

Russian Offensive Campaign Assessment

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July 15, 7:25 pm 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.

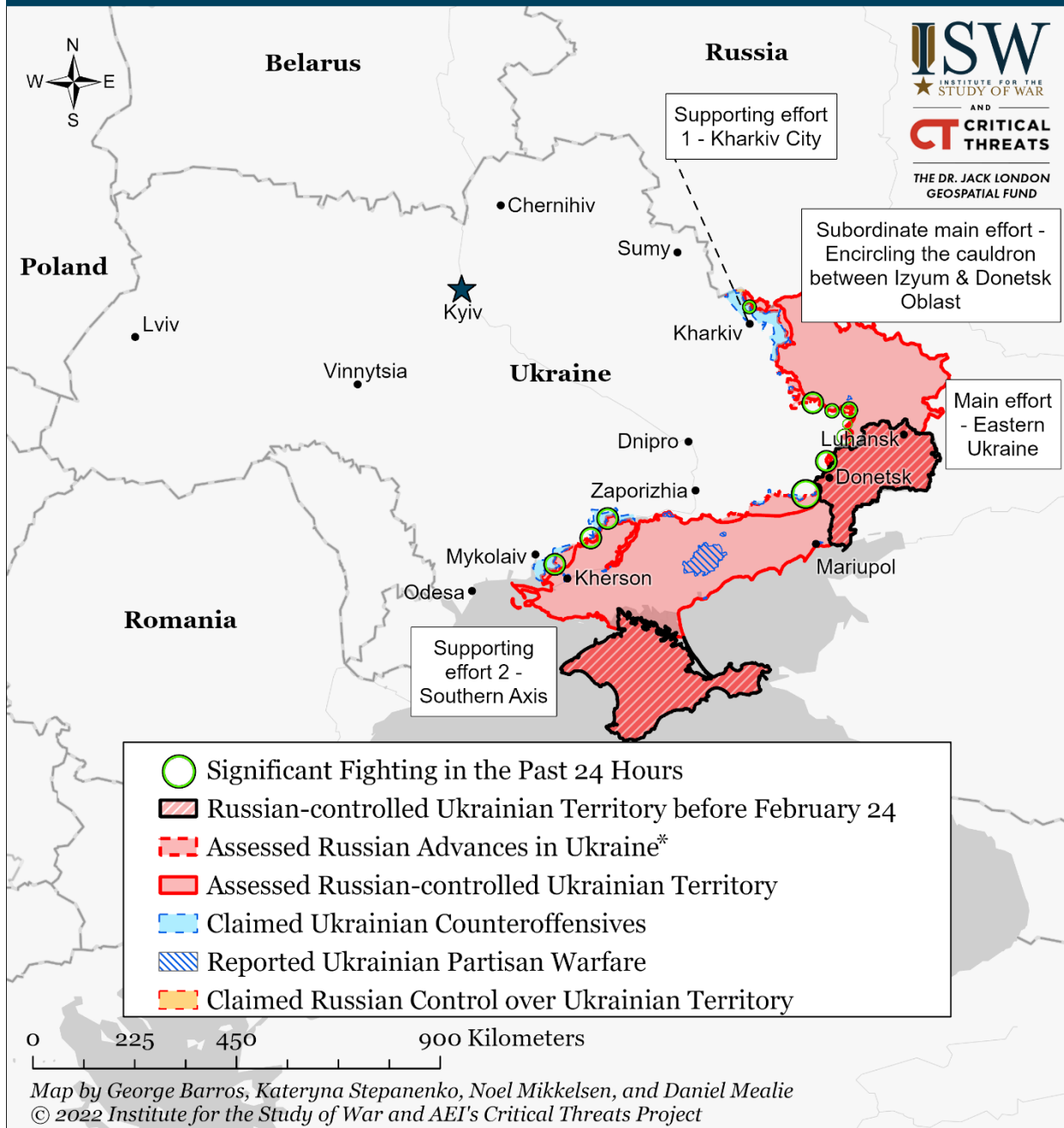
Russian forces are likely emerging from their operational pause as of July 15. Russian forces carried out a series of limited ground assaults northwest of Slovyansk, southeast of Siversk, along the T1302 Bakhmut-Lysychansk highway, southeast of Bakhmut, and southwest of Donetsk City.¹ These assaults may indicate that Russian forces are attempting to resume their offensive operations in Donbas. The assaults are still small-scale and were largely unsuccessful. If the operational pause is truly over, the Russians will likely continue and expand such assaults in the coming 72 hours. The Russians might instead alternate briefer pauses with strengthening attacks over a number of days before moving into a full-scale offensive operation. A 10-day-long operational pause is insufficient to fully regenerate Russian forces for large-scale offensive operations. The Russian military seems to feel continuous pressure to resume and continue offensive operations before it can reasonably have rebuilt sufficient combat power to achieve decisive effects at a reasonable cost to itself, however. The resuming Russian offensive may therefore fluctuate or even stall for some time.

