Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment

Christina Harward, Nicole Wolkov, Angelica Evans, Riley Bailey, and Frederick W. Kagan April 11, 2024, 6:25pm ET

Note: The data cut-off for this product was 12:45pm ET on April 11. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the April 12 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Russian forces conducted another large-scale series of missile and drones strikes against Ukraine on the night of April 10 to 11 that caused notable and likely long-term damage to Ukraine's energy infrastructure. The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Russian forces launched 82 air targets at Ukraine on the night of April 10 to 11, including 20 Kh-101/555 cruise missiles from Saratov Oblast; six Kinzhal aeroballistic missiles from Tambov Oblast; 12 S-300 anti-aircraft missiles from Belgorod Oblast; four Kh-59 cruise missiles from occupied Zaporizhia Oblast; and 40 Shahed-136/131 drones from Primorsko-Akhtarsk, Krasnodar Krai and occupied Cape Chauda, Crimea.[1] Ukrainian forces reportedly shot down 57 air targets, including 16 Kh-101/555 missiles, two Kh-59 missiles, and 39 Shahed drones.[2] Ukrainian state electricity transmission operator Ukrenergo stated that this strike series was the third large-scale Russian strike on Ukrainian electricity generation in 2024, likely referring to the March damaged Ukrainian thermal and hydroelectric power plants strikes that (TPPs/HPPs).[3] Ukrainian energy company Centrenergo reported that an unspecified Russian strike destroyed the Trypilska TPP in Kyiv Oblast — the largest supplier of electricity to Kyiv, Cherkasy, and Zhytomyr oblasts. [4] Ukrainian Kharkiy Oblast Military Administration Head Oleh Synehuboy stated that Russian forces conducted at least 10 strikes on critical infrastructure in Kharkiv City and Oblast. [5] Lviv Oblast Military Administration Head Maksym Kozytskyi reported that Russian forces struck a gas distribution facility and electric substation in Lviv Oblast with drones and unspecified missiles.[6] Ukraine's Southern Operational Command reported that Russian forces damaged an energy facility in Zaporizhia Oblast with unspecified missiles, that debris from a downed drone caused a fire at an energy facility in Odesa Oblast, and that Russian forces targeted Odesa City with a Kh-31 anti-radar missile, but that the missile malfunctioned over the Black Sea.[7] Ukrainian officials also reported that an unspecified number of Russian ballistic missiles struck Mykolaiv City and that Russian guided glide bombs struck a power plant in Sumy City during the day of April 11.[8] The Wall Street Journal (WSJ) reported on April 11 that Russian strikes, not including the April 10-11 strike series, have disrupted 80 percent of the generation capacity of DTEK, Ukraine's largest private energy company, which supplies about 20 percent of Ukraine's power.[9] The WSJ reported that DTEK's chief executive, Maksym Timchenko, stated that DTEK spent \$110 million repairing damage during the war's first year and that it will cost more than twice that much to fix the most recent destruction caused by Russian strikes.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba stated that Ukraine needs more Patriot air defense batteries to protect both Ukraine's population centers and frontline areas. The Washington Post reported on April 10 that Kuleba is currently focusing on obtaining seven Patriot batteries from other countries as quickly as possible to defend Ukraine's largest cities.[10] Kuleba reportedly stated that Ukraine would place at least one of these batteries closer to the frontline. Kuleba recently emphasized that Ukraine especially needs Patriot systems to defend against Russian ballistic missiles, such as Kinzhal missiles, as Ukraine's Soviet-era air defense systems are unable to intercept these missiles.[11] Russian strikes have forced Ukraine to make difficult decisions between providing air defense coverage to large population centers in the rear and active areas on the frontline, and Russia appears to be exploiting Ukraine's degraded air defense umbrella in an attempt to collapse Ukraine's energy grid and constrain Ukraine's defense industrial capacity while Russian ground forces take advantage of their ability to use air strikes on Ukrainian frontline positions to make slow but steady gains.[12] ISW continues to assess that sparse and inconsistent air defense coverage along the front has likely facilitated Russia's intensification of guided and unguided glide bomb strikes, which Russian forces used to tactical effect in their seizure of Avdiivka in mid-February 2024 and which Russian forces appear to be using again during their current offensive operations near Chasiv Yar.[13]

The Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada adopted a new mobilization law on April 11, a significant step in addressing Ukraine's manpower challenges amid growing manpower constraints in Ukrainian units defending on the frontline.[14] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that the new

mobilization law will come into force after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky signs the law in May.[15] Ukrainian Joint Forces and "Khortytsia" Group of Forces Commander Lieutenant General Yuriy Sodol addressed the Verkhovna Rada ahead of the vote and reiterated that one of Ukraine's main problems is its manpower challenges.[16] Sodol stated that some Ukrainian units are severely undermanned and suggested that some Ukrainian detachments are undermanned to the point that the detachment can currently only defend roughly 20 of the 100 meters a detachment at full end strength is typically able to defend. Sodol suggested that the Ukrainian military is currently deploying three partially manned brigades to cover the same area that one fully manned brigade can typically defend, forcing Ukraine to allocate additional units to defensive actions that could otherwise be resting in rear areas or preparing for future counteroffensive actions. ISW continues to assess that Ukraine's ability to defend against Russian offensive operations and eventually challenge the theater-wide initiative depends heavily on the provision of US military assistance and the continuation of non-US military support as well as on Ukraine's efforts to restore and reconstitute existing units and create new units.[17]

US European Command (EUCOM) Commander and NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) General Chistopher Cavoli reported that EUCOM and NATO are strengthening their ability to respond to the "chronic threat" that Russia poses to global stability and European security in hopes of deterring future Russian aggression against **NATO.** Cavoli stated during a briefing to the US House of Representatives Armed Services Committee on April 10 that Russia poses a "chronic threat" to the world and warned that Russian President Vladimir Putin does not intend to limit or stop his aggression at the borders of Ukraine, [18] Cavoli reported that EUCOM is responding to the Russian threat by enhancing its deterrence posture across Europe, including strengthening EUCOM's eastern flank with rotational force deployments, expanding EUCOM's prepositioned stocks, and modernizing EUCOM's infrastructure to enable a rapid reception of reinforcing forces. Cavoli stated that EUCOM and NATO are exercising extensively to demonstrate their ability to defend against and deter future Russian aggression against NATO. Cavoli noted that China, Iran, North Korea, and Russia are forming "interlocking, strategic partnerships" that are antithetical to US national security interests and aim to challenge the existing global security framework. Kremlin officials, particularly Putin, are increasingly contextualizing the war in Ukraine as part of a long-term geopolitical confrontation between Russia and the West in order to justify Russia's long-term war effort in Ukraine and future Russian aggression against other European countries.[19]

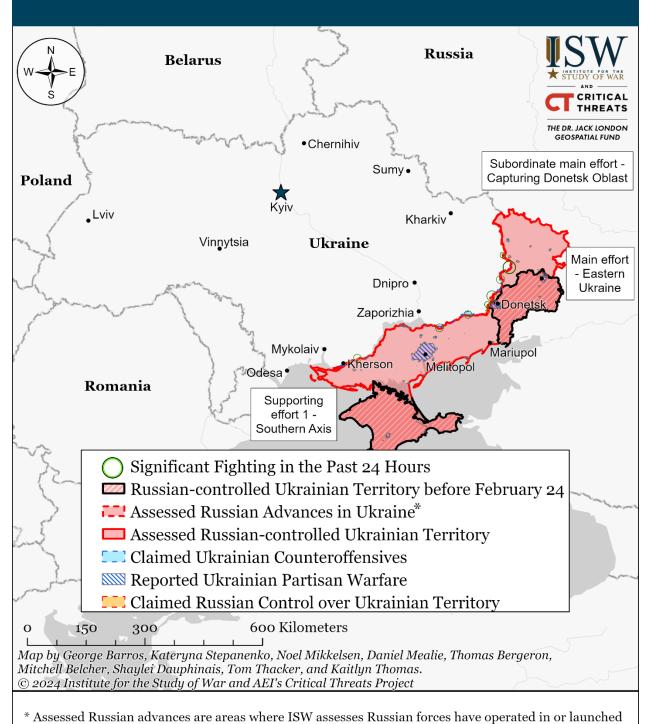
Ukraine and Latvia signed a bilateral security agreement on April 11 providing for long-term Latvian assistance and security commitments to Ukraine.[20] Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky stated that the agreement will provide annual aid to Ukraine valued at 0.25 percent of Latvia's GDP from 2024 through 2026 and confirms Latvia's 10-year commitment to aid Ukraine in reconstruction, the protection of critical infrastructure, de-mining, unmanned technology, and cyber security.[21] Latvia will also provide about 112 million euros (about \$120 million) worth of military aid to Ukraine in 2024.[22]

