

Rochan Consulting

# Ukraine Conflict Monitor



**Issue 175 – Weekly update**

**19-25 September 2022**

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## Key takeaways

- **The mobilisation of the Russian Armed Forces will likely have significant implications on the frontline situation;**
- **The call-up of at least 300,000 (could be more than 1,000,000) will probably be implemented in waves.**
- **The call-up is being pursued relentlessly by military commissars, and the quota will highly likely be met. The focus is on the quantity and not quality;**
- **The Ukrainian Armed Forces (UAF) made some progress near the Lyman area. It is possible that soon they will cut off one of the two Russian withdrawal routes from the city.**
- **Russian and proxy forces made progress in capturing Bakhmut. They may control around 20-30% of the city.**
- **There were no changes in the Zaporizhzhia Oblast, although rumours continue to circulate that Ukrainian forces are to start a counterattack. To prevent another successful operation of the UAF, Moscow deployed a sizable grouping of force (18-20 BTGs/CTGs) into the area;**
- **The UAF continued striking Russian C2, bridges, crossings and ammunition warehouses in the Kherson Oblast, but so far, this appears to have had a limited impact on the battlefield situation. The UAF made no progress last week.**

## Frontline situation

The overall initiative is on the Ukrainian side. Kyiv's forces are pushing (or trying) the frontlines in the Kharkiv, northern Donetsk, and Kherson Oblasts. Ukrainian posture remains defensive between Bakhmut and Donetsk City. Unless there is a big Ukrainian counteroffensive, we do not expect significant changes on the battlefield until Russian reinforcements acquired through mobilisations arrive.

In the Kharkiv Oblast, the frontline is rested on the Oskil River. Last week, Ukrainians successfully tried to extend their presence east of it, pushing them from Kupyansk and Dvorichna. It seems that the UAF presence near Oskil is divided into two parts. The first focuses

on the northern areas, [Kupyansk-Dvorchina](#), which can ultimately see the Ukrainian forces pushing towards [Svatove-Troitske](#). The second area focuses on operations east of [the Oskil-Lozove](#) line, where the UAF had tactical successes.

Indeed, the second part of the last week was marked by Ukrainian advances near Lyman that could seriously threaten Russian positions around the city. According to Russian sources, there are some 20,000 Russian and proxy forces around Lyman, which is probably an overestimation. Nevertheless, Russian positions in this area are becoming increasingly indefensible as Ukrainians slowly move their formations to envelop Lyman and areas north of it.

Given the low likelihood of reinforcements arriving over the next few days, we assess that Russian formations will eventually pull back under the artillery fire to the [Severodonetsk-Svatove line](#). That will liberate the northern parts of the Donetsk Oblast and allow Ukrainians to prepare for further attacks on the Luhansk Oblast.

Ukrainians remain on the defensive in the [Bakhmut-Donetsk](#) line. Russian forces made some progress there, but advances are painfully slow and often barely noticeable. As we stated last week, based on pro-Russian reports on the situation in the Donetsk Oblast, assuming all gains are confirmed, the attackers captured five settlements over the prior three weeks. Last week, they added another village (Yatskivka that we cannot identify), but it did not impact the overall operational picture of the battlefield. Again, we do not expect major changes in this area until reinforcements arrive.

Lastly, Ukrainians continue to be offensively committed in the Kherson Oblast. However, for several weeks, we have not seen any battlefield changes in this direction. Despite a weeks-long interdiction campaign against Russian ammunition depots, C2 points, and crossings over the Dnieper River, Russian defensive operations north of the river remained effective.

## **Mobilisation**

As already written in the UCM, on 21SEP, President Vladimir Putin announced a partial mobilisation. Following Putin's speech, the Minister of Defence, Sergei Shoigu, stated that the armed forces are seeking to call up 300,000 men out of the total number of 25 mln under the

appropriate age limit. However, shortly after Putin's address, an official decree was published on the Kremlin's website, which did not mention the number of reservists to be called up. One of the articles of the decree (7) was classified. The press secretary of the President, Dmitry Peskov, later said that the classified clause referred to the number of reservists who could be called up for military service. A Russian oppositionist outlet, Novaya Gazeta, claimed that the General Staff plans to call up not 300,000 but around 1,000,000 Russians, which Peskov denied.

Since the decree was published, the mobilisation machine started rolling. From our observations, it seems that whereas the formal process and delivering mobilisational papers appears to be working fine and is effective, there have been many instances when citizens unfit for military service were called up. There have been reports about students, males over 60 years old or without prior military experience, being rounded up. Notices were also addressed to citizens who have long been dead, which confirms that the reservist database was not regularly and properly maintained. It also seems that the primary focus is on the number of conscripts, not their qualities. Some personnel near commissariats were seen in disorderly conduct, drunk, and fighting with each other. Twitter coined the phrase "alco-battalions" to describe the state of Russian reservists. We do not wish to generalise the status of reservists, however, a huge majority of images and videos we have seen so far show males in their late 30s, 40s, and 50s being called up. There seem to be relatively few young males.

Putin signed another decree on 24SEP on the deferment from conscription during mobilisation. The document stipulates that deferment is granted to students studying full-time and part-time in state-accredited secondary vocational and higher education programs in state educational and scientific organisations. Deferment is also granted to the State Duma and Federation Council deputies, IT and defence industry workers, and criminals. Apart from these groups, it seems that effectively everyone could be called-up.

At first, there were relatively few protests in response to the mobilisation. However, over the weekend, the security situation worsened significantly in Dagestan, which saw multiple demonstrations against the draft and how it had been handled. Protesters clashed with police and other security agencies. It remains to be seen whether this process will spill over to other

oblasts. One thing to remember about Dagestan is that it has had a disproportionately high number of casualties compared to other oblasts in the ongoing war. Recently, [BBC Russian service identified](#) more than 6,020 Russian soldiers who died in the war in Ukraine (the actual number is undoubtedly higher), of which 301 came from Dagestan, compared to 15 from Moscow.

In the meantime, [Novya Gazeta](#) claims that 261,000 men have already left Russia, which probably brings closer the decision to close the border to all males within the conscription age. Another oppositionist outlet, [Mediazona](#), counted all instances where military enlistment offices were set on fire. There have been 37 such cases since the start of the war, of which 17 occurred since the draft was announced.

According to an oppositionist Telegram account, [Volya](#), by 25SEP, more than 120,000 Russians were mobilised, and 65,000 were sent to units for training. If this pace is maintained, we believe by the end of next week, 300,000 Russians will receive draft notifications.

It remains to be seen whether this number will be divided into waves. We believe that it is likely. We initially thought the refresher training would last up to four weeks. However, it now seems [that it will be shorter](#). The first mobilised personnel may appear in Ukraine by mid-October. Its combat effectiveness will be very limited, to put it mildly. But as we already stated, the General Staff is primarily concerned about the number of service members, not their quality. It probably believes that the number of soldiers can overcome their lack of training. This means that the training will be effectively undertaken in a combat environment.

