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South Korea Says Russian Military Planes Entered Its Air Defense Zone

By AFP

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Dmitry Terekhov (CC BY-SA 2.0)

South Korea said Wednesday that it would summon Russia's defense attaché after several Russian military aircraft breached its air defense identification zone earlier in the day.

The Russian aircraft flew over the East Sea — also known as the Sea of Japan — and left the defense zone after South Korean forces took "military measures," including deploying fighter jets, according to South Korea's ministry of national defense.

The ministry said Russian aircraft "flew right up to the edge of our airspace" and an alert was issued as a proactive measure.

South Korea's military said the Russian aircraft did not violate the country's airspace and that no North Korean aircraft were involved.

Earlier on Tuesday, an emergency alert was issued in the North Gyeongsang province, stating

that a "suspected North Korean aircraft has left the danger zone." Authorities later issued a correction to that initial alert.

The South Korean ministry of national defense said it plans to summon the Russian defense attaché in Seoul on Tuesday afternoon to lodge a "stern protest" over the incident.

South Korea's air defense identification zone is not sovereign airspace but acts as a buffer area in which countries identify approaching aircraft for security purposes.

Military aircraft are generally expected to notify the relevant country before entering its air defense zone, although such notification is not legally required.

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