

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, July 19, 2023

Kateryna Stepanenko, Riley Bailey, Angelica Evans, George Barros,
Christina Harward, and Frederick W. Kagan

July 19, 2023, 8:50pm 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.

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Note: The data cutoff for this product was 2:30pm ET on July 19. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the July 20 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Russian forces launched an extensive missile and drone attack against port and grain infrastructure in southern Ukraine on July 19 likely to further emphasize Russia's objections to the renewal of the Black Sea grain deal and hinder Ukraine's ability to export grain. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted strikes using 16 Kalibr sea-based cruise missiles, eight Kh-22 anti-ship missiles, six Onyx cruise missiles, one Kh-59 guided air missile, and 32 Iranian-made Shahed drones.[1] Ukrainian military officials reported that Russian forces predominantly targeted civilian and military infrastructure in Odesa Oblast with Kh-22 and Onyx missiles and that Ukrainian forces shot down 37 air targets including 13 Kalibrs, one Kh-59 missile, and 23 Shaheds.[2] Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky stated that Russian forces deliberately targeted the infrastructure necessary for executing the Black Sea grain deal in Odesa, Zhytomyr, and other oblasts.[3] The Ukrainian Southern Operational Command reported that Russian forces struck grain and oil terminals and damaged tanks and loading equipment.[4] Ukrainian Minister of Agrarian Policy and Food Mykola Solskyi reported that Russian strikes destroyed 60,000 tons of grain in the Chornomorsk port in Odesa Oblast on the night of July 19.[5] The Southern Operational Command added that Russian strikes also targeted coastal areas in Mykolaiv Oblast and some infrastructure in Kherson City.[6] Spokesperson of the Ukrainian Southern Operational Command Captain of the First Rank Nataliya Humenyuk stated that the Russian July 19 strikes "happened virtually simultaneously," and that Russian forces likely attempted to overwhelm the Ukrainian air defense systems.[7] Ukrainian Air Forces Spokesperson Colonel Yuriy Ihnat stated that this attack was the most intense missile and drone attack on Odesa Oblast since the start of the full-scale invasion in February 2022.[8]

Russian sources, apart from the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD), claimed that Russian strikes on south Ukraine aimed to dismantle the port infrastructure necessary for the Black Sea grain deal. The Russian MoD claimed that Russian forces struck Ukrainian military infrastructure and ammunition depots in Odesa Oblast and the Kanatove Air Base in Kirovohrad Oblast.[9] Kremlin-affiliated mibloggers and former proxy officials claimed that Russian strikes damaged port infrastructure, grain storage, and industrial facilities in Odesa Oblast.[10] Some Russian ultranationalists called on the Russian MoD to authorize additional strikes to destroy

Ukrainian port and grain infrastructure to ensure that no grain deals can ever be renewed.[11] One milblogger who has been routinely skeptical of the Kremlin's war effort claimed that the Russian strike campaign is more "retaliatory" than "operationally sound" and blamed the Russian General Staff for wasting Russian efforts (and likely the dwindling stock of Russian precision weapons) on striking Ukrainian civilian infrastructure rather than military infrastructure.[12]

The South African Presidential Office announced that Russian President Vladimir Putin will not attend the BRICS summit in-person in Johannesburg in August 2023.[13] Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov will represent Russia at the summit, and President Putin will participate by video call.[14]

An explosion at a Russian training ground in occupied Kirovskiy Raion (Islam Terek Raion), southeastern Crimea, disrupted the Russian use of the Tavrida highway that connects eastern Crimea to Sevastopol on July 19. Russian and Ukrainian sources reported that Russian ammunition depots detonated following an explosion at the Starokrymskyi Training Ground in Kirovskiy Raion.[15] Geolocated footage showed explosions at the reported Russian ammunition depot south of Aivazovske (25km northwest of Feodosia).[16] Crimean Occupation Head Sergei Aksyonov stated that the explosions caused a landfill to catch on fire and announced that the Russian occupation officials will block movement on the Tavrida highway until the consequences of the fire are managed.[17] Aksyonov also announced the evacuation of 2,000 residents.[18] Aksyonov stated that the cause of the explosion is unknown as of the time of this publication, and Russian occupation officials notably did not accuse Ukrainian forces of striking Russian military infrastructure.[19] A Representative of the Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) Andriy Yusov denied claims that GUR Chief Major General Kyrylo Budanov confirmed Ukraine's involvement in the explosion.[20] Russian milbloggers, however, accused Ukrainian forces of striking a Russian ammunition depot but did not provide a consistent suggestion of the means Ukraine might have used to conduct this strike.[21] Some ultranationalist milbloggers claimed that the explosion sparked criticism of Russian military officials within the Kremlin as these officials continued to lie about the situation in Crimea.[22]

Ukrainian forces conducted counteroffensive operations on at least three sectors of the front on July 19 and made gains in these areas. Geolocated footage published on July 19 indicates that Ukrainian forces made gains near Andriivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut). The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations north and south of Bakhmut City and forced Russian forces to retreat from positions northeast of Orikhovo-Vasylivka (11km northwest of Bakhmut).[23] The Ukrainian General Staff also reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Berdyansk (Zaporizhia-Donetsk Oblast border area) and Melitopol (western Zaporizhia Oblast) directions.[24] Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces Spokesperson Major Valerii Shershen stated that Ukrainian forces advanced more than a kilometer in an unspecified area of the Melitopol direction.[25] A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces lack rotations and reinforcements on the Zaporizhia front and south of Bakhmut, which is preventing Russian forces from recapturing lost positions.[26] The milblogger forecasted that continued delays in resolving these rotation and reinforcement issues south of Bakhmut threaten serious consequences for the Russian grouping in the area.[27]