Problems with discipline and chain of command are bound to happen, but we do not know yet how widespread this will be and to what extent it will impact the overall operational situation.

According to Andrei Gurulev, a member of the State Duma Defense Committee, ex-deputy commander of the Southern Military District, the mobilisation was much needed as the Russian grouping of forces in Ukraine was not numerous enough. He believes that with mobilisation, Russians will be able to stop advancing Ukrainians and gradually move forward. There appears to be an understanding on the Russian side that the disparity in the number of

personnel is too big for Russia to continue its operations in Ukraine. The call-up is first and foremost to bridge this gap, but interestingly, there is little discussion about Russia actually obtaining manpower advantage in this war.

It seems that, at least initially, reservists will fill in gaps in existing frontline formations. Only then will new companies or battalions be formed. A big part of called-up personnel will also create and maintain rear support. Others can carry out garrison service in the captured territories. They will probably combine police and security functions and serve as light infantry operational reserve.

There is also a question of conscripts currently undertaking their compulsory military service. The law prohibits the armed forces from sending conscripts outside the territory of Russia for warfighting. However, they can still be sent to border regions (Belgorod or Kursk Oblast) and serve there. At the same time, given ongoing "referenda" on joining Russia in Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson Oblasts, by the end of September, these areas could be formally annexed by Russia and, from the Kremlin's point of view, effectively become parts of Russia. In this case, legally, conscripts could be sent to Ukraine.

Speaking on referenda, Peskov stated on 23SEP that "immediately after the decision to join Russia, the Constitution of Russia will come into force in relation to these territories" (Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson Oblasts). He also added that Russia would regard Ukraine's attempts to retake Donbas and other territories. This, of course, opens up the question of whether Moscow will conduct nuclear strikes on Ukraine if it continues to conduct offensive operations in these oblasts. During his 21SEP address, Putin stated that Russia would use "all weapons systems available" to protect its "territorial integrity," adding that he was not bluffing. The truth is that we have entered uncharted territories. Resorting to nuclear threats highlights Russian conventional weaknesses in Ukraine and the inability to shape events militarily. We believe that nuclear escalation, currently unlikely, does not need to mean an out-of-the-blue attack on Ukraine. We may first see various forms of signalling indicating Russian preparations for a nuclear release combined with pressure put on the West and Ukraine. These can include nuclear exercises happening in Russia, clearly stating that the goal is to strike Ukraine, a detonation of a low-yield nuclear warhead over the Black Sea, etc.

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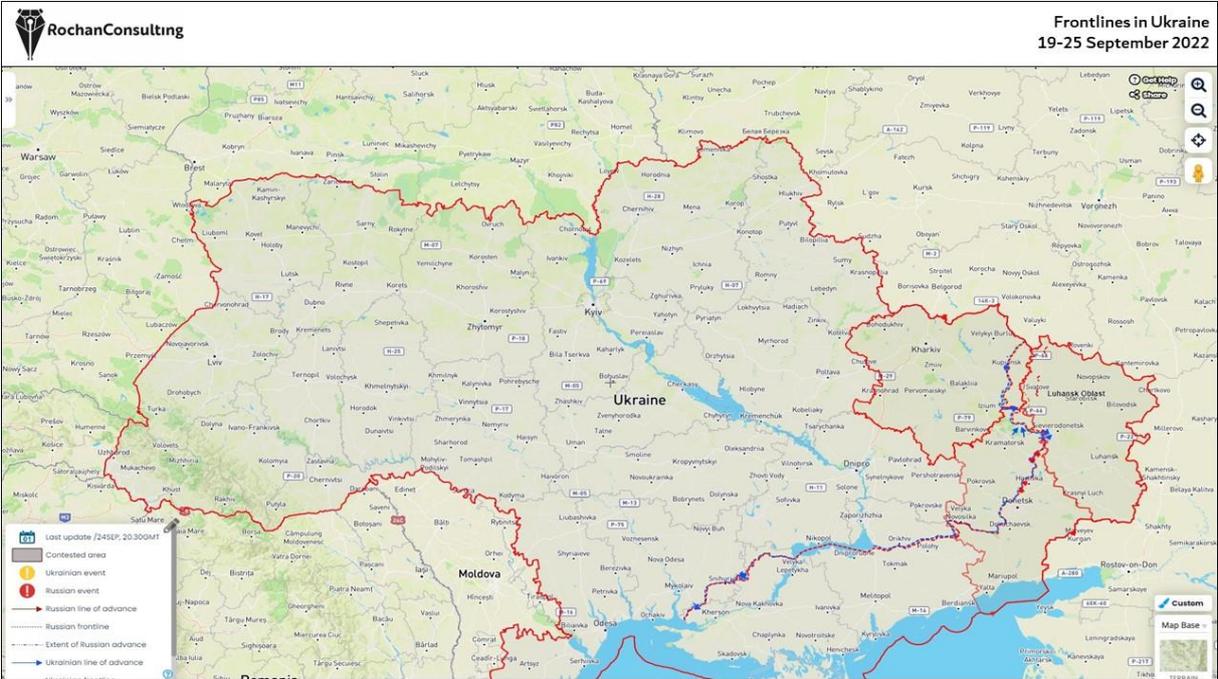
Moscow will likely maintain escalation dominance in this conflict, but to escalate, it needs to have space to do so. A nuclear release does exactly the opposite.

Russian success in this war will also depend on the domestic industry to fulfil the state defence order. On Wednesday, 21SEP, Putin stated, "The heads of enterprises of the military-industrial complex are directly responsible for solving the tasks of increasing the production of weapons and military equipment and deploying additional production capacities." He instructed the government to immediately resolve such enterprises' material, financial and resource support issues. Many companies already work three shifts, often during weekends, but it is understood that the intensity of work will be increased. Under the recent amendments made to the Russian Criminal Code, violations of the terms of the state defence contract are punishable by fines (at least RUB5 mln) and imprisonment (five to ten years). The industry seems to mainly focus on producing and repairing equipment for the land forces (tanks, armoured vehicles, trucks, and artillery).

Lastly, on 24SEP, General Dmitry Bulgakov, a deputy defence minister responsible for logistics, was relieved of his duties. Bulgakov was essentially at the top of the logistics commanding structure since 1997 when he became the chief of staff of Logistics of the Armed Forces of Russia. Then on 2DEC 2008, he was promoted to the post of Chief of Logistics of the Russian Armed Forces, and the Deputy Minister of Defence. He held this post until 24SEP 2022. He must have seriously fallen out of favour with the country's political-military establishment if he was relieved of his duties having commanded the top of logistics command bodies for 25 years. Or, to put it differently, things within the command must have been really bad, and the belief that he could turn things around so low that he was fired only two days after the mobilisation was announced.

