

Anna Harvey, Grace Mappes, Daria Novikov, Jessica Sobieski, Justin Young, George Barros, and Frederick W. Kagan with Nate Trotter

April 19, 2025, 10:30pm ET

Note: The data cut-off for this product was 12:15pm ET on August 19. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the August 20 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov accurately stated that the Kremlin's objective in Ukraine is to politically control all of Ukraine rather than to seize select Ukrainian territories such as Donetsk Oblast. Lavrov claimed in a televised interview on August 19 that the Kremlin has "never talked about the need to seize any territories" from Ukraine and that Russia's goal was not to seize Crimea, Donbas, or other areas of Ukraine.[1] The claim seems bizarre in the context of Russia's repeated demands that Ukraine and the West recognize Russia's annexation of Ukrainian territory, including territory Russian forces do not control. It reflects the deeper Russian aims in Ukraine, however, quite accurately. Lavrov reiterated that Russia's war objectives concern "protecting" the people in Ukraine from the Ukrainian government, which the Kremlin falsely portrays as illegitimate and oppressive.[2] Lavrov's description of the Kremlin's aim to "protect" Ukrainians from their own government reflects the fact that the Kremlin seeks to remove the democratically elected Ukrainian government and replace it with a pro-Russian government that would allow the Kremlin to control Ukraine without needing to fight for physical control over territory or annex it. Lavrov notably made demands during the interview that reject Ukraine's sovereignty including that Ukraine repeal laws regarding language and religion that are the proper concern only of the government of a sovereign state. Lavrov stated explicitly "there can be no talk of any long-term [peace] agreements" with Ukraine "without respect" for Russia's security and the rights of Russian-speakers in Ukraine, as "these are the reasons that must be urgently eliminated in the context of a settlement." [3] The Kremlin's continued insistence on controlling Ukrainian domestic affairs reflects the arguments made by Russian President Vladimir Putin in his 2021 essay arguing that Ukraine should not exist independently of Russia.[4]

Lavrov's August 19 statement further emphasizes the Kremlin's broader objective of obtaining full political control over Ukraine before Russia ends its war.[5] Considering Russia's territorial demands separately from demands concealed by its references to "root causes" obscures the reality that the Kremlin views its war demands as indivisible – the Kremlin aims to accomplish all of these goals and has shown no willingness to compromise any of them or sacrifice some for others to facilitate or complete a peace process. The Kremlin has repeatedly defined its war aims as Ukrainian demilitarization, government change in favor of a pro-Russian proxy government, and Ukrainian commitments barring it from joining NATO and other international alliances.[6] Kremlin officials have consistently reiterated throughout the war and negotiations process that Russia will achieve these war aims either militarily or diplomatically in line with Lavrov's August 19 statements.[7]

Russia launched the full-scale invasion in 2022 after failing to secure control over Ukraine by other means. Russia has long attempted to exert control over former Soviet states through continuing cognitive warfare efforts.[8] Ukraine's 2004 Orange Revolution, in which the Ukrainian people protested for a transparent Western-style government, threatened effective Russian control over Ukraine and prompted the Kremlin to launch a series of cognitive warfare efforts in order to stop and reverse the loss of Russian influence in Ukraine.[9] Russian President Vladimir Putin accelerated his efforts to undermine Ukrainian sovereignty following the 2014 Euromaidan Revolution that drove out Ukraine's Russia-friendly president, Viktor Yanukovych, and in favor of a democratically elected, pro-Western government.[10] Russia illegally occupied and annexed Crimea in response, accelerated hybrid operations, and backed separatist forces in eastern Ukraine.[11] Putin tried to force Ukraine to legitimize the Russia-invented Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) and Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) in the 2015 Minsk II accords that established the ceasefire that Russia broke fully in 2022. The Kremlin pressured Ukraine to extend the legal limited autonomy of the regions in December 2019 and to enshrine broader autonomy for Donbas as a constituent part of Ukraine into the Ukrainian Constitution so that the DNR and LNR could serve as conduits for Russian influence in and ultimately control over the government in Kyiv, but Ukraine rejected this effort.[12] The Kremlin ultimately launched the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 after this failure to bring Ukraine back under Russian control. Putin has long denied Ukrainian sovereignty and alleged that Ukrainians have always belonged to the Russian nation because of their shared "historical and spiritual space." [13] Putin used these claims as part of his justification for the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, which was the culmination of eight years of failed efforts to regain control of Ukraine through hybrid warfare campaigns.

Russia similarly seeks to exert influence over the internal governance of other former Soviet countries, including NATO states, effectively denying their sovereignty and setting conditions to threaten their independent governance. Russian officials are setting informational conditions to justify exerting control over former Soviet states, including NATO members Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia, by denying the legality of the collapse of the Soviet Union.[14] The Kremlin asserts its right to interfere in the internal affairs of the Baltic States by prosecuting officials who remove Soviet-era war monuments and citizens who graffiti them within these states' sovereign territories in absentia under Russian law that does not apply to those states.[15] Russia notably launched one of the first ever cyberattacks against Estonia in response to the Estonian government's decision to relocate a Soviet "Monument to the Liberators of Tallinn." [16] Russian efforts to exert control over the Baltics has failed. Russia has been much more successful in establishing control over both Belarus and Georgia, however, by launching hybrid operations in both countries and backing pro-Russian governments that are loyal to the Kremlin.[17] The Kremlin now seeks to bring Belarus further into Russian control through the Union State framework and to eliminate the facade of an independent Belarus completely.

Lavrov implicitly rejected suggestions that Russia might accept Western security guarantees for Ukraine. Lavrov stated on August 19 that Russia and Ukraine cannot make any long-term agreements that do not take into account Russia's "security interests," very likely referring to Russia's demand for Ukrainian "neutrality." [18] Russian officials have long insisted on Ukrainian neutrality and non-alignment with NATO as a precondition to negotiations, and Russia is likely setting information space conditions to oppose Western security guarantees for Ukraine.[19] Russian Ministry

of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Spokesperson Maria Zakharova stated on August 18 that Russia "categorical[ly] reject[s]... any scenario that envisages the appearance in Ukraine of a military contingent with the participation of NATO countries." [20] The Kremlin's demand ostensibly for Ukraine's neutrality is in fact meant to isolate Ukraine from its allies and deny Ukraine its sovereign right to form alliances even as Russia insists on de facto control over Ukraine's domestic internal affairs. [21]

Russian forces appear to be attempting to counterattack Ukrainian forces clearing the Russian infiltration near Dobropillya as Ukrainian forces increasingly threaten the base of the penetration. Geolocated footage published on August 18 and 19 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced in an area northwest of Poltavka and northeast of Volodymyrivka (both southeast of Dobropillya). [22] Russian milbloggers also claimed on August 18 and 19 that Russian forces are bypassing Volodymyrivka toward Sofiivka (northeast of Volodymyrivka) and are flanking Ukrainian positions in and near Shakhove (immediately north of Volodymyrivka) from the west in the main penetration and from the east near Volodymyrivka. [23] The Russian advance and pattern of attacks support an August 18 assessment from Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets, who stated that elements of the Russian 8th Combined Arms Army (CAA) (Southern Military District [SMD]) are attacking in the area east of Volodymyrivka to threaten the flank of Ukrainian forces that are attempting to cut off the base of the Russian penetration east and northeast of Dobropillya. [24] The base of the penetration is relatively narrow compared to its depth and runs along the Dorozhnie-Mayak-Volodymyrivka line (all southeast of Dobropillya). Mashovets assessed on August 18 that Russian forces attacking east of Volodymyrivka were advancing more slowly than Ukrainian forces attempting to cut off the base of the penetration, and noted that the forces operating within the main penetration are largely elements of the 51st CAA (SMD). Mashovets reported on August 19 that fighting begun for Mayak – indicating that Russian forces no longer exert firm control over Mayak and other settlements forming the base of the penetration and that Ukrainian forces are now threatening the heart of the penetration. [25] Milbloggers claimed that Russian forces also advanced toward or into Vesele and that heavy fighting is ongoing near Zoloty Kolodyaz (both northeast of Dobropillya in the main penetration). [26] An officer of a Ukrainian brigade operating near Dobropillya reported on August 19 that Ukrainian forces repelled a Russian attack near Vesele and that Russian forces are attempting to bring forward reserves to reinforce within the penetration. [27]

