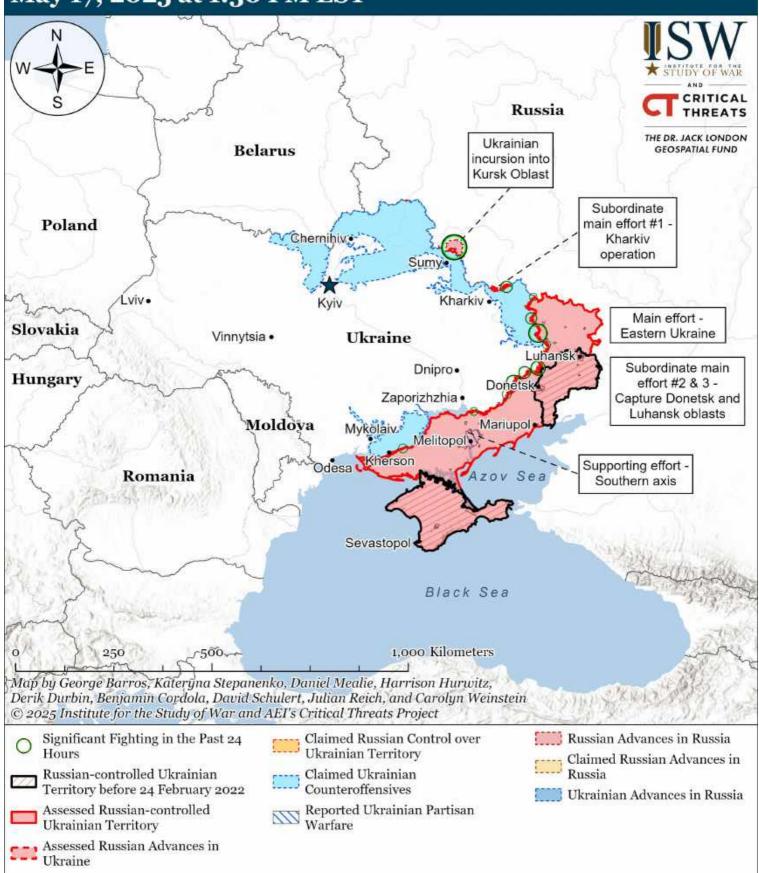
Assessed Control of Terrain in the Russo-Ukrainian War May 17, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST





Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment

Anna Harvey, Olivia Gibson, Christina Harward, and Frederick W. Kagan with Nate Trotter

May 17, 2025, 6:40pm ET

Note: The data cut-off for this product was 12:15pm ET on May 17. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the May 18 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

The Russian delegation in Istanbul reportedly framed its demands for a final peace settlement as preconditions that Ukraine must meet before Russia will agree to a ceasefire. Most of Russia's demands are contrary to US President Donald Trump's proposed peace plan. Sources familiar with the May 16 Ukrainian-Russian talks in Istanbul reported to *Bloomberg* that the Russian delegation demanded that Ukraine cede all of Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhia, and Kherson oblasts and Crimea to Russia and that the international community recognize the four oblasts and the peninsula as Russian territory before Russia will agree to a ceasefire.[1] The Russian delegation also reportedly demanded that Ukraine adopt a neutral status, that no foreign troops be allowed on Ukrainian territory, and that Ukraine abandon its demands for war reparations from Russia. Chairperson of the Russian Federation Council's Committee on Foreign Affairs Grigory Karasin stated on May 17 that the Russian delegation maintained Russian President Vladimir Putin's June 2024 demands, including that Ukrainian forces withdraw from the entirety of the four oblasts and abandon its NATO aspirations before Russia would agree to a ceasefire and peace negotiations.[2] The United States reportedly presented Russia in April 2025 with a seven-point peace plan that offered Russia "de jure" US recognition of Russian sovereignty over occupied Crimea and "de facto" recognition of Russian control over the parts of Ukraine that Russian forces currently occupy.[3] The US proposal also reportedly included "a robust security guarantee" involving a group of European states and possibly non-European states as a likely peacekeeping force. The Russian delegation's demands in Istanbul outright reject these aspects of the US peace proposal.

ISW continues to assess that Russia's war aim remains full Ukrainian capitulation.[4] Russia is reframing its territorial demands — typically the subject of war termination negotiations — as preconditions for a ceasefire.[5] Russia is attempting to posture itself as open to negotiations but is putting forward demands that Ukraine cannot reasonably accept while offering no compromises of its own. ISW continues to assess that Putin will continue to refuse to offer compromises until Ukraine and the West are able to alter his theory of victory, which posits that Russia will win a war of attrition through indefinite creeping advances that prevent Ukraine from conducting successful, operationally significant counteroffensive operations.[6]

Russia's continued protraction of negotiations emphasizes its unwillingness to engage in good-faith negotiations for either a ceasefire or a final peace agreement. Kremlin Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov stated on May 17 that Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukrainian

