

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, September 28, 2023

Nicole Wolkov, Angelica Evans, Riley Bailey, Grace Mappes, and Frederick W. Kagan
September 28, 2023, 7:20pm 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 2:00pm ET on September 28. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the September 29 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations near Bakhmut and in western Zaporizhia Oblast on September 28. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Melitopol (western Zaporizhia Oblast) direction and in the Bakhmut direction.[1] The “Storm Ossetia” and “Alania” volunteer battalions claimed that unspecified sources continue to spread false information about a Ukrainian breakthrough in the Robotyne-Verbove area, possibly referring to a fringe Russian milblogger’s claims on September 22 and 23 that Ukrainian forces advanced into Verbove (18km southeast of Orikhiv).[2] ISW has been unable to confirm this report and will not continue to record it in the absence of visual confirmation or similar claims from other Russian sources.

Russian forces have reduced the tempo of their localized offensive operations on the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line in recent days. Russian and Ukrainian officials are increasingly reporting fewer Russian ground attacks in the Kupyansk and Lyman directions, indicating that Ukrainian offensive operations have drawn Russian forces away from the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line and significantly degraded the Russian offensive effort on this line.[3] ISW has previously assessed that Russian offensive operations on the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line aimed to pin Ukrainian forces on this line and away from more critical areas of the front.[4] Ukrainian Deputy Director of the Department of Application Planning of the Main Directorate of the Ukrainian National Guard Colonel Mykola Urshalovych stated on September 28 that Russian forces conducted defensive operations and reinforced units in the past week while Ukrainian forces conducted offensive operations and pushed Russian forces from unspecified positions.[5] The Ukrainian General Staff’s September 28 morning situation report (SITREP) reported no Russian ground attacks in the Kupyansk and Lyman directions while the September 28 evening SITREP only reported one Russian attack south of Kreminna near Bilohorivka.[6] Russian aviation has become increasingly active on this line as ground attacks have apparently diminished, and Russian sources consistently claim that Russian air strikes hit Ukrainian-controlled bridges across the Oskil River — presumably to stymie the threat of any Ukrainian offensive operations east of the river.[7]

Russian aviation is increasingly active in the Kharkiv, Luhansk, and Kherson oblasts and apparently less active in areas of western Zaporizhia Oblast where Ukrainian

forces are conducting counteroffensive operations. Russian forces have been increasingly conducting airstrikes against targets in the west (right) bank of Kherson Oblast and against rear Ukrainian ground lines of communication (GLOCs) in the Kupyansk direction in the past week.[8] Ukrainian Eastern Group of Forces Spokesperson Captain Ilya Yevlash stated on September 28 that Russian Su-35 attack aircraft and Ka-52 helicopters are increasingly active in the Kupyansk and Lyman directions and that Russian forces conducted 21 airstrikes in these directions, primarily near the Siversk (19km south of Kreminna) and the Serebryanske forest area (11km south of Kreminna).[9] Kherson Oblast Military Administration Spokesperson Oleksandr Tolokonnikov stated on September 28 that Russian forces have increased the number of airstrikes on Kherson City and right bank Kherson Oblast by a factor of three or four in the past three days and that Russian forces dropped more than 50 aerial glide bombs against targets in these areas.[10]

Russian aviation continues to conduct strikes against rear Ukrainian areas in eastern Zaporizhia Oblast, although mentions of Russian aviation repelling Ukrainian assaults in frontline areas have become less routine in Russian reporting than earlier in the counteroffensive. Russian sources noted that Russian aviation, particularly Ka-52 helicopters, played a significant role in disrupting Ukrainian assaults at the start of the counteroffensive.[11] Ukrainian forces appear to have increased their ability to down Russian Ka-52 helicopters in mid-August 2023, and the Russian command may have decreased aviation use in western Zaporizhia Oblast out of fears of aviation and pilot losses.[12] **The decreased Russian aviation use in western Zaporizhia Oblast has not seriously undermined the Russian defense, however, as Russian forces appear to have increased their use of strike drones against advancing Ukrainian forces, and Russian artillery units continue to play a significant role in repelling Ukrainian assaults.** It remains unclear what Russian forces intend to achieve with increased aviation activity in Kherson Oblast and whether more airstrikes against Ukrainian targets in the Kupyansk and Lyman directions will be able to offset degraded Russian combat power in the area.

Russian forces conducted a series of drone strikes against Ukraine on the night of September 27 to 28. The Ukrainian General Staff reported on September 28 that Ukrainian air defenses downed 31 of 39 Russian-launched Shahed drones over Ukraine on the night of September 27 to 28 and three out of five Shahed drones on September 27.[13] The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Russian forces launched the drones from Primorsko-Akhtarsk, Krasnodar Krai, and occupied Crimea.[14] Ukrainian Center for the Research of Trophy and Prospective Weapons and Military Equipment of the Ukrainian General Staff Spokesperson Captain Andriy Rudyk stated that Russian companies have modified the Russian-produced Shahed-136 drones to contain more domestically produced parts but have not improved the drone's tactical or technical characteristics.[15] Rudyk stated that the modifications indicate that Russia continues to pursue the domestic mass production of Shahed drones.[16]

