

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, December 15
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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.

Russia may be setting conditions to conduct a new offensive against Ukraine— possibly against Kyiv—in winter 2023. Such an attack is extraordinarily unlikely to succeed. A Russian attack from Belarus is not imminent at this time.

Russian President Vladimir Putin’s objectives in Ukraine have not changed according to Ukrainian officials’ and ISW’s assessments based on Kremlin statements and actions. Putin continues to pursue maximalist goals in Ukraine using multiple mechanisms intended to compel Ukrainians to negotiate on Russia’s terms and likely make preemptive concessions highly favorable to Russia. This fundamental objective has underpinned the Kremlin’s various military, political, economic, and diplomatic efforts over the past 10 months in Ukraine.

Various Ukrainian defense officials continue to assess that Putin maintains maximalist goals and seeks to compel Ukraine to enter negotiations and/or accept a ceasefire to advance Russian objectives. Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Malyar stated on December 15 that the ultimate goal of Russia is the “complete conquest and control over Ukraine,” and noted that recent Russian information operations have been aimed at compelling Ukraine to enter negotiations with Russia.¹ Deputy Chief of the Main Operational Directorate of the Ukrainian General Staff, Brigadier General Oleksiy Hromov, stated that Russia seeks to force Ukraine into negotiations in order to generate a strategic pause that would afford Russian troops time to regroup and regain strength.² Ukrainian Commander-in-Chief Valery Zaluzhny emphasized that Russia is seeking to temporarily force Ukraine to agree to stop fighting in order to gather renewed resources and prepare for renewed future offensive operations.³

Putin is using two simultaneous military efforts to pursue his ultimate objective of regaining control of Ukraine and securing major territorial concessions. Russia’s current offensive pushes in Donetsk Oblast, particularly around Bakhmut and in the Avdiivka-Donetsk City area and the ongoing campaign of massive missile strikes on critical Ukrainian infrastructure are intended to create realities on the ground that Russia will likely demand Ukraine recognize as the basis for negotiations.⁴ Russian troops have reinforced their efforts throughout Donetsk Oblast with freed-up combat power following the withdrawal from the west (right) bank of Kherson Oblast and have been consistently pursuing territorial objectives, albeit unsuccessfully. ISW continues to assess that Putin has given the order for Russian troops to complete the capture of the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, and that current Russian offensive efforts around Bakhmut, Donetsk City, and in western Donetsk Oblast are part of the effort to execute that order. Ukrainian officials reiterated that the immediate focus of Russian efforts is securing territorial gains in Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts.⁵ Putin likely hopes that these offensive operations will threaten Ukraine’s ability to further defend territory and cause significant damage to Ukrainian combat power so that Ukraine will have no choice but to negotiate a ceasefire, concede on Russia’s terms, and ultimately allow Russian troops the time to reconstitute and relaunch new offensive operations in the future. The massive Russian missile strikes against critical

Ukrainian infrastructure are Putin's second military effort to compel Ukraine to surrender or enter negotiations on Putin's terms. Over the course of the last two months, Russian forces have used missiles and drones to systematically target civilian and energy infrastructure in a way that generates disproportionate psychological impacts but does not achieve significant military objectives.

These two military efforts are failing to coerce Ukraine into negotiating or offering preemptive concessions, and Ukraine has retained the battlefield initiative following its two successive counteroffensive operations in Kharkiv and Kherson oblasts. Putin may therefore be setting conditions for a third, sequential military effort in the likely event that these two efforts fail to secure his objectives by preparing for a renewed offensive against Ukraine in the winter of 2023. Ukrainian Commander-in-Chief Valery Zaluzhny suggested that such an offensive could take place as early as January, in the worst-case scenario, and March, in the best case.⁶ Zaluzhny additionally observed that this new offensive could take the form of another mechanized attack against Kyiv from Belarusian territory.⁷ As ISW has previously reported, there are a series of observed indicators that suggest that Russian forces may indeed be preparing for a new offensive operation—including the reconsolidation of force compositions along major axes of advance and the movement of heavy equipment to the frontlines.⁸

The winter 2023 timeframe suggested by Ukrainian officials for such a potential offensive is consistent with ISW's long-standing assessment that the winter will facilitate Ukrainian and Russian offensive operations and is consistent with the current projected timeline for the completion of Russian force generation efforts.⁹ Putin announced the beginning of mobilization in late September 2022.¹⁰ Putin stated that Russia fielded 150,000 mobilized men of the initial 300,000 mobilized recruits in Ukraine on December 7—about two months after beginning mobilization—and that 150,000 mobilized men continue to train in Russia to prepare for deployment.¹¹ The remaining 150,000 mobilized men in training should deploy to Ukraine around February to March 2023 if the training and deployment rate remains uniform and as Putin described. Zaluzhny noted that Russia is currently preparing 200,000 troops for deployment—an expanded estimate which likely incorporates servicemembers from the autumn 2022 conscription cycle who are training alongside the remaining mobilized recruits.¹² The combination of ongoing training efforts for both mobilized recruits and the Fall 2022 conscript class, alongside indications that Russia is preparing for another wave of “partial” mobilization, indicate that Russia is trying to generate the combat capability for a renewed offensive in the early months of 2023.¹³

