions. Geolocated footage published on August 25 indicates that Ukrainian forces advanced 1.5km southward northeast of Novoprokopivka (13km south of Orikhiv).[1] US Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Mark Milley stated on August 25 that Ukrainian forces are currently attacking through the main set of Russian defensive preparations along the axis of Ukrainian advance.[2] *Reuters* reported on August 26 that a Ukrainian commander fighting in southern Ukraine stated that Ukrainian forces believe they have broken through the most difficult line of Russian defenses in the area and will now be able to advance more quickly.[3] The Ukrainian commander reportedly stated that Ukrainian forces have entered areas where they encountered only Russian "logistics groups" and that he expects that further Ukrainian breakthroughs in these areas will be easier.[4] A Russian milblogger claimed on August 25 that Ukrainian forces were attacking in the direction of rear defensive lines near Verbove (18km southwest of Orikhiv), suggesting that Ukrainian forces may be near tactical rear areas within the series of Russian defensive positions that they are currently penetrating - though these reports should not be misinterpreted to indicate Ukrainian forces have entered Russian rear areas at the operational level.

Ukrainian forces now appear within striking distance of the next series of prepared Russian defensive positions, which may be weaker than the previous set of Russian defenses but still pose a significant challenge. The series of defensive positions that Ukrainian forces are currently advancing through were comprised of dense layers of minefields and fortifications to which Russian forces committed considerable manpower, materiel, and effort to hold.[5] The series of Russian defensive positions now ahead of Ukrainian forces likely consists of a relatively more contiguous array of anti-tank ditches; dragon's teeth anti-tank obstacles; and additional minefields - with Russian fighting positions behind these obstacles - much like the first Russian line of defense. However, the extent of the minefields in the area of this series of prepared defensive positions is unclear, although they may be less heavily mined to give Russian forces operating north of these positions the ability to retreat.[6] ISW additionally recently assessed that this series of prepared defensive positions may be less heavily defended than the positions Ukrainian forces already penetrated to the north, although this remains unclear.[7]

Each of these Russian “lines” are layered defensive positions with their own forward and rear area positions, and it is important to differentiate between the rear areas of individual Russian defensive positions and of Russian defenses in southern Ukraine as a whole. Russian defensive “lines” are additionally notional in the sense that Russian prepared positions are not uniform across the front in southern Ukraine, and are not fully manned. There are additional series of prepared Russian defensive positions further south of the current Ukrainian advance, although Russian forces will only be able to fully leverage these positions if they have the available personnel and materiel to incorporate them into cohesive defensive operations.

A Ukrainian source indicated that Russian forces have laterally redeployed elements of a relatively elite formation from the Kreminna area in Luhansk Oblast to the Robotyne area in western Zaporizhia Oblast. A Ukrainian reserve officer reported on August 26 that Russian forces transferred elements of the 76th Guards Air Assault (VDV) Division to the Robotyne area from the Kreminna area.[8] ISW has observed elements of the 76th VDV Division operating in the Kreminna area but cannot confirm if all elements of the 76th VDV Division were deployed in the area or what elements remain near Kreminna.[9] ISW has now observed elements of almost every Russian VDV formation operating in areas where Ukrainian forces are conducting offensive operations, including elements of the 7th Guards Mountain VDV Division operating in southern Ukraine; and elements of the 98th Guards VDV Division, 106th Guards VDV Division, 11th Guards VDV Brigade, and 83rd Guards VDV Brigade operating near Bakhmut.[10] A Russian source has claimed that elements of the 31st Guards VDV Brigade are also defending in the Bakhmut area, although ISW has not observed further indicators that these elements are present.[11] Lateral redeployments of elements of the 7th Guards Mountain VDV Division from Kherson Oblast to the frontline in Zaporizhia Oblast and elements of the 76th VDV Division from the Kreminna area to the Robotyne area suggest that Russian forces may be using relatively elite units to reinforce critical sectors of the front. This additional lateral redeployment, if true, further supports ISW’s assessment that a lack of sizeable operational reserves would force the Russian command to conduct further lateral redeployments and make decisions about what sectors of the front to prioritize.[12] Elements of these VDV formations may be more heavily committed in certain sectors of the front than others and each formation is unlikely to be operating as a cohesive brigade or division-level asset, and all reports should be understood as referring to elements of the relevant formation.

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Pyatykhatky and Robotyne as of August 26, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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- 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.

Russian irregular formations remain willing to threaten to withdraw from combat unilaterally despite recent efforts by Russian military command to purge and suppress insubordination. The "Rusich" Sabotage and Reconnaissance Group, a far-right Russian irregular paramilitary unit, announced on August 25 that the group will refuse to conduct combat missions in Ukraine until the Russian

government secures the release of Rusich commander and founding member Yan Petrovsky, who is currently in Finnish custody.[13] Ukrainian authorities requested the extradition of Petrovsky from Finland to Ukraine, where he is suspected of various charges related to terrorism.[14] The Rusich Group accused the Russian government of not meeting its obligations to protect Russians abroad by not securing Petrovsky's release earlier, and asked why Rusich personnel should protect Russia if the Russian government will not protect Russians.[15] The Rusich Group indicated that it is likely operating on the Robotyne-Verbove line in western Zaporizhia Oblast, a critical area of the frontline where the Russian military command likely cannot afford for any units to rebel and refuse to conduct combat missions.[16] The Russian MoD has notably previously struggled with insubordination and threats of desertion from other Russian units in western Zaporizhia Oblast.[17]

