

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, October 4, 2023

Karolina Hird, Grace Mappes, Nicole Wolkov, Angelica Evans, and Frederick W. Kagan
October 4, 2023, 5:30pm 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 cut-off for this product was 1pm ET on October 4. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the October 5 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

The Russian military recently transferred several Black Sea Fleet (BSF) vessels from the port in occupied Sevastopol, Crimea to the port in Novorossiysk, Krasnodar Krai, likely in an effort to protect them from continued Ukrainian strikes on Russian assets in occupied Crimea. Satellite imagery published on October 1 and 3 shows that Russian forces transferred at least 10 vessels from Sevastopol to Novorossiysk.[1] The satellite imagery reportedly shows that Russian forces recently moved the *Admiral Makarov* and *Admiral Essen* frigates, three diesel submarines, five landing ships, and several small missile ships.[2] Satellite imagery taken on October 2 shows four Russian landing ships and one Kilo-class submarine remaining in Sevastopol.[3] Satellite imagery from October 2 shows a Project 22160 patrol ship reportedly for the first time in the port of Feodosia in eastern Crimea, suggesting that Russian forces may be moving BSF elements away from Sevastopol to bases further in the Russian rear.[4] A Russian think tank, the Center for Analysis of Strategies and Technologies, claimed on October 3 that the BSF vessels' movements from occupied Sevastopol to Novorossiysk were routine, however.[5] Russian forces may be temporarily moving some vessels to Novorossiysk following multiple strikes on BSF assets in and near Sevastopol but will likely continue to use Sevastopol's port, which remains the BSF's base. Former Norwegian Navy officer and independent OSINT analyst Thord Are Iversen observed on October 4 that Russian vessel deployments have usually intensified following Ukrainian strikes but ultimately returned to normal patterns.[6] ISW will explore the implications of Ukrainian strikes on the BSF in a forthcoming special edition.

Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations near Bakhmut and in western Zaporizhia Oblast and marginally advanced on October 4. Ukrainian forces continued ground attacks towards the rail line between Klishchivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut) and Andriivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut), and the Ukrainian General Staff stated that Ukrainian forces achieved partial success near these settlements.[7] Geolocated footage published on October 4 indicates that Ukrainian forces marginally advanced east of Novoprokopivka (5km southeast of Robotyne) in western Zaporizhia Oblast, and the Ukrainian General Staff also reported that Ukrainian forces achieved partial success west of Robotyne.[8] Some Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces advanced up to a Russian trench line on the Robotyne-Kopani line (5km northwest of Robotyne).[9]

Autumn and winter weather conditions will slow but not stop Ukrainian counteroffensive operations. US National Security Council Spokesperson John Kirby stated on October 3 that good weather will last for another six to eight weeks before weather will impact both Ukrainian and Russian operations.[10] ISW has previously observed that seasonal heavy rain and resulting mud in the autumn will slow ground movements on both sides, and that the autumn rain and mud are usually less intense than spring conditions.[11] Hardening ground during the winter freeze will likely enable the tempo of combat operations to increase, however, and Ukrainian officials have expressed their intent to continue counteroffensive operations into late 2023 and exploit cold weather conditions.[12] ISW has frequently assessed that offensive operations will continue through the winter season and has observed the continuation of combat activities throughout the fall mud season of 2022, winter season of 2022–2023, and spring mud season of 2023.[13]

The Kremlin is likely intensifying its use of tools of digital authoritarianism to increase domestic repression and tighten control of the information space. Russian opposition outlet *Vazhnye Istorii* reported on October 4 that the Russian Prosecutor General's Office requested that Russian social media platform VKontakte (VK) begin blocking posts from relatives of mobilized servicemen calling for their loved ones to return home.[14] *Vazhnye Istorii* noted that VK is hiding posts with several hashtags pertaining to the treatment or return of mobilized servicemen and that several posts in group chats have reportedly disappeared.[15] The Prosecutor General is likely able to impose this form of censorship under the existing law that concerns "unreliable" information about Russian operations in Ukraine.[16] The Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) additionally proposed a draft resolution on October 3 that would expand the list of personal and geolocation data that "organizers of information dissemination" (ORIs) are required to store and provide to law enforcement bodies upon request.[17] The FSB's October 3 proposal notably follows its recent backing of amendments that would allow it unrestricted access to user data of Russian internet, banking, and telecom companies.[18] Some Russian opposition

outlets notably suggested that this apparent expansion of digital authoritarianism may be increasingly based on the restrictive Chinese model. One Russian opposition source, later amplified by an insider source, claimed that the Russian State Social University is developing and testing a social rating system for Russians based on the Chinese model and that the intended generated social scores will link to personal data that government entities and banks will have access to.[19] ISW has recently reported on previous instances of the Kremlin's efforts to expand digital authoritarianism to surveil the Russian information space, likely to consolidate power and increase information space oversight prior to the 2024 presidential elections.[20]

CNN reported on October 4 that the US will transfer seized Iranian weapons and ammunition rounds to Ukraine.[21] CNN cited US officials saying that the US intends to transfer “thousands” of such weapons to alleviate some equipment shortages that Ukraine is facing. US Central Command (CENTCOM) noted that the US obtained the weapons through a Department of Justice civil forfeiture claim against the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) on July 20, 2023, and that the US has already transferred one million rounds of small-arms ammunition to Ukraine as of Monday, October 2.

