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Russia’s FSB Says It Foiled Ukrainian Helicopter Plot

By AFP

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A Russian Mi-8MTPR-1 helicopter. **Russian Defense Ministry**

Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) said Monday that it foiled a Ukrainian attempt to divert a military helicopter by recruiting its pilot.

"Ukrainian military intelligence officers attempted to recruit a Russian military pilot to divert this aircraft to an area controlled by the Ukrainian armed forces," the FSB said, adding that the helicopter was a Mi-8MTPR-1.

Authorities did not specify when the incident took place but said that intelligence obtained during the operation had allowed strikes to be carried out on Ukrainian positions.

The Russian state news agency RIA Novosti, citing the FSB, said the pilot was contacted by Ukrainian security services and asked to poison the rest of the helicopter crew before flying the aircraft across the front line.

In July, the FSB claimed to have foiled a similar attempt targeting a strategic bomber, with the Russian pilot being promised a financial award and Italian citizenship.

In the summer of 2023, Ukraine recruited a Russian helicopter pilot, Maxim Kuzminov, who deserted the military and flew a Mi-8 aircraft to territory under Ukrainian control. Kuzminov was found dead in Spain earlier this year.

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