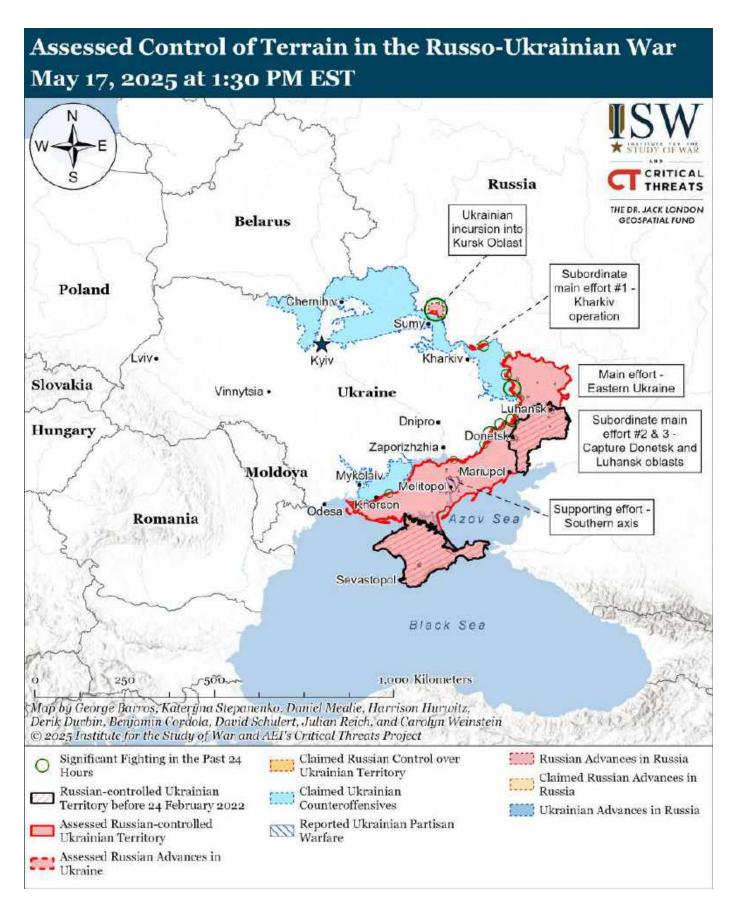
President Volodymyr Zelensky may meet only if the Russian and Ukrainian delegations reach unspecified agreements and underscored that all talks should be conducted behind closed doors.[7] Peskov's statements are likely intentionally vague in order to further delay progress in Russian-Ukrainian talks. Russian opposition outlet Verstka reported on May 17 that a source close to the Russian Presidential Administration stated the Kremlin viewed discussions between Putin and Zelensky as "out of the question" as Moscow knew that the conditions it was pushing Ukraine to accept were non-starters for Kyiv.[8] Another Verstka source close to the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) similarly stated that Russian officials do not plan to discuss preparations for a Putin-Zelensky meeting. Russia has doubled down on its efforts to protract peace processes by continuing to present Ukraine with ultimatums that Ukraine cannot accept. The Verstka source close to the Presidential Administration added that Russia's demand that the Ukrainian-Russian talks occur without a mediator shows that the Kremlin seeks to demonstrate that it is capable of demanding that the United States limit the influence of Ukraine's Western partners. Peskov's comments and Verstka's report cohere with ISW's long-standing assessment that Russia remains committed to prolonging peace negotiations so as to continue making battlefield advances and to extract additional concessions from the West.[9] Ukraine has continually demonstrated its willingness to compromise and engage in good-faith negotiations in contrast.

Kremlin officials continue to signal that Russia is prepared to continue or even escalate its war against Ukraine should Ukraine and the West not agree to Russia's demands for Ukraine's surrender. Russian Security Council Deputy Chairperson Dmitry Medvedev claimed on May 17 on his English-language X account that "all enemies of Russia that issue negotiating ultimatums" should remember that peace negotiations do not always lead to the end of hostilities and that unsuccessful negotiations can even lead to a "more terrible stage of war with new weapons and participants."[10] Medvedev's statement is a thinly veiled threat of possible Russian nuclear weapons use, the introduction of Russian allied forces in the war, or even Russian attacks against Europe. ISW continues to assess that the Kremlin is extremely unlikely to use nuclear weapons or to attack NATO states at this time.[11] Russia has demonstrated that it will not accept any terms less than Ukraine's full capitulation and would likely view any negotiations that do not fulfill these war aims as "unsuccessful." The threat that Russia could continue its war against Ukraine and even escalate it should Russia not achieve its goals mirrors Russian Presidential Aide Vladimir Medinsky's May 16 statement that Russia is ready to fight for "however long it takes."[12] Medvedev's threat is part of Russia's reflexive control campaign meant to push Ukraine and the West to accept Russia's demands for Ukrainian surrender.

Russia continues to deny the current Ukrainian government's legitimacy and is likely setting conditions to renege on any future Ukrainian—Russian peace agreement. Kremlin Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov stated on May 17 that it is important for Russia to understand exactly who from the Ukrainian government will sign the documents that may result from any future Russian—Ukrainian agreement.[13] Peskov's comments are likely part of the Kremlin's long-standing narrative rejecting Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's legitimacy and the legitimacy of all post-2014 Ukrainian governments.[14] This rhetorical campaign is part of efforts to set conditions for Russia to withdraw from any future peace agreements at a time of Russia's choosing and to support Russia's repeated demand that Ukraine acquiesce to regime change and the installation of a pro-Russian proxy government.[15] Any future peace agreement between Russia and Ukraine must include Russia's explicit recognition of the Ukrainian government's and the Ukrainian Constitution's legitimacy.

Key Takeaways:

- The Russian delegation in Istanbul reportedly framed its demands for a final peace settlement as preconditions that Ukraine must meet before Russia will agree to a ceasefire. Most of Russia's demands are contrary to US President Donald Trump's proposed peace plan.
- Russia's continued protraction of negotiations emphasizes its unwillingness to engage in good-faith negotiations for either a ceasefire or a final peace agreement.
- Kremlin officials continue to signal that Russia is prepared to continue or even escalate its war against Ukraine should Ukraine and the West not agree to Russia's demands for Ukraine's surrender.
- Russia continues to deny the current Ukrainian government's legitimacy and is likely setting conditions to renege on any future Ukrainian-Russian peace agreement.
- Ukrainian forces recently advanced near Lyman, and Russian forces recently advanced near Chasiv Yar, Toretsk, Pokrovsk, Novopavlivka, and Kurakhove.



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.

- Alleged Ceasefire Violation
- Ukrainian Operations in the Russian Federation
- Russian Supporting Effort Northern Axis
- Russian Main Effort Eastern Ukraine (comprised of three subordinate main efforts)
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 Push Ukrainian forces back from the international border with Belgorod Oblast and approach to within tube artillery range of Kharkiv City
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and encircle northern Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #3 Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia's proxies in Donbas, and possibly advance into Dnipropetrovsk Oblast
- Russian Supporting Effort Southern Axis
- Russian Air, Missile, and Drone Campaign
- Significant Activity in Belarus

Alleged Ceasefire Violations

There are no active ceasefires in Ukraine.

Ukrainian Operations in the Russian Federation

Fighting continued in Kursk Oblast on May 16 and 17.[16]

Russian milbloggers claimed that fighting continued near Tetkino (southwest of Glushkovo).[17]

Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian 56th Airborne (VDV) Regiment (7th VDV Division) are reportedly training in rear areas of Kursk Oblast.[18]

Neither Ukrainian nor Russian sources reported ground activity in northwestern Belgorod Oblast on May 17.

<u>Russian Supporting Effort – Northern Axis</u> (Russian objective: Create defensible buffer zones in northern Ukraine along the international border and approach to within tube artillery range of Sumy City)

Russian forces continued offensive operations in Sumy Oblast on May 17 but did not make confirmed advances.

