

# Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, November 27, 2023

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November 27, 2023, 6:00pm 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 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 12:30pm ET on November 27. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the November 28 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.**

**A cyclone in the Black Sea and southern Ukraine caused infrastructure damage in many areas of coastal southern Russia and occupied Ukraine and is impacting the tempo of military operations along the frontline in Ukraine, but has notably not stopped military activity entirely.** Russian sources posted images and footage of the impact of the cyclone on civilian and transportation infrastructure in coastal areas of Krasnodar Krai, including near Sochi, Anapa, Gelendzhik, Novorossiysk, and Taupse.[1] Ukrainian and Russian sources also noted that coastal areas of occupied Crimea, occupied Kherson Oblast, and much of Odesa Oblast were heavily impacted by heavy snow and high winds, leaving large swaths of the population without electricity.[2] The Ukrainian Navy and Ukraine's Southern Operational Command notably reported that dangerous weather in the Black Sea forced Russia to return all of its naval vessels and missile carriers to their base points.[3] A prominent Russian milblogger warned that the threat of mines in the Black Sea will increase for both military and civilian vessels in the coming days because the storm has broken boom nets and dispersed minefields, causing mines to drift throughout the northwestern Black Sea.[4] Several sources also reported that the storm damaged rail lines in coastal areas, which may have logistical ramifications for Russian forces in occupied Crimea and southern Ukraine.[5]

Despite the challenging weather conditions, both Russian and Ukrainian forces are continuing ground attacks throughout Ukraine, albeit at a slightly slower pace due to snow and resulting poor visibility. Russian milbloggers noted that heavy snow and winds have reduced visibility and complicated aerial reconnaissance and artillery correction in the Kherson direction, but noted that Ukrainian forces have taken advantage of low visibility conditions to consolidate positions on the east (left) bank of the Dnipro River.[6] Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces Spokesperson Colonel Oleksandr Shtupun reported that Russian forces in the Tavriisk direction (ranging from Avdiivka all the way through western Zaporizhia Oblast) have reduced artillery use by one and a half times and drone use six times due to the weather but emphasized that Russian forces continue to heavily use aviation in the Avdiivka direction.[7] Challenging winter conditions will force both sides to rely more heavily on infantry-led ground attacks in the absence of aerial reconnaissance and artillery correction capabilities.[8]

**Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and several Russian milbloggers stated that Russia must maintain active operations in Ukraine and expressed worry over the prospect of further Western military support to Ukraine, though some milbloggers additionally expressed increased discontent with the perceived lack of articulated Russian war aims and stated Russia must clarify its war aims before discussing any pause or end to the war.** Lavrov claimed on November 27 that the West is currently trying to "freeze" the war to gain time and rearm Ukraine for future attacks on Russia.<sup>[9]</sup> Several Russian milbloggers similarly claimed that any "truce" or pause in the war will only benefit Ukraine and allow Ukrainian forces to rest, refit, and relaunch offensive operations.<sup>[10]</sup> One prominent critical milblogger claimed that a pause in the war will allow Ukraine to conduct a "Minsk-3," alluding to the previous Minsk agreements that temporarily paused large-scale combat operations in eastern Ukraine in 2014 and 2015 but ultimately allowed Russia to prepare for the full-scale invasion in 2022.<sup>[11]</sup> The critical milblogger also observed that any discussions regarding pauses or negotiations in the war will be particularly harmful to Russia because Russia has failed to clearly define war aims or conditions necessary for a Russian victory.<sup>[12]</sup> The milblogger noted that the lack of a clear definition for victory has caused internal destabilization within Russia.<sup>[13]</sup> Other Russian milbloggers noted that Ukraine still controls several territories that Russia has claimed to have (illegally) annexed, arguing that Russia should not see any negotiations until or unless Russia can capture the rest of the four occupied oblasts (Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson, and Zaporizhia oblasts), as well as Odesa and Mykolaiv oblasts.<sup>[14]</sup>

Renewed discussion of hypothetical negotiations underlined Russia's lack of clearly articulated war aims and are causing significant anxiety in the pro-war Russian information space. Some milbloggers claimed that Russia cannot even consider the possibility of pausing the war until they have fully captured the four occupied Ukrainian oblasts, while other milbloggers advocated for more maximalist aims such as the capture of Odesa and Mykolaiv oblasts, in which Russia currently has no presence (with the exception of a small Russian presence on the Mykolaiv Oblast side of the Kinburn Peninsula).<sup>[15]</sup> The apparent lack of consensus as to what exactly would constitute a Russian victory is compounding anxieties over the perceived pace of the war in the Russian information space—an anxiety that is increasingly reflected in the highest levels of the Russian government. ISW has previously reported that select voices in the Russian information space, namely deceased Wagner Group financier Yevgeny Prigozhin, advocated for freezing the lines in Ukraine to afford Russian troops the ability to rest and reconstitute, but Lavrov's statement against any sort of pause in Ukraine is an explicit rejection of this argument, as well as a tacit acceptance of a protracted war in Ukraine.<sup>[16]</sup> Clear Russian concern about Ukraine's ability to rearm and relaunch offensives in the case of the pause highlights Russia's concern over continued NATO and Western support for Ukraine. Russia is rapidly replacing losses and belatedly moving its economy to a war footing, and ISW continues to assess that the Kremlin would leverage any pause or ceasefire to prepare for renewed aggression against Ukraine.<sup>[17]</sup> Ukraine's partners have the capability to sustain and accelerate aid to Ukraine and enable Ukraine to restore maneuver to the battlefield.<sup>[18]</sup>

**Ukrainian National Defense and Security Council Secretary Oleksiy Danilov stated that the Kremlin has activated a network of sleeper agents in Ukraine in the past few months to destabilize Ukrainian society.** Danilov stated in an interview with the *Times* published on November 27 that these sleeper agents are embedded in public institutions and threaten Ukrainian security agencies, including the Ukrainian Security Service (SBU).<sup>[19]</sup> Danilov stated that these sleeper agents aim to undermine Ukrainian unity by causing fractures between Ukrainian political and military leadership, as well as between Ukrainian civilians and the government. Danilov

warned that these sleeper agents are specifically exploiting alleged tensions between Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and Commander-in-Chief General Valerii Zaluzhnyi and are additionally targeting female relatives of Ukrainian soldiers to foment anti-government sentiments as part of these efforts to fracture Ukrainian society.