Russian authorities conducted a counterterrorism operation and reportedly killed two suspected terrorists in the Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria on April 11. The Russian National Anti-Terrorism Committee (NAK) stated that Russian authorities declared a counterterrorism regime in Nalchik and Chereksky Raion, Kabardino-Balkaria and killed two militants who were reportedly planning sabotage and terrorist attacks in Kabardino-Balkaria.[23] The NAK also conducted a counterterrorism operation and reportedly detained three militants in the Republic of Dagestan on March 31.[24] Russian security forces are likely intensifying counterterrorism operations in Russia — particularly in the North Caucasus, which has seen Islamic State-Caucasus Province (Wilayat al Qawqaz) and other jihadist activity over the years — due to heighted fears of terrorism in Russia following the March 22 Crocus City Hall attack. Continued Russian counterterrorism operations in the North Caucasus and intensified measures targeting Central Asian migrants in Russia are further evidence that Russian authorities actually assess that threats emanate from Russia's Central Asian and Muslim communities instead of Ukraine despite Russian efforts to baselessly tie Ukraine to the Crocus City Hall attack.[25] ISW remains confident that Islamic State (IS) conducted the Crocus City Hall attack and has yet to observe independent reporting or evidence to suggest that an actor other than IS was responsible for or aided the attack.[26]

Key Takeaways:

- Russian forces conducted another large-scale series of missile and drones strikes against Ukraine on the night of April 10 to 11 that caused notable and likely long-term damage to Ukraine's energy infrastructure.
- Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba stated that Ukraine needs more Patriot air defense batteries to protect both Ukraine's population centers and frontline areas.
- The Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada adopted a new mobilization law on April 11, a significant step in addressing Ukraine's manpower challenges amid growing manpower constraints in Ukrainian units defending on the frontline.
- US European Command (EUCOM) Commander and NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR) General Chistopher Cavoli reported that EUCOM and NATO are strengthening their ability to respond to the "chronic threat" that Russia poses to global stability and European security in hopes of deterring future Russian aggression against NATO.
- Ukraine and Latvia signed a bilateral security agreement on April 11 providing for long-term Latvian assistance and security commitments to Ukraine.
- Russian authorities conducted a counterterrorism operation and reportedly killed two suspected terrorists in the Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria on April 11.
- Russian forces recently made confirmed advances near Kreminna, in the direction of Chasiv Yar west of Bakhmut, and in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on April 11.
- Russian exiled opposition outlet Novaya Gazeta Europe reported on April 11 that Russian courts have commuted sentences in over half of all criminal cases against Russian veterans and active-duty servicemen due to military service in Ukraine.

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of April 11, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



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attacks against but do not control.