Ukrainian HIMARS strikes have likely killed or wounded four Russian 106th Airborne Division deputy commanders. Russian news outlets reported the deaths of 106th Division's deputy commanders Colonel Sergey Kuzminov, Colonel Andrey Vasiliev, and Colonel Maxim Kudrin, seemingly confirming Ukrainian claims that HIMARS strikes on Shaktarsk on July 9 killed or wounded a significant portion of the 106th's leadership.² Ukraine's Center for Strategic Communications claimed on July 12 that one unspecified 106th Airborne Division deputy commander remains in critical condition.³

Key Takeaways

- **Russian forces are likely emerging from their operational pause, launching ground assaults north of Slovyansk, southeast of Siversk, around Bakhmut, and southwest of Donetsk City.**
- **Russian forces continued to defend occupied positions in the Kharkiv City direction to prevent Ukrainian forces from advancing toward the Russian border in Kharkiv Oblast.**
- **Russian forces continued their systematic attacks on civilian infrastructure targeting residential infrastructure, recreational facilities, and educational institutions in Mykolaiv City on July 15.**
- **Chelyabinsk Oblast officials announced the completion of a volunteer battalion on July 15.**
- **Russian occupation authorities continued to institute new societal control measures in occupied territories.**

Assessed Control of Terrain in Ukraine and Main Russian Maneuver Axes as of July 15, 2022, 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.

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.

- Main Effort—Eastern Ukraine (comprised of one subordinate and three supporting efforts)
- Subordinate Main Effort—Encirclement of Ukrainian Troops in the Cauldron between Izyum and Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts
- Supporting Effort 1—Kharkiv City
- Supporting Effort 2—Southern Axis
- Mobilization and Force Generation Efforts
- Activities in Russian-occupied Areas

Main Effort—Eastern Ukraine

Subordinate Main Effort—Southern Kharkiv, Donetsk, Luhansk Oblasts (Russian objective: Encircle Ukrainian forces in Eastern Ukraine and capture the entirety of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, the claimed territory of Russia’s proxies in Donbas)

Russian forces continued to launch localized attacks and continued shelling north of Slovyansk on July 15. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces have repelled a Russian assault on Bohorodychne, approximately 20 km northwest of Slovyansk.⁴ Geolocated footage shows Ukrainian artillery striking a Russian armored mobility vehicle in Bohorodychne on an unspecified date, which may indicate that Russian forces are attempting to advance through the settlement.⁵ Russian forces continued to shell Slovyansk and settlements southwest and southeast of Izyum.⁶ The Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) released footage of the aftermath of Russian shelling at the Sviatohirsk Lavra (a monastery approximately 19 km northeast of Slovyansk), which indicates that Russian forces have not crossed the Siverskyi Donets River in the area.⁷

