Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, November 1

Kateryna Stepanenko, Riley Bailey, Karolina Hird, Grace Mappes, Madison Williams, Yekaterina Klepanchuk, and Frederick W. Kagan November 1, 8:30 pm ET

Click <u>here</u> 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.

Iran plans to send more combat drones and new ballistic missile systems to Russia for use in Ukraine, likely further strengthening Russia's reliance on Iranian-made weapon systems. The Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) reported on November 1 that Iranian officials intend to send a shipment of more than 200 Shahed-136, Mohajer-6, and Arash-2 combat drones to Russia.¹ The GUR reported that Iran will send Russia the drones in a disassembled state and that Russian personnel will assemble them with Russian markings.² CNN reported on November 1 that unnamed officials from a western country that closely monitors Iranian weapons programs stated that Iran plans to send a thousand weapons to Russia by the end of the year, including surface-to-surface short-range ballistic missiles and combat drones.3 This would be the first confirmed instance of Iran sending Russia advanced precision-guided missiles. Russia likely negotiated the additional Iranian shipment of weapons systems due to the depletion of its stockpile of cruise missile and drone systems over the course of the war in Ukraine, particularly during the Russian campaign against Ukrainian critical infrastructure. The GUR reported that Ukrainian air defenses have shot down more than 300 Shahed-136 drones since Russia starting using them in Ukraine on September 13.4 Russia will likely continue to use drone attacks and missile strikes against critical infrastructure to try to offset the failures and limitations of its conventional forces on the frontline. Russian dependence on Iranian-made systems, and therefore on Iran, will likely increase.

The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) started its semi-annual fall conscription drive on November 1, amidst reports of continuing covert mobilization throughout the country. Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu announced that 2,700 draft committees across 85 federal subjects began the fall conscription call-up of 120,000 men.⁵ Shoigu also stated that partial mobilization in Russia concluded. Head of the Main Organizational and Mobilization Directorate of the Russian General Staff, Yevgeniv Burdinsky, reiterated that Russia is conscripting 7,500 fewer men than in previous years and noted that partial mobilization postponed the conscription cycle by one month.⁶ Burdinsky claimed that conscripts will not serve in occupied Luhansk, Donetsk, Kherson, or Zaporizhia oblasts this year and will not participate in combat. Head of the 4th Directorate of the Main Organizational and Mobilization Directorate of the Russian General Staff Vladimir Tsimlyansky added that most recruits will deploy to training formations and military units where they will train for five months, while others will receive specializations based on their skills and education level.⁷ The Russian MoD has conducted semi-annual conscription call-ups for decades and should be able to execute this process effectively and efficiently. Any problems with the execution of the fall call-up would likely indicate that partial mobilization and the war in Ukraine have complicated a standard procedure.

Numerous Russian sources reported that Russian enlistment officers are continuing to mobilize men despite Shoigu's previous announcements of the conclusion of partial mobilization and transition into the conscription period on October 28. Local Russian outlets reported instances of men receiving mobilization notices in Tyumen and St. Petersburg as of October 31.8 The Russian Central Military District (CMD) reportedly told journalists of a Russian outlet that mobilization processes will continue across Russia until Russian President Vladimir Putin signs a decree ending the mobilization period.9 Ukrainian Melitopol and Mariupol authorities also reported that Russian occupation authorities are continuing to coerce Ukrainians into volunteer battalions and territorial defense units.¹⁰

