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January 26, 2025, 6:10 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 see ISW's interactive map of Ukraine's offensive in Kursk Oblast.

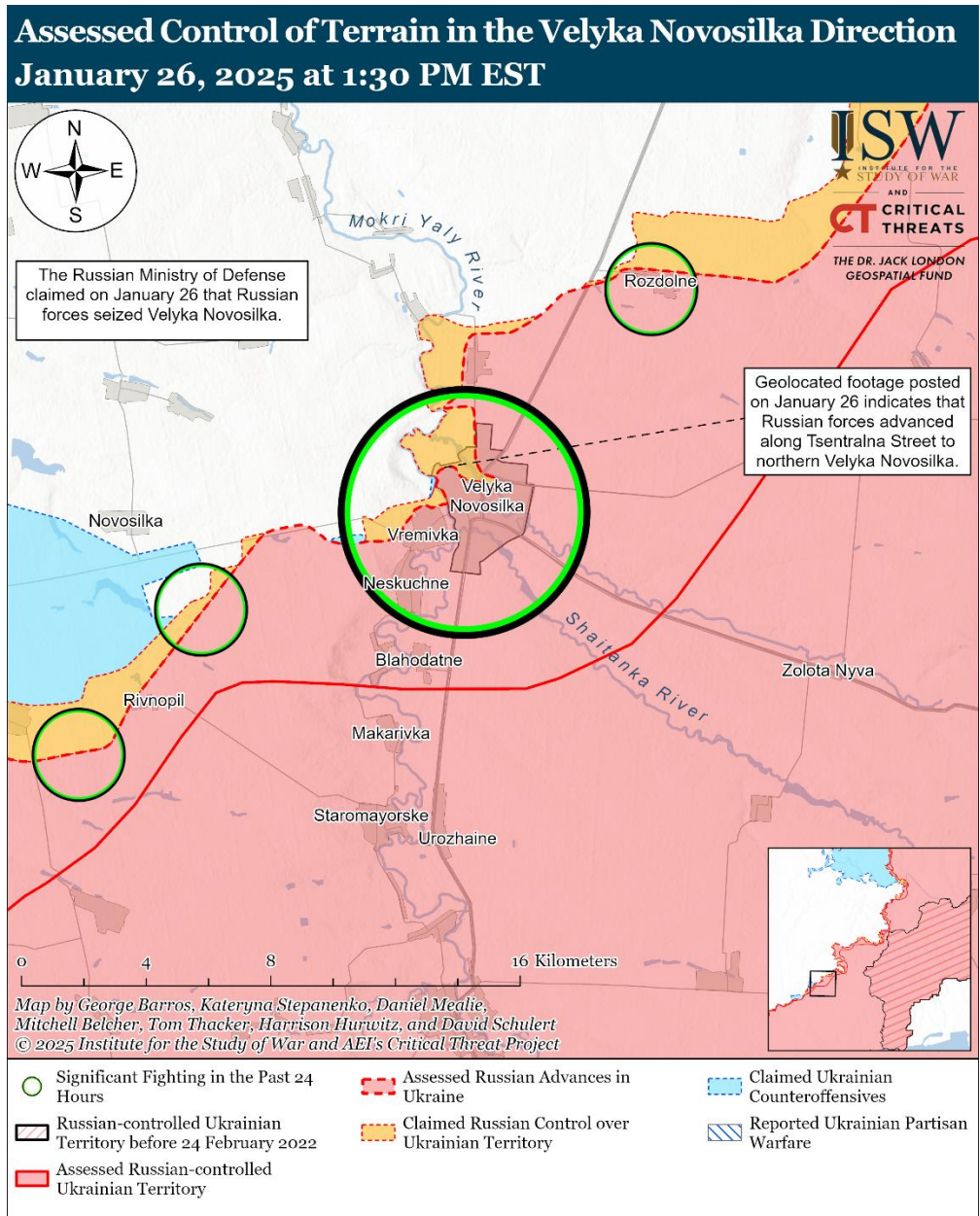
Click [here](#) to see ISW's 3D control of terrain topographic map of Ukraine. Use of a computer (not a mobile device) is strongly recommended for using this data-heavy tool.

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

**Note:** The data cut-off for this product was 12:15 am ET on January 26 ISW will cover subsequent reports in the January 27 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

**Russian forces recently made further advances within Velyka Novosilka amid official Russian claims that Russian forces seized the entire settlement on January 26.** Geolocated footage published on January 26 indicates that Russian forces advanced northward along Tsentralana Street in northern Velyka Novosilka.[1] Some Russian sources, including the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD), claimed on January 26 that Russian forces completely seized Velyka Novosilka, whereas other Russian sources claimed that Russian forces had seized most of the settlement.[2] Some Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces are still clearing Ukrainian forces from the settlement, including the northern part, and that Ukrainian forces are still counterattacking in the area.[3] ISW has observed geolocated evidence to assess that Russian forces occupy 89 percent of the settlement, however. Khortytsia Group of Forces Spokesperson Major Viktor Trehubov stated on January 26 that Russian forces have not occupied all of Velyka Novosilka and that Ukrainian forces maintain positions in the settlement.[4] A Ukrainian brigade operating within Velyka Novosilka stated on January 26 that fighting continues within the settlement and that Russian forces do not pose a threat of encircling the brigade's elements.[5] ISW has not observed independent evidence of Russian forces encircling Ukrainian forces in Velyka Novosilka. The Ukrainian brigade also reported that neither Russian nor Ukrainian forces can use heavy equipment due to parity of strikes near the contact line and that Ukrainian and Russian forces have "approximate parity" in terms of artillery and first-person view (FPV) drones but that Russian forces have a "huge" manpower advantage in the area.[6] The brigade stated that Ukrainian forces are conducting artillery and drone strikes against Russian forces within Velyka Novosilka and that the Mokri Yaly River that flows through western Velyka Novosilka is an obstacle to Russian advances. Russian forces continued offensive operations within and near Velyka

Novosilka itself, northeast of Velyka Novosilka near Rozdolne, and west of Velyka Novosilka near Novosilka on January 25 and 26.[7]



**The Russian MoD notably is paying an abnormally high amount of fanfare to the claimed Russian seizure of Velyka Novosilka, very likely as part of informational efforts to shape Western perceptions of the battlefield situation in Ukraine and degrade international support for Ukraine.** The Russian MoD posted footage during the day of January 26 purportedly showing Russian forces conducting thermobaric artillery strikes against Ukrainian forces in Velyka Novosilka and claimed that Russian assault groups were clearing Ukrainian positions.[8] The Russian MoD later claimed that elements of the Russian 5th Tank Brigade (36th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Eastern Military District [EMD]) and the 40th Naval Infantry Brigade (Pacific Fleet, EMD) seized all of Velyka Novosilka, and Russian Defense Minister Andrei Belousov congratulated the command and

personnel of the two brigades for the seizure.[9] The Russian MoD subsequently posted footage purportedly showing Russian flags in multiple areas of the settlement.[10] Russian milbloggers claimed that elements of the Russian 37th Motorized Rifle Brigade (36th CAA) also participated in the claimed seizure of Velyka Novosilka, and it is unclear why the Russian MoD did not credit the 37th Motorized Rifle Brigade in their announcements.[11] The Russian MoD has not recently been announcing the claimed seizures of settlements with so much fanfare and as quickly as they did on January 26. Russia is likely trying to leverage the claimed seizure of Velyka Novosilka in order to influence Western perceptions of the situation on the battlefield in Donetsk Oblast, to advance narratives that Russian battlefield gains are inevitable and that Ukrainian positions are rapidly deteriorating. Russian gains in western Donetsk Oblast continue to be gradual and far below the pace that is normal for modern mechanized warfare. Furthermore, it remains unclear whether Russian forces will be able to rapidly advance beyond Velyka Novosilka, as it is unclear how much combat power elements of the EMD still retain after several months of continuous offensive operations. Velyka Novosilka is located next to several rivers which will likely complicate and hamper further Russian tactical advances in the area.[12] Russian forces have historically struggled with river crossings and tactical terrain features, such as rivers, will likely complicate Russian forces' ability to leverage the seizure of Velyka Novosilka to make operationally significant advances in western Donetsk Oblast.

