

Report

Aggression or Provocation? An Analysis of Arab Media Coverage Following the Incident Involving Russian Drones over Poland in September 2025

Contents

About the project.....	1
Author.....	1
Introduction.....	2
Chapter 1	4
Chapter 2	6
Chapter 3	10
Conclusions and Recommendations.....	13
Bibliography and Sources.....	15

About the project



Instytut Badań
nad Turcją



Disinformation
in MENAT



This project was funded by the state budget as part of the competition organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland, "Public Diplomacy 2024–2025 – The European Dimension and Countering Disinformation."

The publication solely reflects the views of the author and should not be regarded as representing the official position of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland.

Author of the publication

Zuzanna Kowalczyk

Expert at the Institute for Research on Turkey



A graduate in Arabic Studies from the Jagiellonian University, with additional intensive Arabic language courses at the American University in Cairo and El Manar University in Tunis. She has participated in national academic conferences on the Middle East. Her research interests focus on the history of the Middle East in the 19th and 20th centuries, religious and ethnic issues, as well as climate change and water security in the region. She is a regular contributor to Salam Lab.

In September 2025, Poland once again found itself at the centre of international attention following an incident involving Russian drones that violated its airspace. Unfolding against the backdrop of the ongoing war in Ukraine and rising tensions along NATO's eastern flank, the event quickly attracted global media attention and became the subject of extensive political commentary. In this context, Arab media coverage proved particularly noteworthy, as it went beyond merely reporting the facts and instead interpreted the incident through the lens of their own experiences, interests, and political frameworks. The way in which the event was presented offers valuable insight into how Central and Eastern Europe, NATO's security, and relations between Russia and the West are perceived across the Middle East and North Africa. The diversity of coverage—from neutral, fact-based reporting to emotional commentary and conspiracy theories—highlights the complexity of the Arab media landscape, where international news often serves not only to inform but also to shape specific political and ideological narratives.

The purpose of this report is to examine how Arabic-language and Arab-owned English-language media covered and interpreted the incident involving Russian drones over Poland in September 2025. The analysis draws on selected examples from state-run outlets, independent news portals, and social media platforms, both within and outside the Arab world. Among the sources considered are RT Arabic and Sputnik Arabic (Russian state media broadcasting in Arabic), as well as Al-Quds Al-Arabi, an independent Arabic newspaper published in London. The social media analysis focuses primarily on Telegram and X (formerly Twitter). Particular attention is paid to the dominant narratives, the portrayal of the actors involved, and the ways in which Poland's image as a NATO member state was shaped within these narratives, with special emphasis on Russian disinformation and its influence on the emerging media discourse.

Introduction

According to reports from the Operational Command of the Polish Armed Forces[1] and the Ministry of National Defence[2], during the night of 9–10 September 2025, Russian combat drones violated Polish airspace. The unmanned aerial vehicles entered from the direction of Ukraine at a time when Russia was conducting a large-scale missile and drone attack against Ukrainian territory. Some of the drones crossed into Poland and flew towards the Lublin region, prompting the immediate activation of NATO's Quick Reaction Alert system—a rapid-response protocol for aerial threats[3]. Polish Air Force units, supported by allied NATO forces including Dutch F-35 fighters on duty as part of the Air Policing mission, responded to the alert. Their actions resulted in the interception and destruction of several drones[4]. As emphasised by Polish and Western media outlets (including Reuters[5]), this was the first instance since the start of the war in Ukraine where a NATO member state had shot down Russian drones over its own territory.

[1] Statement by the Operational Command of the Polish Armed Forces, X (Twitter), September 10, 2025. <https://x.com/DowOperSZ/status/1965618553194766773>

[2] Statement by the Operational Command of the Polish Armed Forces, X (Twitter), September 10, 2025. <https://x.com/DowOperSZ/status/1965618553194766773>

[3] "An act of aggression that posed a real threat to civilians." Military statement, Polish Press Agency (PAP), September 10, 2025. <https://www.pap.pl/aktualnosci/akt-agresji-ktory-stworzyl-realne-zagrozenie-dla-obywateli-komunikat-wojska>

[4] A. Charlish, L. Kelly, B. Erling, Poland downs drones in its airspace, becoming first NATO member to fire during war in Ukraine, Reuters, September 10, 2025. <https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/poland-downs-drones-its-airspace-becoming-first-nato-member-fire-duringwar-2025-09-10/>

[5] Ibid.

