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Russia Launches Barrage of Strikes Across Ukraine, Targeting Infrastructure

Electricity and water supplies are hit across the country as strikes on civilian resources intensify

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KYIV, Ukraine—Russian forces launched a wave of missile strikes across Ukraine on Monday that knocked out electricity and water supplies in Kyiv and other cities, just as the country was recovering from the damage inflicted in the Kremlin’s recent attacks on civilian infrastructure.

Several loud explosions were heard in Kyiv shortly after 8 a.m. on Monday, during the morning rush hour, forcing civilians to take shelter in metro stations, homes, hotels and public buildings across the capital. More than 50 missiles were fired by Russian forces, although most were intercepted by air defenses, Ukrainian officials said.

The strikes disrupted water supplies to some 80% of households in Kyiv, the city’s mayor said. Ukrainian officials said Russian missiles also disabled electricity grids in Kyiv, Zaporizhzhia in southeastern Ukraine, Kharkiv in the north, and central and western parts of the country.

Kyiv says the targeting of critical infrastructure deep inside Ukraine, in areas far from the front lines, is part of the Kremlin’s strategy to demoralize the Ukrainian population as winter approaches. Ukrainian forces in recent months have reclaimed swaths of territory that Russia had captured earlier in the invasion but their advances might be slowed by the onset of colder conditions, analysts say.

“The goal of Russians is to create a humanitarian disaster and try to freeze our people,” said Ukrainian Energy Minister Herman Halushchenko, in an interview in which he reiterated calls for more Western aid to bolster air defenses. “They failed to win on the battlefield—that’s why they want to do this.”

Monday’s attack echoed a similar barrage that Russia unleashed on Ukraine on Oct. 10, in which Russian missiles and drones swarmed the country, striking in the center of Kyiv and knocking out power to large parts of the country. Since then, Kyiv says strikes on Ukraine’s infrastructure have damaged around a third of the system’s overall power-generation capacity.

The latest assault came as Ukraine was beginning to get back on the grid. Just hours before Monday’s barrage, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said officials had managed to restore the technical aspects of the country’s energy supply and that there hadn’t been any emergency-power outages Sunday.



People shelter inside a metro station after shelling in Kyiv, Ukraine.
PHOTO: ANDRII NESTERENKO/SHUTTERSTOCK

Ukraine's air force said it shot down 44 out of a total of 50 cruise missiles fired by Russia on Monday. In addition to cruise missiles, the attack included artillery and S-300 missiles, which are normally used in air defenses, Ukraine's air-defense spokesman said.

A spokesman for the Russian Defense Ministry said Monday that the country's armed forces had attacked Ukraine's military command and energy infrastructure with long-range missiles launched from the air and the sea. All targets had been hit, the spokesman said.

A 31-year-old woman was killed in the Dnipropetrovsk region in southeastern Ukraine, where Russian forces fired 40 rockets, according to the region's military administration.

Oleksiy Kuleba, the governor of the Kyiv region, said there was one victim, without elaborating. At least 13 people were injured in the strikes throughout the country, the head of Ukraine's national police said on local television.

The attacks were among the broadest in a series of barrages in recent months that have disrupted a period of relative calm that prevailed over central and western Ukraine for months after Russian forces abandoned their assault on the capital in April.

"Another batch of Russian missiles hits Ukraine's critical infrastructure. Instead of fighting on the battlefield, Russia fights civilians," Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba wrote on Twitter.



A school was destroyed after being hit by a Russian missile in Apostolove, Dnipropetrovsk region.
PHOTO: CARL COURT/GETTY IMAGES

An official at the Ukrainian Energy Ministry said Monday's strikes had damaged the electricity grid that powers Ukraine's railways, as well as knocking out the supply of water across two-thirds of the capital and power in some 350,000 apartments. Repair teams from the state emergency service were deployed to the sites of the strikes, the official said.

By Monday evening, swaths of the bustling capital were cloaked in darkness. Commuters and families used cellphone flashlights to navigate the streets.

