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August 22, 2025, 7:45 pm ET

Note: The data cut-off for this product was 12pm ET on August 22. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the August 23 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

The Kremlin continues to signal that Russian President Vladimir Putin is unwilling to have an immediate bilateral meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov gave an interview to NBC on August 22 and reiterated that there is currently no plan for Putin to meet with Zelensky.[1] Lavrov stated that Putin would meet Zelensky "when the agenda is ready for a summit," but noted that "this agenda is not ready at all." Lavrov accused Zelensky of failing to accept Russia's demanded preconditions for negotiation, such as "discussion of territorial issues," despite the fact that Zelensky stated on August 18 that he remains willing to meet with Putin unconditionally and directly discuss territorial questions.[2] Putin notably rejected Zelensky's May 2025 invitation for the leaders to hold direct negotiations in Istanbul.[3] The Kremlin has used Lavrov multiple times over the past few days to clarify the Kremlin's position that there will be no Putin-Zelensky meeting on the timeline that US President Donald Trump desires, and Lavrov's interview with a US-based media outlet likely aims to directly clarify this position to Western audiences.[4]

The Kremlin is likely concerned that a bilateral Putin-Zelensky meeting could undermine Putin's domestic justification for Russia's war in Ukraine. Russian opposition outlet Verstka reported on August 22, citing interlocutors in the Kremlin, that the Kremlin sees a Putin-Zelensky meeting in the near future as unlikely.[5] A political strategist working in the Kremlin told Verstka that Putin and his advisors fear reputational consequences as a result of meeting with Zelensky. A source who works with the Kremlin's domestic political projects stated that Kremlin Presidential Aide Yuriy Ushakov's August 18 statement about "raising the level" of the negotiating delegations is "more like a polite refusal" to the proposed Putin-Zelensky meeting. ISW previously assessed that the Kremlin failed to commit to a Putin-Zelensky meeting following the August 18 Trump-Putin call, and Kremlin officials led by Lavrov continue to explicitly reject such a meeting in the immediate future.[6] ISW continues to assess that the Kremlin is struggling to balance between appeasing a domestic audience that has been conditioned to accept nothing less than a full Russian victory in Ukraine and staving off further US sanctions that could impact Russia's ability to sustain its war effort.[7]

Russian officials continue to deflect blame for the lack of a Putin-Zelensky meeting and Ukraine-Russia peace negotiations by rejecting the legitimacy of Ukraine's democratically elected government. Lavrov also asked on August 22 how Russia can meet with an individual "pretending to be a leader," falsely implying that Zelensky is an illegitimate leader.[8]

Lavrov also questioned on August 21 Ukrainian officials' legitimacy and their eligibility to sign a peace agreement with Russia.[9] Other Russian officials, including State Duma International Affairs Committee First Deputy Head Alexei Chepa, State Duma International Affairs Committee Deputy Head Andrei Klimov, and State Duma Defense Committee First Head Chairperson Alexei Zhuravlev also rejected Zelensky's legitimacy and questioned the legality of any peace agreement that Zelensky would sign.[10] Russian officials have repeatedly denied and undermined the legitimacy of Zelensky's presidency in an ongoing effort to justify Russia's war against Ukraine, portray Zelensky as a false actor in peace negotiations, and deflect from Russia's ongoing refusal to participate in negotiations.[11] Lavrov and other Russian officials' claims about Zelensky's illegitimacy also set informational conditions for Russia to reject the legality of any peace agreement Russia may sign and justify Russia's reneging on such an agreement in the future.[12]

Ukraine continued its strike campaign against the Russian military and oil infrastructure in Russia and occupied Ukraine. Ukrainian Unmanned Systems Forces Commander Major Robert "Magyar" Brovdi reported on August 21 that Ukrainian drones struck the Unecha oil pumping station northeast of Vysokoye, Bryansk Oblast, which is part of Russia's Druzhba pipeline and plays a key role in supplying Russia's military-industrial complex.[13] Geolocated footage published on August 21 shows a Ukrainian strike on one of the Unecha station's oil pumps and a large fire.[14] Ukrainian forces most recently struck the Unecha facility overnight on August 12 to 13.[15] The Ukrainian General Staff reported on August 22 that Ukrainian missile, artillery, and aviation launched coordinated strikes on a command post of the Russian Rubikon Center for Advanced Unmanned Technologies and a large ammunition depot in occupied Donetsk Oblast.[16] Geolocated footage from the Ukrainian General Staff published on August 22 shows the Ukrainian strike against the Rubikon command post and ammunition depot east of occupied Novotoretske, Donetsk Oblast (northeast of Pokrovsk).[17] The Ukrainian Navy reported on August 22 that the Ukrainian Navy struck a Russian drone base at the Khersones Airbase west of occupied Sevastopol, Crimea, hitting up to three Iranian Mohajer-6 drones and two Forpost reconnaissance drones that the Russian military uses to monitor the Black Sea.[18]

Ukrainian authorities returned Ukrainian civilians whom Russian authorities deported from occupied areas of Ukraine to a checkpoint on the Russia-Georgia border. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andriy Sybiha and Internal Affairs Minister Ihor Klymenko stated on August 22 that Ukrainian authorities organized the return of 65 Ukrainian civilians, including eight seriously ill, who Russian authorities deported and abandoned without documents, food, or water at the Verkhny Lars border checkpoint on the Russia-Georgia international border.[19] Non-profit organization Volunteers Tbilisi and Russian opposition outlet Vazhnye Istorii added that the Ukrainian civilians spent about three months in a basement at the border checkpoint meant to hold only 20 people.[20] Vazhnye Istorii reported that the civilians included residents of Russian-occupied areas of Ukraine who refused to cooperate with occupation authorities or accept Russian passports during forced Russification campaigns.[21]

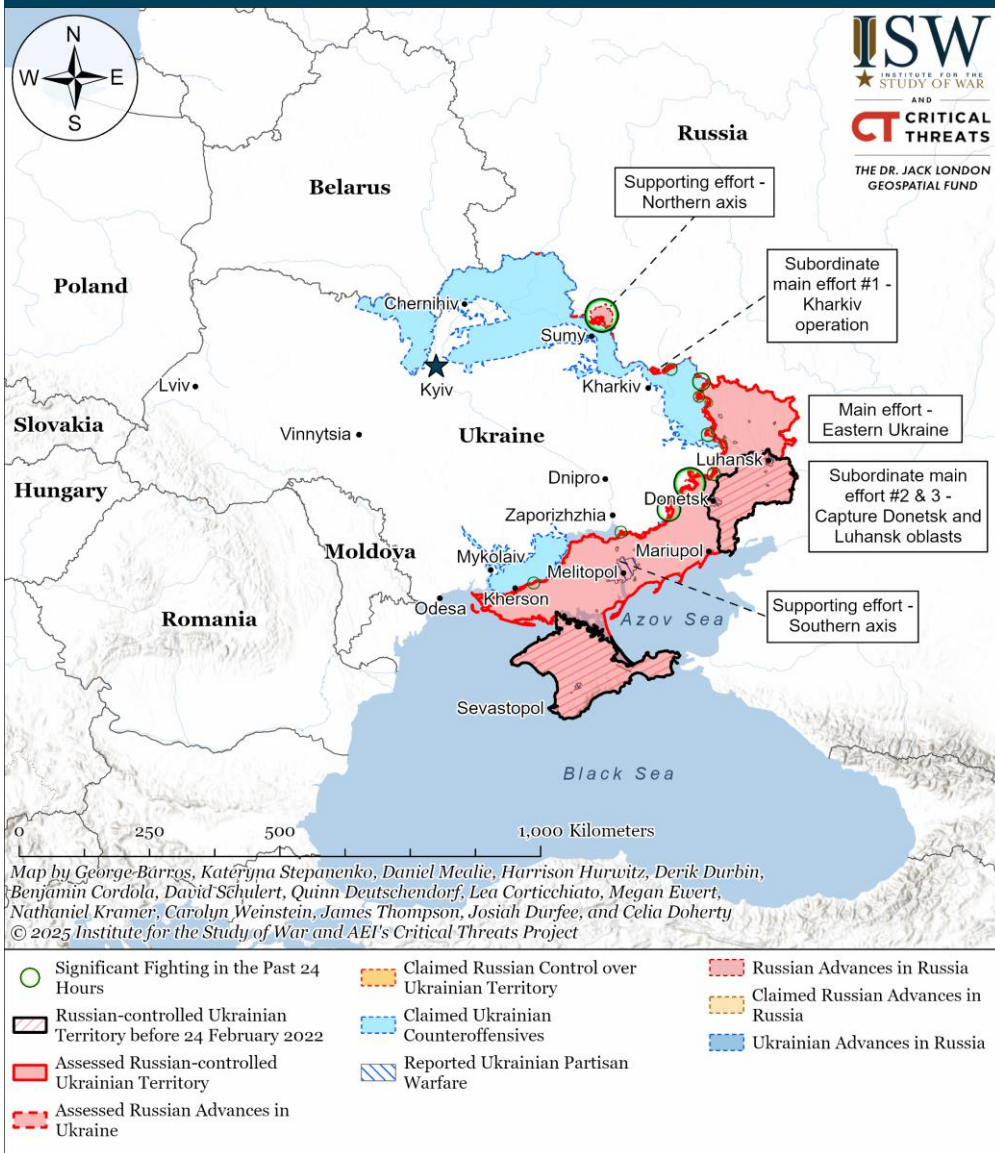
Key Takeaways:

