

# [***Three Thousand Russians Were Killed Or Wounded For Every Square Mile They Captured Around Avdiivka***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69VS-TNM1-DXVP-51X3-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Byline:** David Axe, Forbes Staff

**Highlight:** One Russian soldier fighting near Avdiivka recently said his unit started their assault with 70 people and lost 56 of them.

**Body**

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Russian dead in Ukraine.

Via social media

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Nearly as many Russians died in two months along a single miles-long stretch of eastern Ukraine as died in**all of Ukraine**in the first couple of months of Russia s wider war on the country.

Ukraine s own casualties have been lighter.

Staggering and escalating losses have not bought Russia significant advances in Ukraine since the first few weeks of the wider war. At the same time, these losses aren t about to collapse the regime of Russian strongman Vladimir Putin.

Around 13,000 Russianshave been killed or woundedin two months of attacks on the Ukrainian garrison in Avdiivka, a few miles north of Donetsk city in eastern Ukraine s Donbas region, the administration of U.S. president Joe Biden revealed this week in a declassified intelligence assessment.

For comparison, the U.S. Defense Departmentestimated20,000 Russians died and another 50,000 or 60,000 were wounded between the start of Russia s wider war in February 2022 and the commencement of a major Ukrainian counteroffensive six months later.

Losses around Avdiivka swelled, to 315,000, Russia s total casualties after 22 months of major fighting in Ukraine. The entire Russian military, active and reserve, included 2.9 million people at the outset of the wider war and since has added another 400,000 billets.

In the same nearly two-year period, Ukrainian forces suffered nearly 200,000 killed and wounded,according to U.S. estimates. Ukraine s own armed forces had 1.1 million people in late 2021, and since have grown to 1.3 million.

If the U.S. tally of Russian losses seems high, consider that Ukrainian estimates of Russian casualties are much, much**higher**. The Ukrainian governmentcounted340,000 Russian deaths in Ukraine between February 2022 and December 2023.

Anecdotal evidence supports a profound Russian death toll. One Russian soldier fighting near Avdiivkarecently saidhis unit started their assault with 70 people and lost 56 of them.

What s especially shocking about Russia s losses is what it has gained in exchange. While Russian minefields managed to limit the pace of Ukraine s 2023 counteroffensive and hold Ukrainian brigades to advances of just 10 miles or so along two main axes, Russian units have not managed to make major advances of their own in seven months.

Indeed, the Avdiivka meatgrinder is the Kremlin s most successful campaign since its forces captured the ruins of Bakhmut in May. But Russian regiments have advanced just a mile or so north and south of Avdiivka for a total gain of four square miles. They have not captured Avdiivka itself.

More than 3,000 Russians were killed or wounded for each square mile, most of them victims of Ukrainian artillery brigades that turned their bombardment of Russian assault columns into a competition, according to Ukrainian artillery officer Arty Green.

It s clear Russian troops are dying in Ukraine in much greater numbers than Ukrainian troops are dying, and for smaller gains. But whether that disparity matters is less clear.

Ukraine is a democracy and so are Ukraine s major allies; decisions in these countries are subject to popular opinion. Russia by contrast is a democracy only in name; it essentially is illegal to run against Putin, and credible opponents usually end up dead or imprisoned.

Russia s major allies China, Iran and North Korea also are authoritarian states. Short of violent revolution, public opinion in all of these countries is irrelevant. There are many dissatisfied people in Russia, but they are finding it increasingly difficult to vent their displeasure, Roland Bathonwrotein**International *Politics* and Society**.

So Russia can draft hundreds of thousands of men, and send them possibly to die in Ukraine, without those losses undermining the war effort. At the same time, a slower-than-expected Ukrainian counteroffensive has given pro-Russian Republicans in the U.S. Congress all the rationale they need to justify vetoing future U.S. aid to Ukraine.

Ukrainians have no future, Putinrecently laughed. But we do have a future. By we, he didn t mean the tens of thousands of Russians who have died for his war of choice in Ukraine, of course. But then, Russian lives never mattered to Putin any more than Ukrainian lives mattered.

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