

Russian Strike Kills 51 Gathered for Wake in East Ukraine

By [AFP](#)

October 05, 2023



Oleg Sinegubov / Telegram

A Russian strike killed at least 51 people gathered for a wake in northeastern Ukraine on Thursday, provoking outrage from Western leaders for what the UN warned could be a war crime.

The mourners for a fallen Ukrainian soldier had gathered at a cafe in the village of Groza, located in the Kharkiv region.

People who had been in a shop in the same building were also killed in the attack on the small village, which had a population of 330 people.

Police and soldiers loaded body bags of unidentifiable bodies onto trucks bound for the city Kharkiv for DNA testing.

"My son was just found without a head, without arms, without legs, without anything. They recognized him from his documents," Volodymyr Mukhovaty, 70, told AFP.

His wife and daughter-in-law were also attending the wake, he said, acknowledging he had "little hope" of finding them alive.

"I lived with my wife for 48 years," he said. "I will not last long alone."

Embed:

☒☒росіяни вдарили по кафе та магазину на Харківщині — загинули щонайменше 49 людей, серед них хлопчик 6 років.

Атаку здійснили близько 13:15 по селу Гроза Куп'янського району, на момент удару у кафе та магазині перебувало багато цивільних людей. Зараз там продовжують працювати... pic.twitter.com/1Wfe8emavZ

— hromadske (@HromadskeUA) [October 5, 2023](#)

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, who was attending a European summit in Spain, said he had no doubts that the strike had been deliberate.

"The Russian military could not fail to know where they were hitting," he said.

"It was not a blind strike."

Zelensky also said he had secured agreements from several countries to provide Kyiv with more air defense systems and artillery.

Thursday's attack took place in the Kupiansk district of the war-battered Kharkiv region bordering Russia, where Moscow's forces have been pushing to recapture territory they lost last year to Ukrainian troops.

'True evil'

The head of the Kharkiv region Oleg Sinegubov said the strike took place around 1:15 p.m.

The village of Groza is located west of Kupiansk, a frontline town in the region where officials have recently ordered mandatory evacuations following a surge in Russian strikes.

Zelensky's adviser Mykhailo Podolyak said the attack had "no military logic."

"This is a reminder to anyone who is willing to smile and shake hands with war criminal Putin at international conferences," he said, referring to Russian leader Vladimir Putin.

"A reminder to all those who want to sell something to Russia and return to bloody business as usual," he said.

Defense Minister Rustem Umerov said the strike showed Ukraine needed more air defense "to protect our country from terror. We are discussing this with partners."

Large swathes of the Kharkiv region were captured by Russian forces in the early days of their invasion launched in February last year.

Ukrainian forces recaptured much of the border territory during a lightning offensive in September 2022, but the regional capital is still subjected to routine shelling.

Updated with new death toll.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/10/05/russian-strike-kills-51-gathered-for-wake-in-east-ukraine-a82675>