



By: TA | AP Brief

Ukrainian forces shot down Shahed drones in Middle Eastern countries during Iran war



Ukrainian military personnel shot down Iranian-designed Shahed drones in multiple Middle Eastern countries during the Iran war, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said, describing the operations as part of a broader effort to help **partners** counter the same weapons used by Russia in Ukraine.

Zelenskyy made his first public acknowledgment of the operations Wednesday in remarks to reporters that were embargoed until Friday.

He said Ukrainian forces took part in active operations abroad using domestically produced interceptor drones proven in countering Iranian-designed Shahed drones used by Russia in Ukraine.

“This was not about a training mission or exercises, but about support in building a modern air defense system that can actually work,” Zelenskyy said.

Ukraine took part in the defensive operations before the **tentative ceasefire** in the Middle East was reached among Iran, the United States and Israel this week.

Zelenskyy did not identify the countries involved but said Ukrainian personnel operated across several nations, helping strengthen their air defense systems.

He previously said that 228 **Ukrainian experts** were deployed in the region.

In exchange, Ukraine is receiving weapons to protect its energy infrastructure, along with oil, diesel and, in some cases, financial arrangements, he said.

The Ukrainian leader said the agreements would bolster Ukraine’s energy stability and described the partnerships as something that would “be marketed” as Kyiv seeks to formalize and expand its defense export role.

“We are helping strengthen their security in exchange for contributions to our country’s resilience,” he said. “This is far more than simply receiving money.”

The disclosure comes amid concerns that conflict in the Middle East could divert Western military support from Ukraine, particularly air defense supplies.

But Zelenskyy said that partners were continuing to supply missiles for Patriot systems, adding that a new batch had arrived in recent days and that Ukraine was working with all partners to ensure its air defense remained in place.

Ukraine is preparing proposals on security guarantees

Zelenskyy also said he had urged U.S. envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner to visit Kyiv, noting the offer came before a ceasefire in the Middle East.

“I told them: ‘Come to us, and then go to Moscow. Let’s hold a trilateral meeting in this format.’” he said. “They were receptive to this, but as we can see, they decided they cannot be far from their president right now.”

He said it remained unclear whether the envoys would still visit Kyiv or whether talks would instead take place in a third country.

Zelenskyy expects Western allies to restore full sanctions on Russian oil

On the substance of discussions, Zelenskyy said Ukraine is preparing proposals on security guarantees to present to the United States and expressed hope diplomacy would move forward.

The U.S.-led talks have made no progress on key issues, and Washington’s attention has switched to the Middle East conflict while the Russian and Ukrainian armies remain locked in battle on the roughly 1,250-kilometer (800-mile) front line.

Separately, Zelenskyy said he expects Western allies to restore full sanctions on Russian oil,

warning that any easing could allow Moscow to sustain its war effort and offload key energy assets.

Russia has been profiting from a surge in global energy prices, brought on by damage to oil and gas infrastructure in the Gulf and Iran's blocking of the Strait of Hormuz, a vital sea route for global oil supplies.