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Kyiv Says Belarus ‘Concentrating’ Troops on Border, Warns Against ‘Unfriendly Actions'

By AFP

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A Wagner camp in Belarus, 2023. **Alexander Nemenov / AFP**

Ukraine accused its Moscow-allied neighbor Belarus on Sunday of "concentrating" troops on the countries' shared border and warned Minsk against "unfriendly actions," in a statement by Kyiv's foreign ministry.

The statement came as Kyiv mounts an incursion into Russia's Kursk region and as Russia continues its advance into eastern Ukraine.

Belarus had allowed Russian troops to use its territory as a launchpad for their February 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

The statement said Ukrainian intelligence had recorded Belarus "concentrating a significant number of personnel... in the Gomel region near Ukraine's northern border under the guise of

exercises."

It added: "We warn Belarusian officials not to make tragic mistakes for their country under Moscow's pressure, and we urge its armed forces to cease unfriendly actions and withdraw forces away from Ukraine's state border to a distance greater than the firing range of Belarus' systems."

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Kyiv accused Belarus of building up equipment and troops on the border, saying it had recorded the presence of Wagner fighters — some of whom are being hosted by Belarus after their leader's failed rebellion last year.

Ukraine warned that military exercises in the border area pose a "global security" threat due to how close the Chernobyl Nuclear Power plant — the site of the world's worst nuclear disaster.

"We emphasize that Ukraine has never taken and is not going to take any unfriendly actions against the Belarusian people," the foreign ministry added.

Belarus has been ruled by President Alexander Lukashenko since 1994.

In 2022, he had allowed Russian troops to station in Belarus during what Russia and Belarus called "drills" before they launched their invasion in February.

Belarus is politically and economically reliant on Russia.

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