

Turkish Yacht Poisoning Kills 3

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June 01, 2011

The  **Moscow Times**

Three Russian tourists have died and 17 others have been sickened by suspected alcohol poisoning during a yacht party in Turkey, the Federal Tourism Agency [said](#) Wednesday.

Of the 70 participants of the yacht trip, which took place near the Aegean Sea resort of Bodrum late Friday, 20 Russians applied for medical aid over the weekend, complaining of nausea, vomiting and loss of consciousness, the agency said in a statement on its web site.

The first two deaths, Maria Shalyapina, 27, and Aigul Zalyayeva, 19, occurred in Turkish hospitals earlier this week, it said. Marina Shevelyova, 22, returned to Moscow and died in a hospital late Tuesday.

Only one person, Viktoria Nikolayeva, remained hospitalized Wednesday, said Marina Badayeva, deputy director of the Coral Travel agency, which brought the Russians to Turkey. The tourist is in grave condition, Badayeva told Interfax.

Natives of Azerbaijan, Britain, Kazakhstan and Ukraine were also aboard the yacht but did not

report any health problems, Interfax said, citing an unidentified Coral Travel representative.

The cause of the poisoning is believed to be whiskey mixed with methanol, an undrinkable type of alcohol used to produce gas, diesel fuel, perfumes and varnish, Argumenty i Fakty [reported](#) Wednesday.

Whiskey was not on the menu because local regulations ban spirits aboard tourist yachts, which means that the Russians might have brought it with them, Interfax [said](#).

The yacht did not have a sailing license, and the tour was organized by a Turkish agency, the Federal Tourism Agency said in a separate [statement](#).

Turkish authorities have opened a criminal investigation and will report to Russian authorities within a week, the statement said.

Turkey also will examine all retail alcohol sales and ask local travel agents to regularly instruct tourists on where and how to buy quality alcohol and food, it said.

Turkey has [pledged](#) to cover the medical bills of those who fell ill and pay for travel and accommodation costs for relatives who flew to Bodrum to assist them, RIA-Novosti reported.

The insurance company that provided mandatory coverage for the sickened tourists, Ingosstrakh, said it would fulfill its obligations as obliged under contract. But it was unclear whether the victims were entitled to compensation because alcohol poisoning is generally not covered by insurance contracts, RIA-Novosti said.

Moonshine kills thousands of people in Russia every year, but similar incidents also have been reported at Turkish resorts. In 2009, three young Germans died from drinking illicitly distilled liquor in the resort town of Kemer.

Russian tourist operators have reported no decrease in demand for trips to Turkey following the yacht incident, Interfax reported.

Original url: <https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2011/06/01/turkish-yacht-poisoning-kills-3-a7347>