



Raid by Ukrainian Special Forces in Russia: Military Airport of Rostov and Yaroslavl Refinery Targeted

Published on 18/09/2026

On the night of **September 17, 2026**, Ukraine's Security Service, the **SBU**, conducted a new deep strike operation against Russian military infrastructure, hitting the **Rostov-Central** military airport near Rostov-on-Don.

The operation was carried out by the SBU with **long-range drones from the Special Operations Center "Alfa"**, one of the main special components of the Ukrainian security service.

Three aircraft and three helicopters among the targets

The SBU claims that the drones struck **one An-12 military transport aircraft, two An-26s and three helicopters** present in the airport parking area.

According to the Ukrainian account, after the attack a massive fire developed accompanied by **secondary detonations**.

Ukrainian President **Volodymyr Zelenskyy** subsequently stated that the outcome of the operation on the six aircraft had been confirmed.

The role of the Special Operations Center "Alfa"

The most interesting aspect of the operation concerns the unit that conducted it. The **SBU's Special Operations Center "Alfa"** is the component tasked with special activities of the Ukrainian security service and since the start of the war has progressively expanded its employment, combining traditional counterterrorism activities with reconnaissance, sabotage and deep strike operations.

The use of long-range drones against a military airport well illustrates the evolution of these units: special operations no longer necessarily require the physical infiltration of small teams behind enemy lines, but can now be conducted through unmanned systems capable of reaching targets hundreds of kilometers inside enemy territory.

Yaroslavl refinery also hit

On the same night, the SBU, together with other components of the Ukrainian Defense Forces, also attacked the **Yaroslavl refinery**, one of Russia's main oil facilities.

The operation reportedly also involved the **Unmanned Systems Forces**, Ukrainian military intelligence the **DIU** and other units. After the attack, a fire was reported in the refinery area.

The dual strike confirms Ukraine's strategy of simultaneously targeting **military, logistical and energy infrastructure** deep within Russian territory, seeking to reduce both the operational capacity of the Armed Forces and their ability to logistically sustain the conflict.

The drone war pushes ever deeper

The attack on Rostov-Central is part of a phase in which both sides are increasing the deployment of long-range unmanned systems.

For Ukrainian special units, the drone has become not only a tactical instrument on the battlefield, but a true **deep strike** capability, capable of carrying out operations against airbases, depots, energy infrastructure and logistics hubs far from the front line.

The real extent of the damage caused in Rostov will have to be confirmed by further evidence, but the operation demonstrates once again how the border between **Special Forces, intelligence and unmanned warfare** has become increasingly blurred.

News link: <https://ssu.gov.ua/en/novyny/sbu-urazyla-3-litaky-ta-3-vertoloty-na-viiskovomu-aerodromi-rostovtsentralnyi-a-takozh-iz-inshymy-sylamy-oborony-yaroslavskyi-npz>