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Putin Makes First Trip to Kursk Region Since Russian Army Expelled Ukrainian Forces

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Vladimir Putin meeting with volunteers in the Kursk region. **Russian President Press Office / TASS**

President Vladimir Putin visited the southwestern Kursk region for the first time since Russia's military said it cleared the area of Ukrainian forces following months of cross-border fighting.

The Kremlin released a video early Wednesday of Putin meeting with local volunteers, including members of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Kremlin-aligned All-Russia People's Front, but did not specify when the visit took place.

During the visit, the Russian president accused Ukrainian forces of destroying Soviet World War II memorials in the region, calling them "people with neo-Nazi views."

"Even in an idiot contest, they'd only manage to win second place. Why? Because they're idiots," Putin said of Ukrainian soldiers. "By doing what they do, they show who they really

are.”

Embed:

> Vladimir Putin visited the Kursk region for the first time since Russia’s army said it cleared the area of Ukrainian forces. During the visit, he toured the Kursk Nuclear Power Plant with Deputy Presidential Chief of Staff Sergei Kiriyenko.
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> — The Moscow Times (@MoscowTimes) May 21, 2025

Putin also met with Acting Kursk region Governor Alexander Khinshtein, telling him that state compensation for residents unable to return home due to the damage caused by Ukrainian shelling should remain at the current 65,000 rubles ($800).

“That’s what needs to be done until people are able to return to their homes,” Putin said in comments broadcast on state television. “And of course, the number of demining teams across the relevant agencies will need to be increased so that people can return to their loved ones as soon as possible.”

More than 150,000 residents of towns and villages in the Kursk border region were ordered to leave their homes after Ukrainian troops launched a surprise incursion in early August. Some displaced residents have since staged protests over poor living conditions and what they describe as inadequate government support and compensation.

Putin also visited the city of Kurchatov, home to the Kursk Nuclear Power Plant. Kremlin footage showed the president wearing a hard hat and touring the nuclear facility alongside Deputy Presidential Chief of Staff Sergei Kiriyenko.

Putin’s visit was announced as Russia’s Defense Ministry claimed to have destroyed more than 100 Ukrainian drones overnight. Some state media reported that six drones were downed over Kursk during his visit, though the Kremlin did not confirm the timing.

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