

9 Killed in Overnight Russian Strikes on Ukraine

By [AFP](#)

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Dnipro after Russian strikes. **State Emergency Service of Ukraine**

Russian strikes on Ukraine in the early hours of Friday killed at least nine people, including three children, as Kyiv said it shot down a Russian strategic bomber for the first time.

Moscow said a military plane crashed over the south of the country while returning to base from a combat mission after suffering a technical malfunction.

The downing of a Russian bomber used to fire cruise missiles at Ukraine would be a highly symbolic win for Kyiv, which has been pounded by hundreds of overnight Russian aerial strikes since Moscow invaded more than two years ago.

The latest overnight Russian strikes on the eastern Dnipropetrovsk region killed at least nine people and injured more than a dozen, Ukrainian officials said Friday.

"A child who was heavily wounded during a massive enemy attack on the Dnipropetrovsk region today died in hospital. The death toll had now risen to nine, including three children," the office of Ukraine's Prosecutor General said in a statement on Telegram.

Strikes were recorded on the region's Synelnykivsky area — where at least two children, aged six and eight, were among those killed — and the regional capital of Dnipro, the interior ministry said.

"Unfortunately, the number of victims is expected to rise. The rubble of the damaged buildings is being cleared," Interior Minister Ihor Klymenko said in a post on Telegram.

He published photos showing emergency workers carrying injured people away on stretchers.

Life-saving air defense

After the strike, President Volodymyr Zelensky repeated his calls for Ukraine's Western allies to supply air defense systems.

"Every country that provides air defense systems to Ukraine, every leader who helps persuade our partners that air defense systems should not be stored in warehouses but deployed in real cities and communities facing terror, and everyone who supports our defence is a life saver," Zelensky said on social media.

Embed:

In Washington, the U.S. House of Representatives is gearing up for a crucial weekend vote on a long-stalled \$61 billion package of military aid for Kyiv that could deliver much-needed weapons to Ukrainian soldiers struggling on the front lines.

In a boost for their forces, Kyiv said it had downed a Russian long-range strategic bomber for the first time in an overnight attack.

"For the first time, anti-aircraft missile units of the air force, in cooperation with the defense intelligence of Ukraine, destroyed a Tu-22M3 long-range strategic bomber," Ukraine's military said in a statement on social media.

The plane was returning to its base in Russia after having fired missiles at Ukraine earlier in the night, the main intelligence directorate of Ukraine's defense ministry said.

Shot down

Russian officials said the plane crashed over the southern Stavropol region, but blamed it on a technical malfunction. It said at least one member of the crew had died.

"A Russian armed forces Tu-22M3 aircraft crashed in the Stavropol region while returning to its base aerodrome after performing a combat mission. The pilots ejected," the state-run TASS news agency quoted Russia's defense ministry as saying.

"According to preliminary data, the cause of the accident was a technical malfunction," it

added.

One of the four crew members died in the incident, Stavropol Governor Vladimir Vladimirov said in a post on Telegram, and two were taken to a local medical center.

"The search for the fourth pilot is continuing," he added, posting photos of the burnt-out and mangled fuselage of the plane in a field.

The plane crashed in the region's Krasnogvardeysky district, the governor said — around 400 kilometers (250 miles) from the eastern edge of the annexed Crimean peninsula.

The main intelligence directorate of Ukraine's defense ministry said it "was shot down at a distance of about 300 kilometers from Ukraine. As a result of the hit, the bomber was able to fly to the Stavropol area, where it crashed."

Ukraine's air force said Friday that Russia had launched 22 missiles and 14 Iranian-designed attack drones overnight — including from the downed strategic bomber.

It said all the unmanned aerial vehicles were downed as well as 15 missiles.

Russian strikes have pummelled towns and cities across Ukraine since the beginning of Moscow's invasion more than two years ago. A missile attack on the northern city of Chernigiv left 18 dead earlier this week.

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