

# Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment, December 20

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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.

**Intensifying Russian pressure on Belarus is degrading Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko's maneuver room to avoid making concessions to the Kremlin.** Russian President Vladimir Putin's long game to reestablish suzerainty over Belarus is making progress separate and apart from Putin's efforts to get Belarus more actively involved in his invasion of Ukraine. Lukashenko confirmed that Russia "gave" Belarus an unspecified number of S-400 air defense systems during his meeting with Putin in Minsk on December 19, confirming ISW's 2021 forecast that Russian-made S-400 systems would begin operating in Belarus.<sup>1</sup> Lukashenko had previously rejected S-400 systems operating in Belarus in 2020.<sup>2</sup> Lukashenko is likely delaying acceding to Putin's larger demands - such as committing Belarusian forces to join the invasion against Ukraine - by making smaller concessions that he has stonewalled for years.

Russian military personnel will likely operate the Belarus-based S-400 systems. Russian personnel may operate the S-400 systems from the so-called joint Russian-Belarusian Air Force and Air Defense Forces training center in Grodno, Belarus – a permanent Russian military presence in Belarus that the Kremlin established in the spring of 2021.<sup>3</sup>

**ISW continues to observe indicators consistent with the most dangerous course of action (MDCOA) of a renewed Russian invasion of northern Ukraine from Belarus.**<sup>4</sup> Ukrainian military officials continue to warn about a growing Russian threat from Belarus. Ukrainian Joint Forces Commander Serhiy Nayeв stated on December 20 that Russian elements in Belarus have military potential "currently sufficient" to create an unspecified threat to Ukraine and that these elements can conduct unspecified "tactical actions."<sup>5</sup> Nayeв's statement marks an inflection in Ukrainian officials' characterization of the growing Russian forces in Belarus; previous Ukrainian descriptions of Russian forces in Belarus did not ascribe to them tactically significant capacities.<sup>6</sup> Independent Belarusian sources continue to report growing Russian mechanized forces in Belarus.<sup>7</sup> About 30 Russian T-80 tanks reportedly deployed to Belarus around December 20.<sup>8</sup>

These indicators support the MDCOA forecast, but that course of action remains unlikely at this time. A Russian invasion of northern Ukraine from Belarus is not very likely imminent. Nayeв reiterated that Ukraine's defense is prepared to defend northern Ukraine.<sup>9</sup> The Ukrainian General Staff reiterated that it has not observed Russian forces forming strike groups in Belarus as of December 20.<sup>10</sup> ISW will continue to monitor the situation.

**Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's frontline visit to Bakhmut on the 300th day of war is undermining an ongoing Kremlin information operation intended to present Russian President Vladimir Putin as an involved war leader.** Zelensky made a surprise visit to Ukrainian troops serving on the intense Bakhmut front on December 20 and presented awards.<sup>11</sup> In contrast, Putin held a senior-level award ceremony where he celebrated Russian occupation and Kremlin officials such as proxy leaders from occupied Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson, and Zaporizhia oblasts, Russian propagandist and RT Editor-in-Chief Margarita Simonyan, and Russian milblogger Semyon Pegov among other state officials.<sup>12</sup> ISW has previously assessed that Putin has intensified his efforts to extricate himself and the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) from persistent criticism by making public appearances relating to various undertakings aimed at improving the Russian war

effort. This award ceremony further indicates Putin's fixation with presenting himself as an involved wartime leader.<sup>13</sup> Putin likely seeks to deflect blame for Russian military failures in Ukraine by maintaining a façade that paints Putin in a positive light but absolves him of responsibility for the war.

