



Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment

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May 8, 2025, 10:45pm ET

Note: The data cut-off for this product was 12:50pm ET on May 8. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the May 9 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

[Note: The Ukrainian General Staff's 1600 May 8 SITREP appears to cover battlefield activity from 0000 to 1600 on May 8, and any reports of Russian ground activity in this SITREP are by default an accusation that Russian forces violated Russia's unilateral Victory Day ceasefire. The Ukrainian General Staff's 0800 May 8 SITREP appears to cover battlefield activity from 0800 on May 7 to 0800 on May 8. ISW is unable to assess whether Russian attacks reported in the 0800 SITREP occurred after the start of Russia's ceasefire at 0000 Moscow time on May 8. The Ukrainian General Staff's 2200 May 7 SITREP appears to cover battlefield activity from 0000 to 2200 on May 7 before Russia's implementation of its unilateral ceasefire on May 8.]

The Kremlin continues to seize on the Russian mythos of the Second World War ahead of Russia's May 9 Victory Day holiday to set informational conditions to justify a prolonged war in Ukraine and future aggression against NATO to Russian society. Russian Defense Minister Andrei Belousov published an article on May 8 in which he argued that Russia's war in Ukraine will go down in history as a feat of courage and significance equal to the victory of the Soviet military and people during the Second World War.[1] Belousov claimed that Russia's war in Ukraine is a continuation of the "glorious traditions" of Soviet bravery and heroism and of the Soviet people's enthusiasm for enlisting and otherwise supporting the war effort. Belousov claimed that Russia's victory in Ukraine is "inevitable." Belousov said that domestic unity is a necessity for Russia's victory in Ukraine just as the Soviet Union's "moral and spiritual unity" was a critical factor for its victory in the Second World War. Russian state media highlighted Belousov's statements comparing the Second World War to Russia's war in Ukraine in their coverage of his 10-page essay, indicating that the Kremlin is trying to message to the domestic audience that Russia will achieve its goals in its war in Ukraine as long as Russian society remains unified and supportive.[2] Kremlin officials have recently seized on the mythos of the Second World War to form the basis of a new pseudo-state ideology that will span across generations and that the Kremlin intends to use to justify potential future aggression against the West.[3]

Belousov reiterated the Kremlin's oft-repeated fallacious narrative that Russia had no choice but to launch its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 because the situation was "life or death." Belousov claimed that Ukraine is a conduit for the collective West's "crusade" against Russia, which Belousov claimed is a manifestation of "eternal Russophobia" and intended to eradicate Russian

statehood. Belousov quoted Russian President Vladimir Putin's speech from February 24, 2022, announcing the full-scale invasion.[4] Belousov amplified Putin's accusations that the United States and its Western allies had a policy of "containment" against Russia and created a situation in which Russia had to launch the full-scale invasion of Ukraine to defend Russia's interests.[5] The Kremlin is attempting to link Putin's anti-Western claims to the mythos of the Second World War in order to heighten the existential threat against Russia that the Kremlin claims Russia is currently facing. It is also reconstructing the Soviet-era narrative that the West is conspiring to destroy Russia (in place of the Soviet Union) and that the conflict will be unending.

Belousov explicitly identified large-scale Russian military reforms as preparations for a future conflict with NATO as Russian Security Council Chairperson Dmitry Medvedev threatened European countries that support Ukraine.[6] Belousov stated in his May 8 essay that Russia has reformed and augmented its military specifically in response to NATO expansion and military build-up (undertaken only well after the Russian 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine), including by reorganizing Russia's Western Military District (WMD) into the Moscow and Leningrad military districts (MMD and LMD); re-opening two former military academies and establishing a new third military academy; and fully forming, staffing, and equipping two combined arms armies, a river flotilla, a mixed aviation corps, and 50 other formations and units.[7] ISW has long assessed that Russian military restructuring efforts, including reforms of the LMD and MMD, are part of future preparations for war against NATO.[8]

Medvedev threatened that European countries must "remember" the "crushing defeat of Nazi Germany" when supporting Ukraine.[9] Medvedev notably made his threat on his English-language X account, indicating that Medvedev intended this threat for international audiences.[10] Other senior Russian officials have also intensified accusations against European states for supporting "Nazism" in recent days.[11] Medvedev's threat and Russian claims of European "Nazism" are part of the Kremlin's ongoing reflexive control campaign that aims to push European countries into refraining from providing further assistance to Ukraine.[12] Kremlin officials have also recently framed European efforts to shoulder more of their own defense requirements (in line with US President Donald Trump's efforts) as threatening to Russia, and the Kremlin's reflexive control campaign likely also aims to prevent European states from building up their defenses. Dutch Military Intelligence and Security Service Head Vice Admiral Peter Reesink warned in an interview with Politico published on May 8 that Russia's most threatening behavior is its military buildup and moving military assets towards Russia's borders with Finland and the Baltic states.[13] Reesink stated that Russia appears to be producing more artillery than the Russian military needs for its war in Ukraine when taking account of the assistance Russia is receiving from its allies. *Reuters* published an investigation on May 8 revealing that Russia has been constructing a significant new production line for explosives at the Biysk Oleum Plant in Siberia that is planned to produce 6,000 metric tons of explosives annually.[14] *Reuters* noted that this would be enough explosive to manufacture 1.28 million 152mm artillery rounds and that Russia produced nearly two million 122mm and 152mm artillery rounds in 2024, suggesting that this new production line could expand Russia's artillery shell production capacity by over 50 percent when completed.

Russia claimed to have implemented its unilateral Victory Day ceasefire on May 8 and accused Ukraine of ceasefire violations even though Ukraine did not officially and

publicly agree to Russia's ceasefire. Russia's unilateral Victory Day ceasefire and accusations of violations continue to demonstrate the necessity that any ceasefire or peace agreement be formally agreed to in advance by all parties and include robust monitoring mechanisms. Russian President Vladimir Putin announced on April 28 Russia's ceasefire starting at midnight on the night of May 7 to 8 and ending at midnight on the night of May 10 to 11 in honor of Victory Day on May 9.[15] Russia's Victory Day celebrates the Soviet Union's contributions to defeating Nazi Germany during the Second World War while minimizing the role of the United States. The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Russian forces completely ceased combat operations and remained at their current positions at midnight Moscow time on May 8 in accordance with Russian President Vladimir Putin's unilateral ceasefire.[16] The Russian MoD claimed that Ukrainian forces did not stop combat operations "despite the announcement of the ceasefire." Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andriy Sybiha stated on May 8 that Russian forces continued to attack across the entire frontline.[17] Ukrainian Center for Countering Disinformation Head Lieutenant Andriy Kovalenko stated that Russian forces shelled Sumy and Kharkiv oblasts after the start of the ceasefire.[18] Ukrainian outlet *Suspilne* reported that servicemembers from three Ukrainian units operating in the Pokrovsk direction and in southern Ukraine confirmed that they received instructions to open fire only in response to Russian combat operations.[19]

Ukrainian officials continue to highlight Ukraine's willingness to implement US President Donald Trump's desired 30-day ceasefire to precede peace talks. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky stated that he spoke with Trump on May 8 about the concrete steps needed to achieve peace.[20] Zelensky reiterated to Trump that Ukraine is ready for an immediate 30-day ceasefire and for talks "in any format." Zelensky reported that Trump supported a 30-day ceasefire. Ukrainian Presidential Administration Chief of Staff Andriy Yermak stated that Ukraine can only start peace negotiations after the implementation of an unconditional 30-day ceasefire and that the United States and Ukraine's European partners agree with this timeline.[21] Yermak noted that Russia and Ukraine can agree on a format for peace negotiations and appoint delegations after a longer-term ceasefire is in place.

The Kremlin is attempting to exploit its unilateral Victory Day ceasefire to blame Ukraine for the lack of progress toward a longer-term ceasefire and peace negotiations despite Russia's continued rejection of such a longer-term ceasefire. Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Spokesperson Maria Zakharova claimed on May 7 that Ukraine does not want to seriously discuss a long-term ceasefire.[22] Zakharova claimed that Russia's support for the previous US- and Ukrainian-proposed 30-day moratorium on strikes against energy infrastructure and Russia's unilateral Easter truce shows that Russia has never been against a ceasefire, even though the Kremlin has continued to protract and delay meaningful negotiations to establish a comprehensive ceasefire.[23] Zakharova accused Ukraine of repeatedly violating the strikes and Easter ceasefires and claimed that there could be progress toward a long-term ceasefire should Ukraine observe shorter-term ceasefires. Zakharova repeated recent Kremlin narratives that Ukraine cannot control its own military and Putin's rejection of previous US and Ukrainian 30-day ceasefire proposals on the grounds that there are "nuances" about enforcement mechanisms and weapons provisions to Ukraine that the parties would need to work out prior to implementation.[24] Russia previously accused Ukraine of violating the strikes and Easter ceasefires while rarely offering evidence supporting these accusations, and

Russian officials will likely do the same during the unilateral Victory Day ceasefire in order to distract from Russia's continued intransigence in negotiations about Ukraine.[25]

Russian President Vladimir Putin and People's Republic of China (PRC) President Xi Jinping conducted a series of bilateral engagements in Moscow on May 8, showcasing deeper Russian–Chinese cooperation and alignment.[26] These engagements mark the third official meeting in 2025 between Putin and Xi. Putin and Xi signed a package of bilateral intergovernmental and interdepartmental cooperation documents and issued a joint statement on May 8.[27] Xi travelled to Russia to attend Russia's Victory Day celebrations on May 9. Putin and Xi discussed the roles that China and the Soviet Union played in the Second World War, emphasized the importance of their countries' contributions to the defeat of fascism, highlighted significant Chinese and Soviet losses in the war, and claimed that China and the Soviet Union were the "main theaters" in the war.[28] Russian officials repeatedly use the mythos of the Soviet Union's sacrifice during the Second World War to persuade the Russian population that their increasing social and economic sacrifices for the Russian war effort in Ukraine can lead to victory.[29] Russian officials are likely overemphasizing World War II mythos to bolster support for Russia's war effort in Ukraine in part due to Russia's inability to showcase battlefield successes for Victory Day 2025.

The joint Russian–Chinese statement on May 8 referenced Putin's original aims in launching his full-scale invasion of Ukraine in an attempt to lend international support and legitimacy to Russia's goals and attempted justifications for the war. The Russian–Chinese joint statement asserted that Russia and the PRC are "convinced" that a long-term and sustainable settlement in the war in Ukraine requires the elimination of the "root causes" of the war.[30] The joint statement claimed that Russia and the PRC will work to counter attempts to "rehabilitate" Nazism and the rise of militarism that contribute to discrimination and intolerance. The joint statement noted that Russia "positively evaluates" the PRC's position on the war in Ukraine and that Russia welcomes the PRC's desire to play a role in the political and diplomatic efforts towards settling the war. The PRC and Brazil — two members of BRICS — have notably put forth peace proposals for the war in Ukraine that heavily favored Russia.[31] The Kremlin has repeatedly claimed that Russia must eliminate the "root causes" of its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, which Russian officials have defined as NATO's alleged violation of commitments not to expand into eastern Europe and along Russia's borders in the 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s, and the Ukrainian government's alleged discrimination against ethnic Russians and Russian language, media, and culture in Ukraine.[32] Putin named Ukraine's "demilitarization" and "denazification" as Russia's main goals when he launched his full-scale invasion in February 2022, and Russian officials have consistently used these terms to call for the removal of the current legitimate Ukrainian government, the installation of a pro-Russian proxy government in Kyiv, and the reduction of Ukraine's military such that Ukraine is unable to defend itself in the future.[33] Russia has attempted to exploit diplomatic meetings with PRC and Iranian officials in recent months to publicly reiterate these original war aims and posture Russia's allies as supportive in these efforts.[34] The PRC has previously publicly attributed talk of Russia's alleged need to eliminate the "root causes" of the war in Ukraine only to Kremlin officials — not PRC officials.[35] The May 8 joint Russian–Chinese statement declaring that "the parties" are "convinced" of the need to eliminate the "root causes" of the war is a notable inflection in PRC rhetoric.

