

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment

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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.

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 1 pm ET on June 3. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the June 4 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Ukrainian officials continue to signal that Ukrainian forces are prepared to start counteroffensive operations. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky stated in a June 3 interview with the *Wall Street Journal* that Ukraine is ready to launch a counteroffensive.¹ Zelensky stated that Ukraine “would like to have certain things, but ... can't wait for months” to start counteroffensive operations.² Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Malyar stated on June 3 that “military plans love silence” and that she will “discuss something else” in the meantime, likely acknowledging that Ukrainian officials have started to more strictly enforce a regime of informational silence about operations in preparation for upcoming counteroffensives.³ Ukrainian Minister of Internal Affairs Ihor Klymenko stated on June 3 that Ukraine has formed all nine brigades of the “Offensive Guard” and that these formations are ready to take part in hostilities at Zelensky's and Ukrainian Commander in Chief General Valeriy Zaluzhnyi's orders.⁴

Wagner Group financier Yevgeny Prigozhin escalated his feud with the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD), likely hoping to draw criticism back to the Russian military leadership and downplay his ongoing conflict with Chechen Republic Head Ramzan Kadyrov. Prigozhin alleged on June 2 that representatives of the MoD placed anti-tank mines and other explosive devices along routes that Wagner forces were using to withdraw from Bakhmut.⁵ Prigozhin asserted that these charges were placed in rear areas with no Ukrainian activity and that the MoD likely meant for Wagner forces to detonate the explosives in order to give Wagner a “public flogging.”⁶ Prigozhin also further responded to a concerted attack that Chechen commanders launched against him on June 1 and stated on June 3 that he and Kadyrov settled the conflict.⁷ Prigozhin claimed that he called Kadyrov on June 1 and the two agreed to let the “whole story” about the conflict dissipate.⁸ Prigozhin suggested that a group in the Kremlin may have started the conflict between Kadyrov's forces and Wagner and insinuated that the Kremlin often plays “dangerous games” that could destabilize interethnic relations within Russia.⁹ Kadyrov has yet to publicly address the conflict between Chechen forces and Wagner.

Prigozhin has not yet responded to Kadyrov or the Chechen commanders who started the attack in an antagonistic manner typical of his usual approach to responding to critiques.¹⁰ The claimed private phone call between Prigozhin and Kadyrov would suggest that Prigozhin is concerned that this typical public response might further antagonize Kadyrov and Chechen commanders and that Prigozhin is concerned about having another prominent *silovik* figure like Kadyrov aligned against him. Prigozhin likely accused the MoD of trying to kill Wagner forces and the Kremlin of creating the conflict with the Chechen commanders to quickly reorient Russian discussion back to his usual targets of ire, the Russian military and political leadership. Prigozhin is also likely aiming to rally pro-war ultranationalist groups, specifically Kadyrov and Chechen commanders, to join him in criticizing those targets as he has done before.

Prigozhin’s flamboyant allegations are also likely an attempt to retain his heightened initiative within the Russian information space following the capture of Bakhmut. Prigozhin has consistently shaped discussions within the Russian information space leading up to the capture of Bakhmut and following the end of Wagner’s effort in the city by engaging in a near-daily series of public outbursts and demonstrative actions.¹¹ Prigozhin has used his heightened profile following the capture of Bakhmut to intensify his attacks against the Russian military establishment and elites and bolster his attempt to solidify himself as the central figure of the Russian ultranationalist community.¹² The concerted attack from Chechen commanders represents the first instance since the capture of Bakhmut that Prigozhin has not been the one to initiate larger conversations about himself and the Wagner Group within the Russian information space. Prigozhin’s desire to retain Kadyrov as a potential ally has likely constrained Prigozhin’s regular approach to shaping the Russian information space. Prigozhin has routinely used Wagner’s claimed responsibility for tactical gains to legitimize his pursuit of influence and his criticism of others, and he is likely also concerned that he may soon lose his current ability to dominate discussions about himself and Wagner as Wagner Group forces withdraw to rear areas to replenish and reconstitute.¹³ Prigozhin’s dramatic accusation against the MoD aims to remove any constraints resulting from his conflict with Kadyrov, shift the conversation back to criticizing his opponents in the MoD, and allow Prigozhin to continue determining how he and Wagner are portrayed.