The incident prompted a swift and firm response from both the Polish government and NATO structures. Poland condemned Russia's actions, calling them a provocation and an attempt to test the Alliance's resilience, according to a statement from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs[6]. The Prime Minister convened an emergency government meeting to address the security situation, and Poland formally requested the activation of Article 4 of the North Atlantic Treaty[7], which provides for consultations among member states in the event of a perceived threat to any of them. The majority of Poland's allies supported the decision, and officials in Warsaw emphasised that Russia's actions violated the fundamental principles of international security and regional stability. The following day, the North Atlantic Council convened, and NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte declared that "the Alliance stands shoulder to shoulder with Poland" and "will defend every inch of NATO territory"[8].

Moscow rejected Warsaw's accusations, claiming that Russian drones "did not have the range to reach Poland." Additionally, Russian officials described the incident as an "information provocation" and an attempt to escalate tensions between Russia and NATO[9]. These explanations were widely dismissed as part of Russian propaganda and a broader hybrid campaign aimed at destabilising NATO's eastern flank[10]. Experts from the Council on Foreign Relations assessed that the violation of Polish airspace may have been reconnaissance in nature. According to their analysis, Russia's actions likely served to test the effectiveness of NATO's air defence systems and gauge the Alliance's response to low-intensity incidents[11]. The September events also prompted a reaction from Brussels. The European Commission announced that it would accelerate work on a joint counter-drone defence system known as the European Drone Defence Initiative. The aim of the project is to create an integrated network of radars and electronic warfare systems designed to protect the airspace of EU member states. According to Reuters[12], the system is expected to become fully operational by the end of 2027.

The events of September 2025 marked a major turning point for regional security. The breach of Polish airspace showed that, in an era of advanced technologies and the increasing role of drones in warfare, the borders of the North Atlantic Alliance are more vulnerable than ever. The incident clearly demonstrated that even small unmanned aerial vehicles can be effective tools for destabilisation and as a means of testing the West's readiness and response.

[6] Statement by the Advisory Council for International Disinformation Resilience at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the intrusion of foreign drones into the airspace of the Republic of Poland, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, September 11, 2025. <https://www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja/oswiadczenie-rady-konsultacyjnej-ds-odpornosci-na-dezinformacje-miedzynarodowa-przy-ministrze-spraw-zagranicznych-w-zwiazku-z-wtargnieciem-obcych-dronow-w-przestrzen-powietrzna-rzeczypospolitej-polskiej>

[7] Violation of Polish airspace: Poland requests the activation of Article 4 of the North Atlantic Treaty, Chancellery of the Prime Minister, September 10, 2025. <https://www.gov.pl/web/nauka/naruszenie-polskiej-przestrzeni-powietrznej-jest-wniosek-o-uruchomienie-art-4-traktatu-polnocnoatlantyckiego>

[8] Statement by NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte on the violation of Polish airspace by Russian drones, NATO, September 10, 2025. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_237559.htm

[9] Charlish, L. Kelly, B. Erling, *ibid*.

[10] L. Bidochko, Propaganda's mixed response to Russia's provocation against Poland, *New Eastern Europe*, September 22, 2025. <https://neweasterneurope.eu/2025/09/22/propagandas-mixed-response-to-russias-provocation-against-poland/>

[11] Liana Fix, E. D. Dumbacher, Russia Tests NATO With Poland Drone Breach, *Council on Foreign Relations*, September 10, 2025. <https://www.cfr.org/article/russia-tests-nato-poland-drone-breach>

[12] EU Commission to propose new anti-drone system be fully operational by end-2027, *Reuters*, September 15, 2025. <https://www.reuters.com/world/eu-commission-propose-new-anti-drone-system-be-fully-operational-by-end-2027-2025-10-15/>

Chapter 1

Poland: A Victim or an Active Player in NATO–Russia Tensions?

In Arab media, the September incident involving Russian drones over Poland was interpreted in two different ways. One narrative portrayed Poland as a victim of Russian provocation; the other presented it as an active participant in the growing tensions between NATO and Russia. Both narratives developed simultaneously, evolving from brief news reports into more detailed analyses that situated the event within the broader context of European security policy.