**The seizure and clearing of Velyka Novosilka will likely present opportunities and a decision point to the Russian military command on whether to redeploy elements of the Russian Eastern Military District [EMD] from the Velyka Novosilka area to other priority operational areas. Any redeployment of EMD elements from the Velyka Novosilka area over the coming weeks will indicate the Russian military command's priority operational areas for offensive operations in Spring and Summer 2025.** Elements of the Russian EMD have been the primary fighting force in the Vuhledar and Velyka Novosilka directions since at least early 2023, defended against the Ukrainian counteroffensive in Summer 2023, and later intensified offensive operations in the area in Fall 2024.[13] Elements of the EMD participated in the seizure of Vuhledar in September and October 2024 and successfully exploited the seizure of the settlement to advance north towards Kurakhove and west towards and into Velyka Novosilka over the following three months.[14] The seizure of Velyka Novosilka will present the Russian military command with a decision point during which the Russian military command can pursue several courses of action (COAs). Velyka Novosilka is protected from Ukrainian counterattack due to the settlement's disposition near the Mokri Yaly River. The Russian military command may opt to retain elements of the EMD in the western Donetsk Oblast area and continue advancing towards the Donetsk-Dnipropetrovsk Oblast administrative boundary, which runs north and west of Velyka Novosilka. This decision would indicate that the Russian military is prioritizing advances to the administrative boundary as quickly as possible over other axes of advance in Donetsk Oblast or other frontline areas. It remains unclear how much combat power the EMD elements still retain after having engaged in intense operations for over six months, however. The Russian military command could also retain some EMD elements in the Velyka Novosilka area to continue limited attacks and pin Ukrainian forces in the area but redeploy the bulk of the EMD to another frontline area. Russian forces are currently intensifying offensive operations in the Kupyansk, Borova, Chasiv Yar, Toretsk, and Pokrovsk directions and are still working to eliminate the remainder of the Ukrainian salients in the Kurakhove direction and Kursk Oblast. Ukrainian officials have also recently warned that Russian forces may also renew offensive operations in

Zaporizhia Oblast in 2025.[15] The Russian military command could redeploy EMD elements to any of these directions, and the redeployment of elements of the EMD will be an indicator of the Russian military command's priority areas for Spring and Summer 2025.

**Russian forces are poised to seize Toretsk in the coming days and a redeployment of elements of the EMD to reinforce the Russian force grouping in the Toretsk direction would indicate a new Russian priority effort to resume attacks in the direction of Kostyantynivka.** ISW previously assessed that Russian forces likely intend to exploit the seizure of Toretsk to push further west and along the T-05-16 Toretsk-Kostyantynivka highway towards the southernmost point of Ukraine's fortress belt in Kostyantynivka.[16] Russian advances in the Toretsk direction have historically been slow as Russian forces fought through built up urban areas, but Russian forces may begin to advance relatively more quickly once they break out of Toretsk into the more open fields west of the settlement. Russian forces may also attempt to leverage tactical gains within and near Toretsk and east of Pokrovsk to eliminate the Ukrainian salient southwest of Toretsk and select Russian milbloggers have recently speculated that Russian forces may be intensifying offensive operations southwest of Toretsk for this purpose.[17] Russian forces may want to eliminate the Ukrainian salient southwest of Toretsk in order to firm up their southern flank ahead of a push on Kostyantynivka. The Russian military command may redeploy elements of the EMD to reinforce offensive operations in the Toretsk direction if it intends to prioritize pressuring the Ukrainian fortress belt in Donetsk Oblast in the Spring and Summer 2025. Seizing Pokrovsk has been the Russian military command's main operational objective in Donetsk Oblast since February 2024.[18] A Russian redeployment of EMD elements to the Toretsk or Chasiv Yar directions - as opposed to retaining the EMD elements in western Donetsk Oblast, redeploying them to the Zaporizhia direction, or redeploying them to the Pokrovsk direction - would therefore indicate an inflection in Russian operational priorities.

**Ukrainian forces conducted a second strike on the Ryazan Oil Refinery in Ryazan Oblast on the night of January 25 to 26.** The Ukrainian General Staff reported on January 26 that elements of Ukraine's Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) and Unmanned Systems Forces struck the Ryazan Oil Refinery in Ryazan City.[19] Geolocated footage shows a fire at a tank at the refinery.[20] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed on January 26 that Russian forces downed eight drones over Ryazan Oblast on the night of January 25 to 26.[21] Ryazan Oblast Governor Pavel Malkov claimed that Russian air defenses and electronic warfare (EW) systems destroyed Ukrainian drones over Ryazan Oblast and that authorities were assessing material damage.[22] Ukrainian official sources noted that the Ryazan Oil Refinery is one of the four largest refineries in Russia and produces fuel for military equipment; jet fuel; diesel fuel; and other petroleum products for tanks, aircraft, and ships.[23] Ukrainian forces last struck the Ryazan Oil Refinery on the night of January 23 to 24.[24]

#### **Key Takeaways:**

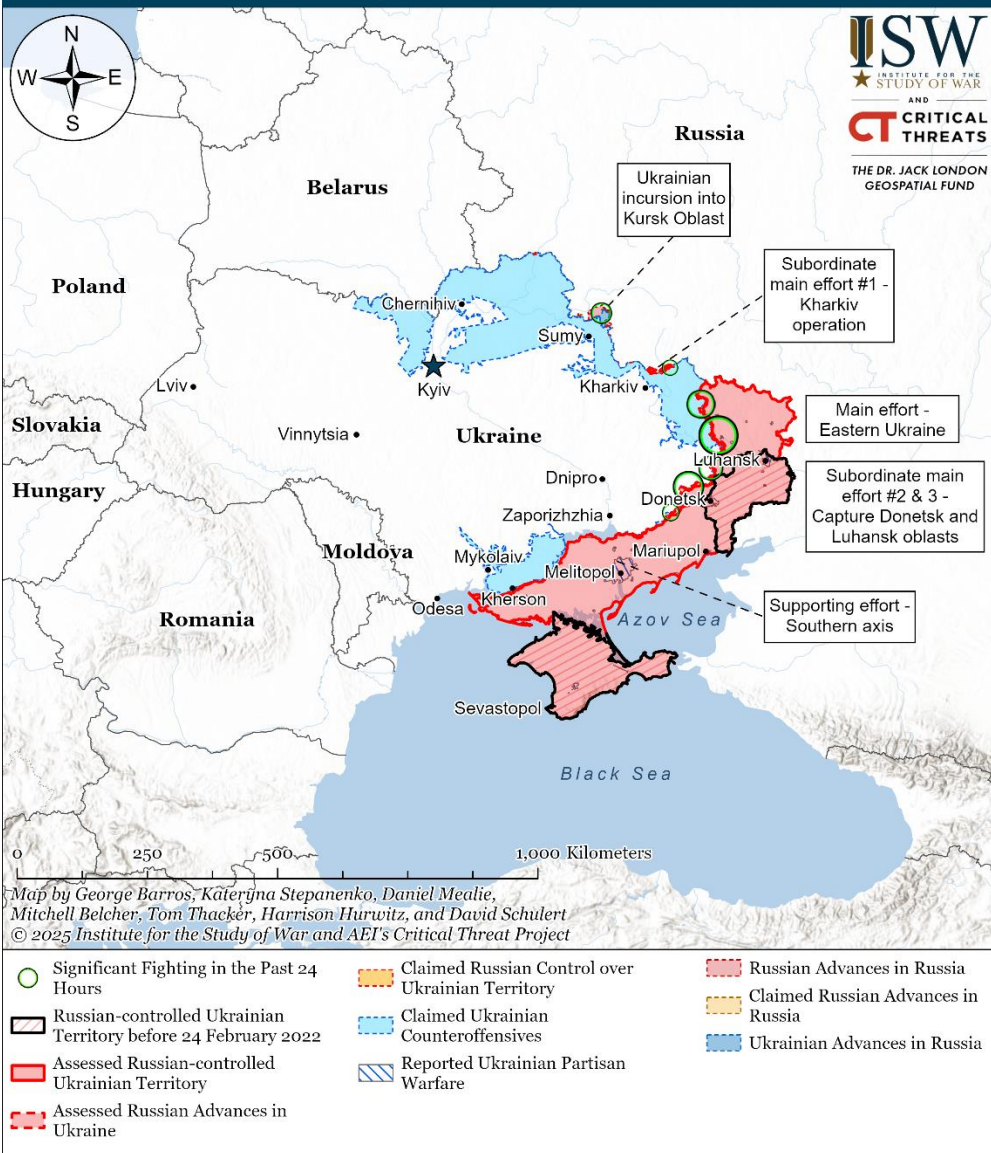
- **Russian forces recently made further advances within Velyka Novosilka amid official Russian claims that Russian forces seized the entire settlement on January 26.**
- **The Russian MoD notably is paying an abnormally high amount of fanfare to the claimed Russian seizure of Velyka Novosilka, very likely as part of informational**

**efforts to shape Western perceptions of the battlefield situation in Ukraine and degrade international support for Ukraine.**

- **The seizure and clearing of Velyka Novosilka will likely present opportunities and a decision point to the Russian military command on whether to redeploy elements of the Russian Eastern Military District [EMD] from the Velyka Novosilka area to other priority operational areas. Any redeployment of EMD elements from the Velyka Novosilka area over the coming weeks will indicate the Russian military command's priority operational areas for offensive operations in Spring and Summer 2025.**
- **Russian forces are poised to seize Toretsk in the coming days and a redeployment of elements of the EMD to reinforce the Russian force grouping in the Toretsk direction would indicate a new Russian priority effort to resume attacks in the direction of Kostyantynivka.**
- **Ukrainian forces conducted a second strike on the Ryazan Oil Refinery in Ryazan Oblast on the night of January 25 to 26.**
- **Ukrainian forces advanced in Kursk Oblast and regained positions in Toretsk.**
- **Russian forces recently advanced near Borova, Pokrovsk, and Kurakhove.**
- **Russian milbloggers criticized the Russian government on January 25 for not prioritizing the recruitment and training of Russia's next generation of military officers.**

