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Russia Says It Shot Down Ukrainian Drones Near Occupied Nuclear Plant

By AFP

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The Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant. **IAEA Imagebank**

Russia said Thursday it had intercepted nine Ukrainian drones near the Ukrainian city of Enerhodar, where the Moscow-controlled Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant is located.

The plant, which was captured by Russian forces in March 2022, has been rocked by repeated drone attacks and shelling that Kyiv and Moscow have blamed on each other.

"At around 12:30 Moscow time (09:30 GMT) today, nine Ukrainian copter drones were detected and intercepted by on-duty air defense equipment near the city of Enerhodar in Zaporizhzhia region," the Russian Defense Ministry said.

It accused Ukraine of threatening to cause a "disaster" at the plant during a routine changeover of UN nuclear agency officials, who had been monitoring safety there.

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Russian diplomat Mikhail Ulyanov said earlier Thursday that Ukrainian drones had hit a hotel on the site of the nuclear plant, without providing further detail.

"Instead of keeping 'the regime of silence,' the Ukrainian side undertook a massive drone attack on the town of Enerhodar located near the plant," Ulyanov said on social media.

AFP was not able to verify the accounts.

Fears for safety at the plant have grown since the nearby Kakhovka dam was destroyed in June, threatening the water supply used to cool the plant's nuclear reactors upstream.

The six-reactor plant has not been supplying electricity to the power grid since September 2022 but it still requires constant maintenance to prevent overheating.

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