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Ukraine Vows Retaliation to Deadly Odesa Strikes

By AFP

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Oleksandr GIMANOV / AFP

Russia's latest missile attack on Odesa left two dead Sunday, wounded many and badly damaged a UNESCO-listed Orthodox cathedral, drawing a vow of retaliation from Ukraine's leader.

The strike on the port city, which Russia has pounded since quitting the Black Sea grain deal, came just hours before Russian President Vladimir Putin met his Belarus counterpart for talks.

Ukrainian leader Volodmyr Zelensky promised to strike back at Russia for the deadly attack, which involved 19 missiles and also wounded 22 people.

"Missiles against peaceful cities, against residential buildings, a cathedral," Zelensky said. "There will definitely be a retaliation against Russian terrorists for Odesa."

Kyiv also said the Orthodox Savior and Transfiguration Cathedral under UNESCO protection in

the historic city centre was destroyed, calling it a "war crime that will never be forgotten and forgiven."

Andriy Palchuk, archdeacon of the cathedral, told AFP that both people in the cathedral at the time of the attack survived.

Embed:

> Missiles against peaceful cities, against residential buildings, a cathedral... There can be no excuse for Russian evil. As always, this evil will lose. And there will definitely be a retaliation to Russian terrorists for Odesa. They will feel this retaliation.
>
> All those who... pic.twitter.com/gcpD30BFP1
>
> — Володимир Зеленський (@ZelenskyyUa) July 23, 2023

Moscow said it had hit all its intended targets in the Odesa strike, claiming the sites were being used to prepare "terrorist acts" against Russia.

Odesa has been bombed several times since the start of the invasion, and in January the United Nations cultural agency UNESCO designated the historic centre of the city as a World Heritage in Danger site.

Attacks have increased since Russia said it was pulling out of a key deal which allowed the safe export of Ukrainian grain — effectively ending the agreement signed in July last year between Moscow, Kyiv, Istanbul and the UN.

Russian authorities then announced that they would consider any ships heading for Ukrainian grain ports on the Black Sea as military targets.

Kyiv has accused Russia of targeting grain supplies and infrastructure vital to any resumption of Ukrainian grain exports.

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