

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, April 5, 2023

Kateryna Stepanenko, Karolina Hird, Riley Bailey, Grace Mappes, Layne Philipson, and Mason Clark
April 5, 6:30 pm 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.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky stated that Ukrainian forces will withdraw from Bakhmut to avoid encirclement if necessary, but do not yet assess the need to do so. Zelensky stated during a press conference in Poland on April 5 that Ukrainian troops face a very challenging situation in Bakhmut, and that Kyiv will make the “corresponding decisions” if Ukrainian troops risk encirclement by Russian forces.[1] Zelensky’s statement is in line with other recent statements by Ukrainian officials that Ukrainian military command will order a withdrawal from Bakhmut when and if they deem a withdrawal to be the most strategically appropriate option. While it remains to be seen whether Ukraine’s defense of Bakhmut and its efficacy in fixing Russian forces in the area is worth Ukrainian losses (and we will likely be unable to assess this until observing the Ukrainian spring counteroffensive), Ukrainian military leadership continues to clearly signal that Ukrainian forces are still not encircled and have the option to withdraw as necessary.[2]

Russian President Vladimir Putin framed Russia’s efforts to consolidate control of occupied territories of Ukraine as a matter of internal security and rule of law during a meeting with the Russian National Security Council on April 5. Putin called for the continued economic, legal, and social integration of occupied Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson, and Zaporizhia oblasts into the Russian Federation and emphasized the importance of Russian “restoration” efforts in occupied areas in facilitating the integration process.[3] Putin also accused Ukraine of threatening civilians in occupied areas and highlighted recent “terrorist attacks” against occupation officials and law enforcement agencies, referring to Ukrainian partisan attacks against occupation organs.[4] Putin emphasized the need for intensified law enforcement operations to guard against such attacks and called for the increased participation of local Ukrainian citizens in law enforcement processes, explicitly encouraging collaborators and informants in occupied areas. Putin has notably invoked the concept of “terrorism” and threats to Russian domestic security to justify domestic repressions and is likely setting conditions for further repressions and law enforcement crackdowns in occupied territories using similar framing.[5]

Putin also attempted to portray Russia as a respected world power against the backdrop of Chinese officials downplaying close relations with Russia. Putin held a televised meeting presenting ambassador credentials to the heads of 17 diplomatic missions on April 5, during which he highlighted Russia’s close relationship with Syria and cooperation with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), likely as part of ongoing Russian efforts to appeal to non-Western states.[6] Putin stated that Syria is a reliable partner with whom Russia reached several unspecified agreements during Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad’s recent trip to Russia on March 14. Putin berated ambassadors from the United States and European Union states and claimed that the West is responsible for the war in Ukraine and geopolitical confrontation with Russia.

Chinese Ambassador to the EU Fu Cong stated on April 5 that the Russian–Chinese joint statement declaring there were “no limits” to their ties released in February 2022 was misrepresented, calling “no limits” a “purely rhetorical statement.”[7] Fu added that China does not support Russia’s war in Ukraine and is not providing Russia weapons. Fu’s statement is consistent with ISW’s March 21 assessment that Putin has not been able to secure the benefits from the no-limits bilateral partnership with China which he likely hoped for when meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping in Moscow between March 20 and March 22.[8]

The Kremlin is likely increasingly struggling to maintain loyalty among lower-level regional authorities as it continues to place the onus on funding the war on Russian federal subjects. Independent Russian outlet *Verstka* reported on April 5 that the Kremlin is developing a “program of privileges” in regional administrations to maintain loyalty among lower-level local officials.[9] *Verstka* stated that the Russian presidential administration demanded that regional administrations create “initiative groups” to cater to the needs of regional civil servants, and that regional vice-governors are being encouraged in an oddly framed measure to install vending machines in administration buildings, secure preferential bank loans for employees, and offer officials free city parking.[10] *Verstka* reported that these measures in large part are meant to mitigate growing discontent about the continued costs of the war.[11] ISW has previously observed that the Kremlin has repeatedly placed the onus on Russian regional authorities to mobilize and fund the war, and Russian regions continue to bear the brunt of the Kremlin’s decision-making demographically and economically.[12] Such efforts

are likely meant to pay lip service to the burden placed on regional entities but are unlikely to stimulate a significant increase in support for the war at the regional and local levels.

Putin dismissed Colonel-General Nikolai Grechushkin from his post as Deputy Head of the Ministry of Emergency Situations on April 5.[13] ISW has also previously reported on recent investigations into and arrests of Russian Rosgvardia leadership, including Rosgvardia's naval department head and Deputy Commander of Rosgvardia's Central District.[14] Rosgvardia was notably created using personnel and resources from a variety of Russian security and military services, including the Ministry of Emergency Situations (EMERCOM). The Kremlin may be attempting to oust a slate of Rosgvardia and EMERCOM officials that have fallen out of Putin's favor in an effort to crack down on Russian domestic security control.

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko arrived in Moscow on April 5 to meet with Putin and will meet with the Supreme Council of the Russia-Belarus Union State on April 6. Neither the Russian nor Belarusian governments published readouts by the data collection cutoff for this publication. ISW will provide updates on the meeting in the April 6 update.