Putin's decision to award members of his circle who have not even been directly involved in fighting in contrast with Zelensky's visit near the front lines in Bakhmut sparked some criticism among Russian nationalist voices. A former Russian militant commander and critical voice in the Russian information space, Igor Girkin, noted that Putin is awarding "his heroes in the Kremlin" but not Russian and proxy servicemen who are engaged in combat on the frontlines.<sup>14</sup> Other milbloggers speculated that the Kremlin made a secretive political decision for a Russian ceasefire, allowing Zelensky to walk around Bakhmut.<sup>15</sup> Another milblogger reiterated that Putin had not visited the occupied territories and stated that Russian forces would not be able to effectively conduct a precision strike in time against Zelensky.<sup>16</sup> Zelensky's visit to Bakhmut upstaged Putin's efforts to establish himself as a wartime commander in chief and turned Putin's own information operation into an embarrassment even within parts of the pro-war Russian information space.

**Wagner financier Yevgeniy Prigozhin further undermined Putin, possibly inadvertently, within the Russian information space by attempting to boost his standing against the backdrop of Zelensky's visit to Bakhmut.** Prigozhin published a series of videos claiming he arrived at the frontlines near Bakhmut to speak to Zelensky regarding the control of territories in the area.<sup>17</sup> Prigozhin's "offers" to negotiate with Zelensky are neither serious nor authoritative, since he does not hold any official position in Russia. Prigozhin, however, continues to pose as a prominent political and military figure in Russia, and such farcical comments are likely a response to Zelensky's repeated offers to negotiate directly with Putin after Russia withdraws its forces from Ukraine. Prigozhin's appearance on the frontline further weakens Putin's presentation of himself as a wartime leader, since Putin has not even visited Russian-occupied territories, let alone gone anywhere near the front lines. Social media users additionally exposed that Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu did not actually visit the frontlines on December 17 - as he claimed - by geolocating the videos the Russian MoD posted of Shoigu's trip in Armyansk, Crimea.<sup>18</sup> While Prigozhin did not directly criticize Putin for his inability to directly address Zelensky or arrive on the frontlines, his and Zelensky's visits to the frontlines threaten to make Putin's posing as a wartime commander in chief humiliating rather than effective.

**The Kremlin's efforts to improve the reputation of the Russian MoD may have prompted Prigozhin to double down on his efforts to legalize Wagner in Russia.** Russian state media outlet *RT* - likely affiliated with Wagner - published a 10-minute report on Wagner describing Prigozhin's establishment of the paramilitary organization as an attempt to support "Russian interests" and defend the "Russian world."<sup>19</sup> **Such a portrayal suggests that Prigozhin is trying to rid Wagner of the mercenary stigma and instead re-introduce the group as a legitimate military formation in Russia that supports Russian national interests.** *RT* also introduced prominent Kremlin officials like the Chairman of the Fair Russia - For Truth Party Sergey Mirnonov who criticized the Russian government for not seizing the initiative to recognize Wagner troops' "heroism" in Ukraine or granting Wagner official status under Russian law. Private military companies such as Wagner are notably illegal in Russia. The *RT* report also supported a long-standing ISW assessment that Prigozhin is strategically growing his influence on the Russian internet, noting that the newly-opened Wagner Center in St. Petersburg is a working space for "patriotic" media outlets and bloggers to resist the information war against Russia. Prigozhin will likely continue his efforts to establish himself and his Wagner Group in Russia by promoting himself on Telegram and Wagner-affiliated media, which may further diminish the Kremlin's attempts to minimize criticism of its defense leadership.

**The Kremlin will likely continue efforts to portray Putin and the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) as effective leaders of the war in Ukraine when Putin holds the Russian MoD board**