Russian sources continue to speculate about the current role of former Aerospace Forces (VKS) Commander and Wagner Group-affiliate Army General Sergei Surovikin after the Wagner rebellion, further highlighting his continued relevance in the Russian information space. Some Russian sources amplified footage on October 3 and 4 allegedly of Surovikin and his family outside a church near Moscow on October 3.[22] This speculation comes after prior speculation of Surovikin allegedly appearing in various African countries on behalf of the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD).[23] Russian news outlet *Novye Izvestia* claimed that Surovikin denied to comment to journalists who approached him near the church.[24]

The European Union (EU) is reportedly preparing for negotiations on Ukraine's EU accession that will take place in December. *Politico* reported on October 4, citing three unnamed diplomats, that EU leaders are preparing to begin formal talks with Kyiv on Ukraine's accession to the EU as early as December of this year.[25] Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba reported on October 4 that he and Swedish Foreign Minister Tobias Billstrom spoke about Ukraine's EU integration and are working bilaterally to opening talks about Ukraine's accession by the end of the year.[26]

Key Takeaways:

- **The Russian military recently transferred several Black Sea Fleet (BSF) vessels from the port in occupied Sevastopol, Crimea to the port in Novorossiysk, Krasnodar Krai, likely in an effort to protect them from continued Ukrainian strikes on Russian assets in occupied Crimea.**
- **Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations near Bakhmut and in western Zaporizhia Oblast and marginally advanced on October 4.**
- **Autumn and winter weather conditions will slow but not stop Ukrainian counteroffensive operations.**
- **The Kremlin is likely intensifying its use of tools of digital authoritarianism to increase domestic repression and tighten control of the information space.**
- **CNN reported on October 4 that the US will transfer seized Iranian weapons and ammunition rounds to Ukraine.**
- **Russian sources continue to speculate about the current role of former Aerospace Forces (VKS) Commander and Wagner Group-affiliate Army General Sergei Surovikin after the Wagner rebellion, further highlighting his continued relevance in the Russian information space.**
- **The European Union (EU) is reportedly preparing for negotiations on Ukraine's EU accession that will take place in December.**
- **Russian forces conducted offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kremlinna line, near Bakhmut, along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line, in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area, and in western Zaporizhia Oblast and made limited gains near Kremlinna.**
- **Russian authorities continue efforts to collect information about Russian citizens for future conscription and enlistment cycles.**
- **Russian Deputy Prime Minister for Construction and Regional Development Marat Khusnullin is reportedly heavily involved in Russian infrastructure projects in occupied Ukraine.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of October 4, 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.

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

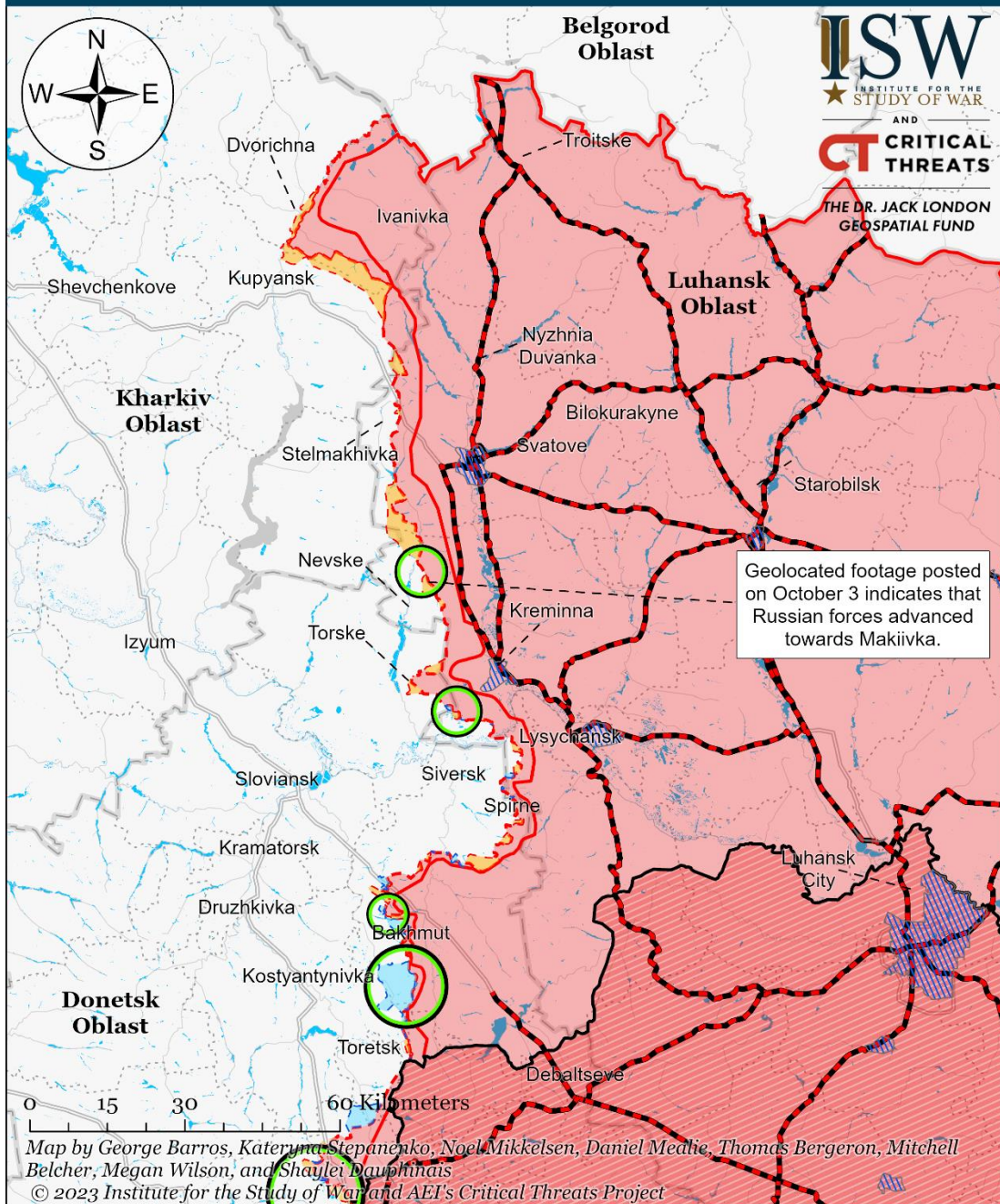
Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Luhansk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and northern Donetsk Oblast)

