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Russia Intensified Drone, Missile Strikes on Ukraine in September – AFP Analysis

By AFP

October 01, 2025



Sergei Bobok / AFP

Russia intensified its long-range missile and drone strikes on Ukraine in September, an AFP analysis of data from Kyiv's Air Force showed, attacks that came amid a spate of alleged Russian airspace violations into Europe and as peace talks froze.

NATO boosted its defenses along its eastern borders throughout the month as it accused Moscow of testing the alliance's air defenses with drone incursions into several members and by flying military jets in Estonian airspace.

Russia fired some 5,638 long-range drones and 185 missiles in overnight attacks throughout the month — up 36% compared with August.

Moscow had temporarily scaled back its strikes ahead of the Aug. 15 summit between President Vladimir Putin and his U.S. counterpart Donald Trump.

But that meeting failed to make any progress. Russia said in September that talks with Ukraine were "on pause" and vowed to press its offensive.

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September also saw Russia launch its largest ever aerial bombardment of the war, firing 810 drones at Ukraine on the night of Sept. 6-7.

That barrage hit the Ukrainian government building in the center of Kyiv, the first time it had been struck since Russia invaded in February 2022.

The data covers the Air Force's initial estimates of how many incoming long-range drones and missiles it detected in overnight strikes.

The Air Force said it shot down or intercepted 87% of the Russian drones and 68% of the missiles.

Russia has fired drones at Ukraine every single night since May 10, after a three-day "truce" announced by Putin to coincide with a grand military parade in Moscow ended.

To counter the attacks, Ukraine deploys a mix of mobile air defense units, electronic jammers and new interceptor drones.

Kyiv has also begun talking to NATO members about sharing their experience in downing Russian drones amid a spate of alleged airspace violations by Russia into NATO members.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Tuesday that Ukraine was deploying an anti-drone military team to Denmark "for exercises."

Several NATO members, including the United States, Germany and France, have deployed military equipment to Copenhagen to help protect a summit of EU leaders on Wednesday.

Denmark has seen repeated airport closures in recent weeks over drone sightings that have ramped up fears about a heightened threat from Russia.

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