

# Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, February 10, 2023

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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.

**Russian forces launched another massive series of missile and drone strikes across Ukraine on February 10.** Ukrainian military sources reported that Russian forces launched over 100 missiles against critical and civil infrastructure throughout Ukraine including S-300 surface-to-air missiles in ground attack mode and air and sea-based Kh-101/Kh-55 and Kalibr-28 cruise missiles.<sup>1</sup> The Ukrainian General Staff noted that Russian forces also launched seven Shahed-type drones and that Ukrainian air defense intercepted 61 of the cruise missiles.<sup>2</sup> Ukrainian Air Force spokesperson Yuriy Ihnat noted that Russian forces struck Kharkiv Oblast with S-300 missiles from the direction of Belgorod Oblast and Tokmak, Zaporizhia Oblast.<sup>3</sup> Russian milbloggers widely lauded the wave of strikes and claimed they hit energy infrastructure in Kyiv, Khmelnytskyi, Dnipropetrovsk, Pavlohrad, Vinnytsia, Zaporizhia, Odesa, Mykolaiv, Poltava, Zhytomyr, Kirovohrad, and Kharkiv oblasts.<sup>4</sup> Russian claims of the scale and effectiveness of the strikes are overblown in comparison to official Ukrainian statements, and Russian forces continue to expend already limited stocks of precision munitions on such strikes.

**Russian missile overflights of NATO territory are highly unlikely to prompt an escalation, and ISW continues to assess with high confidence that Russian President Vladimir Putin is unwilling to risk a direct conflict with NATO.** Russian forces fired two cruise missiles from the Black Sea that reportedly crossed Romanian and Moldovan airspace before entering Ukrainian airspace.<sup>5</sup> Russia's ongoing campaign of missile strikes in support of its illegal invasion of Ukraine will continue to generate peripheral risks outside of Ukraine, such as these overflights or the risk of air defense incidents (as in Poland on November 15, 2022). However, ISW assesses that NATO (and individual member states) are in full control over its responses and the degree to which it chooses to escalate in response to accidental or intentional Russian overflights or other provocations. ISW also continues to assess with high confidence that Putin does not seek a war with NATO and is unlikely to directly risk an escalation.

**Recent footage of a failed Russian assault near Vuhledar, Donetsk Oblast has become the latest point of neuralgia in the Russian information space.** Milbloggers latched onto the footage to launch several critiques of Russian military leadership.<sup>6</sup> Russian milbloggers claimed that the same Russian commanders who oversaw highly attritional assaults by the 155th Naval Infantry Brigade on Pavlivka (near Vuhledar) in November 2022 are responsible for the effort to capture Vuhledar, and argued that the video illustrates that these commanders continue to make the same costly mistakes.<sup>7</sup> One Russian milblogger specifically stated that Eastern Grouping of Forces commander Lieutenant General Rustam Muradov is responsible for Russian tactical failures around Vuhledar.<sup>8</sup> Another Russian milblogger called for public trials to punish high-ranking officers who repeatedly fail on the battlefield and argued that Russian forces will continue to repeat the same mistakes if these commanders remain in their positions.<sup>9</sup> Footage shows these Russian forces engaging in highly dysfunctional tactics that are far more indicative of the fact that the 155th Naval Infantry Brigade is likely comprised of poorly trained mobilized personnel than of poor command.<sup>10</sup> Russian milbloggers likely blamed Russian commanders to downplay the fact that the systemic poor training of Russian mobilized personnel will likely continue to result in similar tactical failures throughout Ukraine. Russian milbloggers have routinely accused Russian commanders of being responsible for tactical failures throughout the war, likely to shift the overall Russian military failure in Ukraine from the Russian military as an institution onto individuals.