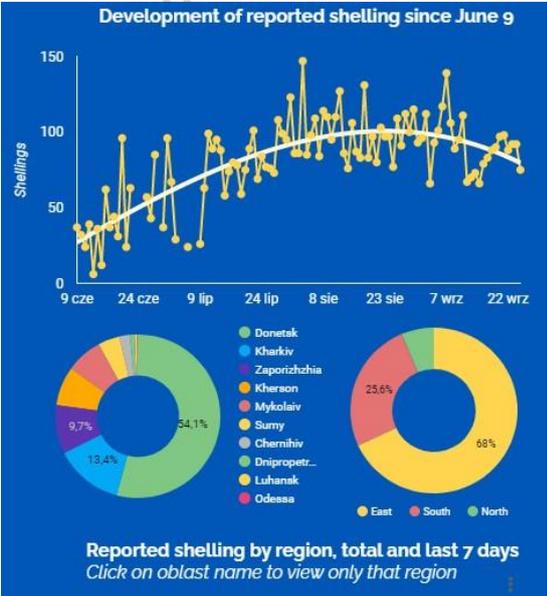
General Colonel [Mikhail Mizintsev](#) reportedly replaced Bulgakov. His biography on the Russian MoD website clearly shows that Mizintsev is not a logistician. Throughout his career, he was primarily involved in commanding operational formations. Since 2014, he has been the Head of the National Defense Control Center of the Russian Federation. It seems that the General

Staff hopes that his understanding of the operational environment coupled with a command of logistics services will streamline and enhance logistics support.



**Frontlines in Ukraine with artillery shelling data – 19-25 September 2022**

**\*WE ARE NO LONGER INCLUDING FIRMS DATA IN OUR MAPS\***



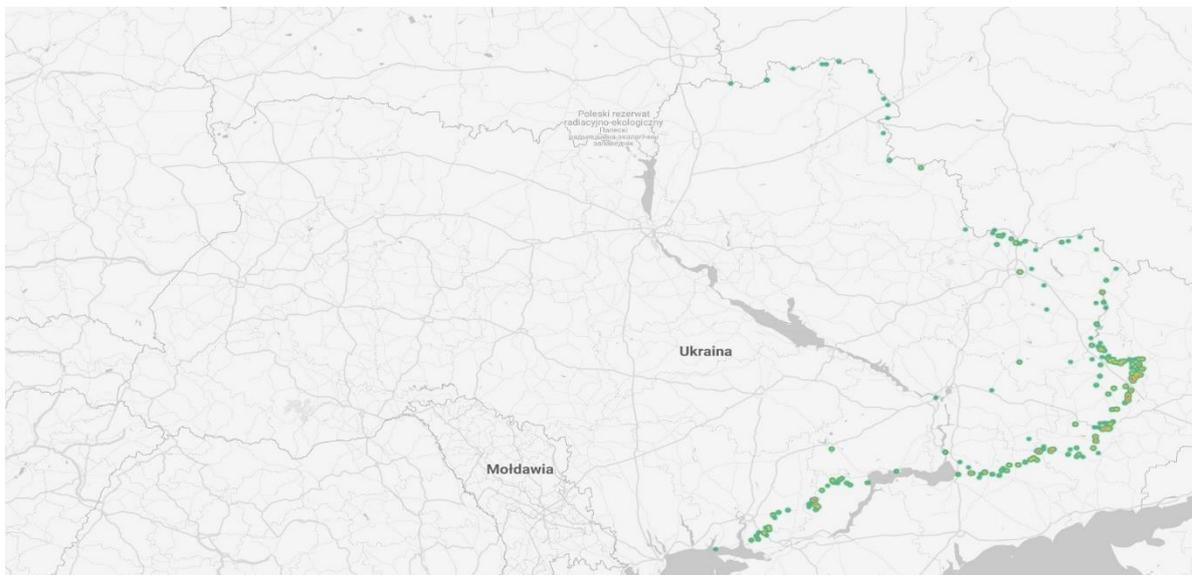
**Development of reported shellings since June 9 (Source)**

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**Ukrainian General Staff reported shellings by city and oblast for the past seven days (19-25SEP)**  
([Source](#))

There was a significant increase in the number of artillery fires in the Donetsk Oblast. After a decline last week, artillery strikes picked up in the Kharkiv Oblast. We warned about this development in the previous Weekly Update. Strikes in the Kharkiv, Mykolaiv and Zaporizhzhia Oblasts continue to decline as a percentage of the total shellings in Ukraine. Last week, a total of 30% strikes occurred in these three Oblasts, compared to 34% a week before.



**Heatmap with reported shellings, past seven days (19-25SEP)** ([Source](#))

## **The situation in Belarus**

Over the past seven days, the military-political situation in Belarus was visibly calm. The activities of the Belarusian Armed Forces were generally limited. This was probably linked to the recuperation of military units after the conclusion of the command-staff exercise. However, the announcement of partial mobilisation in Russia increased the informational "tension" around the Belarusian Army and forced some officials to speak up.

On Friday, Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenka unquestionably denied the possibility of mobilisation in Belarus. Nevertheless, during a meeting with State Security Council Lieutenant General Alexander Volfovich, Lukashenka advised his interlocutor to strengthen the discipline of the Belarusian society and carry out all necessary actions related to protecting the state. Belarusian President precisely mentioned putting military formations on alert, calling up reserve troops and even conducting wartime exercises. As claimed by Lukashenka, those actions are entirely justified by the dangerous situation near the Belarusian borders. However, since calls were made, we have not seen anything unusual about the activity of the Belarusian Armed Forces.

On Monday, Lukashenko signed Decree No. 332, which deprived selected (former) Belarusian service members of their military or special ranks. This action can be linked to the desire to dispose of and punish members of the power apparatus who were involved in anti-regime activities during the summer-autumn 2020 protests.

Last week, the actions of Belarusian military leadership were focused on international affairs. On Wednesday, a day before the mobilisation was announced, Volfovich went to Moscow to meet with his Russian counterpart Nikolai Patrushev. At the same time, the Head of the International Military Cooperation Department, Colonel Valery Revenko, led a meeting with his subordinated bodies about the implementation of the Belarusian military foreign policy. Some of them were visible during the past seven days.

Last week, 18 officers were promoted to the colonel rank.

As already mentioned, the number of training events in Belarus was limited. Nevertheless, during the last week, standalone drills were undertaken by the 5<sup>th</sup> Spetsnaz Brigade and the

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Belarusian Air Force. Between Tuesday and Thursday, multiple training flights were observed, which involved the entire range of the Belarusian Air Forces' capabilities (trainer, combat, transport aircraft and helicopters). The 72<sup>nd</sup> Joint Training Center also organised some tactical-level drills, but we considered them planned actions linked to the already established training plans.

