

## Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, August 3, 2023

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August 3, 2023, 5:30 pm 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 1:00pm ET on August 3. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the August 4 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

**Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations on at least three sectors of the front on August 3 and reportedly advanced in some areas.** The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Berdyansk (Zaporizhia-Donetsk Oblast border area) and Melitopol (western Zaporizhia Oblast) directions, and Ukrainian officials stated that Ukrainian forces continued to advance in the Bakhmut direction.[1] Ukrainian Director of the Department of Planning of the Main Directorate of the National Guard Colonel Mykola Urshalovych stated that Ukrainian forces advanced up to 650m into Russian defenses along a 1.5km front in the Melitopol direction.[2] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces advanced near Mykilske (27km southwest of Donetsk City) in western Donetsk Oblast.[3] Ukrainian National Security and Defense Council Secretary Oleksiy Danilov stated on August 3 that the Ukrainian counteroffensive does not have a set deadline or schedule.[4] Danilov added that Russian defensive lines along the front continue to be heavily mined, with some areas having three, four, or five mines per square meter.[5]

**Russian forces conducted a series of drone strikes on August 3, primarily targeting Kyiv.** The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian air defenses shot down all 15 Iranian-made Shahed-131/136 drones launched by Russian forces on August 3.[6] The Kyiv City Military Administration reported that Ukrainian air defenses destroyed almost a dozen targets near Kyiv on August 3.[7] Ukrainian Air Force Spokesperson Colonel Yuriy Ihnat stated that Russian forces launched the drones from occupied Crimea, Krasnodar Krai, and Kursk and Bryansk oblasts.[8] Ihnat added that Russian forces have moved many drone launch sites to the eastern coast of the Sea of Azov in Krasnodar Krai due to Ukrainian strike capabilities against Crimea and Russian border regions.[9]

**The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) took down Russian Airborne Forces (VDV) Commander Colonel General Mikhail Teplinsky's August 2 speech, possibly due to his disclosure of Russian casualties in Ukraine.** Teplinsky claimed on VDV Day (August 2, a holiday celebrating the Russian airborne forces) that at least 8,500 VDV personnel have been wounded in Ukraine since the start of the war, a rare official disclosure of Russian casualties, which Russian officials have largely sought to obscure as the war has progressed.[10] Russian MoD mouthpiece *TV Zvezda* took down Teplinsky's August 2 speech, and some Russian sources claimed this removal was due to the casualty count.[11] *BBC* and opposition outlet *Mediazona* have confirmed that at least 1,800 VDV personnel were killed in action in Ukraine as of July 30, and a killed to wounded ratio of 1:3 is on average (if not slightly better) for Russian forces in Ukraine.[12] The Russian MoD may have also

sought to censor Teplinsky's disclosure of details regarding new VDV formations, as Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu and other military officials have previously discussed the establishment of other formations but not specified their names and exact subordination to existing units.[13] Teplinsky previously capitalized on Russia's "Defender of the Fatherland" Day on February 23 to criticize Russian Chief of the General Staff and overall theater commander Army General Valery Gerasimov about the extent of Russian casualties in Ukraine.[14]

**Russian prosecutors reportedly classified the investigation into ardent Russian ultranationalist and former FSB officer Igor Girkin on August 2.** Girkin's lawyer Alexander Molokhov stated that materials relevant to Girkin's case have been classified as "top secret" and refused to issue further comments so as to not violate his non-disclosure agreements.[15] Girkin's supporters continued to call for the start of a movement to demand Girkin's release via political means and claimed that Girkin is a political prisoner.[16] Girkin's wife Miroslava Reginskaya appealed to Russian President Vladimir Putin directly in a public letter for Girkin's release, noting that Girkin's arrest was either someone's attempt to curry favor with unnamed officials or an effort to censor the truth about the situation on the frontlines.[17]

### **Key Takeaways:**

- **Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations on at least three sectors of the front on August 3 and reportedly advanced in some areas.**
- **Russian forces conducted a series of drone strikes on August 3, primarily targeting Kyiv.**
- **The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) took down Russian Airborne Forces (VDV) Commander Colonel General Mikhail Teplinsky's August 2 speech, possibly due to his disclosure of Russian casualties in Ukraine.**
- **Russian prosecutors reportedly classified the investigation into ardent Russian ultranationalist and former FSB officer Igor Girkin on August 2.**
- **Russian forces conducted offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line, near Bakhmut, along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line, and in the western Donetsk-eastern Zaporizhia Oblast border area on August 3 and made advances in certain areas.**
- **Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations on at least three sectors of the front on August 3 and reportedly advanced near Kreminna and Vuhledar.**
- **The Kremlin is attempting to establish favorable conditions to attract additional volunteers to serve in the Russian Armed Forces.**
- **A report from Yale University's Conflict Observatory supports ISW's longstanding assessments that Russian and occupation authorities are using forced passportization measures to consolidate social and legal control over occupied areas of Ukraine.**

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



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

***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 and advanced on the Kupyansk-Svatove line on August 3. Geolocated footage published on August 2 shows that Russian forces advanced up to the N26 Kupyansk-Svatove highway in southern Novoselivske (14km northwest of Svatove).[18] A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced north of Novoselivske but that the exact line of contact in the settlement itself is unclear.[19] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Russian forces made marginal advances near Vilshana (15km northeast of Kupyansk) and Pershotravneve (22km east of Kupyansk), Kharkiv Oblast and Kuzemivka, Luhansk Oblast (15km northwest of Svatove).[20] A Russian source claimed that Russian forces advanced near Lyman Pershyi (12km east of Kupyansk) on August 2.[21] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces maintain a five-kilometer bridgehead on the west bank of the Zherebets River near Karmazynivka (13km southwest of Svatove), though ISW has not observed visual confirmation of an extensive Russian presence on the west bank of the river.[22] Ukrainian Eastern Group of Forces Spokesperson Colonel Serhiy Cherevaty reported that Russian forces attacked Ukrainian positions near Synkivka (8km northeast of Kupyansk) and Novoselivske.[23]

