

Satellite Images Show Russian Military Buildup Near Finland – NYT

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Satellite image by Planet Labs

Russia is expanding its military infrastructure near the border with Finland, in what NATO officials describe as the early stages of a long-term buildup, The New York Times [reported](#) Monday.

The construction follows Russia's [announcement](#) that it would grow its military and create new units in response to Finland and Sweden joining NATO after Moscow's 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

Satellite images reportedly show Russian helicopters at a base near the Arctic city of Murmansk — their first appearance there in 20 years, according to NYT. The base lies about 160 kilometers (100 miles) from the borders of Finland and Norway.

At the Olenya air base near Olenogorsk, south of Murmansk, satellite photos show a significant increase in military aircraft. The air base houses Russian long-range Tu-22 bombers.

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Further south in the town of Alakurtti, about 50 kilometers (31 miles) from the Finnish border, new buildings have appeared and can reportedly house dozens of military vehicles. Similar construction was spotted in Petrozavodsk, the capital city of the nearby republic of Karelia.

More than 130 troop tents [appeared](#) last year at a restored Cold War-era base in Kamenka, located in northwestern Russia's Leningrad region about 65 kilometers (40 miles) from the Finnish border.

Finland, which now shares NATO's longest border with Russia, closed its land border crossings with Russia in December 2023 after a reported spike in asylum seekers that Helsinki blamed on the Kremlin.

Finnish defense officials fear Russia could triple its troop presence near their shared border within five years once fighting in Ukraine subsides.

"The increase of military force in our nearby areas will happen after the fighting in Ukraine quiets down," Finnish Defense Ministry policy director Janne Kuusela told NYT.

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