Low exercise tempo translated into a smaller number of observed convoys. However, some interesting movements involved more sophisticated military systems like PPRU-1 reconnaissance and control air defence vehicles. Unofficial sources also reported about movements of artillery (towed howitzers, 2S1, BM-21s) and communications assets. (R-434 CITRUS, R-161A2M). However, the biggest single transfer of military equipment involved a BTR-based mechanised company. At the same time, outside observers noticed the transport of construction materials used for checkpoint creation. Thus, one can conclude that the Belarusian Armed Forces continue to display a defensive posture, primarily focused on guarding the border with Ukraine. Indeed, last week, we saw no indication that any offensive grouping of forces was being established.

The activity of the Russian Armed Forces in Belarus was also limited last week. Three cargo aircraft (two Il-76s and a single Tu-154) presumably delivered ammunition and equipment to Russian forces stationed in the country.

**Last week's events in Belarus**

-----	Political leadership	Military leadership	Training activities	Transfers of military equipment	
				BAF	RAF
<b>Monday</b>	Belarusian President signed Decree No. 332 related to the deprivation of formed	-----	Special-tactical exercises of the 5 <sup>th</sup> Spetsnaz Brigade.	A single R-434 CITRUS radio relay station.	Single insignificant ground transfer.

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	servicemen of their military and special ranks.				
<b>Tuesday</b>	Belarusian President met with the Secretary of the State Security Council to discuss the issues of a new Belarusian Concept of National Security.	Deputy Head of the Belarusian Military Academy participated in the infusion of the General Staff Faculty new students.  Belarusian officers started their visit in the military facilities of Cyprus Republic.  Belarusian Military Attache in Serbia met with the Chief of Serbian General Staff.	Examinations of the 72 <sup>nd</sup> Joint Training Center.  Pre-jump training of the cadets of the Belarusian Military Academy (Reconnaissance Faculty).  Significant activity of the Belarusian Air Force.	-----	-----
<b>Wednesday</b>	-----	The Secretary of the State Security Council met with Russian counterpart.  Head of the International Military Cooperation Department led a meeting related to the implementation of Belarusian	Final exams of the cadets of 59 <sup>th</sup> Automotive Specialist Training School (72 <sup>nd</sup> Joint Training Center)  Beginning of the competition for best artillery commander (battery and battalion).	A single 9K33M3 OSA with two trucks.  A PPRU-1 reconnaissance and control air defence vehicle with MAZ-537.  At least one mechanised company (BTR).	Arrival of two cargo planes (Tu-154: RA-85554, Il-76: RA-85556)  One insignificant ground transfer

		(military) foreign policy.	Significant activity of the Belarusian Air Force.		
<b>Thursday</b>	-----	Minister of Defence participated in the promotion ceremony of 18 lieutenant colonels to colonel ranks.  Military Commissar of the Barysaw and Krupsky districts, commented the issue of mobilisation in Russia.	Continuation of the pre-jump training of the Military Reconnaissance Faculty cadets (Belarusian Military Academy)  Security day in the 336 <sup>th</sup> Reactive Artillery Brigade.  Visible activity of the Belarusian Air Force.	Five trailers with elements used to checkpoint construction.  Single echelon with two MAZ-537 tractors spotted.	-----
<b>Friday</b>	Belarusian President commented the issue of mobilisation.	Secretary of the State Security Council and Minister of Defence participated in the official celebration of the Day of the motor riflemen.  Deputy Commander of the N-W OC hosted a methodological gathering with commander-	Information about the upcoming exercise of the CSTO Joint Forces in Kazakhstan.	At least four military busses.  Four covered trucks with three howitzers.  Four 2S1 SPHs with a single truck.  Six trucks with an unspecified light vehicle and an R-161A2M radio station.	One insignificant ground transfer.

		deputies of subordinated units.			
<b>Saturday</b>	-----	-----	-----	Five BM-21 launchers with a single truck.	Arrival of an Il-76 (RA-86906).

## Summary of losses

According to the Russian Ministry of Defence, since the start of the war, Ukraine has lost 301 aircraft (+8), 155 helicopters (0), 2,074 UAVs (+93), 377 anti-aircraft missile systems (launchers?)(+2), 5,111 tanks and other armoured combat vehicles (+89), 845 MLRS launchers (+9), 3,413 field artillery guns and mortars (+15), as well as 5,680 units of special military vehicles (+194).

According to the Ukrainian General Staff, Russia lost (killed) 56,700 personnel (+2,220), 2,275 tanks (+65), 4,832 armoured personnel vehicles (+114), 1,368 artillery systems (+59) and 328 MLRS (+16), 171 anti-aircraft systems (+3), 259 aircraft (+8) and 220 helicopters (+3), and 966 UAVs (+102), 3,701 vehicles and fuel tanks (+123), 15 warships and boats (0) and 130 special equipment (+8).

The number in parentheses denotes a weekly change.

## The situation at selected axes and directions

### Kharkiv direction

Last week did not bring big changes in the Kharkiv Oblast, however, small-scale events that occurred last week could have significant operational consequences next week.

Ukrainian formations crossed the Oskil River and are expanding their presence on the east side of the river. Firstly, the UAF pushed east from Dvorichna and is now fighting over [Tavil'zhanka](#), some 30 km west of the main Russian line of defence between [Troitske](#) and [Pokrovske](#).

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The UAF also crossed Oskil in Kypuansk and pushed southeast towards [Podoly-Kurylivka](#). Yet, despite these tactical developments and successes, it seems that, for now, the UAF will not conduct another large-scale attack on the Luhansk Oblast. In fact, given the Russian mobilisation and inevitable deployment of 1000s of Russian reservists, Ukrainians may set up their main defensive line on the Oskil River and defend the Kharkiv Oblast from the east.

