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Chasiv Yar Falls to Russian Forces After Nearly a Year of Intense Fighting

By Moscow Times Reporter

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The key eastern Ukrainian stronghold of Chasiv Yar has fallen to advancing Russian forces, five Ukrainian and European military and government sources have independently confirmed to The Moscow Times.

While neither the Ukrainian nor Russian militaries have confirmed the city's capture, The Moscow Times' sources on the ground report that Ukrainian forces have been pushed to the outskirts, marking a significant shift in the battle that has raged since April 2024.

Chasiv Yar, a strategically important hilltop city in the Donetsk region, had been under relentless Russian assault for nearly a year.

Despite being well-entrenched, Ukrainian forces faced mounting challenges in holding their positions as manpower shortages and dwindling Western military aid took a toll. By late 2024,

Russian forces had gained the upper hand, systematically tightening their grip on the city.

One Ukrainian military source confirmed the city's fall, saying: "Yes, that's how it is."

"All supply roads in and out of the city are being heavily bombed," another source said, referring to intensified Russian strikes on the western approaches to Chasiv Yar.

Russian forces launched their first direct assault on the city in April 2024. By April 21, they had captured the nearby town of Bohdanivka, strengthening their position for the push into Chasiv Yar.

By mid-October, Moscow's troops had breached Ukrainian defensive lines and advanced into southeastern parts of the city, establishing footholds along its canal network.

Russian forces reached the city center by mid-November, escalating the intensity of urban combat. Despite determined Ukrainian counterattacks, Russian troops continued to make gains, particularly in the north, by late December. Heavy fighting in the west of the city was reported on Monday.

Chasiv Yar was the last major Ukrainian defensive position standing between Russian forces and the larger urban centers of Kostyantynivka, Kramatorsk and Sloviansk — key targets for Moscow in its broader war effort to control all of the Donetsk region.

"The Russians are in the city center; any Ukrainians still in the city are the last holdouts on the outskirts," a third source citing multiple military contacts said of the situation on the ground.

All five of The Moscow Times' sources spoke on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the matter.

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By mid-November 2024, only 304 residents remained in the besieged city out of a pre-war population of 12,000. Evacuations have been increasingly difficult to carry out amid relentless shelling, and those still in Chasiv Yar rely on scarce humanitarian aid while facing a collapse in basic services.

The future of Kyiv's defenses in eastern Ukraine remains uncertain as Russia continues to advance.

Meanwhile, Western support for Ukraine is at a critical juncture, with U.S. President Donald Trump — who has criticized the amount of Washington's aid to Kyiv — pledging to negotiate an end to the nearly three-year full-scale war within his first 100 days in office.

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