

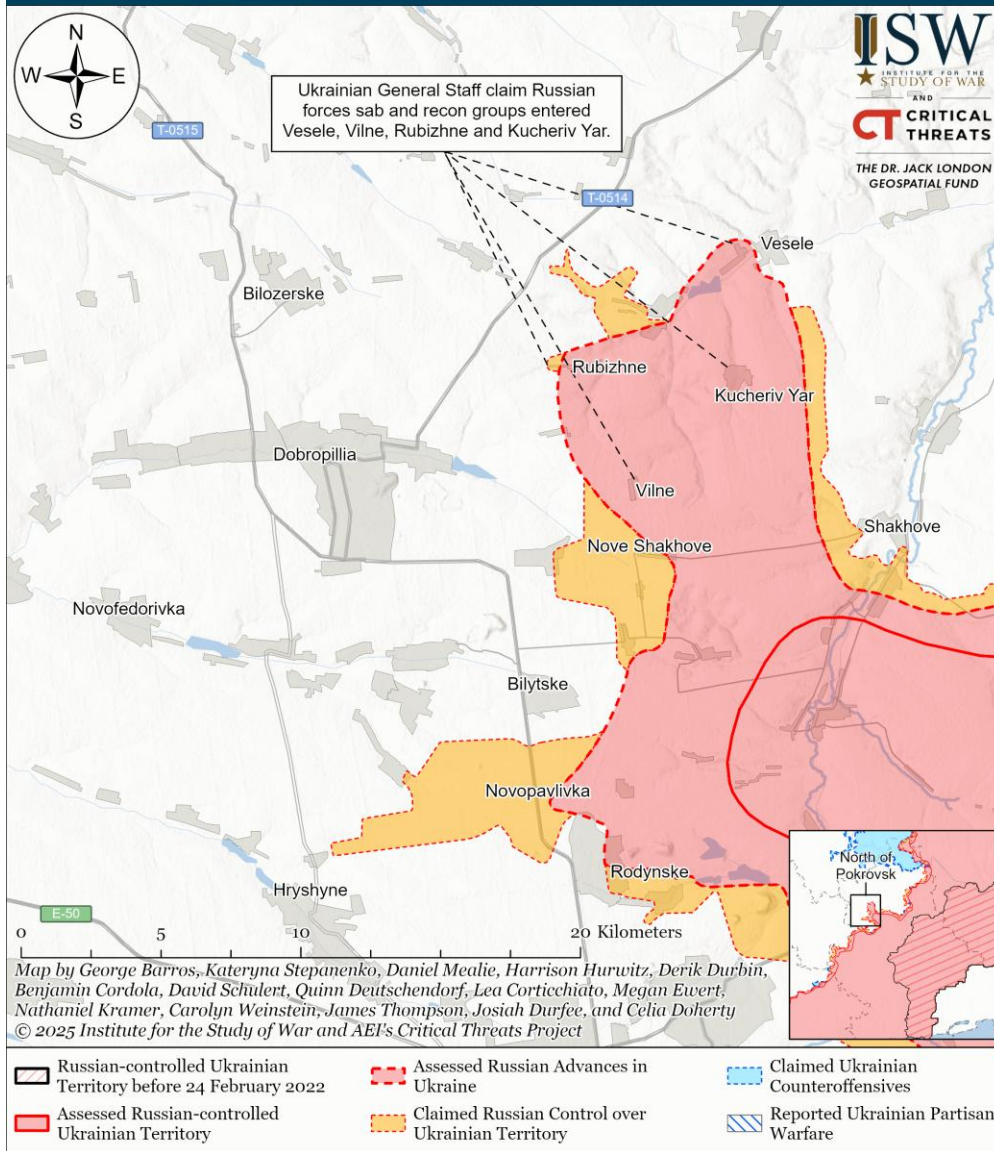
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with Nate Trotter**

August 12, 2025, 9:30 pm ET

Note: The data cut-off for this product was 12:30 pm ET on August 12. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the August 13 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Russian forces continued to infiltrate Ukrainian defenses east and northeast of Dobropillya (northwest of Pokrovsk) using limited sabotage and reconnaissance groups on August 12. Russian forces have yet to be able to deploy reinforcements to hold and exploit this tactical penetration and will likely face obstacles in trying to do so. The Ukrainian General Staff reported on August 12 that Russian sabotage groups infiltrated Vesele, Rubizhne, Kucheriv Yar (all three northeast of Dobropillya), and Vilne (east of Dobropillya) and that Ukrainian forces had already destroyed some of these groups.[1] The Ukrainian General Staff stated that several small Russian groups bypassed Ukrainian positions and tried to advance toward Zoloty Kolodyaz (northeast of Dobropillya). The Ukrainian General Staff reported that the Ukrainian military command allocated additional forces and means to the area. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky stated on August 12 that the situation is most complicated near Dobropillya and that Russian forces operating without mechanized equipment advanced about 10 kilometers deep.[2] The Ukrainian General Staff's report indicates that Russian forces recently advanced east of Dobropillya to Nove Shakhove and Stepy. Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces also seized Nove Shakhove, Rubizhne, Ivanivka (both east of Dobropillya), and Dorozhie (southeast of Dobropillya) and advanced near Zoloty Kolodyaz, Shakhove, Toretske (both east of Dobropillya), and Bilytske (southeast of Dobropillya) and in eastern Novyi Donbas (east of Dobropillya).[3]

Assessed Control of Terrain North of Pokrovsk August 12, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



Ukrainian and Russian sources characterized the Russian forces operating east and northeast of Dobropillya as limited sabotage and reconnaissance groups that are hiding in basements, windbreaks, and forests in the area.[4] Russian forces have been using tactics that rely on small fireteams that infiltrate the Ukrainian rear by finding weak points in Ukrainian defenses, at which point the fireteams wait for more forces to accumulate and then attack to try to gain a foothold and consolidate.[5] The Ukrainian Dnipro Grouping of Forces recently reported that Russian forces are constantly changing tactics and methods of deploying troops in the Pokrovsk direction and are leveraging numerical manpower superiority to infiltrate Ukrainian defenses with small infantry groups despite sustaining high casualties in these assaults.[6] The Dnipro Grouping of Forces clarified that small group infiltrations are not an indicator of Russian forces establishing control over a given area and noted that such inaccurate conclusions lead to a misunderstanding of the situation in the Pokrovsk

direction. Russian forces will likely attempt to employ this infiltration and accumulation tactic east and northeast of Dobropillya as well. The Russian penetration near Dobropillya is notably a deeper and faster tactical push than those that Russian forces have recently achieved, but Russia's ability to mature these tactical advances into an operational-level breakthrough in the near future is not certain. Ukrainian drone operations had been largely successful at holding back significant Russian advances in the Pokrovsk direction since late 2024 and will likely continue to be an obstacle to Russia's deployment of reinforcements and ability to hold its positions. Russian forces will also have to contend with newly arrived Ukrainian reinforcements in the area.[7]

Russian milbloggers, who often overinflate Russian advances, questioned Russia's ability to exploit the tactical penetration. Several Russian milbloggers urged caution on August 12, noting that Russian forces have yet to consolidate their positions and that the penetration is not a full-scale breakthrough yet.[8] A Russian milblogger and former Storm-Z instructor claimed that Russian forces infiltrated Ukrainian defenses in a "splayed" manner and that the depth of the penetration threatens Russia's ability to secure its flanks.[9] The milblogger expressed concern about Russia's ability to close the pocket in the area, given Russia's high losses. The milblogger complained that Russian forces had not adequately integrated strike drone units and assault groups and that the Russian groups infiltrated gaps in Ukrainian defenses, mostly using Russia's "usual" highly attritional, infantry-led assaults. Another milblogger claimed that the penetration has significantly stretched the frontline and that Russian forces will only be able to turn the penetration into a "success" if Russian forces have enough manpower to introduce operational reserves and advance "correctly and in time." [10] A Russian source claimed that infiltration missions have serious risks, as the infantry far from the front can only receive supplies via drones, and the main forces cannot support isolated infiltration groups.[11] The source claimed that Russian forces will likely soon try to launch a subsequent attack with a larger group of forces to prevent Ukrainian forces from gaining the tactical initiative. A Ukrainian source stated that Ukrainian forces destroyed several Russian groups that had infiltrated the area and are gradually pushing back Russian forces that were trying to gain a foothold.[12]

