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Russian Long-Range Strategic Bomber Crashes, Ukraine Claims Responsibility

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VVV5807 / Telegram

Ukraine said Friday that, for the first time since Russia's invasion, it had downed a Russian long-range bomber used to fire cruise missiles at cities across the war-battered country.

"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 Russian Defense Ministry said a "technical malfunction" caused the crash.

Russian officials said the plane had crashed over the southern Stavropol region when it was flying back to base and at least one member of the crew had died.

Two other pilots were taken to the hospital and searches are underway for the fourth pilot, the state-run RIA Novosti news agency reported, citing the Defense Ministry.

Footage circulating on social media shows the bomber spinning as it descends to the ground

with a fire near its tail.

Ukraine said that the Tu-22M3 had launched deadly strikes on the cities of Dnipro and Kryvyi Rih overnight.

"This was the plane that bombed Dnipro and Kryvyi Rih. We took our revenge for our cities and civilians," air force spokesperson Illya Yevlash told AFP.

Embed:

Stavropol is a region in Russia's north Caucasus, to the east of the annexed Crimean peninsula which has seen multiple attacks throughout the two-year war.

The plane crashed in the Stavropol region's Krasnogvardeysky district, the governor said — around 400 kilometers from the eastern edge of Crimea.

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.

AFP contributed reporting.

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