

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, May 27, 2023

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May 27, 2023, 6:30pm 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 May 27. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the May 28 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Wagner Group mercenaries appear to be withdrawing from Bakhmut city to reconstitute and regroup in the rear as Russian offensive operations decrease in and around the city. Ukrainian military officials reported that Russian offensive operations had dramatically decreased to two skirmishes in the Bakhmut direction, and Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Malyar attributed this decrease to the Russian relief-in-place and regrouping of forces in the area.^[1] The Ukrainian General Staff reported on May 27 that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful offensive operations west of Khromove (immediately west of Bakhmut) and in the direction of Predtechyne (15km southwest of Bakhmut).^[2] Malyar stated that Ukrainian forces hold dominant elevated positions north and south of Bakhmut and that Ukrainian forces stopped combat operations on May 26 and 27 to fulfill other unspecified tasks.^[3] Malyar also stated that Ukrainian forces continue to control positions in the southwestern outskirts of Bakhmut City.^[4] A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces are not conducting active operations aimed at regaining positions in Bakhmut City itself despite the possible continuation of localized Ukrainian counterattacks northwest and southwest of the city.^[5]

Ukrainian National Security and Defense Council Secretary Oleksiy Danilov stated that Wagner mercenaries are withdrawing from the city of Bakhmut and are “regrouping to another three locations.”^[6] Wagner Group financier Yevgeny Prigozhin reiterated that Wagner forces continued to withdraw from Bakhmut city on May 27.^[7] Prigozhin's statements are likely true given the decrease in Russian offensive capabilities around Bakhmut and Ukrainian statements regarding the situation in Bakhmut.

The Russian military command may be transferring Donetsk People's Republic's (DNR) forces to relieve Wagner Group forces in Bakhmut city. The UK Ministry of Defense (MoD) assessed that the Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) forces have likely entered Bakhmut city as of May 24 and begun clearing operations.^[8] ISW previously observed elements of the 132nd Separate Guard Motorized Rifle Brigade of the DNR's 1st Army Corps operating in the Bakhmut direction after previously fighting in the Avdiivka area.^[9] It is unclear at this time if elements of the 132nd Brigade are operating inside of the city, but DNR Head Denis Pushilin previously raised the DNR flag in Bakhmut - which likely indicates that the DNR forces are assuming control over Bakhmut.^[10] Pushilin also indicated that DNR elements were clearing the city as of May 23.^[11]

The Russian transfer of DNR elements to Bakhmut may decrease the tempo of Russian offensive operations on the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line. ISW previously assessed that the Russian military command has heavily committed a variety of DNR elements to the Avdiivka-Donetsk City frontline.[12] Russian attacks around Avdiivka-Donetsk City area appear to have been decreasing in recent days, which may be connected to the transfer of DNR forces to Bakhmut. The Ukrainian General Staff reported on May 27 that Russian forces conducted 13 combat operations in eastern Ukraine, of which seven attacks were in the Marinka area (about 19km west from Donetsk City).[13] The Ukrainian General Staff previously reported that Russian forces attacked 20 times in Marinka alone on the day Wagner forces declared victory over Bakhmut on May 20.[14] The Russian offensives around Avdiivka have been steadily decreasing since at least April 8 after the Russian military command attempted to intensify offensive operations near the settlement in mid-March, and the transfer of DNR units to Bakhmut may further slow Russian efforts on the Avdiivka-Donetsk City frontline.[15] The Russian military command may be transferring DNR units operating in the well-defended Avdiivka-Donetsk City area to avoid making other directions vulnerable or to ensure quick reinforcements for Bakhmut city.

The Russian military command appears to be reinforcing Bakhmut's flanks with regular formations, however. The UK MoD assessed that elements of the 31st Brigade of the Russian Airborne Forces (VDV) have likely transferred from the Svatove-Kreminna line to reinforce Bakhmut's flanks in recent weeks.[16] Ukrainian military officials previously reported that Russian forces are transferring unspecified VDV, motorized rifle, and special forces units to the Bakhmut direction after successful Ukrainian counterattacks on Bakhmut's flanks.[17] ISW also observed Cossack units operating in Soledar, although these units likely were previously operating in the area.[18]

Former Russian officer and ardent nationalist Igor Girkin accused Wagner Group financier Yevgeny Prigozhin of planning a coup against the current Russian leadership. Girkin openly accused Prigozhin of planning to conduct a coup amid the upcoming Ukrainian counteroffensive and of continuously violating Russian censorship laws against the discreditation of the Russian army and military command.[19] Girkin warned of "mutiny" if Prigozhin is "allowed" to lead the Wagner Group. Girkin noted that Prigozhin ordered for the Wagner forces to withdraw to the Wagner bases deep inside of Russia on the eve of the Ukrainian counteroffensive. He also claimed that Wagner personnel had never taken oaths promising not to engage in combat against Russia or its military.[20] Prigozhin stated on May 27 that Wagner will decide later on if it will fight in Ukraine or in another country, which indicates that Prigozhin retains the ability to command his own army outside of the formal Russian military command structure.[21] Girkin also recently criticized the Russian military command for failing to address Prigozhin's open and vulgar conflict with the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD), even warning that Prigozhin will "devour" the Russian military officials who "bet" in his favor as he seeks to increase his political power.[22] A member of Girkin's Angry Patriots Club claimed that the conflict between Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu and Prigozhin is developing into a conflict between the Russian military and Wagner forces but that Putin is not paying attention.[23] Girkin's and his associates' criticisms are largely consistent with Prigozhin's continued prioritization of his own personal aims over those of the Russian Ministry of Defense and the broader operational situation near Bakhmut.[24] Prigozhin's decision to withdraw his forces from Bakhmut and, apparently, from active combat on the eve of the Ukrainian counter-offensive is strategically questionable.

