

OSINT REPORT · 22 NOV 2026 · VERSION 2

Kaliningrad air-raid alert, 21 November 2026: what we actually know

Sparta II, sirens and the “Baltiysk explosions”. Verifying photos and videos from Russian and Ukrainian channels

Window: 20 Nov 2026 22:00 to 22 Nov 2026 08:30 CET. All times are Polish time (CET, UTC+1). Kaliningrad is on UTC+2. Telegram and X timestamps are UTC and have been converted.

Confidence levels: **[Fact]** at least two independent layers; **[Claimed]** a single source or an interested party; **[Assessment]** my own inference from the data; **[Speculation]**; **[No data]**.

Open sources only, with no logins and no accounts created. I do not publish faces or addresses of private individuals. Frames from third-party material are short quotations, each credited.

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1. Summary

The only confirmed attack that day was a strike by two drones on the ro-ro vessel **Sparta II**, bound for Kaliningrad, in neutral waters of the Gulf of Finland in the morning **[Fact]**.

Sirens sounded across the oblast at around 18:00–18:15 CET, and Khrabrovo airport accepted flights only with clearance for about 40 minutes **[Fact]**. At 18:36 CET Governor Besprozvannykh wrote of a "suspicious object from the direction of Lithuania" over the Neman district and said there was "no threat" **[Fact]** (as worded). Lithuania denies it, and its air force detected no drones **[Fact]**.

Later that evening Ukrainian channels posted videos captioned "Baltiysk": tracer fire and air defence at work. None of the ones I checked shows an impact or a fire caused by one **[Assessment]**.

The most viral "photo of the Baltiysk explosion" is certainly not from 21 November **[Fact]**: the same scene has circulated since 8 November, when Iranian and pro-Iranian channels captioned it as smoke over Qeshm Island. That it is Qeshm rests only on their word **[Claimed]**. A video described as Baltiysk actually shows the new High Bridge under construction in central Kaliningrad **[Fact]**.

The Russian MoD mentions the oblast neither in its daytime report for 21 November nor in its overnight report for 22 November. FIRMS shows no hotspot at Baltiysk, and no Sentinel satellite has passed over the port since the event **[Fact]**.

Conclusion: air defence was active at Baltiysk, at least gun systems **[Assessment]**. An attack with real effects cannot be confirmed **[No data]**. From the first minute, the Russian line has blamed Lithuania.

2. Corrections after verification

The first version (early on 22 November) contained conclusions that were wrong or overstated. I correct them here:

Was	Now	Why
The "Baltiysk" photo is near-identical to the @HormuzReport post (pHash 6/64)	Same fixed scene and viewpoint, but a different frame: the smoke column sits elsewhere. Scene **[Fact]**	A SIFT homography aligns the building, bushes, ridge and power lines, while the smoke does not. Smolii vs 8 Nov: 31 inliers, NCC 0.777, edge NCC 0.744. Controls: 0.23 and −0.05
Source: @HormuzReport, 8 Nov 21:40 CET	Earliest found: Al-Mehwar News, 8 Nov 20:42 CET, watermarked. HormuzReport is a secondary copy. Original author: **[No data]**	Al-Mehwar: 642 inliers, NCC 0.927. @xxoperatpyz at 21:39 CET carries the same watermark. HormuzReport was created on 20 May 2026
Location: Qeshm **[Fact]**	Qeshm **[Claimed]**, with doubts	Only Iranian and pro-Iranian outlets report strikes on Qeshm on 8 Nov. FIRMS for 5–11 Nov shows no event anomaly. Lush greenery and a wooded ridge do not fit an arid island
Smolii first (19:03 CET)	Earliest found: Sternenko, 19:02:03 CET, the identical file (pHash 0). INSIDER UA posted before 19:14, but the post is gone **[No data]**	t.me/ssternenko/66372; INSIDER UA screenshot in voenacher/98970
Kaliningrad bridge **[Assessment]**	**[Fact]**	Concrete towers, steel lattice lift towers, the blue-and-white fence and site containers match reference photos from RG and Novy Kaliningrad
Sparta II in the footage	**[Fact]**, with extra evidence	The name СПАРТА II is legible on the hull

3. Verifying the “Baltiysk explosion” photo

What I checked. I compared the versions posted by Smolii and Incident Kaliningrad on 21 November with the copies from 8 November (Al-Mehwar, @xxoperatpyz, @HormuzReport), using SIFT feature matching after contrast equalisation (CLAHE), a RANSAC homography, and normalised cross-correlation on both the image and its edges. Unrelated frames from the same evening served as controls.