**Russia’s attempt to artificially create a migrant crisis at the Finnish border appears to be failing due to Finnish authorities’ swift response.** Finnish Prime Minister Petteri Orpo stated on November 27 that the Finnish government will close the last border crossing with Russia “if necessary” and reported that the Finnish government is ready to take unspecified additional measures in response to Russia’s artificially generated migrant crisis.[20] Finland previously closed three checkpoints on the Finnish-Russian border on November 23, leaving only its northernmost border crossing open.[21] Several other Finnish government officials also signaled their support for closing the entire border with Russia.[22] A Russian insider source claimed that Russian Presidential Administration First Deputy Head Sergei Kiriienko instructed Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) Head Vladimir Kolokoltsev to gather migrants from the Middle East, Africa, and other regions to send them to the Finnish border.[23] The insider source complained that Finnish border authorities stopped most migrants from crossing into Finland and that Russian authorities must now settle the migrants in Russia.[24]

**The Kremlin appears to be shifting responsibility for potential future austerity measures onto Russian occupation heads and the heads of four select Russian republics.** Russian state news outlet *Kommersant* reported on November 27 that the Russian Ministry of Finance’s 2024 subsidy provision agreements will directly assign budget deficit responsibilities to the heads of the republics of Dagestan, Ingushetia, Chechnya, and Tuva and the heads of the four Russian occupation administrations in Ukraine.[25] The Russian Ministry of Finance reportedly plans to add additional obligations to the subsidy agreements with the four Russian republics and the four occupation administrations in order to reduce gaps between regional income and expenses and will withdraw federal subsidies if these regional and occupation administrations fail to lower budget deficits.[26] These additional obligations will ask republic and occupation heads to sign promises levels of targeted spending of federal money on social programs; increase the efficiency of their respective budgetary institutions; refuse to expand the number of state employees; and not increase state salaries above the inflation level.[27] The additional obligations will also reportedly require that the heads of these administrations increase state revenue collection and agree with the Ministry of Finance’s 2025 draft budget.[28] The heads of the republic and occupation administrations reportedly have until December 18, 2023, to sign the 2024 subsidy provision agreements with the new obligations or refuse subsidies for the upcoming year.[29] These obligations appear to amount to an austerity package as increases to state revenue collection will likely require tax hikes, while targeted spending for social programs may portend cuts to existing regional and occupation programs.

The Russian Ministry of Finance reportedly selected the occupation administrations and the four republics because of their high ratio of federal subsidies to regional income.[30] The Russian government has heavily subsidized regions in the North Caucasus since the Chechen wars and has almost completely subsidized occupied territories in Ukraine following their illegal annexation into Russia.[31] Federal subsidies reportedly accounted for 54 percent of the Republic of Tuva’s budget revenue in 2020, making it the most subsidized Russian federal subject, followed by the republics of Dagestan, Chechnya, and Ingushetia.[32] Russian Finance Minister Anton Siluanov stated on September 11 that Russia has a plan to reduce its overall budget deficit in the coming years amid

continued significant spending on the war in Ukraine.[33] The potential austerity measures in the most subsidized Russian federal subjects and the almost entirely subsidized occupation administrations may represent the beginning of a wider set of measures to cut budget deficits while maintaining defense spending. The Kremlin may have instructed the Russian Ministry of Finance to shift responsibility for the measures directly onto the republic and occupation administrations to prevent the Kremlin from bearing the expected discontent for austerity. The Kremlin may have also chosen the occupied territories and four non-ethnic Russian republics to contain social discontent in non-ethnic Russian areas and existing areas of concern ahead of the 2024 Russian presidential elections.

**The Kremlin may risk undermining Russian integration efforts in occupied territories and prompt discontent in federal subjects if it pursues significant austerity measures.**

Large-scale federal spending on infrastructure and social programs, as well as preferential tax codes and benefits, have been a central component of the Russian effort to establish economic and social control over occupied territories in Ukraine, and potential austerity measures may complicate these efforts. Concerns about domestic discontent in the North Caucasus have recently intensified alongside heightened ethnoreligious tensions in Russia, and economic strains may make this discontent more pronounced.[34]

**Key Takeaways:**

- **A cyclone in the Black Sea and southern Ukraine caused infrastructure damage in many areas of coastal southern Russia and occupied Ukraine and is impacting the tempo of military operations along the frontline in Ukraine, but has notably not stopped military activity entirely.**
- **Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov and several Russian milbloggers stated that Russia must maintain active operations in Ukraine and expressed worry over the prospect of further Western military support to Ukraine.**
- **Some milbloggers additionally expressed increased discontent with the perceived lack of articulated Russian war aims and stated Russia must clarify its war aims before discussing any pause or end to the war.**
- **Ukrainian National Defense and Security Council Secretary Oleksiy Danilov stated that the Kremlin has activated a network of sleeper agents in Ukraine in the past few months to destabilize Ukrainian society.**
- **Russia's attempt to artificially create a migrant crisis at the Finnish border appears to be failing due to Finnish authorities' swift response.**
- **The Kremlin appears to be shifting responsibility for potential future austerity measures onto Russian occupation heads and the heads of four select Russian republics.**
- **Russian forces conducted offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line, near Bakhmut, near Avdiivka, in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area, and in western Zaporizhia Oblast and did not make confirmed advances.**

- Deputy Commander of the Russian Navy Lieutenant General Viktor Astapov confirmed on November 27 that the Russian navy is reorganizing naval infantry brigades into divisions in order to increase their combat capabilities.
- Likely Ukrainian partisans continue to target Russian occupation elements throughout occupied Ukraine.

# Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of November 27, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Megan Wilson, and Shaylei Dauphinais  
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\* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

***We do not report in detail on Russian war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We will continue to evaluate and report on the effects of these criminal activities on the Ukrainian military and the Ukrainian population and specifically on combat in Ukrainian urban areas. We utterly condemn 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.***

- 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
- Russian Technological Adaptations
- Activities in Russian-occupied areas
- Russian Information Operations and Narratives

