

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, June 23, 2023

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June 23, 2023, 8:45pm 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: Due to rapidly evolving events, the data cutoff for the portion of this update covering Prigozhin's actions was 6:00pm ET, while the cutoff for the rest of this product was 3:00pm ET on June 23. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the June 24 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, but events will likely have developed further between the drafting and publication of this update.

Wagner Group financier Yevgeny Prigozhin appears to have launched an armed rebellion on June 23 to force a leadership change within the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) which is unlikely to succeed. Prigozhin amplified a video from a Wagner-affiliated Telegram channel on June 23 which reportedly shows the aftermath of a missile strike on a rear-area Wagner camp and accused the Russian MoD of conducting that strike.[1] ISW cannot independently verify the veracity of the video, and it may have been manufactured for informational purposes. Prigozhin used the video to then justify his most explicit rhetorical escalation against the Russian MoD to date and a call for action against the Russian MoD. Prigozhin claimed that the Wagner Commanders' Council made the decision to stop "the evil brought by the military leadership" who neglect and destroy the lives of tens of thousands of Russian soldiers.[2] Prigozhin urged the Russian people not to resist, to remain calm, remain in their homes, and warned that Wagner will "deal" with those who destroyed Russian soldiers before returning to the frontlines in Ukraine after restoring justice for all. Prigozhin also notably accused Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu of personally planning an operation to destroy Wagner and claimed that 25,000 Wagner personnel are prepared to act.[3] Prigozhin later posted an audio message qualifying his previous statements and claiming that there is no "coup," only a "march for justice." [4]

Early reports following Prigozhin's statements suggest that Russian internal security forces are activating in response to Prigozhin's statements and possible Wagner moves, primarily in Moscow and Rostov, and the Kremlin appears opposed to Prigozhin's actions. Kremlin newswire *TASS* reported that security measures have been strengthened in Moscow and that Rosgvardia (Russian National Guard) special police (OMON) and special rapid response (SOBR) units have been alerted of the situation.[5] Russian sources posted footage reportedly showing military equipment moving through the streets of Moscow.[6] *TASS* also reported that Russian military personnel and law enforcement have set up military posts and checkpoints near the Southern Military District (SMD) headquarters in Rostov-on-Don, and *BBC's* Russia Service reported

that Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) employees and SOBR units have set up roadblocks along the Moscow-Voronezh-Rostov highway.[7] A Russian milblogger also claimed that the “Grom” special forces detachment of the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) has additionally activated.[8] The FSB and Russian Anti-Terrorism Committee have both opened cases against Prigozhin.[9] Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov notably stated that Russian President Vladimir Putin has been informed and is aware of the situation.[10] The emergency activation of the domestic security forces and the Kremlin’s direct response suggest that the Kremlin was very likely not aware of, and is explicitly opposed to, Prigozhin’s actions.

Prigozhin has established the informational conditions for this effort earlier in the day by accusing the Russian MoD and unnamed oligarchs of deceiving Putin and the Russian public in order to launch the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine. Prigozhin released an interview in which he stated that the Russian MoD intentionally deceived the Russian public and Putin about an impending Ukrainian offensive with NATO support in 2022 and about the increase in Ukrainian aggression before the start of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine.[11] Prigozhin asserted that the situation in eastern Ukraine on February 24, 2022, was no different than the previous eight years of hostilities.[12] Prigozhin suggested that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky was prepared to negotiate with the Kremlin but that the Russian leadership refused to abandon their maximalist positions.[13] Prigozhin accused the Russian military leadership of launching the full-scale invasion for self-promotion and claimed that Shoigu advocated for the invasion in order to achieve a higher rank and state awards.[14] Prigozhin accused Russia’s oligarchs of supporting the invasion of Ukraine for similar reasons of personal benefit. Prigozhin claimed that Russia’s oligarchs wanted the Kremlin to install former Ukrainian politician and Kremlin ally Viktor Medvedchuk as the new Ukrainian president after the removal of the Ukrainian government so that Medvedchuk would divide the assets of occupied Ukrainian territories between the oligarchs.[15] Prigozhin’s rejection of the justifications of the war is not a rejection of the war itself, as he argued that the fighting in Ukraine is a “holy war with those who offend the Russian people.”[16] Prigozhin’s attack on the Kremlin’s justifications of the war is likely meant to legitimize the potential removal of the Russian security and business elite from power without directing calling for an end to Putin’s war.

Prigozhin likely intends to truly conduct an armed rebellion against the Russian MoD, rather than expecting Kremlin support to compel MoD leadership changes or only escalating rhetorically. Prigozhin may have wildly miscalculated and called for an armed rebellion incorrectly thinking that he would have Putin’s backing, considering Putin’s past tenuous relationship with the MoD and Shoigu. This contingency is however extraordinarily unlikely, considering that Putin has recently more firmly aligned himself with the MoD, and the Kremlin’s responses to Prigozhin’s posturing thus far have indicated surprise and a lack of agreement with Prigozhin.[17] Prigozhin’s actions and statements may alternatively be a rhetorical overreach in his ongoing dispute with the MoD and his campaign to retain his wavering influence within the Russian information space following the culmination of Wagner’s Bakhmut effort. However, this contingency is also highly unlikely, as initial indicators of actual Wagner movements are observable and the Kremlin is not responding to Prigozhin’s statements as only rhetoric.

