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Russian Army Claims Sumy Missile Strike Targeted Ukrainian Military Commanders

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Russia's Defense Ministry said Monday that its missile strike on the Ukrainian city of Sumy killed "more than 60 Ukrainian servicemen" during a meeting of military commanders, breaking a 24-hour silence as it denied targeting civilians.

Ukrainian officials said the Sunday morning strike killed 34 people, including two children, and wounded 117 others. The attack, which hit the city center, was among the deadliest in Ukraine since 2023.

The strike drew widespread condemnation, including from U.S. President Donald Trump, who called it a "horrible thing" and suggested Russia had "made a mistake."

Russia's Defense Ministry said it fired two Iskander-M ballistic missiles at a "meeting place of command staff," claiming the strike killed more than 60 Ukrainian troops. It accused Kyiv

of placing military facilities in populated areas and using civilians as "human shields."

"Our army hits only military and military-related targets," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters Monday, denying that civilians or residential infrastructure had been targeted.

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Peskov also reiterated that only Defense Ministry information is considered official under Russian law, which criminalizes reporting on the war based on non-government sources.

The Defense Ministry acknowledged civilian casualties but blamed Ukraine, saying the strike occurred in a densely populated area because Kyiv held a military gathering there.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Sunday condemned the attack and invited Trump to visit Ukraine to witness the destruction firsthand. He noted the strike occurred on Palm Sunday, a major Christian holiday.

"Only completely deranged scum can do something like this," Zelensky said in his nightly address.

It was the second major Russian attack this month to result in mass civilian casualties. A strike earlier this month in Zelensky's hometown of Kryvyi Rih killed at least 18 people, including nine children.

AFP contributed reporting.

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