**meeting on December 21.** The Kremlin press service announced on December 20 that Putin will hold an expanded version of the Russian MoD board meeting on December 21, which will reportedly include a summary of the activities of the Russian Armed Forces in 2022 and a setting of tasks for the Russian military in 2023.<sup>20</sup> The Kremlin press service announced that Russian Defense Minister Shoigu will deliver the main report on the progress of the “special military operation” in Ukraine at the meeting.<sup>21</sup> The Kremlin press service stated that the commanders of military districts and services of the Russian Armed Forces, the heads of central military authorities, and representatives of federal executive bodies will attend the expanded meeting.<sup>22</sup> The Kremlin press service also stated that 15,000 Russian military officials will attend the meeting via video conference.<sup>23</sup> **Putin is likely holding a larger than usual Russian MoD board meeting to present the Russian military as an organized and formidable fighting force and to demonstrate that his control over that force remains unquestioned despite its pronounced military failures in its invasion of Ukraine.** Shoigu will likely deliver a main report on the war in Ukraine that minimizes the Russian MoD’s responsibility for failures at the front and offers an optimistic forecast for what Russian forces will be able to achieve operationally in Ukraine in 2023. The Kremlin will likely publicize aspects of the event to augment the Kremlin’s continuing efforts to present Putin and the Russian MoD as competent managers of the war in Ukraine and to shield Putin and the Russian MoD from the criticism of the ultra-nationalist pro-war community.<sup>24</sup> The event shows that Putin is taking increasing pains to surround himself with military uniforms, possibly hoping to evoke recollections of Joseph Stalin engaging with the Soviet STAVKA during World War II and to separate himself from the famous pictures of Putin separated by a very long table from Shoigu and Chief of the General Staff General Valery Gerasimov.

## Key Takeaways

- **Russian pressure against Belarus is degrading Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko’s maneuver room to avoid making concessions to the Kremlin.**
- **ISW continues to observe indicators consistent with the least likely but most dangerous course of action (MDCOA) of a renewed Russian invasion of northern Ukraine from Belarus.**
- **Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky’s visit to Bakhmut undermines an ongoing Kremlin information to present Russian President Vladimir Putin as an involved war leader.**
- **Wagner financier Yevgeniy Prigozhin undercut Putin’s efforts to portray himself as a wartime leader within the Russian information space, possibly inadvertently.**
- **The Kremlin’s efforts to improve the reputation of the Russian MoD may have prompted Prigozhin to increase his efforts to legalize Wagner Group in Russia.**
- **The Kremlin will likely continue efforts to portray Russian President Vladimir Putin and the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) as effective leaders when Putin holds an expanded annual Russian MoD board meeting on December 21.**
- **Russian forces conducted limited counterattacks along the Svatove-Kremynna line.**
- **Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Bakhmut and Avdiivka areas.**
- **Russian forces are expanding defensive fortifications on the left (east) bank in Kherson Oblast.**
- **A Kremlin official deflected questioning surrounding a Moscow Oblast military recruitment officer’s December 17 claim that Russian authorities will extend the service period for conscript soldiers.**
- **Russian President Vladimir Putin demanded that Russian security services intensify their efforts to counter pro-Ukrainian partisan activity.**

***We do not report in detail on Russian war crimes because those 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 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.***

- Ukrainian Counteroffensives—Eastern Ukraine
- Russian Main Effort—Eastern Ukraine (comprised of one subordinate and one supporting effort);
- Russian Subordinate Main Effort—Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast
- Russian Supporting Effort—Southern Axis
- Russian Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts
- Activities in Russian-occupied Areas

### **Ukrainian Counteroffensives (Ukrainian efforts to liberate Russian-occupied territories)**

#### **Eastern Ukraine: (Eastern Kharkiv Oblast-Western Luhansk Oblast)**

Russian forces continued to conduct limited counterattacks to regain lost positions along the Kreminna-Svatove line on December 20. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian assaults near Stelmakhivka (16km northwest of Svatove), Chervonopopivka (6km north of Kreminna), and Hryhorivka (11km south of Kreminna).<sup>25</sup> A Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces also conducted assaults near Makiivka (22km northwest of Kreminna) and Bilohorivka (12km south of Kreminna).<sup>26</sup>