Ukrainian officials denied Western reporting that suggested that a Chinese diplomat expressed interest in a negotiated ceasefire in Ukraine amidst the likely renewal of Russia’s information campaign surrounding negotiations. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba stated on May 27 that he contacted his European counterparts who recently met with Chinese Special Representative for Eurasian Affairs Li Hui and that they denied that Li had expressed interest in a ceasefire that would see Russia retain control of occupied territories, as a May 26 *Wall Street Journal* report suggested.[25] Li Hui visited Moscow on May 26 reportedly to discuss a negotiated settlement to Russia’s war in Ukraine, a visit that the Kremlin likely used to attempt to renew a recurring information operation falsely claiming that Russia is open to serious negotiations.[26] The Kremlin previously intensified this information operation in December 2022 to attempt to delay the provision of Western tanks and other advanced military equipment to Ukraine in order to set conditions for Russia’s 2023 winter-spring offensive.[27] The Kremlin is likely reintroducing the information operation intending to weaken Western willingness to send critical security assistance to Ukraine ahead of potential Ukrainian counteroffensive operations.

The Kremlin has established a pattern in this information operation in which some Russian officials express feigned interest in negotiations while other Russian officials simultaneously reiterate Putin’s maximalist goals for the war in Ukraine.[28] Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Galuzin stated on May 26 that the conditions for a “comprehensive, just and lasting peace” in Ukraine include the cessation of hostilities by Ukrainian forces, the end of Western security assistance to Ukraine, the Ukrainian return to a “neutral non-aligned status,” the explicit Ukrainian refusal to join NATO and the EU, and the recognition of Russia’s annexation of occupied territories in Ukraine.[29] Galuzin’s reiteration of Russia’s maximalist objectives coincide with Putin’s alleged expression of Russian interest in negotiations during a phone call with Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula de Silva on May 26.[30]

Key Takeaways

- **Wagner Group mercenaries appear to be withdrawing from Bakhmut city to reconstitute and regroup in the rear as Russian offensive operations decrease in and around the city.**
- **The Russian military command may be transferring Donetsk People’s Republic’s (DNR) forces to relieve Wagner Group forces in Bakhmut city.**
- **The Russian transfer of DNR elements to Bakhmut may decrease the tempo of Russian offensive operations on the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line.**
- **The Russian military command appears to be reinforcing Bakhmut’s flanks with regular formations, however.**
- **Former Russian officer and ardent nationalist Igor Girkin accused Wagner Group financier Yevgeny Prigozhin of planning a coup against the current Russian leadership.**
- **Ukrainian officials denied Western reporting that suggested that a Chinese diplomat expressed interest in a negotiated ceasefire in Ukraine amidst the likely renewal of Russia’s information campaign surrounding negotiations.**
- **Russian forces continued limited offensive operations northeast of Kupyansk and south of Kreminna.**
- **Russian forces continued to launch unsuccessful offensive operations on the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line.**

- **Ukrainian forces continued to strike rear logistics nodes in southern Zaporizhia oblast.**
- **The Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) warned on May 26 that Russian forces are preparing to conduct large scale provocations to create radiological danger at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP).**
- **The Russian Ministry of Justice registered the civil society group “Council of Mothers of Wives” as a foreign agent on May 26, likely to curb resistance to ongoing and future Russian force generation efforts.**
- **Russian authorities are escalating efforts to portray Russia as a safe guardian of Ukrainian children.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of May 27, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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

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

Note: The Ukrainian counteroffensive layer displays areas previously assigned to the Russian control, Russian advances, or Russian claims layers where ISW now assesses that Ukrainian forces have established a presence beyond a short-term raid. Inclusion of an area on this layer does not imply that ISW assesses that the area is part of any upcoming Ukrainian counteroffensive operation.