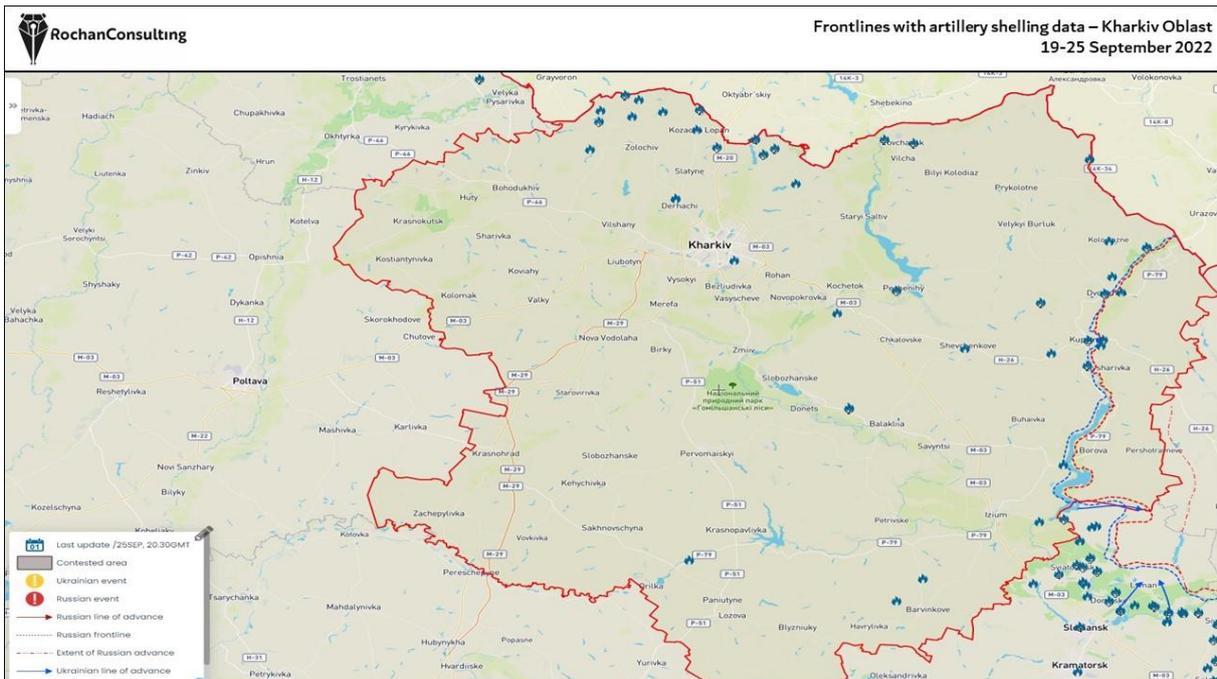
Ukrainians deployed elements of their territorial brigades into the border regions to prevent Russian ground attacks from Russia proper. Altogether, up to eight Russian BTGs/CTGs are now deployed in the border region south of Belgorod.

These include elements from the 138<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> Motorised Rifle Brigades, 6th Combined Arms Army), 11th Tank Regiment of the 18th Motorised Rifle Division (11th Army Corps of the Baltic Sea Fleet), the 80th Separate Motorised Rifle Brigade of the 14th Army Corps, and the 61<sup>st</sup> Separate Marines Brigade of the Northern Fleet. Ukrainians claim that the 11<sup>th</sup> Army Corps lost its combat capability due to heavy losses in the Kharkiv Oblast.

Additional forces include two rifle battalions of the mobilisational reserve of the DPR's 1<sup>st</sup> Army Corps.

Despite the degradation in their capacity to fight, early in the week, Russians conducted ground attacks on the Ukrainian position near [Hoptivka](#), but were pushed back. They also conduct artillery strikes from across the border on Ukrainian military and civilian targets. We do not expect Russians to change their behaviour. Whereas ground assault may become more or less sporadic, artillery strikes are the permanent feature of the combat environment in border regions.

Last week, Ukrainians conducted a precision missile strike on Svatove, reportedly seriously wounding the commander of the 144th Motor Rifle Division of the 20th Combined Arms Army, Major General Oleg Tsokov.



## Donetsk Oblast Direction

Military operations in the Donetsk Oblast can be divided into two areas. In the north, building up on their successes following the Kharkiv Offensive, Ukrainians continue to push through Russian defences north of the Siverskyi Donets River, between Lozove-Yampil. However, farther south, the Ukrainian posture is defensive as Russians continue attempting to capture Bakhmut.

Last week, the UAF managed to break Russian positions east of Oskil, which resulted in a withdrawal of their forces, probably as far away as [Ridkodub](#), some 25 km east of Oskil. If the tempo of advance is maintained, Ukrainians can reach Ivanivka and the Zherebets River next week, effectively cutting one of the Russian withdrawal routes from the Lyman area. The second withdrawal route is between [Zarichne and Yampil](#), so a UAF attack on this axis would envelop Russian forces north of Lyman. There are also a couple of crossings over the [3-Y Stavok](#), but their status is unknown.

Despite the progress made last week, it is clear that the UAF is not committing all forces available. The Kharkiv Offensive started with only two brigades, but the total number of

formations employed as the attack progressed reached 7-8. The front is now much wider and Kyiv needs to manage its forces carefully not to overstretch its presence and become vulnerable to Russian counterattacks and raids.

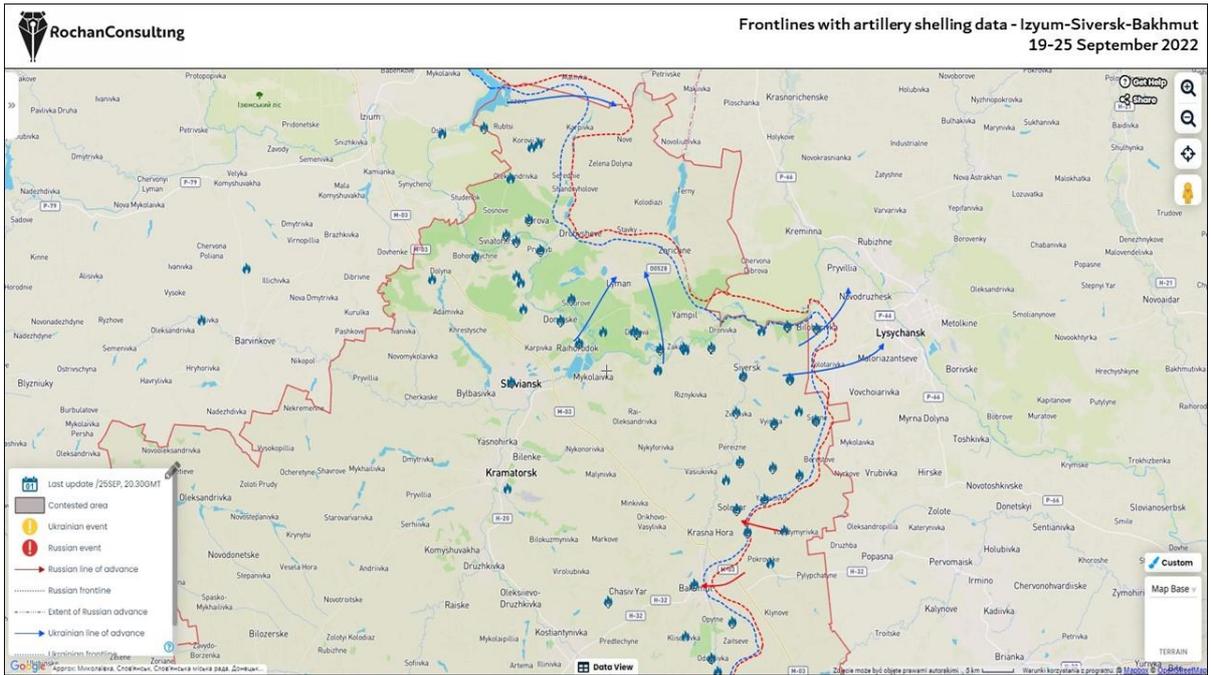
Moving away from the Lyman area, further east, the situation near [Bilohorivka](#) (Luhansk Oblast) is unclear. The village is reportedly relentlessly shelled by Russian artillery, possibly to prevent the UAF from approaching Kreminna and cutting off the only available road out of Lyman.

