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Russian Army Makes Biggest Territorial Gains in 2025 Since First Year of Full-Scale Invasion

By AFP

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Russian soldiers march during an award ceremony in the Nizhny Novgorod region. **Yaroslav Gunin / TASS**

Russia made its largest territorial gains in Ukraine last year since the early months of the full-scale invasion in 2022, according to an AFP analysis.

The Russian military captured more than 5,600 square kilometers (2,160 square miles) of Ukrainian territory in 2025 — about 0.94% of the country — based on data from the U.S.-based Institute for the Study of War.

That figure includes areas that both Ukraine and independent analysts have confirmed as being under Russian control, as well as territory claimed by Moscow.

Russia's gains last year exceed those made in 2023 and 2024 combined, though they remain

far below the more than 60,000 square kilometers seized in early 2022.

The largest monthly advance in 2025 came in November, when Russian forces captured around 701 square kilometers. Their advance slowed in December to 244 square kilometers, the smallest monthly gain since March.

Ukraine faced mounting pressure throughout the year from sustained Russian bombardment and ground offensives, gradually ceding territory as its forces grappled with manpower and ammunition shortages.

Russia currently occupies just under one-fifth of Ukraine and has demanded that Kyiv withdraw its forces from the eastern Donbas region as a condition for peace.

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