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Belarus Shoots Down Missile Launched From Ukraine

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Updates with Belarus saying it shot down the missile

Russian ally Belarus said on Thursday that its air defense shot down a missile launched from Ukrainian territory, in the first such incident reported by Minsk since the start of Moscow's Ukraine offensive.

The Defense Ministry in Minsk said a missile was shot down around 10:00 am local time with its debris discovered in a village in the western Brest region of Belarus, which borders Ukraine and Poland.

"It was preliminarily established that the fragments belonged to an S-300 anti-aircraft guided missile launched from the territory of Ukraine," the ministry said in a statement.

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko "was immediately informed" of the incident, a Telegram channel close to the presidency said.

There have been no reports of injuries or casualties so far.

The Belarus military and investigators were dispatched to the site of impact, President Alexander Lukashenko's press service said on Telegram.

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Lukashenko is an ally of Moscow and has supported its invasion of Ukraine, allowing Russian troops to launch part of their February invasion from its territory. Moscow and Minsk conducted joint military drills close to the country's border with Ukraine as a smokescreen for the Russian army's build-up of troops.

The Belarusian army has not so far participated in the Russian invasion, though in October Lukashenko issued a warning to the Kyiv government against touching "even a meter of our territory with their dirty hands."

This is the second time since the start of the war that a Ukrainian missile has entered a country other than Russia — on Nov. 15, a Ukrainian missile landed in Poland leaving two people dead and sparking concern that NATO could be drawn into the conflict in Ukraine.

However, the incident was later widely accepted to have been a Ukrainian air defense missile that had missed its incoming target.

AFP contributed reporting.

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