

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, February 14, 2023

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February 14, 8:15 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.

US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin signaled on February 14 that the Ukraine Defense Contact Group's 54 member states will continue to support Ukraine in the long run. Austin stated that the Ukraine Defense Contact Group (a coalition of 54 states supporting Ukraine's defense) will "support Ukraine's fight for freedom over the long haul" and will support Ukraine during a spring counteroffensive.¹ The *Washington Post* reported on February 13 that the Biden administration will announce a new aid package for Ukraine "in the next week."²

The *Washington Post* reported that US officials have privately signaled to Ukraine that Western security aid to Ukraine is finite, however. The *Washington Post* reported on February 13 that an anonymous US government official stated that US government officials are trying to "impress upon [Ukrainian officials] that [the US Government] can't do anything and everything forever."³ The *Washington Post* also reported that US officials stated that recent Western aid packages for Ukraine "represent Kyiv's best chance to decisively change the course of the war."⁴

Western reporting indicates that there continue to be Western concerns about Ukraine's determination to hold Bakhmut. The *Washington Post* also reported that US defense planners assess that Ukrainian forces are unable to simultaneously defend Bakhmut and launch a spring counteroffensive and have urged Ukraine to prioritize the spring counteroffensive over defending Bakhmut.⁵ ISW continues to assess that Ukraine's decision to defend Bakhmut is likely a strategically sound effort despite its costs for Ukraine.⁶ Ukraine's defense of Bakhmut has forced the Kremlin to expend much of the Wagner Group as a force and commit high-value Russian airborne forces to sustain attritional advances.⁷ Ukrainian defense of Bakhmut has degraded significant Russian forces and will likely set favorable conditions for a future Ukrainian counteroffensive. Had Russian troops taken Bakhmut without significant Ukrainian resistance they could have hoped to expand operations in ways that could have forced Ukraine to construct hasty defensive positions in less favorable terrain. Therefore, Ukraine's defense of Bakhmut and undertaking an effort to set conditions for a counteroffensive are likely complementary, not mutually exclusive, activities considering that Russian forces would have continued their offensive beyond Bakhmut had Ukraine yielded the city earlier.

The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) is reportedly recruiting convicts and mimicking the Wagner Group's treatment of convicts as cannon fodder. *CNN* reported that the Russian MoD had been directly recruiting prisoners who deployed to Soledar, Donetsk Oblast, into formations of the Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) 2nd Army Corps in October 2022.⁸ Convicts complained to *CNN* about gruesome abuses and noted that they suffered heavy casualties after they were ordered to storm Ukrainian defensive positions. *CNN* also obtained a recording from a deceased convict who feared that the Russian MoD would execute him after he survived an assault on Soledar, though this soldier was killed in action days later anyway. These convicts specified that the Russian MoD recruited

them after Wagner Group initially overlooked them, and even accused Russian forces of conducting deliberate friendly fire against the convicts.

The Russian MoD’s decision to recruit prisoners is an indicator that the Kremlin seeks to exploit convicts for future human wave attacks in a similar fashion as the Wagner Group despite convicts’ limited combat effectiveness. Representative of the Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate Andriy Usov stated that Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu and Chief of the Russian General Staff Valery Gerasimov are creating a convict cannon fodder reserve that they could directly control through the MoD’s own private military companies.⁹ Russian MoD’s integration of these convict forces into the LNR formations also may suggest that Russian military commanders are attempting to avoid the restructuring of some of their conventional units to fit underprepared convicts. ISW had previously observed instances of Russian proxy armed formations receiving poor treatment from Russian conventional forces, and the Russian command may have sought to not further disturb unit morale by integrating convicts.¹⁰

The Russian MoD’s recruitment of prisoners in fall 2022 may also coincide with the intensifying criticism from Wagner Group financier Yevgeny Prigozhin. Prigozhin began to publicly attack Russian military commanders in early October, and the Russian MoD’s intervention in his recruitment scheme may have ignited some of these grievances with the conventional Russian military and MoD bureaucracy.¹¹ A representative for the Russian prisoner group *Gulagu.net* also noted that many in Moscow began to fear Prigozhin and his unpredictable and ever-growing large “organized criminal group of mercenaries and killers.”¹² The Kremlin has since been distancing itself from Wagner—both rhetorically and by likely depriving Prigozhin of the ability to recruit and train convicts. The Ukrainian General Staff, for example, reported that Russian MoD began to use the Kadamovsky Training Ground in Rostov Oblast to train mobilized and volunteer personnel for a few weeks, while Wagner had not been able to train at the training ground since the beginning of 2023.¹³

