

## Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, October 1, 2023

Angelica Evans, Nicole Wolkov, George Barros, Karolina Hird, and Frederick W. Kagan

October 1, 2023, 5:30pm ET

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

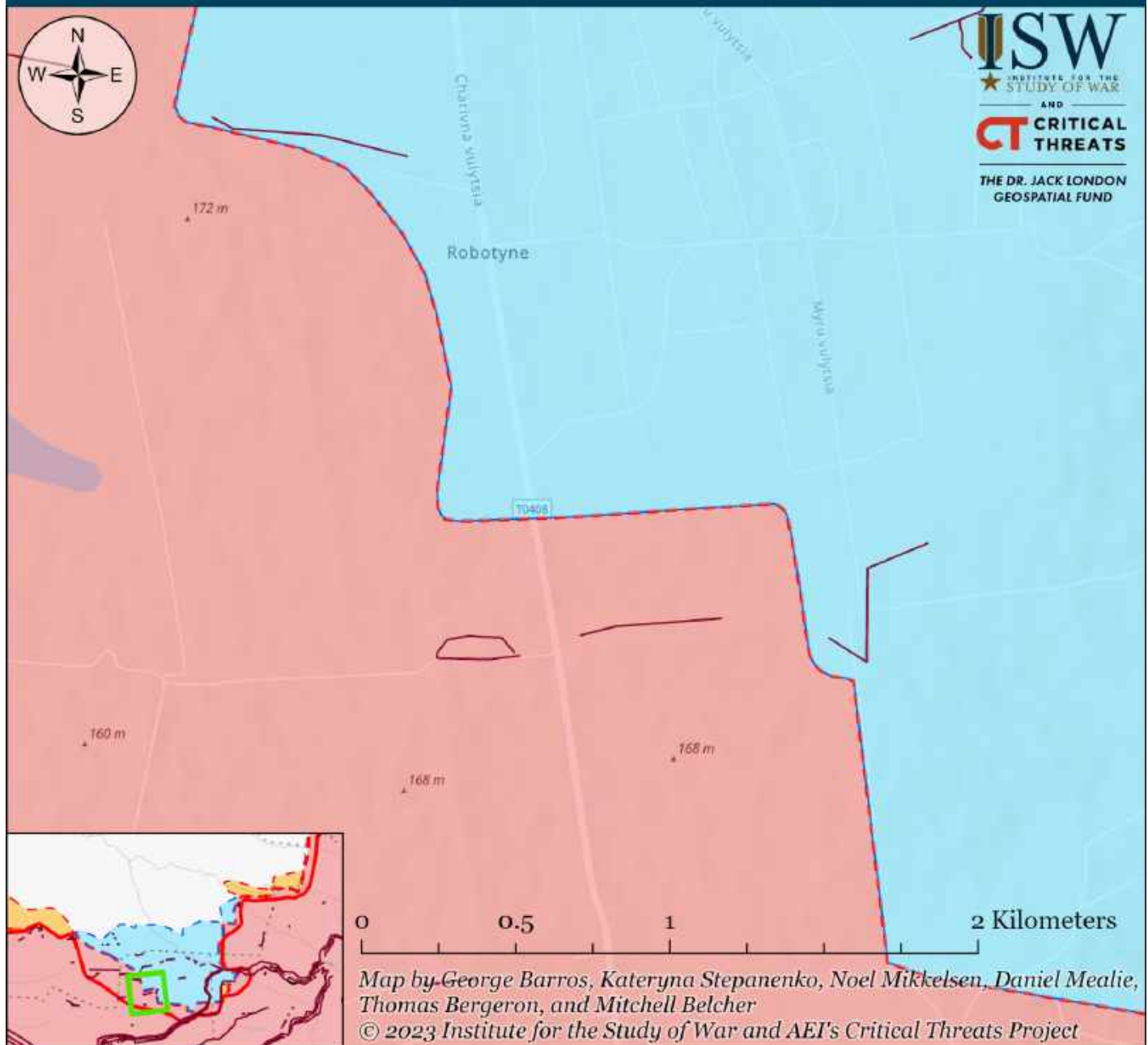
Click [here](#) to access ISW's archive of interactive time-lapse maps of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. These maps complement the static control-of-terrain map that ISW produces daily by showing a dynamic frontline. ISW will update this time-lapse map archive monthly.

**Note: The data cut-off for this product was 12:15pm ET on September 30. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the October 1 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.**

**Russian forces are conducting tactical counterattacks in the Robotyne area as part of their elastic defense against ongoing Ukrainian offensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast. The situation south of Robotyne is fluid as some tactically significant field fortifications have changed hands several times.** Geolocated footage posted on September 30 shows Ukrainian forces striking Russian troops trying to enter a trench system about 1km southwest of Robotyne near the T0408 Robotyne—Tokmak road.[1] Footage posted on September 13 shows that Ukrainian forces had previously occupied segments of this trench and thus appear to have lost it to Russian counterattacks between September 13 and 30.[2] ISW has recoded this area from Ukraine's counteroffensive to Russian advances.

A Ukrainian soldier analyzed the footage of the area and noted that the aforementioned Russian-controlled trench is a strongpoint in an interconnected system of trenches, firing systems, and dugouts that lie between Robotyne and Novoprokopivka.[3] The Ukrainian soldier noted that the trenches are connected by underground tunnel-like structures and that Russian forces are prioritizing the defense of these positions, which have tactical significance in the area between Robotyne and Novoprokopivka.[4] Geolocated footage posted on October 1 shows Russian forces striking a Ukrainian vehicle just south of the middle of the three trenches and about 1km west of the easternmost trench in the system, suggesting that Ukrainian forces control the easternmost trench and are attempting to push westward to recapture the remaining two trenches and connected dugouts and firing positions.[5] Commercially available satellite imagery indicates that Russian forces destroyed this vehicle between September 25 and 28, indicating that Russian forces repelled a Ukrainian attack and reconsolidated Russian positions near the trench systems in late September. The reported continued presence of Russian forces in the western and central trenches suggests that Russian forces have been conducting successful limited tactical counterattacks south of Robotyne and that the tactical situation in this area is complex and dynamic.

# Russian Field Fortifications South of Robotyne as of October 1, 2023



- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- 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.

**The Russian information space continues to falsely portray Western aid to Ukraine as escalatory in order to discourage continued Western support for Ukraine.** Newly appointed United Kingdom Defense Secretary Grant Shapps stated in an interview with the *Telegraph* published on September 30 that he held talks with unspecified (likely UK) “Army leaders” about moving “more training and production” of military equipment into Ukraine.[6] UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak walked back Shapps’ statement on October 1 and stated that the UK has no immediate plans to deploy military instructors to Ukraine.[7] Sunak clarified that it may be possible for the UK to conduct some training in the future in Ukraine but stated that the UK would not send British soldiers to fight in the “current conflict.”[8] Russian Security Council Deputy Chairperson Dmitry Medvedev, a notably nationalistic and extreme voice in the Russian government, called Shapps’ since-clarified statement a “push” toward a “third world war.”[9] Medvedev regularly voices alarmist rhetoric and continues to portray any Western aid to Ukraine as escalatory in an attempt to undermine Western military aid to Ukraine.[10] His comments are part of a long-running Russian information operation along these lines and do not mark any sort of inflection.

Several Russian milbloggers also expressed baseless paranoia in response to UK officials’ statements by claiming with no evidence at all that the UK intends to help train Ukrainian forces for future operations in Crimea.[11] The milbloggers’ claims are likely also a part of a Russian information operation intended to portray Western military aid and continued support for Ukraine as escalatory. Russian milbloggers have noted broad indicators such as Ukrainian strikes on military targets in Crimea and on Russian Black Sea Fleet (BSF) assets to suggest that western forces are currently aiding Ukrainian forces in preparations to launch military operations in Crimea.[12] Ukrainian strikes against Crimea and BSF assets are more likely part of Ukraine’s interdiction campaign assisting Ukrainian counteroffensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast.[13]

**The status of the Wagner Group remains unclear amid reported negotiations about the Wagner Group’s future cooperation with the Russian government.** The Wagner Group’s main combat elements are split across several countries, including Belarus, the Central African Republic, Libya, and Mali, and there is no clear unified leader for the Wagner Group.[14] Russian President Vladimir Putin publicly embraced former Wagner Group commander and current Ministry of Defense (MoD) employee Andrey Troshev on September 29 and stated that he and Troshev discussed how Troshev would be involved in the formation of new volunteer detachments that perform combat missions primarily in Ukraine.[15] Some Wagner group elements reacted negatively to Putin’s embrace of Troshev and have now put forward an alternative leader. A prominent Wagner-affiliated Telegram channel announced on October 1 that Yevgeny Prigozhin’s 25-year-old son Pavel Prigozhin has taken over “command” of the Wagner Group, and that Pavel Prigozhin is negotiating with Rosgvardia about having the Wagner Group rejoin combat operations in Ukraine.[16] The prominent Wagner-affiliated source reported that Wagner fighters would not have to sign contracts with the Russian MoD and that the Wagner Group would retain its name, symbols, ideology, commanders, management, and existing standard operating principles.[17] A Russian insider source claimed that Pavel Prigozhin is not an independent actor and is under the influence of Wagner Security Service head Mikhail Vatanin, indicating that some Wagner personnel are interested in rallying around a Prigozhin-linked alternative to the Kremlin- and MoD-aligned Troshev, even if that alternative is not an independent entity.[18] A different pro-Wagner source claimed on September 30 that Rosgvardia Head Viktor Zolotov is considering allowing Wagner Group elements to join Rosgvardia as a separate Wagner unit, though the Pavel Prigozhin camp has not commented specifically on how its branch of the Wagner Group may operate with Rosgvardia.[19] It is unclear what the Kremlin thinks the relationship(s) between Wagner elements and the Russian government are. Rosgvardia is directly subordinate to the Russian Presidential Administration, which makes Putin’s public embrace of Troshev and subordinating Wagner elements to the Russian MoD

noteworthy. The MoD would have to provide the equipment and supplies for a large, reconstituted force under Rosgvardia in any case, since Rosgvardia does not have the logistical infrastructure to do so on its own.

**ISW will revise its assessment about the prospects for the Wagner Group to reemerge as an effective military organization if the Wagner Group successfully reconstitutes as a large, unitary organization under Rosgvardia, the Russian MoD, or a similar organization.** ISW previously assessed that disjointed Wagner Group elements were unlikely to pose a serious military threat to Ukraine without bringing the full suite of effectiveness Wagner had as a unitary organization under Yevgeniy Prigozhin's and Dmitry Utkin's consolidated leadership. This initial assessment will be invalidated if the Wagner Group reestablishes itself as a coherent and large formation under the Russian government with effective centralized leadership.

**Russian forces conducted another series of drone strikes against Ukraine on the night of September 30 to October 1.** The Ukrainian General Staff reported on October 1 that Ukrainian air defenses downed 16 of 30 Shahed 131/136 drones that Russian forces launched.<sup>[20]</sup> Ukrainian Air Force Spokesperson Colonel Yuriy Ihnat stated that Shahed drones have a large power reserve and are highly accurate, which enables them to strike targets far from their launch points.<sup>[21]</sup> Ihnat stated that unspecified actors, likely Russian authorities and their allies, are working to make Shahed drones and other Russian weapons more resistant to electronic warfare and more difficult to down.<sup>[22]</sup> A Russian milblogger noted that Ihnat is likely referring to small noise-resistant Comet satellite signal receivers that Russian drone producers have begun installing on domestically produced Shahed drones.<sup>[23]</sup>

#### **Key Takeaways:**

- **Russian forces are conducting tactical counterattacks in the Robotyne area as part of their elastic defense against ongoing Ukrainian offensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast. The situation south of Robotyne is fluid as some tactically significant field fortifications have changed hands several times.**
- **The Russian information space continues to falsely portray Western aid to Ukraine as escalatory in order to discourage continued Western support for Ukraine.**
- **The status of the Wagner Group remains unclear amid reported negotiations about the Wagner Group's future cooperation with the Russian government.**
- **ISW will revise its assessment about the prospects for the Wagner Group to reemerge as an effective military organization if the Wagner Group successfully reconstitutes as a large, unitary organization under Rosgvardia, the Russian MoD, or a similar organization.**
- **Russian forces conducted another series of drone strikes against Ukraine on the night of September 30 to October 1.**
- **Russian forces continued offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Lyman line, near Bakhmut, along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line, in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area, and in western Zaporizhia Oblast and marginally advanced in western Zaporizhia Oblast.**
- **The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) officially announced the beginning of its regular fall 2023 conscription cycle on October 1.**

# Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of October 1, 2023, 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.

***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 Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine**

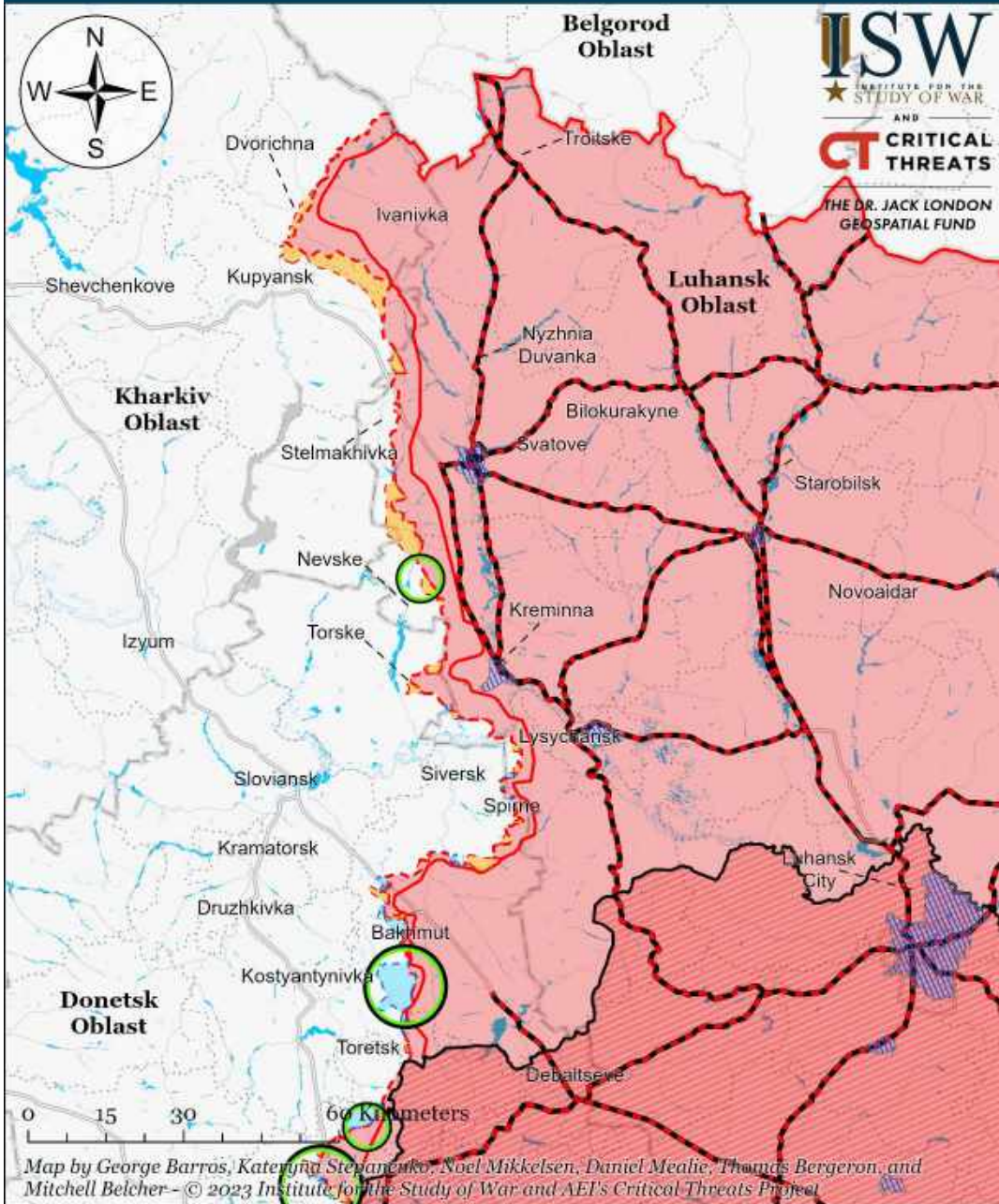
#### **Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Luhansk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and northern Donetsk Oblast)**

Russian sources claimed that Russian forces conducted limited ground attacks along the Kupyansk-Lyman line and made marginal advances between September 30 and October 1. A Russian milblogger claimed on September 30 that Russian forces made unspecified advances near Kyslivka (20km southeast of Kupyansk) and that fighting is ongoing near Petropavlivka (7km east of Kupyansk), Synkivka (9km northeast of Kupyansk), and Dvorichna (17km northeast of Kupyansk).[24] Another milblogger claimed that fighting occurred in the Serebryanske forest area (11km south of Kreminna) but that the intensity of fighting in the Luhansk direction has decreased over the past week.[25] Ukrainian Eastern Group of Forces Spokesperson Captain Ilya Yevlash stated on October 1, however, that no combat engagements occurred in the Kupyansk-Lyman direction.[26] Footage published on October 1 purportedly shows elements of the 7th Motorized Rifle Brigade (2nd Luhansk Army Corps) operating near Bilohorivka (10km south of Kreminna).[27]

The newly created Russian 25th Combined Arms Army (CAA) is reportedly fully staffed with over 17,000 personnel. Yevlash reported on October 1 that the 25th CAA has deployed south and west of Kreminna in order to replace the elements of the significantly degraded 41st Combined Arms Army (Central Military District) and 76th Airborne (VDV) Division.[28]

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted unsuccessful ground attacks near Kreminna on October 1. The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed on October 1 that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Dibrova (7km southwest of Kreminna) and in the Serebryanske forest area.[29] A Russian milblogger claimed on September 30 that Ukrainian forces regularly conduct unsuccessful attacks west of Kreminna to interfere with Russian operations on the bank of the Siverskyi Donets River near Bilohorivka, as well as near Torske (12km west of Kreminna) and Terny (17km west of Kreminna).[30]

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of October 1, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine\*
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Russian Ground Lines of Communication
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- 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.

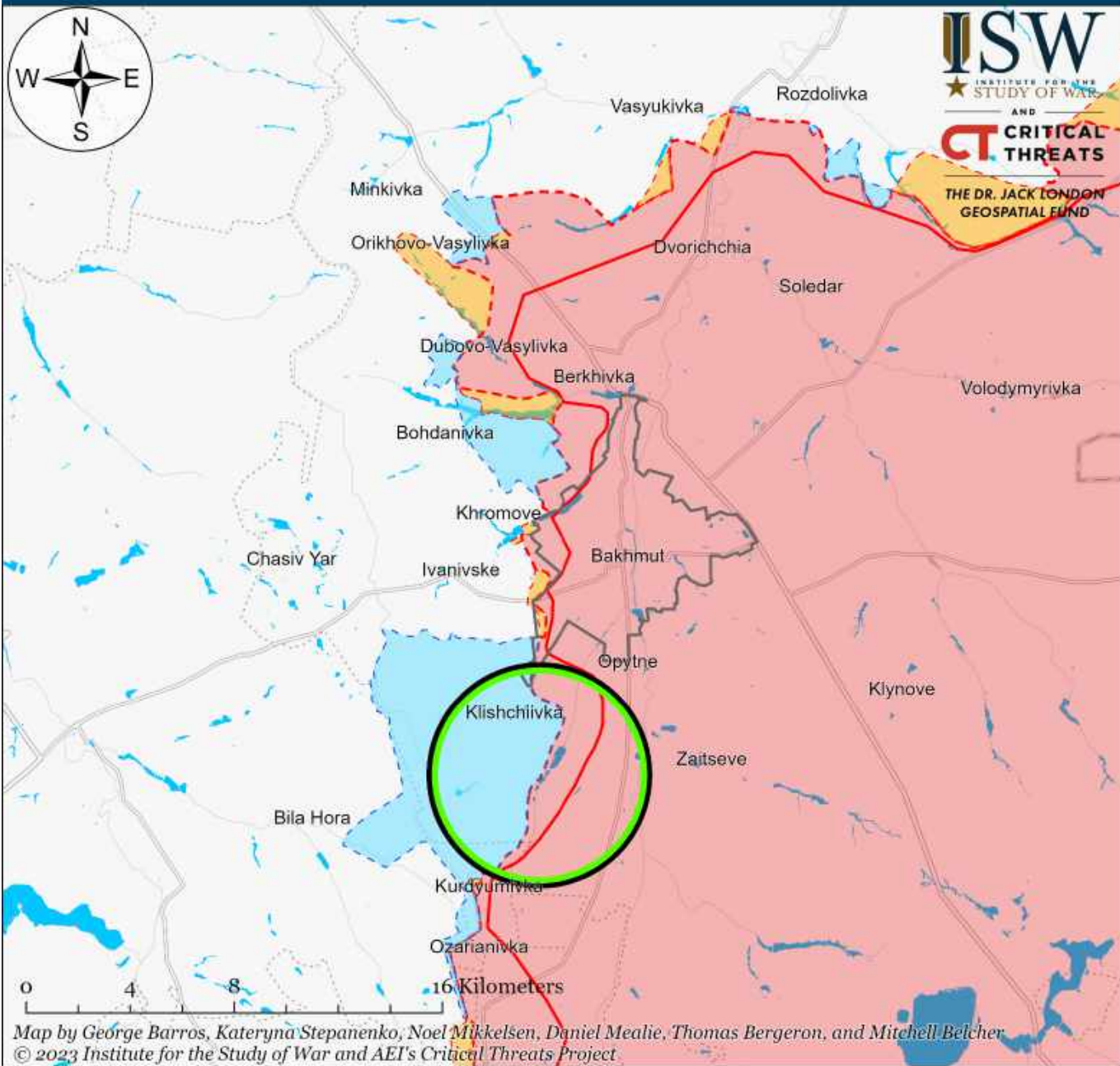
## **Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Donetsk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)**

Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations near Bakhmut on October 1 and have made confirmed marginal advances. Geolocated footage published on September 30 indicates that Ukrainian forces marginally advanced east of Andriivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut).[31] Additional geolocated footage published on October 1 indicates that Ukrainian forces marginally advanced northeast of Andriivka.[32] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) stated that elements of the Russian Southern Grouping of Forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut), Andriivka, and Kurdyumivka (13km southwest of Bakhmut).[33] Russian sources claimed on September 30 and October 1 that Ukrainian forces continued unsuccessful attempts to break through to the railway line near Klishchiivka and Andriivka.[34]

Russian forces continued offensive operations near Bakhmut on October 1 but did not make any confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks near Klishchiivka and Andriivka.[35] Ukrainian Eastern Group of Forces Spokesperson Ilya Yevlash stated on October 1 that Russian forces have concentrated over 10,000 personnel in Bakhmut itself.[36]



# Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of October 1, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



- Bakhmut City Limits
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine\*
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare

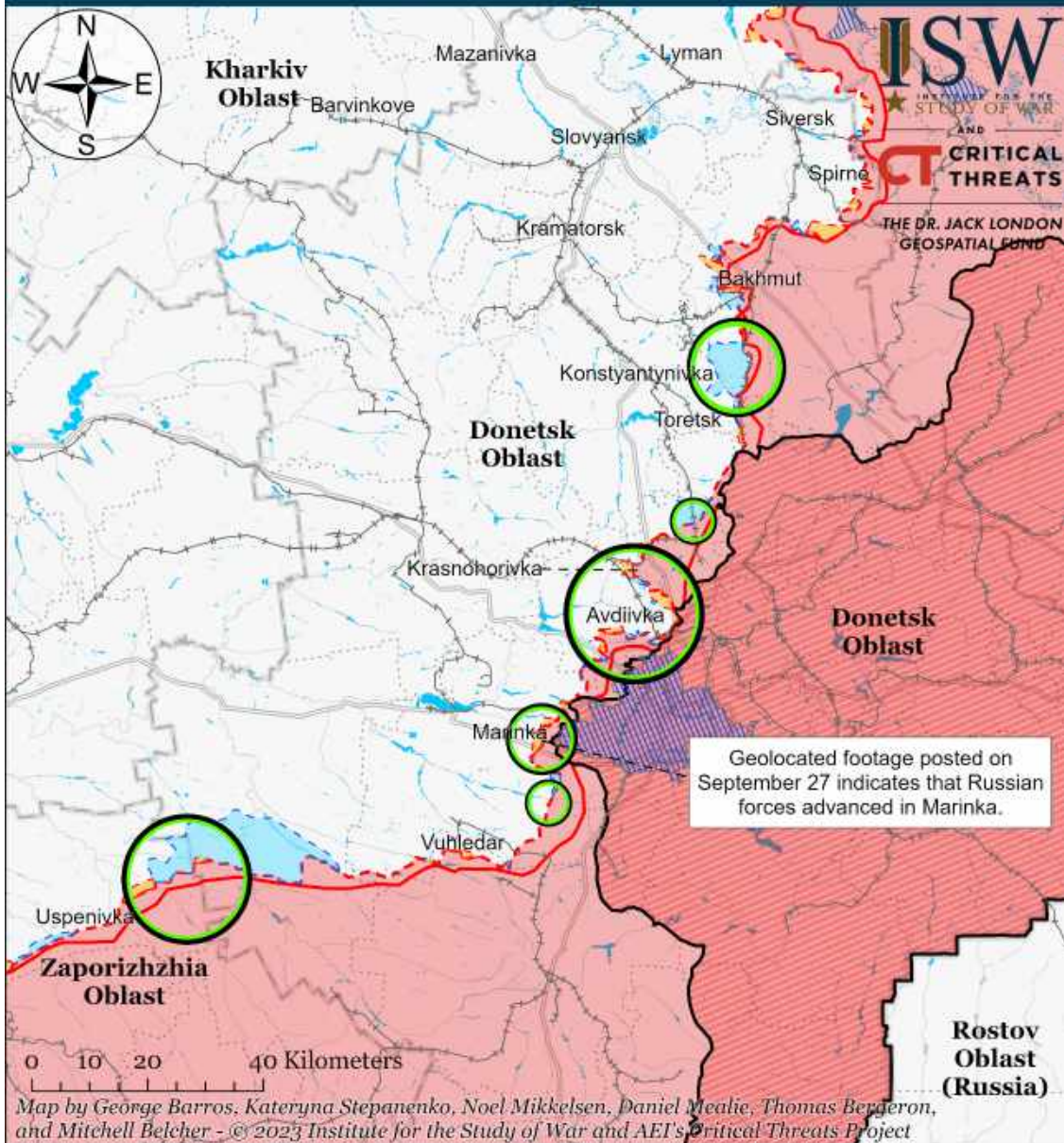
\* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Russian milbloggers claimed on September 30 and October 1 that Russian forces are counterattacking and holding defensive positions along the railway near Klishchiivka and Andriivka.[37] A Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed on October 1 that Russian forces also conducted unsuccessful attacks northeast of Klishchiivka.[38] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces completely control Kurdyumivka and claimed that control of Klishchiivka and Andriivka is contested as of September 30.[39] Another Russian milblogger claimed that fighting south of Bakhmut reminds him of the situation in Izyum in the fall of 2022 (alluding to Ukraine's Kharkiv Oblast counteroffensive) because the situation is very bad for both sides and "fraught with serious risks." [40] The milblogger noted that he does not think that the Bakhmut front will collapse as it did in Izyum in September 2022, however.[41] Russian sources claimed that Russian forces have established positions in the eastern part of Orikhovo-Vasylivka (10km northwest of Bakhmut) as of September 30.[42]

The Russian MoD claimed on October 1 that Russian forces repelled a Ukrainian attack near Krasnohorivka (8km northwest of Avdiivka).[43]

Russian forces continued ground attacks along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line on October 1 but did not make any confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks near Novoselivka (15km northeast of Avdiivka), Stepove (8km northwest of Avdiivka), Avdiivka, Vesele (on the northwestern outskirts of Donetsk City), Marinka (just southwest of Donetsk City), and Novomykhailivka (10km southwest of Donetsk City).[44] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces also conducted unsuccessful attacks near Sieverne (6km west of Avdiivka) and from Opytne (3km southwest of Avdiivka).[45] A Russian news aggregator claimed that Russian forces attacked south of Avdiivka on September 30.[46] Another Russian milblogger amplified footage on October 1 claiming to show elements of the Russian 9th Motorized Rifle Brigade (Donetsk People's Republic [DNR] 1st Army Corps) operating in the Avdiivka direction.[47] Yet another Russian milblogger posted footage on September 30 claiming to show elements of the Russian 1453rd Regiment (1st Slavic Brigade, DNR 1st Army Corps) operating near Avdiivka.[48]

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of October 1, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

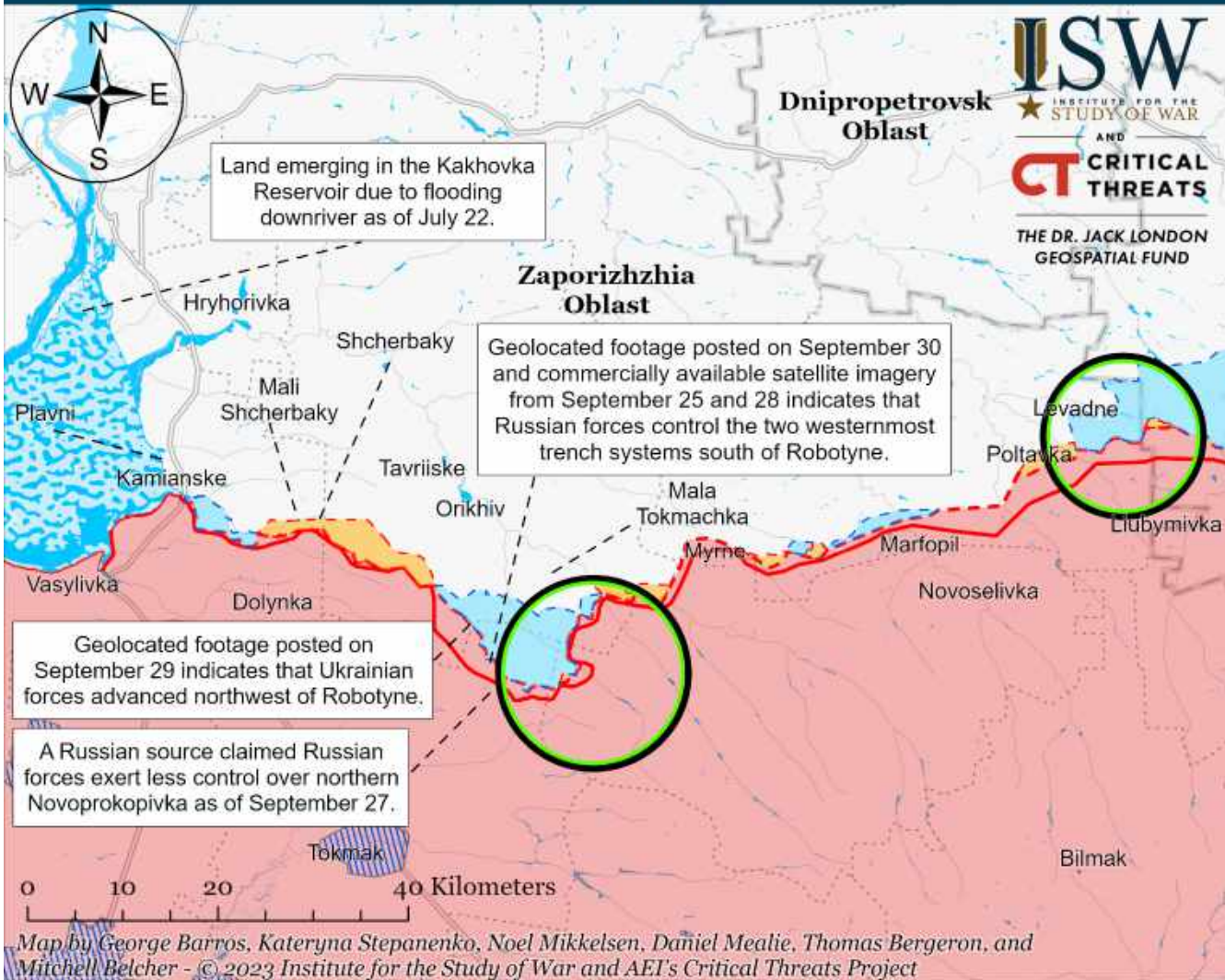


	Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours		Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory		Major Railroads
	Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24		Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory		Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
	Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*		Claimed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

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

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

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhzhia as of October 1, 2023, 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
- Emerging land in the Kakhovka Reservoir
- 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.

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted unsuccessful limited offensive operations in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on October 1. The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Russian forces repelled four Ukrainian attacks near Pryyutne (16km southwest of Velyka Novosilka).[49] A Russian milblogger claimed that the intensity of Ukrainian attacks in this area has significantly decreased as of September 30.[50] The milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces are rotating and replenishing units in preparation to possibly resume attacks near Pryyutne and Novomayorske (18km southeast of Velyka Novosilka).[51]

Russian forces conducted counterattacks in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area and reportedly restored some lost positions on October 1. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks near Novodarivka (15km south of Velyka Novosilka).[52] A Kremlin-affiliated Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces conducted successful counterattacks from Pryyutne and restored lost positions.[53] The milblogger claimed that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful counterattacks in the direction of Staromayorske (9km south of Velyka Novosilka).[54] A Russian news aggregator claimed that Russian forces achieved unspecified success during offensive operations near Pryyutne and counterattacks from Urozhaine (9km south of Velyka Novosilka) on September 30.[55]

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around the Vremivka Salient as of October 1, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



**ISW**  
INSTITUTE FOR THE  
STUDY OF WAR  
AND  
**CRITICAL  
THREATS**  
THE DR. JACK LONDON  
GEOSPATIAL FUND

Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, and Mitchell Belcher - © 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

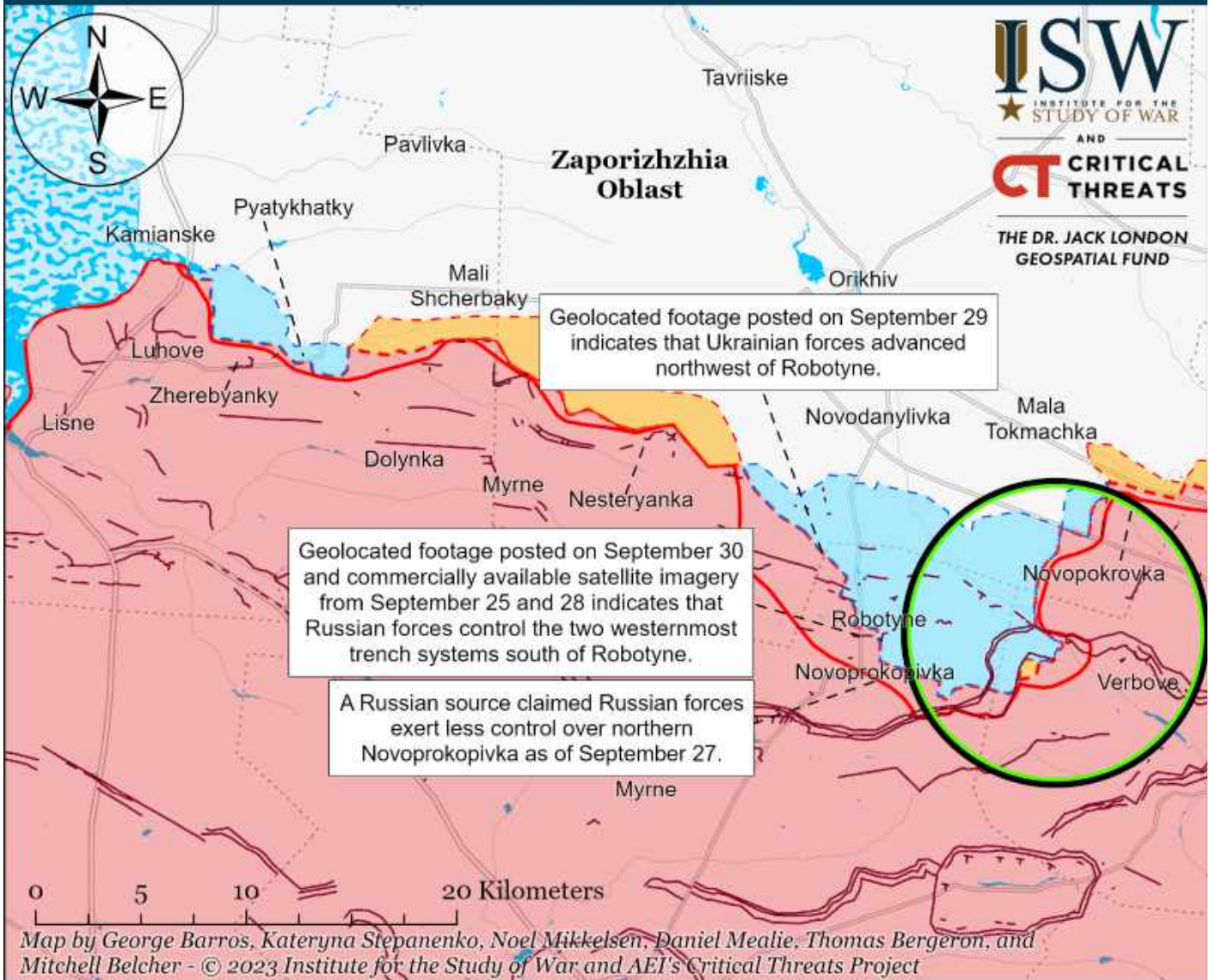
- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine\*
- Claimed Ukrainian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

Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast on October 1 and made confirmed marginal gains near Robotyne. Geolocated footage published on September 29 indicates that Ukrainian forces marginally advanced northwest of Robotyne (13km south of Orikhiv).[56] The Russian MoD claimed that Russian forces repelled two Ukrainian attacks in the direction of Robotyne and Verbove (18km southeast of Orikhiv).[57] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces have reduced the intensity of their attacks near Orikhiv and are rotating forces in preparation for resumed attacks in this direction.[58] A Russian news aggregator claimed that Ukrainian forces continued unsuccessful attacks near Verbove and Novopokrovka (16km southeast of Orikhiv) on September 30.[59] Another Russian milblogger claimed on October 1 that Russian and Ukrainian forces skirmished near Novofedorivka (21km southeast of Orikhiv).[60] A Russian milblogger claimed that elements of the Russian 56th Guards Air Assault (VDV) Regiment (7th Guards VDV Division) repelled Ukrainian attacks near Novofedorivka.[61] Another Russian milblogger posted footage on September 30 claiming to show elements of the Russian 108th VDV Regiment (7th VDV Division) repelling Ukrainian attacks near Verbove.[62] A Kremlin-affiliated Russian milblogger claimed that Russian and Ukrainian forces skirmished near Bilohiria (15km southeast of Orikhiv).[63]

Russian forces conducted limited counterattacks in western Zaporizhia Oblast on October 1 and marginally advanced near Robotyne. Geolocated footage published on September 30 indicates that Russian forces marginally advanced south of Robotyne.[64] Additional geolocated footage published on September 29 indicates that Russian forces marginally advanced northwest of Verbove.[65] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks near Novodarivka and Verbove.[66] Russian sources claimed that Russian forces counterattacked near Novoprokopivka (13km south of Orikhiv) and from Verbove but did not specify an outcome.[67] Russian milbloggers posted footage on October 1 claiming to show elements of the Russian 177th Naval Infantry Regiment (Caspian Sea Flotilla) operating near Dorozhnianka (34km east of Orikhiv).[68]

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Pyatykhatky and Robotyne as of October 1, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, and Mitchell Belcher - © 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| 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 | Emerging land in the Kakhovka Reservoir |
| Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*                     | 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.



