

Russian Chief of Staff Visits Troops in East Ukraine

By [AFP](#)

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Gerasimov awards state decorations during the visit to a Russian command post in east Ukraine.

Russian Defense Ministry/TASS

Russian Chief of Staff Valery Gerasimov visited troops fighting in east Ukraine as Russian forces advance in the area, the Defense Ministry said Saturday.

"General Valery Gerasimov...visited a command post" in the Donetsk region, it [said](#) in a statement.

Russia is seeking to win control of Chasiv Yar and Pokrovsk, two important frontline strongholds for the Ukrainian army.

Further to the north, Russia earlier on Saturday claimed the capture of Novolyubivka in the Luhansk region which is now largely under its control.

The Ukrainian army controls just a handful of localities in Luhansk, whose annexation

Moscow claimed in 2022, the year it began its full-scale offensive on Ukraine.

Gerasimov's visit to the front comes as Washington and Moscow engage in a rapprochement, targeting a swift end to a conflict that has cost hundreds of thousands of lives.

Russia meanwhile hopes to obtain the lifting of American sanctions which have battered its economy.

But a possible return to the Russian market of American — and Western — companies will occur "on a case-by-case basis," Russian Minister of Economic Development Maxim Reshetnikov said on Saturday.

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"The Russian market has been and remains open," Reshetnikov said as he indicated Moscow wants to maintain a "balance" between "taking into account consumer interests and maintaining market plurality in order to guarantee competition and keep prices under control."

Since 2022 brought an avalanche of Western sanctions, "the Russian economy has changed. Therefore, the requirements of foreign companies regarding location, investments and technologies will be very different," Reshetnikov warned.

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