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Kursk Region Officials Meet With Families of Missing Residents

By AFP

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Kursk region Governor Alexander Khinshtein meets with locals. **@Hinshtein**

Russian officials met this week with the families of those trapped behind Ukrainian lines in the embattled Kursk region, coming amid mounting criticism of the government's efforts to secure their return.

Dozens of villages, as well as the regional hub of Sudzha, have been under Ukrainian control since Kyiv launched its surprise ground assault in early August. Hundreds of people remain cut off behind the front line, with frustration growing over the lack of information from local authorities.

A missing persons list compiled by Russian authorities initially reported around 500 people unaccounted for in the Ukrainian-occupied zone, but residents and Ukraine's military say the true number is closer to 3,000.

Tuesday's meeting between officials and relatives of missing persons sought to establish "a single open list of missing persons," acting Kursk region Governor Alexander Khinshtein said.

The new list will "reassure relatives of the missing, who will see that their loved ones are not forgotten or abandoned," he wrote on Telegram, adding that he hoped most of the work would be completed within 10 days.

Volunteers, aid workers and Russia's human rights ombudsman Tatyana Moskalkova also attended the meeting.

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Kursk region resident Lyubov Prilutskaya, who has spent months searching for her parents in the occupied zone, called the meeting a positive step.

"Most likely, our figure is correct — about 3,000 people. Now the lists will be compiled in one place, they will be checked, reviewed, verified and there will be at least some understanding of the situation," she told AFP.

Prilutskaya previously accused authorities of including people known to be dead on their lists.

Residents have criticized officials for not doing enough to locate their loved ones and for keeping them in the dark about the scale of the fighting in the Kursk region. Over the past two weeks, dozens have launched appeals for more information in a coordinated social media campaign.

Ukraine has said that it is providing safe passage to Russians stranded in the Kursk region.

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