

# Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment

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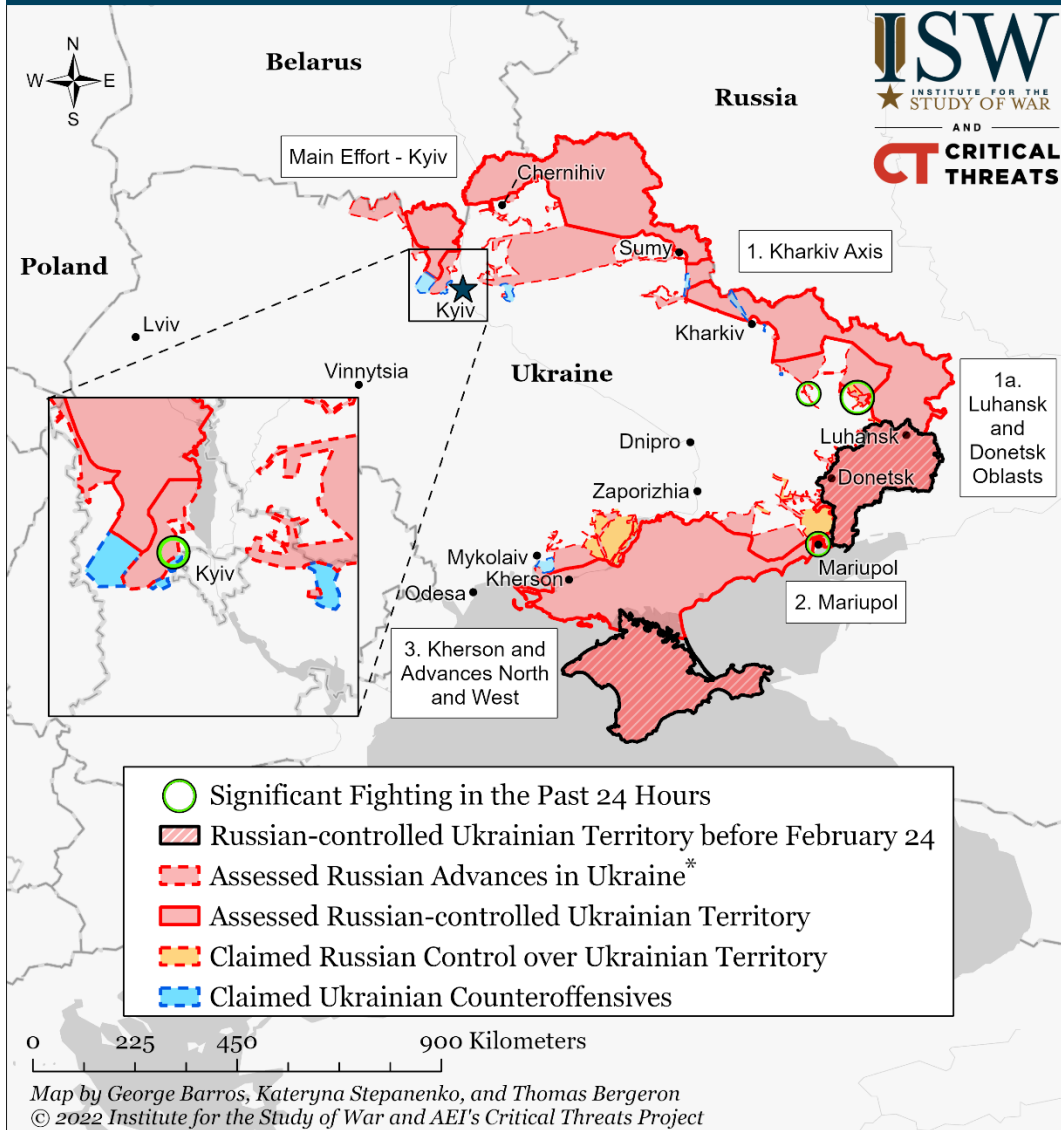
March 30, 5:30 pm ET

