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Ukraine's Kherson Targeted in Months-Long Russian Drone Campaign – FT

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A civilian car attacked by a Russian drone in Kherson, Ukraine. **State Emergency Service of Ukraine**

Russian attack drones have for months targeted civilians in the southern Ukrainian city of Kherson, in an attempt to empty the city ahead of a possible offensive there, the Financial Times reported Wednesday, citing local officials and residents.

At least 37 people have been killed in more than 9,500 drone attacks on Kherson and its neighboring villages since mid-July. In November 2022, Russia withdrew from the city to the eastern banks of the Dnipro River, the de facto front line between the Russian and Ukrainian forces.

Russia's drones have regularly targeted crowded markets, gas stations, cafes, post offices and humanitarian aid centers.

Kherson region Governor Oleksandr Prokudin said Russian forces deployed some of its "best drone units" for "target practice" there. The devices included first-person view (FPV) drones, over-the-counter Chinese Mavics and at times Russia's larger military Lancets.

Drones that carry more powerful explosives like anti-tank mines and RPG warheads have targeted military vehicles, ambulances, police cars, fire trucks and humanitarian convoys. They have ranges of up to 15 kilometers (9.3 miles) and can reach speeds of more than 100 kilometers per hour (62.1 miles per hour).

Some Russian drones carry incendiary bombs, which set fire to fields and homes that jump from building to building.

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“Russia wants to launch another offensive here,” FT quoted Prokudin as saying, claiming that the Russian forces had assembled 300 boats to cross the river.

Ukrainian officials suspect the Kherson drone attacks are part of Russia’s pressure campaign ahead of U.S. President-elect Donald Trump’s inauguration in January and preparations for a potential push across the Dnipro river.

Russia’s military has not commented on the claims.

The Kherson region’s pre-war population of 1 million has now plummeted to 158,000, and the city of Kherson's pre-war population of 250,000 has dropped to 60,000.

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