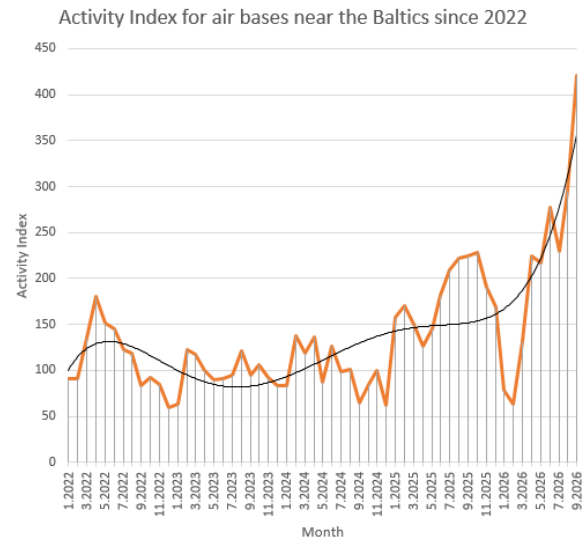


Russian and Belarussian Air Base Activity, Update October 2026

Key Findings



Several western intelligence services are warning that Moscow is developing the capacity and willingness to test NATO, especially in the Baltic's region.

Analysis showed Russia is rebuilding and expanding the military infrastructure on NATO's eastern flank, including a new Iskander-M missile brigade, extensive Russian EW activity and new divisions and corps are being created.

Continuous air base activity measured with satellite based radar imagery showed us a similar picture. Throughout the years of the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, **several Russian and Belarussian air bases have undergone significant rebuilding and improvement**. In late 2026, air bases in the Kaliningrad region and near the Baltic states showed a marked surge in activity, pointing to increased Russian military preparedness along the region's eastern flank. Particularly pronounced spikes were observed at Soltsy-2, Pskov, and Ostrov.

Beyond the increased **amassing of equipment** at these bases, we also detected **elevated levels of electronic warfare (EW) activity at the same sites** throughout the year. The data suggests a shift in the geographic focus of Russian EW activity away from Crimea and toward the Baltic region, where we are now observing increased radar jamming in the C-band.

Taken together, these developments suggest that **Russia is preparing for a broader conflict, either through direct military preparations or through hybrid means aimed at creating uncertainty and fear along NATO's eastern flank**. Moscow is well aware that a visible increase in military activity is unlikely to go undetected—and that the perception of such preparations can itself be leveraged as a strategic tool.

Introduction

CIA / U.S. intelligence: In August, CIA Director John Ratcliffe reportedly warned Moscow directly against attacking NATO, particularly the Baltic states. U.S. intelligence assessments indicated that Putin might authorize limited or deniable actions on NATO territory—cyberattacks, sabotage, hybrid operations or other provocations—to test whether NATO, and especially Washington, would respond.

Danish Defence Intelligence Service (DDIS): Its September assessment was unusually explicit: there is a “low but growing” risk of a limited Russian military attack against a NATO country even while the Ukraine war continues. It judged a full-scale invasion unlikely in the near term, but estimated **Russia could prepare for a local war in roughly six months**, a regional conflict in two years and a large European war in five years.