Several Russian milbloggers claimed that they self-censor the majority of their reporting amidst an apparent wider self-censorship in Russian reporting about the tactical realities on certain sectors of the front. Some notably critical Russian milbloggers claimed that they only publish five to 15 percent of the amount of information they receive.[17] One milblogger claimed that problems with communications, drones, tires, electronic warfare (EW), personnel payments, and various other issues persist among Russian forces on the frontline but that Russian personnel attempt to mitigate these problems through connections and personal initiatives, likely, according to the milblogger, because Russian commanders routinely silence complaints and

ignore efforts to fix problems.[18] The milblogger amplified a statement from a claimed Russian platoon commander who complained about the inefficient flow of information from the Russian frontline to decision makers and who stated that he has had to take unusual measures to mitigate negative battlefield consequences from this poor information flow.[19] Another milblogger noted that certain information should not be shared and that the ability to remain silent at the right moment is an important quality.[20] A Russian milblogger deleted a part of a post on September 25 claiming that Ukrainian forces advanced near Novoprokopivka (13km south of Orikhiv) and controlled the northeastern part of the settlement.[21] The milblogger edited the post and instead claimed that Ukrainian forces attacked near Robotyne (10km south of Orikhiv), just north of Novoprokopivka.[22] Geolocated footage published later in the day showed that Ukrainian forces advanced 1.5km northeast of Novoprokopivka.[23] The milblogger's deletion suggests that Russian sources are intentionally limiting their reporting on tactical actions, especially those with outcomes unfavorable to Russia. Censorship or self-censorship among Russian milbloggers will affect ISW's and the wider Western coverage ability of Russian operations, and ISW will continue to track changes in the Russian information space that could affect open-source reporting on the war in Ukraine.

The Russian State Duma adopted a bill in its first reading that criminalizes promoting and justifying extremism, likely to encourage self-censorship in the Russian information space.[24] The bill amends a current Russian law that punishes inciting extremism with a fine of up to 300,000 rubles (about \$3,100) and up to four years in prison.[25] The amendment would also increase the imprisonment term to five years for calling for, promoting, or justifying extremism online.[26] Russian authorities arrested former Russian officer and ardent nationalist Igor Girkin on July 21 on extremism charges and likely intends to use the proposed expansion of the law on extremism to encourage self-censorship among more figures disseminating criticisms of the Kremlin in the Russian information space.[27]

Russian President Vladimir Putin signaled his support for Chechen Republic Head Ramzan Kadyrov during a meeting on September 28 amid continued speculations about Kadyrov's health and public backlash against the recent behavior of Kadyrov's son. Putin praised the claimed successes of Chechen forces in Ukraine and Kadyrov's leadership of Chechnya during the meeting.[28] Putin and Kadyrov appeared comfortable during the meeting in stark contrast with the pair's last meeting on March 23 where Kadyrov appeared visibly nervous.[29] Kadyrov's and Putin's September 28 meeting comes amid continued speculations about Kadyrov's health and recent public backlash over footage of Kadyrov's son beating a detainee.[30] Putin's meeting with Kadyrov is likely a reciprocation of Kadyrov's expressions of loyalty to Putin following Wagner's armed rebellion on June 24 and signals Putin's willingness to continue supporting Kadyrov despite recent events.[31]

The Russian information space continued to criticize the Armenian leadership and lament Russia's perceived decreased influence in Armenia. Imprisoned ardent nationalist and former Russian officer Igor Girkin called the Russian peacekeeping contingent in Nagorno-Karabakh "pathetic" on September 27 for attempting to undertake "imperial functions" without the "ability and willingness" to support peacekeeping operations.[32] Girkin also claimed that Russian peacekeeping forces would have suffered defeat if they had intervened in the recent fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh.[33] A Russian milblogger criticized the Armenian government for not intervening in Nagorno-Karabakh.[34] Another Russian source claimed that Russia has lost a "frozen

conflict” that it can leverage and that the disappearance of a breakaway republic in Russia’s supposed sphere of influence is directly connected to decreasing Russian international influence.[35]

Senior NATO and Western defense officials met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in Kyiv on September 28 to discuss Ukraine’s military needs.[36] NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg, UK Defense Secretary Grant Shapps, and French Defense Minister Sebastien Lecornu discussed defensive cooperation and strengthening Ukrainian air defenses with Zelensky.

Key Takeaways:

- **Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations near Bakhmut and in western Zaporizhia Oblast on September 28.**
- **Russian forces have reduced the tempo of their localized offensive operations on the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line in recent days.**
- **Russian aviation is increasingly active in Kharkiv, Luhansk, and Kherson oblasts and apparently less active in areas of western Zaporizhia Oblast where Ukrainian forces are conducting counteroffensive operations.**
- **Russian forces conducted a series of drone strikes against Ukraine on the night of September 27 to 28.**
- **Several Russian milbloggers claimed that they self-censor the majority of their reporting amidst an apparent wider self-censorship in Russian reporting about the tactical realities on certain sectors of the front.**
- **The Russian State Duma adopted a bill in its first reading that criminalizes promoting and justifying extremism, likely to encourage self-censorship in the Russian information space.**
- **Russian President Vladimir Putin signaled his support for Chechen Republic Head Ramzan Kadyrov during a meeting on September 28 amid continued speculations about Kadyrov’s health and public backlash against the recent behavior of Kadyrov’s son.**
- **The Russian information space continued to criticize Armenian leadership and lament Russia’s perceived decreased influence in Armenia.**
- **Russian forces conducted offensive operations on the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line, near Bakhmut, along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line, in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area, and in western Zaporizhia Oblast and did not make confirmed gains.**
- **Russian sources stated that the Russian Aerospace (VKS) Forces received a new batch of fifth-generation Su-57 stealth fighter and fourth-generation Su-35S air defense fighter aircraft on September 28.**
- **Ukrainian Mariupol Mayoral Advisor Petro Andryushchenko stated on September 28 that Ukrainian partisans set fire to a Russian military facility in occupied Yalta, Donetsk Oblast (21km southwest of Mariupol).**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of September 28, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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

