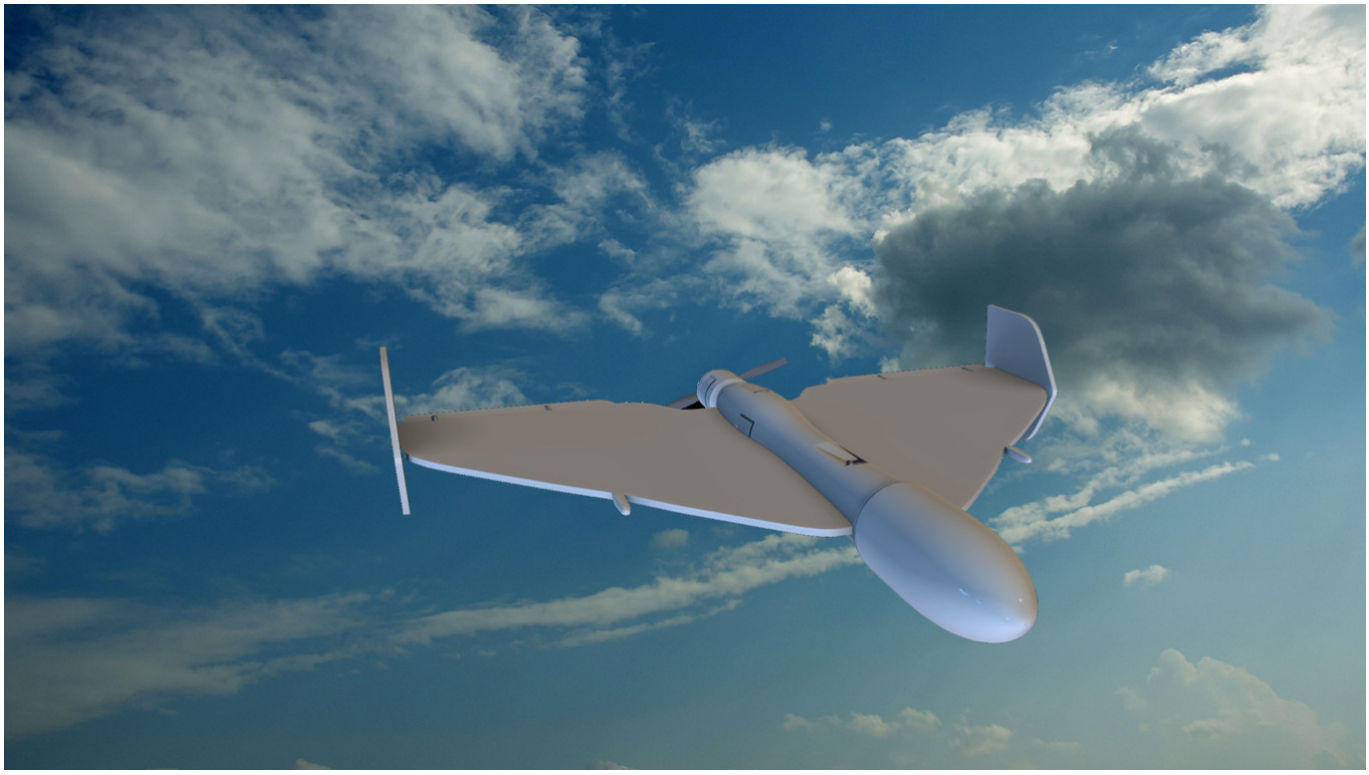
The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Latvia Says Crashed Russian Drone Was Fully Armed Shahed

By AFP

September 09, 2024



Shahed-136 drone. **Idmental (CC BY 4.0)**

Latvia's armed forces on Monday said the Russian drone that crashed on the Baltic state's territory was an Iranian-designed Shahed equipped with explosives.

Riga had earlier announced that investigators were looking into a drone that had crashed in the eastern part of the country on Saturday.

Latvia, which was once ruled by the Soviet Union but is now an EU and NATO member, has had tense relations with Moscow following independence, and ties have further deteriorated since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022.

"The explosive warhead stuck half a meter deep into the ground and was neutralized on the spot, avoiding detonation," Latvian armed forces commander General Leonids Kalnins told a press conference.

This "allowed our military intelligence officers to gather all the debris and remnants from the drone for further investigation, details of which will be shared with all of our NATO partners," he said.

Related article: Latvia Reports Russian Drone Crash on NATO Territory

Because of the ongoing investigation, the general did not specify how and when the drone was deactivated.

Latvian air force commander Colonel Viesturs Masulis said "the drone was not aimed at a military target in our country. It sort of drifted into Latvia."

"The drone was seen by our air defenses while still deep into Belarusian airspace, which gave us time to react," he said at the briefing.

Defense Minister Andris Spruds said the army had already dispatched additional mobile anti-aircraft units to Latvia's borderlands.

Latvian President Edgars Rinkevics had said Sunday that airspace breaches had increased along NATO's eastern borders.

Romania on Sunday said a Russian attack drone targeting civilian infrastructure in Ukraine had entered its airspace overnight.

Fellow NATO member Poland has also recorded at least two cases of its airspace being violated by Russian missiles or drones attacking Ukraine, most recently in December.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2024/09/09/latvia-says-crashed-russian-drone-was-fully-armed-shahed-a86315