

Light in the sky over Norway, see at 7:50 am local time. Photo: Jan Petter Jørgensen via Vaeret

[/caption]

Apparently, this is not a Photoshopped image, as there are several more just like it, taken from various locations. This morning in northern Norway, people saw a strange light in the sky which shocked residents and so far, the phenomenon has yet to be explained. This picture was taken from a pier, looking to the east, approximately at 07.50 am local time. "I can imagine that it went on for two, three minutes," said the photographer Jan Petter Jørgensen. "It was unbelievable. I was quite shaken when I saw it."



The spiral as seen over Borrås, Norway. Via Altaposten.no

"It consisted initially of a green beam of light similar in colour to the aurora with a mysterious rotating spiral at one end," said another eyewitness, Nick Banbury of Harstad, quoted on Spaceweather.com. "This spiral then got bigger and bigger until it turned into a huge halo in the sky with the green beam extending down to the earth. According to the press, this could be seen all over northern Norway and must therefore have been very high up in the atmosphere to be seen hundreds of km apart."

[Here's a link to a video of the spiral forming.](#)

"[A popular] suggestion at the moment is that it was a rocket shot up by a Russian submarine in the White Sea, but the Russians deny this apparently. A big mystery indeed!"

UPDATE (Dec. 10): Russia has finally admitted a missile accident with the Bulava ICBM. This rocket already has failed six of 13 previous tests, according to the BBC, so Russia might have been a little embarrassed about it. [See our additional article the on "Norway Spiral."](#)

According to NRK, there were advance warnings about several Russian missile launches from the White Sea from December 7-10, but an anonymous source in the Northern Fleet said they had no information about the incident. Press Attaché from Russia's Embassy in

Oslo, Vladimir Isupov, did not have any immediate information that could explain the light phenomenon over Northern Norway.

UPDATE: Doug Ellison from UnmannedSpaceflight.com did a very cool simulation of a tumbling rocket stage throwing out unspent fuel in two directions, and what it would look like. The question, though would be how the spiral of fuel was lit. It possibly could have been back-lit by the soon-to-rise sun.

Another eyewitness said, "We saw it from the Inner Harbor in Tromsø. It was absolutely fantastic. It almost looked like a rocket that spun around and around, and then went diagonally down the heavens. It looked like the moon was coming over the mountain, but then came something completely different," said Totto Eriksen.

We'll keep you posted on any explanations that come out on this!

I also received a report today from a geophysicist in Papua, Indonesia who observed "an enormous flare (bolide?) visible here at Tomage (2°39'27"S 132°59'27"E), and the sighting was at a bearing approximately 165 (East of South) and the flare seemed to begin at about 30 degrees above the horizon." Paul Anderson said the date and time of the flare was approximately 2009.12.09 12:39 UTC

"I have seen meteors all my life but this was extraordinarily bright and lit up the sky. Not sure what the trajectory was aside from a slight (15 degrees, perhaps) trend to the West but this should probably be known somewhere. My guess is it entered steeply from the North," he said.

Anyone else in or near Indonesia see anything similar?

Sources: [Vaeret](#), [Altaposten](#), [NRK](#), [Spaceweather.com](#)

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