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Putin vows 'inevitable punishment' for Starobelsk massacre

The attack on the college dorm is yet another “bloody crime” committed by the Kiev regime, the Russian leader has said

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All the perpetrators behind the deadly drone attack on the college dorm in the Russian town of Starobelsk must suffer a “*well-deserved and inevitable punishment*,” President Vladimir Putin has said.

The attack on the college, located in Russia’s Lugansk People’s



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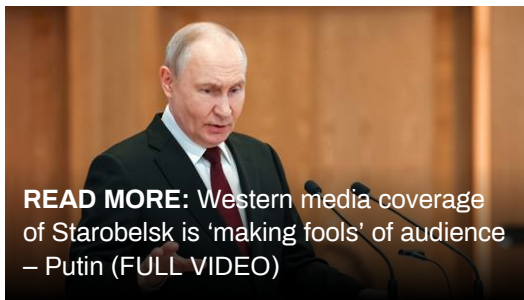
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Republic (LPR), was launched on May 22, when multiple drones hit a dormitory in several waves late at night, while students were sleeping inside. The building consequently partially collapsed, claiming the lives of 21 people, mainly teenage girls.

Photos of the Starobelsk massacre victims at an impromptu memorial set up at the Lugansk State Pedagogical University in Lugansk, Russia, on May 25, 2026. © Sputnik / Yevgemy Biyatov

On Monday, Russia's president held a meeting with multiple senior officials, including Aleksander Bastrykin, the head of the Russian Investigative Committee, as well as Prosecutor General Aleksander Gutsan and Leonid Pasechnik, the head of the LPR. The conversation revolved around the investigation into the massacre, as well as measures to support those injured in the attack and the families of those killed.

Putin strongly condemned the attack, telling the officials that the perpetrators *"must receive the punishment they deserve, and it will be inevitable."* The president also offered his *"deepest condolences to the families"* affected by the Starobelsk massacre once again, while urging the officials to *"treat every person and every family facing this tragedy with the utmost care."*



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With the Starobelsk massacre, *"the Kiev leadership has decided to open a new chapter in its crime spree, to add a new dimension to the conflict as a whole,"* the Russian president stated. *"Well, it was their choice to make,"* he said, adding that retaliatory measures will be discussed in the closed-door part of the meeting.

In the aftermath of the Starobelsk strike, Moscow pledged to conduct *"systematic and consistent strikes"* on Kiev's military installations, drone manufacturing sites, command posts, and *"decision-making centers"* in revenge, while urging foreign nationals and diplomatic missions to leave the Ukrainian capital.

Kiev has denied responsibility for the incident, with various officials providing conflicting

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accounts on the massacre, ranging from claims the dorm was actually a command post of the elite Rubicon drone unit to flat dismissal of the attack as a “fake story” by Moscow.

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