It is therefore most likely that Prigozhin fully intends for Wagner to move against MoD leadership and forcibly remove them from power, more likely against the Southern Military District command in Rostov-on-Don but possibly also against Moscow. ISW is

unable to confirm exactly where the bulk of Wagner forces are currently located, but it currently appears more likely that Prigozhin intends for Wagner to move on the MoD assets in Rostov. Following Wagner's withdrawal from Bakhmut in late May and early June, a large contingent of Wagner forces likely remained in rear areas of Ukraine, particularly in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, or else at Wagner's training facility near Molmino, Krasnodar Krai. Considering the relative proximity of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts and Krasnodar Krai to Rostov Oblast, the more likely course of action may be that Prigozhin views the MoD in Rostov as the most viable target of a Wagner armed rebellion. Prigozhin claimed at 0200 local time (1900 EST) that Wagner forces have crossed Russia's international border into Rostov Oblast and claimed they face no resistance, but ISW has not observed visual confirmed of any Wagner movements as of the time of this publication.[18]

An armed Wagner attack against the Russian military leadership in Rostov-on-Don would have significant impacts on Russia's war effort in Ukraine. Rostov-on-Don houses both the headquarters of the SMD, whose 58th Combined Arms Army is currently decisively engaged in defensive operations against Ukrainian counteroffensives in southern Ukraine, and the command center for the Russian Joint Group of Forces in Ukraine as a whole.[19] Rostov-on-Don is therefore a critical command and control membrane for the Russian army, and any threats to the MoD's presence are likely to have ramifications on some critical aspects of the war effort.

Prigozhin's apparent start of an armed rebellion is the culmination of his campaign to retain control over his military forces, and he likely views the rebellion as an existential survival effort. Prigozhin's largely independent control over Wagner forces has been the cornerstone of his campaign to become the central figure of the Russian ultranationalist movement.[20] Prigozhin has long overstepped existing norms within the Russian information space that limit criticism of Russian leadership because he likely believed the Kremlin's need for Wagner to fight in Ukraine shielded him from punishment.[21] Prigozhin primarily used Wagner's responsibility for tactical gains in and around Bakhmut to advocate for more influence and responsibility for himself and Wagner, and the effectiveness of this mode of self-promotion has likely declined since Wagner withdrew to rear areas following the capture of Bakhmut on May 21.[22] The MoD recently ordered Wagner personnel to sign MoD contracts in an effort to fully subordinate Wagner to the MoD, and likely did so to seize on the opportunity of Wagner's weakened relevance to Russian operations in Ukraine.[23]

The MoD's recent demands that Wagner fully subordinate itself to the MoD would entail Prigozhin losing control of his parallel military structure, and therefore both his main source of influence and his means for avoiding the consequences of his public self-promotion. The MoD reportedly gave Wagner an ultimatum between subordination to the MoD or the recognition of Wagner's continued operations on the frontlines as illegal.[24] Prigozhin may have attempted to negotiate continued independence for Wagner with his own contract outlining how Wagner and the MoD would coordinate continued Wagner operations, although the MoD outright rejected this possible attempt at negotiation.[25] Prigozhin likely reached a perceived crucial decision point between surrendering his independent armed forces and actively resisting the MoD, and appears to have chosen the latter. The severe consequences that would result from a failed armed rebellion suggest that Prigozhin viewed his alternatives to be just as threatening.

Prigozhin's likely intention was to gain the allegiance of senior Russian officers and military personnel, but he is unlikely to secure sufficient military support considering

that Wagner-affiliated Army General Sergei Surovikin denounced Prigozhin's call for armed rebellion. Prigozhin explicitly called for the entire Russian military and all of Russia to join Wagner in its effort to remove the Russian military leadership.[26] Prigozhin's longstanding calls for supplies and ammunition for Wagner indicate that Wagner likely does not have the necessary level of independent access to the materiel required to militarily depose the MoD leadership, and therefore MoD elements with their own supplies will need to support Wagner's armed rebellion if it has any real chance at lasting success.[27] The desired outcome of Prigozhin's armed rebellion also relies on senior Russian officers and military personnel recognizing the legitimacy of the supposedly new Russian military command that would follow any attempt at an armed rebellion. Prigozhin likely sought to rally military support for the effort earlier in the day by seizing on longstanding grievances about high Russian losses in Ukraine, accusing Shoigu and Gerasimov of sending tens of thousands of Russian personnel unnecessarily to their death and calling on Russia to hold Shoigu and Gerasimov responsible for the claimed deliberate "genocide" of Russian citizens.[28] Prigozhin has likely miscalculated the level of support for Wagner, as one of Wagner's most high-profile alleged allies, Surovikin, called on Wagner personnel to not follow Prigozhin's orders.[29] Wagner likely previously relied on its relationship with high-profile allies like Surovikin to retain access to supplies and its responsibility for operations in the Bakhmut area.[30] Surovikin's rejection represents a major blow to Wagner's ability to rally elements of the MoD to its cause, and other high-ranking officers with Wagner affiliations and sympathies are less likely to support Wagner given the public statement from a high-profile senior officer like Surovikin.

