

**Christina Harward, Angelica Evans, Nicole Wolkov, Grace Mappes,
Kateryna Stepanenko, Karolina Hird, and George Barros with Nate Trotter**

January 28, 2025, 6:15 pm ET

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

Click [here](#) to see ISW's interactive map of Ukraine's offensive in Kursk Oblast.

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 11:45am ET on January 28. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the January 29 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

The first official Russian delegation arrived in Syria since the fall of the Assad regime on January 28 to discuss Russia's continued use of its military bases in Syria.[1] The Russian delegation includes Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov and Presidential Special Representative to Syria Alexander Lavrentyev. *Reuters* reported that two Syrian sources stated that the delegation will meet with the new Syrian government sometime this week.[2] Bogdanov told Russian state media outlet *RT* that the visit aims to strengthen Russian-Syrian historical relations based on common interests.[3] *Bloomberg* reported that a Russian source familiar with the matter stated that Russia is struggling to retain access to the Hmeimim Air Base and Port of Tartus because negotiations with the new Syrian government are "stuck." [4] Russian milbloggers responded to the Russian delegation's arrival, claiming that Syria is "far from" Russia's first or even second priority and cautioning against believing Russian or Syrian officials' "standard phrases" about cooperation.[5] A Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed that there is no hope that Russian-Syrian relations can return to their previous strength and that Hayat Tahrir al Sham (HTS) holds the upper hand in negotiations and can extract greater concessions from Russia.[6]

The Russian military continues to evacuate military assets from the Port of Tartus amid the ongoing Russian-Syrian negotiations. Commercially available satellite imagery collected by Planet Labs PBC from January 18 and 27 shows that the Russian military loaded equipment onto the Russian *Sparta* and *Sparta II* cargo ships at Tartus and that the *Sparta II* ship left the port while the *Sparta* remained.[7] OSINT analyst MT Anderson posted satellite imagery from January 23 showing

the *Vyazma* Kaliningradneft-class oiler alongside the port and possibly suggesting that the Russian military was loading vehicles onto the *Sparta*.^[8] *Bloomberg* reported on January 28 that a Russian source stated that two Russian transport ships — likely the *Sparta* and *Sparta II* — had been waiting for weeks off Tartus before Syrian authorities allowed them to dock.^[9]

The Russian military likely formed a separate unmanned systems regiment at the military district level in order to augment Russia's unmanned systems capabilities. The creation of this regiment supports the Russian Ministry of Defense's (MoD) recent coordinated effort to establish the Unmanned Systems Forces within the Russian military and centralize control over informal drone detachments.^[10] Ukrainian volunteer drone initiative Victory Drones initially amplified in April 2024 preliminary information that the Russian military command was finalizing the establishment of the 7th Separate Unmanned Systems Reconnaissance Strike Regiment as part of the Central Military District (CMD).^[11] Victory Drones noted that the regiment had 1,342 servicemembers and that the regiment was staffed at 94 percent as of April 2024. Victory Drones noted that the regiment trained at the base of the Russian 473rd District Training Center (CMD) and consists of command elements, an unmanned systems strike battalion, three unmanned systems reconnaissance and strike battalions, and logistics support units such as signal, medical, and repair elements. Victory Drones reported that the Russian military command planned to form 102 subordinate component units within the 7th Separate Unmanned Systems Reconnaissance Strike Regiment, of which 41 are strike units and 61 are reconnaissance units. Several Russian volunteer groups began crowdfunding for the 7th Separate Unmanned Systems Reconnaissance Strike Regiment starting in July 2024 and implied that the regiment was operating in occupied Zaporizhia Oblast.^[12]

Russian milbloggers observed throughout Fall 2024 that the Russian MoD began reorganizing informal drone detachments and other specialists, such as signalmen, medics, and engineers, into "joint technical battalions."^[13] The Russian MoD also announced that it formed an unspecified number of unmanned systems detachments by October 2024 via the "Rubikon" Center for Prospective Unmanned Technologies and announced the formation of five additional unmanned systems.^[14] Russian Defense Minister Andrei Belousov subsequently announced that the Russian MoD would complete the formation of the Unmanned Systems Forces within the Russian military in the third quarter of 2025.^[15] Defense Analyst Konrad Muzyka assessed that the recent organizational changes within the Russian military and the formation of drone units suggest that similar regiments may emerge in other Russian military districts in the future.^[16] Russian forces will likely gain augmented drone support capabilities should the Russian MoD successfully form these new unmanned systems regiments and centralize its procurement efforts under the Unmanned Systems Forces, although the success of this effort will depend on the Russian military's commitment to executing the necessary reforms and the availability of resources.^[17]

A senior NATO official acknowledged that Russia is escalating a sabotage and destabilization campaign against European NATO member states to deter further military assistance to Ukraine. NATO Deputy Assistant Secretary General James Appathurai stated at the European Parliament on January 28 that NATO states have faced acts of sabotage in recent years, including train derailments, arson, attacks against politicians' property, and assassination plots against defense industry figures, including a Kremlin plot to assassinate Rheinmetall Head Armin Papperger.^[18] Appathurai emphasized that the Kremlin aims to "create disquiet to undermine support

for Ukraine" and called for NATO states to more assertively deter Russian sabotage acts.[19] The Kremlin has consistently attempted to use information operations to deter Western states from providing additional military assistance to Ukraine.[20] The Kremlin's sabotage and destabilization campaign directly targeting NATO states supports ISW's assessment that Russian President Vladimir Putin sees Russia as waging a hybrid war directly against NATO.[21]

Key Takeaways:

- **The first official Russian delegation arrived in Syria since the fall of the Assad regime on January 28 to discuss Russia's continued use of its military bases in Syria.**
- **The Russian military continues to evacuate military assets from the Port of Tartus amid the ongoing Russian-Syrian negotiations.**
- **The Russian military likely formed a separate unmanned systems regiment at the military district level in order to augment Russia's unmanned systems capabilities. The creation of this regiment supports the Russian Ministry of Defense's (MoD) recent coordinated effort to establish the Unmanned Systems Forces within the Russian military and centralize control over informal drone detachments.**
- **A senior NATO official acknowledged that Russia is escalating a sabotage and destabilization campaign against European NATO member states in Europe to deter further military assistance to Ukraine.**
- **Ukrainian forces recently advanced in Toretsk and near Pokrovsk, and Russian forces recently advanced near Toretsk, Pokrovsk, Kurakhove, Velyka Novosilka, and in western Zaporizhia Oblast.**
- **The Russian government continues to use its "Time of Heroes" program to appoint veterans of the war in Ukraine to federal government positions as part of wider Kremlin efforts to militarize Russian society.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Russo-Ukrainian War

January 28, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



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.

- Ukrainian Operations in the Russian Federation
- 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
- Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis
- Russian Air, Missile, and Drone Campaign
- Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts
- Russian Technological Adaptations
- Activities in Russian-occupied areas
- Significant Activity in Belarus

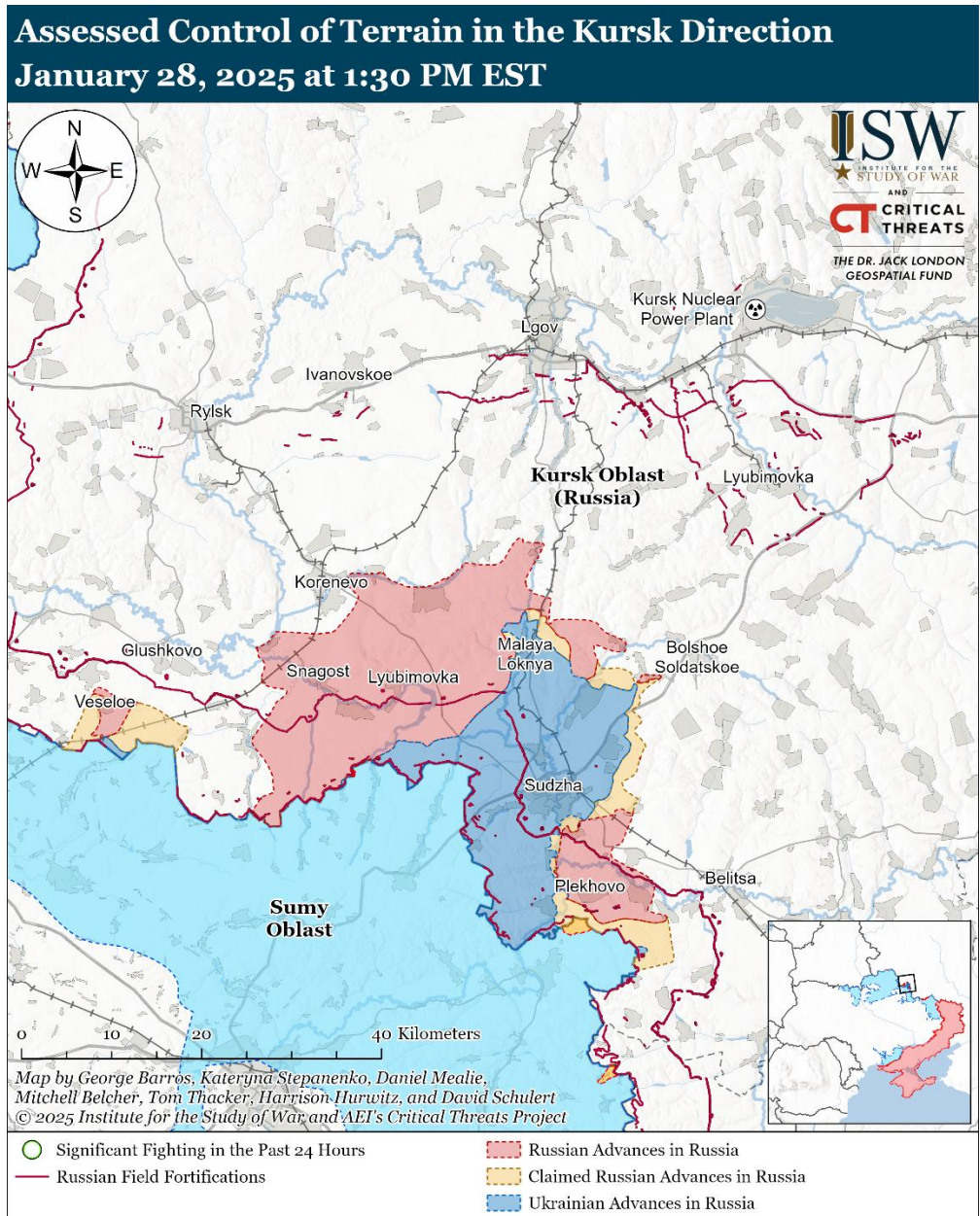
Ukrainian Operations in the Russian Federation

