

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, January 26, 2023

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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.

Russian forces launched another massive series of missile and drone strikes across Ukraine on January 26. Ukrainian Commander-in-Chief General Valery Zaluzhnyi stated that Russian forces launched 55 air- and sea-based missiles, including Kh-101, Kh-555, Kh-47, and Kh-95 Kalibr and Kinzhal missiles at Ukraine from Tu-95, Su-35, and MiG-31K aircraft from the waters of the Black Sea.¹ Ukrainian air defense shot down 47 of the 55 missiles and all 24 Shahed 136 and 131 drones.² Several missiles struck critical infrastructure in Vinnytsia and Odesa oblasts.³ Ukrainian Defense Minister Oleksii Reznikov notably reported that Russian forces had 90 Iranian-made drones remaining as of January 7.⁴ Russian forces have enough drones for only a few more large-scale strikes unless they have received or will soon receive a new shipment of drones from Iran. Russian Duma Chairman Vyacheslav Volodin met with Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi in Tehran on January 23 to expand bilateral cooperation efforts, conversations that may have included discussions on the provision of Iranian-made weapons systems to Russia.⁵

A recent altercation between Wagner Group financier Yevgeny Prigozhin and former Russian officer Igor Girkin is exposing a new domain for competition among Russian nationalist groups for political influence in Russia. Girkin accused Prigozhin on January 25 of deliberately misconstruing his criticism of Prigozhin's political aspirations and exploitation of the information space as an attack on Wagner forces fighting in Ukraine.⁶ Girkin claimed that Wagner-affiliated outlet *RiaFan's* interview with an unnamed Wagner commander who blamed Girkin for abandoning positions in Donbas in 2014 was an effort to anonymously discredit him.⁷ Girkin also accused Prigozhin of continuing to commit Wagner forces to support operations in Syria and African countries instead of deploying his mercenaries to win the war in Ukraine.

Prigozhin replied that he does not have political ambitions and stated that his team attempted to bribe Girkin in an effort to silence his criticism of Wagner forces that could have led to the imprisonment of his fighters for illegal mercenary activity.⁸ Prigozhin also made a point of exaggerating his authority by claiming that he cannot withdraw Wagner from Africa because he "made a promise to several presidents" that he will "defend them," claimed that Wagner "de-facto" won the Syrian war, and noted that Wagner was kicked out of Donbas in 2015.⁹ Prigozhin reiterated that he founded, controls, and sponsors Wagner and sarcastically invited Girkin to join one of Wagner's assault units in occupied Luhansk Oblast, which Girkin stated he would do if Prigozhin sent him a serious invitation.¹⁰ Prigozhin further demeaned Girkin by stating that Wagner does not send out invitations and stated that Girkin would not be effective on the frontlines because he is only interested in promoting himself for financial benefit.¹¹

Prigozhin and Girkin – both critics of Russian President Vladimir Putin's conduct of the war – are likely competing for influence and patronage among pro-war politicians disillusioned with the progress of the war. ISW assessed on October 4 that the Russian nationalists are split among three distinct groups that pursue different objectives while unilaterally criticizing the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD): Russian or proxy veterans, nationalists with their own private forces, and Russian milbloggers and war correspondents.¹² Girkin represents the veteran faction due to his connections with veteran organizations such as the All-Russian Officers Assembly, while Prigozhin is a self-proclaimed nationalist with access to a parallel military structure.¹³ While both have avidly denied their political aspirations in Russia, they have continued to criticize the Russian MoD and the Kremlin in an effort to boost their prominence in Russian society against the

backdrop of Russian military failures.¹⁴ Prigozhin and Girkin are likely competing for favor with the same pro-war nationalist patronage networks within the Kremlin that are represented by outspoken nationalist politicians. Prigozhin, for example, is engaging members of the A Just Russia – For Truth Party and nationalist-leaning Chairman of the State Duma Vyacheslav Volodin to legalize Wagner mercenaries in Russia.¹⁵ Girkin had broken with many officials with strong nationalist rhetoric like Volodin, however, and may be frustrated that he is unable to attain the same political power that he exerted in 2014 during the occupation of Crimea, and parts of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts.¹⁶

Prigozhin’s attack on Girkin may benefit Putin, however. Prigozhin is very prominent in the Russian information space, and many milbloggers accused Girkin of lacking combat experience and cowardice in response to this exchange.¹⁷ Prigozhin may have attempted to undermine Girkin to gain influence in the nationalist space while simultaneously but not necessarily intentionally discrediting one of the most prominent Putin critics.