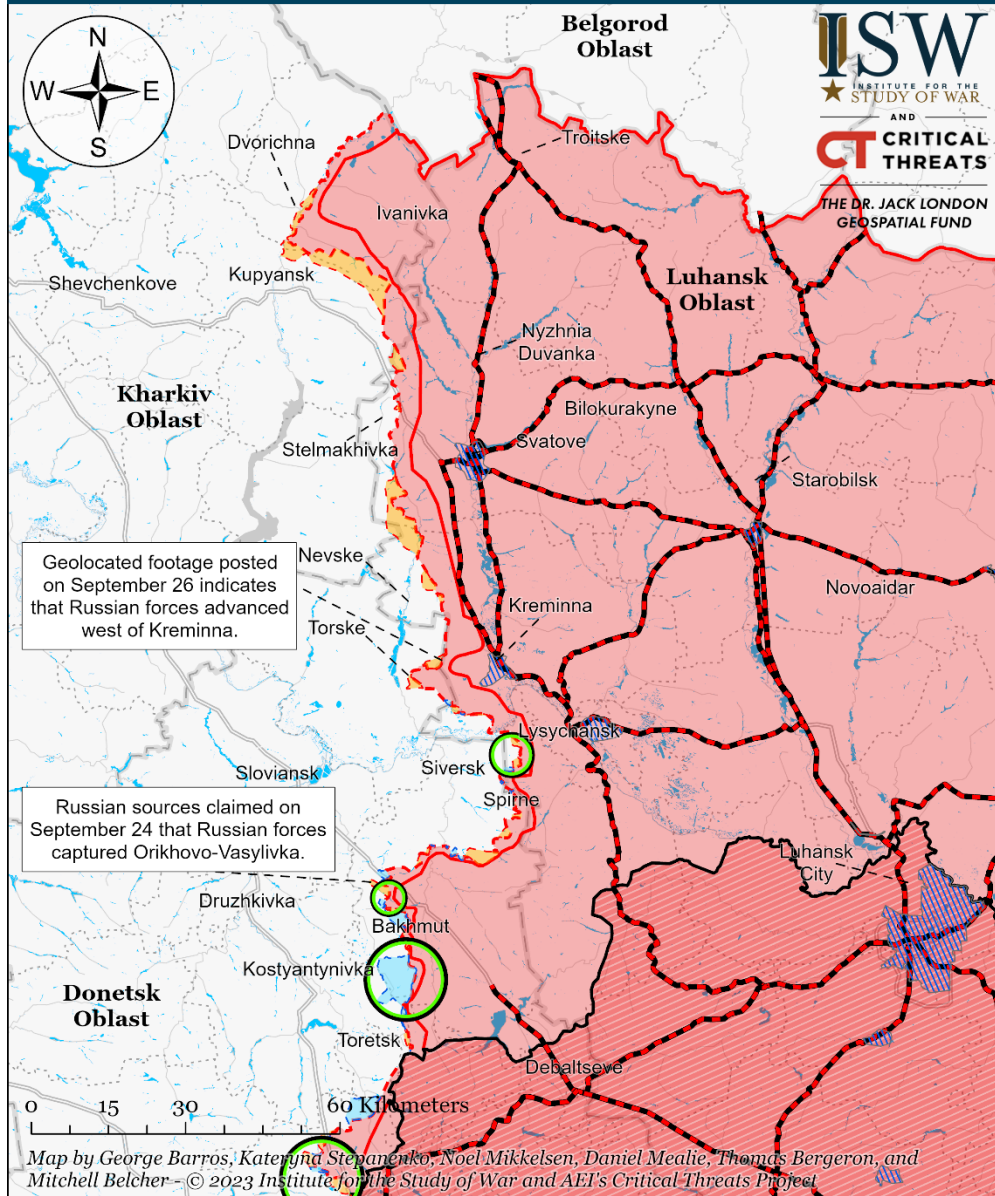
Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Luhansk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and northern Donetsk Oblast)

Russian forces continued limited ground attacks on the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on September 28 but did not make any confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled a Russian ground attack near Bilohorivka, Luhansk Oblast (13km south of Kremina).[37] A Russian milblogger claimed on September 27 that Russian forces continue to pressure Ukrainian forces near Synkivka (6km northeast of Kupyansk), Petropavlivka (7km east of Kupyansk), and Kyslivka (20km southeast of Kupyansk), and west of Svatove.[38] Other Russian sources claimed on September 27 and 28 that limited fighting is ongoing in the Serebryanske forest area (11km south of Kreminna).[39]

Ukrainian Eastern Group of Forces Spokesperson Captain Ilya Yevlash stated on September 28 that unspecified elements of the newly-formed Russian 25th Combined Arms Army (CAA) are operating on the Kupyansk-Lyman front line.[40] ISW previously reported, citing Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) Head Kyrylo Budanov, that Russian forces deployed the 25th CAA “roughly north of Bakhmut” rather than the Kupyansk-Lyman direction.[41] Yevlash’s September 28 statement is more consistent with prior reports that Russian forces deployed elements of the 25th CAA to the Kupyansk-Lyman direction, however.[42]

Ukrainian forces continued offensive actions on the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on September 28 and reportedly recently advanced. Ukrainian Deputy Director of the Department of Application Planning of the Main Directorate of the Ukrainian National Guard Colonel Mykola Urshalovych stated that Ukrainian forces conducted successful assault operations in the Kupyansk and Lyman directions in the past week.[43] A Russian milblogger claimed that elements of the 25th Separate Guards Motorized Rifle Brigade (6th CAA, Western Military District) repelled a Ukrainian attack in a forest area near Synkivka on September 28.[44] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Russian forces repelled a Ukrainian ground attack near Dibrova (7km southwest of Kreminna).[45]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of September 28, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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

- 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.