Last week, Ukrainian sources claimed that Lysychansk was on the verge of being retaken, although this did not happen eventually. In fact, there is very little information about the fighting status in this area so our understanding of the situation in this area is incomplete.

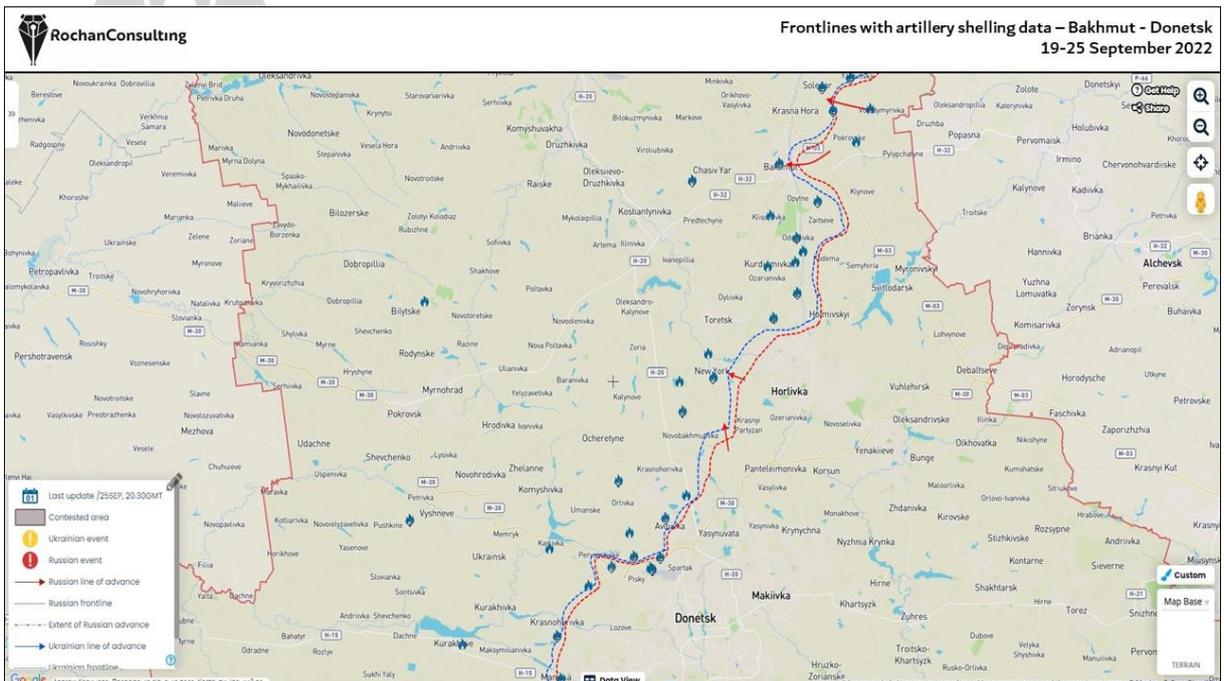
The situation in Bakhmut worsened for Kyiv. Ukrainian forces destroyed a bridge that cuts [through Bakhmut](#), around one kilometre west of the last known Wagner position in the Bakhmut Factory of Sparkling Wines. We are still trying to verify information about Wagner's position, although the bridge's destruction is confirmed. Thus, Russians may control the city's territories east of the river. This is a significant change compared to previous weeks when Russian assaults were regularly pushed back by Ukrainian forces in the city.

A few weeks ago, Ukrainians reportedly deployed several infantry battalions into the city or its vicinity, so Kyiv may have some reserves left ready to deploy.

The remaining parts of the Donetsk Oblast present a relatively stable situation. Russians could not extend their gains near the city of Donetsk, although some sources, both Ukrainian and Russian, claimed that Kyiv was conducting counterattacks northwest of Donetsk. We have not been able to verify these claims, neither about attacks in general nor about any territorial gains in particular.



**Frontlines with artillery shelling data - Izyum-Siversk-Bakhmut, 19-25 September 2022**



**Frontlines with artillery shelling data - Donetsk Oblast - 19-25 September 2022**

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## Zaporizhzhia direction

For yet another week in a row, this direction remains the most stable.

We saw no frontline changes in the Zaporizhzhia Oblast, although artillery exchanges occur daily along the entire frontline. Positional battles continued as well, however, they brought about no actual changes.

Russian sources continue to report about the build-up of Ukrainian military formations in the oblast, presumably in anticipation of an offensive.

(Pro)Russian social media accounts stated last week that Ukraine had deployed the 65th Mechanised Brigade, 128th Mountain Assault Brigade, 102nd Territorial Defence Brigade, and 9th Operational National Guard Regiment into the oblast. The 44th Artillery Brigade supports these ground units.

Russian presence has been significantly strengthened. According to the Ukrainian think-tank Centre for Defence Strategies (CDS), Moscow has deployed the following formations into the oblast:

- Two battalions each from the 35<sup>th</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Motor Rifle Brigades. They are soon to be joined by elements from the 55<sup>th</sup> Motorised Rifle Brigade ([Mariupol](#));
- Three BTGs from the 150<sup>th</sup> Motorised Rifle Division ([Maryanka-Velyka Novosilka](#));
- Two BTGs of the 5th Separate Tank Brigade and 37th Separate Motorised Rifle Brigade ([Volnovakha](#));
- Two BTGs from the 127<sup>th</sup> Motorised Rifle Brigade from the 5th Combined Arms Army (?)
- Elements from the 78th special forces regiment "Akhmat-North";
- Elements from the 71st and 291st Motorised Rifle Regiments of the 42nd Motorised Rifle Division of the 58th Combined Arms Army;
- Two BTGs from the 6th Motorised Rifle Division of the 3rd Army Corps (Novopavlivka?). This area is expected to be strengthened with a BTG from the 54th Motorised Rifle Regiment;