The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled a limited Russian attack north of Zybyne (3km south of the Kharkiv Oblast-Russian border) on October 4, likely in reference to a limited cross-border raid originating from Belgorod Oblast.[27]

Russian forces conducted ground attacks along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on October 4 and marginally advanced. Geolocated footage published on October 3 indicates that Russian forces marginally advanced east of Makiivka (22km northwest of Kreminna).[28] The Ukrainian General Staff reported on October 4 that Ukrainian forces repelled five Russian attacks east of Makiivka in Luhansk Oblast and northwest of Dibrova (7km southwest of Kreminna) in Donetsk Oblast.[29] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces attacked near Makiivka but did not specify an outcome.[30] A Russian source amplified claims that Russian forces conducted offensive operations near Svatove.[31] A Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed that Russian forces conducted assaults against Ukrainian positions near Bilohorivka (10km south of Kreminna) on October 3.[32] The milblogger also claimed that Russian air strikes destroyed at least five bridges across the Oskil River in the Kupyansk area in recent weeks and impacted Ukrainian logistics.[33] Chechen Republic Head Ramzan Kadyrov published footage on October 4 claiming to show the Chechen Spetsnaz “Aida” group, reportedly under the command of the deputy commander of the Chechen “Akhmat” formations, operating in the Kreminna direction.[34]

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted unsuccessful ground attacks along the Svatove-Kreminna line on October 4. The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Yampolivka (17km west of Kreminna) and the Serebryanske forest area.[35] Luhansk People’s Republic (LNR) Head Leonid Pasechnik claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian ground attacks along the Hryhorivka-Novodruzhesk (10km south to 10km southeast of Kreminna) line, Vovchovyarivka-Ivano-Darivka (23km south to 24km southeast of Kreminna) line, and the Pereizne-Berestove (30km southwest to 30km south of Kreminna) line over the past week.[36]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of October 4, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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Geolocated footage posted on October 3 indicates that Russian forces advanced towards Makiivka.

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

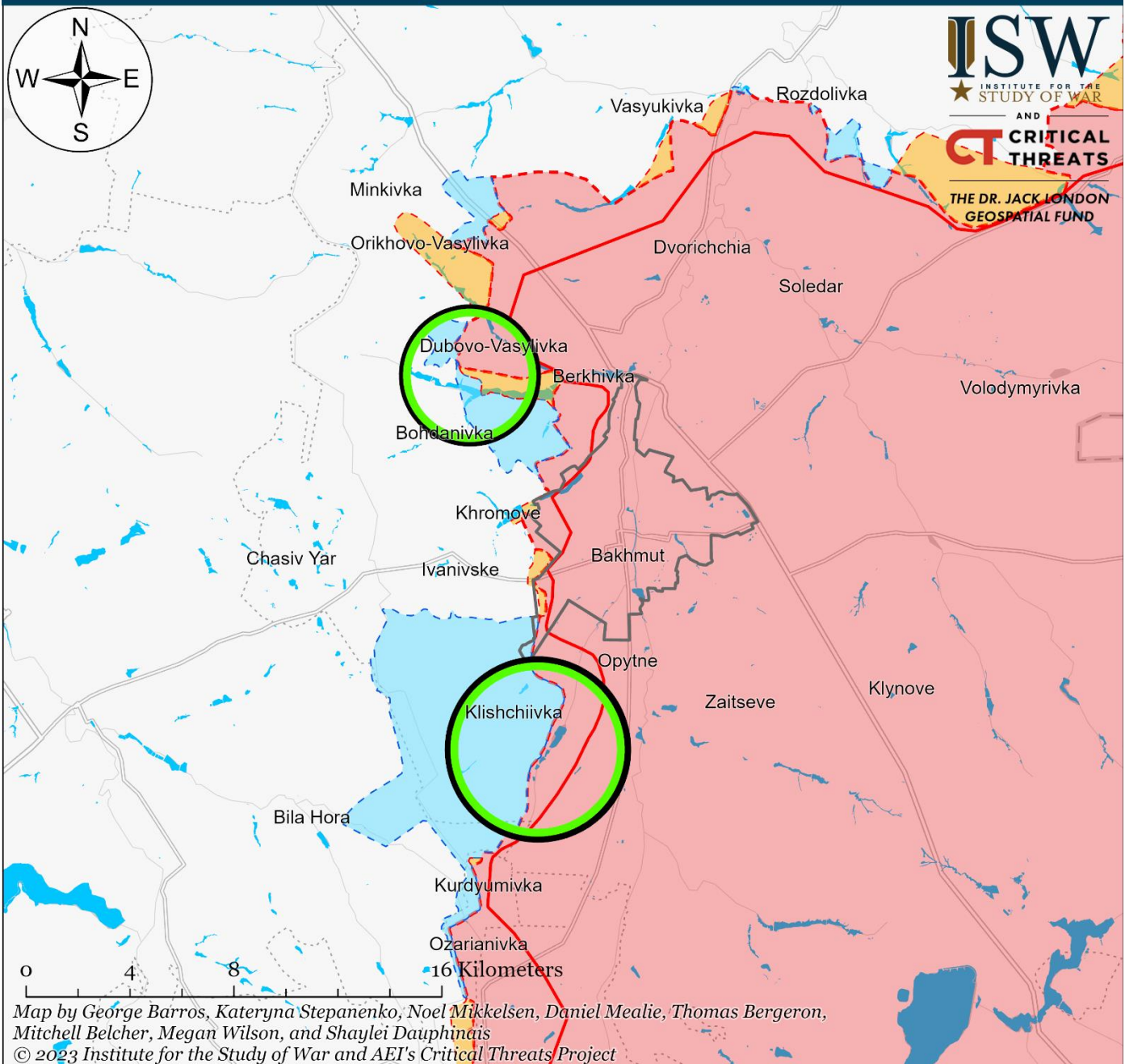
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