The joint Russian–Chinese statement supported Putin's proposed Eurasian security architecture and Russia's ongoing efforts to create a Russia-dominated alternative, anti-Western bloc. Russia and the PRC reiterated their mutual interest in establishing a multipolar world order in which the UN plays a central role.[36] Xi further claimed that both Russia and the PRC bear a special responsibility as permanent members of the UNSC and great powers to oversee the creation of a new multipolar world.[37] The joint statement underscored both parties' commitment to the creation of a Eurasian security architecture - a reference to the architecture that Putin first proposed in June 2024 with Xi's support.[38] The joint statement highlighted the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and BRICS - organizations that Kremlin officials have previously labelled as the foundation of Putin's proposed Eurasian security architecture.[39] The joint statement paradoxically called for an end to confrontational bloc mentality and specifically cited NATO expansion as an example of such bloc mentality. The statement noted that Russia and the PRC find the construction of military blocs that are anti-Russian and anti-Chinese in nature unacceptable. The statement emphasized the need to eliminate the "root causes" of interstate conflicts before the creation of a Eurasian security architecture - the first time Russian officials have publicly linked their calls for the elimination of "root causes" with Putin's proposed Eurasian security architecture. ISW continues to assess that Russia has been building a web of overlapping coalitions and partnerships, including within the CSTO, CIS, ASEAN, BRICS, and SCO, to offset the limits of Russian state power and that Putin's Eurasian security architecture proposal is part of Russian efforts to create an alternative Russian-led bloc to further Putin's goals of destroying NATO and weakening the West and its allies.[40]

The United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine's (UN HRMMU) reported that Ukrainian civilian casualties have significantly increased between 2024 and 2025. The UN HRMMU reported that Ukrainian civilian casualties increased 23 percent between March 2025 and April 2025 and increased by 84 percent between April 2024 and April 2025.[41] The UN HRMMU reported that at least 209 civilians were killed and 1,146 civilians were injured in the war in April 2025. The UN HRMMU reported that 97 percent of these civilian casualties were in unoccupied Ukraine and that April 2025 had the highest number of civilian casualties since September 2024. The HRMMU reported that almost half of these casualties were due to missile and loitering munition strikes and noted several Russian drone and missile strikes in urban areas of Kryvyi Rih and Sumy, Dnipro, Zaporizhzhia, Kyiv, and Kharkiv cities in April 2025. The UN HRMMU reported that short-range drone strikes accounted for 23 percent of civilian casualties, most of which were in Kherson Oblast. The UN HRMMU noted that a drone strike against a civilian bus in Marhanets, Dnipropetrovsk Oblast (on the east [right] bank of the Dnipro River immediately across from the Russian-occupied Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant) significantly contributed to these casualties.

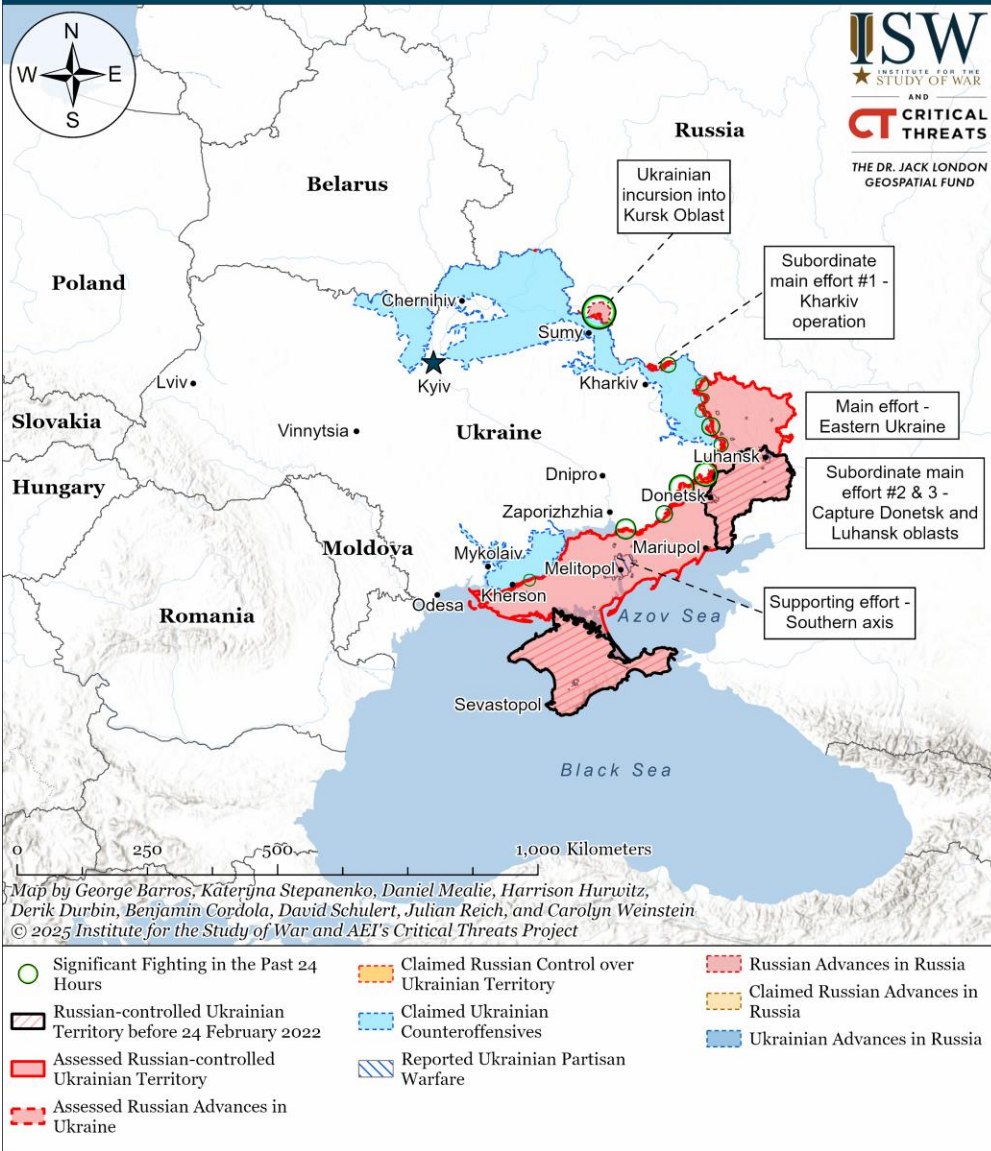
The Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada ratified the US–Ukrainian bilateral economic partnership agreement on May 8.[42] The United States and Ukraine signed the bilateral economic partnership agreement on April 30.[43]

Key Takeaways:

- **The Kremlin continues to seize on the Russian mythos of the Second World War ahead of Russia's May 9 Victory Day holiday to set informational conditions to justify a prolonged war in Ukraine and future aggression against NATO to Russian society.**
- **Belousov explicitly identified large-scale Russian military reforms as preparations for a future conflict with NATO as Russian Security Council Chairperson Dmitry Medvedev threatened European countries that support Ukraine.**
- **Russia claimed to have implemented its unilateral Victory Day ceasefire on May 8 and accused Ukraine of ceasefire violations even though Ukraine did not officially and publicly agree to Russia's ceasefire. Russia's unilateral Victory Day ceasefire and accusations of violations continue to demonstrate the necessity that any ceasefire or peace agreement be formally agreed to in advance by all parties and include robust monitoring mechanisms.**
- **Ukrainian officials continue to highlight Ukraine's willingness to implement US President Donald Trump's desired 30-day ceasefire to precede peace talks.**
- **The Kremlin is attempting to exploit its unilateral Victory Day ceasefire to blame Ukraine for the lack of progress toward a longer-term ceasefire and peace negotiations despite Russia's continued rejection of such a longer-term ceasefire.**
- **Russian President Vladimir Putin and People's Republic of China (PRC) President Xi Jinping conducted a series of bilateral engagements in Moscow on May 8, showcasing deeper Russian–Chinese cooperation and alignment.**
- **The joint Russian–Chinese statement on May 8 referenced Putin's original aims in launching his full-scale invasion of Ukraine in an attempt to lend international support and legitimacy to Russia's goals and attempted justifications for the war.**
- **The joint Russian–Chinese statement supported Putin's proposed Eurasian security architecture and Russia's ongoing efforts to create a Russia-dominated alternative, anti-Western bloc.**
- **The United Nations Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine's (UN HRMMU) reported that Ukrainian civilian casualties have significantly increased between 2024 and 2025.**
- **The Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada ratified the US-Ukrainian bilateral economic partnership agreement on May 8.**
- **Ukrainian forces recently advanced in Kursk Oblast and near Toretsk. Russian forces recently advanced in Kursk and Sumy oblasts and near Kupyansk, Borova, Toretsk, Kurakhove, and Velyka Novosilka.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Russo-Ukrainian War

May 8, 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.

- 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

See topline and axes text for reports of violations of Russia's unilateral Victory Day ceasefire.

Ukrainian Operations in the Russian Federation

Ukrainian and Russian forces recently advanced in Kursk Oblast before Russia's unilaterally imposed Victory Day ceasefire as Russian and Ukrainian sources accused each other of violating Russia's ceasefire on May 8

Assessed Ukrainian advances: Geolocated footage published on May 7 indicates that Ukrainian forces recently advanced along Chapayeva Street in southwestern Tetkino (southwest of Glushkovo) and southeast of the settlement.[44]