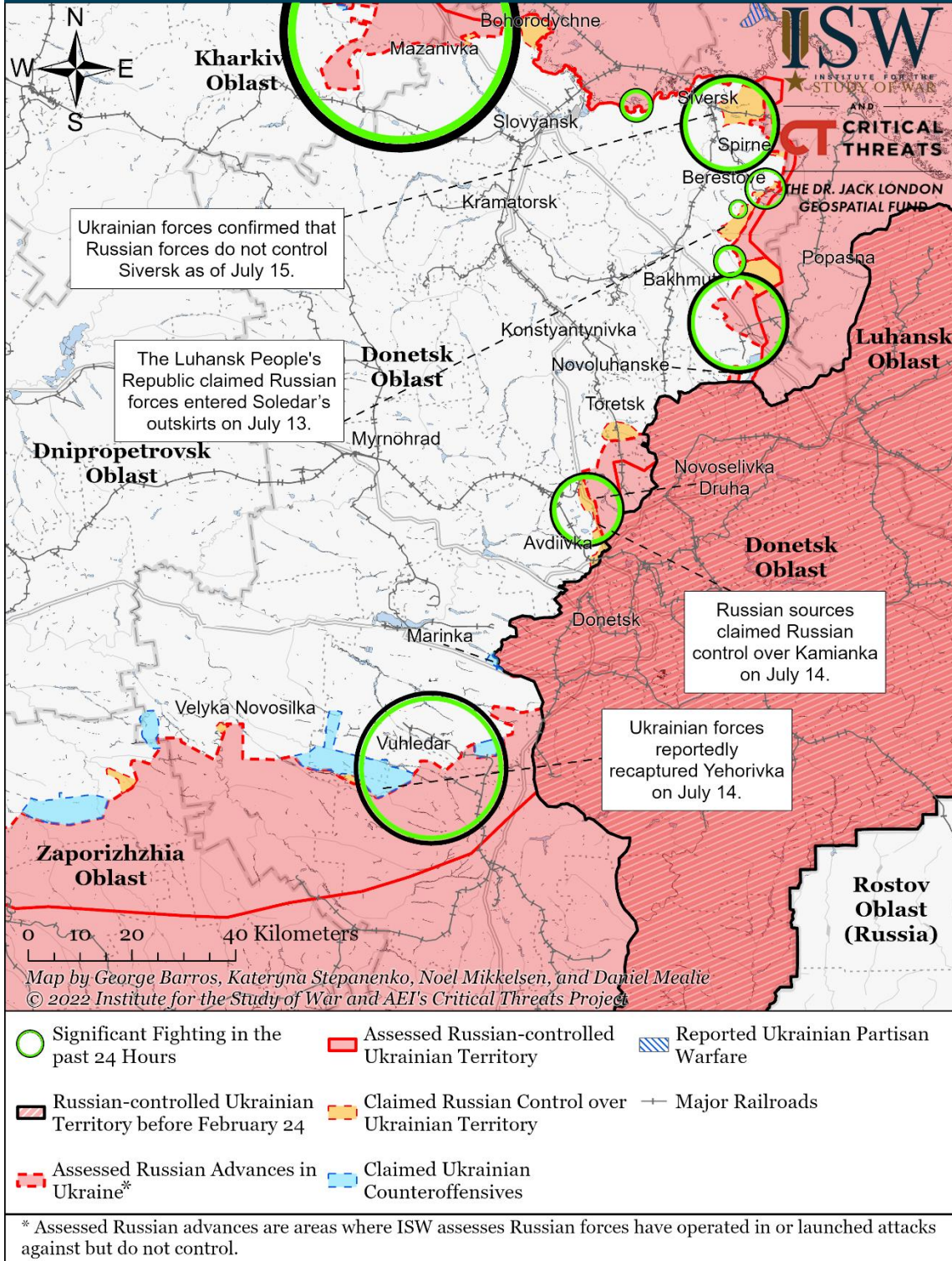
Russian forces continued to launch assaults in the Lysychansk area in an effort to advance toward Siversk. The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attempted to capture Spirne (approximately 13 km southeast of Siversk), likely to interdict Ukrainian ground lines of communication (GLOCs) along the T0513 highway.⁸ The Ukrainian Joint Forces Operation (JFO) published footage confirming that Russian forces did not capture Siversk on July 14, contradicting claims by Luhansk People’s Republic (LNR) Assistant to the Interior Minister Vitaly Kiselyov.⁹ Russian forces reportedly continued to shell Kramatorsk, Hryhorivka, and Zakitne and launched an airstrike on Verkhnyokamyanske.¹⁰