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

Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Bakhmut area and reportedly advanced on October 4. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued assaults south of Bakhmut and achieved partial success near Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut) and Andriivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut).[37] A correspondent of Kremlin-sponsored outlet *Izvestia* claimed that Ukrainian forces hold positions within 40 meters of the rail line near Klishchiivka.[38] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces resumed armored assaults near Klishchiivka and Andriivka towards the railway line and that fighting is ongoing in contested “gray zones” northeast and southwest of Andriivka.[39] Russian military officials claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Andriivka and Klishchiivka.[40] Some milbloggers claimed that Russian aviation, including helicopters, and artillery are firing on Ukrainian forces in an attempt to stymie the attacks.[41]

Russian forces continued limited counterattacks near Bakhmut but did not advance on October 4. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attempted to recapture lost positions near Hryhorivka (6km northwest of Bakhmut) and Andriivka.[42] Russian sources claimed that Russian forces counterattacked near Andriivka on October 3 and 4.[43] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) posted footage of an unspecified element of the 106th Guards Airborne (VDV) Division operating in the Soledar direction.[44]

Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of October 4, 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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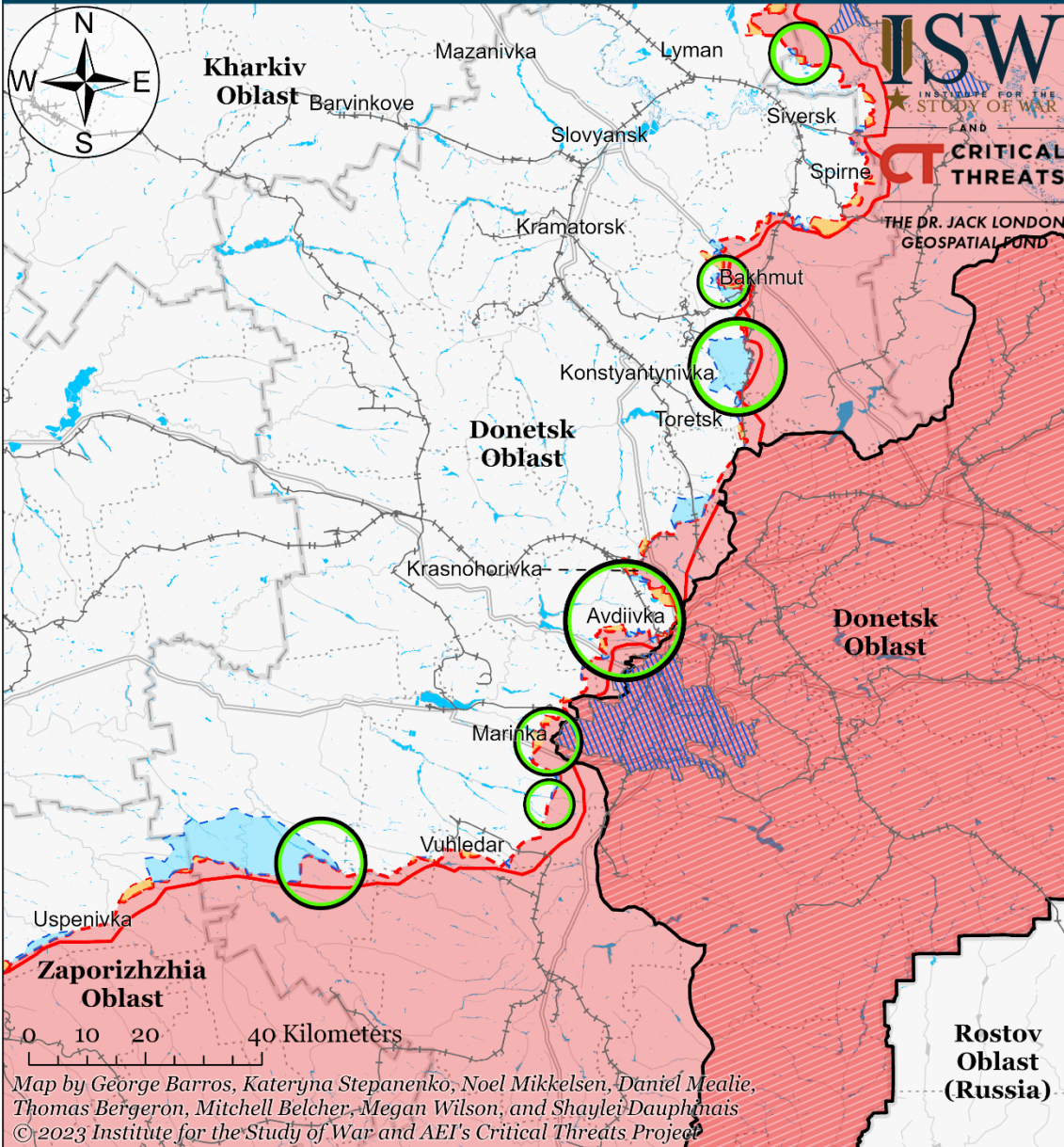
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|---------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| Bakhmut City Limits | Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory | Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives |
| Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine* | Claimed Russian 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.