**Russia is withdrawing some elements of its forces around Kyiv into Belarus for likely redeployment to other axes of advance and did not conduct any offensive operations around the city in the past 24 hours, but Russian forces will likely continue to hold their forwardmost positions and shell Ukrainian forces and residential areas.** Ukrainian forces repelled several Russian attacks in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts in the past 24 hours and Russian forces likely continued to take territory in Mariupol. Russian forces held their positions and did not conduct offensive operations throughout the rest of the country. Russian forces will likely capture Mariupol in the coming days but likely suffered high casualties taking the city, and Russian force generation efforts and the redeployment of damaged units from the Kyiv axis are increasingly unlikely to enable Russian forces to make rapid gains in the Donbas region.

## Key Takeaways

- **Russian forces around Kyiv held their forward positions and continued to defend against limited Ukrainian counterattacks. Russian forces are unlikely to give up their secured territory around the city and are continuing to dig in.**
- **ISW can confirm Russia is withdrawing some units around Kyiv for likely redeployment to other axes of advance, but *cannot* confirm any changes in Russian force posture around Chernihiv as of this time.**
- **Russian forces did not conduct any offensive operations in northeastern Ukraine in the past 24 hours.**
- **Elements of the 20th Combined Arms Army and 1st Guards Tank Army are redeploying to support Russian operations on Izyum, but are unlikely to take the city in the near future.**
- **Ukrainian forces repelled continuing Russian assaults in Luhansk and Donetsk Oblasts. Russian forces continued to take territory in Mariupol but are likely suffering high casualties.**

# Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of March 30, 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.

Note: We have updated our map to show increased Russian areas of controlled terrain and advances around Ivankiv based on observing new data about Russian forces operating in that area. This expanded area in our map of March 30 does not indicate that Russian forces made further gains, only that we have received sufficiently detailed and reliable reporting of previous gains to adjust our map. ISW will update its assessments based on verified information.

**Russia is reportedly increasingly deploying support personnel and auxiliary units to replace combat losses in Ukraine.** The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russia is deploying servicemen from military support units, including educational institutions, to replace combat losses.<sup>1</sup> Russian officer casualties and the decision to strip Russian training units of personnel will further impede the Russian military's ability to train new conscripts and replacements. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that three battalion tactical groups (BTGs) including up to 2,000 Russian and South Ossetian personnel from Russia's 4th and 7th Military Bases in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, respectively, deployed to unspecified locations in Ukraine.<sup>2</sup> Social media users observed South Ossetian forces in the Donbas region on March 29, but ISW cannot independently confirm if the *entirety* of these reinforcements were deployed to Donbas.<sup>3</sup>

The Ukrainian General Staff additionally stated that Russia faces continuing morale and supply issues, including contract servicemen (volunteer troops, not conscripts) in the 26th Tank Regiment requesting to terminate their contracts and relocate to garrison service, and elements of the 150th Motor Rifle Division receiving inoperable equipment from military storage.<sup>4</sup> The Ukrainian Main Intelligence Directorate additionally claimed that Russian military procurement is "on the verge of failure" due to western sanctions and that Russia cannot produce modern weapons and equipment without foreign electronics.<sup>5</sup> ISW cannot independently confirm these Ukrainian intelligence reports, but they are largely consistent with previously confirmed reports of low Russian morale and equipment failures.

***We do not report in detail on the deliberate Russian targeting of civilian infrastructure and attacks on unarmed civilians, which are 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 forces are engaged in four primary efforts at this time:**

- Main effort—Kyiv (comprised of three subordinate supporting efforts);
- Supporting effort 1—Kharkiv;
  - Supporting effort 1a—Luhansk and Donetsk Oblasts;
- Supporting effort 2—Mariupol; and
- Supporting effort 3—Kherson and advances northward and westward.

