

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, July 24, 2023

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July 24, 2023, 6:45pm 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 cutoff for this product was 1pm ET on July 24. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the July 25 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Likely Ukrainian forces conducted a drone strike near the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) building in Moscow on July 24. The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) claimed that Russian electronic warfare (EW) suppressed two Ukrainian UAVs that detonated, damaging two non-residential buildings.[1] One drone detonated on Komsomolsky Prospekt within 500 meters of the MoD building and within 200 meters of a reported secret Russian General Staff Main Directorate (GRU) building.[2] Russian sources reported that the second drone hit a business center on Likhachev Prospekt.[3] CNN reported that an unspecified Ukrainian intelligence official confirmed that Ukrainian forces conducted the attack.[4] Ukrainian Digital Transformation Minister Mykhailo Fedorov stated that unspecified UAVs attacked the capital and warned that more UAV attacks against Russia will occur.[5] Russian opposition source *The Insider* reported that Russian authorities banned Russian television channels from covering the drone strikes, citing sources in Russian state media channels.[6] Russian milbloggers had a muted reaction to these strikes; some criticized the Russian air defenses for allowing the drones to penetrate that far into Moscow, while others argued that the informational victory of such attacks is minimal and short-lived.[7]

Likely Ukrainian forces targeted Russian military assets in occupied Crimea, temporarily disrupting Russian logistics through Crimea on July 24. The Russian MFA accused Ukrainian forces of attacking occupied Crimea with 17 UAVs, and the MFA claimed that Russian EW suppressed 14 UAVs while air defenses shot down three UAVs.[8] Crimean occupation head Sergey Aksyonov claimed that one UAV hit an ammunition depot in Dzhankoy Raion.[9] A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces also launched three Storm Shadow missiles at an ammunition depot in Vilne (19km southwest of Dzhankoy) and a repair base in Novostepne (immediately south of Dzhankoy).[10] Ukrainian Mariupol Mayoral Advisor Petro Andyushchenko reported that strikes injured three Russian personnel at the Vesele military airfield (10km southwest of Dzhankoy) and reported additional explosions near Krasnohvardiiske (20km southwest of Dzhankoy).[11] Aksyonov temporarily suspended road traffic on the Dzhankoy-Simferopol highway as well as rail traffic through Dzhankoy Raion.[12] Aksyonov also announced the evacuation of all civilians within a five-kilometer radius of the strike area in Dzhankoy

Raion.[13] Crimean occupation advisor Oleg Kryuchkov stated that occupation authorities will strictly monitor social media posts that could help Ukrainian forces identify targets in Crimea.[14]

Russian President Vladimir Putin signed an article published on July 24 likely intended to mitigate damage to Russia’s position in Africa and his own reputation resulting from Russia’s withdrawal from the Ukraine-Russia grain deal, Russian attacks on Ukrainian grain and port facilities, and Putin’s inability to attend the upcoming BRICS summit due to the International Criminal Court (ICC) arrest warrant issued for him. Putin outlined Russia’s goals for establishing partner relationships with Africa and called for the continuation of “traditionally close cooperation on the world stage.”[15] Putin also emphasized Russia’s trade with African economic partners and the importance of “uninterrupted food supply” for the “maintenance of the political stability of African states,” accusing the collective West of exploiting the grain deal for its own benefit at the expense of Russia and countries such as Ethiopia, Sudan, and Somalia.[16] Putin’s article follows Russia’s withdrawal from the grain deal and attacks that have destroyed tens of thousands of tons of Ukrainian grain and Ukrainian facilities essential to transporting the grain to areas of Africa that rely heavily on Ukrainian grain. Putin is also likely attempting to mitigate the opportunity cost and embarrassment of his inability to personally attend the BRICS Summit in South Africa due to the ICC arrest warrant.[17]

Russia conducted another drone strike on Ukrainian port infrastructure in Odesa Oblast overnight on July 23-24. Ukrainian military sources reported that Russian forces launched Iranian-made Shahed drones at port infrastructure in Reni, along the Danube River in far western Odesa Oblast, within a few kilometers of the Romanian border.[18] Odesa Oblast Head Oleh Kiper also stated that the drone strikes damaged 25 architectural monuments in Odesa Oblast, including the Transfiguration Orthodox Cathedral in Odesa City.[19] Russian sources claimed that Ukraine used the port infrastructure in Reni for the export of weapons, equipment, and grain.[20]

Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations along at least three sectors of the front on July 24 and have reportedly advanced in certain areas. Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Malyar reported that over the past week, Ukrainian forces have advanced gradually on the southern flank of Bakhmut and in the Berdyansk (western Donetsk-eastern Zaporizhia Oblast border area) and Melitopol (western Zaporizhia Oblast) directions.[21] Malyar also noted that these counteroffensive actions are taking place against the backdrop of continued Russian offensive operations in the Kupyansk, Lyman, Avdiivka, and Marinka directions.[22] Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted limited ground attacks in western Donetsk Oblast south of Velyka Novosilka and advanced south of Orikhiv in western Zaporizhia Oblast.[23] The Ukrainian General Staff indicated that Ukrainian troops are continuing offensive actions in the Berdyansk and Melitopol directions but did not specify locations or outcomes.[24]

The Kremlin continues to codify domestic repression into Russian law, generating minimal opposition from select Russian lawmakers. Russian President Vladimir Putin signed laws on July 24 allowing the Russian Ministry of Justice to conduct unscheduled inspections of those classified as “foreign agents” under new Russian laws and requiring Russian citizens, government officials, and organizations to comply with restrictions on foreign agents.[25] Putin also signed a law that would fine citizens up to 50,000 rubles (about \$550), officials up to 100,000 rubles (about \$1,100), and organizations up to 300,000 (about \$3,300) rubles for violating the law on foreign agents.[26] Russian opposition news outlet *Vazhnye Istarii* reported on July 24 that the Russian

