

Russia's Wagner Claims Capture of Ukraine Village Near Bakhmut

By [AFP](#)

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Wagner Group head Yevgeny Prigozhin attending the funeral of a slain Wagner fighter at the Beloostrovskoye cemetery outside St. Petersburg in late December. **AP / TASS**

The head of Russia's Wagner Group on Friday said that his fighters had captured a village near Ukraine's eastern city of Bakhmut, the scene of fierce fighting between the two sides for months.

Berkhivka "is entirely under our control," Yevgeny Prigozhin said in a statement released by his press service on the one-year anniversary of Moscow's offensive in Ukraine.

AFP could not immediately verify the claim.

Moscow has been fighting to take Bakhmut for months, with the battle exposing tensions between the Wagner paramilitary group and Russia's army, though the Kremlin denies any rift.

The embattled city has turned into a key political and symbolic prize and the fight for it is now the longest-running battle of Russia's year-long offensive.

Although capturing Bakhmut would be a major win for Moscow, analysts say its capture would be mainly symbolic as the city holds little strategic value.

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