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Ukraine Strikes Crimean Bridge for Second Day as Russia Pounds Kyiv Bridges

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Social media

Ukraine struck the strategic bridge linking southern Russia and Crimea for a second straight day on Tuesday, part of what data suggested was the largest Ukrainian drone attack of the war, while Russia pounded Kyiv's bridges and other infrastructure.

Unverified eyewitness footage published on social media appeared to show a strike on the bridge's 227-meter road arch. A separate video appeared to show the arch collapsing into the strait. Images circulated after the strike appeared to show the adjacent railway arch still standing.

Sergei Aksyonov, the Russian-installed head of Crimea, reported the strike and said traffic across the bridge was suspended.

Russian-installed authorities in Crimea said two people were killed in a separate overnight

drone attack in the peninsula's Leninsky district.

Ferries were carrying most of the traffic between the peninsula and the Russian mainland, and rail operator Grand Service Express said four passenger trains bound for Crimea had been delayed.

BBC Russian military analyst Ilya Abishev said the road arch helps support the span and that a prolonged closure would leave traffic between Russia and Crimea reliant on ferries and the land route through occupied southern Ukraine.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky confirmed the attack on the bridge and said it was in response to Russian attacks on Ukrainian infrastructure, including bridges.

"We are ... reminding Russia that war will always return to where it began," he said on X.

The Kremlin said President Vladimir Putin had been briefed on Tuesday's attack ahead of meetings in China later this week. Russia's Investigative Committee said it had opened a terrorism investigation.

In Kyiv, Mayor Vitali Klitschko said Russian forces had struck two bridges spanning the Dnipro River and other infrastructure in the capital.

Related article: Ukraine Hits Crimean Bridge Amid Record Overnight Drone Attack

The 19-kilometer (12-mile) road and rail bridge linking Crimea to Russia's Krasnodar region is a flagship project closely associated with President Vladimir Putin, who unveiled it four years after annexing the peninsula from Ukraine in 2014.

It was once a key supply route for Russian forces in Ukraine but is now used mainly by residents and visitors, as the military can rely on a land corridor through Russian-controlled territory in southern Ukraine.

The bridge has been attacked by Ukraine several times since Putin sent Russian forces into Ukraine in February 2022. A truck bomb in October 2022 killed four people and limited the bridge's capacity for several months.

The Kremlin had called the damage from Monday's attack "minor," though footage aired by Russian state media showed an arch leaning and satellite images published by the exiled news outlet Astra appeared to show damage to the roadway in at least two places.

The overnight attack on Crimea was part of what state news agencies called the largest overnight Ukrainian drone attack on Russia since the start of the full-scale war in 2022.

Russia's Defense Ministry said it shot down 1,441 drones over 22 regions, surpassing the previous record of 1,336 set on Monday.

Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin said that around 800 Ukrainian drones had flown toward the capital region, 321 of which had been brought down en route to the capital.

The scale and frequency of Ukrainian drone attacks have increased as Russia has intensified its own drone and missile campaign in a grinding war of attrition, with both sides targeting energy infrastructure and other strategic assets.

Attacks have continued despite U.S.-brokered peace talks in Abu Dhabi last week, the first in nine months, and separate meetings between U.S. envoys and Putin and Zelensky.

Related article: Ukrainian Drones Hit Gazprom Refinery in Bashkortostan in Second Record Overnight Attack

Kyiv's bridges struck

In Kyiv, Reuters witnesses reported a series of loud explosions in the capital overnight.

Klitschko said Russia struck the capital's North and South bridges, a claim later confirmed by Moscow, and partially damaged the metro system. The attacks caused some power and water outages and prompted transport restrictions, he said.

Russia has targeted Kyiv's bridges before, causing widespread disruption.

Overnight strikes on energy infrastructure left consumers without power in eight Ukrainian regions, Deputy Energy Minister Artem Nekrasov said.

In other attacks, local officials on Telegram said three people were injured in the Cherkasy region. They said Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-biggest city, Dnipropetrovsk and Zaporizhzhia, and other regions were also targeted.

Russia's Defense Ministry confirmed the strikes, saying on Telegram they had hit transport, military and energy facilities in Kyiv, Zaporizhzhia, Cherkasy and Dnipropetrovsk, along with port infrastructure and cargo ships.

Reuters could not immediately independently confirm the reports. Both sides deny deliberately targeting civilians.

Reuters contributed reporting.

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