

## **Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, June 20**

### **Karolina Hird, Kateryna Stepanenko, and Frederick W. Kagan**

#### **June 20, 5:30 pm ET**

Click [here](#) to see ISW's interactive map of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

**Ukrainian officials are emphasizing that the coming week will be decisive for Russian efforts to take control of Severodonetsk.**<sup>1</sup> Deputy Ukrainian Defense Minister Hanna Malyar reported that Russian leadership has set June 26 as the deadline for Russian forces to reach the Luhansk Oblast administrative border, which will likely result in intensified efforts to take full control of Severodonetsk and move westward towards the Oblast border.<sup>2</sup> Head of the Luhansk Regional State Administration Serhiy Haidai reported that Russian forces control all of Severodonetsk except for the industrial zone as of June 20, which is the first explicit Ukrainian confirmation that Russian forces control all of Severodonetsk with the exception of the Azot plant.<sup>3</sup> Russian forces will likely continue efforts to clear the Azot plant and complete encirclement operations south of Severodonetsk and Lysychansk by driving up the T1302 Bakhmut-Lysychansk highway.

**Russian authorities likely seek to leverage the consequences of Russia's blockade on Ukrainian grain exports in order to cajole the West into weakening its sanctions.** Head of state-owned propaganda outlet *RT* Margarita Simonyan stated on June 20 that the famine caused by Russia's blockade on grain exports will force the rest of the world to lift sanctions in order to curb further effects of global famine.<sup>4</sup> Simonyan's statement is especially salient considering a report by the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office that Ukraine had generated 12% of global wheat and barley exports and that Russia's blockade has trapped over 20 million tons of grain in storage.<sup>5</sup>

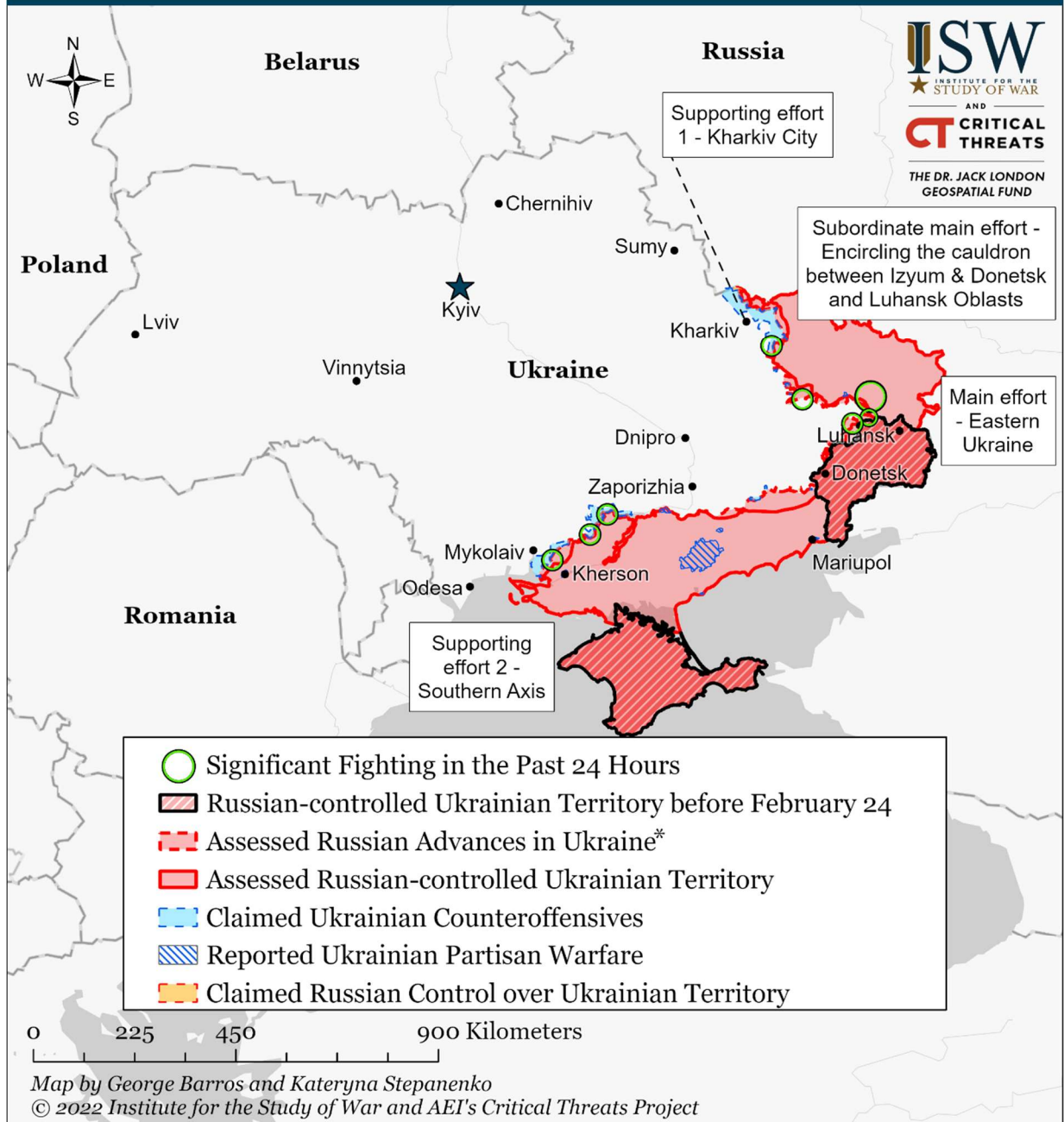
**The UK Ministry of Defense claimed on June 20 that consistent failures of the Russian air force have significantly contributed to Russia's limited success in Ukraine.**<sup>6</sup> The UK MoD emphasized that the Russian air force has continually underperformed and been largely risk-averse, failing to establish air superiority or give Russian forces a decisive advantage in Ukraine. The report additionally claimed that training procedures for air force personnel are scripted and designed to impress senior officials but do not adequately prepare personnel for the challenges of active air combat.