Russian infiltration tactics and a low manpower density along the frontline in the Pokrovsk direction have seemingly allowed Russian forces to restore limited, tactical maneuver east and southeast of Dobropillya – at least temporarily. Both Russian and Ukrainian forces in the Pokrovsk direction have a low manpower density along the frontline in the Pokrovsk direction, particularly near Dobropillya, and do not have continuous defensive positions but rather intermittent outposts on the frontline. [28] The terrain near Dobropillya consists of wide, open fields and a low density of settlements. These factors all favor rapid, tactical gains even in conditions of positional warfare, allowing Russian forces to attempt a flanking maneuver in support of a tactically significant penetration. Russian forces do not appear to have established a continuous defensive line within their narrow penetration east and northeast of Dobropillya, likely in part due to the infiltration tactics used to achieve the penetration. The tactical penetration is also a reflection of this low manpower density and relatively sparse positions on the frontline, in combination with favorable terrain in the area, can permit a degree of tactical maneuver. Russian forces likely remain unable to restore

operational maneuver to the battlefield in the near-term in large part due to the threat Ukrainian drones pose to Russian armored vehicles.

Ukraine and Russia conducted another exchange of the bodies of soldiers killed in action (KIA) on August 19. The Ukrainian Coordination Headquarters for the Treatment of Prisoners of War (POWs) reported on August 19 that Russia released the bodies of 1,000 deceased Ukrainian soldiers, including the bodies of five soldiers who died in Russian detention.[29] The Ukrainian Coordination Headquarters for the Treatment of POWs reported that Ukraine previously listed the servicemembers on the lists of severely wounded or severely ill prisoners to be exchanged in accordance with the June 2 Istanbul agreements.[30] Russian authorities confirmed that Russia returned the bodies of 1,000 KIA Ukrainian soldiers on August 19 and claimed that Russia only received the bodies of 19 KIA servicemembers.[31]

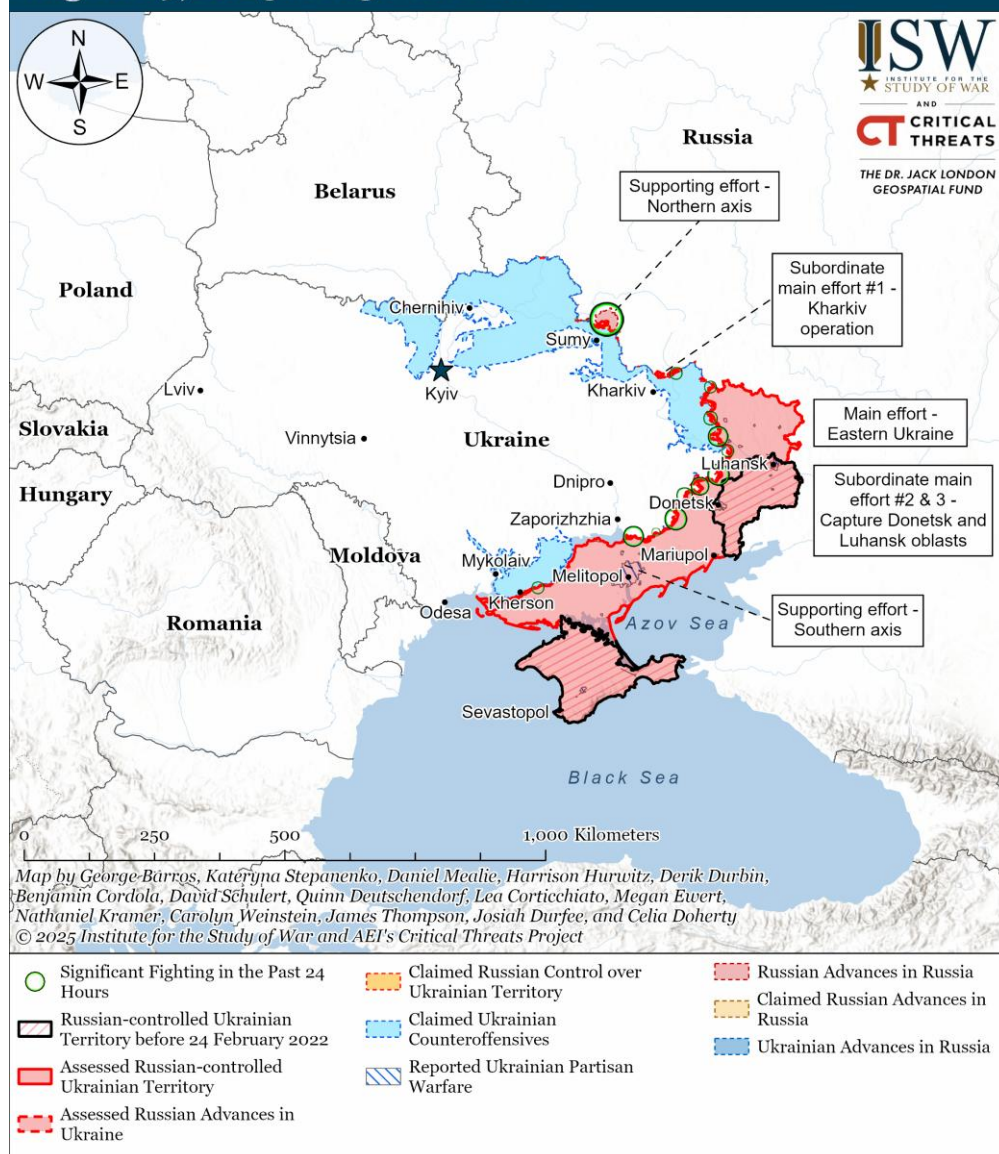
Ukrainian authorities implicated a soldier of the Russian 82nd Motorized Rifle Regiment in the executions of two Ukrainian prisoners of war (POWs) in Vovchansk, Kharkiv Oblast in Summer 2024. The Kharkiv Oblast Prosecutor's Office reported on August 19 that it opened an investigation into a Russian soldier of the 82nd Motorized Rifle Regiment (69th Motorized Rifle Division, 6th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Leningrad Military District [LMD]) who participated in the executions of two Ukrainian prisoners of war (POW) at the Vovchansk Aggregate Plant on June 16 and July 2, 2024.[32] The Kharkiv Oblast Prosecutor's Office noted that the Russian soldier, whom Ukrainian forces captured after the seizure of the plant on September 24, 2024, told Ukrainian investigators that a Russian commander ordered the execution of the Ukrainian POWs.[33] There has been a sharp increase in credible reports and footage of Russian forces executing Ukrainian POWs throughout 2024 and 2025, and ISW continues to assess that Russian military commanders are either complicit in or directly enabling their subordinates to conduct systemic executions in direct violation of international law.[34]

Key Takeaways:

- **Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov accurately stated that the Kremlin's objective in Ukraine is to politically control all of Ukraine rather than to seize select Ukrainian territories such as Donetsk Oblast.**
- **Russia launched the full-scale invasion in 2022 after failing to secure control over Ukraine by other means.**
- **Russia similarly seeks to exert influence over the internal governance of other former Soviet countries, including NATO states, effectively denying their sovereignty and setting conditions to threaten their independent governance.**
- **Lavrov implicitly rejected suggestions that Russia might accept Western security guarantees for Ukraine.**
- **Russian forces appear to be attempting to counterattack Ukrainian forces clearing the Russian infiltration near Dobropillya as Ukrainian forces increasingly threaten the base of the penetration.**

