The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia Says 'Nearing' Full Control of Ukraine's Luhansk

By AFP

May 20, 2022



Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu. **Moskva News Agency**

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said on Friday Moscow was nearing full control of Ukraine's eastern separatist region of Luhansk.

Russian President Vladimir Putin sent troops to Ukraine on Feb. 24 under the guise of protecting the Russian-speaking population there, especially in the breakaway regions of Luhansk and Donetsk.

Russia recognized the independence of the separatist republics shortly before launching the military action.

"The liberation of the Luhansk People's Republic is nearing completion," Shoigu said at a televised ministry meeting.

Separately, Shoigu said 1,908 Ukrainian soldiers had surrendered at the besieged Azovstal

steelworks in the port city of Mariupol.

Russia claimed control of the strategic city in southeastern Ukraine in late April, keeping the remaining Ukrainian forces blocked inside the giant steel plant.

Shoigu said Ukrainian authorities in early May attempted to retake the strategic Snake Island in the Black Sea that was seized by Russian troops early in the conflict.

"This questionable action turned out to be a complete failure," Shoigu said.

Snake Island became a symbol of Ukrainian resistance after a radio exchange went viral at the start of the conflict, in which Ukrainian soldiers used an expletive in rebuffing a demand by the Russian warship Moskva to surrender.

The Moskva sank in the Black Sea in mid-April following what Moscow said was an explosion on board. Ukraine and the U.S. said the warship was hit with missiles.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2022/05/20/russia-says-nearing-full-control-of-ukraines-luhansk-a77747