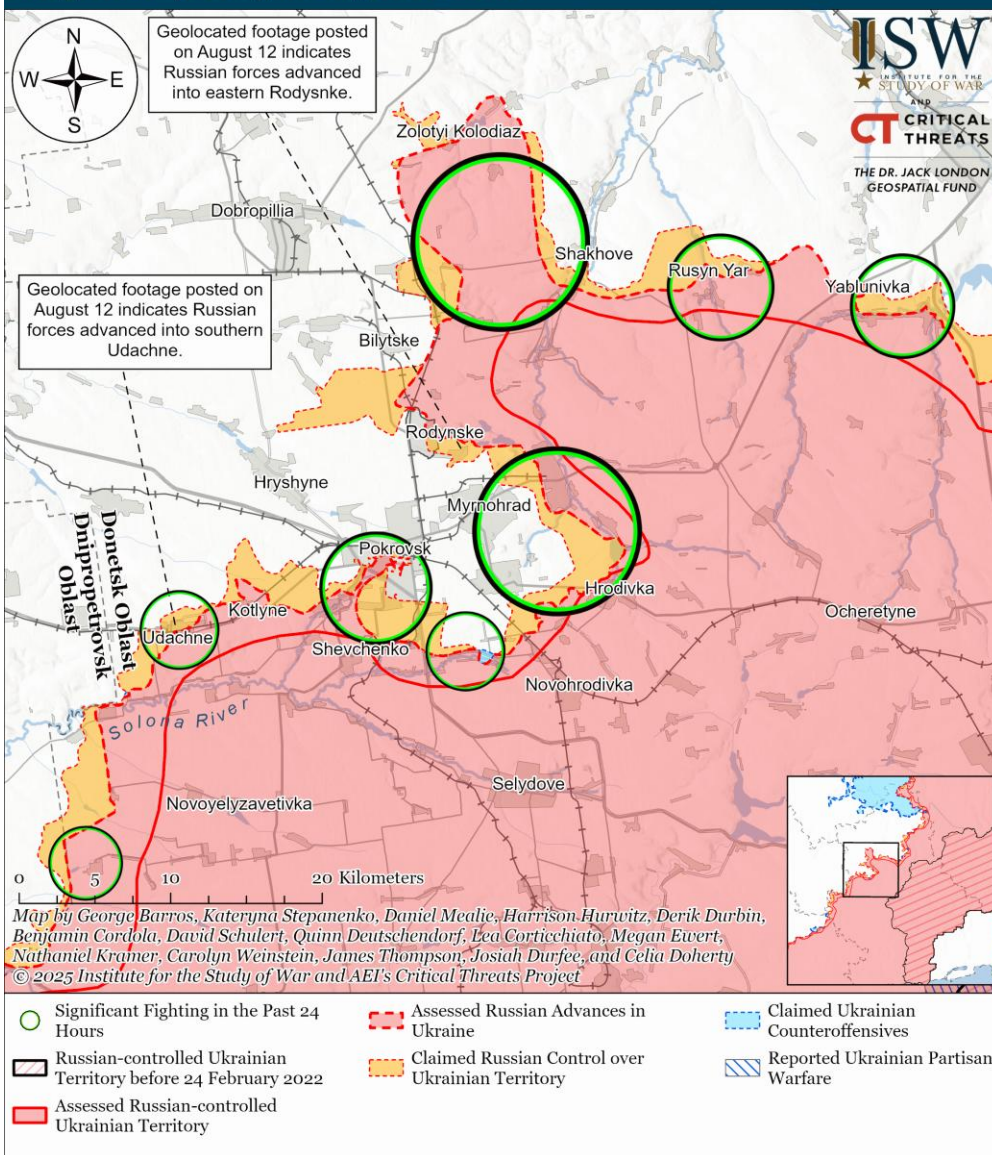
The Russian tactical penetration in the Dobropillya direction was not immediate but came rather after months of Russian preparation and condition setting using new drone innovations and tactics at scale. ISW recently assessed that Russia's integration of combined drone strike tactics and adaptations in recent months has facilitated Russian advances on key Ukrainian towns.[13] Russian strike and reconnaissance drone adaptations are likely achieving some effects of battlefield air interdiction (BAI) - the use of airpower to strike targets in the near rear of the frontline to impact battlefield operations in the near term. A Russian milblogger claimed on August 12 that Russian forces in the Dobropillya area have "systematically" knocked out Ukrainian drone crews and had taken Ukrainian ground lines of communication (GLOCs) northwest of Pokrovsk and Myrnohrad (east of Pokrovsk) under fire control with drones.[14] The milblogger claimed that these Russian efforts isolated the combat zone. Another milblogger claimed on August 12 that Russian infantry infiltrated the Ukrainian near rear along previously reconnoitered routes.[15]

Russia's persistent drone strikes against Ukrainian GLOCs have likely impacted Ukraine's defensive operations, enabling the recent Russian sabotage and reconnaissance group penetration. Russian forces have increased their use of first-person view (FPV) drone strikes against the T-0514 Dobropillya-Lyman

highway, and Russian drones have also been targeting Ukrainian vehicles along the T-0515 highway in Rodynske (north of Pokrovsk).[16] Russia's drone adaptations in recent months, including the use of repeater drones that extend the range of tactical drones, sleeper drones with modifications to operate on the ground in a low-power standby mode, and fiber optic drones that are resistant to electronic warfare (EW), have enabled Russian forces to threaten Ukrainian GLOCs deeper in the rear than before. Russia's partners, particularly the People's Republic of China (PRC), have provided drone components and production capabilities that have enabled many of these Russian drone adaptations. Russia tested many of its recent drone innovations during offensive operations to push Ukrainian forces from Kursk Oblast and began scaling up its production and deployment of modified drones in early 2025. **Russia's use of sabotage and reconnaissance groups to conduct a tactical penetration is not intrinsically noteworthy, but Russia's drone innovations enabling strikes against Ukrainian GLOCs to achieve the effects of BAI will require a Ukrainian and Western response.**

Russian advances in the Pokrovsk direction are also only the most recent result of over 17 months' worth of protracted campaigning. Russia's recent tactical penetration should be viewed within the context of Russian forces' significant resource expenditures to attrit Ukrainian forces in the Pokrovsk direction over the past year and a half. Russian forces have been fighting since February 2024 to advance west of Avdiivka. Russian forces, with their recent penetration near Zoloty Kolodyaz have advanced 55 kilometers in depth over the past 17 months. Russian forces have lost well over five divisions' worth of armored vehicles and tanks in Pokrovsk Raion since beginning their offensive operation to seize Avdiivka in October 2023 and during intensified Russian offensive operations in western Donetsk Oblast in the Summer 2024.[17]

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Pokrovsk Direction August 12, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



Russian officials are attempting to exploit the tactical penetration near Dobropillya to influence the upcoming US-Russia summit in Alaska, but the Kremlin's overall strategic objective is to break the will of Ukraine, the United States, and Europe in order to achieve Russia's longstanding demand for full Ukrainian capitulation. Russian State Duma deputies Alexei Zhuravlev and Nikolai Buduev claimed on August 12 that negotiations must account for “realities on the ground” (a reference to the frontline that Kremlin officials often use to claim that Russia is in a superior position on the battlefield and to demand that Ukraine must concede to Russia's demands).[18] Zhuravlev also claimed that eastern Ukraine is a “treasure trove of minerals” and that it is strategically important that Russia maintain a land corridor to occupied Crimea via southern Ukraine. Buduev further claimed that a freeze of the current frontline would be a temporary solution as it would leave the “root causes” of the war unresolved, and State Duma International Affairs

Committee Deputy Head Alexei Chepa similarly claimed that any peace settlement must address the “causes” of the war in order to prevent the future resumption of Russian military activity.[19] Kremlin-affiliated Russian academic Dmitry Suslov published an op-ed in Russian business outlet *Kommersant* claiming that any possible ceasefire and peace settlement that emerges from the August 15 US-Russia summit will be based “primarily on the Russian approach” but that Russia will “continue to win” on the battlefield even if the summit does not result in any agreements about the war.[20] Russian Liberal Democratic Party (LDPR) Head and Duma Deputy Leonid Slutsky claimed on August 12 that additional Western military aid to Ukraine will not change the battlefield situation and that time is not on Ukraine’s and the West’s side.[21]