The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) is reportedly prosecuting the junior officers and soldiers of a Russian unit that complained about senior commanders' inattention to frontline issues, following a MoD pattern of deflecting blame away from senior officers. Russian milbloggers claimed on August 26 that an assistant to an unspecified Russian deputy defense minister arrived in Kherson Oblast to investigate complaints associated with the 205th Motorized Rifle Brigade (49th Combined Arms Army, Southern Military District) that sparked outrage within the Russian information space on August 25.[18] These milbloggers claimed that the Russian MoD official is protecting the 205th Brigade's commander and punishing protesting company commanders.[19] These Russian milbloggers expressed continued anger at this deflection of responsibility and at the broader Russian officer system that does not allow for officers with new command styles.[20] These claims are unconfirmed, but the speed at which the Russian military command is reportedly responding likely demonstrates their deep concern about insubordination in the military, as well as of public criticism of the Russian military command. The Russian MoD has previously shown a propensity for deflecting blame away from senior officers and holding lower-level soldiers responsible for problems.[21] The Russian military has recently suffered from multiple public instances of insubordination, and ISW has previously assessed that the Russian military chain of command is deteriorating.[22]

No prominent channels known to be directly affiliated with Wagner have shared additional information on the future of the group despite speculation from nominally pro-Wagner channels, while the majority of Russian sources have focused their attention on kinetic activity on the frontline. Insider sources have continued to report details about the flight crew killed in the crash as well as the ongoing Russian government investigation into the crash.[23] Russian sources that are not aligned with Wagner have largely stopped speculating about Prigozhin's death and the future of the Wagner Group and have focused their reporting on operations on the frontline.

Key Takeaways:

- **Ukrainian forces have made further tactically significant gains in western Zaporizhia Oblast, and several Ukrainian and Russian sources reported that Ukrainian forces are advancing through what Ukrainian and US sources suggested may be the most challenging series of prepared Russian defensive positions.**
- **Ukrainian forces now appear within striking distance of the next series of prepared Russian defensive positions, which may be weaker than the previous set of Russian defenses but still pose a significant challenge.**

- **A Ukrainian source indicated that Russian forces have laterally redeployed elements of a relatively elite formation from the Kreminna area in Luhansk Oblast to the Robotyne area in western Zaporizhia Oblast.**
- **Russian irregular formations remain willing to threaten to withdraw from combat unilaterally despite recent efforts by Russian military command to purge and suppress insubordination.**
- **The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) is reportedly prosecuting the junior officers and soldiers of a Russian unit that complained about senior commanders' inattention to frontline issues.**
- **No prominent channels known to be directly affiliated with Wagner shared additional information on the future of the group, while the majority of Russian sources have focused their attention on kinetic activity on the frontline.**
- **Russian forces conducted offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line, near Bakhmut, along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line, and in western Donetsk Oblast but did not make any confirmed advances.**
- **Russian regional governments continue to facilitate the forced deportation of Ukrainian children from occupied Ukraine to occupied Crimea.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of August 26, 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)

