

# **Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, March 10**

**Mason Clark, George Barros, and Kateryna Stepanenko**

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**The likelihood is increasing that Ukrainian forces could fight to a standstill the Russian ground forces attempting to encircle and take Kyiv. Russian forces also appear to be largely stalemated around Kharkiv and distracted from efforts to seize that city. Russian advances in the south around Mykolayiv and toward Zaporizhya and in the east around Donetsk and Luhansk made little progress as well in the last 24 hours. Russia likely retains much greater combat power in the south and east and will probably renew more effective offensive operations in the coming days, but the effective reach and speed of such operations is questionable given the general performance of the Russian military to date. There are as yet no indications that the Russian military is reorganizing, reforming, learning lessons, or taking other measures that would lead to a sudden change in the pace or success of its operations, although the numerical disparities between Russia and Ukraine leave open the possibility that Moscow will be able to restore rapid mobility or effective urban warfare to the battlefield.**

Russian forces around Kyiv did not attempt to renew offensive operations on a multi-battalion scale on March 10 following the failure of limited efforts on March 8-9. Ukrainian forces badly damaged a Russian armored column in the Brovary area east of Kyiv, likely further disrupting Russian efforts to set conditions for offensive operations on the east bank of the Dnipro. Ukrainian resistance all along the Russian lines of communication from eastern Kyiv to the Russian border near Sumy continues to disrupt Russian efforts to bring more combat power to bear near the capital. The episodic, limited, and largely unsuccessful Russian offensive operations around Kyiv increasingly support the Ukrainian General Staff's repeated assessments that Russia lacks the combat power near the capital to launch successful offensive operations on a large scale.

## **Key Takeaways**

- **Russian operations around Kyiv remained largely stalled over the past 24 hours.**
- **Ukrainian forces badly damaged a Russian armored unit east of the capital, likely disrupting Russian efforts to encircle or assault the city from the east.**
- **Russian forces continue to struggle in efforts to seize Chernihiv city and to secure the long ground lines of communication from Sumy, which the Ukrainians still hold, to eastern Kyiv.**
- **A new Russian invasion from western Belarus, with or without Belarusian ground forces' support, appears increasingly unlikely.**
- **Russian forces remain pinned down attempting to reduce Mariupol by siege and bombardment.**
- **Russian efforts to bypass Mykolayiv and establish a reliable ground line of communication across the Southern Bug River to the north of Mykolayiv remain stalled.**
- **Ukrainian air force and air defense operations continue to hinder Russian ground forces maneuver by likely limiting Russian close air support and exposing Russian mechanized forces to Ukrainian air and artillery attacks.**



### **Russian forces are engaged in four primary efforts at this time:**

- Main effort—Kyiv (comprised of three subordinate supporting efforts);
- Supporting effort 1—Kharkiv;
  - Supporting effort 1a—Luhansk Oblast;
- Supporting effort 2—Mariupol; and
- Supporting effort 3—Kherson and advances westward.

### **Main effort—Kyiv axis: Russian operations on the Kyiv axis are aimed at encircling the city from the northwest, west, and east.**

**Russian forces did not make any substantial gains in the past 24 hours. The Ukrainian military reported it halted Russian advances “in all directions” and that Russian forces have reduced their offensive pace due to demoralization on March 10.<sup>1</sup> The Ukrainian Air Force and Ukrainian air defenses additionally remain operational. The Ukrainian General Staff claimed that Ukrainian air defenses and fighters shot down four Russian Su-25 aircraft, two helicopters, and two cruise missiles on March 8-9.<sup>2</sup> Individual Russian attacks at roughly regiment size reported on March 8-9 may represent the maximum scale of offensive operations Russian forces can conduct on this axis at any one time. Russian forces will likely require a period longer than the previous operational pauses of 48-72 hours to sufficiently reinforce their forces to resume advances on Kyiv, if they are able to at all.**

