

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, May 11, 2023

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May 11, 2023, 8pm ET

Click [here](#) to see ISW's interactive map of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This map is updated daily alongside the static maps present in this report.

Click [here](#) to access ISW's archive of interactive time-lapse maps of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. These maps complement the static control-of-terrain map that ISW produces daily by showing a dynamic frontline. ISW will update this time-lapse map archive monthly.

Note: The data cutoff for this product was 2:00 pm ET on May 11. ISW will cover subsequent reports in the May 12 Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment.

Ukrainian forces likely broke through some Russian lines in localized counterattacks near Bakhmut, prompting responses from Wagner Group financier Yevgeny Prigozhin and the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD). Ukrainian Eastern Group of Forces Commander Colonel General Oleksandr Syrskyi stated that Russian forces retreated up to two kilometers behind Russian lines in unspecified sectors of the Bakhmut front.[1] Syrskyi's confirmation of Ukrainian gains prompted a response from Prigozhin, who claimed that Ukrainian forces have started the counteroffensive and recaptured three kilometers of ground in and around Bakhmut.[2] The Russian MoD acknowledged the Ukrainian counterattacks uncharacteristically quickly, claiming that Russian forces repelled eight ground attacks and three reconnaissance-in-force efforts in the Donetsk direction but denied reports that Ukrainian forces broke through the Russian defensive lines.[3] Prigozhin's and the MoD's responses are reflective of increased panic in the Russian information space over speculations about planned Ukrainian counteroffensives and indicate increased concern among Wagner and Russian MoD leadership as well as reflecting Kremlin guidance to avoid downplaying Ukrainian successes.[4]

The deployment of low-quality Russian forces on the flanks around Bakhmut suggests that the Russian MoD has largely abandoned the aim of encircling a significant number of Ukrainian forces there. The Russian MoD likely began a broader deprioritization of the Bakhmut effort by January 2023 when the MoD cut off Wagner Group penal recruitment efforts, which likely prompted Prigozhin to ramp up the Soledar-Bakhmut effort in January and publicly complain about the lack of MoD support for his efforts starting in February 2023.[5] The Russian MoD briefly allocated more resources to the Bakhmut front line in March and April by sending T-90 tanks and Russian Airborne (VDV) forces to the Bakhmut area and assigning mobilized reservists to Wagner, however.[6] Prigozhin claimed on April 24 that the Russian MoD only deployed irregular and degraded units to hold Bakhmut's flanks, and the inability

of these units to fulfill even this limited mission indicates that Russian flanks in Bakhmut and other similarly-manned areas of the front are likely vulnerable to Ukrainian counterattacks.[7] The MoD's allocation of forces combined with changes in the geometry of the battlespace also suggests that the danger of a Russian encirclement of significant Ukrainian forces in Bakhmut may have passed. Wagner forces will likely continue conducting frontal assaults in Bakhmut, which would allow Ukrainian forces to conduct organized withdrawals from threatened areas in a shallower partial envelopment rather than facing encirclement on a large scale.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky stated that Ukraine needs more time to launch a counteroffensive because it is waiting for the delivery of promised military aid. Zelensky told the *BBC* that some of the expected military equipment has not arrived in Ukraine and that, although Ukrainian forces are ready for the counteroffensive, Ukraine would suffer too many casualties.[8] Zelensky also stated that the Ukrainian counteroffensive is important to prevent Russia from freezing the war.

Kremlin Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov contradicted the pre-war Kremlin justifications for the war by asserting that the Russian “special military operation” began as “a conflict between Russia and Ukraine.” He said that Russia has “partially” achieved the goals of “protecting” people in Donbas,[9] but added that Russia is still far from fully achieving these goals. He said that it was “hard to believe” at the beginning of the war that NATO, the United States, and European countries would “intervene in this conflict.” ISW previously reported that the Kremlin has begun to shift its domestic narratives to claim that Russia is fighting only against NATO in an effort to set informational conditions for potential Russian military failures during the planned Ukrainian counteroffensive.[10] Peskov's statement is consistent with the new Russian narrative but contradicts Russian President Vladimir Putin's statements prior to the February 24, 2022 invasion. Putin stated on February 21, 2022, that Russia is “not fighting the Ukrainian people” and claimed that Ukraine had become a hostage of its “Western masters.”[11] The Russian pre-war justification for the invasion relied heavily on portraying a NATO threat to Russia supposedly emanating from Ukraine.[12]

Unnamed Kremlin sources claimed that Wagner Group Yevgeny Prigozhin's recent rhetoric is “seriously disturbing the top leadership” of Russia. Two Kremlin sources told Russian opposition outlet *Meduza* that the Kremlin saw Prigozhin's attempts to blackmail the Russian MoD on May 5 as a “serious threat” and that Prigozhin is not acting in the Kremlin's interests.[13] One interlocutor stated that Prigozhin is committed to claiming Bakhmut as a personal victory in order to have influence over the Russian MoD. The Kremlin reportedly expressed further concerns over Prigozhin's May 9 mockery of the “happy grandfather” figure who is responsible for future Russian generations.[14] ISW assessed on May 9 that Prigozhin was likely referring to Putin, and a Kremlin source claims that Prigozhin's statement was a direct allusion to Putin. The second interlocutor claimed that Prigozhin's rhetoric cannot be interpreted as a “direct attack” on Putin, however. Prigozhin attempted on May 10 to downplay his original statements, claiming that the “happy grandfather” did not refer to

Putin.[15] The sources noted that Prigozhin’s escalating behavior is likely a result of his inability to meet an unspecified deadline for the capture of Bakhmut. One source claimed that Prigozhin is blaming conventional units in order to avoid accepting responsibility for failing to follow through on his “personal promise” to capture Bakhmut.