Federation Council proposed a bill that would allow Russian authorities to deprive natural born Russian citizens of citizenship due to certain “political crimes” and “desertion.”^[27] *Vashnye Istorii* also noted, however, three senators Olga Bas (representing the Luhansk People’s Republic), Ekaterina Altabayeva, and Sergei Kolbin (both representing Sevastopol in occupied Crimea) withdrew their authorship of the bill, potentially due to nuances and intricacies within the ever-expanding new body of Russian law pertaining to citizenship in occupied areas.^[28] Federation Council Constitutional Legislation and State Building Committee Head Andrey Klishas criticized the bill and claimed that it would violate the Russian Constitution, likely referencing Article 6 which states that a Russian citizen may not be deprived of their citizenship or of the right to change citizenship status.^[29] *Vashnye Istorii* reported that Russia has already adopted a law that would allow Russian authorities to revoke Russian citizenship from an individual who did not acquire Russian citizenship by birth for posing what the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) deems a “security threat.”^[30] ISW has previously reported on measures taken by Russian authorities to intensify domestic repression and encourage self-censorship through various amendments to and manipulations of domestic law.^[31]

Key Takeaways:

- **Likely Ukrainian forces conducted a drone strike near the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) building in Moscow on July 24.**
- **Likely Ukrainian forces targeted Russian military assets in occupied Crimea, temporarily disrupting Russian logistics through Crimea on July 24.**
- **Russian President Vladimir Putin signed an article published on July 24 likely intended to mitigate damage to Russia’s position in Africa and his own reputation resulting from Russia’s withdrawal from the Ukraine-Russia grain deal, Russian attacks on Ukrainian grain and port facilities, and Putin’s inability to attend the upcoming BRICS summit due to the International Criminal Court (ICC) arrest warrant issued for him.**
- **Russia conducted another drone strike on Ukrainian port infrastructure in Odesa Oblast overnight on July 23-24.**
- **Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations along at least three sectors of the front on July 24 and have reportedly advanced in certain areas.**
- **The Kremlin continues to codify domestic repression into Russian law, generating minimal opposition from select Russian lawmakers.**
- **Russian forces conducted offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line, in the Bakhmut area, and along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line and made marginal gains south of Kreminna.**
- **Ukrainian forces conducted offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line, and in the Bakhmut area and reportedly advanced in the Bakhmut area.**
- **Russian forces conducted offensive operations in western Donetsk Oblast and did not make any confirmed or claimed gains.**
- **Ukrainian forces conducted offensive operations in western Donetsk Oblast and in western Zaporizhia Oblast and reportedly advanced in the Orikhiv area.**
- **Russian officials continue to highlight the claimed successes of the Russian defense industrial base (DIB).**

- **Ukrainian officials continue to reveal the involvement of Belarusian entities in the forced deportation of Ukrainian children.**



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 and Ukrainian forces reportedly continued limited fighting northeast of Kupyansk, where Russian forces reportedly advanced on July 24. A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian counterattacks west of Lyman Pershyi and near the Movchanove rail station (both 10-11km northeast of Kupyansk).[32]

Russian sources claimed that Russian forces advanced during offensive operations in the Svatove area on July 24. Some Russian milbloggers claimed on July 23 that Russian forces captured Novoyehorivka (15km southwest of Svatove), but other Russian milbloggers claimed on July 24 that Russian advances in the area were limited or unconfirmed.[33] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces, including unspecified Airborne (VDV), 20th Combined Arms Army (Western Military District), and Central Military District (CMD) elements, expanded their foothold on the west (right) bank of the Zherebets River southwest of Svatove and advanced up to five kilometers deep into Ukrainian lines.[34] Russian milbloggers claimed that elements of unspecified Russian motorized rifle brigades also captured at least one Ukrainian fortified position near Karmazynivka (12km southwest of Svatove).[35] ISW has not yet observed any visual confirmation of Russian advances in this area, and these Russian claims may be part of a broader effort to exaggerate claimed gains in the area.[36] One Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces also conducted a failed ground attack against Nadiya (15km southwest of Svatove).[37]

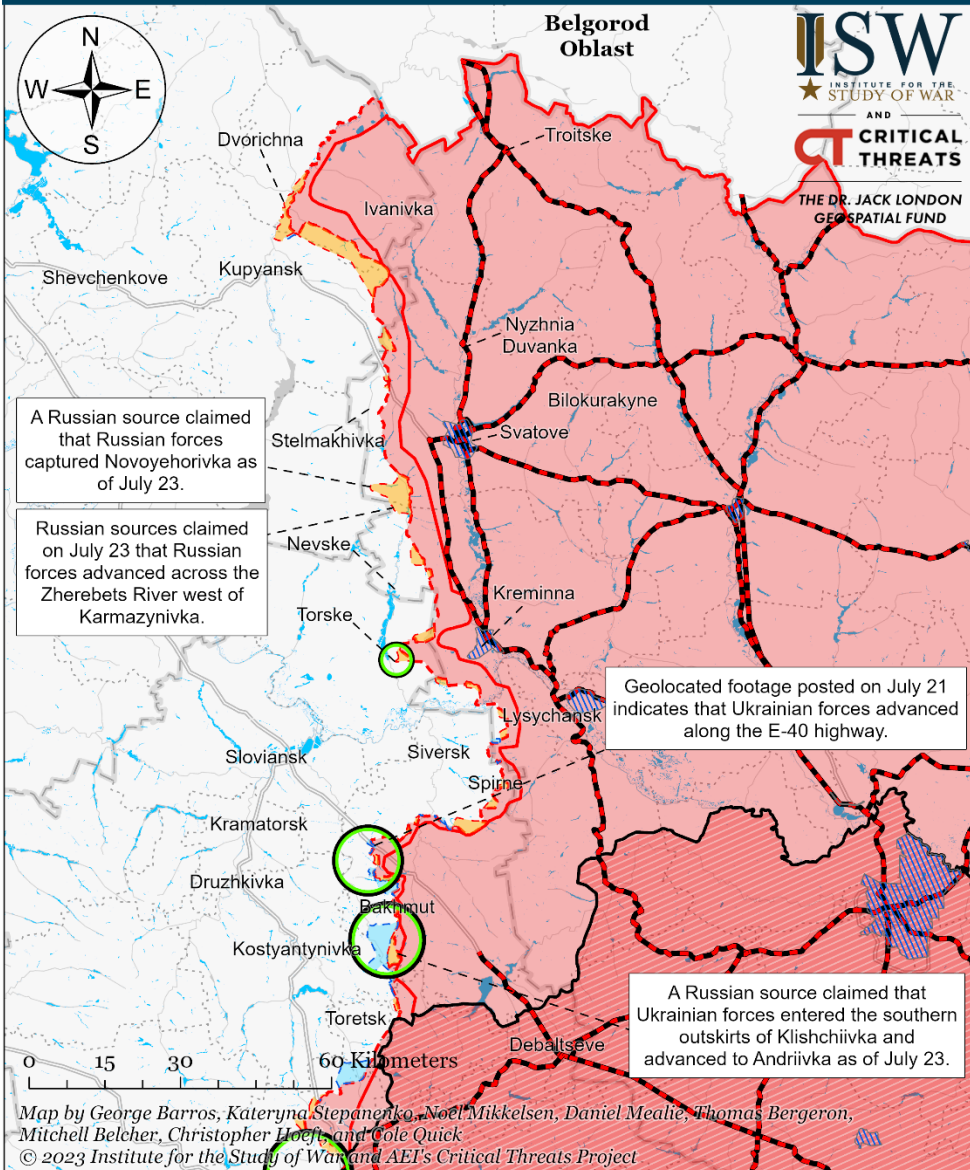
Ukrainian forces reportedly conducted limited counterattacks in the Svatove area and did not advance on July 24. A Russian source claimed that the Russian 21st Guards Separate Motorized Rifle Brigade (2nd Combined Arms Army, Central Military District) repelled Ukrainian counterattacks west of Karmazynivka.[38]