## Key Takeaways

- Russian forces launched another massive series of missile and drone strikes across Ukraine.
- Russian missile overflights of NATO territory are highly unlikely to prompt an escalation, and ISW continues to assess with high confidence that Russian President Vladimir Putin is unwilling to risk a direct conflict with NATO.
- Recent footage of a failed Russian assault near Vuhledar, Donetsk Oblast has become the next point of neuralgia in the Russian information space and demonstrated the systemic poor training of Russian mobilized personnel.
- Russian forces continued offensive operations northwest of Svatove and around Kreminna.
- Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Bakhmut and Avdiivka-Donetsk City areas as well as in western Donetsk Oblast.
- Russian forces reportedly conducted a limited ground attack in Zaporizhia Oblast.
- Russian authorities are likely placing restrictions on movement in and out of Russia to support crypto-mobilization efforts.
- Russian officials and occupation authorities are intensifying measures to integrate children in occupied territories using government-funded civic organizations.

*We do not report in detail on Russian war crimes because those activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We will continue to evaluate and report on the effects of these criminal activities on the Ukrainian military and population and specifically on combat in Ukrainian urban areas. We utterly condemn these Russian violations of the laws of armed conflict, Geneva Conventions, and humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.*

- 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 continue offensive operations into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and northern Donetsk Oblast)**

*ISW continues to assess the current Russian most likely course of action (MLCOA) is an imminent offensive effort in Luhansk Oblast and has therefore adjusted the structure of the daily campaign assessments. We will no longer include the Eastern Kharkiv and Western Luhansk Oblast area as part of Ukrainian counteroffensives and will assess this area as a subordinate part of the Russian main effort in Eastern Ukraine. The assessment of Luhansk Oblast as part of the Russian main effort does not preclude the possibility of continued Ukrainian counteroffensive actions here or anywhere else in theater in the future. ISW will report on Ukrainian counteroffensive efforts as they occur.*

Russian forces continued offensive operations northwest of Svatove on February 10. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian assaults near Hryanykivka (54km northwest of Svatove) and Masyutivka (51km northwest of Svatove) in Kharkiv Oblast as well as Stelmakhivka, Luhansk Oblast (15km west of Svatove).<sup>11</sup> The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Russian forces completely captured Dvorichne, Kharkiv Oblast (53km northwest of Svatove), although ISW has not observed visual confirmation of this claim.<sup>12</sup> A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces secured marginal advances near Dvorichne and Synkivka (47km northwest of Svatove) and that Ukrainian forces are increasing their combat and logistical capabilities in the Kupyansk area.<sup>13</sup> Russian forces appear to be concentrating renewed offensive operations northwest of Svatove around Dvorichna (55km northwest of Svatove) and likely intend to capture Dvorichna in the coming weeks. Dvorichna is located at an intersection of the R79 highway that leads southwest to Kupyansk and the T2114 highway that leads northwest to Velykyi Burluk, and Russian forces may intend to cut off Ukrainian control of this highway intersection to set conditions for further offensive operations in eastern Kharkiv Oblast.

Russian forces continued offensive operations around Kreminna on February 10. Luhansk Oblast Head Serhiy Haidai stated that Russian forces around Kreminna are conducting assaults and attacking Ukrainian positions in the area with heavy equipment.<sup>14</sup> A Russian milblogger published footage on February 10 purporting to show Russian convoys near Kreminna and claimed that Russian forces are transferring infantry, BMPs, and tanks to the area.<sup>15</sup> The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian assaults near Dibrova (5km southwest of Kreminna).<sup>16</sup> A Russian milblogger claimed that positional battles between Russian and Ukrainian forces continued in the direction of Lyman (25km west of Kreminna) and that Ukrainian forces may be accumulating forces in the area either in preparation for Russian offensives or in advance of Ukrainian counterattacks.<sup>17</sup> The Russian milblogger also claimed that Russian forces are continuing positional offensive operations near Bilohorivka (12km south of Kreminna) and that Russian forces control half of the settlement after Ukrainian forces retreated to Bilohorivka's western outskirts.<sup>18</sup> ISW has not observed any visual confirmation of Russian forces in Bilohorivka, however.

