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Journalist in Severe Condition, Young Daughter Killed in Russia

By AFP

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A home destroyed by falling drone debris. **Vyacheslav Gladkov / Telegram**

Journalist Khaybar Akifi was severely wounded in a drone attack that also killed his four-year-old daughter and his wife's parents in Russia's border region of Belgorod, several media officials said.

"Right now (Akifi) is in a coma after a Ukrainian drone strike that killed his daughter and his wife's parents," the head of the state television channel RT, Margarita Simonyan, said on Telegram.

She said the 29-year-old journalist had been covering the aftermath of an earthquake in Herat, western Afghanistan, where around 1,000 people were killed.

"He took a few days off to come visit his family in Belgorod" in western Russia, Simonyan said.

His wife is in stable condition in hospital but her parents died in the attack, RIA Novosti said citing the head of the Rossiya Segodnya media group Dmitry Kiselyov.

Russian regions bordering Ukraine like Belgorod have reported repeated attacks from Kyiv's forces including strikes and occasional cross-border incursions.

Earlier, the region's governor said drone debris fell on homes, killing three people including a young child.

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Russian air defenses "shot down an aircraft-type UAV (unmanned aerial vehicle) approaching the city," said Governor Vyacheslav Gladkov, adding that the falling debris destroyed several homes.

"Most importantly, three people were killed, one of them a small child," he wrote on the Telegram messaging app, accompanied by pictures of a house reduced to rubble behind red and white police tape.

"A difficult morning for all of us," he said, offering his condolences to the loved ones of those killed.

"We are all grieving."

Earlier, he had said that the bodies of a man and a woman had been discovered in the rubble, while another man and woman who suffered injuries in the incident were taken to hospital.

The Russian Defense Ministry said on Telegram that an attempted Ukrainian drone attack in the Belgorod region had been "thwarted" at around 11:50 p.m. Wednesday.

It made no mention of casualties.

Since Ukraine launched its counteroffensive in June, Russia has sustained waves of drone attacks, especially in border regions.

On Tuesday, Ukrainian shelling killed two civilians in the Belgorod region, according to Gladkov.

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