Russian officials’ statements continue to emphasize that Russia is unwilling to compromise and remains committed to achieving its original war aims. Russian officials’ continued references to the war’s “root cause” (which Kremlin officials have defined as Ukraine’s alleged discrimination against Russian speakers and NATO expansion) are reiterations of Russia’s original war demands from 2021 and 2022 for changes to NATO’s Open Door Policy and the removal of the current Ukrainian government.[22] Zhuralev’s claims about mineral deposits and the land bridge are setting informational conditions to claim that Russia cannot withdraw from eastern or southern Ukraine due to strategic Russian security interests. Zhuralev’s claim demonstrates Russia’s unwillingness to engage in good faith negotiations that require compromises - as ISW has repeatedly assessed. Russian officials have repeatedly attempted to frame Russia’s seizure of Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhia, and Kherson oblasts as inevitable to push Ukraine and the West to capitulate to Kremlin demands.[23] Russia has frequently employed informational campaigns that frame large-scale Russian advances and battlefield victories as inevitable, even when there are no negotiations on the horizon.[24] Russian efforts to influence the US-Russia summit in Alaska are unlikely to be successful, as US President Donald Trump previously stated that the United States would not pursue a US-Russian agreement to end Russia’s war against Ukraine during the summit.[25] Trump recently noted that Putin aims to conquer all of Ukraine – in line with ISW’s longstanding assessment.[26] Russia is trying to break the will of the United States and Europe to continue supporting Ukraine and to break Ukraine’s will to continue defending against Russian aggression in order to pave the way for Russia to achieve full Ukrainian capitulation.

Ukrainian intelligence indicated that North Korea recently deployed 11,000 soldiers to Russia to facilitate Russia’s war effort in Ukraine, further demonstrating Russia’s commitment to leaning on its anti-Western partners to protract the war in Ukraine. Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) Deputy Chief Major General Vadym Skibitskyi reported on August 12 that there are roughly 11,000 North Korean troops at Russian training grounds located largely in western Russia, including in Kursk Oblast. Skibitskyi noted that the Russian military command appears to have defined North Korean forces’ areas of responsibility as Kursk and Belgorod oblasts. Skibitskyi reported that North Korea has agreed to send additional troops to Russia to support reconstruction efforts in Kursk Oblast, which coheres with Russian Security Council Secretary Sergei Shoigu’s announcement in June 2025.[27] Skibitskyi noted that GUR is expecting the arrival of the first contingent of North Korean soldiers to Kursk Oblast to consist of approximately 1,200 soldiers. South Korean intelligence assessed in June 2025 that the Russian military command likely intended to leverage the deployment of North Korean troops to Russia in July or August 2025, and Skibitskyi’s report coheres with these reports.[28] The Russian military command likely aims to

leverage the influx of North Korean troops to pin Ukrainian forces to the Russian-Ukrainian border area as part of efforts to establish a buffer zone in northern Sumy and Kharkiv oblasts and to prevent the Ukrainian military command from redeploying manpower to reinforce Ukrainian defensive positions in other priority areas of the front.[29] Ukrainian Presidential Office Deputy Head Colonel Pavlo Palisa previously assessed that Russia likely seeks to create a buffer zone along the northern Ukrainian-Russian border by the end of 2025, and the Russian military command is likely aiming to exploit North Korean troops in pursuit of this objective.[30] It remains unclear whether North Korean troops will deploy to Ukrainian territory or remain in Russian border areas. North Korean troops deploying to Ukrainian territory would indicate a serious escalation in North Korea's commitment to support Russia's war effort, as North Korean troops have previously only fought on Russian territory. North Korean troops operating in Russian border areas would still free up Russian forces for deployment to the battlefield in Ukraine, however.

Key Takeaways:

- **Russian forces continued to infiltrate Ukrainian defenses east and northeast of Dobropillya (northwest of Pokrovsk) using limited sabotage and reconnaissance groups on August 12. Russian forces have yet to be able to deploy reinforcements to hold and exploit this tactical penetration and will likely face obstacles in trying to do so.**
- **Russian milbloggers, who often overinflate Russian advances, questioned Russia's ability to exploit the tactical penetration.**
- **The Russian tactical penetration in the Dobropillya direction was not immediate but came rather after months of Russian preparation and condition setting using new drone innovations and tactics at scale.**
- **Russian advances in the Pokrovsk direction are also only the most recent result of over 17 months' worth of protracted campaigning.**
- **Russian officials are attempting to exploit the tactical penetration near Dobropillya to influence the upcoming US-Russia summit in Alaska, but the Kremlin's overall strategic objective is to break the will of Ukraine, the United States, and Europe to achieve Russia's longstanding demand for full Ukrainian capitulation.**
- **Ukrainian intelligence indicated that North Korea recently deployed 11,000 soldiers to Russia to facilitate Russia's war effort in Ukraine, further demonstrating Russia's commitment to leaning on its anti-Western partners to protract the war in Ukraine.**
- **Russian forces recently advanced near Velykyi Burluk, Borova, and Pokrovsk.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Russo-Ukrainian War August 12, 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 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

Ukrainian Operations in the Russian Federation

Fighting continued in unspecified areas of Kursk Oblast on August 11 and 12.[31]

Russian milbloggers claimed on August 12 that Ukrainian forces counterattacked toward Tetkino (southwest of Glushkovo).[32]

Ukraine continued its long-range drone strike campaign against Russian military and defense industrial infrastructure overnight on August 11 to 12. Ukraine's Security Service (SBU) reported on August 12 that it conducted a drone strike against a Russian Shahed drone warehouse in Kzyl Yul, Republic of Tatarstan, for the second time in a week.[33] The SBU reported the previous strike on the Kzyl Yul warehouse on August 9.[34] Geolocated footage published on August 12 shows a drone striking the territory of the warehouse and a subsequent explosion.[35] The SBU stated that Russia stored Shahed drones and related foreign-sourced components at the warehouse, located roughly 43 kilometers from the Alabuga Special Economic Zone (SEZ) near Yelabuga, Republic of Tatarstan, where Russia has based a large-scale Shahed drone production facility.[36] Ukrainian broadcaster *Suspilne* reported on August 12 that Ukrainian intelligence sources confirmed that the Ukrainian Main Intelligence Directorate (GUR) conducted a drone strike against the Orenburg Helium Plant near Orenburg City, the only facility in Russia that produces helium, a key component in missile production.[37] *Suspilne* stated that the plant refines 15 million cubic meters of natural gas annually. *Suspilne* stated that residents reported a series of explosions around the plant.

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 continued offensive operations in northern Sumy Oblast on August 12 but did not advance.

Russian and Ukrainian sources reported that Ukrainian forces control Novokostyantynivka (north of Sumy City) as of August 12.[38]

