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**August 18, 2025, 10 pm ET**

**Note: The data cut-off for this product was 12 pm ET on August 18, except for reports regarding the August 18 multilateral US-Ukrainian-European meetings in Washington, D.C. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the August 19 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.**

**The Kremlin did not publicly commit to a bilateral or trilateral leader-level meeting, contrary to US President Donald Trump's announcement following the August 18 multilateral summit.** Trump stated that he called Russian President Vladimir Putin following the August 18 summit and began to arrange a bilateral meeting between Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and Putin at an unspecified date and undetermined location.[1] Trump stated that he will meet with Zelensky and Putin in a trilateral meeting at an unspecified time after the bilateral meeting. Russian Presidential Aide Yuri Ushakov spoke to reporters following the August 18 Trump-Putin call and that Putin and Trump “expressed support for the continuation of direct negotiations between the delegations of Russia and Ukraine” and expressed that “it would be necessary to study the possibility of raising the level of representatives of the Ukrainian and Russian sides” — a far cry from agreeing to leader-level bilateral and trilateral meetings.[2] Zelensky reiterated, following the August 18 summit, that he is ready to meet with Putin unconditionally and that Russia was the first to propose a bilateral Ukrainian-Russian meeting followed by a trilateral meeting with the United States.[3] Zelensky stated that territorial issues are issues that he will leave “between [himself] and Putin.”

**Western leaders reaffirmed the importance of strong security guarantees for Ukraine to ensure a just and lasting peace at the August 18 summit.** Trump met with Zelensky at the White House before both joined a meeting with European leaders, including NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, French President Emmanuel Macron, UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, Italian President Giorgia Meloni, and Finnish President Alexander Stubb.[4] The leaders discussed security guarantees for ensuring a lasting peace in Ukraine, plans for future meetings between Ukrainian and Russian leaders, and continued NATO and EU support for Ukraine. Trump stated that the meeting went well and that the US and European diplomatic and security support is paving the way for peace in Ukraine and Russia.[5] Zelensky stated that he and Trump agreed to work together on an all-for-all exchange of prisoners of war (POWs) and civilian prisoners, and the return of Ukrainian children whom Russia had kidnapped.[6]

The Western leaders emphasized the importance of a peace deal and security guarantees that deter further aggression against Ukraine and ensure both Ukrainian and European security.[7] Von der

Leyen, Meloni, and Starmer expressed support for Ukrainian security guarantees styled after NATO's Article 5, which obliges member states to take "such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force," in case of aggression against a single member state.[8] Trump stated that his intent is that the unspecified security guarantees for Ukraine will deter future aggression against Ukraine.[9] Trump also verbally stated that the United States will provide some unspecified support for the security guarantees, with European states bearing most of the burden of these guarantees. Trump's readout of the meeting posted on Truth Social states that "various European countries" would provide the security guarantees and that the United States would provide "coordination" for the guarantees.[10] The US position on American involvement in providing Ukraine security guarantees, therefore, remains unclear. Zelensky stated in a joint press conference with Trump that Ukraine needs security guarantees from its partners as well as resources to keep its military strong, including weapons, training, and intelligence sharing, and that a strong Ukrainian military is itself a security guarantee.[11] Zelensky noted that Ukraine and European partners now have a program to purchase weapons from the United States and that this is part of the guarantee of a strong Ukrainian military.[12]

Ukraine reportedly proposed a deal to purchase US weapons and produce Ukrainian drones in exchange for US security guarantees. The *Financial Times* (FT) reported on August 18 that it obtained a document that Ukraine will promise to purchase \$100 billion worth of US weapons with European financing should the United States provide security guarantees, but noted that the document did not specify which weapons Ukraine seeks to purchase.[13] The FT reported that Ukraine also proposed a \$50 billion deal to produce drones with Ukrainian companies, but that the documents did not indicate how much of the drone deal would be procurement or investment. The FT cited four people familiar with the matter that these proposals were on a Ukrainian list of talking points shared with European leaders ahead of the August 18 summit.

**Russian officials largely rejected Europe's proposed security guarantees for Ukraine in a potential peace agreement.** Trump stated on August 18 during his meeting with Zelensky and European leaders that Putin stated on August 15 at the Alaska summit that Russia would accept security guarantees for Ukraine as part of a peace agreement.[14] Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Spokesperson Maria Zakharova claimed 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," however.[15] Zakharova's rejection covers both a formal NATO contingent to a peacekeeping mission in Ukraine as well as contingents from any NATO member state in Ukraine, even if those contingents are not part of a NATO mission. Zakharova's statement is consistent with previous Kremlin statements rejecting the possibility of any NATO member state deploying a military contingent to Ukraine and threatening that Russia would deem any such deployment of forces to Ukraine as legitimate military targets.[16] Trump and other EU officials reiterated that any deployment of peacekeeping forces to Ukraine would not be a formal NATO military contingent.[17]

**Western leaders expressed support for a ceasefire that may follow a possible future trilateral meeting between Trump, Zelensky, and Putin.** Trump stated that all the leaders in attendance at the August 18 multilateral summit "would obviously prefer an immediate ceasefire while we work on a lasting peace," but that "as of this moment, it's not happening." [18] Trump stated that he supports a ceasefire because it could stop the casualties "immediately." Merz and Macron also expressed support for Ukraine and Russia to implement a ceasefire either ahead of or following a

trilateral Trump-Zelensky Putin meeting.[19] Both Trump stated that both Zelensky and Russian President Vladimir Putin "can talk a little bit more" about a potential ceasefire, presumably in a potential future bilateral or meeting.[20]

**Russian forces conducted long-range strikes against Ukrainian rear areas that resulted in civilian casualties ahead of the August 18 White House meetings.** The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Russian forces launched four Iskander-M ballistic missiles from Taganrog and Millerovo, Rostov Oblast, and Kursk City; and 140 Shahed-type and decoy drones from the directions of Kursk, Oryol, and Bryansk cities; Millerovo; Primorsko-Akhtarsk, Krasnodar Krai; and occupied Cape Chauda, Crimea overnight on August 17 to 18.[21] The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Ukrainian forces downed 88 Shahed drones and decoys over northern, eastern, southern, and central Ukraine and that missiles and drones struck 25 locations in Donetsk, Kharkiv, Sumy, Dnipropetrovsk, Odesa, and Kyiv oblasts.[22] Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky reported on August 18 that Russian missile strikes killed three and injured 20 in Zaporizhzhia City.[23] Zelensky also reported that Russian forces struck an Azerbaijani energy facility in Odesa City. Kharkiv City Mayor Ihor Terekhov reported that Russian missiles and drones damaged civilian infrastructure in Kharkiv City and killed seven civilians and injured 18.[24] Russian forces conducted combined missile and drone strikes against Ukraine on the night before and after the Alaska summit on August 15, also inflicting civilian casualties and damaging civilian infrastructure.[25] Russia continues to conduct drone and missile strikes that result in high civilian casualties even as Trump has repeatedly called on Russia to stop strike series that disproportionately affect civilian areas.

