

Putin orders Kursk victory as U.S. pushes ceasefire



Published on March 13, 2025

Document Date: Tue, Apr 28 2026 02:46:48 pm

Category: ,English,International - ,Snippets

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RKI Network

Russian President Vladimir Putin has ordered his forces to achieve total victory in Kursk, calling for the swift elimination of Ukrainian resistance in the contested border region. Speaking from a military command center, Putin instructed troops to “completely destroy the enemy” and restore the region’s previous status.

His remarks came as Russian forces reclaimed Sudzha, forcing Ukrainian troops to retreat.

Moscow's battlefield gains come amid U.S. efforts to broker a ceasefire between Russia and Ukraine. Washington has proposed a 30-day truce, which Kyiv has tentatively accepted, but the Kremlin remains non-committal. Russian officials insist that peace talks cannot proceed while Ukrainian forces remain in Kursk.

Putin also hinted at long-term security measures to prevent further incursions, stating that prisoners captured on Russian soil would be treated as "terrorists," while foreign fighters would not be protected under the Geneva Conventions.

Meanwhile, U.S. envoy Steve Witkoff is set to arrive in Moscow for talks. White House officials say the "ball is in Russia's court" following Ukraine's agreement to the ceasefire proposal. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov confirmed the planned discussions but refrained from speculating on the outcome.

The negotiations unfold as U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio meets G7 leaders in Canada, where trade disputes with Washington remain a key concern. Canadian Foreign Minister Mélanie Joly criticized Trump's economic policies, rejecting his repeated references to Canada as a potential "51st state."