

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of November 8, 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 8, 2023

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

November 8, 2023, 5:45pm 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 12:30pm ET on November 8. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the November 9 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations near Bakhmut and in western Zaporizhia Oblast on November 8. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Melitopol (western Zaporizhia Oblast) and Bakhmut directions.[1] Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted assaults near Robotyne, Novoprokopivka (just south of Robotyne), and Verbove (9km east of Robotyne).[2] Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky stated during a video address to the *Reuters* NEXT conference in New York on November 8 that Ukrainian forces have a battlefield plan for 2024 that he cannot disclose.[3] Zelensky stated that Ukrainian forces have several paths for future advances in southern Ukraine, eastern Ukraine, and Kherson Oblast. There are also plans to advance to specific occupied cities.[4] Ukrainian forces continue counteroffensive operations without interruption in several sectors of the front, and Ukrainian officials continue to indicate that these operations will continue into this winter.[5]

Select Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian commanders may be making operational and tactical decisions using maps of the battlefield in Ukraine that differ from tactical reality. A Russian milblogger claimed that the Russian General Staff uses battlefield maps that differ from tactical reality in response to another milblogger who questioned why Russian forces were not striking alleged large Ukrainian force concentrations close to the frontline.[6] The Russian milblogger claimed that Russian personnel on the front have access to the "real" map and that Russian commanders order Russian forces to conduct routine assaults to make gains that align the "real" map with the Russian General Staff's map.[7] A separate milblogger claimed that there had been previous individual cases of Russian battalion and regiment-level assault operations aimed at achieving compliance with inaccurate maps of the frontline but that this is the first time that he has heard of a wider operational imperative to make advances that comply with a reported General Staff map.[8] A milblogger claimed that Russian commanders are incentivized to make the tactical gains depicted in the General Staff's maps because the General Staff increasingly requires positive reports

from frontline commanders.[9] Russian milbloggers have routinely criticized Russian commanders throughout the chain of command for delivering false and overly positive reports to their superiors and have identified the Russian General Staff as fostering this widespread institutional dishonesty.[10]

Russian President Vladimir Putin promoted 44 Russian military and internal affairs officers, including Eastern Grouping of Forces Commander Andrei Kuzmenko, to general officer rank on November 8.[11] Putin promoted Kuzmenko to the rank of colonel general following Kuzmenko's meeting with Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu during Shoigu's visit to the Eastern Grouping of Forces command post in the south Donetsk direction (Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area) on October 25.[12] Shoigu's visit confirmed Kuzmenko's position as the Eastern Grouping of Forces commander and likely the Eastern Military District (EMD) commander. This promotion is likely routine and intended to give Kuzmenko a rank appropriate to his position. Putin also promoted three Russian officers to the rank of lieutenant general, 11 officers to the rank of major general, and 29 internal affairs officers to the rank of major general and lieutenant general.[13]

Russian President Vladimir Putin will reportedly avoid centering his 2024 presidential campaign on the war in Ukraine and will rather focus on Russia's alleged stability and criticisms of the West.[14] Russian opposition media outlet *Meduza* reported on November 8 that two sources close to the Russian Presidential Administration stated that the presidential campaign aims to paint Putin as a leader who made Russia an "island of calm." [15] *Meduza* sources claimed that Putin's ratings increase after speeches in which he criticizes the West and that Russian state propaganda will encourage this by increasingly publishing stories about "difficulties" in Western countries and the United States' alleged inability to support Ukraine and Israel simultaneously. A *Meduza* source also reportedly stated that the campaign would only discuss the war in Ukraine if there were a "very serious [Russian] success" on the front instead of continued "positional warfare." Putin is reportedly preparing to announce his campaign this month, and Russian sources have consistently indicated that the campaign will not prominently promote the war in Ukraine.[16] Putin previously downplayed the Russian offensive effort near Avdiivka, referring to it as "active defense," which would be consistent with these reports.[17] The Kremlin-backed United Russia Party also reportedly realized that using the war in Ukraine in their election campaigns in the run up to the September 2023 State Duma elections was ineffective and counterproductive.[18] Concerns within the Kremlin and United Russia over domestic support for the war are not indications that United Russia or Putin's dominance of Russian politics faces a legitimate threat in the upcoming presidential election, however. This campaign framing, if it occurs, would double down on Putin's refusal to mobilize Russian society to a wartime footing and may increase the informational cost necessary to support a long-term war effort in Ukraine.

Ukrainian partisans and military intelligence assassinated a prominent Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) official accused of conducting war crimes in occupied Ukraine. Russian and occupation officials reported on November 8 that a car bomb killed LNR People's Council member and the LNR Liberal Democratic Party (LDPR) Head Colonel Mikhail Filiponenko in occupied Luhansk City.[19] Filiponenko previously headed the LNR People's Militia and the LNR's Joint Center for Control and Coordination (JCCC).[20] Ukraine's Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) reported that GUR agents and Ukrainian partisans conducted the attack.[21] GUR stated that Filiponenko organized torture camps for Ukrainian civilians and

prisoners of war (POWs) and that Filiponenko personally participated in the torture.[22] These accusations would be an apparent violation of the UN Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.[23]

Key Takeaways:

- **Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations near Bakhmut and in western Zaporizhia Oblast on November 8.**
- **Select Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian commanders may be making operational and tactical decisions using maps of the battlefield in Ukraine that differ from tactical reality.**
- **Russian President Vladimir Putin promoted 44 Russian military and internal affairs officers, including Eastern Grouping of Forces Commander Andrei Kuzmenko, to general officer rank on November 8.**
- **Russian President Vladimir Putin will reportedly avoid centering his 2024 presidential campaign on the war in Ukraine and will rather focus on Russia's alleged stability and criticisms of the West.**
- **Ukrainian partisans and military intelligence assassinated a prominent Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) official accused of conducting war crimes in occupied Ukraine.**
- **Russian forces conducted offensive operations 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 on November 8 and advanced in some areas.**
- **Russia is reportedly attempting to reacquire components for military equipment from states to which it previously sold the equipment, including Egypt, Pakistan, Brazil, and Belarus.**
- **Russian occupation administrations continue to create new administrative bodies meant to further integrate occupied territories into Russian governance systems.**

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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

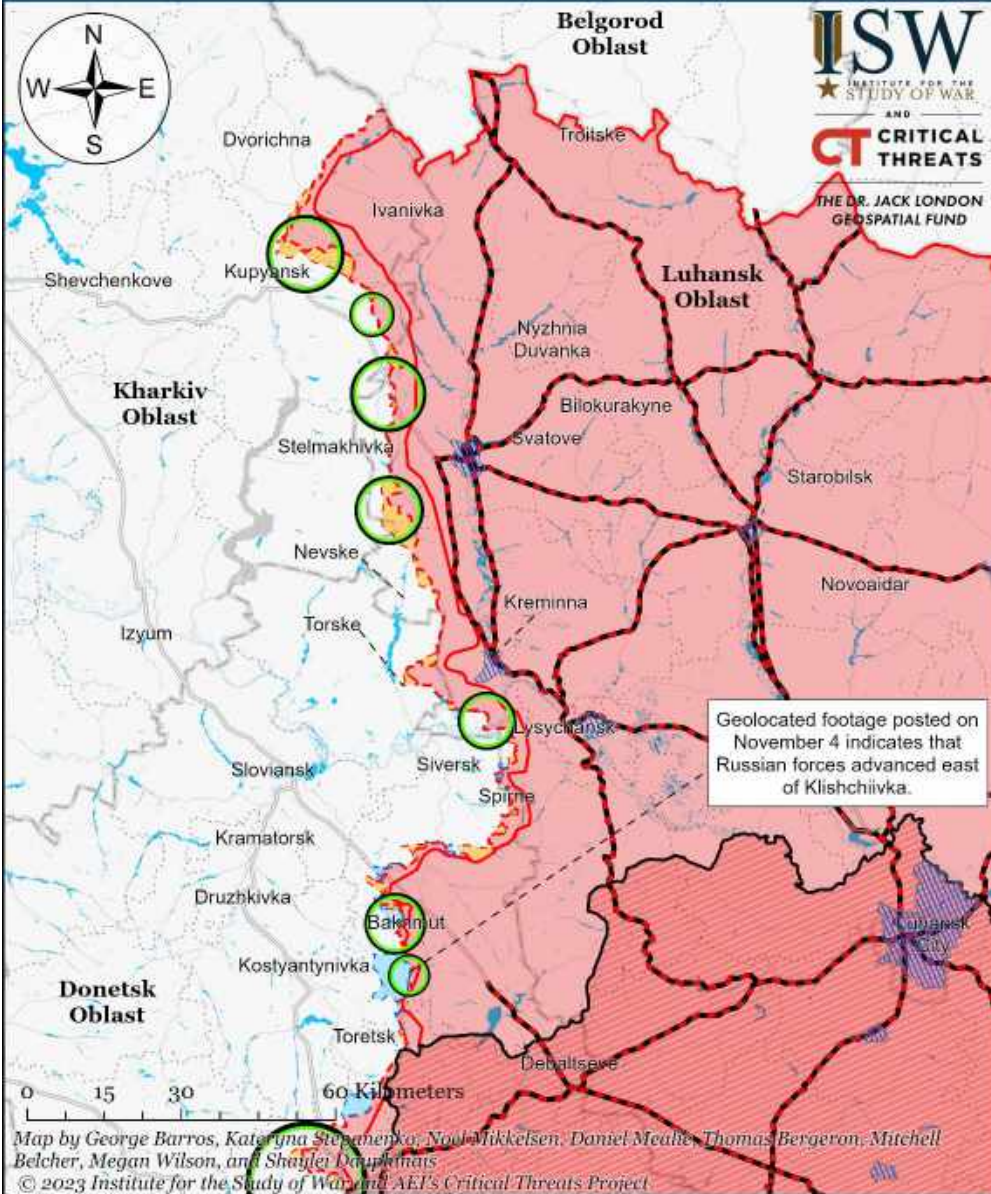
Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

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-Kreminna line on November 8 but did not make any confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian assaults near Synkivka (9km northeast of Kupyansk), Ivanivka (21km southeast of Kupyansk), Berestove (20km northwest of Svatove), Novoyehorivka (16km southwest of Svatove), and the Serebryanske forest area (10km south of Kreminna).[24] A Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed on November 7 that Russian forces continued to advance west of Pershotravneve (20km east of Kupyansk), although ISW has not observed visual confirmation of these claims.[25] The milblogger claimed that Russian forces are struggling to advance due to dense minefields in the area.[26] Ukrainian Ground Forces Command Spokesperson Lieutenant Colonel Volodymyr Fityo stated that Russian forces in the Kupyansk, Lyman, and Bakhmut directions lost 1,826 personnel and 200 pieces of military equipment, including 22 tanks and 54 armored combat vehicles, between November 1 and 6.[27]

The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that elements of the Russian Western Grouping of Forces repelled two Ukrainian assaults southeast of Kupyansk near Tymkivka (20km southeast of Kupyansk) on November 8.[28]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of November 8, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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

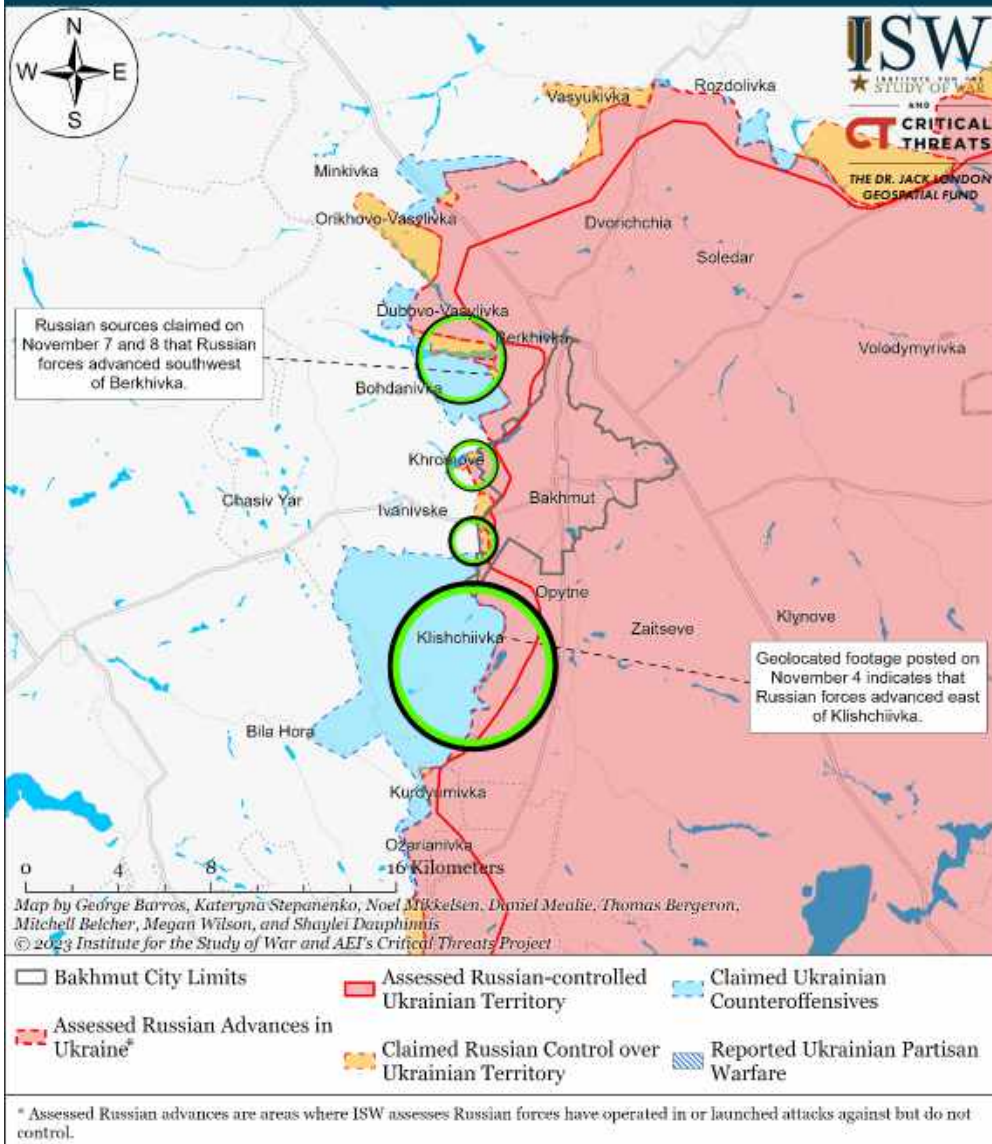
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

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

The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued assault operations south of Bakhmut on November 8.[29]

Russian forces continued offensive operations near Bakhmut and reportedly advanced on November 8. Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces made marginal advances from Berkhivka (6km northwest of Bakhmut) towards Bohdanivka (6km northwest of Bakhmut).[30] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces also successfully counterattacked near Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut), and another milblogger claimed that Russian forces reentered the settlement.[31] ISW has not observed visual evidence of these claims, however. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks near Bohdanivka, Khromove (immediately west of Bakhmut), Ivanivske (6km west of Bakhmut), Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut), and Andriivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut).[32]

Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of November 8, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



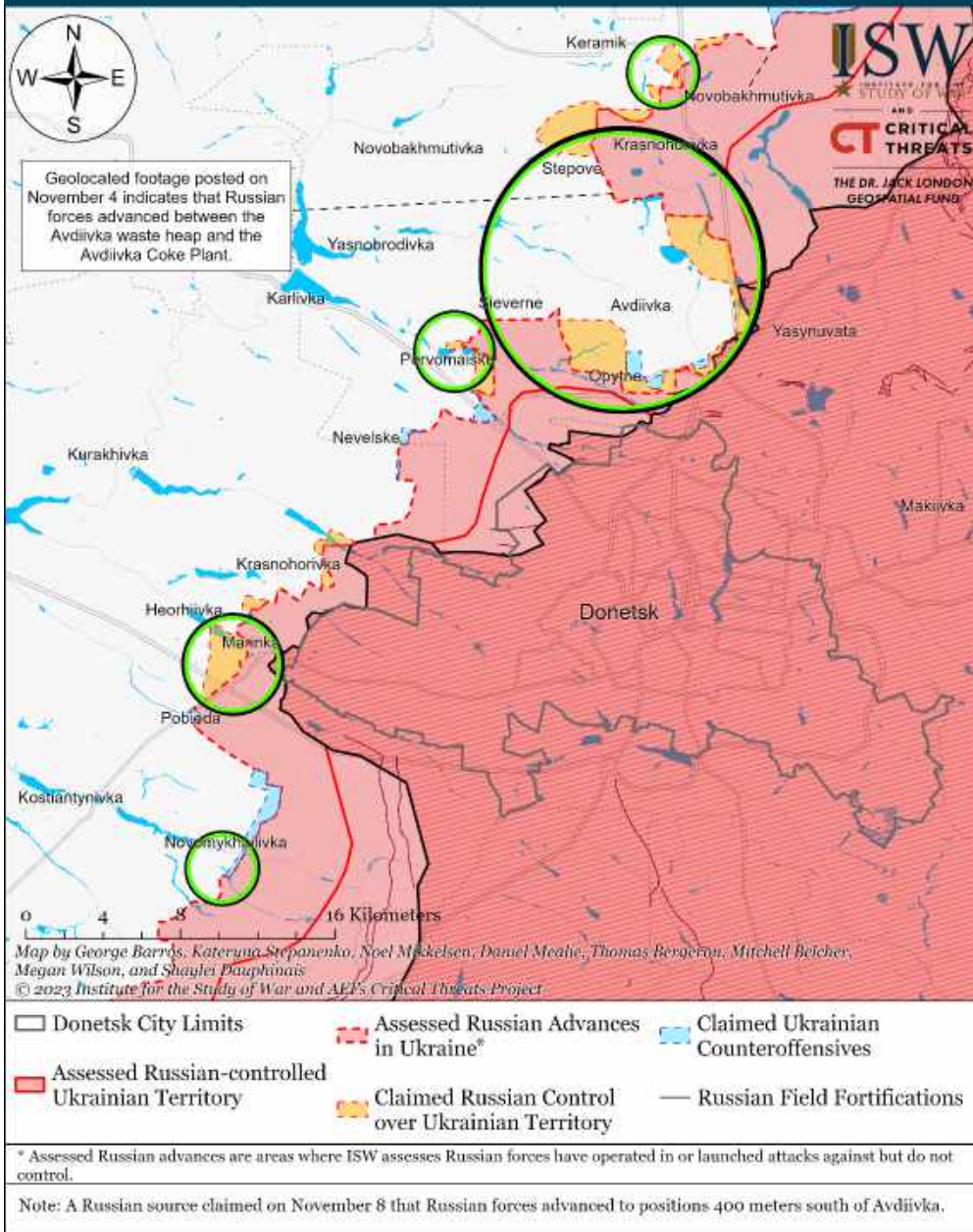
Russian forces continued offensive operations near Avdiivka and reportedly advanced on November 8. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian assaults near Keramik (14km northwest of Avdiivka), Stepove (3km northwest of Avdiivka), Avdiivka, Tonenke (7km northwest of Avdiivka), and Pervomaiske (11km southwest of Avdiivka).[33] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces near Vodyane (7km southwest of Avdiivka) are pressuring Ukrainian forces in the direction of Sieverne (6km west of Avdiivka) and Pervomaiske (11km southwest of Avdiivka).[34] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces have advanced to positions 400 meters from the southern border of Avdiivka, but ISW has not observed visual evidence of this claim.[35] Russian sources continued to claim that Russian forces advanced near the railway line near Stepove, but Ukrainian sources stated that Russian forces suffered high casualties to make this

advance.[36] Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces Spokesperson Colonel Oleksandr Shtupun stated on November 7 that Russian forces in the Avdiivka area lost 585 personnel within the past day during light infantry attacks without armored vehicle support.[37]

Ukrainian officials indicated that Russian forces remain committed to the Avdiivka effort despite high losses and inclement weather. Ukrainian military spokesperson Anton Kotsukon stated that Russian forces have concentrated 40,000 “reserves” in the Avdiivka direction, though it is unclear how many of these personnel are committed to offensive operations.[38] Ukrainian officials have recently stated that Russian forces have 40,000 total personnel in the Avdiivka area.[39] Kotsukon stated that Russian forces have recently been attacking in groups of 10-20 personnel and using a large number of drones to identify Ukrainian counterbattery elements.[40] Ukrainian Avdiivka Military Administration Head Vitaliy Barabash stated that Russian forces are likely ready to conduct a third wave of assaults on Avdiivka but that inclement weather will impede Russian use of equipment.[41]

Ukrainian forces reportedly made marginal gains during counterattacks near Avdiivka on November 8. A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces achieved partial success while counterattacking Russian positions near Vodyane.[42]

Assessed Control of Terrain near Donetsk City as of November 8, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

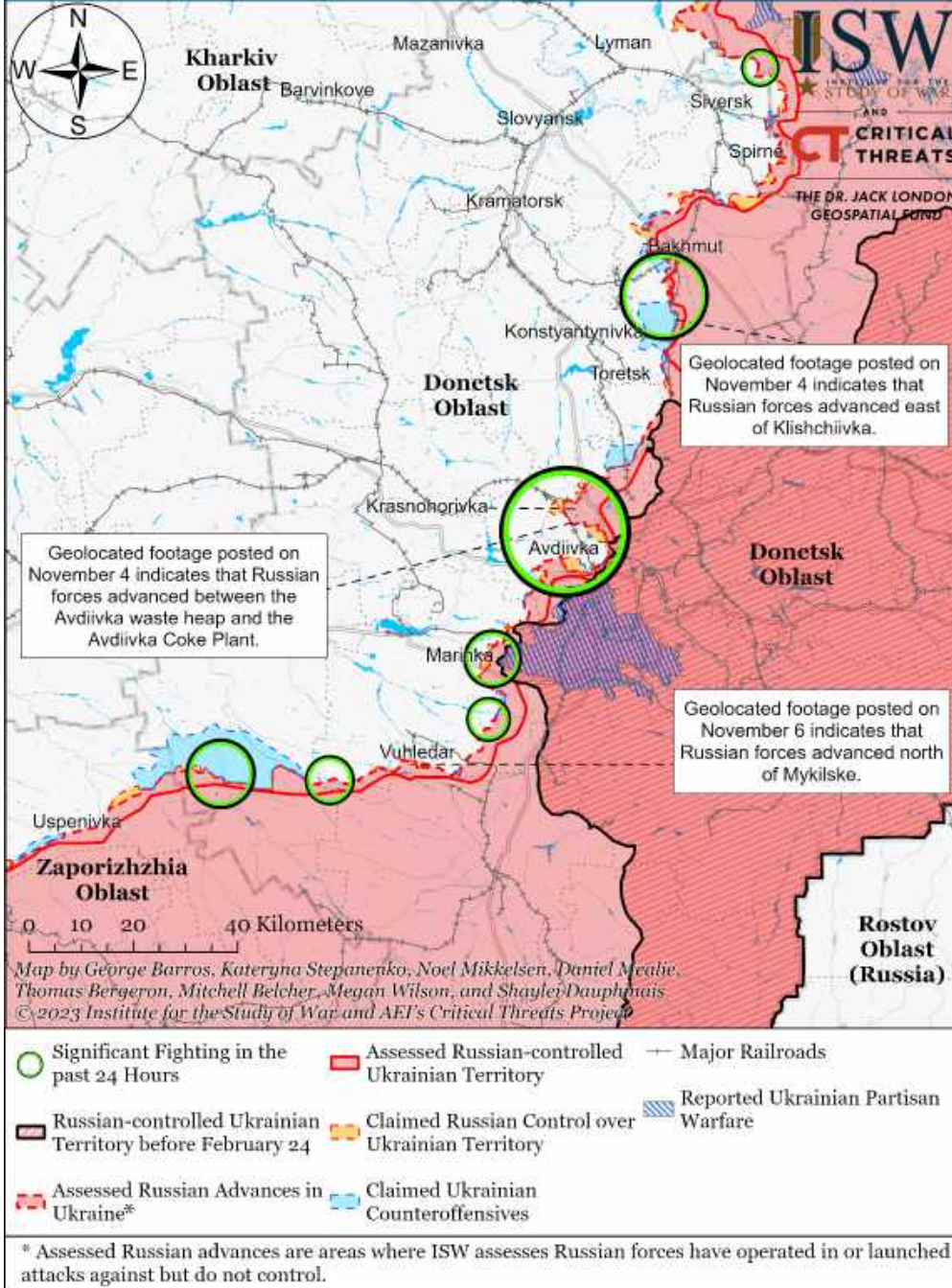


Russian forces continued offensive operations west and southwest of Donetsk City but did not advance on November 8. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful offensive operations near Marinka (immediately west of Donetsk City) and Novomykhailivka (10km southwest of Donetsk City).[43]

Russian forces conducted offensive operations in western Donetsk Oblast on November 8 and recently advanced. Geolocated footage published on November 6 shows that Russian forces advanced north of Mykilske (3km southeast of Vuhledar).[44] Russian sources made similar claims of Russian advances in the area and claimed that there is additional fighting in the dacha area west of Mykilske and that hostilities near Vuhledar have intensified in recent days.[45]

Ukrainian forces did not conduct any claimed or confirmed offensive operations on the western and southwestern outskirts of Donetsk City or in western Donetsk Oblast on November 8.

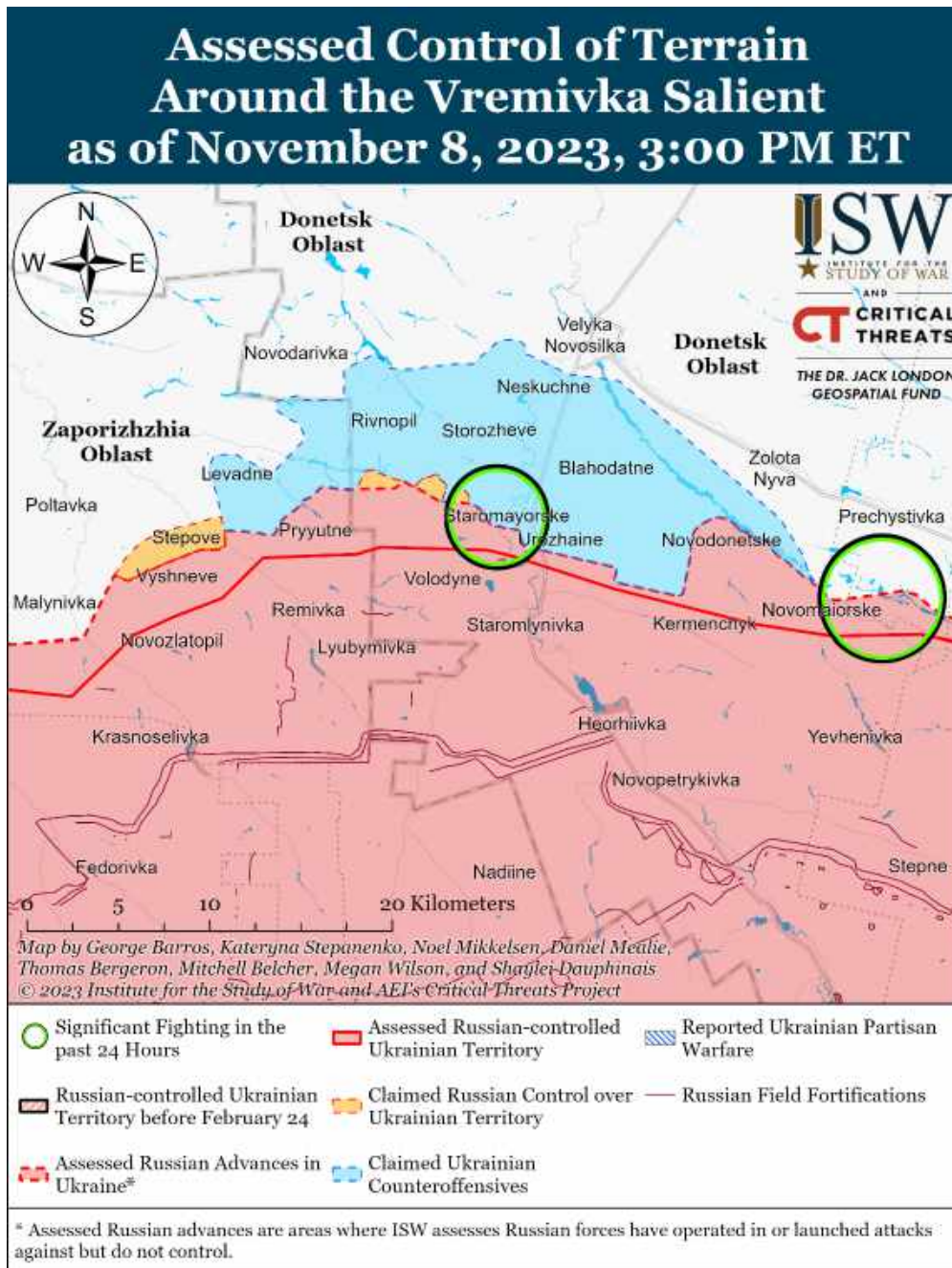
Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of November 8, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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

Russian Eastern Grouping of Forces Spokesperson Oleg Chekhov claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian assaults in the Donetsk-Zaporizhzhia Oblast border area near Staromayorske (9km south of Velyka Novosilka) on November 8.[46]

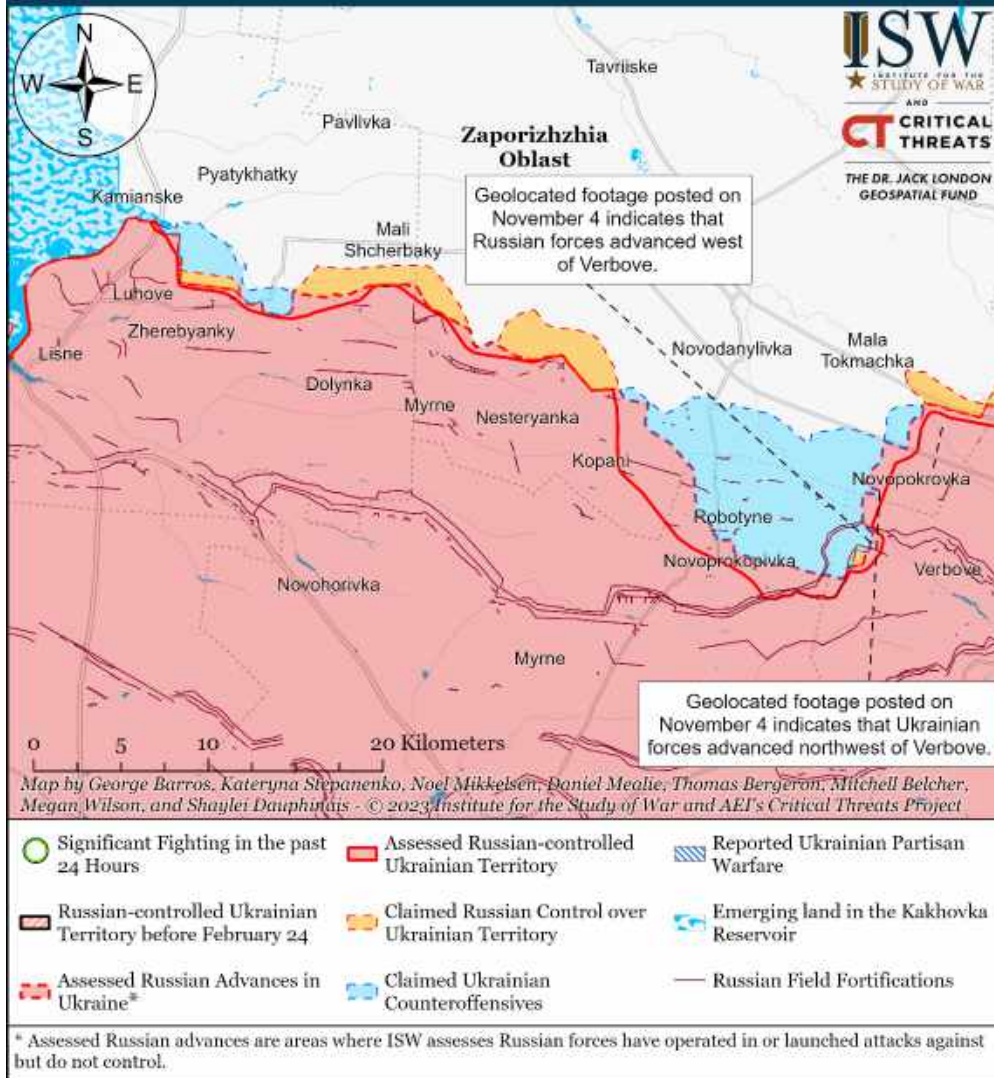
Russian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks in the Donetsk-Zaporizhzhia Oblast border area on November 8. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful assaults near Staromayorske and south of Prechystivka (17km southeast of Velyka Novosilka).[47] A Russian milblogger claimed that the 77th Separate Reconnaissance Battalion of the Russian 127th Motorized Rifle Division (5th Combined Arms Army, Eastern Military District) is operating in the Donetsk-Zaporizhzhia Oblast border area.[48]



Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast but did not make any claimed or confirmed advances on November 8. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Melitopol (western Zaporizhia Oblast) direction.[49] The Russian MoD claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Robotyne and Novoprokopivka (just south of Robotyne).[50] A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces are attempting to capture unspecified heights northwest of Verbove (9km east of Robotyne), where Russian forces withdrew from several unspecified positions.[51] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces with armored vehicle support continued attacks near Robotyne and Verbove over the past several days.[52]

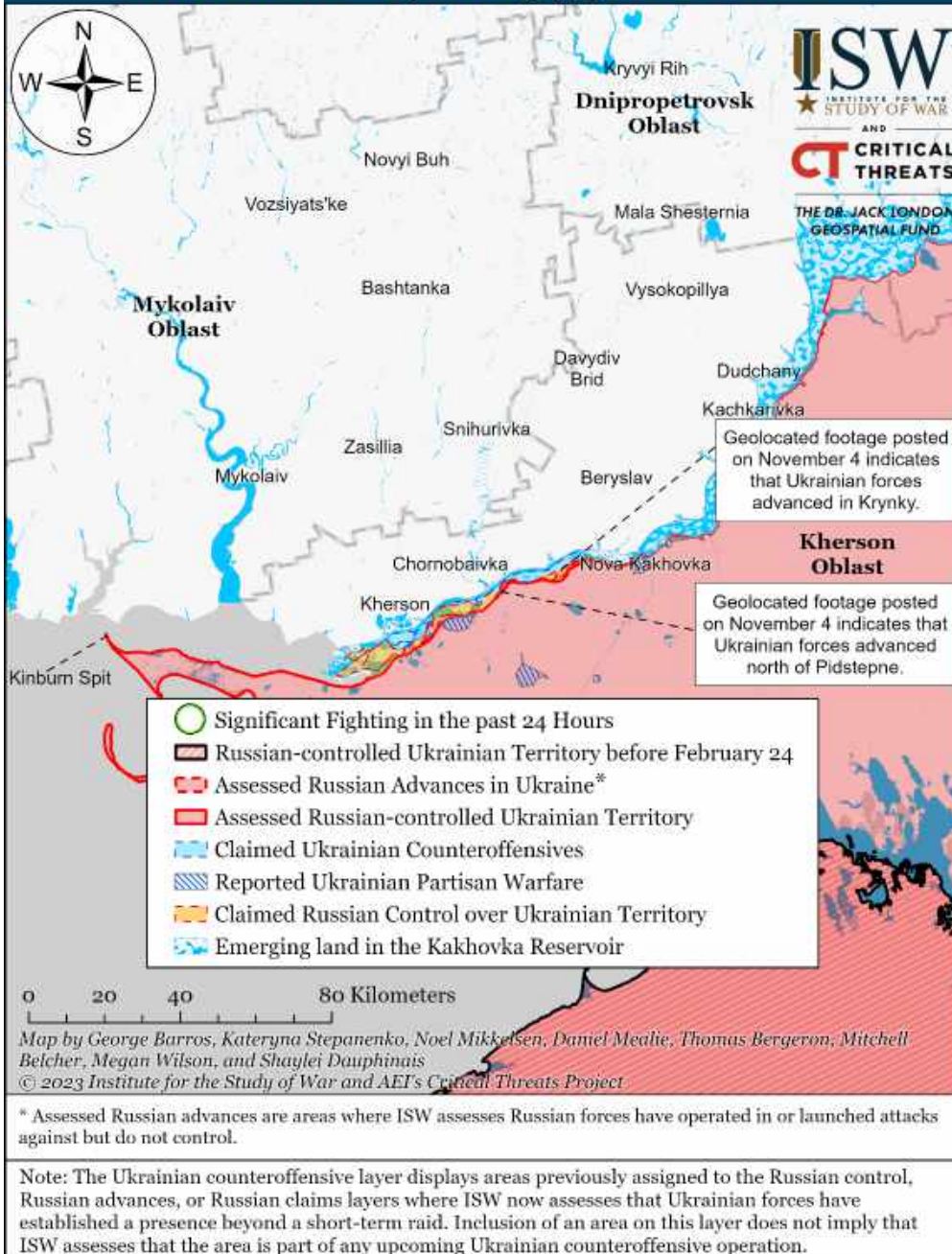
Russian forces conducted unsuccessful ground attacks in western Zaporizhia Oblast on November 8. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces did not conduct offensive actions in the Zaporizhia direction.[53] A Russian news aggregator claimed that Russian forces counterattacked near Verbove on November 7.[54] Russian milbloggers amplified footage claiming to show elements of the Russian 237th Airborne Assault (VDV) Regiment (76th VDV Division) and 22nd Guards Spetsnaz Brigade operating near Verbove.[55] A Russian milblogger amplified footage on November 8 claiming to show elements of the Russian 247th Guards Air Assault Regiment (7th VDV Division) also operating near Verbove.[56]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Pyatykhatky and Robotyne as of November 8, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces maintain positions on the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast and reportedly advanced near Krynky on November 8. Russian milbloggers claimed on November 7 and 8 that Ukrainian forces maintain positions in central Krynky (30km northeast of Kherson City and 2km from the Dnipro River).[57] Several Russian milbloggers claimed on November 8 that Ukrainian forces advanced near Krynky.[58] One Russian milblogger claimed on November 7 that Ukrainian forces are “creeping” forward at a rate of one meter per day.[59] Another Russian milblogger claimed on November 8 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).[60] Prominent Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces continued to transfer personnel to reinforce Ukrainian positions on the east bank.[61]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of November 8, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Kherson Oblast occupation head Vladimir Saldo claimed on November 8 that Russian air defenses downed three Ukrainian missiles over occupied Henichesk Raion, Kherson Oblast.[62] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces were targeting Crimea.[63]

A Kremlin-affiliated Russian milblogger claimed on November 7 that Russian air defenses and electronic warfare (EW) systems downed 17 Ukrainian drones, primarily targeting the Belbek and Saky airfields (just north of Sevastopol and 60km north of Sevastopol, respectively) in occupied Crimea.[64]

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

Russia is reportedly attempting to reacquire components for military equipment from states to which it previously sold the equipment, including Egypt, Pakistan, Brazil, and Belarus. *The Wall Street Journal (WSJ)* reported on November 8 that Egypt agreed in July 2023 to give Mi-8 and Mi-17 helicopter engines back to Russia after Egypt reneged on a deal to send Russia rockets.[65] *WSJ* reported that Russia offered to forgive Egyptian debt and continue wheat supplies to Egypt in exchange for the engines and that Russia also threatened to remove its arms industry advisers from Egypt if Egypt did not agree to return the engines. *WSJ* reported that Egyptian shipments of about 150 engines will likely begin in December 2023. *WSJ* reported that Russia also asked Pakistan to return at least four Mi-35M helicopter engines and asked to buy back 12 decommissioned Mi-35M engines from Brazil, which Brazil reportedly refused. *WSJ* reported that Belarus agreed to sell six Mi-26 helicopter engines back to Russia and that Russia rerouted weapons destined for India and Armenia to Ukraine.

The Russian military reportedly attempted to conscript a Ukrainian minor illegally deported to Russia. The Ukrainian Ministry of Reintegration and Russian opposition outlet *Vazhnye Istorii (iStories)* stated on November 8 that Russian authorities issued a military summons to a 17-year-old Ukrainian who was illegally deported from occupied Mariupol to Russia, where he then lived with a Russian foster family and received a Russian passport.[66] The minor's lawyer reportedly appealed for the teenager's return to Ukraine to Kremlin-appointed Commissioner for Children's Rights Maria Lvova-Belova, who previously claimed in April 2023 that Russian security forces detained the Ukrainian teenager on the Belarussian border as he tried to return to Ukraine.[67] ISW previously reported that Lvova-Belova continuously attempts to justify the illegal deportation of Ukrainian children to Russia as part of a large-scale Russian deportation campaign in Ukraine.[68]

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

A Russian milblogger claimed on November 8 that the Russian Aerospace Forces received new Ka-52M attack helicopters. The milblogger claimed that the modernized helicopter variant includes a GOES-451 electro-optical targeting turret, an updated BKS-50M communications system, an SUO-806PM fire control system that can use new weapons such as the BKO L418 "Monoblock" air defense complex, and the integration of light multipurpose guided missiles (LMUR).[69]

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 administrations continue to create new administrative bodies meant to further integrate occupied territories into Russian governance systems. Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) head Leonid Pasechnik announced on November 8 that Russian occupation officials created a council of municipal entities in occupied Luhansk Oblast.[70] Pasechnik stated that recently elected occupation heads of 28 cities and municipalities in occupied Luhansk Oblast will participate in the occupation council of municipal entities and that Alchevsk City occupation head, Albert Apshev, will chair the regional governance body.[71] Pasechnik asserted that the creation of the council of municipal entities is an important step in the integration of the occupied Luhansk Oblast into the Russian legal field.[72]

Russian occupation officials continue to use maternity capital programs to augment passportization efforts in occupied territories. Zaporizhia Oblast occupation deputy Vladimir Rogov stated on November 8 that residents in occupied Zaporizhia Oblast can receive maternity capital payments for their first and second children if they have Russian passports or if their children have Russian passports.[73]

Russian Information Operations and Narratives

Russian President Vladimir Putin and Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu met with the Chinese Deputy Chairman of the Central Military Council, Zhang Youxia, in Moscow on November 8 and reiterated boilerplate anti-Western rhetoric. Putin claimed that NATO activities are “attempt[ing] to go beyond” its geographic boundaries and that the US is drawing NATO countries into creating a “tense” situation in the Asian Pacific region.[74] Shoigu criticized Western countries for being “aggressive” in creating a “military bloc” and reiterated the Kremlin narrative about the close personal ties between Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping.[75]

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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[1] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidop2fW8JxuLaQkmBqi3RuqKMDhZddDjvm7JKbDiR8hEevLU3w7Z9kgisKQyqMxVzpln> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2VP9zk4vcGMFtAnZ8mbi6W6dnMdAZkQp53iYu4EzANVEhUc93i379MKTqH2GfYcetl>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidop2fW8JxuLaQkmBqi3RuqKMDhZddDjvm7JKbDiR8hEevLU3w7Z9kgisKQyqMxVzpln>

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[3] <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/reuters-next-zelenskiy-says-ukraine-has-plan-continue-fighting-after-slow-2023-11-08/>

[4] <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/reuters-next-zelenskiy-says-ukraine-has-plan-continue-fighting-after-slow-2023-11-08/>

[5] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar101023> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar100623> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar092323> ;

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[9] https://t.me/Alekhin_Telega/8569

[10] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar091623> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar091523> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar081023> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar092423> ;

[11] <http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/document/0001202311080004> ; <https://meduza dot io/news/2023/11/08/putin-prisvoil-zvanie-general-polkovnika-komanduyuschemu-gruppirovkoy-vostok-takzhe-generalskie-zvaniya-poluchili-esche-44-ofitsera> ; <http://publication dot pravo.gov.ru/document/0001202311080003?index=1>

[12] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-25-2023>

[13] <http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/document/0001202311080004> ; <https://meduza dot io/news/2023/11/08/putin-prisvoil-zvanie-general-polkovnika-komanduyuschemu-gruppirovkoy-vostok-takzhe-generalskie-zvaniya-poluchili-esche-44-ofitsera> ; <http://publication dot pravo.gov.ru/document/0001202311080003?index=1>

[14] <https://meduza dot io/feature/2023/11/08/ukraine-ne-udalos-dobitsya-uspehov-v-rezultate-kontrnastupleniya-no-kreml-vse-ravno-hochet-ostavit-voynu-na-zadnem-plane-vo-vremya-predvybornoy-kampanii-2024-goda>

[15] <https://meduza dot io/feature/2023/11/08/ukraine-ne-udalos-dobitsya-uspehov-v-rezultate-kontrnastupleniya-no-kreml-vse-ravno-hochet-ostavit-voynu-na-zadnem-plane-vo-vremya-predvybornoy-kampanii-2024-goda>

[16] <https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-3-2023>

[17] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar101523>

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https://t.me/boris_rozhin/103264 ; https://t.me/dolg_z/2914 ; https://t.me/notes_veterans/13385;
https://t.me/basurin_e/6765 ; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/51944> ;
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Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, November 7, 2023

Christina Harward, Riley Bailey, Angelica Evans, Karolina Hird, and Frederick W. Kagan
November 7, 2023, 5:40pm 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 12:30pm ET on November 7. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the November 8 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces transferred a limited number of armored vehicles to the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast and are continuing larger-than-usual ground operations on the east bank with a light infantry grouping of roughly battalion size. Russian milbloggers amplified a picture on November 6 purporting to show a Ukrainian tracked amphibious transport (PTS) vehicle carrying an infantry fighting vehicle onto the east bank near Krynky (30km northeast of Kherson City and 2km from the Dnipro River).[1] Other milbloggers claimed on November 7 that a Ukrainian amphibious infantry fighting vehicle crossed the Dnipro River on its own near Krynky and amplified separate footage on November 7 purporting to show a destroyed Western amphibious armored personnel carrier in an unspecified location on the east bank.[2] Select Russian milbloggers claimed that either one or two Ukrainian PTS vehicles crossed the Dnipro near Krynky, while other milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces transferred several unspecified armored vehicles to the area.[3] Russian milbloggers claimed that more than 300 Ukrainian personnel (about a battalion's worth) are operating on the east bank in the Krynky area and continue to claim that Ukrainian forces maintain positions in central Krynky and nearby areas.[4] One milblogger claimed that several hundred Ukrainian personnel are operating throughout east bank Kherson Oblast.[5] Russian milbloggers claimed that combat engagements continued near Krynky, as well as 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), but did not claim that Ukrainian attempts to advance on November 6 and 7 were particularly larger than in previous days.[6]

Ukrainian forces likely conducted initial company-sized assaults across the Dnipro River onto the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast on October 17 and 18.[7] The reported battalion-size Ukrainian force grouping on the east bank suggests that heavy Russian interdiction efforts along the Dnipro River have not prevented Ukrainian forces from transferring additional personnel and materiel to positions on the east bank. **ISW will not speculate on the prospects of ongoing Ukrainian activity on the east bank of Kherson Oblast.**

Ukrainian forces conducted counteroffensive operations near Bakhmut and in western Zaporizhia Oblast on November 7. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Bakhmut and Melitopol (western Zaporizhia Oblast) directions.[8] A Russian milblogger claimed on November 6 that Ukrainian forces crossed the railway near Andriivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut).[9] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces are entrenched in forest areas near Verbove (9km east of Robotyne) and that a lack of Russian control of the airspace in the area is complicating Russian artillery fire on these positions.[10]

A prominent pro-war Russian milblogger who is typically optimistic about Russian capabilities expressed a relatively pessimistic assessment of the war and emphasized the need for the Kremlin to fully mobilize the Russian economy and defense industrial base (DIB) to a wartime footing to win. The milblogger claimed on November 7 that Ukraine is committed to an "exhausting war" against Russia and that Russian needs "enormous combat potential" and an "accurate calculation" of its capabilities to beat Ukraine.[11] Another Russian milblogger expressed surprise that a milblogger who was previously so positive in his assessments of the Russian offensive campaign in Ukraine would openly admit to the need for a wider mobilization of the Russian economy in the face of a long war.[12] The Kremlin has largely appeared unwilling to conduct wider economic mobilization, and the milblogger's call to change this line is noteworthy.[13] Yet another Russian milblogger claimed that Russia is "paying terribly" for the Kremlin's unwillingness to fully commit to the war.[14] The milbloggers' suggestion to further mobilize the Russian economy appears to be part of recent discussions in the Russian information space about operational changes that could help Russian forces overcome challenges in Ukraine, likely in response to Ukrainian Commander-in-Chief General Valerii Zaluzhnyi's recent essay on the

subject of “positional warfare.”[15] Zaluzhnyi’s essay appears to have prompted even the most positive Russian milbloggers to make more straight and honest assessments about the Russian war effort.

Russian authorities detained Republic of Dagestan's deputy Minister of Internal Affairs on the pretext of corruption charges, likely in an effort to demonstrate that the federal government is taking action in Dagestan without drawing further attention to the interethnic and interreligious tensions and the propensity for destabilization in the region. Russian state media outlet *TASS* stated on November 7 that Russian security forces detained Dagestani Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs Rufat Ismailov and are currently conducting searches of his home and office.[16] Russian state media outlet *RIA Novosti* further reported that a source within the Russian security forces stated that Ismailov is preliminarily suspected of bribery.[17] A Russian insider source claimed that Ismailov is believed to have received a 100-million-ruble (about \$1,085,770) bribe from an insurance company.[18] The insider source and a Russian milblogger claimed that Russian authorities transferred Ismailov to Moscow, and the milblogger claimed that this indicates that there are risks of high-level officials at the federal subject level “escaping responsibility.”[19] Russian opposition media outlet *SOTA* reported that Russian authorities, including the Federal Security Service (FSB), are also investigating the deputy head of the investigative department of the Dagestani Ministry of Internal Affairs, Dalgat Abdulgapurov.[20] Russian authorities previously removed multiple ineffective air defense officials in charge of the defense of Moscow on the pretext of corruption charges after increasing drone strikes on rear Russian cities, showing that there is a recent pattern of Russian authorities using corruption charges to circumvent publicly disciplining Russian officials for not performing their duties well and thereby admitting to their ineptitude.[21] Although ISW has no reason to doubt the charges against Ismailov his detention suggests that Russian authorities are attempting to create a semblance of federal government control over the situation in Dagestan while avoiding highlighting the recent antisemitic riots. ISW similarly assessed that the Russian leadership likely avoided meting out more severe punishments for more serious charges for participants of the antisemitic riots out of concerns that they will inflame discontent towards the Kremlin.[22]

The Ukrainian strike on a Russian shipyard in Kerch, occupied Crimea on November 4 significantly damaged a Russian Black Sea Fleet (BSF) naval vessel. Russian and Ukrainian sources posted photos on November 7 showing significant damage to the *Askold* Project 22800 Karakurt-class Kalibr missile carrier corvette that will likely render it inoperable for the foreseeable future.[23] ISW assesses that Ukrainian forces have conducted 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.[24]

Key Takeaways:

- **Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces transferred a limited number of armored vehicles to the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast and are continuing larger-than-usual ground operations on the east bank with a light infantry grouping of roughly battalion size.**
- **Ukrainian forces conducted counteroffensive operations near Bakhmut and in western Zaporizhia Oblast on November 7.**
- **A prominent pro-war Russian milblogger who is typically optimistic about Russian capabilities expressed a relatively pessimistic assessment of the war and emphasized the need for the Kremlin to fully mobilize the Russian economy and defense industrial base (DIB) to a wartime footing to win.**
- **Russian authorities detained Republic of Dagestan's deputy Minister of Internal Affairs on the pretext of corruption charges, likely in an effort to demonstrate that the federal government is taking action in Dagestan without drawing further attention to the interethnic and interreligious tensions and the propensity for destabilization in the region.**
- **The Ukrainian strike on a Russian shipyard in Kerch, occupied Crimea on November 4 significantly damaged a Russian Black Sea Fleet (BSF) naval vessel.**
- **Russian forces conducted offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kremlinna line, near Bakhmut, near Avdiivka, west and southwest of Donetsk City, in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area, in eastern Zaporizhia Oblast, and in western Zaporizhia Oblast and reportedly advanced in some areas.**
- **A Russian battalion comprised of Ukrainian prisoners of war (POWs) will likely deploy to Ukraine in the near future in an apparent violation of the Geneva Convention on Prisoners of War.**
- **Kremlin-appointed Commissioner on Children's Rights Maria Lvova-Belova advertised several benefit schemes targeting children in occupied Ukraine as part of the "A Country for Children" strategic program.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of November 7, 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

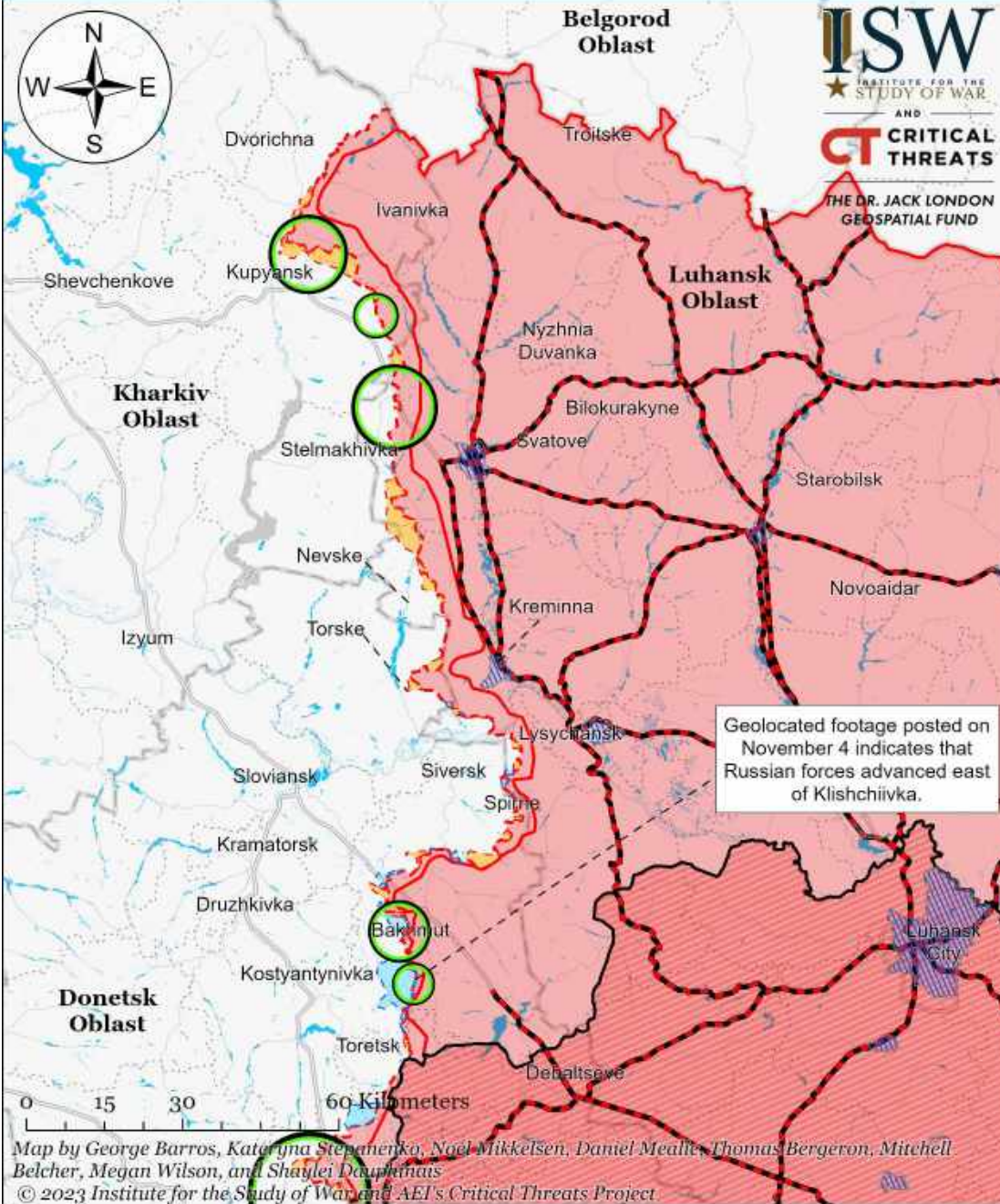
Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

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 offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove line on November 7 but did not make any confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful offensive operations near Synkivka (9km northeast of Kupyansk), Ivanivka (20km southeast of Kupyansk), Berestove (20km northwest of Svatove), and Stelmakhivka (15km northwest of Svatove) and that Russian forces did not conduct any offensive actions in the Lyman direction.[25] A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces attacked near Synkivka and Petropavlivka (7km east of Kupyansk) and captured new positions in the area.[26] Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets stated that Russian forces will likely renew offensive actions towards Petropavlivka from the north, attempt to advance to the N26 Kupyansk-Svatove road from Pershotravneve (24km east of Kupyansk), and attempt to break through Ukrainian defenses in the Stepova Novoselivka-Pishchane direction (18-20km southeast of Kupyansk) in the near future.[27] Mashovets stated that elements of the Russian 25th Motorized Rifle Brigade (6th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Western Military District [WMD]) and the 138th Motorized Rifle Brigade (6th CAA, WMD) attempted to advance towards Petropavlivka from Lyman Pershyi (11km northeast of Kupyansk). Mashovets also stated that elements of the 15th Motorized Rifle Regiment (2nd Motorized Rifle Division, 1st Guards Tank Army, WMD) attacked southwest of Pershotravneve and achieved unspecified partial success. Mashovets added that elements of the 272nd Motorized Rifle Regiment (47th Tank Division, 1st Guards Tank Army, WMD) attempted to advance to Stelmakhivka (15km northwest of Svatove). The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed to be issuing cash prizes to Russian Western Grouping of Forces servicemen for destroying Western-provided equipment in the Kupyansk direction.[28] Mashovets stated that the Russian Central Grouping of Forces command introduced the 137th Separate Motorized Rifle Brigade (reportedly the former “Ural” volunteer battalion that the Russian MoD formalized in October 2023) into combat in the Lyman direction and noted that this brigade is likely operating below its doctrinal end strength.

