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Kremlin Says France Seeks 'Direct' Role in Ukraine War

By AFP

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Emmanuel Macron and Volodymyr Zelensky. **president.gov.ua**

French President Emmanuel Macron's recent statements are "inflaming" tensions in Europe and show he is readying France for a direct role in the Ukraine war, the Kremlin said on Friday.

The French leader has taken an increasingly hawkish line in his support for Kyiv, promising on Thursday to transfer Mirage fighter jets to the embattled country and help train Ukrainian pilots.

"Macron demonstrates absolute support for the Kyiv regime and declares readiness for France's direct participation in the military conflict," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

"We consider these statements to be very, very provocative, inflaming tensions on the

continent and not conducive to anything positive," Peskov said on the sidelines of the Saint Petersburg International Economic Forum, where President Vladimir Putin is expected to deliver an address on Friday afternoon.

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Macron has refused to rule out deploying troops to Ukraine, despite reluctance from other NATO members and furious condemnation from Moscow.

Paris does not officially have military personnel assisting or training Ukrainian forces in Ukraine at the moment, but Kyiv said last week that it was "in talks" with the French authorities on the issue.

Russia warned on Tuesday it would consider any foreign instructors sent to Ukraine a "legitimate target" for strikes.

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