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putin's forces dig 45-mile-long 'mega-trench' in Ukraine as attacks in east intensify

Сили путіна риють «мегатраншею» завдовжки 45 миль в Україні, оскільки атаки на сході посилюються

Репортерка New York Post С. Фарберов в статті пише, що російські військові викопали колосальну траншею довжиною 45 миль в окупованій Запорізькій області, явно намагаючись перешкодити контрнаступу ЗСУ. Український центр журналістських розслідувань на нових знімках, зроблених супутником Sentinel-2, виявив зображення рукотворного яру, від околиці села Семенівка до поля за межами села Маринівка. Лінія оборони є майже третиною довжини Запорізької області, яку путін незаконно анексував. Керівниця об'єднаного координаційного пресцентру Сил оборони півдня України Наталія Гуменюк заявила, що гігантська траншея стане їхнім єдиним досягненням війни.

<https://nypost.com/2023/04/10/vladimir-putins-forces-dig-mega-trench-in-ukraine/>

Russian forces have dug a colossal, 45-mile-long trench in Ukraine's occupied Zaporizhzhia region in an apparent bid to thwart Kyiv's looming counteroffensive, new satellite images revealed.

The new images captured by the Sentinel-2 satellite show the oversize trench being built in the southeastern region as Vladimir Putin's troops on Monday stepped up attacks on front-line cities in the east.

The Ukrainian Center for Journalistic Investigations uncovered images of the man-made gully, which runs for over 45 miles from the outskirts of the village of Semenivka to a field outside the village of Marynivka.

According to CJI's estimates, Russia began excavating the mega-trench in September 2022, working from both directions simultaneously. Construction was completed by mid-October.

The defensive line represents almost one-third of the length of the Zaporizhzhya region, which Putin illegally annexed last fall.

The Center for Journalistic Investigations has reported that in anticipation of Kyiv's spring counteroffensive, Putin's soldiers — along with laborers from Central Asia — had spent the winter months digging trenches, building dugouts and installing concrete anti-tank bollards.

Natalya Gumenyuk, spokesperson for Ukraine's southern defense forces, trolled the enemy by saying that the gargantuan trench would stand out as their sole achievement of the war.

"Well, at least they'll score a victory in something. They will have no other victories. Let them be record holders from the trenches," she remarked sarcastically during a recent TV interview.

Meanwhile, in eastern Ukraine, which has seen the bloodiest battles of the war, Russian forces were pummeling Ukrainian positions around the besieged city of Bakhmut and the surrounding area with airstrikes and artillery barrages.

“The enemy switched to so-called scorched earth tactics from Syria. It is destroying buildings and positions with airstrikes and artillery fire,” Col. Gen. Oleksandr Syrskyi, commander of Ukraine’s ground forces, said of Bakhmut.

The head of the Moscow-controlled part of the Donetsk region, Denis Pushilin, claimed that Russian troops now held 75% of the obliterated city, which they have fought for months to capture at a devastating cost in lives on both sides.

Syrskyi said Moscow was sending in special forces and airborne units to encircle Bakhmut, where fighting has been likened to a “meat grinder.”

According to Ukraine’s general staff, Russians had made unsuccessful advances on areas west of Bakhmut and at least 10 towns and villages had come under shelling.

While Ukraine has said it wants to inflict as many casualties as possible on the Russian forces ahead of its counteroffensive, President Volodymyr Zelensky last week acknowledged that if troops risked being surrounded, they could be pulled back.

Ukrainian military analyst Oleh Zhdanov confirmed that enemy forces controlled the center of Bakhmut, with much of their assault now focusing on the railway station.

“There is heavy fighting in the city center and the enemy is gradually moving toward the western outskirts,” Zhdanov said.

Moscow’s military was also targeting the city of Avdiivka, where an airstrike destroyed an apartment building Monday.

“The Russians have turned Avdiivka into a total ruin,” said Pavlo Kyrylenko, Donetsk’s regional governor. “In total, around 1,800 people remain in Avdiivka, all of whom risk their lives every day.”

Russia’s Ministry of Defense boasted Monday its forces destroyed a depot with 70,000 tons of fuel near Zaporizhzhia, along with Ukrainian army warehouses filled with missiles and ammunition.

Kyiv for months has been building up its stocks of weaponry supplied by its Western allies in preparation for a counteroffensive that would force the invaders out of Ukraine after more than 13 months of fighting.

But according to reporting by CNN, Ukraine had been forced to modify some military plans because of a leak of dozens of highly classified Pentagon documents containing information about Ukraine’s weaknesses involving weaponry and air defenses, as well as battlefield casualty data and details about Kyiv’s allies.

Ukrainian presidential aide Mykhailo Podolyak downplayed the report, saying that Kyiv’s strategic plans remained unchanged but that specific tactics were always subject to revision.

The files, some marked “Secret” and “Top Secret,” first began showing up on social media sites in March. The Department of Justice has launched a criminal investigation into the leaks, of which the Pentagon reportedly was not aware until last week.

Some national security experts and US officials say they suspect the leaker could be American, but they do not rule out pro-Russia actors possibly seeking to drive a wedge between Ukraine and its Western allies at this crucial time.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov declined to comment on the leak, but added: “There is in fact a tendency to always blame everything on Russia. It is, in general, a disease.”