

Zelensky Calls for 'Truly Strong Pressure' on Russia to Halt Strikes

By [AFP](#)

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A local resident looks out of the window of his flat in a residential building, damaged following a Russian drone strike on Kyiv on May 24, 2025. **SERGEI SUPINSKY/AFP**

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky urged international leaders Sunday to increase their pressure on Russia, after a second straight night of major air strikes killed 12 people in Ukraine.

"Without truly strong pressure on the Russian leadership, this brutality cannot be stopped. Sanctions will certainly help," Zelensky said on social media, calling on the United States, European countries and "all those around the world who seek peace" to show their "determination" to make Moscow halt the war.

Ukraine's emergency services described a night of "terror" as Russia launched a second straight night of major air strikes on Ukraine, including on the capital Kyiv, after pummeling the country with ballistic missiles and drones overnight Friday to Saturday.

The latest fire comes as the two sides pursue their biggest prisoner swap since Moscow launched its full-scale invasion in February 2022 and as the United States tries to broker a ceasefire to halt the three-year-old war.

The death toll from the latest Russian strikes included three children ages 8, 12 and 17, killed in the northwestern region of Zhytomyr, officials said.

Ukraine's military said early Sunday it had shot down 45 Russian missiles and 266 attack drones overnight.

Four people were also reported dead in the western Khmelnytskyi region, four in the Kyiv region and one in Mykolaiv in the south.

Emergency services said four people were killed and 16 injured in the Kyiv region, including three children, in the "massive night attack."

AFP journalists heard explosions in Kyiv, with Tymur Tkachenko, the head of the city's military administration, warning "the night will not be easy."

The capital was "under attack" but "air defenses are operating," said Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko.

Russian authorities meanwhile reported that a dozen drones flying towards Moscow had been downed.

In Moscow, restrictions were imposed on at least four airports, including the main hub Sheremetyevo, the Russian civilian aviation authority said.

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