### **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 around Bakhmut on February 10. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian troops repelled Russian attacks on Bakhmut itself; northeast of Bakhmut near Fedorivka (15km northeast); north of Bakhmut near Krasna Hora (4km north); and west of Bakhmut near Ivanivske (5km west).<sup>19</sup> Russian sources widely claimed that Russian forces have secured fire control of both the T0504 Kostyantynivka-Chasiv Yar-Bakhmut and E40 Bakhmut-Slovyansk highways as of February 10.<sup>20</sup> Several milbloggers claimed that Wagner Group forces broke through Ukrainian defensive lines towards Stupocky (about 12km west of Bakhmut just south of the T0504 highway).<sup>21</sup> Russian sources also discussed heavy fighting north of Bakhmut near the E40 highway, particularly near Orikhovo-Vasylivka (10km north of Bakhmut) and in the Paraskoviivka-Krasna Hora area.<sup>22</sup> One prominent milblogger notably differentiated between Wagner Group operations southwest of Bakhmut along the T0504 highway and other Russian units in the area north and northeast of Bakhmut, supporting ISW's observation that conventional Russian units are increasingly supplanting Wagner operations in the Bakhmut area.<sup>23</sup>

Russian forces conducted limited ground attacks in the Avdiivka-Donetsk City area on February 10. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian assaults near Avdiivka, Krasnohorivka (on the northwestern outskirts of Donetsk City), and Paraskoviivka (just southwest of Donetsk City).<sup>24</sup> A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian troops are continuing attacks toward Avdiivka, Pervomaiske, Vesele, and Marinka, and are trying to gain control over the section of the N20 Donetsk City-Slovyansk highway that runs east of Avdiivka.<sup>25</sup> Geolocated footage shows that forces of the Donetsk People's Republic 1st Army Corp sustained substantial manpower and equipment losses, losing eight

infantry fighting vehicles, three tanks, and 25 personnel, during a failed attack just southwest of Avdiivka between February 6 and 7.<sup>26</sup>

Russian forces conducted a limited ground attack in western Donetsk Oblast on February 10. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled a Russian assault near Prechystivka (35km southwest of Donetsk City).<sup>27</sup> Russian sources claimed that Russian troops attempted to advance towards Prechystivka and are trying to break through Ukrainian lines near Bohoyavlenka (25km southwest of Donetsk City) to encircle Vuhledar (30km southwest of Donetsk City).<sup>28</sup> Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) Head Denis Pushilin additionally claimed that Russian forces entrenched themselves in unspecified positions on the southern outskirts of Vuhledar and that Ukrainian forces are deploying reserves to the area in response.<sup>29</sup> A Ukrainian reserve officer reported that elements of the Russian Eastern Military District (particularly varied units of the 36th and 37th Motor Rifle Brigades), Southern Military District (primarily elements of the 136th Separate Guards Motor Rifle Brigade), 155th and 40th Naval Infantry Brigades, "Kaskad" and "Vostok" DNR formations, BARS (Combat Reserve), and the "Patriot" private military company are present in the Vuhledar area.<sup>30</sup>

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

A Russian source claimed that Russian forces conducted a limited ground attack in Zaporizhia Oblast on February 10. The source claimed that Russian forces conducted a ground attack towards Novodanylivka, Zaporizhia Oblast.<sup>31</sup> A Russian source complained that Russian forces stopped an offensive in the Zaporizhia direction after experiencing successes for which Russian military command was not prepared.<sup>32</sup> Russian forces likely only made marginal gains during an increase in offensive activities in late January 2023, as ISW has previously reported.<sup>33</sup>

The Ukrainian Zaporizhia Oblast Military Administration reported on February 10 that Wagner Group forces deployed prison recruits to Myrne, Zaporizhia Oblast, to make up for combat losses.<sup>34</sup> ISW has not yet observed confirmation that Wagner Group forces have arrived in Zaporizhia Oblast. If true, this report supports ISW's ongoing assessment that Russian forces are attempting to supplant Wagner forces in the Bakhmut area with conventional forces by deploying them to deprioritized areas on the frontline and replacing them with conventional elements.<sup>35</sup>

The Russian Ministry of Defense posted footage of Russian Airborne (VDV) forces operating along the east (left) bank of the Dnipro River, suggesting that Ukrainian raids across the Dnipro River may have fixed Russian VDV elements in place along the front line.<sup>36</sup>

