# Polish jets intercept Russian Su-24 in Baltic amid escalating military provocations



Tensions in the Baltic region have taken a notable turn following an incident involving a Russian Su-24 fighter jet, which was intercepted by the Polish Air Force over international waters. This event has been confirmed by Wladysław Kosiniak-Kamysz, Poland's Defence Minister, who stated that two Polish jets were dispatched under the directive from NATO’s joint operational command to locate and deter the aircraft, which was reportedly engaging in perilous manoeuvres. Such actions, Kosiniak-Kamysz explained, were indicative of intentionality rather than accident, reflecting a trend of military provocations in the area.

This incident is particularly alarming, given a series of similar events in recent weeks that have underscored the escalating tensions between NATO and Russia. Earlier, Polish military forces responded to a suspicious Russian-flagged ship displaying erratic behaviour near an undersea power cable vital to energy supply between Poland and Sweden. The quick response from Poland, including the deployment of their naval assets, showcased a proactive approach to safeguarding critical infrastructure amidst increasing military activities from Russia. The Polish Defence Ministry reassured that the integrity of this power line remained intact, despite the ship's manoeuvres.

The Baltic Sea has emerged as a focal point for military activities, especially since the onset of the Ukraine conflict in February 2022. For example, not only did Polish jets intercept a Gabon-flagged oil tanker suspected of being involved in sanction evasion on behalf of Russia, but they also shadowed Russian Su-35 jets as they transited the Gulf of Finland. This kind of surveillance is essential for maintaining airspace security and has become a regular duty for NATO member states in the region.

The broader context reveals a pattern of Russian military behaviour that has alarmed neighbouring countries, especially after plans for territorial expansion in the Baltic area resulted in heightened apprehension among Baltic states and Finland. Satellite reconnaissance has revealed a concerning build-up of Russian military infrastructure close to the Finnish border, suggesting a deliberate strategy of reinforcement that has not gone unnoticed by NATO analysts or regional governments.

Furthermore, alliances in the region have been solidified recently, with both Sweden and Finland now contributing to NATO's Baltic air policing missions. Their integration into NATO operations has allowed for a more comprehensive and coordinated approach to dealing with Russian incursions. The success of these joint operations demonstrates a united front and signals a commitment to air and maritime security in the face of aggressive posturing from Moscow.

