

Russia Launches Heavy Strikes at Ukraine, Killing at Least 20

By [Reuters](#)

October 07, 2026



Rescuers work at a site of an apartment building damaged by a Russian missile strike, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in the town of Pryluky, Chernihiv region. **Ukrainian State Emergency Service**

Russia pounded Ukraine with waves of missiles and drones in one of its most "vile strikes" on Wednesday, President Volodymyr Zelensky said, killing at least 20 people, including children, and damaging industrial facilities and energy infrastructure.

Zelensky said the strike coincided with Russian President Vladimir Putin's birthday.

The heaviest death toll was in Pryluky in the northern Chernihiv region, where a Russian missile obliterated a five-storey residential building. At least 14 people, including four children, were killed there, local officials said.

"Today, as a birthday 'gift' to Putin, the Russian army destroyed a residential building in Pryluky," Zelensky said.

"The Russians wanted to strike painfully and demonstratively. This was one of the most vile strikes: 70 missiles in total, many of them ballistic."

An excavator and dozens of rescuers with shovels sifted through rubble at the site where several sections of the five-storey building collapsed.

Emergency workers used ladders to get to the upper floors of what remained of the building. Around 50 people were wounded, including seven children, regional officials said.

Big jump in reported drone interceptions

Zelensky said six other people were killed in Kyiv, Oleksandria and Kremenchuk during the heavy overnight attack.

Russia's Defense Ministry said its forces had carried out a "massive strike" on military-industrial facilities in Kyiv and other Ukrainian regions, using high-precision land-, sea- and air-launched weapons, as well as drones.

Ukraine's air force said it had downed just over 80% of the 46 jet-powered drones launched by Russia — a sharp increase from recent weeks when, on average, air defenses took down 50% to 60%.

Since the summer, Russia has used increasing numbers of the new high-velocity drones in round-the-clock attacks on Kyiv and other cities, with Ukraine's air defenses struggling to cope with their speed.

The air force did not explain the jump in the interception rate and did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

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Zelensky said the Russian ballistic missiles remained the major challenge for Ukraine, adding that he and his team were "every day looking for Patriot [missile interception] systems that can and must protect people's lives."

Ukraine received a new 1.2 billion euro (\$1.34 billion) tranche from the European Union on Wednesday and will channel the funds towards defense needs, Prime Minister Serhii Koryukhina said.

The U.S.-made Patriot system is the only weapon in Ukraine's arsenal capable of stopping high-velocity ballistic missiles but tight global supplies have been drained by the Iran war as well as the Ukraine conflict.

Ukraine's energy ministry said it had started to roll out partial emergency power cuts in five Ukrainian regions due to the attacks.

Russia's Defense Ministry said its targets included sites where Ukrainian defense company Fire Point manufactures and stores its Flamingo cruise missiles and medium- and long-range drones in Kyiv as well as regions of Kyiv, Chernihiv, Kirovohrad, Dnipropetrovsk, Poltava and

Kharkiv.

Last week Zelensky said Ukraine had fired its first domestically made ballistic missile in combat, produced by Fire Point. In an interview with Reuters, he said he expected the company to have a longer-range FP-9 missile ready by the autumn. Fire Point has said that weapon will be able to reach Moscow.

People shelter overnight in Kyiv metro

Zelensky said Ukrainian troops hit four targets in Russia over the past 24 hours, including two Russian oil facilities and a training ground in the Perm, Samara and Astrakhan regions.

In the Reuters interview, Zelensky said Ukraine would hit Russia's energy assets in response to Moscow's escalating strikes on civilian infrastructure.

Many Kyiv residents took shelter in the city's deep underground metro stations as warnings of the upcoming attacks were shared by Ukrainian officials and military intelligence.

Several loud explosions reverberated through the capital during the night.

"The metro is better because we live on the ninth floor of a high-rise, and it's really scary when you're on the ninth floor and missiles are flying at you," Lesia, a 49-year-old Kyiv resident, told Reuters.

Ukrainian officials said Russian ballistic missiles as well as the drones had targeted Kyiv.

Overnight air strikes on the southeastern city of Dnipro damaged an industrial facility, transportation infrastructure in Zaporizhzhia and apartment buildings in Kremenchuk, regional officials said on the Telegram messaging app.

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