

# [***Sukhoi Massacre: Ukraine Has Shot Down Six Of Russia s Best Jets In Just Three Days***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BCG-TB01-DXVP-5003-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Highlight:** The Ukrainian air force is desperately short of U.S.-made Patriot air-defense missiles. But when the air force does fire one of its Patriots, it seldom misses.

**Body**

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A Sukhoi Su-35.

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The Ukrainian air force is desperately short of its best munitions, including its 90-mile-range, U.S.-made Patriot air-defense missiles.

But the air force rarely wastes a missile. So when it**does** fire off one of its dwindling number of Patriots, it seldom misses.

Which is why, even as the Ukrainians scream, beg and ***politic*** for more munitions, they ve shot down as many as six Russian fighter-bombers in just the last three days. A rate of loss the Russian air force cannot sustain.

Russian planes continue to fall! the Ukrainian defense ministrycrowedon Monday. The claimed tally includes four twin-seat Sukhoi Su-34 fighter-bombers and two single-seat Sukhoi Su-35s.

The Su-34s are the Russian air force s best supersonic strike planes. Lately they mostly have flown close-air-support missions streaking high and fast toward the front line and lobbing KAB precision glide-bombs from as far away as 25 miles.

The supersonic Su-35s are air-superiority fighters: they escort the Su-34s.

The Ukrainians bagged the first three Sukhois on Saturday as the jets were flying 60 miles east of Avdiivka in eastern Ukraine, apparently lining up fora glide-bombing raidon the Ukrainian troops retreating from that ruined city.

The Ukrainian militaryclaimedit shot down a fourth Sukhoi on Sunday and two more on Monday, the latter over the Sea of Azov in the south.

It s possible, likely even, that Ukraine s Patriot PAC-2 missile-batteries three of which Ukraine has received from the United States and Germany were responsible for all six shoot-downs.

The Ukrainian air force has deployed one Patriot battery in Kyiv and one each in the south and east. A battery s truck-mounted launchers can spread out and move while still linking to the battery s radars.

The Russian air force isn t about to run out of Sukhois. In two years of hard fighting,according to Oryx, the Russians have lost 25 of their 150 Su-34s and six of their 120 Su-35s.

But the recent rate of loss six jets in three days is unsustainable**if it continues**. The Russian air force has lost 95 jets since February 2022. That s four per month. In the last week, however, the air force has written off warplanes at a rate of**60 per month**.

For an air force that has just a thousand fast jets, losing 60 in a month would be catastrophic. The loss of experienced aircrews might sting even more, according toa recent reportfrom the Royal United Services Institute in London.

Russian air ops are constrained by the availability of pilots with sufficient experience to carry out key missions, RUSI analysts Jack Watling and Nick Reynolds wrote.

But it s highly unlikely the Ukrainian air force can keep shooting down Russian jets at a rate of two per day. Four months after Russia-aligned Republicans began blocking U.S. aid to Ukraine, Ukraine s stock of Patriots is dropping to a critical level, according toAnton Gerashchenko, a former advisor to the Ukrainian interior ministry.

And it s not like the Ukrainians can devote all their Patriots to shooting down Sukhois. They also count on the million-dollar PAC-2s to intercept Russian ballistic missiles targeting Kyiv, Kharkiv and Odesa.

So look for the Sukhoi massacre to taper off in the coming days as a shortage of missiles weighs on Ukraine s**capacity**, though not its**capability**, to shoot down Russia s best warplanes.

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