

Finland Says 'Aware' of Russia's Plans to Incite Protests – Yle

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Protesters in Istanbul burn the Swedish flag. **Yasin Akgul / AFP**

Finland's intelligence service is aware of plans by Moscow to incite demonstrations in the Nordic country, the Finnish broadcaster Yle [reported](#) Monday.

Citing a secret Russian intelligence report, Yle said Moscow had planned to organize "disruption campaigns disguised as demonstrations" in Finland and Sweden as the two EU members sought to join NATO following Russia's invasion of Ukraine last year.

The Finnish Security Intelligence Service (Supo) confirmed its knowledge of the unidentified Russian intelligence service's plans to "incite demonstrations in Finland," according to Yle.

Supo declined to comment further due to "operational activities."

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While Sweden is still awaiting approval from NATO members Turkey and Hungary, Finland

was accepted into the bloc in April 2023.

Yle reported that Russia's stated goal was to "increase friction" between Turkey and other NATO members in Europe after riots erupted in Sweden against Quran burnings.

Russia's methods reportedly included spraying "as much anti-Islam and anti-[Turkish President Recep Tayyip] Erdogan graffiti as possible in well-known public spaces."

It did not appear that Russia accomplished its plans in Finland, the broadcaster added.

Yle said it has withheld the identity of the Russian intelligence officer who had authored the secret memo and their intelligence unit for security reasons.

French media [reported](#) in May that Russia's intelligence services were behind similar demonstrations across European capitals, which aimed to "discredit Ukraine, the EU and Turkey."

The Dossier Center, Russia's investigative news website which initially obtained the secret intelligence memo, [reported](#) that France's intelligence was also aware of similar "disinformation campaigns" in the country that "rely on pre-existing tensions."

The Swedish Defense Ministry this summer [accused](#) Russian state media of trying to disrupt Sweden's NATO membership bid through Arabic-language disinformation campaigns about the Quran burnings.

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