

Russia Hits Seat of Ukraine Government in War's Biggest Air Attack

By [Caleb Davis for AFP](#)

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The strike on Ukraine's cabinet of ministers, a sprawling government complex at the heart of Kyiv, was the first such strike of the war. [@dsns_telegram](#) / **State Emergency Service of Ukraine**

Russia fired its biggest-ever aerial barrage at Ukraine early Sunday, killing two people and setting the seat of the Ukrainian government in Kyiv ablaze in an attack President Volodymyr Zelensky warned would prolong the war.

The attack was the first to hit Ukraine's cabinet of ministers, a sprawling government complex at the heart of Kyiv.

An AFP reporter saw the roof of Ukraine's cabinet of ministers in flames and smoke billowing over the capital.

Drone strikes also damaged several high-rise buildings in Kyiv, according to emergency services.

Russia has shown no sign of halting its three-and-a-half-year invasion of Ukraine, pushing hardline demands for ending the war despite efforts by the United States to broker a peace deal.

Residents in Kyiv spoke of their frustration following the strikes.

“This is already routine for us, unfortunately,” Olga, a 30-year-old resident of a damaged building told AFP.

The Russians first “grab the Shaheds [Iranian-designed drones], then the rockets come,” she said.

An AFP reporter saw helicopters dropping buckets of water over its roof, as emergency services rushed to the scene.

Embed:

Russia, which denies targeting civilians in Ukraine, said it had struck a plant and a logistics hub in Kyiv.

The Russian Defense Ministry said “no strikes were carried out on other targets within the boundaries of Kyiv,” explicitly denying responsibility for the government building strike.

Police cordoned off the area surrounding the building, the roof and upper floors of which sustained damage.

“We will restore the buildings. But we cannot bring back lost lives. The enemy terrorizes and kills our people every day throughout the country,” Prime Minister Yulia Svyrydenko said.

She later posted a video from inside the damaged floor showing shattered offices and burned walls.

Russia fired at least 810 drones and 13 missiles at Ukraine between late Saturday and early Sunday, in a new record, according to the Ukrainian air force.

“Such killings now, when real diplomacy could have already begun long ago, are a deliberate crime and a prolongation of the war,” Zelensky said.

He discussed the attack in a call with French President Emmanuel Macron and said that France would help Ukraine strengthen its defense.

Macron, on X, condemned the attack and said Russia “is locking itself ever deeper into the logic of war and terror.” France stood by Ukraine, he said.

U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer and EU chief Ursula von der Leyen also slammed the attack.

“Once again, the Kremlin is mocking diplomacy,” von der Leyen wrote on X.

The “cowardly strikes” show that Russian President Vladimir Putin “is not serious about peace,” Starmer said in a statement.

AFP reporters heard explosions over the capital early Sunday.

A strike on a nine-story residential building in the west of Kyiv killed at least two people, a mother and her two-month-old son, prosecutors said.

More than a dozen others were wounded in Kyiv, according to the emergency service.

Among them was a 24-year-old pregnant woman, who delivered a premature baby shortly after the attack, and doctors were fighting for her life and that of her baby, state TV Suspilne reported.

Two more died and dozens others wounded in overnight strikes across the country's east and southeast, authorities said.

The attack also killed seven horses at an equestrian club in Kyiv's suburbs, according to Ukraine's foreign ministry.

"The world cannot stand aside while a terrorist state takes lives — human or animal — every single day," it wrote on X.

The barrage came after more than two dozen European countries pledged to patrol any agreement to end the war, some of whom said they were willing to deploy troops on the ground.

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Kyiv insists on Western-backed security guarantees to prevent future Russian attacks, but President Vladimir Putin warns that any Western troops in Ukraine would be unacceptable and legitimate targets.

Efforts in recent weeks by U.S. President Donald Trump to end the war have so far yielded little progress.

Meantime, on the front line in the east, Moscow continued to claim territory in costly grinding battles, capturing another village in the Dnipropetrovsk region. Russia occupies around 20% of the country in total.

Tens of thousands have been killed in three-and-a-half years of fighting, which has forced millions from their homes and destroyed much of eastern and southern Ukraine in Europe's bloodiest conflict since World War II.

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