

# Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, August 22

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and Frederick W. Kagan

August 22, 6:15 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.

**Russian occupation officials in Zaporizhia Oblast have obliquely declared the region's independence from Ukraine by falsely identifying Ukrainian citizens entering the occupied region as temporary asylum seekers.** Head of the Zaporizhia Oblast occupation administration Yevheny Balitsky signed an order that designates Ukrainian citizens arriving in occupied Zaporizhia Oblast as temporary asylum seekers based on Russian law.<sup>1</sup> The order requires the registration of Ukrainian and Russian citizens based on their place of residence or place of arrival in the Russian-occupied parts of Zaporizhia Oblast and requires the distribution of temporary identification forms for all "stateless persons." Ukrainians and Russians may register if they present proof of their temporary asylum application. This decree has various implications under both international law and domestic Russian law. International law states that a refugee is an individual from outside the country (or who is stateless) who is seeking "temporary asylum" in another country to escape persecution.<sup>2</sup> Russian law defines a refugee as a person "who is outside of his/her country of nationality or habitual residence."<sup>3</sup> Neither of these statuses properly apply to the majority of people crossing from unoccupied Ukraine into occupied Zaporizhia.

**Russian occupation authorities are thus falsely classifying all Ukrainians entering occupied territories in Zaporizhia Oblast as refugees escaping persecution in Ukraine.**

The order also de facto identifies Ukraine as a separate country from the Zaporizhia Oblast entity, as defined by the occupation authority. By classifying all Ukrainians as refugees, Russian occupation authorities are establishing a new legal category that might have its own restrictions. Russian occupation authorities may use the refugee status to restrict Ukrainians who temporarily return to occupied territories after evacuating from them. The order will likely affect Ukrainian citizens traveling to occupied Kherson Oblast via the checkpoint in Vasylivka, Zaporizhia Oblast, as the order requires the registration of individuals at the point of arrival in the occupied Zaporizhia Oblast, and Vasylivka is the checkpoint serving Kherson as well as Zaporizhia Oblasts.

## Key Takeaways

- **Russian-backed occupation authorities in Zaporizhia Oblast have obliquely declared the independence of the occupied areas of the oblast by falsely identifying Ukrainian citizens entering from unoccupied Ukraine as temporary asylum seekers.**
- **Russian forces conducted localized spoiling attacks southwest and southeast of Izyum.**
- **Russian forces continued ground attacks southeast of Siversk and northeast and south of Bakhmut.**
- **Russian forces continued attempts to advance from the northern and western outskirts of Donetsk City and conducted limited ground attacks southwest of Donetsk City.**
- **Russian forces made marginal gains along the Mykolaiv-Kherson line.**

- **Ukrainian intelligence stated that the Luhansk People’s Republic (LNR) will start “general mobilization” processes on September 1.**
- **Prymorsky Krai announced the formation of a new repair and service volunteer battalion.**
- **Ukrainian partisans continued to conduct attacks against Russian forces in occupied Melitopol.**

***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.***

- Main Effort—Eastern Ukraine (comprised of one subordinate and two supporting efforts);
- Subordinate Main Effort—Encirclement of Ukrainian Troops in the Cauldron between Izyum and Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts
- Supporting Effort 1—Kharkiv City
- Supporting Effort 2—Southern Axis
- Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts
- Activities in Russian-occupied Areas

# Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of August 22, 2022, 3:00 PM ET



Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, and Daniel Mealie  
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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.

## **Main Effort—Eastern Ukraine**

### **Subordinate Main Effort—Southern Kharkiv, Donetsk, Luhansk Oblasts (Russian objective: Encircle Ukrainian forces in Eastern Ukraine and capture the entirety of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)**

Russian forces conducted limited ground attacks southwest and southeast of Izyum near the Kharkiv-Donetsk Oblast border on August 22. Ukrainian sources reported that Russian troops attempted to advance on Dibrovne and Nova Dmytrivka—both within 25 km southwest of Izyum.<sup>4</sup> As ISW has previously assessed, Russian attacks southwest of Izyum are likely limited and localized spoiling attacks and not coherent attempts to advance in a specific direction.<sup>5</sup> The Ukrainian General Staff also stated that Russian forces conducted offensive operations in Krasnopillya, which lies between Izyum and Slovyansk along the E40 highway.<sup>6</sup> Russian forces continued to shell along the Izyum-Slovyansk line and struck economic infrastructure in Kramatorsk.<sup>7</sup>

