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Russia Says Captured Small Village in East Ukraine

By AFP

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Giatsint-S self-propelled gun of the Zapad group of forces. **Russian Defence Ministry / TASS**

Russia's Defense Ministry said Thursday its forces had captured a small village in eastern Ukraine, as both sides struggle to make significant battlefield gains after two years of fighting.

"In the Donetsk direction, as a result of successful actions of Southern Group troop units, the settlement of Vesele in the Donetsk People's Republic was liberated," Russia's Defense Ministry said.

AFP was unable to verify the Defense Ministry's claims.

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The village of Vesele lies 20 kilometers (12 miles) northeast of Bakhmut, the industrial city

that was flattened by months of artillery shelling and urban combat earlier in the conflict.

Vesele had a pre-conflict population of around 100.

Moscow claimed to have annexed Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region — which it calls the "Donetsk People's Republic" — in 2022, despite not having full control over the territory.

Millions of Ukrainians fled the east and south of the country after Russia launched its full-scale military offensive in February 2022.

Neither side has made any significant territorial gains for more than a year as the conflict has ground to a stalemate.

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