

# Russia Launches New Ground Offensive Against Northeastern Ukraine

By [AFP](#)

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Ukraine's Kharkiv region after a Russian attack. **National Police of Ukraine**

Russian forces launched a surprise ground offensive into Ukraine's northeastern Kharkiv region on Friday, as Ukrainian authorities told civilians along border areas to flee amid heavy fighting.

"Russia launched a new wave of counteroffensive actions... Ukraine met them there with our troops, brigades, and artillery," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said in a briefing. "Now there is a fierce battle underway."

A high-ranking Ukrainian military official said Russia had advanced into Ukraine by one kilometer and was aiming to "create a buffer zone" to prevent attacks into Russian territory.

If Moscow's advances are confirmed, it would represent the Russian military's largest land operation in the region since sending thousands of troops across the border in February 2022.

Ukraine's Defense Ministry said its forces were pushing back against Russia's incursion but that "fighting of varying intensity" was ongoing, adding that the Russian military launched aerial strikes into an area near the Kharkiv region border.

According to the ministry, Friday's offensive was launched around 5:00 am local time, with Russian forces trying to break through Ukraine's lines under the cover of armored vehicles.

There has been no comment from the Russian Defense Ministry so far, but pro-war Russian military bloggers have reported active fighting in the area.

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