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Russia Says It Seized 2 Villages in Central Ukraine

By AFP

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Ukraine Emergencies Ministry.

Russia on Saturday said it had captured two villages in Ukraine, including one in the central Dnipropetrovsk region, marking a fresh advance into an area largely spared seizures of land since Moscow's 2022 invasion.

Overnight strikes launched by both sides meanwhile claimed six lives — four in central Ukraine and two in western Russia, according to officials in both countries.

The Russian army said its forces had "liberated the settlement of Maliyevka" in Dnipropetrovsk, weeks after it seized the first village in the region — not one of the Ukrainian regions annexed by Russia.

In a separate message on Saturday, Moscow said it had "liberated the settlement of Zeleny Gai" in Donetsk region on the border with Dnipropetrovsk, adding that it was an important

stronghold used by Ukraine to protect the region.

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Supported by swarms of drones, Russia gains new settlements almost daily, but they are normally reduced to rubble and emptied of inhabitants after months of fighting.

The summer offensive comes despite a call from the United States to end the violence and peace talks in Istanbul, which so far have yielded no breakthroughs.

Further Russian advances could harm Ukraine's economy and energy supplies as Dnipropetrovsk and Donetsk, which has been occupied since 2014, are part of Ukraine's mining heartland, particularly for coal that powers the electricity grid.

Ukrainian authorities have already been ordering civilians with children to flee a front line that is creeping closer.

Deeper Russian advances could mean more attacks on one of Ukraine's largest cities, Dnipro, though Russian troops are around 200 kilometres (120 miles) away.

Dnipropetrovsk is not one of the five Ukrainian regions — Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Crimea — that Moscow has publicly claimed as Russian territory.

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