Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, October 20, 2023

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October 20, 2023, 4:00 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 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 1:30 pm ET on October 20. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the October 21 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Russian forces launched a renewed offensive push near Avdiivka on October 20 and marginally advanced, indicating that the Russian military command remains committed to offensive operations in the area despite heavy materiel and personnel losses. Geolocated footage published on October 20 shows that Russian forces secured minor advances west of Krasnohorivka (5km north of Avdiivka).[1] Russian milbloggers and a Ukrainian military observer claimed that Russian forces captured a Ukrainian stronghold near the waste heap just northeast of Avdiivka, advanced to a rail station north of Avdiivka, and advanced near the “Tsarska Okhota” restaurant south of Avdiivka.[2] One prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Sieverne (6km west of Avdiivka), south of Avdiivka, near Stepove (8km northwest of Avdiivka), and near Novokalynove (11km northwest of Avdiivka), however.[3] Other milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced up to one kilometer on the Stepove-Berdychi line (8-10km northwest of Avdiivka) on October 19 and that fighting is ongoing near Berdychi on October 20.[4] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks near Avdiivka, Novokalynove, Stepove, Pervomaiske (11km southwest of Avdiivka), and Sieverne.[5]

The Ukrainian General Staff reported on October 20 that Ukrainian forces damaged and destroyed almost 50 Russian tanks and over 100 armored vehicles during the past day of fighting near Avdiivka.[6] Ukrainian soldiers operating in the Avdiivka area reported on October 20 that Ukrainian forces have destroyed 200 Russian armored vehicles in the past four days.[7] Avdiivka City Military Administration Head Vitaliy Barabash stated that Russian forces are attempting to repair damaged equipment while still in the field.[8] Footage published on October 20 shows Ukrainian forces striking a Russian TOS-1 thermobaric artillery system near Avdiivka.[9] A Russian milblogger complained that Russian counterbattery fire near Avdiivka is decreasing in effectiveness due to poor communication and the failure to stockpile munitions ahead of the offensive effort, very likely exacerbating material losses in the area.[10] The initial Russian offensive operations in the Avdiivka area on October 10 also resulted in high verified Russian equipment losses, and the fact that Russian forces regrouped and re-launched assaults after the initial attacks suggests that either Russian forces believe they can feasibly take Avdiivka, or that the Russian military command is poorly prioritizing offensive operations regardless of cost.[11]
Assessed Control of Terrain near Donetsk City as of October 20, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

Geolocated footage posted on October 16 indicates that Russian forces advanced south of Novomykhailivka.

Geolocated footage posted on October 18 indicates that Russian forces advanced north of the E-50 Highway.

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- Donetsk City Limits
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Russian Field Fortifications

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

Note: A Russian source claimed on October 19 that Russian forces advanced one kilometer in depth in the Stepove and Berdychi directions. A Russian source claimed on October 18 that Russian forces advanced approximately two kilometers in the areas around Avdiivka.
Ukrainian forces continued larger-than-usual ground operations on the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast on October 20 and established a confirmed presence in a settlement on the east bank. Geolocated footage published on October 19 indicates that Ukrainian forces advanced into northeastern Krynky (27km east from Kherson City and 2km from the Dnipro River).[12] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces are establishing a foothold near Krynky and continue to maintain their presence near the Antonivsky roadway and railway bridges.[13] A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces temporarily advanced further into Krynky up to the Kozachi Laheri-Krynky-Korsunka road before Russian airstrikes pushed Ukrainian troops back to the northern outskirts of the settlement.[14] Another Russian milblogger claimed that fighting is ongoing near Pishchanivka (14km east from Kherson City and 4km from the Dnipro River) and that a Ukrainian sabotage and reconnaissance group is operating on the southern outskirts of the settlement.[15] The prominent Russian milblogger suggested that Russian forces only maintained positions on the southern outskirts of Pishchanivka as of the afternoon of October 18, and the Ukrainian General Staff reported on October 19 that Russian aviation struck Pishchanivka, implying that Ukrainian forces were still operating in the settlement.[16] ISW has not observed any other visual confirmation of Ukrainian forces maintaining positions in east bank settlements other than Krynky, however.
Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of October 20, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

Russian sources and geolocated footage from October 17 and 18 indicate that Ukrainian forces advanced north of Pishchanivka and Poyoma.