Russian forces continued offensive operations within the Ukrainian salient in Kursk Oblast on January 28 but did not make any confirmed advances. A Ukrainian brigade operating in Kursk Oblast posted footage on January 28 showing Ukrainian drones repelling a reinforced platoon-sized Russian mechanized assault in an unspecified area of Kursk Oblast.[22] The Russian MoD claimed that elements of the Russian 83rd Airborne (VDV) Brigade advanced along the Snagost River and participated in the seizure of Nikolayevo-Darino (west of Sudzha).[23] Russian milbloggers also claimed that Russian forces advanced north of Guyevo (south of Sudzha) and near Sverdlikovo (west of Sudzha).[24] ISW has not observed confirmation of these claims, however. Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces attacked northwest of Sudzha near Viktorovka, Nikolskyi, Novaya Sorochina, and Staraya Sorochina, and south of Sudzha near Kurilovka.[25] Russian sources claimed that Russian forces recently repelled a Ukrainian infantry attack near Nikolskyi.[26] Elements of the Russian 34th Motorized Rifle Brigade (49th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Southern Military District [SMD]) are reportedly operating near Pogrebki (northwest of Sudzha), and elements of the 5th Anti-Aircraft Missile Regiment (98th VDV Division), 106th VDV Division, and 56th VDV Regiment (7th VDV Division) reportedly continue to operate in Kursk Oblast.[27]

Russian security forces told Kremlin newswire *TASS* on January 28 that Russian forces destroyed a Ukrainian sabotage and reconnaissance group operating near Bilopillya, Sumy Oblast across the international border from Tetkino, Kursk Oblast.[28] ISW has not observed independent confirmation of this claim.

The North Korean force grouping in Kursk Oblast reportedly continues to suffer significant manpower losses and may be temporarily withdrawing from combat operations due to these losses. Ukrainian Center for Countering Disinformation Head Lieutenant Andriy Kovalenko stated on January 28 that North Korean forces have not learned to counter Ukrainian drone and artillery strikes and have suffered significant losses as a result.[29] Kovalenko stated that Russian commanders and North Korean officers are working to remedy these "mistakes." A Ukrainian special operations commander told *Sky News* on

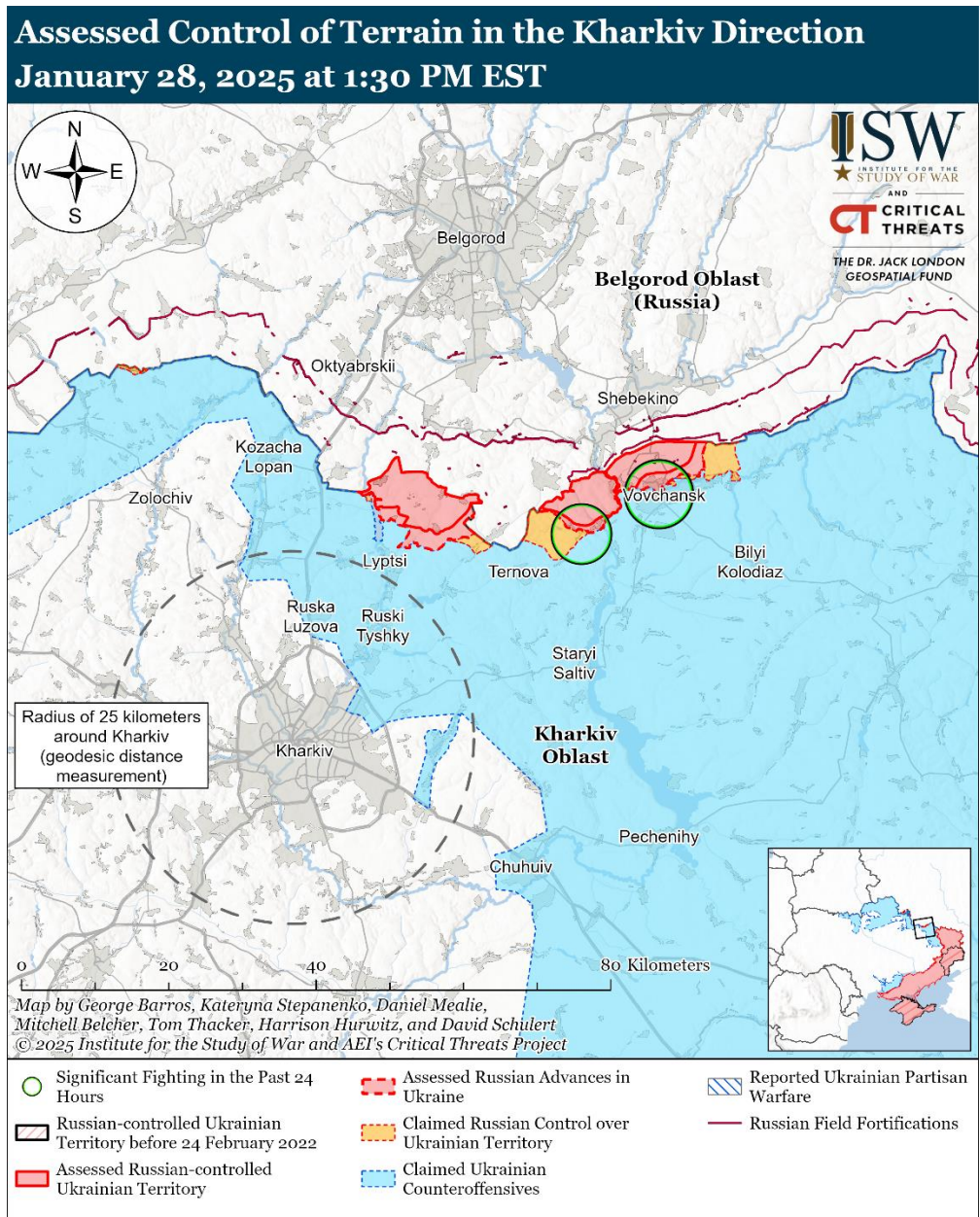
January 27 that North Korean troops appear to have temporarily withdrawn from the frontline in Kursk Oblast after suffering significant losses and may be tending to wounded servicemembers or waiting for additional reinforcements.[30] The Ukrainian commander suggested that North Korean troops will return to combat soon, however. Other Ukrainian servicemembers told *Sky News* that North Korean forces appeared unaware of the threat of drone and artillery strikes when they first arrived in Kursk Oblast and often operated in easily identifiable groups of 20 to 60 personnel.[31] The Ukrainian servicemembers reiterated that North Korean and Russian forces have poor communication due to the language barrier and that North Korean forces have higher quality small arms and uniforms than Russian forces but often lack access to armored vehicles and must attack and transport supplies on foot.



Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Kharkiv Oblast (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 ground attacks northeast of Kharkiv City near Vovchansk and Starytsya on January 27 and 28 but did not advance.[32] The commander of a Ukrainian brigade operating in the Vovchansk direction stated on January 27 that Russian forces assault the Vovchansk Aggregate Plant daily in groups of three to 10 personnel, including with male and female convict recruits.[33]



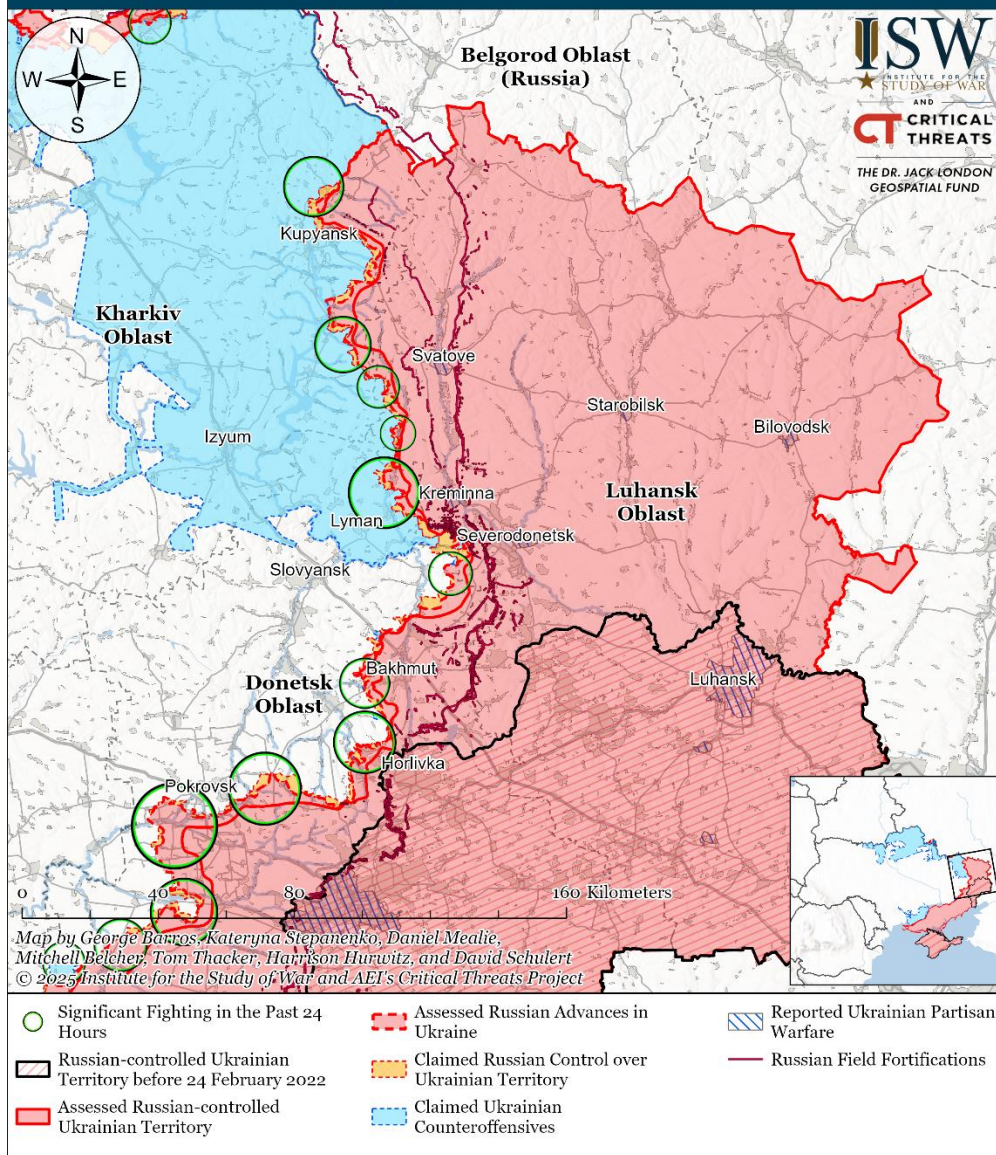
Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Luhansk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and northern Donetsk Oblast)

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Kupyansk direction on January 28 but did not make any confirmed advances. The Russian MoD claimed on January 28 that elements of the Russian 25th Motorized Rifle Brigade (6th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Leningrad Military District [LMD]) seized Dvorichna (northeast of Kupyansk), but ISW has not observed confirmation of this claim.[34] Russian sources claimed that the alleged seizure of Dvorichna will allow Russian forces to advance toward Kutkivka and Zapadne (west and southwest of Dvorichna, respectively) and attempt to either envelop Kupyansk from the west or advance northwest toward Velykyi Burluk to support Russian offensive operations near Vovchansk (northeast of Kharkiv City).[35] Ukrainian Kharkiv Oblast Head Oleh Synhubov stated on January 28 that Russian forces have not seized Dvorichna and that fighting continues in the settlement.[36] Russian forces continued attacking northeast of Kupyansk near Dvorichna; north of Kupyansk near Kutkivka and Kindrashivka; east of Kupyansk near Petropavlivka; southeast of Kupyansk near Pishchane; and south of Kupyansk near Hlushkivka on January 27 and 28.[37] The commander of a Ukrainian drone battalion operating in the Kupyansk direction stated on January 28 that Ukrainian forces have repelled four mechanized assaults of unspecified echelons since January 22.[38] The commander stated that Ukrainian forces destroyed over 15 Russian armored vehicles and tanks — roughly 80 percent of which Ukrainian forces destroyed with drones. Elements of the Russian 136th Reconnaissance Battalion (1st Guards Tank Army [GTA], Moscow Military District [MMD]) reportedly continue operating in the Kupyansk direction.[39] Elements of the Russian 16th Spetsnaz Brigade (Russian General Staff's Main Directorate [GRU]) are reportedly operating first-person view (FPV) drones with fiber-optic cables near Petropavlivka.[40]

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Borova direction on January 28 but did not advance. Russian milbloggers continued to claim that Russian forces seized Novoyehorivka (southeast of Borova) but have not seized Tverdokhlibove (immediately west of Novoyehorivka).[41] Russian forces continued attacking northeast of Borova near Lozova, Bohuslavka, Zelenyi Hai, and Nova Kruhlyakivka; east of Borova near Kopanky; and southeast of Borova near Novoyehorivka, Makiivka, and Hrekiivka on January 27 and 28.[42] The spokesperson of a Ukrainian brigade operating in Kharkiv Oblast stated on January 28 that Russian forces conduct assault in groups of up to six personnel daily near the Oskil River and Borova.[43] The spokesperson added that Russian forces occasionally conduct assaults on motorcycles but use tanks to fire from closed positions — likely in order to conserve armored vehicles. Elements of the Russian 27th Motorized Rifle Brigade (1st GTA) were reportedly recently operating near Lozova.[44]

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Lyman direction on January 28 but did not make any confirmed advances. Russian forces attacked northeast of Lyman near Terny, Kolodyazi, and Yampolivka and towards Zelene Dolyna; east of Lyman near Zarichne; and southeast of Lyman in the Serebryanske forest area on January 27 and 28.[45] Drone operators of the Chechen Akhmat Spetsnaz "Shram" Group are reportedly operating in the Lyman direction.[46]

Assessed Control of Terrain in Luhansk Oblast January 28, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



Russian Subordinate Main Effort #3 – Donetsk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)

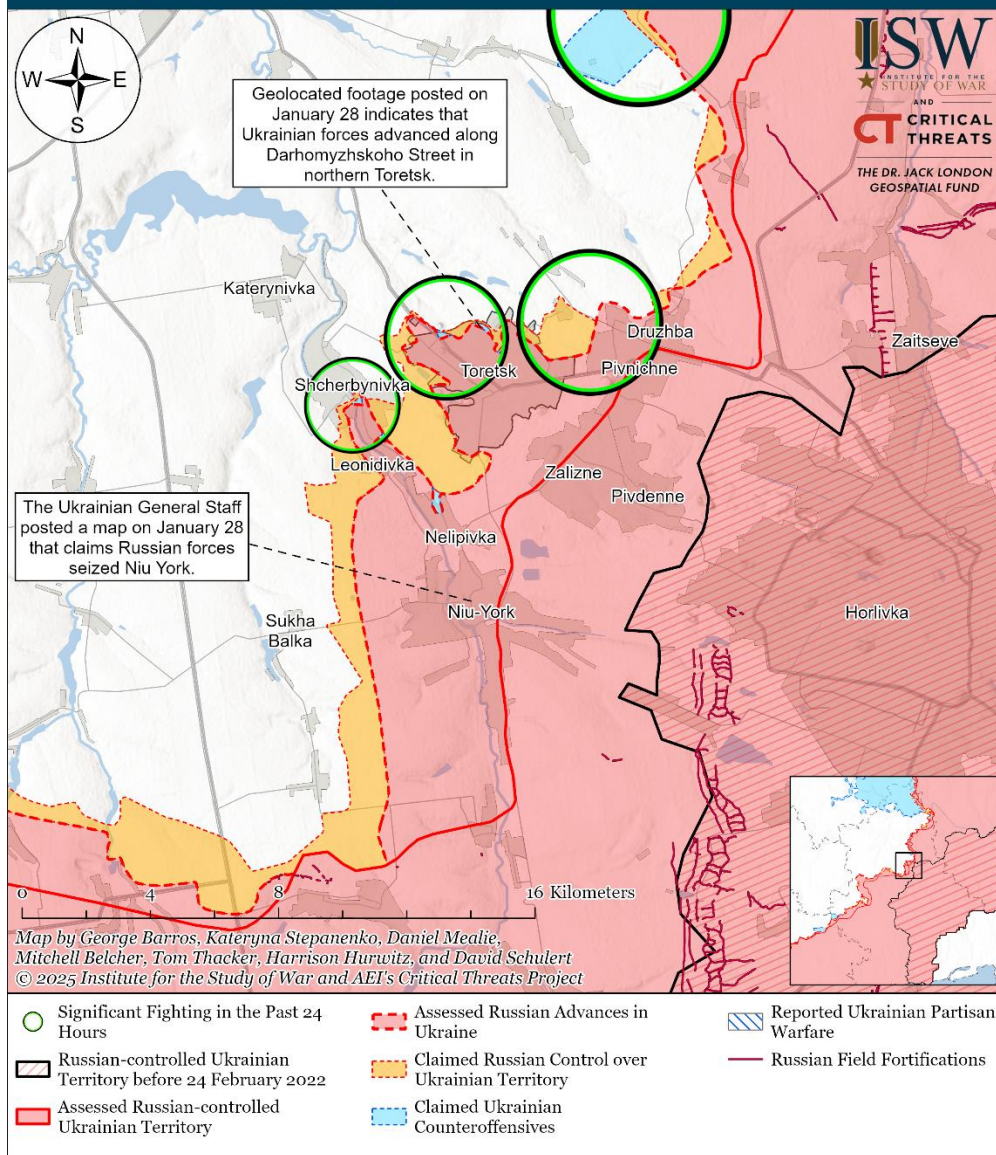
Russian forces continued ground attacks northeast of Siversk near Bilohorivka and east of Siversk near Verknokamyanske and Novoselivka on January 27 and 28 but did not make any confirmed advances.[47]

