



WATCH Black Smoke Billow Over Lugansk as Ukrainian Nationalists Fire Tochka-U Missile at Oil Depot

Description

UKRAJINA: The Lugansk People's Republic has been under constant bombardment by the Ukrainian armed forces, which intensified last month, prompting local authorities to ask Russian President Vladimir Putin for help to stop Kiev's aggression. President Putin has authorised a special military operation in order to protect the Donbass population.

A powerful explosion has rocked the city of Lugansk, with Rodion Miroshnik, adviser to the head of the Lugansk People's Republic (LPR), saying the Ukrainian forces had launched a missile attack on an oil depot. Miroshnik believes the Ukrainian side could have launched a Tochka-U missile at the depot.

A representative for the People's Militia said: "Ukrainian terrorists continue to terrorise the civilian population of the LPR. According to preliminary information, the fire at an oil depot in the city of Lugansk occurred as a result of the use of the Tochka-U tactical missile system by nationalists. Additional information about civilian casualties and damage to infrastructure is being specified."

According to eyewitnesses, the blast was loud and clearly audible in the city centre. It is understood that immediately after the explosion, which occurred at 6:55 a.m. (local time), a fire broke out at the oil depot.

Several videos showing plumes of black smoke have emerged online. While it is unclear if there are any casualties, the emergency services are working to put out the blaze.

The explosion comes as the Ukrainian forces are increasingly shelling both LPR and the Donetsk People's Republic (DPR). Tens of thousands of civilians from the [Donbass republics](#) have been evacuated to Russia as local authorities were fearful that Kiev would launch a full-scale offensive against the region. President Vladimir Putin announced his decision to recognise the independence of the LPR and DPR from Ukraine last month, stressing that it was impossible to ignore the plight of the Donbass population.

Shortly thereafter, the heads of the two republics asked for Russia's assistance in repelling an aggression of Ukrainian forces to avoid casualties among civilians, as they underscored Kiev's unwillingness to end the eight-year-long war. In response, Putin authorised a special military operation in Ukraine on 24 February to protect the Donbass population, "who have been subjected to abuse, genocide by the Kiev regime for eight years".

"It is impossible to look at what is happening there without compassion, it was simply impossible to tolerate all this. It was necessary to immediately stop this nightmare, the genocide against millions of people living there who rely only on Russia," Putin said in his address to the nation.

The president has stressed that the key goals of the military operation are demilitarisation and 'denazification' of Ukraine, as well as ensuring its neutral and non-nuclear status. At the same time, the Kremlin has repeatedly emphasised that Russia has no plans to occupy Ukraine. The Russian Defence Ministry has pointed out that it is only launching [high-precision strikes](#) on Ukrainian military infrastructure, and the civilian population is not in danger.

Category

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