Even if the Wagner Group can credibly threaten the MoD, Putin is incredibly unlikely to acquiesce to a successful effort by Prigozhin to topple the MoD. Should Wagner be able to tangibly attack the MoD in Rostov, Moscow, or elsewhere, and actually force a change in the military leadership (which is as of this time highly unlikely due to the apparent lack of backing for Wagner amongst senior officers and military personnel), it is unlikely that Putin would accept this as an outcome. ISW has not observed any indications that Putin will accept such a change in MoD leadership. The violent overthrow of Putin loyalists like Shoigu and Gerasimov would cause irreparable damage to the stability of Putin's perceived hold on power, and Putin would be highly unlikely to accept any armed rebellion even if he supported the figures conducting it.

Ukrainian forces conducted counteroffensive operations on at least two sectors of the front on June 23. Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces continued limited attacks in the western Donetsk-eastern Zaporizhia Oblast border area and made marginal gains southwest of Velyka Novosilka.[31] The Ukrainian General Staff additionally reported that Ukrainian forces made gains in western Zaporizhia south of Orikhiv on the Novodanylivka-Robotyne line and southeast of Orikhiv on the Mala Tokmachka-Novofedorivka line.[32] Milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces broke through Russian defenses north of Robotyne and advanced to positions within 1.5km north of the settlement.[33]

Russian forces conducted another series of missile and drone strikes against Ukraine on June 23, primarily targeting a Ukrainian airfield in Khmelnytskyi Oblast. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces launched 14 Kh-101/555 cruise missiles from strategic aviation over the Caspian Sea, targeting Khmelnytskyi Oblast and the Khmelnytski airfield, and reported that Ukrainian forces shot down all of the missiles.[34] Satellite imagery published on June 22 shows that Russian forces deployed strategic aviation to an airfield near Mozdok, North

Ossetia as of May 24, and *Radio Liberty* reported that Russian strategic bombers that targeted Khmelnytskyi Oblast took off from this airfield.[35]

Key Takeaways

- **Wagner Group financier Yevgeny Prigozhin appears to have launched an armed rebellion on June 23 to force a leadership change within the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) which is unlikely to succeed.**
- **Early reports following Prigozhin's statements suggest that Russian internal security forces are activating in response to Prigozhin's statements and possible Wagner moves, primarily in Moscow and Rostov, and the Kremlin appears opposed to Prigozhin's actions.**
- **Prigozhin set informational conditions for this effort earlier in the day by accusing the Russian MoD and unnamed oligarchs of deceiving Putin and the Russian public in order to launch the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine.**
- **Prigozhin likely intends to truly conduct an armed rebellion against the Russian MoD, rather than expecting Kremlin support to compel MoD leadership changes or only escalating rhetorically.**
- **It is therefore most likely that Prigozhin fully intends for Wagner to move against MoD leadership and forcibly remove them from power, more likely against the Southern Military District command in Rostov-on-Don but possibly also against Moscow.**
- **An armed Wagner attack against the Russian military leadership in Rostov-on-Don would have significant impacts on Russia's war effort in Ukraine.**
- **Prigozhin's apparent start of an armed rebellion is the culmination of his campaign to retain control over his military forces, and he likely views the rebellion as an existential survival effort.**
- **Prigozhin's likely intention was to gain the allegiance of senior Russian officers and military personnel, but he is unlikely to secure sufficient military support considering that Wagner-affiliated Army General Sergei Surovikin denounced Prigozhin's call for armed rebellion.**
- **Even if the Wagner Group can credibly threaten the MoD, Putin is incredibly unlikely to acquiesce to a successful effort by Prigozhin to topple the MoD.**
- **Ukrainian forces conducted counteroffensive operations on at least two sectors of the front on June 23.**
- **Russian forces conducted another series of missile and drone strikes against Ukraine on June 23, primarily targeting a Ukrainian airfield in Khmelnytskyi Oblast.**
- **Russian forces continued to conduct limited ground attacks in the Kupyansk area, and Russian and Ukrainian forces continued to skirmish south of Kreminna.**
- **Russian forces did not conduct any confirmed ground attacks in the Bakhmut area.**
- **Russian and Ukrainian forces continued limited offensive operations along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City front.**

- **Russian and Ukrainian forces continued ground attacks in the western Donetsk-eastern Zaporizhia Oblast border area.**
- **Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast.**
- **Russian federal subjects and the Wagner Group continue efforts to conceal the true scale of Russian and Wagner losses in Ukraine.**
- **Ukrainian officials reported that Russian and occupation administrations continue to disregard the lives of Ukrainian civilians in occupied territories.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of June 23, 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

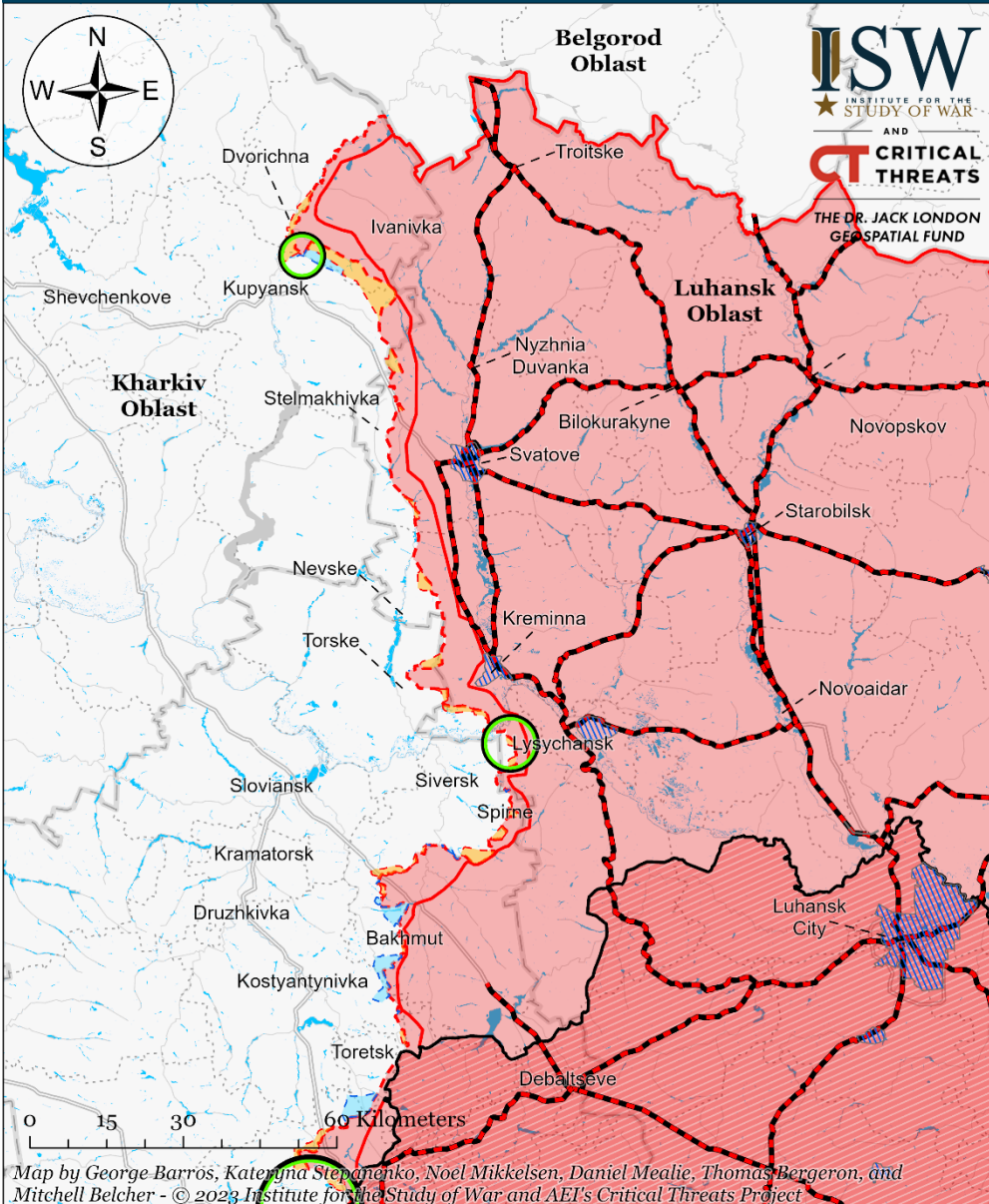
Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

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 to conduct limited ground attacks in the Kupyansk area on June 23. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful offensive operations near Synkivka (8km northeast of Kupyansk).[36] Some Russian sources claimed that Russian forces advanced west of Synkivka and established a small bridgehead on the west (right) bank of the Oskil River, but ISW is unable to confirm this claim.[37] Ukrainian Eastern Group of Forces Spokesperson Colonel Serhiy Cherevaty stated that Russian and Ukrainian forces only participated in two engagements in the Kupyansk direction and that Russian forces have lost the initiative in the area.[38]

Russian and Ukrainian forces continued to skirmish south of Kreminna on June 23. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful offensive actions near Bilohorivka (12km southwest of Kreminna).[39] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces made marginal advances west of Kreminna and in Bilohorivka, and that Russian forces entrenched themselves near Spirne (25km south of Kreminna).[40] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces attacked near Kreminna on June 22 and Shyplivka (9km south of Kreminna) on June 23.[41]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of June 23, 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