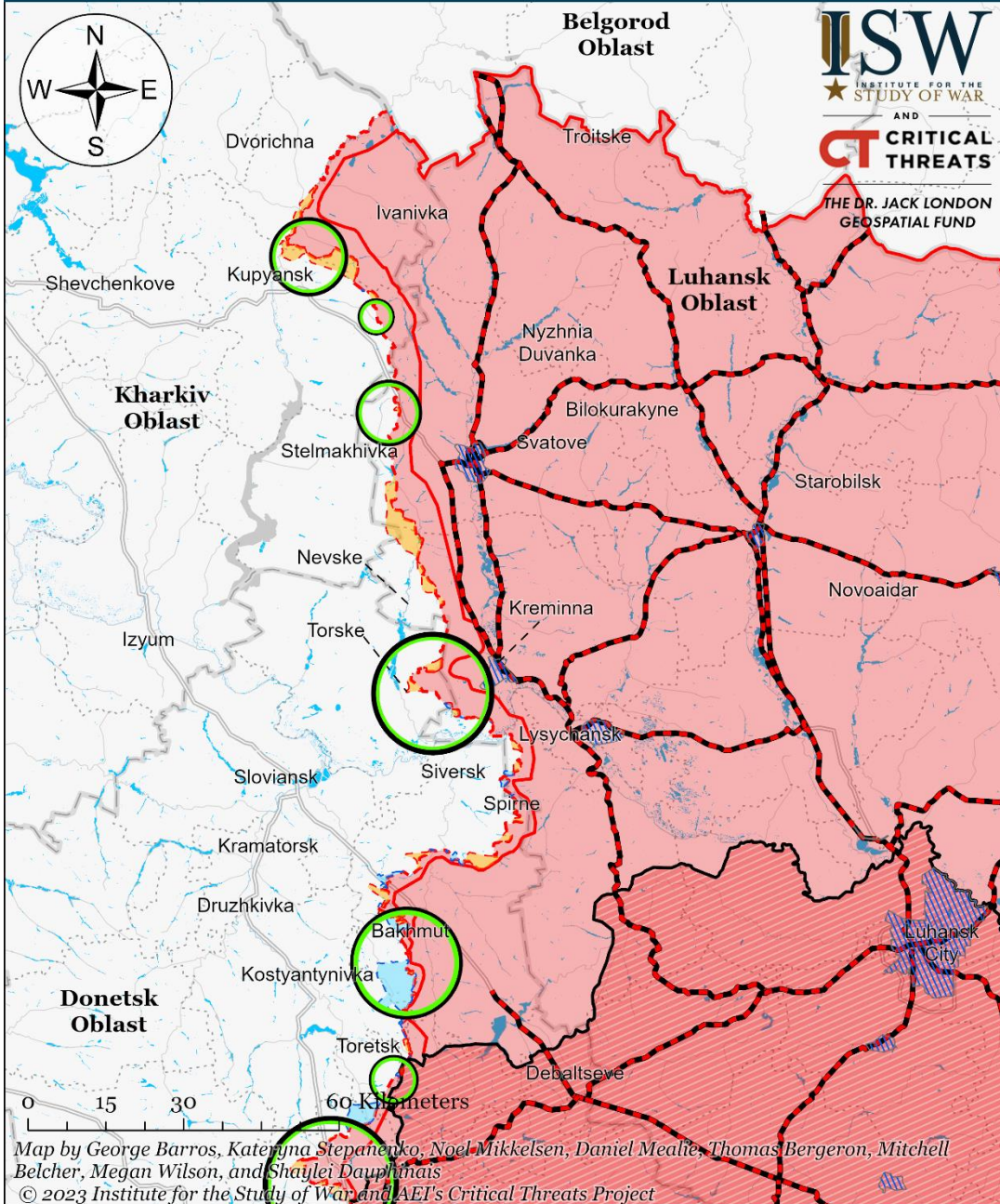
### **Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine**

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

Russian forces continued offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on November 27 but did not make any confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported unsuccessful Russian assaults near Petropavlivka (7km northeast of Kupyansk), Synkivka (8km northeast of Kupyansk), Novoselivske (15km northwest of Svatove), Terny (17km west of Kreminna), Yampolivka (17km west of Kreminna), Torske (15km southwest of Kreminna), and in the Serebryanske forest area (just southwest of Kreminna).[35] Ukrainian Ground Forces Commander Colonel General Oleksandr Syrskyi noted that Russian forces are using "Storm," "Storm-Z," and "Storm-V" assault units comprised of former convicts and former Wagner Group fighters in assaults on Ukrainian positions along the Kupyansk-Kreminna line.[36] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces captured new unspecified positions near Synkivka, and other milbloggers reported heavy fighting in the Synkivka area.[37] Russian sources also claimed that there are ongoing meeting engagements in the Serebryanske forest area, particularly near Dibrova (7km southwest of Kreminna).[38]

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted limited and unsuccessful counterattacks along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on November 27. The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked in the Kupyansk area near Synkivka and Ivanivka (20km southeast of Kupyansk), and in the Kreminna direction near Dibrova.[39] A Russian media aggregator claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Synkivka and that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian reconnaissance-in-force efforts in the Serebryanske forest area on November 26.[40]

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of November 27, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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

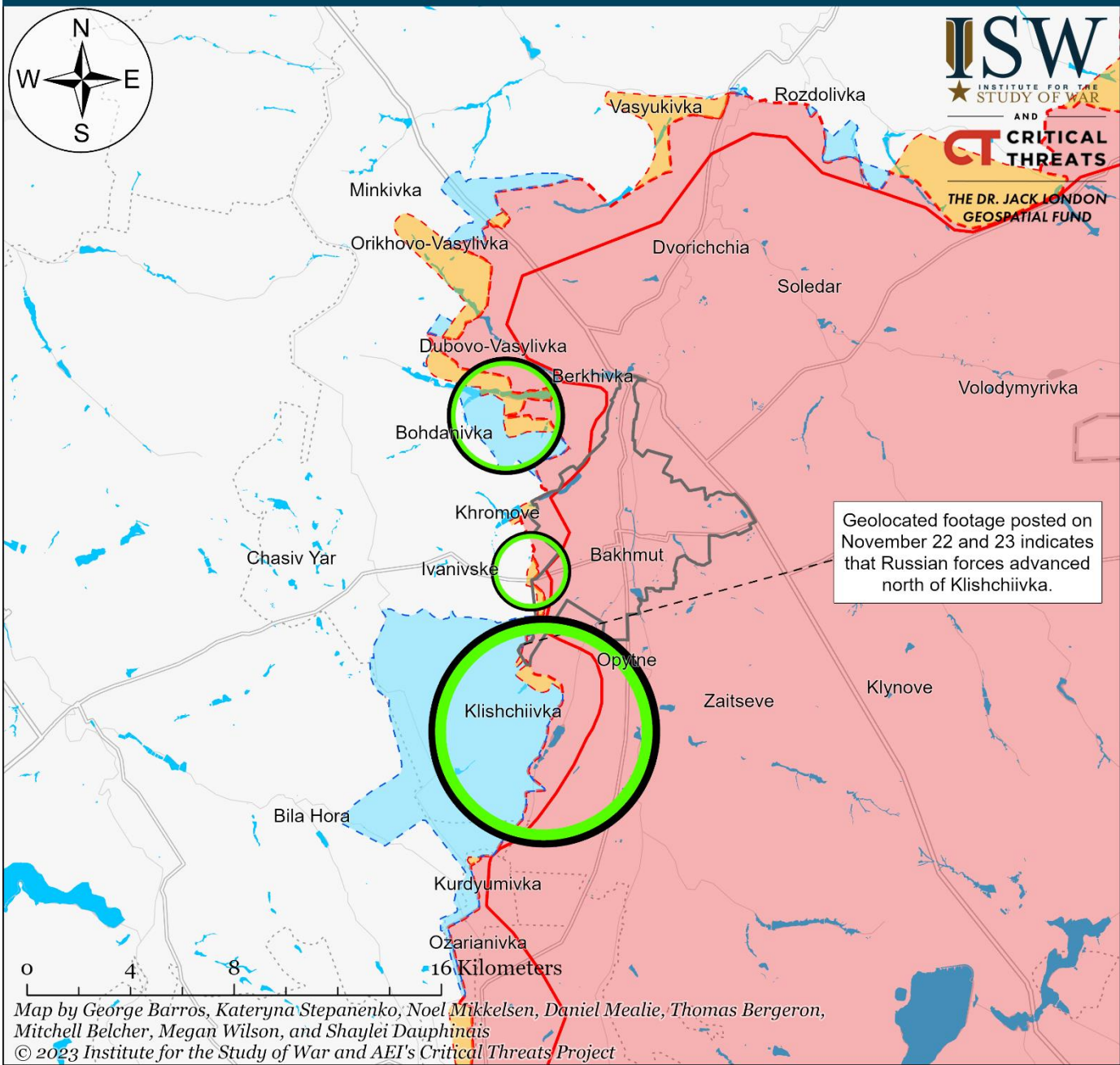
## **Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Donetsk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)**