The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks along the Kupyansk-Kreminna line on November 7. Russian Western Grouping of Forces Spokesperson Sergei Zybinsky claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian assaults near Zahoruykivka (15km east of Kupyansk).[29] The Russian MoD claimed that Russian forces repelled a Ukrainian attack near Dibrova (7km southwest of Kreminna).[30]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of November 7, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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Geolocated footage posted on November 4 indicates that Russian forces advanced east of Klishchiivka.

Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealle, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Megan Wilson, and Shaylei Dauphinais
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- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Russian Ground Lines of Communication
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare

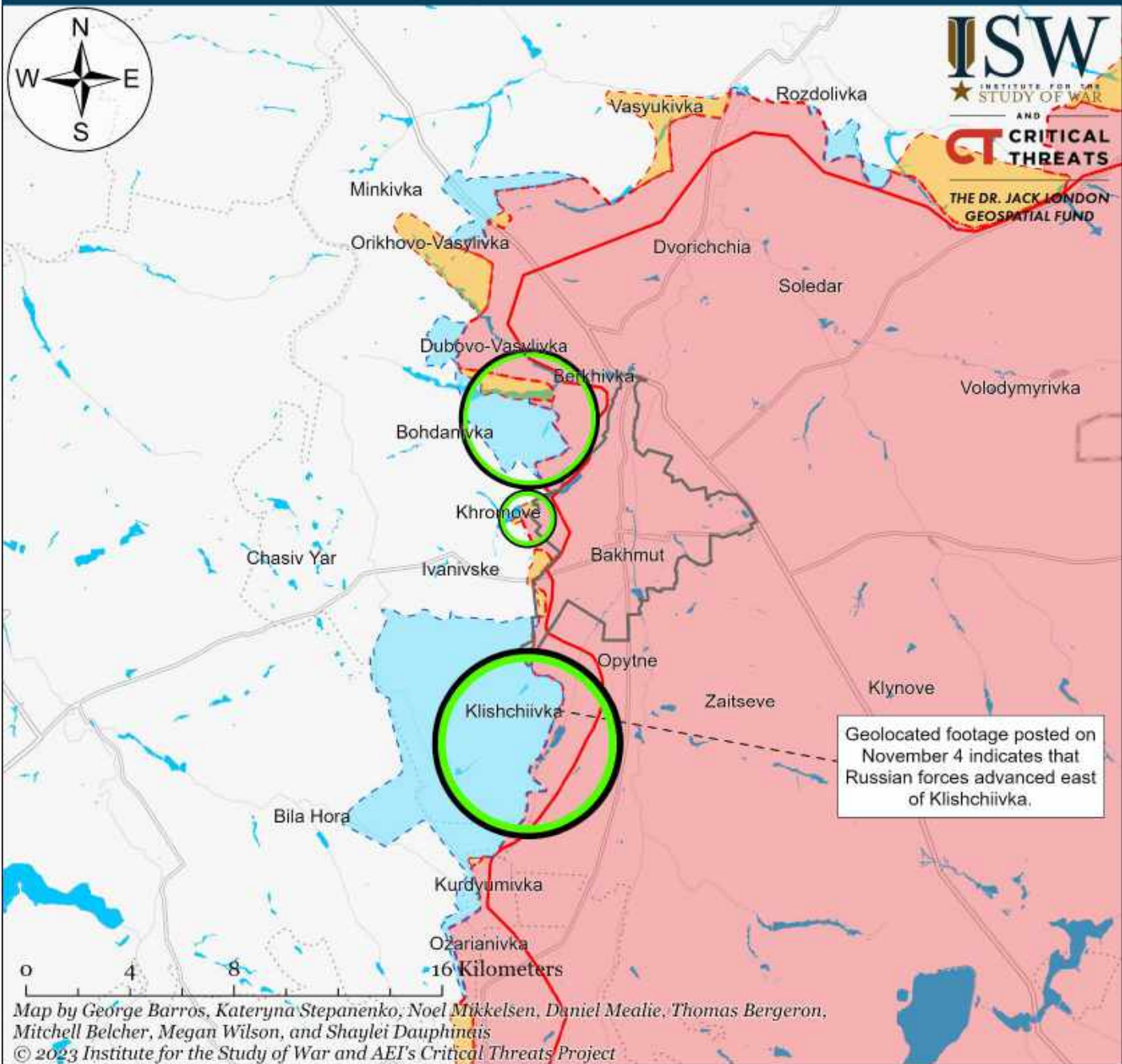
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

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

Ukrainian forces continued offensive actions near Bakhmut on November 7 and reportedly advanced. A Russian milblogger claimed on November 6 that Ukrainian forces crossed the railway near Andriivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut).[31] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed on November 7 that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Rozdolivka (18km north of Bakhmut), Minkivka (15km northwest of Bakhmut), and Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut).[32] A Russian milblogger claimed that there are positional battles in the Soledar direction north of Bakhmut.[33]

Russian forces conducted offensive operations near Bakhmut but did not make any confirmed gains on November 7. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces marginally advanced near Klishchiivka and “significantly” advanced from Berkhivka (6km northwest of Bakhmut) to Bohdanivka (6km northwest of Bakhmut).[34] Another Russian milblogger claimed on November 6 and 7 that Russian forces regained lost positions in the direction of Zelenopillia (4km northeast of Bakhmut) and advanced to Vasyukivka and Sakko i Vantsetti (both 16km north of Bakhmut) and near Klishchiivka.[35] ISW has not observed visual confirmation of these claimed Russian advances. A Russian milblogger claimed on November 6 that Russian forces counterattacked north of Klishchiivka and south of Andriivka, and a Russian news aggregator claimed that Russian forces pushed Ukrainian troops back from a section of the railway line between Klishchiivka and Andriivka on November 6.[36] The Ukrainian General Staff reported on November 7 that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Bohdanivka, Khromove (immediately west of Bakhmut), Andriivka, and Klishchiivka.[37] The Russian MoD reported that elements of the Russian 98th Guards Airborne (VDV) Division are operating north of Bakhmut.[38]

Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of November 7, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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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.

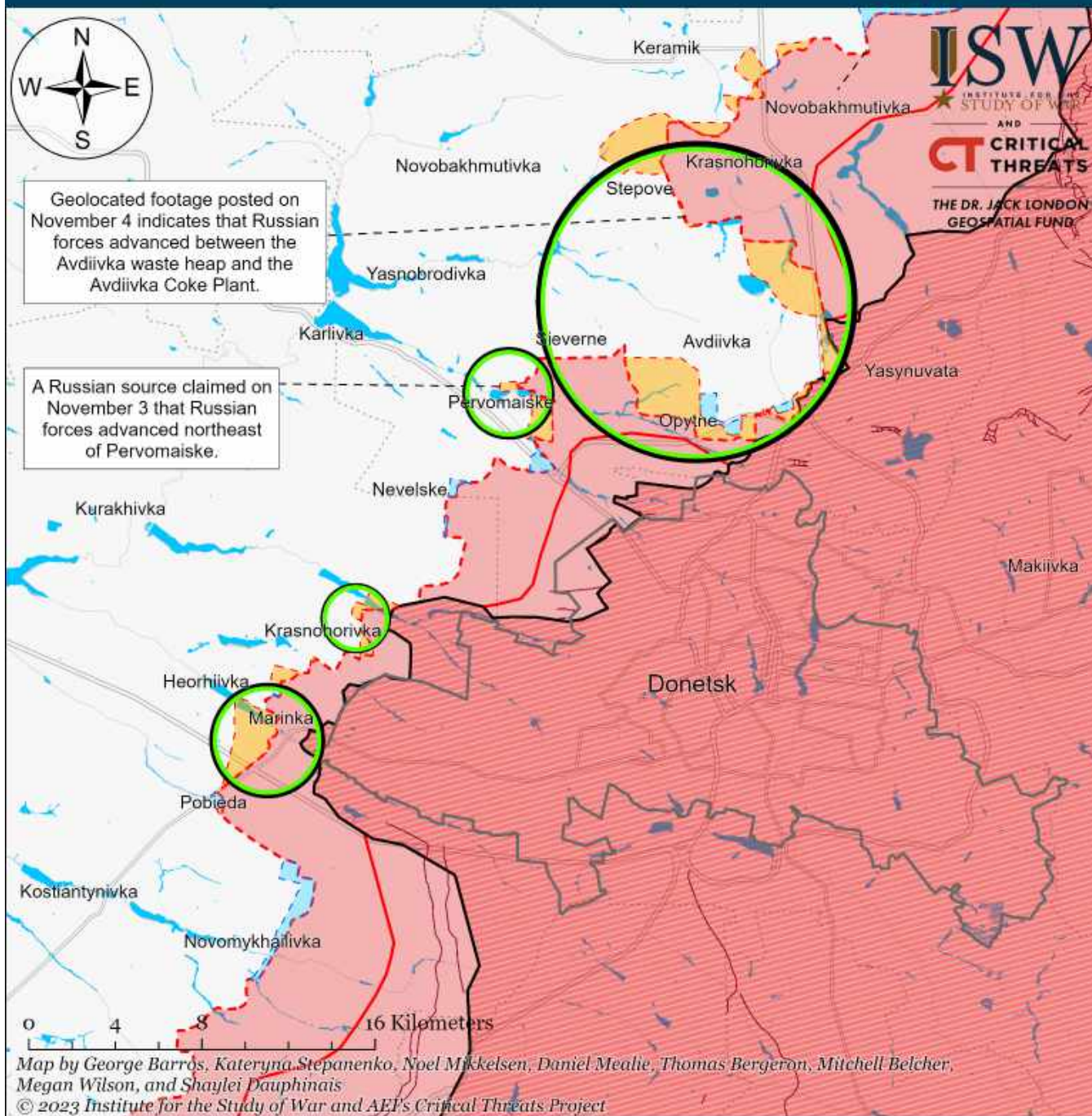
Russian forces conducted offensive operations near Avdiivka on November 7 and reportedly advanced. Russian sources claimed on November 6 and 7 that Russian forces marginally advanced along the railway line near Stepove (3km northwest of Avdiivka).[39] Russian milbloggers claimed on November 7 that Russian forces advanced near Sieverne (6km west of Avdiivka) but did not enter the settlement itself.[40] The milbloggers also claimed that Russian forces advanced along the river from Vodyane in the direction of Pervomaiske (10km southwest of Avdiivka) and that Russian forces control the waste heap north of Avdiivka but that Ukrainian artillery is preventing Russian forces from consolidating their positions there.[41] Russian sources claimed on November 6 and 7 that Russian forces attacked near Pervomaiske and Stepove, north of Spartak (4km south of Avdiivka), in the direction of Sieverne, and on the southern and eastern approaches to Avdiivka.[42] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Stepove, Avdiivka, Tonenke (5km west of Avdiivka), and Pervomaiske.[43] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces have switched to a “creeping offensive” in the Avdiivka direction after Russian forces conducted a “heavy onslaught” in the first days of attacks, suggesting that the pace of Russian offensive operations in this area has slowed.[44] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces are suffering from a shortage of electronic warfare (EW) complexes in the Avdiivka direction, which is allowing Ukrainian forces to establish control of the air in the area.[45]

Ukrainian forces did not conduct any claimed or confirmed offensive operations near Avdiivka on November 7.

Russian forces conducted offensive operations west and southwest of Donetsk City but did not make any confirmed advances on November 7. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced near Mykilske (3km southeast of Vuhledar) and attacked in Marinka (on the western outskirts of Donetsk City).[46] Another Russian milblogger claimed on November 6 that Russian forces pushed Ukrainian forces out of unspecified positions near Novomykhailivka (10km southwest of Donetsk City).[47] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Marinka and Krasnohorivka (directly west of Donetsk City).[48] A Russian news aggregator claimed that there were positional battles in Marinka and meeting engagements on the western outskirts of Marinka and Novomykhailivka on November 6.[49]

Ukrainian forces did not conduct any claimed or confirmed offensive operations west or southwest of Donetsk City on November 7.

Assessed Control of Terrain near Donetsk City as of November 7, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

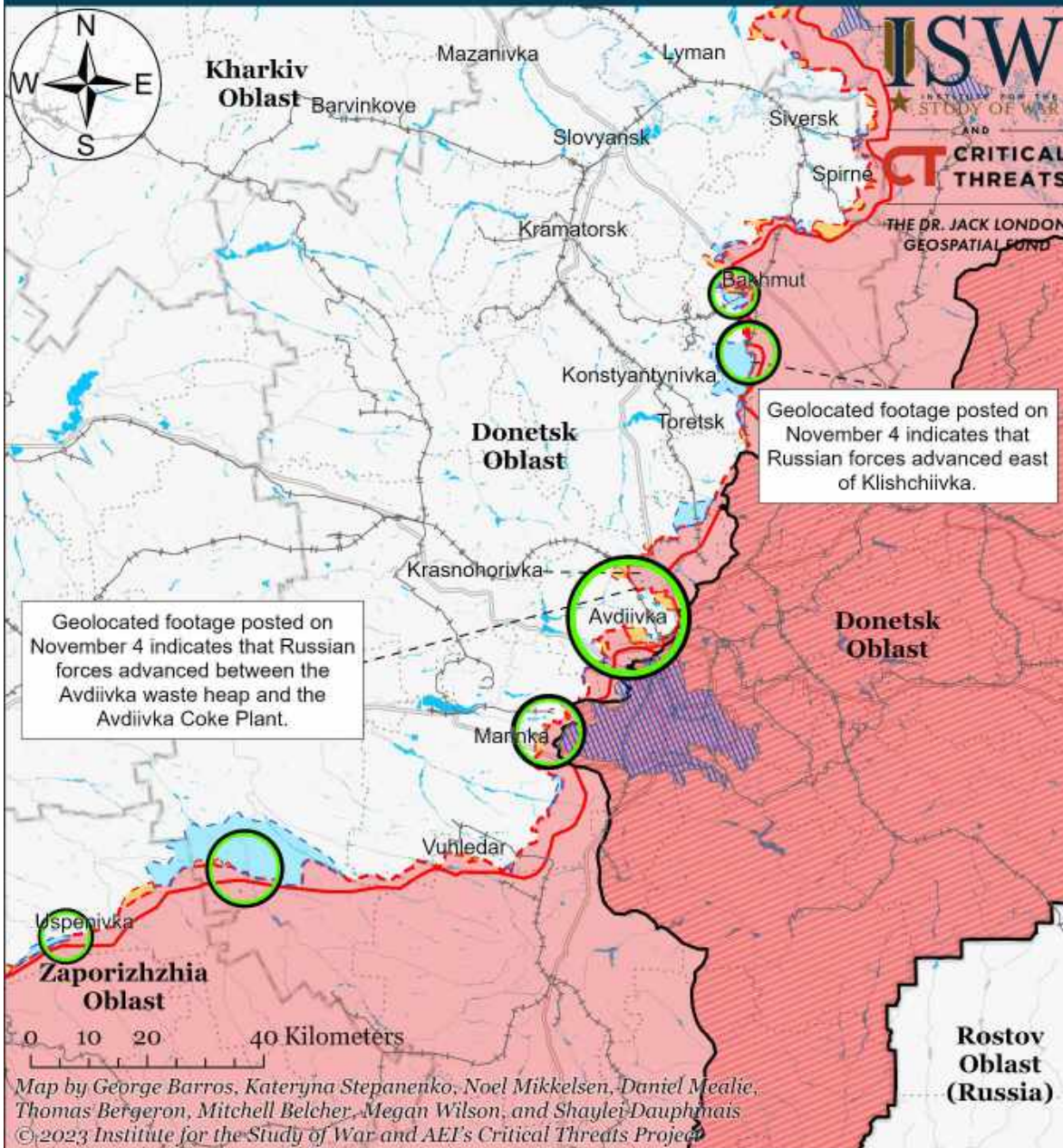


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- Donetsk City Limits
- ▭ Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- ▭ Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- ▭ Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- ▭ Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Russian Field Fortifications

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

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of November 7, 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)

Ukrainian forces did not conduct any confirmed or claimed ground attacks in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on November 7.

Russian forces continued limited offensive operations in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on November 7 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).[50] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces also repelled Russian assaults near Pryyutne (14km southwest of Velyka Novosilka).[51] A Russian media aggregator claimed that Russian forces made unspecified gains near Staromayorske on November 6, although ISW has not seen visual confirmation of this claim.[52]



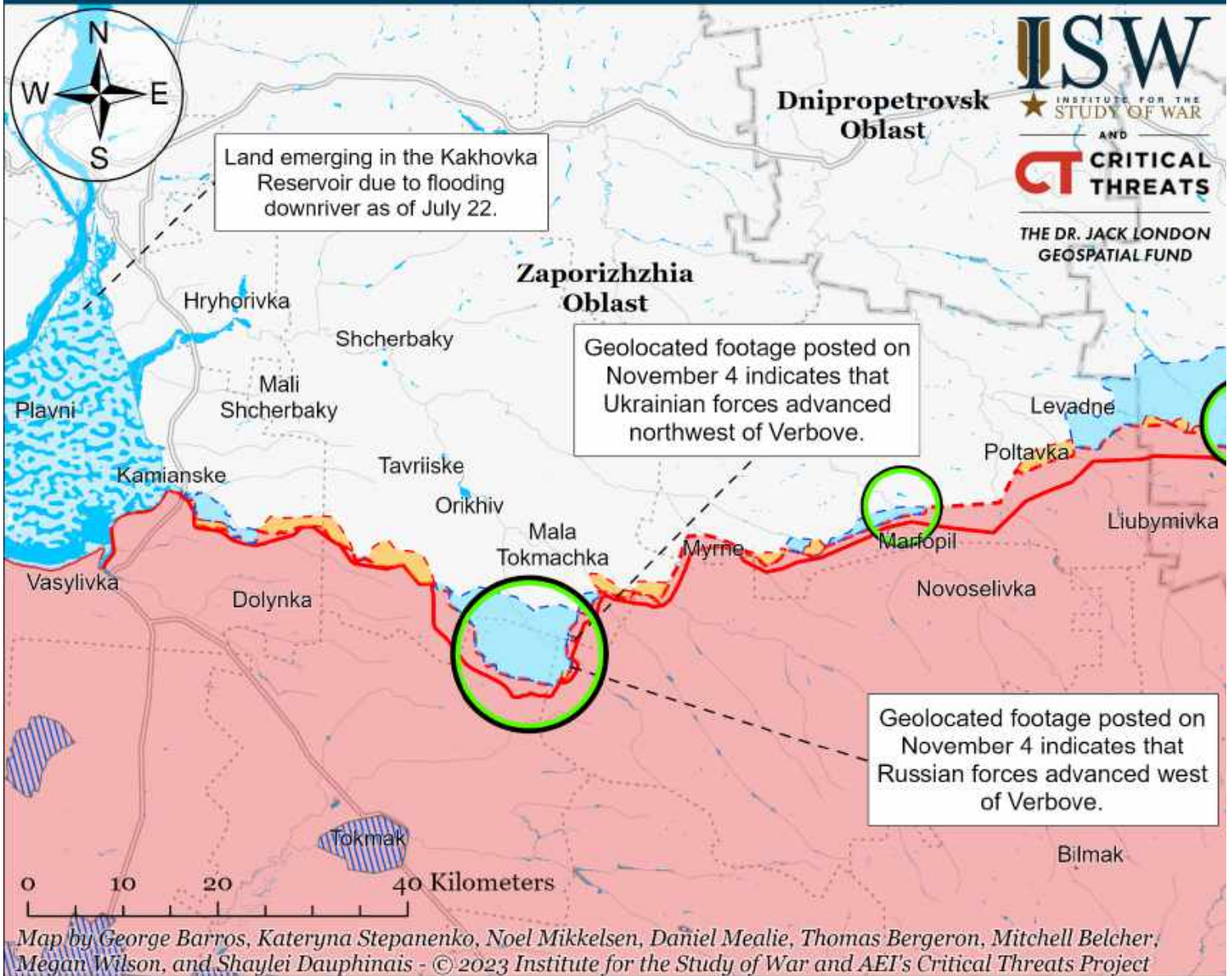
Russian forces conducted ground attacks in eastern Zaporizhzhia Oblast on November 7 but did not make any confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful assaults near Chervone (6km east of Hulyaipole).[53]

Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast on November 7 but did not make any confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Melitopol (western Zaporizhzhia Oblast) direction.[54] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian assaults west of Robotyne and near Verbove (9km east of Robotyne).[55] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces are entrenched in unspecified forest areas near Verbove and that a lack of Russian control of the air in the area is complicating Russian artillery fire on these positions.[56] The milblogger claimed that a Ukrainian reconnaissance group approached western Verbove and that a small-arms engagement is ongoing in the area.[57]

Russian forces counterattacked in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast on November 7 but did not make any confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian assaults near Robotyne and northwest of Verbove.[58] A Russian media aggregator claimed that Russian forces counterattacked near Kopani (6km northwest of Robotyne) on November 6 but did not specify the outcome of the counterattacks.[59] The media aggregator also claimed that fighting resumed near Pyatykhatky (26km northwest of Robotyne) on November 6, although other Russian sources who regularly comment on the situation near the settlement have not yet made similar claims.[60]



Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhzhia as of November 7, 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 | |

* 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.

The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Russian air defenses intercepted 17 Ukrainian drones over the Black Sea and occupied Crimea on the morning of November 7.[61]

Ukrainian military observer Konstantyn Mashovets stated on November 7 that the Russian Aerospace (VSK) forces conducted two patrols of the Black Sea between October 28 and November 3 with MiG-31 attack aircraft.[62] Russian forces recently transferred at least four MiG-31 attack aircraft to the Belbek airfield in occupied Crimea after Russian President Vladimir Putin announced on October 18 that the Russian VKS would begin to patrol the airspace over the Black Sea with MiG-31 aircraft.[63] Mashovets notably added that the MiG-31 aircraft that have patrolled the Black Sea took off from the Mozdok airfield in the North Ossetia-Alania Republic and the Savasleyka airfield in Nizhny Novgorod Oblast instead of the Belbek airfield in occupied Crimea.[64]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of November 7, 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)

A Russian battalion comprised of Ukrainian prisoners of war (POWs) will likely deploy to Ukraine in the near future in an apparent violation of the Geneva Convention on Prisoners of War.[65] Russian news outlet *RIA Novosti* reported on November 7 that Ukrainian soldiers of the "Bogdan Khmelnytsky" battalion, the first unit consisting of former Ukrainian POWs, swore an oath of allegiance to Russia and will soon deploy to Ukraine.[66] *RIA Novosti* reported that the battalion is operating under the Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) "Kaskad" formation, which suggests that the POWs will deploy to the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area, where Kaskad is reportedly active.[67] Russian sources claimed that the Russian command will treat the POWs the same as Russian soldiers and that they will receive comparable salaries and benefits.[68] As ISW previously reported, Russian state media claimed that Russian forces "recruited" up to 70 Ukrainian POWs from various Russian penal colonies to serve in the "Bogdan Khmelnytsky" battalion.[69] The Geneva Convention on Prisoners of War prohibits the use of POWs in military activities on the side of the power that has captured them, stating that "no prisoner of war may at any time be sent to or detained in areas where he may be exposed to the fire of the combat zone" and shall not "be employed on labor which is of an unhealthy or dangerous nature."[70]

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

The Russian military continues efforts to increase and optimize the use of FPV drones. The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) announced on November 7 the creation of a training school for FPV drone operators as part of the Sudoplatov volunteer battalion, which is affiliated with the Zaporizhia Oblast occupation administration.[71] The Russian MoD claimed that Russian servicemembers are learning how to operate the FPV drones and use 3D printers to produce drone components at the training schools.[72] A Russian milblogger praised the increased use of small and high-speed FPV drones by Russian forces in Ukraine over the course of 2023 and claimed that they are a "real technical revolution."[73]

Kremlin press wire *TASS* reported on November 7 that Russian forces in Ukraine used a S-400 anti-aircraft missile system to launch anti-aircraft guided missiles with active homing heads for the first time.[74] *TASS*, citing an unidentified Russian MoD source, claimed that Russian forces used the S-400 in tandem with an A-50 long-range radar detection aircraft to ensure success against Ukrainian aviation.[75]

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)

Kremlin-appointed Commissioner on Children's Rights Maria Lvova-Belova advertised several benefit schemes targeting children in occupied Ukraine as part of the "A Country for Children" strategic program.[76] Lvova-Belova reported that under the "A Country for Children" program, Russian occupation authorities have opened five "humanitarian" headquarters in occupied Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson, and Zaporizhia oblasts that are meant to fulfill requests of residents. Such clearly Kremlin-affiliated humanitarian headquarters are likely aimed at generating dependency on the occupation administration by monopolizing the provision of basic social benefits. Lvova-Belova also reported that a woman from Nizhny Novgorod Oblast is raising 14 foster children, including children from occupied Donetsk Oblast, further confirming that certain Russian families are engaged in an ostensibly Kremlin-approved process of adopting Ukrainian children to forcibly Russify them.[77] Lvova-Belova also confirmed that Russian authorities have deported at least 50 children from occupied Zaporizhia Oblast to a sanatorium-resort for "treatment" in Krasnodar Krai.[78]

Russian Information Operations and Narratives

Russia continues efforts to posture itself as the leader of a coalition of states that are aligned against the West. Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu held separate meetings on November 7 with Nicaraguan Army Commander-in-Chief Julio Aviles Castillo and Burkinabe Minister of Defense and Veteran Affairs Brigadier General Kassoum Coulibaly to discuss bilateral military cooperation.[79] Shoigu remarked that Russia and Nicaragua both "reject the dictates and political pressure from Western states, led by the US" and that Russia, Nicaragua, and that a coalition of "like-minded" states are counterbalancing Western "hegemony."[80] Shoigu frequently uses such bilateral defense meetings to posture Russia as a viable partner and further several Russian narratives regarding the US and the West.

The Russian information space continues to respond negatively to reports of deepening US-Armenian relations. A prominent Kremlin-affiliated milblogger responded to a November 3 meeting between Chief of the Armenian General Staff Edvard Asryan and US Deputy European Command (EUCOM) commander Lieutenant General Steven Basham and claimed that this interaction is another Armenian snub to Russia.[81] The milblogger voiced concern that growing US-Armenian

cooperation will threaten Russia's ability to maintain the 102nd Military Base in Gyumri, Armenia, thereby further weakening Russia's presence in the region.[82] ISW has recently assessed that Yerevan is distancing itself from Moscow as bilateral relations between the two deteriorate.[83]

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.

[1] https://t.me/dva_majors/28619 ; https://t.me/dva_majors/28620 ; https://t.me/dva_majors/28626

[2] <https://t.me/wargonzo/16295> ; <https://t.me/osetin20/7332> ; https://t.me/dva_majors/28664

[3] <https://t.me/rybar/53979> ; https://t.me/dva_majors/28620 ; https://t.me/dva_majors/28626 ; https://t.me/romanov_92/42244 ; <https://t.me/rybar/53979> ; <https://t.me/rybar/53981> ; https://t.me/negumanitarnaya_pomosch_Z/12006 ; https://t.me/boris_rozhin/103140 ; <https://t.me/wargonzo/16295> ; <https://t.me/wargonzo/16300> ; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4562> ; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/51920> ;

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[13] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-july-11-2023> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-february-9-2023>

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- [18] <https://t.me/vchkogpu/43548>
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- [26] <https://t.me/wargonzo/16285>
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- [29] https://t.me/mod_russia/32236
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- [32] https://t.me/mod_russia/32245 ; https://t.me/mod_russia/32248
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- [37] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbidopvkrWhCVVJGq3jRPdS7ZJNNfqiGfKM01XkYDNgQqQNg9aov1XzAaiv86bAX1Pvgl> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02zKw4M1RyUusb7Qc2sNQ5TUkxaQ69FA7KBMFyv9yiPupcmMTYfCLyQYhrx5x5CJtnl> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02mvTSRqEjP9YoUFPJZ99MjoBBxY3i6eva2XhDHuF2yt6JRKBE3irhrMQD3eAVSsTYI>
- [38] https://t.me/mod_russia/32226
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[64] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1387>

[65] https://t.me/rian_ru/220717 ; https://twitter.com/666_mancer/status/1721763917406384212 ; https://twitter.com/666_mancer/status/1721765643400208423 ; https://t.me/rian_ru/220719 ; <https://t.me/vrogov/12801>

[66] <https://ria dot ru/20231107/prisyaga-1907803987.html>

[67] <https://ria dot ru/20231107/prisyaga-1907803987.html>

[68] https://t.me/rian_ru/220717 ; https://twitter.com/666_mancer/status/1721763917406384212 ; https://twitter.com/666_mancer/status/1721765643400208423 ; https://t.me/rian_ru/220719 ; <https://t.me/vrogov/12801>

[69] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar102723>

[70] <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/geneva-convention-relative-treatment-prisoners-war>

[71] https://t.me/mod_russia/32251; https://t.me/mod_russia/32252 ; https://t.me/mod_russia/32258

[72] https://t.me/mod_russia/32251

[73] <https://t.me/EnotHersonVDV/68> ; https://t.me/vdv_ZA_teplinsky/322

[74] <https://tass.ru/armiya-i-opk/19219021>

[75] <https://tass dot ru/armiya-i-opk/19219021>

[76] <https://t.me/malvovabelova/2407>

[77] <https://t.me/malvovabelova/2407>

[78] <https://t.me/malvovabelova/2407>

[79] https://t.me/mod_russia/32242 ; https://t.me/mod_russia/32243; https://t.me/mod_russia/32254 ; https://t.me/mod_russia/32255

[80] https://t.me/mod_russia/32242 ; https://t.me/mod_russia/32243

[81] <https://t.me/rybar/54000>; <https://www.eucom.mil/pressrelease/42544/armenian-military-leaders-visit-eucom-for-bilateral-meeting>; <https://www.mil dot am/en/news/11848>

[82] <https://t.me/rybar/54000>

[83] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-26-2023>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-14-2023>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-october-11-2023>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-25-2023>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-19-2023>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-5-2023>

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, November 6, 2023

Kateryna Stepanenko, Karolina Hird, Riley Bailey,
Christina Harward, and Frederick W. Kagan

November 6, 2023, 6:50pm ET

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

Click [here](#) to 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 6. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the November 7 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Imprisoned ardent nationalist and former Russian officer Igor Girkin argued that Russian forces will be “even less capable of offensive operations than they are now” by spring 2024 given the current nature of Russian offensive operations along the frontline.^[1] Girkin’s wife, Miroslava Reginskaya, published a hand-written letter from Girkin dated October 26, in which he summarized the frontline situation in Ukraine for the month of October. Girkin claimed that the situation for Russian forces is “gradually deteriorating” and that Russian forces are showcasing “growing weakness (compared to [Ukraine’s] capabilities,” despite Russia’s “generally successful repulsion” of the Ukrainian offensive over the summer and fall of 2023. Girkin argued that Russian forces were not only unable to start broad offensive operations at the beginning of the fall season but were also unable to complete even limited offensive operations to achieve operationally significant goals – namely around Kupyansk, Lyman, and Avdiivka. Girkin claimed that Russian forces failed to advance in the Kupyansk direction and are now impaled in battles on “the distant approaches to the city,” while also failing to change the situation in the Lyman direction. Girkin added that tactical advances around Avdiivka led to significant losses in Russian manpower and equipment and did not lead to the further development of the Russian offensive. Girkin observed that the Avdiivka offensive demonstrated Russian forces’ inability “to achieve superiority on a very narrow sector of the front” despite Russia’s careful preparations, good coordination of strike forces and means for the initial stage of the offensive, and the abundance of ammunition “unheard of since the assault on Bakhmut.”

Girkin suggested that Russian efforts to repel Ukrainian localized attacks across the frontline and simultaneous fall-winter offensive operations will likely degrade Russian offensive and defensive potential by spring 2024. Girkin noted that Russian forces would need to spend the rest of the fall-winter campaign on the defensive to try to eliminate emerging operational crises – such as the Ukrainian presence in the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast. Girkin argued that Russian forces will continue to be “incapable of any broad offensive actions” even if

Ukrainian forces are unable to “knock out” Russian frontline units, fail to achieve a breakthrough over the fall-winter season, and are exhausted. Girkin, however, added that such a “positional scenario” is not guaranteed and that he fears that Ukrainian forces may be successful in breaking Russian forces that have already been exhausted by months of combat. Girkin’s suggestion that ongoing Russian offensive operations are harming the prospects for future Russian operations is notable because Russian forces still must repel Ukrainian offensive operations while attempting to initiate their own offensives. The timing of current Russian offensives around Avdiivka was also somewhat odd and suboptimal because the rainy and muddy weather has predictably hindered Russian operations.[2] ISW continues to assess that fall and winter weather conditions are unlikely to preclude Russian or Ukrainian offensives.[3]

Girkin implied that additional Western military aid to Ukraine and the lack of mobilization in Russia could allow Ukraine to end positional warfare and conduct successful offensive operations in 2024. Girkin stated that Ukrainian forces are continuing to use Western-provided materiel to target the Russian rear and even destroy the Berdyansk airfield in occupied Zaporizhia Oblast against the backdrop of Russian offensives in Avdiivka. Girkin implied that Ukrainian forces would continue to devastate the Russian rear over the winter as Russian forces continued to push for limited offensive operations. Girkin stated that once Ukraine receives Western-provided F-16 fighter jets, Ukrainian forces could have localized advantages for a short period of time on any section of the frontline. Girkin added that Ukraine could be “seriously strengthened in military-technical terms” with Western military equipment. Girkin also claimed that Ukraine currently has superiority in manpower over Russian forces due to a lack of mobilization in Russia and that the Kremlin is unlikely to call up mobilization before spring 2024 due to upcoming presidential elections. Girkin noted that the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) is unlikely to recruit “hundreds of thousands” of new contract servicemen because Russia has exhausted the recruitment potential for new contract servicemen and volunteers. Ukrainian Commander-in-Chief General Valerii Zaluzhnyi’s long essay, “Modern Positional Warfare and How to Win It,” similarly argues that Western-provided military equipment and air superiority among other things will allow Ukraine to overcome positional warfare.[4]

Russian milbloggers appear to be grappling with how Russian forces can overcome wider operational challenges in Ukraine, likely in response to Ukrainian Commander-in-Chief General Valerii Zaluzhnyi’s recent essay on the subject of “positional warfare.” Select milbloggers argued that specific changes in battlefield tactics will allow Russian forces to achieve their desired operational objectives in the current difficult operational environment.[5] Another milblogger argued that Russia should not celebrate Zaluzhnyi’s discussion of Ukrainian difficulties with positional warfare and that Russian forces need to prepare for a long, challenging war.[6] The milblogger argued that Russia is currently no closer to victory in Ukraine and expressed concerns that Russian forces will likely face a renewed Ukrainian counteroffensive in the winter.[7] The milblogger’s discussion of a large Ukrainian counteroffensive effort in the winter suggests that he expects that Russian forces will not completely seize the initiative in the coming months and therefore will not be able to launch a larger offensive effort that would preclude Ukrainian forces from committing resources to counteroffensive operations. The wider Russian information space has offered a relatively muted response to Zaluzhnyi’s essay, and Russian ultranationalists appear to be applying Zaluzhnyi’s discussions about the challenges of the operational environment in Ukraine to Russia’s offensive campaign and not coming to very optimistic conclusions.[8]

Select Russian milbloggers specifically argued that the use of small infantry assault groups will allow both Russian and Ukrainian forces to better achieve operational objectives along the front. Russian milbloggers argued on November 3 and 6 that concentrated attacks with large forces attempting to break through a stable defense to full depth is increasingly ineffective and suggested that small infantry groups with comprehensive support may be more effective at achieving significant operational effects in the current operational environment.[9] One of the milbloggers argued that the initial phases of the ongoing Ukrainian counteroffensive and the ongoing Russian offensive effort near Avdiivka are similar in that both operations made some initial advances at the cost of irretrievable manpower and equipment losses.[10] The milblogger argued that throughout the war in Ukraine, heavy losses during such large, mechanized assaults have prompted Russian and Ukrainian forces to increasingly rely on smaller ad-hoc infantry groups in subsequent operations.[11] The Ukrainian command changed tactics to rely more on infantry assaults following early setbacks in the counteroffensive in June 2023, and Ukrainian forces proceeded to make significant advances in the following months.[12] It remains to be seen if Russian forces will show the same adaptability near Avdiivka, especially since repeated offensive failures suggest that the Russian General Staff has failed to internalize and disseminate lessons learned from previous costly large, mechanized assaults.[13] The milblogger argued that it would be more advantageous to prepare specialized small infantry assault groups with sufficient technological capabilities, specifically in reconnaissance and communication, ahead of offensive operations instead of switching to small infantry assault tactics only after larger, mechanized assaults prove too costly to continue.[14]

Russian sources suggested that some Ukrainian forces may already be fielding the small infantry assault groups that these sources are advocating for. A Russian milblogger noted that Ukrainian forces already appear to be employing this adaptation in ongoing ground operations on the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast, where the milblogger claimed that small Ukrainian assault groups operating at the operational-tactical level have been able to divert considerable Russian combat resources and attention from elsewhere along the front.[15] The milblogger argued that lower-level Russian commanders have previously made some progress in preparing such small infantry groups south of Bakhmut but that the Russian command's insistence on manpower-intensive frontal assaults quickly rendered these groups combat ineffective.[16] The milblogger's observations suggest that Ukrainian forces may be once again successfully adapting to aspects of the battlefield in Ukraine while Russian forces struggle to do so. Select elements of the Russian military have shown the propensity for successful adaptation, particularly in defensive operations during the Ukrainian counteroffensive in western Zaporizhia Oblast, but the Russian command will likely continue to struggle with instituting any successful change in tactics and capabilities writ-large throughout the theater.[17]

The war in Ukraine is likely exacerbating an emerging identity crisis within Russian society resulting from tensions between Russian identity and Russian nationalism. Russian "Vostok" Battalion Commander and Russian Orthodox ideologue Alexander Khodakovsky wrote two long Telegram posts on November 6 about what it means to be "Russian," acknowledging a schism in Russian national identity that has largely resulted from the ideological arguments advanced to justify and mobilize support for Russia's war in Ukraine.[18] Khodakovsky shared an anecdote of an unidentified Chechen general who, he claimed, conducted a "genetic study" to identify "the ethnic composition" of his Russian friends and found out that "Russian genes" were not dominant.[19] Khodakovsky used this anecdote to offer commentary on what it means to be "Russian," and concluded that it is not "ethnogenetic," but rather a matter of morals and ideologies,

observing that *Russian nationalism* is "hysteria" resulting from a lack of consolidated *Russian identity*.^[20] Khodakovsky thereby appears to offer the suggestion that when one fixates on a genetic definition of what it means to be Russian, the destructive and toxic ideologies of nationalism appear and erase broader and more socio-cultural and linguistic definitions of identity. Khodakovsky warned that a population that lacks a coherent identity can easily destroy itself from within.^[21]

Khodakovsky's musings offer insight into some socio-cultural implications of Russia's pursuit of ideological goals in its war in Ukraine. In several ways, the war has narrowed the conception of what it means to be Russian among Russian ideologues, particularly as concepts of identity are increasingly defined by hyper-nationalist and pro-war information space voices who amplify the Kremlin's ideological line on the war and redirect it at domestic audiences.^[22] Whereas Russian identity was largely defined before the war linguistically and culturally as enshrined in the Russian concepts of "compatriots abroad" and "Russkyi Mir," the war has focused Russian identity more narrowly on Russian ethnonationalism that echoes the Kremlin's ideological justifications for the war.^[23] Russia's deliberate campaign to "Russify" Ukraine through the invasion has generated clear social impacts within Russia itself, particularly aimed at ethnic minority and migrant communities, which have paradoxically been forced by the Russian government to bear the brunt of force generation efforts for the war.^[24] Russian nationalist commentators have increasingly fixated on demographic transitions facing Russia particularly relating to the balance between "Russians" and "minorities" within the Russian population, further reinforcing concepts of what it means for Russia to be a fundamentally "Russian" state.^[25] Khodakovsky responded to this apparent schism in Russian society by underlining some of the inherent dangers of defining what it means to be Russian as a matter of genetics and notably drew criticism from some more virulently nationalist commentators for being "Russophobic" in his conclusions.^[26] Both Khodakovsky's observations and the immediate response to his conclusions underline a fundamental dilemma facing Russia as it continues its war in Ukraine—the dilemma of how to reconcile the hyper-nationalist ideologies on which the Kremlin increasingly relies to justify the war and demand greater sacrifices from its people with Moscow's desire to continue to increase the burden of mobilization on disenfranchised minority communities, while also maintaining a sense of Russian identity that society can coalesce behind as the war continues.

Russian forces conducted missile and drone strikes against rear areas in southern Ukraine on the evening of November 5 and on the night of November 5 to 6 as well as the largest series of glide bomb strikes to date against targets in Kherson Oblast on November 5. Ukraine's Southern Operational Command reported that Russian forces launched a Kh-59 cruise missile at Dnipro City and a Kh-31P anti-radar missile at Odesa City on November 5.^[27] Ukraine's Southern Operational Command stated that Ukrainian air defenses shot down the Kh-59 missile and that the Kh-31P missile struck an infrastructure facility in Odesa City.^[28] The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Russian forces also conducted missile and drone strikes on the night of November 5 to 6 with a Kh-31 anti-radar missile and a Kh-59 cruise missile launched from occupied Kherson Oblast, a P-800 Onyx anti-ship missile and an Iskander-M ballistic missile launched from occupied Crimea, and 22 Shahed-131/136 drones launched from Cape Chauda, occupied Crimea.^[29] The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Ukrainian forces destroyed the Kh-59 missile and 15 drones.^[30] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that the Russian strikes targeted port infrastructure in Odesa Oblast and civilian infrastructure in Kherson City and damaged residential buildings, port infrastructure, transportation infrastructure, and other civil infrastructure.^[31] Ukrainian Odesa Oblast Military Administration Head Oleh Kiper reported that a

Russian strike partially damaged the Odesa National Art Museum.[32] Ukrainian Minister of Internal Affairs Ihor Klymenko stated that Russian forces launched 87 glide bombs on populated areas in Kherson Oblast on November 5 - the largest number of glide bombs that Russian forces have launched to date since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.[33]

The Russian military appears to have increased its stock of high-precision missiles due to reported increases in Russian missile production more rapidly than previous forecasts had suggested. Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) Spokesperson Vadym Skibitskyi stated on November 6 that Russian forces have a total of 870 high-precision operational-strategic and strategic missiles in reserve. Skibitskyi previously stated on August 28 that Russian forces had a total of 585 long-range missiles in reserve, indicating that Russian forces have increased their missile reserves by 285 missiles since August.[34] Skibitskyi added on November 6 that Russian forces produced a total of 115 long-range high-precision missiles in October: 30 Iskander-M cruise missiles, 12 Iskander-K cruise missiles, 20 Kalibr cruise missiles, 40 Kh-101 cruise missiles, 9 Kh-32 cruise missiles, and 4 Kinzhal ballistic missiles.[35] Skibitskyi stated on August 28 that Russian defense enterprises were struggling to produce several dozens of specific types of missiles a month due to foreign component shortages, and the increase of 285 missiles in Russian reserves since late August — with 115 of that total being produced in October alone — indicates that Russia has increased its domestic production of missiles faster than had been forecasted.[36]

Skibitskyi also commented on Russian domestic drone production on November 6, stating that the GUR has not observed the movement of Shahed drones from Iran to Russia as Iran has fulfilled its first Shahed supply contracts with Russia.[37] Skibitskyi stated that Iran may still send small batches of Shaheds to Russia, however.[38] Skibitskyi also stated that Russia has begun to increase the domestic assembly of Shahed drones with components from Iran including at the factory in Alabuga, Tatarstan Republic.[39] Skibitskyi added that predicted Russian missile and drone strikes against Ukrainian energy infrastructure in the upcoming winter will likely not be as “primitive” as the strike series during the winter of 2022-2023.[40] Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has recently commented on Ukraine's urgent need for air defense systems.[41]

Ukrainian forces conducted counteroffensive operations near Bakhmut and in western Zaporizhia Oblast. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Bakhmut and Melitopol (western Zaporizhia Oblast) directions.[42] A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked near Krasnohorivka (6km northwest of Avdiivka) between November 3 and November 5, thereby forcing Russian troops to withdraw from part of the railway track in the area.[43] The Russian “Russkiy Legion” (BARS-13) irregular armed formation claimed that Ukrainian forces were successfully pressuring Russian forces near Stepove and the “Tsarska Okhota” restaurant south of Avdiivka.[44]

Key Takeaways:

- **Imprisoned ardent nationalist and former Russian officer Igor Girkin argued that Russian forces will be “even less capable of offensive operations than they are now” by spring 2024 given the current nature of Russian offensive operations along the frontline.**

- **Russian milbloggers appear to be grappling with how Russian forces can overcome wider operational challenges in Ukraine, likely in response to Ukrainian Commander-in-Chief General Valerii Zaluzhnyi's recent essay on the subject of "positional warfare," and not coming to optimistic conclusions.**
- **Select Russian milbloggers specifically argued that the use of small infantry assaults groups will allow both Russian and Ukrainian forces to better achieve operational objectives along the front. Russian sources suggested that some Ukrainian forces may already be fielding the small infantry assault groups that these sources are advocating for.**
- **The war in Ukraine is likely exacerbating an emerging identity crisis within Russian society resulting from tensions between Russian identity and Russian nationalism.**
- **Russian forces conducted missile and drones strikes against rear areas in southern Ukraine on the evening of November 5 and on the night of November 5 to 6 as well as the largest series of glide bomb strikes to date against targets in Kherson Oblast on November 5.**
- **The Russian military appears to have increased its stock of high-precision missiles due to reported increases in Russian missile production more rapidly than previous forecasts had suggested.**
- **Ukrainian forces conducted counteroffensive operations near Bakhmut and in western Zaporizhia Oblast.**
- **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, in eastern Zaporizhia Oblast, and in western Zaporizhia Oblast and advanced in some areas on November 6.**
- **Russian occupation officials are expanding military recruitment and registration offices in occupied territories, likely in support of coercive mobilization efforts.**
- **Russian officials continue to weaponize youth engagement programs to consolidate social control of occupied areas of Ukraine.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of November 6, 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

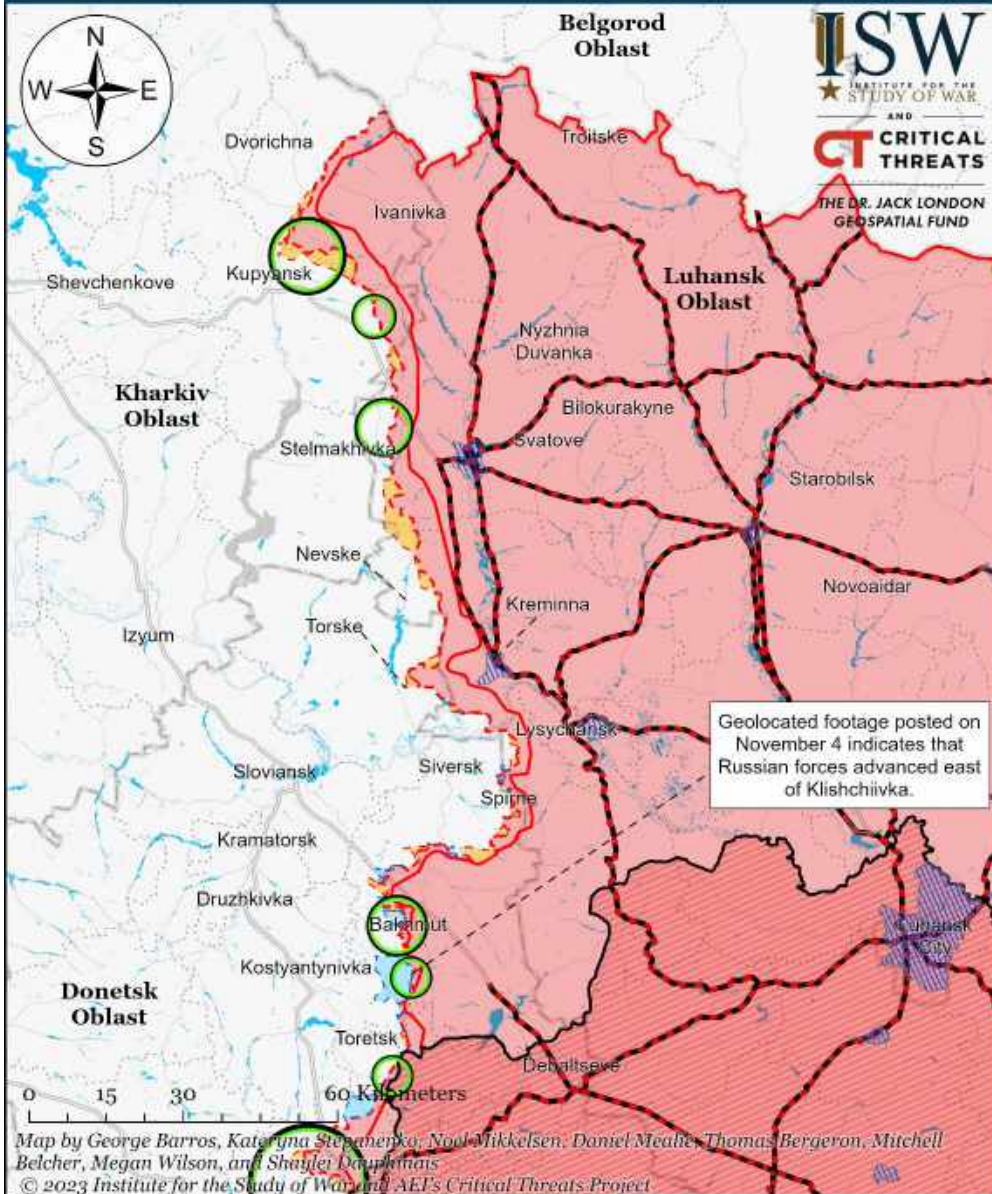
Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