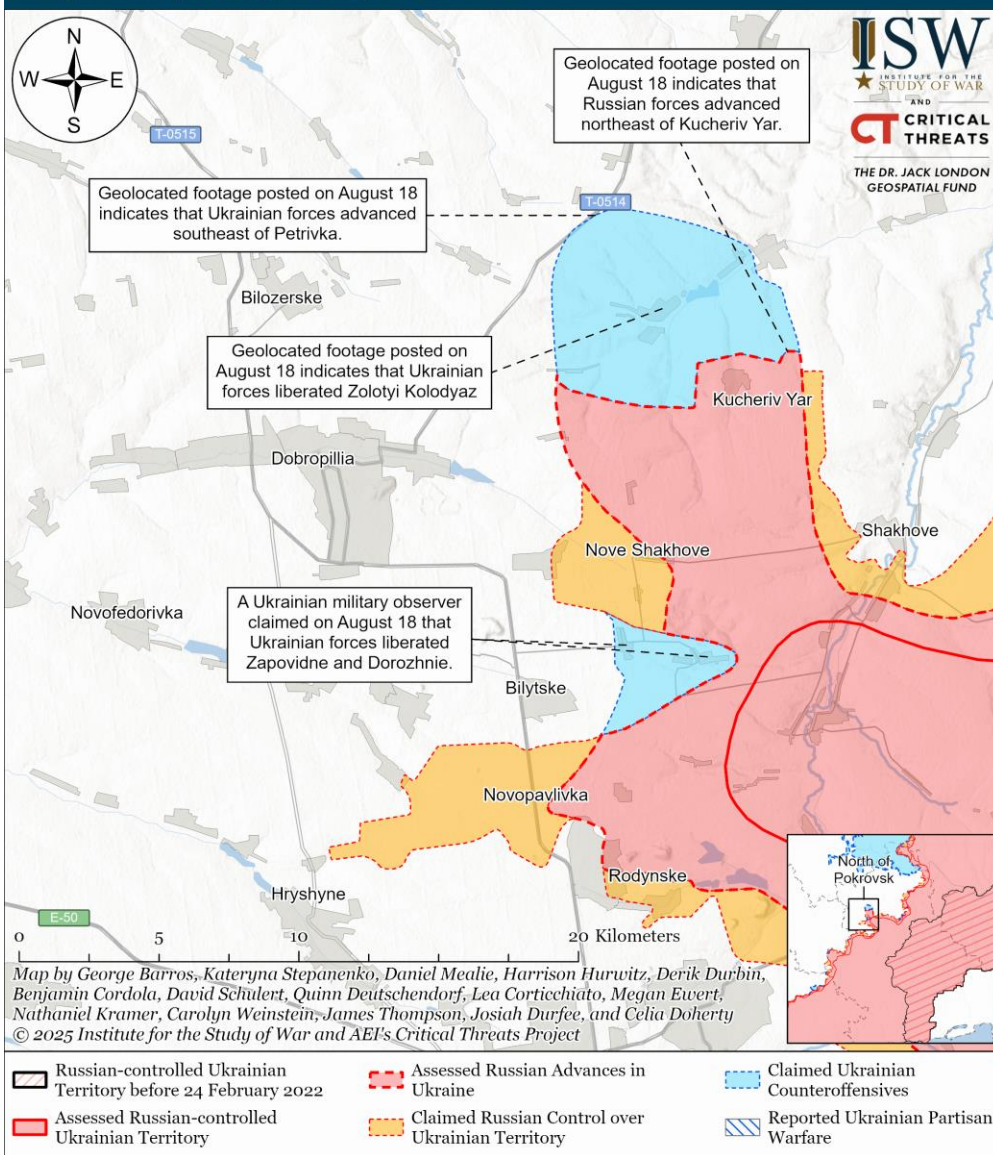
**Russian budgetary constraints are forcing Russia to employ alternative mechanisms to fund enlistment bonus payments and recruit soldiers for its war in Ukraine.** Russian opposition media outlet Vazhnye Istorii reported on August 18 that data from Russian federal budget expenditures indicate that the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) contract recruitment rate fell to a two-year low in the second quarter of 2025.[26] Vazhnye Istorii reported that the Russian MoD made payments to 37,900 people for signing a contract in the second quarter of 2025, but that the Russian MoD made payments to 92,800 people in 2024, a significant decrease. ISW previously observed reports that the Kremlin exceeded its 30-billion-ruble (\$381.5 million) 2025 federal budget allocation for contract payments by Summer 2025 and increased its budget allocation to 35.8 billion rubles (\$455.3 million).[27] Russia's recruitment rate likely has not slowed despite the federal recruitment budget's depletion, however. Russian Security Council Deputy Chairperson Dmitry Medvedev claimed on July 2 that the Russian MoD signed over 210,000 contract soldiers, which Vazhnye Istorii noted is 1.6 times higher than what the budget expenditure data reflects.[28] Vazhnye Istorii reported that other research assessed that the MoD secured about 191,000 new contracts using regional budgetary data, suggesting that the Kremlin is using other budgets to finance recruitment.[29] Russian officials are increasingly attempting to circumvent budgetary shortcomings by informally recruiting conscripts, offering additional payments to foreigners, and shifting the financial burden by tapping the budgets of Russian federal subjects (regions) rather than the direct budget of the federal government.[30] Russia's attempt to place the onus of funding enlistment bonuses on federal subjects represents a cosmetic attempt to obscure the fact that Russia's finite national wealth is unable to sustain long-term recruitment efforts indefinitely without cutting into other government programs. Increased financial challenges will likely degrade Russia's overall force generation apparatus. Additional Western sanctions targeting Russian

oil revenues will likely exacerbate greater economic challenges that can degrade Russia's long-term ability to continue its war in Ukraine.[31]

**Russian forces are struggling to exploit the infiltration in the Dobropillya direction in the face of continued Ukrainian counterattacks.** Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets stated on August 18 that Ukrainian forces recently liberated Zapovidne (formerly Nykanorivka) and Dorozhnie — both southwest of Dobropillya — at the very base of the Russian penetration east and northeast of Dobropillya.[32] Geolocated footage published on August 14 and geolocated on August 18 shows Ukrainian servicemembers detaining Russian soldiers along a windbreak southwest of Petrivka (northeast of Dobropillya), indicating that Russian forces advanced to the area prior to August 14 during the initial infiltration operation.[33] Additional geolocated footage published on August 17 and geolocated on August 18 shows Ukrainian forces raising a flag in Zoloty Kolodyaz (northeast of Dobropillya), indicating that Russian forces had advanced to the settlement before August 17 and that Ukrainian forces were then able to liberate the area.[34] ISW had previously not coded these settlements as Russian advances on ISW's maps due to the lack of geolocated evidence of Russian presence in either Petrivka or Zoloty Kolodyaz.

ISW has observed indications that Russian forces are struggling to translate the initial tactical infiltration around Dobropillya into a wider operational-level breakthrough. Ukrainian Dnipro Group of Forces Spokesperson Colonel Viktor Trehubov reported on August 18 that Ukrainian forces collapsed the Russian salient in the Dobropillya direction by cutting off Russian infiltration elements from main forces, presumably by denying Russian forces the ability to supply and reinforce the infiltration groups at the scale necessary to exploit the infiltration.[35] Mashovets stated elements of the Russian 150th Motorized Rifle Division (8th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Southern Military District [SMD]) are attempting to bypass Volodymyrivka (southwest of Dobropillya) from the east in an attempt to threaten the flank of the Ukrainian forces currently threatening elements of the 51st CAA, which are holding a narrow penetration toward Dobropillya between Zapovidne and Novotoretske (southwest of Dobropillya).[36] Mashovets stated that Ukrainian forces advancing on the western side of the penetration are advancing faster than elements of the 8th CAA are advancing east of Volodymyrivka, however. Mashovets stated that elements of the 5th, 110th, and 132nd motorized rifle brigades (all 51st CAA) operating within the penetration are therefore "fracturing" in their efforts to support the base of penetration and can only hold a 2.5 kilometer width of territory within the penetration as a result.[37] A Russian milblogger recently warned that the Russian penetration east and northeast of Dobropillya was too narrow relative to its depth and therefore vulnerable to Ukrainian counterattacks and interdiction.[38] Russian milbloggers are also notably increasingly discussing the Rodynske direction (north of Pokrovsk and southeast of Dobropillya) as opposed to Dobropillya, indicating that failures to reinforce the initial infiltration are now being reflected in the Russian information space's reporting of the Pokrovsk direction.

