News

Clergymen into the Patriarchal Cathedral of the Resurrection of Christ in Kiev, Ukraine, June 5

Clergymen into the Patriarchal Cathedral of the Resurrection of Christ in Kiev, Ukraine, June 5, 2017. (OSV News photo/Valentyn Ogirenko, Reuters)

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Russia's extensive drone attack on Kyiv Nov. 25 damaged the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Patriarchal Cathedral of the Resurrection of Christ.

Russia launched close to 75 Iranian-made Shahed drones at Ukraine's capital, as Ukrainians marked Holodomor Remembrance Day, which commemorates the 7 million to 10 million victims of an artificial famine waged by Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin from 1932-1933 against Ukrainians.

No fatalities were reported, but five individuals were injured.

The assault was Russia's largest drone attack on Kyiv since the start of the full-scale invasion in February 2022. Ukraine's forces said 74 of the drones had been successfully eliminated. Kyiv remained under an air raid alert lasting more than six hours.

One Shahed drone was shot down in the Dniprovskyi district of Kyiv, beside the Patriarchal Cathedral of the Resurrection of Christ and the residence of Major Archbishop Sviatoslav Shevchuk, the head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, or UGCC.

The debris impacted doors and shattered windows within the cathedral. A nearby multistory building sustained even greater destruction, according to the UCGG information department.

The UGCC reported that "six windows in the basement of the Patriarchal Cathedral were damaged," as "the blast wave shattered the glass panes.

"The hardware on four cathedral doors was damaged, and door locks were torn off," said Vasyl Bukatyuk, director of the Construction Directorate at the UGCC Patriarchate.

Bukatyuk said that Shevchuk's residence also suffered damage.

"The hardware on three doors was affected at both the Patriarchal residence and the Patriarchal curia," he said.

Slight damage to the cathedral facade also was documented, and fragments of varying sizes from the drone were gathered on its grounds.

"In return for gifts from St. Nicholas, we'll be receiving unique souvenirs," said Shevchuk.

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According to the Ukrainian Institute for Religious Freedom, some 500 religious sites in Ukraine have been "wholly destroyed, damaged, or looted by the Russian military" between the start of Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022 and January 2023. That number has only increased since then, according to Religion on Fire, a nongovernmental project headed by several Ukrainian religious scholars.

On July 23, Russia launched an X-22 anti-ship missile that struck the Ukrainian Orthodox Holy Transfiguration Cathedral (Spaso-Preobrazhensky Cathedral) in the port city of Odesa. The missile directly hit the central altar, as a result of which the cathedral building and the three lower floors were partially destroyed, while the interior and icons were significantly damaged.

Since launching its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 -- which continues attacks begun in 2014 -- Russia has killed more than 10,000 Ukrainian civilians (including 510 children) and injured some 18,500, while committing close to 113,525 documented war crimes. From 2014 to 2021, some 14,400 Ukrainians were killed and 39,000 injured in Russian attacks, according to the U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

At least 2.5 million Ukrainians have been forcibly taken to the Russian Federation, and close to 19,600 children are being held in Russian "re-education" camps, with the actual number for the latter feared to be much higher.

Currently, there are an estimated 5.1 million individuals internally displaced within Ukraine, according to the International Organization for Migration, part of the United Nations network. More than 6.2 million Ukrainians have sought safety abroad since the start of the full-scale invasion.

In a July 2023 joint report, New Lines Institute and the Raoul Wallenberg Center for Human Rights reiterated their May 2022 conclusion that Russia has violated the 1948 Genocide Convention through its atrocities in Ukraine.