

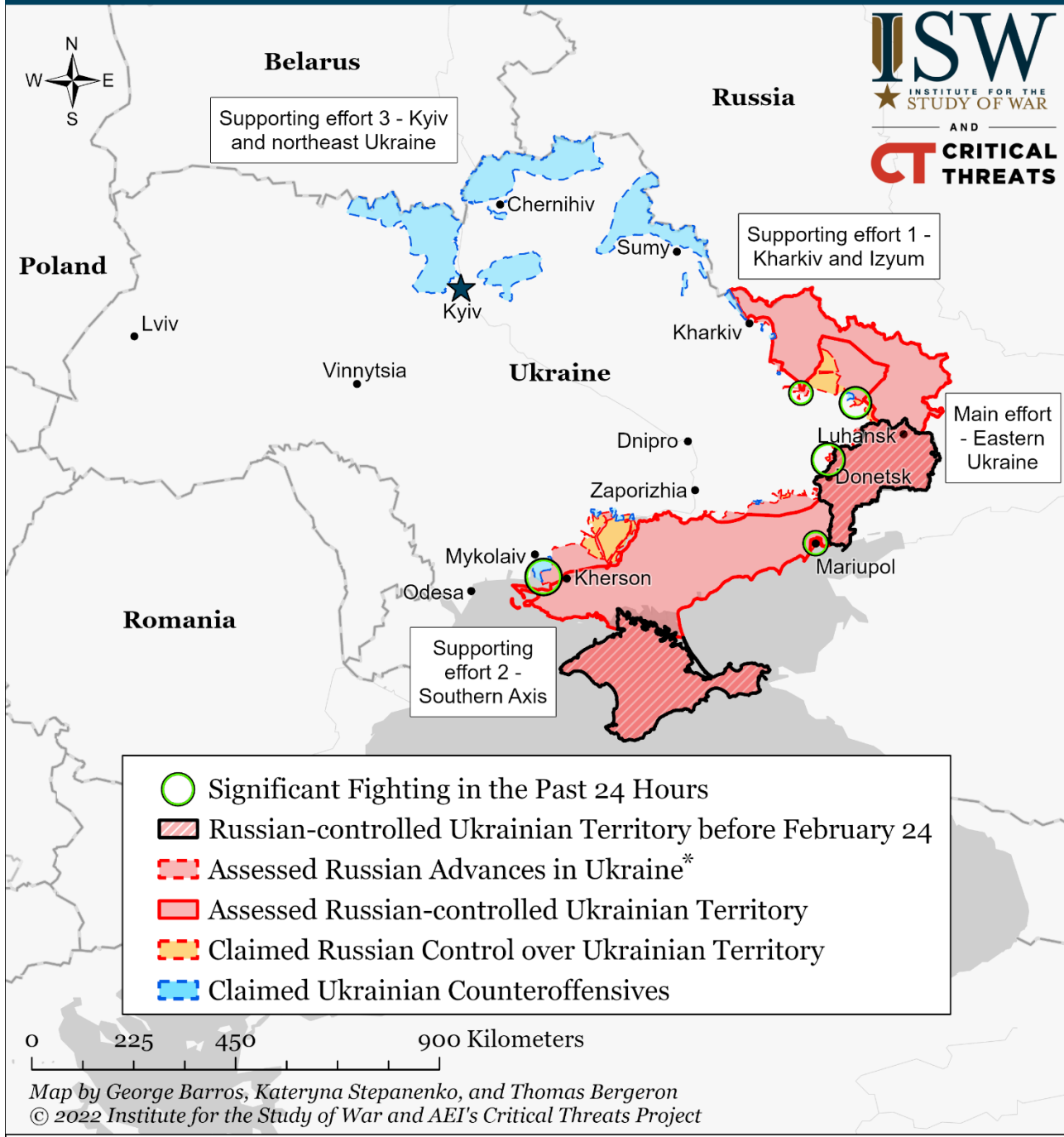
Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, April 13
Mason Clark, Kateryna Stepanenko, and Karolina Hird
April 13, 4:30pm ET

Russian claims of a mass Ukrainian surrender in Mariupol are likely false, but Russian forces forced Ukrainian troops to abandon the Ilyich metal plant in northern Mariupol on April 13, further constricting the two remaining pockets of Ukrainian defenders. Russian forces will likely capture Mariupol in the coming week. Russian forces continued to conduct small-scale limited offensive operations on both the Izyum and Severodonetsk axes and have not yet begun a broader offensive campaign.

