# Russia prepares RS-24 ICBM launch in major show of strength targeting Europe and NATO



Russia's military, as relayed by Ukraine's Main Directorate of Intelligence (GUR), is poised to conduct a significant show of strength by launching an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) known as the RS-24. Scheduled for Monday night, this training and combat exercise aims to project power not only towards Ukraine but also to the wider European Union and NATO. The RS-24 boasts a formidable range exceeding 10,000 kilometres (6,200 miles), effectively capable of reaching targets across Europe and potentially reaching as far as the East Coast of the United States. This capability serves as a stark reminder of the strategic challenges that NATO faces in the region.

The GUR's announcement highlights a broader context in which Russia seeks to exert pressure as part of its ongoing conflict with Ukraine. The planned missile launch, conducted from the Sverdlovsk region, follows an escalation in military actions, including a recent drone strike where Russia deployed over 270 Shahed drones across multiple Ukrainian regions, marking one of its largest offensive actions since the onset of the war in February 2022. This intensifying posturing underscores Russia's strategy of maintaining psychological and military pressure against its neighbours.

In a related development, the RS-24 ICBM itself represents a significant leap in Russia's nuclear arsenal modernization efforts. The missile is designed with advanced features, such as the capability to carry multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicles (MIRVs). This means that a single missile can effectively target several locations simultaneously, enhancing its strategic deterrence capabilities. Since late 2023, Russia's Strategic Missile Forces have been transitioning from older Topol ICBM systems to the more advanced RS-24 Yars, signifying a concerted effort to bolster its nuclear capabilities amid ongoing tensions in Eastern Europe.

The transition to the RS-24 Yars is not merely theoretical; in December 2023, the missile was successfully loaded into a silo at a military base in Kaluga, southwest of Moscow. This operational readiness reflects Russia's commitment to advancing its missile forces, striving to ensure that its nuclear deterrence remains robust against perceived threats. The nature of the RS-24, with both mobile and silo-based configurations, provides an added layer of strategic flexibility that can complicate adversaries’ defensive calculations.

However, the road to a fully reliable ICBM capability has not been without its setbacks. Earlier tests of the RS-24 have encountered difficulties, with reports indicating that some recent launches failed to achieve their intended objectives. For instance, a test in early November 2023 resulted in the missile deviating from its designated path, echoing earlier failures this autumn. These incidents raise questions about the reliability and effective operational readiness of Russia's missile capabilities, even as the country continues to assert its military advancements.

As observers closely monitor developments in Russia's missile programme, it is clear that the planned launch of the RS-24 ICBM is a critical element in the broader theatre of military conflict in Eastern Europe. The potential implications of such actions extend beyond immediate tactical considerations, influencing strategic dynamics across the continent and serving as a litmus test for NATO's resolve in responding to evolving threats.

### Reference Map

* Paragraph 1: [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/2056924/russia-launch-terrifying-missile-range)
* Paragraph 2: [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/2056924/russia-launch-terrifying-missile-range), [[2]](https://armyrecognition.com/news/army-news/army-news-2023/russia-confirms-replacement-of-all-old-topol-icbm-missiles-with-new-rs-24-yars)
* Paragraph 3: [[2]](https://armyrecognition.com/news/army-news/army-news-2023/russia-confirms-replacement-of-all-old-topol-icbm-missiles-with-new-rs-24-yars), [[3]](https://armyrecognition.com/news/army-news/2023/russian-strategic-missile-forces-bolster-defense-with-advanced-rs-24-yars-icbms-in-kozelsky-unit), [[4]](https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/russia-missile-rs-24-yars-russia-loads-new-intercontinental-ballistic-missile-into-a-silo-launcher-4692010)
* Paragraph 4: [[3]](https://armyrecognition.com/news/army-news/2023/russian-strategic-missile-forces-bolster-defense-with-advanced-rs-24-yars-icbms-in-kozelsky-unit), [[4]](https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/russia-missile-rs-24-yars-russia-loads-new-intercontinental-ballistic-missile-into-a-silo-launcher-4692010)
* Paragraph 5: [[5]](https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2023/11/4/7427171/)
* Paragraph 6: [[5]](https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2023/11/4/7427171/), [[6]](https://armyrecognition.com/news/army-news/army-news-2024/russia-tests-rs-24-yars-intercontinental-missile-for-nuclear-capability)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/2056924/russia-launch-terrifying-missile-range> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://armyrecognition.com/news/army-news/army-news-2023/russia-confirms-replacement-of-all-old-topol-icbm-missiles-with-new-rs-24-yars> - In December 2023, Russia's Strategic Missile Force announced the complete replacement of its old Topol and Topol-M intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) with the new RS-24 Yars system. This transition aims to modernize Russia's nuclear capabilities, with the RS-24 Yars capable of launching the Avangard hypersonic glide vehicle. The RS-24 Yars is a solid-fuel ICBM designed to carry multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicles (MIRVs), enhancing Russia's strategic deterrence capabilities. The deployment of these advanced systems underscores Russia's commitment to strengthening its nuclear forces.
3. <https://armyrecognition.com/news/army-news/2023/russian-strategic-missile-forces-bolster-defense-with-advanced-rs-24-yars-icbms-in-kozelsky-unit> - In November 2023, the Kozelsky unit of Russia's Strategic Missile Forces became the first to be equipped with the advanced RS-24 Yars intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs). This deployment marks a significant enhancement in Russia's defense capabilities, as the RS-24 Yars is designed to replace older Topol and Topol-M missile systems. The RS-24 Yars features both mobile and silo-based configurations and is capable of carrying multiple nuclear warheads, each independently targetable. This advancement reflects Russia's ongoing efforts to modernize its strategic missile forces.
4. <https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/russia-missile-rs-24-yars-russia-loads-new-intercontinental-ballistic-missile-into-a-silo-launcher-4692010> - In December 2023, Russia's defense ministry announced the successful loading of a new RS-24 Yars intercontinental ballistic missile into a silo at the Kozelsk base in the Kaluga region, southwest of Moscow. The 23-meter-long RS-24 Yars missile is designed to carry multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicles (MIRVs), allowing it to deliver multiple nuclear warheads to different targets. This development underscores Russia's ongoing efforts to modernize its nuclear arsenal and enhance its strategic deterrence capabilities.
5. <https://www.pravda.com.ua/eng/news/2023/11/4/7427171/> - In early November 2023, Ukrainian intelligence reported that Russia conducted unsuccessful tests of its nuclear-capable RS-24 Yars intercontinental ballistic missile. The missile was launched from the Plesetsk Cosmodrome in the Arkhangelsk region towards the Kura Missile Test Range in Kamchatka. However, the missile deviated from its intended course, similar to a previous test on October 25, 2023. These failed tests highlight ongoing challenges in Russia's missile testing programs and raise concerns about the reliability of its strategic nuclear forces.
6. <https://armyrecognition.com/news/army-news/army-news-2024/russia-tests-rs-24-yars-intercontinental-missile-for-nuclear-capability> - In March 2024, Russia's Ministry of Defense released footage of a successful test of the RS-24 Yars intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM). The test, conducted at the Plesetsk state test site in northern Russia, demonstrated the missile's capability to carry multiple nuclear warheads. The RS-24 Yars, with a range of over 10,000 kilometers, is a key component of Russia's nuclear force. This successful test underscores Russia's commitment to maintaining and enhancing its strategic nuclear capabilities.