Russian forces continued offensive operations near and within Chasiv Yar on January 28 but did not make any confirmed advances. Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced in central Chasiv Yar and west of Kalynivka (north of Chasiv Yar), but ISW has not observed confirmation of these claims.[48] Ukraine's Khortytsia Group of Forces reported that Russian forces recently attacked with armored vehicle support near Bila Hora (south of Chasiv Yar) and that Ukrainian drones destroyed and

damaged Russian two tanks and three armored vehicles during the attack.[49] Russian forces continued assaults near Chasiv Yar itself and south of Chasiv Yar near Stupochky, Predtechyne, and Bila Hora on January 27 and 28.[50] Elements of the Russian 98th Airborne (VDV) Division, including its 331st VDV Regiment and 215th Reconnaissance Battalion; 38th Separate Engineer-Sapper Battalion (possibly a resurrected Soviet unit); and 200th Motorized Rifle Brigade (14th Army Corps [AC], Leningrad Military District [LMD]) are reportedly operating near and within Chasiv Yar.[51]

Ukrainian forces recently advanced in northern Toretsk amid continued Russian offensive operations in the Toretsk direction on January 28. Geolocated footage published on January 28 indicates that Ukrainian forces recently advanced along Darhomyzhskoho Street in northern Toretsk.[52] The Ukrainian General Staff published a map on January 28 indicating that Russian forces seized Niu York (south of Toretsk) and Yuriivka (west of Niu York), but it is unclear when Russian forces made these gains.[53] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced in western Toretsk and west of Toretsk and that intense fighting continues along the outskirts of Toretsk.[54] ISW has not observed confirmation of these claims of Russian advances, however. Ukraine's Khortytsia Group of Forces reported that Ukrainian forces recently destroyed a column of five Russian vehicles attempting to disembark infantry near frontline Ukrainian positions in the direction of Shcherbynivka (west of Toretsk).[55] Russian forces continued assaults in Toretsk itself; north of Toretsk near Krymske, Dachne, and Dyliivka; and west of Toretsk near Shcherbynivka on January 27 and 28.[56]

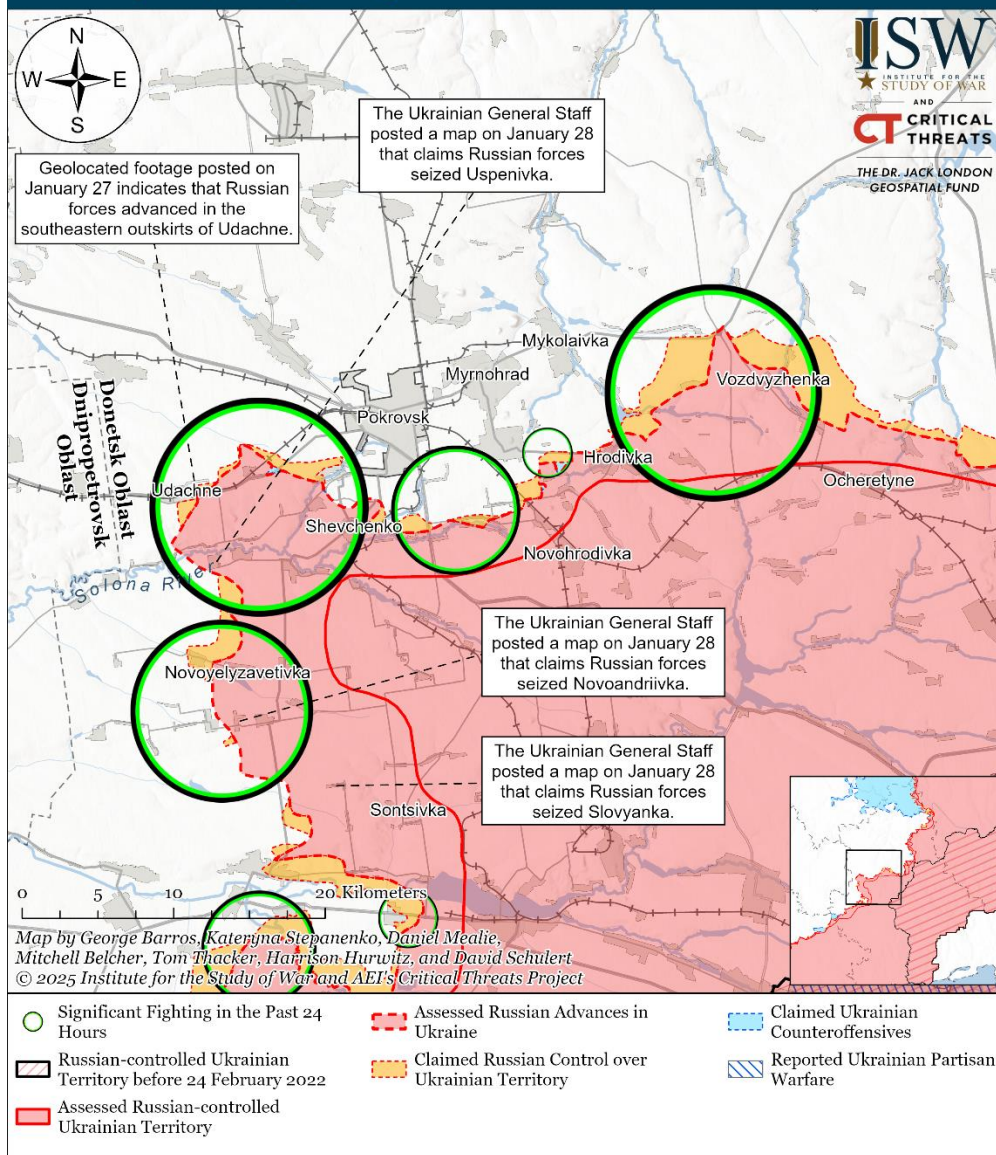
Assessed Control of Terrain in the Toretsk Direction January 28, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



Ukrainian and Russian forces recently advanced in the Pokrovsk direction amid continued Russian offensive operations in the area on January 28. Geolocated footage published on January 27 and 28 indicates that Ukrainian forces recently advanced in southeastern Kotlyne (west of Pokrovsk) and south of Zvirove (southwest of Pokrovsk).[57] Additional geolocated footage published on January 27 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced along the Donetsk Railway on the southeastern outskirts of Udachne (west of Kotlyne).[58] The Ukrainian General Staff published a map on January 28 indicating that Russian forces have seized Uspenivka and Novoandriivka (both southwest of Pokrovsk), but it is unclear when Russian forces made these gains.[59] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced to Chunyshyne (south of Pokrovsk), south of Udachne, towards Kotlyarivka, north and south of Nadiivka, and in Novooleksandrivka (all southwest of Pokrovsk).[60] ISW has not observed confirmation of these claims, however. Russian forces conducted offensive