The interlocutors noted that Prigozhin may have crossed the Kremlin’s “red lines” and may alienate his supporters within the Russian inner circle. Prigozhin reportedly is losing contact with one of his patrons, Russian billionaire and Putin’s “personal banker” Yuriy Kovalchuk. Kovalchuk was reportedly one of the leading voices supporting the full-scale invasion of Ukraine after developing a strong relationship with Putin during the Covid-19 pandemic.[16] The sources noted that Russian propagandists received a directive to discredit Prigozhin as a traitor if he continues to critique the Kremlin – an effort that has previously failed.[17] The sources assessed that Prigozhin is not at risk while Wagner is still on the frontline, which allows Prigozhin to have contact with Putin.

The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) denied official Ukrainian and US reports that a Patriot missile defense system shot down a Kinzhal missile on the night of May 4.[18] Kremlin newswire *TASS* reported on May 11 that a “high-ranking source in the Russian MoD” denied reports that Ukraine intercepted a Kinzhal missile. Ukrainian Air Force Commander Mykola Oleshchuk had reported that Ukrainian forces used the Patriot system to shoot down a Kinzhal missile in the air over Kyiv Oblast at night on May 4.[19] The Russian MoD denied this report only after the US Department of Defense confirmed on May 9 that a Patriot air defense system had shot down a Russian Kinzhal missile.[20]

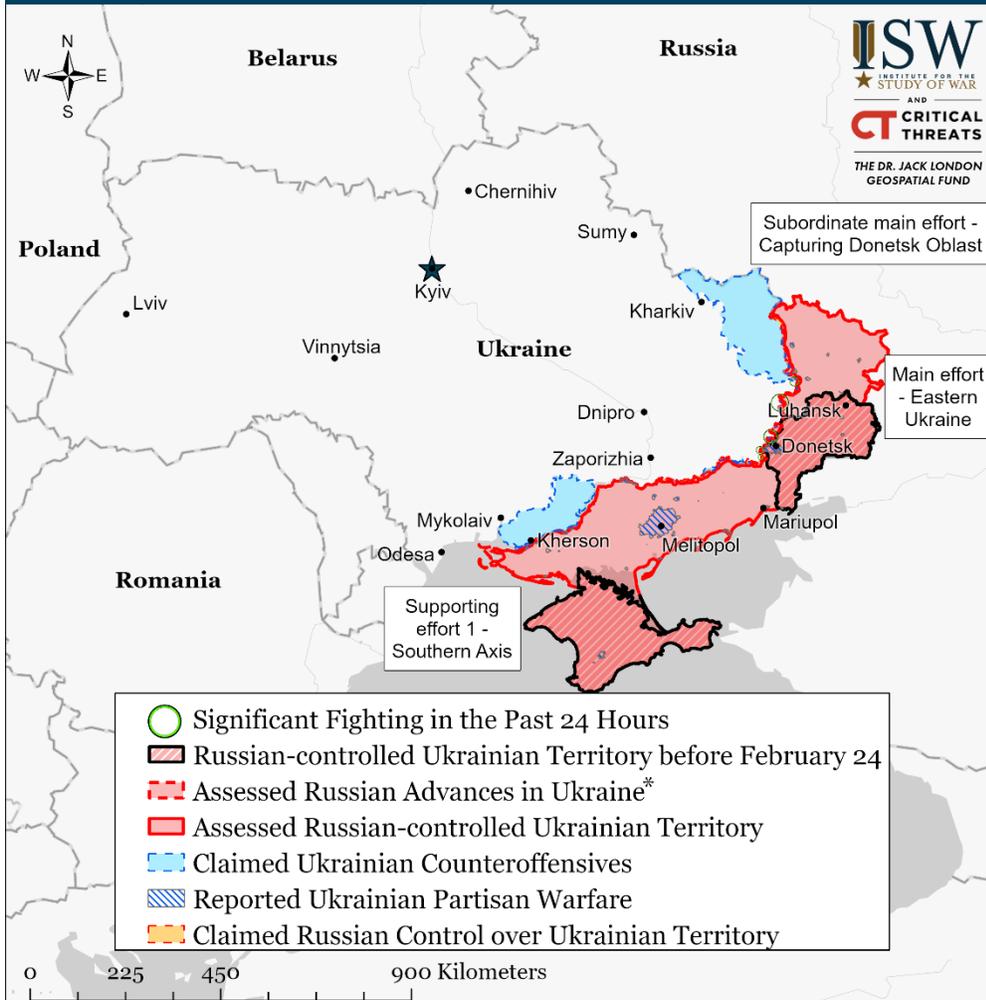
Russian occupation authorities seized the cathedral of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine in Simferopol as oppression of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church continues in Russian-occupied Crimea. The Commissioner of the Crimean Eparchy of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine, Metropolitan Kliment of Simferopol, and Crimean journalist Andriy Shchekun reported on May 11 that representatives of the Russian State Property Fund of the Republic of Crimea and other occupation authorities broke down the doors of the church and began stealing the property of the cathedral.[21] ISW has previously reported on Russia’s religious repression throughout occupied Ukraine.[22]

Key Takeaways

- **Ukrainian forces likely broke through some Russian lines in localized counterattacks near Bakhmut, prompting responses from Wagner Group financier Yevgeny Prigozhin and the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD).**
- **The deployment of low-quality Russian forces on the flanks around Bakhmut suggests that the Russian MoD has largely abandoned the aim of encircling a significant number of Ukrainian forces there.**
- **Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky stated that Ukraine needs more time to launch a counteroffensive because it is waiting for the delivery of promised military aid.**