Commander of the 8th Combined Arms Army of the Southern Military District (SMD) Lieutenant-General Andrey Mordvichev reportedly replaced Colonel-General Alexander Lapin as commander of the Central Military **District (CMD).** Several Russian milbloggers—including some who appear on Russian state television—noted that Mordichev has replaced Lapin in this position, but the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) has not officially announced Mordichev's appointment nor Lapin's dismissal as of November 1.11 A Russian local outlet citing an unnamed official within the Russian MoD claimed that Mordichev will only replace Lapin as the commander of the "center" forces in Ukraine for the duration of Lapin's supposed three-week medical leave. 12 A milblogger who frequently appears on Russian state media claimed that the Commander of the Russian Forces in Ukraine, Army General Sergey Surovikin, personally appointed Mordichev to replace Lapin due to his commitment to objective frontline reporting.¹³ If reports of Mordichev's appointment are true, then the Kremlin may be attempting to appease the pro-war milblogger community that has been demanding transparency and more honest reporting. The milblogger added that Mordichev reportedly has "warm working relations" with Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov, and that Kadyrov called Mordichev "the best commander" during their meeting in mid-March.¹⁴ Mordichev's appointment may therefore indicate that the Kremlin is attempting to appease the *siloviki* faction—composed of Kadyrov and Wagner Group financier Yevgeniy Prigozhin-that has publicly criticized Lapin as well.¹⁵ Lapin's dismissal may have also been Surovikin's recommendation as well, however, given that both commanders operated in the Luhansk Oblast area to seize Lysychansk and its surroundings in June.¹⁶ ISW cannot independently verify milblogger or Russian local outlet reports at this time.

Wagner Group financier Yevgeniy Prigozhin is likely attempting to address critiques against his parallel military structures following Lapin's reported dismissal. Prigozhin defended his mercenaries against unspecified "tens of thousands of critics," stating that his Wagner mercenaries are dying while critics are refusing to go to the frontlines.¹⁷ Prigozhin has been responding to numerous inquiries in recent days regarding Wagner units suffering losses or facing outbreaks of infectious diseases among prisoner recruits, but his attacks against Lapin have prompted some within the pro-war community to publicly question his authority.¹⁸ Many Russian milbloggers who had

defended Lapin heavily criticized Prigozhin's comments about the Russian higher military command, with one milblogger stating that "shepherds and cooks," sarcastically referring to Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov and Prigozhin, could not assess Lapin's performance. ¹⁹ ISW has also previously noted that Prigozhin's units have not made significant gains around Bakhmut since June. ²⁰

Prigozhin is likely attempting to reduce the appearance that he might become too powerful, stating that he has no plans to hold political office and would refuse such a position if offered. Prigozhin also added that he does not consider himself to be a leader of public opinion and does not engage in "showdowns" with Russian officials, despite continuing to publicly attack St. Petersburg Governor Alexander Beglov and repeatedly calling for his resignation. Prigozhin added that he is not competing with Beglov in the St-Petersburg business sphere.

Key Takeaways

- Planned Iranian shipments of drones and ballistic missiles to Russia will likely further strengthen Russian reliance on Iran and Iranianmade weapons systems.
- The Russian MoD started its semi-annual fall conscription cycle despite reports of Russian authorities covertly continuing mobilization measures.
- Commander of the 8th Combined Arms Army of the Southern Military District (SMD), Lieutenant-General Andrey Mordvichev, reportedly replaced Colonel-General Alexander Lapin as commander of the Central Military District (CMD).
- Wagner Group financier Yevgeniy Prigozhin is likely attempting to address critiques against his parallel military structures following Lapin's reported dismissal.
- Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces continued to conduct counteroffensive operations in the directions of Svatove and Kreminna.
- Russian forces continued defensive preparations while Ukrainian forces conducted counteroffensive operations in Kherson Oblast.
- Russian forces continued to conduct offensive operations around Bakhmut and around Donetsk City.
- Russian forces continued to strengthen Russian control over the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant.
- Russian military structures are reportedly expanding training capabilities.
- Russian occupation officials continued to set conditions for the longterm and permanent relocation of residents from the east bank of the Dnipro River in Kherson Oblast.

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of November 1, 2022, 3:00 PM ET



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.