#### **Key Takeaways**

- **Ukrainian sources stated that the coming week will be decisive for Russian forces to complete the capture of Severodonetsk and that Russian forces will focus troops and equipment on the area.**
- **Ukrainian sources confirmed that Russian forces control all of Severodonetsk with the exception of the Azot industrial zone, where fights are ongoing.**
- **Russian sources are likely setting information conditions to justify slow and unsuccessful advances towards Slovyansk from the southeast of Izyum and west of Lyman.**

- **Russian forces are likely intensifying operations to interdict Ukrainian lines of communication along the T1302 Bakhmut-Lysychansk highway in order to support escalating operations in Severodonetsk-Lysychansk.**
- **Russian forces continued to focus on resisting further Ukrainian advances north of Kharkiv City towards the international border.**
- **Russian forces are continuing defensive operations along the Southern Axis.**
- **Ukrainian partisan activity is continuing to complicate efforts by Russian occupation authorities to consolidate control of occupied areas.**

# Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of June 20, 2022, 3:00 PM ET



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

***We do not report in detail on Russian war crimes because 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.***

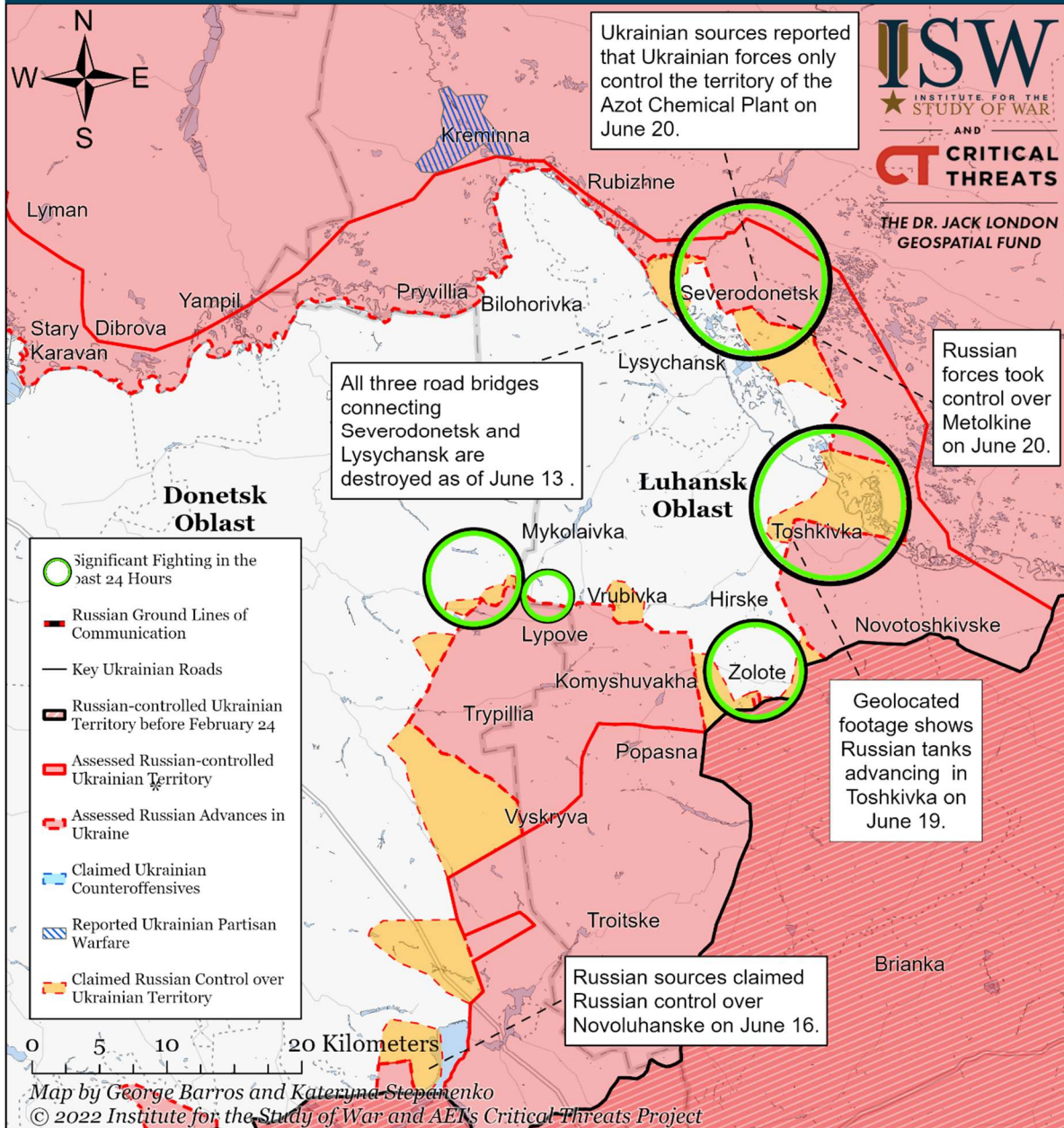
- Main Effort—Eastern Ukraine (comprised of one subordinate and three supporting efforts);
- Subordinate Main Effort—Encirclement of Ukrainian troops in the cauldron between Izyum and Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts
- Supporting Effort 1—Kharkiv City;