Result. The fixed elements (building, bushes, the ridge on the horizon, the wires) line up after the homography. The smoke column does not, so this is a different frame of the same scene, probably from the same burst of shots **[Fact]**. The controls give NCC close to zero. Smolii’s version is the very same file as Sternenko’s (pHash 0, 800×708).

First publication. The earliest copy I found is Al-Mehwar News, 8 November at 20:42 CET, captioned “Columns of smoke rise from Qeshm Island after the American aggression”, with its watermark. Then came @xxoperatpyz (21:39 CET) and @HormuzReport (21:40 CET, 107k views). I could not identify the original photographer **[No data]**. I found no copy of the Smolii frame from before 21 November (Yandex returns only look-alikes from Lebanon, Gaza and Donetsk).

Is it Qeshm? Strikes on Qeshm on 8 November are reported by Al-Mehwar (from 20:17 CET), IRNA via Anadolu, and Iran International **[Claimed]**. The FIRMS archive (VIIRS 375 m, NASA Worldview) for 5–11 November shows no event-related anomaly: the points around 55.5–55.9 E appear every day, so they are industrial sites **[No data]**. Lush grass, broadleaf shrubs and a wooded ridge are unusual for arid Qeshm. They do not fit flat Baltiysk in November either **[Assessment]**.

How it spread on 21 November. Sternenko at 19:02 CET (“alert in the oblast”, with this photo), Smolii at 19:03, and an INSIDER UA screenshot reposted by Voenacher at 19:14. At 19:36 Sternenko reported a “hit in Baltiysk”, then added that the first photo was fake (NV puts the retraction at about 19:44 CET). The Russian side (Incident Kaliningrad at 20:04, the governor’s spokeswoman Bashkirova, RIA, TASS) used the debunk to dismiss the whole episode as fake.

