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Kherson Region Head Requests Kremlin Help with Evacuations

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Kremlin-installed governor of the Kherson region, Vladimir Saldo (R), with Russian President Vladimir Putin. **kremlin.ru**

The Kremlin-installed governor of Ukraine's Kherson region, which the Kremlin says it has annexed, appealed to Moscow to help evacuate civilians from the area on Thursday, in yet another sign that the Ukrainian military's southern counteroffensive is continuing to gain ground.

"Cities in the Kherson region are coming under daily rocket attacks," Vladimir Saldo said in a video post on Telegram, adding that civilian infrastructure was being targeted.

"We suggest all people of the Kherson region should, if they wish, leave for other regions to protect themselves from missile strikes," Saldo added.

"In addressing the leadership of the country, I ask you to help organize this task."

Saldo added that those choosing to leave the region would go to the southern Russian regions

of Rostov, Krasnodar and Stavropol as well as to Crimea — the peninsula that Moscow annexed from Ukraine in 2014.

Related article: Kremlin Eyes 'Crimea-Style' Annexation of Ukraine's Kherson

Kirill Stremousov, the region's Russian-installed deputy governor, stressed on Thursday that the appeal "wasn't a call for evacuation."

"No one is evacuating anyone," Stremousov said on Telegram, adding that the measure was meant "to save the lives" of Kherson residents.

Kherson, one of the four Ukrainian regions that Moscow recently claimed to have annexed, made the request for assistance a day after Kyiv said it had retaken five settlements in the region.

Last week Ukraine, which unleashed a southern counteroffensive against Russian-controlled regions of Ukraine in August, said it had recaptured over 400 square kilometers of territory in the Kherson region in the past week.

AFP contributed reporting.

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