- **Kremlin Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov contradicted the pre-war Kremlin justifications for the war by asserting that the Russian “special military operation” began as “a conflict between Russia and Ukraine.”**
- **Unnamed Kremlin sources claimed that Wagner Group Yevgeny Prigozhin’s recent rhetoric is “seriously disturbing the top leadership” of Russia.**
- **The Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) denied Ukrainian and US reports that a Patriot missile defense system shot down a Kinzhal missile on the night of May 4.**
- **Russian occupation authorities seized the cathedral of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine in Simferopol as oppression of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church continues in Russian-occupied Crimea.**
- **Russian forces conducted limited ground attacks northeast of Kupyansk and along the Svatove-Kreminna line.**
- **Ukrainian forces reportedly continued to conduct localized counterattacks around Bakhmut.**
- **Russian forces targeted Ukrainian positions west of Hulyaipole and in Kherson Oblast.**
- **Russia needs to produce over 29 million shells per year to satisfy Wagner Group financier Yevgeny Prigozhin’s demands for Wagner to use 80,000 shells per day – 13 times more than Russia’s pre-invasion annual production rate.**
- **Russian officials continue to threaten and seek to manipulate international humanitarian efforts by threatening to dissolve the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which is set to expire on May 18.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of May 11, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Will Kielm, and Mitchell Belcher - © 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Note: The Ukrainian counteroffensive layer displays areas previously assigned to the Russian control, Russian advances, or Russian claims layers where ISW now assesses that Ukrainian forces have established a presence beyond a short-term raid. Inclusion of an area on this layer does not imply that ISW assesses that the area is part of any upcoming Ukrainian counteroffensive operation.

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 these Russian violations of the laws of armed conflict, Geneva Conventions, and humanity even though we do not describe them in these reports.

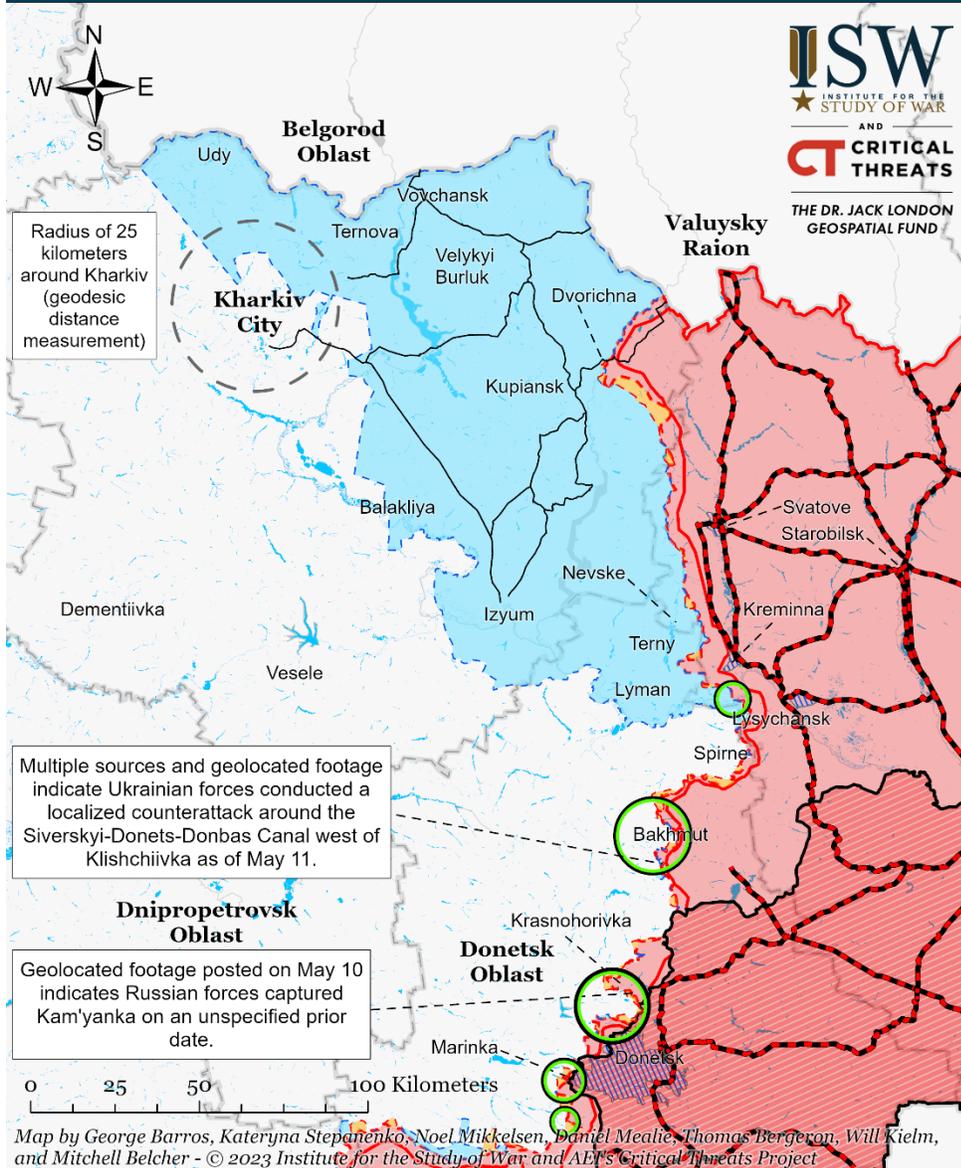
- Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine (comprised of two subordinate main efforts)
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and encircle northern Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis
- Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts
- Activities in Russian-occupied areas

Russian Main Effort – Eastern Ukraine

Russian Subordinate Main Effort #1 – Luhansk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the remainder of Luhansk Oblast and push westward into eastern Kharkiv Oblast and northern Donetsk Oblast)

