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Poland Condemns Russian 'Provocation' After 3 Airspace Violations

By Reuters

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Police officers and firefighters near the site of a possible object falling near Nowy Lipowiec, Poland.
REUTERS / Kacper Pempel

Russia violated Poland's airspace overnight with three objects that were likely two missiles and a drone, the Polish defence minister said on Friday, as he denounced what he called a "provocation" from Moscow.

The Russian Embassy in Warsaw did not immediately respond to an emailed request for comment.

Drones have repeatedly strayed into the airspace of countries on NATO's eastern flank since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, fueling tension with the NATO military alliance and stoking fears that the war could spread.

"There has been a violation of Polish airspace and an incursion by objects from the Russian

Federation," Defence Minister Władysław Kosiniak-Kamysz told a news conference.

"There was an Kh-101 missile... In the second case, one can also speak of a missile; in the third, it was most likely a jet-powered drone."

The incursions happened as Poland was set to hold military exercises of the 'Coalition of the Willing' of Ukraine's allies on Friday.

"These exercises, combined with the presence of defence ministers from France, the United Kingdom and the Baltic states — along with eight chiefs of staff, including those from our key allies — suggest that the convergence of these events is no accident," Kosiniak-Kamysz said.

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He said that the exercises would go ahead and also said Poland would ask NATO for more support securing the alliance's eastern flank.

Prime Minister Donald Tusk said that there was no doubt that the objects that landed in Poland were Russian.

"It seems we are dealing with an intentional provocation," he told a news conference.

The latest incident comes after European countries warned against any attempt to decide a peace over their heads, following President Donald Trump's embrace of Russia's Vladimir Putin as a "friend" at a summit with Chinese leader Xi Jinping.

Explosion

Polish Interior Minister Marcin Kierwiński said investigations were under way at three locations — Rudnik nad Sanem, Mołodycz and Nowy Lipowiec.

Footage shared on social media from what appeared to be a security camera at a property in the village of Chmielek, near Nowy Lipowiec, showed an explosion in the distance.

"I had just gotten up. I was making coffee, getting the kids ready for school, and then I heard a whistling sound. And then a thud — a dull, muffled kind of impact," said local resident Natalia Szponar. "I was a little panicked. I felt a bit scared."

Andrzej Borowiec, the mayor of neighboring Aleksandrów county, said an object that was around seven metres long had fallen at 05:40 GMT.

"Smoke was rising — black smoke... something that looked like one large, distinct mushroom cloud," he told Reuters.

Polish Infrastructure Minister Dariusz Klimczak said on X that a traffic controller had heard a loud bang near railway premises in Rudnik nad Sanem, about 50 kilometers (31 miles) west of Nowy Lipowiec.

He said no visible damage to the railway had been found but that an inspection vehicle had been dispatched.

Klimczak said air traffic controllers had been evacuated at the airport in Rzeszów, the largest city in southeastern Poland.

Police said that in Mołodycz, about 50 km south of Nowy Lipowiec, debris was found scattered across a large expanse of uncultivated agricultural land.

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