Russian forces may be setting conditions to attack from Belarus, though ISW continues to assess a Russian invasion from Belarus is not imminent at this time. The Ukrainian General Staff's daily reports from December 1 to 15 uniformly state that Ukrainian officials have not detected Russian forces in Belarus forming strike groups necessary to attack northern Ukraine.¹⁴ There are no observed open-source indicators that Russian forces are forming strike groups within Belarus as of December 15. Belarusian forces remain extremely unlikely to invade Ukraine without a Russian strike group.¹⁵

The following indicators support a forecast cone that Russia may be setting conditions to attack Ukraine from Belarus in winter 2023. ISW will continue to monitor the situation and provide updated assessments.

- **Russia’s military presence in Belarus has been growing since fall 2022.** Multiple official Ukrainian and independent Belarusian sources have reported a growing Russian military presence in Belarus since October 2022.¹⁶ Hromov stated on December 15 that Russia most recently deployed one battalion's worth of tanks to the Obuz-Lesnovsky Training Ground in Brest and one battalion’s worth of tanks to the Losivdo Training Ground in Vitebsk during the week of December 4-11.¹⁷ A senior Ukrainian intelligence official stated on October 24 that Russia deployed about 3,200 personnel to Belarus.¹⁸ These numbers alone are not sufficient to support an invasion of Ukraine but could indicate an effort to again accumulate a large Russian force in Belarus.
- **Ukrainian officials claim that Russian forces in Belarus do not have specific plans to return to Russia after completing their training.** Hromov stated that the Russian military has not given Russian trainees in Belarus any indication about their future tasks or whether they will deploy back to Russia, remain in Belarus, or attack Ukraine.¹⁹ Russian commanders may be keeping options open for a potential attack against Ukraine from Belarus in winter 2023.
- **Senior Ukrainian officials are increasingly warning that Russian forces may attempt to attack Kyiv.** Zaluzhny said that Russian forces may attempt to attack Ukraine from Belarus between January and March 2023 and stated “I have no doubt [Russian forces] will have another go at Kyiv” on December 15.²⁰ Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba stated on December 13 that Russia may be preparing for a large-scale offensive in January and February 2023.²¹
- **Elements of the 1st Guards Tank Army—in principle the Russian military’s most elite heavy formation that could form the core of a strike force—are reportedly training in Belarus as of December 15.** Hromov stated that elements of the 2nd Motorized Rifle Division of the 1st Guards Tank Army are training in Belarus.²² All maneuver elements of the 1st Guards Tank Army have taken heavy losses near Kharkiv, Sumy, and eastern Kyiv Oblast, making its “elite” status and effective combat power even after reconstitution with mobilized reservists and/or conscripts questionable.

It remains extraordinarily unlikely that Russian forces would be able to take Kyiv even if Russian forces again attack from Belarus again. Russian forces are extremely unlikely to be more successful at attacking northern Ukraine in the winter of 2023 than they were in February 2022. Russia’s conventional forces are badly degraded and lack the combat power that they had when Russia attempted (and failed) its full-throated effort to capture Kyiv in February 2022. Russian forces have been unable to secure their gains across Ukraine and have lost over 70,000 square km of occupied territory since abandoning Kyiv. Russian forces in Bakhmut currently advance no more than 100-200 meters a day after concentrating their main efforts there.²³ Russia has not established air superiority let alone air supremacy in Ukraine and has largely exhausted its precision-guided munitions arsenal. Ukrainian forces, for their part, have prepared significant defenses in northern Ukraine and are better prepared to defend now than they were in February 2022. The terrain near the Belarusian-Ukrainian border is not conducive to maneuver warfare and possible invasion routes from Belarus to Kyiv run through defensible chokepoints in the Chernobyl exclusion zone that Ukrainian forces now have experience defending.²⁴

Key Takeaways

- **Russia may be setting conditions to conduct a new offensive against Ukraine—possibly against Kyiv—in winter 2023. Such an attack is extraordinarily unlikely to succeed. A Russian attack from Belarus is not imminent at this time.**
- **Russian President Vladimir Putin’s objectives in Ukraine have not changed.**

- **Putin is using two simultaneous military efforts to pursue his objective of conquering Ukraine and securing major concessions.**
- **Putin is likely setting conditions for a renewed offensive before spring of 2023 to coerce Ukraine into offering concessions.**
- **Russian forces may be setting conditions to attack from Belarusian territory, although ISW continues to assess that the Belarusian military will not join the fighting in Ukraine.**
- **Ukrainian forces reportedly continued counteroffensive operations in the direction of Kreminna and Svatove.**
- **Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Bakhmut and Avdiivka areas.**
- **Russian forces continued defensive operations south of the Dnipro River in southern Ukraine.**
- **The Russian officer corps continues to suffer heavy losses in Ukraine.**
- **Ukrainian partisans conducted a sabotage attack on a power transformer substation in Berdyansk, Zaporizhia Oblast.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of December 15, 2022, 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 those 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 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.