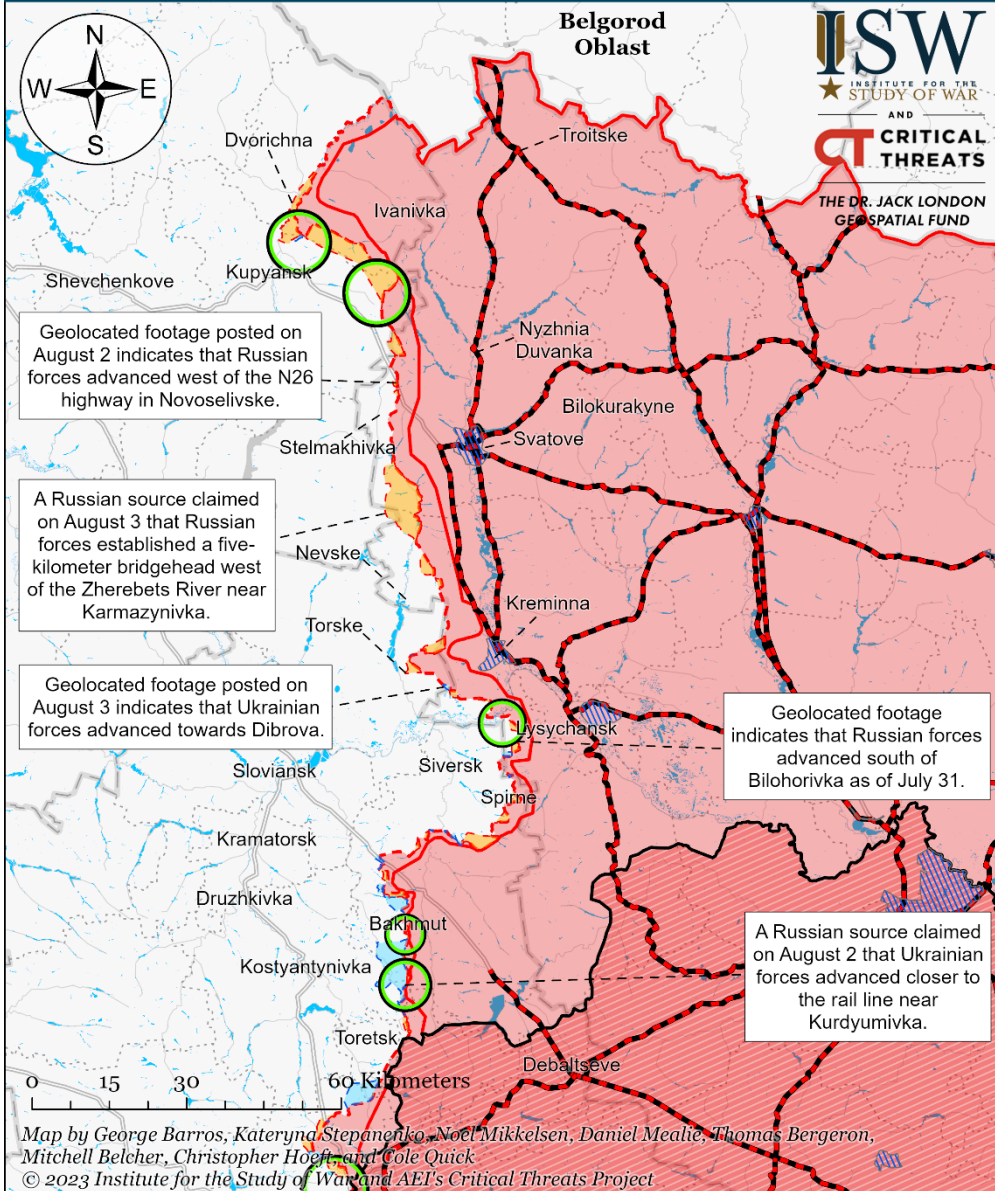
Ukrainian forces continued limited offensive operations on the Kupyansk-Svatove line and did not advance on August 3. The Russian MoD claimed that Russian forces repelled a Ukrainian ground attack near Novoselivske.[24]

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Kreminna area and reportedly advanced on August 3. A Russian milblogger claimed that elements of the 2nd Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) Army Corps captured Ukrainian positions near Bilohorivka (12km southwest of Kreminna).[25] A Russian source claimed that Russian forces advanced in the Torske (14km west of Kreminna) and Serebrianske forest areas (10km southwest of Kreminna) on August 2.[26]

Ukrainian forces continued limited offensive operations in the Kreminna area and advanced on August 3. Geolocated footage published on August 3 shows that Ukrainian forces advanced west of Dibrova

(5km southwest of Kreminna).[27] The Russian MoD claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian ground attacks near Bilohorivka and Berestove (30km south of Kreminna).[28]

## Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of August 3, 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.

Note: A Russian source claimed on July 31 that Russian forces advanced to the shoreline of the Oskil River.

