

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, August 6, 2023

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August 6, 2023, 6:30pm ET

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

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

Note: The data cutoff for this product was 12:00pm ET on August 6. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the August 7 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Ukrainian forces struck two key road bridges along critical Russian ground lines of communication (GLOCs) connecting occupied Crimea and occupied Kherson Oblast on August 6, causing Russian forces to reroute road traffic from shorter eastern routes to longer western routes. Kherson Oblast occupation administration head Vadimir Saldo claimed that Ukrainian forces launched 12 missiles at a road bridge across the Henichesk Strait connecting Henichesk Raion to the Arabat Spit and that Russian air defenses intercepted nine of the missiles.[1] Russian sources amplified images showing significant damage to the bridge and claimed that Ukrainian strikes partially collapsed a section of the bridge.[2] Russian sources amplified footage showing Ukrainian forces striking the Chonhar road bridge along the M-18 (Dzhankoi-Melitopol) highway connecting occupied Crimea with occupied Kherson Oblast and subsequent minor damage to both sides of the bridge.[3] Crimean occupation head Sergei Aksyonov claimed that Ukrainian forces launched two missiles at the bridge and that one missile made it through Russian air defenses and damaged the roadbed of the road bridge.[4] Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces used Storm Shadow cruise missiles to conduct both strikes, although ISW has yet to observe confirmation of Russian forces intercepting Storm Shadow cruise missiles.[5]

Ukrainian Strikes Against Bridges in Crimea as of August 6, 2023



Aksyonov announced that repair work is underway at the Chonhar bridge and that Russian officials will reroute all traffic through the Armyansk and Perekop checkpoints along the M-17 (Armyansk-Oleshky) and T2202 (Armyansk-Nova Kakhovka) highways.[6] The Crimean occupation transport ministry announced that all traffic through the Dzhankoi checkpoint along the M-18 highway is closed but that traffic along the Kerch Strait bridge and the Kerch Strait ferry crossing is operating normally.[7] The Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) suspended civilian entry to the Arabat Spit as of July 31, and Russian officials have not commented on the status of traffic along the Henichesk-Arabat Spit GLOC.[8] The extent of the damage to the bridge across the Henichesk Strait is likely forcing Russian forces to redirect military traffic from the Arabat Spit to longer western routes between occupied Crimea and occupied Kherson Oblast. The M-17 highway passes through Armyansk before branching at a junction with the T2202 highway to the north and continuing to the northwest, meaning that most if not all Russian road traffic between Crimea and Kherson Oblast will have to pass along or very close to one 20km section of the M-17 between Ishun and Armyansk. This major bottleneck in Russian GLOCs will likely pose significant disruptions to logistics and chances for delays and traffic jams. It is unclear how quickly Russian officials will be able to repair the Chonhar bridge and it is equally as unclear if Russian officials have repaired the Chonhar railway bridge that Ukrainian forces struck on July 29.[9] The damage to the Henichesk Strait bridge will likely take Russian officials substantially longer to repair. Russian GLOCs along the T2202 northwest of Crimea - especially routes along primary and trunk roads south of Nova Kakhovka - are closer to Ukrainian positions in upper Kherson Oblast and in many cases within artillery range of the Ukrainian-held western bank of the river. Russian forces likely can reduce risks from Ukrainian indirect fire in this area by taking slower and less efficient village roads northeast of Chaplynka, but at the cost of slower and more complicated logistics support.

Ukrainian strikes on bridges along critical Russian GLOCs are a part of the Ukrainian interdiction campaign focused on setting conditions for future decisive counteroffensive operations. A prominent Wagner-affiliated Russian milblogger argued that the Ukrainian strikes on August 6 show that Ukrainian forces are methodically trying to cut off the Russian grouping in southern Ukraine and disrupt its logistics in a way similar to the Ukrainian interdiction campaign during the Kherson counteroffensive.[10] The milblogger noted that Russian defenses on west (right) bank Kherson Oblast broke down in a matter of days following months of Ukrainian strikes on Russian logistics and expressed concern that the situation could repeat itself.[11] The Ukrainian strikes on the eastern crossing points will likely disrupt the transport of Russian personnel, materiel, and equipment from occupied Crimea to critical Russian defensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast and the Zaporizhia-Donetsk Oblast border area for some, undetermined, time. Ukrainian forces appear to be also expanding their interdiction efforts to target Russian naval targets involved in Russian logistics in the Black Sea as ISW has previously observed.[12] Ukrainian officials have routinely stated their commitment to a deliberate interdiction campaign against Russian military targets to degrade Russian logistics and defensive capabilities to set favorable conditions for future Ukrainian counteroffensive activity.[13]

Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations on at least two sectors of the front on August 6. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces conducted offensive operations in the Berdyansk (western Donetsk-eastern Zaporizhia Oblast area) and Melitopol (western Zaporizhia Oblast) directions.[14] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) and other Russian sources claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian offensive operations near Bakhmut.[15] Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) Head Major General Kyrylo Budanov stated in an interview published on August 5 that Ukrainian forces are advancing faster around Bakhmut than in southern Ukraine.[16] Budanov also stated that Russian forces have built stationary, fully equipped, concrete-filled defense posts in southern Ukraine, making the Ukrainian offensive there difficult.[17]

Russian forces conducted one of the largest missile and drone strike series on Ukraine in recent months on the night of August 5-6. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces launched the first wave of strikes on the night of August 5 consisting of 14 Kalibr cruise missiles and three Kh-47 Kinzhal air-launched ballistic missiles, and that Ukrainian forces shot down 12 Kalibr cruise missiles.[18] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces launched a second wave of strikes on August 6 consisting of 27 Shahed-131/136 drones, six Kalibr missiles, and 20 Kh-101/555 air-launched cruise missiles and that Ukrainian forces shot down all 27 Shahed drones, five Kalibr missiles, and 13 Kh-101/555 missiles.[19] Ukrainian Air Force Command Spokesperson Colonel Yuriy Ihnat reported on August 6 that Russian attacks targeted the Starokostyantyniv airfield in Khmelnytskyi Oblast and noted that this is not the first time that Russian forces have attacked the airfield.[20] Some Russian milbloggers claimed that Russians targeted the Starokostyantyniv airfield because Ukrainian forces store foreign-supplied missiles including Storm Shadow cruise missiles at warehouses on the base and because the Ukrainian aviation unit that operates at the base is the only one with Storm Shadow missiles.[21] ISW has not observed any evidence to confirm these claims, however. The milbloggers' claims that Russian forces specifically targeted an area where Ukrainian forces allegedly store and launch Storm Shadow missiles suggests that Russian forces are increasingly concerned about Ukraine's interdiction campaign.