Key Takeaways

- **Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky stated that Ukrainian forces will withdraw from Bakhmut to avoid encirclement if necessary, but do not yet assess the need to do so.**
- **Russian President Vladimir Putin framed Russia's efforts to consolidate control of occupied territories of Ukraine as a matter of internal security and rule of law during a meeting with the Russian National Security Council.**
- **Putin also attempted to portray Russia as a respected world power against the backdrop of Chinese officials downplaying close relations with Russia.**
- **Putin dismissed Colonel-General Nikolai Grechushkin from his post as Deputy Head of the Ministry of Emergency Situations on April 5.**
- **Russian and Ukrainian forces continued to engage in positional battles along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line.**
- **Russian forces likely made gains in and around Bakhmut and continued offensive operations along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City frontline.**
- **Russian businessmen may be assuming a larger role in supporting the Russian MoD's efforts to form irregular volunteer formations.**
- **Russian Commissioner for Children's Rights Maria Lvova-Belova continues to deny international allegations that Russia is forcibly deporting Ukrainian children to Russia.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of April 5, 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.

We do not report in detail on Russian war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We will continue to evaluate and report on the effects of these criminal activities on the Ukrainian military and the Ukrainian population and specifically on combat in Ukrainian urban areas. We utterly condemn these Russian violations of the laws of armed conflict, Geneva Conventions, and humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

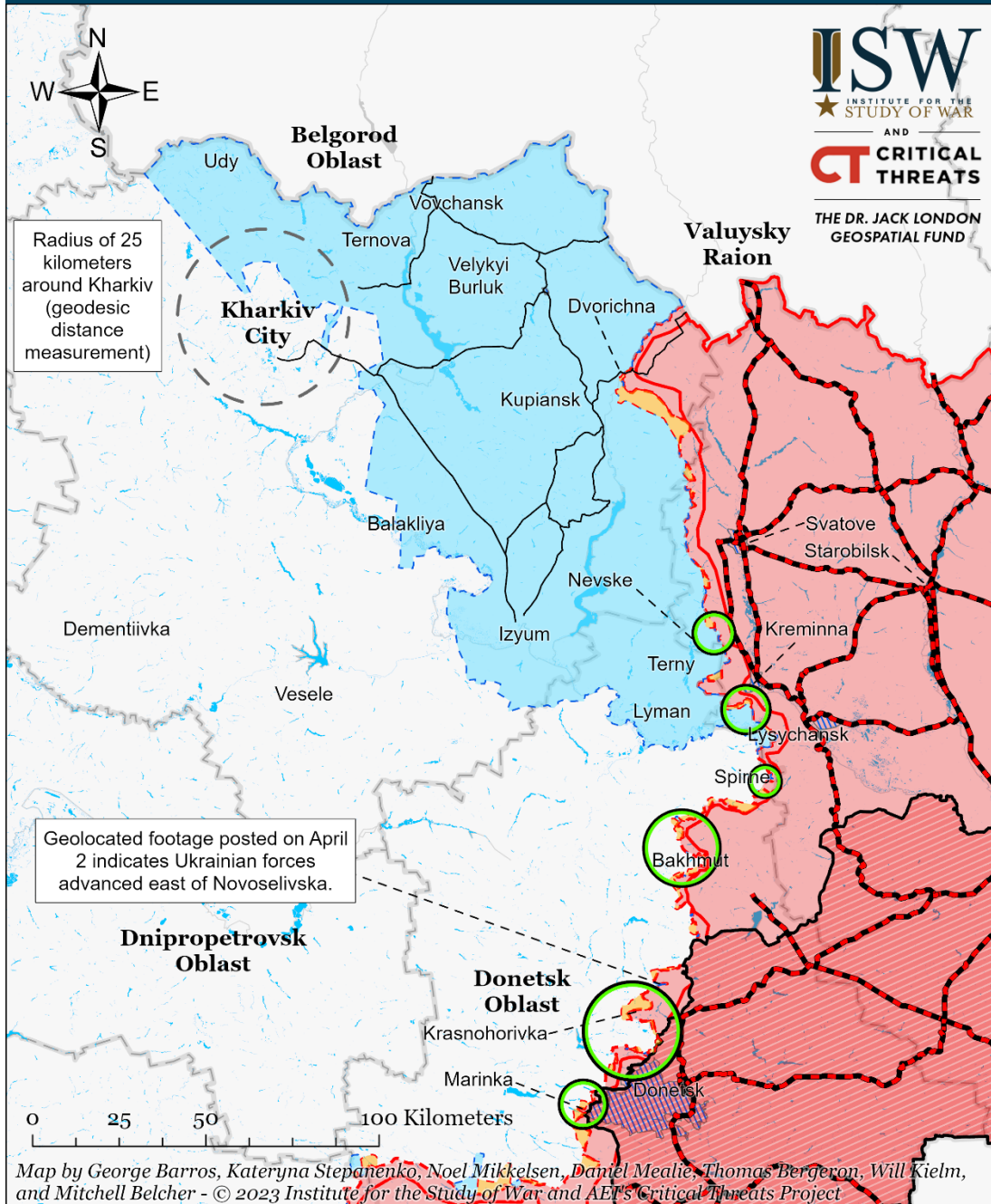
- Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine (comprised of two subordinate main efforts)
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and encircle northern Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Capture the entirety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

Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

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

Russian and Ukrainian forces continued to engage in positional battles along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna frontline and southwest of Lysychansk on April 5. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian assaults on Nevske (20km northwest of Kreminna), the Serebrianska forest area (10km south of Kreminna), and south of Spirne (17km southwest of Lysychansk).[15] A Russian source claimed that Russian forces continued to advance through Ukrainian defensive positions on the outskirts of Makiivka (about 25km northwest of Kreminna) and near the Zhuravka gully.[16] Another Russian source claimed that Russian forces unsuccessfully attempted to advance from the direction of Shpylivka (9km south of Kreminna) towards the Serebrianska forest area and near Torske (about 16km west of Kreminna).[17] The Russian source claimed that Russian forces also attacked near Nevske, Terny (about 21km northwest of Kreminna), and Makiivka. Geolocated footage showed Russian forces using the TOS-1 thermobaric rocket system and shelling Ukrainian positions south of Kreminna.[18]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kharkiv as of April 5, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Key Ukrainian Roads
- Russian Ground Lines of Communication
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- 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.

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

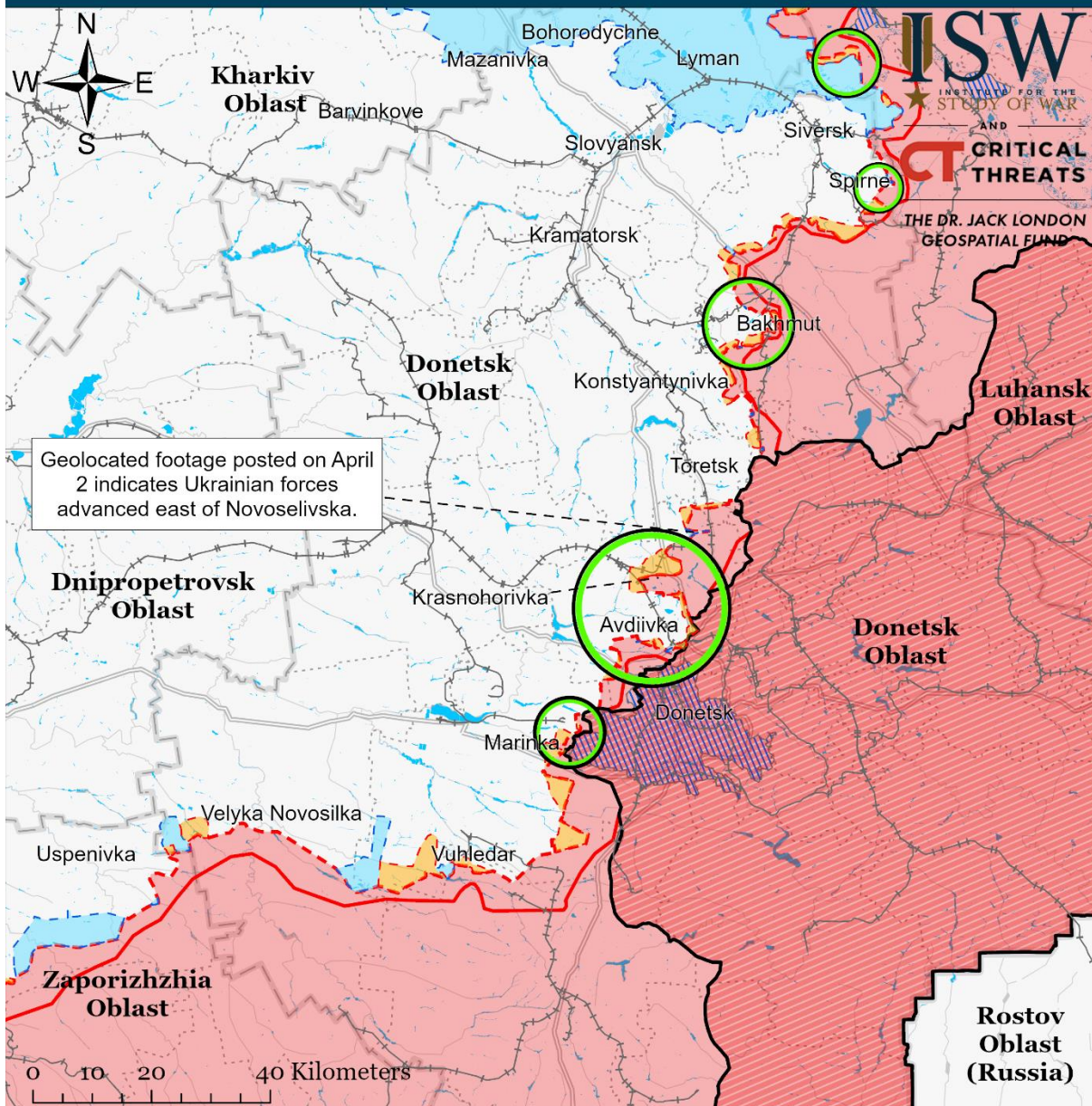
Russian forces continued to make gains in and around Bakhmut on April 5. Geolocated footage shows that Russian forces have made advances north of Bakhmut both north of Khromove (2km west of Bakhmut) and northeast of Orikhovo-Vasylivka (11km northwest of Bakhmut).[19] Russian sources claimed that Wagner Group fighters seized a school just west of the Metallurg Stadium in central Bakhmut.[20] Other Russian sources claimed that Wagner made gains in central and eastern Bakhmut and failed to advance near Ivanivske southwest of Bakhmut.[21] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled ground attacks in Bakhmut, northwest of Bakhmut near Bohdanivka (5km northwest), and southwest of Bakhmut near Ivanivske (2km southwest).[22] A Russian milblogger speculated that Russian forces may next attempt a double encirclement around Bakhmut by first encircling the surrounding area and cutting logistics lines to Chasiv Yar southwest of Bakhmut before cutting Ukrainian lines through Khromove northwest of Bakhmut.[23]