Prigozhin is likely attempting to maximize his influence to avoid Girkin’s fate. The Kremlin had seemingly rid itself of Girkin after his militants retreated from Slovyansk and following his involvement in the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 in July 2014.¹⁸ Girkin was removed from the position of Minister of Defense of the Donetsk People’s Republic (DNR) in August 2014 and has not resurrected his influence within the Kremlin since then. Prigozhin, however, is trying to build a support base within the Kremlin and in Russian society to solidify his presence in Russian domestic affairs even as Wagner struggles on the battlefield.

Russian President Vladimir Putin continued his campaign against critical and opposition voices by cracking down on several major opposition media outlets while continuing to platform highly critical Russian milbloggers. Putin signed a law on January 25 designating several major Russian language media and investigative outlets, including *Meduza*, *Important Stories*, *Bellingcat*, *The Bell*, and *The Insider* as undesirable organizations within Russia, outlawing the publication, distribution, or financial support of the organizations and their publications.¹⁹ The Russian Prosecutor General’s Office claimed that the activities of *Meduza* and other outlets threaten the “foundations of the constitutional order and security” of Russia.²⁰ Wagner Group financier Yevgeny Prigozhin had notably called for the Russian Prosecutor General’s Office to censor *Meduza* in July 2022, claiming that the outlet deliberately spread false information to split Russian society.²¹ Putin has failed, however, to rein in highly critical Russian nationalist milbloggers who have long criticized and undermined the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD), Kremlin, and even Putin himself, as ISW has previously reported.²² Putin likely hopes to cultivate a group of loyal milbloggers to undermine other rising opponents, such as Prigozhin and Chechen Republic Head Ramzan Kadyrov.²³

The United States Treasury Department announced new sanctions targeting the Wagner Group’s global support network, likely in response to the Wagner Group’s renewed efforts to support its operations outside of Ukraine. The US Department of the Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) designated 16 entities that support the Wagner Group’s military operations as sanctioned entities including a Russian-based technology firm, a Chinese-based satellite imagery company, a Central African Republic security company controlled by the Wagner Group, a United Arab Emirates-based aviation firm, and several Russian nationals.²⁴ OFAC redesignated the Wagner Group as a significant transnational criminal organization and cited both its role in Russian operations in Ukraine and its involvement in serious criminal activity in the Central African Republic and Mali.²⁵ The announcement of secondary sanctions on specified entities outside of Russia and the focus on the Wagner Group’s activities in the Sahel suggests that the US Treasury Department is in part trying to constrain the Wagner Group’s likely renewed focus on conducting operations outside of Ukraine. The Wagner Group has likely renewed efforts to increase security capacity building and counterterrorism roles in African countries, roles that the Wagner Group had focused heavily on before committing serious resources to the Russian invasion of Ukraine.²⁶

Key Takeaways

- Russian forces launched another massive series of missile and drone strikes across Ukraine on January 26.
- A recent altercation between Wagner Group financier Yevgeny Prigozhin and former Russian officer Igor Girkin is exposing a new domain for competition among Russian nationalist groups for political influence in Russia against the backdrop of Russian military failures in Ukraine.
- Russian President Vladimir Putin continued his campaign against critical and opposition voices by cracking down on several major opposition media outlets.
- The United States Treasury Department announced new sanctions targeting the Wagner Group’s global support network, likely in response to the Wagner Group’s renewed efforts to reinvigorate its operations outside of Ukraine.
- Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces relaunched counteroffensive operations near Kreminna.
- Russian forces continued ground attacks around Bakhmut, on the western outskirts of Donetsk City, and in the Vuhledar area.
- Ukrainian officials reported that Russian forces in Zaporizhia Oblast are not conducting offensive operations at the size or scale necessary for a full-scale offensive.
- Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces continued to conduct limited and localized ground attacks in Zaporizhia Oblast.
- The Wagner Group likely experienced significant losses in attritional offensive operations in eastern Ukraine over the past few months.
- Russian occupation officials are reportedly continuing to “nationalize” property and close places of worship belonging to the Ukrainian Evangelical Baptist Christian communities in occupied Zaporizhia Oblast in an effort to establish the Kremlin-affiliated Moscow Patriarchate Orthodox Church as the dominant faith in the region.