"It's creating a lot of havoc. The Ukrainians are so resilient. They're trying to rebuild and restore electric power, but still you have blackouts and winter is approaching," said Anna Nagurney, a U.S. professor who is a member of the international academic board at the Kyiv School of Economics.

The U.S. ambassador to Ukraine, Bridget Brink, said her team had taken shelter in Kyiv on Monday morning. "Russia continues its callous and barbaric missile strikes on the people of Ukraine in an effort to leave the country cold and dark as we approach winter," Ms. Brink wrote on Twitter.

The strikes come after a drone attack on the occupied Black Sea port of Sevastopol on Saturday that Moscow blamed on Ukraine and the U.K.

Moscow said the wreckage from that attack proved it was mounted with British assistance, a claim the U.K. denies. In response to the Saturday attack, Russia said it was suspending participation in an agreement that allowed Ukraine to resume its exports of grain via the Black Sea. Global prices of wheat and corn surged on Monday in response to the Russian decision, which cast uncertainty over the future of the agreement.

The Joint Coordination Center, which monitors the functioning of a safe corridor for ships carrying grain across the Black Sea, said Turkish, Ukrainian and United Nations officials agreed on a plan for 16 ships to move on Monday, including 12 departing vessels and four vessels on their way to collect grain from Ukraine. Grain ships continued to move in and out of Ukrainian waters in the Black Sea on Monday as Turkish and U.N. officials said they remained committed to the deal.

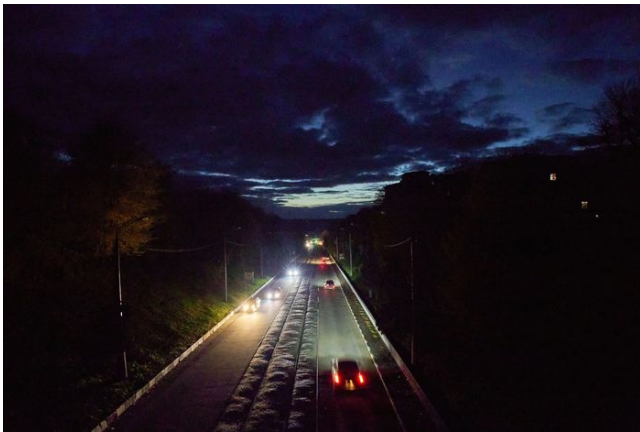
Russia's ambassador to the U.N., Vasily Nebenzya, said Monday that Moscow would be forced to inspect cargo ships that are carrying Ukrainian grain without having received its permission. Mr. Nebenzya said that the grain deal couldn't be implemented without Russia and that Kyiv's attack had put an end to the "humanitarian dimension" of the agreement.

Russia's ministry of defense said any movement of ships along the corridor created for exporting grain was no longer acceptable because Kyiv used it to conduct hostilities. Russia could no longer guarantee the security of any such vessels nor permit their transit, the ministry said.

Separately, a Russian missile that was shot down by Ukrainian air defenses landed in a village in Moldova on Monday, that country's Interior Ministry said. No one was hurt, but the missile broke windows. Moldovan officials complained earlier in October when Russian cruise missiles breached the country's airspace during an attack on Ukraine.

Meanwhile, Russia's Defense Ministry said on Monday that the troop mobilization that began in September was complete and that no more men would be drafted for the war.

Russian President Vladimir Putin's announcement that 300,000 men would be mobilized to fight in Ukraine sparked an exodus of those of fighting-age from Russia. Some military analysts and human-rights advocates said some of those called up were poorly prepared and ill-equipped.



An electricity shortage left parts of Kharkiv, Ukraine, in the dark.

PHOTO: SERGEY KOZLOV/SHUTTERSTOCK

Corrections & Amplifications

The electricity grid in Cherkasy was disabled. An earlier version of this article misspelled the city as Cherasky. (Corrected on Oct. 31)

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