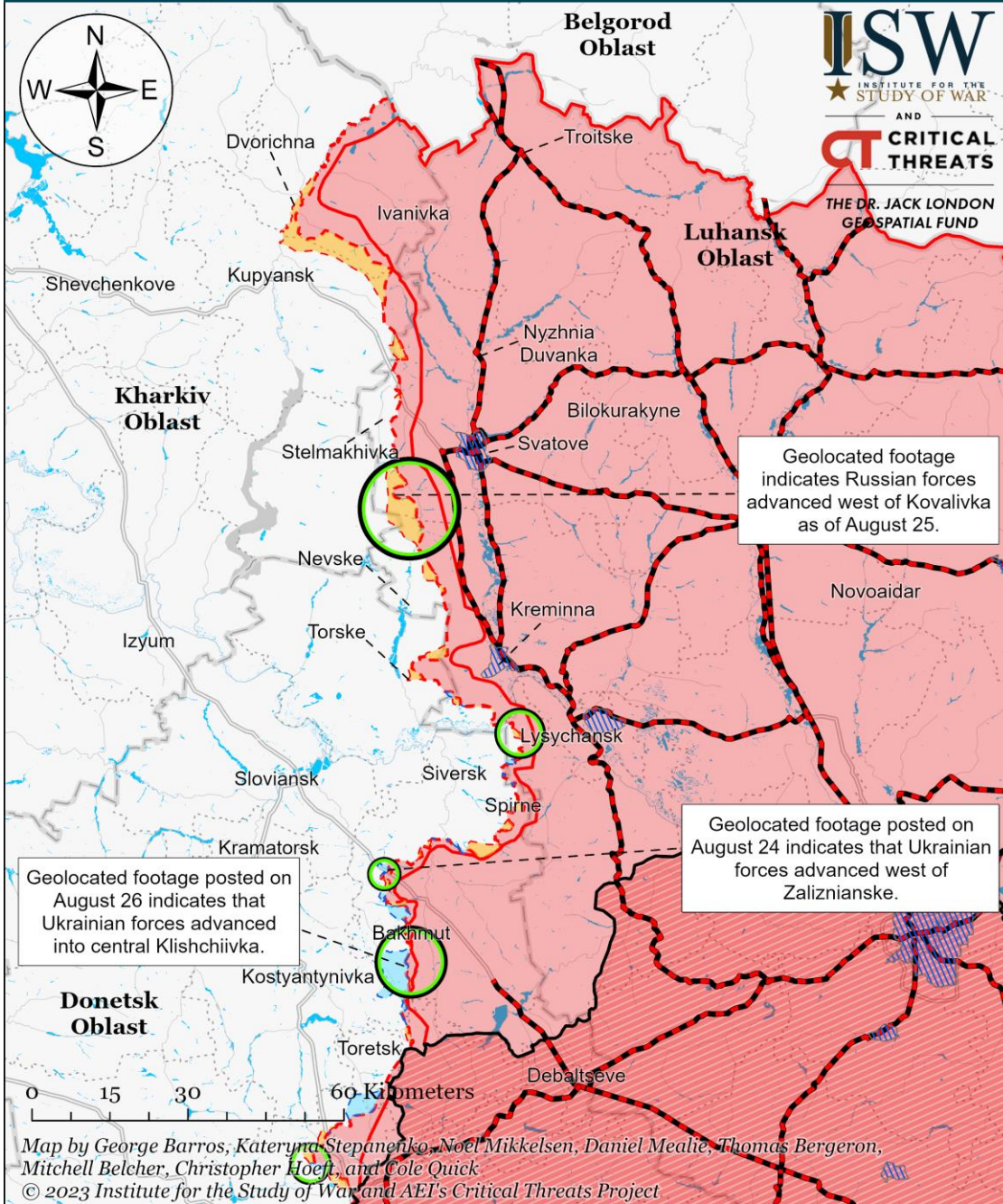
Russian forces continued offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on August 26 but did not make any confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful offensive operations near Novoyehorivka (16km southwest of Svatove) and Bilohorivka (12km south of Kreminna).[24] Russian Western Grouping of Forces Press Officer Yaroslav Yakimkin claimed that Russian forces captured three unspecified strongholds in the Kupyansk direction.[25] Ukrainian Eastern Group of Forces Spokesperson Ilya Yevlash stated on August 25 that Russian forces shifted their tactical focus from the Kupyansk direction to the Novoyehorivka area.[26] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced near Synkivka (9km northeast of Kupyansk) and in the direction of Petropavlivka (6km east of Kupyansk), although ISW has not observed visual confirmation of these claims.[27]

The United Kingdom Ministry of Defense (UK MoD) stated on August 26 that Russian forces may launch an operational level offensive in the Kupyansk and Lyman directions in the next two months, though ISW assesses such an offensive operation remains unlikely.[28] The UK MoD stated that Russian forces will possibly try to regain the initiative amidst Ukrainian counteroffensive operations by launching such an offensive operation.[29] The UK MoD assessed that Russian forces will possibly try to advance west to the Oskil River and create a buffer zone around occupied Luhansk Oblast.[30] Russian forces have been conducting localized offensive operations northeast of Kupyansk and southwest of Svatove in recent weeks, but there are no indications that Russian forces are committing the necessary manpower and materiel required to turn such localized offensive operations in this sector of the front into an operational offensive effort.[31] Ukrainian Ground Forces Commander Colonel General Oleksandr Syrskyi stated on August 25 that Russian forces are transferring elements of newly formed brigades and divisions to the Kupyansk and Lyman directions after a month of significant losses in order to resume active offensive operations in these directions, although ISW has not observed confirmation of these transfers.[32] The resumption of localized Russian offensive operations likely aims to fix and draw Ukrainian forces to this axis and away from more critical areas of the front and has little likelihood of securing major territorial gains.[33] Russian forces concentrated manpower for months in this sector of the front before launching their unsuccessful winter-spring 2023 operational offensive effort, and ISW has observed no similar preparations in the area.[34] Russian forces are highly unlikely to be able to seize the operational initiative in the next two months.

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted limited unsuccessful ground attacks along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on August 26. The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Russian forces repelled five Ukrainian assaults near Synkivka, Novoyehorivka, Novoselivske (15km northwest of Svatove), and Raihorodka (13km west of Svatove).[35] The Russian MoD and the Russian Central Grouping of Forces Spokesperson Alexander Savchuk claimed that Russian forces repelled seven Ukrainian assaults in the Lyman direction, including near Dibrova (6km southwest of

Kreminna).[36] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces also repelled Ukrainian attempts to restore lost positions near Torske (17km west of Kreminna) and in the Serebryanske forest area south of Kreminna.[37]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of August 26, 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 | |

