

Ukraine Receives Deliveries of German, British Tanks

The British Challenger 2 tanks are equipped with depleted uranium munitions

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The first batch of British-made Challenger 2 tanks [arrived in Ukraine on Monday](#) as reports said Berlin also delivered 18 of its Leopard tanks to the country.

The UK will send a total of 14 Challenger 2 tanks that [will be armed with depleted uranium ammunition](#), a controversial munition that is radioactive and linked to cancer and birth defects in Iraq, where US forces commonly used the rounds.

Britain's deputy defense minister confirmed last week that the Challenger 2s would be armed with depleted uranium despite Russian warnings. Over the weekend, Russian President Vladimir Putin [said Russia would deploy nuclear weapons to Belarus](#), a move he said was a response to the UK arming Ukraine with depleted uranium.

Also on Monday, reports said Germany [has delivered 18 of its Leopard tanks to Ukraine](#). *Der Spiegel* reported the last of the tanks left Germany last week and were handed to Ukraine at the border. Poland said in February that it [had delivered four Leopard tanks to Ukraine](#) and was preparing to send more.

Germany initially pledged to put together 60 Leopard tanks for Ukraine but has fallen far short of that goal. The US has [sped up plans to get 31 Abrams tanks to Ukraine](#) by refurbishing older models instead of building new ones, but they will still take eight to 10 months to deliver.

The number of Challengers, Leopards, and Abrams still falls short of what Ukraine has been asking for. Valery Zaluzhny, the commander-in-chief of Ukraine's armed forces, [told *The Economist* in December](#) that he needed 300 tanks to beat Russia.

The US and its allies want Ukraine to launch a counteroffensive this spring and hope the new tanks can help. But Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky [said Saturday](#) that the offensive can't begin until Western countries send even more weapons.

The provision of Western-made tanks to Ukraine marks a significant escalation in NATO's role in the war. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz previously ruled out the idea of arming Ukraine with Leopards because he said he was [trying to avoid a direct clash between NATO and Russia](#) to prevent a nuclear war.

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