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Russian Attacks Kill 3 as Ukraine Calls for More Air Defenses

By AFP

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The State Emergency Service of Ukraine

Russian attacks on eastern and southern Ukraine killed at least three people on Wednesday, officials said, as Kyiv called for more Patriot air defense systems to battle a surge in missile strikes.

Moscow has escalated aerial attacks on Ukraine in the past few weeks, targeting key infrastructure — including power stations — in retaliation for fatal bombardments of Russia's border regions.

In Ukraine's second-largest city of Kharkiv, which has been reeling from power outages due to the strikes, officials said shelling killed at least one person and injured 16 others.

"Four children are among the wounded. Apartment buildings were damaged. The number of victims may increase," the region's Governor Oleh Siniehubov said.

The governor of Ukraine's southern Kherson region, which is partially occupied by Russia, said one woman had been killed in a drone attack on the village of Mykhailivka.

"A 61-year-old local resident was fatally wounded in her own home," the official, Oleksandr Prokudin, wrote on social media.

And in the southeastern city of Nikopol, officials said artillery fire killed a 55-year-old man, while a ballistic missile strike on the coastal territory of Mykolaiv left eight wounded.

The Ukrainian air force said Russia had launched 13 Iranian-designed attack drones overnight and that 10 were downed over the Kharkiv region, the neighboring Sumy region and near the capital Kyiv.

'Little time'

During an online briefing on Wednesday, Ukraine's Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba called again for urgent deliveries of air defense systems he said were crucial in warding off the increase in attacks.

"The peculiarity of the current Russian attacks is the intensive use of ballistic missiles that can reach targets at extremely high speeds, leaving little time for people to take cover and causing significant destruction," Kuleba said.

"Patriot and other similar systems are defensive by definition. They are designed to protect lives, not take them," he said.

Ukraine has been forced onto the defensive in the past few months as it struggles with ammunition shortages and delays to a $60 billion aid package from Washington.

It has also been forced to concede ground to Russia on the eastern front, warning earlier this week of "difficult" battles around the eastern city of Chasiv Yar.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky was in the Sumy region on Wednesday, where he met with soldiers recovering from their injuries.

The army's ground forces commander warned last week that Russia was building a group of over 100,000 soldiers in advance of what may be a major offensive this summer.

Russia meanwhile announced that its air defence systems had shot down 18 rockets near the border city of Belgorod, which has recently seen an increase in fatal Ukrainian attacks.

The governor of Russia's Belgorod region, Vyacheslav Gladkov, said two people were wounded during the barrage and later drone attack.

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