

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, August 8, 2023

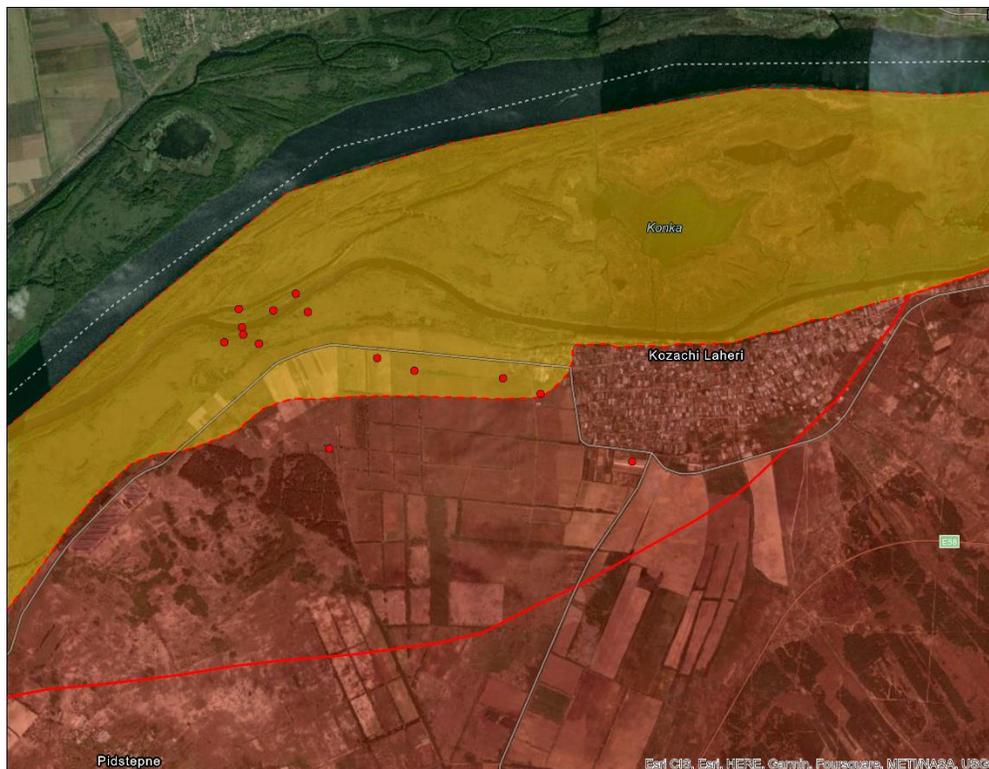
Karolina Hird, Angelica Evans, Nicole Wolkov, Christina Harward, and Frederick W. Kagan
August 8, 2023, 5:30pm ET

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 12:00pm ET on August 8. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the August 9 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Ukrainian forces appear to have conducted a limited raid across the Dnipro River and landed on the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast, although it remains unclear whether Ukrainian troops have established an enduring presence on the east bank. Several Russian milbloggers reported on August 8 that Ukrainian forces landed up to seven boats, each carrying around six to seven people, on the east bank of the Dnipro near the settlement of Kozachi Laheri, broke through Russian defensive lines, and advanced up to 800 meters deep.[1] A Russian milblogger noted that the Russian command recently redeployed a "prepared grouping" of Russian airborne (VDV) personnel from the Kozachi Lopan area to Zaporizhia Oblast and replaced them with mobilized fighters from an unspecified unit, thereby weakening Russian defensive power in this area.[2] Kherson Oblast occupation head Vladimir Saldo downplayed reports of the Ukrainian landing and claimed that Russian artillery fire repelled the Ukrainian boats and that there are no Ukrainian troops near Kozachi Lopan.[3] However, the majority of prominent Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces managed to utilize tactical surprise and land on the east bank before engaging Russian forces in small arms exchanges, and Saldo was likely purposefully trying to refute claims of Ukrainian presence in this area to avoid creating panic in the already-delicate Russian information space.[4] Hotspots on available NASA Fire Information for Resource Management System (FIRMS) data from the past 24 hours in this area appear to confirm that there was significant combat, likely preceded or accompanied by artillery fire. By the end of the day on August 8, many Russian sources had updated their claims to report that Russian forces retain control over Kozachi Laheri, having pushed Ukrainian forces back to the shoreline, and that small arms skirmishes are occurring in shoreline areas near Kozachi Laheri and other east bank settlements.[5]



[Source: NASA's Fire Information for Resource Management System over Kherson, August 8 and Esri, Maxar, Earthstar Geographics, and the GIS User Community; overlaid on ISW's August 8 control-of-terrain map]

ISW will continue to offer a conservative assessment of the situation on the east bank of Kherson Oblast until or unless ISW observes visual confirmation of an enduring Ukrainian presence near Kozachi Lopan or other east bank settlements. ISW has not yet observed visual evidence to suggest that there are a substantial number of Ukrainian personnel or the deployment of Ukrainian vehicles near Kozachi Laheri, and the current pattern of Russian reporting is more consistent with a limited cross-river raid than a wider Ukrainian operation. Ukrainian officials have not commented on operations in this area as of this writing.

Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations on at least two sectors of the front on August 8. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces conducted offensive operations in the Berdyansk (western Donetsk–eastern Zaporizhia Oblast area) and Melitopol (western Zaporizhia Oblast) directions.[6] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) and other Russian sources claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks around Bakhmut.[7] *The New York Times* reported on August 7 that a Ukrainian battalion commander operating in southern Ukraine described counteroffensive operations as a “marathon” and “not a sprint.”[8]

Talks between Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and Chinese Communist Party Director of the Office of the Central Commission for Foreign Affairs Wang Yi following China’s participation in the peace talks in Saudi Arabia suggest that China is increasingly diverging with Russia on proposed settlements to end the war. The Russian and Chinese foreign ministries portrayed the conversation between Lavrov and Wang differently. The Russian Foreign Ministry reported that Lavrov and Wang “touched on a series of ‘hot’ regional topics including the Ukrainian crisis,” while the Chinese Foreign Ministry reported that the Russian and Chinese sides “exchanged views” about the war.[9] The Chinese Foreign Ministry’s description of the talks may suggest that the Kremlin is becoming dissatisfied with China’s continued efforts to promote its peace plan in international fora, which is consistent with ISW’s previous assessments that China is not interested in a “no-limits partnership” with Russia as the Kremlin desires.