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces continued limited offensive operations on the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line and marginally advanced on October 4. A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces captured a contested “gray zone” near Nevelske (directly west of Donetsk City) and are now within 2km of a crossroads in Pisky (6km east of Nevelske).[45] Russian military officials claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Vodyane (7km southwest of Avdiivka), Nevelske, and Krasnohorivka (unclear if in reference to the Krasnohorivka 8km northwest of Avdiivka or directly west of Donetsk City).[46]

Russian forces continued offensive operations on the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line but did not advance on October 4. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks near Avdiivka, Lastochkyne (6km west of Avdiivka), Pervomaiske (11km southwest of Avdiivka), Marinka (on the southwestern outskirts of Donetsk City), and Krasnohorivka (directly west of Donetsk City).[47] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces also continued attacks near Stepne (14km south of Donetsk City) and Novomykhailivka (10km southwest of Donetsk City).[48]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of October 4, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Major Railroads
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
- 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.

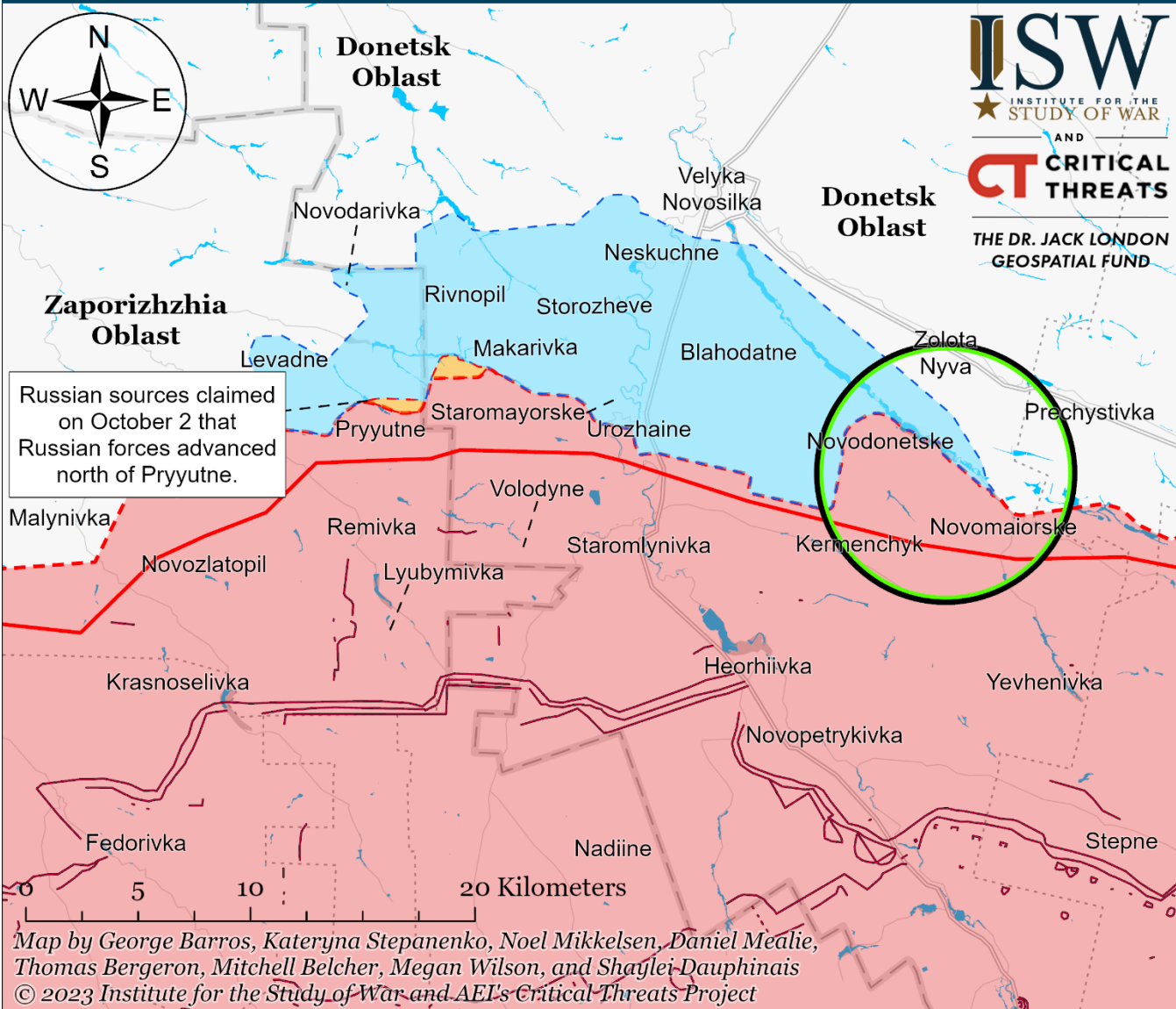
Note: A Russian source claimed on October 2 that Russian forces advanced 200 meters in depth east of Urozhaine.