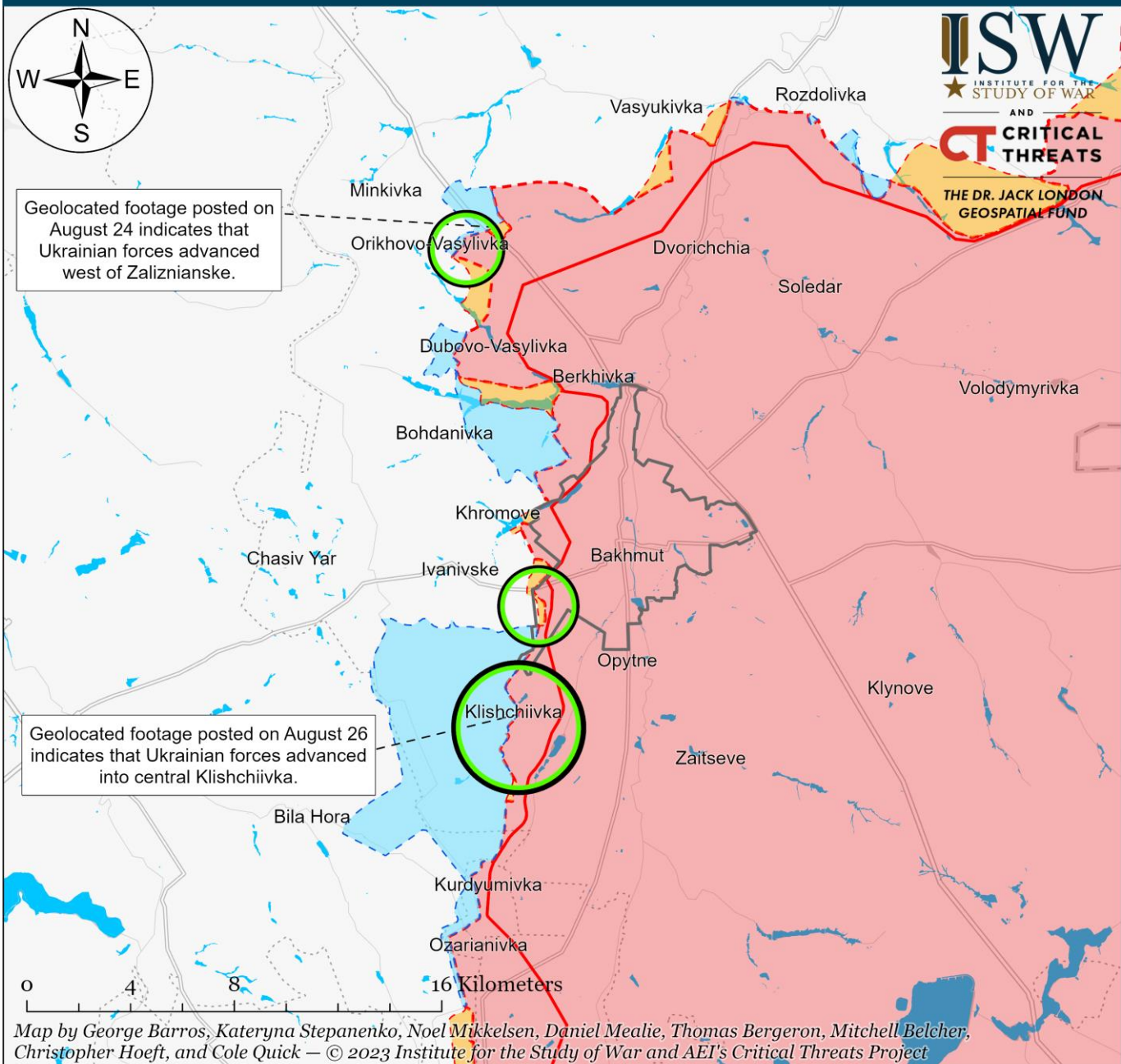
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

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

Russian forces conducted offensive operations near Bakhmut on August 26 and reportedly advanced. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful offensive operations near Orikhovo-Vasylivka (11km northwest of Bakhmut), Ivanivske (6km west of Bakhmut), and Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut).[38] Russian sources claimed that Russian forces captured positions near Klishchiivka, although ISW has not observed visual confirmation of these claims.[39] A Russian milblogger claimed that elements of the Russian 4th Motorized Rifle Brigade (2nd Luhansk People’s Republic Army Corps) captured positions north of Klishchiivka.[40]

Ukrainian forces conducted offensive operations near Bakhmut and advanced on August 26. Geolocated footage published on August 26 indicates that Ukrainian forces advanced further into Klishchiivka.[41] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Minkivka (15km northwest of Bakhmut) and Klishchiivka.[42] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Klishchiivka.[43] Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces attacked near Kurdyumivka (13km southwest of Bakhmut).[44] The Ukrainian Eastern Group of Forces Spokesperson Ilya Yevlash reported on August 25 that Ukrainian forces are advancing 100-300 meters per day in the Bakhmut direction.[45]

Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of August 26, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Christopher Hoefl, and Cole Quick – © 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