As tensions remain high and military exercises continue across the Baltic, it's clear that both NATO and Russia are poised for a prolonged period of interaction that might shape the geopolitical landscape of the region for years to come. The situation not only reflects the ongoing animosity stemming from the Ukraine conflict but potentially foreshadows a difficult transition for European security in an era of increased military activity on both sides.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14743147/russia-nato-su24-polish-baltic-sea.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14743147/russia-nato-su24-polish-baltic-sea.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/poland-says-russian-ship-performed-suspicious-manoeuvres-near-cable-sweden-2025-05-21/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14743147/russia-nato-su24-polish-baltic-sea.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.wionews.com/world/german-air-force-says-russian-aircraft-intercepted-over-baltic-sea-586228)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14743147/russia-nato-su24-polish-baltic-sea.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://www.aerotime.aero/articles/nato-belgium-fighters-intercept-russian-jets), [[6]](https://theaviationist.com/2025/04/26/swedish-gripens-first-nato-air-policing-scramble/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[5]](https://kam.lt/en/data-on-interceptions-of-aircraft-completed-near-the-baltic-states-borders-on-june-10-16-2024/), [[7]](https://www.ukrinform.net/rubric-ato/3861166-polish-f16s-intercept-russian-reconnaissance-aircraft-over-baltic-sea-twice-in-recent-days.html)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14743147/russia-nato-su24-polish-baltic-sea.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/poland-says-russian-ship-performed-suspicious-manoeuvres-near-cable-sweden-2025-05-21/> - On May 21, 2025, Poland's military intervened after detecting a suspicious Russian 'shadow fleet' ship near a crucial undersea power cable connecting Poland and Sweden. The ship, under an Antigua flag, performed suspicious maneuvers but was deterred following Polish military intervention and rerouted to a Russian port. Polish Defence Minister Wladyslaw Kosiniak-Kamysz stated that a patrol flight scared the vessel off, and the ORP Heweliusz was deployed to the area. Despite the concerns, the Polish grid operator affirmed the cable’s functionality, with 600 megawatts flowing to Sweden. Increasing tensions in the Baltic, especially since Sweden and Finland joined NATO, have led to more frequent infrastructure sabotage incidents. Poland and NATO promised strong responses to any attacks. Sweden affirmed its readiness to respond and is coordinating with allies to monitor the situation. Moscow, which has denied involvement in past Baltic sabotage cases, declined to comment on the incident.
3. <https://www.wionews.com/world/german-air-force-says-russian-aircraft-intercepted-over-baltic-sea-586228> - On April 26, 2023, the German air force, in coordination with the British Royal Air Force, intercepted three Russian military reconnaissance aircraft over the Baltic Sea. The intercepted aircraft included two Sukhoi Su-27 Flankers and one Ilyushin Il-20, all flying without transponder signals in international airspace. The German and British Eurofighters were alerted to identify these aircraft, highlighting ongoing surveillance and interception activities in the region to ensure airspace security.
4. <https://www.aerotime.aero/articles/nato-belgium-fighters-intercept-russian-jets> - On December 6, 2023, Belgian fighter jets intercepted Russian Su-30 aircraft over the Baltic Sea. This marked the first alert scramble for the Belgian Air Force since assuming the lead in NATO’s Baltic Air Policing mission just one week earlier. NATO radars detected unidentified aircraft departing Kaliningrad, prompting the launch of two Belgian Air Force F-16s from Šiauliai in Lithuania to investigate the situation. The intercept was conducted in coordination with the Swedish Air Force. The Russian Su-30s, flying without communication with civilian Air Traffic Control, were visually identified by the Belgian F-16s. The French Air and Space Force Mirage 2000-5s were on standby for a potential scramble but were ultimately held back as NATO controllers opted to continue monitoring the situation via radar.
5. <https://kam.lt/en/data-on-interceptions-of-aircraft-completed-near-the-baltic-states-borders-on-june-10-16-2024/> - Between June 10 and 16, 2024, NATO Baltic Air Policing Detachment aircraft were scrambled multiple times to intercept Russian Federation aircraft violating flight rules in international airspace over the Baltic Sea. On June 10, NATO fighter aircraft were scrambled to intercept one IL-20 flying in international airspace over the Baltic Sea without a flight plan. Additionally, NATO fighter jets intercepted one SU-27 as it was flying in international airspace over the Baltic Sea. These incidents underscore the ongoing vigilance and response measures by NATO forces to maintain airspace security in the region.
6. <https://theaviationist.com/2025/04/26/swedish-gripens-first-nato-air-policing-scramble/> - On April 24, 2025, Swedish Air Force JAS39 Gripen fighters conducted their first interception of a Russian Il-20 Coot reconnaissance plane over the Baltic Sea as part of NATO's Enhanced Air Policing mission. The Swedish Gripens, deployed to Malbork, Poland, under NATO command, identified the aircraft in international airspace and escorted it out of the area. This operation marked Sweden's first sharp mission within the framework of NATO's enhanced incident preparedness, highlighting the country's active role in regional airspace security following its NATO membership.
7. <https://www.ukrinform.net/rubric-ato/3861166-polish-f16s-intercept-russian-reconnaissance-aircraft-over-baltic-sea-twice-in-recent-days.html> - On May 3 and 6, 2025, Polish F-16 fighters intercepted and escorted a Russian Il-20 reconnaissance aircraft over international waters of the Baltic Sea. The aircraft, which took off from an airfield in the Kaliningrad region, was performing a reconnaissance mission without entering Polish airspace. The Polish Operational Command reported that the aircraft was intercepted and visually identified by the F-16s, underscoring Poland's commitment to monitoring and securing its airspace and the broader Baltic region.