Ukrainian forces reportedly continued counteroffensive operations in the Kreminna area on December 20. Luhansk Oblast Head Serhiy Haidai reported that Ukrainian forces have progressed a few kilometers towards Kreminna.<sup>27</sup> A BARS-13 (Russian Combat Reserve) affiliated source claimed that Ukrainian forces are continuously attempting to break through Russian defenses near Kreminna.<sup>28</sup> The Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) People's Militia claimed that Ukrainian forces struck Svatove and Novoselivka (53km southeast of Svatove) with HIMARS rockets and 155-mm artillery.<sup>29</sup>

#### **Russian Main Effort—Eastern Ukraine**

#### **Russian Subordinate Main Effort—Donetsk Oblast (Russian objective: Capture the entirety of Donetsk Oblast, the claimed territory of Russia's proxies in Donbas)**

The pace of Russian advances in the Bakhmut area has not increased in previous weeks. ISW assesses that Russian forces have gained a total of 192 sq km in the Bakhmut area between October 1 and December 20. Russian forces gained 100 sq km in the Bakhmut area between October 1 and November 1 and 92 sq km between November 1 and December 20. The pace of Russian advances in the Bakhmut area over the past 50 days is roughly equivalent to the pace of Russian advances during the month of October. Russian sources will likely continue to try to falsely assert that Russian forces are taking a notable amount of territory in the Bakhmut area.

Russian forces continued offensive operations around Bakhmut on December 20. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian assaults near Bakhmut, within 33km northeast of Bakhmut near Verkhokamianske and Pidhorodne, and within 14km south of Bakhmut near Opytne and Kurdyumivka.<sup>30</sup> A Russian milblogger claimed that Wagner Group elements attempted to break through Ukrainian defenses northeast of Bakhmut near Bakhmut'ske.<sup>31</sup> Another Russian milblogger claimed that fierce fighting between Russian and Ukrainian forces continued in the outskirts of Bakhmut.<sup>32</sup> *The Wall Street Journal* published an interview with a Ukrainian commander who stated that Russian artillery strikes on Bakhmut are less intense

than what his unit experienced on the Kherson front during the Ukrainian counteroffensive there and suggested that Russian forces in the Bakhmut area may be running out of ammunition.<sup>33</sup> A social media source published footage of a Ukrainian soldier claiming that Ukrainian forces recaptured 500 meters of territory near Opytne on December 19.<sup>34</sup> Geolocated footage posted on December 20 shows Ukrainian forces patrolling in Opytne.<sup>35</sup> Russian milbloggers claimed that Russian forces also conducted assaults south of Bakhmut near Klishchiivka, where Ukrainian forces have reportedly surrounded the settlement with strongholds and have turned it into a serious defensive hub.<sup>36</sup> One Russian milblogger claimed that Wagner Group elements plan to storm Klishchiivka and that the capture of the settlement would allow Russian forces to interdict Ukrainian forces' ability to transfer equipment and personnel along the Bakhmut to Kostantynivka supply route (the T0504 highway).<sup>37</sup>

Russian forces continued offensive operations in the Avdiivka-Donetsk City area on December 20. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces repelled Russian assaults near Krasnohorivka (24km southwest of Avdiivka) and Marinka (28km southwest of Avdiivka).<sup>38</sup> A Russian milblogger claimed that the 5th Brigade of the Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) Peoples Militia made marginal advances within Marinka.<sup>39</sup> The Russian milblogger claimed that even if Russian forces fully capture Marinka the accumulation of Ukrainian fortified areas in the vicinity of Marinka will likely continue to constrain the actions of Russian forces in the area.<sup>40</sup> Another Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces conducted assaults near Novomykhailivka (37km southwest of Avdiivka) and Pobieda (32km southwest of Avdiivka).<sup>41</sup> The Russian milblogger claimed that Russian forces also conducted an unsuccessful assault in the direction of Oleksandropil (17km northeast of Avdiivka) in an attempt to cut off the N20 highway and encircle the Ukrainian garrison in Novbakhmutivka (14km northeast of Avdiivka).<sup>42</sup> The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces continued routine indirect fire along the line of contact in Donetsk and eastern Zaporizhia oblasts.<sup>43</sup>

