

Ukraine's Zelensky Rules Out Attacks on Russia With U.S. Arms

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Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, center, inspects damaged buildings, as he visits the Kharkiv region on May 29, 2022. **Ukrainian Presidential Press Office via AP/TASS**

Ukraine will not use advanced missile systems it expects to receive from the United States to attack within Russian territory, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky [said](#) Tuesday.

President Joe Biden [announced](#) earlier that the U.S. is sending advanced rocket systems in Ukraine to strike “key targets on the battlefield in Ukraine.” A U.S. official identified the weapon as the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS), saying its range of 80 kilometers will keep them from being used to [hit targets](#) inside Russia.

“Look, we’re not planning to attack Russia, we’re not interested in the Russian Federation, we’re not fighting on their territory,” Zelensky told the conservative U.S. broadcaster Newsmax in an interview.

With precision-guided munitions and a longer range than weapons currently deployed by Ukraine, the multiple rocket launchers represent an important upgrade at a time when the

Ukrainians are fighting off Russian artillery in the east of the country.

The Himars are the centerpiece of a \$700 million package being unveiled Wednesday which also includes air surveillance radars, more Javelin short-range anti-tank rockets, more artillery ammunition, helicopters, vehicles and spare parts, the official said.

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Although there'd been speculation for days that Himars would be part of Washington's package — following repeated pleas from Ukraine's outgunned military — the announcement also made clear the U.S. attempt to help Kyiv's war effort while not being seen as a direct belligerent.

For that reason, the ammunition for the Himars will not include a version able to reach some 186 miles (300 kilometers), out of fear that the Ukrainians would use it to hit deep inside Russia.

They will instead get the version extending about 50 miles (80 kilometers), which is still significantly further than the Ukrainians' present capabilities, the U.S. official said. That means Ukraine's forces will be able to strike at Russian positions with the rockets from relative safety.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov nonetheless [condemned](#) the expected HIMARS shipment, saying "attempts to present the decision as containing an element of 'self-restraint' are useless."

The new weaponry will come from a recently approved fund of \$40 billion. The Biden administration has already sent \$4.5 billion in mostly military aid to Ukraine since Russia launched its invasion in February.

Zelensky argued in the Newsmax interview that Ukraine needs longer-range versions of the missile system provided by the U.S. to deoccupy eastern and southern territories captured by Russia.

“We have a war on our territory, they came to our country, we want to de-block our cities and for that purpose we need MLRS [multiple launch rocket system] with an effective range of fire of over 100 kilometers,” he said.

His assurances come after authorities in Russia's southwestern regions on the Ukrainian border have reported dozens of attacks since President Vladimir Putin ordered Russian troops to invade Ukraine in late February.

At least three Russian civilians have been [killed](#) in the cross-border attacks, which included explosions at oil refineries and damage to railroads.

Ukrainian officials have not claimed responsibility for attacks inside Russia, but have also not explicitly denied that Ukrainian forces were involved.

Zelensky estimated Ukraine's military losses at between 60-100 killed and 500 wounded a

day.

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