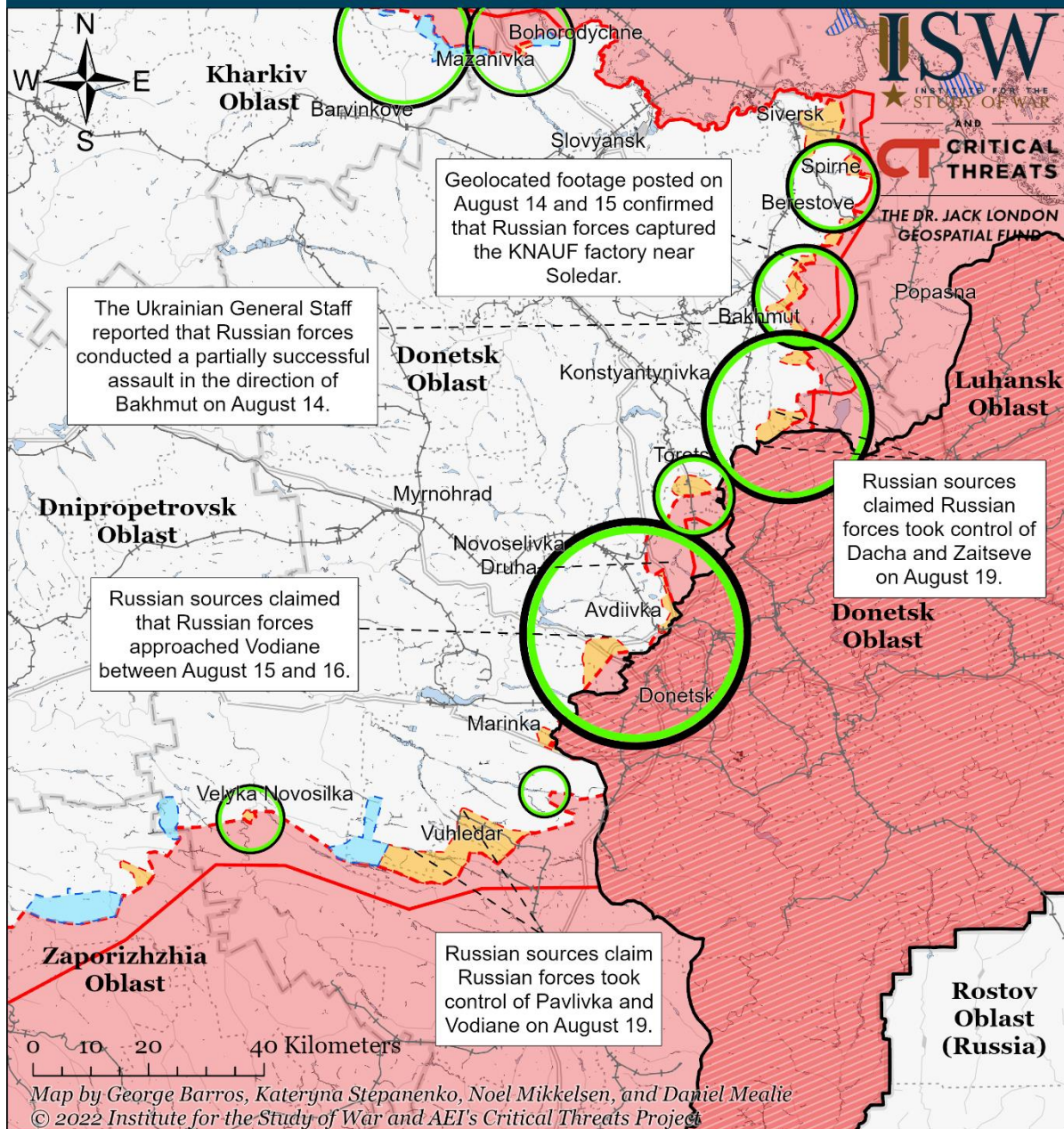
Russian forces conducted limited ground attacks southeast of Siversk on August 22. The Ukrainian General Staff stated that Russian forces attempted to launch an advance southwest of Spirne (13 km southeast of Siversk) towards Vesele (15 km southeast of Siversk).<sup>8</sup> This attempt to advance south of the Spirne area may be intended to advance on Soledar from the north and support attacks toward Bakhmut from the Soledar area. Russian forces additionally continued artillery strikes on and around Siversk.<sup>9</sup>