Prigozhin seized on general Russian discontent with security on the Belgorod Oblast border to threaten that Wagner Group forces may operate in Russian territory without approval from the Russian military command.¹⁴ Prigozhin claimed that Wagner will not wait for an invitation or permission from the MoD to defend Belgorod Oblast if the MoD does not curb security threats to the region. Prigozhin justified his threat of insubordination by claiming that Wagner aims to protect the Russian people, implying that Wagner will assume the role of border defender that the MoD should already occupy. Prigozhin’s threats capitalize on complaints from other prominent information space voices that Russian authorities have not done enough to protect border areas from the impacts of the war and reflect Prigozhin’s current loss of informational initiative.¹⁵

Prigozhin’s threats also indicate that he may aim for Wagner forces to assume primary or sole responsibility for an axis in the Ukrainian theater now that Wagner forces have withdrawn from that role in the Bakhmut area. Prigozhin may see the Belgorod-Ukraine border as an easy enough front line to defend as the raids into Russia have thus far occurred on an extremely limited scale. Deploying Wagner forces to the Belgorod border would allow Prigozhin to maintain his position as a commander of frontline forces without the grueling demands of conducting human wave-style frontal assaults against a heavily fortified Ukrainian city. **Prigozhin’s apparent threat to undertake military operations, even defensive ones, on Russian territory without the permission of the Russian MoD is astonishing if it is anything other than flamboyant rhetoric.** It implies that Prigozhin regards himself as able to use large military forces loyal to him at his own discretion and beyond the control of the actual Russian military. Russian President Vladimir Putin would have to have tremendous confidence in Prigozhin’s personal loyalty to himself to be at all comfortable with such a situation.

A Russian Duma Deputy stated during a public forum on June 1 that Russia has failed to accomplish any of its articulated goals for the “special military operation” in Ukraine. First Duma Deputy Chairman of the Committee on Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) Affairs Konstantin Zatulin emphasized that of Russia’s officially declared goals at the beginning of the invasion of Ukraine — “denazification, demilitarization, the neutrality of Ukraine, and the protection of the inhabitants of the Donetsk and Luhansk People’s Republics”—none have actually been met.¹⁶ Zatulin further noted that as the war has worn on, these goals have ceased to hold actual meaning and suggested that Russian forces should have been more aggressive in efforts to push Ukrainian forces back from the borders of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. Zatulin’s critical observations are noteworthy considering that he is a contributor to the Kremlin-affiliated Valdai Discussion Club, which famously upholds views complementary to Russian President Vladimir Putin and the official Kremlin propaganda line.¹⁷ Zatulin’s apparent views of the war represent an absolute minority within the Russian domestic political environment, as self-censorship and general information space repressions are

commonplace. However, such statements coming from a relatively mainstream and well-platformed official suggest that a small subset of the predominant pro-war Russian political faction may feel somewhat empowered to voice discontent and advocate for escalated goals as the war continues.

Key Takeaways

- **Ukrainian officials continue to signal that Ukrainian forces are prepared to start counteroffensive operations.**
- **Wagner Group financier Yevgeny Prigozhin escalated his feud with the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD), likely hoping to draw criticism back to the Russian military leadership and downplay his ongoing conflict with Chechen Republic Head Ramzan Kadyrov. Prigozhin’s flamboyant allegations are also likely an attempt to retain his heightened initiative within the Russian information space following the capture of Bakhmut.**
- **Prigozhin seized on general Russian discontent with security on the Belgorod Oblast border to threaten that Wagner Group forces may operate in Russian territory without approval from the Russian military command.**
- **A Russian Duma Deputy stated during a public forum on June 1 that Russia has failed to accomplish any of its articulated goals for the “special military operation” in Ukraine.**
- **Russian forces continued limited offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove line and northwest and south of Kreminna.**
- **Regular Russian forces have likely largely relieved Wagner Group forces in Bakhmut amid a low offensive tempo in the area as of June 3.**
- **Russian forces focused offensive operations on the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line near Marinka.**
- **Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces continued limited ground attacks in western Donetsk Oblast.**
- **Russian forces continued efforts to establish defensive positions in Kherson Oblast.**
- **The Russian military leadership is attempting to create and staff new military formations.**
- **Likely Ukrainian partisans assassinated a Russian collaborator in occupied Zaporizhia Oblast.**