Russian forces struck Kherson Oblast with guided aerial bombs overnight on September 30 – October 1. Ukrainian Southern Operational Command Spokesperson Captain First Rank Nataliya Humenyuk stated on October 1 that Russian forces launched 16 guided aerial bombs at Kherson Oblast and targeted residential and agricultural infrastructure.<sup>[69]</sup> The Kherson Oblast Administration noted that two guided aerial bombs struck a residential quarter in the Beryslav area in the afternoon of October 1.<sup>[70]</sup> A Russian milblogger posted footage of Russian Aerospace Forces (VKS) dropping a FAB-500 aerial bomb on Ukrainian positions on an island in the Dnipro River delta.<sup>[71]</sup>

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of October 1, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, and Mitchell Belcher - © 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

\* 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 sources claimed that Ukraine fired two “Hrim-2” missiles at occupied Crimea on October 1. The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Russian air defense shot down two “Hrim-2” missiles over Dzhankoy, and that some debris fell on the Dzhankoy area.[72] The Ukrainian Resistance Center noted that Russian forces are transferring air defense equipment to Simferopol, likely in an effort to further augment Russian air defense capabilities in occupied Crimea.[73]

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

The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) officially announced the beginning of its regular fall 2023 conscription cycle on October 1.[74] The Russian MoD announced that Russian authorities will call up 130,000 conscripts who will train with formations for five months, and then be assigned to their units.[75] The MoD explicitly stated that conscripts will not deploy to occupied Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhia, or Kherson oblasts or participate in combat operations in Ukraine.[76] Ukrainian Luhansk Oblast Head Artem Lysohor noted on October 1 that Russian authorities are also conscripting people in occupied Ukraine.[77] Russian authorities are steadily increasing penalties for ignoring conscription notices: Russian authorities increased fines for ignoring a summons from 3,000 to 30,000 rubles (\$31 to \$310), introduced new fine up to 500,000 rubles (\$5,181) for organizations that do not provide enlistment offices information to issue summons, and banned summoned conscripts from leaving Russia.[78]

Russian military administrators continue facing problems granting benefits to fighters of irregular units due to their informal status under Russian law. The Vostok Battalion claimed on October 1 that an irregular unit, likely referring to the Donetsk People's Republic's “Kaskad” formation, did not receive state awards for its participation in combat when other regular units did because the unit formation exists outside of Russia’s “legal framework” as a relic from when the Donetsk People’s Republic (DNR) was not officially part of the Russian Federation.[79] The Vostok Battalion complained that the unit’s personnel cannot receive combat veterans benefits despite serving as part of a frontline unit, whereas noncombatant Russian National Guard personnel did receive benefits when performing security duties in the rear.[80]

A Kremlin-linked milblogger complained that the attritional fighting and a lack of infantry have degraded formerly “elite” Russian Spetsnaz, Airborne Forces, and Naval Infantry units into “ordinary trash.”[81] The source stated that these units used to be elite prior to Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine but that the Russian military has turned all their forces into infantry because there is a great need for infantry.[82] The source acknowledged that there is a lack of Russian infantry but argued that the Russian military should consider how to improve the quality of Russia’s regular infantry and then think about how to employ elite forces more appropriately instead of using elite forces as a stopgap for regular infantry’s short fallings for convenience's sake.[83]

### **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)**

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)**

Wagner Group trainers in Belarus may have provided Belarusian territorial defense elements captured Ukrainian vehicles for tactical training. The Belarusian Ministry of Defense (MoD) posted photos on September 25 showing Belarusian Mogilev territorial defense forces using a Ukrainian-made KrAZ Cobra vehicle (very likely captured from Ukrainian forces) at the Osipovichi Training Ground.[84] A Russian source hypothesized that Russian forces may have given the captured vehicle to Belarus following the withdrawal from Kyiv in early 2022 or Wagner Group forces used it in training following their relocation to Belarus.[85]

**ISW will continue to report daily observed Russian and Belarusian military activity in Belarus as part of ongoing Kremlin efforts to increase their control over Belarus and other Russian actions in Belarus.**

**Note: ISW does not receive any classified material from any source, uses only publicly available information, and draws extensively on Russian, Ukrainian, and Western reporting and social media as well as commercially available satellite imagery and other geospatial data as the basis for these reports. References to all sources used are provided in the endnotes of each update.**

POWERED BY:  BABELSTREET

---

[1] <https://twitter.com/solonko1648/status/1708204916299170013?t=ErUgFzMKdHB...>

[2] <https://twitter.com/moklasen/status/1702000252813824344>; [https://t.me/dva\\_majors/25431](https://t.me/dva_majors/25431)

[3] <https://twitter.com/solonko1648/status/1708204916299170013>

[4] <https://twitter.com/solonko1648/status/1708204916299170013>

[5] <https://twitter.com/VigorousFalcon/status/1708512338754908493>; [https://t.me/ZA\\_FROHT/22409](https://t.me/ZA_FROHT/22409)

[6] <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2023/09/30/grant-shapps-to-send-uk-...>  
<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2023/09/30/grant-shapps-interview-m...>

[7] <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/uk-aims-offer-military-training-inside-ukraine-minister-says-2023-09-30/>

[8] <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/uk-aims-offer-military-training-ins...>

[9] [https://t.me/medvedev\\_telegram/391](https://t.me/medvedev_telegram/391)

[10] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-30-2023> ;  
<https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-july-3-2023>

[11] <https://t.me/NeoficialniyBeZsonoV/29667> ; [https://t.me/voin\\_dv/5247](https://t.me/voin_dv/5247)

[12] [https://t.me/rusich\\_army/11087](https://t.me/rusich_army/11087) ; [https://t.me/voin\\_dv/5247](https://t.me/voin_dv/5247) ; <https://t.me/rybar/52526>

[13] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-august-17-2023> ;  
<https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-22-2023> ;  
<https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-22-2023> ;  
<https://isw.pub/UkrWar081423>

[14] <https://t.me/vchkogpu/42164>

[15] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-29-2023> ;  
<http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/72391>

[16] [https://t.me/prigozhin\\_2023\\_tg/3850](https://t.me/prigozhin_2023_tg/3850)

[17] [https://t.me/prigozhin\\_2023\\_tg/3850](https://t.me/prigozhin_2023_tg/3850)

[18] <https://t.me/vchkogpu/42162>

[19] [https://t.me/prigozhin\\_2023\\_tg/3850](https://t.me/prigozhin_2023_tg/3850)

[20] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02bQ4TcbgQb5i4rMCzmcidLwqTf5xQwYRS8FLz5JhQXTFYaCVMxZB1FFb2PETpqpV8l> ;  
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02mSG1M2Awj1CaEND3JPUEoMSBeejTs6g64qzso7MxKAxisAmhWPXpKBMxxhe24QFgl>

[21] <https://suspilne.media/584315-ignat-poasniv-comu-ne-zavzdi-vdaetsa-zbiti-vsi-sahedi/>

[22] <https://suspilne.media/584315-ignat-poasniv-comu-ne-zavzdi-vdaetsa-zbiti-vsi-sahedi/>

[23] <https://t.me/milinfoolive/107353>

[24] [https://t.me/boris\\_rozhin/98979](https://t.me/boris_rozhin/98979) ; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/50912>

[25] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15389>

[26] <https://armyinform.com.ua/2023/10/01/vorog-zoseredyv-u-bahmuti-ponad-10-tysyach-zhyvoyi-syly-illya-yevlash/> ; <https://t.me/luhanskaVTSA/13979>

[27] <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/53982>

[28] <https://armyinform.com.ua/2023/10/01/vorog-zoseredyv-u-bahmuti-ponad-10-tysyach-zhyvoyi-syly-illya-yevlash/> ; <https://t.me/luhanskaVTSA/13979>

[29] [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/31036](https://t.me/mod_russia/31036)

[30] [https://t.me/boris\\_rozhin/98979](https://t.me/boris_rozhin/98979) ; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/50912>

[31] <https://twitter.com/franfran2424/status/1708201819237658797>

[32] <https://twitter.com/VigorousFalcon/status/1708527006152028289> ;  
<https://twitter.com/VigorousFalcon/status/1708527383912022383> ;

[33] [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/31036](https://t.me/mod_russia/31036)

[34] <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/53946> ; <https://t.me/sashakots/42508> ; <https://t.me/readovkanews/66934>

[35] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoWSqcJodJQbZPEv6BGTP32Jkq7SbUR7pY7n6EafVJBFSGpq3Vz94KHCz5caj3tgsSl> ;  
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2bQ4TcbgQb5i4rMCzmcidLwqTf5xQwYRS8FLz5JhQXTFYaCVMxZB1FFb2PETppqV8l>

[36] [https://armyinform.com\\_dot\\_ua/2023/10/01/vorog-zoseredyv-u-bahmuti-ponad-10-tysyach-zhyvoyi-syly-illya-yevlash/](https://armyinform.com_dot_ua/2023/10/01/vorog-zoseredyv-u-bahmuti-ponad-10-tysyach-zhyvoyi-syly-illya-yevlash/)

[37] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15389> ; [https://t.me/boris\\_rozhin/98979](https://t.me/boris_rozhin/98979) ; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/50912>

[38] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15380>

[39] [https://t.me/boris\\_rozhin/98979](https://t.me/boris_rozhin/98979) ; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/50912>

[40] [https://t.me/philologist\\_zov/558](https://t.me/philologist_zov/558)

[41] [https://t.me/philologist\\_zov/558](https://t.me/philologist_zov/558)

[42] [https://t.me/boris\\_rozhin/98979](https://t.me/boris_rozhin/98979) ; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/50912> ; <https://t.me/readovkanews/66934>

[43] [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/31036](https://t.me/mod_russia/31036)

[44] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2bQ4TcbgQb5i4rMCzmcidLwqTf5xQwYRS8FLz5JhQXTFYaCVMxZB1FFb2PETppqV8l> ;  
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoWSqcJodJQbZPEv6BGTP32Jkq7SbUR7pY7n6EafVJBFSGpq3Vz94KHCz5caj3tgsSl>

[45] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15380>

[46] <https://t.me/readovkanews/66934>

[47] [https://t.me/boris\\_rozhin/99045](https://t.me/boris_rozhin/99045)

[48] <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/53936>

[49] [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/31036](https://t.me/mod_russia/31036) ; [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/31032](https://t.me/mod_russia/31032)

[50] [https://t.me/boris\\_rozhin/98979](https://t.me/boris_rozhin/98979)

[51] [https://t.me/boris\\_rozhin/98979](https://t.me/boris_rozhin/98979)

[52] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2bQ4TcbgQb5i4rMCzmcidLwqTf5xQwYRS8FLz5JhQXTFYaCVMxZB1FFb2PETppqV8l>

[53] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15389>

[54] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15380>

[55] <https://t.me/readovkanews/66934>

[56] [https://twitter.com/auditor\\_ya/status/1708211617052180828](https://twitter.com/auditor_ya/status/1708211617052180828); <https://t.me/BOBRMORF/273>;  
<https://t.me/BOBRMORF/272>

[57] [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/31036](https://t.me/mod_russia/31036)

[58] [https://t.me/boris\\_rozhin/98979](https://t.me/boris_rozhin/98979)

[59] <https://t.me/readovkanews/66934>

[60] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15380>

[61] [https://t.me/vdv\\_ZA\\_teplinsky/459](https://t.me/vdv_ZA_teplinsky/459)

[62] <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/53945>

[63] <https://t.me/rybar/52540>

[64] <https://t.me/combatfootageua/7505>; [https://t.me/kiber\\_boroshno/4293](https://t.me/kiber_boroshno/4293);  
<https://twitter.com/solonko1648/status/1708204916299170013?t=ErUgFzMKdHB...>

[65] <https://twitter.com/moklasen/status/1708504293332988017>; <https://t.me/molotgryup/284>

[66]  
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0WSqcJodJQbZPEv6BGTP32Jkq7SbUR7pY7n6EafVJBFSGpq3Vz94KHCz5caj3tgsSl>

[67] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15380> ; <https://t.me/polk1430/1211>

[68] <https://t.me/IronHelmets/1685> ; [https://t.me/voin\\_dv/5238](https://t.me/voin_dv/5238)

[69] <https://armyinform.com> dot ua/2023/10/01/cziyeyi-nochi-po-hersonshhyni-vorog-vypustyv-16-kerovanyh-aviaczijnyh-bomb-nataliya-gumenyuk/

[70] <https://t.me/khersonskaODA/10766>

[71] <https://t.me/milinfohive/107362>

[72] [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/31035](https://t.me/mod_russia/31035); <https://t.me/Aksenov82/3190> ; <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/53971> ;  
[https://t.me/russkiy\\_opolchenec/38166](https://t.me/russkiy_opolchenec/38166) ; <https://t.me/rsotmdivision/10921> ; <https://t.me/vchkogpu/42176>

[73] <https://sprotyv.mod.gov> dot ua/okupanty-posylyuyut-oboronu-tymchasovo-okupovanogo-krymu/

[74] [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/31015](https://t.me/mod_russia/31015)

[75] [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/31015](https://t.me/mod_russia/31015)

[76] [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/31015](https://t.me/mod_russia/31015)

[77] <https://t.me/luhanskaVTSA/13966>

[78] <https://t.me/sotaproject/67273>

[79] [https://t.me/batalyon\\_vostok/204](https://t.me/batalyon_vostok/204)

[80] [https://t.me/batalyon\\_vostok/204](https://t.me/batalyon_vostok/204)

[81] [https://t.me/Sladkov\\_plus/8668](https://t.me/Sladkov_plus/8668)

[82] [https://t.me/Sladkov\\_plus/8668](https://t.me/Sladkov_plus/8668)

[83] [https://t.me/Sladkov\\_plus/8668](https://t.me/Sladkov_plus/8668)

[84] <https://t.me/modmilby/32351>

[85] <https://t.me/milinfoive/107316>



# Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, September 30, 2023

Nicole Wolkov, Christina Harward, Angelica Evans,  
Riley Bailey, and Frederick W. Kagan

September 30, 2023, 5:15pm 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 12:15pm ET on September 30. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the October 1 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.**

**Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast and near Bakhmut on September 30.** The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Melitopol direction (western Zaporizhia Oblast) and near Bakhmut.[1] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted unsuccessful ground attacks near Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut), Andriivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut), Robotyne (10km south of Orikhiv), Novoprokopivka (13km south of Orikhiv), and Verbove (18km southeast of Orikhiv).[2] A fringe Russian milblogger reportedly affiliated with the Russian Airborne (VDV) forces implicitly recanted claims from September 24 that Ukrainian forces occupy half of Verbove (18km southeast of Orikhiv).[3] The fringe milblogger claimed on September 29 that elements of the 7th Guards VDV Division still hold Verbove despite suffering losses.[4]

**The Kremlin has seemingly not yet clarified what Ukrainian territories it claims that Russia has annexed, leading to continued confusion among Russian government and occupation officials a year after the illegal annexation of occupied territories.** Russian President Vladimir Putin gave a speech in honor of the so-called “Day of Reunification of the Donetsk People’s Republic, Luhansk People’s Republic, Zaporizhia, and Kherson Oblasts with Russia” on September 30 in which he reiterated boilerplate rhetoric about the international legitimacy of the illegal Russian annexation referenda, the West’s alleged role in starting the war in Ukraine, and the unity between Russia and occupied Ukraine.[5] Sevastopol occupation governor Mikhail Razvozhayev posted a map on his Telegram channel in honor of the holiday that showed the entirety of Crimea and Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhia, and Kherson oblasts as Russian territory.[6] The Kherson Oblast occupation administration posted a different map that showed Russian territory roughly extending to the current frontlines in the four most recently annexed territories.[7] Russian Security Council Deputy Chairperson Dmitry Medvedev, a notable nationalistic and extreme voice in the Russian government, ambiguously claimed that the war in Ukraine will continue until “the original Russian territories are liberated.”[8] Medvedev’s unclear statement and occupation officials’ disparate maps indicate that the Kremlin has yet to clarify what territories it claims to have annexed or intends to annex.

**Russian forces conducted a series of drone strikes primarily targeting Vinnytsia Oblast on the night of September 29 to 30.** Ukrainian military sources reported on September 30 that Ukrainian forces downed 30 out of 40 Shahed-131/136 drones that Russian forces launched from occupied Crimea.[9] Ukrainian Southern Operational Command Spokesperson Captain First Rank Nataliya Humenyuk stated that Russian forces struck an infrastructure facility in Vinnytsia Oblast.[10] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian drones struck a Ukrainian military arsenal near Kalynivka (22km north of Vinnytsia) in Vinnytsia Oblast.[11] Russian sources also claimed that Russian drones struck Ukrainian port infrastructure in Odesa and Mykolaiv oblasts on the night of September 29 to 30.[12] The Romanian Ministry of Defense (MoD) stated that its radar systems indicated a possible unauthorized entry into Romanian airspace during the Russian strike series on the night of September 29 to 30.[13] The Romanian MoD stated that Romanian authorities have not yet identified any objects that may have fallen into Romanian territory.[14]

**Russian milbloggers claimed on September 30 that the Russian military command removed the commander of the Russian 205th Motorized Rifle Brigade following recent outrage from milbloggers about the brigade's command.**[15] The same group of Russian milbloggers extensively amplified reports about elements of the 205th Separate Motorized Rifle Brigade (49th Combined Arms Army, Southern Military District) suffering significant losses due to inadequate artillery support and poor leadership in the Kherson direction in late August.[16] One of the Russian milbloggers stated on September 30 that the removal of this commander is a “rare case” in which truth and justice prevailed.[17] The removal of the commander suggests that Russian ultranationalist outrage may still be able to pressure the Russian military command despite the apparent decline in such reactions in the wider Russian information space since the Wagner Group's June 24 rebellion.

**An organization with alleged ties to Russian First Deputy Presidential Chief of Staff Sergey Kiriyenko is reportedly categorizing Russian internet user data in an effort to disseminate tailored information to specific domestic populations as part of a wider attempt to control the Russian information space.** Independent Belarusian outlet *Vot Tak* reported on September 29 that Russian non-profit organization Dialog is gathering Russian internet user data and information from Russian government agencies in order to categorize Russian media consumers and then feed tailored narratives to specific categories of users.[18] A former employee of Dialog told *Vot Tak* that Dialog's database categorizes internet users by profession, interests, and political beliefs and specifically orients false news about the war in Ukraine and pro-war narratives toward Russian military personnel, relatives of military personnel, and civil servants.[19] The former Dialog employee also claimed that Dialog categorizes internet users as “loyal” and “disloyal” and shares its information with Russian security services.[20] The former Dialog employee claimed that Dialog has failed to make a significant ideological impact on the Russian information space because Dialog could not produce unified and clear narratives.[21] Dialog's efforts to promote narratives to specific Russian populations are likely a more subtle part of the Kremlin's effort to control the Russian information space and commensurate with the Kremlin's more overt efforts to promote self-censorship.

### **Key Takeaways:**

- **Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast and near Bakhmut on September 30.**

- **The Kremlin has seemingly not yet clarified what Ukrainian territories it claims that Russia has annexed, leading to continued confusion among Russian government and occupation officials a year after the illegal annexation of occupied territories.**
- **Russian forces conducted a series of drone strikes primarily targeting Vinnytsia Oblast on the night of September 29 to 30.**
- **Russian milbloggers claimed on September 30 that the Russian military command removed the commander of the Russian 205th Motorized Rifle Brigade following recent outrage from milbloggers about the brigade's command.**
- **An organization with alleged ties to Russian First Deputy Presidential Chief of Staff Sergey Kiriyyenko is reportedly categorizing Russian internet user data in an effort to disseminate tailored information to specific domestic populations as part of a wider attempt to control the Russian information space.**
- **Russian forces conducted offensive operations near Kupyansk, Kreminna, Bakhmut, along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line, and in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area and marginally advanced along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line.**
- **Russian authorities have started to conscript citizens in occupied Ukraine who have Russian passports.**
- **Russian authorities continue to forcibly deport children from occupied Ukraine to Russia in order to assimilate Ukrainian children into Russian culture.**

# Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of September 30, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



***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 Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine**

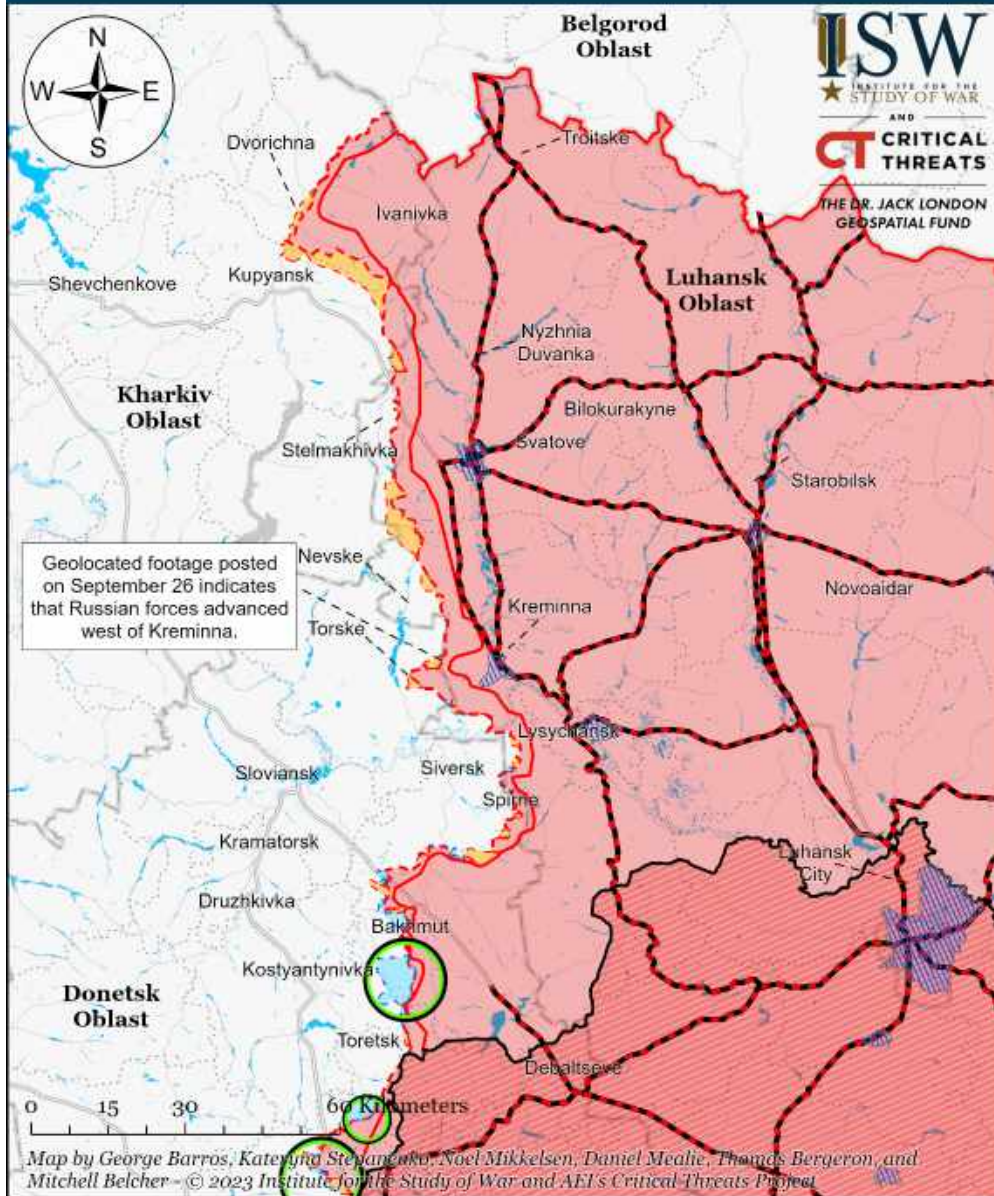
### **Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Luhansk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and northern Donetsk Oblast)**

Russian forces conducted offensive operations near Kupyansk and Kremmina on September 30 but did not make confirmed advances. A Russian milblogger claimed that positional battles are ongoing near Synkivka (9km northeast of Kupyansk) and in the Serebryanske forest area (11km south of Kreminna).[22] Another milblogger claimed that Russian forces attacked Ukrainian positions near Bilohorivka (10km south of Kreminna).[23] Ukrainian Eastern Group of Forces Spokesperson Captain Ilya Yevlash stated that Russian forces resumed assault operations in the Kupyansk and Lyman directions and unsuccessfully tried to break through unspecified Ukrainian defenses twice over the past day.[24] Footage published on September 30 purportedly shows elements of the “Moscow” Volunteer Battalion assaulting and capturing a Ukrainian position near Kreminna.[25] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) reportedly formed the “Moscow” Volunteer Battalion in January 2023, and the volunteer detachment consists of athletes and Russian soccer fans.[26] Footage published on September 30 purportedly shows elements of the 88th Motorized Rifle Brigade (2nd Luhansk People’s Republic Army Corps) operating in the Siversk direction (19km south of Kreminna).[27]

The Russian military has reportedly deployed elements of the newly created 25th Combined Arms Army (CAA) along the frontline in the Kupyansk-Lyman direction. Yevlash reported on September 30 that Ukrainian forces have observed a total of 12,000 25th CAA personnel along the frontline in the Kupyansk-Lyman direction and that the 25th CAA consists of mobilized personnel and personnel from heavily degraded units that have completely lost their combat capabilities.[28] Yevlash also stated that the 25th CAA has unspecified weapons, logistics, and personnel problems.[29]

The Russian MoD claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks near Yampolivka (17km west of Kreminna), Torske (12km west of Kreminna), and Dibrova (7km southwest of Kreminna) on September 30.[30]

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of September 30, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



- 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 Counteroffensives
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare

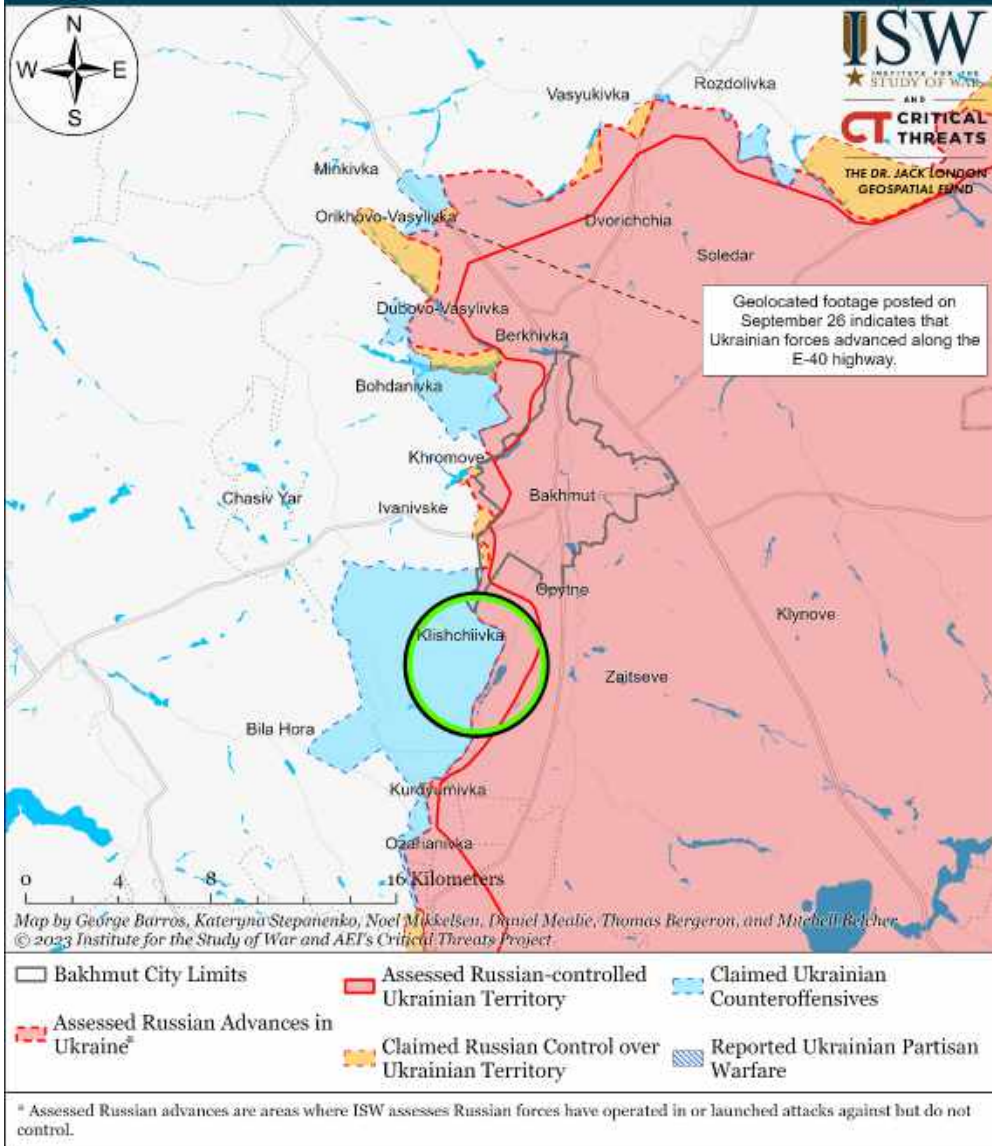
\* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

## **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 reportedly continued offensive actions near Bakhmut on September 30 but did not make any confirmed advances. A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces attempted to break through to the railway east of Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut) and Andriivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut).[31] A Russian news aggregator claimed on September 29 that Ukrainian forces control half of Klishchiivka and that the other half of the settlement is a contested “gray zone.”[32] Ukrainian Eastern Group of Forces Spokesperson Captain Ilya Yevlash stated on September 30 that Ukrainian artillery continues to target the T0513 (Bakhmut-Horlivka) highway, which is a key Russian logistics line.[33]

Russian forces continued ground attacks near Bakhmut on September 30 but did not make any confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks near Klishchiivka.[34] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces pushed Ukrainian forces back from the railway east of Klishchiivka.[35] A Russian news aggregator claimed on September 29 that Russian forces were entrenched at the railway near Klishchiivka and counterattacked near Andriivka.[36] A Russian milblogger posted footage claiming to show elements of the Russian 106th Guards Airborne (VDV) Division operating in the Soledar (10km northeast of Bakhmut) direction.[37] Another Russian milblogger posted footage claiming to show elements of the 98th VDV Division operating near Bakhmut.[38] Chechen Republic Head Ramzan Kadyrov posted footage claiming to show elements of Chechen Akhmat Spetsnaz and the Russian 4th Motorized Rifle Brigade (Luhansk People’s Republic [LNR] 2nd Army Corps) operating near Klishchiivka.[39]

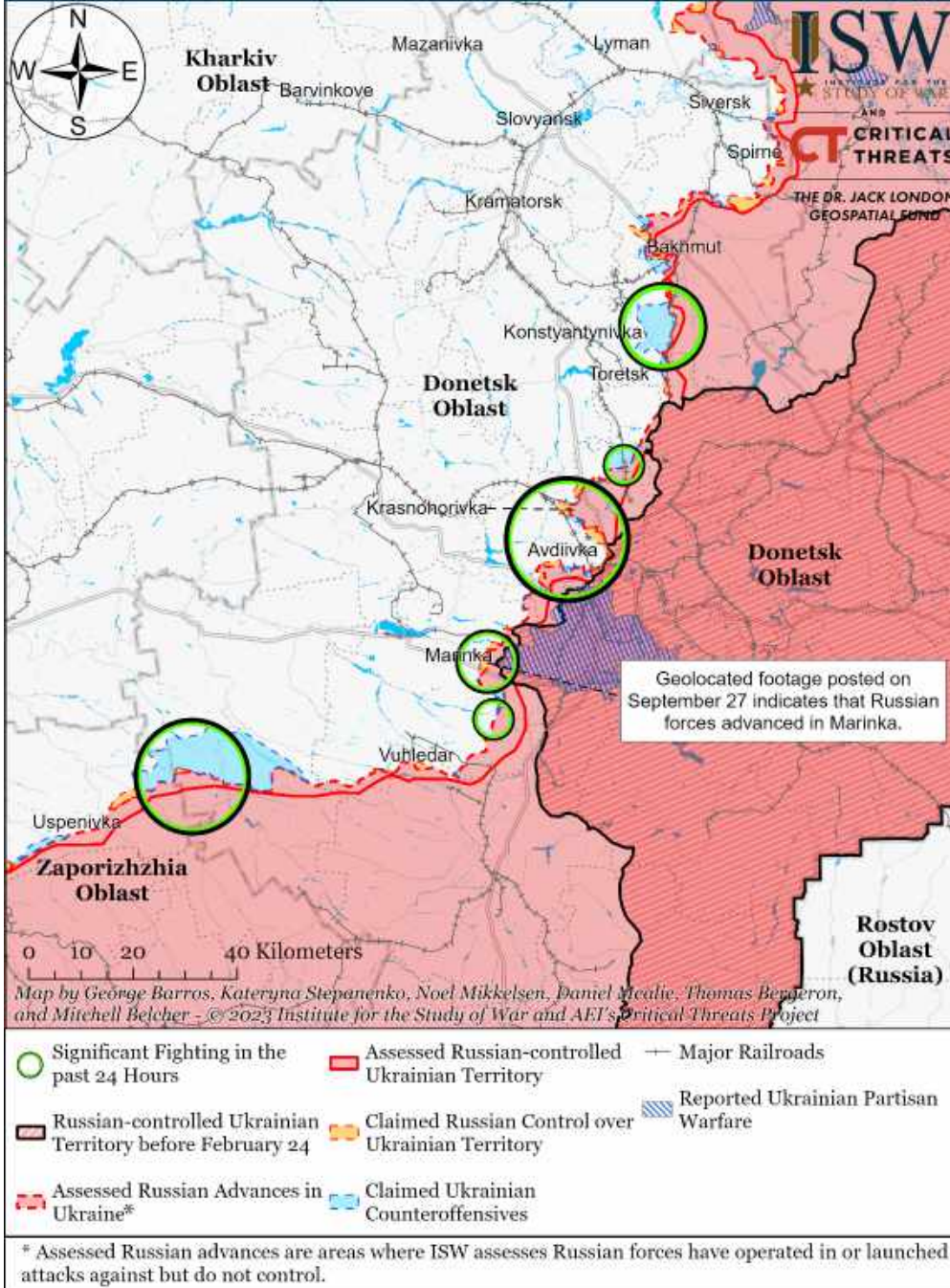
## Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of September 30, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Russian forces continued offensive operations along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line on September 30 and recently advanced. Geolocated footage published on September 27 indicates that Russian forces marginally advanced west of Marinka (on the southwestern outskirts of Donetsk City).[40] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks east of Stepove (8km northwest of Avdiivka), southwest of Avdiivka, and near Novoselivka (17km northeast of Avdiivka), Tonenke (7km northwest of Avdiivka), Marinka, and Novomykhailivka (10km southwest of Donetsk City).[41] A Russian milblogger also claimed that Russian forces attacked near Novomykahilivka and Marinka but did not specify an outcome.[42] Another Russian milblogger amplified claims on September 29 that Russian forces conducted successful assaults near Opytne (3km southwest of Avdiivka) and Vesele (on the northwestern outskirts of Donetsk City).[43]



# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of September 30, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

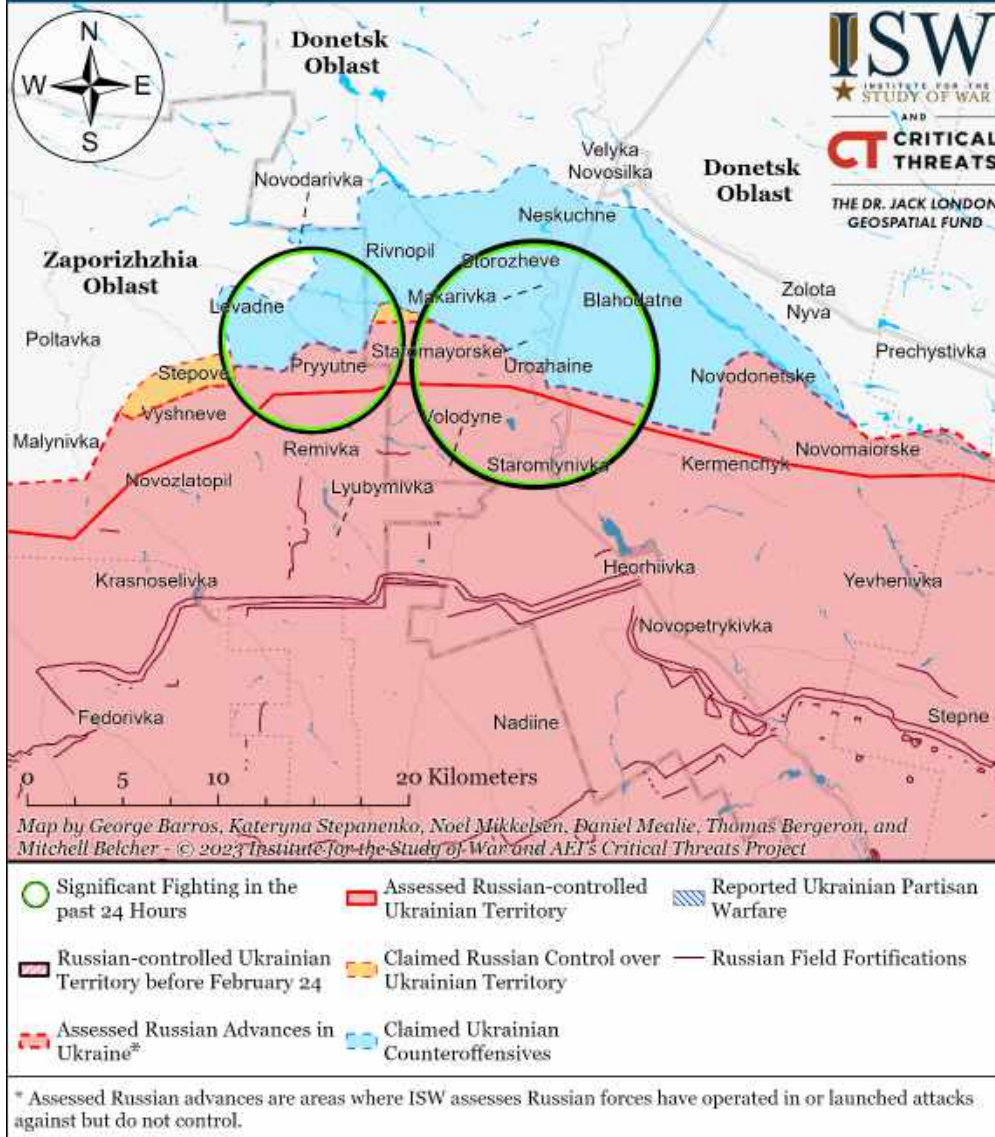


## **Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions and secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes)**

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted limited unsuccessful ground attacks along the administrative border between Donetsk and Zaporizhia oblasts on September 30. The Russian MoD claimed that elements of the Russian Eastern Grouping of Forces repelled two Ukrainian attacks near Pryyutne (15km southwest of Velyka Novosilka) and Rivnopil (10km southwest of Velyka Novosilka).[44] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces attacked near Pryyutne in three small groups with 15 personnel each.[45] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted reconnaissance-in-force operations near Pryyutne and Novomayorske (18km southeast of Velyka Novosilka) on September 29.[46]

Russian forces continued limited ground attacks in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on September 30 but did not make any confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful offensive actions near Staromayorske (9km south of Velyka Novosilka) and Novodarivka (15km south of Velyka Novosilka).[47] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces are conducting localized offensive operations from Pryyutne in the direction of Rivnopil and are counterattacking near Urozhaine (9km south of Velyka Novosilka).[48] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian aviation struck a bridge across the Shaytanka River in Velyka Novosilka.[49]

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around the Vremivka Salient as of September 30, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



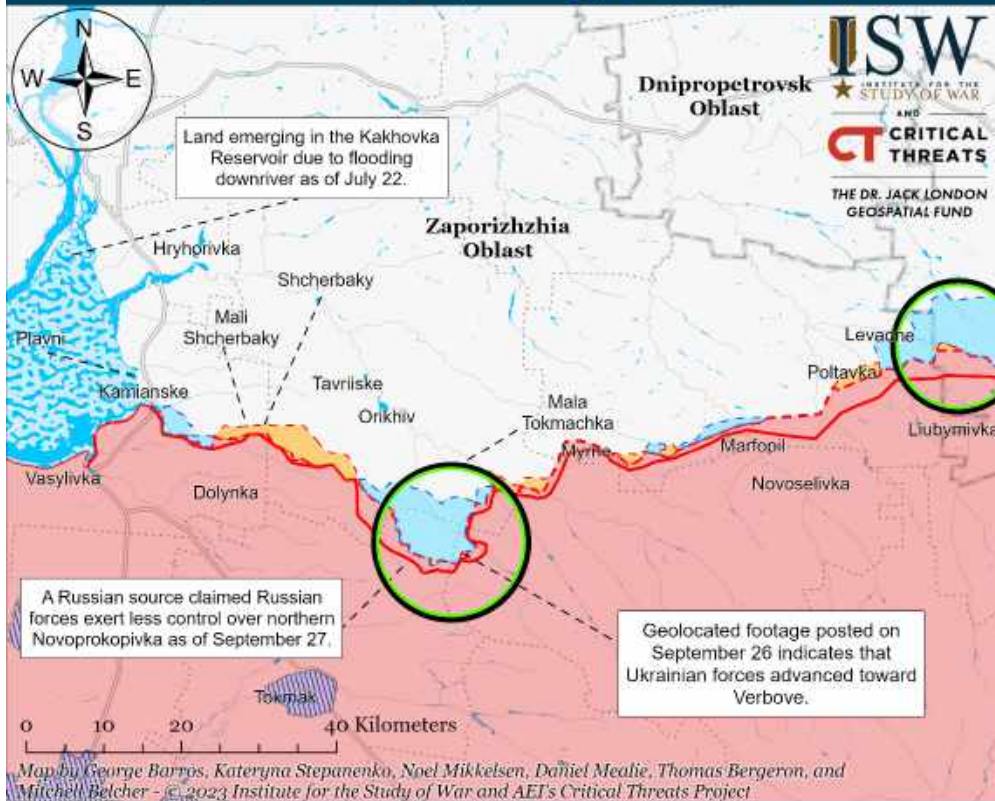
Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast on September 30 but did not make any confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Melitopol (western Zaporizhzhia Oblast) direction.[50] Russian milbloggers claimed that small Ukrainian infantry groups without armored vehicle support continue assaults near Robotyne (10km south of Orikhiv), Novoprokopivka (13km south of Orikhiv), and Verbove (18km southeast of Orikhiv).[51] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces attacked in an area north of Verbove and conducted assaults in the direction of Kopani (11km southwest of Orikhiv).[52]

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Pyatykhatky and Robotyne as of September 30, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Russian forces continued counterattacks in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast on September 30 and recently made marginal gains. Geolocated footage published on September 29 indicates that Russian forces recaptured limited positions at a series of previously lost Russian defensive positions south of Robotyne.[53] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully tried to recapture lost positions near Robotyne and Verbove on September 30.[54] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces are also counterattacking near Novodanylivka (4km south of Orikhiv) and Mala Tokmachka (7km southwest of Orikhiv).[55] The milblogger claimed that Russian forces resumed activities southeast of Hulyaipole, likely referring to limited Russian offensive actions near Chervone (9km east of Hulyaipole).[56] Russian sources acknowledged that Russian air defenses downed a Russian Su-35 attack aircraft in a fratricide incident near Tokmak on September 29 as ISW previously reported.[57]

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhzhia as of September 30, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

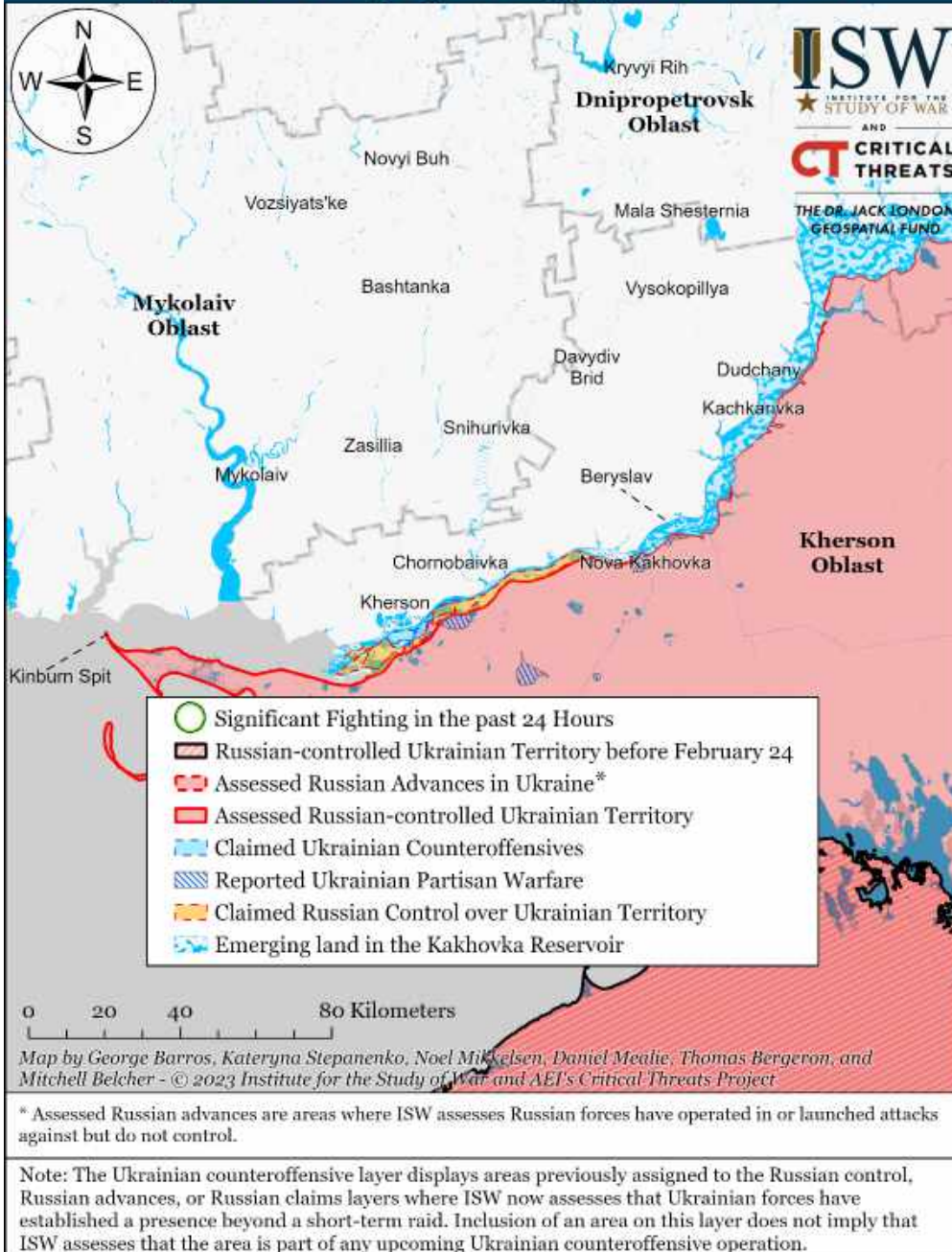


Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, and Mitchell Belcher - © 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| 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 | Emerging land in the Kakhovka Reservoir |
| 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.

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of September 30, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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

Russian authorities will reportedly conscript citizens in occupied Ukraine who have Russian passports. Ukrainian Kherson Oblast Administration Advisor Serhiy Khlan stated on September 30

that Russian authorities have begun requiring residents in occupied territories with Russian passports to go to military registration and enlistment offices for the Russian conscription cycle that will begin on October 1.[58] Khlan stated that Russian authorities are threatening civilians with Russian passports eligible for conscription with fines and detention for not appearing. ISW has previously reported that Russian authorities and occupation administrations continue to conduct forced passportization and mobilization in occupied Ukraine.[59]

The Russian military is reportedly continuing to recruit Cuban citizens to fight in Ukraine, possibly as a part of relatively elite Airborne (VDV) formations. Russian opposition media outlet *Mobilization News* stated on September 29 that Vladimir Shkunov, a researcher at the Institute of History of the Russian Academy of Sciences and a member of the Russian Government Expert Council, recruited eight Cuban citizens to fight in the war in Ukraine.[60] *Mobilization News* stated that about 140 Cuban citizens arrived in Russia in the summer of 2023 and joined the 106th VDV Division headquartered in Tula City, further indicating that the 106th VDV Division is likely degraded from fighting in Ukraine. *Reuters* reported on September 30 that according to Cuban recruits, there are 119 Cubans training at a Russian military base outside of Tula City and that some Cuban recruits are already in Ukraine.[61] ISW previously reported on September 8 that Cuban officials reportedly arrested 17 individuals on charges related to a human trafficking ring that lured Cuban men to serve in the Russian military.[62] The Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated on September 5 that “Cuba plays no role in the war in Ukraine” and that it will “act vigorously” against whoever participates in any form of human trafficking for the recruitment of mercenaries from Cuba.[63]

Russian companies are reportedly willing to break Russian laws surrounding military registration in order to retain IT employees. Russian outlet *Kommersant* reported on September 29 that some Russian companies would rather pay fines for not registering their employees’ military records than risk having employees, especially IT specialists, quit over the military registration requirement.[64]

**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 authorities continue to forcibly deport children from occupied Ukraine to Russia in order to assimilate Ukrainian children into Russian culture. Russian Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug Governor Dmitry Artyukhov stated on September 30 that the Yamalo-Nenets government is launching a three-year program that will bring children from occupied Volnovakha, Donetsk Oblast to Russia to visit “cultural heritage centers” in Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Nizhny Novgorod; Russian universities; and the “Russia” exhibition in Moscow.[65] Artyukhov stated that 500 Ukrainian children will participate in the program in fall 2023.

Russian federal subjects continue to expand their patronage networks in occupied Ukraine. Russian Head of the North Ossetia-Alania Republic Sergey Menyaylo claimed on September 30 that the North Ossetia-Alania Republic sponsors occupied Chernihivka Raion, Zaporizhia Oblast.[66] Luhansk People’s Republic (LNR) head Leonid Pasechnik stated that Russian Irkutsk Oblast has helped construct infrastructure facilities and factories in occupied Holubivka, Luhansk Oblast.[67] Artyukhov stated that Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug has built social and residential infrastructure in occupied Volnovakha, Donetsk Oblast.[68]

**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)**

Nothing significant to report.

