

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of November 16, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Megan Wilson, and Shaylei Dauphinais

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

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, November 15, 2023

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November 15, 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 see ISW's 3D control of terrain topographic map of Ukraine. Use of a computer (not a mobile device) is strongly recommended for using this data-heavy tool.

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 November 15. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the November 16 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

The European Union (EU) appears poised to ban the export of precision machine tools and key weapons manufacturing equipment components to Russia. The ban, if enacted and effectively enforced, could deal a significant blow to Russia's defense industrial base (DIB) given precision machine tools' importance in industrial manufacturing. *Bloomberg* reported on November 15 that the EU's 12th sanctions package proposes a ban on the export of precision machine tools and machinery parts that Russia uses to make weapons and ammunition, such as welding machines, lithium batteries, thermostats, motors, and drone motors.[1] *Bloomberg* reported that Russia has been importing precision machines and precision machine tools from Europe to sustain its ammunition production and other DIB production efforts. *Bne Intellinews* reported in June 2021 that Russia's near total reliance on European- and US-produced precision machine tools makes Russia particularly vulnerable to such sanctions and noted that at the time Russia imported almost all of the precision machines it required.[2]

Russia has been increasingly attempting to develop import substitution solutions for sourcing Western-made precision machine tools in 2023, likely in preparation for Western sanctions targeting this vulnerability. The Russian government approved in May 2023 the "Concept of Technological Development until 2030," which encourages domestic production of high-tech products such as precision machine tools and mandates that domestic enterprises produce at least 75 percent of Russia's high-tech products by 2030.[3] Russian state-owned defense conglomerate Rostec reported in August 2023 that Russia's STAN group, the country's largest domestic precision machine manufacturer, which Rostec purchased in 2019, is a major element of Russia's import substitution program.[4] Rostec subsidiary RT-Capital's head, Semyon Yakubov, told *Kommersant* on October 26 that Rostec hopes to use the STAN Group to meet Russia's "great need" for modern precision machines in the absence of Western imports.[5] Yakubov stated that Western sanctions and the war in Ukraine have sharply increased Russia's military and civilian demand for domestically produced machine tools. Yakubov noted that STAN was unable to meet even

a third of the total volume of Russia's orders for precision machines in 2023, worth around six billion rubles (approximately \$67.1 million). Yabukov stated that Russia's demand for precision machines is "much greater" than its current production abilities.

Denmark will reportedly start inspecting and potentially blocking Russian oil tankers in an effort to enforce a price cap on Russian oil and the European Union's (EU) insurance regulations. The *Financial Times (FT)* reported on November 15 that the EU proposed measures that would allow Denmark to inspect and block Russian oil tankers traveling through the Danish straits. These measures are part of an EU effort to enforce a G7 cap demanding that Western insurers only provide coverage to Russian shipments where oil is sold for less than \$60 per barrel.[6] An unnamed senior European government official told *FT* that "almost none" of the Russian maritime oil shipments in October 2023 were below the \$60 barrel price cap.[7] *FT* also reported that the EU is concerned that Russian tankers are violating EU regulations by frequently traveling with falsified financial statements or non-Western insurance.[8]

The Ukrainian government reached a deal with international insurers that will provide affordable coverage to vessels carrying grain and other critical food supplies through the Black Sea corridor for civilian vessels, amid continued Russian efforts to deny navigation through the corridor. The *Financial Times (FT)* reported on November 15 that the Ukrainian government reached a deal with insurance broker giant Marsh McLennan to provide up to \$50 million in hull and liability insurance from Lloyd's of London firms for each vessel carrying agricultural goods.[9] Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal stated that this agreement would allow Ukraine to "provide vital food supplies to the world at the same time as supporting the Ukrainian economy and keeping the Black Sea open for international trade." [10] Russian forces have continually conducted strikes on Ukrainian port infrastructure and mined areas in the Black Sea to deny freedom of navigation in the corridor.[11]

Russian President Vladimir Putin stated during a meeting with Russian election commission representatives on November 15 that the Russian government will suppress any foreign or domestic election interference. Putin stated that the Russian government will "continue to do everything necessary to prevent any illegal intrusion into electoral processes." [12] Putin notably did not specifically reference the March 2024 presidential elections, nor did he announce his presidential campaign.

Recent Russian opinion polls indicate that roughly half of Russians maintain support for the war in Ukraine and for Russia to engage in peace negotiations. The Levada Center – an independent Russian polling organization – reported on October 31 that 55 percent of respondents to a recent poll believe that Russia should begin peace negotiations while 38 percent favor continuing to conduct the war.[13] The Levada Center observed that while these numbers slightly increased between September and October by four percent, they have largely remained consistent since July 2023.[14] The Levada Center added that support for Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine remained high with 76 percent of respondents stating that they support Russian military operations in Ukraine. The Levada Center reported that 62 percent of surveyed Russians believe that the full-scale invasion is progressing well, while 21 percent of respondents believe that the war is going reasonably or very poorly for Russia.[15] The Levada Center reported on November 14 that two-thirds of respondents believe that Russia is headed in the right direction and of those who believe the opposite, 45 percent cited the war in Ukraine.[16] Opposition-leaning Russian research organization

Russian Field reported similar numbers supporting negotiations on November 15, noting that 48 percent of respondents said that Russia should engage in peace negotiations and that 74 percent would support Russian President Vladimir Putin if he signed a peace agreement “tomorrow.”[17] Russian Field stated that 36 percent of respondents believe that the war is going well for Russia whereas 25 percent believe that the war is going poorly for Russia and that respondents who trust Telegram channels are twice as likely to believe that the war is going poorly for Russia as those who rely on Russian television.[18]

Yandex NV - the Dutch holding company of Russian internet technology company Yandex - reportedly aims to sell all its Russian assets by the end of 2023, allowing the Russian government to further increase its hold over the Russian information space. *Reuters* and *Bloomberg* reported on November 14, citing sources familiar with the matter, that Yandex NV likely aims to sell all its Russian assets, not just a controlling stake, by the end of 2023.[19] One of *Reuters*' sources claimed that Yandex NV seeks a complete break from Russia while another source stated that a complete exit is likely but undecided. *Reuters* and *Bloomberg* reported that Yandex NV will host a board meeting on the deal in late November and hopes to finalize a deal by December 2023.[20] The Kremlin has been attempting to crypto-nationalize Yandex through coercive measures since at least the summer of 2023 and reportedly approved a prior deal to sell Russian Yandex holdings to an affiliate of Russian Presidential Administration First Deputy Head Sergey Kiriyenko.[21] The Yandex crypto-nationalization effort likely supports the Kremlin's preparations for the 2024 Russian presidential elections.

Key Takeaways:

- **The European Union (EU) appears poised to ban the export of precision machine tools and key weapons manufacturing equipment components to Russia.**
- **Denmark will reportedly start inspecting and potentially blocking Russian oil tankers in an effort to enforce a price cap on Russian oil and the European Union's (EU) insurance regulations.**
- **The Ukrainian government reached a deal with international insurers that will provide affordable coverage to vessels carrying grain and other critical food supplies through the Black Sea corridor for civilian vessels, amid continued Russian efforts to deny navigation through the corridor.**
- **Russian President Vladimir Putin stated during a meeting with Russian election commission representatives on November 15 that the Russian government will suppress any foreign or domestic election interference.**
- **Recent Russian opinion polls indicate that roughly half of Russians maintain support for the war in Ukraine and for Russia to engage in peace negotiations.**
- **Yandex NV - the Dutch holding company of Russian internet technology company Yandex - reportedly aims to sell all its Russian assets by the end of 2023, allowing the Russian government to further increase its hold over the Russian information space.**
- **Russian forces conducted offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line, near Bakhmut, near Avdiivka, west and southwest of Donetsk City, in the Donetsk Zaporizhia Oblast border area, and in western Zaporizhia Oblast and advanced in some areas.**

- A Russian insider source claimed that Kremlin-created Defenders of the Fatherland Foundation, which presented a limited number of former Wagner fighters with the certificates of their combat veteran status, is coercing former Wagner fighters into signing contracts with the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD).
- Russian and occupation authorities continue efforts to indoctrinate Ukrainian students in occupied Ukraine.



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 Russian violations of the laws of armed conflict and the Geneva Conventions and crimes against 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
- Russian Technological Adaptations
- Activities in Russian-occupied areas
- Russian Information Operations and Narratives

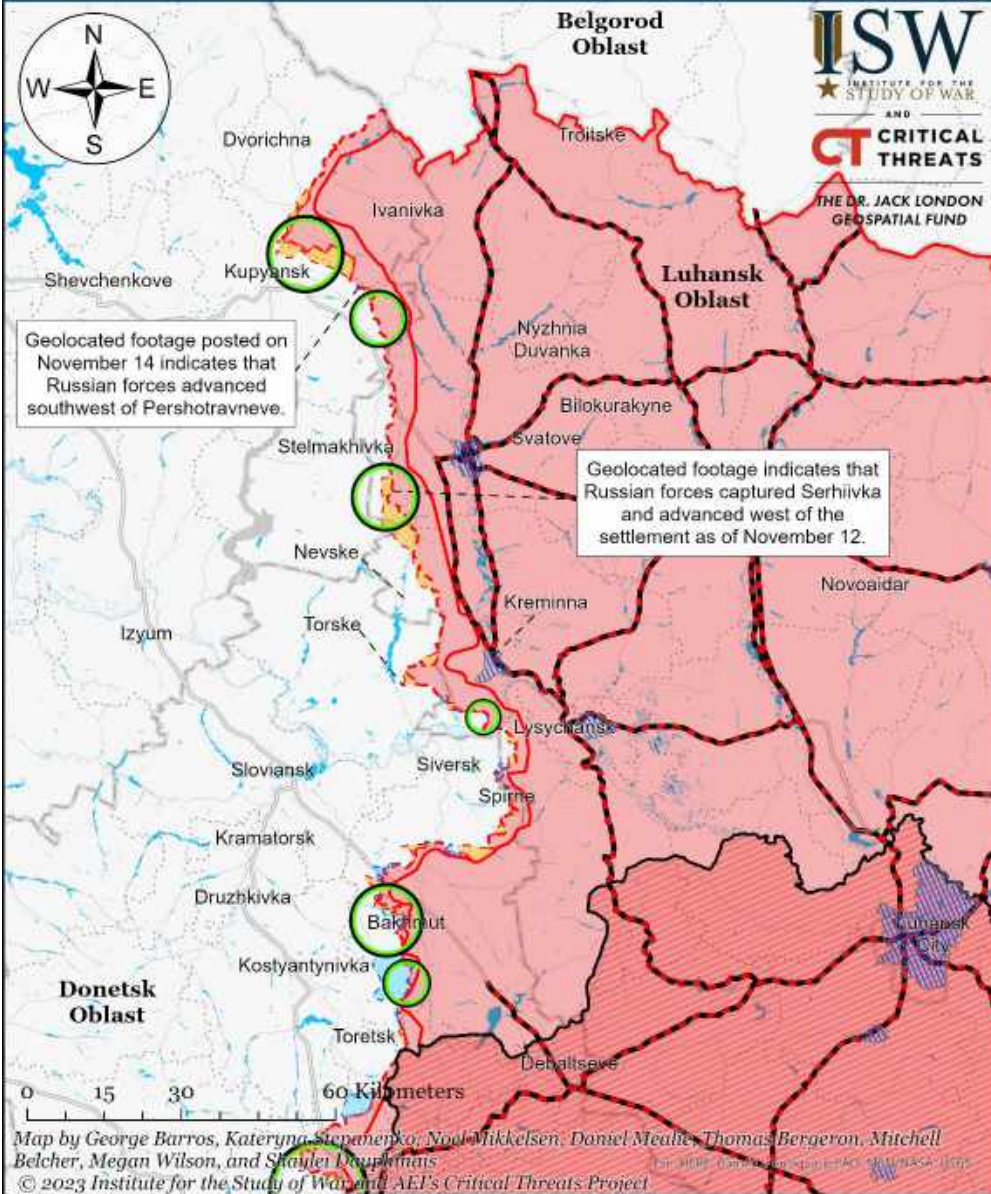
Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

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

Russian forces continued offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on November 15 and made confirmed advances. Geolocated footage published on November 14 indicates that Russian forces marginally advanced east of Ivanivka (20km southeast of Kupyansk) and west of Volodymyrivka (19km northwest of Svatove).[22] A Kremlin-affiliated Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced to the outskirts of Synkivka (9km northeast of Kupyansk) and around Tymkivka (19km east of Kupyansk) to encircle the settlement.[23] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces are advancing near Lyman Pershyi (12km northeast of Kupyansk), Kyslivka (22km southwest of Kupyansk), and Makiivka (22km northwest of Kreminna).[24] ISW has not observed visual evidence that would confirm these claimed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked in the Kupyansk direction near Synkivka, Petropavlivka (7km east of Kupyansk), and Ivanivka and in the Lyman direction near Nadiya (16km west of Svatove) and the Serebryanske forest area.[25]

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted assaults along the Kupyansk-Kreminna line on November 15 but did not make any claimed or confirmed advances. The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that elements of the Russian Western Grouping of Forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Synkivka, the former village of Zahoruykivka (a village 16km east of Kupyansk that was disincorporated in 1980) in Kharkiv Oblast, Hyrhorivka (10km south of Kreminna), and Serebyanka (11km southwest of Kreminna) in Donetsk Oblast.[26] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces attacked in the forest area west of Kreminna and are attempting to push Russian forces from Torske (15km west of Kreminna).[27]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of November 15, 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

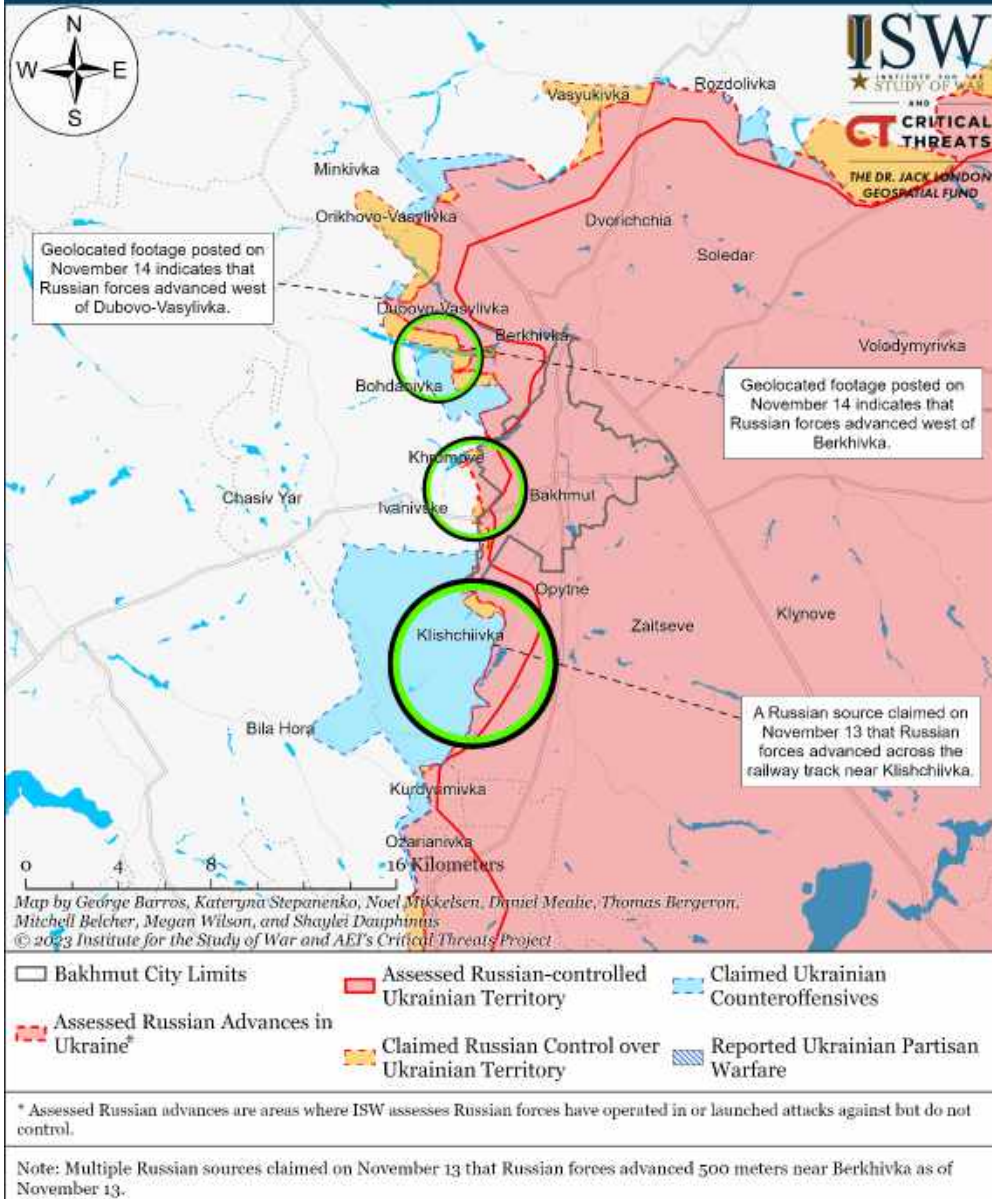
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

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

Russian forces continued to attack along Bakhmut’s northern and southern flank on November 15. Geolocated footage published on November 14 shows Russian forces operating on Bakhmut’s southwestern outskirts, and Russian forces have likely been operating on the approaches to the Bakhmut prior to November 14.[28] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced on Bakhmut’s northern flank near Berkhivka (4km north of Bakhmut) and Yahidne (2km north of Bakhmut) and consolidated new positions near the Berkhivka reservoir.[29] A Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed that unspecified Russian Airborne Forces (VDV) elements are attempting to regain lost positions and advanced 500 meters in an unspecified area south of the Berkhivka reservoir, and another milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces lost nearly all territory that they captured in spring-summer 2023 in the vicinity of Berkhivka and Yahidne.[30] Russian milbloggers also claimed that Russian forces advanced in forest areas near Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut) and gained a foothold on the settlement's northern outskirts.[31] Russian milbloggers also claimed that Russian and Ukrainian forces are actively fighting for control of key heights near Klishchiivka and claimed that Ukrainian forces still hold the key heights west of the settlement.[32] A Russian milblogger claimed that Andriivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut) remains contested while Russian forces maintain control of Kurdyumivka (12km southwest of Bakhmut).[33] Another Russian milblogger claimed that elements of the Russian “Sibir” Spetsnaz detachment are operating near Klishchiivka.[34] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled all Russian assaults near Bohdanivka (5km northwest of Bakhmut), Ivanivske (5km west of Bakhmut), Klishchiivka, and Andriivka.[35] Ukrainian Ground Forces Spokesperson Lieutenant Colonel Volodymyr Fityo stated that Russian forces are likely preparing to launch new assaults by intensifying artillery fire around Bakhmut.[36]

Ukrainian forces launched localized attacks south of Bakhmut on November 15 and made confirmed territorial gains. Geolocated footage published on November 15 indicates that Ukrainian forces marginally advanced southeast of Toretsk (23km southwest of Bakhmut).[37] A Russian milblogger amplified footage published on November 14 purportedly showing Russian Spetsnaz elements repelling a group of Ukrainian forces attempting to advance near Andriivka.[38] Another Russian source claimed that Ukrainian forces are unsuccessfully counterattacking near Klishchiivka.[39] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continue to launch assaults on Bakhmut’s southern flank.[40]

Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of November 15, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

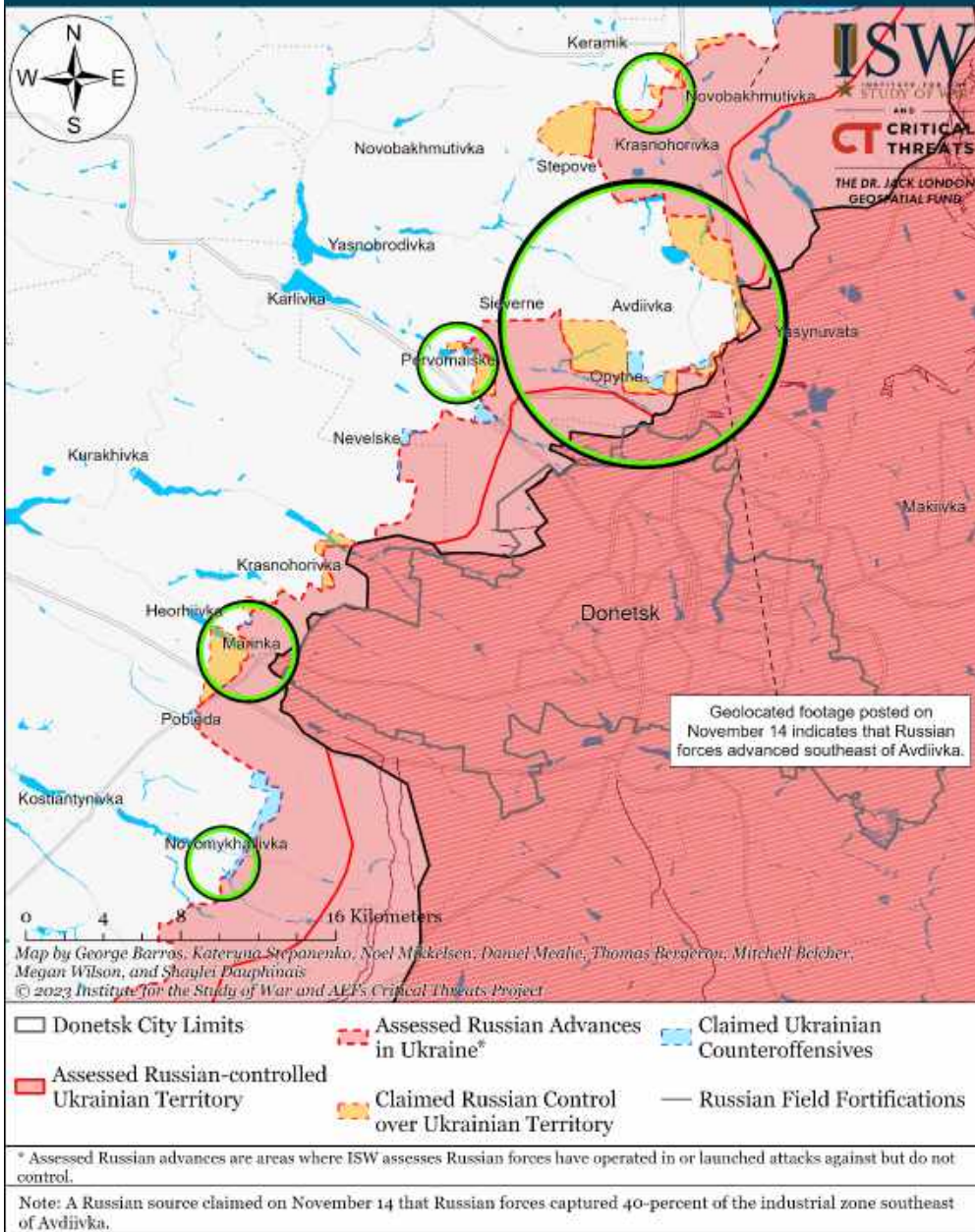


Russian sources made unconfirmed claims that Russian forces continued advancing around Avdiivka on November 15. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces pushed Ukrainian forces from their positions near the waste heap north of Avdiivka and that Russian forces seized at least 60 percent of the industrial area south of Avdiivka.[41] One Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced south of the waste heap and seized several unspecified Ukrainian positions.[42] A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces pushed Ukrainian forces from Stepove (3km northwest of Avdiivka) and that the settlement is currently contested.[43] The milblogger added that Russian forces advanced north of Pervomaiske (11km southwest of Avdiivka), drove Ukrainian forces from unspecified treatment facilities southeast of the waste heap, and consolidated control over

Stepove's eastern outskirts by advancing along the railway track.[44] The milblogger noted that Russian forces have not advanced towards Sieverne (6km west of Avdiivka) or Tonenke (5km west of Avdiivka) and are not directly attacking Avdiivka or the Avdiivka Coke Plant.[45] Another milblogger claimed that Russian forces are not rushing to advance north of Avdiivka so as to avoid taking unnecessary losses.[46] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces conducted simultaneous offensive operations near Stepove, Sieverne, and Pervomaiske; west of Kamianka (5km northwest of Avdiivka); near the water treatment plant; and on the industrial site.[47] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks east of Novokalynove (11km northwest of Avdiivka) and Pervomaiske and near Avdiivka, Sieverne, Tonenke, and Vodyane (7km southwest of Avdiivka).[48]

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked in the Avdiivka direction on November 15 but did not advance. A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attempted to attack Russian positions near the waste heap and in the industrial area south of Avdiivka.[49] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces repelled a Ukrainian attack with an infantry fighting vehicle near Stepove.[50] Geolocated footage posted on November 14 indicates that Ukrainian forces maintain control over the Avdiivka Coke Plant northwest of Avdiivka.[51]

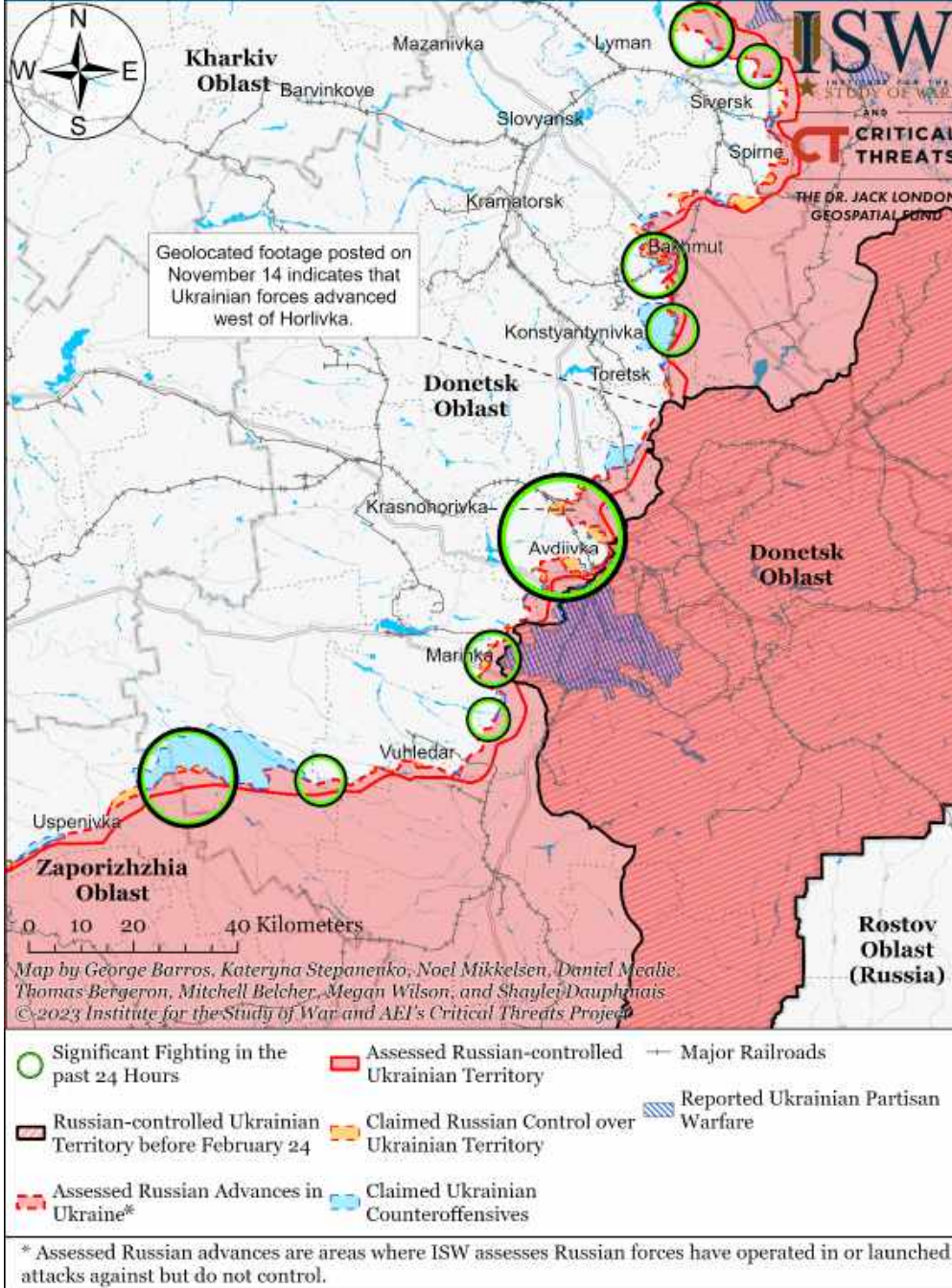
Assessed Control of Terrain near Donetsk City as of November 15, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Russian forces continued offensive operations west and southwest of Donetsk City on November 15 but did not make any confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported unsuccessful Russian attacks near Marinka (on the western outskirts of Donetsk City) and near Novomykhailivka (10km southwest of Donetsk City).[52] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces continued assault operations near Marinka and that the frontline had not significantly changed.[53]

Russian forces are continuing to establish new military bases in and near occupied Mariupol. Ukrainian Mariupol Mayor Advisor Petro Andryushchenko reported that Russian forces continue to establish military bases outside of the industrial zones in occupied Mariupol.[54] Andryushchenko stated that these military bases include ammunition stores and barracks housing 100 to 150 personnel. The Crimea-based Ukrainian partisan group “Atesh” reported that Russian forces established a military base in Manhush (14km southwest of Mariupol) containing a fuel depot, at least 10 armored fighting vehicles, four air defense systems, a command post, and a headquarters.[55]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of November 15, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

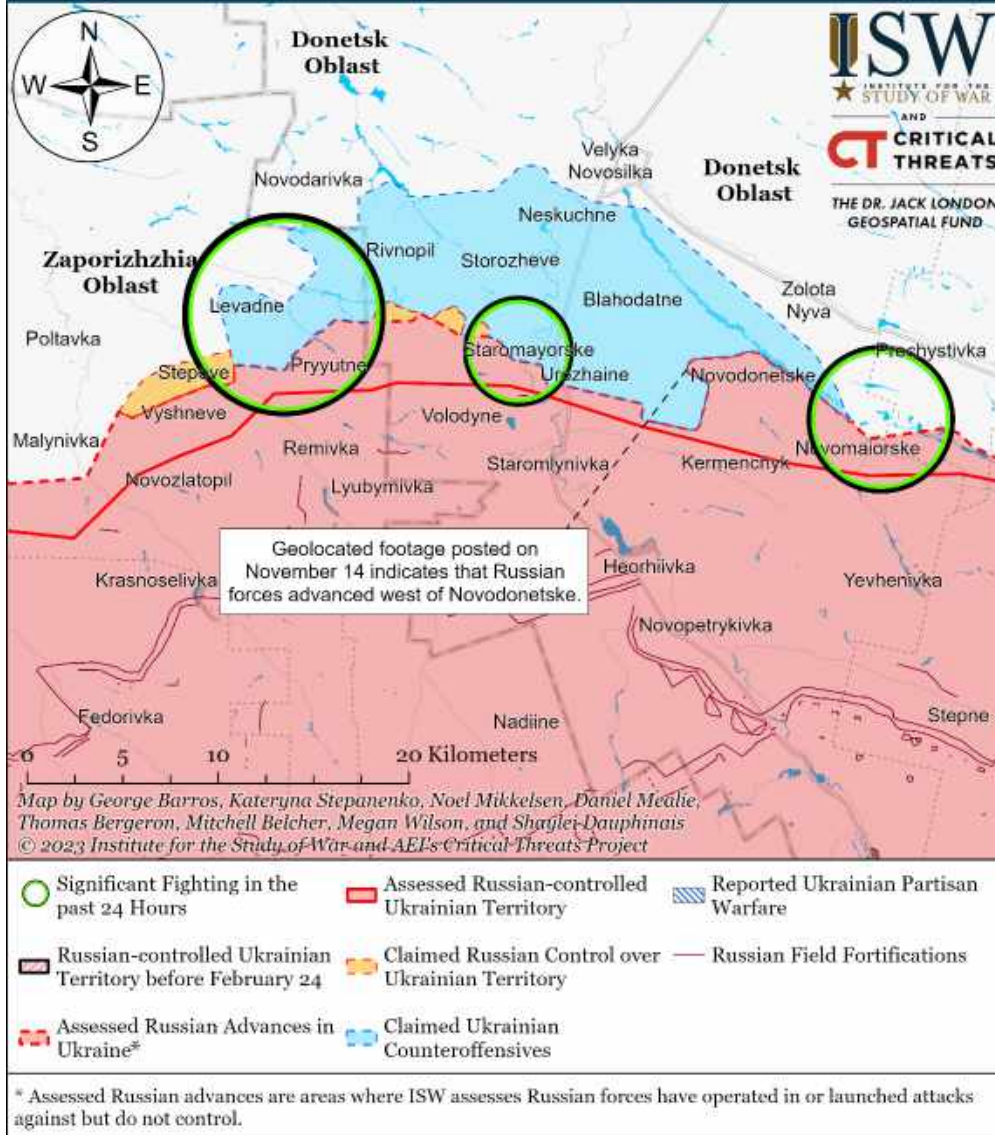


Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions and secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes)

Neither Russian nor Ukrainian sources reported Ukrainian ground attacks in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on November 15.

