

As 2025 begins, Russian attacks continue against the cities in the east



Russia's war against Ukraine continued last week, as it has for several months, with the Russian forces attacking toward Kupiansk in Kharkiv region; toward Chasiv Yar, west of Bakhmut which was taken last year after a lengthy 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, as they have for the last several months, toward Kharkiv from territory they hold north of the city; toward Lyman about 30 kilometers southeast of Izyum; 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; toward Orikhiv 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 Dnipro River. They also continued to attack, with the assistance of a substantial number of North Korean troops, the Ukrainian forces that took some of Russia's Kursk region northeast of Sumy in their August incursion.

In its daily updates covering the seven days last week from Sunday, Dec. 29, through Saturday, January 4, the General Staff of the Ukrainian Armed Forces reported a total of 1,150 Russian attacks at various points along the contact line between the forces. In the previous week of Dec. 22-28, the General Staff had reported a total of 1,425 Russian attacks and in the week before that, Dec. 15-21, the General Staff had reported a total of 1,491 attacks. As in recent weeks, in the seven days last week the Russian forces launched more attacks against the Ukrainian forces defending Pokrovsk (301) than

against any other target. But the Ukrainian forces defending Kurakhove, Vremivka, and Lyman were also attacked many times last week, as they had been in the previous two weeks. Kurakhove was attacked 153 times, Vremivka was attacked 119 times, and Lyman was attacked 127 times last week. And the Ukrainian forces holding part of Russia's Kursk region were attacked 165 times last week by Russian and North Korean forces. Judging from the number of attacks, Pokrovsk and Kurakhove clearly remain, as they have been for the past two months, the primary targets for the Russian forces in eastern Ukraine.

On Feb. 21, 2022, President Putin convened Russia's 30-member Security Council to discuss the continuing conflict in the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of eastern Ukraine between Ukrainian forces and Russian forces supporting the self-declared, pro-Russian People's Republics in the two regions. The Council considered the appeals of the leaders of the two Republics that Russia recognize their sovereignty as well as a resolution passed by the Russian Duma on the same subject. After the Security Council agreed that Russia should recognize both, Putin signed executive orders doing that and signed a Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance with each. The next day the Duma and the Federation Council, the two chambers of the Russian legislature, approved laws ratifying the treaties, and Putin signed them and submitted a proposal to the Federation Council that it approve a resolution authorizing the use of the Russian armed forces. The Council did so and at 6 a.m. the next morning, Feb. 24, 2022, Putin went on television and announced a "special military operation" to protect Russian citizens in the two regions, and Russia's war against Ukraine began.

According to his site, on Tuesday evening Putin "heard reports detailing the progress of the special military operation from Chief of the General Staff – First Deputy Defense Minister Valery Gerasimov as well as force grouping commanders. The President thanked everyone for their service and extended his warmest wishes for the upcoming New Year to servicepeople and participants in the special military operation." He of course didn't mention that, as the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense reported, as of that evening Russia had experienced 790,800 "combat losses," meaning troops killed or wounded and removed from battle.

On Feb. 24, the war will enter its fourth year – and will do so with no end in sight.

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