

**Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, May 12, 2023**  
**Karolina Hird, Grace Mappes, Nicole Wolkov, Layne Philipson, and**  
**Frederick W. Kagan**  
**May 12, 2023, 6:15pm 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 3:00 pm ET on May 12. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the May 13 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.*

*Important Note: ISW has reindexed its map layer for reported Ukrainian counteroffensives on May 12, 2023. We removed reported Ukrainian counteroffensive coded before May 1, 2023, in order to delineate more clearly new Ukrainian territorial gains from gains secured in previous Ukrainian counteroffensives. ISW retained a few reported Ukrainian counteroffensive polygons from before May 1, 2023, specifically on the Dnipro River Delta south of Kherson Oblast, to preserve context in that complex area of operations. May 1, 2023, is an arbitrary date and does not mark the beginning or end of any assessed Ukrainian or Russian effort. ISW has reindexed its map layers before and similarly removed old reported Ukrainian counteroffensives around Kyiv, Zhytomyr, Chernihiv, and Sumy oblasts following the conclusion of the Battle of Kyiv in April 2022.*

**Ukrainian forces have made gains northwest of Bakhmut in localized counterattacks as of May 12.** Geolocated footage posted on May 12 shows Russian forces fleeing Ukrainian artillery fire on the southern bank of the Berkhivske Reservoir, about 4km northwest of Bakhmut.<sup>1</sup> This footage visually confirms claims made by a number of Russian milbloggers that Ukrainian forces made gains northwest of Bakhmut in the area between Bohdanivka and Berkhivka.<sup>2</sup> One Russian milblogger claimed that elements of the 200th Separate Motorized Rifle Brigade (14th Army Corps, Northern Fleet) lost their positions in the area between Hryhorivka and Dubovo-Vasylivka (about 6km northwest of Bakhmut).<sup>3</sup> Several Russian sources warned that Ukrainian forces may be attempting to encircle the Wagner Group within Bakhmut.<sup>4</sup> Wagner Group financier Yevgeny Priogozhin emphasized that Ukrainian forces are approaching Berkhivka and claimed that Ukraine now holds positions within 500m of Bakhmut's northwestern city limits.<sup>5</sup> Russian milbloggers additionally reported that Ukrainian troops are counterattacking towards Khromove (3km west of Bakhmut), Bohdanivka (6km northwest of Bakhmut), and Klishchiivka (6km southwest of Bakhmut).<sup>6</sup> One Russian milblogger claimed that the situation southwest of Bakhmut near Mayorsk has stabilized following Ukrainian attacks on positions of the 1st Donetsk People's Republic Army Corps.<sup>7</sup> The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) rejected claims made by other Russian sources regarding Ukrainian advances and claimed instead that elements of the 4th Separate Motorized Rifle Brigade (Luhansk People's Republic) and 200th Separate Motorized Rifle Brigade (14th Army Corps, Northern Fleet) repelled all attacks in the Berkhivka area "taking into account the favorable conditions of the Berkhivske Reservoir."<sup>8</sup>

**Russian milbloggers and other prominent voices in the pro-war information space continue to respond to recent Ukrainian counterattacks with varying degrees of caution and anxiety.** Many milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian activity around Bakhmut marks the official beginning of the anticipated spring counteroffensive and speculated about where Ukraine's main effort will take place.<sup>9</sup> Several prominent Russian voices, however, urged caution and restraint in responding to the counteroffensive, suggesting that some milbloggers are advocating for the application of certain lessons they took from the information space meltdown during Ukraine's successful Kharkiv and Kherson counteroffensives. Some milbloggers warned that reports

about Ukrainian success could be a deliberate Ukrainian attempt to sow panic.<sup>10</sup> Another milblogger warned against accepting all reports that Ukrainian activities are “psychological operations” at face value and voiced concern about Russian propaganda responses to the counterattacks.<sup>11</sup> One milblogger suggested that credible reports of Ukrainian counterattacks do not mean that the “everything is on fire,” cautioning the audience against falling into despair.<sup>12</sup> The milblogger remarked that telling the truth about Ukrainian operations does not amount to “sowing panic.”<sup>13</sup> The overall Russian information space response appears to be focused on the idea of avoiding spreading panic.

**Ukrainian and American officials stated that Ukrainian forces have not yet started the planned counteroffensive.** Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Malyar stated on May 12 that Ukrainian forces are still conducting defensive operations, which sometimes include counterattacks and other unspecified active actions.<sup>14</sup> A senior US military official and a senior Western official stated on May 12 that Ukrainian forces have started conducting “shaping” operations in advance of the counteroffensive.<sup>15</sup> Western reporting on this subject notably contradicts Russian sources, many of which have claimed the counteroffensive is officially underway.

**Senior Russian officials proposed a series of domestic repression and censorship measures during the St. Petersburg International Legal Forum on May 11.** The theme of the forum centered on the criminalization of “Russophobia,” a measure that Russian Human Rights Council Chairperson Valery Fadeev proposed and Deputy Minister of Justice Andrey Loginov and Russian Ombudsman Tatyana Moskalkova supported.<sup>16</sup> Moskalkova defined Russophobia as a “misanthropic ideology,” and a State Duma deputy claimed that the International Criminal Court’s arrest warrants for Russian officials for the kidnapping of Ukrainian children to Russia is an example of “Russophobia.”<sup>17</sup> Deputy Minister of Justice Oleg Sviridenko announced an expansion of the law against “foreign agents” to include a section penalizing “third parties” for aiding foreign agents in violating Russian law.<sup>18</sup> Russian Investigative Committee Chairperson Alexander Bastrykin asked Russian Constitutional Court Chairperson Valery Zorkin to look into ways of establishing an unspecified state ideology in the Russian Constitution, which Bastrykin claimed would require the Duma to adopt a new constitution rather than pass an amendment.<sup>19</sup> Russian Minister of Justice Konstantin Chuychenko supported Bastrykin’s proposal, but Zorkin noted that the current constitution contains a set of values that can “allow civil society to connect.”<sup>20</sup> Senior Russian officials’ introduction of such proposals indicates that the Kremlin may be gauging the information space reaction to increased repression measures and setting conditions for long-term strengthening of these measures.