## Assessed Control of Terrain North of Pokrovsk August 18, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



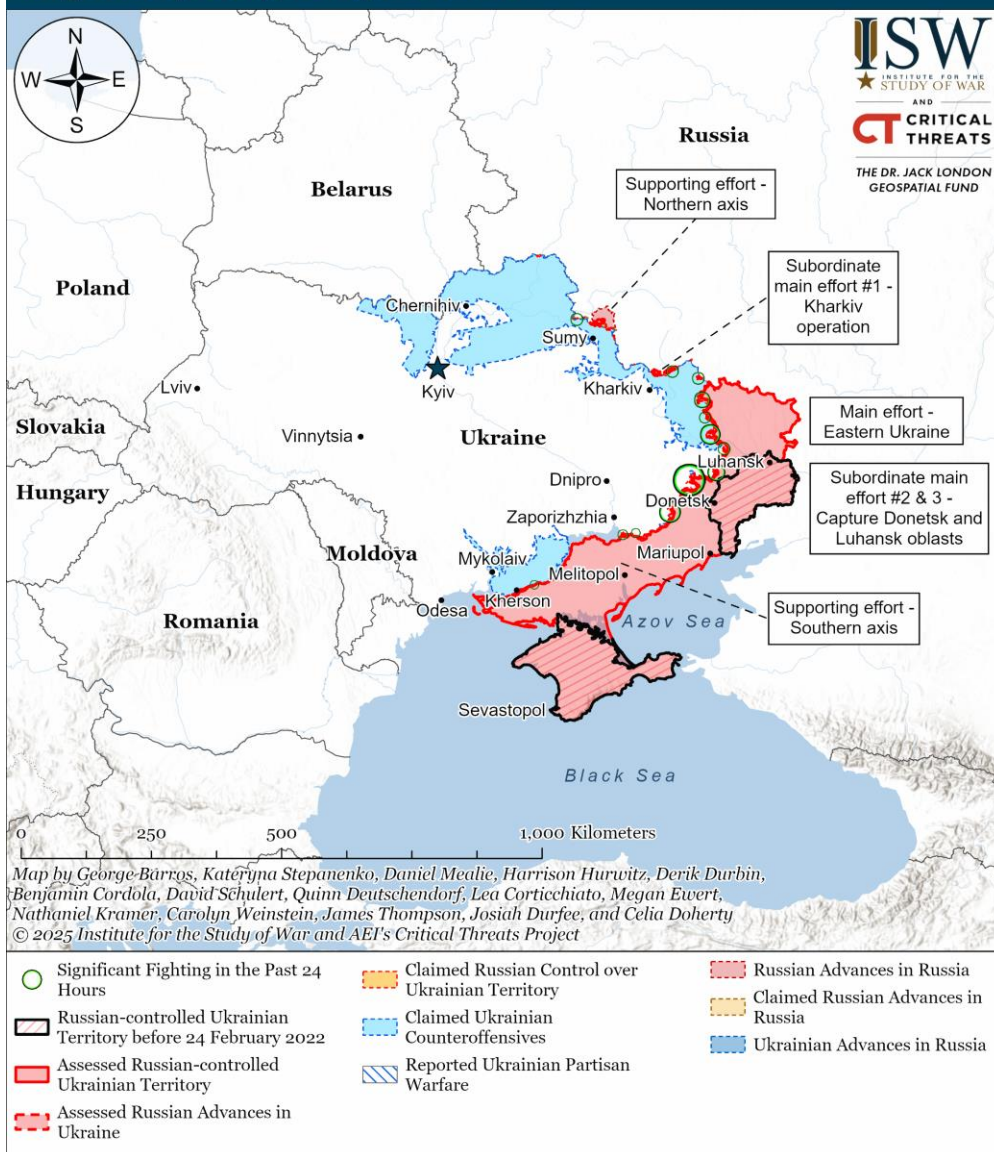
**A Russian servicemember recently murdered a Ukrainian woman in the Pokrovsk direction in clear violation of international law.** The Ukrainian Donetsk Oblast Prosecutor's Office reported on August 18 that it opened an investigation into a Russian servicemember murdering a Ukrainian woman as she walked on a street near Rodynske (north of Pokrovsk).[39] The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) states that "intentionally direct attacks against the civilian population or against individual civilians not taking direct part in hostilities" constitutes a serious violation of the laws and customs applicable in international armed conflict within the established framework of international law.[40] Russian soldiers have notably committed extreme atrocities against civilians and soldiers in Ukraine as part of the wider military modus operandi.[41]

### Key Takeaways:

- **The Kremlin did not publicly commit to a bilateral or trilateral leader-level meeting, contrary to US President Donald Trump's announcement following the August 18 multilateral summit.**
- **Western leaders reaffirmed the importance of strong security guarantees for Ukraine to ensure a just and lasting peace at the August 18 summit.**
- **Russian officials largely rejected Europe's proposed security guarantees for Ukraine in a potential peace agreement.**
- **Western leaders expressed support for a ceasefire that may follow a possible future trilateral meeting between Trump, Zelensky, and Putin.**
- **Russian forces conducted long-range strikes against Ukrainian rear areas that resulted in civilian casualties ahead of the August 18 White House meetings.**
- **Russian budgetary constraints are forcing Russia to employ alternative mechanisms to fund enlistment bonus payments and recruit soldiers for its war in Ukraine.**
- **Russian forces are struggling to exploit the infiltration in the Dobropillya direction in the face of continued Ukrainian counterattacks.**
- **A Russian servicemember recently murdered a Ukrainian woman in the Pokrovsk direction in clear violation of international law.**
- **Ukrainian forces recently advanced near Dobropillya. Russian forces recently advanced near Lyman, Toretsk, and Pokrovsk.**



## Assessed Control of Terrain in the Russo-Ukrainian War August 18, 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 continues in unspecified areas of Kursk Oblast on August 17 and 18.[42]**

**Russian authorities confirmed that a Ukrainian strike recently seriously injured a senior Russian military commander.** Republic of Dagestan Head Sergei Melikov confirmed the Ukraine's Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) August 17 report that Ukrainian forces seriously wounded Russian Northern Group of Forces Deputy Commander Lieutenant General Esedulla Abachev.[43] The GUR reported that Ukrainian strikes against a convoy along the 38K-040 Rylsk-Khomutovka highway in Kursk Oblast on August 16 injured Abachev, requiring an arm and leg amputation.

**Ukrainian forces struck Russian oil infrastructure in Tambov Oblast overnight on August 17 to 18.** The Ukrainian General Staff reported on August 18 that Ukrainian Unmanned Systems Forces and other Ukrainian forces struck the Nikolskoye oil pumping station in Tambov Oblast.[44] The Ukrainian General Staff stated that the strike stopped oil flow through the Druzhba pipeline, which supplies Russian oil from Russia to various locations throughout Europe.

**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 18 but did not make confirmed advances.**

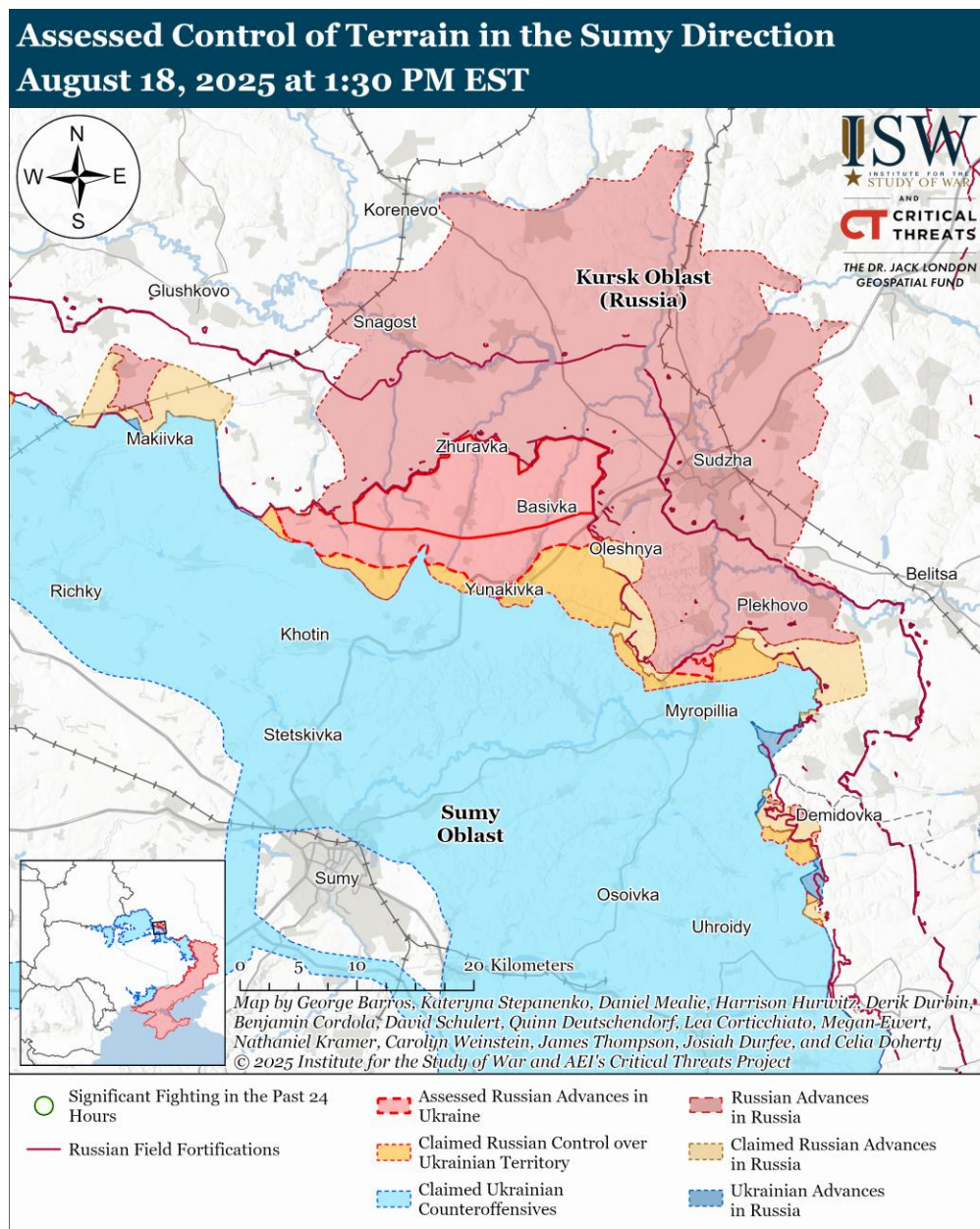
Unconfirmed claims: A Russian milblogger claimed that unspecified Russian Airborne Forces (VDV) elements advanced in Yunakivka (northeast of Sumy City).[45]