Ukrainian officials stated that Ukrainian air defenses have destroyed 3,500 aerial targets since the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022. Ukrainian Air Force Command Spokesperson Colonel Yuriy Ihnat stated on August 6 that Ukrainian air defenses have intercepted and destroyed 3,500 aerial targets, including 350 Russian fixed and rotary wing aircraft, 1,200 cruise missiles, including 13 hypersonic Russian "Kinzhal" Kh-47M2 missiles, and 24 ballistic missiles.[22] Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky reported on August 6 that Ukrainian air defenses have intercepted and destroyed over 2,000 Russian unmanned aerial vehicles (types unspecified) and that Ukrainian pilots have conducted over 14,000 sorties since February 24, 2022.[23]

International talks aimed at drafting the main principles for a future settlement to the war in Ukraine continued in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia on August 6. Diplomats from 42 countries including the US, Japan, South Korea, South Africa, the United Kingdom, India, and China reportedly agreed that future peace talks between Ukraine and Russia should be based on principles of international law, such as respect for Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity.[24] Ukrainian Presidential Administration Chief of Staff Andriy Yermak reported that the Ukrainian delegation spoke with representatives from each country present at the meeting.[25] Chinese diplomats reportedly reintroduced China's 12-point peace plan from February 2023, prompting European delegations to respond that an unconditional ceasefire would create a frozen conflict and allow Russia to consolidate its control over occupied Ukrainian territories.[26] *The Wall Street Journal* reported on August 6 that most countries in attendance in Saudi Arabia, including China, agreed to meet again in the near future in a similar format that again would not include Russia.[27]

Kremlin Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov gave an unclear and contradictory answer to a *New York Times* reporter who asked whether Russia seeks to conquer more Ukrainian territory beyond the four partially occupied oblasts that Russia illegally annexed in September 2022. The *New York Times* reported that Peskov said, "No... We just want to control all the land we have now written into our Constitution as ours," when asked whether Russia seeks to capture more territory in Ukraine.[28] Peskov's seemingly straightforward answer is contradictory, vague, and does not answer the reporter's original question. Russian forces do not fully occupy the four oblasts — Kherson, Zaporizhia, Donetsk, and Luhansk oblasts — that the Russian government formally claims. Russian forces would have to conduct significant offensive operations to capture over 16,000 square kilometers of land in these four oblasts to bring de facto Russian-occupied territory in line with

the Russian constitution as Peskov described. Russia also occupies territory in northeastern Kharkiv Oblast and in Mykolaiv Oblast (the Kinburn Spit) — territory that the Kremlin has not formally annexed. Peskov’s statement implies that Russian forces should relinquish their territory in Kharkiv and Mykolaiv oblasts, but the Russian government has made no indication that it plans to do so and, in fact, is continuing offensive operations to gain more territory in Kharkiv. The Kremlin likely seeks to continue significant military operations against Ukraine to – at a minimum – capture the remaining parts of Kherson, Zaporizhia, Donetsk, and Luhansk oblasts that Russian forces do not yet occupy. The Kremlin has articulated further maximalist objectives in Ukraine beyond that, including changing the Ukrainian government and constitution.[29]

Peskov also strangely stated that Russia’s presidential election is “not really democracy” but rather a “costly bureaucracy” and that Russian President Vladimir Putin “will be re-elected next year with more than 90 percent of the vote,” but walked back on this statement the same day it was publicized.[30]

Key Takeaways:

- **Ukrainian forces struck two key road bridges along critical Russian ground lines of communication (GLOCs) connecting occupied Crimea and occupied Kherson Oblast on August 6, causing Russian forces to reroute road traffic from shorter eastern routes to longer western routes.**
- **Ukrainian strikes on bridges along critical Russian GLOCs are a part of the Ukrainian interdiction campaign focused on setting conditions for future decisive counteroffensive operations.**
- **Russian forces conducted one of the largest missile and drone strike series on Ukraine in recent months on the night of August 5-6.**
- **Ukrainian officials stated that Ukrainian air defenses have destroyed 3,500 aerial targets since the beginning of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022.**
- **International talks aimed at drafting the main principles for a future settlement to the war in Ukraine continued in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia on August 6.**
- **Kremlin Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov gave an unclear and contradictory answer to a New York Times reporter who asked whether Russia seeks to conquer more Ukrainian territory beyond the four partially occupied oblasts that Russia illegally annexed in September 2022.**
- **Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations on at least two sectors of the front on August 6.**
- **Russian forces conducted offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line, near Bakhmut, along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line, in the Zaporizhia-Donetsk Oblast border area, and in western Zaporizhia Oblast August 6 and made advances in certain areas.**
- **Russian military command finally allowed personnel of the Russian “Alga” volunteer battalion – which has been involved in the most combat intense frontlines in Donetsk Oblast since Fall 2022 – to return to Russia on leave.**
- **Russian occupation authorities in Ukraine continue establishing institutional linkages between Russian and Ukrainian governance structures and social services in occupied Ukraine.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of August 6, 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.

