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Putin's Guards Say 'Nothing Unusual' About Helicopter Sighting Over Kremlin

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Moskva News Agency

The two helicopters spotted on Thursday flying over the Kremlin carrying unknown cargo were part of routine exercises carried out every fall, President Vladimir Putin's secretive guard service has said.

The two helicopters were caught on camera flying over Red Square and appeared to be transporting what looked like a net carrying three people. Local media reported that the aircraft could be Mi-8 transport helicopters and that they took off from within the Kremlin.

"Nothing unusual took place," Russia's state-run TASS news agency quoted the Federal Guard Service's (FSO) press office as saying Friday. "These were planned exercises that have been held every fall in recent years."

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The FSO said the helicopter flights over the Kremlin are "one of the stages of the annual exercises that we've always reported."

The comments came less than 24 hours after the FSO – the agency responsible for protecting high-ranking officials, including the president – refused to comment on the flight.

Online, Russians have speculated that the flight was part of Putin's "evacuation" drills.

Reuters contributed reporting to this article.

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