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Ukraine Reports Fewer Russian Attacks on Avdiivka as Moscow's Losses Mount

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Militia from the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic on the frontline near Avdiivka. **Alessandro Guerra / EPA / TASS**

Russian forces have scaled back their offensive on the frontline city of Avdiivka, the Ukrainian military said Wednesday as analysts documented heavy Russian losses in its major push for the Donetsk region stronghold.

Ukraine's General Staff of the Armed Forces has reported at least 15 or more daily Russian attacks on Avdiivka since Russian troops closed in on the industrial city last week.

The general staff said Ukrainian soldiers fought off 10 Russian attacks on Tuesday and five on Wednesday.

Avdiivka's military administration chief Vitaly Barabash said the lull indicates that Russia's army has "run out of breath" and "the situation has stabilized."

"But it's not over yet," Barabash told Ukrainian television. "Shelling and small arms fire

continue around the clock, so the situation remains very hot."

"I can say for sure that this is the largest offensive that has ever been launched against Avdiivka since the war began in 2014."

Russia has lost five times more military equipment than Ukraine in its week-long assault on Avdiivka, the Russian investigative outlet Agentstvo said Tuesday, citing the open-source project Oryx.

President Vladimir Putin on Sunday said "active defense" operations were taking place in Avdiivka in what has been interpreted as an attempt to temper expectations of major Russian gains.

The British defense ministry's daily intelligence assessment said Russia's push for Avdiivka — "the most significant offensive operation" since January — was marred by heavy equipment and personnel losses.

Russian forces' attempt to seize the initiative in Avdiivka suggests that the Kremlin is "confident" in its defenses against the Ukrainian counteroffensive in the south, according to The New York Times.

Avdiivka is a heavily fortified city defended by 10,000 Ukrainian troops who threaten logistical lines in the Russian-controlled Donetsk region.

The industrial town had a pre-war population of around 31,000. An estimated 2,000 remain.

Putin moved to annex Ukraine's Donetsk region last fall — following widely criticized referendums — despite Russian forces failing to control the entire territory, including Avdiivka.

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