

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, October 9, 2023

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October 9, 2023, 5:15pm ET

Click [here](#) to see ISW's interactive map of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

Click [here](#) to access ISW's archive of interactive time-lapse maps of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. These maps complement the static control-of-terrain map that ISW produces daily by showing a dynamic frontline. ISW will update this time-lapse map archive monthly.

Note: The data cut-off for this product was 1pm ET on October 9. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the October 10 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

NOTE: ISW has added a new section on Russian information operations and narratives to the daily Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, found at the end of the update.

The Kremlin remains focused on promoting the purported legality and legitimacy of Russian internal politics despite Kremlin officials' admissions to the contrary. Kremlin Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov responded on October 9 to Chechen Head Ramzan Kadyrov's October 7 proposal to cancel the upcoming 2024 presidential election and instead hold a unanimous vote for Russian President Vladimir Putin, remarking that this will not happen because Putin has "emphasized the need to comply with all of the requirements of democracy, the constitution, and accordingly, to hold these elections." [1] Peskov then claimed that Russian society has consolidated behind Putin with unprecedented unanimity and suggested that Putin is "a politician with whom it is unlikely that anyone, even theoretically, can compete in any way electorally." [2] Peskov's statements indicate that while the Kremlin is invested in creating the guise that the 2024 elections will be free and fair by encouraging Russians to at least nominally participate in the practices of democracy, the Russian government does not intend for any alternative political candidate to pose an actual threat to Putin's re-election. Russian opposition outlet *Meduza* similarly noted in July that its internal sources claimed that the Kremlin has already decided that Putin will win over 80 percent of the vote in the upcoming presidential elections. [3]

Peskov's strong comments also indicate the Kremlin's desire to posture confidence and steadfastness against the backdrop of Kremlin concerns over Russian opinions on and support for Putin's invasion of Ukraine. Peskov's suggestion that Russia intends to hold regular elections has the effect of emphasizing that Russia is still a functioning and confident state despite the war, and the insinuation that Putin will win the elections unanimously also frames him as an effective and capable war-time leader with the total support of his society. ISW has recently reported on several instances of the Kremlin strengthening efforts to control the information space and seeking to dispel concerns over another mobilization wave prior to 2024, enabling the Kremlin to consolidate its narratives within the Russian information space. [4] ISW has also consistently observed several indicators that the Kremlin is concerned about the impact of the war on domestic Russian support for

Putin and his regime, including refusing to conduct additional mobilization or otherwise move Russian society to a full wartime footing.[5]

Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations and reportedly advanced in western Zaporizhia Oblast and near Bakhmut on October 9 amid reports of deteriorating weather conditions in Ukraine. The Ukrainian General Staff and Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces Spokesperson Colonel Oleksandr Shtupun reported that Ukrainian forces achieved partial success west of Verbove (18km southeast of Orikhiv), and near Klishchiivka (5km southwest of Bakhmut) and Andriivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut).[6] Russian milbloggers claimed that rainfall has worsened visibility in southern Ukraine, hindering Russian and Ukrainian reconnaissance drone operations.[7] One Russian milblogger claimed that the ground has become muddy and obstructs tracked vehicle movement, though another milblogger claimed that the ground has not yet become muddy enough to inhibit vehicle movement.[8] Exact conditions likely vary along the frontline, though weather conditions are generally worsening. Ukrainian Eastern Group of Forces Spokesperson Captain Ilya Yevlash reported that Russian forces are relying less heavily on aviation and drone activity in the Kupyansk-Lyman direction due to heavy rainfall.[9]

Russian forces reportedly launched localized offensive operations south of Hulyaipole and may have reorganized the Southern Grouping of Forces, likely in an attempt to further defend against Ukrainian counteroffensive operations. A Russian milblogger and a Ukrainian military observer both independently reported that elements of the Russian 64th Motorized Rifle Brigade (35th Combined Arms Army, Eastern Military District) advanced several hundred meters in a contested "gray zone" in the Marfopil-Chervone (6km southeast of Hulyaipole) direction on October 9.[10] Russian forces reportedly attacked at the battalion level or less, indicating that these operations are likely tactical and aim to draw and pin Ukrainian forces south of Hulyaipole rather than further west in Zaporizhia Oblast.[11] The Ukrainian military observer reported that the Russian military command recently reorganized the Southern Grouping of Forces to operate in two directions: the Mariupol direction in the western Donetsk Oblast; and the Berdyansk direction in the western Donetsk-eastern Zaporizhia Oblast border area, where Russian forces have concentrated the most and highest quality forces.[12] The observer reported that this grouping contains mostly motorized rifle units; the Eastern Military District's (EMD) "most powerful" army, the 5th Combined Arms Army (CAA); the EMD's two "least powerful" armies, the 29th and 36th CAAs; the Black Sea Fleet's 40th and 155th Naval Infantry brigades; and the Pacific Fleet's 336th Naval Infantry Brigade.[13] The military observer reported that the Russian military command has prioritized allocating additional new forces and means to the Southern Grouping of Forces over other force groupings in the theater.[14]

Imprisoned former Russian officer and ardent nationalist Igor Girkin reiterated his previous claims that the Russian military will continue to conduct a strategic defense to freeze the frontlines before the Russian presidential elections in March 2024. Girkin's wife published a letter on October 9 which Girkin reportedly wrote on September 29 in which Girkin discussed the current state of the war and his forecast of Russian actions. Girkin has continually claimed that a specific faction within the Russian leadership has advocated for freezing the current frontline in Ukraine and has opposed another faction that advocates for continued Russian offensive operations and domestically improving the war effort.[15] Girkin claimed he is "99 percent" certain that the Kremlin will decide to "freeze the frontline" until after the Russian presidential elections in March 2024.[16] Girkin claimed that Russian forces will likely continue conducting a strategic