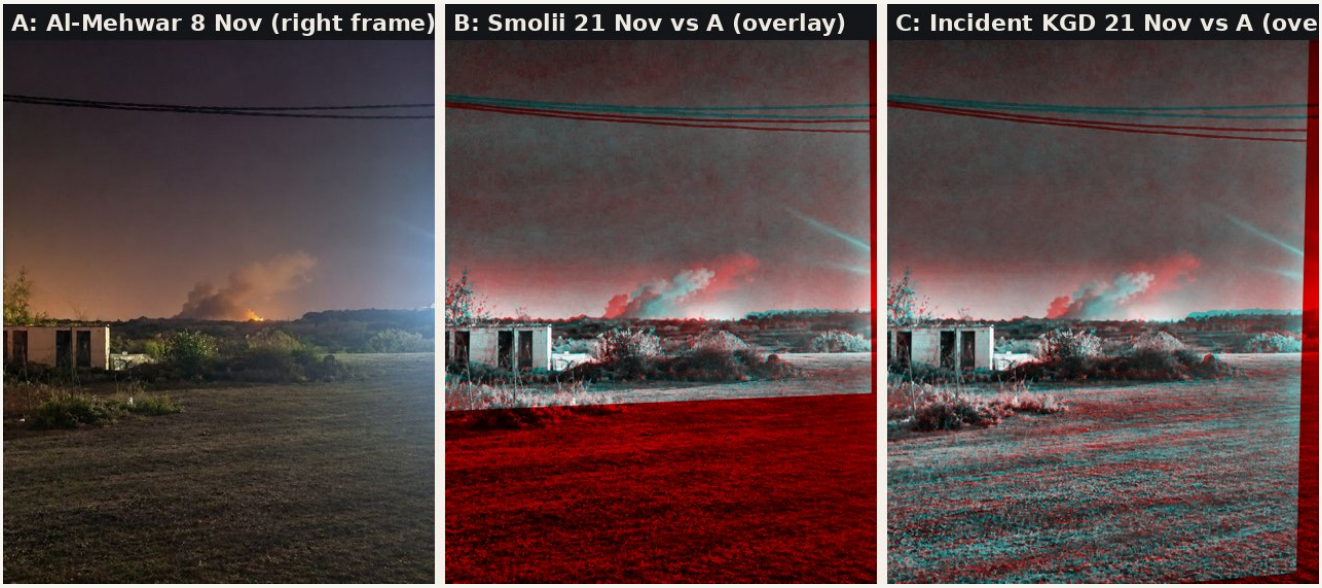


Fig. 1. A: Al-Mehwar copy from 8 Nov (short quotation, source t.me/alomhoar/115796). B and C: the Smolii and Incident Kaliningrad versions from 21 Nov overlaid on A after homography (cyan and red). The fixed scene matches; the smoke does not. **[Fact]**: the photo is not from 21 November.



Fig. 2. Copies side by side: Smolii 21 Nov, two @HormuzReport frames from 8 Nov, Incident Kaliningrad 21 Nov. Short quotation for verification purposes; sources as captioned.

4. Timeline (CET)

Time CET	Event	Source	Level
8 Nov 20:42	Al-Mehwar News posts the smoke photo “over Qeshm”, the earliest copy found	alomhoar/115796	[Fact]
21 Nov morning	Two drones hit the Sparta II (Russian flag, US-sanctioned) in the Gulf of Finland, 3 miles from the Russian border	Drozdenko via RIA; besprozvannih/6750; Reuters	[Fact]
21 Nov 16:16	Oblast government: crew evacuation “was not needed”. Finland and Reuters: fire, drift, 16 people evacuated	government_kgd/8688; Reuters	[Assessment]
21 Nov ~18:00–18:15	Sirens in Kaliningrad and several towns. Text messages warning of possible mobile internet limits	Klops, Kaliningrad.ru, Baza	[Fact]
21 Nov 18:31–18:56	Rosaviatsia: Khrabrovo by clearance only, then back to normal	mash/79557; vestiru	[Fact]
21 Nov 18:36	Governor: “suspicious object from the direction of Lithuania”, “no threat”	besprozvannih/6752	[Fact]
21 Nov 18:52–20:13	A series of “Baltiysk” videos: tracers, air defence, shelters	supernova_plus, exilenova_plus	[Claimed]
21 Nov 19:02	Sternenko posts the 8 Nov photo as the oblast; at 19:36 a “hit in Baltiysk”, then an update: fake	ssternenko/66372, /66376	[Fact]
21 Nov 19:03	Smolii: “explosions in Baltiysk”, with the same photo	smolii_ukraine/182111	[Fact]
21 Nov 20:04	Incident Kaliningrad: the photo is Qeshm. Bashkirova debunks it on her channel (RIA)	incidentkld/39067; RIA	[Fact]
22 Nov 03:32	Lithuanian FM Budrys: Lithuania never allowed use of its airspace. No drones detected	RIA; Daily Baltic	[Fact]
22 Nov 06:36	Russian MoD overnight: 170 drones, no mention of Kaliningrad	RIA	[Fact]
22 Nov 06:55	RVvoenkor: a truncated repost of the 21 Nov text, not a new alert	RVvoenkor/127724	[Fact]
22 Nov morning	Meduza: sirens “for the first time since the start of the war”. DW reported an alert in the oblast on 25 May	Meduza; DW	[Assessment]
22 Nov morning	Yle via Euromaidan Press: Sparta II crew evacuated, fire still burning, tow to Russian waters	Euromaidan Press	[Claimed]
22 Nov 08:01	TASS: Finland allows for Kyiv’s involvement in the Sparta II attack	incidentkld/39073	[Claimed]