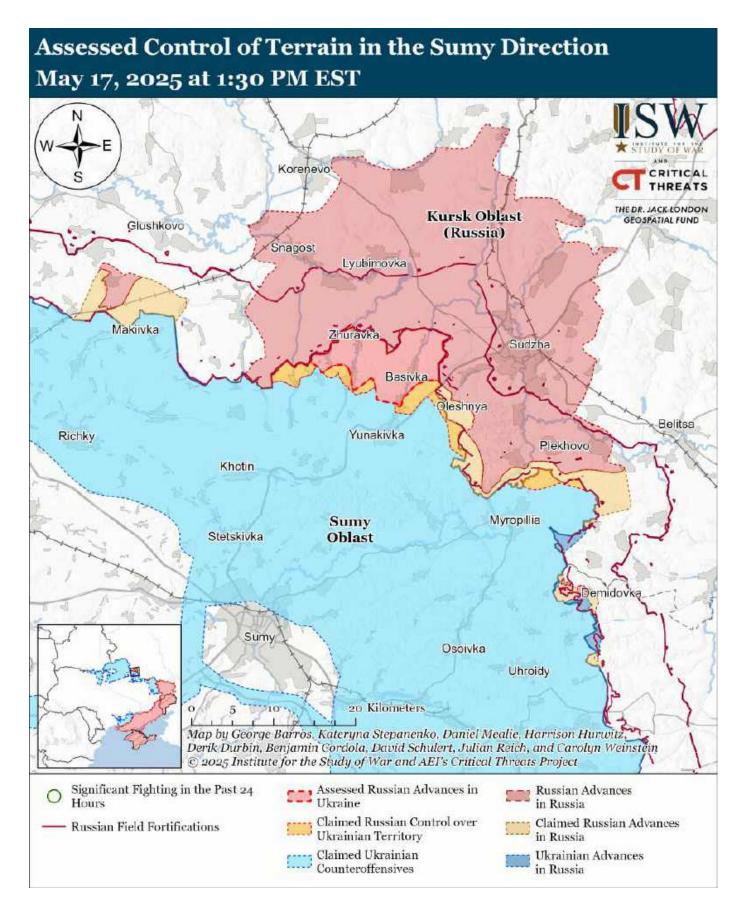
Unconfirmed claims: A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced in Bilovody (north of Sumy City).[19]

A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces continued offensive operations in unspecified areas in Sumy Oblast.[20]

Ukraine's Siversk Group of Forces Spokesperson Vadym Mysnyk reported that Russian forces continue to deploy sabotage and reconnaissance groups along the international border and are leveraging foliage for cover.[21] Mysnyk noted that the Russian command has accumulated a significant concentration of forces and means along Ukraine's northern border, particularly in Kursk Oblast.

Official Ukrainian sources reported that Russian forces conducted a Lancet drone strike against a civilian bus near Bilopillia (northwest of Sumy City and southeast of Tetkino), killing at least nine civilians and injuring at least seven.[22]

Order of Battle: Drone operators of the Russian "Anvar Spetsnaz" detachment (possibly referring to the BARS-25 "Anvar" volunteer detachment) are reportedly striking Ukrainian targets in Sumy Oblast.[23]



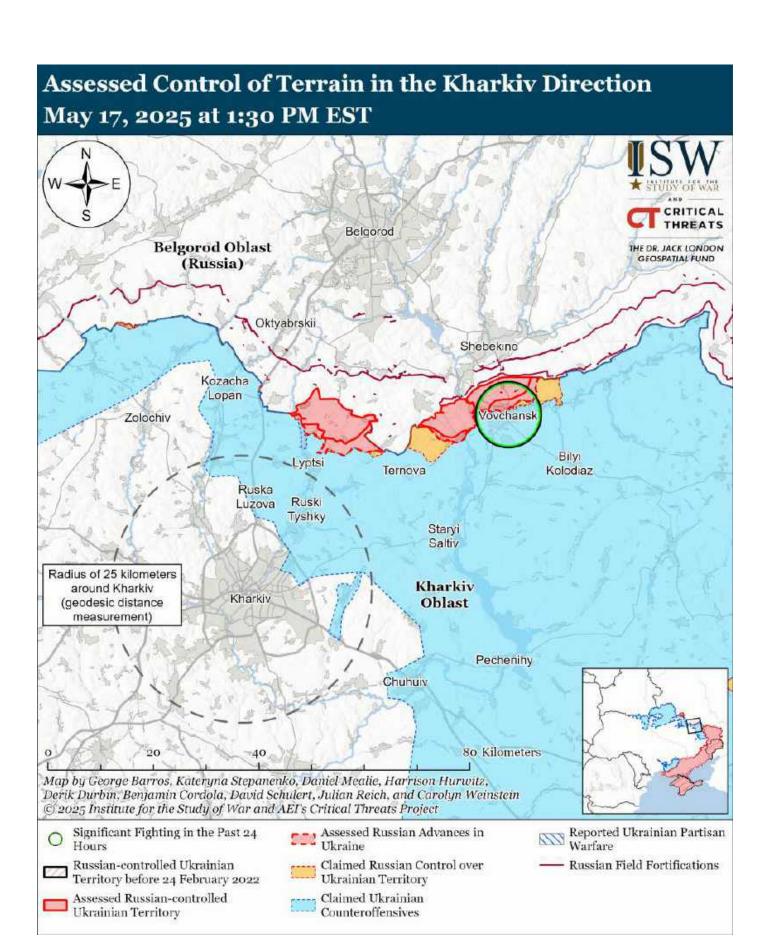
Russian Main Effort - Eastern Ukraine

<u>Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Kharkiv Oblast (</u>Russian objective: Push Ukrainian forces back from the international border with Belgorod Oblast and approach to within tube artillery range of Kharkiv City)