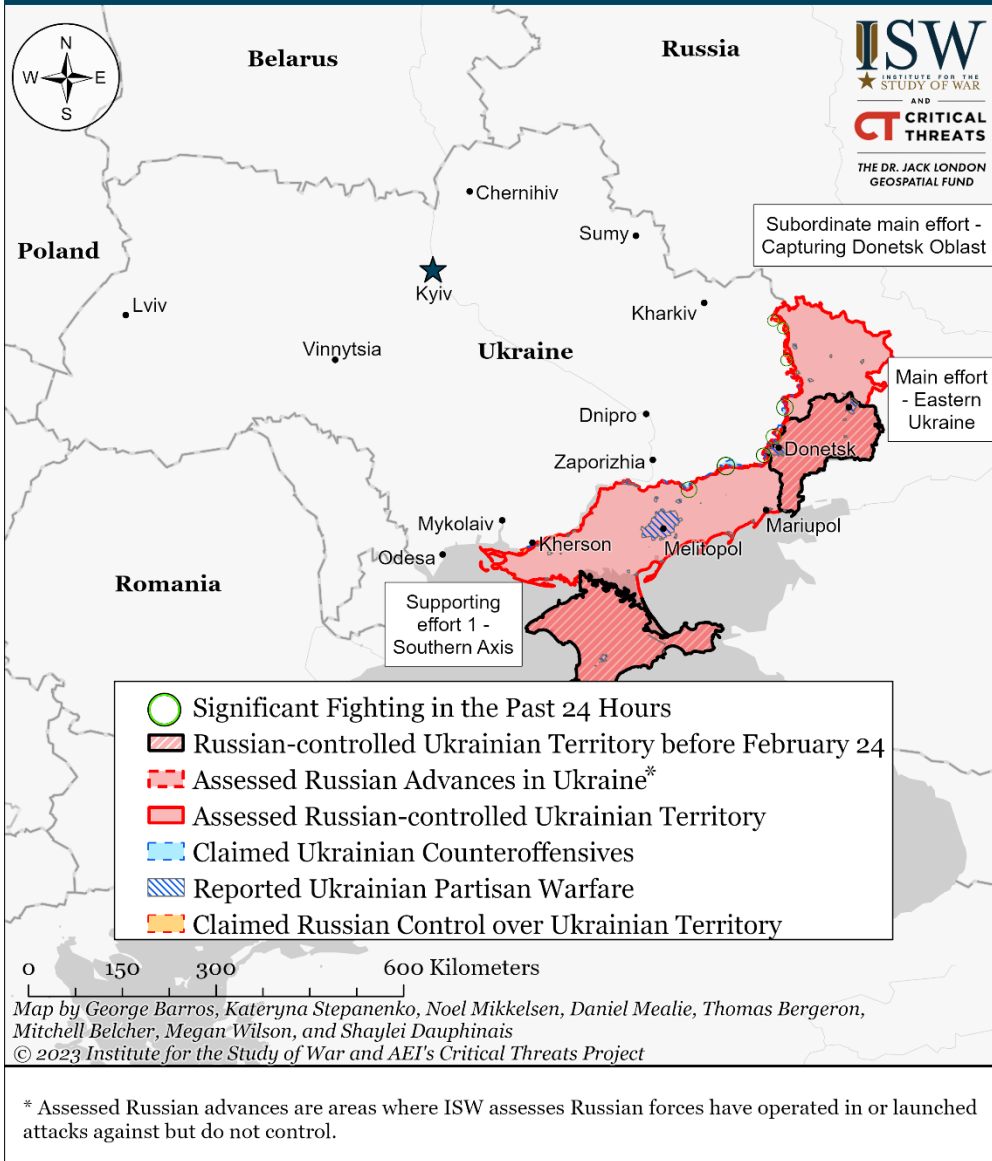
defense on the existing frontlines and focus on preventing Ukrainian breakthroughs or “sensitive operational successes.”[17] Girkin further claimed that any Russian government actions to strengthen the Russian military before the 2024 presidential elections would likely aggravate the Russian social, economic, and internal political situations.[18] Girkin also claimed that the Russian government would likely gradually increase domestic repressions ahead of the elections.[19]

The Russian government is moving toward revoking Russia’s ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. *Reuters* reported on October 9 that Russian State Duma leaders gave the Duma International Affairs Committee until October 18 to discuss the process of revoking Russia’s ratification of the treaty.[20] Russian President Vladimir Putin first commented on the possibility of Russia revoking Russia’s ratification of the treaty on October 5.[21] ISW has previously assessed that the Kremlin uses nuclear rhetoric to prompt the United States and its allies to pressure Ukraine to negotiate and that Russian nuclear use in Ukraine remains unlikely.[22]

Key Takeaways:

- **The Kremlin remains focused on promoting the purported legality and legitimacy of Russian internal politics despite Kremlin officials’ admissions to the contrary.**
- **Peskov’s strong comments also indicate the Kremlin’s desire to posture confidence and steadfastness against the backdrop of Kremlin concerns over Russian opinions on and support for Putin’s invasion of Ukraine.**
- **Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations and reportedly advanced in western Zaporizhia Oblast and near Bakhmut on October 9 amid reports of deteriorating weather conditions in Ukraine.**
- **Russian forces reportedly launched localized offensive operations south of Hulyaipole and may have reorganized the Southern Grouping of Forces, likely in an attempt to further defend against Ukrainian counteroffensive operations.**
- **Imprisoned former Russian officer and ardent nationalist Igor Girkin reiterated his previous claims that the Russian military will continue to conduct a strategic defense to freeze the frontlines before the Russian presidential elections in March 2024.**
- **The Russian government is moving toward revoking Russia’s ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.**
- **Russian forces conducted offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line, near Bakhmut, along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line, in western Donetsk Oblast, in the western Donetsk-eastern Zaporizhia Oblast border area, and in western Zaporizhia Oblast and advanced in some areas on October 9.**
- **Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations near Bakhmut, in western Donetsk Oblast, and western Zaporizhia Oblast, and reportedly advanced in some areas.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of October 9, 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 Information Operations and Narratives

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)