- **Russian infiltration tactics and a low manpower density along the frontline in the Pokrovsk direction have seemingly allowed Russian forces to restore limited, tactical maneuver east and southeast of Dobropillya —at least temporarily.**
- **Ukraine and Russia conducted another exchange of the bodies of soldiers killed in action (KIA) on August 19.**
- **Ukrainian authorities implicated a soldier of the Russian 82nd Motorized Rifle Regiment in the executions of two Ukrainian prisoners of war (POWs) in Vovchansk, Kharkiv Oblast in Summer 2024.**
- **Ukrainian forces advanced near Pokrovsk and Velykomykhailivka. Russian forces advanced near Chasiv Yar and Toretsk.**

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We do not report in detail on Russian war crimes because these activities are well-covered in Western media and do not directly affect the military operations we are assessing and forecasting. We will continue to evaluate and report on the effects of these criminal activities on the Ukrainian military and the Ukrainian population and specifically on combat in Ukrainian urban areas. We utterly condemn Russian violations of the laws of armed conflict and the Geneva Conventions and crimes against humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

- 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 18 and 19.[35]

A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces attacked from Yastrubne, Sumy Oblast, toward the international Kursk border area (southeast of Glushkovo).[36]

Two unspecified sources told Reuters on August 18 that Ukrainian drone strikes on August 13 and 14 damaged Lukoil’s Volgograd City oil refinery and that the refinery will halt oil processing until mid-September 2025 at the earliest.[37] Reuters reported that the strike damaged three distillation units with a combined daily processing capacity of 42,270 metric tons and noted that the refinery produced 5.1 percent of Russian refineries’ total oil volume in 2024.

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)

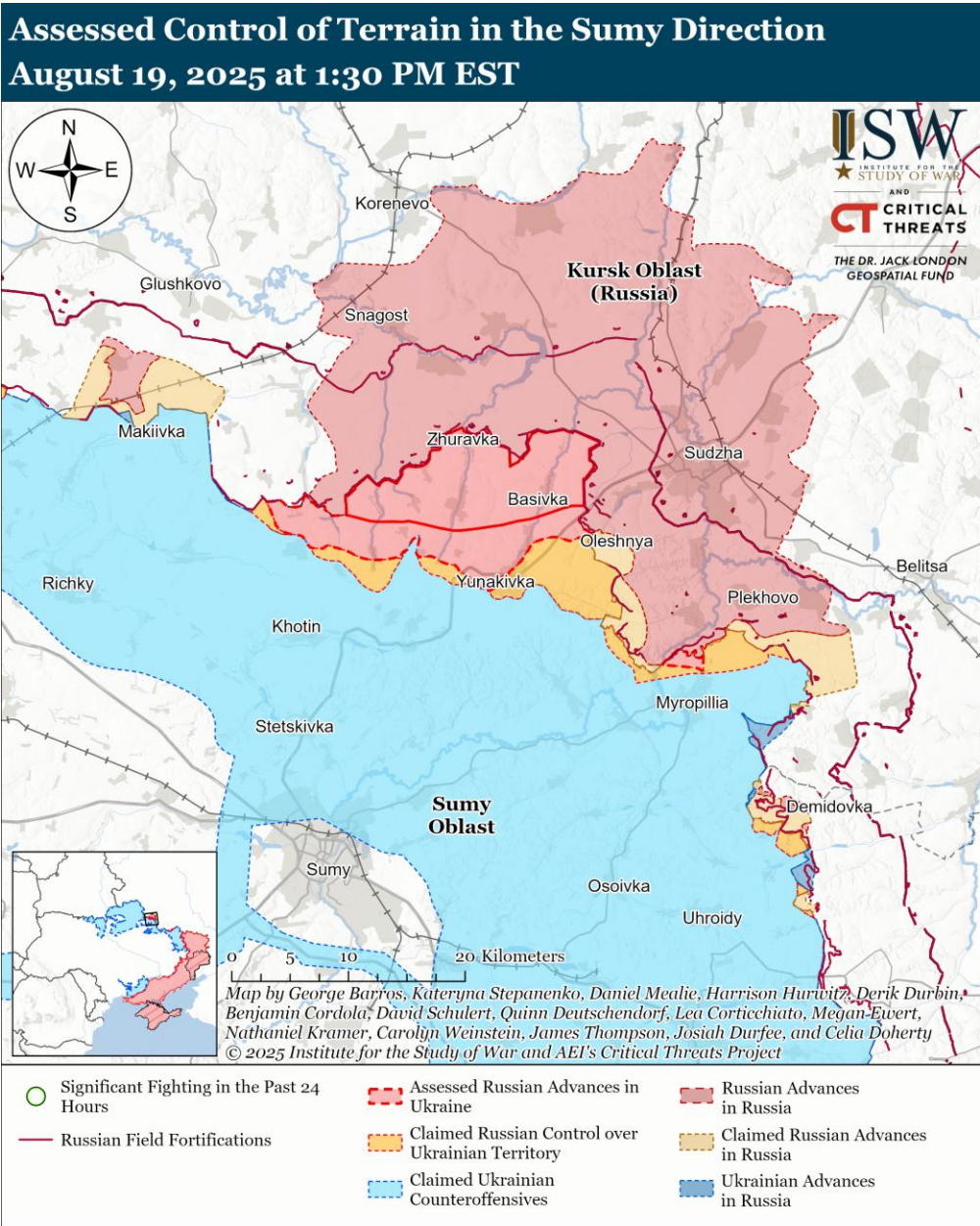
Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Sumy direction on August 19 but did not make confirmed advances.

Unconfirmed claims: A Russian milblogger claimed that unspecified elements of the Russian Airborne Forces (VDV) advanced within Yunakivka (northeast of Sumy City).[38]

Russian forces attacked north of Sumy City near Novokostyantynivka and Kindrativka and northeast of Sumy City within Yunakivka on August 18 and 19.[39] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked north of Sumy City near Kindrativka, Stepove, Novokostyantynivka, and Oleksiivka and northeast of Sumy City near Varachyne.[40]

Order of Battle: Drone operators of the Russian Anvar Spetsnaz Detachment (possibly referring to the BARS-25 Anvar volunteer detachment) are reportedly striking Ukrainian forces in Seredyna-Buda

(northwest of Sumy City), Mohrytsya (northeast of Sumy City), and Velyka Pysarivka (southeast of Sumy City).[41]



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 19 but did not advance.

Russian forces attacked northeast of Kharkiv City near Vovchansk, Hlyboke, Synelnykove, and on the south (left) bank of the Vovcha River on August 18 and 19.[42]

