

Putin Says Russia Could Have Been 'Better Prepared' for Border Attacks

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Vladimir Putin's meeting with war correspondents. kremlin.ru

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday admitted that Moscow could have more successfully readied the country's southern regions bordering Ukraine for cross-border attacks from Ukrainian territory.

His comments, made at a meeting with pro-Kremlin war bloggers and reporters, follow weeks of intensifying strikes on the Belgorod region that included an unprecedented incursion claimed by an anti-Kremlin militia in late May.

“Of course, there is nothing good in this,” he said, referring to the recent cross-border attacks on the Belgorod region.

“But in principle, one could have assumed that the enemy would behave this way, and one could have prepared better,” he added.

Discussing improvements to Russia's air defense system, Putin [said](#): “It would be better if

this was done in a timely manner and at the proper level, but nevertheless this work is being done.”

“This is a solvable problem,” he said.

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The Russian leader also said that Moscow's forces in Ukraine were suffering from shortages in military equipment including high-precision ammunition and drones.

“During the course of the special military operation, it became clear that many things were lacking,” he said, using the Kremlin's preferred term for the war.

“High-precision ammunition, communications equipment, drones etc... We have them, but unfortunately, there is not enough.”

He denied that the Kremlin was considering a second round of military mobilization for the war in Ukraine as Kyiv started its long-awaited counteroffensive to retake territories occupied by Russia.

Speaking about Russia's [army recruitment campaign](#), Putin said that Russia has recruited more than 150,000 contract soldiers since the start of the year.

He also claimed that Ukraine was suffering massive losses in its long-awaited counteroffensive against Russian positions in Ukraine, which he said was targeting several sectors of the front.

"Their losses are approaching a level that could be described as catastrophic."

Putin [claimed](#) that Kyiv has lost “over 160 tanks and over 360 armored vehicles of various types,” adding that the actual losses could be higher.

“The enemy was not successful in any area,” Putin said, claiming Russia suffered “10 times fewer losses than those of the armed forces of Ukraine.”

Putin again accused Ukraine of provoking its full-scale invasion in February 2022.

“In the end, they led us to the fact that we tried to end by force of arms the war which they started in 2014,” Putin said, repeating a frequently used talking point to describe the outbreak of hostilities between pro-Russia separatists and Kyiv in 2014.

“When they tell us: 'You started the war, Putin is an aggressor!' No, they are the aggressors, they started this war, and we are trying to stop it, but we are forced to do it with the help of the Armed Forces,” he said.

AFP contributed reporting.

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