Russian forces conducted limited ground attacks northeast of Kupyansk and along the Svatove-Kreminna line on May 11. Geolocated footage published on May 11 shows artillery elements of the 6th Combined Arms Army (Western Military District) operating near Vilshana (15km northeast of Kupyansk).[23] The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful offensive actions near the Serebrianska forest area (10km south of Kreminna).[24] A Russian milblogger claimed on May 10 that Russian forces conducted ground attacks near Masyutivka (12km northeast of Kupyansk), Stelmakhivka (15km northwest of Svatove), Makiivka (22km northwest of Kreminna), and Bilohorivka (10km south of Kreminna).[25]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kharkiv as of May 11, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



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- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Key Ukrainian Roads
- Russian Ground Lines of Communication
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare

* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

Note: The Ukrainian counteroffensive layer displays areas previously assigned to the Russian control, Russian advances, or Russian claims layers where ISW now assesses that Ukrainian forces have established a presence beyond a short-term raid. Inclusion of an area on this layer does not imply that ISW assesses that the area is part of any upcoming Ukrainian counteroffensive operation.

Russian Subordinate Main Effort #2 – Donetsk Oblast (Russian Objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)

Ukrainian forces continued to conduct localized counterattacks around Bakhmut on May 11. Geolocated footage shows that Ukrainian forces pushed Russian forces from a section of the T0504 Bakhmut-Chasiv Yar highway in southwestern Bakhmut.[26] Russian milbloggers claimed that Ukrainian forces advanced northwest of Bakhmut near Bohdanivka (6km northwest of Bakhmut) and Khromove (immediately west of Bakhmut) after Russian forces retreated from positions north of Khromove. Russian milbloggers also claimed that Ukrainian forces attacked in Bakhmut to alleviate pressure against the Bakhmut-Chasiv Yar highway.[27] A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces regained ground south and southwest of Ivanivske (6km west of Bakhmut) and west of Klishchiivka (6km southwest of Bakhmut).[28]

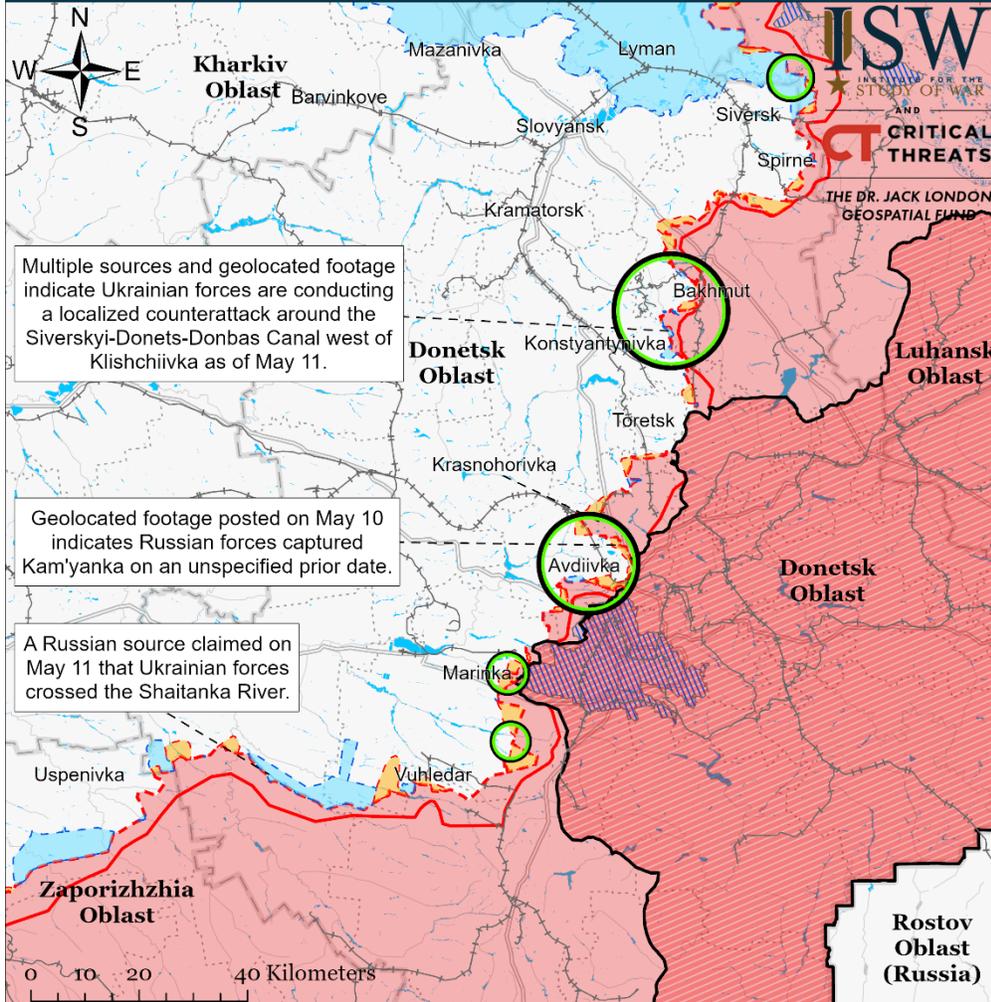
Successful localized Ukrainian counterattacks have likely constrained Russian offensive efforts in Bakhmut as of May 11. Ukrainian officials reported that Russian forces conducted 15 ground attacks in Bakhmut and near Stupochky (13km southwest of Bakhmut), a notable decrease in the number of reported Russian ground attacks in the Bakhmut area.[29] A Russian milblogger described the Stupochky assault as risky.[30] Russian milbloggers criticized the Russian 4th and 374th Motorized Rifle brigades (2nd Army Corps) for abandoning their positions northwest of Klishchiivka during Ukrainian counterattacks and said that Wagner Group forces took up the brigades’ former positions to prevent deep penetration of Russian lines, likely depriving Wagner forces of personnel that could otherwise have been allocated to offensive operations in Bakhmut.[31] Wagner financier Yevgeny Prigozhin claimed that Wagner forces only need to advance 625 meters to reach the western entrance to Bakhmut, a rhetorical shift suggesting that Prigozhin is unwilling to completely abandon his goal of completing the capture of Bakhmut in favor of defending against localized Ukrainian counterattacks.[32] The Republic of Tatarstan’s “Alga” volunteer battalion (part of the 72nd Motorized Rifle Brigade, 3rd Army Corps) reportedly lost contact with personnel’s affiliated social media channels following the retreat on May 9.[33] The “Alga” battalion is one of two elements of the 72nd Brigade; there is currently no information on whether the brigade’s second element, the “Molot” volunteer battalion, was defeated or retreated.[34]

