

**Christina Harward, Grace Mappes, Nicole Wolkov,
Nate Trotter, William Runkel, and Frederick W. Kagan**

January 21, 2025, 4:30 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 see ISW's interactive map of Ukraine's offensive in Kursk Oblast.

Click [here](#) to see ISW's 3D control of terrain topographic map of Ukraine. Use of a computer (not a mobile device) is strongly recommended for using this data-heavy tool.

Click [here](#) to access ISW's archive of interactive time-lapse maps of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. These maps complement the static control-of-terrain map that ISW produces daily by showing a dynamic frontline. ISW will update this time-lapse map archive monthly.

Note: The data cut-off for this product was 12:15 pm ET on January 21. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the January 22 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Ukrainian forces conducted a series of drone strikes against Russian defense industrial enterprises and oil refineries in Russia on the night of January 20 to 21 as part of an ongoing strike series aimed at degrading Russian military capacity. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian Special Operation Forces (SSO) elements and other Ukrainian forces conducted a drone strike against Rosneft's Lisinskaya Oil Refinery in Voronezh Oblast for the second time this week following successful strikes on the night of January 15 to 16.[1] The January 20 to 21 strike caused a fire at fuel and lubricant tanks, and the Ukrainian General Staff noted that the oil refinery supplies the Russian military. Voronezh Oblast Governor Alexander Gusev claimed on January 20 that Russian forces destroyed several drones in Voronezh Oblast but that a drone fell on an oil depot in Liskinsky Raion, starting a fire.[2] A Kremlin-affiliated Russian milblogger noted that the oil depot was still burning from the January 15-16 strike and the second strike started another fire at the facility.[3] The Ukrainian General Staff also reported that Ukraine's Unmanned Systems Forces and SSO struck the Smolensk Aviation Plant in Smolensk Oblast.[4] Geolocated footage shows fires at the production building of the Smolensk Aviation Plant.[5] Ukrainian Center for Countering Disinformation Head Lieutenant Andriy Kovalenko stated that the plant produces and modernizes Su-25 attack aircraft and maintains aviation equipment.[6] Smolensk Oblast Governor Vasily Anokhin claimed that Russian forces repelled a Ukrainian drone strike against Smolensk Oblast but that falling drone debris caused fires.[7] Russian opposition outlet *Astra* reported that Ukrainian forces struck Lukoil's Saratovorgsintez Chemical Plant in Saratov City overnight that produces acrylonitrile, acetonitrile, and sodium cyanide.[8] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Russian

forces destroyed 10 drones over Smolensk Oblast, six over Voronezh Oblast, and four over Saratov Oblast on the night of January 20 to 21.[9]

The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces also continue to conduct strikes against Russian command posts in the Russian rear. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces struck the command post of the Russian 29th Combined Arms Army (CAA) (Eastern Military District [EMD]) in occupied Volnovakha, Donetsk Oblast on the night of January 20 to 21.[10] The Ukrainian General Staff stated that there are reports of explosions and smoke after the strike and that Ukrainian authorities are clarifying the results of the strike. ISW has not observed footage or other reporting of this command post strike. ISW has observed reports that elements of the 29th CAA are currently operating along the Yantarne-Zelenivka line southwest of Kurakhove.[11] The Ukrainian General Staff reported in early and mid-January 2025 that Ukrainian forces struck the command posts of the Russian 2nd CAA (Central Military District [CMD]), 8th CAA (Southern Military District), and 3rd Army Corps (AC) (CMD) in occupied Donetsk Oblast.[12] ISW continues to assess that Ukrainian strikes against main command posts further in the Russian rear are likely aimed at degrading broader Russian logistics and operational planning efforts, which could impact Russia's ability to conduct its military operations in western Donetsk Oblast.[13]

Russian President Vladimir Putin and People's Republic of China (PRC) President Xi Jinping held a phone call on January 21 and emphasized deepening cooperation. Putin and Xi reiterated boilerplate narratives emphasizing increasing Russian-PRC foreign policy, energy, and economic cooperation.[14] Russian Presidential Aide Yuri Ushakov claimed that Putin and Xi discussed Russia's war in Ukraine and Russia's and the PRC's relations with the United States, although the official Kremlin readout of the call did not mention these topics.[15] Ushakov also claimed that Xi gave Putin an overview of Xi's recent call with US President Donald Trump.[16]

Acting Kursk Oblast Governor Alexander Khinshtein's recent appointment has thus far failed to solve or distract from Russia's failure to adequately respond to Ukraine's incursion into Kursk Oblast. Russian President Vladimir Putin appointed Khinshtein to this post on December 5, 2024, following intense backlash for failing to communicate with or support Kursk Oblast residents displaced by the Ukrainian incursion - scapegoating then-Kursk Oblast Governor Alexei Smirnov for Russia's failure to respond.[17] Russian opposition media and local Kursk Oblast news outlets reported that residents of Sudzhansky, Korenevsky, Bolshesoldatsky, and Glushkovsky raions – all on the frontline in Kursk Oblast – protested in front of the Kursk Oblast Administration building on January 18 and 21, demanding to meet with Khinshtein.[18] The protestors recorded an appeal to Khinshtein on January 21 asking him to address insufficient permanent housing for residents, issues with temporary accommodation centers, and his lack of dialogue with Kursk Oblast residents – the latter of which was one of Khinshtein's stated priorities following his appointment.[19] Local Kursk Oblast media reported that Khinshtein's advisor, Viktoria Penkova, met with the protestors, and the Kursk Oblast Administration Press Service stated that authorities informed the protestors of "necessary explanations and consultations" during the meeting.[20] Putin likely appointed Khinshtein to appear dedicated to solving social issues in Kursk Oblast and to quell local protests, and Khinshtein's failure to thus far fulfill this role in his tenure as acting governor undermines this intended effect.[21]

Key Takeaways:

- **Ukrainian forces conducted a series of drone strikes against Russian defense industrial enterprises and oil refineries in Russia on the night of January 20 to 21 as part of an ongoing strike series aimed at degrading Russian military capacity.**
- **The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces also continue to conduct strikes against Russian command posts in the Russian rear.**
- **Russian President Vladimir Putin and People's Republic of China (PRC) President Xi Jinping held a phone call on January 21 and emphasized deepening cooperation.**
- **Acting Kursk Oblast Governor Alexander Khinshtein's recent appointment has thus far failed to solve or distract from Russia's failure to adequately respond to Ukraine's incursion into Kursk Oblast.**
- **Russian forces recently advanced in Kursk Oblast and near Chasiv Yar, Pokrovsk, and Kurakhove. Ukrainian forces recently regained lost positions near Pokrovsk.**
- **Russian ultranationalist milbloggers renewed complaints against the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) for failing to hold the Russian military command accountable for military failures.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Russo-Ukrainian War

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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 Russian violations of the laws of armed conflict and the Geneva Conventions and crimes against humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