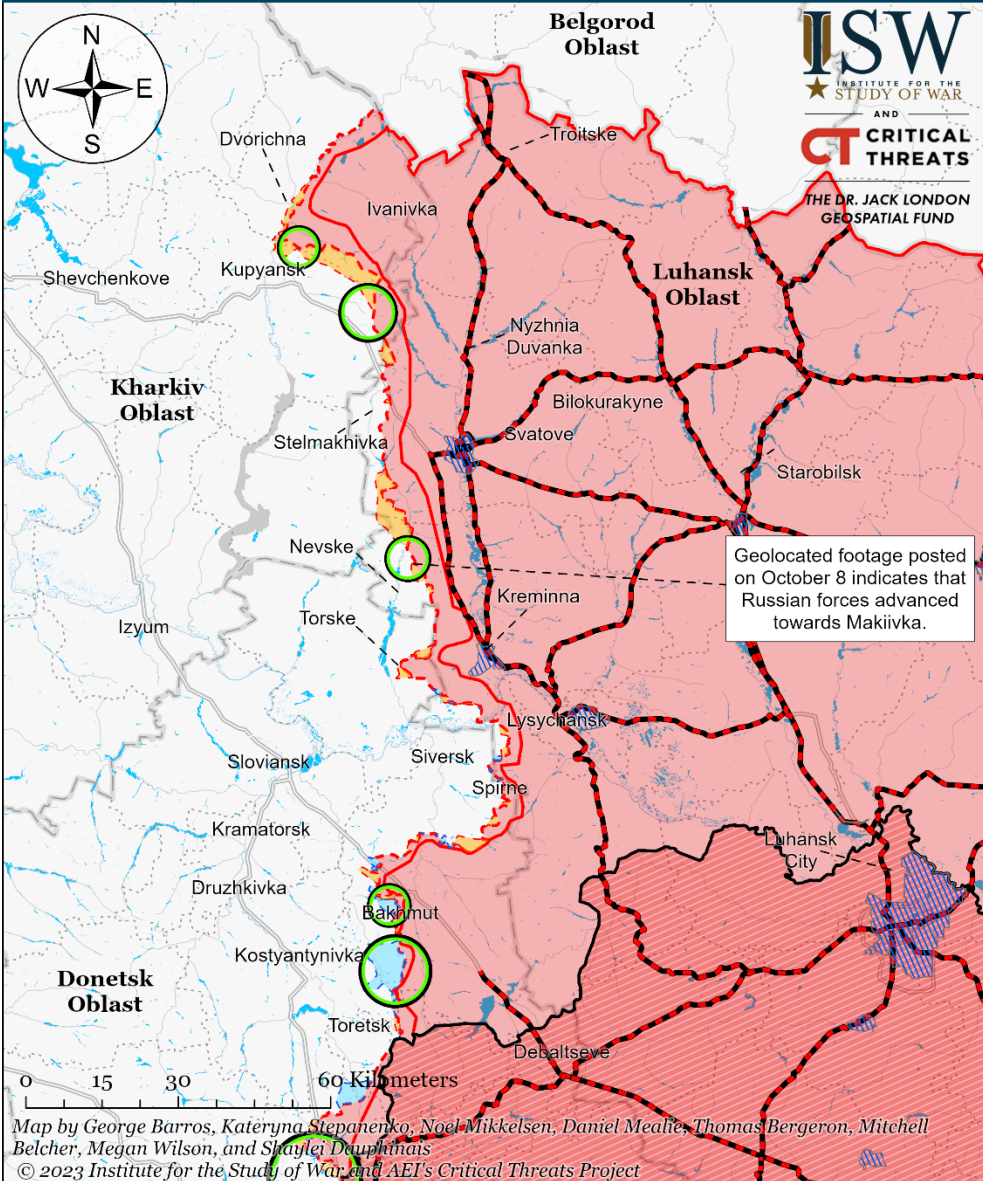
Russian forces conducted offensive operations near Kupyansk on October 9 but did not make confirmed advances. Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces captured unspecified positions near Ivanivka (20km southeast of Kupyansk) and northeast of Kupyansk.[23] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks near Synkivka (8km northeast of Kupyansk) and Ivanivka.[24] Ukrainian Eastern Group of Forces Spokesperson Captain Ilya Yevlash reported that Russian operations near Synkivka and Ivanivka have escalated despite a decrease in aviation and drone activity in the Kupyansk-Lyman direction due to heavy rainfall.[25]

The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed on October 9 that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Synkivka and Orlyanka (22km east of Kupyansk).[26]

Russian forces conducted offensive operations along the Svatove-Kreminna line on October 9 and did not make confirmed gains. Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced up to 1km near Makiivka (22km northwest of Kreminna) and captured unspecified positions near Nevske (18km northwest of Kreminna), though ISW has not observed visual evidence to confirm this claim.[27] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks near Makiivka.[28] Footage published on October 9 purportedly shows elements of the 88th Motorized Rifle Brigade (2nd Luhansk People's Republic Army Corps) operating near Berestove (30km south of Kreminna).[29]

The Russian MoD claimed on October 9 that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Makiivka, Dibrova (7km southwest of Kreminna), Torske (15km west of Kreminna), and the Serebryanske forest area (11km south of Kreminna).[30]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of October 9, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Meale, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Megan Wilson, and Shaylei Dauphinais
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- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Russian Ground Lines of Communication
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- 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.