Key Takeaways

- **US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin signaled on February 14 that the Ukraine Defense Contact Group’s 54 member states will continue to support Ukraine in the long run. The Washington Post reported that US officials have privately signaled to Ukraine that Western security aid to Ukraine is finite, however.**
- **The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) is reportedly recruiting convicts and mimicking the Wagner Group’s treatment of convicts as cannon fodder.**
- **Russian forces continued offensive actions in the Kupyansk direction and along the Svatove-Kreminna line on February 14.**
- **Russian forces did not conduct any confirmed ground attacks in western Donetsk Oblast or in Kherson, Mykolaiv, or western Zaporizhia oblasts on February 14.**
- **Russian ground forces on the Kola Peninsula in northwestern Russia have been reduced to one-fifth of their initial strength numbers before the invasion of Ukraine, supporting ISW’s longtime assessment that the Kremlin is not concerned about a NATO conventional military threat against Russia.**
- **A Ukrainian and Tatar partisan group reportedly conducted an improvised explosive device (IED) attack on a car carrying two Russian military personnel and two Russian special service representatives in Nova Kakhovka on February 10.**

- **Russian President Vladimir Putin and Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko may meet on February 17.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of February 14, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Will Kielm, and Mitchell Belcher - © 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

* 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 those 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 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 continue offensive operations into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and northern Donetsk Oblast)

ISW continues to assess the current Russian most likely course of action (MLCOA) is an imminent offensive effort in Luhansk Oblast and has therefore adjusted the structure of the daily campaign assessments. We will no longer include the Eastern Kharkiv and Western Luhansk Oblast area as part of Ukrainian counteroffensives and will assess this area as a subordinate part of the Russian main effort in Eastern Ukraine. The assessment of Luhansk Oblast as part of the Russian main effort does not preclude the possibility of continued Ukrainian counteroffensive actions here or anywhere else in theater in the future. ISW will report out on Ukrainian counteroffensive efforts as they occur.

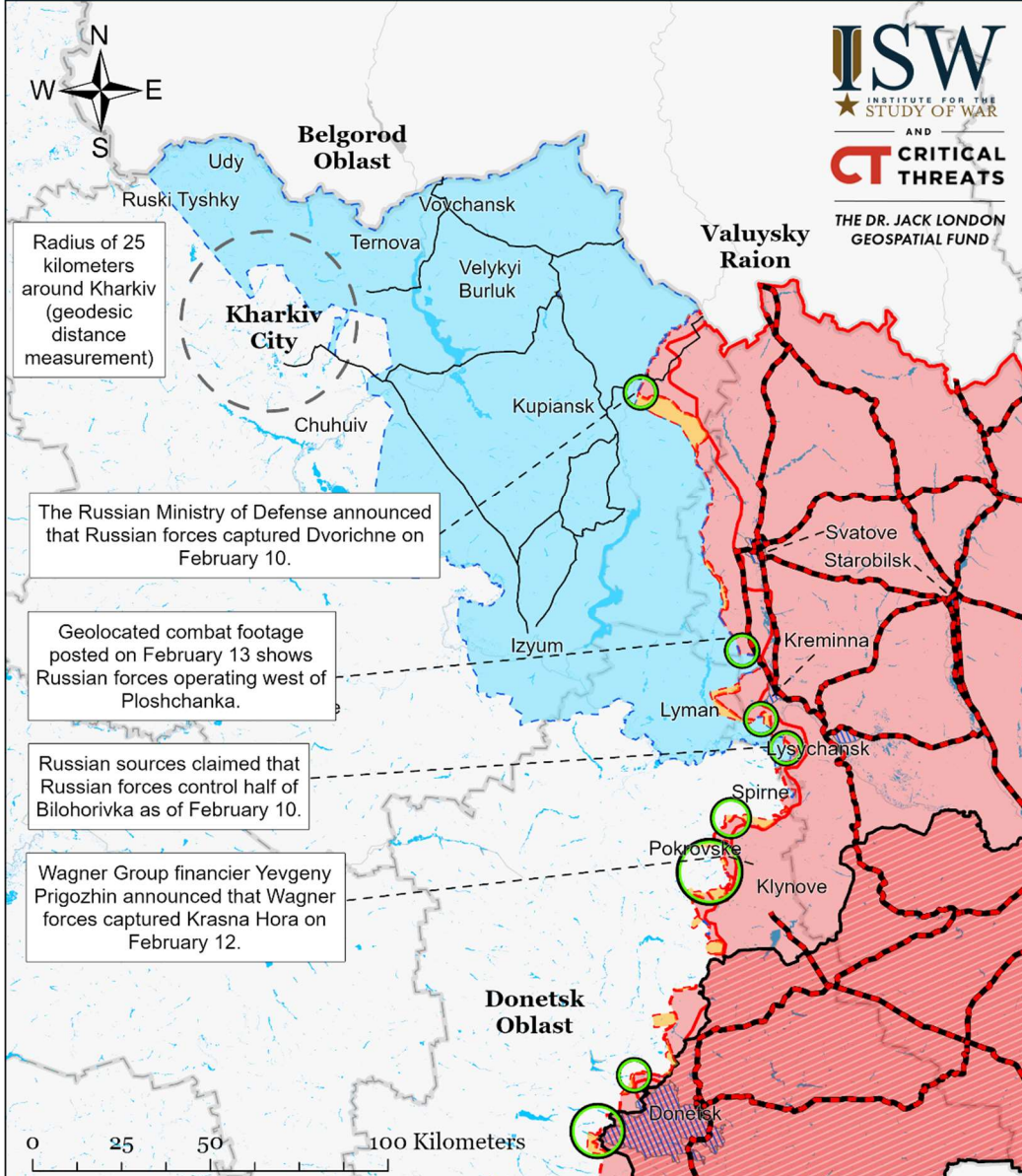
Russian forces continued offensive actions in the Kupyansk direction on February 14. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian troops repelled Russian ground attacks near Hrianykivka, 16km northwest of Kupyansk.¹⁴ Russian milbloggers claimed that fighting intensified on this sector of the front and that Russian forces entered Lyman Pershyi (10km northeast of Kupyansk), advanced around Synkivka (8km northeast of Kupyansk), and launched an offensive effort near Masiutivka (13km northeast of Kupyansk).¹⁵ One Russian source made an unsubstantiated claim that Ukrainian officials are evacuating Kupyansk in anticipation of Russian offensives.¹⁶ Former Russian officer and prominent milblogger Igor Girkin downplayed claims of Russian offensive operations in this area and characterized them as battles of local importance resulting in tactical gains.¹⁷

