

Ukraine military kills a top Russian general

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Ukrainian defense forces killed Russian Maj. Gen. Andrei Sukhovetsky in combat earlier this week, according to Ukrainian officials and Russian media.

Photo by Sergei Malgavko/TASS via Getty Images

The circumstances of the 47-year-old's death were not immediately clear, but the Kremlin-backed Pravda said he was killed "during a special operation in Ukraine."

According to Russia's state-owned TASS news agency, Russian President Vladimir Putin appointed Sukhovetsky deputy commander of the 41st Combined Arms Army of the Central Military District last year. He was also the head of the 7th Airborne Division, had served in Syria and received two commendations for bravery from the Kremlin.

"The fact is, we killed him," Volodymyr Omelyan, Ukraine's former minister of infrastructure who has joined the militia in Kyiv, told Fox News Digital Thursday.

The U.S. could not immediately confirm his death, according to a senior defense official.

But multiple reports cited a post on the Russian VKontakte social media platform attributed to Sergei Chipilev, a member of a Russian military officers' group.

"With great pain, we learned the tragic news of the death of our friend, Major General Andrey Sukhovetsky, on the territory of Ukraine during the special operation," he wrote, according to a translation published by the English-language Russian outlet, Pravda.ru. "We express our deepest condolences to his family." The Kremlin maintains that its military presence in Ukraine is a "special operation" and not an invasion or war.

But Russian troops have attacked targets across the country since entering from the north, east and south last week. Although Ukraine's defenses are out-manned and outgunned, Western intelligence analysts have said they appear to have put up a stiffer resistance than Putin expected.

"If it's true, it's big," Dan Hoffman, a former CIA officer and station chief, said of Sukhovetsky's death.

It could fortify the Ukrainian military's steadfast resolve and represents a tactical victory.

A massive Russian military convoy appears to have stalled outside Kyiv for days, bogged down by logistical problems and Ukraine's military. But Putin's troops have seized Kherson, a port city of almost 300,000. They were also shelling Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, and bombarding defense forces in Mariupol, another waterfront hub.

Russian troops also said they seized the area around Europe's largest nuclear power plant, Zaporizhzhya, near the riverside city of Enerhodar. Reports say the facility is on fire.

A successful campaign across Ukraine's coastal southern region could create a land bridge for Russian forces between the homeland and Crimea, which they have occupied since 2014. It would also cut off Ukraine from maritime shipping.

Russia reported Wednesday morning that it had lost 498 troops. Ukrainian officials claim that number to be as high as 9,000 – but they have not released figures of their own casualties.



Major General Andrei Sukhovetsky, commander of the Novorossiysk guards mountain air assault division of the Russian Airborne Troops, takes part in an exercise at Opuk range in Crimea, March 19, 2021. Sergei Malgavko/TASS

Fox News' Caitlin McFall, Jennifer Griffin, Sarah Rumpf, and The Associated Press contributed to this report.