Wagner Group financier Yevgeniy Prigozhin and reportedly Wagner Commander Dmitry Utkin greeted Wagner fighters at the new Wagner base near Asipovichy, Belarus, on July 18. Footage posted on July 19 and likely captured on July 18 shows Prigozhin addressing Wagner fighters at the field camp near Asipovichy, Belarus.[28] Prigozhin welcomed the fighters to Belarus in a ceremony whose symbolism demonstrates that Prigozhin still controls the Wagner Group.[29] Prigozhin handed the Wagner flag that had previously flown at the Wagner Group's main military base in Molmino, Krasnodar Krai, to the local Wagner commander – a man with a first name of Sergey and callsign “Pioneer” – who will command Wagner forces in Belarus.[30] “Pioneer” has reportedly been awarded five Orders of Courage and participated in combat in Syria, Central African Republic, Sudan, Mali, and other countries.[31] Prigozhin stated that unspecified current events in Ukraine are a “shame in which [Wagner] does not need to participate” but acknowledged that Wagner may return to Ukraine when Wagner can be sure that Wagner fighters will not be forced to “shame” themselves.[32] Prigozhin also ceremonially presented ribbons of Russian and Belarusian flags so that “no one will think that [Wagner] fights without a flag and without a Motherland as some have said.”[33] Prigozhin stated that Wagner personnel will remain in Belarus “for some time” and that they will make “make the Belarusian army the second army in the world” - an insult directed against the Russian Ministry of Defense. Prigozhin also stated that Wagner will embark on a new journey in Africa after regrouping in Belarus. An unidentified man – reportedly Dmitry Utkin (callsign “Wagner”) – also thanked the Wagner fighters for their work and for making Wagner a world-famous name. Utkin said that “this is only the beginning of the biggest job that will be carried out soon.” ISW is unable to confirm the identity of the man who was presented as Utkin. If the man is indeed Utkin, this ceremony would mark Utkin's first public appearance since 2016.[34] Russian milbloggers reported that several thousand Wagner fighters attended this ceremony, though ISW cannot verify attendance numbers at this time.[35]

Russian sources claimed that Wagner will continue to operate abroad in African countries, although Prigozhin's involvement in these activities remains unclear. A Russian source published on July 19 an apparent audio clip from Prigozhin, in which Prigozhin stated that he has sold part of Wagner's “African assets” to an unspecified buyer to pay off existing liabilities – but that this will not curtail any Wagner programs in African countries.[36] Wagner-affiliated milbloggers amplified statements from Wagner Commander Alexander Ivanov on July 19, in which Ivanov claimed that Wagner is continuing to rotate Wagner instructors in the Central African Republic (CAR).[37] Ivanov reportedly stated that Wagner's employees in CAR are not military personnel and did not sign military contracts with the Russian MoD.[38] Ivanov stated that Prigozhin intends to expand Wagner's presence in Africa despite unspecified change in the structure of Wagner's business in the region and quoted Prigozhin as saying that “concrete negotiations” are occurring on the matter.[39]

Russian President Vladimir Putin continues to display his knowledge of Russian history at odd moments, this time appearing to warn against the possibility of revolution in Russia. Putin stated on July 19 that Russia already exceeded its “limit on revolutions in the last century” in response to the mention of the Mayevka tourism event that took place in May.[40] Mayevka was an illegal meeting of revolutionary-minded workers held outside of Moscow during the Tsarist period, but the word can also be associated with the arrival of spring.[41] Putin additionally stated that he hoped that the tourism Mayevka event would not “lead to a revolution.” Putin had previously made a seemingly unrelated and unprompted allusion to Russian history at a public engagement in October 2022 when he spoke about the causes of the 18th Century Pugachev

Rebellion, observing that it began because the center appeared weak and because someone decided that he was tsar – an observation that has since appeared to have been apropos.[42]

Russian authorities opened a case against an affiliate of the ultranationalist Angry Patriots Club for discrediting Russian forces, prompting the Angry Patriots Club to make explicit demands of Russian officials. Russian media reported on July 18 that Russian authorities initiated a criminal case against former Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU) Colonel Vladimir Kvachkov under the article for discrediting the Russian Armed Forces.[43] Angry Patriots Club member Viktor Alksnis claimed on July 18 that he talked with Kvachkov and confirmed the initiation of the case.[44] The Angry Patriots Club formally denounced the criminal case and demanded that Russian authorities end their “persecution” of Kvachkov.[45] Kvachkov recently spoke at the Angry Patriots Club’s June 25 event in Moscow aimed at espousing longstanding criticisms against Russian President Vladimir Putin and the Russian military leadership.[46] Kvachkov may have drawn the attention of Russian authorities at the event, although it is likely that authorities were aware of his activities given that Kvachkov recently left prison in 2019 after serving a six-year sentence for creating a terrorist group and plotting to overthrow the government.[47] Kvachkov called for violence “against representatives of state power” in a video message in 2017 and admitted to promoting anti-government propaganda among the military.[48] The Federal Security Service (FSB) previously reportedly attempted to censor notable Angry Patriots Club member Igor Girkin.[49]

Key Takeaways:

- **Russian forces launched an extensive missile and drone attack against port and grain infrastructure in southern Ukraine on July 19 likely to further emphasize Russia’s objections to the renewal of the Black Sea grain deal and hinder Ukraine’s ability to export grain.**
- **The South African Presidential Office announced that Russian President Vladimir Putin will not attend the BRICS summit in-person in Johannesburg in August 2023.**
- **An explosion at a Russian training ground in occupied Kirovskiy Raion (Islam Terek Raion), southeastern Crimea, disrupted the Russian use of the Tavrida highway that connects eastern Crimea to Sevastopol on July 19.**
- **Ukrainian forces conducted counteroffensive operations on at least three sectors of the front on July 19 and made gains in these areas.**
- **Wagner Group financier Yevgeniy Prigozhin and reportedly Wagner Commander Dmitry Utkin greeted Wagner fighters at the new Wagner base near Asipovichy, Belarus, on July 18.**
- **Russian sources claimed that Wagner will continue to operate abroad in African countries, although Prigozhin’s involvement in these activities remains unclear.**
- **Russian President Vladimir Putin continues to display his knowledge of Russian history at odd moments, this time appearing to warn against the possibility of revolution in Russia.**
- **Russian authorities opened a case against an affiliate of the ultranationalist Angry Patriots Club for discrediting Russian forces, prompting the Angry Patriots Club to make explicit demands of Russian officials.**

- **Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Kupyansk area, near Kreminna, in the Bakhmut area, and along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City front and made gains near Bakhmut.**
- **Russian forces continued offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line, in the Bakhmut area, along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City front, and in the western Donetsk-eastern Zaporizhia oblast area. They made marginal gains along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City front and reportedly made limited advances in the western Donetsk-eastern Zaporizhia oblast area.**
- **Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations in the western Donetsk-eastern Zaporizhia area and western Zaporizhia Oblast and made reportedly made gains in both sectors of the front.**
- **The Russian State Duma adopted on July 19 a law on the first reading and “in general” that allows the Russian National Guard (Rosgvardia) to have heavy military equipment.**
- **The Ukrainian Crimean-based “Atesh” partisan group conducted another successful attack on a Russian military convoy in occupied Kherson Oblast on July 14.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of July 19, 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 offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove line and did not make confirmed advances on July 19. The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) and Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces made advances northeast of Kupyansk.[50] The Russian MoD claimed that Russian units advanced more than one kilometer in depth and two kilometers in width in the Kupyansk direction and captured the Movchanove railway station near Lyman Pershyi (11km northeast of Kupyansk).[51] Other Russian sources claimed that Russian forces took control of the Movchanove railway station near Lyman Pershyi as well as positions near Masyutivka (13km northeast of Kupyansk) and Synkivka (8km northeast of Kupyansk).[52] A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that elements of the 6th Combined Arms Army (Western Military District) have been assaulting Ukrainian strongholds west of Lyman Pershyi for several days and have recently advanced two kilometers in the area.[53] ISW has not observed visual confirmation of these claims. Former Luhansk People’s Republic (LNR) Interior Minister Vitaly Kiselev claimed that heavy fighting continues near Synkivka.[54]

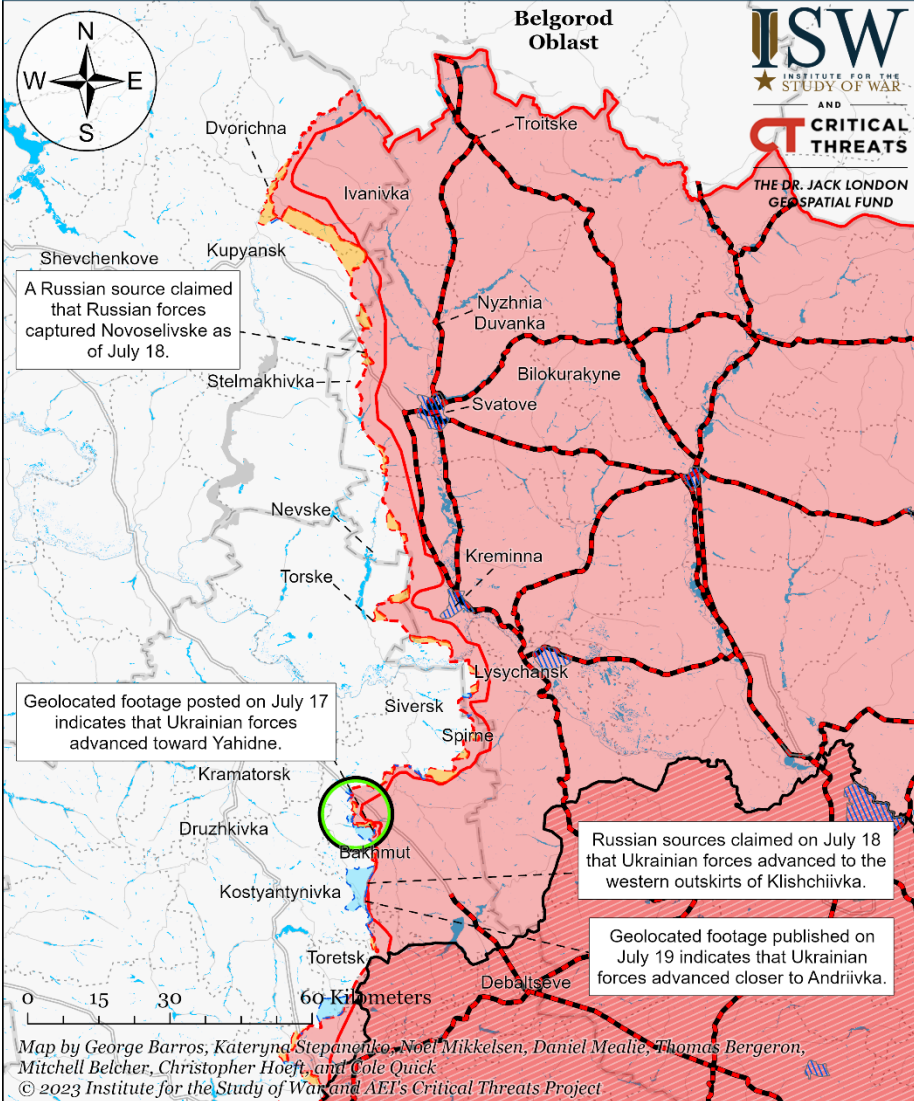
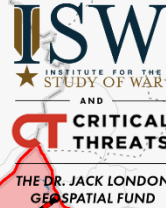
Ukrainian forces continued to defend positions in the Kupyansk area on July 19. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continue to hold firm in the Kupyansk direction.[55] Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Malyar reported on July 18 that Russian offensives in this direction have been unsuccessful.[56] Malyar and Ukrainian Luhansk Oblast Head Artem Lysohor claimed that Ukrainian forces in the Kupyansk direction have the initiative.[57]