Key Takeaways

- **Russian forces continued to take ground in Mariupol, but Russian claims of a mass Ukrainian surrender are likely false.**
- **Russian forces continued unsuccessful local attacks in eastern Ukraine amid continuing preparations for a likely wider offensive.**
- **Russian forces continued to regroup in Kharkiv Oblast for offensive operations and conducted only minor attacks south of Izyum.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of April 13, 2022, 3:00 PM ET



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

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

ISW has updated its assessment of the four primary efforts Russian forces are engaged in at this time:

- Main effort—Eastern Ukraine (comprised of two subordinate supporting efforts);
- Supporting effort 1—Kharkiv and Izyum;
- Supporting effort 2—Southern axis;
- Supporting effort 3—Sumy and northeastern Ukraine.

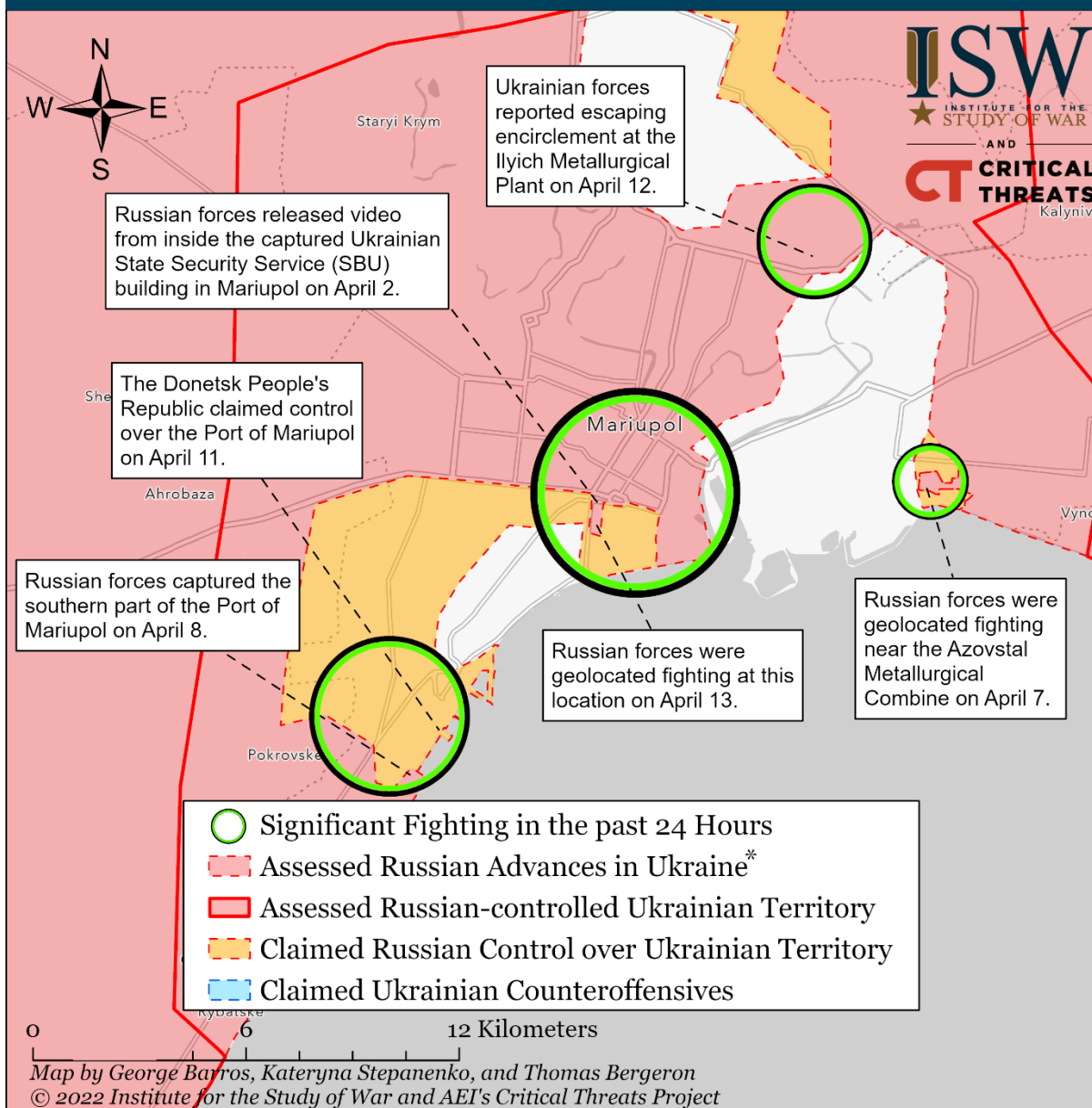
Main effort—Eastern Ukraine

Subordinate main effort—Mariupol (Russian objective: Capture Mariupol and reduce the Ukrainian defenders)

Russian forces captured the Ilyich metal plant in northern Mariupol on April 13, though some elements of defending Ukrainian forces escaped to link up with Ukrainian forces in Azovstal despite Russian claims of a mass surrender. The Russian Ministry of Defense claimed that 1026 servicemen of Ukraine's 36th Marine Brigade surrendered at the Ilyich metal plant (in northern Mariupol) on April 13 and Russian troops released a video of around 30 Ukrainian troops they claim were captured during an attempt to breakout from Ilyich to the north.