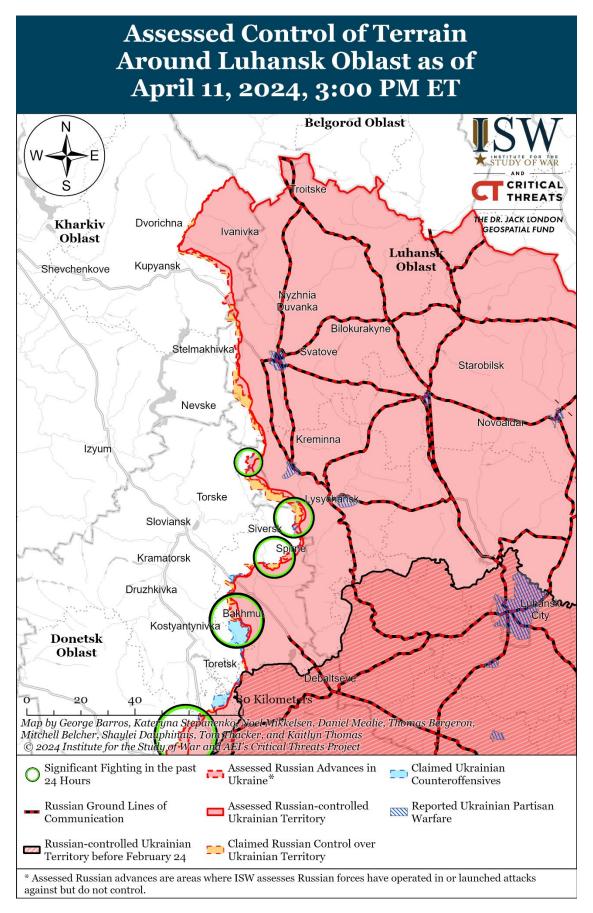
We do not report in detail on Russian war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We will continue to evaluate and report on the effects of these criminal activities on the Ukrainian military and the Ukrainian population and specifically on combat in Ukrainian urban areas. We utterly condemn Russian violations of the laws of armed conflict and the Geneva Conventions and crimes against 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 Air, Missile, and Drone Campaign
- Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts
- Russian Technological Adaptations
- Activities in Russian-occupied areas
- Ukrainian Defense Industrial Base Efforts
- Russian Information Operations and Narratives
- Significant Activity in Belarus

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)

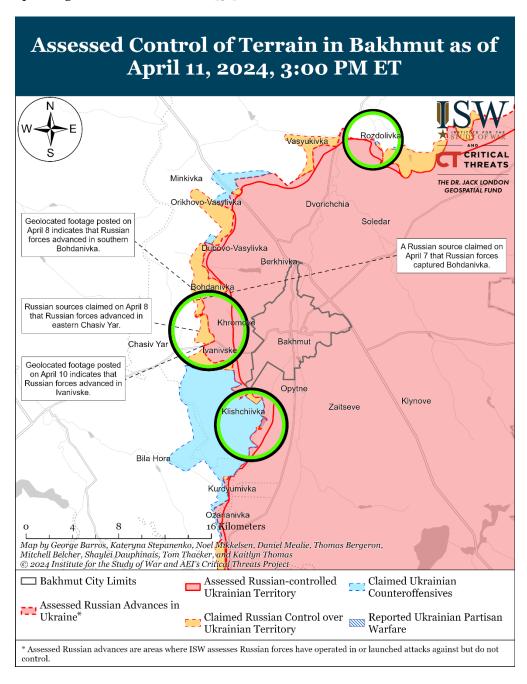
Russian forces recently made confirmed advances near Kreminna amid continued positional engagements in the area on April 11. Geolocated footage published on April 10 indicates that Russian forces marginally advanced east of Terny (west of Kreminna).[27] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Terny but did not conduct any assaults in the Kupyansk direction.[28] Elements of the Russian 123rd Motorized Rifle Brigade (2nd Luhansk People's Republic [LNR] Army Corps) are reportedly operating near Bilohorivka.[29]



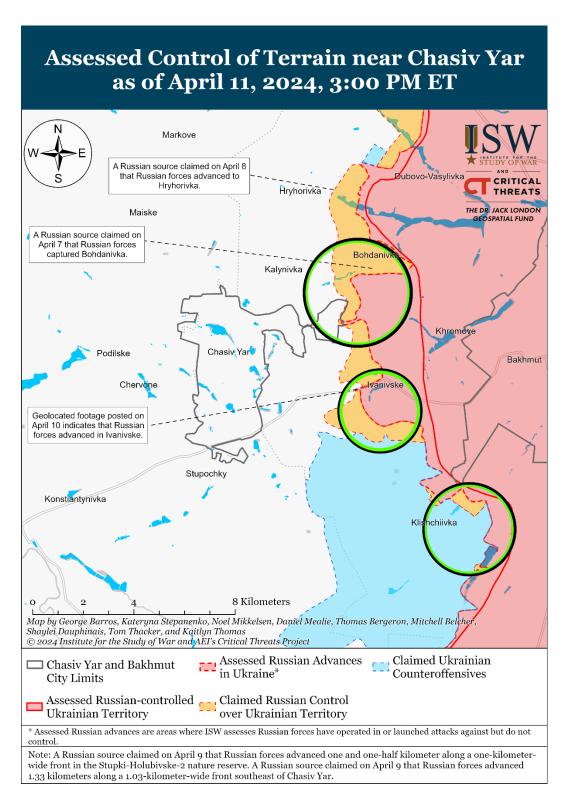
<u>Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 — Donetsk Oblast</u> (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia's proxies in Donbas)

Note: ISW will be orientating activity in the immediate Bakhmut area around Chasiv Yar for the foreseeable future as ISW assesses that the seizure of Chasiv Yar is the current Russian operational objective in the area.