We do not report in detail on Russian war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We will continue to evaluate and report on the effects of these criminal activities on the Ukrainian military and the Ukrainian population and

specifically on combat in Ukrainian urban areas. We utterly condemn these Russian violations of the laws of armed conflict, Geneva Conventions, and humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

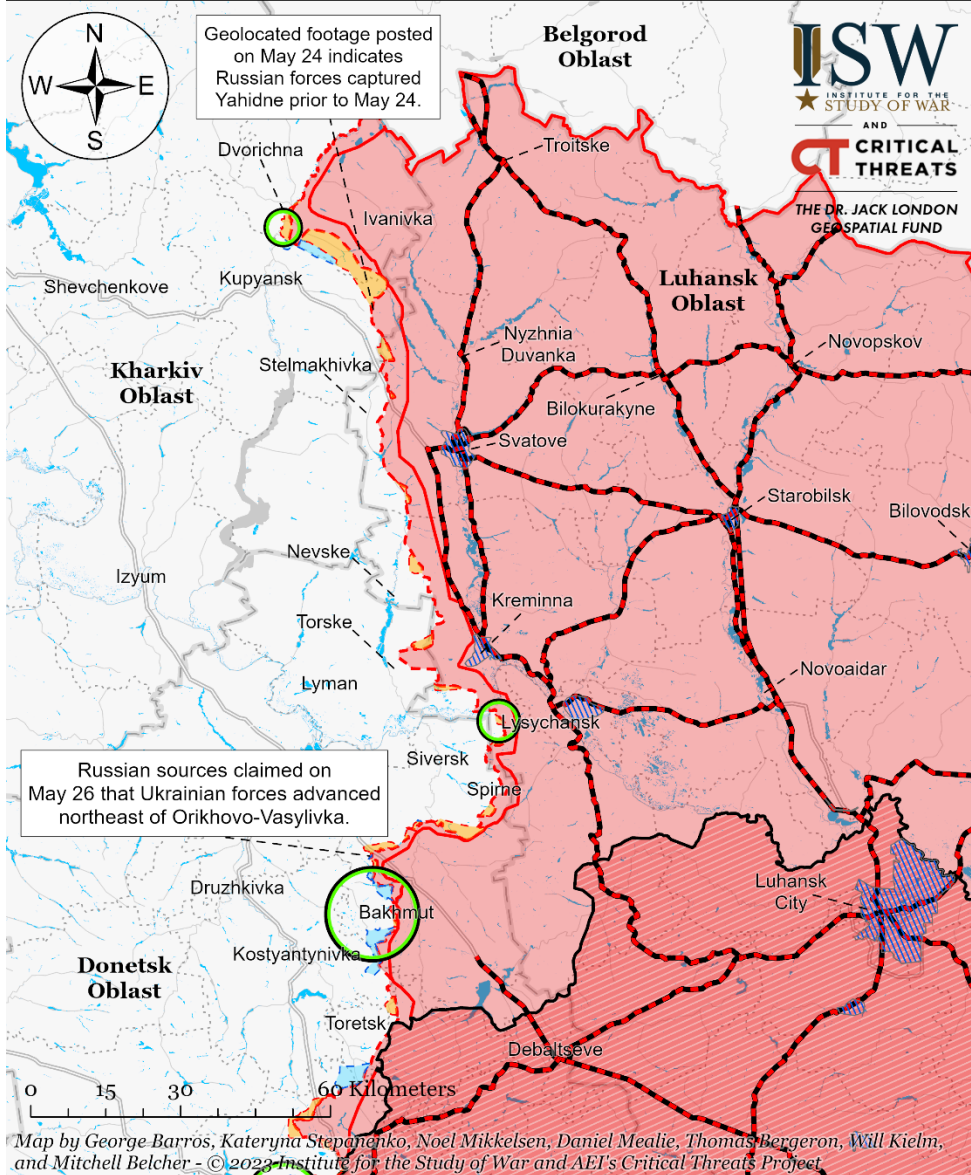
- Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine (comprised of two subordinate main efforts)
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and encircle northern Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis
- Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts
- Activities in Russian-occupied areas

Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

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

Russian forces continued limited offensive operations northeast of Kupyansk and south of Kreminna on May 27. Geolocated footage published on May 26 indicates that Russian forces likely advanced northwest of Bilohorivka, Luhansk Oblast (12km south of Kreminna).[31] The Ukrainian General Staff reported on May 27 that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful offensive operations near Bilohorivka and Masyutivka, Kharkiv Oblast (13km northeast of Kupyansk).[32] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces recaptured several recently lost positions southeast of Bilohorivka, although ISW has not observed visual confirmation of this claim.[33] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced up to two kilometers from Masyutivka, although ISW has not seen visual confirmation of these advances nor confirmation that Russian forces control Masyutivka.[34] The milblogger claimed that fighting is ongoing near Dvorichna (16km northeast of Kupyansk) and Synkivka (8km northeast of Kupyansk).[35] Russian Western Grouping of Forces (Western Military District) Spokesperson Sergey Zybinsky claimed that Russian forces also conducted offensive operations near Movchanove (10km northeast of Kupyansk) and destroyed a Ukrainian platoon in the area.[36]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of May 27, 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: The Ukrainian counteroffensive layer displays areas previously assigned to the Russian control, Russian advances, or Russian claims layers where ISW now assesses that Ukrainian forces have established a presence beyond a short-term raid. Inclusion of an area on this layer does not imply that ISW assesses that the area is part of any upcoming Ukrainian counteroffensive operation.

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

Click here to read ISW’s new retrospective analysis on the Battle for Bakhmut.