Russian forces continued offensive operations northeast of Bakhmut, likely in an attempt to seize the T1302 Bakhmut-Lysychansk highway.¹¹ The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces unsuccessfully attacked Nahirne and Bilohorivka along the T1302.¹² Geolocated footage showed Ukrainian artillery shelling a Russian ammunition depot in Nahirne, which indicates that Russian forces have likely advanced within the settlement but did not secure access to the T1302.¹³ The Luhansk

People's Republic claimed that Russian forces seized Nova Kamyanka and Stryapivka, along the T1302, but did not provide any evidence to support the claim.¹⁴ Ukrainian forces also reportedly repelled assaults on the Vuhlehirka Power Plant, Vershyna, and Kodema, just southeast of Bakhmut.¹⁵

Russian forces resumed assaults on settlements east of the Donetsk-Zaporizhia Oblast border on July 15. The Ukrainian General Staff noted that Russian forces unsuccessfully attempted to advance toward Vodyane and Pavlivka, approximately 40 and 50 km southwest of Donetsk City, respectively.¹⁶

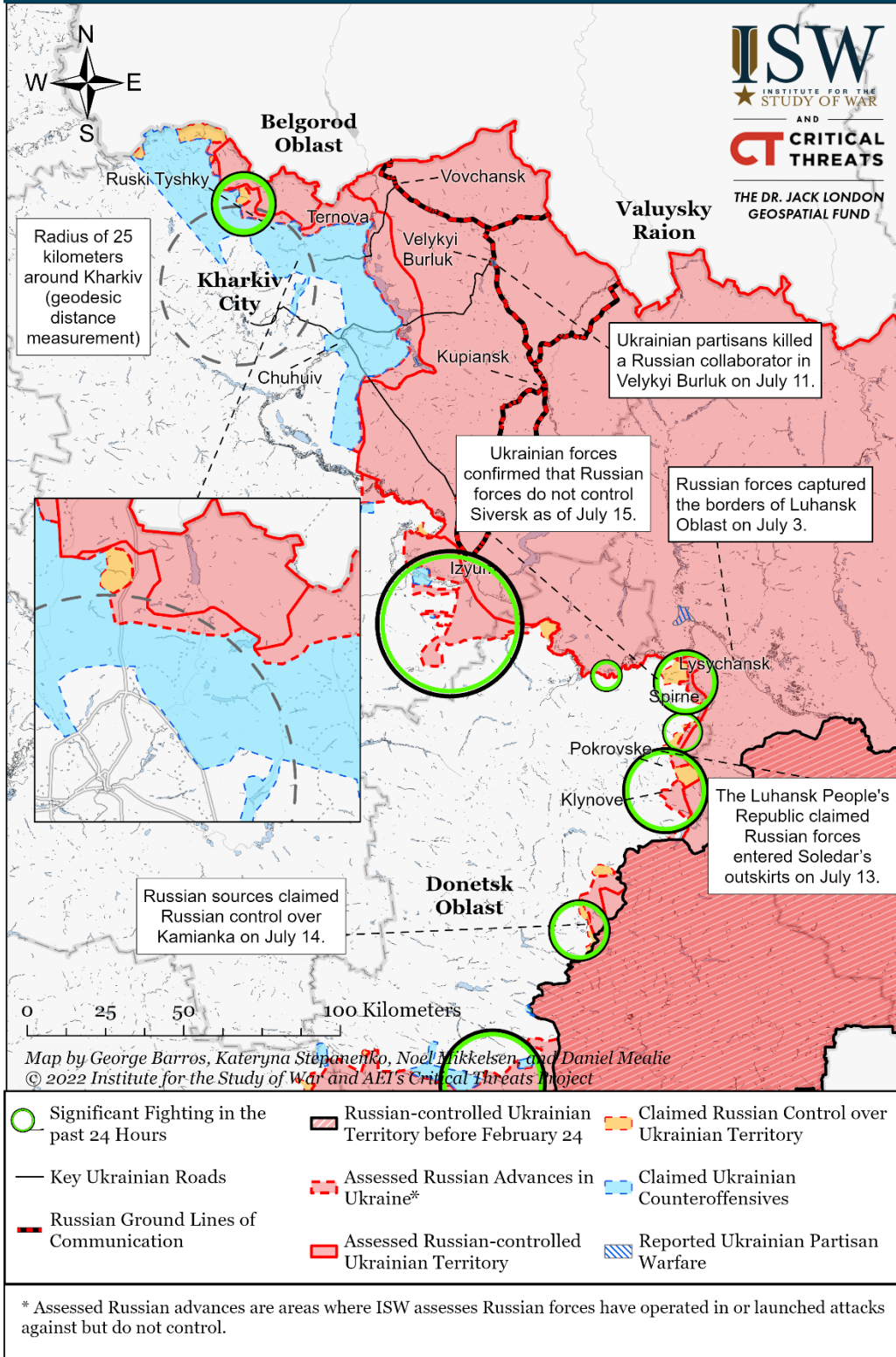
Assessed Control of Terrain Around Donetsk as of July 15, 2022, 3:00 PM ET