**Former Russian officer and ardent nationalist Igor Girkin’s newly formed “Club of Angry Patriots” held a press conference on May 12 to discuss its discontent with the current Russian conduct of the war in Ukraine.** Former self-proclaimed Donetsk People’s Republic (DNR) “People’s Governor” Pavel Gubarev emphasized that the goal of the “special military operation” should be the “elimination of Ukrainian statehood,” and “Another Russia” political party coordinator Mikhail Aksel accused Russian authorities of not taking the steps needed to realize the goals of the war.<sup>21</sup> Girkin himself reiterated his belief that the Russian military in its current state cannot achieve decisive battlefield results and criticized the inaction of Russian leadership.<sup>22</sup> As ISW has previously assessed, the Club of Angry Patriots is using its platform to launch specific critiques at the inner circles of Russian leadership while protecting a pro-war faction within the Kremlin.<sup>23</sup> The public format of this press conference is additionally noteworthy--Girkin and other members of the club typically use their individual Telegram channels to propagate their talking points, and a public press conference suggests that they have had some success in reaching broader audiences, potentially as domestic pro-war factions are increasingly discontent with the way Russia has been fighting the war thus far. The Club of Angry Patriots notably held the press conference during a period of high information space agitation about a future Ukrainian counteroffensive, which may inflame some factions’ criticisms of senior Russian leadership for poor performance in the war.

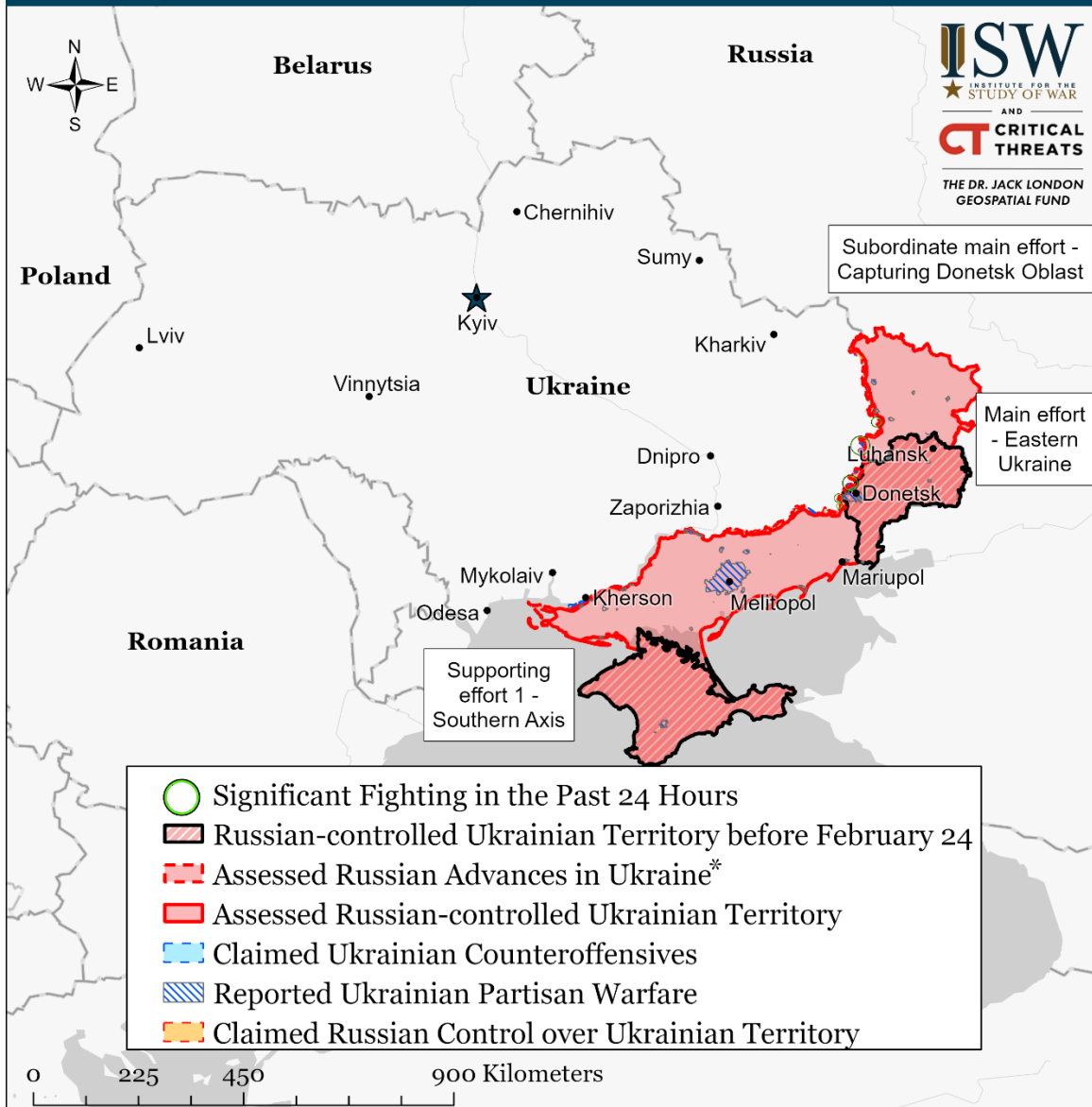
**U.S. Ambassador to South Africa Reuben Brigety accused South Africa of loading a Russian ship with ammunition and weapons in December 2022, contradicting its proclaimed neutral stance on the war in Ukraine.**<sup>24</sup> Brigety stated on May 11 that a sanctioned Russian vessel containing weapons departed the Simon’s Town naval base in Cape Town on December 9, 2022, and arrived in Novorossiysk on

February 22, 2023.<sup>25</sup> White House National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby stated on May 12 that these reports are a “serious issue” as the US has consistently and strongly urged other countries not to supply weapons to Russia.<sup>26</sup> South African officials stated that there is no evidence to support US accusations and summoned Brigety on May 12 after criticizing his statements.<sup>27</sup>

### **Key Takeaways**

- **Ukrainian forces have made gains northwest of Bakhmut in localized counterattacks as of May 12.**
- **Russian milbloggers and other prominent voices in the pro-war information space continue to respond to recent Ukrainian counterattacks with varying degrees of caution and anxiety.**
- **Ukrainian and American officials stated that Ukrainian forces have not yet started the planned counteroffensive.**
- **Senior Russian officials proposed a series of domestic repression and censorship measures during the St. Petersburg International Legal Forum on May 11.**
- **Former Russian officer and ardent nationalist Igor Girkin’s newly formed “Club of Angry Patriots” held a press conference on May 12 to discuss its discontent with the current Russian conduct of the war in Ukraine.**
- **U.S. Ambassador to South Africa Reuben Brigety accused South Africa of loading a Russian ship with ammunition and weapons in December 2022, contradicting its proclaimed neutral stance on the war in Ukraine.**
- **The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) attempted to distract from and assuage information space paranoia over a potential Ukrainian counteroffensive on the Kharkiv-Luhansk front.**
- **Russian forces continue limited ground attacks in and around Bakhmut.**
- **Russian sources continue to speculate about potential Ukrainian counteroffensive preparations in southern Ukraine.**
- **Russian forces continue to recruit convicts and establish volunteer battalions as a part of crypto-mobilization efforts.**
- **Senior Russian officials are claiming that they are taking active measures to return displaced and illegally deported Ukrainian civilians, including Ukrainian children, to occupied Ukraine.**

# Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of May 12, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Will Kiehl, 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.

