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Ukrainian Strikes on Russian-Annexed Crimea Kill 4, Pause Fuel Sales

By AFP

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Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency

Four people were killed and fuel sales were suspended in annexed Crimea, Moscow-backed authorities there said on Sunday, after a major Ukrainian barrage hit the Black Sea peninsula.

Ukraine said it targeted military and energy facilities in Crimea — Moscow's key logistics base for its four-year military offensive — in one of the biggest attacks on the peninsula in recent months.

"As a result of the enemy's drone attack on the Kerch Peninsula, unfortunately, there are casualties among the civilian population," said Russia-backed Crimea Governor Sergei Aksyonov, referring to the part of Crimea that borders Russia.

"According to the latest information, four people were killed, 28 were wounded," he added.

"Today, June 21, starting from 09:00 am, fuel sales at Crimean petrol stations have been

suspended," Aksyonov said in a separate statement, adding that fuel would only be sold to government agencies and state-owned companies.

The mass raid also killed one person on a ferry and hit an oil terminal in Russia's southern Krasnodar region bordering Crimea, authorities there said.

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Part of Crimea, which was annexed by Russia in 2014, was left without power after the attacks, the local utilities company Krymenergo said.

Separately, overnight Russian strikes in eastern Ukraine killed three people.

"Last night, our long-range sanctions targeted the occupiers' military logistics, oil industry and air defense," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said on social media.

Ukraine calls its retaliatory attacks on Russia and occupied territories "long-range sanctions" and denies targeting civilians.

Fuel supplies

"All of this is a just response to Russia's brutal attacks against our people," Zelensky continued.

He added that Ukrainian forces also struck the Crimean Bridge connecting the peninsula to Russia, as well as radar and air defense systems.

After upgrading its long-range drone capabilities, Kyiv now says it can strike at will along the land corridor through occupied southeastern Ukraine that Russia uses to supply Crimea and its forces stationed there.

Ukraine has in recent months also stepped up drone attacks on energy facilities in Russia, striking targets deep behind the front lines.

Earlier this week, it hit a large refinery in Moscow twice.

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Ukraine says the attacks are aimed at denting oil revenues that Russia uses to fund the war.

Some gas stations in Russia, the world's third-biggest oil producer, introduced fuel rationing this month.

Fuel exports have been banned since April.

Energy Intelligence, a U.S.-based energy research firm, said earlier this month that about a third of Russian oil refining capacity had gone offline because of Ukrainian strikes.

Talks on ending Europe's biggest conflict since World War II remain frozen, while fighting on the front line is effectively at a standstill.

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