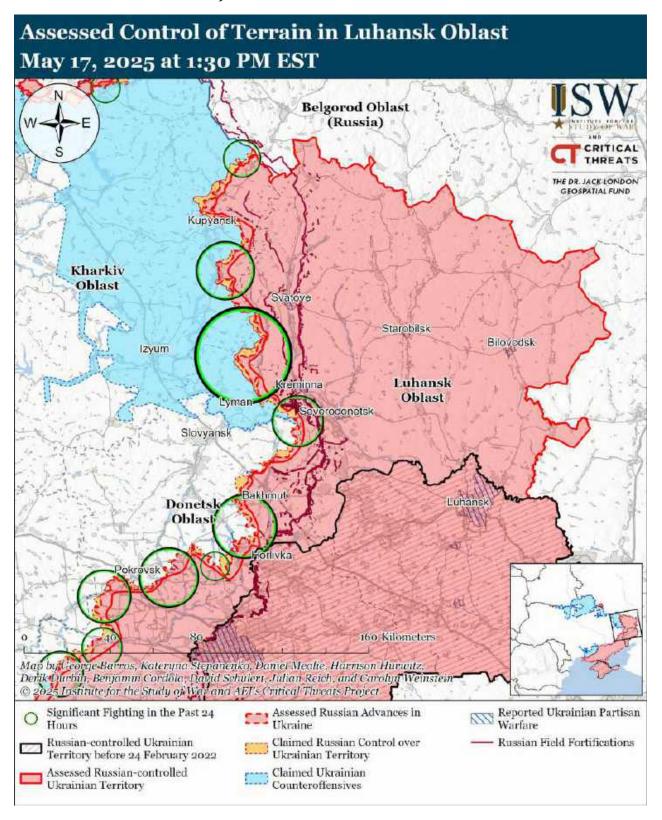
Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Kharkiv direction on May 17 but did not advance.

Russian forces attacked northeast of Kharkiv City near Vovchansk on May 16 and 17.[24]

Order of Battle: Drone operators of the 41st Motorized Rifle Regiment (72nd Motorized Rifle Division, 44th Army Corps [AC], Leningrad Military District [LMD]) are reportedly striking Ukrainian positions in Kharkiv Oblast.[25] Drone operators of the Russian "Anvar Spetsnaz" detachment (possibly referring to the BARS-25 "Anvar" volunteer detachment) are reportedly striking Ukrainian targets near Odnorobivka (northwest of Kharkiv City).[26]



<u>Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Luhansk Oblast</u> (Russian objective: Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and northern Donetsk Oblast)



Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Kupyansk direction on May 17 but did not advance.

Russian forces attacked northeast of Kupyansk near the international border toward Stroivka and near Kamyanka and southeast of Kupyansk toward Novoosynove on May 16 and 17.[27] Ukraine's Khortytsia Group of Forces reported that Russian forces conducted a reconnaissance-in-force mission in the direction of Stroivka.[28]

A Ukrainian spokesperson for a brigade operating in the Kupyansk direction reported that Russian forces have attacked in the Kupyansk direction exclusively with light equipment, including motorcycles, all-terrain vehicles (ATV), and buggies, in groups of two to three since roughly May 11.[29]

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Borova direction on May 17 but did not advance.

Russian forces attacked northeast of Borova near Kolisnykivka and Zahryzove and southeast of Borova near Novoyehorivka, Hrekivka, and Olhivka on May 16 and 17.[30]

Order of Battle: Drone operators of the Russian 1st Guards Tank Army (Moscow Military District [MMD]) are reportedly operating near Bohuslavka (north of Borova).[31]

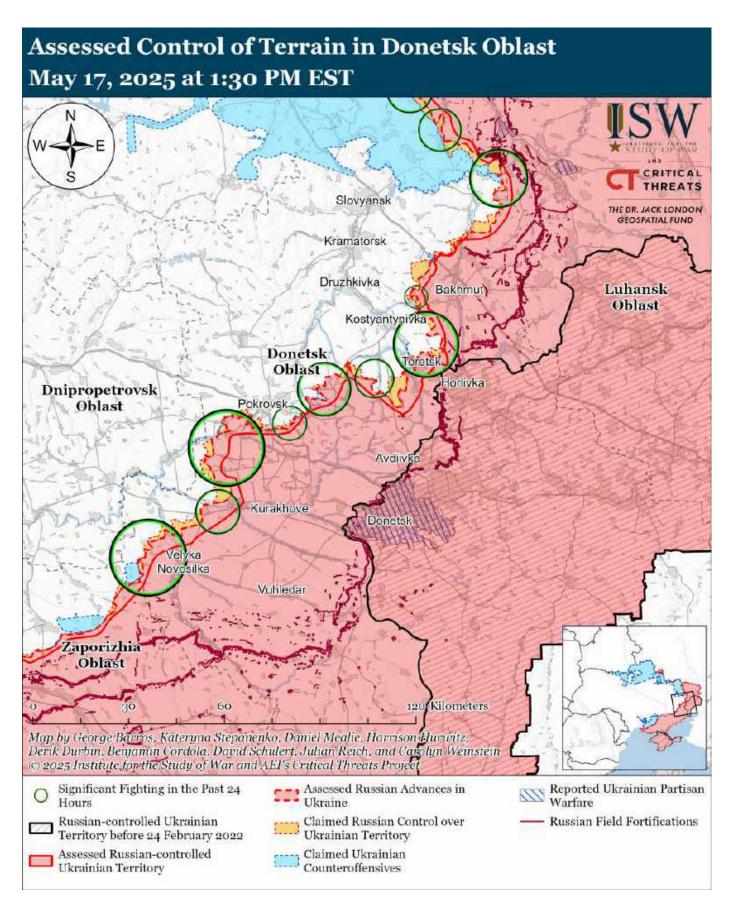
Ukrainian forces recently advanced in the Lyman direction.

Assessed Ukrainian advances: Geolocated footage published on May 16 indicates that Ukrainian forces recently advanced in central Torske (east of Lyman).[32]

Russian forces attacked north of Lyman near Ridkodub, Novyi Mir, and Zelena Dolyna and toward Karpivka; northeast of Lyman near Lozova, Kolodyazi, and Yampolivka; east of Lyman near Torske and toward Shyikivka; and southeast of Lyman in the Serebryanske forest area and on May 16 and 17.[33]

Order of Battle: Elements of Russian 31st, 36th, and 37th motorized rifle regiments (all of the 67th Motorized Rifle Division, 25th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Central Military District [CMD]) are reportedly operating near Torske.[34] Elements of the 3rd Motorized Rifle Division (20th CAA, MMD) are reportedly operating in the Lyman direction.[35]

<u>Russian Subordinate Main Effort #3 – Donetsk Oblast</u> (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia's proxies in Donbas, and possibly advance into Dnipropetrovsk Oblast)



Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Siversk direction on May 17 but did not advance.