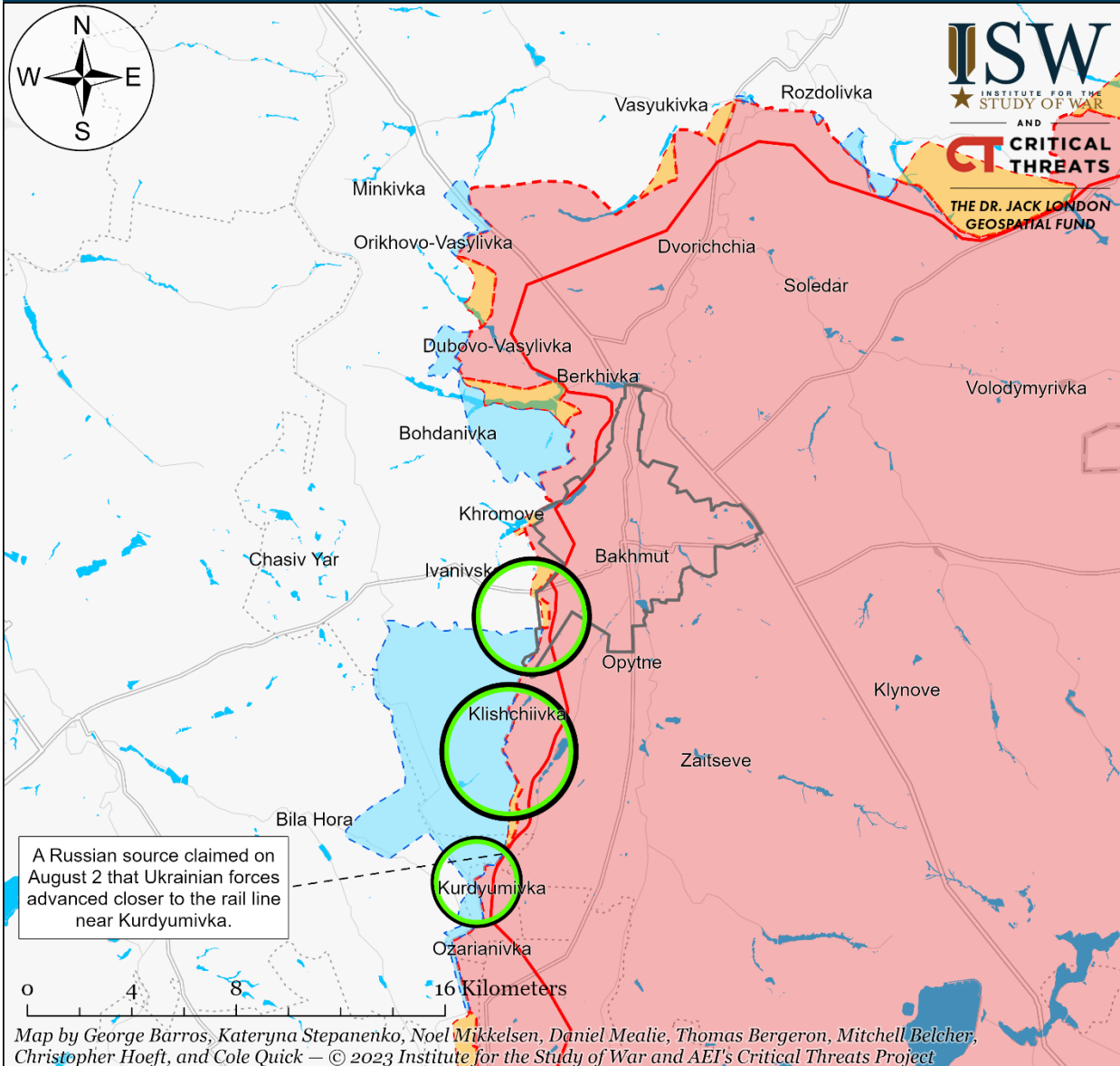
## **Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Donetsk Oblast (Russian Objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)**

Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations in the Bakhmut direction but did not make any confirmed gains on August 3. Ukrainian Ground Forces Commander Colonel General Oleksandr Syrskyi stated that Ukrainian forces are continuing to gradually move forward in the Bakhmut direction, and Ukrainian Eastern Group of Forces Spokesperson Colonel Serhiy Cherevaty stated that Ukrainian forces continued to advance on Bakhmut’s southern flank.<sup>[29]</sup> Cherevaty added that Ukrainian forces advance by hundreds of meters daily in the Bakhmut direction and that Ukrainian forces are not conducting frontal assaults in the area in order to preserve personnel.<sup>[30]</sup> Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces intensified offensive operations in the Bakhmut direction, particularly around Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut), and are attempting to break through Russian defenses along the outskirts of Bakhmut City itself.<sup>[31]</sup> The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that elements of the Russian Southern Grouping of Forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Klishchiivka.<sup>[32]</sup>

Russian forces conducted limited unsuccessful counterattacks in the Bakhmut area on August 3. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian assaults south and southeast of Ivanivske (6km west of Bakhmut), and that Russian forces unsuccessfully attempted to regain lost positions west of Klishchiivka, south of Andriivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut), and west of Kurdyumivka (13km southwest of Bakhmut).<sup>[33]</sup> Russian sources claimed that Russian forces counterattacked near Klishchiivka and Kurdyumivka but did not specify the results of the attacks.<sup>[34]</sup>



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



Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Christopher Hoeft, 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 Colonel Serhiy Cherevaty stated on August 3 that Ukrainian forces advance over 100 meters daily on Bakhmut's southern flank. Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Malyar reported on August 1 that Ukrainian forces captured two square kilometers over the past week in the Bakhmut direction for a total of 37 square kilometers