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

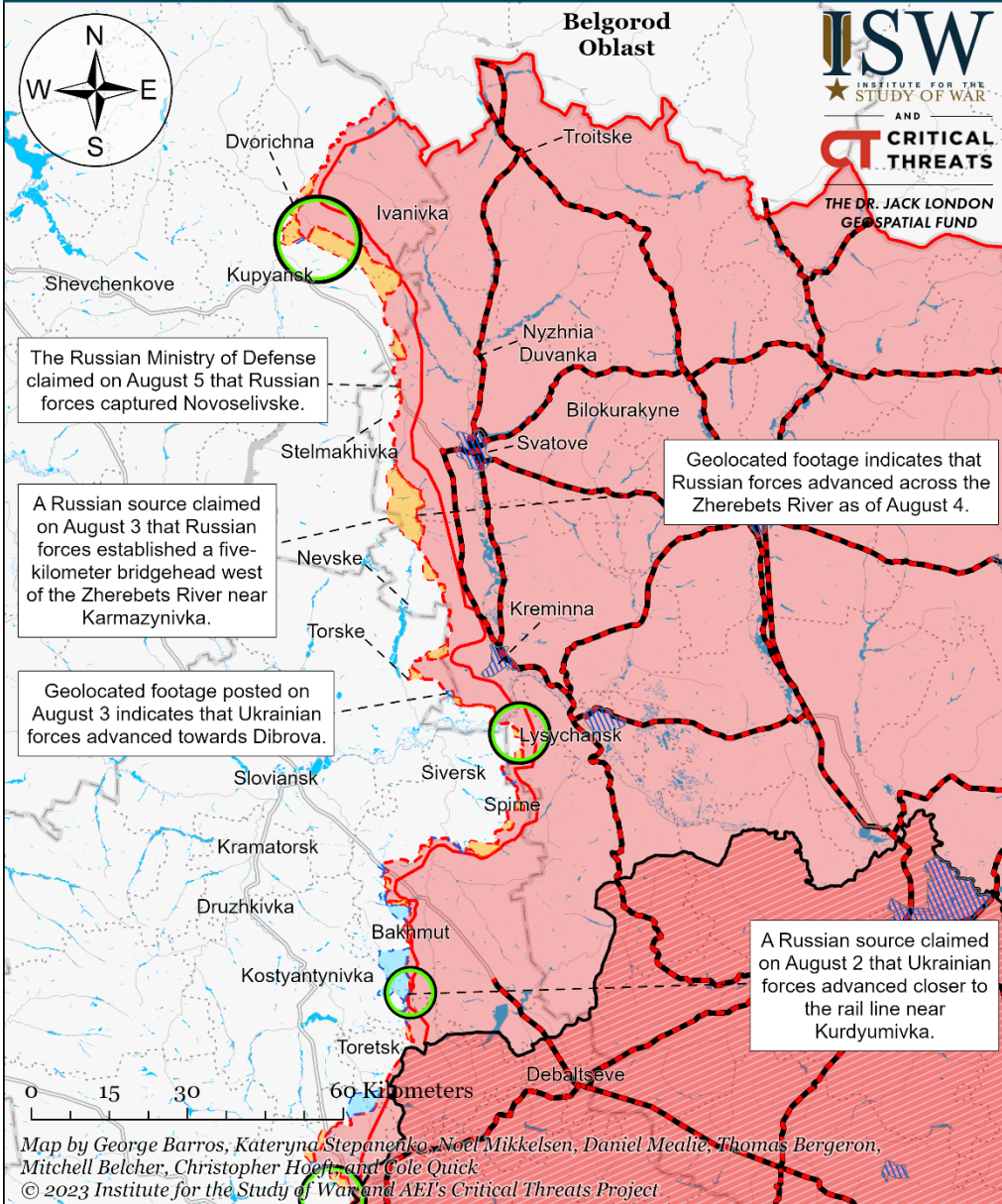
Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

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)

The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line but did not advance on August 6. The Russian MoD claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked Russian forces near Synkivka (8km northeast of Kupyansk), Vilshana (15km northeast of Kupyansk), Novoselivske (14km northwest of Svatove), southwest of Kovalivka (10km southwest of Svatove), and near the Serebryanske forest area (10km southwest of Kreminna).[\[31\]](#)

Russian forces conducted offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on August 6 and reportedly advanced. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked Ukrainian forces near Petropavlivka (7km east of Kupyansk), Vilshana, Synkivka, and Bilohorivka (12km south of Kreminna).[\[32\]](#) Russian Western Grouping of Forces Spokesperson Sergey Zybinsky claimed that Russian assault groups of the 6th Combined Arms Army (Western Military District) advanced into Ukrainian defenses near Vilshana.[\[33\]](#) Some Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces took control of Novoselivske on August 5.[\[34\]](#) A Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed that Russian forces "decisively" captured Novoselivske after several months of fighting and pushed Ukrainian forces out of their last positions in the western part of the settlement on August 5.[\[35\]](#) The milblogger claimed that fierce fighting continues for the heights south of Novoselivske.[\[36\]](#) ISW has not yet observed visual confirmation of these claims.

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of August 6, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- - - 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.