# Assessed Control of Terrain in the Russo-Ukrainian War

## January 26, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



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

- Ukrainian Operations in the Russian Federation
- Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine (comprised of three subordinate main efforts)

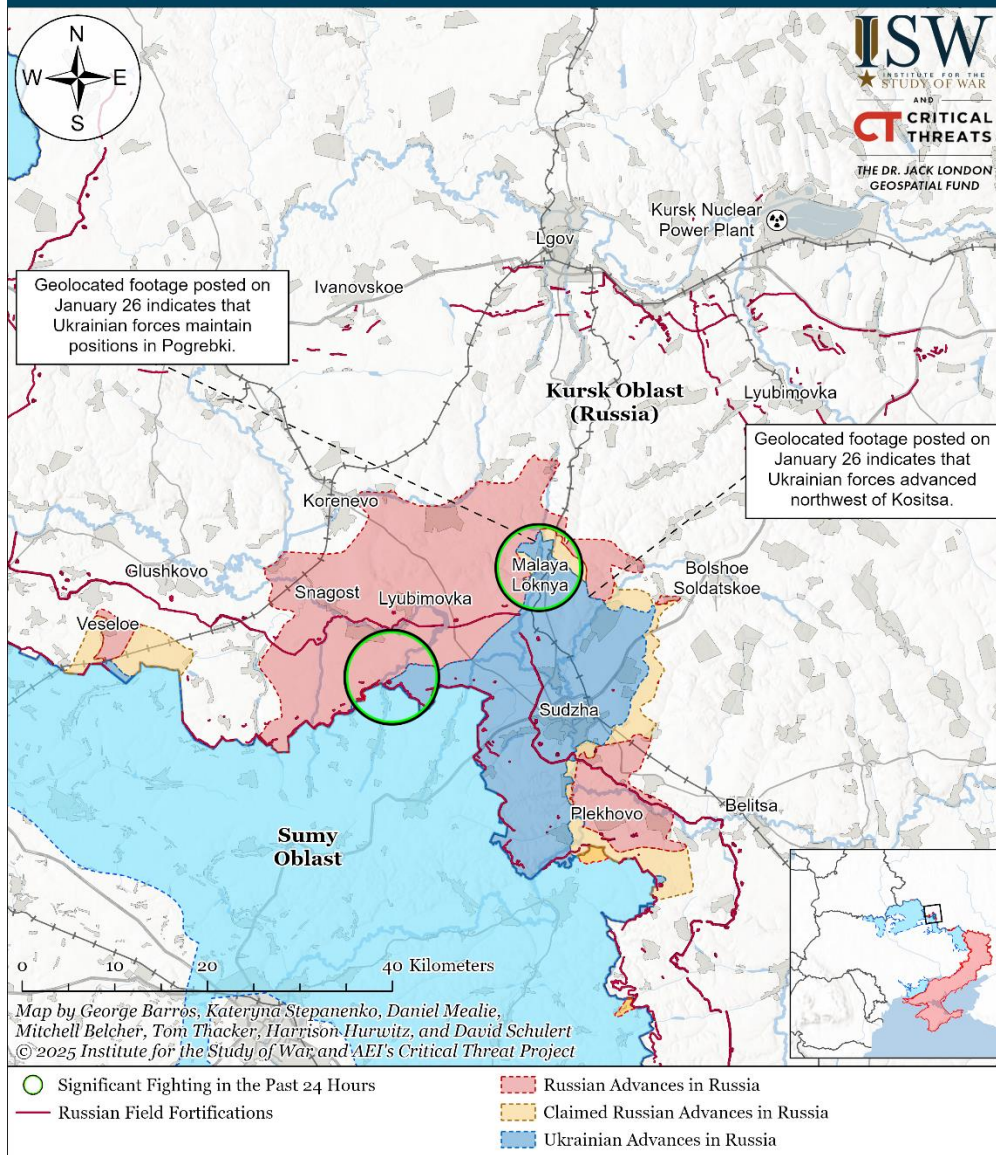
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Push Ukrainian forces back from the international border with Belgorod Oblast and approach to within tube artillery range of Kharkiv City
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and encircle northern Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #3 – Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis
- Russian Air, Missile, and Drone Campaign
- Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts
- Russian Technological Adaptations
- Activities in Russian-occupied areas
- Significant Activity in Belarus

### **Ukrainian Operations in the Russian Federation**

Ukrainian forces recently marginally advanced in Kursk Oblast amid continued fighting in the Ukrainian salient on January 26. Geolocated footage published on January 26 indicates that Ukrainian forces recently marginally advanced in central Pogrebki (north of Sudzha) and in the forested area northwest of Kositsa (northeast of Sudzha).[25] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted counterattacks near Pogrebki.[26] Elements of the Russian 106th and 76th airborne (VDV) divisions, including the 76th VDV Division's 234th VDV Regiment, are reportedly operating in Kursk Oblast; elements of the 34th Motorized Rifle Brigade (49th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Southern Military District [SMD]) are reportedly operating near Pogrebki; and elements of the 1427th Motorized Rifle Regiment (formed during 2022 partial reserve call up) are reportedly operating near Kositsa (north of Sudzha).[27]

Russian sources claimed on January 26 that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attempted to cross the Russian-Ukrainian international border towards Tetkino (west of the main Ukrainian salient in Kursk Oblast), and some milbloggers characterized the Ukrainian activity as a reconnaissance-in-force mission.[28]

## Assessed Control of Terrain in the Kursk Direction January 26, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



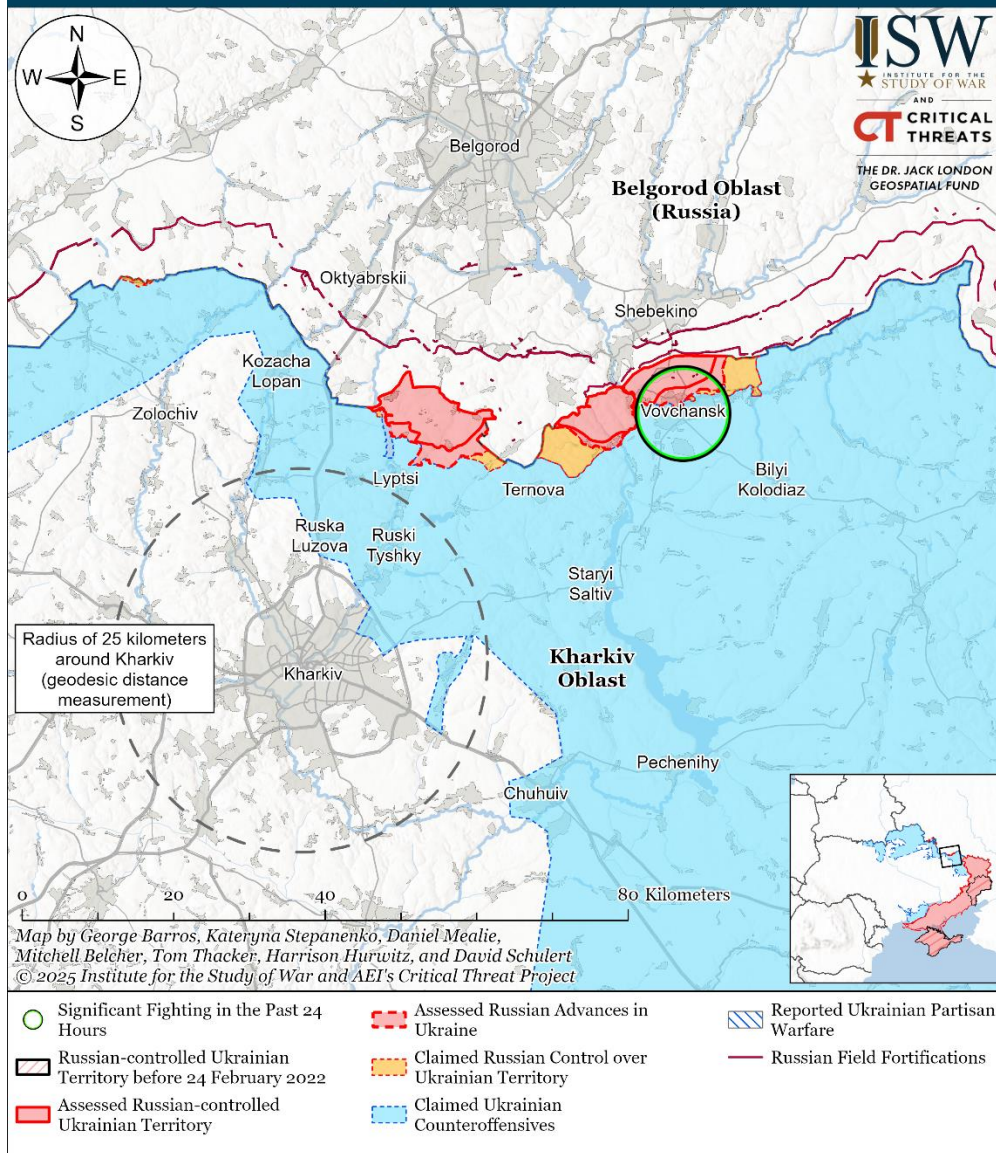
### Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

#### Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Kharkiv Oblast (Russian objective: Push Ukrainian forces back from the international border with Belgorod Oblast and approach to within tube artillery range of Kharkiv City)

Russian forces continued ground attacks northeast of Kharkiv City near Vovchansk on January 26 but did not advance.[29] Ukraine's Khortytsia Group of Forces reported on January 26 that Ukrainian forces destroyed four Russian infantry fighting vehicles in the Vovchansk direction.[30]



## Assessed Control of Terrain in the Kharkiv Direction January 26, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



### **Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Luhansk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and northern Donetsk Oblast)**

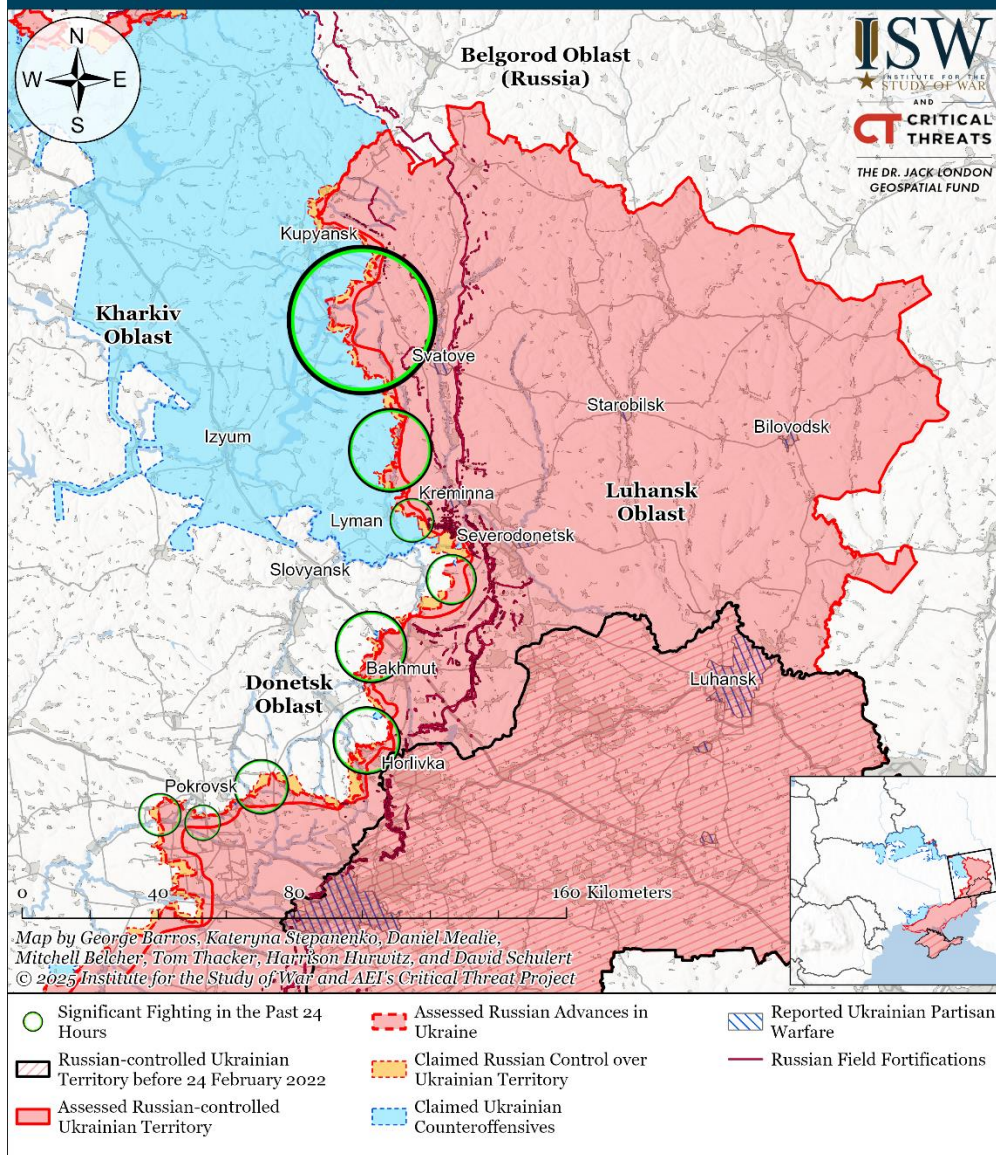
Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Kupyansk direction on January 26 but did not make any confirmed advances. Ukrainian units operating in the Kupyansk direction posted footage on January 25 showing Russian forces conducting a reinforced platoon-sized mechanized assault near Pishchane (southeast of Kupyansk) towards Kupyansk-Vuzlovyi (west of Pishchane) and reported that Ukrainian forces destroyed all four armored personnel carriers involved in the assault.[31] The commander of a Ukrainian battalion operating in the Kupyansk direction stated that Russian forces were trying to cross the Oskil River and expand their bridgehead near Dvorichna (north of Kupyansk).[32] The commander noted that Russian forces cannot conduct a full-scale river crossing

with heavy equipment as the river is not frozen, so groups of five to eight people cross the river in small boats during the night or foggy weather, after which they wait at a concentration point in forested areas for reinforcements to arrive. Russian forces conducted offensive operations east of Kupyansk near Stepova Novoselivka and Petropavlivka, southeast of Kupyansk near Pishchane, and south of Kupyansk near Hlushkivka on January 25 and 26.[33]

Russian forces recently advanced in the Borova direction amid continued Russian offensive operations in the area on January 26. Geolocated footage published on January 26 shows Russian soldiers raising a Russian flag in eastern Tverdokhlibove (southeast of Borova), indicating that Russian forces recently advanced to the eastern part of the settlement and seized Novoyehorivka (just east of Tverdokhlibove).[34] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced in the fields northwest of Novoyehorivka, in the fields northwest and west of Makiivka (southeast of Borova), and 400 meters from Makiivka towards Hrektivka (just west of Makiivka).[35] ISW has not observed confirmation of these claims, however. Russian forces continued ground attacks northeast of Borova near Kolisnykivka, Nova Kruhlyakivka, Lozova, Zelenyi Hai, and Zahryzove; east of Borova near Nadiya, Pershotravneve, and Kopanky and in the direction of Shyikivka; and southeast of Borova near Hrektivka, Makiivka, Novoserhiivka, Druzhelyubivka, Tverdokhlibove, and Novoyehorivka on January 25 and 26.[36] The commander for a Ukrainian battalion operating in the Kupyansk and Borova directions stated on January 26 that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian advances near Kolisnykivka and toward Zahryzove and that Ukrainian forces destroyed almost all of the equipment that Russian forces used in four mechanized assaults in the area between January 23 to 26.[37]

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Lyman direction on January 26 but did not make any confirmed advances. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced to the outskirts of Kolodyazi (northeast of Lyman) after repelling Ukrainian counterattacks.[38] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces are unsuccessfully trying to enter Kolodyazi in small groups.[39] Russian forces conducted offensive operations northeast of Lyman near Kolodyazi, Yampolivka, Terny, Ivanivka, and Novolyubivka and east of Lyman near Torske on January 25 and 26.[40] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked in Torske.[41] The spokesperson of a Ukrainian brigade operating in the Lyman direction stated that Russian forces rarely conduct mechanized assaults but are almost constantly attacking in teams of two to three people.[42] The spokesperson stated that Russian forces are using a tactic in which an unarmed Russian servicemember storms Ukrainian positions first in order to identify Ukrainian firing positions, after which well-trained servicemembers begin attacking. Drone operators of the Russian 16th Spetsnaz Brigade (Russian General Staff's Main Directorate [GRU]) are reportedly operating near Zarichne (east of Lyman).[43]

