



Wagner Declares Full Capture Of Bakhmut After 224 Days Of Fighting

Description

Head of the Russian private military group Wagner, Yevgeny Prigozhin, has announced Saturday that after months of grinding warfare and heavy casualties, Russia has now taken full control of the strategic city of Bakhmut.

Prigozhin is announcing final victory and that Bakhmut has finally fallen. **“The operation to capture Bakhmut lasted 224 days”** he said in a video posted to Wagner’s Telegram channel. **“Today at noon, Bakhmut was fully captured,”** he declared.



Wagner celebrating victory, via Telegram

Russian state media is also declaring “The key Donbass city of Artyomovsk, known as Bakhmut in

Ukraine, has been **fully liberated by the Russian forces...**".

Prigozhin described that full capture of the city finally came when an area containing high-rise buildings where the final Ukrainian defensive holdout had a presence was conquered.

Western media reports have said they can't verify the claims, but headlines in *Reuters* and the *Associated Press* are widely reporting the Wagner chief's declaration of victory:

*In a video posted on Telegram, Wagner head Yevgeny Prigozhin said the city came under complete Russian control at about midday Saturday. He spoke **flanked by about half a dozen fighters, with ruined buildings in the background and explosions heard in the distance.***

But the mainstream media reports are also highlighting **Ukraine's rejection of claims that the city has finally fallen**. Yet, as the AP underscores, Ukrainian officials have lately admitted the situation was already dire for their forces:

However, after the video appeared, Ukrainian deputy defense minister Hanna Maliar said heavy fighting was continuing.

"The situation is critical," she said. "As of now, our defenders, control certain industrial and infrastructure facilities in this area."

Serhiy Cherevatyi, spokesman for Ukraine's eastern command, told The Associated Press that Prigozhin's claim "is not true. Our units are fighting in Bakhmut."

BREAKING: Russian forces have taken complete control of Artyomovsk-Bakhmut, Donetsk Republic, according to Wagner PMC Chief Prigozhin.

He says Wagner forces will begin leaving the city on May 25, transferring control to the Russian Military. pic.twitter.com/j32FXiKqFs

— Rachel Blevins (@RachBlevins) [May 20, 2023](#)

Starting weeks ago the Russian side said it held at least 90-95% of the city, and that gains were being made a couple hundred meters at a time. Prigozhin said Saturday that by the end of the month Wagner will hand over its captured positions to regular Russian forces.

Interestingly, The New York Times issued the following story at the very moment that Wagner declared victory – a headline that looks to have immediately become obsolete:

As Russia rotated troops outside Bakhmut, Ukraine seized the moment, gaining ground on the city's flanks. Here's how it shifted the momentum in the fiercest battle of the war.

<https://t.co/6UpFLk5xw3>

— The New York Times (@nytimes) [May 20, 2023](#)

Western media has been hyping Ukrainian “gains” of late in Bakhmut, but that doesn’t look to have ultimately been the case. Likely as verification comes of Russia’s control of the key city in Donetsk, there will be a lot of downplaying of the significance by US and Western officials.

It could also make **Zelensky’s G7 trip in Japan more awkward**. He’s expected to meet with President Biden and other G7 leaders on Saturday. Top on the agenda for Zelensky will be requests to expedite fighter jets to Kiev, and it looks like the Western allies are slowly moving in that direction. But the elephant in the room will be **growing doubts even among the most ardent of Kiev’s supporters of whether Ukraine can in fact ‘win’**... no matter how much military equipment they are given by Western backers.

by Tyler Durden

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