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Russia Making Slow Progress in ‘Fortress’ Bakhmut — Wagner Boss Prigozhin

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TASS

Russian troops attacking the Ukrainian town of Bakhmut are bogged down because of a tenacious Ukrainian resistance and an extensive network of defensive fortifications, the head of Russia’s mercenary company Wagner said Tuesday.

There is a “fortress in every house” in Bakhmut, Yevgeny Prigozhin said in an interview with state news agency RIA Novosti.

“The lads are fighting over every house, sometimes for more than a day. Sometimes it takes them weeks to capture a house. They take one house, they take another.”

Wagner soldiers — including inmates recruited from Russian prisoners — have been leading a Russian assault on Bakhmut that has lasted almost eight months and intensified in early winter as Russian military commanders apparently came under pressure to deliver a

battlefield victory.

Related article: Explainer: Why is Russia Trying So Hard to Capture the Small Ukrainian City of Bakhmut?

Russia's determination to take Bakhmut, a city of little strategic significance, has puzzled many military experts, who question Moscow's huge commitment of men and resources.

Bakhmut has been badly damaged in the bitter fighting and fewer than 10,000 civilians from a pre-war population of about 70,000 are believed to remain.

Prigozhin offered little reassurance that Bakhmut could be seized any time soon.

"They took one house this morning and broke through the defenses. But behind that house were new defensive lines — and not just one," he told RIA Novosti.

"And how many such defensive lines are there in Artemovsk [Bakhmut]? If we say 500 we probably won't be making a mistake. Every 10 meters there is a defensive line," he said.

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