**ISW will continue to report daily observed Russian and Belarusian military activity in Belarus as part of ongoing Kremlin efforts to increase their control over Belarus and other Russian actions in Belarus.**

**Note: ISW does not receive any classified material from any source, uses only publicly available information, and draws extensively on Russian, Ukrainian, and Western reporting and social media as well as commercially available satellite imagery and other geospatial data as the basis for these reports. References to all sources used are provided in the endnotes of each update.**

---

[1] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02ZJcpVzmvQDTPKcSjLYYRuWlr4TJFJKTG8YyM49d7ZwprY7D5wAz7JZYNpK7TvcZrl> ;  
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02CkNWRULKPZ9AhAuhNJ5qX7xoNy8z6mQKHBb4zmGsQeumqU57NTqrMV1TzM5EUJTZl> ;  
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02E1sR3sGeBeAqFVJxvmLgythEP64nGYTExqtLFraQzMwx74N7G1SGCFmTXf4muTbrl>

[2] [https://t.me/dva\\_majors/26475](https://t.me/dva_majors/26475) ; <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/53920> ;  
[https://t.me/dva\\_majors/26480](https://t.me/dva_majors/26480) ; <https://t.me/batalyon15/3037>

[3] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-24-2023> ; [https://t.me/vdv\\_ZA\\_teplinsky/425](https://t.me/vdv_ZA_teplinsky/425)

[4] [https://t.me/vdv\\_ZA\\_teplinsky/447](https://t.me/vdv_ZA_teplinsky/447)

[5] <http://kremlin dot ru/events/president/news/72403>

[6] <https://t.me/razvozhaev/4031>

[7] [https://t.me/VGA\\_Kherson/14309](https://t.me/VGA_Kherson/14309)

[8] [https://t.me/medvedev\\_telegram/390](https://t.me/medvedev_telegram/390)

[9] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02ZJcpVzmvQDTPKcSjLYYRuWlr4TJFJKTG8YyM49d7ZwprY7D5wAz7JZYNpK7TvcZrl> ; [https://t.me/SJTF\\_Odes/1143](https://t.me/SJTF_Odes/1143) ; <https://armyinform.com dot ua/2023/09/30/cziyeyi-nochi-osnovnyj-udar-vorozhyh-bpla-buv-spryamovanyj-povinnychchyni-yurij-ignat/> ;  
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02topKbEKWT8MS32KbAxAfHfWK3dNB U5jZdbMgPQbZwe3mRk1dir6ZnaTHqQbVnjYl>

[10] <https://suspilne dot media/583785-rosia-atakuvala-pivden-ukraini-20-sahedami-gumenuk/>



- [11] [https://t.me/boris\\_rozhin/98948](https://t.me/boris_rozhin/98948) ; [https://t.me/dva\\_majors/26476](https://t.me/dva_majors/26476) ; [https://t.me/Mestb\\_Dobr\\_oj\\_Voli/8368](https://t.me/Mestb_Dobr_oj_Voli/8368) ; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/3624> ; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/3612> ; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/50896>
- [12] <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/53879> ; <https://t.me/kommunist/18670> ; <https://t.me/epoddubny/17572>
- [13] [https://www.mapn\\_dot\\_ro/cpresa/18137\\_comunicat-de-presa](https://www.mapn_dot_ro/cpresa/18137_comunicat-de-presa)
- [14] [https://www.mapn\\_dot\\_ro/cpresa/18137\\_comunicat-de-presa](https://www.mapn_dot_ro/cpresa/18137_comunicat-de-presa)
- [15] [https://t.me/dva\\_majors/26473](https://t.me/dva_majors/26473) ; <https://t.me/osetin20/7132> ; [https://t.me/romanov\\_92/41777](https://t.me/romanov_92/41777)
- [16] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar082523> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar082623> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar082723> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar082823> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar082923>
- [17] [https://t.me/romanov\\_92/41777](https://t.me/romanov_92/41777)
- [18] [https://vot-tak\\_dot\\_tv/novosti/29-09-2023-ispoved-sotrudnika-kremlevskoj-propagandy](https://vot-tak_dot_tv/novosti/29-09-2023-ispoved-sotrudnika-kremlevskoj-propagandy)
- [19] [https://vot-tak\\_dot\\_tv/novosti/29-09-2023-ispoved-sotrudnika-kremlevskoj-propagandy](https://vot-tak_dot_tv/novosti/29-09-2023-ispoved-sotrudnika-kremlevskoj-propagandy)
- [20] [https://vot-tak\\_dot\\_tv/novosti/29-09-2023-ispoved-sotrudnika-kremlevskoj-propagandy](https://vot-tak_dot_tv/novosti/29-09-2023-ispoved-sotrudnika-kremlevskoj-propagandy)
- [21] [https://vot-tak\\_dot\\_tv/novosti/29-09-2023-ispoved-sotrudnika-kremlevskoj-propagandy](https://vot-tak_dot_tv/novosti/29-09-2023-ispoved-sotrudnika-kremlevskoj-propagandy)
- [22] [https://t.me/dva\\_majors/26475](https://t.me/dva_majors/26475)
- [23] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15365>
- [24] [https://armyinform.com\\_dot\\_ua/2023/09/30/na-lymano-kupyanskomu-napryamku-za-mynulodobu-vorog-dvichi-namagavsya-probyty-nashu-oboronu-illya-yevlash/](https://armyinform.com_dot_ua/2023/09/30/na-lymano-kupyanskomu-napryamku-za-mynulodobu-vorog-dvichi-namagavsya-probyty-nashu-oboronu-illya-yevlash/)
- [25] <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/53922>
- [26] [https://tvzvezda\\_dot\\_ru/news/2023129191-zNnZm.html](https://tvzvezda_dot_ru/news/2023129191-zNnZm.html)
- [27] [https://t.me/sons\\_fatherland/11038](https://t.me/sons_fatherland/11038)
- [28] [https://armyinform.com\\_dot\\_ua/2023/09/30/na-lymano-kupyanskomu-napryamku-za-mynulodobu-vorog-dvichi-namagavsya-probyty-nashu-oboronu-illya-yevlash/](https://armyinform.com_dot_ua/2023/09/30/na-lymano-kupyanskomu-napryamku-za-mynulodobu-vorog-dvichi-namagavsya-probyty-nashu-oboronu-illya-yevlash/)
- [29] [https://armyinform.com\\_dot\\_ua/2023/09/30/na-lymano-kupyanskomu-napryamku-za-mynulodobu-vorog-dvichi-namagavsya-probyty-nashu-oboronu-illya-yevlash/](https://armyinform.com_dot_ua/2023/09/30/na-lymano-kupyanskomu-napryamku-za-mynulodobu-vorog-dvichi-namagavsya-probyty-nashu-oboronu-illya-yevlash/)
- [30] [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30988](https://t.me/mod_russia/30988) ; [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30994](https://t.me/mod_russia/30994) ; [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30983](https://t.me/mod_russia/30983)

- [31] [https://t.me/dva\\_majors/26475](https://t.me/dva_majors/26475)
- [32] <https://t.me/readovkanews/66890>
- [33] <https://armyinform.com dot ua/2023/09/30/zaraz-tryvayut-vazhki-boyi-bilya-trasy-bahmut-gorlivka-illya-yevlash/>
- [34] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2CkNWRULKPZ9AhAuhNJ5qX7xoNy8z6mQKHBb4zmGsQeumqU57NTqrMV1TzM5EUJTZl> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2E1sR3sGeBeAqFVJxvmLgythEP64nGYTExqtLFraQzMwx74N7G1SGCFmTXf4muTbrl> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2ZJcpVzmvQDTPKcSjLYYRuWlr4TJFJKTG8YyM49d7ZwprY7D5wAz7JZYnpK7TvcZrl>
- [35] <https://t.me/zvofront/1195>
- [36] <https://t.me/readovkanews/66890>
- [37] <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/3616>
- [38] <https://t.me/milinfoolive/107277>
- [39] [https://t.me/RKadyrov\\_95/3930](https://t.me/RKadyrov_95/3930)
- [40] <https://twitter.com/blinzka/status/1707795849441349930>; <https://twitter.com/NOELreports/status/1707072901520707739>
- [41] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2CkNWRULKPZ9AhAuhNJ5qX7xoNy8z6mQKHBb4zmGsQeumqU57NTqrMV1TzM5EUJTZl> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2E1sR3sGeBeAqFVJxvmLgythEP64nGYTExqtLFraQzMwx74N7G1SGCFmTXf4muTbrl> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2ZJcpVzmvQDTPKcSjLYYRuWlr4TJFJKTG8YyM49d7ZwprY7D5wAz7JZYnpK7TvcZrl>
- [42] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15365>
- [43] <https://t.me/RVvoenkori/53881>
- [44] [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30989](https://t.me/mod_russia/30989) ; [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30995](https://t.me/mod_russia/30995)
- [45] [https://t.me/voin\\_dv/5230](https://t.me/voin_dv/5230)
- [46] <https://t.me/RVvoenkori/53881>
- [47] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2CkNWRULKPZ9AhAuhNJ5qX7xoNy8z6mQKHBb4zmGsQeumqU57NTqrMV1TzM5EUJTZl> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2E1sR3sGeBeAqFVJxvmLgythEP64nGYTExqtLFraQzMwx74N7G1SGCFmTXf4muTbrl>
- [48] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15365>

[49] <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/3635> ; [https://t.me/voin\\_dv/5228](https://t.me/voin_dv/5228) ;  
[https://t.me/grey\\_zone/20837](https://t.me/grey_zone/20837)

[50] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02CkNWRULKPZ9AhAuhNJ5qX7xoNy8z6mQKHBb4zmGsQeumqU57NTqrMV1TzM5EUJTZl> ;  
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02E1sR3sGeBeAqFVJxvmLgythEP64nGYTExqtLFraQzMwx74N7G1SGCFmTXf4muTbrl> ;  
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02ZJcpVzmvQDTPKcSjLYYRuWlr4TJFJKTG8YyM49d7ZwprY7D5wAz7JZYNpK7TvcZrl>

[51] <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/53920> ; [https://t.me/dva\\_majors/26480](https://t.me/dva_majors/26480) ; <https://t.me/batalyon15/3037> ; [https://t.me/polk\\_1430/1022](https://t.me/polk_1430/1022) ;

[52] <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/53920> ; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/3622>

[53] [https://t.me/WarArchive\\_ua/5481](https://t.me/WarArchive_ua/5481)

[54] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02CkNWRULKPZ9AhAuhNJ5qX7xoNy8z6mQKHBb4zmGsQeumqU57NTqrMV1TzM5EUJTZl> ;  
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02E1sR3sGeBeAqFVJxvmLgythEP64nGYTExqtLFraQzMwx74N7G1SGCFmTXf4muTbrl>

[55] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15365>

[56] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15365> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-29-2023> ;  
<https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-28-2023>

[57] [https://t.me/boris\\_rozhin/98963](https://t.me/boris_rozhin/98963) ; [https://t.me/grey\\_zone/20834](https://t.me/grey_zone/20834) ;  
<https://t.me/milinfoive/107293> ; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/50897> ;  
[https://t.me/istories\\_media/3807](https://t.me/istories_media/3807) ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-29-2023>

[58] <https://www.facebook.com/sergey.khlan/posts/pfbid02TBuP9jPw4EMe1fzuLUY6nFyUTcCWan9uauJLvqKwBevkQFvXxHrZ71muERsB4dp7l>

[59] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-june-28-2023> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-august-2-2023> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-august-4-2023> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-21-2023> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-11-2023>

[60] <https://t.me/mobilizationnews/15584>

[61] <https://www.reuters.com/world/whatsapp-war-how-cubans-were-recruited-fight-russia-2023-09-30/#:~:text=In%20that%20war%20in%20southern,%2Dbacked%20anti%2Dcommunist%20movement>

[62] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounders/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-8-2023>

[63] <https://cubaminrex dot cu/es/declaracion-del-ministerio-de-relaciones-exteriores>

[64] <https://www.kommersant dot ru/doc/6239911> ; <https://meduza dot io/news/2023/09/29/voenkomy-v-rf-ne-spravlyayutsya-s-potokom-obrascheniy-ot-rabotodateley-kompaniyam-grozyat-shtrafy-za-nesvoevremennuyu-podachu-dannyh-o-voennoobyazannyh>

[65] [https://t.me/artyukhov\\_da/2037](https://t.me/artyukhov_da/2037)

[66] <https://t.me/sergeymeniaylo/1993>

[67] [https://t.me/glava\\_lnr\\_info/1600](https://t.me/glava_lnr_info/1600)

[68] [https://t.me/artyukhov\\_da/2037](https://t.me/artyukhov_da/2037)

# Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment

Christina Harward, Riley Bailey, Nicole Wolkov, Grace Mappes,  
and Frederick W. Kagan

September 29, 2023, 8:15pm 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 2pm ET on September 29. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the September 30 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.**

**Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast and in the Bakhmut area on September 29.** Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces attacked north of Robotyne (10km south of Orikhiv) and near Verbove (18km southeast of Orikhiv) and Novoprokopivka (13km south of Orikhiv) on September 28 and 29.<sup>1</sup> Russian milbloggers claimed on September 29 that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attempted to advance east of the railway line south of Bakhmut near Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut) and Kurdyumivka (13km southwest of Bakhmut) and reported heavy fighting across the Klishchiivka-Andriivka-Kurdyumivka line.<sup>2</sup>

**The Russian government announced details about the semi-annual conscription cycle set to begin on October 1 in most of Russia, reportedly including the illegally annexed territories in Ukraine.** Russian Deputy Chief of the Main Organizational and Mobilization Directorate of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces Rear Admiral Vladimir Tsimlyansky stated on September 29 that the semi-annual conscription cycle will begin on October 1, except in some regions of Russia's Far North where conscription will begin on November 1 due to poor weather.<sup>3</sup> Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a decree on September 29 stating that the Russian military will conscript 130,000 personnel from October to December 2023, as compared to 147,000 personnel conscripted in the spring conscription cycle according to Tsimlyansky.<sup>4</sup> Tsimlyansky claimed that Russia will not send conscripts to the war in Ukraine and that conscripts will serve for 12 months.<sup>5</sup> Tsimlyansky stated that the fall conscription cycle will take place "in all constituent entities of the Russian Federation," including in occupied territories in Ukraine according to multiple Russian state media outlets.<sup>6</sup> The Russian laws that illegally incorporated Ukrainian territory in Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhia, and Kherson oblasts into Russia in October 2022 stated that military conscription in these territories would begin in 2023, but Russian government officials announced the day before the beginning of the spring 2023 conscription cycle that conscription in these territories "would not occur until further notice."<sup>7</sup>

**Russian President Vladimir Putin met with Russian Deputy Defense Minister Yunus-Bek Yevkurov and former Wagner Group commander and current Ministry of Defense (MoD) employee Andrey Troshev on September 29 signaling that Putin will likely back the MoD in its apparent competing effort with the Russian National Guard (Rosgvardia) to recruit current and former Wagner personnel.** Putin stated that at his last meeting with Troshev (call sign "Sedoy") the two discussed that Troshev would be involved in the formation of volunteer detachments that perform combat

missions primarily in Ukraine.<sup>8</sup> Wagner-affiliated sources claimed that Troshev left Wagner following Wagner's June 24 rebellion to work for the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD)-affiliated Redut private military company (PMC), and Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov acknowledged on September 29 that Troshev works for the MoD.<sup>9</sup> Russian sources widely identified the volunteer detachments that Putin tasked Troshev with forming as Redut PMC formations.<sup>10</sup> Putin also stated during his meeting with Troshev that Troshev maintains relationships with his former comrades, further suggesting that the MoD seeks to leverage Troshev's connections to Wagner.<sup>11</sup> Yevkurov has been overseeing the MoD's effort to subsume Wagner elements abroad and is likely heavily involved in the MoD's campaign to recruit Wagner personnel for MoD-affiliated PMCs operating in Ukraine.<sup>12</sup> The United Kingdom Ministry of Defense (MoD) reported on September 29 that several hundred former Wagner fighters have returned to Ukraine in the past weeks either with regular Russian forces or PMCs.<sup>13</sup>

There are increasing reports that Wagner personnel are operating alongside Rosgvardia and that the State Duma will consider a proposed bill that will allow Rosgvardia to form volunteer formations.<sup>14</sup> Current Wagner Commander Anton Yelizarov (call sign "Lotos") is reportedly negotiating with Rosgvardia for current Wagner personnel to join volunteer formations under Rosgvardia on terms more favorable to Wagner.<sup>15</sup> A Russian insider source claimed that elements of the Wagner contingent in Belarus do not want to sign contracts with either the MoD or Rosgvardia and instead plan to join Belarusian President Lukashenko's effort to create a Belarusian-based PMC for Wagner fighters under the command of a Wagner commander with the call sign "Brest."<sup>16</sup> Putin's backing of the MoD effort is likely significant for factional dynamics among the Russian military leadership and the wider Russian security apparatus, but it does not portend a significant redeployment of Wagner personnel to Ukraine. The piecemeal deployment of former Wagner personnel to any areas of the frontline is unlikely to generate any significant strategic or even localized effects on the battlefield in Ukraine.<sup>17</sup>

**The Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) is likely supporting amendments to a Russian State Duma bill that would expand its tools of digital authoritarianism to surveil users of Russian internet, banking, and telecom companies.** Russian outlet *Kommersant* reported on September 29 that the bill would allow Russian law enforcement agencies to remotely access, edit, and delete information in Russian private businesses' databases.<sup>18</sup> The Russian State Duma is reportedly proposing these amendments to protect the personal data of Russian judges, FSB employees, and police from data leaks of personal information.<sup>19</sup> *Kommersant* reported that the Russian Big Data Association – which includes Russian internet giant Yandex, Russian telecommunications companies, and banks – opposed the amendments and claimed that such access could lead to new data leaks.<sup>20</sup> The FSB's efforts to gain control over large companies' databases are likely part of an attempt to strengthen surveillance measures over the Russian populace and populations in occupied Ukraine. The FSB also intends to use potential new access to databases to mask its operations more easily. The FSB's potential new access to private companies' databases may affect information security in other countries that use services provided by the Russian Big Data Association. In August, the Kremlin attempted to force Yandex into supplying international user data to the FSB.<sup>21</sup>

**The apparent self-censorship in the wider Russian information space has likely opened the door for some fringe elements to directly criticize and speculate about senior Russian military commanders without pushback.** A fringe Russian milblogger reportedly affiliated with the Russian Airborne (VDV) forces recently claimed that Russian Chief of the General Staff and overall theater commander Army General Valery Gerasimov removed VDV Commander Colonel General Mikhail Teplinsky as deputy commander in Ukraine, and no Russian sources have offered claims consistent with this one until recently.<sup>22</sup> ISW has no independent way of verifying the channels' claims and speculations and is by no means ready to assess that Teplinsky's role has changed, but the emergence and spread of such claims, though currently limited, in the Russian information space is notable amid this unusual Russian informational environment.

**The response of the wider Russian information space to fringe claims about Teplinsky’s role in the war in Ukraine may portend an inflection point in discussions about the Russian military command.** A Russian insider source who publishes monthly lists purportedly of Russian President Vladimir Putin’s so-called “war cabinet” notably excluded Teplinsky from their September list.<sup>23</sup> The fringe Russian milblogger complained that Teplinsky did not appear on this list for the first time since being added in April 2023.<sup>24</sup> The exclusion of Teplinsky from the “war cabinet” list is consistent with the fringe Russian milblogger’s September 22 claim that Gerasimov removed Teplinsky from his duties as deputy commander in Ukraine.<sup>25</sup> ISW has observed that this insider source is one of several whose information is often a harbinger of larger conversations in the wider Russian information space, specifically about changes and dynamics within the Russian leadership. **ISW is not assessing at this time that the Russian military command has removed Teplinsky from some of his duties.** These claims may prompt a wider discussion in the Russian information space about changes in command and factional dynamics among the Russian leadership that has been increasingly quiet since Wagner’s June 24 rebellion. If the wider Russian information space continues to ignore these fringe conversations about Teplinsky, however, this may further suggest that Russian sources are engaging in self-censorship—or, alternatively, that the claims are so nonsensical as to require no response.

**A Russian insider source speculated about Gerasimov’s intent for Russian defensive operations in southern Ukraine, possibly in an attempt to renew animosity toward Gerasimov.** A Russian insider source claimed on September 4 that Gerasimov wants to conserve Russian forces for the defense of Melitopol and Berdyansk, possibly at the expense of defending Tokmak.<sup>26</sup> Social media sources circulated this rumor on September 27 and 28 after which the Russian insider source claimed that Gerasimov is also willing to withdraw forces from Bakhmut and prefers to defend Melitopol to prevent Ukrainian forces from bringing artillery closer to Crimea.<sup>27</sup> The claim that Gerasimov intends to withdraw Russian forces to Melitopol to strengthen Russian defenses there is far outside of Gerasimov’s pattern of observed behavior.<sup>28</sup> ISW has no evidence to confirm the insider source’s claims, however. If these claims are false, it could indicate that there is a concerted effort in the Russian information space to discredit Gerasimov, possibly in tandem with protecting Teplinsky.

#### **Key Takeaways:**

- **Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast and in the Bakhmut area on September 29.**
- **The Russian government announced details about the semi-annual conscription cycle set to begin on October 1 in most of Russia, reportedly including the illegally annexed territories in Ukraine.**
- **Russian President Vladimir Putin met with Russian Deputy Defense Minister Yunus-Bek Yevkurov and former Wagner Group commander and current Ministry of Defense (MoD) employee Andrey Troshev on September 29 signaling that Putin will likely back the MoD in its apparent competing effort with the Russian National Guard (Rosgvardia) to recruit current and former Wagner personnel.**
- **The Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) is likely supporting amendments to a Russian State Duma bill that would expand its tools of digital authoritarianism to surveil users of Russian internet, banking, and telecom companies.**
- **The apparent self-censorship in the wider Russian information space has likely opened the door for some fringe elements to directly criticize and speculate about senior Russian military commanders without pushback.**
- **Russian forces conducted offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line, near Bakhmut, along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line, in the western Donetsk-**

**eastern Zaporizhia Oblast border area, and in western Zaporizhia Oblast and advanced in some areas on September 29.**

- **Russia may be continuing attempts to circumvent sanctions through military-technical cooperation with Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) member countries.**
- **Russia is relaxing passport controls on Ukrainian citizens leaving and entering Russia likely in an attempt to simplify the movement of Ukrainian citizens to Russia.**

***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 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 limited ground attacks along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line but did not make confirmed gains on September 29. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled a Russian attack near Bilohorivka, Luhansk Oblast (12km south of Kreminna), and that Russian forces did not conduct any offensive actions in the Kupyansk direction.<sup>29</sup> A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces expanded control over unspecified positions near Torske (12km west of Kreminna), although ISW has not observed confirmation of this claim.<sup>30</sup>

Russian forces continue to target Ukrainian ground lines of communication (GLOCs) in near rear areas in the Kupyansk direction. Geolocated footage published on September 28 shows Russian forces striking a bridge across the Oskil River west of Kupyansk.<sup>31</sup> A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces have destroyed at least four bridges across the Oskil River in Kupyansk and south of the settlement in recent days.<sup>32</sup> The milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces have established pontoon crossings near damaged bridges.<sup>33</sup>

The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed on September 29 that Russian forces repelled 12 Ukrainian counterattacks near Torske (15km west of Kreminna) and in the Serebryanske forest area (11km south of Kreminna) between September 24 and 29.<sup>34</sup>



## **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 in the Bakhmut area on September 29 and reportedly recently advanced. A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces captured a height near Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut) on an unspecified date.<sup>35</sup> Russian milbloggers claimed that heavy fighting continues near Klishchiivka, Andriivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut), and Kurdyumivka (13km southwest of Bakhmut).<sup>36</sup> The milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces attacked near Kurdyumivka and unsuccessfully tried to cross the railway line bisecting the settlement.<sup>37</sup> A Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces briefly crossed the rail line near Klishchiivka on September 28 before Russian forces pushed Ukrainian forces west of the railway line.<sup>38</sup>

Russian forces continued limited counterattacks in the Bakhmut area on September 29 but did not make any confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled a Russian attack near Klishchiivka.<sup>39</sup> A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces unsuccessfully counterattacked near Andriivka, Klishchiivka, and Hryhorivka (8km northwest of Bakhmut).<sup>40</sup> Another milblogger claimed that Russian forces have regrouped near Klishchiivka and plan to recapture the settlement, but these Russian forces likely currently lack the combat capabilities necessary to do so.<sup>41</sup> A Russian milblogger claimed that the Russian 88th Brigade (2nd Luhansk People’s Republic [LNR] Army Corps) replaced the 85th Motorized Rifle Brigade (2nd LNR Army Corps) during a rotation in the Bakhmut area.<sup>42</sup> Chechen Republic Head Ramzan Kadyrov and other Russian sources claimed that the “Shustroy” detachment of Akhmat Spetsnaz operates with the 4th Brigade (2nd LNR Army Corps) and 346th Spetsnaz Brigade (GRU) on the outskirts of Klishchiivka.<sup>43</sup>

Russian forces continued offensive operations but did not advance on the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line on September 29. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks south of Avdiivka and Tonenke (7km northwest of Avdiivka) and near Nevelske (directly west of Donetsk City), Marinka (on the southwestern outskirts of Donetsk City), and Novomykhailivka (10km southwest of Donetsk City).<sup>44</sup> Russian sources claimed on September 28 that unspecified elements of the Russian 150th Motorized Rifle Division (8th Combined Arms Army, Southern Military District) continue to fight in the Marinka area.<sup>45</sup>

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

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted offensive operations in the western Donetsk-eastern Zaporizhia Oblast border area but did not advance on September 29. Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked north of Zavitne Bazhannya (12km south of Velyka Novosilka).<sup>46</sup> Russian Eastern Grouping of Forces Spokesperson Oleg Chekhov claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Pryyutne (16km southwest of Velyka Novosilka), and the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that from September 24 to September 29 Ukrainian forces conducted four unsuccessful attacks near Pryyutne.<sup>47</sup>

Russian forces conducted offensive operations in the western Donetsk-eastern Zaporizhia Oblast border area and reportedly advanced on September 29. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces successfully counterattacked north of Pryyutne and achieved unspecified successes.<sup>48</sup> The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked west of Staromayorske (9km south of Velyka Novosilka) and near Urozhaine (9km south of Velyka Novosilka).<sup>49</sup>

Ukrainian forces conducted offensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast but did not advance on September 29. A Russian milblogger claimed on September 28 that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked north of

Robotyne (10km south of Orikhiv).<sup>50</sup> Russian sources claimed on September 28 and 29 that Ukrainian forces attempted to break through Russian defenses near Novoprokopivka (13km south of Orikhiv) but did not specify an outcome.<sup>51</sup> A Russian milblogger claimed on September 29 that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations towards Novoprokopivka and Verbove (18km southeast of Orikhiv).<sup>52</sup> The Russian MoD claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted eight unsuccessful attacks near Robotyne and Verbove from September 24 to September 29.<sup>53</sup>

Russian forces conducted offensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast but did not advance on September 29. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Robotyne, Verbove, and Chervone (9km east of Hulyaipole).<sup>54</sup> A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces attacked on the western outskirts of Robotyne but did not specify an outcome.<sup>55</sup>

Russian air defenses reportedly shot down a Russian Su-35 fighter jet near Tokmak on September 29, although the situation remains unclear.<sup>56</sup> Ukrainian and Western media reported the Russian fratricide incident, but Russian sources have yet to acknowledge or deny the incident.<sup>57</sup> The reported footage of the event is unclear, but this incident, if true, would not be shocking as both Ukrainian and Russian forces use Soviet-era aircraft, making accidents through misidentification more likely in highly congested and contested airspace.<sup>58</sup> This possible Russian fratricide incident does not necessarily indicate a systemic problem with Russian air defenses.

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

Russia may be continuing attempts to circumvent sanctions through military-technical cooperation with Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) member countries. Delegations from the defense ministries of Russia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan arrived in Tula Oblast to discuss military and military-technical cooperation on September 29.<sup>59</sup> Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu announced that CIS defense ministers also established a military research organization and a joint humanitarian demining unit.<sup>60</sup>

### **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)**

Russia is relaxing passport controls on Ukrainian citizens leaving and entering Russia likely in an attempt to simplify the movement of Ukrainian citizens to Russia. Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a law on September 29 that would allow Ukrainian citizens to enter or leave Russia without a Russian visa and with a valid or expired internal or foreign passport.<sup>61</sup> The new requirements retroactively came into force as of January 1, 2023, when the visa-free regime between Russian and Ukrainian citizens from 1997 expired.<sup>62</sup>

Russian occupation administration officials continue to forcibly deport children from occupied Ukraine to Russia. The Kherson Oblast occupation administration Ministry of Labor and Social Policy claimed on September 28 that Russian senator for occupied Kherson Oblast Konstantin Basyuk and Kherson Oblast occupation head Vladimir Saldo organized a “tourist trip” for 20 children and an unspecified number of adults from occupied Kherson Oblast to Vladivostok, Primorsky Krai, for an unspecified length of time.<sup>63</sup> Former Advisor to Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) Head Rodion Miroshnik claimed on September 28 that 20 children and 17 mothers from front line areas of occupied Donetsk Oblast arrived at the Klyazma sanatorium in Moscow Oblast for a rehabilitation program that the “Helping Our Own” Foundation organizes.<sup>64</sup> Miroshnik claimed that the “Helping Our Own” foundation has sent 150 people from occupied Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts to

sanitariums in Russia in the past six months.<sup>65</sup> Zaporizhia Oblast occupation official Vladimir Rogov posted footage on September 29 purportedly showing 20 children from occupied Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhia, and Kherson oblasts receiving Russian passports at the Victory Museum in Moscow.<sup>66</sup>

The Russian government may be uninterested in funding large reconstruction projects across occupied Ukraine. Russian Minister of Construction, Housing, and Communal Services Irek Fayzullin stated on September 29 that the Russian government may not rebuild all cities destroyed in fighting in occupied Ukraine, citing the lack of a population in some destroyed cities.<sup>67</sup> Fayzullin also claimed that there is a shortage of funds for restoring occupied territories.<sup>68</sup> ISW has frequently observed reports of the Kremlin shifting the financial responsibilities of infrastructure restoration in occupied Ukraine to Russian federal subjects.<sup>69</sup>

### **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)**

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko appointed Colonel Alexander Bykov as First Deputy Commander of the Internal Troops of the Belarusian Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) on September 28.<sup>70</sup> Bykov replaced Major General Igor Burmistrov in the position after Burmistrov entered reserve duty due to his age.<sup>71</sup>

**ISW will continue to report daily observed Russian and Belarusian military activity in Belarus as part of ongoing Kremlin efforts to increase their control over Belarus and other Russian actions in Belarus.**

**Note: ISW does not receive any classified material from any source, uses only publicly available information, and draws extensively on Russian, Ukrainian, and Western reporting and social media as well as commercially available satellite imagery and other geospatial data as the basis for these reports. References to all sources used are provided in the endnotes of each update.**

---

<sup>1</sup> [https://t.me/rusich\\_army/11073](https://t.me/rusich_army/11073) ; [https://t.me/dva\\_majors/26430](https://t.me/dva_majors/26430) ; <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/53831> ; <https://t.me/wargonzo/15349>

<sup>2</sup> [https://t.me/dva\\_majors/26430](https://t.me/dva_majors/26430) ; <https://t.me/RtrDonetsk/20569> ; <https://t.me/wargonzo/15349> ; [https://t.me/boris\\_rozhin/98846](https://t.me/boris_rozhin/98846) ; <https://t.me/readovkanews/66828> ; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/3573> ; [https://t.me/Sladkov\\_plus/8647](https://t.me/Sladkov_plus/8647) ; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/3594> ; <https://t.me/sashakots/42479>

<sup>3</sup> [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30939](https://t.me/mod_russia/30939) ; <https://telegra dot ph/Brifing-zamestitelya-nachalnika-Glavnogo-organizacionno-mobilizacionnogo-upravleniya-Generalnogo-shtaba-VS-RF-kontr-admirala-Vla-09-28>

<sup>4</sup> [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30964](https://t.me/mod_russia/30964) ; <http://publication dot pravo.gov.ru/document/0001202309290005?index=1> ; [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30939](https://t.me/mod_russia/30939) ; <https://telegra dot ph/Brifing-zamestitelya-nachalnika-Glavnogo-organizacionno-mobilizacionnogo-upravleniya-Generalnogo-shtaba-VS-RF-kontr-admirala-Vla-09-28>

<sup>5</sup> [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30939](https://t.me/mod_russia/30939) ; <https://telegra dot ph/Brifing-zamestitelya-nachalnika-Glavnogo-organizacionno-mobilizacionnogo-upravleniya-Generalnogo-shtaba-VS-RF-kontr-admirala-Vla-09-28>

<sup>6</sup> <https://tass dot ru/armiya-i-opk/18871475> ; <https://lenta dot ru/news/2023/09/29/prizyv/> ; <https://russian dot rt.com/russia/article/1209991-minoborony-rossiya-osennii-prizyv-detali>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.kremlin dot ru/acts/bank/48365> ; <http://www.kremlin dot ru/acts/bank/48367> ; <http://kremlin dot ru/acts/bank/48356> ; <http://www.kremlin dot ru/acts/bank/48355> ; <https://tass dot ru/armiya-i-opk/17405487>

<sup>8</sup> <http://kremlin dot ru/events/president/news/72391>

- <sup>9</sup> <https://isw.pub/UkrWar082023> ; <https://ria dot ru/20230929/peskov-1899411148.html> ; <https://www.kommersant dot ru/doc/6250426> ; <https://t.me/astrapress/39020> ; <https://t.me/bbcrossian/53048> ; <https://t.me/bbcrossian/53060>
- <sup>10</sup> <https://t.me/vchkogpu/42145> ; [https://t.me/basurin\\_e/5939](https://t.me/basurin_e/5939) ; <https://t.me/nonetutto/959> ; <https://t.me/arat/1709> ; [https://t.me/vizioner\\_rf/5897](https://t.me/vizioner_rf/5897) ; [https://t.me/Sladkov\\_plus/8647](https://t.me/Sladkov_plus/8647)
- <sup>11</sup> <http://kremlin dot ru/events/president/news/72391>
- <sup>12</sup> <https://isw.pub/UkrWar091723> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar091623> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar091523> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar091323>
- <sup>13</sup> <https://x.com/DefenceHQ/status/1707633440760189266?s=20>
- <sup>14</sup> <https://isw.pub/UkrWar092123>
- <sup>15</sup> <https://isw.pub/UkrWar092623>
- <sup>16</sup> [https://t.me/vizioner\\_rf/5897](https://t.me/vizioner_rf/5897)
- <sup>17</sup> <https://isw.pub/UkrWar092723>
- <sup>18</sup> <https://www.kommersant dot ru/doc/6239907> ; <https://t.me/astrapress/39027> ; <https://meduza dot io/news/2023/09/29/assotsiatsiya-bolshih-dannyh-ne-podderzhala-zakonoproekt-dayuschiy-silovym-strukturam-pryamoy-dostup-k-bazam-s-personalnymi-dannymi>
- <sup>19</sup> <https://www.kommersant dot ru/doc/6239907> ; <https://t.me/astrapress/39027> ; <https://meduza dot io/news/2023/09/29/assotsiatsiya-bolshih-dannyh-ne-podderzhala-zakonoproekt-dayuschiy-silovym-strukturam-pryamoy-dostup-k-bazam-s-personalnymi-dannymi>
- <sup>20</sup> <https://www.kommersant dot ru/doc/6239907> ; <https://t.me/astrapress/39027> ; <https://meduza dot io/news/2023/09/29/assotsiatsiya-bolshih-dannyh-ne-podderzhala-zakonoproekt-dayuschiy-silovym-strukturam-pryamoy-dostup-k-bazam-s-personalnymi-dannymi>
- <sup>21</sup> <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-august-10-2023>
- <sup>22</sup> [https://t.me/vdv\\_ZA\\_teplinsky/444](https://t.me/vdv_ZA_teplinsky/444) ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Russian%20Offensive%20Campaign%20Assessment%2C%20September%2027%2C%202023%20PDF.pdf>
- <sup>23</sup> <https://t.me/russicatrend/2978>
- <sup>24</sup> [https://t.me/vdv\\_ZA\\_teplinsky/446](https://t.me/vdv_ZA_teplinsky/446)
- <sup>25</sup> <https://t.me/russicatrend/2978> ; [https://t.me/vdv\\_ZA\\_teplinsky/419](https://t.me/vdv_ZA_teplinsky/419)
- <sup>26</sup> [https://t.me/kremlin\\_secrets/2758](https://t.me/kremlin_secrets/2758)
- <sup>27</sup> [https://t.me/kremlin\\_secrets/2880](https://t.me/kremlin_secrets/2880) ; [https://twitter.com/The\\_Real\\_ITDUDE/status/1707092599922688060/photo/1](https://twitter.com/The_Real_ITDUDE/status/1707092599922688060/photo/1) ; [https://twitter.com/Maks\\_NAFO\\_FELLA/status/1707087317486182634](https://twitter.com/Maks_NAFO_FELLA/status/1707087317486182634) ; [https://twitter.com/Heroiam\\_Slava/status/1707039975701668260](https://twitter.com/Heroiam_Slava/status/1707039975701668260) ; <https://twitter.com/Thibli2/status/1707101046894383214> ; <https://twitter.com/BrennpunktUA/status/1707088231324418559> ; [https://twitter.com/The\\_Real\\_ITDUDE/status/1707394357991555466](https://twitter.com/The_Real_ITDUDE/status/1707394357991555466)
- <sup>28</sup> <https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/kremlin%E2%80%99s-pyrrhic-victory-bakhmut-retrospective-battle-bakhmut> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-february-19-2023> ; <https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-april-30-2023> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-january-11-2023> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Russian%20Offensive%20Campaign%20Assessment%2C%20April%201%2C%202023.pdf> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-may-7-2023>
- <sup>29</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0gDkKaPBBtoJYTJEtMkG6ipZPmgK2JDCgdZnidvBR2HGDn1oaokqvypFoQx9jPnPKI> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02J9UWT4RbxPx6HVVEitFNdahj43ZYqkHsJ7jyriZhQNUwMbRnZe3WzyZhB9JecqEl>
- <sup>30</sup> [https://t.me/dva\\_majors/26430](https://t.me/dva_majors/26430)
- <sup>31</sup> <https://twitter.com/EjShahid/status/1707494580545884500> ; <https://t.me/Aviahub34/1422>
- <sup>32</sup> <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/3599>

---

<sup>33</sup> <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/3599>

<sup>34</sup> [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30956](https://t.me/mod_russia/30956)

<sup>35</sup> <https://twitter.com/GirkinGirkin/status/1707693222305116190> ; [https://t.me/romanov\\_92/41769](https://t.me/romanov_92/41769)

<sup>36</sup> [https://t.me/dva\\_majors/26430](https://t.me/dva_majors/26430); <https://t.me/RtrDonetsk/20569>; <https://t.me/wargonzo/15349>;  
[https://t.me/boris\\_rozhin/98846](https://t.me/boris_rozhin/98846); <https://t.me/readovkanews/66828>; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/3573>;  
[https://t.me/Sladkov\\_plus/8647](https://t.me/Sladkov_plus/8647)

<sup>37</sup> [https://t.me/dva\\_majors/26430](https://t.me/dva_majors/26430); [https://t.me/multi\\_XAM/818](https://t.me/multi_XAM/818) ; <https://t.me/RtrDonetsk/20569>;  
<https://t.me/wargonzo/15349>; [https://t.me/boris\\_rozhin/98846](https://t.me/boris_rozhin/98846); <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/3594>;  
<https://t.me/sashakots/42479>

<sup>38</sup> <https://t.me/sashakots/42469>

<sup>39</sup>

<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02J9UWT4RbxPx6HVVEitFNdahj43ZYqkHsJ7jyriZhQNUwMbRnZe3WzyZhB9JecqEI>

<sup>40</sup> <https://t.me/wargonzo/15349>

<sup>41</sup> <https://twitter.com/GirkinGirkin/status/1707693222305116190> ; [https://t.me/romanov\\_92/41769](https://t.me/romanov_92/41769)

<sup>42</sup> <https://twitter.com/GirkinGirkin/status/1707460672873807915>

<sup>43</sup> [https://t.me/RKadyrov\\_95/3929](https://t.me/RKadyrov_95/3929); <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/53836>; <https://t.me/z4lpr/665>

<sup>44</sup>

<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02J9UWT4RbxPx6HVVEitFNdahj43ZYqkHsJ7jyriZhQNUwMbRnZe3WzyZhB9JecqEI>;

<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0gDkKaPBBtoJYTJEtMkG6ipZPmgK2JDCgdZnidvBR2HGDn1oaokqvypFoQx9jPnPKI>

<sup>45</sup> <https://t.me/readovkanews/66816>; [https://t.me/boris\\_rozhin/98827](https://t.me/boris_rozhin/98827)

<sup>46</sup> <https://t.me/wargonzo/15349>; [https://t.me/multi\\_XAM/818](https://t.me/multi_XAM/818)

<sup>47</sup> [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30954](https://t.me/mod_russia/30954); [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30955](https://t.me/mod_russia/30955)

<sup>48</sup> <https://t.me/wargonzo/15349>

<sup>49</sup>

<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02J9UWT4RbxPx6HVVEitFNdahj43ZYqkHsJ7jyriZhQNUwMbRnZe3WzyZhB9JecqEI> ;

<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0gDkKaPBBtoJYTJEtMkG6ipZPmgK2JDCgdZnidvBR2HGDn1oaokqvypFoQx9jPnPKI>

<sup>50</sup> [https://t.me/rusich\\_army/11073](https://t.me/rusich_army/11073)

<sup>51</sup> [https://t.me/dva\\_majors/26430](https://t.me/dva_majors/26430) ; <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/53831>

<sup>52</sup> <https://t.me/wargonzo/15349>

<sup>53</sup> [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30955](https://t.me/mod_russia/30955)

<sup>54</sup>

<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02J9UWT4RbxPx6HVVEitFNdahj43ZYqkHsJ7jyriZhQNUwMbRnZe3WzyZhB9JecqEI> ;

<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0gDkKaPBBtoJYTJEtMkG6ipZPmgK2JDCgdZnidvBR2HGDn1oaokqvypFoQx9jPnPKI>

<sup>55</sup> <https://t.me/wargonzo/15349>

<sup>56</sup> <https://t.me/gnilayachereha/11958> ; <https://t.me/gnilayachereha/11957> ; [https://t.me/fighter\\_bomber/14166](https://t.me/fighter_bomber/14166) ;  
<https://twitter.com/Tendar/status/1707683457537540562> ;  
[https://twitter.com/bayraktar\\_1love/status/1707679055124779062?s=20](https://twitter.com/bayraktar_1love/status/1707679055124779062?s=20)

<sup>57</sup> <https://www.newsweek.com/russia-su35-fighter-jet-downed-own-air-defense-friendly-fire-zaporizhzhia-tokmak-1830844> ; <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/world-news/2023/09/29/russia-ukraine-war-su-35-fighter-jet-friendly-fire/> ; <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-12576353/Moment-Russian-forces-shoot-80million-SU-35-fighter-jet-friendly-fire-blunder-Ukraine.html> ; <https://t.me/gnilayachereha/11957>;  
<https://t.me/gnilayachereha/11958>; <https://t.me/gnilayachereha/11961>; <https://t.me/gnilayachereha/11966>

<sup>58</sup> <https://t.me/gnilayachereha/11958>

<sup>59</sup> [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30946](https://t.me/mod_russia/30946)

<sup>60</sup> [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30951](https://t.me/mod_russia/30951)

---

<sup>61</sup> <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/53861> ; [https://t.me/miroshnik\\_r/12703](https://t.me/miroshnik_r/12703) ; <http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/document/0001202309290004> ; [https://t.me/boris\\_rozhin/98888](https://t.me/boris_rozhin/98888) ; <https://t.me/bbcrossian/53062>

<sup>62</sup> <https://t.me/bbcrossian/53062> ; <https://tass dot ru/obschestvo/18876495>

<sup>63</sup> [https://t.me/VGA\\_Kherson/14264](https://t.me/VGA_Kherson/14264)

<sup>64</sup> [https://t.me/miroshnik\\_r/12699](https://t.me/miroshnik_r/12699)

<sup>65</sup> [https://t.me/miroshnik\\_r/12699](https://t.me/miroshnik_r/12699)

<sup>66</sup> <https://t.me/vrogov/12273>

<sup>67</sup> [https://t.me/istories\\_media/3799](https://t.me/istories_media/3799) ; <https://tass dot ru/obschestvo/18875691>

<sup>68</sup> [https://t.me/istories\\_media/3799](https://t.me/istories_media/3799) ; <https://tass dot ru/obschestvo/18875691>

<sup>69</sup> <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-june-20-2023> ;

<https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-28-2023> ;

<https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-august-11-2023> ;

<https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-june-7-2023>

<sup>70</sup> [https://t.me/pul\\_1/10098](https://t.me/pul_1/10098)

<sup>71</sup> [https://t.me/pul\\_1/10098](https://t.me/pul_1/10098)

# Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, September 28, 2023

Nicole Wolkov, Angelica Evans, Riley Bailey, Grace Mappes, and Frederick W. Kagan  
September 28, 2023, 7:20pm 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 2:00pm ET on September 28. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the September 29 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.**

**Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations near Bakhmut and in western Zaporizhia Oblast on September 28.** The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Melitopol (western Zaporizhia Oblast) direction and in the Bakhmut direction.[1] The “Storm Ossetia” and “Alania” volunteer battalions claimed that unspecified sources continue to spread false information about a Ukrainian breakthrough in the Robotyne-Verbove area, possibly referring to a fringe Russian milblogger’s claims on September 22 and 23 that Ukrainian forces advanced into Verbove (18km southeast of Orikhiv).[2] ISW has been unable to confirm this report and will not continue to record it in the absence of visual confirmation or similar claims from other Russian sources.

