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Belgian defense chief stands by €50 million drone scare

While most reports of UAV sightings have been proven false, some appeared “plausible” despite a lack of any evidence, Theo Francken insists

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Belgian Defense Minister Theo Francken has defended the drone scare which gripped the country last year and cost some €50 million (\$58.5 million) in emergency spending, offering a lackluster apology for personally disseminating images purporting to show the UAVs, which turned out to be false.



FILE PHOTO: Belgian Defense Minister Theo Francken (C). © Getty

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The drone craze gripped the country, as well as several other EU nations, late last year with numerous sightings of mysterious UAVs reported from military and critical infrastructure sites. The Belgian government declared an emergency situation over the sightings and swiftly allocated €50 million for anti-drone procurement.

Images / Anadolu / Dursun Aydemir

The scare prompted allegations of Russian involvement, yet no evidence to back up such claims, as well as to prove the very existence of the elusive aircraft, has ever emerged. Moscow at the time dismissed the “*drone hysteria*” as paranoia.

The drone affair was explored by VRT News’ program Pano, which reignited the controversy over the drones and the government’s handling of the crisis. According to the documentary, in several instances the alleged UAVs turned out to be police helicopters. The investigation also raised questions over emergency spending, pointing at inflated pricing allegations in multi-million contracts awarded without any due public tender process.



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drone” for them, he claimed.

Francken was grilled over Pano’s revelations on Wednesday in Parliament’s Defense Select Committee. The minister defended the handling of the scare, yet acknowledged that many of the more than 550 reported sightings turned out to be false.

The defense chief cited findings by the country’s military intelligence, which claimed that at least 42 out of 250 drone sightings over military barracks were legitimate. While no physical evidence has been collected, there was “*no other plausible explanation than a*

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“Anyone who claims today that there were no drones is therefore ignoring the findings of our own intelligence service. And let’s be honest: as long as you don’t have the means to detect and neutralize drones, it stands to reason that you cannot immediately produce physical evidence,” Francken said.

The minister also offered a lackluster apology for his role in fueling the scare, admitting it had been *“painful”* that he personally circulated images of alleged drones that turned out to be false. In particular, Francken disseminated an image of an aircraft above Brussels Airport, which turned out to be a police helicopter.

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Daniel 4/23/2026 at 9:09 AM

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What a maroon.

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Brayan Stoyanov 4/23/2026 at 4:07 AM

2

I think they were Chinese weather balloons or did Ursula have another horse party again?

I recall she did have problems walking.

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Trouty McTroutTrout 4/23/2026 at 3:10 AM

2

Almost as if russophobia causes irrational paranoia to the detriment of the countries exhibiting it. Perhaps, and this is just me thinking out loud, we should judge people as individuals rather than having deep suspicions of entire races.

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Lu Long (GeorgeOrwellRocks) 4/23/2026 at 2:15 AM

3

When you get totally completely and utterly absorbed in viur own b s



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T **T Joes** 4/23/2026 at 12:48 AM

4

If there is a false flag, there is a Jew involved

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 **M** 4/23/2026 at 2:05 AM ↕

2

No doubt, no doubt.

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S **Spanky Mcduff** 4/23/2026 at 2:01 AM

2

There is not a western politician that has two clues to rub together.

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H **Hocus Pocus** 4/23/2026 at 1:22 AM

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The Benelux Union, or Benelux for short, consists of Luxembourg, Belgium and the Netherlands, who stole 300 Bio. € from the Central Bank of Russia to stay luxurious.

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h **hassan abdelaal** 4/23/2026 at 12:47 AM

1

What if they dont u back 50 million, what u get in return knowing they can't pay off their 1st stupid loans? Kosher loan or american?

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 **SS Steinkern** 4/22/2026 at 11:46 PM

2

The usual pull the wool over everyone's eyes. First create the fear, then handle it with money thrown in. Works everytime and they that cash in – know it.

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