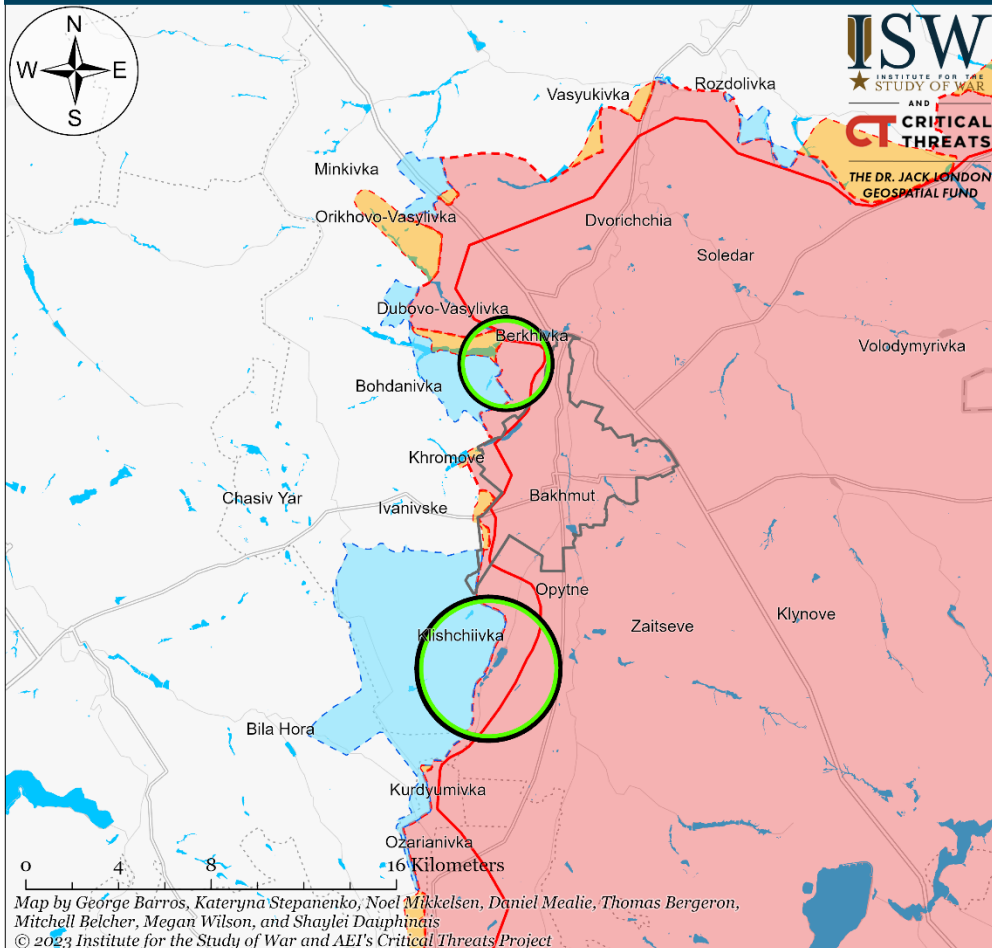
Note: A Russian source claimed on October 9 that Russian forces advanced up to one kilometer near Makiivka. Russian milbloggers claimed on October 8 that Russian forces are entrenched 600 meters east from Makiivka. A Russian source claimed on October 6 that Russian forces advances up to 500 meters in the Kupyansk direction.

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

Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Bakhmut direction on October 9 and reportedly advanced. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces achieved partial success southwest of Bakhmut near Klishchiivka (5km southwest) and Andriivka (10km southwest).[31] Russian milbloggers claimed that heavy fighting is ongoing for tactical heights near the railway line between Klishchiivka and Andriivka.[32]

Russian forces continued counterattacks in the Bakhmut direction on October 9 but did not make any claimed or confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff stated that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks north of Bohdanivka (6km northwest of Bakhmut), Klishchiivka, and Andriivka.[33] Ukrainian “Rubizh” Rapid Response Brigade Spokesperson Pavlo Storozhuk noted that Russian forces have changed their tactics in the Bakhmut direction and are increasingly using small groups of four to eight people to bypass Ukrainian forces by “maneuvering competently” instead of throwing large waves of infantry at Ukrainian positions.[34] The Ukrainian 3rd Separate Assault Brigade reported that its fighters captured the commander of the “Alga” volunteer battalion of the 72nd Motorized Rifle Brigade (3rd Army Corps, Western Military District).[35] A Russian obituary posted on October 8 confirms that elements of the 331st Guards Airborne (VDV) Regiment (98th VDV Division) are fighting in the Andriivka area.[36]

Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of October 9, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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.

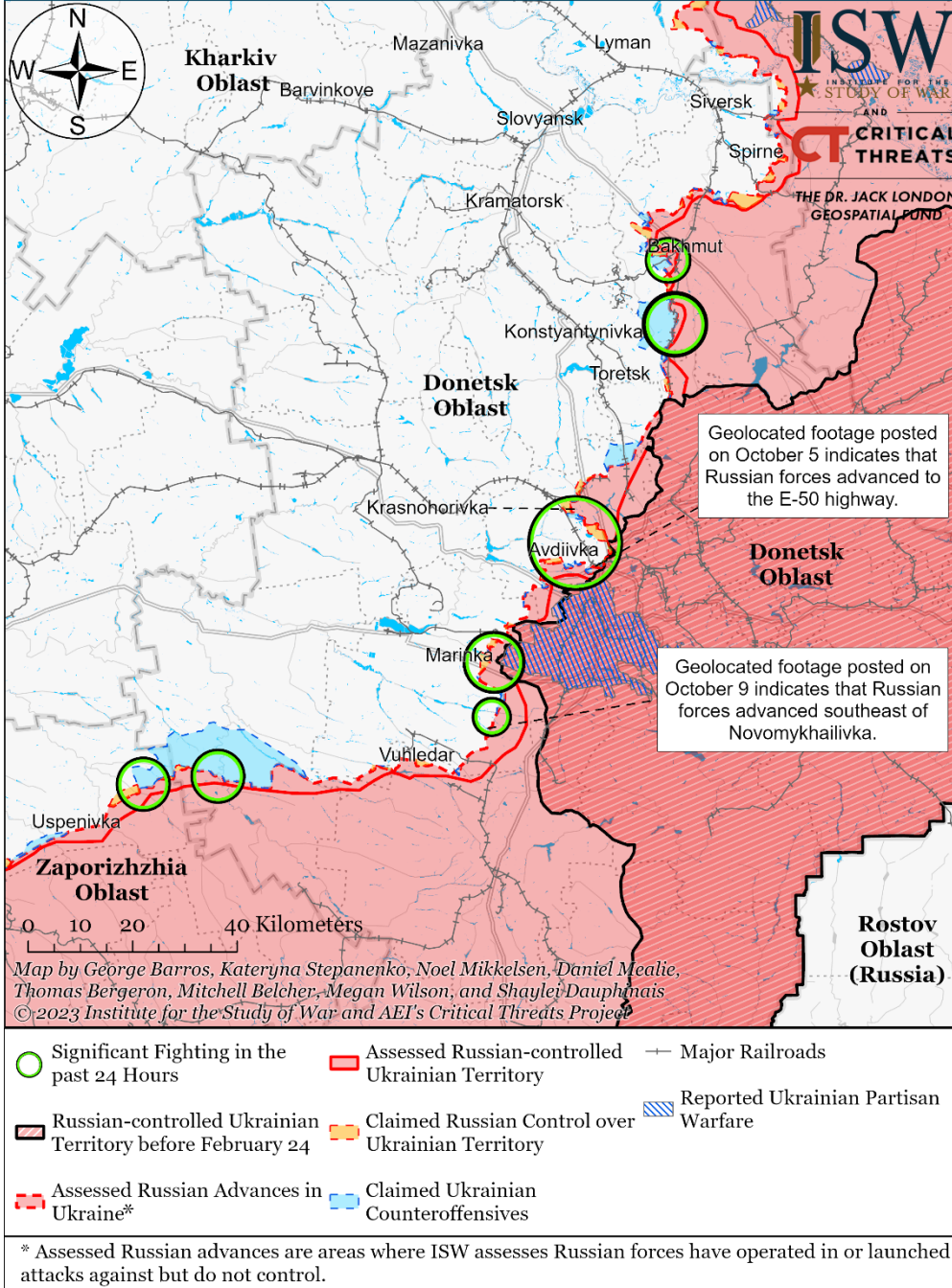
Note: Ukrainian Eastern Group of Forces Spokesperson Captain Ilya Yevlash reported on October 7 that Ukrainian forces advanced one hundred to three hundred meters in the Bakhmut direction over the last 24 hours. Russian sources claimed on October 7 that Russian forces penetrated Ukrainian defenses and advanced up to one kilometer in the area of Yahidne.