- Ukrainian Counteroffensives—Southern and Eastern Ukraine
- Russian Main Effort—Eastern Ukraine (comprised of one subordinate and two supporting efforts);
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort—Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Supporting Effort—Southern Axis
- Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts
- Activities in Russian-occupied Areas

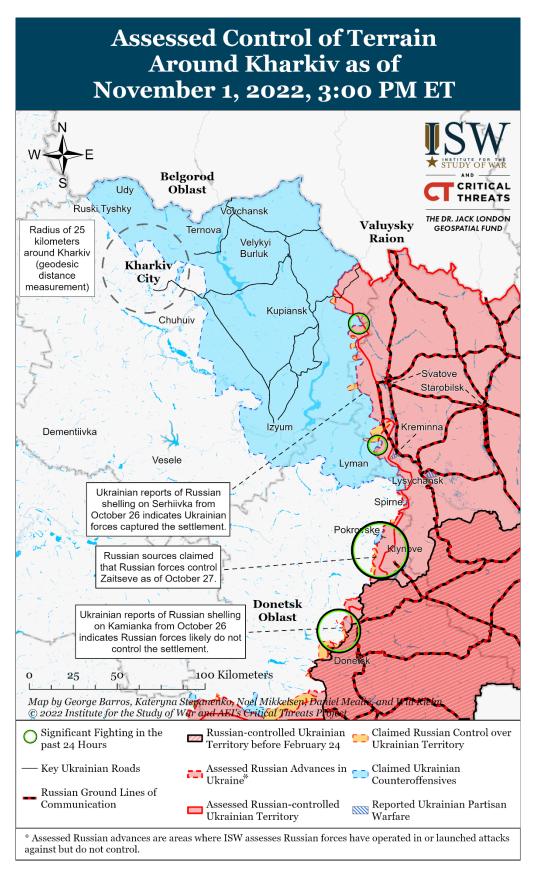
<u>Ukrainian Counteroffensives</u> (Ukrainian efforts to liberate Russianoccupied territories)

Eastern Ukraine: (Eastern Kharkiv Oblast-Western Luhansk Oblast)

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces continued to conduct counteroffensive operations in the direction of Svatove on November 1. The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian assaults northwest of Svatove in the directions of Mykolaivka and Kuzemivka (14km northwest of Svatove) in Luhansk Oblast and near Orlyanske, Kharkiv Oblast (30km northwest of Svatove).²³ A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces also launched a preemptive strike against Ukrainian forces preparing to resume a counteroffensive in the direction of Orlyanske and claimed that unsuccessful Ukrainian assaults from the direction of Kupyansk in the past weeks have cost Ukrainian forces significant equipment and manpower, which is forcing Ukrainian commanders to prepare for Russian counterattacks in the direction of Kupyansk.²⁴ Another Russian milblogger claimed that it would be highly unlikely that Russian forces would be able to launch an offensive in the Kupyansk direction until late November or December.²⁵ A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces crossed the Zherebets River near Stelmakhivka (15km northwest of Svatove) and are preparing to resume an assault on Russian positions in the area.²⁶ Russian sources claimed that Russian BARS (Combat Reserve) 13 and 16 detachments are currently defending areas in the Svatove direction.²⁷ The BARS-13 commander reported that Ukrainian forces have increased their grouping in the Svatove direction and intend to take Svatove this week.²⁸

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces continued to conduct counteroffensive operations in the direction of Kreminna on November 1. A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces continue to conduct offensive operations in the direction of the Kreminna-Svatove highway.²⁹ Another Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces are preparing to conduct offensive operations toward Chervonopopivka to access

Kreminna from the north.³⁰ The milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces near Ploshchanka (17km northwest of Kreminna) intend to launch offensives that will cut off the highway between Kreminna and Svatove.³¹ Another Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces periodically launch counterattacks west of Kreminna near Terny (17km northwest of Kreminna) and Torske (15km west of Kreminna) to constrain the actions of Ukrainian forces in the direction of the highway.³² A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully tried to assault Kreminna from the direction of Nevske (18km northwest of Kreminna).³³ ISW cannot verify these Russian claims. The Luhansk Oblast Administration confirmed on November 1 that Ukrainian forces recaptured Nevske.³⁴