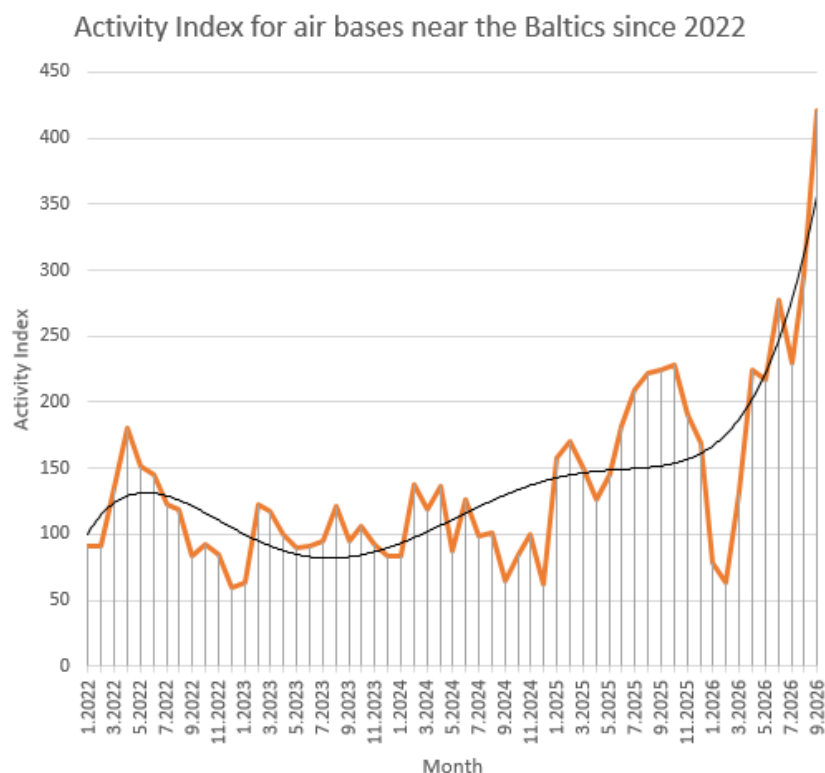
Lithuanian intelligence (VSD/AOTD): Lithuania's 2026 assessment says **Russia is continuing to expand its military structure along NATO's eastern frontier despite the Ukraine war**. Brigades are being converted into divisions, new formations are being created, and an Iskander-M missile brigade is being formed in the Leningrad Military District. In Kaliningrad, Russia is expanding its naval infantry brigade into a division and developing military infrastructure.

Spaceborne radar imagery from ESA's Sentinel-1 satellites confirm this picture. Radar images allow us to detect present material on airfields - from the material box up to the fighter aircraft. The strong backscatter occurs from the geometry of these objects, whereas no signal is present at the flat empty tarmacs. One big advantage of such SAR (Radar) images is that they can see through clouds and also take images at night. That makes it perfect to use for continuous monitoring.

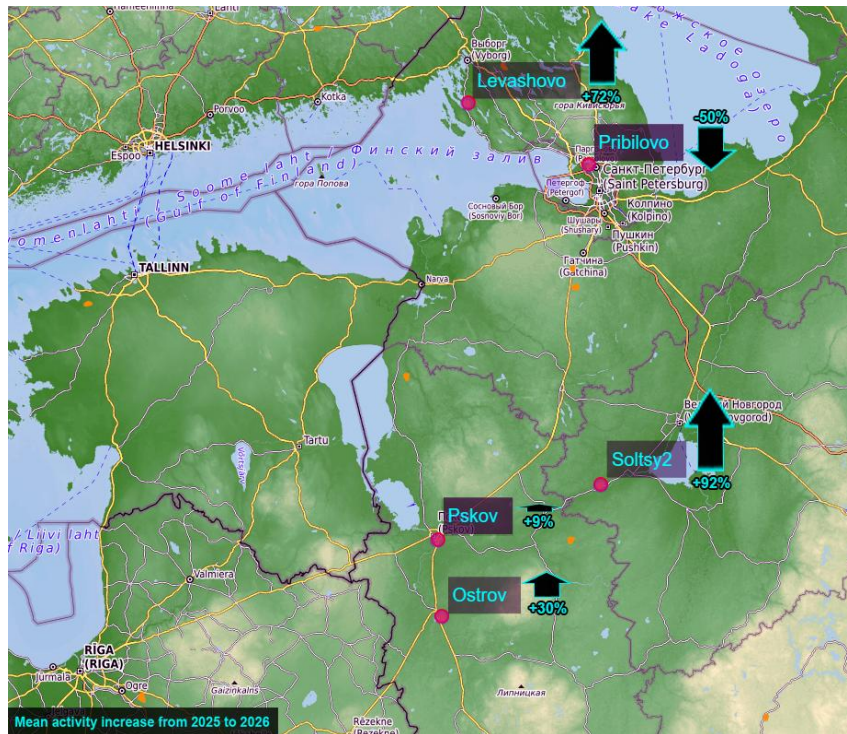
Activity measured near the Baltics, Finland, in Kaliningrad, and in Belarus

Baltics

The analysis focused on the Levashovo, Pribilovo, Soltsy-2, Pskov, and Ostrov air bases. Across these sites, the observed activity increased substantially throughout 2026.