Russian forces continued limited ground attacks on the Avdiivka-Donetsk City line on May 11. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted unsuccessful ground attacks near Avdiivka, Marinka (27km southwest of Avdiivka), and Novomykhailivka (36km southwest of Avdiivka).[35] A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces made marginal gains west of Kamianka (5km northeast of Avdiivka) and northeast of Opytne (3km southwest of Avdiivka), and continued ground attacks near the N20 highway west of Novobakhmutivka (9km northwest of Avdiivka).[36]

Ukrainian forces reportedly conducted a limited and localized counterattack in western Donetsk Oblast on May 11. A Russian milblogger claimed that Ukrainian forces

counterattacked and crossed the Shaitanka River near Novodonetske (12km southeast of Velyka Novosilka).[37]

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of May 11, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



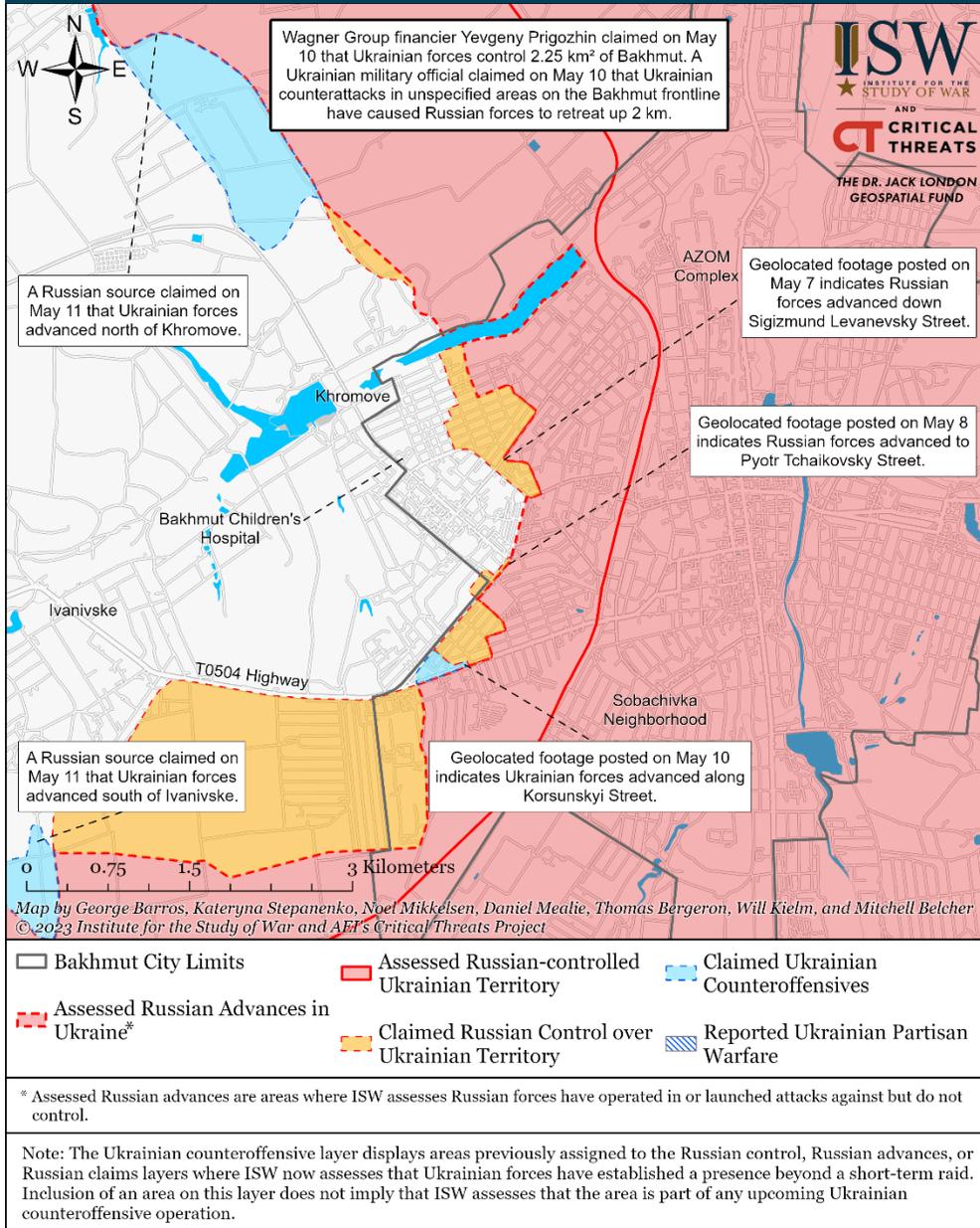
Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Will Kielm, and Mitchell Belcher - © 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
- Major Railroads