Russian forces continued offensive actions along the Svatove-Kreminna line on February 14. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian troops repelled Russian ground attacks near Kreminna, Nevske (18km northwest of Kreminna), Kuzmyne (3km southwest of Kreminna), Shpylivka (8km southeast of Kreminna), and Bilohorivka (10km south of Kreminna).¹⁸ Geolocated footage of

Russian tanks operating west of Ploshchanka (15km northwest of Kreminna) shows that Russian forces have made incremental advances in the area northwest of Kreminna.¹⁹ Ukrainian Luhansk Oblast Head Serhiy Haidai noted that mobilized Russian forces are arriving in Luhansk Oblast to replenish losses to frontline units and that Russian forces are constantly probing Ukrainian defenses along the Svatove-Kreminna line.²⁰ Haidai warned that Ukrainian officials are expecting large-scale Russian offensive attacks in the coming days as Russian forces try to meet Russian President Vladimir Putin's objective of seizing all of Luhansk Oblast.²¹ Ukrainian Eastern Group of Forces spokesperson Colonel Serhii Cherevaty noted that Russian forces carried out a record number of artillery strikes in the Lyman direction west of Kreminna in the last week, likely as Russian forces conduct artillery preparation of the battlefield to support offensive operations.²² The UK Ministry of Defense (UK MOD) assessed that Russian troops may be trying to advance west of the Zherebets River, which roughly runs parallel to the Svatove-Kreminna line.²³ A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian troops attacked along the Dibrova-Zarichne line southwest of Kreminna and are attempting to break through towards Yampolivka and Nevske, 15km west and northwest of Kreminna, respectively.²⁴

Ukrainian forces reportedly conducted a HIMARS strike against a Russian concentration area in Kadiivka (40km west of Luhansk City) on February 13.²⁵

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kharkiv as of February 14, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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Radius of 25 kilometers around Kharkiv (geodesic distance measurement)

The Russian Ministry of Defense announced that Russian forces captured Dvorichne on February 10.

Geolocated combat footage posted on February 13 shows Russian forces operating west of Ploshchanka.

Russian sources claimed that Russian forces control half of Bilohorivka as of February 10.

Wagner Group financier Yevgeny Prigozhin announced that Wagner forces captured Krasna Hora on February 12.

0 25 50 100 Kilometers

Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Will Kiehm, and Mitchell Belcher - © 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AET's Critical Threats Project

- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Key Ukrainian Roads
- Russian Ground Lines of Communication
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Assessed Russian-controlled 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.