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

Russian forces are expanding fortifications in the left-bank Kherson Oblast and are continuing to shell settlements in Kherson, Zaporizhia, and Dnipropetrovsk oblasts.<sup>44</sup> Geolocated footage demonstrated that Russian forces visibly expanded fortifications near Bekhtery (approximately 50km southwest of Kherson City) between November 15 and December 20.<sup>45</sup> Spokesperson for the Southern Defenses Nataliya Humenyuk stated that Russian forces are continuing to increase troops in the direction of the Kinburn Spit, but Ukrainian forces are continuing counter-battery efforts in the area.<sup>46</sup> Humenyuk added that Russian forces are continuing to shell Nikopol, Dnipropetrovsk Oblast, in an effort to provoke Ukrainian forces to retaliate with artillery fire. Ukrainian officials and social media users reported that Russian forces have shelled Kherson City and settlements on the right bank of the Dnipro River in western Kherson Oblast.<sup>47</sup>

Ukrainian forces continued to strike Russian logistics in southern Ukraine. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces stuck a Russian permanent deployment point in the area of Chaplynka (about 76km southeast of Kherson City) on December 18.<sup>48</sup> The Ukrainian General Staff also added that Ukrainian forces stuck Russian manpower and equipment concentrations in Polohy, Vasylivka, and Kaminka-Dniprovsk, wounding up to 130 Russian servicemen and destroying 10 pieces of equipment.<sup>49</sup>

Russian outlets published a video showing a Russian truck exploding on the Crimean Isthmus near Chongar Peninsula in Kherson Oblast, but Russian sources did not comment on the cause of the explosion.<sup>50</sup>

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

A Kremlin official deflected questioning surrounding a Moscow Oblast military recruitment officer's December 17 claim that Russian authorities will extend the service period for conscript soldiers. ISW reported on December 17 that Moscow Oblast military commissar Colonel Alexei Astakhov claimed that Russian authorities will extend the service period for conscript soldiers from 12 months to 18 for spring 2023 conscripts and to two years for fall 2023 conscripts.<sup>51</sup> ISW also previously reported that Russian MoD officials have denied these claims.<sup>52</sup> Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov deflected a question about the claim on December 20, stating that Russian Defense Minister Sergey Shoigu is best positioned to address any rumors surrounding a two-year extension to military service.<sup>53</sup>

An independent Russian investigative organization, Conflict Intelligence Team, amplified an unverified report that Russian forces have assembled a unit from mobilized personnel and convicts.<sup>54</sup> The report stated that the unit deployed to an unspecified settlement in the Lyman direction on the frontline where it is currently waiting for its command to issue orders.<sup>55</sup> ISW is unable to independently verify these claims, but if true, they would indicate that Russian forces are conducting a prisoner recruitment campaign similar to the one used by the Wagner Group to obtain cannon fodder.

The Wagner Group's troops continue to experience extremely high mortality rates due to high casualty rates and infectious diseases.<sup>56</sup> A forcibly mobilized Crimean man, Volodymyr Saychuk, stated that his unit fought alongside Wagner forces in Donetsk Oblast, noting that the number of dead Wagner personnel was three times the number of wounded. Saychuk stated that many Wagner servicemen also wore white and red wristbands which indicated that they had HIV or Hepatitis C.<sup>57</sup> ISW previously reported on October 25 that Wagner recruited prisoners with serious infectious diseases.<sup>58</sup>

Kremlin officials remain unlikely to sign an end-of-mobilization decree. Deputy of the Legislative Assembly of St. Petersburg Boris Vishnevsky shared a response letter from the Russian presidential administration, which stated that the administration requires "additional documents and materials" to consider Vishnevsky's appeal to formally end mobilization and extended the period of consideration for his request until February.<sup>59</sup> The Kremlin is unlikely to declare the end of mobilization because doing so would demobilize servicemen currently operating on the frontlines or training to enter combat at a later date.<sup>60</sup> A Russian source reported that Russian military officials have not released volunteers from the Shaimuratov Battalion from service, despite their contracts ending in November.<sup>61</sup> The report stated that the wives of these service members appealed to their local military prosecutor's office where the assistant duty officer stated there is a provision of a decree on "partial" mobilization, which states that military contracts continue in force while mobilization is in progress.