- Supporting Effort 2—Southern Axis;
- Activities in Russian-occupied Areas

### **Main Effort—Eastern Ukraine**

**Subordinate Main Effort—Southern Kharkiv, Donetsk, Luhansk Oblasts (Russian objective: Encircle Ukrainian forces in Eastern Ukraine and capture the entirety of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)**

Ukrainian sources confirmed that Russian forces control all of Severodonetsk except for the Azot chemical plant, where fights are ongoing on June 20. Head of the Luhansk Oblast Administration Serhiy Haidai stated that Ukrainian troops “only control the Azot plant” and that Russian troops are fighting within the industrial zone.<sup>7</sup> Haidai additionally confirmed that Russian forces took control of the southeastern suburb of Metolkine, but claimed that the remaining Ukrainian forces in Severodonetsk are still not completely encircled.<sup>8</sup> Deputy Ukrainian Defense Minister Hanna Malyar stated that the coming week will be decisive for Russian forces to complete the capture of Severodonetsk and that Russian leadership has set June 26 as the deadline for Russian forces to reach the Luhansk Oblast administrative borders.<sup>9</sup> Russian forces are accumulating equipment around Toshkivka, which is still highly-contested territory, and are drawing equipment into Starobilsk (approximately 40km northeast of Severodonetsk in Russian-occupied Luhansk Oblast) to support operations in Severodonetsk from the east.<sup>10</sup> Russian forces will likely continue to funnel troops and equipment into Severodonetsk to complete the capture of the industrial zone in the coming week.

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Severodonetsk as of June 20, 2022, 3:00 PM ET