5. Other frames

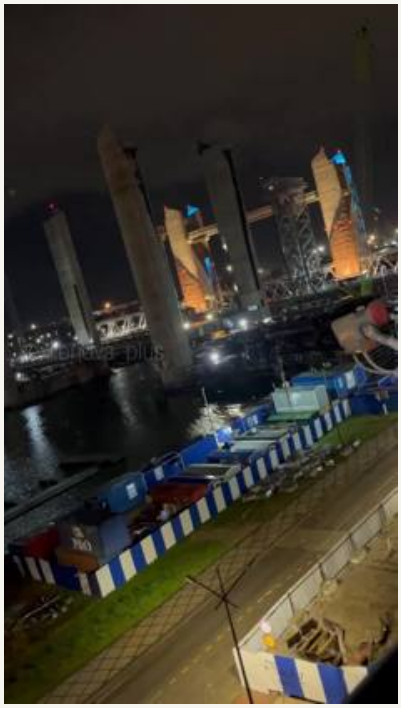


Fig. 3. Video with sirens: the High Bridge construction site in Kaliningrad. Other channels captioned it as Baltiysk. First posted by Supernova+ 63316 at 18:28 CET as “Königsberg”. **[Fact]**



Fig. 4. Tracer fire over low-rise buildings (Exilenova+ 35001). Consistent with air-defence guns. Location not confirmed. **[Assessment]**



Fig. 5. Air defence over a housing estate (Supernova+ 63325, later Astra), attributed to Baltiysk. **[Claimed]**

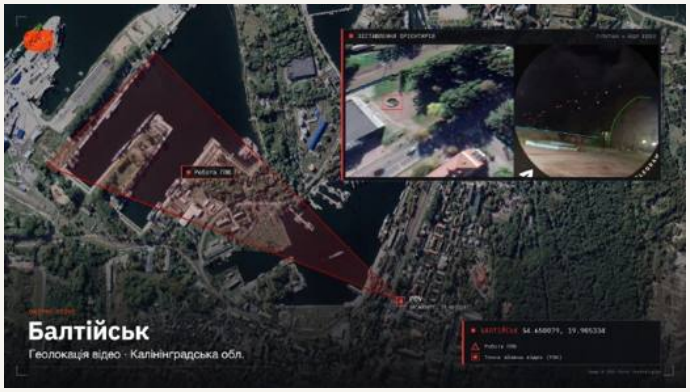


Fig. 6. Dnipro Osint graphic with a pin on Baltiysk port. A graphic, not a geolocation of any video. **[Claimed]**



Fig. 7. Sparta II after the attack, name visible on the hull (Supernova+ 63338). **[Fact]**

6. Versions and narratives

• **“An object from the direction of Lithuania”.** Lithuania is blamed from the outset, echoed by TASS, Vesti, SolovievLive, Readovka, RV and Baza **[Claimed]**. Vilnius denies it **[Fact]**. RIA undercuts the denial with the word “allegedly”.

• **“The Baltic states lend their airspace”.** Swodki on 22 Nov at 05:06 CET calls for a “response” and mentions a “nuclear response” **[Speculation]**.

• **The whole episode is fake.** The Russian side debunks the 8 Nov photo and stays silent on the air-defence videos. **[Assessment]**: selective debunking.

• **The Ukrainian side.** “First attack on the oblast” (UNN, Moscow Times, NV) and “the authorities called it a drill”, which the governor’s statement does not say. **[Assessment]**: premature and

misattributed.

• **Sparta II.** Oblast government: no evacuation needed. Finland and Yle: evacuation and fire. A contradiction **[Fact]**.

• **Poland.** No Russian channel links the alert directly to Poland. Vesti runs an anti-Lithuanian series and items on “Polish claims” **[Assessment]**.

7. Technical layers

Layer	Result	Level
FIRMS, oblast, 21–22 Nov	No detections at Baltiysk. The only point in the oblast is a permanent industrial site at 54.755 N 20.332 E	**[Fact]**
FIRMS, Qeshm 5–11 Nov	No anomaly tied to 8–9 Nov	**[No data]**
Sentinel-1	Last pass 21 Nov 17:27 CET, before the alert. None since (as of 22 Nov 08:35 CET)	**[Fact]**
Sentinel-2	Only 19–20 Nov, before the event, 41–85% cloud	**[No data]**
Image alignment (SIFT, NCC)	Fixed scene matches, smoke shifted	**[Fact]**
Reverse image search	Yandex: look-alikes only. TinEye blocked; Bing and Lens need JavaScript	**[No data]**
Metadata	Telegram strips EXIF. mp4 creation_time: 18:10–19:52 CET	**[Fact]**
Duplicates	About 20 unique videos across 81 media posts	**[Fact]**

8. Gaps

• No statements from the Baltic Fleet, Peskov or Zakharova (as of about 08:30 CET on 22 Nov).