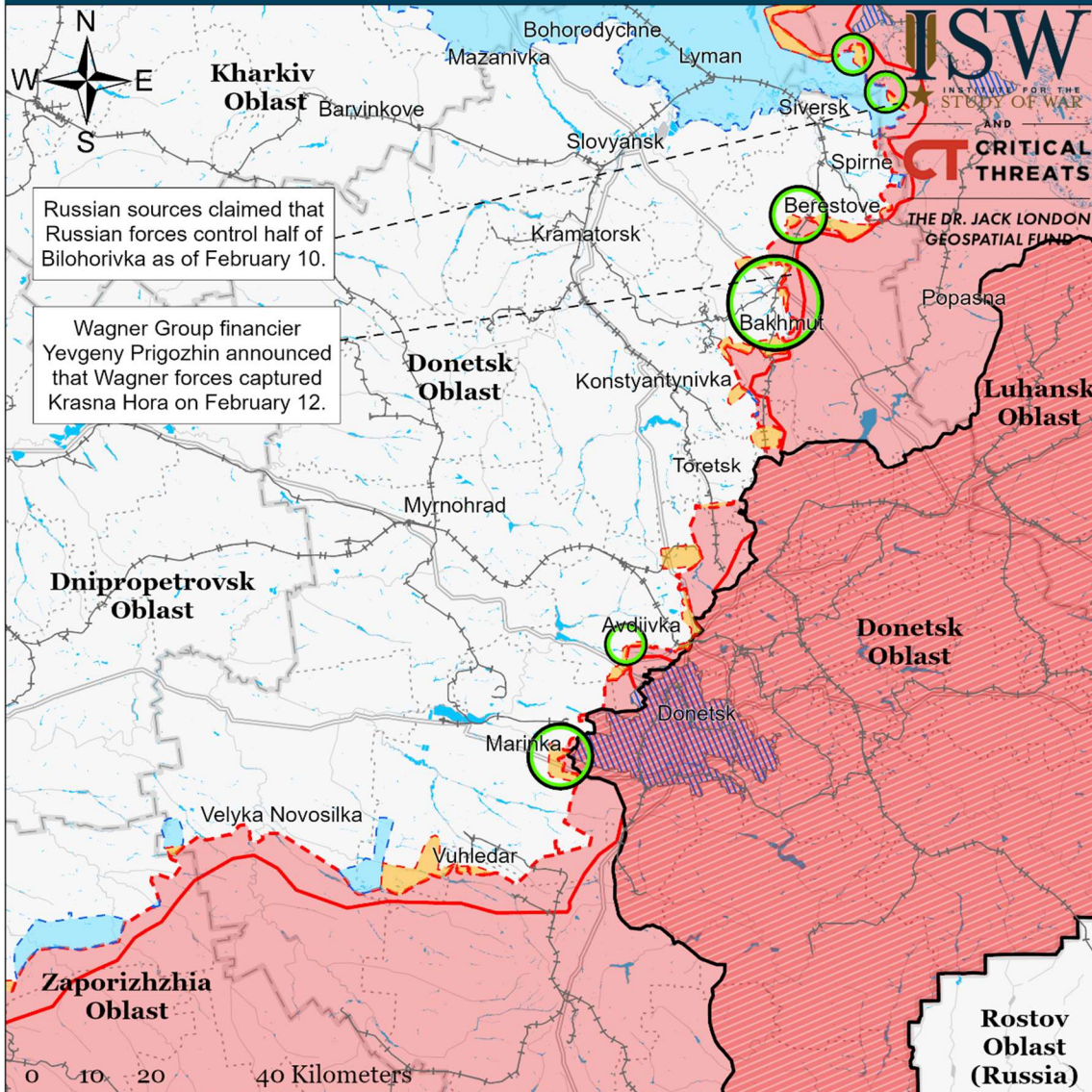
Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2—Donetsk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)

Russian forces continued ground attacks around Bakhmut on February 14. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian troops repelled Russian attacks on Bakhmut itself, north of Bakhmut near Fedorivka (15km northeast), and north of Bakhmut near Paraskoviivka (5km north).²⁶ Ukrainian Eastern Group of Forces spokesperson Colonel Serhii Cherevaty stated that Russian and Ukrainian troops made contact 17 times within Bakhmut on February 13 and denied Wagner Group financier Yevgeny Prigozhin’s claim that Wagner troops captured Krasna Hora (4km north of Bakhmut).²⁷ Prigozhin posted an expletive-filled rant on February 14 in which he emphasized that Wagner is nowhere near completing the encirclement of Bakhmut due to continued Ukrainian defense of the area.²⁸ Russian milbloggers claimed that Wagner forces have cut the E40 Bakhmut-Slovyansk highway and that fighting is ongoing in Paraskoviivka, from where Wagner Group fighters advanced towards Vasyukivka (12km north of Bakhmut).²⁹ Geolocated footage posted on February 13 shows Russian forces have advanced within one-kilometer southeast of Vasyukivka.³⁰ One Russian milblogger remarked that Russian troops are making marginal advances north of Bakhmut near Dubovo-Vasylivka and in southwestern Bakhmut itself.³¹ Russian sources continued to discuss Russian attacks towards settlements southwest of Bakhmut along the T0504 Kostyantynivka-Chasiv Yar-Bakhmut highway, particularly Ivanivske, Chasiv Yar, and Stupochky.³²

