



## Avdiivka has fallen - Analysis

**It's no surprise that Avdiivka has fallen. What is interesting is the pace, the how and the why.**

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### Introduction

The fact that Avdiivka has fallen was to be expected. We reported on this a few days ago "[War report: Avdiivka about to fall - newsflash](#)".

In this article, we assess the how, the why and our evaluation of the possible consequences for the further course of the war, as there were new aspects in terms of timing and intensity that had not previously been observed in this conflict.

## Sequence of events

### *Speed*

The first surprising aspect is the speed with which this city fell. In our last war report on February 12, we reported that one reason why Zaluzhny was replaced by Syrskyi was probably that Zelensky wanted to hold this city at least until March 17 in order to deny President Putin the victory over this city for his election campaign. The Ukrainians' strategy was therefore to hold out for another five weeks.

Yesterday, however, General Syrskyi ordered the [withdrawal](#) from Avdiivka. The reason given for this decision was that they wanted to save human lives. This is not at all in keeping with the reputation of Syrskyi, who is nicknamed the "Butcher of Bachmut" because he used up thousands of his soldiers in Bachmut last spring. It can be assumed that he knew exactly which troops were in this town and was aware of their quality and condition. Furthermore, Azov's elite troops were transferred from Kiev to Avdiivka to hold the city.

### *Deterioration of fighting morale*

According to various sources - including [Military Summary](#) - the real reason was not humanitarianism, but the fact that the troops simply refused to go into battle, i.e. disobeying orders.

This is not surprising, as hundreds of videos of Ukrainian troops complaining about the catastrophic supply of weapons, ammunition and even food have been published for weeks. Furthermore, more and more troops who had been at the front for 18 months without ever having been rotated, i.e. without ever having received a furlough, came forward. They demanded that the "Золотая молодёжь" or "golden youth", also known as "мажоры", i.e. the children of the bigwigs and privileged in Ukraine, should be sent to the front. This fact alone shows that the innermost fabric - the fighting morale - of the armed forces is disintegrating.

Added to this is the fact that the disturbing images of forced recruitment in Ukraine, which show people being hunted, are no exceptions, but are probably a more realistic representation of the mood among the Ukrainian population than the Ukrainian authorities would like.

### *Comparison with Bachmut*

Bachmut only fell when the last square meter of the city had been physically conquered. This city was the second major conquest by the Russians after Mariupol. Bachmut fell after bloody fighting that began in the fall of 2022 and

ended on May 20, 2023, with many Russians also killed in the eight months, especially fighters from the Wagner group.

Military Summary estimates that Avdiivka fell when only around 10% of the actual city area had been conquered. The Russians had learned a lot since Bachmut and had proceeded in an extremely intelligent tactical manner, concentrating primarily on blocking the Ukrainians' supply routes, whereby this was already achieved from a distance by cutting off artillery supplies.

The best school for armed forces is war itself. The Russians will definitely apply the tactics they have learned in the future in order to save time, men and material.

### *Air superiority*

Another factor that worked to the advantage of the Russian armed forces was the fact that the air forces could be deployed more frequently, as the Ukrainians' air defenses are becoming less and less effective.

### *Further development*

The capture of Avdiivka is a major victory for Russia, as Avdiivka was the last town in Donetsk to be turned into a fortress by the Ukrainians since 2014. Furthermore, civilians will be able to sleep more peacefully for the first time in nine years, as artillery attacks on the civilian population of Avdiivka, which have been ongoing since 2014, will cease.

The extent to which the towns west of Avdiivka are fortified and therefore require further protracted operations by the Russians cannot be conclusively assessed. However, we are already hearing from Ukrainian troops that the towns west of Avdiivka are poorly prepared.

In my opinion, low morale among the troops is the greatest danger for the Ukrainian armed forces. The soldiers' confidence that the leadership will provide them with weapons, ammunition, food and medical care is the moral basis of any armed force. It is currently unclear to what extent the grievances described only affect the Donetsk region or the entire front.

However, what seems to be morale-destroying is the increasing unwillingness of the Ukrainian people to be sent to the front to be used as cannon fodder.

On the Russian side, it can be observed that the air forces can move more freely and with less interference, which is a great advantage.

## Conclusion

We are always very cautious in making predictions, as it is impossible to assess the situation on every section of the gigantic 1,000-kilometer-long front. Avdiivka is one point on the front. To pass judgment on the situation in this section for the entire front would be negligent, because in war anything can happen anywhere.

Nevertheless, the trend points to a clear strengthening of the Russian side and a weakening of the Ukrainian side. Morale cannot be bought - strong morale depends on the trust of the troops in the leadership, the support of the respective population and successes.

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