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

Russian President Vladimir Putin demanded that Russian security services intensify their efforts to counter pro-Ukrainian partisan activity amidst continuing Ukrainian partisan sabotage attempts. Putin stated on December 20 that the "extremely difficult" situation in Russian-occupied territories requires Russian security services to "severely suppress the actions of foreign intelligence services and quickly identify traitors, spies, and saboteurs."<sup>62</sup> A social media source claimed on December 20 that Ukrainian partisans set fire to a building at the Mariupol Ilyich Metallurgical plant.<sup>63</sup> ISW assesses that Ukrainian partisan activity continues to force the Kremlin to divert resources away from frontline operations to help secure rear areas.<sup>64</sup> Putin's call on Russian occupation and Russian security services to combat partisan activity indicates that these services will likely increase law enforcement crackdowns and other measures aimed at curbing partisan activity in occupied territories.

Russian occupation officials continue to enact measures aimed at the political integration of Russian-occupied territories into the Russian Federation. Russian sources claimed on December 20 that the acting heads of the Russian occupation administrations in Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhia, and Kherson oblasts appointed senators to represent the illegally annexed territories in the Russian Federation Council.<sup>65</sup> Russian sources did not specify when the senators would officially begin representing the occupation administrations in the Russian Federation Council.

Russian occupation officials continue to promote Russian ideology and propaganda in educational institutions and youth groups in Russian-occupied territories. The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported on December 20 that Russian occupation officials employ propagandists in schools, children's camps, and various youth activities in occupied territories.<sup>66</sup> The Ukrainian Resistance Center reported that Russian occupation officials have established a children's organization called "Movement of the First" that emphasizes ultra-nationalistic Russian propaganda.<sup>67</sup> The Ukrainian Resistance Center also reported that Russian occupation officials continue to actively recruit teenagers in the occupied territories into the militaristic Russian ultra-nationalist group "Yunarmia."<sup>68</sup>

**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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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.interfax dot ru/world/877703>; <https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-december-19>; <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/belarus-warning-update-lukashenko-and-kremlin-vie-control-over-future-russian-weapons>;

<https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-december-19>

<sup>2</sup> [https://avia\(.\)pro/news/belorussiya-otkazalas-ot-pokupki-rossiyskih-s-400-zayaviv-ob-ih-bespoleznosti](https://avia(.)pro/news/belorussiya-otkazalas-ot-pokupki-rossiyskih-s-400-zayaviv-ob-ih-bespoleznosti);  
[https://bulgarianmilitary\(.\)com/2020/02/27/belarus-refused-to-buy-russian-s-400-missile-systems-because-they-are-useless/](https://bulgarianmilitary(.)com/2020/02/27/belarus-refused-to-buy-russian-s-400-missile-systems-because-they-are-useless/)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russia-review-russia-opens-permanent-training-center-belarus-and-sets-conditions>

<sup>4</sup> <https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-december-16>;

<https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-december-15>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/JointForcesCommandAFU/videos/831390204600181/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/JointForcesCommandAFU/videos/831390204600181/>

<sup>7</sup> [https://t.me/Hajun\\_BY/6012](https://t.me/Hajun_BY/6012)

<sup>8</sup> <https://twitter.com/markito0171/status/1605204614005293063>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/JointForcesCommandAFU/videos/831390204600181/>

<sup>10</sup>

<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0271ZJEJpXLQvXQQkwrRHvWMrjW3o1kUnGdgEjBzHLJu5S4yuv1Qb7cmpcjsCFqTFgrl>

