

Moscow Waging 'Intense' Counteroffensive With North Korean Troops in Kursk Region, Kyiv Says

By [AFP](#)

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Mikhail Klimentyev / TASS

Russia has been using North Korean troops to spearhead an "intense" counteroffensive in the southwestern Kursk region as it tries to drive Ukrainian forces back across the border, Ukraine's commander-in-chief Oleksandr Syrsky said Tuesday.

"For three days in a row, the enemy has been conducting intense offensive operations in the Kursk region, actively using North Korean army units," Syrsky said in an address to local officials. Ukrainian troops launched an incursion into the border region in early August, seizing large swaths of territory.

"North Korean mercenaries have already suffered heavy losses. The Ukrainian defenders are steadfastly holding the line of defense, destroying enemy personnel and equipment," Syrsky

said, without providing further details.

Ukrainian military intelligence, the Pentagon and authorities in South Korea have all said that Pyongyang deployed around 10,000 troops to Russia to fight alongside Moscow's armed forces. Western officials believe that deployment was made in exchange for shipments of air defense systems to North Korea.

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Kyiv said Monday that its forces killed or wounded at least 30 North Korean soldiers in Kursk over the weekend.

The reports of a fresh Russian counteroffensive in the Kursk region come with Moscow's forces advancing in eastern Ukraine. On Tuesday, Russia's Defense Ministry claimed to have seized a small village in the eastern Donetsk region, around 10 kilometers (six miles) south of the industrial hub of Kurakhove.

Syrsky said the "most difficult situation" is currently around Kurakhove and the mining city of Pokrovsk.

He said the "operational and strategic situation remains difficult" across the 1,170-kilometer (730-mile) front line, a day after President Vladimir Putin said Russian troops had seized "the strategic initiative" across the front.

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