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Kreminna area and made marginal advances on July 24. Geolocated footage published on July 24 shows that Russian forces made marginal advances south of Kreminna.[39] A Russian milblogger claimed on July 23 that Chechen “Akhmat” forces, unspecified VDV elements, and unspecified 228th Motorized Rifle Regiment (90th Guards Tank Division, Central Military District) elements captured Ukrainian positions in the Kreminna forest area.[40] Russian milbloggers claimed on July 24 that Russian forces advanced in the Kreminna

forest area and continued attacks south of Kreminna near Bilohorivka and the Serebrianske forest area (both 10-11km south).[41] The Ukrainian General Staff and one Russian milblogger reported that Russian forces conducted a failed ground attack west of Kreminna near Torske (15km west of Kreminna).[42]

Ukrainian forces reportedly continued limited offensive operations near Kreminna and did not advance on July 24. A Russian source claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian ground attacks in the Serebrianske forest area.[43]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of July 24, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



- 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.

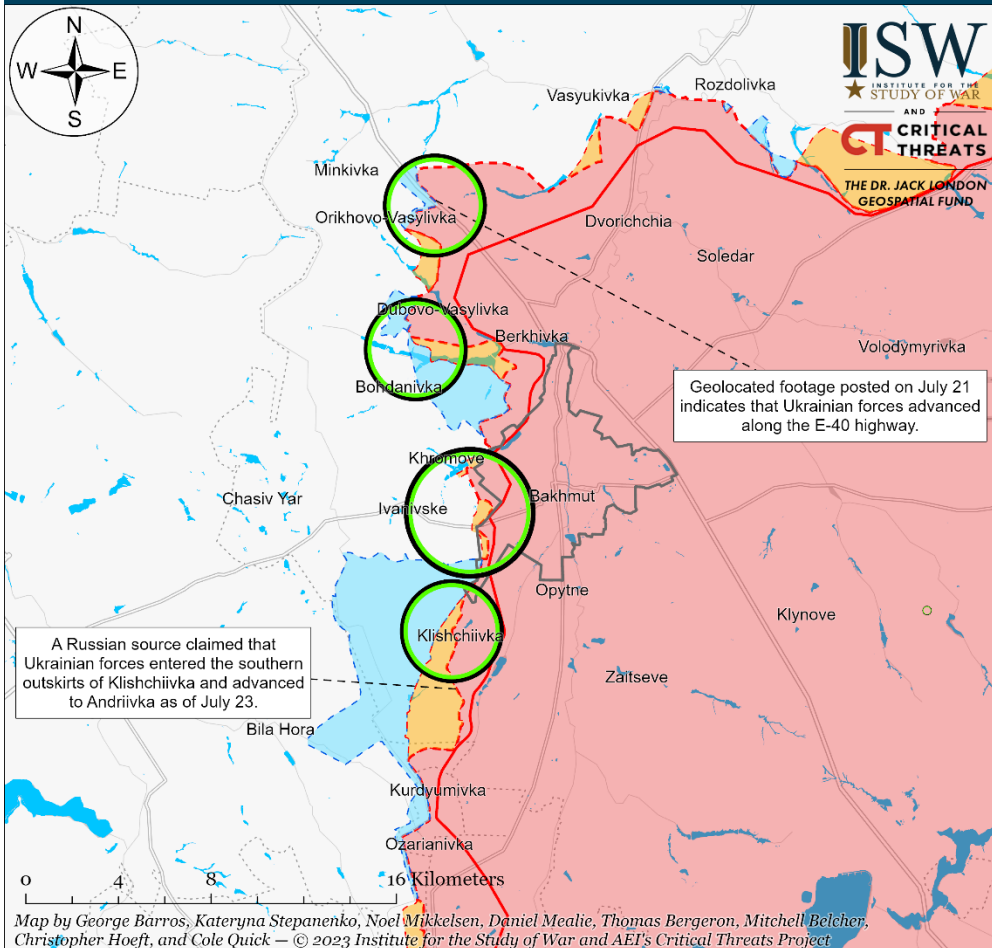
Note: Russian sources claimed on July 23 and July 24 that Russian forces captured elevated positions on the right (west) bank of the Zherebets River and established a three and a half kilometer deep and five to seven kilometer wide bridgehead. A Russian source claimed on July 21 that Russian forces made marginal advances in the Serebryanske forest area.