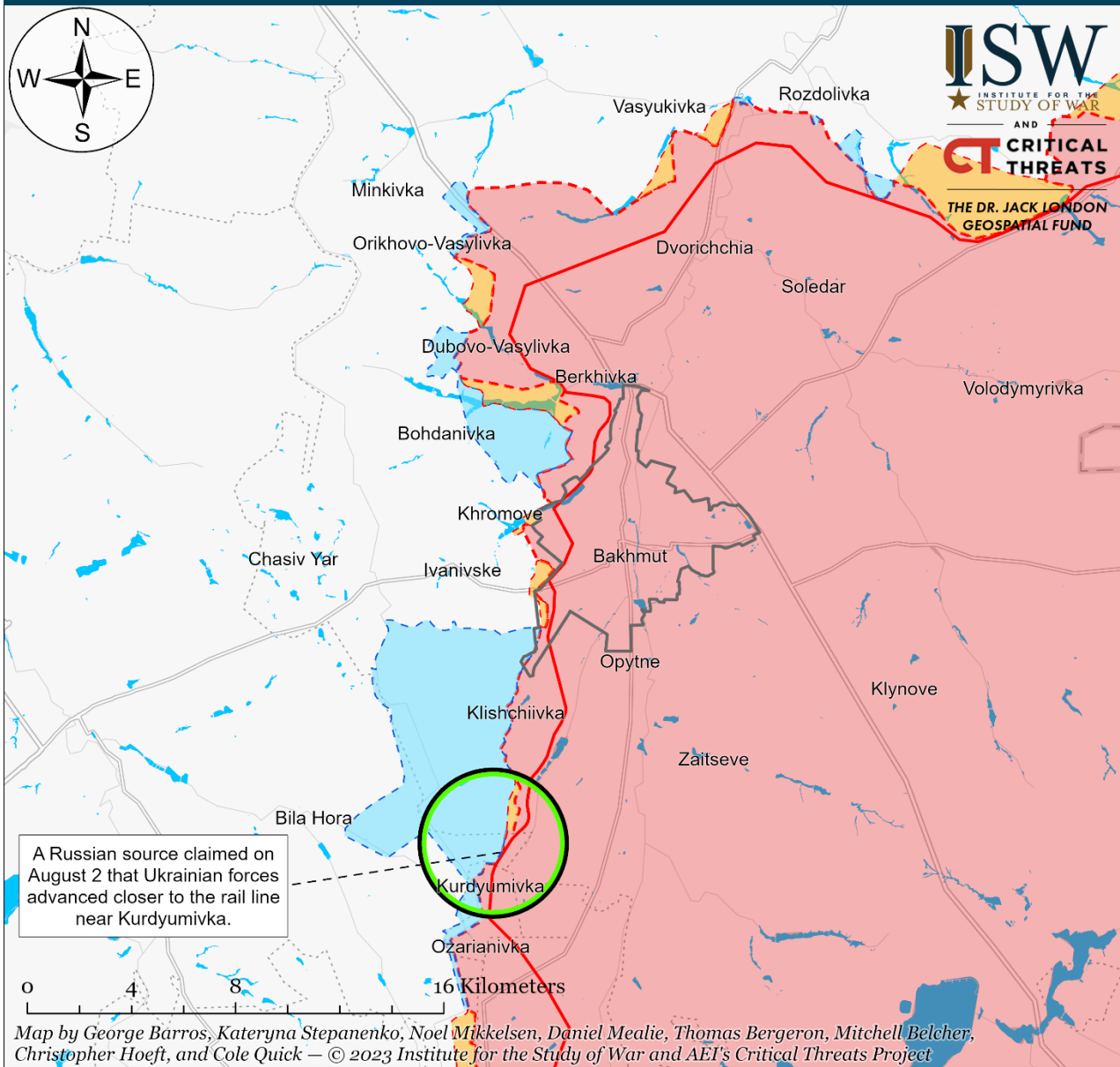
Note: A Russian source claimed on August 4 that Russian forces advanced two kilometers in depth along a three to five kilometer front in the Kupyansk direction.

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 reportedly conducted offensive operations near Bakhmut on August 6, but did not make any confirmed or claimed gains. Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) Head Major General Kyrylo Budanov stated in an interview published on August 5 that Ukrainian forces are advancing faster around Bakhmut than in southern Ukraine.^[37] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) and other Russian sources claimed that elements of the Russian Southern Grouping of Forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut).^[38] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian and Ukrainian artillery strikes are preventing either side from gaining a foothold or the initiative near Klishchiivka, however.^[39] A Russian milblogger claimed that unspecified Russian airborne units (VDV) repelled a Ukrainian attack near Berkhivka (6km northwest of Bakhmut).^[40]

Russian forces conducted offensive operations near Bakhmut on August 6, but did not make any confirmed or claimed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks near Kurdyumivka (12km southwest of Bakhmut) and northeast of Dyliivka (15km southwest of Bakhmut).^[41] Footage published on August 5 purportedly show elements of the 4th Motorized Rifle Brigade (2nd Luhansk People's Republic Army Corps) operating near Klishchiivka.^[42]

Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of August 6, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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A Russian source claimed on August 2 that Ukrainian forces advanced closer to the rail line near Kurdyumivka.

0 4 8 16 Kilometers

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

- 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

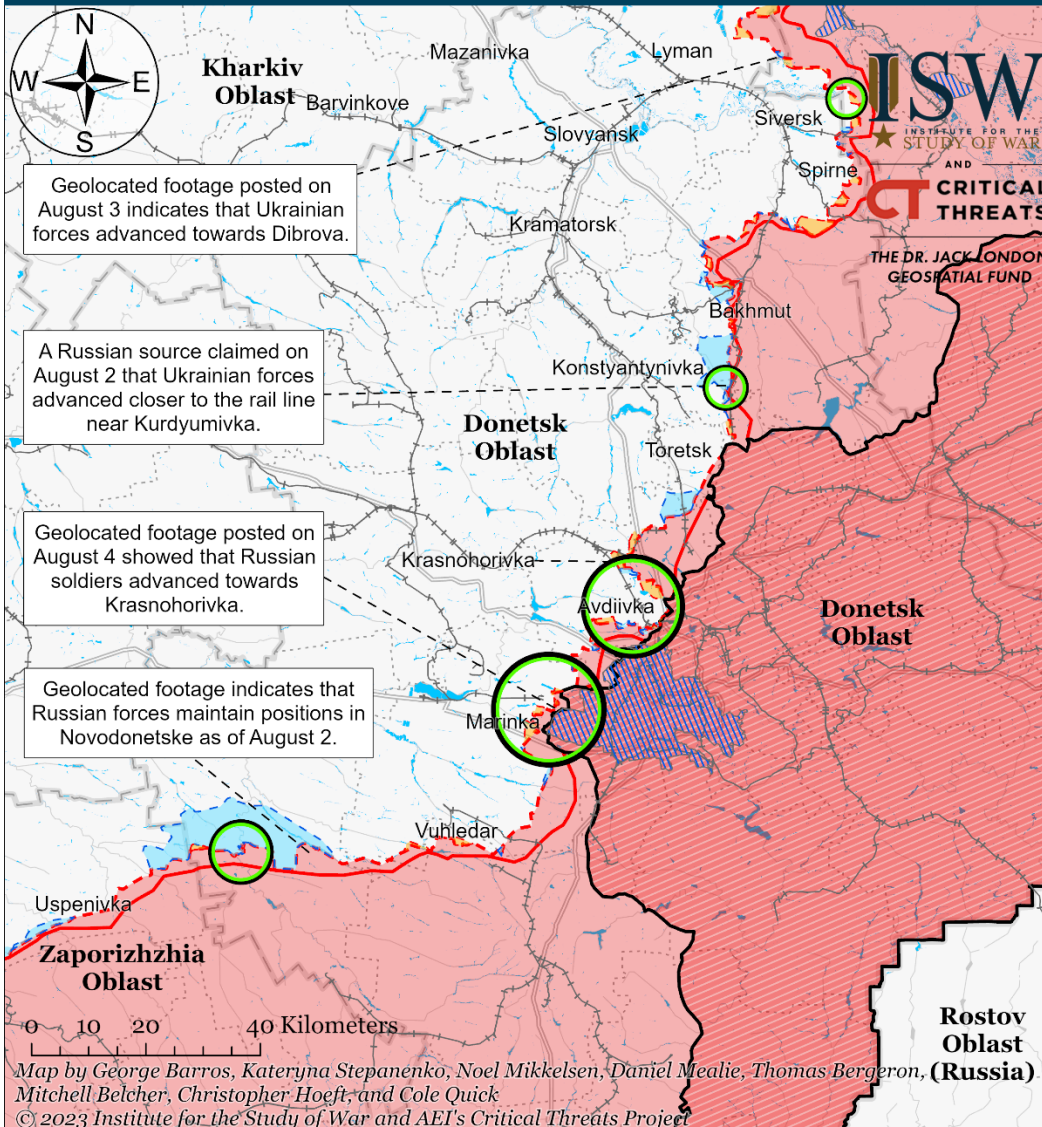
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Note: A Russian source claimed on August 4 that Ukrainian forces advance 20 meters daily near Klishchiivka. Ukrainian Eastern Group of Forces Spokesperson Colonel Serhiy Cherevaty stated on August 3 that Ukrainian forces advance over 100 meters daily on Bakhmut's southern flank.

