The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia Says Captured Key Eastern Ukrainian Town of Kurakhove

By AFP

January 06, 2025



Alexander Polegenko / TASS

Russia said Monday that its forces had captured the "important logistics hub" of Kurakhove in eastern Ukraine in what would be a key advance after months of steady gains in the area.

Moscow has been pressing hard in eastern Ukraine, and the claimed capture of the industrial town is a major boost for its forces just two weeks before U.S. President-elect Donald Trump takes office, having vowed to strike a peace deal.

Both sides are looking to secure a better position on the battlefield before Trump's Jan. 20 inauguration. Moscow said Kyiv had launched its own counteroffensive on Russian territory over the weekend.

Russian units "have fully liberated the town of Kurakhove — the biggest settlement in southwestern Donbas," the Russian Defense Ministry said on Telegram.

It called the town "an important logistics hub" and said its capture would allow Russian forces to seize the rest of the Donetsk region "at an accelerated pace."

The claim came after Russia said Kyiv had launched a new "counterattack" in its Kursk border region, five months after Ukraine's forces initially seized swathes of the area in a shock cross-border incursion.

"In the Kursk region we are confidently inflicting losses," the commander of Ukraine's land forces, Mykhailo Drapaty, told media including AFP on Monday, without giving details.

He declined to comment on the eastern town of Kurakhove, however, saying this was "not my area of expertise."

Kurakhove, which had a pre-conflict population of around 22,000 people, is located next to a reservoir and is home to a power station.

In a visit close to the town last November, AFP journalists saw abandoned houses, shattered by bombs, and empty supermarket shelves as residents fled in the face of Russia's grinding advance and daily bomb attacks.

The Russian Defense Ministry said Monday that Ukrainian forces had turned Kurakhove into "a powerful fortified area with a developed network of long-standing firing positions and underground communications."

It said Ukraine's supply operations in the wider area would now be "significantly hampered."

Ukrainian forces did not confirm the claim, saying only that Russia was "conducting assault operations in the urban area of Kurakhove."

Ukraine's General Staff said on Facebook that its forces "repelled 27 attacks in the Kurakhove sector."

Russia's Defense Ministry also claimed Monday to have captured the village of Dachenske, south of Pokrovsk, another major city in the Donetsk region that its troops are targeting.

Kursk 'buffer zone'

The capture of Kurakhove comes at a critical juncture in the conflict.

Trump has promised to bring a swift end to nearly three years of fighting, without proposing any concrete proposals for a ceasefire or peace deal.

French President Emmanuel Macron said in a speech Monday that Ukraine needed to have "realistic discussions on territorial issues," for the first time clearly urging Kyiv to consider territorial concessions.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Trump would be crucial to any end of the conflict, in an interview with U.S. podcaster Lex Fridman released Sunday.

"Trump and I will come to an agreement and... offer strong security guarantees, together with

Europe, and then we can talk to the Russians," Zelensky said, according to the published translation of the interview held in Kyiv over the New Year.

Trump "has enough power to pressure him, to pressure Putin," Zelensky said.

Zelensky said Monday that Ukraine was "maintaining a buffer zone" in the Kursk region, where Russia has sent "strong units" including North Koreans, meaning Moscow cannot deploy them to other regions such as Donetsk.

On Monday, Russia's Defense Ministry said its troops "continue to defeat Ukrainian army units on the territory of the Kursk region" and had prevented an attempted "breakthrough" near the village of Berdin.

The extent of the operation or whether Ukraine had secured territorial gains were not clear.

Kyiv seized dozens of villages in the Kursk region shortly after its incursion started on Aug. 6, 2024, but its advances stalled after Moscow rushed reinforcements to the area, including thousands of troops from its ally North Korea.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2025/01/06/russia-says-captured-key-eastern-ukrainian-town-of-kurakhove-a87513