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Russia Says Retook 2 More Villages in Border Region

By AFP

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The Russian town of Sudzha after it was retaken by Russian forces. **Russian Defence Ministry/TASS**

Russia said Saturday it had retaken two more villages from Ukrainian forces in its Kursk border region where it has launched an offensive to wrest back seized territory.

Moscow has pushed this week to retake a large part of the land that Ukraine originally captured in its western Kursk region.

The Russian Defense Ministry said troops took control over the villages of Zaoleshenka and Rubanshchina — north and west of the town of Sudzha, the main town that Moscow reclaimed this week.

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Russian President Vladimir Putin a day earlier called on embattled Ukrainian troops in Kursk

to "surrender," while his U.S. counterpart Donald Trump urged the Kremlin to spare their lives.

"If they lay down their arms and surrender, they will be guaranteed life and dignified treatment," Putin said Friday.

Ukrainian leader Volodymyr Zelensky denied Saturday any "encirclement" of his troops by Moscow's forces in Russia's Kursk region, a day after U.S. President Donald Trump made the claim.

"There is no encirclement of our troops," Zelensky said on social media, adding: "Our troops continue to hold back Russian and North Korean groupings in the Kursk region."

The Ukrainian army on Saturday published a map on social media that showed its troops had retreated west toward the border.

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