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

Russia forces conducted limited ground attacks around Bakhmut and did not advance on July 24. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks northwest of Orikhovo-Vasylivka (11km northwest of Bakhmut), near Bohdanivka (6km northwest of Bakhmut), south of Ivanivske (6km west of Bakhmut), and west of Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut).[44] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces unsuccessfully conducted a ground attack near Khromove (immediately west of Bakhmut).[45] Footage published on July 24 purportedly shows elements of the “Sever-Z” Brigade (the 200th Motorized Rifle Brigade, 14th Army Corps, Northern Fleet) assaulting Ukrainian positions near Bakhmut.[46]

Ukrainian forces conducted counteroffensive operations north and south of Bakhmut and reportedly advanced as of July 24. Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Malyar reported that Ukrainian forces have liberated four square kilometers in the Bakhmut direction in the past week and that Ukrainian forces continue to advance slowly but confidently.[47] A Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed on July 23 that Ukrainian forces advanced in the Orikhovo-Vasylivka direction, entered the outskirts of Klishchiivka, and advanced close to Andriivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut), and another Russian milblogger claimed on July 24 that Ukrainian forces took positions on the heights near Klishchiivka.[48] Russian sources claimed that intense fighting is ongoing near Klishchiivka, while the Russian MoD claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Klishchiivka.[49] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces are having significant difficulty defending positions on the southern flank of Bakhmut due to a lack of rotations and effective Ukrainian electronic warfare.[50]

Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of July 24, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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

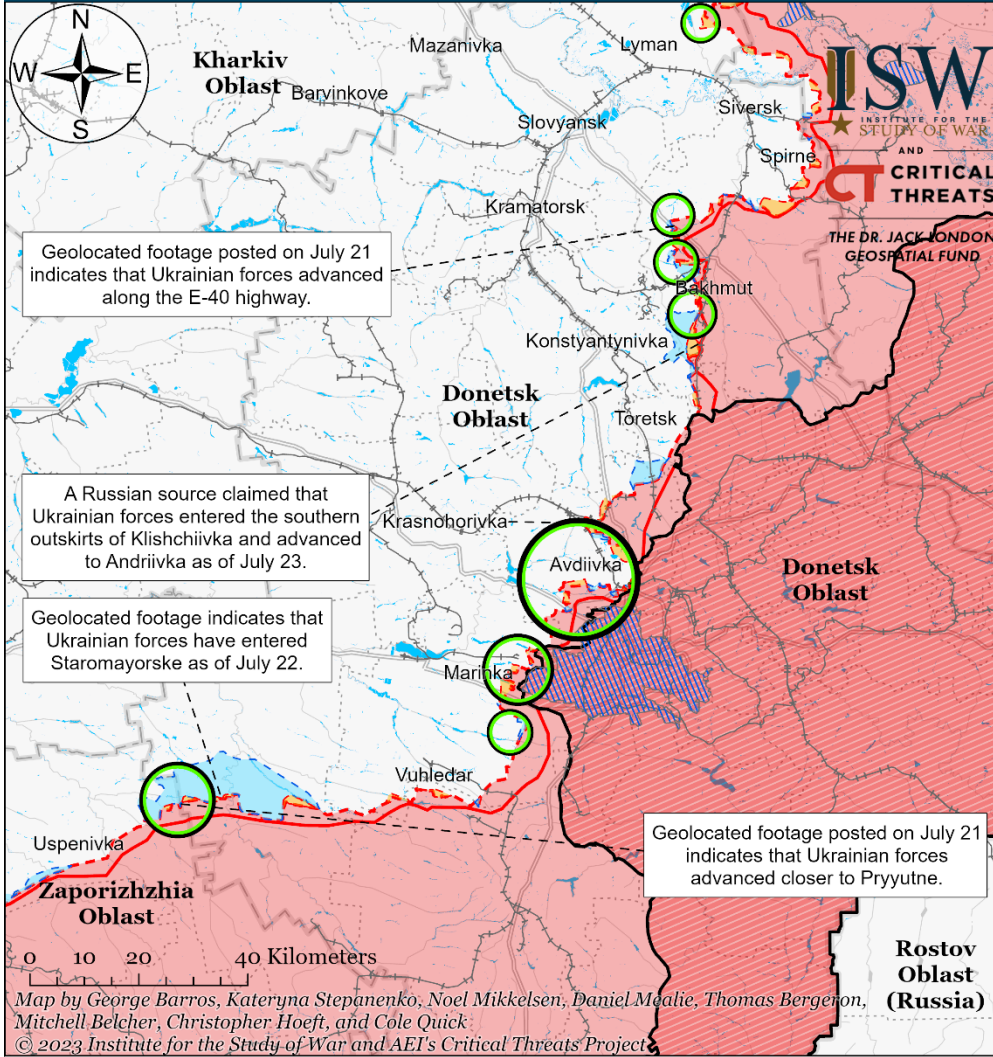
| | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|
| Bakhmut City Limits | Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory | Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives |
| Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine* | Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory | Reported 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 stated that Ukrainian forces recaptured four square kilometers over the last week and a total of 35 square kilometers in the Bakhmut direction as of July 24. Ukrainian Eastern Group of Forces Spokesperson Colonel Serhiy Cherevaty stated on July 21 that Ukrainian forces are making measured and stable progress, capturing hundreds of meters daily in the Bakhmut direction. Commander of the Ukrainian Ground Forces Colonel General Oleksandr Syrsky stated on July 20 that Ukrainian forces advances approximately one half to one kilometer daily in the Bakhmut direction. A Russian source claimed on July 20 that Ukrainian forces captured positions on the heights near Klischiivka, but Russian forces still control the settlement. The Russian source also claimed on July 20 that Ukrainian forces captured positions near the M-03 highway near Orikhovo-Vasylivka and advanced toward Yahidne.

