

Russian Satellites Maneuver Into Co-Planar with Finnish SAR Satellite Supporting Ukraine, Integrity ISR Analysis Finds

Russian Satellites Maneuver Into Position to Threaten Finnish Satellite Supporting Ukraine, Analysts Warn

WILLIAMSBURG, VA, UNITED STATES, May 22, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Russia has quietly moved five of its newest military satellites into orbits that closely shadow a Finnish-American radar imaging spacecraft that has been supporting Ukrainian military operations since 2022, according to analysis by Integrity ISR, a Virginia-based firm specializing in ISR and space domain analysis.

Between May 14 and May 20, five of six recently launched Russian Cosmos satellites — Cosmos 2610, 2611, 2612, 2613, 2614 — executed plane change maneuvers that raised their orbital inclination from 97.0° to 97.8°, matching the inclination of ICEYE-X36, a Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) satellite operated by ICEYE, the Finnish-American company that runs the world's largest commercial SAR constellation.

Plane changes of this magnitude are rare in Low Earth Orbit because of the fuel they consume. Integrity ISR estimates the maneuver cost each



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satellite roughly 105 to 106 meters per second of delta-v — a level of energy expenditure not typically associated with satellites built for routine Earth observation, signals collection, or communications.

"Plane matching is the first and most fuel-expensive step toward conducting Rendezvous and Proximity Operations," said Greg Gillinger, an Integrity ISR analyst and author of the [Integrity Flash](#), a biweekly newsletter focused on adversary space and counterspace capabilities. "These five Russian satellites are now effectively co-planar with ICEYE-X36. From here, only minor adjustments in eccentricity and altitude would be needed to enable persistent proximity operations."

The five Cosmos satellites are now orbiting at approximately 547 kilometers — within 2.5 kilometers of ICEYE-X36's altitude — with eccentricities between .001 and .002, nearly identical to the ICEYE spacecraft. Cross-track separation between the Russian satellites and ICEYE-X36 currently ranges from 0.5 to 22 kilometers. The Cosmos satellites were originally launched into orbits with less than a 0.5° Right Ascension of the Ascending Node (RAAN) offset from ICEYE-X36, meaning the recent inclination shift was the final step needed to align their orbital planes.

ICEYE-X36 is part of a constellation Ukraine has been able to task throughout the war with Russia. ICEYE donated its "People's Satellite" to Ukraine in 2022, and Ukrainian defense intelligence has publicly credited the imagery with supporting strikes against Russian targets.

Gillinger said Russia's intentions and the specific capabilities of the Cosmos satellites are not publicly known. But the scale of the maneuvers, combined with the deliberate orbital match to ICEYE-X36, places Russian operators in a position to conduct kinetic or non-kinetic operations to disrupt or degrade ICEYE X-36's imagery capabilities while expending relatively little additional fuel. ICEYE-X36, at roughly 90 kilograms, is unlikely to have the maneuverability to evade a co-orbital threat.

The activity also comes nearly four years after senior Russian officials publicly warned that Western commercial satellites supporting Ukraine could be considered "legitimate targets for retaliation."

"The situation warrants close and continued monitoring," Gillinger said. To read Greg's full report, [Click Here](#).

To learn more [about Integrity ISR's](#) work in the space domain, visit <http://www.IntegrityISR.com>.

About Integrity ISR

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trusted team supports missions across the Department of Defense, allied partners, and the commercial space industry.

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