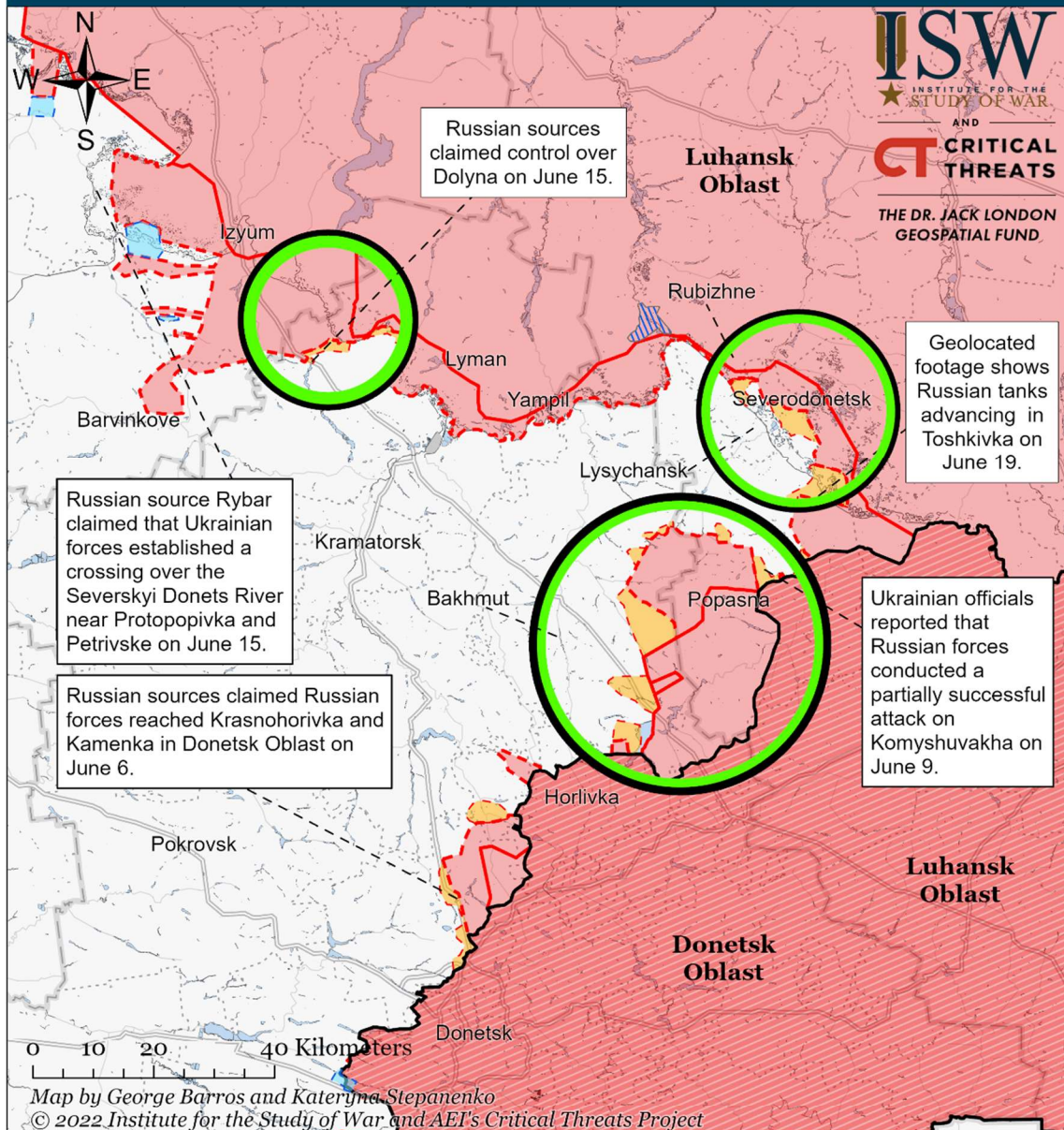
\* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Note: We extended Russian assessed advances over Severodonetsk based on Luhansk Oblast Administration Head Serhiy Haidai's statement that Ukrainian forces only control the Azot Chemical Plant as of June 20. Haidai added that fighting is ongoing in some unspecified area of the industrial zone. We extended Russian assessed advances to Toshkivka based on geolocated footage of Russian tanks advancing in the settlement on June 19. Haidai reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian assaults on Toshkivka on June 19, but the situation in the settlement is unclear as of June 20. ISW will modify our maps once we obtain more evidence.

Russian forces focused on maintaining positions to the southeast of Izyum and west of Lyman but did not make any confirmed advances towards Slovyansk on June 20.<sup>11</sup> Russian forces reportedly conducted an unsuccessful assault on Bohorodychne, about 20 kilometers northwest of Slovyansk.<sup>12</sup> Russian Telegram channel “Military chronicle” notably claimed that Ukrainian positions around Slovyansk are highly fortified and on “dominant heights,” which likely is an attempt to set information conditions to justify slow, grinding, and largely unsuccessful Russian advances towards Slovyansk.<sup>13</sup> The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian troops around Lyman are conducting continual airstrikes and attempting to prevent Ukrainian forces from regrouping in this area.<sup>14</sup> Russian forces remain unlikely to advance on Slovyansk as they concentrate resources on completing the capture of Severodonetsk and the rest of Luhansk Oblast.