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area and did not advance on November 15. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful offensive operations near Staromayorske (9km south of Velyka Novosilka), Novodarivka (13km southwest of Velyka Novosilka), and Prechystivka (17km southeast of Velyka Novosilka).[56] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces also attacked near Urozhaine (9km south of Velyka Novosilka), Novodonetske (12km southeast of Velyka Novosilka), and Novomayorske (18km southeast of Velyka Novosilka).[57] A prominent Russian milblogger claimed on November 14 that elements of the Russian 5th Combined Arms Army (CAA) have been unsuccessfully attempting to advance near Staromayorske since November 11 and that elements of the 37th Motorized Rifle Brigade (36th CAA, Eastern Military District) also recently tried to attack between Urozhaine and Novodonetske.[58]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around the Vremivka Salient as of November 15, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

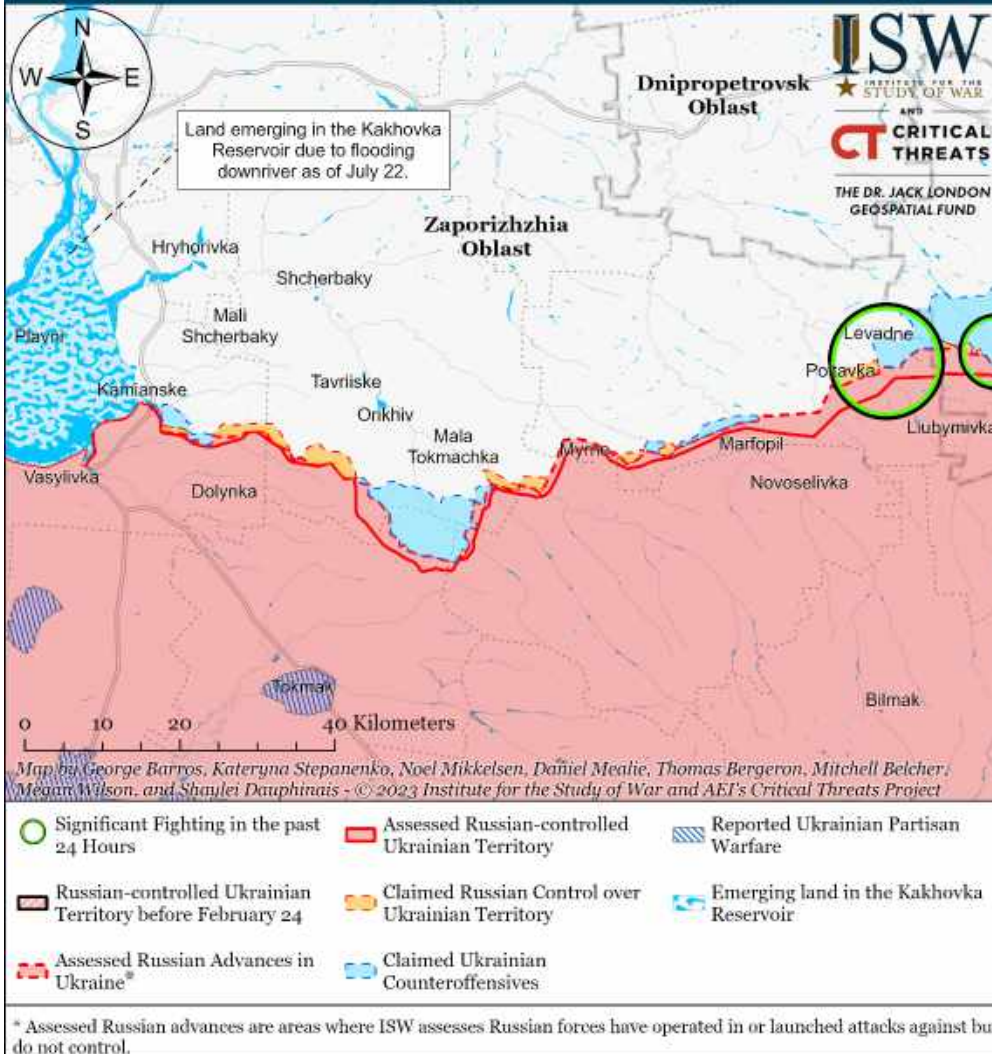


Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast on November 15 and reportedly advanced. A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces made some advances in an unspecified area of western Zaporizhzhia Oblast but that Russian forces are already counterattacking to recapture the positions.[59] Russian sources claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks between Robotyne and Kopani (5km northwest of Robotyne) and near Verbove (10km east of Robotyne) and Novofedorivka (15km northeast of Robotyne).[60] Another milblogger claimed that the nature of the fighting west of Robotyne is largely direct infantry contact.[61] Russian milbloggers noted that inclement weather is impeding offensive operations in the Orikhiv area.[62]

Russian forces continued offensive operations in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast on November 15 and reportedly recently advanced. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced 700 meters into a forest area near Robotyne and to the outskirts of Pyatykhatky (27km northwest of Robotyne) on November 13-15.[63] A prominent Russian milblogger claimed on November 14 that Russian forces failed to suppress Ukrainian firing positions on the heights surrounding Pyatykhatky after Russian forces entered Pyatykhatky from the south.[64]



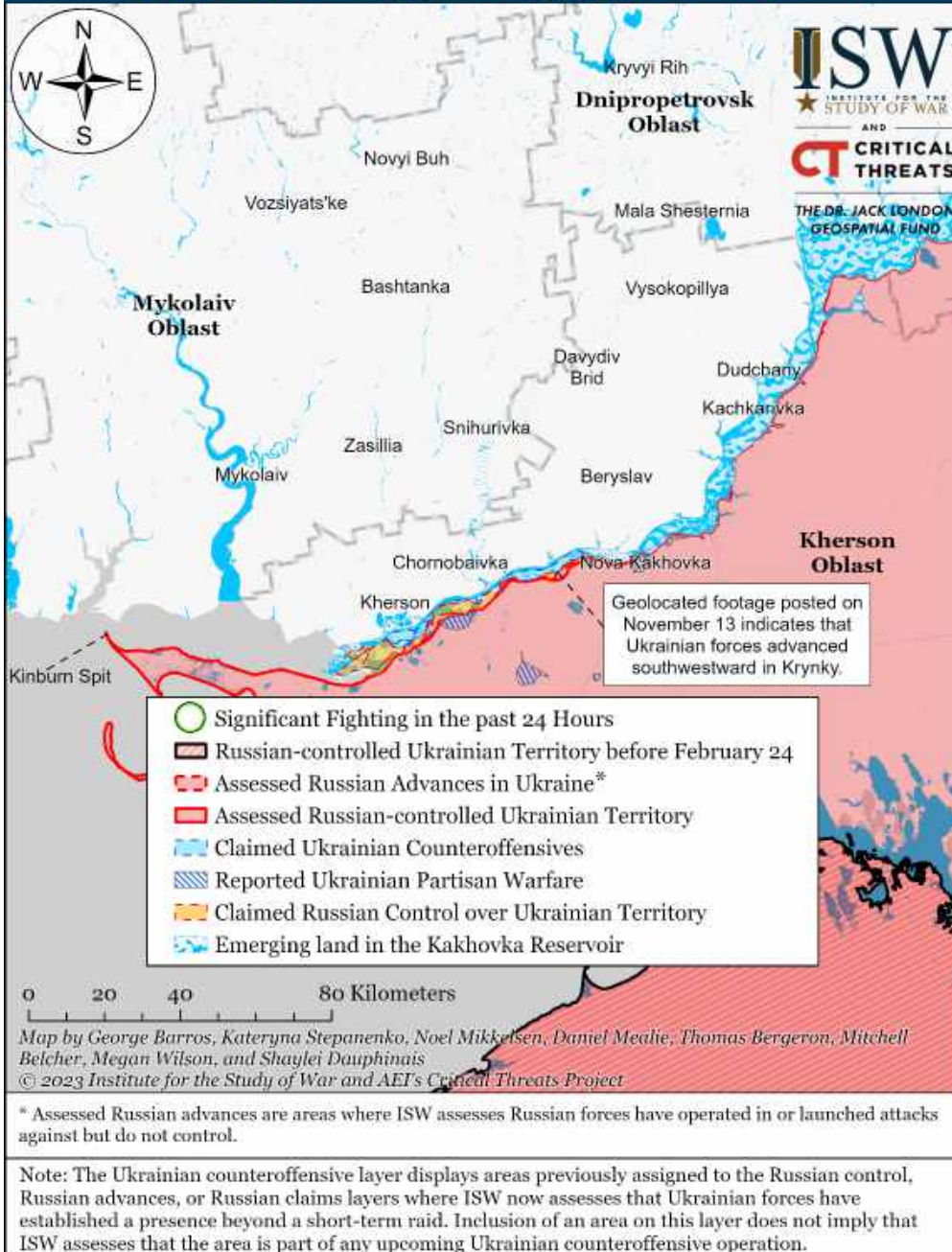
Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhzhia as of November 15, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Ukrainian forces continued larger-than-usual operations on the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast on November 15. Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks from central Krynyky (30km northeast of Kherson City, 2km from the Dnipro River, and about 3.6 km north of the E-58 highway) and that Ukrainian forces are also attacking near Poyma (11km east of Kherson City and 4km from the Dnipro River) and Pishchanivka (15km east of Kherson City and 3km from the Dnipro River).[65] Russian milbloggers also claimed that Russian forces prevented Ukrainian forces from conducting casualty evacuation and deploying additional Ukrainian personnel to the east bank near the Antonivsky road bridge.[66] Ukrainian Southern Operational Command Spokesperson Captain First Rank Nataliya Humenyuk stated that Ukrainian forces are pushing Russian forces three to eight kilometers from the Dnipro River's east bank in Kherson Oblast.[67] The geographic extent of this described effort is significantly larger than what any available open-source evidence currently shows.

Russian forces made a recent confirmed advance in a Ukrainian-held area in the east bank of Kherson Oblast amid continued operations against Ukrainian east bank positions on November 15. Geolocated footage published on November 14 shows that Russian forces made some advances into Krynyk.[68] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces counterattacked and forced Ukrainian forces to withdraw from some areas south of Krynyk, near Kozachi Laheri (23km northeast of Kherson City and 2km from the Dnipro River), and near the Antonivsky bridge, but ISW is unable to confirm these claims.[69] Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets stated that Russian forces have likely developed a plan to eliminate Ukrainian positions on the east bank by forming three tactical groups.[70] Mashovets stated that Russian forces plan to use two groups to flank the Oleshky-Nova Kakhovka road and the Krynyk area from the Korsunka (45km northeast of Kherson City and 1km from the Dnipro River) and Kozacha Laheri areas, while the third group will attack south of Krynyk and advance north.[71] The *Wall Street Journal*, citing Ukrainian soldiers who fought on the east bank, reported that Russian forces are employing heavy mines, infiltration tactics, snipers, and heavy artillery, multiple launch rocket systems (MLRS), and airstrikes to defend against Ukrainian advances on the east bank.[72]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of November 15, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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

A Russian insider source claimed that Kremlin-created Defenders of the Fatherland Foundation, which presented a limited number of former Wagner fighters with combat veteran status certificates, is coercing former Wagner fighters into signing contracts with the Russian Ministry of Defense

(MoD). The insider source claimed on November 15 that Wagner Group representatives advertised to Wagner fighters applying for government assistance through the Defenders of the Fatherland Foundation that they should sign contracts with the MoD and told them that the Moscow Oblast military registration and recruitment head would explain to them the benefits of service under the Russian MoD.[73] ISW cannot verify the insider source's claims, although ISW continues to observe reports that the Russian MoD continues attempting to recruit Wagner fighters.[74]

Russian authorities continue to target migrant communities as part of crypto-mobilization efforts across Russia. Russian sources reported on November 15 that Russian authorities physically issued about 50 summonses to attendees of a birthday celebration at a restaurant in Voronezh Oblast, demanding that these attendees appear at military enlistment centers.[75] Russian sources reported that the majority of people accosted with summonses were recently naturalized Russian citizens originally from Azerbaijan.[76]

Russian federal subjects continue to recruit volunteers to support the war effort in Ukraine. *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty* affiliate *Idel Realii* reported that Mari El Republic Head Yuri Zaitsev signed a decree that increased the one-time payment to individuals who sign contracts with the Russian military from 100,000 rubles (about \$1,120) to 250,000 rubles (about \$2,800) and that Udmurt Republic Head Alexander Brechalov announced that those who sign a Russian military contract will receive a one-time payment of 50,000 rubles (about \$660).[77] The Moscow Oblast government announced on November 15 the creation of an elite unit of over 2,000 volunteers from Moscow Oblast and advertised one-time payments of one million rubles (about \$11,200).[78] Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin claimed that 47,000 people from Moscow have signed contracts with the Russian military since the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, including 22,000 people in 2023.[79]

Russian Technological Adaptations (Russian objective: Introduce technological innovations to optimize systems for use in Ukraine)

The Institute for Science and International Security published satellite images on November 13 showing that Russian authorities are expanding the facilities that produce Shahed drones at the Alabuga Special Economic Zone in the Republic of Tatarstan. The Institute for Science and International Security found that Russian authorities have constructed an additional facility, likely consisting of motor test cells, since April 2023 and a new security perimeter and corridors connecting the facility's buildings since July 2023.[80]

Ukrainian Ground Forces Spokesperson Lieutenant Colonel Volodymyr Fityo stated that the Russian military is pulling Soviet-era T-62 tanks from long-term storage to use in combat in Ukraine. Fityo stated on November 15 that only about one in three T-62 tanks work but that they still pose a threat to Ukrainian forces because the additional armor forces Ukrainian forces to expend ammunition and loitering munitions to destroy them.[81]

Activities in Russian-occupied areas (Russian objective: Consolidate administrative control of annexed areas; forcibly integrate Ukrainian citizens into Russian sociocultural, economic, military, and governance systems)

Russian occupation authorities continue efforts to indoctrinate Ukrainian students in occupied Ukraine. The Ukrainian Center for Countering Disinformation reported on November 14 that occupation authorities are enrolling Ukrainian first graders into the “Orlyata Rossii” (“Eagles of Russia”) movement, which is the children’s branch of the Kremlin-funded pseudo-volunteer “Dvizheniye Pervykh” (“Movement of the First”) youth organization.[82] The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported on November 15 that employees of an unspecified Russian investigative department are raiding schools in occupied Kherson Oblast in search of teenagers who are helping the Ukrainian military and are encouraging other students to denounce “disloyal” classmates.[83] Former Ukrainian Presidential Commissioner for Children’s Rights and founder of the *Save Ukraine* organization Mykola Kuleba announced that *Save Ukraine* helped four Ukrainian children and their families escape occupied Ukraine after Russian authorities coerced the children’s parents into sending them to a Russian school, where Russian officials and armed Russian servicemen attempted to indoctrinate the children.[84]

Russian authorities continue efforts to artificially change the demographics of occupied Ukraine. Ukrainian Mariupol City Advisor Petro Andryushchenko stated on November 15 that occupation authorities are allowing Russian minority group members and Central Asia migrants to move into and loot apartments in occupied Mariupol, Donetsk Oblast.[85] The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported that crime rates are rising in occupied southern Donetsk Oblast due to the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) encouraging newly settled Russian and Central Asian migrants to form criminal groups in occupied Ukraine.[86]

Russian authorities continue preparations for the 2024 Russian presidential elections in occupied Ukraine. Ukrainian Melitopol Mayor Ivan Fedorov reported on November 15 that Russian authorities are transporting ethnic Russian prosecutors, law enforcement officers, teachers, and other officials from Russia to occupied Melitopol, Zaporizhia Oblast, to form election commissions.[87]

Russian Information Operations and Narratives

Nothing significant to report.

Significant activity in Belarus (Russian efforts to increase its military presence in Belarus and further integrate Belarus into Russian-favorable frameworks and Wagner Group activity in Belarus)

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko stated on November 14 that Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan should “not rush” or “make hasty decisions” following Pashinyan’s refusal to attend the upcoming Russian-led Collective Treaty Security Organization (CSTO) summit in Minsk on November 23.[88]

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.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-11-15/eu-takes-aim-at-key-machine-exports-to-russia-in-new-sanctions>
- [2] <https://intellinews.com/long-read-russia-s-sanctions-soft-underbelly-precision-machine-tools-213024/>
- [3] <http://government dot ru/news/48570/>
- [4] <https://rostec dot ru/en/news/rostec-ramps-up-the-manufacture-of-high-precision-machines-for-domestic-industry/>
- [5] <https://www.kommersant dot ru/doc/6297595>
- [6] <https://www.ft.com/content/6409ed38-73f4-46b3-b0f1-649c5e5b79db>
- [7] <https://www.ft.com/content/09e8ee14-a665-4644-8ec5-5972070463ad> ; <https://www.ft.com/content/6409ed38-73f4-46b3-b0f1-649c5e5b79db>
- [8] <https://www.ft.com/content/6409ed38-73f4-46b3-b0f1-649c5e5b79db>
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Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of November 14, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Megan Wilson, and Shaylei Dauphinais

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

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, November 13, 2023

Christina Harward, Karolina Hird, Riley Bailey, Nicole Wolkov, George Barros, and Frederick W. Kagan

November 13, 2023, 6:55pm 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 see ISW's 3D control of terrain topographic map of Ukraine. Use of a computer (not a mobile device) is strongly recommended for using this data-heavy tool.

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 November 13. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the November 14 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Russian state media released and later retracted reports about the "regrouping" of Russian forces on the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast to positions further east of the Dnipro River, suggesting that the Russian command and/or Russian state media apparatus has failed to establish a coordinated information line for the Russian response to ongoing Ukrainian ground operations on the east bank. Kremlin press wire *TASS* and Russian state media outlet *RIA Novosti* published reports claiming that the command of the Russian "Dnepr" Grouping of Forces (currently active in east bank Kherson Oblast) decided to transfer troops to unspecified "more advantageous positions" east of the Dnipro River and that the Russian military command would transfer elements from the "Dnepr" Grouping of Forces to other directions for offensive operations following the regrouping.[1] *TASS* and *RIA Novosti* withdrew the reports within minutes and *TASS* later issued an apology wherein it claimed that it had "erroneously" released its report.[2] Russian state-affiliated outlet *RBK* reported that the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) called the reports of a regrouping on the east bank of Kherson Oblast "false" and a "provocation." [3] Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov responded to a question about the situation in Kherson Oblast by stating that only the Russian military can and should comment on the situation.[4]

The Russian MoD has not acknowledged persisting Ukrainian positions on the east bank or ongoing larger-than-usual Ukrainian ground operations in recent weeks. Russian milbloggers have increasingly reported on Ukrainian activity on the left bank, however, sharply contrasting with the continued lack of acknowledgement from Russian state media and Russian officials.[5] The Russian command has previously struggled to establish a coordinated informational approach to developments in Ukraine, particularly when the Russian command failed to set informational conditions for defeats during the Kharkiv 2022 counteroffensive.[6] Previous failures to set coordinated informational approaches have led to chaotic fractures and pronounced discontent in the Russian information space, and the Russian command risks repeating these incidents with the situation on the east bank, which has drawn notable concern from Russian ultranationalists.[7] The

reports' references to Russian "offensives" elsewhere on the front suggests that the uncoordinated informational approach may be more widespread than the east bank, since the Russian command has not explicitly recognized any current Russian operations in Ukraine as an offensive effort.[8]

The now-retracted reports of a Russian regrouping on the east bank of Kherson Oblast may be indicative of actual discussions taking place in the high echelons of Russian military command that may have prematurely entered the information space before being officially released by the Russian military. Russian media outlet *RBK* reported that the original *TASS* and *RIA Novosti* reports stated that the commander of the joint Russian group of forces in Ukraine (unnamed in the article, but in reference to Chief of the General Staff Army General Valery Gerasimov) heard and agreed with arguments from the "Dnepr" group command (also unnamed in the article, but known to be Colonel General Mikhail Teplinsky) and ordered the "Dnepr" group to redeploy and free up forces for offensive operations in other unspecified directions.[9] The suggestion that two high-ranking military commanders would have a discussion on reallocating Russian forces away from a certain sector of the front to another is not outlandish or improbable. *RBK's* report further suggests that the Russian military command has assessed that the situation in Kherson Oblast is not overtly threatening to Russian forces. Despite near-constant anxiety about the Kherson direction on the part of milbloggers, the Russian military command itself seems to be preoccupied with other sectors of the front, namely the Avdiivka direction, where Russian forces are pursuing renewed offensive operations.[10] Gerasimov and Teplinsky may have weighed the costs of maintaining frontline units in Kherson Oblast with the benefits of redeploying these units to other areas of the front and decided that the current Russian grouping in rear areas of Kherson is sufficient to defend against Ukrainian operations on the east bank. Ukrainian military observer Konstantyn Mashovets remarked on November 12 that the Russian command in the Kherson direction has refused to commit to the front lines additional forces of the 70th Motorized Rifle Division (of the newly formed 18th Combined Arms Army) and 7th Air Assault (VDV) Division beyond the elements of single regiments and battalions, opting instead to maintain the remainder of these formations in near rear areas and secondary echelons of defense.[11] Mashovets noted that the Russian presence in frontline areas of Kherson Oblast is "limited." [12] The suggestion that Russian forces have a stronger rear-area presence in Kherson Oblast largely tracks with purported discussions between Gerasimov and Teplinsky to free up these frontline elements and commit them to other areas of the front.

Alternatively, the Russian military command may have instructed state media to release and then retract these reports as part of an information operation that aims to have Ukrainian forces underestimate available Russian manpower on the east bank of Kherson Oblast. The Ukrainian Resistance Center stated on November 13 that Ukrainian officials have not observed any Russian forces withdrawing from positions on the east bank and that the *TASS* and *RIA Novosti* reports are a part of a Russian information operation to distract Ukrainian forces.[13] Ukrainian forces are very unlikely to make any operational-level decisions based on limited media reports of a Russian regrouping, however, and if the reports are a part of an information operation, they will likely fail to deceive the Ukrainian command.

It is unlikely that an outside source posing as the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) provided information about the reported "regrouping" of Russian forces on the left bank of Kherson Oblast to Russian state media outlets. Several Russian sources suggested that an unspecified actor posing as the Russian MoD from a fake account could have provided the

information to Russian state news outlet *RIA Novosti*.^[14] It is very unlikely that an outside actor posing as the Russian MoD could deceive Russian state media outlets as Russian state media is closely connected to Russian government bodies including the Russian MoD.

Regardless of the causes and circumstances of the *TASS* and *RIA Novosti* reports, the reaction to them suggests that events in Kherson Oblast continue to be highly neuralgic in the pro-war information space and emphasizes that the Russian media space still has not coalesced around a singular rhetorical line about what is happening on the east bank of the Dnipro. The published reports use relatively neutral language and notably do not announce a "retreat" or "withdrawal," instead discussing a "transfer" and "regrouping."^[15] The Russian media frenzy that followed, including the immediate retraction of the statements, a direct response from the Kremlin, and emphatic milblogger refutations, reflects the fact that any mention of the Russian grouping in Kherson Oblast generates near-immediate information space neuralgia.^[16] It also appears that the Russian information space has not yet determined how to discuss the operational situation on the east bank of the Dnipro, and that any inflection in the situation there can generate an informational shock. The Russian MoD falsely framed the Russian retreat from Kharkiv Oblast in early September of 2022 as a "regrouping," and that word and general concept apparently remains highly neuralgic for the Russian information space.

Ukrainian and Russian sources noted that weather conditions are impacting the battlespace but not halting operations. Ukrainian Ground Forces Spokesperson Lieutenant Colonel Volodymyr Fityo noted on November 13 that rain and mud in Donbas impede the speed of ground maneuver advances.^[17] Ukrainian 14th Mechanized Brigade Spokesperson Nadiya Zamryha stated on November 12 that fog and rain complicate both Russian and Ukrainian aerial reconnaissance efforts and lead to reduced numbers of attacks.^[18] Zamryha added that the falling leaves complicate efforts to hide equipment and personnel. Ukrainian Southern Operational Command Spokesperson Captain First Rank Nataliya Humenyuk stated that Russian aviation has been less active in southern Ukraine due to weather conditions and that Russian forces are attempting to launch as many glide bombs as possible with each sortie.^[19] A Ukrainian reserve officer assessed that mud will make many roads near Avdiivka impassable, complicating logistics for both sides.^[20] Russian milbloggers claimed that recent heavy rains led to reduced shelling and that strong winds and rain interfere with Russian drone operations and complicate offensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast.^[21] Russian sources also circulated footage purporting to show mud and rain filled Ukrainian trenches.^[22] ISW continues to assess that fall weather conditions will decrease the tempo of Russian and Ukrainian operations but not halt them entirely, and that fighting will continue on both sides throughout the winter months as it did in the winter of 2022-2023 and in the years between 2014-2022.^[23]

Ukrainian officials indicated that Ukraine will likely conduct an interdiction campaign against Russian supply routes in the upcoming winter. Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk responded on November 13 to the forecasted large-scale Russian strike series against Ukrainian critical infrastructure in the upcoming winter and stated that Ukraine is preparing air defense capabilities and needs additional air defense systems and long-range missiles, such as ATACMS, to hit Russian rear areas.^[24] Ukrainian Ground Forces Spokesperson Lieutenant Colonel Volodymyr Fityo stated on November 12 that Ukrainian forces' current main task is to disrupt Russian ground lines of communications (GLOCs) and that these disruptions, coupled with the onset of inclement weather, will "freeze" Russian offensive operations.^[25] Fityo also stated on November 13 that Ukrainian disruptions of Russian GLOCs will create issues for the supply of food, water,

ammunition, and winter materials to Russian forces.[26] Ukrainian forces have been conducting an interdiction campaign against Russian military infrastructure in occupied Crimea, primarily Black Sea Fleet assets, since June 2023 to degrade the Russian military's ability to use Crimea as a staging and rear area for Russian operations in southern Ukraine, and Ukraine may intend to intensify and widen this interdiction campaign in the coming months.[27]

A Russian milblogger called on actors in the Russian information space to more widely amplify Russian strikes on Ukrainian military assets as opposed to Ukrainian strikes on Russian rear areas, indirectly highlighting a unique dynamic wherein the majority of reported Russian strikes seem to affect Ukrainian civilian objects, whereas the majority of reported Ukrainian strikes affect Russian military assets. A Russian milblogger claimed that all types of Russian units work together to identify, record, direct, and confirm Russian strikes on Ukrainian targets.[28] The milblogger complained that the Russian information space barely covers these events, which creates a “false impression of [Russian forces’] inaction.” The milblogger claimed that the Russian information space instead devotes more coverage to Ukrainian strikes on Russian territory and that Russian milbloggers have to search for information about the alleged Russian strikes on their own. The milblogger urged other milbloggers and “ordinary pro-Russian residents of Ukraine” to offer “brighter” coverage of Russian strikes on Ukrainian infrastructure and military targets in order to “create the spirit of victory in the media space.” The milblogger offered an example of the alleged insufficient coverage, claiming that Russian forces struck five unspecified Ukrainian railway junctions on an unspecified date in response to the Ukrainian operation that derailed a Russian freight train in Ryazan Oblast on November 11. The milblogger did not report on these five alleged Russian strikes previously but did report on the Ukrainian operation in Ryazan Oblast.[29] The wider Russian information space has also not reported on these alleged five retaliatory strikes, and the Russian milblogger did not specify where they got this information.[30]

Russian forces have used many of their long-range weapons to target Ukrainian critical and civilian infrastructure and have recently increased glide bomb strikes against populated areas of the west (right) bank of Kherson Oblast.[31] One critical Russian milblogger, whom Russian authorities later arrested, complained in July 2023 that the Russian strike campaign was more “retaliatory” than “operationally sound” and blamed the Russian General Staff for wasting Russian efforts on striking Ukrainian civilian infrastructure rather than military infrastructure.[32] Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky stated on November 12 that Ukraine will focus on responding to the large-scale Russian series of strikes on Ukrainian critical infrastructure that are likely to occur in the winter, and Ukrainian officials have signaled their intent to strike military and energy targets within Russia and Russian-occupied areas of Ukraine.[33]

US Ambassador to Ukraine Bridget Brink stated that the 100th civilian ship departed the Black Sea corridor for civilian vessels on November 13, amid continued Russian efforts to deter usage of the corridor. Brink also stated that Ukraine has used the corridor to export 3.7 million tons of food and other goods, presumably since the first civilian vessel successfully departed from a Ukrainian port through the corridor on August 15.[34] Russian forces have

continually conducted strikes on Ukrainian port infrastructure and mined water areas to disrupt and discourage civilian maritime traffic through the corridor.[35]

Former Wagner Group personnel are reportedly rejecting Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) recruitment attempts aimed at subsuming Wagner operations in Africa. A Russian insider source claimed on November 13 that the Russian MoD, led by Russian Deputy Defense Minister Yunus-Bek Yevkurov and members of the Main Directorate of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces (GRU), has been attempting to recruit former Wagner personnel at the former Wagner base in Molkino, Krasnodar Krai, to Russian MoD operations in Africa since September 2023.[36] The insider source claimed that the Russian MoD is offering former Wagner personnel 110,000-ruble (about \$1,200) salaries, “promising” positions and ranks, and the formation of a separate unit capable of operating in Libya, Syria, Mali, and Burkina Faso.[37] The insider source also claimed that the reported leader of Redut private military company (PMC), Konstantin Mirzoyants, denied the MoD’s offers on November 8 and claimed that the Russian MoD would not form a separate unit and that all personnel would go to Burkina Faso, which caused over 120 former Wagner personnel to reject contracts with the Russian MoD and leave Molkino.[38] ISW cannot confirm any of the insider source’s claims.

Key Takeaways:

- **Russian state media released and later retracted reports about the "regrouping" of Russian forces on the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast to positions further east of the Dnipro River, suggesting that the Russian command and/or Russian state media apparatus has failed to establish a coordinated information line for the Russian response to ongoing Ukrainian ground operations on the east bank.**
- **There are three hypotheses of varying likelihood for the release of the now-retracted reports of a Russian regrouping on the east bank of Kherson Oblast: They may be indicative of actual discussions taking place in the high echelons of Russian military command that may have prematurely entered the information space before being officially released by the Russian military; the Russian military command alternatively may have instructed state media to release and then retract these reports as part of an information operation that aims to have Ukrainian forces underestimate available Russian manpower on the east bank of Kherson Oblast; or an outside source posing as the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) provided information about the reported “regrouping” of Russian forces on the left bank of Kherson Oblast to Russian state media outlets.**
- **Regardless of the causes and circumstances of the *TASS* and *RIA Novosti* reports, the reaction to them suggests that events in Kherson Oblast continue to be highly neuralgic in the pro-war information space and emphasizes that the Russian media space still has not coalesced around a singular rhetorical line about what is happening on the east bank of the Dnipro.**
- **Ukrainian and Russian sources noted that weather conditions are impacting the battlespace but not halting operations.**

- **Ukrainian officials indicated that Ukraine will likely conduct an interdiction campaign against Russian supply routes in the upcoming winter.**
- **A Russian milblogger called on actors in the Russian information space to more widely amplify Russian strikes on Ukrainian military assets as opposed to Ukrainian strikes on Russian rear areas, indirectly highlighting a unique dynamic wherein the majority of reported Russian strikes seem to affect Ukrainian civilian objects, whereas the majority of reported Ukrainian strikes affect Russian military assets.**
- **US Ambassador to Ukraine Bridget Brink stated that the 100th civilian ship departed the Black Sea corridor for civilian vessels on November 13, amid continued Russian efforts to deter usage of the corridor.**
- **Former Wagner Group personnel are reportedly rejecting Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) recruitment attempts aimed at subsuming Wagner operations in Africa.**
- **Russian forces continued offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove line, near Bakhmut, near Avdiivka, west and southwest of Donetsk City, the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area, and in western Zaporizhia Oblast and advanced in some areas of the frontline.**
- **Ukrainian officials continued to discuss Russian forced mobilization of Ukrainian civilians in occupied areas of Ukraine.**
- **Russian occupation officials continued to deport Ukrainian children to Russia under vacation schemes.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of November 13, 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 Russian violations of the laws of armed conflict and the Geneva Conventions and crimes against humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

- Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine (comprised of two subordinate main efforts)
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and encircle northern Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis
- Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts
- Activities in Russian-occupied areas
- Russian Information Operations and Narratives

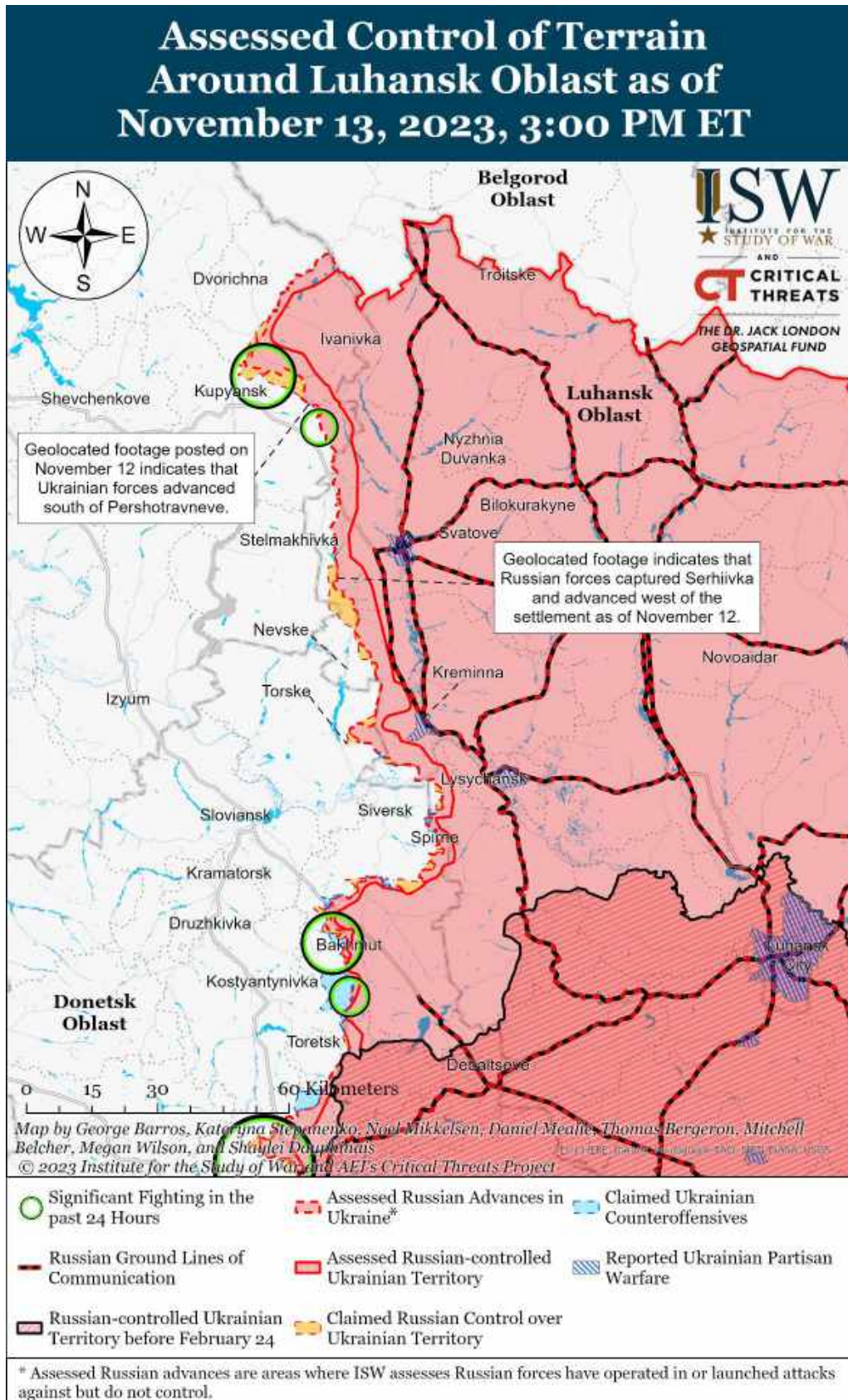
Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

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

Russian forces continued localized offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove line on November 13 and made confirmed advances. Geolocated footage published on November 13 indicates that Russian forces advanced west of Volodymyrivka (19km northwest of Svatove).[39] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled over 15 Russian assaults near Synkivka (9km northeast of Kupyansk), Petropavlivka (7km east of Kupyansk), Ivanivka (21km southwest of Kupyansk), Kyslivka (22km southwest of Kupyansk), and Novoyehorivka (15km southwest of Svatove).[40] Ukrainian Ground Forces Command Spokesperson Lieutenant Colonel Volodymyr Fityo stated that Ukrainian forces in the Kupyansk, Lyman, and Bakhmut directions are defending against Russian detachments comprised of convict recruits and regular Russian units comprised mainly of mobilized personnel.[41] The spokesperson for a Ukrainian brigade operating in the Kupyansk direction stated that Russian forces in the area often conduct assaults with groups of up to 10 personnel each and with four to five vehicles - squad-sized elements with limited combat power.[42]

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully counterattacked along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on November 13. The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that elements of the Russian Western Grouping of Forces repelled four Ukrainian assaults near Zahoruykivka (16km east of Kupyansk) and Tymkivka (19km east of Kupyansk) and that elements of the Russian Central Grouping of Forces repelled five assaults near Kreminna, Dibrova (6km

southwest of Kreminna), and Bilohorivka (12km south of Kreminna).[43] Fityo stated that Ukrainian forces conduct opportunistic offensive actions to improve their tactical positions in the Kupyansk, Lyman, and Bakhmut directions.[44]

