



## U.S. SECRETLY SHIPPED 100 ATACMS TACTICAL BALLISTIC MISSILES TO UKRAINE

### Description

**WORLD :** The MGM-140 is a tactical ballistic missile that can be fired from the tracked M270 Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) and the wheeled M142 High Mobility Artillery Rocket System (HIMARS), both are already in service with Kiev forces.

President Biden secretly approved the transfer of the missiles in February for use inside Ukrainian territory, Pentagon spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Garron Garn said, adding that the missiles were then quietly included in the \$300 million aid package announced on March 12 and ultimately delivered to Ukraine earlier this month.

“It was not announced that we are providing Ukraine with this new capability at the time in order to maintain operational security for Ukraine at their request,” Garn said.

In October 2023, a year and eight months after the start of the Russian special military operation in Ukraine, Kiev forces received a limited number of ATACMS missiles from the U.S. However, the missiles were of the older M39 Block I version, which has a range of 165 kilometers. This version is armed with a cluster warhead with 950 M74 bomblets.

Kiev forces quickly used the missiles to target Berdiansk Airport as well as several gatherings and ammunition dumps of the Russian military in the special military operation zone. Some of the missiles were intercepted and the damage caused by the strikes was very limited.

The Pentagon didn't clarify what “long-range” version of the ATACMS was shipped to Ukraine.

The U.S. might have supplied the M39A1 Block I which is armed with a cluster warhead with 300 M74 bomblets but has a range of 300 kilometers, or with the M48 QRU and M57 Block IA Unitary versions which are both armed with WAU-23/B unitary warheads and have a range of 270 and 300 kilometers respectively.

Biden reportedly directed his team to take this step following Russia's alleged procurement and use of North Korean ballistic missiles against Ukraine, and recent Russian strikes on infrastructure in Ukraine.

"We had warned Russia against acquiring North Korean ballistic missiles and against renewing its attacks against Ukraine's civilian infrastructure," Pentagon spokesman Major Dietz said. "With our readiness concerns resolved, we were able to follow through on our warning and provide this long-range capability to Ukraine."

More ATACMS missiles are expected to be included in the new military assistance package the Pentagon announced on April 24 after Biden signed into law an aid package providing nearly \$61 billion in assistance for Ukraine following months of delays in Congress.

The New York Times reported on April 25 that the missiles recently supplied by the U.S. were used in the April 17 Ukrainian attack on Dzhankoy airfield in the Crimean Peninsula.

Kiev forces could use long-range ATACMS missiles to attack targets in the Crimean Peninsula, or deeper in Russian territory.

The Russian military has means to intercept the missiles, like the S-300V4 and S-400 air defense system. Still, such attacks would be a major escalation and Moscow could hold Washington responsible.

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