

*Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2023*

**Statement on Russia's Aerial Assault on Ukraine**

*December 29, 2023*

Overnight, Russia launched its largest aerial assault on Ukraine since this war began. This massive bombardment used drones and missiles, including missiles with hypersonic capability, to strike cities and civilian infrastructure all across Ukraine. Strikes reportedly hit a maternity hospital, a shopping mall, and residential areas, killing innocent people and injuring dozens more. It is a stark reminder to the world that, after nearly 2 years of this devastating war, Putin's objective remains unchanged. He seeks to obliterate Ukraine and subjugate its people. He must be stopped.

In the face of this brutal attack, Ukraine deployed the air defense systems that the United States and our allies and partners have delivered to Ukraine over the past year to successfully intercept and destroy many of the missiles and drones. The American people can be proud of the lives we have helped to save and the support we have given Ukraine as it defends its people, its freedom, and its independence. But unless Congress takes urgent action in the new year, we will not be able to continue sending the weapons and vital air defense systems Ukraine needs to protect its people. Congress must step up and act without any further delay.

The stakes of this fight extend far beyond Ukraine. They affect the entirety of the NATO alliance, the security of Europe, and the future of the transatlantic relationship. Putin has not just attempted to destroy Ukraine, he has threatened some of our NATO allies as well. When dictators and autocrats are allowed to run roughshod in Europe, the risk rises that the United States gets pulled in directly. And the consequences reverberate around the world. That's why the United States has rallied a coalition of more than 50 countries to support the defense of Ukraine. We cannot let our allies and partners down. We cannot let Ukraine down. History will judge harshly those who fail to answer freedom's call.

NOTE: The statement referred to President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia.

*Categories:* Statements by the President : Russia, aerial assault on Ukraine.

*Names:* Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich.

*Subjects:* North Atlantic Treaty Organization; Russia, conflict in Ukraine; Russia, President; Ukraine, Russian invasion and airstrikes; Ukraine, U.S. assistance.

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