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Polish Jets Make Second Consecutive Interception of Russian Spy Plane Over Baltic Sea

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A Polish Air Force MiG-29. **Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej**

Poland's military said Thursday its fighter jets had intercepted a Russian reconnaissance aircraft over the Baltic Sea for the second day in a row amid heightened regional tensions.

In a statement similar to the one it made Wednesday, the Polish operational command said two of its MiG-29 fighter jets were scrambled to identify and escort an Il-20 aircraft before 9:00 a.m. local time.

It released photos on X showing the aircraft's tail marked with "RF-9552" and "Russian Aerospace Forces."

The operational command said the Russian Il-20 was flying in international airspace without a filed flight plan and with its transponder switched off, rendering it invisible to civilian radar systems.

“There was no violation of Polish airspace,” the command wrote, praising the “high combat readiness and professionalism” of the pilots and ground crew involved.

Russia’s Defense Ministry has not commented on either interception.

Related article: Poland Says Intercepted Russian Spy Plane Over Baltic Sea

The Il-20, a Soviet-designed electronic intelligence aircraft, is capable of intercepting radio communications and radar emissions and has been a frequent participant in intelligence-gathering flights near NATO airspace.

NATO states along the alliance’s eastern flank have reported an uptick in Russian military air activity in recent months.

In September, Poland reported more than 20 Russian drones crossing into its territory, while Estonia said three Russian jets violated its airspace. The Kremlin has denied any intentional border incursions.

U.S. President Donald Trump said he thinks NATO states should shoot down any Russian planes that violate their airspace. The Kremlin called the statement “reckless and irresponsible.”

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