

# In Photos: Russian Forces Inch Forward in Bakhmut at Terrible Human Cost

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While analysts are divided over Bakhmut's ultimate significance as a military prize, the eastern Ukrainian town has taken on great psychological importance to both sides in the conflict, and vast resources have been poured into emerging victorious from the bloodiest and longest battle of the war so far. NATO may have warned last week that Bakhmut could fall within a matter of days, but Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has vowed to continue to hold the city for "as long as possible" and claimed that Russian forces had lost some 1,100 fighters in and around Bakhmut in the last few days alone. While most of the buildings in the city have now been flattened or lie in ruins, there are still a surprising number of people who continue to call Bakhmut home. Here are some images of everyday life in a town that was once best known for its salt mines and sparkling wines.



**Aris Messinis / AFP**

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