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Huge Blast Rocks Engels Airbase as Ukraine Launches Major Drone Assault

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Ukrainian drone strikes sparked a fire at a military airfield and wounded at least two people in Russia's southern Saratov region, local authorities said Thursday.

"Due to a fire at the [Engels] airfield, residents of a nearby farming co-op are being evacuated for safety reasons," Saratov region Governor Roman Busargin wrote on Telegram.

The Engels-2 airfield, a base for Tu-95 and Tu-160 nuclear-capable strategic bombers, is located about 500 kilometers (300 miles) east of Ukraine's border and 730 kilometers (454 miles) southeast of Moscow. It has been targeted multiple times since Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022.

Images shared by the Telegram news channel Astra, which frequently reports on Russian and Ukrainian attacks, showed thick smoke rising from an Engels neighborhood about 10 kilometers (6.2 miles) west of the airfield.

Embed:

Busargin described the assault as the "largest ever" drone strike on the Saratov region since the war began. He said attacks also hit the regional capital of Saratov, causing property damage but no casualties.

Two people were wounded in Engels, while a hospital, two kindergartens, a school and at least 30 homes were damaged, according to Busargin and Russian investigators.

Russia's Defense Ministry said its air defenses shot down 132 Ukrainian drones overnight across six regions and occupied Crimea, including 54 over Saratov.

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