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 and made confirmed advances on November 6. Geolocated footage published on November 6 indicates that Russian forces advanced southwest of Pershotravneve (24km east of Kupyansk).[45] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced near Stepova Novoselivka (18km southeast of Kupyansk).[46] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Synkivka (8km northeast of Kupyansk), Petropavlivka (7km east of Kupyansk), Ivanivka (20km southeast of Kupyansk), and Stelmakhivka (15km northwest of Svatove) and stated that Russian forces did not conduct any offensive actions in the Lyman direction.[47] A Russian milblogger claimed that there were meeting engagements in the Serebryanske forest area (10km southwest of Kreminna).[48] The Ukrainian Assistant Head of the 15th “Steel Border” Mobile Border Detachment Ivan Shevtsov stated on November 5 that about 250 former Wagner fighters have arrived in the Kupyansk-Lyman direction to manage assault operations by regular Russian forces and “Storm” and “Storm-Z” units consisting mostly of convicts.[49]

The Russian MoD claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Synkivka, Zahoruykivka (15km east of Kupyansk), Tymkivka (18km east of Kupyansk) near Kupyansk on November 6.[50]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of November 6, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Nool Mikkelsen, Daniel Meales, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Megan Wilson, and Shaylei Daughmans
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- | | | |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| 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 | |

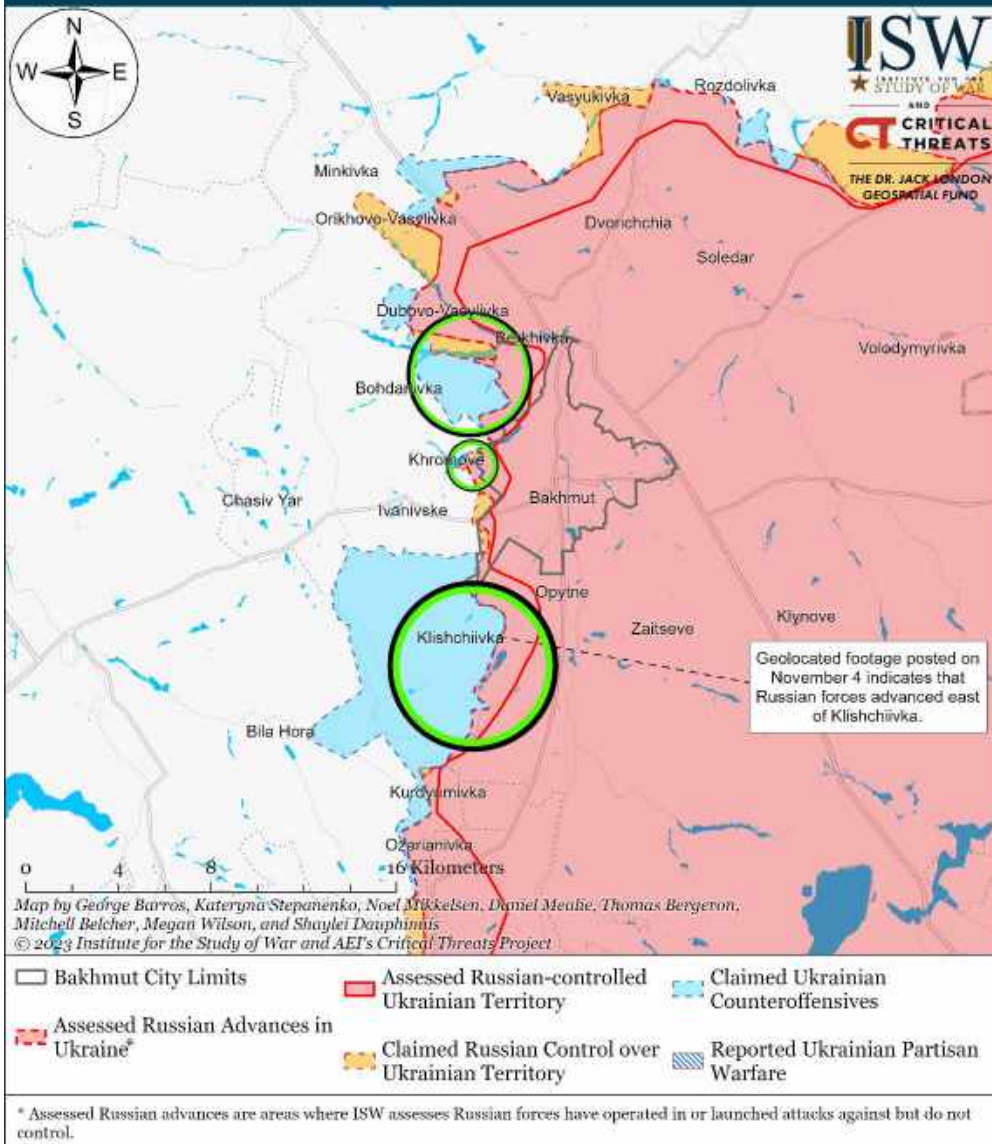
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

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 offensive operations in the Bakhmut direction on November 6 and made confirmed advances. Geolocated footage posted on November 6 shows that Russian forces made marginal advances northward along a road near Vasyukivka (about 12km north of Bakhmut).[51] A Ukrainian source and several Russian milbloggers additionally claimed that Russian forces made gains near the Bekrhivka reservoir (directly northwest of Bakhmut), with some sources claiming that Russian forces control the whole reservoir and some claiming that they only control the southern shore.[52] ISW has not yet observed visual confirmation of purported Russian gains in the Berkhivka area. Russian sources amplified footage reportedly showing elements of the Russian 58th Special Purpose Brigade (formerly the 3rd Donetsk People's Republic [DNR] Spetsnaz Brigade) fighting near Bakhmut.[53] A Russian BARS (Combat Reserve)-affiliated source claimed that Russian forces are successfully pushing Ukrainian forces away from positions between Klishchiivka and Andriivka.[54] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully tried to regain lost positions near Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut) and Andriivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut) and attacked near Bohdanivka (7km west of Bakhmut), Khromove (immediately west of Bakhmut), and Pivdenne (21km southwest of Bakhmut) but did not advance.[55]

Ukrainian forces counterattacked in the Bakhmut direction on November 6 but did not make any claimed or confirmed advances. A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces "periodically" counterattack across the railway line between Klishchiivka and Andriivka, and another milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces are attacking along the entire Klishchiivka-Andriivka-Kurdyumivka (12km southwest of Bakhmut) line.[56] The Ukrainian General Staff stated that Ukrainian forces continued offensive actions south of Bakhmut.[57]

Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of November 6, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

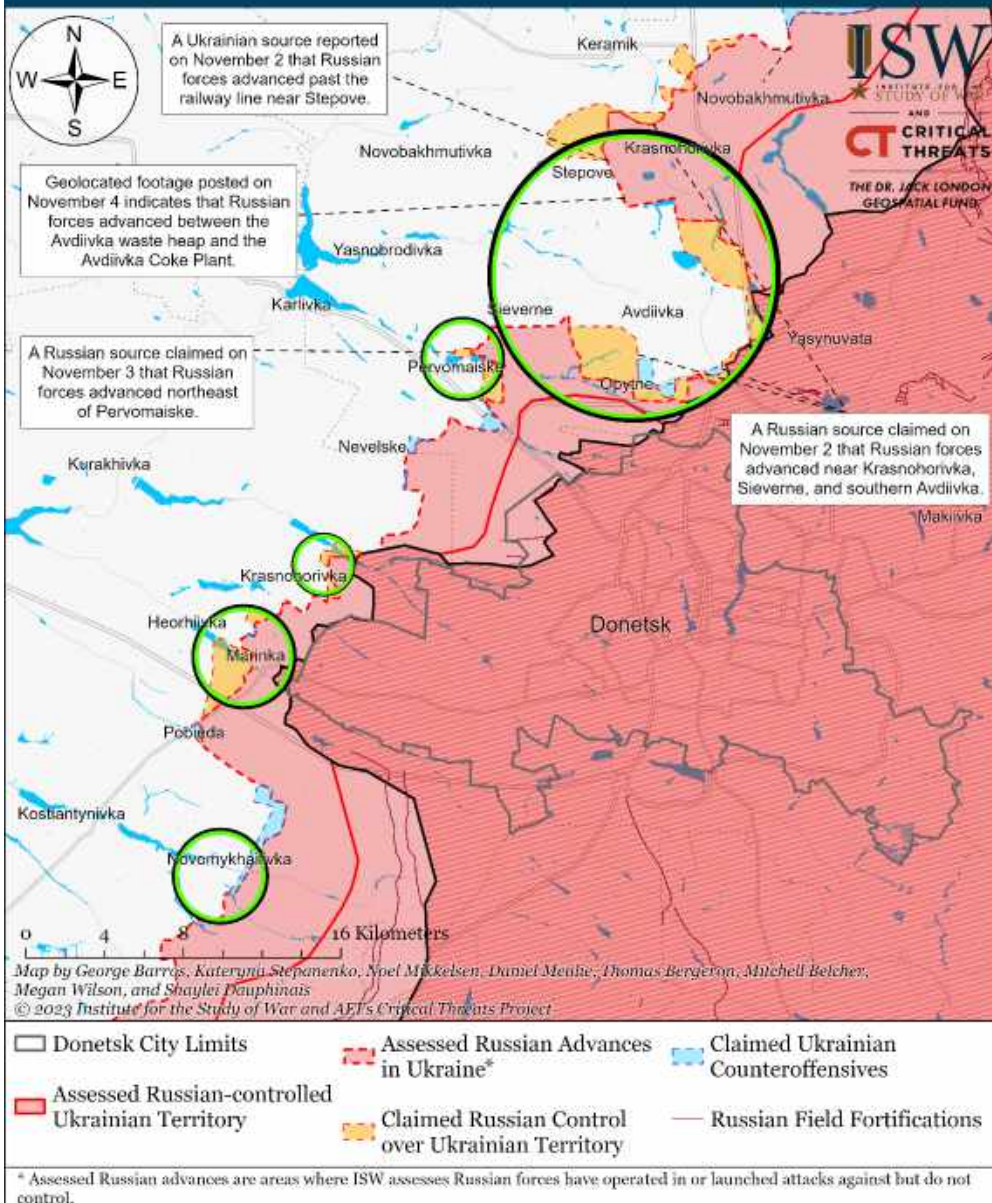


Russian forces continued offensive operations near Avdiivka on November 6 and reportedly advanced. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces broke through the railway line near Stepove (7km northwest of Avdiivka) and maintained control of the waste heap area north of Avdiivka.[58] Ukrainian military observe Konstantyn Mashovets similarly noted that elements of the Russian 15th Motorized Rifle Brigade (2nd Combined Arms Army, Central Military District) conducted a successful attack near Stepove and pushed Ukrainian forces out of a stronghold in the area.[59] Mashovets also reported that Russian forces captured territory in a segment of the front behind the railway line near the northern part of the Avdiivka Coke Plant (just north of Avdiivka), although ISW has not yet observed visual confirmation of Mashovets' claims.[60] Russian sources claimed that fighting continues south, east, and north of Avdiivka and that Russian forces continue to

advance in some areas.[61] Several Russian milbloggers remarked that Russian offensive operations towards Avdiivka have already been an operational success because they have alleviated the intensity of Ukrainian artillery strikes on Donetsk City and its environs.[62] Ukrainian military observer Yuri Butusov warned that Russian forces are preparing for another wave of renewed assaults on Avdiivka with fresher reserves, and Mashovets noted that Russian forces have recently deployed understrength elements of the 239th Tank Regiment (90th Tank Division, 41st Combined Arms Army, Central Military District) to the Avdiivka area to further support offensive operations.[63] The Ukrainian General Staff reported unsuccessful Russian attacks near Avdiivka, Stepove, Tonenke (5km west of Avdiivka), Sieverne (5km west of Avdiivka), and Pervomaiske (10km southwest of Avdiivka).[64]

Ukrainian forces reportedly counterattacked near Avdiivka and restored some lost positions as of November 6. A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked near Krasnohorivka (6km northwest of Avdiivka) between November 3 and November 5, thereby forcing Russian troops to withdraw from part of the railway track.[65] The Russian "Russkiy Legion" (BARS-13) irregular armed formation claimed that Ukrainian forces were successfully pressuring Russian forces near Stepove and the "Tsarska Okhota" restaurant south of Avdiivka.[66]

Assessed Control of Terrain near Donetsk City as of November 6, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

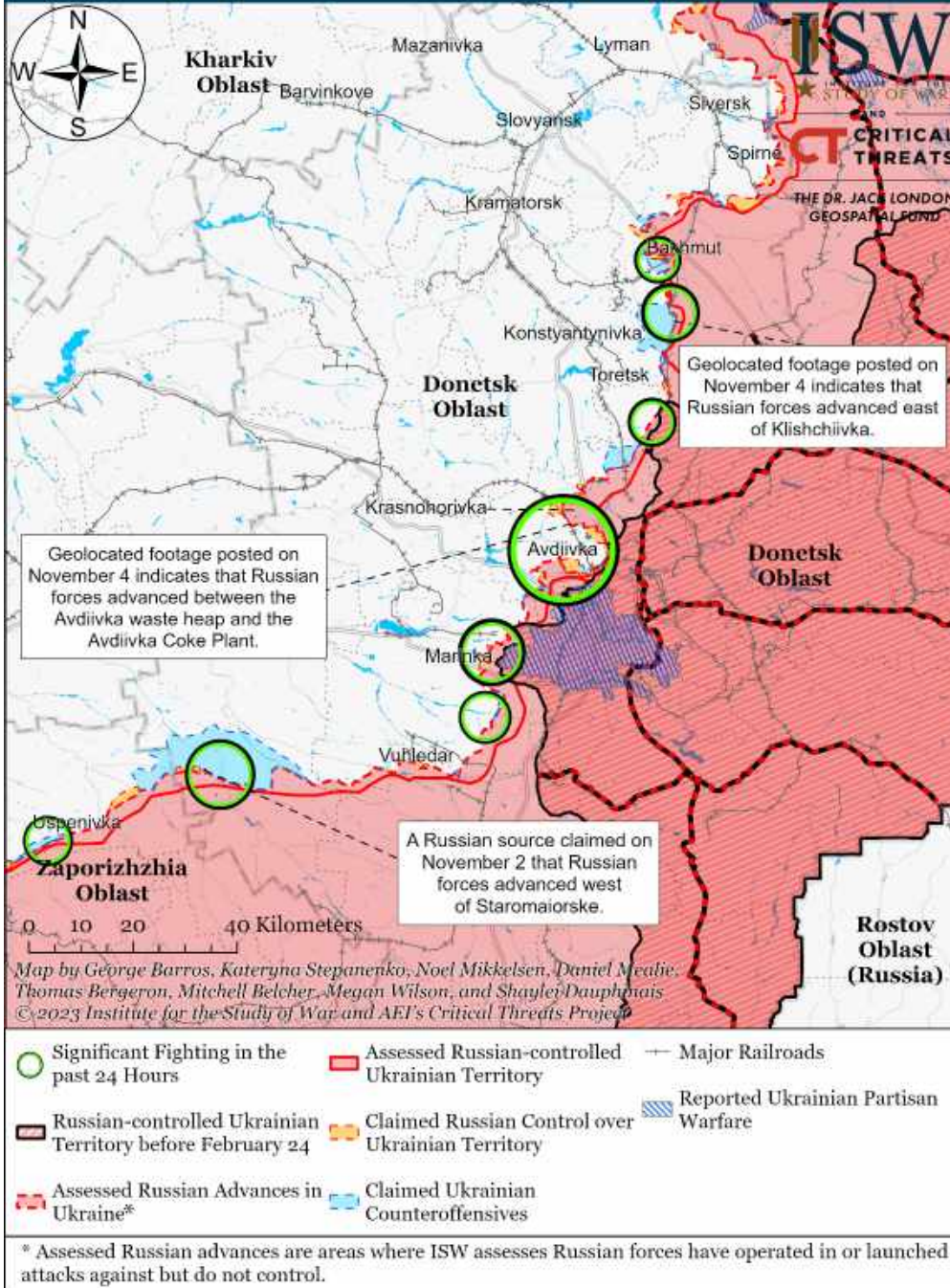


Russian forces continued offensive operations west and southwest of Donetsk City on November 6 and made confirmed advances. Geolocated footage posted on November 6 shows that Russian forces have advanced south of Novomykhailivka, about 12km southwest of Donetsk City.[67] The Ukrainian General Staff reported unsuccessful Russian attacks near Marinka and Krasnohorivka (both on the southwestern outskirts of Donetsk City) and Novomykhailivka.[68] A Russian news aggregator claimed that Russian forces attacked on the western outskirts of Marinka on November 5.[69] A Russian milblogger posted footage purportedly of elements of the 68th Army Corps (Eastern Military District) striking Ukrainian positions in the Novomykhailivka area.[70]

Ukrainian forces did not conduct any claimed or confirmed ground attacks southwest of Donetsk City on November 6.

Ukrainian forces reportedly conducted a strike on Russian military assets in occupied southern Donetsk Oblast on November 5. Ukrainian and Russian sources reported that a Ukrainian missile struck near an ammunition warehouse in Siedove (45km east of Mariupol), and geolocated footage shows a large explosion near Siedove on the night of November 5.[71] Ukrainian sources speculated that the strike hit an ammunition depot and damaged Russian helicopters and other military equipment.[72] Russian milbloggers offered diverging claims on which missiles Ukrainian forces may have used, claiming that they were either air-launched cruise missiles or ground-launched ballistic missiles such as ATACMS.[73] ISW has not observed confirmation of a Ukrainian ATACMS launch as of the time of this publication. Some Russian sources denied the strike outright and claimed that the damage to the warehouse was caused by an accidental fire.[74]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of November 6, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

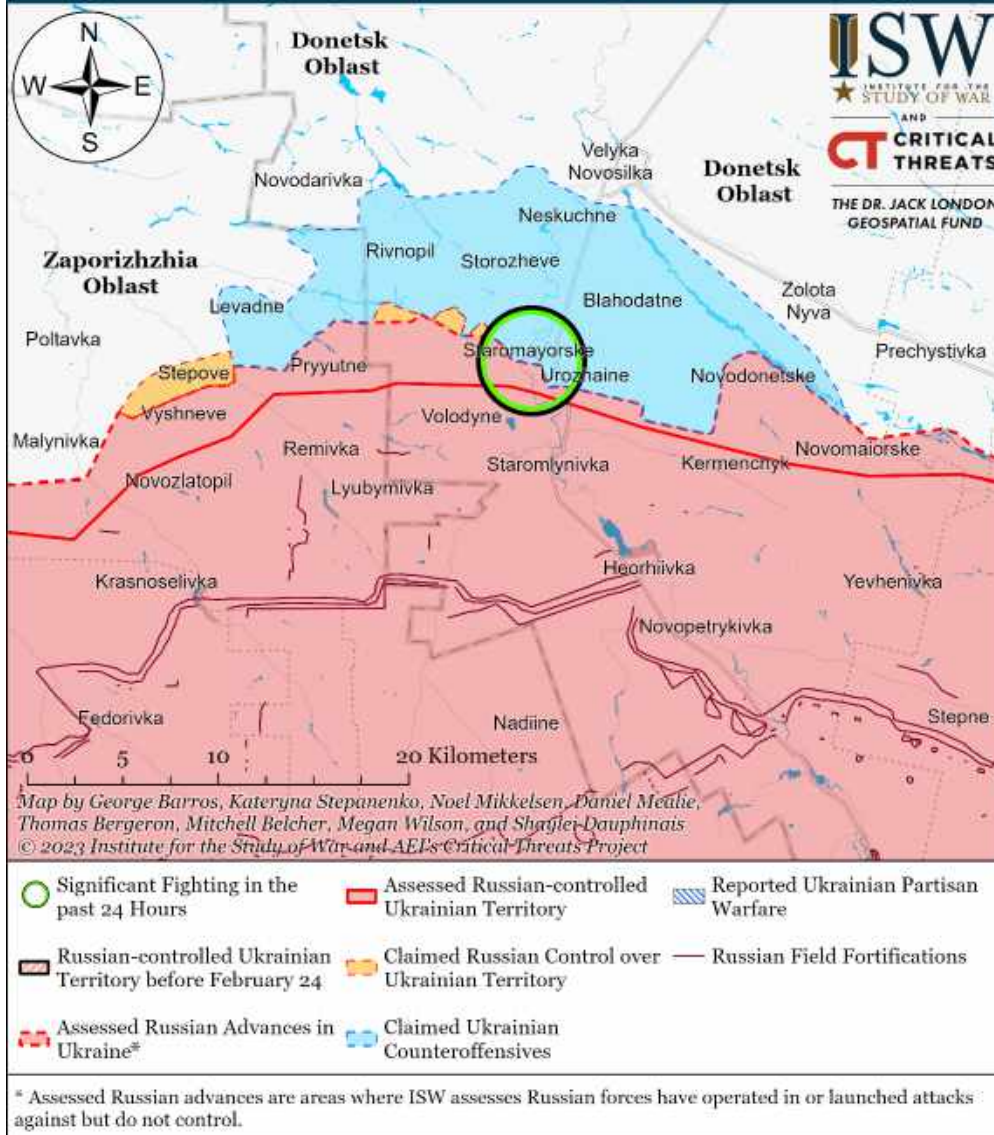


Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions and secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes)

Russian forces conducted ground attacks in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on November 6 but did not make confirmed advances. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces managed to reach Staromayorske (10km south of Velyka Novosilka) from the southwest and counterattacked from the direction of Zavitne Bazhannya (12km south of Velyka Novosilka).[75] The milblogger also claimed that Russian advances from the Pryyutne (15km southwest of Velyka Novosilka) area are putting pressure on Ukrainian positions in Staromayorske.[76] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Staromayorske, however.[77] Russian milbloggers also claimed that Russian forces remain active near Pryyutne and Urozhaine (9km south of Velyka Novosilka).[78] The Russian “Vostok” Battalion, which operates in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area, claimed that current poor weather is unsuitable for high combat activity and that there are mostly artillery duels along the frontline.[79] A Russian milblogger claimed that positional battles are ongoing in western Donetsk and eastern Zaporizhia oblasts.[80]

Russian forces made limited confirmed territorial gains in eastern Zaporizhia Oblast on an unspecified date. Geolocated footage published on November 6 indicates that Russian forces slightly advanced east of Zahirne (11km southwest of Hulyaipole).[81]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around the Vremivka Salient as of November 6, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

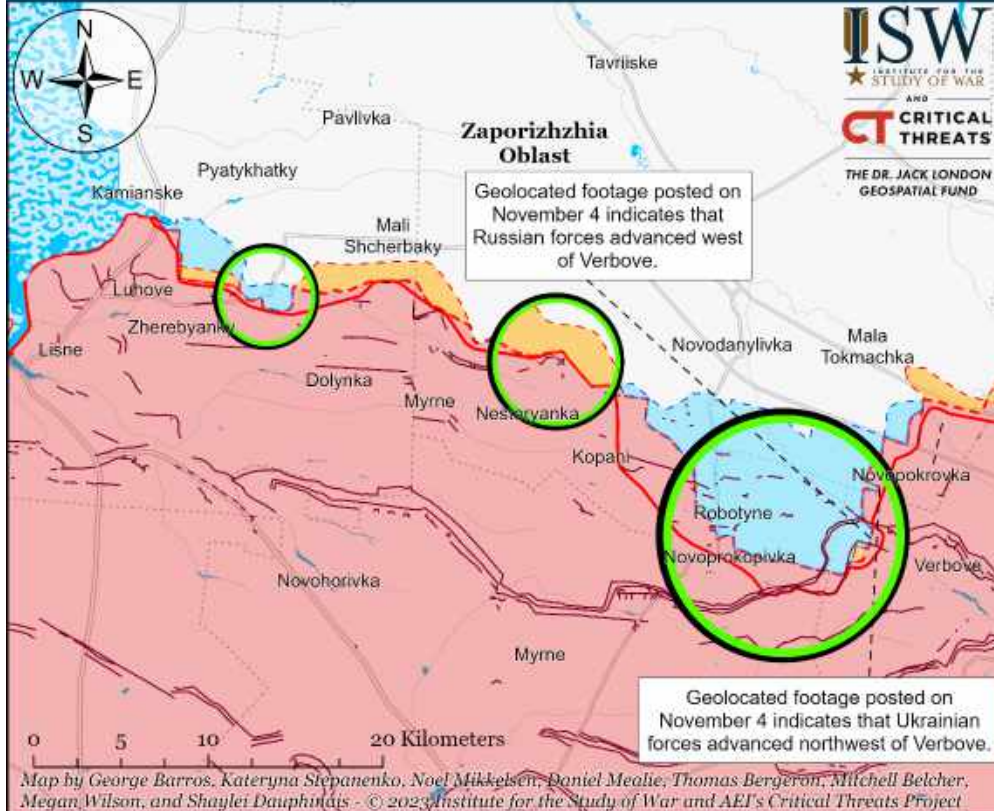


Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast but did not make claimed or confirmed advances.[82] The Russian MoD claimed that Russian forces repelled a Ukrainian attack near Robotyne.[83] A Russian milblogger claimed that positional battles are ongoing near Verbove (8km east of Robotyne) and that Ukrainian forces are trying to disrupt Russian defense systems in the area, likely implying Russian fortifications.[84] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces conduct periodic local attacks with limited forces near Kopani (5km northwest of Robotyne), Robotyne, Verbove, and Novoprokopivka (just south of Robotyne) that are unsuccessful.[85] Another milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces took advantage of poor weather and limited visibility to conduct assaults near Verbove but were not successful.[86]

Russian sources claimed that Russian forces made incremental territorial gains in western Zaporizhia Oblast on November 6, but ISW has not observed visual confirmation of these claims. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces repelled a Ukrainian attack near Robotyne and seized two unspecified Ukrainian positions after counterattacking in the area.[87] A Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed that Russian forces attacked near Robotyne and attempted to advance from Verbove.[88] Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets assessed that unspecified elements of the 42nd Guards Motorized Rifle Division (58th Combined Arms Army, Southern Military District [SMD]) decided to “prove themselves” through a series of unsuccessful attacks south of Robotyne after the Russian command rotated other elements of the 42nd Division and subordinated them to the 136th Motorized Rifle Brigade (58th Combined Arms Army).[89]

Russian forces conducted localized attacks southwest of Orikhiv in western Zaporizhia Oblast on November 6 but did not make any claimed or confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian assaults north of Nesteryanka (10km southwest of Orikhiv) and near Pyatykhatky (23km southwest of Orikhiv).[90] A Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed that Russian forces are attacking in the Zaporizhia direction and attacked near Pyatykhatky from the direction of Kopani. A Russian milblogger claimed that neither Ukrainian nor Russian forces control Kamyanske (30km west of Orikhiv).[91]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Pyatykhatky and Robotyne as of November 6, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

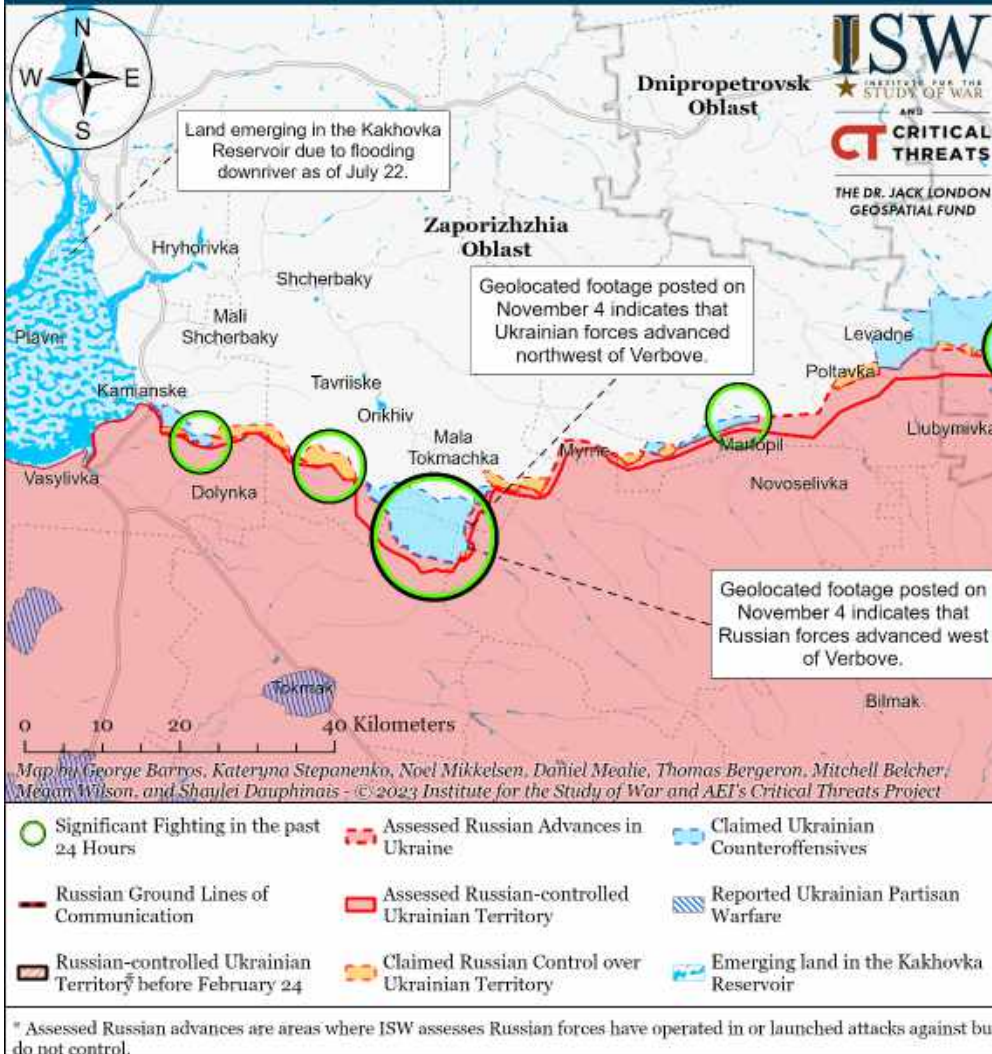


Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Megan Wilson, and Shaylei Dauphinais - © 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| 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 | Russian Field Fortifications |

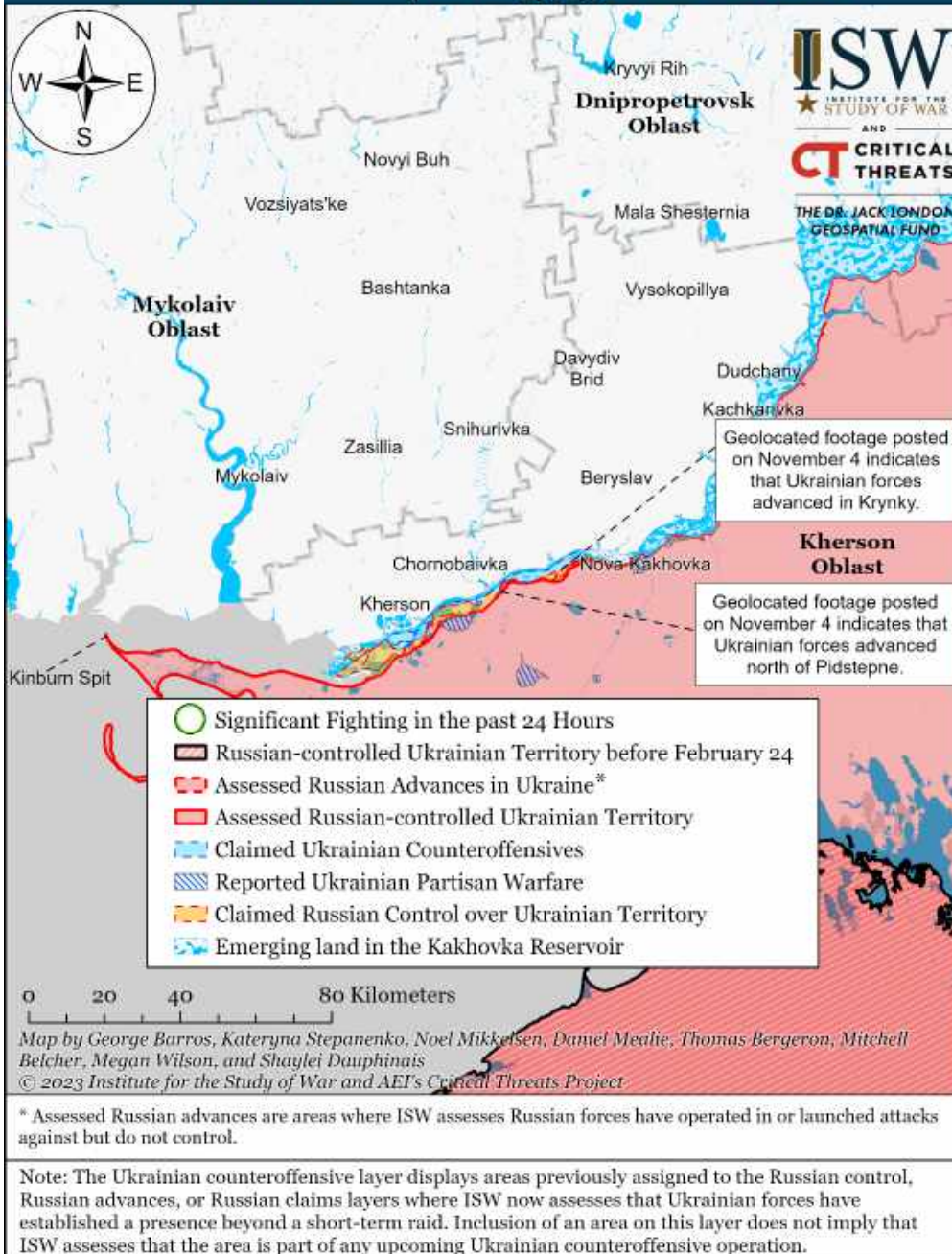
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhzhia as of November 6, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces retained their positions in the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast as of November 6.[92] A Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces still maintain positions in one part of Krynky (30km east of Kherson City and about 2km inland from the Dnipro River shoreline) despite Russian efforts to push Ukrainian forces from the east bank of the Dnipro River.[93] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces expanded control over their positions north of Pidstepne (17km east of Kherson City).[94] Another Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces repelled a Russian attack near Krynky and that elements of the Russian 177th Naval Infantry Regiment (Caspian Flotilla) are shelling Ukrainian positions in west (right) bank Kherson Oblast.[95] Mashovets also assessed that the Russian military command plans to commit two more “Storm-Z” assault detachments to the zones of responsibility of the Russian 26th Motorized Rifle Regiment (70th Guards Motorized Rifle Division, SMD) or the 144th Motorized Rifle Brigade (SMD) from the direction of Korsunka (43km northeast of Kherson City).[96]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of November 6, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Geolocated footage from November 4 confirms that Ukrainian forces hit the Russian *Askold* missile carrier, a Karakurt-class corvette that the Russian Black Sea Fleet (BSF) launched in 2021, at the Zalyv Shipyard in Kerch, Crimea.[97] Open-source geolocation project GeoConfirmed observed that Ukrainian forces targeted *Askold* missile carrier with multiple deep strike missiles.[98]

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

Russian occupation officials are expanding military recruitment and registration offices in occupied territories, likely in support of coercive mobilization efforts. Russian senator for occupied Kherson Oblast Konstantin Basyuk stated on November 4 that he met with the Kherson Oblast occupation military commissar to discuss the opening of military recruitment and registration offices in Henichesk, Nova Kakhovka, Kakhovka, and other unspecified settlements in Kherson Oblast.[99] The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported on November 6 that Russian occupation officials have already formed new military recruitment and registration offices in occupied southern Ukraine.[100] Basyuk asserted that enlistment in the Russian Armed Forces is wholly voluntary for residents in occupied Kherson Oblast, but ISW has routinely observed Russian occupation officials coerce and force residents into military service.[101]

Russian officials in Moscow Oblast are reportedly intensifying contract recruitment efforts. Russian opposition outlet *Mobilization News* reported on November 6 that the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) began a temporary contract recruitment campaign that will last between November 1 and November 26, during which Russian officials will offer individuals from Moscow Oblast million ruble (\$10,790) lump sum payments.[102] A Russian insider source claimed that on November 6 the recruitment campaign was for an unspecified "elite" unit and that Moscow Oblast Governor Andrey Vorobyov is actively raising funds for the recruitment campaign.[103]

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)

Russian officials continue to weaponize youth engagement programs to consolidate social control of occupied areas of Ukraine. Several Russian officials, including Donetsk Oblast occupation head Denis Pushilin, Luhansk Oblast occupation head Leonid Pasechnik, and Kherson Oblast occupation head Vladimir Saldo, and First Deputy Head of the Russian Presidential Administration Sergei Kiriyenko attended the "Big Change" youth competition at the "Artek" children's center in occupied Crimea.[104] The competition is reportedly meant for children aged 14-16 and revolves around the theme "Serve Fatherland and Remember," which disseminates Russian patriotic ideals and ideologies to youth in occupied Ukraine. Pushilin noted that he spoke to a girl from occupied Donetsk Oblast at Artek, suggesting that Russian occupation officials may be using this program to further remove children from their homes in occupied Ukraine and expose them to Russian military-patriotic education.[105]

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)

A Ukrainian military observer stated on November 6 that Belarusian forces replaced elements of the Belarusian 383rd Air Assault Battalion of the 36th Airborne Assault Brigade with elements of the 3rd Airborne Battalion of the 103rd Airborne Brigade near the border with Ukraine.[106]

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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[106] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1383>

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, November 5, 2023

Riley Bailey, Karolina Hird, Christina Harward, Grace Mappes, and Frederick W. Kagan

November 5, 2023, 5pm 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 12:30pm ET on November 5. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the November 6 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Ukrainian forces conducted a successful strike on a Russian shipyard in Kerch, occupied Crimea on November 4, likely damaging a naval vessel. The Ukrainian Amed Forces Center for Strategic Communications (StratCom) stated that Ukrainian forces conducted successful strikes on Russian marine and port infrastructure at the Zalyv Shipyard in Kerch on the evening of November 4.[1] Satellite imagery from November 4 shows that the strike damaged a Project 22800 Karakurt-class Kalibr missile carrier corvette at the shipyard, although the extent of the damage to the ship is currently unclear.[2] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Russian forces intercepted 13 of 15 Ukrainian missiles targeting the shipyard and acknowledged that two missiles damaged an unspecified ship.[3] Ukrainian officials stated that Ukrainian cruise missiles damaged the *Askold* missile carrier, a Karakurt-class corvette that the Russian Black Sea Fleet (BSF) launched in 2021.[4] The Zalyv shipyard reportedly planned to construct 14 warships intended for the BSF between 2016 and 2021, including eight Project 22800 Karakurt-class corvettes.[5] ISW has only confirmed that three Project 22800 Karakurt-class corvettes have launched from the Zalyv shipyard as of 2023, however.[6] The Zalyv shipyard is the largest shipyard in Eastern Europe and is likely the main repair facility for the BSF in Crimea following a successful Ukraine strike on the Russian state-owned ship repair facility Sevmorzavod in Sevastopol on September 13, 2023.[7] The extent of damage to the repair facilities at the Zalyv Shipyard is unclear, although the available satellite imagery suggests that the Ukrainian strike has likely not caused damage that will disrupt its operations in the medium-to-long term, unlike the previous strike on the Sevmorzavod facility.[8] *Radio Free Europe/Free Liberty (RFE/RL)* has reported that Russian forces have three active shipyards, including the Zalyv facility, in occupied Crimea.[9] ISW assesses that Ukrainian forces have conducted 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.[10]

Ukrainian forces reportedly intensified strikes on rear Russian areas in southern Ukraine and occupied Crimea on November 5. Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces struck Skadovsk, occupied Kherson Oblast on the night of November 4-5.[11] Russian sources claimed that Russian forces also disabled Ukrainian drones targeting a railway at an oil refinery in Dzhankoi,

occupied Crimea on November 5.[12] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted a Storm Shadow missile strike on Berdyansk, Zaporizhia Oblast on November 5.[13] Ukrainian Berdyansk City Military Administration Head Viktoria Halitsyna stated that locals reported two explosions in the city but that the Ukrainian General Staff was clarifying information.[14] Ukrainian Chief of the Main Directorate of the Missile Troops and Artillery and Unmanned Systems Brigadier General Serhiy Baranov notably stated in an interview with the *Independent* published on November 4 that Ukrainian forces intend to “capitalize” on their learned experiences and conduct large-scale drone strikes on Russian targets when fighting slows in the winter.[15] The *Independent* reported that Baranov stated that Ukraine intends to build on its “significant successes” with recent drone strikes that targeted critical Russian military assets and naval sites.[16]

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky gave an interview to NBC and repeated that the war is not in a stalemate. Zelensky emphasized that the situation on the battlefield remains very challenging but noted that he does not believe that the war is at a “stalemate.” He described it instead as a “check on the part of the Russian army,” suggesting that Ukraine can resume making significant advances when it resolves the military parity with Russian forces described by Ukrainian Commander-in-Chief General Valerii Zaluzhnyi.[17] Zelensky noted that Ukraine continues to destroy Russian Black Sea Fleet assets and continued to reiterate Ukraine’s urgent need to receive air defense systems from Western partners. Zelensky further noted that Ukraine will not negotiate with Russia until or unless Russia entirely withdraws from Ukrainian territories, concluding that Ukraine is not ready to concede its freedom to the “f###ig terrorist Putin.”[18] ISW continues to assess that external pressure to force Ukraine to negotiate with Russia is harmful and counterproductive as long as Putin maintains his maximalist objectives and believes that he can attain them on the battlefield.[19]

Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations near Bakhmut and made confirmed gains in western Zaporizhia Oblast and on the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast on November 5. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations south of Bakhmut and in the Melitopol (western Zaporizhia Oblast) direction.[20] Geolocated footage indicates that Ukrainian forces have made limited advances west of Verbove (10km east of Robotyne in western Zaporizhia Oblast), as well as on the east bank of Kherson Oblast near Pidstepne (12km east of Kherson City and 3km from the Dnipro River) and in Krynky (30km east of Kherson City and 2km from the Dnipro River).[21]

Chechen officials announced that Chechen Republic Head Ramzan Kadyrov appointed his 15-year-old-son Adam to a prominent position in a Chechen security service, though there is confusion over Adam Kadyrov’s exact position. Chechen Duma Chairperson Magomed Daudov, Chechen Republic Press Head Akhmed Dudaev, and Russian State Duma Deputy Adam Delimkhanov stated that Adam holds an unspecified “important position” in the security service of the Head of the Chechen Republic.[22] Chechen Ministry of Internal Affairs special regiment commander Zamid Chalaev and Health Minister Adam Alkhanov claimed that Adam Kadyrov was appointed as the head of this security service.[23] Ramzan Kadyrov has not yet commented on his son’s appointment. Ramzan Kadyrov notably headed the security service of his father, former Chechen Republic President Akhmat Kadyrov, in the early 2000s until Akhmat Kadyrov’s death in 2004.[24] Adam Kadyrov will turn 16-years-old on November 24, 2023.[25]

Courts in the Republic of Dagestan reportedly charged participants in the antisemitic riots on October 29 with minor crimes and issued limited punishments. Russian authorities reportedly charged many of the antisemitic riot participants with using obscene language, disobedience of police orders, petty hooliganism, and violations of procedures for holding a rally.[26]

Dagestani courts sentenced rioters to six to 10 days of administrative arrest or compulsory labor. ISW previously assessed that the Russian leadership is likely avoiding wider punishments for antisemitism in the North Caucasus out of concerns that they will inflame discontent towards the Kremlin.^[27]

Key Takeaways:

- **Ukrainian forces conducted a successful strike on a Russian shipyard in Kerch, occupied Crimea on November 4, likely damaging a naval vessel. Ukrainian forces reportedly intensified strikes on rear Russian areas in southern Ukraine and occupied Crimea on November 5.**
- **Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky gave an interview to *NBC* and repeated that the war is not in a stalemate.**
- **Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations near Bakhmut and made confirmed gains in western Zaporizhia Oblast and on the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast on November 5.**
- **Chechen officials announced that Chechen Republic Head Ramzan Kadyrov appointed his 15-year-old-son Adam to a prominent position in a Chechen security service, though there is confusion over Adam Kadyrov's exact position.**
- **Courts in the Republic of Dagestan reportedly charged participants in the antisemitic riots on October 29 with minor crimes and issued limited punishments.**
- **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 milblogger called on Russian “propagandists” to increase the use of Russian propaganda against Ukrainian prisoners of war (POWs) held in Russia in an effort to increase the number of “volunteers” in the Russian military.**
- **Kremlin-appointed Children's Rights Commissioner Maria Lvova-Belova continued to promote the illegal deportation of Ukrainian children to Russia under the guise of vacations.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of November 5, 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

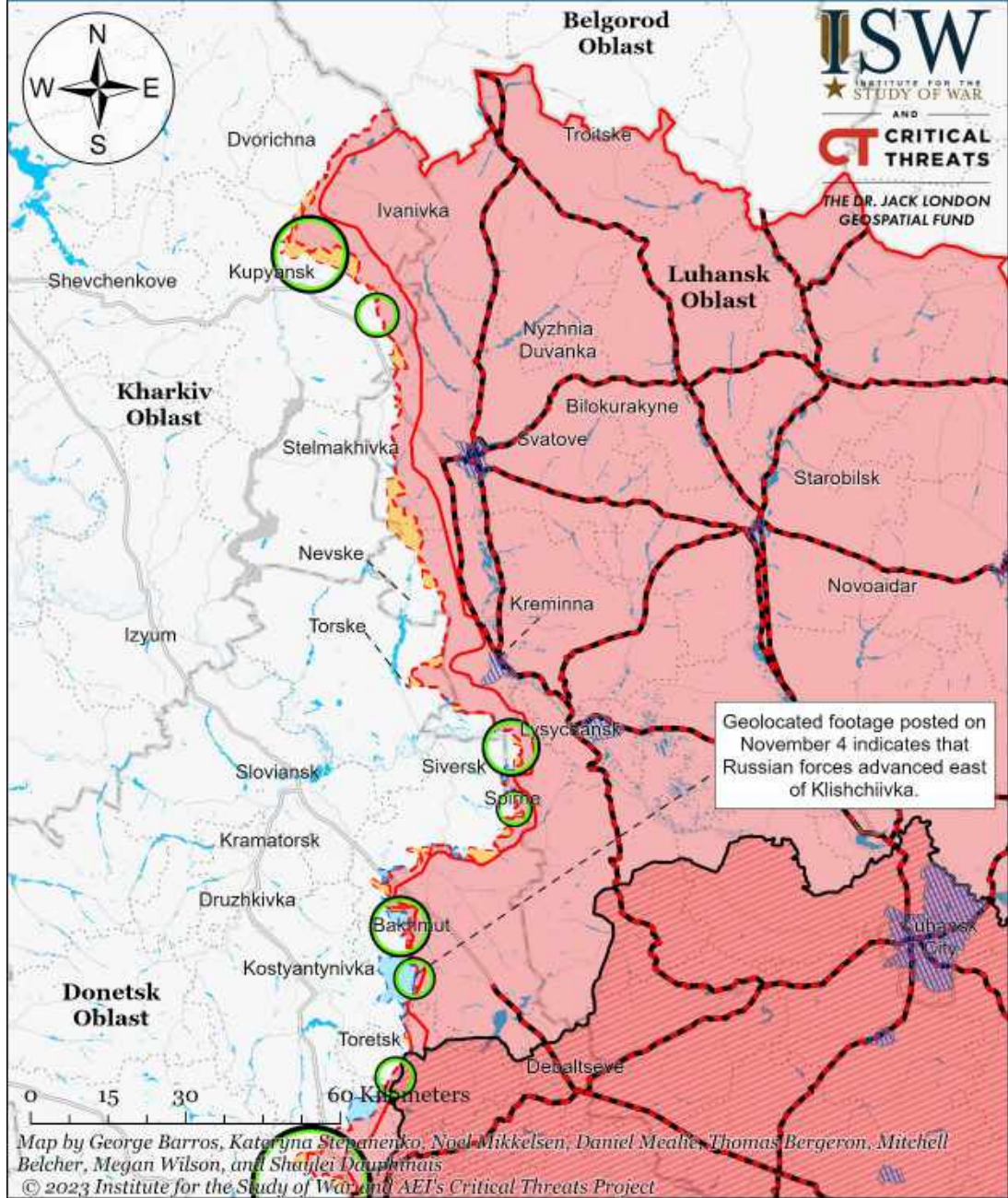
Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

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 offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on November 5 but did not make any confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks northeast of Petropavlivka (7km east of Kupyansk) and near Synkivka (8km northeast of Kupyansk), Ivanivka (20km southeast of Kupyansk), Bilohorivka (13km south of Kreminna), and Spirne (25km south of Kreminna).[28] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces also conducted offensive operations near Stepova Novosilka (18km southeast of Kupyansk), near Makiivka (22km northwest of Kreminna), and from Dibrova (7km southwest of Kreminna) towards the Serebryanske forest area (11km south of Kreminna).[29] A Russian news aggregator claimed that Russian forces advanced near Kyslivka (20km southeast of Kupyansk) and attacked near Makiivka on November 4.[30]

The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on November 5.[31]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of November 5, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Meale, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Megan Wilson, and Shafiqi Dauphinais
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- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- - - Russian Ground Lines of Communication
- ▬ Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- ▬ Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- ▬ Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- ▬ Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- ▬ Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- ▬ Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare

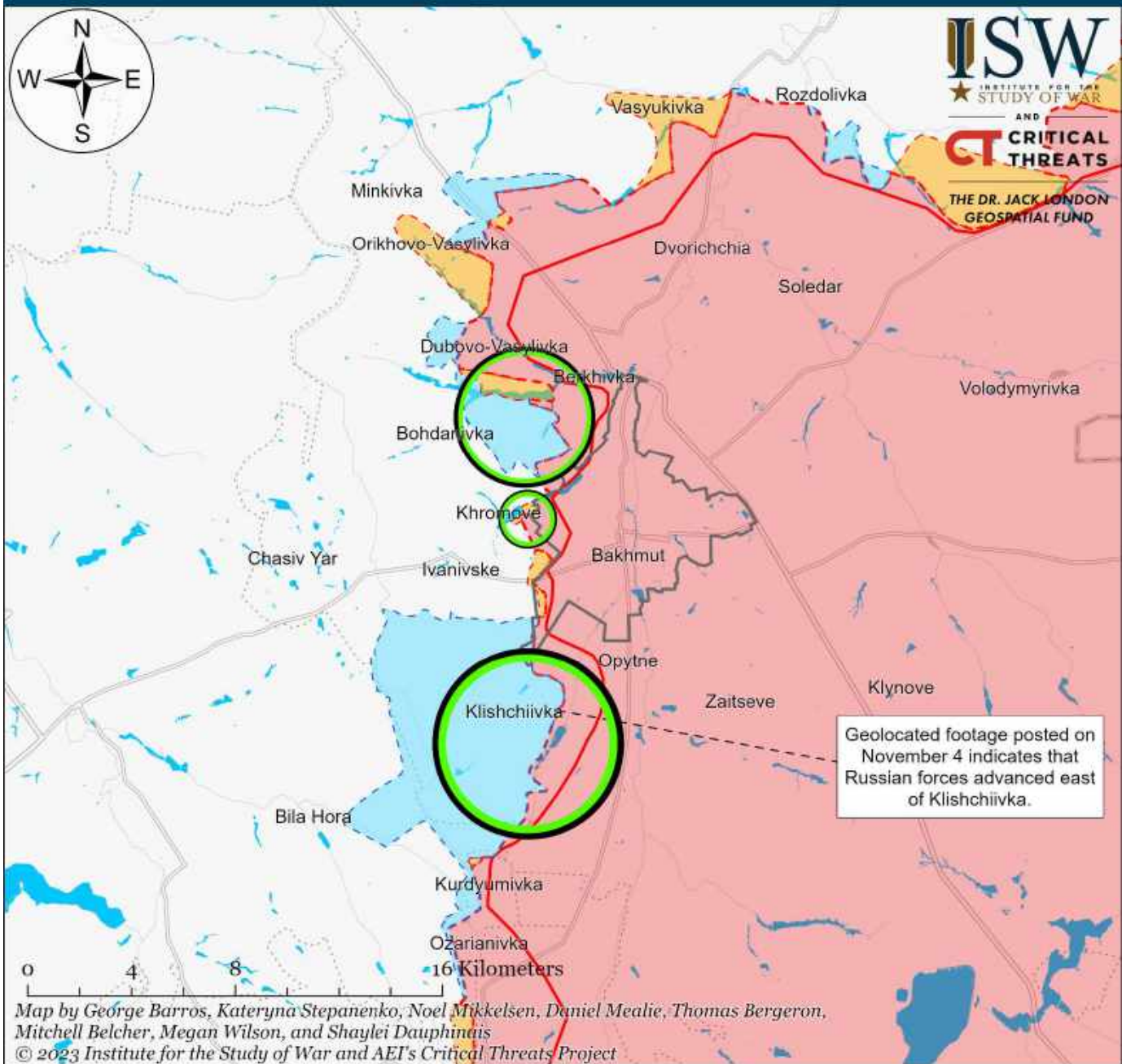
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

