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WORLD

Russia Defies Trump With Largest-Ever Drone-and-Missile Attack on Ukraine

Kyiv says more than 350 explosive drones targeted its cities overnight

By [Matthew Luxmoore](#) [Follow](#)

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Explosions in the night sky during a Russian drone strike in Kyiv, Ukraine. PHOTO: GLEB GARANICH/REUTERS

Key Points

What's This? ⓘ

- Russia launched a large drone-and-missile assault on Ukraine, according to Ukrainian officials.
- The Kremlin stated the strikes were a response to Ukrainian attacks on Russian territory.
- Zelensky denounced the attacks and called for fresh economic sanctions against Russia.

Russia launched its largest-ever drone-and-missile assault on Ukraine overnight into Monday, according to Ukrainian officials, defying President Trump's calls for an end to the bombardment.

Ukraine's air force said Russia launched more than 350 explosive drones and at least nine cruise missiles. Kyiv scrambled aircraft and deployed electronic warfare systems and mobile air-defense teams throughout the country in response, the government said.

The latest attacks came just hours after Trump [issued a strong rebuke](#) of Russian President [Vladimir Putin](#), denouncing airstrikes on the Ukrainian capital and other cities that killed at least 12 people Sunday.

“He has gone absolutely CRAZY! He is needlessly killing a lot of people, and I’m not just talking about soldiers,” Trump said late Sunday in a social-media post, referring to Putin. “Missiles and drones are being shot into Cities in Ukraine, for no reason whatsoever.”

He also criticized Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, saying in the same post that Zelensky “is doing his Country no favors by talking the way he does.”

The Kremlin said Monday’s strikes were a response to Ukrainian attacks on Russian territory, which Moscow said involved dozens of drones over the weekend. Ukrainian officials said the strikes damaged several Russian military-industrial facilities, including a factory that makes parts for ballistic missiles.

Russia’s Defense Ministry said its own overnight salvo against Ukraine struck an air base in a central region of the country as well as other military objects in several regions.

“This was a retaliatory strike,” said Putin’s spokesman, Dmitry Peskov. He called Trump’s criticism of Putin an “emotional reaction” at a time when Russia and Ukraine are taking some steps with U.S. encouragement to open talks about an end to the war.



Residents outside destroyed homes in Kyiv, Ukraine. PHOTO: ANDREW KRAVCHENKO/BLOOMBERG NEWS

Zelensky denounced Monday’s attacks and called for fresh economic sanctions against Russia.

“Only a feeling of total impunity can allow Russia to launch such strikes,” he said in a post on social media. “There is no meaningful military sense to this.”

The latest exchange of missile-and-drone attacks comes as efforts to end the war [have reached something of an impasse](#). Russia last month dismissed a proposed 30-day cease-fire that was brokered by Trump and accepted by Ukraine, and has insisted that Kyiv first agree to discuss its disarmament and the abandonment of its aspirations to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

After a call with Trump last week, Putin said a memorandum could soon be drafted that commits Moscow and Kyiv to working on a peace deal. But Peskov said Monday that even this initial document—essentially an agreement to keep talking—hadn't even been finalized by the Russian side, let alone passed to Kyiv.

The only tangible result of talks this month between Russia and Ukraine in Istanbul, the first face-to-face negotiations in nearly three years, was a prisoner swap involving around 1,000 soldiers from either side. Prisoners of war from Ukraine and Russia [began arriving home Friday](#).



Released Ukrainian POWs near Ukraine's northern border with Russia. PHOTO: SERHII KOROVAYNY FOR WSJ

The intensifying campaign of Russian and Ukrainian strikes comes as both sides step up production of strike drones capable of flying hundreds of miles.

Russia has been expanding its military-industrial complex, turning shopping malls into drone production facilities and expanding a factory that specializes in making Shahed strike drones with help from Iran, a Russian ally.

Russia has also evolved in its methods of evading Ukraine's air defenses. The drone attacks it launches now feature an array of decoy projectiles that are meant to imitate strike drones but carry no explosives. Ukraine uses up expensive air defense missiles and ammunition to shoot them down.

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