¹ Several independent Ukrainian outlets and government officials contrarily reported that the 36th Marine Brigade broke out of Ilyich to link up with Ukrainian forces at the Azovstal plant.² The commanders of the 36th Brigade and the Azov Regiment (the primary Ukrainian defenders in Azovstal) additionally released a joint video on April 13.³

Russian forces additionally conducted several assaults on Ukrainian defenders in the southwestern port and eastern Azovstal steel plant in the last 24 hours.⁴ Russian forces heavily shelled Ukrainian defenders in the Port of Mariupol on April 12-13.⁵ Mariupol's City Council stated on April 13 that Russian forces continue to "purposefully create a humanitarian catastrophe" through intentional attacks on civilian infrastructure.⁶

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Mariupol as of April 13, 2022, 3:00 ET



Russian forces continue their grinding advance into Mariupol, which they have encircled and are bombarding. Fighting is proceeding block-by-block and slowly. Russian forces began penetrating Mariupol's city center on March 24. Ukraine's 36th Marine Brigade reported escaping encirclement at the Ilyich Metallurgical Plant and reuniting with the Ukrainian Azov Regiment on April 12. Russian Defense Ministry claimed that 1,026 Ukrainian servicemen surrendered at the the Ilyich Metallurgical Plant on April 13, but Ukrainian forces deny reports of mass surrender. The Azov Regiment continued to challenge Russian forces in central Mariupol by destroying some Russian military equipment on April 13.