The recent allocation of TOS-1A thermobaric artillery systems to Russian Airborne (VDV) forces on April 3 may include VDV forces operating around Bakhmut.[24] ISW has observed VDV forces, including the 76th and 106th Guards Airborne divisions, in the Bakhmut area, and combat footage posted on April 5 shows Russian forces using a TOS-1A to strike targets in Bakhmut.[25] ISW continues to assess that allocating this military-district level asset to operations in Bakhmut will not provide Russian forces a decisive offensive advantage.[26]

Russian forces continued to conduct ground attacks along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City frontline on April 5. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian ground attacks near Avdiivka, northwest of Avdiivka near Novokalynove (11km northwest), west of Avdiivka near Sieverne (5km west), southwest of Avdiivka near Pervomaiske (11km southwest), and west of Donetsk City near Marinka.[27] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces made unspecified advances near Sieverne and Pervomaiske, and attacked near Avdiivka, north of Avdiivka near Keramik (10km north), southwest of Avdiivka near Krasnohorivka (22km southwest), and in Marinka.[28] Some Russian milbloggers denied April 4 reports that Ukrainian forces made a breakthrough near Avdiivka, but geolocated footage from April 4 shows that Ukrainian forces have advanced to positions west of Novobakhmutivka north of Avdiivka.[29] It remains unclear whether Ukrainian forces maintain positions in these areas, however.[30]

A Russian source claimed that Russian forces broke through Ukrainian defenses in eastern Zaporizhia Oblast on April 5. One Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces made unspecified gains from the Dorozhnyanka up the T0401 highway towards Hulyaipole, but ISW is unable to confirm these claims.[31] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces did not conduct any offensive operations in western Donetsk Oblast.[32] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Russian forces repelled three Ukrainian sabotage and reconnaissance groups in western Donetsk Oblast.[33]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of April 5, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

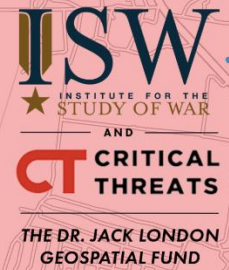
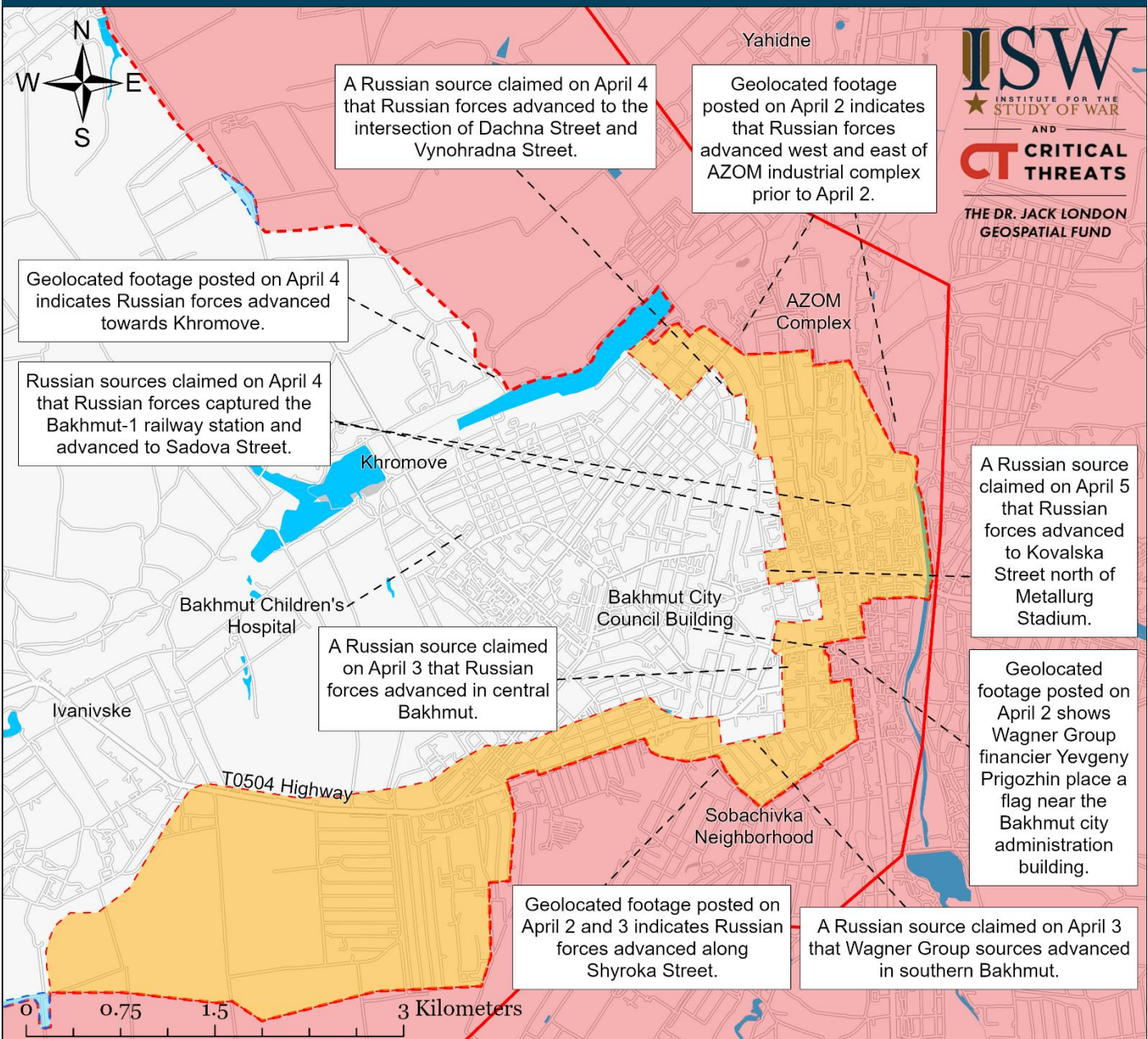


Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Will Kiehl, and Mitchell Belcher - © 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- 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.

Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of April 5, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare

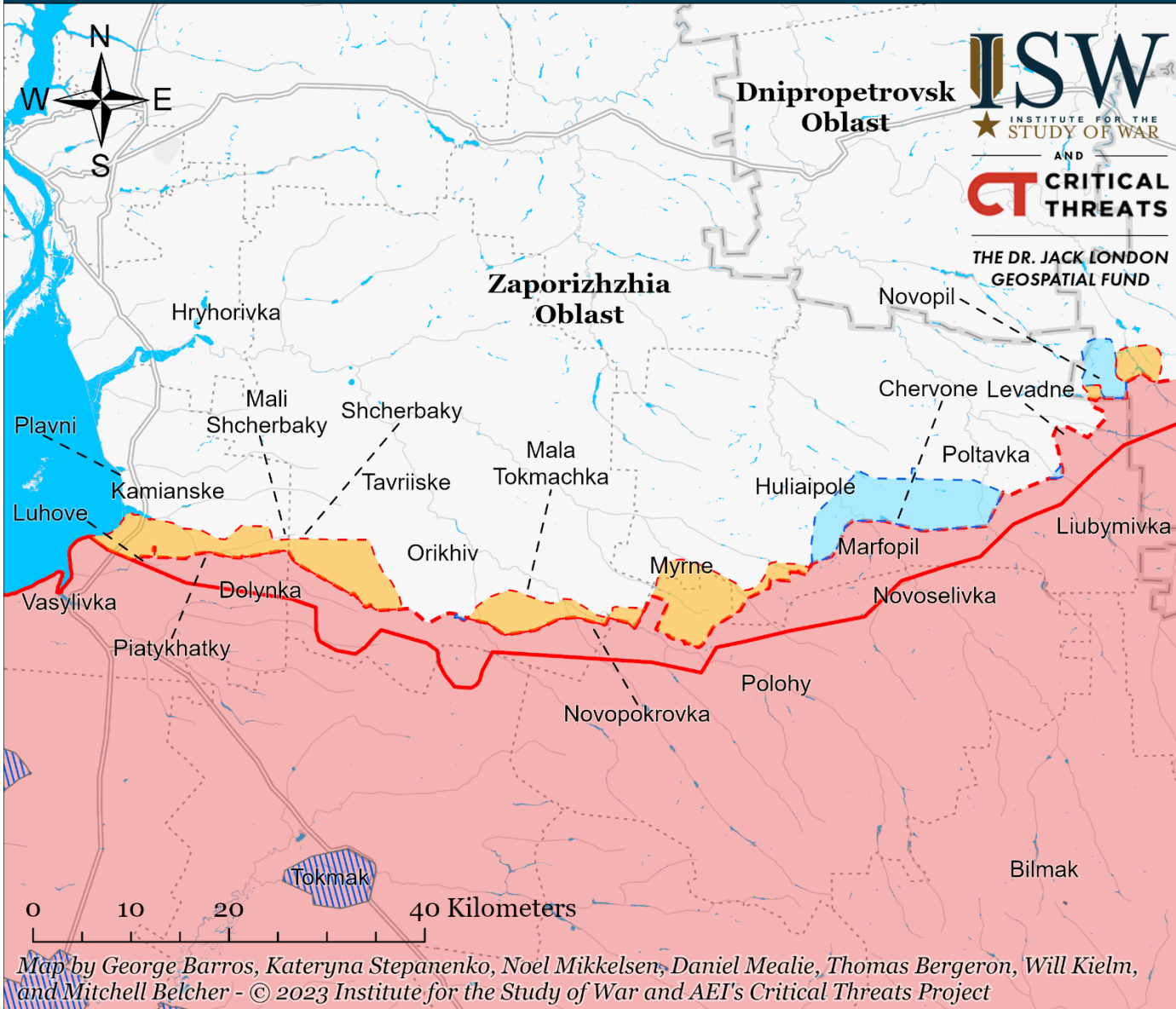
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

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

Russian forces continued defensive operations and shelled along the frontline in southern Ukraine on April 5. Russian Eastern Group of Forces (Eastern Military District) Spokesperson Aleksandr Gordeev claimed that Russian troops in the Zaporizhia direction prevented a Ukrainian sabotage and reconnaissance group from penetrating Russian rear areas in an unspecified location.[34] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian troops in Kherson and Zaporizhia oblasts are building fortifications and defensive lines.[35] Russian forces also conducted routine shelling throughout western Zaporizhia, Kherson, and Mykolaiv oblasts.[36]