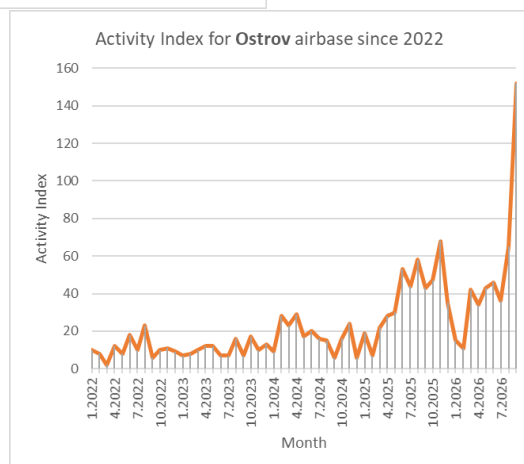
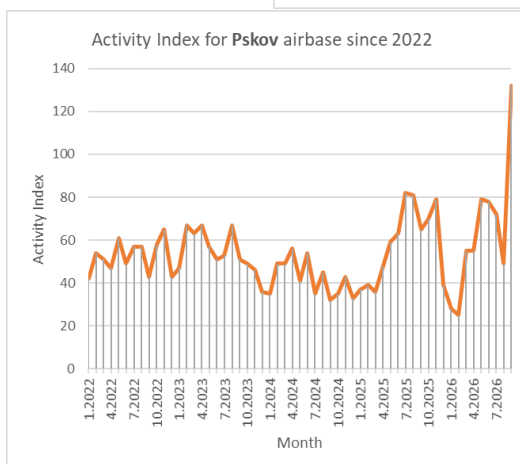
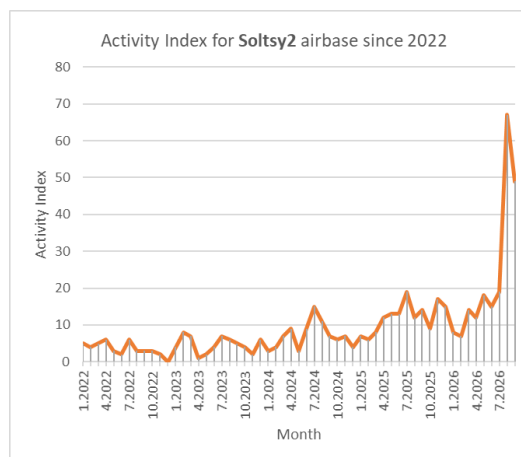


The following map illustrates the year-on-year change in mean activity.



Levashovo recorded an annual increase of **72%**. Pribilovo, by contrast, showed a decline in activity compared with 2025, when activity had already surged. However, compared with 2024, activity at Pribilovo remains approximately **ten times higher**.

Pskov and Ostrov appear to show a different pattern. Although their overall annual mean increases remain relatively modest, activity at both bases began to rise sharply in autumn 2026. As a result, the annual averages do not yet fully reflect the scale of the recent increase.



Overall, activity at several of these bases doubled or even tripled during 2026. While increased activity sites, such as Lida, can largely be attributed to structural developments within the bases themselves, the pattern observed here points more strongly towards an increased presence of aircraft and other military equipment.

The areas marked in blue indicate the estimated presence of equipment or aircraft as of Sep 2026.



