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‘It Feels Like the Government Doesn’t Need Us’: Displaced Kursk Residents Accuse Governor of Ignoring Their Pleas

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A group of displaced residents from Russia’s southwestern Kursk region held a protest on Tuesday over what they claimed was the local governor’s refusal to meet with them and offer more comprehensive support amid ongoing clashes between Russian and Ukrainian forces.

More than 150,000 residents of border towns and villages in the Kursk region were forced to evacuate their homes after Ukrainian troops launched a surprise incursion in early August. Since then, displaced residents have staged multiple protests, describing poor temporary accommodations and a lack of government compensation for lost and damaged property.

“It’s been almost half a year since we were thrown out onto the street into a complete unknown,” one woman said in a video shared by local media. “We have no permanent place to stay... our children are forgetting what home is, and the region’s authorities refuse to acknowledge our growing problems.”

The woman accused Kursk region officials of intentionally delaying support, pointing out that President Vladimir Putin had publicly assured citizens that the government would fund recovery efforts.

“The president of Russia said the region [Kursk] has no problems with funding... and yet we are constantly told: ‘We have no money’,” the woman said.“It feels like the government doesn’t need us,” she added, calling for a face-to-face meeting with Alexander Khinshtein, the newly appointed acting governor of the Kursk region.

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Flanked by other displaced residents from the region’s Glushkovsky district, the woman criticized Khinshtein for avoiding direct engagement with their community. “Stop hiding from us behind the backs of initiative groups,” she said.

Local media reported that the residents were told Khinshtein was unable to meet with them after getting sick.

Since his appointment last month, Khinshtein has held several meetings with displaced residents, but he has dismissed some of their demands as “unfair.” His predecessor, Alexei Smirnov, was reportedly sacked over his apparent inability to manage emergency relief efforts following Ukraine’s surprise incursion.

Meanwhile, Ukraine’s military gains in the Kursk region have reportedly stalled amid reinforcements from Russia, including troops from its ally North Korea. Russia’s Defense Ministry said last week that its forces had reclaimed over 60% of the territory in the region initially occupied by Ukrainian forces.

During his end-of-year press conference in December, Putin declined to specify when the Kursk region would be fully “liberated.”

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