Wagner Group financier Yevgeny Prigozhin is using the recent coup in Niger and Wagner’s continued presence in Africa to maintain relevance in the Russian information space. Several Wagner-affiliated Russian milbloggers and another milblogger posted an audio file on August 8 of Prigozhin discussing US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland’s trip to Niger on August 7.[10] Prigozhin claimed that he is proud of Wagner’s actions in Africa and suggested that the threat of future Wagner involvement in Niger prompted Nuland’s trip.[11] Prigozhin is likely attempting to co-opt Nuland’s trip to Niger to grandstand on one of the few threats he still has the power to execute after realizing that the fallout of Wagner’s armed rebellion on June 24 is making him increasingly irrelevant in the Russian information space.

Key Takeaways:

- **Ukrainian forces appear to have conducted a limited raid across the Dnipro River and landed on the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast, although it remains unclear whether Ukrainian troops have established an enduring presence on the east bank.**
- **ISW will continue to offer a conservative assessment of the situation on the east bank of Kherson Oblast until or unless ISW observes visual confirmation of an enduring Ukrainian presence near Kozachi Lopan or other east bank settlements.**
- **Talks between Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and Chinese Communist Party Director of the Office of the Central Commission for Foreign Affairs Wang Yi following China’s participation in the peace talks in Saudi Arabia suggest that China is increasingly diverging with Russia on proposed settlements to end the war.**
- **Wagner Group financier Yevgeny Prigozhin is using the recent coup in Niger and Wagner’s continued presence in Africa to maintain relevance in the Russian information space.**
- **Russian forces conducted offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kremynna line, near Bakhmut, along the Avdiivka–Donetsk City line, in the eastern Donetsk-western Zaporizhia Oblast border area, and in western Donetsk Oblast on August 8 and made advances in certain areas.**
- **Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations on at least two sectors of the front on August 8 and made advances near Svatove.**
- **Russia continues to draw from its stock of Soviet-era equipment to compensate for equipment losses in Ukraine.**
- **Russian occupation authorities are preparing for regional elections in occupied areas.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of August 8, 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.

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 near Kupyansk and reportedly advanced on August 8. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Synkivka (8km northeast of Kupyansk) and north of Ivanivka (20km east of Kupyansk).[12] Multiple Russian sources, including the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD), claimed that elements of the 6th Combined Arms Army (Western Military District), Vilshana (15km northeast of Kupyansk), and a Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces took positions on the landings south of Vilshana and Pervomaiske (24km east of Kupyansk).[13] Russian sources claimed that Russian assault groups pushed Ukrainian forces past Lyman Pershyi (12km northeast of Kupyansk) and out of positions along the Lyman Pershyi-Pervomaiske line.[14] A Russian milblogger also claimed that Russian forces attempted to break through Ukrainian defenses east and northeast of Kupyansk.[15] Russian sources claimed that the goal of Russian offensive operations in the Kupyansk direction is to draw Ukrainian forces from other sectors of the front to the Kupyansk area and suggested that the wider operational goal is to distract Ukrainian troops as opposed to gaining substantial territory.[16] Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Malyar reported that Russian forces have suffered heavy losses in the Kupyansk direction over the last week.[17]

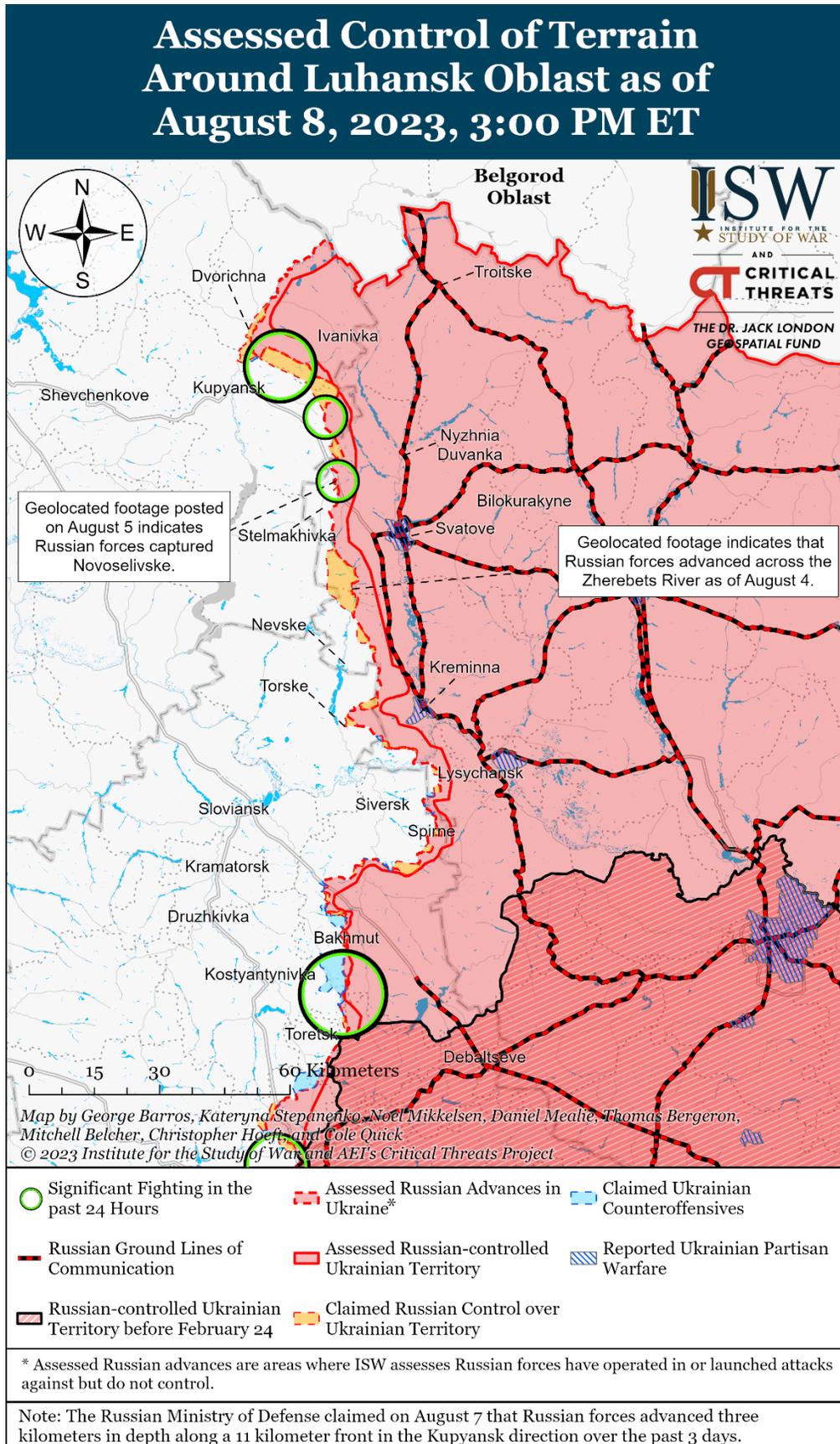
Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations near Kupyansk but did not advance on August 8. The Russian MoD claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks near Synkivka.[18] Russian Western Grouping of Forces Spokesperson Sergey Zybinsky claimed that Ukrainian forces are trying to regain lost positions in the Kupyansk direction and that Ukrainian forces conducted five unsuccessful counterattacks against Russian forces near Synkivka, Mankivka (17km east of Kupyansk), and the Usa forest (likely between Synkivka and Lyman Pershyi).[19]

