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Russian Rockets Kill 2 as Rivals Mark Orthodox Easter

By AFP

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"In Pokrovsk, rocket attacks killed two people and damaged a house," said Vadim Filashkin, Ukraine's governor of the eastern Donetsk region. **t.me/VadymFilashkin**

A Russian rocket strike on Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region killed two people and a drone attack on the northeastern city of Kharkiv injured at least six, officials said Sunday.

The overnight attacks came as Orthodox Christians in Ukraine and Russia celebrated Easter.

"In Pokrovsk, rocket attacks killed two people and damaged a house," Vadim Filashkin, Ukraine's governor of the eastern Donetsk region, said in a post on Telegram.

Pokrovsk is around 60 kilometers (35 miles) northwest of Donetsk city, the Russian-held capital of the region which Moscow claims to have annexed.

Ukraine's air force said Russia fired 24 Iranian-style "Shahed" drones at its territory overnight, 23 of which were shot down.

"A house and outbuildings were burned down as a result of 'Shahed' attacks. Six people were injured, among them a girl born in 2015," said Kharkiv Governor Oleg Synegubov on Telegram.

In Russia and Ukraine, leaders have used religion and the church institution to rally society behind the war effort.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky published a video message on Sunday from Kyiv's Saint Sophia Cathedral in the center of the capital.

Wearing a traditional Ukrainian vyshyvanka shirt, instead of his typical army-style clothes, he said: "We believe that God has a chevron with the Ukrainian flag on his shoulder. Therefore, with such an ally, life will definitely defeat death."

An exhibition at the cathedral features religion icons painted on ammunition boxes.

In Russia, President Vladimir Putin did not explicitly mention the war — that Russia calls a "special military operation" — in his Easter message.

In a public address to Patriarch Kirill — head of the Russian Orthodox Church that strongly backs Moscow's invasion of Ukraine — Putin thanked him for "fruitful cooperation in the current difficult period, when it is so important for us to unite our efforts for the steady development and strengthening of the Fatherland."

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