#### Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, November 24, 2023

Christina Harward, Riley Bailey, Angelica Evans, Nicole Wolkov, Karolina Hird, and Frederick W. Kagan November 24, 2023, 7:30pm ET

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

Click here to 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 2:30pm ET on November 24, and covers both November 23 and November 24 due to the fact that ISW did not publish a Campaign Assessment on November 23 in observance of the Thanksgiving Day holiday. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the November 25 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Ukrainian officials reported that Russian forces began a renewed offensive effort towards Avdiivka on November 22, although likely with weaker mechanized capabilities than in the previous offensive waves that occurred in October. Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces Commander Brigadier General Oleksandr Tarnavskyi reported on November 23 that Russian forces launched a "third wave" of assaults as part of the Russia offensive operation in the Avdiivka direction, and Tavriisk Group of Forces Spokesperson Colonel Oleksandr Shtupun stated that this "third wave" began on November 22.[1] Shtupun reported a 25 to 30 percent increase in Russian ground attacks near Avdiivka on November 22 and stated that Ukrainian forces repelled several Russian columns of roughly a dozen armored vehicles in total during assaults.[2] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled at least 50 Russian assaults in the Avdiivka direction on November 23 and 24.[3] Russian sources claimed that Russian forces continued offensive operations on Avdiivka's northern and southern flanks but did not characterize any Russian assaults as heavily mechanized.[4] Russian sources claimed that Russian forces continued to advance north of Avdiivka and made further gains in the industrial zone southeast of Avdiivka but did not make any territorial claims consistent with a successful renewed large-scale Russian offensive push.[5]

Shtupun stated that Ukrainian forces destroyed three Russian tanks and seven armored fighting vehicles on November 22, suggesting that Russian forces are currently conducting a smaller set of mechanized assaults than in October.[6] Ukrainian officials reported that Russian forces lost 50 tanks and 100 armored vehicles in renewed assaults on Avdiivka on October 19 and 15 tanks and 33 armored vehicles during the initial large, mechanized assaults on October 10.[7] Russian forces have lost a confirmed 197 damaged and destroyed vehicles in offensive operations near Avdiivka since October 9, and the Russian military appeared to spend the end of October and all of November preparing for a wave of highly attritional infantry-led ground assaults to compensate for these heavy-equipment losses.[8] Large infantry-led ground assaults will likely pose a significant threat to Ukrainian forces defending in the Avdiivka direction but will not lead to a rapid Russian advance in the area.

**High-ranking Russian officials may be engaged in a wider scheme of forcibly adopting deported Ukrainian children.** *BBC Panorama* and Russian opposition outlet *Vazhnye Istorii* published investigations on November 23 detailing how Just Russia Party leader Sergei Mironov adopted a 10-month-old Ukrainian girl whom Russian authorities forcibly deported from a Kherson City orphanage in autumn of 2022 alongside over 40 other children.[9] The investigations found that Mironov's new wife, Inna Varlamova, traveled to occupied Kherson Oblast, where occupation authorities issued her a power of attorney to deport two children—a 10-month-old girl and a two-year-old boy.[10] Both *BBC* and *Vazhnye Istorii* noted that Varlamova falsely introduced herself to the leadership of the children's home as the "head of children's affairs from Moscow," a position which she does not hold and that still would not legitimize the deportations of the children under international law.[11] Russian court documents show that Mironov and Varlamova then adopted the girl in November 2022, changed her name from her Ukrainian birth name to a new Russian name and the surname Mironova, and officially changed her place of birth from Kherson City to Podolsk, Russia.[12] Neither investigation could confirm the whereabouts of the two-year-old boy. Mironov notably responded to the investigation and called it a "fake from Ukrainian special services and their Western curators" meant to discredit him.[13]

Mironov and his wife, who reportedly holds a low-level unspecified position in the Russian Duma, follow in the footsteps of Russian Commissioner on Children's Rights Maria Lvova-Belova, who has also adopted at least one Ukrainian child from occupied Mariupol.[14] While ISW can only confirm that these two Russian officials have forcibly adopted deported

Ukrainian children at this time, the adoptions may be indicative of a wider pattern in which Russian officials adopt deported children in order to legitimize the practice in the eyes of the Russian public. Russian politicians may be adopting deported Ukrainian children to set administrative and cultural precedents for wider adoptions of Ukrainian children to further escalate Russia's campaign to deport Ukrainians to Russia. ISW continues to assess that the forced deportation and adoption of Ukrainian children likely amounts to a violation of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.[15]

Ukraine's Western allies declared their commitment to further develop Ukrainian air defense capabilities during the 17th Ramstein Group virtual meeting on November 22. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky announced that Germany and France will lead a coalition of 20 countries to further develop Ukraine's air defenses, and Ukrainian Defense Minister Rustem Umerov added that the coalition will help Ukraine further develop its ground-based air defense systems. [16] Zelensky noted on November 23 that improved Ukrainian air defenses will save lives and resources, allow Ukrainian citizens to return from abroad, and deprive Russia of the ability to terrorize Ukraine. [17] Ramstein Group members also agreed on issues such as additional equipment and weapons for Ukraine during the winter of 2023–24, mine trawling and other security measures in the Black Sea, Ukraine's NATO Interoperability Roadmap, and additional security assistance packages from the US, Germany, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Finland, the Netherlands, and Estonia. [18]