Ukrainian forces did not conduct any claimed or confirmed ground attacks on the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line on October 9.

Russian forces continued ground attacks along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line on October 9 and made marginal advances south of Donetsk City. Geolocated footage posted on October 9 shows that Russian forces have advanced southeast of Novomykhailivka (about 12km southwest of Donetsk City).[37] Ukrainian military sources stated that Russian forces conducted nearly 15 unsuccessful attacks north of Donetsk City near Avdiivka and southwest of Donetsk City near Marinka and Novomykhailivka.[38] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces are continuing ground attacks

along the entire Avdiivka-Donetsk City frontline.[39] One milblogger noted that “Storm-Z” assault units and elements of the 39th Motorized Rifle Brigade (68th Army Corps, Eastern Military District) advanced south of Novomykhailivka.[40] One milblogger characterized the pace of operations near Novomykhailivka as “creeping” and noted that Russian forces have failed to take the settlement and open avenues for further attacks into western Donetsk Oblast.[41]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of October 9, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

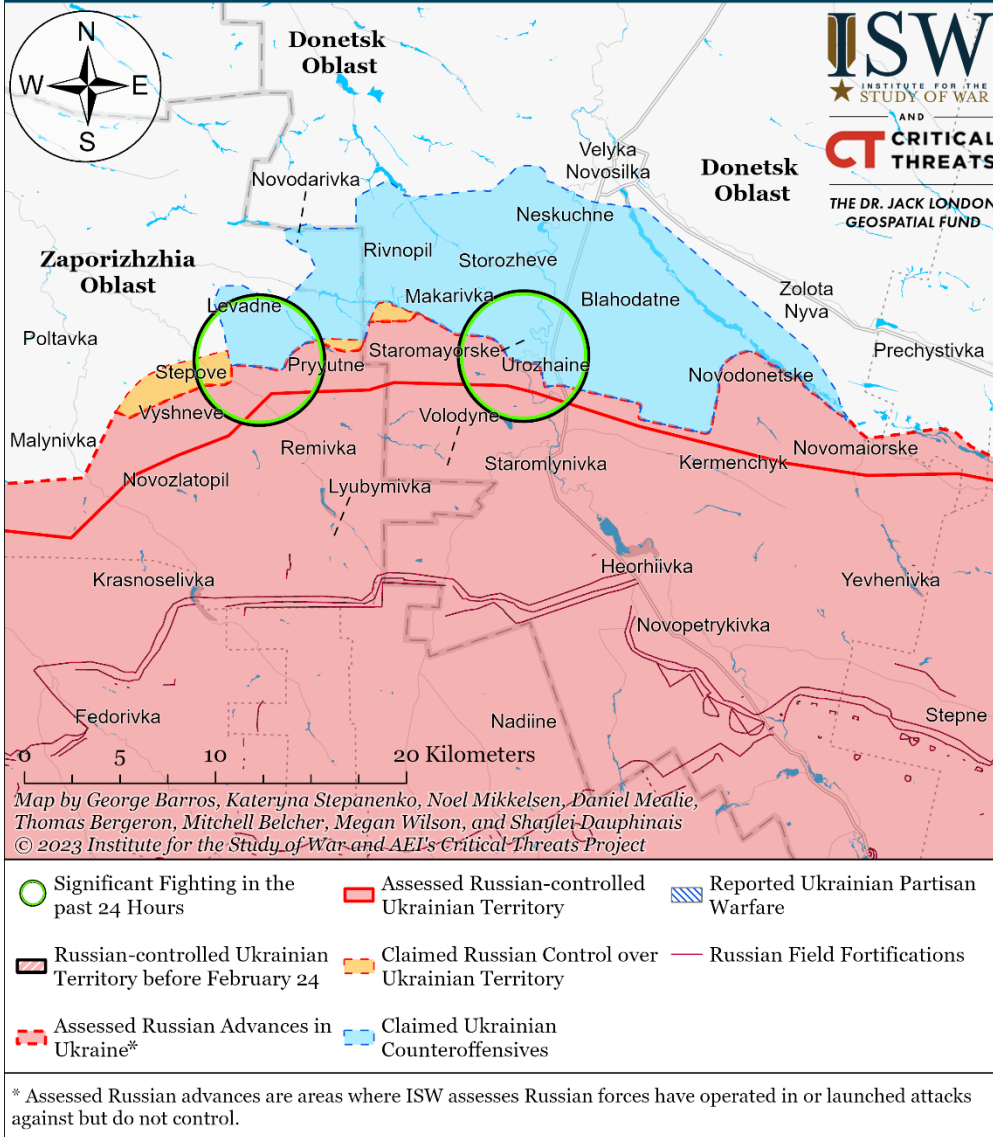


Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions and secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes)

Ukrainian forces conducted offensive operations in western Donetsk Oblast and in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area but did not make any confirmed advances on October 9. Russian sources claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Pryyutne (16km southwest of Velyka Novosilka) and Mykilske (3km southeast of Vuhledar and about 30km southeast of Velyka Novosilka).[42] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces continue attempts to seize the tactical battlefield initiative near Pryyutne.[43]