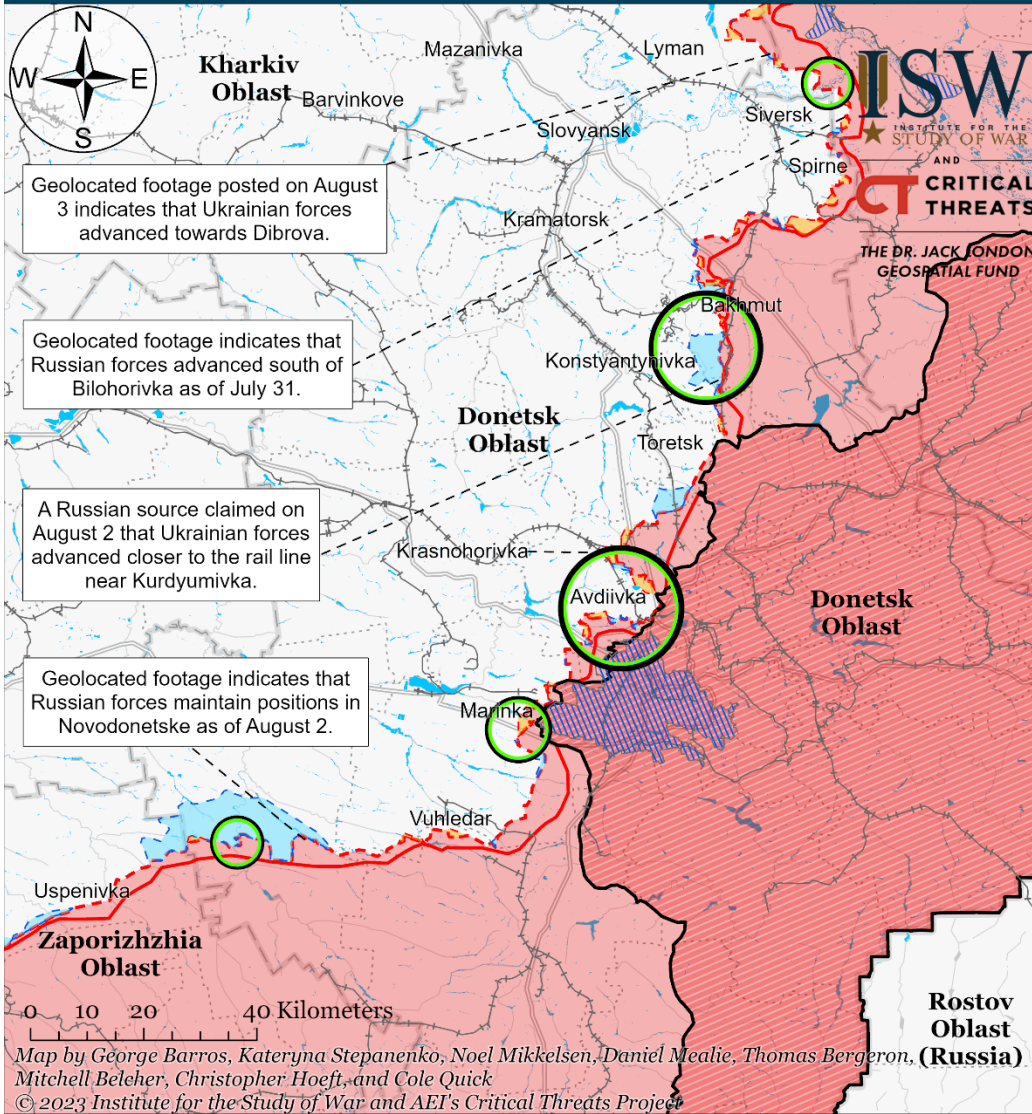
Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City front on August 3 but did not advance. The Russian Ministry of Defense claimed that elements of the Russian Southern Grouping of Forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Krasnohorivka (though it is unclear whether this report refers to the settlement of that name southwest or north of Avdiivka) and Marinka (27km southwest of Avdiivka) and successfully counterattacked against retreating Ukrainian forces in these areas.[35] ISW has not observed visual confirmation of recent successful Russian counterattacks along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City front.

Russian forces continued ground attacks along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City front on August 3 but did not make any confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful offensive actions north and southeast of Avdiivka, southeast of Pervomaiske (11km southwest of Avdiivka), and near Marinka.[36] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces conducted assaults on the southwestern approaches towards Avdiivka and pushed Ukrainian forces from unspecified positions in the area.[37] The milblogger also claimed that Russian forces conducted a successful assault near Vesele (5km northeast of Avdiivka) and advanced closer to Avdiivka from the northeast.[38] ISW has not yet observed visual confirmation of recent Russian gains near Avdiivka.

Ukrainian forces continued to target Russian rear areas in Donetsk Oblast on August 2 and 3. Geolocated footage published on August 3 shows Ukrainian forces striking a Russian “Buk” air defense system with a HIMARS rocket near Roty (17km southeast of Bakhmut).[39] Geolocated footage published on August 2 shows Ukrainian forces striking a Russian Grad MLRS system southwest of Olenivka (7km south of Donetsk City).[40]



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



Geolocated footage posted on August 3 indicates that Ukrainian forces advanced towards Dibrova.

Geolocated footage indicates that Russian forces advanced south of Bilohorivka as of July 31.

A Russian source claimed on August 2 that Ukrainian forces advanced closer to the rail line near Kurdyumivka.

Geolocated footage indicates that Russian forces maintain positions in Novodonetske as of August 2.

- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine\*
- 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 Eastern Group of Forces Spokesperson Colonel Serhiy Cherevaty stated on August 3 that Ukrainian forces advance over 100 meters daily on Bakhmut's southern flank. Russian sources claimed on August 1 and 2 that Russian forces control the surrounding heights of Staromayorske. Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Malyar reported on August 1 that Ukrainian forces captured two square kilometers over the past week in the Bakhmut direction for a total of 37 square kilometers.