Russian President Vladimir Putin attended the Collective Security Treaty Organization's (CSTO) Collective Security Council session in Minsk, Belarus on November 23 against the background of Armenia's continued absence from recent CSTO events and exercises. Putin attended the session alongside Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko, Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, Kyrgyz President Sadyr Japarov, Tajik President Emomali Rahmon, and the CSTO's Secretary General Imangali Tasmagambetov.[19] The summit marked the end of Belarus' chairmanship of the CSTO, and Lukashenko stated that Kazakhstan will hold the chairmanship beginning December 31, 2023. Putin thanked the session's attendees for contributing to the regional defense structure and highlighted expanding military-technical cooperation between CSTO member states. Putin stated during his bilateral meeting with Rahmon that Russia will deliver two air defense divisions equipped with S-300 air defense systems to Tajikistan as part of the CSTO's unified air defense system.[20]

Russian sources widely noted Armenia's absence from the CSTO summit on November 23.[21] Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan also did not attend the CSTO's summit in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan on October 13 after Armenian forces refrained from participating in the CSTO "Indestructible Brotherhood-2023" exercises in early October.[22] Kremlin Spokesperson Dmitri Peskov stated on November 23 that the Kremlin regretted Armenia's absence in Minsk but stated that Armenia remains "an ally and strategic partner" to Russia.[23] The Kremlin has previously attempted to dispel concerns about the deterioration of Russian-Armenian relations.[24] Kremlin newswire *TASS* reported that Armenian Deputy Foreign Minister Mnatsakan Safaryan reiterated that Armenia is not considering leaving the CSTO or asking Russia to withdraw its forces from Russia's 102nd Military Base in Gyumri, Armenia.[25]

Chinese businesses, including a prominent state-owned Chinese construction firm, are reportedly working with Russian businessmen to plan the construction of an underwater tunnel that would connect Russia with occupied Crimea. The Washington Post reported on November 24 that it corroborated information in emails provided by Ukrainian intelligence services that detail the formation of a Russian-Chinese business consortium that aims to build an underwater tunnel along the Kerch Strait connecting Russia to occupied Crimea. [26] Vladimir Kalyuzhny, identified by the emails as the general director of the consortium, reportedly messaged the Crimean occupation representative to the Russian President, Georgy Muradov, and stated that he has a letter from Chinese business partners attesting to the Chinese Railway Construction Corporation's (CRCC) readiness to participate as a general contractor for the tunnel project.[27] The CRCC is under the supervision of China's state-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission and is one of China's largest construction firms. [28] The emails reportedly indicate that the CRCC stipulated that its involvement would occur through an unaffiliated legal entity and that an unnamed Chinese bank was willing to convert dollar funds into rubles to fund the consortium's projects.[29] Kalyuzhny, Crimean occupation head Sergei Aksyonov, and Kremlin Spokesperson Dmitri Peskov denied the Washington Post's reporting. [30] The reported Russian interest in the tunnel project, which would likely take years to complete, is an additional indicator of deep Russian concern about the vulnerability of ground lines of communication (GLOCs) between Russia and occupied Crimea along the Kerch Strait Bridge.

European states are responding to Russia's continued orchestration of an artificially created migrant crisis on its northwestern borders. The Finnish government announced on November 22 that Finland will close three more checkpoints on the Finnish-Russian border from November 23 to December 23, leaving only the northernmost checkpoint open.[31] Norwegian Prime Minister Johan Gahr Store stated on November 22 that Norway would also close its border to Russia "if necessary."[32] Estonian Defense Minister Hanno Pevkur stated on November 23 that an increased number of migrants have also arrived at the Estonian-Russian border and that Russia is organizing the arrivals as part of

an effort to "weaponize illegal immigration." [33] Reuters reported on November 23 that the Estonian Interior Ministry stated that Estonia has undertaken preparations to close its border crossings with Russia if "the migration pressure from Russia escalates." [34] Latvian Prime Minister Evika Silina stated on November 24 that Latvia has experienced a similar influx of migrants on its border with Russia, and Silina and Finnish Prime Minister Petteri Orpo stated that these are Russian and Belarusian "hybrid attacks." [35] Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Spokesperson Maria Zakharova accused Finland on November 22 of "stirring up Russophobic sentiments" and interrupting border services that were an integral part of Russian—Finnish cooperation. [36] ISW previously assessed that Russia is employing a known hybrid warfare tactic similar to Russia's and Belarus's creation of a migrant crisis on the Polish border in 2021 that is likely similarly aimed at destabilizing NATO. [37]

The Russian Strelkov (Igor Girkin) Movement (RDS) called prior Russian regional elections and the upcoming Russian presidential election illegitimate, likely in an effort to establish Girkin's inevitable presidential election loss as a long-standing grievance. [38] The RDS Congress issued a resolution on November 24 in which it claimed that unspecified actors are doing everything possible to preserve the existing system of power in Russia regardless of the political situation or Russian citizens' will. [39] The RDS Congressional resolution issued a list of demands for Russian election reform and claimed that the RDS would not recognize any future elections as legitimate if the Russian government does not meet these demands. [40]

Russian law enforcement reportedly detained about 700 migrants at a warehouse in Moscow Oblast and issued some military summonses, likely as part of an ongoing effort to coerce migrants into Russian military service. [41] Russian sources reported on November 24 that Russian police and Rosgvardia raided a Wildberries (Russia's largest online retailer) warehouse in Elektrostal, Moscow Oblast looking for migrants who had recently acquired Russian citizenship. [42] Russian law enforcement reportedly took about 135 detained migrants with Russian citizenship and transferred them to military registration and enlistment offices. [43] An unspecified Russian law enforcement official told Russian news outlet *Interfax* that Russian law enforcement conducted the raid as part of "Operation Migrant," which aims to ensure that all naturalized citizens are registered for military service and issue them military summonses. [44] A Russian source claimed that Russian law enforcement also conducted a raid near the Wildberries warehouse on November 23, fined 16 migrants for violating migration protocols, and deported three. [45] The Wildberries press service stated this mass detention of migrants interrupted company's shipments and put billions of dollars at risk. [46]