Russian forces continued efforts to interdict Ukrainian lines of communication east of Bakhmut along the T1302 Bakhmut-Lysychansk highway but did not make any confirmed advances on June 20.<sup>15</sup> The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian sabotage groups near Bakhmut conducted an unsuccessful assault on Mykolaivka, which is a settlement directly along the T1302 highway.<sup>16</sup> Chechen troops additionally continued efforts to take control of Zolote to further support efforts to interdict Ukrainian lines of communication along the T1302.<sup>17</sup> Ukrainian officials have stated that the coming week will be decisive for the Russian offensive on Severodonetsk and Lysychansk, and Russian troops will likely further intensify artillery attacks east of Bakhmut along the T1302 in order to set conditions for an offensive northward to support the encirclement of Ukrainian troops in Severodonetsk-Lysychansk from the south.<sup>18</sup>

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk as of June 20, 2022, 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

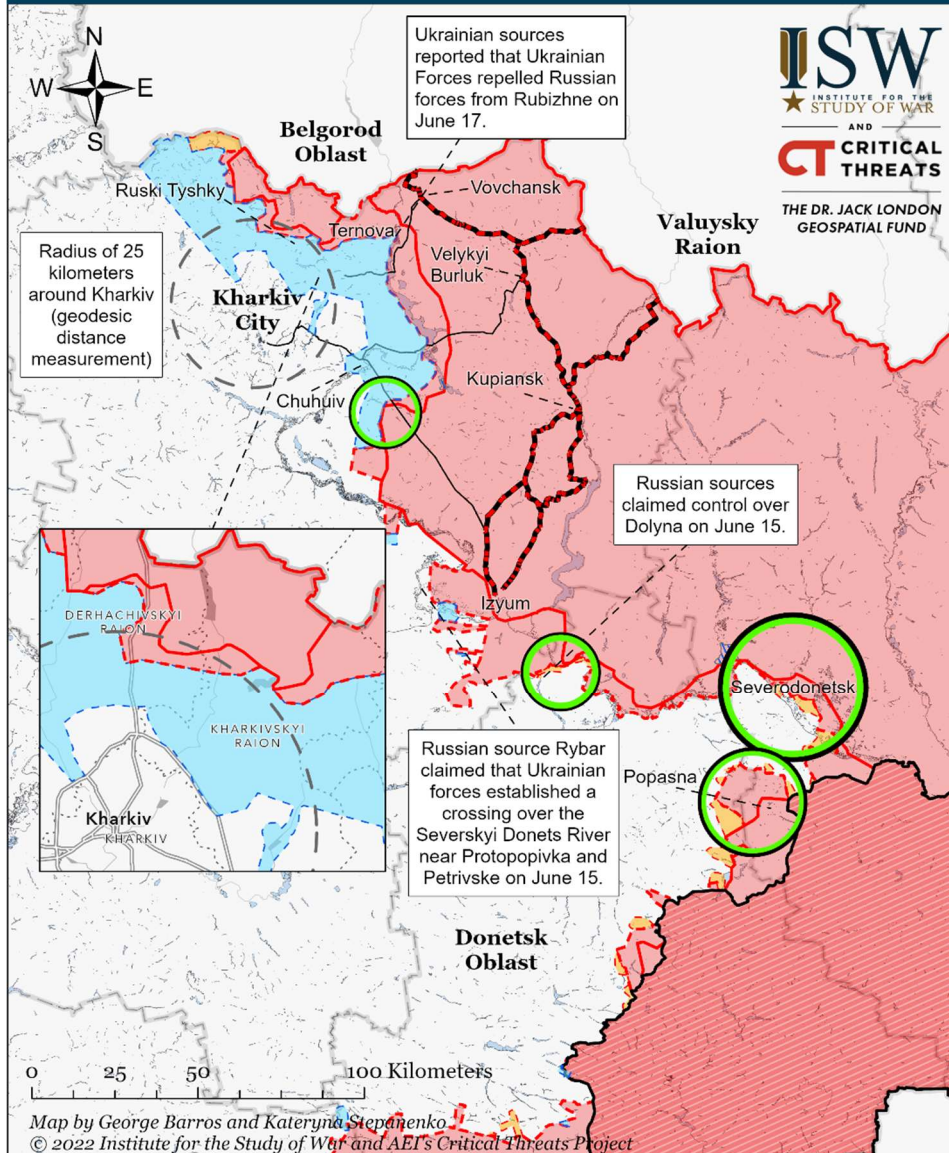
\* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

**Supporting Effort #1—Kharkiv City (Russian objective: Withdraw forces to the north and defend ground lines of communication (GLOCs) to Izyum)**