## Assessed Control of Terrain in Luhansk Oblast January 26, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST

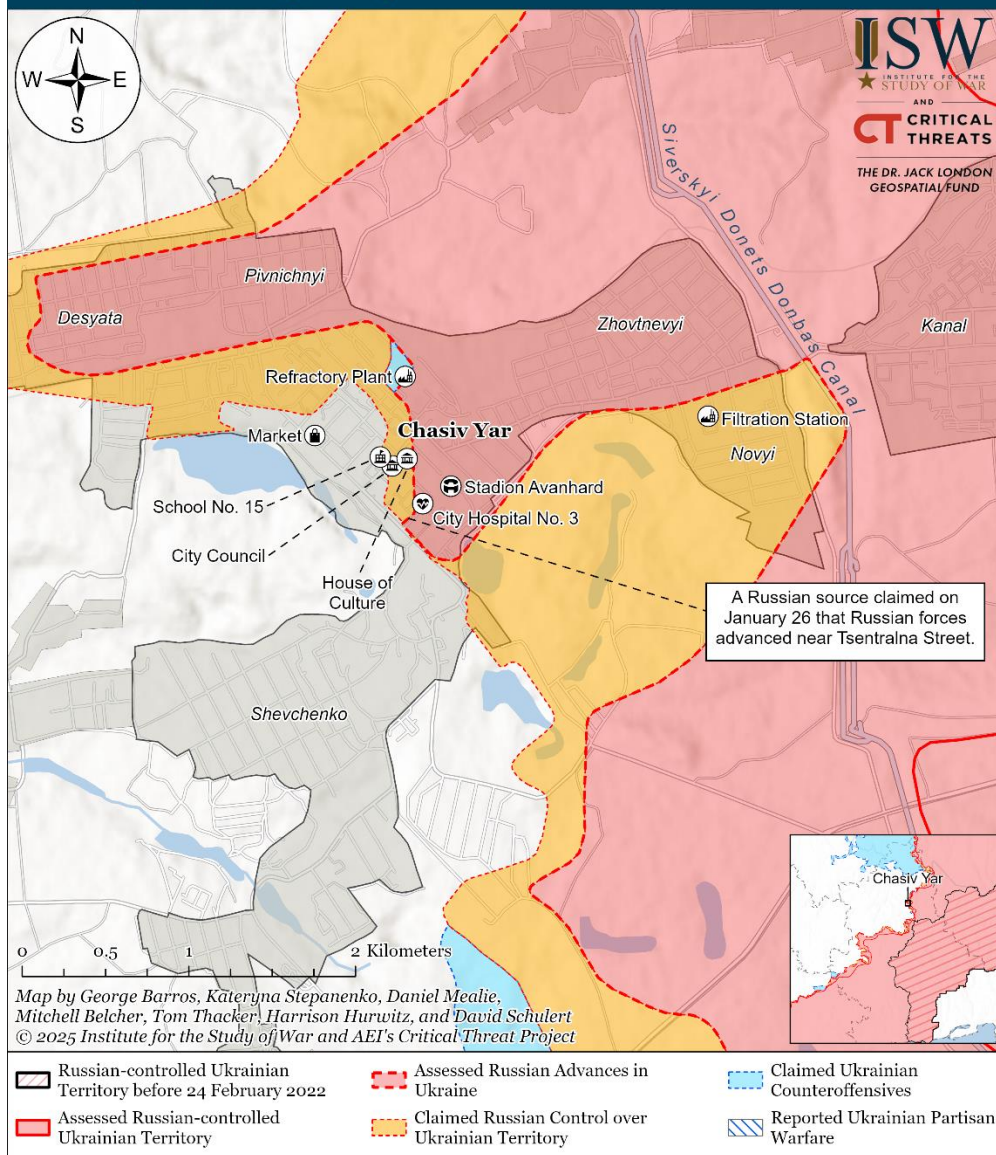


### **Russian Subordinate Main Effort #3 – Donetsk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)**

Russian forces continued offensive operations east of Siversk near Verkhokamyanske on January 25 and 26 but did not advance.[44] An officer of a Ukrainian National Guard battalion operating in the Siversk direction reported on January 25 that Russian forces are attaching nets to Mavic drones to disable Ukrainian drones but are still working on improving the effectiveness of the nets.[45] The Ukrainian officer also reported that Russian and Ukrainian forces have parity in terms of quantity of drones and that Russian forces could be suffering from equipment shortages since Russian forces are trying to recover all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), electronic warfare (EW) systems, mopeds, or damaged armored vehicles from the front.

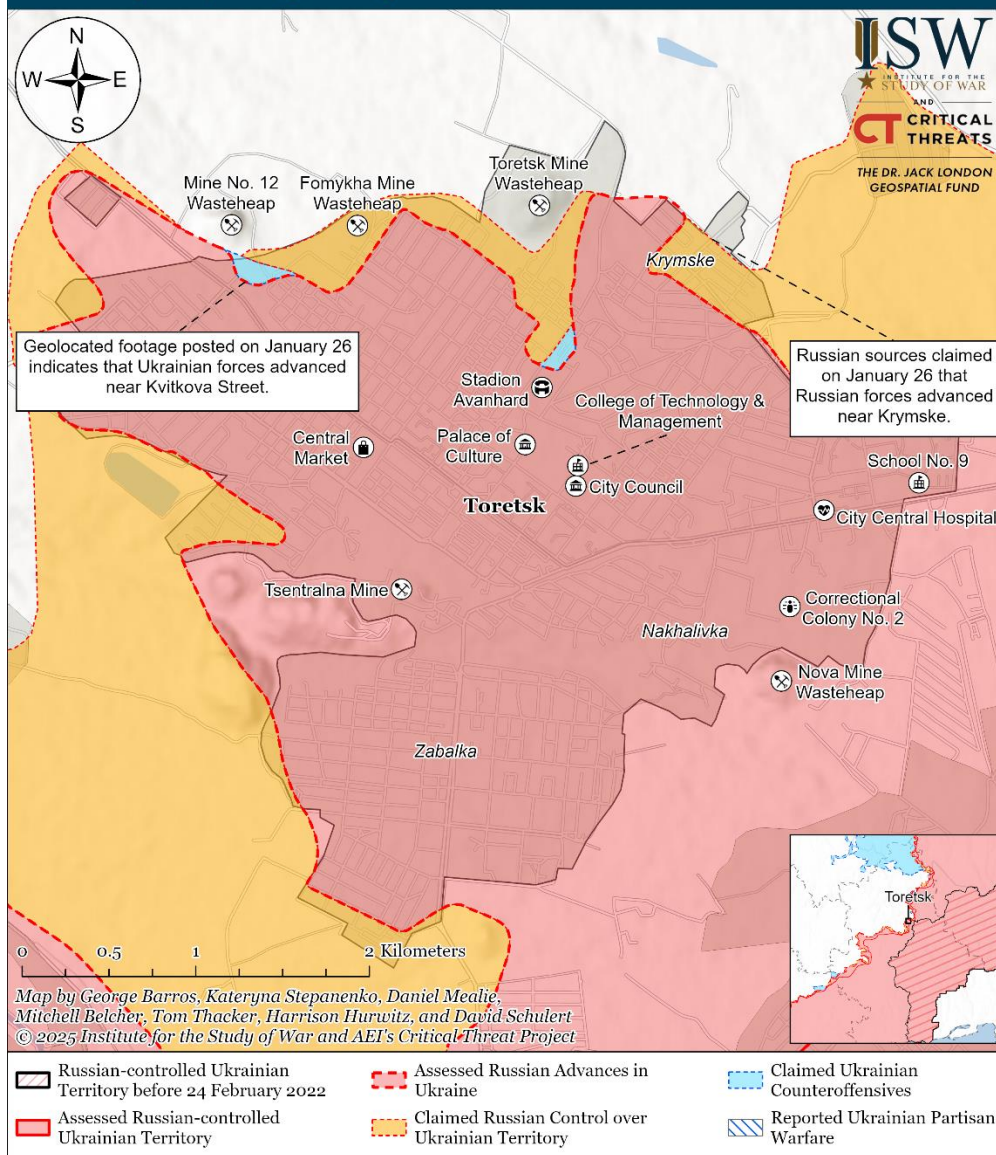
Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Chasiv Yar direction on January 26 but did not make any confirmed advances. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced to Tsentralna Street in western Chasiv Yar and on the southern outskirts of the settlement, but ISW has not observed confirmation of these claims.[46] Russian forces continued ground attacks near Chasiv Yar itself; north of Chasiv Yar near Orikhovo-Vasylivka and towards Novomarkove; and south of Chasiv Yar near Stupochky, Bila Hora, and Predtechyne on January 25 and 26.[47] A spokesperson for a Ukrainian brigade operating in the Chasiv Yar direction stated on January 26 that the elements of the Russian 98th Airborne (VDV) Division operating in and near Chasiv Yar are well trained and that Chechen "Akhmat" Spetsnaz elements that include former Wagner Group and "Rusich" Russian Sabotage Assault Reconnaissance Group soldiers are reinforcing the airborne elements.[48] The Ukrainian spokesperson stated that Russian forces are conducting small group infantry assaults daily and are taking advantage of times when Ukrainian forces decrease their use of drones due to fog and precipitation to attack. Ukraine's Khortytsia Group of Forces Spokesperson Major Viktor Trehubov stated that Russian forces are hiding and moving around in pipes near the Siverskyi Donets Donbas Canal. Elements of the Russian 27th Artillery Regiment (6th Motorized Rifle Division, 3rd Army Corps [AC]) are reportedly operating in the Chasiv Yar direction.[49]

