

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE

A NEW REPORT FROM THE SOUFAN CENTER EXAMINES RUSSIAN HYBRID TACTICS IN EUROPE BETWEEN 2022-2025

Building on six case studies, researchers identify country-specific patterns and collective strategies to counter Russia's network of hybrid threats

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(New York, NY – March 24, 2026) The Soufan Center (TSC) has published a new report [***Priming, Destabilizing, Coercing: Russian Hybrid Tactics in Europe 2022-2025***](#). The report examines Russia's hybrid threat activities in six European countries, with researchers identifying country-specific patterns, as well as collective strategies states and other actors can use to counter Russia's contemporary practice of hybrid warfare. The report studies 255 hybrid incidents targeting six countries: France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Estonia, Moldova, and Georgia. It draws on an original open-source incident database and 22 expert interviews with serving and former intelligence officials, government advisors, and leading academics.

"Our research shows that a consistent operational tempo of hostile activities by Russia on European soil has become normalized and simply folded into the fabric of daily life," explains one of the primary report researchers Nikkie Lyubarsky, a Research Associate at The Soufan Center. "When looking across different countries and environments, we see that flooding the zone, so-to-speak, with low-cost operations is partly designed to force democracies into a choice between looking weak or looking hysterical — and either outcome serves the Kremlin," she says.

"These activities across Europe have been cheap and often both deniable and scalable for Moscow, while the costs Russia imposes on targets are absorbed almost entirely by the targeted countries and their populations," concludes Clara Broekaert, a Research Analyst at The Soufan Center and the other primary researcher on the project. "What sets our new research apart is the longitudinal study of Russian tactics used in Europe — this has demonstrated a clear pivot to more physical probing and infrastructure sabotage as informational meddling has not brought about desired changes in targeted countries."

The report's key findings include:

- Russia has increasingly outsourced operations to disposable intermediaries — petty criminals and social media recruits — representing a 254 percent increase from 2023 to 2024.
- In 2025, Russia's campaign became measurably more physical, especially across NATO countries.
- Russia runs two distinct playbooks depending on its target. Against France, Estonia, and Moldova, it floods the information and societal domains — exploiting religious divides, stoking intercommunal tensions, and running election interference campaigns. Against Germany and the United Kingdom, it prioritizes military and infrastructure targeting: drone surveillance, shadow fleet vessels, and undersea cable reconnaissance.

The report's other authors include Dr. Colin P. Clarke, Executive Director at The Soufan Center, and Joseph Shelzi, a Research Fellow at The Soufan Center. The research project was made possible with the generous support of the [Airey Neave Trust](#).

ABOUT THE SOUFAN CENTER (TSC)

[The Soufan Center](#) is an independent nonprofit organization based in New York City. Our mission is to provide cutting-edge research, analysis, and strategies to anticipate and counter the world's most urgent security challenges.

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