Russian forces conducted offensive operations northeast of Siversk near Bilohorivka and Hryhorivka and east of Siversk near Verkhnokamyanske on May 16 and 17.[36]

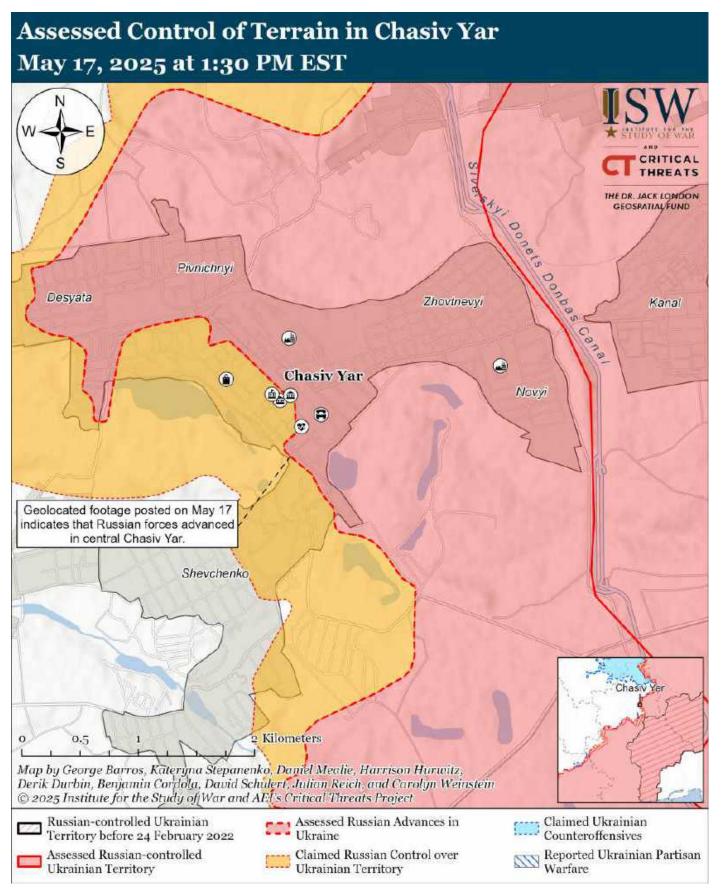
Russian forces recently advanced in the Chasiv Yar direction.

Assessed Russian advances: Geolocated footage published on May 17 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced in central Chasiv Yar.[37]

Russian forces conducted offensive operations near Chasiv Yar itself; southeast of Chasiv Yar near Kurdyumivka and Ozaryanivka; and south of Chasiv Yar near Bila Hora and Predtechyne on May 16 and 17.[38]

Ukrainian Luhansk Group of Forces Spokesperson Lieutenant Colonel Dmytro Zaporozhets reported on May 17 that Russian forces increased the quantity of assaults, including assaults with armored vehicles, in the Chasiv Yar direction from three to five assaults per day one to two weeks ago to seven to nine assaults per day more recently.[39]

Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian 5th Anti-Aircraft Missile Brigade (98th Airborne [VDV] Division) are reportedly operating near Chasiv Yar, and elements of the 299th VDV Regiment (98th VDV Division) and 6th Motorized Rifle Division (3rd Army Corps [AC]) are reportedly operating in the Chasiv Yar direction.[40]



Russian forces recently advanced in the Toretsk direction.

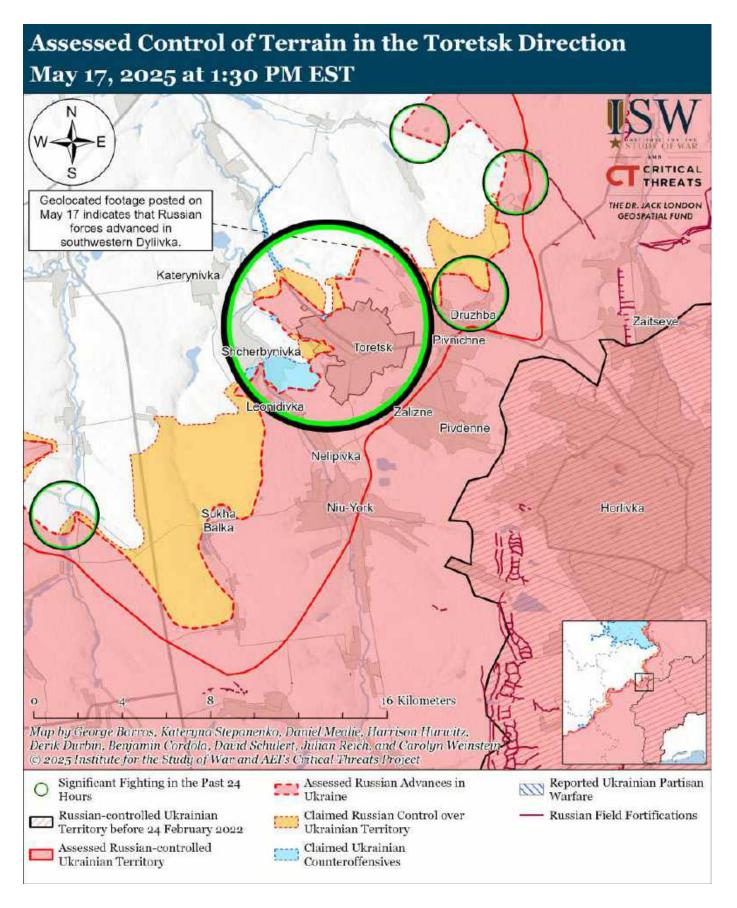
Assessed Russian advances: Geolocated footage published on May 17 shows Russian forces raising flags in central Oleksandropil and Nova Poltavka (both southwest of Toretsk), indicating that Russian forces recently seized the settlements.[41] The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed on May 17 that Russian forces seized Oleksandropil, and a Russian milblogger claimed that elements of the 242nd Motorized Rifle Regiment (20th Motorized Rifle Division, 8th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Southern Military District [SMD]) participated in the seizure of the settlement.[42] Additional geolocated footage published on May 17 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced in southwestern Dyliivka (north of Toretsk), in western Stara Mykolaivka (southwest of Toretsk), and west of Nova Poltavka.[43]