In the initial days following the incident, Arab media coverage was dominated by the narrative portraying Poland as the victim of a Russian provocation and airspace violation. On 10 September, Al Jazeera reported that the Polish armed forces had shot down several drones that had entered its airspace, citing statements from Poland's Ministry of Defence and NATO. The report emphasised that this was the first time since the beginning of the war in Ukraine that a NATO member state had responded with force to the presence of Russian drones. The incident was linked to the escalation of Russian attacks on Ukraine and presented as part of Moscow's broader strategy to test NATO's security boundaries[13]. A day later, on 11 September, Al Arabiya expanded on the story, explaining the significance of Article 4 of the North Atlantic Treaty, which Poland invoked following the incident. The report described this decision as an unprecedented test of NATO's unity and a warning to Moscow that further provocations could escalate tensions. The tone of the coverage thus began to shift towards a narrative portraying Poland as an active participant and initiator of diplomatic and military actions within the Alliance[14]. A similar tone appeared in a post published on the Telegram channel Roaa Medianews[15] and in a post by user @boibraheem on the X (formerly Twitter) platform[16].



Graphic 1. “A French Rafale fighter jet armed with MICA air-to-air missiles takes off from the Polish air base in Mińsk Mazowiecki as part of NATO's Eastern Sentry operation. The readiness level of NATO air forces was raised following Russia's launch of kamikaze drones towards Polish territory.” (Roaa Medianews, Telegram, 14 September 2025)

[13] Polish and NATO forces scramble to shoot down Russian drones, Al Jazeera, September 10, 2025. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/9/10/poland-downs-drones-during-airspace-intrusion-as-russia-strikes-ukraine>

[14] <https://www.alarabiya.net/arab-and-world/2025/09/11/4-مسيرات-روسية-في-اجواء-بولندا-تستنفّر-الناتو-ما-قصة-المادة>

[15] <https://t.me/s/roaamedianews>

[16] <https://x.com/boibraheem/status/1965720412144464230>



Graphic 2. “#Russia provokes #Poland by sending drones near its borders, and #Poland calls for the activation of Article 4 of the #NATO Treaty, requesting the Alliance’s support.” (@boibraheem, X [formerly Twitter], 10 September 2025)

A few days later, on 16 September, Al Jazeera published an analysis offering a different interpretation of the events. Citing Russian experts, the outlet suggested that the violation of Polish airspace might have resulted from a technical error or a deliberate provocation aimed at testing NATO’s response. The article noted that while Warsaw portrayed the incident as evidence of a growing threat from Russia, Moscow accused Poland of seeking to escalate tensions. In this way, in the eyes of Arab media, Poland appeared both as the target of provocation and as a key player in the intensifying East–West confrontation[17]. Similar themes emerged in Al Arabiya’s report on 20 September, which stated that Poland had declared a heightened state of combat readiness and deployed additional aircraft in response to the “increased risk of airspace violations.” The report emphasised that Poland’s actions were coordinated with NATO and represented a joint Allied response to Russian provocations. Poland was thus depicted not merely as a country reacting to threats but as an active partner shaping NATO’s strategy towards Russia[18]. In the following weeks, Arab media gradually shifted their focus from the incident itself to its broader geopolitical implications. On 25 September, Al Jazeera published another analysis framing the events over Poland as part of Russia’s wider strategy of “testing NATO’s borders” and assessing the Alliance’s readiness to respond. Within this perspective, Poland appeared as a flashpoint in Russia–West relations—both a target of Russian hybrid operations and a key NATO partner in missions along the Alliance’s eastern flank[19]. A day later, the same outlet reported on the European Union’s plans to construct a so-called “drone wall” along its eastern border, presenting the project as a direct response to the incident over Poland and to the growing sense of insecurity in the region[20]. This narrative culminated in a Reuters article on 1 October, which described discussions among European Union leaders about strengthening joint air defence and advancing the previously mentioned drone wall project along the EU’s eastern frontier. The article underscored that the incident over Poland had become a catalyst for deeper security cooperation and increased investment in advanced defence technologies[21].

[17] <https://www.aljazeera.net/politics/2025/9/16/من-أرسل-الطائرات-المسيرة-الروسية>

[18] <https://www.alarabiya.net/arab-and-world/2025/09/20/بولندا-تدفع-بطائرات-لحماية-مجالها-الجوي-بعد-ضربات-روسية-على-أوكرانيا>

[19] S. Shamim, Is Russia testing NATO with aerial incursions in Europe?, Al Jazeera, September 25, 2025. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/9/25/is-russia-testing-nato-with-aerial-incursions-in-europe>

[20] R. Sullivan, EU to develop ‘drone wall’ amid regional airspace violations, Al Jazeera, September 26, 2025.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/9/26/eu-plans-to-develop-drone-wall-amid-regional-airspace-violations>

