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Downed Drones Near Putin's Residence Rattle Russia's Elite

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President Vladimir Putin's residence in Novo-Ogaryovo outside Moscow. **Dmitry Azarov / Kommersant**

Luxury houses owned by the Russian elite and President Vladimir Putin's main out-of-town residence were just a few kilometers from where drones were shot down Tuesday during a major attack on the Russian capital, according to a crash site list published by a Russian parliamentary deputy.

Since the Soviet era, Moscow's western suburbs — where at least five drones came down before dawn — have been home to much of Russia's elite.

"I think we will have to live with this for quite a long time," a top Russian official told The Moscow Times when asked about the attacks, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"The conflict with Ukraine is dragging on."

While it is unclear whether the drones — which Russia has accused Ukraine of launching —

were targeting Putin's residence or other properties in the vicinity, the sounds of air defense missiles and the blasts from downed drones likely interrupted the sleep of many of the Russian political and business elite.

According to a list of places where drones apparently crashed that was published by State Duma deputy Alexander Khinshtein, one drone was shot down near the village of Ilyinskoe and another near the village of Razdory.

Both villages are only a few kilometers from Putin's Novo-Ogaryovo residence, where the Russian leader is believed to spend much of his time.

When two drones were shot down over the Kremlin earlier this month, Putin's spokesperson Dmitry Peskov claimed the incident was an assassination attempt on the president.

And a possible strike on presidential residences seems to have been something anticipated by the Russian authorities.

A Pantsir-S1 air defense system was installed 10 kilometers from Novo-Ogaryovo, near the village of Zarechye, in January, according to the Sirena Telegram channel run by supporters of jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny. Another Pantsir-S1 was spotted near one of Putin's other residences in the northwestern Novgorod region around the same time.

While Peskov declined to say whether Putin was at Novo-Ogaryovo as Tuesday's drone attack unfolded, other members of the Russian elite were undoubtedly disturbed by the blasts.

Former Bolshoi ballerina and Russian celebrity Anastasia Volochkova, who owns a mansion in Nikolo-Uryupino north of Ilyinskoe, posted on Instagram on Tuesday that she was woken by explosions.

"Two hours ago I woke up from some terrible blasts," she wrote, apparently unaware that the capital had been attacked by drones.

According to Khinshtein, another drone was shot down near the village of Timoshkino, which is a few kilometers from the Gorki-9 residence of ex-Russian President Dmitry Medvedev.

Historically, Soviet leaders and top bureaucrats were provided with out-of-town residences to the west of Moscow. Today, the area is filled with luxury housing developments — particularly clustered along the Rublyovka highway — that are home to some of Russia's wealthiest and most powerful people.

Khinshtein also said that a drone was shot down near the luxury Greenfield housing complex, where a mansion belonging to Alexei Miller, the head of state-owned gas giant Gazprom, is reportedly located.

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According to an investigation by independent media outlet Proekt, billionaires Boris and Arkady Rotenberg — childhood friends of Putin — have mansions just a few kilometers away from Novo-Ogaryovo. Homes used by Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu and top Kremlin official

Sergei Kiriyenko are believed to be nearby.

The Russian Defense Ministry said Tuesday that a total of eight drones were downed over Moscow — three by jamming their control systems and another five by air defense systems.

However, reports on social media suggested up to 32 drones reached Moscow and its surrounding areas.

Not all the unmanned aerial vehicles were shot down in western Moscow, however, with several high-rise apartment blocks in the south-west of the city also apparently damaged by falling drones.

Kyiv has denied involvement in the drone attacks.

Shoigu described the attempted strikes on Moscow as a "terrorist attack against civilians," the state-run RIA Novosti news agency reported.

Russia's Investigative Committee announced it had opened a criminal case.

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