Russian forces continued ground attacks northeast and south of Bakhmut on August 22. Russian troops continued efforts to advance through Soledar, about 10 km northeast of Bakhmut.<sup>10</sup> Combat footage posted by Russian outlet *Zvezda* shows Donetsk People’s Republic (DNR) soldiers reportedly moving through residential areas of Soledar under the cover of artillery fire.<sup>11</sup> The Ukrainian General Staff noted that Russian troops also attempted to advance on Bakhmut from Pokrovske (10 km east), a report that is supported by statements that Russian troops control a section of Patrice Lumumba Street, which runs from Pokrovske into Bakhmut.<sup>12</sup> Russian forces also continued attempts to advance north of positions in the Horlivka area and fought around Hladsove (18 km south of Bakhmut), Kodema (15 km southeast of Bakhmut), Vershyna (12 km southeast of Bakhmut), and Zaitseve (8 km southeast of Bakhmut).<sup>13</sup> Russian forces continued air and artillery strikes near Bakhmut and surrounding settlements.<sup>14</sup>

Russian forces continued ground attacks near the northern and western outskirts of Donetsk City on August 22. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian troops attempted to advance on Avdiivka from Novoselivka Druha and Krasnohorivka—both less than 10 km north of Avdiivka.<sup>15</sup> Russian troops also attempted to push westward of positions in Pisky (on the northwestern outskirts of Donetsk City) toward Nevelske and Pervomaiske, where fighting is reportedly ongoing.<sup>16</sup> Russian Telegram channels continued to report on Russian attempts to advance through Ukrainian fortifications in Marinka, on the southwestern outskirts of Donetsk City.<sup>17</sup> Social media users in Donetsk City additionally reported a large explosion at a Russian ammunition depot in the east of Donetsk City.<sup>18</sup> Several Russian sources claimed that the explosion was the result of a Ukrainian strike.<sup>19</sup>

Russian forces conducted several ground attacks southwest of Donetsk City near the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border on August 22. The Ukrainian General Staff stated that Russian troops fought near Novomykhailivka (25 km southwest of Donetsk City) and around Makarivka, Vremivka, and Velyka Novosilka, all in western Donetsk Oblast within 10 km of the Zaporizhia Oblast border.<sup>20</sup> Russian forces also continued efforts to cut Ukrainian lines of communication around Vuhledar and shelled Vuhledar and surrounding areas in order to gain access to the Vuhledar-Marinka road.<sup>21</sup>

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of August 22, 2022, 3:00 PM ET



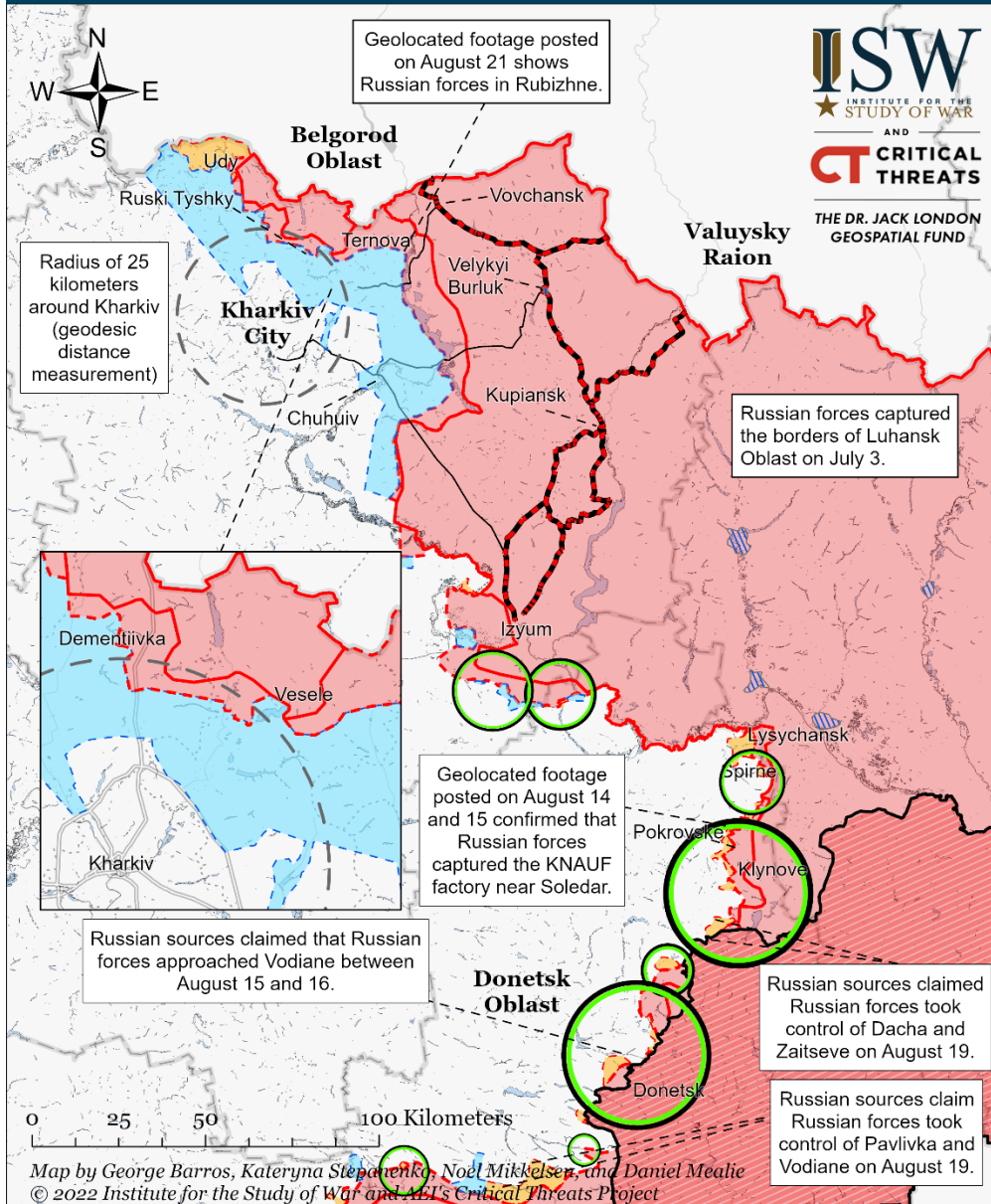
	Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours		Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory		Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
	Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24		Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory		Major Railroads
	Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*		Claimed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