- Ukrainian Operations in the Russian Federation
- Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine (comprised of three subordinate main efforts)

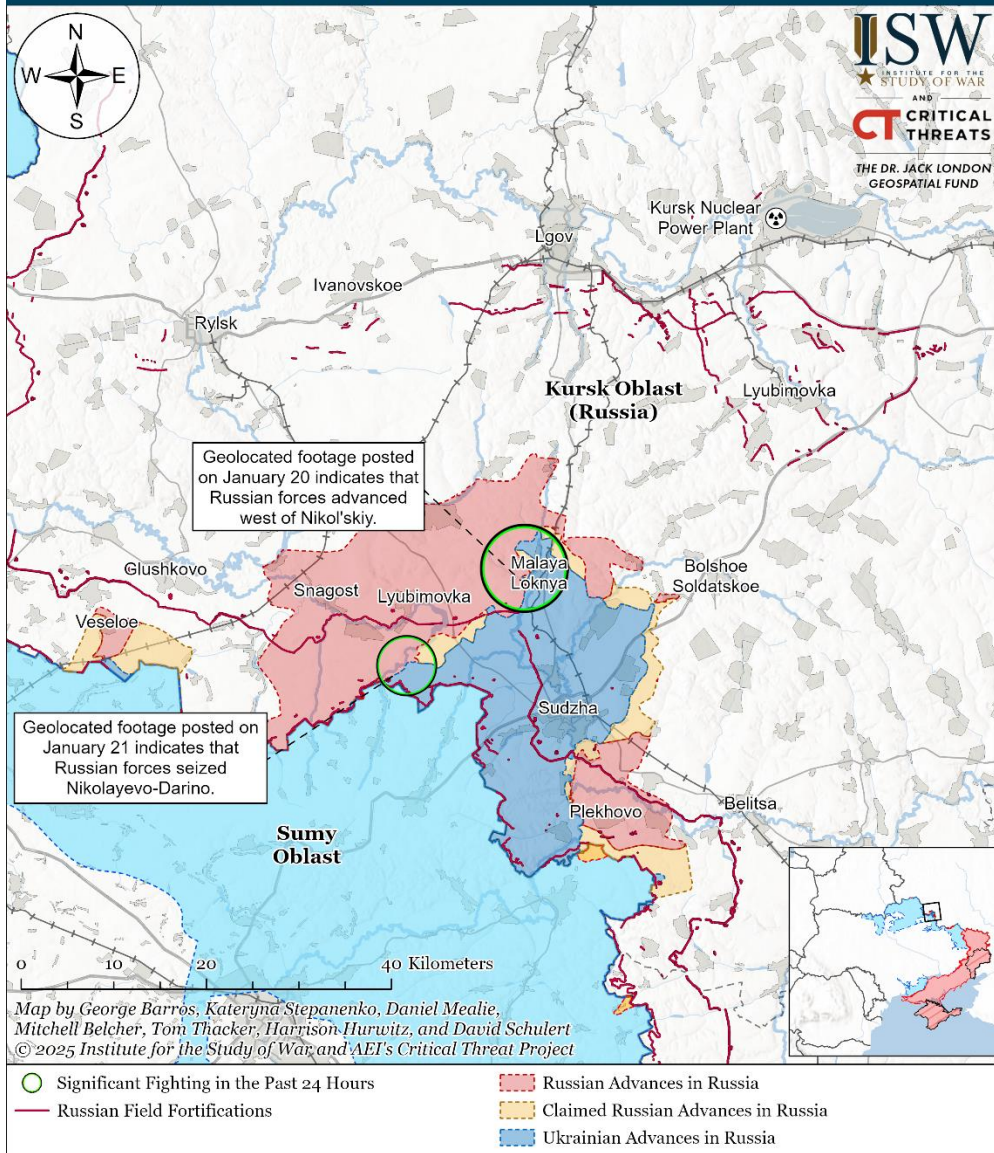
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Push Ukrainian forces back from the international border with Belgorod Oblast and approach to within tube artillery range of Kharkiv City
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and encircle northern Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #3 – Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis
- Russian Air, Missile, and Drone Campaign
- Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts
- Russian Technological Adaptations
- Activities in Russian-occupied areas
- Significant Activity in Belarus

Ukrainian Operations in the Russian Federation

Russian forces recently advanced in the Ukrainian salient in Kursk Oblast amid continued fighting in the area on January 21. Geolocated footage published on January 20 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced to the western outskirts of Viktorovka (northwest of Sudzha) and southwest and northwest of Nikol'skiy (south of Viktorovka) during an at least company-sized mechanized assault.[22] One of the Ukrainian brigades that repelled the mechanized assault reported on January 20 that Ukrainian forces destroyed three tanks and seven infantry fighting vehicles.[23] Russian milbloggers claimed that elements of the Russian 810th Naval Infantry Brigade (Black Sea Fleet, Southern Military District [SMD]) advanced towards Guyevo (south of Sudzha) from the north and that elements of the 83rd Airborne (VDV) Brigade completely seized Nikolayev-Darino (southeast of Korenevo).[24] ISW has not observed confirmation of these claims, however. A Russian source claimed that fighting continued near Kurilovka (south of Sudzha).[25] A Russian milblogger claimed that the current warmer weather and expected upcoming snow and rain in Kursk Oblast are not conducive to large offensive operations.[26] Elements of the Russian 5th Anti-Aircraft Missile Regiment (98th VDV Division) are reportedly operating in Kursk Oblast.[27]

Russian opposition outlet *Mobilization News* reported on January 21 that Russian authorities are currently searching for three North Korean personnel who killed five Russian soldiers of the 810th Naval Infantry Brigade near Bolshoye Soldatskoye (northeast of Sudzha).[28]

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Kursk Direction January 21, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST

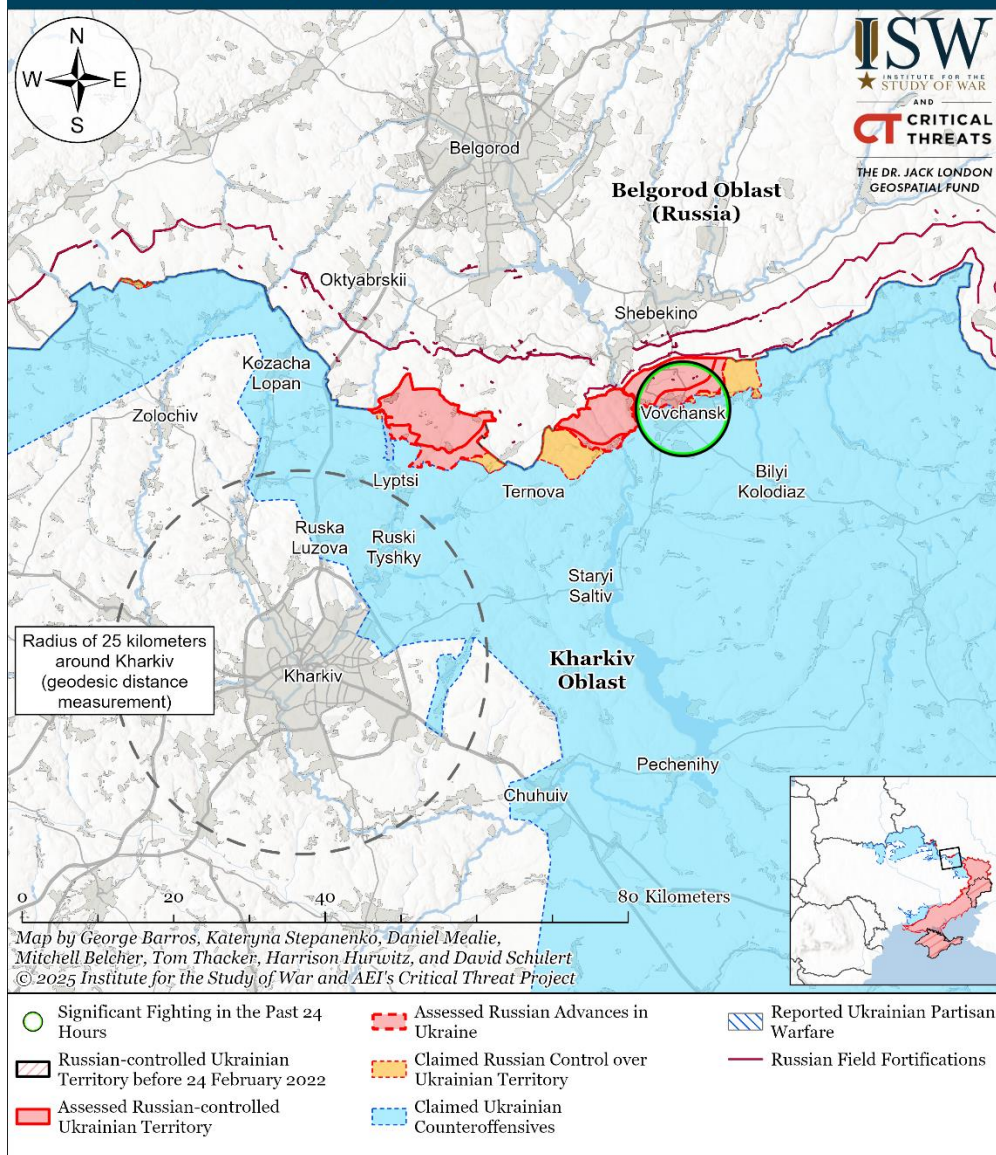


Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Kharkiv Oblast (Russian objective: Push Ukrainian forces back from the international border with Belgorod Oblast and approach to within tube artillery range of Kharkiv City)

Russian forces continued ground attacks northeast of Kharkiv City near Vovchansk on January 20 and 21 but did not advance.[29]

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Kharkiv Direction January 21, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Luhansk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and northern Donetsk Oblast)

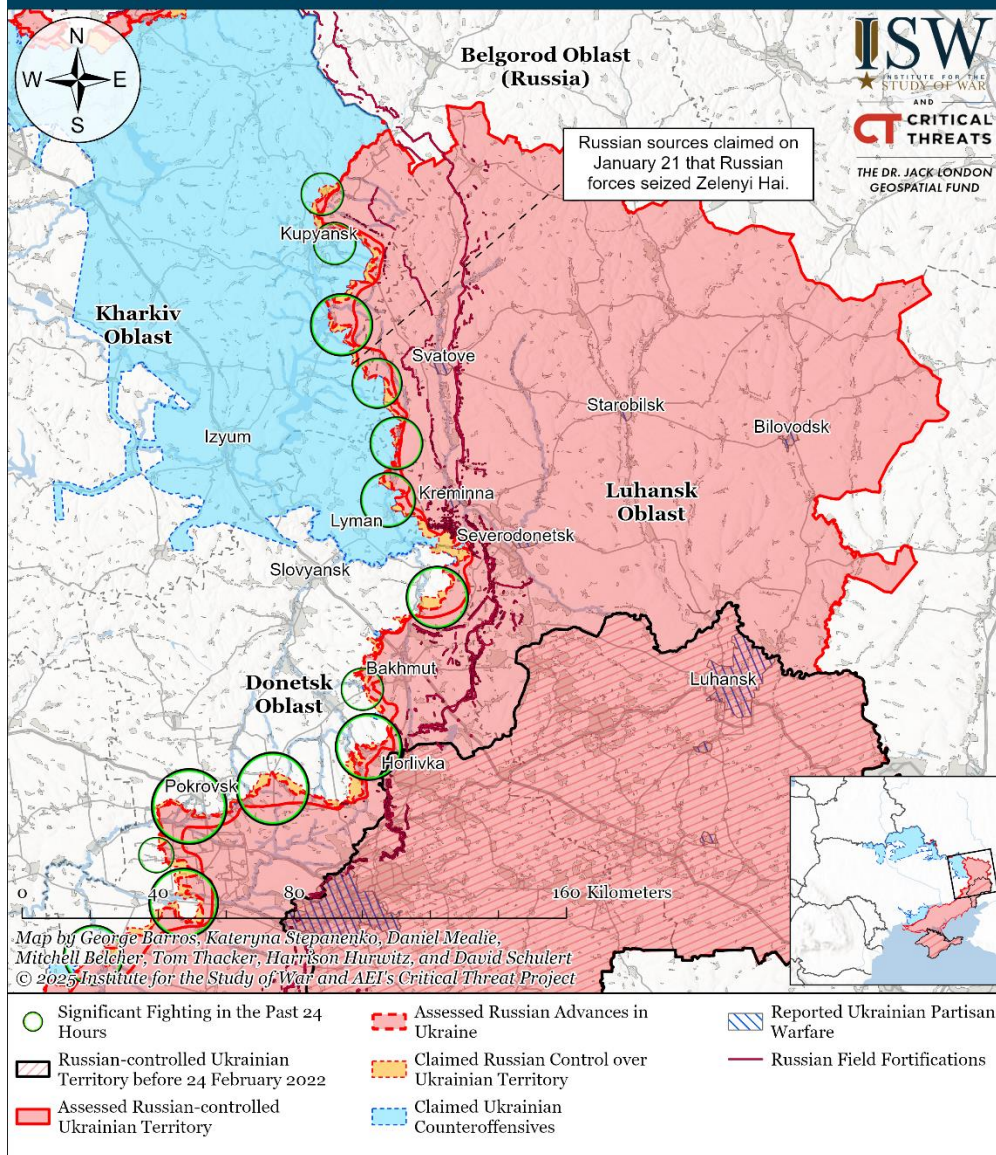
Russian forces continued offensive operations north of Kupyansk near Dvorichna and east of Kupyansk near Petropavlivka on January 20 and 21 but did not advance.[30] Drone operators of the Russian Rubicon Center for Advanced Unmanned Technologies are reportedly operating in the Kupyansk direction.[31]