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

Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations near Bakhmut on November 5 but did not make any confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations south of Bakhmut.[32] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces have recently made gains east of the railway line near Andriivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut) and that fighting is ongoing near Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut).[33]

Russian forces continued limited offensive operations near Bakhmut on November 5 and recently made confirmed gains southwest of Bakhmut. Geolocated footage published on November 4 indicates that Russian forces made marginal gains west of a section of the railway line near Klishchiivka.[34] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled more than 10 Russian assaults near Bohdanivka (7km northwest of Bakhmut), Khromove (immediately west of Bakhmut), Klishchiivka, Andriivka, and Pivdenne (21km southwest of Bakhmut).[35]

Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of November 5, 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 |

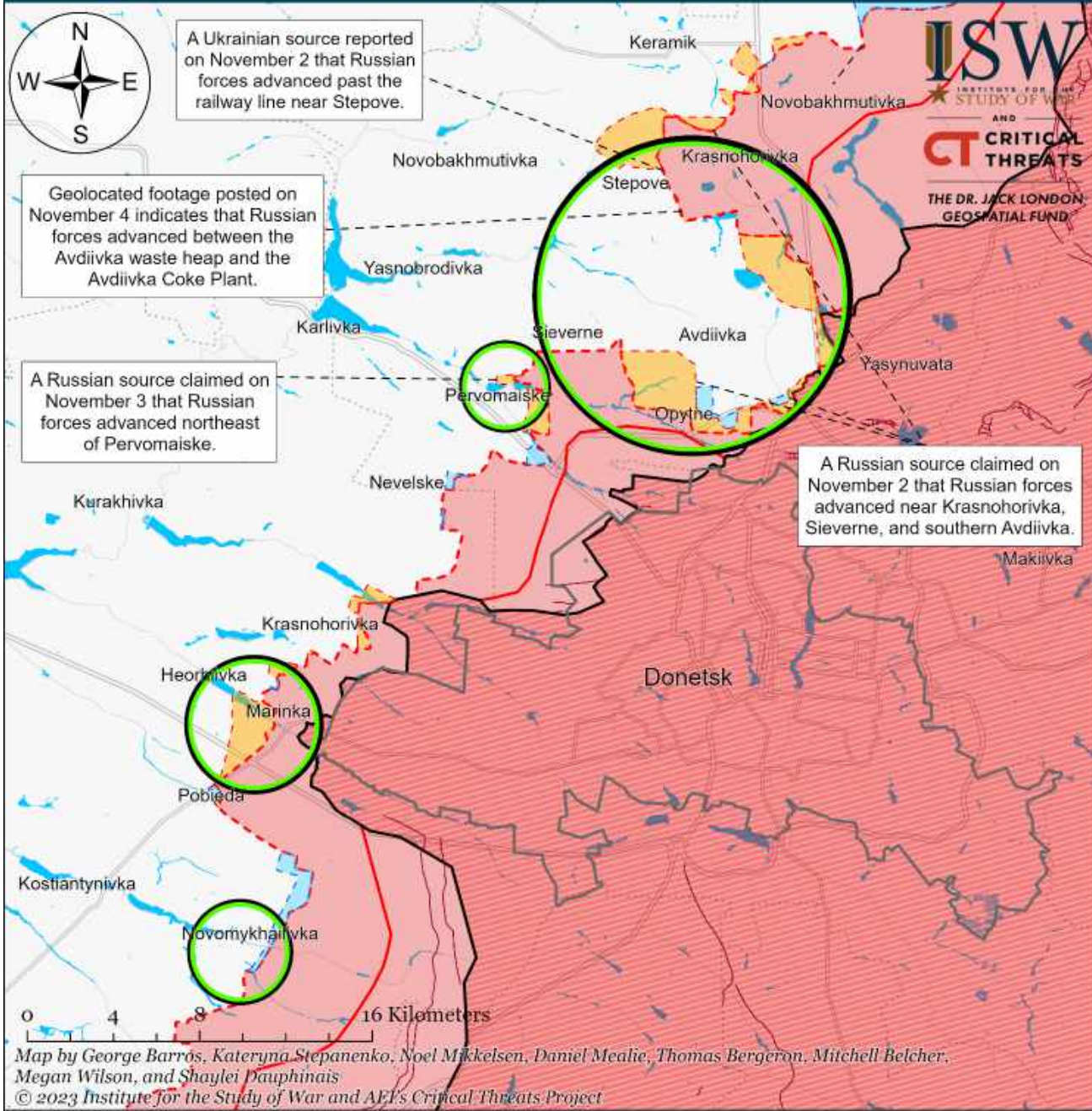
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Russian forces continued offensive operations near Avdiivka on November 5 but did not make any confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled more than 20 Russian assaults near Stepove (3km north of Avdiivka), Avdiivka, Sieverne (6km west of Avdiivka), and Pervomaiske (11km southwest of Avdiivka).[36] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces established a foothold near Stepove and advanced west of a section of the railway line near the settlement.[37] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces made unspecified gains southeast of Avdiivka and continued assaults in the direction of Novokalynove (8km north of Avdiivka) after conducting heavy MLRS fire.[38] Avdiivka City Military Administration Head Vitaliy Barabash stated that Russian artillery and aviation units continue to heavily strike Ukrainian positions in and near Avdiivka and that Russian forces regularly conduct four to 10 heavy aerial bombardments in a day.[39]

Ukrainian officials reported that Russian forces continue to suffer heavy losses near Avdiivka as of November 5. Ukrainian Ground Forces Command Spokesperson Volodymyr Fityo stated on November 5 that Russian forces lost 212 personnel near Avdiivka over the past day.[40] Ukrainian Chief of the Main Directorate of the Missile Troops and Artillery and Unmanned Systems Brigadier General Serhiy Baranov stated on November 4 that Russian forces lost 250 personnel killed and wounded and 20 armored vehicles near Avdiivka in the past 24 hours.[41]

A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked north of Avdiivka near Krasnohorivka (5km north of Avdiivka) on November 5 but did not specify the outcome of the assaults.[42]

Assessed Control of Terrain near Donetsk City as of November 5, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



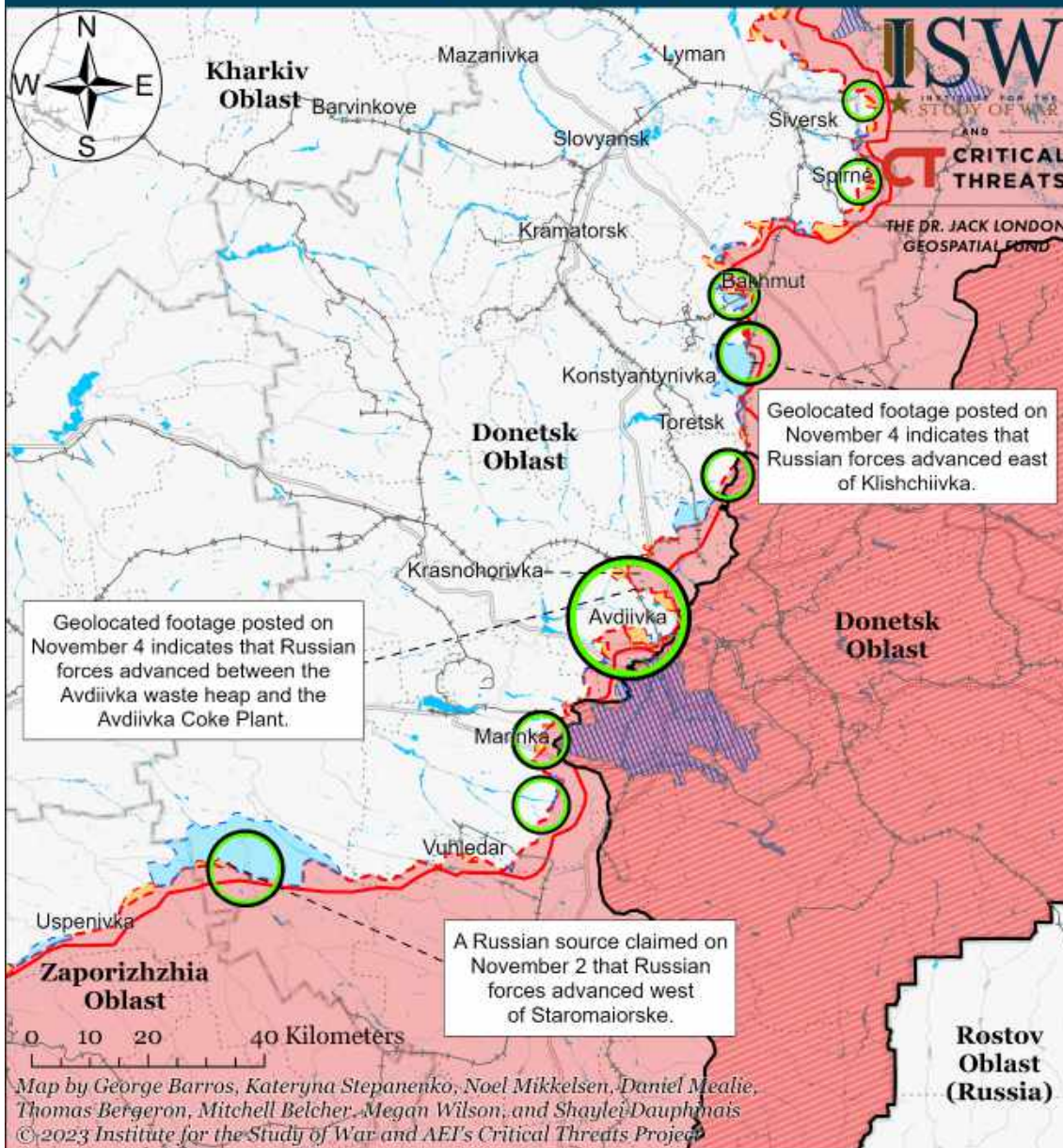
- Donetsk City Limits
- ▨ Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- ▨ Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- ▨ Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- ▨ Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Russian Field Fortifications

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

Russian forces continued offensive operations west and southwest of Donetsk City on November 5 but did not make any confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled more than 20 Russian assaults near Marinka (immediately southwest of Donetsk City) and Novomykhailivka (11km southwest of Donetsk City).[43] Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces Spokesperson Colonel Oleksandr Shtupun stated that there were 42 combat engagements in the Tavriisk direction (from Avdiivka to western Zaporizhia Oblast) over the past day and that the majority of fighting took place near Marinka.[44]

The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian counterattacks near Novomykhailivka and Mykilske (3km southeast of Vuhledar) in western Donetsk Oblast on November 5.[45]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of November 5, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

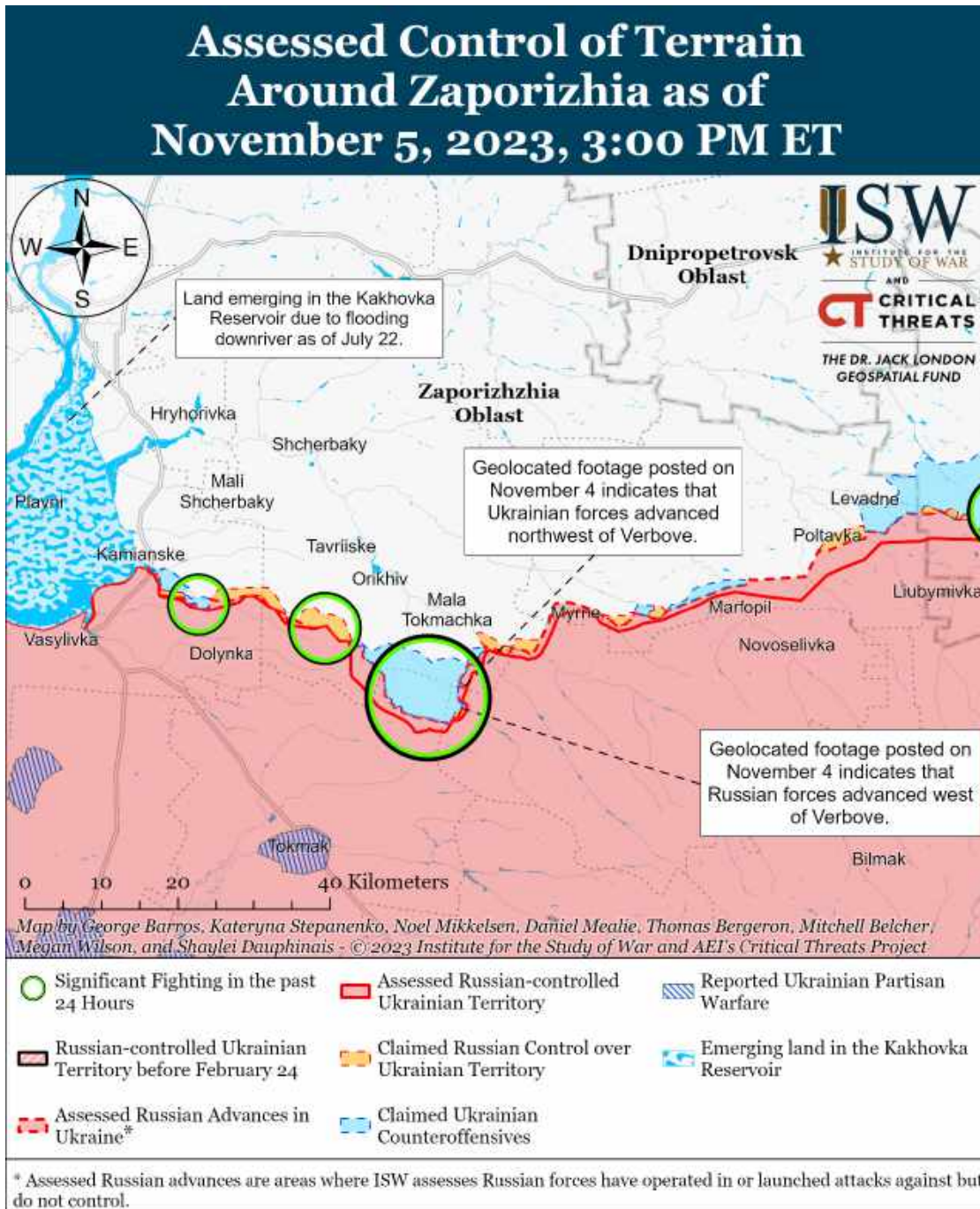


	Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours		Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory		Major Railroads
	Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24		Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory		Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
	Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*		Claimed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

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

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

Russian forces conducted ground attacks in the Donetsk-Zaporizhzhia Oblast border area on November 5 but did not make any confirmed advances. Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces, including elements of the 127th Motorized Rifle Division (5th Combined Arms Army, Eastern Military District), advanced near Pryyutne (15km southwest of Velyka Novosilka) and west of Staromayorske (10km south of Velyka Novosilka).[46] ISW has not yet observed visual confirmation of these purported advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Staromayorske.[47]



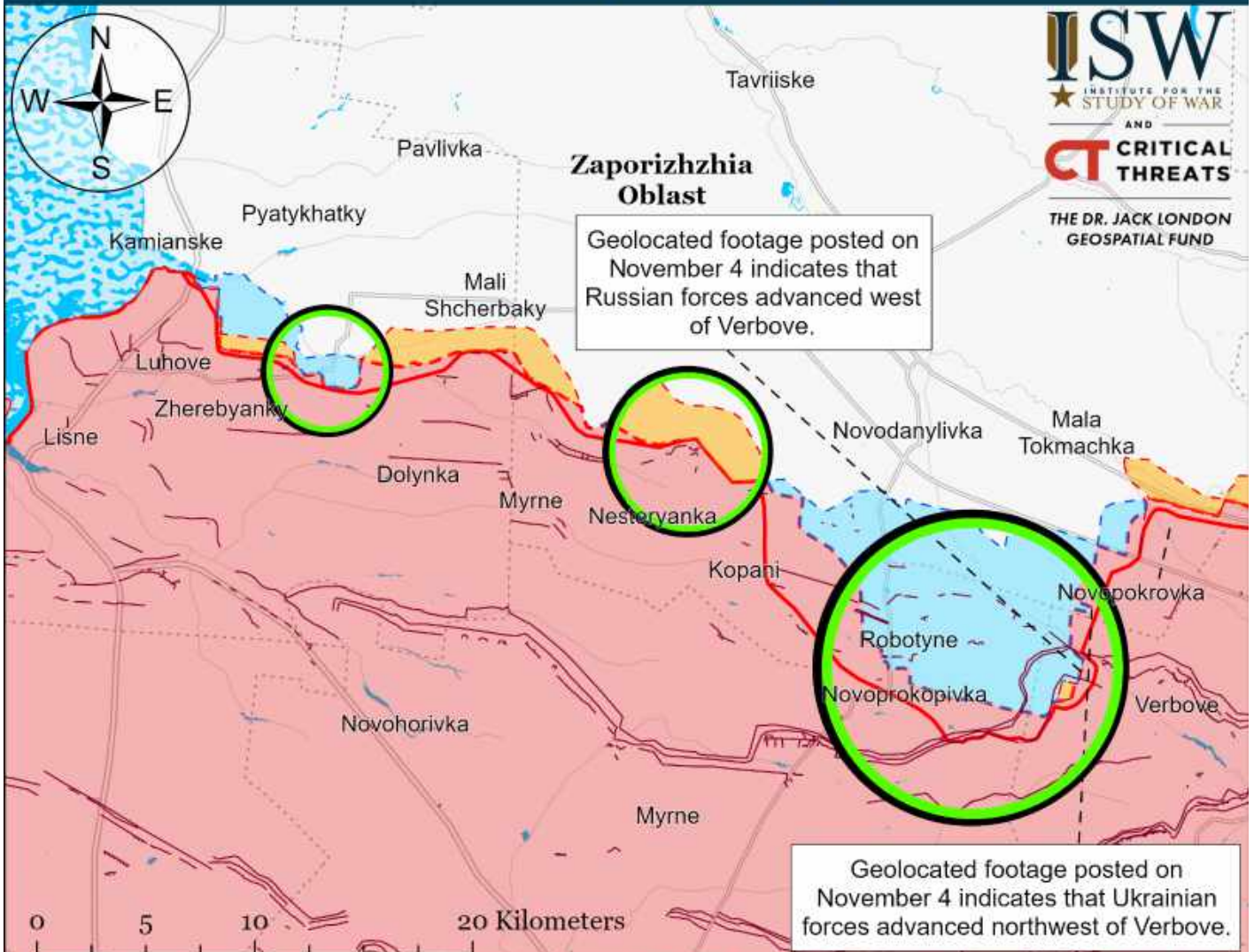
Ukrainian forces did not conduct any claimed or confirmed ground attacks in the Donetsk-Zaporizhzhia Oblast border area on November 5.



Russian forces continued ground attacks in western Zaporizhia Oblast area on November 5 and made a marginal confirmed advance. Geolocated footage posted on November 4 indicates that Russian forces made a limited advance towards a trench line west of Verbove (10km east of Robotyne).[48] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces also conducted unsuccessful attacks northwest of Verbove, near Robotyne, north of Nesteryanka (10km northwest of Robotyne), and near Pyatykhatky (25km northwest of Robotyne).[49] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) posted footage on November 5 reportedly showing elements of the Russian 7th Airborne (VDV) Division clearing Ukrainian positions during active defensive measures near Verbove and Robotyne.[50]

Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast on November 5 and made marginal confirmed advances. Geolocated footage posted on November 4 indicates that Ukrainian forces made limited gains northwest of Verbove.[51] The Russian MoD claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Robotyne and Verbove.[52] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted an unsuccessful attack near Novoprokopivka (just south of Robotyne).[53] Several Russian sources remarked that the situation along the Robotyne-Verbove line remains relatively unchanged and claimed that the fighting is mostly of a positional nature.[54]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Pyatykhatky and Robotyne as of November 5, 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

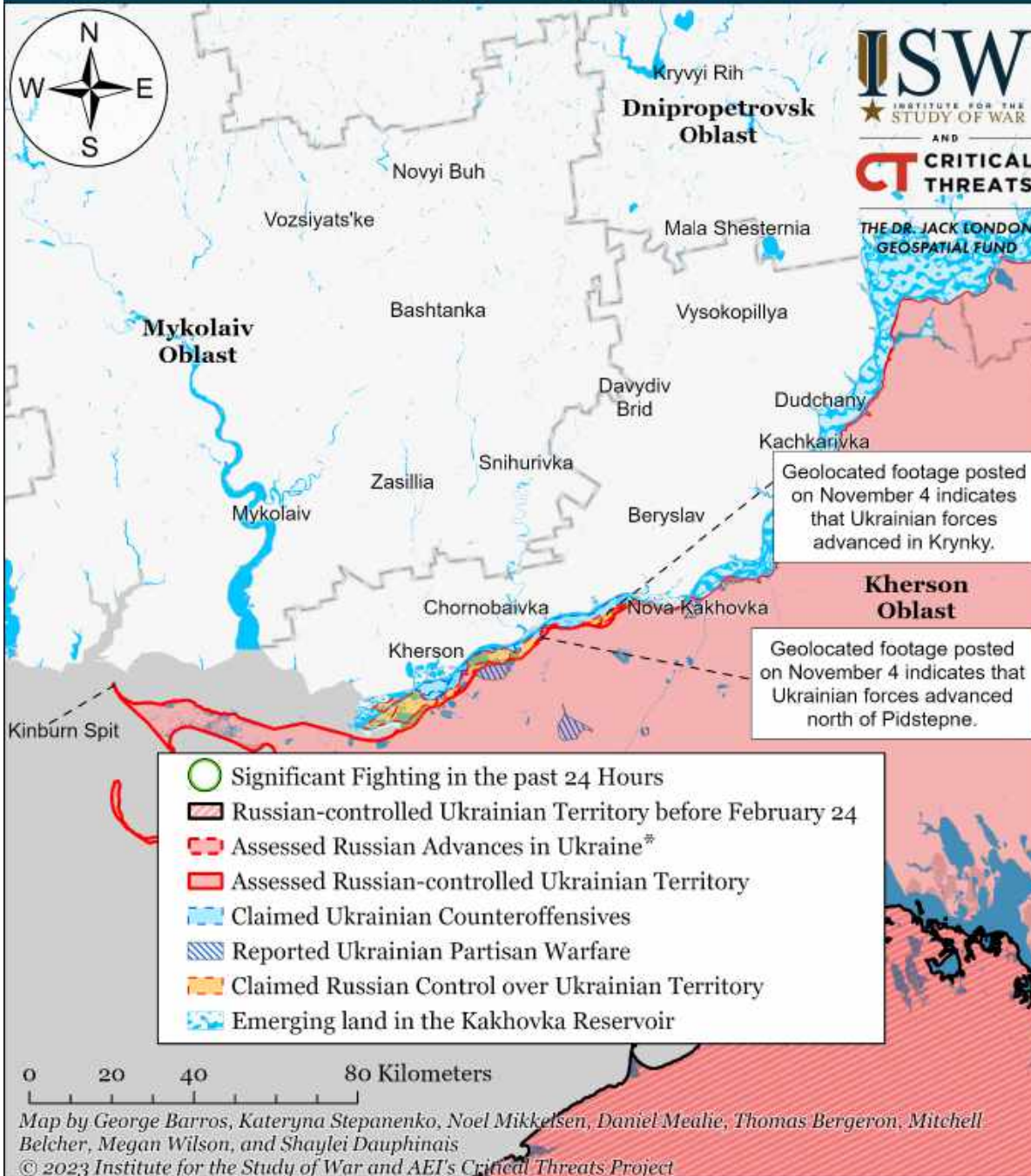
- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours | Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory | Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare |
| Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24 | Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory | Emerging land in the Kakhovka Reservoir |
| Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine* | Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives | 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 activity on the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast on November 5 and made confirmed gains. Geolocated footage posted on November 4 indicates that Ukrainian forces have marginally advanced on the southwestern corner of a solar panel farm near Pidstepne (12km east of Kherson City and 3km from the Dnipro River).[55] Additional geolocated footage posted on November 4 confirms that Ukrainian forces hold positions in houses in Krynky (30km east of Kherson City and 2km from the Dnipro River).[56] A Russian milblogger claimed that positional battles continue in Krynky and along the Pishchanivka-Poyma line (10km east of Kherson City and 4km from the Dnipro River).[57]

Russian forces continued glide bomb strikes against west (right) bank of Kherson Oblast on November 5. Ukraine's Southern Operational Command stated that Russian forces conducted nine airstrikes with 50 glide bombs against populated areas of west bank Kherson Oblast in the past day.[58] A Russian milblogger posted footage reportedly showing a Russian glide bomb strike on Odradokamyanka (50km east of Kherson City).[59] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces have launched over 40 FAB-500 glide bombs at Ukrainian targets in Kherson Oblast over the past 24 hours.[60]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of November 5, 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)

A Russian milblogger called on Russian “propagandists” to increase the use of Russian propaganda against Ukrainian prisoners of war (POWs) currently detained in Russia in an effort to increase the number of “volunteers” in the Russian military.[61] The milblogger suggested that Russian prisons housing Ukrainian POWs stream almost constant broadcasts of state television and radio programs, such as “Rossiya-24,” “Radio Mayak,” and “Radio Rossiya.” The milblogger also proposed that prisons show specially produced “propaganda lectures” about the Russian way of life and bring in Russian political scientists and economists to give talks in the prisons. Russian state media previously reported that the Russian “Bogdan Khmelnytsky” volunteer battalion “recruited” Ukrainian POWs from various Russian penal colonies.[62] Coercing POWs into combat, however, is a violation of the Geneva Convention on Prisoners of War.[63]

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

The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) posted footage purportedly of a successful test of the RSM-56 “Bulava” submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) from the *Emperor Alexander III* nuclear-powered strategic Borei-A class submarine cruiser in the White Sea near the Kamchatka peninsula on November 5.[64] The Russian MoD claimed that the firing of the ballistic missile was the final step before the Russian Navy decides whether to accept the missile into service. The Russian MoD claimed that the Russian Navy has three Borei-A class submarines in service, one more completing tests, and three under construction. The Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) stated on November 4 that Russian forces conducted an unsuccessful test of the “Bulava” missile on October 25 and that Russia was struggling to improve its strategic nuclear force.[65] ISW has consistently assessed that Russia often references Russian nuclear capabilities in an attempt to dissuade the West from providing Ukraine with materiel.[66]

Russian defense manufacturer Kalashnikov Concern is reportedly modernizing the “Kub” drone based on Russian forces’ experience in the war in Ukraine.[67] Kalashnikov Concern President Alan Lushnikov stated that the company has successfully completed tests and that the updated Kub drone will have increased power and a larger warhead. Lushnikov also stated that the company is working on increasing the drone’s range and navigation systems.

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)

Kremlin-appointed Children’s Rights Commissioner Maria Lvova-Belova continues to promote the illegal deportation of Ukrainian children to Russia under the guise of vacations. Lvova-Belova stated on November 5 that she met with children from occupied Ukraine at the “Artek” children’s camp in occupied Crimea.[68]

Russian Information Operations and Narratives

The Russian information space continues to discuss the official Russian response to domestic interethnic tensions. A prominent Russian milblogger complained that some Azerbaijani and Turkish migrants in Putilkovo, Moscow Oblast are affiliated with various nationalist groups and are “terrorizing” ethnic Russians in the town.[69] The milblogger complained that there is “not a day

without incidents” in ethnic diasporas and migrants in Russia and that the government repeatedly fails to respond adequately. Jewish Autonomous Okrug Head Rostislav Goldstein stated that the okrug is ready to accept refugees from the Israel-Hamas war under the Russian resettlement program to the Far East, and a Kremlin insider source amplified comments from local Christian, Jewish, and Muslim faith leaders in support of Goldstein’s proposal.[70]

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.

[1] <https://t.me/AFUStratCom/20918>

[2] <https://www.facebook.com/corruption.schemes/posts/pfbido2HwGMVsh9WTEsjCj...> ; <https://t.me/suspilnecrimea/9229> ; <https://meduza.io/news/2023/11/05/opublikovany-sputnikovye-snimki-sudostroitel'nogo-zavoda-v-kerchi-po-kotoromu-vsu-nanesli-raketnyy-udar>

[3] https://ria.ru/20231105/kerch-1907514377.html?utm_source=yxnews&utm_medium=desktop

[4] <https://tass.com/defense/1340759> ; <https://armyinform.com.ua/2023/11/05/syly-oborony-provely-potuzhnu-robotu-shhodo-vyavleniya-j-urazhennya-rosijskogo-raketonosiyaskolda-nataliya-gumenyuk/> ; <https://t.me/MykolaOleshchuk/144>

[5] <https://jamestown.org/program/an-arsenal-of-empire-russian-naval-construction-in-crimea-and-implications-for-black-sea-security/> ; <https://oborona.ru/includes/periodics/navy/2015/0730/153716373/detail.shtml> ; <https://topwar.ru/91585-korvety-pr-22160-malozametnye-patruľnye-korabli-s-vozmozhnostyami-esminca-vsled-zasoobrazitelny.html> ; <https://topwar.ru/173342-korabli-proekta-23900-universalnye-desantnye-svoi.html>

[6] <https://tass.com/defense/1645805> ; <https://tass.com/defense/1340759> ; http://forums.airbase.ru/2023/06/t91586_267--malyj-raketnyj-korabl-korvet-proekta-22800-karakurt.491.html

[7] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar091323> ; <https://kerchbutoma.ru/o-nas.html> ; <https://rg.ru/2022/05/14/reg-ufo/sudostroitelnyj-zavod-zaliv-v-kerchi-zagruzili-zakazami-na-100.html> ; <https://t.me/crimeainform/39425>

[8] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar091323> ; <https://www.facebook.com/corruption.schemes/posts/pfbido2HwGMVsh9WTEsjCj...> ;

<https://t.me/suspilnecrimea/9229> ; <https://meduza dot io/news/2023/11/05/opublikovany-sputnikovye-snimki-sudostroitelnogo-zavoda-v-kerchi-po-kotoromu-vsu-nanesli-raketnyy-udar>

[9] <https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/crimea-military-bases-map/32397787.html?l...>

[10] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/special-edition-campaign-a...>

[11] https://t.me/SALDO_VGA/1395 ; https://t.me/miroshnik_r/13060

[12] https://t.me/dva_majors/28544 ; https://t.me/boris_rozhin/102965 ;
<https://t.me/breakingmash/49134> ; <https://t.me/milinfo/110050> ;
https://t.me/miroshnik_r/13059 ; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/51874>

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[14] <https://t.me/berdmisk/5321>

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<https://twitter.com/Mediatormundi/status/1721119460885475470>;
https://t.me/creamy_caprice/2952; <https://t.me/beardtim/14063>;
<https://twitter.com/Mediatormundi/status/1721119463083331866>; https://t.me/ok_spn/27431 ;
<https://x.com/moklasen/status/1720880350639829131?s=20>

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https://t.me/WarArchive_ua/7000 <https://twitter.com/GermanObserver1/status/1720905150556946865>

[35] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0qWHP52Uhz22p6YDZy7V...>
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<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0BGzRRVjZ8jzBoNdUyiR...>

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[50] https://t.me/mod_russia/32165; https://t.me/mod_russia/32154

[51] <https://twitter.com/moklasen/status/1720927626544419060>; <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/56068>

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https://t.me/creamy_caprice/2952; <https://t.me/beardtim/14063>;
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[69] <https://t.me/rybar/53927>

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Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, November 4, 2023

Kateryna Stepanenko, Grace Mappes, Angelica Evans,
Christina Harward, and Frederick W. Kagan

November 4, 2023, 7:15pm 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 2:30pm ET on November 4. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the November 5 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky emphasized that the war in Ukraine is not a “stalemate” in a comment to the media about Ukrainian Commander-in-Chief General Valerii Zaluzhnyi’s essay on the positional nature of warfare in Ukraine.[1] Zelensky stated during a joint press conference with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen on November 4 that the current situation on the frontlines is “not a stalemate” even if “time has passed” and “people are tired.” Zelensky emphasized that Ukraine prioritizes the safety of its servicemen and needs US F-16 fighter aircraft and air defenses to gain an advantage over Russian forces. Zelensky recalled that many observers were quick to call the battlefield situation in 2022 “a stalemate,” but that Ukrainian forces with several “tricks, tactics, [and] military operations” were able to liberate Kharkiv Oblast and west (right) bank Kherson Oblast. Zelensky added that Russian President Vladimir Putin will not stop at Russia’s currently occupied lines and noted that Ukraine “has no right to even think about giving up.” Zelensky’s statements largely mirror the main arguments in Zaluzhnyi’s essay entitled, “Modern Positional Warfare and How to Win It.”

Zaluzhnyi’s long essay, “Modern Positional Warfare and How to Win It,” outlines Zaluzhnyi’s consideration of the changes Ukraine must make to overcome the current “positional” stage of the war more clearly than the shorter op-ed and the *Economist* article it accompanied. Zaluzhnyi wrote that the war “is gradually moving to a positional form” and noted that Ukraine needs to gain air superiority; breach mine barriers in depth; increase the effectiveness of counter-battery; create and train the necessary reserves; and build up electronic warfare (EW) capabilities to overcome positional warfare.[2] Positional warfare refers to military operations that do not result in rapid or dramatic changes to the frontline despite both sides’ continuing efforts to improve their positions. Zaluzhnyi notably did not say that the war was stalemated in his essay or suggest that Ukraine could not succeed. His essay focused, rather, on explaining that the current positional character of the war was a result of technological-tactical parity on the battlefield and the widespread use of mine barriers by Russian and Ukrainian troops.

Zaluzhnyi considered the opportunities presented to Ukraine by Russia's challenges, including the significant losses suffered by Russian aviation; Ukrainian use of Western missile and artillery weapons; and Russia's failure to take advantage of its human mobilization resources due to political, organizational, and motivational issues. Zaluzhnyi argued that to avoid World War I-style "trench war" and move to maneuver warfare, Ukraine must develop new approaches including technological and other changes, some of which depend on Western support and others require adaptations within the Ukrainian military, state, and society. Zaluzhnyi concluded that positional warfare benefits Russia as it prolongs the war and could allow Russia to achieve superiority in certain areas. Zaluzhnyi argued that Ukraine or Russia could return to rapid maneuver warfare under the right circumstances, which for Ukraine must include Western-provided military resources. **Zaluzhnyi's essay was all about how to restore maneuver to a positional war, not an argument that the war has reached a stalemate.**

Zelensky also denied Western reports that US and European officials are pressuring Ukrainian officials to discuss the possibility of peace negotiations. *NBC*, citing current and former US officials, reported on November 3 that US and European officials have been "quietly" discussing the prospects of peace negotiations with Ukrainian officials.[3] *NBC's* sources stated that these discussions took place during a meeting of the Ukraine Defense Contact Group in the past month and were the result of Ukrainian acknowledgment of Western concerns that the war has reached a "stalemate." Zelensky stated during the press conference on November 4 that, as the leader of Ukraine, he can attest that no one in Europe or the United States is pressuring him to discuss peace negotiations.[4] Von der Leyen also expressed her support for Ukraine's sovereignty.

***NBC* added that US officials have no indication that Russian President Vladimir Putin is willing to negotiate with Ukraine or doubts that Russia can continue its war until Western aid for Ukraine falters.**[5] ISW has also not observed any indications that Russia is prepared to enter peace negotiations with Ukraine in good faith. Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov expressed the Kremlin's disagreement with the characterization of the war in Ukraine as a "stalemate" on November 2, stating that the war in Ukraine "has not reached a dead end" and that the Russian military continues to conduct offensive operations.[6] Russia's offensive operations around Avdiivka indicate that the Kremlin continues to believe that it is possible to achieve its objectives with military force and is unlikely to enter peace negotiations with Ukraine, except to buy time to reconstitute for future offensive operations. **Pressure on Ukraine to negotiate an end to the war will likely remain meaningless if not harmful as long as Putin believes that he can achieve his objectives on the battlefield.**

The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) allegedly used claims that the Syrian government agreed to supply weapons to Iranian-backed Lebanese Hezbollah to subsume remnants of the Wagner Group in Syria and seize their air defense systems. A Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed on November 4 that Israel communicated information via diplomatic channels to Russia a few weeks ago about Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's alleged agreement to supply Iranian-backed Lebanese Hezbollah with weapons.[7] The milblogger claimed that remnants of the Wagner Group were operating in Syria under an agreement with the Syrian government and that the Russian MoD used this alleged information to pressure the Syrian government to allow the Russian MoD to force Wagner fighters in Syria to transfer their weapons to and sign contracts with the Russian MoD. The milblogger claimed that the Russian MoD seized a Pantsir-S1 air defense system from Wagner personnel near Palmyra, Syria. *CNN* previously reported

that Assad agreed to provide the Russian air defense systems to Hezbollah and tasked Wagner with their delivery.[8] The milblogger did not specify whether the allegations about Assad's agreement with Hezbollah were true and instead claimed that the truth of that matter is not as important as the fact that the Russian MoD used it as a pretext to make demands of Wagner. The Russian MoD has consistently pursued efforts to subsume Wagner operations abroad recently and is likely concerned about air defense systems in Wagner's possession because Wagner forces used air defense systems to shoot down multiple Russian aircraft during the June 24 rebellion.[9]

Russian forces conducted a series of missile and drone strikes against Ukraine on November 3 and 4. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian air defenses downed two Shahed-131/136 drones targeting Sumy Oblast on the night of November 3 to 4 and three Iskander-K cruise missiles targeting Dnipropetrovsk and Poltava oblasts on the evening of November 4.[10] The Russian MoD claimed that Russian forces struck a Ukrainian weapons and ammunition arsenal in Pryluky, Chernihiv Oblast.[11] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces also targeted Ukrainian rear areas, including the Kanatove airfield, Kirovohrad Oblast; Myrhorod, Poltava Oblast; Kharkiv City, Kharkiv Oblast; Dnipro City, Dnipropetrovsk Oblast; Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast; Odesa Oblast; and Lviv Oblast.[12]

Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations near Bakhmut and in western Zaporizhia Oblast on November 4. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Melitopol (western Zaporizhia Oblast) and Bakhmut directions.[13] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces advanced along the forest line north of Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut) and are gaining a foothold in the area.[14]

English-language Russian outlet the *Moscow Times* reported that the Russian government dismissed TASS General Director Sergei Mikhailov on July 5 due to TASS's failure to align with Kremlin narratives while reporting on the Wagner Group rebellion. The *Moscow Times* cited anonymous Russian government officials, including from the presidential administration and the State Duma, as stating that the Kremlin dismissed Mikhailov because TASS's coverage of the Wagner rebellion did not paint Russian authorities in a favorable light and did not include enough pro-Kremlin coverage.[15] Russian government officials stated that Mikhailov was fired because "TASS covered [the Wagner rebellion] in too much detail and promptly" and that "they [TASS employees] had forgotten that their main task is not to report the news [but] to create an ideologically correct narrative for the Kremlin." A source admitted that the news outlet's "neutrality" is useless with the war in Ukraine ongoing and the upcoming Russian presidential elections, which Putin "must win on record." A TASS source stated that Mikhailov adhered to the "basic rules of journalism" and claimed that Russian state media outlet *RIA Novosti*, in contrast, is similar to a tabloid. ISW previously assessed that Mikhailov had rebranded TASS into a modern publication since his appointment in 2012 and that his dismissal may indicate that the Kremlin was unhappy with the media coverage of the Wagner rebellion and highlighted the continued importance of loyalty to Putin over professional achievement.[16] Putin previously awarded Mikhailov the Order of Friendship in 2021 for his professional successes and "many years of conscientious work." [17]

The Russian government is testing an electronic voting system ahead of the 2024 presidential elections, likely to further support efforts to manipulate the results in favor of Russian President Vladimir Putin. Russian opposition outlet *Meduza* reported on November 4 that the Russian government services portal *Gosuslugi* sent letters inviting Russian

citizens, including *Meduza* employees, to test the remote electronic system on November 15-17. The letters also stated that all adult Russian citizens are eligible to participate in the test.[18] The Russian government officially announced the tests on October 31, and *Meduza* reported that a government source stated that the Russian government intends to have as many Russian federal subjects utilize electronic voting as possible in the presidential election.[19] These public election preparations are notable as Putin has not announced his official campaign and Russian state media has not yet begun posturing Putin as the only viable candidate.

Key Takeaways:

- **Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky emphasized that the war in Ukraine is not a “stalemate” in a comment to the media about Ukrainian Commander-in-Chief General Valerii Zaluzhnyi’s essay on the positional nature of warfare in Ukraine.**
- **Zaluzhnyi’s long essay, “Modern Positional Warfare and How to Win It,” outlines Zaluzhnyi’s consideration of the changes Ukraine must make to overcome the current “positional” stage of the war more clearly than the shorter op-ed and *Economist* article it accompanied.**
- **Zelensky also denied Western reports that US and European officials are pressuring Ukrainian officials to discuss the possibility of peace negotiations.**
- ***NBC* added that US officials have no indication that Russian President Vladimir Putin is willing to negotiate with Ukraine or doubts that Russia can continue its war until Western aid for Ukraine falters.**
- **The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) allegedly used claims that the Syrian government agreed to supply weapons to Iranian-backed Lebanese Hezbollah to subsume remnants of the Wagner Group in Syria and seize their air defense systems.**
- **Russian forces conducted a series of missile and drone strikes against Ukraine on November 3 and 4.**
- **Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations near Bakhmut and in western Zaporizhia Oblast on November 4.**
- **English-language Russian outlet the *Moscow Times* reported that the Russian government dismissed TASS General Director Sergei Mikhailov on July 5 due to TASS’s failure to align with Kremlin narratives while reporting on the Wagner Group rebellion.**
- **The Russian government is testing an electronic voting system ahead of the 2024 presidential elections, likely to further support efforts to manipulate the results in favor of Russian President Vladimir Putin.**
- **Russian forces continued offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line, north and south of Bakhmut, around Avdiivka, west and southwest of Donetsk City, near Vuhledar, in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area, and in eastern and western Zaporizhia Oblast, and advanced in various sectors of the front.**
- **The *BBC* and Russian opposition media outlet *Mediazona* confirmed that at least 35,780 Russian servicemen have died in the war in Ukraine since February 24, 2022, as of November 3, 2023, including 923 deaths in the past two weeks.**

- **Russian authorities continue efforts to settle Russian citizens 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
- Activities in Russian-occupied areas
- Russian Information Operations and Narratives

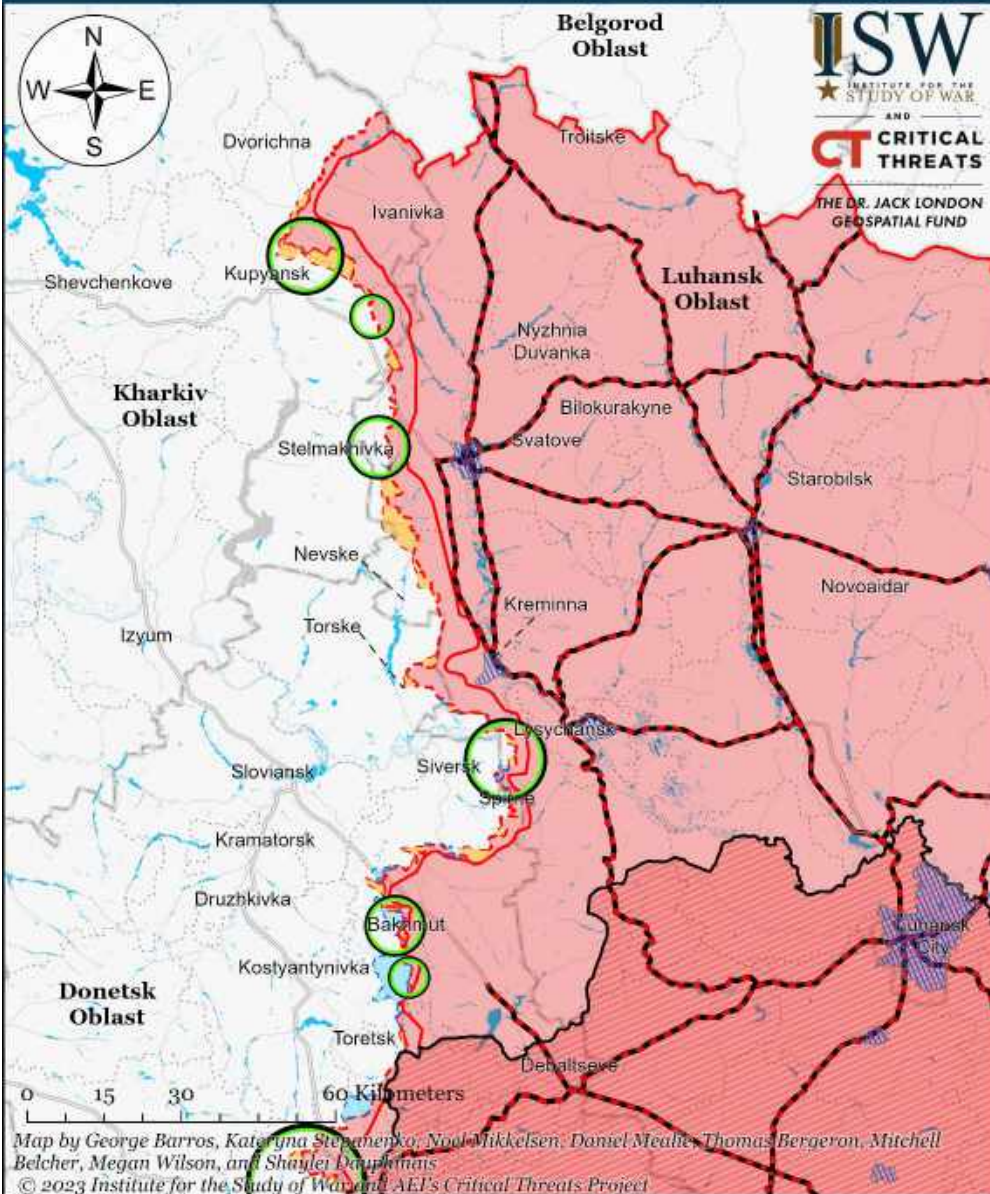
Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

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 4 but did not make any claimed or confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Synkivka (9km northeast of Kupyansk) and Ivanivka (21km southeast of Kupyansk) in Kharkiv Oblast, Stelmakhivka (15km northwest of Svatove) and Bilohorivka (10km south of Kreminna) in Luhansk Oblast, and Verkhokamianske (18km south of Kreminna) in Donetsk Oblast.[20] Ukrainian Ground Forces Commander Colonel General Oleksandr Syrskyi stated that elements of the Russian 6th Combined Arms Army (Western Military District [WMD]) and 1st Guards Tank Army (WMD) continued offensive operations near the Kupyansk forest area, Pershotravneve (24km east of Kupyansk), and Orlyanka (22km east of Kupyansk) and intensified efforts to capture Synkivka and create favorable conditions to capture Kupyansk.[21] Syrskyi stated that Russian forces have suffered significant losses along the Kupyansk Vuzlovyi-Yahidne line (up to 22km southeast of Kupyansk) and are currently regrouping in the area. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces transferred additional manpower to the Kupyansk-Kreminna direction.[22]

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on November 4. The Russian MoD claimed that elements of the Russian Western Grouping of Forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Synkivka and north of Tymkivka (18km east of Kupyansk) and that elements of the Russian Central Grouping of Forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Novoselivske (16km northwest of Svatove) and Hryhorivka (11km south of Kreminna).[23]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of November 4, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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

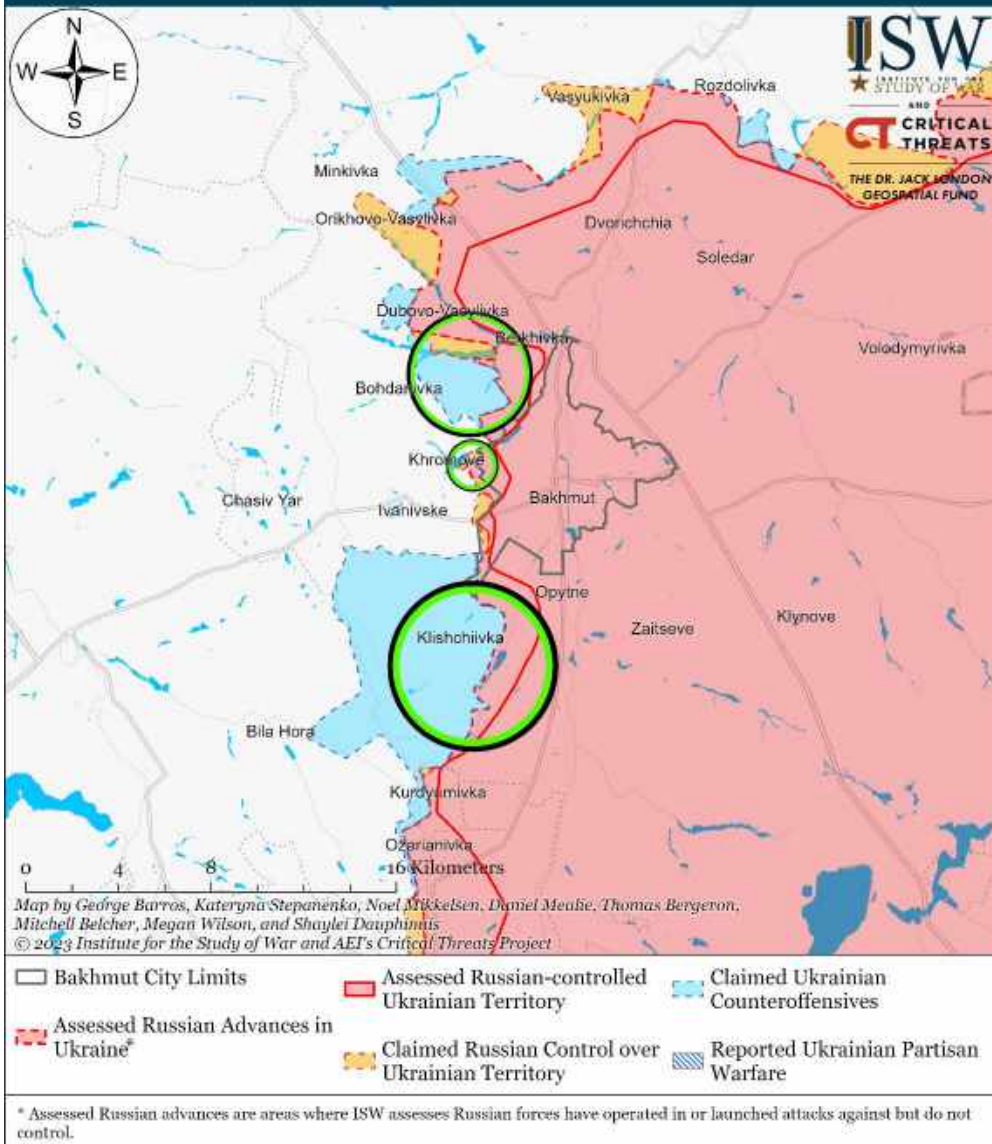
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

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

Ukrainian forces reportedly advanced on Bakhmut’s southern flank on November 4. Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces advanced along the forest line north of Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut) and are gaining a foothold in the area.[24]

Russian forces continued to attack north and south of Bakhmut on November 4 but did not make any claimed or confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attempted to regain lost positions near Klishchiivka and Andriivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut) and launched failed assaults near Bohdanivka (5km northwest of Bakhmut) and Khromove (directly west of Bakhmut).[25] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces launched a ground attack near the Berkhivka reservoir (just north of Bakhmut) but did not advance.[26] Russian milbloggers indicated that elements of the Russian 200th Motorized Rifle Brigade (14th Army Corps, Northern Fleet) are operating on Bakhmut’s northern flank and claimed that elements of the Russian “Viking” Spetsnaz detachment are fighting in the Bakhmut direction.[27]

Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of November 4, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Russian forces continued offensive operations around Avdiivka on November 4 and made confirmed advances. Geolocated footage published on November 3 and November 4 shows that Russian forces marginally advanced towards the railway southeast of Stepove (8km northwest of Avdiivka) and advanced west of Krasnohorivka (9km north of Avdiivka).[28] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced and consolidated new positions along the railway tracks near Stepove, and one milblogger claimed that Russian forces controlled the railway section near Stepove.[29] A Russian milblogger also claimed that Russian forces are strengthening their positions behind the railway tracks north of Avdiivka.[30] A Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed that Russian forces launched assaults from the direction of Spartak (4km south of Avdiivka) and attacked near Stepove and Novokalynove (7km north of Avdiivka).[31] Another Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed that