Russian forces continued ground attacks along the western outskirts of Donetsk City on February 14. The Ukrainian General Staff stated that Ukrainian troops repelled Russian attacks on the northwestern outskirts of Donetsk City near Vodyane and on the southwestern outskirts near Marinka and Pobieda.³³ A Russian source claimed that Russian forces captured an unspecified Ukrainian position near Novobakhmutivka, about 15km north of Donetsk City.³⁴ The Donetsk People’s Republic (DNR) posted an interview reportedly with soldiers of the DNR 1st Brigade, who are fighting near Vodyane.³⁵ A Russian milblogger claimed that elements of the 381st Artillery Regiment (150th Motor Rifle Division, 8th Combined Arms Army, Southern Military District) are striking targets near Marinka.³⁶ Russian outlet *RT* posted footage of Marinka and claimed that Russian forces control two-thirds of the settlement and are fighting for every remaining building.³⁷

Russian forces did not conduct any confirmed ground attacks in western Donetsk Oblast on February 14. DNR Head Denis Pushilin claimed that there is fierce fighting ongoing southeast of Vuhledar, and a Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces are fighting on the southeastern outskirts of Vuhledar near the Mykilske dacha area, indicating that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian forces from outside the immediate vicinity of Vuhledar.³⁸ Aerial footage posted on February 13 shows that artillery fire has entirely leveled the dacha area southeast of Vuhledar.³⁹

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of February 14, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Russian sources claimed that Russian forces control half of Bilohorivka as of February 10.

Wagner Group financier Yevgeny Prigozhin announced that Wagner forces captured Krasna Hora on February 12.

Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Will Kiern, and Mitchell Belcher - © 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

- 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
- Major Railroads

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

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

Russian forces did not conduct any confirmed offensive operations in Kherson, Mykolaiv, or western Zaporizhia oblasts on February 14. Russian forces continued routine shelling along the southern axis on February 14.⁴⁰

Russian forces are likely prioritizing efforts to increase combat and defense readiness of forces in southern Ukraine while exaggerating the threat of a coming Russian offensive in this direction to distract and disperse Ukrainian forces. Spokesperson for the Ukrainian Southern Defense Forces Nataliya Humenyuk reported on February 14 that Russian forces are preparing for actions in all directions along the southern axis while attempting to create the impression that they are closing in on Ukrainian positions by using sabotage and reconnaissance groups and placing checkpoints, observation posts, and ammunition warehouses on islands on the Dnipro River delta.⁴¹ Humenyuk added that Ukrainian forces are destroying these points. Humenyuk also noted that Russian forces deployed 200 members of the Russian National Guard (Rosgvardia) to Kherson Oblast to restore order among demoralized, dissatisfied Russian units and increase pressure on the local population.⁴² A comparison of satellite imagery from January 21 and February 13 shows that Russian forces have constructed new trenches and barriers along the T2202 highway between Chaplynka, Kherson Oblast, and Armyansk, Crimea.⁴³

