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Russian Navy Denies Technical Malfunction Forced Submarine to Surface Near France

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The Novorossiysk attack submarine. **Russian Defense Ministry**

Russia's Navy on Monday denied claims that one of its submarines was forced to surface off the coast of France last week after reportedly encountering technical problems.

NATO said last Thursday that the French Navy had monitored a Russian submarine surfacing off France's northwestern coast, following reports that the stealth diesel-electric attack submarine Novorossiysk may have experienced a fuel leak in the Strait of Gibraltar in late September.

Russia's Black Sea Fleet dismissed those reports as false, saying in a statement carried by state news agencies that the Novorossiysk had no malfunctions and surfaced in the English Channel in accordance with international sailing protocols while returning from a planned deployment in the Mediterranean.

The Novorossiysk, which joined the Black Sea Fleet in 2024 after entering service a decade earlier, is an updated version of the Kilo-class diesel-electric submarine and is equipped with Kalibr cruise missiles. It is quieter than most of Russia's nuclear-powered submarines and is designed primarily for operations in shallow waters near home ports.

French media reported that the Novorossiysk was previously spotted off Brittany in 2022.

Defense analysts suggested that the submarine may have been engaged in intelligence gathering or discreet transportation of personnel and equipment through the Strait of Gibraltar, the only maritime link between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic.

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