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

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

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

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

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian troops relaunched counteroffensive operations near Kreminna on January 26. A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces launched offensive operations against 144th Motorized Rifle Division (20th Combined Arms Army, Western Military District) positions near Kreminna on the night of January 25.²⁷ The milblogger claimed that the 144th Motorized Rifle Division repelled the attack and forced Ukrainian troops to retreat to their original positions, but that Ukrainian troops re-initiated attempts to

attack Russian positions from the direction of Torske (14km west of Kreminna) on the morning of January 26.²⁸ Russian sources posted footage reportedly of Russian strikes on Ukrainian positions near Kreminna.²⁹ Geolocated combat footage posted by the Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) 4th Motorized Rifle Brigade originally posted on January 12 allegedly shows LNR forces shelling a Ukrainian vehicle in a forest area near Kreminna.³⁰ The Ukrainian General Staff stated that Russian forces carried out a limited ground attack in Chervonopivka (6km north of Kreminna).³¹

Russian Main Effort—Eastern Ukraine

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

Russian forces continued ground attacks around Bakhmut on January 26. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian troops repelled Russian attacks on Bakhmut itself; northeast of Bakhmut near Verkhokamyanske (30km northeast), Blahodatne (8km northeast), Spirne (27km northeast), and Rozdolivka (15km northeast); and south of Bakhmut near Klishchiivka (7km southwest).³² Geolocated footage posted on January 25 shows that Russian forces have made incremental advances on the southeastern outskirts of Bakhmut.³³ Russian milbloggers continued to discuss fighting within Bakhmut itself.³⁴ Ukrainian Eastern Grouping of Forces spokesperson Serhiy Cherevaty reported that Russian forces conducted 39 combat clashes in one day in the Bakhmut direction and that Russian forces lost almost an entire battalion in combat clashes on January 25 alone.³⁵ Ukraine's Joint Forces Task Force noted that the Wagner Group is using small unit tactics and squad-sized assault detachments of four to five people to attack and infiltrate urban areas of Bakhmut.³⁶

Russian forces continued ground attacks on the western outskirts of Donetsk City on January 26. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian troops repelled a Russian attack on Marinka, on the southwestern outskirts of Donetsk City.³⁷ A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces are continuing to fight for the western part of Marinka.³⁸ Another Russian milblogger claimed that the Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) 1st Motorized Rifle Brigade took control of Vodiane, on the northwestern outskirts of Donetsk City.³⁹ The Russian milblogger noted that DNR forces are exhausted from fighting different battles on this axis and that they are lacking manpower to hold territory or pursue further advances near Donetsk City.⁴⁰

Russian forces conducted limited ground attacks in western Donetsk Oblast on January 26. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian troops attacked Vuhledar and Pavlivka, about 30km southwest of Donetsk City.⁴¹ Russian sources widely claimed that Russian troops interdicted the Pokrovske-Vuhledar highway, although there is no one clear highway that runs from Pokrovske (75km northwest of Vuhledar) to Vuhledar, which likely means that Russian sources are claiming control of a segment of the T0509 Velyka Novoselivka-Pavlivka highway that runs just south of Vuhledar.⁴² A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces broke through Ukrainian defenses on the southern outskirts of Vuhledar and gained positions in Vuhledar itself.⁴³ A video taken by Ukrainian troops in the Vuhledar area shows heavy smoke near Vuhledar, and a Ukrainian soldier stated that Russian forces are actively storming the settlement.⁴⁴ Several Russian sources emphasized that Russian forces still do not control all of Vuhledar but that heavy fighting is underway.⁴⁵

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

Ukrainian officials reported on January 26 that Russian forces in Zaporizhia Oblast are not conducting offensive operations at the size or scale necessary for a full-scale offensive, supporting ISW's previous assessment.⁴⁶ Head of the Ukrainian Joint Press Center of the Tavriisk Direction Defense Forces Yevhen Yerin stated that Russian forces have not massed a powerful enough strike group to conduct an offensive in the Zaporizhia direction but warned that Russian forces have somewhat strengthened their manpower presence in Zaporizhia Oblast at the cost of other units and directions of advance.⁴⁷ Yerin noted that Russian forces continue to conduct ground attacks with 10-person (squad-sized) formations and to fire on Ukrainian forces with tube and rocket artillery.⁴⁸