[21] <https://www.reuters.com/ar/world/3QON5EBGRJI3PNTN3IHY4DYPRA-2025-10-01>

Chapter 2

The Image of Russia and the West in Arab Media Discourse

Within the prevailing media landscape—epitomised by outlets such as Al Arabiya, Al Jazeera, Sky News Arabia, and Al Quds Al-Arabi—Russia was portrayed as the actor responsible for escalating tensions and undermining NATO's security. On 10 September, Al Arabiya published a report citing Poland's Minister of National Defence, who described the situation as a “gross violation of sovereignty” and called on NATO to respond. Later the same day, Al Arabiya released another article outlining the respective positions of both sides: Warsaw accused Moscow of provocation, while the Russian Ministry of Defence denied the allegations, asserting that Poland sought to intensify the situation and was looking for a pretext to draw NATO into the conflict[22].



Graphic 3. “Poland accuses Russia of deliberately violating its airspace... Moscow: Warsaw seeks to escalate the conflict.” (Al Arabiya, 10 September 2025)

The same theme appeared in a post published on the Roaa Medianews channel on Telegram[23].



Graphic 4. “Russian Ministry of Defence: We had no plans to target sites in Poland during the overnight strikes on Ukraine's defence industry facilities, and we are ready to hold consultations with Poland regarding the drones that allegedly violated its airspace.” (Roaa Medianews, Telegram, 10 September 2025)

[22] <https://www.alarabiya.net/arab-and-world/2025/09/10/بولندا-تتهم-روسيا-بخرق-مجالها-عمداً-وموسكو-وارسو-تسعى-لتصعيد-النزاع>

[23] <https://t.me/s/roaamedianews>

On the following day, 11 September, Al Jazeera reported remarks by NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte, who sought to reassure public opinion by emphasising the Alliance's firm stance on the incident. The outlet also noted that the events over Poland had triggered a wave of commentary across the region concerning the real risk of the conflict spilling over into NATO territory[24].



Graphic 5.“Europe condemns the violation of Polish airspace by drones; Russia denies responsibility.” (Al Jazeera, 11 September 2025)

Similarly, Sky News Arabia reported on the downing of Russian drones and the temporary closure of four airports in Poland. The network stated that the authorities' decision reflected a growing sense of insecurity in Europe and rising tensions along NATO's eastern flank[25]. The language used in these reports—terms such as “violation” (انتهاك), “threat” (تهديد), and “NATO mobilisation” (استنفار الناتو)—further reinforced the perception of Russia as the main source of tension and destabilisation in the region.



Graphic 6.“Poland shot down Russian drones over its territory and closed four airports.” (Sky News Arabia, 10 September 2025)

[24] <https://www.aljazeera.net/video/2025/9/11/أجواء-مسيرات-باختراق>

[25] www.skynewsarabia.com/world/1819323-4-مطارات-تغلق-أراضيها-روسية-تسقط-مسيرات-بولندا

In its analysis, Al Jazeera questioned Moscow's strategy. The outlet argued that the incident in Poland was not an isolated event but part of a broader Russian approach aimed at gradually testing NATO's responses. Journalists noted that Moscow employs low-intensity provocations—such as brief airspace violations—to gauge the Alliance's tolerance levels and its willingness to respond[26]. This interpretation reinforced the image of Russia as a calculated actor deliberately managing the level of tension in its relations with the West. Meanwhile, Al Quds Al-Arabi reported on the incident from a regional security perspective. On 10 September, the newspaper highlighted Poland's increased air force readiness and Germany's support, which included the deployment of Eurofighter jets to Malbork[27]. In this coverage, Russia was portrayed as a state triggering a "domino effect," in which each of its actions provokes a defensive response from Western countries.

In stark contrast to the tone of other outlets, the materials published by RT Arabic, Sputnik Arabic, and —albeit to a lesser extent—Al-Mayadeen adopted a markedly different stance. In their coverage, Poland and NATO were portrayed as actors exploiting the incident for political gain, while Russia was depicted as a country unfairly demonised by the West. RT Arabic published several articles questioning the credibility of Polish reports. An article released on 11 September described Warsaw's actions as "an exaggerated reaction" and "evidence of hysteria fuelled by Western media[28]." A follow-up piece published the next day cited British journalist Warren Thornton[29], who directly accused Western outlets of "creating an atmosphere of danger without presenting any evidence." Such publications fit neatly into the characteristic pattern of Russian Arabic-language media, which often focus on discrediting facts, shifting blame onto the West, and invoking allegedly independent or objective commentators to reinforce their narrative.