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Assessed Control of Terrain in Bakhmut as of May 11, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



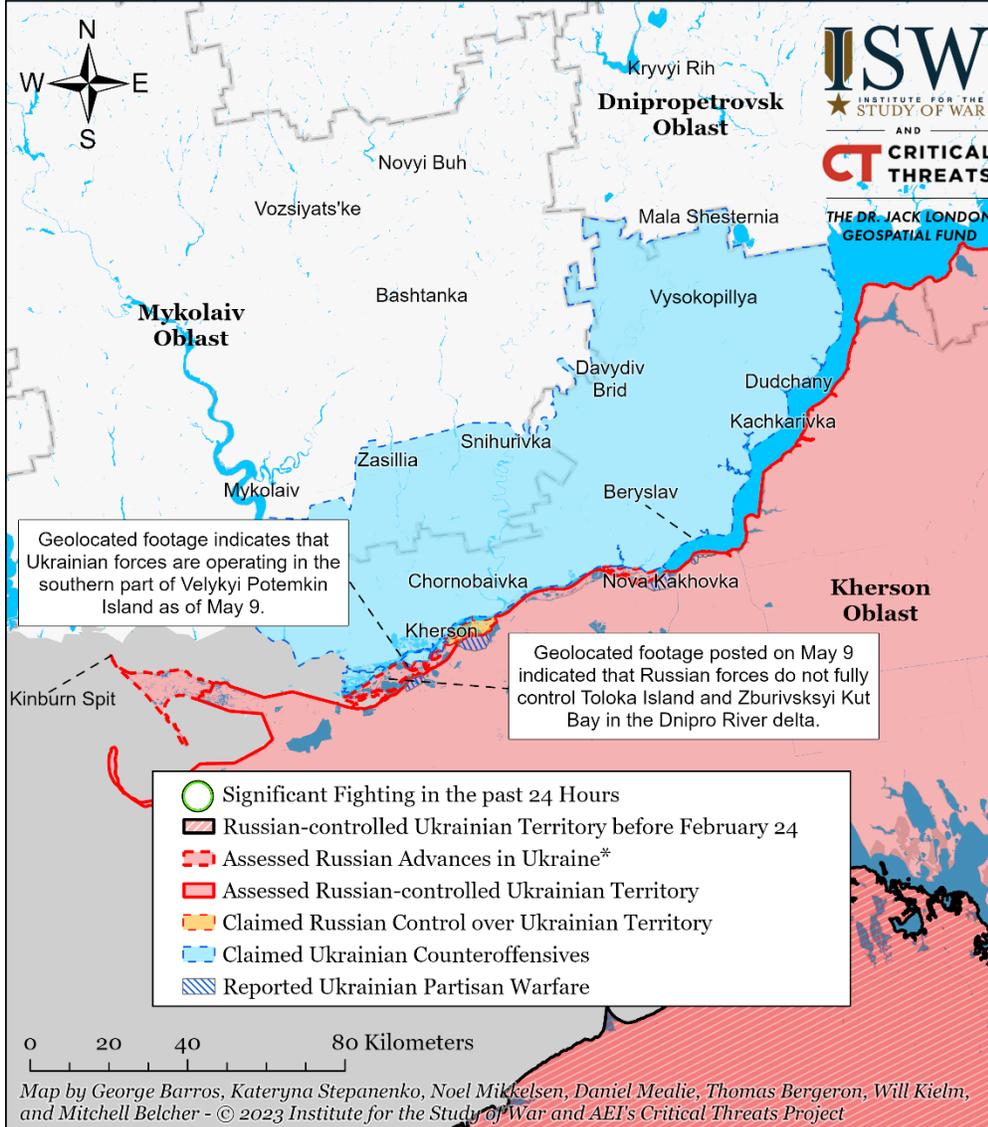
Russian Supporting Effort – Southern Axis (Russian objective: Maintain frontline positions and secure rear areas against Ukrainian strikes)

Russian forces targeted Ukrainian positions west of Hulyaipole and in Kherson Oblast on May 11. The Ukrainian Southern Operational Command reported that Russian forces increased the intensity of shelling and shelled the west (right) bank Kherson Oblast 98 times.[38] Russian forces are reportedly becoming more active in shelling the Dnipro-

Buzka estuary against the backdrop of the Black Sea Grain Initiative talks.[39] Ukrainian military officials reported that Russian forces struck Stanislav (33km southwest of Kherson City) and Kizomys (20km southwest of Kherson City) with seven KAB-500 guided aerial bombs and targeted civilian infrastructure in Zaporizhzhia City with two S-300 missiles.[40] A Russian milblogger claimed that fighting is ongoing on Velykyi Potemkin Island in the Dnipro River delta south of Kherson City.[41]

Russian forces reportedly plan to “evacuate” Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP) staff to Russia. Ukrainian nuclear energy operator Energoatom reported on May 11 that Russian occupation authorities plan to “evacuate” about 3,100 people from Enerhodar.[42] Energoatom reported that the Russian occupation authorities are discussing the removal of 2,700 employees (and their families) of the ZNPP who signed contracts with the fake “Operating Organization of Zaporizhzhia NPP” or another Rosatom company. Enerhodar stated that Russian forces have prohibited ZNPP employees from leaving the city since the start of the occupation, and the Ukrainian General Staff noted that Russian forces have already deported some families of ZNPP employees from Enerhodar to Rostov Oblast.[43] ISW has previously reported on Russian forces kidnapping ZNPP employees to strengthen Russian control over ZNPP operations.[44]