Russian forces conducted offensive operations along the Svatove-Kreminna line and did not advance on August 8. The Ukrainian General Staff and Ukrainian Luhansk Oblast Head Artem Lysohor reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked Ukrainian forces south of Novoselivske (14km northwest of Svatove).[20] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces have begun consolidating positions in Novoselivske.[21] The milblogger also claimed that Russian forces attacked near Bilohorivka (12km south of Kreminna) and Torske (14km west of Kreminna), but did not specify an outcome.[22] Another Russian milblogger claimed that a TOS-1A thermobaric artillery crew from the Russian 1st Guards Tank Army (Western Military District) is conducting offensive operations near Stelmakhivka.[23]

Ukrainian forces conducted offensive operations along the Svatove-Kreminna line and reportedly made limited advances on August 8. A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces advanced towards Karmazynivka (13km southwest of Svatove) but that Russian forces still control the heights near the settlement.[24] Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked Russian forces near the Raihorodka-Karmazynivka line.[25] The Russian MoD claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked Russian forces near Novoselivske, Novoyehorivka (15km southwest of Svatove), Zhytlivka (2km northwest of Kreminna), and Terny (16km west of Kreminna).[26] Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked near the Serebrianske forest area (10km southwest of Kreminna), Torske, and Yampolivka (17km west of Kreminna).[27]

A Ukrainian reserve officer who has previously reported accurately on Russian force dispositions reported on August 8 that according to satellite imagery, Russian authorities have recently based 12 to 16 Russian helicopters at the Luhansk International Airport.[28] The officer reported that these helicopters are outside the range of Ukrainian HIMARS and man-

portable air defense systems (MANPADs).[29] The officer asserted that the disabling of the helicopters would compel Russian forces to vacate the airport, which would slow Russian logistics and response times.[30]

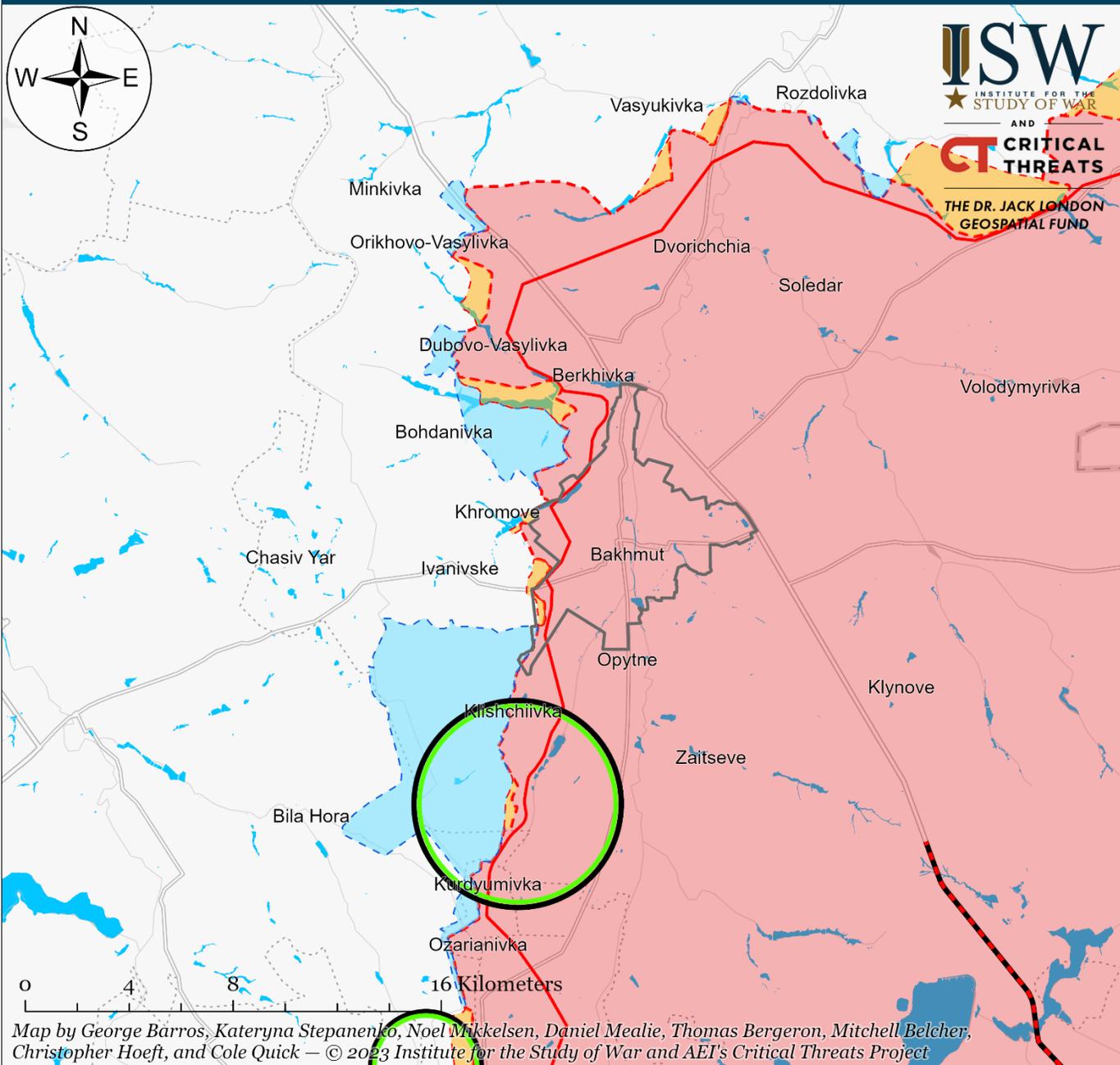


Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Donetsk Oblast (Russian Objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)

Ukrainian forces reportedly conducted offensive operations near Bakhmut on August 8, but did not make any confirmed or claimed advances. The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that elements of the Southern Grouping of Forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Bakhmut, Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut), and Zaitseve (20km south of Bakhmut).[31] Russian milbloggers claimed that elements of the 72nd Motorized Rifle Brigade (3rd Army Corps) repelled Ukrainian attacks near Andriivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut), that Chechen “Akhmat” spetsnaz and other Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Klishchiivka, and that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Berkhivka (6km northwest of Bakhmut).[32] A Russian milblogger claimed on August 7 that elements of the 200th Motorized Rifle Brigade (14th Army Corps, Northern Fleet) repelled a Ukrainian attack near Berkhivka.[33]

Russian forces conducted limited ground attacks near Bakhmut on August 8 and made claimed advances. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces counterattacked near Klishchiivka and pushed Ukrainian forces out of several unspecified positions.[34] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Klishchiivka is fully under Russian control.[35] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful operations near Klishchiivka, Andriivka, Kurdyumivka (12km southwest of Bakhmut), and Druzhba (18km southwest of Bakhmut).[36]

Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of August 8, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



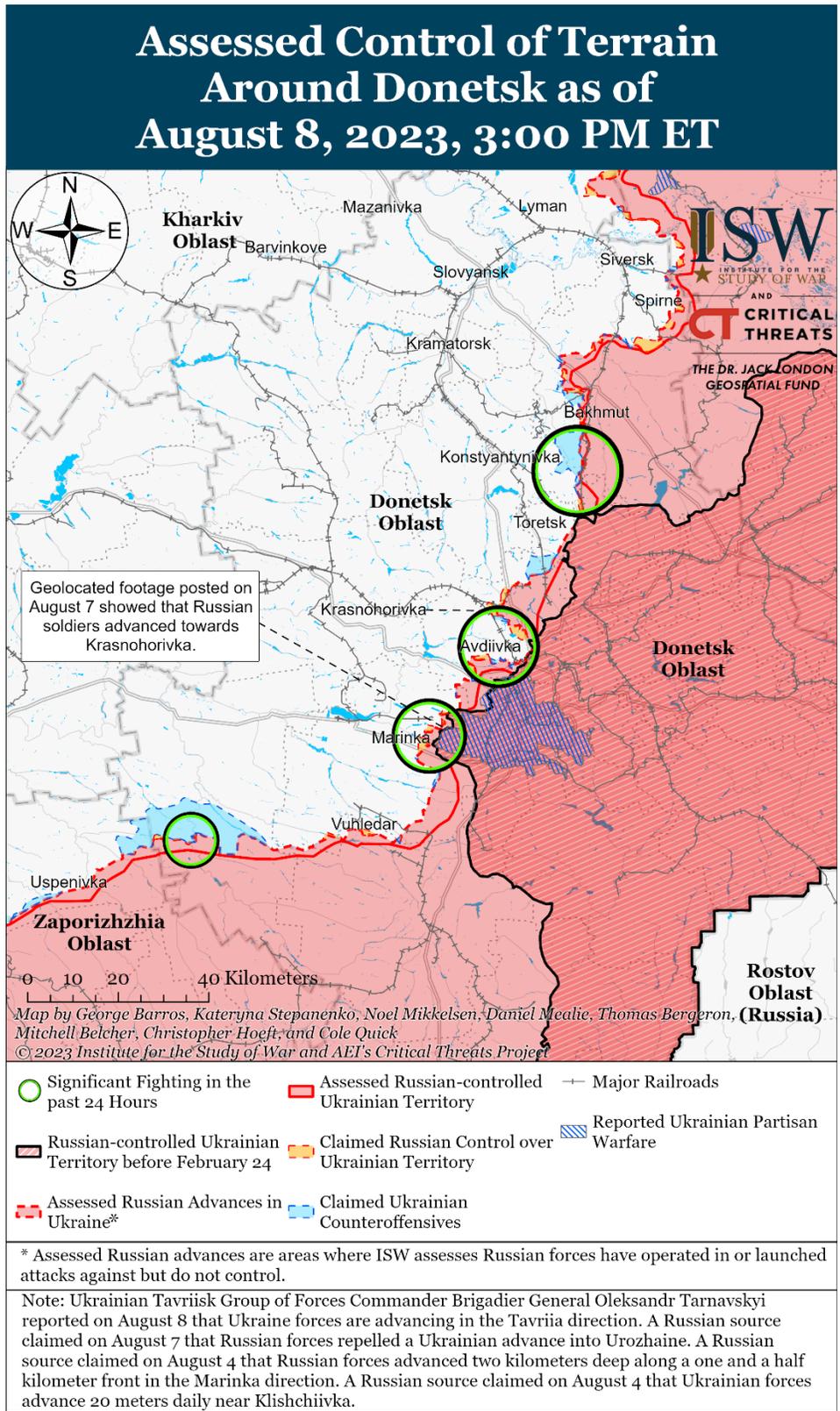
Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Christopher Hoeft, and Cole Quick – © 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

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|---------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| 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: A Russian source claimed on August 4 that Ukrainian forces advance 20 meters daily near Klishchivka.

Russian forces conducted limited ground attacks along the Avdiivka–Donetsk City line on August 8 and made limited advances. Geolocated footage published on August 7 shows that Russian forces made limited advances near Krasnohorivka (on the western outskirts of Donetsk City).[37] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks near Avdiivka, Sieverne (6km west of Avdiivka), and Marinka.[38] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked Krasnohorivka.[39] Footage published on August 8 purportedly shows artillery units of the 9th Motorized Rifle Brigade (1st Donetsk People’s Republic Army Corps) operating in the Avdiivka direction.[40]



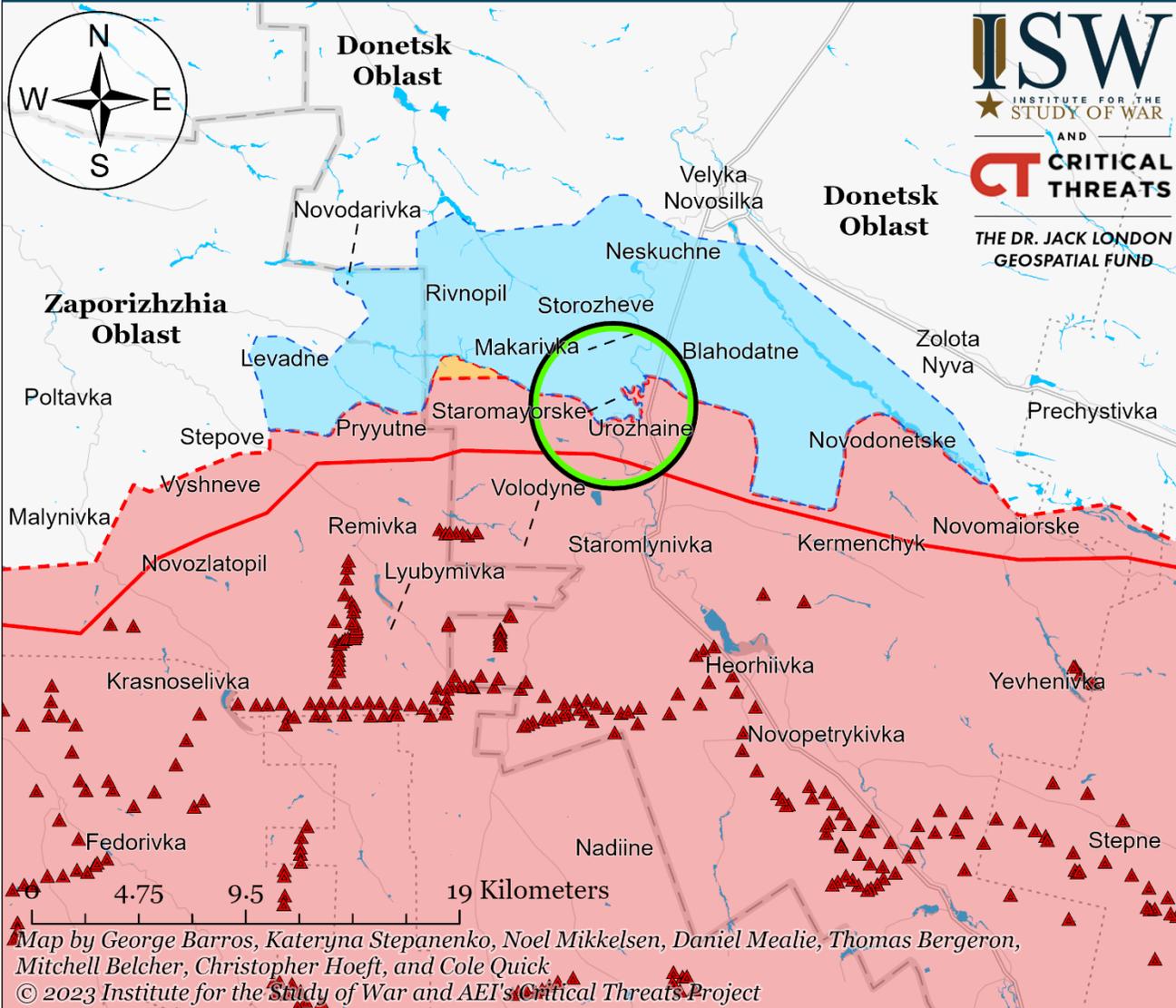
Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions and secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes)

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted limited ground attacks in western Donetsk Oblast on August 8 and did not advance. The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that elements of the Russian Eastern Grouping of Forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Mykilske (27km southwest of Donetsk City near Vuhledar).[41]

Ukrainian forces continued ground attacks along the western Donetsk-eastern Zaporizhia Oblast border area on August 8 and did not make any claimed or confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Berdyansk direction.[42] The Russian MoD and Russian Eastern Grouping of Forces Spokesperson Oleg Chekhov claimed that elements of the Russian Eastern Grouping of Forces repelled several Ukrainian attacks near Urozhaine (9km south of Velyka Novosilka).[43] Several Russian sources, including “Vostok” Battalion Commander Alexander Khodakovsky who is reportedly defending in the area, claimed that Ukrainian forces crossed the Mokri Yali River and unsuccessfully attacked the northern outskirts of Urozhaine on the morning of August 8.[44]

Russian forces conducted a limited ground attack along the eastern Donetsk–western Zaporizhia Oblast border area on August 8 and did not advance. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful offensive operations near Staromayorskse (9km south of Velyka Novosilka).[45]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around the Vremivka Salient as of August 8, 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
- 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.

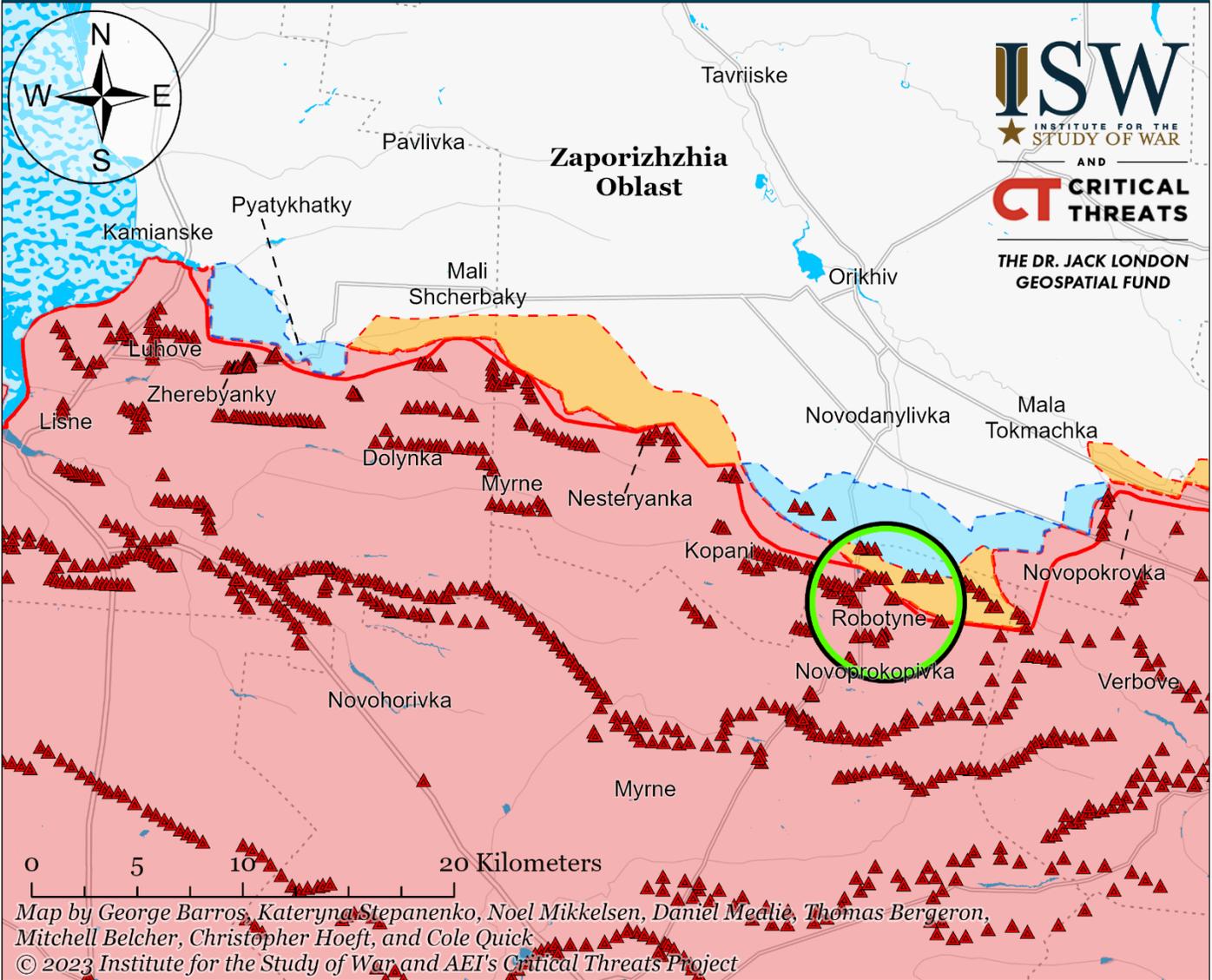
Note: Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces Commander Brigadier General Oleksandr Tarnavskiy reported on August 8 that Ukraine forces are advancing in the Tavriia direction. A Russian source claimed on August 7 that Russian forces repelled a Ukrainian advance into Urozhaine.

Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast on August 8 and did not make any claimed or confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Melitopol direction.[46] A Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed that Russian forces repelled a Ukrainian infantry attack along the Robotyne-Verbove line (up to 18km southeast of Orikhiv) on the night of August 7–8.[47] Several Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces with armored vehicles and tank support unsuccessfully attacked Russian positions on the northern outskirts of Robotyne (12km south of Orikhiv) on the morning of August 8.[48] The Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces managed to occupy the northern outskirts of the settlement in the morning but that Russian forces pushed Ukrainian forces out of those positions later in the day.[49]

Russian forces continued offensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast on August 8 and did not advance. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful offensive operations near Robotyne.[50]

Russian sources made conflicting claims regarding fighting to the southeast of Orikhiv but maintained a cohesive narrative regarding the situation to the southwest of Orikhiv on August 8. A Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed that there are positional battles near Bilohirya (16km southeast of Orikhiv), but another Russian milblogger directly contradicted this claim and claimed that there is no confirmation of fighting near Bilohirya.[51] A Russian milblogger who is reportedly defending in the area claimed that the situation is stable and calm near Pyatykhatky (25km southwest of Orikhiv) and Zherebyanky (26km southwest of Orikhiv).[52]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Pyatykhatky and Robotyne as of August 8, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

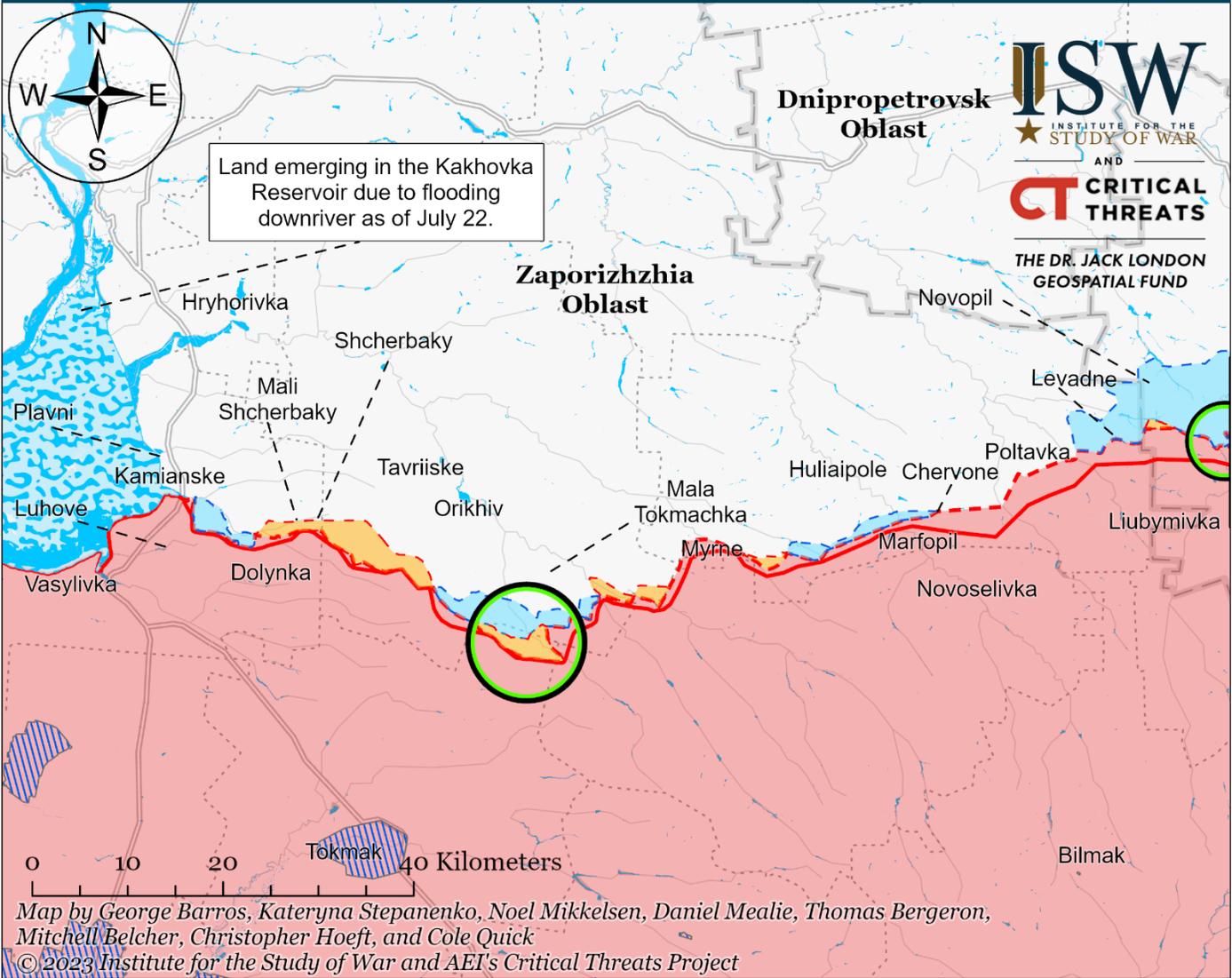


- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Emerging land in the Kakhovka Reservoir
- Assessed Russian 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: Multiple Russian sources claimed on August 7 that Russian forces pushed Ukrainian forces back 1.5 kilometers northeast of Robotyne.