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

**Supporting Effort #1—Kharkiv City (Russian objective: Defend ground lines of communication (GLOCs) to Izyum and prevent Ukrainian forces from reaching the Russian border)**

Russian forces did not make any confirmed territorial gains on August 22. The Ukrainian General Staff stated that Russian forces are attempting to improve their tactical positions around Kharkiv City in unspecified locations.<sup>22</sup> Geolocated footage shows Russian soldiers in Rubizhne on the right bank of the Pechenihy Reservoir, and Russian news outlet *Izvestia* reported on August 21 that Ukrainian forces maintain positions 500 m from Rubizhne.<sup>23</sup> Russian forces conducted airstrikes on Pytomnyk (15 km north of Kharkiv City) and Saryi Saltiv and Verkhni Saltiv (both on the right bank of the Pechenihy Reservoir).<sup>24</sup> Russian forces continued shelling and UAV reconnaissance throughout the line of contact.<sup>25</sup>

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kharkiv as of August 22, 2022, 3:00 PM ET



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Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, and Daniel Mealie  
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- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Key Ukrainian Roads
- - - 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 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.

Note: We expanded assessed Russian advances further south over Dementiivka, Kharkiv Oblast, after observing geolocated footage posted on August 18 depicting Russian forces in the area. We expanded Russian advances to Velyka Komyshevakha in Kharkiv Oblast after observing geolocated footage from late July for the first time on August 8. Russian forces have likely been in Velyka Komyshevakha since late July. Ukrainian military officials confirmed on August 4 that Ukrainian forces liberated Mazanivka, Dmytrivka, and Dibrivne. Ukrainian General Staff Deputy Chief of Main Operational Department Oleksiy Gromov also stated on August 4 that Ukrainian forces entered Russian defensive lines in Sulyhivka and Brazhkvivka.

## **Supporting Effort #2—Southern Axis (Russian objective: Defend Kherson and Zaporizhia Oblasts against Ukrainian counterattacks)**

Russian forces conducted multiple assaults on the Mykolaiv-Kherson line and likely captured the frontline village of Blahodatne, Mykolaiv Oblast, approximately 35 km from Mykolaiv City, on August 22. Russian sources reported that Russian forces captured Blahodatne on August 22, and the Ukrainian General Staff seemingly confirmed these Russian claims, stating that Russian forces had unspecified “partial success” near Blahodatne.<sup>26</sup>

Ukrainian forces struck both road bridges across the Dnipro River in Kherson Oblast on August 21-22, likely rendering both unusable for heavy transport. Ukrainian Advisor to the Kherson Oblast Military Administration Head, Serhiy Khlan, claimed that Ukrainian forces again struck the Antonivsky road bridge as a Russian convoy was transporting ammunition across the bridge.<sup>27</sup> Russian sources claimed that the Ukrainian HIMARS strike damaged the roadbed and injured 15 construction workers who were repairing the bridge.<sup>28</sup> Images and footage of large fires on the Antonivsky road bridge are consistent with claims that Ukrainian strikes targeted explosives on the bridge.<sup>29</sup> Images from previous Ukrainian strikes across the Antonivsky bridge did not feature a fireball and smoke as this one did. Footage from before the strikes on August 21-22 shows Russian forces again using pontoon bridges and barges near Kherson City to transport supplies across the Dnipro River.<sup>30</sup> ISW has previously forecasted that Ukrainian forces would likely target such infrastructure with further HIMARS strikes.<sup>31</sup> ISW cannot currently verify reports that the Antonivsky road bridge collapsed after the Ukrainian strikes.<sup>32</sup> Footage posted on August 21-22 shows smoke rising from the Kakhovka Hydroelectric Power Plant (HPP) after Ukrainian forces reportedly struck the bridge on the evening of August 21.<sup>33</sup> Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian strikes damaged both the roadbed and HPP infrastructure.<sup>34</sup>