Russian forces north of Kharkiv City continued to focus on preventing further Ukrainian advances towards the international border on June 20.<sup>19</sup> Deputy Ukrainian Defense Minister Hanna Malyar claimed that Ukrainian troops have nearly reached the Russian border in Kharkiv Oblast and that Ukrainian forces still have some territory to liberate north of Kharkiv City.<sup>20</sup> While ISW cannot independently confirm the positions of Ukrainian troops near the Russian border, Ukrainian counteroffensive operations in this area will likely continue to pressure Russian troops to fight for control of occupied frontiers and intensify artillery attacks against Ukrainian positions around Kharkiv City.<sup>21</sup> Russian forces additionally conducted artillery attacks and unsuccessful reconnaissance-in-force southeast of Kharkiv City, likely in response to Ukrainian counteroffensive actions southeast of Kharkiv City heading towards the Izyum area.<sup>22</sup>



# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kharkiv as of June 20, 2022, 3:00 PM ET



- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Key Ukrainian Roads
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine\*
- Russian Ground Lines of Communication
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare

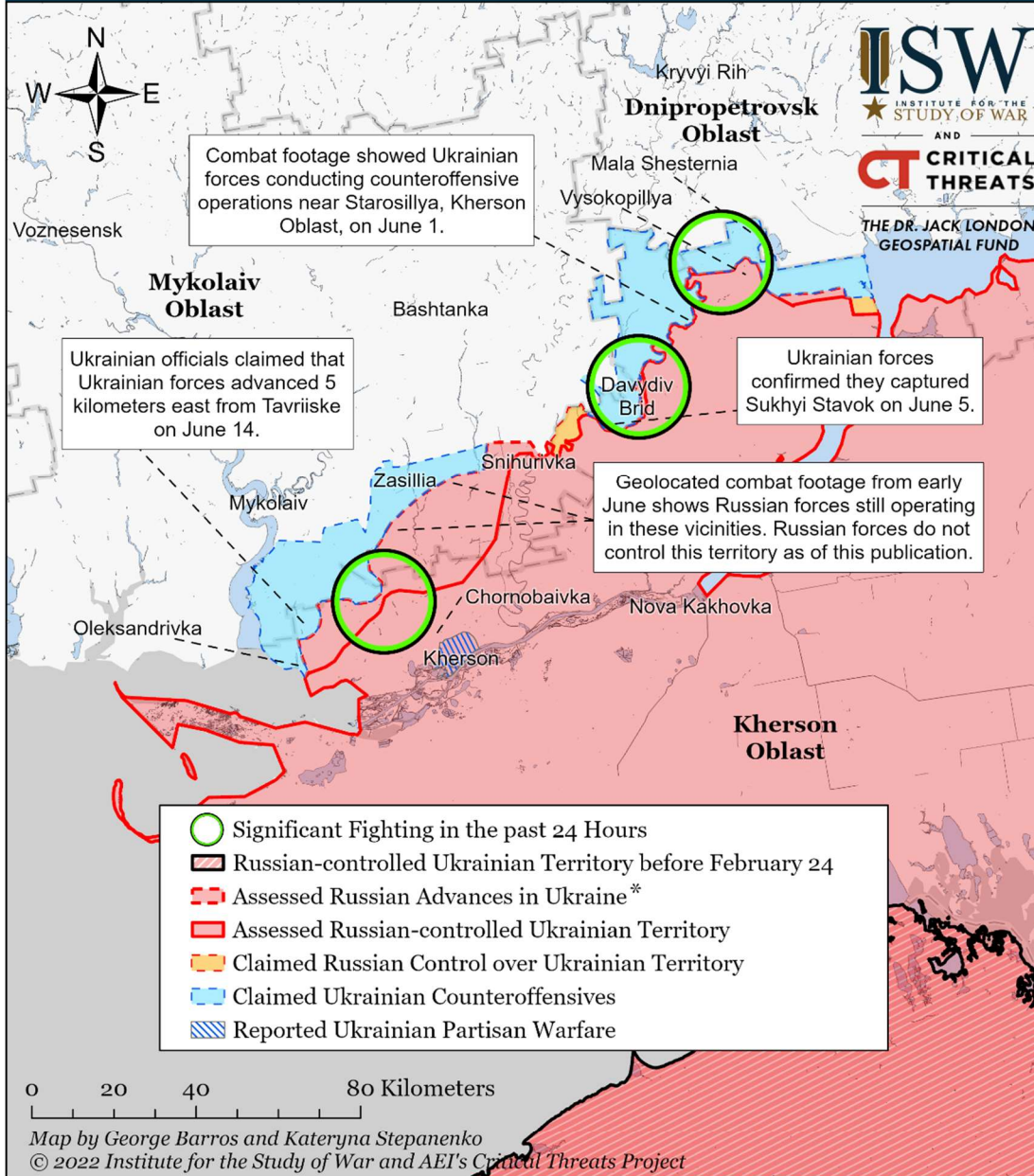
\* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Note: Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Malyar stated on June 20 that Ukrainian forces have nearly reached the Ukrainian-Russian border. ISW will map Ukrainian counteroffensives when we observe corroborating evidence. We expanded Ukrainian counteroffensives in Rtyshchivka, just southwest of Chuhuiv, based on the Ukrainian General Staff report that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian reconnaissance-in-force attempt on the settlement on June 20.