Yerin also stated that Russian forces may intend to fix Ukrainian forces along the Zaporizhia Oblast frontline. These efforts are inconsistent with the continuing Russian information operation of an ongoing and successful Russian offensive in Zaporizhia Oblast.⁴⁹

Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces continued to conduct limited and localized ground attacks in Zaporizhia Oblast on January 26. Russian milbloggers, including one who has been proven to have fabricated false information about the situation on the front lines, claimed that Russian and Ukrainian forces fought near Shcherbaky, Mali Shcherbaky, Novodanylivka, and Novopokrovka.⁵⁰ A Russian milblogger characterized Russian offensive operations in the area as a “positional offensive” and claimed that the front line has not changed, supporting ISW’s prior assessment that the pace and effectiveness of claimed Russian ground attacks in the area are low.⁵¹ Russian and Ukrainian sources continued to report that Russian forces shelled areas that Zaporizhia Oblast occupation official Vladimir Rogov previously claimed Russian forces control, including Novodanylivka, Mala Tokmachka, Novoandriivka, Kamianske and Bilohirya.⁵²

Several Russian milbloggers continued to warn of a Ukrainian counteroffensive in the Zaporizhia direction, indicating that ongoing ground attacks in this area, and the accompanying information operation, are likely aimed at spoiling Ukrainian efforts. Rogov continued to claim that Ukrainian forces are preparing for a decisive effort against Melitopol and Berdyansk in the coming months, but that Russian battlefield successes will reduce Ukrainian forces’ capability to conduct this effort.⁵³ A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces went into full combat readiness for a resumed Russian offensive in the Kamianske-Stepove area near Orikhiv, indicating continued concern over Ukrainian actions on this front.⁵⁴ Another Russian milblogger who has been proven to have fabricated false information about the situation on the front lines claimed that Ukrainian forces are preparing for active hostilities and transported a column of armored vehicles towards Kamianske on the eastern bank of the Kakhovka Reservoir.⁵⁵

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces attempted to conduct another landing in east (left) bank Kherson Oblast on January 26. Russian milbloggers, including one who has previously fabricated information, claimed that Russian artillery fire prevented Ukrainian forces from landing near Kakhovka or Dnipriany overnight on January 25-26.⁵⁶ Ukrainian forces conducted a successful raid near Kakhovka on January 23-24, as ISW has previously reported.⁵⁷

Russian occupation authorities continue efforts to restore Russian logistics lines through Crimea into southern Kherson and Zaporizhia oblasts. Occupation authorities announced on January 26 that authorities restored the third of four total bridge spans needed to repair the Kerch Strait road bridge, and plan to install the fourth span on January 31.⁵⁸ Russian occupation authorities maintain that they will finish restoring the Kerch Strait road bridge in March 2023.⁵⁹

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

Official Ukrainian sources continue to report that Russian officials are preparing for a second wave of mobilization. The Ukrainian General Staff reported on January 26 that Russian officials in occupied Crimea are conducting preparatory measures for a new wave of mobilization and are requiring all state and private institutions in Crimea to submit lists of employees for mobilization to military recruitment offices by January 29.⁶⁰ Official Ukrainian sources have reported in the past month that Russian officials have been preparing for a second wave of mobilization and have forecasted dates for when Russian officials will conduct various mobilization efforts.⁶¹ It is likely that Russian officials are receiving orders to prepare the Russian military recruitment apparatus for a second wave of mobilization, and Ukrainian officials may be basing their forecasts on these orders. A *CNN* report from January 25 suggests that Russian President Vladimir Putin has likely not decided when to start another mobilization wave and that he intends to conduct one discreetly to avoid further domestic backlash.⁶² Previous Ukrainian forecasts may have been off because Putin keeps pushing back his

decision to issue orders to begin mobilization processes or possibly even make the decision due to his concern about the Russian public's reaction.

Ukrainian officials continue to report that Russian forces are forcibly mobilizing residents in violation of international law. Ukrainian Deputy Defense Minister Hana Malyar reported on January 26 that Russian forces are continuing to forcibly mobilize residents in occupied territories and intentionally sending these Ukrainians to frontline positions without proper provisions and training.⁶³ Malyar reported that Russian servicemembers routinely assault and harass these forcibly mobilized Ukrainians.⁶⁴ Article 51 of the Geneva convention prohibits an occupying power from compelling protected civilian non-combatants from serving in its armed or auxiliary forces.⁶⁵ The systemic impressment of Ukrainian residents from occupied territories into the Russian Armed Forces also likely produces formations with substandard combat effectiveness that lack cohesion with other Russian formations. The Russian military may be engaging in this substandard force generation effort to decrease the Ukrainian population in occupied territories and support a likely deliberate ethnic cleansing campaign.⁶⁶