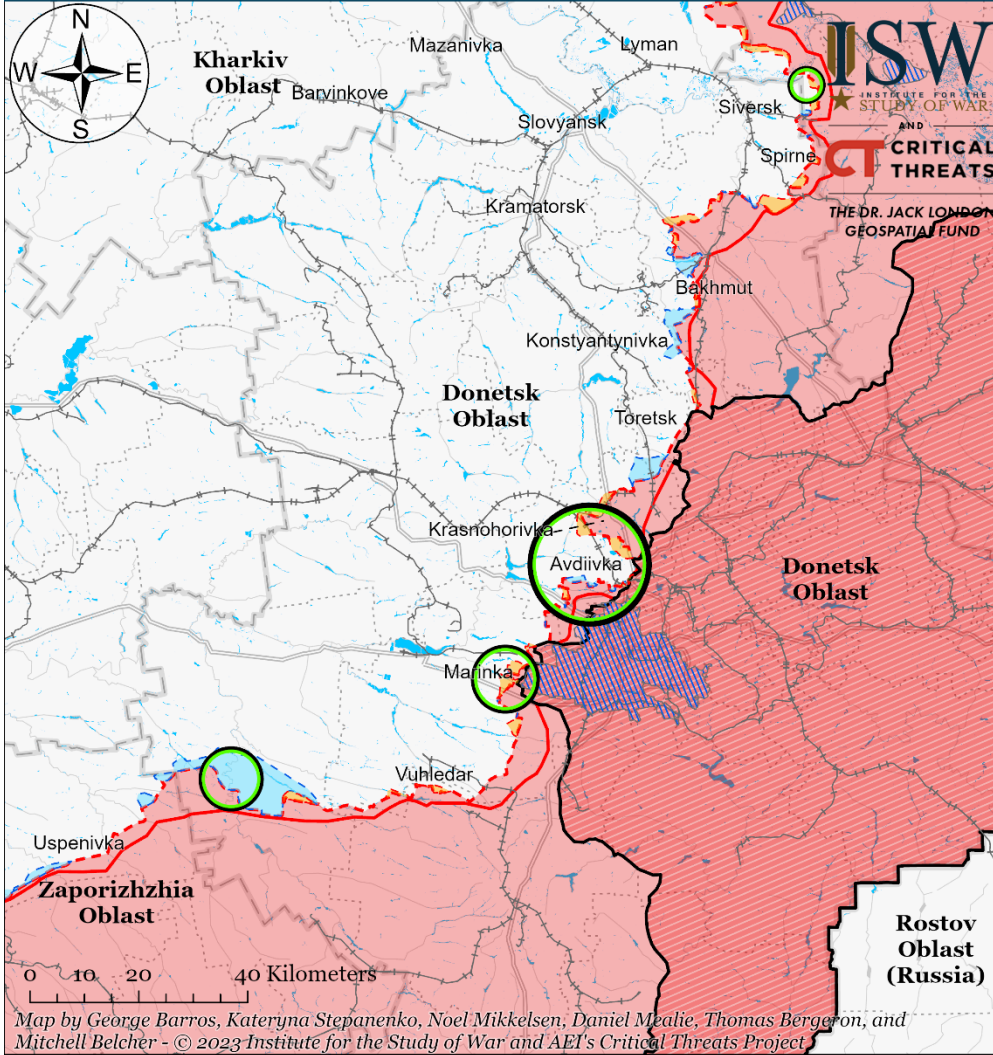
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

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

Russian forces did not conduct any confirmed ground attacks in the Bakhmut area on June 23.^[42] Ukrainian Eastern Group of Forces Spokesperson Colonel Serhiy Cherevaty reported that there were no combat engagements in the Bakhmut direction and that Russian and Ukrainian forces continued mutual counter-battery fire in the area.^[43] Satellite imagery published on June 22 indicates that Russian forces have constructed new fortifications near Semyhiria (16km southeast of Bakhmut) since May 18.^[44]

Russian and Ukrainian forces continued limited offensive operations along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City front on June 23. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful offensive operations near Avdiivka, Sieverne (6km west of Avdiivka), Marinka (27km southwest of Avdiivka), Pobieda (32km southwest of Avdiivka), and Novomykhailivka (36km southwest of Avdiivka).^[45] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces achieved unspecified successes near Avdiivka and also conducted offensive operations near Pervomaiske (11km southwest of Avdiivka) and Novomykhailivka.^[46] Another milblogger claimed that Russian forces made marginal advances southeast of Krasnohorivka (22km southwest of Avdiivka) between June 21 and June 22.^[47] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked near Staromykahilivka (18km southwest of Avdiivka) and captured unspecified positions.^[48] Combat footage published on June 21 reportedly shows Ukrainian forces attacking Russian positions southeast of Krasnohorivka.^[49]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of June 23, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

