

Ukraine Says Russia Attacking With 'Heavy Fire' in South

By [AFP](#)

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Russian servicemen on the front line in Ukraine. **Alexander Polegenko / TASS**

Ukrainian troops are facing "heavy fire" from advancing Russian forces in the southern Zaporizhzhia region after Moscow last week made its most significant territorial gain in nine months, Ukrainian military officials said Monday.

Russian forces are back on the offensive across eastern and southern Ukraine and have forced Kyiv into a hasty withdrawal from the town of Avdiivka in the eastern Donetsk region, securing their first major gain since the capture of Bakhmut in May 2023.

Senior Ukrainian commander Oleksandr Tarnavsky said Monday that Russia was now launching multiple attacks near the village of Robotyne, one of the few places where Kyiv had managed to regain ground during last year's counteroffensive.

Russia was trying to advance with "small assault groups with the involvement of several units

of armored vehicles," he said on the messaging app Telegram.

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"These offensive attempts are being halted, the enemy is being eliminated in the outskirts of Robotyne," Tarnavsky, who commands Ukraine's forces in the area, added.

Earlier unconfirmed reports from pro-war Russian military bloggers had suggested that Moscow's forces were at the southern outskirts of the village.

"The situation is dynamic here, the enemy is inflicting heavy fire," Tarnavsky's spokesperson Dmytro Lykhoviy said earlier Monday on state TV.

Like many settlements across eastern Ukraine, Robotyne has been mostly destroyed by months of heavy artillery fire.

Lykhoviy said Russian troops were "regrouping" after Ukraine withdrew from Avdiivka and "will probably transfer units to other sectors."

Russian President Vladimir Putin hailed the capture of Avdiivka as an "important victory" for his military, just days before the second anniversary of Russia's invasion on February 24.

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