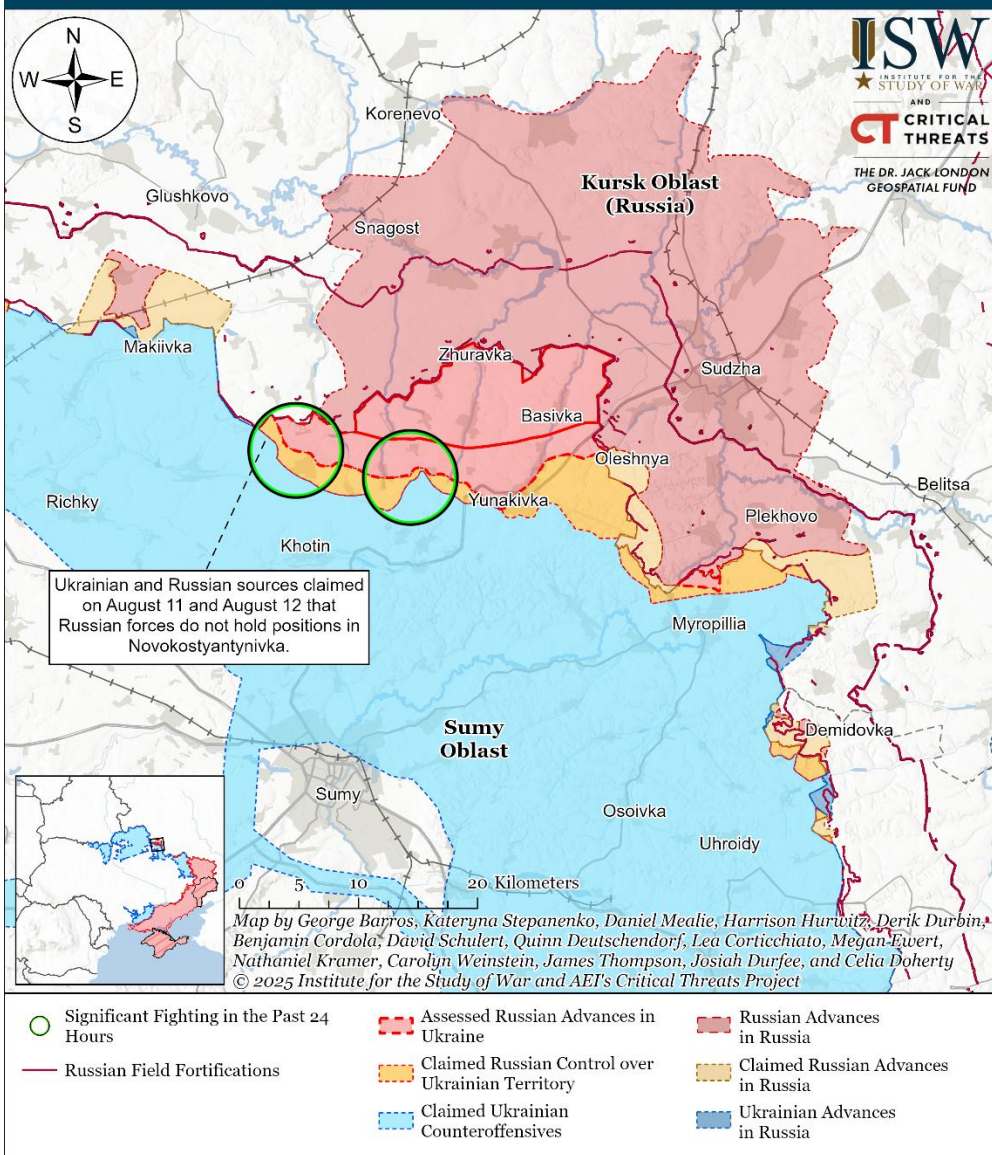
Russian forces attacked near Sumy City itself; north of Sumy City near Oleksiivka, Andriivka, and Kindrativka; and northeast of Sumy City near Yunakivka on August 11 and 12.[39] Russian milbloggers

claimed on August 12 that Ukrainian forces counterattacked near Sumy City, Oleksiivka, Andriivka, Kindrativka, Novokostyantynivka, Yunakivka, and Yablunivka (northeast of Sumy City).[40]

A Russian milblogger reportedly affiliated with the Russian Northern Group of Forces reported that elements of the 119th Airborne (VDV) Regiment (106th VDV Division) and the 83rd Separate VDV Brigade recently redeployed to Yunakivka to relieve elements of the 104th, 234th, and 237th VDV regiments (all part of the 76th VDV Division).[41] The milblogger also claimed that the Russian military command left elements of the Russian 51st VDV Regiment (106th VDV Division) stranded near Sadky (northeast of Sumy City) following a failed attempt by Russian forces to evacuate wounded personnel from the area.[42]

Order of Battle: Drone operators of the Russian 106th VDV Division, 83rd Separate VDV Brigade, Rosgvardia Special Forces, and the 155th Naval Infantry Brigade (Pacific Fleet) are reportedly striking Ukrainian forces in Sumy Oblast.[43] Drone operators of the Chechen Akhmat Spetsnaz Salyut Group are reportedly striking Ukrainian forces on the border of Kharkiv and Sumy oblasts.[44]

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Sumy Direction August 12, 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)

Russian forces continued offensive operations in northern Kharkiv Oblast on August 12 but did not advance.

Unconfirmed claims: A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced west of Synelnykove.[45]

Russian forces attacked northeast of Kharkiv City near Vovchansk, Synelnykove, and on the south (left) bank of the Vovcha River on August 11 and 12.[46]

The spokesperson of a Ukrainian brigade operating in northern Kharkiv Oblast reported on August 12 that Russian forces in the direction recently changed tactics and are no longer conducting mechanized assaults using tanks, infantry fighting vehicles, and armored personnel carriers, instead attacking in small assault groups either on foot or mounted on buggies, motorcycles, or all-terrain vehicles.[47] The spokesperson added that Russian forces leverage FPV and Supercam reconnaissance drones to strike Ukrainian ground lines of communication (GLOCs), and take advantage of terrain features such as windbreaks and foliage in order to flank settlements and approach Ukrainian positions undetected.

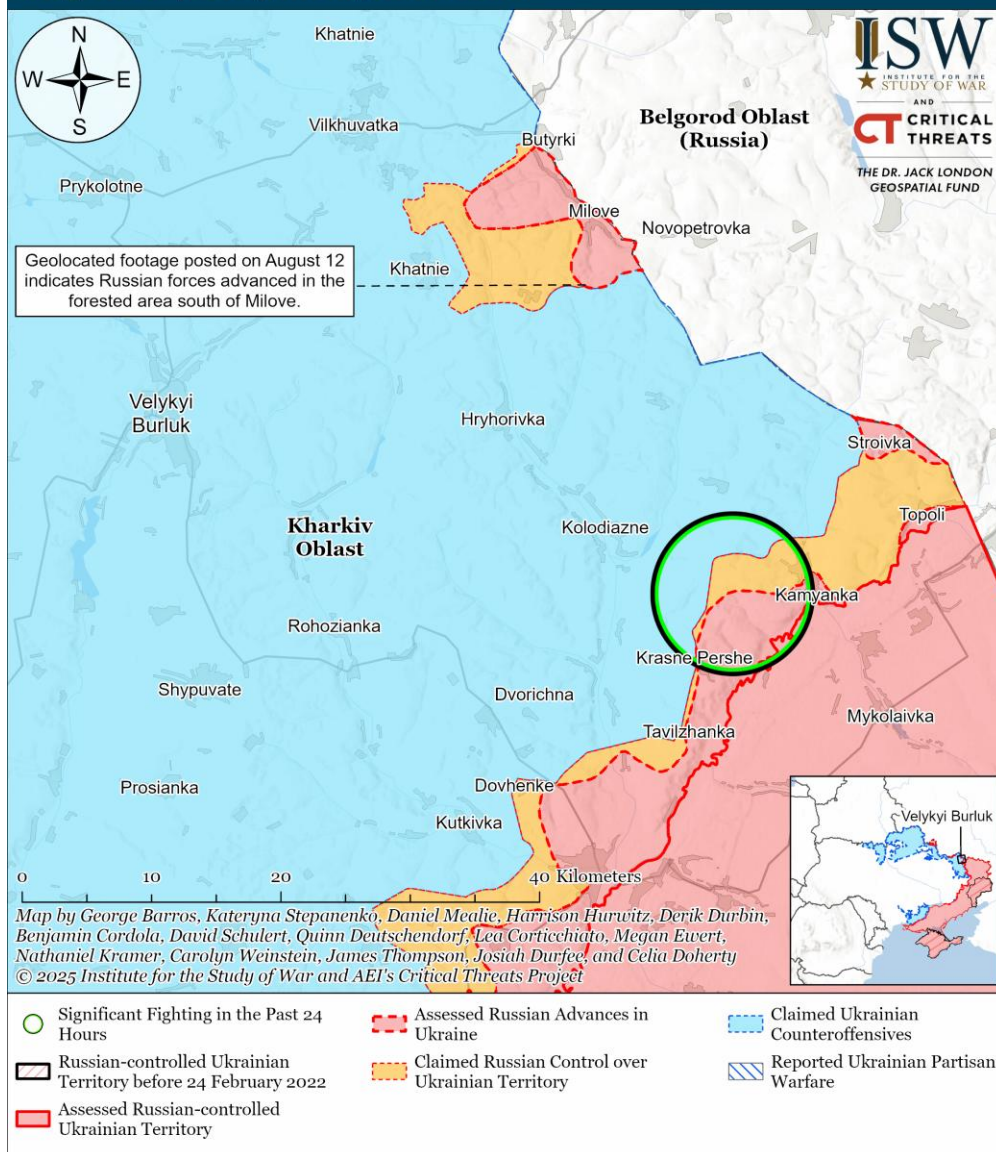
Ukrainian Railroads (Ukrzaliznytsia) Chief Executive Officer Oleksandr Pertsovskyi told *RBC-Ukraine* that Russian forces conducted an artillery strike against a railway station in Synelnykove on the night of August 9 to 10.[48]

Russian forces recently advanced in the Velykyi Burluk direction.