**Russian forces have reduced the tempo of their localized offensive operations on the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line in recent days.** Russian and Ukrainian officials are increasingly reporting fewer Russian ground attacks in the Kupyansk and Lyman directions, indicating that Ukrainian offensive operations have drawn Russian forces away from the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line and significantly degraded the Russian offensive effort on this line.[3] ISW has previously assessed that Russian offensive operations on the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line aimed to pin Ukrainian forces on this line and away from more critical areas of the front.[4] Ukrainian Deputy Director of the Department of Application Planning of the Main Directorate of the Ukrainian National Guard Colonel Mykola Urshalovych stated on September 28 that Russian forces conducted defensive operations and reinforced units in the past week while Ukrainian forces conducted offensive operations and pushed Russian forces from unspecified positions.[5] The Ukrainian General Staff’s September 28 morning situation report (SITREP) reported no Russian ground attacks in the Kupyansk and Lyman directions while the September 28 evening SITREP only reported one Russian attack south of Kreminna near Bilohorivka.[6] Russian aviation has become increasingly active on this line as ground attacks have apparently diminished, and Russian sources consistently claim that Russian air strikes hit Ukrainian-controlled bridges across the Oskil River — presumably to stymie the threat of any Ukrainian offensive operations east of the river.[7]

**Russian aviation is increasingly active in the Kharkiv, Luhansk, and Kherson oblasts and apparently less active in areas of western Zaporizhia Oblast where Ukrainian**

**forces are conducting counteroffensive operations.** Russian forces have been increasingly conducting airstrikes against targets in the west (right) bank of Kherson Oblast and against rear Ukrainian ground lines of communication (GLOCs) in the Kupyansk direction in the past week.[8] Ukrainian Eastern Group of Forces Spokesperson Captain Ilya Yevlash stated on September 28 that Russian Su-35 attack aircraft and Ka-52 helicopters are increasingly active in the Kupyansk and Lyman directions and that Russian forces conducted 21 airstrikes in these directions, primarily near the Siversk (19km south of Kreminna) and the Serebryanske forest area (11km south of Kreminna).[9] Kherson Oblast Military Administration Spokesperson Oleksandr Tolokonnikov stated on September 28 that Russian forces have increased the number of airstrikes on Kherson City and right bank Kherson Oblast by a factor of three or four in the past three days and that Russian forces dropped more than 50 aerial glide bombs against targets in these areas.[10]

Russian aviation continues to conduct strikes against rear Ukrainian areas in eastern Zaporizhia Oblast, although mentions of Russian aviation repelling Ukrainian assaults in frontline areas have become less routine in Russian reporting than earlier in the counteroffensive. Russian sources noted that Russian aviation, particularly Ka-52 helicopters, played a significant role in disrupting Ukrainian assaults at the start of the counteroffensive.[11] Ukrainian forces appear to have increased their ability to down Russian Ka-52 helicopters in mid-August 2023, and the Russian command may have decreased aviation use in western Zaporizhia Oblast out of fears of aviation and pilot losses.[12] **The decreased Russian aviation use in western Zaporizhia Oblast has not seriously undermined the Russian defense, however, as Russian forces appear to have increased their use of strike drones against advancing Ukrainian forces, and Russian artillery units continue to play a significant role in repelling Ukrainian assaults.** It remains unclear what Russian forces intend to achieve with increased aviation activity in Kherson Oblast and whether more airstrikes against Ukrainian targets in the Kupyansk and Lyman directions will be able to offset degraded Russian combat power in the area.

**Russian forces conducted a series of drone strikes against Ukraine on the night of September 27 to 28.** The Ukrainian General Staff reported on September 28 that Ukrainian air defenses downed 31 of 39 Russian-launched Shahed drones over Ukraine on the night of September 27 to 28 and three out of five Shahed drones on September 27.[13] The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Russian forces launched the drones from Primorsko-Akhtarsk, Krasnodar Krai, and occupied Crimea.[14] Ukrainian Center for the Research of Trophy and Prospective Weapons and Military Equipment of the Ukrainian General Staff Spokesperson Captain Andriy Rudyk stated that Russian companies have modified the Russian-produced Shahed-136 drones to contain more domestically produced parts but have not improved the drone's tactical or technical characteristics.[15] Rudyk stated that the modifications indicate that Russia continues to pursue the domestic mass production of Shahed drones.[16]

**Several Russian milbloggers claimed that they self-censor the majority of their reporting amidst an apparent wider self-censorship in Russian reporting about the tactical realities on certain sectors of the front.** Some notably critical Russian milbloggers claimed that they only publish five to 15 percent of the amount of information they receive.[17] One milblogger claimed that problems with communications, drones, tires, electronic warfare (EW), personnel payments, and various other issues persist among Russian forces on the frontline but that Russian personnel attempt to mitigate these problems through connections and personal initiatives, likely, according to the milblogger, because Russian commanders routinely silence complaints and



ignore efforts to fix problems.[18] The milblogger amplified a statement from a claimed Russian platoon commander who complained about the inefficient flow of information from the Russian frontline to decision makers and who stated that he has had to take unusual measures to mitigate negative battlefield consequences from this poor information flow.[19] Another milblogger noted that certain information should not be shared and that the ability to remain silent at the right moment is an important quality.[20] A Russian milblogger deleted a part of a post on September 25 claiming that Ukrainian forces advanced near Novoprokopivka (13km south of Orikhiv) and controlled the northeastern part of the settlement.[21] The milblogger edited the post and instead claimed that Ukrainian forces attacked near Robotyne (10km south of Orikhiv), just north of Novoprokopivka.[22] Geolocated footage published later in the day showed that Ukrainian forces advanced 1.5km northeast of Novoprokopivka.[23] The milblogger's deletion suggests that Russian sources are intentionally limiting their reporting on tactical actions, especially those with outcomes unfavorable to Russia. Censorship or self-censorship among Russian milbloggers will affect ISW's and the wider Western coverage ability of Russian operations, and ISW will continue to track changes in the Russian information space that could affect open-source reporting on the war in Ukraine.

**The Russian State Duma adopted a bill in its first reading that criminalizes promoting and justifying extremism, likely to encourage self-censorship in the Russian information space.**[24] The bill amends a current Russian law that punishes inciting extremism with a fine of up to 300,000 rubles (about \$3,100) and up to four years in prison.[25] The amendment would also increase the imprisonment term to five years for calling for, promoting, or justifying extremism online.[26] Russian authorities arrested former Russian officer and ardent nationalist Igor Girkin on July 21 on extremism charges and likely intends to use the proposed expansion of the law on extremism to encourage self-censorship among more figures disseminating criticisms of the Kremlin in the Russian information space.[27]

**Russian President Vladimir Putin signaled his support for Chechen Republic Head Ramzan Kadyrov during a meeting on September 28 amid continued speculations about Kadyrov's health and public backlash against the recent behavior of Kadyrov's son.** Putin praised the claimed successes of Chechen forces in Ukraine and Kadyrov's leadership of Chechnya during the meeting.[28] Putin and Kadyrov appeared comfortable during the meeting in stark contrast with the pair's last meeting on March 23 where Kadyrov appeared visibly nervous.[29] Kadyrov's and Putin's September 28 meeting comes amid continued speculations about Kadyrov's health and recent public backlash over footage of Kadyrov's son beating a detainee.[30] Putin's meeting with Kadyrov is likely a reciprocation of Kadyrov's expressions of loyalty to Putin following Wagner's armed rebellion on June 24 and signals Putin's willingness to continue supporting Kadyrov despite recent events.[31]

**The Russian information space continued to criticize the Armenian leadership and lament Russia's perceived decreased influence in Armenia.** Imprisoned ardent nationalist and former Russian officer Igor Girkin called the Russian peacekeeping contingent in Nagorno-Karabakh "pathetic" on September 27 for attempting to undertake "imperial functions" without the "ability and willingness" to support peacekeeping operations.[32] Girkin also claimed that Russian peacekeeping forces would have suffered defeat if they had intervened in the recent fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh.[33] A Russian milblogger criticized the Armenian government for not intervening in Nagorno-Karabakh.[34] Another Russian source claimed that Russia has lost a "frozen

conflict” that it can leverage and that the disappearance of a breakaway republic in Russia’s supposed sphere of influence is directly connected to decreasing Russian international influence.[35]

**Senior NATO and Western defense officials met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in Kyiv on September 28 to discuss Ukraine’s military needs.[36]** NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg, UK Defense Secretary Grant Shapps, and French Defense Minister Sebastien Lecornu discussed defensive cooperation and strengthening Ukrainian air defenses with Zelensky.

### **Key Takeaways:**

- **Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations near Bakhmut and in western Zaporizhia Oblast on September 28.**
- **Russian forces have reduced the tempo of their localized offensive operations on the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line in recent days.**
- **Russian aviation is increasingly active in Kharkiv, Luhansk, and Kherson oblasts and apparently less active in areas of western Zaporizhia Oblast where Ukrainian forces are conducting counteroffensive operations.**
- **Russian forces conducted a series of drone strikes against Ukraine on the night of September 27 to 28.**
- **Several Russian milbloggers claimed that they self-censor the majority of their reporting amidst an apparent wider self-censorship in Russian reporting about the tactical realities on certain sectors of the front.**
- **The Russian State Duma adopted a bill in its first reading that criminalizes promoting and justifying extremism, likely to encourage self-censorship in the Russian information space.**
- **Russian President Vladimir Putin signaled his support for Chechen Republic Head Ramzan Kadyrov during a meeting on September 28 amid continued speculations about Kadyrov’s health and public backlash against the recent behavior of Kadyrov’s son.**
- **The Russian information space continued to criticize Armenian leadership and lament Russia’s perceived decreased influence in Armenia.**
- **Russian forces conducted offensive operations on the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line, near Bakhmut, along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line, in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area, and in western Zaporizhia Oblast and did not make confirmed gains.**
- **Russian sources stated that the Russian Aerospace (VKS) Forces received a new batch of fifth-generation Su-57 stealth fighter and fourth-generation Su-35S air defense fighter aircraft on September 28.**
- **Ukrainian Mariupol Mayoral Advisor Petro Andryushchenko stated on September 28 that Ukrainian partisans set fire to a Russian military facility in occupied Yalta, Donetsk Oblast (21km southwest of Mariupol).**

# Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of September 28, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



***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 Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine**

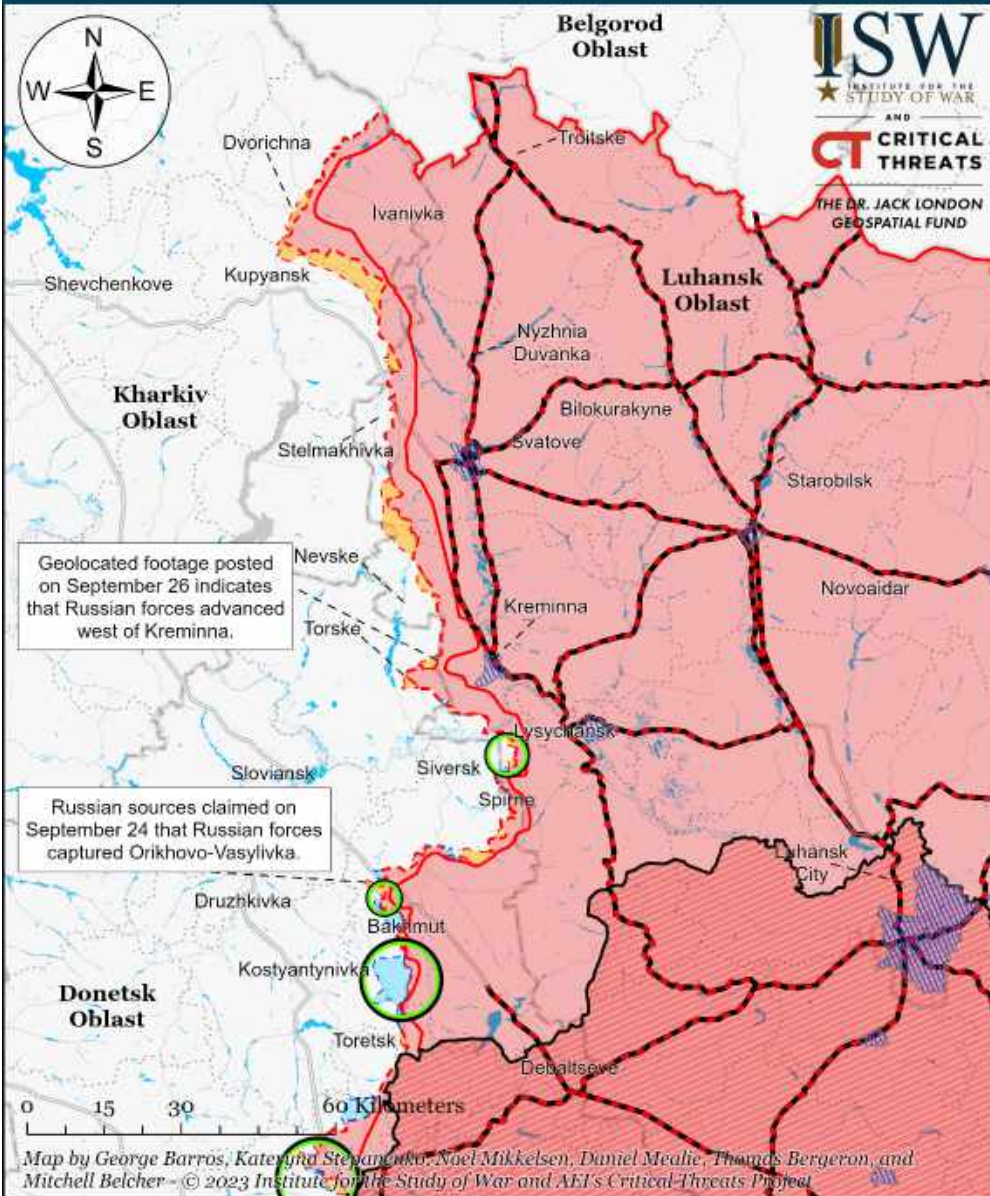
### **Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Luhansk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and northern Donetsk Oblast)**

Russian forces continued limited ground attacks on the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on September 28 but did not make any confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled a Russian ground attack near Bilohorivka, Luhansk Oblast (13km south of Kremina).[37] A Russian milblogger claimed on September 27 that Russian forces continue to pressure Ukrainian forces near Synkivka (6km northeast of Kupyansk), Petropavlivka (7km east of Kupyansk), and Kyslivka (20km southeast of Kupyansk), and west of Svatove.[38] Other Russian sources claimed on September 27 and 28 that limited fighting is ongoing in the Serebryanske forest area (11km south of Kreminna).[39]

Ukrainian Eastern Group of Forces Spokesperson Captain Ilya Yevlash stated on September 28 that unspecified elements of the newly-formed Russian 25th Combined Arms Army (CAA) are operating on the Kupyansk-Lyman front line.[40] ISW previously reported, citing Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) Head Kyrylo Budanov, that Russian forces deployed the 25th CAA “roughly north of Bakhmut” rather than the Kupyansk-Lyman direction.[41] Yevlash’s September 28 statement is more consistent with prior reports that Russian forces deployed elements of the 25th CAA to the Kupyansk-Lyman direction, however.[42]

Ukrainian forces continued offensive actions on the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on September 28 and reportedly recently advanced. Ukrainian Deputy Director of the Department of Application Planning of the Main Directorate of the Ukrainian National Guard Colonel Mykola Urshalovych stated that Ukrainian forces conducted successful assault operations in the Kupyansk and Lyman directions in the past week.[43] A Russian milblogger claimed that elements of the 25th Separate Guards Motorized Rifle Brigade (6th CAA, Western Military District) repelled a Ukrainian attack in a forest area near Synkivka on September 28.[44] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Russian forces repelled a Ukrainian ground attack near Dibrova (7km southwest of Kreminna).[45]

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of September 28, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



- 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 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.

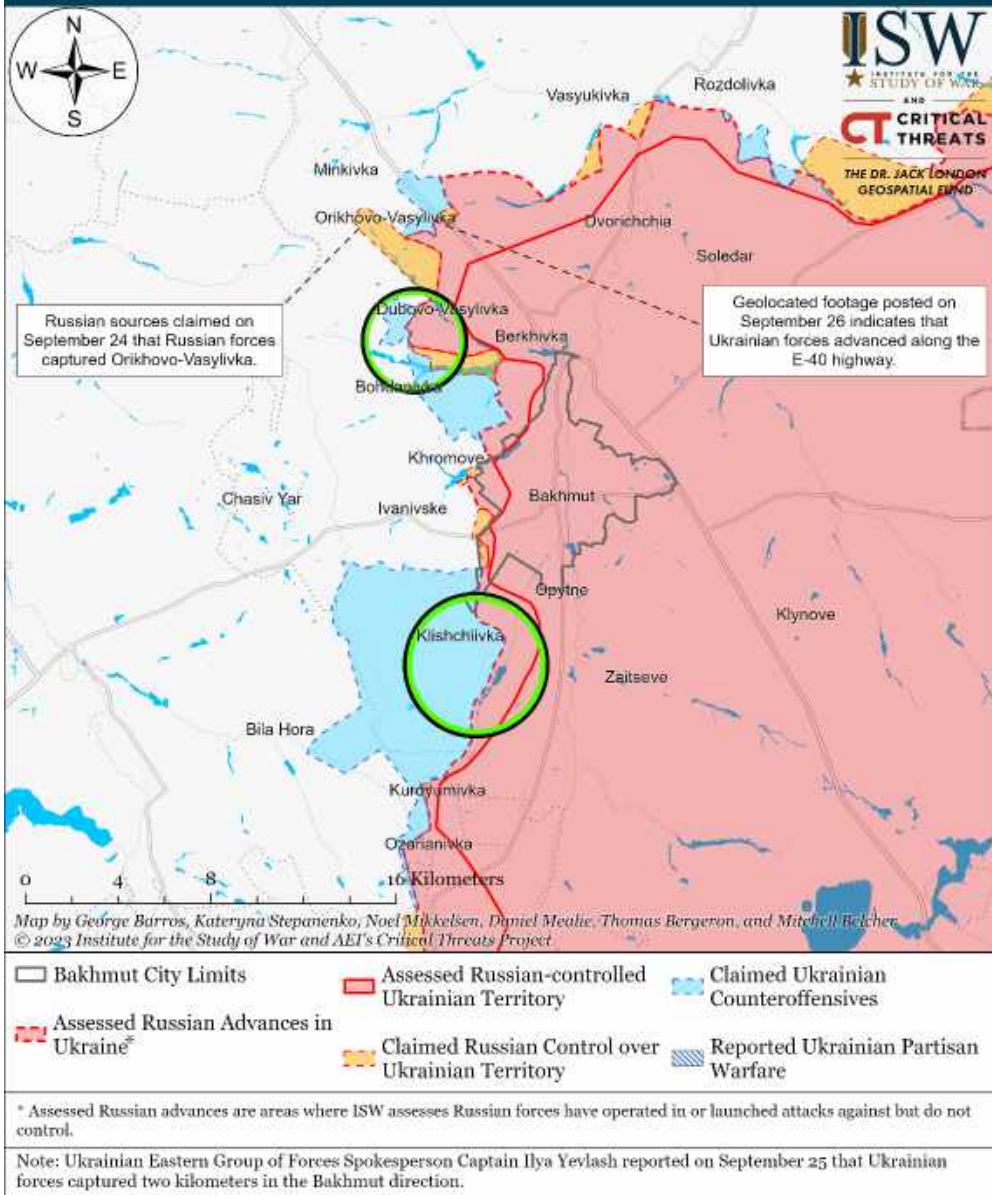
## **Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Donetsk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)**

Ukrainian forces conducted offensive operations near Bakhmut but did not make confirmed gains on September 28. Ukrainian Commander of the 5th Separate Assault Brigade stated that Ukrainian forces have recently advanced beyond Andriivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut) and Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut).[46] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued conducting offensive operations in the Bakhmut direction.[47] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Russian forces repelled a Ukrainian attack near Klishchiivka.[48] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces attacked near the railway line east of Andriivka and that some previously Russian-held positions near Andriivka are now contested.[49] Russian milbloggers claimed on September 27 and 28 that fighting continues near the railway line along the Klishchiivka-Andriivka-Kurdyumivka line (7-12km southwest of Bakhmut).[50]

Russian forces conducted offensive operations near Bakhmut on September 28 but did make confirmed gains. A Russian milblogger claimed on September 27 that Russian forces cleared Ukrainian forces from Orikhovo-Vasyivka (10km northwest of Bakhmut), but ISW has not observed evidence of this recurring Russian claim.[51] The Ukrainian General Staff reported on September 28 that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks near Hryhorivka (9km northwest of Bakhmut), Klishchiivka, and Andriivka.[52] Ukrainian Director of the Planning Department of the Main Directorate of the National Guard Colonel Mykola Urshalovych stated that the Russian military is reinforcing advanced units to prevent further Ukrainian advances in the Bakhmut direction.[53]

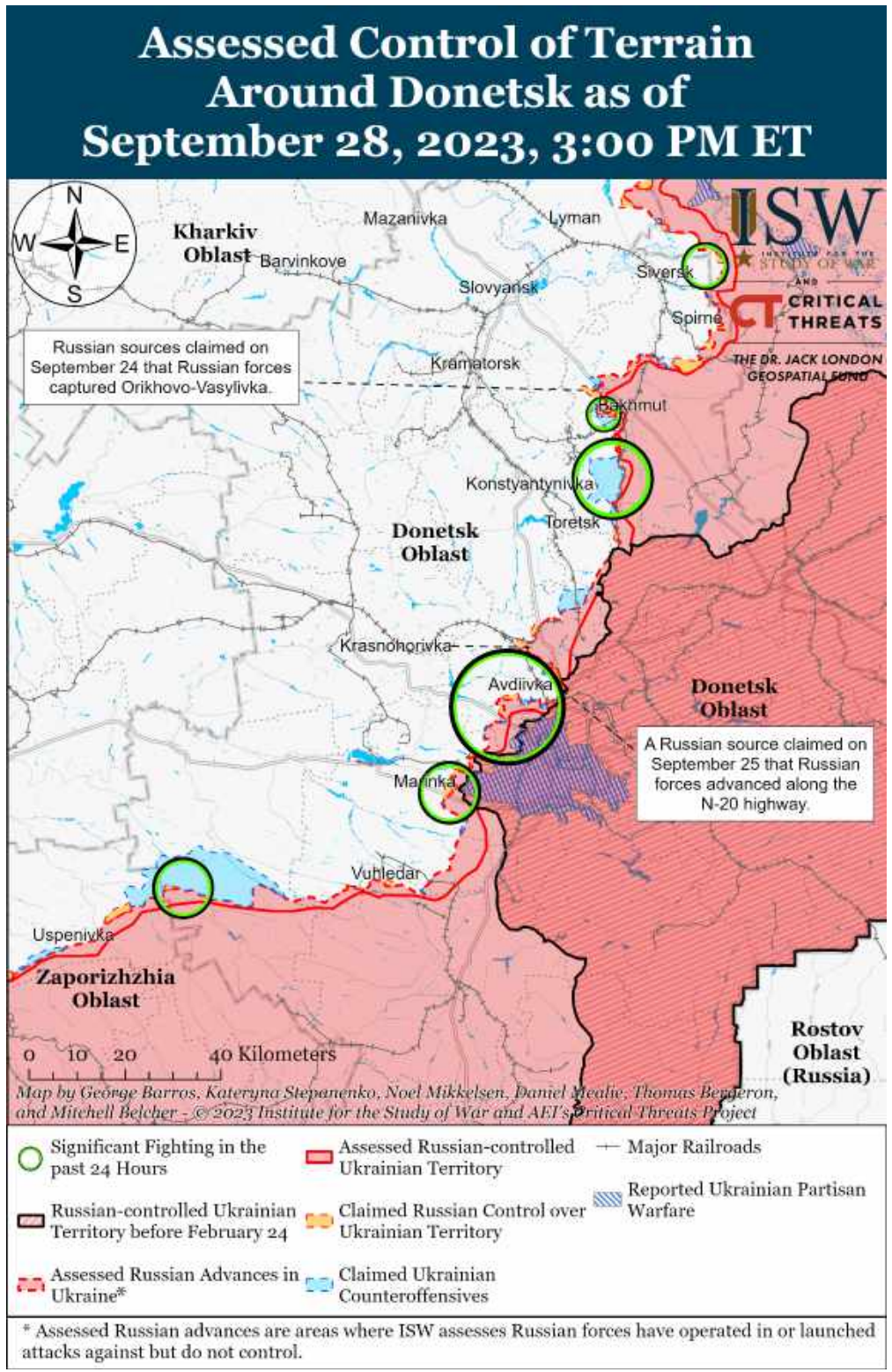
Ukrainian electronic warfare (EW) systems are likely significantly disrupting Russian drone operations near Bakhmut. Ukrainian Eastern Group of Forces Spokesperson Captain Ilya Yevlash stated on September 28 that Ukrainian EW systems disrupted 258 Russian drone missions over the past day.[54] A Russian milblogger claimed on September 19 that Ukrainian EW systems are stronger than Russian EW systems in the Bakhmut area.[55]

## Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of September 28, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Russian forces conducted offensive operations along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line on September 28 but did not make any confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks south of Avdiivka and near Nevelske (13km southwest of Avdiivka), Pervomaiske (11km southwest of Avdiivka), and Marinka (on the southwestern outskirts of Donetsk City).[56] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Sieverne (6km west of Avdiivka).[57] A Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed on September 27 that Russian forces captured a position near Krasnohorivka (directly west of Donetsk City).[58]

The Russian MoD claimed on September 28 that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line near Pervomaiske and southwest of Vesele (6km north of Avdiivka).[59]



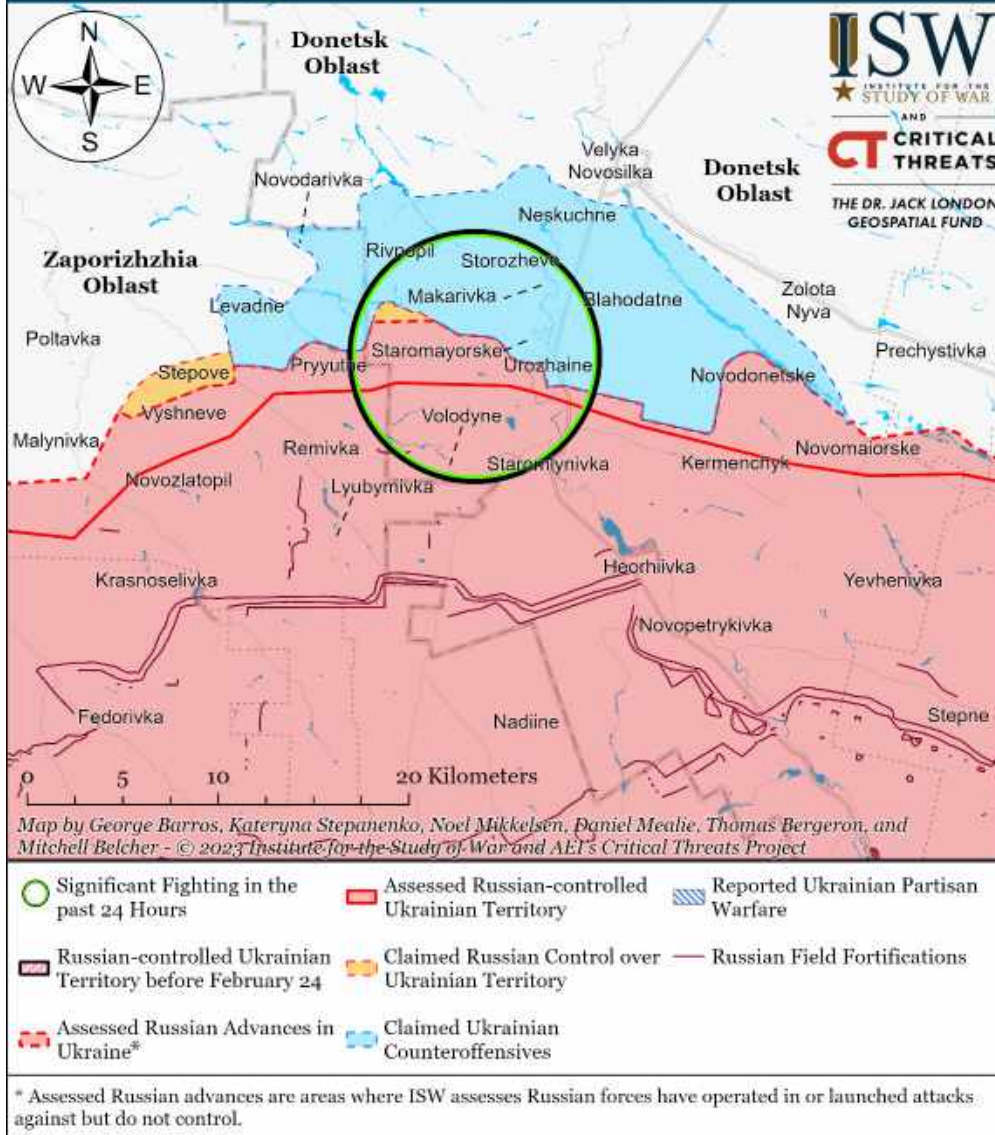


## **Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions and secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes)**

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted limited unsuccessful ground attacks along the administrative border between Donetsk and Zaporizhia oblasts on September 28. The Russian MoD claimed that elements of the Russian Eastern Grouping of Forces repelled two Ukrainian assaults near Pryyutne (15km southwest of Velyka Novosilka).[60] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attempted to advance towards Zavitne Bazhannya (12km south of Velyka Novosilka).[61] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces have curtailed attempts to break through Russian defenses in the area and are conducting assaults for tactical purposes.[62]

Russian forces continued limited ground attacks in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on September 28 but did not make any confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian assaults near Urozhaine (9km south of Velyka Novosilka) and Rivnopil (10km southwest of Velyka Novosilka).[63] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced west of Staromayorske (9km south of Velyka Novosilka) and east of Urozhaine and recaptured unspecified positions north of Pryyutne.[64]

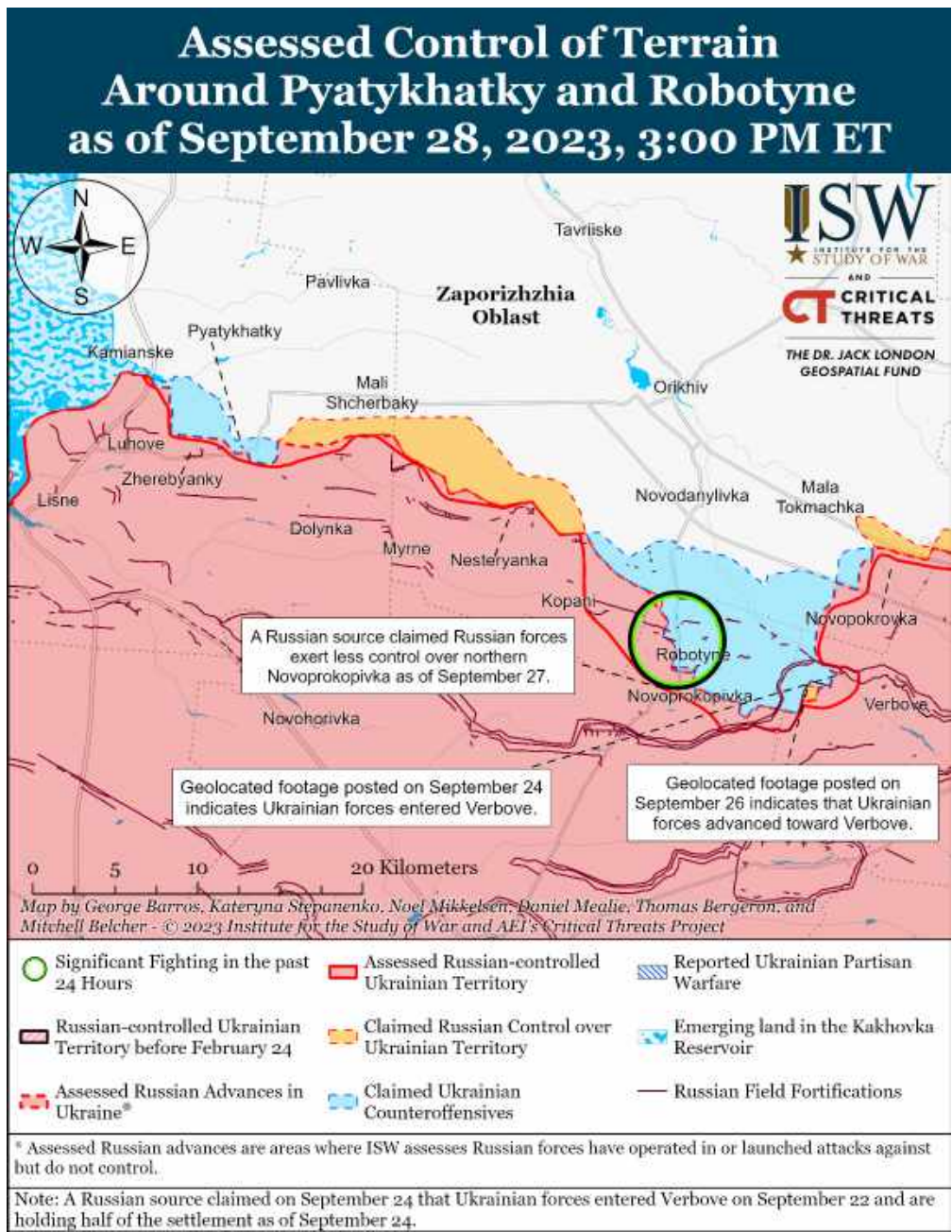
# Assessed Control of Terrain Around the Vremivka Salient as of September 28, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



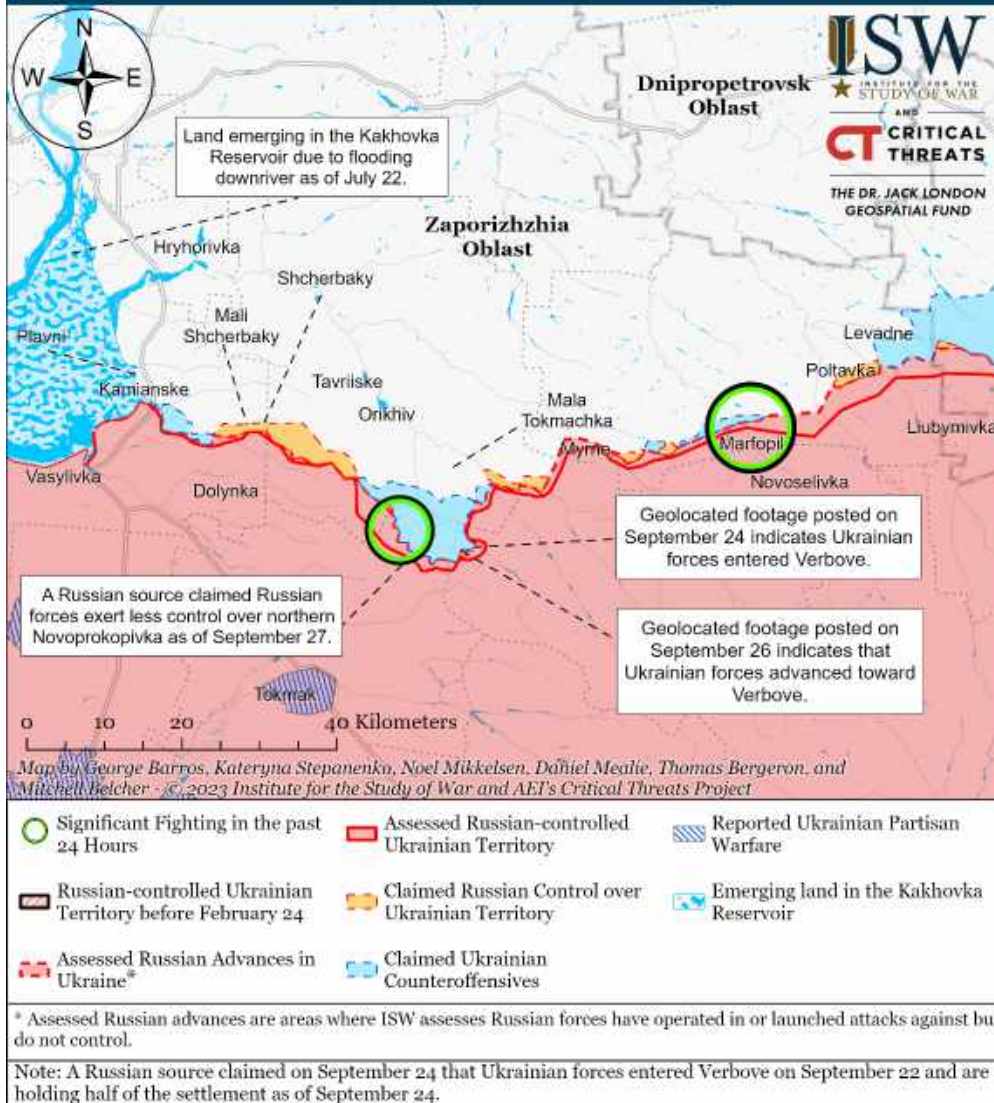
Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast on September 28 but did not make any confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Melitopol (western Zaporizhzhia Oblast) direction.[65] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces continued assaults along the Robotyne-Verbove line (10km south of Orikhiv to 18km southeast of Orikhiv) and conducted small, mechanized assaults near Novoprokopivka (13km south of Orikhiv).[66] Select Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian assaults near Novoprokopivka and Verbove were unsuccessful.[67] The “Storm Ossetia” and “Alania” volunteer battalions claimed that unspecified sources continue to spread false information about a Ukrainian breakthrough in the Robotyne-Verbove area.[68] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces also conducted mechanized assaults near Kopani (11km southwest of Orikhiv) and

that Ukrainian forces are attempting to break through to the settlement along tree lines in the area.[69]

Russian forces continued counterattacks in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast on September 28 but did not make any confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful attempts to restore lost positions near Chervone (9km east of Hulyaipole) and near Robotyne.[70] A Russian milblogger amplified footage purporting to show elements of the 247th Guards Air Assault (VDV) Regiment (7th Guards VDV Division) counterattacking near Verbove and claimed that these elements seized positions at nearby strongholds, although ISW has not observed geolocated evidence of any recent Russian advances in the area.[71]

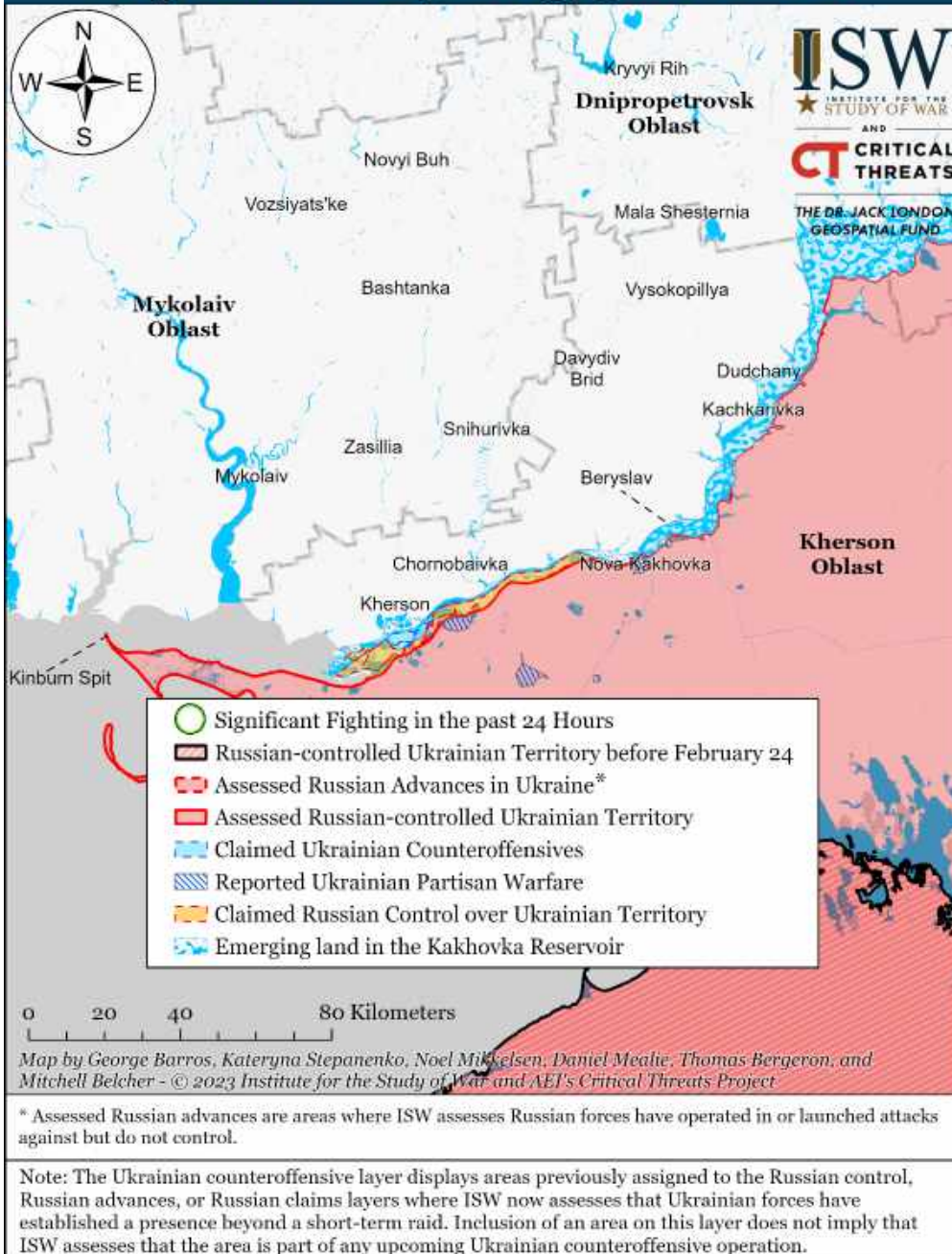


# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhzhia as of September 28, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Russian milbloggers continue to express concern about Ukrainian activity on islands in the Dnipro River delta and the possibility of a Ukrainian crossing to the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast. A prominent Russian milblogger claimed on September 28 that small Ukrainian groups landed in marsh areas northeast of Oleshky (7km south of Kherson City).[72] Several Russian milbloggers expressed concern that Ukrainian forces are accumulating forces to conduct a landing from islands in the Dnipro River delta to the left bank of Kherson Oblast.[73]

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of September 28, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Several Russian milbloggers claimed on September 28 that Russian forces intercepted a Ukrainian missile targeting an unspecified target in occupied Crimea.[74] Another Russian milblogger claimed on September 28 that Russian authorities temporarily closed the Kerch Strait Bridge due to the threat of a Ukrainian strike.[75]

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

Russian sources stated that the Russian Aerospace (VKS) Forces received a new batch of fifth-generation Su-57 stealth fighter and fourth-generation Su-35S air defense fighter aircraft on September 28.[76] Russian Minister of Industry and Trade Denis Manturov stated that this delivery is part of the state defense order and that Russian forces will receive another batch of Su-57 aircraft by the end of 2023.[77] This was reportedly the third batch of Su-35S aircraft that the Russian VKS received in 2023.[78]

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky stated on September 28 that Ukraine's authorities and partners have evidence that Iran has not yet sold Iranian missiles to Russia.[79] The American Enterprise Institute's Critical Threats Project (CTP) and ISW assessed on September 27 that senior Iranian and Russian military officials reviewed Iranian advanced conventional weapons in Moscow and Tehran in August and September 2023 and may conclude a drone and missile sale agreement following the expiration of UN missile restrictions on October 18.[80]

## **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)**

Ukrainian Mariupol Mayoral Advisor Petro Andryushchenko stated on September 28 that Ukrainian partisans set fire to a Russian military facility in occupied Yalta, Donetsk Oblast (21km southwest of Mariupol).[81]

Occupation authorities continue efforts to repopulate occupied Ukraine with Russian citizens. Andryushchenko stated on September 27 that occupation authorities plan to evict Ukrainian residents from a large apartment complex in occupied Mariupol within the next week and sell the apartments to Russian citizens.[82] Andryushchenko stated that occupation authorities raised mortgages for these apartments to rates unaffordable for local Ukrainian residents.[83]

