# Intense Fighting and Strategic Manoeuvres in Vovchansk as Ukrainian Forces Aim to Encircle Russian Troops



Intense fighting continues near the Ukrainian town of Vovchansk as Ukrainian forces from the 57th Motorized Brigade aim to encircle Russian troops who have recently crossed the nearby border. The conflict is concentrated around an aggregate plant on the northern edge of Vovchansk, with both Ukrainian and Russian military sources reporting heavy combat.

Stanislav Buniatov, a Ukrainian squad commander, reported that the situation is challenging yet under control and that Russian forces are surrounded. Ukrainian troops are maintaining their positions and conducting successful assaults, reclaiming as well as pushing back enemy forces.

Russian forces initiated this multi-pronged assault last month, aiming to create a buffer zone to protect Russian cities like Belgorod. Initially, they captured several small villages but faced stiff resistance upon reaching the outskirts of Vovchansk, which Ukrainian forces had reclaimed in September 2022.

The Ukrainian monitoring group DeepState noted that Russian soldiers have repeatedly tried to secure the aggregate plant but have been repelled. They also mentioned logistical difficulties for Russian forces, who are now receiving supplies via drones.

On June 16, 2024, Ukrainian drones were seen striking the plant, and military blogger WarGonzo described the ongoing clashes as "fierce," with Ukrainian attempts to dislodge Russian troops being particularly intense.

Meanwhile, the Russian Ministry of Defense claimed improvements in their frontline positions and reported inflicting significant losses on Ukrainian troops in areas around Vovchansk, Synelnykove, and Vovchanski Khutory.

Separately, a Russian soldier revealed severe losses within his unit in the assault near Kharkiv. His unit, originally comprising 100 soldiers, was reduced to just 12, underscoring the heavy toll of the conflict. This revelation comes amid suggestions from the Kremlin to prevent Ukrainian strikes on Russian territory and follows renewed offensives in Ukraine's northeastern Kharkiv region.

At a peace summit in Switzerland on June 16, 2024, international leaders including Ghana's President Nana Akufo-Addo and Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau called for peace, although a definitive agreement was not reached.