Russian forces attacked north of Sumy City near Novokostyantynivka and Oleksiivka, and northeast of Sumy City in Yunakivka and near Varachyne on August 17 and 18.[46] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked near Novokostyantynivka, Oleksiivka, Stepove (north of Sumy City), in Yunakivka, and near Varachyne.[47]

Order of Battle: A Russian milblogger reportedly affiliated with the Russian Northern Group of Forces claimed that the Russian command redeployed elements of the 177th Naval Infantry Regiment (Caspian Flotilla) and the 155th and 40th naval infantry brigades (both of the Pacific Fleet) to another unspecified



direction, while limited elements of the 810th Naval Infantry Brigade (Black Sea Fleet) reportedly continue to operate in the Sumy direction.[48] The source reported that this redeployment ended Russian naval infantry forces' participation in the Russian Northern Grouping of Forces. Elements of the Russian 106th VDV Division are reportedly striking Ukrainian forces near Mohrytsia (northeast of Sumy City).[49] Drone operators of the Anvar Spetsnaz Detachment, 137th Airborne Regiment (106th VDV Division), and the Tiger Drone Detachment (83rd Separate VDV Brigade) are reportedly striking Ukrainian forces in the Sumy direction.[50]



## 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 18 but did not make confirmed advances.**

Unconfirmed claims: Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced on the southern (left) bank of the Vovcha River in Vovchansk (northeast of Kharkiv City) and west of Synelnykove (south of Vovchansk).[51]

Russian forces attacked northeast of Kharkiv City near Vovchansk, Vovchanski Khutory, and Synelnykove on August 17 and 18.[52]

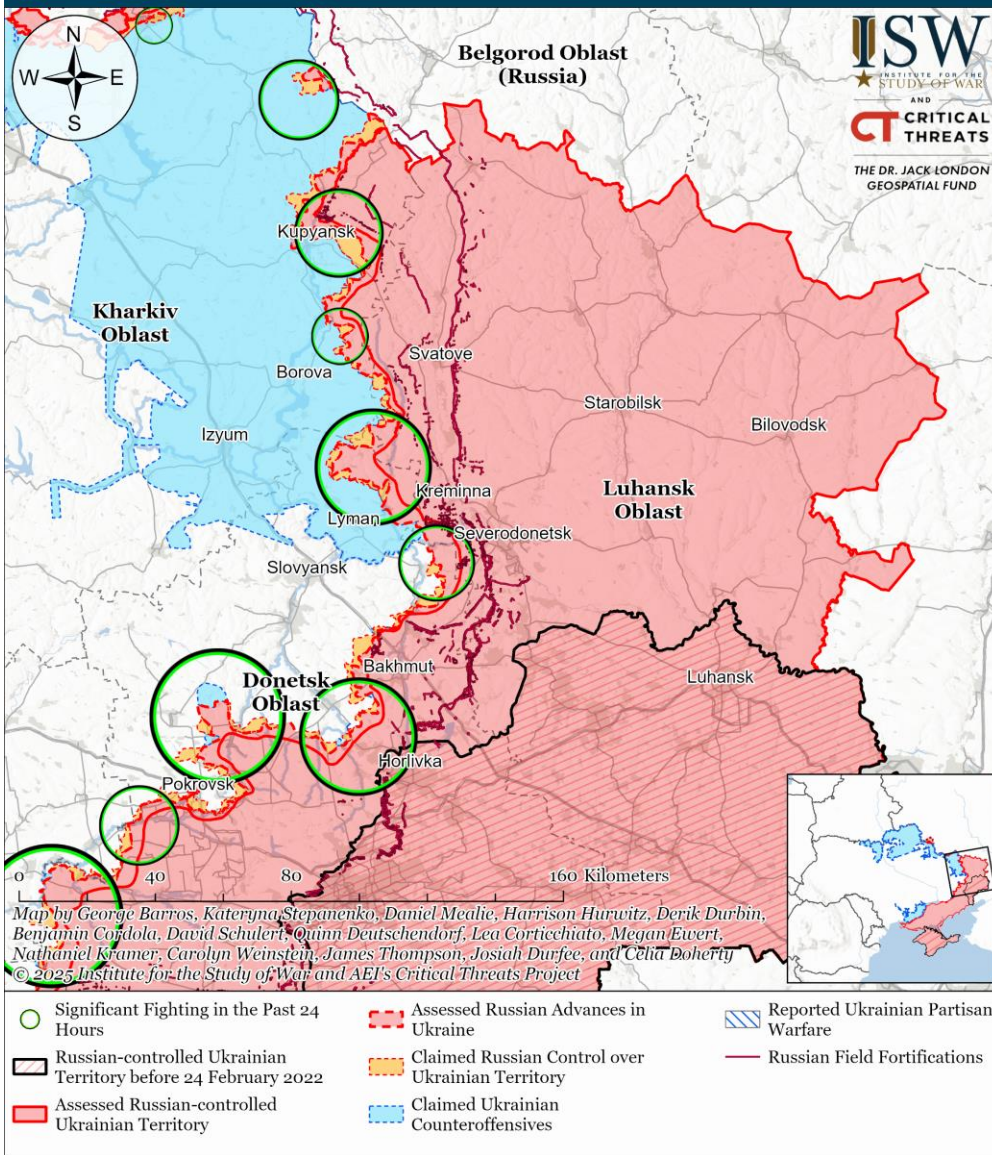
Order of Battle: Drone operators of the pro-Russian Chechen Sheikh Mansur volunteer battalion (subordinated to the Russian Ministry of Defense [MoD]) are reportedly striking Ukrainian positions in the Kharkiv direction.[53]

**Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Velykyi Burluk direction on August 18 but did not advance.**

Russian forces attacked northeast of Velykyi Burluk near Ambarne and toward Khatnie and east of Velykyi Burluk toward Odradne on August 18 and 19.[54]

**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 18, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



**Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Kupyansk direction on August 18 but did not advance.**

Russian forces attacked near Kupyansk itself; west of Kupyansk near Sobolivka; north of Kupyansk near Kindrashivka, Holubivka, and Zapadne; northeast of Kupyansk near Kamyanka; east of Kupyansk near Petropavlivka; and southeast of Kupyansk near Stepova Novoselivka on August 18 and 19.[55]

**Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Borova direction on August 18 but did not advance.**

Russian forces attacked northeast of Borova near Zahryzove and toward Nova Kruhlyakivka and southeast of Borova near Hrekiivka on August 17 and 18.[56]

Order of Battle: Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets reported on August 18 that elements of the Russian 3rd Motorized Rifle Division (20th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Moscow Military District [MMD]) are operating southeast of Borova near Druzhelyubivka and Hrektivka.[57]

**Russian forces recently advanced in the Lyman direction.**

Assessed Russian advances: Geolocated footage published on August 18 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced in southwestern Ridkodub (north of Lyman).[58] Mashovets reported that Russian forces recently advanced southwestward in the Serebryanske forest area (southeast of Lyman).[59]

Unconfirmed claims: Mashovets claimed that Ukrainian forces recently eliminated Russian forces who infiltrated Ukrainian lines after crossing the Chornyi Zherebets river near Zarichne (east of Lyman).[60]

