# Germany ramps up military aid as Ukraine intensifies strikes on Kerch Bridge



Ukraine's ongoing conflict with Russia continues to escalate, with strategic developments focused on the Kerch Bridge, a critical link between Russia and occupied Crimea. The bridge, a 12-mile engineering feat connecting the regions, has been a focal point for Ukrainian military operations, serving not just logistical purposes but also symbolising Russia's territorial ambitions. Recent strikes by Ukrainian forces have aimed to disrupt Russia's supply routes and signal defiance against Putin's authority.

The bridge has seen repeated attacks, with the most recent significant incident occurring in July 2023, when an assault by Ukrainian drone boats inflicted considerable damage. The earlier strike in October 2022, attributed to a truck bomb, caused a massive fire and partial collapse, critically disrupting Russian military logistics. These bold moves reflect Ukraine’s strategy to undermine Russian efforts while reinforcing its own position in the ongoing conflict.

Germany’s new Chancellor, Friedrich Merz, has pledged to bolster Ukraine's military capabilities, committing resources towards developing long-range weapon systems that could further threaten the integrity of the Kerch Bridge. This shift in German policy marks a notable departure from the hesitance shown by previous Chancellor Olaf Scholz, who faced criticism for delaying military support. Merz’s support illustrates a growing European commitment to assist Ukraine in reclaiming its sovereignty, suggesting a potential turning point in the rate and scale of military assistance offered.

James Black, assistant director of the Defence and Security research group at RAND Europe, commented on the situational dynamics surrounding the bridge. He stated that although the strategic importance of destroying the bridge may have diminished as Russia has adapted its logistics, the ongoing threat of further attacks places considerable strain on Russian defence resources. He explained that maintaining a defensive posture around the bridge diverts critical military assets from other fronts, thereby weakening Russia's overall military effectiveness. “The burden of defending the bridge ties up Russian air defence systems and other forces that could otherwise be deployed elsewhere on the frontline,” Black noted. This strategic diversion is beneficial for Ukraine, illustrating that even the perception of a threat can enrich their tactical position.

Notably, Ukraine's recent missile strike attempts against the bridge, despite being intercepted by Russian air defences, reflect the growing resolve and capability of Kyiv's military forces. In August 2023, three missiles targeted the bridge, prompting a fierce reaction from the Kremlin, which labelled the operation a “terrorist act.” Such rhetoric underscores the bridge's significance as a vital supply route, while the Ukrainian military's persistent attempts to disrupt it highlight its strategic vulnerability.

President Volodymyr Zelensky has championed the neutralisation of the Kerch Bridge as essential to undermine Russian military operations. Following escalations from Moscow, which included retaliatory strikes against Ukrainian cities, Zelensky's call to action underscores the intensified military competition in the region. The bridge's status as a vital artery for Russian forces, providing troops and supplies into Crimea and beyond, renders it a salient target for Ukrainian operations.

Amid these developments, Russia is reportedly gathering significant military forces near the Sumy front in northeast Ukraine, leading to further concerns regarding an escalation in the conflict. As both sides engage in this brutal contest for supremacy, the Kerch Bridge remains a poignant symbol of territorial ambition and military strategy, illustrating the complex interplay of warfare, infrastructure, and geopolitical significance in an increasingly tense landscape.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/2062526/ukraine-kerch-bridge-missile-strike-germany-russia-putin), [[3]](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-66397227)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/2062526/ukraine-kerch-bridge-missile-strike-germany-russia-putin), [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/aug/12/ukraine-fires-missiles-at-kerch-bridge-connecting-crimea-to-russia), [[4]](https://www.cnn.com/2023/08/12/europe/russia-missiles-kerch-strait-intl/index.html)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/2062526/ukraine-kerch-bridge-missile-strike-germany-russia-putin), [[6]](https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2023/07/22/ukraine-strikes-kill-six-zelensky-says-kerch-bridge-neutralize/3351690036929/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[3]](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-66397227), [[7]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/07/17/why-kerch-bridge-crimea-attack-significant-ukraine-russia/)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/2062526/ukraine-kerch-bridge-missile-strike-germany-russia-putin> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/aug/12/ukraine-fires-missiles-at-kerch-bridge-connecting-crimea-to-russia> - On 12 August 2023, Ukrainian forces launched three missiles at the Kerch Bridge, which connects Crimea to Russia. Russian air defences reportedly intercepted the missiles, causing no damage. The attack prompted Russia to condemn it as a 'terrorist act' and temporarily halt traffic on the bridge. This incident marked the latest in a series of Ukrainian strikes targeting Russian infrastructure in Crimea.
3. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-66397227> - In July 2023, Ukraine's military confirmed an attack on the Kerch Bridge, a crucial link between Russia and Crimea. The strike led Russia to restrict passage through the Kerch Strait. This marked the second time the bridge was targeted, highlighting its strategic importance and vulnerability amid ongoing hostilities.
4. <https://www.cnn.com/2023/08/12/europe/russia-missiles-kerch-strait-intl/index.html> - Following the attempted missile strikes on the Kerch Bridge, Russia's foreign ministry condemned Ukraine for what it termed a 'terrorist attack.' The Crimean Bridge, a vital supply route for Russian forces, was temporarily closed, and traffic resumed after the threat subsided. The incident underscored the escalating tensions and the strategic significance of the bridge.
5. <https://www.wsaz.com/2023/07/09/russia-reports-intercepting-missile-over-annexed-crimea-briefly-halts-traffic-key-bridge/> - On 9 July 2023, Russian authorities reported intercepting a cruise missile near the city of Kerch, leading to a brief suspension of traffic on the Kerch Bridge. The missile's origin was not specified, and no damage or casualties were reported. This event highlighted the ongoing security challenges in the region.
6. <https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2023/07/22/ukraine-strikes-kill-six-zelensky-says-kerch-bridge-neutralize/3351690036929/> - Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky stated that the Kerch Bridge, connecting Crimea to Russia, 'has to be neutralized.' This remark followed Russian military strikes across Ukraine, resulting in civilian casualties. Zelensky emphasized the strategic importance of the bridge in the ongoing conflict.
7. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/07/17/why-kerch-bridge-crimea-attack-significant-ukraine-russia/> - The article discusses the significance of the Ukrainian attack on the Kerch Bridge in July 2023. The bridge serves as a crucial logistical artery for Russia, supplying troops and combat supplies into Crimea and the front lines in mainland Ukraine. The attack demonstrated the vulnerability of Russian supply lines and the strategic importance of targeting such infrastructure.