

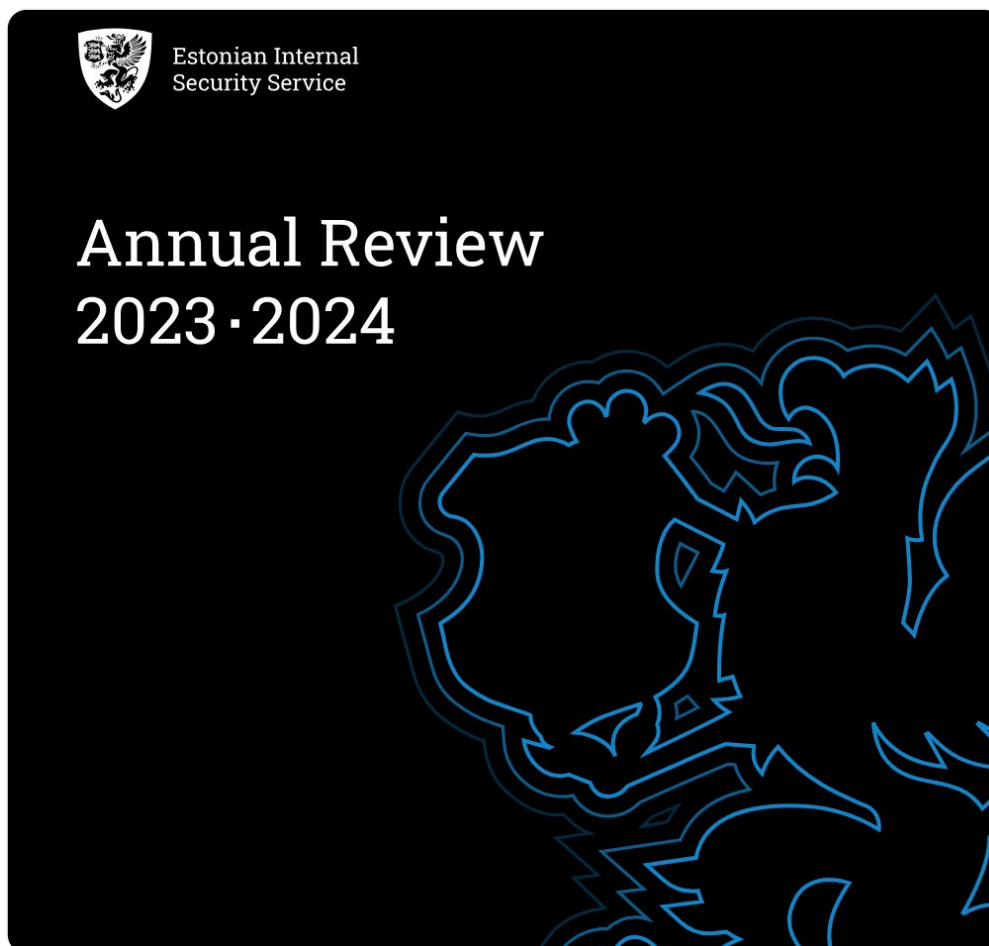


Pekka Kallioniemi @P_Kallioniemi

Feb 12, 2025 · 18 tweets · [P_Kallioniemi/status/1889668965409927620](https://twitter.com/P_Kallioniemi/status/1889668965409927620)

In today's Vatnik Soup, I'll discuss how Estonia deals with the Russian threat. Estonia's Internal Security Service (KAPO) published their 2023-2024 annual review some time ago, and it's packed with insights on Russian hybrid operations in the region.

1/17



Estonia is at the frontlines against Russia's hybrid war, and they've been targeted by the Kremlin for decades. Russia's main goal remains the same: undermine Estonia's constitutional order. To do this, they use intimidation, propaganda & cyber warfare to stir unrest.

2/17



Vladimir Putin, president of Russia, arrives during the Opening Ceremony of the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics on February 4, 2022. CARL COURT/GETTY IMAGES

THREATS

Russian hybrid operations on the rise in Estonia, Moldova

Similar Russian attempts to exploit ethnic divisions in democratic nations have preceded more aggressive action.

Like in all Baltic countries, one of their major tools is the manipulation of ethnic Russians in Estonia. The Kremlin pushes propaganda to create divisions, but recent surveys show integration is improving. The Kremlin is losing its grip.

Estonia’s language and culture are becoming battlegrounds for independence from Putin’s Russia

Published: January 6, 2025 8.17am EST



Russia has also been orchestrating hybrid attacks. These include fake bomb threats at Estonian schools, coordinated cyber attacks, misinformation campaigns on social media, and pressuring Russian citizens abroad to act in the Kremlin’s interests.

4/17

POLITICO

NEWS > DEFENSE

Estonia’s city at the ‘end of the free world’ stares across a frozen border at Russia

Estonia’s third-largest city is struggling to face off threats from Russia.

