

# Swedish Fighter Jets Intercept Russian Bombers Near Border

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STOCKHOLM — Swedish fighter jets intercepted two Russian bombers flying in international airspace over the Baltic Sea close to the Swedish border on Thursday, Sweden's military said.

Relations between the West and Russia have soured as a result of Moscow's role in the conflict in Ukraine and its annexation of Crimea, while increased Russian military activity in the Baltic region and the North Atlantic has added to tension.

Sweden, which is not a member of NATO, said it had intercepted two Tu-22M Backfire bombers heading in the direction of the Swedish island of Oland, south of Stockholm.

"They were up identifying these airplanes — telling them 'Hey, we see you,'" said Jesper Tengroth, Sweden's military spokesman.

Russia has been critical of closer ties between Sweden and NATO, which staged one of its biggest-ever anti-submarine exercises in the North Sea in early May, inviting Sweden to join in for the first time.

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