### **Subordinate main effort along the west bank of the Dnipro**

Russian forces did not make any substantial advances west of Kyiv on March 10. The Ukrainian General Staff reported at noon local time on March 10 that Russian forces occupy a ring of positions north and west of Kyiv running through Poliske, Kukhari, Borodyanka, Andriyivka, Motyzhyn, Horenychi, Bucha, and Demydiv.<sup>3</sup> Russian forces made slight advances in Motyzhyn and Bucha, two towns west of Kyiv, but Russian positions in Kyiv’s northwestern outskirts remained the same over the past 24 hours. The Ukrainian General Staff did not report any new details on the Russian elements that attempted to push south toward Fastiv from Byshiv since March 9. The Ukrainian General Staff reported at 10:00 am local time on March 10 that Ukrainian forces continue to maintain their defensive lines around Kyiv.<sup>4</sup> The General Staff claimed Russian forces have not abandoned their efforts to encircle Kyiv from the west and southwest but predominantly regrouped and replaced combat losses over the last 24 hours.<sup>5</sup> Ukrainian forces repulsed Russian attacks on Vyshhorod (approximately 18 kilometers directly north of Kyiv along the west bank of the Dnipro River) and on Moshchun (roughly 20 kilometers northwest of Kyiv on the Irpin River) on March 10.<sup>6</sup>

The Ukrainian General Staff additionally reported on March 10 that Russian saboteurs are wearing yellow armbands (an identifying marker of Ukrainian forces) as well as a yellow band on the leg to identify themselves to other Russian forces.<sup>7</sup> The General Staff additionally stated Russian saboteurs may have infiltrated Kyiv under the guise of evacuated residents of Kyiv’s suburbs.<sup>8</sup> ISW cannot independently confirm the possible successes of Russian efforts to infiltrate Kyiv.

The apparent failure of Russian forces’ attacks on March 8-9 after reconstituting and preparing during the operational pause and resupply efforts of the past several days supports the Ukrainian General Staff assessments that Russian forces have far less effective combat power around the capital than their numbers would suggest.<sup>9</sup>

Russian and/or Belarusian forces remain unlikely to attempt to open a new axis of advance into western Ukraine in the near future. The Ukrainian General Staff reported on March 10 that Ukrainian forces continue to cover the border with Belarus.<sup>10</sup> The Russian military is unlikely to be able to concentrate sufficient combat power to conduct any meaningful operation against western Ukraine. The Ukrainian General Staff reported at midnight on March 9 that Belarus is supplying Russian forces with fuel and supplies and allowing Russian forces to use Belarusian bases but has not committed its own forces.<sup>11</sup> Russian aircraft additionally continue to operate from several Belarusian airbases.<sup>12</sup> Russia will likely continue to prioritize feeding individual replacements and reinforcing units to its ongoing main effort to encircle Kyiv, rather than attempting a new line of advance.

### **Subordinate supporting effort—Chernihiv axis**

Russian forces unsuccessfully continued efforts to assault Chernihiv on March 10. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continue to hold the city as of 6:00 am local time on March 10.<sup>13</sup> Ukrainian forces additionally claimed to destroy a Russian Iskander-M missile battalion near Chernihiv on March 10.<sup>14</sup> The Ukrainian General Staff previously reported on March 9 that elements of the 2nd Combined Arms Army, 41st Combined Arms Army, and 90th Tank Division are attempting to renew the offensive toward Chernihiv and Kyiv from the north.<sup>15</sup>

Ukrainian forces likely successfully repelled Russian attacks on Brovary, an eastern suburb of Kyiv, on March 10. The Ukrainian GUR claimed Ukrainian forces killed Russian Colonel A. Zakharov, commander of the 6th Tank Regiment of the 90th Tank Division, in Brovary on March 10.<sup>16</sup> Several social media users additionally posted videos, later verified by *CNN*, of Russian losses in Brovary on March 9-10.<sup>17</sup>