Russian forces continued limited ground attacks along the Svatove-Kreminna line on July 19 and made no confirmed advances. Former Ukrainian Luhansk Oblast Head Serhiy Haidai stated that Russian forces have repeatedly tried to advance in the Svatove-Kreminna direction and have constantly attacked Ukrainian positions in Bilohorivka (12km south of Kreminna) in order to establish a new defensive line to protect Lysychansk.[58] Haidai stated that the situation in the Svatove-Kreminna direction, however, has stabilized.[59] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces of the 1st Tank Regiment (2nd Guards Motorized Rifle Division, 1st Guards Tank Army, Western Military District) are operating near the Svatove-Kreminna line.[60] A Russian source claimed that Russian forces made gains near Karmazynivka (12km southwest of Svatove), although ISW has not observed visual confirmation of this claim.[61] The milblogger claimed that Russian forces probed Ukrainian positions near Torske (15km west of Kreminna) and that Russian forces and Ukrainian forces engaged in low-intensity combat in the Serebryanske forest area near Dibrova (6km southwest of Kreminna).[62] Other Russian milbloggers claimed that positional battles continue in

this area.[63] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked Ukrainian forces in the direction of Vesele (30km south of Kreminna).[64]

Ukrainian forces reportedly conducted ground attacks in the vicinity of Kreminna and did not make any confirmed gains on July 19. The Russian MoD claimed Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked elements of the Russian Central Grouping of Forces near Karmazynivka, Shepilove (9.5km southeast of Kreminna), Bilohorivka, and Kreminna in Luhansk Oblast and that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked elements of the Russian Southern Grouping of Forces near Bilohorivka, Donetsk Oblast (33km south of Kreminna).[65] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces attacked Russian forces northwest of Novovodyane (17km southwest of Svatove).[66]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of July 19, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Christopher Hoeft, and Cole Quick
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- 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.

Note: The Russian Ministry of Defense claimed on July 19 that Russian forces advanced more than one kilometer in depth and up to two kilometers along the front in Luhansk Oblast. A Russian source claimed on July 18 that Russian forces advanced two kilometers west of Lyman Pershyi. The Russian Ministry of Defense claimed on July 18 that Russian forces advanced 1.5 kilometers deep along a two kilometer frontline in the direction of Kupyansk. Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Malyar reported on July 17 that Ukrainian forces occupied almost all the dominant heights around Bakhmut. Malyar also reported on July 17 that Ukrainian forces have recaptured a total of seven square kilometers within the past week and 31 square kilometers total since the start of the counteroffensive in the Bakhmut direction. ISW is unable to confirm the geometry of the advance at this time.

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 continued counteroffensive operations on Bakhmut’s northern and southern flanks on July 19 and made gains in some areas. Geolocated footage published on July 19 indicates that Ukrainian forces advanced west of Andriivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut).[67] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations north and south of Bakhmut City and forced Russian forces to retreat from positions northeast of Orikhovo-Vasylivka (11km northwest of Bakhmut).[68] Russian milbloggers amplified footage on July 19 purporting to show Ukrainian forces conducting assaults on Russian trench positions near Dubovo-Vasylivka (7km northwest of Bakhmut) with non-Western armored vehicles.[69] Russian milbloggers claimed on July 18 and 19 that Ukrainian forces made marginal advances near Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut) and liberated new positions at dominant heights on the western outskirts of the settlement.[70] Other milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted unsuccessful offensive operations near Klishchiivka and Andriivka.[71] Another milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces are attempting to reestablish control over recently lost positions on dominant heights near Klishchiivka.[72]

Russian forces conducted limited counterattacks in the Bakhmut area on July 19 and did not make any confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian assaults near Bohdanivka (6km northwest of Bakhmut).[73] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces unsuccessfully counterattacked in the direction of Minkivka (16km northwest of Bakhmut), Hryhorivka (9km northwest of Bakhmut), Berkhivka (4km north of Bakhmut), and Ivanivske (6km west of Bakhmut).[74] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces drove Ukrainian forces out of positions at unspecified dominant heights near Klishchiivka.[75]