<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid034kBEgWcauwpZwCDq8rrDYupPWkKffpwtjb1EYlm8XhfPjqNWujonK8vaJdkHPurJI>

<sup>11</sup>

<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid02U91CgShcZwSWBYxRLVQQUrwiPLvzdtiH9NSuLxi71QXPbQhn5fLuU3ScCEfBJeQ9I>

<sup>12</sup> <http://kremlin dot ru/events/president/news/70150>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-december-18>

<sup>14</sup> <https://t.me/strelkovii/3580>

<sup>15</sup> [https://t.me/boris\\_rozhin/73182](https://t.me/boris_rozhin/73182)

<sup>16</sup> <https://t.me/m0sc0wcalling/16523>

<sup>17</sup> [https://t.me/grey\\_zone/16263](https://t.me/grey_zone/16263)

<sup>18</sup> <https://t.me/radiosvoboda/33263>

<sup>19</sup> [https://t.me/grey\\_zone/16255](https://t.me/grey_zone/16255)

<sup>20</sup> <http://kremlin dot ru/press/announcements/70151>

<sup>21</sup> <http://kremlin dot ru/press/announcements/70151>

<sup>22</sup> <http://kremlin dot ru/press/announcements/70151>

<sup>23</sup> <http://kremlin dot ru/press/announcements/70151>

<sup>24</sup> <https://isw.pub/UkrWar121822> ; <https://isw.pub/UkrWar121722>

<sup>25</sup>

<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0271ZJEJpXLQvXQQkwrRHvWMrjW3o1kUnGdgEjBzHLJu5S4yuv1Qb7cmpcjsCFqTFgrl>

<sup>26</sup> <https://t.me/wargonzo/9901>

<sup>27</sup> [https://t.me/serhiy\\_hayday/8959](https://t.me/serhiy_hayday/8959)

<sup>28</sup> [https://t.me/russkiy\\_opolchenec/35325](https://t.me/russkiy_opolchenec/35325)

<sup>29</sup> <https://t.me/millnr/9906>



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<sup>31</sup> <https://t.me/wargonzo/9901>

<sup>32</sup> <https://t.me/rybar/42162>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.wsj.com/articles/battle-for-bakhmut-is-critical-test-of-russias-prospects-in-ukraine-11671382297?redirect=amp>

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<https://twitter.com/wartranslated/status/1604794565126279168?s=20&t=l1hBkok1LQMwIARfz1DRyg>

<sup>35</sup> [https://twitter.com/GirkinGirkin/status/1605038236862218240?s=20&t=NcDCGaXotfS6rYHeJgM\\_xA](https://twitter.com/GirkinGirkin/status/1605038236862218240?s=20&t=NcDCGaXotfS6rYHeJgM_xA);

[https://twitter.com/JulianRoepcke/status/1605133348799651840?s=20&t=NcDCGaXotfS6rYHeJgM\\_xA](https://twitter.com/JulianRoepcke/status/1605133348799651840?s=20&t=NcDCGaXotfS6rYHeJgM_xA)

<sup>36</sup> <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/43854> ; <https://t.me/wargonzo/9901> ; <https://t.me/rybar/42162>

<sup>37</sup> <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/43854>

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<sup>39</sup> [https://t.me/Sladkov\\_plus/6881](https://t.me/Sladkov_plus/6881)

<sup>40</sup> [https://t.me/Sladkov\\_plus/6881](https://t.me/Sladkov_plus/6881)

<sup>41</sup> <https://t.me/wargonzo/9901>

<sup>42</sup> <https://t.me/wargonzo/9901>

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<sup>45</sup> <https://twitter.com/bradyafr/status/1605262988482871296>

<sup>46</sup> <https://armyinform.dot.com.ua/2022/12/20/rosijski-vijskovi-ne-prypynyayut-provokaczij-u-rajoni-zaporizkoyi-aes/>