The Wagner Group likely experienced significant losses in attritional offensive operations in eastern Ukraine over the past few months. *The New York Times* and *Reuters* both published investigative reports on a Wagner Group-operated cemetery in Bakinskaya, Krasnodar Krai on January 26 that indicate that the Wagner Group has buried a significant number of personnel at the site in the previous months.⁶⁷ Satellite imagery reportedly shows a burial plot at the site expanding by a factor of seven between November 24, 2022, and January 24, 2023, and *Reuters* journalists who visited the burial ground reported that there were around 200 graves at the site and that there were almost no remaining available plots.⁶⁸ The Wagner Group began using the burial site after it reportedly ran out of space at a Wagner-affiliated chapel in the nearby town of Goryachy Klyuch, which *The New York Times* reported had 882 burial compartments.⁶⁹ The two burial sites may hold 1,000 dead Wagner Group personnel, a good portion of whom likely died in the Wagner Group's operations around Bakhmut. The majority of the Wagner Group personnel buried at these sites were reportedly prisoners, a result of the Wagner Group's overwhelming reliance on prison recruitment and its operational use of these personnel in costly assaults.⁷⁰ The high number of casualties is likely constraining the Wagner Group's ability to continue offensive operations at a high pace and will likely prompt further prison recruitment efforts.

The Russian military continues to engage in unconventional force generation efforts that are likely degrading the effectiveness of the conventional Russian military. Russian and social media sources amplified footage purporting to show a reconnaissance group of the 106th Guards Airborne Division of the Russian Airborne Forces (VDV) operating in eastern Ukraine that is completely comprised of personnel from a football hooligans club.⁷¹ A Russian milblogger claimed that the formation is one of the most motivated and combat-ready Russian formations in Ukraine.⁷² The report that the VDV, historically considered among the most elite of conventional Russian forces, staffed an entire unit with likely untrained and poorly disciplined personnel suggests that premier conventional Russian forces have experienced such significant losses in Ukraine that they have had to resort to unconventional recruitment efforts.

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

Russian occupation officials are reportedly continuing to "nationalize" property and close places of worship belonging to the Ukrainian Evangelical Baptist Christian communities in occupied Zaporizhia Oblast in an effort to establish Kremlin-affiliated Moscow Patriarchate Orthodox Church as the dominant faith in the region. The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported on January 26 that Russian occupation officials seized the building of an Evangelical church in Melitopol and noted that Russians are persecuting representatives of confessions other than the Kremlin-backed Moscow Patriarchate Orthodox Church.⁷³ The center also reported that the Russian Association for the Protection of Religious Freedom, which is sponsored by grants from Russian President Vladimir Putin, is responsible for "integrating" occupied Ukrainian churches into the

“Russian sociocultural space” by seizing their property and places of worship.⁷⁴ The Ukrainian Community of Evangelical Baptist Christians also announced that Russian occupation authorities closed two houses of prayer in Berdyansk belonging to the community on January 22 and January 23.⁷⁵ The community had previously reported that Russian occupation authorities closed a Ukrainian Evangelical Baptist Christian church in Chkalove, occupied Zaporizhia Oblast, during evening prayer in late September.⁷⁶ Ukrainian news outlets reported that armed Russian military personnel interrupted the service of the Ukrainian Evangelical Church “Blahodat” in Melitopol in early September, arresting two pastors.⁷⁷ Ukrainian outlets added that Russian forces announced the “nationalization” of the church, accused worshipers of cooperating with the US and demanded and received their passport information.⁷⁸

Russian officials are formalizing the establishment of penal colonies in occupied areas. A Russian government decree dated January 23 provides for the opening of 27 penal colonies throughout occupied Ukraine—13 in Donetsk Oblast, seven in Luhansk Oblast, three in Kherson Oblast, and three in Zaporizhia Oblast.⁷⁹ Russian officials may use these penal colonies to expand social control in occupied territories by threatening residents with imprisonment for pro-Ukrainian and partisan activities. Russian authorities may alternatively seek to use these penal colonies to consolidate a mobilization resource in occupied areas. Ukrainian sources have recently reported on Russian efforts to forcibly mobilized Ukrainian prisoners in Russian prisons.⁸⁰ The establishment of prisons in occupied areas may be part of the same line of effort.

