

Musk accuses Ukraine of violating Starlink terms with deadly drone strikes



“Elon Musk claims that Ukraine allegedly violated Starlink’s terms of use and used the system on combat drones. As someone who was inside the process at the Ministry of Defense, I can say with certainty that this is not true,” Sternenko wrote. “In February of this year, whitelists were introduced. Stationary terminals could be registered by both military personnel and civilians. But for any satellite terminal to work while on the move, it had to be added to a special list and connected to the military Starshield system. Otherwise, no satellite communication terminals in Ukraine would work. In other words, using civilian Starlink for drone missions was technically impossible. All drone missions that required satellite communication could only be carried out using Starshield.”

Musk: Starshield limits are up to POTUS

Musk initially responded to the controversy by stating that, unlike the Starlink commercial service, “Starshield systems are owned and controlled by the US government. Any limits on speed or usage are decided by the US military and ultimately POTUS.” Musk added that “Starlink is limited to civilian or defensive activities and cannot be used for offensive military action,” but did not at first accuse Ukraine of violating that restriction.

President Trump denied making the decision to limit Ukraine’s satellite connectivity and reportedly called Musk to ask him to lift the restrictions.

SpaceX confirmed in 2023 that it had blocked Ukraine from using Starlink with military drones, saying its contract with Ukraine did not allow offensive uses. In May 2026, Musk said that US military suicide drones set up by a contractor incorrectly used Starlink instead of Starshield.

On Saturday, Musk wrote that “Starlink remains critical to the defense of Ukraine, as it is the only system that cannot be jammed or blown up, at least for now. Were Starlink to be turned off, the Ukrainian front line would collapse immediately. This is NOT a threat, it is simply a statement of fact.”

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