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Russian Drone Attack Kills 9 in Eastern Ukraine's Sumy

By AFP

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State Emergency Service of Ukraine

A Russian drone attack on a residential block killed nine people including three elderly couples in the eastern Ukrainian city of Sumy, officials said on Thursday.

Moscow has pummelled Ukrainian cities with dozens of drones or missiles almost daily since it invaded in early 2022.

Images distributed by the emergency services showed a gaping hole in the facade of the long block of flats and rescue workers digging through debris for survivors.

"This is a terrible tragedy, a terrible Russian crime. It is very important that the world does not pause in putting pressure on Russia for this terror," President Volodymyr Zelensky wrote on social media.

National Police later said the search operation had been completed after 19 hours, with rescuers finding nine bodies in the ruins, while 13 people were wounded.

Among the dead were three couples — men and women between the ages of 61 and 74 — Ukrainian prosecutors said.

Those killed also included a 37-year-old woman, while her eight-year-old daughter was wounded, the Sumy prosecutor's office said.

Sumy lies just over the border from Russia in northeastern Ukraine and has been regularly targeted by Moscow. Around 255,000 people lived there before the war.

"[Russian President Vladimir] Putin claims to be ready for negotiations, but this is what he actually does. Only strength works with liars," Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha said on social media.

The Ukrainian air force said Moscow had attacked with 81 drones, including the Iranian-designed Shahed type.

Ukraine's air defense units downed 37 of the drones in various regions, including in Sumy and near the capital Kyiv.

In the southern Odesa region on the Black Sea, officials said Russian drones targeted the port town of Izmail, one of several important Ukrainian export hubs.

Zelensky's chief of staff Andriy Yermak on Thursday accused Russia of launching Shahed drones charged with shrapnel "to increase the number of civilian casualties."

Separate Russian attacks killed one person and wounded 14 more, including two children, in Ukraine's eastern Donetsk region, which the Kremlin said it annexed in late 2022.

Ukrainian shelling of a Moscow-held village on the Dnipro River's western bank in the southern Kherson region killed an elderly man and wounded a woman, a spokesman for the Russian authorities told TASS news agency.

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