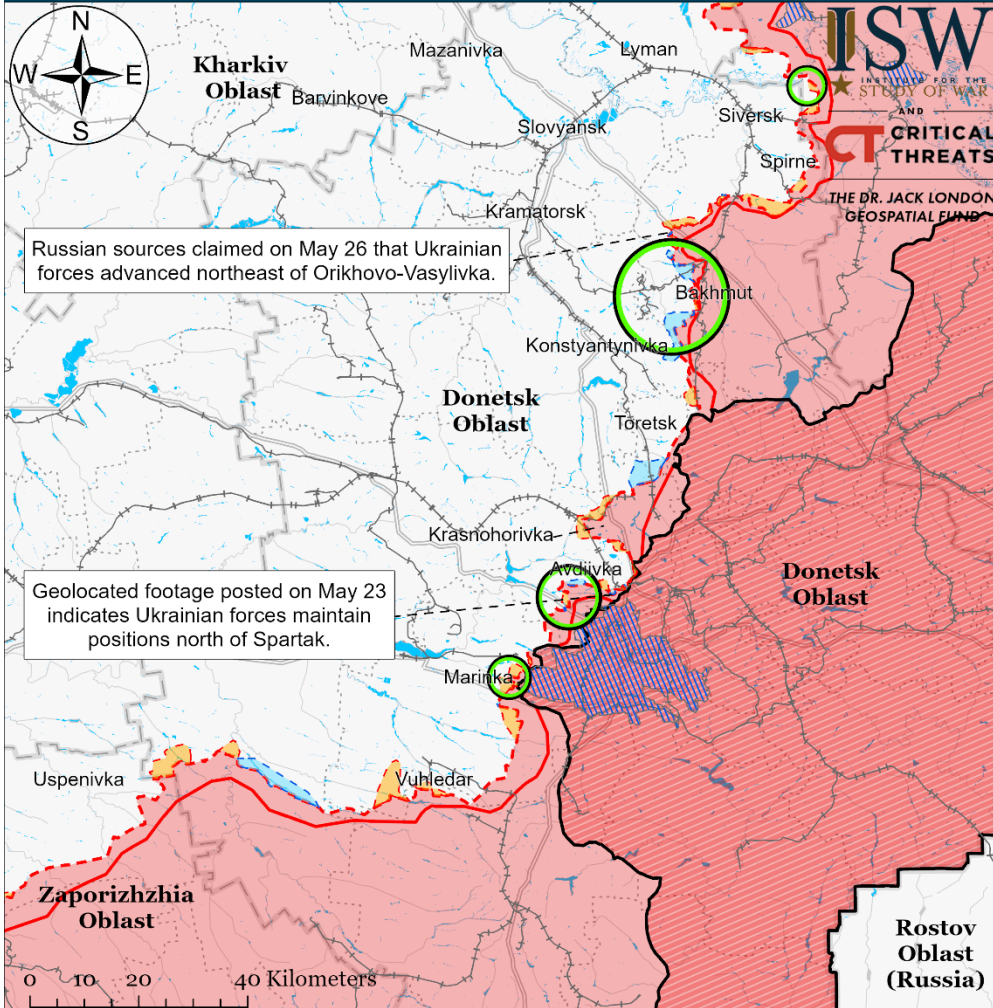
See topline text for Bakhmut.

Russian forces continued to launch unsuccessful offensive operations on the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line on May 27. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian assaults on Pervomaiske and Sieverne within 12km west of Avdiivka, and seven attacks on Marinka (about 20km southwest of Donetsk City).[37] A Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed that Russian forces conducted a reconnaissance-in-force in the Novokalynove direction (about 12km north of Avdiivka) from Krasnohorivka (approximately 9km north of Avdiivka).[38] The milblogger also claimed that Russian forces repelled a Ukrainian counterattack across the H20 highway from Novokalynove. Another Kremlin-affiliated milblogger stated that Russian forces are continuing assaults in Marinka and unsuccessfully conducted offensive operations in Krasnohorivka (about 19km west from Donetsk City).[39] The Donetsk People’s Republic claimed that the 10th Separate Tank Battalion of the 1st Army Corps is operating in the Avdiivka direction.[40] Russian sources also indicated that elements of the 110th Separate Guards Motorized Rifle Brigade (formerly the 100th Brigade, 1st Army Corps) are operating in the Nevelske direction (approximately 18km northwest of Donetsk City).[41]

Russian forces did not conduct offensive operations southwest of Donetsk City on May 27 and continued launching artillery and air strikes at Ukrainian positions in the area.[42] A Russian milblogger amplified video footage reportedly showing elements of the Russian 37th Separate Guards Motor Rifle Brigade of the 36th Combined Arms Army (Eastern Military District) shelling Ukrainian positions in the Vuhledar direction.[43] The Ukrainian General Staff retroactively reported that unspecified Russian airborne units participated in an attack on Vuhledar in February 2023 and suffered heavy losses.[44]

Russian sources amplified footage on May 26 purporting to show the aftermath of a Ukrainian strike at the Azovstal Metallurgical Combine in Mariupol with two long-range missiles.[45] Russian sources also claimed that Russian air defenses shot down one of the two missiles.[46]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of May 27, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