## Assessed Control of Terrain in Chasiv Yar January 26, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



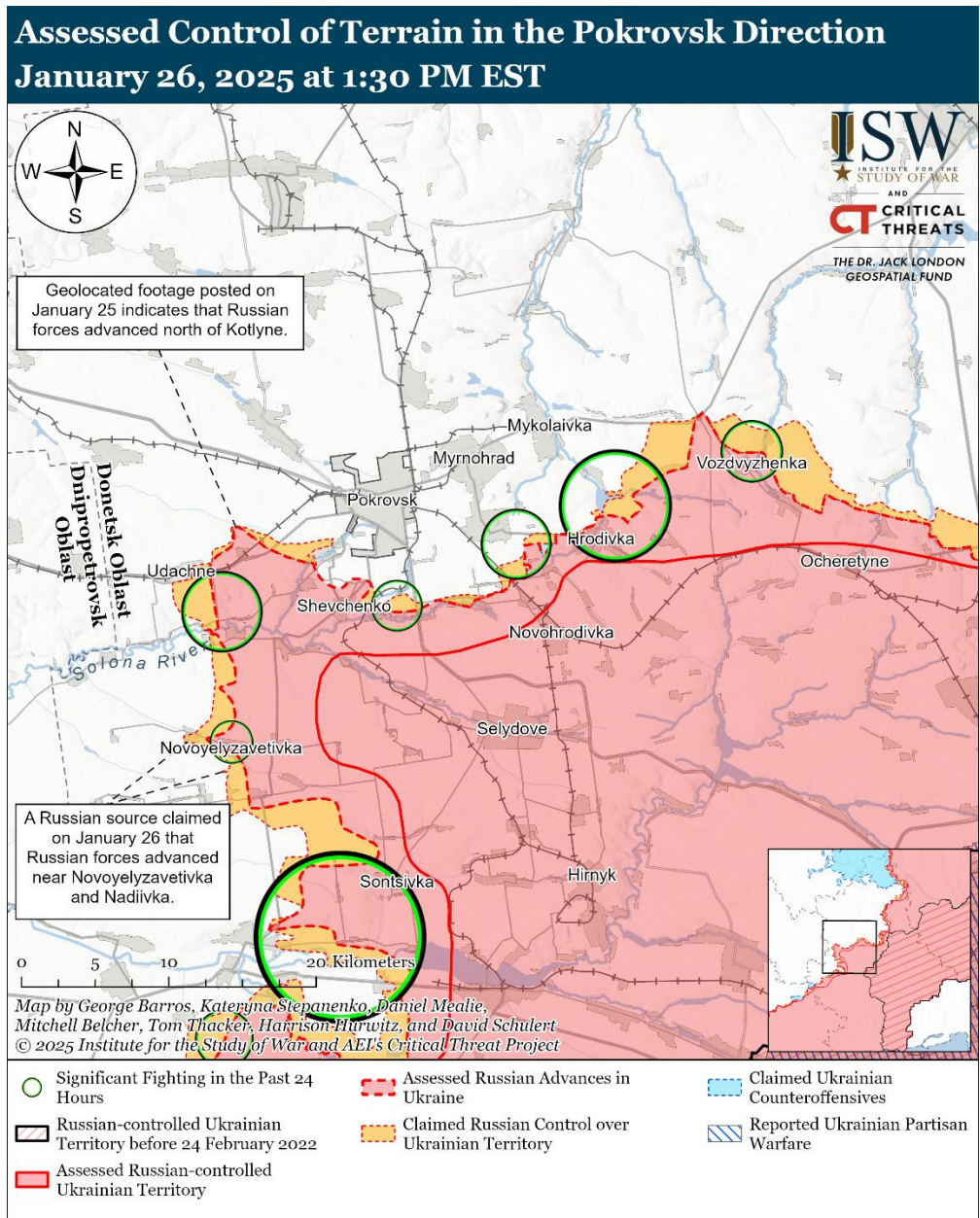
Ukrainian forces recently regained limited positions in Toretsk amid ongoing Russian assaults in the settlement on January 26. Geolocated footage published on January 26 indicates that Ukrainian forces recently regained limited positions in northwestern Toretsk.[50] A Ukrainian battalion commander operating in the Toretsk direction reported that Ukrainian forces maintain positions within the administrative boundaries of Toretsk.[51] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces are advancing in Krymske (north of Toretsk) and Petrivka (west of Toretsk), but ISW has not observed confirmation of this claim.[52] Russian forces continued assaults near and within Toretsk, including near the Toretska Mine in northern Toretsk, on January 25 and 26.[53] Elements of the Russian 132nd Motorized Rifle Brigade (51st Combined Arms Army [CAA], formerly 1st Donetsk People's Republic [DNR] AC) reportedly continue to operate in Toretsk.[54]

## Assessed Control of Terrain in Toretsk January 26, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



Russian forces recently marginally advanced west of Pokrovsk amid ongoing offensive operations in the Pokrovsk direction on January 26. Geolocated footage published on January 25 indicates that Russian forces recently marginally advanced in the fields north of Kotlyne (west of Pokrovsk).[55] The spokesperson of a Ukrainian National Guard Brigade operating in the Pokrovsk direction stated that Russian forces are transporting infantry on armored vehicles towards Ukrainian positions and are using several tanks to provide fire support for each group of disembarking infantry.[56] The Russian MoD claimed that Russian forces seized Zelene (south of Pokrovsk), and ISW assessed that Russian forces seized the settlement as of January 21.[57] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced further west of Kotlyne and seized a nearby mineshaft, advanced in the fields south of Udachne (west of Pokrovsk), south of Novoyelyzavetivka (southwest of Pokrovsk) and gained a foothold in eastern and southern Nadiivka (southwest of Pokrovsk), but ISW has not observed confirmation of these

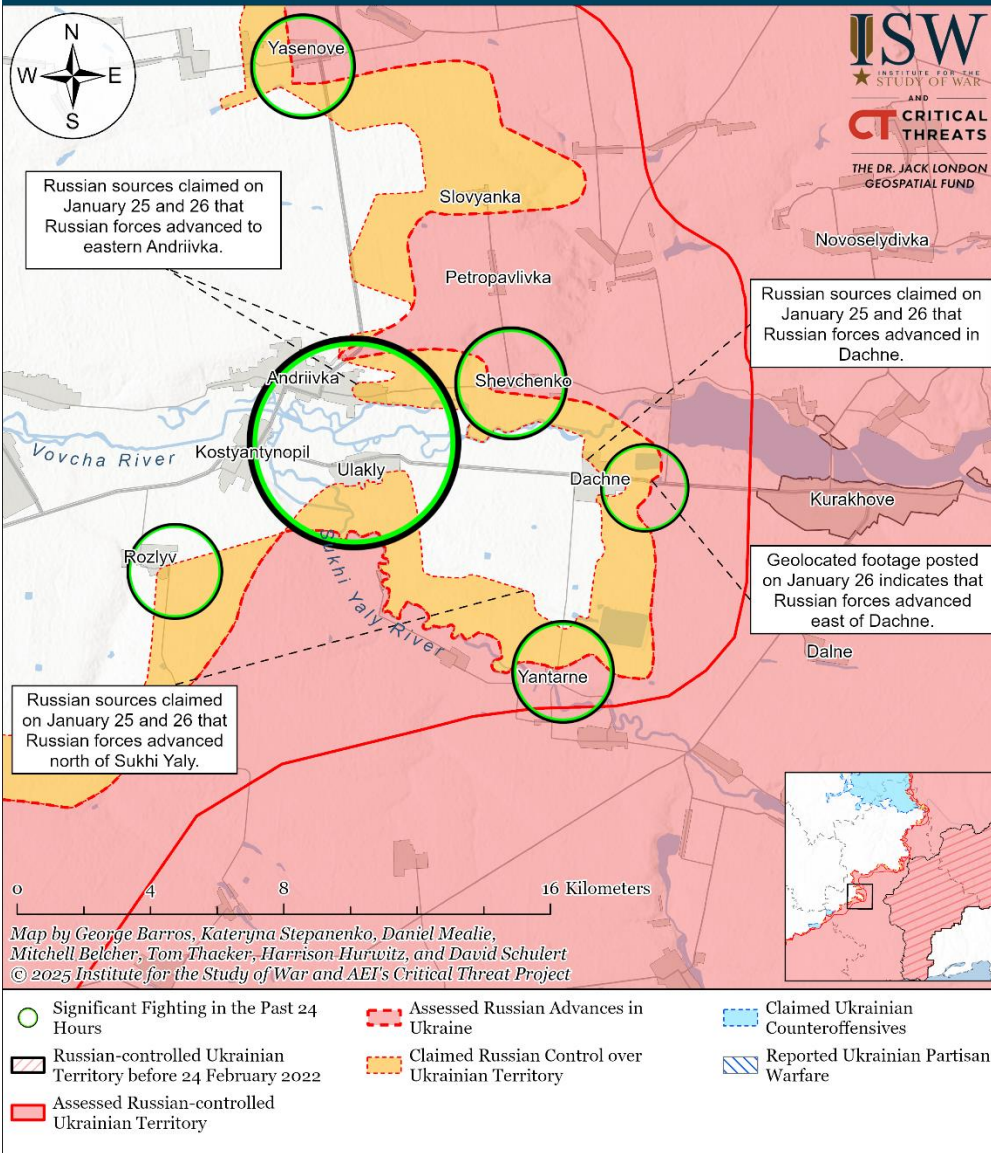
claims.[58] A Russian source claimed that Russian forces are attempting to bypass and envelop Yelyzavetivka (east of Pokrovsk).[59] Russian forces continued assault near Pokrovsk itself; east of Pokrovsk near Vozdvyzhenka, Vodyane Druhe, Myrolyubivka, Yelyzavetivka, and Promin; southeast of Pokrovsk near Lysivka; south of Pokrovsk near Zelene, Novoukrainka, and Zvirove; west of Pokrovsk near Udachne and Kotlyne; and southwest of Pokrovsk near Novovasylivka, Novooleksandrivka, Uspenivka, Novoserhiivka, Nadiivka, and Bohdanivka on January 25 and 26.[60] Elements of the Russian 35th Motorized Rifle Brigade (41st CAA, Central Military District [CMD]) and drone operators of the Russian Rubicon Center for Advanced Unmanned Technologies and the "Vega" Spetsnaz Detachment (24th Guards Spetsnaz Brigade, Main Intelligence Directorate of the Russian General Staff [GRU]) are reportedly operating in the Pokrovsk direction.[61]



