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Russia Launched Offensive in Sumy and Kharkiv Regions, Ukraine's Top Commander Confirms

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Aftermath of a Russian attack on Ukraine. **State Emergency Service of Ukraine**

Russian forces launched an offensive into northeastern Ukraine's Sumy and Kharkiv regions several days ago, Ukraine's commander in chief General Oleksandr Syrsky said in an interview published Wednesday.

Syrsky's comments come nearly a month after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky claimed that Russia was readying a new attack on the Sumy region, which borders Russia's Kursk region.

"I can say that the president is absolutely right and this [Russian] offensive [in the Sumy and Kharkiv regions] has actually already begun," Syrsky told the Ukrainian news website Left Bank.

"For several days now, nearly a week, we've been seeing almost a doubling of the number of

enemy offensive actions in all major areas," he added.

Syrsky claimed Russia was seeking to create a buffer zone in the Kharkiv and Sumy regions, as well as in northern Ukraine's Chernihiv region.

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President Vladimir Putin proposed establishing a so-called "buffer zone" in the Sumy region to safeguard the Kursk region from future attacks during his visit there last month. The proposal was followed by reports of a potential Russian offensive, with minor Russian incursions into the Sumy region.

Ukraine launched a surprise incursion into the Kursk region in August, but a Russian counteroffensive in recent months has gradually chipped away at its hold over swaths of territory.

The latest offensive is not the first time Russia has set its sights on Ukraine's Sumy region. Russian troops pushed into the region during the early weeks of the full-scale invasion in February 2022.

However, despite initial successes, Russian forces failed to establish control due to Ukrainian resistance, and the Kremlin was forced to withdraw by early April 2022 as part of its broader retreat from northern Ukraine.

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