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

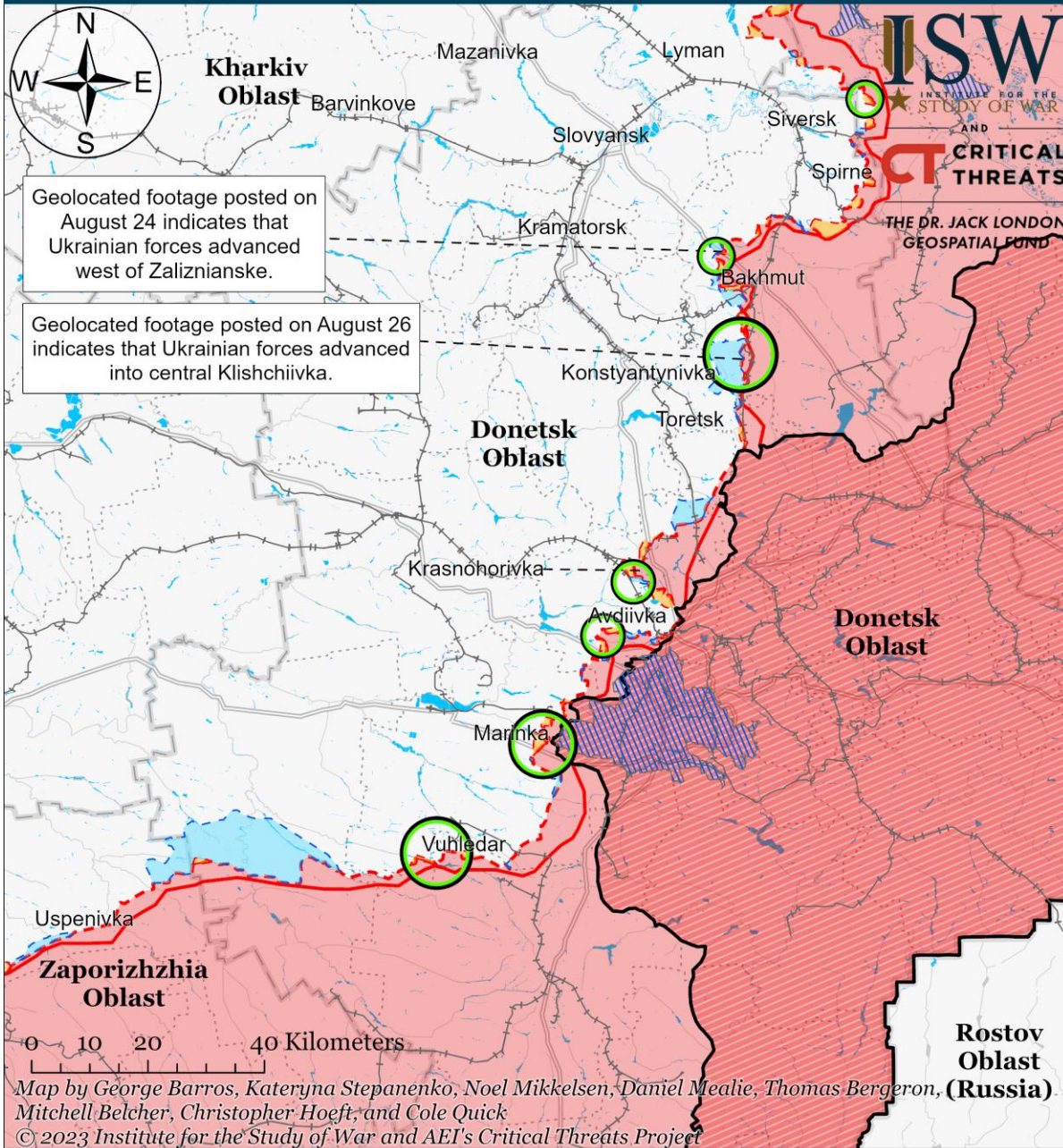
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Note: Ukrainian Eastern Group of Forces Spokesperson Ilya Yevlash stated on August 25 that Ukrainian forces advanced from 100 meters to 300 meters each day in the Bakhmut direction.

Russian forces conducted offensive operations along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line and reportedly advanced on August 26. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful offensive operations near Pervomaiske (11km southwest of Avdiivka), Stepove (8km northwest of Avdiivka), and Marinka (on the western outskirts of Donetsk City).[46] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces captured territory south of Novomykhailivka (10km southwest of Donetsk City).[47] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful assaults in the southwestern outskirts of Avdiivka, in Marinka, and northeast and southeast of Novomykhailivka.[48]

The Russian MoD claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Krasnohorivka (either directly west of Donetsk City or 8km northwest of Avdiivka) on August 26.[49]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of August 26, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, (Russia) Mitchell Belcher, Christopher Hoefft, and Cole Quick
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- 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

