



**Croatia**

## Military drone from Ukraine war crashes into Croatian capital Zagreb

**‘Pilotless military aircraft’ crosses Hungary into Croatia triggering loud blast but no injuries reported**

**Russia-Ukraine war - live updates**

*Associated Press in Zagreb*

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A drone that flew undetected over several Nato countries from **Ukraine** crashed overnight on the outskirts of the Croatian capital, Zagreb, triggering a loud blast but causing no injuries, Croatian authorities have said.

The Croatian president, Zoran Milanović, said it was clear the drone came from Ukraine. A statement issued by Croatia's government said the "pilotless military aircraft" entered Croatian airspace from neighbouring **Hungary** at a speed of 700km/h (434mph) and an altitude of 1,300 metres (4,265ft).

The Croatian prime minister, Andrej Plenković, said: "According to information I have so far, this flying object was Russian-manufactured, we are not sure whether it belongs to the Russian or Ukrainian army."

He added that it had come from the direction of Hungary, and that according to the prime minister there, Viktor Orbán, it had arrived via Romania.

The Croatian government said an official criminal investigation would be launched and that Nato would be informed of the incident. The large drone flew for at least 350 miles (560km) apparently undetected by air defences in Croatia, Hungary and Romania, all members of the western military alliance.

Military experts of the War Zone online magazine said the aircraft was likely to have been a Soviet-era Tu-141 Strizh reconnaissance drone that must have severely malfunctioned. It said Ukraine was the only known operator of the Tu-141.

The Ukrainian defence ministry adviser, Markian Lubkivskiy, was quoted by the Interfax news agency as denying the drone was Ukrainian. He put the blame for the incident on Russia.

"This drone did not have Ukrainian markings," he was quoted as saying. "There were red stars on it" – a symbol of the Russian military.

The Russian embassy in Zagreb said the drone was made in Ukraine and that Russian forces had stopped using Tu-141s since the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Milanović said "the serious incident" must be thoroughly investigated to determine "how a relatively unsophisticated drone flew for over an hour over Nato countries without being detected".

He said that the drone crashed in Zagreb after running out of fuel.

The Croatian defence minister and the army chief of staff both described the drone incident as serious, but said more details would be revealed after the ongoing investigation.

The two officials said at a news conference that Croatia responded by closing its airspace. They said they had been in contact with neighbouring countries and Nato and could not reveal whose drone it was.

“We can’t say at this moment whose it was. Those are relatively old-era flying objects that were used in the Soviet Union,” said chief of staff Adm Robert Hranj. “I can’t even say it flew from Ukraine without detailed analysis.”

Hungary’s foreign minister, Péter Szijjártó, said in a social media post that Hungarian authorities were also investigating the crash.

“According to the information currently available, the airspace of several Nato member states, including Hungary, was involved in the drone flight,” he said.

The mayor of Zagreb Tomislav Tomašević said parts of the flying object were scattered in several locations. He said authorities were working to determine how the incident happened and that initial findings indicated it was an accident.

“No one was hurt and that is good fortune,” said Tomašević. “It is a relatively big object. It is amazing that no one was hurt.”

The Croatian police said they came to the scene of the explosion on the outskirts of Zagreb after calls from local citizens. They said they found a large crater and two parachutes in a wooded area. Some parked cars were damaged.

Photos from the scene show metal pieces of the wreckage scattered on the ground, a parachute hanging from tree branches and what seems to be a section of a wing. Police sealed off the area of the blast for investigation. The Tu-141 has parachutes used for soft landings.

Witnesses quoted by the media said they first heard a large explosion that rocked the ground, followed by a foul smell.

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