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhia as of August 8, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

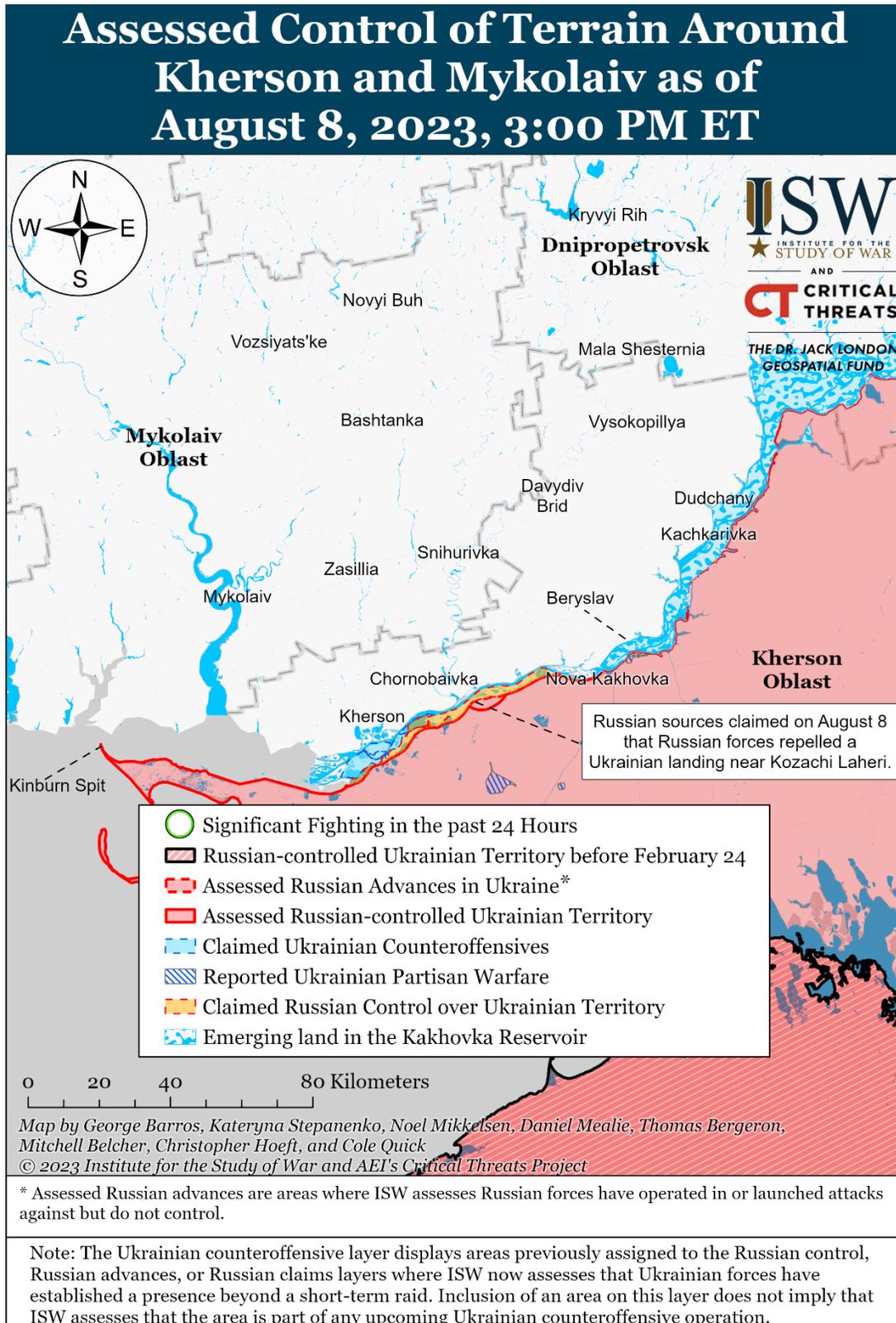


-  Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
-  Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
-  Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
-  Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
-  Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
-  Emerging land in the Kakhovka Reservoir
-  Assessed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

Note: Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces Commander Brigadier General Oleksandr Tarnavskiy reported on August 8 that Ukraine forces are advancing in the Tavriia direction. Multiple Russian sources claimed on August 7 that Russian forces pushed Ukrainian forces back 1.5 kilometers northeast of Robotyne.

Russian and Ukrainian forces continued routine artillery fire in Kherson Oblast on August 8. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces struck settlements along the west (right) bank of Kherson Oblast, including Kherson City.[53] Ukrainian Southern Operational Command Spokesperson Captain First Rank Nataliya Humenyuk reported that Ukrainian forces destroyed two Russian sabotage groups attempting to maneuver between unspecified islands in Kherson Oblast on boats.[54] A Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces continue to use artillery fire on the (east) left bank on the Dnipro River to cover the actions of Ukrainian reconnaissance boats.[55]



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

Russia continues to draw from its stock of Soviet-era equipment to compensate for equipment losses in Ukraine. Russian opposition outlet *The Moscow Times* reported on August 7 that Russian forces have removed around 40 percent of old Soviet tanks, mainly T-62 tanks produced between 1962 and 1975, from the Vagzhanov military storage base near Ulan-Ude, Republic of Buryatia.[56] *The Moscow Times*, citing satellite imagery, noted that there were 3,840 armored vehicles visible at Vagzhanov as of September 2021 and that the number dropped to 2,270 by May 2023.[57] Satellite imagery additionally revealed that Russian forces removed 32 percent of the visible armored vehicles from Vagzhanov following the declaration of partial mobilization in September 2022.[58] The Eastern Military District's 36th Combined Arms Army (CAA) is based in Ulan-Ude, and the 36th CAA has been fighting in western Donetsk Oblast and near the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border in 2023.[59] Ulan-Ude's 5th Guards Tank Brigade in particular suffered major personnel and equipment, including tank losses, during failed assaults on Vuhledar, western Donetsk Oblast, in February 2023.[60]

Chechen authorities appear to be sending the families of prominent Chechen opposition activists to fight in Ukraine as a means of punishment. Chechen human rights activist and former lawyer for Russian opposition group "Committee Against Torture" Abubakar Yangulbaev reported on August 7 that several of his relatives are now fighting with Chechen forces in Donetsk Oblast after they were forcibly mobilized by Chechen authorities.[61] Yangulbaev noted that footage posted by Chechen Republic Head Ramzan Kadyrov on August 6 shows his relatives being sent to the combat zone in Ukraine.[62]

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 occupation authorities continue to deport Ukrainian children to Russia under the guise of rehabilitation schemes. A Telegram channel affiliated with the Kherson Oblast occupation administration reported on August 7 that 40 children from the Skadovsk raion of Kherson Oblast are undergoing a 21-day long "rehabilitation course" at the Raduga social rehabilitation center in Nalchik, Kabardino-Balkarian Republic.[63] Even if the children return to Kherson Oblast following the trip, the circumstances of their removal from an active war zone were likely sufficiently coercive to mean that they or their guardians could not have given full consent.