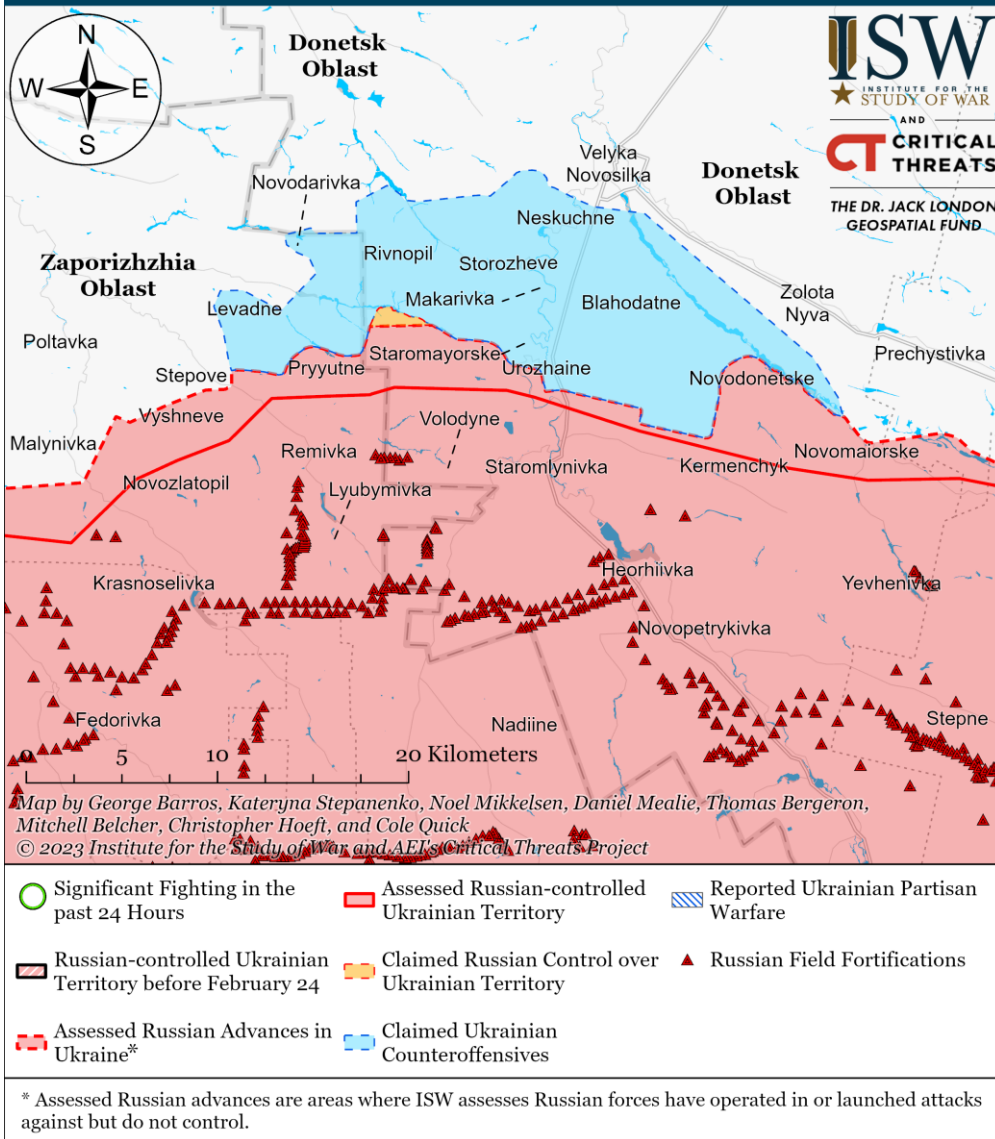
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

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

The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful offensive actions near Vuhledar in western Donetsk Oblast on August 26.[50]

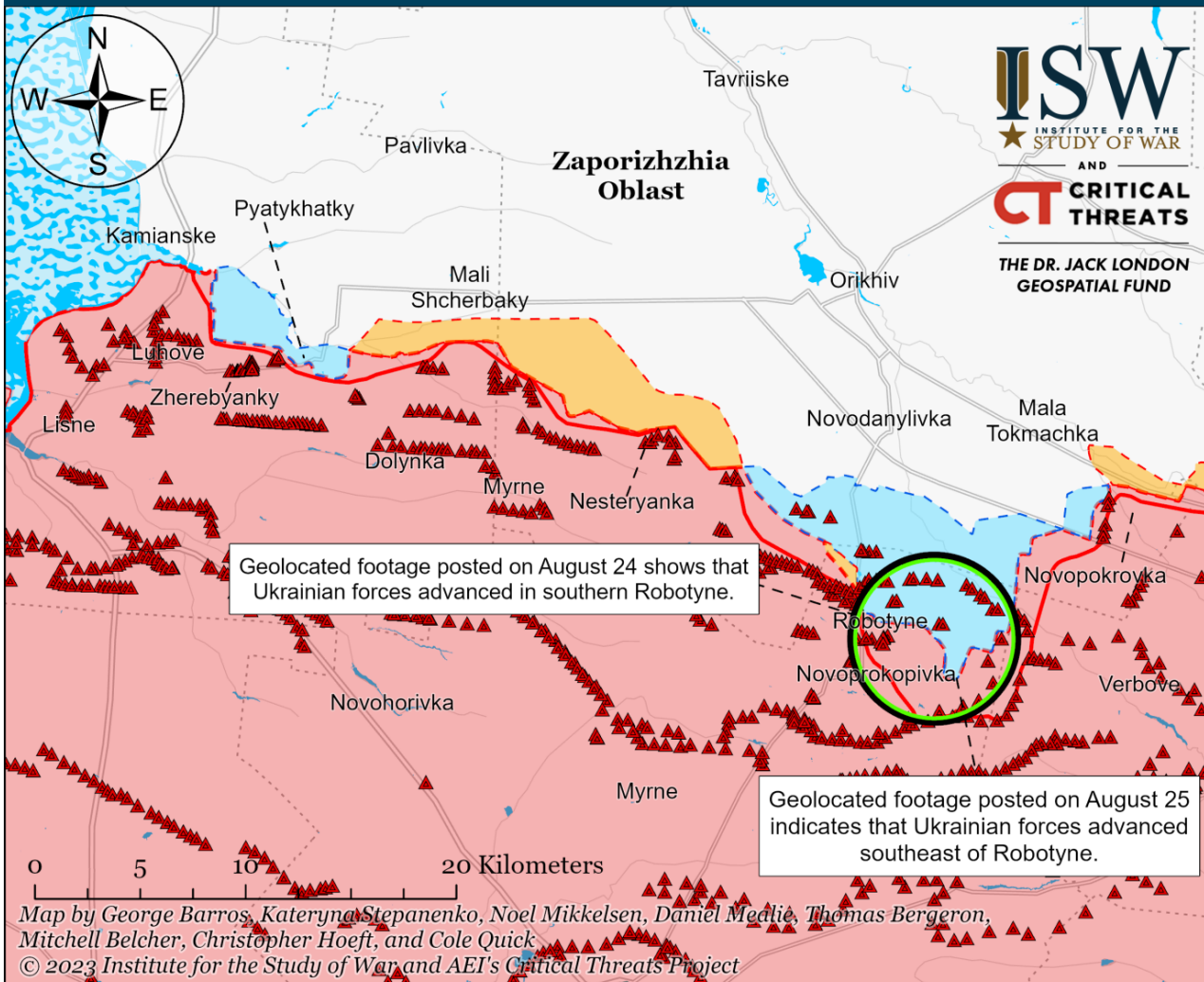
Ukrainian forces reportedly conducted offensive operations in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area but did not advance on August 26. Russian sources, including the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD), claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Staromayorske (9km south of Velyka Novosilka).[51] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces also conducted unsuccessful attacks south of Urozhaine (9km south of Velyka Novosilka) and near Pryyutne (16km southwest of Velyka Novosilka), Staromlynivka (14km south of Velyka Novosilka), and Kermenchyk (16km southwest of Velyka Novosilka).[52] The Russian “Vostok” Battalion expressed concern that Ukrainian forces would attack its area of responsibility after finishing attacks south of Urozhaine, suggesting that elements of the Vostok Battalion are no longer operating in the immediate Urozhaine area.[53]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around the Vremivka Salient as of August 26, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Ukrainian forces advanced closer to the next series of Russian defensive positions in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast as of August 26. Geolocated footage published on August 26 shows that Ukrainian forces made further advances west of Verbove (18km south of Orikhiv).[54] Russian milbloggers also claimed on August 26 that Ukrainian forces advanced northwest of Verbove.[55] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks in Robotyne (10km south of Orikhiv), and some claimed that Russian forces managed to recapture some unspecified positions in the settlement.[56] Other Russian and Ukrainian sources indicated that Russian forces only control part of Robotyne, however.[57]

