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Ukrainian Drones Kill 4 and Set Ryazan Oil Refinery Ablaze

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An apartment building in Ryazan damaged during a Ukrainian drone attack on May 15, 2026. **VKontakte**

A Ukrainian drone barrage killed at least four people and ignited a huge fire at an oil refinery in the city of Ryazan on Friday, in what appeared to be a direct retaliation for a deadly Russian strike on Kyiv a day earlier.

Ryazan region Governor Pavel Malkov confirmed the deaths in posts on Telegram, adding that dozens of people, including children, were wounded in the attack. He said drones struck two apartment buildings and an industrial site, which he did not identify by name.

Videos shared on social media showed at least one badly damaged high-rise residential building in Ryazan engulfed in smoke and flames.

Other images captured huge columns of smoke and large flames rising above what appeared to be the Rosneft-operated Ryazan Oil Refinery, located just south of the city. One of Russia's largest fuel plants, the facility processes about 17 million tons of crude oil each year.

As thick black smoke engulfed the sky, NASA satellite imagery tracked the plume extending more than 100 kilometers (60 miles) into the neighboring Tambov region.

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Olga, a 27-year-old Ryazan resident, told The Moscow Times that the strikes on Friday morning were "very loud," causing windows to rattle and car alarms to go off in her neighborhood.

"In the morning, I saw a huge column of smoke outside the window. The oil refinery is on fire right now," Olga said. "I heard from friends who have relatives working at the plant that there were over a hundred [drone] strikes. They were told not to come to work today."

Telegram news channels shared images of what was said to be dark, oily rain falling on the streets below. Schools and kindergartens in parts of the city were ordered to close on Friday for safety reasons, Governor Malkov said.

Russia's Defense Ministry said it intercepted 355 Ukrainian drones countrywide between Thursday night and Friday morning, making it one of the largest Ukrainian air attacks on Russia since the start of the year.

The Ryazan region, located around 185 kilometers (115 miles) southeast of Moscow, as well as the Ryazan Refinery, has been repeatedly targeted by Ukrainian drones since the 2022 invasion.

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Friday's attack comes a day after Russia carried out a missile and drone strike on Kyiv that killed at least 24 people, making it one of the deadliest air assaults on the city in months. Zelensky had told his military to plan a retaliatory response.

"This is a deliberate terrorist tactic by the Russians," Zelensky said Thursday. "I instructed the Defense Forces of Ukraine and the special services to propose possible formats for our response to this Russian attack."

Ukraine has stepped up its attacks on Russia's oil and gas infrastructure in recent months in a bid to deprive the Kremlin of energy windfalls amid the continued closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

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