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Georgia's Breakaway Region Sends Troops to Ukraine

By AFP

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South Ossetia deploys troops to Ukraine to support Russia. **Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation/TASS**

Georgia's breakaway region of South Ossetia has sent troops to Ukraine to "help protect Russia," its leader said on Saturday, as Moscow's military campaign in the neighboring country entered its 31st day.

"Our guys are going to fulfill their military duty with a proudly raised banner," the leader of South Ossetia, Anatoly Bibilov, said on Telegram.

He said the troops were "on fire."

"They understand perfectly that they are going to defend Russia, they are going to defend Ossetia too," Bibilov said.

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"Because if fascism is not crushed at the distant frontiers, tomorrow it will again manifest itself here."

He did not say how many troops had been deployed but posted a video showing several buses and trucks on the move.

The announcement came on the 31st day of the Kremlin's military campaign in pro-Western Ukraine, with thousands of people killed and more than 10 million displaced.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has said Moscow aims to "demilitarize" and "denazify" Ukraine.

After a month of fighting Russian forces have been unable to break the Ukrainian army's resistance. On Friday, Russia signaled it may dial back its aims in Ukraine to focus on the east.

In 2008, Russia and Georgia fought a brief but bloody war over South Ossetia.

After the war, Russia recognised South Ossetia, and another separatist region, Abkhazia, as independent statelets and stationed permanent military bases there.

The full-scale offensive on Ukraine has sparked an outpouring of solidarity in Georgia, with hundreds of Georgians joining the Ukrainian army.

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