



Latvia: Italian Soldiers and the Threat of Russian Undercover Spies

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Latvia, a country sharing borders with Russia and Belarus, has become a crucial point for European security. **With the invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Russia has intensified its espionage operations, and Latvia is not exempt from this danger.** In this scenario, Latvian security services have released a report providing important guidelines for identifying Russian undercover spies.

The Russian Threat and Undercover Operations

According to the [MIDD \(Latvian Military Intelligence and Security Service\)](#), **Russia has intensified the dispatch of groups composed of three or four agents into the country, usually undercover.** These agents are tasked with conducting reconnaissance operations, sabotage, and fomenting internal unrest against the Latvian government. Additionally, Russia might attempt to assassinate political figures considered enemies of the regime. Agents can legally enter the country, pretending to be tourists, businessmen, or people visiting relatives,

but many arrive clandestinely, hiding in the woods.

Despite the progress in the discretion of Russian agents, **the MIDD warns that some operations are still recognizable through suspicious behavior.** The agents, in fact, disguise themselves as campers, humanitarian workers, or overly curious tourists, showing excessive interest in local politics and strategic infrastructures, such as military bases and power plants.

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How to Recognize Russian Spies

The MIDD has provided a series of indications to recognize these undercover agents, including:

- **Suspicious behavior:** persistent questions about local politics and the country's strategic infrastructures.
- **Unusual equipment:** agents might carry military maps, specialized medical kits, or communication devices, completely out of place for tourists or simple travelers.
- **Anomalous locations:** presence near military bases, sensitive areas, or places of strategic interest, such as power plants.

The MIDD emphasizes that, although these clues may suggest the presence of Russian agents, it is important not to act alone but to immediately report suspicions to the police or the nearest army unit.

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National Security and the Italian Contribution

In the context of the growing Russian threat, **Italy has actively participated in Latvia's security through the NATO Forward Land Forces (FLF) mission**, which saw the involvement of the Italian Contingent in the exercise “Crystal Arrow 2025”. This multinational exercise, one of the most complex within NATO, involved about 3,000 military personnel and 1,200 vehicles from the Latvian Army and Allied countries. The Italian units, belonging to the

132nd Armored Brigade “Ariete”, operated in the role of OPFOR (Opposing Force), simulating a conventional enemy and carrying out realistic combat maneuvers. This allowed Latvian forces to test their operational capabilities in a high-intensity scenario.

Italy's role in the FLF mission confirms our country's commitment to strengthening NATO's deterrence and defense posture. The operational and training activities were coordinated by the Joint Operational Command (COVI) and highlighted Italy's ability to operate in complex multinational contexts, maintaining high operational standards.

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Conclusions

Latvia is at the center of NATO's defense operations, and the Russian threat poses a concrete challenge to the region's security. Timely recognition of Russian undercover spies is essential to ensure the protection of allied forces, including Italian ones, which play a key role in the security of the Alliance's northeastern flank. Thanks to participation in the “Crystal Arrow 2025” exercise and ongoing commitment to NATO operations, Italy contributes to strengthening deterrence and ensuring stability in the Euro-Atlantic region, offering a credible and qualified contribution to NATO's collective mission.

News link: <https://www.ruetir.com/2025/05/16/the-guide-of-latvia-to-recognize-the-roller-coaster-spies-under-cover-the-post/>