The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia Fired Record Number of Drones at Ukraine in April – AFP Analysis

By AFP

May 01, 2026



Wreckage of a Russian Geran-2 drone, based on the Iranian Shahed. **State Emergency Service of Ukraine**

Russia fired a record number of long-range attack drones at Ukraine in April, AFP analysis of data published by Kyiv's air force showed.

The wave of attacks came with U.S.-mediated talks on ending the conflict frozen and saw Moscow significantly increase the number of long-range drones fired in the middle of the day, a tactic Kyiv condemned as trying to inflict more civilian harm.

Russia launched 6,583 long-range drones during the month, according to a compilation of daily reports published by Ukraine's air force.

That was 2% more than the number fired in March, which was also a record at the time.

According to the data, Ukraine managed to shoot down 88% of all incoming drones and

missiles.

Kyiv has touted its defenses against drones as the best in the world, developed over four years of nightly Russian barrages of Iranian-style attack craft.

Ukrainian drone interceptors have been used in the Gulf to down Iranian drones launched as part of the war in the Middle East.

Related article: Zelensky Says Kyiv Seized a Russian Position With Drones and Robots. Is This a Game Changer?

Russia previously fired long-range drones at Ukraine almost exclusively in overnight attacks, but in recent weeks, daytime attacks have become more frequent in what analysts have called an approach designed to inflict more damage.

"Russia's new tactic of coupling a large nighttime strike with an equally large daytime strike will likely cause increased civilian harm," the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) said in April.

"Russia may aim for the daytime strike series to more heavily target civilians and civilian infrastructure including public and open-space areas, especially as warmer weather arrives and more Ukrainians are likely outside," the U.S.-based think tank added.

Pavlo Palisa, the deputy head of President Volodymyr Zelensky's office said the daytime attacks were a new attempt to "terrorise civilians" now that winter is over.

Russia had barraged Ukraine's power and heating grid over the winter, leaving millions without hot water or communal heating amid temperatures of minus 20 degrees Celsius.

"There is also an economic component here. Massive attacks in the middle of the working day significantly paralyse business," Palisa said in an interview to Ukrainian media in early April.

Moscow denies targeting civilians and says its attacks target military and military-connected energy sites.

Tens of thousands of civilians have been killed since Russia invaded in February 2022, including hundreds in drone and missile strikes on apartment buildings across the country.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2026/05/01/russia-fired-record-number-of-drones-at-ukraine-in-april-afp-analysis-a92664