

EU Top Diplomat Says Ukraine Has Right To Strike Russian Territory

By [AFP](#)

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Ukrainian HIMARS on combat mission. **Ukrainian Defense Ministry**

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell on Tuesday urged countries to balance fear of escalation against Ukraine's need to defend itself, saying Kyiv had the right to use Western arms to strike in Russia.

"According with the law of war, it is perfectly possible and there is no contradiction.

"I could retaliate or I could fight against the one who fights against me from his territory," Borrell said at the start of a meeting with European Union defense ministers.

"You have to balance the risk of escalation and the need for Ukrainians to defend."

Ukraine has been pressing its Western backers to allow it to hit targets in Russia using the longer-range weaponry Kyiv's supporters are supplying.

Key backers including the United States and Germany have been reluctant to permit Kyiv to strike targets in Russia out of fear that it could drag them closer to direct conflict with Moscow.

Several other defense ministers at the gathering in Brussels backed Borrell's call.

Dutch minister Kaja Ollongren said the Netherlands had no restrictions and that she hoped "other countries that have different positions will change that".

"It is quite feasible that they have to strike also inside Russia," Ollongren said.

Estonia's Hanno Pevkur said he "truly hopes" that every country that donated weapons to Ukraine allows Kyiv to strike Russian territory.

"It cannot be normal that Russia is attacking from very deep into Ukrainian territory and the Ukrainians are fighting with one hand behind their back," he said.

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The calls came after NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said on Monday that "the time had come" for allies to reconsider their restrictions, especially as Russia is pounding the Ukrainian city of Kharkiv with bombs, drones, and missiles launched from its own territory.

At the same time, NATO countries are struggling to provide Kyiv with the air defense system it desperately needs.

Stoltenberg said last month that allies had agreed to give more air defenses. But since then no new systems have been pledged.

Dutch minister Ollongren said The Netherlands is working on an initiative to assemble a Patriot air defense system in close cooperation with several partners to send to Ukraine.

"We will deliver, from our own capabilities, several parts of the system so that we can assemble the whole system and deliver it to Ukraine," she said.

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