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Russia Says Thwarted Ukrainian Drone Attacks on Moscow, Crimea

By AFP

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A view of a damaged office block of the Moscow International Business Center (Moskva City) following a reported drone attack in Moscow on July 30. **Alexander Nemenov / AFP**

Russia said on Sunday it had downed Ukrainian drones targeting Moscow and the Crimea peninsula in attacks that damaged two office towers in the capital and briefly shut an international airport.

One drone targeting Moscow was shot down on the city's outskirts and two others were "suppressed by electronic warfare" and smashed into an office complex early on Sunday, the Russian Defense Ministry said, adding that there were no injuries.

Moscow and its environs, lying about 500 kilometers (310 miles) from the Ukrainian border, had rarely been targeted during the conflict in Ukraine until several drone attacks this year.

Following the attacks, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky warned that "war" was

coming to Russia.

"Gradually, the war is returning to the territory of Russia — to its symbolic centers and military bases, and this is an inevitable, natural and absolutely fair process," Zelensky said on a visit to the western city of Ivano-Frankivsk.

Russia has been targeted with a series of recent drone assaults — including on the Kremlin and Russian towns near the border with Ukraine — that Moscow has blamed on Kyiv.

Russia's Defense Ministry denounced an "attempted terrorist attack" which Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said would have been "impossible without the help afforded the Kyiv regime by the United States and its NATO allies."

The Defense Ministry said on Telegram: "On the morning of July 30, the Kyiv regime's attempted terrorist attack with unmanned aerial vehicles on objects in the city of Moscow was thwarted.

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"One Ukrainian UAV was destroyed in the air by air defence systems over the territory of the Odintsovo district of Moscow region.

"Two more drones were suppressed by electronic warfare and, having lost control, crashed on the territory of Moscow-City's non-residential building complex."

Moscow-City is a commercial development in the west of the capital.

Mayor Sergei Sobyanin posted on Telegram that the "facades of two city office towers were slightly damaged" but added there were no victims.

Several windows had been blown out on the corner of the buildings, AFP photos showed, with mangled steel beams visible and documents strewn on the ground below.

Police officers had cordoned off the area.

Airport briefly closed

The TASS state news agency reported the capital's Vnukovo airport was "closed for departures and arrivals, flights are redirected to other airports" but operations appeared to have returned to normal inside an hour.

Earlier this month, a volley of drone attacks briefly disrupted air traffic at the same airport.

The Defense Ministry also said on Sunday that 25 Ukrainian drones were destroyed by air defense fire in an overnight attack on Crimea, a peninsula Moscow annexed in 2014.

"Another nine Ukrainian drones were suppressed by means of electronic warfare and, without reaching the target, crashed into the Black Sea," the ministry said, adding that there were no victims.

Crimea has been targeted by Kyiv throughout Moscow's Ukraine offensive but has come under more intense, increased attacks in recent weeks.

Kyiv has repeatedly said it plans to take Crimea back.

The attacks on Moscow come several weeks into a Ukrainian counteroffensive to claw back territory captured by Russia since large-scale hostilities erupted in February 2022.

On Friday, Russia said it had intercepted two missiles over its southern Rostov region bordering Ukraine, with at least 16 people wounded by debris falling on the city of Taganrog.

Shortly after, it said it had downed a second S-200 missile near the city of Azov, with debris falling in an unpopulated area.

Across the border, a Russian strike killed two people in the southern city of Zaporizhzhia on Saturday, authorities there said.

Two civilians were also killed in a missile attack Saturday on the northeastern city of Sumy, the municipal city council said, with 20 more hurt, three of them hospitalized after a higher education institution was hit.

According to public broadcaster Suspilne, the building was destroyed in an explosion at about 8:00 p.m. (17:00 GMT).

In early July, a Russian drone attack hit an apartment building in the same city, killing three and wounding 21.

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