The Kremlin is reportedly renewing attempts to control all video surveillance systems in Russia, likely as part of ongoing efforts to intensify its tools of digital authoritarianism to increase domestic repressions. The Russian Ministry of Digital Development proposed an initiative to create a unified platform for storing and processing footage from all video surveillance systems in Russia, which would reportedly cost 12 billion rubles (about \$134 million).[47] Kommersant reported that there are about 1.2 million surveillance cameras in Russia, about half of which are currently accessible to the Russian government.[48] The Russian Ministry of Digital Development reportedly plans to increase the number of surveillance cameras across Russia to five million by 2030 and integrate all of them with facial and image recognition software.[49] Kommersant also noted that the Russian Ministry of Emergency Situations attempted a similar initiative in 2020 to 2022 as part of the Hardware and Software Complex "Safe City" project aimed at standardizing and installing surveillance systems with artificial intelligence software in Russian regions but faced criticism from the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs and Russian Ministry of Economy.[50]

#### **Key Takeaways:**

- Ukrainian officials reported that Russian forces began a renewed offensive effort towards Avdiivka on November 22, although likely with weaker mechanized capabilities than in the previous offensive waves that occurred in October.
- High-ranking Russian officials may be engaged in a wider scheme of forcibly adopting deported Ukrainian children.
- Ukraine's Western allies declared their commitment to further develop Ukrainian air defense capabilities during the 17th Ramstein Group virtual meeting on November 22.
- Russian President Vladimir Putin attended the Collective Security Treaty Organization's (CSTO) Collective Security Council session in Minsk, Belarus on November 23 against the background of Armenia's continued absence from recent CSTO events and exercises.
- Chinese businesses, including a prominent state-owned Chinese construction firm, are reportedly working with Russian businessmen to plan the construction of an underwater tunnel that would connect Russia with occupied Crimea.
- European states are responding to Russia's continued orchestration of an artificially created migrant crisis on its northwestern borders.

- The Russian Strelkov (Igor Girkin) Movement (RDS) called prior Russian regional elections and the upcoming Russian presidential election illegitimate, likely in an effort to establish Girkin's inevitable presidential election loss as a long-standing grievance.
- Russian law enforcement reportedly detained about 700 migrants at a warehouse in Moscow Oblast and issued some military summonses, likely as part of an ongoing effort to coerce migrants into Russian military service.
- The Kremlin is reportedly renewing attempts to control all video surveillance systems in Russia, likely as part of ongoing efforts to intensify its tools of digital authoritarianism to increase domestic repressions.
- Russian forces conducted ground attacks along the Svatove-Kreminna line, near Bakhmut, near Avdiivka, west and southwest of Donetsk City, in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area, and in western Zaporizhia Oblast and marginally advanced in some areas.
- The Russian aviation industry is likely under significant constraints due to international sanctions and demands from the Russian defense industrial base (DIB).
- The Russian occupation authorities continue efforts to indoctrinate Ukrainian children in occupied Ukraine into Russian national and cultural identities.

### Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of November 24, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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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.

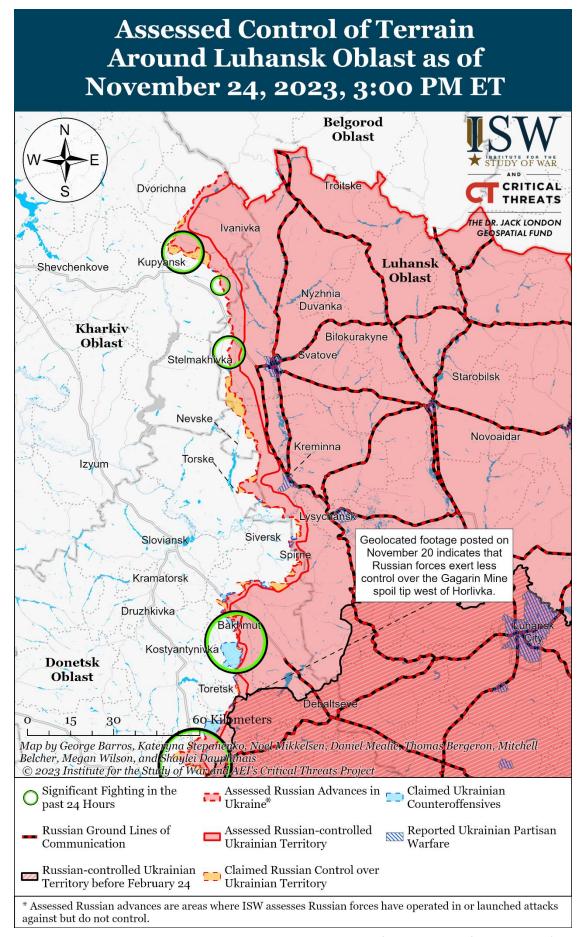
- Russian Main Effort Eastern Ukraine (comprised of two subordinate main efforts)
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and encircle northern Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 Capture the entirety of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