Russian and Ukrainian sources reported shelling at a thermal plant in Enerhodar, approximately 5 km from the Zaporizhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP). Geolocated footage posted on August 22 showed damaged water lines and a stalled car with a deceased driver after Russian forces reportedly shelled the thermal plant.<sup>35</sup> Enerhodar Mayor Dmytro Orlov denied Russian accusations that Ukrainian forces shelled the thermal plant from their positions in Nikopol, located across the Dnipro River from Russian-occupied positions in Zaporizhzhia Oblast.<sup>36</sup>

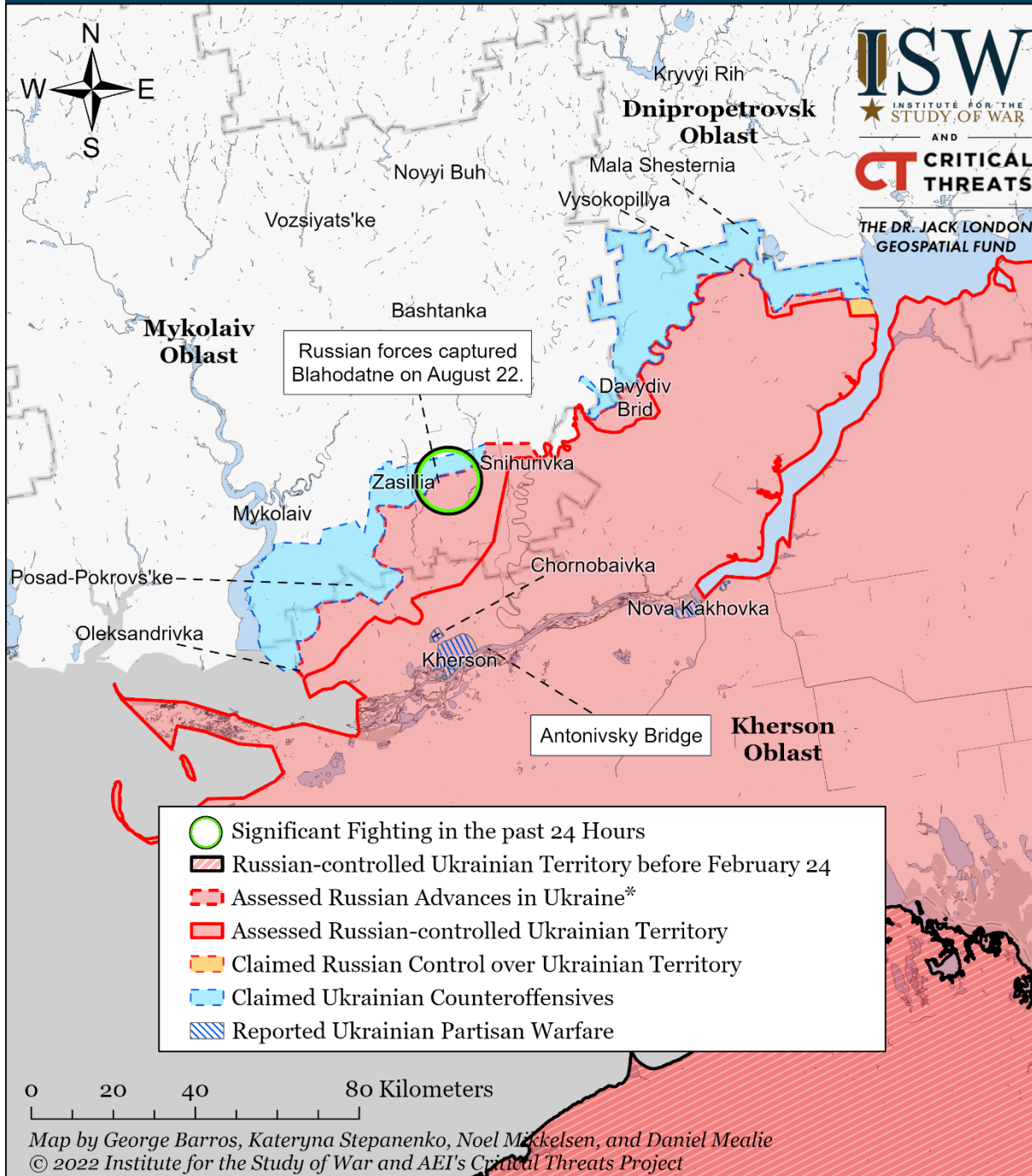
Russian forces continued focusing their efforts on maintaining occupied positions, preventing Ukrainian forces from advancing, and replenishing losses along the Southern Axis on August 22.<sup>37</sup> The Ukrainian Southern Operational Command reported that Russian forces continued conducting reconnaissance and are using aviation and missile weapons to launch remote strikes on Ukrainian positions along the frontline.<sup>38</sup> The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces carried out at least eight airstrikes, including near Bila Krynytsia and Andriivka, likely targeting the Ukrainian bridgehead and staging grounds near the Inhulets River.<sup>39</sup> Russian forces also continued using tank, tube, and rocket artillery to shell settlements along the frontline on the Southern Axis.<sup>40</sup>

