

# Kiev's Air Defense Capability Threatened

By [Lucas Leiroz de Almeida](#)

Global Research, May 18, 2023  
[InfoBrics](#)

Region: [Europe](#), [Russia and FSU](#)

Theme: [Intelligence](#), [Military](#), [Military and WMD](#)

In-depth Report: [UKRAINE REPORT](#)

All Global Research articles can be read in 51 languages by activating the Translate Website button below the author's name.

To receive Global Research's Daily Newsletter (selected articles), [click here](#).

Click the share button above to email/forward this article to your friends and colleagues. Follow us on [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#) and subscribe to our [Telegram Channel](#). Feel free to repost and share widely Global Research articles.

\*\*\*

*The recent successful Russian attacks against strategic Ukrainian targets made clear the reality that was already reported by many military experts: the Ukrainian air defense is vulnerable. Despite all the Western aid and the incessant delivery of weapons, Kiev seems unable to improve its defense system, continuing to be an easy target for Russia's incisive combat actions. Tracking and shooting down Russian missiles and drones has become a difficult work for Ukrainian forces, which are still failing to stop Russian weapons from reaching their targets.*

However, this news coexists with Western-Ukrainian propaganda that Russian hypersonic missiles are being shot down by Kiev. Although mainstream media outlets support the Ukrainian narrative, in recent months these same newspapers have reported the weakness of the regime's armed forces on several occasions, therefore there is a contradiction in data.

For example, in March, experts pointed out in an [article](#) published in The Washington Post that Kiev was suffering from a severe shortage of ammunition for its air defense systems. At the time, analysts said that Ukrainian forces could become absolutely unable to protect their airspace against Russian missiles and UAVs, leaving military facilities "open" to enemy attacks. Experts also warned at the time of the serious lack of qualified military personnel, stating that most of the experienced Ukrainian military had already been neutralized in the first year of the operation, leaving now few able soldiers to manage the country's defense systems.

Even more pessimistic forecasts were exposed by the [Financial Times](#), which also commented on the critical situation of the Ukrainian air defense, even claiming that the military capacity of this sector will be completely until late May. Experts have warned that the number of anti-missiles launched to intercept a Russian attack is usually double the number of Russian missiles or drones, in order to increase the chances of success. A side effect of this is to overspend artillery ammunition, accelerating depletion.

“[...] Officials said the continuing need to defend against Russian missile and drone attacks had systematically depleted Ukraine’s stockpiles — a warning backed up by US intelligence documents leaked online this spring that suggested Kyiv might run out of ammunition for five critical air defence systems. According to documents reviewed by the Financial Times, the US assessed in late February that Ukraine’s ability to protect its troops on the front lines would be ‘completely reduced’ by May 23”, the Financial Times articles reads.

Forbes also reported on the Ukrainian situation. In an [article](#) published on the site in April, experts said the imminent shortage of missiles was the main problem for Ukraine’s air defense. At the time, it was warned that, in addition to having dozens of their systems destroyed by Russian attacks, the Ukrainians would also be suffering from the absence of 9M38 Buk missiles. This equipment is produced in Russia, with Ukrainian stocks remaining from Soviet times. The depletion of these missiles, therefore, becomes an even more worrying issue because Kiev’s sponsors do not manufacture this weapon, which is compatible with the Soviet-era Buk systems that Ukraine has.

One solution found was the American supply of Raytheon RIM-7 Sea Sparrows, which, although different, use the same radar guidance as the 9M38. With proper technical adaptations, these American weapons could be launched using Soviet Buk systems. However, despite promises started in January, so far Washington has not been able to organize a program of constant supply of Raytheon RIM-7 Sea Sparrow missiles, thus preventing Kiev’s air defense from being re-established. Furthermore, the need for technical handling and adaptation of these weapons to Soviet systems could be a problem, considering the lack of qualified military personnel, as pointed out by the Post. With that, Ukraine’s hopes for recovery become even more complicated.

Another big outlet commenting on this problem was Deutsche Welle, which in an [article](#) published on April 22 made it clear that Ukraine is not capable of shooting down Russian guided bombs, being vulnerable to the air operations of Moscow’s forces. The newspaper at the time interviewed the representative of the Air Force of Ukraine, Yuri Ignat, who said that the systems used by his troops were not able to shoot down Russian equipment, with the need to receive new, more modern and efficient systems from the West.

As well known, most of the Western media is extremely biased and propagandistic in its narrative of the conflict, always trying to make it seem like Kiev has the advantage over the Russians. When something negative for the regime is communicated, it is because there really is no way to ignore the situation and it becomes more convenient to report it in order to seek improvements – perhaps trying to pressure western authorities to send more help to change the scenario. This seems to have been the case in recent months regarding the Ukrainian air defense.

However, now the media work has again been “optimistic” about the Ukrainian defense. Media outlets repeated the regime’s propaganda that several Russian “Kinzhal” hypersonic missiles were shot down by Ukrainian troops. In addition to no evidence of this being given, the narrative also contradicts everything that had been reported by the Western media (citing Ukrainian sources) in recent months, that the country’s air defenses were close to being disabled.

This contradictory information shows once again how the western media has been spreading lies about the conflict. Either the Ukrainian air defense is close to collapse, or it is able to

shoot down “Kinzhal” missiles – there is no way to join both narratives. And the recent successful Russian air strikes across the conflict zone, neutralizing several strategic targets, already makes clear what is the correct information.

\*

Note to readers: Please click the share button above. Follow us on Instagram and Twitter and subscribe to our Telegram Channel. Feel free to repost and share widely Global Research articles.

*Lucas Leiroz is a journalist, researcher at the Center for Geostrategic Studies, geopolitical consultant. You can follow Lucas on [Twitter](#) and [Telegram](#).*

*Featured image is from InfoBrics*

The original source of this article is [InfoBrics](#)  
Copyright © [Lucas Leiroz de Almeida](#), [InfoBrics](#), 2023

---

**[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)**

**[Become a Member of Global Research](#)**

Articles by: [Lucas Leiroz de Almeida](#)

**Disclaimer:** The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: [publications@globalresearch.ca](mailto:publications@globalresearch.ca)

[www.globalresearch.ca](http://www.globalresearch.ca) contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: [publications@globalresearch.ca](mailto:publications@globalresearch.ca)