Graphic 7. "British journalist criticises Europe's reaction to the drone incident in Poland." (RT Arabic, 12 September 2025)

[26] S. Shamim, *ibid.*

[27] <https://www.alquds.co.uk/بولندا-تغلق-مطارات-رئيسية-بعد-هجمات-ر/>

[28] <https://social.rtarabic.com/world/1710352-بولندا-منع-كامل-للطائرات-المسييرة-وقيود-مشددة-على-الطيران-المدني-لمدة-3-أشهر-1710352>

[29] More on this topic: A Western Voice in the Service of Russian Propaganda — The Case of Warren Thornton in the Arab Infosphere, *DisinfoDigest*, 22 September 2025. <https://disinfodigest.pl/2025/09/22/zachodni-glos-w-sluzbie-rosyjskiej-propagandy-przypadek-warrena-thorntona-w-arabskiej-infosferze>

Sputnik Arabic maintained a similar tone, emphasising the denials issued by the Russian Ministry of Defence and reiterating the claim that the drones had been targeting locations in Ukraine rather than in Poland[30]. In its commentaries, the phrase “Poland claims” (تزعم بولندا) appeared frequently—a hallmark of the Russian narrative style, which not only distances itself from the facts but also subtly shifts responsibility for the incident onto the other side, suggesting that it is the West, not Russia, that is in fact the initiator of the escalation.

Al-Mayadeen—a Lebanese television channel identifying itself as part of the so-called “axis of resistance”—presented the events in Poland primarily within the broader context of tensions between Russia and NATO. Its coverage focused mainly on NATO’s response and the activation of consultations under Article 4 of the North Atlantic Treaty, without directly attributing blame to Russia. The narrative also emphasised that the entire situation contributes to the further militarisation of Eastern Europe and the increased U.S. military presence in the region, rather than genuinely strengthening Poland’s security[31].

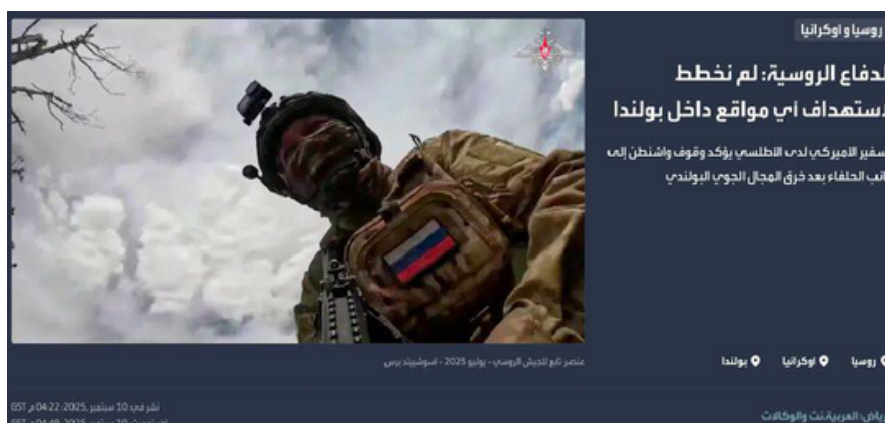
[30] <https://sarabic.ae/20250913/1104819372-المسيرة-الطائرات-حادث-بولندا-روسيا-بشأن-حادث-الطائرات-المسيرة.html>

[31] <https://www.almayadeen.net/news/politics/بولندا-الناتو-فعل-المادة-الرابعة-بعد-انتهاك-مسيرات-روسي>

Chapter 3

The Presence of Disinformation Narratives and Conspiracy Theories

In Arabic-language media, the incident involving the violation of Polish airspace by Russian drones in September 2025 gave rise to numerous narratives that questioned Polish and Western accounts of the events, incorporating elements of disinformation and conspiracy theories. One of the most frequently repeated themes in Arab media—including Al Arabiya—was Moscow's claim that Russia “had no plans to attack targets in Poland.[32]”



Graphic 8. “Russian Ministry of Defence: We did not plan to attack any targets on Polish territory.”
(Al Arabiya, 10 September 2025)

Arabic media often employed language that emphasised uncertainty about who was responsible for the incident, thereby weakening the clear attribution of blame to Russia. Headlines and articles featured phrases such as “claims” (تزعّم), “without evidence” (بدون أدلة), and “suspected of being of Russian origin” (يُشتبه بأنها روسية). Such expressions introduced a tone of scepticism and conveyed ambiguity regarding the facts. An example of this can be found in Al Jazeera’s report, which described the downed drones as “suspected of being of Russian origin” (يُشتبه بأنها روسية) [33].