The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued ground attacks south of Bakhmut on November 27, although Ukrainian forces did not make any confirmed or claimed advances.[41]

Russian forces continued localized offensives operations near Bakhmut on November 27 but did not make any confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled more than 26 Russian assaults near Bohdanivka (6km northwest of Bakhmut), Ivanivske (6km west of Bakhmut), Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut), and Andriivka (13km southwest of Bakhmut).[42] Ukrainian Ground Forces Commander Colonel General Oleksandr Syrskyi stated that Russian forces continued attempts to dislodge Ukrainian forces from positions in Klishchiivka and intensified their use of strike drones in the Bakhmut direction.[43] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces achieved unspecified tactical successes northwest of Klishchiivka and northwest of Khromove (immediately west of Bakhmut).[44] The milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces continue to control dominant tactical heights near Klishchiivka and that the outskirts of the settlement are a contested "gray zone." [45] A Russian news aggregator claimed that Russian forces established a foothold near the railway east of Andriivka on November 26, although ISW has not observed visual confirmation of this claim.[46] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) posted footage purporting to show elements of the Russian 98th Airborne (VDV) Division capturing a Ukrainian stronghold in the Bakhmut direction.[47]



# Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of November 27, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



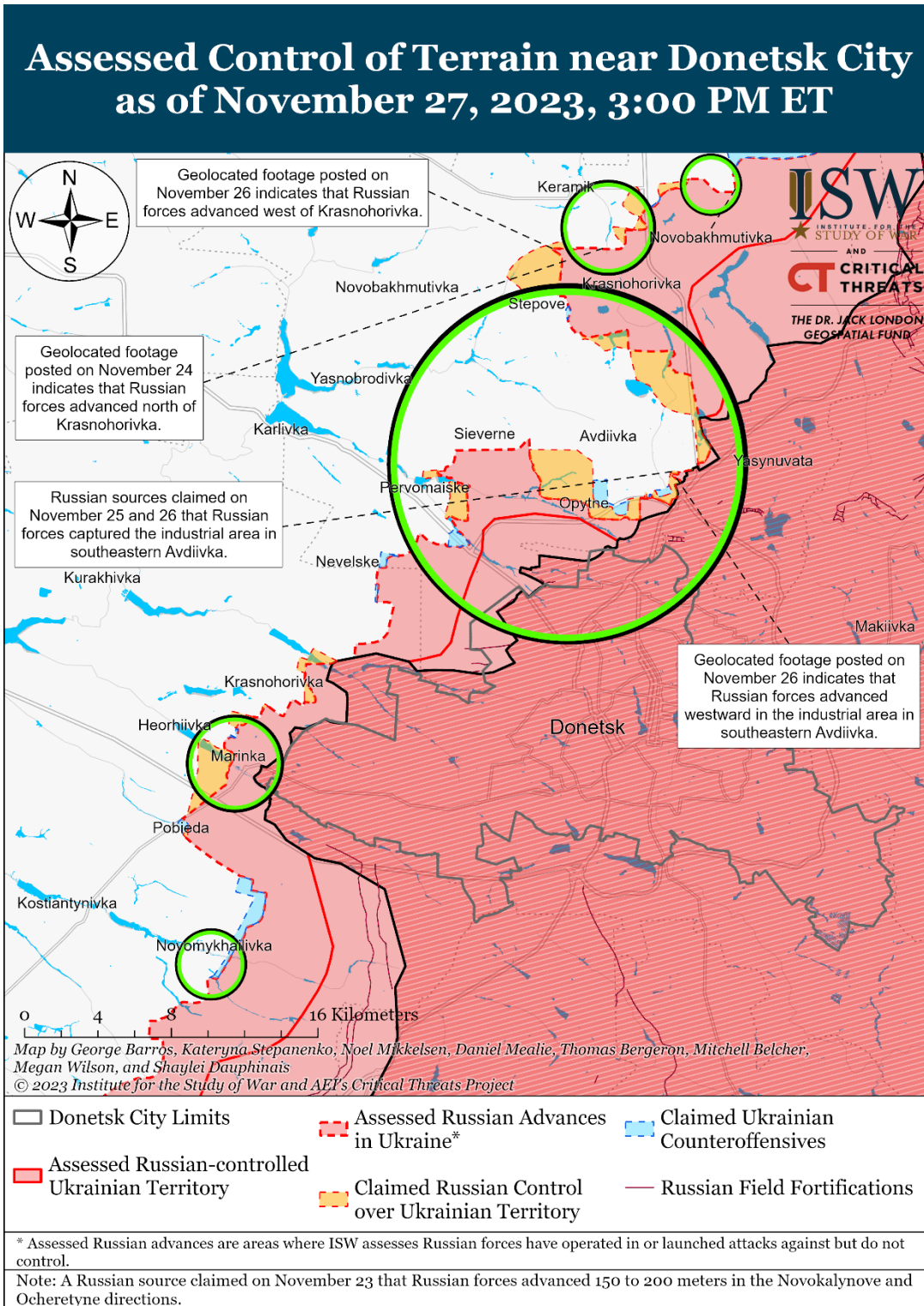
Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Megan Wilson, and Shaylei Dauphinais  
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- Bakhmut City Limits
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine\*
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare

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

The Russian MoD claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian assaults northwest of Horlivka near Pivdenne and Shumy (both 11km northwest of Horlivka) on November 27.[48]

Russian forces conducted ground attacks northwest of Horlivka on November 27 but did not make any confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled assaults east of Pivdenne.[49] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces are attempting to advance near Mayorske (10km northwest of Horlivka) and that battles are ongoing in the area.[50]



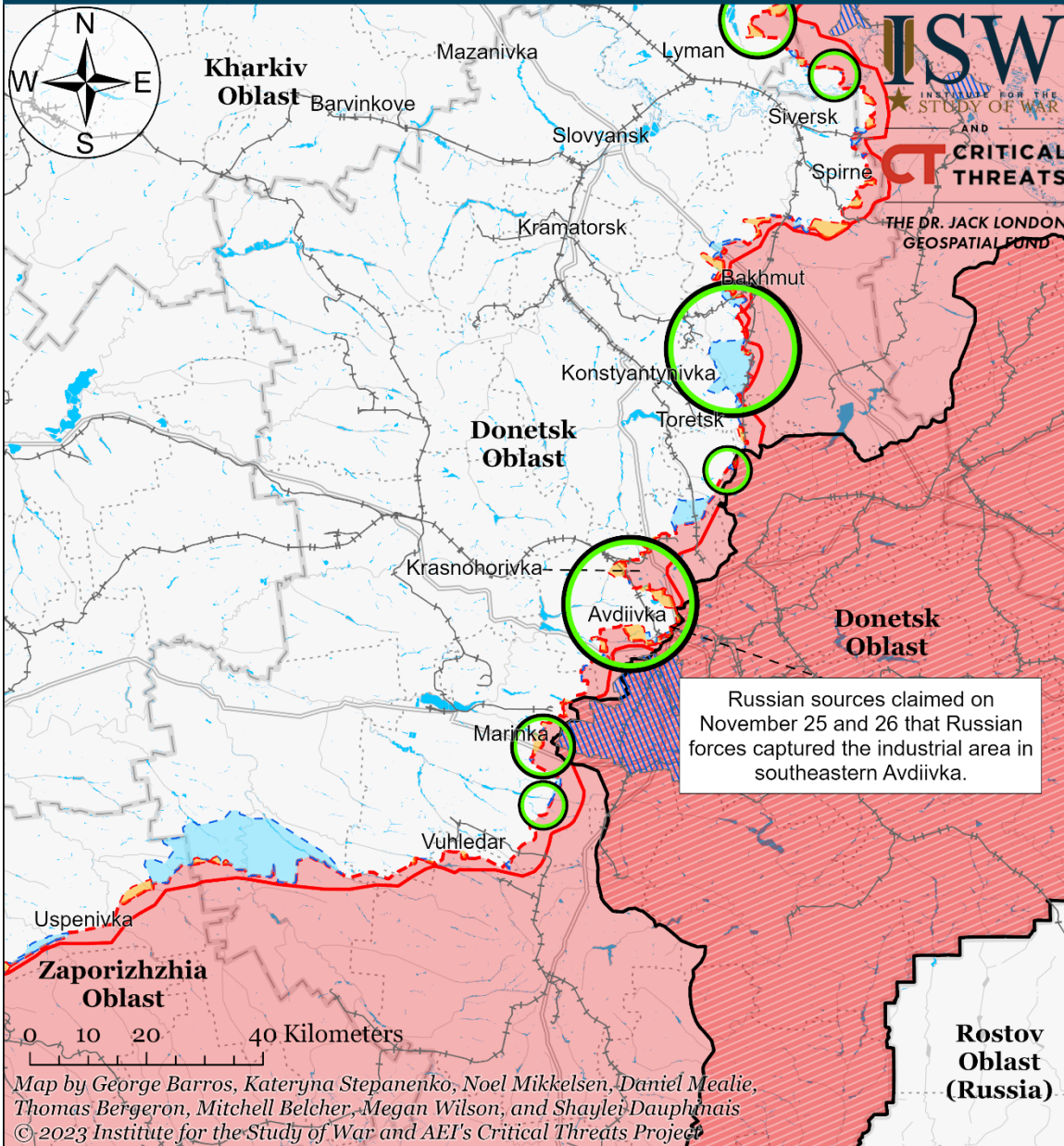
Russian forces continued offensive operations near Avdiivka on November 27 but did not make any confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled more than 30 Russian assaults east of Novobakmutivka (13km northwest of Avdiivka); northeast of Berdychi (7km northwest of Avdiivka); south of Novokalynove (12km north of Avdiivka) and Tonenke (7km west of Avdiivka); and near Stepove (3km north of Avdiivka), Avdiivka, Sieverne (6km west of Avdiivka), and Pervomaiske (11km southwest of Avdiivka).[51] Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces Spokesperson Colonel Oleksandr Shtupun stated that Russian forces continued ground attacks in groups of 10 to 20 personnel each.[52] Shtupun stated that Russian forces are attacking in six directions in the Avdiivka area, and that heavy fighting is ongoing near the Avdiivka Coke Plant in northeastern Avdiivka and the industrial zone southeast of Avdiivka.[53] Russian sources reiterated claims that Russian forces captured all of the industrial zone southeast of Avdiivka and reached Avdiivka's southeastern outskirts.[54] A Russian news aggregator claimed that elements of the "Veterany" Assault Brigade (of the MoD-affiliated "Redut" private military company [PMC]) were primarily responsible for the claimed Russian capture of the industrial zone.[55] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces made unspecified advances near Kruta Balka (5km east of Avdiivka) and the Avdiivka Coke Plant, although ISW has not observed visual confirmation of these claims.[56] Shtupun stated that poor weather conditions in the Avdiivka area heavily reduced Russian artillery fire and drone use, but that Russian aviation is still active in the area.[57]

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces successfully counterattacked near Avdiivka on November 27. A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked Russian positions near Stepove and were partially successful.[58] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully counterattacked near the industrial zone southeast of Avdiivka.[59]

Russian forces continued offensive operations west and southwest of Donetsk City on November 27 but did not make any confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled more than nine Russian assaults near Marinka (immediately southwest of Donetsk City) and Novomykhailivka (11km southwest of Donetsk City).[60]

Ukrainian forces did not conduct any confirmed or claimed counterattacks west or southwest of Donetsk City on November 27.

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of November 27, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Russian sources claimed on November 25 and 26 that Russian forces captured the industrial area in southeastern Avdiivka.