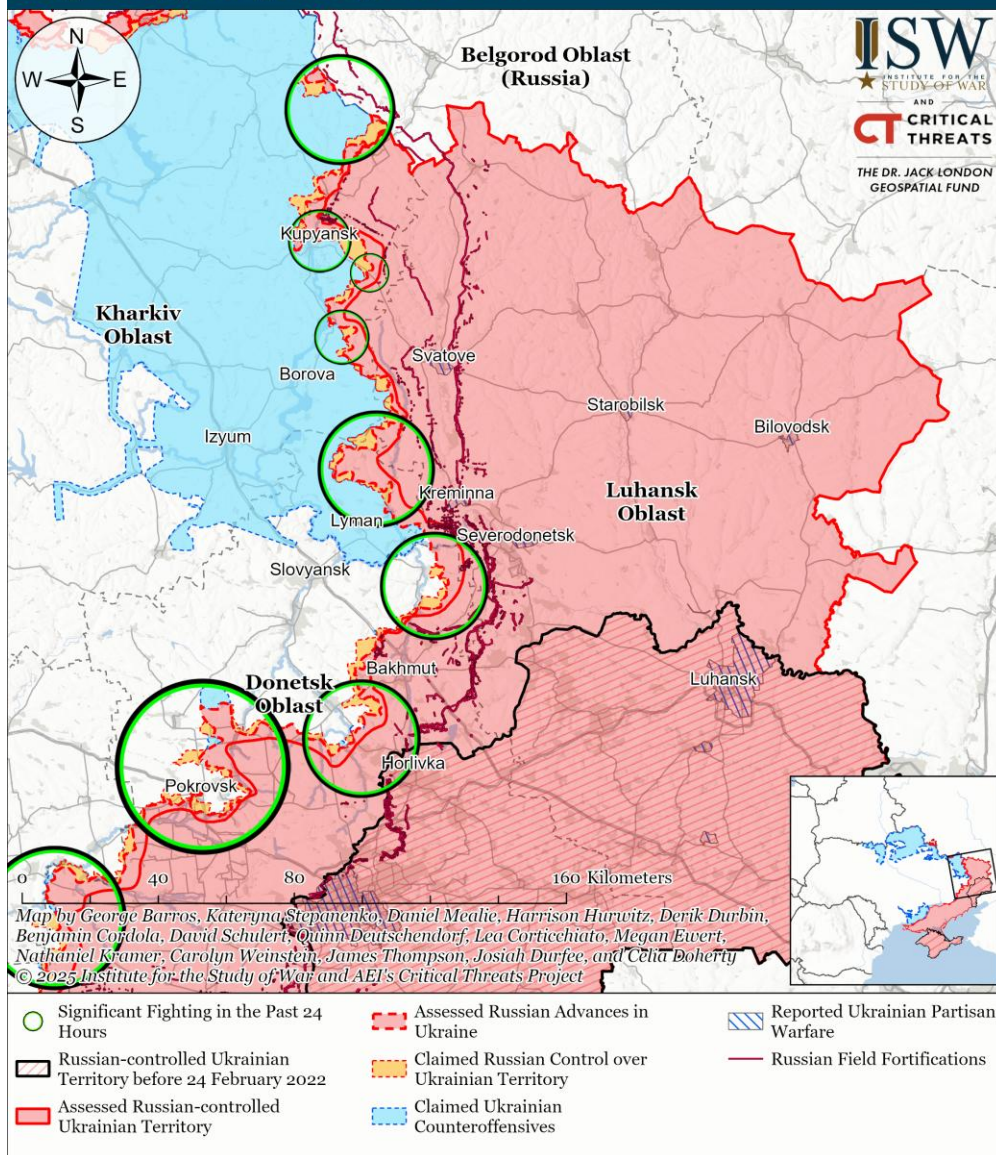
The deputy head of a Ukrainian fire support unit operating in northern Kharkiv Oblast stated on August 19 that Russian forces have conducted ineffective frontal assaults on Vovchansk since May 2024 and that Russian forces maintain positions in ruined buildings within the city.[43] The officer added that Russian forces continue attempts to assault Ukrainian positions in small infantry groups but that Ukrainian drone operators strike Russian force concentrations, preventing Russian assaults. The officer noted that Russian forces are moving infantry fighting vehicles close to the frontline but are unable to leverage tanks due to Ukrainian drone activity.

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Velykyi Burluk direction on August 19 but did not advance.

Russian forces attacked northeast of Velykyi Burluk near Ambarne and toward Khatnie on August 18 and 19.[44]

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 August 19, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Kupyansk direction on August 19 but did not make advances.

Russian forces attacked near Kupyansk itself; west of Kupyansk near Sobolivka and toward Blahodativka; just northwest of Kupyansk near Myrove; north of Kupyansk near Kindrashivka, Radkivka, and Holubivka and toward Kolodyazne; northeast of Kupyansk near Novovasylivka, Kamyanka, and Synkivka; east of Kupyansk near Petropavlivka; and southeast of Kupyansk near Stepova Novoselivka on August 18 and 19.[45] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked toward Synkivka.[46]

An officer of a Ukrainian brigade operating in the Kupyansk direction reported on August 19 that Russian forces are supplying forward units operating in this direction through drone drops and

individual personnel carrying ammunition and provisions.[47] The officer reported that Russian forces are increasingly leveraging anti-drone thermal imaging cloaks to evade Ukrainian drones during assaults, and that Russian infantry stop intermittently in dugouts and trenches to allow the cloaks to cool down in order to evade drone detection.

The commander of Ukraine's National Guard reported on August 18 that Ukrainian forces repelled a reinforced-platoon sized Russian mechanized assault of four MT-LB armored fighting vehicles (AFVs) and a tank in the Kupyansk direction.[48]

Order of Battle: Drone operators of the Russian 1st Guards Tank Army (Moscow Military District [MMD]) are reportedly striking Ukrainian positions near Kurylivka (southeast of Kupyansk).[49]

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Borova direction on August 19 but did not advance.

Russian forces attacked northeast of Borova near Zahryzove and southeast of Borova near Hrekivka and toward Cherneshchyna on August 18 and 19.[50]

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Lyman direction on August 19 but did not make confirmed advances.

Unconfirmed claims: A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces have seized over half of the Serebryanske forest area (southeast of Lyman).[51]

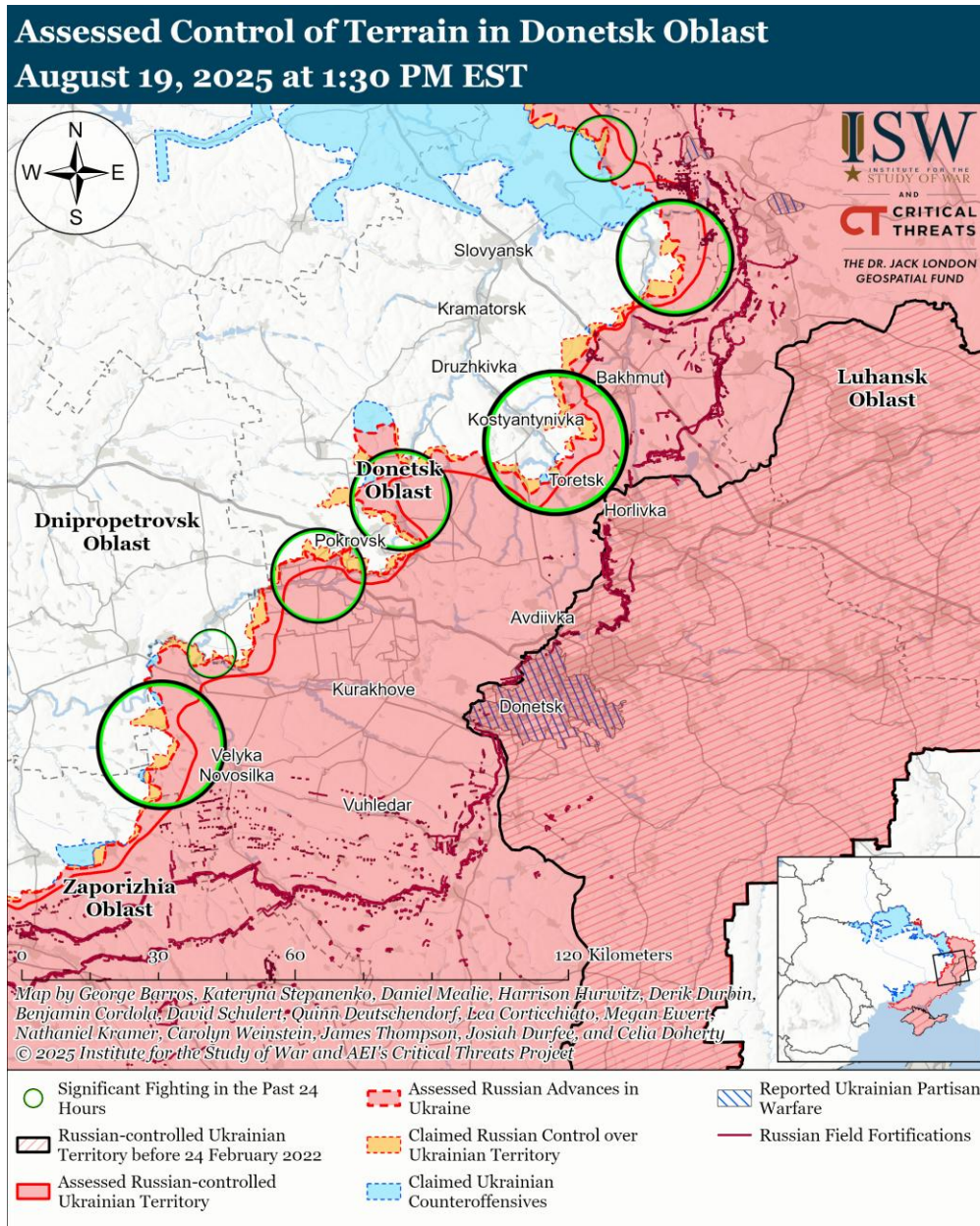
Russian forces attacked northwest of Lyman near Shandryholove and Karpivka and toward Drobysheve; north of Lyman near Zelena Dolyna, Ridkodub, and Stavky; northeast of Lyman near Kolodyazi and Myrne; east of Lyman near Torske, Zarichne, Dibrova; and southeast of Lyman toward Yampil and Hryhorivka and in the Serebryanske forest area on August 18 and 19.[52]