### **Subordinate supporting effort—Sumy axis**

Russian forces likely continued efforts to consolidate control of their lines of communication to eastern Kyiv along the Sumy axis in the past 24 hours as Ukrainian forces continue to contest them. Russian forces again unsuccessfully attacked Okhtyrka in Sumy Oblast throughout March 9-10.<sup>18</sup> Ukrainian forces did not report any counterattacks against Russian forces in Sumy Oblast in the past 24 hours but claimed that Ukrainian troops continued "stabilization operations" and territorial defense outside the Kyiv and southeastern axes, likely referring to fighting in northeastern Ukraine.<sup>19</sup> This continued fighting likely indicates that the Russians are struggling to consolidate control over this long line of communication and that Ukrainian forces are actively contesting it.

### **Supporting Effort #1—Kharkiv:**

Russian forces continued to bombard Kharkiv on March 10 but have not renewed attempts to take the city through ground assault on a large scale.<sup>20</sup> Kharkiv Governor Oleh Sinegubov additionally claimed that Ukrainian forces recaptured the northern Kharkiv suburb of Dergachi from Russian forces on March 10—Ukrainian forces' third claimed counteroffensive in Kharkiv Oblast since February 24.<sup>21</sup>

Russian forces, likely from the Kharkiv axis, also continued operations to the southeast on March 10. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces attempted to seize Izyum, Petrivske, and Hrushuvakha, three towns approximately 110 kilometers southeast of Kharkiv.<sup>22</sup> Russian forces advancing southeast from the Kharkiv axis likely seek to link up with Russian forces advancing west from Donbas but are unlikely to do so in the near future given that Russian forces have been trying and failing to take Izyum since at least March 8.<sup>23</sup>

### **Supporting Effort #1a—Luhansk Oblast:**

The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian and proxy forces continued attacks in Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts on March 10, focused on the city of Kryvyi Rih.<sup>24</sup> The military situation in Donbas has not materially changed in the past 24 hours.

### **Supporting Effort #2—Mariupol:**

Russian forces continue to encircle and bombard Mariupol. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continue to successfully defend the city.<sup>25</sup> The Russian proxy Donetsk People’s Republic claimed that its forces took control of several neighborhoods near Mariupol—including Azovskiy, Naydenovka, Lyapino, Vinogradar, and the Azovstal metallurgical factory—on March 10.<sup>26</sup> The Donetsk People’s Republic (DNR)’s 1st Army Corps (the Ukrainian designation for the Russian-controlled military forces of the DNR) additionally reportedly deployed conscripted troops to Mariupol on March 10.<sup>27</sup>

The Ukrainian General Staff reported at 6:00 am local time on March 10 that Ukraine’s main efforts are focused on preventing the Russians from advancing in the “south-eastern direction”—likely referring to Russian attacks towards Zaporizhyya—as well as Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts.<sup>28</sup> The Ukrainian General Staff had not explicitly highlighted the southeast as an operational priority prior to March 10.

### **Supporting Effort #3—Kherson and west:**

Russian forces continued assaults on the outskirts of Mykolayiv on March 10.<sup>29</sup> Ukrainian forces and social media reported ongoing fighting in Voznesensk, which is northwest of Mykolayiv and the furthest point of Russian advances west of the Dnipro River from Crimea.<sup>30</sup> The Ukrainian General Staff also stated that Russian forces are “trying to gain a foothold” in settlements approximately 25 kilometers south and southeast of Mykolayiv on March 10, indicating that Russian forces are likely experiencing difficulty advancing northwest beyond the Inhul River.<sup>31</sup>

Russian forces continued to concentrate on the drive toward Mykolayiv and made little progress on other operations. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russia deployed a battalion tactical group of the 336th Naval Infantry Brigade (of the Baltic Fleet) to “the Crimean direction” on March 10, and previously reported increasing concentrations of Russian forces toward Mykolayiv on March 9.<sup>32</sup> The Ukrainian General Staff reported at midnight on March 9 that Russian forces continued attacks toward Zaporizhyya but did not secure territorial gains.<sup>33</sup>

