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Shoigu Says 'Confident' in Situation in Ukraine

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Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu. **kremlin.ru**

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu told President Vladimir Putin on Monday that the military had improved its position in Ukraine despite Ukrainian counteroffensives throughout the year.

Speaking in a televised meeting, Shoigu said Ukraine had suffered heavy losses after beginning their June counteroffensive, with Russian forces destroying hundreds of tanks and over 1,500 armored vehicles.

He also said the military has built deeply layered "active" defenses along the entire front line, preventing Ukrainian forces from advancing.

"In general, the situation is stable. I'm confident that our troops are acting very, very professionally, showing heroism in many areas," Shoigu said. "It is certain that they will not only hold their positions but continue to implement the plans we have outlined."

During its summer counteroffensive, the Ukrainian military said that Russian forces were spreading false information about Ukrainian losses as part of a psychological campaign to demoralize Ukrainians and mislead the Russian population.

Russian forces have also reportedly seen heavy losses, with drafted soldiers dying at particularly high rates.

The meeting was also attended by Federal Security Service Director Alexander Bortnikov, Foreign Intelligence Service Director Sergei Naryshkin, National Guard Director Viktor Zolotov, and Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov.

Speaking about the situation in Gaza, Ryabkov said that the Russian government was working to get Russians out of both Israel and the Palestinian territories and that "the threat of this whole conflict getting out of control is high."

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