Supporting Effort #1—Kharkiv City (Russian objective: Defend ground lines of communication (GLOCs) to Izyum and prevent Ukrainian forces from reaching the Russian border)

Russian forces focused on preventing Ukrainian forces from advancing toward the Russian border in Kharkiv Oblast on July 15.¹⁷ The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces continued to shell civilian and military infrastructure in Kharkiv City and settlements to the north, east, and northeast of the city.¹⁸ The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces conducted aerial reconnaissance near Prymorske on the eastern side of the Pechenihy Reservoir.¹⁹ Russian forces previously conducted aerial reconnaissance in the same area on July 14, likely indicating that they have not retained control over some settlements on the eastern side of the Pechenihy Reservoir.²⁰

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kharkiv as of July 15, 2022, 3:00 PM ET

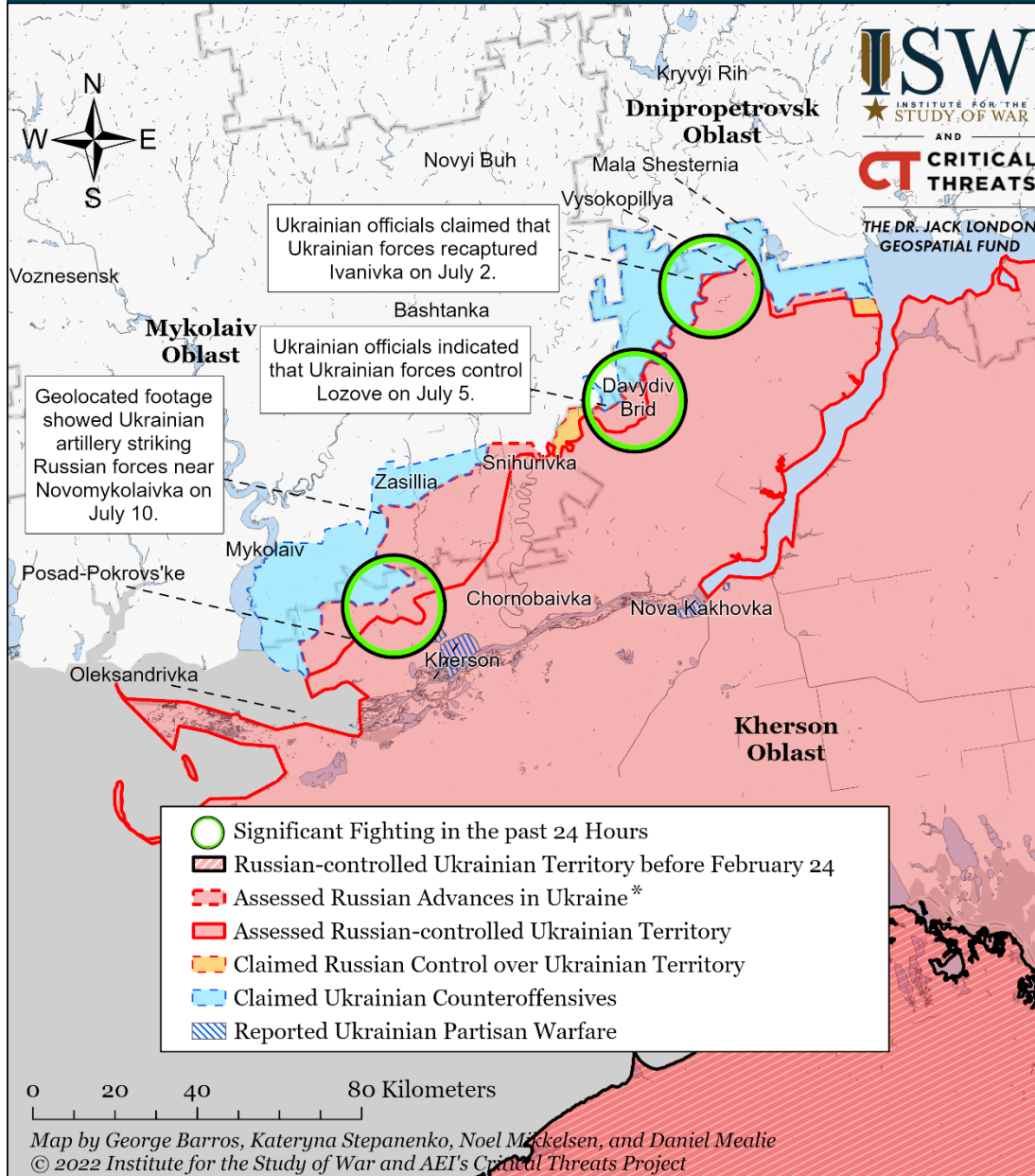


Supporting Effort #2—Southern Axis (Russian objective: Defend Kherson and Zaporizhia Oblasts against Ukrainian counterattacks)