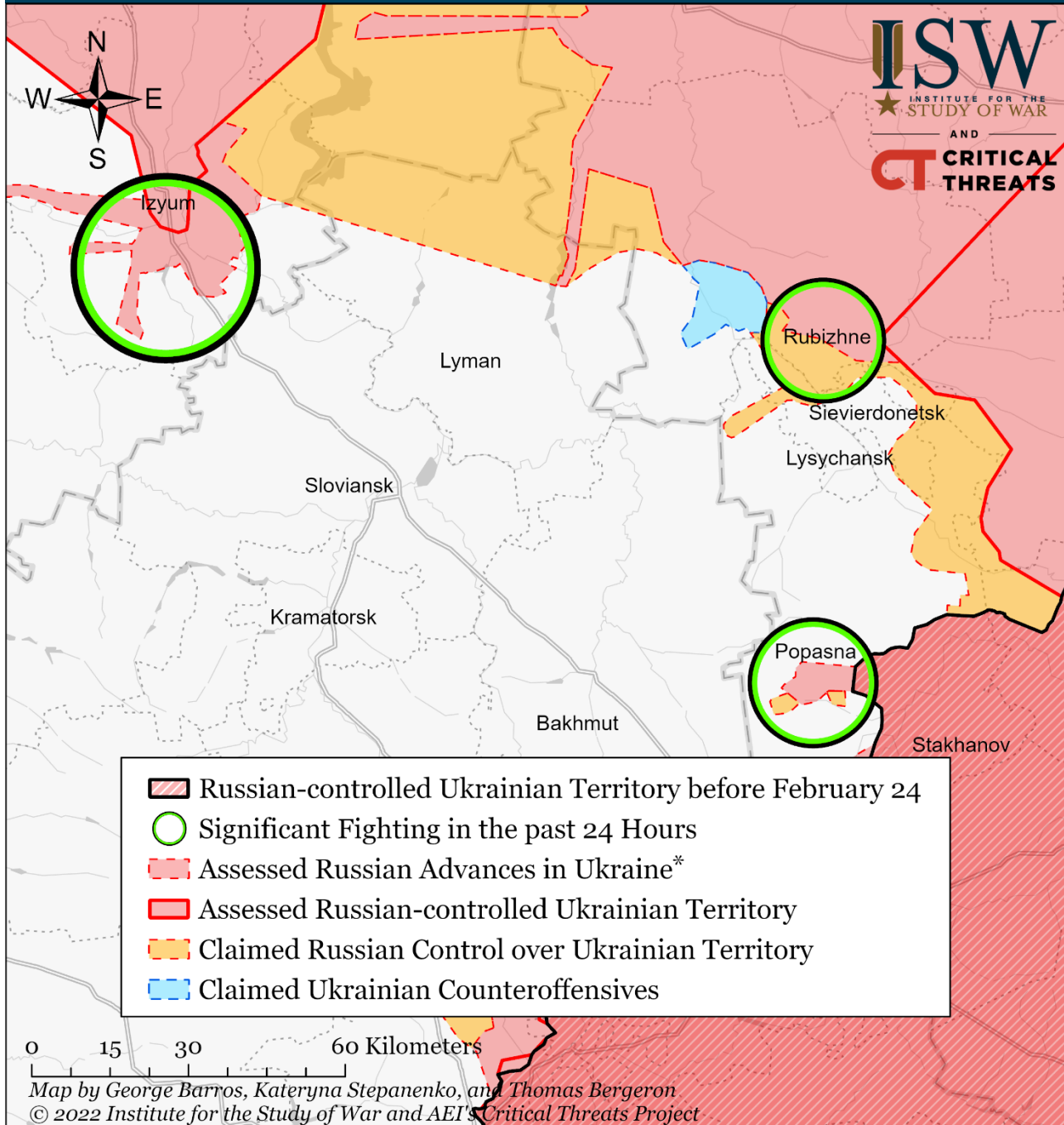
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Subordinate main effort—Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)

Russian forces continued unsuccessful local attacks in eastern Ukraine throughout the past 24 hours amid continuing preparations for a likely wider offensive. Russian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks in Sverodonetsk, Rubizhne, and Popasna but made no substantial progress on April 13.⁷ US intelligence sources stated that Russia has approximately 55 battalion tactical groups (BTGs) fighting in “southern Ukraine,” though this number likely includes both Donbas and the southern Kherson axis.⁸

Russian forces continue to deploy damaged and ad-hoc units to Donbas.⁹ The Kremlin introduced a “yellow level of threat” in Russian regions bordering Ukrainian from April 13-26, likely to organize the redeployment of personnel and equipment to eastern Ukraine by imposing restrictions on civilian movement.¹⁰ The Ukrainian General Staff reported Russia has formed five understrength Motorized Rifle regiments (the 103rd, 109th, 113th, 125th, and 127th) from forcibly mobilized personnel in Donetsk and Luhansk.¹¹ The Ukrainian General Staff stated these regiments are composed of up to five “battalions” of 300 personnel each, and that only 5-10 percent of recruits have any combat experience.

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk as of April 13, 2022, 3:00 ET



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

Note: We revised Russian assessed advance near Rubizhne due to observing new geolocation data for Russian forces and reconciling it with an April 10 interview from Luhansk Oblast Governor Serhei Haidai in which he stated that Russian forces occupy half of Rubizhne and that street fighting in Rubizhne is ongoing. We recorded Russian-claimed control near Izyum, Rubizhne, and Sievierdonetsk due to Russian claims in a new map from Kremlin news outlet RIA Fan from April 12.

