Nine killed and dozens injured in ‘massive’ Russian missile attack on Kyiv

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<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/apr/24/kyiv-ukraine-killed-dozens-injured-massive-russian-missile-attack>

At least nine people have been killed and more than 70 injured in Kyiv after Russia carried out one of the most devastating air attacks against [Ukraine](https://www.theguardian.com/world/ukraine) for months, with Kharkiv and other cities also targeted.

Waves of drones as well as ballistic and guided missiles struck the Ukrainian capital early on Thursday. There were explosions for much of the night, beginning at about 1am local time, and the rattle of anti-aircraft fire as Ukrainian defences tried to shoot the missiles down.

Kyiv’s mayor, Vitali Klitschko, said rescuers were pulling survivors from under the rubble. The injured included six children and a pregnant woman. A house, cars, and other buildings were set on fire, with extensive damage caused by falling debris in several districts, he said.

“Russia has launched a massive combined strike on Kyiv,” Ukraine’s state emergency service said on Telegram. “According to preliminary data, nine people were killed, 63 injured.”

Ukraine’s interior minister, Ihor Klymenko, said a big rescue operation was under way in the Svyatoshinsky district of Kyiv, involving dogs and engineering teams. “Mobile phones can be heard ringing under the ruins. The search will continue until everybody is got out. We have information about two children who cannot be found at the scene of the incident,” he added.

On Wednesday evening, drones could be seen buzzing in the sky above the north-east Kharkiv region and flying over a forest. Kharkiv, Ukraine’s second city, was hit by seven missiles and 12 kamikaze drones in strikes throughout the night as black smoke plumed overhead.

According to Kharkiv’s mayor, several private houses, a factory and a high-rise apartment block were hit. “One of the most recent strikes hit a densely populated residential area. Two people were injured there,” Ihor Terekhov said, urging people to be careful.

The onslaught came as Donald Trump [lashed out at Volodymyr Zelenskyy](https://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2025/apr/23/russia-ukraine-war-live-london-peace-talks-macron-starmer-zelenskyy-putin-latest-news-updates#top-of-blog) for failing to support a US “peace plan”, in which Crimea and other Ukrainian territories would be handed to Russia.

On Wednesday, Trump accused Ukraine’s president of prolonging the “killing field” and making “very harmful” statements. Zelenskyy has ruled out recognising Crimea as Russian and says a complete ceasefire is needed before any settlement can be discussed.

On Thursday, Zelenskyy said he was cutting short a trip to South Africa because of the attack. “It has been 44 days since Ukraine agreed to a full ceasefire and a halt to strikes... And it has been 44 days of Russia continuing to kill our people,” Zelensky said in a post on X. “The strikes must be stopped immediately and unconditionally,” he added.

The Ukrainian foreign minister, Andriy Sybiga, said Russia’s “maximalist demands for Ukraine to withdraw from its regions, combined with these brutal strikes, show that Russia, not Ukraine, is the obstacle to peace”.

He added: “Moscow, not Kyiv, is where pressure should be applied. Putin demonstrates through his actions, not words, that he does not respect any peace efforts and only wants to continue the war. Weakness and concessions will not stop his terror and aggression. Only strength and pressure will.”

Posting on social media, as Russian bombs fell around them, Ukrainians criticised Trump’s one-sided approach and his apparent indifference to Ukrainian civilian casualties. The massive attack suggested the Kremlin was not remotely interested in peace, they suggested.

[Olga Rudenko](https://x.com/olya_rudenko), the editor of the Kyiv Independent newspaper, wrote on social media: “Can’t begin to explain how surreal it is to be sitting on the floor in the safest place of my apartment hearing an extremely loud Russian missile+drone attack – after having spent entire day discussing and editing coverage of the US effectively demanding Ukraine’s surrender.”

[Euan MacDonald](https://x.com/Euan_MacDonald), a freelance journalist, added: “Great big bang in Kyiv, and another – incoming missiles. Shaheds also in city, just heard anti-aircraft guns. And two more big bangs just as I write … Not been this noisy for a while …”

There were further attacks in the cities of Pavlohrad and Zhytomyr, as well as in the Zaporizhzhia region.

In Kyiv some residents spent a sleepless night in the subway, which doubles as a missile shelter. According to the [photographer Kostyantyn Liberov](https://www.instagram.com/p/DI0AJsioqia/?igsh=MXB4b2hmcjJjOWZ6aQ%3D%3D), Shahed drones struck the same district twice as rescuers and civilians were trying to free a young woman who was trapped in a collapsed building.

“Honey, we’ll get you out no matter what. We’re right here,” one of the rescuers reassured her, as the loud roar of a Shahed drone buzzed overhead, Liberov reported.

The videographer Anton Shtuka, [who filmed the difficult rescue operation](https://www.instagram.com/reel/DI0HpL7NOll/?igsh=aGxlczMya2xrdHVm), said: “Sometimes it looks like these strikes hit our homes because [Vladimir] Putin feels US support and begins to pressure Ukraine even more.” He added, ironically: “Thank you, partners.”

Kyiv was last hit by missiles in early April, when at least three people were hurt. It has been the target of sporadic attacks since Russia launched its full-scale invasion in February 2022.

Andriy Yermak, the head of Zelenksyy’s office, said: “Putin shows only a desire to kill. The attacks on civilians must stop.”