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Russia Threatens to Strike Kyiv 'Command Centers' Over Cross-Border Attacks

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Russian Defense Ministry spokesman Igor Konashenkov during a briefing on March 15, 2022. **Vadim Savitsky/Russian Defense Ministry/TASS**

The Russian military threatened on Wednesday to strike "command centers" in Kyiv in retaliation to recent cross-border attacks attributed to the Ukrainian forces.

"We see the Ukrainian forces' attempts to sabotage and conduct strikes against facilities in Russia," Defense Ministry spokesman Maj. Gen. Igor Konashenkov said in an evening briefing.

"If these cases continue, the Russian Armed Forces will strike decision-making centers, including those in Kyiv, which the Russian army has so far refrained from doing," he added.

Konashenkov's statement marks the first official acknowledgment by the Russian military of attacks on Russian facilities, including a railroad and an oil depot, since President Vladimir

Putin ordered an invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24. Ukraine has not confirmed the reported attacks, which do not appear to have led to major casualties

Ukraine's military intelligence warned Tuesday that Russia could be planning to stage terrorist attacks on its own territory in order to blame Kyiv and justify "cruelty toward Ukraine's civilian population."

Six Russian regions on the border with Ukraine raised terrorist threat levels over the past week after residents reported a series of explosions that local officials referred to as "incidents."

The warning comes weeks after Russia announced its withdrawal of ground troops from areas surrounding Kyiv, leaving behind evidence of atrocities, to refocus efforts on capturing territories in eastern and southern Ukraine.

Western and Ukrainian officials said Russia was redeploying its remaining available forces in preparation for major battles. Satellite imagery and eyewitnesses have reported Russian forces massing outside Kharkiv, as well as the separatist Donetsk and Luhansk regions in recent days.

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