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

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted limited and unsuccessful ground attacks in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on October 4. The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that elements of the Russian Eastern Grouping of Forces repelled a Ukrainian attack near Pryyutne (16km southwest of Velyka Novosilka).[49] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces remain active in forest areas northwest of Pryyutne, where they are constantly trying to restore lost positions.[50]

Russian forces conducted limited counterattacks in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area and reportedly regained some positions on October 4. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian troops repelled a Russian attack near Zolota Nyva (12km southeast of Velyka Novosilka).[51] One milblogger claimed that Russian forces have the initiative in this area of the front and are counterattacking near Pryyutne, Zavitne Bazhannia (13km south of Velyka Novosilka), and Staromayorske.[52] Another milblogger claimed that unspecified Russian Spetsnaz elements are successfully pushing Ukrainian forces back from positions near Pryyutne, and another milblogger claimed that elements of the 37th Motorized Rifle Brigade (36th Combined Arms Army, Eastern Military District) have been advancing in forest areas east of Urozhaine (10km south of Velyka Novosilka) since the end of September.[53]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around the Vremivka Salient as of October 4, 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
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Russian Field Fortifications

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

Note: A Russian source claimed on October 2 that Russian forces advanced 200 meters in depth east of Urozhaine.

Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast on October 4 and made confirmed gains. Geolocated footage posted on October 4 indicates that Ukrainian forces have marginally advanced along a small local road east of Novoprokopivka (about 5km southeast of Robotyne).[54] Additional geolocated footage posted on October 4 confirms that Ukrainian forces hold positions near a trench system that lies along the T0408 Orikhiv-Tokmak route between Robotyne and Novoprokopivka.[55] The Ukrainian General Staff noted that Ukrainian forces were partially successful during offensive operations west of Robotyne.[56] Russian milbloggers noted that Ukrainian forces have increased the intensity of attacks along the Robotyne-Kopani line (about 5km northwest of Robotyne), and some Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces advanced towards some Russian defensive trenches on this line over the past day.[57] Russian milbloggers additionally claimed that Ukrainian forces continued attacks near Verbove (10km east of Robotyne) and Novoprokopivka.[58]

Russian forces continued counterattacking in western Zaporizhia Oblast on October 4 and reportedly regained some positions. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces attacked near Robotyne and Verbove.[59] Several Russian sources claimed that Russian airborne (VDV) elements managed to push Ukrainian forces back around 2km near Verbove on October 4.[60] A Russian milblogger posted graphic footage of a paratrooper detachment of the 7th VDV division reportedly clearing a captured Ukrainian stronghold somewhere between Robotyne and Verbove.[61]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Pyatykhatky and Robotyne as of October 4, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



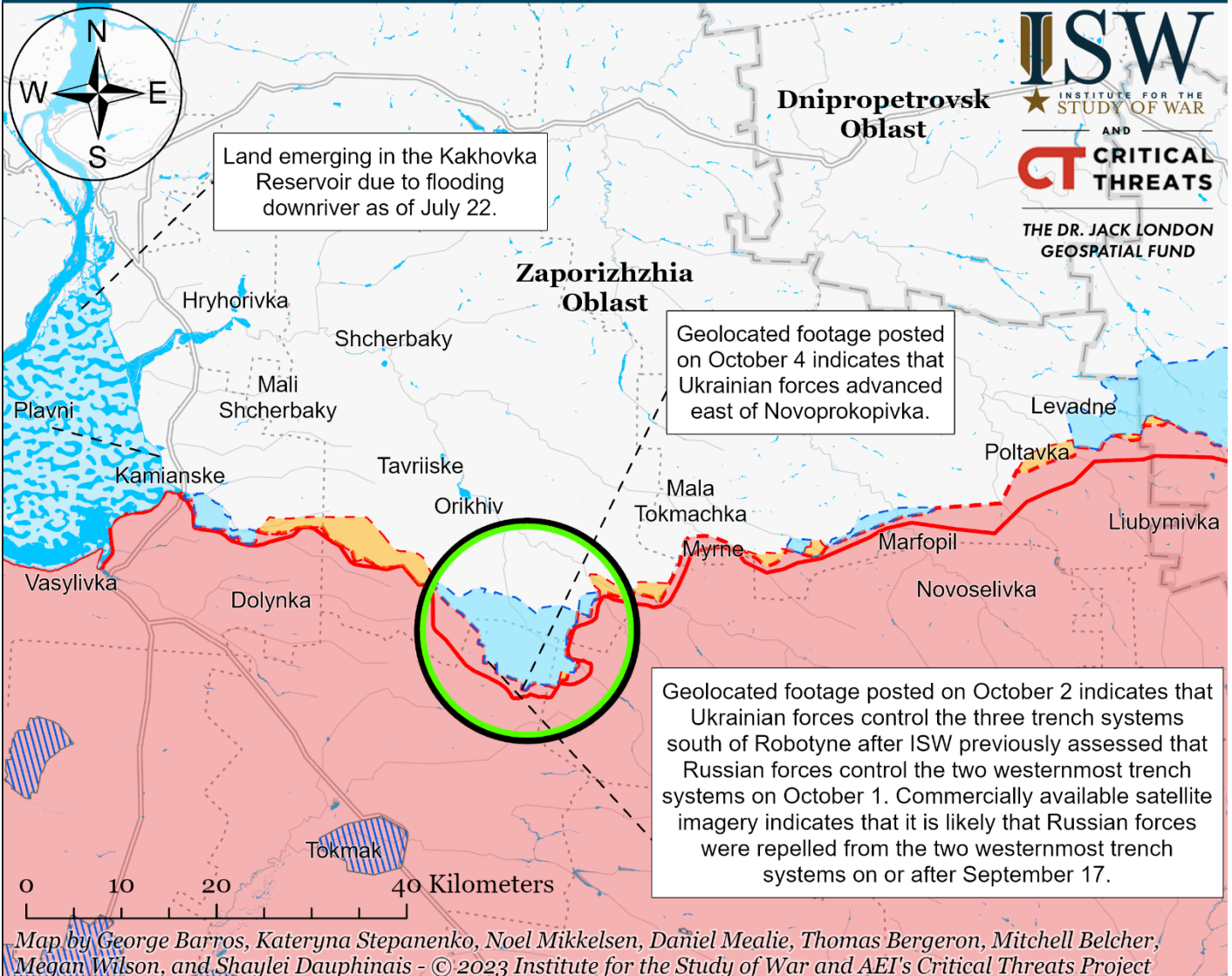
Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Megan Wilson, and Shaylei Dauphinais - © 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project