- Ukrainian Counteroffensives—Eastern Ukraine
- Russian Main Effort—Eastern Ukraine (comprised of one subordinate and one supporting effort);
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort—Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Supporting Effort—Southern Axis
- Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts
- Activities in Russian-occupied Areas

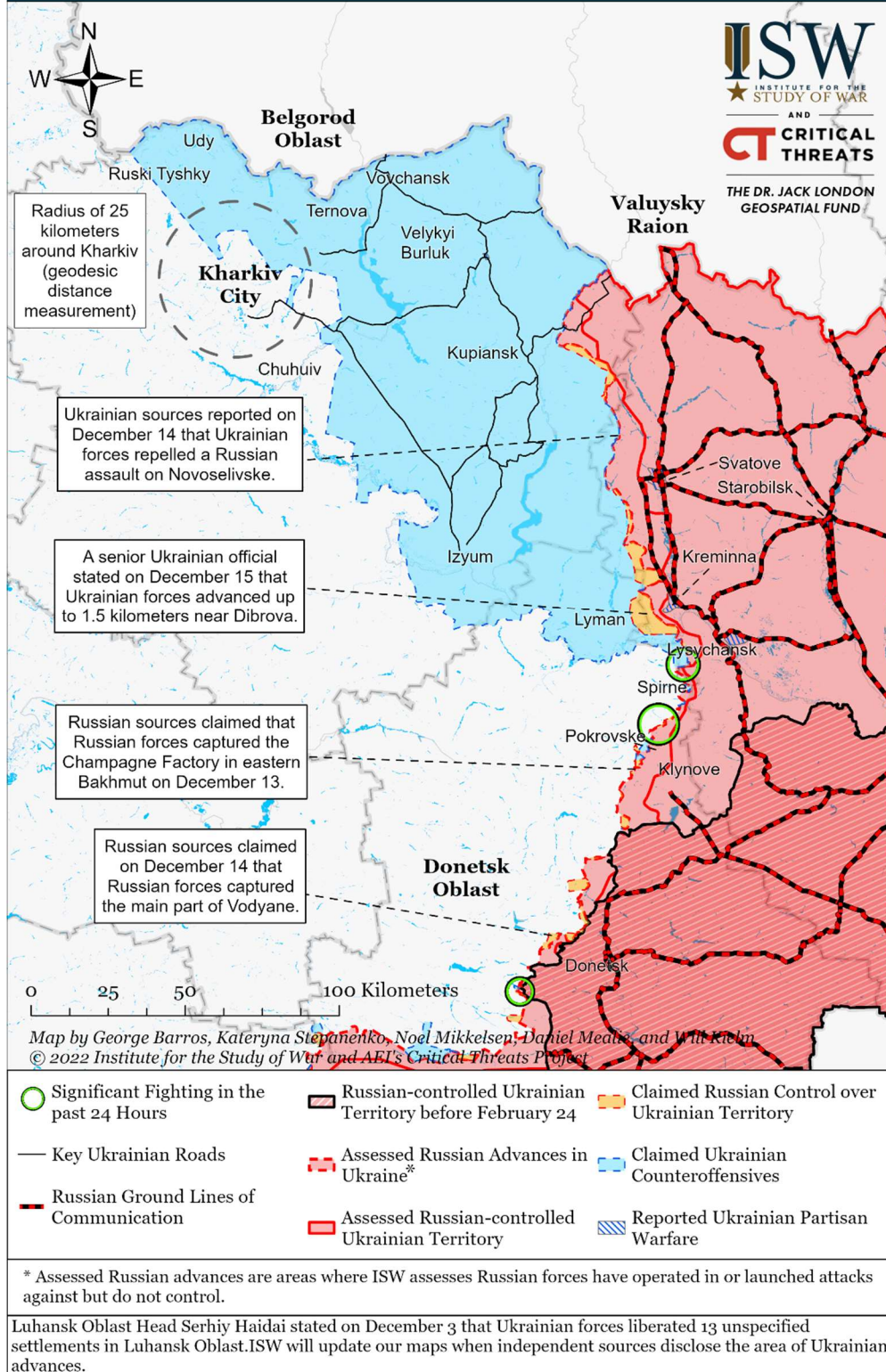
Ukrainian Counteroffensives (Ukrainian efforts to liberate Russian-occupied territories)