#### Russian Main Effort - Eastern Ukraine

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

Russian forces continued offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on November 23 and 24 but did not make any confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked in the Kupyansk direction northeast of Petropavlivka (7km east of Kupyansk) and near Synkivka (8km northeast of Kupyansk), Ivanivka (20km southeast of Kupyansk), and Stelmakhivka (25km northwest of Svatove) but did not conduct any offensive operations in the Lyman direction.[51] A Russian milblogger claimed on November 23 that Russian forces marginally advanced east of Petropavlivka.[52] A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful offensive operations from Orlyanka (22km east of Kupyansk) and near Petropavlivka.[53] Another Russian milblogger claimed on November 24 that Russian forces are having widespread issues with electronic warfare (EW) systems along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line, causing unnecessary casualties due to otherwise preventable drone strikes.[54] Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets stated on November 23 that Russian forces transferred an unspecified battalion of the Russian 380th Motorized Rifle Regiment (47th Tank Division, 1st Guards Tank Army, Western Military District) from Kursk Oblast to positions near Raihorodka (12km west of Svatove).[55] Chechen Republic Head Ramzan Kadyrov claimed that the "Amura" detachment of Chechen "Akhmat" Spetsnaz are operating in the Serebryanske forest area (10km southwest of Kreminna).[56]

Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on November 23 and 24 and reportedly advanced on an unspecified date. The Ukrainian State Border Guards published footage on November 24 showing Ukrainian forces advancing and capturing Russian positions in an unspecified area of the Svatove direction on an unspecified date. [57] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed on November 23 and 24 that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Vilshana (15km northeast of Kupyansk) and Hryhorivka (10km south of Kreminna). [58] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line and that fighting continues near Torske (15km west of Kreminna) and the Serebryanske forest area. [59]



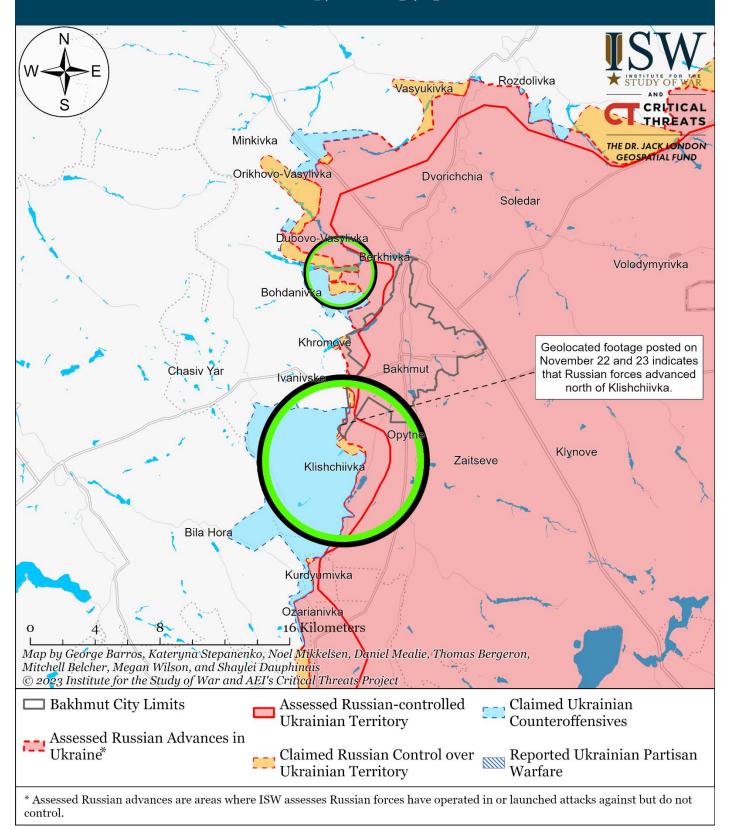
### <u>Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Donetsk Oblast</u> (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia's proxies in Donbas)

The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked in the Bakhmut area near Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut) on November 23.[60]

Russian forces conducted offensive operations near Bakhmut on November 23 and 24 and made confirmed advances. Geolocated footage published on November 22 and 23 indicates that Russian forces advanced north of Klishchiivka.[61] Russian sources claimed that Russian forces advanced near Bohdanivka (6km northwest of Bakhmut), the Berkhivka reservoir (about 2km northwest of Bakhmut), Klishchiivka, and the railway near Andriivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut).[62] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Bohdanivka, Ivanivske (6km west of Bakhmut), Klishchiivka, and Andriivka.[63] Russian milbloggers claimed that fighting continued near the railway north of Klishchiivka and the heights west of the settlement, which a Russian source claimed that Ukrainian forces continued to control as of November 23.[64] One Russian source claimed on November 23 that Klishchiivka is a contested "gray zone."[65] Ukrainian military sources stated on November 23 and 24 that Russian forces in the Bakhmut direction are focusing on small tactical gains, probing the frontline, and conducting drone strikes at night.[66] A Ukrainian sergeant operating in the Bakhmut direction characterized fighting in his sector of the front on November 24 as "static, trench warfare."[67] The Russian MoD reported that elements of the Russian 106th Airborne (VDV) Division are operating in the Bakhmut direction.[68] Russian sources claimed that elements of the 58th Separate Spetsnaz Battalion (1st Donetsk People's Republic [DNR] Corps) are also operating in the Bakhmut direction.[69]

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted offensive operations northwest of Horlivka (20km south of Bakhmut) but did not make any claimed or confirmed advances on November 23 or 24. A Russian milblogger claimed on November 23 that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Mayorske (6km northwest of Horlivka).[70] Another Russian milblogger claimed on November 24 that there are meeting engagements near the waste heap northwest of Horlivka.[71]

### Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of November 24, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



A Russian milblogger claimed on November 23 that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully counterattacked near Avdiivka southwest and west of Krasnohorivka (5km northeast of Avdiivka).[72]

