



Moldova: NATO airspace breached, two jets up, nothing stopped

The violation is on the record with timings. The near-miss is a claim the two governments involved have not made.

INCIDENT DETAILS • 5WH

Who A Geran-4, the jet-powered Shahed-class one-way attack drone, identified by Ukrainian open-source monitoring. Two Spanish F-18s responded.

What A hostile munition crossed into a NATO member's airspace, was held on radar about 25 minutes, alerted five counties, and was not engaged.

Where Out of Ukraine into Moldova, into Romania south-east of Iasi, north of Roman, down at Mihailenii Vechi back inside Moldova.

When Tuesday 8 September 2026. Airspace entered 16:37, jets up 16:39, contact lost 17:02, crash after 17:20, aircraft departed 17:57.

Why Disputed. The Kremlin says no threat existed; Moldova will not name a target.

How A jet-powered drone is faster and harder to engage than the Shahed it came from. Fighters launched in two minutes and achieved nothing.

IMPACT

- No interception, no damage, no casualties. The munition destroyed itself in a field.
- Airspace closed, three departures and four arrivals delayed, RO-Alert to five Romanian counties.
- The capability gap is the finding: NATO knew, launched, and the object left when it was ready.
- Three incompatible accounts in 48 hours - a near-miss, a routine delay, and no threat at all.

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS



Sep 2025 Nineteen drones over Poland

Aug 2026 Estonia and Romania spillover

Aug 2026 Tulcea: radar saw nothing

- 1 16:20 - Moldova detects; airspace shut
- 2 16:37 - into Romanian airspace
- 3 16:39 - two Spanish F-18s launch
- 4 16:48 - tracked 18 km north of Roman
- 5 17:02 - radar contact lost; no engagement
- 6 17:57 - the delayed aircraft departs

ASSESSMENT, LESSONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- The airspace violation is established. The near-miss is not: the crash was 160 km from the airport and radar lost the drone 55 minutes before departure.
- The correction is to the drama, not the seriousness. A munition carrying 50 to 90 kg flew over a populated NATO region and was not brought down.
- A realistic possibility the flight was routed to coincide with the movement. Nothing published shows a track towards the airport.
- Almost certain further incursions follow; likely fighter-based policing keeps failing to engage. The counter is ground-based and not yet in place.