Russian federal subjects continue to expand their patronage networks in occupied Ukraine. The Kherson Oblast occupation administration stated on September 28 that Pskov Oblast authorities have nearly completed constructing a kindergarten in occupied Pavlivka, Henicheskyi Raion, Kherson Oblast.[84] The Kherson Oblast occupation administration also stated that Pskov Oblast authorities sent Russian-language literature, construction equipment, and reagents for water purification to occupied Kherson Oblast.[85]

## **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)**

Belarusian maneuver brigades conducted mining, parachute, drone, and ambush exercises on September 28. The Belarusian Ministry of Defense (MoD) reported that the 38th Airborne Assault Brigade conducted parachute exercise at the Brest training ground in Brest Oblast; that the 103rd Separate Guards Airborne Brigade conducted underwater mining and demining exercises at the Losvido training ground in Vitebsk Oblast; and that the 120th Separate Guards Mechanized Brigade

conducted drone, counter-drone, and ambush exercises at the Borisovsky training ground in Minsk Oblast.[86]

**ISW will continue to report daily observed Russian and Belarusian military activity in Belarus as part of ongoing Kremlin efforts to increase their control over Belarus and other Russian actions in Belarus.**

**Note: ISW does not receive any classified material from any source, uses only publicly available information, and draws extensively on Russian, Ukrainian, and Western reporting and social media as well as commercially available satellite imagery and other geospatial data as the basis for these reports. References to all sources used are provided in the endnotes of each update.**

---

[1] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0D4pziUWC3452Dt62LKhe6KSfR2iBYSTL9z8xcTSvpe3YZLcq5JnfuXAZPkbkzeNJl>

[2] <https://t.me/batalyon15/3029> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-24-2023>

[3] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-august-8-2023> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-august-26-2023>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-august-28-2023>;  
[https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Aug%2011%20Russian%20Offensive%20Campaign%20Assessment%20PDF\\_o.pdf](https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Aug%2011%20Russian%20Offensive%20Campaign%20Assessment%20PDF_o.pdf)

[4] [https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Aug%2011%20Russian%20Offensive%20Campaign%20Assessment%20PDF\\_o.pdf](https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Aug%2011%20Russian%20Offensive%20Campaign%20Assessment%20PDF_o.pdf); <https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Russian%20Offensive%20Campaign%20Assessment%2C%20September%2027%2C%202023%20PDF.pdf> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-20-2023>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-july-16-2023>

[5] <https://t.me/militarymediacenter/3282>

[6] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0D4pziUWC3452Dt62LKhe6KSfR2iBYSTL9z8xcTSvpe3YZLcq5JnfuXAZPkbkzeNJl> ;  
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0D4pziUWC3452Dt62LKhe6KSfR2iBYSTL9z8xcTSvpe3YZLcq5JnfuXAZPkbkzeNJl>

[7] [https://t.me/Sladkov\\_plus/8638](https://t.me/Sladkov_plus/8638); [https://t.me/boris\\_rozhin/98756](https://t.me/boris_rozhin/98756)  
; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/50845>; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/3523> ;  
<https://t.me/rybar/52109> ; <https://t.me/rybar/52096> ; [https://t.me/dva\\_majors/25849](https://t.me/dva_majors/25849) ;  
[https://t.me/dva\\_majors/25849](https://t.me/dva_majors/25849) ; <https://t.me/bbcussian/52614> ; [https://t.me/boris\\_rozhin/97973](https://t.me/boris_rozhin/97973)

- [8] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-24-2023> ; <https://suspilne dot media/582475-bilse-niz-50-aviabomb-ta-raketi-kilkist-obstriliv-vijsk-rf-po-hersonsini-zbilsilas-vtrici-ova/> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-27-2023> ;
- [9] <https://armyinform.com dot ua/2023/09/28/u-rajoni-bahmuta-znyshheno-pryblyzno-dyvizion-artsystem-rf-illya-yevlash/>; <https://suspiln dot .media/582189-na-limano-kupanskomu-napramku-armia-rf-pisla-zatissa-pisla-na-sturm-evlas/> <https://t.me/luhanskaVTSA/13894>
- [10] <https://suspilne dot media/582475-bilse-niz-50-aviabomb-ta-raketi-kilkist-obstriliv-vijsk-rf-po-hersonsini-zbilsilas-vtrici-ova/>
- [11] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar061023>
- [12] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar081723>
- [13] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0D4pziUWC3452Dt62LKhe6KSfR2iBYS TL9z8xcTSvpe3YZLcq5JnfuXAZPkbkzeNjI> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid odpirPv7tQDqoEtRRQaBwmq63NqMfqdKGoJ336rvnJWYi52w4cHz19xrLGBvKtLWDl>
- [14] <https://t.me/kpszsu/5758>
- [15] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid035THjfQfww9iJtdJW5beXwCgjnRNmp S5PyoGXhp73cANDmUjSE5eZicgsLAGmN1mMl> ; <https://armyinform dot com.ua/2023/09/28/chym-vidriznyayetsya-modernizovanyj-shahed-136-vid-starogo-mopeda/> ; <https://www.pravda dot com.ua/eng/news/2023/09/28/7421791/>
- [16] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid035THjfQfww9iJtdJW5beXwCgjnRNmp S5PyoGXhp73cANDmUjSE5eZicgsLAGmN1mMl> ; <https://armyinform dot com.ua/2023/09/28/chym-vidriznyayetsya-modernizovanyj-shahed-136-vid-starogo-mopeda/>
- [17] [https://t.me/belarusian\\_silovik/22228](https://t.me/belarusian_silovik/22228) ; [https://t.me/dva\\_majors/26403](https://t.me/dva_majors/26403) ; [https://t.me/Mestb\\_Dobroj\\_Voli/8349](https://t.me/Mestb_Dobroj_Voli/8349)
- [18] [https://t.me/dva\\_majors/26404](https://t.me/dva_majors/26404)
- [19] [https://t.me/dva\\_majors/26413](https://t.me/dva_majors/26413)
- [20] [https://t.me/Mestb\\_Dobroj\\_Voli/8349](https://t.me/Mestb_Dobroj_Voli/8349)
- [21] <https://twitter.com/GirkinGirkin/status/1706277347974901989/photo/2> ; [https://t.me/polk\\_1430/963](https://t.me/polk_1430/963)
- [22] <https://twitter.com/GirkinGirkin/status/1706277347974901989/photo/2> ; [https://t.me/polk\\_1430/963](https://t.me/polk_1430/963)
- [23] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-august-26->



2023 ; <https://twitter.com/moklasen/status/1695182886960304408> ; <https://twitter.com/moklasen/status/1695186122744250653>

[24] <https://tass dot ru/obschestvo/18866597> ; <https://meduza dot io/news/2023/09/28/gosduma-prinyala-v-pervom-chtenii-zakonoproekt-o-nakazanii-za-opravdanie-i-propagandu-ekstremizma-do-pyati-let-lisheniya-svobody> ; <https://sozd.duma.gov dot ru/bill/403956-8>

[25] <https://meduza dot io/news/2023/09/28/gosduma-prinyala-v-pervom-chtenii-zakonoproekt-o-nakazanii-za-opravdanie-i-propagandu-ekstremizma-do-pyati-let-lisheniya-svobody>; <https://tass dot ru/obschestvo/18866597>

[26] <https://meduza dot io/news/2023/09/28/gosduma-prinyala-v-pervom-chtenii-zakonoproekt-o-nakazanii-za-opravdanie-i-propagandu-ekstremizma-do-pyati-let-lisheniya-svobody>; <https://tass dot ru/obschestvo/18866597>

[27] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-july-21-2023>

[28] <http://kremlin dot ru/events/president/news/72377>

[29] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-march-13-2023> ; <https://t.me/rusbrief/159274>

[30] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar092623> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar092023> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar091723>

[31] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar083023> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar082523>

[32] <https://t.me/strelkovii/6379>

[33] <https://t.me/strelkovii/6379>

[34] <https://t.me/sashakots/42456>

[35] <https://t.me/rusbrief/159277> ; <https://t.me/ShaltayBabay/11464>

[36] <https://www.president.gov dot ua/news/lish-pitannya-chasu-koli-ukrayina-de-yure-stane-chlenom-nat-85937> ; <https://www.president.gov dot ua/news/prezident-zustrivsyia-z-derzhavnim-sekretarem-velikoyi-britan-85921> ; <https://www.president.gov dot ua/news/volodimir-zelenskij-zustrivsyia-z-ministrom-zbrojnih-sil-fran-85941>; <https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-war-nato-ammunition-zelensky-stoltenberg-4f40e940d63f595445f141oddfoba73>

[37] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0D4pziUWC3452Dt62LKhe6KSfR2iBYSTL9z8xcTSvpe3YZLcq5JnfuXAZPkbkzeNJl>

[38] [https://t.me/boris\\_rozhin/98756](https://t.me/boris_rozhin/98756) ; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/50845>

[39] <https://t.me/rybar/52438>; <https://t.me/readovkanews/66767>; [https://t.me/vdv\\_ZA\\_teplinsky/441](https://t.me/vdv_ZA_teplinsky/441) ; [https://t.me/dva\\_majors/26374](https://t.me/dva_majors/26374)

[40] <https://armyinform.com dot ua/2023/09/28/u-rajoni-bahmuta-znyshheno-pryblyzno-dyvizion-artsystem-rf-illya-yevlash/>; <https://suspiln dot media/582189-na-limano-kupanskomu-napramku-armia-rf-pisla-zatissa-pisla-na-sturm-evlas/> <https://t.me/luhanskaVTSA/13894>

[41] <https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Russian%20Offensive%20Campaign%20Assessment%2C%20September%2027%2C%202023%20PDF.pdf>

[42] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-1-2023>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Russian%20Offensive%20Campaign%20Assessment%2C%20September%2015%2C%202023%20PDF.pdf>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-13-2023>;

[43] <https://t.me/militarymediacenter/3282>

[44] <https://t.me/zvofront/1178>; <https://twitter.com/GirkinGirkin/status/1707359848730448355>

[45] [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30902](https://t.me/mod_russia/30902) ; [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30908](https://t.me/mod_russia/30908)

[46] <https://suspilne dot media/582681-mi-vijsli-za-mezi-sil-kombat-5-i-sturmovoi-pro-sprobi-okupantiv-povernuti-andriivku-ta-klisiivku/>

[47] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidOD4pziUWC3452Dt62LKhe6KSfR2iBYSTL9z8xcTSvpe3YZLcq5JnfuXAZPkbkzeNjI> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidodpirPv7tQDqoEtRRQaBwmq63NqMfqdKG0J336rvnJWYi52w4cHz19xrLGBvKtLWDI> ; <https://www.facebook.com/JointForcesCommandAFU/posts/pfbid02Pcx3sCtp7iYHUD7r6HiMWf91FKAt91UgqxS4MYtk1toH2DwfLh2JSS1oqeNyuWxDI>

[48] [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30898](https://t.me/mod_russia/30898)

[49] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15328>

[50] [https://t.me/boris\\_rozhin/98756](https://t.me/boris_rozhin/98756) ; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/50845> ; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/50852> ; [https://t.me/vdv\\_ZA\\_teplinsky/441](https://t.me/vdv_ZA_teplinsky/441) ; [https://t.me/dva\\_majors/26374](https://t.me/dva_majors/26374)

[51] [https://t.me/boris\\_rozhin/98751](https://t.me/boris_rozhin/98751)

[52] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidodpirPv7tQDqoEtRRQaBwmq63NqMfqdKG0J336rvnJWYi52w4cHz19xrLGBvKtLWDI>

[53] <https://t.me/militarymediacenter/3282>

[54] <https://armyinform.com dot ua/2023/09/28/u-rajoni-bahmuta-znyshheno-pryblyzno-dyvizion-artsystem-rf-illya-yevlash/>

[55] <https://t.me/sashakots/42257> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-19-2023>

[56] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidOD4pziUWC3452Dt62LKhe6KSfR2iBYSTL9z8xcTSvpe3YZLcq5JnfuXAZPkbkzeNjI> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidodpirPv7tQDqoEtRRQaBwmq63NqMfqdKGoJ336rvnJWYi52w4cHz19xrLGBvKtLWDI>

[57] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15328>

[58] <https://t.me/rybar/52438>

[59] [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30902](https://t.me/mod_russia/30902) ; [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30905](https://t.me/mod_russia/30905)

[60] [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30902](https://t.me/mod_russia/30902) ; [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30907](https://t.me/mod_russia/30907)

[61] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15328>

[62] [https://t.me/boris\\_rozhin/98756](https://t.me/boris_rozhin/98756) ; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/50845>

[63] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidOD4pziUWC3452Dt62LKhe6KSfR2iBYSTL9z8xcTSvpe3YZLcq5JnfuXAZPkbkzeNjI> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidodpirPv7tQDqoEtRRQaBwmq63NqMfqdKGoJ336rvnJWYi52w4cHz19xrLGBvKtLWDI>

[64] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15328> ; [https://t.me/voin\\_dv/5188](https://t.me/voin_dv/5188)

[65] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidOD4pziUWC3452Dt62LKhe6KSfR2iBYSTL9z8xcTSvpe3YZLcq5JnfuXAZPkbkzeNjI> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidodpirPv7tQDqoEtRRQaBwmq63NqMfqdKGoJ336rvnJWYi52w4cHz19xrLGBvKtLWDI> ; <https://www.facebook.com/JointForcesCommandAFU/posts/pfbidO2Pcx3sCtp7iYHUD7r6HiMWf91FKAt91UgqxS4MYtk1toH2DwfLh2JSs1oqeNyuWxDI>

[66] <https://t.me/rybar/52451> ; [https://t.me/rusich\\_army/11066](https://t.me/rusich_army/11066) ; <https://t.me/wargonzo/15328> ; <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/53790>

[67] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15328> ; <https://t.me/vrogov/12254>

[68] <https://t.me/batalyon15/3029>

[69] <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/53790>

[70] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidOD4pziUWC3452Dt62LKhe6KSfR2iBYSTL9z8xcTSvpe3YZLcq5JnfuXAZPkbkzeNjI> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidodpirPv7tQDqoEtRRQaBwmq63NqMfqdKGoJ336rvnJWYi52w4cHz19xrLGBvKtLWDI>

[71] <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/53755>

[72] <https://t.me/rybar/52457>

[73] <https://t.me/rybar/52457> ; <https://t.me/rybar/52458> ; [https://t.me/dva\\_majors/26374](https://t.me/dva_majors/26374) ; [https://t.me/boris\\_rozhin/98756](https://t.me/boris_rozhin/98756) ; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/50845>

- [74] [https://t.me/vdv\\_ZA\\_teplinsky/441](https://t.me/vdv_ZA_teplinsky/441) ; [https://t.me/dva\\_majors/26374](https://t.me/dva_majors/26374)
- [75] <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/3551>
- [76] [https://t.me/z\\_arhiv/25136](https://t.me/z_arhiv/25136) ; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/3550> ; <https://t.me/sashakots/42453> ; <https://t.me/epoddubny/17550> ; <https://www.vedomosti dot ru/politics/news/2023/09/28/997615-vks-rossii> ; <https://t.me/milinfo/107169>
- [77] <https://www.vedomosti dot ru/politics/news/2023/09/28/997615-vks-rossii>
- [78] <https://www.vedomosti dot ru/politics/news/2023/09/28/997615-vks-rossii>
- [79] <https://www.ukrinform dot net/rubric-ato/3767270-no-confirmed-facts-so-far-of-iran-sending-missiles-to-russia-zelensky.html>
- [80] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-september-27-2023>
- [81] <https://t.me/andriyshTime/13816> ; <https://t.me/andriyshTime/13818>
- [82] <https://t.me/andriyshTime/13807>
- [83] <https://t.me/andriyshTime/13806>
- [84] [https://t.me/VGA\\_Kherson/14241](https://t.me/VGA_Kherson/14241)
- [85] [https://t.me/VGA\\_Kherson/14241](https://t.me/VGA_Kherson/14241)
- [86] <https://t.me/modmilby/32423>; <https://t.me/modmilby/32423>; <https://t.me/modmilby/32407>

# Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, September 27, 2023

Christina Harward, Angelica Evans, Grace Mappes, Kateryna Stepanenko, and Frederick W. Kagan  
September 27, 2023, 7:45pm 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 2pm ET on September 27. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the September 28 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.**

**Ukrainian forces marginally advanced near Bakhmut and in western Zaporizhia Oblast on September 27.** Geolocated footage published on September 26 indicates that Ukrainian forces advanced near Orikhovo-Vasylivka (10km northwest of Bakhmut).[1] Additional geolocated footage published on September 26 indicates that Russian forces likely no longer control a roughly one-kilometer-long trench line west of Verbove (16km southeast of Orikhiv).[2] The absence of Russian forces in this trench line could facilitate further Ukrainian advances in this area, as this trench line is no longer a significant obstacle for Ukrainian forces. Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces Commander Brigadier General Oleksandr Tarnavskiy stated that “there will be good news” in the Zaporizhia operational direction and noted that Ukrainian forces are steadily advancing but did not provide additional information.[3]

**The situation near Verbove remains unclear as prominent Russian milbloggers have become noticeably less inclined to report in detail on Russian activity on this frontline or present bad news about Russian failures, while a discussion about reported Russian problems in this area has emerged on the fringes of the Russian information space.** Zaporizhia Oblast occupation official Vladimir Rogov claimed on September 26 that at least four Ukrainian companies with a significant number of armored vehicles stormed Russian positions along the Robotyne-Verbove line after conducting a massive artillery barrage.[4] A Russian milblogger who avidly supports Russian Airborne Forces (VDV) Commander Colonel General Mikhail Teplinsky by criticizing the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) responded to Rogov, stating that Ukrainian forces have already passed the minefields and “dragon’s teeth” anti-tank fortifications on the Robotyne-Verbove line and that Ukrainian forces would have conducted such attacks sooner or later.[5] Another Russian milblogger claimed on September 26 that there is intense mutual shelling that is making it dangerous to operate above ground near Verbove and Robotyne.[6] Still another milblogger reportedly affiliated with the VDV Forces responded to this claim, stating that a personal source from the Russian 108th VDV Regiment (7th VDV Division) reported that there is intense Ukrainian shelling in the area.[7] The milblogger added that their source provided unclear information about whether the 108th VDV Regiment was moving to Verbove or leaving from Verbove. The milblogger also claimed that the Russian military command in Moscow canceled plans for the redeployment of the Russian 106th VDV Division to the Robotyne area to aid the 7th and 76th VDV Divisions currently operating there and offered an unreasonable explanation for the motivation behind this decision.[8] ISW has observed that this channel has demonstrated a tendency to make exaggerated statements and implausible claims that favor Teplinsky against Russian Minister of Defense Sergei Shoigu and Russian Chief of the General Staff Army General Valery Gerasimov. ISW has also previously observed elements of the 106th VDV Division in the Bakhmut area.[9] The Russian information space has largely been hesitant recently to discuss Russian forces’ operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast, as the Russian milblogger community has reduced its criticisms of the Russian conduct of the war on this sector of the front since Wagner Group financier Yevgeny Prigozhin’s rebellion on June 24. ISW will continue to adapt to this new information space.

**Russian media continues to publish inconclusive “proof” that Black Sea Fleet Commander Admiral Viktor Solokov is alive.** *Zvezda News* published an interview with Solokov on September 27, but ISW is unprepared at this time to make an assessment about the authenticity of the footage or the date of its filming.[10] The Kremlin and Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) have been notably silent on the matter and have not directly confirmed that Sokolov is alive.

**Ukrainian and Russian confirmations of some former Wagner Group personnel deploying to the Bakhmut area indicate that the Wagner Group is struggling to cohesively reform around new leadership.** A Russian milblogger claimed on September 26 that the appointment of a new overall Wagner commander triggered an exodus of Wagner personnel to Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD)-related structures.[11] Ukrainian Eastern Group of Forces Spokesperson Captain Ilya Yevlash confirmed on September 27 the presence of 500 former Wagner personnel operating in MoD-related formations in the Bakhmut area and that these personnel are insufficient to change the situation on the battlefield.[12] A Ukrainian drone operator reportedly operating in the Bakhmut area reported that Wagner personnel changed commanders and returned to the Bakhmut area to compensate for ongoing personnel shortages in the area.[13] The

piecemealed deployment of former Wagner personnel to any area of the frontline is unlikely to generate any significant strategic or even localized effects on the battlefield in Ukraine.

**Key Takeaways:**

- **Ukrainian forces marginally advanced near Bakhmut and in western Zaporizhia Oblast on September 27.**
- **The situation near Verbove remains unclear as prominent Russian milbloggers have become noticeably less inclined to report in detail on Russian activity on this frontline or present bad news about Russian failures, while a discussion about reported Russian problems in this area has emerged on the fringes of the Russian information space.**
- **Russian media continues to publish inconclusive “proof” that Black Sea Fleet Commander Admiral Viktor Solokov is alive.**
- **Ukrainian and Russian confirmations of some former Wagner Group personnel deploying to the Bakhmut area indicate that the Wagner Group is struggling to cohesively reform around new leadership.**
- **Russian forces continued offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line, in Bakhmut, and along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line on September 27 but did not make any confirmed gains.**
- **The *Guardian* reported on September 27 that Iranian drones that Russian forces operate in Ukraine contain European components despite international sanctions.**
- **Ukrainian partisans continue to disrupt Russian logistics in occupied Ukraine.**

# Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of September 27, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, and Mitchell Belcher - © 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

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

***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 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)**

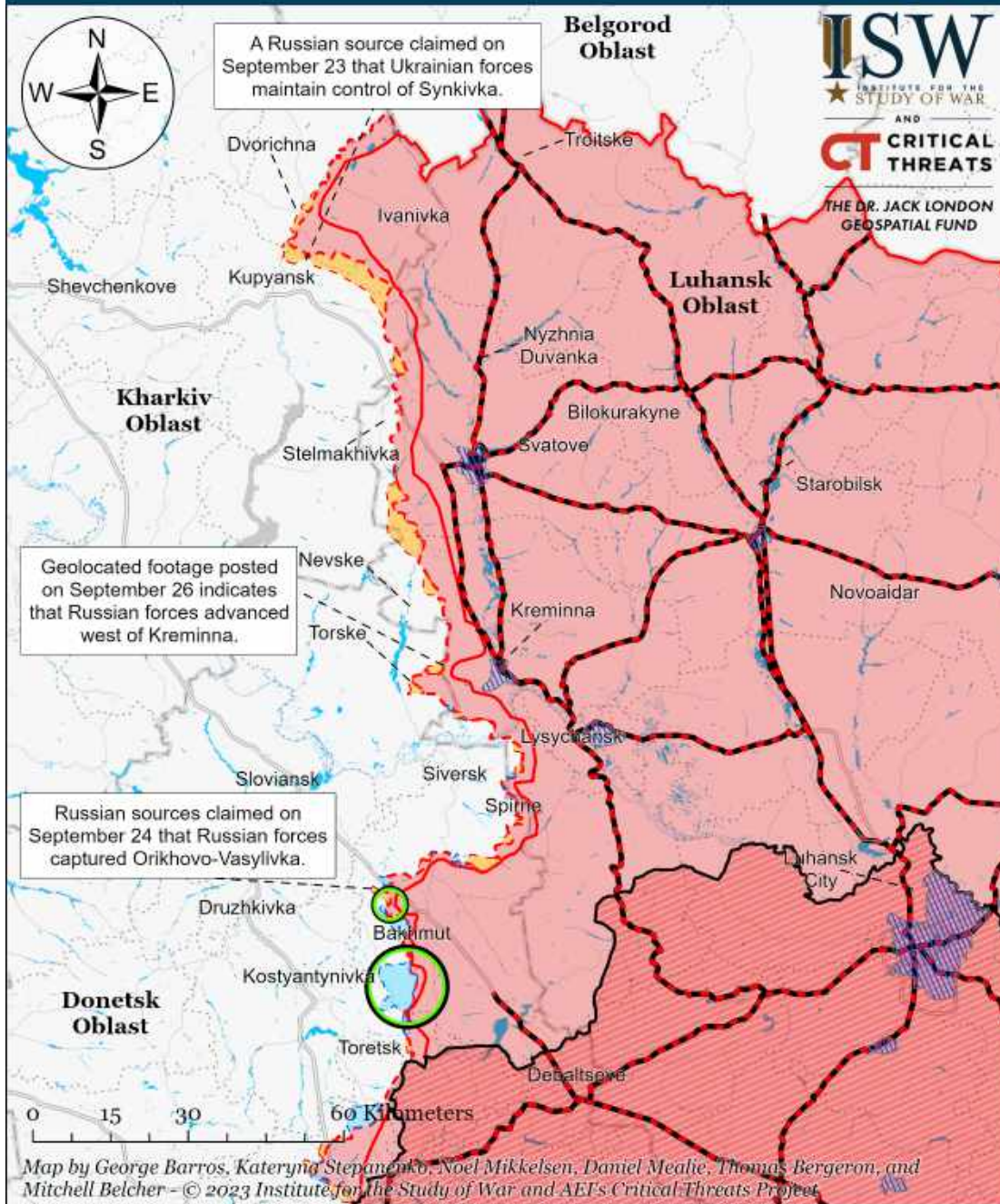
Russian forces conducted offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line but did not advance on September 27. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces attacked in the Serebryanske forest area (11km south of Kreminna) but did not specify an outcome.[14] A Russian news aggregator claimed that Russian and Ukrainian forces participated in combat engagements near the Serebryanske forest area on September 26.[15] The Ukrainian General Staff and Ukrainian Eastern Group of Forces Spokesperson Captain Ilya Yevlash reported on September 27 that Russian forces did not conduct offensive actions in the Kupyansk and Lyman directions.[16] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces destroyed two unspecified bridge crossings over the Oskil River.[17]

The Russian military is reportedly deploying elements of the recently created 25th Combined Arms Army (CAA) to the Kreminna area instead of the Kupyansk area, likely disrupting Russian attempts to pin Ukrainian forces in the Kupyansk direction away from southern Ukraine. The United Kingdom Ministry of Defense (MoD) reported on September 27 that elements of the Russian 67th Motorized Rifle Division and 164th Separate Motorized Rifle Brigade (25th CAA, Eastern Military District) are operating west of Severodonetsk and Kreminna.[18] Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) Head Lieutenant General Kyrylo Budanov previously stated on September 22 that the Russian military had deployed elements of the 25th CAA “roughly north of Bakhmut.”[19] Elements of the 25th CAA may be operating both west of Kreminna and Severodonetsk as well as north of Bakhmut, though the situation is currently unclear. Budanov also stated on August 31 that elements of the 41st CAA (Central Military District) have begun to slowly redeploy from the Kupyansk direction to southern Ukraine.[20] The deployment of elements of the 25th CAA to the Severodonetsk-Kreminna area and possibly to north of Bakhmut – and not to the Kupyansk direction to replace elements of the 41st CAA – will likely disrupt Russian efforts to fix Ukrainian forces in the Kupyansk direction, as ISW has previously assessed.[21]

The Russian MoD claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted unsuccessful offensive operations south of Kreminna on September 27. The Russian MoD claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Dibrova (7km southwest of Kreminna), the Serebryanske forest area, Hryhorivka (11km south of Kreminna), and Spirne (25km south of Kreminna).[22]



# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of September 27, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, and Mitchell Belcher - © 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine\*
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Russian Ground Lines of Communication
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory

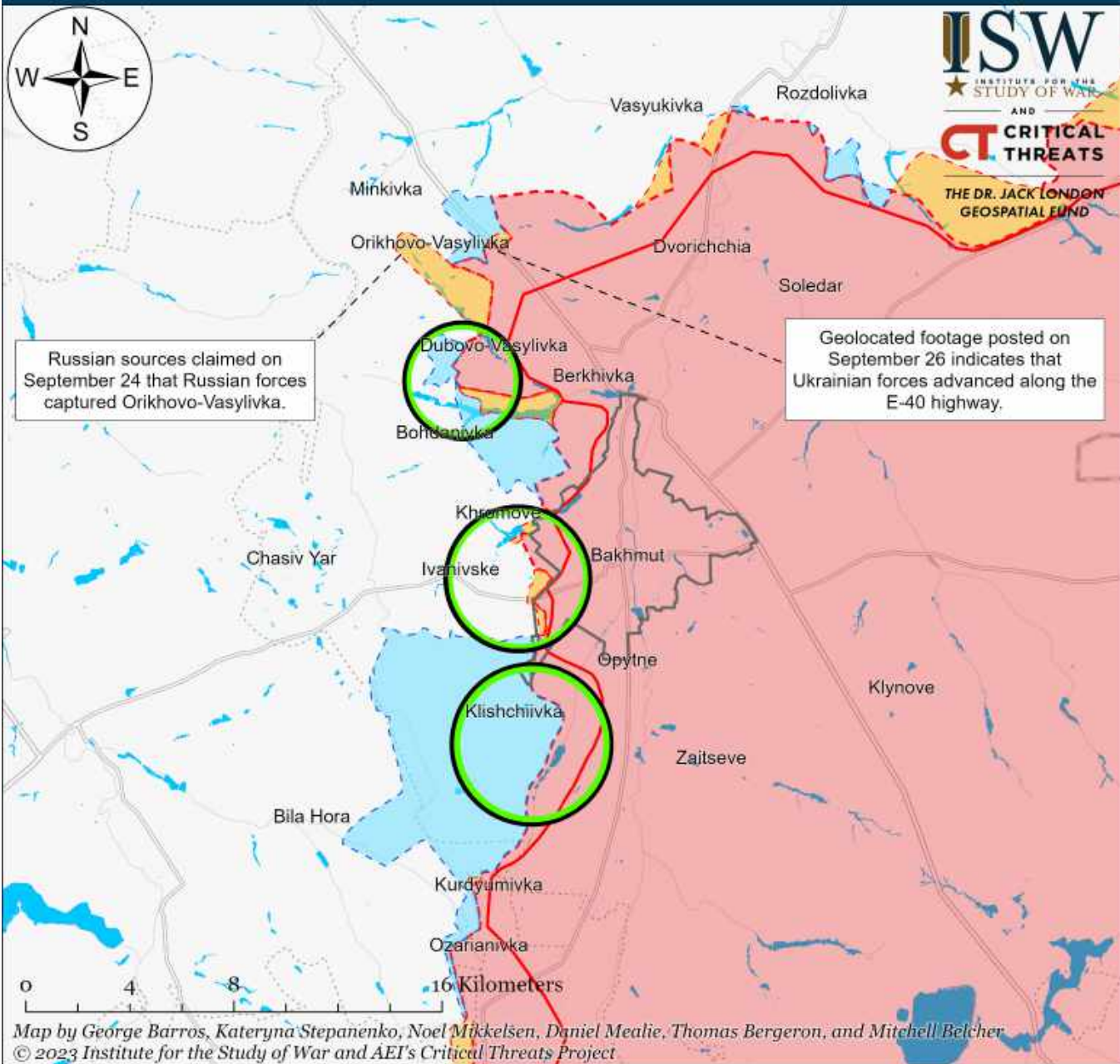
\* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

**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 September 27 and advanced. Geolocated footage published on September 26 indicates that Ukrainian forces marginally advanced east of Orikhovo-Vasylivka (10km northwest of Bakhmut).[23] Ukrainian Eastern Grouping of Forces Spokesperson Captain Ilya Yevlash stated on September 27 that Ukrainian forces were successful in the direction of Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut), Odrativka (7km south of Bakhmut), and Shumy (22km southwest of Bakhmut).[24] The Ukrainian Border Guards Service stated on September 26 that Ukrainian forces continued to advance in the Bakhmut direction and are defending recently recaptured positions.[25] Russian sources claimed on September 27 that Ukrainian forces continue attempts to break through Russian defenses near Klishchiivka, Andriivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut), and Kurdyumivka (12km southwest of Bakhmut).[26] Another Russian milblogger that Russian forces repelled a Ukrainian armored assault between Zaliznyanske (13km north of Bakhmut) and Orikhovo-Vasylivka.[27] A Russian news aggregator claimed that Russian forces repelled a Ukrainian attack near Berkhivka (6km northwest of Bakhmut) on September 26.[28] A Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces are concentrating manpower near Bakhmut potentially for an attempted breakthrough in the area.[29]

Russian forces continued offensive operations near Bakhmut on September 27 but did not make any confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled a Russian attack near Hryhorivka (10km northwest of Bakhmut).[30] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces counterattacked near Klishchiivka and Andriivka but did not specify an outcome.[31] Russian sources continued to claim that Russian forces advanced near Orikhovo-Vasylivka, although ISW has not observed visual confirmation of this claim.[32] Yevlash stated that Russian forces are attempting to restore lost positions near Bakhmut and have concentrated 50,000 personnel in the Bakhmut direction, and this number likely includes Russian rear-area personnel.[33] Russian sources amplified footage claiming to show elements of the Russian 58th Separate Special Purpose Battalion (Donetsk People’s Republic [DNR] 1st Army Corps) operating near Bakhmut.[34]

# Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of September 27, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



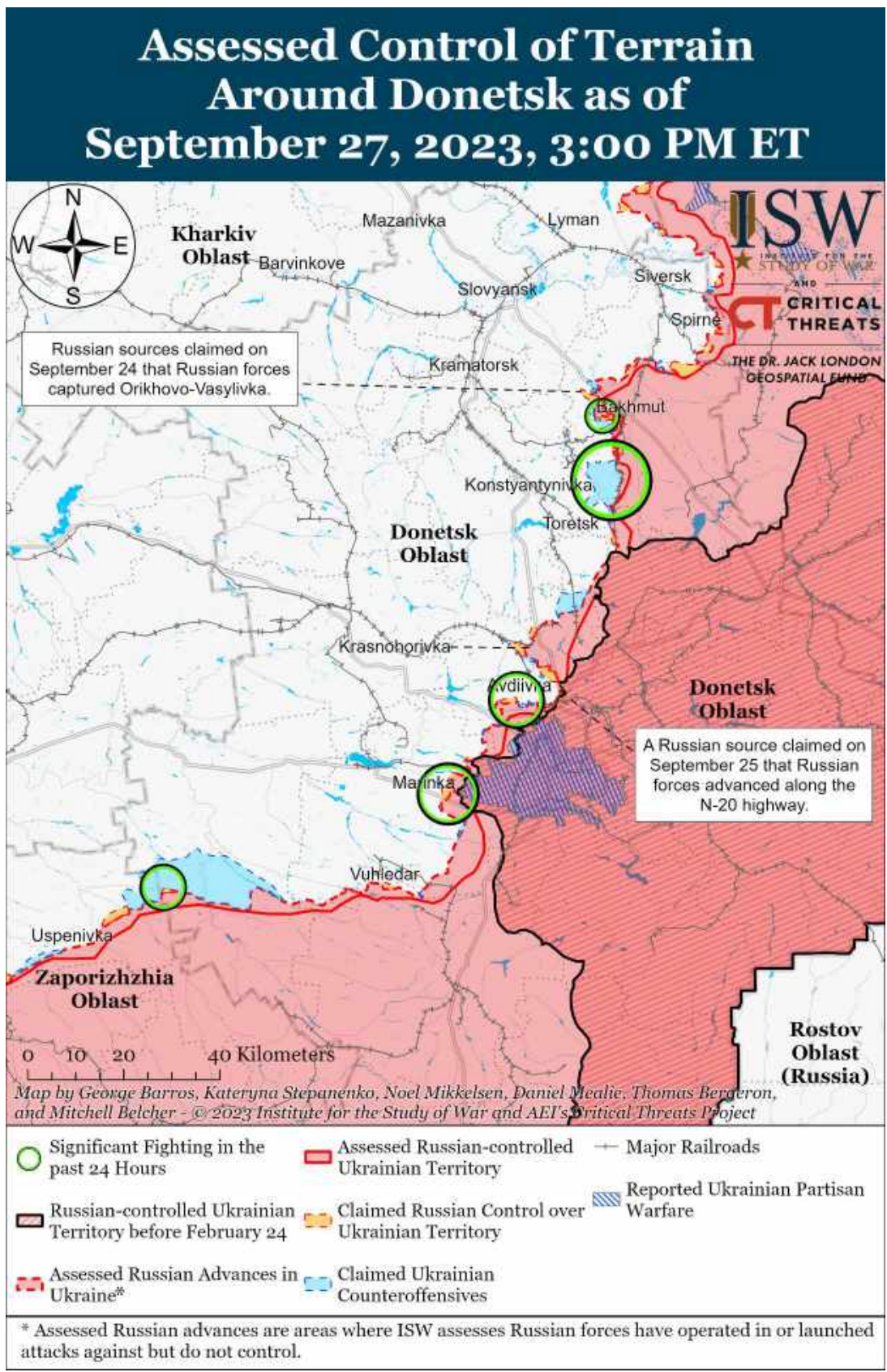
Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, and Mitchell Belcher  
 © 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

Bakhmut City Limits	Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory	Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*	Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory	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: Ukrainian Eastern Group of Forces Spokesperson Captain Ilya Yevlash reported on September 25 that Ukrainian forces captured two kilometers in the Bakhmut direction.

Russian forces continued limited offensive operations along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line on September 27 but did not make any confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks near Sieverne (6km west of Avdiivka) and Marinka (directly west of Donetsk City).[35] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces also attacked near Novomykhailivka (36km southwest of Avdiivka).[36]

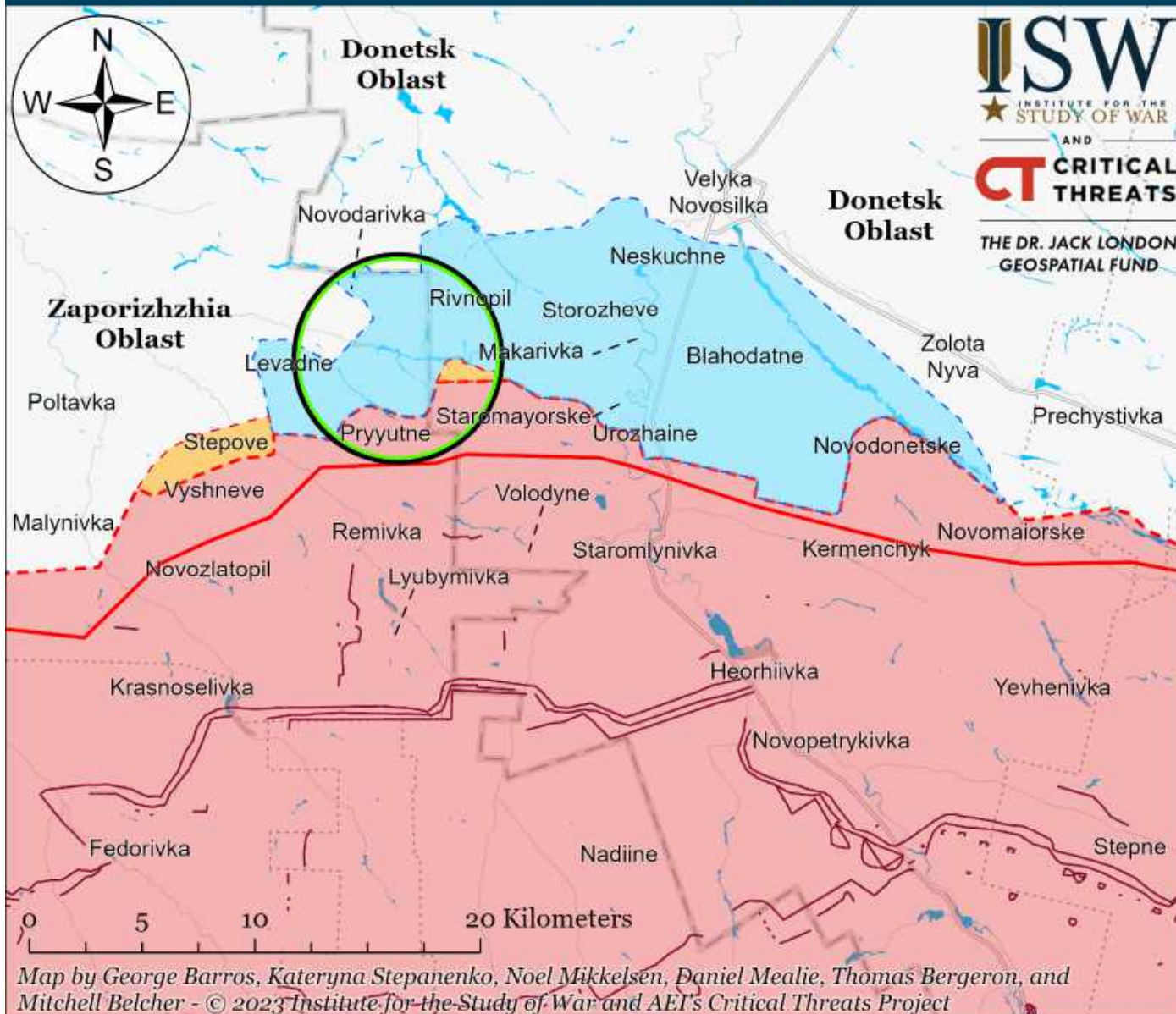


**Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions and secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes)**

Ukrainian forces continued limited offensive operations on the western Donetsk-eastern Zaporizhia Oblast frontline on September 27 but did not make any territorial gains. Russian Eastern Grouping of Forces Spokesperson Oleg Chekhov claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks north of Pryyutne (14km southwest of Velyka Novosilka), near Staromayorske (8km southwest of Velyka Novosilka), near Novodonetske (12km southeast of Velyka Novosilka), and near Marfopil (5km southeast of Hulyaipole).[37] A Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed that heavy fighting is ongoing in near Vuhledar (30km southwest of Donetsk City) in western Donetsk Oblast despite reports that Ukrainian activity slightly decreased near Urozhaine (7km south of Velyka Novosilka) and Staromayorske.[38] A Russian milblogger claimed that elements of the Russian 5th Combined Arms Army (Eastern Military District) repelled Ukrainian attacks in an unspecified area in the Vremivka salient on September 27, and a Russian news aggregator added that Russian forces repelled an assault on Pryyutne on September 26.[39]

Russian forces counterattacked against Ukrainian positions in western Donetsk and eastern Zaporizhia oblasts on September 27 but did not advance. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks near Rivnopil (10km southwest of Velyka Novosilka) and south of Novodarivka (15km west of Velyka Novosilka).[40] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces counterattacked in an unspecified area on the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border and pushed Ukrainian forces from unspecified positions.[41]

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around the Vremivka Salient as of September 27, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



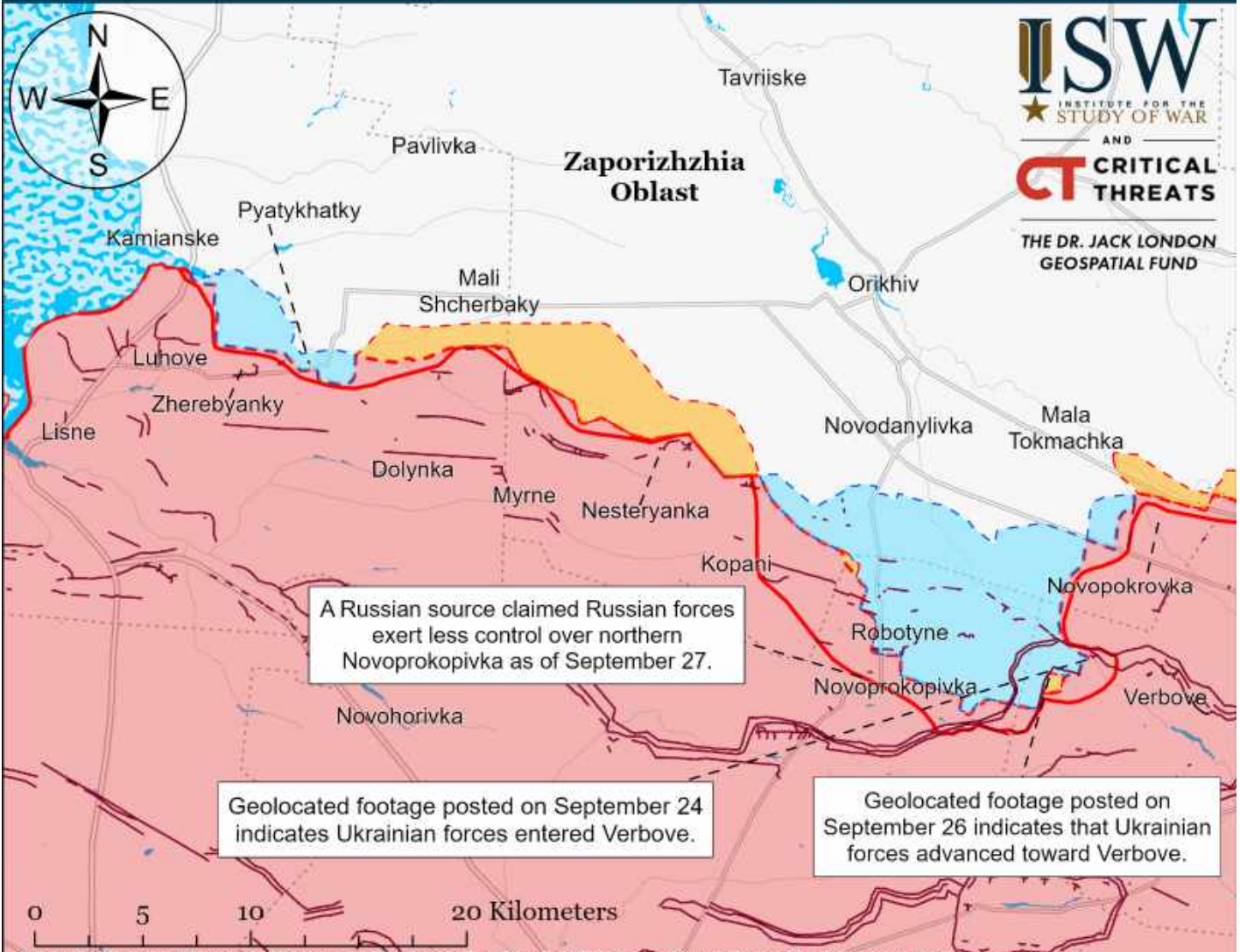
- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine\*
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
- Russian Field Fortifications