Russian forces conducted offensive operations near Avdiivka but did not make any confirmed gains on November 23 and 24. Russian sources claimed that Russian forces advanced south of the Avdiivka Coke Plant northwest of Avdiivka; near the railways north and northwest of Krasnohorivka; in and near the industrial zone southeast of Avdiivka; near Novobakhmutivka (12km northwest of Avdiivka), Novokalynove (13km northeast of Avdiivka), Stepove (3km northwest of Avdiivka), Sieverne (6km west of Avdiivka), and Tonenke (5km west of Avdiivka); and in the direction of Keramik (14km northwest of Avdiivka), Berdychi (5km northwest of Avdiivka), and the "Tsarska Okhota" restaurant south of Avdiivka, [73] Russian sources also claimed that Russian forces attacked northwest of Avdiivka near Novobakhmutivka, Novokalynove, Stepove, Krasnohorivka, and the coke plant; south and southwest of Avdiivka near Pervomaiske (10km southwest of Avdiivka), Vodyane (7km southwest of Avdiivka), and Optyne (4km south of Avdiivka); and southeast of Avdiivka near the industrial zone, [74] Russian milbloggers claimed on November 23 that Russian forces conducted reconnaissance-in-force near Stepove, Vodyane, and Sieverne. [75] A Russian milblogger claimed on November 23 that Russian forces advanced 150-200 meters in the direction of Novokalynove and Ocheretyne (15km northwest of Avdiivka), but ISW has not observed visual evidence of this claim. [76] A Russian source claimed on November 22 that Russian forces control 80 percent of the industrial zone southeast of Avdiivka, and later claimed on November 24 that Russian forces control 95 percent of the area.[77] Another Russian source claimed on November 24 that Russian forces control the entire industrial zone but acknowledged that this claim is based on unconfirmed preliminary information.[78] A Russian milblogger claimed on November 23 that Russian forces are pushing Ukrainian forces out of Stepove but that Ukrainian forces still control a part of the settlement. [79] The Ukrainian General Staff reported on November 23 and 24 that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked east of Novokalynove and Novobakhmutivka; north of Lastochkyne (5km west of Avdiivka); and near Stepove, Pervomaiske, Sieverne, Avdiivka.[80] A Russian milblogger claimed on November 24 that Russian helicopters have to fly at very low altitudes to avoid Ukrainian air defense systems near Avdiivka.[81] Ukrainian Avdiivka Military Administration Head Vitaliy Barabash stated that Russian forces are struggling to use a large amount of military equipment due to weather conditions.[82]

# **Assessed Control of Terrain near Donetsk City** as of November 24, 2023, 3:00 PM ET Keramil nohorivka Novobakhmutivka stepove Yasnobrodivk Sieverne Avdiivka Nevelske Kurakhivka Makiivka Krasnohorivka Heorhiiv Donetsk Pobieda Kostiantynivka

Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher,

16 Kilømeters

Note: A Russian source claimed on November 23 that Russian forces advanced 150 to 200 meters in the Novokalynove and Ocheretyne directions. A Russian source claimed on November 22 that Russian forces control 80% of the industrial zone southeast of Avdiivka.

Megan Wilson, and Shaylei Pauphinais
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Donetsk City Limits

Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine\*

Counteroffensives

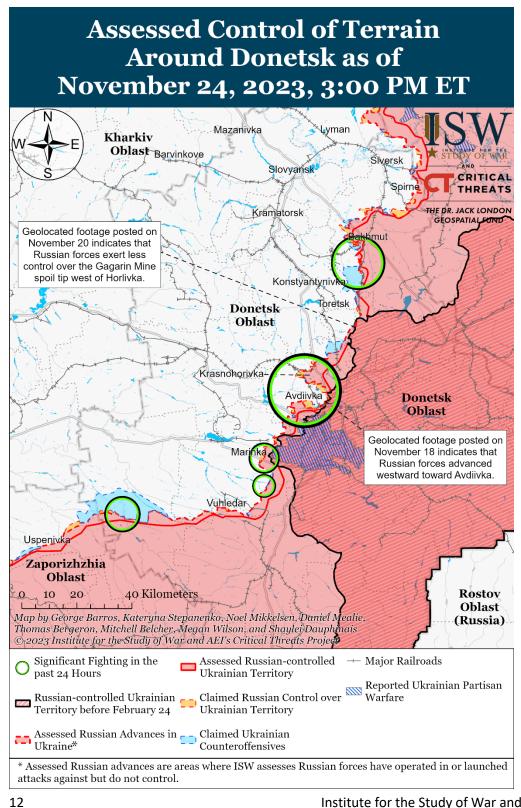
Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory

Claimed Russian Control

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

Ukrainian forces did not conduct any claimed or confirmed offensive operations west and southwest of Donetsk City on November 23 and 24.

Russian forces conducted offensive operations west and southwest of Donetsk City but did not make any claimed or confirmed advances on November 23 and 24. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Marinka (on the western outskirts of Donetsk City) and Novomykhailivka (10km southwest of Donetsk City).[83] A Russian milblogger claimed on November 23 that Russian forces conducted offensive operations in Marinka but did not specify an outcome.[84]