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Borova direction on January 21 but did not make any confirmed advances. Russian sources claimed that Russian forces seized Zelenyi Hai (northeast of Borova) and advanced toward the Borova-Bohuslavka line (north of Borova) and west of Makiivka

(southeast of Borova).[32] ISW has not observed confirmation of these claims, however. A Russian milblogger claimed on January 21 that the Russian MoD's January 20 claim that Russian forces seized Novoyehorivka (southeast of Borova) was inaccurate and that Ukrainian forces still hold positions in the settlement.[33] The Russian milblogger claimed that the Russian MoD's inaccurate report on the seizure of Novoyehorivka likely will lead to high Russian losses in the settlement. Russian forces continued ground attacks northeast of Borova near Lozova, Zelenyi Hai, Kolisnykivka, Zahryzove, and Nova Kruhlyakivka; east of Borova near Kopanky and Nadiya; and southeast of Borova near Novoyehorivka, Nevske, and Makiivka on January 20 and 21.[34] Drone operators of the Russian 16th Spetsnaz Brigade (Russian General Staff's Main Directorate [GRU]) are reportedly operating southwest of Nadiya.[35]

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Lyman direction on January 21 but did not make any confirmed advances. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced near Terny (northeast of Lyman), but ISW has not observed confirmation of this claim.[36] Russian forces continued attacking northeast of Lyman near Terny and Kolodyazi and east of Lyman toward Zarichne on January 20 and 21.[37] Elements of the Russian 144th Motorized Rifle Division (20th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Moscow Military District [MMD]) reportedly continue operating in the Lyman direction.[38]

Assessed Control of Terrain in Luhansk Oblast January 21, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST

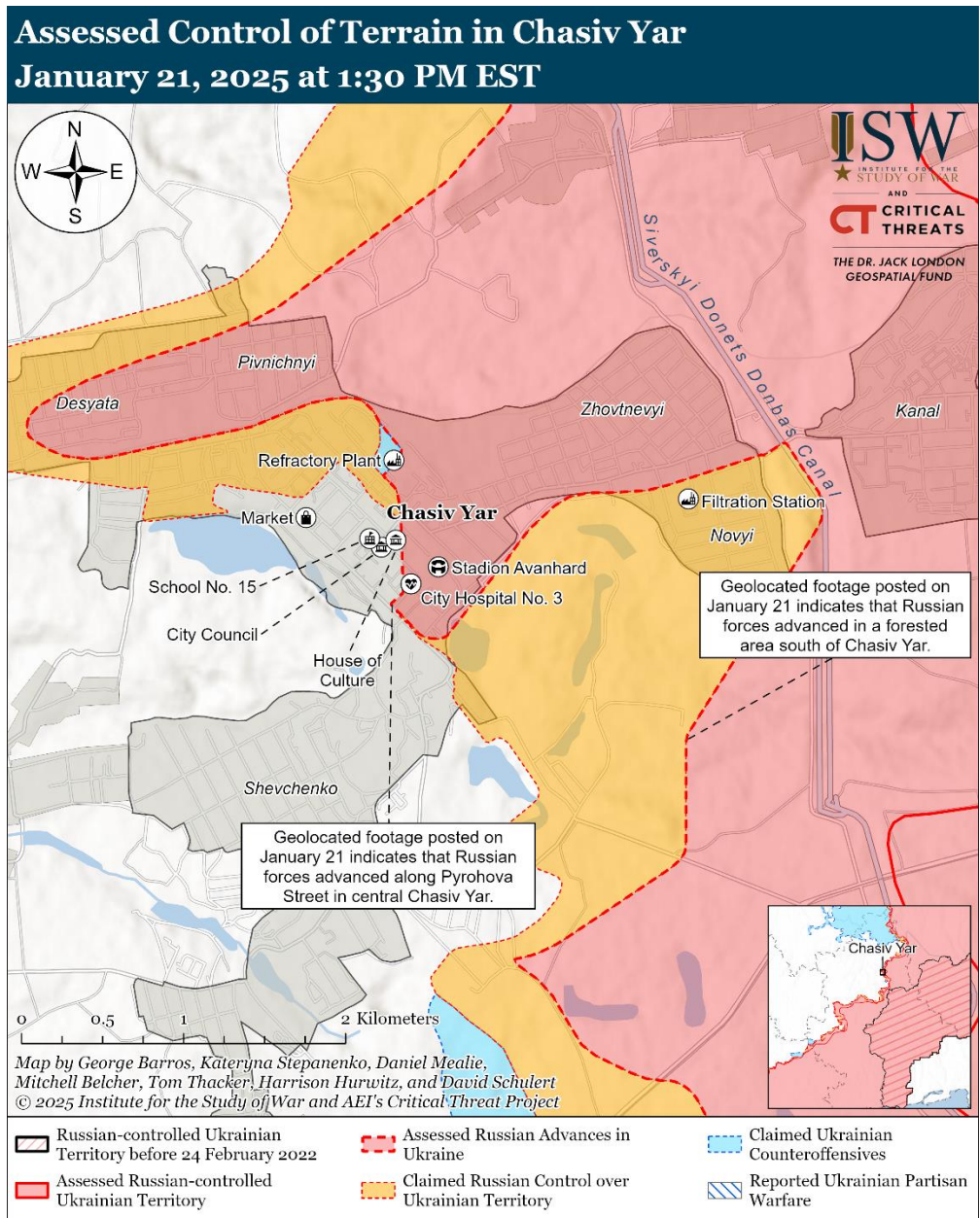


Russian Subordinate Main Effort #3 – Donetsk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)

Russian forces continued offensive operations east of Siversk near Verkhokamyanske and southeast of Siversk in the direction of Ivano-Darivka on January 20 and 21 but did not advance.[39]

Russian forces recently advanced in the Chasiv Yar direction amid continued offensive operations in the area on January 21. Geolocated footage published on January 21 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced within central Chasiv Yar.[40] Additional geolocated footage published on January 21 shows elements of the "Shustry" Detachment of Chechen Akhmat Spetsnaz operating south of Chasiv Yar, indicating that Russian forces recently advanced in the area.[41] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces cleared the Refractory Plant in central Chasiv Yar and advanced in northwestern and

