Russia Says Beat Back Ukraine Near Villages Claimed By Kyiv

By [AFP](#)

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Yelena Afonina / TASS

Russia said Monday it had repelled Ukrainian attacks around several villages in the war-battered southeast of the country, contradicting earlier claims from Kyiv's forces that they had retaken the settlements.

The contradictory reports from Kyiv and Moscow come as analysts have said that Ukraine has launched a long-awaited counteroffensive with Western weapons in an aim to claw back territory occupied by Russian forces.

The Russian Defense Ministry said Monday that Russian forces had fought back three Ukrainian assaults near Velyka Novosilka, a town in the eastern Donetsk region where Kyiv has claimed gains.

"Decisive actions of defending units — artillery fire and heavy flamethrower systems of the

Vostok grouping — repelled three enemy attacks," it said in a statement.

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The Defense Ministry also said that Russian troops had fought off Ukrainian attacks just west of Velyka Novosilka, around the nearby village of Levadne in the neighboring southern region of Zaporizhzhia.

Ukraine has over recent days claimed to have advanced deeper into Russian-controlled territory around Velyka Novosilka, announcing the capture of three villages over the weekend.

After months of building expectations, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky confirmed on Saturday that a counteroffensive against Russian forces had begun.

On Sunday, Kyiv claimed to have captured three villages beyond Velyka Novosilka — Neskuchne, Blahodatne and Makarivka.

Ukraine's Defense Ministry earlier Monday said its troops had retaken another village in the same area, while Ukrainian forces said they had captured Novodarivka, a village in the southern region of Zaporizhzhia near Levadne earlier this month.

The various claims by Moscow and Kyiv could not be verified independently but analysts have said that Ukraine has likely made recent advances near Velyka Novosilka.

"Ukrainian forces made visually verified advances in western Donetsk Oblast and western Zaporizhia Oblast, which Russian sources confirmed but sought to downplay," the U.S.-based Institute for the Study of War said in an analytical note Monday.

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