Ostrov



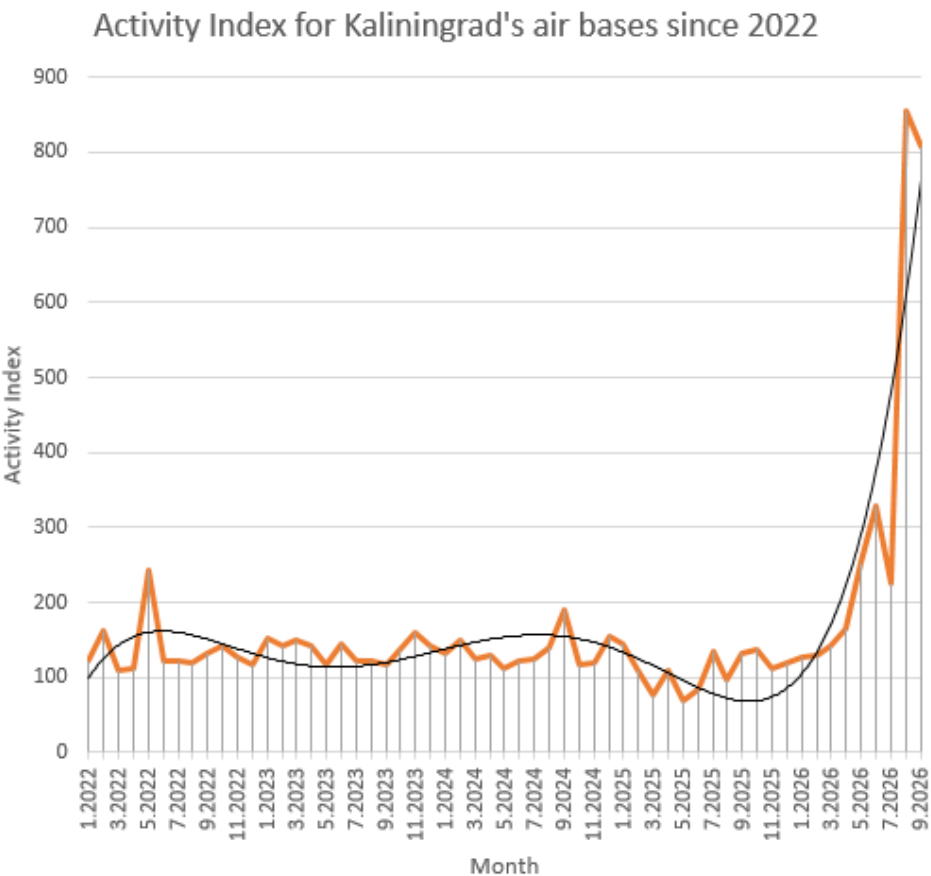
Pskov



Soltsy2

Kaliningrad

A sharp increase in activity was also observed across the Kaliningrad region, with Chkalovsk and Donskoye standing out in particular.