Russian sources accused Ukrainian troops of striking an object near the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP) with a drone on April 5.[37] Zaporizhia Oblast occupation deputy Vladimir Rogov posted *RIA Novosti* footage claiming that a Polish-produced drone fell a few hundred meters from the plant.[38] ISW has previously reported on Russian efforts to discredit Ukraine by accusing Ukrainian forces of irresponsible conduct near the ZNPP in an effort to consolidate Russia's control over plant.[39]

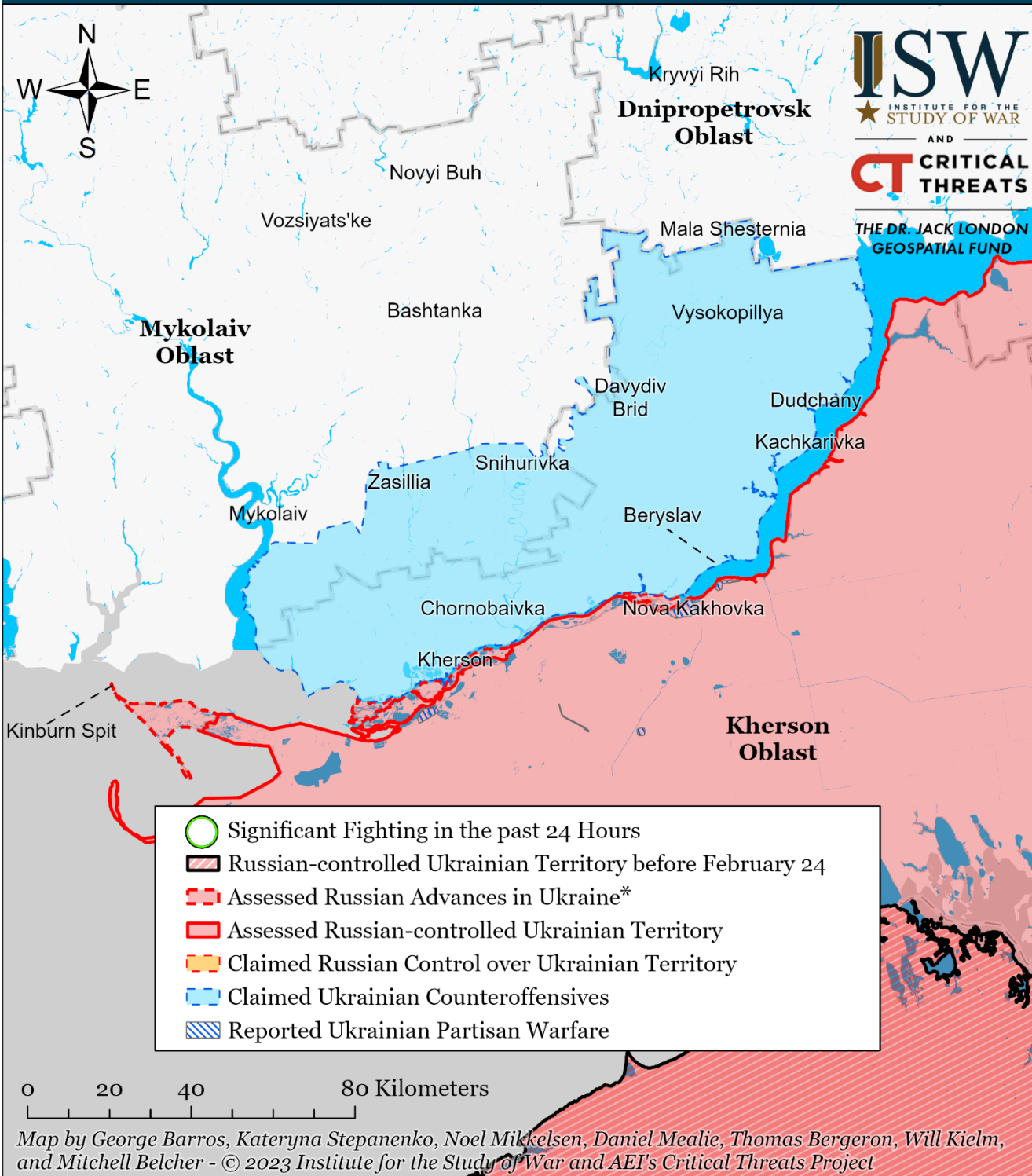
Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhzhia as of April 5, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- 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.

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of April 5, 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.

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

Russian officials continue measures to support Russia's ongoing spring conscription cycle amid continued crypto-mobilization efforts. Russian sources reported on April 4 that authorities in Samara and Chelyabinsk oblasts plan to conscript 3,500 residents, and that Russian officials in Kursk Oblast plan to conscript 2,000 residents and confiscate IDs to prevent potential conscripts from leaving the area.[40] Russian sources reported that Russian officials are increasing advertising campaigns for conscription and contract service, with a focus on promised benefits.[41] Russian media outlet *Rotunda* reported on April 4 that St. Petersburg officials held a meeting focusing on ways to incentivize foreign citizens to serve in the Russian military.[42] ISW previously assessed that Russian conscripts will not increase Russian manpower in the short term and that Russian forces are unlikely to deploy newly conscripted personnel to the war in Ukraine.[43] Russian officials are continuing crypto-mobilization efforts to avoid declaring a formal second wave of mobilization, although these efforts and the ongoing conscription cycle will likely compete for resources and add further pressure on Russia's already taxed training capacity.