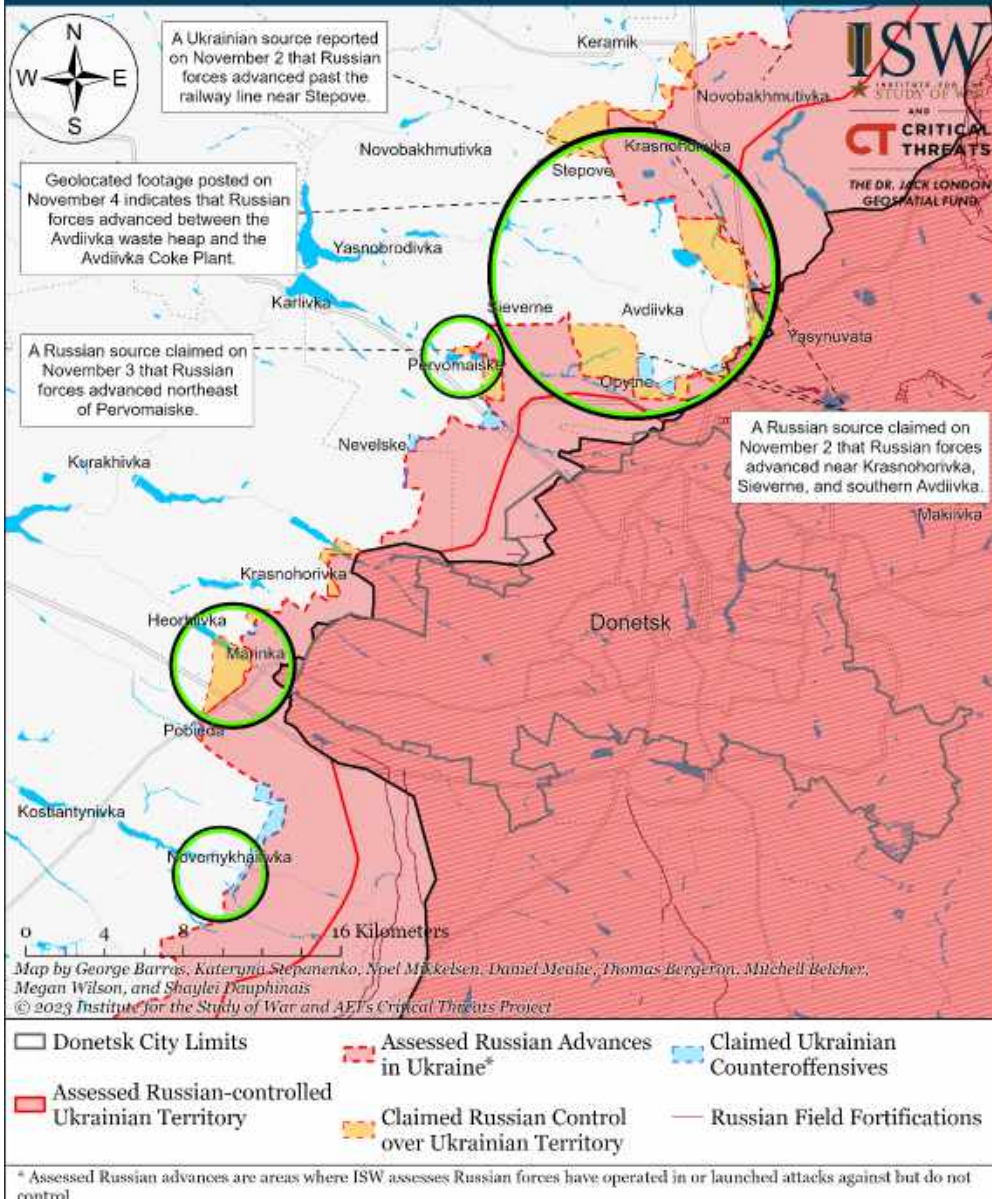
Russian forces are attacking in the direction of Sieverne (6km west of Avdiivka) and that heavy fighting is ongoing near the “Tsarska Okhota” restaurant immediately south of Avdiivka.[32] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces launched unsuccessful attacks near Stepove, Tonenke (7km northwest of Avdiivka), Avdiivka, Sieverne, and Pervomaiske (11km southwest of Avdiivka).[33]

Ukrainian forces are reportedly counterattacking against Russian advances in the Avdiivka direction as of November 4. A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked against Russian advances near the railway north of Avdiivka.[34]

Russian sources continued to claim that Russian forces were digging tunnels to destroy Ukrainian positions and launch surprise attacks in the Avdiivka direction. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces dug a tunnel to a Ukrainian position and mined it, destroying the Ukrainian position.[35] Russian milbloggers claimed that elements of the Russian “Dikiya Divisiya” irregular armed formation, which is partially staffed with former Wagner Group personnel, dug a 160-meter-long tunnel and used it to detonate explosives under an unspecified Ukrainian position near Avdiivka.[36]

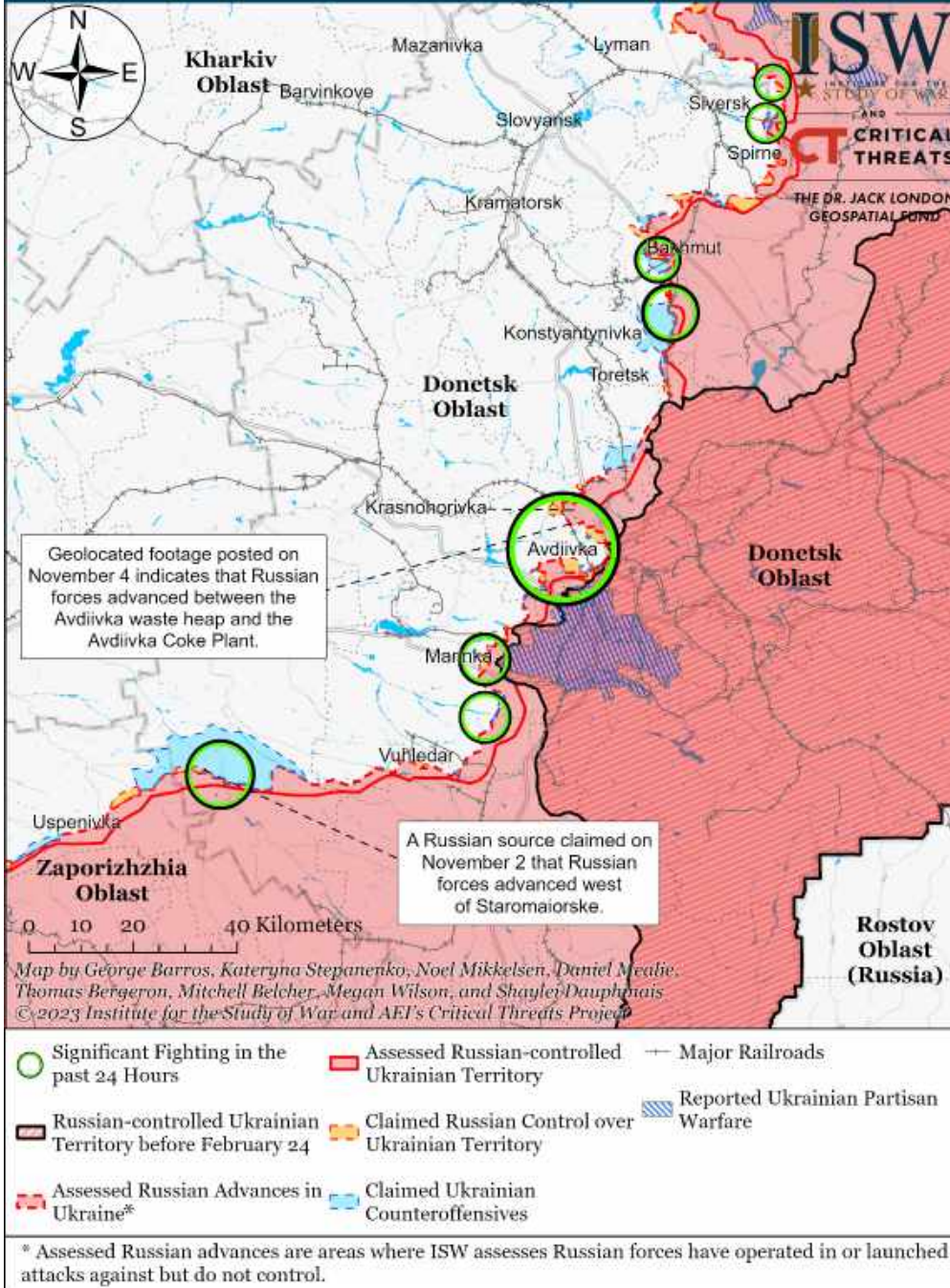
Russian forces reportedly lost around 200 armored vehicles while conducting offensive operations in the Avdiivka direction over the past three weeks. The UK Ministry of Defense (MoD) assessed that Russian forces have likely lost around 200 armored vehicles around Avdiivka, likely due to the effectiveness of Ukrainian modern hand-held anti-armor weapons, mines, UAV-dropped munitions, and precision artillery systems.[37] The UK MoD assessed that Russian forces have likely switched their tactics to conducting dismounted infantry-based assaults due to vehicle losses in the area. The Ukrainian General Staff published video footage on November 4 showing Ukrainian forces striking a column of Russian armored vehicles moving in a line along a road in the Avdiivka direction.[38]

Assessed Control of Terrain near Donetsk City as of November 4, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Russian forces continued offensive operations west and southwest of Donetsk City and near Vuhledar on November 4 but did not make any claimed or confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian assaults near Marinka (just west of Donetsk City) and Novomykhailivka (10km south of Marinka).[39] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked Ukrainian positions from the Mykilske direction (4km southeast of Vuhledar).[40]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of November 4, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



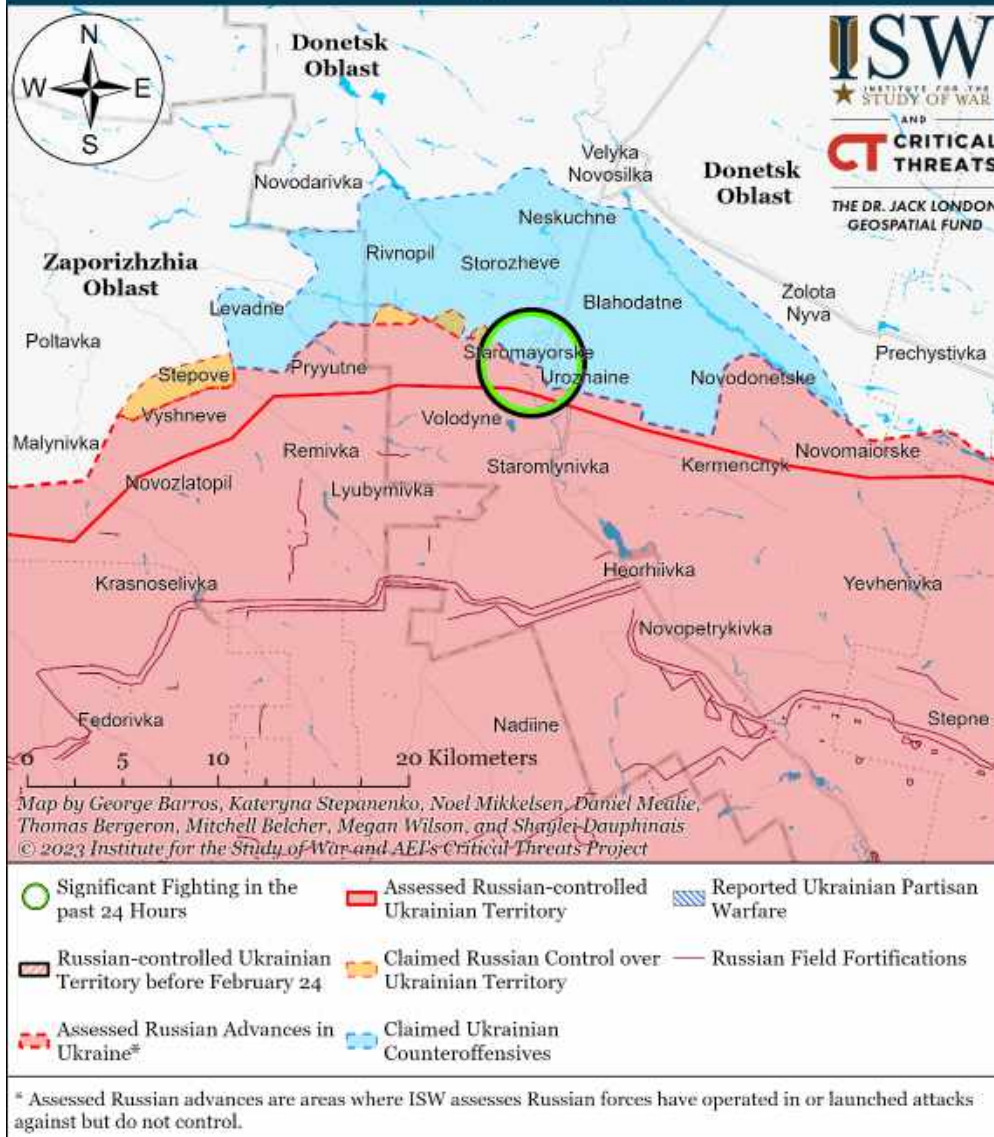
Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions and secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes)

Ukrainian forces did not conduct any confirmed or claimed ground attacks in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on November 4.



Russian forces conducted offensive operations in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area but did not make any confirmed gains on November 4. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks near Staromayorske (9km south of Velyka Novosilka).[41] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced near Pryyutne (14km southwest of Velyka Novosilka) and along the Rivnopil-Staromayorske (10km southwest to 9km south of Velyka Novosilka) line.[42] Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets stated on November 4 that Russian forces conducted a series of unsuccessful counterattacks along the Novodonetske-Zolota Nyva (12km southeast of Velyka Novosilka) line and from the Pryyutne-Zavitne Bazhannya (14km southwest to 13km south) line towards Rivnopil in the past several days.[43]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around the Vremivka Salient as of November 4, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Russian and Ukrainian forces reportedly skirmished in eastern Zaporizhzhia Oblast on November 4, and Russian forces recently made confirmed territorial gains. Geolocated footage published on November 3 shows that Russian forces marginally advanced south of Chervone (6km southeast of Hulyaipole).[44] The Russian MoD claimed that Russian forces repelled a Ukrainian ground attack near Marfopil (5km southeast of Hulyaipole).[45]

Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast on November 4 but did not make confirmed gains. Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces continued small-group assaults near Robotyne (10km south of Orikhiv) and Verbove (18km southeast of Orikhiv) on

November 3 and 4.[46] A Russian milblogger claimed on November 3 that some positions in forest areas west of Robotyne have changed control several times in the past week.[47]

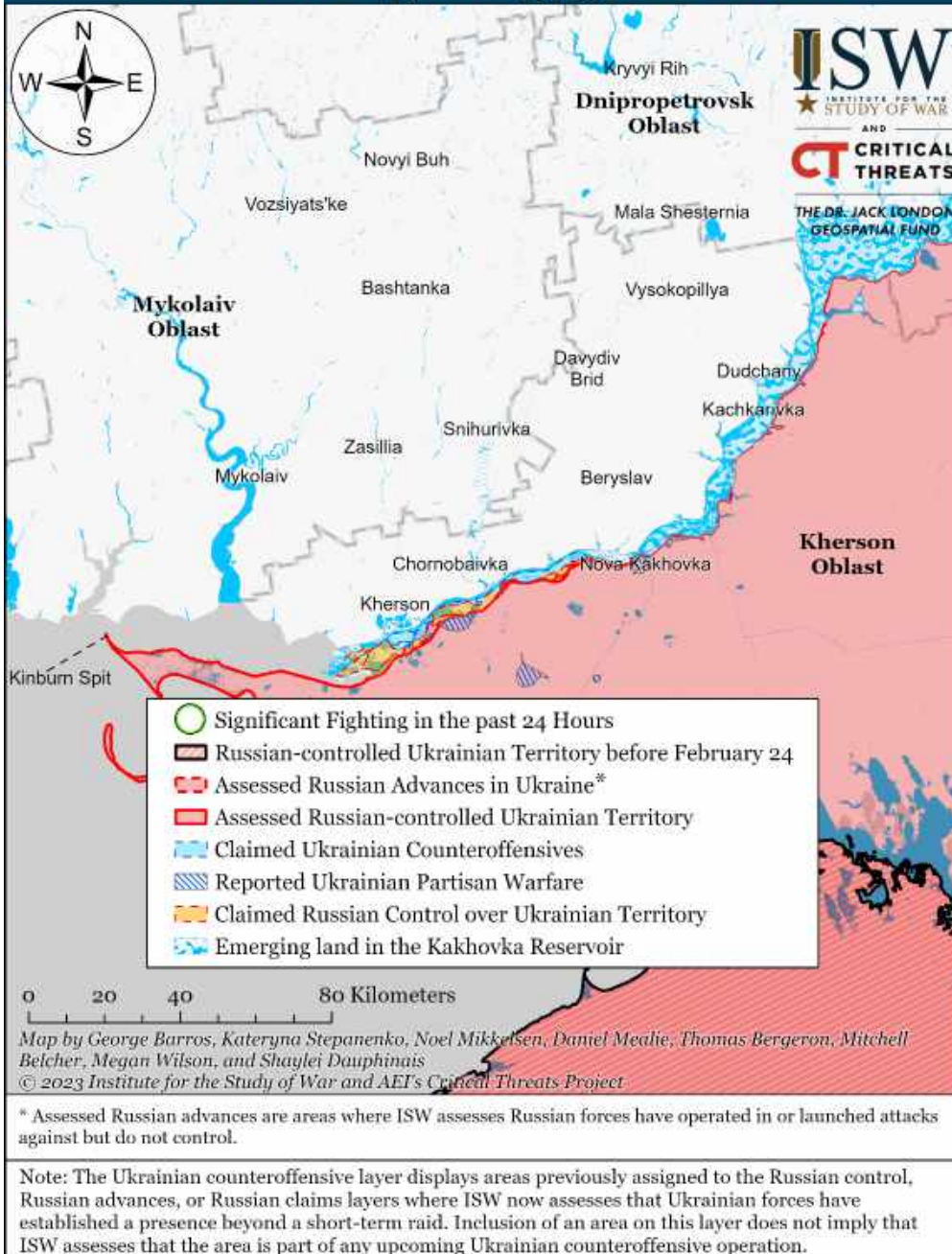
Russian forces continued limited offensive operations in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast on November 4 and did not make any confirmed or claimed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled a Russian ground attack near Robotyne.[48] Mashovets stated that two battalions of the Russian 2nd Motorized Rifle Brigade and 291st Motorized Rifle Regiment (both of the 42nd Motorized Rifle Division, 58th Combined Arms Army, Southern Military District) conducted a tactical rotation near Robotyne to restore combat power after heavy combat losses.[49]



Russian forces continue to fail to push Ukrainian forces from their positions in the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast. Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces achieved minor success in pushing

Ukrainian forces from positions in Krynyky but that Ukrainian forces remain in the center of the settlement.[50] The milbloggers also claimed that Ukrainian forces maintain positions near the Antonivsky road and railway bridges.[51] Other Russian milbloggers amplified footage of a Russian infantry squad moving along a road in a condensed formation in Krynyky before small arms fire killed and wounded all the personnel, which one milblogger attributed to friendly fire rather than Ukrainian fire.[52] The milbloggers reiterated standard complaints of poor Russian communications between units, lack of counterbattery fire, and poor training of military personnel.[53]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of November 4, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Ukrainian forces continue targeting Russian military assets in rear areas in southern Ukraine. Russian occupation authorities and other Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces targeted the Kerch Strait Bridge in occupied Crimea on November 4 but that Russian air defenses intercepted the missiles.[54] Russian sources claimed that missile fragments hit a dry dock in the Zalyv shipyard in Kerch, and geolocated footage shows a fire at the shipyard.[55] A Russian insider source claimed that the Zalyv shipyard contained Project 22800 Karakurt missile ships, which can carry Kalibr cruise

missiles, though ISW cannot verify this claim.[56] Zaporizhia Oblast occupation official Vladimir Rogov claimed that Russian forces also shot down three Ukrainian Storm Shadow missiles above Berdyansk on November 4.[57]

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

The *BBC* and Russian opposition media outlet *Mediazona* confirmed that at least 35,780 Russian servicemen have died in the war in Ukraine since February 24, 2022 as of November 3, 2023, including 923 deaths in the past two weeks.[58] The *BBC* and *Mediazona* confirmed the deaths through open-source materials, including a Russian death in the Ukrainian strike on Russian dry docks in Sevastopol on September 13, 2023, and the deaths of two Russian majors in the Ukrainian ATACMS strikes on Russian airfields in occupied Berdyansk and Luhansk City on October 17, 2023. The *BBC* and *Mediazona* stated that Russian deaths in Bakhmut still exceed those in the latest Russian offensive operations near Avdiivka.

The Russian government will now register prisoners on a “special military registration.” The Russian government invalidated a subsection of the law on military registration that exempted those serving a prison sentence from military registration and created a “special military registration” for prisoners.[59] Russian military registration and enlistment offices located at correctional facilities and pre-trial detention centers will now input, edit, and remove prisoners' information on the “special military registration” without the prisoner’s personal presence at the office. The Russian prisoners subject to special registration will not undergo medical examinations or psychological screenings.

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

Russia is reportedly struggling to improve its strategic nuclear force due to Western sanctions and the lack of domestically produced components.[60] The Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) stated on November 4 that Russia conducted unsuccessful tests of the RS-24 “Yars” intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) on October 25 and November 1. The GUR stated that Russia also conducted an unsuccessful test of the RSM-56 “Bulava” submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) on October 25. The GUR stated that Russia accepted the RS-28 “Sarmat” superheavy ICBM into service in September 2023 after only one full test and years of postponements. The GUR stated that Russia has postponed the delivery of new Tu-160M2 strategic bombers due to Russia’s inability to resume production of the new version of the NK-32 engine.

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 settle Russian citizens in occupied Ukraine. Ukrainian Melitopol Mayor Ivan Fedorov stated on November 3 that Russian forces are searching the settlements in occupied Ukraine for vacant housing that could be allocated to Russian servicemen and citizens and that Russian authorities are evicting local residents under false claims of delinquent debt.[61] Fedorov stated that Russian occupation authorities are expropriating the most housing in occupied Melitopol, Berdyansk, Tokmak, and Molochansk, Zaporizhia Oblast. Former Ukrainian Luhansk Oblast Administration Head Serhiy Haidai stated that Russian forces from Tatarstan are also

expropriating property from Ukrainian citizens in Severodonetsk and two other cities in occupied Luhansk Oblast.[62]

Russian Information Operations and Narratives

Russian sources used the celebration of Unity Day in Russia on November 4 to promote Kremlin narratives about interethnic and interreligious harmony in Russia and the Russian military as well as the false unity of occupied Ukraine with Russia. A Russian milblogger claimed that various ethnic minorities serving in the Russian military together, the presence of people from various regions of Russia in occupied Ukraine, and the patronage systems between Russian regions and occupied Ukrainian areas are all characteristic of the meaning of Unity Day.[63] A Russian source claimed that Russian authorities canceled a religious procession in honor of Unity Day in Samara Oblast so as to not disrespect other religions and diasporas.[64] Russian sources also highlighted the opening of the "Rossiya" International Exhibition and Forum opened in Moscow on November 4, which included exhibits on occupied Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson, and Zaporizhia oblasts.[65] Antisemitic riots in Dagestan on October 29 and recent controversies surrounding Chechen and regular Russian forces highlighted interethnic and interreligious tensions in Russia.[66]

Russian government officials continue to use escalatory nuclear rhetoric to scare the international community and impede Western military aid provisions to Ukraine. Russian Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev claimed on November 4 that Russia has more nuclear missiles than its "competitors" for the first time in history. Patrushev claimed that Russia's security will be guaranteed for "decades" due to its "unique strategic weapons," such as hypersonic missiles.[67] Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Grushko stated on November 4 that Russia will take "all necessary military-technical precautions" in response to the US transfer of F-35 nuclear-weapons capable fighter jets to the United Kingdom and NATO's activities generally.[68] ISW has consistently assessed that the Kremlin often references Russian nuclear capabilities in an attempt to dissuade the West from providing Ukraine with materiel.[69]

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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[67] <https://ria.ru/20231104/oruzhie-1907408332.html>

[68] <https://ria.ru/20231104/f-35-1907363281.html>

[69] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounders/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-february-12-2023>

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, November 3, 2023

Riley Bailey, Christina Harward, Kateryna Stepanenko, Karolina Hird, and Frederick W. Kagan
November 3, 2023, 6:35pm ET

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

Click [here](#) to 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 3. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the November 4 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Russian forces conducted a notably larger series of drone strikes throughout Ukraine on November 3. The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Russian forces launched four dozen Shahed-131/-136 drones from Kursk Oblast and Primorsko-Akhtarsk, Krasnodar Krai, and a Kh-59 cruise missile from occupied Kherson Oblast at targets in Ukraine.[1] The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Ukrainian air defenses shot down the Kh-59 cruise missile and 24 of the Shahed drones.[2] Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky stated that Ukrainian forces intercepted over half of the roughly 40 drones that Russian forces launched at Ukraine.[3] Ukrainian officials reported that Russian forces struck targets in Kharkiv, Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, and Odesa oblasts, and Zelensky stated that Ukrainian air defenses activated in Kharkiv, Zaporizhia, Kherson, Mykolaiv, Odesa, Kyiv, Kirovohrad, Vinnytsia, Khmelnytskyi, and Lviv oblasts.[4] Ukrainian officials reported that Russian forces primarily struck civil infrastructure, and Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast Military Administration Head Svitlana Onyshchuk stated that Russian forces struck an unspecified military facility in Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast.[5] Ukrainian officials reported that Russian forces launched small groups of Shaheds to identify the locations of Ukrainian air defenses and then launched several waves of drones to complicate the Ukrainian response.[6] Ukrainian officials, including Zelensky, stated that Russian forces plan to launch more damaging strikes throughout Ukraine as winter approaches.[7]

The US Department of Defense (DoD) announced new military aid packages to Ukraine on November 3, primarily aimed at strengthening Ukraine's air defenses. The US DoD announced an aid package of military materiel support for Ukraine valued at \$125 million, including munitions for National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile Systems (NASAMS) and HIMARS; 155mm and 105mm artillery rounds; Tube-Launched, Optically-Tracked, Wire-Guided (TOW) anti-tank missiles; Javelin and AT-4 anti-armor systems; and over three million rounds of small arms ammunition and grenades.[8] The US DoD will also allocate \$300 million to the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative (USAI) to strengthen Ukraine's air defenses over the long term. The US DoD will provide Ukraine laser-guided munitions to counter UAVs under USAI.

Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations near Bakhmut and in western Zaporizhia Oblast on November 3. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Bakhmut and Melitopol (western Zaporizhia Oblast) directions.[9] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Russian forces repelled eight Ukrainian assaults in western Zaporizhia Oblast and several Ukrainian attacks near Bakhmut from October 28 to November 3.[10]

Russian milbloggers continued to criticize the Russian military command for failing to establish long-term training capabilities because it is keeping skilled commanders and soldiers at the front and leaving inexperienced careerists to train new recruits and officers. One Russian milblogger claimed that Russia continues to only learn from its mistakes at the cost of significant losses and that the Russian military command fails to teach effective tactics employed by competent commanders and servicemen to new personnel.[11] The milblogger claimed that the Russian military command commits the most capable commanders and servicemen to the most dangerous frontlines in Ukraine instead of using them to train the incoming class of Russian soldiers. The milblogger added that Russia needs to resolve this problem on a systemic level, otherwise newly formed units will repeat prior Russian mistakes on the frontline. Another Russian milblogger responded to the milblogger's critiques, noting that Russia needs to have experienced servicemen teach graduating classes at Russian military schools since graduates only study theory and do not receive any practice in modern warfare.[12] The milblogger implied that there are problems with Russian military theory and a lack of proper officer training because generals and officers who receive teaching positions do not have combat experience and only care about their own career growth. The milblogger concluded that the poor command of Russian operations in the Avdiivka direction

and near Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut) indicates that Russian generals do not think about the wellbeing of the Russian Armed Forces in the long-term.

Alleged long-time allies of Russian President Vladimir Putin are reportedly financing two Russian Ministry of Defense–subordinated private military companies that have subsumed former Wagner Group operations in Africa. *The Wall Street Journal (WSJ)* reported on November 3 that the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD), including Russian Deputy Defense Minister Yunus-Bek Yevkurov and members of the Main Directorate of the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces (GRU), is continuing efforts to subsume Wagner Group activities in Africa under the MoD-subordinated Redut and Convoy private military companies (PMCs).[13] *WSJ* reported that Arkady Rotenberg and Gennady Timchenko, two Russian billionaires who have known Putin for decades and are in Putin’s inner circle, are financing Convoy and Redut, respectively. This decision is likely an attempt to prevent a single PMC and single financier from again gaining the power and influence to potentially threaten Putin and the Russian central leadership. ISW has previously assessed that Putin routinely appoints people to positions such that no one figure amasses too much political influence.[14] *WSJ* also reported that Konstantin Pikalov leads Convoy PMC and that Konstantin Mirzayants leads Redut PMC. Russian State Duma Defense Committee Chairman Andrei Kartopolov stated on November 3 that Wagner has “completely disbanded” and that some Wagner fighters continue to operate in Africa but under a “different brand” under the Russian MoD.[15]

Wagner elements in Syria will reportedly transfer Russian Pantsir-S1 air defense systems that Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has agreed to provide to Iranian-backed Lebanese Hezbollah. (*NOTE: This text also appeared in the Critical Threats Project’s (CTP) November 3 Iran Update*) CNN reported on November 3 that two people familiar with US intelligence stated that Assad agreed to provide the Russian air defense systems to Hezbollah and tasked Wagner with their delivery during joint conversations between the three actors.[16] *WSJ* reported on November 2 that US intelligence indicated that Wagner itself would give the Russian air defense systems to Hezbollah.[17] Israel frequently conducts airstrikes on Iranian weapons shipments into and through Syria, and Assad may have asked Wagner to deliver the air defense systems to Hezbollah to act as a deterrent to potential Israeli interdiction efforts.[18] CTP-ISW has previously assessed that Russia may be able to facilitate weapons shipments in Syria without risking Israeli airstrikes, and the Kremlin may believe that this Israeli reluctance will extend to Wagner.[19] Russia and Israel have a complex relationship in Syria, as Israel has historically relied on Russia to curb Iranian activities in Syria.[20]

Dagestani officials claimed they would punish those who participate in and organize alleged future demonstrations, in contrast to calls for leniency for those participating in the October 29 antisemitic riots. The office of the Mayor of Makhachkala called on local residents to refrain from participating in unauthorized rallies, including one allegedly planned for November 5, and preemptively threatened that participants and “those who provoke the population” will face “serious consequences.”[21] Russian milbloggers similarly claimed that Telegram channels continue to call on Dagestani residents to attend a November 5 demonstration to demand the release of those detained for the October 29 antisemitic riots.[22] A Russian milblogger continued to criticize the weak official response to the recent riots, stating that “to have mercy means to show weakness.”[23]

Chechen Republic Head Ramzan Kadyrov’s continued appeals to Chechen nationalists likely aim to solidify domestic support without disrupting his appearance as a steadfast supporter of Russian President Vladimir Putin. Kadyrov announced on November 3 that Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin signed a decree assigning original Chechen names to eight Chechen villages that suffered from Stalin-era deportations and that Soviet authorities disbanded.[24] Russian officials have increasingly suppressed acknowledgements of Stalinist deportations, yet the Kremlin’s support for reversing Stalin’s 1944 order disbanding these Chechen villages suggests that Kadyrov is coordinating his rhetorical appeals with the Kremlin.[25] This likely rhetorical overture follows similar allusions to Chechen national history from Kadyrov, who recently named two new Chechen volunteer battalions after 18th and 19th Century Chechen fighters who resisted Russian imperial rule.[26] These allusions to Chechen national history are a low stakes approach to currying favor with Chechen nationalists who may have negative attitudes towards the Kremlin and Kadyrov’s avowed support of Putin. Kadyrov’s rhetorical support for historical Chechen nationalism diverts conversations away from his current support of the increasingly ultranationalist Kremlin, while only drawing temporary ire from select Russian ultranationalists.[27]

Key Takeaways:

- **Russian forces conducted a notably larger series of drone strikes throughout Ukraine on November 3.**
- **The US Department of Defense (DoD) announced new military aid packages to Ukraine on November 3, primarily aimed at strengthening Ukraine’s air defenses.**

- **Russian milbloggers continued to criticize the Russian military command for failing to establish long-term training capabilities because it is keeping skilled commanders and soldiers at the front and leaving inexperienced careerists to train new recruits and officers.**
- **Alleged long-time allies of Russian President Vladimir Putin are reportedly financing two Russian Ministry of Defense–subordinated private military companies that have subsumed former Wagner Group operations in Africa.**
- **Wagner elements in Syria will reportedly transfer Russian Pantsir-S1 air defense systems that Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has agreed to provide to Iranian-backed Lebanese Hezbollah.**
- **Dagestani officials claimed they would punish those who participate in and organize alleged future demonstrations, in contrast to calls for leniency for those participating in the October 29 antisemitic riots.**
- **Chechen Republic Head Ramzan Kadyrov’s continued appeals to Chechen nationalists likely aim to solidify domestic support without disrupting his appearance as a steadfast supporter of Russian President Vladimir Putin.**
- **Russian forces conducted offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line, near Bakhmut, near Avdiivka, west and southwest of Donetsk City, near Vuhledar, in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area, and in western Zaporizhia Oblast and advanced in some areas.**
- **Kremlin-affiliated milbloggers began advertising recruitment into an “elite regiment” in Moscow Oblast and offering recruits one-million-ruble (about \$10,900) salaries.**
- **Kremlin-appointed Children’s Rights Commissioner Maria Lvova-Belova continued attempts to discredit information about Russia’s deportation of Ukrainian children.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of November 3, 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

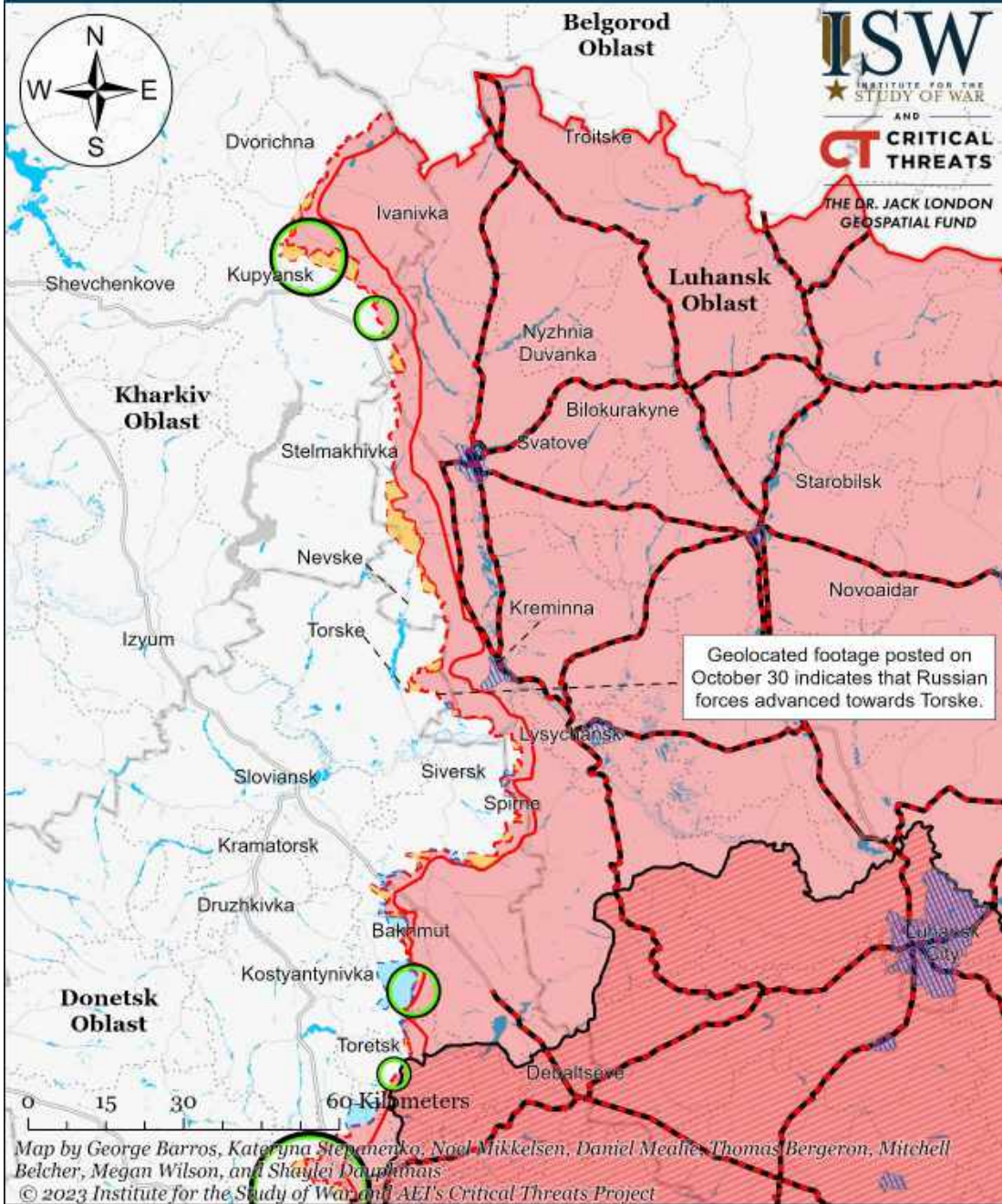
Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

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 along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on November 3 but did not make any confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks in the Kupyansk direction near Synkivka (7km northeast of Kupyansk), Petropavlivka (5km northeast of Kupyansk), and Ivanivka (20km southeast of Kupyansk) and in the Svatove area near Stelmakhivka (15km northwest of Svatove).[28] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that elements of the Russian Western Grouping of Forces improved their positions near Kupyansk.[29] One prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced southwest of Pershotravneve (24km east of Kupyansk), and another milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced near Petropavlivka and Synkivka and are making progress near Makiivka (20km southwest of Svatove).[30] Russian sources posted footage purporting to show Russian aviation striking Ukrainian crossings across the Oskil River in the Kupyansk direction with FAB-500 glide bombs.[31] The Ukrainian State Border Guard Service posted footage of Ukrainian border guards repelling a small Russian infantry attack near Svatove.[32] A Russian milblogger posted footage purportedly of Russian airborne (VDV) snipers operating in the forest areas near Kreminna.[33]

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted unsuccessful ground attacks along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on November 3. Russian Western Grouping of Forces Spokesperson Sergei Zybinsky claimed that elements of the Russian Western Grouping of Forces repelled a Ukrainian assault near Synkivka.[34] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that elements of the Russian Western Grouping of Forces repelled 24 Ukrainian assaults in the Kupyansk direction and that elements of the Russian Central Grouping of Forces repelled 20 Ukrainian assaults in the Lyman direction between October 28 and November 3.[35]

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



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THE DR. JACK LONDON
GEOSPATIAL FUND

Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Meales, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Megan Wilson, and Shaylei Dauphinais
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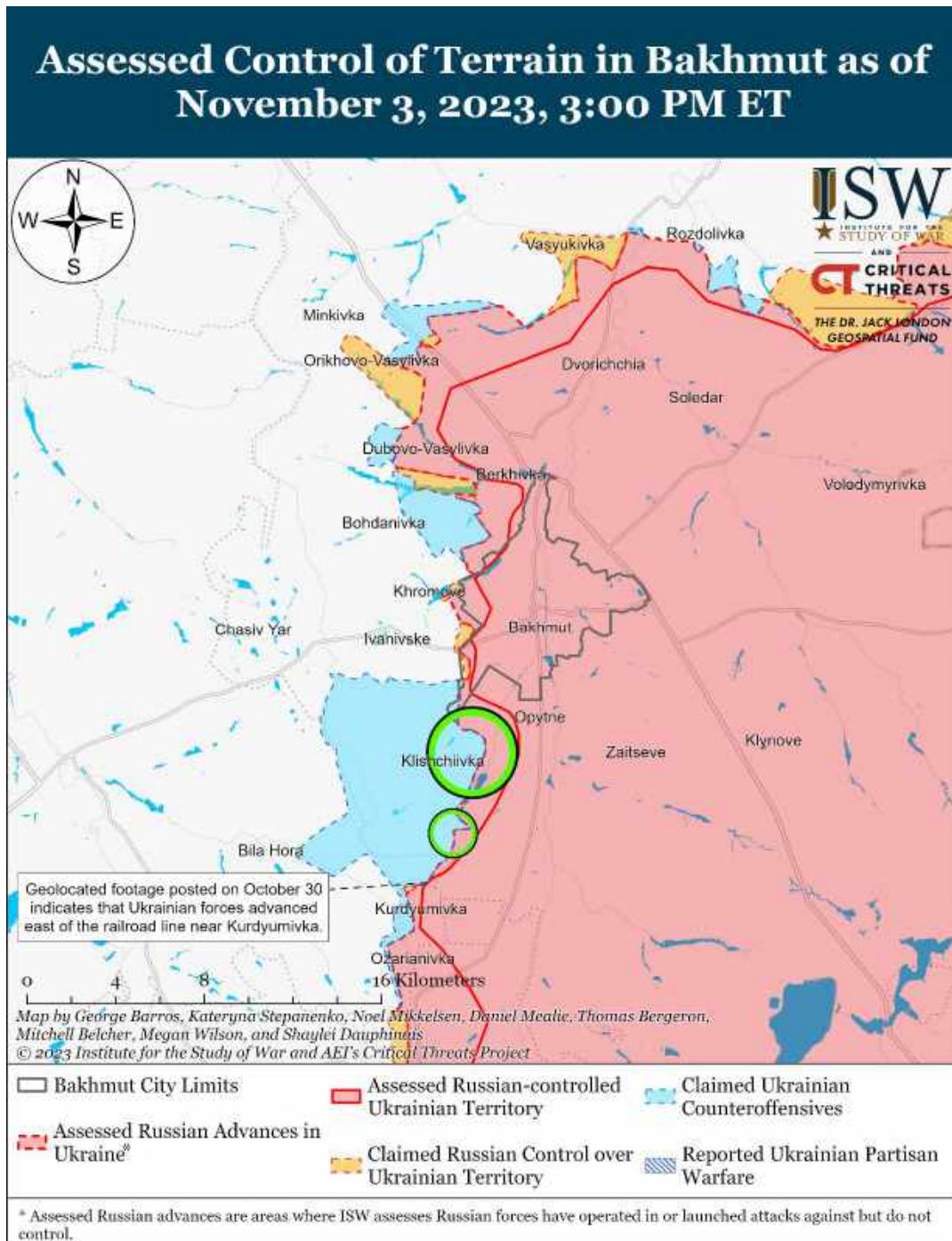
- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- - - Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- - - Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- - - Russian Ground Lines of Communication
- ▭ Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- ▭ Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
- ▭ Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- ▭ Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory

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

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

Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations near Bakhmut on November 3 but did not make any claimed or confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations south of Bakhmut.[36] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that elements of the Russian Southern Grouping of Forces repelled Ukrainian assaults near Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut) and Kurdyumivka (13km southwest of Bakhmut) between October 28 and November 3.[37]

Russian forces continued limited offensive operations near Bakhmut on November 3 but did not make any confirmed or claimed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled more than 10 Russian assaults near Bohdanivka (7km northwest of Bakhmut), Khromove (immediately west of Bakhmut), Klishchiivka, Andriivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut), and Pivdenne (21km southwest of Bakhmut).[38]



Russian forces continued offensive operations near Avdiivka on November 3 and made confirmed gains on Avdiivka's northern flank. Geolocated footage published on November 3 indicates that Russian forces advanced southwest of Krasnohorivka (4km north of Avdiivka) towards the railway line north of Avdiivka.[39] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued to resist Russian advances near Avdiivka and repelled more than 17 Russian assaults near Stepove (3km north of Avdiivka), Sieverne (6km west of Avdiivka), Tonenke (7km west of Avdiivka), and Pervomaiske (11km southwest of Avdiivka).[40] Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces Spokesperson Colonel Oleksandr Shtupun later stated that there were no active combat engagements near Avdiivka but that Ukrainian forces expect "the situation to worsen" in the area.[41] Avdiivka City Military Administration Head Vitaliy Barabash stated that Russian forces are heavily shelling Ukrainian positions in Avdiivka and that infantry battles are ongoing north and south of the settlement.[42] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces made unspecified advances southeast of Avdiivka as of November 3.[43] Russian sources claimed on November 2 and 3 that Russian forces advanced north and west of Krasnohorivka, towards Novokalynove (8km northwest of Bakhmut), and near Stepove and pushed through Ukrainian defenses near Vesele (4km northeast of Avdiivka).[44] Russian milbloggers claimed that fighting continued near the Avdiivka Coke Plant, Avdiivka's southern and southwestern outskirts, and Opytne (4km south of Avdiivka).[45] A Ukrainian military observer stated that Russian forces are quickly constructing fortifications in the rear areas close to the areas of intended advance in the Avdiivka area so that they can more quickly commit reserves to combat.[46]

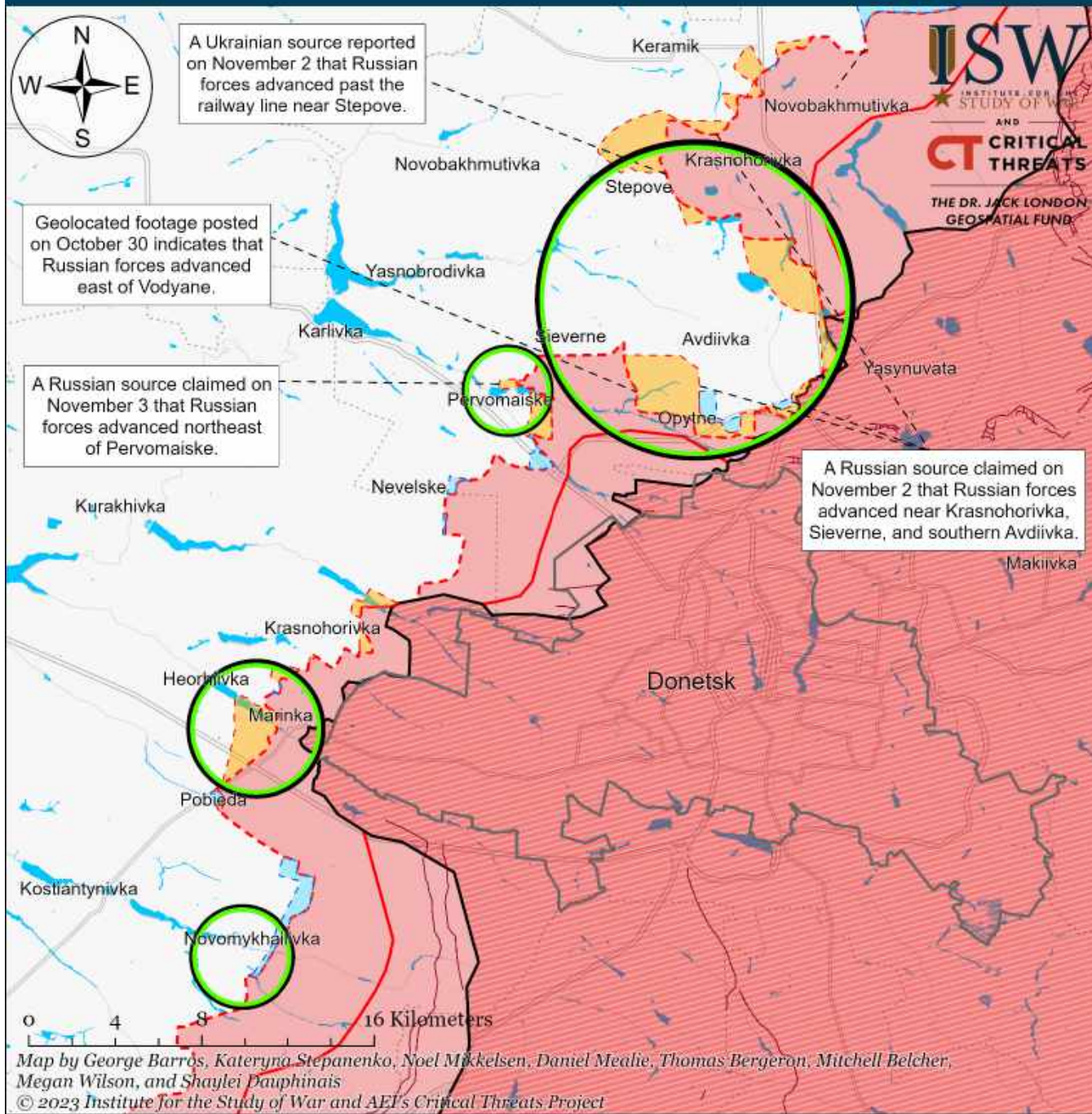
Ukrainian officials and Russian sources reported that Russian forces are preparing for a third series of larger assaults near Avdiivka. Barabash stated that Russian forces are concentrating manpower and equipment for a third massive assault on Avdiivka and that Russian forces would likely focus their offensive operations on the Avdiivka Coke Plant in northern Avdiivka.[47] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces near Avdiivka are conducting a tactical regrouping and similarly highlighted the Avdiivka Coke Plant as the objective of potential future Russian offensive operations.[48] Barabash stated that Russian forces will renew larger offensive operations when the ground near Avdiivka dries after several recent days of heavy rain.[49]

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked near Avdiivka on November 3 but did not advance. A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces are constantly conducting counterattacks near Avdiivka.[50] A prominent milblogger claimed on November 2 that Ukrainian counterattacks have failed to prevent Russian advances on Avdiivka's southern and northern flanks.[51] A Russian media aggregator claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked north of the Avdiivka Coke Plant on November 2 but did not specify an outcome.[52]

Russian forces continued offensive operations west and southwest of Donetsk City on November 3 but did not make any confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled more than 20 Russian assaults near Marinka (immediately southwest of Donetsk City) and Novomykhailivka (11km southwest of Donetsk City).[53]

The Russian MoD (MoD) claimed that elements of the Russian Southern Grouping of Forces repelled several Ukrainian assaults near Marinka between October 28 and November 3.[54]

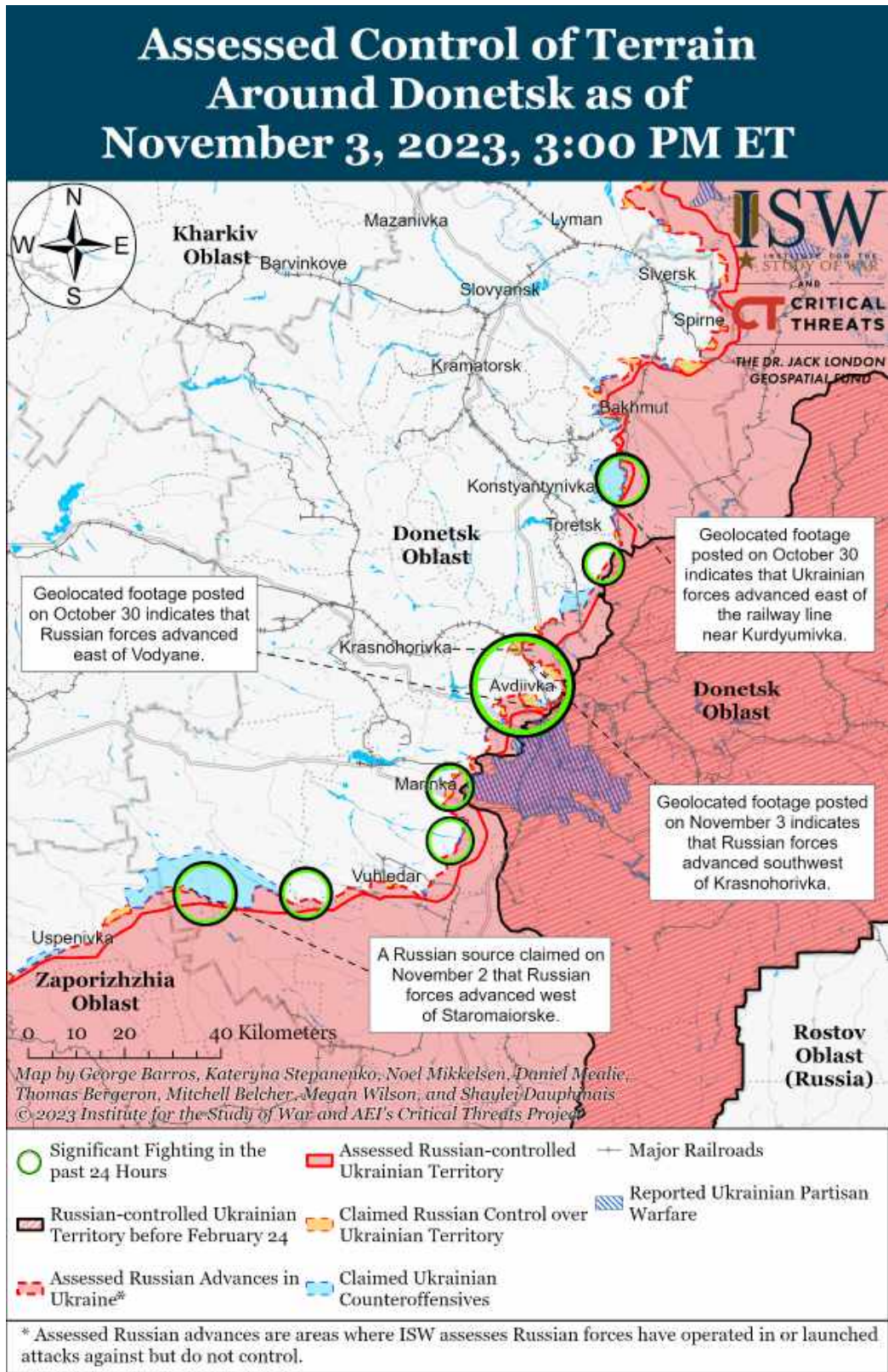
Assessed Control of Terrain near Donetsk City as of November 3, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



- 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.