Russian forces conducted offensive operations in western Donetsk Oblast and in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area but did not advance on October 9. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks near Staromayorske (9km south of Velyka Novosilka) and Levadne (18km southwest of Velyka Novosilka).[44] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Mykilske and Novodonetske (13km southeast of Velyka Novosilka).[45]

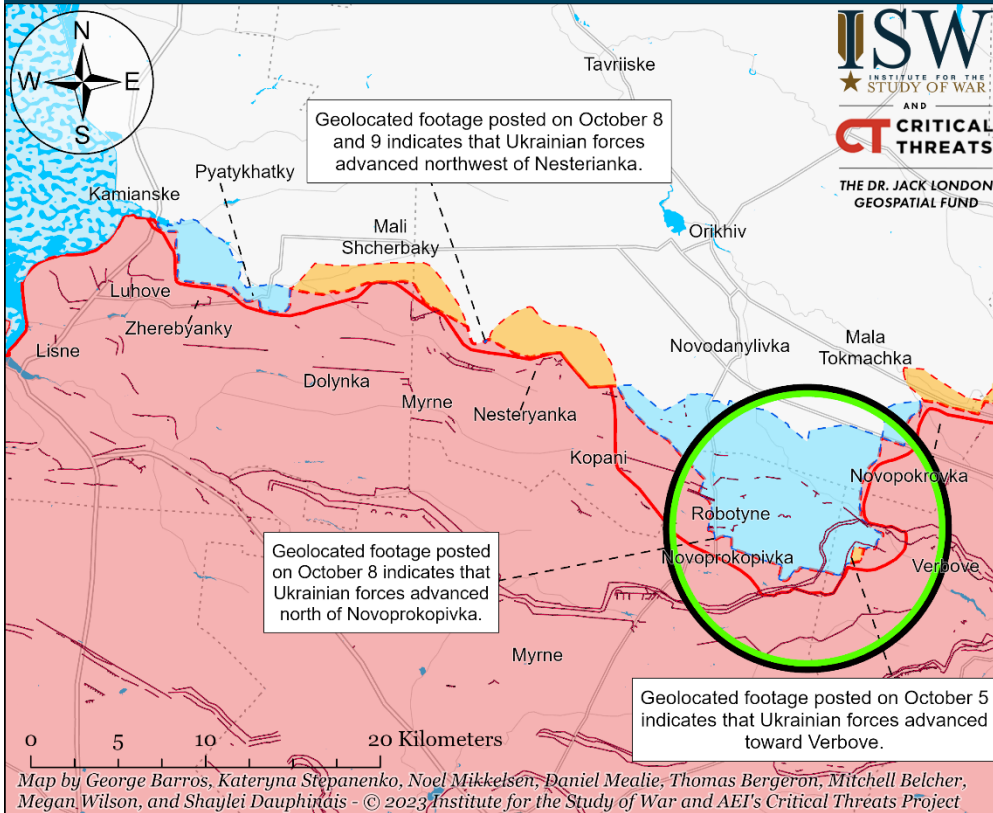
Assessed Control of Terrain Around the Vremivka Salient as of October 9, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Some Russian and Ukrainian sources indicated that Russian forces conducted localized offensive operations south of Hulyaipole and made tactical territorial gains on October 9. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian and Ukrainian forces are fighting meeting engagements near Marfopil (9km south of Hulyaipole), and the milblogger claimed that Russian forces have gained the tactical initiative in the area.[46] A Ukrainian military observer reported that elements of the Russian 64th Motorized Rifle Brigade (35th Combined Arms Army, Eastern Military District) advanced several hundred meters in a contested “gray zone” in the Marfopil-Chervone (6km southeast of Hulyaipole) direction.[47] The observer stated that these attacks are only tactical as Russian forces are attacking at the scale of a battalion or less.

Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast and reportedly advanced on October 9. The Ukrainian General Staff and Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces Spokesperson Colonel Oleksandr Shtupun reported that Ukrainian forces achieved partial success west of Verbove (18km southeast of Orikhiv).[48] Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces marginally advanced towards Kopani (10km southwest of Orikhiv) and between Robotyne (10km south of Orikhiv) and Novodanylivka (4km south of Orikhiv).[49] A Russian milblogger claimed that a small Ukrainian group entered the outskirts of Novoprokopivka (14km south of Orikhiv) but that elements of the 42nd Motorized Rifle Division (58th Combined Arms Army, Southern Military District) ultimately repelled the group.[50] Geolocated footage published on October 8 shows elements of the 42nd Motorized Rifle Division conducting clearing operations in the northern outskirts of Novoprokopivka, suggesting that Ukrainian forces may have temporarily advanced here.[51] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Novoprokopivka.[52] Russian milbloggers claimed that heavy fighting continues on the Robotyne-Verbove line and that Ukrainian forces did not advance.[53]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Pyatykhatky and Robotyne as of October 9, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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