Positional engagements continued northeast of Bakhmut on April 11, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline. Positional engagements continued east of Siversk near Verkhnokamyanske, southeast of Siversk near Vyimka, and south of Siversk near Rozdolivka.[30] Elements of the Russian 106th Airborne (VDV) Division reportedly continue operating in the Soledar-Siversk direction, and elements of the 123rd Motorized Rifle Brigade (2nd Luhansk People's Republic [LNR] Army Corps [AC]) reportedly continue operating in the Siversk direction.[31]

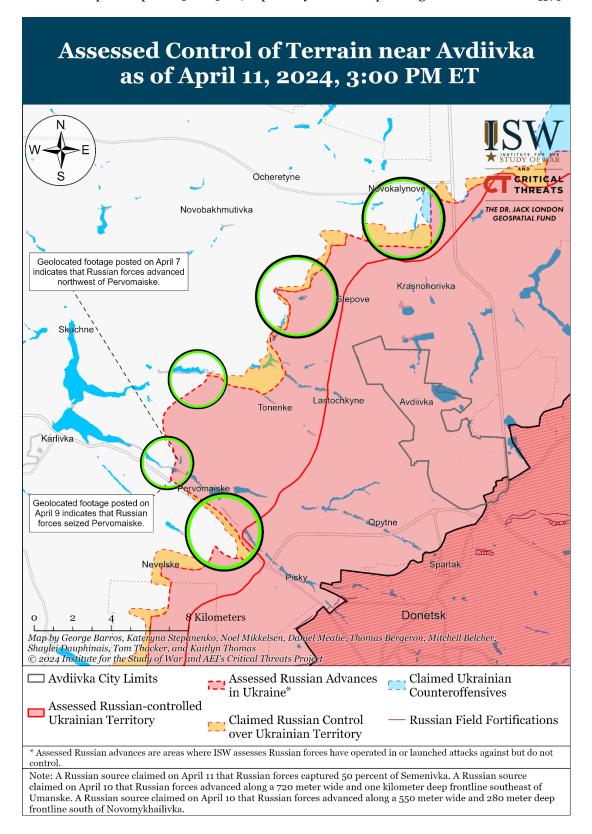


Russian forces recently made a confirmed advance in the direction of Chasiv Yar, amid continued positional engagements on April 11. Geolocated footage published on April 10 that ISW has previously reported on further indicates that Russian forces advanced west of Ivanivske (east of Chasiv Yar) along the To504 (Bakhmut-Chasiv Yar) highway.[32] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces, including elements of the 98th VDV Division, continued to attack near the Kanal Microraion (easternmost Chasiv Yar) and near Bohdanivka (northeast of Chasiv Yar).[33] Positional engagements continued near Chasiv Yar, Ivanivske, and Klishchiivka.[34]