**Main effort—Kyiv axis: Russian operations on the Kyiv axis were aimed at encircling the city from the northwest, west, and east. It is unclear if forces on this axis have been given a new mission and, if so, what it might be.**

**Elements of Russian forces around Kyiv, both in the northwest and around Brovary, continued to pull back into Belarus on March 30, though Russian forces continued to defend their front lines in the area and shell civilian targets.**<sup>6</sup> Ukrainian Interior Ministry Advisor Denisenko reported on March 30 that Russia has not decreased its military activity near Kyiv and those ongoing Russian withdrawals appear to be unit rotations, rather than a cessation of hostilities.<sup>7</sup> Ukraine's National Security and Defense Council concurred that Russian forces withdrawn from Kyiv will likely be redeployed to other axes.<sup>8</sup> The Ukrainian General Staff reported at noon local

time on March 30 that it confirmed a column of Russian forces traveled north through Ivankiv toward the Chernobyl area, though ISW cannot confirm the unit identification or size of this reported withdrawal.<sup>9</sup> The Kyiv Oblast administration reported that Russian forces are concentrating on shelling Ukrainian fuel storage to disrupt Ukrainian logistics and create a humanitarian crisis.<sup>10</sup> Russian forces around Kyiv will continue to shell the city, and forces withdrawn into Belarus will likely be deployed to other lines of advance in the coming week.

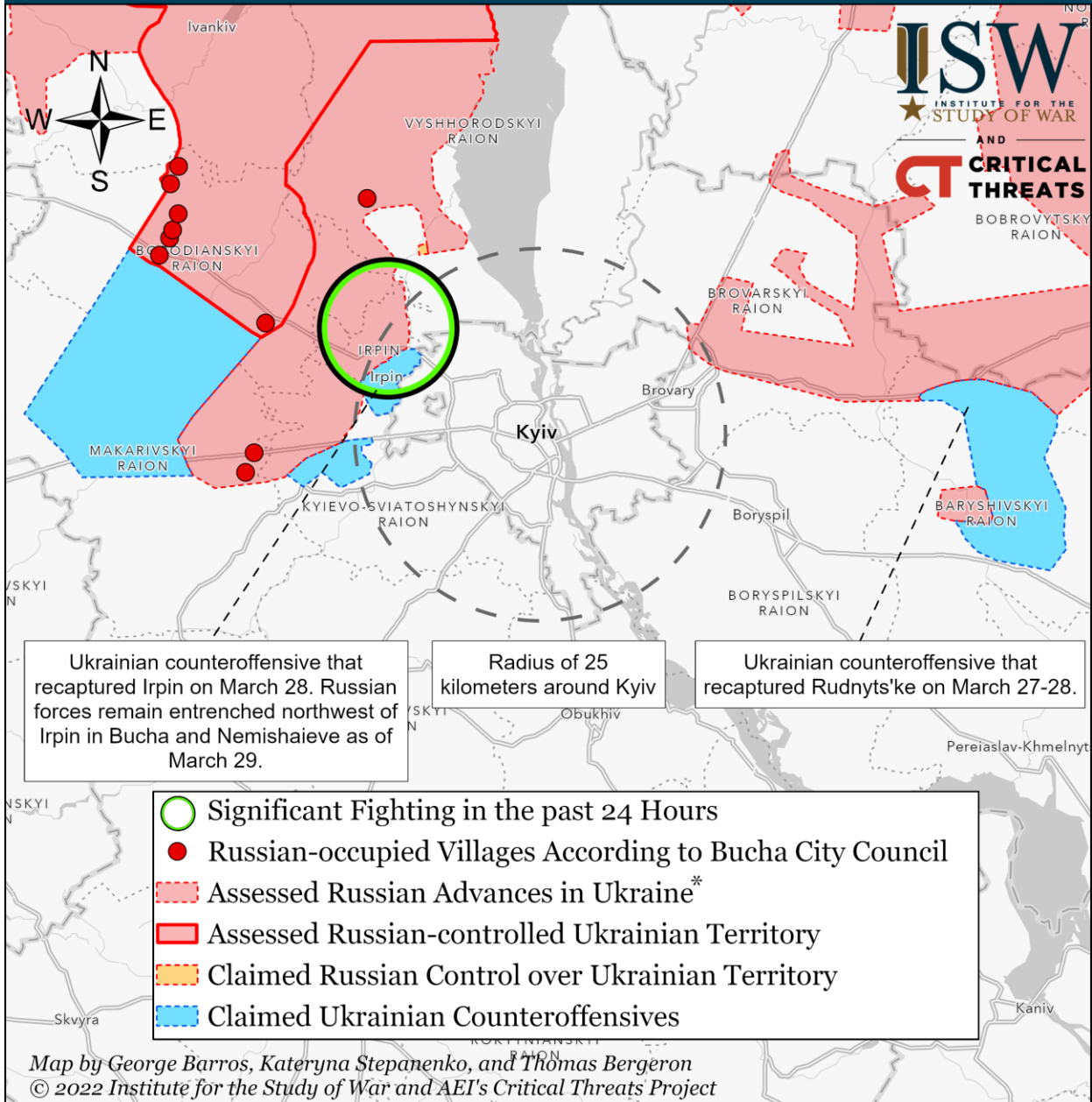
### **Subordinate main effort along the west bank of the Dnipro**