Russian forces conducted limited ground attacks along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line and did not advance on July 24. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks near Avdiivka, Nevelske (13km southwest of Avdiivka), Pervomaiske (11km southwest of Avdiivka), Marinka (on the western outskirts of Donetsk City), Krasnohorivka (directly west of Donetsk City), and Novomykhailivka (36km southwest of Avdiivka).^[51] Malyar stated that Russian forces continue to focus offensive operations on establishing control over Avdiivka and Marinka.^[52]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of July 24, 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

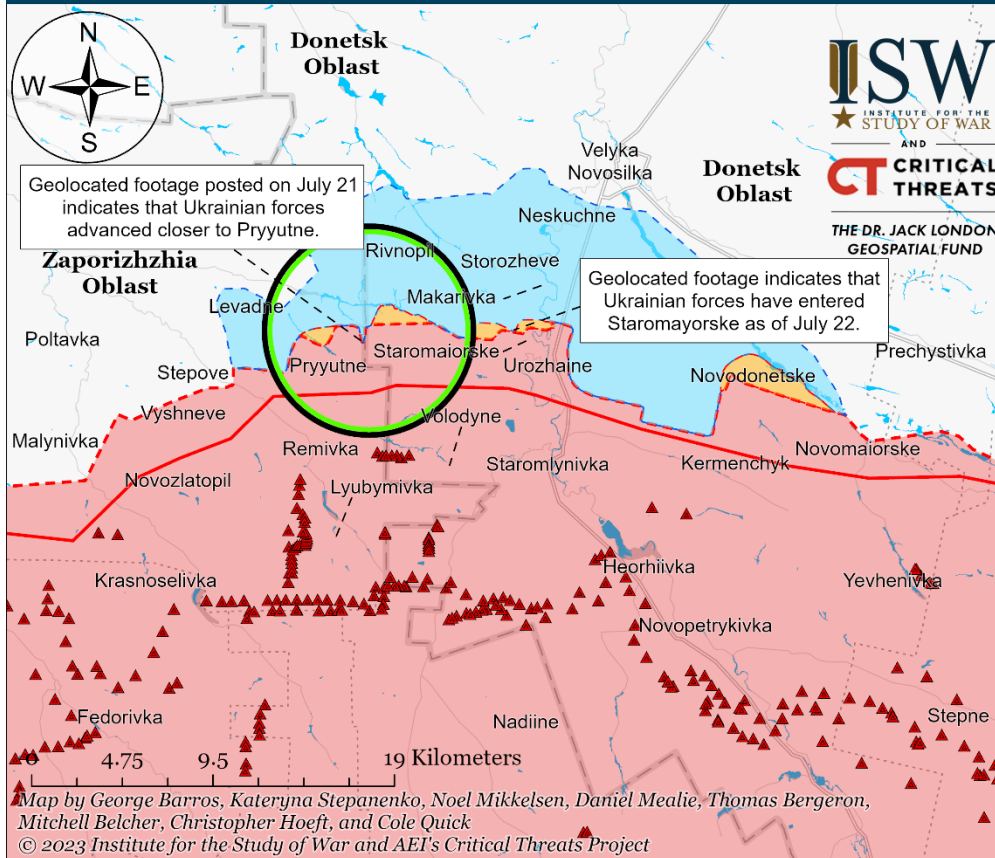
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Note: Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Malyar stated that Ukrainian forces liberated 12.7 square kilometers over the last week and a total of 192.1 square kilometers in the Melitopol and Berdyansk directions as of July 24. Ukrainian Melitopol Mayor Ivan Fedorov stated on July 24 that Ukrainian forces advanced 350 meters to 1.4 kilometers in the Berdyansk direction. Ukrainian Eastern Group of Forces Spokesperson Colonel Serhiy Cherevaty stated on July 21 that Ukrainian forces are making measured and stable progress, capturing hundreds of meters daily in the Bakhmut direction.

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

Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in western Donetsk Oblast on July 24 but did not make any confirmed gains. Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Malyar reported that Ukrainian troops have had success in unspecified sectors along the Novodarivka–Pryyutne and Novosilka–Staromayorske lines south of Velyka Novosilka.[53] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks near Staromayorske and Urozhaine, both about 9km south of Velyka Novosilka.[54]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around the Vremivka Salient as of July 24, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