Assessed Russian advances: Geolocated footage published on August 12 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced south of Milove (northeast of Velykyi Burluk).[49]

An unspecified military source claimed to Kremlin newswire *TASS* on August 12 that Ukrainian forces counterattacked near Milove.[50]

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Velykyi Burluk Direction August 12, 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)

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Kupyansk direction on August 12 but did not advance.

Russian forces attacked near Kupyansk itself; west of Kupyansk near Myrove and Sobolivka; north of Kupyansk near Kindrashivka and Holubivka; northeast of Kupyansk near Dvorichna, east of Kupyansk near Petropavlivka; southeast of Kupyansk near Stepova Novoselivka; and south of Kupyansk near Kivsharivka on August 11 and 12.[51] A Russian source claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked near Radkivka (north of Kupyansk).[52]

The head of a Ukrainian artillery unit operating in the Kupyansk direction stated on August 12 that Russian forces are constantly shelling ground lines of communication (GLOCs) and conducting highly attritional small infantry group assaults in attempts to encircle or destabilize Ukrainian forces in the area.[53] A servicemember of a Ukrainian brigade operating in the Kupyansk direction stated that Russian forces are constantly attacking near Kupyansk in infantry groups as small as one person.[54] The spokesperson for a Ukrainian brigade operating in the Kupyansk direction reported that Russian forces are landing fiber-optic "waiter" drones in fields near Ukrainian GLOCs, setting the drones to wait, and then activating the drones to strike passing Ukrainian vehicles.□ The Ukrainian spokesperson also stated that Russian forces are conducting assaults at the same tempo as before but have recently changed tactics and are now attacking in groups of one to two soldiers instead of five to six, and are using anti-drone thermal imaging cloaks to attempt advances during all hours of the day.

Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian 352nd Motorized Rifle Regiment (11th Army Corps [AC], Leningrad Military District [LMD]) reportedly continue to operate near Stepova Novoselivka.[55]

Russian forces recently advanced in the Borova direction.

Assessed Russian advances: Geolocated footage published on August 11 indicates that elements of the Russian 12th Tank Regiment (4th Tank Division, 1st Guards Tank Army [GTA], Moscow Military District [MMD]) recently seized Zelenyi Hai (east of Borova).[56]

Unconfirmed claims: A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced southwest of Zelenyi Hai.[57]

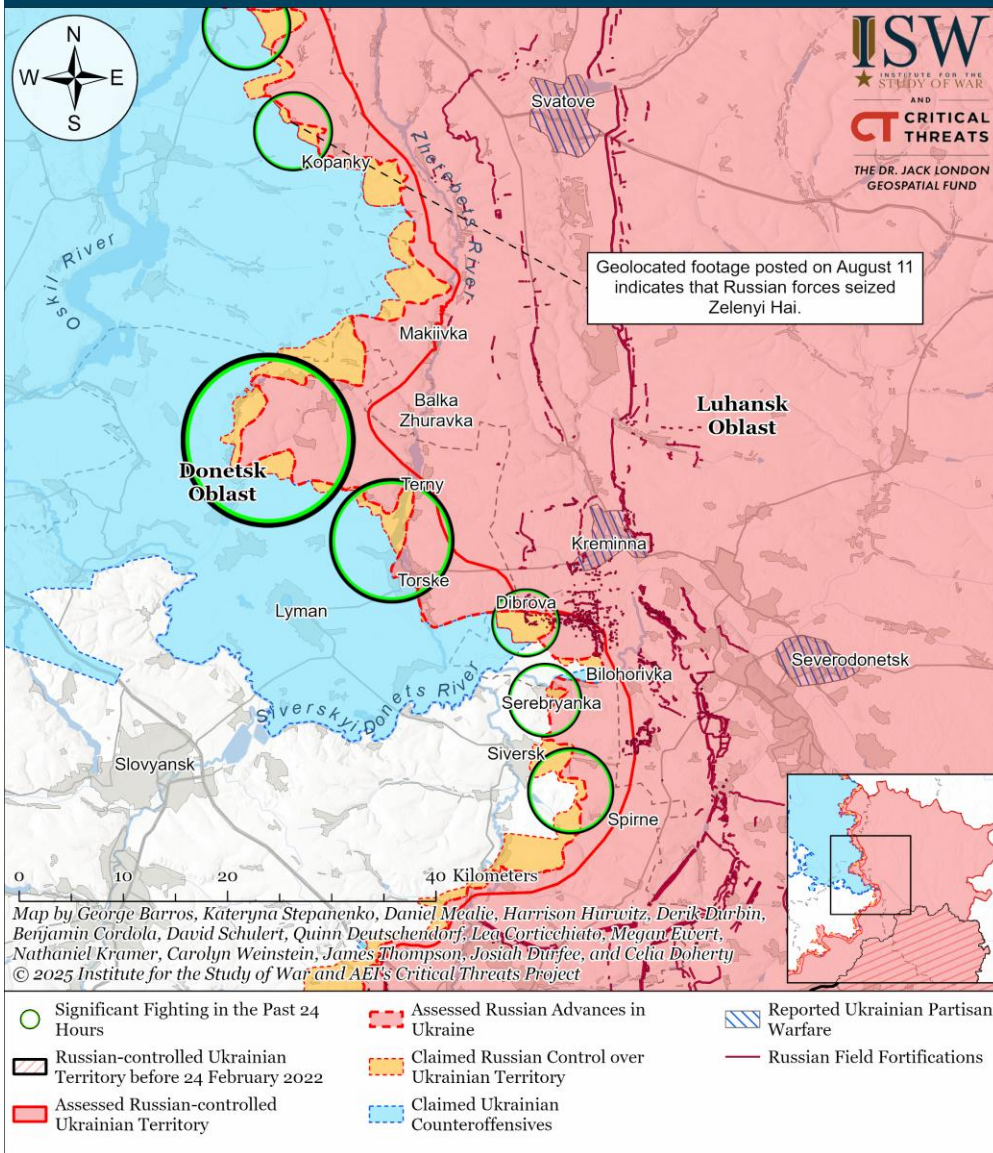
Russian forces conducted ground assaults near Borova itself; northeast of Borova near Nova Kruhlyakivka, Kruhlyakivka, Bohuslavka, and Zahryzove; and southeast of Borova near Hrekivka and Druzhelyubivka on August 11 and 12.[58]

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Lyman direction on August 12 but did not make confirmed advances.

