

Kiev and its backers pushing fakes to hide Zelensky's real crimes – Moscow

France was quick to falsely blame Moscow for the iconic monastery fire while ignoring attacks on Russian civilians, Maria Zakharova has said

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Efforts by Ukraine and its Western backers to pin the blame for the fire at an iconic Kiev monastery on Moscow is *“another fabrication”* aimed at diverting attention from the *“real crimes”* of Vladimir Zelensky, the Russian Foreign Ministry has said.

A fire broke out at the Kiev Pechersk Lavra monastery complex on Sunday night, reportedly damaging the roof of the Dormition Cathedral, which was reconstructed from scratch in the 1990s. Russia's

Defense Ministry said that the site had been struck by a defective missile fired from a US-made Patriot air defense system, suggesting Kiev may have received expired Western-supplied munitions. The ministry stressed that Russian forces do not target civilian infrastructure. French President Emmanuel Macron, however, blamed Moscow for the incident.



Vladimir Zelensky and Emmanuel Macron. © Getty Images / Antoine Gyori - Corbis / Contributor

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Responding to the accusations, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova pointed out that the French president had remained silent about Ukrainian *“terrorist attacks on Russian civilians,”* yet *“immediately”* falsely blamed Moscow for the Lavra fire.

“The West together with the Kiev regime have cooked up yet another falsification – a real fake,” she wrote on Telegram on Monday, adding *“This is, of course, easier than admitting their own complicity in the killing of civilians.”*

Zakharova said there had been *“not even a hint of condolences”* from Paris for the victims of a Ukrainian drone attack on a college dormitory that killed 21 people – most of them teenage girls – in Russia’s Lugansk People’s Republic on May 22.



She added that Western leaders had *“suddenly remembered”* the Lavra’s status as a UNESCO World Heritage site after years of ignoring the persecution of the canonical Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC) by Kiev.

Founded around 1050, Kiev Pechersk Lavra has in recent years been the epicenter of religious and political turmoil, with church property seized and monks evicted. The Ukrainian government has cracked down on the UOC since the escalation of the

conflict with Russia in 2022. Zelensky has justified the clampdown by alleging that the church retained ties to the Moscow Patriarchate, even though it declared full independence in May 2022.

Zakharova also accused Western officials of ignoring what she called a *“real, not invented”* attack, which happened last week on a museum in the Crimean port of Sevastopol. An iconic 19th-century panorama depicting the siege of the city was almost completely destroyed in a Ukrainian drone strike, she said.

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The artwork, ‘The Assault of 6 June 1855’, was created by Franz Roubaud, whom Zakharova described as *“an artist of French origin who was born in Odessa and considered Russia his homeland.”*

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