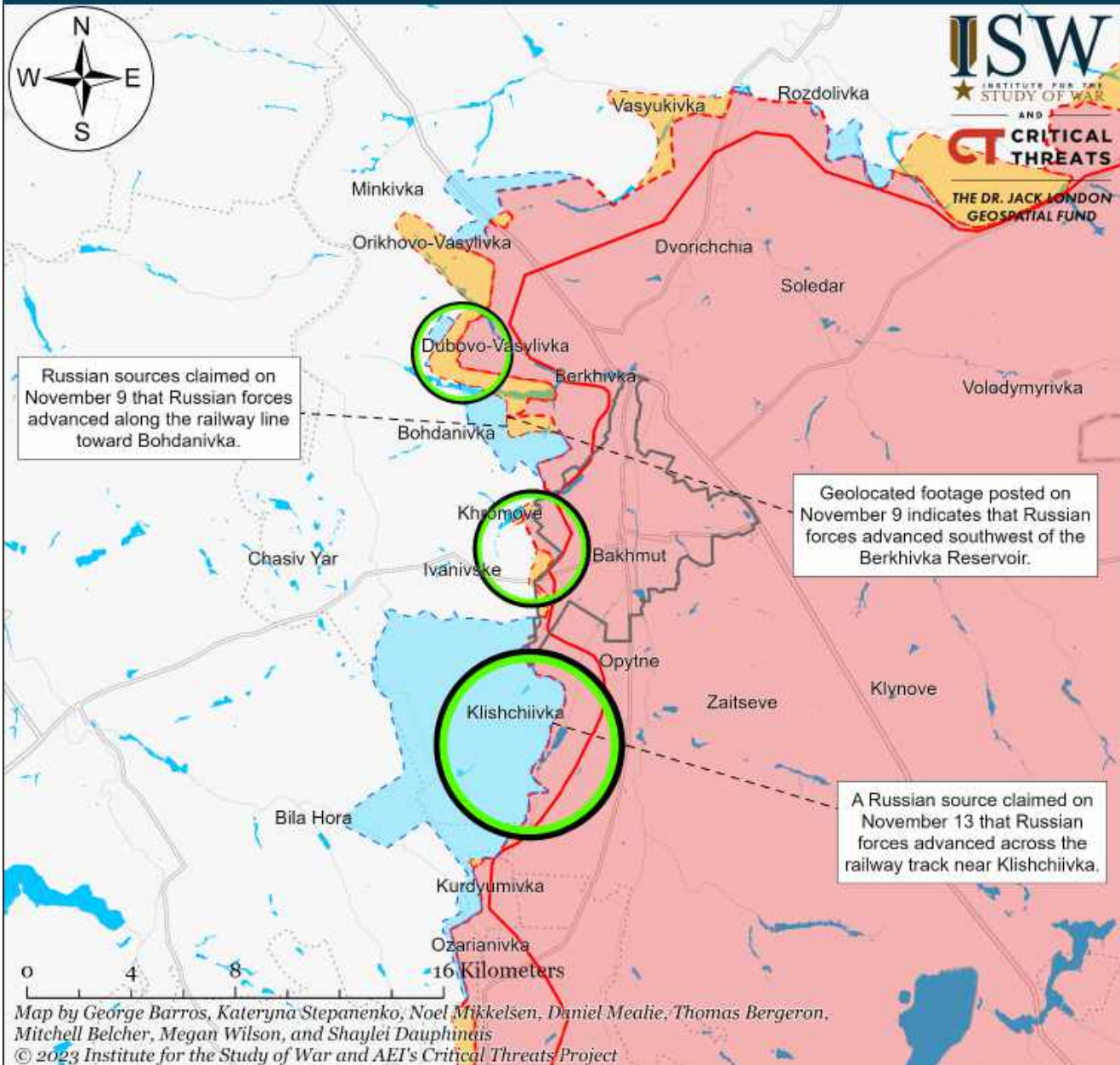


Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Donetsk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)

Ukrainian forces conducted ground attacks near Bakhmut on November 13 but did not make any confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued assault operations in the Bakhmut direction.[45] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) and other Russian sources claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut), Kurdyumivka (13km southwest of Bakhmut), and Ivanivske (6km west of Bakhmut).[46]

Russian forces continued localized offensive operations near Bakhmut on November 13 and made a confirmed advance. Geolocated footage published on November 12 shows that Russian forces advanced west of Yahidne (2km north of Bakhmut).[47] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks east of Klishchiivka and near Dubovo-Vasylivka (8km northwest of Bakhmut), Ivanivske, and Andriivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut).[48] Several Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces crossed the railway track near Klishchiivka and are consolidating control over positions in the northern part of Klishchiivka, though ISW cannot confirm this claim at this time.[49] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces pushed Ukrainian forces out of Klishchiivka several days ago, while another milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces still control Klishchiivka.[50] ISW has not observed visual evidence of a Russian advance into Klishchiivka itself. Some Russian sources claimed that Russian forces advanced in the direction of Bohdanivka (6km northwest of Bakhmut) and established new positions near the Berkhivka Reservoir (about 3km north of Bakhmut).[51] Footage published on November 13 purportedly shows elements of the Russian “Alexander Nevsky” Assault Brigade operating near Vasyukivka (15km north of Bakhmut) and elements of the Russian 331st Airborne (VDV) Regiment (98th VDV Division) operating in the Bakhmut direction.[52]

Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of November 13, 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 |

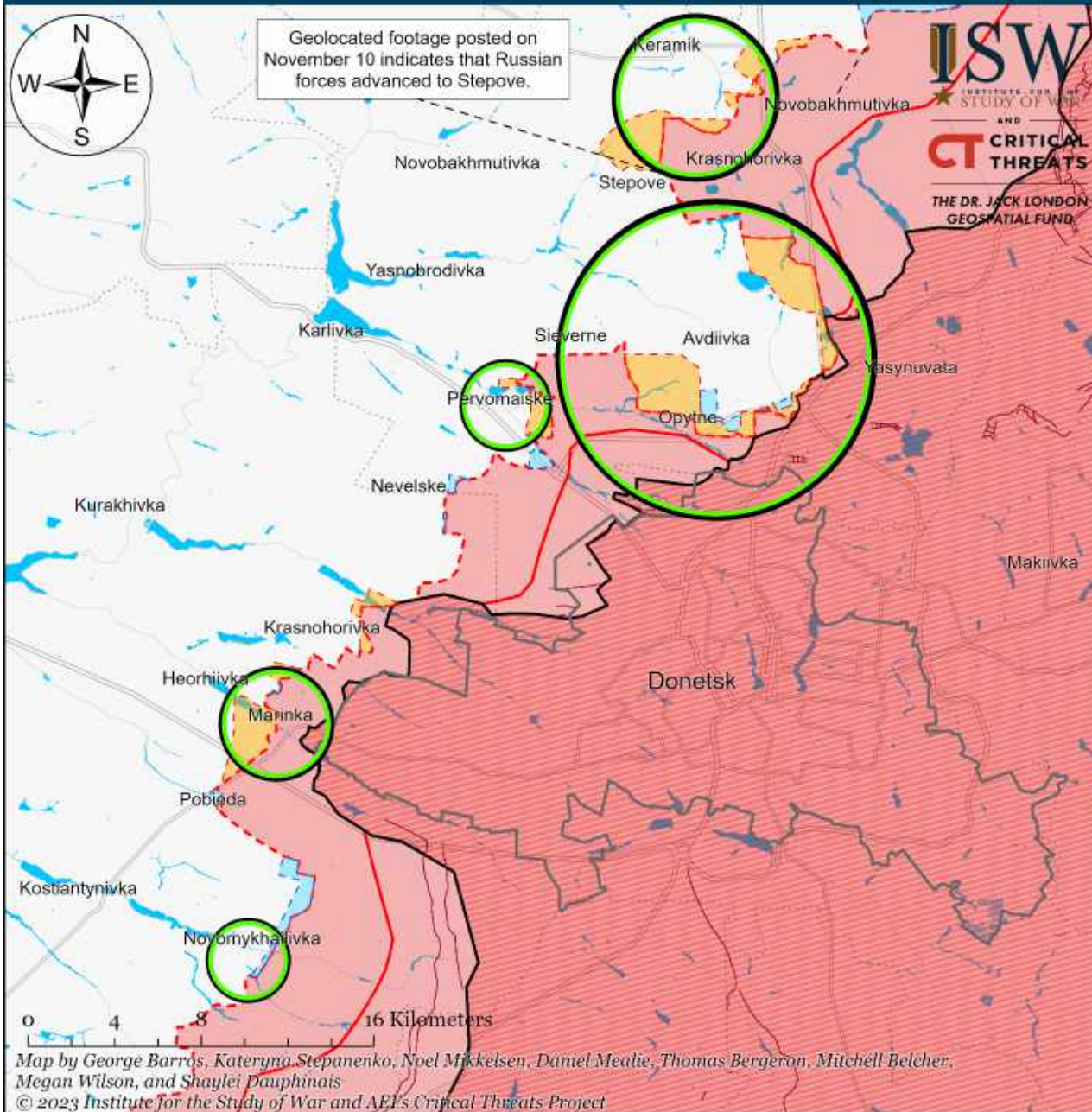
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Note: Multiple Russian sources claimed on November 13 that Russian forces advanced 500 meters near Berkhivka as of November 13.

Russian forces continued offensive operations near Avdiivka on November 13 and made confirmed gains. Geolocated footage published on November 10 shows that Russian forces recently advanced to the eastern outskirts of Stepove (3km north of Avdiivka).[53] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks southeast and south of Novokalynove (11km northwest of Avdiivka), east of Pervomaiske (11km southwest of Avdiivka) and Novobakhmutivka (13km northeast of Avdiivka), and near Avdiivka and Sieverne (6km west of Avdiivka).[54] Several Russian milbloggers claimed that fighting is ongoing near the Avdiivka Coke Plant and the waste heap in northern Avdiivka.[55] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces control at least half of the Avdiivka Coke Plant and that alleged reports of Russian forces capturing the plant are false.[56] ISW has not observed Russian claims that Russian forces captured the Avdiivka Coke Plant, however. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces pushed Ukrainian forces out of several unspecified positions in the industrial area on Avdiivka's southern flank, although ISW has not observed visual confirmation of this claim.[57]

Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces successfully counterattacked and advanced near Avdiivka on November 13. A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces advanced to the railway station near Stepove and near the "Tsarska Okhota" restaurant immediately south of Avdiivka.[58] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Krasnohorivka (5km north of Avdiivka).[59]

Assessed Control of Terrain near Donetsk City as of November 13, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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

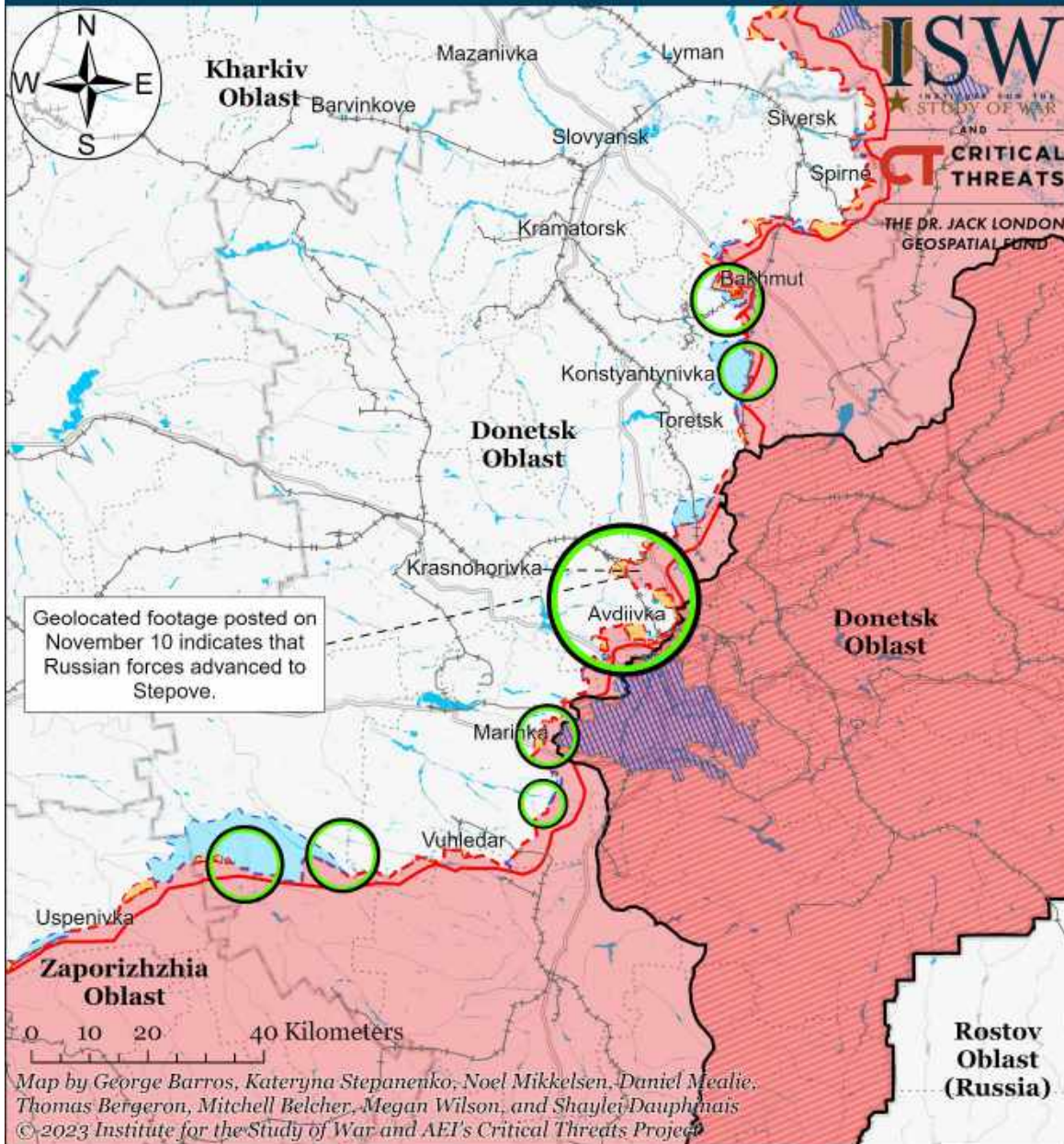
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Note: A Russian source claimed on November 13 that Ukrainian forces control at least half of the Avdiivka Coke Plant.

Russian forces continued limited ground attacks west and southwest of Donetsk City on November 13 but did not make any confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks near Marinka (immediately southwest of Donetsk City) and Novomykhailivka (11km southwest of Donetsk City).^[60] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces gained a foothold near Novomykhailivka but are currently unable to assault Novomykhailivka itself.^[61]

Ukrainian forces did not conduct any claimed or confirmed ground attacks west and southwest of Donetsk City on November 13.

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of November 13, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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

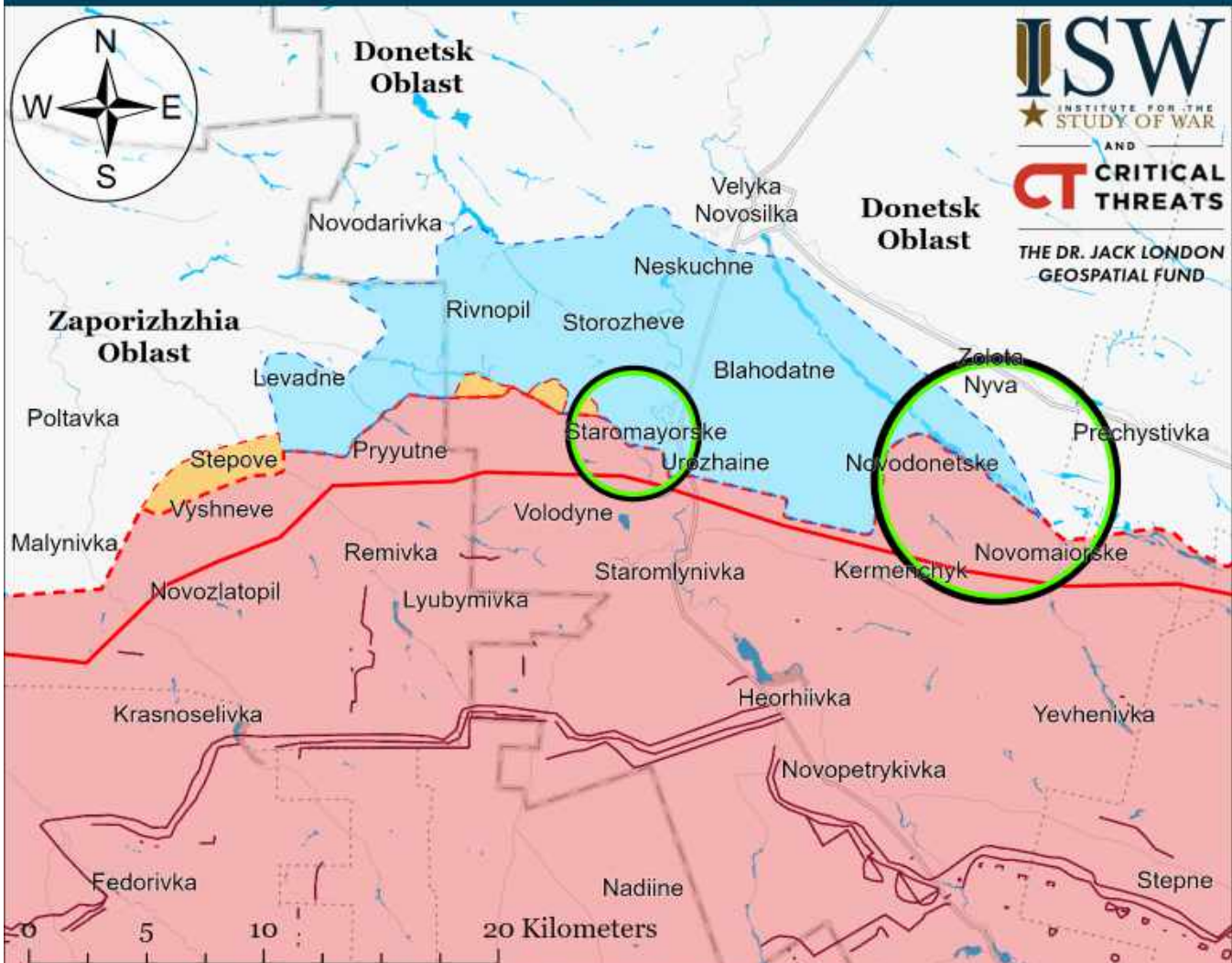
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

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

A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces resumed ground attacks in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area but did not make any advances on November 13. A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces attacked north of Novodonetske (12km southeast of Velyka Novosilka) and Novomayorske (18km southeast of Veylka Novosilka) and that positional fighting is ongoing in the area.[62]

Russian forces conducted ground attacks in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area but did not make any claimed or confirmed advances on November 13. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked south of Zolota Nyva (11km southeast of Velyka Novosilka) and near Staromayorske (9km south of Velyka Novosilka).[63] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces remain active north of Pryyutne (16km southwest of Velyka Novosilka) and near Urozhaine (9km south of Veylka Novosilka), though ISW has not observed any significant Russian advances in the area in several months.[64]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around the Vremivka Salient as of November 13, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Megan Wilson, and Shaylei Dauphinais
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- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- 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 counteroffensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast but did not make any claimed or confirmed advances on November 13. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Melitopol (western Zaporizhia Oblast) direction.^[65] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted larger-than-usual assaults with tank support north of Verbove (9km east of Robotyne) and that mutual shelling is ongoing.^[66] Russian sources, including the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD), claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Rivne (8km west of Robotyne), Robotyne, Novoprokopivka (2km south of Robotyne), and Verbove.^[67] A Russian milblogger claimed that fighting along the Kopani-Robotyne line (up to 5km northwest of Robotyne) is positional.^[68]

Russian forces conducted offensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast but did not make any confirmed advances on November 13. Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces captured an unspecified fortified Ukrainian position near Robotyne.^[69] A Russian source claimed that Russian forces counterattacked from Novofedorivka (21km southeast of Orikhiv) but did not specify an outcome.^[70] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Robotyne.^[71]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Pyatykhatky and Robotyne as of November 13, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

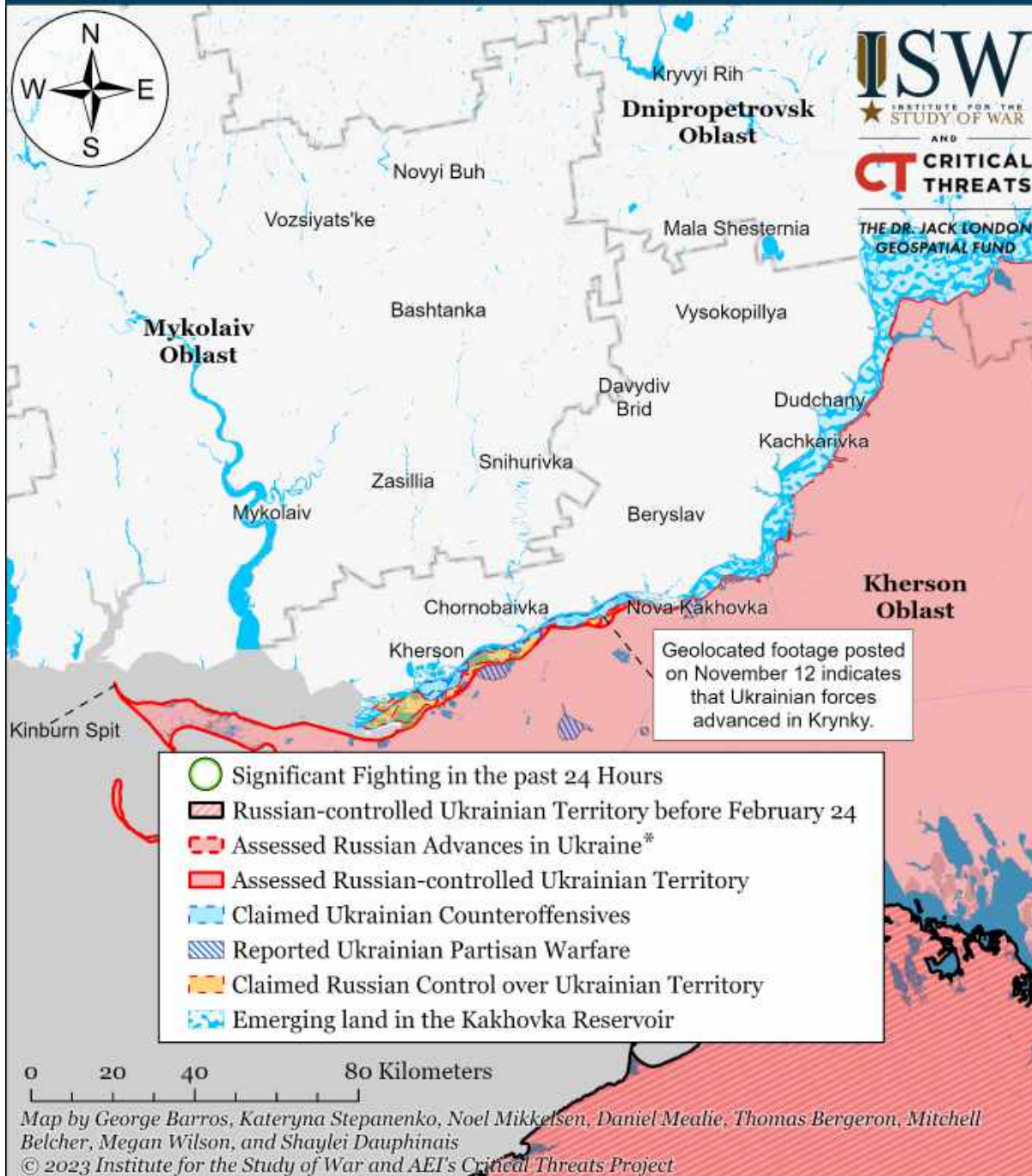


-  Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
-  Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
-  Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
-  Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
-  Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
-  Emerging land in the Kakhovka Reservoir
-  Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
-  Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
-  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 sources claimed that Ukrainian forces continued ground operations on the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast and advanced on November 13. Russian milbloggers claimed on November 12 and 13 that Ukrainian forces maintain positions in Krynky (30km northeast of Kherson Oblast and 2km from the Dnipro River) and marginally expanded their zone of control south of the settlement.[72] A Russian milblogger claimed on November 13 that Russian forces managed to push Ukrainian forces out of unspecified positions near Krynky.[73] A Russian source claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted unsuccessful offensive maneuvers near Krynky.[74] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces are persistently attempting to gain a foothold near Poyma (10km southeast of Kherson City and 4km from the Dnipro River) and Pishchanivka (13km southeast of Kherson City and 3km from the Dnipro River).[75] Russian sources claimed that Russian forces are using firepower to prevent Ukrainian transfers of personnel and materiel to the east bank.[76] A Russian milblogger claimed that elements of the Russian 810th Naval Infantry Brigade (Black Sea Fleet) are operating near Krynky.[77] Ukrainian counteroffensive operations reportedly previously rendered the 810th Naval Infantry Brigade combat ineffective as of September 22.[78]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of November 13, 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.

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 forces conducted air and artillery strikes against the west (right) bank of Kherson Oblast on November 13. Ukraine's Southern Operational Command stated on November 13 that Russian forces conducted four air strikes with 41 glide bombs against populated areas of Kherson Oblast in the past day.[79] Ukrainian Southern Operational Command Spokesperson Captain First Rank Nataliya Humenyuk stated that Russian glide bomb strikes target critical infrastructure.[80] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces are constantly conducting strikes with TOS-1A thermobaric artillery systems and glide bombs on the west bank.[81]



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

Ukrainian officials continue to discuss Russian forced mobilization of Ukrainian civilians in occupied areas of Ukraine. Ukrainian Luhansk Oblast Head Artem Lysohor and the Ukrainian General Staff noted on November 12 that Russian authorities are conducting forced mobilization in Starobilsk, Luhansk Oblast, and removing mobilized Ukrainians to Krasnodar Krai for training.[82] Ukrainian Melitopol Mayor Ivan Fedorov also stated that Russian authorities are using mandatory passportization measures in occupied areas of Ukraine to distribute summonses to Ukrainian men.[83] Fedorov reported that forced mobilization has spread from small villages to bigger cities in occupied areas.[84]

Russian Technological Adaptations (Russian objective: Introduce technological innovations to optimize systems for use in Ukraine)

Russia continues efforts to enhance Iranian-produced Shahed-131/136 drones. A Russian milblogger posted footage on November 13 of a Shahed-136 drone equipped with an electro-optical seeker striking a target during testing in Iran.[85] The milblogger noted that this adaptation essentially converts Shaheds into Lancet-type drones that can travel greater distances and cause more damage.[86]

Russian state media outlet *RIA Novosti* reported on November 13 that Russian state-owned defense enterprise Rostec is preparing to produce the first units of the Sukhoi Su-75 "Checkmate" fifth-generation single-engine stealth aircraft.[87]

Russia continues to build out testing infrastructure for drone use. *RFE/RL* affiliate *Idel Realii* reported on November 13 that Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin signed a draft resolution establishing an "experimental legal regime" for the operation and testing of light and heavy drones in Samara Oblast.[88] The testing regime reportedly accommodates 18,000 planned flights for test drones that are produced at the production center for the national "Unmanned Aircraft Systems" program in Samara.[89]

Activities in Russian-occupied areas (Russian objective: Consolidate administrative control of annexed areas; forcibly integrate Ukrainian citizens into Russian sociocultural, economic, military, and governance systems)

Russian occupation officials continue to deport Ukrainian children to Russia under vacation schemes. Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) head Leonid Pasechnik stated on November 12 that the Russian "humanitarian" organization "We Don't Abandon Our Own" sent nine children from occupied Luhansk Oblast to Sochi, Krasnodar Krai for rehabilitation.[90] Pasechnik stated that the "We Don't Abandon Our Own" organization has sent a total of 170 Ukrainian children to Sochi.[91]

Russian occupation officials continue to use social service provisions to coerce residents into receiving Russian passports and to collect personal information on residents. Kherson Oblast occupation head Vladimir Saldo stated on November 13 that updated regulations for the acquisition and use of housing certificates needed for purchasing a home or apartment will require that recipients have a Russian passport or birth certificate.[92] The new stipulations for housing certificates also likely aim to facilitate the ongoing resettlement of ethnic Russians in occupied territories in Ukraine.[93] The Kherson Oblast occupation Ministry of Internal Affairs stated on November 12 that residents will have to re-register license plates, driver's licenses, and documentation numbers in the Russian system by 2026 and that residents will need a Russian passport to do so.[94] These re-registration measures likely aim to collect information on residents in occupied territories while also further augmenting ongoing passportization efforts.

Russian Information Operations and Narratives

Russia continues to militarize Russian children against the backdrop of the war in Ukraine. A prominent Kremlin-affiliated milblogger reported on November 13 that members of their team attended the "Time of Heroes" social event in Moscow to teach young children of Russian servicemembers "visual propaganda" via coloring books and comics.[95] The Russian Federal Agency for Youth Affairs and the Main Military-Political Directorate of the Russian Armed Forces organize the "Time of Heroes" program, which intends to instill Russian "military-patriotic" values in Russian children and youth.[96]

Prominent Russian sources are propagating various information operations aimed at disparaging the Ukrainian military and the Ukrainian military command. Various Russian sources are speculating on potential "purges" in the Ukrainian military command and amplified claims that protests against mobilization are growing in Ukraine.[97]

Chechen Republic Head Ramzan Kadyrov continues efforts to present Chechnya as stable by making claims about the purported diversity and unity of Chechen "Akhmat" Spetsnaz formations. Kadyrov posted footage on November 13 showing "Akhmat" Spetsnaz Commander Apti Alaudinov talking to "Akhmat" personnel and asking them to raise their hands to demonstrate if they are former Wagner personnel, Orthodox Christians, Muslims, or members of other faith groups.[98] Kadyrov claimed that there has never been dishonesty, disagreements, or divisions amongst "Akhmat" personnel.[99] Kadyrov is likely using this purported guise of diversity and unity amongst his notoriously brutal forces to portray "Akhmat" fighters as a powerful and effective fighting force as he continues to curry favor with the Russian high command.

Hyper-nationalist factions within the Russian space continue to seize on Russia's relationship with migrant communities to further hardline xenophobic rhetoric against minority communities. Moscow Duma Deputy Andrey Medvedev responded on November 13 to a statement made by the Russian Commission of the Public Chamber on Interethnic and Interreligious Relations and Migration Chairperson Vladimir Zorin, who voiced his concern over the "changed tone in the socio-political discourse on the issue of migration and interethnic relations." [100] Medvedev questioned Zorin's

"Russianness" and emphasized that Russia is ignoring "migrant problems," concluding that Russia needs to protect Russians in Russia.[101] ISW previously assessed that the war in Ukraine is exposing tensions between Russian national identity and Russian nationalism, and the continued participation of Russian politicians in anti-migrant discourse exacerbates these apparent tensions.[102]

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 Defense Minister Lieutenant General Viktor Khrenin signed a bilateral military cooperation agreement with United Arab Emirates (UAE) Minister of State for Defense Affairs Mohammed Ahmed al Bowardi following negotiations in Dubai on November 13.[103]

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

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Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, November 12, 2023

Grace Mappes, Angelica Evans, Riley Bailey, Karolina Hird, and Frederick W. Kagan

November 12, 2023, 3:55pm 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 see ISW's 3D control of terrain topographic map of Ukraine. Use of a computer (not a mobile device) is strongly recommended for using this data-heavy tool.

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 1pm ET on November 12. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the November 13 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Ukraine appears to be intensifying attacks against Russian military, logistics, and other high-profile assets in rear areas in occupied Ukraine and Russia. The Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) reported on November 12 that Ukrainian partisans attacked a Russian military headquarters in occupied Melitopol, Zaporizhia Oblast on November 11, killing at least three Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) and Rosgvardia officers.[1] The GUR's November 12 announcement follows a Ukrainian partisan attack against a former Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) People's Militia head on November 8; strikes against a Russian military base in occupied Skadovsk, Kherson Oblast and Black Sea Fleet assets in Crimea on November 9; and three rear-area strikes and partisan attacks in Russia on November 11.[2] Ukrainian forces have conducted a strike campaign specifically targeting occupied Crimea since summer 2023.[3]

The Russian government is attempting to downplay the extent of its efforts to strengthen control over the Russian information space. The Russian Ministry of Digital Development claimed on November 12 that it will only block specific virtual private network (VPN) services that an "expert commission" identifies as threats, likely aiming to prevent Russians from bypassing Russian censorship efforts and anonymizing themselves online.[4] The Ministry of Digital Development had responded to an inquiry from the "Novyi Lyudi" faction expressing concern over the Russian government's efforts to restrict access to information on the internet and fears that the Russian government will simply identify all VPN services as threats and block them.[5] The Russian government recently announced a ban on services that provide virtual and temporary mobile numbers starting on September 1, 2024, and Russians can use these mobile numbers in conjunction with VPN services to form anonymous online personas to evade Russian censorship efforts.[6] The Russian government is very unlikely to allow any VPNs to operate within Russia that would allow Russians to bypass censorship efforts and remain anonymous from the Russian government.