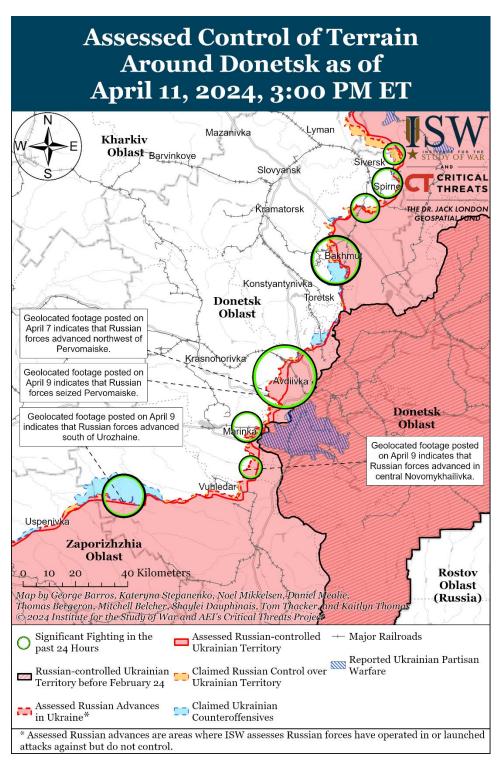


Positional engagements continued west of Avdiivka on April 11, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline. Rusisan milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced 2.5 kilometers in depth between Yasnobrodivka and Umanske (both west of Avdiivka), reached the southeastern outskirts of Umanske, and control almost half of Semenivka (west of Avdiivka), although ISW has not observed visual evidence of these claims.[35] Positional engagements continued northeast of Avdiivka near Novokalynove, Keramik,

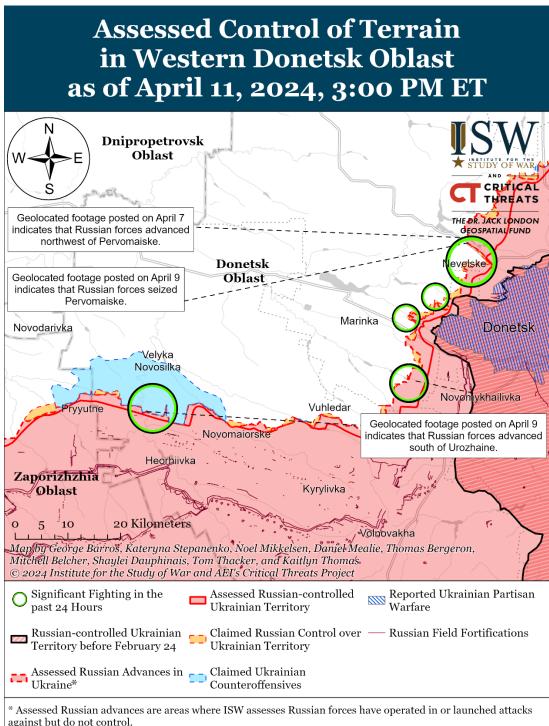
Novobakhmutivka, and Berdychi; west of Avdiivka near Umanske and Semenivka; and southwest of Avdiivka near Pervomaiske and Netaylove.[36] Elements of the Russian 9th Motorized Rifle Brigade (1st Donetsk People's Republic [DNR] AC) reportedly continue operating near Pervomaiske.[37]



Russian forces reportedly advanced southwest of Donetsk City on April 11, but there were no confirmed changes to the frontline. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced within Novomykhailivka (southwest of Donetsk City), but ISW has not observed visual confirmation of this claim.[38] Positional engagements continued west of Donetsk City near Pobieda, Krasnohorivka, and Heorhiivka and southwest of Donetsk City near Novomykhailivka.[39] Elements of the Russian 238th Artillery Brigade (9th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Southern Military District [SMD]) and 5th Motorized Rifle Brigade (1st DNR AC) reportedly continue operating near Krasnohorivka.[40]



Russian forces recently marginally advanced in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area amid continued positional fighting in the area on April 11. Geolocated footage published on April 9 indicates that Russian forces recently marginally advanced south of Urozhaine (south of Velyka Novosilka).[41] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled several Russian attacks near Staromayorske (south of Velyka Novosilka).[42]