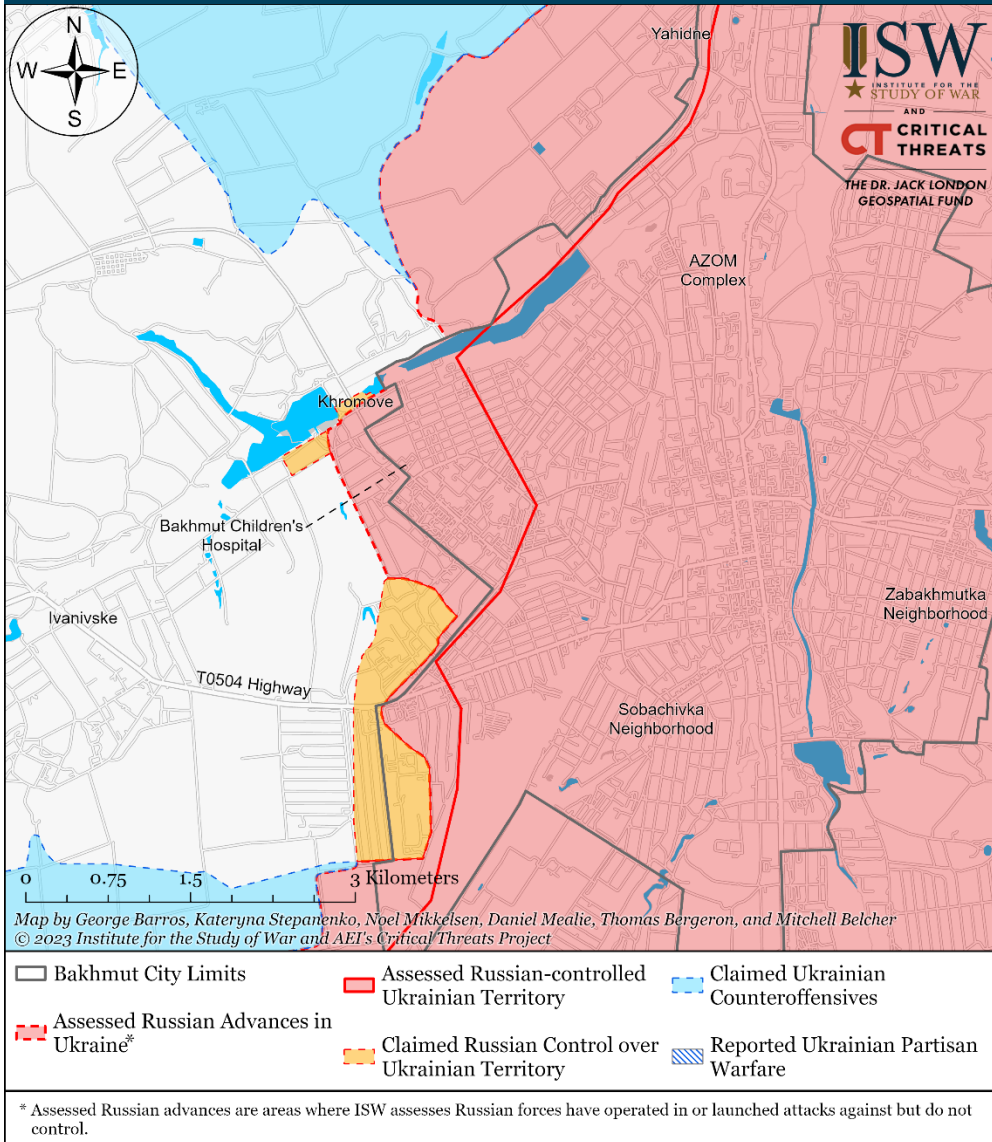


- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- + Major Railroads
- 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 Tavriisk Operational Direction Spokesperson Valerii Shershen reported on June 22 that Ukrainian forces advanced one kilometer in the direction of Berdyansk over the last 24 hours. ISW cannot assess the exact areas of advances at this time due to a lack of sufficient evidence.

Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of June 23, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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

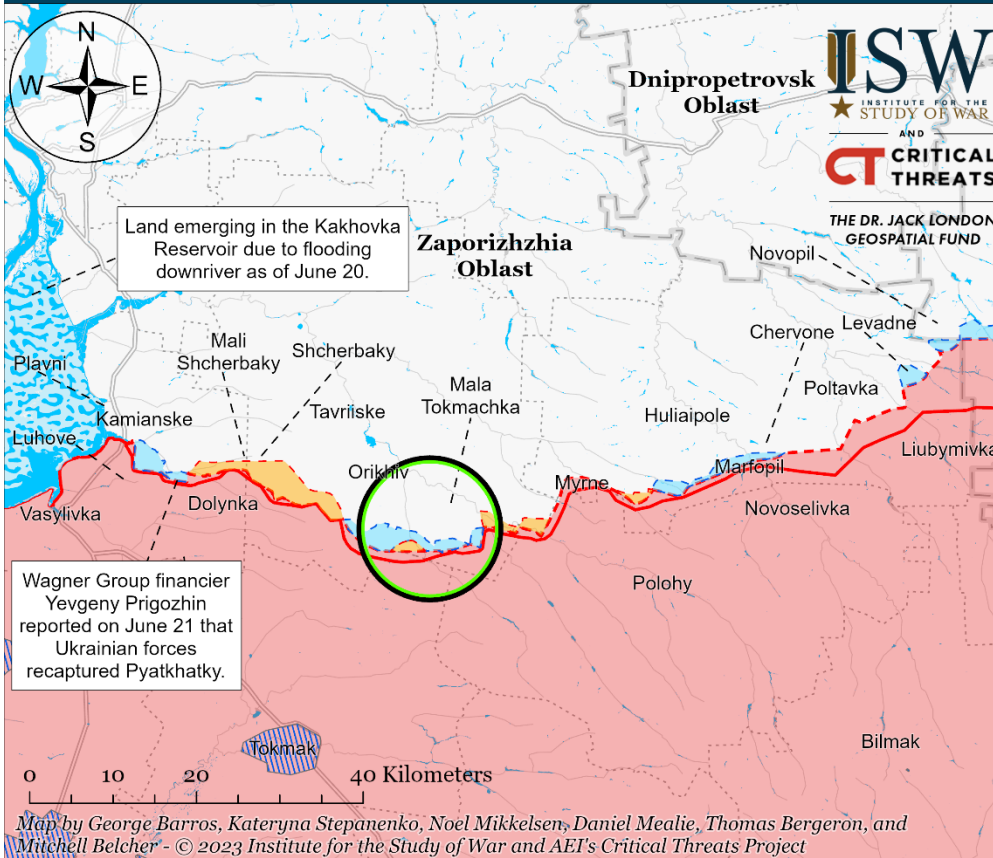
Russian and Ukrainian forces continued ground attacks in the western Donetsk-eastern Zaporizhia Oblast border area on June 23. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces attempted to recapture lost positions near Makarivka, Donetsk Oblast (about 7km south of Velyka Novosilka).[50] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Russian forces repelled three Ukrainian attacks in this area.[51] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces along the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border attempted to attack along the Levadne-Priyutne line (about 15km southwest of Velyka Novosilka) and had some success near Rivnopil (10km southwest of Velyka

Novosilka).[52] The Russian MoD and a Russian milblogger confirmed that Russian forces maintain control over Urozhaine (9km due south of Velyka Novosilka).[53] Russian milbloggers indicated that elements of the 336th Naval Infantry Brigade (Baltic Fleet) and unspecified Eastern Group of Forces units are fighting in this area.[54]

Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast on June 23. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian troops had partial success on the Novodanylivka-Robotyne line (just south of Orikhiv) and the Mala Tokmachka-Novofedorivka line (just southeast of Orikhiv).[55] The Ukrainian General Staff also stated that Russian forces deployed reserves to the Orikhiv area to defend against Ukrainian advances.[56] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces launched an attack on the Novodanylivka-Robotyne line, broke through towards Russian defensive lines, and advanced up to 1.5km in the Robotyne direction.[57] Russian sources claimed that elements of the 810th Naval Infantry Brigade (Black Sea Fleet) and the 70th, 71st, and 291st Motorized Rifle Regiments of the 42nd Motorized Rifle Division (58th Combined Arms Army, Southern Military District) are defending the area north of Robotyne.[58] Russian milbloggers also claimed that positional fighting continued near Pyatykhatkhy (southwest of Orikhiv).[59]

Ukrainian forces continued strikes on Russian rear areas in southern Ukraine on June 23. Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian troops launched four Storm Shadow missiles at a Russian concentration area, reportedly a Rosgvardia base, in Henichesk, Kherson Oblast, about 175km southeast of Kherson City.[60] Kherson Oblast occupation head Vladimir Saldo additionally stated on June 23 that the June 22 Ukrainian strike on the Chonhar Bridge (along the E105 highway connecting Russian-occupied Kherson Oblast and Crimea) was much worse than initially reported and that it will take 15 to 20 days for the bridge to reopen for traffic.[61] Satellite imagery posted on June 23 additionally shows that Russian forces have begun constructing pontoon bridges under the Chonhar Bridge.[62]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhia as of June 23, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



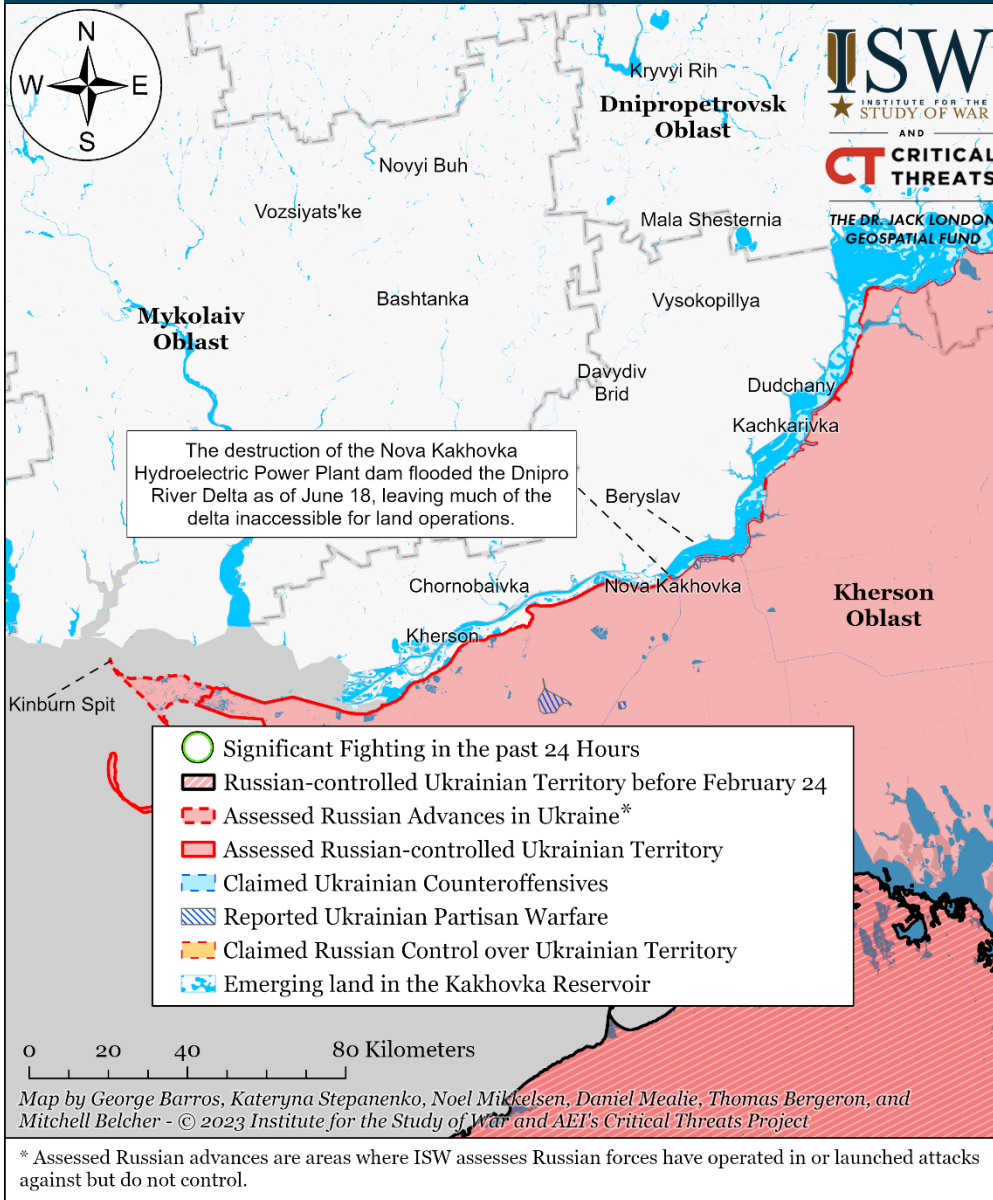
Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, and Mitchell Belcher - © 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-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 Tavriisk Operational Direction Spokesperson Valerii Shershen reported on June 22 that Ukrainian forces advanced one kilometer in the direction of Melitopol over the last 24 hours. ISW cannot assess the exact areas of advances at this time due to a lack of sufficient evidence.