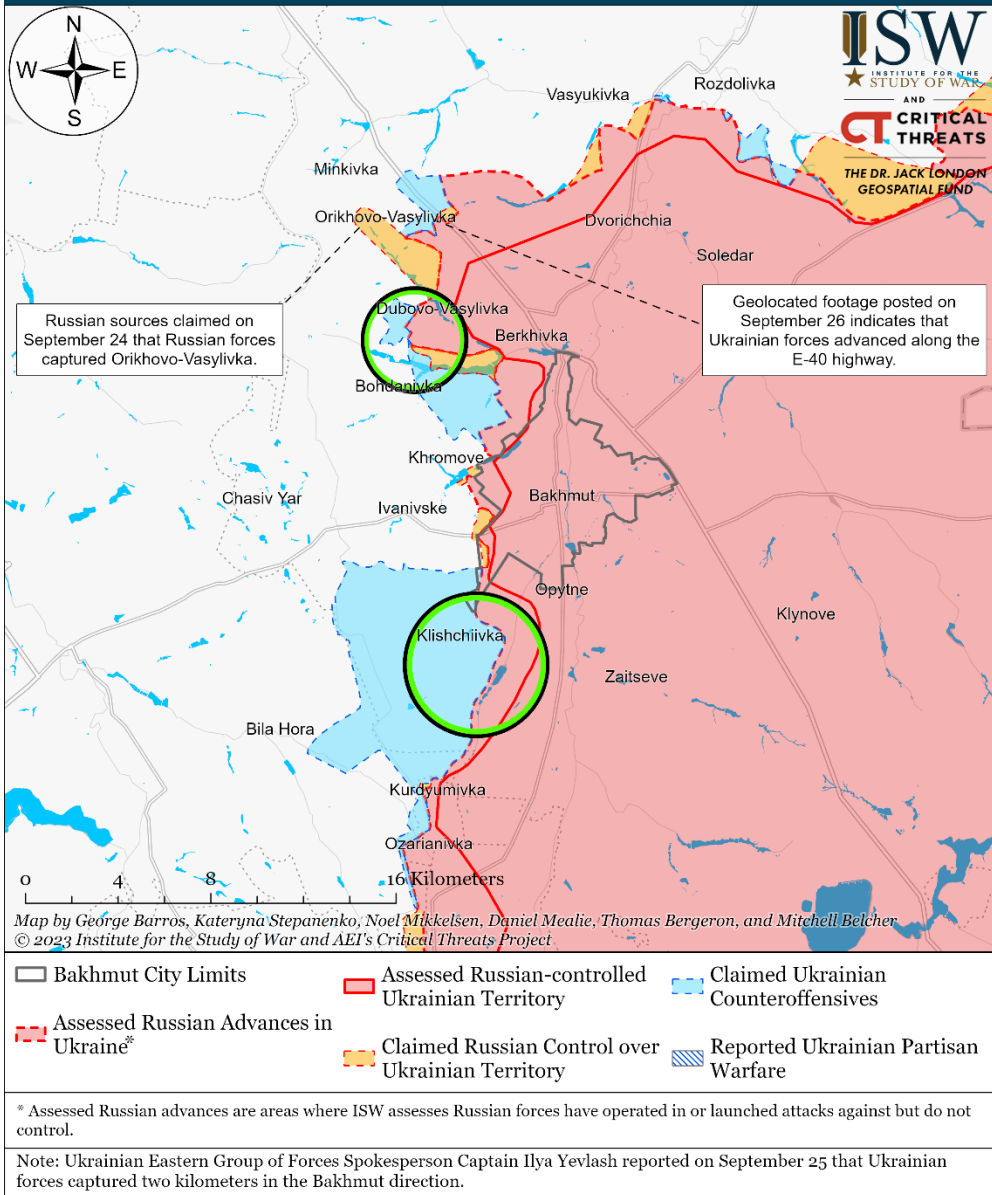
Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Donetsk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)

Ukrainian forces conducted offensive operations near Bakhmut but did not make confirmed gains on September 28. Ukrainian Commander of the 5th Separate Assault Brigade stated that Ukrainian forces have recently advanced beyond Andriivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut) and Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut).[46] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued conducting offensive operations in the Bakhmut direction.[47] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Russian forces repelled a Ukrainian attack near Klishchiivka.[48] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces attacked near the railway line east of Andriivka and that some previously Russian-held positions near Andriivka are now contested.[49] Russian milbloggers claimed on September 27 and 28 that fighting continues near the railway line along the Klishchiivka-Andriivka-Kurdyumivka line (7-12km southwest of Bakhmut).[50]

Russian forces conducted offensive operations near Bakhmut on September 28 but did make confirmed gains. A Russian milblogger claimed on September 27 that Russian forces cleared Ukrainian forces from Orikhovo-Vasyivka (10km northwest of Bakhmut), but ISW has not observed evidence of this recurring Russian claim.[51] The Ukrainian General Staff reported on September 28 that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks near Hryhorivka (9km northwest of Bakhmut), Klishchiivka, and Andriivka.[52] Ukrainian Director of the Planning Department of the Main Directorate of the National Guard Colonel Mykola Urshalovych stated that the Russian military is reinforcing advanced units to prevent further Ukrainian advances in the Bakhmut direction.[53]