Unconfirmed claims: A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced to eastern Romanivka (southwest of Toretsk) and toward Zorya (east of Oleksandropil) and Yablunivka (north of Oleksandropil).[44]

Russian forces conducted offensive operations near Toretsk itself; east of Toretsk near Druzhba; north of Toretsk near Dyliivka and Krymske; northwest of Toretsk toward Katerynivka and Pleshchiivka; west of Toretsk near Novospaske (formerly Petrivka) and toward Yablunivka and Poltavka; and southwest of Toretsk near Yelyzavetivka, Oleksandropil, Stara Mykolaivka, and Nova Poltavka and toward Zorya and Hnativka on May 16 and 17.[45]

The spokesperson of a Ukrainian brigade operating in the Toretsk direction stated that Russian forces have suffered roughly 50,000 casualties, including roughly 20,000 killed, in the last 10 months of fighting for Toretsk.[46] Zaporozhets stated that Russian forces in the Toretsk direction have a sufficient number of personnel and do not have to reduce the intensify of their assaults.[47] Zaporozhets stated that Russian forces sometimes attack with heavy armored vehicles to clear the way for motorcyclists.[48] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces have reduced their offensive activity near Nova Poltavka to regroup for future attacks.[49]

Order of Battle: Zaporozhets stated that elements of the Russian 132nd Motorized Rifle Brigade (51st CAA, formerly 1st Donetsk People's Republic [DNR] AC, SMD) are operating in the Toretsk direction.[50] Elements of the 102nd Motorized Rifle Regiment (150th Motorized Rifle Division, 8th CAA, SMD) are reportedly operating near Nova Poltavka.[51] Elements of the 33rd Motorized Rifle Regiment (20th Motorized Rifle Division, 8th CAA, SMD) are reportedly operating in the Kostyantynivka (Toretsk) direction.[52] Elements of the 238th Artillery Brigade (8th CAA, SMD) are reportedly operating near Toretsk, and elements of the 4th Motorized Rifle Brigade (3rd CAA, formerly 2nd Luhansk People's Republic [LNR] AC, SMD) are reportedly operating near Dyliivka.[53]



Russian forces recently advanced in the Pokrovsk direction.

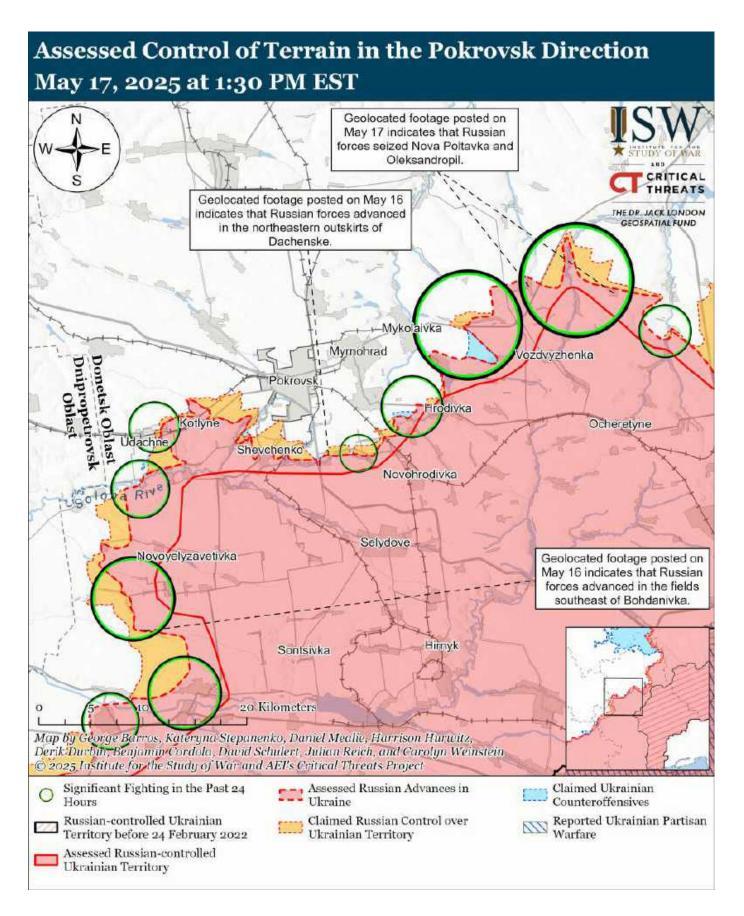
Assessed Russian advances: Geolocated footage published on May 16 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced in the northeastern outskirts of Dachenske (south of Pokrovsk).[54]

Unconfirmed claims: A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces occupy roughly half of Pershe Travnia (just southwest of Pokrovsk) and have seized Pishchane (southwest of Pokrovsk).[55]

Russian forces conducted offensive operations northeast of Pokrovsk toward Shevchenko Pershe; east of Pokrovsk near Vozdvyzhenka, Myrolyubivka, Promin, and Malynivka; southwest of Pokrovsk near Lysivka; south of Pokrovsk near Novoukrainka; and southeast of Pokrovsk near Novoserhiivka, Kotlyne, and Udachne on May 16 and 17.[56] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked near Myrolyubivka.[57]

The deputy commander of a Ukrainian battalion operating in the Pokrovsk direction stated that the intensity of Russian mechanized assaults has decreased and that Russian forces are mostly conducting infantry or motorized vehicle assaults.[58] The deputy commander stated that Russian forces are using poorly trained personnel who have undergone one month of training.

Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian 5th Motorized Rifle Brigade (51st CAA, SMD) are reportedly operating in Mykhailivka (east of Pokrovsk).[59]



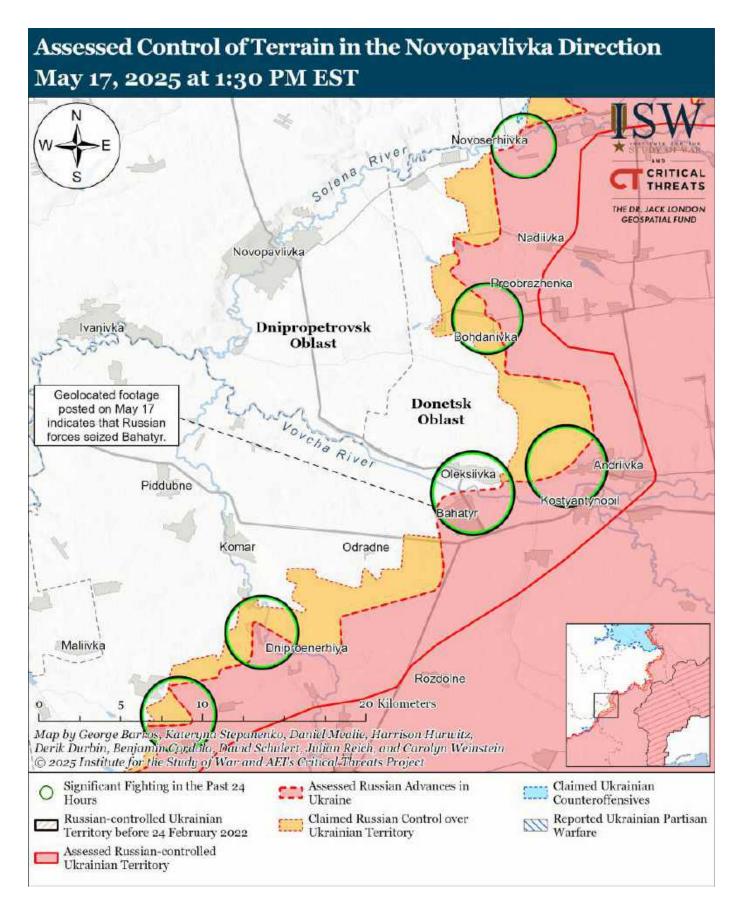
Russian forces recently advanced in the Novopavlivka direction.

Assessed Russian advances: Geolocated footage published on May 16 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced southeast of Bohdanivka (southeast of Novopavlivka).[60]

Russian forces conducted offensive operations northeast of Novopavlivka near Novooleksandrivka and southeast of Novopavlivka near Troitske, Zaporizhzhia, Horikhove, and Bohdanivka on May 16 and 17.[61] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked near Kotlyarivka (east of Novopavlivka).[62]

A spokesperson for a Ukrainian brigade operating in the Novopavlivka direction stated that Russian forces are constantly rotating and replenishing forces, including with convict recruits.[63] A sergeant in a Ukrainian unmanned systems battalion operating in the Novopavlivka direction stated that Russian forces are using cars, motorcycles, and electric bikes to approach Ukrainian positions.[64]

Order of Battle: A spokesperson for a Ukrainian brigade operating in the Novopavlivka direction stated that elements of the Russian 36th Motorized Rifle Brigade (29th CAA, Eastern Military District [EMD]), 39th Motorized Rifle Brigade (68th AC, EMD), and 59th Motorized Rifle Brigade (possibly referring to the 59th Command Brigade [CMD]) are operating in the Novopavlivka direction.[65]



Russian forces recently advanced in the Kurakhove direction.

Assessed Russian advances: Geolocated footage published on May 17 shows elements of the Russian 36th Motorized Rifle Brigade (29th CAA, EMD) raising Russian flags in Bahatyr (west of Kurakhove), indicating that Russian forces recently seized the settlement.[66] Additional geolocated footage published on May 17 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced south of Odradne (southwest of Kurakhove).[67]

Unconfirmed claims: Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced east and west of Odradne.[68]

Russian forces conducted offensive operations west of Kurakhove near Andriivka, Kostyantynopil, Oleksiivka, and Bahatyr on May 16 and 17.[69] Russian milbloggers claimed on May 17 that Ukrainian forces counterattacked near Bahatyr and Oleksiivka.[70]

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Velyka Novosilka direction on May 17 but did not make confirmed advances.

Unconfirmed claims: A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced towards Zelene Pole and Novopil (both southwest of Velyka Novosilka).[71]

Russian forces conducted offensive operations northwest of Velyka Novosilka near Shevchenko, Vesele, and Vilne Pole; west of Velyka Novosilka near Novosilka; and southwest of Velyka Novosilka near Zelene Pole and Rivnopil on May 16 and 17.[72]

Ukrainian Southern Defense Forces Spokesperson Colonel Vladyslav Voloshyn reported on May 17 that Russian forces attempted to attack with up to a battalion's worth of forces two weeks ago but suffered significant losses and have since focused on smaller-scale assaults.[73] Voloshyn stated that Russian forces are conducting assaults mostly using buggies, all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), and motorcycles along the Zelene Pole-Novopil-Vilne Pole line.[74]

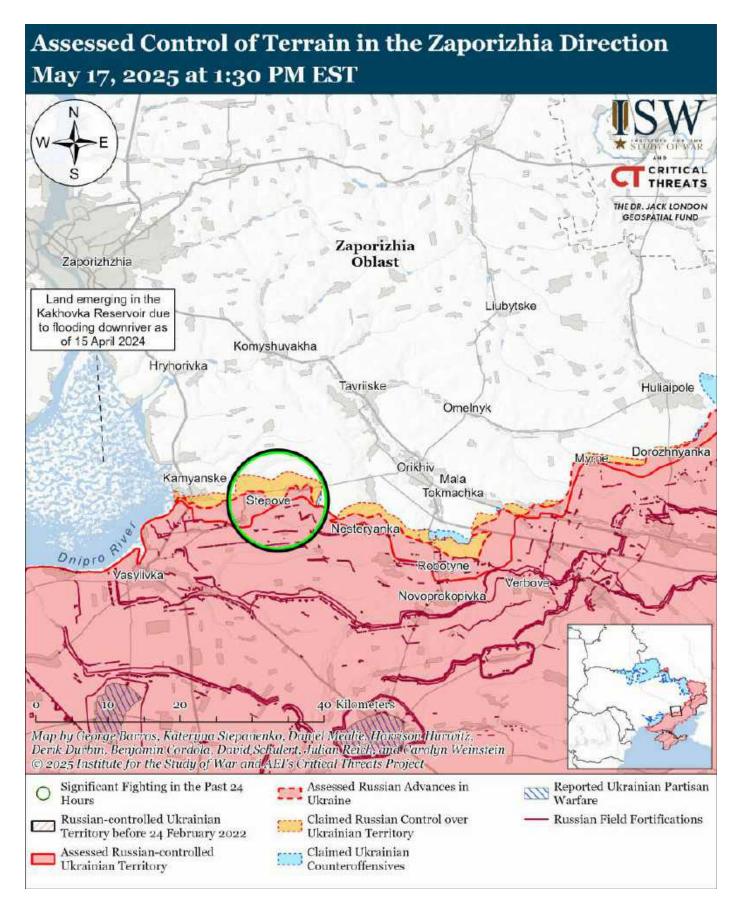
Order of Battle: Drone operators of the Russian 57th Separate Motorized Rifle Brigade and the "Altaya" battalion of the 60th Separate Motorized Rifle Brigade (both of the 5th CAA, EMD) are reportedly operating near Vilne Pole.[75]

<u>Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis</u> (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions, secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes, and advance within tube artillery range of Zaporizhzhia City)

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Zaporizhia direction on May 17 but did not make confirmed advances.

