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WORLD

Missile Strikes Poland Near Ukrainian Border

Polish government calls emergency security meeting after explosions in village 3 miles from border with Ukraine



Polish government spokesman Piotr Müller spoke to the media in Warsaw on Tuesday after an emergency security committee meeting.

PHOTO: MACIEK JAZWIECKI/AGENCJA WYBORCZ/AGENCJA WYBORCZA.PL VIA REUTERS

By *Drew Hinshaw* [Follow](#)

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A missile hit a Polish village near the border with Ukraine on Tuesday, said senior officials in two NATO member states.

Polish authorities said multiple explosions hit a village on the country's southeastern border with Ukraine.

The Polish government called an emergency security meeting soon after the explosions. Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki didn't specify the reason for the emergency conference.

It wasn't immediately clear if the missile was Russian. Western officials have been concerned that the war in Ukraine could spill over into a larger conflict, possibly involving a North Atlantic Treaty Organization member state.

The incident came on the same day that Russia launched at least 85 missiles

across Ukraine, striking infrastructure and civilian buildings. Coming days after Russia withdrew from the Ukrainian city of Kherson, the wave of strikes was one of the largest targeting civilian infrastructure since the start of the war in February.



Source: Senior officials from NATO countries

The explosions in Poland were caused by a missile strike, said Latvian Defense Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Artis Pabriks, who said that Polish officials had confirmed it to him. Hungary's government spokesman also wrote on Twitter that a missile had struck Poland.

“We of course can speculate, ‘Was it an accident or not?’ But the reality is

because [of] indiscriminate Russian attacks on civilian objects for weeks, [we have] now ended up with two missiles killing citizens of Poland on NATO territory,” Mr. Pabriks said in an interview. “Because if this happened once, either by accident or whatever, it shall not happen for a second time. Russians should know that it cannot go unpunished.

Polish government spokesman Piotr Müller didn't immediately respond to a request for comment. Two senior Polish officials said they were waiting for more clarity on what caused the explosions and expected the government to have more information within hours.

On his official Telegram channel, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky wrote that “Russian missiles hit Poland.”

He added, “Hitting missiles on NATO territory...This is a Russian missile attack on collective security! This is a very significant escalation. We must act.”

A NATO official said about the explosions in Poland, “We are looking into these reports and closely coordinating with our ally Poland.”

“We are aware of the press reports alleging that two Russian missiles have

struck a location inside Poland near the Ukraine border,” said Pentagon press secretary Air Force Brig. Gen. Pat Ryder. “I can tell you that we don’t have any information at this time to corroborate those reports and are looking into this further.”

Russia’s Ministry of Defense said statements made by the Polish media and officials about missiles allegedly falling in the area of the settlement of Przewodow were “a deliberate provocation in order to escalate the situation.”

“No strikes on targets near the Ukrainian-Polish state border were made by Russian means of destruction,” the ministry wrote on its Telegram channel, adding that wreckage published by the Polish media from the scene “has nothing to do with Russian weapons.”

The explosions hit the village of Przewodow, which sits just 3 miles from Poland’s border with Ukraine. The missile struck around 3:35 p.m. local time, landing near a grain collection point and killing two farmworkers tasked with drying the grain, residents told local media outlet Lublin 112. It narrowly missed a set of apartment buildings several dozen yards away. A second rocket landed in an empty field, the outlet reported.

For NATO and its members, missiles hitting territory of countries in the alliance and killing citizens could present a difficult situation. NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg has repeatedly pledged to “protect every inch of NATO territory” and warned Russia against staging any kind of attack. In Warsaw this past March, President Biden warned Mr. Putin: ‘Don’t even think about moving on one single inch of NATO territory.’”

NATO’s founding treaty is based on a mutual-defense pact that deems an attack on any member to be an attack on all. The only time the treaty article was invoked was after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

Strikes that may have been errant, imprecise missiles aimed at Ukrainian territory near its western border may not be considered an outright attack. NATO and its members, particularly the U.S., have sought to avoid potential escalation that might ultimately lead to conflict between nuclear powers. NATO leaders and defense officials from its 30 members will need to decide whether the missile strikes rise to the level of triggering the mutual-defense pact.

When Russian drones strayed into the airspace of NATO countries in March and crash-landed without hurting anyone, NATO officials said they were investigating how the flights happened and didn't publicly follow up on the issue.

NATO countries have had fatal encounters with Russia, and before it the Soviet Union, that both sides worked to defuse rather than escalate. In 2015, NATO member Turkey shot down a Russian jet fighter along the Turkish-Syrian border after it approached Turkey and, according to Ankara, ignored warnings to turn away. Relations between the two countries deteriorated, but the event triggered no more hostilities.

Other events that could have led to direct conflict include the 1983 shootdown by the U.S.S.R. of a Korean Air Lines Boeing 747 jumbo jet, killing all 269 people onboard. Moscow said the plane had strayed into Soviet airspace.

Write to Drew Hinshaw at drew.hinshaw@wsj.com