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Russia Kills 4 in Massive Ukraine Attack Using Nuclear-Capable Missile

By AFP

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Russia pounded Kyiv with a large missile and drone attack early on Sunday, killing two people and wounding 56, authorities said. **Ukrainian State Emergency Service**

Multiple rounds of loud explosions were heard in the Ukrainian capital throughout the early hours of the morning, AFP journalists reported, as residents took shelter in underground stations.

Daylight revealed rescue workers extinguishing fires and sifting through debris of heavily damaged buildings — houses, shopping centers, museums, theaters, schools and universities.

Russian President Vladimir Putin had earlier threatened retaliation for Ukrainian strikes in Russian-occupied eastern Ukraine that killed 21 people in a vocational school.

In Kyiv, Sofia Melnychenko, 21, thought she was safe in the subway, "but then there were three loud explosions, and after the fourth one the ceiling in the metro started crumbling,"

she told AFP.

“There was complete chaos. Children started screaming, people were panicking,” she added.

“It was a very frightening night.”

The Ukrainian air force said the raid involved 600 drones and 90 missiles, of which 549 drones and 55 missiles were intercepted.

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Kyiv has been grappling with an acute air defense missile deficit since the U.S.-Israeli air campaign against Iran drove up demand for U.S.-made Patriot rounds.

European leaders reacted by saying the salvo showed Russia's desperation.

“Terror against civilians is not strength. It's despair,” EU chief Ursula von der Leyen said on X.

French President Emmanuel Macron said the strikes signaled “the dead end of Russia's war of aggression,” while German Chancellor Friedrich Merz called the use of Oreshnik a “reckless escalation.”

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky urged more action from allies. “I am grateful to everyone now expressing words of support. But concrete steps to bolster air defense are also needed — missile deliveries must not stop for a single day,” he said on social media.

He earlier said the Russians hit dozens of residential buildings, schools, a water supply facility and a market in a “genuinely deranged” attack.

Russia's army confirmed it had launched the Oreshnik at Ukraine for the third time in the war, saying it was “in response to Ukraine's terrorist attacks on civilian infrastructure on Russian territory.” The missile was used without a nuclear warhead.

Moscow denied targeting civilians, saying it had struck command posts of the Ukrainian army and intelligence.

Four people were killed and more than 100 were wounded in Kyiv and the surrounding region, local officials said. Kyiv mayor Vitali Klitschko said damage had been recorded in every district of the capital.

The residence of the Albanian ambassador was also hit and the Balkan country summoned the Russian envoy in protest.

Buildings housing a studio of German broadcaster ARD and an office for German outlet DW were damaged as well, the companies said in statements. Both premises were empty of people at the time.

Projectiles also hit other Ukrainian regions, with dozens of wounded reported in the Kharkiv, Cherkasy and Dnipropetrovsk regions.

Attacks continued during the day, with a shelling killing two and wounding 17 in the frontline city of Kherson.

Related article: Russia Requests UN Security Council Meeting After Deadly Ukrainian Attack on Luhansk Vocational School

Ukraine had been expecting a major strike after its own forces launched a drone barrage on Starobilsk, in the Russian-occupied east of the country, which Moscow said hit a college dormitory and killed 21 people, most of them young female students.

Launched overnight on Thursday to Friday, the drone salvo — one of Ukraine's deadliest such strikes in months — also wounded dozens in the city, located in the occupied Luhansk region.

Ukraine denied targeting civilians, saying it had hit a Russian drone unit stationed in the area.

Ukraine regularly targets Russian-controlled areas of the country with drones, arguing that the strikes are retaliation for Russian attacks.

Kyiv has recently expanded its drone capabilities and stepped up strikes on internationally recognized Russian territory, including residential areas and oil export infrastructure.

Moscow has hit Ukraine almost daily with barrages of missiles and drones since launching its full-scale invasion of the country in 2022, also hitting infrastructure and causing civilian deaths. It denies targeting civilians.

U.S.-led efforts to negotiate an end to more than four years of war have slowed in recent months, with Washington's attention diverted toward its conflict in the Middle East.

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