Eastern Ukraine: (Eastern Kharkiv Oblast-Western Luhansk Oblast)

Ukrainian forces reportedly continued counteroffensive operations in the direction of Svatove and Kreminna on December 15. The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Russian forces thwarted Ukrainian assaults in the direction of Sofiivka, Luhansk Oblast (22km northwest of Svatove).²⁵ The Russian MoD also claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian assaults in the direction of Ploshchanka (17km northwest of Kreminna), Holykove (10km northwest of Kreminna), and Kreminna.²⁶ Deputy Chief of the Main Operational Directorate of the Ukrainian General Staff, Brigadier General Oleksiy Hromov reported that Ukrainian forces advanced up to 1.5km in the vicinity of Dibrova (5km southwest of Kreminna).²⁷ A Russian milblogger claimed that positional battles are ongoing in Bilohorivka (12km south of Kreminna).²⁸

Ukrainian forces continued to strike Russian rear areas in Luhansk Oblast on December 15. Ukrainian and Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces struck Kadiivka, Luhansk Oblast (60km southeast of Kreminna) with HIMARS rockets.²⁹ A social media source claimed that Ukrainian forces struck a Russian ammunition warehouse in Kadiivka.³⁰

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kharkiv as of December 15, 2022, 3:00 PM ET



Russian Main Effort—Eastern Ukraine

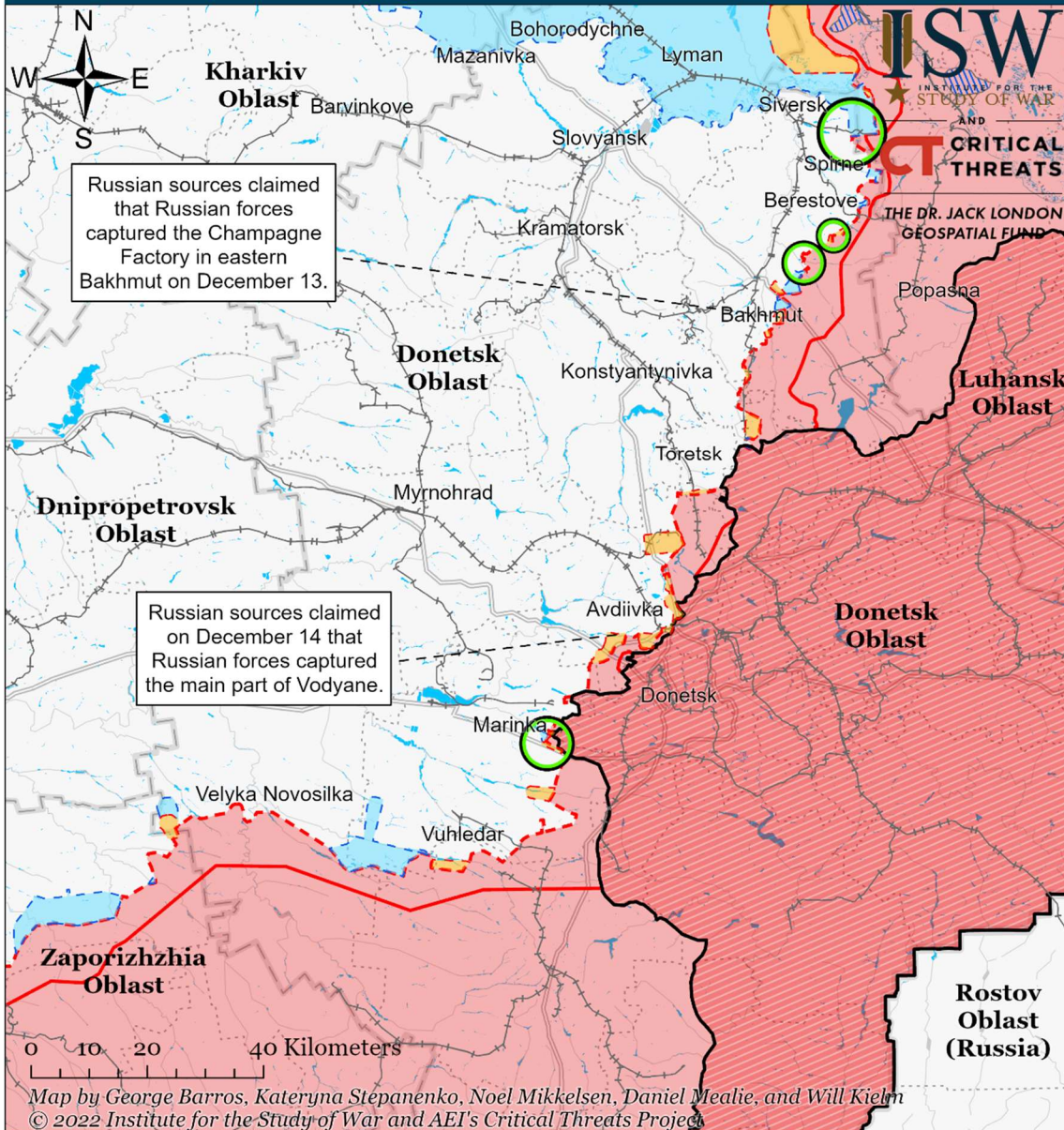
Russian Subordinate Main Effort—Donetsk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)

