



Leipzig/Halle: a bomb on the apron and something on the approach

A drone carrying an explosive charge and a detonator was found metres from a Ukrainian An-124. A robot made it safe. Meanwhile a freighter that had broken off its approach hit something in the air.

INCIDENT DETAILS • 5WH

Who Officially unattributed - no arrests, no claim, no evidence made public. Ukraine's ambassador said it could only be Russia; German authorities have named no one.

What Two events under investigation as possibly linked: a modified drone with an explosive payload and detonator found near the southern runway, and a freighter striking an object in flight.

Where Leipzig/Halle Airport, Saxony. The device sat beside a parked Ukrainian Antonov An-124, one of four present. The mid-air encounter about 6 km out on approach.

When From shortly before midnight, Tue 4 Aug 2026. North runway closed about two hours.

Why No motive stated. The target set fits interference with logistics supporting Ukraine - context, not attribution.

How An explosive-carrying UAS placed airside beside a parked aircraft. Nitrate-based charge; detonator removed remotely by robot. Casualties: none.

SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

A Jul 2024: incendiary parcel ignites before loading onto a DHL freighter

B Nov 2024: DHL aircraft out of Leipzig crashes at Vilnius, one crew killed

C 2025: conviction for passing Leipzig flight schedule and cargo data

1 Before midnight: object sighted; arrivals halted, flights diverted

2 A freighter breaks off and strikes an object about 6 km out

3 Staff spot a drone on the ground beside an An-124

4 Robot deployed; nitrate charge and detonator identified

5 Detonator removed; extremism unit and prosecutors take the lead

IMPACT

- Human: none. The device did not function and the aircraft landed safely.
- Operational: arrivals halted, a passenger flight and freighters diverted, north runway closed about two hours at a DHL and NATO freight hub.
- Airside security: the substantive finding - an explosive charge reached the apron and rested beside a strategic airlifter.
- Narrative: an unclaimed device beside a Ukrainian aircraft in a NATO country, at no cost to whoever left it.

ASSESSMENT, LESSONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- The access is the finding, not the explosion that did not happen - the protective failure is identical either way.
- The two events may be one operation and the sequence is suggestive, but no link has been established.
- An aircraft in flight was struck; a few metres different is an ingestion or a windscreen on short final.
- It is almost certain airside and approach-path drone incidents at European logistics airfields continue.