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Zelensky Visits Troops Near Threatened Pokrovsk

By AFP

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@V_Zelenskiy_official

President Volodymyr Zelensky on Tuesday said he visited troops near the embattled city of Pokrovsk, as Ukraine scrambles to defend the logistics hub that Russia has tried to capture for months.

The fortress city in Ukraine's Donetsk region lies on a major supply route for the Ukrainian army and has been in Moscow's sights for over a year.

"I met with our warriors at the command post of the 1st Corps of the National Guard of Ukraine 'Azov,' which is conducting a defensive operation in the Dobropillia sector," Zelensky said on social media, referring to a town some 20 kilometers (12 miles) from Pokrovsk.

"This is our country, this is our East, and we will certainly do our utmost to keep it Ukrainian," he added.

Hundreds of Russian soldiers have infiltrated the logistics hub, Kyiv said earlier this week.

Others are closing in on its outskirts in a pincer-shaped movement, according to battlefield maps published by the U.S.-based Institute for the Study of War.

Related article: Gerasimov Says Russia Encircled Pokrovsk and Kupiansk. Experts and Pro-War Bloggers Doubt It.

The Russian army on Tuesday said it was "tightening the encirclement around the enemy" in Pokrovsk and claimed to have captured a few dozen buildings in the town.

Ukraine at the weekend deployed special forces to bolster the city's defences.

The capture of Pokrovsk would provide a major propaganda boost for the Kremlin, which has rebuffed US calls to halt its nearly-four year invasion and instead pushed forward with its ground assault.

The city, home to 60,000 people before the war, is now a largely deserted wasteland devastated by fighting.

Initially founded by far-right militants, the Azov Corps went on to win a hero status in Ukraine, particularly during the siege of Mariupol in 2022. It now recruits people beyond ultranationalist groups.

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