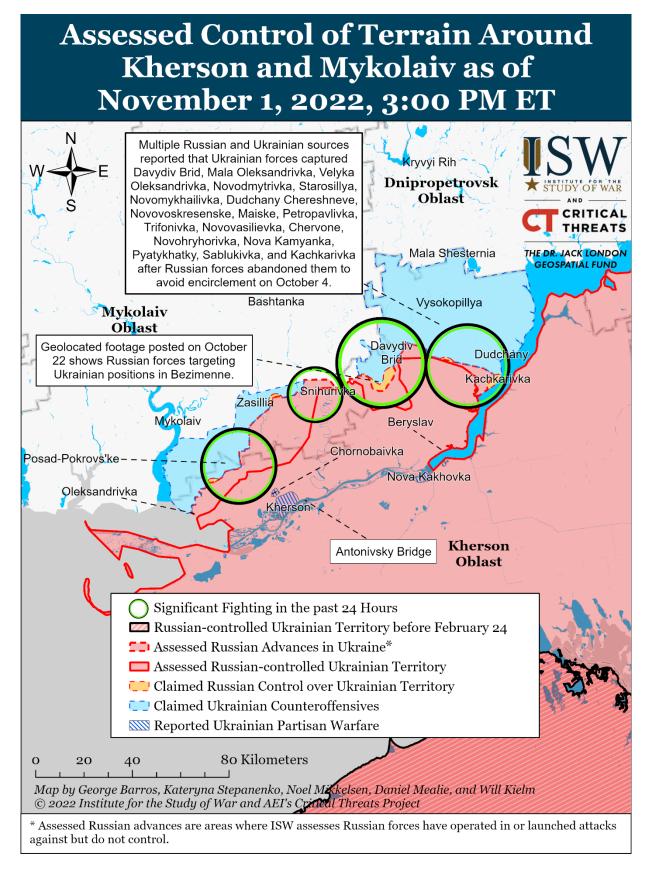


Southern Ukraine: (Kherson Oblast)

Russian forces continued defensive preparations in Kherson Oblast on November 1. Ukraine's Southern Operational Command reported that Russian troops are continuing active defensive actions, conducting aerial reconnaissance, and forming defensive lines on the east bank (left) of the Dnipro River.³⁵ Residents reported that Russian forces are digging trenches and settling in for the defense of the east bank, including along the Nova Kakhovka-Dnipryany-Korsunka line (on the east bank about 45km east of Kherson City), Hola Prystan (8km southwest of Kherson City) and as far south as Mykhailivka, which lies well into Russian-occupied territory about 45km south of Kherson City.³⁶ Such reports indicate that Russian troops are preparing for protracted defensive operations on the east bank.

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian troops continued counteroffensive operations in Kherson Oblast on November 1. Kherson occupation deputy Kirill Stremousov and other Russian sources claimed that Russian troops repelled an attempted Ukrainian attack in the direction of Beryslav.³⁷ The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) similarly claimed that Ukrainian troops unsuccessfully attempted to advance towards Mylove (30km northeast of Beryslav), Sukhanove (32km north of Beryslav), the Bruskynske-Kostromka area (40km northwest of Beryslav), and Zeleny Hai (24km northwest of Kherson City).³⁸ ISW cannot independently verify these Russian claims.

Ukrainian forces continued their interdiction campaign against Russian concentration areas, logistics nodes, and military assets in Kherson Oblast on November 1. Ukraine's Southern Operational Command reported on October 31 that Ukrainian rocket and artillery units conducted 180 fire missions against Russian manpower and equipment concentrations in Kherson Oblast and that Ukrainian aviation struck a Russian stronghold in Snihurivka, Mykolaiv Oblast.³⁹ Ukrainian Kherson Oblast Head Yaroslav Yanushevich stated that Ukrainian forces also hit Russian ammunition warehouses in Beryslav Raion.⁴⁰ Social media users additionally reported explosions in Kozatske, near Nova Kakhovka, on November 1.⁴¹