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

Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast on September 27 and have entered a trench line west of Verbove (16km southeast of Orikhiv). Geolocated footage published on September 26 shows a Russian drone striking Ukrainian infantry inside a trench west of Verbove, and the Russian use of drones to engage these Ukrainian forces indicates that Russian forces likely are no longer present at the roughly one-kilometer-long trench line west of Verbove.[42] Zaporizhia Oblast occupation official Vladimir Rogov claimed on September 26 that at least four Ukrainian companies with a significant number of vehicles stormed Russian positions along the Robotyne-Verbove lines after first conducting a massive artillery barrage.[43] A Russian milblogger who avidly supports the Russian Airborne Forces (VDV) Commander Colonel General Mikhail Teplinsky by criticizing the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) responded to Rogov stating that Ukrainian forces have already passed the mine fields and dragon's teeth anti-tank fortifications on the Robotyne-Verbove line and that Ukrainian forces would have conducted such attacks sooner or later.[44] Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces Commander Brigadier General Oleksandr Tarnavskyi stated that "there will be good news" in the Zaporizhia operational direction and noted that Ukrainian forces are steadily advancing but did not provide additional information.[45]

Other sources, including the Russian MoD, claimed that Russian forces continued to repel Ukrainian attacks near Verbove on September 27 and that Ukrainian forces have not achieved any breakthroughs in western Zaporizhia Oblast.[46] A Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully tried to advance toward Novoprokopivka (15km south of Orikhiv) and Verbove.[47] Russian sources also claimed that elements of the "Timer" volunteer battalion from the Republic of Tatarstan is shelling advancing Ukrainian forces on the Robotyne-Verbove line.[48] The North Ossetian "Alania" and "Storm Ossetia" volunteer battalions that operate in the area claimed that the intensity of fighting is decreasing in some areas of the Robotyne-Verbove line.[49]

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Pyatykhatky and Robotyne as of September 27, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



**ISW**  
INSTITUTE FOR THE  
STUDY OF WAR  
AND  
**CT CRITICAL  
THREATS**  
THE DR. JACK LONDON  
GEOSPATIAL FUND

Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, and Mitchell Belcher - © 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

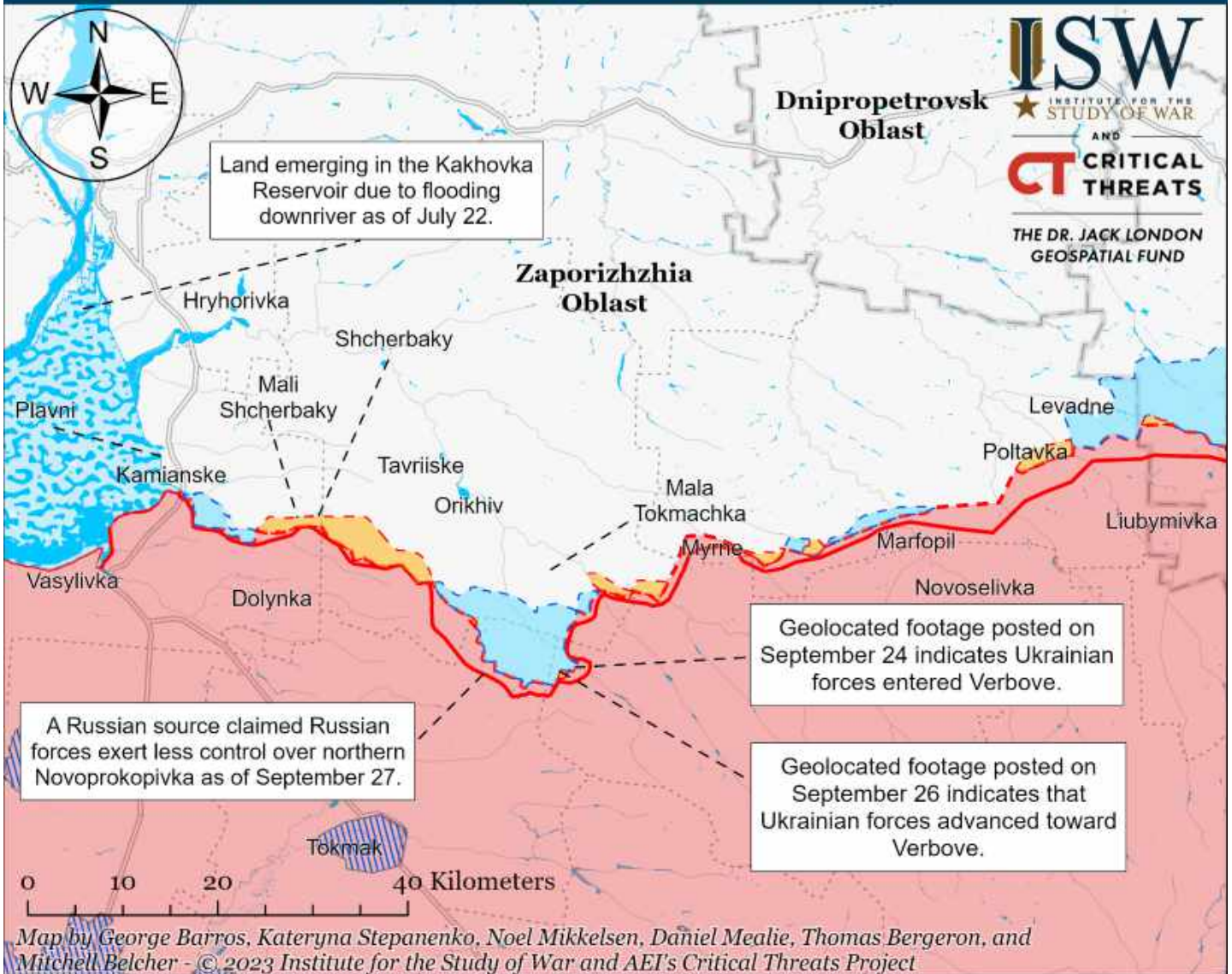
- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Emerging land in the Kakhovka Reservoir
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine\*
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- 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 September 24 that Ukrainian forces entered Verbove on September 22 and are holding half of the settlement as of September 24.



# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhia as of September 27, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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

\* 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 September 24 that Ukrainian forces entered Verbove on September 22 and are holding half of the settlement as of September 24.

Russian forces conducted an airstrike against Kherson Oblast on September 26. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky stated on September 27 that Russian forces launched 26 Kab-500 aerial bombs at Kherson Oblast.[50]



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

The *Guardian* reported on September 27 that Iranian drones that Russian forces operate in Ukraine contain European components despite international sanctions targeting these parts.[51] The *Guardian* cited a document that Ukrainian officials originally presented to international leaders at a G7 meeting in August 2023 and reported that Iranian drone manufacturers used drone components from companies based in the United States, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Germany, Canada, Japan, and Poland, including one Polish subsidiary of a United Kingdom company. The *Guardian* reported that the Shahed-131 drone uses 52 parts from Western companies while the Shahed-136 drone uses 57 parts. The *Guardian* reported that Iranian-assembled drones travel to Russia through the Caspian Sea while drones assembled at Iranian factories in Syria travel to Russia through Novorossiysk.

Senior Russian officials continue to posture as effectively mobilizing the Russian defense industrial base (DIB). Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu and Moscow Oblast Head Andrey Vorobov visited the Tactical Missiles Corporation in Moscow Oblast on September 27.[52] Tactical Missiles Corporation Head Boris Obnosov stated claimed that the Tactical Missiles Corporation has doubled its production of high-precision weapons and increased production of other products by three-and-a-half to five times due to production modernization, more personnel, and shifting to a 24/7 work schedule. Obnosov claimed that the corporation recently hired 40 specialists from technical schools in Orenburg Oblast and Perm Krai and is working with technical schools for further recruitment efforts.

## **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)**

Ukrainian partisans continue to disrupt Russian logistics in occupied Ukraine. Ukrainian Crimean-based partisan group “Ateş” stated on September 26 that Ateş agents disabled five Russian military ZIL-131 fuel and lubricant transportation vehicles over the past ten days in occupied Luhansk Oblast.[53] Ateş also insinuated that its agents were involved in the disappearances of an unspecified number of Russian servicemen in occupied Luhansk.[54] Geolocated footage published by Ateş confirms that its agents are operating in occupied Luhansk City and likely have access to Russian military transportation vehicles.[55] The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported on September 27 that unspecified Ukrainian partisans have recently helped Ukrainian forces strike Russian military equipment and warehouses in occupied Ukraine.[56]

The Russian government will now require State Duma and Federation Council members to receive permission from the Russian military to travel to occupied Ukraine. Russian State Duma Deputy Mikhail Matveyev announced on September 26 that Duma deputies were banned from travelling to occupied Ukraine without approval from Russian Chief of the General Staff Army General Valery Gerasimov.[57] Matveyev stated that these travel restrictions also apply to employees of other Russian government structures, including the Presidential Administration.[58] The order reportedly does not apply to occupied Crimea.[59] Russian news outlet *RBC* reported on July 27 that Russian State Duma deputies would have to receive permission from Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu or Gerasimov to visit Russian military units fighting in Ukraine.[60] Russian servicemen reportedly complained that Russian State Duma deputies were disruptive and “constantly taking pictures, putting on a show.”[61]

## **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)**

Nothing significant to report.

**ISW will continue to report daily observed Russian and Belarusian military activity in Belarus as part of ongoing Kremlin efforts to increase their control over Belarus and other Russian actions in Belarus.**

**Note: ISW does not receive any classified material from any source, uses only publicly available information, and draws extensively on Russian, Ukrainian, and Western reporting and social media as well as commercially available satellite imagery and other geospatial data as the basis for these reports. References to all sources used are provided in the endnotes of each update.**

[1] <https://x.com/VigorousFalcon/status/1706812464644669895?s=20>; <https://t.me/Tourists51/58>

[2] <https://twitter.com/vosintt/status/1706794313181466663?s=20> ; <https://t.me/RVvoenk0r/53719>

- [3] <https://t.me/otarnavskiy/255>
- [4] <https://t.me/vrogov/12232>
- [5] <https://t.me/zonaosoboho/21443>
- [6] <https://t.me/frontbird/3685>
- [7] [https://t.me/vdv\\_ZA\\_templinsky/434](https://t.me/vdv_ZA_templinsky/434)
- [8] [https://t.me/vdv\\_ZA\\_templinsky/433](https://t.me/vdv_ZA_templinsky/433)
- [9] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-sept-16-2023> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-august-26-2023>
- [10] <https://t.me/zvezdanews/130148>
- [11] <https://t.me/akashevarova/6654> ; [https://twitter.com/666\\_mancer/status/1706750636870537281](https://twitter.com/666_mancer/status/1706750636870537281) ; <https://twitter.com/GirkinGirkin/status/1706995425205522594/photo/1>
- [12] <https://suspilne dot media/581703-kolisni-bijci-vagnera-spravdi-perebuvaut-na-bahmutskom-ukraїnskomu-napramku-cepshihologicna-operacia-evlas/>
- [13] <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/09/27/europe/ukraine-eastern-offensive-cotovio-intl/index.html>
- [14] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15301>
- [15] <https://t.me/readovkanews/66721>
- [16] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02ae3gbyxq6Y9n4xPbAXfUgMmGhNEMd7UnqP5brm23oC15rUazgmKgeYYbdqT3pTAGl> ; <https://suspilne dot media/581389-armia-rf-ne-ruhaetsa-na-limano-kupanskomu-napramku-evlas/>
- [17] <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/3523>
- [18] <https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1706903544190689630?s=20>
- [19] <https://www.thedrive.com/the-war-zone/exclusive-interview-with-ukraines-spy-boss-from-his-dc-hotel-room> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-23-2023>
- [20] <https://suspilne dot media/563677-na-kupanskomu-napramku-rf-ne-narosue-sili-a-provodit-rotaciu-budanov/> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-1-2023>
- [21] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-23-2023>
- [22] [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30876](https://t.me/mod_russia/30876) ; [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30879](https://t.me/mod_russia/30879) ; [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30873](https://t.me/mod_russia/30873) ; [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30879](https://t.me/mod_russia/30879) ; [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30860](https://t.me/mod_russia/30860)
- [23] <https://x.com/VigorousFalcon/status/1706812464644669895?s=20> ; <https://t.me/Tourists51/58>
- [24] <https://suspilne dot media/581389-armia-rf-ne-ruhaetsa-na-limano-kupanskomu-napramku-evlas/>
- [25] [https://www.facebook.com/DPSUkraine/posts/pfbid021pJ87qnRv8aVj4x5MgTZ8Y4QKDb1e5dWGq1MyqN2DqqxwroED5PY4NU8Yyi8zjPI?\\_\\_cft\\_\\_\[0\]=AZVnbAWEecZTcM3rGpDy6g\\_z\\_uWRQQeGVtsJ5qcl9s4iGrn-WXSZFikkyfu1KbnHokQxHZYpNivrXVekRdNdhzjOdigvLK40coOq1AY6hUGxc-g9zYkiaepoioIpCnIhb5Q3Au8FTAe02b2f1WgxvDufSoYLUOPFavU9U2h84rU6seX4Gwa\\_AJdwrEkob4ipL3U&\\_\\_tn\\_\\_=%2CO%2CP-R](https://www.facebook.com/DPSUkraine/posts/pfbid021pJ87qnRv8aVj4x5MgTZ8Y4QKDb1e5dWGq1MyqN2DqqxwroED5PY4NU8Yyi8zjPI?__cft__[0]=AZVnbAWEecZTcM3rGpDy6g_z_uWRQQeGVtsJ5qcl9s4iGrn-WXSZFikkyfu1KbnHokQxHZYpNivrXVekRdNdhzjOdigvLK40coOq1AY6hUGxc-g9zYkiaepoioIpCnIhb5Q3Au8FTAe02b2f1WgxvDufSoYLUOPFavU9U2h84rU6seX4Gwa_AJdwrEkob4ipL3U&__tn__=%2CO%2CP-R)
- [26] [https://t.me/dva\\_majors/26320](https://t.me/dva_majors/26320) ; <https://t.me/batalyon15/3019> ; [https://t.me/rusich\\_army/11049](https://t.me/rusich_army/11049)

- [27] <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/3520>
- [28] <https://t.me/readovkanews/66721>
- [29] <https://t.me/rybar/52409> ; <https://t.me/rybar/52412>
- [30] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid024iNTgyxgX1vRLjg1h52sEbH98HfhUqDGbgJ2w4EAwRsJPmCLpvdxRpRAKKjQFTvsl>
- [31] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15301> ; [https://t.me/dva\\_majors/26320](https://t.me/dva_majors/26320) ; <https://t.me/batalyon15/3019>
- [32] <https://t.me/batalyon15/3019> ; [https://t.me/dva\\_majors/26320](https://t.me/dva_majors/26320)
- [33] <https://suspilne dot media/581389-armia-rf-ne-ruhaetsa-na-limano-kupanskomu-napramku-evlas/>
- [34] <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/53742> ; [https://t.me/nm\\_dnr/11017](https://t.me/nm_dnr/11017) ; [https://t.me/boris\\_rozhin/98728](https://t.me/boris_rozhin/98728)
- [35] <https://www.facebook.com/sergey.khlan/posts/pfbid027BKtM3GZuzRk64QePjBsAhzk6b69Zxi7U5uTqnLoenLKXMSFXpzMyttvBrhaQEtTl> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid024iNTgyxgX1vRLjg1h52sEbH98HfhUqDGbgJ2w4EAwRsJPmCLpvdxRpRAKKjQFTvsl>
- [36] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15301>
- [37] [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30872](https://t.me/mod_russia/30872)
- [38] <https://t.me/rybar/52419>
- [39] [https://t.me/voin\\_dv/5174](https://t.me/voin_dv/5174) <https://t.me/readovkanews/66721>
- [40] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid024iNTgyxgX1vRLjg1h52sEbH98HfhUqDGbgJ2w4EAwRsJPmCLpvdxRpRAKKjQFTvsl> <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02ae3gbyxq6Y9n4xPbAXfUgMmGhNEMd7UnqP5brm23oC15rUazgmKgeYYbdqT3pTAGl> ; <https://www.facebook.com/PresscentrTavria/posts/pfbid02iKJAJG1z4R5RYP5Pknj8LFMg9bp9GzEbVYZfKyTbz5qajTQ1VAfipsCFtNGyE8nyl>
- [41] <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/53714>
- [42] <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/53719> ; <https://x.com/vosintt/status/1706794313181466663?s=20>
- [43] <https://t.me/vrogov/12232>
- [44] <https://t.me/zonaosoboho/21443>
- [45] <https://t.me/otarnavskiy/255>
- [46] [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30873](https://t.me/mod_russia/30873) ; [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30877](https://t.me/mod_russia/30877) ; [https://t.me/rusich\\_army/11042](https://t.me/rusich_army/11042) ; [https://t.me/rusich\\_army/11043](https://t.me/rusich_army/11043)
- [47] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15301> ; <https://t.me/rybar/52409> ; <https://t.me/batalyon15/3024>
- [48] [https://t.me/z\\_arhiv/25122](https://t.me/z_arhiv/25122)
- [49] <https://t.me/batalyon15/3019>
- [50] <https://armyinform dot com.ua/2023/09/27/mayemo-prosuvannya-vpered-na-doneczkomu-napryamku-volodymyr-zelenskyj/>
- [51] <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/sep/27/revealed-europes-role-in-the-making-of-russia-killer-drones>
- [52] [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30861](https://t.me/mod_russia/30861) ; [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30862](https://t.me/mod_russia/30862) ; [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30871](https://t.me/mod_russia/30871)

[53] [https://t.me/atesh\\_ua/1966](https://t.me/atesh_ua/1966)

[54] [https://t.me/atesh\\_ua/1966](https://t.me/atesh_ua/1966)

[55] [https://t.me/atesh\\_ua/1966](https://t.me/atesh_ua/1966); <https://x.com/neonhandrail/status/1706873554728554561?s=20>

[56] <https://sprotyv.mod.gov.ua/pidpillya-nyshhyt-voroga/>

[57] <https://ria.ru/20230926/vyezd-1898819819.html> ; <https://www.gazeta.ru/politics/news/2023/09/27/21375229.shtml>

[58] <https://ria.ru/20230926/vyezd-1898819819.html> ; <https://www.gazeta.ru/politics/news/2023/09/27/21375229.shtml>

[59] <https://ria.ru/20230926/vyezd-1898819819.html> ; <https://www.gazeta.ru/politics/news/2023/09/27/21375229.shtml>

[60] <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/27/07/2023/64c20d219a794768f18b2277>

[61] <https://www.rbc.ru/politics/27/07/2023/64c20d219a794768f18b2277>

# Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, September 26, 2023

Riley Bailey, Christina Harward, Grace Mappes,  
Angelica Evans and Frederick W. Kagan

September 26, 2023, 8:35pm 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.

*Correction: We are correcting this report to note that the additional parachute regiment is subordinate to the Russian 98th Guards Airborne (VDV) Division, based in Ivanovo Oblast. We previously reported that the additional regiment is subordinate to the Russian 106th Guards Airborne (VDV) Division. We apologize for the error.*

**Note: The data cut-off for this product was 3pm ET on September 26. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the September 27 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.**

**The tactical situation in Verbove remains unclear as Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast on September 26.** The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Melitopol (western Zaporizhia Oblast) direction and offensive actions in the Bakhmut direction.[1] A Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces reached the northern outskirts of Novoprokopivka (13km south of Orikhiv).[2] Russian sources have still not directly addressed a claim from a source reportedly affiliated with the Russian Airborne (VDV) Forces that Ukrainian forces control half of Verbove (18km southeast of Orikhiv) as of September 24.[3] ISW has not observed evidence of such a Ukrainian advance, and the source reporting it has a very small following. It is still noteworthy that other VDV-connected sources have not responded to these claims.

Russian President Vladimir Putin awarded the Russian 58th Combined Arms Army (CAA) the "Guards" honorific on September 26.[4] The Russian 58th CAA (Southern Military District) has been responsible for the ongoing Russian defense against Ukrainian counteroffensive operations in southern Ukraine.[5]

**Likely degraded elements of the Russian 58th Combined Arms Army's 42nd Motorized Rifle Division are increasingly counterattacking in the Novoprokopivka area, suggesting that Ukrainian counteroffensive operations may have degraded relatively more elite Russian Airborne (VDV) elements that were responsible for counterattacking in the area.** Elements of the 42nd Motorized Rifle Division's 70th and 71st Guards Motorized Rifle Regiments have increasingly engaged in limited counterattacks near Novoprokopivka in the past week, and a Russian milblogger claimed that elements of the 42nd Motorized Rifle Division pushed Ukrainian forces from positions near Novoprokopivka on September 25.[6] Elements of the 42nd Motorized Rifle Division's 70th, 71st, and 291st Motorized Rifle Regiments routinely engaged in combat engagements

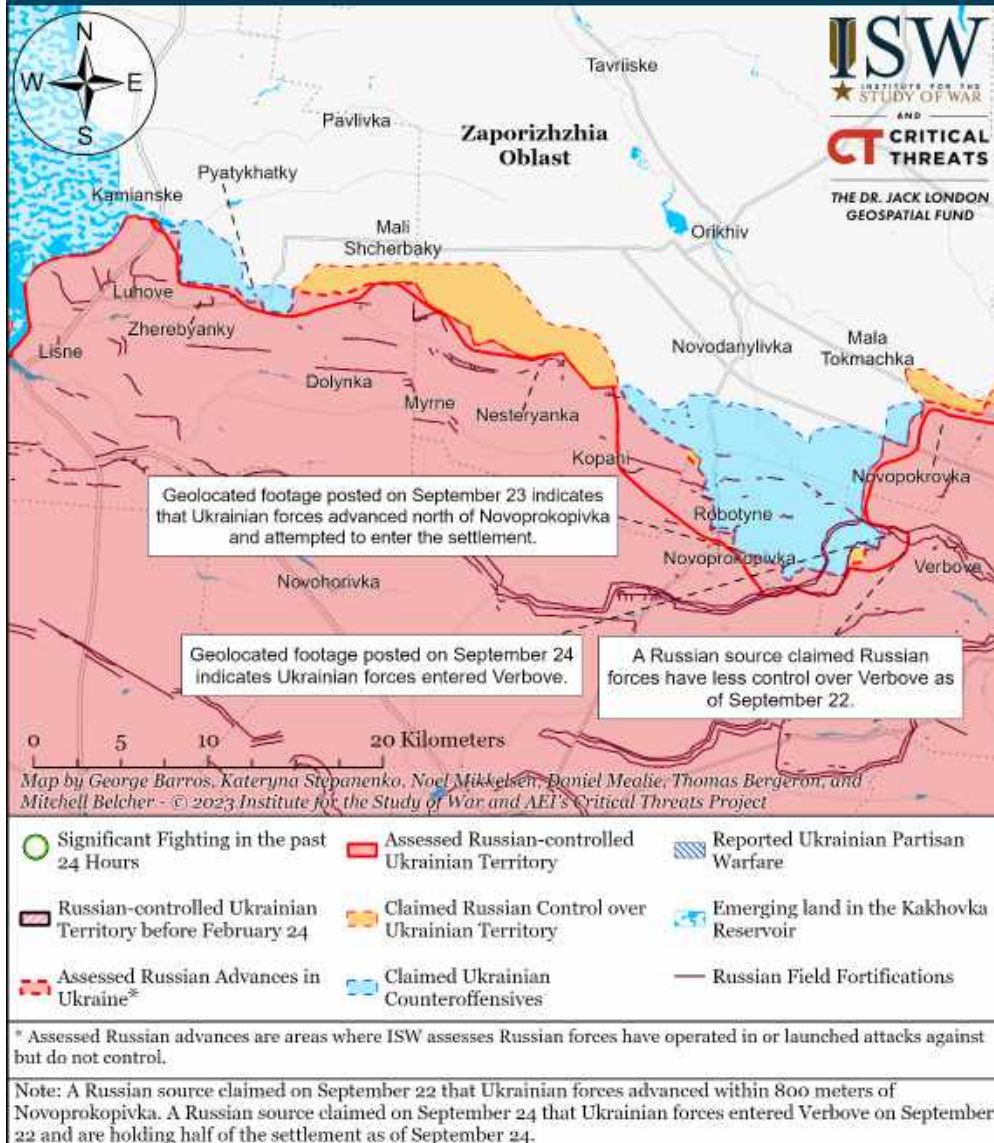
and counterattacks against Ukrainian forces at the forwardmost Russian defensive positions in the Orikhiv area before withdrawing behind the Russian defensive layer between Verbove and Solodka Balka (20km south of Orikhiv) in mid-to-late August.[7] Russian forces laterally redeployed elements of the more elite 7th and 76th VDV Divisions to the Orikhiv direction in early-to-mid August to counterattack against a widening Ukrainian breach in the area, which may have provided these elements of the 42nd Motorized Rifle Division respite from hostilities.[8] Elements of the 70th Motorized Rifle Regiment may have conducted one of the few unit rotations that ISW has observed on this sector of the front, possibly allowing these elements to partially reconstitute.[9]

The 70th and 71st Motorized Rifle Regiments' involvement in counterattacks around Novoprokopivka suggests that Ukrainian counteroffensive operations may have significantly degraded the combat capabilities of elements of the 7th and 76th VDV Divisions and that these VDV elements can no longer conduct all counterattacks along the entire Ukrainian breach in the Orikhiv direction. The Russian command may have committed the 70th and 71st Motorized Rifle Regiments to defending and counterattacking in the Novoprokopivka area to allow VDV elements to prioritize defensive operations on the western and eastern flanks of the Ukrainian salient in the Orikhiv direction.[10] It is also possible that elements of the 70th and 71st Motorized Rifle Regiments have held positions near Novoprokopivka since withdrawing from positions further north and are now engaging Ukrainian forces because the Ukrainian advance has reached the outskirts of Novoprokopivka. Roughly a month of respite and possible reconstitution are unlikely to offset the significant degradation that elements of the 70th and 71st Motorized Rifle Regiments suffered while defending earlier in the counteroffensive. Elements of the 810th Naval Infantry Brigade (Black Sea Fleet) similarly defended to hold forwardmost defensive positions earlier in the counteroffensive, and Ukrainian counteroffensive operations recently reportedly rendered these elements combat ineffective.[11] The Russian command risks rendering the already degraded elements of the 70th and 71st Motorized Rifle Regiments combat ineffective if they heavily commit these elements to counterattacking the Ukrainian advance near Novoprokopivka.

**Elements of the 42nd Motorized Rifle Division are reportedly deployed as far back as Tokmak, continuing to suggest that the Russian command has not manned the multi-echeloned defense in southern Ukraine in depth.** Russian sources reported on September 25 and 26 that elements of the 71st Motorized Rifle Regiment's 3rd Battalion were involved in an altercation with military police from the 70th Motorized Rifle Regiment in occupied Tokmak.[12] The presence of elements of the 70th and 71st Motorized Rifle Regiments in Tokmak suggests that Russian forces have deployed elements of these regiments throughout the multi-echeloned defense between the current frontline and Tokmak. Russian forces, however, appear to be continuing to deploy most of their combat power in western Zaporizhia Oblast to immediate frontline areas.[13] The deployment of the 70th and 71st Motorized Rifle Regiments as far back as Tokmak suggests that elements of the same Russian formations and units defending at forward positions are holding positions, likely in smaller numbers, in subsequent defensive layers. It is possible that unobserved elements of other Russian units and formations hold positions at rear defensive positions, although the current Russian manpower commitment to holding positions on the frontline indicates that this is unlikely.



# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Pyatykhatky and Robotyne as of September 26, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



**Interethnic tensions appear to be sowing division between elements of the Russian 42nd Guards Motorized Rifle Regiment defending against the Ukrainian counteroffensive in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast.** Arsen Temiraev, a mobilized serviceman from the Republic of North Ossetia-Alania serving with the 70th Guards Motorized Rifle Regiment, posted a video on September 25 alleging that Russian military police of the 70th Regiment beat Temiraev and two other soldiers of the 71st Guards Motorized Rifle Regiment's 3rd Battalion in Tokmak on September 24.[14] Temiraev claimed that the military police asked about his ethnicity before telling Temiraev that "Russia is for Russians." Temiraev claimed that the military police beat him and the other servicemen because a Tokmak local alleged that the soldiers had sexually assaulted children, a crime that Temiraev denied having committed. Temiraev complained that he thought the "Nazis were on the other [Ukrainian] side,

[but] it turns out they [the Nazis] are among us.”[15] North Ossetian-Alanian Republic Head Sergey Menyailo responded on September 26, claiming that the elements of the “Storm Ossetia” and “Alania” volunteer battalions in the area verified the incident.[16] Menyailo reported the incident to the Southern Military District command, which informed the commander of the 58th Combined Arms Army, and called the incident unacceptable towards any Russian soldier. Interethnic tensions between Russian units operating in the frontline and near the rear of western Zaporizhia Oblast may threaten the integrity of Russian defenses and unit cohesion amidst recent Ukrainian gains in the area.

**Interethnic tensions may also threaten Chechen Republic Head Ramzan Kadyrov’s broader standing within the Russian political sphere amid an ongoing controversy surrounding Kadyrov’s son.** Kadyrov posted footage on September 25 of his son, Adam Kadyrov, beating a detained man accused of burning a Quran, and Ramzan Kadyrov praised his son for the beating.[17] The incident prompted varied condemnation and calls for investigations from Russian officials. Russian Human Rights Council (HRC) Head Valery Fadeev stated that burning the Quran is a serious crime but that officials must follow rules for detaining suspects, while HRC member Eva Merkacheva called for an investigation and called the situation a “challenge to the entire legal system of Russia.”[18] Merkacheva levied a thinly veiled criticism of the Chechen Republic, claiming that “in a particular region [Chechen Republic] they [Chechen officials] have shown that they commit crimes and nothing will happen to them about it.”[19] Other Russian officials, including Human Rights Commissioner Tatyana Moskalkova, called for Adam Kadyrov to answer for his crime in a Russian court.[20] Ramzan Kadyrov reportedly responded to a journalist’s request for a follow up and reportedly claimed that he had not witnessed the attack and that Adam Kadyrov is “independent and temperamental.”[21] Ramzan Kadyrov reportedly praised Adam Kadyrov’s behavior and stated he did not punish his son, but said that Adam Kadyrov will be punished to the fullest extent of Russian law if a Russian court convicts him.[22] ISW has long observed tensions between Chechen and non-Chechen officials and military units, and senior Russian officials’ emotional reactions suggest that Kadyrov’s political standing may be insufficient to protect his son from the consequences of this situation.[23]

**Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu discussed ongoing Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) efforts to increase Russian Airborne (VDV) Forces’ combat capabilities and add elements similar to those normally found in motorized rifle units to the VDV, likely to better align VDV elements with their current combat roles in Ukraine.** Shoigu stated during a speech to the Russian Defense Ministry Board on September 26 that the Russian MoD is implementing measures to increase the Russian VDV’s combat potential by creating new airborne assault formations and increasing the VDV’s reconnaissance, strike, and fire capabilities.[24] Shoigu stated that the Russian MoD has nearly finished forming a fifth Russian VDV division, the 104th Airborne Assault (VDV) Division, and an additional parachute regiment subordinate to the Russian 98th Guards Airborne (VDV) Division, based in Ivanovo Oblast.[25] Shoigu stated that the Russian MoD plans for all Russian VDV divisions to have a logistics brigade and repair and restoration battalions by the end of 2023.[26] Shoigu stated that Russian VDV divisions will be “completed” with an artillery brigade but did not specify a time frame for this addition.[27] These additional elements will bring Russian VDV divisions into closer alignment with the force composition of a typical Russian motorized rifle division.[28] Shoigu did not state that Russian VDV divisions would receive tank regiments, which are common in Russian motorized rifle divisions.[29] These additional units will likely allow the Russian military to use Russian VDV divisions almost interchangeably with motorized rifle divisions in the future, and VDV elements in Ukraine have been increasingly operating as combat infantry similar to motorized rifle divisions.[30] The Russian MoD’s provision of additional elements

to Russian VDV units and formations serving in Ukraine is a recognition of the role Russian VDV forces are currently playing in Ukraine and highlights the non-standard way in which the Russian military is using these forces. These Russian formations have become “airborne” in name only, and it is not clear when the Russian MoD intends for them to take to the skies again.

**Russian forces conducted a series of Shahed-131/136 drone strikes on port and military targets in Ukraine on the night of September 25-26.** Ukrainian military officials reported that Russian forces launched 38 drones from Krasnodar Krai and Cape Chauda, Crimea, targeting Ukrainian port and border infrastructure and that Ukrainian air defenses shot down 26 drones.[31] Russian forces hit the Orlivka-Isaccea ferry crossing that connects Odesa Oblast and Romania, and Ukrainian Southern Operational Command Spokesperson Captain First Rank Nataliya Humenyuk denied speculations that the Russian drones crossed into Romanian territory.[32] Geolocated footage shows that Russian forces destroyed a Ukrainian MiG-29 fighter aircraft at the Kulbakino airfield in Mykolaiv Oblast.[33]

**Russian and Western sources largely claimed that Russian Black Sea Fleet (BSF) Commander Admiral Viktor Sokolov is alive after the Russian MoD posted footage of Sokolov allegedly attending a meeting on September 26, although the situation remains unclear at this time.** Russian and Western sources largely speculated that footage posted by the Russian MoD on September 26 of Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu’s remarks at the Russian MoD Board meeting purportedly shows Sokolov attending via teleconference.[34] The Ukrainian Special Operations Forces previously reported on September 25 that the Ukrainian strike on the BSF headquarters in Sevastopol on September 22 killed Sokolov, and Russian officials have not yet issued a response confirming or denying reports of Sokolov’s death.[35] The Ukrainian Special Operations Forces stated on September 26 that it was clarifying information about Sokolov’s possible death but that available sources indicate that he is dead.[36] Kremlin Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov stated on September 26 that he had not received any information from the Russian MoD about the matter and that the Kremlin had nothing to say as this is “solely [the Russian MoD’s] prerogative.”[37] ISW is unprepared at this time to make an assessment about the authenticity of the Russian MoD’s footage of Sokolov or about Sokolov’s status on Earth.

**The Russian MoD has reportedly recruited some former Wagner Group personnel for MoD-affiliated private military companies (PMCs) fighting in Ukraine, while negotiations between the reported Wagner leadership and the Russian National Guard (Rosgvardia) have allegedly stalled over disagreements concerning Wagner’s independence and cohesion.** A reported Wagner-affiliated source claimed on September 26 that the Wagner Group is still operating in Africa and Belarus and that there are no plans to close the organization.[38] A Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed that former Wagner personnel that left the organization with Andrey Troshev (known under the callsign “Sedoy”) after Prigozhin’s rebellion have joined the MoD-affiliated “Redut” and “Volunteer Corps” PMCs and have begun to redeploy to the Bakhmut area in Ukraine.[39] The milblogger claimed that Troshev is trying to recruit Wagner personnel who are currently operating in Belarus, Africa, and the Middle East for Russian MoD-affiliated PMCs. The milblogger also claimed that Anton Yelizarov (known as “Lotos”) is now the head of Wagner and is negotiating with Rosgvardia about the inclusion of Wagner units within Rosgvardia. Yelizarov is reportedly resisting Rosgvardia’s condition that Wagner personnel sign individual contracts, which the milblogger complained would allow Rosgvardia to divide the Wagner units and send them to various areas. ISW previously reported that Russian State Duma deputies will reportedly

propose a bill allowing Rosgvardia to include volunteer formations, and Yelizarov is likely pushing for Wagner personnel to be considered a distinct Rosgvardia volunteer formation.[40]

### **Key Takeaways:**

- **The tactical situation in Verbove remains unclear as Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast on September 26.**
- **Likely degraded elements of the Russian 58th Combined Arms Army's 42nd Motorized Rifle Division are increasingly counterattacking in the Novoprokopivka area, suggesting that Ukrainian counteroffensive operations may have degraded relatively more elite Russian Airborne (VDV) elements that were responsible for counterattacking in the area.**
- **Elements of the 42nd Motorized Rifle Division are reportedly deployed as far back as Tokmak, continuing to suggest that the Russian command has not manned the multi-echeloned defense in southern Ukraine in depth.**
- **Interethnic tensions appear to be sowing division between elements of the Russian 42nd Guards Motorized Rifle Regiment defending against the Ukrainian counteroffensive in western Zaporizhia Oblast.**
- **Interethnic tensions may also threaten Chechen Republic Head Ramzan Kadyrov's broader standing within the Russian political sphere amid an ongoing controversy surrounding Kadyrov's son.**
- **Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu discussed ongoing Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) efforts to increase Russian Airborne (VDV) Forces' combat capabilities and add elements similar to those normally found in motorized rifle units to the VDV, likely to better align VDV elements with their current combat roles in Ukraine.**
- **Russian forces conducted a series of Shahed-131/136 drone strikes on port and military targets in Ukraine on the night of September 25-26.**
- **Russian and Western sources largely claimed that Russian Black Sea Fleet (BSF) Commander Admiral Viktor Sokolov is alive after the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) posted footage of Sokolov allegedly attending a meeting on September 26, although the situation remains unclear at this time.**
- **The Russian MoD has reportedly recruited some former Wagner Group personnel for MoD-affiliated private military companies (PMCs) fighting in Ukraine, while negotiations between the reported Wagner leadership and the Russian National Guard (Rosgvardia) have allegedly stalled over disagreements concerning Wagner's independence and cohesion.**
- **Russian forces conducted offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line, near Bakhmut, along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line, and in western Zaporizhia Oblast and reportedly advanced in some areas on September 26.**

# Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of September 26, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



***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

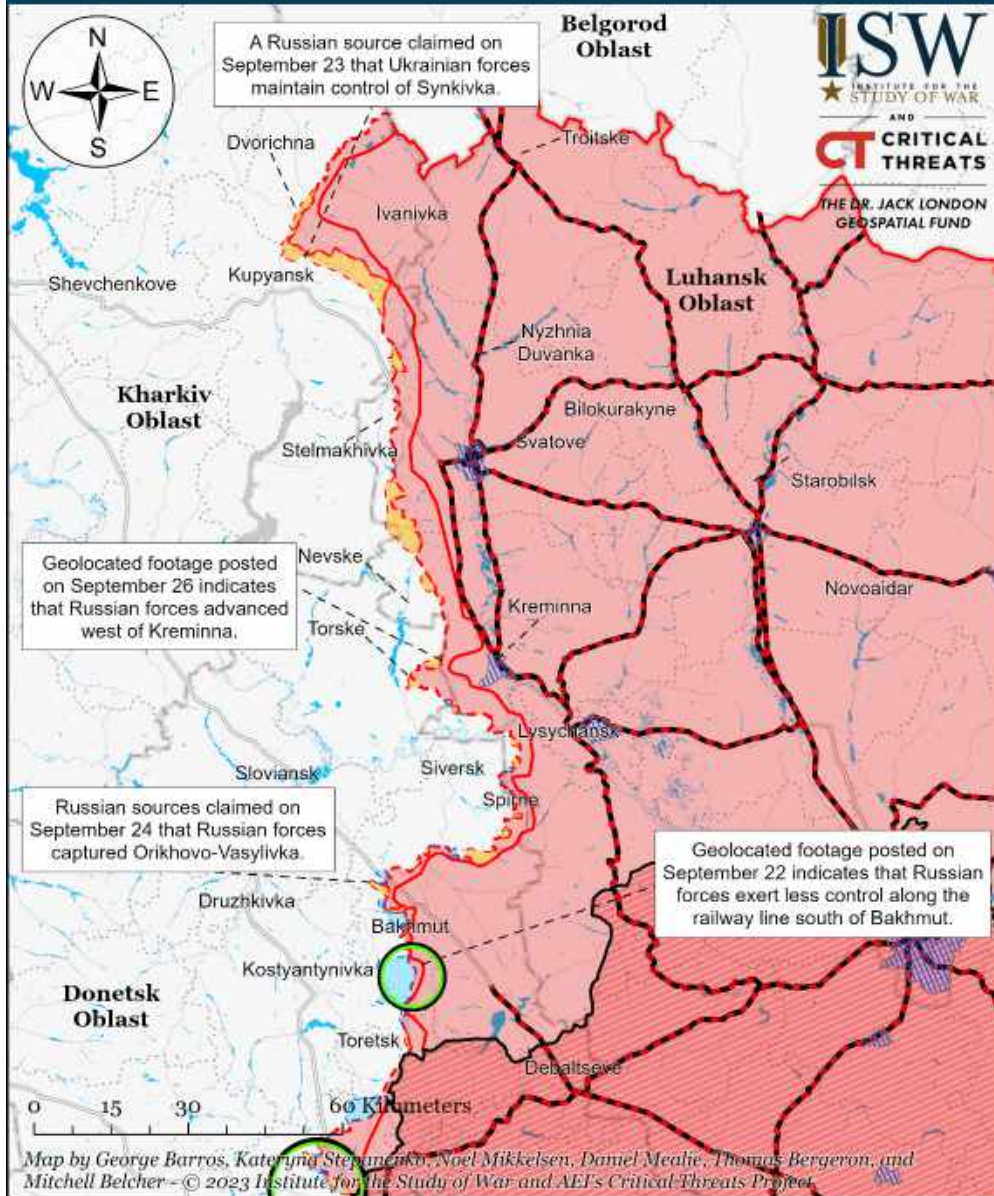
## **Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine**

### **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 sources claimed that Russian forces conducted ground attacks along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on September 26 but did not make any confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces did not conduct any assaults in the Kupyansk and Lyman directions.[41] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces captured unspecified positions near Kyslivka (20km southeast of Kupyansk) and attacked near Dibrova (7km southwest of Kreminna) and the Serebryanske forest area (11km south of Kreminna).[42] A Russian news aggregator claimed that Russian forces attacked near Dvorichna (17km northeast of Kupyansk), Petropavlivka (7km east of Kupyansk), Synkivka, Novoyehorivka (16km southwest of Svatove), and Bilohorivka (13km south of Kreminna) on September 25.[43]

The Russian MoD claimed on September 26 that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Kuzmyne (3km southwest of Kreminna) and Dibrova.[44] A Russian news aggregator claimed that Russian forces also repelled Ukrainian attacks near the Serebryanske forest area on September 25.[45]

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of September 26, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Russian Ground Lines of Communication
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine\*
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- 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.