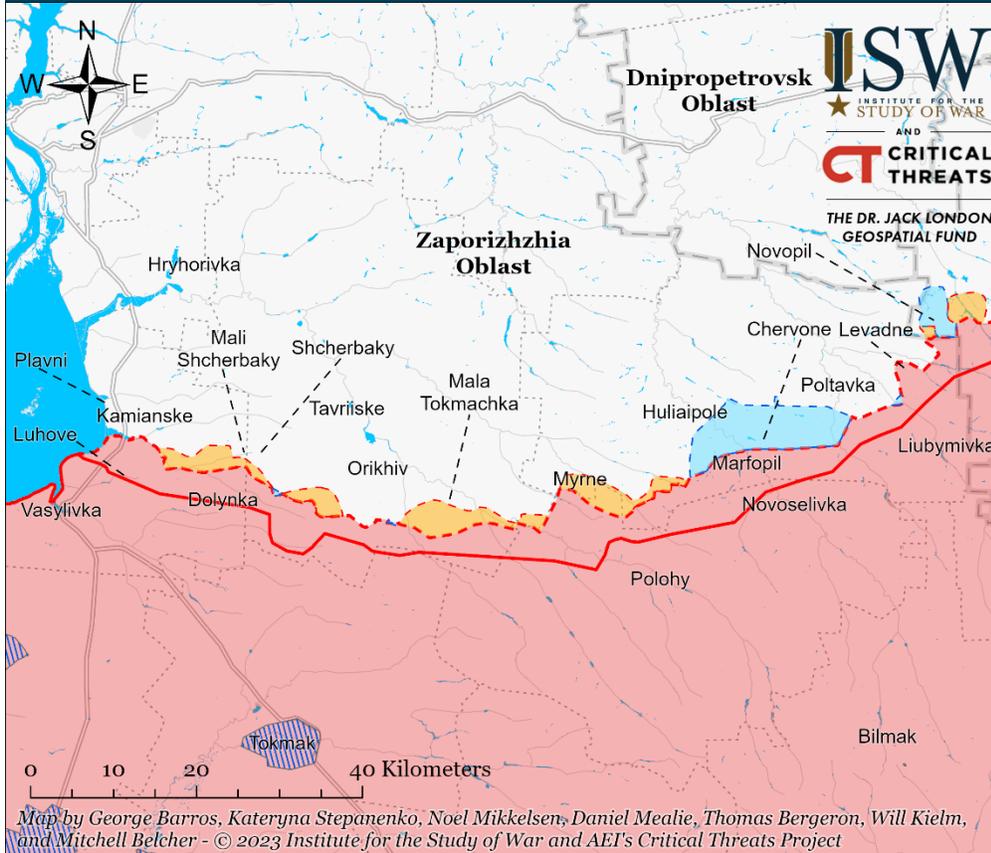
Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of May 11, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



* Assessed Russian advances are areas where ISW assesses Russian forces have operated in or launched attacks against but do not control.

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Assessed Control of Terrain Around Zaporizhia as of May 11, 2023, 3:00 PM ET



Map by George Barros, Kateryna Stepanenko, Noel Mikkelsen, Daniel Mealie, Thomas Bergeron, Will Kielm, and Mitchell Belcher - © 2023 Institute for the Study of War and AEI's Critical Threats Project

- Significant Fighting in the past 24 Hours
- Assessed Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory
- Reported Ukrainian Partisan Warfare
- Russian-controlled Ukrainian Territory before February 24
- Claimed Russian Control over Ukrainian Territory
- Assessed Russian Advances in Ukraine*
- Claimed Ukrainian Counteroffensives

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Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts (Russian objective: Expand combat power without conducting general mobilization)

Russia needs to produce over 29 million shells per year to satisfy Wagner Group financier Yevgeny Prigozhin's demands for Wagner to use 80,000 shells per day – 13 times more than Russia's pre-invasion annual production rate. Prigozhin stated on April 29 that Wagner needs 80,000 shells to "grind" Ukrainian forces, and ISW previously

reported that Russian forces used up to 60,000 shells per day (almost 22 million per year) before facing ammunition shortages.[45] A Russian military expert told Russian opposition outlet *MediaZona* that Russia produced about 2.4 million shells per year prior to the full-scale invasion and is attempting to increase the production of shells to three million shells per year.[46]

Russian officials are continuing to express concerns about Russian shortages of military personnel on the frontlines likely out of panic ahead of the planned Ukrainian counteroffensive. The former head of the Russian state space corporation, Roscosmos, (and current head of the “Tsar’s Wolves” group of military advisors), Dmitry Rogozin, stated that Russia needs to call up new mobilization waves with one wave taking place prior to fall and one in early fall.[47] Rogozin acknowledged that Russia “has problems” with the number of available personnel due to casualties on the battlefield. Rogozin noted that Russia must bear in mind that “the enemy is stronger” than Russian forces. Russian State Duma Defense Committee member Viktor Sobolev proposed that Russian military officials call up Russian civilian men for reservist training, even if these men are over the legal conscription age but are still part of the mobilization reserve.[48]

The Russian MoD continues to recruit prisoners, while the Russian justice system is setting conditions that aid such force generation efforts. The UK MoD reported that the Russian MoD has intensified prisoner recruitment efforts since the start of 2023 and likely recruited up to 10,000 convicts in April 2023 alone.[49] A Russian opposition outlet reported that Russian courts drastically reduced the number of paroles granted to Russian prisoners since the Wagner Group and the Russian MoD began prisoner recruitment in 2022. The Russian judicial system only granted paroles to 39 percent of eligible prisoners, which marked one of the lowest parole rates in the past two decades.[50]

Russian regional officials are launching new recruitment drives and are forming new volunteer battalions. The Republic of Bashkortostan is forming a “Tagir Kusimov” volunteer battalion, which is Bashkortostan’s fifth military volunteer unit.[51] The Republic of Sakha published a document that offers compensation to private entities that facilitate the transfer of recruits who live outside of the republic to Yakutsk for contract service.[52] The document reveals that Russian regional officials may be paying privately-owned entities to assist in fulfilling its force generation quotas. The transfer of volunteers from different regions may also indicate that republics such as Sakha are trying to meet their force generation quotas by recruiting and competing for volunteers in other regions.