Russian forces continued to target settlements in Dnipropetrovsk, Odesa, and Mykolaiv Oblasts with artillery and missile strikes on August 22. Ukrainian officials reported that Russian forces struck Zelendolsk with Uragan MLRS and shelled Nikopol and other settlements throughout Dnipropetrovsk.<sup>41</sup> Ukrainian officials also claimed that Russian forces launched two Kh-59 missiles from Su-35 aircraft toward an unspecified infrastructure facility in Odesa Oblast.<sup>42</sup> Russian sources claimed that Russian forces struck a bridge in the coastal settlement of Zatoka, south of the Dniester



Estuary.<sup>43</sup> The Ukrainian Southern Operational reported that Russian forces launched four S-300 missiles on Mykolaiv City at night on August 21-22 and continued shelling other settlements throughout Mykolaiv Oblast.<sup>44</sup>

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of August 22, 2022, 3:00 PM ET



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

Note: ISW reassessed Russian control of terrain around Snihurivka further south based on a geolocated footage published on August 20 that showed four Ukrainian servicemen conducting a raid in the northern part of the settlement. Kherson Oblast Administration Head Dmytro Butriy reported on August 2 that Ukrainian forces liberated an additional seven unnamed villages in Kherson Oblast. ISW will continue to monitor the situation and will update our maps when open sources name the liberated settlements.

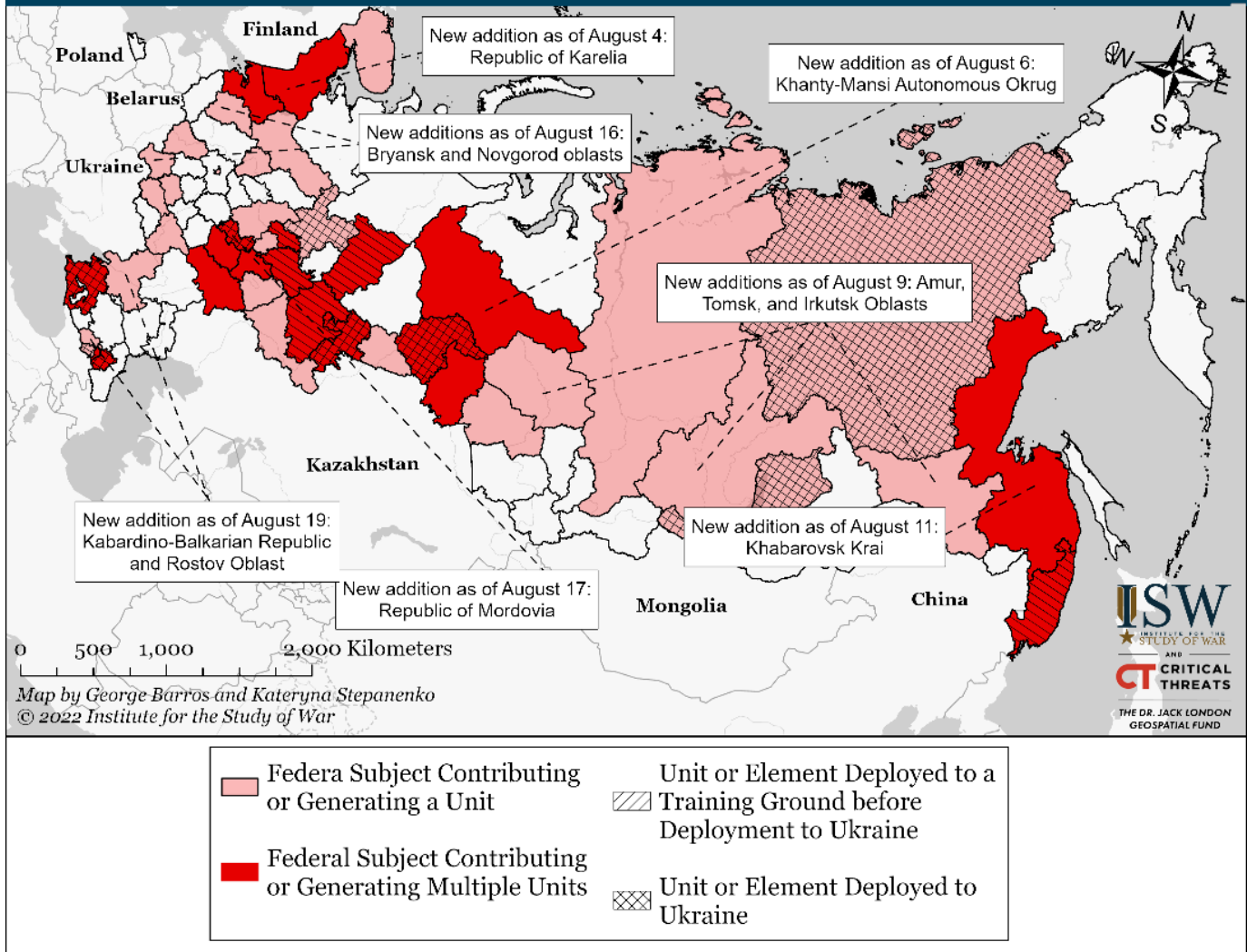
## **Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts (Russian objective: Expand combat power without conducting general mobilization)**

