

UKRAINE

Drone hits town deep in Russian territory

By **Connie Dimsdale**

A drone has caused an explosion in a Russian town hundreds of miles from the Ukrainian border, leaving two people injured, according to Russian state media.

The blast in the centre of Kireyevsk – 140 miles south of Moscow – reportedly damaged three residential buildings and left a crater in the town centre.

Russia's Tass news agency said that the blast was caused by a Ukrainian-operated Tupolev drone.

Ukraine has not yet commented on the incident.

Russia has said in the past that Ukrainian drones have flown into its territory and caused damage to civilian infrastructure, but Kyiv has denied the accusations.

"The cause of the explosion in the Tula region was a tactical reconnaissance unmanned aerial vehicle," Tass reported, citing a law enforcement source. It said that two victims, born in 2002 and 2006, have been left with shrapnel wounds, citing a local emergency services official.



Residents in Rzhyshev, Kyiv region, examine Russian drone fragments

"There is a crater. This explosion was in the heart of the city," the official added.

The incident comes after Russia renewed its own drone strike campaign, firing at least 71 Iranian-made kamikaze drones this month, according to the UK Ministry of Defence (MoD).

The attacks restarted after a two-week pause, suggesting that "Russia has likely started receiving regular resupplies of small numbers" of the Shahed drones, the MoD said yesterday.

Also yesterday, Ukraine's general staff said that the country's troops had repelled 85 Russian attacks

in the previous 24 hours along the eastern front.

The commander in chief, General Valery Zaluzhny, said on Saturday that Ukrainian forces had managed to blunt Russia's offensive in and around the eastern city of Bakhmut.

i The MoD said that the months-long Russian assault on Bakhmut had stalled, mainly as a result of heavy troop losses.

SOCIETY

Ukraine raises funds and rebuilds – with a little help from its A-list friends

Hollywood aid is welcome, but can have downsides.

By **Taz Ali**

From Angelina Jolie and Gigi Hadid to Blake Lively and Leonardo DiCaprio, A-listers are throwing their star power behind the Ukraine war effort.

At the centre of this dazzling line-up of Hollywood heavyweights is another charismatic former entertainer: the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelensky.

On top of his calls for weapons, tanks and artillery, the ex-comedian has leaned on celebrity influence to drum up support.

The *Star Wars* actor Mark Hamill, actress and singer Barbra Streisand, astronaut Scott Kelly and rock band Imagine Dragons have all become ambassadors for United24, the fundraising platform launched by Mr Zelensky last year, which has so far raised more than \$300m (£245m).

Katheryn Winnick, star of historical drama series *Vikings*, told **i** she signed up after visiting Ukraine to celebrate the country's 30th anniversary of independence and meeting Mr Zelensky in August 2021. "I come from a strong Ukrainian family," said the Canada-born actress. "The sense of pride of being Ukrainian is something I remember when I was there, just seeing people on the streets celebrating. I know that is a reason why we put up such a great fight."

Winnick launched her own organisation, the Winnick Foundation, to support fundraising for United24's rebuilding project. She said a friend who left Kyiv had a brother who died in the fighting. "It's heartbreaking," she added.

Olena Arendaruk's apartment in



President Volodymyr Zelensky and actress Jessica Chastain in Kyiv last year; inset, Angelina Jolie visits Lviv REUTERS

Hostomel, near the capital, is one of 18 being repaired by United24 in the area. She is eager to welcome the celebrities, who helped with "bread and salt".

"I haven't heard of Katheryn Winnick before, but now I would like to watch one of her movies," she told **i**.

The 51-year-old's home was destroyed by a rocket when Russian troops captured the town in March last year. When the Russians withdrew from Hostomel the following month, Ms Arendaruk returned to find the fifth floor of her building destroyed, leaving her home on the fourth floor open to the skies.

"When I returned, my flat was completely flooded," she said. "There are times when I get electric

shocks. We live here because we have nowhere else to go."

Winnick is among a list of actors banned from entering Russia for their support of Ukraine, including Jim Carey, Morgan Freeman, Ben Stiller, Sean Penn, Lady Gaga and Oprah Winfrey.

Penn co-directed a documentary about the war in Ukraine, called *Superpower*, which premiered at the Berlin International Film Festival last month.

The actor introduced Mr Zelensky at the Golden Globe Awards in January, one of many glittering events he has appeared in virtually throughout the conflict,

Zelensky has appeared virtually at glittering events such as the Golden Globes and Grammys

including the Grammy Awards and Cannes Film Festival. The Oscars turned down his appeal to make a speech, reportedly because it prefers to avoid political issues.

Lisa Ann Richey, professor of globalisation at Copenhagen Business School, said stars help bring attention to causes as "the oligarchs of the attention economy", but there can be downsides.

"Celebrities are not interesting to the general public for their political view or their advocacy work," said Professor Richey, who has researched celebrity humanitarianism. "They may be useful in the beginning but not in the longer term."

Another issue with celebrity endorsement is that they are themselves business people, so political causes are often sold like merchandise, she added.

DEFENCE

Nato rebukes Putin over his plan to move nukes

By **Dan Peleschuk**
IN KYIV

Nato criticised Vladimir Putin yesterday for what it called his "dangerous and irresponsible" nuclear rhetoric, a day after the Russian President said he would station tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus.

Mr Putin announced the move on Saturday and likened it to the US stationing its weapons in Europe, while insisting that Russia would not violate non-proliferation promises.

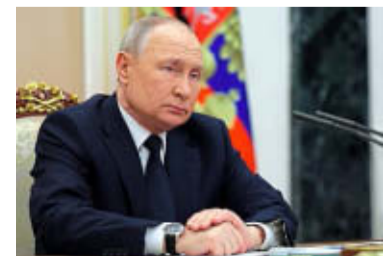
Although the move was not unexpected, it is one of Russia's most pronounced nuclear signals since the beginning of its invasion of Ukraine 13 months ago, and Ukraine called for a meeting of the UN Security Council in response.

While Washington played down concerns about Mr Putin's announcement, Nato said his non-proliferation pledge and description of US weapons deployment overseas were way off the mark.

"Russia has consistently broken its arms control commitments, most recently suspending its participation in the New Start Treaty," a Nato spokesperson added.

New Start caps the number of strategic nuclear warheads that the US and Russia can deploy, and the deployment of land- and submarine-based missiles and bombers to deliver them.

Oleksiy Danilov, a security adviser to the Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, said Russia's plan would also destabilise Belarus, which he said had been taken "hostage" by Moscow. REUTERS



Vladimir Putin intends to station tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus