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Russian Village Near Ukraine Border Asks Putin for 'Protection'

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Kindergarten in the village of Tetkino. **t.me/gubernator_46**

Residents of a Russian village near the border with Ukraine have launched a petition calling on President Vladimir Putin to provide better protection against an increased number of cross-border attacks.

About 2 kilometers from Ukraine, the Kursk region village of Tyotkino has been repeatedly targeted by shelling, according to the petition published earlier this week on a community news page on social media platform Vkontakte.

"Recently we have been living in permanent fear," the petition reads. "Why was Tyotkino shelled for 45 minutes on 19 May with no return [fire from the Russian side]? Why did about 100 shells land on civilian houses and factories?"

The number of attacks on Russian territory has risen since Moscow's forces pulled back from northern Ukraine after an aborted attempt to seize Kyiv, and successful Ukrainian counterattacks near the northeastern city of Kharkiv.

The latest shelling attack in Russia's border area was reported Wednesday in the Belgorod region village of Zhuravlevka during which a local resident was badly wounded.

A truck driver making a delivery to a distillery in Tyotkino, which has about 3,200 residents, was killed in shelling last week — the second civilian death inside Russia since the start of the invasion. The incident was the third attack on Tyotkino in 48 hours.

According to the petition and information shared by local residents online, the spillover from fighting in Ukraine has seriously disrupted the lives of locals.

"[Neighboring village] Alekseevka still has no [cell] service and the government is not doing anything about it. [We are] under shelling and with no [cell] service," Elena Pereverzina wrote Sunday on the Tyotkino community page on VK.

Officials in Tyotkino contacted by The Moscow Times declined Wednesday to comment on the petition, which cannot be signed online, but is circulating in the village. Kursk region Governor Roman Starovoit did not respond to a request for comment.

Ukraine has not claimed responsibility for the attacks on Russian territory, but nor has it formally denied being behind them.

Dmytro Zhyvytskyy, the governor of the Ukrainian region of Sumy across the border from Tyotkino, has said that Ukrainian towns and villages have remained under regular shelling from the Russian side of the border.

While the authors of the petition said they "understand the necessity" for attacking Ukraine and are "providing help and support to the Russian servicemen," not all locals seem to be loyal to authorities.

"The governor said that the attacks were thwarted and nothing endangers us. Is he lying?" user Vyacheslav Avdeev commented in response to a copy of the petition posted online. "If so, why do we need such a liar as a governor?"

One of the staging grounds for the February invasion of Ukraine, the Kursk region has been under a heightened terrorist threat level since last month.

"We are asking to increase the protection of our borders, to create some kind of a buffer zone on Ukrainian territory so shells wouldn't be able to reach us and we can live, work, and sleep safely at night," the Tyotkino petition reads.

Tyotkino resident Alyona Gorodeskaya said on VK on Sunday that she was questioned at home by border guards after signing and distributing the petition.

Gorodestkaya declined to comment Wednesday when approached by The Moscow Times.

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