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Ukraine Concedes Troops Advancing 'Not So Quickly'

By AFP

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Ukrainian servicemen operate at a recaptured position near Klyshchiivka village, south of Bakhmut, Donetsk region. **Anatolii Stepanov / AFP**

Ukraine acknowledged Friday its troops were not making speedy headway in their counteroffensive to recapture territory in the east and south of the country from Russian forces.

"Today it's advancing not so quickly," the head of the presidency Andriy Yermak told reporters, conceding that battles were difficult.

"If we are going to see that something is going wrong, we'll say so. No one is going to embellish," he said.

Western allies were not however putting pressure on Kyiv to advance faster, said Yermak, who is seen as President Volodymyr Zelensky's right-hand man.

"There is no pressure, just a question: how can we help you further?" he said.

"It's clear that our successes on the battlefield influence everything that is happening," he said.

At a meeting with Ukrainian armed forces leadership on Friday, "the president informed the military that this is important," Yermak said.

Kyiv would not negotiate with Russia until Moscow withdrew its troops from Ukraine, Yermak also insisted.

"Even thinking about these talks is only possible after Russian troops leave our territory," he said.

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