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Ukraine Says Launched Promised Counteroffensive Against Russia – WaPo

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Ukrainian servicemen fire a BM-21 Grad multiple launch rocket system towards Russian troops near the frontline town of Bakhmut. **Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty / Serhii Nuzhnenko via REUTERS**

Ukraine's forces have launched their long-awaited counteroffensive to reclaim territory occupied by Russia, The Washington Post reported Thursday, citing four Ukrainian soldiers and officers.

The Ukrainian military opened a "crucial phase" in the war with intensified attacks on the frontline in southeast Ukraine on Wednesday, the members were cited as saying.

Kyiv's counterattack aims both to restore its territorial integrity and "preserve Western support," the publication said.

Officials including President Volodymyr Zelensky have signaled in recent days that they have amassed enough Western military aid to mount a major counteroffensive against Russian forces without giving an exact date for its start.

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Zelensky declared Saturday 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.

Russia's military claimed this week that it had repelled Ukraine's long-promised offensive in three days of fighting. Kyiv has not responded to the claim.

Following the full-scale invasion of its neighbor last year, the Kremlin claimed to have annexed eastern and southern Ukraine's Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions in a move that was widely condemned by the international community.

However, large parts of these areas — including two of the regional capitals — are not currently under the control of Russian forces.

Heavy fighting continues in all four of the Ukrainian regions partially occupied by Russia.

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