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Russia To Stay in Southern Ukraine 'Forever' – Senior Lawmaker

By AFP

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Andrei Turchak attends a medals ceremony for servicemen of the separatist Donetsk People's Republic.
Nikolai Trishin / TASS

A senior official from the Russian parliament said Friday that Russia will remain in southern Ukraine "forever," speaking on a visit to the Moscow-controlled city of Kherson.

"Russia is here forever. There should be no doubt about this. There will be no return to the past," Andrey Turchak said, according to a statement from the ruling United Russia party.

"We will live together, develop this rich region, rich in historical heritage, rich in the people who live here," Turchak added.

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Turchak also announced the opening of humanitarian aid center in Kherson, for the delivery of food, medicine and essentials.

It was the first time a senior Russian official indicated Moscow's intentions to remain present on Ukrainian territory.

Kherson was the first major city to fall to Russian forces after the start of their military operation in Ukraine on Feb. 24.

Last month, the Russian army said it had taken control of the southern port city of Mariupol, on the shores of the Sea of Azov.

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