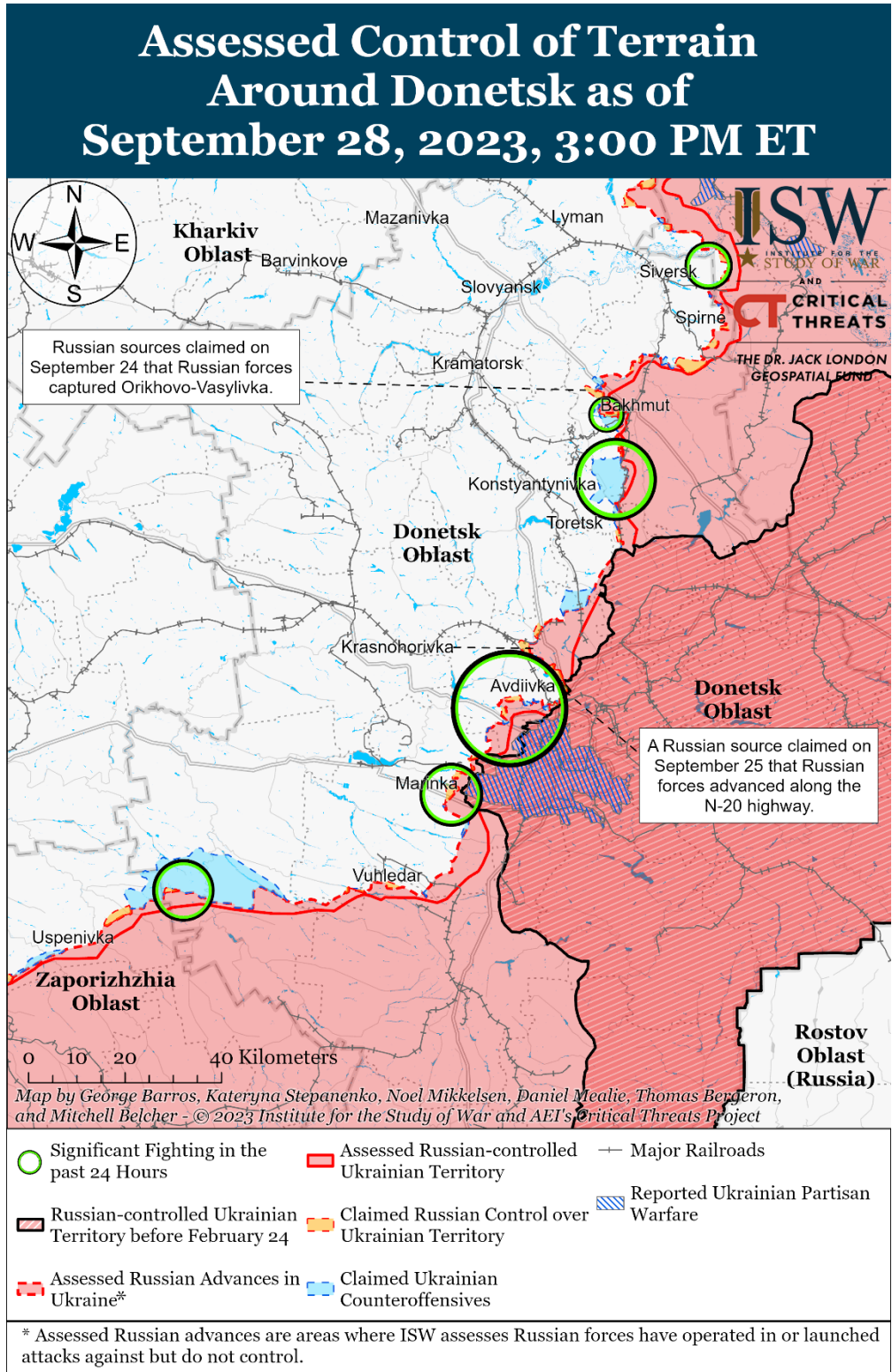
Ukrainian electronic warfare (EW) systems are likely significantly disrupting Russian drone operations near Bakhmut. Ukrainian Eastern Group of Forces Spokesperson Captain Ilya Yevlash stated on September 28 that Ukrainian EW systems disrupted 258 Russian drone missions over the past day.[54] A Russian milblogger claimed on September 19 that Ukrainian EW systems are stronger than Russian EW systems in the Bakhmut area.[55]

Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of September 28, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Russian forces conducted offensive operations along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line on September 28 but did not make any confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks south of Avdiivka and near Nevelske (13km southwest of Avdiivka), Pervomaiske (11km southwest of Avdiivka), and Marinka (on the southwestern outskirts of Donetsk City).[56] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Sieverne (6km west of Avdiivka).[57] A Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed on September 27 that Russian forces captured a position near Krasnohorivka (directly west of Donetsk City).[58]

The Russian MoD claimed on September 28 that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line near Pervomaiske and southwest of Vesele (6km north of Avdiivka).[59]



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 unsuccessful ground attacks along the administrative border between Donetsk and Zaporizhia oblasts on September 28. The Russian MoD claimed that elements of the Russian Eastern Grouping of Forces repelled two Ukrainian assaults near Pryyutne (15km southwest of Velyka Novosilka).[60] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attempted to advance towards Zavitne Bazhannya (12km south of Velyka Novosilka).[61] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces have curtailed attempts to break through Russian defenses in the area and are conducting assaults for tactical purposes.[62]

Russian forces continued limited ground attacks in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on September 28 but did not make any confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian assaults near Urozhaine (9km south of Velyka Novosilka) and Rivnopil (10km southwest of Velyka Novosilka).[63] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced west of Staromayorske (9km south of Velyka Novosilka) and east of Urozhaine and recaptured unspecified positions north of Pryyutne.[64]