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

***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**

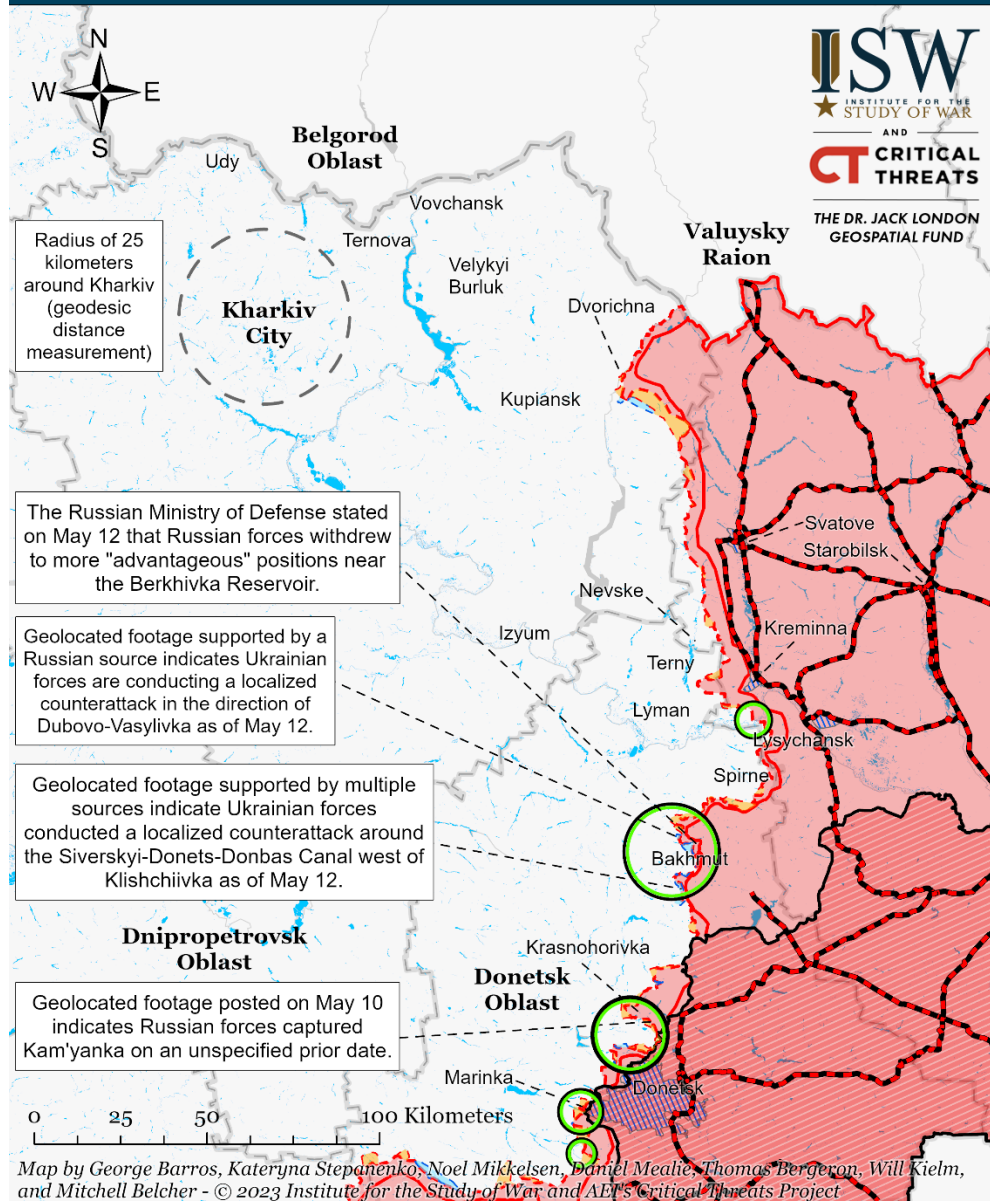
#### **Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Luhansk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and northern Donetsk Oblast)**

The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) attempted to distract from and assuage information space paranoia over a potential Ukrainian counteroffensive on the Kharkiv-Luhansk front. The Russian MoD denied that Ukrainian forces broke through Russian lines in the Kupyansk and Lyman directions on May 11, instead claiming that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian sabotage and reconnaissance groups near Kotlyarivka, Kharkiv Oblast (25km northwest of Svatove), and Dibrova (5km southwest of Kreminna) and Kreminna, Luhansk Oblast.<sup>28</sup> The MoD also posted footage on May 12 of Russian forces using T-90, T-80, and T-72B3 tanks, and BMP-2 infantry fighting vehicles conducting ground attacks near Spirne (26km south of Kreminna).<sup>29</sup> Geolocation of the Russian MoD's footage indicates that Russian forces only made marginal advances west of Spirne.<sup>30</sup>

Russian forces conducted limited ground attacks along the Svatove-Kreminna line on May 12. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful offensive actions in the Se rebrianska forest area (10km south of Kreminna).<sup>31</sup> A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful ground attacks towards Stelmakhivka (15km northwest of Svatove), Terny (16km west of Kreminna), and Torske (14km west of Kreminna).<sup>32</sup>

Ukrainian forces continue to target Russian rear areas in Luhansk Oblast, sparking some information space fear about Ukrainian long range strike capabilities. Geolocated footage shows the aftermath of explosions at the Luhansk Machine Building Plant in Luhansk City (roughly 80-100km behind the front line) on May 12.<sup>33</sup> A Russian milblogger speculated that Ukrainian forces may have used a long-range weapon, such as a cruise missile or the newly delivered Storm Shadow missiles, in this strike.<sup>34</sup> Other milbloggers claimed that it is too early to tell which weapon Ukrainian forces used but warned that the whole of the Russian rear in Luhansk Oblast is within range of Storm Shadow missiles.<sup>35</sup>

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kharkiv as of May 12, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Russian Ground Lines of Communication
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory\*
- Claimed Russian Control over 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: The Ukrainian counteroffensive layer displays areas previously assigned to the Russian control, Russian advances, or Russian claims layers where ISW now assesses that Ukrainian forces have established a presence beyond a short-term raid. Inclusion of an area on this layer does not imply that ISW assesses that the area is part of any upcoming Ukrainian counteroffensive operation.