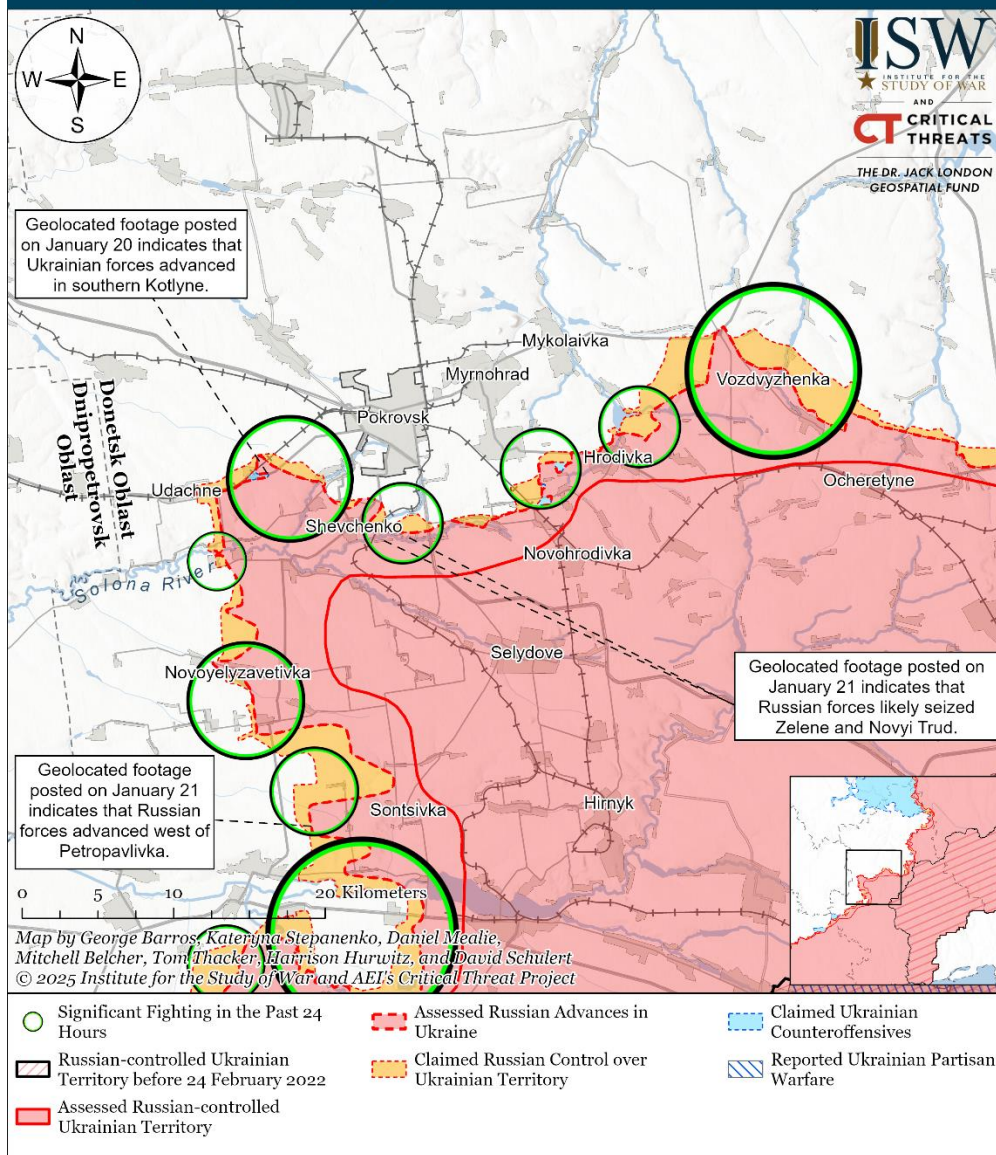
southwestern Chasiv Yar, but ISW has not observed confirmation of these claims.[42] Ukraine's Luhansk Group of Forces Spokesperson Colonel Dmytro Zaporozhets stated on January 21 that Russian forces are leveraging the limited visibility during poor weather conditions to accumulate in northern Chasiv Yar and assault the Refractory Plant.[43] Russian forces continued attacking near Chasiv Yar itself, south of Chasiv Yar toward Stupochky, and northwest of Chasiv Yar toward Fedorivka on January 20 and 21.[44] Elements of the Russian 299th Airborne (VDV) Regiment (98th VDV Division) and "Hispaniola" Volunteer Brigade (Russian Volunteer Corps) reportedly continue operating near Chasiv Yar.[45] Elements of the Russian 200th Motorized Rifle Brigade (14th Army Corps [AC], Leningrad Military District [LMD]) are reportedly operating near Orikhovo-Vasylivka (northeast of Chasiv Yar).[46]



Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Toretsk direction on January 21 but did not make any confirmed advances. A Russian milblogger claimed on January 20 that Russian forces advanced in the Fomikha Mine waste heap and along Rizdviana and Mykhaila Hrushevskoho Streets (all in northern Toretsk).[47] Another Russian milblogger claimed on January 21 that Russian forces seized all of Toretsk.[48] ISW has not observed confirmation of these claims, however. Russian forces continued attacking within Toretsk itself; north of Toretsk near Krymske and Dyllivka; northeast of Toretsk near Ozaryanivka; and west of Toretsk near Shcherbynivka on January 20 and 21.[49]

Ukrainian and Russian forces recently advanced in the Pokrovsk direction amid continued offensive operations in the area on January 21. Geolocated footage published on January 20 indicates that Ukrainian forces recently regained lost positions in southern Kotlyne (southwest of Pokrovsk).[50] Additional geolocated footage published on January 21 indicates that Russian forces recently seized Zelene and Novyi Trud (both south of Pokrovsk).[51] The Russian MoD claimed on January 21 that Russian forces seized Vovkove (southwest of Pokrovsk), but ISW assess that Russian forces likely seized the settlement as of January 4.[52] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced in southwestern Zvirove (southwest of Pokrovsk), but ISW has not observed confirmation of this claim.[53] Russian forces attacked near Pokrovsk itself; northeast of Pokrovsk near Vodyane Druhe and Zelene Pole; east of Pokrovsk near Myrolyubivka, Baranivka, Yelyzavetivka, Myrnohrad, and Promin; southeast of Pokrovsk near Lysivka; south of Pokrovsk near Shevchenko; southwest of Pokrovsk near Nadiivka, Zvirove, Udachne, Uspenivka, and Novoandriivka; and west of Pokrovsk near Kotlyne on January 20 and 21.[54] Elements of the Russian 110th Motorized Rifle Brigade (51st CAA, formerly 1st Donetsk People's Republic [DNR] AC) are reportedly operating near Baranivka, and elements of the Russian "Vega" Spetsnaz Detachment (24th Guards Spetsnaz Brigade, Russian General Staff's Main Intelligence Directorate [GRU]) are reportedly operating in the Pokrovsk direction.[55]

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Pokrovsk Direction January 21, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