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In 2023, Russian intelligence services conducted several hybrid operations at the Estonian border. They harassed Ukrainian refugees at checkpoints, filmed staged migrant crossings for propaganda, and used FSB agents to intimidate travelers.

5/17

Estonia

This article is more than **1 year old**

Estonia accuses Russia of weaponising immigration at Europe's borders

Arrival of hundreds of people at Finnish and Estonian borders claimed to be 'fully state-orchestrated' operation

Miranda Bryant in Stockholm
Thu 23 Nov 2023 17:31 GMT

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People arriving at the Salla border crossing in Finland on Wednesday. Photograph: Lehtikuva/Reuters

Estonia has accused Russia of weaponising immigration on Europe's eastern borders amid a rise in the number of asylum seekers trying to enter its territory and **Finland**.

Kremlin-backed Orthodox leader Metropolitan Eugene was expelled from Estonia in 2024. He was a key player in Russian influence operations, pushing Moscow's agenda under the guise of religion. The Russian Orthodox Church has long been a tool...

6/17

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Estonia forcing Russian head of church to leave the country by February 6

NEWS
ERR
18.01.2024 11:50



Metropolitan Eugene of the Estonian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate. Source: Siim Lõvi /ERR

Estonia has decided not to extend the residence permit of Metropolitan Eugene of the Estonian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate who will have to leave the country by February 6. The interior minister believes Eugene's activities pose a threat to national security.

12 f t c s

...of the Kremlin's disinformation campaigns. It plays a role in justifying Russia's actions in Ukraine, spreading anti-Western narratives & fostering division in countries with Orthodox communities. Estonia has acted decisively to curb its influence.

7/17



Pekka Kallioniemi ✓
@P_Kallioniemi · Follow



In today's #vatniksoup, I'll talk about the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate (UOC-MP) and how pro-Kremlin propagandists, oligarchs and lawyers are using its "persecution" as a tool to reduce support for Ukraine and its government.

1/20

UOC-MP Metropolitan called Ukrainian authorities the "beast" at war with the saints

24.10.2023, 13:05 STATE



In his address, Metropolitan Yevlogy of the UOC-MP stated that the Ukrainian authorities are the "beast" engaged in a war against the saints and must conquer them.

4:01 PM · Mar 6, 2024



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Russian "comedians" Vovan and Lexus have made prank calls around Europe, impersonating as foreign officials and tricking Western leaders like Giorgia Meloni. They also tried to trick the former Estonian PM Kaja Kallas, but she didn't fall for it.

8/17

BREAKING

Italy's Prime Minister Duped By Russian Pranksters—Their Latest Target Amid Ukraine War

Britney Nguyen Forbes Staff

I am a reporter on the breaking news team based in New York City.

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Nov 1, 2023, 01:43pm EDT

f **TOPLINE** Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni was duped by Russian pranksters Vovan and Lexus into sharing her thoughts on the war in Ukraine and her frustration around Italy's responsibility for migrants entering Europe through the country, making her the latest high-profile target for the pro-Kremlin duo alongside the likes of Elton John and Bernie Sanders.

X

in

Sanctioned Russian media, like Sputnik, still try to operate in Estonia. In 2024, KAPO arrested a person secretly working for Rossiya Segodnya, violating EU sanctions. The Kremlin understands how important it is to control the local media space.

Estonia to charge Russian Estonian citizen with treason for spreading Russian propaganda

MARIYA YEMETS — TUESDAY, 6 AUGUST 2024, 21:28



952

A Russian woman with Estonian citizenship who promoted Russia's propagandist messages for years has been charged with sanctions violations and treason.

Source: [European Pravda](#) with reference to [ERR](#)

Details: The Prosecutor's Office of Estonia has charged Svetlana Burtseva, who is an Estonian citizen, with violating international sanctions and committing treason. Following a preliminary court session on 6 August, it was announced that the hearing would commence on 1 November.

Burtseva became an Estonian citizen in 1994 through naturalisation. She has worked for the Russian media group Rossiya segodnya (Russia Today) since 2017, writing for various Estonian online media outlets.

Cybersecurity threats have surged. Russian and Iranian hackers have targeted Estonia's critical infrastructure, focusing on water and heating systems. Meanwhile, Russian state-backed cybercriminals tried to sabotage aid to Ukraine.

10/17



ESTONIA

Catalin Cimpanu
July 29th, 2021

Government

News

Privacy

Estonia says a hacker downloaded 286,000 ID photos from government database

Estonian officials said they arrested last week a local suspect who used a vulnerability to gain access to a government database and download government ID photos for 286,438 Estonians.

The attack took place earlier this month, and the suspect was arrested last week on July 23, Estonian police said in a press conference yesterday, July 28.



But it's not only Russia conducting hybrid operations in Estonia - the CCP intelligence is targeting researchers, businesses, and government data, using economic influence and pressure tactics. A Chinese agent was recently sentenced to 8.5 years for spying in Estonia.