- **The Kremlin continues to signal that Russian President Vladimir Putin is unwilling to have an immediate bilateral meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.**
- **Russian officials continue to deflect blame for the lack of Putin-Zelensky meeting and Ukraine-Russia peace negotiations by rejecting the legitimacy of Ukraine's democratically elected government.**
- **Ukraine continued its strike campaign against Russian military and oil infrastructure in Russia and occupied Ukraine.**
- **Ukrainian authorities returned Ukrainian civilians whom Russian authorities deported from occupied areas of Ukraine to a checkpoint on the Russia-Georgia border.**
- **Ukrainian forces advanced in northern Sumy Oblast and near Pokrovsk and Novopavlivka. Russian forces advanced in northern Sumy and eastern Zaporizhia oblasts and near Chasiv Yar and Novopavlivka.**

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

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Russo-Ukrainian War August 22, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



Ukrainian Operations in the Russian Federation

Fighting continued in Kursk Oblast on August 22.

Russian forces attacked in unspecified areas of Kursk Oblast on August 21 and 22.[22] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked near Tetkino (southwest of Glushkovo).[23]

A Russian milblogger reportedly affiliated with the Russian Northern Grouping of Forces claimed on August 22 that Russian forces continue to concentrate an unspecified number of airborne (VDV) and aerospace (VKS) elements near Novyi Put (southwest of Glushkovo) and speculated that Russian forces may be preparing for some unspecified operations in the area.[24]

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)

Ukrainian and Russian forces recently advanced in northern Sumy Oblast.

Assessed Ukrainian advances: Geolocated footage published on August 21 shows Russian forces conducting artillery strikes against Ukrainian forces within and north of Varachyne (northeast of Sumy City), indicating that Russian forces likely no longer hold positions within Varachyne and that Ukrainian forces have likely recently liberated the settlement.[25]

Assessed Russian advances: Geolocated footage published on August 22 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced in eastern and southern Yunakivka (northeast of Sumy City).[26]

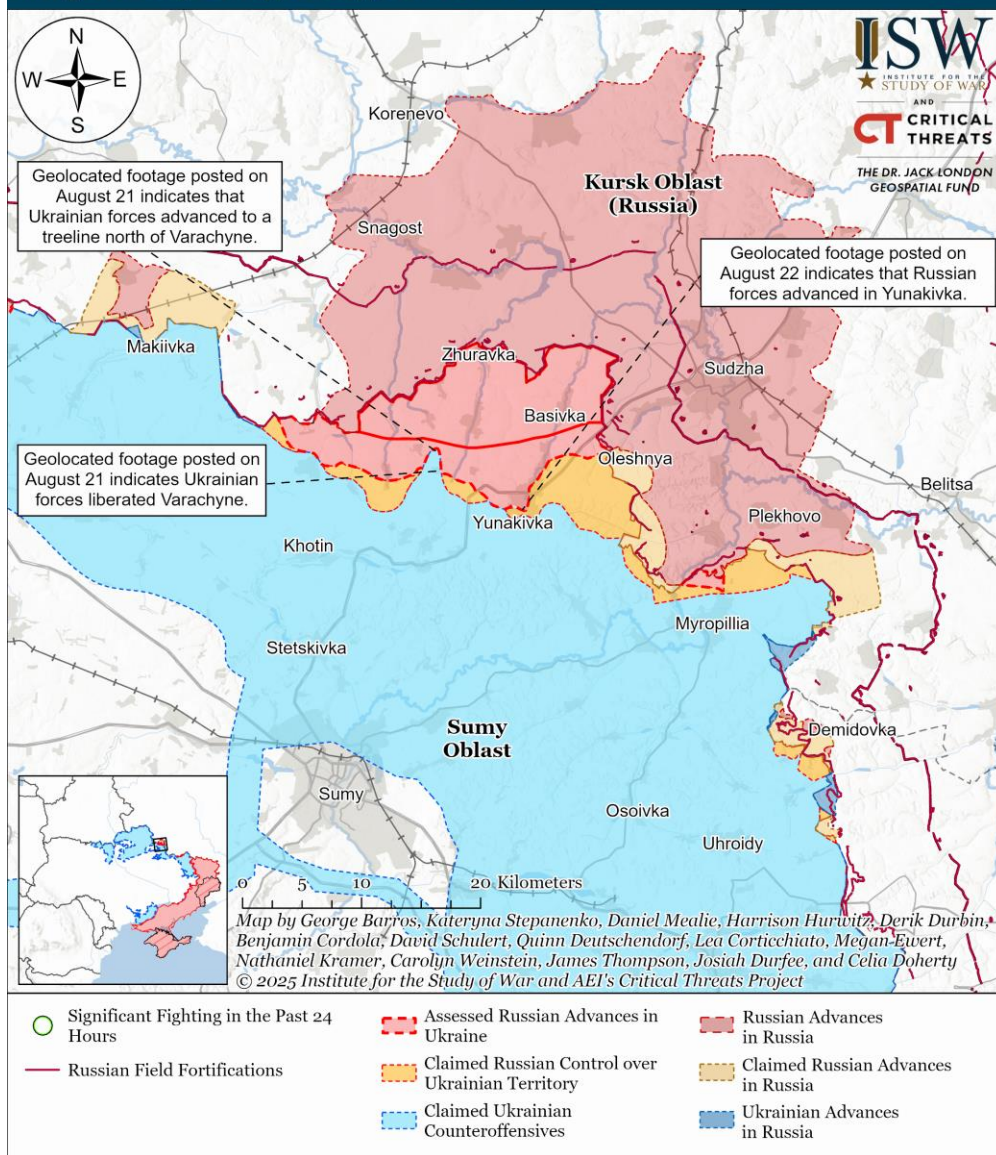
Russian forces attacked near Novokostyantynivka and Oleksiivka (both north of Sumy City) and in Yunakivka on August 21 and 22.[27] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked near Yunakivka.[28]

A Russian milblogger reportedly affiliated with the Russian Northern Grouping of Forces criticized the Russian military command on August 22 for committing a battalion of the 810th Naval Infantry Brigade (Black Sea Fleet) to assaults near Stepne (northwest of Sumy City), where other unspecified elements of the 810th Naval Infantry Brigade and 40th Naval Infantry Brigade (Pacific Fleet) previously suffered high casualty rates.[29]

The mayor of Bilopilnya (northwest of Sumy City), Yuriy Zarko, stated on August 22 that Russian forces began operating fiber-optic drones in central Bilopilnya for the first time after flying fiber-optic drones on the outskirts of the settlement for some unspecified time.[30]

Order of Battle: Assault groups of the Russian 83rd Separate Airborne (VDV) Brigade are reportedly fighting in Yunakivka.[31] Elements of the Russian 51st VDV Regiment (106th VDV Division) are reportedly trying to hold positions near Sadky and have practically stopped conducting offensive operations in the area.[32] Drone operators of the Chechen Anvar Spetsnaz Detachment and 1st Infantry Battalion of the 137th VDV Regiment (106th VDV Division) are reportedly conducting joint strikes against Ukrainian forces near Mohrytsya (southeast of Yunakivka).[33] Drone operators of the 56th VDV Regiment (7th VDV Division) reportedly continue to operate in northern Sumy Oblast.[34]

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Sumy Direction August 22, 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 22 but did not make confirmed advances.