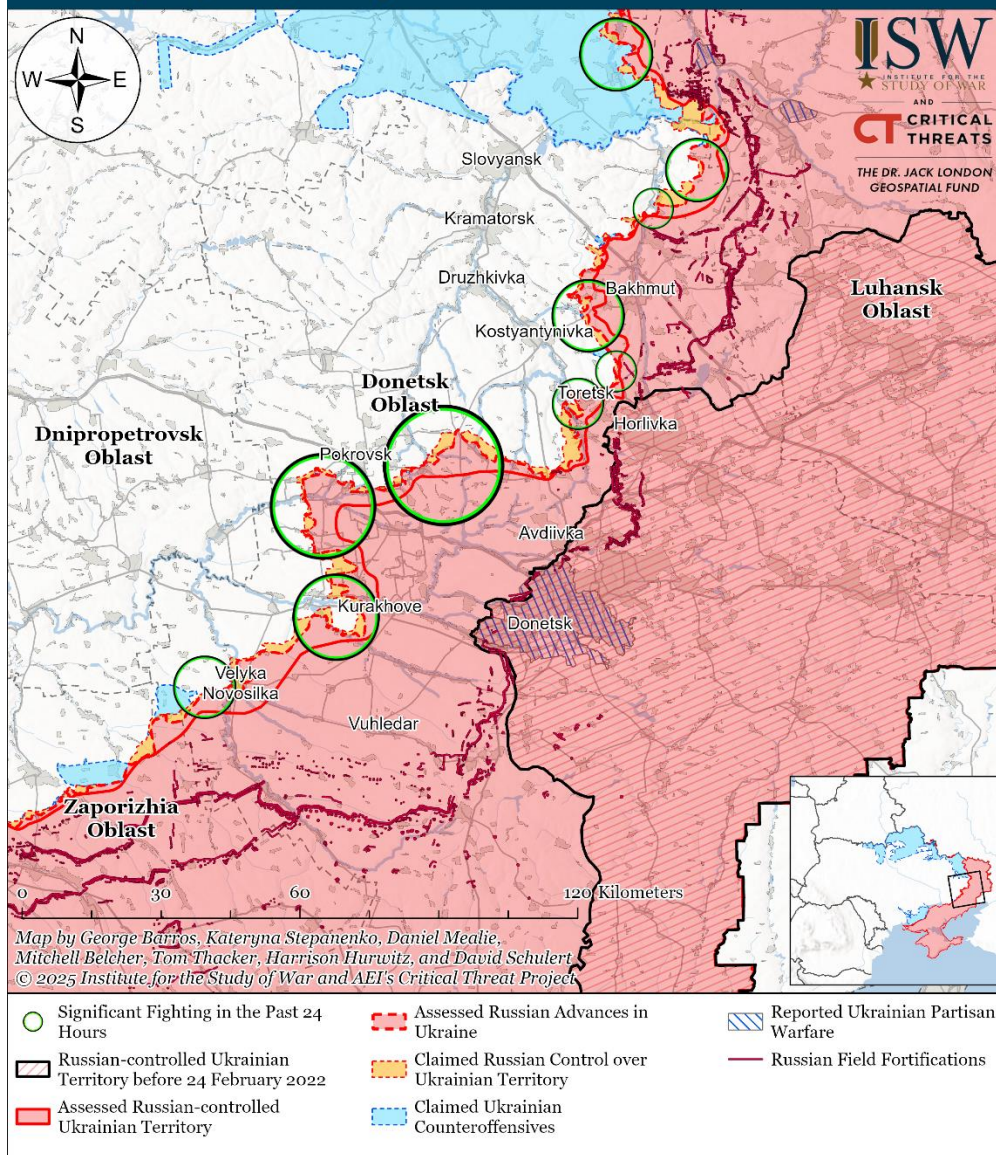
Russian Chief of the General Staff Army General Valery Gerasimov visited a forward command post of an unspecified Russian tank division (possibly the 90th Tank Division, which is known to be in the area) and motorized rifle brigade in the Pokrovsk direction on January 21.[56] Gerasimov heard reports from Russian Central Grouping of Forces Commander Colonel General Andrei Mordvichev and other unspecified commanders.

Russian forces recently advanced northwest of Kurakhove amid continued offensive operations in the Kurakhove direction on January 21. Geolocated footage published on January 21 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced in fields west of Petropavlivka (northwest of Kurakhove) and northeast of Rozdolne (southwest of Kurakhove).[57] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces cleared the pocket between Petropavlivka and Shevchenko (south of Petropavlivka) and advanced towards the outskirts of Kostyantynopil (west of Kurakhove) and north of Sukhi Yaly (southwest of Kurakhove).[58]

ISW has not observed confirmation of these claims, however. A Russian source claimed that Russian forces are bypassing the approaches to Andriivka (west of Kurakhove) from the north as part of efforts to advance to the T0515 Andriivka-Pokrovsk highway.[59] Another milblogger claimed, however, that the intensity of fighting in the Kurakhove direction has largely decreased and that Russian forces are focusing their offensive efforts on seizing Andriivka from the north.[60] Russian forces continued ground attacks northwest of Kurakhove near Shevchenko; west of Kurakhove near Andriivka, Ulakly, Dachne, and Kostyantynopil; and southwest of Kurakhove near Yantarne and Rozlyv on January 20 and 21.[61] A milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked near Dachne and Zelenivka (southwest of Kurakhove).[62] Drone operators of the Russian 39th Motorized Rifle Brigade (68th AC, Eastern Military District [EMD]) are reportedly striking targets near Sukhi Yaly, and drone operators of the 68th Reconnaissance Battalion (20th Motorized Rifle Division, 8th CAA, Southern Military District [SMD]) are reportedly striking targets near Dachne.[63] Elements of the Russian 242nd Motorized Rifle Regiment (20th Motorized Rifle Division), 381st Artillery Regiment (150th Motorized Rifle Division, 8th CAA), and 238th Artillery Brigade (8th CAA) reportedly continue to operate in the Kurakhove direction.[64]

Russian forces continued offensive operations near Velyka Novosilka on January 21 but did not make any confirmed advances. Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced 1.1 kilometers deep along Fontanna Street in eastern Velyka Novosilka, but ISW has not observed confirmation of this claim.[65] Russian forces conducted offensive operations near Velyka Novosilka itself and west of Velyka Novosilka towards Pryvilne on January 20 and 21.[66] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces destroyed a Ukrainian infantry fighting vehicle with a fiber optic cable drone near Novyi Komar (north of Velyka Novosilka).[67]

Assessed Control of Terrain in Donetsk Oblast January 21, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST

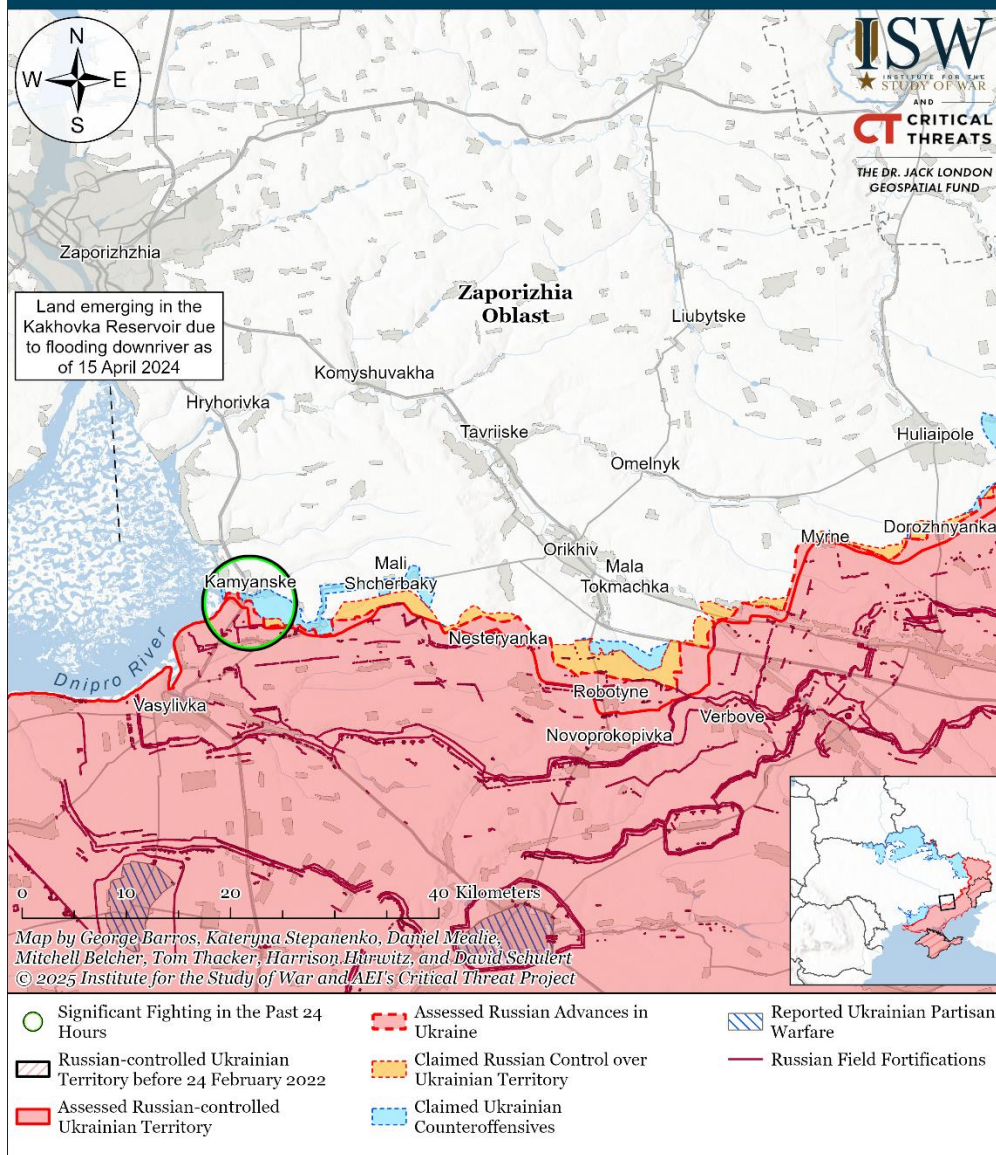


Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions and secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes)

Russian forces conducted a limited ground attack northwest of Robotyne near Kamyanske on January 21 but did not advance.[68] Sappers of the Russian 7th Airborne (VDV) Division and elements of the 42nd Motorized Rifle Division (58th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Southern Military District [SMD]) are reportedly operating in the Zaporizhia direction.[69]

Geolocated footage published on January 20 shows that Ukrainian forces struck a Russian Tor-M2 air defense system southeast of Novomykolaivka (south of Tokmak).[70]

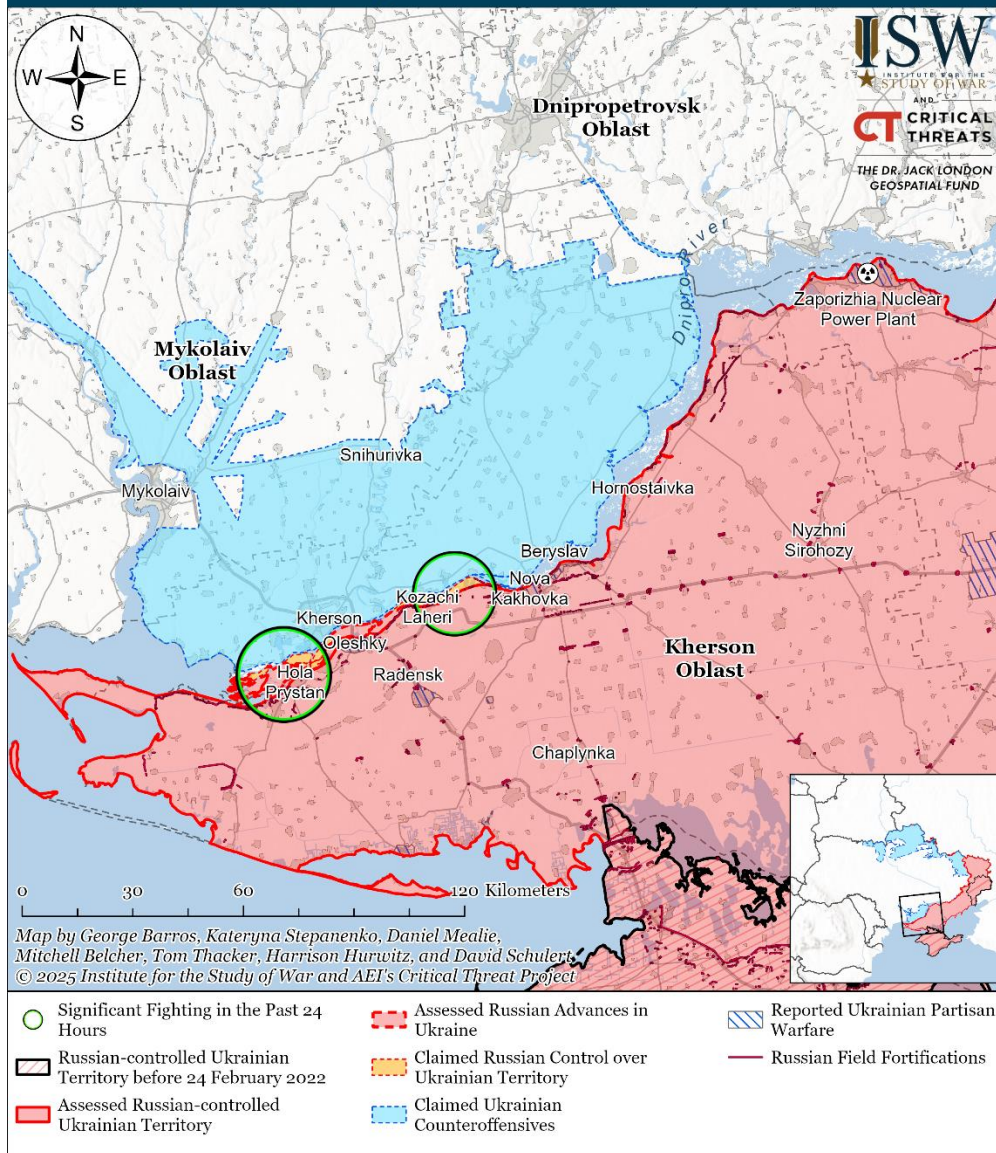
Assessed Control of Terrain in the Zaporizhia Direction January 21, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



