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Russian Defense Ministry Says 'Thwarted' Ukrainian Counteroffensive

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Russian defense minister Sergei Shoigu. **Russian Defense Ministry**

Russia claimed Tuesday that it had repelled Kyiv's long-anticipated counteroffensive in eastern Ukraine after three days of fighting, Russian state-run media reported.

"For three days, the Ukrainian regime has launched a long-promised offensive at different points along the frontlines," Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said.

"The offensive attempts were thwarted, the enemy was stopped, Russian soldiers and officers showed courage and heroism in the battles," he said, while claiming Kyiv had suffered "significant and incomparable casualties."

According to Shoigu, in three days of fighting, Ukraine lost "3,715 servicemen, 52 tanks, 207 armored vehicles, 134 cars, five planes and two helicopters."

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Seventy-one Russian servicemen were said to have been killed in repelling the attacks, while another 210 were wounded — a rare admission of losses by Russia.

Shoigu also blamed Kyiv for Tuesday's destruction of the strategic Kakhovka dam in southern Ukraine, saying: “Having failed to achieve success in the offensive, Kyiv intends to transfer units from Kherson to the area of offensive operations, thereby weakening positions in Kherson.”

Kyiv did not immediately respond to the Russian Defense Ministry’s claims.

Ukraine has blamed Russian forces for the dam's destruction.

On Saturday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky declared that his country’s military was ready to launch a counteroffensive against Russian forces.

“We strongly believe that we will succeed,” Zelensky said in an interview with The Wall Street Journal.

However, the Ukrainian leader has not given an exact date for when the counteroffensive would start.

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