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of June 23, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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

Russian federal subjects and the Wagner Group continue efforts to conceal the true scale of Russian and Wagner losses in Ukraine. Russian opposition media outlet *Verstka* reported that authorities of at least 16 Russian federal subjects ceased publishing the obituaries of Russian soldiers killed in Ukraine, seven federal subjects never published consistent obituaries for war dead, and 19 federal subjects never published obituaries.[63] *Bloomberg* reported on June 22, citing data from the Bank of

Russia, that Wagner Group is paying death gratuities to Wagner personnel's families in cash, likely in an attempt to conceal the true amount Wagner has paid.[64] *Bloomberg* noted that Wagner has paid so many death gratuities that the cash turnover in Russia within the past 10 months exceeded pre-war forecasts by 2.2 trillion rubles (roughly \$25.9 million).

Russian authorities continue to resurrect old Russian formations, form new volunteer formations, and formalize volunteer formations. A Russian milblogger claimed that Khabarovsk Krai formed two new volunteer artillery battalions, the "Yerofey Khabarov" and the "Mazim Passar," in addition to the previously formed "General Korf" battalion.[65] The milblogger claimed that the new battalion members will receive salaries of 300,000 rubles.[66] The Russian MoD continues to claim its efforts to formalize volunteer formations are progressing as intended.[67] Russian sources amplified footage indicating that the Russian 383rd "Miners" Rifle Division, which was originally formed during World War II and disbanded following the war's end, has been resurrected and is now operating in Ukraine.[68]

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 reported that Russian and occupation administrations continue to disregard the lives of Ukrainian civilians in occupied territories. The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported that the Russian occupation administrations detained over 600 Ukrainians from Debaltseve and Dokuchaevsk, Donetsk Oblast, and Starobilsk, Luhansk Oblast in "distribution camps" prior to deporting them to Rostov Oblast.[69] Ukrainian Luhansk Oblast Military Administration Head Artem Lusohor reported that Russian soldiers forced Ukrainian civilians to quarter them in their homes in order to use the civilians as "human shields." [70] The Ukrainian Resistance Center also reported that occupied Mariupol is approaching an epidemiological disaster due to unsanitary conditions.[71] Ukrainian Mariupol Mayor Vadym Boychenko warned on June 23 that tens of thousands of citizens might die from dysentery and cholera due to the accumulation of garbage, sewage, and corpses in the city and noted that the occupation administration has done nothing to address the issue.[72] Russian occupation forces have consistently prioritized the medical care of Russian military personnel over the medical care and well-being of Ukrainian civilians, as ISW has recently reported.[73]

Russian and occupation authorities continue to announce new infrastructure and economic development projects in occupied territories. The Kherson Oblast Occupation Minister of Economic Development Konstantin Kostin and Chairman of the Board of Avtodor Vyacheslav Petushenko discussed restoring and constructing roads in occupied Kherson Oblast, likely part of an ongoing effort to strengthen Russian ground lines of communication (GLOCs) to occupied areas.[74] Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) Head Leonid Pasechnik announced that the Russian federal government provided funding and leased agricultural equipment to local farmers and transferred "unowned" land to local councils in order to lease it to farmers.[75]

A Ukrainian partisan movement claimed responsibility for attacking a Russian military asset in occupied Ukraine. A Ukrainian partisan movement claimed that one of its agents within the Russian military set fire to a Russian R-161 mobile communications complex on fire in Kherson Oblast on June 22.[76]

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

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.

Nothing significant to report.

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/Prigozhin_hat/3797 ; https://t.me/concordgroup_official/1283; https://t.me/razgruzka_vagnera/169

[2] https://t.me/Prigozhin_hat/3798 ; https://t.me/Prigozhin_hat/3799 ; https://t.me/Prigozhin_hat/3801 ; https://t.me/Prigozhin_hat/3800 ; https://t.me/Prigozhin_hat/3802 ; <https://twitter.com/wartranslated/status/1672314259907158028>; <https://twitter.com/wartranslated/status/1672316037428027401>

[3] https://t.me/Prigozhin_hat/3798 ; https://t.me/Prigozhin_hat/3799 ; https://t.me/Prigozhin_hat/3801 ; https://t.me/Prigozhin_hat/3800 ; https://t.me/Prigozhin_hat/3802 ; <https://twitter.com/wartranslated/status/1672314259907158028>; <https://twitter.com/wartranslated/status/1672316037428027401>

[4] https://t.me/concordgroup_official/1289

[5] <https://tass dot ru/proisshestiya/18103225>; <https://t.me/rybar/48861>; https://t.me/dva_majors/18643; <https://t.me/arat/1600>; <https://t.me/rybar/48860>; <https://t.me/rybar/48859>

[6] <https://t.me/rusbrief/129037>; <https://t.me/rusbrief/129033>; https://t.me/boris_rozhin/90025

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