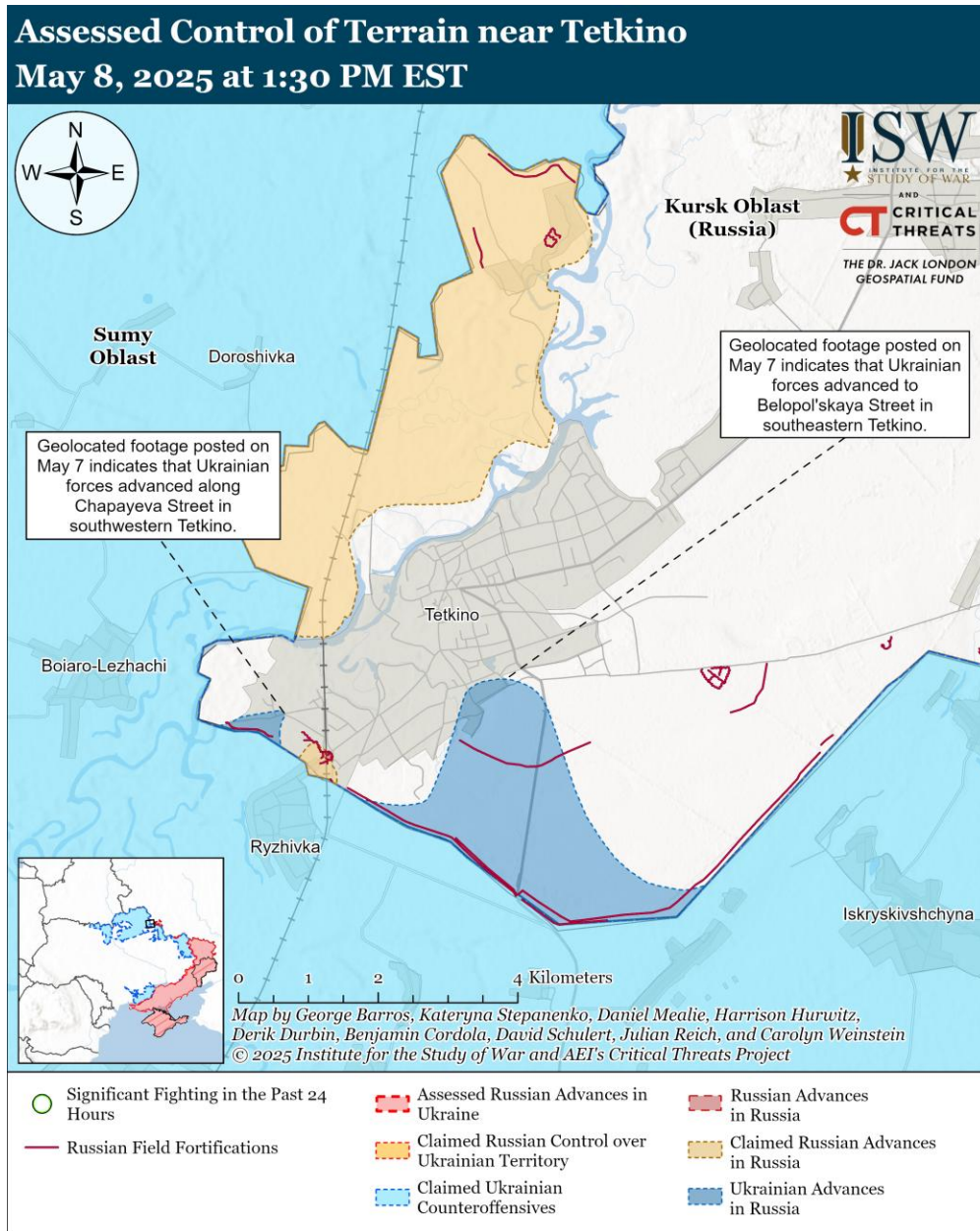
Assessed Russian advances: Geolocated footage published on May 7 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced up to the international border south of Oleshnya (southeast of Sudzha).[45]

The Ukrainian General Staff's May 7 2200 SITREP reported that Russian forces attacked in Kursk Oblast on May 7 before Russia implemented its unilateral Victory Day ceasefire at 0000 Moscow time on May 8.[46]

The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed that Ukrainian forces violated Russia's ceasefire by attacking across the international border in Kursk Oblast on May 8.[47] Russian milbloggers claimed on May 8 that Ukrainian forces attacked toward Tetkino and Novyi Put (east of Tetkino along the international border).[48]

A Russian milblogger claimed on May 7 that Ukrainian forces maintain limited positions in Kursk Oblast and that Ukrainian forces maintain their drone superiority over Russian forces in the area.[49] Ukraine's Unmanned Systems Forces reported on May 7 that Ukrainian forces struck a Russian "Zaslon" radar system in Kursk Oblast.[50]

Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian 217th Airborne (VDV) Regiment (98th VDV Division) are reportedly operating near Tetkino.[51]



A Russian milblogger accused Ukrainian forces of violating Russia's unilateral Victory Day ceasefire near Demidovka (northwest of Belgorod City) on May 8.[52]

Russian Supporting Effort — Northern Axis (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 recently advanced in northern Sumy Oblast before Russia's unilateral Victory Day ceasefire as Russian sources accused Ukrainian forces of violating Russia's ceasefire on May 8.

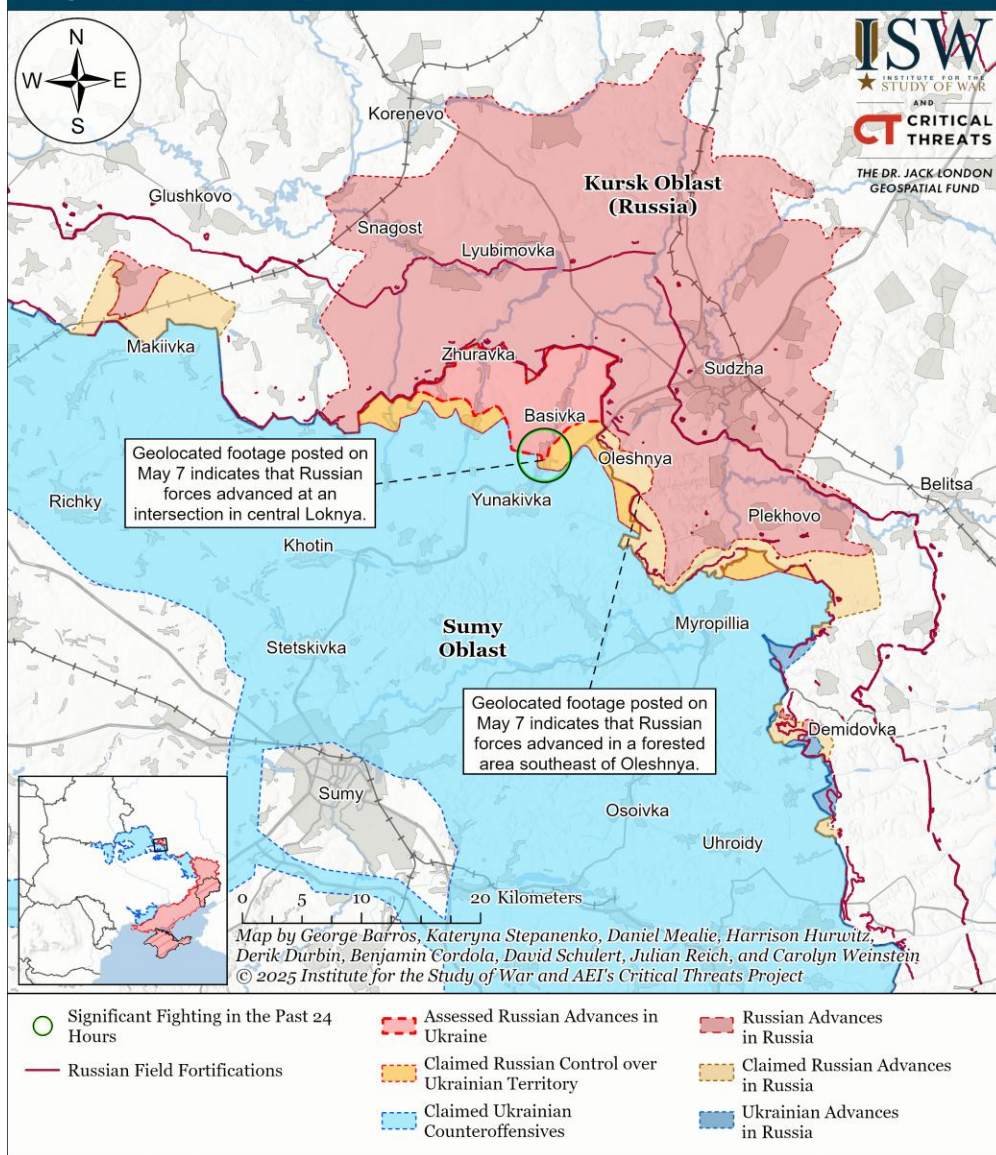
Assessed Russian advances: Geolocated footage published on May 6 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced to central Loknya (northeast of Sumy City).[53]

Unconfirmed claims: A Russian milblogger claimed on May 8 that Russian forces advanced near Vodolahy, Bilovody (both north of Sumy City), and Loknya.[54]

A Russian milblogger accused Ukrainian forces of violating Russia's unilateral ceasefire near Bilovody on May 8.[55]

Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian 30th Motorized Rifle Regiment (72nd Motorized Rifle Division, 44th Army Corps [AC], Leningrad Military District [LMD]) are reportedly operating in the Sumy direction, and elements of the "Anvar Spetsnaz" detachment (possibly referring to the BARS-25 "Anvar" volunteer detachment) are reportedly striking Ukrainian positions northwest of Sumy City near the Sumy-Bryansk Oblast international border.[56]

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Sumy Direction May 8, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



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)

Ukrainian sources accused Russian forces in northern Kharkiv Oblast of violating Russia's unilateral Victory Day ceasefire on May 8.

Unconfirmed claims: A Russian milblogger claimed on May 7 that Russian forces advanced on the eastern outskirts of Vovchansk (northeast of Kharkiv City).[57]

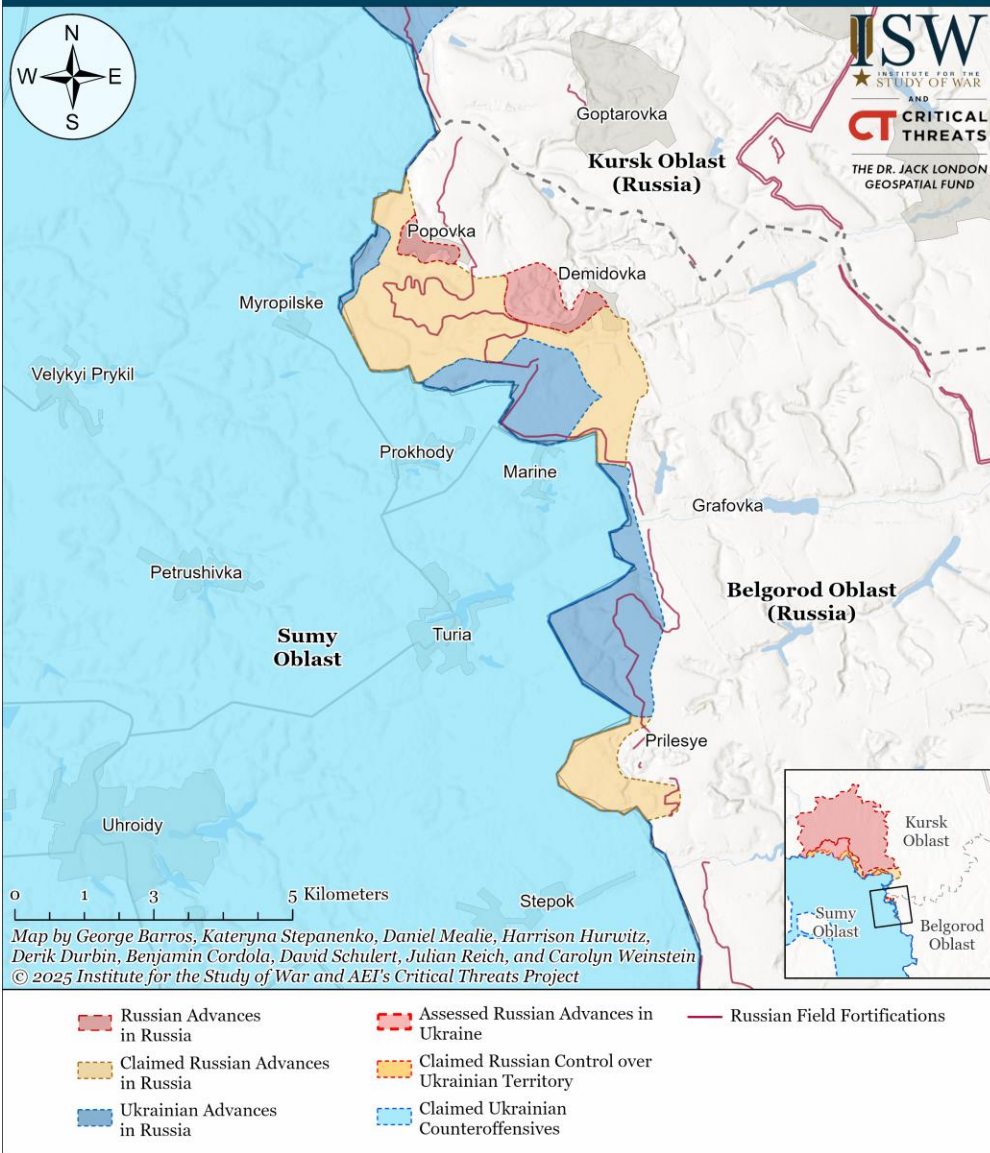
The Ukrainian General Staff's May 7 2200 SITREP reported that Russian forces attacked northeast of Kharkiv City near Vovchansk and Vovchanski Khutory on May 7 before Russia implemented its unilateral Victory Day ceasefire at 0000 Moscow time on May 8.[58]

The Ukrainian General Staff's May 8 0800 SITREP reported that Russian forces attacked near Vovchansk and Vovchanski Khutory.[59] ISW is unable to assess whether these attacks occurred after the start of Russia's unilateral ceasefire at 0000 Moscow time on May 8.

