

Lithuania Blames Russian Military Intelligence for IKEA Arson Attack

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Augustas Didžgalvis / Wikimedia

Lithuanian prosecutors on Monday [accused](#) Russia of orchestrating an arson attack on an IKEA store in Vilnius last year, calling it “an act of terrorism.”

Authorities said they had “reasonable grounds” to believe that unspecified Russian “military structures and security services” organized and financed the May 9, 2024, attack on the Swedish retailer in the Lithuanian capital.

“We regard this act as an act of terrorism with serious consequences,” prosecutor Arturas Urbelis told reporters.

Prosecutors said two Ukrainian citizens were suspected in the case, with one arrested in Lithuania and the other in Poland.

“It has been established that through a series of intermediaries... the organizers of these crimes are in Russia and this is connected to military intelligence and security forces,” Urbelis

said.

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The prosecutor’s office said one suspect entered Poland in early 2024 and, during a secret meeting in Warsaw, agreed to set fire to and bomb shopping centers in Lithuania and Latvia in exchange for 10,000 euros (\$10,904).

“More than one supermarket has been set on fire, and not just supermarkets,” Urbelis said when asked about possible links to similar arson attacks in Poland.

“It is obvious that the persons we have identified, the perpetrators and the intermediaries, are also linked to the criminal acts committed in Poland,” he added.

The attacks, including the IKEA arson, were intended to “intimidate” and “destabilize” Lithuania and pressure the EU member state to halt its support for Ukraine, officials added.

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk called it “exceptionally perfidious” for Russia to hire Ukrainians as saboteurs.

“The investigation of the Lithuanian prosecutor’s office has confirmed our suspicions that responsible for setting fires to shopping centers in Vilnius and Warsaw are the Russian secret services,” Tusk said on X.

“Good to know before negotiations. Such is the nature of this state [Russia],” he added, in an apparent reference to peace talks on ending the war in Ukraine.

In May, Tusk [announced](#) the arrest of nine people linked to an alleged Russian spy ring suspected of plotting sabotage in Lithuania, Latvia, Poland and possibly Sweden.

The group — comprising Ukrainian, Belarusian and Polish citizens — was accused of carrying out arson attacks and violent assaults, with some members believed to have been recruited from criminal circles.

AFP contributed reporting.

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