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

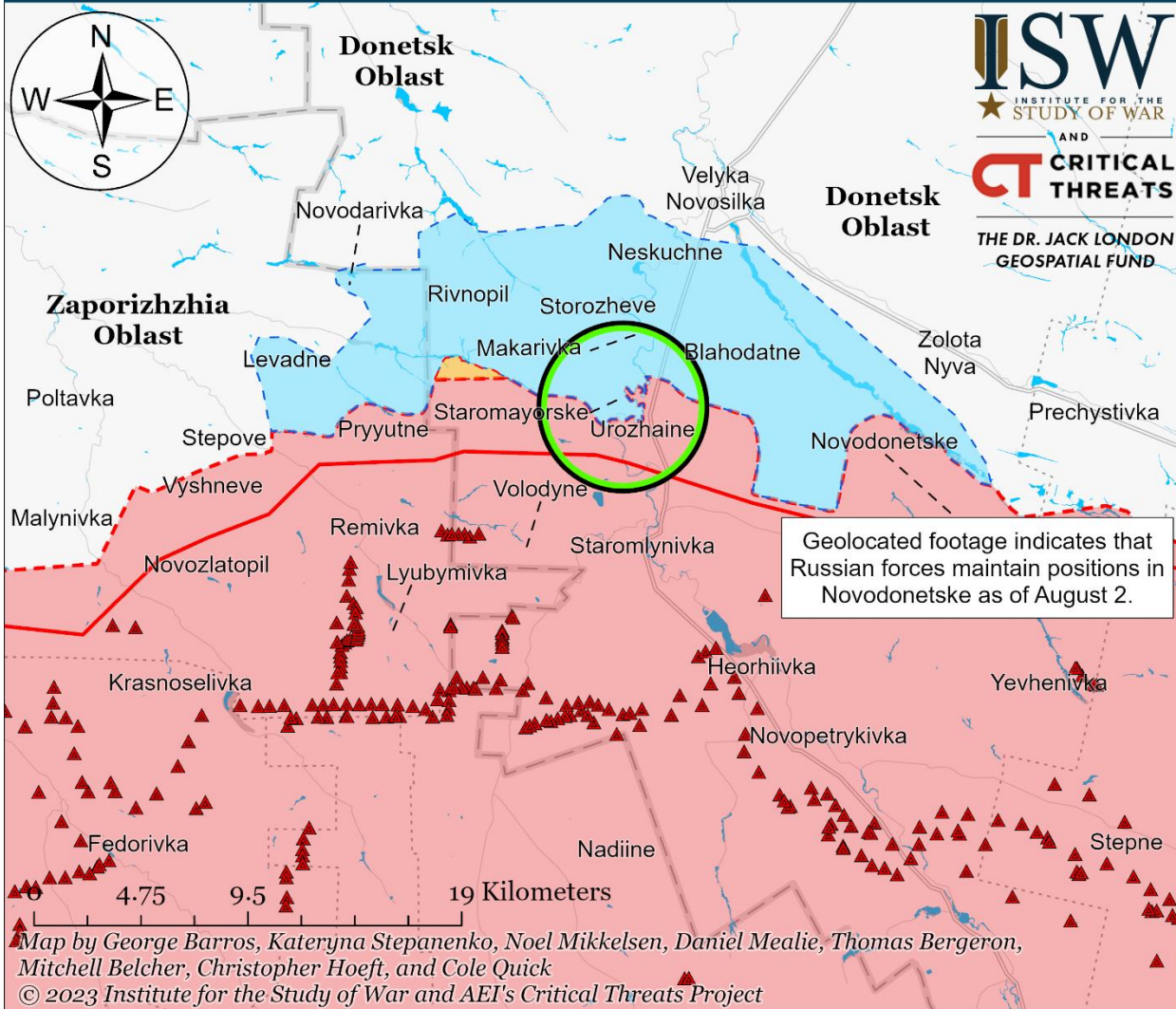
Ukrainian forces conducted offensive operations in western Donetsk Oblast and reportedly advanced on August 3. A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces advanced near Mykilske (27km southwest of Donetsk City).[41]

Russian forces conducted offensive operations in western Donetsk Oblast but did not advance on August 3. Russian sources claimed that Russian forces attacked Ukrainian forces near Vuhledar (30km southwest of Donetsk City) and that fighting is ongoing in the area.[42]

Ukrainian forces conducted offensive operations in the western Donetsk-eastern Zaporizhia Oblast area but did not advance on August 3. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Berdyansk (Zaporizhia-Donetsk Oblast area) direction.[43] Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked Russian forces near Urozhaine (9km south of Velyka Novosilka).[44] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted limited ground attacks near Pryyutne (16km southwest of Velyka Novosilka).[45]

Russian forces conducted offensive operations in the western Donetsk-eastern Zaporizhia Oblast area and did not advance on August 3. Geolocated footage indicates that Russian forces maintain positions in Novodonetske (12km southeast of Velyka Novosilka) as of August 2.[46] Russian sources have claimed that Russian forces have maintained positions in Novodonetske for several weeks already, and it is unlikely that the geolocated footage indicates recent Russian advances in the area.[47] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attempted to regain lost positions west of Staromayorske (9km south of Velyka Novosilka) and near Urozhaine.[48] Russian sources claimed that Russian forces attacked Ukrainian forces near Urozhaine and Staromayorske.[49]

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



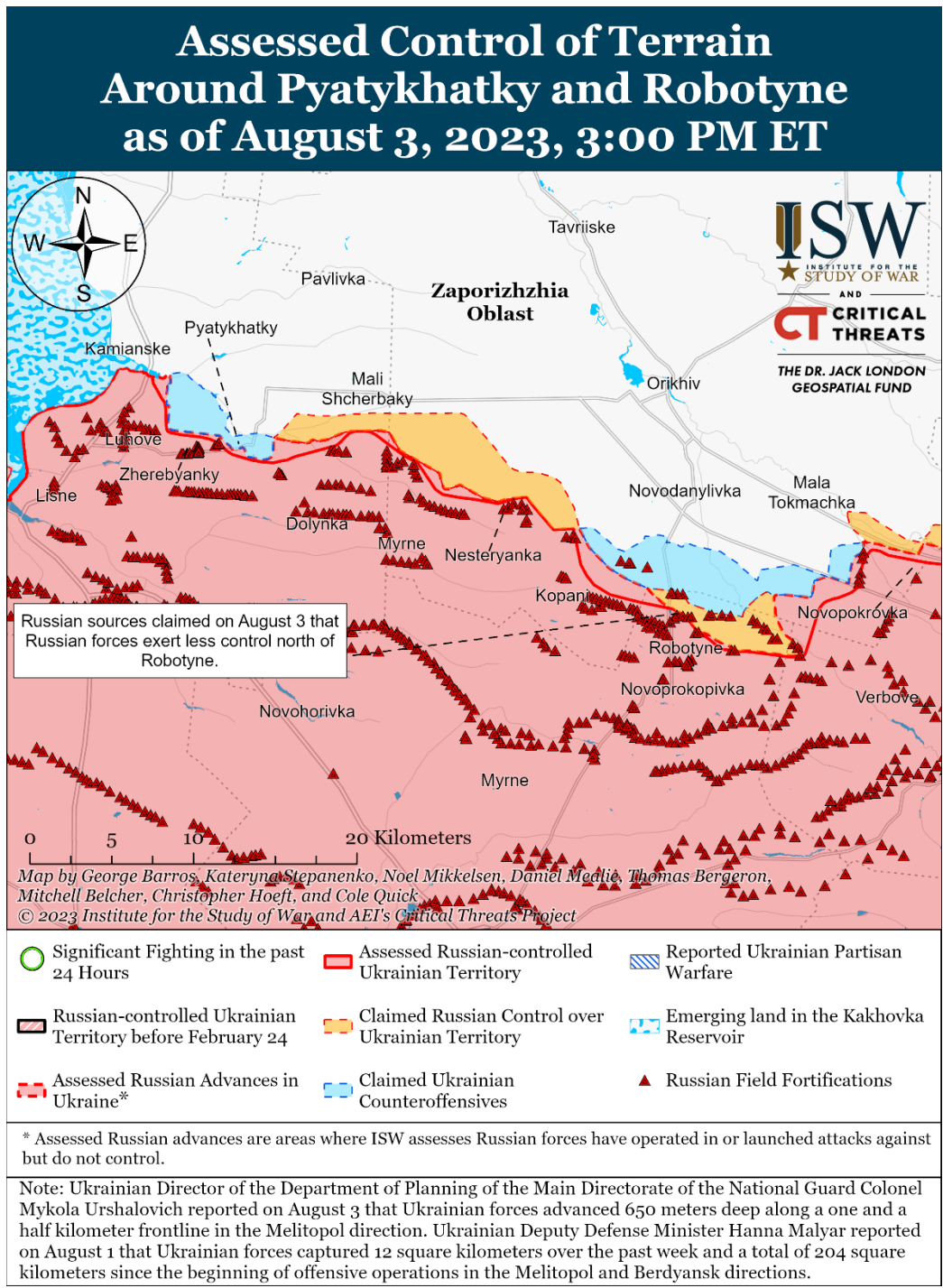
- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine\*
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
- Russian Field Fortifications

