

German Defense Chief Suggests Russian Involvement in Lithuania Plane Crash

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Police officers near the site of the Swiftair cargo plane crash in Vilnius. **ZUMA / TASS**

This week's deadly DHL cargo plane crash in Lithuania aligns with a pattern of incidents across Europe earlier this year that were attributed to Russia, Germany's highest-ranking military officer [said](#) Wednesday.

Chief of Defense Carsten Breuer suggested that Russia may have been "exploring vulnerabilities" when the aircraft crashed near Vilnius airport on Monday. The crash, which killed one crew member, saw the plane hit several buildings and skid for several hundred meters.

"We already experienced a similar situation this summer, and now something happened that fits somewhere into this pattern," Breuer told the ARD public broadcaster.

In July, a series of igniting parcels at logistics depots in Germany and Poland were linked to an alleged Russian sabotage campaign, aimed at triggering explosions on cargo flights.

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Lithuanian presidential adviser Kestutis Budrys said earlier this month that those parcel incidents were likely a test run. While British, German and Polish authorities are investigating, the Kremlin has dismissed the claims as “fake.”

However, Lithuanian Defense Minister Laurynas Kasciunas contradicted Breuer’s remarks, [stating](#) Wednesday that there were “no signs” of sabotage in the DHL crash.

Kasciunas said visual analysis of the wreckage showed no external impact on the aircraft as it attempted to land. Surviving crew members also denied any disturbances, such as smoke or unusual odors, on board prior to the crash.

The crash remains under investigation, with authorities working to determine the cause.

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