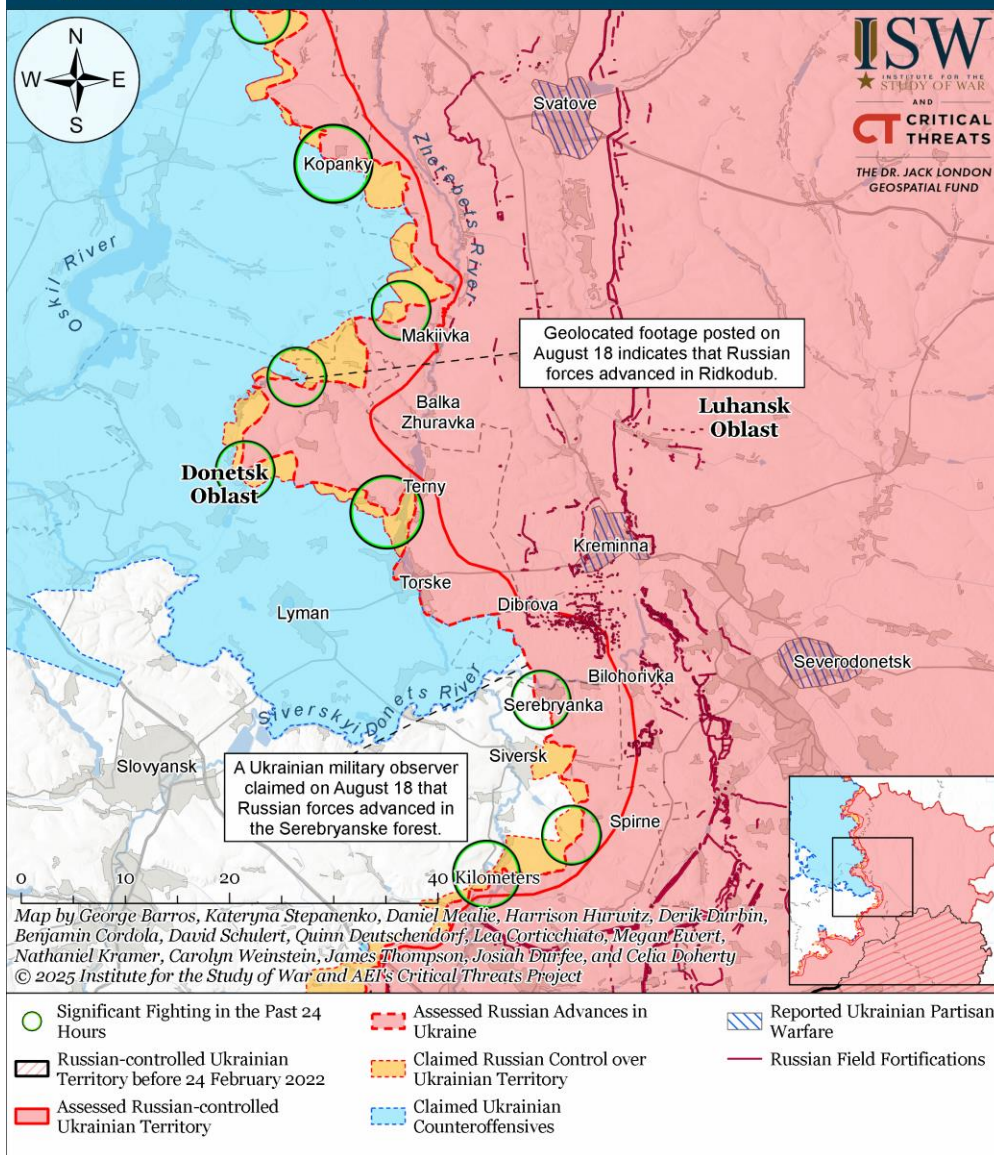
Russian forces attacked northwest of Lyman near Serednie, Shandryholove, and Karpivka and toward Korovyi Yar and Drobysheve; north of Lyman near Ridkodub; northeast of Lyman near Kolodyazi and Myrne; east of Lyman near Torske; and southeast of Lyman toward Yampil and in the Serebryanske forest area on August 17 and 18.[61]

A Ukrainian brigade operating on the Lyman direction reported on August 18 that Russian forces in this direction have suffered heavy losses in constant assault operations and are increasing their use of small fireteam infiltration tactics.[62] The Ukrainian brigade added that Russian fireteams try to bypass Ukrainian positions to infiltrate the Ukrainian rear, where survivors of the initial infiltration then use dense foliage and ruined buildings as concealment while waiting for reinforcements. A spokesperson of a Ukrainian brigade operating in the Lyman direction told Ukrainian broadcaster *Suspilne* on August 18 that Russian forces have failed to make significant advances in the Lyman direction but continue to rely on attritional, infantry-led assaults.[63] The spokesperson added that Russian forces are increasing their usage of drones due to the ineffectiveness of attritional assaults, and are deploying Molniya strike drones along the frontline rather than only in longer-range strikes against Ukrainian logistics.

Order of Battle: Mashovets reported that elements of the Russian 144th Motorized Rifle Division (20th CAA) are reportedly operating near Karpivka and Ridkodub.[64] Drone operators of the Russian 236th Artillery Brigade (20th CAA) are reportedly striking Ukrainian forces near Rubtsi (northwest of Lyman).[65]

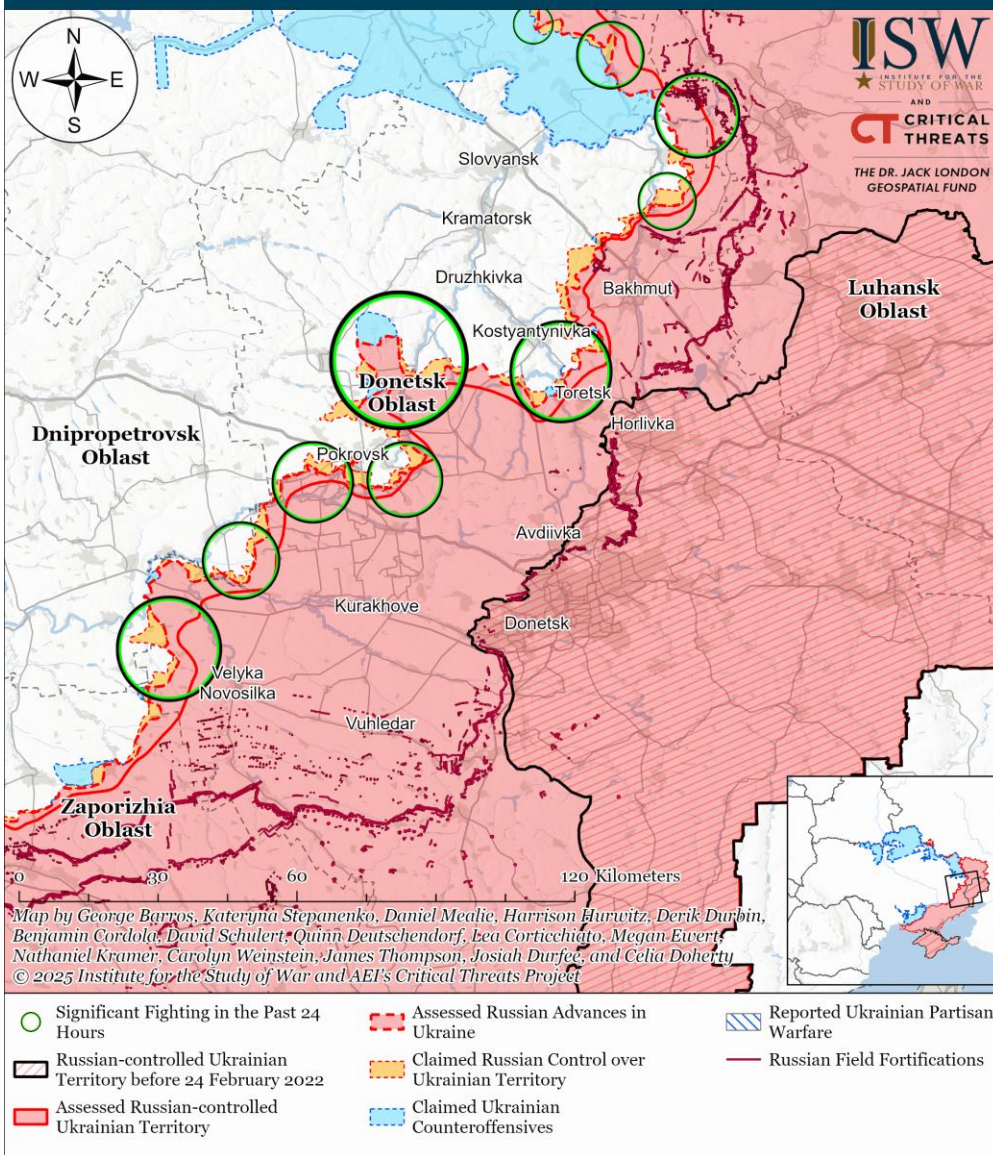


## Assessed Control of Terrain in the Svatove-Kreminna Direction August 18, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



**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 18, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



**Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Siversk direction on August 18 but did not make confirmed advances.**

Unconfirmed claims: A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced south of Novoselivka (southeast of Siversk) and west of Ivano-Darivka (southeast of Siversk).[66]

Russian forces attacked north of Siversk near Serebryanka and Hryhorivka, east of Siversk near Verkhokamyanske, southeast of Siversk near Vyimka and Ivano-Darivka, and southwest of Siversk near Fedorivka on August 17 and 18.[67]

Order of Battle: Ukrainian military observer Kostyantyn Mashovets stated that elements of the Russian 123rd Motorized Rifle Brigade (3rd Combined Arms Army [CAA], formerly 2nd Luhansk People's Republic Army Corps [LNR AC], Southern Military District [SMD]) are operating near Ivano-



Darivka.[68] Mashovets stated that elements of the 6th Motorized Rifle Brigade and 123rd Motorized Rifle Brigade (both 3rd CAA), the 127th Motorized Rifle Brigade (reportedly 3rd CAA), and unspecified motorized rifle regiments of the Russian mobilization reserve are attempting to use infiltration tactics to advance in the Siversk direction. Elements of the 85th Motorized Rifle Brigade (3rd CAA) are reportedly operating in the Soledar direction (southeast of Siversk).[69]

**Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Chasiv Yar direction on August 18 but did not make confirmed advances.**

Russian forces attacked near Chasiv Yar itself and south of Chasiv Yar near Predtechyne on August 18.[70]

Order of Battle: Mashovets reported that elements of the Russian 72nd Motorized Rifle Brigade (3rd AC) and 1307th Motorized Rifle Regiment (6th Motorized Rifle Division, 3rd AC) are operating near the Siverskyi Donets Donbas Canal southeast of Chasiv Yar.[71] Mashovets stated that the 98th Airborne (VDV) Division is operating in Chasiv Yar itself, north of Chasiv Yar toward Kalynivka-Virolubivka, and northeast of Chasiv Yar toward Mayske. Reconnaissance elements of the 439th Rocket Artillery Brigade (8th CAA, SMD) and drone operators of the 238th Artillery Brigade (8th CAA) are reportedly operating in the Kostyantynivka (Chasiv Yar) direction.[72] Artillery elements of the 1065th Airborne Artillery Regiment (98th Airborne Division) are reportedly operating west of Chasiv Yar.[73]

**Russian forces recently advanced in the Toretsk direction.**

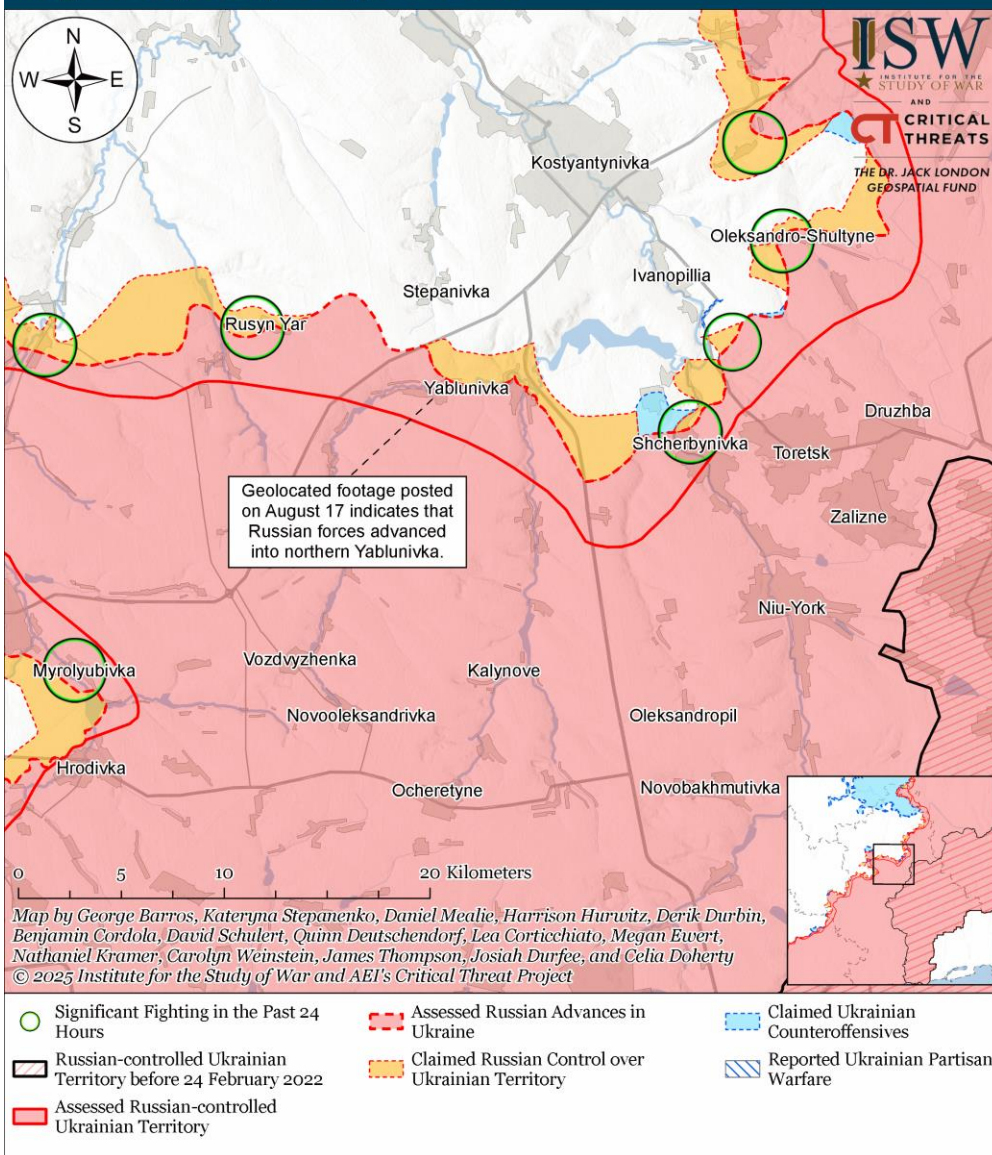
Assessed Russian advances: Russian forces recently advanced in northern Yablunivka (northwest of Toretsk).[74]

Russian forces attacked near Toretsk itself; north of Toretsk near Oleksandro-Shulytne and Bila Hora; west of Toretsk near Shcherbynivka; and northwest of Toretsk near Poltavka, Rusyn Yar, Oleskandro-Kalynove, Yablunivka, and Stepanivka, and toward Pleshchiivka and Nelipivka on August 17 and 18.[75] Mashovets stated that Ukrainian forces are counterattacking near Katerynivka (northwest of Toretsk).[76]

A Ukrainian brigade operating in the Toretsk direction stated that Ukrainian forces repelled a Russian armored assault near Katerynivka.[77]

Order of Battle: Mashovets stated that elements of the Russian 4th Motorized Rifle Brigade (3rd CAA, SMD) are operating near Bila Hora.[78] Mashovets stated that elements of the Russian 103rd Motorized Rifle Regiment (150th Motorized Rifle Division, 8th CAA, SMD) and the 1465th Motorized Rifle Regiment (reportedly of the 20th Motorized Rifle Division, 8th CAA) are operating near Katerynivka. Mashovets stated that other elements of the 150th Motorized Rifle Division (8th CAA) are operating in the Novoolenivka-Rusyn Yar direction and that other elements of the 20th Guards Motorized Rifle Division (8th CAA) are operating near Yablunivka and Oleksandro-Kalynove. The Russian Ministry of Defense claimed that elements of the 27th Artillery Regiment (6th Motorized Rifle Division, 3rd AC) are striking Ukrainian forces in the Kostyantynivka (Toretsk) direction.[79]

