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White House Says N. Korea Supplied Russia With Missiles for Attacks on Ukraine

By AFP

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National Security Council spokesman John Kirby speaks during Thursday's press briefing. **Saul Loeb / AFP**

North Korea has provided Russia with ballistic missiles and missile launchers that were used in recent attacks on Ukraine, the White House said Thursday.

The Pyongyang-supplied missiles, with ranges of around 900 kilometers, were fired by Russia in two attacks over the past week, National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said.

"Our information indicates that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea recently provided Russia with ballistic missile launchers and several ballistic missiles," Kirby told reporters in a briefing at the White House.

"This is a significant and concerning escalation of the DPRK's support for Russia," he added.

Kirby said the development underscored the need for the U.S. Congress to pass a package of vital military aid for Ukraine, without which the pipeline of support will soon run dry.

Air defenses for Ukraine, which has come under a barrage of aerial attacks by Russia in recent days, were "absolutely" a priority, he continued.

"It's critical that Congress meets this moment and responds by providing the Ukrainians what they need to defend themselves. The time for Congress to act is now," Kirby said.

Russian forces launched at least one of the North Korean-supplied missiles on Dec. 30, which landed in an open field in the Zaporizhzhia region, he added.

Moscow's forces then fired "multiple" ballistic missiles into Ukraine as part of a mass aerial attack on Jan. 2, Kirby said.

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