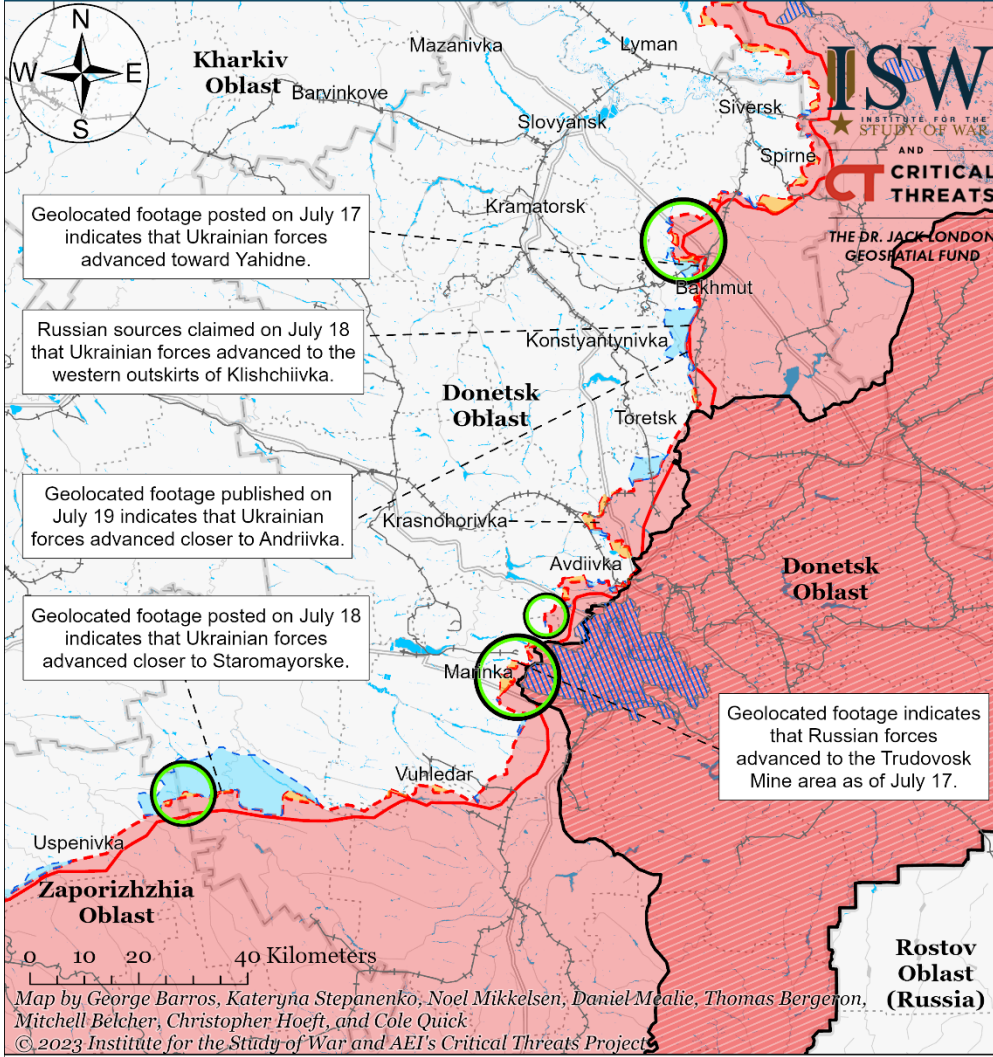
Russian forces continue to deploy elite formations and units to support Russian defensive operations around Bakhmut. The Russian MoD published footage on July 19 showing elements of the 98th Guards Airborne (VDV) Division defending against Ukrainian assaults on Bakhmut’s northern flanks.[76] Russian sources also amplified footage on July 19 showing elements of the 11th VDV Brigade operating in the Bakhmut direction.[77] ISW has previously observed elements of the 106th VDV Division defending north and south of Bakhmut, and Russian sources have claimed the 31st VDV Brigade and the 364th Special Forces Brigade (Russian General Staff Main Directorate) are also operating in the Bakhmut direction.[78]

Ukrainian forces reportedly continued limited offensive operations along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City front on July 19 and did not make any confirmed or claimed gains. The Russian MoD reported that Russian elements of the Southern Grouping of Forces repelled Ukrainian assaults near Sieverne (6km west of Avdiivka), Pervomaiske (11km southwest of Avdiivka), Nevelske (13km southwest of Avdiivka), and Marinka (27km southwest of Avdiivka).[79] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces also conducted probing attacks near Kamianka (5km northeast of Avdiivka) and Kurta Balka (5km east of Avdiivka).[80]

Russian forces continued limited offensive operations along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City front on July 19 and made marginal gains. Geolocated footage published on July 19 indicates that Russian forces made marginal advances northwest of Marinka.[81] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks near Nevelske, Krasnohorivka (22km southwest of Avdiivka), and Marinka.[82] Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces Spokesperson Major Valerii

Shershen reported that Russian "Storm-Z" assault detachments conducted unsuccessful offensive operations between Oleksandrivka (26km southwest of Avdiivka) and Marinka.^[83] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces also unsuccessfully attacked Ukrainian strongholds near Avdiivka.^[84]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of July 19, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

