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Putin Vows to Ensure Russia's Security Amid Ukraine Retaliatory Strikes

By AFP

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President Vladimir Putin at the United Russia party congress. **Kremlin.ru**

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Sunday vowed to ensure security and overcome challenges as Ukraine stepped up its retaliatory strikes inside Russia amid Moscow's four-year war.

Kyiv calls the attacks fair retribution for Russia's near-daily barrages on Ukrainian civilians and energy infrastructure since its February 2022 war.

"Yes, we see the problems, we are aware of them and are responding to them, but we will certainly ensure the security of both the country and our citizens, as well as the inviolability of Russia's borders," Putin said at the United Russia party congress.

"We will undoubtedly overcome all the challenges facing us today, including terrorist attacks on our territory and infrastructure facilities," he added.

Putin's speech came hours after a Ukrainian drone strike killed one person in Russia's southern Krasnodar region and sparked a fire in a refinery, according to regional Governor Veniamin Kondratyev.

Kyiv claimed the hit, with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky calling it a part of the "operations that weaken Russia's ability to wage this war."

"The Slavyansk oil refinery in the Krasnodar region was hit — about 300 kilometers from the frontline. We also reached a refinery in the Yaroslavl region, approximately 700 kilometers from our border," Zelensky said on X on Sunday.

Last week, another Ukrainian attack caused a major fire at a refinery in the southeast of Moscow, shrouding the capital's suburbs in plumes of thick black smoke.

Russian-annexed Crimea on Friday declared an "emergency situation" in a bid to ease the fallout from increasing Ukrainian aerial attacks on the peninsula.

The territory grapples with fuel shortages and power cuts triggered by Ukrainian attacks on logistics chains and oil facilities across Crimea, other Russian-occupied parts of Ukraine and southern Russia.

Russia seized and annexed Crimea in 2014, though the vast majority of countries — including many of Moscow's allies — do not recognize the move.

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