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Russia Claims Capture of Village in Ukraine's Donetsk Region

By AFP

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A Russian serviceman near Bakhmut, eastern Ukraine. **Russian Defense Ministry / TASS**

Russia said on Wednesday its armed forces had taken control of Khromove, a small village on the outskirts of Bakhmut in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region.

Moscow's troops seized Bakhmut in May after one of the bloodiest battles of its 21-month military offensive.

"Troops, supported by aviation and artillery fire, improved their positions along the front line and liberated the village of Artemovskoye," Russia's Defense Ministry said in a daily briefing, referring to the village by a previous version of its name.

AFP was unable to verify the claim.

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According to satellite images, the village of Khromove, located on the western edge of Bakhmut, consisted of a few streets and several dozen houses before the Russian offensive.

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu had said the capture of Bakhmut would open up the battlefield and allow Moscow's troops to mount further significant advances.

But Russia's forces have not pressed on from the city, which independent military analysts said had little significant strategic importance.

Bakhmut and its suburbs were completely destroyed by months of relentless artillery fire and urban combat.

Yevgeny Prigozhin, whose Wagner mercenaries led Russia's assault on Bakhmut, said 20,000 of his fighters were killed in that campaign.

Russia declared the annexation of Donetsk last year — along with three other areas of eastern and southern Ukraine — despite not having full control over the region.

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