## **Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Donetsk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)**

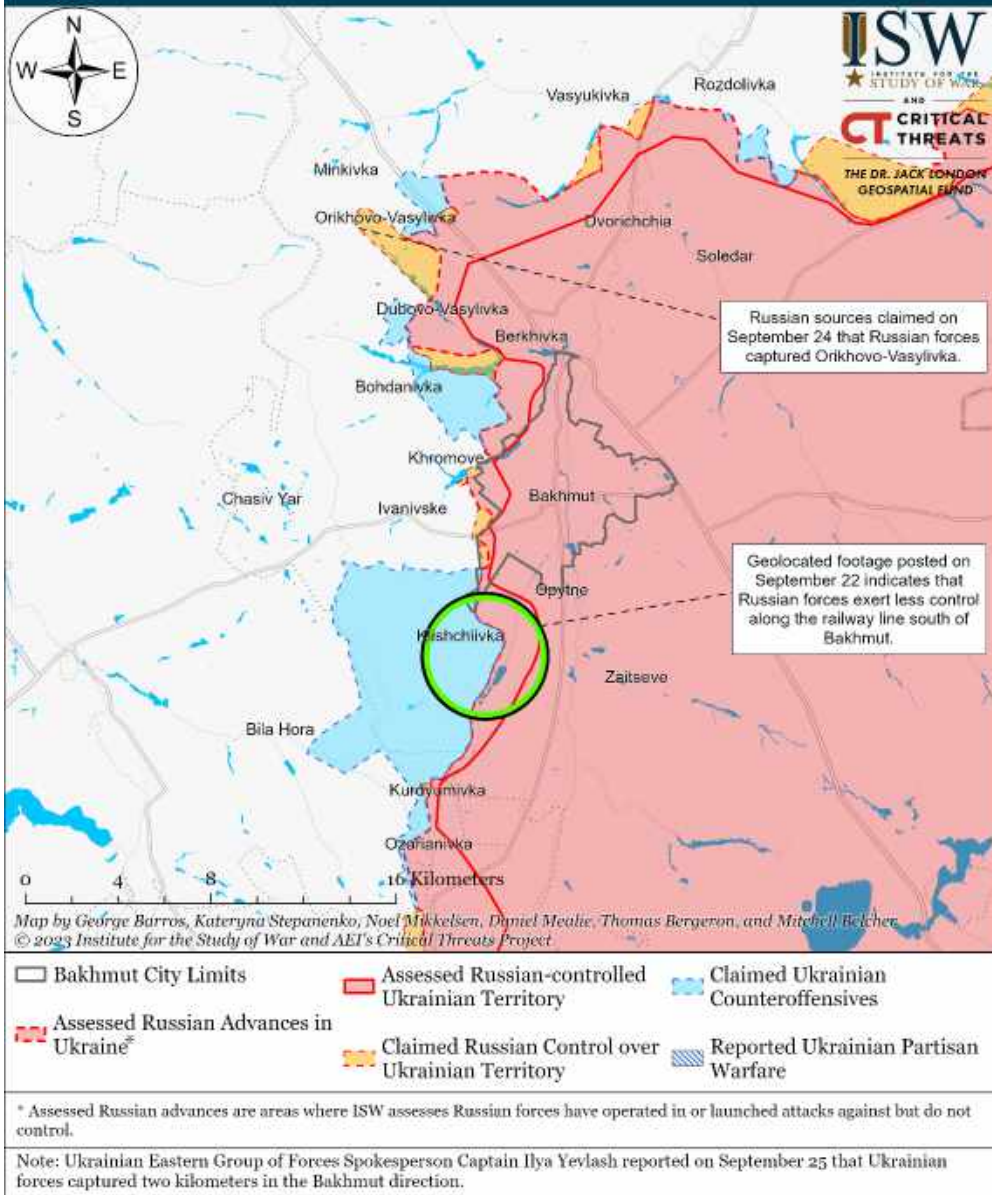
Ukrainian forces continued offensive actions in the Bakhmut area on September 26 and reportedly advanced. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive actions in the Bakhmut direction, and Ukrainian Eastern Group of Forces Spokesperson Captain Ilya Yevlash stated that Ukrainian forces were successful near Ivanivske (6km west of Bakhmut), Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut), Odrativka (7km south of Bakhmut), and Zaitseve (20km south of Bakhmut).[46] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces continued assaults near Klishchiivka and that Russian forces withdrew from positions along a section of the railway line northeast of Klishchiivka.[47] A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that small Ukrainian assault groups continue periodic assaults along the entire Klishchiivka-Andriivka-Kurdyumivka line (up to 13km southwest of Bakhmut).[48]

The Ukrainian General Staff reported on September 26 that elements of the Russian 200th Separate Motorized Rifle Brigade (14th Army Corps, Northern Fleet) operating on Bakhmut’s northern flank are suffering heavy casualties.[49] Elements of the 200th Separate Motorized Rifle Brigade arrived in the Bakhmut area to defend Bakhmut’s northern flank against localized Ukrainian counterattacks following the Russian capture of Bakhmut in May 2023.[50] Ukrainian counteroffensive operations have fixed these elements of the 200th Separate Motorized Rifle Brigade to Bakhmut’s northern flank since the start of the counteroffensive in June 2023.

Russian forces continued limited counterattacks in the Bakhmut area on September 26 but did not make any confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled five Russian counterattacks near Klishchiivka.[51] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces also counterattacked near Andriivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut) and advanced near Orikhovo-Vasylivka (11km northwest of Bakhmut), although several milbloggers denied Russian claims that Russian forces recently captured the settlement.[52] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian “Storm-Z” units recently advanced into Andriivka under the assumption that Russian Airborne (VDV) forces would provide support, but that VDV elements failed to reach their positions.[53] Ukrainian Ground Forces Commander Colonel General Oleksandr Syrskyi stated on September 18 that Ukrainian forces destroyed the combat capabilities of elements of the 31st Guards VDV Brigade and the 83rd Guards VDV Brigade during the liberation of Andriivka and Klishchiivka.[54] VDV elements south of Bakhmut may be failing to perform combat tasks due to this reported destruction of combat capabilities.



## Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of September 26, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

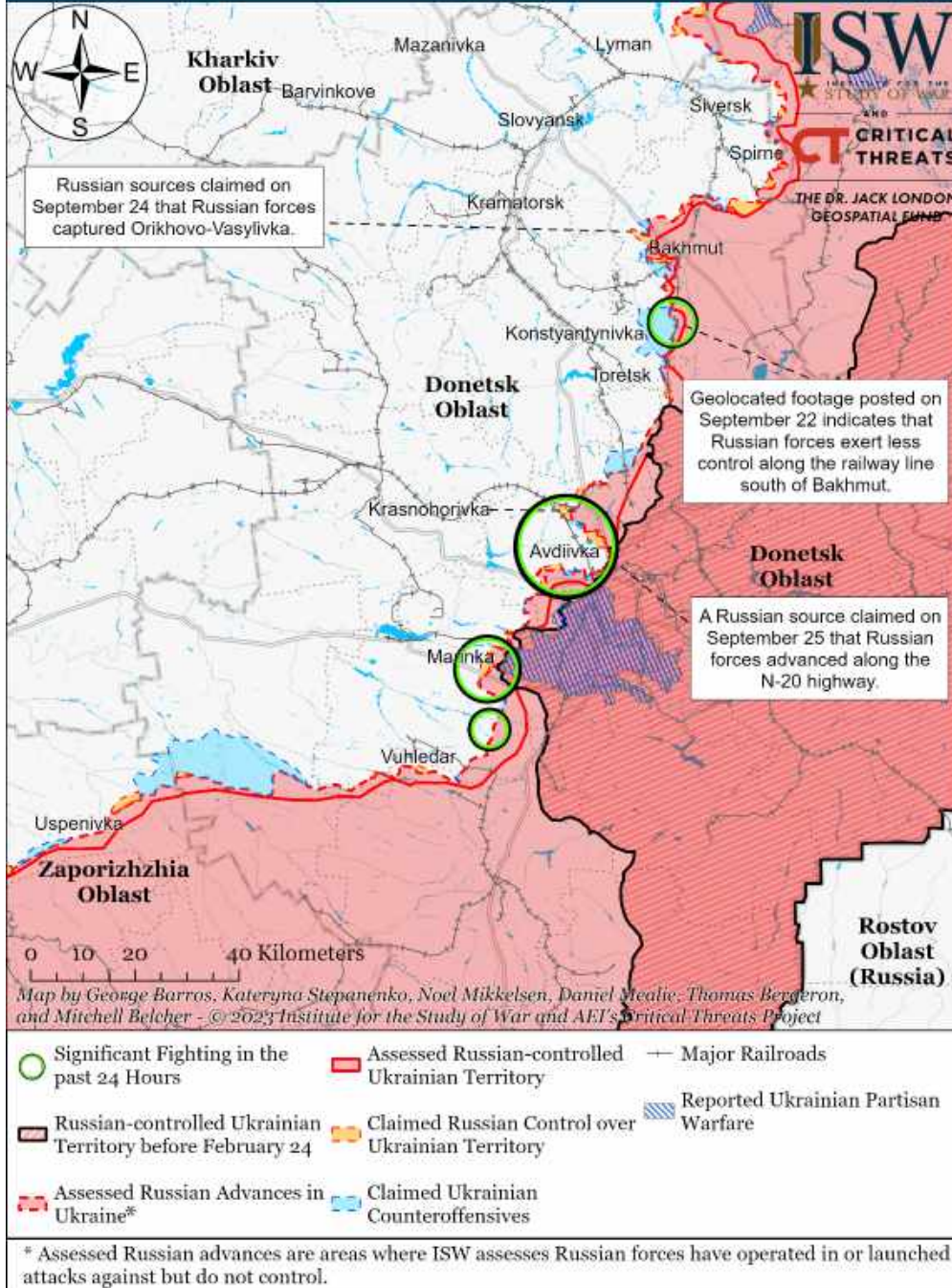


Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted limited unsuccessful ground attacks along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City front on September 26. The Russian MoD reported that elements of the Russian Southern Grouping of Forces repelled Ukrainian assaults near Krasnohorivka (unclear whether the settlement 11km north of Avdiivka or the settlement 22km southwest of Avdiivka) and Pervomaiske (11km southwest of Avdiivka).[55] Russian sources claimed that elements of the Russian 20th Guards Motorized Rifle Division (8th Combined Arms Army, Southern Military District) repelled a Ukrainian assault near Marinka (27km southwest of Avdiivka).[56] A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces have repeatedly tried to break through Russian defenses near Opytne (4km south of

Avdiivka) and Vodyane (8km southwest of Avdiivka) in recent weeks but that elements of the Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) 1st Slavic Brigade recaptured lost positions near Opytne.[57]

Russian forces continued limited offensive operations along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City front on September 26 but did not advance. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks near Avdiivka, southeast of Sieverne (6km west of Avdiivka), and near Marinka.[58] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian "Storm-Z" units captured several Ukrainian strongpoints near Opytne but suffered heavy losses.[59]

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of September 26, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted offensive operations in the western Donetsk-eastern Zaporizhzhia Oblast border area but did not advance on September 26. The Russian MoD claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Staromayorske (9km south of Velyka Novosilka).[60] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Pryyutne (16km southwest of Velyka Novosilka) and in the direction of Zavitne Bazhannya (12km south of Velyka Novosilka).[61]

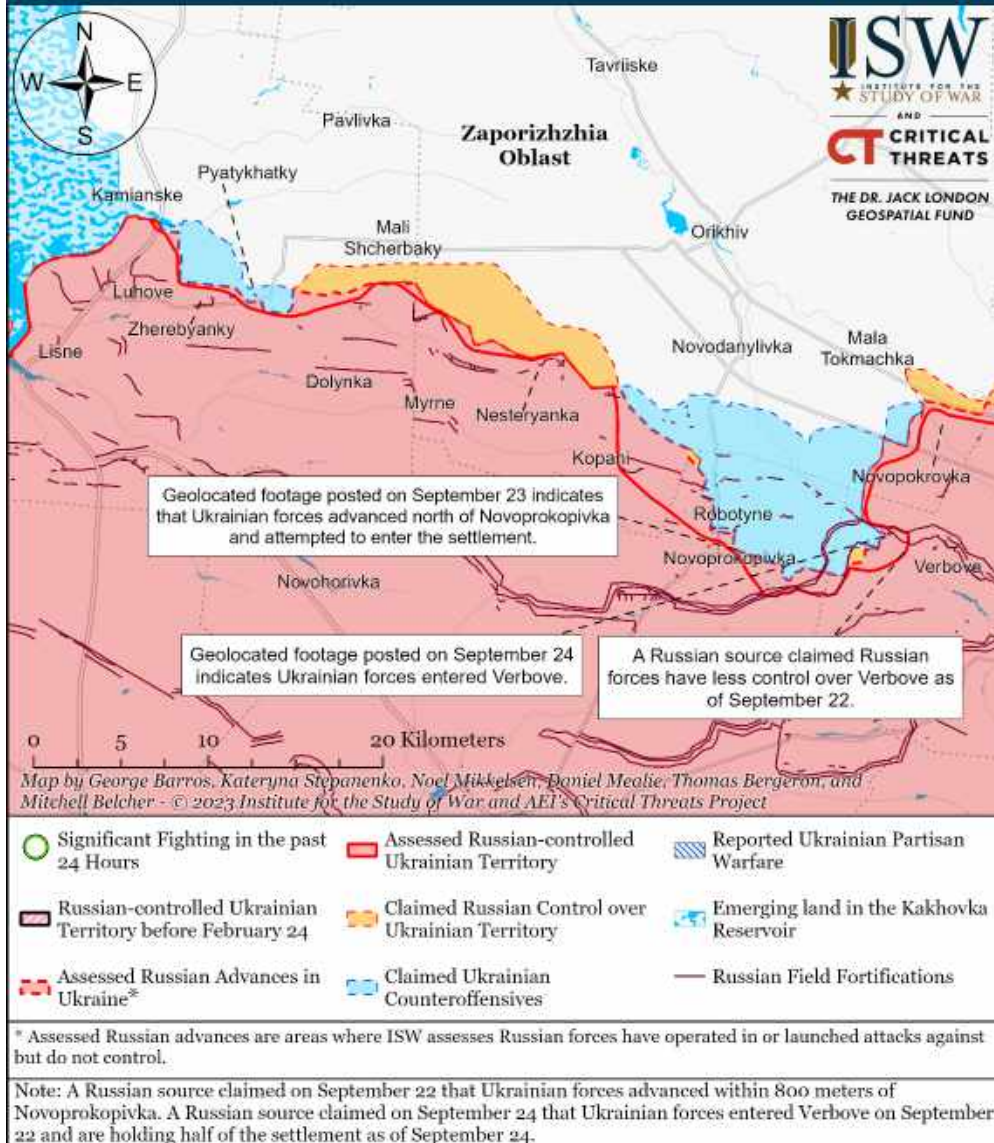


Ukrainian forces conducted offensive operations in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast and reportedly advanced on September 26. A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces reached the northern outskirts of Novoprokopivka (13km south of Orikhiv).[62] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian

forces marginally advanced northwest of Verbove (18km southeast of Orikhiv) and have advanced two kilometers in this area in the past three weeks.[63] Russian sources, including the Russian MoD, claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Verbove and in the direction of Novoprokopivka.[64]

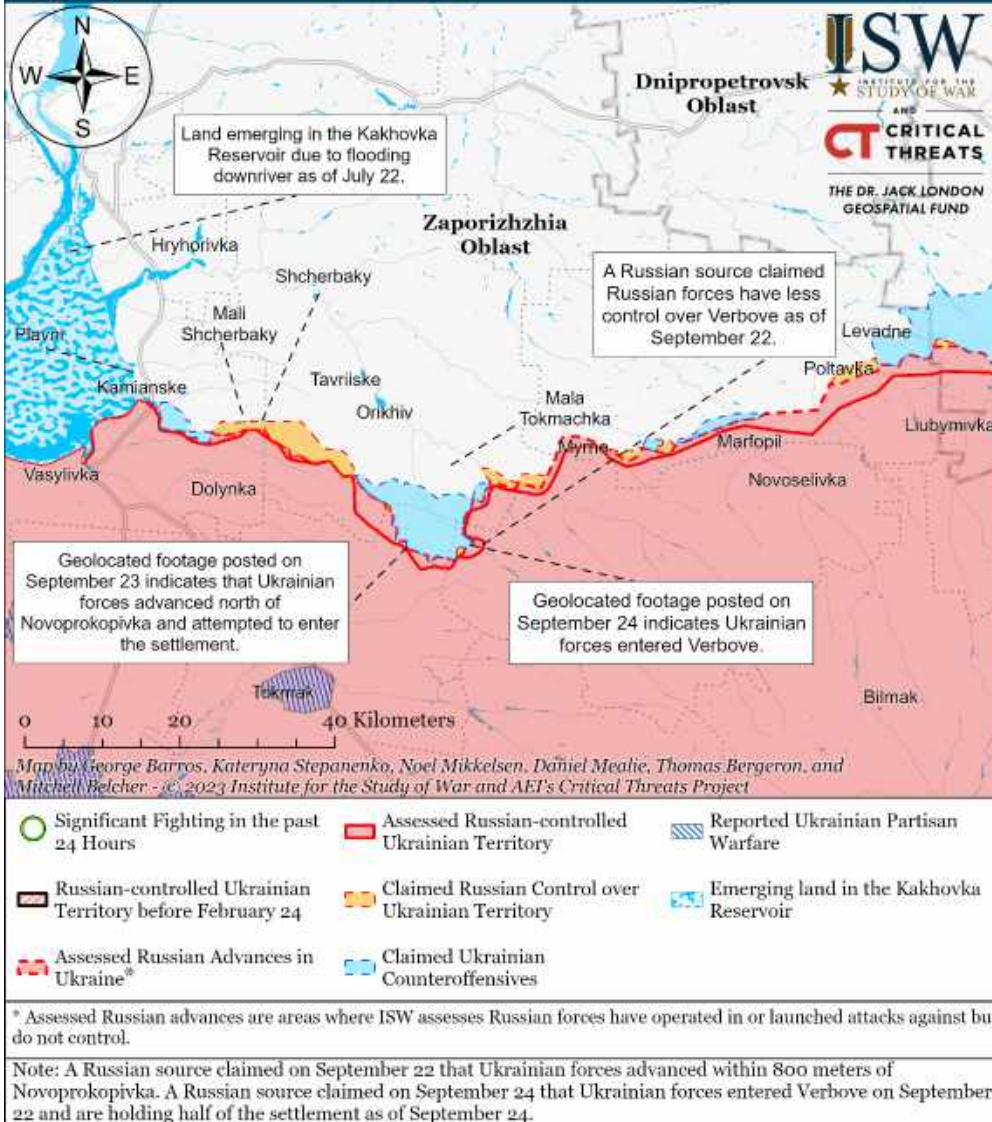
Russian forces conducted offensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast and reportedly advanced on September 26. A Russian milblogger claimed that elements of the Russian 42nd Motorized Rifle Division (58th Combined Arms Army, Southern Military District) counterattacked and pushed Ukrainian forces from unspecified positions near Robotyne.[65] Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces Spokesperson Colonel Oleksandr Shtupun stated on September 25 that Russian forces continue to mine and build fortifications in the depth of their defenses in the Tavriisk direction.[66]

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Pyatykhatky and Robotyne as of September 26, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



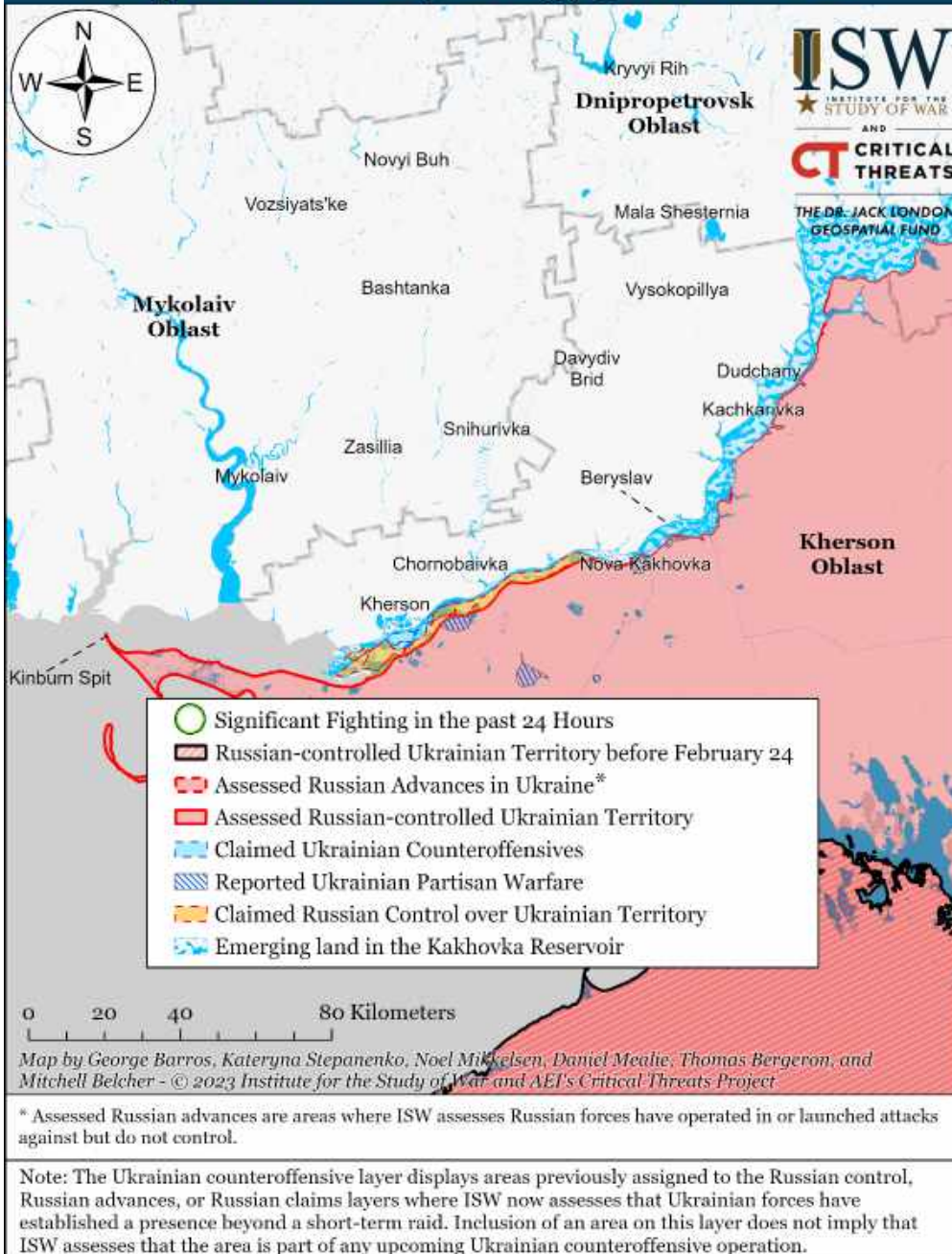
Ukrainian forces conducted a HIMARS strike against a Russian military headquarters in occupied Kherson Oblast on September 18. *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* reported on September 26 that sources within the Ukrainian Security Service (SBU) stated on September 26 that a September 18 Ukrainian HIMARS strike hit the headquarters of the Russian 24th Motorized Rifle regiment (70th Motorized Rifle Division) near Kherson City, killing eight officers and wounding seven.[67] Geolocated footage of the strike from SBU indicates that the headquarters is located in Radensk (24km southeast of Kherson City).[68]

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhzhia as of September 26, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



A Russian milblogger claimed on September 26 that Ukrainian forces continue to operate on the islands in the Dnipro River delta and are trying to expand their zone of control in the area.[69]

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of September 26, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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

Senior Russian officials continue to present Russian crypto-mobilization efforts as highly successful, likely to signal their lack of intent to conduct another mobilization wave. Russian Security Council



Deputy Chairperson Dmitry Medvedev claimed on September 26 that Russia has recruited over 325,000 contract personnel since January 1, 2023, updating Russian President Vladimir Putin's claims of 280,000 personnel on September 12 and 300,000 personnel on September 15.[70]

A Russian opposition outlet indicated that reduced immigration to Russia and ethnic tensions are exacerbating ongoing domestic labor shortages.[71] Russian opposition outlet *Verstka* reported that migration has decreased from 5.9 million in the first half of 2022 to 3.5 million in the first half of 2023.[72] *Verstka* also reported that migrants are increasingly emigrating from Russia to their home countries or other countries due to political and social discrimination, depreciation of the ruble, and fear of mobilization. *Verstka* reported that there are shortages in transportation and delivery services, construction, and catering as a result and that ethnic Russians are not interested in these professions.

**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 and occupation authorities continue efforts to strengthen ground lines of communication (GLOCs) connecting occupied southern Ukraine with Russia. Zaporizhia Oblast occupation Minister of Economic Development Yuri Guskov announced on September 26 that Russia has begun developing plans for a railway that will connect Melitopol and Berdyansk, Zaporizhia Oblast with Rostov Oblast through occupied Crimea and Krasnodar Krai, likely to alleviate some pressure from the Kerch Strait rail and road bridges.[73]

**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)**

Belarusian military and territorial defense forces completed a series of training exercises on September 26. The Belarusian Ministry of Defense (MoD) announced that Belarusian forces completed bilateral training exercises that began on September 22 to improve Belarusian command and control bodies at the tactical and operational levels.[74]

**ISW will continue to report daily observed Russian and Belarusian military activity in Belarus as part of ongoing Kremlin efforts to increase their control over Belarus and other Russian actions in Belarus.**

**Note: ISW does not receive any classified material from any source, uses only publicly available information, and draws extensively on Russian, Ukrainian, and Western reporting and social media as well as commercially available satellite imagery and other geospatial data as the basis for these reports. References to all sources used are provided in the endnotes of each update.**

- [1] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoVaAQ5MbGc8jPKFYr2WXohMXmpCWEBR3xce8adc6g70oxNz4z45WXCmScFCqdczZcl>
- [2] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15284>
- [3] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-24-2023>
- [4] [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30831](https://t.me/mod_russia/30831)
- [5] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar091823> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar090823>
- [6] <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/53654> ; [https://t.me/boris\\_rozhin/98609](https://t.me/boris_rozhin/98609) ; [https://t.me/voin\\_dv/5150](https://t.me/voin_dv/5150) ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar092323> ; <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1234> ; [https://t.me/voin\\_dv/5105](https://t.me/voin_dv/5105) ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-24-2023>
- [7] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar091823>
- [8] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar091823>
- [9] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar091823>
- [10] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-24-2023>
- [11] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar092323>
- [12] <https://t.me/batalyon15/3007> ; <https://t.me/sergeymeniaylo/1980> ; <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/53692>
- [13] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-24-2023>
- [14] [https://twitter.com/kavkaz\\_realii/status/1706386502152753329](https://twitter.com/kavkaz_realii/status/1706386502152753329) ; <https://twitter.com/mobilizationews/status/1706622884804755508> ; <https://t.me/ButusovPlus/5179> ; [https://t.me/Pravda\\_Gerashchenko/80104](https://t.me/Pravda_Gerashchenko/80104)
- [15] [https://t.me/Pravda\\_Gerashchenko/80104](https://t.me/Pravda_Gerashchenko/80104)
- [16] <https://t.me/batalyon15/3007> ; <https://t.me/sergeymeniaylo/1980>
- [17] [https://t.me/RKadyrov\\_95/3924](https://t.me/RKadyrov_95/3924) ; <https://t.me/severrealii/20217>
- [18] <https://meduza dot io/news/2023/09/25/eto-vyzov-vsey-pravovoy-sisteme-rossii-chlen-spch-eva-merkacheva-o-videozapisi-na-kotoroy-syn-kadyrova-izbivaet-zaderzhannogo> ; <https://t.me/svobodnieslova/3016>

[19] <https://meduza dot io/news/2023/09/25/eto-vyzov-vsey-pravovoy-sisteme-rossii-chlen-spch-eva-merkacheva-o-videozapisi-na-kotoroy-syn-kadyrova-izbivaet-zaderzhannogo>;  
<https://t.me/svobodnieslova/3016>

[20] <https://t.me/ombudsmanrf/3132>; <https://meduza dot io/news/2023/09/25/eto-vyzov-vsey-pravovoy-sisteme-rossii-chlen-spch-eva-merkacheva-o-videozapisi-na-kotoroy-syn-kadyrova-izbivaet-zaderzhannogo>; <https://t.me/svobodnieslova/3016>;

[21] <https://t.me/bbcussian/52902>

[22] <https://t.me/bbcussian/52902>

[23] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-17>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-24> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-18>

[24] <https://telegra dot ph/Vstupitelnoe-slovo-Ministra-oborony-RF-generalarmii-Sergeya-SHojgu-na-zasedanii-Kollegii-Minoborony-Rossii-26-sentyabrya-2023--09-26>  
; [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30824](https://t.me/mod_russia/30824) ; [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30829](https://t.me/mod_russia/30829)

[25] <https://telegra dot ph/Vstupitelnoe-slovo-Ministra-oborony-RF-generalarmii-Sergeya-SHojgu-na-zasedanii-Kollegii-Minoborony-Rossii-26-sentyabrya-2023--09-26>  
; [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30824](https://t.me/mod_russia/30824) ; [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30829](https://t.me/mod_russia/30829)

[26] <https://telegra dot ph/Vstupitelnoe-slovo-Ministra-oborony-RF-generalarmii-Sergeya-SHojgu-na-zasedanii-Kollegii-Minoborony-Rossii-26-sentyabrya-2023--09-26>  
; [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30824](https://t.me/mod_russia/30824) ; [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30829](https://t.me/mod_russia/30829)

[27] <https://telegra dot ph/Vstupitelnoe-slovo-Ministra-oborony-RF-generalarmii-Sergeya-SHojgu-na-zasedanii-Kollegii-Minoborony-Rossii-26-sentyabrya-2023--09-26>  
; [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30824](https://t.me/mod_russia/30824) ; [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30829](https://t.me/mod_russia/30829)

[28] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-april-23-2023> ; <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/russia/army-vdv-org.htm#:~:text=Division%2Dlevel%20support%20elements%20include,defense%20company%2C%20and%20a%20reconnaissance>

[29] <https://telegra dot ph/Vstupitelnoe-slovo-Ministra-oborony-RF-generalarmii-Sergeya-SHojgu-na-zasedanii-Kollegii-Minoborony-Rossii-26-sentyabrya-2023--09-26>  
; [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30824](https://t.me/mod_russia/30824) ; [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30829](https://t.me/mod_russia/30829) ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-april-23-2023>

[30] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar082823> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar091623> ; <https://isw.pub/Bakhmuto91723>

[31] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2aaLGid2HrKQksajQzeVnewDMXfXzHDKeFitEZjYGrU2GPraX7ZqUDbyexqo795Bcl> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/p>

fbido238dfq34hAnQR79sQYfUKu4eeD9KDmpr81vQ8hLMbPaW2eZzd8kpYVxt1jt5vujHKL ; [https://www.facebook.com/kpszsu/posts/pfbidouG2SKgWyeuahzjTbHoAT7mBEkNDCmQvZv3QuUBiy9f92Dy6UtwQKGytuBwhvyEjTl?locale=uk\\_UA](https://www.facebook.com/kpszsu/posts/pfbidouG2SKgWyeuahzjTbHoAT7mBEkNDCmQvZv3QuUBiy9f92Dy6UtwQKGytuBwhvyEjTl?locale=uk_UA) ; [https://armyinform.com dot ua/2023/09/26/vorog-atakuvav-pryportovu-ta-prykordonnu-infrastrukturu-pivdnya-ukrayiny/](https://armyinform.com.ua/2023/09/26/vorog-atakuvav-pryportovu-ta-prykordonnu-infrastrukturu-pivdnya-ukrayiny/)

[32] <https://t.me/pivdenmedia/14915> ; <https://x.com/revishvilig/status/1706520523931365607?s=20> ; <https://x.com/Cosmonaut19/status/1706536602309407125?s=20> ; <https://suspilne dot media/580455-cerez-rosijsku-ataku-po-odesini-ne-pracue-punkt-propusku-z-rumunieu/>

[33] <https://t.me/voenacher/52841>; <https://x.com/EjShahid/status/1706421000517132710?s=20>

[34] [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30829](https://t.me/mod_russia/30829) ; <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/53682> ; <https://t.me/kommunist/18642> ; [https://t.me/rian\\_ru/216502](https://t.me/rian_ru/216502) ; [https://t.me/boris\\_rozhin/98619](https://t.me/boris_rozhin/98619) ; <https://t.me/bazabazon/21711> ; <https://t.me/wargonzo/15296> ; <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russian-black-sea-commander-shown-working-after-ukraine-said-it-killed-him-2023-09-26/> ; <https://twitter.com/maxseddon/status/1706624970535669817?s=20> ; <https://twitter.com/BBWorld/status/1706668251567083978?s=20> ; <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/russian-black-sea-fleet-commander-shown-meeting-ukraine-killed-sokolov-rcna117336>

[35] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-25-2023> ; [https://t.me/ukr\\_sof/760%C2%A0%C2%A0](https://t.me/ukr_sof/760%C2%A0%C2%A0)

[36] [https://t.me/ukr\\_sof/761](https://t.me/ukr_sof/761)

[37] <https://ria dot ru/20230926/flot-1898715768.html>

[38] [https://t.me/razgruzka\\_vagnera/295](https://t.me/razgruzka_vagnera/295)

[39] <https://t.me/rybar/52382>

[40] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar092123>

[41] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoVaAQ5MbGc8jPKFYr2WXohMXmpCWEBR3xce8adc6g70oxNz4z45WXCmScFCqdcZcl> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2aaLGid2HrKQksajQzeVnewDMXfXzHDK eFitEZjYGrU2GPraX7ZqUDbyexqo795Bcl>

[42] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15284>

[43] <https://t.me/readovkanews/66673>

[44] [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30833](https://t.me/mod_russia/30833) ; [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30838](https://t.me/mod_russia/30838)

[45] <https://t.me/readovkanews/66674>

[46] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoVaAQ5MbGc8jPKFYr2WXohMXmpCWEBR3xce8adc6g70oxNz4z45WXCmScFCqdcZcl>

[47] <https://t.me/zvofront/1159> ; <https://t.me/batalyon15/3008> ;  
<https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/3468>

[48] <https://t.me/rybar/52396>

[49] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoVaAQ5MbGc8jPKFYr2WXohMXmpCWEBR3xce8adc6g70oxNz4z45WXCmScFCqdcRZcl>

[50] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar051223>

[51] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoVaAQ5MbGc8jPKFYr2WXohMXmpCWEBR3xce8adc6g70oxNz4z45WXCmScFCqdcRZcl>

[52] <https://t.me/rybar/52396> ; [https://t.me/boris\\_rozhin/98608](https://t.me/boris_rozhin/98608) ; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/3468> ; [https://t.me/philologist\\_zov/547](https://t.me/philologist_zov/547)

[53] [https://t.me/philologist\\_zov/547](https://t.me/philologist_zov/547); [https://t.me/philologist\\_zov/548](https://t.me/philologist_zov/548)

[54] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar091823>

[55] [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30833](https://t.me/mod_russia/30833) ; [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30836](https://t.me/mod_russia/30836)

[56] <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/53688> ; [https://t.me/nm\\_dnr/11013](https://t.me/nm_dnr/11013) ; [https://t.me/TRO\\_DPR/13116](https://t.me/TRO_DPR/13116) ;  
<https://t.me/NeoficialniyBeZsonoV/29543> ; <https://t.me/milinfoolive/107090>

[57] <https://t.me/rybar/52364>

[58] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2aaLGid2HrKQksajQzeVnewDMXfXzHDKeFitEZjYGrU2GPraX7ZqUDbyexqo795Bcl> ;  
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoVaAQ5MbGc8jPKFYr2WXohMXmpCWEBR3xce8adc6g70oxNz4z45WXCmScFCqdcRZcl>

[59] [https://t.me/dva\\_majors/26275](https://t.me/dva_majors/26275)

[60] [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30833](https://t.me/mod_russia/30833) ; [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30839](https://t.me/mod_russia/30839)

[61] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15284>

[62] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15284>

[63] [https://t.me/multi\\_XAM/812](https://t.me/multi_XAM/812)

[64] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15284> ; [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30833](https://t.me/mod_russia/30833) ; [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30837](https://t.me/mod_russia/30837) ; <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/53693> ; [https://t.me/dva\\_majors/26296](https://t.me/dva_majors/26296); <https://t.me/frontbird/3678> ; [https://t.me/boris\\_rozhin/98635](https://t.me/boris_rozhin/98635) ; <https://t.me/vrogov/12224>

[65] <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/53654>

[66] [https://armyinform.com\\_dot\\_ua/2023/09/25/na-tavrijskomu-napryamku-syly-oborony-ukrayiny-uspishno-vidbyvayut-ataky-voroga/](https://armyinform.com_dot_ua/2023/09/25/na-tavrijskomu-napryamku-syly-oborony-ukrayiny-uspishno-vidbyvayut-ataky-voroga/)

[67] [https://www.radiosvoboda\\_dot\\_org/a/news-udar-shtab-viysk-rf-kherson/32609857.html](https://www.radiosvoboda_dot_org/a/news-udar-shtab-viysk-rf-kherson/32609857.html)

[68] [https://x.com/auditor\\_ya/status/1706718323386278196?s=20](https://x.com/auditor_ya/status/1706718323386278196?s=20); <https://x.com/NOELreports/status/1706552669186261297?s=20>

[69] [https://t.me/dva\\_majors/26275](https://t.me/dva_majors/26275)

[70] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-12-2023>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-15-2023>; [https://www.themoscowtimes\\_dot\\_com/2023/09/26/jailed-reporter-safronov-moved-to-siberian-hospital-a82569](https://www.themoscowtimes_dot_com/2023/09/26/jailed-reporter-safronov-moved-to-siberian-hospital-a82569); [https://t.me/rian\\_ru/216524](https://t.me/rian_ru/216524); [https://t.me/boris\\_rozhin/98638](https://t.me/boris_rozhin/98638)

[71] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-may-7-2023>; <https://understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-april-27-2023>

[72] [https://verstka\\_dot\\_media/pochemu-trudovye-migranty-bolshe-ne-hotiat-rabotat-v-rossii](https://verstka_dot_media/pochemu-trudovye-migranty-bolshe-ne-hotiat-rabotat-v-rossii)

[73] [https://rostov.rbc\\_dot\\_ru/rostov/freenews/6512884c9a794708b3e91a79](https://rostov.rbc_dot_ru/rostov/freenews/6512884c9a794708b3e91a79)

[74] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-21-2023> ; <https://t.me/modmilby/32367>

# Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, September 25, 2023

Angelica Evans, Christina Harward, Riley Bailey,  
Karolina Hird, and Frederick W. Kagan

September 25, 2023, 5:50pm ET

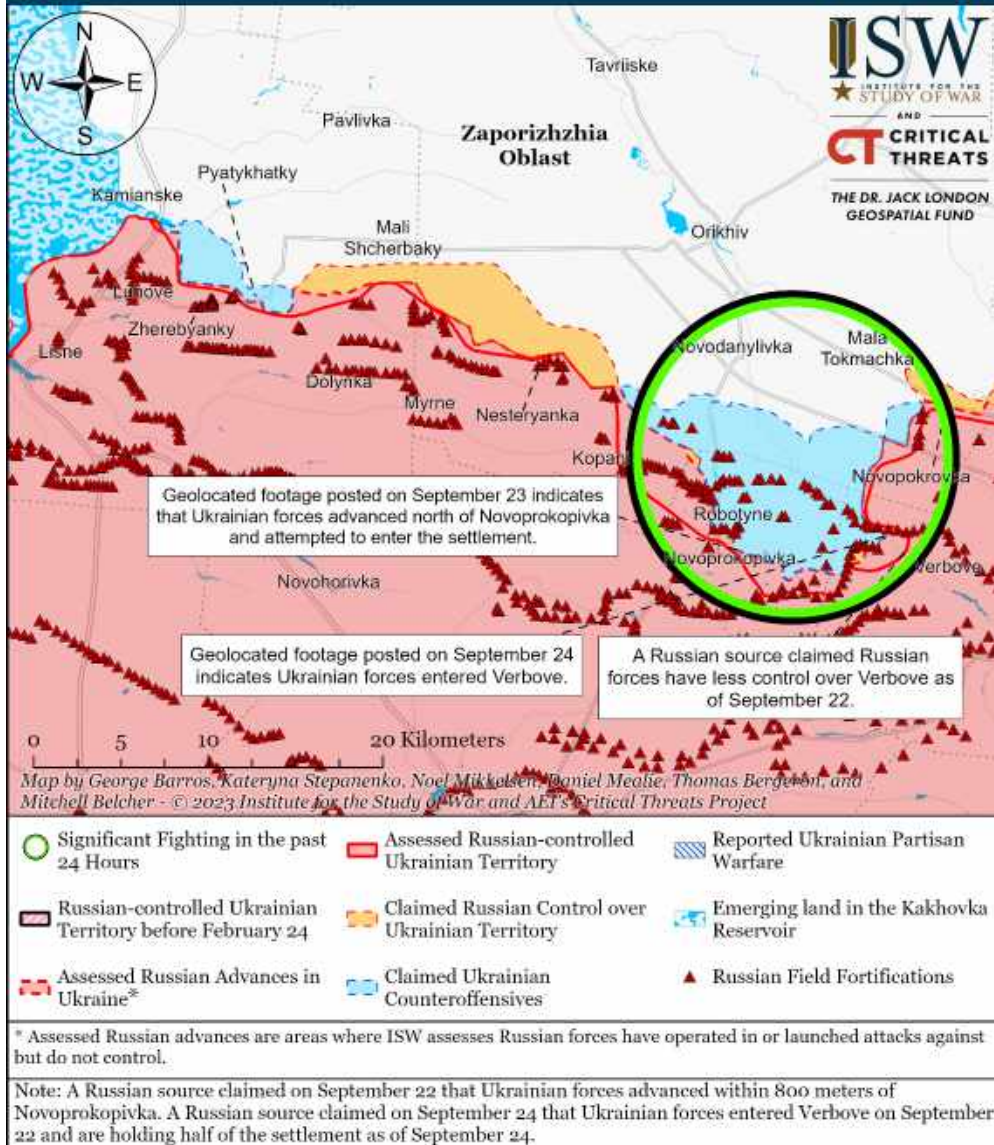
Click [here](#) to see ISW's interactive map of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

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 1:30pm ET on September 25. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the September 26 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.**

**The tactical situation in Verbove remains unclear amid continued Ukrainian offensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast on September 25.** The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Melitopol (western Zaporizhia Oblast) direction and offensive assaults in the Bakhmut direction, inflicting losses on Russian manpower and equipment and depleting Russian forces along the entire front line.[1] Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces reached northern Verbove (18km southeast of Orikhiv) but that Russian forces pushed them back to their original positions.[2] Russian sources have yet to directly address a claim from a source reportedly affiliated with the Russian Airborne (VDV) Forces that Ukrainian forces control half of Verbove as of September 24.[3]

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Pyatykhatky and Robotyne as of September 25, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



**The Ukrainian Special Operations Forces reported on September 25 that a precision Ukrainian strike on the headquarters of the Black Sea Fleet (BSF) in occupied Sevastopol, Crimea, on September 22 killed 34 Russian officers, including BSF Commander Admiral Viktor Sokolov.**[4] Ukrainian Special Operations Forces reported that the strike, which occurred during a meeting of senior BSF leadership, also wounded 105 Russian personnel.[5] Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) Head Lieutenant General Kyrylo Budanov stated on September 23 that the strike seriously wounded the commander of the Russian 200th Separate Motorized Rifle Brigade (Northern Fleet), Lieutenant General Oleg Tsekov, and the commander of the Russian grouping of forces in Zaporizhzhia Oblast, Colonel General Alexander Romanchuk.[6] Ukrainian Special Operations Forces also reported that the Ukrainian



strike on the *Minsk* landing ship in Sevastopol on September 13 killed 62 personnel, noting that many personnel were present as the *Minsk* was scheduled to go on combat duty on September 14.[7] ISW has yet to observe confirmation that these Ukrainian strikes killed Sokolov or any other high-ranking Russian commanders, although the Russian command would be able to easily disprove Ukrainian reporting if these reports are false. Sokolov's and other Russian officers' reported deaths would create significant disruptions in command and control in the Russian Black Sea Fleet.

**Ukrainian forces reportedly struck the Khalino Airfield and a Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) building in Kursk Oblast during a series of drone strikes on September 24.** Ukrainian media reported on September 24 that sources connected to the Ukrainian GUR stated that Ukrainian forces struck an FSB building and an oil refinery near the Khalino Airfield in Kursk Oblast.[8] Russian Kursk Oblast Governor Roman Starovoyt confirmed that a Ukrainian drone struck an administrative building in the Central District of Kursk City.[9] Ukrainian news outlet *RBC-Ukraine's* sources clarified on September 25 that Ukrainian forces struck the Khalino Airfield and killed an unspecified number of officers of the Russian 14th Guards Fighter Aviation Regiment (105th Guards Composite Aviation Division, 6th Air and Air Defense Forces Army, Russia Aerospace [VSK] Forces), which is based at the airfield.[10] The Russian 14th Guards Fighting Aviation Regiment is equipped with Su-30SM aircraft.[11] Russian sources confirmed the strike on the Khalino Airfield and the death of an unspecified number of Russian servicemen.[12]

**Russian forces conducted a series of Shahed-131/136 drone and missile strikes on the night of September 24-25 against Ukrainian port, grain, and military targets.** Ukrainian military officials reported that Russian forces launched 12 Kalibr sea-launched cruise missiles from the Black Sea, two Onyx cruise missiles from the Sevastopol area, and 19 Shahed drones from Krasnodar Krai.[13] Ukrainian air defenses shot down 11 Kalibr missiles and all 19 drones.[14] Ukrainian military officials reported that Russian forces struck port and grain infrastructure in Odesa Oblast, and footage shows that Russian strikes damaged a hotel in Odesa City.[15] Russian sources, including the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD), claimed that Russian forces struck a Ukrainian MiG-29 fighter aircraft at the Dolhintsevo airfield in Dnipropetrovsk Oblast.[16] Moldovan government officials stated on September 25 that fragments of an S-300 missile fell in Chitcani (5km south of Tiraspol) in Transnistria and that the missile's origin and flight path have not been confirmed.[17]

**Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky confirmed on September 25 that US-provided Abrams tanks have arrived in Ukraine.**[18] The *New York Times* reported that US officials stated that the US delivered an unspecified number of Abrams tanks to Ukraine on September 23 and that the Biden administration intends to send 31 Abrams in total.[19] *Politico* previously reported on August 31 that Ukraine would receive the first 10 of 31 Abrams tanks in mid-September.[20]

**Russian military officials continue efforts to build out the Russian armed forces to suit the needs of Russian forces fighting in Ukraine.** Russian outlet *Izvestia*, citing sources in the Russian military, claimed on September 25 that the Russian armed forces are forming reconnaissance and assault brigades in combined arms armies and newly formed army corps and that these brigades are already actively recruiting.[21] *Izvestia* reported that the new units will be comprised of assault troops intended to break through layered defenses and reconnaissance troops that will conduct reconnaissance at "tactical depth," and noted that each brigade will receive tanks, light armored vehicles, artillery, and various drones.[22] *Izvestia* emphasized that these new brigades are meant to

overcome pre-prepared Ukrainian defensive positions, particularly in areas of Donbas, where Ukrainian forces have been expanding and equipping fortifications since Russia's first invasion in 2014. Colonel Valery Yuryev, chairman of the Russian Union of Paratroopers, told *Izvestia* that the war has stressed the "need to have specialized units for storming fortified areas" and that "separate assault units and formations are necessary." [23]

The Russian military has previously attempted to adapt to lessons learned in Ukraine by forming similar assault-focused company-sized units intended to target urban and fortified areas in the form of "Storm-Z" companies, which have been primarily active and mostly unsuccessful along the Donetsk City-Avdiivka frontline and on the Luhansk-Kharkiv Oblast front. [24] ISW has been reporting on ongoing Russian military reforms and the creation of new combined arms army and army corps level formations, and it remains unclear how the Russian force generation apparatus will be able to recruit, train, and staff brigade, army, or army-corps level formations considering the multitude of endemic mobilization issues the Russian army faces at this time. [25]

### **The Kremlin and the Armenian government continue to deflect blame onto one another over the surrender of Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijan amidst deteriorating Armenian-Russian relations.**

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan delivered an address on September 24 in which he criticized Russia by stating that the Russian-led security structures of which Armenia is a part are ineffective and by questioning the motives of the Russian peacekeeping contingent in Nagorno-Karabakh. [26] Pashinyan blamed Azerbaijan and Russian peacekeepers for the recent events in Nagorno-Karabakh, which Pashinyan labeled as "a policy of ethnic cleansing." The Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) responded to Pashinyan's statement on September 25, blamed Pashinyan for avoiding personal responsibility for "failures in [Armenian] domestic and foreign policy," and heavily criticized Pashinyan's recent turn to the West. [27] Russian milbloggers have consistently focused on anti-Pashinyan protests in Yerevan since the Nagorno-Karabakh authorities accepted a Russian peacekeeper-mediated ceasefire agreement with Azerbaijan on September 20. [28] ISW previously reported that the Kremlin reportedly distributed a manual on September 19 instructing Kremlin-affiliated media to blame the West and Pashinyan for recognizing Azerbaijani sovereignty over Nagorno-Karabakh. [29] The initial protests in Armenia following the surrender of Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijan appear to be skewing in the direction of the Kremlin's preferred narrative, although it is unclear if the Kremlin will retain strong Armenian support for Russia in the long-term following the inaction of Russian peacekeeping forces.