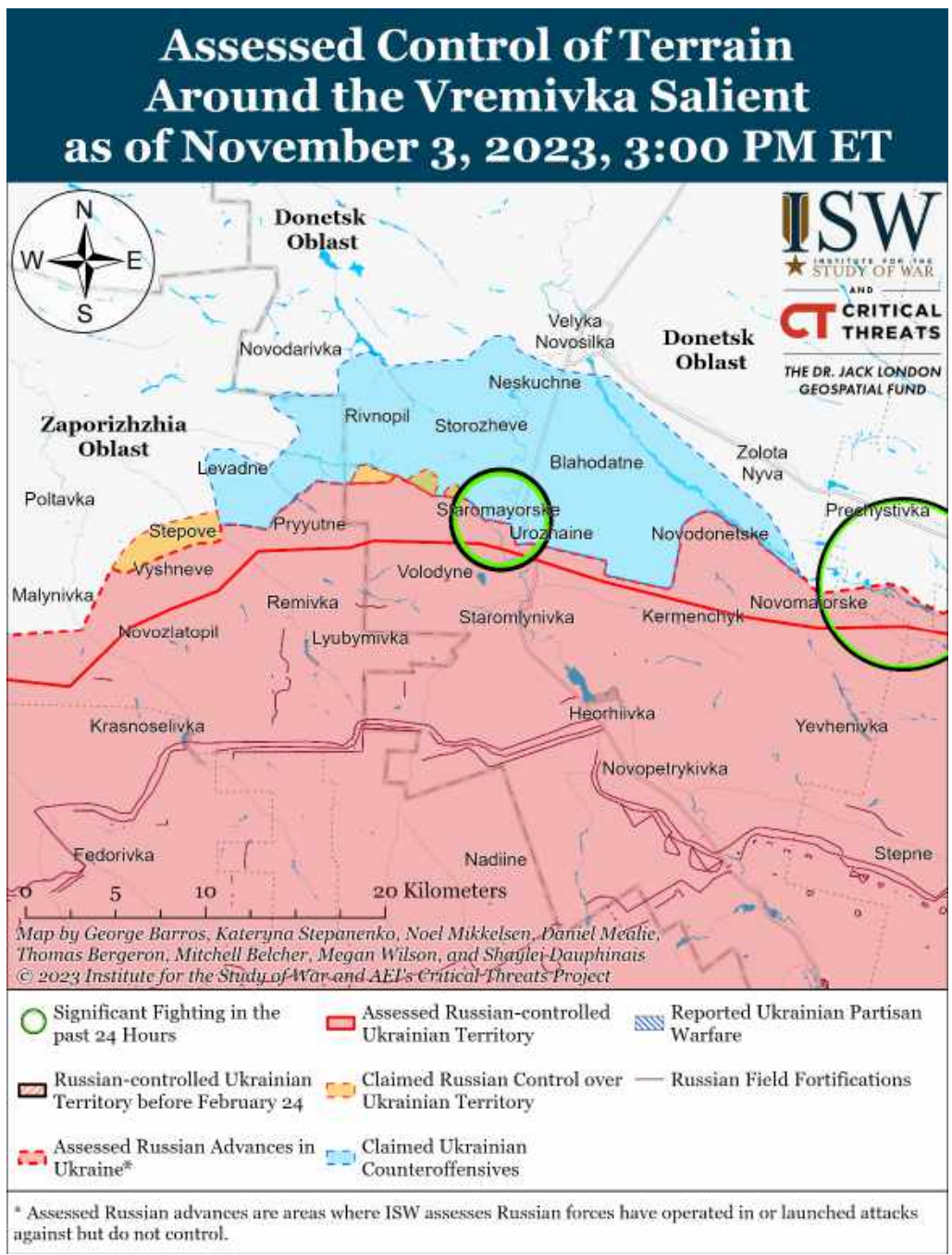
Ukrainian forces repelled mechanized Russian assaults near Vuhledar on November 2. Geolocated footage published on November 2 shows Ukrainian forces striking a column of Russian armored vehicles during a Russian assault on the eastern outskirts Mykilske (4km southeast of Vuhledar).[55] Shtupun stated on November 3 that Ukrainian forces recently destroyed dozens of Russian military vehicles and stopped a Russian attack near Vuhledar.[56] Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky similarly stated on November 2 that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian assaults in the general Vuhledar direction and that Russian forces lost dozens of military vehicles during the attacks.[57]



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 western Donetsk-eastern Zaporizhzhia Oblast border area near Staromayorske (9km south of Velyka Novosilka) in the past week.[58]

Russian forces conducted offensive operations in the western Donetsk-eastern Zaporizhzhia Oblast border area but did not make any confirmed gains on November 3. A Russian milblogger claimed on November 2 that Russian forces advanced along the Pryyutne-Staromayorske line (9km south to 16km southwest of Velyka Novosilka) in recent weeks and that elements of the Russian 394th Motorized Rifle Regiment (127th Motorized Rifle Division, 5th Combined Arms Army, Eastern Military District) recently advanced north of the Hrusheva gully northeast of Pryyutne (16km southwest of Velyka Novosilka).[59] Another Russian milblogger claimed on November 3 that Russian forces attacked from Pryyutne but Ukrainian forces held their positions.[60] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Staromayorske and Prechystivka (18km southeast of Velyka Novosilka).[61] A Russian milblogger claimed on November 2 that Russian forces counterattacked west of Staromayorske.[62]



Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted offensive operations in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast but did not make any claimed or confirmed advances on November 3. Russian milbloggers claimed on November 2 and 3 that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Robotyne (10km south of Orikhiv), Kopani (5km northwest of Robotyne), Novoprokopivka (2km south of Robotyne), and Verbove (9km east of Robotyne).[63] The Russian MoD claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Verbove and Robotyne in the past week.[64]

Russian forces conducted offensive operations in western Zaporizhzhia but did not make any claimed or confirmed advances on November 3. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Robotyne.[65] Russian sources, including the Russian MoD, reported that elements of the Russian 7th Airborne (VDV) Division are operating near Robotyne and Verbove.[66]



Ukrainian and Russian forces reportedly conducted ground attacks on the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast. Russian sources claimed on November 2 and 3 that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Poyma (10km southeast of Kherson City and 4km from the Dnipro River) and Krynyky.[67] A Russian milblogger claimed on November 2 and 3 that Russian forces conducted assaults in Krynyky (30km northeast of Kherson Oblast and 2km from the Dnipro River) and pushed Ukrainian forces to the center of the settlement.[68] The milblogger noted that Ukrainian artillery and drone activity are complicating Russian attempts to recapture Krynyky.[69]

Russian forces continued airstrikes with glide bombs against targets on the west (right) bank of Kherson Oblast on November 3. Ukraine’s Southern Operational Command reported that Russian forces launched 18 glide bombs at targets in Kherson and Beryslav raions over the past day.[70]



Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted a missile strike on Russian rear areas in occupied Kherson Oblast on November 3. Russian occupation officials and milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces launched six missiles on Chaplynka and that Russian air defenses intercepted four of the missiles.[71]

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

Kremlin-affiliated milbloggers began advertising recruitment into an “elite regiment” in Moscow Oblast that offered recruits one-million-ruble (about \$10,900) salaries.[72] Milbloggers claimed that recruitment into the unnamed elite regiment is ongoing until November 25.

Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty’s (RFE/RL) Siberian service reportedly uncovered the largest Wagner Group burial ground in eastern Russia.[73] *RFE/RL* reported that one of the local Novosibirsk cemeteries is a burial ground for at least 368 Wagner servicemen, of whom most died between January and March 2023 during Wagner’s assault on Bakhmut. Russian field commanders are reportedly selling mobilized personnel into service with Russian private military companies (PMCs). Russian investigative outlet *Vazhnye Istorii (iStories)* spoke to a mother of a Russian mobilized serviceman who had been reportedly sold to “Redut” private military company (PMC) for 25,000 rubles (\$272).[74] The mother claimed that Russian Colonel “Kozhanov” sold one of his mobilized fighters assigned to two military units, the 1440th Mobilized Regiment (unit 29593) and unit 29303, to the “Veterany” separate sabotage assault brigade (Redut PMC). Relatives of servicemen in the 1440th Mobilized Regiment previously complained in May 2023 that the Russian command transferred elements of the regiment to the “Veterany” brigade.[75]

Relatives of Russian mobilized servicemen continue to appeal to Russian President Vladimir Putin to order rotations on the frontline. Wives and mothers of mobilized personnel from Novorossiysk in unit 61756 asked Putin to send the mobilized personnel to the rear or give them a break after fighting on the frontline for a year.[76]

The Commission on Demography, Protection of Family, Children and Traditional Values of the Russian Civic Chamber proposed to issue “paternity capital” in the sum of one million rubles for the birth or adoption of a third child.[77] The sum is almost twice as much as the maternity capital. The Russian Civic Chamber believes that “paternity capital” will improve the demographic situation in Russia.

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

Chechen Republic Head Ramzan Kadyrov claimed on November 3 that Chechnya established drone production assembly facilities at the Russian Spetsnaz University in Gudermes.[78] Kadyrov claimed that future FPV-drone operators will also train at the university and that Chechnya will produce more than 100 drones in November to use on the frontlines in Ukraine.

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)

Kremlin-appointed Children’s Rights Commissioner Maria Lvova-Belova continued attempts to discredit information about Russia’s deportation of Ukrainian children. Lvova-Belova announced on November 3 that the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs held a press conference with foreign journalists and promoted the “Day After Tomorrow” program through which Russian authorities illegally deport Ukrainian children from occupied Ukraine to Russia under the guise of vacations and educational programs.[79]

Russian Information Operations and Narratives

Russian President Vladimir Putin reiterated long-standing Kremlin narratives during a meeting with the Russian Civic Chamber on November 3.[80] Putin continued to deny Ukraine’s historical existence and blamed the West for its role in the Ukraine crisis. Putin also accused Ukraine of selling weapons to the Taliban and accused the West and Ukraine of trying to organize “Jewish pogroms” in Russia. Putin repeated boilerplate rhetoric about Russia’s war effort in Ukraine as being part of its alleged need to protect Russian history, culture, and language in Ukraine.

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)

A Pro-Wagner Russian milblogger amplified footage on November 3 purporting to show Wagner Group personnel conducting intensive combat training with unspecified Belarusian special forces units at the Volovshchina training center in Minsk Oblast.[81]

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/kpszsus/7135>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02rr9YfqReoJNAs1s1wMWW6oMyGLvP65vDCwq3DLywmwR75vPpYhhT8n6S4N7QvkRML> ;

[2] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02rr9YfqReoJNAs1s1wMWW6oMyGLvP65vDCwq3DLywmwR75vPpYhhT8n6S4N7QvkRML>

[3] https://t.me/V_Zelenskiy_official/8431

[4] https://t.me/V_Zelenskiy_official/8431 ; <https://armyinform.com dot ua/2023/11/03/unochi-v-zoni-vidpovidalnosti-pivden-bulo-znyshheno-11-udarnyh-droniv-nataliya-gumenyuk/> ; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WY8sDvZdWEA> ; <https://suspilne dot media/608703-nad-odesinou-zbili-dva-rosijskih-droni-e-vlucanna-po-infrastrukturi/> ; https://www.facebook.com/sergii.tiurin.public/posts/pfbid02xXrTMgyFYjDiLBRMnV2JYbh8ERCvHqerFUDHJtA9pxXqfx6jiDTqy5mfsRNHdTVil?ref=embed_post ; <https://t.me/synegubov/7416> ; <https://t.me/synegubov/7417> ; <https://suspilne dot media/608691-rf-zavdala-blizko-10-udariv-bezpilotnikami-po-harkovu-ta-oblasti-prokuratura/> ; https://t.me/istories_media/4118

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Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, November 2, 2023

Kateryna Stepanenko, Christina Harward, Riley Bailey, and Frederick W. Kagan

November 2, 2023, 8:15pm ET

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

Click [here](#) to 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 3pm ET on November 2. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the November 3 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted a missile strike on the Russian “Dnepr” Grouping of Forces headquarters in Kherson Oblast on November 1.[1] A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces launched Storm Shadow cruise missiles and Neptune anti-ship missiles targeting Strilkove, Kherson Oblast, on the Arabat Spit and that Russian air defenses only intercepted half of the missiles.[2] Multiple Russian sources claimed that Colonel General Mikhail Teplinsky, the recently named commander of the Russian “Dnepr” Grouping of Forces operating in the Kherson direction, was uninjured.[3] Russian opposition media outlet *Astra* reported that four Ukrainian missiles struck the “Aura” recreation center near Strilkove that served as the Russian Dnepr Grouping's headquarters.[4]

Ukrainian forces recently advanced near Bakhmut and continued offensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast on November 2. Geolocated footage published on November 1 indicates that Ukrainian forces advanced further northeast of the railway line near Klishchiiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut).[5] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Bakhmut and Melitopol (western Zaporizhia Oblast) directions.[6]

The Russian information space's reaction to Ukrainian Commander-in-Chief General Valerii Zaluzhnyi's November 1 interview and essay about the current operational environment in Ukraine was relatively muted. Several Russian sources simply summarized Zaluzhnyi's points, while others suggested that Zaluzhnyi was primarily acknowledging the superiority of Soviet-era military strategy over NATO doctrine.[7] Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov expressed disagreement with Zaluzhnyi's conclusions and stated that the war has not reached a “dead end.”[8]

South Korean officials reported that North Korea is reportedly increasing its weapons and ammunition transfers to Russia and has reportedly delivered more than one million artillery rounds to date.[9] South Korean lawmaker Yoo Sang-bum told reporters that

the South Korean National Intelligence Service said that there have been about 10 weapon shipments from North Korea to Russia since August 2023 – totaling about one million rounds of artillery.[10] Yoo added that North Korea also sent advisers to Russia to guide Russians on the use of the munitions. South Korean *Yonhap* news agency reported the South Korean Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) estimated that North Korea shipped about 2,000 containers of military equipment and munitions from its northeastern port of Rajin to Vladivostok in Russia’s Far East.[11] *Yonhap* estimated that these containers can carry 200,000 122mm artillery shells or over one million of 152mm shells. *Yonhap* reported that North Korea may also have supplied other weapons to Russia, including T-series tank ammunition, anti-tank guided missiles, rocket launchers, rifles and machine guns, and possibly short-range ballistic missiles. A senior South Korean military official observed that North Korean maritime trade with Russia increased in August before North Korean dictator Kim Jong Un’s trip to Russia in September. The official also noted that Russia may consider providing North Korea with technological support for military satellites, nuclear weapons, fighter jets, and air defense systems. *Yonhap* reported that South Korean officials believe that North Korea is in the final stage of preparations to launch a surveillance satellite after two previous failed attempts, and it is possible that Pyongyang seeks to expand its military-technological relationship with the Kremlin in exchange for munitions.

The Wagner Group is reportedly planning to provide Hezbollah with Pantsir-S1 air defense systems. The *Wall Street Journal* reported on November 2 that U.S. officials stated that intelligence indicates that Wagner plans to give Iranian-backed Lebanese Hezbollah Russian Pantsir-S1 air defense missile systems.[12] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) has reportedly attempted to subsume Wagner operations abroad, including in the Middle East.[13] Russia and Iran have recently increased their military-technical ties; Iran has provided Russia with Shahed 136/131 drones and domestic Shahed production capabilities, and Russia reportedly provided Iran with advanced surveillance software and cyber weapons and promised Iran Su-35 aircraft.[14]

A Russian State Duma official attempted to deny ongoing claims that Rosgvardia will structurally absorb the Wagner Group private military company (PMC), rather than individually recruit former Wagner personnel. The Head of the Russian State Duma Information Policy Committee Alexander Khinshtein denied claims on November 1 that the Wagner private military company (PMC) is structurally integrated into Rosgvardia as a PMC and is recruiting personnel for Rosgvardia.[15] Khinshtein claimed that only former Wagner fighters, not the entire PMC, can sign individual contracts with Rosgvardia and that Rosgvardia cannot structurally absorb PMCs. Khinshtein was likely responding to a claim by a Wagner instructor known under the alias “Brest,” who claimed that Wagner PMC would officially become part of Rosgvardia.[16] Khinshtein’s denial contradicts prior Russian claims that Rosgvardia allowed Wagner personnel to sign individual and group agreements with Rosgvardia “as a guarantee that [Wagner] will not be ‘torn apart.’”[17] Khinshtein’s denials also contrast with “Akhmat” Spetsnaz forces Commander Apty Alaudinov’s claims that former Wagner fighters are joining Rogvardia’s Akhmat forces to follow their former commanders.[18] Russian sources reported that former Wagner personnel have created their own “Kamerton” detachment subordinated under Akhmat Spetsnaz forces that will soon deploy to an unspecified frontline in Ukraine.[19]

The fate of the Wagner PMC as an entity, its assets, and its remaining personnel is unclear at this time. A former Wagner fighter also told Russian opposition outlet *Verstka* that former Wagner personnel are currently torn between signing contracts with the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) or Rosgvardia or returning to civilian life.[20] Russian security structures, namely the Russian MoD and Rosgvardia, are competing for Wagner PMC's assets, likely prompting numerous contradictory statements about the fate of Wagner PMC as an entity.

Select Russian milbloggers accused Chechen officials and Akhmat Spetsnaz of attempting to defame and censor milbloggers who criticized Wagner's integration into Rosgvardia. Some milbloggers claimed that they had a negative opinion about Wagner's transfer to Rosgvardia and that Wagner fighters could have joined other security structures, directly criticizing the character of Rosgvardia's Director Army General Viktor Zolotov.[21] A Wagner-affiliated milblogger amplified claims that a prominent Russian milblogger got into an altercation with Akhmat's and Kadyrov's "public relations people" after the milblogger criticized Wagner's transfer to Akhmat units.[22] Russian milbloggers claimed that Kadyrov's people began to spread rumors about the milblogger and offered money to Telegram channels in return for reposting incriminating evidence against the milblogger.[23]

Russian officials appear to be pursuing limited punishments for the October 29 antisemitic riots in the Republic of Dagestan, which several Russian officials and Russian state media have called "pogroms." Russian authorities have arrested 15 individuals in connection with the riots at the Makhachkala airport as of November 1 and Dagestani Republic Head Sergei Melikov stated on November 1 that he dismissed the administrative head of Batyrkhanov, Dagestan, for participating in the riots.[24] Kremlin press wire TASS paraphrased Melikov as stating that only those who encroached on the lives of police officers and those who initiated the pogrom would face legal punishment.[25] Kremlin Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov stated on November 2 that the Kremlin supports Melikov's approach to punishing only select rioters.[26] The Head of the Spiritual Administration of the Republic of Tatarstan, Kamil Samigullin, had called on Russian authorities earlier on November 1 to show leniency towards those who fell for the "provocation" in Dagestan since outside forces allegedly organized the riots.[27] Samigullin also called the riots "pogroms" and called on Muslims in Russia not to attack Jews.[28] Telegram reportedly blocked an additional two channels on November 1 that also incited antisemitic unrest in Dagestan, following the removal of the Telegram channel that had initially promoted rumors that sparked the riots.[29] Select Russian ultranationalists criticized calls for leniency and warned that Dagestani public opinion leaders would escalate tensions in Dagestan in the absence of Kremlin control over the information space there.[30]

The Russian leadership is likely avoiding wider punishments for antisemitism in the North Caucasus out of concerns that they will inflame discontent towards the Kremlin. Russian officials have rhetorically signaled support for fighting antisemitic actions since the October 29 riots but have likely failed to convince domestic and international constituencies of Russia's ability to protect Jews in Russia. Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Spokesperson Maria Zakharova on November 2 condemned the Israeli travel warnings for the North Caucasus as "anti-Russian" actions and argued that Russian authorities at all levels have sufficiently dealt with the events in Dagestan.[31]

Russian authorities elsewhere in the North Caucasus have indicated concerns about the potential for similar riots. The Sunzhi City Administration in the Republic of Ingushetia announced on November 1 that Russian authorities would strengthen security at the Magas airport following the circulation of rumors about the arrival of a flight, presumably from Israel, on the night of November 1.[32] Russian state-run outlet *Izvestia* reported on November 1 that the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) detained an unspecified number of men in the Republic of Ingushetia who were organizing a demonstration at the Magas airport for the night of October 30.[33]

Key Takeaways:

- **Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted a missile strike on the Russian “Dnepr” Grouping of Forces headquarters in Kherson Oblast on November 1.**
- **Ukrainian forces recently advanced near Bakhmut and continued offensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast on November 2.**
- **The Russian information space’s reaction to Ukrainian Commander-in-Chief General Valerii Zaluzhnyi’s November 1 interview and essay about the current operational environment in Ukraine was relatively muted.**
- **South Korean officials reported that North Korea is reportedly increasing its weapons and ammunition transfers to Russia and has reportedly delivered more than one million artillery rounds to date.**
- **The Wagner Group is reportedly planning to provide Hezbollah with Pantsir-S1 air defense systems.**
- **A Russian State Duma official attempted to deny ongoing claims that Rosgvardia will structurally absorb the Wagner Group private military company (PMC), rather than individually recruit former Wagner personnel.**
- **Select Russian milbloggers accused Chechen officials and Akhmat Spetsnaz of attempting to defame and censor milbloggers who criticized Wagner’s integration into Rosgvardia.**
- **Russian officials appear to be pursuing limited punishments for the October 29 antisemitic riots in the Republic of Dagestan, which several Russian officials and Russian state media have called “pogroms.”**
- **Russian authorities elsewhere in the North Caucasus have indicated concerns about the potential for similar riots.**
- **Russian forces conducted offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line, near Bakhmut, near Avdiivka, west and southwest of Donetsk City, in the western Donetsk-eastern Zaporizhia Oblast border area, and in western Zaporizhia Oblast and advanced in some areas.**
- **Russian irregular forces are continuing to form new assault detachments and are incentivizing recruitment by offering recruits semi-independence from the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD).**
- **Recent Russian border restrictions are reportedly complicating the return of Ukrainian children forcibly deported to Russia.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of November 2, 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

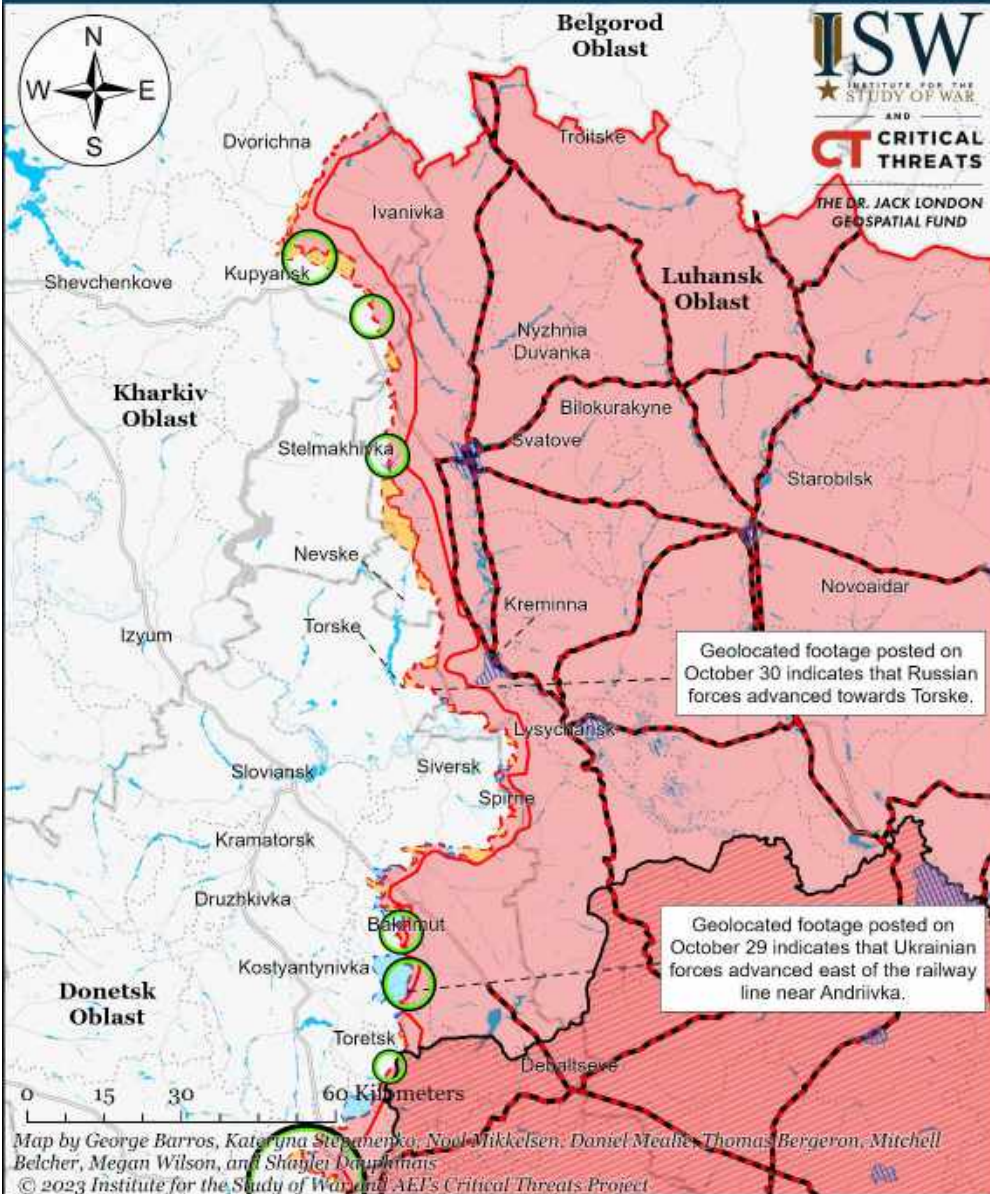
Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

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 2 and marginally advanced in the Kupyansk direction. Geolocated footage published on November 2 indicates that Russian forces advanced west of Orlyanka (22km east of Kupyansk).[34] A Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed that Russian forces seized new positions near Petropavlivka (7km east of Kupyansk) and Synkivka (9km northeast of Kupyansk), and are continuing to fight in the direction of Kupyansk.[35] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Synkivka, Petropavlivka, and Ivanivka (20km southeast of Kupyansk) and did not conduct any assaults near Kreminna.[36] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces continue to attack west of Svatove near Makiivka (22km northwest of Kreminna) and northeast of Kupyansk and that there have not been any major changes near Torske (14km west of Kreminna).[37] The Russian “Russkiy Legion” (BARS-13) formation claimed that combat activity remained low in the Kupyansk direction despite improvements in weather conditions.[38]

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted localized attacks on the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on November 2 but did not advance. The Russian MoD claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian assaults near Synkivka and Dibrova (5km southwest of Kreminna).[39] A Russian milblogger claimed that battles along the Kupyansk-Svatove line are positional and that Ukrainian forces periodically counterattack on this line.[40] Footage published on November 1 shows that Russian forces have recently lost seven tanks and infantry fighting vehicles in the Kupyansk direction.[41]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of November 2, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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

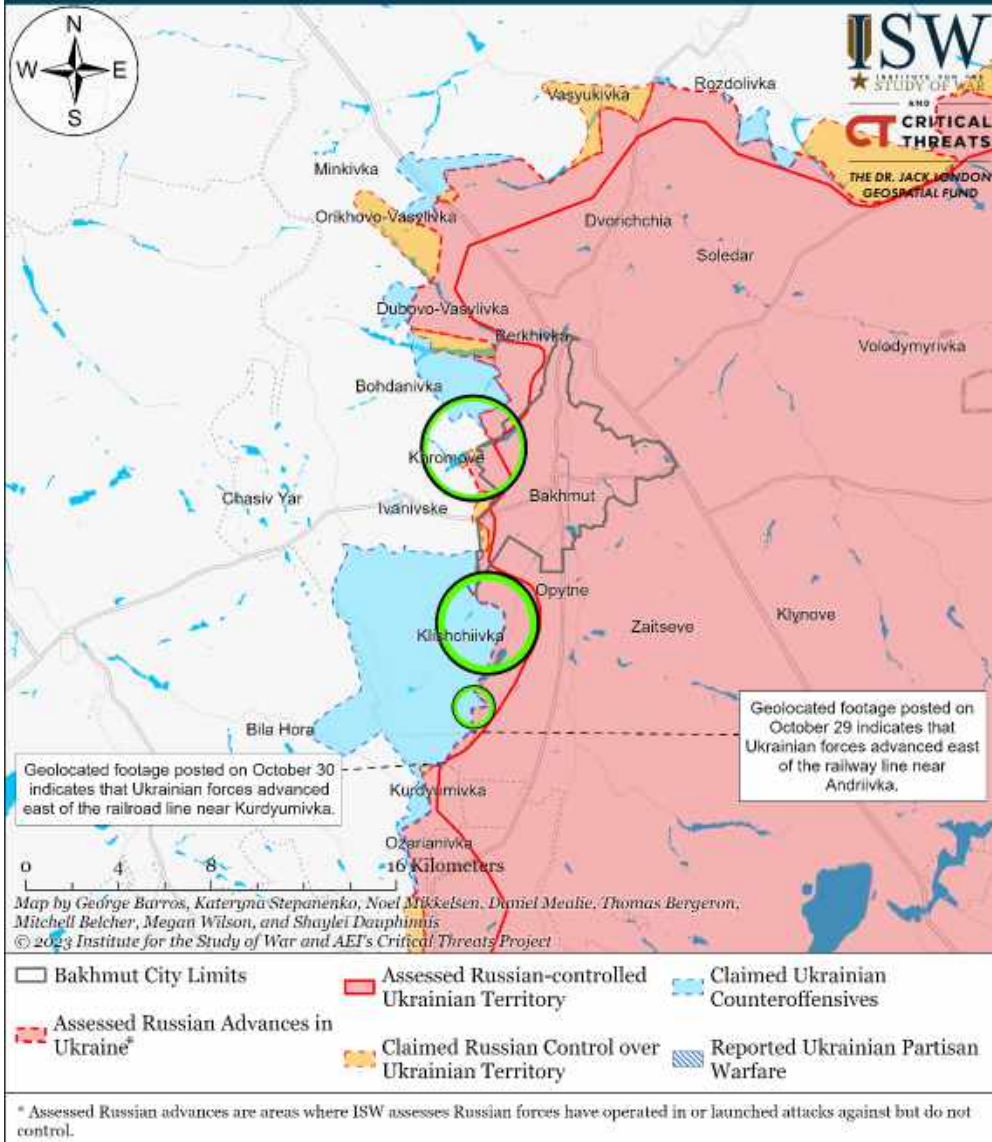
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

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

Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations near Bakhmut on November 2 and made confirmed advances. Geolocated footage published on November 1 indicates that Ukrainian forces advanced further northeast of the railway line near Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut).[42] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations south of Bakhmut.[43] Russian sources, including the Russian MoD, claimed that Russian forces repelled several Ukrainian assault groups near Klishchiivka.[44] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces are pushing through Russian defenses east of Andriivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut).[45]

Russian forces continued limited offensive operations near Bakhmut on November 2 but did not make any confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted 15 unsuccessful attempts to restore lost positions near Khromove (immediately west of Bakhmut), Klishchiivka, and Andriivka and that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian assaults near Pivdenne (22km southwest of Bakhmut).[46] Russian sources claimed on November 1 that Russian forces attacked near Bohdanivka (7km northwest of Bakhmut) and recaptured several unspecified positions south of Bakhmut.[47] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian units operating in the Bakhmut area are coordinating more effectively and suffering lower manpower losses compared to earlier in the ongoing Ukrainian counteroffensive near Bakhmut.[48]

Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of November 2, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

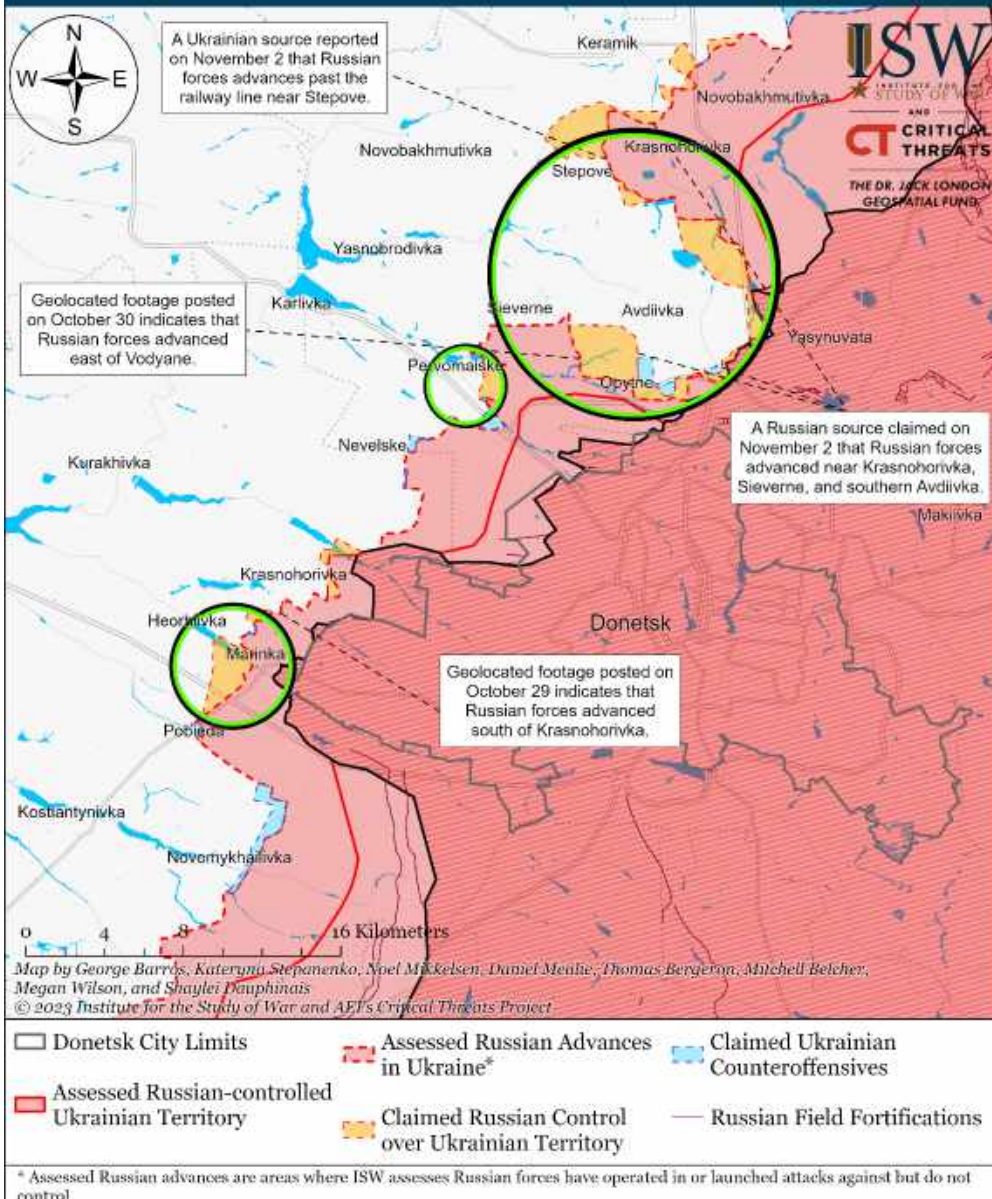


Russian forces continued offensive operations near Avdiivka on November 2 but did not make any confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued to hold back Russian advances near Avdiivka and repelled Russian assaults near Sieverne (6km west of Avdiivka), Tonenke (8km west of Avdiivka), and Pervomaiske (11km southwest of Avdiivka).[49] Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces Spokesperson Colonel Oleksandr Shtupun stated that Russian forces are mainly attacking with small infantry groups.[50] Shtupun stated that the tempo of Russian operations near Avdiivka is declining because Russian forces are regrouping and need reinforcements.[51] Avdiivka City Military Administration Head Vitaly Barabash stated that Russian forces are concentrating efforts on Avdiivka's northern flank and conducting consistent assault operations despite heavy rains in the area.[52] A Ukrainian military observer stated that Russian

forces crossed the railway line near Stepove (3km north of Avdiivka) and are preparing to launch attacks from these newly captured positions on the Avdiivka Coke Plant in northern Avdiivka.[53] A Russian media aggregator claimed that Russian forces advanced up to the Avdiivka Coke Plant on November 1.[54] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces conducted combined missile and air strikes targeting the Avdiivka Coke Plant on November 1 but noted that Ukrainian air defenses are preventing Russian forces from heavily striking the area.[55] The Ukrainian military observer also stated that Russian forces are expanding their control over positions near Opytne (4km south of Avdiivka).[56] A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced closer to the southwestern outskirts of Avdiivka and up to a kilometer from Sieverne, although ISW has not observed visual confirmation of these claims.[57]

Ukrainian forces did not conduct any claimed or confirmed counterattacks in the Avdiivka area on November 2.

Assessed Control of Terrain near Donetsk City as of November 2, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

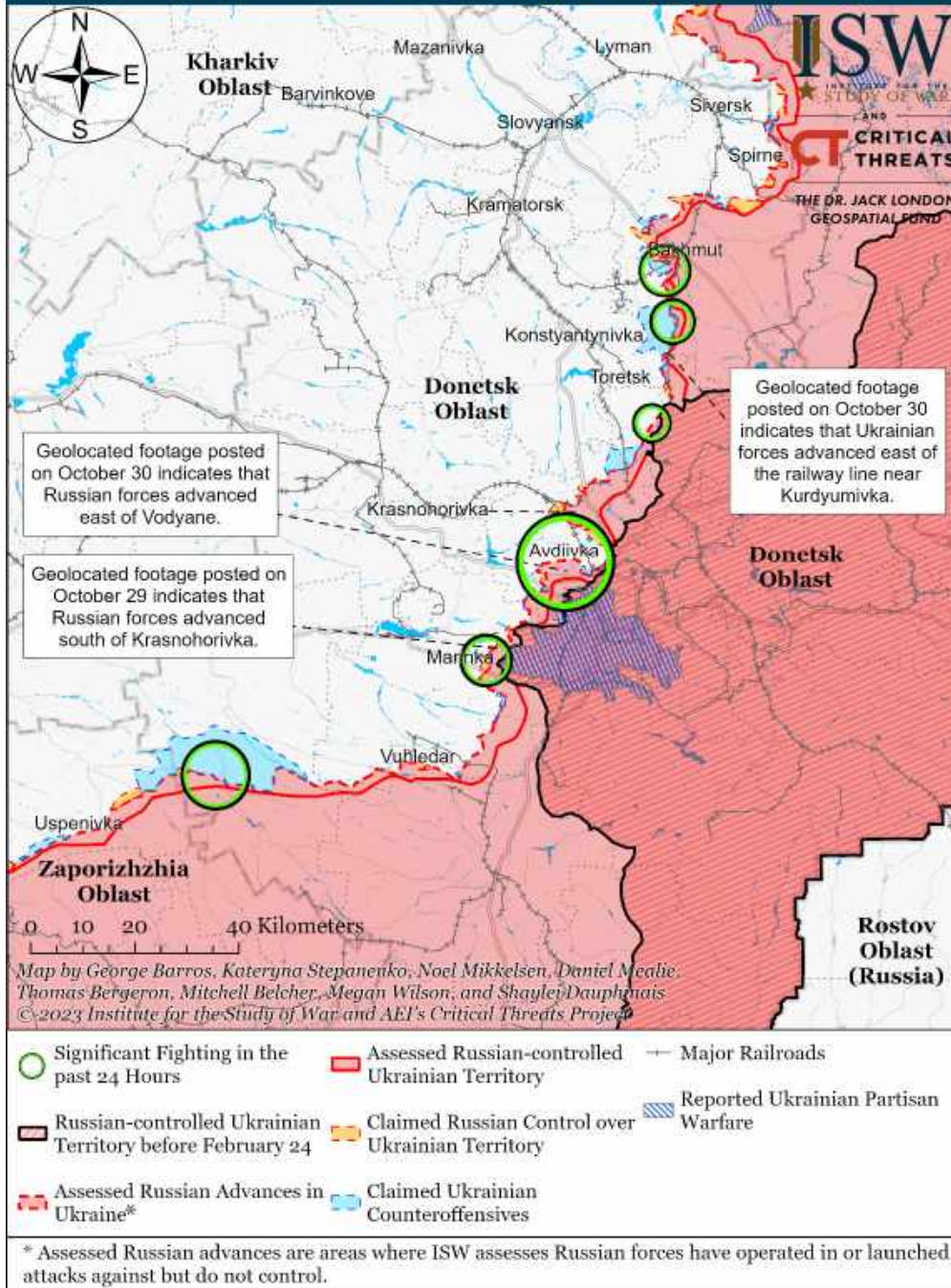


Russian forces conducted offensive operations west and southwest of Donetsk City on November 2 but did not make any confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled more than 20 Russian assaults near Marinka (immediately southwest of Marinka).[58] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces made marginal gains near Novomykhailivka (11km southwest of Donetsk City).[59]

Ukrainian forces did not conduct any confirmed or claimed counterattacks southwest of Donetsk City on November 2.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky stated on November 2 that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian assaults in the Vuhledar direction and that Russian forces lost dozens of military vehicles during the attacks.[60]

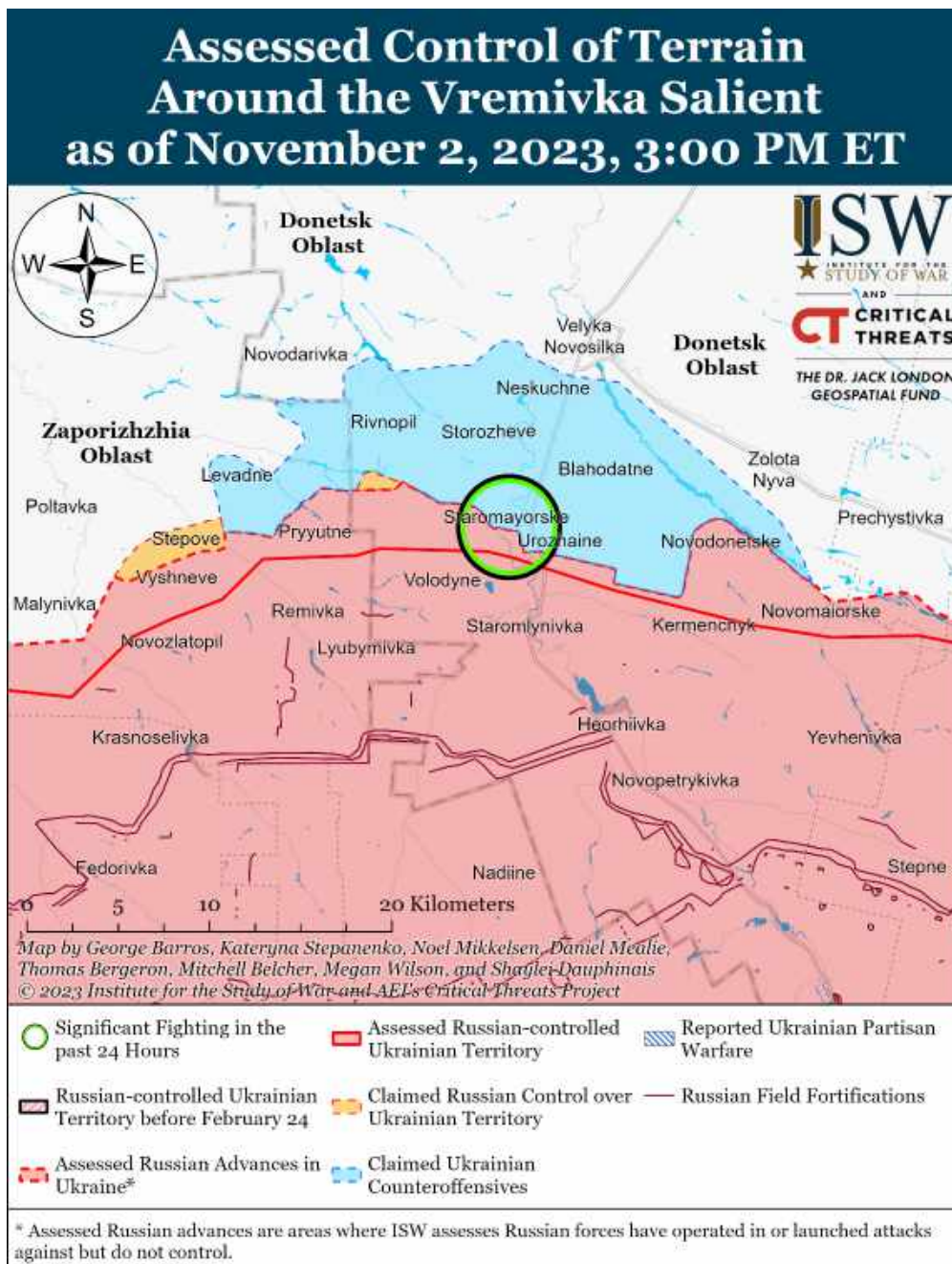
Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of November 2, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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 western Donetsk-eastern Zaporizhzhia Oblast border area on November 2.

Russian forces conducted offensive operations in the western Donetsk-eastern Zaporizhzhia Oblast border area but did not make any confirmed advances on November 2. The Russian “Vostok” Battalion claimed that Russian forces captured two Ukrainian positions, likely southeast of Velyka Novosilka.[61] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Staromayorske (9km south of Velyka Novosilka).[62]



Ukrainian forces conducted offensive operations in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast but did not make any confirmed advances on November 2. Russian sources claimed on November 1 and 2 that Ukrainian forces advanced west of Robotyne (10km south of Orikhiv) and in the direction of Myrne (16km northwest of Robotyne).[63] Russian sources claimed on November 1 and 2 that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Novoprokopivka (2km south of Robotyne) and southwest of Verbove (9km east of Robotyne).[64]



Russian forces conducted offensive operations in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast but did not make any claimed or confirmed advances on November 2. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful attacks near Robotyne.[65] A Russian milblogger claimed that elements of the Russian 56th Guards Airborne (VDV) Regiment (7th VDV Division) are operating southwest of Verbove.[66]

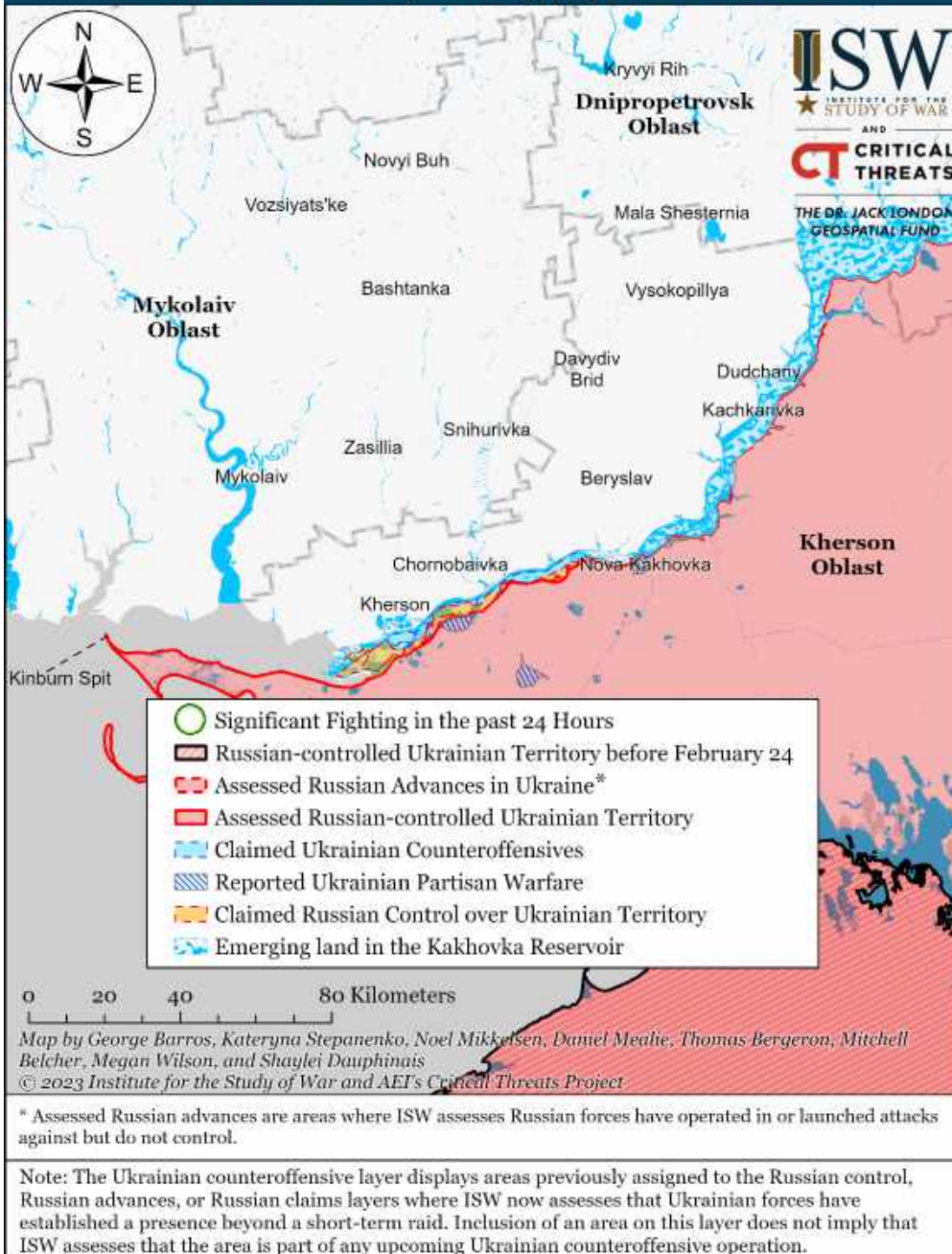
Russian sources, including the Russian MoD, claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted a drone strike near Enerhodar.[67]



Ukrainian forces reportedly maintain positions and continue offensive operations on the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast. 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 advanced near Krynky (30km northeast of Kherson Oblast and 2km from the Dnipro River).[68] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces temporarily advanced westward from central Krynky but that Russian forces pushed Ukrainian forces back to their original positions and gained a foothold east of the settlement.[69] Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets stated that Ukrainian forces

maintain positions near Krynky and the Antonivsky road and railway bridges.[70] Mashovets stated that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near the Antonivsky railway bridge and towards Krynky from Korsunka (45km northeast of Kherson City and 1km from the Dnipro River).[71] Mashovets stated that elements of the Russian 171st Air Assault Battalion (56th VDV Regiment, 7th VDV Division) and the 205th Motorized Rifle Brigade (49th Combined Arms Army, Southern Military District) are operating on the left (east) bank of Kherson Oblast.[72] Mashovets stated that the Russian force grouping in the Kherson direction includes 8 brigades, 17 regiments, 8 battalions, and 4 battalion-level detachments including BARS (Russian Combat Army Reserve) and “Storm-Z” units and that Russian reserves in this direction include 2 motorized rifle regiments and 2 reserve motorized rifle battalions.[73]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of November 2, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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

Russian irregular forces are continuing to form new assault detachments and are incentivizing recruitment by offering recruits semi-independence from the Russian MoD. The Russian “Russkiy

Legion” (BARS-13) irregular armed formation announced the recruitment and establishment of new assault detachments on November 2, promising prospective candidates that “Russkiy Legion” is independently forming these new detachments.[74] The “Russkiy Legion” also claimed that their commanders and instructors would command these new detachments, and both these statements imply that these detachments would not be formally subordinated under the Russian MoD or the Russian Armed Forces. The “Russkiy Legion” did not specify if the recruits would sign military contracts directly with BARS-13 or with the Russian MoD. The advertisement suggests that Russian irregular formations are continuing to offer semi-independence from the Russian regular army despite the Russian MoD’s efforts to formalize irregular formations. A prominent Russian milblogger also claimed that the Russian “Bohdan Khmelnytskyi” battalion, which is reportedly composed of Ukrainian prisoners of war, is completing its training course.[75]

The Kremlin is continuing to task regional authorities with force generation initiatives to support the war effort in Ukraine. Russian opposition outlet *Vazhnye Istorii (iStories)* obtained a document that shows that the Office of the Russian Presidential Plenipotentiary Representative of the Central Federal Okrug instructed regional authorities to focus on recruiting 22 types of people, including convicts, debtors, the unemployed, migrants, active duty military personnel, reservists, and those with criminal records or on probation.[76] A Russian serviceman working at a military recruitment center revealed that authorities also bring homeless people, drunks, and individuals with development issues to sign military contracts with the Russian MoD.

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

The Russian “Vostok” Battalion claimed that it received new “Skalpel” drones, which are reportedly inferior analogues to the Russian “Lancet” drones.[77] Vostok Battalion claimed that Skalpel drones are inferior to Lancet drones in some technical parameters but are more widely available than Lancet drones, which the battalion claimed are generally lacking on the frontline. Vostok Commander Alexander Khodakovsky stated that the Vostok Foundation is fundraising for a program that seeks to create and commercialize cheap but long-range and effective loitering munitions.[78]

A Russian milblogger praised Perm Krai for having 22 defense industry (DIB) enterprises that have successfully increased the completion of defense orders by 2.5 times.[79] The milblogger claimed that the Perm Krai DIB facilities employed an additional 9,000 people in 2023.