Unconfirmed claims: A Russian milblogger claimed on August 21 that Russian forces advanced northeast of Kharkiv City in the forest west of Synelnykove and along the south (left) bank of the Vovcha River.[35]

Russian forces attacked northeast of Kharkiv City near Vovchansk, Synelnykove, and on the south (left) bank of the Vovcha River on August 21 and 22.[36] A Russian milblogger claimed on August 21 that Ukrainian forces counterattacked near Vovchansk and on the south (left) bank of the Vovcha River.[37]

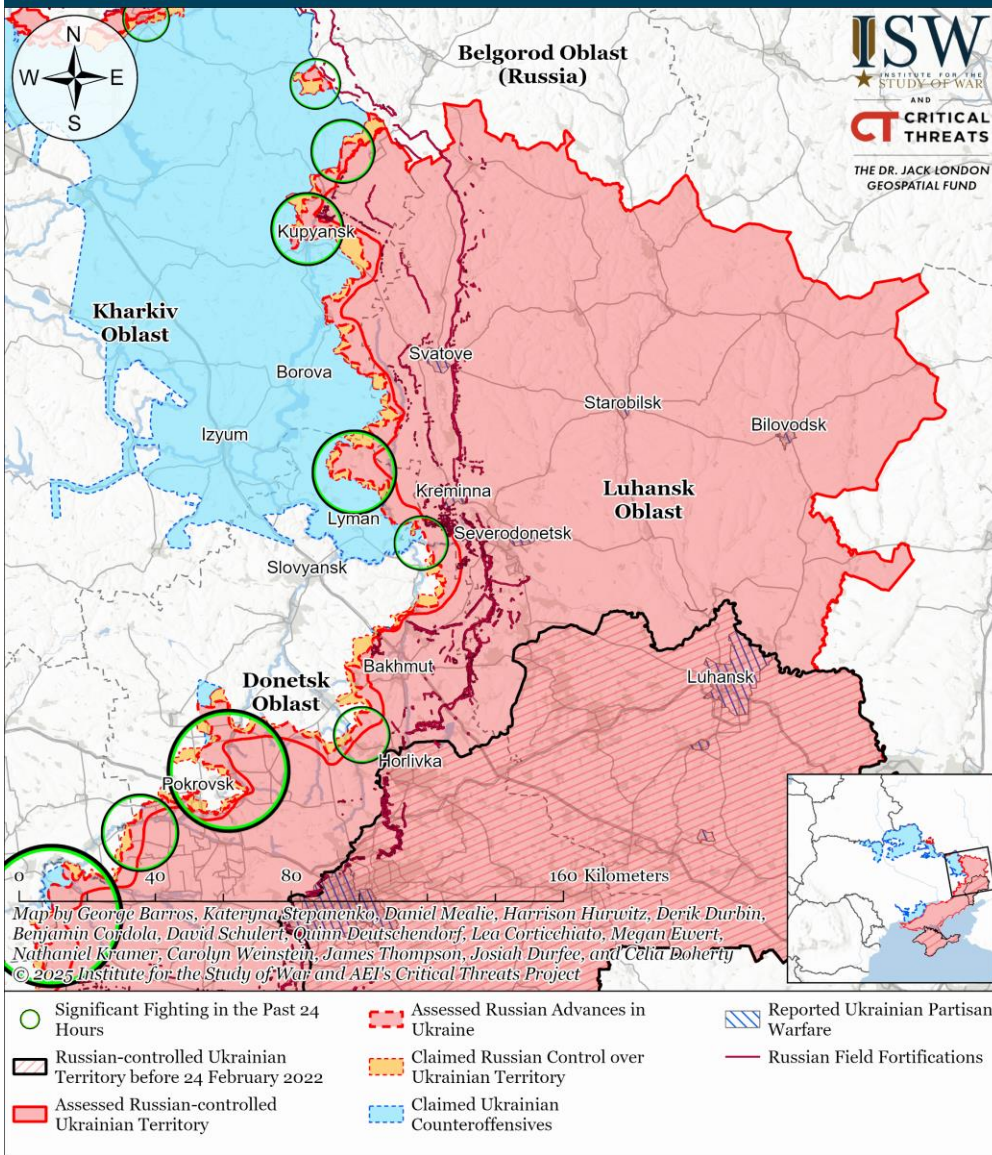
Russian forces conducted offensive operations in the Velykyi Burluk direction on August 22 but did not make confirmed advances.

Unconfirmed claims: A Russian milblogger claimed on August 22 that Russian forces advanced in the Khatnie (northeast of Velykyi Burluk) direction with support from the Russian Aerospace Forces (VKS) and TOS thermobaric artillery systems.[38]

Russian forces attacked northeast of Velykyi Burluk near Khatnie and Ambarne and toward Chuhunivka on August 21 and 22.[39]

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 22, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Kupyansk direction on August 22 but did not advance.

Russian forces attacked near Kupyansk itself; northwest of Kupyansk near Myrove; north of Kupyansk near Zapadne, Holubivka, and Kindrashivka and toward Kolodyazne; and southeast of Kupyansk near Stepova Novoselivka on August 21 and 22.[40] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked northeast of Kupyansk near Synkivka and east of Kupyansk near Petropavlivka.[41]

A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces conducted FAB glide bomb strikes on a bridge crossing over the Oskil River in the Kupyansk direction.[42]

Order of Battle: Drone operators of the Russian 352nd Motorized Rifle Regiment (11th Army Corps [AC], Leningrad Military District [LMD]) are reportedly operating near Stepova Novoselivka.[43]

Drone operators of the 68th Motorized Rifle Division (6th Combined Arms Army [CAA], LMD) reportedly continue to operate in the Kupyansk direction.[44]

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Borova direction on August 22 but did not make confirmed advances.

Unconfirmed claims: A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced west of Lozova (northeast of Borova) and southwest of Zelenyi Hai (east of Borova).[45]

Russian forces attacked northeast of Borova near Zahryzove and southeast of Borova near Hrekivka on August 22.[46]

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Lyman direction on August 22 but did not make confirmed advances.

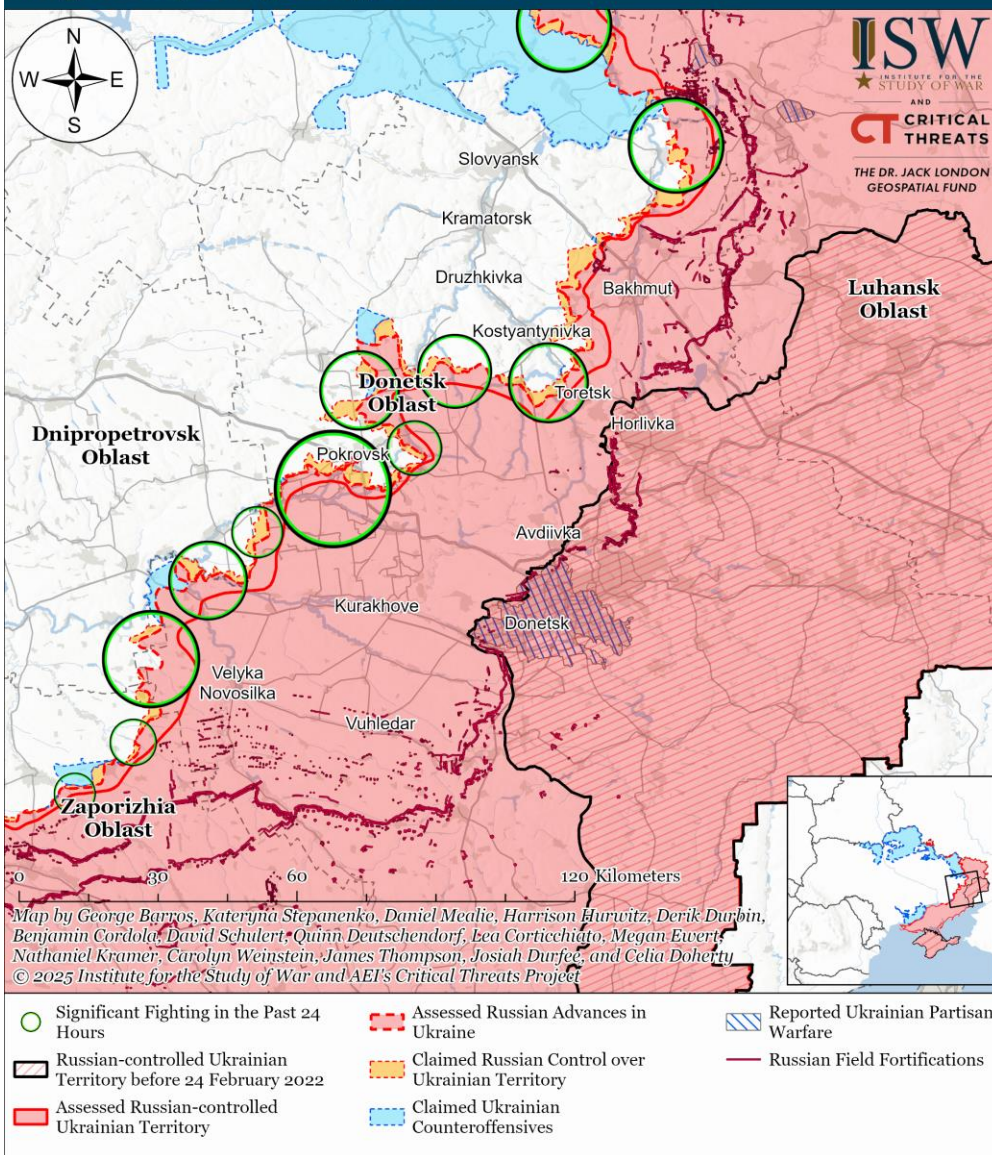
Unconfirmed claims: Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced southwest of Kolodyazi (northeast of Lyman), and southwest of Torske and in the Serebryanske forest area (both east of Lyman).[47]

