

Ukraine Dismisses Russia's Latest Claimed Territorial Advances as 'An Illusion'

By [Reuters](#)

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A Ukrainian artilleryman sets up Starlink satellite internet system near the front line in the eastern Donetsk region. **Reuters**

Ukraine on Saturday rejected Russia's claim to have captured more than 1,800 square kilometers (695 square miles) of Ukrainian territory and nearly 100 settlements, including the eastern town of Dobropillia, since the beginning of September.

On Friday, the chief of Russia's General Staff, Valery Gerasimov, told President Vladimir Putin that Russian forces had captured 92 Ukrainian settlements and made significant territorial gains since last month.

Ukraine's General Staff spokesman, Andriy Kovaliov, dismissed the claims.

"In fact, through their active operations, the Ukrainian Defense Forces have liberated more

territory since the beginning of the fall than the enemy has managed to capture," he said in an emailed statement.

"The Russian military leadership continues to create an illusion of major victories for its political leadership and domestic audience," Kovaliov added.

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Russia's advances along the front line have slowed this year. Still, its forces have been bearing down on the so-called "fortress belt" cities of Sloviansk and Kramatorsk, the capture of which would bring Russia closer to its goal of seizing the entire Donetsk region.

Kovaliov also rejected Gerasimov's claims that Russian troops had reached the outskirts of Kramatorsk and were advancing in the suburbs of Sloviansk.

He said Dobropillia, southwest of the two cities, remained under Ukrainian control despite sustained Russian attacks.

Reuters could not independently verify the battlefield claims.

With many front lines largely static across a deadly "kill zone," both sides have intensified their air campaigns in recent months.

Russia fired hundreds of ballistic missiles over the summer and early fall, and it is widely expected to target critical infrastructure, including heating and power sites, into the winter.

Ukraine, which has a far smaller missile arsenal, has launched hundreds of long-range drone attacks on Russian oil refineries, ships and commercial sites.

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