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GERMANY'S air defense frigate FSG Hamburg in Copenhagen, site of upcoming European Union talks.

Denmark reports more troubling drone sightings

ASSOCIATED PRESS

COPENHAGEN — Denmark's Defense Ministry said Sunday that it had again observed drones at several of its armed forces' locations overnight, a day after the NATO alliance announced that it would enhance its vigilance in the Baltic Sea region.

The ministry said in a statement that it had "several capacities deployed" after drone sightings from Saturday into Sunday night. It didn't offer any further details about the specifics of the deployment, the number of drones or locations.

This is the latest unexplained drone activity after several sightings, including over five Danish airports last week, raising concerns about security amid suspected growing Russian military activity.

Following a North Atlantic Treaty Organization meeting in Riga, Latvia, on Saturday, Col. Martin O'Donnell, the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe spokesperson, announced that "we will conduct even more enhanced vigilance with new multi-domain assets in the Baltic Sea region, which includes Denmark, under Baltic Sentry."

He also said that NATO leaders were in constant contact with Danish officials following the drone sightings.

As Denmark gears up for the upcoming European Union summit in Copenhagen, the Danish Transportation Ministry said Sunday that "all civilian drone flying in Danish airspace will be prohibited" from Monday to Friday to "remove the risk that enemy drones can be confused with legal drones and vice versa."

"We cannot accept that foreign drones create uncertainty and disturbances in society, as we have experienced recently. At the same time, Denmark will host EU leaders in the coming week, where we will have extra focus on security," Danish Transportation Minister Thomas Danielsen said in a statement.

"A violation of the prohibition can result in a fine or imprisonment for up to two years," the statement said.

The prohibition does not apply to military drone

flights, drones used by state aviation, including police and emergency drone operations, as well as in municipal and regional emergencies.

On Sunday afternoon, the Danish Defense Ministry announced that the German air defense frigate FSG Hamburg had arrived in Copenhagen. "The German frigate is part of NATO's Baltic Sentry activity, which is intended to strengthen NATO's presence along the alliance's eastern flank," the ministry said in a statement.

Separately, Germany said that following a request from Denmark, its armed forces would provide additional military support for the upcoming EU summit.

Sweden had announced earlier that it would "lend Denmark a military anti-drone capability."

Tensions have been running high in Denmark after reports of drone activity, and hundreds of possible sightings reported by concerned citizens that couldn't officially be confirmed.

Danish Minister of Justice Peter Hummelgaard said on Thursday that the goal of the flyovers is to sow fear and division, adding that the country will seek additional ways to neutralize drones, including proposing legislation to allow infrastructure owners to shoot them down.

While it's not clear who is behind the drone activity, Denmark's prime minister and NATO's secretary-general said last week that Russian involvement couldn't be ruled out.

The Russian Embassy in Denmark last week rejected claims of Moscow's involvement in the incidents.

Speaking to Russian media in comments released Sunday, Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko said that any attempt by NATO to shoot down Russian or Belarusian aircraft would be met with an "immediate response."

Discussing whether NATO would shoot down his helicopter when flying close to the Polish border, Lukashenko said, "Let them try, let them shoot. Or they'll shoot down something Russian over Kaliningrad. Then, of course, we'll have to fight, as they say in Russia, with all we've got. Is that necessary? No."