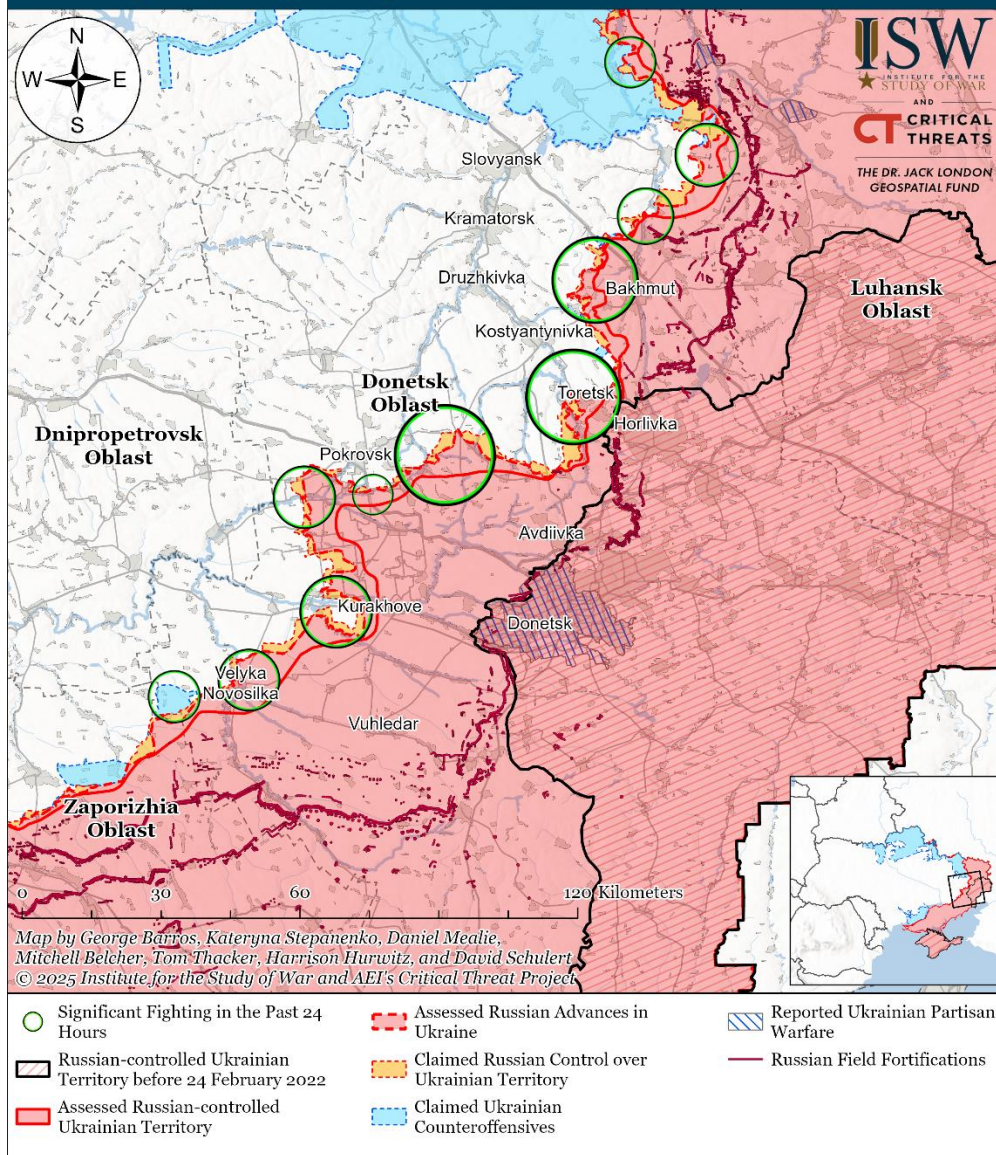
Russian forces recently advanced in the Kurakhove direction amid continued offensive operations in the area on January 26. Geolocated footage published on January 26 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced to the eastern outskirts of Dachne (west of Kurakhove).[62] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced north, east, and south of Sribne (northwest of Kurakhove); into Andriivka (west of Kurakhove); to northern Dachne; and north and northeast of Sukhi Yaly (southwest of Kurakhove).[63] A Russian source claimed that Russian forces attacked after artillery preparation north and south of Ulakly (west of Kurakhove) and advanced as part of efforts to close the Ukrainian pocket in the area.[64] ISW has not observed confirmation of these claims, however. Russian forces continued assaults northwest of Kurakhove near Sribne and Shevchenko; west of Kurakhove near Andriivka, Kostyantynopil and Dachne; and southwest of Kurakhove near Kostyantynopolske, Yantarne, and Ulakly on January 25 and 26.[65] Elements of the Russian 68th Reconnaissance Battalion (20th Motorized Rifle Division, 8th CAA, Southern Military District [SMD]) are reportedly operating near Dachne; elements of the 114th Motorized Rifle Brigade (51st CAA) and 238th Artillery Brigade (8th CAA, SMD) are reportedly operating near Andriivka; and elements of the 200th Artillery Brigade (29th CAA, Eastern Military District [EMD]) and 39th Motorized Rifle Brigade (68th AC, EMD) are reportedly operating near the Sukhi Yaly River (southwest of Kurakhove).[66]



# Assessed Control of Terrain in the Kurakhove Direction January 26, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



## Assessed Control of Terrain in Donetsk Oblast January 26, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST

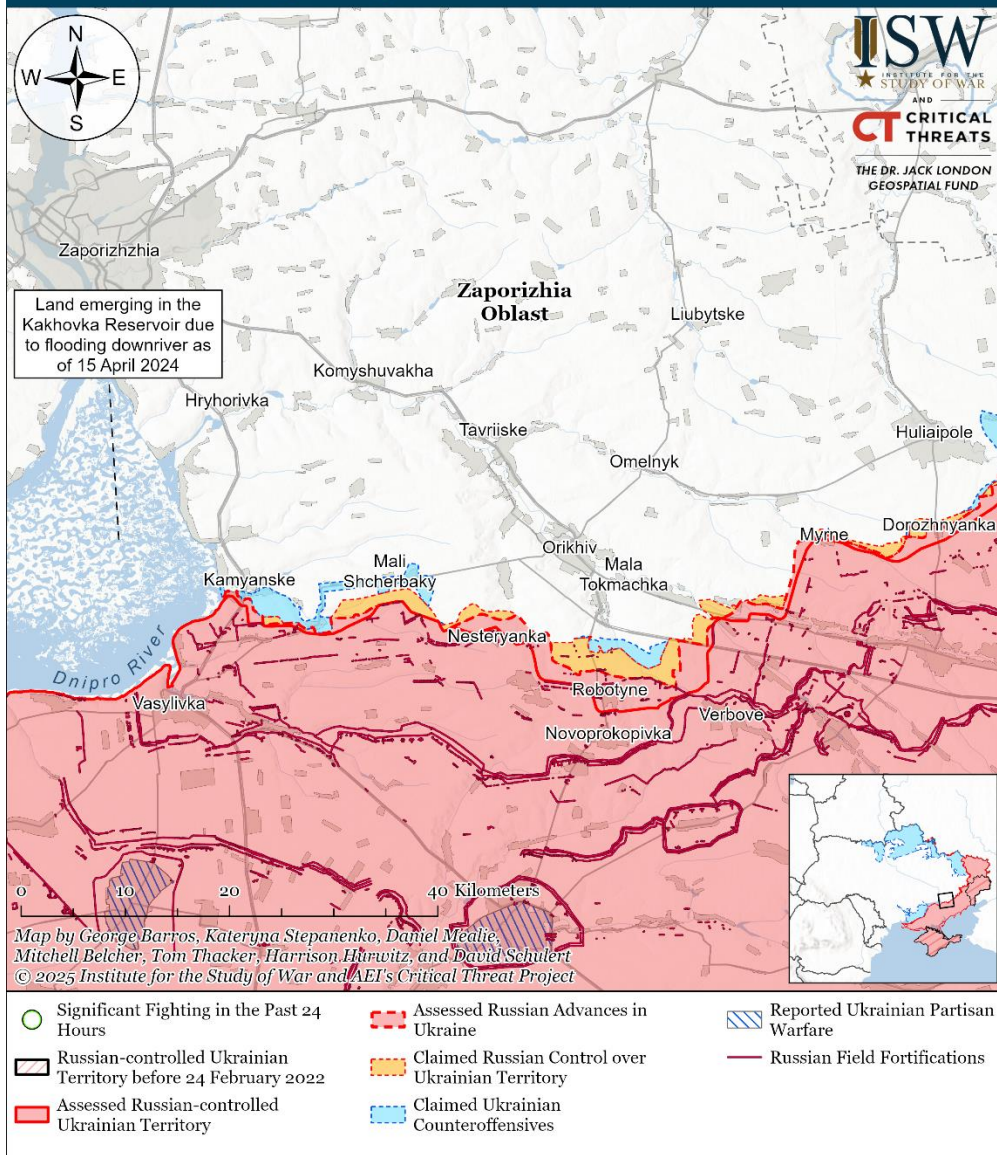


See topline text for updates on the Velyka Novosilka area.