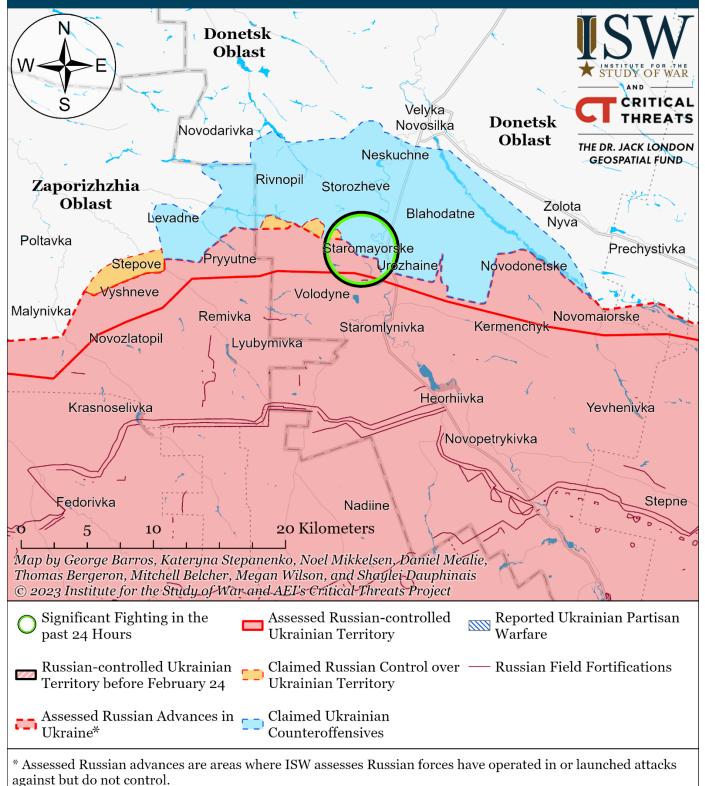


### <u>Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis</u> (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions and secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes)

Russian sources continued offensive operations in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on November 23 and 24 but did not make any claimed or confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported unsuccessful Russian assaults near and southwest of Staromayorske (10km south of Velyka Novosilka) on November 23 and 24.[85] The Russian Vostok Battalion, which is operating in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area, claimed on November 24 that Russian forces currently have an advantage in terms of fire power in this direction.[86] Russian sources additionally claimed that Russian forces attacked near Staromayorske and Urozhaine (10km south of Velyka Novosilka) on the evening of November 22 and throughout November 23, and northwest of Staromayorske on November 24.[87] Geolocated footage posted on November 23 shows elements of the 336th Naval Infantry Brigade (Baltic Fleet) operating a Lancet drone against Ukrainian positions near Vesele (33km southwest of Velyka Novosilka).[88]

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted limited and unsuccessful counterattacks in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on November 23 and 24. The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) reported on November 23 and 24 that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Pryyutne (15km southwest of Velyka Novosilka) and elsewhere in the overall southern Donetsk Oblast direction.[89] A Russian milblogger claimed on November 23 that Ukrainian forces are trying to activate north of Pryytune and north of Novomayorske (18km southeast of Velyka Novosilka) but emphasized that Ukrainian forces are largely on the defensive on this sector of the front.[90]

## Assessed Control of Terrain Around the Vremivka Salient as of November 24, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

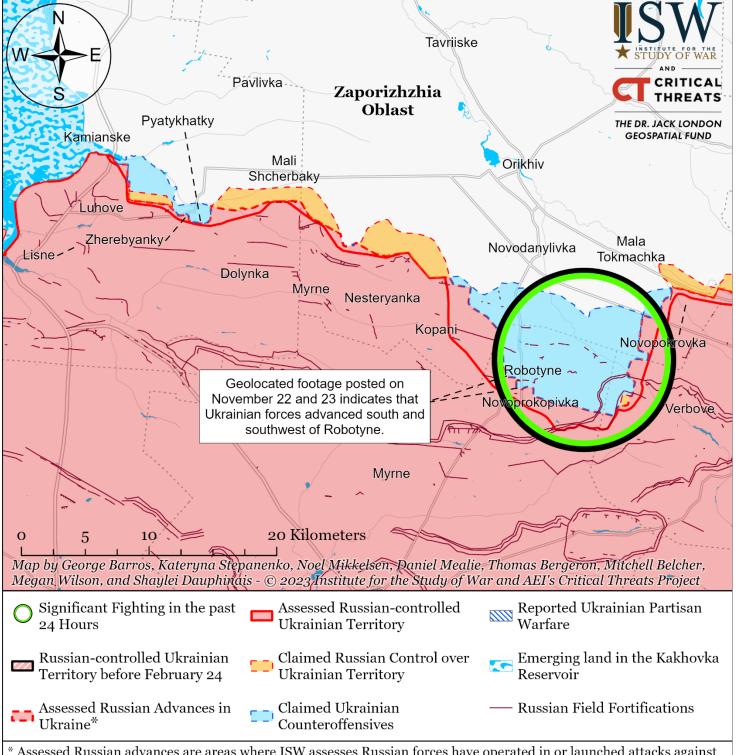


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Russian forces continued offensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast on November 23 and 24 and made confirmed advances. Geolocated footage published on November 24 shows that Russian forces have marginally advanced southwest of Novopokrovka, about 9km northeast of Robotyne.[91] A Russian airborne (VDV) affiliated milblogger claimed on November 24 that elements of the 7th VDV Division, including the 108th Air Assault Regiment, recaptured positions north of Verbove (10km east of Robotyne and 5km south of Novopokrovka), which generally coincides with confirmation of Russian advances in the area southwest of Novopokrovka.[92] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attempted to improve their positions near Robotyne on November 23 and conducted unsuccessful assaults near Robotyne, Novopokrovka, and west of Verbove on November 24.[93]

