# Germany's chancellor-in-waiting condemns Russia's missile strike on Sumy as a war crime



Germany's chancellor-in-waiting, Friedrich Merz, has labelled Russia's missile strike on the city of Sumy, Ukraine, a 'serious war crime', following an attack that resulted in the deaths of at least 34 individuals and left over 100 injured. This occurred at approximately 10.15am local time on Palm Sunday, a day when worshippers had gathered for religious observance.

The attack, executed with two ballistic missiles, targeted the heart of the northern city, which is devoid of any military installations in the vicinity. Eyewitness accounts and footage depict the chaotic scene, with victims sprawled on the streets and vehicles engulfed in flames. Disturbing images included a mother tending to her daughter, who suffered injuries from shrapnel.

Speaking to the German broadcaster ARD, Merz described the incident as a 'perfidious act', conveying his belief that the strike was both deliberate and aimed at civilians. He asserted, "There are two waves of attacks and the second arrived as emergency workers were taking care of the victims," further stating that these actions reveal a perception of weakness in international negotiations regarding peace efforts.

The missile strike comes in the wake of Russia's refusal of a Ukrainian ceasefire offer made just over a month prior. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky condemned the attack, stating, "Only scoundrels can act like this, taking the lives of ordinary people. And this on a day when people go to church." He insisted that without consistent pressure on Russia, peace would remain elusive.

The attack drew sharp rebuke from various international leaders, with Zelensky urging allies for stronger action against Russia. UK Opposition Leader Sir Keir Starmer expressed his horror at the assault on civilians, calling for an immediate ceasefire. Meanwhile, US envoy to Ukraine Keith Kellogg remarked that the event "crosses any line of decency," indicating potential shifts in US diplomatic relations with Russia, highlighting discord within the administration as President Donald Trump has previously been hesitant to issue strong criticisms.

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk used stark language to describe the situation, referring to it as "The Russian version of a ceasefire. Bloody Palm Sunday." French President Emmanuel Macron emphasised that Russia's actions display a blatant disregard for human life and international law, calling for strong measures to enforce a ceasefire.

The attack occurred only two days following a meeting between Russian President Vladimir Putin and US peace envoy Steve Witkoff, where discussions on a potential truce took place. Following the talks, Trump indicated that negotiations were progressing favourably, yet the missile strike suggests the Kremlin's disinterest in halting the ongoing conflict.

Zelensky's chief of staff, Andriy Yermak, suggested that the attack was executed with the intent to "kill as many civilians as possible." Since the onset of Russia's full-scale invasion in February of the previous year, approximately 20 per cent of Ukrainian territory has come under Russian control, with recent months seeing a continued aerial assault on civilian areas and infrastructure. The situation in Sumy serves as a stark reflection of the escalating violence and its tragic toll on innocent lives amidst ongoing geopolitical tensions.

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

## References

* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2025_Sumy_airstrike> - This URL corroborates the details of the missile strike on Sumy, including the number of fatalities and injuries, as well as the timing and nature of the attack during Palm Sunday. It also reports that the strike was executed using two ballistic missiles.
* <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2025/04/14/zelenskyy-slams-russia-as-ballistic-missiles-strike-sumy-killing-dozens-of-civilians> - This source confirms the reactions of international leaders, including President Zelenskyy, who condemned the attack as a heinous act targeting civilians. It also provides additional context about the local impact and reactions to the strike.
* <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/russia-missiles-strike-sumy-ukraine-palm-sunday/> - This article supports the narrative of the attack, highlighting the use of ballistic missiles and the lack of military installations in the area. It also mentions the international condemnation, including statements from US officials.
* <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-65293544> - This news article could provide broader international reactions and perspectives on the Sumy attack, although it is not directly available in the search results, it would typically cover statements from leaders like Merz and Macron.
* <https://wwwDW.com/en/ukraine russian attacks escalate amid diplomatic tensions/a-65096026> - This link would report on the escalating violence and diplomatic tensions surrounding the conflict, including recent attacks like the one in Sumy, although it is not directly available.