• No images of damage and no satellite imagery after the event.

• VK and MAX not checked (login required). I could not find Bashkirova’s post in the public preview; I know it from RIA.

• The photographer and location of the original 8 Nov photo remain unknown.

• The INSIDER UA post with the photo has been removed, so its time is unknown.

9. Sources

Source	Link
besprozvannih/6752	https://t.me/besprozvannih/6752
besprozvannih/6750	https://t.me/besprozvannih/6750
government_kgd/8688	https://t.me/government_kgd/8688
incidentkld/39067	https://t.me/incidentkld/39067
alomhoar/115796 (Al-Mehwar)	https://t.me/alomhoar/115796
x.com/xxoperatpyz	https://x.com/xxoperatpyz/status/2119530322161262787
x.com/HormuzReport	https://x.com/HormuzReport/status/2119530617671234035
ssternenko/66372	https://t.me/ssternenko/66372
ssternenko/66376	https://t.me/ssternenko/66376
smolii_ukraine/182111	https://t.me/smolii_ukraine/182111
voenacher/98970	https://t.me/voenacher/98970
exilenova_plus/35001	https://t.me/exilenova_plus/35001
supernova_plus/63316	https://t.me/supernova_plus/63316
supernova_plus/63325	https://t.me/supernova_plus/63325
supernova_plus/63338	https://t.me/supernova_plus/63338
DniproOfficial/8431	https://t.me/DniproOfficial/8431
astrapress/131842	https://t.me/astrapress/131842
mash/79557	https://t.me/mash/79557
bazabazon/50995	https://t.me/bazabazon/50995
swodki/635875	https://t.me/swodki/635875
RIA 2133189816	https://ria.ru/20261122/baltiysk-2133189816.html
RIA 2133203859	https://ria.ru/20261122/litva-2133203859.html
RIA 2133211809	https://ria.ru/20261122/pvo-2133211809.html
RIA 2133119632	https://ria.ru/20261121/bpla-2133119632.html
Klops	https://klops.ru/proisshestviya/2026-11-21/395393-sreagirovali-na-podozritelnyy-ob-ekt-so-storony-litvy-besprozvannyh-ob-yasnil-pochemu-v-regione-orali-sireny
RBK Kaliningrad	https://kaliningrad.rbc.ru/kaliningrad/21/11/2026/6b01d53c2fd6754e4a990072
Radio Svoboda	https://www.svoboda.org/a/v-kaliningrade-vozdushnaya-trevoga-vozmozhna-ataka-bpla-na-baltiysk/33903252.html
Meduza	https://meduza.io/news/2026/11/22/v-kaliningradskoy-oblasti-vpervye-srabotali-sireny-vozdushnoy-trevogi-gubernator-zayavil-o-podozritelnom-ob-ekte-so-storony-litvy
NV (English)	https://english.nv.ua/nation/air-raid-alert-in-kaliningrad-oblast-as-sternenko-reports-strike-in-baltiysk-50661375.html
Reuters	https://www.reuters.com/3fec1b0a85a0/world/russia-says-cargo-vessel-struck-by-drones-finland-says-it-is-fire-its-waters-2026-11-21/
Daily Baltic	https://www.dailybaltic.com/45275/
WhatTheFact	https://whatthefact.app/fact-checks/2026-11-22-ukrainian-drones-attack-baltiysk-kaliningrad-baltic-fleet-nov-21
Euromaidan Press	https://euromaidanpress.com/2026/11/22/explosions-reported-at-russias-baltic-fleet-base-in-kaliningrad/
RBC-Ukraine	https://newsukraine.rbc.ua/news/drones-target-baltiysk-key-russian-naval-1795290314.html
DW	https://www.dw.com/ru/v-kaliningradskoj-oblasti-obavili-vozdusnuu-trevogu/a-80011040

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