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Ukraine Cancels Pokrovsk Evacuation Train, Citing Security Fears

By AFP

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People board an evacuation train in Pokrovsk in the eastern Donetsk region, on Aug. 2, 2024. **ROMAN PILIPEY / AFP**

Ukraine on Thursday canceled a train that was set to ferry people fleeing the city of Pokrovsk in eastern Donetsk amid fears of a possible Russian attack.

Moscow's forces have been advancing on the key logistics hub for months and are within 10 kilometers (six miles) of the city, where officials are urging the 27,000 people still there to leave.

"Due to a complication of the security situation, boarding of evacuation trains from Pokrovsk station (Donetsk region) has been canceled," the administration of the adjacent city of Myrnohrad said in a social media post Thursday.

It said the train for people evacuating the Donetsk region would instead depart from the city

of Pavlohrad, 100 kilometers to the west, near the city of Dnipro.

Ukraine's state rail operator Ukrzaliznytsya said departure points for special daily evacuation trains would vary from now on citing new "safety protocols."

Ordinary trains were continuing to run to and from Pokrovsk, it added.

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Ukrainian officials are cautious about gathering large numbers of civilians in places like train stations in areas close to the frontlines.

A Russian strike on Kramatorsk train station in the Donetsk region in April 2022 killed more than 60 civilians, including children, and wounded more than 160 fleeing the Russian advance.

Some 4,000 civilians had gathered there last April to board evacuation trains when the station was struck by a Tochka-U missile, which experts said was armed with cluster munitions.

Ukrzaliznytsya said in the future people would be asked to gather at "certain safe points" and advised those to flee to contact a local hotline for more details.

Around 13,000 people have fled Pokrovsk over the last month, Donetsk Governor Vadym Filashkin told state television on Wednesday.

The city had a population of around 60,000 before Russia invaded in 2022.

Russian forces have pushed towards the city throughout 2024, advancing several kilometers as Ukraine struggles with manpower and ammunition shortages.

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