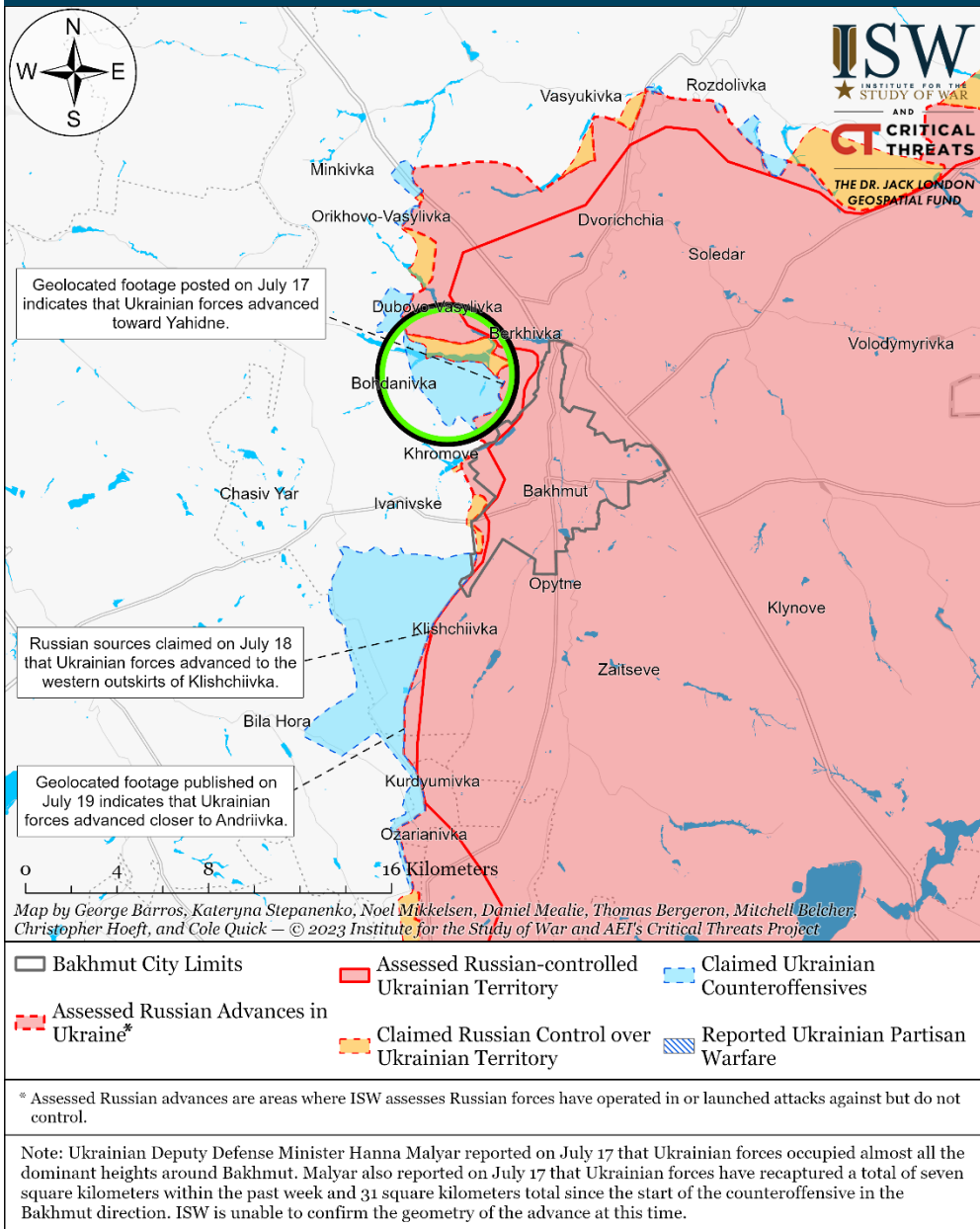


- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- + Major Railroads
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare

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

Note: Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Malyar reported on July 17 that Ukrainian forces occupied almost all the dominant heights around Bakhmut. Malyar also reported on July 17 that Ukrainian forces have recaptured a total of seven square kilometers within the past week and 31 square kilometers total since the start of the counteroffensive in the Bakhmut direction. ISW is unable to confirm the geometry of the advance at this time.

Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of July 19, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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

Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations in the western Donetsk-eastern Zaporizhia Oblast border area and made advances in the area as of July 19. Geolocated footage published on July 18 shows that Ukrainian forces advanced north of Staromayorske (9km south of Velyka Novosilka).[85] A Russian milblogger also claimed that Ukrainian forces achieved unspecified success near Staromayorske.[86] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces achieved

success in the Velyka Novosilka-Staromayorske (up to 9km south of Velyka Novosilka) and Novosilka-Staromayorske (up to 10km southwest and 9km south of Velyka Novosilka) directions and have established control over new unspecified positions.[87] Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces Spokesperson Major Valerii Shershen reported that Ukrainian assault units conducted a significant number of offensive actions in the Velyka Novosilka-Staromayorske direction.[88] Shershen stated that Russian forces are losing fire control in the Staromayorske area and that this is a vector of Ukrainian advance in the Berdyansk

(Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area) direction.[89] Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Malyar stated on July 18 that Ukrainian forces also achieved unspecified success on the Velyka Novosilka-Urozhaine (up to 9km south of Velyka Novosilka) line.[90]

