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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Forces Breach Ukrainian Defenses in Drive Toward Pokrovsk

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A Russian soldier near the front line in eastern Ukraine. **Alexei Konovalov/TASS**

Russian troops have pierced a small but important section of the front line in eastern Ukraine's Donetsk region, positioning themselves for a possible encirclement of the nearby city of Pokrovsk, military analysts said on Monday.

"The situation is quite chaotic. Having found gaps in the defenses, the enemy is infiltrating deep, trying to quickly entrench and amass forces for further advances," the Ukrainian open-source intelligence group Deep State wrote in a post on Telegram.

Ukraine's military said on Monday that Russian troops were "using their advantage in numbers" to push through with small groups and that additional forces had been deployed to "identify and destroy enemy sabotage groups."

Analysts say Russian forces have seized at least nine settlements near the city of Dobropillia, about 22 kilometers (13.6 miles) north of Pokrovsk, and are advancing from the north, east and south using small infantry units and drone surveillance to stretch outmanned Ukrainian

defenses.

Beyond its strategic location, Pokrovsk is a key transportation and logistics hub linking Donetsk and Kramatorsk to Ukraine's central Dnipropetrovsk region. The city, home to Ukraine's only coking coal mine, had supplied 90% of the country's steelmaking needs before shutting down in January.

Fewer than 7,000 civilians remain in the city, down from a pre-war population of 60,000.

Embed:

> A concerning update from @Deepstate_UA showing further Russian advances in between Dobropillia and Druzhkivka.https://t.co/P31VHHBd5l https://t.co/poPp1gjzFd pic.twitter.com/RkioO66mGm
>
> — Rob Lee (@RALee85) August 11, 2025

While some have suggested the gains near Dobropilla could eventually lead to a major breakthrough, including the capture of Pokrovsk, others caution against overstating the recent Russian advance.

The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) said it was "premature" to call the gains operationally significant, though Russian forces "very likely seek to mature their tactical advances into an operational-level breakthrough in the coming days."

The U.S.-based think tank noted a similar maneuver came after Russia's capture of Avdiivka in early 2024, adding that "the next several days will likely be critical for Ukraine's ability to prevent accelerated Russian gains north and northwest of Pokrovsk."

Michael Kofman, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, previously said that Ukrainian troops are making Russia pay a steep price despite incremental advances.

"Given the character of the fight, territory changing hands is a lagging indicator for what's happening," Kofman wrote late last month. "'Gradually then suddenly' transitions are possible."

ISW suggested Moscow may be pushing its offensive toward Dobropillia ahead of Friday's U.S.-Russia summit in Alaska to portray its control over occupied Ukrainian territories as inevitable, potentially pressuring the West to urge Kyiv to accept Russian peace terms.

Related article: 'We Could Lose It in 60 Days': Russia Closes In on Ukrainian Stronghold of Pokrovsk

On Tuesday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky acknowledged Russian advances near

Dobropilla and Pokrovsk, saying that they showed “the Russian army is not preparing to end the war.”

“They are making movements that indicate preparations for new offensive operations. In such circumstances, it is important that the unity of the world is not threatened,” Zelensky wrote on X. “As long as they continue the war and occupation, all of us together must maintain our pressure.”

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