

Kremlin Declines to Say if Moscow is Preparing for Air Strikes

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The Pantsir-S1 air defense system. **Vitaly V. Kuzmin (CC BY-SA 4.0)**

Updates with Peskov and Horowitz comments.

The Kremlin refused to say whether Russia was preparing for strikes on the capital on Friday after images of missile defense systems on several Moscow rooftops circulated on social media.

Anti-aircraft missile systems have been spotted across Moscow this week amid concerns over Ukraine's ability to strike deep within Russian territory.

Videos and photos circulating online Thursday showed what appeared to be a Pantsir-S1 surface-to-air system being installed on top of an administrative building and the Defense Ministry headquarters in central Moscow.

On Friday, reports emerged that another likely Pantsir-S1 system had been [spotted](#) 10 kilometers from President Vladimir Putin's official residence in Novo-Ogaryovo outside

Moscow this month.

Pantsir-S1 is an air defense system designed to protect against a variety of weapons including aircraft and ballistic and cruise missiles.

They follow sightings of S-400 anti-aircraft missile systems at a national park and a testing ground in north and northeastern Moscow.

Security analyst Michael Horowitz said on Twitter that Russia could be concerned about "Ukrainian attacks against Moscow" or wanted to play up the threat of Ukrainian attacks.

Embed:

Moscow has accused Ukrainian forces of being behind drone attacks on military infrastructure deep inside Russian territory.

On Friday, Ukraine's Western allies gathered for a major conference to decide on a new package of military aid for the war-torn country.

Putin sent troops to Ukraine in February last year but Moscow's army has suffered a string of military setbacks in Ukraine in recent months.

The reported Pantsir-S1 and S-400 deployments follow a series of damaging [drone strikes](#) hundreds of kilometers within Russian territory last month. Moscow blamed Kyiv for the attacks, while Kyiv has not officially commented on the incidents.

Asked whether Russia was concerned that Moscow could be a target, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov referred questions to the defense ministry.

"They are responsible for ensuring the security of the country in general and the capital in particular, therefore it is better to ask the defense ministry about all measures that are taken," Peskov told reporters.

The ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Experts have [warned](#) that Moscow has been left exposed to potential Ukrainian strikes after it moved its air defense systems closer to Ukraine following the Feb. 24, 2022 invasion of its neighbor.

AFP contributed reporting.

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