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Russian Air Attacks Kill Two in Ukraine

By AFP

May 31, 2025



Firefighters working to extinguish a fire in Ukraine's Odesa region. **Handout / Ukrainian State Emergency Service Press Service / AFP)**

Russian shelling and air strikes on southern Ukraine killed a man and a nine-year-old girl in separate attacks overnight, Ukrainian officials said on Saturday.

In the Zaporizhzhia region, "Russians hit a residential area with guided aerial bombs," killing the girl and wounding a 16-year-old boy, Ivan Fedorov, head of the regional military administration, said on the Telegram platform.

One house was destroyed and several others damaged by the blast, he added.

In a separate assault on the city of Kherson, a "66-year-old man sustained fatal injuries" from Russian shelling, Oleksandr Prokudin, Kherson region's governor, wrote on Telegram.

Since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, tens of thousands of people have been killed, swaths of eastern and southern Ukraine destroyed and millions forced to flee their homes.

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One person was wounded in a Russian drone strike in the Ukrainian city of Kharkiv, its mayor said.

In Russia, Ukrainian drone attacks wounded 10 people in the Kursk region overnight, acting governor Alexander Khinshtein said.

Diplomatic efforts to end the war have accelerated in recent weeks, with both sides meeting earlier this month for their first round of direct talks in more than three years.

But the negotiations in Istanbul yielded only a prisoner exchange and promises to stay in touch.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Friday that his government did not expect results from further talks with Russia unless Moscow provided its peace terms in advance, accusing the Kremlin of doing "everything" it could to sabotage a potential meeting.

"There must be a ceasefire to continue moving towards peace. We need to stop the killing of people," Zelensky added in a statement on Telegram.

The Ukrainian leader also said he had discussed with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan "a possible next meeting in Istanbul and under what conditions Ukraine is ready to participate," with both agreeing that the next round of talks with Moscow "cannot and should not be a waste of time."

Russia has said it will send a team of negotiators to Istanbul for a second round of talks on Monday. But Kyiv has yet to confirm if it will attend.

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