Russian forces attacked northwest of Lyman near Serednie and Shandryholove; north of Lyman near Karpivka and Zelena Dolyna; northeast of Lyman near Myrne and Kolodyazi; east of Lyman near Dibrova, Zarichne, and Torske; and southeast of Lyman toward Yampil and in the Serebryanske forest area on August 21 and 22.[48] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked north of Lyman near Ridkodub and Katerynivka.[49]

Order of Battle: Elements, including drone operators, of the Russian 164th Motorized Rifle Brigade (25th CAA, Central Military District [CMD]) are reportedly striking Ukrainian forces near Zarichne and operating in the Serebryanske forest area.[50]

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 22, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Siversk direction on August 22 but did not make confirmed advances.

Unconfirmed claims: A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces advanced southwest of Novoselivka (east of Siversk).[51]

Russian forces attacked near Siversk itself, north of Siversk near Serebryanka, northeast of Siversk near Hryhorivka, east of Siversk near Novoselivka, southeast of Siversk near Vyimka and Ivano-Darivka, south of Siversk near Pereizne, and southwest of Siversk near Fedorivka on August 21 and 22.[52]

The commander of a Ukrainian drone platoon operating in the Siversk direction stated that Russian forces continue to conduct small infantry group assaults in attempts to identify and infiltrate weak

points in Ukrainian defensive lines.[53] The commander stated that Russian forces in this direction leverage up to 150 fiber-optic and first-person view (FPV) drones per day to strike Ukrainian drones and equipment. The commander added that Russian forces are constructing makeshift drone adaptations using improvised materials such as logs and camouflage nets.

Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian 9th Motorized Rifle Brigade (51st Combined Arms Army [CAA], formerly 1st Donetsk People's Republic Army Corps [DNR AC], Southern Military District [SMD]) are reportedly operating near Rozdolivka (south of Siversk).[54]

Russian forces recently advanced in the Chasiv Yar direction.

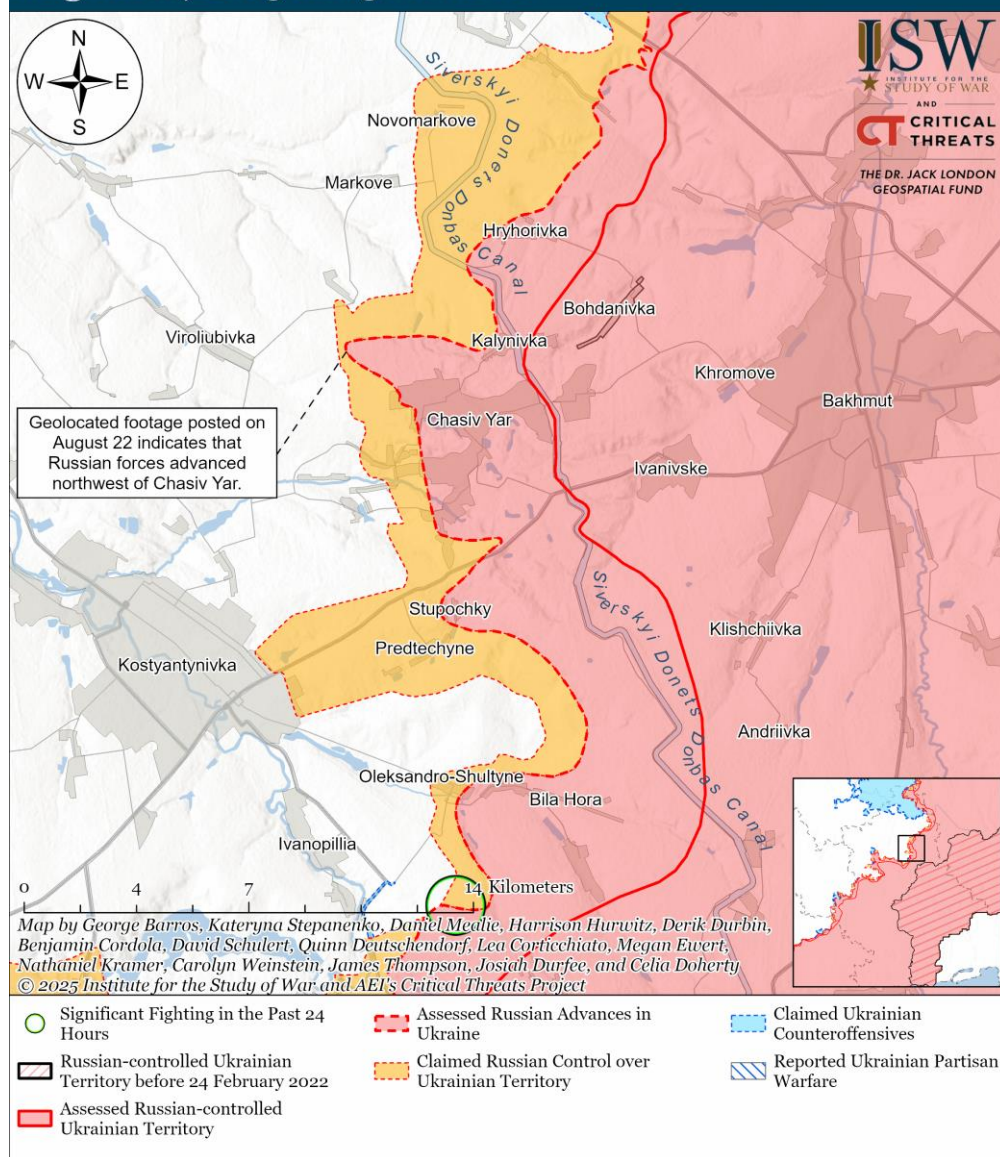
Assessed Russian advances: Geolocated footage published on August 22 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced northwest of Chasiv Yar.[55]

Russian forces attacked south of Chasiv Yar near Predtechyne and southwest of Chasiv Yar near Kostyantynivka on August 21 and 22.[56]

The commander of a Ukrainian drone battalion operating in the Chasiv Yar direction stated that Russian forces recently changed tactics in this direction and are now leveraging unmanned ground vehicles (UGVs) to supply Russian forces operating close to the frontline.[57] The commander also stated that Russian forces continue to conduct small infantry group assaults at all hours of the day, accumulating forces and then conducting assaults in improvised camouflage.

Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian 33rd Motorized Rifle Regiment (20th Motorized Rifle Division, 8th CAA, SMD) are reportedly operating in the Kostyantynivka (Chasiv Yar) direction.[58]

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Chasiv Yar Direction August 22, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Toretsk direction on August 22 but did not make confirmed advances.