The spokesperson of a Ukrainian brigade operating in the Lyman direction reported that Russian forces have concentrated large numbers of manpower in this direction and are constantly conducting highly attritional small infantry group attacks ranging in size from two to four personnel and leveraging large numbers of Lancet, Molniya, and Cube (or "Kub")-type drones.[53] The spokesperson stated that Russian forces are leveraging large numbers of personnel to assault and attempt to infiltrate Ukrainian defensive lines but that these personnel are often poorly trained, financially motivated recruits.[54] The spokesperson attributed Russian forces' ability to maintain positions along the frontline in the Lyman direction to a numerical, rather than quality, advantage in manpower. The spokesperson also noted that Russian forces are attempting to concentrate armored vehicles in hidden positions, possibly in preparation for renewed mechanized assault attempts in the Lyman direction.[55]

Order of Battle: Drone operators of the Russian 16th Spetsnaz Brigade (Russian General Staff's Main Directorate [GRU]) are reportedly striking Ukrainian positions near Yampil.[56]

The Ukrainian Security Service (SBU) reported on August 19 that SBU drones struck two Russian ammunition depots in Bilokurakhyne, Luhansk Oblast, overnight on August 18 to 19.[57] The SBU stated that the depots are located along a railway branch leveraged by the Russian military command to supply materiel to Russian forces operating in the Pokrovsk direction. NASA Fire Information for Resource Management (FIRMS) data shows heat anomalies in the area.[58]

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)



Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Siversk direction on August 19 but did not make confirmed advances.

Unconfirmed claims: A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced along the north (left) bank of the Siverskyi Donets river toward Dronivka (northwest of Siversk) in order to support efforts to envelop Siversk in a semicircle.[59]

Russian forces attacked north of Siversk near Serebryanka, northeast of Siversk near Hryhorivka, southeast of Siversk near Vyimka, south of Siversk near Pereizne, and southwest of Siversk near Fedorivka on August 18 and 19.[60] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked near Serebryanka.[61]

Russian forces recently advanced in the Chasiv Yar direction.

Assessed Russian advances: Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets reported on August 18 that Russian forces recently advanced to the Siverskyi Donets-Donbas Canal east of Stupochky (south of Chasiv Yar).[62]

Unconfirmed claims: Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced south of Maiske (northwest of Chasiv Yar), within Mykolaivka (west of Chasiv Yar), south of Stupochky, southeast of Predtechyne (south of Chasiv Yar), and into southeastern Kostyantynivka (southwest of Chasiv Yar).[63]

Russian forces attacked near Chasiv Yar itself, northwest of Chasiv Yar toward Virolyubivka, west of Chasiv Yar within Mykolaivka and toward Stinky, and south of Chasiv Yar near Stupochky on August 18 and 19.[64]

Order of Battle: Drone operators of the Russian 98th Airborne (VDV) Division are reportedly striking Ukrainian logistics in the Kostyantynivka (Chasiv Yar) direction.[65] Artillery elements of the 33rd Motorized Rifle Regiment (20th Motorized Rifle Division, 8th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Southern Military District [SMD]) are reportedly striking Ukrainian forces in the Kostyantynivka direction.[66]

Russian forces recently advanced in the Toretsk direction.

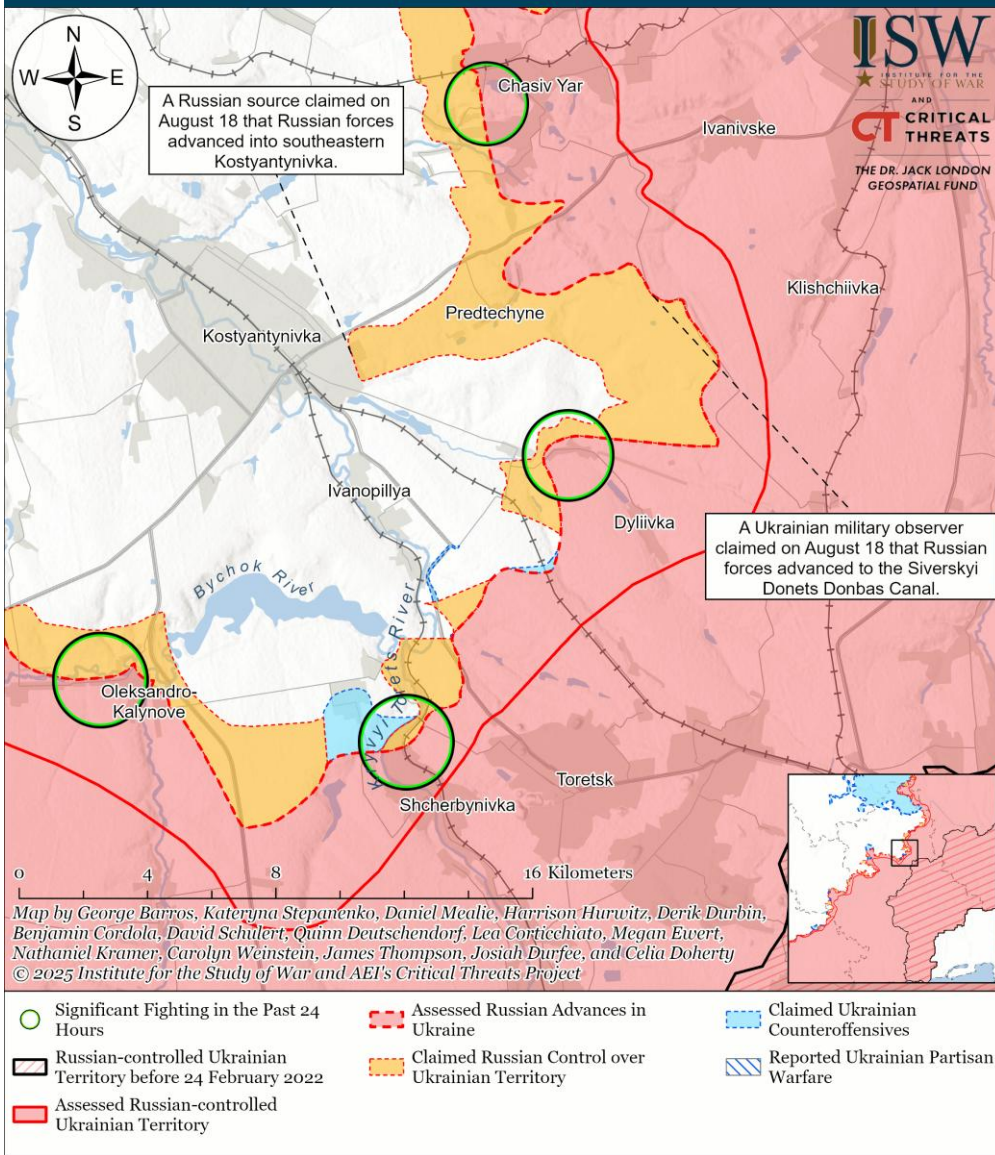
Assessed Russian advances: Geolocated footage published on August 18 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced northwest of Poltavka (northwest of Toretsk).[67]

Russian forces attacked near Toretsk itself; north of Toretsk near Bila Hora; west of Toretsk near Shcherbynivka; and northwest of Toretsk near Poltavka, Rusyn Yar, Yablunivka, Kleban Byk, Katerynivka, and Stepanivka, and toward Berestok, Pleshchiivka, and Nelipivka on August 18 and 19.[68]

