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# Belarusian Troops Begin Training on Russian Nuclear-Capable Missile System

By AFP

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A Russian-made Iskander-M short-range ballistic missile system. **Vitaly V. Kuzmin (CC BY-SA 4.0)**

Belarusian troops have begun training on a nuclear-capable Russian missile system following President Vladimir Putin's recent decision to deploy tactical weapons on Belarusian territory, Moscow and Minsk said on Tuesday.

Back in March Putin announced that Russia would station tactical nuclear weapons in neighboring Belarus, a move that drew sharp criticism from the West, while also sparking fears of potential nuclear conflict.

Tactical nuclear arms are battlefield weapons that, while devastating, have a smaller yield compared to long-range strategic weapons.

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“An Iskander-M operational-tactical missile system has been transferred to Belarusian forces," Russian defense minister Sergei Shoigu said on Tuesday, adding that crews had begun training with the system on Monday.

In its turn, the Belarusian Defence Ministry published photos of uniformed men boarding military planes to Russia.

"The crew of these units will study in detail issues relating to the maintenance and use of the tactical nuclear weapons of the Iskander-M missile system," the Belarusian defense ministry said on Telegram.

"They will undergo a full training cycle at one of the Russian armed forces' training grounds," it said, without stating how long the training would last.

Belarusian leader Alexander Lukashenko said Friday that he was ready to host "strategic" Russian nuclear weapons "if need be," though Moscow has not indicated that it has plans for stationing the more destructive arms on its ally's territory.

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