Arab media also cited Moscow's position that the accusations of violating Polish airspace were part of a disinformation campaign orchestrated by European countries. Al Arabiya reported that—according to the Russian side—the allegations against Moscow “aim to disrupt the settlement process of the war in Ukraine” (تهدف لتعطيل التسوية) and serve to weaken Russia's position on the international stage [34].

[32] <https://www.alarabiya.net/arab-and-world/2025/09/10/بولندا-اي-مواقع-داخل-بولندا>

[33] <https://www.aljazeera.net/news/2025/9/10/أوكراينا-على-أوسع-أسعة-على-أوكراينا>

[34] [https://www.alarabiya.net/arab-and-world/2025/09/19/باوكرانيا-التسوية-لتنظيم-الجوي-يهدف-لتنظيم-الجوي](https://www.alarabiya.net/arab-and-world/2025/09/19/باوكرانيا-التسوية-لتنظيم-الجوي-يهدف-لتنظيم-الجوي-يهدف-لتنظيم-الجوي)



Graphic 9. “Moscow: European accusations of airspace violations are intended to hinder a settlement on Ukraine.” (Al Arabiya, 19 September 2025)

At the same time, Arab media circulated conspiracy theories portraying the drone incident as a potential “provocation” (استفزاز) or “false flag operation” (عملية زائفة). Some Arab sources claimed that the drones were unarmed, suggesting this as evidence that the entire event might have been a staged scenario designed to test Poland’s and NATO’s responses. Such narratives appeared primarily in pro-Russian Arabic-language outlets. RT Arabic published an analysis describing the drones as part of a “Western provocation against Russia,” implying that the incident over Poland may have been deliberately orchestrated to blame Moscow for escalating tensions[35].



Graphic 10. “Drones are only the beginning: Europe prepares for a bloody provocation against Russia.” (RT Arabic, 17 September 2025)

The story about a potential false-flag operation was also circulated on Telegram by the Roaa Medianews channel[36].

[35] <https://arabic.rt.com/press/1711807-أوروبا-تستعد-لاستفزاز-دموي-ضد-روسيا>

[36] <https://t.me/s/roaamedianews>



Graphic 11. “If reports about Kyiv’s plans to carry out a false-flag operation in Romania and Poland are confirmed, it could very quickly lead to the outbreak of World War III.” (Roaa Medianews, Telegram, 27 September 2025)

Similar content was also circulated by news aggregation websites such as Sahafa24, which do not produce original material but instead compile articles from various Arabic sources—including RT Arabic, Sputnik Arabic, and Al-Mayadeen[37].



Graphic 12. “Finnish expert: Zelensky may use the drone incident in Poland to draw NATO into a direct conflict with Russia.” (Sahafa24, 14 September 2025)

[37] <https://sa24.co/article/771694566/خبير-فنلندي-زيلينسكي-قد-يستغل-حادثة-المسيّرات-في-بولندا-لجر-الناتو.html>

Chapter 4

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

Multiplicity of Narratives, Lack of a Shared Picture

The incident proved to be more than just a short-lived news story. Different media outlets covered it in markedly different ways—ranging from pro-Western interpretations to neutral reporting and openly pro-Russian narratives.

Poland as a Victim and Loyal NATO Ally

Across major Arab media outlets such as Al Jazeera, Al Arabiya, and Sky News Arabia, Poland is portrayed as a responsible and loyal NATO member. In these narratives, Russia acts as the provocateur, while the incident is used to highlight the need for unity and solidarity among Western nations in the face of Eastern threats.

Arabic-Language Russian Media – Redirecting Blame and Softening Russia's Image

In RT Arabic and Sputnik Arabic, the incident is presented in a manner that sharply differs from Western coverage. Poland and NATO are depicted as the instigators seeking escalation, whereas Russia appears calm and rational in its response. This narrative framing serves to legitimise Kremlin actions and to promote a more favourable image of Russia among Arab audiences.

Independent Media – Analytical Tone and Emotional Detachment

In non-mainstream outlets such as Al-Quds Al-Arabi, reporting tends to be measured and analytical. Poland is portrayed not only as a victim but also as a key component of NATO's security architecture. This approach offers a more nuanced understanding of the geopolitical context, though it reaches a relatively limited audience.

