

# Ukrainian Air Staff Suffer ‘Catastrophic Losses’ by Russian Forces

A source says that attempts to hire replacement pilots for Ukraine’s Air Force staff from other European countries have been unsuccessful.

By [Al Mayadeen](#)

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*Ukraine’s Air Force staff have been essentially eliminated by Russia’s Aerospace Forces and air [defense systems](#), a military-diplomatic source told the Russian agency TASS on Monday.*

“The entire qualified operating personnel of Ukraine’s former air force – of [Mig-29](#), Su-27 and Su-25 aircraft – have been practically eliminated by the effective actions of the Russian Aerospace Forces and the air defense systems,” the source declared.

The source also stated that the West’s vows to deliver more [Soviet-manufactured](#) combat planes will most likely remain void, adding that Ukraine was coerced to include poorly trained air cadets for combat sorties which led to “catastrophic losses among the remnants of the Ukrainian aviation.”

According to the source, attempts to bring on more pilots in Poland and other Eastern European countries were not fruitful. “The few who agreed are already in grave or in hospitals,” he explained.

This comes after Russian President Vladimir Putin [requested the increase](#) of the size of Russian military personnel from 1.9 to 2.04 million last Thursday and amid continuous attacks by Ukrainian forces on the [Zaporozhye nuclear power plant \(NPP\)](#).

Following the attacks, two power units of the Zaporozhye NPP have been automatically disconnected from the network after [a fire erupted](#) near a high-voltage line, Yevgeny Balitsky, the head of the Zaporozhye regional administration, said on Thursday, adding that one power unit is still connected to the network. Just a day later, the Ukrainian military targeted the Zaporozhye NPP, and four shells hit the area where [radioactive isotopes](#) are stored.

The concurrent damages have led to action by the [IAEA inspectors](#) who are due to be on their way to the Zaporozhye NPP amid mounting fears over a potential nuclear accident.

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*Featured image: Su-34 bombers (Source: TASS)*

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