Russian forces continued offensive operations around Bakhmut on December 15. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian assaults within 33km northeast of Bakhmut near Verkhokamianske, Yakovlivka, Soledar, and Vesele.³¹ Deputy Chief of the Main Operational Directorate of the Ukrainian General Staff, Brigadier General Oleksiy Hromov, reported that Russian forces are attempting to break through Ukrainian defenses near Verkhokamianske in order to advance towards Bilohorivka, Luhansk oblast from the south. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces also conducted assaults in the direction of Pidhorodne (6km northeast of Bakhmut).³² A Russian milblogger claimed that fighting between Ukrainian and Russian forces continued in the eastern outskirts of Bakhmut.³³ Hromov reported that Russian forces also conducted assaults near Bakhmut and within 22km south of Bakhmut near Opytne, Klishchiivka, Ozarianivka, and Mayorsk.³⁴ Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces conducted assaults from the direction of Kurdyumivka (14km southwest of Bakhmut) and established control over strongholds to the west of Andriivka (10km south of Bakhmut).³⁵

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Avdiivka-Donetsk City area on December 15. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled a Russian assault near Marinka (28km southwest of Avdiivka).³⁶ Russian milbloggers claimed that Donetsk People’s Republic (DNR) Head Denis Pushilin stated that Russian forces have control over more than 80 percent of Marinka.³⁷ A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces also conducted ground assaults near Nevelske (16km southwest of Avdiivka), Pobieda (32km southwest of Avdiivka), and Novomykhailivka (37km southwest of Avdiivka).³⁸

Russian forces reportedly continued defensive operations in western Donetsk Oblast on December 15. The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Russian forces destroyed Ukrainian sabotage and reconnaissance groups near Pavlivka, Donetsk Oblast (52km southwest of Donetsk City).³⁹ The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces continued routine indirect fire along the line of contact in Donetsk and eastern Zaporizhia oblasts.⁴⁰

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of December 15, 2022, 3:00 PM ET



Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours	Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory	Major Railroads
Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24	Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory	Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
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.