Russian forces continued routine indirect fire west of Hulyaipole and in Kherson, Mykolaiv, and Dnipropetrovsk oblasts on February 10.<sup>37</sup> A Russian source posted footage of Russian forces firing incendiary munitions at Kherson City overnight.<sup>38</sup>

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

Russian authorities are restricting international movement in and out of Russia, likely to support ongoing cryptomobilization measures. The Russian State Duma passed a law on February 9 requiring all trucks and cargo trucks travelling between Russia and other states to apply for a certain timeslot to cross the border starting on September 1, 2023.<sup>39</sup> A prior version of this bill required all vehicles seeking to cross the border to apply for a timeslot ahead of time, but the State Duma reportedly adjusted the bill after public dissent.<sup>40</sup> *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty's* Siberia service reported that Russian authorities will implement facial recognition software at nine border checkpoints with China, Kazakhstan, Poland, and Lithuania to compare those crossing the border with existing biometric databases.<sup>41</sup> The Kazakhstan Ministry of Internal Affairs announced on

February 8 that it is increasing documentation requirements for foreigners to obtain residency permits, which could force Russians without the proper documents who are staying in Kazakhstan to return to Russia.<sup>42</sup> The Kazakhstan Ministry of Internal Affairs claimed that it implemented this measure to crack down against migrants registering under fraudulent addresses, but Kazakhstan may have implemented this measure at the behest of Russian authorities.<sup>43</sup> Kazakhstan eliminated a loophole in legislation on January 17 that allowed Russians to stay in Kazakhstan indefinitely.<sup>44</sup> These measures are unlikely to support a second wave of mobilization given the temporal proximity to the Russian spring conscription drive, which will occur on April 1, 2023.<sup>45</sup>

Russian authorities continue to crack down against anti-mobilization figures. Independent Russian opposition outlet *Mediazona* reported on February 10 that the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs placed Free Buryatia movement head Aleksandra Garmazhapova on the Russian federal watch list for unspecified charges, which Garmazhapova claimed would likely involve distributing fake information about the Russian military.<sup>46</sup> *Mediazona* reported that Russian authorities designated Garmazhapova as a foreign agent in fall 2022 and blocked access to the Free Buryatia website in the summer. ISW has previously assessed that Free Buryatia and other such dissent organizations formed in ethnic minority enclaves will continue to place pressure (albeit limited) on the Kremlin for its treatment of ethnic minority communities.<sup>47</sup>

**Activity in Russian-occupied Areas (Russian objective: consolidate administrative control of and annexed areas; forcibly integrate Ukrainian civilians into Russian sociocultural, economic, military, and governance systems)**

Russian officials and occupation authorities are intensifying measures to integrate children into Russian-occupied territories of Ukraine through the use of government funded civic society organizations. The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported on February 10 that Russian officials ordered occupation authorities to increase the number of Ukrainian children in pro-Russia youth groups.<sup>48</sup> The Center stated that Zaporizhia Oblast occupation Minister of Youth Policy Anton Titsky is personally responsible for recruiting children to join the organizations, noting that Titsky is demanding that principals of schools in occupied territories campaign for children to apply to local organizations of pseudo-youth movements including “South Youth,” “We are Together,” “Volunteers of Victory,” and “Movement of the First.”<sup>49</sup> The Center stated that Russian occupation authorities require local educational institutions to implement the programs and are forcing students to participate in pro-Russia youth movements under threats that they will receive unspecified punishments if they refuse.<sup>50</sup> Luhansk Oblast Head Serhiy Haidai stated on February 10 that Russian occupation authorities are now allowing pro-LNR government campaigns to operate in schools.<sup>51</sup> Haidai stated that Russian occupation authorities have presented the “New School Project” in schools in Luhansk City, emphasizing that the organization will expose students to Russian military propaganda.<sup>52</sup> Haidai also stated that Russian occupation authorities held a seminar to teach students how to use unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) in Luhansk City.<sup>53</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.)**