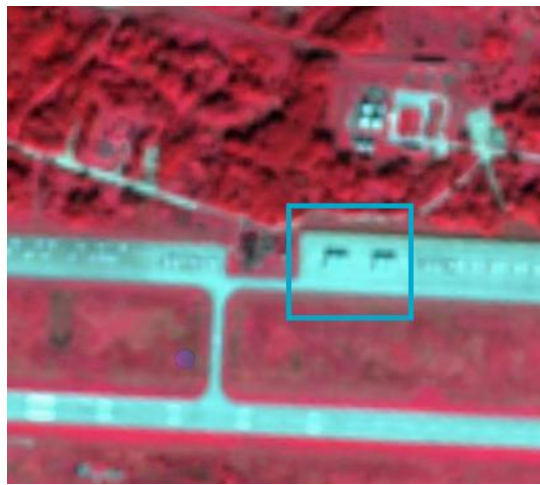


Chkalovsk



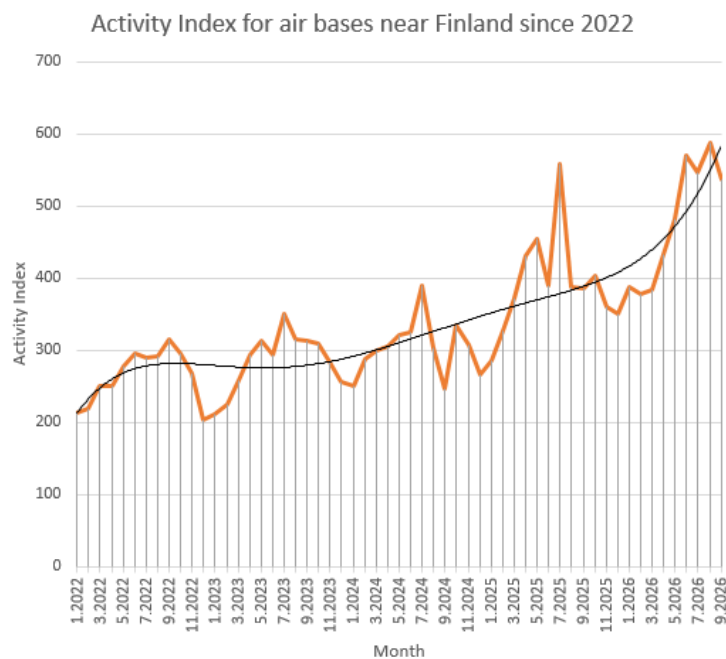
Donskoye

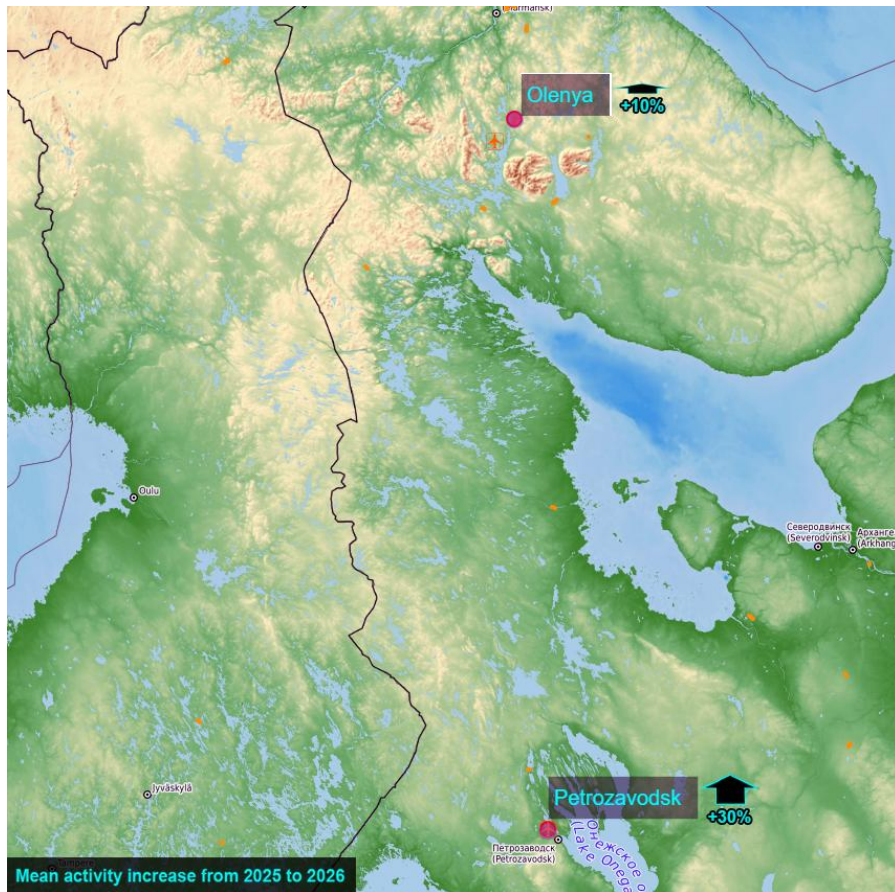
Part of the increase can be attributed to new infrastructure. At Chkalovsk, for example, four new hardened aircraft shelters have been identified.



However, infrastructure developments alone do not fully explain the observed increase. The remaining activity suggests a greater concentration of equipment, potentially including additional aircraft and supporting military materiel.