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

Note: Russian sources claimed on August 1 and 2 that Russian forces control the surrounding heights of Staromayorske. Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Malyar reported on August 1 that Ukrainian forces captured 12 square kilometers over the past week for a total of 204 square kilometers since the start of Ukrainian offensive operations in southern Ukraine.



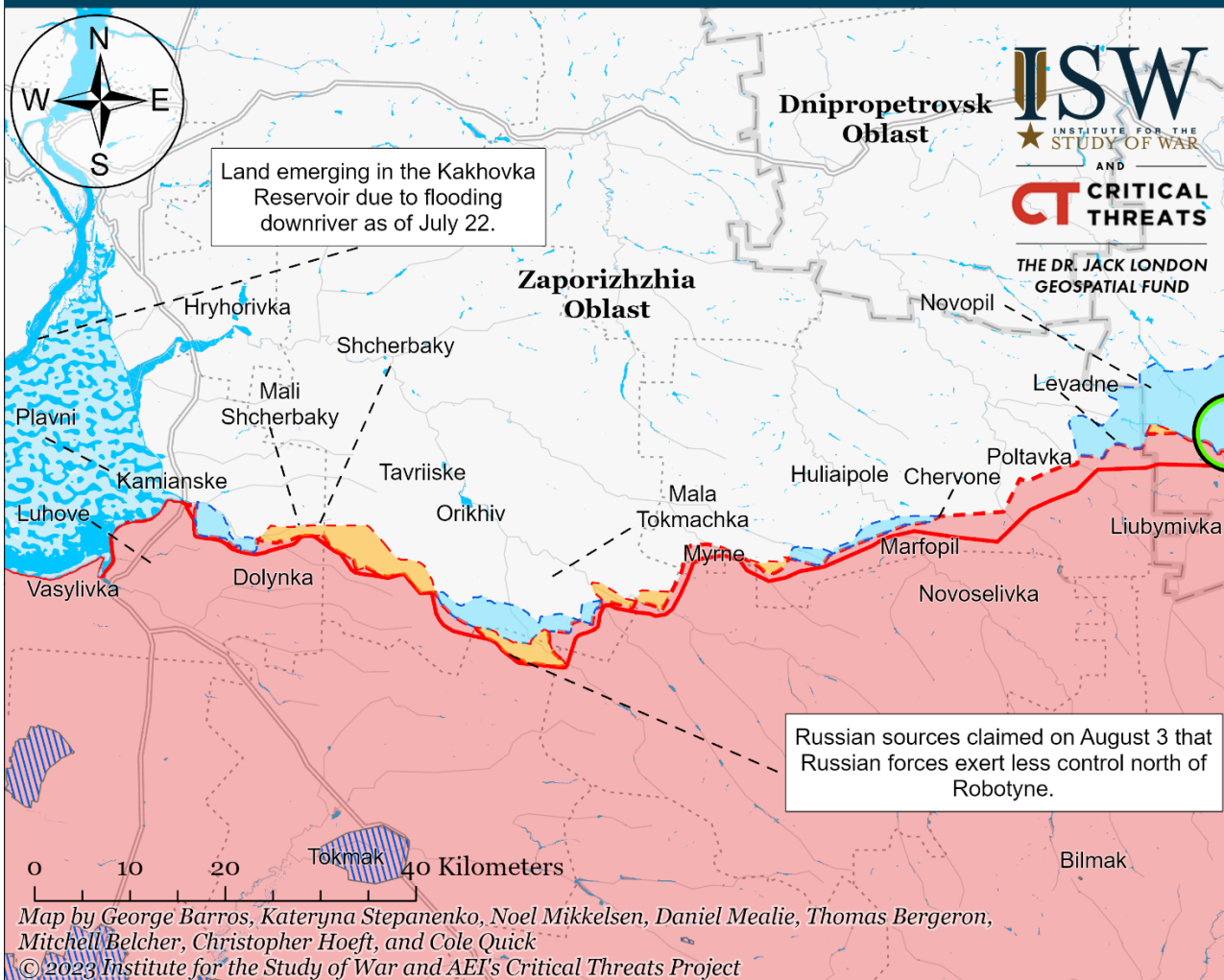
Ukrainian forces conducted offensive operations in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast on August 3 and reportedly made recent advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Melitopol (western Zaporizhzhia Oblast) direction.[50] Ukrainian Director of the Department of Planning of the Main Directorate of the National Guard Colonel Mykola Urshalovych reported that Ukrainian forces recently advanced up to 650m into Russian defenses along a 1.5km front in the Melitopol direction.[51] Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked Russian forces near Robotyne (10km south of Orikhiv).[52] Russian sources continued to disagree on the size of the purported Ukrainian attack near Robotyne, and Ukrainian forces are most likely continuing to conduct limited attacks in this area.[53]



