Mediterranean: Frigate Fasan monitors Russian Kilo-Class Submarine

Published on 27/01/2026

January 27, 2026 – The Italian Navy frigate **ITS *Virginio Fasan*** (Carlo Bergamini/FREMM class), part of the **Standing NATO Maritime Group Two (SNMG2)**, is **monitoring and "shadowing"** (following and surveilling) the Russian submarine **Kilo-Class/Project 636.3 *Krasnodar*** in the **central Mediterranean**. The update was released by the **NATO Maritime Command** on **January 26, 2026**, indicating persistent surveillance activity during the transit of the underwater unit. In practical terms, it is a control and tracking operation aimed at maintaining an updated picture of the situation, avoiding ambiguity about the route, behavior, and possible objectives of the observed unit.

Mediterranean: Frigate Fasan monitors Russian Kilo-Class Submarine

What we know about the Russian transit

According to available information, the *Krasnodar* is crossing the central Mediterranean **with escort**: among the units mentioned is the Russian destroyer **Udaloy-Class *Severomorsk***, along with other support ships. Some open-source reconstructions place the formation **southeast of Sicily**, possibly heading towards more eastern areas of the basin.

This type of “shadowing” does not imply engagement: it is an operational practice aimed at **maintaining situational awareness**, reducing uncertainty, and demonstrating presence. Normally, tracking may involve changes of units “in relay”, so that surveillance remains continuous even when the ship follows other operational priorities.

Mediterranean: Frigate Fasan monitors Russian Kilo-Class Submarine

Why it matters (NATO, deterrence, and the Mediterranean)

The episode is indicative of the **naval competition** in an area where commercial routes, energy interests, and strategic infrastructures converge. The decision to publicly communicate the tracking also has a value of **political signaling and deterrence**: showing vigilance and the ability to control maritime space, while reassuring allies and regional partners at the same time.

On a technical-operational level, the *Krasnodar* (Project 636.3) is a platform known for its **acoustic discretion** and potential use in projection missions, while the *Virginio Fasan* is a frigate with an **anti-submarine warfare (ASW)** vocation, thus suitable for surveillance and tracking tasks. In this context, the activities of **SNMG2** serve to ensure presence and readiness on the southern flank of the Alliance and to continuously manage maritime surveillance in an increasingly contested Mediterranean. Moreover, the basin is a complex environment: intense traffic, variable seabeds, and numerous coastal areas make the underwater domain more difficult to control, increasing the value of sensors, training, and multinational coordination.

News link: https://x.com/NATO_MARCOM/status/2015828747962691958/photo/