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St. Petersburg Boosts Security Measures Amid Drone Strikes

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Police in St. Petersburg tape off the apartment building damaged by a drone crash on Saturday morning.
Darya Ivanova / TASS

St. Petersburg authorities on Monday announced strengthened security measures throughout the city after a drone crashed into an apartment building and exploded in Russia's second-largest city over the weekend.

"I held an extended meeting with the heads of law enforcement agencies. We discussed issues of ensuring security in the region," St. Petersburg Governor Alexander Beglov said on the Telegram messaging app.

"The scope of control measures has been strengthened," he added.

A drone crashed into an apartment building in northern St. Petersburg early Saturday, causing an explosion that damaged several buildings and injured eight people. No one was reported killed.

Local law enforcement agencies on Monday opened a criminal probe into the incident, which they are treating as a "terrorist attack."

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Andrei Kartapolov, who heads the lower-house State Duma's Defense Committee, claimed the drone was launched from northeastern Ukraine with assistance from the United States.

"The Americans after all give [Ukraine] the necessary intelligence information, [such as] where our anti-aircraft systems are located," he was quoted as saying by the Fontanka news website.

As part of the enhanced security measures announced on Monday, Beglov instructed the heads of St. Petersburg's 18 districts to develop action plans for emergencies.

"Residents should not be on the street [during emergencies]. The district heads should clearly know where they should [go for safety] if necessary," the governor was quoted as saying by his press office.

While Russian regions bordering Ukraine have frequently been attacked by drones since Moscow launched its full-scale invasion over two years ago, St. Petersburg, located more than 400 kilometers from the border, has only recently faced such attacks.

In January, a drone crashed near the city center, causing an explosion at an oil refinery. It was the second such incident in St. Petersburg since the start of the war.

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