

Kremlin Dismisses Claims That Kharkiv Offensive Failed

By [AFP](#)

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A Russian army serviceman in Ukraine's Kharkiv region. **Russian Defense Ministry / TASS**

The Kremlin on Wednesday dismissed suggestions that its ground offensive on northeastern Ukraine's Kharkiv region had failed, coming a day after Russian officials said they would seal off border villages to protect civilians from Ukrainian shelling.

Russia launched a surprise assault into the Kharkiv region in early May in a bid to push Ukrainian forces back and create what President Vladimir Putin has called a "security zone."

But on Tuesday, authorities in southwestern Russia's Belgorod region, which borders Kharkiv, announced that civilian access to 14 Russian border villages would be restricted given the ongoing intensity of Ukrainian cross-border attacks.

When asked on Wednesday whether that decision signaled Russia's offensive on Kharkiv had failed, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said: "No, it doesn't."

"This operation is ongoing, it will continue until it has been successfully completed," he told reporters.

"But while it has not been completed, barbaric attacks by the Kyiv regime on civilian infrastructure continue. In order to take the necessary measures to ensure the safety of the population, new practices are being introduced," Peskov added.

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Belgorod Governor Vyacheslav Gladkov said Tuesday that over 200 people had been killed and hundreds more wounded in the region since Moscow launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

He said entry to the border area would be limited starting next Tuesday, with only adult men wearing bullet-proof vests and helmets permitted to pass through checkpoints.

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