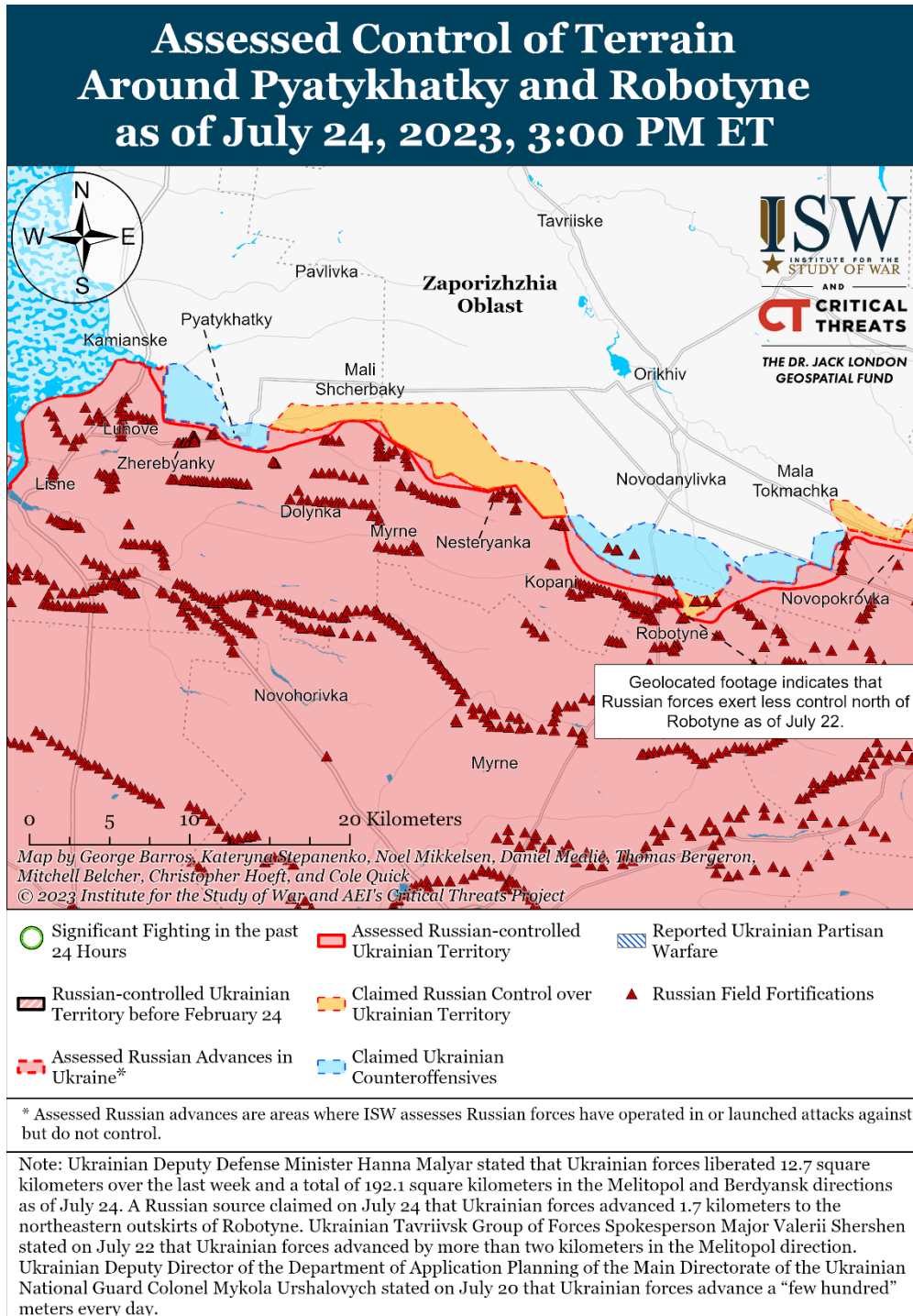
- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- ▲ Russian Field Fortifications
- Assessed Russian Advances 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 Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Malyar stated that Ukrainian forces liberated 12.7 square kilometers over the last week and a total of 192.1 square kilometers in the Melitopol and Berdyansk directions as of July 24. Ukrainian Melitopol Mayor Ivan Fedorov stated on July 24 that Ukrainian forces advanced 350 meters to 1.4 kilometers in the Berdyansk direction. Ukrainian Tavriivsk Group of Forces Spokesperson Major Valerii Shershen stated on July 22 that Ukrainian forces advanced by more than two kilometers in the Melitopol direction.

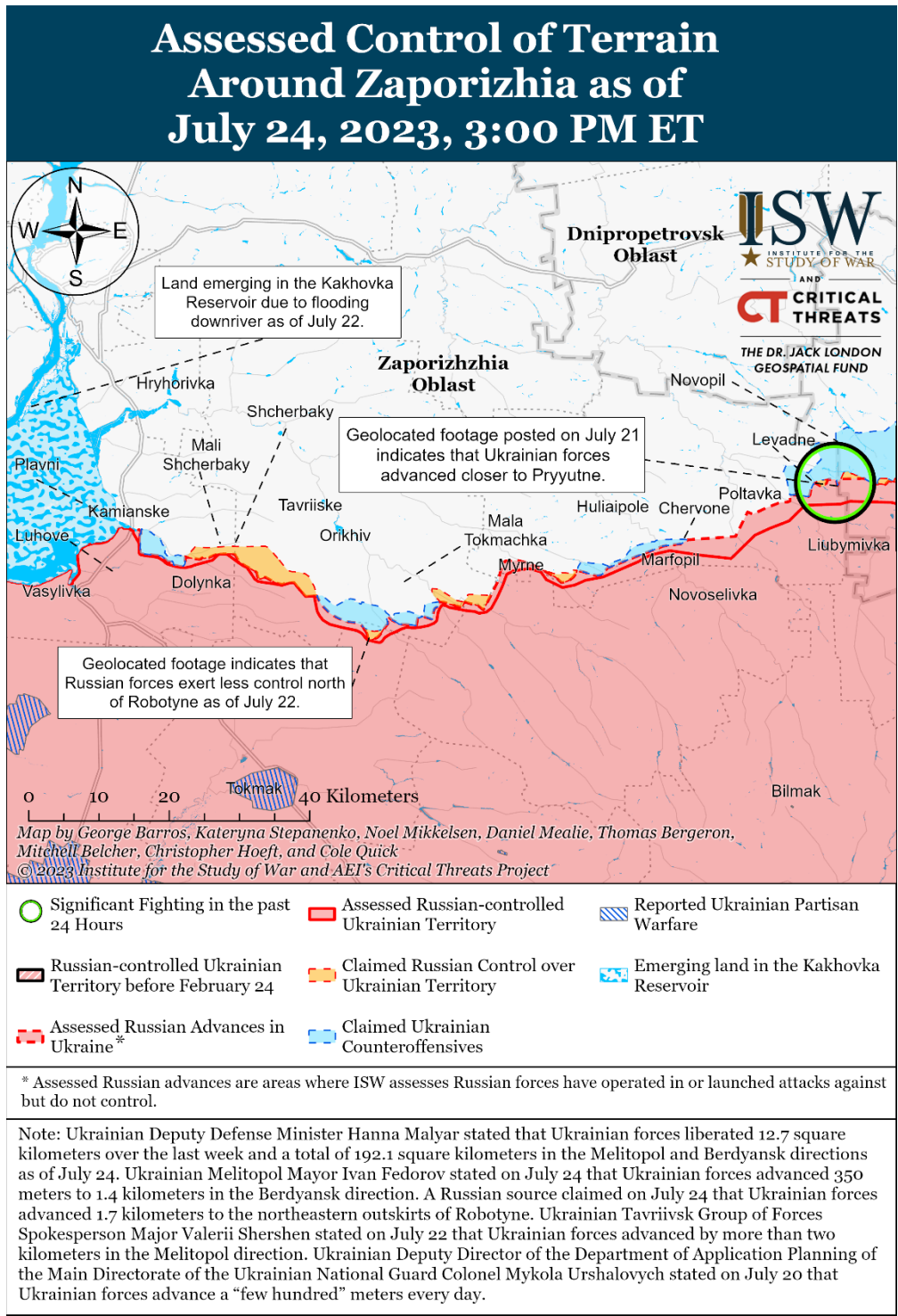
Russian forces conducted limited ground attacks to regain lost positions in western Donetsk Oblast on July 24 but did not make any claimed or confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian troops repelled Russian attacks near Rivnopil (10km southwest of Velyka Novosilka) and Pryyutne (15km southwest of Velyka Novosilka).^[55] Russian sources amplified various reports that elements of the 36th Combined Arms Army (Eastern Military District) and 14th Separate Guards Special Purpose Brigade (Main Directorate of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces [GRU])

are among the Russian formations fighting in this area.[56]



Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast on July 24 and reportedly advanced in the Orikhiv area. A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces advanced 1.7km towards the northeastern outskirts of Robotyne (15km south of Orikhiv).[57] Other Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces are regrouping near Robotyne following an attempted attack on July 23.[58] Geolocated footage posted on July 23 shows elements of the Russian

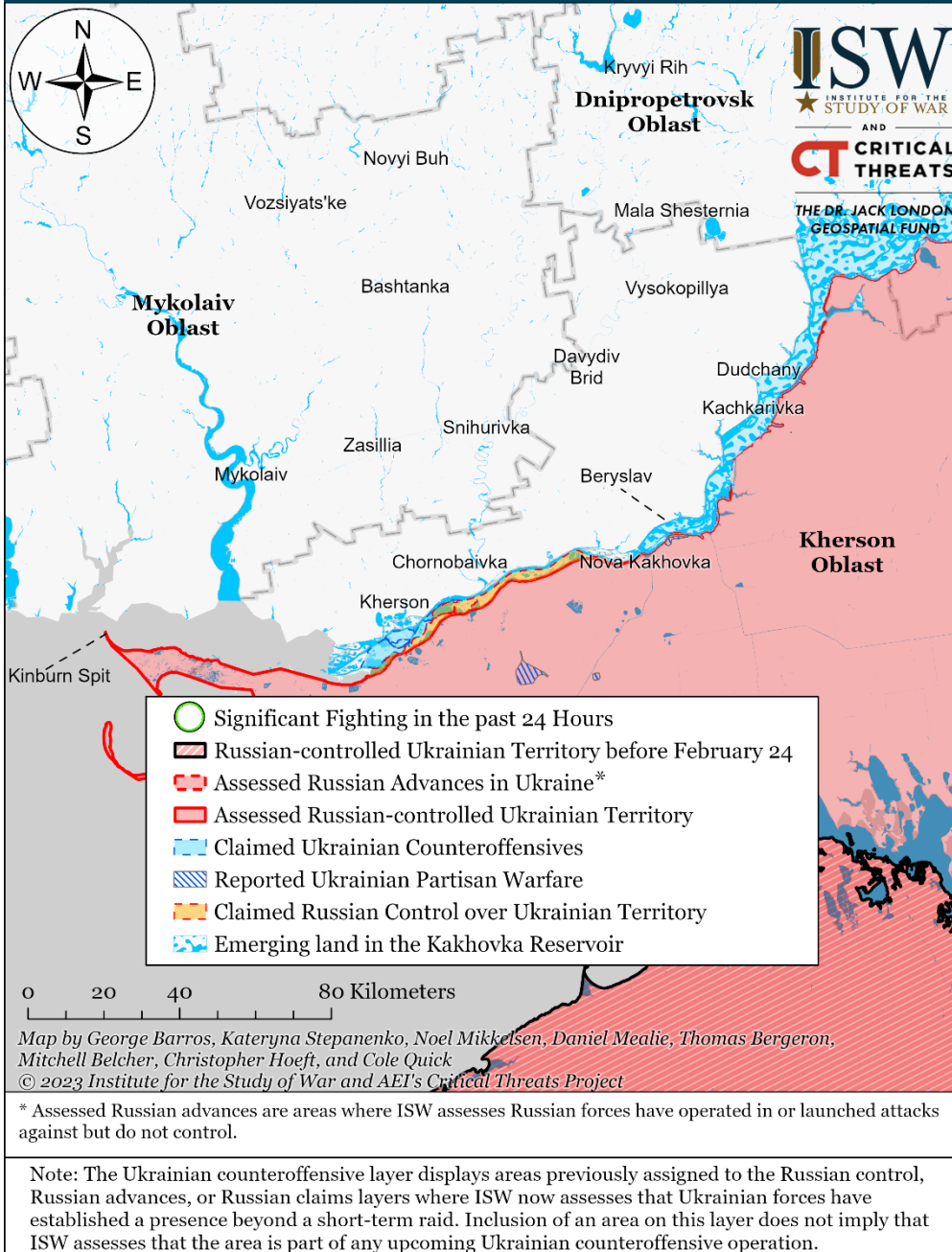
810th Naval Infantry Brigade (Black Sea Fleet) and 291st Motorized Rifle Regiment (42nd Motorized Rifle Division, 58th Combined Arms Army, Southern Military District) repelling Ukrainian attacks northeast of Robotyne.[59] Malyar also reported that Ukrainian forces conducted successful offensive operations southeast of Orikhiv along the Novodanylivka—Verbove and Mala Tokmachka — Verbove lines and south of Orikhiv along the Novodanylivka—Robotyne line.[60] Russian sources claimed that the situation remains unchanged near Pyatykhatky (about 25km southwest of Orikhiv).[61]



Russian forces did not conduct any claimed or confirmed ground attacks in western Zaporizhia Oblast on July 24.