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

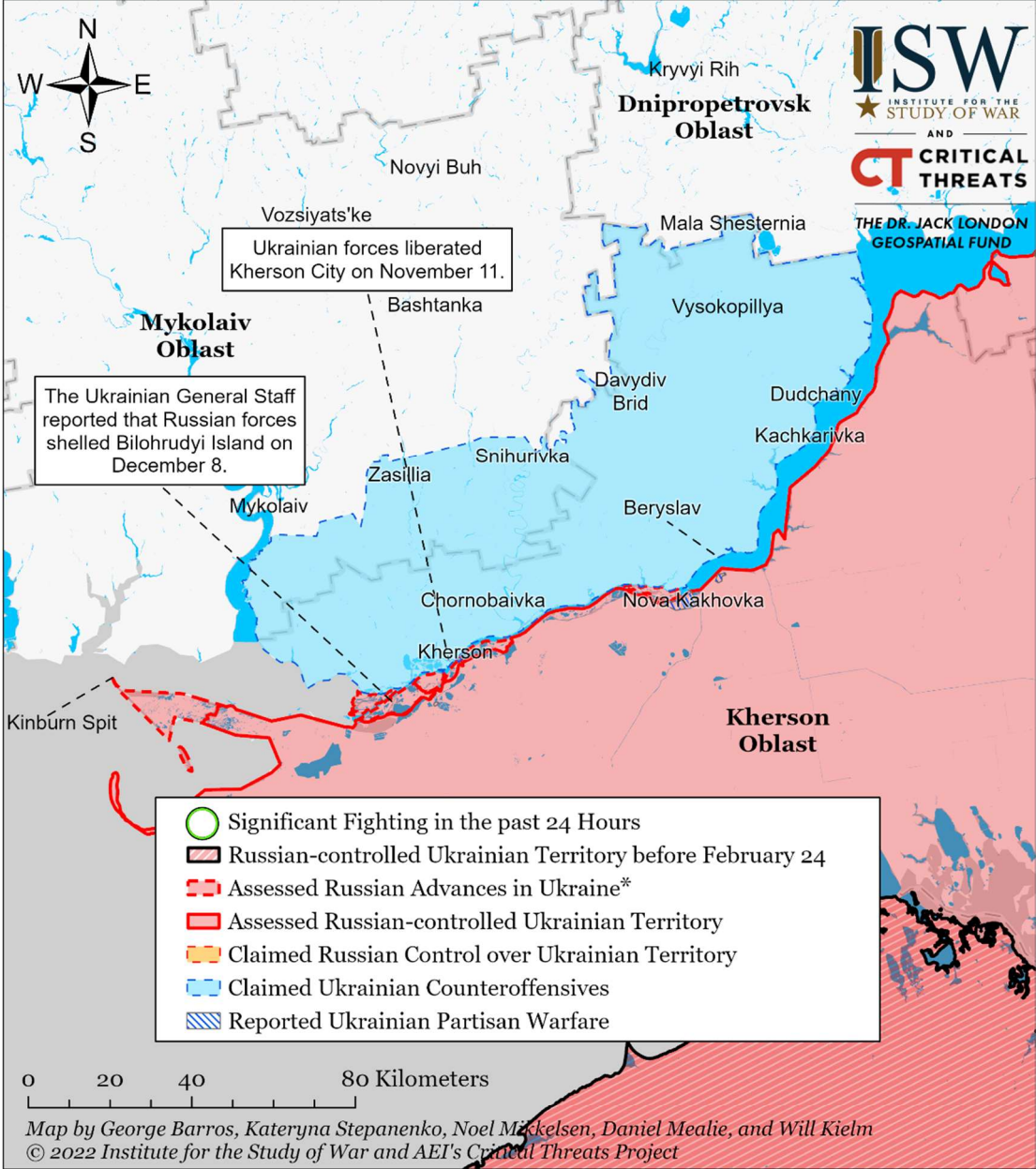
Russian forces continued defensive measures south of the Dnipro River and conducted artillery strikes against the west (right) bank of Kherson Oblast on December 15. Ukrainian and Russian sources reported that Russian troops struck Kherson City and other settlements on the right bank.⁴¹ The Ukrainian General Staff noted that Russian troops mined country plots and the coastline of the Konka and Chaika Rivers near Oleshky, just south of Kherson City.⁴² The Main Ukrainian Intelligence Directorate (GUR) additionally reported that Russian troops are reinforcing the coastline in Molochne, occupied Crimea with mines, trenches, and fortifications out of apparent fear of Ukrainian amphibious assaults.⁴³ Deputy Chief of the Main Operational Directorate of the Ukrainian General Staff, Brigadier General Oleksii Hromov, relatedly noted that Russian forces deployed electronic warfare (EW) equipment to the Belbek, Gvadiyske, and Saky airfields in Crimea.⁴⁴

Ukrainian troops continued strikes against Russian concentration areas in Kherson and Zaporizhia oblasts. Geolocated imagery posted on December 15 shows the aftermath of a Ukrainian strike on a Russian-occupied hotel in Zaliznyi Port, about 60km southwest of Kherson City.⁴⁵ The Ukrainian General Staff confirmed that December 13 Ukrainian strikes destroyed Russian ammunition depots and units of military equipment throughout Zaporizhia Oblast in Tokmak, Polohyi, and Berdyansk.⁴⁶

Ukrainian sources reported that Russian occupation authorities are continuing efforts to consolidate control of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP). The Ukrainian General Staff reported on December 15 that Russian authorities are carrying out work to switch the ZNPP to the Russian energy system but did not offer additional specifics.⁴⁷ ISW has previously reported on attempts by Russian authorities to set conditions for the transfer of the ZNPP to the Russian power grid.⁴⁸

Russian troops continued routine artillery strikes in western Zaporizhia, Dnipropetrovsk, and Mykolaiv oblasts on December 15.⁴⁹ Mykolaiv Oblast Head Vitaly Kim reported that Russian troops attacked the coastal area near Ochakiv with anti-aircraft missiles.⁵⁰

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of December 15, 2022, 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.

Light reconnaissance elements of the Ukrainian Carlson special volunteer unit placed a Ukrainian flag on a tower in the wetlands on the left bank of the Dniester River, approximately 600 meters south of Kherson City and claimed the area will become a Ukrainian bridgehead that will support future operations to further liberate southern Kherson on December 3. ISW does not assess that Ukrainian forces have established a bridgehead or lodgment in this location as Carlson claimed as of December 3. The Carlson element's ability to operate in the area uncontested and the lack of observed Russian fortifications or defensive forces in the area indicate that Russian forces do not exercise full control over the area. Russian control lines are likely south of the Konkra River.

Note: ISW will report on activities in Kherson Oblast as part of the Southern Axis in this and subsequent updates. Ukraine’s counteroffensive in right-bank Kherson Oblast has accomplished its stated objectives, so ISW will not present a Southern Ukraine counteroffensive section until Ukrainian forces resume counteroffensives in southern Ukraine.