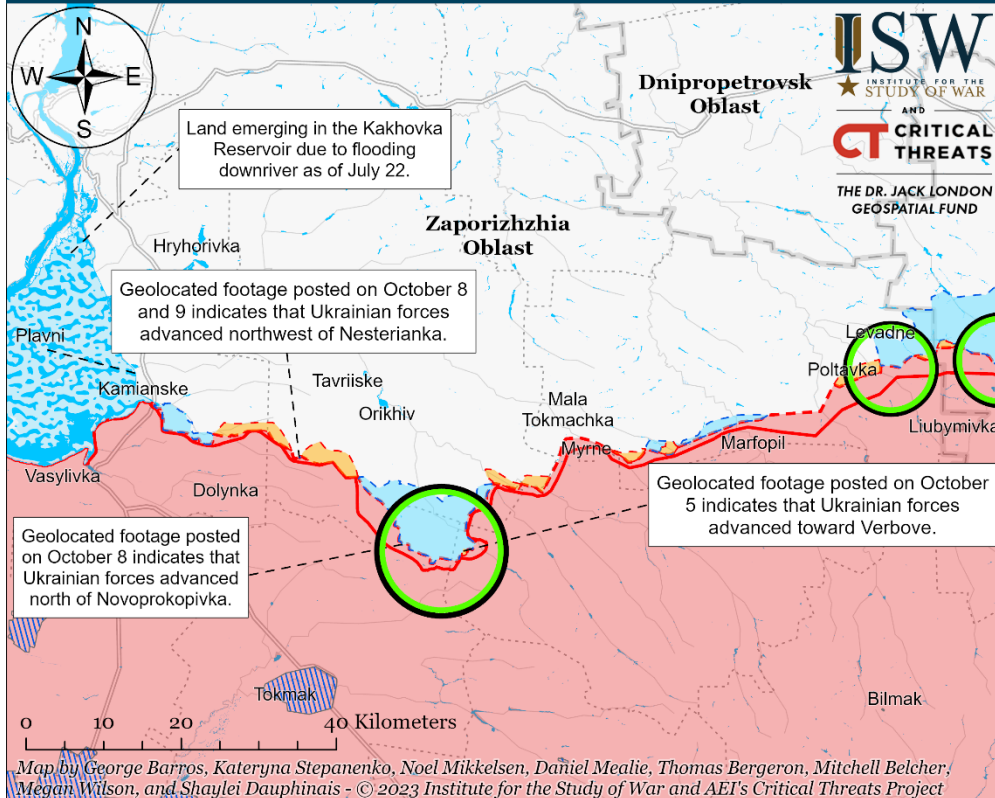
Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours	Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory	Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24	Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory	Emerging land in the Kakhovka Reservoir
Assessed Russian Advances in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

* 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 October 4 that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian forces two kilometers near Verbove.

Russian forces conducted a limited unsuccessful offensive operation in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast on October 9. The Ukrainian General Staff and Shtupun reported that Ukrainian forces repelled a Russian attack north of Novopropkopiivka.[54] A Ukrainian military observer reported that the Russian 1152nd and 1441st Motorized Rifle regiments replaced the 1429th and 1430th Motorized Rifle regiments defending the Novopropkopiivka-Verbove line after the 1429th and 1430th regiments rotated from the front after intense fighting degraded their combat capabilities.[55] The military observer reported that fighting on the Novopropkopiivka-Verbove line is for control of a tactical height that elements of the 71st and likely 291st Motorized Rifle regiments (both of the 42nd Motorized Rifle Division) reinforced by the Russian Combat Army Reserve (BARS)-3 unit are defending.

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhzhia as of October 9, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

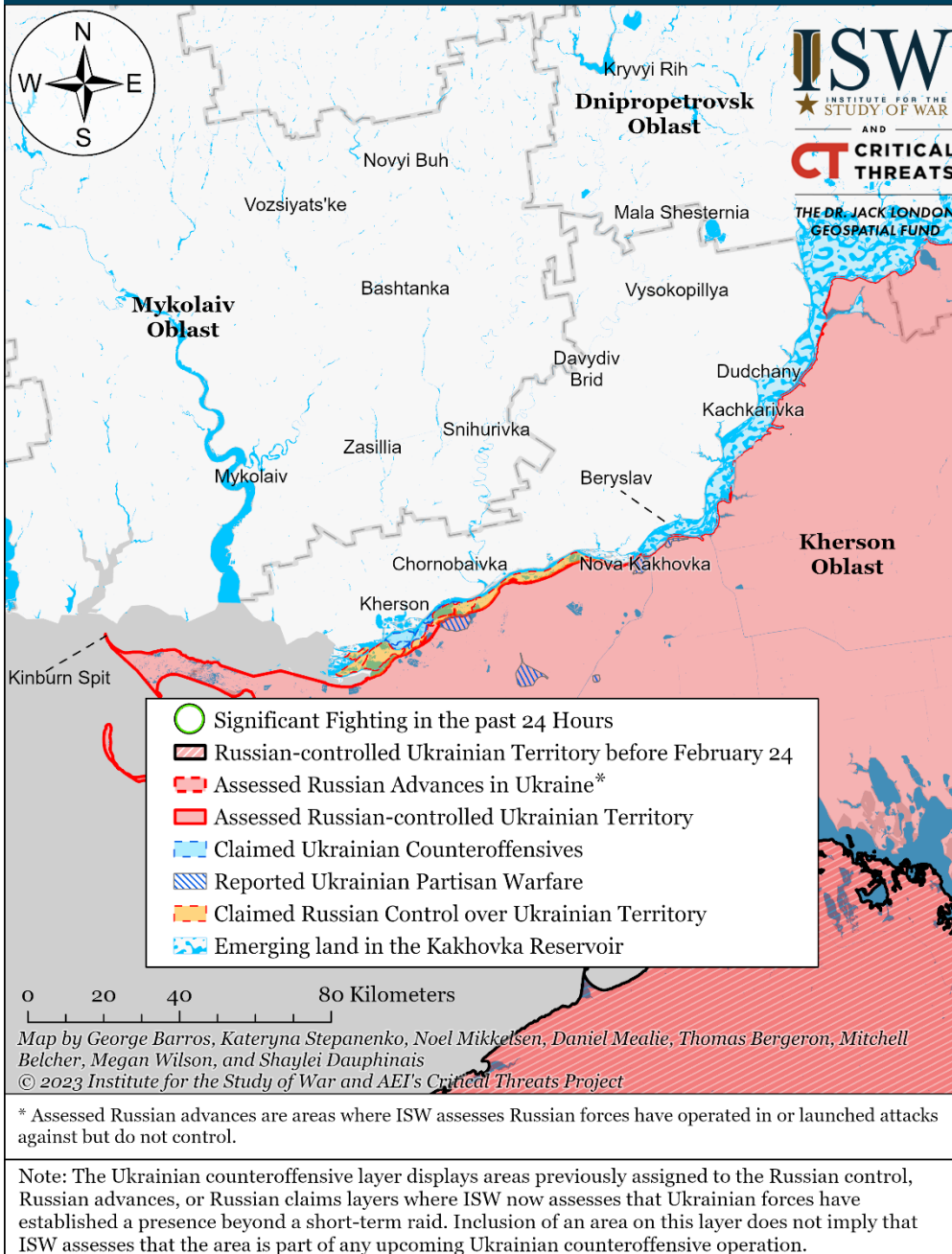


- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Emerging land in the Kakhovka Reservoir
- Assessed Russian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

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

Note: Russian sources claimed on October 4 that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian forces two kilometers near Verbove.