### **Immediate items to watch**

- Russian forces around Kyiv may undertake another operational pause to prepare for renewed efforts to encircle Kyiv from east and west and/or to seize the city center itself following their failures of the previous 48 hours;
- Russian troops may drive on Zaporizhyya city itself within the next 48-72 hours, likely attempting to block it from the east and set conditions for subsequent operations after Russian forces besieging Mariupol take that city;
- Russian forces may attempt amphibious landings anywhere along the Black Sea Coast from Odesa to the mouth of the Southern Bug River in the next 24-48 hours.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/269162925396793>;

<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/269017235411362>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/268677938778625>.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/269162925396793>.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/269162925396793>.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/269162925396793>.

<sup>6</sup> [https://t.me/dvish\\_alive/9666](https://t.me/dvish_alive/9666); [https://twitter.com/666\\_mancer/status/1501850363170889732](https://twitter.com/666_mancer/status/1501850363170889732);  
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/269162925396793>.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/269162925396793>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/269162925396793>.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/26842048213770>,  
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/268272335485852>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/269017235411362>.

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/268866462093106>.

<sup>12</sup> <https://twitter.com/MotolkoHelp/status/1501886604134264833>;  
<https://twitter.com/neumerherwam/status/1501888593119387648>;  
<https://twitter.com/COUPSURE/status/1501577144291442691>; <https://twitter.com/MotolkoHelp/status/1501612798782197763>.

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/269017235411362>.

<sup>14</sup> The Ukrainian word "дивізіон" refers specifically to an "artillery division," roughly equivalent to a battalion.  
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/269193108727108>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.understandingwar.org/background/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-march-9>.

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=347663140620392>; <https://gur.gov.ua/content/likvidovano-komandira-polku-okupanta-polkovnyka-zakharova.html>.

<sup>17</sup> <https://twitter.com/DAlperovitch/status/1501836288319762436>;  
<https://twitter.com/YWNReporter/status/150191310863337856>; <https://twitter.com/RALee85/status/1501811181618610179>;  
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1911380852386728>; [https://twitter.com/666\\_mancer/status/1501944031781158922](https://twitter.com/666_mancer/status/1501944031781158922);  
[https://www.cnn.com/europe/live-news/ukraine-russia-putin-news-03-10-22/h\\_2d2a17a18dc9f3904b708740c19164c5](https://www.cnn.com/europe/live-news/ukraine-russia-putin-news-03-10-22/h_2d2a17a18dc9f3904b708740c19164c5).

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/269017235411362>;  
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/268866462093106>.

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/269017235411362>.

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/269017235411362>;  
<https://twitter.com/Liveuamap/status/1501659274069659659>

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/news/2022/03/10/7329932/> ;  
<https://twitter.com/olliecarroll/status/1501879187640135688>.

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/268866462093106>.

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.understandingwar.org/background/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-march-8>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/268866462093106>;  
<https://www.facebook.com/DPSUkraine/posts/292516162987261>.

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/269017235411362>.

<sup>26</sup> <https://vz.ru/news/2022/3/10/1147841.html>.

<sup>27</sup> [https://twitter.com/666\\_mancer/status/1501905096560427012](https://twitter.com/666_mancer/status/1501905096560427012); [https://t.me/Sladkov\\_plus/5026](https://t.me/Sladkov_plus/5026).

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/269017235411362>.

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/269162925396793>;  
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/269017235411362>.

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/269017235411362>;  
<https://twitter.com/RALee85/status/1501656471326629888>; <https://twitter.com/GirkinGirkin/status/1501858923409780736>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/269162925396793>

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/269162925396793>;  
<https://www.understandingwar.org/background/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-march-9>.

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/268866462093106>.