The Ukrainian General Staff's May 8 1600 SITREP implied that Russian forces violated Russia's unilateral Victory Day ceasefire by attacking in unspecified areas of northern Kharkiv Oblast.[60] Ukrainian Khortytsia Group of Forces Spokesperson Colonel Viktor Trehubov stated on May 8 that Russian forces continued to attack in the Kharkiv direction following Russia's implementation of its unilateral ceasefire.[61]

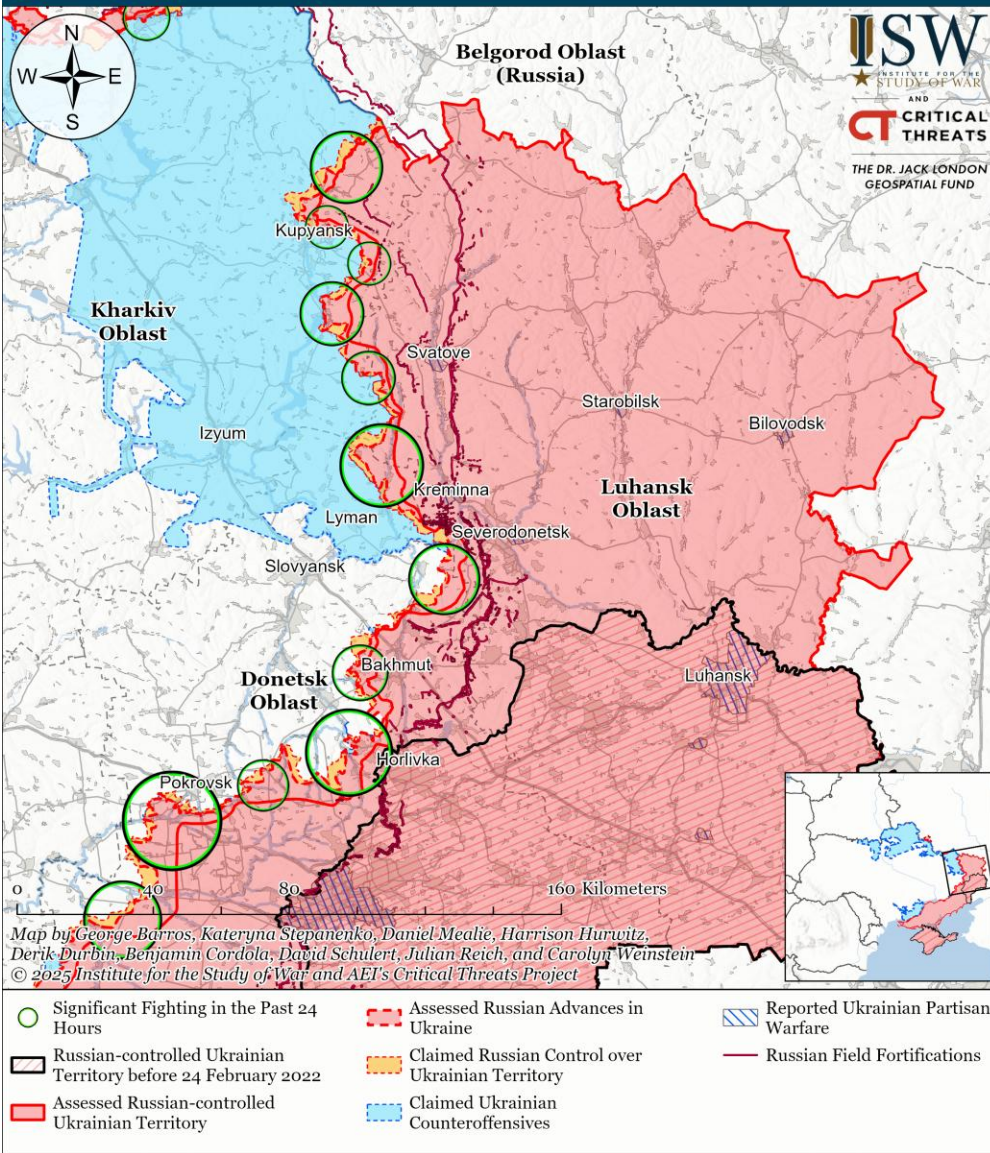
Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian "Anvar Spetsnaz" detachment (possibly referring to the BARS-25 "Anvar" volunteer detachment) are reportedly striking Ukrainian positions near Synelnykove (south of Vovchansk).[62]

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Belgorod Direction
May 8, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



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)

Assessed Control of Terrain in Luhansk Oblast May 8, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



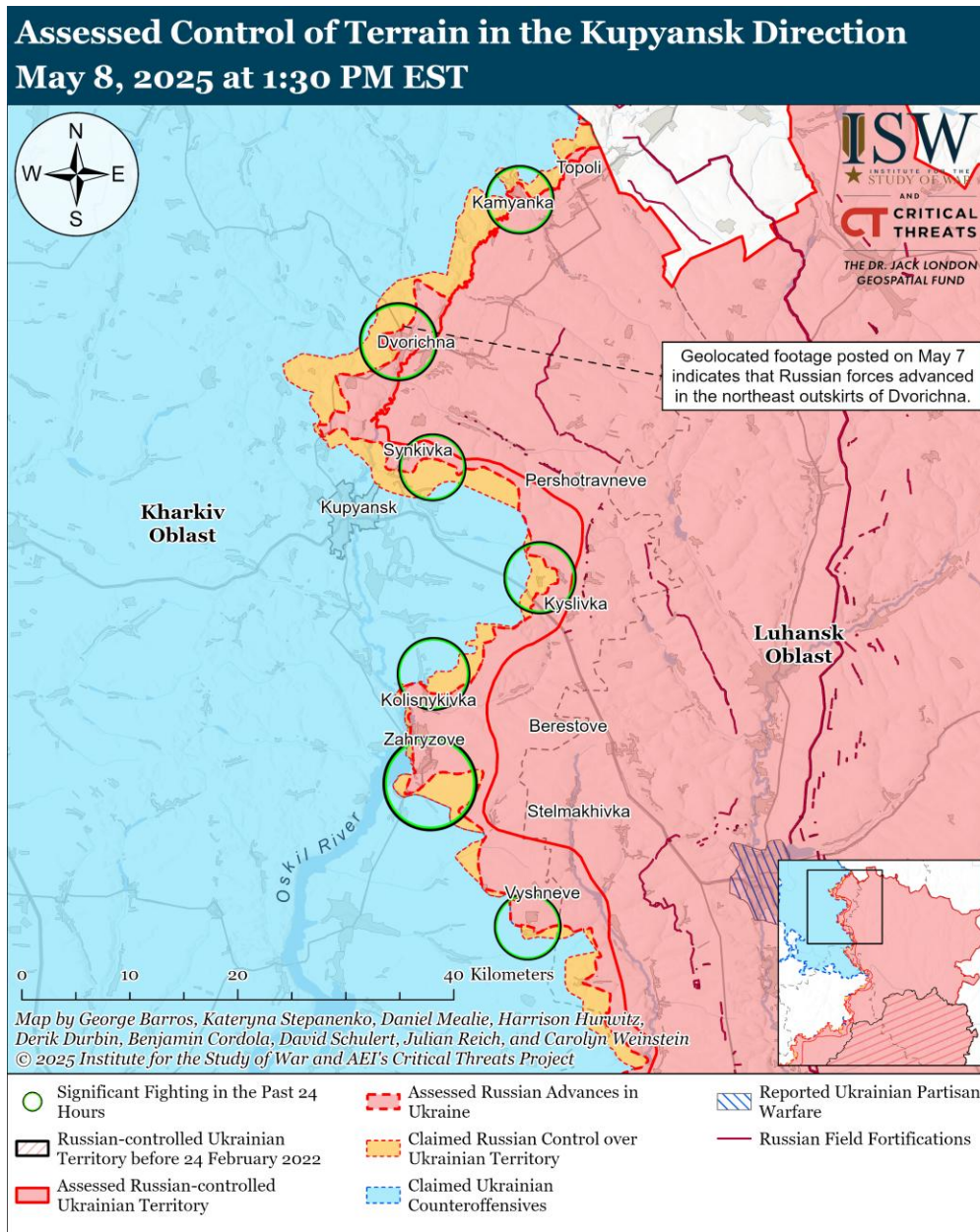
Russian forces recently advanced in the Kupyansk direction before the start of Russia's unilateral Victory Day ceasefire as Ukrainian sources accused Russian forces of violating Russia's ceasefire on May 8.

Assessed Russian advances: Geolocated footage published on May 7 indicates that Russian forces marginally advanced to the northeastern outskirts of Dvorichna (northeast of Kupyansk).[63]

The Ukrainian General Staff's May 7 2200 SITREP reported that Russian forces attacked southeast of Kupyansk near Hlushkivka on May 7 before Russia implemented its unilateral Victory Day ceasefire at 0000 Moscow time on May 8.[64]

The Ukrainian General Staff's May 8 0800 SITREP reported that Russian forces attacked near Hlushkivka.[65] ISW is unable to assess whether these attacks occurred after the start of Russia's unilateral ceasefire at 0000 Moscow time on May 8.

The Ukrainian General Staff's May 8 1600 SITREP implied that Russian forces violated Russia's unilateral Victory Day ceasefire by attacking northeast of Kupyansk near Synkivka and southeast of Kupyansk near Stepova Novoselivka.[66] Ukrainian Kharkiv Oblast Military Administration Head Oleh Synhubov stated on May 8 that fighting is ongoing in northern Kharkiv Oblast and in the Kupyansk direction.[67]



Russian forces recently advanced in the Borova direction as Ukrainian forces accused Russian forces of violating Russia's unilateral Victory Day ceasefire on May 8.

Assessed Russian Advances: Geolocated footage published on May 8 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced northwest of Makiivka (southeast of Borova).[68] ISW is unable to assess if this recent Russian advance occurred before the start of Russia's unilateral ceasefire at 0000 Moscow time on May 8.

The Ukrainian General Staff's May 7 2200 SITREP reported that Russian forces attacked northeast of Borova near Zahryzove and Nova Kruhlyakivka; east of Borova near Kopanky; and southeast of Borova near Hrektivka and toward Olhivka on May 7 before Russia implemented its unilateral Victory Day ceasefire at 0000 Moscow time on May 8.[69]

The Ukrainian General Staff's May 8 0800 SITREP reported that Russian forces attacked near Zahryzove, Nova Kruhlyakivka, and Hrektivka and toward Olhivka.[70] ISW is unable to assess whether these attacks occurred after the start of Russia's unilateral ceasefire at 0000 Moscow time on May 8.

The Ukrainian General Staff's May 8 1600 SITREP implied that Russian forces violated Russia's unilateral Victory Day ceasefire by attacking near Nova Kruhlyakivka, Novoyehorivka (east of Borova), and Hrektivka.[71]

Ukrainian sources accused Russian forces in the Lyman direction of violating Russia's unilateral Victory Day ceasefire on May 8.