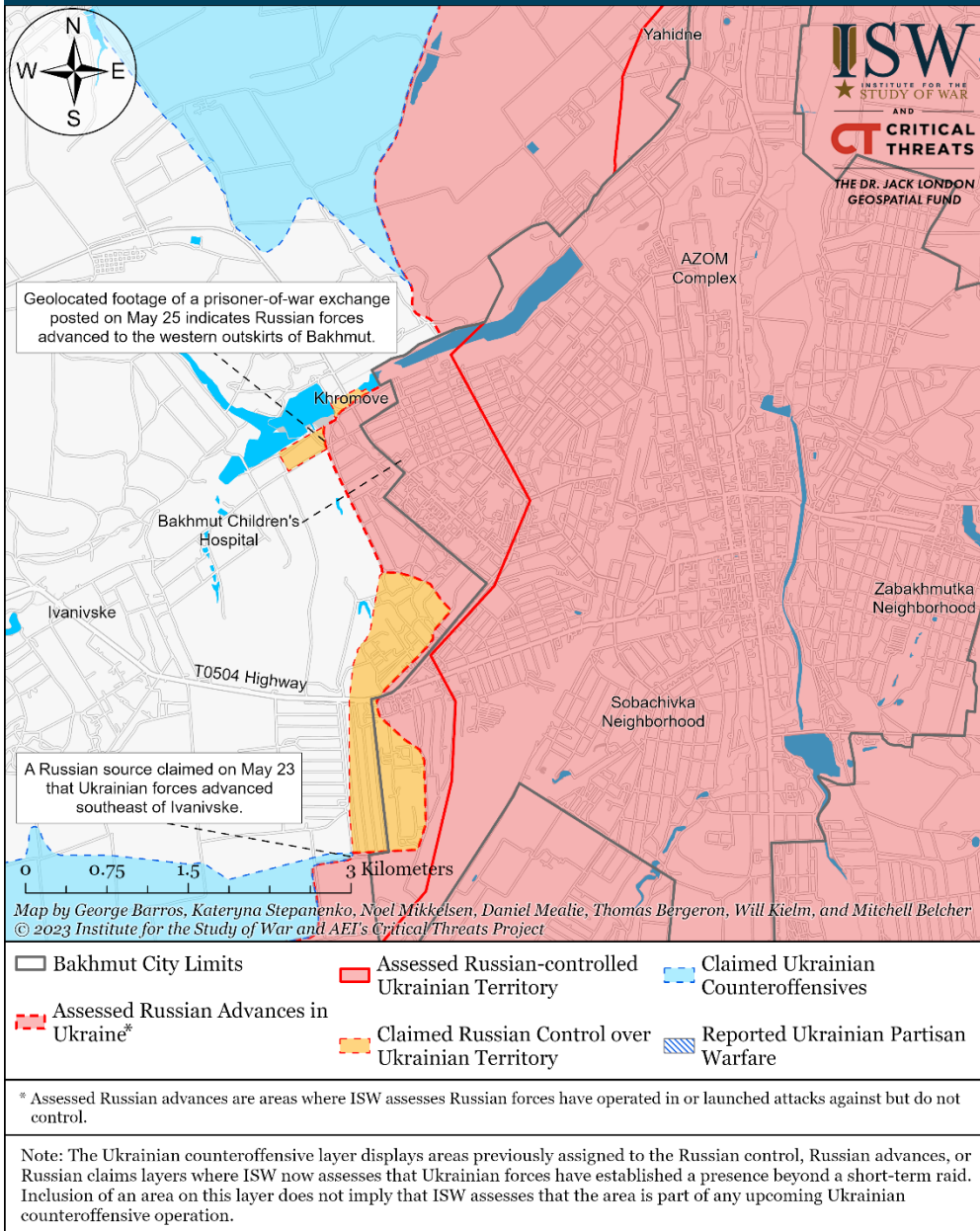
Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Will Kielm, and Mitchell Belcher - © 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- 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: The Ukrainian counteroffensive layer displays areas previously assigned to the Russian control, Russian advances, or Russian claims layers where ISW now assesses that Ukrainian forces have established a presence beyond a short-term raid. Inclusion of an area on this layer does not imply that ISW assesses that the area is part of any upcoming Ukrainian counteroffensive operation.

Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of May 27, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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

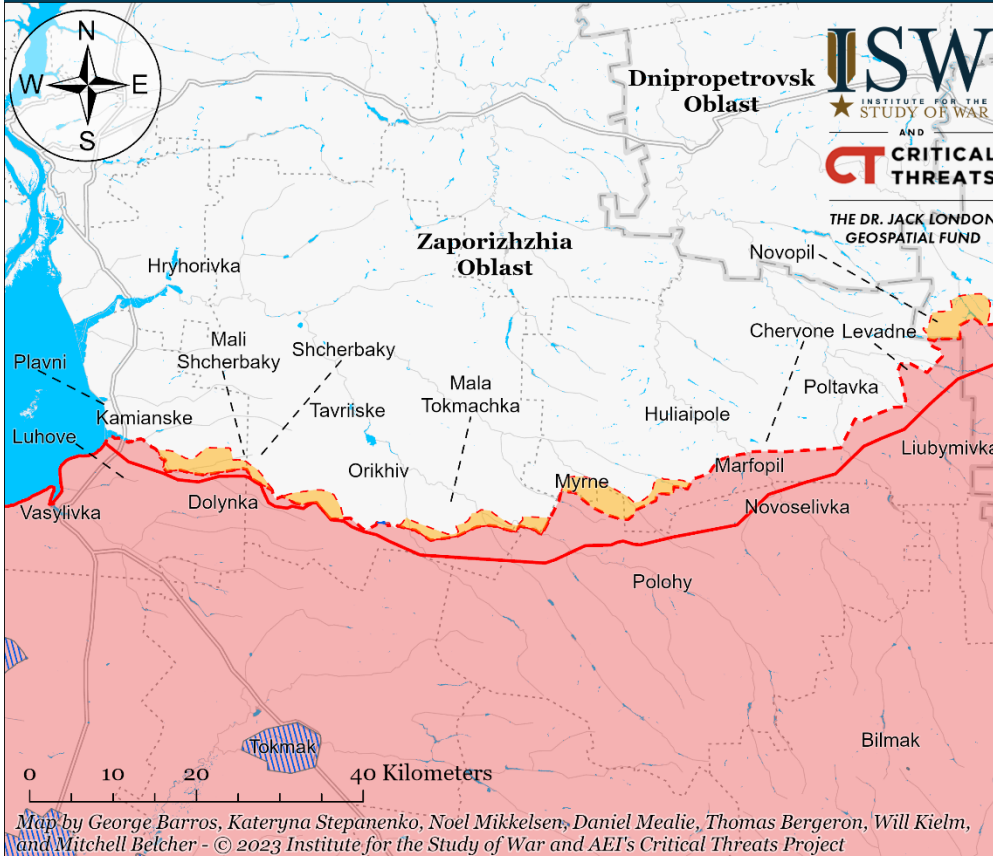
Russian forces continued to target southern Ukraine with artillery, drone, and air strikes on May 27.[47] The Ukrainian Southern Operational Command reported that Russian forces conducted airstrikes against Beryslav Raion, Kherson Oblast, and targeted Mykolaiv Oblast with Shahed drones.[48] Russian sources claimed that Russian forces struck the Obvodna rail station in

Dnipropetrovsk Oblast on May 26.[49] The Ukrainian Southern Operational Command reported on May 27 that Russian forces' primary tactic in southern Ukraine is counterbattery fire.[50] Ukrainian forces continued to strike rear logistical nodes in Zaporizhia Oblast on May 27. Russian and Ukrainian sources reported that Ukrainian forces struck Polohy and Berdyansk, Zaporizhia Oblast on May 27.[51] Some Russian sources claimed that Russian air defenses intercepted Ukrainian Storm Shadow missiles targeting Berdyansk on May 26, on which ISW has recently reported.[52]

The Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) warned on May 26 that Russian forces are preparing to conduct large scale provocations to create radiological danger at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP).[53] The GUR published audio intercepts on May 27 in which Russian military personnel claimed that unknown drones dropped chemical weapons in Enerhodar.[54] The GUR stated that Russia intends to falsely blame Ukraine for the attacks and aims to undermine the coming Ukrainian counteroffensive.[55] ISW has no independent confirmation that Russia is preparing to conduct a nuclear or chemical false flag attack in occupied Zaporizhia Oblast, but GUR's reports are consistent with longstanding debunked Kremlin information operations. ISW has notably reported on prior Kremlin efforts to set conditions for false flag attacks as pretexts for the 2022 full scale invasion of Ukraine and to undermine Western support for Ukraine, and US officials have previously debunked claims that Ukraine was preparing to conduct chemical attacks.[56] The Kremlin has also previously accused Syrian opposition groups of conducting chemical attacks that the Syrian government had actually conducted themselves.[57]

The Russian MoD claimed that the "Ivan Khurs" Yury Ivanov-class intelligence vessel returned to port at Sevastopol on May 26 to resupply following the claimed May 24 attack against the vessel.[58]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhia as of May 27, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



