

Kyiv Invites UN, Red Cross to Ukraine-Held Areas of Russia's Kursk Region

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A destroyed Russian tank outside the Ukrainian-controlled town of Sudzha in the Kursk region. **Yan Dobronosov / AFP**

Ukraine said Monday that it asked the United Nations and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to observe the situation in areas of Russia's Kursk region that its forces seized following their surprise incursion early last month.

"I instructed the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry to officially invite the UN and ICRC to join humanitarian efforts in the Kursk region," Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andriy Sybiga said on social media. "Ukraine is ready to facilitate their work and prove its adherence to international humanitarian law."

Since launching the cross-border incursion on Aug. 6, authorities in Kyiv have sought to portray the offensive and subsequent military presence in parts of the Kursk region as being different from Russia's occupation of eastern Ukraine — which Moscow claims to have annexed.

"From the very first days of the Kursk operation, the Ukrainian Defense Forces, as a civilized European army, have demonstrated high professionalism and full compliance with the principles of international humanitarian law," Ukraine's Foreign Ministry said.

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Moscow has denounced the offensive, which forced the evacuation of more than 150,000 Russian civilians.

The Ukrainian Foreign Ministry's statement came as ICRC President Mirjana Spoljaric arrived in Moscow for a planned visit to discuss a range of issues. That visit comes just a few days after shelling killed three ICRC workers in eastern Ukraine.

Russia's Defense Ministry [said](#) last week that its forces were on the offensive in the Kursk region, recapturing nearly one dozen towns.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky also confirmed that Russian forces had launched a counteroffensive in the Kursk region, but insisted Kyiv's incursion was still going according to plan.

AFP contributed reporting.

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