<sup>47</sup> <https://t.me/hueviyherson/31311>; <https://t.me/hueviyherson/31342> ; <https://t.me/hueviyherson/31346> ;

<https://t.me/hueviyherson/31354>;

<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid034kBEgWcawwpZwCDq8rrDYupPWkKffpwtjb1EYLm8XhfPjqNWujonK8vajdkHPurJl>;

<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/pfbid0271ZJEJpXLQvXQQkwRHvWMrjW3o1kUnGdGEjBzHLJu5S4yuv1Qb7cmpecsCFqTFgrl>; <https://t.me/khersonskaODA/2631> ;

<https://t.me/hueviyherson/31304>

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<sup>50</sup> <https://t.me/readovkanews/49254>

<sup>51</sup> <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-december-17>; ] <https://meduza dot io/news/2022/12/17/podmoskovnyy-voenkom-zayavil-o-vozvrashchenii-k-dvuhletnemu-sroku-sluzhby-po-prizyvu-minoborony-rf-eto-otritsaet>;  
<https://t.me/warfakes/10016>; <https://t.me/milinfo/94488>;

<sup>52</sup> <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-december-17>; [https://t.me/mod\\_russia/22717](https://t.me/mod_russia/22717)

<sup>53</sup> [https://www.rbc\(dot\)ru/politics/17/12/2022/639dacf09a79470f79988bf3](https://www.rbc(dot)ru/politics/17/12/2022/639dacf09a79470f79988bf3);  
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<sup>54</sup> [https://t.me/ostorozhno\\_novosti/13308](https://t.me/ostorozhno_novosti/13308) <https://notes.citeam.org/mobilization-dec-18-19>

<sup>55</sup> [https://t.me/ostorozhno\\_novosti/13308](https://t.me/ostorozhno_novosti/13308) <https://notes.citeam.org/mobilization-dec-18-19>

<sup>56</sup> [https://twitter.com/ChrisO\\_wiki/status/1605005857036664832?s=20&t=l1hBkok1LQMwIARfz1DRyg](https://twitter.com/ChrisO_wiki/status/1605005857036664832?s=20&t=l1hBkok1LQMwIARfz1DRyg);  
[https://t.me/poisk\\_in\\_ua/9570](https://t.me/poisk_in_ua/9570); <https://youtube.com/NytkJkmgvJc>

<sup>57</sup> [https://twitter.com/ChrisO\\_wiki/status/1605005857036664832?s=20&t=l1hBkok1LQMwIARfz1DRyg](https://twitter.com/ChrisO_wiki/status/1605005857036664832?s=20&t=l1hBkok1LQMwIARfz1DRyg);  
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<sup>59</sup> <https://t.me/visboris/9959>; <https://t.me/sotaproject/51122>

<sup>60</sup> <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-november-18>

<sup>61</sup> <https://t.me/mobilizationnews/6032>

<sup>62</sup> <http://kremlin dot ru/events/president/news/70146>

<sup>63</sup> <https://twitter.com/PStyleOne1/status/1605186265200340994>

<sup>64</sup> <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/interactive-map-and-assessment-verified-ukrainian-partisan-attacks-against-russian>

<sup>65</sup> <https://t.me/kommunist/14366> ; <https://t.me/BalitskyEV/613> ; [https://t.me/SALDO\\_VGA/249](https://t.me/SALDO_VGA/249)

<sup>66</sup> <https://sprotyv.mod.gov dot ua/2022/12/20/rosiyany-stvoryly-novyj-ruh-dlya-promyvky-mizkiv-diyam-na-tot/>

<sup>67</sup> <https://sprotyv.mod.gov dot ua/2022/12/20/rosiyany-stvoryly-novyj-ruh-dlya-promyvky-mizkiv-diyam-na-tot/>

<sup>68</sup> <https://sprotyv.mod.gov dot ua/2022/12/20/rosiyany-stvoryly-novyj-ruh-dlya-promyvky-mizkiv-diyam-na-tot/>