## Assessed Control of Terrain Southwest of Toretsk August 18, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



### Ukrainian and Russian forces recently advanced in the Pokrovsk direction.

*See topline text for reports of activity east and northeast of Dobropillya.*

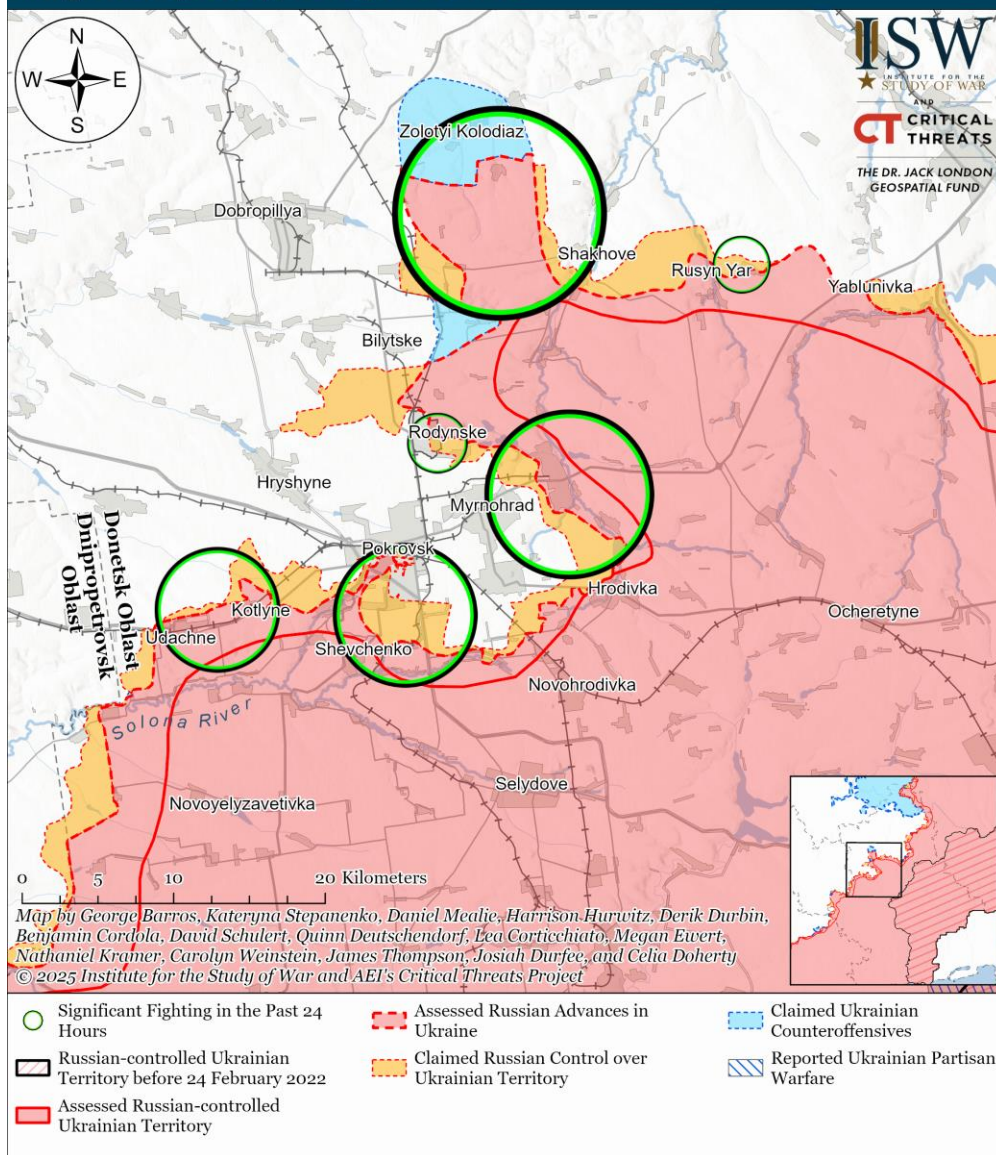
Unconfirmed claims: Mashovets stated that Russian forces advanced between 200 and 300 meters toward Molodetske (southwest of Pokrovsk).[80] Mashovets stated that Russian assault groups advanced into northeastern Krasnyi Lyman (north of Pokrovsk) but that Ukrainian forces pushed the Russian forces back out of the settlement. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced to the outskirts of Kotlyne (southwest of Pokrovsk).[81] Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) Head Denis Pushilin claimed that Russian forces advanced toward Rodynske and Bilytske (both north of Pokrovsk).[82]

Russian forces attacked near Pokrovsk itself; north of Pokrovsk near Rodynske, Vilne, Ivanivka, and Krasnyi Lyman; northeast of Pokrovsk near Nove Shakhove, Zapovidne, Novoekonomichne, Fedorivka, Dorozhnie, Mayak, and Volodymyrivka; east of Pokrovsk near Promin and Myrolyubivka and toward Balahan; southeast of Pokrovsk near Lysivka, Sukhyi Yar and Novopavlivka; south of Pokrovsk near Novoukrainka and Chunyshyne; and southwest of Pokrovsk near Zvirove, Kotlyne, Udachne, and toward Molodetske on August 17 and 18.[83]

The commander of a Ukrainian brigade operating in the Pokrovsk direction reported on August 17 that Russian forces have accumulated and are using a massive number of drones in the brigade's area of responsibility (AOR) and that Russian forces can launch seven first-person-view (FPV) drones at one section of Ukrainian ground lines of communication (GLOC) within 10 minutes.[84] The commander reported that Russian forces are constantly changing tactics and attacking on one flank to draw Ukrainian forces to that area and then attacking on the other flank to take advantage of the distraction. A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces continue to attack in small fireteams in the Pokrovsk direction in attempts to gradually weaken Ukrainian forces and avoid direct frontal assaults.[85]

Order of Battle: Mashovets stated that elements of the Russian 15th Motorized Rifle Brigade (2nd CAA, Central Military District [CMD]) are operating near Udachne; that elements of the 1437th Motorized Rifle Regiment (15th Motorized Rifle Brigade, 2nd CAA) are operating near Zvirove; and that elements of the 51st CAA (formerly 1st Donetsk People's Republic Army Corps [DNR AC], Southern Military District [SMD]), including its 9th Motorized Rifle Brigade, are operating near Rodynske and Krasnyi Lyman.[86] Drone operators of the 35th Motorized Rifle Brigade (41st CAA, Central Military District [CMD]) are reportedly striking Ukrainian positions in the general Pokrovsk direction.[87]

## Assessed Control of Terrain in the Pokrovsk Direction August 18, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



### **Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Novopavlivka direction on August 18 but did not advance.**

Russian forces attacked toward Novopavlivka itself; southeast of Novopavlivka near Dachne; south of Novopavlivka near Filya; and southwest of Novopavlivka near Tovste, Zirka, Zelenyi Hai, and Hrushivske on August 17 and 18.[88]

### **Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Velykomykhailivka direction on August 18 but did not make confirmed advances.**

Unconfirmed claims: Mashovets stated that elements of the Russian 114th Motorized Rifle Brigade (51st CAA, SMD) and 69th Separate Cover Brigade (35th CAA, Eastern Military District [EMD]) advanced toward Vilne Pole (southeast of Velykomykhailivka).[89] Mashovets stated that elements of the 37th



Motorized Rifle Brigade (36th CAA, EMD) and 336th Naval Infantry Brigade (Baltic Fleet) likely bypassed Maliivka (southeast of Velykomykhailivka) from the north and south and that Russian forces are advancing at a pace of four to five square kilometers per day in this direction.[90] Mashovets also reported that Russian forces advanced a few kilometers east of Zaporizke (northeast of Hulyaipole) but that Ukrainian forces hold the Zaporizke-Novohrehorivka (northeast of Zaporizke) line.[91]

Russian forces attacked east of Velykomykhailivka near Oleksandrohrad and Voskresenka and southeast of Velykomykhailivka near Vilne Pole, Maliivka, and Komyshuvakha on August 17 and 18.[92] Mashovets reported on August 18 that elements of the Russian 127th Motorized Rifle Division (5th CAA, EMD) and 69th Separate Covering Brigade (35th CAA, EMD) are attacking along the Temyrivka – Zaporizke line and the Zelene Pole – Novohrehorivka line (both northeast of Hulyaipole).[93]

Order of Battle: Mashovets stated that elements of the Russian 36th Motorized Rifle Brigade and 430th Motorized Rifle Regiment (both of the 29th CAA, EMD) are operating near Zelenyi Hai and Andriivka-Klevstove (northeast of Velykomykhailivka).[94]

**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 limited offensive operations in eastern Zaporizhia Oblast on August 18 but did not advance.**

Russian forces attacked northeast of Hulyaipole near Temyrivka on August 17 and 18.[95]

**Russian forces continued offensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast on August 18 but did not advance.**