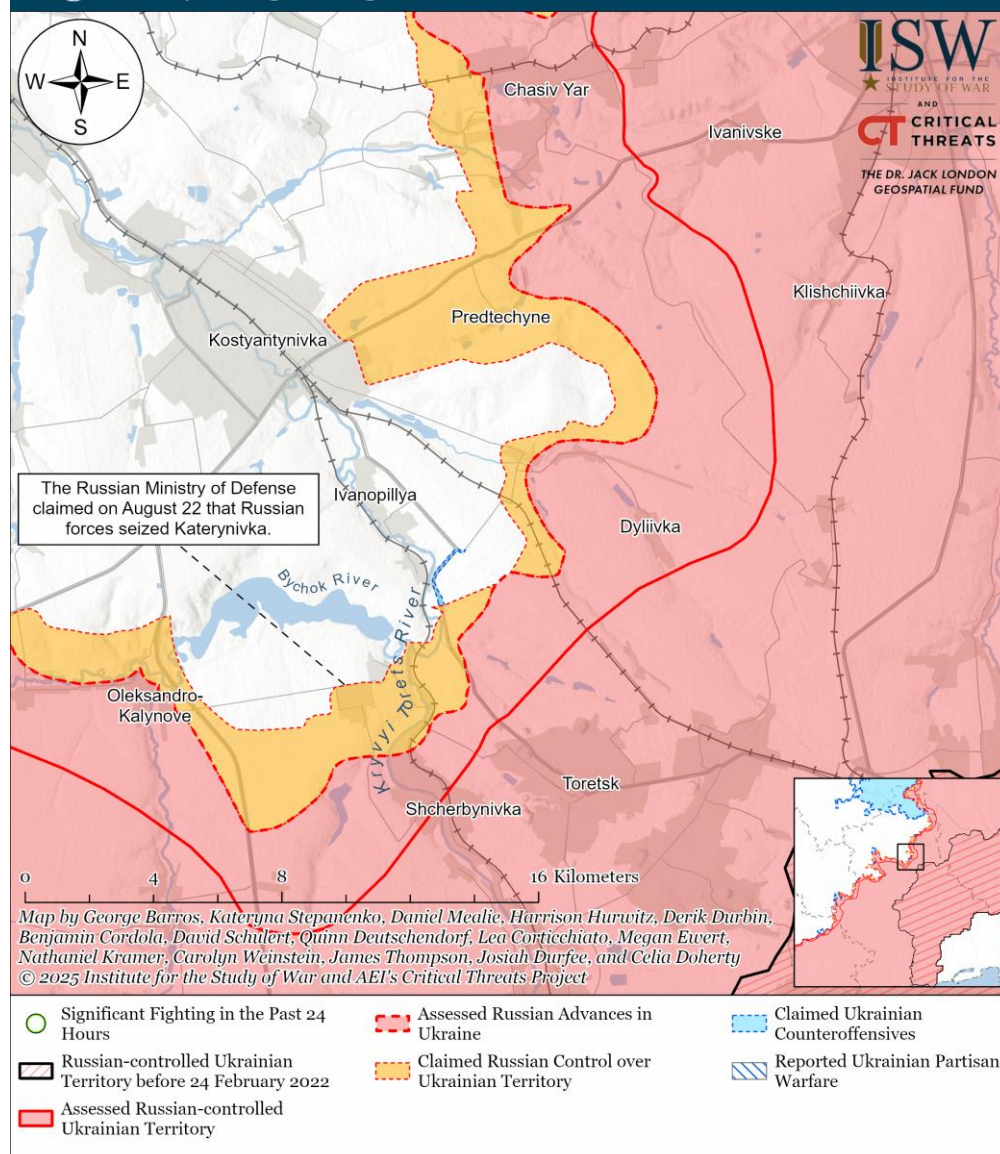
Unconfirmed claims: The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) claimed on August 22 that Russian forces seized Katerynivka (northwest of Toretsk).[59] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced south of Oleksandro-Shulytne (north of Toretsk) and northeast of Rusyn Yar (northwest of Toretsk).[60] Social media sources geolocated the Russian MoD's footage published on August 21, purportedly showing Russian forces after seizing Oleksandro-Shulytne, on August 22 and reported that the footage shows Russian forces assaulting Ukrainian positions in Dyliivka (north of Toretsk), not Oleksandro-Shulytne.[61]

Russian forces attacked near Toretsk itself; north of Toretsk itself near Bila Hora and Oleksandro-Shulyne; northwest of Toretsk near Pleshchiivka, Katerynivka, Kleban-Byk, and Poltavka and toward Stepanivka; and west of Toretsk near Shcherbynivka on August 21 and 22.[62] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked near Kleban-Byk.[63]

Russian milbloggers claimed that natural terrain features, including windbreaks and ravines, and Ukrainian fortifications are complicating Russian forces' attempts to advance near Kleban-Byk.[64]

Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian 1st Prizrak Territorial Defense Battalion (4th Motorized Rifle Brigade, 3rd CAA, formerly 2nd Luhansk People's Republic Army Corps [LNR] AC, SMD) are operating within Bila Hora.[65] Drone operators and elements of the 8th CAA (SMD), including its 238th artillery and 439th rocket artillery brigades, are reportedly striking Ukrainian positions near Katerynivka.[66] Elements of the 150th Motorized Rifle Division (8th CAA, SMD) are reportedly operating within and near Katerynivka.[67] Elements of the 77th Motorized Rifle Regiment (reportedly of the 7th Military Base, 49th CAA, SMD) are reportedly operating near Bila Hora.[68]

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Kostyantynivka Direction August 22, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



Ukrainian forces recently advanced in the Pokrovsk direction.

Assessed Ukrainian advances: Geolocated footage published on August 22 indicates that Ukrainian forces recently advanced in western Udachne (southwest of Pokrovsk).[69]

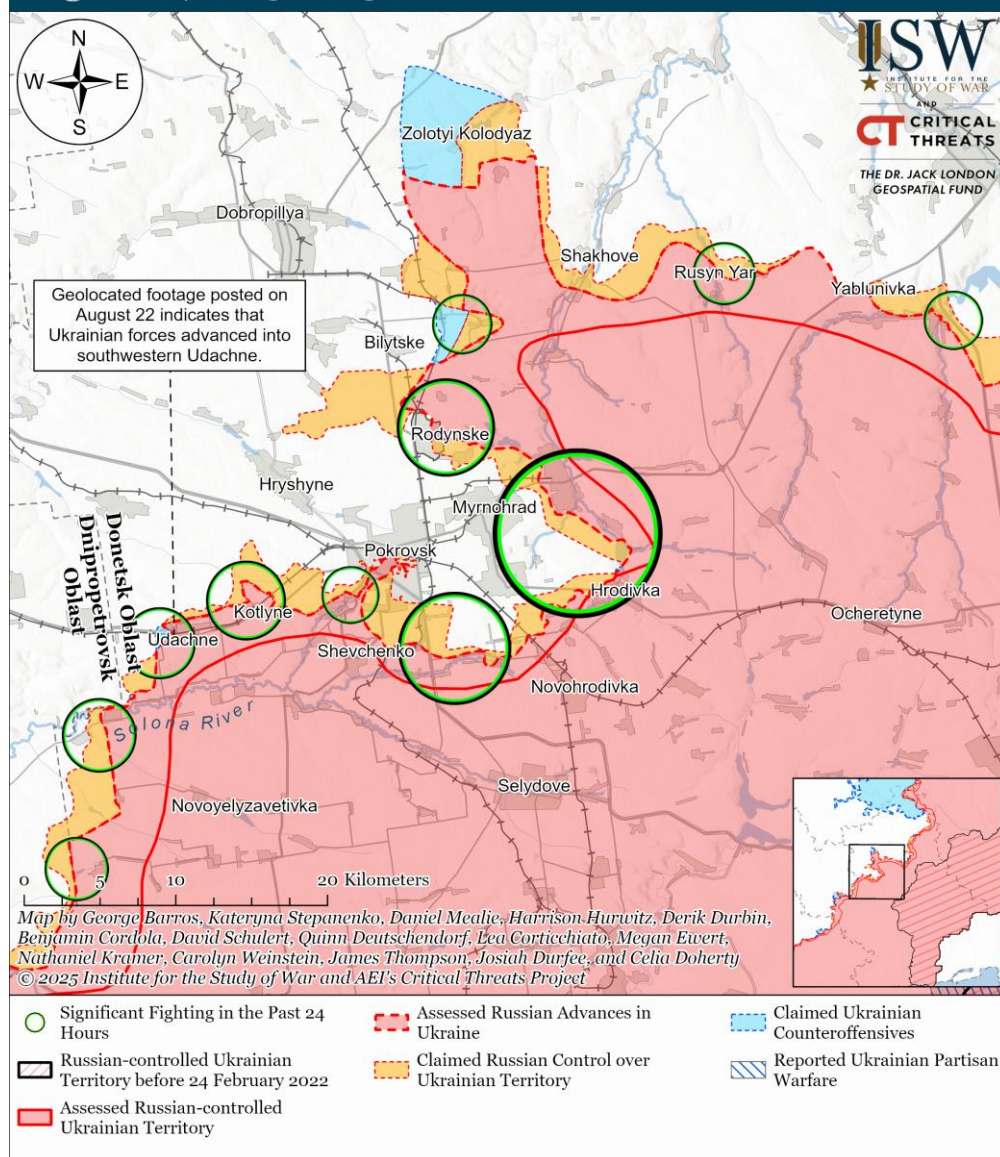
Unconfirmed claims: The Russian MoD claimed on August 22 that Russian forces seized Volodymyrivka (northeast of Pokrovsk).[70] Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces advanced north of Pokrovsk toward Petrivka, northeast of Pokrovsk near Pankivka and toward Shakhove and Sofiivka, east of Pokrovsk near Promin and Moskovske, and south of Pokrovsk near Chunyshyne and into Novopavlivka.[71]