Russian recruitment efforts are continuing to disproportionately target ethnic minorities and labor immigrants. Russian MoD are reportedly conducting crypto-mobilization in the Republic of Buryatia despite the ongoing high casualty rates among personnel from Buryatia on the frontlines in Ukraine.[53] A Russian opposition outlet reported that official documents suggest that 645 servicemen from Buryatia died in April 2023 alone, and the toll of unconfirmed deaths is likely higher. Representatives of a Moscow-based migration center are reportedly attempting to coerce Tajik labor migrants to sign military contracts under the guise of immigration consultation sessions.[54]

Activities in Russian-occupied areas (Russian objective: Consolidate administrative control of annexed areas; forcibly integrate Ukrainian civilians into Russian sociocultural, economic, military, and governance systems)

Russian officials continue to threaten and seek to manipulate international humanitarian efforts by threatening to dissolve the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which is set to expire on May 18. Russian and Ukrainian officials failed to reach an agreement to extend the grain deal after two days of negotiations in Istanbul, Turkey.[55] Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Vershinin claimed on May 11 that Russia will not continue the grain deal if the West rejects its demands, which include removing restrictions on Russian grain and fertilizer exports and reconnecting Russian state-owned agriculture bank Rosselkhozbank to the SWIFT banking system.[56] The Turkish Ministry of Defense (MoD) reported that Russian and Ukrainian officials agreed to continue negotiations in Istanbul soon but provided no details.[57]

Russia is also likely attempting to intensify divisions between Ukraine and Central European countries by threatening not to extend the grain deal. The European Union (EU) lifted tariffs and quotas on food exports from Ukraine in June 2022 after Russian forces blocked farmers from transporting grain and other goods by sea.[58] The measure successfully enabled Ukrainian farmers transport grain to Europe by rail and trucks at the lowest cost possible, sparking complaints from Central European farmers.[59] The Polish government announced a ban on Ukrainian food imports in an effort to protect the domestic agricultural market, with Hungary and Slovakia instituting the same measures in mid-April.[60] Ukrainian Minister of Agriculture Mykola Solok stated on May 9 that Ukraine has alternative means of transporting grain should the grain deal expire but did not provide details.[61] Russia likely anticipates that the West will continue to deny its demands at the next round of negotiations and may hope to further divide Ukraine from its neighbors by forcing Ukraine to export more grain to its western neighbors in an effort to weaken the broader NATO Alliance.

The Ukrainian General Prosecutor's Office reported on May 11 that Russian forces have committed 187 sexually charged crimes against Ukrainians, thirteen of which were against children.[62] The office reported that Ukrainian officials have notified 16 people under suspicion that they participated in the acts.[63]

Ukrainian nongovernmental organization "Save Ukraine" Director Mykola Kuleba reported the return of 96 Ukrainian children from Russia on May 11.[64]

Significant activity in Belarus (ISW assesses that a Russian or Belarusian attack into northern Ukraine in early 2023 is extraordinarily unlikely and has thus restructured this section of the update. It will no longer include counter-indicators for such an offensive.)

ISW will continue to report daily observed Russian and Belarusian military activity in Belarus, but these are not indicators that Russian and Belarusian forces are preparing for an imminent attack on Ukraine from Belarus. ISW

will revise this text and its assessment if it observes any unambiguous indicators that Russia or Belarus is preparing to attack northern Ukraine.

The Belarusian Ministry of Defense (MoD) announced that Belarusian conscripts will take part in territorial defense training the Mazyr region, as well as in Gomel and Minsk from May 11 to June 2.[65]

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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- [1] <https://t.me/osirskiy/66> ; <https://www.facebook.com/easternforces/posts/pfbidoE97EoNG7cahdYNesH1yS4...>
- [2] https://t.me/dva_majors/14856; https://t.me/concordgroup_official/940; https://t.me/dva_majors/14852
- [3] https://t.me/mod_russia/26502
- [4] <https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Russian%20Offensive...>
- [5] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign...> <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign...> <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign...>
- [6] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-april-16-2023>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Russian%20Offensive...>
- [7] <https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Russian%20Offensive...>
- [8] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m_AYMfDAwOw; <https://www.bbc.com/russian/news-65557794>; <https://meduza dot io/news/2023/05/11/nam-nuzhno-eschenemnogo-vremeni-vladimir-zelenskiy-o-podgotovke-kontrnastupleniya>
- [9] <https://meduza dot io/news/2023/05/11/dmitriy-peskov-zayavil-chto-tseli-rossiyskogo-vtorzheniya-v-ukrainu-chastichno-dostignuty-no-daleko-ne-vse>; <https://t.me/bbcrussian/46039>
- [10] <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign...>
- [11] <https://www.newsweek.com/kremlin-insists-war-against-nato-ukraine-future...t%20fighting%20the,have%20effectively%20occupied%20the%20country.%22>
- [12] <https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Ukraine%20Invasion%...> <https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/ISW%20Ukraine%20Ind...> <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/ukraine-invasion-update-25>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/ukraine-conflict-update-14>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/ukraine-invasion-update-21>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign...> <https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Russian%20Offensive...> <https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Russian%20Offensive%20C...> <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive->

campaign... <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign...>

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