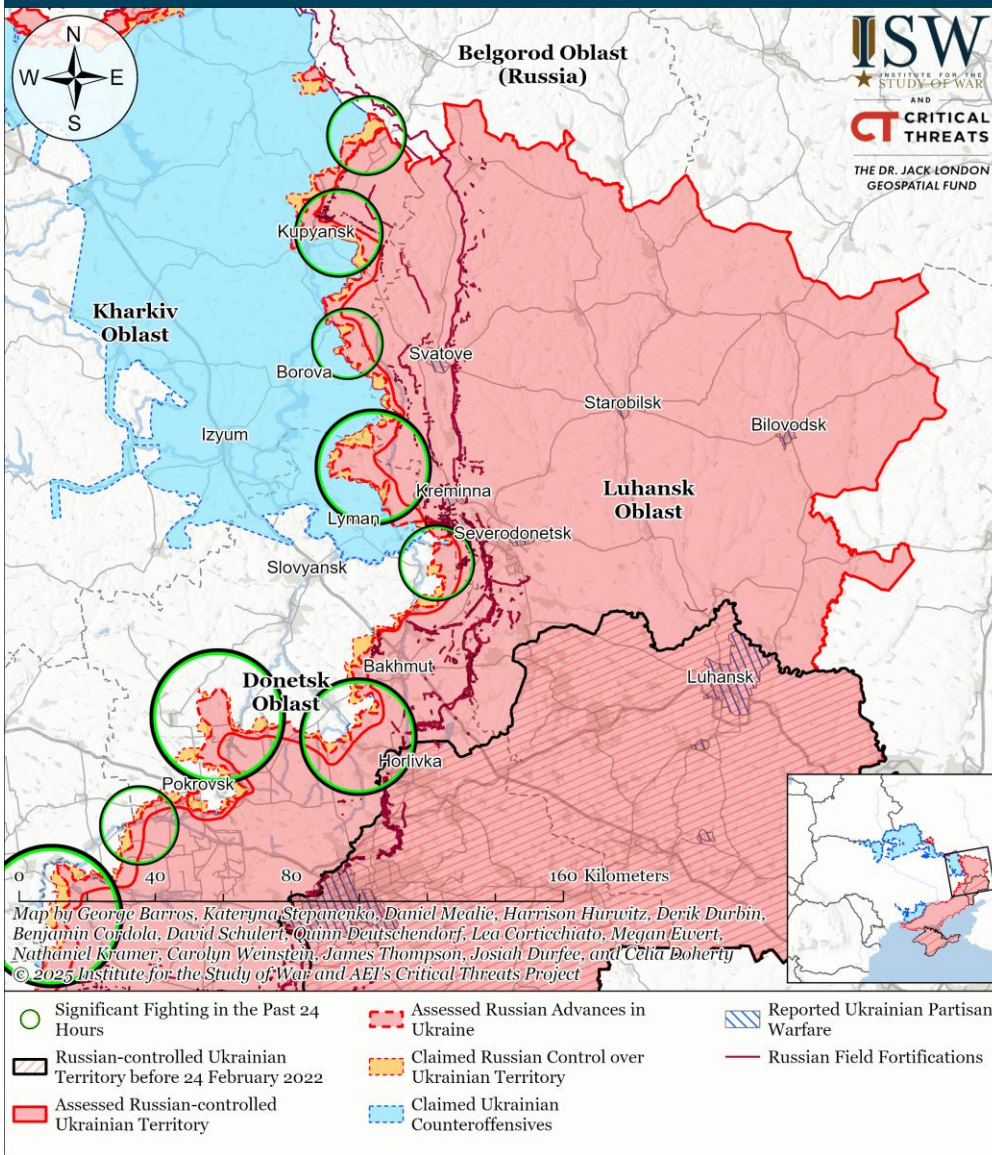
Unconfirmed claims: A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced within unspecified areas of the Serebryanske forest area (southeast of Lyman) and that these areas are now contested "gray" areas.[59]

Russian forces attacked northwest of Lyman near Serednie, Shandryholove, and Karpivka; north of Lyman near Ridkodub and toward Stavky; northeast of Lyman near Kolodyazi and Myrne; east of Lyman near Torske, Dibrova, and Zarichne; and southeast of Lyman toward Yampil and in the Serebryanske forest area on August 11 and 12.[60] A Russian source claimed on August 12 that Ukrainian forces are counterattacking near Kolodyazi.[61]

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Svatove-Kreminna Direction August 12, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST

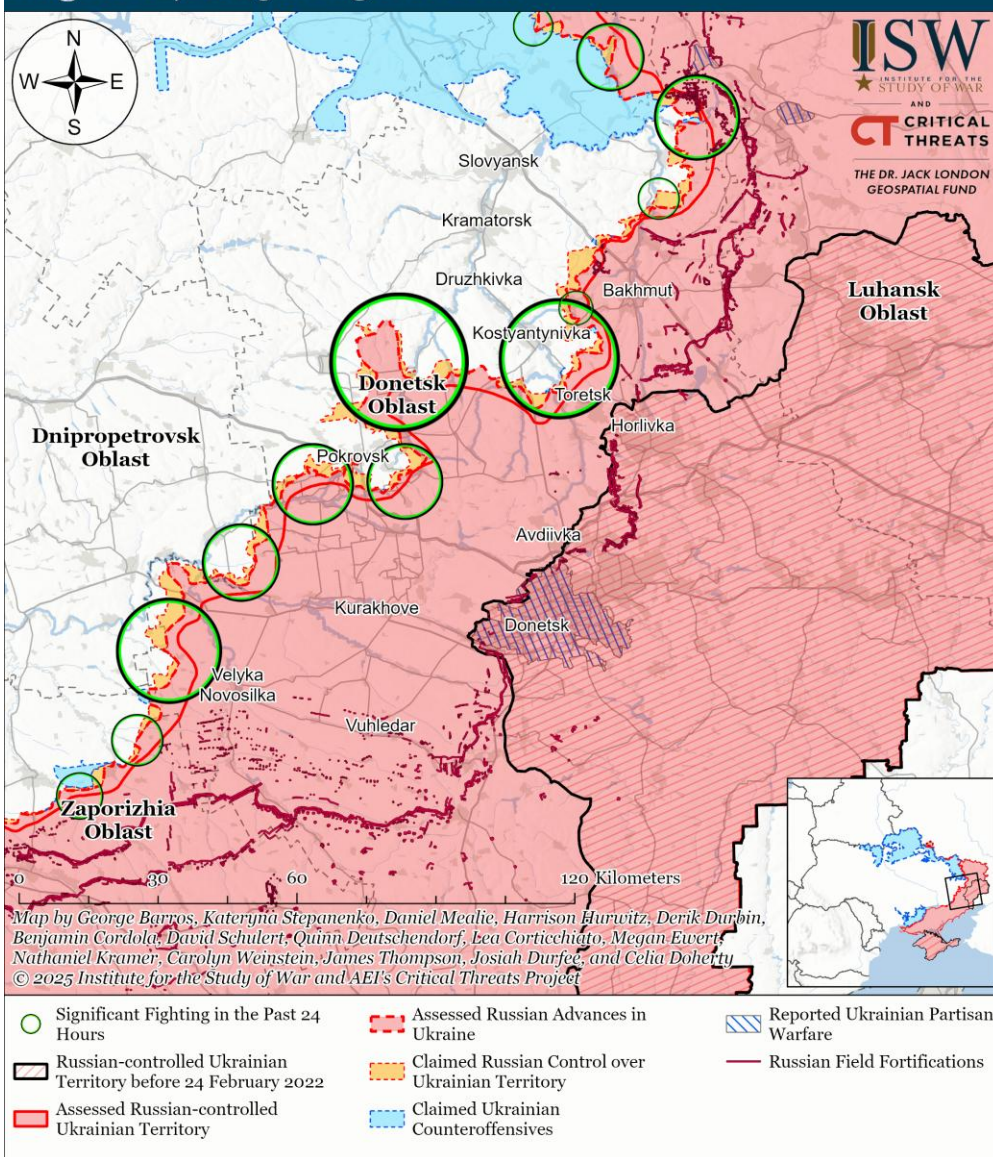


Assessed Control of Terrain in Luhansk Oblast August 12, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



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 August 12, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Siversk direction on August 12 but did not advance.

Russian forces attacked toward Siversk itself, northeast of Siversk near Hryhorivka and Serebryanka, and southeast of Siversk near Vyimka on August 11 and 12.[62]

The Ukrainian General Staff reported on August 11 that Ukrainian forces struck the command post of the Russian 85th Separate Motorized Rifle Brigade (3rd Combined Arms Army [CAA], formerly 2nd Luhansk People's Republic Army Corps [LNR AC], Southern Military District [SMD]) with an unspecified high-precision weapon, killing the brigade commander and five members of its operational staff.[63] ISW recently observed reports that elements of the 85th Separate Motorized Rifle Brigade are operating near Fedorivka (south of Siversk).[64]

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Chasiv Yar direction on August 12 but did not advance.

Russian forces attacked west of Chasiv Yar near Mykolaivka and south of Chasiv Yar near Stupochky, Oleksandro-Shulytne, and Bila Hora on August 11 and 12.[65]

A non-commissioned officer (NCO) of a Ukrainian brigade operating in the Kramatorsk (Chasiv Yar) direction reported on August 12 that Russian forces have intensified attacks in this direction and are leveraging small mobile infantry units, drones, and occasionally light motorized vehicles such as scooters and motorcycles, as Russian forces have largely abandoned large mechanized assault tactics.[66] The NCO stated that the Russian military command's main tactical objective is to penetrate Ukrainian forces' rear and gain a foothold, and that Russian forces are conducting five to seven assaults per day in groups of two to four personnel in pursuit of this objective. The NCO reported that Russian forces are also leveraging Lancet drones to strike Ukrainian ground lines of communication (GLOCs).