Ukrainian Kostyantynivka Military Administration Head Serhiy Horbunov stated on August 19 that Russian forces conducted ten FAB-250 unguided glide bomb strikes against civilian infrastructure in Kostyantynivka, damaging residential and administration buildings and a school.[69]

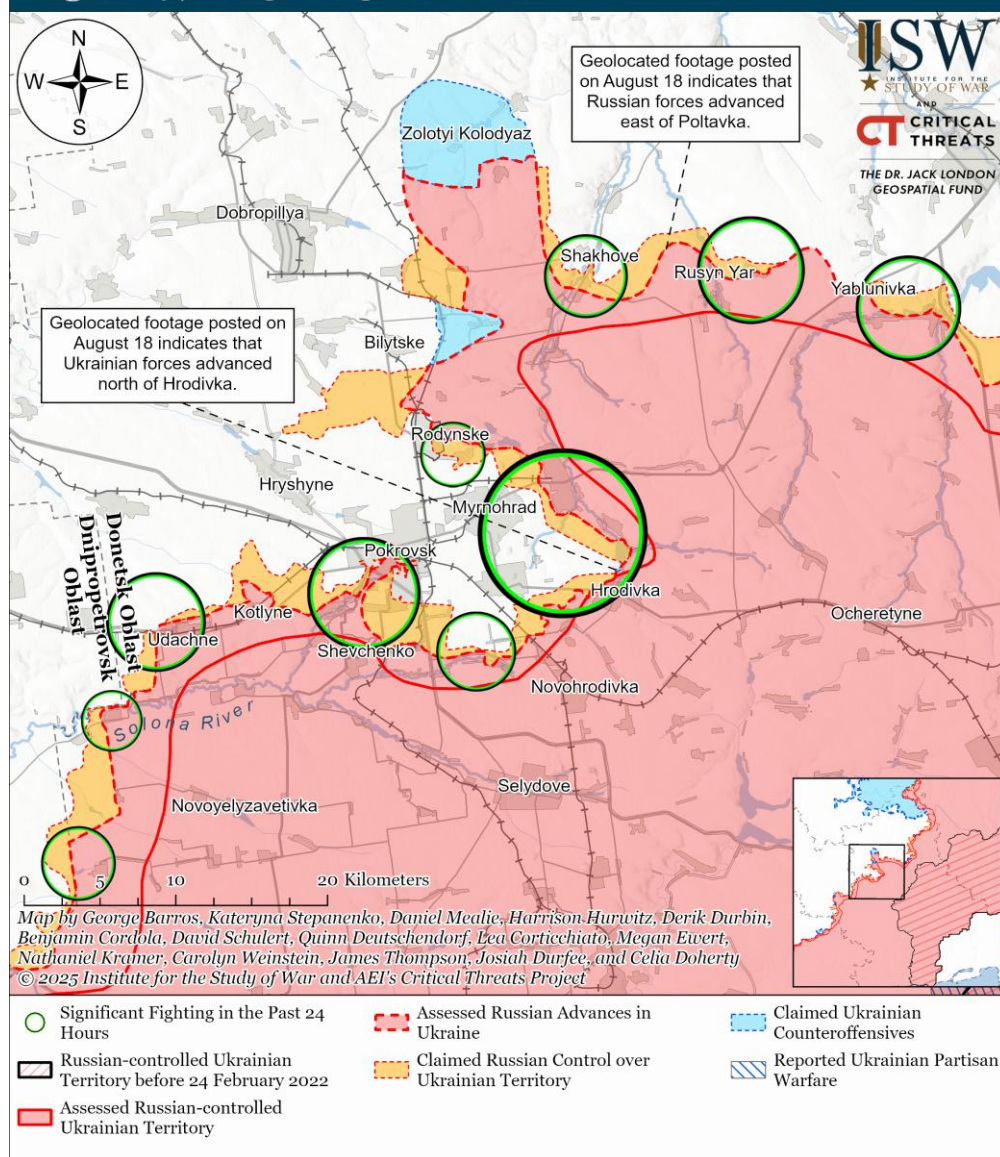
The spokesperson of a Ukrainian brigade operating in the Toretsk direction stated on August 19 that Russian forces in this direction have suffered heavy losses over the past year of fighting.[70] The spokesperson added that Russian forces in the Toretsk direction recently began leveraging unmanned ground vehicles (UGVs) for logistical support but are deploying the UGVs under infantry escort, making the transports vulnerable to Ukrainian drone strikes.

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Kostyantynivka Direction August 19, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



Ukrainian forces recently advanced in the Pokrovsk direction.

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Pokrovsk Direction August 19, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



Assessed Ukrainian advances: Geolocated footage published on August 18 indicates that Ukrainian forces recently advanced north of Hrodivka.[71]

Russian forces attacked near Pokrovsk itself; north of Pokrovsk near Rodynske and Krasnyi Lyman; northeast of Pokrovsk near Shakhove, Zapovidne, Novoekonomichne, Fedorivka, Dorozhnie, Mayak, Sofiivka, Zoloty Kolodyaz, Myrnohrad, Vesele, Sukhetske, and Volodymyrivka; east of Pokrovsk near Promin, Hrodivka, and Myrolyubivka and toward Balahan; southeast of Pokrovsk near Lysivka; south of Pokrovsk near Novoukrainka and Chunyshyne; and southwest of Pokrovsk near Zvirove, Leontovychi, Kotlyne, Udachne, and toward Molodetske and Novopidhorne on August 18 and 19.[72] Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets reported that Ukrainian forces counterattacked

near Mayak.[73] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked near Zoloty Kolodyaz, Sofiivka, and Kucheriv Yar (northeast of Pokrovsk).[74]

A non-commissioned officer (NCO) of a Ukrainian brigade operating in the Pokrovsk direction stated that Russian forces continue to accumulate forces in this direction and constantly launch large numbers of camouflaged small infantry group assaults in ongoing attempts infiltrate Ukrainian positions and observation posts but that Ukrainian drones are repelling them.[75]

Order of Battle: Drone operators of the Russian 80th Sparta Reconnaissance Battalion (51st CAA, formerly 1st Donetsk People's Republic Army Corps [DNR AC], SMD) are reportedly striking Ukrainian positions near Myrnohrad.[76]

Russian forces conducted offensive operations in the Novopavlivka direction on August 19 but did not advance.

Unconfirmed claims: A Ukrainian brigade operating in the Novopavlivka direction reported that Ukrainian forces cleared elements of the Russian 55th Motorized Rifle Brigade and 74th Motorized Rifle Brigade (both 41st CAA, Central Military District [CMD]) and elements of an unspecified 229th Regiment (unidentified – possibly a typo in reference to the 228th Motorized Rifle Regiment of the 90th Tank Division) from a 2.5-kilometer section of the Dnipropetrovsk Oblast border area near Kotlyarivka and Horikhove (east of Novopavlivka).[77]

