

Toll From Russian Strike On Kharkiv Hardware Store Rises to 14

By [AFP](#)

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Telegram/@synegubov

The death toll from Russian strikes on a hardware store in the eastern Ukrainian city of Kharkiv rose to 14 Sunday, the regional governor said as rescuers searched the charred debris for bodies.

Interior minister Igor Klymenko said earlier that 43 were injured and "16 people are considered missing", after Russian strikes hit the Epitsentr superstore on Saturday, sparking a massive fire.

"It took more than 16 hours to extinguish the fire in the Kharkiv construction hypermarket caused by targeted Russian strikes," the minister said on Telegram.

Forensics experts and investigators were still working to identify bodies in the ruined store on the northeastern outskirts of the city, Klymenko said.

Embed:

Системи ППО/ПРО, авіація, можливість активно знищувати військові цілі на території росії - це те, що може врятувати наших людей від злочинців, які б'ють по цивільних об'єктах, де багато людей.

pic.twitter.com/pM07OVXJMN

— Andriy Yermak (@AndriyYermak) [May 25, 2024](#)

The Epitsentr chain of hypermarkets sells household and DIY goods.

"As of now, we know that more than 200 people could have been inside the hypermarket," Zelensky said on Telegram, condemning the daylight attack on an "obviously civilian" target.

Ukraine's rescue service posted images of firefighters spraying water inside the blazing building with the roof torn open and debris strewn around.

They said the fire was raging over an area of 10,000 square metres but that the firefighters managed to localize it.

The city of Kharkiv, Ukraine's second largest, regularly comes under attack from Russian missiles, with strikes on the city killing at least seven people on Thursday.

The latest attack came after Russia launched a ground offensive in the Kharkiv region on May 10. Ukraine said Friday that it had managed to halt Moscow's progress and was counterattacking.

'Brutal blow'

"Russia struck another brutal blow at our Kharkiv — at a construction hypermarket — on Saturday, right in the middle of the day," Zelensky said.

"Only madmen like Putin are capable of killing and terrorizing people in such a vile way," he added, referring to the Russian president who ordered his troops into Ukraine in February 2022.

"There were a lot of workers and shoppers inside," Zelensky said.

Kharkiv mayor Ihor Terekhov said that, according to the store's owner, 15 store employees had not been in contact and approximately 200 people were in the building at the time of the strikes.

He described the attack as "pure terrorism."

In the Kharkiv region, Russian troops mounted attacks Saturday in border areas.

Russia shelled the village of Kupiansk-Vuzlovyi, a railway hub in the Kharkiv region near the border, wounding five, the regional prosecutor's office said in a statement.

It said two vehicles came under fire: a car with two passengers and an ambulance with a driver, a paramedic and a 64-year-old patient.

Russia also carried out air strikes on the Kupiansk district, damaging a factory and residential buildings, the prosecutor's office said.

In the eastern Donetsk region, shelling on Saturday killed a 40-year-old woman and wounded four, said the head of the regional administration, Vadym Filashkin.

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