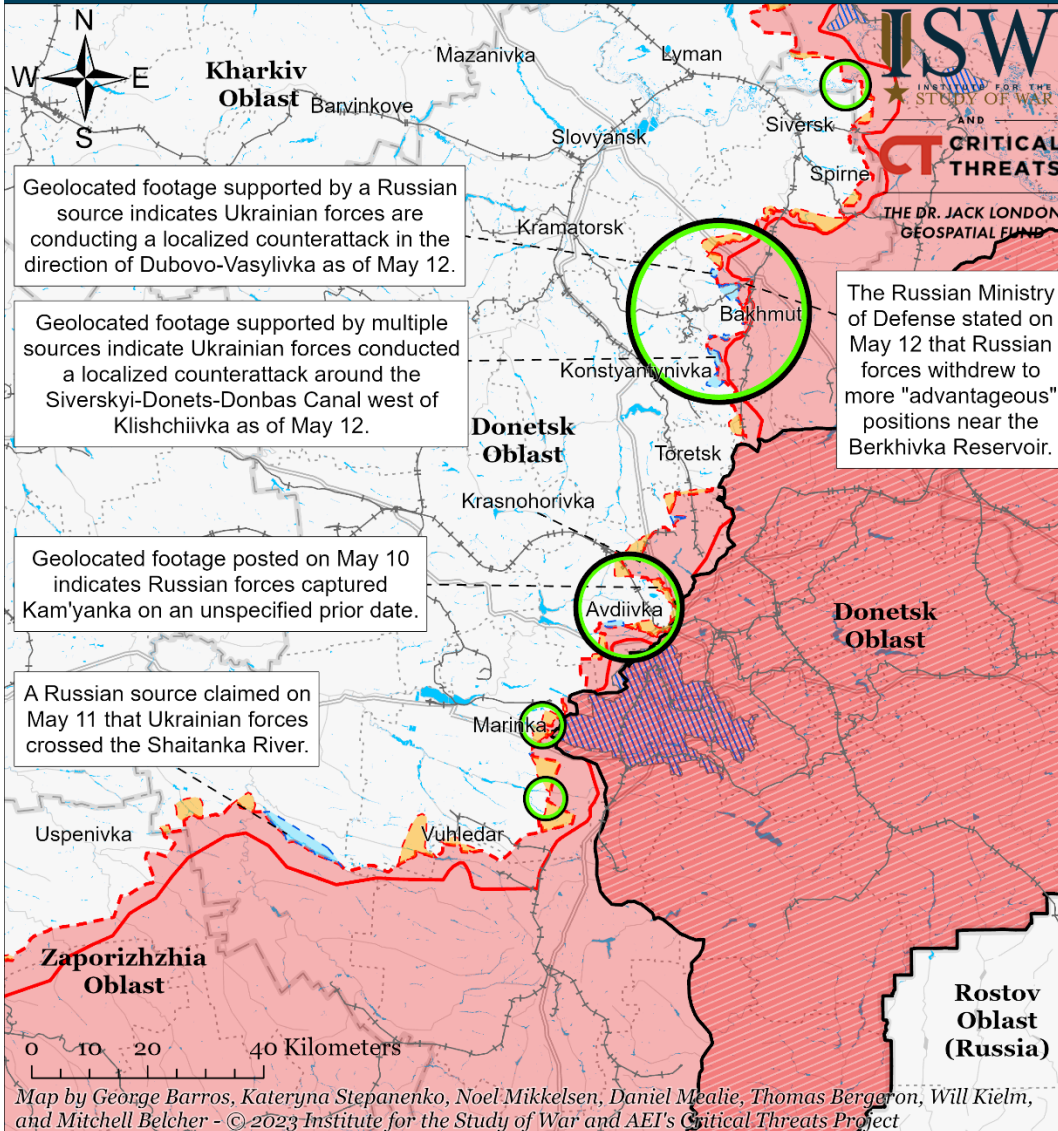
## **Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Donetsk Oblast (Russian Objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)**

Russian forces continued ground attacks in and around Bakhmut on May 12 against the backdrop of localized Ukrainian counterattacks. Geolocated footage posted on May 12 shows that Russian forces have advanced between Marshal Tolbukhin and Iryna Levchenko streets in northwestern Bakhmut.<sup>36</sup> Russian sources claimed that Wagner fighters captured 220m of territory in Bakhmut and are attacking three main fortified areas in the northwestern sector of the city.<sup>37</sup> Prigozhin claimed that Ukraine holds 2.18 square kilometers of territory in Bakhmut.<sup>38</sup> The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces additionally conducted unsuccessful offensive operations towards Stupochky (11km southwest of Bakhmut just south of the T0504 Kostyantynivka-Chasiv Yar-Bakhmut road), Orikhovo-Vasylivka (11km northwest of Bakhmut), and Hryhorivka (9km northwest of Bakhmut).<sup>39</sup> Ukrainian Eastern Group of Force Spokesperson Colonel Serhiy Cherevaty stated on May 12 that over 40 combat clashes have occurred in the Bakhmut direction over the past day and that the situation for Russian forces is overall worsening because Wagner is being supplanted by motorized rifle and paratrooper elements that are comprised of poorly trained and motivated mobilized personnel.<sup>40</sup>

Russian forces continued ground attacks along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City frontline on May 12. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian troops conducted unsuccessful offensive actions near Avdiivka and on the southwestern outskirts of Donetsk City near Marinka and Novomykhailivka.<sup>41</sup> Geolocated footage posted on May 11 shows that Russian forces have made marginal advances within 2km southeast of Avdiivka.<sup>42</sup> A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces have changed the direction of attacks on Avdiivka from the southwest to the east and are attempting to advance on Avdiivka from the Krutka Balka area.<sup>43</sup>