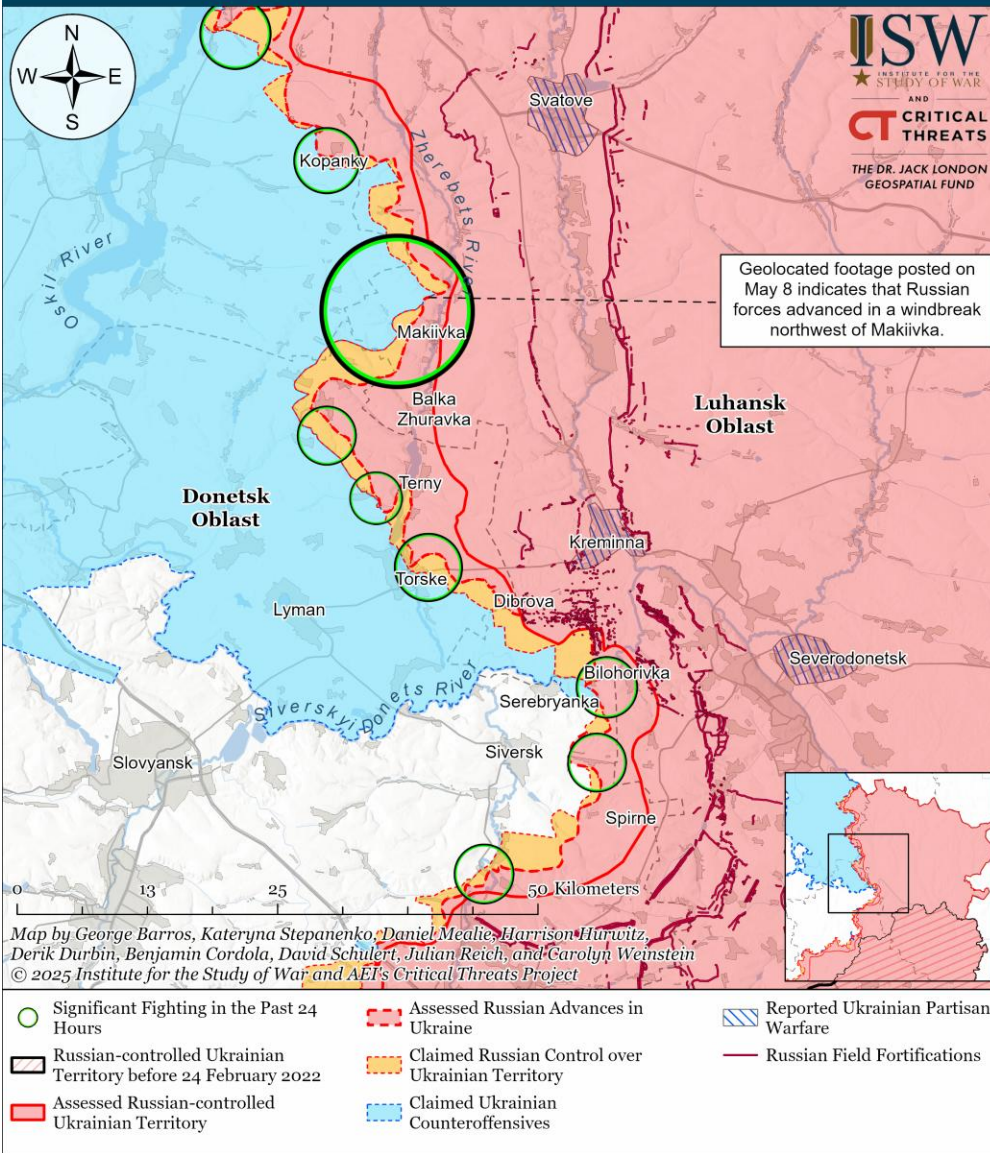
Unconfirmed claims: A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced northwest and west of the Nove (northeast of Lyman).[72]

The Ukrainian General Staff's May 7 2200 SITREP reported that Russian forces attacked northeast of Lyman near Kolodyazi and toward Ridkodub and Novyi Mir on May 7 before Russia implemented its unilateral Victory Day ceasefire at 0000 Moscow time on May 8.[73]

The Ukrainian General Staff's May 8 0800 SITREP reported that Russian forces attacked near Kolodyazi and toward Ridkodub and Novyi Mir.[74] ISW is unable to assess whether these attacks occurred after the start of Russia's unilateral ceasefire at 0000 Moscow time on May 8.

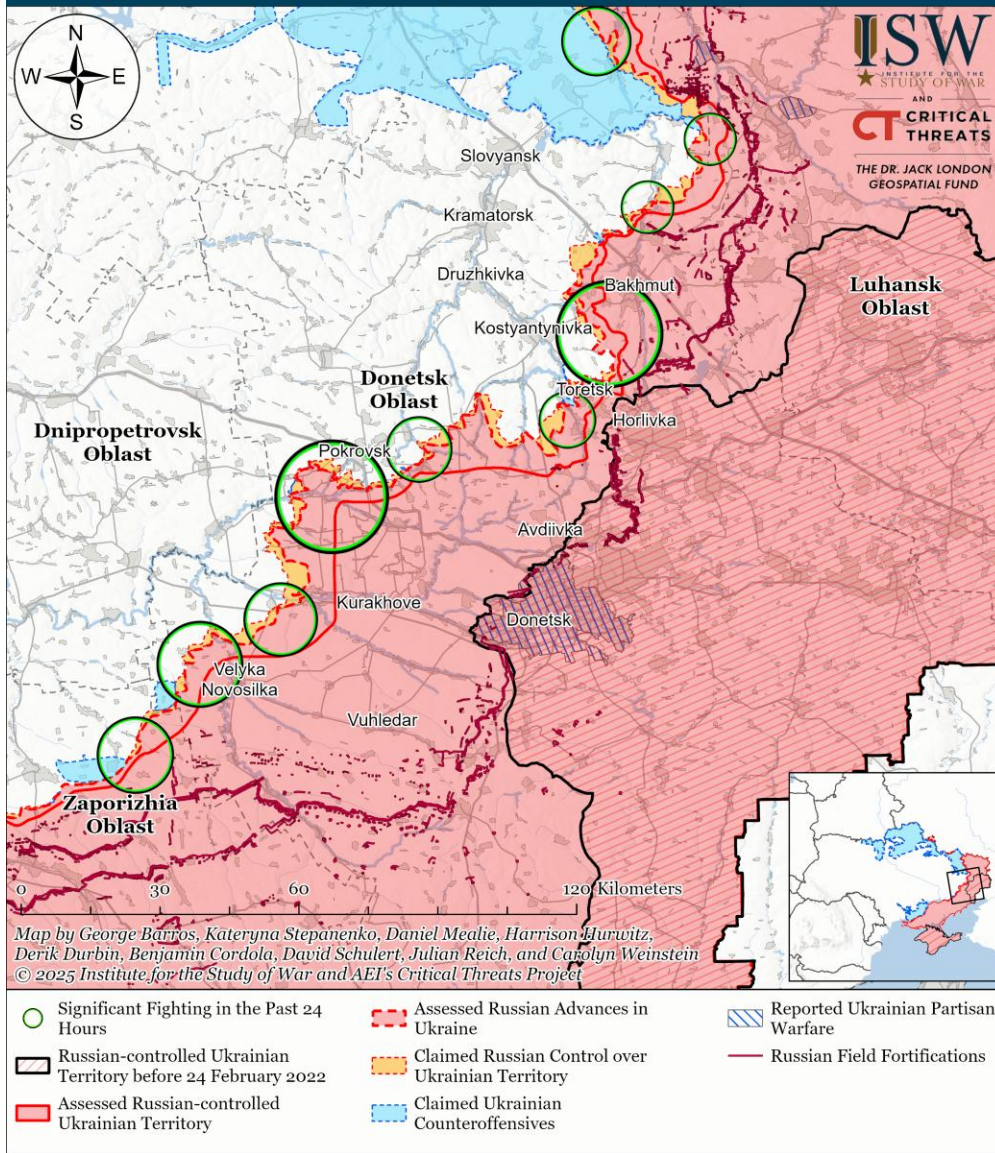
The Ukrainian General Staff's May 8 1600 SITREP implied that Russian forces violated Russia's unilateral Victory Day ceasefire by attacking near Kolodyazi and Torske (east of Lyman) and toward Novomykhailivka, Ridkodub, and Zelena Dolyna (all northeast of Lyman).[75] Ukrainian Khortytsia Group of Forces Spokesperson Colonel Viktor Trehubov reported that Russian forces continued to attack in the Lyman direction after Russia's implementation of its unilateral Victory Day ceasefire.[76]

**Assessed Control of Terrain in the Svatove-Kreminna Direction
May 8, 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, and possibly advance into Dnipropetrovsk Oblast)

Assessed Control of Terrain in Donetsk Oblast May 8, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



Ukrainian sources accused Russian forces in the Siversk direction of violating Russia's unilateral Victory Day ceasefire on May 8.

The Ukrainian General Staff's May 7 2200 SITREP reported that Russian forces attacked northeast of Siversk near Bilohorivka and east of Siversk near Verkhokamyanske on May 7 before Russia implemented its unilateral Victory Day ceasefire at 0000 Moscow time on May 8.[77]

The Ukrainian General Staff's May 8 0800 SITREP reported that Russian forces attacked near Bilohorivka and Verkhokamyanske.[78] ISW is unable to assess whether these attacks occurred after the start of Russia's unilateral ceasefire at 0000 Moscow time on May 8.

The Ukrainian General Staff's May 8 1600 SITREP implied that Russian forces violated Russia's unilateral Victory Day ceasefire by attacking near Bilohorivka and Fedorivka (southeast of Siversk)[79]□

Ukrainian and Russian sources accused each other of violating Russia's unilateral Victory Day ceasefire in the Chasiv Yar direction on May 8.

Unconfirmed claims: Russian milbloggers claimed on May 8 that Russian forces advanced north of Chasiv Yar and entered the Sievny mine.[80]

The Ukrainian General Staff's May 7 2200 SITREP reported that Russian forces attacked near Chasiv Yar and south of Chasiv Yar near Bila Hora and Predtechnye on May 7 before Russia implemented its unilateral Victory Day ceasefire at 0000 Moscow time on May 8.[81]

The Ukrainian General Staff's May 8 0800 SITREP reported that Russian forces attacked near Chasiv Yar, Bila Hora, and Predtechnye.[82] ISW is unable to assess whether these attacks occurred after the start of Russia's unilateral ceasefire at 0000 Moscow time on May 8.

The Ukrainian General Staff's May 8 1600 SITREP implied that Russian forces violated Russia's unilateral Victory Day ceasefire by attacking near Chasiv Yar and Kurdyumivka (southeast of Chasiv Yar) on May 8.[83] Ukrainian Khortytsia Group of Forces Spokesperson Colonel Viktor Trehubov reported on May 8 that Russian forces violated Russia's unilateral ceasefire in the Chasiv Yar direction after Russia implemented its unilateral ceasefire[84]

A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces violated Russia's unilateral ceasefire and counterattacked in the Chasiv Yar direction on May 8.[85]

Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian "Burevestnik" detachment (Russian Volunteer Corps) and the "Volga" Artillery Regiment (reportedly Russian Volunteer Corps) are reportedly operating in the Chasiv Yar direction.[86]

Ukrainian and Russian forces recently advanced in the Toretsk direction before Russia's unilateral Victory Day ceasefire as Ukrainian and Russian sources accused each other of violating Russia's ceasefire on May 8.