Ukrainian intelligence reported that the Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) will begin "general mobilization" proceedings on September 1. The Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) reported on August 22 that LNR Head Leonid Pasechnik announced the start of the first phase of general mobilization during a radiobroadcast in occupied Svatove, Luhansk Oblast.<sup>45</sup> The GUR noted that LNR officials will mobilize Ukrainian citizens who received Russian passports and satisfy military requirements during the first phase of the mobilization. The GUR also stated that the second phase will mobilize the rest of the male population aged 18 to 65. ISW could not locate the original radio broadcast in open sources and cannot independently verify this report. The LNR also claimed that it has not announced mobilization and is not engaged in covert mobilization on August 20.<sup>46</sup> The LNR previously announced a general mobilization on February 19 that conscripted all eligible men ages 18 to 55—both registered and not registered at the military recruitment centers—and reservists.<sup>47</sup> The LNR's previous February mobilization also prohibited men from leaving the territory of occupied Luhansk Oblast and transitioned the economy to a wartime mode. Pasechnik previously claimed that the LNR ended its active mobilization periods in late March.<sup>48</sup> Russian law allows the Russian military to activate both reservists and new conscripts during general mobilization, including those previously exempted from conscription.<sup>49</sup>

The GUR report, if true, could indicate that the LNR is unable to generate and motivate sufficient forces to continue fighting in Donetsk Oblast via recruitment drives or covert mobilization. The GUR previously reported that Russian forces are planning to call up 8,000 people from occupied territories in Ukraine.<sup>50</sup> Ukrainian officials have consistently reported that LNR authorities abduct men off the streets and even commit Russian mine workers to the frontlines.<sup>51</sup>

Russian federal subjects (regions) continued to form new volunteer units and recruit volunteers for Russian security services. Prymorsky Krai announced the formation of a new repair and service "Arsenievskiy" Volunteer Battalion on August 22.<sup>52</sup> The battalion will focus on evacuating damaged military equipment, repairing damaged equipment, and returning refurbished equipment to the frontlines. Kremlin-affiliated outlet *Kommersant* reported that the battalion had already recruited 140 out of 280 planned volunteers as of August 22.<sup>53</sup> Prymorsky Krai offered recruits ages 18 to 60 a one-time enlistment bonus of 300,000 rubles (about \$4,980) and monthly salaries of 200,000 rubles (about \$3,320). ISW has previously reported that Primorsky Krai is forming a naval infantry volunteer battalion "Tigr," but only offered 150,000 rubles (about \$2,490) as a one-time enlistment bonus.<sup>54</sup> The Republic of Buryatia increased its one-time enlistment bonus to 200,000 rubles (about \$3,320) instead of the originally promised 100,000 (about \$1,660).<sup>55</sup> ISW has previously reported that Republic of Tatarstan also increased its one-time recruitment bonus, and it is likely that these republics are increasing their enlistment bonuses due to lack of recruits.<sup>56</sup>

