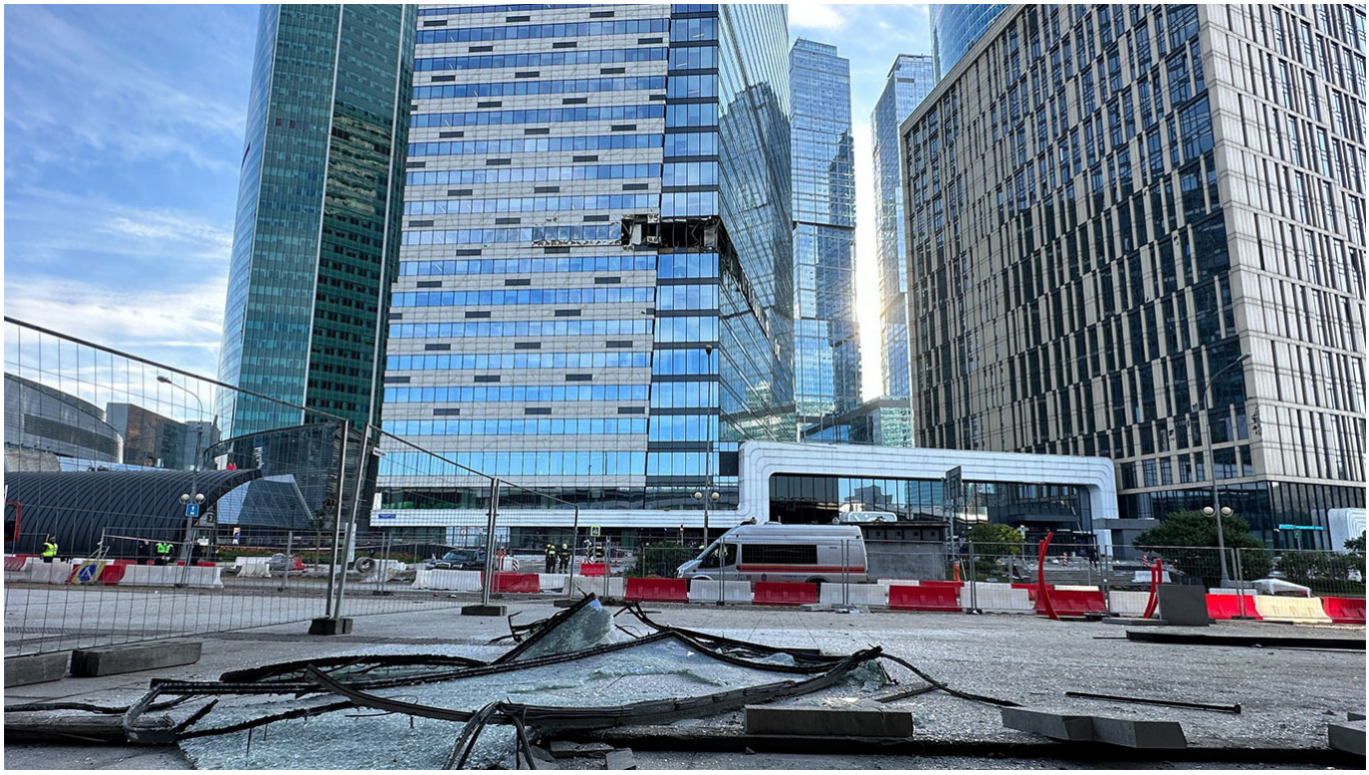
The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Drone Attacks Target Moscow and Russia's Black Sea Patrols

By AFP

August 01, 2023



Moskva News Agency

Russia said Tuesday it had downed another wave of Ukrainian drones aimed at vessels in the Black Sea and Moscow, as an office block in the capital's main business district was struck for the second time in a few days.

"Two Ukrainian (unmanned aerial vehicles) were destroyed by air defense systems over the territory of the Odintsovo and Narofominsk districts of Moscow region," the Russian Defense Ministry said.

"Another drone was suppressed by electronic warfare and, having lost control, crashed on the territory of Moscow City," the capital's main commercial district, the ministry said.

On Sunday, Russian defenses downed drones in that same district, with debris damaging two office towers, blowing out several windows and scattering documents on the pavement below.

Related article: Russia Says Thwarted Ukrainian Drone Attacks on Moscow, Crimea

"One flew into the same tower in (Moscow) City as last time," Mayor Sergei Sobyanin said Tuesday on Telegram.

"The facade on the 21st floor was damaged," and a number of windows were smashed, the mayor said.

He added that emergency services had gone to the scene and that there was no information on any casualties.

"We heard a big explosion, there was no panic," local resident Arkady Metler, 29, told AFP.

"Nobody should be scared... we cannot do anything but stick together," said Metler.

'In shock'

Other residents were more shaken by the renewed explosion in their neighborhood.

"After the last attack, everyone was saying, 'They don't hit the same place twice.' But when we woke up this morning we were in shock," Anastasia Berseneva, 26, told AFP.

"I'm not sure whether I will move out or not but I'm thinking probably yes."

Shortly after the drone attack, Moscow's Vnukovo international airport was briefly closed, TASS state news agency reported.

"Vnukovo was temporarily closed for arrivals and departures, the planes are redirected to other airports," emergency services said, according to TASS, which later reported that it had resumed normal operations.

The same airport, to the southwest of Moscow, was briefly closed after Sunday's attack and earlier this month, a volley of drone attacks disrupted air traffic at Vnukovo.

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

The Russian Defense Ministry said Tuesday it also foiled a Ukrainian drone attack targeting patrol boats in the Black Sea.

'Act of desperation'

"During the night, Ukrainian armed forces tried without success to attack with three drones the 'Sergei Kotov' and 'Vasily Bykov,' patrol boats of the Russian fleet," the Defense Ministry said in a statement.

The three drones were trained on the ships, navigating in waters 340 kilometers (210 miles) southwest of Sevastopol, the base of Russia's Black Sea Fleet on the annexed Crimea peninsula.

Tuesday's attacks were the latest in a series of drone assaults — including on the Kremlin and Russian towns near the border with Ukraine — that Moscow has blamed on Kyiv.

On Monday, a missile strike on a residential building killed six and wounded dozens in Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's hometown of Kryvyi Rih.

Without mentioning a particular attack, Zelensky warned Sunday that the conflict 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 Sunday.

The Kremlin on Monday called the recent strikes on the capital an "act of desperation" by Ukraine following setbacks on the battlefield.

Ukraine began its long-awaited counteroffensive in June but has made modest advances in the face of stiff resistance from Russian forces on the frontline.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/08/01/drone-attacks-target-moscow-and-russias-black-sea-patrols-a82017