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

The Russian officer corps continues to suffer losses in Ukraine. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces are replenishing their operational-tactical command with retired officers and those released from reserve due to heavy officer losses.⁵¹ ISW has previously reported on the officer-cadre shortage in Russian forces due to losses on the Ukrainian frontlines, which far exceeds Russian forces’ cumulative losses over 10 years of Russian operations in Chechnya.⁵² ISW assesses that this practice will continue to further degrade already-poor command structures within Russian forces.

Russian forces may be trying to form more integrated units to address issues with units comprised solely of mobilized personnel. A Russian media outlet reported that Russian forces are integrating recently mobilized and combat-experienced personnel into units following criticism that units formed entirely of mobilized personnel are ineffective.⁵³ The outlet reported that the Russian military assigned mobilized personnel to battle partners that have combat experience and that mobilized personnel are training with seasoned fighters on the right bank of the Dnipro River in Kherson Oblast.⁵⁴

Russian media outlets reported that St. Petersburg officials refuse to recognize Wagner Group personnel as participants in the war in Ukraine. The outlets reported that authorities in Smolny, St. Petersburg are not allowing the burial of a Wagner Group member in the Alley of Heroes at the Beloostrovsky cemetery, claiming that he is not a servicemember of the Russian Armed Forces.⁵⁵ A Russian media source claimed that St. Petersburg authorities proposed to bury the soldier in a newly-established Alley of Valor, which Wagner Group financier Yevgeniy Prigozhin opposed by promising that the individual will be buried in the Alley of Heroes.⁵⁶ ISW has previously reported on continued tensions between Prigozhin and St. Petersburg authorities.⁵⁷

Russian force generation efforts in occupied territories of Ukraine continue to generate social tensions. The resistance group Council of Mothers and Wives amplified complaints from mothers in Donetsk Oblast who are appealing to Russian occupation officials to return their sons from war.⁵⁸ The Council of Mothers and Wives shared a report stating that mobilization officials in the Donetsk People’s Republic (DNR) forced full-time students to sign a 6-month contract with the Russian military that ended on October 11, but that the Russian military extended the contracts until the end of the “Special Military Operation.”⁵⁹ The Council of Mothers and Wives’ report stated that the mothers of these students are appealing to the Russian government to return their sons from the front to allow them to attend university.⁶⁰ ISW previously reported on November 13 that Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov announced that Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered the demobilization of mobilized students in Russian-occupied Luhansk and Donetsk oblasts.⁶¹

Activity in Russian-occupied Areas (Russian objective: consolidate administrative control of and annexed areas; forcibly integrate Ukrainian civilians into Russian sociocultural, economic, military, and governance systems)

The Russian State Duma conducted the first reading of a law that will eliminate criminal liability for crimes in occupied territories if they were committed in the interests of the Russian Federation.⁶² A Russian source stated that this bill targets Russia's "new territories," Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson, and Zaporizhia Oblasts.⁶³ The Ukrainian Military Center amplified the bill's second paragraph, which states that Russian occupation officials are allowed to refuse to punish illegal actions committed by Russian forces during the entire time of occupation and into the future under the justification that those actions committed in the interests of Russia and suggested that this may be extended to refusal to punish war crimes.⁶⁴ Independent Russian outlet *Meduza* reported that the proposed legislation intentionally does not establish a time limit on waiving criminal prosecution in occupied territories.⁶⁵ ISW previously assessed that this law will allow Russian authorities to intensify the integration of the justice systems of occupied areas into the Russian criminal justice system in a way that will give Russian law broader discretion in determining and adjudicating what constitutes as legality in occupied areas.⁶⁶

The Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) reported that a leader of the former Izyum occupation administration admitted that Russian occupation officials used Ukrainian passports to falsify the results of the Annexation Referendum.⁶⁷ SBU reported that the former head of the Savyn territorial department of the Izyum Military-Civilian Administration stated that her administration collected passport data from local residents during Russian occupation and transferred that information to Russian occupation officials.⁶⁸ SBU reported that the Russian occupation administration utilized the personal passport data from local Ukrainians to falsify the results of the referendum.⁶⁹ ISW previously assessed on December 14 that Russian occupation officials continue to pressure Ukrainian citizens to apply for Russian passports in an attempt to rectify the obvious disparity between Russian claims of 99% popular support for the annexation and the clear, demonstrated lack of Ukrainian interest.⁷⁰

Ukrainian partisans conducted a sabotage attack on a power transformer substation in Berdyansk, Zaporizhia Oblast on December 13.⁷¹ The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported that Ukrainian saboteurs blew up the power transformer substation and its supporting power lines which supported the Kosa microdistrict where Russian forces are quartering mobilized forces.⁷² The Ukrainian Resistance Center noted that the complexity of this attack indicates that personnel with military experience carried it out.⁷³ Berdyansk Occupation Head Alexander Saulenko stated that the attack left 10,000 people without power.⁷⁴ ISW has assessed that Russian occupation forces have not been able to neutralize Ukraine's organized partisan movement and are unlikely to be able to do so in the future.⁷⁵