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

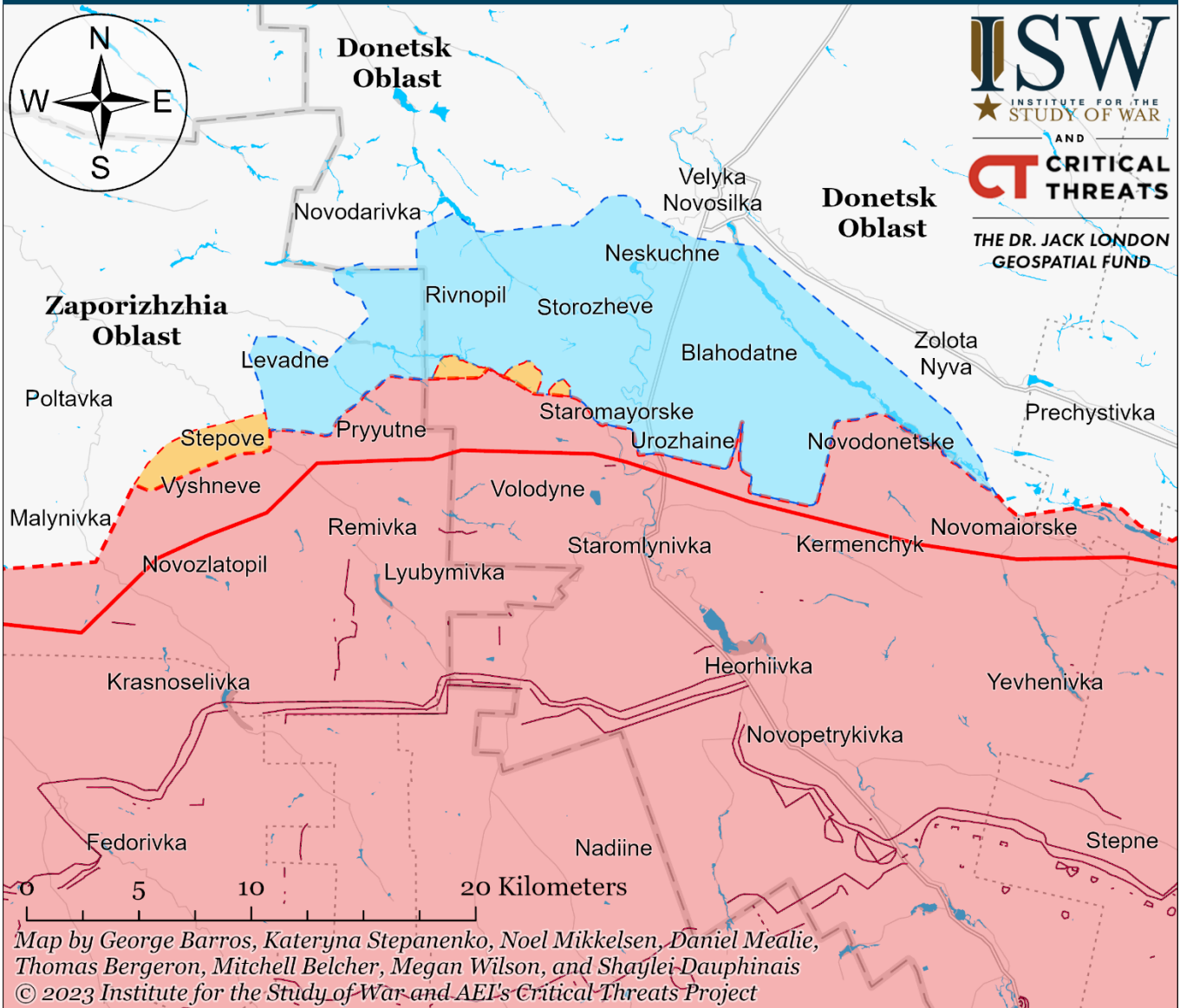
\* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

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

Ukrainian forces did not conduct any confirmed or claimed ground attacks in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on November 27.

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area and reportedly advanced on November 27. Russian milbloggers claimed that elements of the Russian 394th Motorized Rifle Regiment (127th Motorized Rifle Division, 5th Combined Arms Army, Eastern Military District) counterattacked and managed to push Ukrainian forces to the western outskirts of Staromayorske (9km south of Velyka Novosilka) and advanced near the Hrusheva Gully (15km southwest of Velyka Novosilka).[61] ISW is unable to confirm this claim, however. Another Russian source claimed that inclement weather has slowed offensive operations near Staromayorske and that the front line has not changed.[62]

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around the Vremivka Salient as of November 27, 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
- Russian Field Fortifications
- 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.

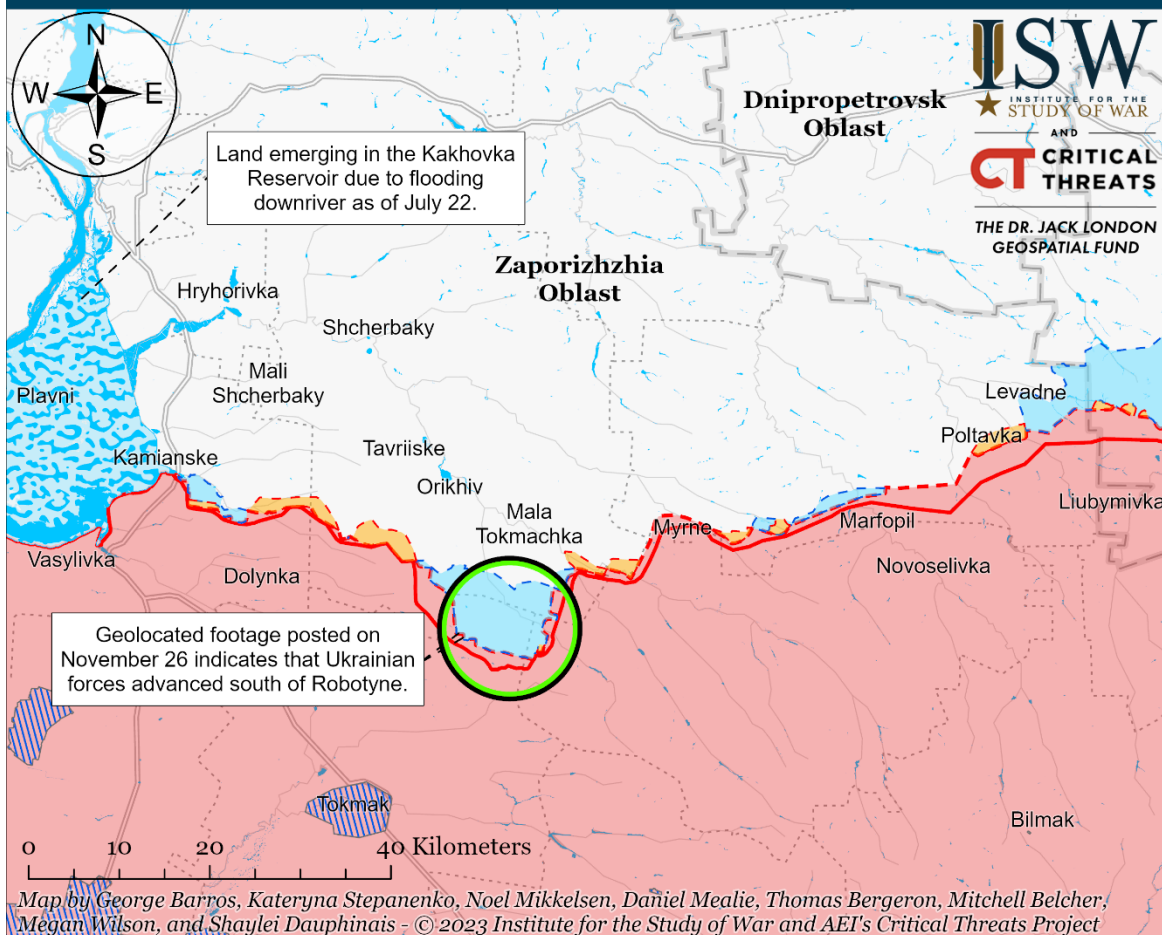
Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast on November 27 and recently marginally advanced. Geolocated footage published on November 26 shows that Ukrainian forces made marginal advances south of Robotyne.[63] Russian sources claimed on November 27 that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian ground attacks near Robotyne, Novopropkivka (2km south of Robotyne), and Verbove (10km east of Robotyne).[64]