Russian forces continued limited ground attacks in the Dnipro direction, including near Kozatskyi Island (northeast of Kherson City), on January 20 and 21 but did not advance.[71]

Satellite imagery published on January 21 shows that Russian forces built additional protective structures at Belbek Airfield in occupied Sevastopol, Crimea between October 22, 2024, and January 20, 2025 - likely to protect Russian combat aircraft from Ukrainian long-range strikes.[72]

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Kherson Direction January 21, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



Russian Air, Missile, and Drone Campaign (Russian Objective: Target Ukrainian military and civilian infrastructure in the rear and on the frontline)

Russian forces conducted a series of drone and missile strikes against Ukraine on the night of January 20 to 21. The Ukrainian Air Force reported on January 21 that Russian forces launched four Iskander-M ballistic missiles from Voronezh Oblast and 131 Shahed and other strike and decoy drones from Millerovo, Rostov Oblast; Primorsko-Akhtarsk, Krasnodar Krai; and Oryol Oblast.[73] The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Ukrainian forces downed 72 drones over Poltava, Sumy, Kharkiv, Cherkasy, Chernihiv, Kyiv, Zhytomyr, Khmelnytskyi, Vinnytsia, Kirovohrad, Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Mykolaiv, Odesa, Zaporizhia, and Rivne oblasts; that 59 drones were "lost," likely due to Ukrainian electronic warfare (EW) interference; and that the strikes damaged institutions, residential buildings, and other structures in Poltava and Cherkasy oblasts. Official Ukrainian sources reported on January 21 that

Russian drone strikes and falling drone debris damaged infrastructure, civilian property, and buildings in Cherkasy, Kharkiv, Kyiv, Poltava, and Mykolaiv oblasts.[74] Dnipropetrovsk Oblast Head Serhii Lysak reported on January 21 that Russian missiles damaged residential homes in Synelnykivskiy Raion and two enterprises in Dnipro City, Dnipropetrovsk Oblast.[75]

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

Russian ultranationalist milbloggers renewed complaints against the Russian MoD for failing to hold the Russian military command accountable for military failures. The milbloggers complained that the Russian MoD sends Russian generals to Syria "in exile" but that the generals do not have to answer for major battlefield failures, including the failed Russian offensive against Vuhledar, Donetsk Oblast in Winter 2022 that suffered extremely high casualties; the failed defense against the Ukrainian counteroffensive in Kharkiv Oblast in Fall 2022; and failures to defend against Ukraine's incursion into Kursk Oblast starting in August 2024.[76] One milblogger complained about Russian air defenses failing to defend against Ukrainian drone and missile strikes deep in the Russian rear.[77] Another milblogger specifically criticized Russian authorities for prosecuting Major General Ivan Popov – whom Russian authorities arrested in May 2024 on charges of fraud after Popov publicly criticized Russian Chief of the General Staff Army General Valery Gerasimov – while other Russian generals remain free.[78] Russian command failures have periodically prompted a backlash in the Russian ultranationalist information space, but less so following Kremlin efforts throughout 2024 to encourage self-censorship among the milblogger community.[79] A revival of complaints directed specifically against the military command and invoking Popov, whose arrest sparked intense backlash within this community at the time, is notable.[80]

Russian authorities continue to use financial incentives to increase voluntary military recruitment. Mari El Republic Head Yuri Zaitsev stated on January 20 that he is raising the one-time regional payment to volunteer recruits who join the Russian military or Rosgvardia from 1.4 million rubles (about \$14,000) to 1.8 million rubles (about \$18,000).[81] Zaitsev stated that Russian soldiers called up during conscription cycles who choose to sign a contract with the Russian MoD will receive a one-time payment of one million rubles (about \$10,000). The Russian MoD's Africa Corps posted a recruitment ad on January 20 offering one-time payments of 1.9 million rubles (about \$19,000) to those who sign a MoD contract in Moscow City and Oblast and 1.7 million rubles (about \$17,000) to those who sign in St. Petersburg.[82]

The Russian government continues to expand the federal "Time of Heroes" program, which aims to install Kremlin-selected veterans into government positions, by creating similar programs for Russian veterans at the regional level. Irkutsk Oblast Governor Igor Kobzev announced on January 20 the regional "Heroes of Priangarie" program that will operate similarly to the federal "Time of Heroes" program and will begin work in February 2025.[83] Kobzev stated that the program will work to resocialize military veterans and allow them to contribute to the regional economy. A Russian insider source claimed on January 21 that the Russian Presidential Administration's domestic policy bloc instructed regional governments to increase efforts to integrate veterans of the war in Ukraine into government positions.[84] The insider source claimed that the Kremlin instructed regional authorities to begin their own training programs for Russian veterans by July 1, 2025, and that each region must

enroll 30 to 70 candidates in the first round of training. Regional governments must reportedly employ 20 percent of the programs' participants in government positions by October 1, 2025, and 80 percent by 2026.

Russian Technological Adaptations (Russian objective: Introduce technological innovations to optimize systems for use in Ukraine)

Nothing significant to report.

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

ISW is not publishing coverage of activities in Russian-occupied areas today.

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

The Belarusian Central Election Commission announced that early voting for the Belarusian presidential election began on January 21 and will end on January 25 ahead of the official election day on January 26.[85] *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's* Russian-language service stated that human rights activists noted that the Belarusian government uses early voting as a mechanism to commit voter fraud and force a certain number of Belarusians to vote early.[86]

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko stated on January 21 that he intends to talk with Russian President Vladimir Putin in the near future about Russia's construction of a second nuclear power plant in Belarus.[87]

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://isw.pub/UkrWar011625>; <https://t.me/GeneralStaffZSU/20123>

[2] https://t.me/gusev_36/3372; https://t.me/gusev_36/3375

[3] <https://t.me/rybar/67328>

[4] <https://t.me/GeneralStaffZSU/20123>

[5] <https://t.me/DniproOfficial/5653> ; https://x.com/99Dominik_/status/1881636194397888744;
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- [7] <https://t.me/anohin67/5022>; <https://t.me/anohin67/5023>
- [8] <https://t.me/astrapress/72911>
- [9] https://t.me/mod_russia/48072
- [10] <https://t.me/GeneralStaffZSU/20123>
- [11] <https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-january-18-2025>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-december-27-2024>; <https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-january-15-2025>; <https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-january-13-2025> ;
<https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-december-31-2024>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-december-27-2024>
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