The Russian MoD claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted limited ground attacks along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line and did not advance on August 6. The Russian MoD claimed that elements of the Southern Grouping of Forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Pervomaiske (11km southwest of Avdiivka), Nevelske (13km southwest of Avdiivka), and Marinka (on the western outskirts of Donetsk City).[43]

Russian forces conducted limited ground attacks along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line on August 6, but did not make any confirmed or claimed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks near Avdiivka, Marinka, and Krasnohorivka (22km southwest of Avdiivka).[44] Footage published on August 6 purportedly shows elements of the 9th Motorized Rifle Brigade (1st Donetsk People's Republic [DNR] Army Corps) operating in the Avdiivka direction and elements of the 5th Motorized Rifle Brigade (1st DNR Army Corps) operating in the Marinka direction.[45]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of August 6, 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
- + Major Railroads
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare

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

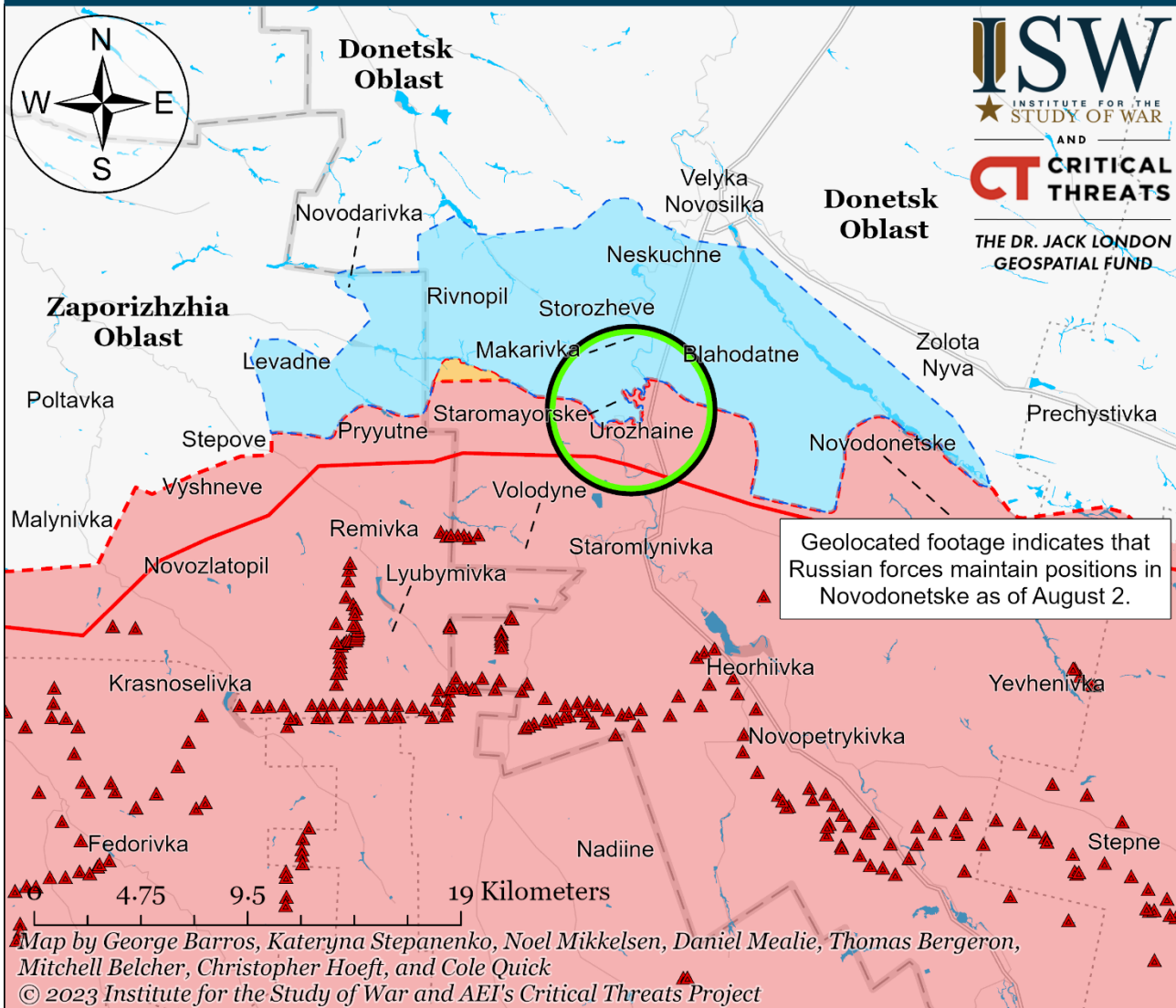
Note: A Russian source claimed on August 4 that Russian forces advanced two kilometers deep along a one and a half kilometer front in the Marinka direction. A Russian source claimed on August 4 that Ukrainian forces advance 20 meters daily near Klishchiivka. Ukrainian Eastern Group of Forces Spokesperson Colonel Serhiy Cherevaty stated on August 3 that Ukrainian forces advance over 100 meters daily on Bakhmut's southern flank. Russian sources claimed on August 2 that Russian forces control the surrounding heights of Staromayorske.