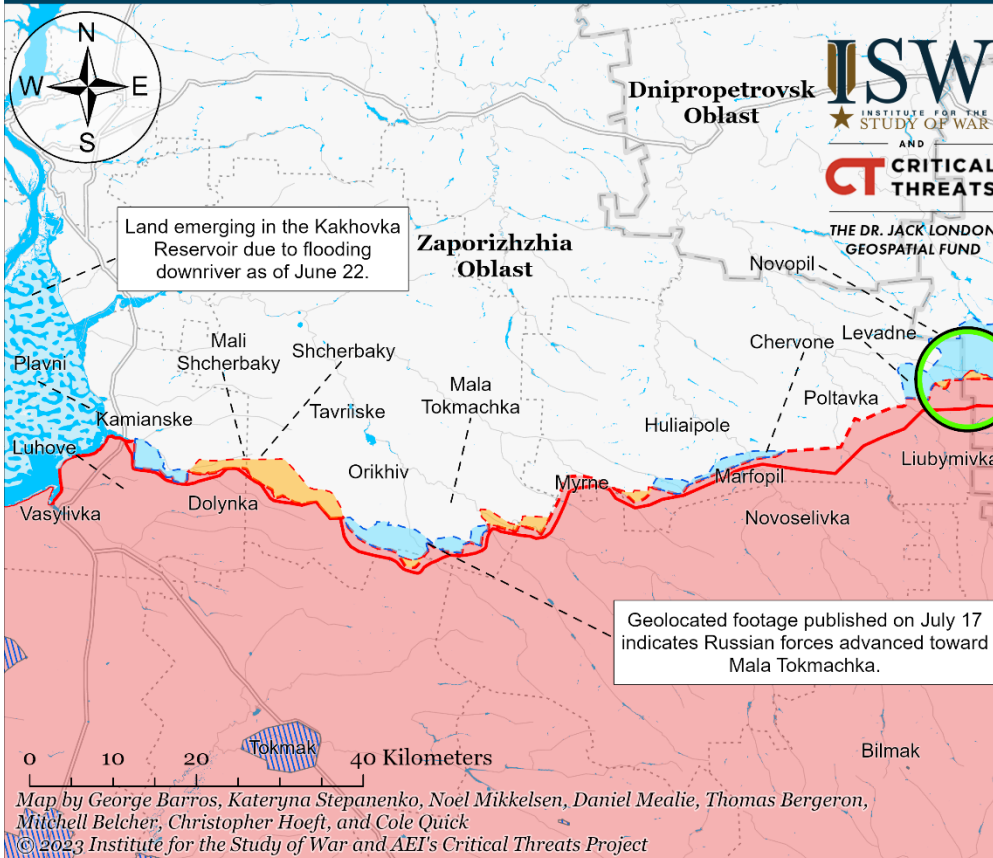
Russian forces conducted limited ground attacks in the western Donetsk-eastern Zaporizhia Oblast border area on Jul 19, and Russian sources claimed they made limited advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful offensive operations near Rivnopol (10km southwest of Velyka Novosilka), Novodarivka (15km southwest of Velyka Novosilka), and north of Pryyutne (14km southwest of Velyka Novosilka).[91] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces recaptured unspecified positions near Rivnopol.[92] Another milblogger amplified footage claiming to show elements of the Russian 34th Separate Motorized Rifle Brigade (49th Combined Arms Army, Southern Military District) operating near Pryyutne.[93]

Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast and reportedly made limited advances in the area on July 19. Shershen reported that Ukrainian forces advanced more than a kilometer in an unspecified area in the Melitopol (western Zaporizhia Oblast) direction.[94] Malyar also stated that Ukrainian forces achieved success on the Mala Tokmachka-Novopokrovka line (9-13km southeast of Orikhiv).[95] Several Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted an unsuccessful attack near Robotyne (12km south of Orikhiv).[96]

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces continue their interdiction campaign in southern Ukraine. A Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed that Ukrainian artillery stuck Russian military warehouses in Burchak (42km southwest of Orikhiv) and that Russian air defenses intercepted Ukrainian missiles targeting Molochansk (42km northeast of Melitopol) and Melitopol.[97] The milblogger also claimed that Ukrainian forces launched six HIMARS rockets at Tokmak and that Russian air defenses intercepted four of the six HIMARS rockets.[98] Melitopol Mayor Ivan Fedorov also reported that residents heard explosions in Tokmak.[99]

Russian sources continue to amplify footage indicating that Ukrainian forces hold positions on the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast. Several Russian milbloggers amplified footage purporting to show Ukrainian forces attempting to land boats and reinforcements near the Antonivksy Bridge, suggesting that Ukrainian forces continue to hold limited positions in the area.[100]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhia as of July 19, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