Narrative Rivalry and the Struggle for Informational Influence

The interpretation of the incident has become part of a broader contest for influence within the Arab media sphere. Poland features in these narratives as a secondary actor within the larger power struggle between the West and Russia.

Recommendations

Rapid and Consistent Crisis Communication

It is imperative to ensure a prompt and coordinated response to emerging disinformation through official government, diplomatic, and military channels. Issuing concise and accurate statements in foreign languages—particularly Arabic, Russian, and English—helps to limit speculation and strengthens the international credibility of Poland's messaging.

Unified and Coherent Messaging by State Institutions

State institutions—including ministries, the armed forces, and public media—should conduct communication activities based on a unified and coordinated narrative. Inconsistency or conflicting statements can undermine the state's credibility and be exploited by actors engaged in disinformation campaigns.

Active Presence in Foreign Media

Polish diplomatic missions and cultural institutes should continuously enhance their visibility in international media by issuing corrections, commentaries, and analyses in local languages—especially in Arab media and global news outlets. Such efforts help build a credible image of Poland and reduce the impact of external disinformation narratives.

Systematic Monitoring of the Media Environment

Continuous monitoring of both traditional and social media platforms is vital for promptly detecting and tracing disinformation. Collaboration with specialised analytical centres—such as OSINT units and fact-checking organisations—enables rapid responses and helps prevent the spread of false information.

Media Literacy and Preventive Measures

Sustained investment in training programmes for journalists, public officials, and society at large is recommended, focusing on developing skills to identify information manipulation and verify sources. Improving media literacy increases societal resilience against disinformation and reduces the effectiveness of propaganda.

Bibliography and Sources

(Sources in Polish and English)

1. Statement by the Operational Command of the Polish Armed Forces, X (Twitter), September 10, 2025. <https://x.com/DowOperSZ/status/1965618553194766773>
2. Statement by the Ministry of National Defence, September 10, 2025. <https://www.gov.pl/web/edukacja/KOMUNIKAT-MON>
3. "An act of aggression that posed a real threat to civilians." Military statement, Polish Press Agency (PAP), September 10, 2025. <https://www.pap.pl/aktualnosci/akt-agresji-ktory-stworzyl-realne-zagrozenie-dla-obywateli-komunikat-wojska>
4. A. Charlish, L. Kelly, B. Erling, Poland downs drones in its airspace, becoming first NATO member to fire during war in Ukraine, Reuters, September 10, 2025. <https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/poland-downs-drones-its-airspace-becoming-first-nato-member-fire-duringwar-2025-09-10/>
5. Statement by the Advisory Council for International Disinformation Resilience at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the intrusion of foreign drones into the airspace of the Republic of Poland, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, September 11, 2025. <https://www.gov.pl/web/dyplomacja/oswiadczenie-rady-konsultacyjnej-ds-odpornosci-na-dezinformacje-miedzynarodowa-przy-ministrze-spraw-zagranicznych-w-zwiazku-z-wtargnieciem-obcych-dronow-w-przestrzen-powietrzna-rzeczypospolitej-polskiej>
6. Violation of Polish airspace: Poland requests the activation of Article 4 of the North Atlantic Treaty, Chancellery of the Prime Minister, September 10, 2025. <https://www.gov.pl/web/nauka/naruszenie-polskiej-przestrzeni-powietrznej-jest-wniosek-o-uruchomienie-art-4-traktatu-polnocnoatlantyckiego>
7. Statement by NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte on the violation of Polish airspace by Russian drones, NATO, September 10, 2025. https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_237559.htm
8. L. Bidochko, Propaganda's mixed response to Russia's provocation against Poland, New Eastern Europe, September 22, 2025. <https://neweasterneurope.eu/2025/09/22/propagandas-mixed-response-to-russias-provocation-against-poland/>
9. Liana Fix, E. D. Dumbacher, Russia Tests NATO With Poland Drone Breach, Council on Foreign Relations, September 10, 2025. <https://www.cfr.org/article/russia-tests-nato-poland-drone-breach>
10. EU Commission to propose new anti-drone system be fully operational by end-2027, Reuters, September 15, 2025. <https://www.reuters.com/world/eu-commission-propose-new-anti-drone-system-be-fully-operational-by-end-2027-2025-10-15/>