Belarusian maneuver elements continue conducting exercises in Belarus. The Belarusian Ministry of Defense (MoD) announced that companies of the Belarusian 103rd Separate Guards Airborne Brigade completed tactical company force-on-force exercises at the Losivido Training Ground in Vitebsk Oblast on February 10.<sup>54</sup> The Belarusian MoD previously reported on February 7 and 8 that companies of the 103rd Separate Guards Airborne Brigade conducted exercises with the exact same description in Brest Oblast.<sup>55</sup> It is unclear whether multiple

companies of the 103rd Separate Guards Airborne Brigade conducted multiple exercises in both Brest and Vitebsk oblasts in a similar time frame or if the Belarusian MoD misreported activity. Russian airborne elements may have participated in these exercises.<sup>56</sup> Unspecified elements of the Belarusian Separate Mechanized Brigade conducted combat readiness tasks in an unspecified location on February 10.<sup>57</sup> Elements of the Belarusian 51st Guards Artillery Brigade conducted live fire exercises at the Osipovichsky training Ground in Mogilev, Belarus, on February 10.<sup>58</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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<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0BNX3J8pfoHPZKxTXjkMcP1AgVpsiHSM5hFvJ8HsAASt8YHXCULFNmRstHUzt5J2Sl>; <https://armyinform dot com.ua/2023/02/10/po-ukrayini-vypustyly-rekordnu-kilkist-raket-s-300-yurij-ignat/>

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<sup>3</sup> <https://armyinform dot com.ua/2023/02/10/po-ukrayini-vypustyly-rekordnu-kilkist-raket-s-300-yurij-ignat/>

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<sup>6</sup> <https://t.me/milinfolive/96816> ; [https://t.me/grey\\_zone/17141](https://t.me/grey_zone/17141) ; <https://t.me/strelkovii/3925>

<sup>7</sup> <https://t.me/milinfolive/96816> ; [https://t.me/grey\\_zone/17141](https://t.me/grey_zone/17141) ; <https://t.me/strelkovii/3925>

<sup>8</sup> [https://t.me/grey\\_zone/17141](https://t.me/grey_zone/17141)

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<sup>10</sup> <https://twitter.com/UAWeapons/status/162364960171772288>;

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<sup>12</sup> [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/24085](https://t.me/mod_russia/24085)

<sup>13</sup> <https://t.me/rybar/43485>

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<sup>14</sup> [https://t.me/serhiy\\_hayday/9393](https://t.me/serhiy_hayday/9393) ; <https://t.me/luhanskaVTSA/8507>;

<sup>15</sup> <https://t.me/sashakots/38461>

<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> <https://t.me/rybar/43485>

<sup>18</sup> <https://t.me/rybar/43495> ; <https://t.me/rybar/43485>

<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> <https://t.me/readovkanews/52422>; <https://t.me/epoddubny/14861>; <https://t.me/kommunist/15710>

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<sup>23</sup> <https://t.me/rybar/43495>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-february-6-2023>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-january-31-2023>

<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> <https://t.me/wargonzo/10800>

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<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> <https://t.me/wargonzo/10800>

<sup>29</sup> <https://t.me/readovkanews/52443>; [https://ria dot ru/20230210/ugledar-1851212102.html](https://ria.dot.ru/20230210/ugledar-1851212102.html);  
<https://t.me/voenkorkotenok/45132>; [https://t.me/boris\\_rozhin/77737](https://t.me/boris_rozhin/77737);

<sup>30</sup> [https://twitter.com/Tatarigami\\_UA/status/1623720127324725249?s=20&t=dImQ5BPY0IxyDiC\\_pNRI7g](https://twitter.com/Tatarigami_UA/status/1623720127324725249?s=20&t=dImQ5BPY0IxyDiC_pNRI7g)

<sup>31</sup> <https://t.me/wargonzo/10800>

<sup>32</sup> <https://t.me/strelkovii/3927>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-january-21-2023>

<sup>34</sup> [https://t.me/zoda\\_gov\\_ua/16578](https://t.me/zoda_gov_ua/16578)

<sup>35</sup> <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-january-31-2023>

<sup>36</sup> [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/24084](https://t.me/mod_russia/24084)

<sup>37</sup> <https://t.me/mykolaivskaODA/4257>;

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