Russian and Ukrainian forces do not appear to have conducted significant operations northwest of Kyiv in the last 24 hours.<sup>11</sup> Kyiv authorities reported on March 30 that Ukrainian forces fully control Makariv and parts of Borodyanka.<sup>12</sup> Fighting has been ongoing in Irpin and Hostomel over the past 24 hours, but Ukrainian forces did not secure additional territory.<sup>13</sup>

### **Subordinate supporting effort—Chernihiv and Sumy axis**

Russian forces did not conduct any major operations along the Chernihiv and Sumy axis in the past 24 hours, but Ukrainian military and civilian sources denied Russian claims to have withdrawn forces from the area.<sup>14</sup> Chernihiv Oblast Administration Head Vyacheslav Chaus stated on March 30 that the city has seen no evidence of Russian withdrawals around the city and reported Russian aircraft continue to strike targets in the city on the night of March 29.<sup>15</sup> The Chernihiv City Council Secretary separately stated on March 30 that Russian shelling increased following the Russian claim on March 29 that Russian forces would reduce operations against Chernihiv.<sup>16</sup> The Ukrainian General Staff reported at noon local time on March 30 that Russian forces conducted reconnaissance and continued to shell Ukrainian positions in the city.<sup>17</sup> ISW has not confirmed any Russian unit rotations near Chernihiv, unlike observed Russian redeployments from northwestern Kyiv.

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kyiv as of March 30, 2022, 3:00 PM ET



Control of terrain did not change significantly on March 30. Ukrainian forces recaptured the Kyiv suburb of Irpin on March 28. The Mayor of Irpin, Oleksandr Markushin, stated on March 28 that Ukrainian forces intend to use Irpin as a staging ground for further counterattacks on Russian-occupied Bucha, Vorzel, and Hostomel.

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

### **Supporting Effort #1—Kharkiv:**

Russian forces do not appear to have conducted significant operations in or immediately around Kharkiv in the last 24 hours and continued to shell the city.<sup>18</sup>

The Ukrainian General Staff reported at noon local time on March 30 that Russia is redeploying elements of the 20th Combined Arms Army and 1st Guards Tank Army from unspecified locations—likely from the Sumy region—to reinforce Russian units around Izyum.<sup>19</sup> Russian forces did not conduct offensive operations in Izyum or Kam'yanka, a town south of Izyum, in the past 24 hours.<sup>20</sup>