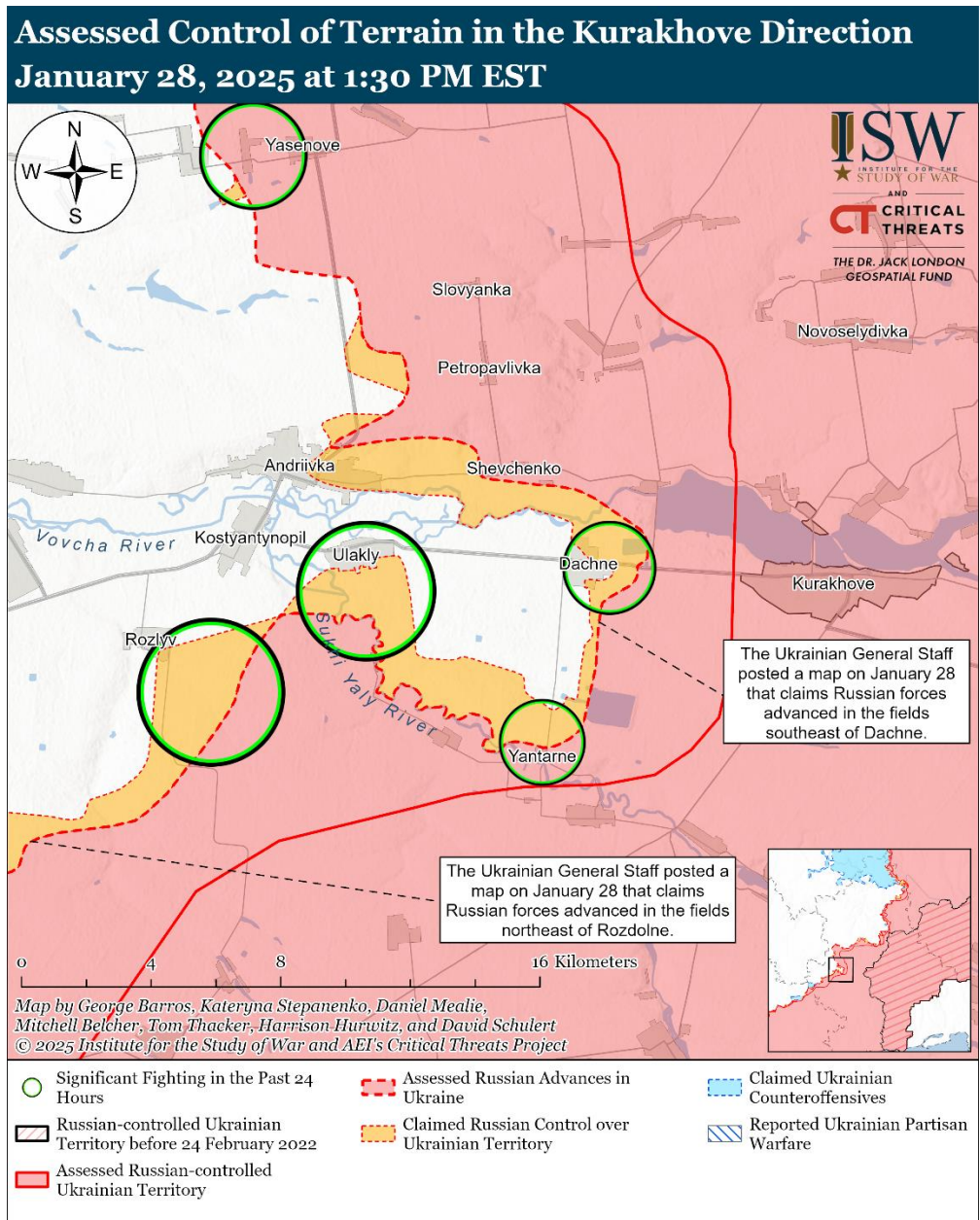
operations near Pokrovsk itself; east of Pokrovsk near Vodyane Druhe, Myrolyubivka, Yelyzavetivka, Promin, Vozdvyzhenka, Zelene Pole, and Baranivka; southeast of Pokrovsk near Sukhyi Yar and Lysivka; south of Pokrovsk near Zelene and Shevchenko; west of Pokrovsk near Udachne and towards Serhiivka; and southwest of Pokrovsk near Nadiivka, Uspenivka, Novovasylivka, Novooleksandrivka, Kotlyarivka, and Novoandriivka and towards Preobrazhenka and Bohdanivka on January 27 and 28.[61] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces are attacking Sribne from three directions, possibly as part of efforts to envelop the settlement along a wide front and push Ukrainian forces from positions along the Vovcha River that runs south of Sribne and west of Kurakhove.[62] A Russian source claimed that Ukrainian forces unsuccessfully counterattacked in Udachne and near Kotylne and that Russian forces are struggling to gain a foothold in Udachne due to the large-scale destruction in the settlement.[63] The commander of a Ukrainian drone platoon operating in the Pokrovsk direction stated that Russian forces are constantly attacking under the cover of fog in small infantry groups and that Russian forces have a large number of infantry reserves.[64] The commander stated that Russian forces sometimes launch as many as 30 first-person view (FPV) drones against a single Ukrainian position and that Russian forces often develop countermeasures against Ukrainian technology within two to three weeks of the Ukrainian technology appearing on the battlefield. A Ukrainian military intelligence officer told the *Economist* in an article published on January 27 that Russian forces are probing Ukrainian positions for weak points near Pokrovsk and then massing forces wherever they achieve tactical successes.[65] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian drone usage is complicating Russian advances near Uspenivka and Novooleksandrivka.[66] Elements of the Russian 74th Motorized Rifle Brigade (41st Combined Arms Army [CAA], Central Military District [CMD]) are reportedly operating near Zvirove.[67]

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Pokrovsk Direction January 28, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



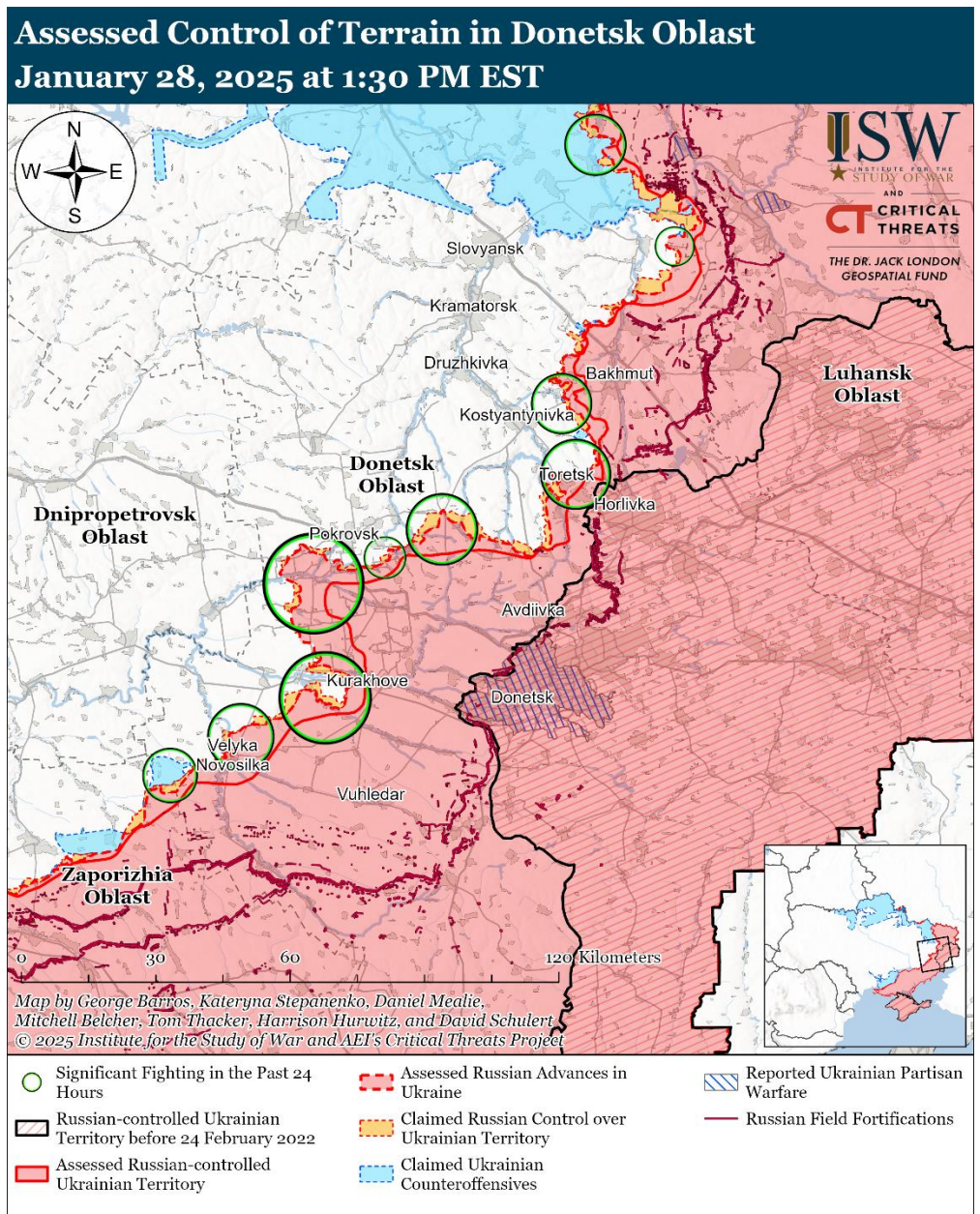
Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Kurakhove direction on January 28. The Ukrainian General Staff published a map on January 28 indicating that Russian forces seized Slovyanka (northwest of Kurakhove) and advanced in the fields west of the Slovyanka and south of Dachne (west of Kurakhove), although it is unclear when Russian forces made these gains.[68] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced in central Andriivka (northwest of Kurakhove), but ISW has not observed confirmation of this claim.[69] The spokesperson of a Ukrainian brigade operating in the Kurakhove direction stated that Russian forces are continuing to attack in small teams of one to three personnel and are using vehicles to disembark infantry near Ukrainian positions but not to conduct motorized assaults.[70] The spokesperson suggested that Russian forces are trying to use their manpower advantage to exhaust Ukrainian forces in the area. Russian milbloggers claimed that elements of the Russian 114th Motorized Rifle Brigade (51st CAA) are expanding their salient northeast

of Andriivka and that Russian forces are trying to seize positions along the T-0515 Andriivka-Pokrovsk highway near Slovyanka (northeast of Andriivka).[71] Russian forces continued assaults northwest of Kurakhove near Andriivka and Shevchenko; west of Kurakhove near Dachne, Ulakly, Kostyantynopil, Rozlyv, and towards Oleksiivka and Bahatyry; and southwest of Kurakhove near Yantarne and Zelenivka on January 27 and 28.[72]



Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Velyka Novosilka direction on January 28 and recently advanced. The Ukrainian General Staff published a map on January 28 indicating that Russian forces advanced northeast of Rozdolne (northeast of Velyka Novosilka), although it is unclear when Russian forces made these gains.[73] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces are still clearing Ukrainian forces from Velyka Novosilka and are regrouping near the settlement.[74] Russian forces continued assaults near Velyka Novosilka itself, northeast of Velyka Novosilka near Rozdolne, and west