A Russian source and geolocated footage from October 19 indicates that Ukrainian forces advanced to Krynky.

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

0 20 40 80 Kilometers

Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noël Mikkelson, Daniel Meadie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Megan Wilson, and Shaylee Dauphinais
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* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Note: The Ukrainian counteroffensive layer displays areas previously assigned to the Russian control, Russian advances, or Russian claims layers where ISW now assesses that Ukrainian forces have established a presence beyond a short-term raid. Inclusion of an area on this layer does not imply that ISW assesses that the area is part of any upcoming Ukrainian counteroffensive operation.
Russian and Ukrainian sources continue to indicate that the Russian units defending the east bank of Kherson Oblast are relatively less combat effective than other Russian forces elsewhere on the front. A Ukrainian military observer stated that the Russian Dnepr Grouping of Forces is primarily comprised of elements of the 49th Combined Arms Army (Southern Military District) and likely elements of the newly created 18th Combined Arms Army.[17] The majority of the 49th Combined Arms Army (CAA) has been deployed to east bank Kherson Oblast since Russian forces withdrew from the west (right) bank, and elements of the 49th CAA’s 205th Motorized Rifle Regiment have since suffered significant casualties.[18] The United Kingdom Ministry of Defense (UK MoD) reported on August 21 that the Russian military was likely forming the new 18th CAA from other units currently operating in Kherson Oblast, and it is unlikely that the new units of the 18th CAA are entirely comprised of fresh forces or staffed to doctrinal end strength.[19] The deployment of the 18th CAA to Kherson Oblast is reminiscent of the rushed deployment of the newly created 25th CAA to the Kupyansk and Lyman directions in early September 2023, and the 18th CAA likely faces similar issues with a lack of personnel, equipment, and proper training.[20] A Russian milblogger claimed that elements of the 26th Motorized Rifle Regiment, reportedly of 70th Motorized Rifle Division of the 18th CAA, are defending against Ukrainian activities near Krynky.[21] Another Russian milblogger claimed that elements of the 1st Battalion of the 177th Naval Infantry Regiment (Caspian Flotilla) are operating near the Antonivsky railway bridge.[22] Elements of the 177th Naval Infantry Regiment have been defending in western Zaporizhia Oblast since the start of the Ukrainian counteroffensive and have likely suffered significant casualties.[23]

Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations near Bakhmut and in western Zaporizhia Oblast but did not make confirmed advances. A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces made marginal advances northwest of Verbke (10km east of Robotyne), though ISW has not observed evidence to confirm this claim.[24] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continue offensive operations in the Bakhmut and Melitopol (western Zaporizhia Oblast) directions.[25] Russian sources reported Ukrainian attacks south of Bakhmut on the Klishchiivka-Andriivka-Kurdyumivka line and south of Orikhiv near Robotyne, Novoprokopivka, and Verbke.[26]

Russian President Vladimir Putin visited the Southern Military District (SMD) headquarters in Rostov-on-Don, Rostov Oblast, on October 19 to discuss the battlefield situation in Ukraine. Russian media reported that Putin met with the Chief of the Russian General Staff and overall theater commander for Russian forces in Ukraine Army General Valery Gerasimov, who told Putin that Russian troops are "solving problems in accordance with the operation plan."[27] Various elements of the SMD are notably currently deployed in critical areas of the frontline — elements of the SMD’s 8th Combined Arms Army are conducting offensive operations near Avdiivka in Donetsk Oblast, elements of the 58th Combined Arms Army are defending against ongoing Ukrainian offensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast, and elements of the 49th Combined Arms Army are operating in the Kherson Oblast direction as of late August 2023.[28] Putin’s publicized visit with Gerasimov indicates that Gerasimov is still the active figurehead of Russian operations in Ukraine and was likely meant to posture the effectiveness and involvement of the Russian military leadership as Russian forces pursue offensive and defensive operations along multiple sectors of the front. ISW will provide additional updates on Putin’s visit to Rostov-on-Don once more readouts become available.