Assessed Ukrainian advances: Geolocated footage published on May 6 indicates that Ukrainian forces advanced to Radhospna Street in northwest Druzhba.[87]

Assessed Russian advances: Geolocated footage published on May 7 indicates that Russian forces advanced in southern Nova Poltavka (west of Toretsk).[88]

Unconfirmed claims: Russian milbloggers claimed on May 7 and 8 that Russian forces advanced north of and into central Nova Poltavka, west of Nelipivka (northwest of Toretsk), north of and into northern Novoolenivka (west of Toretsk), north of and toward Oleksandropil, and into the western outskirts of Leonidivka (both southwest of Toretsk).[89] A Russian milblogger claimed on May 8 that Russian forces seized most of Oleksandropil but did not specify when the advance occurred.[90] A Russian milblogger claimed on May 8 that Russian forces advanced to the T-0504 Pokrovsk-Kostyantynivka highway near Novoolenivka.[91]

The Ukrainian General Staff's May 7 2200 SITREP reported that Russian forces attacked near Toretsk, north of Toretsk near Dyliivka, west of Toretsk near Shcherbynivka and Nova Poltavka, and southwest of Toretsk near Malynivka on May 7 before Russia implemented its unilateral Victory Day ceasefire at 0000 Moscow time on May 8.[92]

The Ukrainian General Staff's May 8 0800 SITREP reported that Russian forces Russian forces attacked near Toretsk, Dyliivka, Shcherbynivka, Nova Poltavka, Malynivka, and Yelyzavetivka and toward Romanivka (both southwest of Toretsk).[93] ISW is unable to assess whether these attacks occurred after the start of Russia's unilateral ceasefire at 0000 Moscow time on May 8.

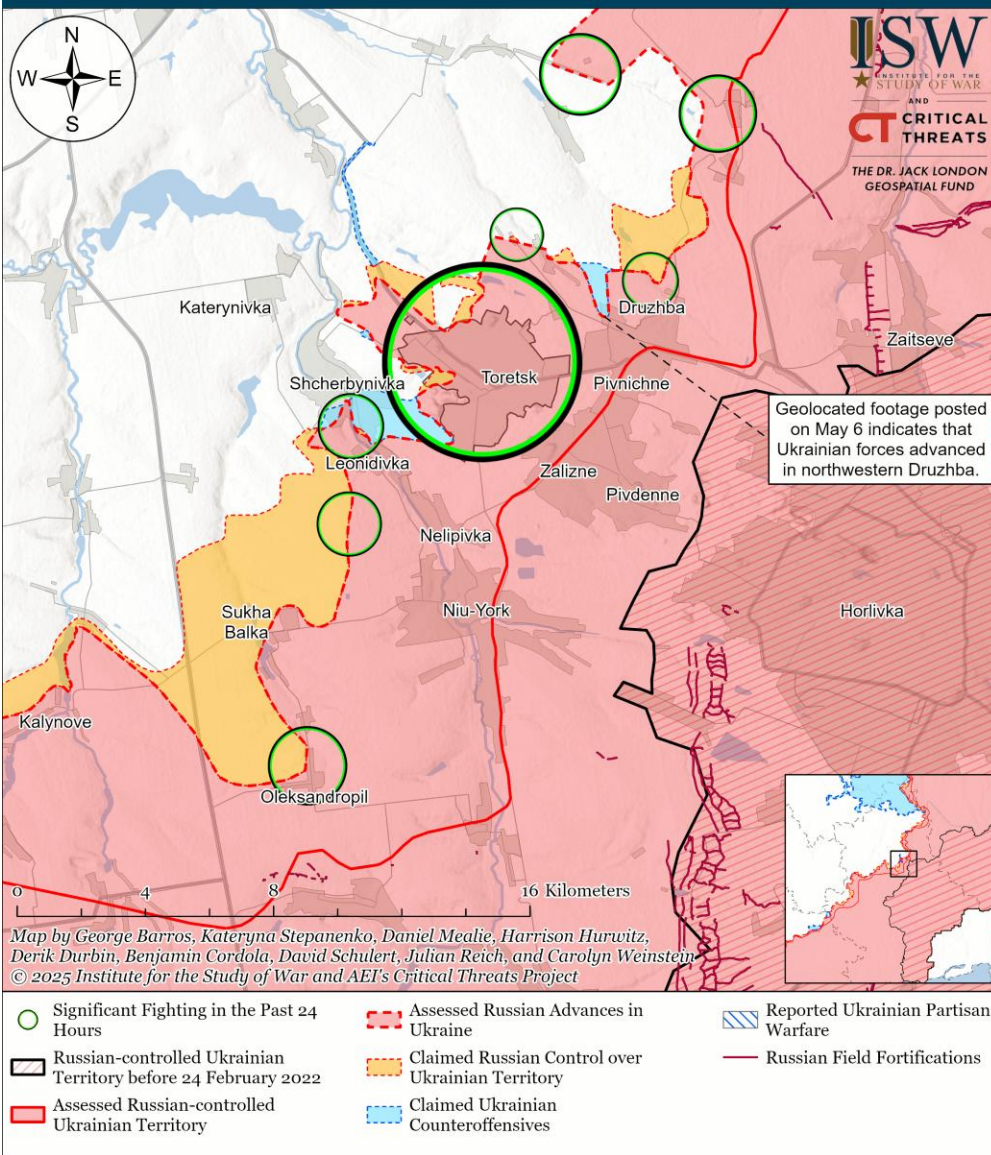
The Ukrainian General Staff's May 8 1600 SITREP implied that Russian forces violated Russia's unilateral Victory Day ceasefire by attacking near Toretsk, Krymske (north of Toretsk), Oleksandropil (southwest of Toretsk), and Yelyzavetivka on May 8.[94] Trehubov stated on May 8 that Russian forces attacked in the Toretsk direction following Russia's implementation of its unilateral ceasefire.[95]

The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed on May 8 that Ukrainian forces violated Russia's unilateral ceasefire by counterattacking near Toretsk.[96] A Russian milblogger claimed on May 8 that Ukrainian forces violated Russia's ceasefire near Toretsk.[97]

Ukrainian Luhansk Group of Forces Spokesperson Lieutenant Colonel Dmytro Zaporozhets stated on May 8 that Russian forces operating in the Toretsk direction are using the cover of spring foliage to storm Ukrainian positions in small infantry groups.[98]

Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian 238th Artillery Brigade (8th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Southern Military District [SMD]) are reportedly striking Ukrainian positions near Kleban-Byk (northwest of Toretsk).[99] Elements of the 33rd Motorized Rifle Regiment and the 255th Motorized Rifle Regiment (both of the 20th Motorized Rifle Division, 8th CAA) are reportedly operating in Novoolenivka (west of Toretsk).[100]

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Toretsk Direction
May 8, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



Ukrainian and Russian sources accused each other of violating Russia's unilateral Victory Day ceasefire in the Pokrovsk direction on May 8.

Unconfirmed claims: Russian milbloggers claimed on May 8 that Russian forces marginally advanced near Novoserhiivka (southwest of Pokrovsk).[101] One milblogger claimed that Russian forces made this advance on May 7 prior to Russia's unilateral Victory Day ceasefire, but the other milblogger did not specify when this advance occurred.[102]

The Ukrainian General Staff's May 7 2200 SITREP reported that Russian forces attacked southeast of Pokrovsk near Lysivka and southwest of Pokrovsk near Kotlyne, Zvirove, Novoserhiivka, and Udachne on May 7 before Russia implemented its unilateral Victory Day ceasefire at 0000 Moscow time on May 8.[103]

The Ukrainian General Staff's May 8 0800 SITREP reported that Russian forces attacked near Pokrovsk, Lysivka, Kotlyne, Zvirove, Novoserhiivka, and Udachne.[104] ISW is unable to assess whether these attacks occurred after the start of Russia's unilateral ceasefire at 0000 Moscow time on May 8.

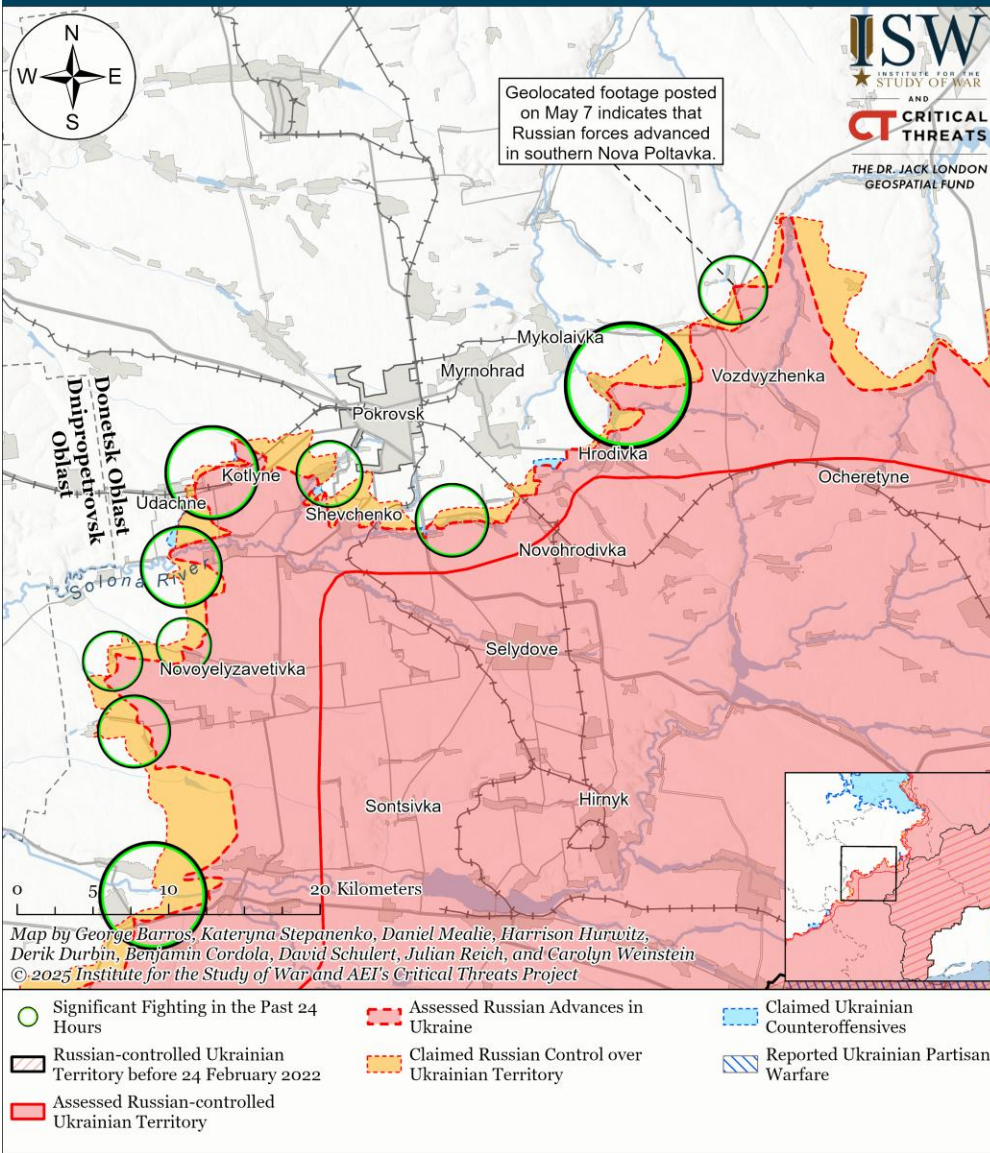
The Ukrainian General Staff's May 8 1600 SITREP implied that Russian forces violated Russia's unilateral Victory Day ceasefire by attacking near Myrolyubivka (east of Pokrovsk), near Hrodivka (southeast of Pokrovsk), Dachenske (south of Pokrovsk), and near Kotlyne, Zvirove, and Udachne on May 8.[105] Trehubov stated on May 8 that Russian forces continued to attack in the Pokrovsk direction following Russia's implementation of its unilateral Victory Day ceasefire.[106]

A Russian milblogger accused Ukrainian forces of violating Russia's ceasefire on May 8 by conducting drone strikes against Russian positions in the Pokrovsk direction.[107]

Ukraine's Khortytsia Group of Forces reported on May 7 that Russian forces continue to increase their use of motorcycles in assaults in the Pokrovsk direction.[108] The spokesperson of a Ukrainian brigade operating in the Pokrovsk direction stated on May 8 that Russian forces are conducting small infantry assaults with motorized vehicle and drone support.[109] The spokesperson stated that Russian forces are repeatedly deploying assaults consisting of poorly trained infantry to first overwhelm Ukrainian defenses before better-trained infantry attack.

