

# Ukraine Accuses SpaceX of Crippling Drone Missions as Ties With U.S. Worsen

By [Reuters](#)

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**Mil.gov.ua**

Ukraine accused Elon Musk's SpaceX on Wednesday of limiting Starlink services, crippling its drones, as Russian missiles knocked out power stations in attacks President Volodymyr Zelensky called "ostentatious disrespect" to Donald Trump.

Kyiv's relationship with Washington has taken a sharp turn for the worse since U.S. President Trump abruptly lifted sanctions on Russian diesel last week and publicly turned on Zelensky.

Trump, under political pressure to lower fuel prices that have soared since he launched a war against Iran, has called on Kyiv to halt attacks on Russian refineries, and said Ukrainians should replace their wartime leader.

The U.S. president also announced that Ukraine and Russia had both agreed to halt attacks on energy targets, although neither side confirmed this and the past two days have seen

intensive Russian bombing, including of Ukrainian power stations.

### **No warning before Starlink cuts**

Ukrainian military officials said Musk's SpaceX had without warning interrupted functioning of military-grade Starlink terminals moving at high speed, effectively preventing Kyiv from using them as onboard guides for drones.

"Our defense forces did not receive a warning about this limitation, and this led to the disruption of several missions," presidential adviser Serhiy Beskrestnov wrote on Telegram.

The apparent suggestion that Musk's company might limit Ukrainian military capabilities drew a sharp response from Poland, which pays for Ukrainian Starlink subscriptions on Kyiv's behalf.

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"Hey, @elonmusk, big man, are you playing politics with your products again?" Polish Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski asked Musk on X. "As your European customers, we are watching you."

There was no immediate response from Musk, who in the past has called Sikorski a "small man." SpaceX did not immediately respond to a request for comment outside of U.S. business hours.

Musk is a close political ally of Trump, and the suggestion that SpaceX might limit Ukrainian capabilities reinforced wider Ukrainian concerns that Washington could withhold battlefield support to compel its onetime ally to make concessions.

Sources have told Reuters and other news organizations that the U.S. has threatened to cut off intelligence for early warning of missile strikes on Ukraine, to press Kyiv to suspend attacks on Russian oil refineries.

### **No warning ahead of missiles**

Rescue workers in Kyiv were stretching the injured from the wreckage of a blasted-out residential building overnight, while firefighters battled a huge blaze in the darkness. Officials said 2 people were killed and 21 wounded at the site.

Some 600,000 people were left without power as Russian missiles careened into power stations during hours of attacks that primarily targeted Kyiv and Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city. Russia's Defense Ministry confirmed it had struck four power plants in and around Kyiv and two in Kharkiv, among other targets. Zelenskiy said more than 30 power stations were damaged.

Ukrainian officials said late on Tuesday they had received no warnings from Western partners for a second day before the massive Russian attacks on the capital. Trump had insisted on Tuesday that Washington was still sharing intelligence.

Zelensky cast the latest attacks as a deliberate snub to Trump's declaration of a ceasefire on energy targets.

"Russia does not consider the American President's statements strong," Zelensky wrote on X. "The strike was entirely deliberate and demonstrative in its scale – Russia has never before shown such ostentatious disrespect toward the United States."

Zelensky has said Ukraine is willing to observe an energy ceasefire and has not targeted Russian refineries since Trump announced it, but will not continue to hold back if Russia ignores the purported truce. The Kremlin said on Tuesday that contacts were continuing about an energy truce.

Ukraine reported downing just four out of 39 Russian missiles, reflecting Kyiv's weakened air defenses against fast-moving ballistic missiles and jet-powered drones amid a shortage of weapons.

Starlink does not work inside Russia, and Ukrainian drones hitting Russia's oil industry use other means of communication, but Ukraine uses Musk's system to guide drones over its own territory, including parts of Ukraine occupied by Russia.

"According to our observations, during flights, the connection could drop for 10–20 seconds at speeds of just 110–120 km/h [68–75 mph]. The drones kept moving, but these interruptions made them harder to control," Ukraine's 7th Rapid Reaction Corps, deployed in the southeast, said in a statement to Reuters.

A source in Ukraine's Defense Ministry said the limitations significantly complicate logistics and some drone operations.

Since being turned on over Ukraine in the early days of Russia's invasion in 2022, Starlink has been the lifeblood of Ukrainian battlefield communications.

Its resistance to electronic signal jamming has made it a crucial tool for flying long-range attack drones and drones used to drop supplies to frontline troops.

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