Key Takeaways:

- **Russian forces launched a renewed offensive push near Avdiivka on October 20 and marginally advanced, indicating that the Russian military command remains**
committed to offensive operations in the area despite heavy materiel and personnel losses.

- Ukrainian forces continued larger-than-usual ground operations on the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast on October 20 and established a confirmed presence in a settlement on the east bank.
- Russian and Ukrainian sources continue to indicate that the Russian units defending the east bank of Kherson Oblast are relatively less combat effective than other Russian forces elsewhere on the front.
- Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations near Bakhmut and in western Zaporizhia Oblast but did not make confirmed advances.
- Russian President Vladimir Putin visited the Southern Military District (SMD) headquarters in Rostov-on-Don, Rostov Oblast, on October 19 to discuss the battlefield situation in Ukraine with Chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov.
- Russian forces conducted offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line, near Bakhmut, around Avdiivka, west of Donetsk City, in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area, and in western Zaporizhia Oblast and made limited advances in some areas.
- Russian Investigative Committee Head Alexander Bastrykin argued on October 20 that Russian authorities should strip migrants of acquired Russian citizenship if they are unwilling to fight in Ukraine.
Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of October 20, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

Significant Fighting in the Past 24 Hours
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory

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

Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Megan Wilson, and Shaylee Dauphinais
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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 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 Information Operations and Narratives

**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 offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on October 20 but did not make any claimed or confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian troops repelled Russian attacks in the Kupyansk direction near Synkivka (8km northeast of Kupyansk) and Ivanivka (20km southeast of Kupyansk), west of Svatove near Nadiya (15km west of Svatove), near Makiiivka (20km southwest of Svatove), and near Nevske (18km northwest of Kreminna).[29] Russian sources claimed that Russian forces continued attacks near Synkivka, Ivanivka, Nadiya, and Makiiivka, and one Russian news aggregator claimed that Russian forces approached the outskirts of Lyman Pershyi (8km northeast of Kupyansk).[30] Ukrainian military observer Konstantyn Mashovets reported that elements of the 26th Tank Regiment (47th Tank Division, 1st Guards Tank Army, Western Military District) and 15th Motorized Rifle Regiment (2nd Motorized Rifle Division, 1st Guards Tank Army, Western Military District) continued attacks north of the Yahidne-Ivanivka area (22km southeast of Kupyansk) but failed to break through towards the N26 Kupyansk-Svatove road.[31] Mashovets noted that Russian forces have shifted their focus towards Petropavlivka (northeast of Kupyansk) and the Stepova Novosilka-Kurylivka direction (directly east of Kupyansk).[32]

The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted unsuccessful ground attacks along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on October 20.[33] Mashovets claimed that Ukrainian forces have advanced up to 400m in an unspecified part of the Kupyansk-Svatove line, although ISW has not observed visual confirmation of Ukrainian advances on this frontline in recent days.[34]
Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of October 20, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

Geolocated footage posted on October 16 indicates that Russian forces exert less control south of Lyman Pershyi.

Geolocated footage posted on October 19 indicates that Russian forces advanced towards Ivanivka.

Geolocated footage posted on October 19 indicates that Russian forces advanced southwest of Yahidne.

Geolocated footage posted on October 17 indicates that Russian forces advanced towards Makiivka.

Geolocated footage posted on October 16 indicates that Ukrainian forces advanced northwest of Zaliznianske.