Order of Battle: Drone operators of the Russian "Vega" Spetsnaz Detachment (24th Guards Spetsnaz Brigade, Russian General Staff's Main Intelligence Directorate [GRU]) are reportedly operating in the Pokrovsk direction.[110]

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Pokrovsk Direction May 8, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



Ukrainian sources accused Russian forces in the Novopavlivka direction of violating Russia's unilateral Victory Day ceasefire on May 8.

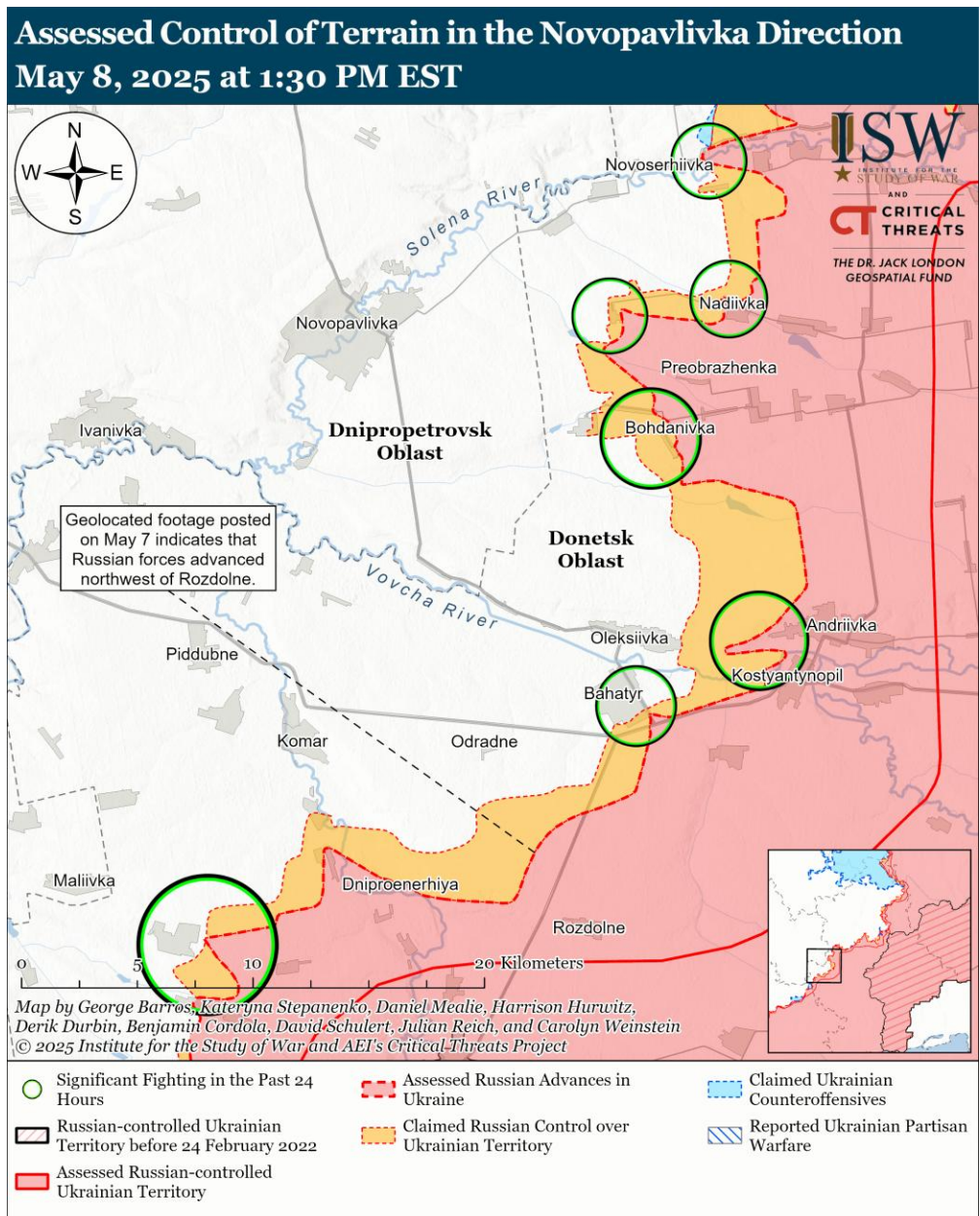
Unconfirmed claims: The Russian MoD claimed on May 8 that Russian forces seized Troitske (southeast of Novopavlivka) before Russia implemented its unilateral Victory Day ceasefire on May 8.[111] Russian milbloggers claimed on May 7 that Russian forces advanced south of Novooleksandrivka (northeast of Novopavlivka) and near Kotlyarivka, Nadiivka (both east of Novopavlivka), and Horikhove (southeast of Novopavlivka).[112]

The Ukrainian General Staff's May 7 2200 SITREP reported that Russian forces attacked northeast of Novopavlivka near Novooleksandrivka; east of Novopavlivka near Nadiivka and Kotlyarivka; and

southeast of Novopavlivka near Trotiske and Bohdanivka on May 7 before Russia implemented its unilateral Victory Day ceasefire at 0000 Moscow time on May 8.[113]

The Ukrainian General Staff's May 8 0800 SITREP reported that Russian forces attacked near Novooleksandrivka, Nadiivka, Kotlyarivka, Trotiske, and Bohdanivka.[114] ISW is unable to assess whether these attacks occurred after the start of Russia's unilateral ceasefire at 0000 Moscow time on May 8.

The Ukrainian General Staff's May 8 1600 SITREP implied that Russian forces violated Russia's unilateral Victory Day ceasefire by attacking near Novooleksandrivka, Kotlyarivka, and Preobrazhenka (east of Novopavlivka) on May 8.[115] Trehubov stated on May 8 that Russian forces attacked in the Novopavlivka direction after Russia implemented its unilateral ceasefire.[116]



Russian forces recently advanced in the Kurakhove direction before Russia implemented its unilateral Victory Day ceasefire and Ukrainian sources accused Russian forces of violating Russia's ceasefire on May 8.

Assessed Russian advances: Geolocated footage published on May 7 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced northwest of Rozdolne (southwest of Kurakhove).[117]

Unconfirmed claims: Russian milbloggers claimed on May 8 that Russian forces advanced northwest of Andriivka (west of Kurakhove) and near Odradne (southwest of Kurakhove) prior to Russia's unilateral Victory Day ceasefire.[118]

The Ukrainian General Staff's May 7 2200 SITREP reported that Russian forces attacked west of Kurakhove near Kostyantynopil, Andriivka, Bahatyr, and Oleksiivka and toward Odradne on May 7 before Russia implemented its unilateral Victory Day ceasefire at 0000 Moscow time on May 8.[119]

The Ukrainian General Staff's May 8 0800 SITREP reported that Russian forces attacked Russian forces attacked near Kostyantynopil, Andriivka, Bahatyr, Oleksiivka, and Odradne.[120] ISW is unable to assess whether these attacks occurred after the start of Russia's unilateral ceasefire at 0000 Moscow time on May 8.[121]

The Ukrainian General Staff's May 8 1600 SITREP implied that Russian forces violated Russia's unilateral Victory Day ceasefire by attacking near Andriivka and Rozlyv (southwest of Kurakhove) on May 8.[122] The deputy commander of a Ukrainian detachment reported on May 8 that Russian forces violated Russia's unilateral ceasefire by attacking near Bahatyr on May 8.[123]

Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian 200th Artillery Brigade and 36th Motorized Rifle Brigade (both of the 29th CAA, Eastern Military District [EMD]) and 43rd Spetsnaz Company (reportedly also of the 29th CAA) are reportedly operating near Bahatyr.[124]

Russian forces recently advanced in the Velyka Novosilka direction before Russia's unilateral Victory Day ceasefire and Ukrainian and Russian sources accused each other of violating Russia's ceasefire on May 8.

Assessed Russian advances: Geolocated footage published on May 7 indicates that Russian forces advanced in fields northwest of Rozdolne (northeast of Velyka Novosilka).[125]

Unconfirmed claims: Russian milbloggers claimed on May 7 that Russian forces advanced north of Dniproenerhiya (north of Velyka Novosilka) and west of Novosilka (west of Velyka Novosilka).[126]

The Ukrainian General Staff's May 7 2200 SITREP reported that Russian forces attacked west of Velyka Novosilka near Vilne Pole and Novosilka and southwest of Velyka Novosilka toward Novopil on May 7 before Russia implemented its unilateral Victory Day ceasefire at 0000 Moscow time on May 8.[127]

The Ukrainian General Staff's May 8 0800 SITREP reported that Russian forces attacked near Vilne Pole and Novosilka and toward Novopil.[128] ISW is unable to assess whether these attacks occurred after the start of Russia's unilateral ceasefire at 0000 Moscow time on May 8.

The Ukrainian General Staff's May 8 1600 SITREP implied that Russian forces violated Russia's unilateral Victory Day ceasefire by attacking near Burlatske (northwest of Velyka Novosilka), Novosilka,

Pryvilne (west of Velyka Novosilka), and Novopil on May 8.[129] Ukrainian Southern Defense Forces Spokesperson Colonel Vladyslav Voloshyn reported on May 8 that Russian forces violated Russia's ceasefire by attacking near Novopil and Novosilka.[130] Voloshyn stated that Russian aviation has ceased activity since the start of Russia's ceasefire but that Russian forces continue artillery and drone strikes, albeit at a decreased intensity.

A Russian milblogger accused Ukrainian forces of violating Russia's ceasefire on May 8 by conducting drone strikes against Russian positions along the Vilne Pole-Novosilka-Novodarivka line (west and southwest of Velyka Novosilka).[131]

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

Ukrainian sources accused Russian forces in the Zaporizhzhia direction of violating Russia's unilateral Victory Day ceasefire on May 8.