Russian occupation authorities are preparing for regional elections in occupied areas. Kherson Oblast occupation election board head Marina Zakharova claimed in an interview with Russian outlet *Izvestia* on August 7 that she expects voter turnout in occupied Kherson to exceed 60 percent and that current voter lists list about 600,000 preliminary voters.[64] Zakharova also emphasized that the Kherson occupation administration is working closely with Rosgvardia (Russian National Guard), the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB), and Ministry of Internal Affairs to provide security to polling stations.[65] Russian occupation officials will likely escalate efforts to consolidate control of occupied areas as the September 10 Russian Unified Election Day approaches, likely including law enforcement crackdowns to instill fear and coerce residents of occupied areas to vote in sham 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)

A Russian insider source claimed that Wagner forces are withdrawing from Belarus and are either deploying to Libya or going on vacation to Russia.[66] The source claimed that the first stage of Wagner's withdrawal from Belarus is complete and that the second wave will begin in mid-August.[67] The source claimed that Wagner personnel are not planning on returning to Belarus.[68] ISW has observed and reported on satellite imagery and other visual evidence of Wagner personnel in Belarus and has not observed evidence of a withdrawal.[69]

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://t.me/Separ13_13/17343; <https://t.me/osetin20/6909>; https://t.me/SALDO_VGA/1059; https://t.me/romanov_92/41082; https://t.me/romanov_92/41080; https://t.me/dva_majors/23145; https://t.me/dva_majors/23148; https://t.me/dva_majors/23149 <https://t.me/batalyon15/2545>

[2] https://t.me/romanov_92/41080; https://t.me/romanov_92/41081

[3] https://t.me/SALDO_VGA/1059 ; <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/50884>

[4] https://t.me/Separ13_13/17343; <https://t.me/osetin20/6909>; https://t.me/SALDO_VGA/1059; https://t.me/romanov_92/41082 ; https://t.me/romanov_92/41080; https://t.me/dva_majors/23145; https://t.me/dva_majors/23148; https://t.me/dva_majors/23149 <https://t.me/batalyon15/2545>

[5] https://t.me/dva_majors/23186; <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/50904>

[6] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoLnzqb9DkcYMUG6uzSZkyMX3uHHtUZAavu54jwneTNpT acATqtWnUnDPvd5BZ8acCl>;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoHBkWhbWU1vJxMdXkEuCnU4vNfuEpnJTdZW2KD17nRxjugq78SKMzPJCz4dkPJczMl>

[7] https://t.me/mod_russia/29062; https://t.me/boris_rozhin/94312; <https://t.me/batalyon15/2546>;
https://t.me/dva_majors/23132; <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/50893>

[8] <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/08/07/world/europe/ukraine-marines-counteroffensive.html#:~:text=Ukraine's%20Marines%20Insist.-,It's%20a%20Marathon.',front%20line.Credit>

[9] https://mid dot ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1899912/; https://www.fmprc.gov dot cn/wjzbhd/202308/t20230807_11123381.shtml

[10] https://t.me/negumanitarnaya_pomosch_Z/9453 ; https://t.me/prigozhin_2023_tg/2717 ; https://t.me/grey_zone/19926

[11] https://t.me/negumanitarnaya_pomosch_Z/9453 ; https://t.me/prigozhin_2023_tg/2717 ; https://t.me/grey_zone/19926

[12] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoLnzqb9DkcYMUG6uzSZkyMX3uHHtUZAavu54jwneTNpT acATqtWnUnDPvd5BZ8acCl>

[13] https://t.me/mod_russia/29062 ; https://t.me/smotri_z/18377; <https://t.me/sashakots/41527> ; https://t.me/notes_veterans/11387 ; https://t.me/notes_veterans/11386 ; <https://t.me/rybar/50528>

[14] <https://t.me/rybar/50528> ; https://t.me/romanov_92/41099 ; https://t.me/dva_majors/23164

[15] <https://t.me/wargonzo/14238>

[16] <https://t.me/politadequate/7808> ; https://t.me/boris_rozhin/94311

[17] <https://armyinform.com dot ua/2023/08/07/rosijsku-vladu-ne-lyakayut-yihni-lyudski-vtraty-ganna-malyar/>

[18] https://t.me/mod_russia/29062

[19] https://t.me/mod_russia/29057

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[21] <https://t.me/wargonzo/14238>

[22] <https://t.me/wargonzo/14238>

[23] https://t.me/boris_rozhin/94287

[24] <https://t.me/wargonzo/14238>

[25] <https://t.me/RVvoenkorf/50850> ; <https://t.me/btr80/9508>

[26] https://t.me/mod_russia/29062

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[28] <https://twitter.com/Tatarigami-UA/status/1688846219156598784?s=20>; <https://twitter.com/Tatarigami-UA/status/1688846220624646144?s=20>; <https://twitter.com/Tatarigami-UA/status/1688846222482706432?s=20>; <https://twitter.com/Tatarigami-UA/status/1688846224277884928?s=20>; <https://twitter.com/Tatarigami-UA/status/1688846225682956288?s=20>; <https://twitter.com/Tatarigami-UA/status/1688846228069502976?s=20>; <https://twitter.com/Tatarigami-UA/status/1688846229273223169?s=20>

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[32] https://t.me/boris_rozhin/94312; <https://t.me/batalyon15/2546>; https://t.me/dva_majors/23132; <https://t.me/RVvoenkorf/50893>

[33] <https://t.me/RVvoenkorf/50856>

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[35] <https://t.me/batalyon15/2545>

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[40] <https://t.me/RVvoenkorf/50885>

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[49] <https://t.me/rybar/50516>

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