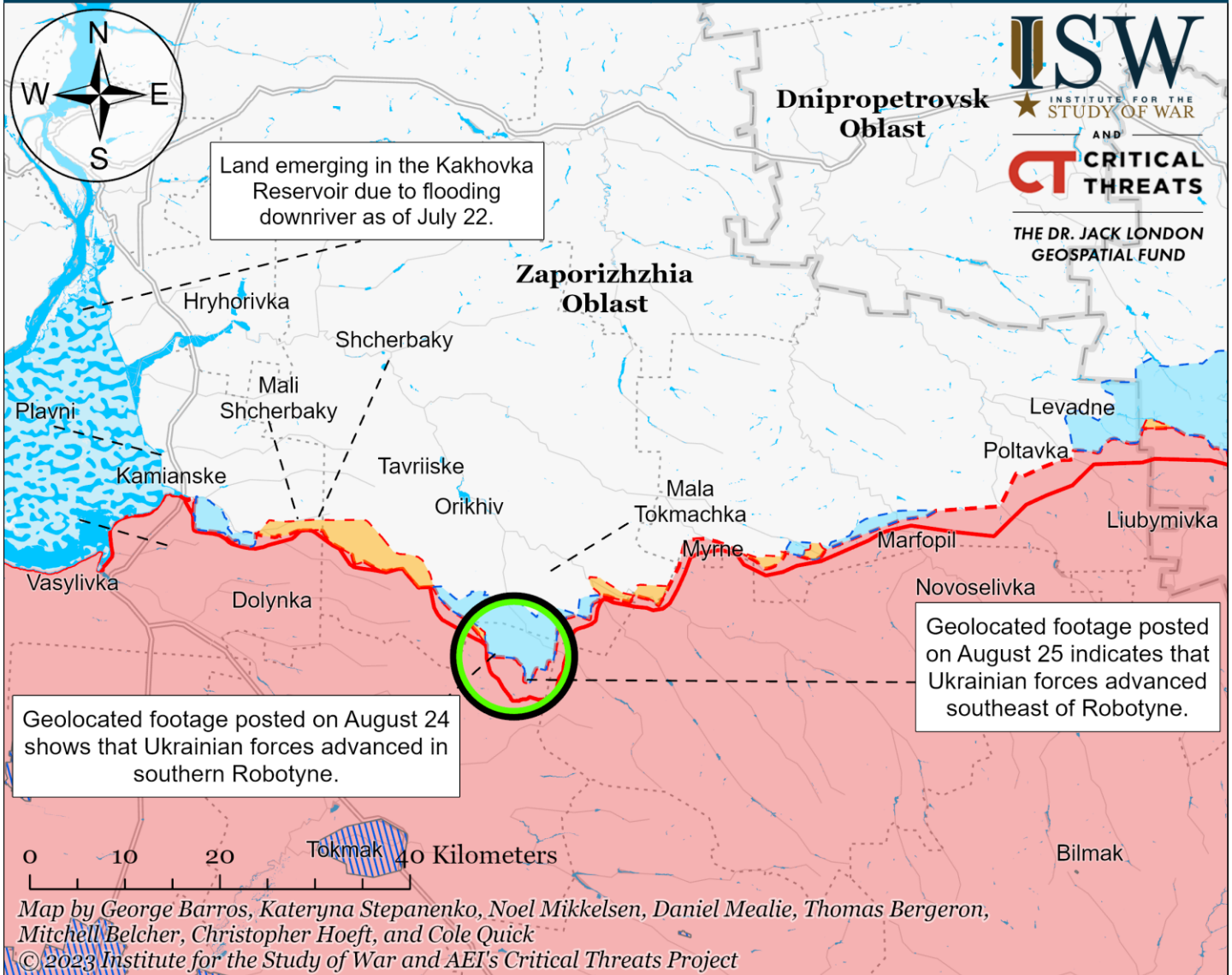
Assessed Control of Terrain Around Pyatykhatky and Robotyne as of August 26, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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