Russia continues to posture itself as a prominent security guarantor for authoritarian countries in Africa. Russian Deputy Defense Minister Alexander Fomin stated during a television

interview with the “Voyennaya Priemka” program on November 12 that Russia will sign military cooperation agreements with six additional African countries in the near future.[7] Fomin stated that Russia currently has military agreements with 30 of the 54 African countries and added that Russia is “very active” on the African continent. Fomin did not specify which African countries Russia will sign agreements with, although Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu and Deputy Defense Minister Yunus-Bek Yevkurov have met with delegations from Burkina Faso, Niger, Mali, and Libya in recent months.[8] French-language outlet *Jeune Afrique* reported on November 11 that a group of Russian servicemen arrived in Burkina Faso to protect President Ibrahim Traore from future coup attempts, which Russian sources credited as an outcome of Shoigu’s November 7 meeting with Burkinabe Minister of Defense and Veteran Affairs Brigadier General Kassoum Coulibaly.[9] The Kremlin appears to be using military agreements with Sahelian juntas to insert itself into the power vacuums created by the withdrawal of Western actors from the region, such as the UN's withdrawal from Mali.[10]

Russian forces conducted a limited series of missile strikes targeting southern Ukraine on November 12. Ukrainian military officials reported that Russian forces launched two Kh-59 cruise missiles and an Iskander ballistic missile at targets in southern Ukraine.[11] Ukraine’s Southern Operational Command reported that Ukrainian air defenses intercepted a Kh-59 cruise missile over Mykolaiv Oblast and that the second Kh-59 missile and the Iskander missile struck unpopulated areas.[12]

Key Takeaways:

- **Ukraine appears to be intensifying attacks against Russian military, logistics, and other high-profile assets in rear areas in occupied Ukraine and Russia.**
- **The Russian government is attempting to downplay the extent of its efforts to strengthen control over the Russian information space.**
- **Russia continues to posture itself as a prominent security guarantor for authoritarian countries in Africa.**
- **Russian forces conducted a limited series of missile strikes targeting southern Ukraine on November 12.**
- **Russian forces continued offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Kreminna line, near Bakhmut, in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area, and in western Zaporizhia Oblast.**
- **Ukrainian forces made a marginal gain on the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast on November 12 amid ongoing ground operations.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of November 12, 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 Russian violations of the laws of armed conflict and the Geneva Conventions and crimes against humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

- Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine (comprised of two subordinate main efforts)
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and encircle northern Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis
- Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts
- Activities in Russian-occupied areas
- Russian Information Operations and Narratives

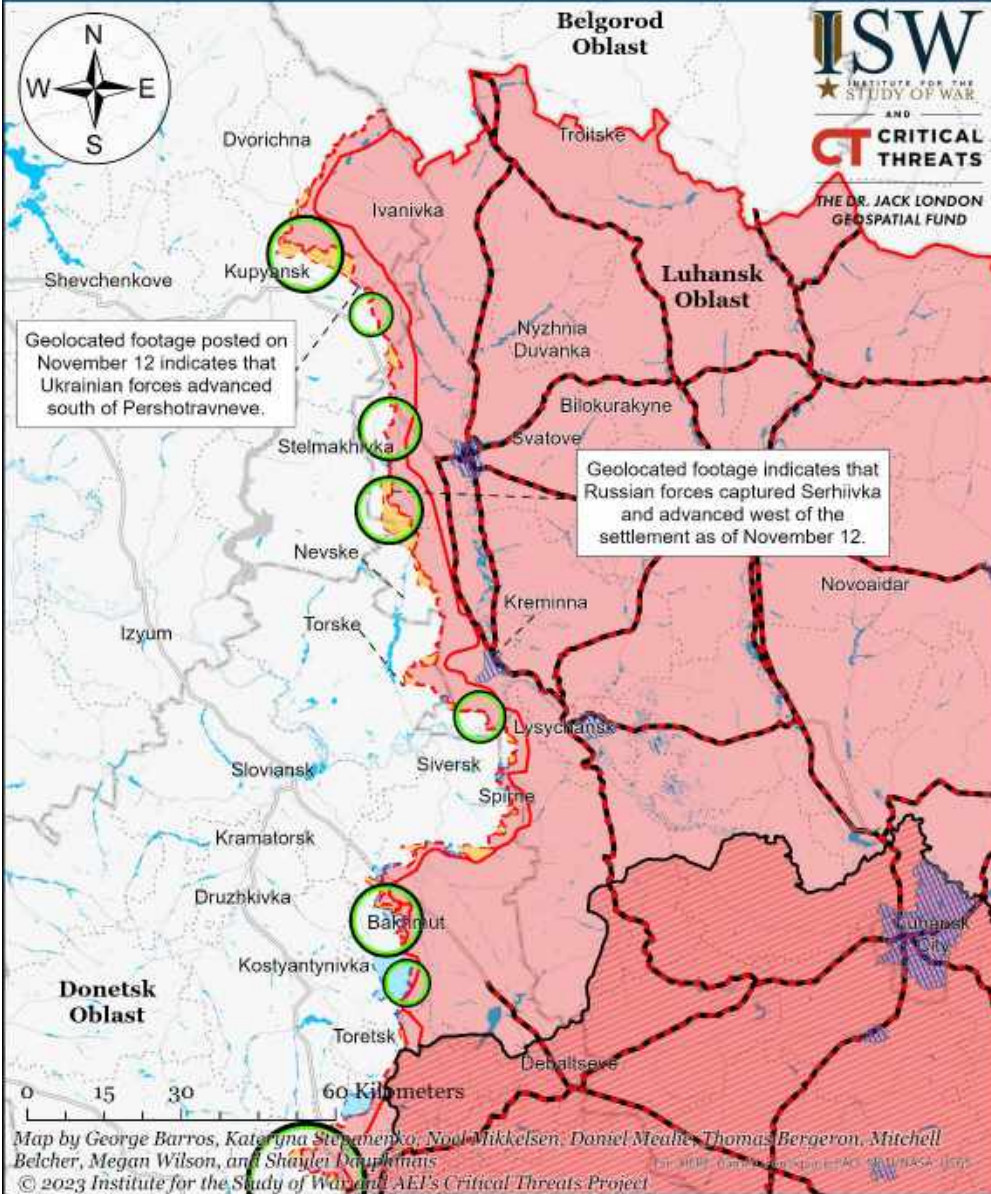
Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

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

Russian forces continued offensive operations on the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on November 12 and made confirmed advances. Geolocated footage published on November 12 shows that Russian forces advanced to positions west of Serhiivka (13km west of Svatove), corroborating Russian claims that Russian forces captured Serhiivka.[13] A Russian news aggregator claimed that Russian forces advanced near Lyman Pershi (12km northeast of Kupyansk), Kyslivka (20km southeast of Kupyansk), and Makiivka (22km northwest of Kreminna) on November 11.[14] The Ukrainian General Staff reported on November 12 that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful assaults near Synkivka (8km northeast of Kupyansk), Petropavlivka (7km east of Kupyansk), Ivanivka (20km southeast of Kupyansk), Stelmakhivka (15km northwest of Svatove), Nadiya (15km southwest of Svatove), Novoyehorivka (16km southwest of Svatove), and the Serebryanske forest area (11km south of Kreminna).[15] A Russian milblogger also reported continued fighting near Synkivka, Ivanivka, Stelmakhivka, and Novoyehorivka.[16] Ukrainian Ground Forces Command Spokesperson Lieutenant Colonel Volodymyr Fityo stated that Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Kupyansk direction but are regrouping because Russian forces have not achieved strategic successes in the past month of fighting.[17] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces seized the initiative in the Kupyansk area and surprised Ukrainian forces but have since failed to develop their battlefield successes.[18]

Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations on the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on November 12 and marginally advanced. Geolocated footage published on November 12 shows Ukrainian forces clearing a Russian position south of Pershotravneve (24km east of Kupyansk).[19] Russian military officials stated that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Synkivka, Zahoruykivka (16km east of Kupyansk), and Bilohorivka (13km south of Kreminna).[20]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of November 12, 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 Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare

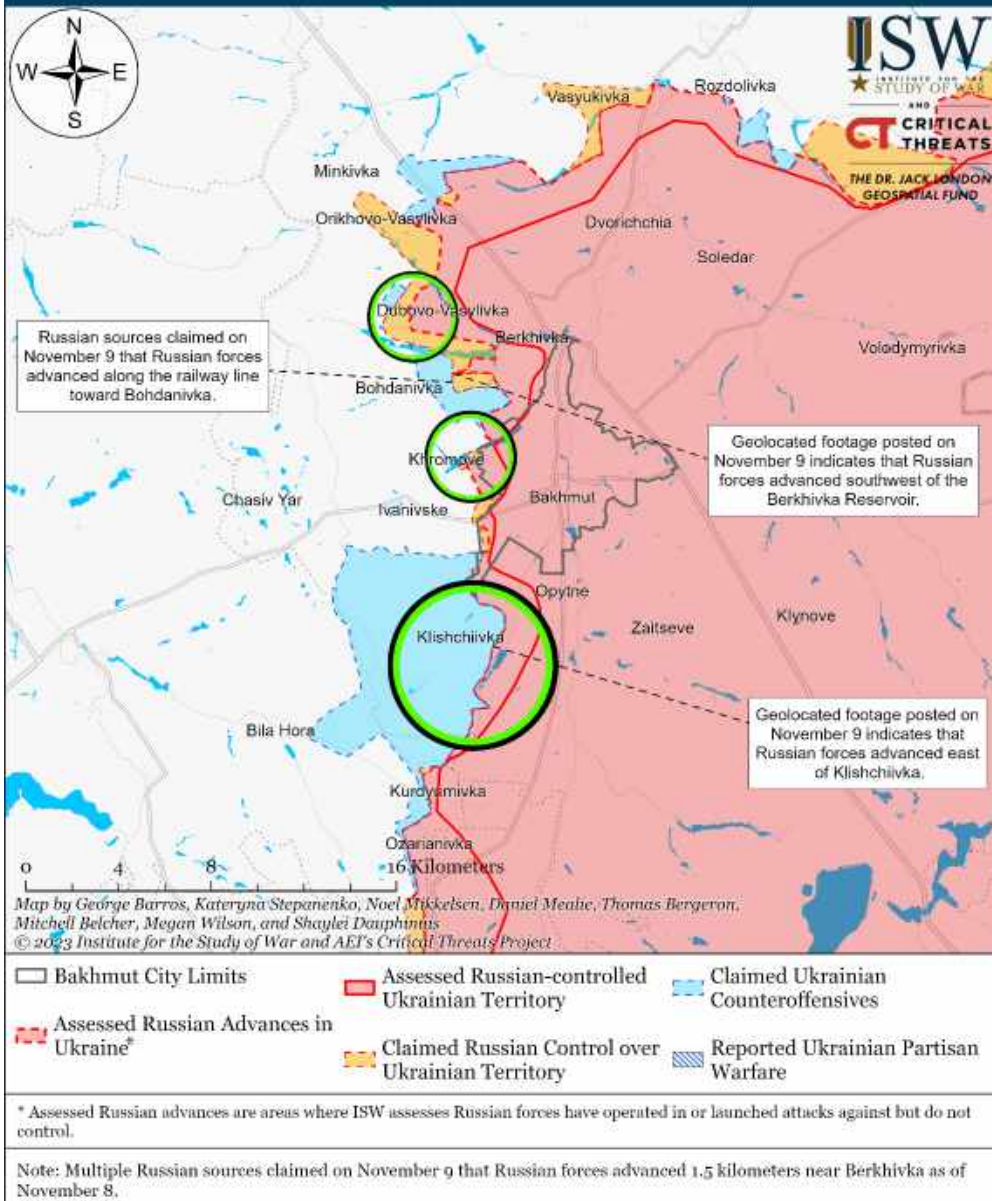
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Russian 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 ground attacks near Bakhmut on November 12 but did not make any confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued to conduct assaults south of Bakhmut.[21] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that elements of the Russian Southern Grouping of Forces repelled five Ukrainian assaults near Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut) and Kurdyumivka (13km southwest of Bakhmut).[22]

Russian forces continued limited localized offensive operations near Bakhmut on November 12 but did not make any confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled more than 10 Russian assaults near Dubovo-Vasylivka (8km northwest of Bakhmut), Khromove (immediately west of Bakhmut), Klishchiivka, and Andriivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut).[23] Ukrainian Ground Forces Command Spokesperson Lieutenant Colonel Volodymyr Fityo reported that Ukrainian forces also repelled Russian assaults near Ivanivske (6km west of Bakhmut) and that Russian forces are conducting an active defense near Bakhmut.[24] Ukrainian Ground Forces Commander Colonel General Oleksandr Syrskyi stated that Russian forces have increased attempts to recapture previously lost positions in the Bakhmut direction.[25] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces pushed Ukrainian forces out of positions near Bohdanivka (6km northwest of Bakhmut) and Klishchiivka and that Russian forces have entrenched themselves in Klishchiivka.[26] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces regained control of the Berkhivka Reservoir north of Bakhmut, although it is unclear if the milblogger meant that Russian forces control all positions around the reservoir.[27] Another Russian milblogger amplified footage on November 11 purporting to show elements of the Russian 106th Airborne (VDV) Division operating in the Bakhmut direction.[28]

Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of November 12, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

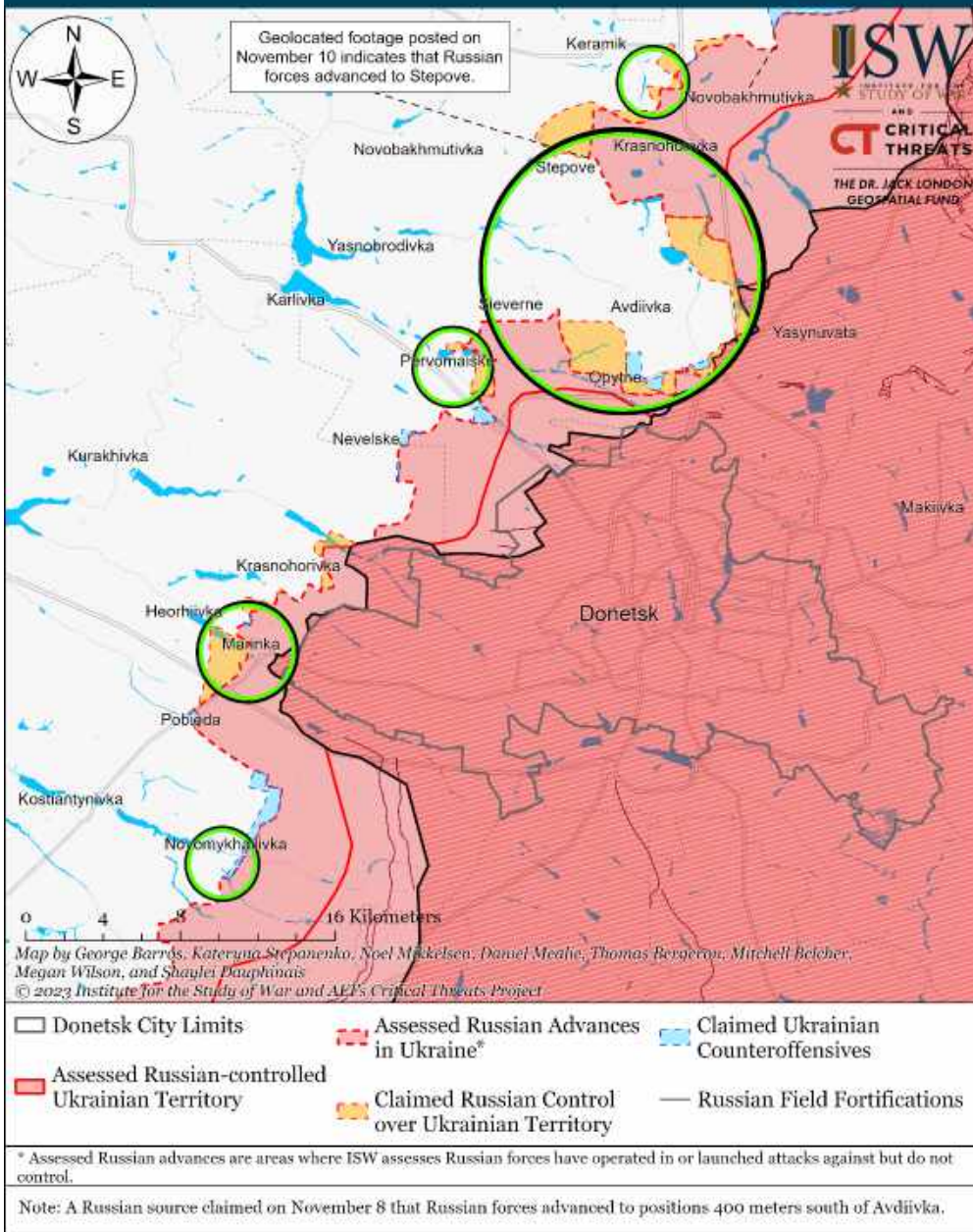


Russian forces continued offensive operations around Avdiivka on November 12 but did not make any confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled over 18 Russian assaults near Avdiivka, Sieverne (6km west of Avdiivka), Tonenke (6km west of Avdiivka), and Pervomaiske (11km southwest of Avdiivka).[29] Russian milbloggers claimed on November 11 and 12 that Russian forces continued to advance near Stepove (3km north of Avdiivka), with some milbloggers claiming that Russian forces reached the outskirts of the settlement and others claiming that Russian forces hold positions within the settlement.[30] A Ukrainian Telegram channel specifically covering the tactical situation around Avdiivka claimed on November 11 that Ukrainian forces pushed Russian forces out of Stepove after Russian forces had temporarily established

positions in the settlement.[31] ISW has not observed visual evidence of Russian forces holding positions on the outskirts of Stepove or in the settlement itself. Russian milbloggers claimed on November 11 and 12 that Russian forces are conducting heavy assaults west of the Avdiivka waste heap and near the Avdiivka Coke Plant in northern Avdiivka.[32] A Russian milblogger claimed on November 12 that Russian forces made marginal advances near the "Tsarska Okhota" restaurant immediately south of Avdiivka, although ISW has not observed visual confirmation of this claim.[33]

Ukrainian forces conducted recent successful counterattacks near Avdiivka and made marginal gains. Geolocated footage published on November 11 indicates that Ukrainian forces advanced south of Avdiivka near the E50 (Donetsk City-Yenakieve) highway on November 10.[34] A Russian milblogger claimed on November 12 that Ukrainian forces counterattacked and restored control over previously lost positions in the direction of Vodyane (7km southwest of Avdiivka) in the past week.[35]

Assessed Control of Terrain near Donetsk City as of November 12, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



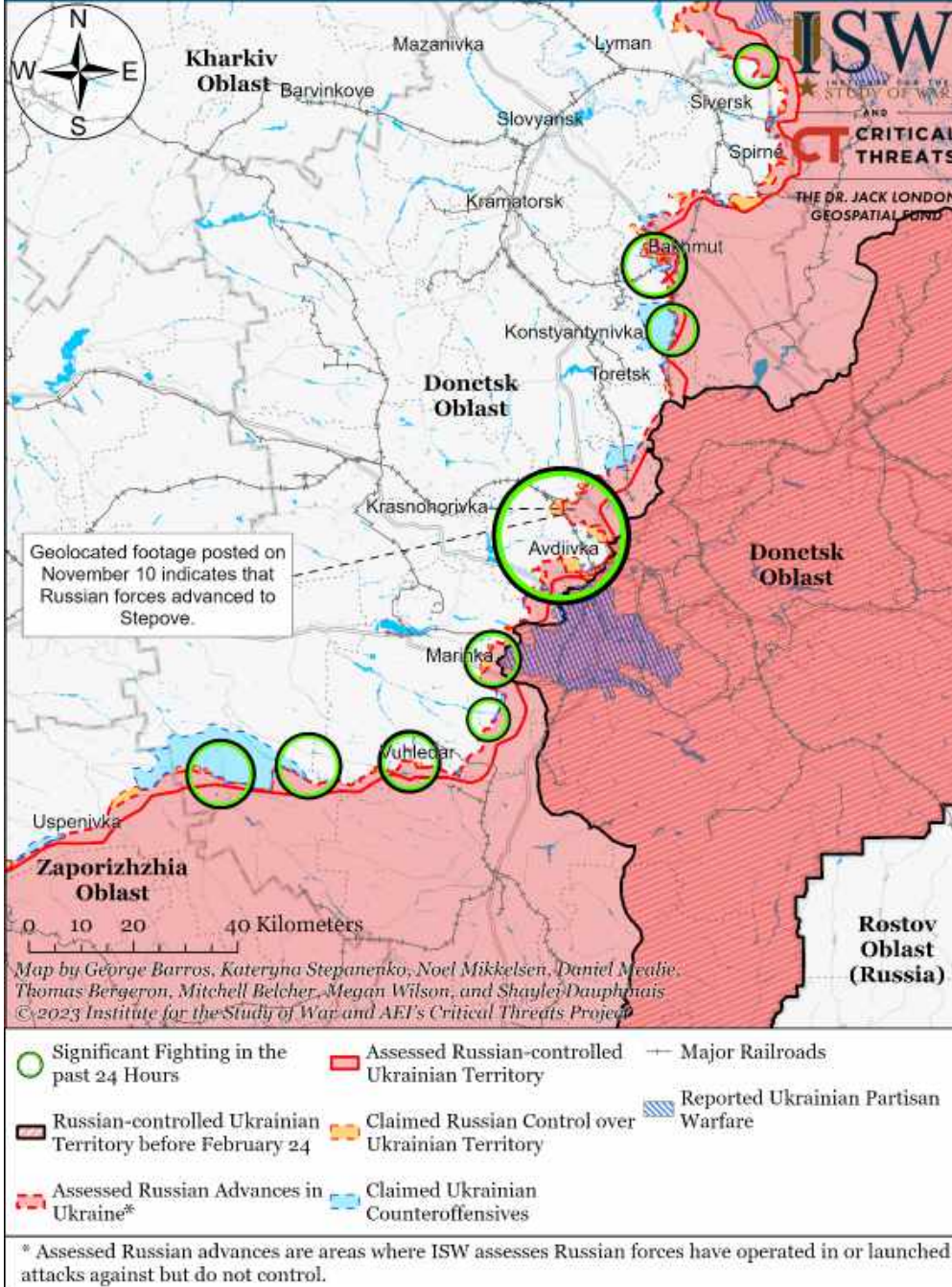
Russian forces continued offensive operations west and southwest of Donetsk City on November 12 but did not make any confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled over 22 Russian assaults near Marinka (immediately southwest of Donetsk City) and Novomykhailivka (11km southwest of Donetsk City).[36]

Ukrainian forces did not conduct any claimed or confirmed ground attacks west and southwest of Donetsk City on November 12.

Ukrainian forces recently made marginal gains in western Donetsk Oblast and reportedly conducted limited ground attacks on November 12. Geolocated footage published on November 11 shows that Ukrainian forces made marginal advances northeast of Mykilske (3km southeast of Vuhledar).[37] The Russian MoD claimed on November 12 that elements of the Russian Eastern Grouping of Forces repelled a Ukrainian assault near Mykilske.[38]

Russian forces conducted limited ground attacks in western Donetsk Oblast on November 12 but did not make any confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Vuhledar.[39] Russian milbloggers claimed that positional battles occurred near Vuhledar and that Russian forces are hesitant to approach the settlement due to heavy casualties that Russian forces suffered in failed attempts to capture Vuhledar during the Russian winter-spring 2023 offensive campaign.[40] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces attempted to break through Ukrainian defenses near Mykilske in the last week but did not specify an outcome.[41]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of November 12, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

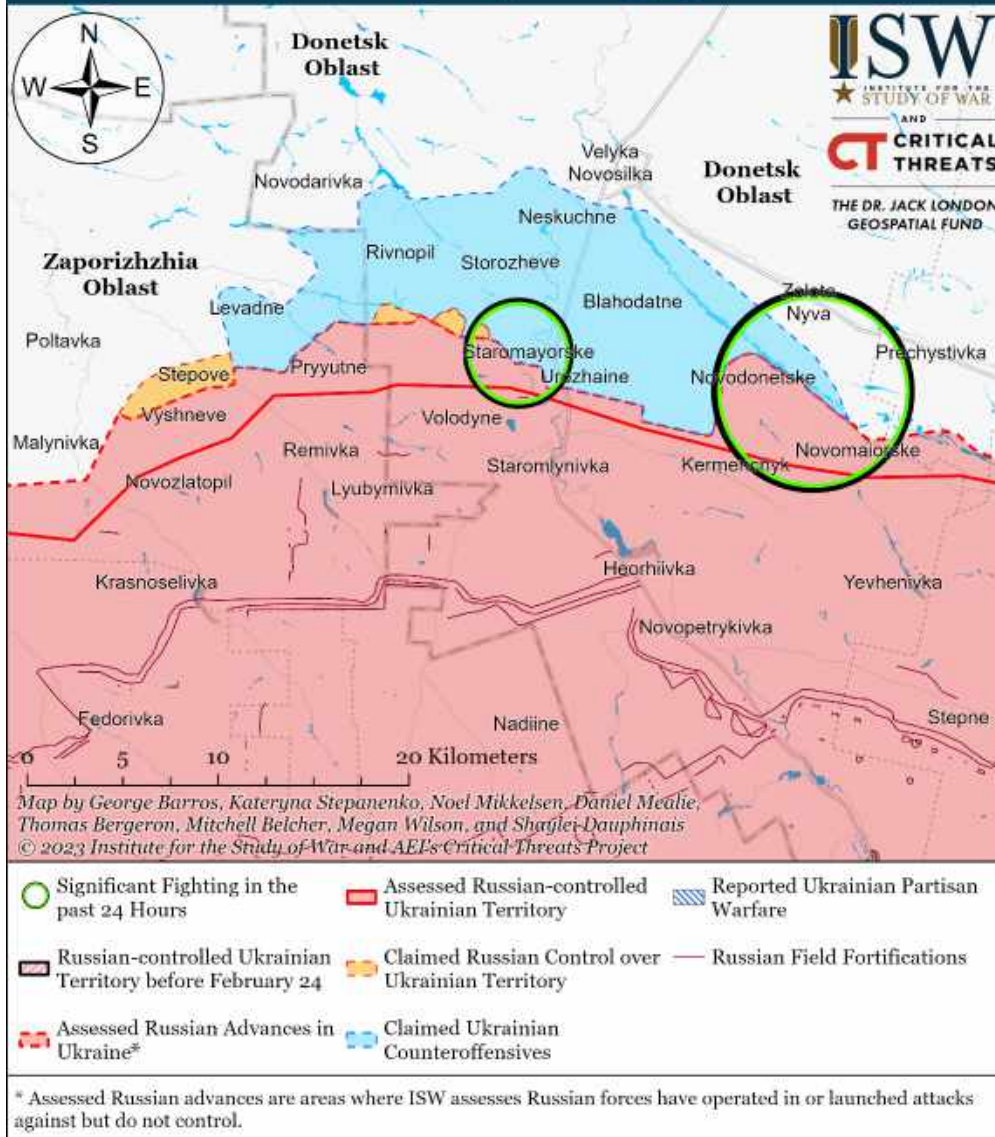


Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions and secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes)

Ukrainian forces did not conduct any claimed or confirmed ground attacks in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on November 12.

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on November 12 but did not make any confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported unsuccessful Russian assaults near Zolota Nyva (10km southeast of Velyka Novosilka) and Staromayorske (9km south of Velyka Novosilka).[42] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces attacked south of Velyka Novosilka, including unsuccessful attacks near Staromayorske.[43] A Russian media aggregator claimed that Russian forces advanced near Staromayorske and Novodonetske (11km southeast of Velyka Novosilka) on November 11.[44] The Russian Vostok Battalion, which is deployed to the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area, claimed that there is high activity along the entire Urozhaine-Staromykhailivka (9km south to 19km southwest of Velyka Novosilka) line and that their neighboring Russian troops went on the offensive, concluding that November 12 will be "an important day." [45]

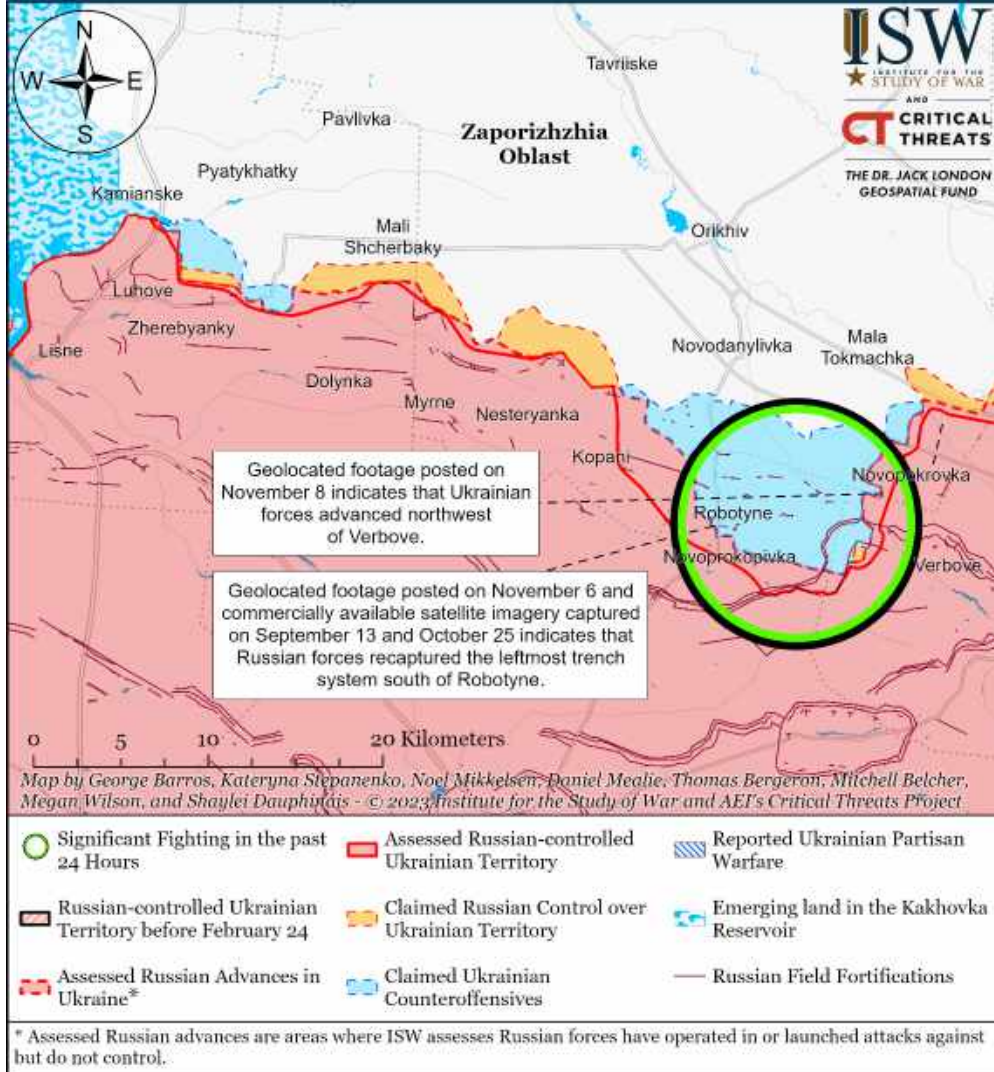
Assessed Control of Terrain Around the Vremivka Salient as of November 12, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



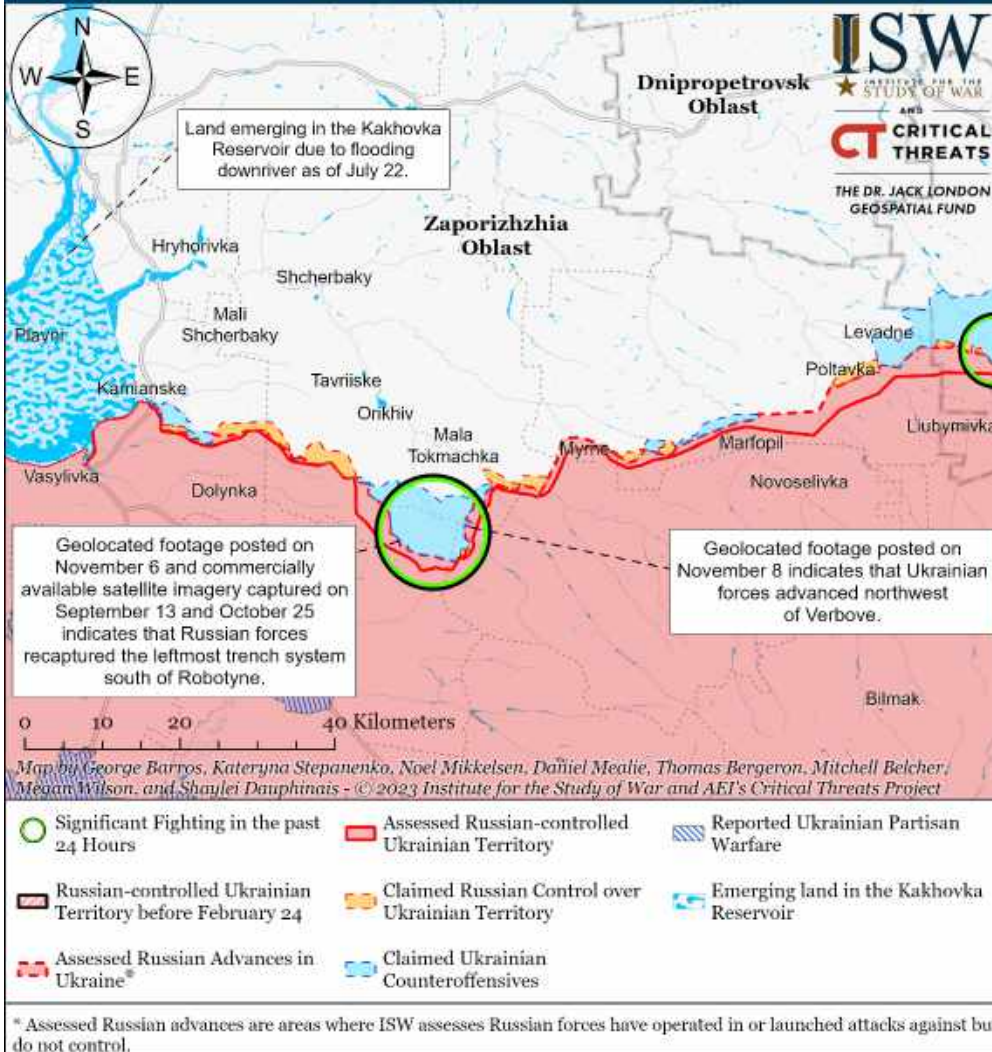
Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast on November 12 and reportedly advanced. Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces marginally advanced near Novoprokopivka (just south of Robotyne) and took positions northwest of Verbove (10km east of Robotyne).[46] A Ukrainian military observer also reported that Ukrainian forces were successful west of Robotyne and knocked elements of the Russian 136th Motorized Rifle Brigade (58th Combined Arms Army, Southern Military District) out of positions on tactical heights in the area.[47]

Russian forces continued offensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast on November 12 and made marginal confirmed advances. Geolocated footage published on November 12 indicates that Russian forces made a marginal gain north of Kopani (6km northwest of Robotyne).[48] Additional geolocated footage published on November 6 indicates that Russian forces recently recaptured positions at previously lost trenches between Robotyne and Novoprokopivka.[49] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful assaults near Robotyne.[50] A Russian milblogger claimed that elements of the 392nd Motorized Rifle Regiment (likely a mobilized unit) are storming Ukrainian positions near Pyatykhatky (26km northwest of Robotyne), although the North Ossetian volunteer battalions “Storm Ossetia” and “Alania” operating near Pyatykhatky claimed that there was no activity near the settlement.[51] The North Ossetian volunteer battalions claimed that there were recent unspecified counterattacks near Pyatykhatky, suggesting some level of ground activity in a sector of the front in western Zaporizhia Oblast that has been largely dormant since the early weeks of the ongoing Ukrainian counteroffensive.[52]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Pyatykhatky and Robotyne as of November 12, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhia as of November 12, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

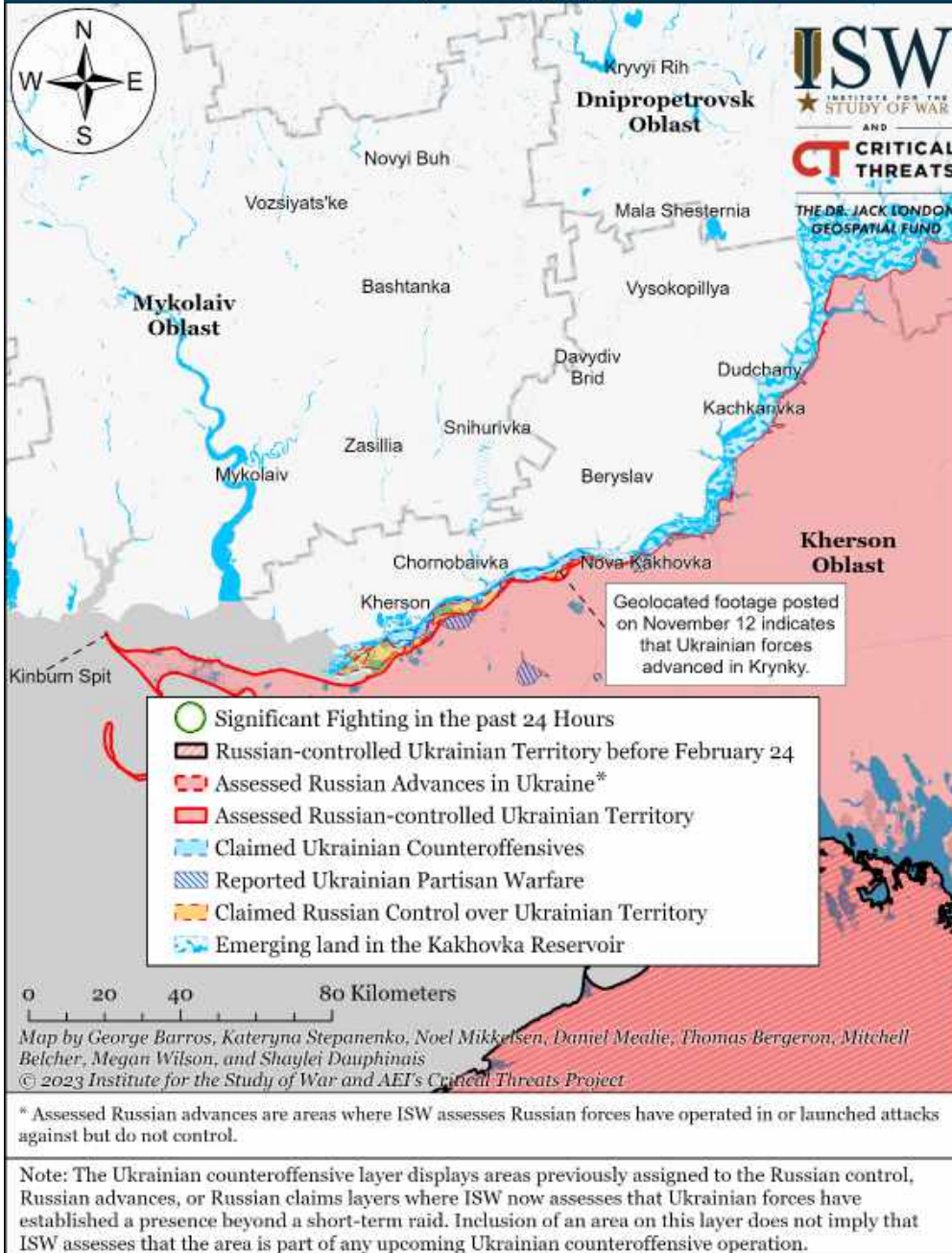


Ukrainian forces made a marginal gain on the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast on November 12 amid ongoing ground operations. Geolocated footage published on November 12 shows that Ukrainian forces made marginal advances further into Krynky (30km northeast of Kherson City and 2km from the Dnipro River).[53] Russian milbloggers continued to claim that Russian forces tried and failed to push Ukrainian forces from Krynky and that Ukrainian forces are conducting offensive operations near Poyma (10km southeast of Kherson City and 4km from the Dnipro River), Pishchanivka (13km southeast of Kherson City and 3km from the Dnipro River), and Pidstepne (17km east of Kherson City and 4km from the Dnipro River).[54] The milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces have transferred additional personnel to the Krynky area and that Ukrainian forces intend to cut Russian logistics lines and strike infrastructure connecting the Russian front line to rear areas in occupied Crimea, Kherson Oblast, and Zaporizhia Oblast.[55] One milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces are advancing towards the E58 Oleshky-Kamianka highway and expressed concern that

Ukrainian forces may threaten Russian positions near the E58-E97 intersection south of the Poyma-Pishchanivka-Pidstepne line.[56] Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets reported that Russian forces have committed relatively few units to defend the Oleshky-Nova Kakhovka Road and to respond to Ukrainian operations on the east bank, likely to conserve combat power within the broader “Dnepr” Group of Forces.[57]

Russian forces conducted air and artillery strikes against the west (right) bank of Kherson Oblast on November 12. Ukraine's Southern Operational Command reported that Russian forces conducted five airstrikes with 31 glide bombs and 55 artillery strikes with 290 shells against targets in the west (right) bank of Kherson Oblast, including Kherson City and Antonivka as well as Ochakiv, Mykolaiv Oblast.[58] A Russian milblogger posted footage of elements of the Russian “Dnepr” Group of Forces striking a Ukrainian ammunition depot in the west bank of Kherson Oblast.[59] Ukrainian sources reported that Russian forces conducted a missile strike against the Honchar library in Kherson City on November 11.[60]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of November 12, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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

Nothing significant to report.

