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Russian Military Says Targeted Drone Training Center in Poltava Attack

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A house in Poltava after a Russian missile strike. **State Emergency Service of Ukraine**

Russia's Defense Ministry said Wednesday that its deadly strike on the central Ukrainian city of Poltava targeted a drone and electronic warfare training center.

At least 53 people were killed and 298 others were injured in Tuesday's attack on a military institute and nearby hospital in the central city of Poltava. Ukrainian authorities did not say how many of the victims were military or civilian.

"Russia's armed forces carried out a precision strike on the 179th joint training center of the Ukrainian army in the city of Poltava," the Russian Defense Ministry said in a daily briefing.

The ministry claimed that Ukrainian communications and electronic warfare specialists, as well as drone operators involved in strikes on Russian territory, were being trained at the center "under the guidance of foreign instructors."

According to AFP, the Poltava military communications institute, founded in the 1960s when

Ukraine was still a part of the U.S.S.R., specializes in training telecommunications specialists.

The strike triggered anger on Ukrainian social media after unconfirmed reports said it had targeted an outdoor military ceremony, with many blaming reckless behavior from officials who allowed the event to take place despite the threat of Russian attacks.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said he had ordered a "full and prompt investigation into all the circumstances."

AFP contributed reporting.

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