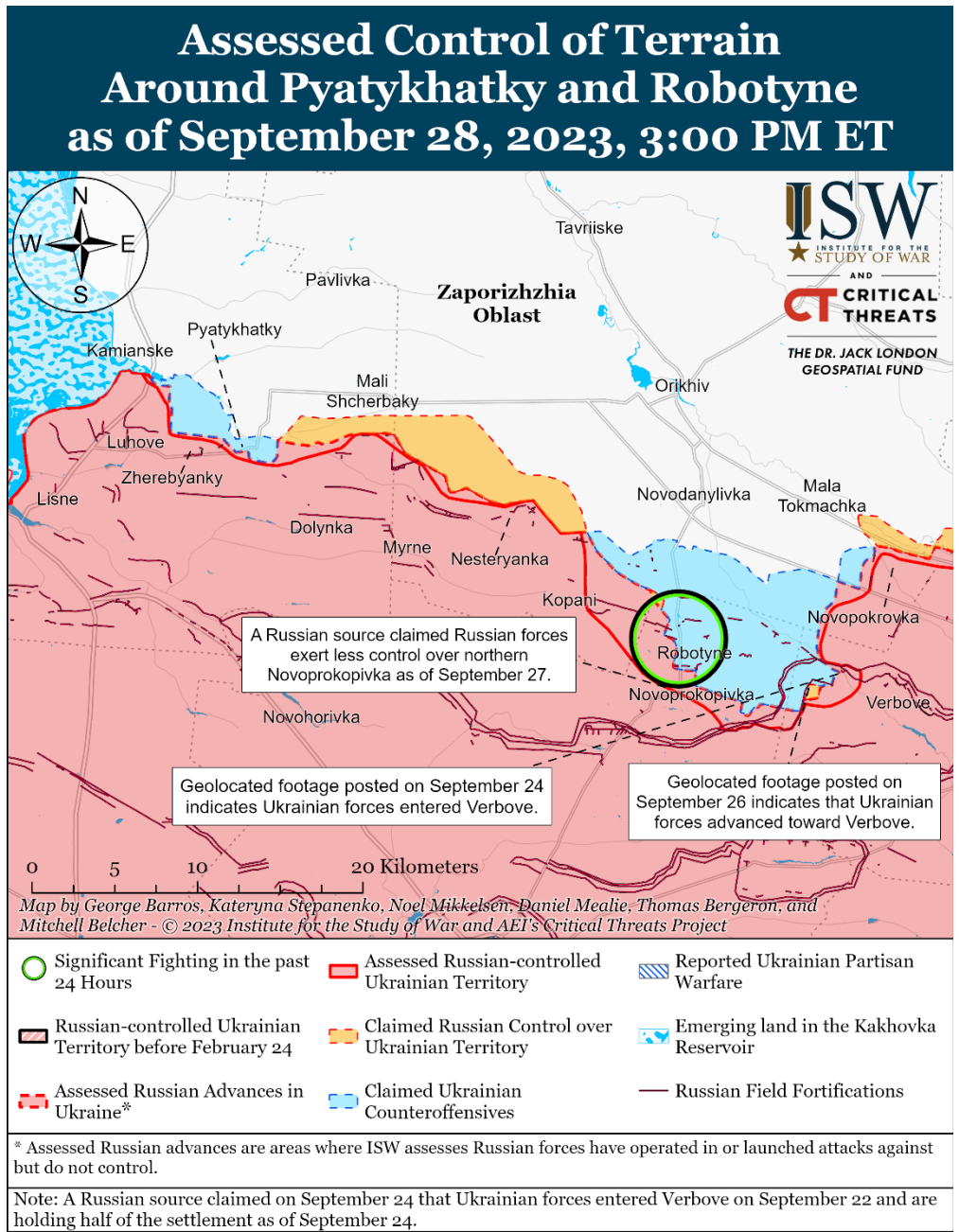
Assessed Control of Terrain Around the Vremivka Salient as of September 28, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



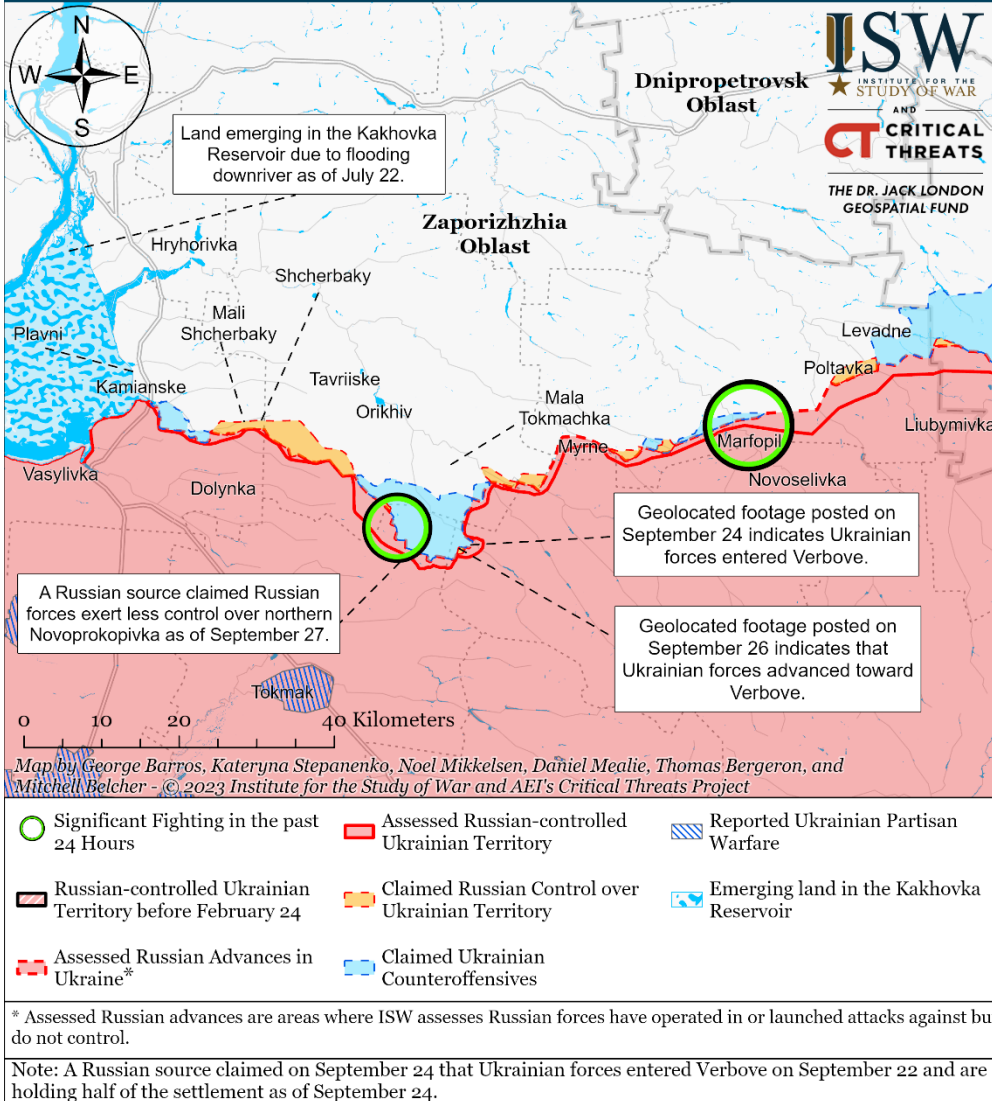
Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast on September 28 but did not make any confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Melitopol (western Zaporizhzhia Oblast) direction.[65] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces continued assaults along the Robotyne-Verbove line (10km south of Orikhiv to 18km southeast of Orikhiv) and conducted small, mechanized assaults near Novoprokopivka (13km south of Orikhiv).[66] Select Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian assaults near Novoprokopivka and Verbove were unsuccessful.[67] The “Storm Ossetia” and “Alania” volunteer battalions claimed that unspecified sources continue to spread false information about a Ukrainian breakthrough in the Robotyne-Verbove area.[68] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces also conducted mechanized assaults near Kopani (11km southwest of Orikhiv) and