Russian forces reportedly advanced during counterattacks in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast on November 27. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces counterattacked and seized multiple fortified Ukrainian positions near Verbove and that Russian forces continued offensive operations near Robotyne.[65] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian ground attacks near Robotyne and west of Verbove.[66]



Ukrainian and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) officials indicated that Russian forces are firing artillery and rockets from positions at or near the occupied Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP). The IAEA reported on November 26 reported that the IAEA contingent at the ZNPP heard a “distinctive sound” of an MLRS launching “several rockets that appeared to have been fired from close to the plant” but that the IAEA personnel could not see the projectiles due to clouds in the area.[67] Ukrainian nuclear energy operator Energoatom amplified the IAEA’s report on November 27 and reported that Russian forces are using the ZNPP as a firing position.[68] ISW has repeatedly reported on Russia’s continued militarization of the ZNPP, including imagery and footage from summer 2022 confirming that Russian forces deployed military equipment to ZNPP grounds.[69]

## Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhzhia as of November 27, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



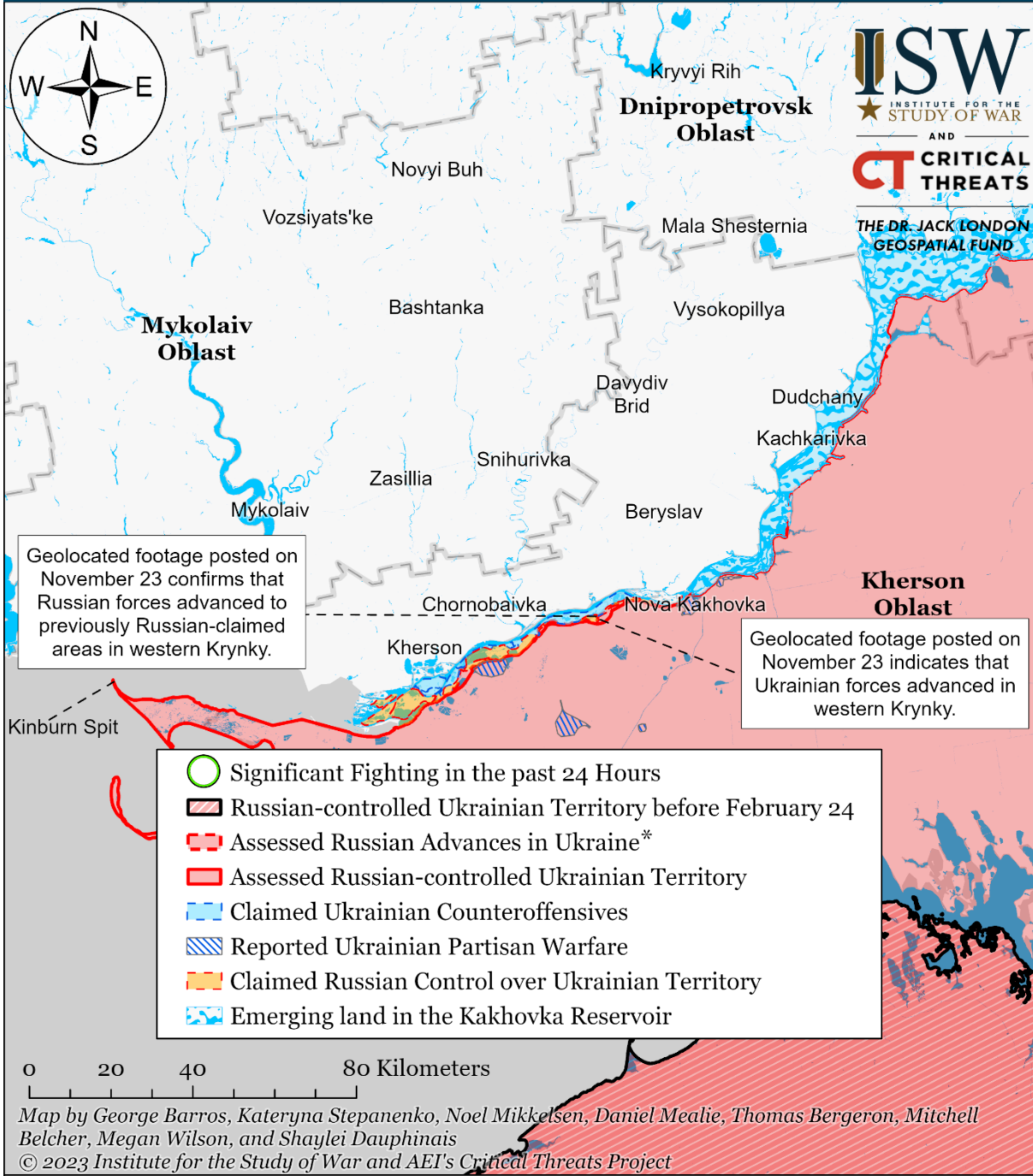
- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine\*
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Reported Ukrainian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

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



Russian forces reportedly advanced in east (left) bank Kherson Oblast amid continued Ukrainian offensive operations on the east bank on November 27. Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces counterattacked in Krynky (30km northeast of Kherson Oblast and 2km from the Dnipro River) with air and artillery support and recaptured some unspecified positions, although ISW has observed no visual confirmation of this claim.<sup>[70]</sup> Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked in and around Krynky and near Poyma (12km east of Kherson City and 4km from the Dnipro River) and Pishchanivka (13km east of Kherson City and 3km from the Dnipro River).<sup>[71]</sup> The milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces took advantage of poor weather conditions to rotate personnel and consolidate defensive positions.<sup>[72]</sup>

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of November 27, 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.