# Confirmed Russian Regions (Federal Subjects) Generating "Volunteer" Units to Fight in Ukraine as of August 22, 2022



The Kremlin likely ordered authorities of the Russian federal subjects to increase their advertisement of contract military service. Novosibirsk Mayor Anatoliy Lokot recorded a video encouraging locals to enlist in the Russian armed forces and posted the official recruitment announcement on the mayor's official website.<sup>57</sup> Novosibirsk outlet *NGS.RU* also reported that local officials distributed contract service ads to apartment building entrances throughout the city and posted identical recruitment information in different social media groups.<sup>58</sup> Tatarstan State Council Parliamentarian from the Russian Communist Party, Nikolay Atlasov, published an opinion piece discussing the linguistic benefits of volunteer battalions that are composed of ethnic personnel.<sup>59</sup> Atlasov's op-ed simultaneously advertised volunteer battalions that are currently forming in the ethnic republics of Chuvashia, Sakha (Yukutia), and Tatarstan. The Kremlin's aggressive advertisement campaign for contract service might generate some pushback from locals, as it significantly differs from the Russian portrayal of the war in Ukraine as a short-term "special military operation."<sup>60</sup>

**Activity in Russian-occupied Areas (Russian objective: consolidate administrative control of occupied areas; set conditions for potential annexation into the Russian Federation or some other future political arrangement of Moscow's choosing)**

Ukrainian civilians attacked a Russian soldier in occupied Melitopol overnight on August 21-22. Footage of the aftermath shows Russian soldiers carrying an injured soldier on a stretcher away from a crowd on the street.<sup>61</sup> Ukraine's Resistance Center reported that Ukrainian partisans attacked a Russian soldier who harassed an underage girl but did not specify the method or result of the attack.<sup>62</sup> Ukrainian sources also reported explosions and gunfire throughout Melitopol overnight on August 21-22.<sup>63</sup> Ukraine's Resistance Center reported that Ukrainian resistance activity is actively inhibiting occupation authorities' efforts to set conditions for a referendum in Kherson Oblast, causing unspecified preparation efforts in Henichensk, Kherson Oblast to fail.<sup>64</sup>

**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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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>; <https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/1951-refugee-convention.html>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/527246344.pdf>

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<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0j2nmPcVAkZbQDEqDEWG9bJD47zHf9AxZXQvdRfHezfBCMjfu54cQXW3JvdZJ3FVYI>; <https://t.me/syneubov/3963>

<sup>5</sup> <https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-august-21>

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<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0MTnfN3zpHDVBEWN6WiEwBJHJSoFz5DSwqmrNlyFywEVkTeU5kG7vMMvFcQgLTg8Vl>

<sup>7</sup> [https://t.me/kramatorsk\\_rada/5568](https://t.me/kramatorsk_rada/5568); <https://twitter.com/GirkinGirkin/status/1561728977072439297>;

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<sup>10</sup> [https://t.me/boris\\_rozhin/61108](https://t.me/boris_rozhin/61108);

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<sup>11</sup> [https://t.me/boris\\_rozhin/61108](https://t.me/boris_rozhin/61108)

<sup>12</sup> <https://twitter.com/johnsweeneyroar/status/1561382163886505984>

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<sup>14</sup> <https://t.me/rybar/37540>; [https://twitter.com/666\\_mancer/status/1561428771856683009](https://twitter.com/666_mancer/status/1561428771856683009); <https://t.me/horevica/5382>;

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<sup>16</sup> <https://t.me/rybar/37551>

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<sup>17</sup> [https://t.me/nm\\_dnr/8819](https://t.me/nm_dnr/8819); <https://t.me/RtrDonetsk/8574>; <https://twitter.com/neonhandrail/status/1561382439250849793>;

<https://twitter.com/PaulJawin/status/1561379028682117120>; [https://twitter.com/666\\_mancer/status/1561420077479522305](https://twitter.com/666_mancer/status/1561420077479522305)

<sup>18</sup> <https://twitter.com/Cosmonaut19/status/1561644080484220928>;

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<https://t.me/itsdonetsk/27135>; [https://twitter.com/666\\_mancer/status/1561590559088820224](https://twitter.com/666_mancer/status/1561590559088820224);

[https://t.me/kulemzin\\_donetsk/7396](https://t.me/kulemzin_donetsk/7396)

<sup>19</sup> <https://t.me/rybar/37540>; [https://twitter.com/666\\_mancer/status/1561594912814108672](https://twitter.com/666_mancer/status/1561594912814108672); <https://t.me/chatinDonetsk/590240>;

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<sup>23</sup> <https://twitter.com/rollowastaken/status/1561711838903115777>; [https://twitter.com/200\\_zoka/status/156141367798006785](https://twitter.com/200_zoka/status/156141367798006785);

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