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)

Recent Russian border restrictions are reportedly complicating the return of Ukrainian children forcibly deported to Russia. The *BBC’s* Russia service reported that Russian authorities require that the Ukrainian child’s close relatives travel to Russia to personally pick up the child, and recent Russian restrictions on the movement of Ukrainian citizens through Russian border checkpoints have significantly complicated this procedure.[80] The news outlet stated that Ukrainian data indicates that 19,546 Ukrainian children have been deported to Russia, of whom only 386 have returned to Ukraine. The Ukrainian Ministry of Reintegration reported that 17 Ukrainian children who were forcibly deported to Russia and occupied Ukraine returned to Ukraine in October.[81]

Russian occupation administrations continue attempts to militarize schoolchildren in occupied Ukraine. Ukrainian Mariupol Mayor Advisor Petro Andryushenko stated on November 2 that the Donetsk's People's Republic Ministry of Education mandated that Russian veterans visit schools in occupied Donetsk Oblast in November and December 2023 to conduct "Lessons in Courage." [82]

Russian Information Operations and Narratives

The Kremlin may be attempting to resurrect its escalatory nuclear rhetoric to scare the international community and impede Western military aid provisions to Ukraine. Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a decree on November 2 that canceled Russia's ratification of the "Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty." [83] The United Nations General Assembly adopted the treaty in 1996, and Russia ratified the treaty in 2000. Putin stated during his Valdai Discussion Club on October 5 that he was not ready to declare that Russia needed to resume nuclear weapons testing but that "theoretically [Russia] could revoke ratification" of the treaty. [84] ISW previously assessed that the Kremlin often references Russian nuclear capabilities to dissuade the West from providing Ukraine with materiel. [85]

Putin signed a decree on November 2 to establish the "National Center of Historical Memory," likely in an effort to further promote pro-war propaganda in Russian society. [86] The National Center of Historical Memory will preserve and protect Russian "traditional values, cultures, and historical memory and implement socially significant projects and initiatives." The Russian Presidential Administration will oversee this center, which will receive state and private financing.

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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- [4] <https://t.me/astrapress/41605>
- [5] <https://x.com/moklasen/status/1719816921762123957?s=20>;
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- [13] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-13-2023> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-15-2023> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar091623> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-17-2023> ; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-29-2023>
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[54] <https://t.me/readovkanews/68770>

[55] <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4430> ; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4446>

[56] [https://www.facebook.com/butusov.yuriy/posts/pfbid027GhSzFxmhr5oAU4gfF3u5CoqNGGW2Bs7vfvW21ntkGdgywLzvznkLMJXdYpyhrLEl?__cft__\[o\]=AZXwmAMvKJ92uyR2vNZcnAxrJVmyfANjoWuzBYkuT4iAS4oHw_rnuQJkkRCYCjZWCohVbUxU7Cg6DIN97n55hEEICKvuqV4sl_G_lCsP_8VS7hsd67AWn2CieIySz8hJgtHwM9fRphOCYZxAa71Ch1I2&__tn__=%2CO%2CP-R](https://www.facebook.com/butusov.yuriy/posts/pfbid027GhSzFxmhr5oAU4gfF3u5CoqNGGW2Bs7vfvW21ntkGdgywLzvznkLMJXdYpyhrLEl?__cft__[o]=AZXwmAMvKJ92uyR2vNZcnAxrJVmyfANjoWuzBYkuT4iAS4oHw_rnuQJkkRCYCjZWCohVbUxU7Cg6DIN97n55hEEICKvuqV4sl_G_lCsP_8VS7hsd67AWn2CieIySz8hJgtHwM9fRphOCYZxAa71Ch1I2&__tn__=%2CO%2CP-R)

[57] <https://t.me/rybar/53844>

[58] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02Raz5XcG9xHxM2GHx5ZjL10s933Hbi2fLkhX2fcvhJRSvZvnnZCbbEU8b4jEDkmy9l> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid031vky7s7oZQVgjpB9j66iciWstTMbnacLFY2W2WnY4ptigvTkCFnUFH2U4LtbUTGQl> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0WXE3L2KceDP4zTJXkhXb5uMtb4ddsP2yaCqA93xHGfv21dTKHhcesRxYdxn21Az8l> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/PresscentrTavria/posts/pfbid02CFENMhxvTPriipCSQUxBT15SZewbXcZMD4d8cbQtiU6XW2E1f8JDSbo7zvsdeUB4l>

[59] https://t.me/boris_rozhin/102639

[60] <https://armyinform dot com.ua/2023/11/02/na-vugledarskomu-napryamku-nashi-voyiny-zupynyly-sproby-nastupu-voroga-ta-zavdaly-jomu-vtrat-prezydent/>

[61] https://t.me/batalyon_vostok/240

[62] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02Raz5XcG9xHxM2GHx5ZjL10s933Hbi2fLkhX2fcvhJRSvZvnnZCbbEU8b4jEDkmy9l> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid031vky7s7oZQVgjpB9j66iciWstTMbnacLFY2W2WnY4ptigvTkCFnUFH2U4LtbUTGQl> ; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0WXE3L2KceDP4zTJXkhXb5uMtb4ddsP2yaCqA93xHGfv21dTKHhcesRxYdxn21Az8l> ; <https://www.facebook.com/PresscentrTavria/posts/pfbid02CFENMhxvTPriipCSQUxBT15SZewbXcZMD4d8cbQtiU6XW2E1f8JDSbo7zvsdeUB4l>

[63] <https://t.me/wargonzo/16176> ; <https://t.me/readovkanews/68770> ;
<https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4454>

[64] <https://t.me/wargonzo/16176> <https://t.me/readovkanews/68770> ; https://t.me/soldat_Krymskoy_vesny/1000 ; https://t.me/vdv_ZA_tepinsky/275

[65] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02Raz5XcG9xHxM2GHx5ZjL1os933Hbi2fLkhX2fcvhJRSvZvvnZCbbEU8b4jEDkmy9l>

[66] https://t.me/soldat_Krymskoy_vesny/1000

[67] <https://t.me/rybar/53841> ; https://t.me/mod_russia/32051 ; https://t.me/dva_majors/28422 ; <https://t.me/vrogov/12753>; <https://t.me/vrogov/12754> ; <https://t.me/vrogov/12755> ; <https://t.me/vrogov/12756> ; <https://t.me/vrogov/12757> ; <https://t.me/vrogov/12758> ; <https://t.me/vrogov/12759> ; <https://t.me/vrogov/12760>

[68] <https://t.me/wargonzo/16176> ; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4453>

[69] <https://t.me/rybar/53848>

[70] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1370> ; <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1371>

[71] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1370> ; <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1371>

[72] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1370>

[73] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1372>

[74] https://t.me/ruskiy_opolchenec/38514

[75] <https://t.me/wargonzo/16184>

[76] <https://t.me/bbcussian/55500>; <https://istories dot media/stories/2023/11/02/dobrovoltsi-na-voinu-migranti-bankroti-dolzhniki-i-bezrobotnie/>

[77] https://t.me/batalyon_vostok/241

[78] https://t.me/aleksandr_skif/2993

[79] <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/51805>

[80] https://www.bbc dot com/russian/articles/cqv9v5666v2o?ocid=wsrussian.social.in-app-messaging.telegram..russiantelegram_.edit

[81] <https://armyinform dot com.ua/2023/11/01/u-zhovtni-v-mezhah-proyektu-shlyah-dodomu-v-ukrayinu-bulo-povernuto-17-ditej/>; <https://www.facebook.com/MReintegration/posts/pfbid02Uk8Td1g19dtsWBZ6QHSJ5BesftWCcypx8BkMnJCQaAA6cTRVxEHvVi1ZYMgSctv4l>

[82] <https://t.me/andriyshTime/14758>

[83] https://suspilne dot media/607771-zaluznij-nazvav-pat-prioritetiv-ukraini-z-grudna-zapracue-derzavnij-operator-tilu-617-den-vijni-onlajn/?anchor=live_1698918146&utm_source=copylink&utm_medium=ps; <http://publication dot pravo.gov.ru/document/0001202311020001>

[84] <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russian-president-putin-makes-keynote-speech-sochi-2023-10-05/>

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Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, November 1, 2023

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

November 1, 2023, 8pm 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. The 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 1. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the November 2 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Ukrainian Commander-in-Chief General Valerii Zaluzhnyi assessed on November 1 that the war in Ukraine has taken on a positional nature and offered a series of recommendations for Ukraine to restore maneuver to the battlespace.[1] In an essay entitled "Modern Positional Warfare and How to Win It" and an interview with *The Economist*, Zaluzhnyi outlined the current operational environment in Ukraine and noted that, despite several previously successful Ukrainian counteroffensive operations in 2022, the war is now "gradually moving to a positional form." [2] Zaluzhnyi heavily stressed that the current positional nature of the war is largely a result of *military parity* between Ukrainian and Russian forces, noting that a deep and dramatic Ukrainian penetration of Russian lines will likely not be possible with the relative technological and tactical equilibrium currently between Ukrainian and Russian forces. [3] In his interview with *The Economist*, Zaluzhnyi acknowledged that technological and tactical parity between opposing forces in Ukraine has resulted in a "stalemate" similar to the case of the First World War. [4] In the more extensive essay on the subject, Zaluzhnyi notably refrained from classifying the situation as a full stalemate and instead framed it as a "positional" war resulting from aspects of this technological-tactical parity. [5] According to Zaluzhnyi, Ukraine's ability to overcome this technological-tactical parity will be contingent on Ukraine's ability to secure five main operational components that have become particularly significant since the summer of 2023 — gaining air superiority; breaching Russian mine barriers in depth; increasing the effectiveness of counterbattery combat; creating and training the necessary reserves; and building up electronic warfare (EW) capabilities.

Zaluzhnyi offered a series of specific tactical solutions to the five aforementioned operational components that have created the conditions for positional warfare, which in his view will allow Ukraine to overcome military parity with Russian forces. Regarding the issue of air superiority, Zaluzhnyi argued that Ukrainian forces need to significantly improve drone capabilities to gain air superiority along the frontline. [6] Zaluzhnyi argued that Ukrainian forces need to overload Russian air defenses, neutralize Russian strike drones, and degrade Russian

visibility over the front by deploying cheap drones *en masse*, developing specific drones meant to target Russian strike drones, and employing EW complexes throughout the front.[7] Zaluzhnyi argued that to overcome the challenges of EW use on the frontline, Ukrainian forces need to introduce necessary command and control (C2) processes for EW complexes, increase EW production capabilities, and streamline engagements with volunteer organizations that provide smaller EW complexes to Ukrainian forces.[8] Zaluzhnyi also recommended that Ukrainian forces improve counter-EW measures and develop new drones with EWs in mind.[9] To gain counterbattery superiority, Zaluzhnyi recommended that Ukrainian forces use more reconnaissance and strike drones to improve Ukrainian counterbattery fire and argued that Ukrainian forces need to strengthen GPS support for Ukrainian counterbattery units and increase the number of counterbattery assets.[10] Zaluzhnyi stated that improved sensors, more widespread and varied mine clearing capabilities, and anti-drone equipment will allow Ukrainian forces to more successfully breach Russian mine barriers in depth while under concealment.[11]

Zaluzhnyi also highlighted wider administrative adaptations and domestic developments in addition to his specific tactical battlefield solutions. Zaluzhnyi specifically called on Ukraine to introduce a Unified State Register for draftees, reservists, and those liable for military service to prepare a necessary reserve for Ukrainian forces.[12] Zaluzhnyi more broadly called on Ukrainian officials to incentivize Ukrainian citizens to join the military reserve and expand the number of citizens that Ukrainian forces are allowed to train.[13] Zaluzhnyi also noted that improving Ukrainian C2 and logistics support will be critical to improving operations writ large.[14] Zaluzhnyi stated that the formation of a "single information environment" for C2 through the use of modern information technology will allow Ukrainians to get ahead of Russian forces in terms of situational awareness.[15] Zaluzhnyi particularly highlighted the need for Ukraine to develop its own defense industry to sustain operations, long-range strike capabilities, and an asymmetric munitions arsenal to break out of military parity with Russian forces.[16]

Russian forces are likely preparing for another wave of highly attritional infantry-led ground assaults on Ukrainian positions in the Avdiivka area. A Kremlin-affiliated Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces near Avdiivka have largely slowed the pace of ground attacks north and south of Avdiivka in favor of heavy indirect fire against Ukrainian frontline positions and near rear areas. Russian forces may be conducting an interdiction campaign against Ukrainian assets in the Avdiivka area, but this heavy fire is more likely air and artillery preparation for the battlefield ahead of another wave of Russian assaults.[17] Other milbloggers also characterized the current Russian operations as "preparatory support," presumably for later assaults.[18] Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces Spokesperson Colonel Oleksandr Shtupun also notably stated on October 30 that Russian forces are preparing to conduct "meat assaults" (colloquial jargon for infantry-led frontal assaults) near Avdiivka and are training "Storm-Z" assault units made largely of convict recruits for future assaults without equipment.[19]

Russian forces may be preparing to transition to such infantry-led frontal assaults following heavy artillery preparation to compensate for heavy materiel losses in Avdiivka over the course of October. Open-source geolocation project GeoConfirmed used commercially available satellite imagery to verify that Russian forces have suffered at least 197 damaged and destroyed vehicles since October 9, losing 99 vehicles during the first wave of assaults between October 9 and 13, 94 vehicles during the second wave between October 14 and 23, and four confirmed and 18 potentially lost vehicles between

October 24 and 31.[20] GeoConfirmed characterized the Russian effort near Avdiivka as the costliest Russian effort thus far in the war in Ukraine.[21]

The current situation near Avdiivka is a microcosm of the Russian General Staff's wider failure to internalize and disseminate lessons learned by Russian forces during previous failed offensive efforts in Ukraine to other force groupings throughout the theater. Various Russian elements have engaged in similarly catastrophic mechanized attacks with infantry-led frontal assaults on fortified Ukrainian positions along several different axes over the course of 2022 and 2023, suggesting that the ultimate fault in the lack of strategic adaptation lies with the General Staff. Russian forces previously suffered significant personnel and materiel losses during an unsuccessful offensive against Vuhledar, western Donetsk Oblast in winter 2022-2023, which was characterized by multiple waves of mechanized attacks against fortified Ukrainian positions.[22] These infantry-heavy assaults completely destroyed the Russian units involved in them, including the 155th Naval Infantry Brigade (Pacific Fleet), which reportedly had to reconstitute several times due to losses suffered near Vuhledar.[23] By contrast, elements of the 1st Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) Army Corps, operating under the command of the Southern Military District's 8th Combined Arms Army, and elements of the Central Military District's 41st Combined Arms Army, have recently conducted analogous costly mechanized assaults near Avdiivka.[24] The fact that two very distinct groupings of forces have engaged in similarly ineffective operations suggests that the Russian military command is struggling to learn and disseminate lessons across the theater or, in the case, even within the same military district.[25] The Russian General Staff is in principle responsible for learning lessons, adapting Russian doctrine, and disseminating lessons and new approaches throughout the force. Chief of the Russian General Staff Army General Valery Gerasimov is ultimately responsible for this failure both in his capacity of chief of the Russian General Staff and as overall theater commander. The contrast between Gerasimov's failure in this regard and General Zaluzhnyi's thoughtful and public evaluation of the challenges facing Ukraine and the solutions to them is notable.

Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations near Bakhmut and in western Zaporizhia Oblast on November 1. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Bakhmut and Melitopol (western Zaporizhia Oblast) directions.[26] Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Zelenopillya (12km southwest of Bakhmut) and along a section of the railway line between Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut) and Andriivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut).[27] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces marginally advanced from Shcherbaky (18km west of Orikhiv) towards Myrne (16km southwest of Orikhiv) and made gains west of Robotyne (10km south of Orikhiv).[28]

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu reiterated Russian President Vladimir Putin's framing of ongoing Ukrainian ground activity on the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast as part of the Ukrainian counteroffensive. Shoigu stated during a conference call on November 1 that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked in the Zaporizhia, Donetsk, and Kherson directions, grouping Ukrainian activity in the Kherson direction with directions recognized as currently part of ongoing Ukrainian counteroffensive efforts.[29] Putin described Ukrainian activity in Kherson Oblast as the "next [Ukrainian] counteroffensive" and dismissed all Ukrainian offensive operations as failures during a press conference in Beijing on October 18.[30]

Russian forces conducted a relatively large series of drone and missile strikes mainly targeting Poltava Oblast on the night of October 31 to November 1. The Ukrainian General Staff reported on November 1 that Russian forces launched three Kh-59 missiles and 20 Shahed 131/136 drones and noted that Ukrainian air defenses downed all three of the Kh-59 missiles and 18 Shahed drones.[31] Ukrainian officials reported that Russian drones struck an oil refinery in Kremenchuk, Poltava Oblast.[32] Russian sources claimed that Russian forces also struck the Myrhorod airfield in Poltava Oblast.[33] Ukrainian Air Force Spokesperson Colonel Yuriy Ihnat stated that Russian forces are targeting “weak points” in Ukrainian air defenses.[34] Ihnat added that Russian forces are looking at several different courses of action to replenish weapons stocks for continued strikes this fall and winter.

The Russian military appears poised to re-establish its military districts as the primary joint headquarters for its ground forces while transferring naval assets back to the command of the Russian Navy. Russian state media outlet *TASS* reported on November 1 that sources close to the Russian military leadership stated that the Russian Northern, Pacific, Black Sea, and Baltic fleets and Caspian Flotilla will return to direct subordination under Russian Navy Commander-in-Chief Admiral Nikolai Evmenov on December 1.[35] The Russian Northern Fleet (NF) will also lose its status as a separate military-administrative unit equal to a military district effective December 1, and its ground, aviation, and air defense forces will be transferred to the newly re-created Leningrad Military District. *TASS* noted that this information has not been officially confirmed. The Russian federal portal of draft regulator legal acts published a presidential decree on October 8, prepared by the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD), which proposed stripping the NF of its status as a joint “strategic territorial association,” signaling that this change would happen in the future but not specifying a date. [36] It remains unclear how Russia intends to mobilize, train, and organize forces previously under its fleets into new military district-level formations, but this restructuring writ large suggests that Russia intends to reconsolidate control of ground forces under the military district structure, including the newly re-created Moscow and Leningrad Military Districts, while separating the naval assets under the Russian Navy.

Russian sources speculated that Pavel Prigozhin, the son of deceased Wagner Group financier Yevgeny Prigozhin, is officially the acting head of Wagner remnants operating under the auspices of Rosgvardia. Russian regional news outlets reported on November 1 that the Wagner Group has resumed recruiting in Perm and Novosibirsk oblasts under Pavel’s leadership.[37] Russian outlet *Ngs.ru* reported that a Wagner representative in Novosibirsk stated that Wagner is no longer recruiting criminals or people with illnesses.[38] Russian milbloggers also claimed that Pavel is the new leader of the remnants of Wagner and expressed hope that Pavel’s appointment is an indication that Wagner will survive its subordination to Rosgvardia.[39]

Key Takeaways:

- **Ukrainian Commander-in-Chief General Valerii Zaluzhnyi assessed on November 1 that the war in Ukraine has taken on a positional nature and offered a series of recommendations for Ukraine to restore maneuver to the battlespace. Zaluzhnyi offered a series of specific tactical solutions to the five aforementioned operational components that have created the conditions for positional warfare, which in his view will allow Ukraine to overcome military parity with Russian forces.**

- **Russian forces are likely preparing for another wave of highly attritional infantry-led ground assaults on Ukrainian positions in the Avdiivka area.**
- **The current situation near Avdiivka is a microcosm of the Russian General Staff's wider failure to internalize and disseminate lessons learned by Russian forces during previous failed offensive efforts in Ukraine to other force groupings throughout the theater.**
- **Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations near Bakhmut and in western Zaporizhia Oblast on November 1.**
- **Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu reiterated Russian President Vladimir Putin's framing of ongoing Ukrainian ground activity on the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast as part of the Ukrainian counteroffensive.**
- **Russian forces conducted a relatively large series of drone and missile strikes mainly targeting Poltava Oblast on the night of October 31 to November 1.**
- **The Russian military appears poised to re-establish its military districts as the primary joint headquarters for its ground forces while transferring naval assets back to the command of the Russian Navy.**
- **Russian sources speculated that Pavel Prigozhin, the son of deceased Wagner Group financier Yevgeny Prigozhin, is officially the acting head of Wagner remnants operating under the auspices of Rosgvardia.**
- **Russian forces continued offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line, in the Bakhmut direction, near Avdiivka, west and southwest of Donetsk City, in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area, and in western Zaporizhia Oblast and advanced in various sectors of the front.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of November 1, 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 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

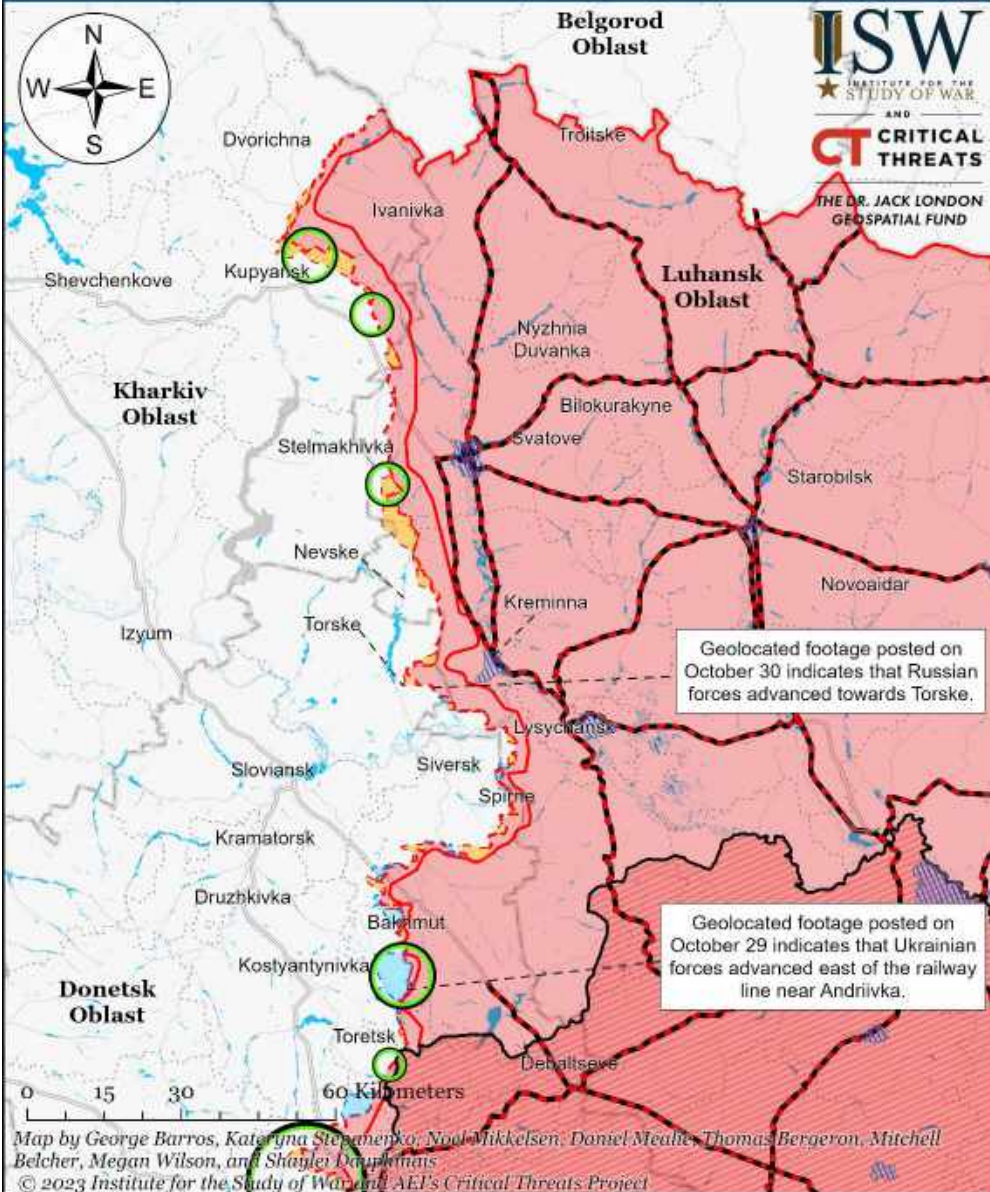
Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

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-Kreminna line on November 1 and made confirmed gains. Geolocated footage published on October 31 indicates that Russian forces advanced east of Petropavlivka (7km east of Kupyansk).[40] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled over 10 Russian assaults near Synkivka (9km northeast of Kupyansk), Ivanivka (21km southeast of Kupyansk), Stelmakhivka (15km northwest of Svatove), and Nadiya (14km southwest of Svatove).[41] Ukrainian Ground Forces Commander Colonel General Oleksandr Syrskiy stated that Russian forces continue their attempts to recapture Kupyansk but have not achieved any strategic success in the Kupyansk direction.[42] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian aviation in the Kupyansk direction continues to target Ukrainian crossings across the Oskil River.[43] Another Russian milblogger posted footage purporting to show elements of the Russian 1st Guards Tank Army (Western Military District) capturing an unspecified stronghold in the Kupyansk direction.[44] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces did not conduct any offensive actions in the Lyman direction on November 1.[45] A Russian milblogger claimed on October 31 that Russian forces made marginal advances in the direction of Yampolivka (17km west of Kreminna) and Torske (14km west of Kreminna), although ISW has not observed visual confirmation of these claims.[46]

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted unsuccessful ground attacks along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on November 1. The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that elements of the Russian Western Grouping of Forces repelled two Ukrainian assaults near Synkivka and that elements of the Russian Central Grouping of Forces repelled two Ukrainian assaults near Hrektivka (20km southwest of Kreminna) and the Serebryanske forest area (10km south of Kreminna).[47] Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) Head Leonid Pasechnik claimed that Russian forces repelled six Ukrainian assaults along the Novodruzhesk-Hryhorivka line (14km southeast of Kreminna to 11km south of Kreminna), eight Ukrainian assaults along the Berestove-Pereizne line (30km to 28km south of Kreminna), and three Ukrainian assaults along the Vovchoyarivka-Ivano-Darivka line (25km southeast of Kreminna to 23km south of Kreminna) over the past week.[48]

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



Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Niall Mikkelsen, Daniel Meales, Thomas Bergeron, Mitchell Belcher, Megan Wilson, and Shaylei Daughmans
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- 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

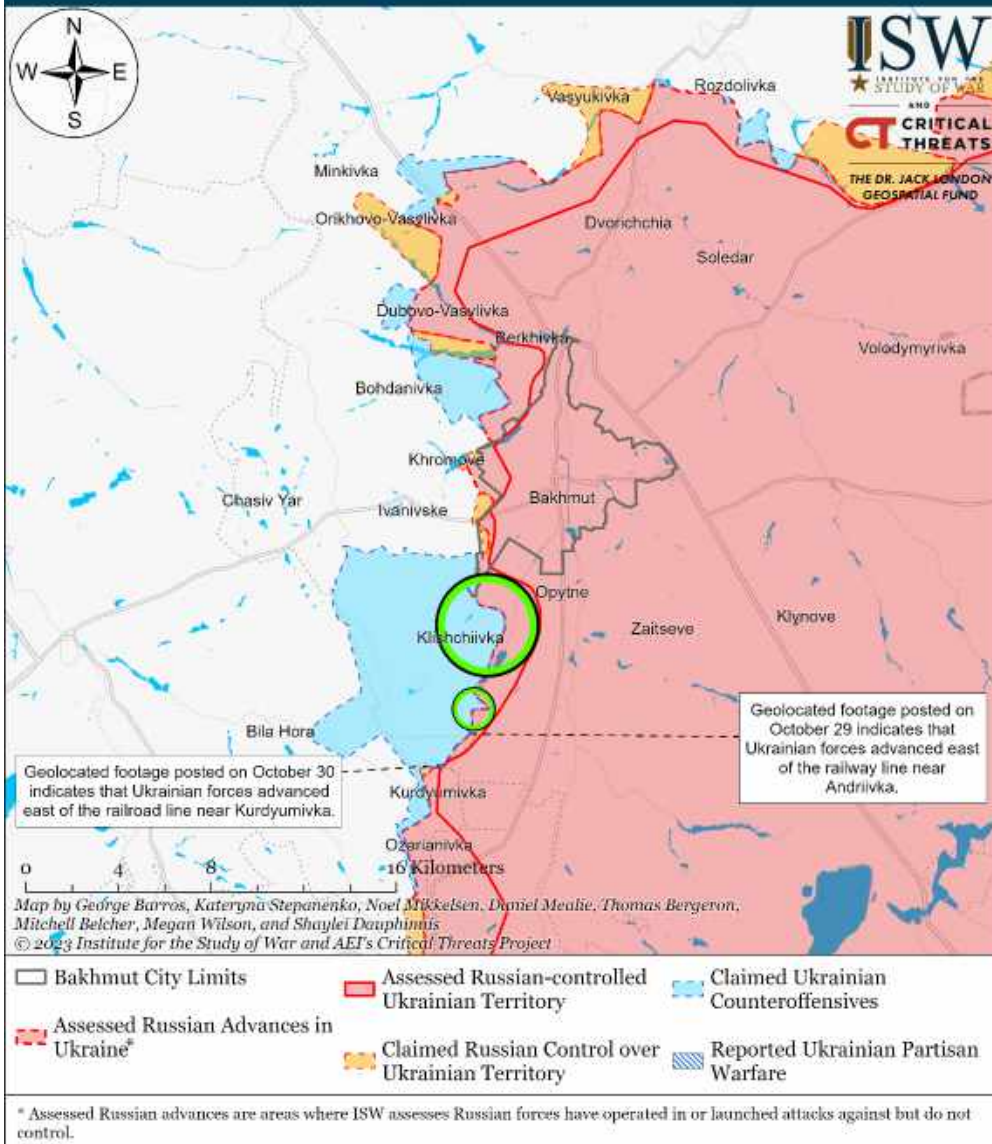
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

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 offensive operations in the Bakhmut direction on November 1 but did not make any claimed or confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully tried to improve their positions near Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut) and Andriivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut) and attacked near Pivdenne (20km southwest of Bakhmut) but did not advance.[49] Ukrainian Ground Forces Command Spokesperson Lieutenant Colonel Volodymyr Fityo noted that Russian forces are bringing reserves to the Bakhmut area to renew active offensive operations after being on the defensive, although ISW has not yet observed indicators of Russian reserves arriving in the Bakhmut direction or the presence of additional Russian troops in the Bakhmut area.[50] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces attacked northwest of Bakhmut from Berkhivka (directly northwest of Bakhmut) towards Bohdanivka (6km northwest of Bakhmut).[51]

Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive actions in the Bakhmut direction but did not make any claimed or confirmed advances. Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Zelenopillya (12km southwest of Bakhmut) and a section of the railway line between Klishchiivka and Andriivka.[52] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian troops continue counteroffensive operations south of Bakhmut.[53]

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

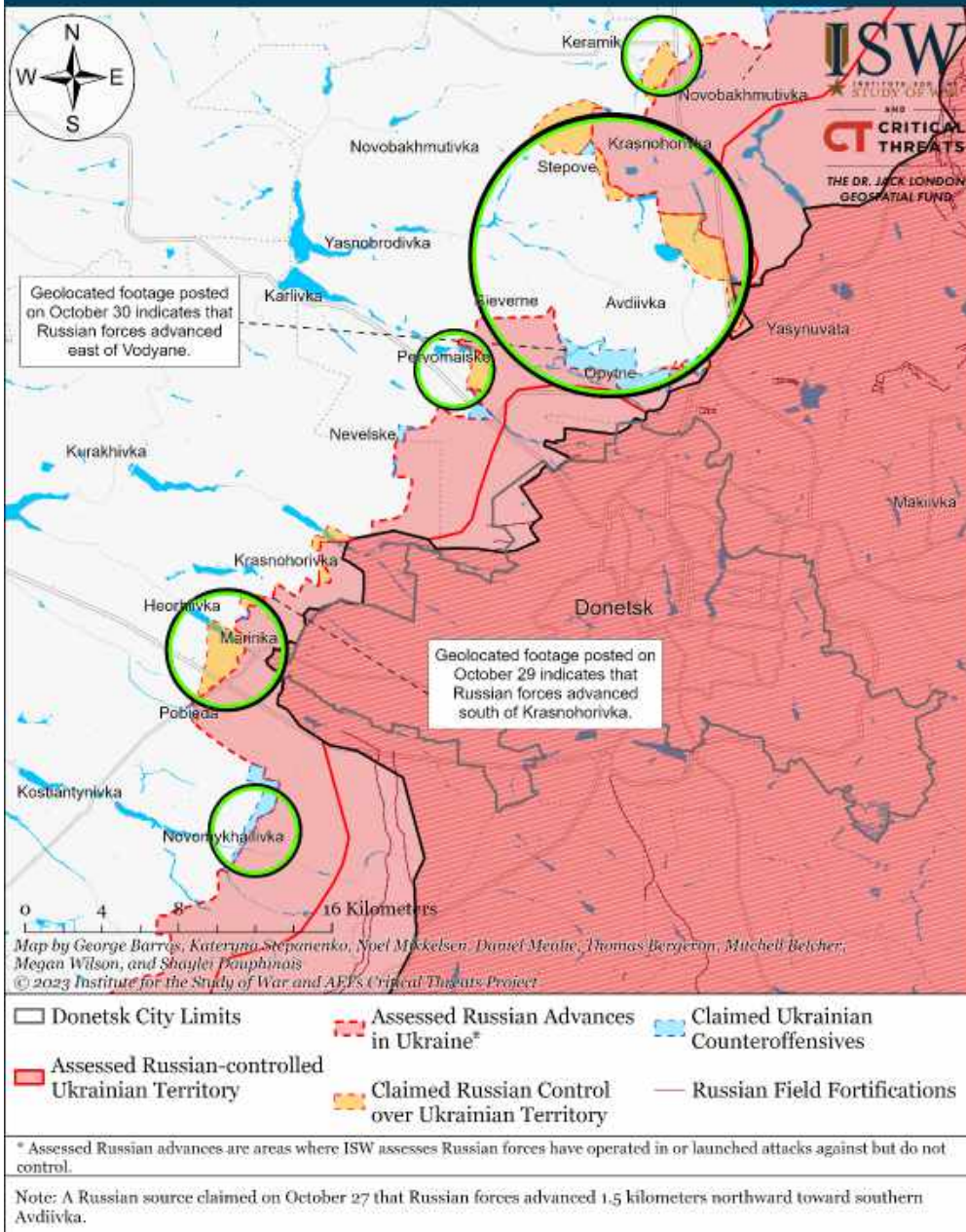


Russian forces continued offensive operations near Avdiivka on November 1 and reportedly advanced. A prominent Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces, including mobilized servicemen from Siberia, advanced from positions in Krasnohorivka (7km northwest of Avdiivka) across the railway track towards Novokalynove and Keramik (both about 12km northwest of Avdiivka).[54] A Russian media aggregator claimed that Russian forces advanced west and south of Avdiivka near Sieverne (5km west of Avdiivka) and Pervomaiske (11km southwest of Avdiivka) on October 31.[55] Several Russian sources claimed on November 1 that there is heavy fighting north of Avdiivka near the waste heap area, and one milblogger noted that Russian forces are preparing to begin attacks on the industrial zone of the Avdiivka Coke Plant in northern Avdiivka.[56] A Ukrainian soldier reported that Russian forces are also conducting attacks south of Avdiivka from Vodyane (6km southwest of

Avdiivka) towards Sieverne.[57] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Avdiivka, Sieverne, Pervomaiske, Keramik, and Stepove (5km northwest of Avdiivka).[58]

Ukrainian forces conducted limited counterattacks near Avdiivka on November 1 but did not make any confirmed advances. Geolocated footage posted on November 1 shows a Ukrainian counterattack north of Krasnohorivka, but the source of the video claimed that Russian forces ultimately repelled the attack and forced Ukrainian troops to withdraw.[59] Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully counterattacked near the waste heap north of Avdiivka and near Krasnohorivka.[60] One Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces are successfully holding back Russian attacks near Tonenke (6km west of Avdiivka).[61]

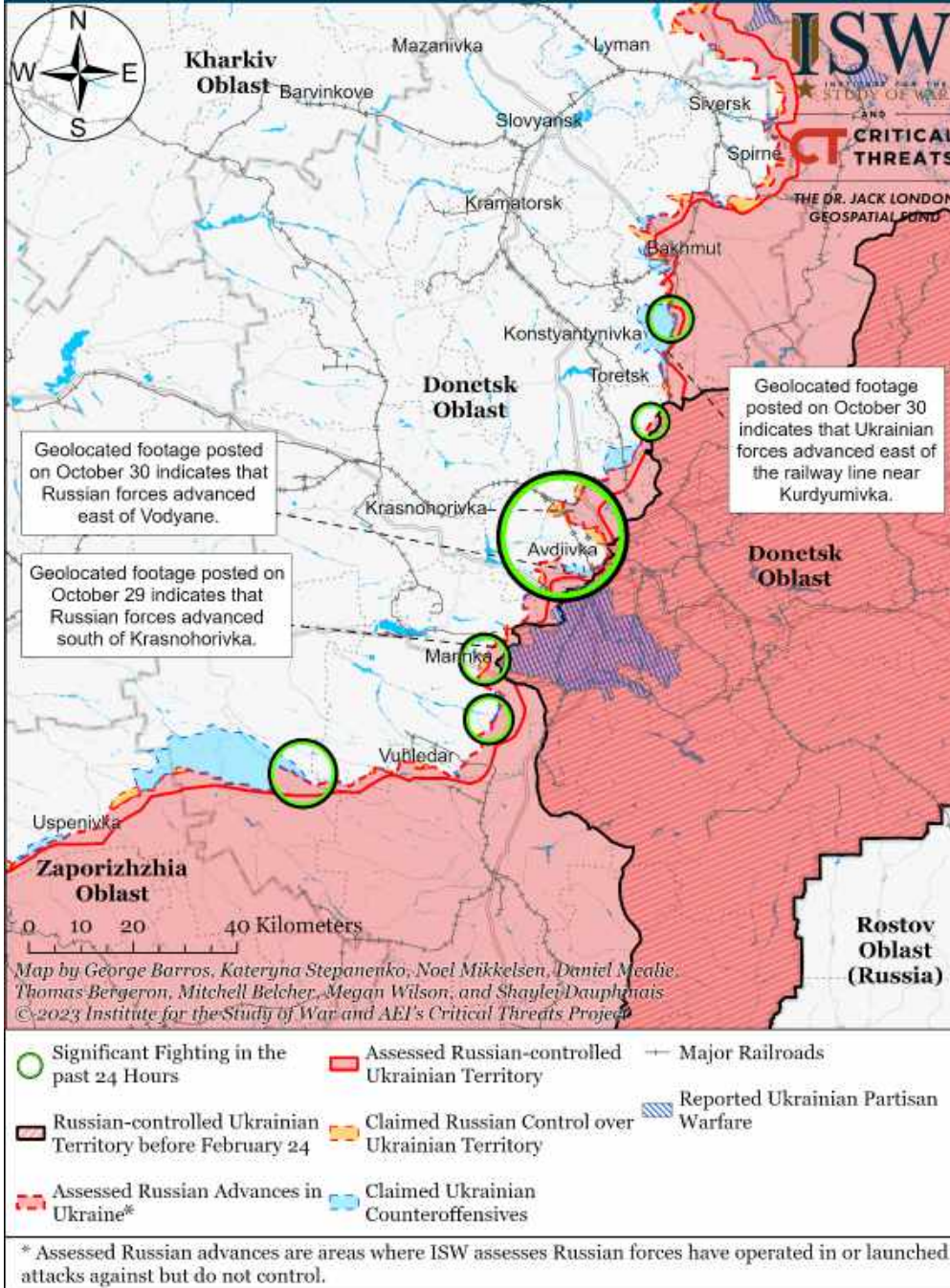
Assessed Control of Terrain near Donetsk City as of November 1, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Russian forces continued offensive operations west and southwest of Donetsk City on November 1 but did not make any claimed or confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked in Marinka (on the southwestern outskirts of Donetsk City) and near Novomykhailivka (12km southwest of Donetsk City).[62] A Russian milblogger posted footage reportedly of a tank of the 5th Brigade of the 1st Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) Army Corps striking Ukrainian positions in Marinka.[63]

Ukrainian forces conducted offensive operations west and southwest of Donetsk City on November 1 and made a confirmed advance. Geolocated footage published on October 31 shows that Ukrainian forces have advanced south of Novomykhailivka.[64]

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

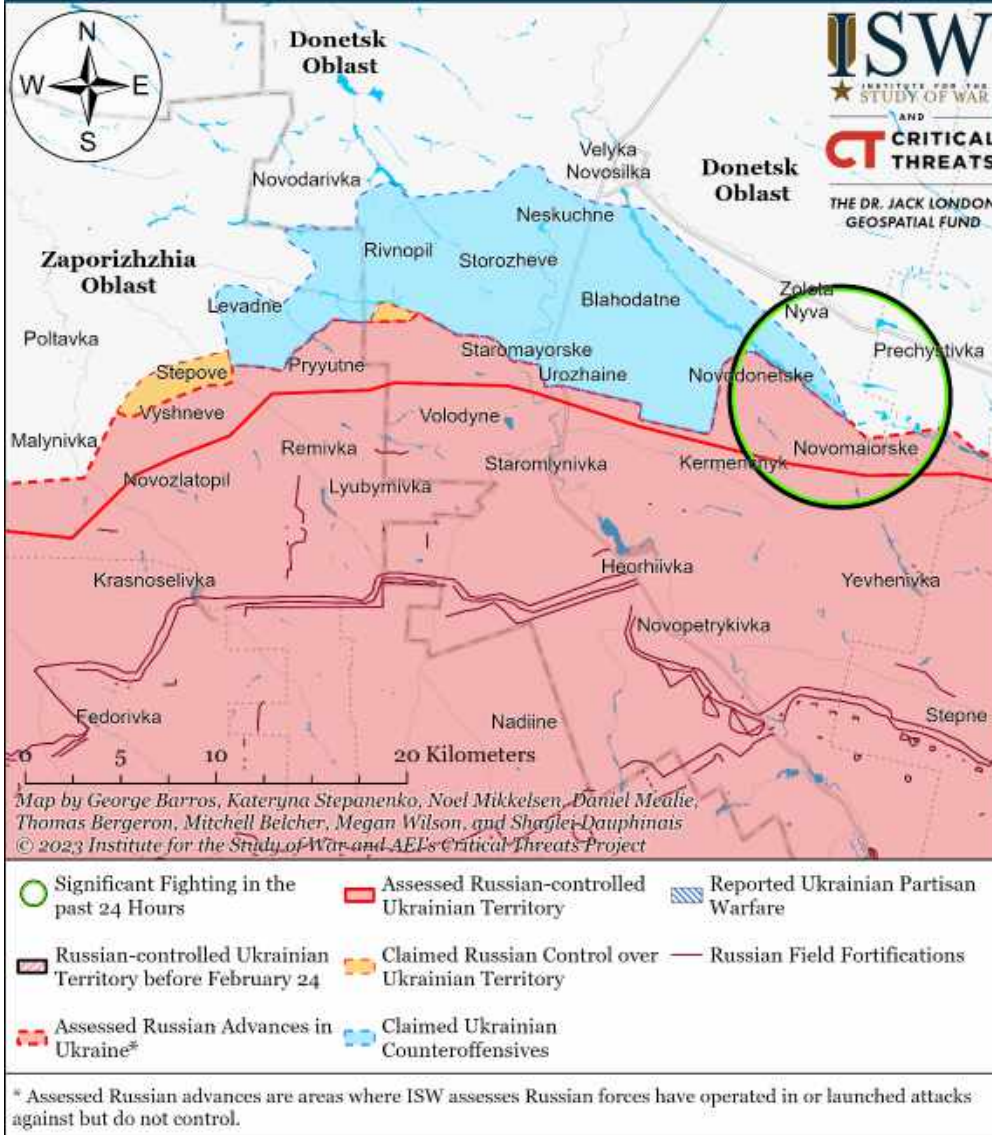


Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions and secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes)

Ukrainian forces did not conduct any confirmed or claimed ground attacks in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on November 1.

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on November 1 and reportedly recently advanced. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful assaults near Prechystivka, (19km southeast of Velyka Novosilka) Zolota Nyva (11km southeast of Velyka Novosilka), and Staromayorske (9km south of Velyka Novosilka).[65] A Russian milblogger claimed that elements of the Russian 127th Motorized Rifle Division (5th Combined Arms Army, Eastern Military District) are advancing near Rivnopil (8km southwest of Velyka Novosilka) and that elements of the 60th Motorized Rifle Brigade, likely referring to the 143rd Motorized Rifle Regiment, and the 394th Motorized Rifle Regiment (both of the 127th Motorized Rifle Division) attacked west of Staromayorske.[66] The Russian “Vostok” battalion, which is reportedly operating southeast of Velyka Novosilka, claimed that Russian forces made some advances in unspecified areas near the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border on October 31.[67]

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

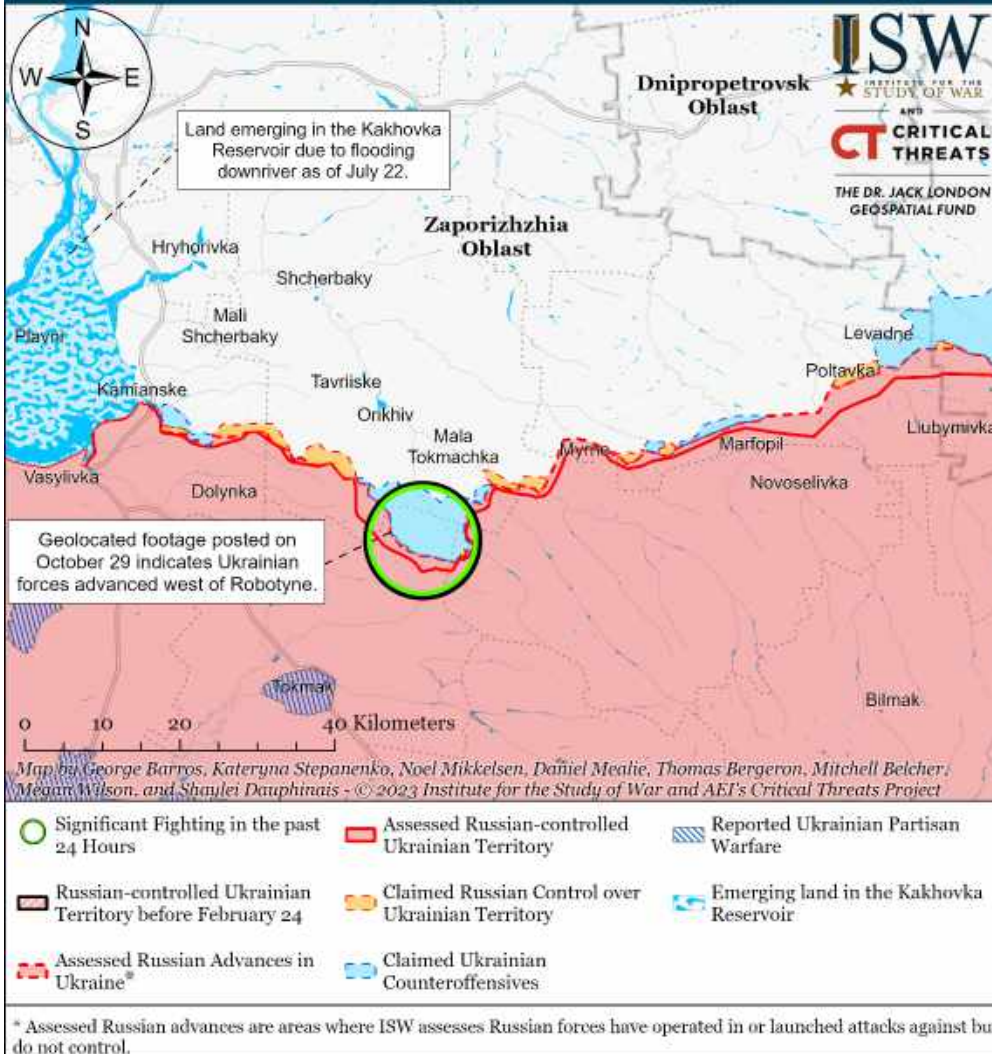


Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast on November 1 and reportedly advanced. A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces marginally advanced from Shcherbaky (18km west of Orikhiv) towards Myrne (16km southwest of Orikhiv) and made gains west of Robotyne (10km south of Orikhiv).[68] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Novoprokopivka (2km south of Robotyne) and Verbove (18km southeast of Orikhiv).[69]

Russian forces continued limited offensive operations in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast but did not make any claimed or confirmed advances on November 1. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian attacks near Robotyne.[70] Russian sources claimed that Russian forces attacked Ukrainian positions near Verbove on October 31 and November 1.[71]



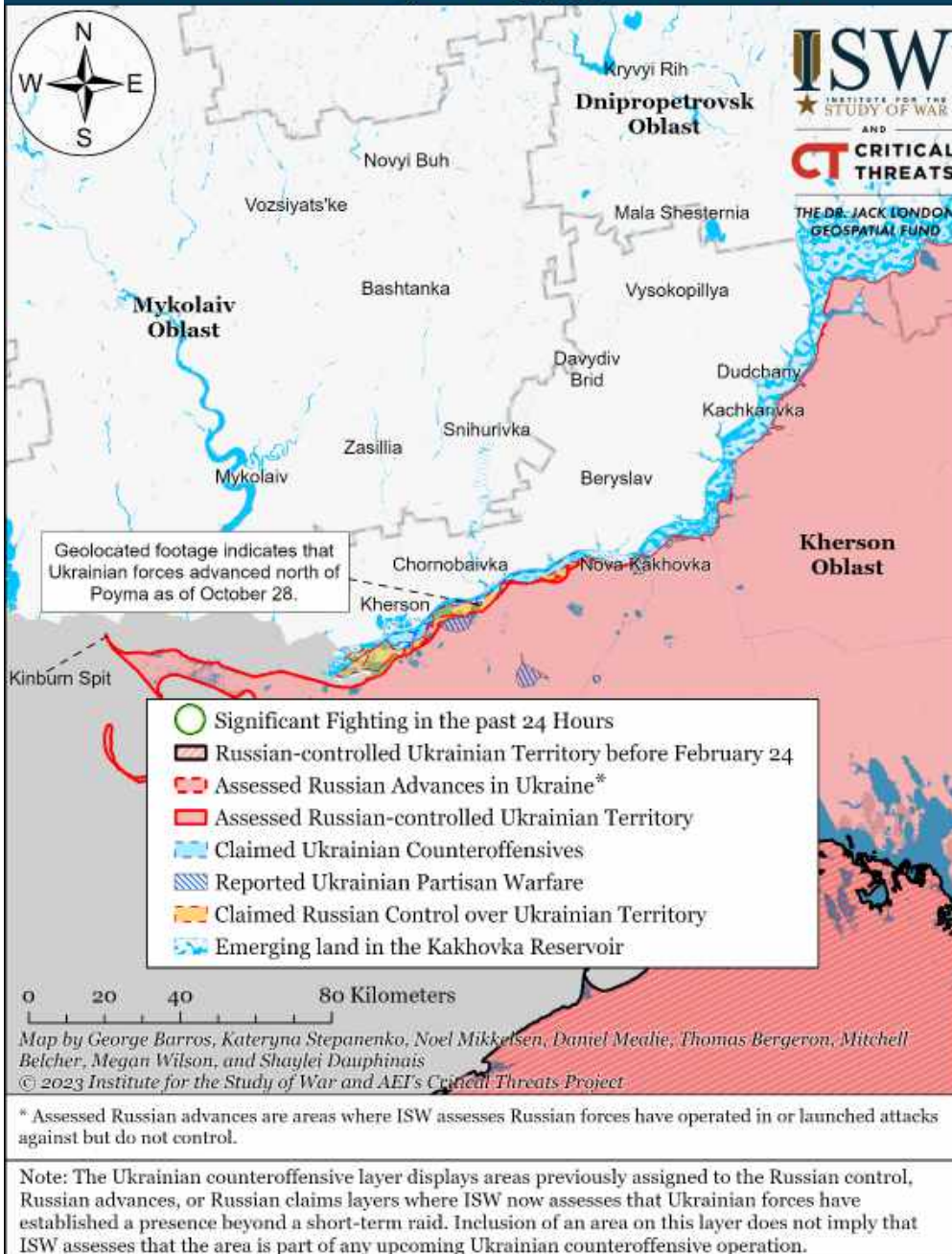
Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhzhia as of November 1, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Russian milbloggers continue to claim that Ukrainian forces hold positions and conduct attacks on the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast. Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces attacked near Poyma (12km southeast of Kherson City and 4km from the Dnipro River) and Pishchanivka (14km east of Kherson City and 3km from the Dnipro River) and that there are meeting engagements near Krynyky (30km northeast of Kherson City and 2km from the Dnipro River).[72] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces maintain positions in Krynyky, where Ukrainian forces continue to reinforce their positions and where Russian forces conduct heavy air and TOS-1A thermobaric artillery strikes.[73] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces mined the area near Krynyky to complicate Russian infantry attacks in the area.[74]

Ukrainian forces targeted Russian rear areas in southern Ukraine on November 1. Kherson Oblast occupation head Vladimir Saldo claimed that Russian forces shot down seven Ukrainian missiles targeting occupied Crimea over occupied Kherson Oblast and that two of the missiles landed in an abandoned area on the Arabat Spit, causing no damage or casualties.[75] Russian occupation authorities deployed smoke screens at the Kerch Strait Bridge presumably in response to the missile threat, but one Russian milblogger characterized the smoke screens as akin to “poultice for a dead person,” remarking on their ineffectiveness.[76]

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



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

Russian authorities continue to praise the apparent successes of the Russian defense industrial base (DIB). The head of Russian state-owned defense conglomerate Rostec, Sergei Chemezov, claimed on

November 1 that Rostec has increased its production volume of tanks sevenfold, its production volume of armored vehicles by a factor of four and a half, and its production volume of unspecified types of ammunition by 60 times over the past year.[77] Chemezov added that Rostec is fulfilling the Russian DIB's need for electronic components.[78]

The Ukrainian Resistance Center stated on November 1 that Russia is forming new Rosgvardia units to conduct anti-sabotage measures in occupied Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhia, and Kherson Oblasts.[79] These units will reportedly be based near Voronezh City in Russia and comprised of around 10,000 servicemen, including former Wagner personnel.

