

Ukraine on Saturday blasted the “global indecision” of its allies after Germany stalled on supplying its vaunted Leopard tanks to bolster Kyiv’s fighting capacity in the nearly year-long war with Russia.

On Friday, about 50 nations agreed to provide Kyiv with billions of US dollars of military hardware, including armored vehicles and munitions needed to push back Russian forces.

However, German Minister of Defense Boris Pistorius said that despite heightened expectations, “we still cannot say when a decision will be taken, and what the decision will be, when it comes to the Leopard tank.”



A Bundeswehr Leopard 2 A7 main battle tank takes part in a military exercise at a training area in Munster, Germany, on May 20, 2019.

Photo: AFP

“Today’s indecision is killing more of our people,” Ukrainian presidential adviser Mykhailo Podolyak wrote on Twitter.

“Every day of delay is the death of Ukrainians. Think faster,” he said.

In a joint statement on Saturday, the foreign ministers of the three Baltic states urged Germany “to provide Leopard tanks to Ukraine now.”

Ukraine says ‘indecision killing more of our people’ as Berlin mum on tanks

Written by Taipei Times

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“This is needed to stop Russian aggression, help Ukraine and restore peace in Europe quickly,” said a message posted by Latvian Minister of Foreign Affairs Edgars Rinkevics, and his Estonian and Lithuanian counterparts.

“Germany, as the leading European power, has special responsibility in this regard,” they added.

In Berlin, hundreds of people demonstrated outside the Federal Chancellery building calling for Germany to send tanks to Ukraine.

Berlin has been hesitant to send the Leopards or allow other nations to transfer them to Kyiv.

Reports earlier in the week indicated Germany would agree to do so only if the US provided its tanks as well.

Washington has said providing its Abrams tanks to Ukraine is not feasible, citing difficulties in training and maintenance.

However, expectations had grown ahead of Friday’s Ukraine Contact Group meeting of about 50 US-led countries that Germany would at least agree to let other countries operating Leopards transfer them to Kyiv’s army.

The pleas came as the Russian army said its troops had launched an offensive in Ukraine’s Zaporizhzhia region, where fighting intensified this week after several months of an almost frozen front.

In its daily report on Saturday, Moscow’s forces said they had carried out “offensive operations” in the region and claimed to have “taken more advantageous lines and positions.”

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Russia also said it had held a training exercise on repelling air attacks in the Moscow region, using an S-300 anti-aircraft missile system.

The Ukrainian Ministry of Defense reported 26 airstrikes and 15 attacks from multiple-launch rocket systems.

“The enemy does not abandon its aggressive plans, focusing its main efforts on attempts to fully occupy the Donetsk region” on Ukraine’s border with Russia, it said.

In Kyiv, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy attended the funeral of his interior minister and other officials killed in a helicopter crash outside the capital on Wednesday.

The seven coffins were hoisted into the echoing hall in central Kyiv by military pallbearers in full ceremonial dress, to the sound of a lone trumpet and a snare drum.

Denys Monastyrsky, one of Zelenskiy’s top aides, is the highest-ranking Ukrainian official to die in the war that Russia launched on Feb. 24 last year.

Zelenskiy and his wife, Olena Zelenska, wore all black and carried floral tributes.

“Ukraine is losing its best sons and daughters every day,” Zelenskiy said in a statement.

“It hurts to think about it, it hurts to talk about it now,” he added in his evening address.

The cause of the crash that killed him and 13 others when the chopper fell near a kindergarten is still being investigated.

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US officials said Ukraine still faced an uphill battle against Russian forces who occupy one-fifth of the country 11 months after invading.

However, they spoke of a possible Ukrainian counteroffensive in the coming weeks to retake parts of its territory.

However, the Kremlin on Friday said that Western tanks would make little difference on the battlefield.

“One should not exaggerate the importance of such supplies in terms of the ability to change something,” Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

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