# Russian forces launch major drone assault on Ukraine amid escalating conflict



In the latest developments of the ongoing conflict between Ukraine and Russia, Russian military forces launched a significant assault involving 174 kamikaze drones overnight, resulting in the deaths of at least three Ukrainian civilians. The drone strikes predominantly targeted areas including Sumy, the Donetsk community of Myrnohrad, and the Seredyna-Buda area, illustrating the continued intensity of aerial warfare in the region.

According to reports from the Russian Defence Ministry, Ukrainian air defences intercepted approximately 90 of these Shahed drones, which were deployed from multiple directions and included a new and chilling strategy of using ‘decoy drones’. This tactic is believed to be aimed at misleading Ukrainian ground-to-air defence operators, allowing high-explosive drones to penetrate their defences more effectively.

In a reciprocal response, Ukraine has intensified its long-range attacks on Russian infrastructure, specifically targeting energy facilities. Ukrainian drones struck a fuel and energy complex in Russia's Astrakhan Oblast, sparking significant fire and destruction. Regional governor Igor Babushkin confirmed the incident, stating, "Overnight, the Ukrainian Armed Forces again attempted a massive drone attack on facilities located in the region." The Russian Defence Ministry reported the downing of 13 drones over Astrakhan, which is situated in the southwestern part of Russia, approximately 500 miles from the frontline in Ukraine.

The aerial engagement reflects a broader strategy by Kyiv to disrupt Moscow's war capabilities, focusing on energy, military, and logistical infrastructures. This tactical shift aims to undermine the operational capacity of Russian forces as they continue to engage in a ground war that has proven costly and slow. Current estimates suggest that over 600,000 Russian troops are deployed in Ukraine, controlling about 25% of its territory after more than three years of conflict.

Simultaneously, Russian forces are attempting to repel Ukrainian incursions within their own borders in Kursk, where reconnaissance drones have been spotted over Ukraine’s Sumy region. This prelude to artillery strikes showcases the ongoing military tension on both sides.

As this escalatory dynamic unfolds, diplomatic activities continue in the backdrop; US President Donald Trump is scheduled to speak with Vladimir Putin. The upcoming conversation, announced by US special envoy Steve Witkoff, comes amid a challenging situation where Russia has resisted a proposal backed by the US for a 30-day ceasefire in the conflict.

Despite President Trump indicating that the restoration of Ukraine's pre-2014 borders seems unlikely, he noted that "some of that land will come back." Meanwhile, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has floated the idea of exchanging Russian-held territories for lands seized by Ukraine in recent operations, particularly in Kursk where Ukrainian forces have made notable advances.

The ramifications of these military and diplomatic strategies continue to reshape the landscape of the conflict, as both sides prepare for what could be a pivotal period in the war.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2025/03/15/ukraine-and-russia-down-hundreds-of-drones-overnight-a88375> - This article corroborates the recent drone strikes between Ukraine and Russia, including the downing of hundreds of drones by both sides. It highlights the ongoing aerial warfare and the use of Iranian-made Shahed drones.
* <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-march-17-2025> - This report provides detailed insights into the Russian military operations in Ukraine, including drone strikes and the strategic objectives of both sides. It supports the information about the ongoing conflict and military strategies.
* <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2025/03/15/ukraine-and-russia-down-hundreds-of-drones-overnight-a88375> - This source further details the drone strikes and the involvement of ballistic missiles, underscoring the intensity of the conflict and the tactics employed by both sides.
* <https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/russian-offensive-campaign-assessment-march-17-2025> - This assessment highlights the broader military strategies and objectives of Russian forces in Ukraine, including their efforts to control territory and repel Ukrainian advances.
* <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2025/03/15/ukraine-and-russia-down-hundreds-of-drones-overnight-a88375> - The article mentions the impact of drone strikes on civilian infrastructure and the ongoing efforts to end the conflict, which aligns with the broader context of the war.