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Massive Russian Attack Hits Ukraine Energy Infrastructure – Kyiv

By AFP

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A Russian attack hit Ukraine's energy infrastructure, killing four people and prompting power cuts in several regions, Ukrainian authorities said Saturday.

Moscow has in recent months escalated attacks on energy infrastructure in Ukraine, damaging natural gas facilities that produce the main fuel for heating in the country.

Experts have said Ukraine risks heating outages ahead of the winter months.

"Russian strikes once again targeted people's everyday life. They deprived communities of power, water and heating, destroyed critical infrastructure, and damaged railway networks," Foreign Minister Andriy Sybiha said.

Russia launched 458 drones and 45 missiles at Ukraine overnight, said the Ukrainian Air Force, adding that it had downed 406 drones and nine missiles.

A drone strike on the eastern city of Dnipro ripped through a nine-storey building, killing two people and wounding six, Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Svyrydenko said.

Attacks forced emergency power cuts and interrupted water supplies in the northern city of Kharkiv, where the mayor said there was a "noticeable shortage of electricity."

There was no electricity, water, and partial heating in Kremenchuk, in the eastern Poltava region, the administration said.

There were also significant train delays, Restoration Minister Oleksiy Kuleba said, accusing Russia of stepping out its attacks on locomotive depots.

"We are working to eliminate the consequences throughout the country. The focus is on the rapid restoration of heat, light and water," Svyrydenko said.

'Technological disaster'

Russia has targeted Ukraine's power and heating grid throughout its almost four-year invasion, destroying a large part of the key civilian infrastructure.

Drones also hit energy infrastructure in Ukraine's southern Odesa late Friday, the region's governor Oleh Kiper said on Telegram.

"There was damage to an energy infrastructure facility," he said, reporting no dead or wounded.

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Russia's Defense Ministry said it struck "enterprises of the Ukrainian military-industrial complex and gas and energy facilities that support their operation."

The attacks on energy infrastructure have raised concerns of heating outages in Ukraine as the war enters its fourth winter.

The Kyiv School of Economics estimated in a report that the attacks shut down half of Ukraine's natural gas production.

Ukraine's top energy expert, Oleksandr Kharchenko, told a media briefing on Wednesday that if Kyiv's two power and heating plants went offline for more than three days when temperatures fall below minus 10 degrees Celsius, the capital would face a "technological disaster."

Ukraine has, in turn, stepped up strikes on Russian oil depots and refineries in recent months, seeking to cut off Moscow's vital energy exports and trigger fuel shortages across the country.

On Friday evening, drone attacks on energy infrastructure in southern Russia's Volgograd region caused power cuts there too, governor Andrei Botcharov said on Telegram.

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