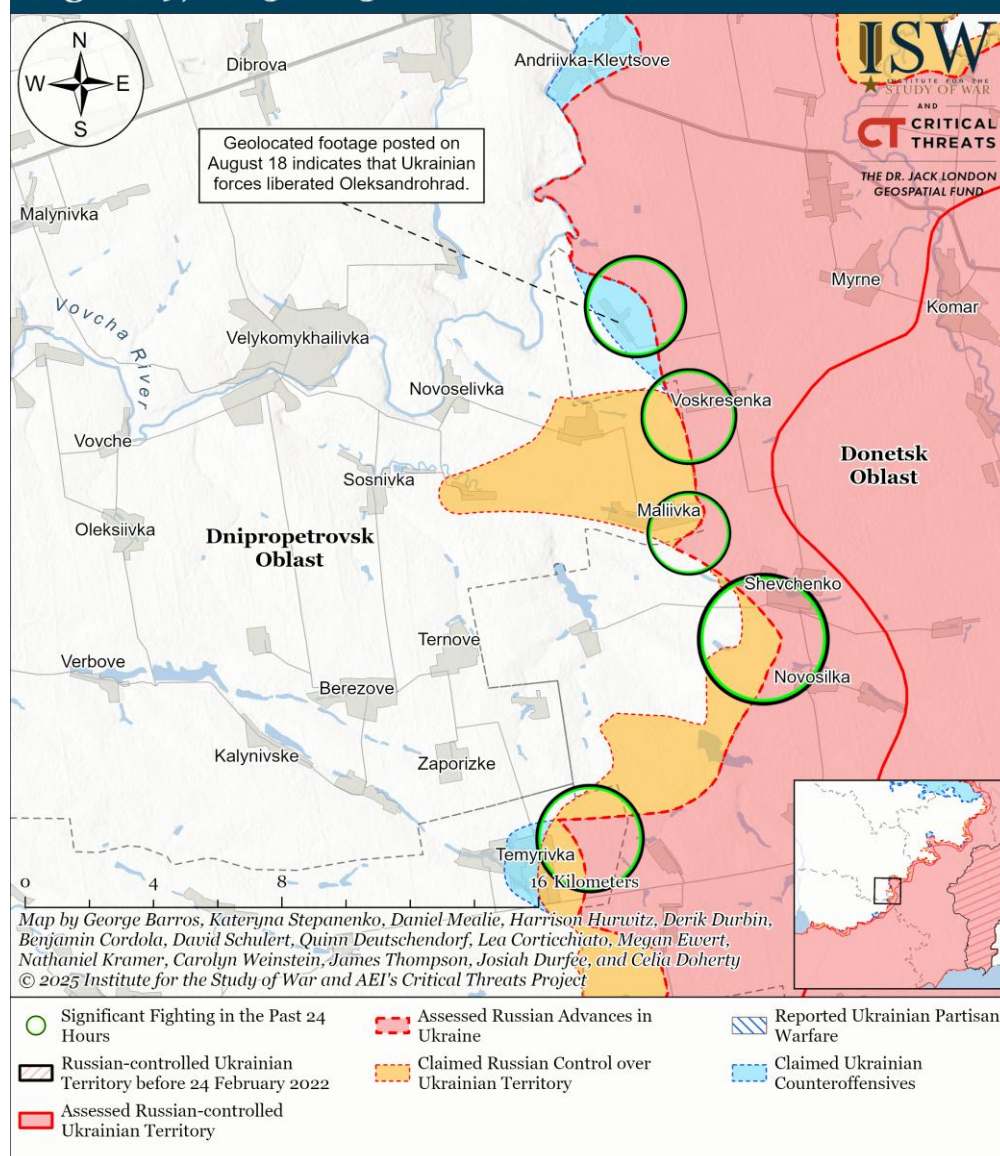
Russian forces attacked toward Novopavlivka itself, northeast of Novopavlivka near Novomykolaivka, southeast of Novopavlivka near Horikhove and Novoukrainka, south of Novopavlivka near Zirka and toward Filiya, and southwest of Novopavlivka near Hrushivske on August 18 and 19.[78] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked near Filiya.[79]

A Kremlin-affiliated milblogger claimed that the majority of Udachne is now a contested “gray zone.”[80]

Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian 228th Motorized Rifle Regiment (90th Tank Division, 41st CAA, CMD) are reportedly operating near the Dnipropetrovsk border area in the Novopavlivka direction.[81] Drone operators of the 57th Motorized Rifle Brigade (5th CAA, Eastern Military District [EMD]) are reportedly striking Ukrainian positions near Zaporizhzhia (south of Novopavlivka).[82]

Ukrainian forces recently advanced in the Velykomykhailivka direction.

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Velykomykhailivka Directio August 19, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



Assessed Ukrainian advances: Geolocated footage published on August 18 shows Ukrainian forces raising a flag in Oleksandrohrad (east of Velykomykhailivka), indicating that Ukrainian forces recently retook the settlement. [83]

Unconfirmed claims: A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced north of Zelenyi Hai (northeast of Velykomykhailivka). [84]

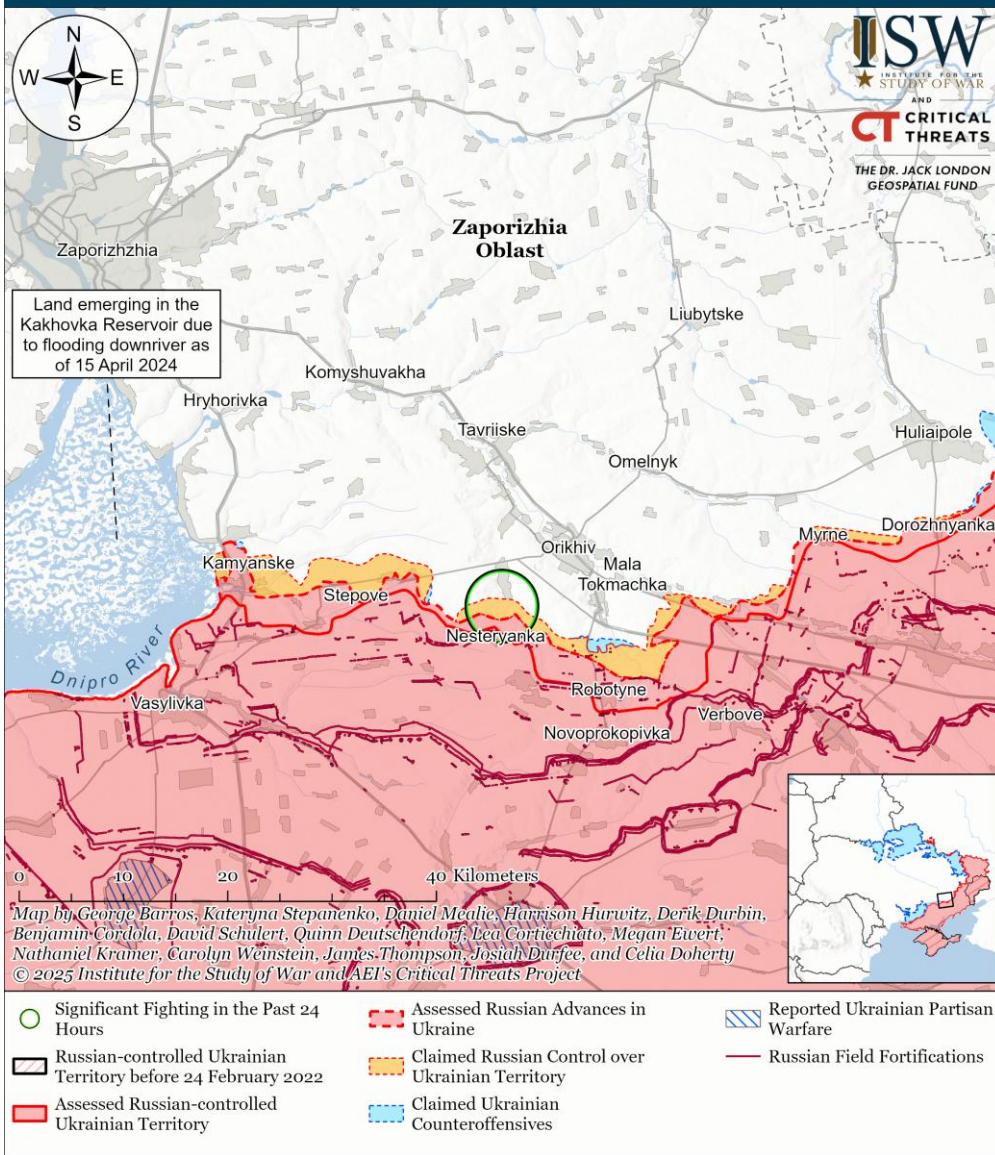
Russian forces attacked northeast of Velykomykhailivka near Zelenyi Hai and toward Ivanivka; east of Velykomykhailivka near Voskresenka and Oleksandrohrad; southeast of Velykomykhailivka near Shevchenko, Novodaryvika, Maliivka, and Vilne Pole and toward Komyshevukha on August 18 and 19. [85]

Order of Battle: Drone operators of the Russian 14th Spetsnaz Brigade (Russian General Staff's Main Directorate [GRU]) are reportedly striking Ukrainian positions near Vorone and Novoselivka (both southeast of Velykomykhailivka).[86] Elements of the 11th Air Force and Air Defense Army (Russian Aerospace Forces [VKS]) are reportedly conducting unguided glide bomb strikes against Ukrainian positions near Novoselivka.[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 19 but did not advance.