Ukrainian forces reportedly continued activity along the Dnipro River on August 3. A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces have made several attempts to cross the Dnipro River and gain a foothold on the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast on August 3 and during the last week.<sup>[54]</sup> Another Russian milblogger claimed that fighting continues near the islands in the Dnipro River floodplains and near the Antonivsky bridge as Ukrainian forces continue to try to send small landing groups across the river.<sup>[55]</sup>

The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) announced official restrictions on transit through the Kerch Strait on August 3. The Russian MoD announced the creation of an inspection area in the Kerch Strait for ships heading into the strait from the Black Sea.<sup>[56]</sup> The Russian MoD also announced that movement through the Kerch Strait will be limited to ships and vessels of the Russian Navy, Federal Security Service (FSB), and Rosgvardia, as well as vessels transiting through MoD-specified sea lanes and recommended routes or to Kerch Strait ports during daylight hours.<sup>[57]</sup> The MoD's announcement further formalizes the Krasnodar Krai operational headquarters' July 28 statement regarding similar restrictions.<sup>[58]</sup>

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhzhia as of August 3, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Christopher Hoeft, and Cole Quick

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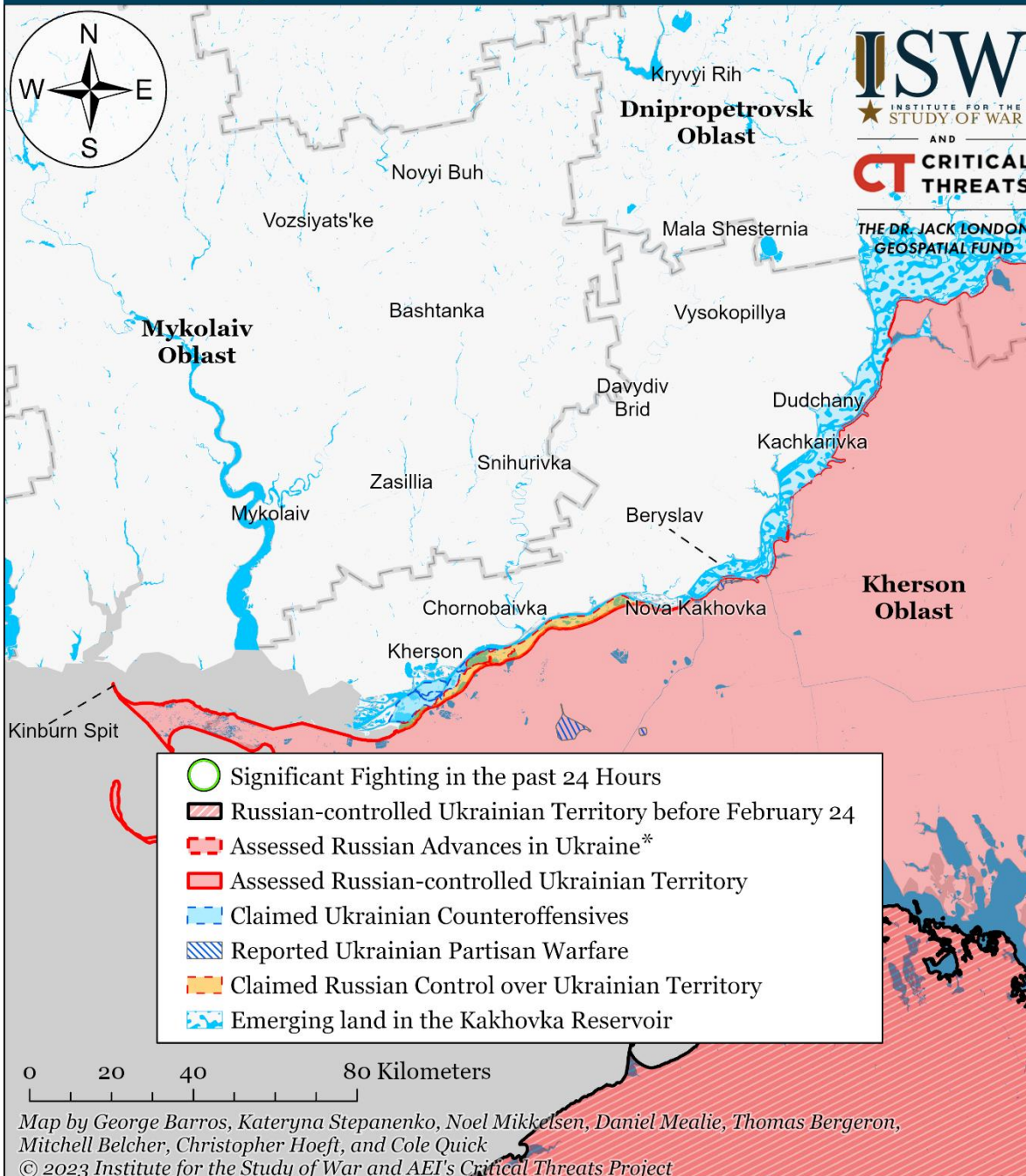
- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours                 | Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory  | Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare     |
| Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24 | Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory | Emerging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

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

Note: Ukrainian Director of the Department of Planning of the Main Directorate of the National Guard Colonel Mykola Urshalovich reported on August 3 that Ukrainian forces advanced 650 meters deep along a one and a half kilometer frontline in the Melitopol direction. Russian sources claimed on August 1 and 2 that Russian forces control the surrounding heights of Staromayorske. Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Malyar reported on August 1 that Ukrainian forces captured 12 square kilometers over the past week for a total of 204 square kilometers since the start of Ukrainian offensive operations in southern Ukraine.



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



Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Christopher Hoeft, and Cole Quick  
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\* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Note: The Ukrainian counteroffensive layer displays areas previously assigned to the Russian control, Russian advances, or Russian claims layers where ISW now assesses that Ukrainian forces have established a presence beyond a short-term raid. Inclusion of an area on this layer does not imply that ISW assesses that the area is part of any upcoming Ukrainian counteroffensive operation.