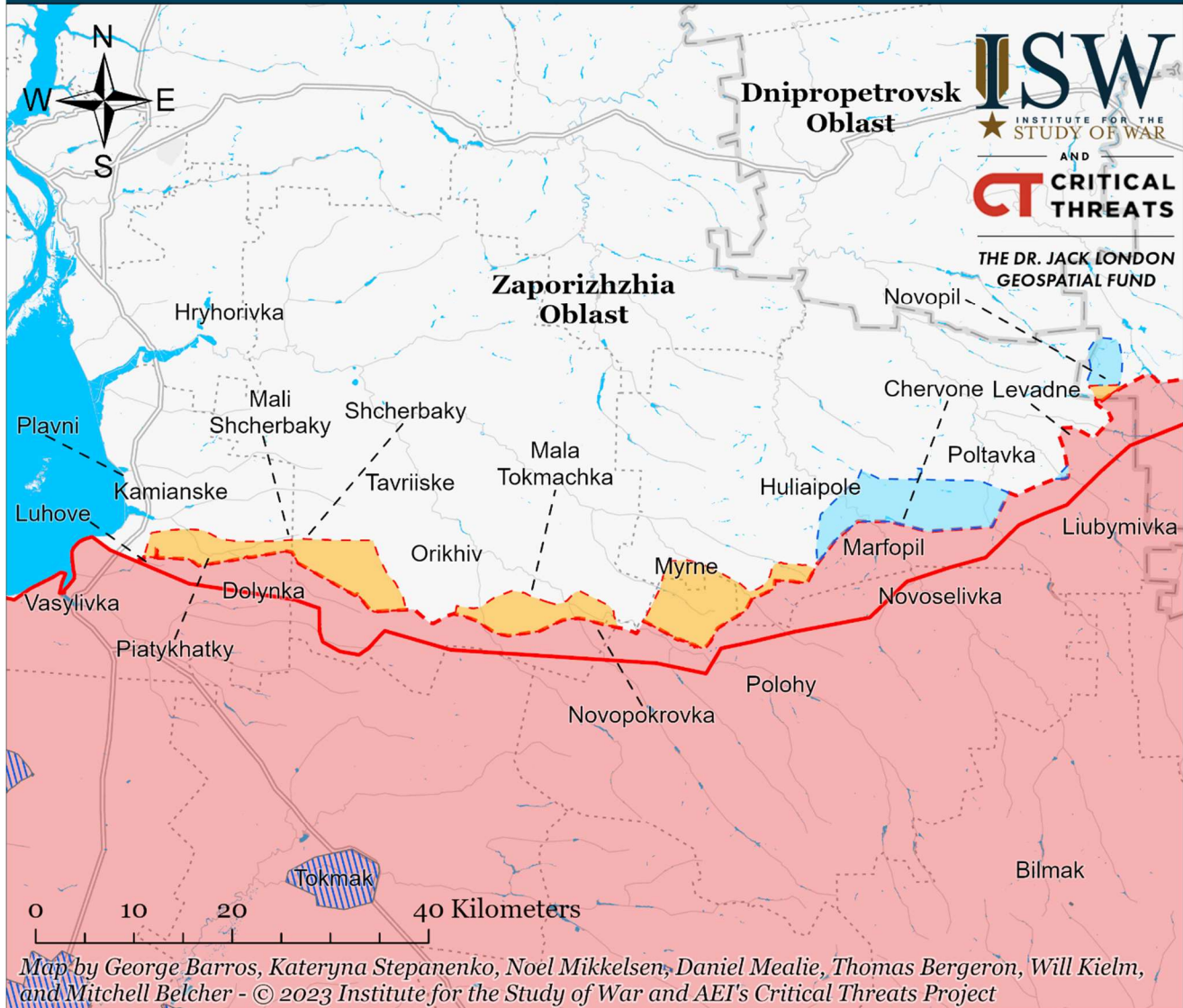
Russian-backed Zaporizhia Oblast occupation administration head Vladimir Rogov on February 14 denied Western reports that Russia may be deliberately lowering Kakhovka Reservoir water levels to create an ecological disaster and shut down Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant's (ZNPP) cooling system.⁴⁴ Rogov accused Ukrainian forces of striking the Nova Kakhovka Dam and causing the water level to fall and then using the situation to discredit Russian management of ZNPP.⁴⁵

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of February 14, 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.

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhzhia as of February 14, 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
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*

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

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

Russian military officials are likely attempting to publicly appear as if they are addressing the emerging grievances from mobilized Russian personnel. Russian Human Rights Ombudsman Tatyana Moskalkova claimed that she sent an appeal to Chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov to investigate appeals from mobilized personnel from the Republic of Tatarstan.⁴⁶ Moskalkova likely referred to an appeal from elements of the 1231st Regiment from Tatarstan who previously complained about their poor treatment as cannon fodder and lack of military equipment following their assignment under the command of unspecified elements of the Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) 1st Army Corps. The mobilized men of the 1231st Regiment submitted a formal complaint that the DNR command designated the mobilized men as disposable assault forces, after which Russian commanders reportedly withdrew the 1231st Regiment.⁴⁷ However, relatives of servicemen of the 1231st Regiment reported that the mobilized servicemen reassigned the individuals who cosigned the complaint to different units, subordinating some under DNR command, likely as a punitive measure.⁴⁸