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

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhia as of August 26, 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

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

Russian milbloggers continued to claim that fighting is ongoing on islands in the Dnipro River delta in Kherson Oblast on August 26. A Russian milblogger claimed that small Ukrainian landing groups landed on unspecified islands in the delta.[58] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted a failed landing on Borschovi Island (14km southwest of Kherson City) on August 25.[59]



A second civilian vessel left port through the Ukrainian humanitarian corridor in the Black Sea on August 26 as part of Ukraine's ongoing effort to circumvent Russia's attempts to curtail maritime traffic.[60] The *Primus* cargo ship, which had been in the port of Odesa since February 2022, departed

for Varna, Bulgaria under a Liberian flag.[61] *BBC's* Russia service reported that the *Primus* returned to port a few hours after departing for unknown reasons, but that the *Primus* still intends to sail to Varna.[62] ISW has previously assessed that Russia likely intends to curtail maritime traffic to Ukraine through the Black Sea without enforcing a full blockade.[63]

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

Ukrainian intelligence reported that the Russian government is considering mobilizing another 450,000 personnel in a possible second mobilization wave. Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) Head Kyrylo Budanov told *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* project *Krim Realii* in an interview published on August 25 that the Russian government is considering mobilizing an additional 450,000 personnel but has not yet decided to commit to the effort.[64] Budanov also reported that Russia continues to mobilize 20,000 to 22,000 people in crypto-mobilization efforts each month.

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 regional governments continue to facilitate the forced deportation of Ukrainian children from occupied Ukraine to occupied Crimea. The Kherson Oblast occupation administration amplified a post on August 26 claiming that the Pskov Oblast administration helped organize a 14-day trip for children from occupied Ukraine, likely occupied Kherson Oblast, to the “Zhemchuzhina” children’s camp in Yevpatoria, occupied Crimea.[65]

Russian occupation authorities reportedly continue to steal Ukrainian grain in occupied territories and sell it on the Russian market. The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported on August 25 that Russian occupation officials have facilitated the theft of 3.7 million tons of grain in all occupied areas except for Crimea, including 1.4 million tons from occupied Zaporizhia Oblast.[66] The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported that Russian occupation authorities force Ukrainian farmers to sell their grain at prices below the market rate, then Russian authorities sell the grain at market price on the Russian market.[67] Russian theft of Ukrainian grain notably continues following Russia's withdrawal from the Black Sea Grain Initiative on July 17 and amidst subsequent Russian strikes on Ukrainian grain infrastructure that have destroyed 270,000 tons of grain as of August 23.[68]

Russian authorities continue efforts likely aimed to artificially increase voter turnout in occupied Ukraine for the September 10 regional elections. Ukrainian Melitopol Mayor Ivan Fedorov reported that Russian occupation authorities are planning to transport residents of Russia and occupied Crimea to occupied Ukraine to increase voter turnout numbers in the coming Russian regional elections.[69]

Significant activity in Belarus (Russian efforts to increase its military presence in Belarus and further integrate Belarus into Russian-favorable frameworks and Wagner Group activity in Belarus)

Nothing significant to report.

ISW will continue to report daily observed Russian and Belarusian military activity in Belarus as part of ongoing Kremlin efforts to increase their control over Belarus and other Russian actions in Belarus.

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

[1] <https://twitter.com/moklasen/status/1695182886960304408>; <https://twitter.com/moklasen/status/1695186122744250653>

[2] <https://www.almamlakatv.com/news/123754-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D9%85%D9%84%D9%83%D8%A9-%D8%AA%D8%AD%D8%A7%D9%88%D8%B1-%D9%82%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AC%D9%8A%D8%B4-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%B1%D9%83%D9%8A>

[3] <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/ukraine-will-speed-up-advance-south...>

[4] <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/ukraine-will-speed-up-advance-south...>

[5] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar081723>

[6] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar082323>

[7] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar082223>

[8] https://twitter.com/Tatarigami_UA/status/1695513993903829445?s=20

[9] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-june-19-2023>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-june-20-2023>

[10] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-august-20-2023>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-august-19-2023>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-august-22-2023>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-august-5-2023>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-july-16-2023>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-august-18-2023>

[11] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign...>

[12] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar081123>

[13] <https://t.me/dshrg2/1206> ; <https://t.me/dshrg2/1207>;

[14] https://t.me/istories_media/3478 ; <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2023/08/25/7417054/>

[15] <https://t.me/dshrg2/1206> ; <https://t.me/dshrg2/1207>;

[16] <https://t.me/dshrg2/1183> ; <https://t.me/dshrg2/1174>; <https://t.me/dshrg2/1158>;

[17] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-july-16-2023>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-july-13-2023>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign...>

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