

Russian State TV Paints Deadly Sumy Attack as 'Staged Provocation'

By [Moscow Times Reporter](#)

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A Russian ballistic missile attack on Ukraine's northeastern city of Sumy. [Ukraine's State Emergency Service](#)

Russian state television portrayed Sunday's deadly missile strike on the northeastern Ukrainian city of Sumy as a "staged provocation" aimed at "undermining" the ongoing Ukraine ceasefire talks between Moscow and Washington.

Two ballistic missiles hit the center of Sumy, close to the Russian border, on Sunday morning, Ukrainian authorities said. Emergency services said the missiles killed 34 people, including two children, and wounded 117, including 15 children.

Pro-Kremlin talk show host Vladimir Solovyov called the strike a "traditional attempt by the Ukrainian authorities to derail any possibility of negotiations" during his program "Sunday Evening with Vladimir Solovyov" on the state-run broadcaster Rossiya 24.

“I couldn’t ignore the information coming from Sumy. Of course, [German media outlet] Deutsche Welle immediately blames us — ‘a strike in the city center, a large number of casualties’,” Solovyov said.

“If you read Deutsche Welle, you get the impression that the classic German propaganda, naturally in cooperation with the British, trying to stage another Bucha,” he said, referring to the Kyiv suburb which was occupied by the Russian forces in 2022 and where the discovery of civilians’ bodies in the streets sparked international outrage.

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Moscow denied responsibility for committing war crimes in Bucha, instead accusing Ukraine and Western media of fabricating the evidence.

The missile strike in Sumy came just two days after U.S. presidential envoy Steve Witkoff visited Russia to meet with President Vladimir Putin as part of U.S. President Donald Trump’s push to broker a ceasefire in the war, now entering its fourth year.

“Putin spends four hours speaking with a representative of Donald Trump and immediately something happens. Of course, a series of nervous bloggers — mainly Ukrainian or pro-Ukrainian — start screaming ‘horror, horror,’” Solovyov added.

“Traditionally, it was a Ukrainian air defense missile that hit the wrong target, which unfortunately led to civilian deaths,” he concluded.

On the same program, RT editor-in-chief Margarita Simonyan echoed Solovyov’s comments, saying: “They [Ukraine and the West] will keep trying to create another Bucha... because it’s the only way they can now prolong the war.”

Also on Sunday, she posted a clip of herself from the day before in which she claimed that Kyiv was preparing a provocation to thwart peace talks, saying that she was proven right.

“A provocation like this could be staged. Trump is a passionate man, not one to dig deep or show the restraint our president does,” she [said](#) on the state-run TV channel TVTS on Saturday, implying that such an attack could be “orchestrated” to sway Trump.

Asked about accusations that Russia targeted civilians in Sumy, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Monday that “our military carries out strikes exclusively on military and military-adjacent targets.”

Commenting on the attack, Trump said that it was “a mistake” without specifying who he was referring to.

U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio condemned the strike as “horrifying” and “a tragic reminder of why President Trump and his administration are putting so much time and effort into trying to end this war and achieve durable peace.”

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Sunday urged Trump to visit Ukraine to witness the devastation firsthand.

Witnesses described panic as people ran for cover amid burning cars. Rescuers were seen pulling bodies from the rubble of a building near a destroyed trolleybus, the dead covered in silver thermal blankets.

Ukraine's Military Intelligence Chief Kyrylo Budanov said on Telegram that Russia had used two Iskander-M or KN-23 ballistic missiles in the strike on Sumy.

Russia has intensified its bombardments in recent weeks. The city of Sumy has come under increasing pressure as Moscow continues to push back Ukrainian troops from Russia's bordering Kursk region.

AFP contributed reporting.

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