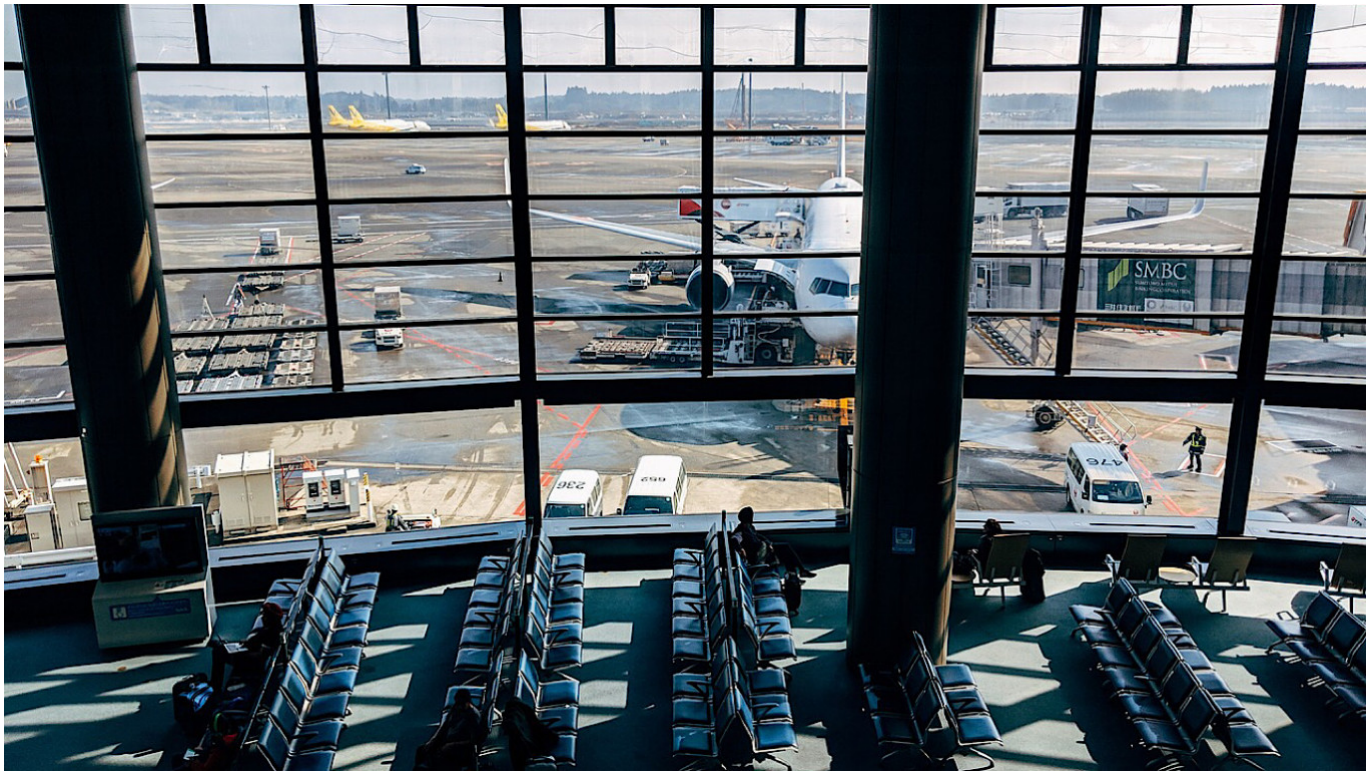
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Poland and Latvia Restrict Airspace Near Russian and Belarusian Borders After Drone Incursion

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Poland and Latvia imposed restrictions on their airspace near the borders with Russia and Belarus on Thursday, a day after NATO fighter jets shot down Russian drones that had crossed into Polish territory.

Aviation authorities in Poland said drones and recreational aircraft will be barred from flying up to 3,000 meters (9,900 feet) along its borders with Belarus and Ukraine until Dec. 9. Commercial passenger flights, which operate at much higher altitudes, will not be impacted, they said.

Those measures do not extend to Poland's northern border with the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad.

Latvia's Defense Ministry said similar airspace restrictions along its eastern border with

Russia and Belarus would take effect on Thursday evening and last at least one week. It said the move, meant to give NATO patrol aircraft and Latvian air defenses freedom to intercept unauthorized flying objects, might be extended.

Meanwhile, Latvia's right-wing opposition party National Alliance said on Wednesday that it had submitted a bill to parliament calling for the immediate closure of Latvia's border with Russia and Belarus. The parliament, known as the Saeima, on Thursday passed the proposal for review to its national security commission.

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Lithuania last month declared a no-fly zone along its border with Belarus from Aug. 14 until Oct. 1, ahead of the joint Russian-Belarusian Zapad-2025 military exercises, which begin later this week. Estonia, which shares an eastern border with Russia, has not announced any airspace restrictions of its own.

Russia's drone incursion into Polish airspace this week marked the first instance of NATO directly engaging with Russia since President Vladimir Putin ordered the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022. Analysts told The Moscow Times the breach may have been a deliberate operation meant to test Western defense systems.

Russia's military denied targeting Poland, while the Foreign Ministry accused Warsaw of spreading "myths" to escalate the war in Ukraine.

Poland on Thursday called an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council to discuss Russia's violations of its airspace.

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