11/17

POLITICO

German election | War in Ukraine | Munich Security Conference | Newsletters | Podcasts | Poll of Polls | Policy news | Events

NEWS > POLITICS

Estonian court jails woman over Chinese espionage charges

Gerli Mutso sentenced to eight and a half years in prison.

Russian intelligence is still using embassies around the world as spy hubs. Estonia has expelled 18 diplomats/spies since 1991. Moscow is desperately trying to rebuild its intelligence networks, but so far they've failed miserably.

12/17

The Moscow Times
30 YEARS INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

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Estonia Expels Russian Diplomat Over 'Interference' Claims

By AFP
March 19, 2024

[f](#) [X](#) [t](#) [w](#) [e](#) [r](#) [p](#)



Russians in Estonia face intense recruitment pressure from Moscow. The Kremlin calls for their loyalty & many are targeted for intelligence work. Recently, Estonian Aivo Peterson attempted to create an “anti-Estonian” movement & was arrested for that.

13/17

 **Pekka Kallioniemi** 
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In today's [#vatniksoup](#), I'll introduce an Estonian politician and propagandist, Aivo Peterson. He's best-known for travelling to Donbas and Mariupol to produce pro-Kremlin propaganda, and for trying to create a pro-Russia separatist movement in Estonia.

1/16



10:56 AM · Jan 3, 2025 

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Estonia has been cracking down on risky behaviors that could pose security threats. This includes gambling debts and financial vulnerabilities, unreported income from cryptocurrencies, and drug use among security clearance applicants.

14/17



'Make a Molotov Cocktail': How Europeans Are Recruited Through Telegram to Commit Sabotage, Arson, and Murder

INVESTIGATION

The cases are multiplying across Europe: Young men with pro-Russian views instructed on Telegram to carry out sabotage attacks. Western security officials point to the Russian special services. For this story, journalists went undercover to reveal how the recruitment works.

All of these factors make individuals potential targets for foreign recruiters, and Russia has used Telegram to recruit low-level criminals to do their bidding, encouraging them to sabotage aid to Ukraine, attack politicians and journalists, etc.

Politics

Russian Sabotage, Spying and Intimidation Is Spreading in Europe

- From London to Berlin, GRU seen as behind a series of attacks
- The uptick in Russian intimidation comes ahead of EU elections



A British man on Friday will appear in court accused of carrying out an arson attack against a Ukrainian-linked warehouse in East London in March. Source: London Fire Brigade



By Bloomberg News
May 9, 2024 at 6:12 PM GMT+3

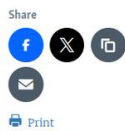
After the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, a lot has changed in Estonia. Russian intelligence operations have become more aggressive and even desperate. But Estonia is adapting fast, exposing and countering these threats before they can cause real harm.

16/17



December 25, 2024 7:29 PM
By Agence France-Presse

Finland-Estonia electricity cable outage is latest Baltic Sea incident



FILE - Fingrid's EstLink 2 transformer station operating between Finland and Estonia is pictured in Porvoo, Finland, March 6, 2014. Fingrid said current on the EstLink 2 cable was cut at 12:26 p.m. local time on Dec. 25, 2024. (Lehtikuija via Reuters)

To conclude, Estonia is one of the few countries that have been able to prepare for Russian hybrid attacks. The Kremlin will keep on provoking and attacking their Baltic neighbor, but

so far Estonia has been able to resist and fight against all this extremely well.

17/17

Bloomberg


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Politics

Estonia Says Russia Removed Border Markers as Tensions Rise

- Border guard says Russia removed Narva river buoys overnight
- Kremlin aims to create 'fear and anxiety,' Kallas says



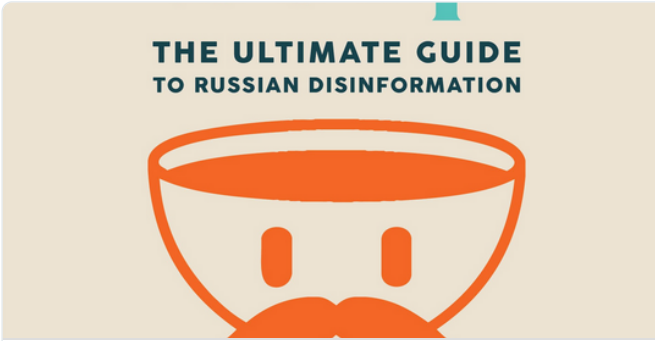
The Narva River separating Estonia, left, and Russia, right, in Narva, Estonia. Photographer: Peter Kollany/Bloomberg

By [Ott Tammik](#)
May 23, 2024 at 12:54 PM GMT+3
Updated on May 23, 2024 at 2:53 PM GMT+3

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Pre-order your copy here:



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Vatnik Soup — Kle•art

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