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Kyiv Says Russia Using Missile That Sank INF Treaty Against Ukraine – Reuters

October 31, 2025



A Russian Army Iskander mobile short-range ballistic missile system. **Russian Defense Ministry / TASS**

Russia has repeatedly fired a ground-launched cruise missile at Ukraine, whose secret development triggered the collapse of a landmark Cold War-era arms-control treaty, Reuters reported Friday.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha told the news agency that Russia has launched the 9M729 missiles 23 times since late August. Kyiv reportedly recorded two previous launches in 2022.

NATO classifies 9M729 missiles, capable of carrying a nuclear or conventional payload and believed to be a variant of the Iskander-K system, as the SSC-8. Analysts say it has an estimated range of up to 2,500 kilometers (1,550 miles).

The United States said in 2019 it withdrew from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF)

Treaty after accusing Russia of covertly developing the 9M729 missile with a capability of flying beyond the pact's limit of 500 kilometers (310 miles). The Kremlin denied the accusations.

Moscow, in response, imposed a unilateral moratorium on deploying intermediate-range missiles. But in early August 2025, Russia's Foreign Ministry announced it would end its voluntary ban on intermediate-range missile deployments.

An unnamed senior Ukrainian official told Reuters Russia began deploying the 9M729 on Aug. 21, less than a week after U.S. President Donald Trump hosted Russian President Vladimir Putin for a summit in Alaska.

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One missile, fired on Oct. 5, reportedly traveled more than 1,200 kilometers (745 miles), killing four people in the Lviv region. Reuters said images reviewed by analysts showed missile debris marked 9M729.

The alleged 23 launches over 72 days amount to roughly one missile every three days.

"Russia's use of the INF-banned 9M729 against Ukraine in the past months demonstrates Putin's disrespect to the United States and President Trump's diplomatic efforts to end Russia's war against Ukraine," Sybiha told Reuters in written remarks.

The White House did not respond to questions about Russia's use of 9M729.

The Kremlin directed questions on the strikes to Russia's Defense Ministry, which did not respond to Reuters' request for comments.

Western analysts told Reuters the strikes signal a hardening Russian stance and raise concerns for European security, as the missiles were originally designed to target NATO territory.

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