- 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
- Emerging land in the Kakhovka Reservoir
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Russian Field Fortifications

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

Note: Russian sources claimed on October 4 that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian forces two kilometers near Verbove. A Russian source claimed on October 3 that Russian forces advanced several hundred meters near Robotyne and Verbove

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhia as of October 4, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

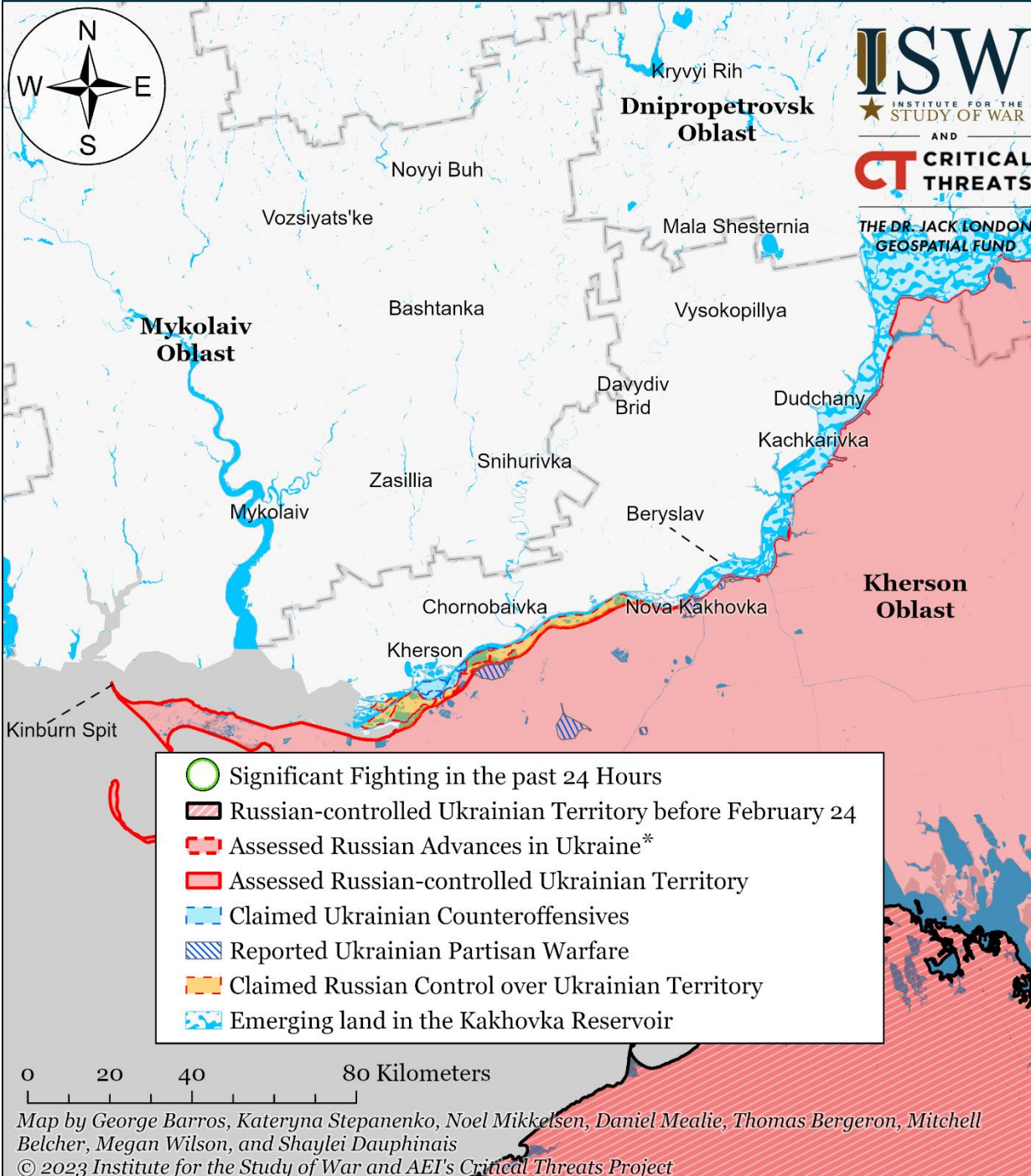


-  Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
-  Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
-  Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
-  Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
-  Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
-  Emerging land in the Kakhovka Reservoir
-  Assessed 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: Russian sources claimed on October 4 that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian forces two kilometers near Verbove. A Russian source claimed on October 3 that Russian forces advanced several hundred meters near Robotyne and Verbove.