Russian forces did not conduct any confirmed ground attacks in western Donetsk Oblast on May 12. Russian forces shelled the Vuhledar area (30km southwest of Donetsk City) but did not conduct any ground attacks towards the settlement.<sup>44</sup> A Russian milblogger claimed that reports of Ukrainian activity in Hulyaipole-Polohy area in eastern Zaporizhia Oblast are false.<sup>45</sup> A Russian milblogger posted footage reportedly of Russian airstrikes on the Hulyaipole area.<sup>46</sup>

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of May 12, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



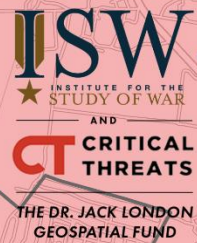
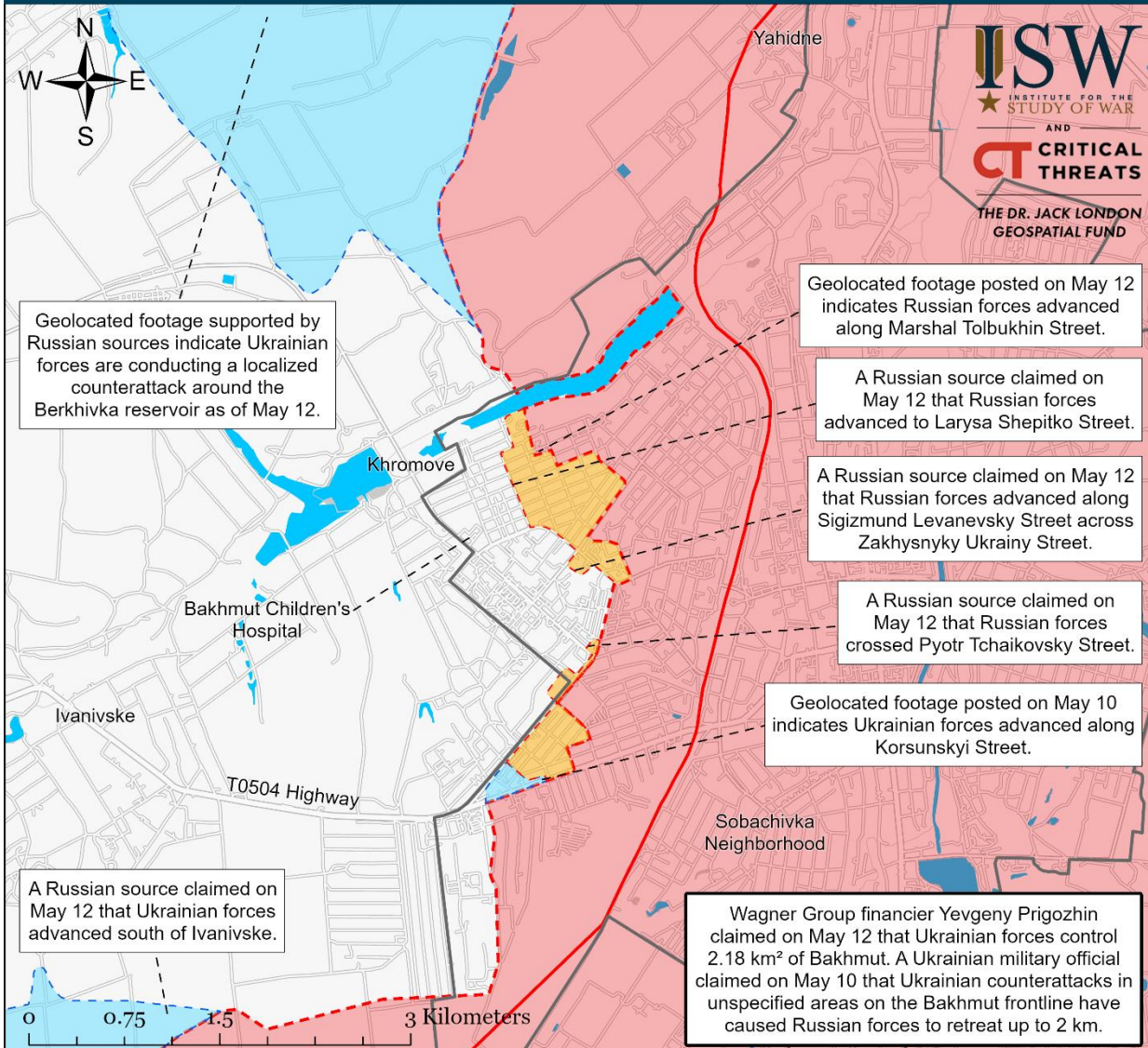
- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine\*
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Major Railroads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

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

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



# Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of May 12, 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