Russian occupation forces continued to forcibly relocate and detain Ukrainian civilians in occupied territories on December 15. Kherson Occupation Head Vladimir Saldo stated that Russian occupation officials are experiencing difficulties in accommodating Ukrainians that they relocated from the west bank and the 15km zone of the east bank of the Dnipro River.⁷⁶ Saldo stated that authorities placed Ukrainian civilians in temporary accommodation centers that are not adapted for use in winter.⁷⁷ The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported that Russian forces forcibly relocated 40 Ukrainian children from Severodonetsk, Luhansk Oblast to Stavropol Krai, Russia under the pretext of "rehabilitation."⁷⁸ ISW has consistently reported on Russian officials' deportation tactics and assesses that forced deportation of Ukrainian children to Russia represents a possible violation of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.⁷⁹ The Ukrainian Resistance Center also reported that Russian forces have increased detentions of Ukrainian civilians in occupied territories for reasons as simple as lacking a Russian passport or using Ukrainian phone applications.⁸⁰

Russian occupation forces have intensified economic integration in occupied territories in Ukraine. A Russian media outlet reported on December 15 that Russian President Vladimir Putin stated that annexed territories will reach the Russian quality of life standard by 2030 and that pensions, capital investments, and social standards will increase accordingly.⁸¹ DNR Head Denis Pushilin claimed that Putin proposed to provide mortgages for new construction in occupied territories at preferential rates.⁸² Kherson Occupation Head Vladimir Saldo stated that Putin has instructed Kherson occupation officials to build a small Russian town on the Arabat Spit, Henichesk district with buildings for Russian federal and local authorities and social institutions such as kindergartens, stadiums, and shops.⁸³ Saldo claimed that the design process for this Russian town is already underway and will soon compete with the reconstruction of Mariupol in the speed of construction.⁸⁴ Ukrainian Mayor of Mariupol Andriyushchenko also reported that Russian occupation officials are renaming Mariupol streets back to their Soviet names.⁸⁵

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://armyinform.com> dot ua/2022/12/15/ganna-malyar-kincheva-czil-voroga-zalyshayetsya-nezminnoyu-povne-zavoyuvannya-ukrayiny/; <https://armyinform.com> dot ua/2022/12/15/ganna-malyar-propaganda-kremlya-bud-shho-namagayetsya-prymusyty-ukrayinu-pity-na-peregovory/

² <https://armyinform.com> dot ua/2022/12/15/kreml-pragne-perevesty-konflikt-u-tryvale-zbrojne-protystoyannya-genshtab-zsu/; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yRHgmcaZag4&ab_channel=intimeUkraineLIVE

³ <https://www.economist.com/zaluzhny-profile>

⁴ <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-december-9>;

<https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-december-8>;

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⁵ <https://armyinform.com> dot ua/2022/12/15/kreml-pragne-perevesty-konflikt-u-tryvale-zbrojne-protystoyannya-genshtab-zsu/; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yRHgmcaZag4&ab_channel=intimeUkraineLIVE

⁶ <https://www.economist.com/zaluzhny-profile>

⁷ <https://www.economist.com/zaluzhny-profile>

⁸ <https://isw.pub/UkrWar121422>; <https://suspilne.media/337956-rf-moze-ponoviti-sprobi-nastupu-na-pocatku-2023-roku-kuleba/>; <https://twitter.com/Danspiun/status/1601718010162839552>;

⁹ <https://isw.pub/UkrWar121222>; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar120822>; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar120422>;

<https://isw.pub/UkrWar120322>; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar111222>; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar111022>

¹⁰ <https://www.cnn.com/2022/09/21/russia-ukraine-war-putin-announces-partial-military-mobilization.html>

¹¹ <https://tass> dot ru/politika/16553333; https://t.me/boris_rozhin/72263; https://t.me/ostorozhno_novosti/13072;

<https://ria> dot ru/20221207/putin-1837018497.html; https://t.me/rian_ru/187966; https://t.me/rian_ru/187968;

https://t.me/news_sirena/8410; https://t.me/news_sirena/8412

¹² <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/explainer-russian-conscription-reserve-and-mobilization>;

<https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-31>;

<https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-november-18>

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- ¹³ <https://t.me/mozhemobiyasnit/14087>; <https://t.me/m0sc0wcalling/14687>;
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- ¹⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02eBtyvtwumrDT7KktF5Rqj7h7p91HmyYy769D6MJgvsakkErYXFt33AdMFoWzLNI>
- ¹⁵ <https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-december-11>;
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- ¹⁶ <https://twitter.com/MotolkoHelp/status/1603344364444569600>;
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