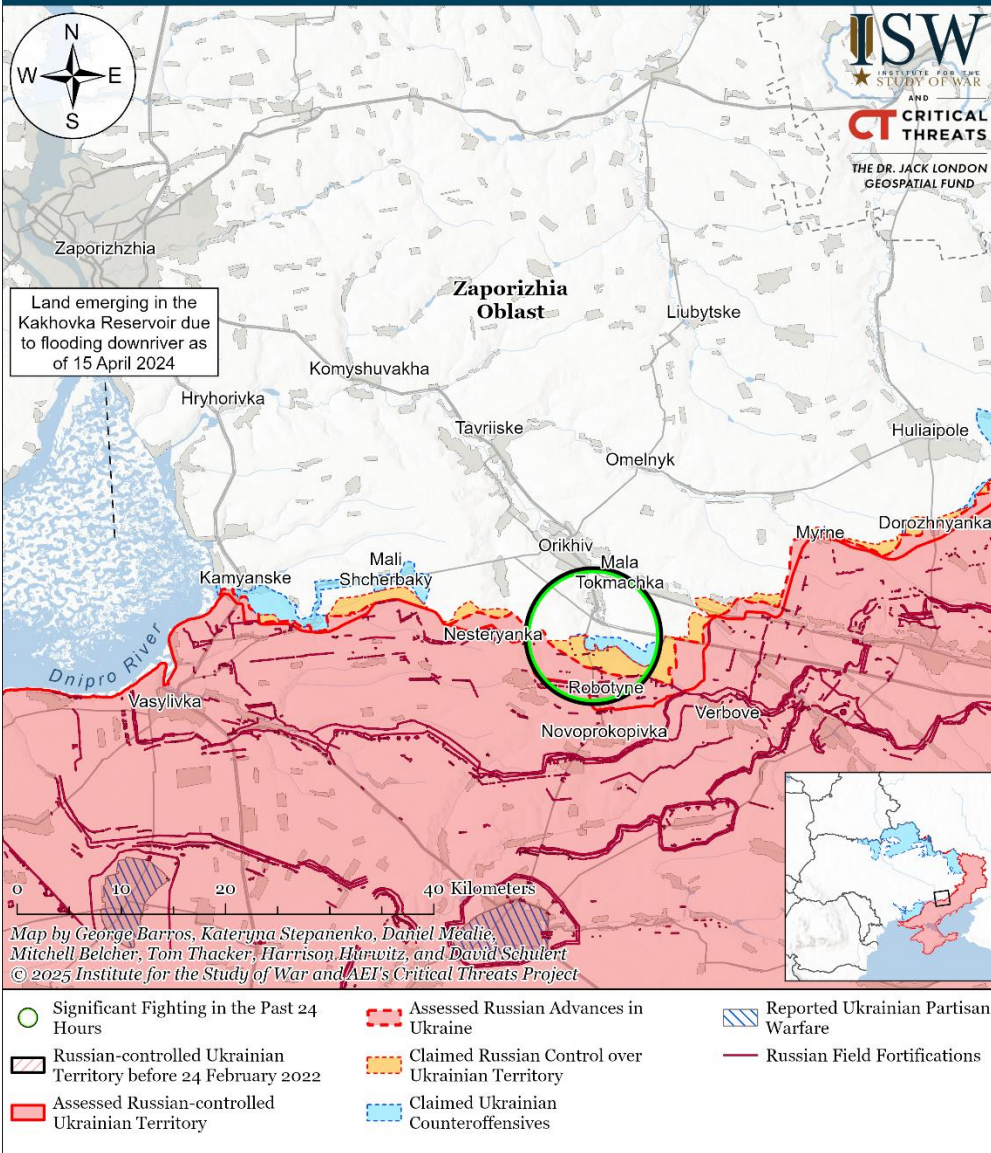
of Velyka Novosilka near Novosilka on January 27 and 28.[75] Drone operators of the Russian 57th Motorized Rifle Brigade (5th CAA, Eastern Military District [EMD]) are reportedly operating near Velyka Novosilka.[76]



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

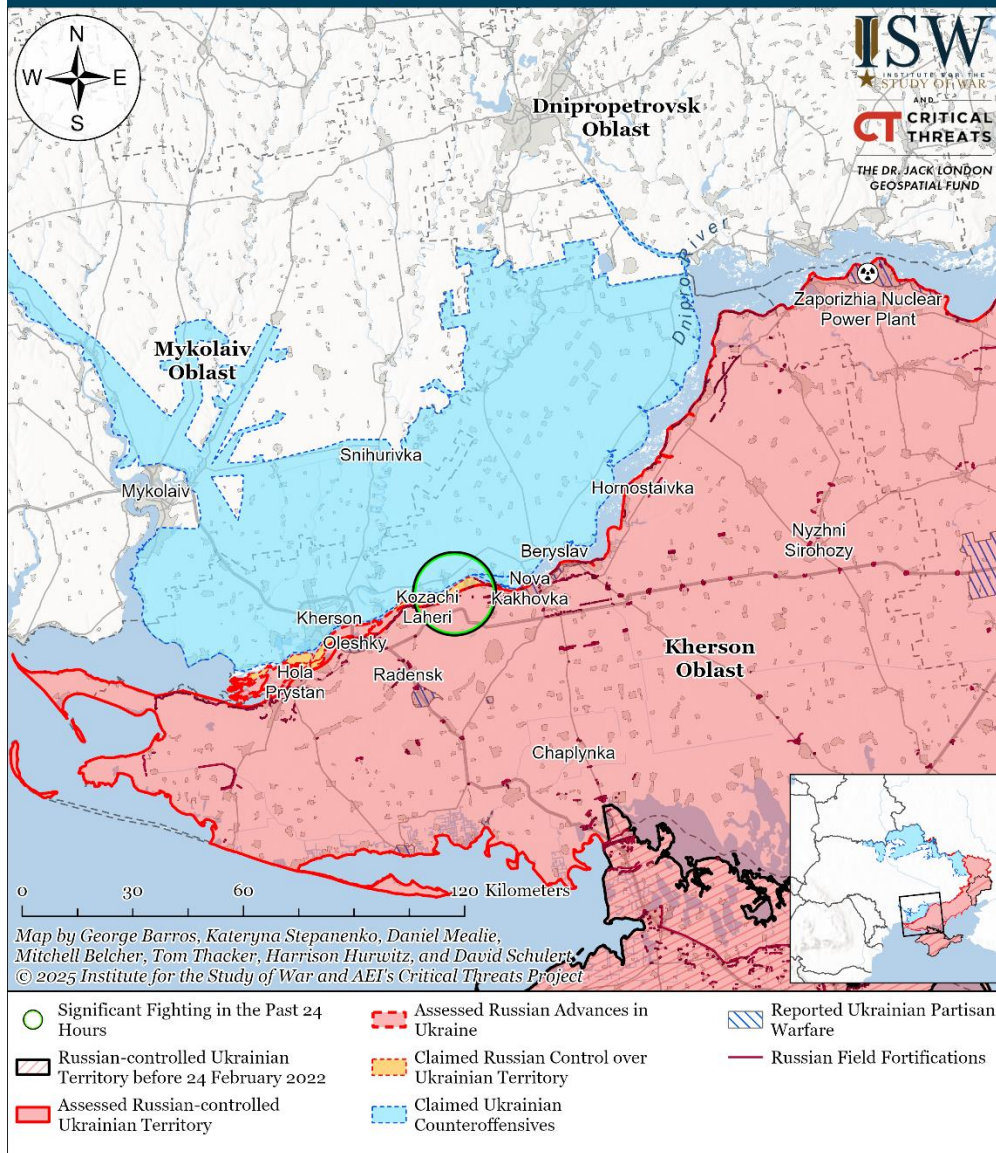
Russian forces conducted limited ground attacks in the Zaporizhia direction near Novodanylivka (north of Robotyne) on January 27 and 28.[77] The Ukrainian General Staff published a map on January 28 indicating that Russian forces seized Stepove (northwest of Robotyne) and advanced northeast of Kopani (west of Robotyne) and south of Maly Shcherbakyy (northwest of Robotyne).[78] It is unclear when Russian forces made these advances, however.