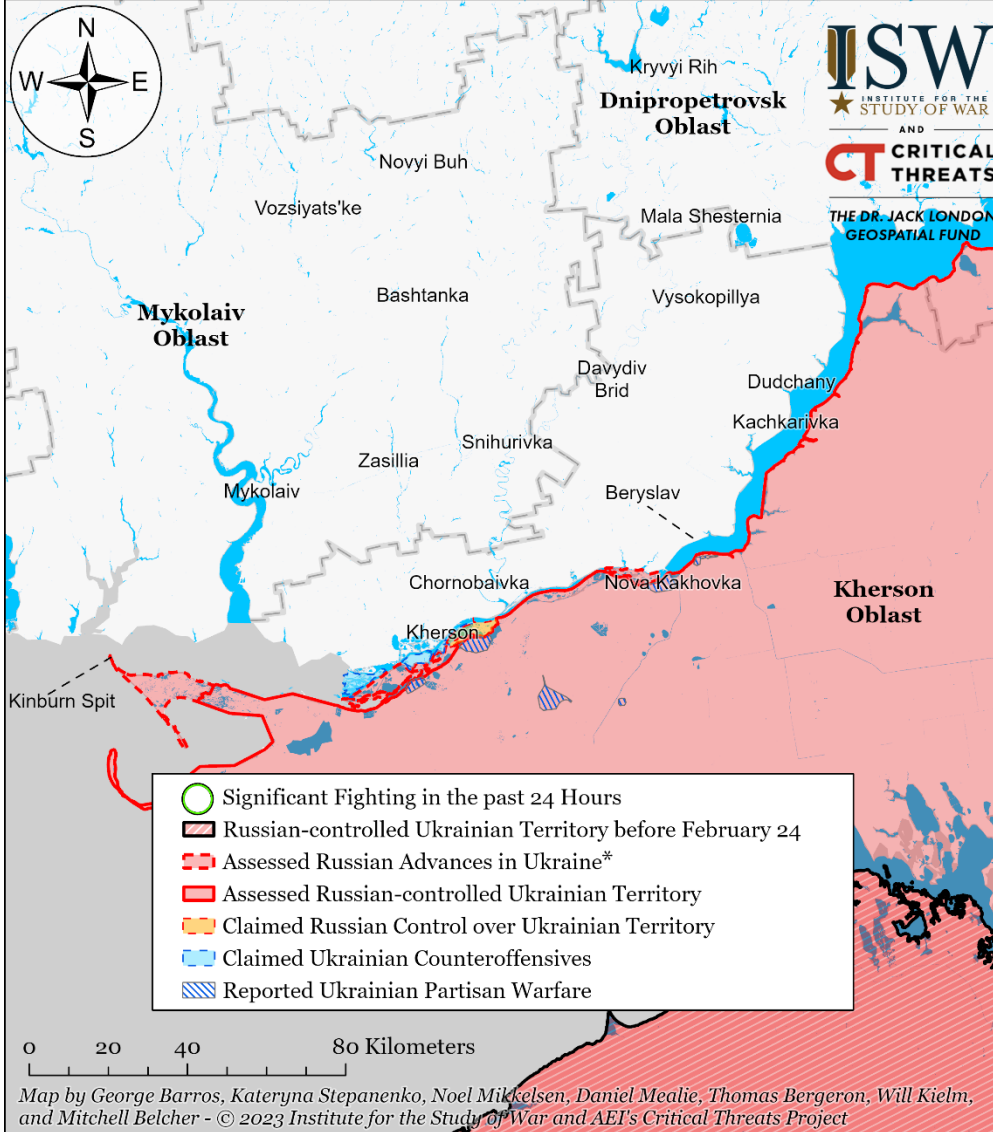
Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Will Kielm, and Mitchell Belcher - © 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

- 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
- 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: The Ukrainian counteroffensive layer displays areas previously assigned to the Russian control, Russian advances, or Russian claims layers where ISW now assesses that Ukrainian forces have established a presence beyond a short-term raid. Inclusion of an area on this layer does not imply that ISW assesses that the area is part of any upcoming Ukrainian counteroffensive operation.

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of May 27, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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

Note: The Ukrainian counteroffensive layer displays areas previously assigned to the Russian control, Russian advances, or Russian claims where ISW now assesses that Ukrainian forces have established a presence beyond a short-term raid. Inclusion of an area on this layer does not imply that ISW assesses that the area is part of any upcoming Ukrainian counteroffensive operation.

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

The Russian Ministry of Justice registered the civil society group “Council of Mothers of Wives” as a foreign agent on May 26, likely to curb resistance to ongoing and future Russian force generation

efforts.[59] The “Council of Mothers and Wives” routinely advocated for their relatives serving in the Russian military by reaching out to local officials following the start of partial mobilization in late September 2022.[60] Putin previously tried to dull the informational impact of the group’s public criticism of mobilization in late November 2022 by attending a meeting with hand-picked women in the Russian political sphere who were falsely presented as mothers of mobilized personnel.[61] The added legal pressure on the group is likely meant to allow Russian officials to suppress the group’s activities in the event of renewed heightened public resistance to Russian force generation efforts.