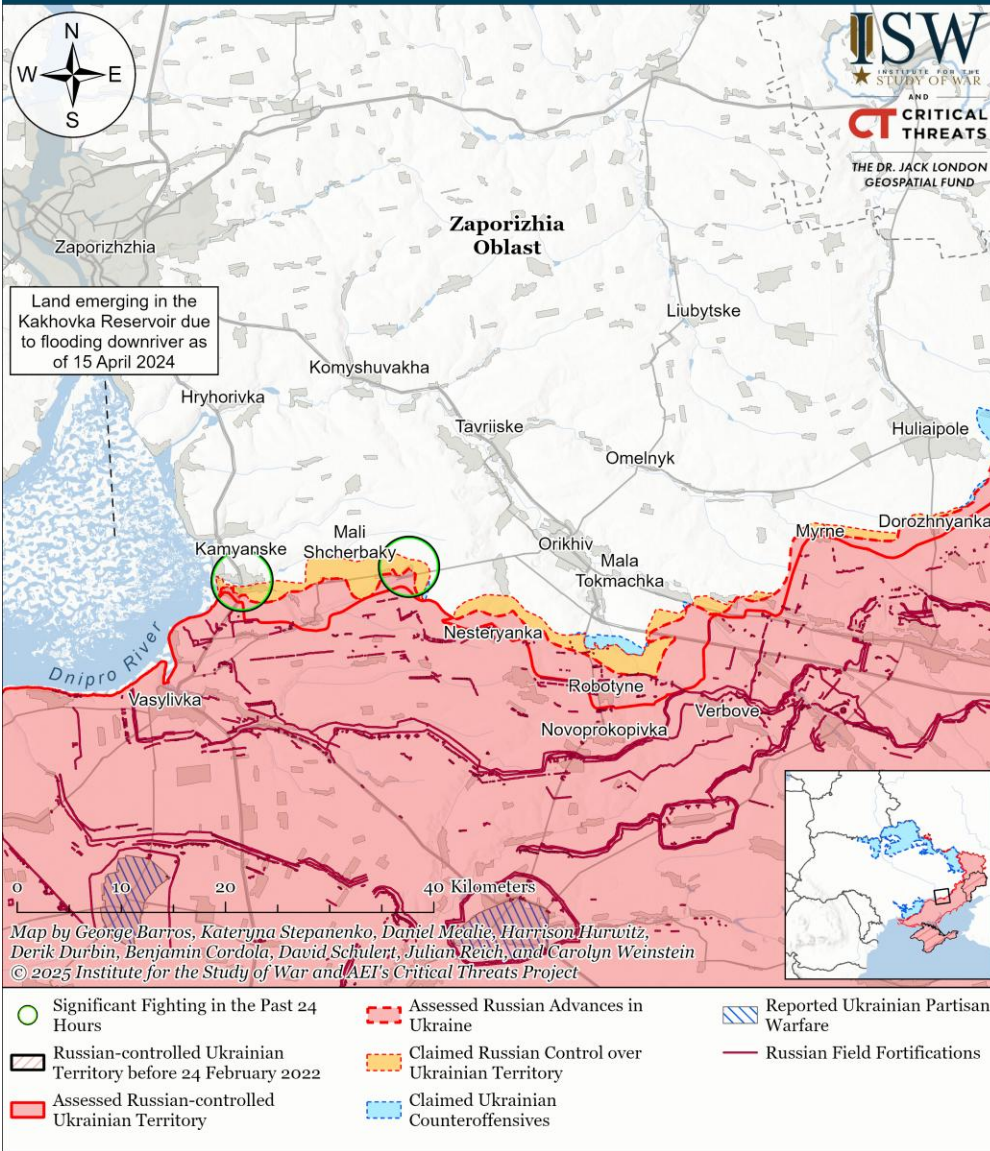
The Ukrainian General Staff's May 7 2200 SITREP reported that Russian forces attacked southwest of Orikhiv near Stepove and west of Orikhiv near Kamyanske before Russia implemented its unilateral Victory Day ceasefire at 0000 Moscow time on May 8.[132]

The Ukrainian General Staff's May 8 0800 SITREP reported that Russian forces attacked near Kamyanske and Shcherbaky (west of Orikhiv).[133] ISW is unable to assess whether these attacks occurred after the start of Russia's unilateral ceasefire at 0000 Moscow time on May 8.

The Ukrainian General Staff's May 8 1600 SITREP implied that Russian forces violated Russia's unilateral Victory Day ceasefire by attacking near Stepove and Shcherbaky.[134] Russian milbloggers claimed on May 8 that Russian forces attacked near Mala Tokmachka (southeast of Orikhiv), Novodanylivka (south of Orikhiv), Stepove, Shcherbaky, and Kamyanske.[135]

Order of Battle: Drone operators of the Russian BARS-3 "Rodina" Battalion (Russian Combat Army Reserve) are reportedly operating in the Orikhiv direction, and drone operators of the "Viking" Drone detachment are reportedly operating near Kamyanske.[136] Drone operators of the 247th Airborne (VDV) Regiment (7th VDV Division) and of the "Nemets" group of the 291st Motorized Rifle Regiment (42nd Motorized Rifle Division, 58th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Southern Military District [SMD]) are reportedly operating in the Zaporizhzhia direction.[137]

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Zaporizhia Direction May 8, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



Ukrainian and Russian sources accused each other of violating Russia's unilateral Victory Day ceasefire in the Kherson direction on May 8.

The Ukrainian General Staff's May 7 2200 SITREP reported that Russian forces attacked in the Kherson direction before Russia implemented its unilateral Victory Day ceasefire at 0000 Moscow time on May 8.[138]

The Ukrainian General Staff's May 8 0800 SITREP reported that Russian forces attacked in the Kherson direction.[139] ISW is unable to assess whether these attacks occurred after the start of Russia's unilateral ceasefire at 0000 Moscow time on May 8.

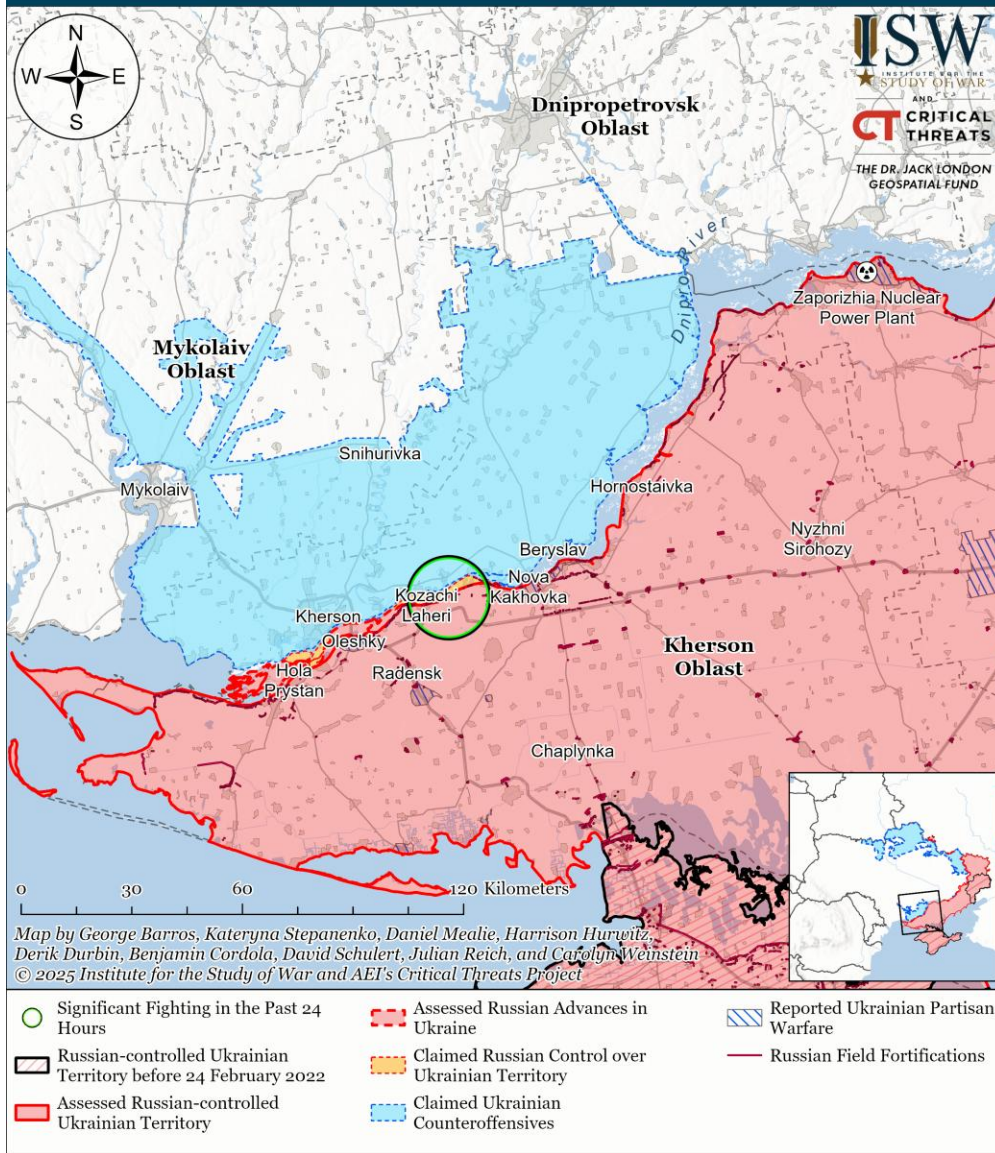
The Ukrainian General Staff's May 8 1600 SITREP implied that Russian forces violated Russia's unilateral Victory Day ceasefire by attacking in the Kherson direction.[140] Ukrainian officials reported on May 8 that Russian forces violated Russia's ceasefire by striking civilian infrastructure in the Kherson direction.[141]

A Russian milblogger accused Ukrainian forces of violating Russia's ceasefire on May 8 by attempting to land on the east (left) bank of the Dnipro River near the Antonvisky Bridge.[142]

A Ukrainian servicemember operating in the Kherson direction reported that Russian and Ukrainian forces are engaging in combat at a distance, so this area of the front is largely static.[143]

Order of Battle: Drone operators of the Russian 61st Separate Naval Infantry Brigade (Northern Fleet) are reportedly operating on the west (right) bank of the Dnipro River.[144]

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Kherson Direction May 8, 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 drone strike against Ukraine on the evening of May 7 before Russia's unilateral Victory Day ceasefire. The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Russian forces launched a third wave of drone strikes against Ukraine during the evening consisting of 31 Shahed and decoy drones.[145] The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Ukrainian forces downed 20 drones in northern and central Ukraine and that six decoy drones were "lost in location." The Ukrainian State Emergency Service reported that the evening drone strike hit infrastructure near Uman, Cherkasy Oblast.[146]

The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Russian forces did not launch missiles or long-range drones against Ukraine on May 8 as of 0800 Kyiv time.[147] The Ukrainian Air Force noted that Russian forces

had increased glide bomb strikes against Sumy Oblast in violation of Russia's unilateral Victory Day ceasefire.[148]

Former Ukrainian Deputy Chief of the General Staff, retired Lieutenant General Ihor Romanenko, stated in an interview published on May 8 that Russian forces are using a roughly one –to-one ratio of Shahed strike drones to decoy drones in their strike packages.[149] Romanenko stated that these decoy drones include "Gerber" and "Parodi" drones and that Russian forces have improved their decoy drones over time, using the decoys to conduct reconnaissance and equipping the decoys with small warheads. Romanenko reported that some of the explosives in decoy drones are meant to detonate immediately upon impact while others have delayed detonations. Romanenko stated that Russian forces use these decoys primarily to distract Ukrainian air defenses and augment the drones with parts that make them falsely appear on radars as much larger targets.

Romanenko clarified that reports from the Ukrainian Air Force that Russian drones were "locationally lost" mean that Ukrainian forces detected the drones but that the drones then maneuvered and left the area of responsibility of the Ukrainian unit that first identified the drone such that Ukrainian air defenders could not locate the drone again.[150]

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

Russia is likely using increased Belarusian-Chinese cooperation as part of its sanctions evasions measures. Belarusian Economy Minister Yuriy Chebotar claimed on May 7 during a meeting of Belarusian-Chinese Intergovernmental Committee on Cooperation's Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation in Beijing that Belarus aims to increase trade, economic, and industrial cooperation with the People's Republic of China (PRC).[151] Chebotar highlighted Belarusian-Chinese cooperation in mechanical engineering, machine tool production, and optics and electronics.

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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