

## Russian forces continue attacks on Pokrovsk, Kurakhove, other cities.



As Friday's British Defence Intelligence map of the battlefield situation in Ukraine, above, indicates, the war in eastern Ukraine continued last week, as it has for several months, with the Russian forces attacking westward toward the city of Kupiansk in the eastern portion of Kharkiv region; toward Chasiv Yar, a small city about 10 kilometers west of Bakhmut which the Russians took last year after a prolonged siege; and toward Pokrovsk, a city with a pre-war population of 60,000 about 60 kilometers west of Avdiivka, which the Russians took in February.

But as the General Staff of the Ukrainian Armed Forces reported in its daily updates on the war, last week the Russian forces also continued to attack at a number of other points – toward Kharkiv from territory they hold north of the city; toward Lyman about 30 kilometers southeast of Izium that, if taken, would provide a pathway toward the cities of Sloviansk and Kramatorsk; toward Siversk about 15 kilometers southeast of Lyman and 20 kilometers north of Bakhmut; toward Kramatorsk about 25 kilometers northwest of Chasiv Yar; toward Toretsk about 20 kilometers south of Chasiv Yar; toward Kurakhove about 25 kilometers west of Donetsk city; toward Vremivka about 30 kilometers southwest of Kurakhove; in the Orikhiv sector southeast of Zaporizhzhia; and toward the area in Kherson region in southern Ukraine where the Ukrainian forces hold territory on the east bank of the Dniro River.

In its daily updates covering the seven days last week from Sunday through Saturday, the General Staff reported a total of 1,116 Russian attacks at various points along the contact line between the forces. In the previous seven days from Sept. 23 through Oct. 5, the General Staff reported a total of 1109 Russian attacks. The number of attacks each day last week varied from 99 on Oct. 6 to 186 on Oct. 12 and averaged 159 each

day. As has been the case for the last several weeks, the Russian forces launched many more attacks last week against the Ukrainian forces defending Pokrovsk (237) and Kurakhove (228) than against those defending any of the other cities in eastern Ukraine. The Ukrainian forces defending some of the other cities were also the targets of many Russian attacks – 145 toward Lyman, 131 toward Kupiansk, and 89 toward Toretsk. But clearly, based on the total number of attacks last week, Pokrovsk and Korakhove were, as they have been for several weeks, the most important targets for the Russian offensive in eastern Ukraine. That they are is understandable. Both are located at junctions of rail lines and major highways and, if taken, would provide pathways to other important cities still held by Ukrainian forces. Taking Pokrovsk would open a pathway northward to Kostiantynivka, Kramatorsk, and Sloviansk to the north. And taking Kurakhove, about 30 kilometers south of Pokrovsk, would open a pathway toward Zaporizhzhia.

Friday's British Defence Intelligence update provided a good summary of the current situation in eastern Ukraine: "The Avdiivka-Pokrovsk sector in eastern Ukraine likely remains the Russian main effort and has seen a high level of Russian operations over the past week. It is highly likely that Russia is continuing to set conditions for an attack on Pokrovsk. Russian forces have partially encircled the outlying town of Selydove and will highly likely attempt to seize the town in the coming weeks. In the same sector, Russia has made gains into the centre of the town of Toretsk. However, progress has been slow and Russian positions in the town are vulnerable to Ukrainian counter-attacks." Subsequently, Russia claimed it had captured Mykhailivka, a village 2 kilometers from Selydove, which is 12 kilometers southeast of Pokrovsk.

On Sunday, the Russian forces attacked the Ukrainian forces 161 times at various points along the contact line and yesterday they conducted a total of 198 attacks at various points along the contact line. 89 of the attacks on Sunday and Monday were conducted against the forces defending Kurakhove and 65 were conducted against the forces defending Pokrovsk. Today the Ukrainian forces still hold both cities. But for how long they'll be able to hold both in the face of Russia's relentless attacks remains uncertain.

David R. Cameron  
October 15, 2024