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Poland Says 2 Ukrainians Working for Russia Suspected in Railway Sabotage

By AFP

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Wojtek Radwanski / AFP

Two Ukrainians acting on behalf of Russian intelligence agencies are suspected of carrying out separate acts of railway sabotage in Poland, Prime Minister Donald Tusk told parliament on Tuesday.

The pair "have been operating and cooperating with Russian services for a long time," Tusk said, citing information from prosecutors and investigators. He said authorities know the identities of the suspects but will not release them while the probe continues.

The acts of sabotage, which occurred between Saturday and Monday, damaged a railway line used to transport supplies to Ukraine. Tusk called the incidents "perhaps the most serious national security situation in Poland since the outbreak of the full-scale war in Ukraine."

In the first incident, a steel clamp was attached to the track in what Tusk said was "likely

intended to derail a train." The second involved the detonation of a military-grade explosive device as a freight train passed. No injuries were reported in that second incident.

One of the suspects is a Ukrainian citizen who was convicted in May by a court in Lviv for "acts of sabotage," Tusk said. The other is a resident of the Russian-occupied Donbas region. Both crossed into Poland from Belarus this autumn and are believed to have fled back to Belarus shortly after the incidents.

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Tusk said that, in total, 23 people have been arrested in connection with sabotage cases in Poland. The country, a NATO and European Union member, has become the main transit hub for military and humanitarian aid bound for Ukraine.

European leaders, including European Commission head Ursula von der Leyen, NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte and Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andriy Sybiga, expressed solidarity with Poland after the disclosures. Sybiga suggested Monday the sabotage may have been carried out "to test responses."

Tusk added that the purpose of the attacks likely included triggering "social and political consequences," particularly by fueling anti-Ukrainian sentiment, which he described as "especially dangerous in countries like Poland."

After Tusk's remarks, the Kremlin accused Poland of "Russophobia."

"It would be strange if Russia wasn't blamed straight away," Kremlin spokesman Dmitri Peskov ironically told state TV, adding that "Russophobia is flourishing there," while not directly denying involvement.

Tusk said the names of the suspected saboteurs may be publicly released later on Tuesday.

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