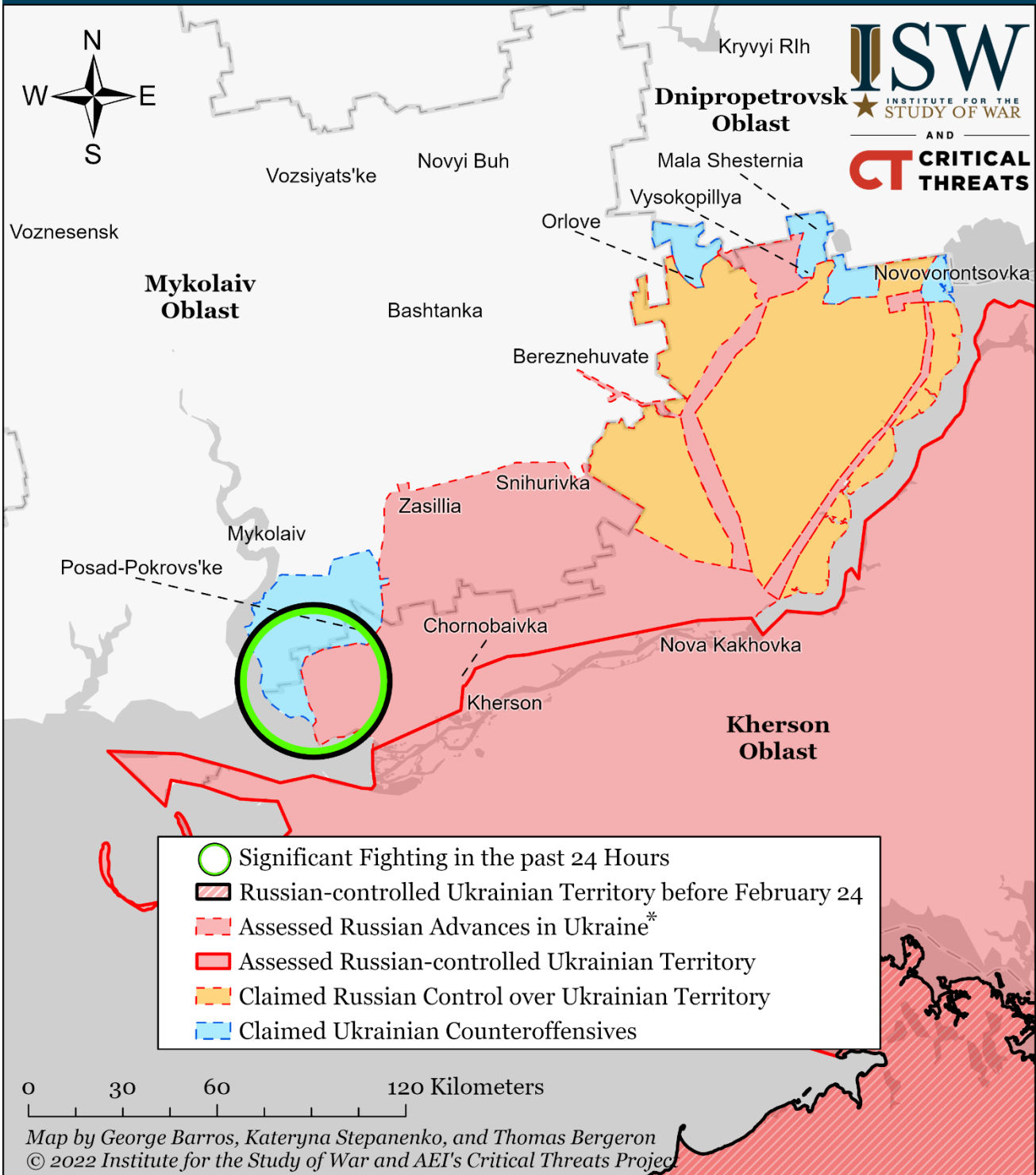
Supporting Effort #1—Kharkiv and Izyum: (Russian objective: Advance southeast to support Russian operations in Luhansk Oblast, and fix Ukrainian forces around Kharkiv in place)