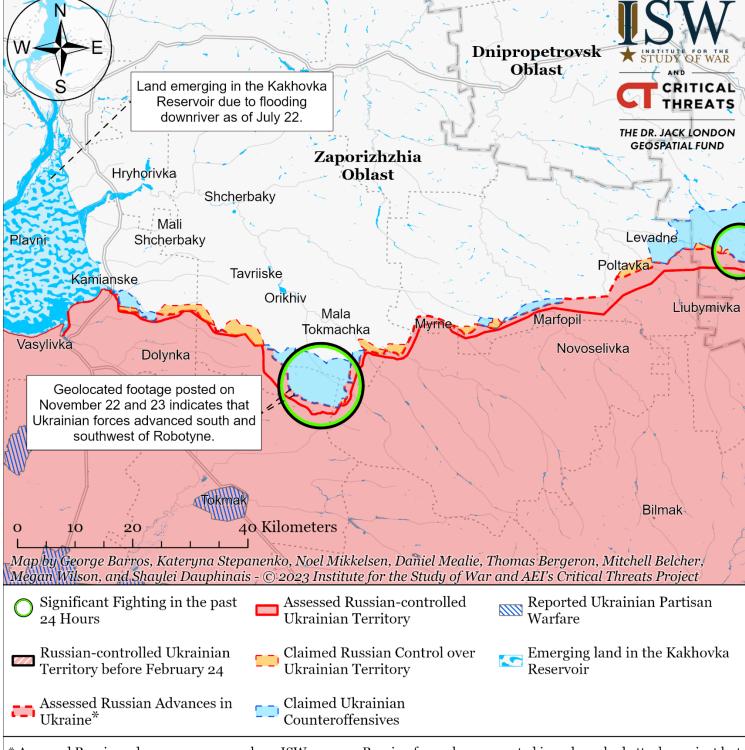
Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast on November 23 and 24 and made confirmed advances. Geolocated footage published on November 22 shows that Ukrainian forces have recaptured the westernmost trench in a series of three trenches that lie about 1km southwest of Robotyne, and other geolocated footage published on November 23 shows that Ukrainian forces have also made advances further west of the westernmost trench.[94] Additional geolocated footage posted on November 22 and 23 indicates that Ukrainian forces have marginally advanced near the To408 Orikhiv-Tokmak highway north of Novoprokopivka (just south of Robotyne), between the outskirts of the aforementioned trench system and the northern outskirts of Novoprokopivka.[95] Russian milbloggers widely claimed on November 23 and 24 that Ukrainian forces launched a renewed attack on Russian positions along the Robotyne-Verbove line with up to 100 personnel, five armored vehicles, and one Western-provided tank.[96] The Russian MoD claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Robotyne and Verbove on November 24, and the Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Melitopol (western Zaporizhia Oblast) direction on November 23 and 24.[97]

## Assessed Control of Terrain Around Pyatykhatky and Robotyne as of November 24, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



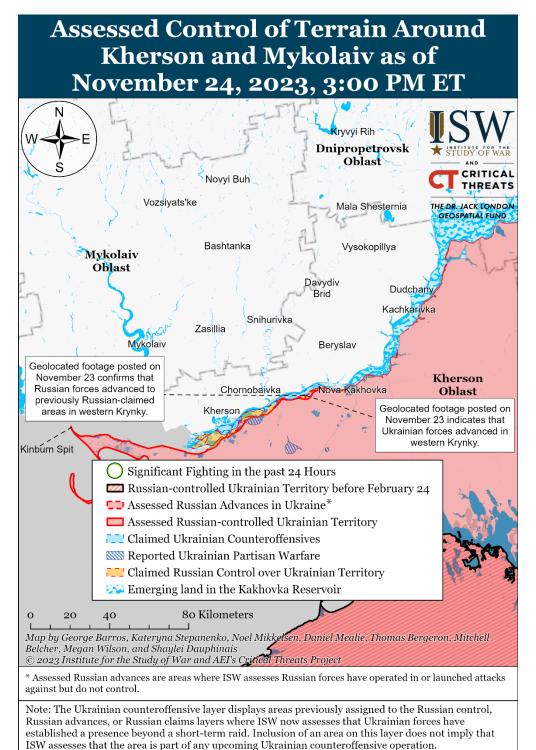
<sup>\*</sup> Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

## Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhia as of November 24, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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

Ukrainian forces continued combat operations on the (east) left bank of the Dnipro River on November 23 and 24, and both Ukrainian and Russian forces have made confirmed gains in Krynky (30km northeast of Kherson City and 2km from the Dnipro River). Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces intensified attacks on the forest area near Krynky on November 23, and then claimed on November 24 that elements of the Russian 810th Naval Infantry Brigade (Black Sea Fleet) and 144th Motorized Rifle Brigade (of the 40th Army Corps of the newly formed 18th Combined Arms Army) counterattacked and knocked Ukrainian forces out of positions in the forest areas near Krynky.[98] Geolocated footage published on November 23 confirms that both Russian and Ukrainian forces have advanced within Krynky, suggesting that intense fighting is ongoing in the settlement and positions are frequently changing hands.[99] Russian sources claimed that elements of the 188th and 144th brigades are facing extremely poor conditions and a lack of resources while trying to defend the Krynky area.[100] Ukrainian military officials confirmed that Ukrainian forces maintain positions on the east bank of Kherson Oblast.[101]



Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces launched a large-scale drone strike against occupied Crimea on the night of November 23 to 24. A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces launched a total of 13 drones in three waves from Kherson Oblast towards railway and military infrastructure in occupied Crimea.[102] Kherson Oblast occupation head Vladimir Saldo claimed that this was one of the largest Ukrainian air attacks on occupied Crimea since the beginning of the war.[103] The Russian MoD claimed that Russian air defense shot down all 13 drones over Crimea, and that Black Sea Fleet naval aviation also hit 12 unmanned aerial boats traveling towards Crimea.[104]

