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Russia Controls Most of Eastern Ukraine's Severodonetsk – Governor

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Severodonetsk, Ukraine. **Alexander Reka / TASS**

Russian forces have seized 70% of the industrial city of Severodonetsk in a push to control eastern Ukraine's Donbas region, the regional governor said Wednesday.

"The Russians control 70% of Severodonetsk," Luhansk governor Sergiy Gaiday wrote on Telegram. He said that some Ukrainian troops had retreated to "more favorable" positions while others continued fighting inside the city.

Evacuations and humanitarian deliveries to and from Severodonetsk had been suspended, he added.

Gaiday said earlier Tuesday that 90% of the city had been destroyed after weeks of relentless shelling.

A Luhansk police official cited by Russia's state-run news agency RIA Novosti over the weekend said Severodonetsk was "now surrounded" and Ukrainian troops could no longer

leave the city.

Severodonetsk, which had a pre-war population of around 100,000, is one of several important urban hubs that lie on Russia's path to capturing the entire Luhansk region and east Ukraine's de-facto administrative center, Kramatorsk. Together, Luhansk and Donetsk comprise Ukraine's larger Donbas region, which many believe that Russian President Vladimir Putin seeks to hold as a key objective after Russia's failed assault on Kyiv.

Last week, Gaiday estimated that Russia controlled "around 95%" of the Luhansk region.

"We're waiting for Western weapons and preparing for de-occupation," Gaiday wrote Wednesday after U.S. President Joe Biden announced the transfer of longer-range high-precision missile systems to Ukraine.

AFP contributed reporting.

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