

Poland discusses possibility of shooting down Russian missiles, no decisions yet - FM

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From a technical and legal point of view, Poland is considering the possible involvement of its air defence systems in shooting down Russian missiles near the country's borders, but no decisions have been made in this regard.

This was stated by Polish Foreign Ministry spokesman Pawel Wronski in a commentary to Ukrinform, commenting on the words of President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelensky and Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba about the possibility of using Polish air defence systems to shoot down Russian missiles over the territory of Ukraine.

"This issue is being considered from a legal and technical point of view, but there are no decisions in this matter," Wronsky said, adding that the Ukrainian side had approached the Polish side with this kind of initiative.

He said that talks on this issue in Poland arose after a Russian missile violated the country's airspace in March this year, staying in it for 39 seconds. According to him, the discussions revolve around whether Polish air defence systems could shoot down such missiles over the territory of Ukraine and what the legal consequences of such a step could be.

The Polish Foreign Ministry spokesperson noted that international law experts should give their assessment of what legal consequences this step might have, as these are missiles with warheads weighing hundreds of kilograms, and they can cause significant damage on the ground when they fall. In addition, technical experts must give their assessment and agree on the conditions under which these missiles can be shot down.

At the same time, the Polish Foreign Ministry spokesperson stressed that there is no question of physically transferring elements of the Polish air defence system to Ukraine.

"There is no discussion of this in Poland at all. There is no possibility of the Polish air defence system being outside the country's borders," Wronski said.

As Ukrinform reported earlier, President Volodymyr Zelensky believes that some of Ukraine's neighbours, including Poland, could shoot down Russian missiles in western Ukraine, including from their own aircraft.

In turn, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said on Tuesday that Kyiv's allies have every right to shoot down Russian missiles flying over Ukraine from their territory.

Former Polish Minister of National Defence and security expert Janusz Onyszkiewicz recently told the agency that Poland, together with its NATO allies, could shoot down Russian missiles flying in the direction of Ukraine.

However, this requires political decisions at the level of NATO and Ukraine and access to full information on the situation in Ukraine's airspace.

Over the past few months, Polish and allied military aircraft have been flying in Poland on numerous occasions, including two pairs of Polish and American F-16 fighter jets patrolling the airspace of eastern Poland in response to Russia's massive missile attack on Ukrainian territory.

On 29 December, during the largest missile attack on Ukraine in 2023, a Russian missile violated Polish airspace. The missile stayed in Polish airspace for about three minutes and flew almost 40 km inland. At the same time, two pairs of F-16 fighter jets were also flying in Poland.

On the night of 24 March, Russian troops launched another massive attack on Ukraine. During this attack, a Russian missile violated Polish airspace near the town of Ocerdów in the Lubelskie Voivodeship and stayed there for 39 seconds.