

Zelensky Says War Has 'Returned' to Russia in Independence Day Address

By [AFP](#)

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President Volodymyr Zelensky at the ceremony of raising the national flag of Ukraine on Friday.

president.gov.ua

President Volodymyr Zelensky said Saturday that Russia wanted to "destroy" Ukraine but that war has "returned to its home," in a Ukrainian Independence Day video address he said was recorded from where Kyiv launched its surprise incursion into Russia.

Kyiv celebrates independence from the Soviet Union as the long war with Russia has reached a dramatic moment, with Ukrainian forces mounting an incursion in Russia's Kursk region and Moscow eyeing more eastern Ukrainian towns.

Zelensky published a video from a deserted, forested area in the Sumy region, which he visited earlier this week, saying it was a "few kilometers" from where Ukrainian forces shocked the world on Aug. 6 by crossing into Russia.

Embed:

Ukraine. Our land. Given by God. Kissed by the sun. Rocked by the winds. Tempered by fire. Defended by its sons and daughters.
It cannot be mistaken for anything else.
It can never be given away to anyone.
Happy Independence Day of Ukraine! pic.twitter.com/LwnRAjnZnc

— Volodymyr Zelenskyy / Володимир Зеленський (@ZelenskyyUa) [August 24, 2024](#)

The wartime leader said Kyiv "surprises once again" and vowed that Russia "will know what retribution is."

By launching its 2022 invasion, he said "Russia was seeking one thing: to destroy us. Instead, today we celebrate the 33rd Independence Day of Ukraine. And what the enemy brought to our land has now returned to its home.

"Anyone who wants to sow evil on our land will reap its fruit on their territory," he added. "This is not a prediction, not gloating, not blind revenge. It is justice."

Zelensky called Russian President Vladimir Putin a "sick old man from Red Square who constantly threatens everyone with the red button."

Ukraine's Kursk incursion has rattled Moscow, but has not slowed Russia's advance in eastern Ukraine.

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