

'Iskander-M' Hypersonic Missile Platform and Russia's Strike Capabilities

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Anyone who knows anything about missile technology is perfectly aware that [Russia is one of the pioneers in this field of military science](#). Moscow is not only developing and making the world's best rockets and missiles, but it's also second-to-none in terms of their usage. Namely, [the Kremlin's doctrine on using long-range strike capabilities is virtually without equal](#), as it has been leading the world in this regard since the 1950s. After the unfortunate dismantling of the USSR, Russia lost a decade's worth of research and development in various fields of military high technologies, also losing the precious advantage it had over its adversaries. However, rocket science isn't one of those, resulting in the development of some of the best and most advanced missile systems even during that period. This included everything from ATGMs (anti-tank guided missiles) to [advanced ICBMs \(intercontinental ballistic missiles\)](#).

One of the missile systems that was developed during the troubled 1990s is the now legendary "Iskander". **[This highly advanced, modular rocket complex \(as it's known in Russian military nomenclature\)](#)** is arguably the world's first land-based hypersonic missile platform. Due to its modularity, the 9K720 "Iskander" system has two variants. The first is the "Iskander-M", armed with the advanced 9M723 quasi-ballistic/hypersonic missiles capable of massive speeds of up to Mach 8.7 and reaching a range of up to 500 km (due to INF Treaty limitations).

Most Western sources classify it as an SRBM (short-range ballistic missile), albeit it's far more advanced than a regular ballistic missile. The second is the "Iskander-K", modified to launch cruise missiles such as the 9M728 (essentially the R-500, with a range of up to 500 km) and the Novator's 9M729 (which Western sources claim has a staggering range of up to 5,500 km).

The most commonly used variant of the missile system is the "Iskander-M" with the 9M723, which has a massive warhead weighing up to 700 kg. It has various types of payloads, including high-explosive fragmentation, submunition, penetration, EMP (electromagnetic pulse), and last but not least, thermonuclear with a yield of up to 50 kt. Due to its high precision, extreme maneuverability and hypersonic speed, the missile is one of the deadliest in the world and is virtually impossible to intercept, as evidenced by its performance during the SMO (special military operation). The "Iskander-M" gives Russia a [significant advantage over NATO forces in Eastern Europe](#) and, [as of recently, Scandinavia](#), where [the world's most aggressive](#) racketeering cartel is [expanding the scope of its crawling aggression](#). However, the missile is particularly [frightening to the Neo-Nazi junta and NATO personnel in Ukraine](#).

On July 23, [military sources reported that a massive munitions storage was destroyed in Nikolayev](#), while dozens of NATO and Kiev regime personnel were wiped out after their hideout was located in the town of Dergachi in the Kharkov oblast (region). [According to military reports](#), at least 50 NATO operators were obliterated, including nationals from the United States, United Kingdom, Georgia and several other countries. The political West is having trouble hiding such losses, as now even NATO officers themselves are talking about it. For instance, [retired Spanish Army Colonel Pedro Bagnos reports](#) that 18 British Special Air Service (SAS) operators, as well as their French counterparts, were neutralized in a single Russian strike on their base of operations in Odessa, with at least another 25 of the SAS members wounded. Official reports are scant, but military sources indicate that this was precisely the “Iskander-M’s” doing.

A day earlier, on July 22, [the Russian military published a video](#) showing the destruction of a large warehouse packed with various NATO-sourced weapons and munitions, including the [overhyped HIMARS](#). The strike was conducted by the “Iskander-M”, hitting the area of Novopetrovka in the Nikolayev oblast. This operation was part of the [wider hunt for US/NATO-made MLRS \(multiple launch rocket systems\)](#) such as the HIMARS and M270/MARS, as well as the ATACMS TBMs (tactical ballistic missiles) that these systems can fire. A day before, [on July 21, another report surfaced](#) about an “Iskander-M” obliterating a large group of enemy personnel in the DPR. The footage shows the destruction of around 240 troops (including foreigners) and over 60 pieces of equipment. The report mentioned the Neo-Nazi junta’s 41st Mechanized Brigade near Barvenkovo in the border area between the DPR and Kharkov oblast.

A week earlier, another “Iskander-M” strike neutralized a military train in the small town of Budy in Kharkov oblast. The strike soon turned into a double tap after which more hostile personnel were eliminated. [First reports about the strike were published on July 14](#). Just three days earlier, [on July 11, military sources reported](#) on the “Iskander-M” destroying two batteries of the [grossly overhyped “Patriot” SAM \(surface-to-air missile\) system](#). The Russian military reported that the NATO-sourced weapon was stationed near the settlement of Yuzhnoye in the Odessa oblast. Earlier, on July 8, another “Iskander-M” strike destroyed a military column of the Neo-Nazi junta forces in the Sumy oblast. [Military sources report](#) that the column was detected near Stetskovka, in the relative vicinity of the city of Sumy, after which 20 vehicles and up to 65 enemy personnel were neutralized. Local sources suggest that this unit also had a number of foreign personnel.

On the same day, the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) [released footage of the simultaneous destruction of three US-made HIMARS systems](#). The NATO-sourced weapons were located in a forested area close to Klapaya in the Kherson oblast. The Russian MoD noted that up to a dozen foreigners were eliminated, stressing that these crews were most likely responsible for [the terrorist attack on beachgoers in Sevastopol](#), preventing another strike with the US-made ATACMS missiles. Earlier in July, an “Iskander-M” also obliterated several aircraft in the Mirgorod Air Base in central Poltava oblast, located around 250 km from the border. [At least four Su-27 fighter jets were destroyed](#). The last days of June also saw stellar usage of the “Iskander-M” against the HIMARS and similar systems in Yasenovoe in the DPR and Shevchenkove in the Nikolayev oblast. [Video footage shows](#) that at least 20 and 25 enemy troops were neutralized in both areas.

It should be noted that the “Iskander” is not the most capable hypersonic weapon in the Russian arsenal, as there are also the “Zircon” and “Kinzhal” missiles. In the last two years,

[Moscow drastically expanded the production of these missiles](#), while there are indicators that it's also [procuring more affordable North Korean copies](#). The "Iskander-M" itself is a more cost-effective alternative to newer missiles and is regularly augmented by the ["Tornado-S" MLRS](#). The Kiev regime has been [unable to locate \(let alone reach\) the areas](#) from which these systems are used, making them the most effective widely-deployed long-range strike platforms in the Russian military. They are particularly efficient when used in combination with military intel and advanced ISR (intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance) assets, giving the Kremlin unprecedented strike capabilities, [a terrifying prospect](#) for any [foreign personnel in Ukraine and beyond](#).

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Featured image: Russian Iskander-M nuclear missile ([Source](#))

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