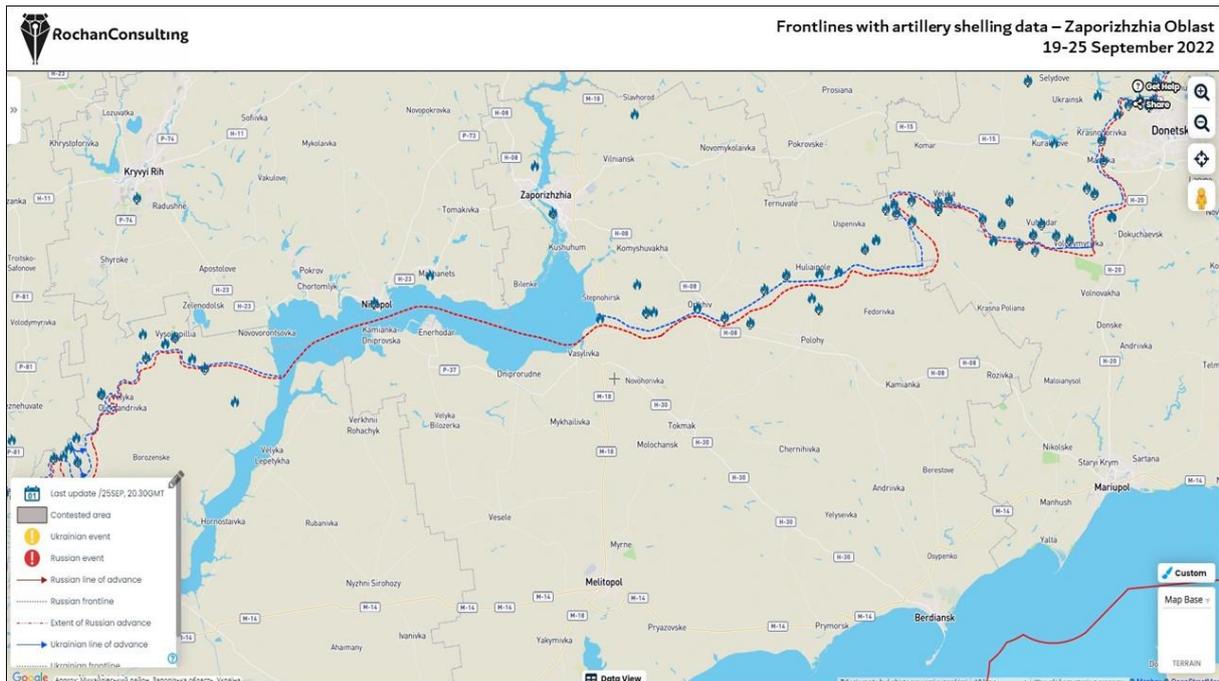
- A BTG from the 54th Motorized Rifle Regiment of the 6th Motorized Rifle Division ([Novomayorske](#));
- A BTG from the 10th tank regiment of the 6th Motorized Rifle Division ([Olhinka](#));

The goal of the 150th Motorized Rifle Division could be to outflank the units of the Ukrainian Defense Forces defending [Vuhledar](#) and break through to [Kurakhove](#) from the south and east. Elements from the 29th or 36th Combined Arms Armies probably set up the first defensive line in [Kopani and Novoprokopivka](#).

According to CDS, other elements deployed into the region include the 22nd separate SOF brigade, 810th Separate Marines Brigade, three tactical groups of the "operational component" of the Russian Guard, a combined group of the 1st Army Corps of the so-called "People's Militia of DPR" (mainly from units of the artillery brigade "Kalmius" in almost full strength and at least two rifle battalions of the mobilisation reserve of the 1st Army Corps), up to two PMC assault battalions (including PMC "Redut").

Altogether, CDS assesses some 18-20 BTGs are deployed in the region.

We are unsure about the existing structure of Russian manoeuvre units. We are uncertain to what extent Russians continue to operate as BTGs. Given the losses Russian units have incurred in this war so far, we assess that many battalions were degraded to company-level formations.



**Frontlines with artillery shelling data – Zaporizhzhia, 19-25 September 2022**

## Kherson direction

# RochanConsulting

There appeared to be no frontline changes in the Kherson Oblast last week.

The situation in this direction remains stable, with minimal prospects of changing. Whereas we continually expect Ukrainians to inch closer toward Kherson and the Dnieper River, the UAF's offensive potential in this front part is largely exhausted.

This does not preclude the possibility that the UAF can retake some villages in the Kherson Oblast, but we do not expect a large-scale, successful push that would ultimately push Russians over the river.

Last week, we stated that the tables had turned and that Ukraine now had the initiative. This has now changed with Russian mobilised reinforcements to be deployed over the next couple of weeks. All Russian forces have to do in the Kherson Oblast is to hold their positions north of the river, which would allow expanding their territorial control once reservists are deployed.

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On the contrary, from Kyiv's perspective, the ideal scenario would be to push Russians over the Dnieper before reservists are committed to battle. Resting their defensive lines on the river would significantly hinder Russian operations in southern Ukraine. However, to achieve this objective in such a short time, Ukrainians would need to deploy significant reinforcements to conduct high-tempo operations to dislodge the Russians.

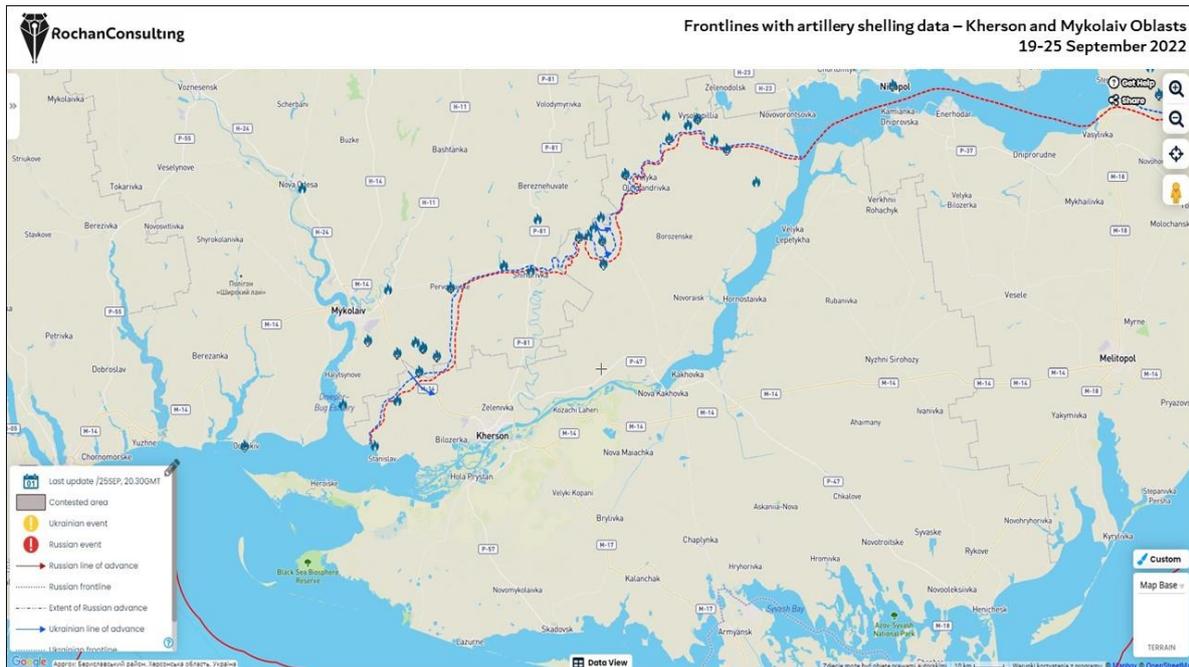
In terms of ground warfare, one of the most significant events last week was a Ukrainian raid that stopped in [Charivne](#). According to Russian sources, the UAF has divided their forces and created small, but mobile groups that are supported by artillery and that can penetrate the frontline and conduct raids deep in Russian territories. There was no follow-up information as to what happened to the group that reached Charivne, so it is challenging to assess Ukrainian success in employing these groups. However, whereas the harassing character of such actions is undeniable, it remains to be seen whether they will impact the operational picture in any way.