that Ukrainian forces are attempting to break through to the settlement along tree lines in the area.[69]

Russian forces continued counterattacks in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast on September 28 but did not make any confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful attempts to restore lost positions near Chervone (9km east of Hulyaipole) and near Robotyne.[70] A Russian milblogger amplified footage purporting to show elements of the 247th Guards Air Assault (VDV) Regiment (7th Guards VDV Division) counterattacking near Verbove and claimed that these elements seized positions at nearby strongholds, although ISW has not observed geolocated evidence of any recent Russian advances in the area.[71]

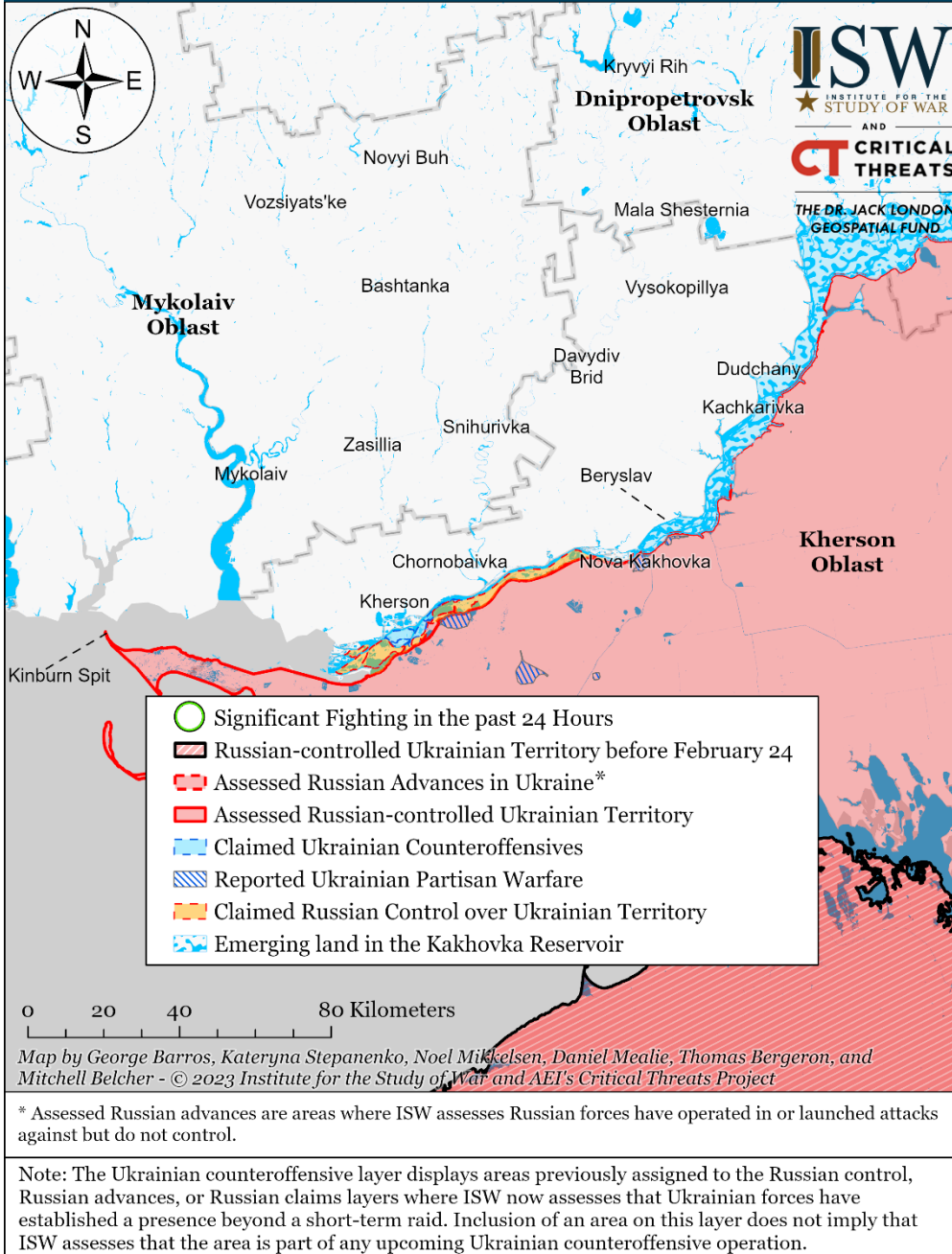


Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhzhia as of September 28, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Russian milbloggers continue to express concern about Ukrainian activity on islands in the Dnipro River delta and the possibility of a Ukrainian crossing to the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast. A prominent Russian milblogger claimed on September 28 that small Ukrainian groups landed in marsh areas northeast of Oleshky (7km south of Kherson City).[72] Several Russian milbloggers expressed concern that Ukrainian forces are accumulating forces to conduct a landing from islands in the Dnipro River delta to the left bank of Kherson Oblast.[73]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of September 28, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Several Russian milbloggers claimed on September 28 that Russian forces intercepted a Ukrainian missile targeting an unspecified target in occupied Crimea.[74] Another Russian milblogger claimed on September 28 that Russian authorities temporarily closed the Kerch Strait Bridge due to the threat of a Ukrainian strike.[75]

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

Russian sources stated that the Russian Aerospace (VKS) Forces received a new batch of fifth-generation Su-57 stealth fighter and fourth-generation Su-35S air defense fighter aircraft on September 28.[76] Russian Minister of Industry and Trade Denis Manturov stated that this delivery is part of the state defense order and that Russian forces will receive another batch of Su-57 aircraft by the end of 2023.[77] This was reportedly the third batch of Su-35S aircraft that the Russian VKS received in 2023.[78]

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky stated on September 28 that Ukraine's authorities and partners have evidence that Iran has not yet sold Iranian missiles to Russia.[79] The American Enterprise Institute's Critical Threats Project (CTP) and ISW assessed on September 27 that senior Iranian and Russian military officials reviewed Iranian advanced conventional weapons in Moscow and Tehran in August and September 2023 and may conclude a drone and missile sale agreement following the expiration of UN missile restrictions on October 18.[80]

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)

Ukrainian Mariupol Mayoral Advisor Petro Andryushchenko stated on September 28 that Ukrainian partisans set fire to a Russian military facility in occupied Yalta, Donetsk Oblast (21km southwest of Mariupol).[81]

Occupation authorities continue efforts to repopulate occupied Ukraine with Russian citizens. Andryushchenko stated on September 27 that occupation authorities plan to evict Ukrainian residents from a large apartment complex in occupied Mariupol within the next week and sell the apartments to Russian citizens.[82] Andryushchenko stated that occupation authorities raised mortgages for these apartments to rates unaffordable for local Ukrainian residents.[83]