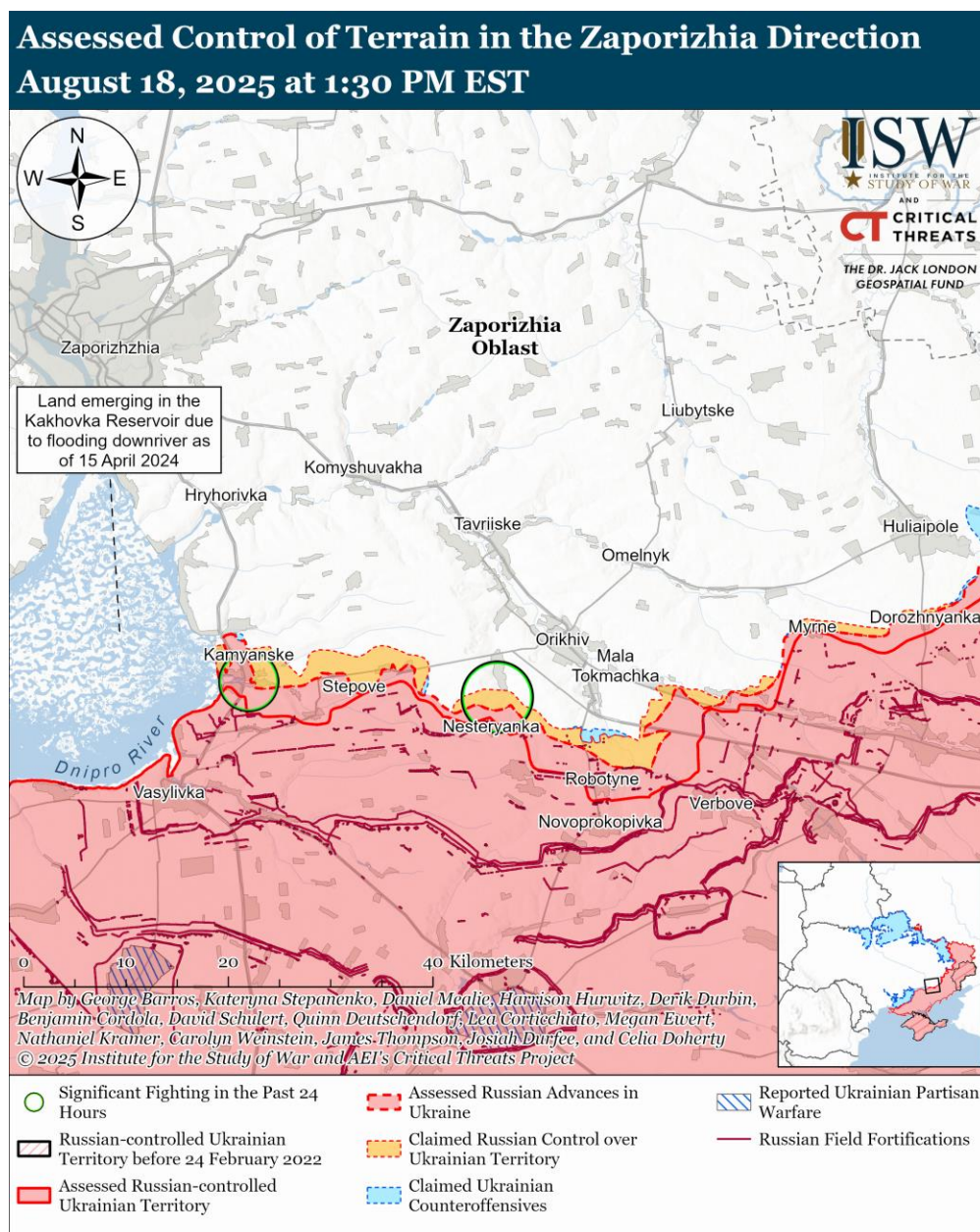
Russian forces attacked southeast of Orikhiv near Mala Tokmachka; southwest of Orikhiv near Nesteryanka; and west of Orikhiv near Novoandriivka, Stepnohirsk, Kamyanske, and Plavni on August 17 and 18.[96]

Ukrainian Southern Defense Forces Spokesperson Colonel Vladyslav Voloshyn stated on August 18 that Russian forces are using 600 to 700 first-person view (FPV) strike drones and increased monthly artillery usage by 54 percent from 12,000 munitions per month to 19,000 in the Zaporizhia direction.[97] Voloshyn also stated that Russian forces continue to accumulate equipment; are not using armored equipment; and last conducted a mechanized assault near Mali Shcherbaky (southwest of Orikhiv) in the week of August 11.[98]

A Ukrainian milblogger published footage on August 17 of Ukrainian FPV drones striking a Russian Barnaul-T air defense command and control (C2) system in Zaporizhia Oblast.[99]

Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian 70th Motorized Rifle Regiment (42nd Motorized Rifle Division, 58th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Southern Military District [SMD]) are reportedly operating near Mala Tokmachka; artillery elements of the 7th Airborne (VDV) Division are reportedly striking Ukrainian positions in the Orikhiv direction; and drone operators of the 114th Motorized Rifle Regiment (127th Motorized Rifle Division, 5th CAA, Eastern Military District [EMD]), 69th Separate

Covering Brigade (35th CAA, EMD), and 291st Motorized Rifle Regiment (42nd Motorized Rifle Division) are reportedly operating in the Zaporizhia direction.[100]



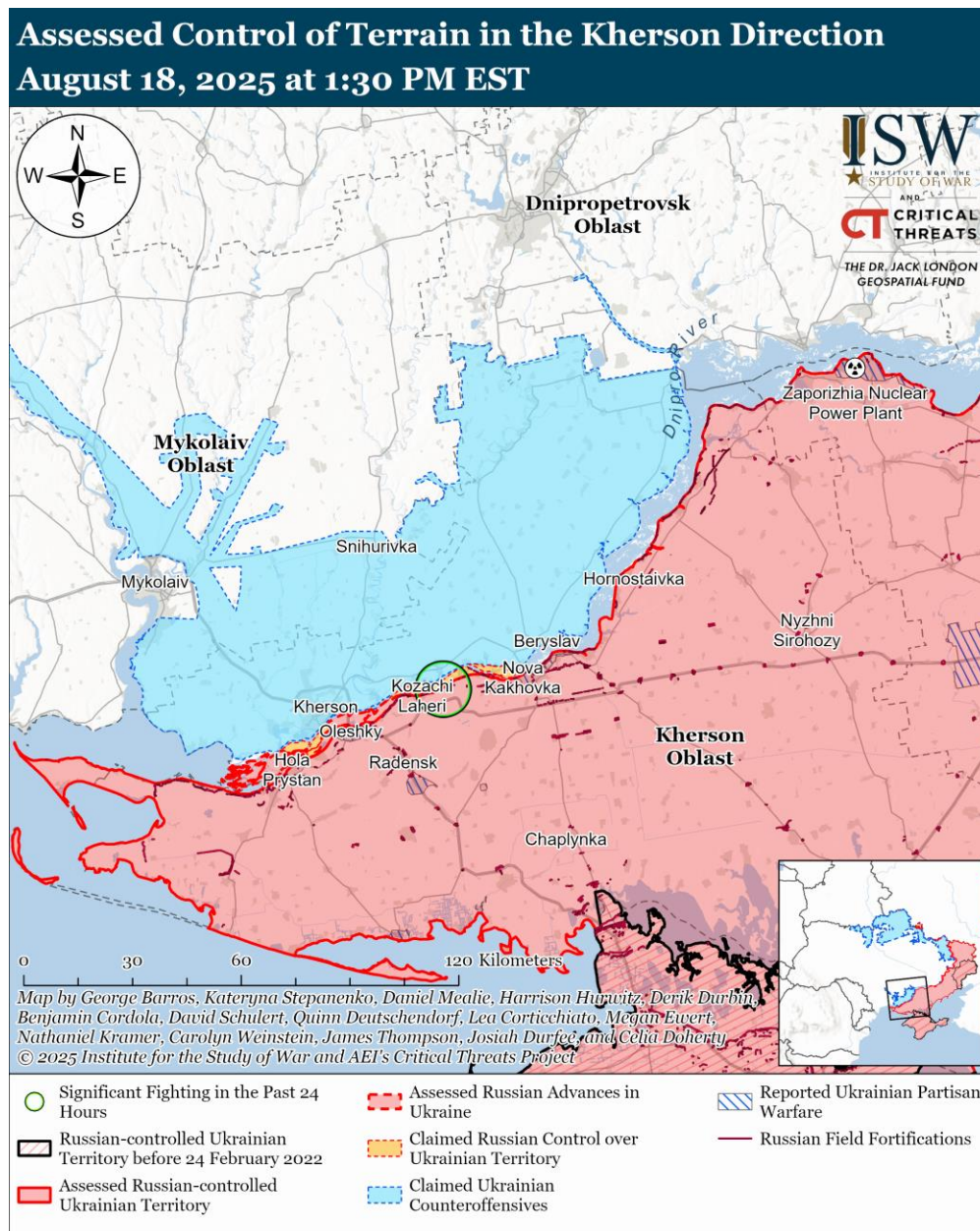
**Russian forces continued limited attacks in the Kherson direction on August 17 and 18, but did not advance.**

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 17 and 18.[101]

A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces are actively striking areas northeast of Kherson City and near Antonivka with aviation and drones in an effort to prepare a bridgehead on west (right) bank Kherson Oblast.[102] The milblogger noted that Russian forces are actively demining the coastal areas



in preparation for a future offensive in Kherson Oblast and that Russian forces consider any vehicle movements, including civilian vehicles, as legitimate targets. The milblogger claimed that elements of the Russian 18th CAA (SMD) struck Ukrainian communications infrastructure northeast of Antonivka with Molniya FPV drones.[103] Geolocated footage published on August 17 reportedly showed Russian forces striking buildings in Korabel Microraiion (southwestern Kherson City) and fortified Ukrainian positions northeast of Kherson City.[104]



## **Russian Air, Missile, and Drone Campaign (Russian Objective: Target Ukrainian military and civilian infrastructure in the rear and on the frontline)**

*See topline text for reports of Russian strikes in Ukraine.*

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

Belarusian Air Force and Air Defense Commander Major General Andrei Lukyanovich stated on August 17 that Belarusian Air Force elements and pilots will participate in the upcoming Zapad-2025 joint Russian-Belarusian military exercises.[105] Lukyanovich stated that the main goals for the Belarusian Air Force during the Zapad-2025 exercises will be securing the airspace, but did not disclose which tasks the Belarusian Air Force will practice during the exercises.

**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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