## **Supporting Effort #2—Southern Axis (Objective: Defend Kherson and Zaporizhia Oblasts against Ukrainian counterattacks)**

Russian forces focused on defensive operations and fired on Ukrainian positions along the Southern Axis on June 20.<sup>23</sup> Russian forces intensified artillery strikes on the Mykolaiv-Kherson Oblast border, likely in response to recent Ukrainian counterattacks along the border south of Davydiv Brid and just north of Kherson City.<sup>24</sup> Ukraine's Zaporizhia Oblast Military Administration stated that Russian forces are continuing to move equipment northwards towards the Vasylivka district (approximately 40 kilometers south of Zaporizhia City) in order to fortify and defend occupied positions in western Zaporizhia Oblast.<sup>25</sup> Commander of the Azov Regiment Rodion Kudryshov notably claimed that Ukrainian forces in Zaporizhia have moved from defensive to offensive positions, which is consistent with reporting that Russian troops are concentrating forces and equipment in Zaporizhia Oblast to prepare for potential Ukrainian counteroffensives.<sup>26</sup> Russian forces are reportedly engaging in continual counter-battery operations along the E105 (also known as the M18) highway that runs through Vasylivka south of Zaporizhia City.<sup>27</sup> Russian forces continued missile and artillery strikes against various areas of Kherson, Zaporizhia, Dnipropetrovsk, Mykolaiv, and Odesa Oblasts.<sup>28</sup>

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of June 20, 2022, 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.

Note: ISW is unable to independently verify conflicting reports about the status of the Ukrainian bridgehead near Davydiv Brid as of June 20. The Ukrainian Southern Operational Command reported on June 19 that Ukrainian aviation launched air strikes on Davydiv Brid and Snihurivka, indicating that Russian units remain in the Davydiv Brid area. The Ukrainian General Staff reported on June 13 that Russian forces conducted UAV reconnaissance in the area of Davydiv Brid to clarify Ukrainian positions, indicating a continued Ukrainian presence near Davydiv Brid. Combat footage of Ukrainian forces shelling Russian positions near Lozove and Andriivka released on June 17 was likely recorded on an earlier date. Melitopol Mayor Ivan Fedorov also claimed that Ukrainian forces made unspecified advances towards Kherson City on June 19. We will update our maps as we collect and confirm more information.

**Activity in Russian-occupied Areas (Russian objective: consolidate administrative control of occupied areas; set conditions for potential annexation into the Russian Federation or some other future political arrangement of Moscow's choosing)**

Russian authorities continued to struggle with consolidating control of occupied territories in the face of persistent Ukrainian partisan pressure. The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported on June 20 that mass partisan activity in occupied territories is preventing Russian authorities from being able to present public support for the accession of these areas to Russia.<sup>29</sup> The Ukrainian Main Intelligence Directorate (GUR) similarly claimed that Russian authorities in Berdyansk are faking queues for Russian passports at local administrative centers in order to fabricate a false façade of public desire for Russian citizenship.<sup>30</sup> The GUR additionally reported that Russian occupation authorities in Starobilsk, Luhansk Oblast, are coercing people into collective farming schemes and forcing those who work in these schemes into taking Russian citizenship.<sup>31</sup> Ukrainian partisan activity is likely having administrative consequences on Russian efforts to institute Russian citizenship processes *en masse* within occupied territories.