### <u>Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts</u> (Russian objective: Expand combat power without conducting general mobilization)

The Russian aviation industry is likely facing significant constraints due to international sanctions and demands from the Russian defense industrial base (DIB). The Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) reported on November 23 that it obtained many documents from the Russian Federal Air Transport Agency (Rosaviatsiya) detailing widespread issues within the Russian aviation industry.[105] The GUR reported that the documents show that there were 185 civil aviation accidents and 150 cases of technical malfunctions in the first nine months of 2023.[106] The GUR reported that the Russian aviation industry is transferring large portions of aircraft maintenance assets to Iran, where repairs occur without certification, due to a lack of repair capacity and specialists in Russia.[107] Russian aviation enterprises are reportedly increasingly using existing planes for component for new production.[108] The Russian United Aircraft Corporation announced on November 22 that it transferred a new batch of Su-34 frontline bombers manufactured at the Novosibirsk Aviation Plant to the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD).[109] Widespread constraints on the civil aviation industry are likely also impacting defense aviation enterprises in Russia, but Russian officials are likely prioritizing military aviation production over the maintenance and production of civil aircraft.

Russian courts have reportedly considered over 4,000 criminal cases against Russian personnel for the unauthorized abandonment of their units since the start of partial mobilization. Russian opposition outlet *Mediazona* reported on November 24 that Russian courts considered 4,121 criminal cases for the unauthorized abandonment of a military unit and ruled in 3,740 cases as of November 21.[110] *Mediazona* reported that Russian courts have delivered sentences to roughly 100 Russian personnel a week on average since June 2023.[111]

Russian personnel from Russian federal subjects (regions) in Siberia and the Far East continue to represent a disproportionate number of Russian casualties in Ukraine. The *BBC* reported on November 24 that confirmed Russian military deaths per 10,000 males aged 16 to 61 in federal subjects of Russia show that the highest proportions of death happen in Siberian and Far Eastern regions.[112] The five highest proportions of military deaths occurred in the Tuva Republic (48.6 deaths), Republic of Buryatia (36.7 deaths), Nenets Autonomous Okrug (30 deaths), Altai Republic (26.5 deaths), and Transbaikal Krai (26.2 deaths).[113] St. Petersburg and Moscow have the lowest proportion of confirmed deaths with 2.5 and 1 per 10,000, respectively.[114]

Russian authorities continue to prevent the relatives of mobilized personnel from holding rallies calling for the demobilization of their relatives. Russian independent investigative outlet *Verstka* reported on November 23 that Russian authorities denied five applications for rallies by relatives of mobilized personnel in Moscow, Chelyabinsk, St. Petersburg, Novosibirsk, and Krasnoyarsk.[115] Russian opposition outlet *SOTA* reported that Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin denied an appeal to his office's decision to refuse permits for a rally in support of demobilization by citing COVID-19 public health restrictions.[116] Russian opposition outlet *Mobilization News* reported that officials in Novosibirsk Oblast accepted demands from relatives of mobilized personnel that would cap mobilization periods at a year with rotations no less than every three months.[117] ISW cannot confirm that any Russian officials have accepted conditions from relatives to set forth terms for mobilization.

### <u>Russian Technological Adaptations</u> (Russian objective: Introduce technological innovations to optimize systems for use in Ukraine)

Russian state-owned defense conglomerate Rostec debuted its new "Chistyulya" portable anti-drone system on November 24.[118] The device reportedly weighs eight kilograms (about 18 pounds) and can suppress drones within a one-kilometer radius.[119] Russian opposition outlet *Vazhnye Istorii* (*iStories*) reported that Chinese online retail service AliExpress sells a similar product with almost the same specifications.[120]

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

The Russian occupation authorities continue efforts to indoctrinate Ukrainian children into Russian national and cultural identities. The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported on November 23 that the Kremlin instructed occupation authorities to ensure that 70 percent of Ukrainian students in occupied areas participate in educational exchange programs in Russia.[121] The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported that Russian occupation schools have started efforts aimed at indoctrinating as early as first grade.[122] The Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) Militia claimed on November 24 that 248 children from occupied Luhansk Oblast returned from a trip to Moscow City that the Kremlin-funded pseudo-volunteer "Movement of the First" youth organization planned.[123] Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) Head Denis Pushilin claimed on November 23 that over 60 students from occupied Donetsk Oblast are currently studying at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO), an institute of higher education subordinate to the Russian Foreign Ministry.[124] Ukrainian Mariupol City Advisor Petro Andryushchenko published footage on November 23 showing Russian military personnel teaching children from occupied Zaporizhia Oblast basic military skills at an event in occupied Sevastopol, Crimea.[125]

#### **Russian Information Operations and Narratives**

Nothing significant to report.

<u>Significant activity in Belarus</u> (Russian efforts to increase its military presence in Belarus and further integrate Belarus into Russian-favorable frameworks and Wagner Group activity in Belarus)

Belarusian military leadership reportedly hopes to increase the combat capabilities of Belarusian forces by equipping them with new drones and armored personnel carriers. Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets stated on November 24 that Belarus' military leadership will equip Belarusian artillery brigades with Russian-produced "Supercam" S350 drones in early 2024.[126] Mashovets stated that Belarusian artillery brigades are currently equipped with quadcopter drones that do not provide adequate fire control and adjustment and that the Russian-produced drones have an increased range. Mashovets added that Belarusian forces are also testing the Belarusian-produced Volat V2 armored personnel carrier at the 227th Combined Arms Training Ground in Borisov, Belarus.

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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