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Romania Shoots Down Third Russian Drone, as President Calls Breaches ‘Intolerable'

By Reuters

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Romania's President Nicusor Dan **REUTERS/Alina Smutko**

A Romanian F-16 fighter jet pilot shot down a Russian drone over the Black Sea, the Defense Ministry said on Sunday, the latest in a series of breaches of the NATO member's airspace that President Nicusor Dan called "inadmissible and intolerable."

Romania shares a 650-kilometer (400-mile) land border with Ukraine and Russian drones have repeatedly violated its airspace during the more than four-year Ukraine war. Moscow is now stepping up attacks on Ukrainian ports across the Danube River.

Romania had not destroyed any of the drones until Friday when a Romanian pilot was able to safely bring one down in an uninhabited area. It has now shot down three drones in as many days.

"It is inadmissible and intolerable for the Russian Federation to continue violating Romania's airspace, which is, at the same time, NATO airspace and European Union airspace," Dan wrote on X on Sunday.

"Such actions are unacceptable, and we treat them with the utmost seriousness, alongside our allies," he said.

Moscow made no immediate public comment on the incidents.

NATO said additional details of Sunday's incident were under investigation.

"The shootdowns come as NATO, Romania, and other nations actively acquire ground-based interceptors to enhance allied and national air defense capabilities," said U.S. Army Colonel Martin O'Donnell, spokesperson for NATO's military headquarters.

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Dan said Romania had identified Friday's drone as a Shahed-type unmanned aerial vehicle commonly used by Russian forces and investigations of those shot down on Saturday and Sunday were ongoing.

Romania's Foreign Ministry said it had summoned the Russian ambassador "following these repeated violations." And Prime Minister Ilie Bolojan called the airspace breaches "unacceptable."

The Defense Ministry said that, in Sunday's incident, the drone was shot down safely, 12 kilometers northeast of the coastal town of Sulina above territorial waters.

"Romania will continue to firmly defend its sovereignty and airspace but these provocations must stop," Romanian Defense Minister Radu Miruta said on his Facebook page.

The Defense Ministry said Russian drones had entered national airspace without permission 33 times since the war started, including Sunday's breach.

Prosecutors have recovered fragments of the drone shot down on Friday but were still looking for pieces of the other two.

On Friday, Romania's army chief of staff said Russian attacks on the region around the Ukrainian port of Odesa had increased ahead of the harvest season, further pressuring crucial energy and trade routes in the Black Sea.

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