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

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

Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

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

Russian forces continued limited offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove line on June 3. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful offensive operations near Novoselivske, Luhansk Oblast (16km northwest of Svatove).¹⁸ A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian reinforcements arrived during Russian ground attacks near Novoselivske and forced Russian forces to retreat towards Kuzemivka (15km northwest of Svatove).¹⁹ The milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked towards Kuzemivka but that Russian forces repelled the assaults.²⁰ Other Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces conducted ground attacks near Dvorichna (16km northeast of Kupyansk), Masyutivka (13km northeast of Kupyansk), and Synkivka (9km northeast of Kupyansk).²¹

Russian forces continued limited offensive operations northwest and south of Kreminna on June 3. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful offensive operations near Makiivka (22km northwest of Kreminna), Bilohorivka (12km south of Kreminna) and Spirne (25km south of Kreminna).²² A Russian milblogger claimed that fighting in the Makiivka area is ongoing near the R-66 (Kreminna to Svatove) highway and that Russian forces advanced in forests west of Kreminna.²³

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

Click [here](#) to read ISW’s retrospective analysis on the Battle for Bakhmut.

Regular Russian forces have likely largely relieved Wagner Group forces in Bakhmut amid a low offensive tempo in the area as of June 3. Wagner Group financier Yevgeny Prigozhin claimed on June 2 that 99 percent of Wagner units have left Bakhmut.²⁴ The UK Ministry of Defense (MoD) reported that degraded Russian Airborne Forces (VDV) elements, including those of the 76th VDV Division, 106th VDV Division, and two unspecified brigades have deployed to the Bakhmut area and are increasing their role in the area.²⁵ Ukrainian Eastern Group of Forces Spokesperson Colonel Serhiy Cherevaty stated that Russian forces lost 100,000 personnel killed and wounded in the 10-month Bakhmut effort.²⁶ The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful offensive actions 6km west of Bakhmut near Ivanivske.²⁷ A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian and Ukrainian forces are conducting positional engagements on the northern and southern flanks of Bakhmut.²⁸ The milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces are strengthening defensive lines in this area because Russian forces aim to restart their offensive effort on June 5, the claimed completion date of the Wagner withdrawal from Bakhmut.²⁹

Russian forces on the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line continued to focus their offensive efforts on Marinka (on the southwestern outskirts of Donetsk City) on June 3. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled 14 Russian ground attacks in Marinka and near Oleksandrivka (immediately south of Donetsk City).³⁰ The Ukrainian General Staff noted that Russian forces did not conduct ground attacks near Avdiivka. Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces gained some territory in northwestern Marinka and that Russian forces will likely attempt to encircle the settlement in June.³¹ One milblogger claimed that Russian forces made limited gains north of Avdiivka and complained that Ukrainian forces successfully constrained Russian offensive efforts west of Avdiivka near Krasnohorivka.³²

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces continued limited ground attacks in western Donetsk Oblast on June 3. A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces are attempting to seize the initiative in the Vuhledar direction but there are currently no reports that Ukrainian troops have broken through Russian lines.³³ Another Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces are probing Russian defenses for future attacks near Pavlivka (2km southwest of Vuhledar) and Mykilske (3km southeast of Vuhledar).³⁴ The Russian MoD claimed that Russian forces struck Ukrainian positions near Russian-controlled Pavlivka, which is consistent with other Russian claims of activity in the area.³⁵ None of these claims are particularly anomalous or unusual, and ISW has

no independent confirmation of any of them.

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

Ukrainian and Russian sources stated that Ukrainian forces continued to target rear Russian positions throughout southern Ukraine on June 3. Ukraine’s Southern Operational Command reported that Ukrainian aviation units struck Russian concentration areas in Skadovsk Raion, Kherson Oblast.³⁶ Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces launched missile strikes against Berdyansk, Zaporizhia Oblast, and that Russian air defenses intercepted six unspecified Ukrainian missiles.³⁷ Zaporizhia Oblast occupation deputy Vladimir Rogov also claimed that Russian air defenses were active near Melitopol, Zaporizhia Oblast, and that residents heard several explosions in the area.³⁸

Russian forces continue to expand fortifications in rear areas of Kherson Oblast as of June 3. Geolocated footage published on June 3 shows newly erected dragon’s teeth defensive structures northeast of Stavky (87km southeast of Kherson City).³⁹ The fortifications are located on the north side of the E97 highway, a key ground line of communication (GLOC) connecting occupied Crimea to Skadovsk (60km south of Kherson City) and Oleshky (8km southwest of Kherson City). These new structures are consistent with an ongoing pattern in limited Russian fortifications in southern Ukraine that prioritize the defense of main GLOCs.