Russian Technological Adaptations (Russian objective: Introduce technological innovations to optimize systems for use in Ukraine)

Russian outlet *Izvestia* reported on November 8 and 12 that Russia is creating a stratospheric strike and reconnaissance complex (RUK).[61] Sources in the Russian MoD and defense industrial base (DIB) stated that Russia will suspend the RUK, comprised of several containers of radars, electronic reconnaissance systems, and optical-electronic stations, from an undetermined aircraft that can fly at high altitudes, including in the stratosphere. The RUK will have a modular configuration, allowing servicemen to install and remove different systems depending on the assigned mission. The RUK is capable of detecting battlefield and rear area targets in real time and providing target designations to artillery, aviation, and naval systems. *Izvestia* reported that Russia is testing the M-55 “Geophysica” high-altitude supersonic aircraft as a potential aircraft for the RUK. Russian military expert Dmitry Kornev told *Izvestia* that the RUK will primarily provide target designations for MLRS and Iskander missile systems, Su-34 and Su-34M bombers, and Kinzhal hypersonic systems. Kornev stated that Russian forces may also use the RUK for target designation for Kalibr cruise missiles and hypersonic Zircon missiles in the future. Russian milbloggers praised the RUK as the future of warfare.[62]

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)

See topline text.

Russian Information Operations and Narratives

Chechen Republic Head Ramzan Kadyrov continues to pander to his own nationalist base. Kadyrov announced the opening of the “Sheikh Mansur” volunteer battalion’s base in Gudermes, Chechen Republic on November 11.[63] Kadyrov stated that Chechnya is proud to have a battalion bearing the name of Sheikh Mansur, an 18th century Chechen fighter who opposed Russian imperial rule. Kadyrov stated that Mansur “only wanted to achieve justice so everyone could live in peace and harmony” and freely practice their religion. Kadyrov announced the creation of this battalion on October 24, generating outrage from Russian ultranationalists.[64] ISW previously assessed that Kadyrov will likely continue to draw the ire of Russian ultranationalists who are increasingly opposed to migrants who come from predominantly Muslim Central Asia countries and other religious minorities in Russia with his continued efforts to appeal to his core Muslim constituencies.[65]

Russian officials continue information operations intended to invalidate Ukrainian identity. Russian National Security Council Deputy Chairperson Dmitry Medvedev denied the existence of Ukraine as a sovereign country and Ukrainian cultural identity in a Telegram post on November 12.[66] Medvedev also claimed that the Ukrainian government is illegitimate.

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 Defense Minister Lieutenant General Viktor Khrenin visited the United Arab Emirates on November 12 and reportedly plans to sign a bilateral agreement on military cooperation.[67]

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



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<https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-november-8-2023>

[3] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/special-edition-campaign-assessment-ukraine%E2%80%99s-strike-campaign-against-crimea>

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[11] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido268CFWtdvExKXETZwxYQ5RKdrw6fDsBqJucbgE5gnnpHiRoEEz8gQnBCPJNBuxW5tl> ; https://t.me/SJTF_Odes/2641 ; <https://armyinform.com.ua/2023/11/12/vorog-prodovzhuye-zavdavaty-raketnyh-atak-poterytoriyi-ukrayiny-yurij-ignat/>

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[25] <https://t.me/osirskiy/435>

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[31] <https://t.me/avdiyivka/12576>

[32] https://t.me/negumanitarnaya_pomosch_Z/12179
; https://t.me/dva_majors/28898 ; <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/56452> ; https://t.me/boris_rozhin/103628

[33] https://t.me/dva_majors/28891; <https://t.me/rybar/54120>

[34] <https://twitter.com/MilitarySummary/status/1723302434427056557>;
<https://t.me/brussinf/6737>

[35] <https://t.me/wargonzo/16391>

[36] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido268CFWtdvExKXETZwxYQ5RKdrw6fDsBqJucbgE5gnnpHiRoEEz8gQnBCPJNBuxW5tl> ;
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[37] https://t.me/voin_dv/5924 ;
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<https://x.com/klinger66/status/1723427670594314265?s=20>

[38] https://t.me/mod_russia/32417

[39] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoT7LpLr4JMPuSEVqycYuaSQ7LCCCSrt6898jXkmKffr8Ssa6sp3RANSL8QZwrhLPul>;
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[40] https://t.me/dva_majors/28891; <https://t.me/rybar/54120> ;
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[41] <https://t.me/wargonzo/16391>

[42] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoT7LpLr4JMPuSEVqycYuaSQ7LCCCSrt6898jXkmKffr8Ssa6sp3RANSL8QZwrhLPul>;
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[43] <https://t.me/wargonzo/16379>; https://t.me/dva_majors/28891; <https://t.me/rybar/54120>

[44] <https://t.me/readovkanews/69261>

[45] https://t.me/batalyon_vostok/252

[46] <https://t.me/readovkanews/69261>; <https://t.me/wargonzo/16391>; <https://t.me/wargonzo/16379>; https://t.me/dva_majors/28891; <https://t.me/rybar/54120>

[47] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1398> ; <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1399>

[48] https://t.me/WarArchive_ua/7331 ;
<https://twitter.com/GirkinGirkin/status/1723635474827235368>

[49] <https://www.facebook.com/operationalcommandwest/videos/755425029753524> ;
<https://x.com/Danspiun/status/1723484482232000635?s=20>

[50] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidoT7LpLr4JMPuSEVqycYuaSQ7LCCCSrt6898jXkmKffr8Ssa6sp3RANSL8QZwrhLPul>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2H8CYReABwGbJK35BZoNfjMphYDGN2rGmtZ5o5aan5njKdBmk4Dy7KmZdbwprSPqPl>

[51] https://t.me/dva_majors/28899 ; <https://t.me/batalyon15/3272>

[52] <https://t.me/batalyon15/3272>

[53] <https://twitter.com/sternenko/status/1723699649372938407>;
https://twitter.com/99Dominik_/status/1723702736183529749

- [54] <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/52028>; <https://t.me/wargonzo/16391>
- [55] <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/52028>; <https://t.me/wargonzo/16391>
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- [57] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1397>
- [58] https://t.me/SJTF_Odes/2643;
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- [59] https://t.me/boris_rozhin/103614
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- [61] <https://iz dot ru/1601565/aleksei-ramm-bogdan-stepovoi/vysokoe-razmeshchenie-armiia-rf-poluchit-stratosfernyi-kompleks-poiska-tcelei> ; <https://iz dot ru/1603331/dmitrii-kornev/stratosferavliianiia-zachem-rossii-novyi-razvedyvatelno-udarnyi-kompleks>
- [62] <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4687> ; https://t.me/vdv_ZA_teplinsky/408
- [63] https://t.me/RKadyrov_95/4129
- [64] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-25-2023>
- [65] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-25-2023>
- [66] https://t.me/medvedev_telegram/411
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Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, November 11, 2023

Karolina Hird, Grace Mappes, Christina Harward,
Angelica Evans, and Frederick W. Kagan

November 11, 2023, 6:15pm 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 see ISW's 3D control of terrain topographic map of Ukraine. Use of a computer (not a mobile device) is strongly recommended for using this data-heavy tool.

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 1:00pm ET on November 11. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the November 12 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Russian forces launched a large-scale missile and drone strike series against Ukraine on the night of November 10 to 11, targeting Kyiv Oblast for the first time in 52 days. Ukrainian military sources reported on November 11 that Russian forces launched 31 Shahed 131/136 drones, two Kh-59 missiles, one Kh-31 missile, one P-800 Onyx anti-ship missile, and an S-300 missile against various targets in Ukraine, and specifically targeted Kyiv Oblast with either an Iskander-M or an S-400 missile.[1] Ukrainian air defenses downed 19 Shaheds (primarily targeting front line areas), one Kh-59 missile, and used a Patriot air defense system to destroy the ballistic missile targeting Kyiv Oblast.[2] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces were targeting an air defense system at the Boryspil Airport near Kyiv City.[3] The Kyiv City Administration stated that it has been 52 days since Russian forces last launched a missile strike against Kyiv Oblast.[4]

Ukraine's Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) was reportedly involved in at least one of three strikes on Russian territory on November 10-11. Ukrainian outlet *Suspilne Crimea* reported that sources in the GUR stated that the GUR orchestrated an explosion of railway tracks in Ryazan Oblast that caused 19 railroad cars of a freight train to derail on the morning of November 11.[5] The GUR source stated that the explosion will complicate Russian military logistics for the near future. A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that the train was carrying mineral fertilizer.[6] Moscow Railways stated that the situation did not affect passenger and commuter trains and that Russian Railways created a headquarters to coordinate any disruptions caused by the derailment.[7] Russian state news outlet *RIA Novosti* stated that the derailment was due to an "intervention of unauthorized persons." [8] The Main Directorate of the Ministry of Emergency Situations for Tambov Oblast also stated that a fire covering 300 square meters broke out in a gunpowder factory near Kotovsk on the night of November 11.[9] Eyewitnesses reportedly heard explosions before the fire ignited.[10] *BBC Russia* stated that this is the second such incident at this gunpowder factory after a fire there killed five people in June 2023.[11] GUR spokesperson Andriy Yusov stated on November 11 that he cannot officially confirm or deny information about events in

Russia, such as the explosion at the gunpowder plant near Tambov or the train derailment but that such strikes will continue.[12] Geolocated footage published on November 10 also shows smoke coming from a building in Kolomna, Moscow Oblast.[13] Russian sources claimed that locals heard explosions near the Machine-Building Design Bureau, a Rostec state corporation in Kolomna that specializes in missile systems.[14] Russian sources also claimed that Russian forces downed one or more drones over the Machine-Building Design Bureau, and a Russian insider source claimed that a drone crashed into the building.[15] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Russian air defenses shot down two Ukrainian drones over Smolensk and Moscow oblasts on the night of November 10, and a prominent Russian milblogger similarly claimed that Russian air defenses intercepted several air targets over Smolensk Oblast and Kolomna, Moscow Oblast in the night.[16] Ukrainian officials have not commented on the Kolomna strike as of the time of this publication. Ukrainian Minister of Energy Herman Halushchenko notably stated in an interview published on November 11 that Ukraine would answer Russian strikes on Ukrainian critical infrastructure in the winter with reciprocal strikes on Russian energy infrastructure, including oil and gas infrastructure.[17]

Continued Russian milblogger discussion of widespread Russian infantry-led frontal assaults highlights the challenges Russia will face in using massed infantry assaults to offset the problems contributing to the current positional warfare identified by Ukrainian Commander-in-Chief General Valerii Zaluzhnyi. One milblogger emphasized on November 11 that the Russian practice of conducting tactical assaults intended to storm Ukrainian fortified positions in forest areas of Donbas will not translate into a wider operational breakthrough anywhere on the front.[18] The milblogger noted that there is no way to train enough Russian personnel for the intensive frontal assaults required for significant advances in Ukraine.[19] Another milblogger claimed that the Russian military is about to experience a "real renaissance of infantry combat" because there are fewer tanks, infantry fighting vehicles (IFVs), and armored personnel carriers (APCs) close to the frontline.[20] A critical milblogger responded to the "infantry renaissance" comment and remarked that the comment is a negative reflection of Russian equipment losses and poor frontline coordination that has created a reliance on assault tactics.[21] A Russian Spetsnaz-affiliated Telegram channel additionally complained that the reliance on infantry-led frontal assaults is heavily attriting all Spetsnaz elements that have deployed to Ukraine because the Russian command has reportedly been using Spetsnaz forces for frontal assaults since the beginning of the war.[22] Spetsnaz forces are not meant to conduct such infantry-led assaults like standard Russian motorized rifle infantry, and some Russian sources are clearly frustrated with the ramifications of the misapplication of such Spetsnaz elements.

ISW has previously observed that Russian forces are increasingly relying on such infantry-led frontal assaults, likely to compensate for a lack of adequately trained personnel and due to widespread equipment losses.[23] The Russian General Staff appears to be relying heavily on frontal assaults as the predominant tactic in Ukraine as an important part of the Russian solution to the problems of "military parity" laid out by Zaluzhnyi's essay on the issue of "positional warfare." [24]

Chechen Republic Head Ramzan Kadyrov appears to be increasingly sidelining his eldest son, 18-year-old Akhmat Kadyrov, in favor of his younger son Adam Kadyrov. Ramzan Kadyrov quietly indicated on November 9 that he appointed Akhmat Deputy First Minister of the Chechen Republic for Physical Culture, Sports, and Youth Policy.[25] This

appointment follows Akhmat's 18th birthday on November 8, when Ramzan Kadyrov praised Akhmat for success in his "chosen business" as head of the Chechen "Movement of the First" youth movement.[26] Ramzan Kadyrov's quiet acknowledgment of Akhmat's new position stands in contrast to the recent praise and appointments of his other children, including his appointment of his younger son, Adam, to the Chechen security service position that Ramzan Kadyrov held prior to succeeding his own father.[27] The reason for Ramzan Kadyrov's apparent snubbing of his eldest son is unclear. Akhmat Kadyrov notably met with Russian President Vladimir Putin in early March 2023 while rumors about Ramzan Kadyrov's declining health circulated, fueling speculation that Ramzan Kadyrov, Akhmat, and Putin may have been preparing for Akhmat to succeed his father.[28]

Key Takeaways:

- **Russian forces launched a large-scale missile and drone strike series against Ukraine on the night of November 10 to 11, targeting Kyiv Oblast for the first time in 52 days.**
- **Ukraine's Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) was reportedly involved in at least one of three strikes on Russian territory on November 10-11.**
- **Continued Russian milblogger discussion of widespread Russian infantry-led frontal assaults highlights the challenges Russia will face in using massed infantry assaults to offset the problems contributing to the current positional warfare identified by Ukrainian Commander-in-Chief General Valerii Zaluzhnyi.**
- **Chechen Republic Head Ramzan Kadyrov appears to be increasingly sidelining his eldest son, 18-year-old Akhmat Kadyrov, in favor of his younger son Adam Kadyrov.**
- **Russian forces continued offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line, near Bakhmut, near Avdiivka, west and southwest of Donetsk City, in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area, and in western Zaporizhia Oblast and advanced near Avdiivka.**
- **Russian authorities have reportedly launched another large-scale crypto-mobilization wave.**
- **Russian authorities continue efforts to fill out the workforce and artificially alter the demographics of occupied Ukraine.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of November 11, 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 Russian violations of the laws of armed conflict and the Geneva Conventions and crimes against humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

- Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine (comprised of two subordinate main efforts)
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and encircle northern Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis
- Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts
- Activities in Russian-occupied areas
- Russian Information Operations and Narratives

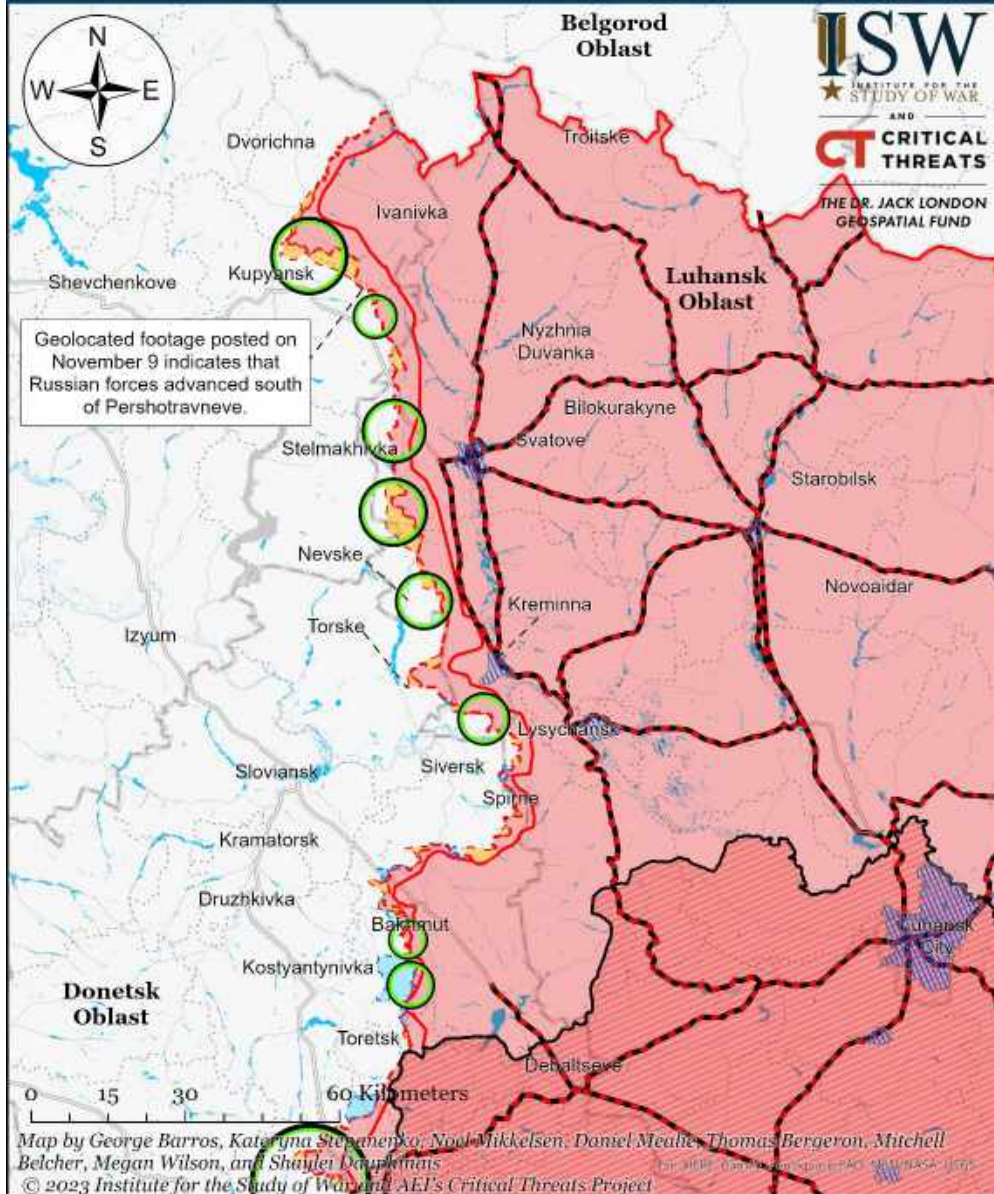
Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

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

Russian forces continued offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on November 11 but did not make any claimed or confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked in the Kupyansk direction northeast of Petropavlivka (7km east of Kupyansk) and near Synkivka (8km northeast of Kupyansk), Ivanivka (20km southeast of Kupyansk), and Stelmakhivka (15km northwest of Svatove), and in the Lyman direction near Nadiya (15km southwest of Svatove), Novoyehorivka (16km southwest of Svatove), Nevske (18km northwest of Kreminna), and the Serebryanske forest area.[29] Ukrainian Ground Forces Spokesperson Lieutenant Colonel Volodymyr Fityo stated that Russia's main goal in the Kupyansk-Lyman direction is to capture Kupyansk City.[30]

The Russian MoD claimed on November 11 that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Synkivka and Zahoruykivka (15km east of Kupyansk) in Kharkiv Oblast and Dibrova (7km southwest of Kreminna) and Hrekivka (20km southwest of Kreminna) in Luhansk Oblast.[31]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of November 11, 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

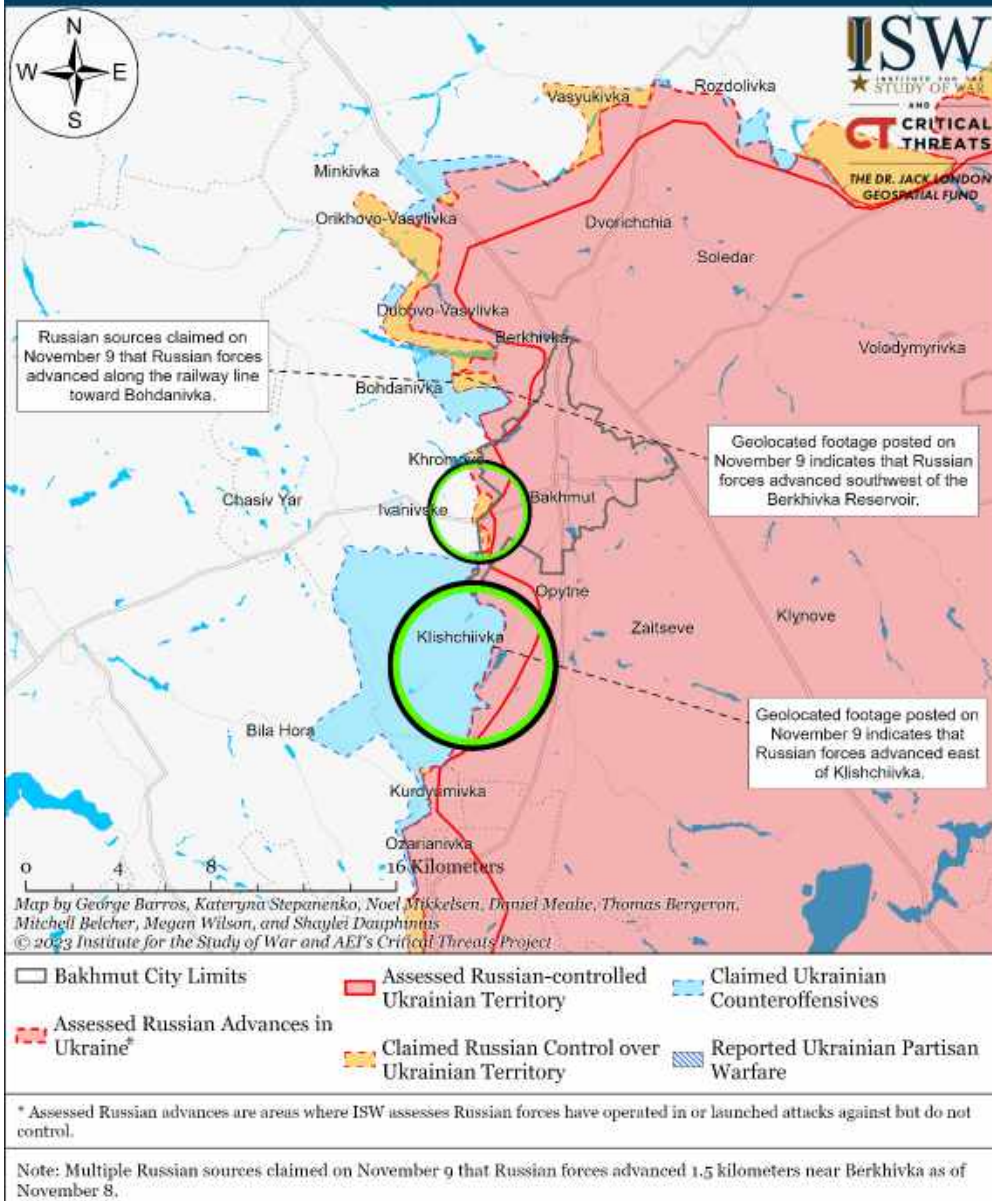
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

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

Russian forces continued assaults near Bakhmut on November 11 but did not make any confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian assaults near Ivanivske (6km west of Bakhmut), Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut), and Andriivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut).[32] A Ukrainian company commander fighting in the Bakhmut area stated that Russian forces are unsuccessfully attempting to recapture positions near the railway near Klishchiivka, and Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces aim to capture dominant tactical heights near Klishchiivka.[33] The Ukrainian company commander stated that Russian forces are using different types of manpower, including mobilized, private military, and contract personnel, to attack near Bakhmut.[34] Russian sources claimed that the Russian 137th Airborne (VDV) Regiment (106th VDV Division) and the 331st VDV Regiment (98th VDV Division) are operating near Bakhmut.[35]

The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued assault actions south of Bakhmut on November 11.[36]

Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of November 11, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

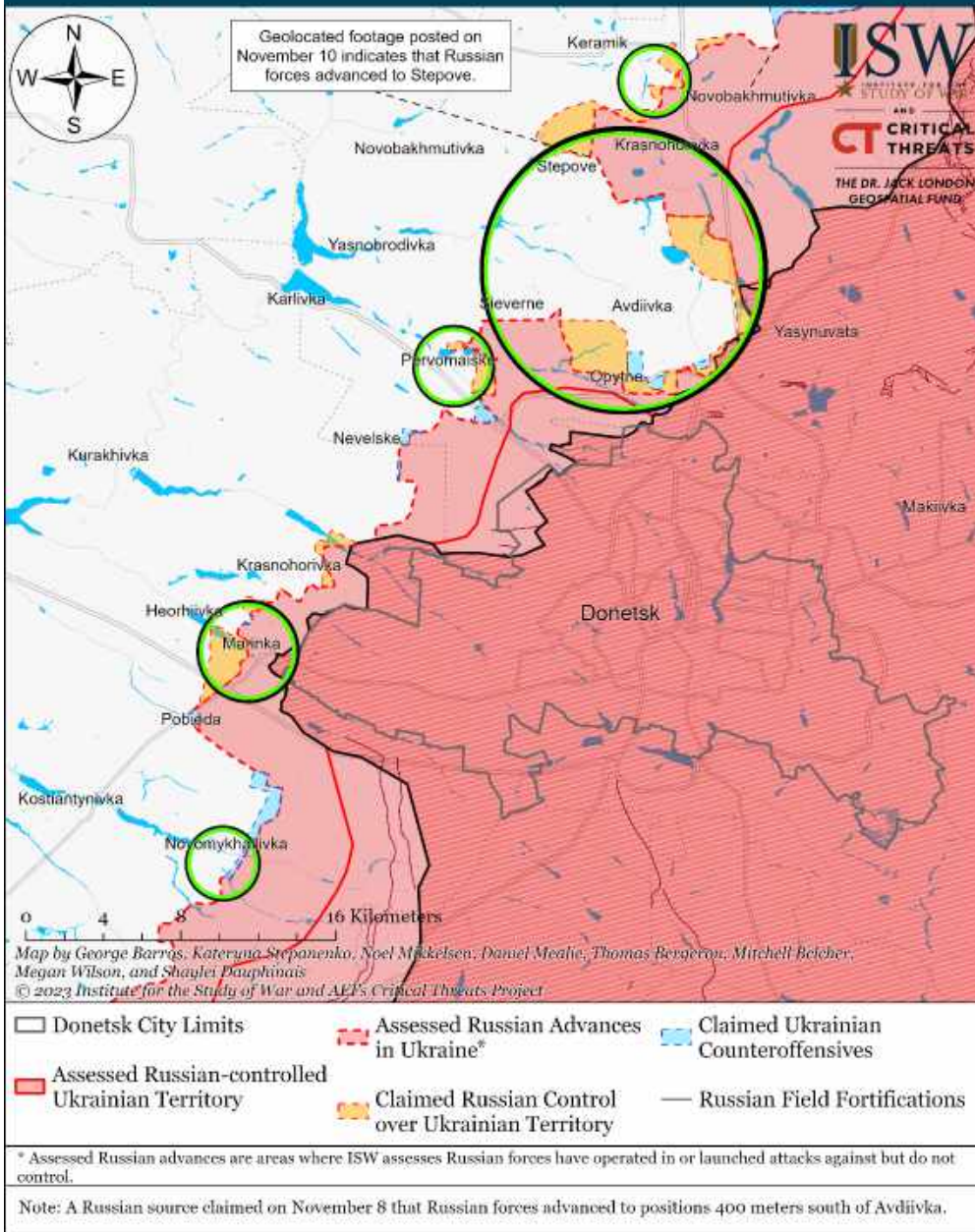


Russian forces have recently made confirmed advances near Avdiivka and temporarily intensified offensive operations between November 10-11, likely to consolidate recent gains in the area. Geolocated footage posted on November 7 and 10 shows that Russian forces advanced into eastern Stepove (3km northwest of Avdiivka), across the rail line southeast of Stepove, and into a tree line north of Stepove.[37] Russian sources largely claimed that Russian forces consolidated positions on the eastern outskirts of Stepove and advanced south of Avdiivka near the “Tsarska Okhota” restaurant.[38] A prominent Russian milblogger claimed on November 10 that Russian forces entered Stepove, conducted reconnaissance-in-force, and then retreated, however.[39] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks east of Novokalynove (11km northwest

of Avdiivka); near Stepove, Avdiivka, Sieverne (6km west of Avdiivka), and Pervomaiske (11km southwest of Avdiivka); and south of Tonenke (5km west of Avdiivka).[40] The Ukrainian General Staff and Tavriisk Group of Forces Spokesperson Colonel Oleksandr Shtupun indicated that Russian forces increased the number of ground attacks committed near Avdiivka in the past day, but the Ukrainian General Staff reported in its November 11 evening situation report that Russian forces only conducted 14 attacks during the day.[41] This tempo is more consistent with the number of Russian assaults reported in the Avdiivka direction in the past week, indicating that the increase in Russian attacks between November 10-11 was likely to consolidate gains near Stepove.[42]

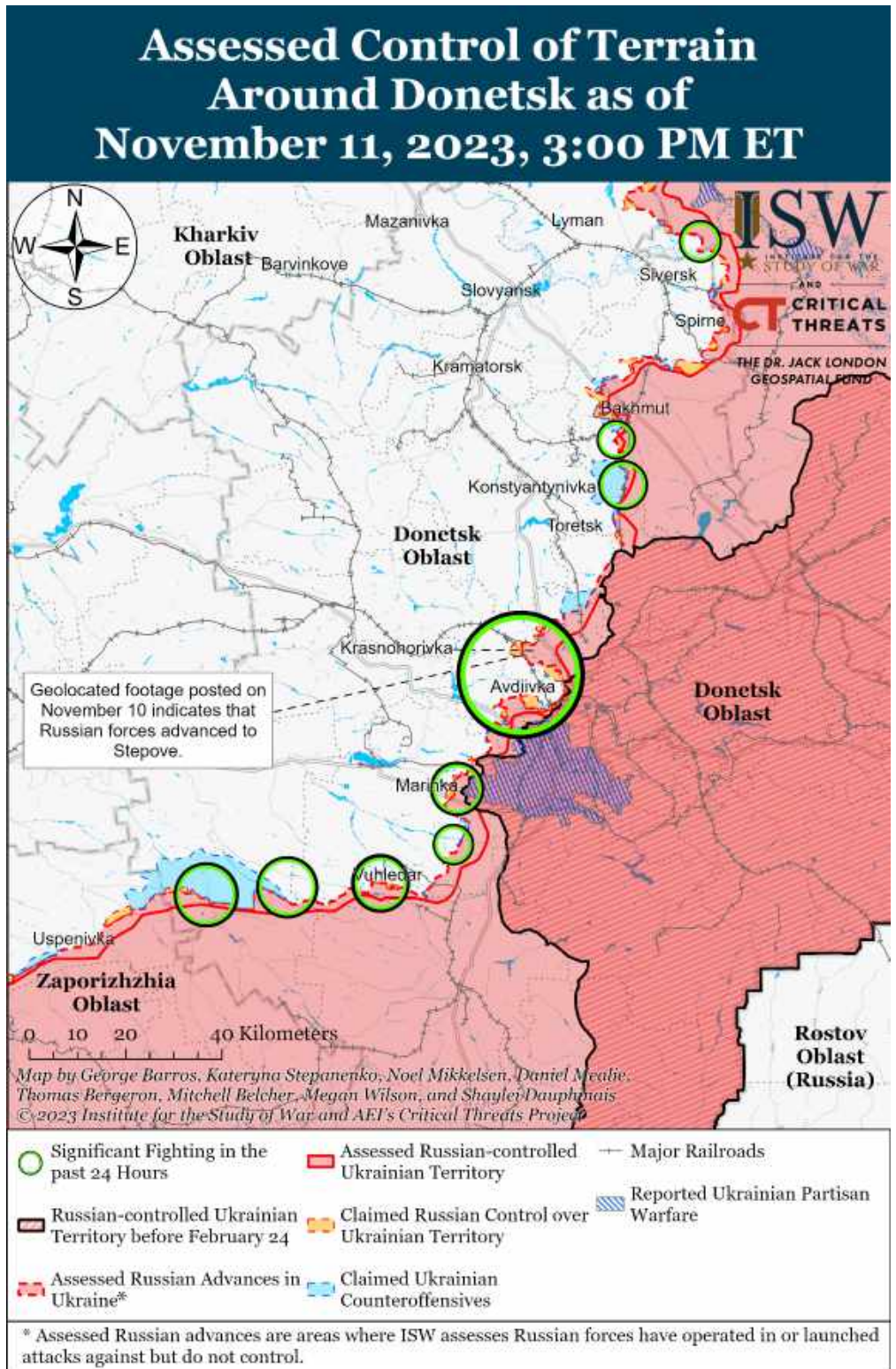
Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted limited counterattacks near Avdiivka on November 10. Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked from Novokalynove towards Krasnohorivka (5km north of Avdiivka) and northeast of Vodyane (7km southwest of Avdiivka) on November 10.[43] Ukrainian forces did not conduct any claimed or confirmed counterattacks near Avdiivka on November 11.