Finland





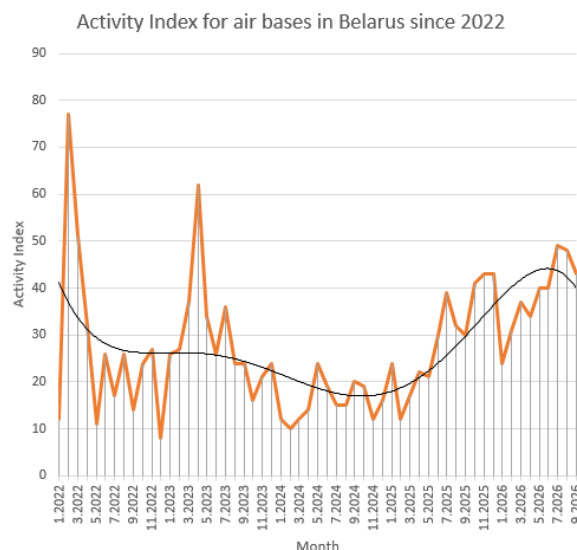
Air bases in the vicinity of Finland also showed increased activity throughout 2026, particularly Petrozavodsk, where activity rose by **30%**.

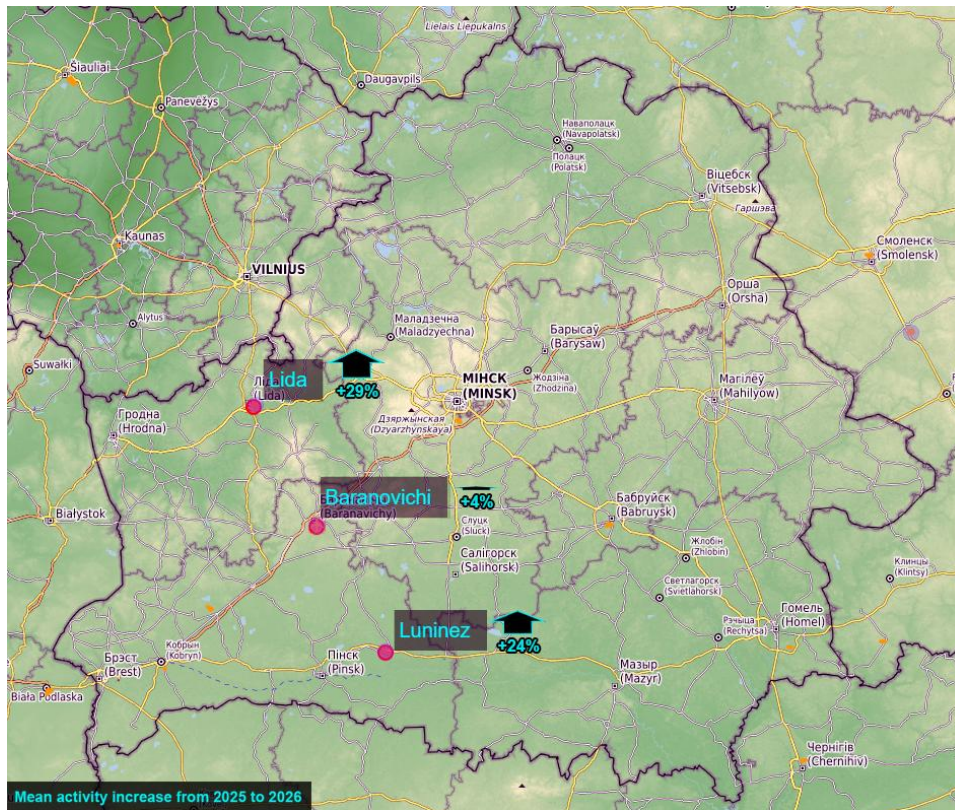
Petrozavodsk had already attracted attention in 2025, when the construction of a new military town in nearby Kandalaksha was observed. The development is intended to support a new artillery and engineering brigade.

The continued increase in activity at Petrozavodsk therefore warrants attention in the context of these broader military infrastructure developments.

Belarus

Lida has shown a sustained increase in activity throughout the period under review. As observed previously, much of this increase can be attributed to the construction of additional hardened aircraft shelters at the site.





Luninez is now also beginning to show signs of new structural developments, suggesting that infrastructure changes may be contributing to increased activity there as well.



In addition to the increased presence of equipment at these air bases, our analysis detected a rise in electronic warfare (EW) activity at the same locations throughout 2026.

The observed signals suggest a possible shift in EW activity away from Crimea and towards the Baltic region, where an increase in C-band radar jamming has been detected.