Last week, the UAF continued attacks on river crossings, ammunition depots, and C2 points. Ukraine's Southern Operational Command (SOC) claims that all bridges and crossings are under fire control, meaning within the range of their artillery systems. The Nova Khakovka bridge is relentlessly bombed, but Russians either conduct some makeshift repairs or create new crossings nearby.

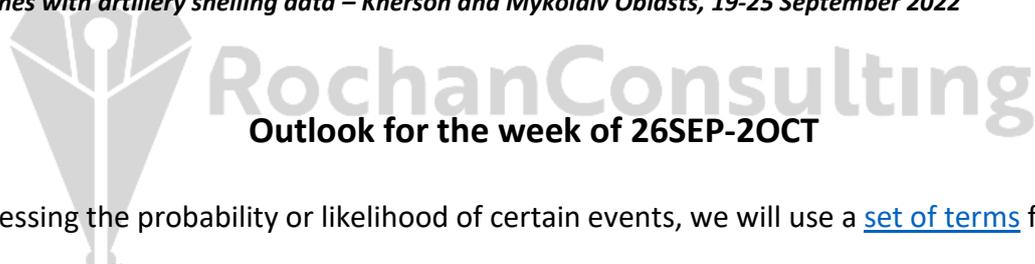
In the meantime, several command posts were also hit, according to the OCS. Most notably, a C2 post of the 7<sup>th</sup> Air Assault Division was struck on Wednesday in Chornobaivka.

On the other hand, Russians started employing Iranian Shahed-136 kamikaze drones, especially in southern Ukraine. Port facilities in [Ochakiv](#) are bombed particularly often. Another target presumably included a Ukrainian Navy Headquarters in Odesa.

Ukrainians deployed air defence assets in various cities across the south. Some drones are indeed shot down, but some land on targets. The OCS has yet to develop a comprehensive strategy to deal with the Shahed-136 threat.



**Frontlines with artillery shelling data – Kherson and Mykolaiv Oblasts, 19-25 September 2022**



## Outlook for the week of 26SEP-2OCT

In assessing the probability or likelihood of certain events, we will use a [set of terms](#) followed by the US Intelligence Community.

<b>Almost no chance</b>	<b>Very unlikely</b>	<b>Unlikely</b>	<b>Roughly even chance</b>	<b>Likely</b>	<b>Very likely</b>	<b>Almost certain(ly)</b>
Remote	Highly improbable	Improbable (improbably)	Roughly even odds	Probable (Probably)	Highly probable	Nearly certain
<b>0-5%</b>	<b>5-20%</b>	<b>20-45%</b>	<b>45-55%</b>	<b>55-80%</b>	<b>80-95%</b>	<b>95-99%</b>

We have decided to introduce more accountability to our forecasts. Therefore, each weekly update will feature an assessment of how correct (or incorrect) our predictions were. Here is what we said last week. Please also remember that while we try to remain as objective as

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possible regarding our performance, the reader will ultimately have to decide how (in)accurate we have been.

## Previous forecasts

"Starting with the **Kharkiv Oblast**, we believe that areas Ukrainians have retaken are now stabilised. We believe Kyiv will likely attempt to push east of the Oskil River, although we are uncertain how organised this effort will be. We do not know whether a new counterattack is being prepared that will seek to push through Russian lines in the northern parts of the Luhansk Oblast." Last week, Ukrainians made limited gains east of [Kupyansk and Dvorichna](#) over the Oskil river. **But we have seen no evidence that a new, large-scale counterattack was in the works.**

"We think there is roughly even chance that Ukrainian forces will capture **Lyman**. However, we believe that Ukrainians will likely make new gains around the city." **Ukrainians made gains around Lyman last week as Russian forces were slowly being pushed towards the Luhansk Oblast. Our sources claimed that Lyman had already been taken, even though this has not been officially confirmed.**

"We think there is roughly even chance that Ukrainians will enter **Lysychansk**. We think it is unlikely that they will enter **Severodonetsk**." **The UAF reportedly entered Lysychansk, although there were no visual confirmations. We were also correct about Severodonetsk.**

"There are no changes regarding **Soldeddar**. Russians and their proxies will likely make minimal gains." **This forecast proved correct.**

"There are no changes regarding **Bakhmut**. We assess that there is a roughly even chance that Russians will make some progress near the city. However, we believe they will likely capture some surrounding settlements." **This forecast was incorrect. Although we were right in saying there was a 50% chance that Russians would make progress in Bakhmut (which they did), surrounding settlements remained in Ukraine's hands.**

"We do not expect major changes in Russian behaviour in the **Zaporizhzhia direction** next week. But given multiple reports that Ukrainians may be preparing an attack in this direction, we assess a roughly even chance it will happen." This forecast proved correct.

"Lastly, the **Kherson Oblast**. It is likely that Ukrainians to make some progress in this area. We believe they will unlikely reach Kherson next week, and the Russians will abandon their positions north of the Dnieper." The situation hardly changed in this direction, but Ukrainians made no real progress.

Final score: 5/7

## Next week's forecast

Everything in war is contingent. Secondly, events are becoming increasingly unpredictable due to mobilisation. Perhaps we will see no changes in the Russian posture over the next few weeks. But once reservists start appearing, **we will probably stop making forecasts for a few weeks**. We are entering uncharted territories, and events will become increasingly unpredictable.

Starting with the **Kharkiv Oblast**, the Ukrainian posture will likely become increasingly offensive, and the UAF will likely capture more settlements east of the Oskil River.

We think it is likely that **Lyman** will be confirmed as captured and that the UAF will gain more territories around the city (and will move towards Zarichne-Kreminna).

We think there is roughly even chance that Ukrainians will enter **Lysychansk**. We think it is unlikely that they will enter **Severodonetsk**.

There are no changes regarding **Soldedar**. Russians and their proxies will likely make minimal gains.

We assess that Russians will make incremental gains in **Bakhmut**. There is roughly even chance they will extend their territorial controls in areas between Horlivka and Bakhmut.

We do not expect major changes in areas around Donetsk. However, there is roughly even chance that Ukrainians will recapture some territories.

We do not expect major changes in Russian behaviour in the **Zaporizhzhia direction** next week. But given multiple reports that Ukrainians may be preparing an attack in this direction, we assess a roughly even chance it will happen.

Lastly, the **Kherson Oblast**. It is likely that Ukrainians to make some progress in this area. We believe they will unlikely reach Kherson next week, and the Russians will abandon their positions north of the Dnieper.