Russian federal subjects continue to expand their patronage networks in occupied Ukraine. The Kherson Oblast occupation administration stated on September 28 that Pskov Oblast authorities have nearly completed constructing a kindergarten in occupied Pavlivka, Henicheskyi Raion, Kherson Oblast.[84] The Kherson Oblast occupation administration also stated that Pskov Oblast authorities sent Russian-language literature, construction equipment, and reagents for water purification to occupied Kherson Oblast.[85]

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)

Belarusian maneuver brigades conducted mining, parachute, drone, and ambush exercises on September 28. The Belarusian Ministry of Defense (MoD) reported that the 38th Airborne Assault Brigade conducted parachute exercise at the Brest training ground in Brest Oblast; that the 103rd Separate Guards Airborne Brigade conducted underwater mining and demining exercises at the Losvido training ground in Vitebsk Oblast; and that the 120th Separate Guards Mechanized Brigade

conducted drone, counter-drone, and ambush exercises at the Borisovsky training ground in Minsk Oblast.[86]

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.

[1] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0D4pziUWC3452Dt62LKhe6KSfR2iBYSTL9z8xcTSvpe3YZLcq5JnfuXAZPkbkzeNJl>

[2] <https://t.me/batalyon15/3029> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-24-2023>

[3] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-august-8-2023> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-august-26-2023>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-august-28-2023>;
https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Aug%2011%20Russian%20Offensive%20Campaign%20Assessment%20PDF_o.pdf

[4] https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Aug%2011%20Russian%20Offensive%20Campaign%20Assessment%20PDF_o.pdf; <https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Russian%20Offensive%20Campaign%20Assessment%2C%20September%2027%2C%202023%20PDF.pdf> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-20-2023>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-july-16-2023>

[5] <https://t.me/militarymediacenter/3282>

[6] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0D4pziUWC3452Dt62LKhe6KSfR2iBYSTL9z8xcTSvpe3YZLcq5JnfuXAZPkbkzeNJl> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0D4pziUWC3452Dt62LKhe6KSfR2iBYSTL9z8xcTSvpe3YZLcq5JnfuXAZPkbkzeNJl>

[7] https://t.me/Sladkov_plus/8638; https://t.me/boris_rozhin/98756
; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/50845>; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/3523> ;
<https://t.me/rybar/52109> ; <https://t.me/rybar/52096> ; https://t.me/dva_majors/25849 ;
https://t.me/dva_majors/25849 ; <https://t.me/bbcruussian/52614> ; https://t.me/boris_rozhin/97973

- [8] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-24-2023> ; <https://suspilne dot media/582475-bilse-niz-50-aviabomb-ta-raketi-kilkist-obstriliv-vijsk-rf-po-hersonsini-zbilsilas-vtrici-ova/> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-27-2023> ;
- [9] <https://armyinform.com dot ua/2023/09/28/u-rajoni-bahmuta-znyshheno-pryblyzno-dyvizion-artsystem-rf-illya-yevlash/>; <https://suspiln dot .media/582189-na-limano-kupanskomu-napramku-armia-rf-pisla-zatissa-pisla-na-sturm-evlas/> <https://t.me/luhanskaVTSA/13894>
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