Russian forces attacked near Pokrovsk itself; north of Pokrovsk near Rodynske and Bilytske; northeast of Pokrovsk near Krasnyi Lyman, Zapovidne, Kucheriv Yar, Novoekonomichne, Mykolaivka, Myrolyubivka, Zatyshok, Sofiiivka, Vesele, Zoloty Kolodyaz, Nove Shakhove, and Volodymyrivka; east of Pokrovsk near Promin and toward Myrnohrad; 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 Molodetske on August 21 and 22.[72] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces counterattacked near Hruzsk (northeast of Pokrovsk), Bilytske, and Kotlyne.[73]

A Russian milblogger claimed on August 22 that Russian forces significantly penetrated Ukrainian defenses near Myrnohrad and are fighting for Rodynske, Zatyshok, and Zapovidne.[74] The milblogger claimed that the heaviest fighting continues near Zoloty Kolodyaz and that Russian advances near Rodynske and Zapovidne will allow Russian forces to envelop Myrnohrad. The milblogger claimed that it is too soon to say that Russian forces broke the frontline near Mayak (northeast of Pokrovsk) or that Russian forces seized Zoloty Kolodyaz. The milblogger stated that neither Ukrainian nor Russian forces have seized the initiative in the salient. Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces are continuing efforts to sever the salient from its base along the Zapovidne-Mayak line.[75] One milblogger claimed that Russian forces are advancing in the salient and expanding their area of control.[76]

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 operate in the Pokrovsk direction.[77]

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Pokrovsk Direction August 22, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



Ukrainian and Russian forces recently advanced in the Novopavlivka direction.

Assessed Ukrainian advances: Geolocated footage published on August 22 shows Ukrainian soldiers raising a flag in central Zelenyi Hai (southwest of Novopavlivka), indicating that Ukrainian forces likely retook the settlement.[78]

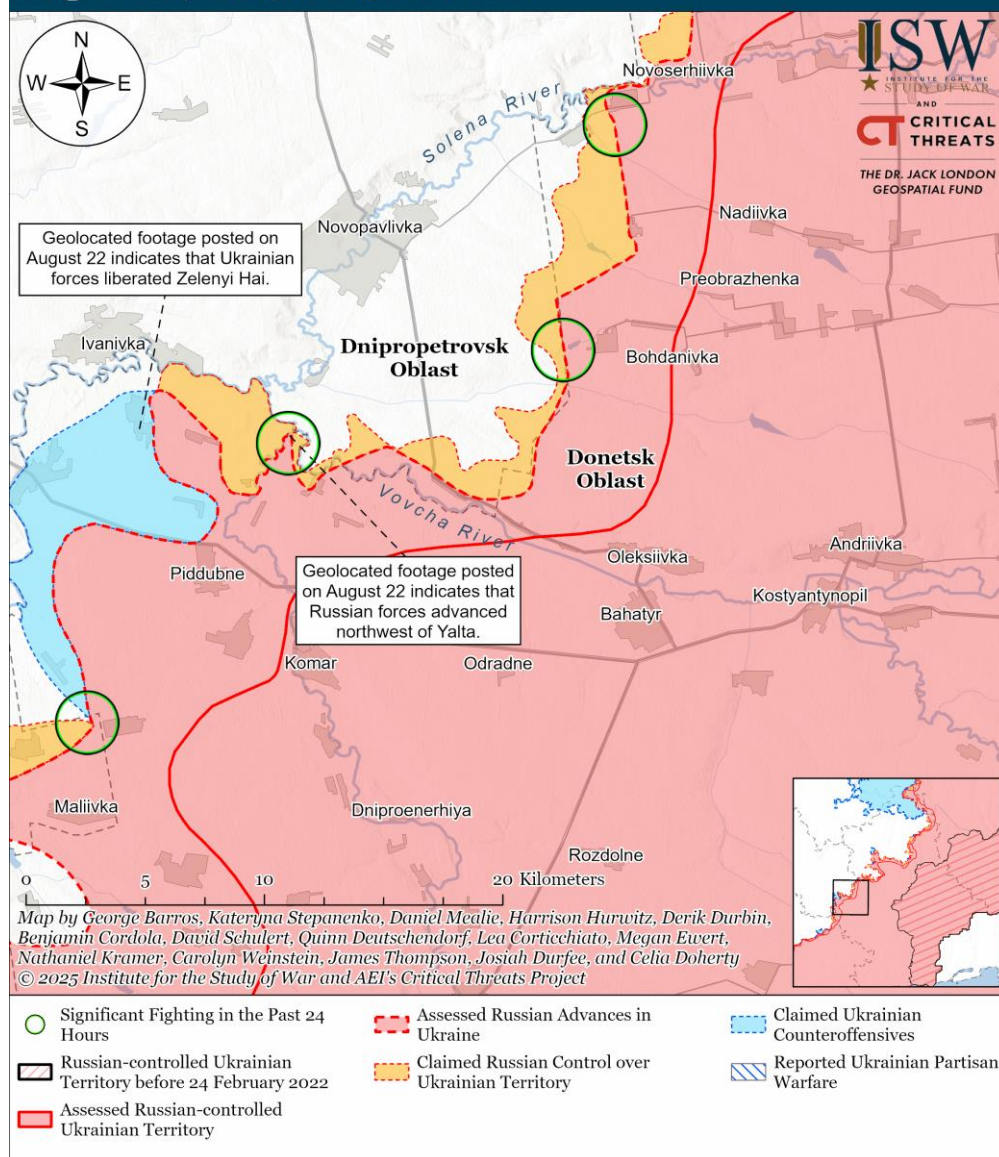
Assessed Russian advances: Geolocated footage published on August 22 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced northwest of Yalta (south of Novopavlivka).[79]

Russian forces attacked near Novopavlivka itself; northeast near Muravka; southeast of Novopavlivka near Dachne and Horikhove; south of Novopavlivka near Tovste, Zaporizhzhia, and Filiya; and southwest of Novopavlivka near Zelenyi Hai on August 21 and 22.[80]

The commander of a Ukrainian tank company operating in the Novopavlivka direction reported on August 21 that Russian forces are slowly advancing in the area and that the situation is critical.[81] The commander reported that Russian forces continue to conduct small infantry group assaults consisting of two to three soldiers with drone and artillery support, and that Russian forces are leveraging drone strikes at longer ranges. The spokesperson of a Ukrainian unmanned systems battalion operating in the Novopavlivka direction reported that the Russian military command is sparing no manpower in the Novopavlivka direction and that Ukrainian drone strikes are slowing Russian advances.[82]

Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian 11th Air Force and Air Defense Army (Russian Aerospace Forces [VKS] and Eastern Military District [EMD]) reportedly continue to conduct FAB-500 unguided glide bomb strikes against Ukrainian positions near Ivanivka (southwest of Novopavlivka).[83] Drone operators of the 74th Motorized Rifle Brigade (41st CAA, Central Military District [CMD]) reportedly continue to strike Ukrainian forces in the Dnipropetrovsk (Novopavlivka) direction.[84]

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Novopavlivka Direction August 22, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



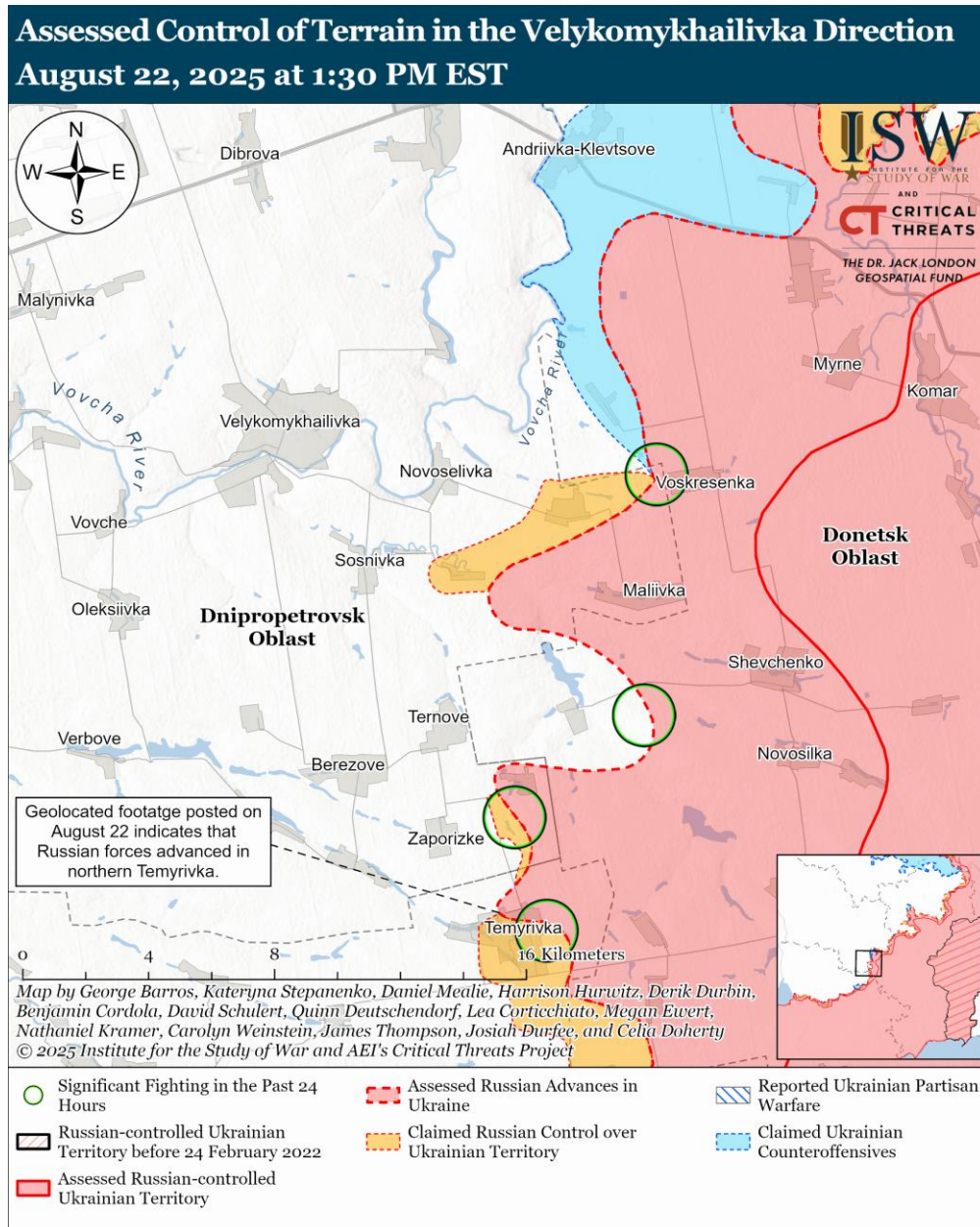
Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Velykomykhailivka direction on August 22 but did not advance.

Russian forces attacked east of Velykomykhailivka near Voskresenka and Oleksandrohrad and southeast of Velykomykhailivka near Shevchenko, Maliivka, Sichneve, and Novoheorhiivka and toward Komyshuvakha and Zaporizhke on August 21 and 22.[85]

Order of Battle: Drone operators of the Russian 37th Motorized Rifle Brigade (36th CAA, EMD) reportedly continue to strike Ukrainian positions near Ternove (southeast of Velykomykhailivka).[86]

Business Insider reported on August 22, citing Maxar satellite imagery captured on August 20, that Russian forces have constructed several long-range Shahed drone launch sites at the destroyed Donetsk

Airport (northwest of occupied Donetsk City), which is fewer than 24 miles from the frontline.[87] Business Insider noted that Maxar satellite imagery indicates that Russian forces began constructing the launch sites between late May and early June 2025. ISW continues to assess that long-range drone launch sites closer to the frontline will reduce the reaction time for Ukrainian air defenses.[88]



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 recently advanced in eastern Zaporizhzhia Oblast.

Assessed Russian advances: Geolocated footage published on August 22 indicates that Russian forces recently advanced into northern Temyrivka (northeast of Hulyaipole).[89]

Russian forces attacked northeast of Hulyaipole near Temyrivka, Zelene Pole, Malynivka, and Olhivske on August 21 and 22.[90]

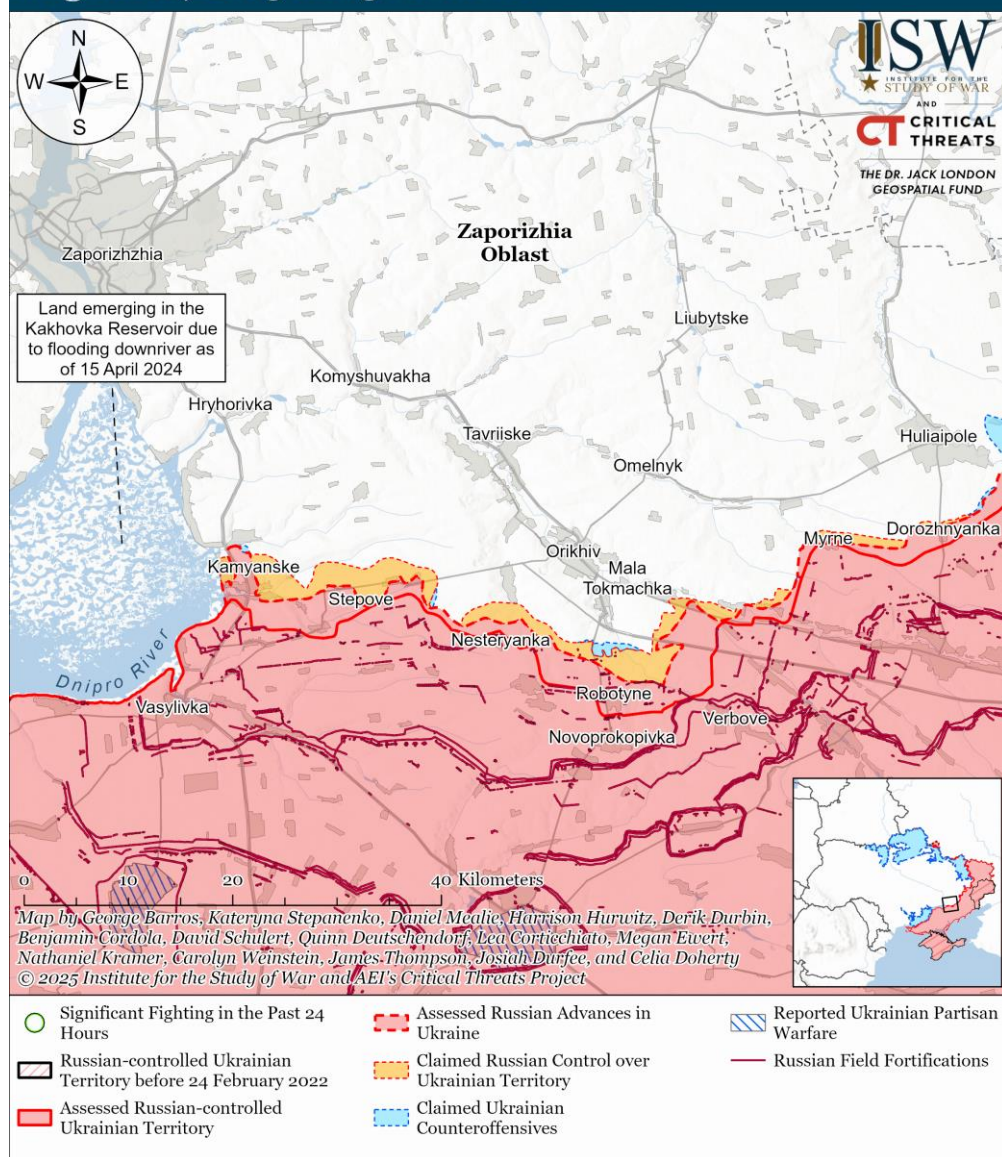
Russian forces continued offensive operations in western Zaporizhia Oblast on August 22 but did not advance.