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

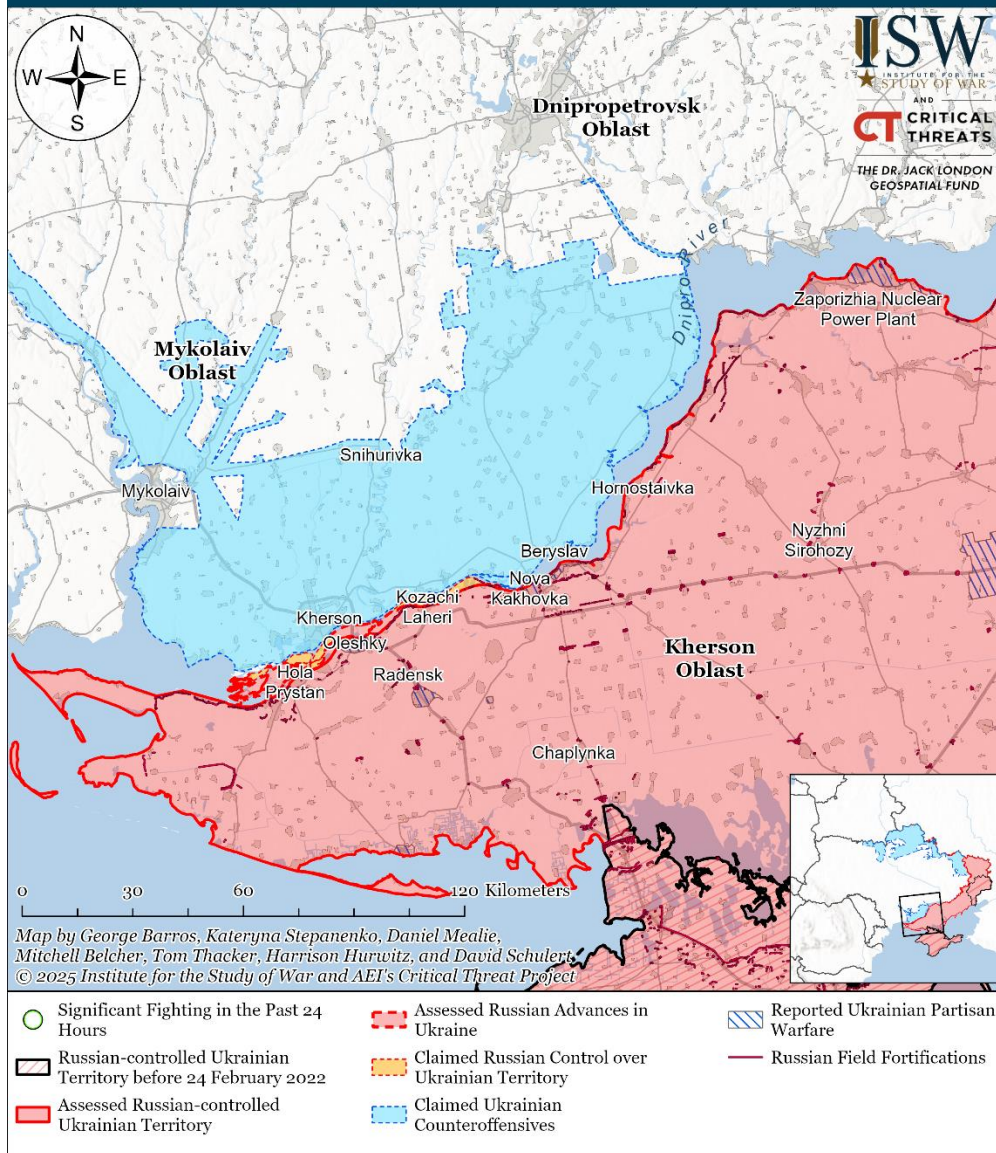
Neither Ukrainian nor Russian sources reported Russian offensive operations in the Zaporizhia direction on January 26. A spokesperson for a Ukrainian brigade operating in the Zaporizhia direction stated that Russian forces are using fiber optic drones more frequently.[67]

## Assessed Control of Terrain in the Zaporizhia Direction January 26, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



Russian forces continued assaults in the Kherson direction, including on Zabych and Kozatskyi islands (southwest and east of Kherson City, respectively) in the Dnipro River Delta, on January 25 and 26 but did not advance.[68]

## Assessed Control of Terrain in the Kherson Direction January 26, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



### **Russian Air, Missile, and Drone Campaign (Russian Objective: Target Ukrainian military and civilian infrastructure in the rear and on the frontline)**

Russian forces conducted a series of drone and missile strikes against Ukraine on the night of January 25 to 26. The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Russian forces launched 72 Shahed and decoy drones from Oryol, Kursk, and Bryansk oblasts; and Millerovo, Rostov Oblast, and Primorsko-Akhtarsk, Krasnodar Krai.[69] The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Ukrainian forces downed 50 drones over Kyiv, Odesa, Kharkiv, Poltava, Sumy, Donetsk, Dnipropetrovsk, and Khmelnytskyi oblasts; that nine decoy drones were “lost” in location, likely due to Ukrainian electronic warfare (EW) interference; and that one drone was still in the air as of 0900 local time. Ukrainian officials reported that Russian drones damaged civilian infrastructure in Sumy City overnight and damaged residential buildings and vehicles

in Shevchenkivskiy, Kyivskiy, Kholodnohirskiy, and Osnovyanskyi raions of Kharkiv City overnight and on January 26.[70]

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky reported on January 26 that Russian forces launched 1,250 glide bombs, over 750 first-person view (FPV) drones, and over 220 missiles against Ukraine from January 20 to 26.[71] The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Ukrainian air defenses downed two guided aircraft missiles, 375 Shaheds, 71 reconnaissance drones, and 59 other drones over Ukraine from January 20 to 26.[72]

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

Russian milbloggers criticized the Russian government on January 25 for not prioritizing the recruitment and training of Russia's next generation of military officers. One Russian milblogger claimed that current Russian youth are more patriotic than previous generations, but a second milblogger claimed that the Russian government is failing to take advantage of this trend and criticized Russian youth for highlighting issues in the Russian military without joining the military or working to develop solutions.[73] The second milblogger criticized Russian military academies for prioritizing state awards over properly training cadets and claimed that the Russian military expelled many contract servicemembers who joined the military in 2024 due to behavioral or training issues. A third milblogger noted that the Russian military does not pay cadets a livable wage and accused the Russian military command of being careless towards the future of the Russian officer corps.[74] A Kremlin-affiliated Russian milblogger noted that the Russian government needs to adjust its youth policies and propaganda.[75]

### **Russian Technological Adaptations (Russian objective: Introduce technological innovations to optimize systems for use in Ukraine)**

Nothing significant to report.

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

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

### **Significant activity in Belarus (Russian efforts to increase its military presence in Belarus and further integrate Belarus into Russian-favorable frameworks)**

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko won the January 26 Belarusian presidential election with a purported 87.6 percent of the vote in an election that was neither free nor fair.[76] Belarusians did not participate in widespread mass protests - a departure from the mass unrest that followed Lukashenko's rigged electoral victory in the 2020 presidential election.[77] Exiled Belarusian opposition leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya called on Belarusians to refrain from protesting ahead of the election, citing the heightened risk of severe repercussions.[78] Lukashenko's regime has attempted to minimize the risk of wide-spread protests in recent years, including by rescheduling the presidential election from their usual timing in the summer to the winter, restricting internet access during the

voting period, and introducing increasingly repressive policies to disincentivize opposition parties since 2020.[79]

The Russian government continues to erode Belarusian sovereignty by increasing its permanent military presence and deploying missile systems in Belarus. Lukashenko claimed on January 26 that Russian Oreshnik ballistic missiles would arrive in Belarus “any day now.”[80] Lukashenko claimed that Russia may deploy the Oreshniks to a Belarusian city, such as Orsha close to Smolensk City in western Russia.[81] Lukashenko asserted that Russia's deployment of Oreshnik missiles to Belarus is a direct response to US missile deployments in Europe and claimed that the Oreshnik missiles will protect Belarus.[82] Lukashenko likely hopes to assert some form of control over Russia's use of the Oreshnik missiles deployed to Belarus to buttress Belarus’ waning sovereignty, but Moscow will likely retain operational control over the missiles and their use. ISW continues to assess that the deployment of Oreshnik medium-range ballistic missiles to Belarusian territory does not fundamentally alter Russian military capabilities vis-à-vis Europe and Ukraine, as Russia has long maintained weapons systems with similar payloads and longer ranges in Kaliningrad and elsewhere in mainland Russia.[83]

**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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