Map by George Barros, Katarina Stupakova, Nade Mikkelsen, Daniel Medlar, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Megan Wilson, and Shadley Dehnhard
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Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
Russian Ground Lines of Communication
Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
Claimed Ukrainian Advances in Ukraine
Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare

* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.
Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Donetsk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)

Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations near Bakhmut on October 20 and did not make confirmed advances. Russian sources, including the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD), claimed that Ukrainian forces continued attacks on the Klishchiivka-Andriivka-Kurdyumivka line (7-13km south of Bakhmut).\[35\] Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets reported that Ukrainian forces advanced up to the railway line east of Klishchiivka.\[36\] Mashovets reported that elements of the Russian 83rd Separate Air Assault (VDV) Brigade are defending west of Zaitseve (5km east of Klishchiivka), indicating that the 83rd VDV Brigade is likely split across at least two axes, including in western Zaporizhia Oblast.\[37\]

Russian forces continued counterattacks near Bakhmut on October 20 and recently marginally advanced. Geolocated footage published on October 20 shows that Russian forces recently marginally advanced north of Klishchiivka.\[38\] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces counterattacked near Klishchiivka.\[39\] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks near Bohdanivka (5km northwest of Bakhmut), Khromove (2km west of Bakhmut), and Klishchiivka.\[40\] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces shot down a Ukrainian Mi-8 helicopter in the Bakhmut area, possibly near Chasiv Yar (12km west of Bakhmut).\[41\]
Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of October 20, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

Geolocated footage posted on October 16 indicates that Ukrainian forces advanced northwest of Zaliznianske.

Geolocated footage posted on October 20 indicates that Russian forces advanced southwest of Bakhmut.


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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bakhmut City Limits</th>
<th>Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory</th>
<th>Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives</th>
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<tr>
<td>Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*</td>
<td>Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory</td>
<td>Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare</td>
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</tbody>
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* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Note: Ukrainian and Russian sources claimed on October 19 that Ukrainian forces advanced near Opytne.
Russian forces continued offensive operations west and southwest of Donetsk City on October 20 but did not make any confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff and Russian sources reported that Russian forces attacked in Marinka (on the western outskirts of Donetsk City) and near Novomykhailivka (25km southwest of Donetsk City).[42]
The Russian MoD claimed on October 20 that Russian forces repelled limited Ukrainian attacks near Vuhledar in western Donetsk Oblast in the past week.\[43\]
Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions and secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes)

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on October 20. The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) and a Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Urozhaine (9km south of Velyka Novosilka) and Staromayorske (9km south of Velyka Novosilka).[44]

Russian forces conducted offensive operations in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on October 20 but did not make confirmed advances. The Russian MoD claimed that Russian units captured positions in an unspecified area in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area in the past week, though ISW has not observed evidence of recent Russian advances in this sector to confirm this claim.[45] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces achieved some successes near Pryyutne (14km southwest of Velyka Novosilka), although ISW has not observed evidence to support this claim.[46] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks near Zolota Nyva (12km southeast of Velyka Novosilka), Staromayorske, Rivnopil (10km southwest of Velyka Novosilka), and Poltavka (28km southwest of Velyka Novosilka).[47] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Novodonetske (12km southeast of Velyka Novosilka) and southwest of Staromayorske.[48] The Russian “Vostok” Battalion, which reportedly operates in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area, claimed that operations in the Velyka Novosilka are limited to minor skirmishes and artillery duels because Russian forces in the area lack the reserves for offensive actions due to offensive operations in other sectors of the front.[49]
Assessed Control of Terrain Around the Vremivka Salient as of October 20, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Medlie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Megan Wilson, and Shaglei-Dauphinais
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Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare

Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
Russian Field Fortifications

Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives

* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.
Ukrainian forces conducted offensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast on October 20 but did not make any confirmed advances. A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces made marginal advances northwest of Verbove (10km east of Robotyne), though ISW has not observed evidence to confirm this claim.[50] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continue offensive operations in the Melitopol (western Zaporizhia direction).[51] The Russian MoD claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Robotyne and Verbove.[52] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces attacked near Novoprokopivka (2km south of Robotyne).[53]