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

The Kremlin is attempting to establish favorable conditions to attract additional volunteers to serve in the Russian Armed Forces. Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a decree on compulsory state life and health insurance for volunteers and mobilized personnel who participate in Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.[59] The decree will also provide insurance to volunteers that have participated in combat since February 24, 2022. Deputy Chairman of the Russian Security Council Dmitry Medvedev claimed that the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) recruited over 231,000 volunteers between January and July 2023, and noted that Russia's task is "to make contract service as prestigious as possible." [60] *BBC's* Russian service reported that Medvedev's claimed number of volunteers, if true, likely does not represent only civilian recruits, as the Russian MoD has been recruiting personnel from Wagner Group that agreed to sign military contracts and conscripts.[61]

The Russian MoD is reportedly not equipping Russian territorial defense units operating on the Russian western international border with combat equipment, which is consistent with its previous hesitance to allocate Russian military equipment to defending the Russian border. A Russian milblogger observed that the Russian MoD failed to provide elements of the Belgorod and Kursk oblasts' territorial defense militias with combat machine guns, instead offering them hunting rifles.[62] The milblogger also called on the Russian MoD to create a Bryansk Oblast territorial defense unit to defend against claimed Ukrainian shelling and sabotage and reconnaissance groups.[63]

The Republic of Bashkortostan reportedly formed a volunteer regiment that consists of at least 10 volunteer detachments and battalions.[64] Vice Speaker of Kurultai State Assembly Rustem Akhmadinurov published a photo which outlined 12 volunteer units subordinated under the "Bashkortostan Regiment," which included some formations such as: the "Tagir Kusimov," "Dayan Murzin," "Shaymuratov," "Dostavalov," and "Minnigali Gulaydulin" volunteer battalions; the "Mugin Nagaev" artillery battalion; the "Sergey Zorin" tank battalion; "Vatan" volunteer detachment; and the "Aleksei Sukhorukov" artillery battery. Akhmadinurov added that the region is continuing to form the earlier announced "Almaz Safin" volunteer battalion.

*Reuters* reported that Russian forces are planting mines under Russian servicemen's corpses to slow down Ukrainian counteroffensive efforts in Zaporizhia Oblast.[65] Ukrainian servicemen told *Reuters* that Russian forces create booby traps at abandoned positions by placing mines under Russian corpses because they know that Ukrainian forces lift the wounded and the dead. Ukrainian servicemen indicated that Russia's excessive mining is slowing down Ukrainian advances on the battlefield.

The Wagner Group is reportedly continuing to recruit in Russia, while the Russian "Redut" private military company (PMC) is recruiting personnel without requiring volunteers to sign military contracts with the Russian MoD. Russian opposition outlet *Vazhnye Istorii* reported that a Wagner mercenary claimed that Wagner continues to recruit personnel via the Omsk-based Orthodox sports club "Desantnik." *Vazhnye Istorii* also noted that Novosibirsk-based veteran organization "Silovoye Yedinstvo of Siberia" (Force Unity of Siberia) is continuing to recruit Wagner volunteers to deploy to Africa, while the Wagner mercenary claimed that some recruitment centers continue to send volunteers to Ukraine. *Vazhnye Istorii* could not confirm the Wagner mercenary's claim that Russia continues to recruit personnel to fight in Ukraine via Wagner. *Vazhnye Istorii* noted that recruiters offered its journalist a contract to join the Redut PMC (linked to Russian state energy giant Gazprom) without signing a military contract with the Russian MoD to fight in Ukraine – bypassing the Russian MoD's

requirement since July 1 to have all volunteer formations participating in combat sign military contracts with the Russian MoD.

**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)**

A report from Yale University’s Conflict Observatory supports ISW’s longstanding assessments that Russian and occupation authorities are using forced passportization measures to consolidate social and legal control over occupied areas of Ukraine.[66] The Conflict Observatory’s study concluded that Russian authorities have enacted a series of laws designed to coerce Ukrainian civilians into accepting Russian citizenship under threat of increasing legal penalties, including denying access to social services and medical care and threatening deportation.[67] The Conflict Observatory’s study noted that Russian and occupation authorities still heavily penalize Ukrainian civilians who accept Russian citizenship likely to further consolidate social control and encourage self-censorship in occupied areas.

Russian occupation authorities continue expanding patronage networks with Russian federal subjects to restore infrastructure in occupied areas. The Kherson Oblast occupation administration reported that Krasnodar Krai is spearheading the renovation of a hospital in Henichesk, Kherson Oblast (the occupation administration’s capitol), and the Republic of Adygea is constructing a multicultural center in Henichesk.[68]

Ukrainian Mariupol Mayoral Advisor Petro Andryushchenko reported on August 2 that Ukrainian partisans poisoned 17 Russian officers in occupied Mariupol, killing two.[69] Andryushchenko noted that the condition of the other 15 officers is unknown. The Donetsk People’s Republic (DNR) and other Russian sources denied reports of the poisoning on August 3, however.[70]

**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).**

**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.**

The Wagner Group may be expanding its footprint in Belarus. A prominent Wagner-linked source reported on August 3 that the Wagner Group raised a new Wagner flag at an unspecified Belarusian military location – possibly an existing base or training ground.[71] Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki stated on August 3 that Polish and Lithuanian officials assess that there are about 4,000 Wagner fighters in Belarus as of August 3.[72]

**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/pfbid02E8HFZdKvwpbSD64n8W9DukM8jfQaRo\\_hxs5ggt5obNmZdTFRN9eFhnbuDvHtXfJsLl](https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02E8HFZdKvwpbSD64n8W9DukM8jfQaRo_hxs5ggt5obNmZdTFRN9eFhnbuDvHtXfJsLl) ;  
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0242az9V3WG4TcB7nqqXMfx6xLJmyS8YaPkhUUm3nSY1fGhzm7sk1bwH1Bt2Yp1sSDl> ; <https://t.me/osirskiy/248> ; <https://armyinform.com.ua/2023/08/03/na-pivdennomu-flanzi-poblyzu-bahmuta-nashi-vijska-prodovzhuyut-prosuvatysya-sergij-cherevatyj/>

[2] <https://armyinform.com.ua/2023/08/03/mykola-urshalovych-artyleriya-ngu-vykonala-ponad-500-vognevyyh-zavdan-zdobuto-vorozhi-trofeyi/>

[3] <https://t.me/wargonzo/14171>

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