

Putin Blasts 'Indiscriminate' Ukrainian Incursion Into Border Region

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Vladimir Putin. kremlin.ru

President Vladimir Putin [said](#) Wednesday that Ukraine was carrying out “indiscriminate” attacks on civilians during cross-border incursions into southwestern Russia’s Kursk region.

“The Kyiv regime has launched another large-scale provocation, firing indiscriminately with various types of weapons, including rockets, at civilian buildings, houses and ambulances,” Putin told government officials, according to a Kremlin transcript.

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Russia’s military [said](#) clashes with Ukrainian forces had been ongoing since they launched a surprise incursion into the Kursk region early Tuesday. At least five people were killed, dozens injured and thousands of civilians evacuated.

Acting Kursk region Governor Alexei Smirnov said he had briefed Putin about the incursion.

Putin said he had instructed government agencies to “provide the needed assistance to residents” and ordered First Deputy Prime Minister Denis Manturov to oversee their work following talks with Smirnov.

The Russian leader’s remarks came ahead of a meeting with government officials on construction and manufacturing.

Putin said he planned to meet Defense Ministry, General Staff and Federal Security Service (FSB) border guards afterward to hear a report about the situation in the Kursk region.

Some Russian military bloggers were reporting Ukrainian troops had reached the town of Sudzha, some eight kilometers (five miles) from the border, and were shelling it constantly.

The small town of about 5,000 people is home to the Sudzha metering station, the last major transit point for Russian pipeline gas still heading to Europe.

A priest in the town, Yevgeny Shestopalov, said in a video shared by Russian media that Sudzha was "on fire" and that residents unable to evacuate were sheltering at his church.

"Our church is full of people, children, not everyone has shelters, not everyone can leave," he said.

"There is no transport running, so we are gathering people in the church," he added.

The Chief of Russia's General Staff, Valery Gerasimov, said up 1,000 combatants from Ukraine had been involved in the offensive.

Ukraine did not immediately comment.

Authorities in Ukraine's northeastern Sumy region, just across the border from Kursk, announced they were evacuating about 6,000 people, without elaborating.

AFP contributed reporting.

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