Russian Main Effort-Eastern Ukraine

<u>Russian Subordinate Main Effort—Donetsk Oblast</u> (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia's proxies in Donbas)

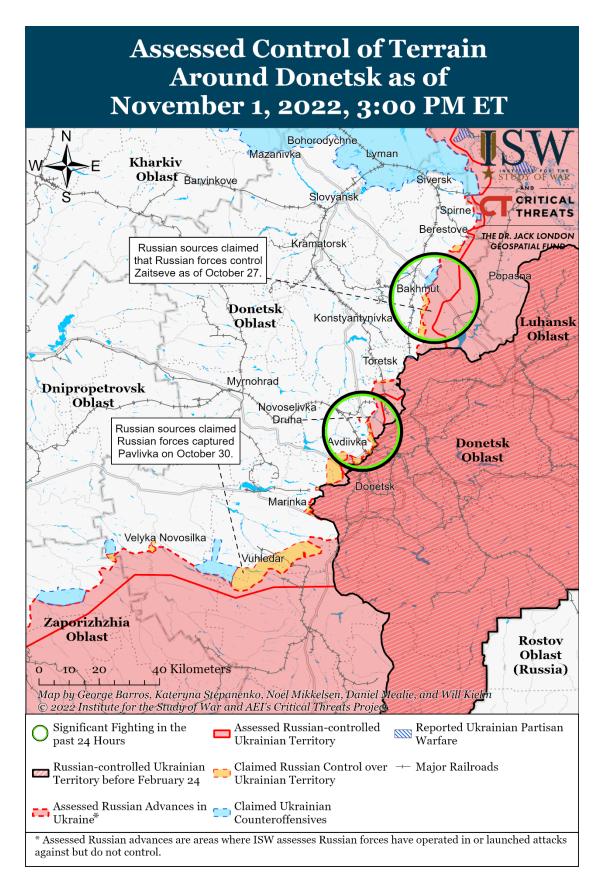
Russian forces continued offensive operations around Bakhmut on November 1. The Ukrainian General Staff notably did not mention specific Russian ground assaults around Bakhmut but noted that Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Bakhmut direction on November 1.42 Russian milbloggers claimed that intense fighting is ongoing near Opytne (about 3km southwest of Bakhmut) in the Kurdyumivka direction.43 A Kremlin-affiliated Russian milblogger also reported that fierce battles continue in the outskirts of Soledar (13km northeast of Bakhmut) and Bakhmut as Wagner troops try to break through Ukrainian defenses.44 Russian sources shared geolocated footage of close-quarters combat between Ukrainian forces and Wagner troops near Zaitseve (8km southeast of Bakhmut).45 Ukrainian soldiers posted footage from settlements around Bakhmut and reported that Ukrainian forces continued to repel endless Russian attacks on Bakhmut and that Ukrainian troops are evacuating civilians in nearby Klyshchiivka (about 9km southwest of Bakhmut).46 Russian and Ukrainian sources reported that Russian forces continued to conduct routine indirect fire along the contact line in Donetsk Oblast.47

Russian forces continued offensive operations on the northern, northwestern, and southwestern outskirts of Donetsk City on November 1. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted offensive operations in the Avdiivka direction (15km northwest of Donetsk City) but did not further specify the location or nature of these operations.⁴⁸ The Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) militia claimed that it stormed Ukrainian positions in Nevelske (about 25km northwest of Donetsk City) and took Ukrainian prisoners. A Russian milblogger reported that fighting continued in Pervomaiske and Vodyane and near Opytne (all about 15km northwest of Donetsk City) at the end of the day on October 31.⁴⁹ Another Russian milblogger additionally claimed that Russian troops managed to advance within Marinka (on the southwestern outskirts of Donetsk City) but that it is too early to evaluate Russian gains in Marinka.⁵⁰ Russian forces conducted routine artillery strikes in the Avdiivka-Donetsk City area.⁵¹