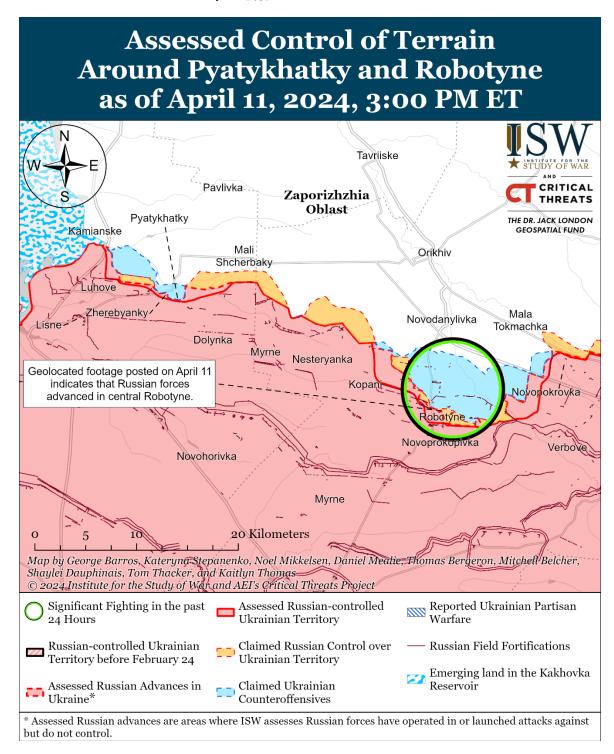


against but do not control.

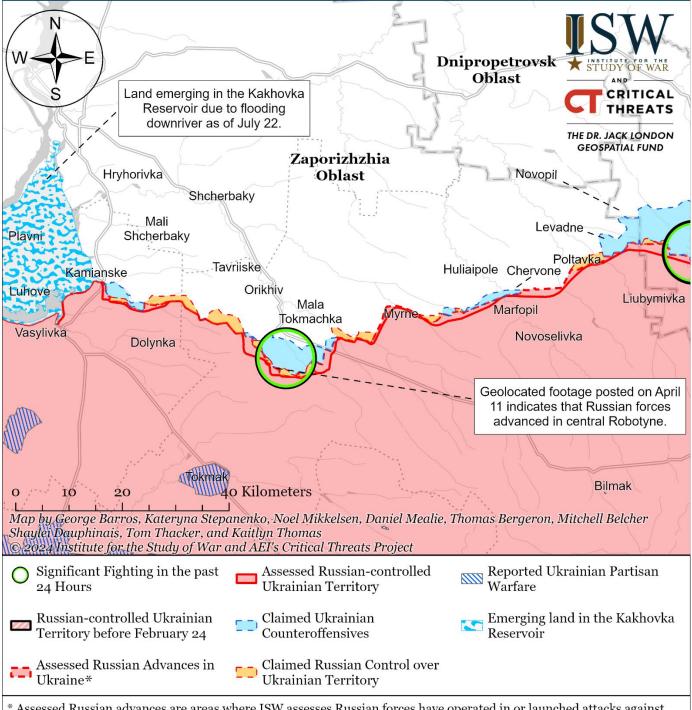
Note: A Russian source claimed on April 11 that Russian forces captured 50 percent of Semenivka. A Russian source claimed on April 10 that Russian forces captured 45 percent of Semenivka. A Russian source claimed on April 9 that Russian forces advanced 150 meters near Novomykhailivka.

<u>Russian Supporting Effort — Southern Axis</u> (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions and secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes)

Russian forces recently advanced in western Zaporizhia Oblast amid continued positional fighting in the area on April 11. Geolocated footage published on Apil 9 indicates that Russian forces recently marginally advanced within western Robotyne.[43] Positional fighting continued near Robotyne and northwest of Verbove (east of Robotyne).[44] Elements of the Russian 76th Airborne (VDV) Division are operating near Ocheretuvate (southeast of Robotyne).[45]



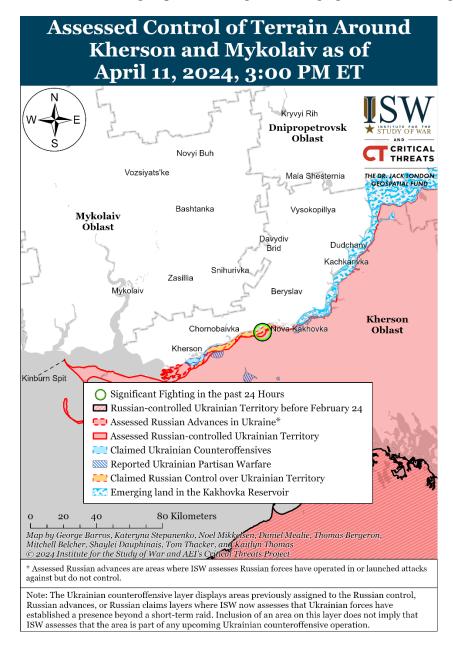
Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhia as of April 11, 2024, 3:00 PM ET



