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Three Dead as Ukrainian Drone Shot Down Over Russian Airbase

By AFP

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Supersonic strategic bomber-missile-carrier Tu-160 "Vladimir Sudets" at the Engels air base **Russian Defense Ministry / TASS**

Russian air defense troops downed a Ukrainian drone as it approached an air base in southern Russia and three people died after being struck by debris, Russian news agencies said Monday.

It was the second attack on the Engels base this month. Engels, in the southern Saratov region, lies over 600 kilometers from Ukraine.

"On December 26, at around 01:35 Moscow time, a Ukrainian unmanned aerial vehicle was shot down at low altitude while approaching the Engels military airfield in the Saratov region," the TASS news agency reported, quoting the defense ministry.

"As a result of the drone's wreckage falling, three Russian technicians who were at the airfield

were fatally injured."

The Defence Ministry said no planes were damaged.

Saratov governor Roman Busargin said there was "absolutely no threat" to local residents, adding that no civilian infrastructure had been damaged.

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He warned locals against spreading "fake information," citing Russia's strict laws adopted in the wake of its Ukraine offensive at the end of February.

"All stories about the evacuation from the city are blatant lies, created far from the borders of our country," he said.

On Dec. 5, Moscow said Ukrainian drones had caused explosions at the Engels airfield and another base in the Ryazan region.

Kyiv has not yet commented on the incident.

Russia has in the past blamed Ukraine for drone attacks on its territory and on Moscow-annexed Crimea.

In late October, Russia blamed Ukraine for a "massive" drone strike on its Black Sea Fleet in the Crimean port city of Sevastopol.

But the Engels attack was the deepest reported strike into Russian territory since fighting began.

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