Russian forces conducted offensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast on October 20 but did not make any confirmed or claimed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks near Robotyne and Verbove.[54] Footage published on October 19 and 20 purportedly shows elements of the 247th Airborne (VDV) Regiment (7th VDV Division) and mobilized personnel of the 387th Motorized Rifle Regiment (likely of the 7th VDV Division) operating near Verbove.[55]
Russian occupation officials claimed that Ukrainian forces launched missiles targeting Russian rear areas in southern Ukraine on October 20. Kherson Oblast occupation head Vladimir Saldo claimed that Ukrainian forces launched between 10 to 15 missiles at Russian occupied Kherson Oblast and Crimea and that Russian forces shot down five missiles over occupied Kherson Oblast.[56] Sevastopol occupation governor Mikhail Razvozhaev claimed that Russian air defenses shot down a missile over the Black Sea near occupied Lyubymivka, Crimea.[57]
Russian Aerospace (VKS) forces are beginning airspace patrols over the Black Sea, in line with Russian President Vladimir Putin’s October 18 announcement that VKS forces are beginning to patrol the airspace over the Black Sea with MiG-31 aircraft armed with Kh-47M2 Kinzhal hypersonic air-launched ballistic missile systems.[58] Satellite imagery published on October 15 shows that Russian forces deployed four MiG-31 aircraft to the Belbek airfield in occupied Sevastopol.[59] Ukrainian Air Force Spokesperson Colonel Yuriy Ihnat stated on October 20 that the Russian military constantly moves aircraft due to fears of Ukrainian missile strikes and that the deployment of MiG-31 aircraft at Belbek airfield will have little effect on Russian operations.[60]

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

Russian Investigative Committee Head Alexander Bastrykin argued on October 20 that Russian authorities should strip migrants of acquired Russian citizenship if they are unwilling to fight in Ukraine.[61] The Russian State Duma proposed a bill on August 28 that would deprive individuals of their acquired Russian citizenship for evading military registration and mobilization, prompting varied reactions of support and opposition among Russian sources.[62] Russian authorities regularly conduct raids on migrant communities in Russia and issue summonses to those with acquired Russian citizenship who have not yet registered with military registration and recruitment offices.[63] Bastrykin’s comments are likely meant to further pressure individuals with acquired citizenship to register with Russian military registration and recruitment offices. Russian authorities are also currently coercing migrants and foreigners living in Russia to fight in the war in Ukraine in exchange for Russian citizenship.[64]

Russian state-owned defense conglomerate Rostec announced on October 20 that it completed tests of the “Koalitsiya-SV” self-propelled artillery system and claimed that Rostec is prepared to start serial production of the system.[65] Russian milbloggers claimed that the new artillery system has a wider range and is more accurate than previous systems, and one prominent milblogger expressed hope that the production of the system will address poor Russian counterbattery capabilities.[66] Russian sources routinely complain about poor Russian counterbattery capabilities throughout the frontline in Ukraine, and Russian forces are unlikely to systematically improve these capabilities in the near term.[67]

**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)**

Russian occupation officials continue to pressure residents in occupied Ukraine to accept Russian passports. The Kherson Oblast occupation administration stated on October 20 that residents will be obligated to use a Russian passport to receive housing certificates and will not be able to use Ukrainian identification documents.[68]

Ukrainian Melitopol Mayor Ivan Fedorov stated on October 20 that Ukrainian partisans blew up a Russian military vehicle near the Russian-controlled airfield in Melitopol, Zaporizhia Oblast.[69]

**Russian Information Operations and Narratives**

Nothing significant to report.
Significant activity in Belarus (Russian efforts to increase its military presence in Belarus and further integrate Belarus into Russian-favorable frameworks and Wagner Group activity in Belarus)

Ukrainian Commander of the Northern Group of Forces Lieutenant General Serhiy Nayev stated on October 20 that Russian forces currently have deployed three Su-30 attack aircraft and two Su-24 reconnaissance aircraft on Belarusian territory.[70]

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.


[3] https://t.me/wargonzo/15896;

[4] https://t.me/dva_majors/27713

[5] https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0278wJQsVeWsv2SWnjoG2pcw11ZVk52XpS7S5NkwX1CVaTxx2gz3jPYuSLWxBh6Enl; https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02cqQ4a7XxvNvZH ZoUa7...;

[6] https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02cqQ4a7XxvNvZH ZoUa7...; https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02cqQ4a7XxvNvZH ZoUa7...;

