

Ukraine Says Fight in Eastern Kharkiv Region 'Complicated'

By [AFP](#)

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Residential buildings destroyed by Russian shelling in the frontline village of Petropavlivka, near Kupiansk, in Kharkiv region. **Sergei Bobok / AFP**

Ukraine said Tuesday its military was outgunned in the eastern Kharkiv region, where Russian forces have been pushing for months to capture the regional hub of Kupiansk.

Russian troops initially captured large swathes of the eastern Kharkiv region early in the invasion but Kyiv's forces pushed them back in a lightning offensive around one year ago.

"The situation is complicated. We have to fight in conditions of superiority of the enemy both in weapons and in the number of personnel," said Oleksandr Syrsky, the head of Ukraine's ground forces.

But Syrsky said Ukrainian forces were adapting to the situation on the front and ultimately holding the line.

The Russian Defense Ministry said Tuesday it had repelled eight Ukrainian attacks around Kupiansk with artillery support.

He said that Russian forces comprising units recruited from prisons were also pushing further south around the war-battered city of Bakhmut, taken by Moscow in the summer.

The Institute for the Study of War, a U.S.-based military observation group, said in a recent explanatory note that Ukrainian forces were having to ration ammunition due to shortages.

"A combination of artillery ammunition shortages and delays in the provision of Western security assistance is likely causing Ukrainian forces to husband materiel and may delay future Ukrainian counteroffensive operations," it said.

Separately, Ukraine said overnight its air defense systems had downed two Russian drones over a western region while Moscow said it had destroyed at least three Ukrainian drones over the border region of Bryansk.

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