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

The Russian military leadership is attempting to create and staff new military formations. Russian state media outlet *TASS* began reporting in mid-May that authorities of the Kabardino-Balkaria Republic are offering to pay 20,000 rubles (approximately \$247) to residents who join the newly formed 40th Army Corps.⁴⁰ Rostov Oblast news agency *DON24* similarly reported on May 12 that Rostov Oblast governor Vasily Golubev instructed military enlistment offices to pay bonuses to volunteers who sign up for contract service with the Rostov St. George Motorized Rifle Battalion of the 144th Motorized Rifle Brigade of the 40th Army Corps of the Southern Military District.⁴¹ Russian media noted that these are the first instances of the 40th Army Corps in the public press, and ISW has not observed mentions of this formation pre-dating reports from mid-May.⁴² ISW previously reported on the *ad hoc* formation of the volunteer-based 3rd Army Corps, which formed over the summer of 2022 and reportedly had an end-strength of around 20,000 personnel.⁴³ It is unclear how Russian military authorities intend to staff an army corps-level formation considering pervasive and continued issues with force generation.

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)

Likely Ukrainian partisans assassinated at least one Russian collaborator in occupied Zaporizhia Oblast on June 2. Zaporizhia Oblast occupation official Vladimir Rogov claimed that Ukrainian actors blew up the car of local businessman Sergey Didovodyuk in Mykhailivka with a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBIED), killing Didovodyuk and injuring two others.⁴⁴ Rogov claimed that Didovodyuk was active in the occupation political sphere and participated in preliminary voting for the ruling “United Russia” party. Ukrainian sources reported that Didovodyuk is the deputy chairperson of the “We are Together with Russia” collaborator movement, of which Rogov is the chair.⁴⁵ Ukrainian sources also reported that the attack killed Didovodyuk’s daughter, Mykhailivka occupation Civil-Military Administration Deputy Head Yana Didovodyuk, and injured the Mykhailivka occupation Civil-Military Administration Head Vyacheslav Bidnyak.

Russian authorities established a system to simplify the adoption of Ukrainian children to Russian families and prevent returning Ukrainian children to Ukraine. Russian independent investigative outlet *Vazhne Istorii* reported that the Russian government established a state information bank on Ukrainian orphans and other children without parental care and advertises their profiles to Russian families for guardianship and adoption.⁴⁶ *Vazhne Istorii* reported that the Russian system aims to keep Ukrainian children from returning to Russia and that there are 4,400 Ukrainian orphans left without any care or adult supervision in Russia as of March 2023. *Vazhne Istorii* found that the number of Ukrainian children in Russia significantly increased in 2022, including 573 Ukrainian children in the Rostov Oblast database, 460 in the Moscow Oblast database, and 388 in the Nizhny Novgorod database.

Russia established a permanent occupation government in occupied Luhansk Oblast. Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) Head Leonid Pasechnik signed a decree on June 2 that established the Government of the LNR, consisting of 18 ministers and headed by a prime minister.⁴⁷ Pasechnik announced that Sergey Kozlov serves as the Chairperson of the LNR Government and that the new government strengthens integration with Russian state bodies.

Significant activity in Belarus (ISW assesses that a Russian or Belarusian attack into northern Ukraine is extraordinarily unlikely).

ISW will continue to report daily observed Russian and Belarusian military activity in Belarus, but these are not indicators that Russian and Belarusian forces are preparing for an imminent attack on Ukraine from Belarus. ISW will revise this text and its assessment if it observes any unambiguous indicators that Russia or Belarus is preparing to attack northern Ukraine.

