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‘Why Did Our State Allow This?’: Russians in Border Region Slam Officials’ Inaction as Ukrainian Forces Attack

By Moscow Times Reporter

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The town of Sudzha in the Kursk region after Ukrainian shelling. **t.me/gubernator_46**

Residents of Russia’s Kursk region bordering Ukraine are appealing to authorities for help with evacuating and accusing them of taking insufficient action as an apparent attack by Kyiv’s forces continued for a second day.

While armed militants from Ukraine have conducted multiple incursions into Russia’s border regions since last year in retaliation to Moscow’s full-scale invasion against Kyiv, the latest attack appears larger in scale and more prepared than previous efforts.

Local officials reported at least five people killed and 24 injured in the Kursk region attack, which Russia said was carried out by some 300 Ukrainian troops, 11 tanks and over 20 armored

vehicles.

The regional governor said Wednesday that the situation was "under control," adding that President Vladimir Putin had been briefed on the attack and was "personally monitoring" the events.

“Over the past 24 hours, our region has been heroically resisting attacks by Ukrainian Nazis. All emergency services have been put on high alert,” Kursk Governor Alexei Smirnov said Wednesday, repeating the Kremlin’s unbacked claim that Kyiv’s government is controlled by neo-Nazis.

Smirnov said Wednesday that authorities had helped “several thousand people” to evacuate.

However, a Moscow Times reporter saw residents of border areas in the Kursk region accusing officials of not doing enough to help them on social media.

“Nobody cared about us... the refugees from that ‘country’ [Ukraine] were given everything at once... and [local] people left for nowhere and with nothing,” wrote Lika Ivanova from Sudzha, a town in the Kursk region that came under massive shelling on Tuesday.

“Why did our state allow this? If you can't protect your people, do an evacuation. As a result, there are victims again,” Kursk resident Andrei Nezlobin posted on the VKontakte social media platform.

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The state-run TASS news agency reported Wednesday that blood donation centers were opened in the region’s capital city of Kursk for “border region hospitals.”

In a meeting with government officials, Putin called the attack a “large-scale provocation,” accused Kyiv of firing “indiscriminately” and ordered First Deputy Prime Minister Denis Manturov to oversee assistance to residents in affected areas starting “immediately.”

Following the attack, Russian pro-war bloggers slammed the Defense Ministry for its apparent negligence, saying that it failed to prepare for such incursions.

“We knew that the Ukrainian Armed Forces would advance into the Kursk region...but nothing was done at the top [of the Russian command],” pro-war blogger Anastasia Kashevarova wrote on the Telegram messaging app.

Related article: Russia Says Downed Drones, Missiles Over Kursk Region Amid Border Incursion

Pro-war Telegram channel Starshe Eddy criticized the border troops’ readiness.

“People at the front knew that the enemy would definitely try to strike a blow like that. But it seems to me that there are other people, maybe even wearing military uniforms... who were far from the front and did not believe in such a thing,” the channel told its 600,000

subscribers.

Alexander Kots, a war correspondent for Russia's Komsomolskaya Pravda tabloid who also runs the popular Telegram channel Kotsnews, stressed that "the key difference between today's battles in the Kursk region and previous 'raids' is that this is a military operation initiated by Kyiv on Russian territory."

Footage published on social media on Tuesday showed what appeared to be Russian warplanes flying over the Kursk region at low altitudes to repel the attack.

Russia's Defense Ministry said Wednesday that the Ukrainian side suffered losses of 260 soldiers and 50 armored vehicles — a claim that could not be independently verified. Russia's air defense system also shot down two Ukrainian missiles.

Russian pro-war bloggers reported Wednesday that at least 11 villages were captured and "regular enemy troops are present up to 15 kilometers deep...and 10-11 kilometers wide."

The Defense Ministry has not confirmed these reports, only saying Wednesday that "the operation" against Ukrainian forces in Kursk was "ongoing."

Ukrainian forces reportedly captured the Sudzha gas metering station, which is used as a gas transit to Europe through Ukraine, the pro-war Telegram channel Rybar reported Wednesday.

The situation in Sudzha is "very tense," the city's mayor told the state-run RIA Novosti news agency.

According to pro-war military bloggers, the attack was first repelled by units staffed with conscripts serving their mandatory military service.

Russian media reported that Kyiv's forces captured at least six Russian soldiers, including two conscripts.

Ukraine has not claimed responsibility for the incursion, the most serious in months.

Ukrainian presidential aide Mykhailo Podolyak alluded to the attacks on social media without specifically mentioning them, saying Moscow had used its "border regions with impunity for massive air and artillery attacks."

AFP contributed reporting.

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