

# Russian Forces Establish Bridgehead Across Frontline River in Eastern Ukraine

By [AFP](#)

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A destroyed railway bridge over the Oskil River in Kupiansk, Kharkiv region. **Roman Pilipey / AFP**

Russian forces have secured a bridgehead on the western bank of the Oskil River in eastern Ukraine's Kharkiv region, a Ukrainian official said Thursday.

The Oskil River serves as the de-facto front line in parts of the region, with Ukrainian troops entrenched on the western bank and Russian forces attempting to push across from the east.

“The enemy is trying to gain a foothold in the town of Dvorichna, which is already on the right bank of the Oskil, and expand the entire bridgehead,” Andrii Besedin, an official in the city of Kupiansk, told state television.

Besedin described the situation as “extremely difficult” and warned that Russian troops could use the bridgehead to outflank Ukrainian positions.

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Besedin added that Russian forces were now just two kilometers (around one mile) from Kupiansk, a strategically important town recaptured by Ukraine during its counteroffensive in late 2022.

“The enemy is constantly trying to carry out assault operations,” he said.

The development comes as Russian forces have made their fastest advances in nearly two years along the front line, posing new challenges for Ukrainian defenses.

A Russian breakthrough in the Kupiansk area could reverse some of the gains Ukraine achieved during its successful 2022 offensive, which dealt a significant blow to Moscow.

Both sides are vying for better battlefield positions ahead of the inauguration of U.S. President-elect Donald Trump on Jan. 20, almost three years after Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

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