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Zelensky Plans New Trump Meeting as Russia Intensifies Attacks

By AFP

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An apartment building in the city of Dnipro struck by a Russian missile. **@dnipropetrovskaODA / Telegram**

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Saturday he would meet U.S. counterpart Donald Trump on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly next week as Russia intensified deadly strikes across his country.

Russia carried out one of its largest aerial attacks, firing 40 missiles and some 580 drones at Ukraine in a nightime barrage that killed at least three people and wounded dozens, Zelensky said.

A Ukrainian strike killed four people in Russia's southwestern Samara region, the local governor said, in one of the deadliest Ukrainian strikes since Russia launched its invasion in 2022.

Zelensky said he would discuss security guarantees for Ukraine and sanctions on Russia during the talks with Trump in New York.

Ukraine has insisted on Western-backed security guarantees to prevent future Russian attacks. Russian President Vladimir Putin has however warned that any Western troops in Ukraine would be unacceptable and legitimate targets.

A U.S.-led push for a quick end to the war has stalled and Russia effectively ruled out a Putin-Zelensky meeting — something that Kyiv says is the only way towards peace.

"We expect sanctions if there is no meeting between the leaders or, for example, no ceasefire," Zelensky said in comments released by the Ukrainian presidency.

"We are ready for a meeting with Putin. I have spoken about this. Both bilateral and trilateral. He is not ready," Zelensky added.

Embed:

> All night, Ukraine was under a massive attack by Russia. The enemy launched 40 missiles – cruise and ballistic – and about 580 drones of various types. I thank all our warriors who defended the skies throughout the night, and our F-16 pilots, who once again proved their prowess... pic.twitter.com/ajjQV3XwnI
>
> — Volodymyr Zelenskyy / Володимир Зеленський (@ZelenskyyUa) September 20, 2025

In Russia's latest aerial assault, "a missile with cluster munitions directly struck an apartment building" in the central city of Dnipro, Zelensky said on social media.

He posted pictures of cars and a building on fire and rescuers carrying a person to safety amid rubble scattered nearby.

In the Dnipropetrovsk region, the strikes killed one person and wounded at least 30 people, with one man in a serious condition, regional Governor Serhiy Lysak said.

'Intense' fighting

The strikes come a day after three Russian fighter jets violated the airspace of Estonia — a NATO member on the alliance's eastern flank — an allegation Moscow denied.

But it triggered fears in the West of a dangerous new provocation from Moscow after Poland last week complained that around 20 Russian drones overflew its territory.

Zelensky repeated the call for "joint solutions" to shoot down drones over Ukraine "together with other countries."

Russia, which has been chipping away at Ukrainian territory for months, announced on Saturday its troops had captured the village of Berezove in the Dnipropetrovsk region.

In the northeastern Kharkiv region, there were "intense actions" in the key area of Kupiansk, Zelensky said, referring to a rail hub Ukraine recaptured in a 2022 offensive.

In Russia, four people were killed "in an enemy drone attack last night," Samara Governor Vyacheslav Fedorishchev said on social media.

He earlier said "fuel and energy facilities" were targeted, without specifying the damage.

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The Ukrainian General Staff said "strategic objects of the Russian aggressor were struck," adding its forces "inflicted damage" on the Saratov Oil Refinery and struck the Novokuybyshevsk Oil Refinery in the Samara region.

A source in Ukraine's SBU security agency said Ukrainian drone strikes "have stopped the operation of a number of oil pumping stations in Russia."

"It is this infrastructure that brings oil-dollar superprofits to the Russian budget, which fuel the war against Ukraine. Work to block these cash flows will continue," the source said.

The Russian Defense Ministry said its air defense alert systems "intercepted and destroyed" 149 Ukrainian drones overnight, including 27 over the Saratov region and 15 over the Samara region.

Three rounds of direct talks between Russia and Ukraine in Istanbul this year only produced prisoner exchanges. Russia has maintained hardline demands, including that Ukraine fully cedes the eastern Donbas region — parts of which it still controls.

Kyiv has rejected territorial concessions and wants European troops to be deployed to Ukraine as a peacekeeping force, something Moscow considers unacceptable.

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