Russian forces attacked southeast of Orikhiv near Mala Tokmachka and Bilohirya and west of Orikhiv near Plavni, Kamyanske, and Stepnohirsk on August 22.[91]

Geolocated footage published on August 22 shows a Russian Orlan-10 reconnaissance drone carrying two first person-view (FPV) drones south of Mala Tokmachka.[92] Ukrainian electronic and radio warfare expert Serhiy "Flash" Beskrestnov reported on August 22 that several Ukrainian units in unspecified areas of the frontline observed Russian Orlan-10 reconnaissance drones operating as "mothership" drones to transport FPV drones closer to the frontline in order to increase the range of FPV drone strikes.[93]

Order of Battle: Drone operators and artillery elements of the Russian 4th Military Base (58th Combined Arms Army [CAA], Southern Military District [SMD]) and elements of the 70th Motorized Rifle Regiment (42nd Motorized Rifle Division, 58th CAA) are reportedly operating near Mala Tokmachka.[94] Drone operators of the BARS-Sarmat Unmanned Systems Special Purpose Center (formerly BARS-Sarmat Detachment, subordinated to the Russian Airborne [VDV] Forces) and elements of the 247th VDV Regiment (7th VDV Division) are reportedly operating near Stepnohirsk.[95]

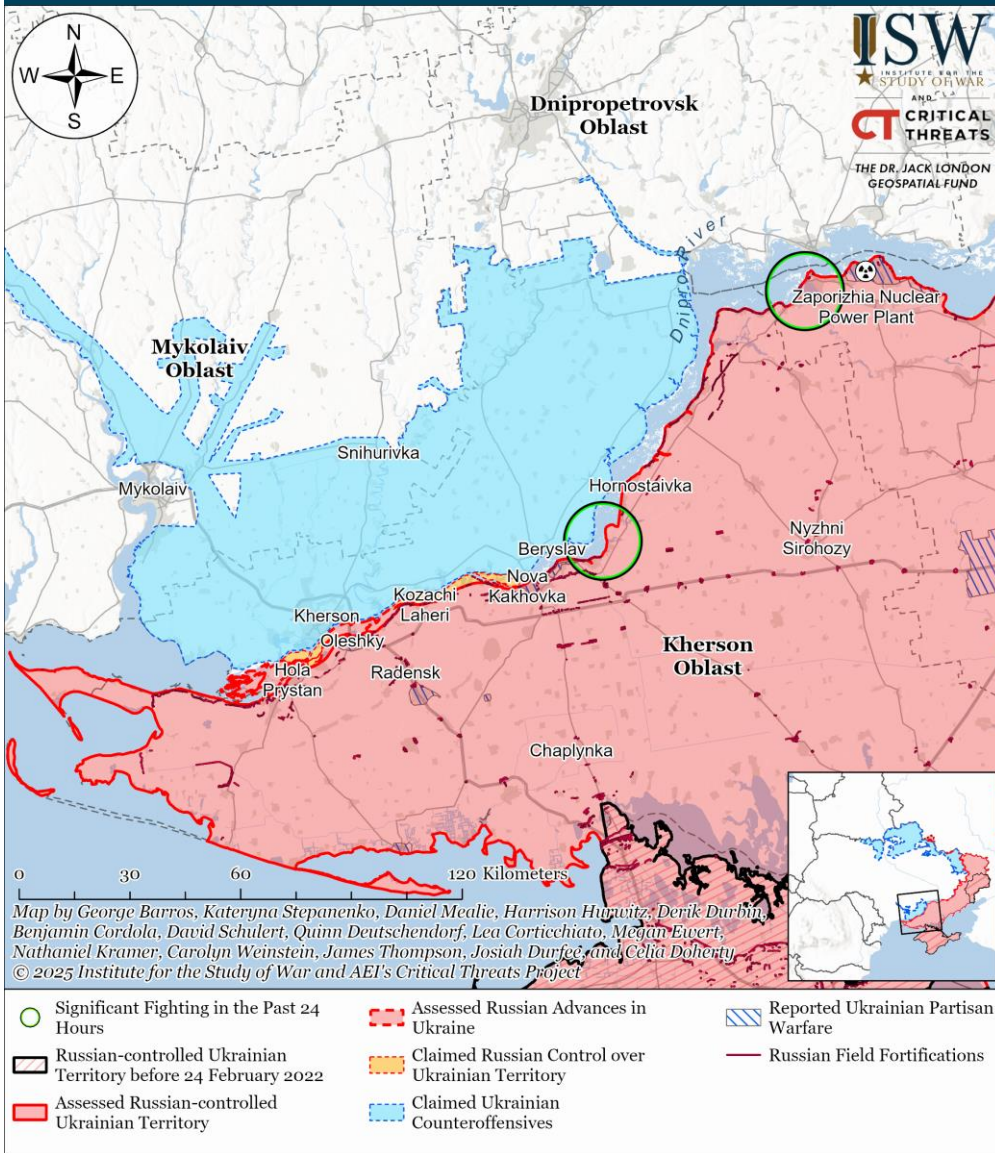
Assessed Control of Terrain in the Zaporizhia Direction August 22, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



Russian forces continued limited attacks east of Kherson City near the Antonivsky road bridge on August 21 and 22 but did not advance.[96]

Order of Battle: Elements of the Russian 80th Arctic Motorized Rifle Brigade (14th Army Corps [AC], Leningrad Military District [LMD]) are reportedly operating on the Dnipro River islands.[97] Elements of the 404th Motorized Rifle Regiment (126th Coastal Defense Brigade, 22nd AC, Black Sea Fleet [BSF]) are reportedly operating in unspecified locations in Kherson Oblast.[98]

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Kherson Direction August 22, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



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

Russian forces conducted a series of drone strikes against Ukraine on the night of August 21 to 22. The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Russian forces launched 55 Shahed-type and decoy drones from the directions of Kursk City; Shatalovo, Smolensk Oblast; Primorsko-Akhtarsk, Krasnodar Krai; Millerovo, Rostov Oblast; and occupied Hvardiiske, Crimea.[99] The Ukrainian Air Force reported that Ukrainian forces downed 46 drones over northern and eastern Ukraine and that nine drones struck four unspecified locations in Ukraine. Kharkiv Oblast Military Administration Head Oleh Synehubov stated on August 22 that Russian drones, including seven Shahed (Geran-2) strike drones, two first-person

view (FPV) drones, and three unspecified drones, damaged civilian infrastructure in Kharkiv Oblast.[100]

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

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko and US President Donald Trump held a phone call discussing the war in Ukraine. Lukashenko stated on August 22 that he told Trump that a strikes moratorium should precede a ceasefire and peace agreement and that Ukraine and Russia must agree to a ceasefire before a peace agreement.[101] ISW continues to assess that a long-range strikes moratorium would prevent Ukraine from continuing its long-range strike campaign against Russian defense industrial facilities and energy infrastructure, which is opposed to the Russian long-range strike campaign against Ukrainian civilian infrastructure, and that Russia will very likely violate and weaponize any future ceasefire agreements in Ukraine while blaming Ukraine for the violations as it did in Spring 2025.[102] Any agreement less than a full and long-term cessation in long-range strikes against civilian infrastructure will pose a great threat to Ukraine's civilian population and infrastructure upon the expiration of the agreement and resumption of long-range Russian strikes.

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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