Russian officials and occupation authorities are continuing efforts to integrate Ukrainian schools into the Russian education apparatus. Zaporizhia Oblast occupation official Vladimir Rogov claimed on January 26 that a bill on educational integration into the Russian system that passed its first reading would recognize degrees and titles obtained in occupied territories as valid in Russia.⁸¹ Rogov claimed that the bill will provide temporary credentials to schools valid until January 2, 2026. Rogov also claimed that the bill will exempt teachers in occupied territories from certification requirements until September 1, 2024.⁸²

Russian occupation authorities are continuing efforts to consolidate administrative control of occupied territories. Luhansk People’s Republic (LNR) Internal Ministry claimed on January 26 that four more subdivisions of the LNR Internal Affairs Ministry’s Migration Service Department began accepting documents to obtain Russian passports in four districts of occupied Luhansk Oblast.⁸³ The LNR Interior Ministry also announced on January 26 that it is seeking residents in occupied Luhansk Oblast to serve in LNR Interior Ministry bodies.⁸⁴

ISW will continue to report daily observed Russian and Belarusian military activity in Belarus.

ISW’s most dangerous course of action warning forecast about a potential major Russian offensive against northern Ukraine from Belarus appears increasingly unlikely. ISW currently assesses the risk of a Russian invasion of Ukraine from Belarus as very low. ISW will continue reporting observed indicators we are using to refine our assessments and forecasts, which we expect to update regularly.

Observed significant military activities in Belarus in the past 24 hours that indicate an attack from Belarus is more likely:

- Nothing significant to report.

Observed significant military activity in Belarus in the past 24 hours that is ambiguous:

- Russian and Belarusian forces continued joint tactical flight exercises on January 26.⁸⁵

Observed significant military activity in Belarus in the past 24 hours that indicates that an attack from Belarus remains unlikely:

- The Ukrainian General Staff reiterated that it has not observed Russian forces in Belarus forming a strike group as of January 26.⁸⁶
- Ukrainian Air Force Command Spokesperson Yuri Ihnat stated on January 26 that joint Belarusian and Russian aviation exercises are intended to generate psychological pressure and do not pose a threat from the northern direction.⁸⁷

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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<https://www.facebook.com/CinCAFU/posts/pfbid0kSgCB6CCtjqWeDFJ2oMEzxqw4SPed9FJfenjLR81Z9JLJ4nusQ2YBzBPu1EziCpPI>

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³ [https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1425699164912683;](https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1425699164912683) [https://t.me/militarymediacenter/964;](https://t.me/militarymediacenter/964) [https://t.me/vinnytskaODA/8152;](https://t.me/vinnytskaODA/8152) [https://t.me/vinnytskaODA/8151;](https://t.me/vinnytskaODA/8151) [https://t.me/odeskaODA/1116;](https://t.me/odeskaODA/1116) https://t.me/Bratchuk_Sergey/27991

⁴ <https://isw.pub/UkrWar010723>

⁵ <https://isw.pub/UkrWar012323>

⁶ <https://t.me/strelkovii/3802>

⁷ [https://t.me/strelkovii/3803;](https://t.me/strelkovii/3803) [https://t.me/strelkovii/3802;](https://t.me/strelkovii/3802) <https://t.me/strelkovii/3805>

⁸ https://t.me/concordgroup_official/348

⁹ https://t.me/concordgroup_official/348

¹⁰ <https://t.me/strelkovii/3810>

¹¹ [https://t.me/concordgroup_official/350;](https://t.me/concordgroup_official/350) https://t.me/concordgroup_official/352

¹² <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-4>

¹³ <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-may-23>

¹⁴ [https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-january-16-2023;](https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-january-16-2023) [https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-january-22-2023;](https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-january-22-2023) [https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-january-18-2023;](https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-january-18-2023) [https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-january-11-2023;](https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-january-11-2023) [https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-december-20;](https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-december-20) [https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-january-14-2023;](https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-january-14-2023) [https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-1;](https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-1) [https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-25;](https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-25) [https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-january-10-2023;](https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-january-10-2023) [https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-november-1;](https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-november-1) <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-28>

¹⁵ [https://t.me/concordgroup_official/355;](https://t.me/concordgroup_official/355) [https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-january-25-2023;](https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-january-25-2023) <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-december-19>

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