Assessed Control of Terrain near Donetsk City as of November 11, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Russian forces continued ground attacks west and southwest of Donetsk City and in western Donetsk Oblast on November 11 but did not make any claimed or confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted ground attacks with aviation support near Marinka (on the southwestern outskirts of Donetsk City), Novomykhailivka (12km southwest of Donetsk City), and Vuhledar.[44]

Ukrainian forces did not conduct any claimed or confirmed ground attacks west or southwest of Donetsk City or in western Donetsk Oblast on November 11. Geolocated footage posted on November 11 shows Ukrainian forces conducting a HIMARS strike against a Russian R-934 radio-electronic warfare station northeast of Puteprovod (17km northeast of Donetsk City).[45]

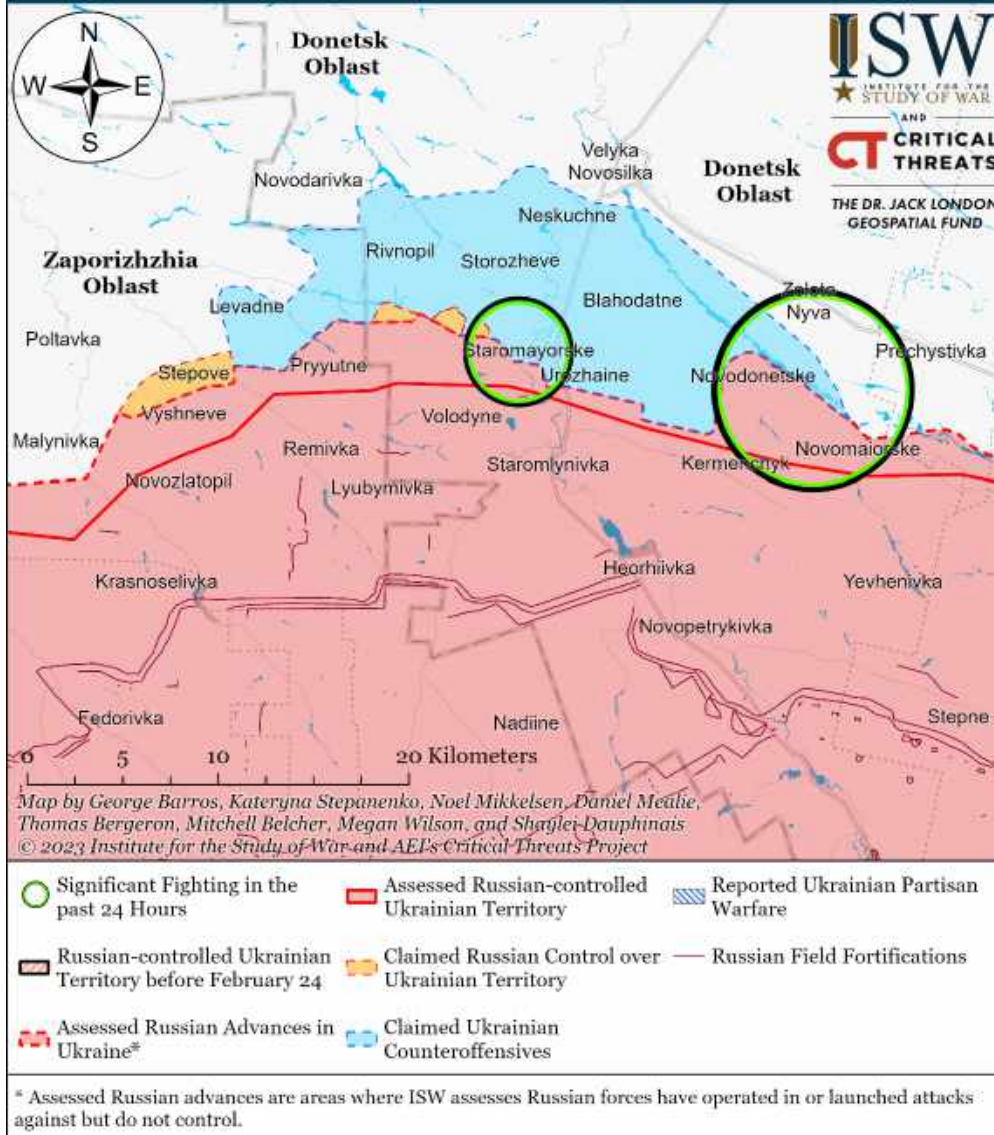


Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions and secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes)

Ukrainian forces did not conduct any claimed or confirmed ground attacks in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on November 11.

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on November 11 but did not make any claimed or confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported unsuccessful Russian assaults near Zolota Nyva (10km southeast of Velyka Novosilka) and Staromayorske (10km south of Velyka Novosilka).[46] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces attacked near Staromayorske and Novodonetske (11km southeast of Velyka Novosilka) but did not advance.[47]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around the Vremivka Salient as of November 11, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

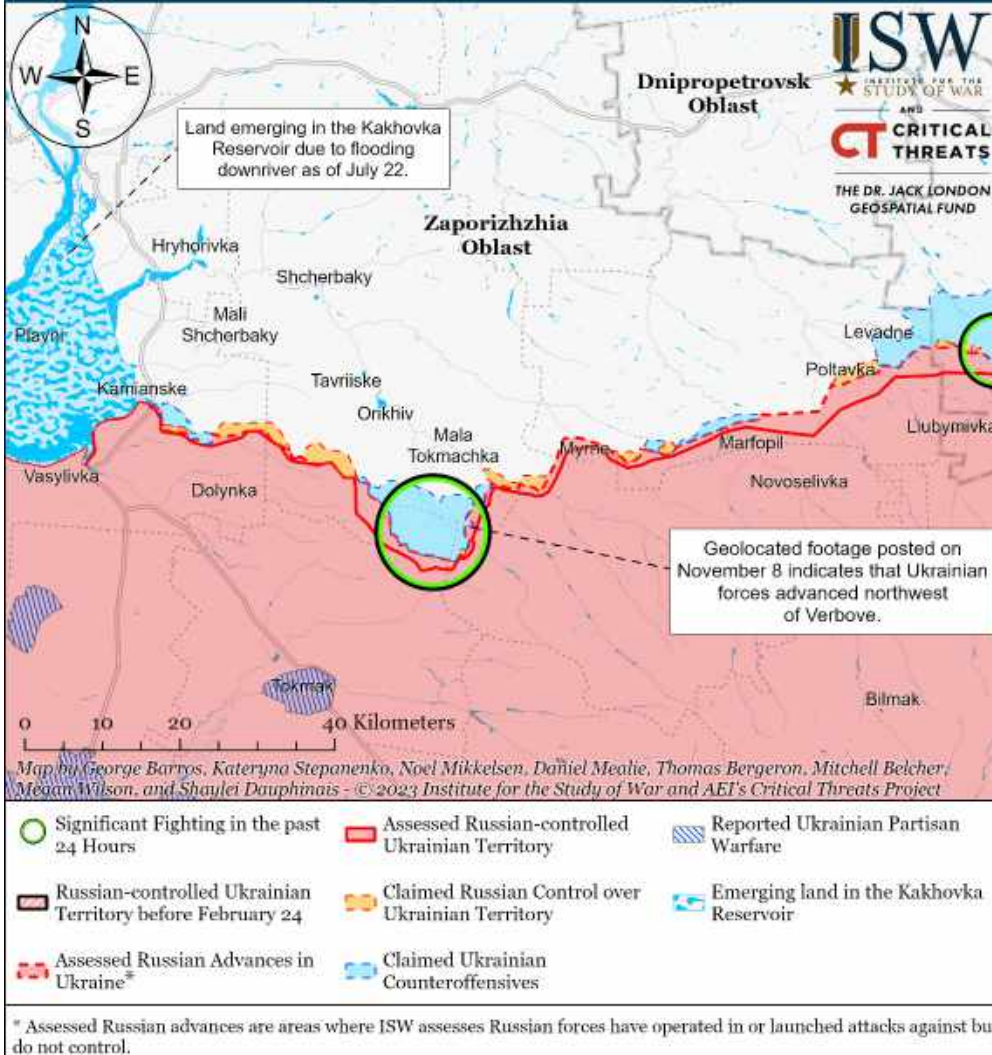


Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast on November 11 and reportedly advanced. A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces attacked northwest of Verbove (10km east of Robotyne) and near Novopokrovka (13km northeast of Robotyne) and forced Russian troops to withdraw from tactical heights in Verbove and along the Novopokrovka-Polohy road.[48] Russian sources also claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Robotyne and Kopani (5km northwest of Robotyne).[49] ISW has not observed visual evidence of Russian retreats from this area, however. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations in the Melitopol (western Zaporizhzhia Oblast) direction.[50]

Russian forces continued offensive operations in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast on November 11 but did not make any confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Robotyne.[51] One Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces attacked west of Robotyne but did not advance.[52] Another milblogger claimed that Russian forces marginally advanced northwest of Verbove and captured Ukrainian prisoners of war (POWs) in the area.[53]



Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhzhia as of November 11, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Russian sources continued to discuss Ukrainian operations on the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast on November 11. Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces attacked near Poyma (10km southeast of Kherson City and 4km from the Dnipro River) and Pishchanivka (13km southeast of Kherson City and 3km from the Dnipro River) and had partial success in forest areas south of Krynyky (30km northeast of Kherson City and 2km from the Dnipro River), where fighting continues.[54] Several milbloggers claimed that Russian forces captured a group of Ukrainian POWs near Krynyky.[55] A prominent Kremlin-affiliated milblogger complained that shortcomings in Russian electronic warfare (EW), air defense systems, and drone use are complicating Russia's ability to destroy the Ukrainian grouping on the east bank.[56]

Ukrainian forces advanced on an island in the Dnipro River delta southwest of Kherson City on November 11. Geolocated footage posted on November 9 shows Russian forces striking Ukrainian troops on the northeastern part of Bilohrudny Island, about 10km southwest of Kherson City.[57]



Russian and Ukrainian sources reported that Ukrainian forces targeted Russian rear areas in Zaporizhia Oblast on November 11. Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian air defense shot down

two Storm Shadow missiles near Berdyansk.[58] Ukrainian Melitopol Mayor Ivan Fedorov reported that residents of Melitopol and Berdyansk reported loud explosions, potentially from air defenses activating.[59]

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

Russian authorities have reportedly launched another large-scale crypto-mobilization wave. Russian opposition group “Skrepach” claimed on November 10 that locals in St. Petersburg and Moscow reported receiving letters and military summonses from military registration and enlistment offices.[60] Ukrainian Mariupol City Advisor Petro Andryushchenko stated that the Russian authorities are also sending text messages and emails to conscripts asking them to come into military enlistment offices to “clarify” their personal information and including threats of punishment if conscripts do not appear at the offices.[61] Andryushchenko warned that Russian military officials will likely force conscripts to sign military service contracts if they show up at the offices.

Russian Technological Adaptations (Russian objective: Introduce technological innovations to optimize systems for use in Ukraine)

The Murmansk Oblast government reported on November 10 that Russia’s Northern Fleet formed a drone operator training center with the oblast’s support.[62] Russian drone operators will learn how to fly, assemble, and repair drones at the facility before deploying to the front in Ukraine. Murmansk Oblast Governor Andrei Chibis stated that his administration purchased over one thousand units of equipment for the facility and expressed hope that the facility will increase the effectiveness of Russian drone operators. Russian Northern Fleet Commander Admiral Alexander Moiseev also visited the training center.

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 efforts to fill out the workforce and artificially alter the demographics of occupied Ukraine. Ukrainian Melitopol Mayor Ivan Fedorov reported on November 11 that Russian authorities are bringing people from Russia and Central Asia to occupied Zaporizhia Oblast as part of the “Zaporizhia Virgin Lands” program in order to destroy Ukrainian identity and compensate for shortages in the workforce.[63] Russian state news outlet *RIA Novosti* stated on October 20 that Zaporizhia occupation governor Yevgeny Balitsky developed the “Zaporizhia Virgin Lands” program as part of a ten-year development plan and that the program will provide those who move to occupied Ukraine with Russian citizenship and government benefits.[64] The Ukrainian Resistance Center stated on November 10 that the Russian authorities are bringing Central Asia migrants *en masse* to occupied Donetsk Oblast to largely work in construction companies with inhuman working conditions.[65]

Russian officials and federal subjects continue to establish connections and patronage networks with occupied Ukraine. Russian Deputy Prime Minister Marat Khusnullin visited occupied Lysychansk and Severodonetsk, Luhansk Oblast, to inspect preparations for winter on November 10.[66] Kherson occupation senator Andrei Alekseenko claimed on November 11 that the Russian Republic of Mordovia is overseeing 27 social and educational infrastructure projects in occupied Kalanchak

Raion, Kherson Oblast, and is investing almost 27 million rubles (about \$292,900) in winter preparations.[67]

Russian Information Operations and Narratives

Russian opposition outlet *Meduza* discredited the Kremlin narrative that falsely accuses Ukrainian authorities of trafficking organs from military personnel on the black market.[68] Kremlin-affiliated actors, such as Adviser to the Russian Minister of Internal Affairs Vladimir Ovchinsky, Russian Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Maria Zakharova, and Russian State Duma Deputy Speaker Anna Kuznetsova, have recently promoted this narrative.[69] *Meduza* explained that Russian narratives that Ukraine transports organs to NATO countries, such as Turkey, via ground transportation is improbable as the route from Odesa City to Istanbul alone is 17 hours – much longer than most organs can survive outside of the body.[70] *Meduza* also noted that Ukraine’s healthcare system lacks doctors who can perform mass organ removals and that Ukrainian law dictates that military personnel and civilians who die in hostilities cannot be organ donors.

The Kremlin continues to appease Chechen Republic Head Ramzan Kadyrov’s promotion of Chechen nationalism. Russian Education Minister Sergei Kravtsov met with Kadyrov on November 11 in Chechnya and presented him with updated textbooks for grade 10 that include revised language about how the Soviet government under Stalin forcibly relocated “innocent people loyal to the Soviet regime” who were “indiscriminately accused of treason.”[71] The textbooks previously stated that the government deported various groups during World War II “on the basis of facts of cooperation with the occupiers” – language which Chechen Duma Chairperson Magomed Daudov previously criticized as insulting.[72]

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.

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

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Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, November 10, 2023

Christina Harward, Grace Mappes, Kateryna Stepanenko, Angelica Evans, and Frederick W. Kagan
November 10, 2023, 8:30pm ET

Note: The data cut-off for this product was 3:00pm ET on November 10. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the November 11 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Ukraine's Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) stated that Ukrainian surface attack drones sank two Russian Black Sea Fleet (BSF) small landing ships in occupied Crimea on November 10. The GUR published satellite imagery and reported that the Ukrainian surface attack drone strike on Uzka Bay near Chornomorsk, occupied Crimea sunk one Project 1176 Akula-class small landing ship and one Project 11770 Serna-class small landing ship.[1] The GUR reported that the Serna-class ship was carrying a crew and was loaded with armored vehicles, including BTR-82 armored personnel carriers, and that Russian forces previously used Serna-class ships to provide cover for Russian BSF ships during raids when Russian forces lacked naval air-defense equipment.[2] A prominent Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted the strike on Uzka Bay with four unmanned boats and that it was one of three series of Ukrainian strikes on occupied Crimea on November 10.[3] The milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces also attempted to conduct a drone strike on an oil depot in Feodosia and a Neptune cruise missile strike on BSF and Federal Security Service (FSB) bases in Chornomorsk.[4] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Russian air defenses shot down a Neptune missile over the Black Sea off the coast of Crimea and intercepted two drones over Crimea.[5] ISW continues to assess that Ukrainian forces have been conducting an interdiction campaign against Russian military infrastructure in occupied Crimea, primarily BSF assets, since June 2023 to degrade the Russian military's ability to use Crimea as a staging and rear area for Russian operations in southern Ukraine.[6]

Russian milbloggers continue to overreact to the Russian failure to push Ukrainian forces from positions in east (left) bank Kherson Oblast. A prominent Russian milblogger reiterated common complaints about inadequate Russian counterbattery fire, electronic warfare, air defense, and assault operations along the Dnipro River in Kherson Oblast.[7] The milblogger especially complained about improper usage of the Russian 10th Spetsnaz Brigade (Main Military Intelligence Directorate [GRU]) to conduct frontal assaults like standard infantry against Ukrainian positions on the east bank even though these frontal assaults are ineffective in this area. The milblogger expressed concerns about possible future Ukrainian operations in the Kherson direction, but other milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces are currently unable to achieve a breakthrough in this direction.[8]

Russian milbloggers are likely hyperfocusing on east bank Kherson Oblast due to the significant Russian information space neuralgia about Russian military issues in the area. Some Russian milbloggers appear to be less concerned about the possible near-term threat of Ukrainian operations on the east bank and are more upset about the poor Russian conduct of the war and mistreatment of military personnel.[9] A Russian milblogger complained that Russian forces struggle with the "ossification" of poor habits and conduct within the Russian military. These habits include poor communications, lack of proper preparations before or support during assault missions, conducting rotations in columns, Russian commanders selling frontline aid, and uninterest in learning from military mistakes and acknowledging poor battlefield realities.[10] The milblogger specifically emphasized the importance of Russian military professionalism and becoming the best army in the world. Other Russian milbloggers reiterated standard complaints about Russian military capabilities in Kherson Oblast but claimed that Russian forces still inflict high casualties on Ukrainian forces operating on the east bank.[11] Another prominent milblogger claimed that the situation near Krynyky, Kherson Oblast is a "tactical problem" for Russian forces but not a strategic threat.[12]

Russian forces are launching significantly smaller and less frequent drone strikes against Ukraine in the past month than in previous months ahead of an anticipated large-scale winter strike campaign. Ukrainian Air Force Spokesperson Colonel Yuriy Ihnat stated on November 10 that Russian forces attacked Ukraine with 500 Shahed-131/-136 drones in September 2023 and several hundred drones in October 2023 but are currently launching drone strikes with fewer Shaheds almost every night.[13] Russian milbloggers noted on November 9 that Russian forces conducted large-scale Shahed strikes against Ukraine almost every night from the end of summer until mid-October 2023.[14] The milbloggers claimed that Russia's Shahed strikes have been notably smaller and less frequent in the past month due to Russian forces planning to synchronize a new wave of intense combined strikes with the beginning of future large-scale ground operations. Ukrainian military sources reported on November 10 that Russian forces launched six Shaheds, a Kh-31 missile, and a Kh-59 missile at targets in Ukraine on the night of November 9 to 10.[15] Ukrainian air defenses downed five of the six Shaheds and the Kh-59 missile. Ihnat reported that the Kh-31 missile did not strike its target.[16]

Russian President Vladimir Putin again visited the Southern Military District (SMD) headquarters in Rostov-on-Don on November 10, possibly in an effort to portray himself as an involved wartime leader ahead of the upcoming presidential elections in March 2024. Chief of the Russian General Staff Army General

Valery Gerasimov, Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu, and other unnamed commanders briefed Putin on the progress of the invasion and presented new models of Russian military equipment.[17] Russian state outlets published footage of Shoigu and Gerasimov showing Putin the Desertcross 1000-3 all-terrain vehicle.[18] Russian opposition outlet *Meduza* observed that an information stand displaying data about the Desertcross 1000-3 in the video claimed that the all-terrain vehicle is intended for patrol, reconnaissance, raid, search, and rescue operations, alongside transporting materiel in difficult road conditions.[19] The information stand also claimed that Russian forces are already using 537 Desertcross 1000-3 vehicles in combat and that Russia plans to purchase an additional 1,590 Desertcross vehicles in December 2023 and in the first quarter of 2024. *Meduza* noted that US-registered brand Aodes (which is headquartered in China) manufactures the Desertcross vehicles and advertises them as vehicles for hunters, farmers, and forestry workers.

Russian milbloggers have been consistently complaining about the lack of military equipment and vehicles in the Kherson direction, and it is possible that Putin is trying to appeal to Russian personnel fighting in this direction by providing them with hunting and farming vehicles rather than dedicated military vehicles.[20] A prominent Russian milblogger, for example, celebrated the news that the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) would provide Russian servicemen with light frontline vehicles.[21] Putin's November 10 visit marks his fifth visit to the SMD headquarters since December 2022 after he last visited the headquarters on October 19.[22]

Russian President Vladimir Putin will reportedly hold his annual live “Direct Line” forum and annual press conference in tandem on December 14, and the event will likely serve to promote his presidential campaign. Russian news outlet *RBK* stated on November 10 that sources familiar with the matter indicated that the “Direct Line” forum and annual press conference will likely occur in tandem on December 14.[23] Russian opposition media outlet *Verstka* stated that sources within the Federation Council indicated that the upper chamber will announce the beginning of the campaign period for the 2024 Russian presidential elections on December 13, as required by Russian law.[24] *Verstka* stated that presidential candidates have 25 days to complete the nomination procedures after the Federation Council's announcement.[25] Although it is unclear when Putin will announce his presidential campaign, he will likely use the “Direct Line” forum and press conference to promote his candidacy and platform, which a Russian opposition source has indicated will widely avoid highlighting the war in Ukraine.[26] The Kremlin likely decided to hold the two events at once in order to more tightly control and regulate the questions asked. Putin has consistently run as an independent candidate despite his affiliation with the United Russia party, and Russian law dictates that independent candidates must gather at least 300,000 signatures in order to submit their candidacy.[27] Russian opposition media outlets stated on November 10 that the United Russia party is preparing to collect signatures to demonstrate its support for Putin's candidacy and asked employees of the Kursk Oblast Multifunctional Service Center, a state and municipal service provider, to fill out a survey with their personal information and up to three suggestions about how to improve IT services in Russia.[28] The employees reportedly received a letter with the survey stating that they could write one suggestion three times but to fill out the form by hand.[29]

Ukrainian Ombudsman Dmitry Lubinets announced on November 10 that Bohdan Yermokhin, a 17-year-old Ukrainian whom Russian authorities forcibly deported from occupied Mariupol to Russia and attempted to conscript, will return to Ukraine.[30] Russian opposition outlet *Meduza* reported that Russian authorities forcibly deported Yermokhin from Mariupol after Russian forces took over the city in May 2022 and placed him with a foster family in Moscow Oblast.[31] Yermokhin's lawyer published a video on his behalf on November 9 pleading for Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's help after Yermokhin received a summons for military service on November 8, weeks ahead of his 18th birthday.[32] Russian Commissioner for Children's Rights Maria Lvova-Belova claimed that Yermokhin testified in writing in August 2023 that he did not plan to return to Ukraine, but Yermokhin's lawyer stated that Russian authorities forced the teenager to write the statement.[33] *Meduza* reported that Yermokhin previously attempted to escape Russia in March 2023, but that Russian border guards detained him.[34] Lubinets stated that Ukrainian authorities will reunite Yermokhin with his sister in Ukraine in the coming days.[35]

The United Kingdom–led Operation Interflex has achieved its goal of training 30,000 Ukrainian soldiers between June 2022 and December 2023. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Operation Interflex, which initially included the United Kingdom but has added Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Lithuania, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Romania, and Sweden as partners since its launch in summer 2022, achieved its goal of 30,000 Ukrainian military personnel trained ahead of time on November 10.[36] The Ukrainian General Staff and UK government stated that the UK has trained over 52,000 Ukrainian soldiers since 2014.[37] The UK government stated that Operation Interflex is the largest military training program on UK territory since the Second World War.[38]

Key Takeaways:

- **Ukraine’s Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) stated that Ukrainian surface attack drones sank two Russian Black Sea Fleet (BSF) small landing ships in occupied Crimea on November 10.**
- **Russian milbloggers continue to overreact to the Russian failure to push Ukrainian forces from positions in east (left) bank Kherson Oblast.**
- **Russian forces are launching significantly smaller and less frequent drone strikes against Ukraine in the past month than in previous months ahead of an anticipated large-scale winter strike campaign.**
- **Russian President Vladimir Putin again visited the Southern Military District (SMD) headquarters in Rostov-on-Don on November 10, possibly in an effort to portray himself as an involved wartime leader ahead of the upcoming presidential elections in March 2024.**
- **Russian President Vladimir Putin will reportedly hold his annual live “Direct Line” forum and annual press conference in tandem on December 14, and the event will likely serve to promote his presidential campaign.**
- **Ukrainian Ombudsman Dmitry Lubinets announced on November 10 that Bohdan Yermokhin, a 17-year-old Ukrainian whom Russian authorities forcibly deported from occupied Mariupol to Russia and attempted to conscript, will return to Ukraine.**
- **The United Kingdom-led Operation Interflex has achieved its goal of training 30,000 Ukrainian soldiers between June 2022 and December 2023.**
- **Russian forces conducted offensive operations on November 10 along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line, near Bakhmut, near Avdiivka, west and southwest of Donetsk City, in western Donetsk Oblast, in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area, and in western Zaporizhia Oblast and advanced in some areas.**
- **Russian forces continue to struggle with low morale and poor discipline.**
- **Ukrainian Telegram channel *Mariupol Resistance* and Ukrainian Mariupol City Advisor Petro Andryushchenko reported on November 10 that Ukrainian partisans detonated a police car in occupied Mariupol, Donetsk Oblast.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of November 10, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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

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 Russian violations of the laws of armed conflict and the Geneva Conventions and crimes against humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

- Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine (comprised of two subordinate main efforts)
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and encircle northern Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis
- Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts
- Activities in Russian-occupied areas
- Russian Information Operations and Narratives

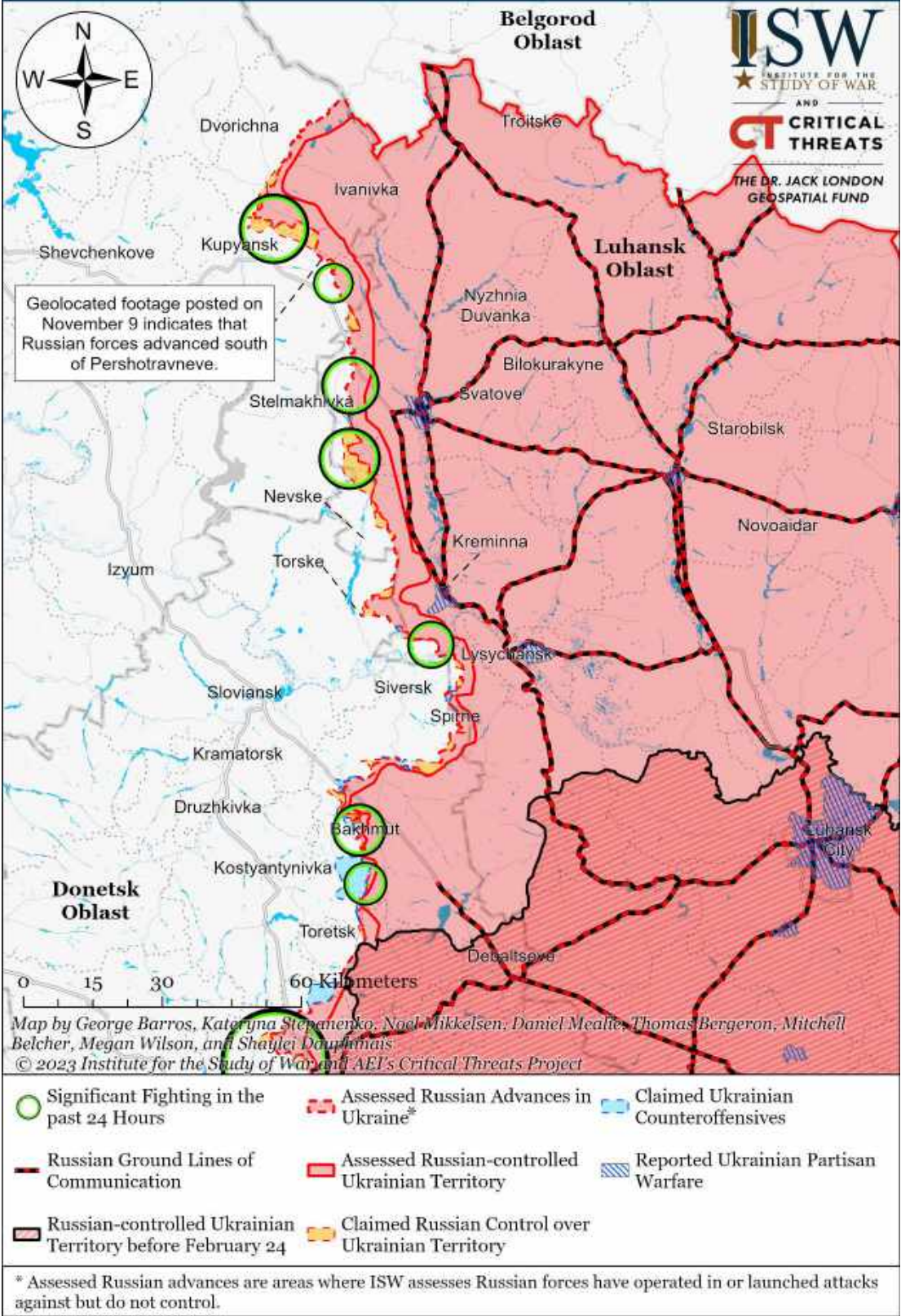
Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

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

Russian forces continued offensive operations on the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on November 10 and recently made marginal confirmed advances. Geolocated footage published on November 7 and 9 shows that Russian forces marginally advanced southwest of Petropavlivka (7km east of Kupyansk).[39] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks near Synkivka (8km northeast of Kupyansk), Ivanivka (20km southeast of Kupyansk), and Stelmakhivka (15km northwest of Svatove), and northeast of Petropavlivka in the Kupyansk direction, as well as near Novoyehorivka (16km southwest of Svatove) and the Serebryanske forest area (11km southwest of Kreminna) in the Lyman direction.[40] Ukrainian Ground Forces Spokesperson Lieutenant Colonel Volodymyr Fityo stated that Russian forces have slightly increased their focus on assault operations in the Kupyansk direction and are beginning to use more vehicles in ground assaults.[41]

Russian Western Grouping of Forces Spokesperson Sergei Zybinsky claimed that Russian forces repelled three Ukrainian assaults near Tymkivka (20km southeast of Kupyansk) and Synkivka in the Kupyansk direction on November 10.[42]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of November 10, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

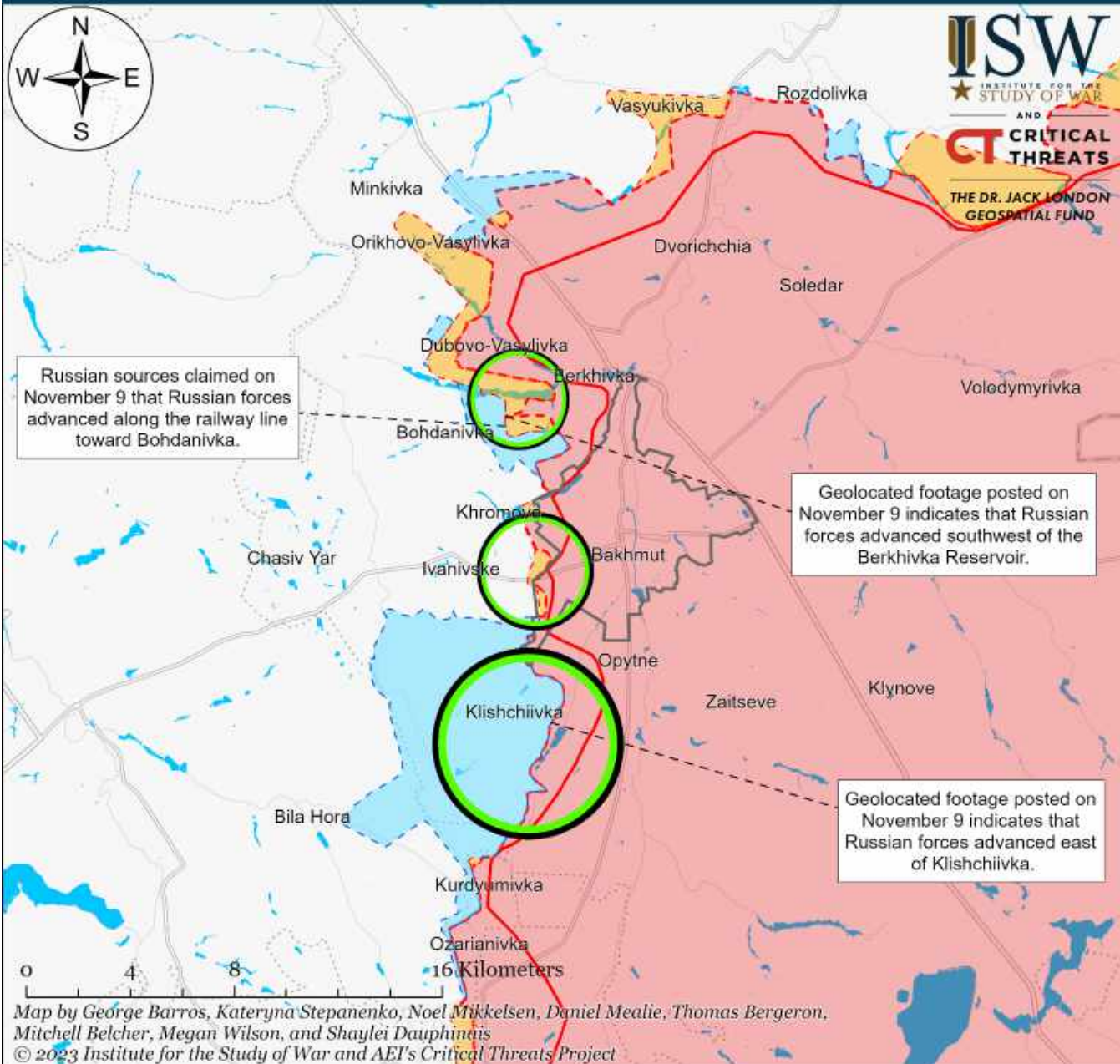


Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Donetsk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)

Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations on Bakhmut’s southern flank on November 10 and made confirmed marginal advances. A Russian milblogger published and claimed to have geolocated footage on November 9 indicating that Ukrainian forces slightly advanced north of Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut).[43] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued assault operations in the Bakhmut direction.[44]

Russian forces continued to attack Ukrainian positions on Bakhmut’s northern and southern flanks on November 10 and made confirmed territorial gains. Geolocated footage published on November 10 shows that Russian forces marginally advanced in the forested area north of Klishchiivka.[45] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces regained some previously lost positions north of Andriivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut) near a water feature and secured a position in a forest strip behind the railway track, pushing Ukrainian forces away from the T0513 highway.[46] The milblogger added that Ukrainian forces continue to hold positions north of Klishchiivka behind the railway line and noted that mines, Ukrainian drones, and mutual artillery fire are complicating Russian attacks on Bakhmut’s southern flank.[47] One Russian milblogger similarly claimed that Russian forces continue to counterattack near Klishchiivka and Berkhivka (directly north of Bakhmut) and have successfully pushed Ukrainian forces “several hundred meters” from the railroad near Klishchiivka.[48] Russian milbloggers also claimed that Russian forces continue to advance near the Berkhivka reservoir and are advancing further west along the railway north of Bakhmut.[49] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian assaults near Bohdanivka (5km northwest of Bakhmut), Ivanivske (6km west of Bakhmut), Klishchiivka, and Andriivka.[50] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that elements of the Russian 331st Guards Airborne Regiment (98th Guards Airborne Division) continue to operate in the Bakhmut direction.[51]

Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of November 10, 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.

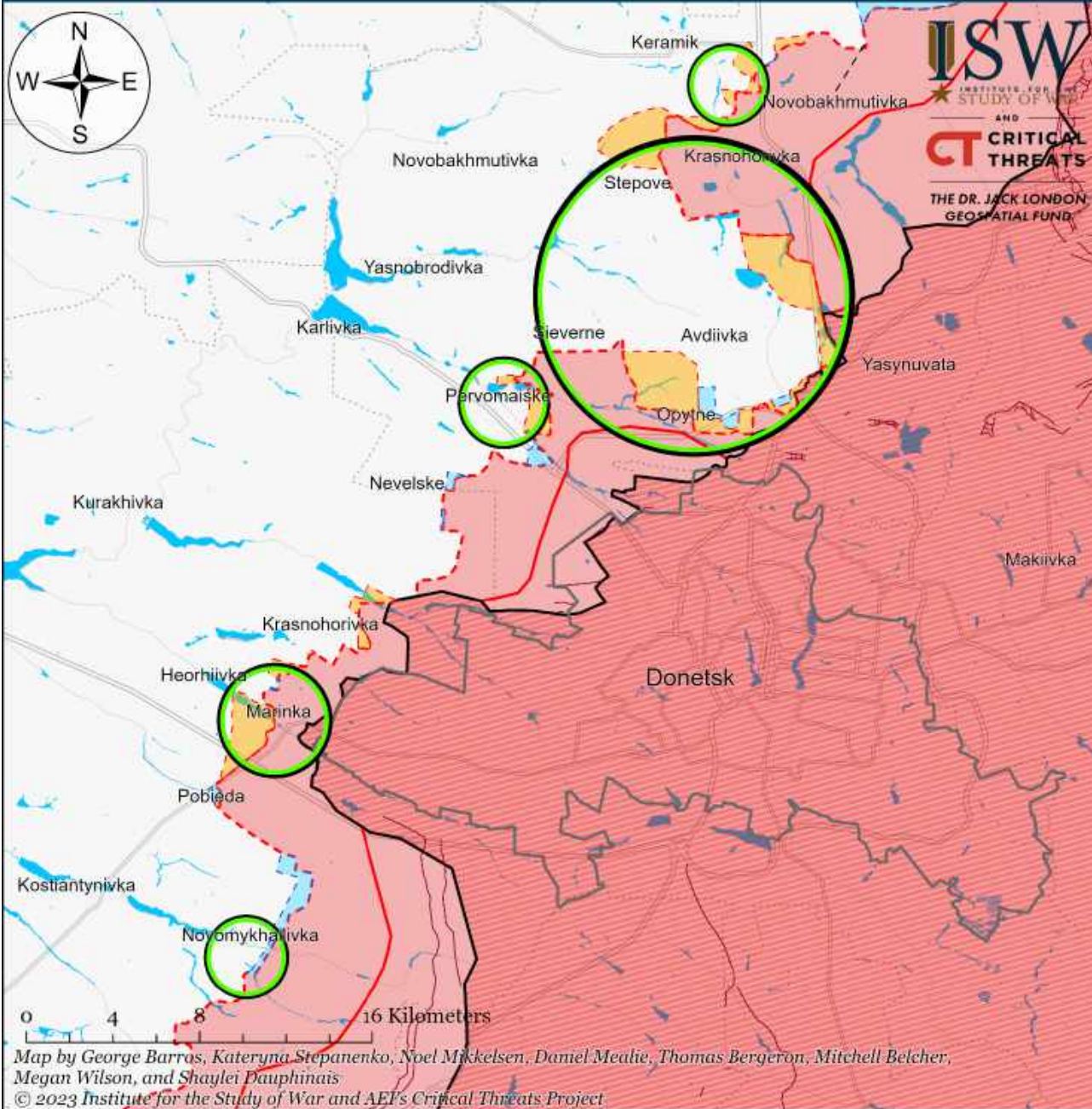
Note: Multiple Russian sources claimed on November 9 that Russian forces advanced 1.5 kilometers near Berkhivka as of November 8.