Russian forces continued offensive operations southwest of Donetsk City on November 1. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian troops conducted offensive operations in the Novopavlivka direction (the operational direction used to refer to activity in western Donetsk Oblast) but did not offer further information on where offensive operations occurred.⁵² Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) First Deputy Minister of Information Daniil Bezsonov claimed that fighting intensified in the Vuhledar direction on November 1 and stated that Russian forces are attempting to take Pavlivka (45km southwest of Donetsk City) and Novomykhailivka (25km southwest of Donetsk City) as Ukrainian forces try to hold the left bank of the Kashlyhach River and regroup in the vicinity of Vuhledar.⁵³ Bezsonov indicated that this offensive is likely intended to encircle the Ukrainian grouping in Vuhledar but noted that seizing Vuhledar will likely be costly for Russian forces.⁵⁴ A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian troops already control

half of Pavlivka as of October 31 and that there was no significant progress by Russian forces operating around Novomykhailivka.⁵⁵ Another Russian miblogger refuted claims that DNR units are fighting in this area and claimed that elements of the 155th Naval Infantry Brigade of the Eastern Military District are operating in the area instead.⁵⁶ Russian forces continued routine artillery fire in western Donetsk and southern Zaporizhia Oblasts.⁵⁷

Ukrainian sources reported on November 1 that a Ukrainian strike destroyed the Akhtamar Hotel along the Mariupol-Donetsk City Road near Volnovakha.⁵⁸ Ukrainian Mariupol Mayoral Advisor Petro Andryushchenko claimed that the hotel housed Chechen troops under the command of Ramzan Kadyrov.⁵⁹



<u>Supporting Effort—Southern Axis</u> (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions and secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes)

Russian forces continued routine fire west of Hulyaipole and in Mykolaiv and Dnipropetrovsk oblasts on November 1. Russian forces conducted Shahed-136 drone and S-300 missile strikes against Dnipro City and Mykolaiv City overnight.⁶⁰ Ukrainian sources reported that Russian forces shelled Nikopol and Marhanets, Dnipropetrovsk Oblast, and Mykolaiv City, Bashtanka, Berenezhuvate, Pervomaisk, and Shyroke areas in Mykolaiv Oblast.⁶¹ Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) Deputy Interior Minister Vitaly Kiselyov claimed that recent Russian strikes against Ukrainian military infrastructure in Ochakiv, Mykolaiv Oblast sank two harbor tugs.⁶² A Russian source claimed that Ukrainian forces continued preparations for a Russian offensive west of Hulyaipole, Zaporizhia Oblast.⁶³

Russian forces have likely increased their sabotage efforts in unoccupied southern Ukraine to further impede Ukrainian participation in the grain deal following the Russian pullout from the deal. Ukraine's Southern Operational Command reported on November 1 that Russian saboteurs are active in southern Ukraine.⁶⁴ Southern Operational Command reported that Ukrainian authorities arrested an Odesa City law enforcement officer associated with Russian intelligence services who collected data on Ukrainian military equipment transport and planned to blow up a railway.⁶⁵ Successful Russian interdiction of Ukrainian logistics lines in southern Ukraine could impede Ukraine's ability to transport grain to neutral ports for international shipment.

Russian forces continue efforts to consolidate control of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP) amid deteriorating working conditions at the plant. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) announced on October 31 that a landmine near the ZNPP perimeter detonated on October 30, cutting power to reactor unit 4 and forcing it to rely on external power lines to power essential safety and security functions. 66 IAEA Director-General Rafael Grossi expressed concern on October 31 for the working conditions of ZNPP personnel and stated that Russian occupation authorities continue to pressure ZNPP personnel into signing contracts with Russian nuclear energy agency Rosatom. 67 Ukraine's Main Intelligence Directorate (GUR) reported on November 1 that Russian occupation authorities established deadlines of November 1 and December 2 for ZNPP personnel to sign contracts with Rosatom and have limited Ukrainian personnel access to the ZNPP. 68 The GUR also reported that Chechen forces arrived at Enerhodar, likely to perform law enforcement duties, and that Russian forces installed equipment on the roof of reactor unit 5 to conduct aerial reconnaissance of the area. 69