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of October 9, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Ukrainian forces reportedly attempted a limited raid across the Dniester River in Kherson Oblast overnight on October 8-9. A Russian milblogger claimed that several boats of Ukrainian forces attempted to conduct a reconnaissance-in-force near the Antonivsky Bridge but that Russian forces repelled the landing attempt.[56] Russian milbloggers expressed continued concern that Ukrainian forces in the west (right) Kherson Oblast are preparing for an offensive operation across the Dniester River on the east (left) bank.[57]

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

The Russian military continues to suffer from tensions between Russian military personnel of different ethnicities and between regular and irregular Russian military formations. Ukrainian Mariupol Mayor Advisor Petro Andryushenko stated on October 9 that a conflict broke out between Russian military personnel and Chechen “Kadyrovites” in central Mariupol.[58] ISW previously reported that interethnic tensions have increased recently in the Russian military, government, and information space and that efforts to integrate irregular forces into the regular Russian military are likely complicated by rifts between regular Russian forces and irregular formations.[59]

Russian companies continue to use intermediaries to import Chinese military supplies for the war in Ukraine. Russian opposition media outlet *Vazhnye Istorii* reported on October 9 that the Russian company Sts Technology LLC imported body armor, armored helmets, and protective glasses worth about 10 billion rubles (about \$100,249,000) from the Chinese Xinxing Guangzhou Import and Export company via Turkish intermediaries from March 2022 to October 2023.[60] *Vazhnye Istorii* cited customs data as indicating that Sts Technology openly marked the imports as “for the ‘special military operation’” and “for military service and combat tasks.” *Vashnye Istorii* reported that the owner of Sts Technology claimed to have no knowledge of the imports as unspecified “bandits” confiscated the company from him three years ago - a practice the owner claimed is common.

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

The Kremlin continues to direct efforts to impose a Russian cultural identity on Ukrainians in occupied areas. Russian President Vladimir Putin met with Russian Culture Minister Olga Lyubimova on October 9 to discuss the development of “cultural institutions” such as cinemas, libraries, children’s centers, art schools, and museums in occupied Ukraine.[61] Lyubimova stated that the Russian Ministry of Culture is especially focusing on developing children’s centers in Russian-run museums in occupied areas and reported that a group from the “Fanagoria” museum in Krasnodar Krai arrived in Henichesk, occupied Kherson Oblast, to set up such a children’s center.[62] A Kherson Oblast occupation administration-affiliated news agency posted footage of children at the center and claimed that they were learning about ancient Russian history.[63] These efforts to impose Russian culture and history on residents of occupied Ukraine, especially young children, are likely in support of the Kremlin’s wider aims of eradicating Ukrainian identity and forcibly Russifying occupied territories.

The Russian government continues to promote tourism in occupied Crimea even though it is an active war zone. Crimean occupation head Sergei Aksyonov stated that the Russian government has allocated 2.2 billion rubles (about \$22,055,000) towards subsidies meant to stimulate the tourism industry in occupied Crimea.[64] Aksyonov stated that the Crimean occupation government began distributing these subsidies to local businesses in the tourism industry on October 9. ISW previously reported that an influx of tourists to Crimea generated serious traffic jams along major Russian ground lines of communications (GLOCs) and that these pervasive civilian and transport issues in

Crimea are partially due to the Russian government’s refusal to fully mobilize Russian society onto a wartime footing.[65]

Russian Information Operations and Narratives:

NOTE: ISW continues to assess that the Kremlin has and will continue to exploit the Hamas attacks in Israel to advance several Russian information operations about Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. However, ISW has notably not observed any evidence – and does not assess – that the Kremlin supported, directed, or is involved in the Hamas attacks.

The Kremlin appears to be promoting two parallel narratives regarding the impact of the Hamas attacks on Israel on the Russian war in Ukraine. Kremlin Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov claimed on October 9 that US naval support of Israel “causes deep concern” and that “there is a high risk of third forces being involved” in the conflict following the initial Hamas attacks in Israel.”[66] Peskov also reiterated the ongoing Russian narrative claiming that Western support to Ukraine will decline as the West provides resources to Israel.[67] Peskov also answered a journalist’s question about whether the Hamas attacks in Israel will affect the war in Ukraine by stating that “the situation in Israel is an entirely different event” and that the war in Ukraine is going according to Putin’s “instructions” and plans.[68] Peskov’s statements indicate that the Kremlin is promoting two parallel narratives regarding the Hamas attacks: Western support for and attention to Ukraine will decline, but any future Russian activity in Ukraine will be independent of larger geopolitical events and will occur due to the competent actions of the Russian leadership and military.

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)

Nothing significant to report.

ISW will continue to report daily observed Russian and Belarusian military activity in Belarus as part of ongoing Kremlin efforts to increase their control over Belarus and other Russian actions in Belarus.

Note: ISW does not receive any classified material from any source, uses only publicly available information, and draws extensively on Russian, Ukrainian, and Western reporting and social media as well as commercially available satellite imagery and other geospatial data as the basis for these reports. References to all sources used are provided in the endnotes of each update.

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- [2] <https://tass dot ru/politika/18950011>
- [3] <https://meduza dot io/feature/2023/07/18/v-kremle-reshili-hto-na-vyborah-2024-goda-putin-dolzhen-nabrat-bolshe-80>
- [4] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar091423>; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar071623>
- [5] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-july-17-2023>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-march-25-2023>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-february-1-2023>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Oct%203%20Russian%20Offensive%20Campaign%20Assessment%20PDF.pdf>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Russian%20Offensive%20Campaign%20Assessment%2C%20March%206%2C%202023%20PDF.pdf>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-february-21-2023>
- [6] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02hUbV6Q11bnaSDb7y2B2FkUss3m7hAU66EBRreyzhapyJdW4YjBgVQdbjmfNn3oDI>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02EjhgT5NRywCQ3WAuGiTqY19AnbNPkH47i3tuVX82XZVLCqxrDiFDWMXHY2ddevEsl>; <https://armyinform dot com.ua/2023/10/09/nashi-vijska-mayut-uspikh-zahidnishe-verbovogo-oleksandr-shtupun/>; <https://t.me/otarnavskiy/277>
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