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TV Tower in Kharkiv Struck as Russia Says Captured Village

By Sergey Bobok for AFP and Victoria Lukovenko for AFP

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Social media

A major television tower was toppled in Ukraine's war-battered city of Kharkiv on Monday after bombardments from Russia forces, as the country's head of military intelligence warned the situation on the front lines would likely deteriorate in coming weeks.

An AFP journalist in Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, saw the red-and-white spire of the 240-meter structure toppled after local officials reported a barrage by Russian forces.

Images circulating social media showed plumes of gray smoke billowing around the large antenna and its upper half careening to the ground following an apparent strike.

"The occupiers attacked a television infrastructure facility in Kharkiv," the region's governor Oleh Syniehubov announced on social media.

"The employees were in hiding during the alarm. There were no casualties," he added, but television broadcasting had been disrupted.

Embed:

> ⛔ A major TV tower in the Ukrainian city of Kharkiv was broken apart on Monday after officials reported a Russian strike on the city.
>
> Video: stranaua / Telegram pic.twitter.com/K0A3bdYEZb
>
> — The Moscow Times (@MoscowTimes) April 22, 2024

The tower was last hit in the early days of the invasion, when Russian ground forces nearly captured the city, and Ukrainian officials have warned that Moscow is likely to push hard to gain more ground, likely including near Kharkiv, in the coming weeks.

Kharkiv has been shelled persistently since and the TV tower was struck in March 2022.

The apparent attack came hours after the head of Ukraine's military intelligence said the situation was worsening at the front, and Russia announced the capture of Novomykhailivka, a village around 20 kilometers away from Vuhledar, which Russian forces have been trying to capture.

'Difficult situation'

Moscow's forces have steadily been gaining ground in the Donetsk region, which the Kremlin has claimed as part of Russia.

The claim of Novomykhailivka's capture from the Russian Defense Ministry came just after the head of Ukrainian military intelligence warned that fighting for his country's forces in the east would likely get much harder in the coming weeks.

Outgunned and outmanned Ukrainian forces have for months struggled to hold back Russian troops, who are expected to soon step up their offensive.

"In our opinion, a rather difficult situation awaits us in the near future," said Kyrylo Budanov, the head of Ukrainian military intelligence.

"But there will be problems starting from mid-May. I am talking about the front in particular," he said in an interview with the BBC's Ukrainian service.

But he added that while the situation would probably worsen for Ukrainian forces, the fighting would not become "catastrophic."

"Armageddon will not happen," he said.

'Rethink strategy'

President Volodymyr Zelensky has warned that Moscow would try to score battlefield victories before May 9 — a patriotic Russian holiday celebrating the defeat of Nazi Germany — "regardless of its losses."

Kyiv has for months struggled with a growing ammunition shortage but the situation is expected to improve in the coming weeks, with the United States House of Representatives approving Saturday a $61 billion package of military aid after months of deadlock.

A senior aide to the Ukrainian leader, Mykhailo Podolyak, said that the U.S. package had given the war-exhausted country a morale boost and that he hoped the support would soon bring results on the front.

"New supplies of ammunition and equipment will enable the Armed Forces to repel the Russian offensive, and give our allies time to rethink their strategy," he said on social media.

Ukrainian officials in eastern and southern Ukraine said Monday that Russian attacks had wounded several people.

In the southern city of Kherson, officials said Russian shelling wounded two people while the interior ministry said a man was wounded in Selydove, a town in the Donetsk region.

Russia had announced that it made gains towards the town of Chasiv Yar, a key battleground now, also in the Donetsk region.

Taking control of Chasiv Yar's strategic heights would open the road for Russia to other important towns in the Donbas region of eastern Ukraine.

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