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

Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations along the administrative border between Donetsk and Zaporizhia oblasts on August 6 but did not advance. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Berdyansk direction (Zaporizhia-Donetsk Oblast border area).[46] Russian sources claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian assaults near Urozhaine (9km south of Velyka Novosilka) and Staromayorske (9km south of Velyka Novosilka).[47] Zaporizhia Oblast occupation official Vladimir Rogov claimed that elements of the 155th Naval Infantry Brigade (Pacific Fleet) repelled the Ukrainian assaults near Urozhaine.[48] Russian sources, including "Vostok" Battalion commander Alexander Khodakovsky who is defending in the area, claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked from Staromayorske towards Urozhaine with two infantry platoons with several tanks and armored vehicles and managed to temporarily cross the shallow river separating the two settlements.[49]

Russian forces conducted limited unsuccessful counterattacks in the Zaporizhia-Donetsk Oblast border area on August 6. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attempted to regain lost positions near Staromayorske.[50]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around the Vremivka Salient as of August 6, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Geolocated footage indicates that Russian forces maintain positions in Novodonetske as of August 2.

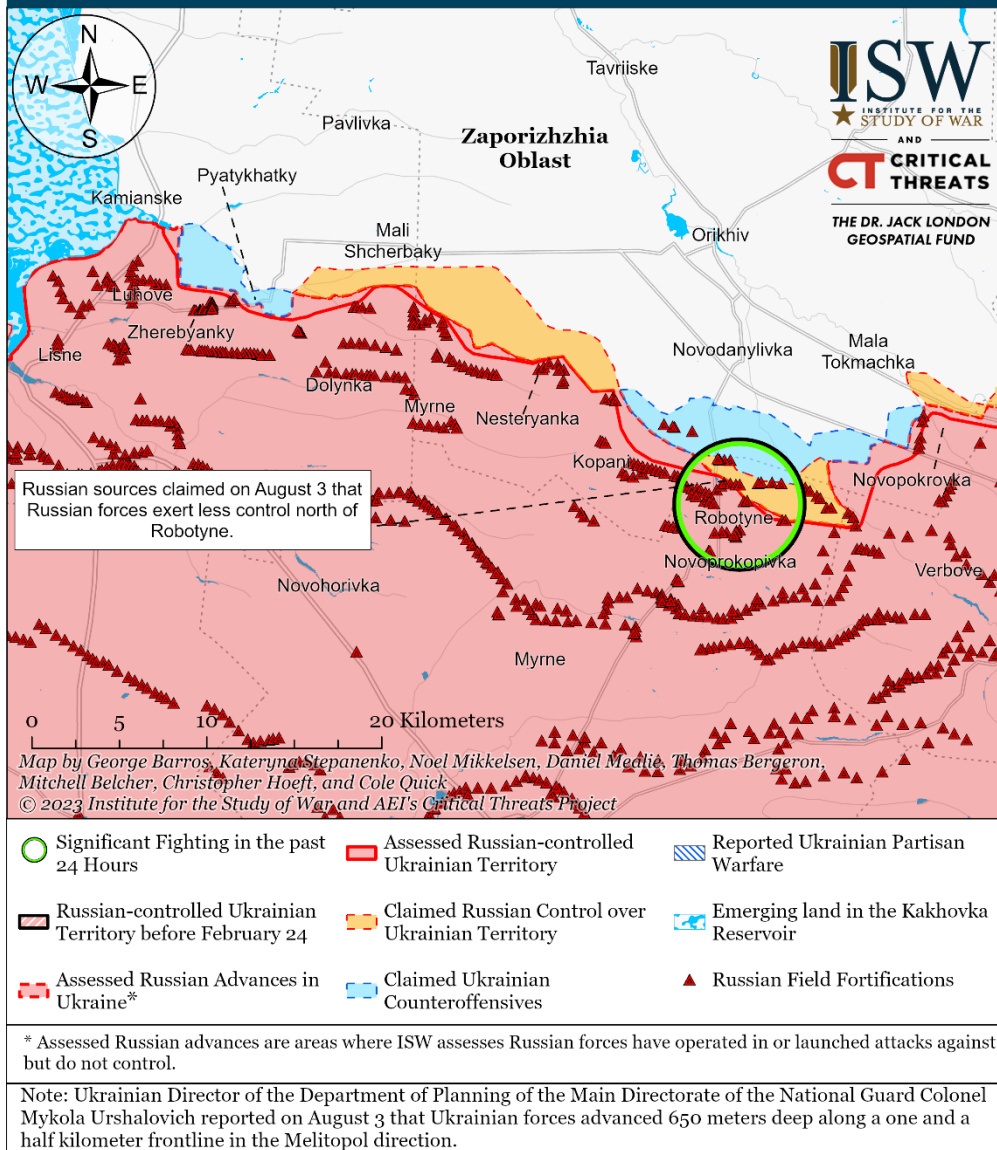
- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- ▲ Russian Field Fortifications
- Assessed Russian Advances 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 August 2 that Russian forces control the surrounding heights of Staromayorske.