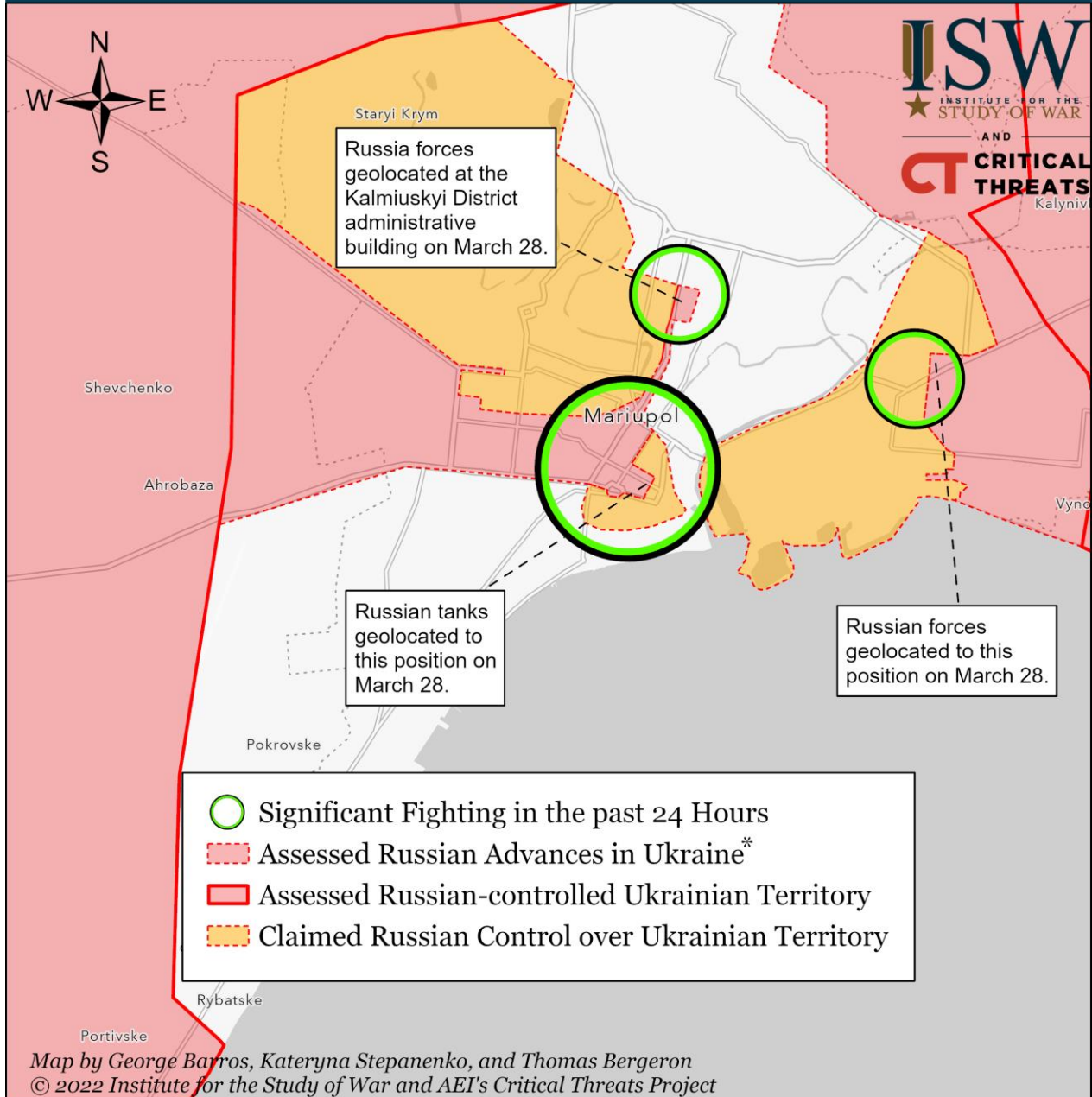
### **Supporting Effort #1a—Luhansk and Donetsk Oblasts:**

Ukrainian forces continued to repel Russian assaults throughout Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts in the last 24 hours. The Ukrainian General Staff reported at 6:00 am local time on March 30 that Ukrainian forces repelled four Russian attacks in the area in the past 24 hours and destroyed seven tanks, seven armored vehicles, and two other vehicles.<sup>21</sup> Local Ukrainian officials in Donetsk Oblast reported Russian shelling and airstrikes continued along the entire line of contact.<sup>22</sup> Donetsk People's Republic Head Denis Pushilin said on March 30 that Russian and proxy forces main task is to “reach the constitutional borders” claimed by the DNR and LNR—the entirety of their respective oblasts.<sup>23</sup>

