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In Photos: Life in the Bakhmut 'Vortex' as Savage Fighting Continues

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The battle for the Ukrainian city of Bakhmut in the country's eastern Donetsk region has become the bloodiest of the war so far and has even prompted comparisons to the great battles of World War I for its trench warfare, high casualty numbers and largely static frontline. While the medium-sized city has been shelled by Russian forces since May, the Russian military only mounted a full assault on Bakhmut in August, with generals directing ever-greater resources to the front in an attempt to give the Russians a much-needed victory before the year's end. The situation has further deteriorated since November, with Russian troops who were freed up by the withdrawal from Kherson being redeployed to the front in Donbas, alongside thousands of newly recruited soldiers from Russia's mobilization drive this fall. Despite the months of fighting, thousands of civilians eke out an existence in Bakhmut, sleeping in basement bomb shelters and foraging forage firewood to keep warm.



Anatolii Stepanov / AFP

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