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

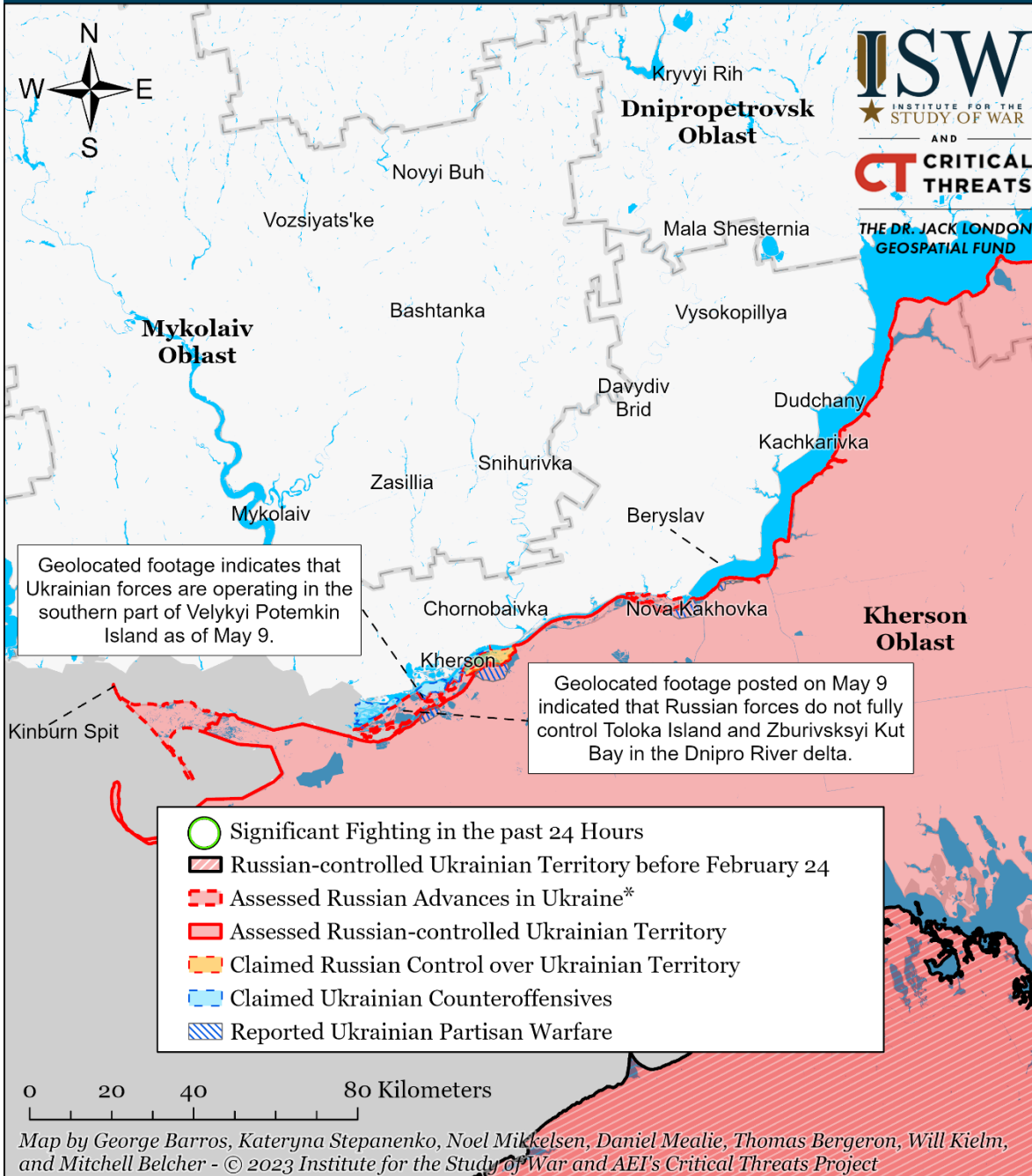
\* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

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

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

Russian sources continue to speculate about potential Ukrainian counteroffensive preparations in southern Ukraine. Zaporizhia Oblast occupation deputy Vladimir Rogov claimed on May 11 that he could not confirm reports that Ukrainian forces launched the full-scale counteroffensive in the Zaporizhia direction.<sup>47</sup> Kherson Oblast occupation head Vladimir Saldo claimed on May 11 that the situation along the frontline near the Dnipro River is stable and that some Russian occupation officials were spreading false information that they found sensational.<sup>48</sup> A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces are concentrating forces in Kherson and Mykolaiv oblasts, while another claimed that reports that Ukrainian forces are accumulating boats on the west (right) bank of the Dnipro River is unconfirmed.<sup>49</sup> Another Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian forces from an unspecified area of the east (left) bank of the Dnipro River.<sup>50</sup>

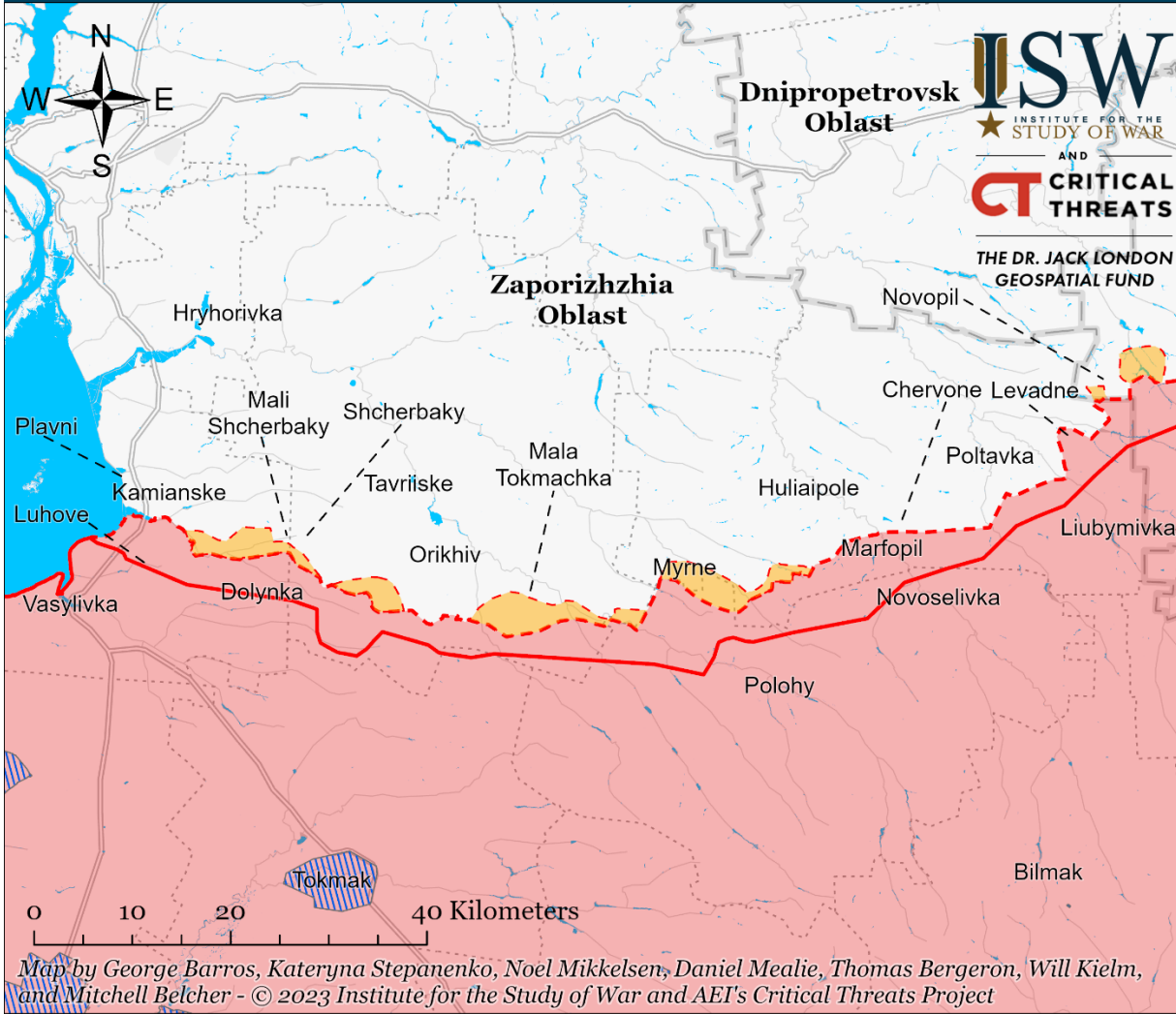
# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of May 12, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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

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# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhia as of May 12, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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
- 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.

