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Russia Makes Steady Gains in Ukraine in October – Analysis

By AFP

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The city of Dobropillia in the Pokrovsk district of the Donetsk region of Ukraine. **@pokrovsk_news**

The Russian army made steady gains in Ukraine in October as it focused attacks on the eastern Donetsk region, an AFP analysis of data from the U.S.-based Institute for the Study of War (ISW) showed.

The region has suffered the most intense fighting of the almost four-year war and Ukraine is now scrambling to keep hold of the important city of Pokrovsk.

According to the analysis of data from ISW, which works with the Critical Threats Project, Russia took 461 square kilometers (286 square miles) from Ukraine in the month.

That pace was in line with the average monthly gain this year, down from a surge in July when Russia seized 634 square kilometers.

Russia now controls 81% of the Donetsk region, which it claims to have annexed and is

fighting to secure full control over.

Moscow has demanded that Ukraine withdraw its troops from there, as well as from the Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions, as a precondition to peace talks, Kyiv has dismissed that as unacceptable.

Several rounds of negotiations have failed to break the deadlock over how to end the conflict.

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In total, Russia controls, or claims to control, 19.2% of Ukraine, including the Crimean peninsula which it annexed in 2014 and parts of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions that were seized by Moscow-backed separatists before Russia launched its full-scale invasion in 2022.

The important logistics hub of Pokrovsk, which Moscow has been trying to capture for more than a year, has come under renewed pressure in recent weeks.

Ukraine's 7th Air Assault brigade said Monday that its "operation of clearing Pokrovsk from occupiers is ongoing," with Kyiv sending special forces to the city over the weekend.

It also said Russian forces were near the outskirts of the neighboring city Myrnohrad, which has also been under heavy Russian attack for over a year.

"The city's defense has already been replenished with additional forces," the brigade said.

The ISW data also showed Russia took 150 square kilometers of the Dnipropetrovsk region, west of Donetsk, over the month.

It is not one of the five Ukrainian regions, including Crimea, that Moscow claims as its own.

Russia controlled 27.7% of Ukraine in March 2022, at the height of its invasion. Kyiv then ousted Russian troops from large swathes of eastern and southern areas.

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