### **Supporting Effort #2—Mariupol:**

Russian forces continued to make steady but costly progress in Mariupol on March 30. ISW cannot confirm any specific territorial changes in the last 24 hours. Social media users depicted ongoing Russian use of thermobaric munitions in Mariupol and widespread damage to the city.<sup>24</sup> Russia's 150th Motor Rifle Division is likely suffering high casualties in ongoing fighting.<sup>25</sup> Mariupol will likely fall within days.

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Mariupol as of March 30, 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. ISW has not observed sufficient evidence to change assessed advances in Mariupol between March 29 and 30, though Russian forces likely have advanced.

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

## **Supporting Effort #3—Kherson and advances northward and westwards:**

Russian forces did not conduct any offensive operations around Kherson and continued to reconstitute their forces in the southern direction in the last 24 hours.<sup>26</sup>

### **Immediate items to watch**

- Russian forces will likely capture Mariupol or force the city to capitulate within the coming days;
- Russian reinforcements may enable a renewed Russian offensive through Slovyansk to link up with Russian forces in Luhansk Oblast;
- Russian withdrawals from near Kyiv and Chernihiv will become significant if Russian troops begin to pull back from front-line positions around either city.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/283954080584344>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/283747677271651>.

<sup>3</sup> <https://twitter.com/Militarylandnet/status/1508870118931144715>.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/283747677271651>;

<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/284155327230886>.

<sup>5</sup> <https://gur.gov.ua/content/chez-vvedeni-sanktsii-v-rosii-zryvaietsia-vykonannia-oboronnoho-zamovlennia.html>.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/284155327230886>;

<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/283954080584344>.

<sup>7</sup> <https://t.me/stranaua/33775> ; <https://magnolia-tv.com/news/71023-pro-te-shcho-rosiyany-zmenschuyut-intensyvni-diy-na-kyivshchyni-ta-chernihivshchyni?prov=ukrnet>.

<sup>8</sup> <https://reform.news/305905-rossija-perebroshchast-podrazdelenij-iz-chernigovskoj-i-kievskoj-oblastej-na-drugie-napravlenija-snb-ukrainy>.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/283954080584344>.

<sup>10</sup> <https://t.me/kyivoda/2818>.

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/283612530618499>.

<sup>12</sup> <https://t.me/kyivoda/2818>; <https://t.me/kyivoda/2818>.

<sup>13</sup> <https://t.me/kyivoda/2818>; <https://t.me/kyivoda/2818>.

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/283612530618499>.

<sup>15</sup> <https://t.me/chernigivskaODA/721>.

<sup>16</sup> <https://t.me/stranaua/33826>; <https://t.me/stranaua/33774>.

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/283954080584344>.

<sup>18</sup> <https://t.me/syngubov/2766>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/283954080584344>.

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/283954080584344>.

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/283954080584344>;

<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/283612530618499>.

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/283747677271651>.

<sup>22</sup> [https://t.me/pavlokyrylenko\\_donoda/2874](https://t.me/pavlokyrylenko_donoda/2874).

<sup>23</sup> [https://twitter.com/666\\_mancer/status/1509057065863553026](https://twitter.com/666_mancer/status/1509057065863553026); <https://tass.com/world/1429647>; <https://lenta.ru/news/2022/03/30/pushilin/>.

<sup>24</sup> <https://twitter.com/RALee85/status/1508833638158319618>; <https://t.me/faceofwar/17807>;

[https://twitter.com/bradyafr/status/1508968499477200897?cxt=HHwWgoC-yd-29\\_ApAAAA](https://twitter.com/bradyafr/status/1508968499477200897?cxt=HHwWgoC-yd-29_ApAAAA).

<sup>25</sup> <https://twitter.com/OSINTua/status/1509128230007197697>.

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/283954080584344>;

<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/283612530618499>;

<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/283612530618499>.