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of October 4, 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.

Ukrainian special agents reportedly conducted a landing in occupied Crimea on the night of October 3-4. Ukraine's Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) posted footage on October 4 purportedly showing GUR special agents landing in an unspecified area of Crimea and inflicting fire damage on Russian forces in the area.[62] GUR Spokesperson Andriy Yusov stated that the special forces landed on Crimea, attacked Russian forces, and retreated after completing their task.[63] The Russian MoD responded to the landing and claimed that Russian Aerospace Forces (VKS) aircraft repelled a Ukrainian group that was travelling towards Cape Tarkhankut (the northwestern tip of the Crimean Peninsula) on high-speed boats and jet skis.[64] Russian milbloggers responded to the attack and claimed that Ukrainian forces suffered losses while fighting Russian troops whereas no Russian forces died.[65]

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

Russian authorities continue efforts to collect information about Russian citizens for future conscription and enlistment cycles. Russian State Duma Committee on Defense Chairman Andrei Kartapolov announced on October 4 that the Russian government will require private clinics and other organizations to provide information about Russian citizens to military registration and enlistment offices.[66] Kartapolov stated that the Russian tax service, Federal Service for the Supervision of Education and Science (Rosobrnadzor), Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD), and other unspecified organizations will also be responsible for providing data to military registration and enlistment offices. Kartapolov stated that this will "remove excess burden" from military registration and enlistment offices and help avoid mistakes when sending out summonses during conscription cycles. Russian opposition outlet *Mobilization News* noted that Rosobrnadzor will collect student information from schools and universities and then submit that information to an electronic database for military registration and enlistment offices.[67]

The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) will issue military service certificates of participation to former Wagner Group personnel who fought in the war in Ukraine. Russian Defenders of the Fatherland Foundation Chairwoman Anna Tsivileva announced on October 4 that the Russian MoD has formed a special commission to issue military service certificates to Wagner personnel.[68] Tsivileva stated that the Russian MoD created the commission "now that issues have finally been resolved regarding Wagner," likely in reference to ongoing efforts by the Kremlin and Russian MoD to subsume Wagner following the June 24 armed rebellion.[69] Tsivileva stated that the commission will provide the documentation to coordinators who will distribute the documents to Wagner personnel throughout Russia, so that the servicemen do not have to travel to "St. Petersburg, Moscow, or the MoD." A Wagner-affiliated source claimed that the Russian MoD has previously withheld military service certificates from personnel who served in Ukraine with irregular formations or private military companies (PMC), like Wagner.[70]

Ukrainian Mariupol City Advisor Petro Andryushchenko stated on October 4 that Russian military registration and enlistment offices in occupied Berdyansk, Zaporizhia Oblast have begun sending military summonses to local residents.[71]

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)

Russian Deputy Prime Minister for Construction and Regional Development Marat Khusnullin is reportedly heavily involved in Russian infrastructure projects in occupied Ukraine. Russian opposition news outlet *Meduza* reported on October 4 that Khusnullin plays a key role in distributing construction contracts to build infrastructure in occupied Ukraine.[72] Unnamed sources close to the Russian presidential administration and government told *Meduza* that Khusnullin has become "one of Putin's favorite subordinates." [73] *Meduza* reported that Russian President Vladimir Putin was not interested in "peaceful affairs" or domestic Russian issues during the first months of the war but that Khusnullin began traveling to occupied areas and started Russian government projects to begin infrastructure restoration.[74] *Meduza* noted that Khusnullin has repeatedly reported "positive news" to Putin about infrastructure repairs in occupied Ukraine, accompanied Putin to occupied Mariupol, Donetsk Oblast in March 2023, and been publicly praised by Putin multiple times.[75]

Russian occupation authorities continue efforts to forcibly indoctrinate Ukrainian youth into Russian culture and identity through the establishment of military-patriotic educational facilities. Yevpatoria city administration occupation head Elena Demidova announced on October 1 that Russian occupation officials opened the new "Avangard" center for military and patriotic education in the "Gagarin" children's health camp in occupied Yevpatoria, Crimea.[76] The "Avangard" center reportedly accepted its first group of 100 ninth-through-eleventh grade students to learn basic Russian military training and participate in "patriotic leisure activities" from October 1 to 6.[77]

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)

Nothing significant to report.

ISW will continue to report daily observed Russian and Belarusian military activity in Belarus as part of ongoing Kremlin efforts to increase their control over Belarus and other Russian actions in Belarus.

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

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[1] <https://meduza dot io/news/2023/10/04/sputnikovye-snimki-podtverdili-chto-chast-chernomorskogo-flota-rf-perebrosili-iz-sevastopolya-v-novorossiysk> ; https://twitter.com/MT_Anderson/status/1708929381903765787 ; https://twitter.com/MT_Anderson/status/1708649952996688039 ; https://twitter.com/MT_Anderson/status/1709244060647772554

[2] <https://meduza dot io/news/2023/10/04/sputnikovye-snimki-podtverdili-chto-chast-chernomorskogo-flota-rf-perebrosili-iz-sevastopolya-v-novorossiysk> ; https://twitter.com/MT_Anderson/status/1708929381903765787 ; https://twitter.com/MT_Anderson/status/1708649952996688039 ; https://twitter.com/MT_Anderson/status/1709244060647772554

[3] https://twitter.com/MT_Anderson/status/1709244060647772554

[4] https://twitter.com/MT_Anderson/status/1708929381903765787

[5] https://t.me/bmpd_cast/17585

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