Russian forces continued to shell Ukrainian positions along the contact line along the Southern Axis on July 15.²¹ The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Russian forces launched airstrikes in the areas of Velyke Artakove and Olhine, along the Kherson-Dnipropetrovsk and Kherson-Mykolaiv Oblast borders.²² Ukrainian officials confirmed on July 15 that Ukrainian forces destroyed a Russian ammunition depot in Radensk (approximately 26 km southeast of Kherson City) and unspecified Russian positions in Nova Kakhova on July 14.²³ The Ukrainian Southern Operational Command reported that Russian Su-35s conducted three unsuccessful attacks on Ukrainian ground attack aircraft over Nova Kakhovka, deep in Russian-controlled territory, suggesting that Russian forces may lack sufficient ground-based air defenses in the area.²⁴

Russian forces continued to launch missile strikes at Mykolaiv City on July 15. Mykolaiv Oblast Administration Head Vitaly Kim reported that Russian forces launched at least 10 missiles on two Ukrainian universities in Mykolaiv on July 15.²⁵ Russian milblogger Yuri Kotyenok claimed that the universities served as temporary housing for Ukrainian National Guard servicemen.²⁶ ISW cannot independently verify Kotyenok's claims.

Assessed Control of Terrain Around Kherson and Mykolaiv as of July 15, 2022, 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.