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

Russian forces recently advanced near the limited Ukrainian bridgehead in east (left) bank Kherson Oblast and on islands in the Dnipro River. Geolocated footage published on April 11 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced within Krynky.[46] Geolocated footage published on April 11 indicates that Russian forces recently began operating on the southern part of Velykiy Potemkin island (north of Hola Prystan).[47] Positional fighting continued in east bank Kherson Oblast, including near Krynky, on April 11.[48] Ukrainian Southern Operational Command Spokesperson Colonel Nataliya Humenyuk stated that Ukrainian forces typically wound or kill roughly 60 percent of the personnel in Russian assault groups that attack Ukrainian positions in east bank Kherson Oblast.[49]

Russian sources claimed on April 11 that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian sabotage and reconnaissance groups that attempted to land in east bank Kherson Oblast and on a drilling platform in the Black Sea. The Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) Operations Center claimed that unspecified Russian forces repelled a Ukrainian sabotage and reconnaissance group that attempted to land on the Tendrivska Spit (west of Skadovsk and on the Black Sea).[50] The FSB also claimed that FSB officers prevented a Ukrainian sabotage and reconnaissance group from landing on a drilling rig in the Shtormove gas field area in the Black Sea.[51]



<u>Russian Air, Missile, and Drone Campaign</u> (Russian Objective: Target Ukrainian military and civilian infrastructure in the rear and on the frontline)

See topline text.

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

Russian exiled opposition outlet *Novaya Gazeta Europe* reported on April 11 that Russian courts have commuted sentences in over half of all criminal cases against Russian veterans and active-duty servicemen due to military service in Ukraine.[52] *Novaya Gazeta Europe* reported that Russian authorities have brought criminal charges against at least 2,605 Russian veterans and active-duty servicemen since the start of Russia's invasion in February 2022. Criminal charges against Russian servicemen are roughly split evenly between violations of civil laws and military laws, and the majority of Russian military criminal charges are for leaving a military unit without permission and desertion. *Novaya Gazeta Europe* noted that Russian courts commuted sentences against Russian veterans and servicemen in roughly 57 percent of all criminal cases because of a defendant's military service. Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a law on March 23 releasing individuals from criminal liability if they are called up for mobilization or sign a military service contract.[53]

<u>Russian Technological Adaptations</u> (Russian objective: Introduce technological innovations to optimize systems for use in Ukraine)

Russian milbloggers amplified footage on April 10 of Russian authorities testing the new "Courier" unmanned ground vehicle (UGV) at an unspecified test site in Russia.[54] The milbloggers claimed that a version of the drone equipped with AGS-17 grenade launcher systems has already undergone combat testing in the Avdiivka direction and claimed that the UGV can been equipped with a variety of other weapons, including anti-tank and electronic warfare (EW) systems. The "Courier" may be the same unspecified UGV that ISW observed operating in southeastern Berdychi (northwest of Avdiivka) and in the Bakhmut direction on March 29 and 30.[55]

<u>Ukrainian Defense Industrial Efforts</u> (Ukrainian objective: Develop its defense industrial base to become more self-sufficient in cooperation with US, European, and international partners)

ISW is not publishing coverage of Ukrainian defense industrial efforts today.

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

ISW is not publishing coverage of activities in Russian-occupied areas today.

Russian Information Operations and Narratives

The Kremlin is reportedly spending millions of dollars funding new domestic propaganda channels and narratives. The Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) stated on April 11 that the Kremlin spent 58 billion rubles (about \$621 million) to create propaganda in 2023.[56] The GUR stated that Russia used private organizations not formally related to the Russian government to create "patriotic content," such as blogs, films, television series, and video games. The GUR stated that the organizations pledged to create positive public opinion about Russian President Vladimir Putin, justify Russia's war in Ukraine, and influence Russian military personnel by glorifying their participation in the war.

<u>Significant activity in Belarus</u> (Russian efforts to increase its military presence in Belarus and further integrate Belarus into Russian-favorable frameworks and Wagner Group activity in Belarus)

Belarusian state news outlet *Belta* reported on April 11 that Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko will meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow on the evening of April 11 to discuss regional and international bilateral cooperation.[57]

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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[37] https://t.me/prigozhin 2023 tg/9962

[38] https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/9407

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