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

Russian military structures are reportedly expanding certain training capabilities. The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) reported on November 1 that Russia is developing "tactical simulator" complexes using various unspecified training aids to reduce the cost

of using expensive weapons systems.⁷⁰ The Belarusian MoD similarly reported that Belarus and Russia are planning to create joint training centers for the combined training of Russian and Belarusian military personnel.⁷¹ Such measures are ostensibly intended to expand the training and development capabilities of the Russian military, potentially in response to widespread and systemic issues with training mobilized reservists under the partial mobilization order.

The Russian military leadership is likely continuing to struggle with the morale and discipline of mobilized soldiers. Russian sources reported on November 1 that the commander of a military base in Chita, Zabaykalsky Krai, expelled mobilized servicemen from the grounds of the base ahead of Zabaykalsky Krai Governor Alexander Osipov's visit to the base.⁷² Russian sources cited fears that the servicemen would ask Osipov "uncomfortable questions about supplies."⁷³ Systemic issues with mobilization structures remain seemingly widespread despite the formal end of partial mobilization.

Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov implied that Chechnya will continue to send summonses to serve within Chechen units to men with previous combat experience.⁷⁴ Kadyrov highlighted that these men will not serve in the army, but will instead serve "among Chechens," presumably in internal security forces in the Chechen Republic. Kadyrov may have again indirectly criticized the Russian Armed Forces by stating that the families of Chechen servicemen will know the locations and units of their loved ones' deployments, which is not the case for soldiers in the Russian military. Russian outlets have reported that families complained that the Russian MoD did not properly inform them about the deployment of their relatives.⁷⁵

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

Russian occupation officials in Kherson Oblast continued setting conditions for the long-term, if not permanent, forced relocation of Ukrainians from the east bank of the Dnipro River. Kherson occupation deputy Kirill Stremousov announced that "evacuations" (forced relocations) began from the 15km zone of the east bank of the Dnipro River. Occupation Head of Kherson Oblast Vladimir Saldo announced that Russian officials will "evacuate" up to 70,000 residents from the east bank of the Dnipro River in Kherson Oblast and temporarily resettle them deep in occupied Kherson Oblast or in other occupied or Russian territories. Saldo stated that Russian authorities in occupied Crimea, Krasnodar Krai, Rostov Oblast, and Voronezh Oblast issued housing vouchers and 100,000-ruble (roughly 1,620 USD) bonuses to "evacuees" from Kherson Oblast, indicating that Russian authorities do not intend to allow the original Ukrainian inhabitants to return to the evacuated zones of Kherson Oblast for a long time if at all. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces are intimidating Kherson Oblast residents into leaving and have deprived Kherson Oblast residents of the means to communicate.

Russian forces are reportedly fortifying in civilian areas in occupied Kherson Oblast. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces are constructing fortifications and explosive barriers around civilian housing in Kherson Oblast. So Saldo announced that the Kherson Oblast occupation administration is creating a territorial defense battalion with over 1,000 personnel and that Russian forces are fortifying on the east bank of the Dnipro River. Kherson Oblast locals reported that Russian forces, including mobilized personnel, occupy civilian buildings and are building fortifications in the rear areas of Kherson Oblast. If true, these fortifications suggest that Russian forces anticipate that Ukrainian forces may eventually advance deep into occupied Kherson Oblast east of the Dnipro River.

Ukraine's Resistance Center reported on November 1 that an explosion seriously wounded a Russian occupation deputy mayor of Berdyansk on October 31.83 A Pro-Ukrainian channel claimed that an improvised explosive device (IED) detonation, likely from Ukrainian partisans, filled with metal balls or nails injured the official.84

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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³ https://edition.cnn.com/2022/11/01/politics/iran-missiles-russia/index.html

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