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Zaporizhia Direction January 28, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



Russian forces continued attacking in the Dniro direction on January 27 and 28 but did not advance.[79]

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Kherson Direction January 28, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



Russian Air, Missile, and Drone Campaign (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 on the night of January 27 to 28. The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Russian forces launched 100 Shahed and decoy drones from Oryol, Bryansk, and Kursk oblasts; Millerovo, Rostov Oblast; Primorsko-Akhtarsk, Krasnodar Krai; and occupied Cape Chauda, Crimea.[80] The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Ukrainian forces downed 65 drones over Kyiv, Kharkiv, Poltava, Sumy, Chernihiv, Cherkasy, Kirovohrad, Zhytomyr, Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhia, Mykolaiv, Odesa, and Kherson oblasts; that 28 decoy drones were “lost,” likely due to Ukrainian electronic warfare (EW) interference; that two drones flew toward Russian and Belarusian airspace; and that one drone remained in the air as of 0930 local time. Ukrainian officials reported that Russian strikes damaged civilian infrastructure in Sumy, Poltava, Cherkasy, Chernihiv,

Kharkiv, Kyiv, and Odesa oblasts.[81] Ukrainian sources reported that Russian strikes damaged a critical infrastructure facility in Umanskyi Raion, Cherkasy Oblast, and caused temporary power outages in 72 settlements in the raion.[82] Odesa Oblast Head Oleh Kiper reported that Russian missile and drone strikes on the morning of January 28 damaged civilian infrastructure in Odesa Oblast.[83]

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

The Russian government continues to use its "Time of Heroes" program to appoint veterans of the war in Ukraine to federal government positions as part of wider Kremlin efforts to militarize Russian society. The "Time of Heroes" program reported on January 28 that Russian authorities appointed Alexander Tikhonov, a participant of the program and veteran of the war, to be Presidential Deputy Plenipotentiary Representative in the Volga Federal District.[84]

Russian authorities continue to offer financial incentives to increase recruitment in occupied Crimea – a violation of the Geneva Convention.[85] Crimea occupation head Sergey Aksyonov announced on January 28 that Russian authorities will pay those who sign Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) contracts in 2025 in occupied Crimea a one-time payment of 500,000 rubles (about \$5,100).[86] Article 51 of the Geneva Convention explicitly prevents an occupying power from compelling the population it occupies to serve in the occupying power's military, including via "pressure or propaganda which aims at securing voluntary recruitment." [87]

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

Russian Presidential Aide and former Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev stated on January 28 that an unspecified Russian Navy center will work to create new types of naval drones, including those that use artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning.[88]

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)

ISW is not publishing coverage of activities in Russian-occupied areas today.

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

Belarusian authorities continue efforts to integrate the Russian and Belarusian political systems. Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko approved on January 28 draft amendments to the 1998 Belarusian-Russian Treaty on Equal Rights of Citizens that would possibly allow Russian and Belarusian citizens who are permanent residents of the other state to vote or run in local elections in their resident state.[89]

Note: ISW does not receive any classified material from any source, uses only publicly available information, and draws extensively on Russian, Ukrainian, and Western reporting and social media as well as commercially available satellite imagery and other

geospatial data as the basis for these reports. References to all sources used are provided in the endnotes of each update.

POWERED BY:



BABEL STREET

[1] <https://tass dot ru/politika/22991933>

[2] <https://www.reuters.com/world/russian-government-delegation-arrives-syria-talks-tass-reports-2025-01-28/>

[3] <https://russian dot rt.com/world/news/1427055-rossiya-delegaciya-vizit-damask>

[4] <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2025-01-28/russia-s-hopes-to-keep-syria-bases-fade-with-talks-stalled>

[5] <https://t.me/matemoney2stwola/766> ; <https://t.me/rybar/67544>; <https://t.me/rybar/67546>

[6] <https://t.me/rybar/67546>

[7] <https://t.me/radiosvoboda/75705>

[8] https://x.com/MT_Anderson/status/1884257764782043400

[9] <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2025-01-28/russia-s-hopes-to-keep-syria-bases-fade-with-talks-stalled>

[10] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-efforts-centralize-drone-units-may-degrade-russian-drone-operations>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-december-21-2024>

[11] <https://t.me/VictoryDrones2023/9047>;
https://x.com/konrad_skorupa/status/1884192481480438062

[12] https://vk dot com/wall-224276476_103; https://vk dot com/wall-218933559_684;
https://t.me/katya_valya_dnr/5901; https://t.me/katya_valya_dnr/5947;
https://t.me/katya_valya_dnr/5837

[13] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-efforts-centralize-drone-units-may-degrade-russian-drone-operations>

[14] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-efforts-centralize-drone-units-may-degrade-russian-drone-operations>

[15] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgroundunder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-december-16-2024>

[16] https://x.com/konrad_muzyka/status/1884196006092497326

[17] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-efforts-centralize-drone-units-may-degrade-russian-drone-operations>

[18] <https://www.politico.eu/article/nato-official-confirms-russian-plot-kill-european-weapons-chief-armin-papperger/>; <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/threat-plot-murder-rheinmetall-ceo-was-part-sabotage-campaign-nato-says-2025-01-28/>;
<https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/en/webstreaming/20250128-0900-COMMITTEE-SEDE>

[19] <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/threat-plot-murder-rheinmetall-ceo-was-part-sabotage-campaign-nato-says-2025-01-28/>

[20] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-january-24-2025>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-april-18-2024>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-november-19-2024>;
<https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-september-12-2024>; <https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/if-west-cuts-aid-ukraine-russia-will-win-if-west-leans-ukraine-can-win>;
<https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/america%E2%80%99s-stark-choice-ukraine-and-cost-letting-russia-win>

[21] <https://www.understandingwar.org/report/russian-hybrid-warfare>;
<https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/denying-russia%E2%80%99s-only-strategy-success>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/america%E2%80%99s-stark-choice-ukraine-and-cost-letting-russia-win>

[22] <https://t.me/brygada47/1197>

[23] https://t.me/mod_russia/48303

[24] <https://t.me/motopatriot78/31646> ; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/23067> ;
https://t.me/dva_majors/63289

[25] https://t.me/dva_majors/63289 ; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/23033> ;
https://t.me/rusich_army/20423

[26] https://t.me/tass_agency/297967

[27] <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/85215> (Pogrebki) ; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/23029> ;
https://t.me/boris_rozhin/152735 ; <https://t.me/milinfo/140734>

[28] https://t.me/tass_agency/297952

[29] <https://t.me/akovalenko1989/8700>

[30] <https://news.sky.com/story/north-koreans-blow-themselves-up-with-grenades-rather-than-risk-capture-say-ukraine-soldiers-13297508>

[31] <https://news.sky.com/story/north-koreans-blow-themselves-up-with-grenades-rather-than-risk-capture-say-ukraine-soldiers-13297508>

- [32] <https://t.me/GeneralStaffZSU/20350> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2ERQTVRmhVNmJ6pEHYCjLH3KQbaX6yAwaVve12veHKsVq43p7LZwekftNZvCz12kCl> ; https://t.me/Khortytsky_wind/4587
- [33] <https://armyinform.com dot ua/2025/01/27/z-narkobarones-u-shturmovyhky-zasudzhenyh-zhinok-rosiyany-vidpravlyayut-atakuvaty-na-vovchanskomu-napryamku/>
- [34] https://t.me/mod_russia/48317 ; https://t.me/mod_russia/48320
- [35] <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/85234> ; <https://t.me/sashakots/51561> ;
https://t.me/tass_agency/297989
- [36] <https://suspilne dot media/kharkiv/935131-ci-okupovana-dvoricna-na-harkivsini-komentar-kerivnika-ova-sinegubov/>
- [37] <https://t.me/GeneralStaffZSU/20350> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2ERQTVRmhVNmJ6pEHYCjLH3KQbaX6yAwaVve12veHKsVq43p7LZwekftNZvCz12kCl> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2nwFBm6XxaVo9wj9FAp4Jc98o6VEXCTwuLiBz2eeyQBJmoSE2Drr7rQNCDH27mygl> ; https://t.me/Khortytsky_wind/4587
- [38] <https://armyinform.com dot ua/2025/01/28/zachystyt-vse-v-radiusi-10-kilometriv-dronari-rozpovily-pro-te-shho-nezabarom-zminyt-liniyu-bojovogo-zitknennya/>
- [39] https://t.me/boris_rozhin/152741
- [40] https://t.me/voin_dv/13069 ; https://t.me/Secrets_of_Vinakos/5203
- [41] <https://t.me/rybar/67534> ; <https://t.me/rybar/67538> ; <https://t.me/motopatriot78/31632> ;
<https://t.me/motopatriot78/31649>
- [42] <https://t.me/GeneralStaffZSU/20350> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2ERQTVRmhVNmJ6pEHYCjLH3KQbaX6yAwaVve12veHKsVq43p7LZwekftNZvCz12kCl> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2nwFBm6XxaVo9wj9FAp4Jc98o6VEXCTwuLiBz2eeyQBJmoSE2Drr7rQNCDH27mygl> ; https://t.me/Khortytsky_wind/4587 ;
https://t.me/tass_agency/297940
- [43] <https://armyinform.com dot ua/2025/01/28/na-shturm-zalitayut-na-nozi-na-kupyanskomu-napryamku-u-rosiyan-rezhym-zhorstkoyi-ekonomiyi/>
- [44] <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/85233>
- [45] <https://t.me/GeneralStaffZSU/20350> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2ERQTVRmhVNmJ6pEHYCjLH3KQbaX6yAwaVve12veHKsVq43p7LZwekftNZvCz12kCl> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2nwFBm6XxaVo9wj9FAp4Jc98o6VEXCTwuLiBz2eeyQBJmoSE2Drr7rQNCDH27mygl> ; https://t.me/Khortytsky_wind/4587
- [46] https://t.me/RKadyrov_95/5450

[47] <https://t.me/GeneralStaffZSU/20350> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2ERQTVRmhVNmJ6pEHYCjLH3KQbaX6yAwaVve12veHKsVq43p7LZwekftNZvCz12kCl> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2nwFBm6XxaVo9wj9FAp4Jc98o6VEXCTwuLiBz2eeyQBJmoSE2Drr7rQNCDH27mygl> ; https://t.me/Khortytsky_wind/4587

[48] <https://t.me/wargonzo/24480> ; https://t.me/boris_rozhin/152753

[49] https://t.me/Khortytsky_wind/4587

[50] <https://t.me/GeneralStaffZSU/20350> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2ERQTVRmhVNmJ6pEHYCjLH3KQbaX6yAwaVve12veHKsVq43p7LZwekftNZvCz12kCl> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2nwFBm6XxaVo9wj9FAp4Jc98o6VEXCTwuLiBz2eeyQBJmoSE2Drr7rQNCDH27mygl>

