

German Navy Thwarts Another Sabotage Attempt



Hessen (file image courtesy Bundeswehr)

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Germany's navy has reported a pattern of suspected sabotage targeting its warships over the past year, and a new attempt was reported just last week. According to German outlets, someone appears to have tried to contaminate the drinking water system of the frigate Hessen.

WDR, NDR and Süddeutsche Zeitung reported last week that an unknown perpetrator made an attempt to put a large quantity of waste oil into the Hessen's freshwater tanks. The frigate was moored at the German Navy's main base in Wilhelmshaven for repairs, and a contractor was hired to refill the vessel's tanks with clean water. The attempted contamination was prevented, and sources within the German Navy told media that they had ruled out the possibility of an accident.

A police investigation is under way into the circumstances of the case, and Germany's Federal Office for Military Counterintelligence (BAMAD) has joined the effort.

Hessen is well-known from her time on patrol in the Red Sea last year, where she helped to defend merchant shipping from Houthi attacks. Beginning in February, Hessen took up station off Yemen as part of EU Operation Aspides, and was shooting down her first drones within days. During one of her earliest engagements, the crew misidentified an American drone as a Houthi munition and targeted it with two SM-2 missiles. Against the odds, both missed for "technical reasons." The frigate returned to Germany in early May, having spent three months on deployment.

The apparent attempt to sabotage Hessen is the latest in a string of incidents affecting German warships in port. In 2024, a German Navy minehunter was damaged by unknown personnel while in shipyard in Rostock. Several cable harnesses were severed, according to Spiegel. In addition, an

unknown saboteur dumped dozens of kilos of metal filings into the oil sumps of the main engines aboard the brand new corvette Emden, according to multiple German media outlets. The contamination was detected and cleaned out, and Emden has been successfully delivered.