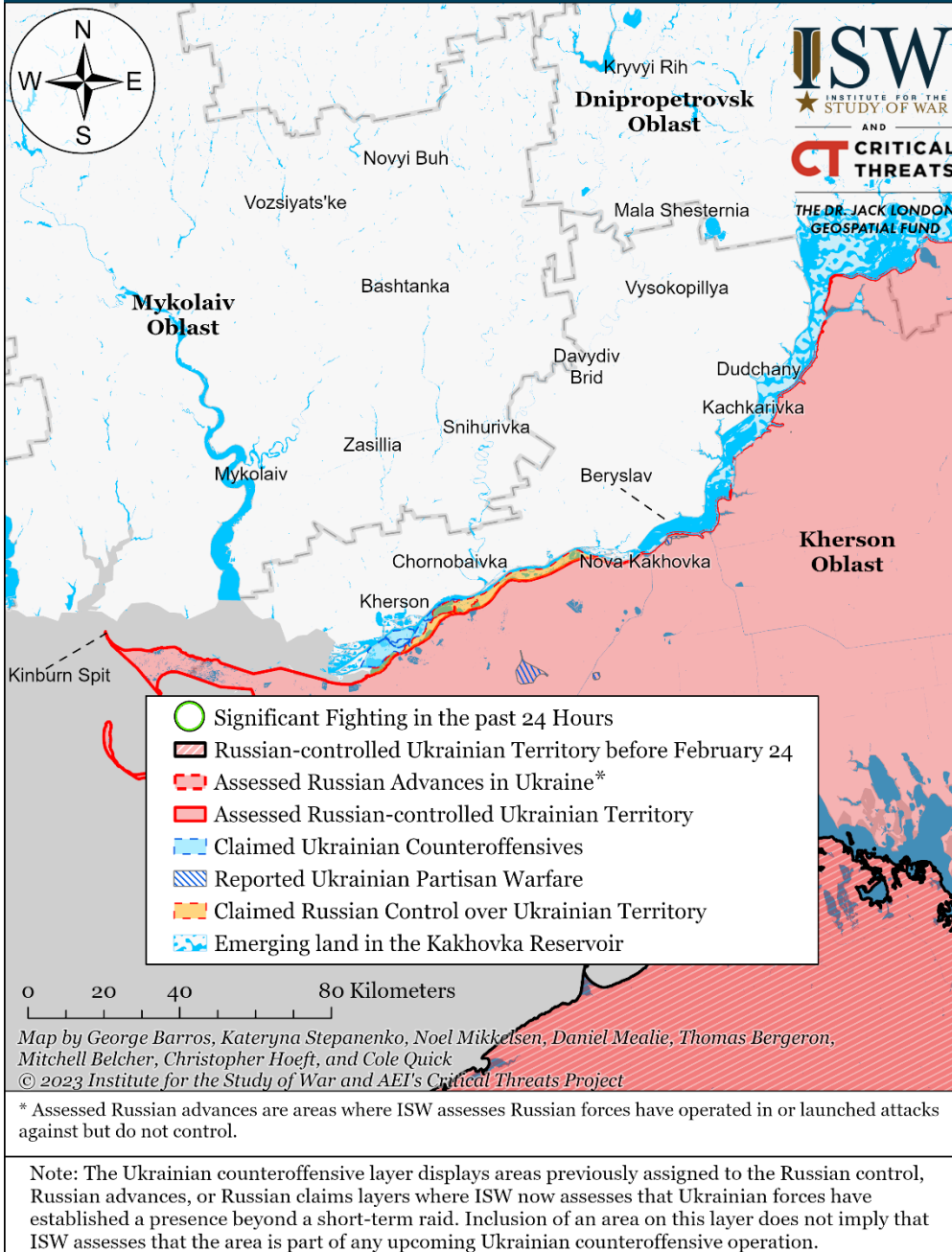


- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Emerging land in the Kakhovka Reservoir
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives

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

Note: Ukrainian Tavriivsk Group of Forces Spokesperson Major Valerii Shershen stated on July 19 that Ukrainian forces advanced by more than one kilometer in the Melitopol direction. Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Malyar reported on July 17 that Ukrainian forces recaptured 10.9 square kilometers within the last week and 179.5 square kilometers since the start of the counteroffensive in the southern direction. Ukrainian Tavriivsk Group of Forces Spokesperson Major Valerii Shershen reported on July 17 that Ukrainian forces advanced more than one kilometer in the Berdyansk direction in the past 24 hours. ISW is unable to confirm the geometry of the advance at this time.

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of July 19, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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

The Russian State Duma adopted on July 19 a law in the first reading and “in general” that allows the Russian National Guard (Rosgvardia) to have heavy military equipment.[101] The law changes the

legal language within the existing regulations for Rosgvardia specifying that Rosgvardia elements are authorized to use military weapons and combat equipment. The law also proposes regulations that would allow Rosgvardia to use military equipment to free hostages; protect citizens, officials, and military personnel; ensure security during riots; suppress the activities of illegal armed groups; and in other unspecified situations.^[102] One of the drafters of the law, Chairman of the State Duma Defense Committee Andrey Kartapolov, stated that the adopted bill “significantly expands the capabilities of the Rosgvardia troops.”^[103] The Kremlin has been steadily expanding internal security capabilities in Russia following the Wagner Group’s rebellion on June 24, and Rosgvardia Head Viktor Zolotov later announced on June 27 that Rosgvardia would receive heavy military equipment and tanks.^[104] ISW observed on July 18 that Russian sources have been suggesting that recent measures at expanding the authority of Rosgvardia will allow it to posture as an alternative Russian military formation.^[105]

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

The Ukrainian Crimean-based “Atesh” partisan group launched another successful attack on a Russian military convoy in occupied Kherson Oblast on July 14.^[106] “Atesh” reported on July 19 that partisans targeted two Russian fuel trucks with explosives near Knyaze-Hryhorivka, east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast.^[107] “Atesh” noted that partisans destroyed one truck and damaged the other truck during the attack.

Russian officials continue to bring Ukrainian children from occupied territories to Russia. The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported that Russian officials brought 80 Ukrainian high school students from occupied Luhansk Oblast to Kostroma Oblast in Russia to participate in military training.^[108] The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported that Ukrainian students are currently undergoing military training at the Military Academy of Radiation, Chemical, and Biological Protection and Engineering Forces in Kostroma Oblast.^[109] *Radio Liberty* uncovered over 10 facilities in Shakhtarske, Khartsyzk, Novoazovsk, and Donetsk City that sent 31 Ukrainian children from occupied Mariupol to the “Polyany” boarding school in Moscow Oblast in spring 2022.^[110]

At least 25 St. Petersburg organizations are reportedly involved in construction projects in occupied Mariupol that use up to 13 billion rubles (\$141 million) from the St. Petersburg city reserve fund.^[111] Russian outlet *Bumaga* reported that private companies and individuals are also involved in funding infrastructure projects in occupied and destroyed Mariupol.

Significant activity in Belarus (Russian efforts to increase its military presence in Belarus and further integrate Belarus into Russian-favorable frameworks).

Belarus removed its border controls with Russia on July 18. A Belarusian official stated on July 19 that Belarus deactivated its border controls with Russia on the evening of July 18.^[112] Belarus initially restored its border control with Russia for the first time in 28 years in May 2023, ostensibly to stop Russian citizens from fleeing mobilization.^[113]

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.

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