### **Key Takeaways:**

- **The tactical situation in Verbove remains unclear amid continued Ukrainian offensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast on September 25.**
- **The Ukrainian Special Operations Forces reported on September 25 that a precision Ukrainian strike on the headquarters of the Black Sea Fleet (BSF) in occupied Sevastopol, Crimea, on September 22 killed 34 Russian officers, including BSF Commander Admiral Viktor Sokolov**
- **Ukrainian forces reportedly struck the Khalino Airfield and a Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) building in Kursk Oblast during a series of drone strikes on September 24.**

- **Russian forces conducted a series of Shahed-131/136 drone and missile strikes on the night of September 24-25 against Ukrainian port, grain, and military targets.**
- **Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky confirmed on September 25 that US-provided Abrams tanks have arrived in Ukraine.**
- **Russian military officials continue efforts to build out the Russian armed forces to suit the needs of Russian forces fighting in Ukraine.**
- **The Kremlin and the Armenian government continue to deflect blame onto one another over the surrender of Nagorno-Karabakh to Azerbaijan amidst deteriorating Armenian-Russian relations.**
- **Russian forces continued unsuccessful offensive operations near Bakhmut, along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line, and in western Zaporizhia Oblast.**
- **Ukrainian forces conducted offensive operations near Bakhmut, in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area, and in western Zaporizhia Oblast but did not make any confirmed gains.**
- **Russian officials continue to deport children from occupied Ukraine to Russia.**

# Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of September 25, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



***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 Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine**

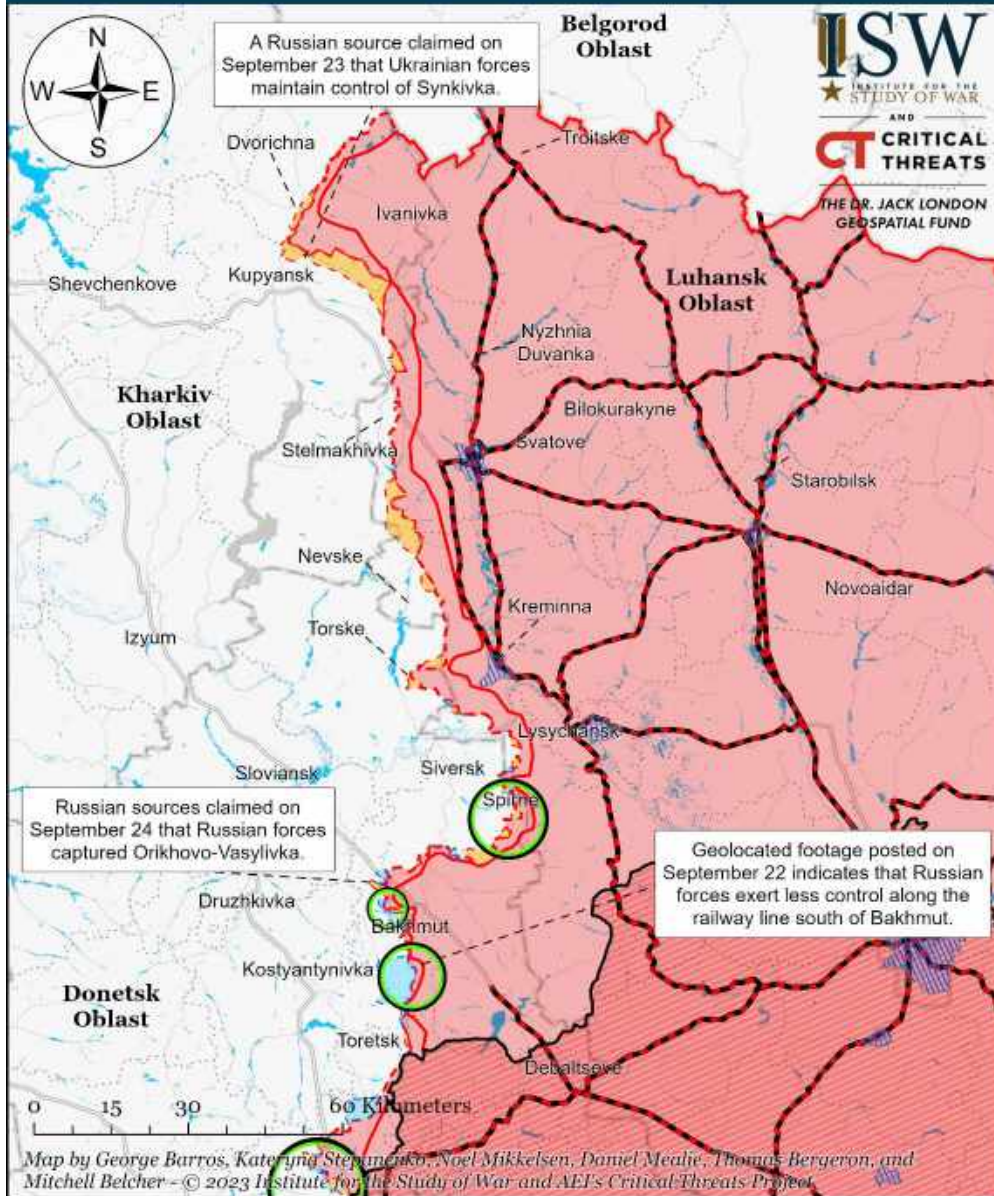
### **Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Luhansk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and northern Donetsk Oblast)**

Russian forces did not conduct any ground attacks along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on September 25. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces did not conduct offensive actions in either the Kupyansk or Lyman directions.[30] Ukrainian Eastern Group of Forces Spokesperson Captain Ilya Yevlash stated that there were three combat engagements near Berestove, Donetsk Oblast (31km south of Kreminna) and in the general direction of Loskutivka (29km southeast of Kreminna) on September 24.[31]

The Russian MoD claimed that elements of the Russian Central Grouping of Forces repelled Ukrainian assaults south of Dibrova (7km southwest of Kreminna) and that elements of the Russian Southern Grouping of Forces repelled Ukrainian assaults near Spirne (24km south of Kreminna) and Berestove in Donetsk Oblast on September 25.[32]

Ukrainian forces reportedly conducted a strike on Russian logistics in a deep rear area of occupied Luhansk Oblast on September 25. Russian and Ukrainian sources reported that Ukrainian forces struck an unspecified industrial facility in Sorokyne (13km from the international Ukrainian-Russian border).[33] A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces launched three Storm Shadow cruise missiles at Sorokyne.[34]

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of September 25, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, and Mitchell Belcher - © 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

- 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 Counteroffensives
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare

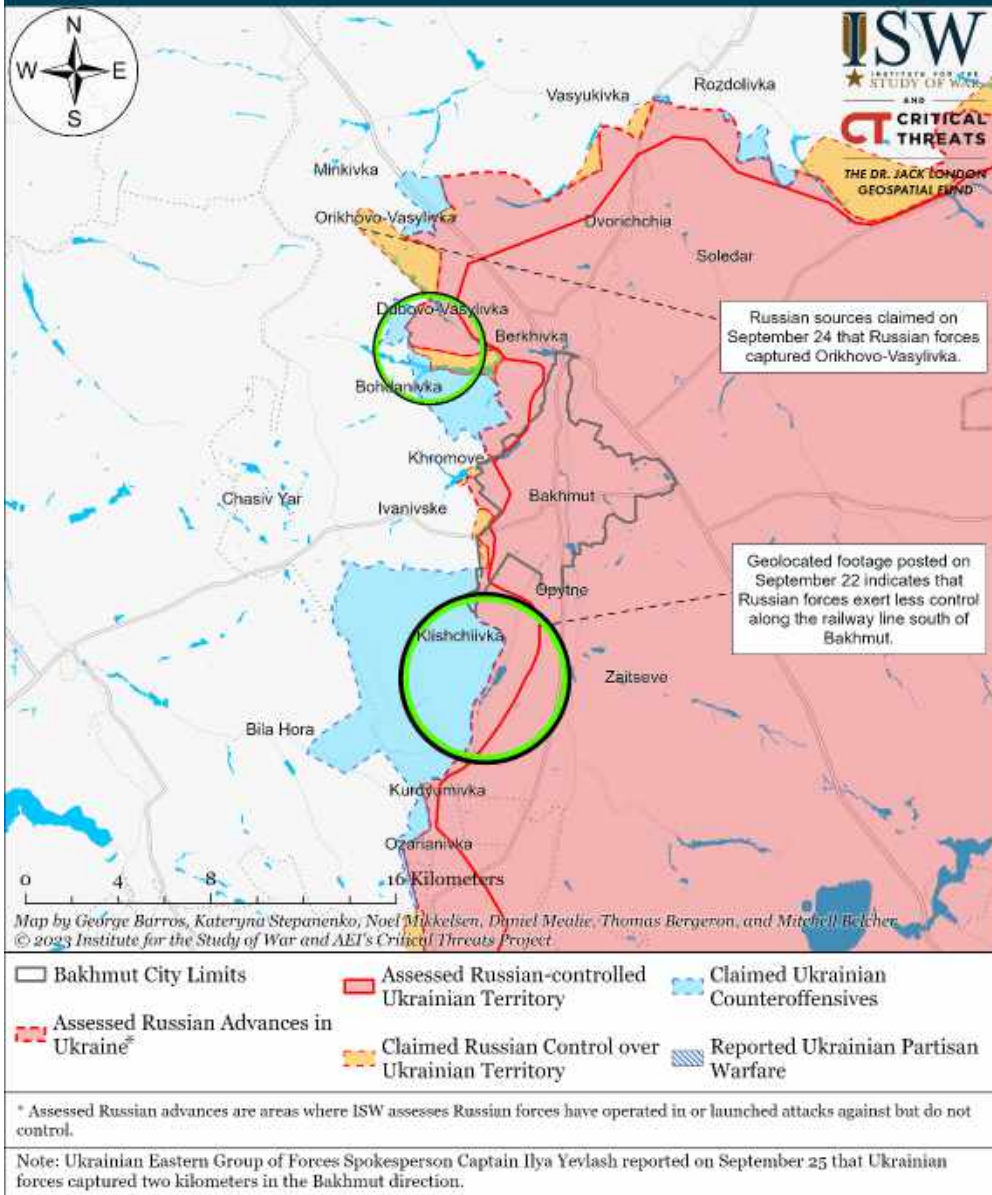
\* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

## **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 actions near Bakhmut on September 25 but did not make any confirmed gains. Ukrainian Eastern Group of Forces Spokesperson Captain Ilya Yevlash stated that Ukrainian forces liberated an additional 2km of territory in the Bakhmut direction.[35] The Russian MoD claimed that elements of the Russian Southern Grouping of Forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Mayorske (20km south of Bakhmut).[36] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces attempted to break through Russian defensive positions along the railway east of Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut).[37] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked near Orikhovo-Vasylivka (10km northwest of Bakhmut) after Russian forces reportedly captured the settlement, although ISW has still not seen visual confirmation that Russian forces have captured Orikhovo-Vasylivka.[38] A Russian milblogger noted that the front lines near Bakhmut have not changed recently.[39]

Russian forces continued ground attacks near Bakhmut on September 25 but did not make any confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks near Klishchiivka and east and southeast of Bohdanivka (7km northwest of Bakhmut).[40] Several Russian milbloggers claimed on September 24 and 25 that Russian forces pushed Ukrainian forces from their positions in Orikhovo-Vasylivka and that Russian forces now control the settlement.[41] One Russian milblogger acknowledged that there is no visual confirmation of these claims.[42] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces are counterattacking near Kurdyumivka (12km southwest of Bakhmut).[43]

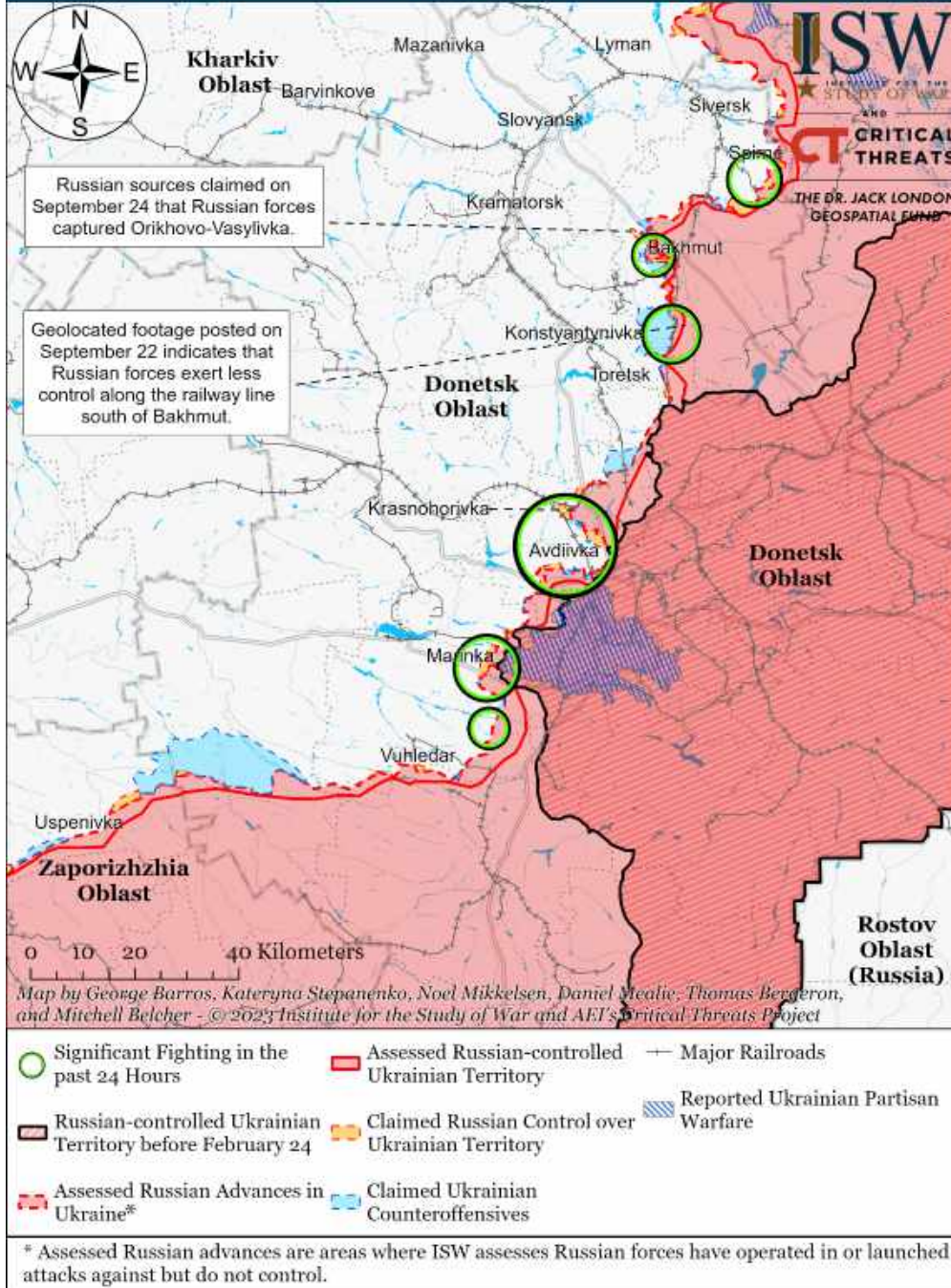
## Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of September 25, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Russian forces continued unsuccessful ground attacks along the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line on September 25. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks near Avdiivka and Marinka (on the western outskirts of Donetsk City) and unsuccessfully attempted to recapture lost positions near Novomykhailivka (36km southwest of Avdiivka).[44] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces attacked near Marinka and on the southern approaches to Avdiivka but did not specify an outcome.[45]

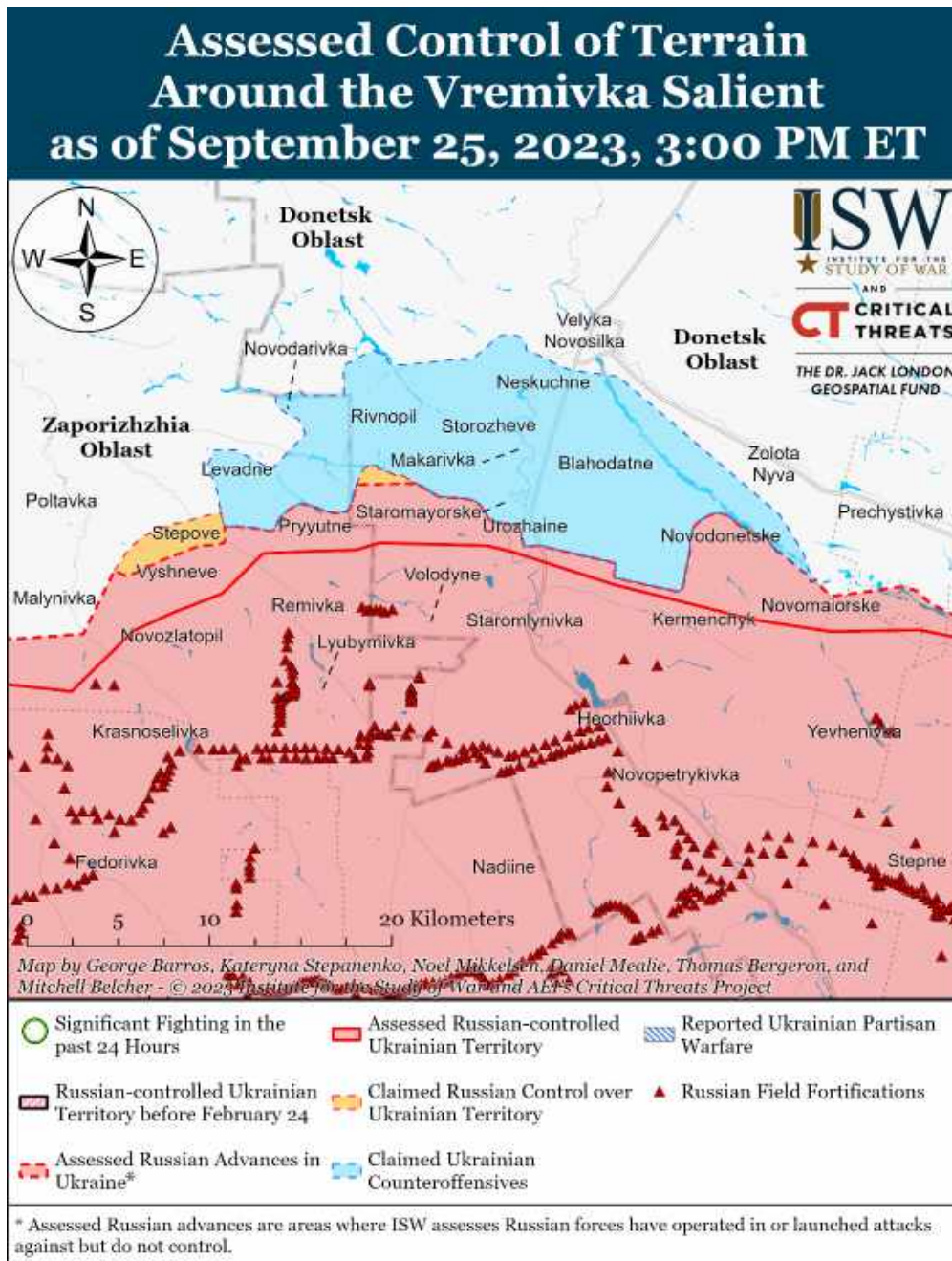


# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of September 25, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



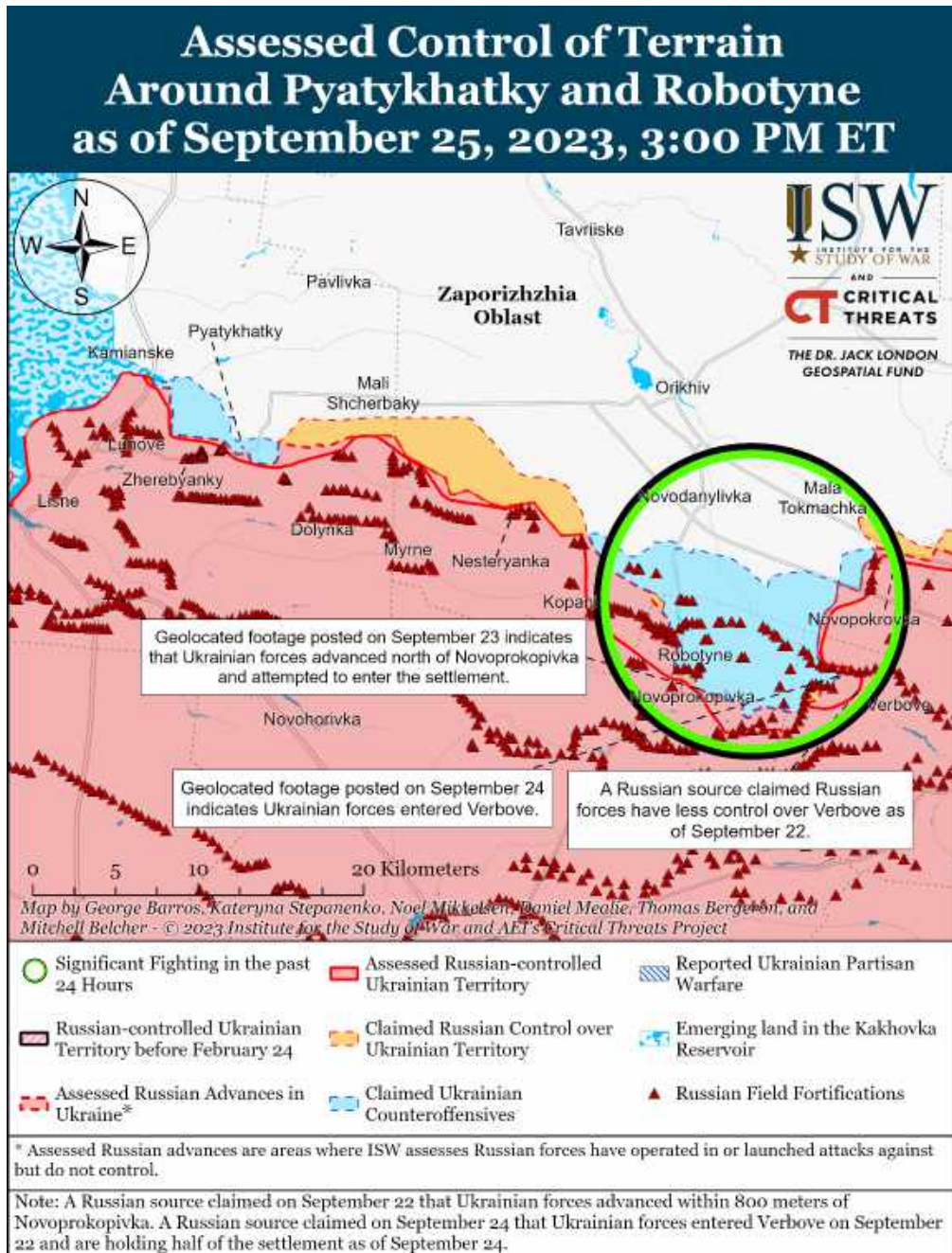
## **Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions and secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes)**

Ukrainian forces conducted offensive operations in the western Donetsk-eastern Zaporizhzhia Oblast border area but did not advance on September 25. A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian infantry groups unsuccessfully attacked east of Urozhaine (9km south of Velyka Novosilka) and conducted reconnaissance-in-force operations near Pryyutne (16km southwest of Velyka Novosilka).[46]



Ukrainian forces conducted offensive operations in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast but did not advance on September 25. Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces reached northern Verbove but that Russian forces pushed them back to their original positions.[47] Russian sources, including the Russian MoD, claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Verbove, Novopokrovka

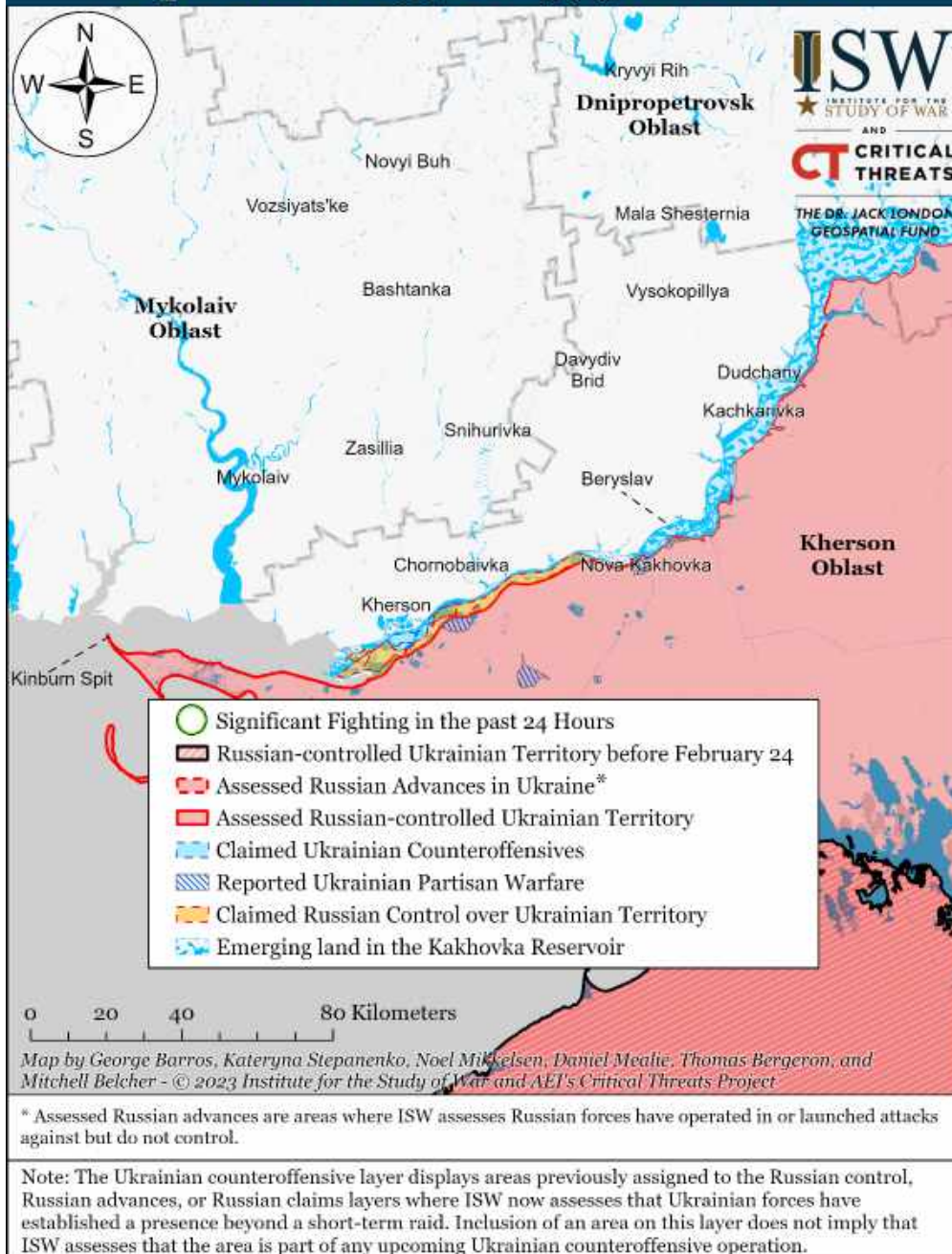
(16km southeast of Orikhiv), Robotyne (10km south of Orikhiv), and Novoprokopivka.[48] Russian forces conducted unsuccessful offensive operations in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast on September 25. Ukrainian General Staff Spokesperson Pavlo Kovalchuk reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Mala Tokmachka (7km southeast of Orikhiv), Novodanylivka (6km south of Orikhiv), Robotyne, and Verbove.[49] A Russian source reportedly affiliated with the Russian VDV Forces claimed on September 24 that elements of the Russian 108th VDV Regiment (7th VDV Division) are operating against “superior” Ukrainian forces in the Zaporizhzhia direction without rotations or reinforcements.[50]



Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces continued to conduct operations on islands in the Dnipro River on September 25. Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted active operations on islands in the Dnipro River delta and are attempting to land on the left (east) bank of the river.[51]

Russian opposition media outlet *Astra* reported on September 25 that Sevastopol occupation governor Mikhail Razvozhaev claimed that Russian air defenses shot down a Ukrainian missile near Sevastopol on September 23, but in reality, the missile actually hit the headquarters of the 758th Center for Black Sea Fleet Logistics and Technical Support.[52]

# Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of September 25, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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

A report by Poland-based open-source intelligence organization Rochan Consulting found that Russia's Baltic Fleet has been substantially degraded due to the war in Ukraine. Rochan

Consulting noted that the Baltic Sea Fleet has lost its ability to conduct large-scale amphibious offensive operations because its Ropucha-class landing ships and 336th Naval Infantry Brigade have been involved in combat in Ukraine.[53] The report stated that three of the Baltic Fleet's landing ships deployed to the Black Sea and are now unable to deploy back to their home ports in Baltiysk and that the 336th Naval Infantry Brigade has suffered extensive losses in combat in Ukraine, which substantially limits the Baltic Fleet's power projection capabilities in the Baltic.[54] ISW has previously observed the commitment of naval infantry assets of the Baltic, Pacific, and Northern Fleets to various axes in Ukraine, and the degradation of these elements is likely to further impede Russian naval capabilities in the Baltic, Arctic, and Pacific.[55]

**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)**

Ukrainian partisan channel "Mariupol Sprotyv" reported on September 25 that Ukrainian partisans destroyed an electrical transformer installation near occupied Staryi Krym, Donetsk Oblast.[56]

Russian officials continue to deport children from occupied Ukraine to Russia. The Kherson Oblast occupation administration amplified a report on September 25 that the Russian Ministry of Culture sent 90 children from occupied Kherson Oblast to Moscow and St. Petersburg for an unspecified amount of time.[57] The Russian Ministry of Culture will reportedly send another group of children of an unspecified size to Russia from occupied Kherson Oblast in October.[58]

**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)**

The Belarusian Ministry of Defense (MoD) announced on September 25 that territorial defense units in Mogilev Oblast held staff training and anti-sabotage and search exercises.[59] The Belarusian MoD announced that Belarusian territorial defense established a volunteer people's militia detachment in Vyazevsky, Osipovichy Raion, Mogilev Oblast.[60]

**ISW will continue to report daily observed Russian and Belarusian military activity in Belarus as part of ongoing Kremlin efforts to increase their control over Belarus and other Russian actions in Belarus.**

**Note: ISW does not receive any classified material from any source, uses only publicly available information, and draws extensively on Russian, Ukrainian, and Western reporting and social media as well as commercially available satellite imagery and other geospatial data as the basis for these reports. References to all sources used are provided in the endnotes of each update.**

---

[1] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid045TVTzqieDTXjcwsyzaMpzhzLxYTinYaEPwe5Wj2yQ6oz23Bo4qhSnwtaPMEywtFl>

- [2] <https://twitter.com/GirkinGirkin/status/1706277347974901989> ; [https://t.me/polk\\_1430/963](https://t.me/polk_1430/963) ; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/3412>
- [3] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar092423> ; [https://t.me/vdv\\_ZA\\_teplinsky/425](https://t.me/vdv_ZA_teplinsky/425)
- [4] [https://t.me/ukr\\_sof/760](https://t.me/ukr_sof/760)
- [5] [https://t.me/ukr\\_sof/760](https://t.me/ukr_sof/760)
- [6] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar092323>
- [7] [https://t.me/ukr\\_sof/760](https://t.me/ukr_sof/760)
- [8] [https://www.pravda.com\\_dot\\_ua/rus/news/2023/09/24/7421182/](https://www.pravda.com_dot_ua/rus/news/2023/09/24/7421182/) ; [https://suspilne\\_dot\\_media/579303-u-kursku-bezpilotnik-atakuvav-adminbudivlu-gubernator/](https://suspilne_dot_media/579303-u-kursku-bezpilotnik-atakuvav-adminbudivlu-gubernator/)
- [9] [https://t.me/gubernator\\_46/3957](https://t.me/gubernator_46/3957) ; <https://x.com/GeoConfirmed/status/1705897024497819885?s=20>
- [10] [https://www.rbc\\_dot\\_ua/ukr/news/aerodrom-halino-kursku-atakuvav-dron-znishcheno-1695632055.html](https://www.rbc_dot_ua/ukr/news/aerodrom-halino-kursku-atakuvav-dron-znishcheno-1695632055.html)
- [11] [http://www.airforce\\_dot\\_ru/content/reportazhi-1/2352-reportazh-s-aerodroma-halino/](http://www.airforce_dot_ru/content/reportazhi-1/2352-reportazh-s-aerodroma-halino/) ; [https://svpressa\\_dot\\_ru/war21/article/331494/](https://svpressa_dot_ru/war21/article/331494/)
- [12] <https://t.me/vchkogpu/42027> ; [https://t.me/boris\\_rozhin/98452](https://t.me/boris_rozhin/98452) ; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/3409> ; <https://twitter.com/GirkinGirkin/status/1706014626331197788>
- [13] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido45TVTzqieDTXjcwesyzaMpzhzLxYTinYaEPwe5Wj2yQ6oz23Bo4qhSnwtaPMEywtFl> ; [https://armyinform.com\\_dot\\_ua/2023/09/25/unochi-syly-ppo-znyshhyly-19-shahediv-ta-11-kalibriv/](https://armyinform.com_dot_ua/2023/09/25/unochi-syly-ppo-znyshhyly-19-shahediv-ta-11-kalibriv/) ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido8gNDc5mojftSM8XcZGV2z19VVKDBv7jtHjCdaHT6tDEfLYxmSJwzUHT9LE6rrPFsl>
- [14] [https://armyinform.com\\_dot\\_ua/2023/09/25/unochi-syly-ppo-znyshhyly-19-shahediv-ta-11-kalibriv/](https://armyinform.com_dot_ua/2023/09/25/unochi-syly-ppo-znyshhyly-19-shahediv-ta-11-kalibriv/)
- [15] [https://t.me/SJTF\\_Odes/1015](https://t.me/SJTF_Odes/1015) ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido38CqtCZnGvWmhhy4h5ssqLhbvbDpZgnDmSnmZ7D5LCqpaLMHta4ZZKUDH1Kf5Skrml> ; <https://twitter.com/revishvilig/status/1706076148650696927> ; <https://twitter.com/revishvilig/status/1706080962910536029> ; <https://twitter.com/RALee85/status/1706205030469030028> ; <https://twitter.com/Hromadske/status/1706192577672753566> ; <https://twitter.com/Militarylandnet/status/1706211467677053268> ; [https://t.me/boris\\_rozhin/98469](https://t.me/boris_rozhin/98469) ; [https://t.me/boris\\_rozhin/98522](https://t.me/boris_rozhin/98522) ; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/50779> ; <https://t.me/rybar/52348>
- [16] [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30795](https://t.me/mod_russia/30795) ; [https://t.me/boris\\_rozhin/98503](https://t.me/boris_rozhin/98503) ; <https://t.me/rybar/52338> ; <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/53597> ; <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/53626> ; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/3373> ; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/3378> ; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/3420> ; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/3388> ; <https://t.me/milinfoive/107025>

[17] <https://newsmaker dot md/rus/novosti/kishinev-otpravil-nablyudateley-na-mesto-padeniya-oblomkov-rakety-v-kitskanah/> ; <https://newsmaker dot md/rus/novosti/na-territorii-pridnestrovyia-obnaruzhili-oblomki-rakety-s-300/>

[18] [https://t.me/V\\_Zelenskiy\\_official/7979](https://t.me/V_Zelenskiy_official/7979)

[19] <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/25/world/europe/us-abrams-tanks-ukraine.html?smid=url-share>

[20] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar090123> ; <https://www.politico.com/news/2023/08/31/ukrainian-soldiers-complete-training-abrams-tanks-00113668>

[21] <https://iz dot ru/1578825/roman-kretcul-aleksei-ramm/sistemnyi-vzлом-v-vs-rossii-poiavitsia-novyi-tip-brigad>

[22] <https://iz dot ru/1578825/roman-kretcul-aleksei-ramm/sistemnyi-vzлом-v-vs-rossii-poiavitsia-novyi-tip-brigad>

[23] <https://iz dot ru/1578825/roman-kretcul-aleksei-ramm/sistemnyi-vzлом-v-vs-rossii-poiavitsia-novyi-tip-brigad>

[24] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar040623>; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar071823>

[25] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar062223>; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar061523>; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar090123>; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar011223>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-january-17-2023>

[26] <https://www.primeminister dot am/ru/statements-and-messages/item/2023/09/24/Nikol-Pashinyan-messages/>

[27] [https://www.mid dot ru/ru/foreign\\_policy/news/1906229/](https://www.mid dot ru/ru/foreign_policy/news/1906229/)

[28] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-20-2023> ; [https://t.me/boris\\_rozhin/98157](https://t.me/boris_rozhin/98157) ; <https://t.me/rybar/52090> ; [https://t.me/russkiy\\_opolchenec/38054](https://t.me/russkiy_opolchenec/38054) ; [https://t.me/infomil\\_live/49](https://t.me/infomil_live/49) ; <https://t.me/rybar/52319> ; [https://t.me/boris\\_rozhin/98456](https://t.me/boris_rozhin/98456)

[29] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar092123>

[30] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido38CqtCZnGvWmhhy4h5ssqLhbvbDpZgnDmSnmZ7D5LCqpaLMHta4ZZKUDH1Kf5Skrm1>

[31] <https://suspilne dot media/579931-zsu-zvilnili-dva-kilometri-na-bahmutskommu-napramku-evlas/>; <https://t.me/luhanskaVTSA/13843>

[32] [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30794](https://t.me/mod_russia/30794) ; [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30799](https://t.me/mod_russia/30799)



[33] <https://t.me/luhanskaVTSA/13846> ; <https://twitter.com/GirkinGirkin/status/1706244230853587156> ; [https://t.me/Trikutnik\\_LSR/1516](https://t.me/Trikutnik_LSR/1516) ; [https://t.me/Trikutnik\\_LSR/1519](https://t.me/Trikutnik_LSR/1519) ; [https://t.me/Trikutnik\\_LSR/1520](https://t.me/Trikutnik_LSR/1520) ; [https://t.me/Trikutnik\\_LSR/1524](https://t.me/Trikutnik_LSR/1524) ; <https://t.me/rybar/52343> ; [https://t.me/miroshnik\\_r/12659](https://t.me/miroshnik_r/12659) ; [https://t.me/boris\\_rozhin/98517](https://t.me/boris_rozhin/98517)

[34] <https://t.me/rybar/52343>;

[35] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido38CqtCZnGvWmhhy4h5ssqLhbvbDpZgnDmSnmZ7D5LCqpaLMHta4ZZKUDH1Kf5Skrml>

[36] [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30794](https://t.me/mod_russia/30794) ; [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30797](https://t.me/mod_russia/30797)

[37] <https://t.me/batalyon15/2995> ; <https://t.me/wargonzo/15262> ; [https://t.me/dva\\_majors/26232](https://t.me/dva_majors/26232) ; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/3406> ; <https://twitter.com/GirkinGirkin/status/170629641596034687>

[38] <https://t.me/vrogov/12202>

[39] <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/3406>

[40] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido38CqtCZnGvWmhhy4h5ssqLhbvbDpZgnDmSnmZ7D5LCqpaLMHta4ZZKUDH1Kf5Skrml> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido45TVTzqieDTXjcwysyaMpzhzLxYTinYaEPwe5Wj2yQ6oz23Bo4qhSnwtaPMEywtFl>

[41] <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/3364> ; <https://t.me/vrogov/12202> ; [https://t.me/boris\\_rozhin/98518](https://t.me/boris_rozhin/98518)

[42] [https://t.me/boris\\_rozhin/98518](https://t.me/boris_rozhin/98518)

[43] <https://twitter.com/GirkinGirkin/status/1706271733878018362> ; <https://t.me/zvofront/1148>

[44] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido38CqtCZnGvWmhhy4h5ssqLhbvbDpZgnDmSnmZ7D5LCqpaLMHta4ZZKUDH1Kf5Skrml> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido45TVTzqieDTXjcwysyaMpzhzLxYTinYaEPwe5Wj2yQ6oz23Bo4qhSnwtaPMEywtFl>

[45] <https://t.me/wargonzo/15262>

[46] [https://t.me/voin\\_dv/5131](https://t.me/voin_dv/5131)

[47] <https://twitter.com/GirkinGirkin/status/1706277347974901989> ; [https://t.me/polk\\_1430/963](https://t.me/polk_1430/963) ; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/3412>

[48] [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30794](https://t.me/mod_russia/30794) ; [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/30798](https://t.me/mod_russia/30798) ; <https://t.me/vrogov/12213> ; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/3404> ; <https://t.me/wargonzo/15262> ; <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/53598> ; <https://t.me/batalyon15/2995>

[49] <https://t.me/militarymediacenter/3246>

- [50] [https://t.me/vdv\\_ZA\\_teplinsky/427](https://t.me/vdv_ZA_teplinsky/427)
- [51] [https://t.me/dva\\_majors/26232](https://t.me/dva_majors/26232) ; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/3405>
- [52] <https://t.me/astrapress/38723>
- [53] [https://rochan-consulting.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Ocean-Shield-2023\\_FL.pdf](https://rochan-consulting.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Ocean-Shield-2023_FL.pdf) ;  
<https://meduza dot io/news/2023/09/25/rochan-consulting-baltiyskiy-flot-rf-iz-za-voyny-nemozhet-provodit-nastupatelnye-desantnye-operatsii>
- [54] [https://rochan-consulting.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Ocean-Shield-2023\\_FL.pdf](https://rochan-consulting.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Ocean-Shield-2023_FL.pdf) ;  
<https://meduza dot io/news/2023/09/25/rochan-consulting-baltiyskiy-flot-rf-iz-za-voyny-nemozhet-provodit-nastupatelnye-desantnye-operatsii>
- [55] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar081323>; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar070123>;
- [56] <https://t.me/mrplSprotyv/26853> ; <https://t.me/andriyshTime/13735>
- [57] [https://t.me/budem\\_zhit/5227](https://t.me/budem_zhit/5227); [https://t.me/VGA\\_Kherson/14141](https://t.me/VGA_Kherson/14141)
- [58] [https://t.me/budem\\_zhit/5227](https://t.me/budem_zhit/5227); [https://t.me/VGA\\_Kherson/14141](https://t.me/VGA_Kherson/14141)
- [59] <https://t.me/modmilby/32320> ; <https://t.me/modmilby/32331>
- [60] <https://t.me/modmilby/32326>