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‘Very Alarming’: Muscovites Shaken By Fresh Drone Attack on Capital

July 24, 2023



Moskva News Agency

Moscow residents were startled awake in the middle of the night as Ukrainian drones crashed close to the Russian Defense Ministry building in the city center on Monday and another hit an office building in a southern area of the capital.

“Around 3:30-3:40 a.m. I heard a very loud sound of an explosion and then the sound of car sirens,” said one Muscovite whose apartment is near the Defense Ministry headquarters.

Another eyewitness told The Moscow Times that she was also woken by the explosion, calling the incident “very alarming.”

Eyewitnesses interviewed by The Moscow Times requested anonymity in order to speak freely about potentially sensitive matters.

While Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin said the strikes caused “no serious damage or casualties,” the attack — which came a day after Ukraine vowed to "retaliate" for a Russian

missile attack on the Black Sea port of Odesa — is likely to be seen as a demonstration of Kyiv's ability to hit targets inside Russia.

A Ukrainian defense source told AFP the attack on Moscow was a "special operation" carried out by Kyiv's military intelligence.

The female eyewitness who spoke to The Moscow Times said she was now considering moving to a different city if “the situation further escalates.”

Other Muscovites appeared to remain calm in the aftermath of Monday's attack.

One man who lives not far from the Defense Ministry building told The Moscow Times that he had “no worries” because his apartment is on the third floor and “drones don’t fly that low, I hope.”

However, he added that “the sound was so loud that my wife and I woke up” and said they were “obviously scared,”

According to Moscow authorities, two Ukrainian drones were downed over the Russian capital. The Defense Ministry said the drones were “suppressed” by electronic warfare systems.

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Footage of the aftermath published on social media and by Russian news outlets showed several buildings with shattered windows.

One eyewitness told the independent broadcaster Dozhd that he saw four buildings on Komsomolsky Prospekt in central Moscow that had been slightly damaged. The resident of an apartment in one of these buildings filmed a video showing the dwelling's broken windows.

The Kremlin declined to comment when asked about the operation of Moscow's air defense systems during the incident.

"As for developing the system of protection and providing for its more intensive operation, this question should be addressed to the Defense Ministry," Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

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Moscow authorities installed additional air defense systems on rooftops around the capital this year, with the Defense Ministry saying in March it would modernize the capital's defensive weapons.

In May, Moscow said that Ukraine carried out a drone attack on the Kremlin in an attempt to assassinate President Vladimir Putin, with Putin saying that “the air defense system worked normally.”

Yet some Muscovites who live near the Defense Ministry building questioned whether sufficient security measures were in place to safeguard the city on Monday.

“Where did they [the drones] fly from?... How the hell did they fly to the very heart of Moscow without any obstacles?” said one member of an online neighborhood group chat seen by The Moscow Times.

“It's surprising how close they flew to the Defense Ministry,” another Muscovite from the group chat said.

“Is there really no air defense system?” the Muscovite added.

AFP contributed reporting.

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https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/07/24/very-alarming-muscovites-shaken-by-fresh-drone-attack-a81947