The Russian State Duma approved the first draft of a bill allowing all Russian personnel, including conscripts, to participate in Russian peacekeeping operations.[44] The bill removes the previous stipulation that only contract personnel could serve in these operations.[45] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) proposed the bill on February 7, likely as a contingency plan to allocate manpower to peacekeeping operations and free up contractor personnel that could be deployed to Ukraine.[46] The Russian MoD is likely setting conditions to be able to commit newly conscripted personnel to peacekeeping operations, and it is highly unlikely that this measure is meant to slowly introduce conscripts into Ukraine by labeling it a "peacekeeping" operation. It is also highly unlikely that the bill intends to set conditions for a cessation of hostilities in Ukraine. ISW has previously assessed that Russia's redeployment of its "peacekeeping force" from Nargorno-Karabakh to Ukraine is eroding Russia's influence with Armenia, and the Russian MoD likely desires additional reserves that can be committed to the area.[47]

Russian authorities appear to be increasingly concerned about information pertaining to Russia's defense industrial base (DIB). The Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) reportedly arrested a married couple in Nizhny Tagil, Sverdlovsk Oblast on April 4 on charges of transferring military technical information about a defense industry enterprise to Ukrainian officials.[48] The FSB previously arrested *Wall Street Journal* correspondent Evan Gershkovich in Yekaterinburg, Sverdlovsk Oblast on March 30 on charges that he collected information constituting a state secret about the activities of a Russian military-industrial complex enterprise.[49] One of Russia's largest tank producers, Uralvagonzavod, is located in Nizhny Tagil and numerous defense industrial enterprises are located in Yekaterinburg, including Russia's primary producer of self-propelled artillery systems, Uraltransmash; one of Russia's leading optical enterprises, Urals Optical-Mechanical Plant; and Uralmash, which mass produced tanks during and after the Second World War.[50] Russian President Vladimir Putin approved a bill on March 18 increasing fines and jailtime for the misappropriation of Russian military assets, and ISW assesses that the Kremlin may use the premise of threats to Russia DIB assets and information to oust officials who have fallen out of favor and to further conceal the activities of Russian defense industrial enterprises.[51]

Russian businessmen may be assuming a larger role in supporting Russian volunteer recruitment efforts. *The Moscow Times* reported on April 5 that the head of the Russian Copper Company, Igor Altushkin, is reportedly the main sponsor of the "Ural" volunteer battalion operating in Ukraine.[52] Altushkin reportedly started creating the battalion after attending a closed meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in September 2022, during which Putin instructed Russian businessmen to finance volunteer formations.[53] Altushkin reportedly recruited from combat veteran organizations, specifically the Special Forces Veteran Foundation, after initially pivoting away from convict recruitment due to the Wagner Group's monopolization of prison recruitment at the time.[54] *The Moscow Times* also reported that the owner of Russian outlet *Tsargrad*, Konstantin Malofeev, created a bonus fund for Russian assault battalions that conduct successful assaults in Ukraine.[55] The Russian MoD initially entrusted regional bodies with the campaign to form volunteer battalions beginning in the summer of 2022, but Russian regional bodies largely failed to generate consequential combat power for Russian operations in Ukraine.[56] The possible emergence of Russian business figures in the formation of irregular volunteer formations may suggest that the Kremlin has entrusted these figures with this effort out a lack of trust in regional bodies and the Russian MoD. These business figures could also be independently supporting these efforts to increase their individual standing with the Kremlin.

Crimean Occupation Head Sergey Aksyonov appears to be continuing efforts to expand his reported private military company (PMC). Aksyonov reportedly visited personnel of the Union of Donbas Volunteers on April 5 in an unspecified area of Ukraine.[57] Aksyonov has reportedly created his own PMC named Convoy under the leadership of Wagner associate Konstantin Pikalov as an official BARS (Russian Combat Reserve of the Country) unit, and the Union of Donbas Volunteers is heavily involved in recruitment efforts for BARS.[58] Russian State Duma Deputy Alexander Borodai heads the Union of Donbas Volunteers, and Aksyonov's visit to the volunteers in Ukraine suggests deepening cooperation between Aksyonov and Borodai in supporting PMC "Convoy's" operations in Ukraine. Malofeev reportedly has close connections with Borodai

and his possible increased involvement in supporting the volunteer recruitment efforts may suggest that the Union of Donbas Volunteers will assume a larger role in the formation and support of irregular volunteer formations serving in Ukraine.[59]