[51] https://t.me/tass_agency/297949 ; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/23029> ;
<https://t.me/motopatriot78/31637>

[52] <https://x.com/AudaxonX/status/1883972416239771945>; https://t.me/liut_npu/645;
<https://x.com/AudaxonX/status/1884162587455283556>;
<https://x.com/TuiteroMartin/status/1884156988273156408>; https://t.me/WarArchive_ua/25127
; https://t.me/Khyzhak_brigade/452

[53] <https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=965438999102512&set=pcb.965439622435783>

[54] https://t.me/dva_majors/63289 ; <https://t.me/wargonzo/24480> ; https://t.me/z_arhiv/30750

[55] https://t.me/Khortytsky_wind/4587

[56] <https://t.me/GeneralStaffZSU/20350> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2ERQTVRmhVNmJ6pEHYCjLH3KQbaX6yAwaVve12veHKsVq43p7LZwekftNZvCz12kCl> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2nwFBm6XxaVo9wj9FAp4Jc98o6VEXCTwuLiBz2eeyQBJmoSE2Drr7rQNCDH27mygl>

[57] <https://x.com/MikiValbuena/status/1884185487138808034>;
<https://x.com/MikiValbuena/status/1884185528704352304>; <https://t.me/skalabatalion/513>;
https://t.me/WarArchive_ua/25101 ; <https://x.com/moklasen/status/1884283370609467620>;
https://t.me/urga_74/3334

[58] https://t.me/creamy_caprice/8236; <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1277747013459366>

[59] <https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=965438999102512&set=pcb.965439622435783>

[60] <https://t.me/RVvoenkori/85218>; <https://t.me/voenkoriKotenok/61717>;
<https://t.me/voenkoriKotenok/61728>; <https://t.me/voenkoriKotenok/61734>;
<https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/23046>; <https://t.me/voenkoriKotenok/61737>;
https://t.me/boris_rozhin/152753

[61] <https://t.me/GeneralStaffZSU/20350> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2ERQTVRmhVNmJ6pEHYCjLH3KQbaX6yAwaVve12veHKsVq43p7LZwekftNZvCz12kCl> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2nwFBm6XxaVo9wjm9FAp4Jc98o6VEXCTwuLiBz2eeyQBJmoSE2Drr7rQNCDH27mygl> ; <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/85218> ;
<https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/61717>; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/61728>;
<https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/61735>; https://t.me/Khortytsky_wind/4587;
<https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/23046>; <https://t.me/DnevnikDesantnika/23046>;
<https://t.me/yurasumy/20800>; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/61737>

[62] <https://t.me/yurasumy/20800>; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/61728>

[63] <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/61718>; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/61737>

[64] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j5TqaWCCdUg>; <https://armyinform.com.ua/2025/01/28/zlyva-z-kamikadze-na-pokrovskomu-napryamku-po-odnij-ukrayinskij-pozycziyi-mozhe-prylitaty-do-30-fpv-droniv/>

[65] <https://www.economist.com/europe/2025/01/27/amid-talk-of-a-ceasefire-ukraines-front-line-is-crumbling>

[66] <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/85218>

[67] <https://x.com/moklasen/status/1884283370609467620>; https://t.me/urga_74/3334

[68] <https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=965438999102512&set=pcb.965439622435783>

[69] <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/61724>; https://t.me/z_arhiv/30756

[70] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o4XONrDJWsc>; <https://armyinform.com.ua/2025/01/28/realno-ye-vidchuttya-shho-cze-ne-lyudy-a-resurs-rosijska-pihota-uspishno-vyvchyla-taktyku-konveyernogo-vmyrannya/>

[71] https://t.me/dva_majors/63289 ; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/61713> ;
<https://t.me/RVvoenkor/85231> ; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/61718> ;
<https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/61724> ; https://t.me/z_arhiv/30756 ;
<https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/61728> ; <https://t.me/yurasumy/20799> ; <https://t.me/sashakots/51565>

[72] <https://t.me/GeneralStaffZSU/20350> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2ERQTVRmhVNmJ6pEHYCjLH3KQbaX6yAwaVve12veHKsVq43p7LZwekftNZvCz12kCl> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2nwFBm6XxaVo9wjm9FAp4Jc98o6VEXCTwuLiBz2eeyQBJmoSE2Drr7rQNCDH27mygl> ; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/61718> ;
<https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/61724> ; <https://t.me/wargonzo/24480>

[73] <https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=965438999102512&set=pcb.965439622435783>

[74] <https://t.me/yurasumy/20799> ; <https://t.me/wargonzo/24480>

[75] <https://t.me/GeneralStaffZSU/20350> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2ERQTVRmhVNmJ6pEHYCjLH3KQbaX6yAwaVve12veHKsVq43p7LZwekftNZvCz12kCl> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2nwFBm6XxaVo9wj9FAp4Jc98o6VEXCTwuLiBz2eeyQBJmoSE2Drr7rQNCDH27mygl>

[76] <https://t.me/RVvoenkor/85230>

[77]
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2ERQTVRmhVNmJ6pEHYCjLH3KQbaX6yAwaVve12veHKsVq43p7LZwekftNZvCz12kCl> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2nwFBm6XxaVo9wj9FAp4Jc98o6VEXCTwuLiBz2eeyQBJmoSE2Drr7rQNCDH27mygl>

[78] <https://www.facebook.com/photo?fbid=965438999102512&set=pcb.965439622435783>

[79]
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2ERQTVRmhVNmJ6pEHYCjLH3KQbaX6yAwaVve12veHKsVq43p7LZwekftNZvCz12kCl> ;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbido2nwFBm6XxaVo9wj9FAp4Jc98o6VEXCTwuLiBz2eeyQBJmoSE2Drr7rQNCDH27mygl>

[80] <https://t.me/kpszsu/27674>

[81] <https://t.me/chernigivskaODA/17971>; <https://armyinform.com> dot
[ua/2025/01/28/bezpilotnyky-rosiyan-atakuvaly-chernigiv-poshkodzheno-budynky/](https://armyinform.com.ua/2025/01/28/bezpilotnyky-rosiyan-atakuvaly-chernigiv-poshkodzheno-budynky/);
<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1Ej1X6bxLd/>; <https://armyinform.com.ua/2025/01/28/seriya-nichnyh-udariv-bezpilotnykamy-po-harkivshhyni-v-ova-rozpovily-pro-naslidky/> ; <https://t.me/synegubov/12827>; <https://suspilne dot media/kharkiv/934919-u-roganskij-gromadi-vnaslidok-padinna-sahedu-postrazdali-dvoe-ludej/>; <https://suspilne dot media/kharkiv/934911-u-harkovi-pisla-vlucanna-saheda-vogon-ohopiv-dvopoverhovij-korpus-miscevogo-pidpriemstva-poskodzeno-gazogin/>; https://t.me/ihor_terekhov/2087;
https://t.me/ihor_terekhov/2088 ;
https://www.facebook.com/MNS.GOV.UA/posts/pfbido2GH5xwFwUs7nBYmfmfz4g58NDxQBGxyECQi3gnLfqLd3BdVA8DDi7779fGGj5qr49l?locale=ru_RU; <https://t.me/kyivoda/24798>;
<https://armyinform.com.ua/2025/01/28/naslidky-nichnoyi-ataky-rf-na-kyivshhynu-poshkodzhenyj-muzej-retro-avtomobiliv/> ; https://t.me/Mykola_Kalashnyk/4390;
<https://t.me/odeskaODA/7902>; <https://armyinform.com.ua/2025/01/28/raketno-dronova-ataka-na-odeshhynu-ye-poraneni-ta-znachni-poshkodzhennya/>; <https://suspilne dot media/odesa/934941-unaslidok-ataki-rf-na-odesu-travmuvalis-tri-ludini/>;
<https://www.facebook.com/OperationalCommandSouth/posts/pfbidoa9i6Yy9JYGPsuXiFgtHw9jb9fQoCkw6btX32QjLDw5kawzfCpFk92me1GaoMBWHpl>; <https://t.me/truonline/4167>

[82] <https://suspilne dot media/cherkasy/934845-na-cerkasini-e-poskodzenna-obekta-kriticnoi-infrastrukturi-vnaslidok-dronovoi-ataki-28-sicna/>; <https://suspilne dot media/cherkasy/935159-naslidki-dronovoi-ataki-po-cerkasini-umansina-bez-vodi-tepla-ta-elektroenergii/>;
<https://t.me/Ukrenergo/3653>;

<https://www.facebook.com/IhorTaburets/posts/pfbid02M3VmNyXxjCYTYga3ck9zVRARBBf8nRNG3nmQ7QRKDsYcyTbhnhudPcRhy14dYcbkl;>

[83] <https://t.me/odeskaODA/7902>

[84] <https://t.me/vremyageroev2024/764>

[85] <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/gciv-1949/article-51>

[86] <https://t.me/Aksenov82/6639>

[87] <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/en/ihl-treaties/gciv-1949/article-51>

[88] <https://rg dot ru/2025/01/28/piraty-baltijskogo-moria.html>

[89] <https://president dot gov.by/ru/events/grazdanam-belarusi-planiruetsa-predostavit-pravogolosoivat-na-vyborah-v-rossii>