Note: ISW expanded Ukrainian counteroffensives to Lozove on the left bank of the Inhulets River on July 5. The Ukrainian General Staff reported on July 6 that Ukrainian forces repelled a Russian offensive in the direction of Lozove in Kherson Oblast, indicating that Ukrainian forces still maintain a position there. Russian Telegram Channel Rybar claimed that Ukrainian forces launched unsuccessful attacks on the Snihurivka-Lozove-Bila Krynytsya line on July 4. Ukraine's Southern Operational Command stated on July 5 that Ukrainian forces repelled a Russian platoon counterattack in the Lozove area, indicating that Ukrainian forces are in Lozove. Ukrainian combat footage posted in mid-June showed Ukrainian forces shelling Russian positions near Lozove. NASA FIRMS data for July 5 shows heat anomaly concentrations south of Lozove consistent with the Ukraine's Southern Operational Command report. We will update our maps as we collect and confirm more information.

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

Russian forces continue conducting accelerated training for combat volunteers. Chechen Republic Head Ramzan Kadyrov claimed on July 15 that hundreds of volunteers are arriving daily in Grozny, Chechnya, for an accelerated training course before deploying to unspecified areas of Donbas.²⁷ Kadyrov claimed that volunteers receive unspecified state guarantees and train at the Russian Special Forces University east of Grozny in Gudermes, likely to entice prospective volunteers with promises of comfortable compensation and living conditions.²⁸ The governor of Russia's Chelyabinsk Oblast announced on July 13 that the region is forming the "South Ural" and "South Uralets" volunteer battalions.²⁹ An 81-person detachment of Russian military volunteers of the 263-person South Uralets Battalion reportedly left Chelyabinsk on July 15 for an accelerated training course in Nizhny Novgorod, Russia.³⁰

Activity in Russian-occupied Areas (Russian objective: consolidate administrative control of occupied areas; set conditions for potential annexation into the Russian Federation or some other future political arrangement of Moscow's choosing)

Russian occupation authorities continue implementing societal control measures in occupied territories. Russian occupation governments of Kherson and Zaporizhia oblasts criminalized speech on July 14-15 that criticizes the Russian Federation, Russian Armed Forces, or the invasion of Ukraine, effectively expanding the Kremlin's domestic censorship law to occupied territories.³¹ The Kherson Oblast occupation government law decrees that authorities will deport violators from Kherson Oblast to unspecified areas, likely filtration camps or penal colonies in Russia.³² The Donetsk People's Republic (DNR) Territorial Defense encouraged pregnant women in Mariupol to register with the DNR motherhood support registry to receive medical care and benefits, and DNR Head Denis Pushilin signed an amendment that provides funds to support non-essential benefits for children, including sports participation fees and Christmas presents.³³

Advisor to the Head of Luhansk People's Republic (LNR) Marina Filippova announced on July 15 that the LNR government established an organizational headquarters to support and hold a referendum on an unspecified date to join the Russian Federation.³⁴ The LNR will likely hold the referendum alongside those of other Russian occupation and proxy governments in Ukraine.

Russian military correspondent Alexander Khodakovsky claimed on July 15 that Russian city and oblast governments acting as patrons for occupied areas of Ukraine are largely absent from reconstruction efforts despite public promises to help rebuild occupied territories, hindering reconstruction efforts.³⁵ Khodakovsky claims he formed his assessment after meeting with various deputy-level officials in unspecified Russian city and oblast governments.³⁶

¹ <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/363631335949951>;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/363236405989444>

² <https://myslo dot ru/news/tula/2022-07-14-zamkomandira-tul-skoj-106-j-divizii-vdv-pogib-v-hode-specoperacii-na-ukraine>;
<https://t.me/AFUStratCom/4134>; <https://twitter.com/GirkinGirkin/status/1547812939884744705>; <https://archive dot>

ph/UllSY#selection-173.0-173.163; <https://twitter.com/RALee85/status/1547735785691942915>;
<https://twitter.com/RALee85/status/1547732993434796033>