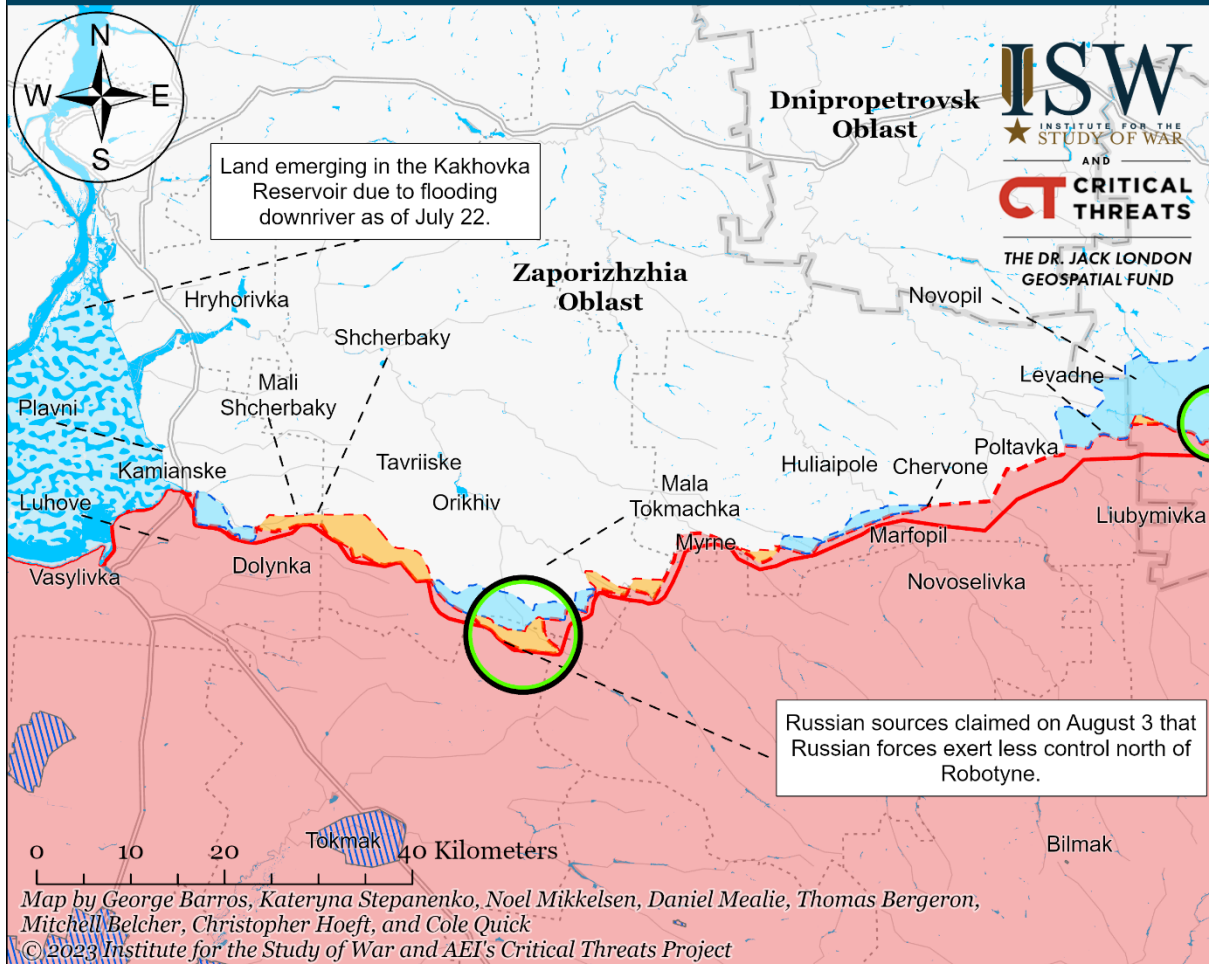
Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast but did not make any confirmed gains on August 6. The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) and Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian assaults near Robotyne (12km south of Orikhiv).[51] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted assaults in the area with small, armored groups.[52] One Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces reached an unspecified Russian trench position along the Robotyne-Verbove line (up to 18km southeast of Orikhiv) and engaged Russian forces there with small arms fire, but that Russian forces later counterattacked and pushed Ukrainian forces from the trenches.[53] Zaporizhia Oblast occupation administration head Yevgeny Balitsky claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian infantry groups without vehicle support that attempted to advance near Mala Tokmachka (7km southeast of Orikhiv) and Novopokrovka (14km southeast of Orikhiv).[54]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Pyatykhatky and Robotyne as of August 6, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Russian forces counterattacked in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast on August 6 but did not advance. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful offensive actions near Robotyne.[55]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhia as of August 6, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



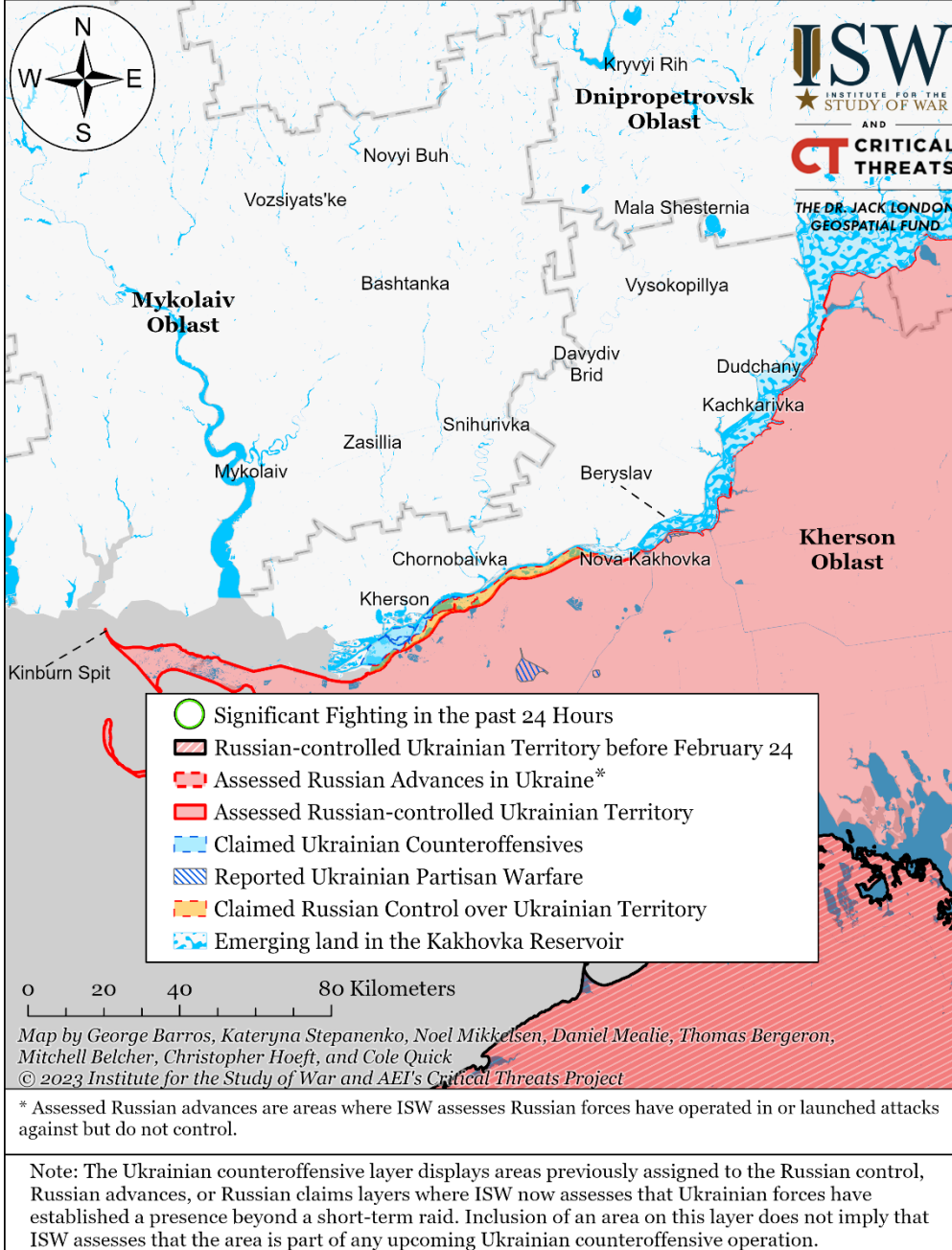
- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Emerging land in the Kakhovka Reservoir
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives

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

Note: Ukrainian Director of the Department of Planning of the Main Directorate of the National Guard Colonel Mykola Urshalovich reported on August 3 that Ukrainian forces advanced 650 meters deep along a one and a half kilometer frontline in the Melitopol direction. Russian sources claimed on August 2 that Russian forces control the surrounding heights of Staromayorske.

Zaporizhia Oblast occupation administration head Yevgeny Balitsky claimed that Ukrainian forces struck Tokmak with HIMARS rockets on the night of August 5 to 6. [56]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of August 6, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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

The Russian military command finally allowed personnel of the Russian “Alga” volunteer battalion – which has been involved in the most combat intense frontlines in Donetsk Oblast since Fall 2022 – to return to Russia on leave.[57] A Russian regional branch of *Radio Liberty* reported that most “Alga” volunteers are receiving treatment for injuries, while a portion of the volunteers returned to the Republic of Tatarstan. The outlet added that the “Alga” Battalion has been operating in Bakhmut for

the past four months after previously fighting in Pisky and Vuhledar, Donetsk Oblast. The “Alga” Battalion had previously suffered significant losses during failed assaults near Vuhledar on February 6.[58] ISW previously assessed that Russian forces lack operational reserves that would allow them to conduct personnel rotations.[59]

Ukrainian intelligence reported that Russian officials are fining Russian enterprises that did not account for employees liable for military service before the announcement of the partial mobilization.[60] The Ukrainian Foreign Intelligence Service reported that Russian enterprises are now informing Russian officials about their employees receiving military summonses.

Russian officials are continuing to recruit volunteers for the war effort via coercion and promises of immunity from mobilization. Russian human rights organization *Gulagu.net* amplified a letter from a Kaluga Oblast prisoner claiming that Russian security forces coerce Russian prisoners to join the war effort by creating terrible conditions in Russian colonies.[61] The prisoner added that Russian prison guards physically abuse prisoners who refuse to deploy to Ukraine. A Russian opposition outlet amplified an advertisement recruiting volunteers for service with the 3rd Operational Battalion of Russian special police (OMON) of Rosgvardia’s Main Directorate, which guaranteed volunteers exemption from mobilization.[62]

A Wagner-affiliated Telegram channel claimed that Wagner financier Yevgeny Prigozhin’s confidant Konstantin Pikalov is continuing to train personnel as part of “Convoy” private military company (PMC) in occupied Perevalne, Crimea.[63] The Telegram channel noted that Crimean occupation head Sergei Aksyonov supports Convoy PMC’s exercises in occupied Crimea. Russian opposition outlets reported in March 2023 that Aksyonov created Wagner-affiliated Convoy PMC, and its operation after Prigozhin’s armed rebellion on June 24 may suggest that the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) has yet to fully absorb all remaining Wagner entities in occupied Ukraine and in Russia.[64]

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 occupation authorities in Ukraine continue establishing institutional linkages between Russian and Ukrainian governance structures and social services in occupied Ukraine. The Kherson Oblast occupational administration announced on August 6 that Russian authorities have registered over 55,000 Kherson Oblast residents with compulsory medical insurance policies since Russia integrated occupied Kherson Oblast’s healthcare system with Russia’s in March 2023.[65] Russian occupation officials reported that these Russian medical insurance plans enable their holders to receive free medical care.[66]

Russian occupation authorities are reportedly conditioning Ukrainian youth in occupied Ukraine to participate in Russia’s controlled and undemocratic elections. The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported on August 6 that Russian occupation authorities are establishing school programs to teach highschoolers in occupied Ukraine about how Russian election officials work to falsify election results as part of a larger effort to condition young Ukrainians to normalize participating in Russia’s controlled and falsified elections.[67]

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).

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

Nothing significant to report.

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

[1] https://t.me/SALDO_VGA/1053; <https://t.me/vrogov/11427>

[2] <https://t.me/milinfofive/104736> ; <https://t.me/moscowcalling/28660> ;
<https://t.me/Crimeanwind/38750>

[3] <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/50754> ; https://t.me/dva_majors/23007 ;
https://twitter.com/tassagency_en/status/1688182424755130369 ;
<https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/49663> ; <https://t.me/milinfofive/104733> ;
<https://t.me/milinfofive/104725>

[4] <https://t.me/Aksenov82/2945>

[5] https://t.me/grey_zone/19885; https://t.me/grey_zone/19883 ;
https://t.me/SALDO_VGA/1054; <https://t.me/rybar/50471> ; <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/50743>;
https://t.me/dva_majors/22988 ; https://t.me/boris_rozhin/94147 ; [https://tass dot
ru/proisshestviya/18455855](https://tassdotru/proisshestviya/18455855)

[6] <https://t.me/Aksenov82/2945> ;

[7] <https://t.me/mintranscrimea/1427>

[8] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign...>

[9] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar073123> ; <https://twitter.com/hwtvn/status/1685701259771482112>

[10] https://t.me/grey_zone/19885 ; https://t.me/grey_zone/19883;

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