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

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

Russian authorities continue to recruit prisoners to augment crypto-mobilization efforts. Russian opposition outlet *Mobilization News*, citing Russian human rights organization *Gulagu.net*, reported that the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) recruited 400 prisoners including those with HIV and hepatitis from Kama penal colonies in Perm Krai on May 8 and 9.<sup>51</sup> *BBC* and Russian opposition outlet *MediaZona* confirmed the deaths of 10,230 Russian personnel, including 3,953 convicts, in Ukraine since December 1, 2022. *BBC* reported that since February 2022 most convicts have served under Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republic proxy forces. ISW has previously reported on the Russian MoD's efforts to recruit convicts.<sup>52</sup>

Russian forces continue to establish volunteer units to support crypto-mobilization efforts. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces are forming a separate motorized rifle brigade of the Southern Military District in Stavropol Krai in order to strengthen Russian forces in Ukraine.<sup>53</sup> The Ukrainian General Staff reported that the contract personnel of the brigade are motivated to make money but have little motivation to participate in combat. Chechen Republic head Ramzan Kadyrov also claimed that volunteers who receive training at the Special Forces University in Gudermes, Chechnya depart every week from Chechnya to fight in Ukraine and that another group of volunteers just left for Ukraine.<sup>54</sup>

## **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)**

Senior Russian officials are claiming that they are taking active measures to return displaced and illegally deported Ukrainian civilians, including Ukrainian children, to occupied Ukraine. Russian President Vladimir Putin on May 12 instructed the Russian government to add a subparagraph to the State Migration Policy to create conditions necessary to return civilians who had fled their homes in occupied territories after Russia's invasion of Ukraine.<sup>55</sup> Russian Commissioner for Children's Rights Maria Lvova-Belova claimed that Ukraine contacted Russia to return Ukrainian children and their parents from Russia and that she provided data on Ukrainian children and their parents believed to be in Russia.<sup>56</sup> Lvova-Belova fell short of promising returns of civilians, however, instead claiming that the Russian Commissioner's Office will examine the request and provide the information that it can.

Russian sources claimed that unknown actors attempted to assassinate two Russian occupation officials in Melitopol, Zaporizhia Oblast on May 11. Russian sources claimed on May 11 that an unidentified individual attempted to use an improvised explosive device (IED) to assassinate the occupied Zaporizhia Oblast Regional Court Chairman, injuring two security guards but failing to kill or wound the chairman.<sup>57</sup> Russian sources claimed on May 11 that unknown actor attempted to use an IED to kill the occupied Zaporizhia Oblast Deputy Minister of Construction.<sup>58</sup> Ukrainian news outlet *Ukrainska Pravda* reported that the official was transported to a local hospital with injuries.<sup>59</sup>

Russian occupation authorities continue to announce patronage-like programs with Russian regions. Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) head Leonid Pasechnik stated on May 12 that the Republic of Tartarstan is officially the patron of Rubizhne, occupied Luhansk Oblast.<sup>60</sup> Pasechnik also thanked the Tartar Republic for its existing patronage of Lysychansk.<sup>61</sup>

**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.**

The Belarusian Ministry of Defense (MoD) announced on May 12 that the 120<sup>th</sup> Separate Guards Mechanized Brigade conducted combat training exercises. The Belarusian MoD also claimed it is commissioning new reinforcements who are or will soon take part in various training to support existing units.<sup>62</sup>

**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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<sup>1</sup> <https://twitter.com/region776/status/1656894839710179328>; <https://twitter.com/Mortenthebjorn/status/1656903842917765121> ; [https://t.me/Pravda\\_Gerashchenko/70841](https://t.me/Pravda_Gerashchenko/70841) ; <https://twitter.com/Militarylandnet/status/1657006499674071040?s=20> ; <https://twitter.com/M0nstas/status/1657008256311500800?s=20>; <https://twitter.com/GeoConfirmed/status/1657018980316463104?s=20>; <https://twitter.com/M0nstas/status/1657008256311500800?s=20>; <https://twitter.com/mirthaHR/status/1657039998342799362?s=20>

<sup>2</sup> <https://t.me/readovkanews/58715>; <https://t.me/readovkanews/58719>; <https://t.me/brussinf/5965>; <https://t.me/brussinf/5964>; <https://t.me/rybar/46929>; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/47490>

<sup>3</sup> <https://t.me/brussinf/5968>

<sup>4</sup> <https://t.me/readovkanews/58706>; <https://t.me/epoddubny/15910>; <https://t.me/readovkanews/58715>; <https://t.me/readovkanews/58719>

<sup>5</sup> [https://t.me/concordgroup\\_official/948](https://t.me/concordgroup_official/948)

<sup>6</sup> <https://t.me/wargonzo/12466>; <https://t.me/milchronicles/1907>

<sup>7</sup> <https://t.me/wargonzo/12484>; [https://t.me/z\\_arhiv/21224](https://t.me/z_arhiv/21224); <https://t.me/genshtab24/23044>; <https://t.me/wargonzo/12463>

<sup>8</sup> [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/26512](https://t.me/mod_russia/26512)

<sup>9</sup> <https://t.me/milchronicles/1905>; <https://t.me/milchronicles/1907>; <https://t.me/readovkanews/58713>; <https://t.me/readovkanews/58715>; <https://t.me/readovkanews/58719>

<sup>10</sup> <https://t.me/kommunist/17318>; <https://t.me/rybar/46920>; <https://t.me/rybar/46921>