Order of Battle: Drone operators of the Russian 27th Artillery Regiment (6th Motorized Rifle Division, 3rd Army Corps [AC]) and of the Rubikon Center for Advanced Unmanned Technologies are reportedly striking Ukrainian positions near Kostyantynivka (southwest of Chasiv Yar).[67] Drone operators of the Nevsky Volunteer Reconnaissance-Assault Brigade (Russian Volunteer Corps) are reportedly striking Ukrainian positions in the Kramatorsk-Druzhkivka direction (west to northwest of Chasiv Yar).[68]

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Toretsk direction on August 12 but did not make confirmed advances.

Unconfirmed claims: Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces recently advanced west of Katerynivka and west of Poltavka (both northwest of Toretsk).[69]

Russian forces attacked near Toretsk itself; north of Toretsk near Dyliivka; northwest of Toretsk near Nelipivka, Katerynivka, Kleban Byk, Popiv Yar, Yablunivka, Rusyn Yar, and Poltavka and toward Stepanivka; and west of Toretsk near Shcherbynivka on August 11 and 12.[70] A Kremlin-affiliated Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked within Katerynivka.[71]

A Russian source claimed on August 12 that Russian forces formed a fire pocket near Kleban-Byk.[72] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces are advancing near Yablunivka (northwest of Toretsk) in groups of two to three personnel on motorcycles and on foot and are leveraging foliage and damaged buildings for cover.[73] The Russian milblogger claimed that drones often provide support for advancing Russian forces and that Ukrainian forces maintain only one remaining GLOC left along the H-20 Donetsk-Kostyantynivka highway.

Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian 103rd Motorized Rifle Regiment (150th Motorized Rifle Division, 8th CAA, SMD) reportedly continue to operate near Kleban Byk.[74] Drone operators of the 68th Tank Regiment (150th Motorized Rifle Division) and artillery elements of the 439th Brigade (8th CAA) are reportedly striking Ukrainian positions near Katerynivka.[75]

Russian forces recently advanced in the Pokrovsk direction.

See topline text for Russian assessed and claimed advances in relation to the Dobropillya direction.

Assessed Russian advances: Geolocated footage published on August 12 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced in eastern Rodynske (north of Pokrovsk) and in central Udachne (southwest of Pokrovsk).[76]

Unconfirmed claims: Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced in southeastern Rodynske, in eastern Krasnyi Lyman, southeast of Svitle (both northeast of Pokrovsk), to southern Shevchenko, east of Novooleksandrivka (both northwest of Pokrovsk), and northwest of Leontovychi (southwest of Pokrovsk).[77]

Russian forces attacked northeast of Pokrovsk near Volodymyrivka, Kolodyazi, Zapovidne, Nove Shakove, Rodynske, Dorozhne, Sukhetske, and Kucheriv Yar; east of Pokrovsk near Novoekonomichne and Promin; southeast of Pokrovsk near Lysivka; and southwest of Pokrovsk near Zvirove and Udachne on August 11 and 12.[78]

Ukrainian National Guard Commander Brigadier General Oleksandr Pivnenko reported on August 11 that the most intense drone warfare on the frontline is occurring near Pokrovsk.[79] The spokesperson of a Ukrainian brigade operating in the Pokrovsk direction reported on August 12 that Russian forces are constantly attacking and conducting air and artillery strikes in the Pokrovsk direction and that Russian forces in this direction are not receiving timely updates regarding the current operational situation and are conducting attacks without knowing where they are meant to advance.[80] A Ukrainian corps unit operating in the Pokrovsk direction reported on August 12 that the Russian military command is transferring reserves to this direction, including unspecified BARS (Russian Combat Army Reserve) elements, to the Pokrovsk direction to relieve exhausted units.[81]

Order of Battle: Drone operators of the Russian Vega Spetsnaz Detachment (24th Guards Spetsnaz Brigade, Russian General Staff's Main Intelligence Directorate [GRU]) reportedly continue to strike Ukrainian forces in the Pokrovsk direction.[82]

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Novopavlivka direction on August 12 but did not advance.

Russian forces attacked southeast of Novopavlivka near Horikhove, Dachne, Novoukrainka; south of Novopavlika near Tovste, Myrne, and Piddubne and toward Filiya; and southwest of Novopavlika near Andriivka-Klevtsove, Zelenyi Hai, and Ivanivka on August 11 and 12.[83]

Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian 74th Motorized Rifle Brigade (41st CAA, Central Military District [CMD]) are reportedly operating in the Dnipropetrovsk (Novopavlivka) direction.[84]

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Velykomykhailivka direction on August 12 but did not advance.

Russian forces attacked east of Velykomykhailivka near Voskresenka and Oleksandrohrad and southeast of Velykomykhailivka near Maliivka, Vilne Pole and toward Komyshuvakha and Novoivanivka on August 11 and 12.[85]

Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian 11th Air Force and Air Defense Army (Russian Aerospace Forces [VKS] and Eastern Military District [EMD]) are reportedly striking Ukrainian positions in

Novoselivka (east of Velykomykhailivka) using FAB guided glide bombs.[86] Drone operators of the 14th Spetsnaz Brigade (GRU) are reportedly striking Ukrainian forces near Maliivka.[87]

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)

Russian forces continued offensive operations in eastern Zaporizhia Oblast on August 12 but did not advance.

Russian forces attacked northeast of Hulyaipole near Poltavka and Olhivske and east of Hulyaipole near Malynivka on August 12.[88]

Order of Battle: Drone operators of the Russian Smuglyanka Detachment and 38th Motorized Rifle Brigade (35th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Eastern Military District [EMD]) are reportedly striking Ukrainian forces in Zaporizhia Oblast.[89] Drone operators of the special incendiary detachment of the 16th Spetsnaz Brigade (Russian General Staff's Main Directorate [GRU]) are reportedly striking Ukrainian positions in the Vremivka (Hulyaipole) direction using unspecified thermobaric ammunition.[90] Artillery elements of the 3rd Motorized Rifle Battalion (reportedly of the 64th Motorized Rifle Brigade, 35th CAA, EMD) are reportedly striking Ukrainian positions near Dorozhnyanka (south of Hulyaipole).[91]