Unconfirmed claims: Russian milbloggers claimed on May 16 and 17 that Russian forces advanced into Mala Tokmachka (southeast of Orikhiv).[76]

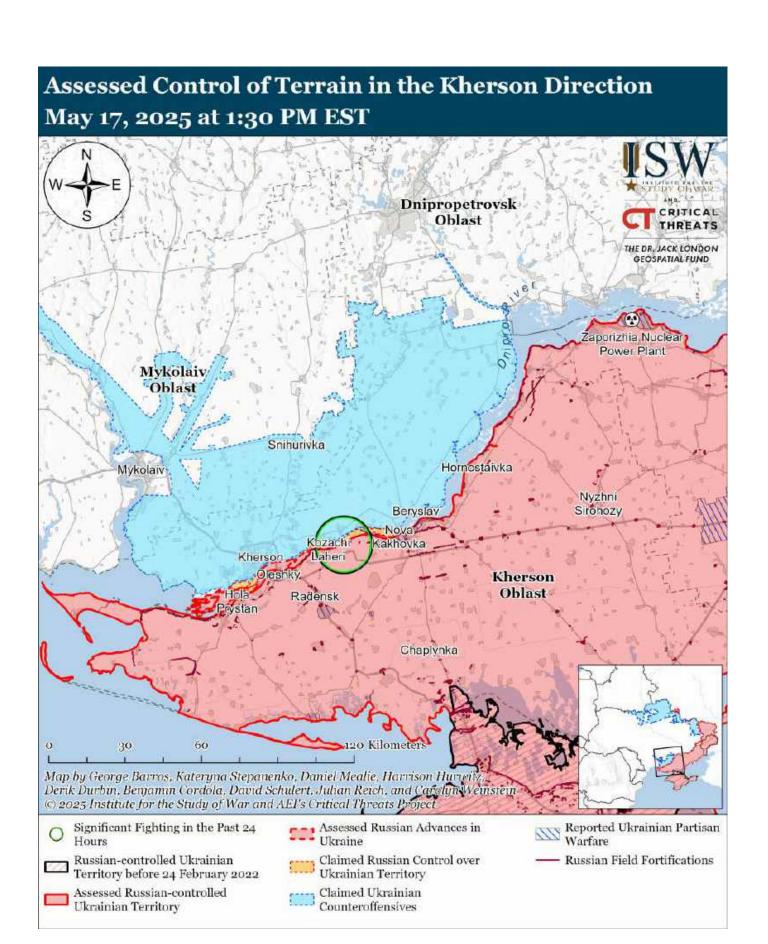
Russian forces attacked southwest of Orikhiv near Mali Shcherbaky, Shcherbaky, and Stepove on May 16 and 17.[77] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked in Mala Tokmachka.[78]



Shelling near the Russian-occupied Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP) is reportedly preventing Ukrainian specialists from repairing damages to the plant. International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Director Rafael Grossi stated that the ZNPP continues to rely on a single power line after military activity in the area disconnected the backup line over a week ago.[79] Grossi reported that Ukrainian grid operators cannot conduct repairs due to ongoing shelling near the plant. The IAEA team also reportedly found loose screws in emergency diesel generators, demonstrating that Russian forces are not properly maintaining the plant.

Russian forces conducted limited offensive operations in the Kherson direction on May 17.[80]

Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian 205th Motorized Rifle Brigade (49th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Southern Military District [SMD]) are reportedly operating in the Kherson direction.[81] Elements of the 61st Naval Infantry Brigade (Northern Fleet) are reportedly operating on islands in the Dnipro River Delta.[82]



<u>Russian Air, Missile, and Drone Campaign</u> (Russian Objective: Target Ukrainian military and civilian infrastructure in the rear and on the frontline)

Russian forces conducted a series of drone strikes against Ukraine overnight on May 16 and 17. The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Russian forces launched 62 Shahed and decoy drones from the directions of Kursk and Oryol cities; Shatalovo, Smolensk Oblast; and occupied Hvardiiske, Crimea.[83] The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Ukrainian forces downed 36 Shahed drones over northern, eastern, southern, western, and central Ukraine and that six drones were "lost in location." Ukrainian official sources reported that Russian drones struck Sumy, Odesa, Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk, and Donetsk oblasts.[84]

<u>Significant activity in Belarus</u> (Russian efforts to increase its military presence in Belarus and further integrate Belarus into Russian-favorable frameworks)

Belarusian authorities are reportedly prepared to participate in peace negotiations between Ukraine and Russia.[85] Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko's Spokesperson Natalya Eismont stated on May 17 that Belarus has never sought and is not seeking to mediate peace negotiations, but that Belarus is ready to organize the peace process if all sides agree. Belarus would not be an impartial mediator, as Belarus and Russia ratified the Russian-Belarusian Union State treaty on security guarantees in March 2025 and Russian launched its full-scale invasion in February 2022 from Belarusian territory.[86]

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



- [1] https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2025-05-16/europe-waits-to-find-out-where-trump-swerves-to-next-on-russia
- [2] https://t.me/MID_Russia/59358; https://t.me/MID_Russia/41959
- [3] https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-april-23-2025
- [4] https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-march-28-2025; https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-april-1-2025; https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-march-18-2025; https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-may-16-2025;

- [5] https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-march-28-2025; https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-april-1-2025; https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-march-18-2025; https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-may-16-2025; https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-june-7-2024; http://kremlin.dot.ru/events/president/news/74234
- [6] https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-june-7-2024; http://kremlin.dot.ru/events/president/news/74234
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- [8] https://verstka dot media/chem-zakonchilis-pryamye-peregovory-rossii-i-ukrainy-v-stambule; https://t.me/svobodnieslova/6847
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