- 
- <sup>1</sup> <https://armyinform dot com.ua/2022/06/20/vorog-namagatymetsya-vyjty-na-kordony-luganskoyi-oblasti-do-26-chervnya-ganna-malyar/>
- <sup>2</sup> <https://armyinform dot com.ua/2022/06/20/vorog-namagatymetsya-vyjty-na-kordony-luganskoyi-oblasti-do-26-chervnya-ganna-malyar/>
- <sup>3</sup> <https://t.me/luhanskaVTSA/3630>
- <sup>4</sup> [https://twitter.com/ukraine\\_world/status/1538911097138331648](https://twitter.com/ukraine_world/status/1538911097138331648)
- <sup>5</sup> <https://twitter.com/FCDOGovUK/status/1538827534967910400>
- <sup>6</sup> <https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1538761939370795008>;  
<https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1538762047856463872>;  
<https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1538762219902717952>;  
<https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1538762619674365952>;  
<https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1538762728462065664>
- <sup>7</sup> <https://t.me/luhanskaVTSA/3630>
- <sup>8</sup> <https://t.me/luhanskaVTSA/3622>; <https://t.me/luhanskaVTSA/3630>
- <sup>9</sup> <https://armyinform dot com.ua/2022/06/20/vorog-namagatymetsya-vyjty-na-kordony-luganskoyi-oblasti-do-26-chervnya-ganna-malyar/>
- <sup>10</sup> <https://t.me/luhanskaVTSA/3622>; [https://twitter.com/The\\_Lookout\\_N/status/1538639693688053763](https://twitter.com/The_Lookout_N/status/1538639693688053763);  
<https://twitter.com/TpyxaNews/status/1538928575579099138>;  
[https://twitter.com/666\\_mancer/status/1538803220654567424](https://twitter.com/666_mancer/status/1538803220654567424)
- <sup>11</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/343975544582197>;  
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/343975544582197>
- <sup>12</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/344356421210776>
- <sup>13</sup> <https://t.me/milchronicles/770>
- <sup>14</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/343975544582197>
- <sup>15</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/344356421210776>;  
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/343975544582197>
- <sup>16</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/344356421210776>
- <sup>17</sup> [https://t.me/RKadyrov\\_95/2355](https://t.me/RKadyrov_95/2355)
- <sup>18</sup> <https://armyinform dot com.ua/2022/06/20/vorog-namagatymetsya-vyjty-na-kordony-luganskoyi-oblasti-do-26-chervnya-ganna-malyar/>
- <sup>19</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/343975544582197>;  
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/344356421210776>
- <sup>20</sup> <https://t.me/spravdi/11152>; <https://armyinform dot com.ua/2022/06/20/syly-oborony-majzhe-vyjshly-do-derzhkordonu-na-harkivshhyni-cherez-cze-rf-posylyly-obstrily/>
- <sup>21</sup> <https://t.me/spravdi/11152>; <https://armyinform dot com.ua/2022/06/20/syly-oborony-majzhe-vyjshly-do-derzhkordonu-na-harkivshhyni-cherez-cze-rf-posylyly-obstrily/>; <https://t.me/synegubov/3466>
- <sup>22</sup> <https://t.me/synegubov/3466>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/344356421210776>
- <sup>23</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/344356421210776>;  
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/343975544582197>;  
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=434410611569206>; <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=700733344551459>;  
[https://t.me/zoda\\_gov\\_ua/9358](https://t.me/zoda_gov_ua/9358)
- <sup>24</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/343975544582197>; <https://t.me/milchronicles/770>
- <sup>25</sup> [https://t.me/zoda\\_gov\\_ua/9358](https://t.me/zoda_gov_ua/9358)
- <sup>26</sup> <https://t.me/milchronicles/770>; <https://t.me/mariupolnow/13953>
- <sup>27</sup> <https://t.me/milchronicles/770>
- <sup>28</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=434410611569206>; [https://t.me/Bratchuk\\_Sergey/14178](https://t.me/Bratchuk_Sergey/14178);  
<https://t.me/stranaua/47941>; <https://t.me/stranaua/47935>; [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/16936](https://t.me/mod_russia/16936);

---

[https://t.me/rlz\\_the\\_kraken/50743](https://t.me/rlz_the_kraken/50743); <https://t.me/sashakots/33800>; <https://t.me/milchronicles/770>;  
<https://t.me/dnipropetrovskaODA/1175>; [https://t.me/mykola\\_lukashuk/623](https://t.me/mykola_lukashuk/623); [https://t.me/zoda\\_gov\\_ua/9360](https://t.me/zoda_gov_ua/9360);  
[https://t.me/zoda\\_gov\\_ua/9358](https://t.me/zoda_gov_ua/9358); <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/344356421210776>;  
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/343975544582197>

<sup>29</sup> <https://sprotyv-dot-mod.gov.ua/2022/06/20/cherez-sprotyv-rosiyany-ne-mozhut-zimituvaty-dobrovolne-vhodzhennya-okupovanyh-terytorij-v-sklad-rf/>

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/DefenceIntelligenceofUkraine/posts/337599271884833>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/DefenceIntelligenceofUkraine/posts/337599271884833>