The Moscow Times
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Ukraine Military Says Village Near Bakhmut 'Liberated'

By AFP

September 14, 2023



General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine

Ukraine's armed forces Friday said the village of Andriivka near the key frontline town of Bakhmut had been "liberated," a day after claims it had been retaken were dubbed premature.

On Thursday, Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Malyar backtracked on an announcement that Kyiv had wrested control of the eastern village from Russian forces, after Ukrainian troops on the ground said fighting was still ongoing.

But Ukraine's General Staff said Friday that the village was back under Ukrainian control.

"In the direction of Bakhmut, the enemy does not stop trying to break through the defense of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the area of Bohdanivka," it said on Facebook.

"In turn, the defense forces had partial success in the Klishchiivka area during offensive

operations. In the course of the assault, they liberated Andriivka in Donetsk region, inflicted significant losses on the enemy in terms of manpower and equipment, and entrenched at the occupied frontiers," it added.

Andriivka is around 14 kilometers (nine miles) south of Bakhmut, with an estimated pre-war population of fewer than 100 people.

Kyiv began pushing back against Moscow's forces in the south and east of the country in June after building up Western weapons and recruiting assault battalions.

Malyar had announced Thursday that the village of Andriivka was "ours," saying Kyiv's forces were "moving forward in the Bakhmut sector."

The announcement was then rejected by Ukrainian soldiers fighting there.

"The statement about the capture of Andriivka is premature," the 3rd Separate Assault Brigade, fighting in the Donetsk region, said on social media.

"There are serious and important battles in the areas of Klishchivka and Andriivka," it said, calling the statement "unfair."

Malyar, in an updated post, said she was "clarifying" the situation, blaming the announcement on a "communication breakdown."

On Friday, Malyar said on Telegram that the General Staff had now "officially confirmed that our troops captured Andriivka yesterday as a result of fighting."

"It was difficult and the situation changed very dynamically several times yesterday," she added.

Bakhmut, a town that was once home to around 70,000 people, was captured by Russian forces in May following one of the longest and bloodiest battles of Russia's invasion.

Ukrainian forces, however, almost immediately began pushing back around the northern and southern flanks of the city and have been posting incremental gains.

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