³ <https://t.me/AFUStratCom/4134>

⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/363631335949951>

⁵ https://twitter.com/Blue_Sauron/status/1547895411955732480;

<https://twitter.com/TexAgg04/status/1547972295401955328>

⁶ <https://t.me/stranaua/52609>; <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/363236405989444>;
<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/363631335949951>

⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=1515523005531234>

⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/363236405989444>;

<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/363631335949951>

⁹ <https://understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-july-14>;

<https://www.facebook.com/easternbridgehead/videos/389470803065881/>

¹⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/363236405989444>

¹¹ <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/363236405989444>

¹² <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/363631335949951>;

<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/363236405989444>

¹³ <https://twitter.com/neonhandrail/status/1547973784690298881>;

<https://twitter.com/neonhandrail/status/1547973784690298881>

¹⁴ <https://t.me/millnr/9111>; <https://t.me/millnr/9110>

¹⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/363631335949951>;

<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/363236405989444>

¹⁶ <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/363236405989444>;

<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/363631335949951>

¹⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/363236405989444>; <https://t.me/synegubov/3664>

¹⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/363631335949951>; <https://t.me/synegubov/3664>;

<https://t.me/rybar/35594>; <https://t.me/synegubov/3664>; <https://t.me/synegubov/3664>

¹⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/363236405989444>

²⁰ <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/363236405989444>;

<https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-july-14>

²¹ <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/363631335949951>;

<https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/363236405989444>;

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=735961860790053>; <https://t.me/mykolaiivskaODA/1780>;

https://t.me/zoda_gov_ua/10429; https://t.me/zoda_gov_ua/10429; https://t.me/mod_russia/17685;

<https://t.me/rybar/35594>

²² <https://www.facebook.com/GeneralStaff.ua/posts/363236405989444>

<https://www.facebook.com/100064555155257/posts/pfbid02kLn62bgT8HDsjSr3D9J5m64iufHD7hCaus5QuXsSBbXd6R8vEWYR4WrZb6zed5PCI/?d=n>;

<https://www.facebook.com/100064555155257/posts/pfbid02kLn62bgT8HDsjSr3D9J5m64iufHD7hCaus5QuXsSBbXd6R8vEWYR4WrZb6zed5PCI/?d=n>; https://t.me/Bratchuk_Sergey/15530 ; https://t.me/Bratchuk_Sergey/15534

²⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=451915109788655>

²⁵ https://twitter.com/vitalij_kim/status/1547819048926208001

²⁶ https://twitter.com/vitalij_kim/status/1547819048926208001; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/38391>;
<https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/38393>; <https://t.me/voenkorKotenok/38409?single>; <https://t.me/readovkanews/38669>

²⁷ https://t.me/RKadyrov_95/2557

²⁸ https://t.me/RKadyrov_95/2557

²⁹ https://www.1obl_dot_ru/news/o-lyudyakh/iz-chelyabinskikh-dobrovoltsev-na-donbasse-sformiruyut-imennye-batalony/

³⁰ https://www.1obl_dot_ru/news/o-lyudyakh/iz-chelyabinska-na-ukrainu-otpravilis-pervye-boytsy-batalona-yuzhnouralets/

³¹ https://t.me/VGA_Kherson/2503; <https://t.me/stranaua/52602>; https://www.kommersant_dot_ru/doc/5468395

³² https://t.me/VGA_Kherson/2503; <https://t.me/stranaua/52602>

³³ https://glavadnr_dot_ru/doc/ukazy/Ukaz_384_15072022.pdf; https://t.me/prav_dnr/2583; https://t.me/TRO_DPR/4733

³⁴ https://www.business-gazeta_dot_ru/amp/557167; <https://t.me/stranaua/52579>; https://www.interfax_dot_ru/world/852331

³⁵ https://t.me/aleksandr_skif/2306

³⁶ https://t.me/aleksandr_skif/2306