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Russia Says Captured Siversk in Ukraine's Donetsk Region

By AFP

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Putin and Colonel Denis Pirogov at a televised meeting in the Kremlin on Thursday. **kremlin.ru**

Russia said Thursday its troops had seized full control of Siversk, a Ukrainian city in the eastern Donetsk region where fighting has intensified in recent weeks, though Ukraine denied the key settlement had been lost.

The Russian army has been slowly but steadily grinding through eastern Ukraine and taking ground from outnumbered and outgunned Ukrainian forces, with some of the fiercest battles taking place in Donetsk.

Russia's chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov said Moscow's forces had captured Siversk in a report to President Vladimir Putin during a televised meeting with army commanders.

The Russian army in Ukraine is "confidently advancing along the entire front," Putin said,

thanking the commanders and soldiers "for their combat work."

Putin said last month his troops were advancing on Siversk, home to around 11,000 residents before the war, claiming that the Russian offensive was "practically impossible to hold back."

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The Ukrainian army's eastern command denied Russian claims it had taken Siversk, saying that it "remains under the control of the Armed Forces of Ukraine."

"The enemy is trying to infiltrate Siversk in small groups, taking advantage of unfavourable weather conditions but most of these units are being destroyed on the approaches," it added in a Facebook post.

Siversk is located about 30 kilometers (18 miles) east of Kramatorsk and Sloviansk, the last two major cities still under Ukrainian control in the Donbas — an industrial and mining region in Moscow's sights.

Moscow earlier this month said it had captured Pokrovsk, a former road and rail hub also in Donetsk, but Kyiv claims fighting in the city is still ongoing.

Putin has said that Moscow is ready to fight on to seize the rest of the land it claims in eastern Ukraine if Kyiv does not give it up as part of a peace deal.

Eastern Ukraine has been ravaged since Russia launched its assault in February 2022, with tens of thousands of people killed and millions forced to flee their homes.

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