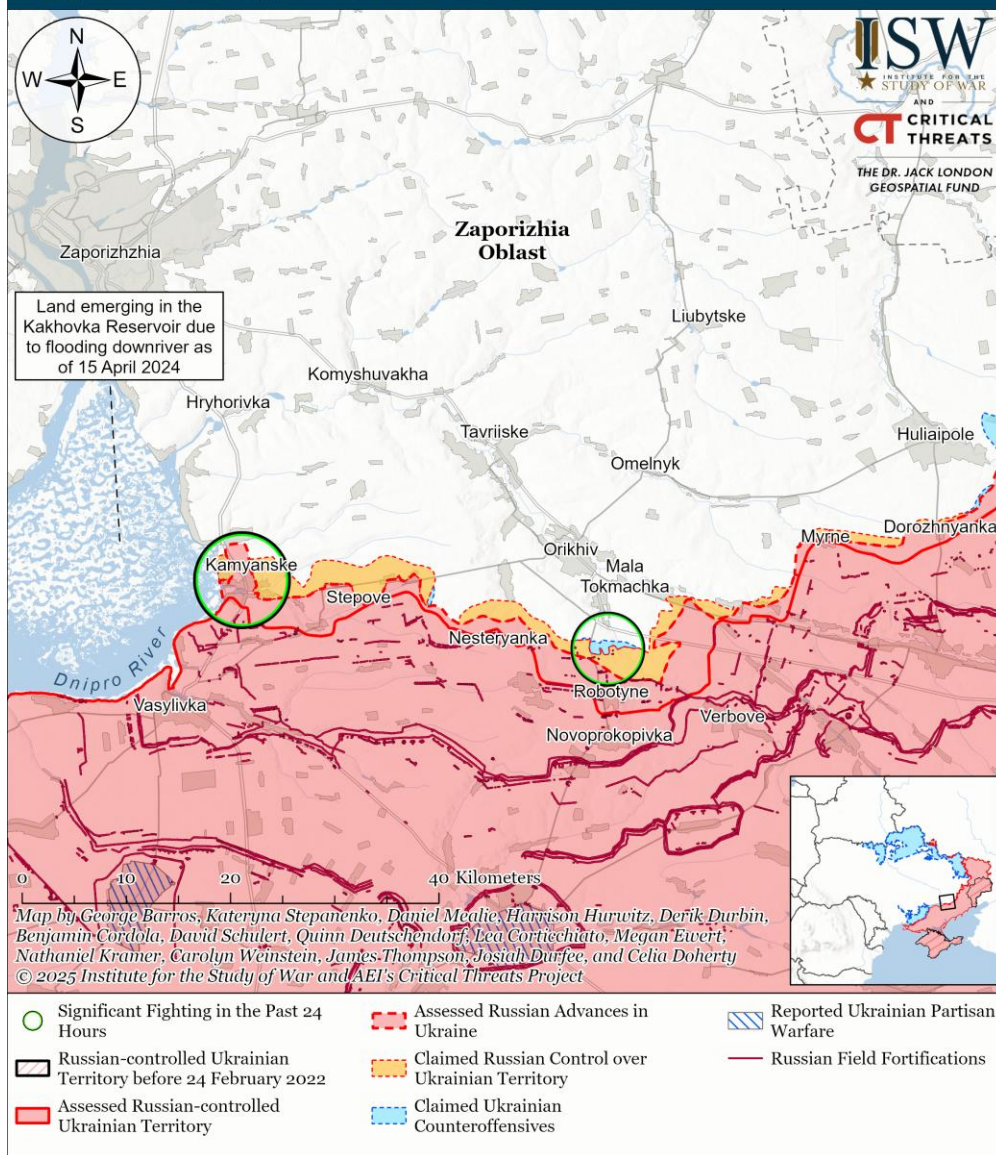
Russian forces continued offensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast on August 12 but did not make confirmed advances.

Unconfirmed claims: A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced within Stepanohirsk (west of Orikhiv).[92]

Russian forces attacked southeast of Orikhiv near Mala Tokmachka; south of Orikhiv toward Novodanylivka; southwest of Orikhiv near Nesteryanka; and west of Orikhiv near Kamyanske, Stepanohirsk, and Plavni on August 11 and 12.[93] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked near Mala Tokmachka.[94]

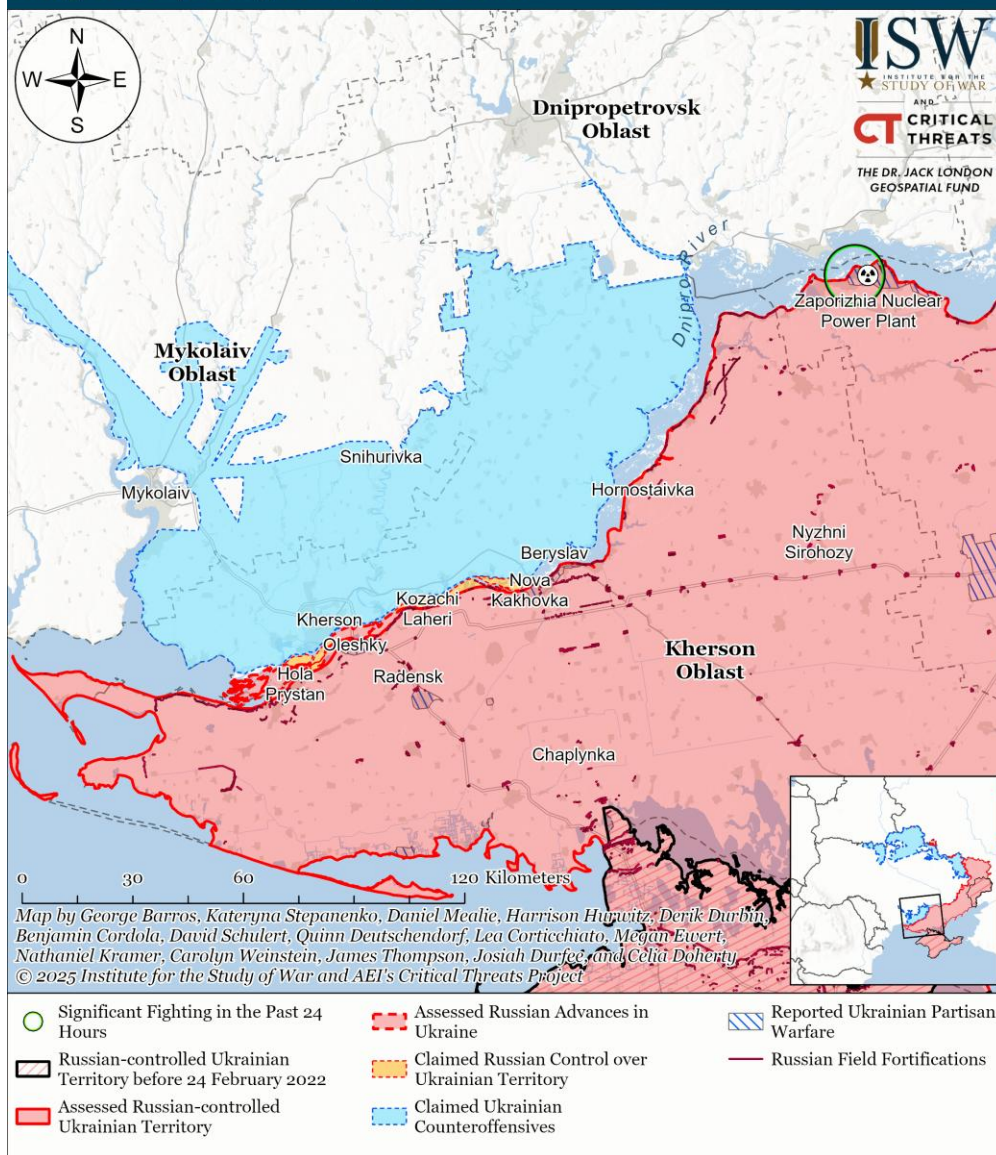
Order of Battle: Drone operators and elements of the Russian 7th Airborne (VDV) Division are reportedly striking Ukrainian positions near Kamyanske and Plavni and operating near Stepanohirsk, respectively.[95] Drone operators and artillery elements of the 4th Military Base (58th CAA, Southern Military District [SMD]) are reportedly striking Ukrainian positions near Mala Tokmachka.[96]

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Zaporizhia Direction August 12, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



Russian forces continued limited attacks in the Kherson direction on August 11 and 12 but did not advance.[97]

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Kherson Direction August 12, 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 and missile strikes against Ukraine overnight on August 11 to 12. The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Russia launched four Iskander-M ballistic missiles from Bryansk and Voronezh oblasts and 48 Shahed-type strike and decoy drones from Bryansk City; Millerovo, Rostov Oblast; and Shatalovo, Smolensk Oblast.[98] The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Russian forces struck Sumy and Donetsk oblasts with drones and Chernihiv Oblast with missiles. The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Ukrainian forces downed 36 drones and that 12 Russian drones and three missiles struck seven unspecified locations in Ukraine. Ukrainian officials reported that Russian strikes damaged civilian and administrative infrastructure in Sumy Oblast.[99] The Ukrainian Land Forces reported on August 12 that Russian forces conducted a missile strike on a Ukrainian forces'

training ground in an unspecified part of Ukraine overnight on August 11 to 12, killing one Ukrainian servicemember.[100] A Kremlin-affiliated Russian milblogger speculated that a Russian missile struck a Ukrainian training ground in Honcharivske, Chernihiv Oblast.[101]

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

Belarusian International Military Cooperation Department Head Valery Revenko stated on August 12 that Russia and Belarus will conduct the combined Zapad-2025 military exercise in Belarus from September 12 to 16.[102] Revenko stated that the Zapad-2025 exercise will leverage the Union State's Regional Grouping of Forces, but did not confirm the total number of Belarusian and Russian personnel that will participate.

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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