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Zaporizhia Direction August 19, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



Russian forces attacked northeast of Hulyaipole near Temyrivka, Novopil, Novodarivka, Olhivske, and Zelene Pole and toward Novoivanivka and Novohryhorivka on August 19.[88]

Order of Battle: Drone operators of the Russian 114th Motorized Rifle Regiment (127th Motorized Rifle Division, 5th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Eastern Military District [EMD]) are reportedly striking Ukrainian positions in the Zaporizhia direction.[89] Drone operators of the 394th Motorized Rifle Regiment (127th Motorized Rifle Division, 5th CAA, EMD) are reportedly striking Ukrainian positions in the Vremivka (Hulyaipole) direction.[90]

Russian forces continued offensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast on August 19 but did not advance.

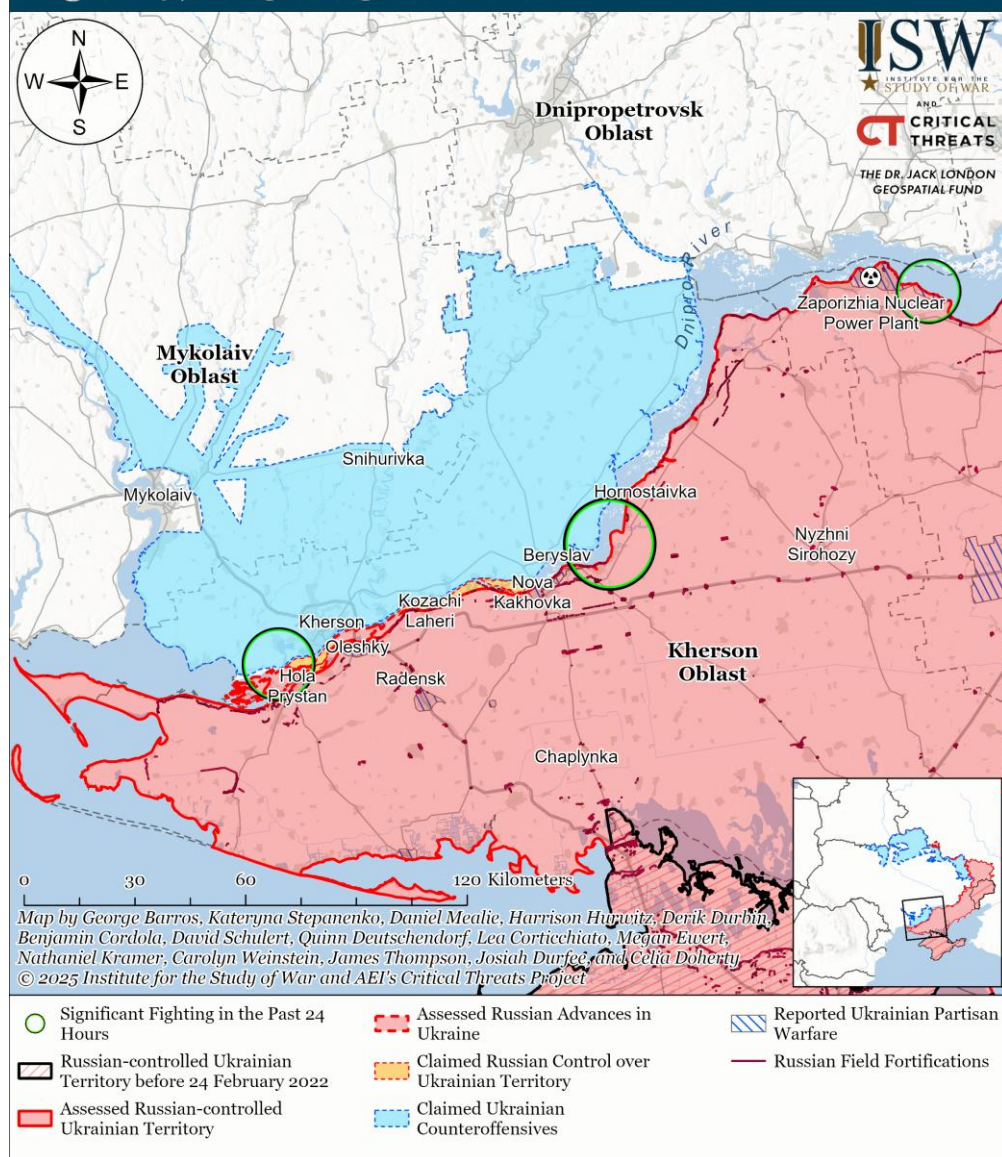
Russian forces attacked southwest of Orikhiv near Nesteryanka and west of Orikhiv near Novoandriivka, Stepnohirsk, Plavni, and Kamyanske on August 18 and 19.[91] A Russian milblogger claimed on August 19 that Ukrainian forces are counterattacking near Stepnohirsk.[92]

Geolocated footage published on August 19 shows Ukrainian forces striking a Russian fuel train west of occupied Tokmak (south of Orikhiv), setting several fuel tanks on fire.[93] Ukrainian and Russian sources reported that elements of the Ukrainian National Guard, Ukraine's Security Service (SBU), Ukraine's Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR), and two Ukrainian brigades coordinated the strike.[94]

Order of Battle: Drone operators of the Russian Smuglyanka Detachment are reportedly coordinating Russian Aerospace Forces (VKS) strikes against Ukrainian positions near Orikhiv, Novoandriivka, and Lukyanivske (northwest of Orikhiv).[95] Elements of the Russian 108th Airborne (VDV) Regiment (7th VDV Division) and artillery elements of the 7th VDV Division are reportedly operating in the Zaporizhia direction.[96]

Russian forces continued limited attacks in the Kherson direction on August 19 but did not advance.

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Kherson Direction August 19, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



Russian forces attacked in the Kherson City direction, including east of Kherson City near the Antonivsky road bridge, southeast of Kherson City near Bilohrudyi Island, and southwest of Kherson City near Dniprovske, on August 18 and 19.[97]

A Russian milblogger reported on August 19 that Russian forces have been striking Ukrainian positions near Mykilske (northeast of Kherson City) and other areas on the west (right) bank Kherson Oblast for a several weeks and that this area is a potential zone of interest for Russian forces.[98]

A Ukrainian open-source intelligence channel posted satellite imagery on August 19 showing a damaged Russian Kasta-2E2 mobile radar system near Khutorok, occupied Crimea, following a Ukrainian drone strike on the radar system at an unspecified time between August 6 and 11.[99]

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 missile and drone strikes against Ukraine on the night of August 18 to 19. The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Russian forces launched five Iskander-M ballistic missiles from Rostov and Voronezh oblasts and occupied Crimea; five Kh-101 cruise missiles from strategic bombers over the Caspian Sea; and 270 Shahed-type and decoy drones from the directions of Kursk Oblast; Millerovo, Rostov Oblast; and Primorsko-Akhtarsk, Krasnodar Krai.[100] The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Ukrainian forces downed 230 drones, two Iskander-M ballistic missiles, and four Kh-101 cruise missiles and that four missiles and 40 drones struck 16 locations in Ukraine and debris fell in three locations. Ukrainian officials reported that Russian drones and missiles damaged civilian infrastructure in Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Chernihiv, Kharkiv, and Poltava oblasts and that two Russian Iskander-M ballistic missiles struck civilian infrastructure in Zaporizhzhia City, killing three civilians and injured 36.[101]

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

The Belarusian Ministry of Defense (MoD) announced on August 18 that elements of the Belarusian Air Force and Air Defense arrived in Russia to participate in missile launches, anti-air operations, and aerial combat exercises at the Ashuluk Training Ground in Ashuluk, Astrakhan Oblast, ahead of the Zapad-2025 joint Russian-Belarusian military exercises in September 2025.[102]

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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