Russian officials reportedly confirmed that Russian conscripts are operating near the Ukrainian border as of May 27. The Yaroslavl Oblast government announced on May 27 that Russian conscripts perform tasks in various military units, including those deployed near the Russian border with Ukraine.[62] ISW assesses that the Kremlin is unlikely to deploy conscripts to Ukraine itself due to the potential for social backlash reminiscent of the domestic response to conscripts’ deployment to Ukraine earlier in the full-scale invasion.[63]

Russian convict recruits reportedly continue to desert their positions in frontline areas of Ukraine. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that 20 convict recruits who recently arrived to strengthen Russian units near Svatove, Luhansk Oblast stole a Russian military vehicle and fled their positions on May 25.[64] Russian sources reported on May 26 that Russian authorities are searching for 39-armed convict recruits who deserted their positions near Lysychansk, Luhansk Oblast.[65]

Russian arms manufacturer Kalashnikov Group is launching a new division for producing drones.[66] Kalashnikov Group President Alan Lushnikov announced on May 26 that the company intends to significantly increase Russia’s production of reconnaissance and combat drones by 2024.[67]

Russian space agency Roscosmos is reportedly recruiting its own employees to form a volunteer battalion. Russian and social media sources amplified an advertisement for the “Uran” volunteer battalion that reportedly appeared on the internal Roscosmos website, which ostensibly only Roscosmos employees can access.[68] The possible recruitment of highly educated and likely limited specialists in the Russian aerospace field suggests that Russian officials may be prioritizing immediate force generation requirements over long-term human capital needs.

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)

Russian authorities are escalating efforts to portray Russia as a safe guardian of Ukrainian children. Luhansk People’s Republic (LNR) Head Leonid Pasechnik announced the formation of a Russian State Duma Committee dedicated to prosecuting claimed Ukrainian crimes against children of Donbas, including the “illegal export” of Ukrainian children – whose families are presumably in Russia – to other countries.[69] Ukrainian Minister for the Reintegration of Occupied Territories Iryna Vereshchuk announced on May 26 that Russia returned a child who had been deported from Mariupol following Russian occupation of the city.[70]

The Kherson Oblast administration announced further efforts likely aimed at stymieing Ukrainian partisan activity and concealing Russian military movements. Kherson Oblast occupation

administration head Vladimir Saldo announced the establishment of a curfew for all of the occupied Kherson Oblast as of May 25.[71] The curfew is between 23:00pm and 04:00am nightly for areas more than 30 kilometers from the east (right) bank of the Dnipro River and 21:00pm to 06:00am for areas within 30 kilometers of the riverbank.[72]

Significant activity in Belarus (ISW assesses that a Russian or Belarusian attack into northern Ukraine is extraordinarily unlikely and has thus restructured this section of the update. It will no longer include counter-indicators for such an offensive.)

The Belarusian Ministry of Defense (MoD) reported that Belarusian territorial troops are continuing to train to respond to sabotage and reconnaissance groups.[73]

ISW will continue to report daily observed Russian and Belarusian military activity in Belarus, but these are not indicators that Russian and Belarusian forces are preparing for an imminent attack on Ukraine from Belarus. ISW will revise this text and its assessment if it observes any unambiguous indicators that Russia or Belarus is preparing to attack northern Ukraine.

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/annamaliar/798>; <https://t.me/annamaliar/797>; https://suspilne dot media/488617-rosia-gotue-udar-po-zaporizkij-aes-predstavniki-rdk-ta-legionu-svoboda-rosii-lisautsa-v-rf-458-den-vijni-onlajn/?anchor=live_1685172293&utm_source=copylink&utm_medium=ps

[2] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0bAfbHGBPWQGST7z4TmmwesUhEwWtcgH6K54DpuvQHcxyBknA3zCo4Nmy4keMCGSI> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0Lk1R3ro57JjXv5tDTPXyNHBAoDxjM7bFwxvnWahNSQF2kTw9dcoTXTLdbitjvy2CI>

[3] <https://t.me/annamaliar/798>; <https://t.me/annamaliar/797>

[4] <https://t.me/annamaliar/798>; <https://t.me/annamaliar/797>

[5] https://t.me/boris_rozhin/87050

[6] <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-65725004>

[7] https://t.me/concordgroup_official/1065

[8] <https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1662337489334419458>

[9] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-may-21-2023>

[10] <https://t.me/pushilindenis/3450>; <https://t.me/pushilindenis/3449>

[11] <https://t.me/pushilindenis/3449>

[12] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-april-23-2023>

[13] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0bAfbHGBPWQGST7z4TtmmwesUhEwWtcgH6K54DpuvQHcxyBknA3zCo4Nmy4keMCGSI>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0bAfbHGBPWQGST7z4TtmmwesUhEwWtcgH6K54DpuvQHcxyBknA3zCo4Nmy4keMCGSI>

[14] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0nrK26wC9KjN8BVTtidet5hBsNVUhqUF2sENC1sQyycX7bc6PrKDiRqe4LuUH6fXBI>

[15] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-april-21-2023>; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar040823>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-march-17-2023>

[16] <https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1662337489334419458>

[17] <https://armyinform.com.ua/2023/05/20/na-bahmutskomu-napryamku-znyshheni-13-polovyh-skladiv-iz-boyeprypamy-okupantiv-sergij-cherevatyj/>

[18] https://t.me/boris_rozhin/87024; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-march-21-2023>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-april-23-2023>

[19] <https://twitter.com/wartranslated/status/1662429293719298049>

[20] <https://twitter.com/wartranslated/status/1662429293719298049>

[21] https://t.me/concordgroup_official/1065

[22] <https://t.me/strelkovii/5057>; <https://t.me/strelkovii/5043>;

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