Russia Pounds Ukraine With 'Massive' Attack in 'Hellish' Night

By [Sergii Volskyi for AFP](#)

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A Ukrainian rescuer works to extinguish a fire in a building following a drone attack in Mykolaiv. **AFP PHOTO / UKRAINIAN EMERGENCY SERVICE**

Russia on Sunday pummelled Ukraine with a "massive" aerial barrage of missiles and drones, killing at least nine people across the country in the largest attack in months that Kyiv called "hellish."

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Moscow launched 120 missiles and almost 100 drones, targeting Kyiv as well as southern, central and far-western corners of the country.

Civilians were killed in the Mykolaiv, Lviv, Kherson, Dnipropetrovsk and Odesa regions.

"A hellish night," the spokesman for Ukraine's airforce Yuriy Ignat said on social media, saying Kyiv downed "144 targets."

The strikes caused massive power cuts across the country, with fears of a precarious winter to come.

Officials in Kyiv called it one of the biggest attacks in the almost three-year-long Russian invasion.

"A massive attack on our country," Zelensky said.

"Over the past week, the aggressor used nearly 140 missiles of various types, more than 900 guided aerial bombs, and over 600 strike drones," he said, accusing Moscow of trying to "intimidate us with cold and blackouts."

The attack came just two days after German Chancellor Olaf Scholz called Russian leader Vladimir Putin for the first time in almost two years.

'True response'

"This is war criminal Putin's true response to all those who called and visited him recently," Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andriy Sybiga said after the attack.

"We need peace through strength, not appeasement."

Kyiv had slammed Scholz for calling Putin, as have many in Germany itself.

But on Sunday, Scholz reaffirmed his country's support for Ukraine, saying that no decision on ending the war would be taken without Kyiv.

"Ukraine can count on us" and "no decision will be taken behind Ukraine's back," the chancellor said at Berlin airport before flying off to a G20 meeting in Rio de Janeiro.

Ukraine has been on the back foot militarily in eastern Ukraine, where Moscow's forces have made steady advances.

The election of Donald Trump in the U.S. has raised questions about the future of the conflict, with the Republican blazingly critical of U.S. aid to Ukraine.

AFP journalists heard explosions in the early morning in Kyiv and in Sloviansk in the Donetsk region.

Moscow, meanwhile, said it had hit all its targets, claiming it had targeted an "essential energy infrastructure supporting the Ukrainian military-industrial complex."

But civilian deaths were reported across Ukraine.

Officials in Kherson said a 51-year-old woman was killed by a drone.

Civilian deaths across country

In the southern Mykolaiv region, local leader Vitaliy Kim said two women were killed in a night attack and that seven people — including two children — were wounded.

The death toll included two employees of the state railway company Ukrzaliznytsia in the city of Nikopol, who were killed when a depot was hit, the Dnipropetrovsk region's Governor Serhiy Lysak and the operator said. Three more people were wounded in the bombing.

Two people were also killed in the Odesa region, where a teenager was wounded.

Russian drones also made their way to Zakarpattia — a mountainous region rarely hit — with officials saying fragments fell in the village of Pavshyno, near the border with Hungary and Slovakia.

The head of the Lviv region, Maksym Kozytsky, said a 66-year-old woman was killed in her car in the village of Sheptytsky — some 20 kilometers (12 miles) from the Polish border.

That prompted NATO member Poland to scramble fighter jets and mobilize all available forces on Sunday in response.

Warsaw puts its armed forces on alert whenever attacks against its neighboring country are deemed likely to create a danger for its own territory.

Russia, meanwhile, said a man was killed by a Ukrainian drone in its border Belgorod region.

Attacks on energy facilities 'throughout Ukraine'

Ukraine's energy operator DTEK on Sunday announced emergency power cuts in the Kyiv region and two regions in the east.

Russia's relentless aerial bombardment has destroyed half of Ukraine's energy production capacity, President Volodymyr Zelensky has said.

Earlier, Ukraine's Energy Minister Herman Halushchenko said on Telegram that Russian forces were "attacking electricity generation and transmission facilities throughout Ukraine."

With the harsh Ukrainian winter fast approaching, the country is already suffering from major energy shortfalls, while its outmanned and outgunned forces have been steadily ceding ground to the Kremlin's troops for weeks.

Kyiv has implored its Western allies to help rebuild its energy grid — a hugely expensive undertaking — and supply its outgunned forces with more aerial defense weapons.

But many in Ukraine fear that Western help will not be as freely given following the imminent return of Trump to the White House in January.