

# Putin Threatens Kyiv With New Hypersonic Missile

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President Vladimir Putin on Thursday threatened to strike "decision-making centers" in Kyiv with Russia's new hypersonic missile, hours after Moscow pummelled Ukraine's energy grid in an attack that left a million people without power.

Russia fired more than 90 missiles and around 100 drones during the barrage, Kyiv said, in what the Kremlin chief called a "response" to Ukrainian strikes on his territory with Western missiles.

The nearly three-year war has seen a sharp escalation in recent days, with both sides deploying new weapons in a bid to gain the upper hand before U.S. President-elect Donald Trump takes office in January.

"We do not rule out the use of Oreshnik against the military, military-industrial or decision-

making centers, including in Kyiv," Putin told a press conference in the Kazakh capital Astana, referring to the hypersonic missile.

Kyiv's government district — an area of the capital where multiple government buildings are located — is protected with intense security, but fears for it have risen over the last week.

Russia last week tested its new Oreshnik ballistic missile on Ukraine, and Putin boasted on Thursday that firing several of the weapons at once would have the equivalent force of a nuclear strike, or a "meteorite" hit.

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He earlier said the overnight barrage was a "response to continued attacks on our territory by [U.S.] ATACMS missiles."

"As I have said repeatedly, there will always be a response from our side."

Putin also claimed Russia knew how many long-range weapons were given to Kyiv and where they were located.

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk said Putin's threat to strike Kyiv was a "testament to weakness" and said the West would not be perturbed by his words.

## 'Despicable escalation'

The fresh strikes came as Ukrainians braced for a tough winter, with much of its energy infrastructure already damaged by almost three years of war, and as Russian troops advanced in eastern Ukraine.

Tensions have ratcheted up over the last few weeks as both sides look to secure an advantage on the battlefield ahead of Trump's January inauguration.

Putin suggested he had hopes for Trump's second term, describing the Republican on Thursday as an "intelligent person," capable of finding a "solution," without specifying what he was referring to.

The Russian leader spoke hours after the overnight barrage that left more than half a million subscribers in Ukraine's western Lviv region cut off from electricity.

Another 280,000 in the western Rivne region and 215,000 in the northwestern Volyn region also lost power, officials said.

Ukraine's emergency services said the Russian overnight strikes inflicted damage in 14 regions across the country, with the nation's West hard-hit.

Zelensky said that Russia had also fired "cluster munitions" during the attack, calling it a "very despicable escalation of Russian terrorist tactics."

AFP journalists in the capital Kyiv heard blasts ring out over the capital overnight as air

defense systems targeted Russian drones and missiles, with locals crowding into the underground metro system for cover.

The energy ministry said it was the 11th massive Russian attack on Ukraine's civilian energy infrastructure this year.

A senior UN official, Rosemary DiCarlo, this month warned that Russian attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure may make this winter the "harshest since the start of the war."

## **Putin boasts of new missile**

Since Moscow shocked the West and Kyiv by testing its new ballistic missile Oreshnik on the city of Dnipro last week, Russian officials have touted the arm's might.

In Astana, Putin said the Oreshnik could turn anything "into dust" and hit at a temperature comparable to "the surface of the sun."

He said Russia was "forced" to "test [the weapon] in combat conditions" after Kyiv's first strike on Russian territory using ATACMS.

Putin said Thursday that the Oreshnik could travel "around three kilometers per second" and that its elements could reach a temperature almost "like the surface of the sun."

Russia also sentenced a lawyer, Dmitry Talantov, to seven years in prison for comparing Moscow's actions in Ukraine at the start of the invasion to "Nazi practices," a day after putting an invasion critic back on trial.

Ukraine, meanwhile, sentenced a woman in the eastern Donetsk region to 15 years in jail on high treason charges for passing sensitive military information to Russia.

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