Russian forces conducted offensive operations around Avdiivka on November 10 but did not make confirmed advances. Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces reached and entered the outskirts of Stepove (3km northwest of Avdiivka) and continue to fight in the area.[52] A Kremlin-affiliated milblogger added that Russian forces also secured positions on the railway line, allowing Russian forces to achieve tactical successes near Stepove.[53] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces are trying to both create a cauldron around Avdiivka and deprive Ukrainian forces of the ability to maintain positions in rear areas in the Avdiivka direction.[54] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces continued to attack in the direction of the Avdiivka Coke Plant north of Avdiivka and that the main battles are ongoing in the directions of Stepove, Berdychi (5km northwest of Avdiivka), Sieverne (6km west of Avdiivka), and Tonenke (5km west of Avdiivka).[55] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian assaults east and southeast of Novokalynove (7km north of Avdiivka); near Stepove, Avdiivka, Sieverne, and Pervomaiske (11km southwest of Avdiivka); and south of Tonenke.[56] Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces Spokesperson Colonel Oleksandr Shtupun stated that Russian forces' most important target is the Avdiivka Coke Plant because capturing the plant would allow Russian forces to establish defensive positions in an industrial area instead of in forested terrain.[57]

Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked in the Avdiivka direction on November 10 and reportedly recaptured previously lost positions. A Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked northeast of Vodyane (7km southwest of Avdiivka) and regained some of their previously lost positions.[58] Another milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces are consistently trying to counterattack to regain lost positions.[59]

Ukrainian Commander-in-Chief General Valerii Zaluzhnyi reported that Ukrainian forces have destroyed over 100 Russian tanks and 100 armored vehicles, approximately 50 artillery systems, and seven Su-25 aircraft during Russian assaults on Avdiivka over nearly a month.[60] Zaluzhnyi added that Russian manpower losses in the Avdiivka direction total about 10,000 personnel. Shtupun reported that daily Russian casualties average between 400 to 600 personnel and noted that Ukrainian forces use aerial reconnaissance and intelligence to prevent Russian forces from reinforcing their troops operating in the Avdiivka direction.[61]

Assessed Control of Terrain near Donetsk City as of November 10, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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

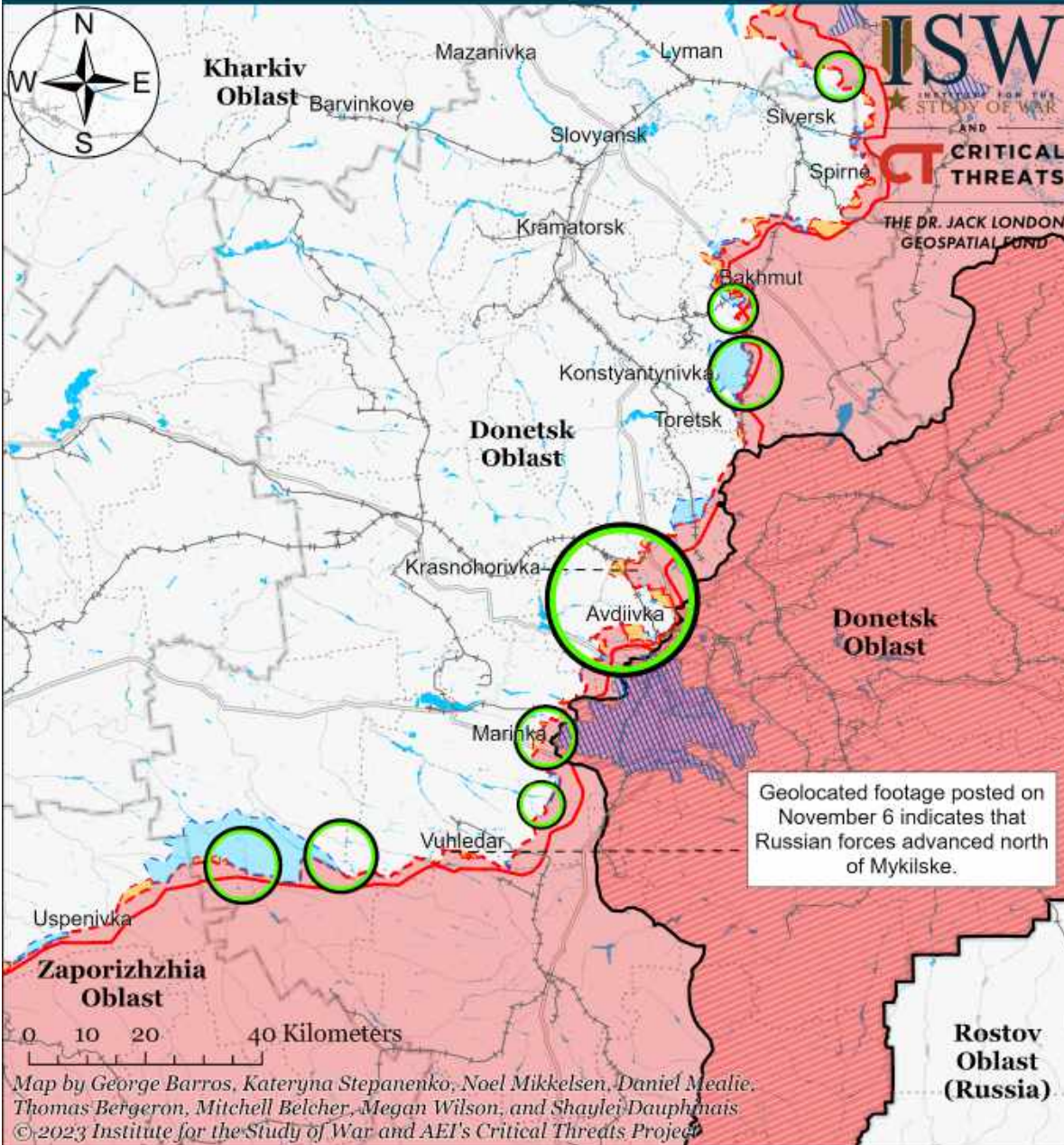
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Note: A Russian source claimed on November 8 that Russian forces advanced to positions 400 meters south of Avdiivka.

Russian forces attacked west and southwest of Donetsk City on November 10 but did not make any claimed or confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian assaults near Marinka (on Donetsk City's western outskirts) and Novomykhailivka (12km southwest of Donetsk City).[62] Shtupun stated that Russian forces continue to attack Marinka and Novomykhailivka with "Storm-Z" units, which are mostly composed of Russian convicts.[63] A Russian news aggregator claimed that Russian forces conducted assaults on Ukrainian positions near Krasnohorivka (directly west of Donetsk City) and on Marinka's western outskirts on November 9.[64]

A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces tried to advance near Vuhledar in western Donetsk Oblast on November 10 but did not specify the outcome of this attempt.[65]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of November 10, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



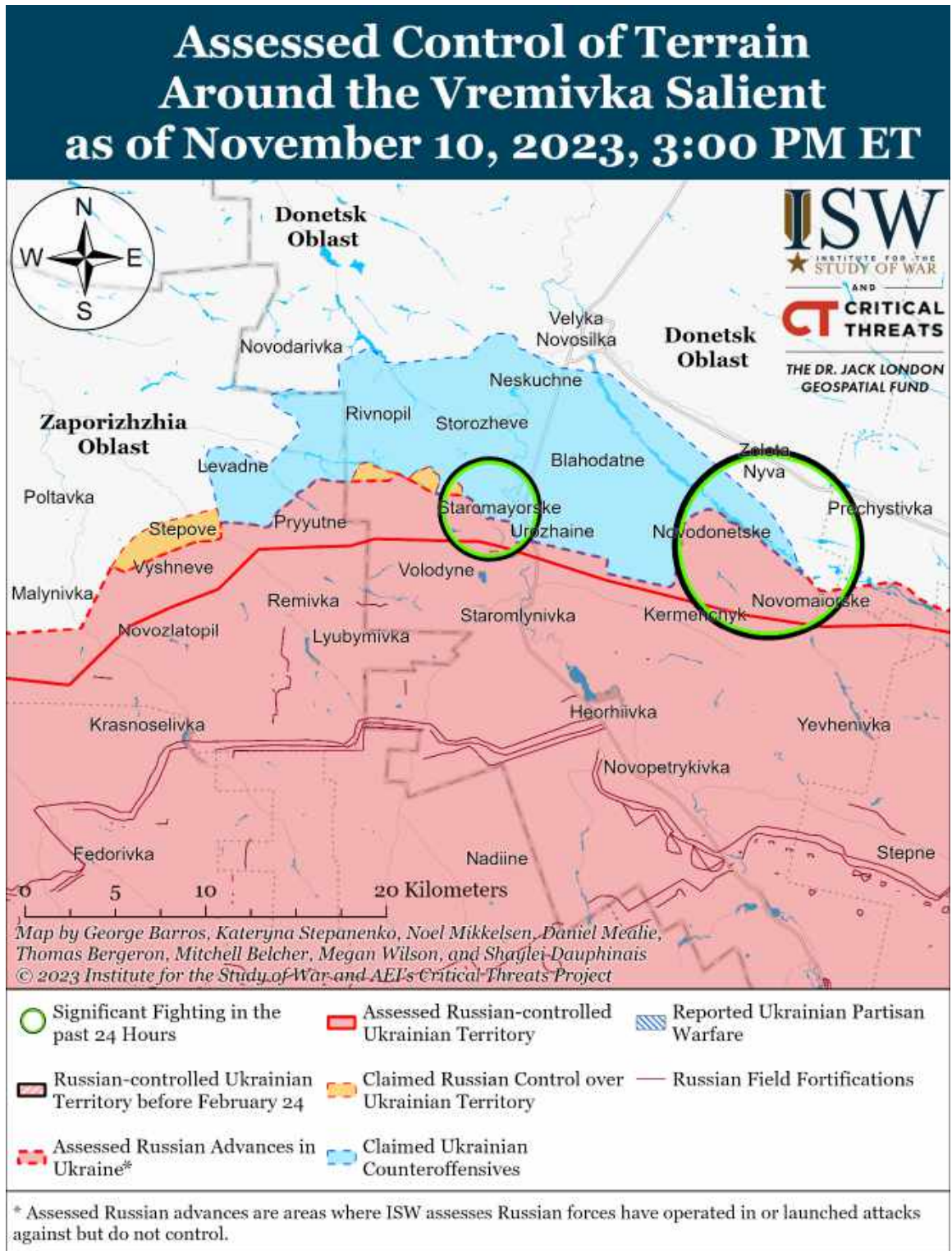
- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Major Railroads
- 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 Supporting Effort – Southern Axis (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions and secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes)

The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area near Staromayorske (9km south of Velyka Novosilka) on November 10.[66] The Russian MoD claimed that Russian forces repelled three Ukrainian attacks in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area in the past week.[67]

The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area near Staromayorske and south of Zolota Nyva (11km southeast of Velyka Novosilka) on November 10.[68]

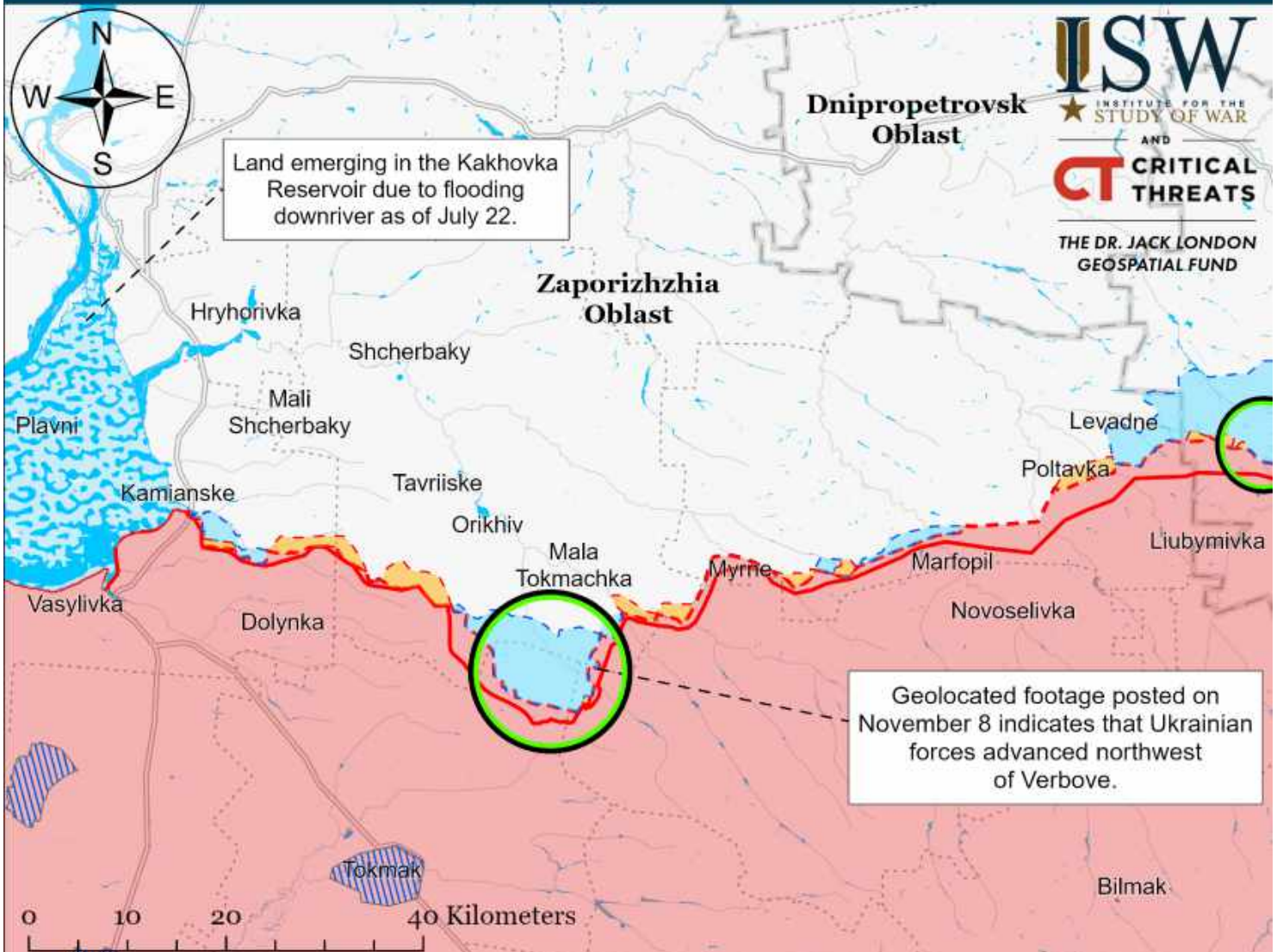


Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted offensive operations in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast but did not make any claimed or confirmed advances on November 10. Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Kopani (5km northwest of Robotyne) and Novopropkivka (2km south of Robotyne) and that fighting is ongoing for the heights northwest of Verbove (9km east of Robotyne).[69] A Russian source claimed that there are meeting engagements near Robotyne.[70] The Russian MoD claimed that Russian forces repelled 14 Ukrainian attacks near Verbove and Robotyne in the past week.[71]

Russian forces conducted offensive operations in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast but did not make any confirmed advances on November 10. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Robotyne and Verbove.[72] A Russian news aggregator claimed that Russian forces counterattacked and advanced in the direction of Robotyne on November 9.[73]



Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhzhia as of November 10, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Megan Wilson, and Shaylei Dauphinais - © 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 | |

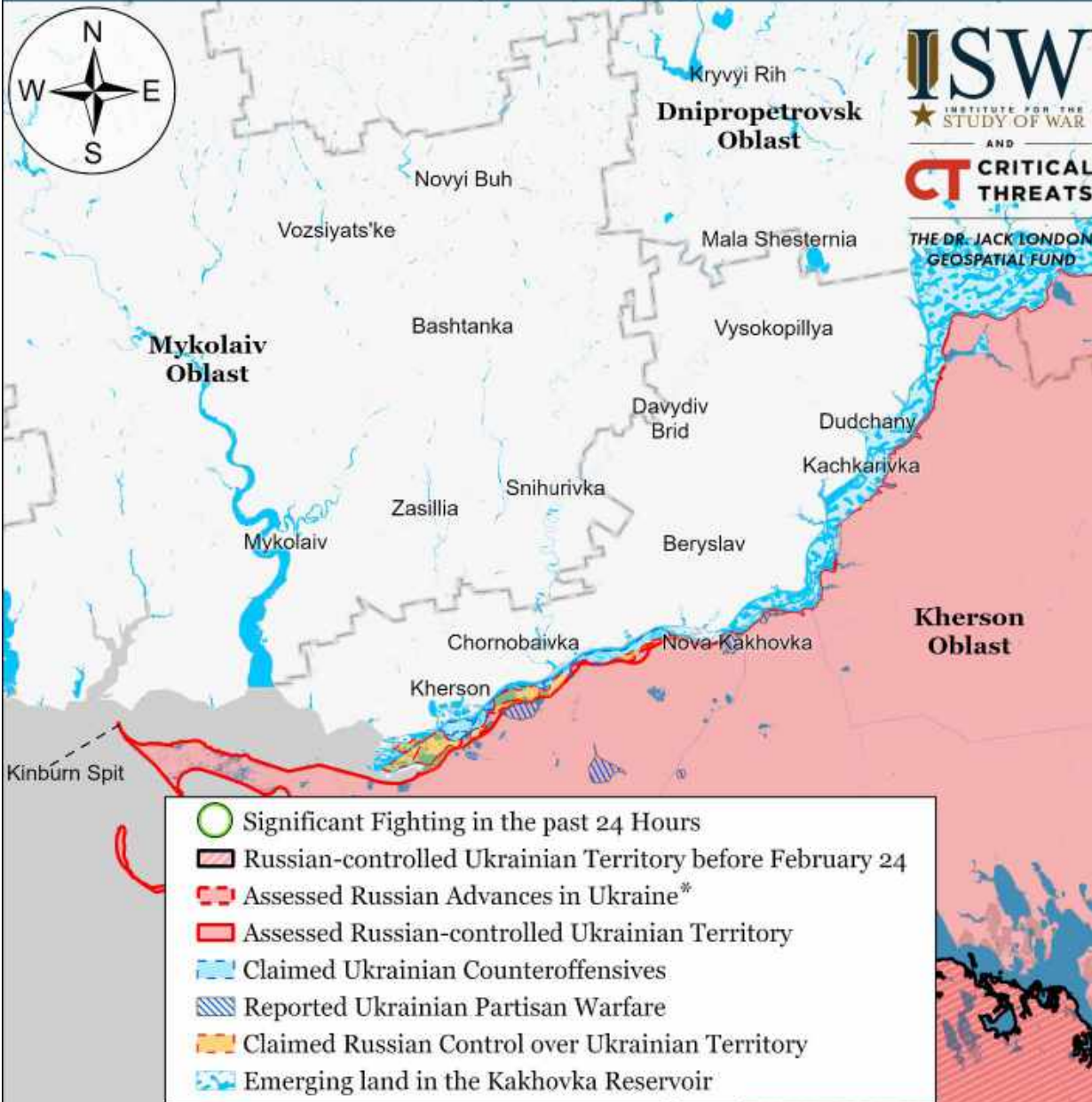
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted an MLRS strike on Kamianka-Dniprovska west of Enerhodar on November 10.[74]

Ukrainian forces conducted limited ground attacks on the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast on November 10. A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces attacked near Poyma (10km southeast of Kherson City and 4km from the Dnipro River), Pishchanivka (13km southeast of Kherson City and 3km from the Dnipro River), Pidstepne (18km east of Kherson City and 4km from the Dnipro River), and Krynky (30km northeast of Kherson Oblast and 2km from the Dnipro River).[75] A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces partially gained a foothold south of Krynky on November 9 but later withdrew due to Russian shelling.[76] Russian sources claimed that gaps in Russian air defenses are allowing Ukrainian forces to operate attack and tactical aviation near the front near Krynky.[77] Geolocated footage published on November 10 indicates that Russian forces advanced south of Krynky.[78]

A Russian source claimed that the Ukrainian missile strike on Skadovsk, Kherson Oblast on November 9 struck the 126th Military Investigative Department of the Russian Investigative Committee. The source claimed that two Ukrainian HIMARS rockets struck the building during a meeting, killing eight to 10 Russian officers and personnel, including the acting head of the 126th Military Investigative Department.[79]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of November 10, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



0 20 40 80 Kilometers

Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Megan Wilson, and Shaylei Dauphinais

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

Note: The Ukrainian counteroffensive layer displays areas previously assigned to the Russian control, Russian advances, or Russian claims layers where ISW now assesses that Ukrainian forces have established a presence beyond a short-term raid. Inclusion of an area on this layer does not imply that ISW assesses that the area is part of any upcoming Ukrainian counteroffensive operation.

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

Russian forces continue to struggle with low morale and poor discipline. The Russian State Duma is considering a bill that would impose the same harsh criminal penalties on Russian military volunteers as on Russian mobilized personnel for refusing to comply with orders, voluntarily surrendering, damaging weapons, or deserting.[80] The Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) reported that a group of mobilized personnel of the 20th Motorized Rifle Division (8th Combined Arms Army, Southern Military District) beat their regiment's deputy commander, "Lieutenant Muserbekov," in occupied Simferopol on November 1 and that Muserbekov died from his injuries on November 7.[81] The GUR stated that the mobilized personnel subsequently fled to Krasnodar Krai dressed as civilians.

Russia continues to form new irregular formations to support combat operations in Ukraine. A Russian milblogger claimed on November 10 that the newly-formed "Volga" volunteer artillery brigade reinforced the Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) 2nd Army Corps in an unspecified area of Ukraine.[82]

Russian Technological Adaptations (Russian objective: Introduce technological innovations to optimize systems for use in Ukraine)

BBC's Russia service reported on November 10 that Ukrainian drone pilots stated that Russian forces are using drones to seize the initiative near Bakhmut.[83] BBC's Russia service stated that Russia is copying Ukraine's use of maneuverable combat drones and expanding the use of these drones to include dropping explosives on the enemy. A Ukrainian drone platoon commander stated that Russian drones are operating in the air day and night, which he stated indicates that Russia has established mass production of drones for reconnaissance, surveillance, and strikes. The commander estimated that Russian forces have twice the number of drones that Ukrainian forces have in the Bakhmut sector.

Russia's Liberal Democratic Party (LDPR) is reportedly producing its own "Zhirinovskiy" drone variant, likely to commemorate LDPR's late leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy. Russian sources claimed that LDPR Chairman Leonid Slutskiy presented 10 "Zhirinovskiy" drones to an unspecified motorized rifle battalion during a visit to Crimea on November 9 and suggested that the drones will likely be used in the Kherson direction.[84] Vladimir Oblast's Rokot-Center 33 reportedly manufactured LDPR's drones, which can operate in inclement weather, switch frequencies in case of signal loss, and have a range of up to 12 kilometers. Rokot-Center 33 claimed on November 9 that the organization has been in contact with the LDPR party for almost five months.[85]

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 Telegram channel *Mariupol Resistance* and Ukrainian Mariupol City Advisor Petro Andryushchenko reported on November 10 that Ukrainian partisans detonated a police car in occupied Mariupol, Donetsk Oblast.[86] *Mariupol Resistance* published photos showing the aftermath of the explosion and stated that partisans took advantage of "a convenient opportunity." [87] The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported that Russian authorities believe there are over 5,000 Ukrainian partisans in occupied Ukraine but have failed to suppress them.[88]

The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported on November 10 that Russian Orthodox Church (ROC) authorities are distributing propaganda literature that justifies Russian occupation and denies the existence of Ukrainian identity in non-ROC churches in occupied Ukraine.[89] The Ukrainian Resistance Center noted that Russian authorities are persecuting representatives of all non-ROC faiths and have looted and co-opted all non-ROC churches in occupied Ukraine.

Russian Information Operations and Narratives

Kremlin Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov blamed Ukrainian officials for delaying a diplomatic resolution to the war, despite the fact that the Kremlin continues to pursue policies indicating that it is unwilling to negotiate in good faith. Peskov responded to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's statement that compromise is unacceptable for Ukraine and stated on November 10 that it is time for Ukraine to understand that it will not win this war on the battlefield.[90] Peskov stated that the preconditions for a negotiated settlement will arise as soon as Ukraine realizes that it cannot win militarily and that Russia will continue the war in the absence of the necessary preconditions. ISW continues to assess that the Kremlin is unlikely to enter peace negotiations with Ukraine except to buy time to reconstitute for future offensive operations.[91] ISW also continues to assess that pressure on Ukraine to prematurely negotiate an end to the war will likely remain meaningless, if not harmful, as long as Russian President Vladimir Putin believes that he can achieve his maximalist objectives on the battlefield.[92]

The Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) reported on November 10 that Russian actors are contacting Ukrainian citizens currently located in the Gaza Strip and alleging that the Ukrainian government will not evacuate them and will abandon them.[93] The GUR stated that Russian actors are sending messages offering evacuations to Ukrainian citizens in exchange for an interview with Russian media. Zelensky announced that Ukrainian authorities evacuated 160 Ukrainian citizens and nine Moldovan citizens from Gaza on November 10 and have rescued 203 Ukrainian citizens this week.[94]

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) reported on November 9 that Iranian General Staff Department of International Relations Head Brigadier General Mohammad Ahadi led a delegation to Belarus as part of the First Joint Belarusian-Iranian Interdepartmental Commission on Military Cooperation.[95]

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko portrayed himself as the guarantor of Belarusian statehood ahead of Belarusian parliamentary elections in 2024 and presidential elections in 2025. Lukashenko stated on November 10 that incoming young Belarusian leaders should ascend to office with the goal of “saving the country [Belarus].”[96] Lukashenko claimed that the fate of Belarus depends on Belarusians and that no one will assist Belarus if the country makes a mistake.[97] Lukashenko’s statements reflect his likely desire to resist complete integration into the Russian-dominated Union State.

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



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Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, November 9, 2023

Riley Bailey, Karolina Hird, Grace Mappes, Angelica Evans, Amin Soltani, and Frederick W. Kagan

November 9, 2023, 6:55pm 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 see ISW's 3D control of terrain topographic map of Ukraine. Use of a computer (not a mobile device) is strongly recommended for using this data-heavy tool.

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 November 9. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the November 10 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

The Russian military command will likely struggle to redeploy combat effective reinforcements to respond to ongoing Ukrainian operations in eastern Kherson Oblast while conducting defensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast and sustaining other offensive efforts in eastern Ukraine. Russian milbloggers claimed on November 9 that Ukrainian forces established control over new positions in Krynky (30km northeast of Kherson City and 2km from the Dnipro River) and conducted assaults towards Russian positions south and southwest of the settlement.[1] A Russian milblogger claimed that there are reports that Ukrainian forces advanced to forest areas south of Krynky.[2] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces also attacked near Poyma (12km east of Kherson City and 4km from the Dnipro River), Pishchanivka (13km east of Kherson City and 3km from the Dnipro River), and Pidstepne (17km east of Kherson City and 4km from the Dnipro River) and are trying to establish positions between Pidstepne and Kozachi Laheri (23km northeast of Kherson City and 2km from the Dnipro River).[3] Ukrainian military observer Konstyantyn Mashovets stated that Ukrainian forces have established continuous control of positions from the Antonivsky railway bridge north of Poyma to the Antonivsky roadway bridge north of Oleshky (7km south of Kherson and 4km from the Dnipro River) as of November 9 and have cut the Oleshky-Nova Kakhovka (53km northeast of Kherson City) road in at least two areas.[4]

Elements of the Russian 18th Combined Arms Army's (CAA) 22nd Army Corps (formerly of the Black Sea Fleet) and 70th Motorized Rifle Division as well as the 177th Naval Infantry Regiment (Caspian Flotilla) appear to be the main Russian forces responding to Ukrainian ground operations on the east bank of Kherson Oblast.[5] The Russian military reportedly formed the 18th CAA from other units previously operating in the Kherson direction, and it is unlikely that new units of the 18th CAA are comprised of fresh forces or staffed to doctrinal end strength.[6] Elements of the 177th Naval Infantry Regiment previously defended positions in western Zaporizhia Oblast for almost the entirety of the Ukrainian counteroffensive and have likely suffered significant casualties.[7] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) stated on November 5 that unspecified elements of the 7th Guards Airborne (VDV)

Division are operating in the Kherson direction, although the bulk of the 7th VDV Division appears to be committed to defensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast.^[8] Mashovets claimed on November 2 and 9 that elements of the 7th VDV Division's 171st Air Assault Battalion (97th VDV Regiment) are operating near Pishchanivka and Poyma, but it is unclear if these reported elements have been present in the Kherson direction since the start of the counteroffensive or recently redeployed to the area.^[9] Elements of the 49th CAA (Southern Military District) have reportedly been operating in the Kherson direction since the Ukrainian liberation of Kherson City in November 2022, but some Russian and Ukrainian sources claim that the Russian command has since redeployed elements of at least one its brigades to the Zaporizhia-Donetsk Oblast border area.^[10] Mashovets claimed that elements of the 49th CAA still comprise the Russian “Dnepr” Grouping of Forces in the Kherson direction, and elements of the 49th CAA’s 205th Motorized Rifle Brigade appeared to be operating on the left bank as of late August 2023.^[11]

The Russian command will likely face significant challenges in redeploying units from other sectors of the front should relatively combat ineffective Russian formations and currently uncommitted Russian forces in the Kherson direction prove insufficient to respond to the Ukrainian operations on the east bank of the Dnipro. Redeployments of considerable elements of the 7th VDV Division or other VDV formations and units in western Zaporizhia Oblast would likely disrupt Russian defensive operations there. Russian forces reportedly continue to accumulate forces for sustaining the Russian offensive effort near Avdiivka and localized offensive operations in Kharkiv and Luhansk oblasts.^[12] Any potential Russian redeployment to the Kherson direction will likely degrade the Russian ability to sustain these other operations and efforts.

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of November 9, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



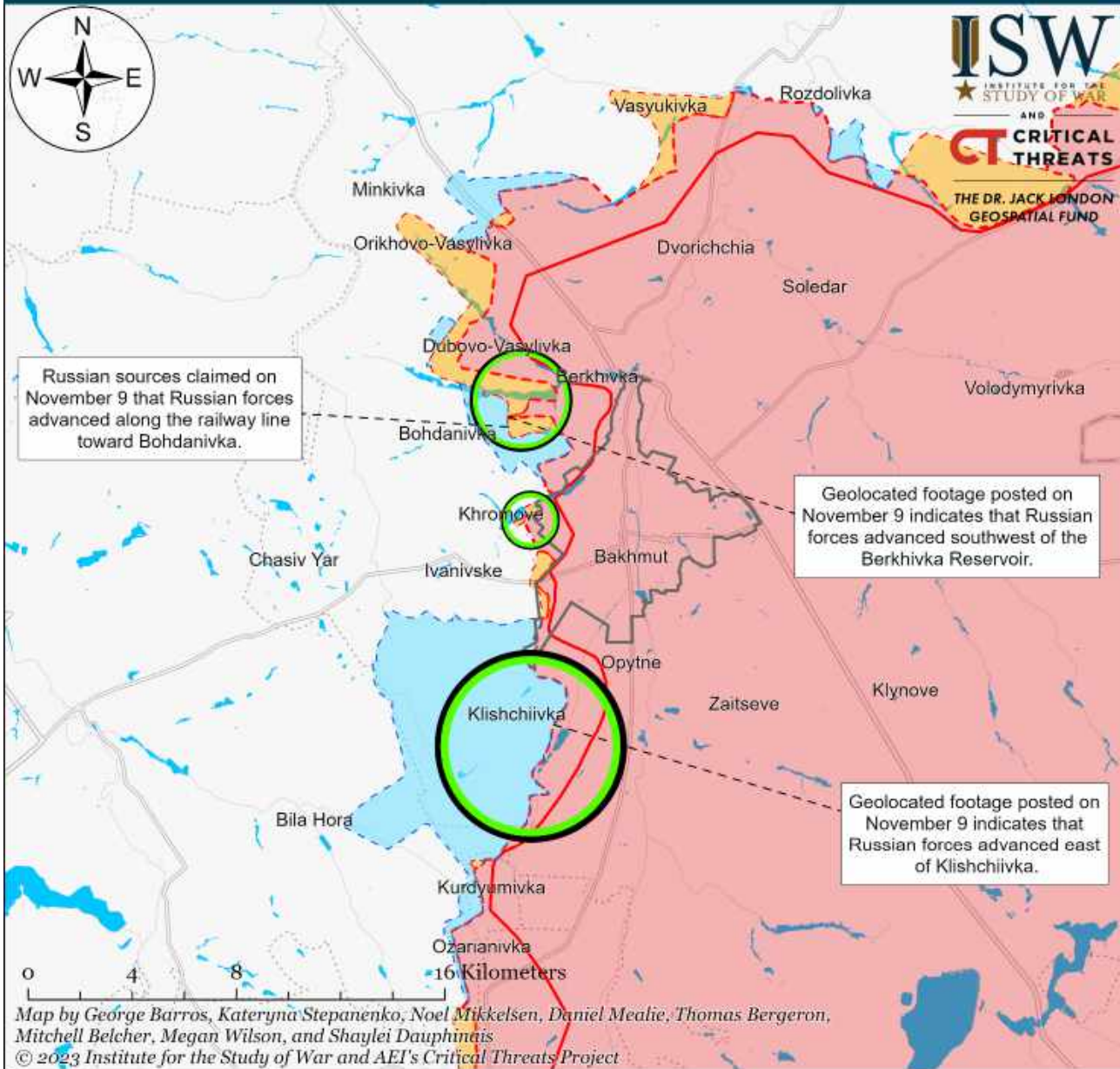
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

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 forces have likely launched opportunistic localized offensive operations in the Bakhmut direction and intensified ground attacks near Bakhmut in recent days. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted nearly 30 attacks northwest and southwest of Bakhmut between November 8 and November 9, which is notably a higher number of attacks than the Ukrainian General Staff typically reports for the Bakhmut area.[13] Russian milbloggers widely claimed that Russian forces entered Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut) and pushed Ukrainian troops back from the railway that runs northeast and east of the settlement.[14] Geolocated footage published on November 9 indicates that Russian forces have advanced towards Klishchiivka and hold positions just east of the settlement and west of the railway line.[15] Some Russian sources claimed that Russian forces also drove Ukrainian forces out of positions in and around Andriivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut), but ISW has not observed visual evidence to substantiate these claims.[16] Several Russian milbloggers additionally claimed that Russian forces advanced northwest of Bakhmut in the Berkhivka-Bohdanivka direction (directly northwest of Bakhmut to 5km northwest of Bakhmut) south of the Berkhivka Reservoir towards the Vilyanova plant nursery.[17] Geolocated footage from around November 7 shows that Russian forces have advanced south of the Berkhivka Reservoir, about 3km northwest of Bakhmut.[18]

These localized offensive operations northwest and southwest of Bakhmut are likely opportunistic tactical ground attacks intended to take advantage of the reported reallocation of Ukrainian resources away from Bakhmut. Several milbloggers noted that the pace of Ukrainian artillery fire and ground activity in the Bakhmut direction has decreased in recent days, with some Russian sources remarking that this is partially because Ukrainian forces have redeployed to other areas of the front.[19] Russian forces are likely taking advantage of a decrease in Ukrainian activity on this sector of the front to launch localized and successful attacks. Russian forces are unlikely to be able to translate offensive efforts near Bakhmut into wider and more meaningful offensive operations, as the Russian force grouping around Bakhmut is weak and disorganized because Russian forces have been committing more manpower and materiel to deliberate and larger-scale offensive operations near Avdiivka and on the Kharkiv-Luhansk Oblast border.

Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of November 9, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Megan Wilson, and Shaylei Dauphinais
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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: Multiple Russian sources claimed on November 9 that Russian forces advanced 1.5 kilometers near Berkhivka as of November 8.

Russian forces struck a civilian ship near Odesa City on November 8. Ukraine's Southern Operational Command reported that a Russian Kh-31P missile struck a civilian ship flying the flag of Liberia in a port near Odesa City, Odesa Oblast, injuring several people and killing the ship's pilot.[20] Russian milbloggers claimed on November 8 and 9 in an attempt to justify the strike that the ship was carrying military cargo.[21] Russia has continually pursued efforts to disrupt Ukrainian exports and curtail maritime traffic to Ukrainian ports and will likely continue escalatory posturing in the Black Sea meant to undermine confidence in the Ukrainian corridor.[22]

Kremlin Press Secretary Dmitry Peskov stated that Russian President Vladimir Putin's annual live "Direct Line" forum and annual press conference will occur in tandem on an unspecified date by the end of the year, potentially to set conditions to cancel the events as the Kremlin sees fit.[23] The Kremlin canceled Putin's annual press conference in December 2022, which ISW assessed was likely in order to preempt the informational risks of Putin addressing difficult questions about the war and international situation live.[24] Similarly, in early June of 2023, Putin postponed the "Direct Line" until November or December 2023.[25] The vagueness with which Peskov announced the two live events suggests that the Kremlin may desire to have the flexibility to cancel them if they deem the informational risks of holding them to be too great. The Kremlin may hope for a wider operational victory in Ukraine to frame both the "Direct Line" and the press conference in a positive light and is likely trying to leave itself room to mitigate if Russian forces cannot secure meaningful battlefield success in Ukraine in the coming month.

Russia may seek to provide gas to Iran through Kazakhstan. Russian President Vladimir Putin emphasized during a meeting with Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev at the 19th Russian-Kazakh Regional Cooperation Forum in Ankara that Russia currently transports gas to Uzbekistan through Kazakhstan and seeks to further develop this transport.[26] Russia began exporting natural gas to Uzbekistan for the first time in October 2023, and Uzbekistan notably still exports its own domestically produced natural gas, including to Russia as recently as 2021, despite suffering domestic shortages in recent years.[27] Uzbekistan's continued export of gas while importing Russian gas for the first time suggests that Uzbekistan may not be the final destination for all its Russian gas imports. Uzbekistan is capable of providing Iran with direct access to other Central Asian as well as Russian and Chinese markets, as ISW-CTP previously reported.[28] Senior Iranian officials, including Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and President Ebrahim Raisi, discussed reviving Iranian-Uzbek economic relations and signed agreements to increase bilateral trade with Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev in Tehran on June 18, 2023.[29] Iran has also increased its economic diplomacy efforts, including on gas supplies, with other countries in Central Asia. Raisi discussed increasing the volume of gas swaps with Turkmenistan during a meeting with Turkmenistan People's Council Chairman Gurbanguly Berdimukhamedov in Tehran on May 30.[30] Iranian Oil Minister Javad Owji separately announced on May 30 that Iran and Turkmenistan will soon sign an agreement for Iran to import 10 million cubic meters of natural gas from Turkmenistan each day, which will allow Iran to use some of the gas it imports from Turkmenistan to supply electricity and heat to its northern provinces.[31] Iran has consistently struggled with natural gas shortages in winter and summer 2023, and Russia may seek to provide gas to Iran through Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan to secure further military cooperation with Iran.[32]

Unspecified actors appear to be targeting Chechen Republic Head Ramzan Kadyrov as he continues to heap honors on his children. A Russian insider source claimed that Moscow

authorities are investigating and charging members of the inner circle of an unspecified nephew of Kadyrov for various crimes including kidnapping, extortion, and organizing a criminal community in both Moscow and Chechnya.[33] The insider source claimed that two high-ranking Chechen security officials lead this inner circle, and that its other members include Chechen police officers and bureaucratic officials.[34] The source claimed that Russian authorities allowed this circle to commit these crimes for “quite a long time” but that “apparently, something is starting to change.”[35] It is possible that Russian authorities are targeting Chechen organized crime activities. This insider source’s specific reference to Kadyrov, however, suggests either that some Russian authorities may seek to target Kadyrov’s affiliates through criminal charges or that some actors may seek to target Kadyrov informationally by using this insider source to discredit him and his family. Kadyrov has notably awarded his children, many of whom are underage, with prominent Chechen governmental positions and awards in recent weeks following the Kremlin’s refusal to become involved when his 15-year-old son Adam was filmed beating a detained man in September 2023, sparking domestic outrage.[36]

Key Takeaways:

- **The Russian military command will likely struggle to redeploy combat effective reinforcements to respond to ongoing Ukrainian operations in eastern Kherson Oblast while conducting defensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast and sustaining other offensive efforts in eastern Ukraine.**
- **Russian forces have likely launched opportunistic localized offensive operations in the Bakhmut direction and intensified ground attacks near Bakhmut in recent days.**
- **Russian forces struck a civilian ship near Odesa City on November 8.**
- **Kremlin Press Secretary Dmitry Peskov stated that Russian President Vladimir Putin's annual live "Direct Line" forum and annual press conference will occur in tandem on an unspecified date by the end of the year, potentially to set conditions to cancel the events as the Kremlin sees fit.**
- **Russia may seek to provide gas to Iran through Kazakhstan.**
- **Unspecified actors appear to be targeting Chechen Republic Head Ramzan Kadyrov as he continues to heap honors on his children.**
- **Russian forces continued offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line, near Bakhmut, in the Avdiivka direction, west and southwest of Donetsk City, in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area, and in western Zaporizhia Oblast and advanced near Kupyansk.**
- **Russian authorities appear to be increasingly reliant on private security companies to protect domestic energy infrastructure from Ukrainian drone strikes on Russian far rear areas.**
- **Occupation authorities reportedly continued efforts to militarize Ukrainian youth.**

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 Russian

violations of the laws of armed conflict and the Geneva Conventions and crimes against humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

- Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine (comprised of two subordinate main efforts)
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and encircle northern Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis
- Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts
- Activities in Russian-occupied areas
- Russian Information Operations and Narratives

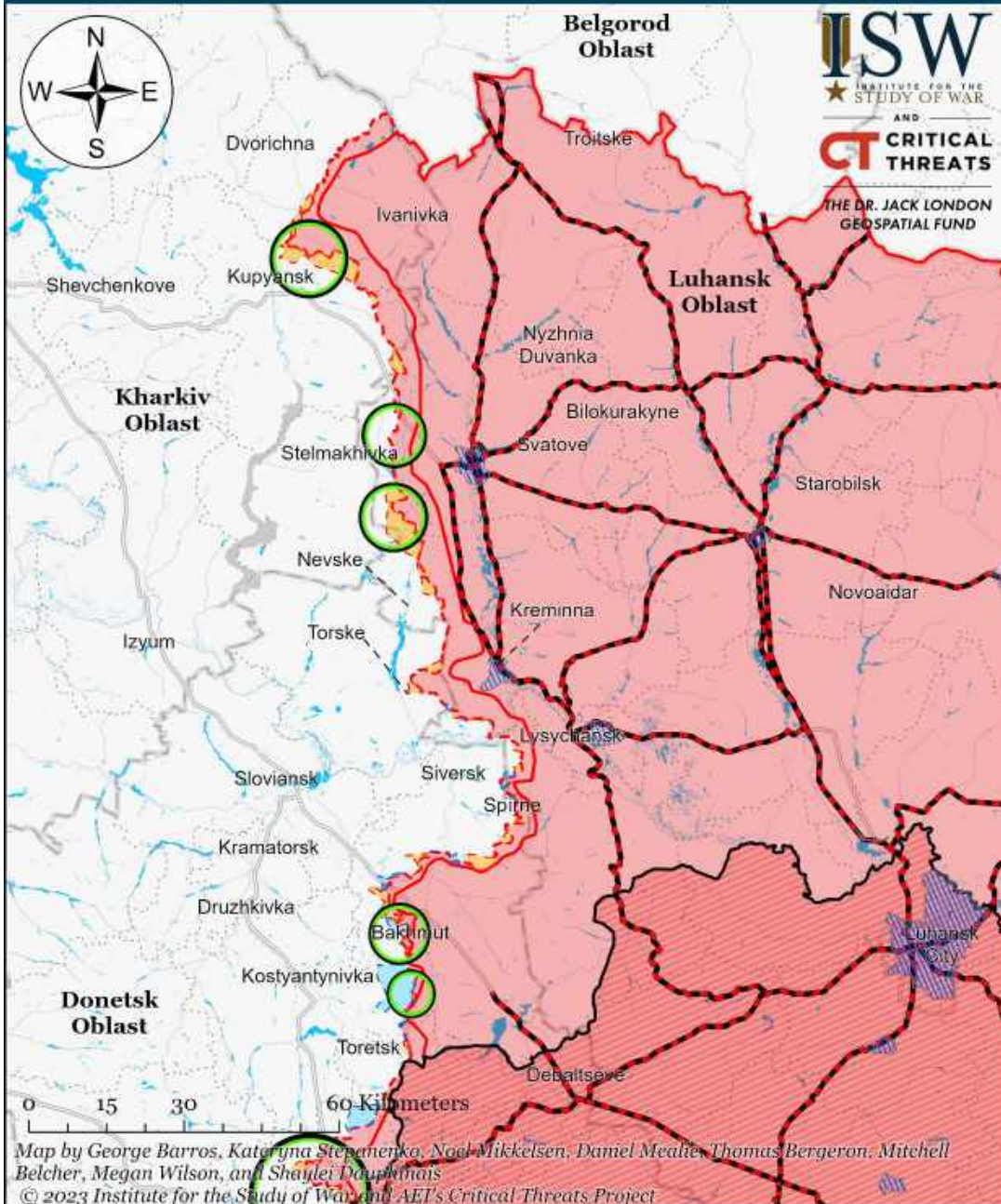
Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

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

Russian forces continued offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on November 9 and made a confirmed advance. Geolocated footage published on November 9 indicates that Russian forces recently marginally advanced south of Pershotravneve (24km east of Kupyansk).[37] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Synkivka (9km northeast of Kupyansk), Kharkiv Oblast and Stelmakhivka (15km northwest of Svatove) and Novoyehorivka (16km southwest of Svatove) in Luhansk Oblast.[38] A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces also attacked near Petropavlivka (7km east of Kupyansk) and achieved unspecified "tactical success" near Synkivka.[39] Russian milbloggers claimed that there was also fighting near Kyslivka (20km southeast of Kupyansk).[40] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces attacked near the Serebryanske forest area and captured several unspecified positions.[41] The milblogger claimed that there are also positional battles near Torske (15km west of Kreminna).

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted unsuccessful assaults along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on November 9. The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Tymkivka (18km east of Kupyansk) and Synkivka, Kharkiv Oblast and Kreminna, Luhansk Oblast.[42] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked with Western-provided armored vehicle support northeast of Kupyansk and west of Svatove.[43] Russian milbloggers claimed that there is also fighting near Dibrova (7km southwest of Kreminna).[44]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of November 9, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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

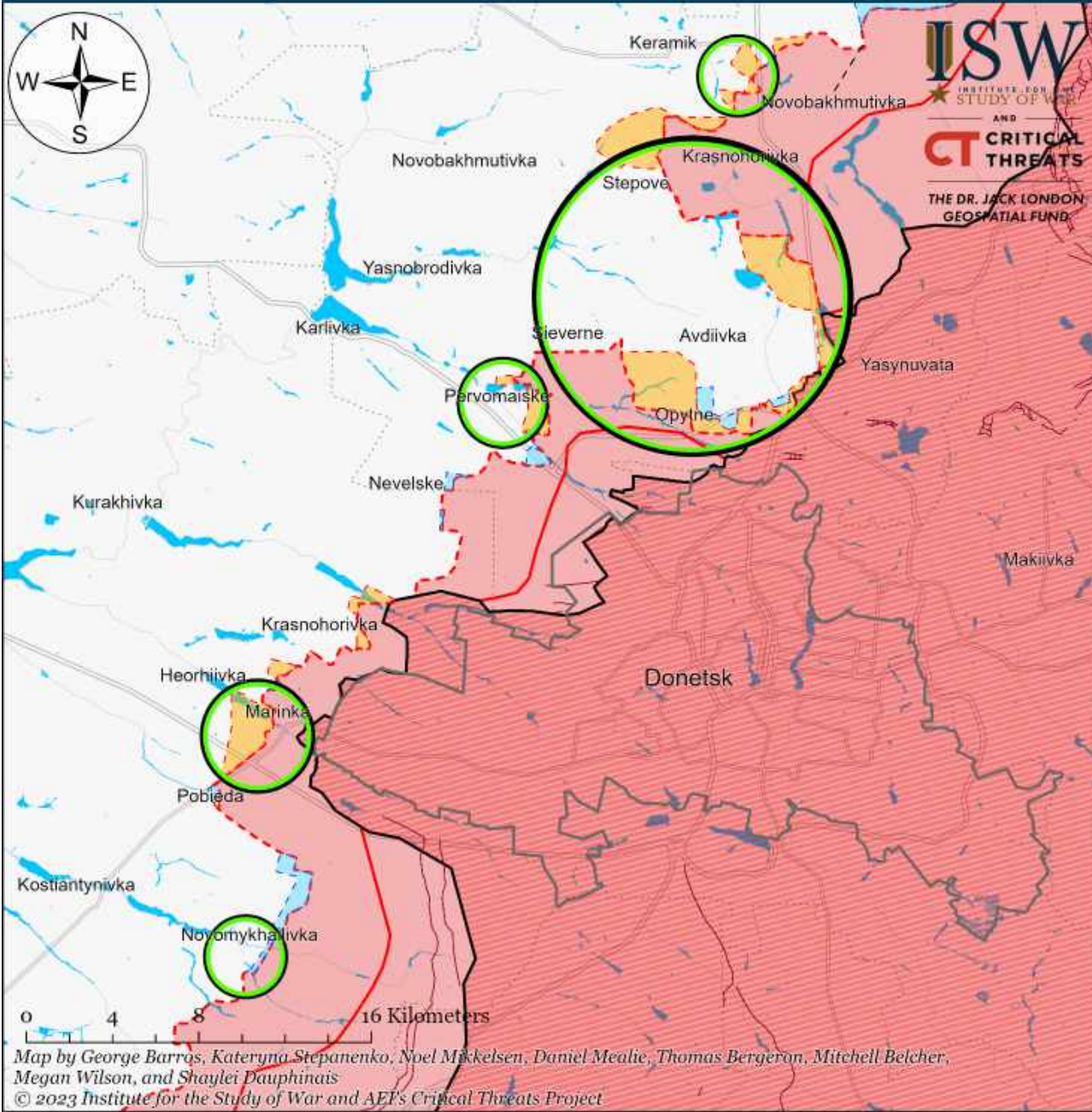
Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Donetsk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)

See topline text for updates on Bakhmut.

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Avdiivka direction on November 9 and reportedly advanced. Several Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces made gains near Stepove (6km northwest of Avdiivka) and are consolidating new positions near the settlement.[45] Russian sources additionally claimed that Russian forces advanced up to 1km beyond the railway line about 3km away from Berdychi (4km northwest of Avdiivka).[46] One milblogger claimed that Russian forces now hold positions within 500 meters of Avdiivka itself.[47] Russian sources additionally claimed that Russian forces are trying to break through Ukrainian lines southwest of Avdiivka near Vodyane.[48] Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces Spokesperson Colonel Oleksandr Shtupun noted that Russian forces have increased their use of aviation in the Avdiivka direction over the past few days and are using Ka-52 and Mi-8 helicopters and Su-25 attack aircraft.[49] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces with aviation support conducted unsuccessful attacks southeast of Novokalynove (10km northwest of Avdiivka), and near Avdiivka, Keramik (10km northwest of Avdiivka), Stepove, Sieverne (5km west of Avdiivka), and Pervomaiske (10km southwest of Avdiivka).[50]

Ukrainian forces did not conduct any claimed or confirmed ground attacks in the Avdiivka direction on November 9.

Assessed Control of Terrain near Donetsk City as of November 9, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Map by George Barras, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Megan Wilson, and Shaylei Dauphinais
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- | | | |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| Donetsk City Limits | Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine* | Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives |
| Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory | Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory | Russian Field Fortifications |

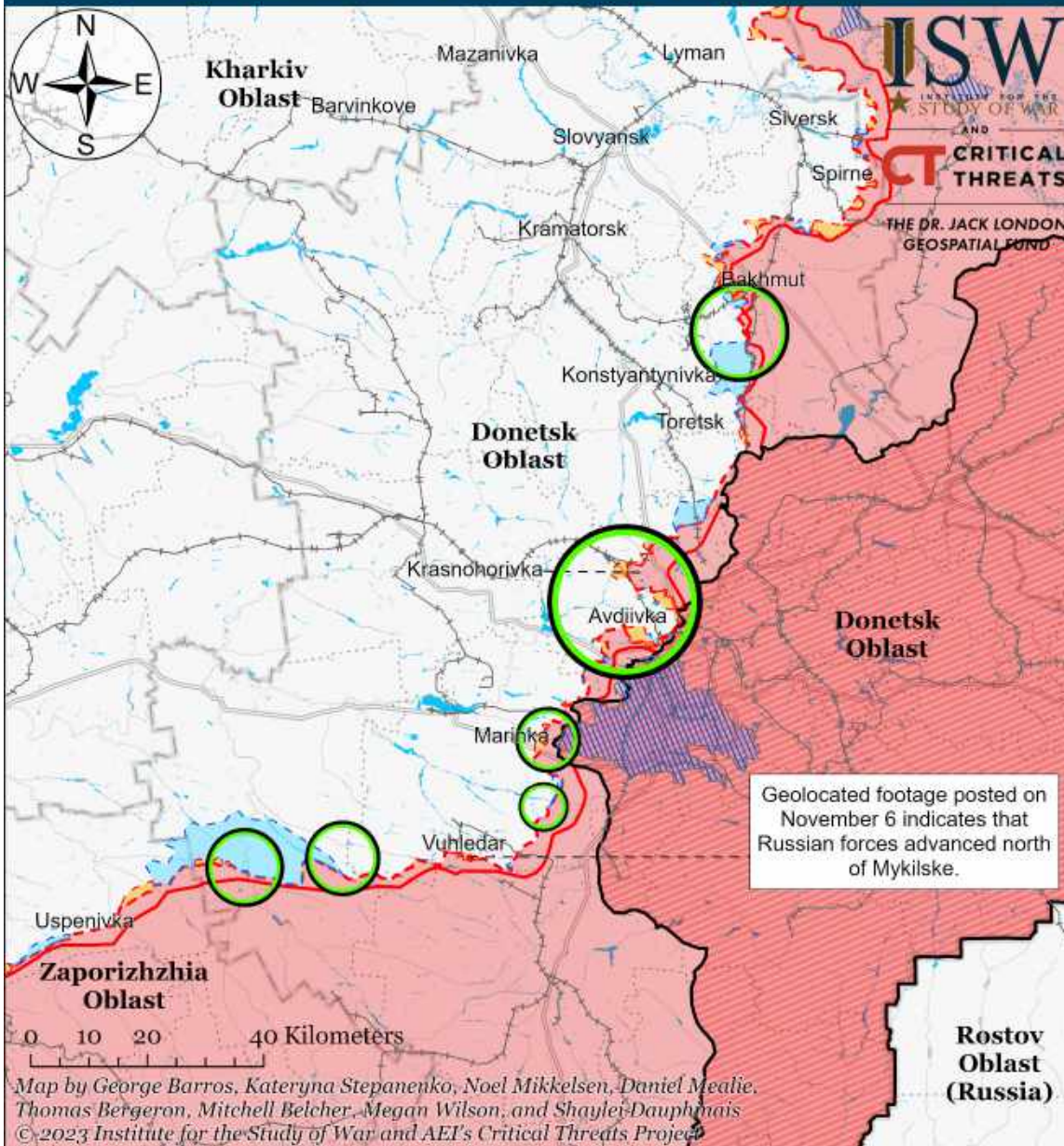
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Note: A Russian source claimed on November 8 that Russian forces advanced to positions 400 meters south of Avdiivka.

Russian forces continued offensive operations west and southwest of Donetsk City on November 9 but did not make any claimed or confirmed advances. Shtupun noted that Russian forces in the Marinka direction (on the southwest outskirts of Donetsk City) are concentrating offensive efforts near Marinka and Novomykhailivka (10km south of Donetsk City), and the Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted 23 unsuccessful attacks near these two settlements over the course of the day.^[51] One milblogger claimed that Russian forces have stopped active advances towards Novomykhailivka and are instead focusing on consolidating their new positions.^[52] A Russian news aggregator claimed that the situation in Marinka remains unchanged and that there is fighting on the western outskirts of the settlement.^[53] Russian sources also claimed that localized fighting is ongoing near Vuhledar (30km southwest of Donetsk City), particularly east of Vuhledar near Mykilske (3km southeast of Vuhledar).^[54]

Ukrainian forces did not conduct any claimed or confirmed ground attacks west or southwest of Donetsk City on November 9.

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of November 9, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



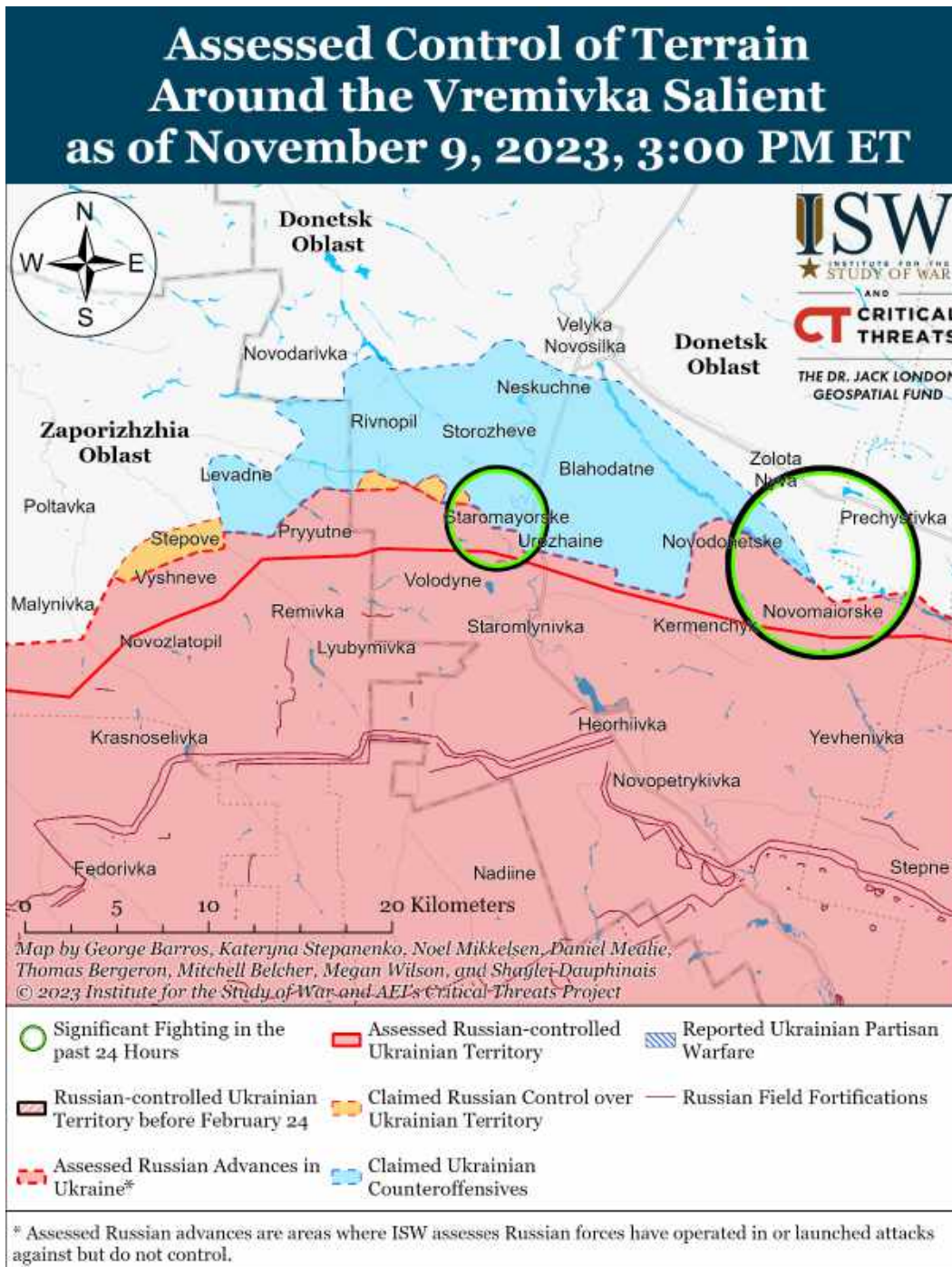
- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Major Railroads
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare

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

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

Ukrainian forces did not conduct any claimed or confirmed ground attacks on the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on November 9.

Russian forces continued limited ground attacks in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on November 9 but did not make any confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian assaults near Staromayorske (9km south of Velyka Novosilka) and south of Prechystivka (18km southeast of Velyka Novosilka).[55]



Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast on November 9 and recently made confirmed advances. Geolocated footage published on November 8 indicates that Ukrainian forces advanced northwest of Verbove (9km east of Robotyne).[56] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Melitopol (western Zaporizhia Oblast) direction.[57] Russian sources, including the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD), claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted unsuccessful assaults near Robotyne, Novoprokopivka (immediately south of Robotyne), and Verbove.[58]

Russian forces conducted limited counterattacks in western Zaporizhia Oblast on November 9 but did not make any confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful assaults near Verbove and Robotyne.[59] Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces Spokesperson Colonel Oleksandr Shtupun stated that Russian forces did not conduct any assaults in the Zaporizhia direction on November 8.[60] A Russian media aggregator claimed that Russian forces counterattacked near Verbove on November 8 but did not specify an outcome.[61]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Pyatykhatky and Robotyne as of November 9, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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

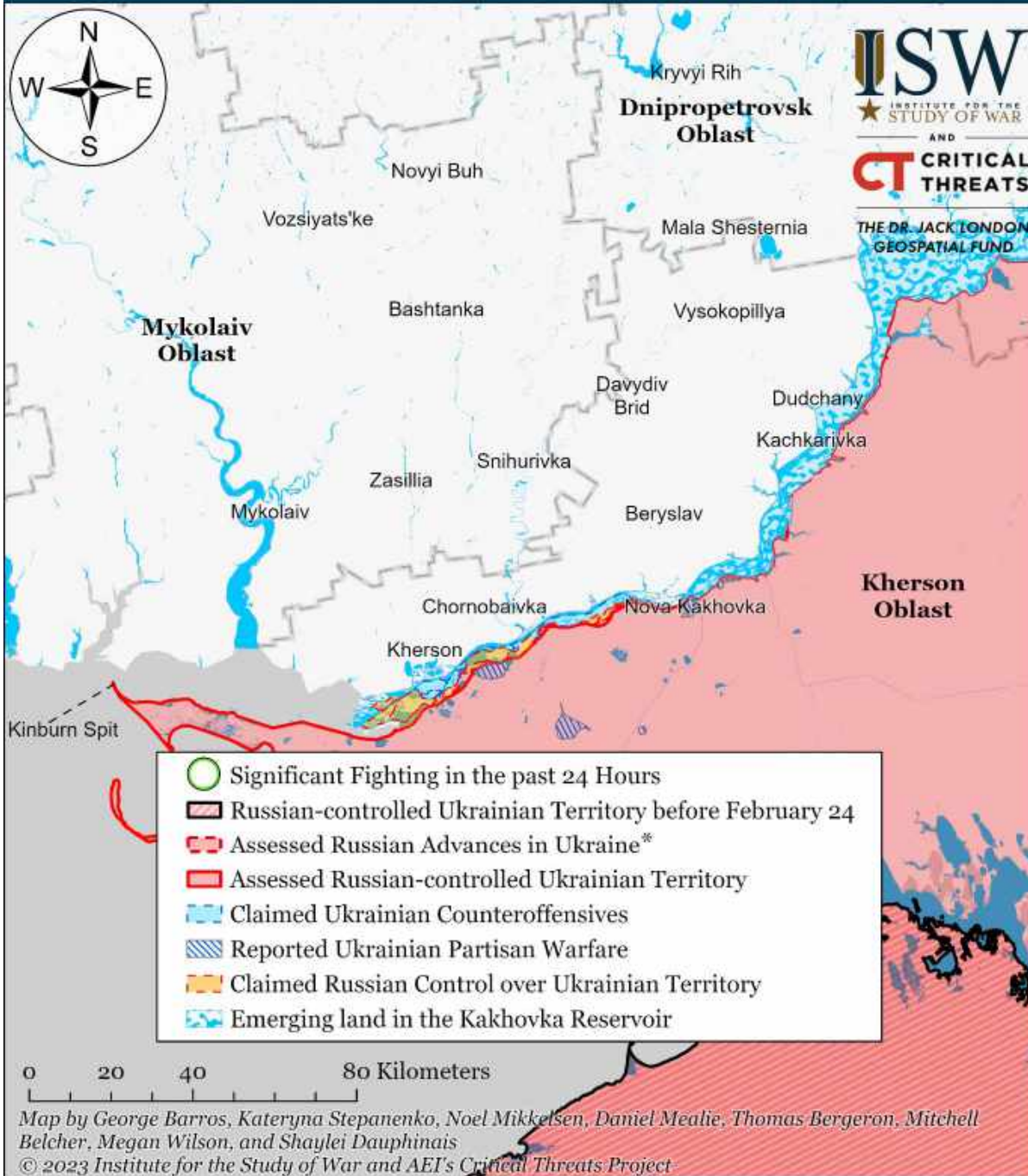
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

For details on Kherson Oblast see topline text.

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces struck a Russian rear area in southern Ukraine and targeted occupied Crimea on November 9. Kherson Oblast occupation head Vladimir Saldo claimed that Ukrainian forces launched two missiles at Skadovsk, Kherson Oblast and that Russian air defenses only intercepted one of the missiles.[62] Russian sources claimed that the Ukrainian forces struck civilian infrastructure in Skadovsk.[63] A Ukrainian news outlet and a Ukrainian military observer stated that Ukrainian forces struck a hotel in Skadovsk that Russian forces used to quarter Russian officers.[64] Ukrainian Mariupol Mayoral Advisor Petro Andryushchenko stated that Russian forces used the hotel as a command post.[65] The Russian MoD claimed that Russian air defenses intercepted a Ukrainian Neptune anti-ship missile off the coast of Crimea on November 9.[66] Russian sources amplified imagery purporting to show smoke clouds near Sevastopol following the interception.[67]



Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of November 9, 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.

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

Russian authorities appear to be increasingly reliant on private security companies to protect domestic energy infrastructure from Ukrainian drone strikes on Russian far rear areas. Russian State Duma “Special Military Operation” Working Group Chairperson Andrei Turchak stated that the group submitted a bill for Duma consideration that will allow private security forces at Russian fuel and energy facilities to shoot down drones.[68] Turchak noted that only Russian law enforcement, security agencies, and certain private security companies with anti-terrorism specialties can legally shoot down drones.[69]

Russian National Security Council Deputy Chairperson Dmitry Medvedev claimed that roughly 410,000 people entered service with the Russian military between January 1 and November 9, 2023.[70] Medvedev previously stated that 385,000 people entered service as of October 25; 357,000 as of October 12; 325,000 as of September 26; and 280,000 as of September 3.[71] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russia will likely have recruited 450,000-460,000 personnel by the end of 2023 based on Medvedev’s statements.[72]

Russian federal subjects continue efforts to incentivize contract service with Russian volunteer formations. Lipetsk Oblast Head Igor Artamonov proposed on November 8 that Lipetsk Oblast should eliminate the requirement that volunteers recruited into Lipetsk Oblast regional volunteer formations need to be residents of Lipetsk Oblast.[73] Artamonov also proposed raising the one-time recruitment bonus for contract personnel from 50,000 rubles (\$542) to 250,000 rubles (\$2,712).[74] Chuvashia Republic Head Oleg Nikolaev announced on November 8 that the government approved a draft law that will award free plots of land for personal housing or farming for distinguished participants from Chuvashia in the war in Ukraine.[75] Nikolaev also stated that the government supported a proposal providing two free meals a day to schoolchildren of Russian personnel who are fighting or who have died in Ukraine.[76]

Russian Technological Adaptations (Russian objective: Introduce technological innovations to optimize systems for use in Ukraine)

Nothing significant to report.

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)

Occupation authorities reportedly continued efforts to militarize Ukrainian youth. Ukrainian Mariupol City Advisor Petro Andryushchenko stated on November 8 that occupation authorities created a new “professional military orientation” program for students in educational institutions in occupied Donetsk Oblast.[77] Andryushchenko stated that the program encourages students to serve and die for Russia. Andryushchenko also published photos of Russian military personnel and authorities training and indoctrinating students at a school in occupied Demianivka, Donetsk Oblast.[78]

Russian Information Operations and Narratives

Russian President Vladimir Putin and Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev met in Ankara for the 19th Russian-Kazakh Regional Cooperation Forum on November 9, where they reiterated boilerplate rhetoric portraying Russia as a valuable ally to Central Asian states.[79] Putin stated that Russia and Kazakhstan have begun constructing a joint production plant for butadiene, a necessary component of rubber, and have agreed to construct a plant to produce polyethylene.[80] Putin also stated that Russia and Kazakhstan agreed to develop logistics routes through Kazakhstan to Central Asia and towards China, including constructing a total of 1,300 kilometers of railway in the next three years.[81] Putin promoted military cooperation with Kazakhstan and stated that Russian forces help train Kazakhstan personnel and that Russia has licensed the production and servicing of Russian military equipment on Kazakh territory.[82] Putin and Tokayev also emphasized Russia and Kazakhstan's joint commitment to their states' strategic partnership and signed numerous bilateral agreements on infrastructure, agricultural, technological, and cultural cooperation at the forum.[83]

Some elements of the Russian ultranationalist information space are unsatisfied with the Kremlin's overly optimistic domestic portrayals of the war in Ukraine and failure to mobilize Russian society to a war-time footing. A prominent Russian milblogger criticized Russian media and television for falsely portraying the war as effectively won even though Ukrainian forces continue counteroffensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast and larger-than-usual ground operations in Kherson Oblast.[84] The milblogger warned that this framing of the war may provoke shock and fear in the Russian information space if Ukrainian forces achieve a great victory because Russian media has not prepared its consumers for such reports. The milblogger also criticized the Russian government for failing to mobilize the production capacity of the Russian defense industrial base (DIB), particularly of naval assets to replace Russian Black Sea Fleet (BSF) losses and regain dominance in the Black Sea.

Russia continues defensive posturing in Central Asia amid the war in Ukraine. The agreement between Russia and Kyrgyzstan creating a joint regional air defense network as part of the unified Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) air defense network came into force on November 9.[85] Kyrgyz President Sadyr Japarov announced during Putin's visit to the Russian military airbase in Kant, Kyrgyzstan on October 12 that the Kyrgyz parliament ratified this agreement on October 11.[86]

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 November 9 that Belarusian missile and artillery forces will conduct management and combat trainings from November 9 to 11.[87]

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



[1] https://t.me/dva_majors/28737 ; <https://t.me/wargonzo/16342> ;
<https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4614> ; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4628>

[2] https://t.me/dva_majors/28778

[3] <https://t.me/wargonzo/16342> ; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4614> ;
<https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4628> ; https://t.me/russkiy_opolchenec/38606 ;
https://t.me/dva_majors/28737 ; https://t.me/dva_majors/28778 ;
https://t.me/romanov_92/42332

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