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces continued attempts to land on islands in the Dnipro River delta and establish additional positions on the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast on July 24. A prominent milblogger claimed that Ukrainian troops tried to land three small boats near the Antonivsky Bridge and that Russian artillery strikes repelled the attempt.^[62] Other milbloggers claimed that Russian forces are constantly destroying small Ukrainian groups that are fighting for control of islands in the Dnipro River delta and on the east bank.^[63] Russian forces continued artillery strikes against the west bank of Kherson Oblast.^[64]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of July 24, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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

Russian officials continue to highlight the claimed successes of the Russian defense industrial base (DIB). Russian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Trade and Industry Denis Manturov claimed

on July 24 that DIB current monthly production of “means of destruction” (likely meaning weapons systems) exceeds the entire annual production of 2022.[65] A Russian milblogger emphasized that these high production levels are critical for a Russian victory in Ukraine and are already clearly visible on the battlefield.[66]

An investigation by *Politico* published on July 24 reported that China is sending nonlethal but militarily useful aid to Russia via Russian shell companies that are importing dual use equipment.[67] *Politico* reported that Russia has imported more than \$100 million worth of drones from China so far in 2023, which is 30 times more than Ukraine has imported from China.[68] *Politico* also reported that Chinese exports of ceramics – which are used in body armor – to Russia have increased 69% whereas Chinese exports of the same item to Ukraine have decreased by 61%.[69]

Russian President Vladimir Putin formally signed amendments increasing the retirement age limits of reservists into law on July 24.[70] The age limitations for all reservists were increased by five years: personnel with “first class” ranks increased from 35 to 40 years, “second class” ranks from 45 to 50 years, “third class” ranks from 50 to 55 years, junior officers from 55 to 60, and senior officers from 60 to 65.[71] Russian opposition media outlet *SOTA* offered the observation that these new laws create conditions for additional avenues for mobilization, noting that Russian citizens with foreign passports or foreign residence permits are no longer excluded from the reserves and that reservists can now be mobilized up to 50 years old (previously 45 years old).[72]

NOTE: ISW previously incorrectly reported on July 14 that the “second class” age bracket would increase from 40 to 45 years of age as opposed to 45 to 50 years of age. ISW sincerely apologizes for this mistake.

Russian sources reported that the Russian State Duma is planning to change the penalties for draft dodging.[73] Amendments were made on July 20 that increased the fine for failing to appear before the draft board from 3,000 rubles (\$33) up to 50,000 (\$553), but the Duma is allegedly going to set the fine at 30,000 rubles (\$331) instead.[74] Russian legislation surrounding force generation processes remains chaotic and disorganized.

Russian military authorities continue efforts to recruit ethnic minorities to fight in Ukraine. Russian opposition media outlet *SOTA* claimed that posters aimed at recruiting Uzbeks to sign contracts with the Russian MoD appeared in bus stations in Volgograd in July.[75] The posters, written in both Uzbek and Russian, offered monetary rewards and guaranteed Russian citizenship for those who signed MoD contracts.[76] *SOTA* claimed that Russian authorities told journalists that these posters were specifically targeting foreign citizens who frequent these bus routes and that there are plans to launch similar advertisements in other languages such as Tajik and Kazakh in the future.[77]

Russian authorities are reportedly exploiting student labor to increase the production of Iranian Shahed drones in Alabuga, Republic of Tatarstan. An investigation by Russian opposition outlet *Protokol* found that the Alabuga Polytechnic College in Tatarstan, Russia is forcing students to assemble Shahed drones.[78] *Protokol* previously reported that the Alabuga Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in the Republic of Tatarstan is the site of a factory where Shahed components supplied by Iran are assembled in Russia.[79]

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)

Ukrainian officials continue to reveal the involvement of Belarusian entities in the forced deportation of Ukrainian children. Ukrainian Prosecutor General Andriy Kostin reported on July 23 that the Belarusian Red Cross participated in the forced deportation of children from occupied Ukraine to Belarus.[80] ISW has previously reported that Belarusian officials, including Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko, are working with Russian officials to facilitate the deportation of Ukrainian children to Belarus.[81]

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).

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.

The Wagner Group continues to establish a permanent presence in Belarus. Independent Belarusian monitoring group The Hajun Project reported on July 24 that about 3,450 to 3,650 Wagner personnel are at the Wagner field camp in Tsel, Asipovichy, Mogilev Oblast. The Hajun Project also reported that 10 Wagner convoys consisting of 670 to 700 vehicles in total have arrived in Tsel since July 11 and that the most recent convoy arrived on July 23.[82] Ukrainian Main Intelligence Directorate (GUR) representative Vadym Skibitskyi reported on July 24 that the GUR continues to monitor Wagner activities and assesses that there is no direct threat to Ukraine from Belarus, which is consistent with ISW's assessments that Wagner forces in Belarus currently pose no military threat to Ukraine or NATO countries.[83]

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://t.me/MID_Russia/30103; https://t.me/mos_sobyanin/6176 ;
<https://t.me/bazabazon/19840>

[2] <https://t.me/svobodnieslova/2522>; https://t.me/istories_media/3134;
<https://twitter.com/RALee85/status/1683317302542884865?s=20> ; <https://t.me/izvestia/138009> ;
<https://t.me/milinfolive/104055> ; <https://t.me/izvestia/138005> ; <https://t.me/izvestia/138006> ;
<https://t.me/bazabazon/19840> ; https://t.me/dva_majors/21981; <https://t.me/bbcussian/49891>

[3] <https://t.me/astrapress/33277> ; <https://t.me/andriyshTime/11888> ; <https://t.me/rybar/50021>;
<https://t.me/rybar/50012>

- [4] <https://www.cnn.com/2023/07/23/europe/ukraine-russia-drone-attacks-hit-moscow-intl-hnk/index.html>
- [5] <https://t.me/zedigital/3416>
- [6] https://t.me/dva_majors/22045
- [7] <https://t.me/vysokygovorit/12336>; <https://t.me/mardanaka/15432>;
https://t.me/dva_majors/22045
- [8] https://t.me/MID_Russia/30103
- [9] <https://t.me/Aksenov82/2888>;
- [10] <https://t.me/rybar/50020>
- [11] <https://t.me/andriyshTime/11899> ; <https://t.me/andriyshTime/11897>
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<https://t.me/andriyshTime/11895>
- [12] <https://t.me/Aksenov82/2891> ; <https://t.me/Aks,enov82/2892>
- [13] <https://t.me/Aksenov82/2890>
- [14] https://t.me/dva_majors/21993
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