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://www.wsj.com/video/series/in-depth-features/wsj-exclusive-an-interview-with-ukraine-volodymyr-zelensky/DF7422A2-778B-403B-83ED-3F9490192C1A?mod=e2tw>

² <https://www.wsj.com/video/series/in-depth-features/wsj-exclusive-an-interview-with-ukraine-volodymyr-zelensky/DF7422A2-778B-403B-83ED-3F9490192C1A?mod=e2tw>

³ <https://t.me/annamaliar/808>

⁴ <https://armyinform.com> dot ua/2023/06/03/gvardiya-nastupu-sformovana-ta-gotova-do-nakaziv-igor-klymenko/

⁵ https://t.me/Prigozhin_hat/3564

⁶ https://t.me/Prigozhin_hat/3564

⁷ <https://isw.pub/UkrWar060123> ; https://t.me/Prigozhin_hat/3571;

⁸ https://t.me/Prigozhin_hat/3571;

⁹ https://t.me/Prigozhin_hat/3571

¹⁰ <https://isw.pub/UkrWar060123>

¹¹ <https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-june-1-2023>;
<https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-may-25-2023>;
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¹² <https://isw.pub/UkrWar052423>
¹³ <https://isw.pub/UkrWar052123> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar051123> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar052423> ;
<https://isw.pub/UkrWar01192023>
¹⁴ https://t.me/Prigozhin_hat/3571; https://t.me/rlz_the_kraken/58925; <https://meduza.io/news/2023/06/03/osnovatel-chvk-vagnera-evgeniy-prigozhin-zayavil-chto-ureguliroval-konflikt-s>
¹⁵ <https://www.understandingwar.org/background/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-may-31-2023>
¹⁶ <https://zatulin.ru/vystuplenie-konstantina-zatulina-na-forsajt-forume-kakaya-ukraina-nam-nuzhna/>
¹⁷ <https://valdaiclub.com/about/experts/522/>
¹⁸

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¹⁹ <https://t.me/rybar/47947>
²⁰ <https://t.me/rybar/47947>
²¹ https://t.me/boris_rozhin/87761; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/48132> ;
<https://t.me/wargonzo/12931>
²²

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²³ https://t.me/boris_rozhin/87761; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/48132>
²⁴ https://t.me/Prigozhin_hat/3564
²⁵ <https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1664861262629556228?s=20>
²⁶ <https://armyinform.com.ua/2023/06/03/bahmut-dlya-voroga-zalyshayetsya-bilsh-priorytetnym-nizh-byelgorodshhyna-sergij-cherevatyj/>
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²⁸ https://t.me/boris_rozhin/87761; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/48132>
²⁹ https://t.me/boris_rozhin/87761; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/48132>
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³¹ https://t.me/boris_rozhin/87761; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/48132>; <https://t.me/wargonzo/12931>

³² https://t.me/boris_rozhin/87761; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/48132>;

³³ <https://t.me/wargonzo/12931>

³⁴ https://t.me/boris_rozhin/87761; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/48132>

³⁵ https://t.me/mod_russia/27063

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³⁷ <https://t.me/vrogov/10009> ; <https://t.me/astrapress/28641>

³⁸ <https://t.me/vrogov/10007> ; <https://t.me/vrogov/10008>

³⁹ <https://twitter.com/CrimeaUA1/status/166498172171922274?s=20> ;

<https://twitter.com/IntelCrab/status/1664982615345045505?s=20>

⁴⁰ <https://tass dot ru/armiya-i-opk/17772407>

⁴¹ <https://don24 dot ru/rubric/obschestvo/dobrovolcam-rostovskogo-motostrelkovogo-batalona-vyplatyat-premii-po-rasporyazheniyu-gubernatora.html>

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⁴³ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/davidaxe/2022/09/15/the-russians-spent-months-forming-a-new-army-corps-it-lived-days-in-ukraine/?sh=4a997ae856e6>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-august-19>; <https://isw.pub/RusCampaignSept18>; <https://isw.pub/RusCampaignAugust27>

⁴⁴ <https://t.me/vrogov/9982> ; <https://t.me/vrogov/9983>; <https://t.me/rybar/47935>; <https://t.me/rybar/47928>

⁴⁵ <https://censor dot>

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⁴⁶ https://storage.googleapis.com/istories/stories/2023/05/31/dopolnitelnie-grazhdane-rossii/index.html?utm_source=telegram&utm_medium=mainpage

⁴⁷ https://t.me/glava_lnr_info/1236