

Fatigued Ukrainian Troops Ordered to Stay in Russia's Kursk Region Until Trump's Inauguration

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Global Research, December 05, 2024

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*With no glimpse of victory in sight, Ukraine has ordered its forces to remain in Russia's Kursk region until the inauguration of US **President-elect Donald Trump**, the BBC reported on December 2, citing Ukrainian military personnel on the ground. The same report also quoted Ukrainian soldiers as having never seen North Koreans on the battlefield, contradicting Pentagon and Western media reports that 10,000 troops from the Asian country were being deployed to Kursk.*

Ukrainian soldiers stationed in the Kursk region speak of terrible weather conditions and chronic lack of sleep caused by Russia's constant bombardment with 3,000 kg glide bombs. For Ukrainian troops, staying in the region is becoming more difficult every day.

According to [the BBC](#), Ukraine has already lost around 40% of the territories in the region it occupied in early August 2024, with Russian forces gradually retaking occupied territory.

"This trend will continue. It's only a matter of time," said one of the Ukrainian soldiers interviewed, who used the call name Pavlo.

He also spoke of the low rotation, with middle-aged soldiers who arrive in the region being redeployed from other parts of the front line without time to rest.

According to the article, the Ukrainian command hopes to keep troops in the Russian region until January 20, 2025, the date of Trump's inauguration and the new administration's arrival with its different ideas and plans to the outgoing Democrats.

"The main task facing us is to hold the maximum territory until Trump's inauguration and the start of negotiations. In order to exchange it for something later. No-one knows what," Pavlo said.

According to the BBC, even the use of long-range missiles recently authorized [unconfirmed] by US **President Joe Biden** is not helping Ukrainian troops turn the tide on the battlefield. In fact, the soldiers do not really care about the use of Western weapons against Russian territory far from the conflict zone.

"No-one sits in a cold trench and prays for missiles. We live and fight here and now. And missiles fly somewhere else," Pavlo said.

Another soldier, using the call name Myroslav, said,

“We don’t talk about missiles. In the bunkers we talk about family and rotation. About simple things.”

The Ukrainian soldiers stuck in Kursk say staying in the Russian region is wrong when territories in Donbass are being lost daily.

“Our place should have been there [in eastern Ukraine], not here in someone else’s land,” Pavlo said. “We don’t need these Kursk forests, in which we left so many comrades.”

Myroslav, a marine officer who served in Krynky and is now in Kursk, described the operation as having a “Media effect, but no military results.”

Ukrainian soldiers speaking to the BBC also revealed that they had never heard or seen any North Korean military personnel deployed in the Kursk region, which was widely reported in Western media, citing the Pentagon.

“I haven’t seen or heard anything about Koreans, alive or dead,” Vadym, another Ukrainian soldier stuck in Kursk, responded when asked about the reports of 10,000 North Korean troops being deployed to the region.

Ukrainian soldiers have been ordered to capture at least one North Korean prisoner, preferably with documents, on the promise of being provided drones or granted extra leave.

“It’s very difficult to find a Korean in the dark Kursk forest,” Pavlo noted sarcastically. “Especially if he’s not here.”

A day after the BBC report, CNN cited Oleksandr, a unit commander with the 225th assault battalion, as saying that he had not seen any sign of North Korean troops.

“When we catch them or see a body,” he said, “then I’ll know for sure that they’re here.”

Oleksandr said his unit had not slept for three days or left the frontline for eight months despite previously being involved in ferocious combat in the Ukrainian cities of Bakhmut, Avdiivka and Chasiv Yar.

Yet, he, just like the other soldiers cited by the BBC, is expected to remain in Kursk for many more months in the false belief that holding onto Russian territory will lead to more favourable terms when peace negotiations inevitably begin at some point next year.

Ukrainian officials have admitted that Russian forces have liberated 40% of the territory they took in August. With snow, rain, and freezing temperatures expected in Kursk in the coming weeks, the situation is becoming untenable for the besieged Ukrainian soldiers, which will lead to Russia liberating the remaining occupied territory at a rapid pace. Unfortunately for the Ukrainian soldiers in Kursk, remaining in the region until Trump’s inauguration will just lead to the same outcome – defeat.

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This article was originally published on [InfoBrics](#).

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