11. Polish and NATO forces scramble to shoot down Russian drones, Al Jazeera, September 10, 2025. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/9/10/poland-downs-drones-during-airspace-intrusion-as-russia-strikes-ukraine>
12. S. Shamim, Is Russia testing NATO with aerial incursions in Europe?, Al Jazeera, September 25, 2025. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/9/25/is-russia-testing-nato-with-aerial-incursions-in-europe>
13. R. Sullivan, EU to develop 'drone wall' amid regional airspace violations, Al Jazeera, September 26, 2025. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/9/26/eu-plans-to-develop-drone-wall-amid-regional-airspace-violations>
14. Poland downs Russian drones, first time NATO member has fired in Ukraine war, Al Arabiya, September 10, 2025. <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/world/2025/09/10/poland-slams-act-of-aggression-as-airspace-violated-in-russian-attack-onukraine>
15. A Western Voice in the Service of Russian Propaganda — The Case of Warren Thornton in the Arab Infosphere, DisinfoDigest, 22 September 2025. <https://disinfodigest.pl/2025/09/22/zachodni-glos-w-sluzbie-rosyjskiej-propagandy-przypadek-warrena-thorntona-w-arabskiej-infosferze>

Sources in Arabic (in order of appearance in the text)

1. <https://www.alarabiya.net/arab-and-world/2025/09/11/--الناطو-ما-قصة-المادة-4>
2. <https://t.me/s/roaamedianews>
3. <https://x.com/boibraheem/status/1965720412144464230>
4. [من أرسل الطائرات المسيرة الروسية](https://www.aljazeera.net/politics/2025/9/16/الطائرات-المسيرة-الروسية)
5. [بولندا تدفع بطائرات لحماية مجالها الجوي بعد ضربات روسية على أوكرانيا](https://www.alarabiya.net/arab-and-world/2025/09/20/-بولندا-تدفع-بطائرات-لحماية-مجالها-الجوي-بعد-ضربات-روسية-على-اوكرانيا)
6. <https://www.reuters.com/ar/world/3QON5EBGRJI3PNTN3IHY4DYPRA-2025-10-01>
7. [بولندا تتهم روسيا بخرق مجالها عمدا وموسكو وارسو تسعى لتصعيد النزاع](https://www.alarabiya.net/arab-and-world/2025/09/10/-بولندا-تتهم-روسيا-بخرق-مجالها-عمدا-وموسكو-وارسو-تسعى-لتصعيد-النزاع)
8. [أوروبا تندد باختراق مسيرات أجواء](https://www.aljazeera.net/video/2025/9/11/-أوروبا-تندد-باختراق-مسيرات-أجواء)
9. [بولندا تُسقط مسيّرات روسية أراضيها وتغلق 4 مطارات](https://www.skynewsarabia.com/world/1819323-بولندا-تُسقط-مسيّرات-روسية-أراضيها-وتغلق-4-مطارات)

10. <https://www.alquds.co.uk/> بولندا-تغلق-مطارات-رئيسية-بعد-هجمات-ر
11. <https://social.rtarabic.com/world/1710352> بولندا-منع-كامل-للطائرات-المسيرة-وقيود-مشددة-على-الطيران--المدني-لمدة-3-أشهر
12. <https://m.rtarabic.com/world/1710880> روسي-بعضا-صحفي-بريطاني-يهاجم-رد-الفعل-الأوروبي-على-حادث-الطائرات-المسيرة-بولندا
13. <https://sarabic.ae/20250913/1104819372.html> مبعوث-روسي-وارسو-غير-مستعدة-للتشاور-مع-روسيا-بشأن-حادثة-الطائرات-المسيرة
14. <https://www.almayadeen.net/news/politics/> بولندا---الناثو--فعل-المادة-الرابعة-بعد--انتهاك--مسيرات-روسي
15. <https://www.alarabiya.net/arab-and-world/2025/09/10/> الدفاع-الروسية-لم-نخطط-لاستهداف-اي-مواقع-داخل-بولندا
16. <https://www.aljazeera.net/news/2025/9/10/> هجمات-روسية-واسعة-على-أوكرانيا
17. <https://www.alarabiya.net/arab-and-world/2025/09/19/> موسكو-اتهام-الاوروبيين-لنا-بخرق-مجالهم-الجوي-يهدف-لتعطيل-التسوية-باوكرانيا
18. <https://arabic.rt.com/press/1711807> الطائرات-المسيرة-ليست-سوى-مقدمة-أوروبا-تستعد-لاستفزاز-دموي-ضد-روسيا
19. <https://sa24.co/article/771694566/> خبير-فنلندي-زيلينسكي-قد-يستغل-حادثة-المسي-رات-في-بولندا-لجر-النات.html