



By: TA | AP Brief

For Russia, foreign troops deployed to Ukraine before any peace deal would be 'legitimate targets'



Russian President Vladimir Putin said Friday that any foreign troops deployed to Ukraine before a peace agreement has been signed would be considered “legitimate targets” by Moscow's forces.

Putin's comments came hours after European leaders **repledged** their commitment to a potential **peacekeeping** force.

“If any troops appear there, especially now while fighting is ongoing, we assume that they will be legitimate targets,” he said during a panel at the Eastern Economic Forum in the far eastern Russian city of Vladivostok.

Putin also dismissed the idea of peacekeeping forces in Ukraine after a final peace deal, saying “no one should doubt” that Moscow would comply with a treaty to halt its 3½-year full-scale invasion of its neighbor.

He said that security guarantees would be needed for both Russia and Ukraine.

Reassurance force

The Russian leader's comments follow **remarks** from French President Emmanuel Macron on Thursday that 26 of Ukraine's allies have pledged to deploy troops as a “reassurance force” for Ukraine once fighting ends.

Macron spoke after a meeting in Paris of the so-called coalition of the willing, a group of 35 countries that support Ukraine.

He said that 26 of the countries had committed to deploying troops to Ukraine — or to maintaining a presence on land, at sea or in the air — to help guarantee the country's security the day after any ceasefire or peace is achieved.

Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022, almost eight years after Moscow illegally annexed Ukraine's **Crimean** Peninsula. Moscow has repeatedly described the presence of NATO troops in Ukraine as part of a peacekeeping force “unacceptable.”