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)**

Deputy Commander of the Russian Navy Lieutenant General Viktor Astapov confirmed on November 27 that the Russian Navy is reorganizing naval infantry brigades into divisions in order to increase their combat capabilities.[73] Astapov also told Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) newspaper *Red Star* that the Russian naval infantry units will undergo additional training to operate drones and that the Russian Navy has created specialized drone operation units.[74] This reorganization likely supports the larger long-term force restructuring as announced by Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu in January 2023.[75]

Russian relatives of mobilized personnel published a manifesto and petition on November 27 calling for the return of their mobilized relatives and an end to “indefinite” mobilization.[76] The manifesto states that the Russian government betrayed mobilized personnel and is now exterminating them.[77] The manifesto also calls Russian President Vladimir Putin’s announcement that 2024 is the “Year of the Family” “ironic” because wives must live without their husbands and children must live without their fathers.[78] The manifesto further criticizes Russian authorities for releasing convicts after they served in the Russian military because they reoffend after returning to Russia.[79] The petition calls for the establishment of a one-year term limit for mobilized personnel’s military service.[80] Relatives of mobilized personnel have continually called for the release of their relatives from military service and for better treatment of mobilized servicemen in the Russian military.[81] A Russian opposition outlet recently reported on November 22 that the Kremlin instructed Russian regional authorities to prevent relatives of mobilized personnel from protesting by paying them off.[82]

Turkey has reportedly increased its export of dual-use goods to Russia in 2023. The *Financial Times (FT)* reported on November 27 that Turkey has increased its exports of 45 “high-priority” civilian materials that Russia’s military utilizes, including microchips, communications equipment, and equipment parts such as telescopic sights.[83] *FT* reported that Turkey exported \$154 million worth of high-priority goods in the first nine months of 2023, three times more than over the same period in 2022.[84] *FT* noted an increase in Turkish exports of high-priority dual-use goods to Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan in 2023 and suggested that these countries may be facilitating sanctions evasion for Russian imports.[85] An unspecified European official told *FT* that Turkey and the United Arab Emirates often serve as intermediaries for exports to Russia.[86]

A Finnish company has reportedly continued to export sanctioned goods to Russia since Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Finnish outlet *Yle* reported on November 26 that a Finnish company has reportedly exported millions of euros worth of truck parts to Russia.[87] *Yle*, citing Finnish customs data, also reported that about a dozen trucks from this company appeared in Russia and noted an uptick in the company’s exports of trucks to Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.[88]

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

The Russian defense industrial base (DIB) reportedly continues to use imported electronics and microchips in some Russian drone and missile systems. Representative of the Ukrainian General Staff’s Center for Research of Captured and Advanced Weapons and Military Equipment, Captain Andriy Rudyk, stated that the Ukrainian research found imported electronics components in downed Russian Orlan-10 and Eleron-3SV reconnaissance drones.[89] Rudyk also stated that Ukrainian specialists found that earlier Kh-101 cruise missiles used high-quality imported microchips, while

newer Kh-101s were equipped with older microchips.[90] Rudyk stated that Russian DIB likely uses simpler technology in newer missile designs in order to offset the effects of sanctions and increase production.[91]

### **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)**

Likely Ukrainian partisans continue to target Russian occupation elements throughout occupied Ukraine. Ukrainian Melitopol Mayor Ivan Fedorov stated on November 27 that local residents in Melitopol reported that Ukrainian partisans exchanged small arms fire with Chechen forces near occupied Myrne, Zaporizhia Oblast over the weekend of November 25-26.[92] Fedorov reported that Ukrainian partisans also blew up a car belonging to Chechen forces.[93] Russian state media additionally reported on November 27 that unspecified actors (likely Ukrainian partisans) attempted to assassinate Kharkiv Oblast occupation deputy head Alexander Slisarenko, who is now recovering in the hospital.[94]

Qatar continues efforts to mediate the return of deported Ukrainian children from Russian back to Ukraine. In an interview with *CBS* on November 26, Qatari Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Sheik Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, stated that Qatar hopes to mediate the repatriation of another group of Ukrainian children before the holidays.[95] Qatar previously facilitated the return of four Ukrainian children to Ukraine, as well as the return of Bohdan Yermokhin, a deported Ukrainian teenager who Russian authorities tried to forcibly conscript.[96]

Russian occupation administrations are struggling to deal with the impacts of inclement weather conditions throughout occupied Ukraine. Ukrainian Kherson Oblast Regional Council First Deputy Yuriy Sobolevskiy noted on November 27 that the Russian occupation administration of east (left) bank Kherson Oblast is facing serious issues with critical infrastructure and logistics due to a cyclone covering southern Ukraine.[97] Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) Head Denis Pushilin stated that a significant number of residents of occupied Donetsk Oblast do not have electricity due to the storm, and Ukrainian Luhansk Oblast Head Artem Lysohor reported mobile communications outages in occupied Luhansk Oblast.[98] Russian sources claimed that over 500,000 people in occupied Crimea are currently without electricity due to stormy weather.[99]

### **Russian Information Operations and Narratives**

The Russian government continues efforts to discredit Western media platforms. Russian outlet *Interfax* reported on November 27 that a Russian court arrested Meta Spokesperson Andy Stone *in absentia* for “promoting terrorist activities.”[100] Russia designated Meta as an extremist organization in March 2022 and banned its Facebook and Instagram services in Russia.[101]

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

Belarusian Minister of Defense Viktor Khrenin stated on November 27 that S-400 air defense systems entered service within the Union State’s combined Russian-Belarusian air defense framework in an unspecified area of Belarus.[102] These S-400 systems are likely in service with a Belarusian air defense unit, as opposed to a Russian air defense unit deployed in Belarus.[103] ISW reported that Russia deployed at least a battery of S-400 air defense systems to Belarus on May 28, 2023.[104]

**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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