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 Commissioner for Children’s Rights Maria Lvova-Belova continues to deny international allegations that Russia is forcibly deporting Ukrainian children to Russia. Lvova-Belova claimed on April 4 that parents of children in occupied Kharkiv, Zaporizhia, and Kherson oblasts willingly sent their children to rehabilitation camps in southern Russia and Crimea to protect them from hostilities.[60] Lvova-Belova claimed that some parents have struggled to remove their children from Russian camps due to logistical restraints and because Ukrainian military-aged men cannot leave Ukrainian territory.[61] Lvova-Belova claimed on April 5 that only 16 of 400 children remain in occupied Crimea after parents, volunteers, and legal representatives had escorted the others to unspecified location.[62] Lvova-Belova continues to claim that the Ukrainian government has yet to express interest in cooperating with Russia to return children to their homes.[63] Lvova-Belova also continues to falsely villainize the Ukrainian state as abandoning and brainwashing its children to hate Russia. Lvova-Belova stated during a press conference on April 4 that Ukrainian propaganda and a childhood in Ukraine caused her 16-year-old adopted son, whom she “adopted” (in truth abducted) from Mariupol, to express anti-Russia sentiment in public.[64]

Russian occupation authorities continue to paint further economic integration of occupied territories as advantageous for the average Ukrainian citizen. Zaporizhia Oblast Occupation Head Yevgeny Balitsky claimed on April 5 that farmers in occupied Zaporizhia Oblast received 4,000–5,000 rubles (about 50–60 USD) per ton of grain sold before occupation, but that farmers now receive 9,000–11,000 rubles (about 110–140 USD) per ton of grain sold under occupation.[65]

Russian and occupation authorities continue to announce new infrastructure projects for occupied territories in an effort to strengthen Russia’s defense industrial base. Luhansk People’s Republic (LNR) Head Leonid Pasechnik claimed on April 5 that Russian and LNR authorities will revive the Luhansk Aircraft Repair Plant, which has remained idle since 2014.[66] Pasechnik claimed that Russian state-owned engineering company United Engine Corporation has developed a plan to revive the plant and that the plant has already begun to service unspecified aircraft engines.[67] Pasechnik claimed that the Luhansk Aircraft Repair Plant will begin servicing Mi-8 and Mi-17 helicopter engines by the summer and fully reach pre-war performance in 1.5 years.[68]

Significant activity in Belarus (ISW assesses that a Russian or Belarusian attack into northern Ukraine in early 2023 is extraordinarily unlikely and has thus restructured this section of the update. It will no longer include counter-indicators for such an offensive.)

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.

Russian forces are reportedly planning to redeploy 2,000 Russian troops from training grounds in Belarus to eastern Ukraine. Ukrainian State Border Guard Service Spokesperson Andrii Demchenko stated on April 5 that of the 4,000 Russian personnel currently in Belarus, about 2,000 will redeploy to Donbas to participate in future hostilities.[69] Ukrainian intelligence previously reported that Russian forces deployed elements of the 2nd Motorized Rifle Division (1st Guards Tank Army, Western Military District), 6th Division of the 3rd Army Corps, and assorted territorial troops to train in Belarus.[70] Russian military command may have redeployed 2,000 troops from these formations to commit them to the frontline in Ukraine either in an attempt to sustain faltering offensive operations or to defend against a potential Ukrainian counteroffensive.

Belarusian forces continued combat exercises throughout Belarus on April 5. The Belarusian Ministry of Defense (MoD) reported that a mechanized battalion of the 120th Separate Guards Mechanized Brigade prepared to deploy to an unspecified designated area to carry out further tasks and that an unspecified anti-aircraft missile regiment will hold tactical exercises at the Brest Training Ground in Brest Oblast until April 7.[71] The Belarusian MoD also noted that military recruitment offices in Grodno Oblast continue to provide mobilization resources as part of a combat readiness verification exercise in an unspecified formation of the Belarusian Western Operational Command.[72]

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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- [1] <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/ukraine-will-take-corresponding-decisions-if-troops-risk-encirclement-bakhmut-2023-04-05/>
- [2] <https://armyinform.com dot ua/2023/04/05/vorog-spryamovuye-informacziyu-pro-boyi-u-bahmuti-dlya-psyhologichnogo-vplyvu-ale-jomu-cze-ne-vdayetsya-ganna-malyar/>; <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/ukraine-will-take-corresponding-decisions-if-troops-risk-encirclement-bakhmut-2023-04-05/>
- [3] <https://kremlin dot ru/events/president/70870>; <http://duma.gov dot ru/news/56791/>
- [4] <https://kremlin dot ru/events/president/70870>; <http://duma.gov dot ru/news/56791/>
- [5] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar022823>; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar013123>; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar121322>
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- [8] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-march-21-2023>
- [9] <https://t.me/svobodnieslova/1720>
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- [11] <https://t.me/svobodnieslova/1720>
- [12] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar030723>
- [13] <https://t.me/readovkanews/56248>
- [14] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar032123>; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar032923>
- [15] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02XvaP348ULJjaxc4FchgCzmoBpUUayVR6xuvTTdsgyv8kg5gearRwtyPk1VJFU4cZl>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02yRwGWPma2WAM97XQowch8AdmFKHGMjsaoyrR2MVUnYQap48F5ZfiAjSYA6PmBYitl>
- [16] <https://t.me/rybar/45460>
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- [18] https://t.me/mod_russia/25387; <https://twitter.com/EjShahid/status/1643594648550506497>; <https://twitter.com/neonhandrail/status/1643618210279718915>; <https://t.me/izvestia/127162>; https://t.me/mod_russia/25330; <https://twitter.com/Danspiun/status/1643586386040061952?s=20>; <https://twitter.com/EjShahid/status/1642908792353325058?s=20>; <https://twitter.com/EjShahid/status/1642950332022939649?s=20>
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