The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) announced that the Kremlin cannot formally end Russian President Vladimir Putin's initial mobilization decree, claiming that the decree's nullification would result in Russians losing their mobilization benefits and financial compensation.⁴⁹ The Kremlin and Russian MoD, however, are likely against any decree formally ending mobilization because that would allow mobilized Russians to return home from the frontlines. The Russian MoD likely framed mobilization as the legal basis for benefits in an effort to mislead Russians advocating mobilization's formal end. The Ukrainian General Staff also reported that Russian officials are attempting to mobilize scientists at the Polyus Scientific Research Institute by advertising the perks and social benefits for mobilized people.⁵⁰

The Russian MoD continues its crypto-mobilization practices, prompting the United States Department of State to warn US-Russian dual citizens to refrain from traveling to Russia to avoid mobilization on February 13.⁵¹ Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov responded to the US warning, stating that while a new wave of mobilization was not planned in Russia, dual citizens in Russia are "first and foremost, Russian."⁵² Peskov's statement, thus, indicated that the Kremlin would consider recruiting or mobilizing dual citizens. Russian opposition outlet *Meduza* reported that the Baikonur City Administration is offering 260,000 rubles (3,530 USD) to residents of Baikonur, Kazakhstan (a city that Russia leases for the Russian-controlled spaceport there) to participate in the war in Ukraine.⁵³ *Meduza* reported that the Baikonur City Administration announced in September 2022 that it would not allow the Kremlin to mobilize residents against their will.⁵⁴

The Kremlin continues to withdraw forces and military equipment from its northwesternmost borders with NATO to support the Russian war in Ukraine. The Head of the Norwegian Intelligence Service Nils Andreas Stensønes told *The Barents Observer* that Russian ground forces on the Kola Peninsula in northwestern Russia have been reduced to one-fifth of their initial strength numbers before the invasion of Ukraine.⁵⁵ Stensønes assessed that approximately three Russian battalion tactical groups (approximately 3,000 servicemen) stationed on the Kola Peninsula participated in the Russian invasion, of which up to half of their assigned personnel died in combat. Stensønes assessed that the Russian Northern Fleet has lost up to 100 tanks and armored personnel vehicles.⁵⁶ The Kremlin's decision to deploy troops away from Russia's borders closest to NATO supports ISW's longtime

assessment that the Kremlin is not concerned about a NATO conventional military threat against Russia.

Russian forces—especially underprepared mobilized personnel—continue to sustain heavy casualties as Russia intensifies its offensive operations in Donbas. An investigation by the *BBC*, Russian opposition outlet *Mediazona*, and open-source volunteers reported that of the confirmed 14,093 Russian deaths during the invasion, there is 1,082 Russian mobilized personnel who were killed in action—40 percent of whom died during the first weeks of 2023.⁵⁷ The report notes that the dates of obituaries of mobilized personnel in October indicate that troops trained for three to seven days. The report states that the Russian forces employed troops trained for one specialty in a different specialty at the front, indicating poor resource allocation, lack of cohesion, and planning unpreparedness.⁵⁸

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

Russian officials are continuing efforts to integrate occupied areas into the Russian governance system. Luhansk People’s Republic (LNR) Head Leonid Pasechnik and Donetsk People’s Republic (DNR) Head Denis Pushilin stated on February 14 that the Kremlin is hosting a training course on civil service and managing the integration process for over 6,000 current and future occupation authorities at the Russian Higher School of Public Administration of the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration.⁵⁹ The Ukrainian Resistance Center noted that Russia launched this program and brought in a large number of Russian civil servants to fill a shortage of local collaborators.⁶⁰ Over 80 percent of the 6,000 “specialists” set to graduate from the program reportedly will be Russians.⁶¹ Russian Federation Commissioner for Children’s Rights Maria Lvova-Belova relatedly stated on February 13 that 60 DNR and LNR specialists will complete a week-long internship on child advocacy in Moscow.⁶² Head of the Zaporizhia Oblast occupation administration Yevheny Balitsky claimed on February 14 that the Russian Federation Council Committee on Economic Policy met to discuss the economic development and integration of Zaporizhia Oblast.⁶³

The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported on February 14 that members of the Ukrainian and Tartar partisan group “Ateş” conducted an improvised explosive device (IED) attack on a car carrying two Russian military personnel and two Russian special service representatives in Nova Kahovka, occupied Kherson Oblast.⁶⁴ The Ukrainian Resistance Center stated that the explosion killed two and left two in serious condition.⁶⁵ A local Ukrainian Telegram channel claimed that the attack occurred on February 10 outside a Russian occupation police station.⁶⁶

Significant activity in Belarus (ISW assesses that a Russian or Belarusian attack into northern Ukraine in early 2023 is extraordinarily unlikely and has thus restructured this section of the update. It will no longer include counter-indicators for such an offensive.