<sup>11</sup> <https://t.me/Agdchan/10265>

<sup>12</sup> <https://t.me/akashevarova/6378>

<sup>13</sup> <https://t.me/akashevarova/6378>

<sup>14</sup> <https://t.me/annamaliar/724>

<sup>15</sup> <https://edition.cnn.com/europe/live-news/russia-ukraine-war-news-05-11-23/index.html>

<sup>16</sup> <https://meduza dot io/slides/oh-pohozhe-v-rossii-mogut-zapretit-transgendernyy-perehod-i-ob-yavit-rusofobiyyu-prestupleniem-a-za-pomosch-inoagentam-budut-shtrafovat>; <https://tass dot ru/politika/17730705>; <https://t.me/sotaproject/58829>

<sup>17</sup> <https://t.me/sotaproject/58835>

<sup>18</sup> <https://sozd.duma dot gov.ru/bill/346727-8>; <https://tass dot ru/politika/17725065>

<sup>19</sup> <https://meduza.io/slides/oh-pohozhe-v-rossii-mogut-zapretit-transgendernyy-perehod-i-ob-yavit-rusofobiyyu-prestupleniem-a-za-pomosch-inoagentam-budut-shtrafovat>

<sup>20</sup> [https://www.kommersant dot ru/doc/5979267?from=glavnoe\\_4](https://www.kommersant dot ru/doc/5979267?from=glavnoe_4); <https://meduza dot io/slides/oh-pohozhe-v-rossii-mogut-zapretit-transgendernyy-perehod-i-ob-yavit-rusofobiyyu-prestupleniem-a-za-pomosch-inoagentam-budut-shtrafovat>

<sup>21</sup> <https://t.me/KRPRus/3>

<sup>22</sup> <https://t.me/KRPRus/29>

<sup>23</sup> <https://isw.pub/UkrWar041823>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.ft.com/content/7ad94426-aafc-4f04-99d7-05f6d5e6f71d>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.ft.com/content/7ad94426-aafc-4f04-99d7-05f6d5e6f71d>; <https://apnews.com/article/russia-weapons-arms-south-africa-e89bac38997f240655ddf5d892e44f85>

<sup>26</sup> <https://news.sky.com/story/its-a-serious-issue-white-house-responds-to-claims-south-africa-passed-weapons-to-russia-12879320>

<sup>27</sup> [https://twitter.com/ClaysonMonyela/status/1656944484083548161?ref\\_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwttrm%3A](https://twitter.com/ClaysonMonyela/status/1656944484083548161?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw%7Ctwcamp%5Etweetembed%7Ctwttrm%3A)

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<sup>28</sup> [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/26502](https://t.me/mod_russia/26502); [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/26512](https://t.me/mod_russia/26512); [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/26513](https://t.me/mod_russia/26513);

[https://t.me/mod\\_russia/26511](https://t.me/mod_russia/26511)

<sup>29</sup> [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/26518](https://t.me/mod_russia/26518) ; [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/26519](https://t.me/mod_russia/26519)

<sup>30</sup> <https://twitter.com/franfran2424/status/1656944091999944705>;

<https://twitter.com/franfran2424/status/1656965007123390469>; <https://twitter.com/franfran2424/status/1656946104842240000>;

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<sup>32</sup> <https://t.me/wargonzo/12466>

<sup>33</sup> [https://twitter.com/bayraktar\\_1love/status/1657051184144711680?s=20](https://twitter.com/bayraktar_1love/status/1657051184144711680?s=20);

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<sup>34</sup> <https://t.me/milchronicles/1910>

<sup>35</sup> <https://t.me/epoddubny/15926>; <https://t.me/epoddubny/15924>; <https://t.me/sashakots/39727>; <https://t.me/milinfofive/100547>;

<https://t.me/milinfofive/100546>; <https://t.me/milinfofive/100545>; <https://t.me/milinfofive/100544>

<sup>36</sup> <https://twitter.com/small10space/status/1656940102008930304>; <https://twitter.com/M0nstas/status/1656964510274469891>;

<https://twitter.com/PowerPigeon2/status/1656987428668751874>

<sup>37</sup> <https://t.me/rybar/46929>; [https://t.me/concordgroup\\_official/945](https://t.me/concordgroup_official/945)

<sup>38</sup> [https://t.me/concordgroup\\_official/945](https://t.me/concordgroup_official/945)

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<sup>40</sup> <https://armyinform.com> dot ua/2023/05/12/nasha-oboronna-operacziya-vidbuvayetsya-uspishno-vorog-vysnazhuyetsya-ta-znekrovlyuyetsya-sergij-cherevatyj/

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<sup>42</sup> [https://twitter.com/auditor\\_va/status/1657011662946201600](https://twitter.com/auditor_va/status/1657011662946201600); <https://t.me/DeepStateUA/16528>

<sup>43</sup> <https://t.me/wargonzo/12466>

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<sup>45</sup> <https://t.me/sashakots/39717>; <https://t.me/sashakots/39718>

<sup>46</sup> <https://t.me/milinfofive/100520>

<sup>47</sup> <https://t.me/vrogov/9421>

<sup>48</sup> [https://t.me/SALDO\\_VGA/787](https://t.me/SALDO_VGA/787)

<sup>49</sup> <https://t.me/rybar/46925>; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/47492>

<sup>50</sup> [https://t.me/rusich\\_army/8806](https://t.me/rusich_army/8806)

<sup>51</sup> <https://t.me/mobilizationnews/11952>

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<sup>52</sup> <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-may-1-2023>;  
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<sup>54</sup> [https://t.me/RKadyrov\\_95/3620](https://t.me/RKadyrov_95/3620)

<sup>55</sup> <https://ria-dot.ru/20230512/regiony-1871309753.html>; <http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/Document/View/0001202305120003?index=1&rangeSize=1>

<sup>56</sup> <https://t.me/malvovabelova/1414>; <https://t.me/malvovabelova/1413>

<sup>57</sup> <https://t.me/BalitskyEV/1079>; <https://t.me/readovkanews/58703>; [https://t.me/boris\\_rozhin/85526](https://t.me/boris_rozhin/85526);  
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<sup>58</sup> [https://t.me/basurin\\_e/1579](https://t.me/basurin_e/1579); <https://t.me/readovkanews/58746>; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/47509>;  
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<sup>59</sup> <https://www.pravda-dot.com.ua/news/2023/05/12/7401929/>

<sup>60</sup> [https://t.me/glava\\_Inr\\_info/1139](https://t.me/glava_Inr_info/1139)

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