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

A Russian milblogger claimed on November 1 that individual combat units are driving the increased prevalence of drones and drone operators in the Russian military, not increased resources and attention from the Russian MoD.[80] The milblogger criticized the Russian MoD's "official view" that drones are more suited for special forces and Spetsnaz detachments as opposed to combined arms formations. Another Russian milblogger criticized the Russian military for giving Russian officials downed Ukrainian drones for their "museums" and not researching and reverse engineering the downed drones.[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 officials continue efforts to control residents' access to information in occupied territories. Kherson Oblast occupation officials promoted satellite television services through the "Russkyi Mir" broadcasting program on October 31 and claimed that frontline residents would receive 25,000 free Russkyi Mir satellite TV sets by the end of the year.[82] Kherson Oblast occupation chairperson Andrey Alekseenko stated that Russian occupation officials plan to install 55,000 Russkyi Mir satellite TV sets in occupied Kherson Oblast by the end of 2024.[83] The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported that Russian officials use the broadcasting program for propaganda and confiscate residents' personal satellite dishes to prevent residents from accessing Ukrainian channels.[84]

Russian occupation officials are likely using public health services to coerce residents in occupied territories into receiving Russian passports. Kherson Oblast occupation head Vladimir Saldo stated on November 1 that occupation authorities will start administering free flu shots in occupied Kherson Oblast and will require residents' passports for the vaccinations.[85] Russian occupation officials have increasingly denied social services to residents with Ukrainian passports and will likely use public health services to augment ongoing passportization efforts.[86]

Russian occupation officials continue to use various education and vacation schemes to deport Ukrainian children and eradicate their Ukrainian national identity. A Russian milblogger amplified a crowdfunding campaign on October 31 for sending 100 Ukrainian children to the Olympus children's camp in occupied Crimea and claimed that the crowdfunding campaign has helped 14,000 Ukrainian children vacation in Crimea.[87] The head of the Kherson branch of the "Combat Brotherhood" veterans organization, Igor Telegin, stated on October 31 that the youth military patriotic organization

”Yunarmia” will send more than 200 members from occupied territories to attend a military education school in Crimea, where they will undergo basic military training.[88]

Russian Information Operations and Narratives

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu reiterated Kremlin narratives about the “failed” Ukrainian counteroffensive during a Russian MoD conference call on November 1. Shoigu claimed that Russia has defeated the Ukrainian military despite the supply of new weapons from NATO.[89] Shoigu claimed that the Russian military has destroyed 37 Ukrainian aircraft over the past month and noted that this is nearly twice the number of F-16 aircraft that Western partners have promised Ukraine. Shoigu claimed that Russian air defenses should be able to destroy Western-provided F-16s in approximately 20 days. Shoigu additionally stated that Russian forces are conducting “active defense” along the front in an effort to temper domestic expectations about localized Russian offensive operations in various sectors of the front.

A Russian milblogger expressed concern over Russia’s growing diplomatic isolation. A Kremlin-affiliated Russian milblogger expressed concern on November 1 that Serbia may become increasingly pro-Western following the dissolution of its parliament and elections in December 2023.[90]

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)

Russian President Vladimir Putin and Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko had a phone conversation on November 1 to discuss bilateral cooperation ahead of the upcoming summit of Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) heads on November 23.[91]

Belarusian Air Force and Air Defense Force Commander Major General Andrei Lukyanovich emphasized on November 1 the improvements that the Belarusian Air and Air Defense Forces are undergoing.[92] Lukyanovich stated that Belarusian Air Forces are phasing in new and modernized weapons and that the Belarusian government is improving measures to provide military personnel with social support.[93]

Chief of the Belarusian General Staff and First Deputy Minister of Defense Major General Viktor Gulevich presented a bill to the Belarusian House of Representatives on November 1 regarding the amendment of laws on national security issues.[94] The draft law includes provisions for improving the military registration system, streamlining processes to notify citizens about conscription events, and ameliorating compensation for those liable for military service.[95]

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, October 31, 2023

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

October 31, 2023, 4:45pm 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 October 31. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the November 1 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Chechen Republic Head Ramzan Kadyrov's response to the October 29 antisemitic riots in the Republic of Dagestan suggests that Russian officials may be increasingly concerned about the weakening of authoritarian control in regions on the periphery of the Russian Federation. Kadyrov responded to the riots in Dagestan by praising Russian President Vladimir Putin's accusation that the West orchestrated the situation to destabilize Russia.[1] Kadyrov later called on Chechen security forces to immediately detain instigators of any potential riots in Chechnya or to "fire three warning shots in the air and after that, fire the fourth shot in the head." [2] Kadyrov's reactions to the riots in Dagestan suggest that he is first and foremost concerned with maintaining the perception of his unwavering support of Putin and secondly with demonstrating the strength of his authoritarian rule over Chechnya by threatening a violent response to potential future riots.[3]

Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations near Bakhmut and in western Zaporizhia Oblast on October 31. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Melitopol (western Zaporizhia Oblast) and Bakhmut directions.[4] Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky met with Ukrainian Commander-in-Chief General Valerii Zaluzhnyi to discuss the situation on the front in the Kupyansk, Avdiivka, and Kherson directions.[5]

Russian forces launched a series of missile and drone strikes against Ukraine on October 31. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces launched four Iskander-M missiles and an S-300 air defense missile at targets in Ukraine.[6] Zaporizhia Oblast Military Administration Head Yuri Malashko reported that Russian forces struck Zaporizhzhia City with a missile.[7] Ukrainian officials reported that Russian forces launched an unspecified number of Shahed-131/136 drones at targets in Khmelnytskyi and Poltava oblasts and that Ukrainian air defenses activated in these oblasts.[8]

Russian authorities detained two suspects for the murder of a Ukrainian family in occupied Donetsk Oblast. The Russian Investigative Committee announced on October 30 that

Russian authorities detained two Russian military contract servicemen originally from the Russian Far East as suspects for the murder on October 29 in Volnovakha, Donetsk Oblast.[9] The Investigative Committee stated that the preliminary investigation indicates that the motive of the murders was of a “domestic” nature. A Russian insider source claimed on October 31 that the two detainees were a part of the Russian 155th Separate Naval Infantry Brigade (Pacific Fleet).[10] Attacks on civilians *hors de combat* (in rear areas far removed from active combat zones) by representatives of an occupying power constitute a clear violation of multiple international legal norms and very likely rise to the level of a war crime or crime against humanity.[11]

A court in Uzbekistan has reportedly sentenced the first Uzbek citizen to prison for serving as a mercenary for Russian forces in Ukraine. A court in Uzbekistan found an Uzbek man, who reportedly served in the Donetsk People’s Republic (DNR) military from 2014-2015, guilty of violating the Uzbek law against mercenarism.[12] Relatives of the convicted man claimed that he did not participate in the war in Ukraine and was in Russia during the indicated years.[13] This sentencing may heighten tensions between the governments of Russia and Central Asian countries as Russian authorities have increased efforts to coerce Central Asian migrants into Russian military service.[14]

Key Takeaways:

- **Chechen Republic Head Ramzan Kadyrov’s response to the October 29 antisemitic riots in the Republic of Dagestan suggests that Russian officials may be increasingly concerned about the weakening of authoritarian control in regions on the periphery of the Russian Federation.**
- **Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations near Bakhmut and in western Zaporizhia Oblast on October 31.**
- **Russian forces launched a series of missile and drone strikes against Ukraine on October 31.**
- **Russian authorities detained two suspects for the murder of a Ukrainian family in occupied Donetsk Oblast.**
- **Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted combined missile strikes against Sevastopol and elsewhere in occupied Crimea on October 30.**
- **Russian forces continued offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kremmina 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.**
- **Former Wagner Group fighters continue to redeploy to Ukraine as part of other Russian formations.**
- **Russian occupation officials continue efforts to eradicate Ukrainian language and culture in occupied Ukraine.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of October 31, 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

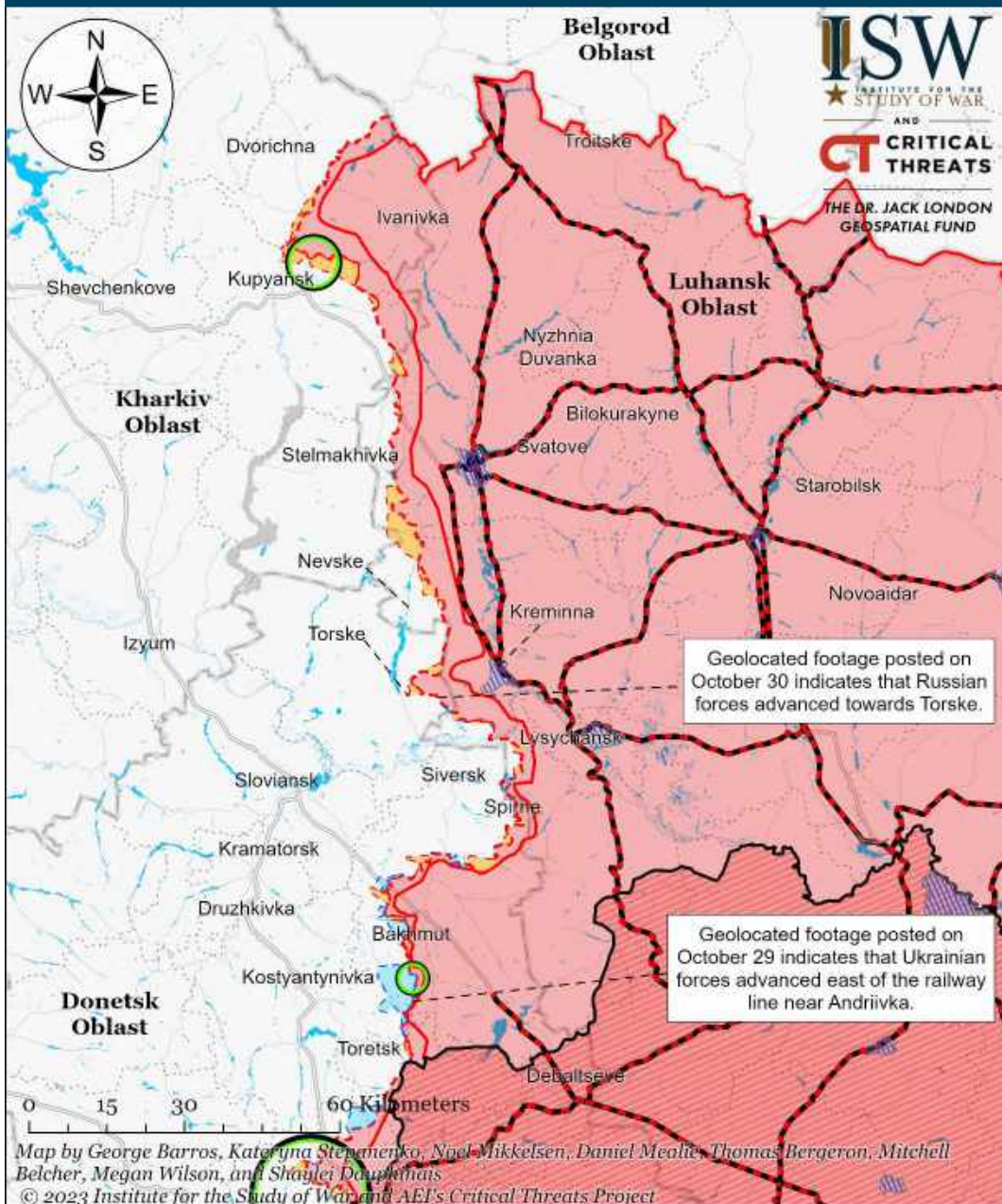
Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

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 conducted offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line but did not make any claimed or confirmed advances on October 31. Ukrainian officials, including the Ukrainian General Staff, reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Synkivka (8km northeast of Kupyansk), Ivanivka (20km southeast of Kupyansk), and Nadiya (16 west of Svatove) but did not conduct any offensive actions in the Lyman direction.^[15] A Russian news aggregator claimed that Russian forces attacked near Synkivka, Kyslivka (20km southeast of Kupyansk), and Makiivka (22km northwest of Kreminna) on October 30 but did not specify an outcome.^[16] A Russian milblogger claimed on October 30 that positional battles continued near the Serebryanske forest area (10km southwest of Kreminna).^[17]

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted unsuccessful offensive operations along the Kupyansk-Svatove-Kreminna line on October 31. Russian sources, including the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD), claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Synkivka, Yampolivka (17km west of Kreminna), and Dibrova (7km southwest of Kreminna).^[18]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Luhansk Oblast as of October 31, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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

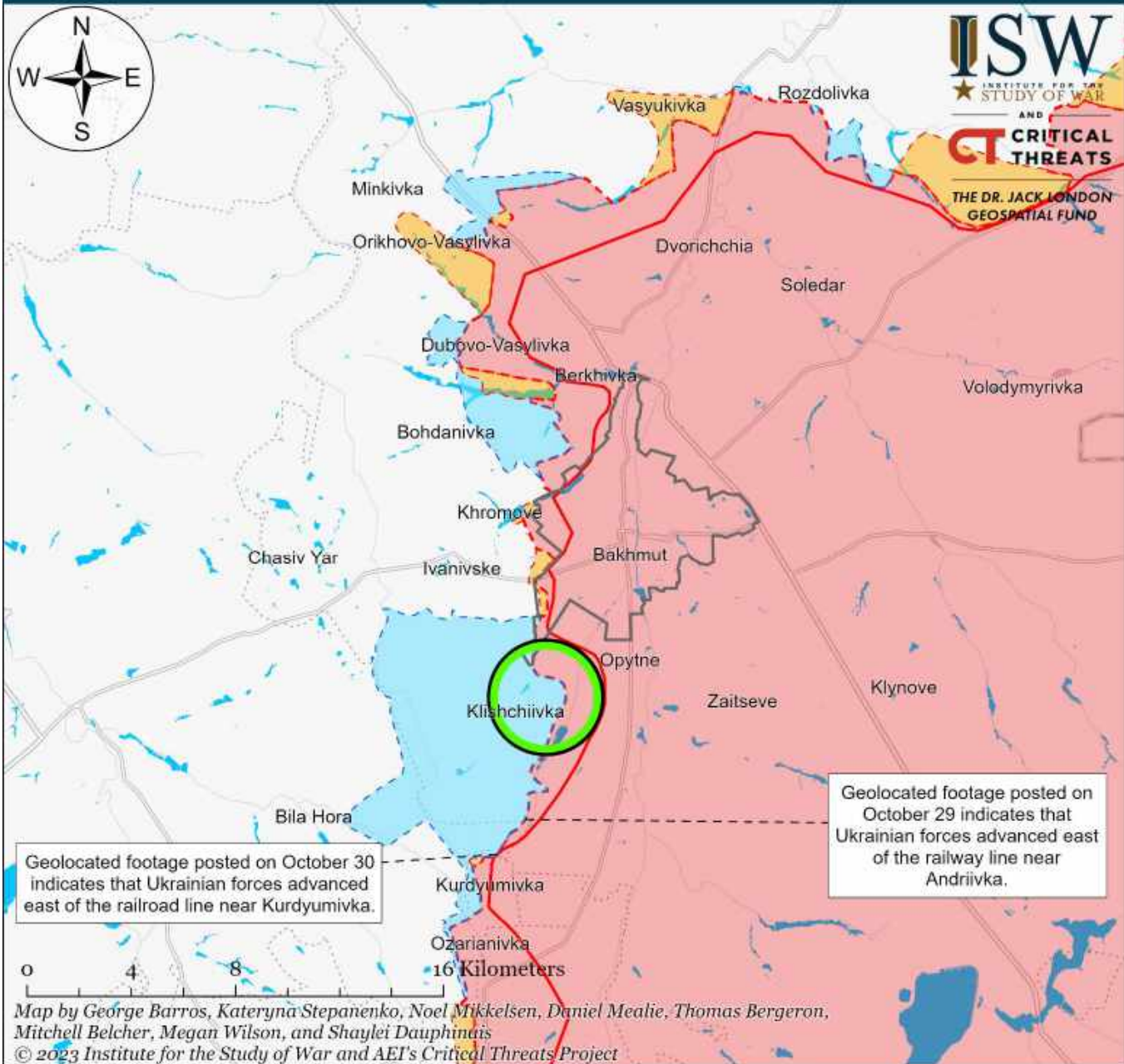
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

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

Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations near Bakhmut but did not make any confirmed advances on October 31. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations south of Bakhmut.^[19] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian attacks near Klishchiivka (7km southwest of Bakhmut), Andriivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut), and Kurdyumivka (13km southwest of Bakhmut).^[20] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces consolidated control over positions east of the railway line near Andriivka and marginally advanced south of the settlement.^[21]

Russian forces counterattacked near Bakhmut on October 31 but did not make any claimed or confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Klishchiivka, Andriivka, and Pivdenne (23km southwest of Bakhmut).^[22] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces counterattacked near Berkhivka (4km north of Bakhmut).^[23] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) published footage purportedly showing elements of the Russian 98th Guards Airborne (VDV) Division operating north of Bakhmut.^[24]

Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of October 31, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Geolocated footage posted on October 30 indicates that Ukrainian forces advanced east of the railroad line near Kurdyumivka.

Geolocated footage posted on October 29 indicates that Ukrainian forces advanced east of the railway line near Andriivka.

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
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare

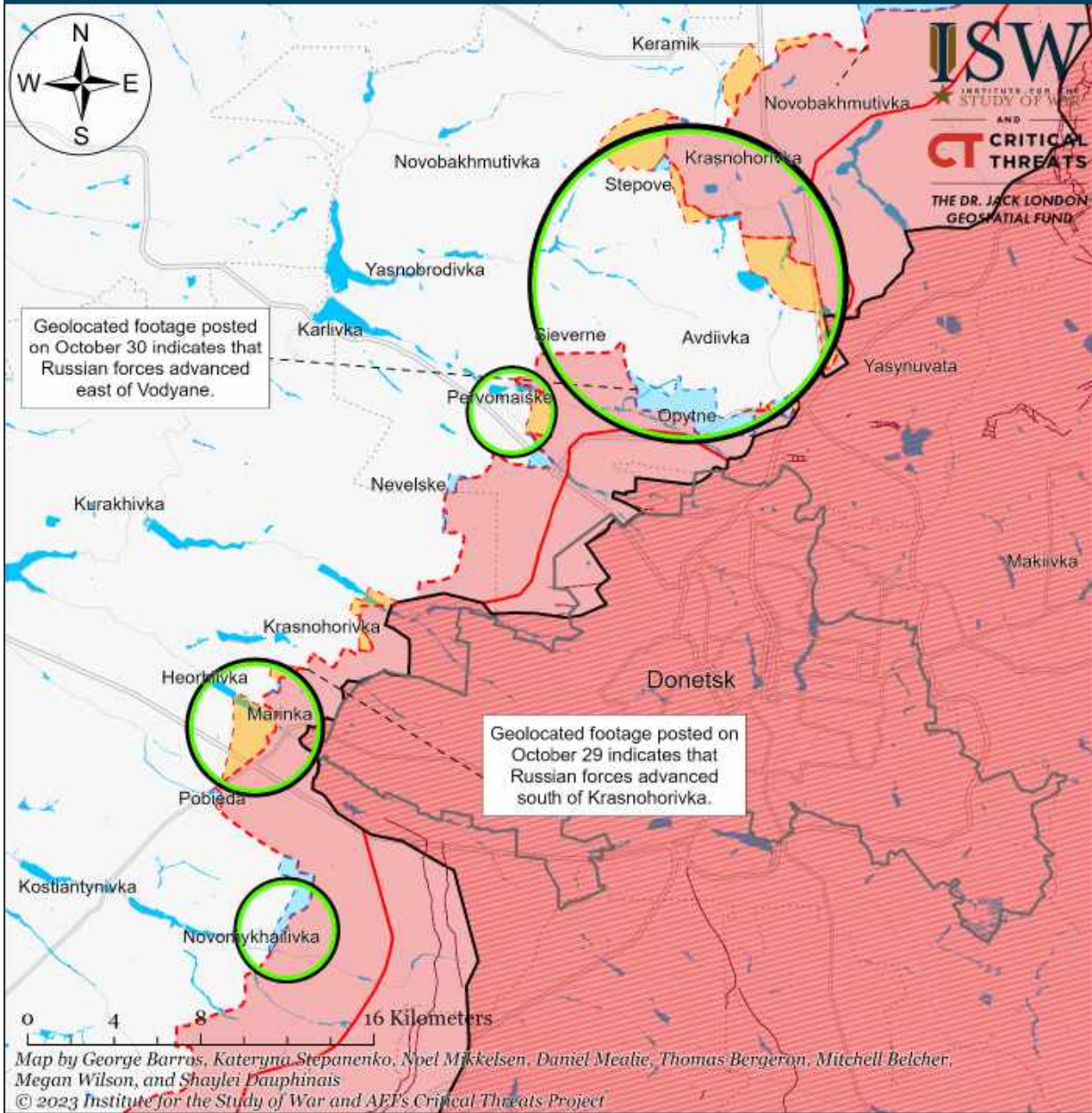
* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Russian sources claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked near Avdiivka but did not make any claimed or confirmed advances on October 31. Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces repelled a Ukrainian counterattack near the Avdiivka waste heap northwest of Avdiivka.[25] Russian milbloggers diverged in their claims about the intensity of fighting in the Avdiivka direction, with one milblogger claiming that the tempo of operations is increasing while another claimed it was decreasing.[26]

Russian sources continued offensive operations near Avdiivka on October 31 and made confirmed advances. Geolocated footage published on October 30 indicates that Russian forces marginally advanced southwest of Avdiivka.[27] Additional geolocated footage published on October 30 indicates that Russian forces advanced southwest of Krasnohorivka (5km north of Avdiivka).[28] Russian milbloggers claimed on October 30 and 31 that Russian forces are advancing near the Avdiivka Coke Plant immediately north of Avdiivka.[29] A Russian milblogger claimed on October 31 that Russian forces are not actively attacking the coke plant and are still preparing for a ground assault.[30] Another Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced to the outskirts of the Avdiivka industrial zone.[31] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces are also advancing near Krasnohorivka, Tonenke (5km west of Avdiivka), Sieverne (6km west of Avdiivka), Vodyane (7km southwest of Avdiivka) and Pervomaiske (11km southwest of Avdiivka).[32] One Russian source criticized other sources on October 29 for writing “victorious” reports about the ongoing operation and preemptively claiming that Russian forces have captured certain positions, suggesting that some Russian correspondents still have a negative perception of the tactical situation near Avdiivka.[33] The Ukrainian General Staff reported on October 31 that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Keramik (10km northwest of Avdiivka), Stepove (3km northwest of Avdiivka), Avdiivka, Tonenke, Sieverne, and Pervomaiske.[34]

Ukrainian forces did not conduct any claimed or confirmed ground attacks west or southwest of Donetsk City on October 31.

Assessed Control of Terrain near Donetsk City as of October 31, 2023, 3:00 PM ET

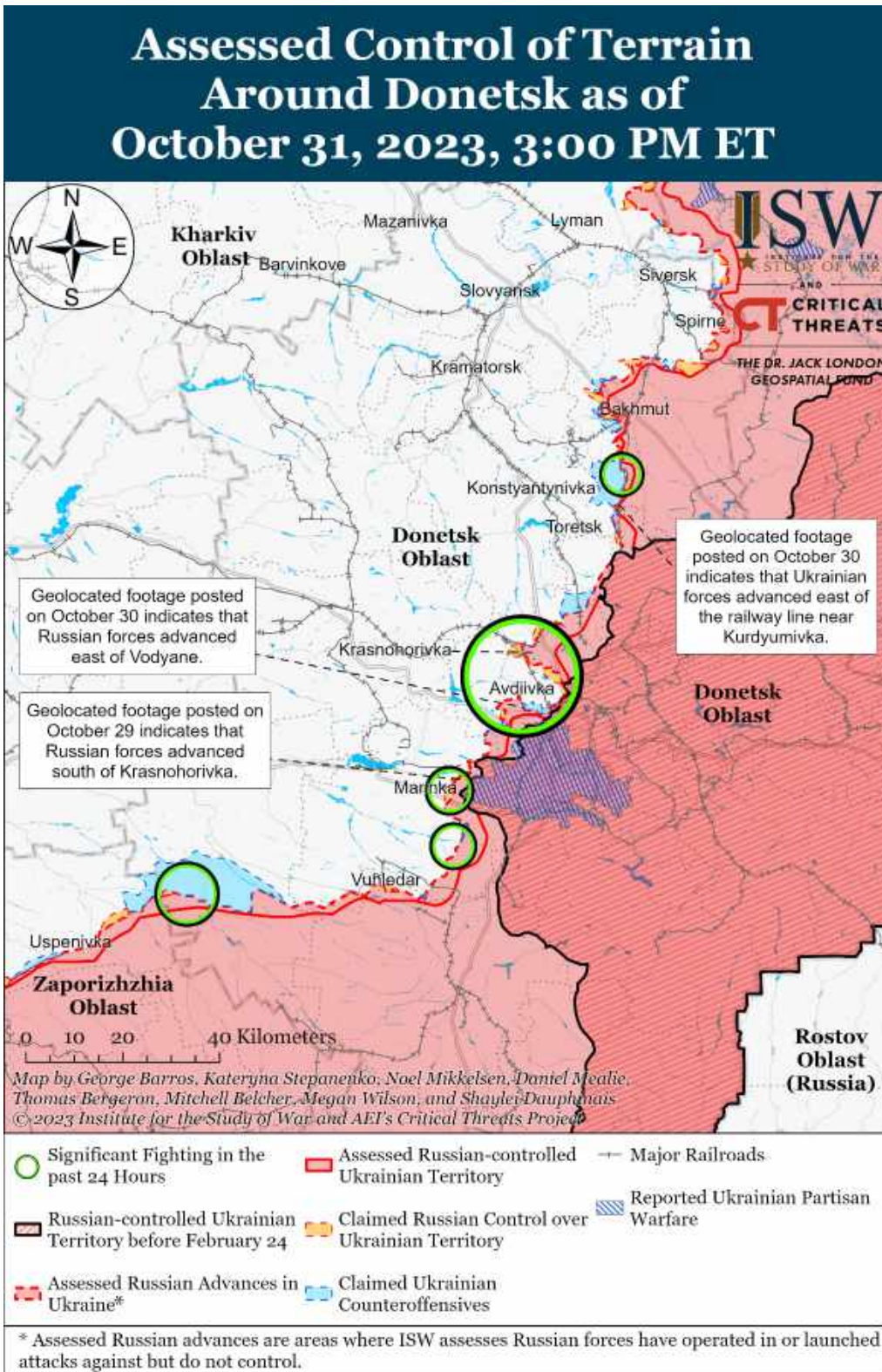


- Donetsk City Limits
- ▨ Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- ▨ Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- ▨ Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- ▨ Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Russian Field Fortifications

* 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 October 27 that Russian forces advanced 1.5 kilometers northward toward southern Avdiivka.

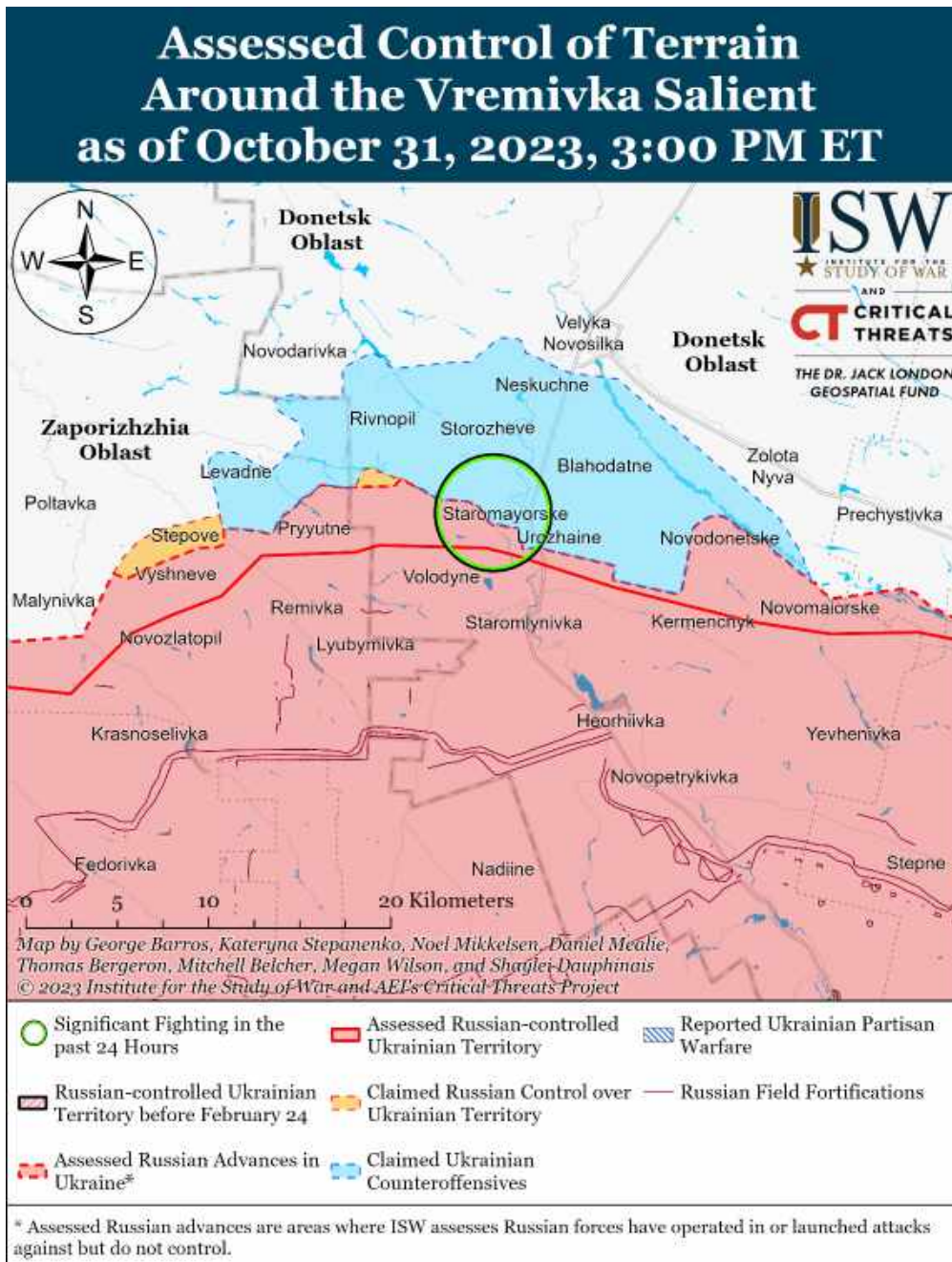
Russian forces continued ground attacks west and southwest of Donetsk City on October 31 and made a confirmed advance. Geolocated footage published on October 30 indicates that Russian forces marginally advanced south of Novomykhailivka (20km southwest of Donetsk City).[35] The Ukrainian General Staff reported on October 31 that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked near Marinka (just west of Donetsk City) and Novomykhailivka.[36] A Russian news aggregator claimed that there were positional battles on Marinka's western outskirts on October 30.[37]



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 assaults in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on October 31.

Russian forces continued limited ground attacks in the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border area on October 31 but did not make any confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian assaults near Prechystivka (18km southeast of Velyka Novosilka), Zolota Nyva (12km southeast of Velyka Novosilka), and Staromayorske (9km south of Velyka Novosilka).[38] A Russian media aggregator claimed that there was fighting near Pryyutne (14km southwest of Velyka Novosilka) and Novodonetske (12km southeast of Velyka Novosilka) on October 30.[39]

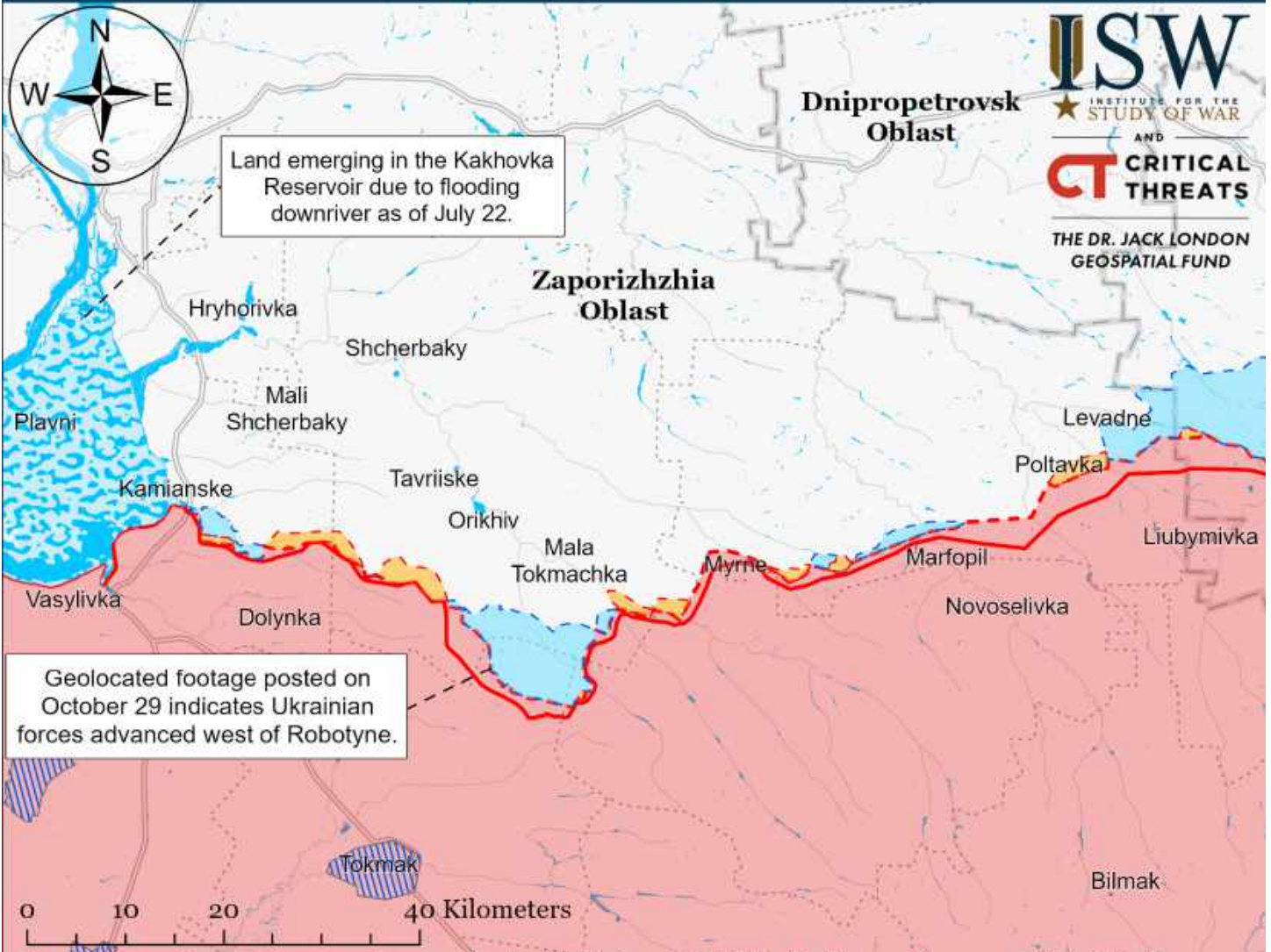


Ukrainian forces continued counteroffensive operations in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast on October 31 but did not make any confirmed gains. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces continued offensive operations in the Melitopol (western Zaporizhzhia Oblast) direction.[40] Russian sources, including the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD), claimed that Russian forces repelled Ukrainian assaults near Robotyne, Verbove (9km east of Robotyne), Novopropkivka (3km south of Robotyne), Kopani (6km northwest of Robotyne), and Nesteryanka (12km northwest of Robotyne).[41]

Russian forces counterattacked in western Zaporizhzhia Oblast on October 31 but did not make any confirmed advances. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully tried to restore lost positions near Robotyne.[42] A BARS-13 (Russian Combat Reserve) affiliated source claimed that Russian forces counterattacked and pushed Ukrainian forces back from positions near Verbove.[43] Russian sources claimed that Russian forces conducted a successful counterattack from Verbove in the direction of Robotyne.[44] ISW has not observed visual confirmation of these claimed Russian advances.



Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhia as of October 31, 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

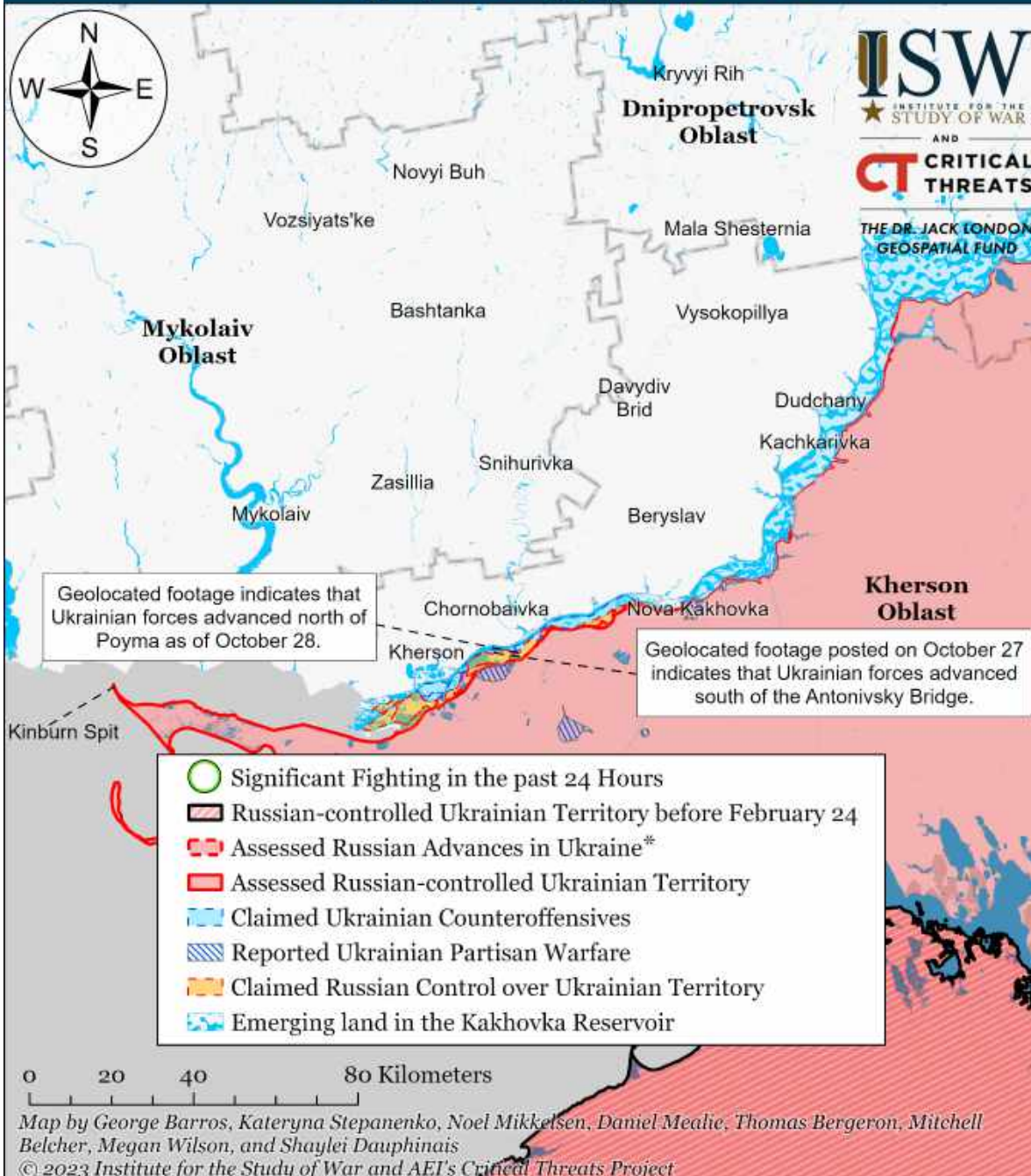
-  Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
-  Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
-  Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
-  Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
-  Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
-  Emerging land in the Kakhovka Reservoir
-  Assessed 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 milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces maintain positions and continue ground activity on the east (left) bank of Kherson Oblast as of October 31. Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces continue to hold positions in Krynky (30km northeast of Kherson City and 2km from the Dnipro River) and near the Antonivsky roadway and railway bridges.[45] Russian milbloggers claimed that fighting is ongoing near Krynky and the Antonivsky Railway Bridge and that Ukrainian forces attempted to break through Russian defenses near Pishchanivka (14km east of Kherson City and 3km from the Dnipro River) and Poyma (12km southeast of Kherson City and 4km from the Dnipro River).[46] Ukrainian Crimean-based “Atesh” partisan group stated on October 31 that elements of the Russian 126th Separate Coastal Defense Brigade (22nd Army Corps, either of the 18th Combined Arms Army or the Black Sea Fleet), which is based near Simferopol, are currently operating in the Kherson direction.[47]

Russian forces continued airstrikes with glide bombs against targets on the west (right) bank of Kherson Oblast on October 31. Ukraine’s Southern Operational Command reported that Russian forces launched 45 glide bombs at targets in Kherson and Bersylav raions over the past day.[48]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of October 31, 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 sources claimed that Ukrainian forces conducted combined missile strikes against Sevastopol and elsewhere in occupied Crimea on October 30.[49] Russian opposition outlet *Astra* reported that sources stated that Ukrainian forces damaged a Russian S-300 air defense system near Molochne (71km northwest of Sevastopol).[50]

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

Former Wagner Group fighters continue to redeploy to Ukraine as part of other Russian formations. A prominent Russian milblogger wrote an article for Kremlin-affiliated outlet *Komsomolskaya Pravda* on October 30 detailing the experience of several former Wagner fighters who have returned to Ukraine under the control of various other Russian formations.[51] The milblogger cited a Russian commander in the Kreminna area of Luhansk Oblast who stated that there are "plenty" of former Wagner fighters in his sector of the front and that former Wagner fighters are signing new contracts and returning to combat zones. The milblogger also noted that over 170 former Wagner fighters are reportedly fighting in the Chechen "Akhmat" Spetsnaz regiment as part of the "Kamerton" detachment.[52] The article notes that some Wagner fighters have entered contracts with Rosgvardia, some have entered volunteer formations, and some have become part of the regular Russian forces.[53]

A Ukrainian HIMARS strike on October 29 reportedly destroyed an entire battalion of mobilized soldiers from Chuvashia. A Chuvashia-based Telegram channel announced on October 31 that the Russian 1st battalion of the 1251st Motorized Rifle Regiment lost over 120 soldiers killed and wounded in a Ukrainian HIMARS strike on the battalion's convoy in an unspecified location in Ukraine.[54] The Telegram channel and other Russian opposition outlets stated that the Chuvashian regional government has remained silent about the issue, calling attention to efforts by many regional authorities to obfuscate the scale of Russian losses in Ukraine.[55]

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

A Russian milblogger claimed on October 31 that Russian forces will soon receive infantry fighting vehicles (IFVs) that will be equipped with electronic warfare (EW) systems that provide special protection from FPV drones.[56] The milblogger claimed that the Kurganmashzavod enterprise in Kurgan Oblast will produce these special IFVs.[57]

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 efforts to eradicate Ukrainian language and culture in occupied Ukraine. Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) Head Denis Pushilin stated on October 27 that "[he] will not allow the Ukrainian language to reappear as a state or privileged language" in occupied Donetsk Oblast and claimed that no schools in occupied Donetsk Oblast have chosen to teach Ukrainian language.[58]

The Ukrainian Resistance Center stated on October 31 that more than 400,000 Ukrainian citizens have passed through 17 Russian filtration centers in occupied Donetsk Oblast since the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.[59] The Resistance Center stated that Ukrainian citizens are subjected to pressure and torture at these filtration centers.

Russian Information Operations and Narratives

Russian sources continue to claim that the antisemitic riots in Makhachkala, Republic of Dagestan on October 29 were the result of a Ukrainian information operation.[60] Telegram founder Pavel Durov announced on October 30 that Telegram blocked the “Utro Dagestan” channel, which played a major role in organizing the antisemitic riots, due to “call[s] for violence.”[61]

Russian Chief of the Radiation, Chemical, and Biological Defense Troops Lieutenant General Igor Kirillov reiterated boilerplate rhetoric in a routine briefing about alleged American military-biological activities in Ukraine and other countries in Africa and the Middle East.[62]

Russia is continuing efforts to intensify Russian social and cultural influence over Russian-occupied Transnistria, Moldova. Russian newswire TASS reported on October 27 that the Chisinau-based Russia House transferred 2,500 modern Russian textbooks to Transnistria last week in order to facilitate the transfer of schools in Transnistria to Russian educational standards.[63] A prominent Russian milblogger responded to the report and claimed that it is a positive sign of the development of Russian “soft power” in Transnistria, but the Moldovan Foreign Ministry condemned the transfer of textbooks as “unacceptable”. [64] The Kremlin frequently weaponizes discourse surrounding Transnistria in an attempt to destabilize Moldova, as ISW has previously reported.[65]

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)

A Ukrainian military observer stated on October 31 that as of October 29, there are 1,800 to 2,000 Belarusian military personnel along the Ukrainian-Belarusian border, including two air assault battalions of the 38th Separate Air Assault Brigade, two combined tactical detachments of the 5th Separate Special Purpose Brigade, a tactical group of the 51st Artillery Brigade, and a rocket artillery battery of the 336th Rocket Artillery Brigade.[66]

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/RKadyrov_95/4071

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[11] [https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/customary-ihl/v2/rule89#:~:text=Articl...\(a\)%20provides%20that,constitutes%20a%20crime%20against%20humanity](https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/customary-ihl/v2/rule89#:~:text=Articl...(a)%20provides%20that,constitutes%20a%20crime%20against%20humanity).

[12] https://rus_dot_ozodlik.org/a/32660461.html ; https://meduza_dot_io/news/2023/10/31/radio-svoboda-sud-v-tashkente-vpervye-prigovoril-grazhdanina-uzbekistana-k-lisheniyu-svobody-za-uchastie-v-voyne-protiv-ukrainy

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<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0LfcozKUpCXph21hQo1g...>
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0LobENMDTopWjKodXvXBFHcTQTRK9jLiLkGb711qz2df2apAYd2e8zWRMiSUFcWfDl> ; <https://t.me/synegubov/7393>

[16] <https://t.me/readovkanews/68657>

[17] <https://t.me/rybar/53765>

[18] https://t.me/mod_russia/31985 ; https://t.me/mod_russia/31988 ;
https://t.me/mod_russia/31989 ; https://t.me/russkiy_opolchenec/38492

[19]
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0LfcozKUpCXph21hQo1g8KGPjRjQRYk6HHhSsRy3ActZUVZSsqyQHCjhUoy14SER9ql> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0LobENMDTopWjKodXvXBFHcTQTRK9jLiLkGb711qz2df2apAYd2e8zWRMiSUFcWfDl>

[20] https://t.me/dva_majors/28301 ; <https://t.me/rybar/53773> ; <https://t.me/wargonzo/16126>

[21] <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4396>

[22] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid027wFLp6TVu5jBfkzZA7emXJWYfL8sF2F6Yh7v61zp8yTw5wWhXLXLNea1dTBKXpwFl> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0LfcozKUpCXph21hQo1g8KGpRJqRyk6HHhSsRy3ActZUVZSqkyQHCjhUoy14SER9ql> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0LobENMDTopWjKodXvXBFHcTQTRK9jLiLkGb711qz2df2apAYd2e8zWRMiSUFcWfDI>

[23] <https://t.me/wargonzo/16126> ; https://t.me/russkiy_opolchenec/38492

[24] https://t.me/mod_russia/31997

[25] https://t.me/russkiy_opolchenec/38492 ; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4398>

[26] <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4398> ; https://t.me/russkiy_opolchenec/38492

[27] https://t.me/kiber_boroshno/4886 ; <https://t.me/sssternenko/22071> ;

[28] <https://t.me/ButusovPlus/5915> ; <https://x.com/klinger66/status/1719310748294205824?s=20> ;
<https://x.com/PStyleOne1/status/1719063042766303553?s=20> https://t.me/WarArchive_ua/6749

[29] https://t.me/dva_majors/28301 ; <https://t.me/rybar/53773> ; <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/55822> ;
<https://t.me/wargonzo/16126> ; <https://t.me/milinfoolive/109707>

[30] https://t.me/boris_rozhin/102513 ; https://t.me/stringer_donetsk/9400

[31] <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4390> ; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4395>

[32] https://t.me/russkiy_opolchenec/38492 ; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4398> ;
<https://t.me/wargonzo/16126> ; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/51734>

[33] <https://t.me/elpicahielo/5311> ; https://t.me/voin_dv/5759

[34] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid027wFLp6TVu5jBfkzZA7emXJWYfL8sF2F6Yh7v61zp8yTw5wWhXLXLNea1dTBKXpwFl> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0LfcozKUpCXph21hQo1g8KGpRJqRyk6HHhSsRy3ActZUVZSqkyQHCjhUoy14SER9ql> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0LobENMDTopWjKodXvXBFHcTQTRK9jLiLkGb711qz2df2apAYd2e8zWRMiSUFcWfDI>

[35] <https://x.com/giK1893/status/1718992596184215690?s=20> ;
<https://x.com/JonHallin/status/1719300122947752206?s=20> ;
<https://t.me/pidrozdilshadowoficial/131>

[36] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid027wFLp6TVu5jBfkzZA7emXJWYfL8sF2F6Yh7v61zp8yTw5wWhXLXLNea1dTBKXpwFl> ;

<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0LfcozKUpCXph21hQo1g...>
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0LobENMDTopWjKodXvXBFHcTQTRK9jLiLkGb711qz2df2apAYd2e8zWRMiSUFcWfDI>

[37] <https://t.me/readovkanews/68657>

[38] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid027wFLp6TVu5jBfkzZA7emXJWYfL8sF2F6Yh7v61zp8yTw5wWhXLXLNea1dTBKXpwFl> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0LfcozKUpCXph21hQo1g...>
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0LobENMDTopWjKodXvXB...>

[39] <https://t.me/readovkanews/68657>

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[41] <https://t.me/wargonzo/16126> ; https://t.me/dva_majors/28301 ;
https://t.me/mod_russia/31985 ; https://t.me/mod_russia/31992 ;
<https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4388> ;

[42] <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid027wFLp6TVu5jBfkzZA7...>

[43] https://t.me/russkiy_opolchenec/38492

[44] <https://t.me/vrogov/12717> ; <https://t.me/readovkanews/68657>

[45] https://t.me/dva_majors/28301 ; <https://t.me/rybar/53773> ; <https://t.me/wargonzo/16126> ;
https://t.me/russkiy_opolchenec/38492 ; <https://t.me/rybar/53765> ;
<https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/4386>

[46] https://t.me/dva_majors/28301 ; <https://t.me/rybar/53773> ; <https://t.me/wargonzo/16126> ;
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[47] https://t.me/atesh_ua/2442

[48] https://t.me/SJTF_Odes/2194 ;
<https://www.facebook.com/OperationalCommandSouth/posts/pfbid02Zi1MG1WpVW...>

[49] https://t.me/dva_majors/28301 ; <https://t.me/rybar/53773> ; <https://t.me/astrapress/41443> ;
<https://t.me/rybar/53765>

[50] <https://t.me/astrapress/41443>

[51] https://www.kp_dot_ru/daily/27574/4844603/

[52] https://www.kp_dot_ru/daily/27574/4844603/

[53] https://www.kp_dot_ru/daily/27574/4844603/

[54] <https://t.me/ChuvashiaDream/7942>; <https://t.me/ChuvashiaDream/7950>

[55] <https://t.me/sotaproject/68723>; <https://t.me/ChuvashiaDream/7950>

[56] https://t.me/Sladkov_plus/8977

[57] https://t.me/Sladkov_plus/8977

[58] https://ria_dot_ru/20231027/pushilin-1905627017.html

[59] https://sprotyv.mod_dot_gov.ua/blyzko-400-tys-meshkantsiv-tot-donechchyny-projshly-filtratsiyu/

[60] <https://t.me/hackberegini/1862> ; <https://t.me/NeoficialniyBeZsonoV/30506> ;
<https://t.me/pezdicide/3271> ; <https://t.me/rybar/53762>

[61] https://t.me/durov_russia/46;

[62] https://t.me/mod_russia/31973 ; https://t.me/mod_russia/31974 ;
https://t.me/mod_russia/31975 ; https://t.me/mod_russia/31976 ; https://t.me/mod_russia/31977
; https://t.me/mod_russia/31978 ; https://t.me/mod_russia/31979 ;
https://t.me/mod_russia/31981 ; https://t.me/ruskiy_opolchenec/38494

[63] https://tass_dot_ru/mezhdunarodnaya-panorama/19139513

[64] <https://t.me/rybar/53776>

[65] <https://isw.pub/UkrWar050823>; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar031023>;
<https://isw.pub/UkrWar030923>

[66] <https://t.me/zvizdecmanhustu/1367>