Russian forces continued to regroup in Kharkiv Oblast for offensive operations and conducted only minor attacks south of Izyum on April 13.¹² US intelligence sources stated Russian efforts to reinforce Izyum are moving slowly.¹³ Ukrainian Deputy Commander-in-Chief Yevhen Moisyuk visited the frontlines at an unspecified location in Kharkiv Oblast on April 13 to inspect Ukrainian defensive positions and stated Russian forces continue to threaten Kharkiv city, though ISW assesses a renewed attempt to take the city is unlikely.¹⁴ Kharkiv Oblast civil authorities claimed Ukrainian forces made minor counterattacks at Rohan and Derhachi (southeast and northwest of Kharkiv city, respectively) but ISW cannot confirm this claim.¹⁵

Supporting Effort #2—Southern axis: (Objective: Defend Kherson against Ukrainian counterattacks)

Russian forces conducted minor attacks in Kherson Oblast without success on April 13.¹⁶ US intelligence sources stated on April 13 Russian forces have likely established two resupply bases in Crimea and southern Ukraine to resupply operations in Mariupol and Kherson.¹⁷

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of April 13, 2022, 3:00 PM ET



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Supporting Effort #3—Sumy and Northeastern Ukraine: (Russian objective: Withdraw combat power in good order for redeployment to eastern Ukraine)

Belarusian social media users filmed several convoys of Russian equipment moving toward Russia in Belarus in the past several days.¹⁸

Immediate items to watch

- Russian forces will likely continue ongoing offensive operations in the Donbas region, feeding reinforcements into the fight as they become available rather than gathering reinforcements and replacements for a more coordinated and coherent offensive.
- Ukrainian defenders of Mariupol will not be able to hold out indefinitely, but it remains unclear how quickly Russia will be able to secure the city.



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¹ <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1034238000538136>;

<https://twitter.com/miladvisor/status/1514046328715849735>.

² <https://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2022/04/12/7339144/>; [https://news dot pn/RussiaInvadedUkraine/270533](https://news.dot.pn/RussiaInvadedUkraine/270533);

<https://t.me/mariupolnow/6382>; <https://www.kavkazr.com/a/kadyrov-soobschil-o-massovoy-sdache-v-plen-v-mariupole/31801118.html?fbclid=IwARo-ehrxAJqdlHEwSCItA44ta8ymxdLB4oGITpSLofZeTBQhoKSvdmox2m8>;

<https://t.me/stranaua/36316>; <https://t.me/stranaua/36312>.

³ <https://t.me/mariupolnow/6382>.

⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/294082149571537>;

<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/293730936273325>;

<https://twitter.com/GeoConfirmed/status/1514218479943045122>; <https://t.me/polkazov/4412>

⁵ <https://t.me/mariupolnow/6265>; <https://t.me/mariupolnow/6371>;

<https://twitter.com/RALee85/status/1514000358149922817>; <https://t.me/faceofwar/18430>

⁶ <https://t.me/mariupolrada/9196>

⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/294082149571537>;

<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/293730936273325>

⁸ <https://twitter.com/JackDetsch/status/1514135486377431042>.

⁹ <https://twitter.com/GeoConfirmed/status/1514217107063545863>.

¹⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/293730936273325>; <https://www.rosbalt dot ru/russia/2022/04/11/1952960.html>; <https://iz dot ru/1319038/2022-04-11/v-dvukh-raionakh-krasnodarskogo-kraia-veden-povyshennyi-uroven-terroristicheskoi-ugrozy>; <https://tass dot ru/proisshestiya/14343471>.

¹¹ <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/294082149571537>.

¹² <https://t.me/syneubov/2863>; <https://twitter.com/GeoConfirmed/status/1514217107063545863>;

<https://twitter.com/Militarylandnet/status/1514172402879586307>.

¹³ <https://twitter.com/JackDetsch/status/1514132973834182656>.

¹⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/293975996248819>;

<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/294082149571537>.

¹⁵ <https://t.me/syneubov/2863>.

¹⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/293730936273325>.

¹⁷ <https://twitter.com/JackDetsch/status/1514135486377431042>;
<https://twitter.com/Cen4infoRes/status/1514141647067652100>.
¹⁸ <https://twitter.com/GirkinGirkin/status/1514150018969702402>;
<https://twitter.com/GeoConfirmed/status/1514066125293854724>;
<https://twitter.com/GeoConfirmed/status/1514038619941519363>.