ISW will continue to report daily observed Russian and Belarusian military activity in Belarus, but these are not indicators that Russian and Belarusian forces are preparing for an imminent attack on Ukraine from Belarus. ISW will revise this text and its

assessment if it observes any unambiguous indicators that Russia or Belarus is preparing to attack northern Ukraine.)

Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov stated on February 14 that Russian President Vladimir Putin and Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko may meet on February 17.⁶⁷

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

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- ¹ <https://www.defense.gov/News/Speeches/Speech/Article/3297356/opening-remarks-by-secretary-of-defense-lloyd-j-austin-iii-at-the-ninth-ukraine/>; <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/3298311/austin-contact-group-continues-stand-with-ukrainian-people/>
- ² <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2023/02/13/us-ukraine-war-critical-moment/>
- ³ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2023/02/13/us-ukraine-war-critical-moment/>
- ⁴ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2023/02/13/us-ukraine-war-critical-moment/>
- ⁵ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2023/02/13/us-ukraine-war-critical-moment/>
- ⁶ <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-january-21-2023>
- ⁷ <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-january-28-2023>
- ⁸ <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/02/14/europe/russian-army-prisoners-conscripts-ukraine-intl/index.html>
- ⁹ <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/02/14/europe/russian-army-prisoners-conscripts-ukraine-intl/index.html>
- ¹⁰ <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-may-13>
- ¹¹ <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-2>
- ¹² <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/02/14/europe/russian-army-prisoners-conscripts-ukraine-intl/index.html>
- ¹³ <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02DS1tjkALaWJqPjaxpdSWd1N2o4UsuFBnfYteDXMkM7ZkZJ67R5SDno5iLbm3cJVI>
- ¹⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02junBFPhLiqSKXsGZj21ZJXv31NGdAgeZMAii42CqvWt4Tmc9ddYPNEvep8kLwYu4I>
- ¹⁵ <https://t.me/readovkanews/52655>; <https://t.me/rybar/43582>
- ¹⁶ https://t.me/notes_veterans/7979
- ¹⁷ <https://t.me/strelkovii/3967>
- ¹⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02junBFPhLiqSKXsGZj21ZJXv31NGdAgeZMAii42CqvWt4Tmc9ddYPNEvep8kLwYu4I>
- ¹⁹ <https://twitter.com/neonhandrail/status/1625196033881014273?s=20&t=eTivdNdyXKVavARHKV5wsA>;
<https://twitter.com/herooftheday10/status/1625091408972419076?s=20&t=eTivdNdyXKVavARHKV5wsA>
- ²⁰ <https://t.me/luhanskaVTSA/8614>
- ²¹ https://t.me/serhiy_hayday/9420
- ²² <https://armyinform dot com.ua/2023/02/14/oborona-bahmuta-za-dobu-234-obstrily-37-boyezitknen-ponad-200-vorogiv-znyshheno/>
- ²³ <https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1625384645402427393/photo/1>
- ²⁴ <https://t.me/wargonzo/10862>
- ²⁵ <https://twitter.com/samotniyskhid/status/1625179389511057417?s=20&t=eTivdNdyXKVavARHKV5wsA>;
<https://twitter.com/samotniyskhid/status/1625185888710934529?s=20&t=eTivdNdyXKVavARHKV5wsA>;
https://t.me/miroshnik_r/10502; <https://t.me/rybar/43580>
- ²⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02junBFPhLiqSKXsGZj21ZJXv31NGdAgeZMAii42CqvWt4Tmc9ddYPNEvep8kLwYu4I>

²⁷ <https://armyinform dot com.ua/2023/02/14/oborona-bahmuta-za-dobu-234-obstrily-37-boyezitknen-ponad-200-vorogiv-znysheno/>; <https://suspilne dot media/384815-234-obstrili-za-dobu-aka-situacia-na-bahmutskomu-napramku/>; <https://twitter.com/Doranimated/status/1625255352122896411>
<https://closetheskyoverukraine.com/latest-news/russia-claimed-the-seizure-of-the-village-of-krasnaya-gora>

²⁸ <https://t.me/readovkanews/52662>; https://t.me/Prigozhin_hat/2639; <https://t.me/NeoficialniyBeZsonoV/22297>

²⁹ <https://t.me/wargonzo/10862>; <https://t.me/rybar/43577>; <https://t.me/readovkanews/52652>; https://t.me/boris_rozhin/78060; <https://t.me/milchronicles/1557>; <https://t.me/kommunist/15846>

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