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Russia's August Advances in Ukraine Biggest Since October 2022

By AFP

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In this photo taken from a video released by the Russian Defense Ministry on Aug. 22, a Russian soldier fires from D-30 howitzer towards Ukrainian positions in an undisclosed location in Ukraine. **Russian Defense Ministry Press Service via AP**

Russia advanced on 477 square kilometers (184 square miles) of Ukrainian territory in August, Moscow's biggest monthly increase since October 2022, according to data supplied by the Institute for the Study of War and analyzed by AFP.

The Ukrainian army, for its part, made rapid gains in early August in Russia after a surprise incursion into the border region of Kursk, gaining more than 1,100 square kilometers in two weeks.

But this new front has been solidifying to between 1,150 and 1,300 square kilometers of advances over the past 15 days, according to the data on claimed and confirmed troop movements.

In August, Russian troops advanced 15 square kilometers per day in Ukraine, mainly in the eastern region of Donetsk.

Most of the gains were toward the logistical hub of Pokrovsk, and as of late Sunday the army had come to within less than seven kilometers (4.4 miles) of the city.

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The last time that Moscow took as much territory in a month was in October 2022, in response to a major Ukrainian counteroffensive around the northeastern city of Kharkiv, at a time when the front line was much more mobile.

Since the beginning of 2024, Moscow has resumed its push into Ukrainian territory, gaining 1,730 square kilometers, three times more than in 2023, when its gains were wiped out by Ukrainian counteroffensives.

But in recent months Kyiv's troops have struggled to counterattack on their own territory.

Ukrainian forces have won more territory than they lost to the Russians on only eight days so far in 2024, and then usually only several square kilometers.

Russia occupied 66,266 square kilometers of Ukrainian territory as of Sept. 1.

Along with the Crimea Peninsula, annexed by Russia in 2014, and zones of eastern Ukraine already under control of pro-Russian separatists before the 2022 invasion, the advances confirmed or claimed by Moscow cover 18% of Ukraine's 2013 size.

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