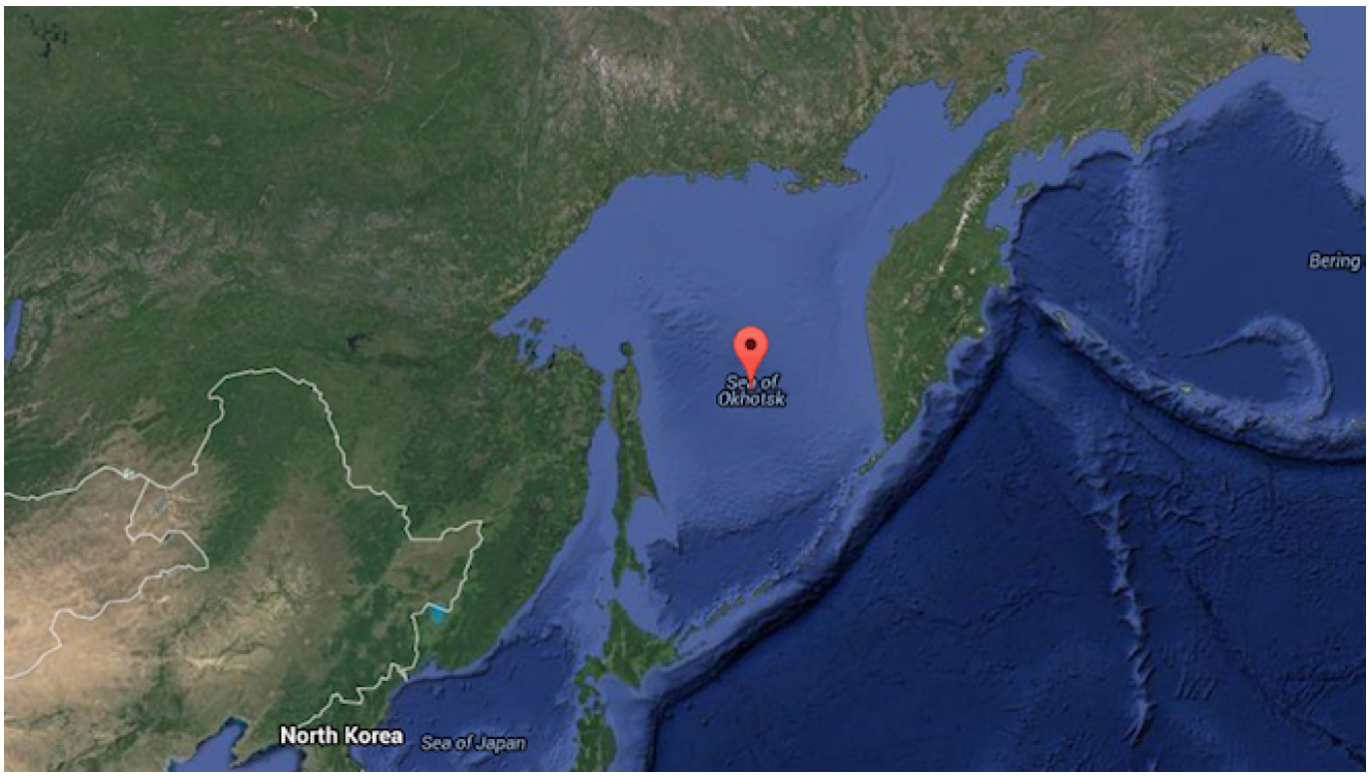
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African Ship Detained in Russia's Far East for Poaching

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The Sea of Okhotsk as seen on Google Maps.

Russian authorities have detained a ship from the small West African nation of Togo on suspicion of poaching crabs in the far eastern Sea of Okhotsk, the TASS news agency reported Thursday, citing the Federal Security Service (FSB).

The ship, which has been escorted to the port of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, had reportedly not been authorized to fish in the area and had not passed through mandatory maritime checkpoints, TASS reported.

The captain of the vessel refused to obey Russian coastguards' orders to stop and attempted to evade authorities, resulting in a six-hour pursuit at sea, the report said.

Though the ship originated from Lome, Togo, and bore the Togolese flag, its crew consisted of 19 Russian citizens.

Administrative proceedings have been instituted against the ship's captain, TASS reported. He

faces a fine equivalent to the value of the fish products illegally captured, as well as the possible seizure of his ship.

Another West African ship — registered in Sierra Leone — was detained in February off the coast of Russia's far eastern Primorye region for 5.5 million rubles' ($100,000 at the current exchange rate) worth of crabs, Russian media reported at the time.

Poachers are believed to illegally catch crabs worth upward of $700 million from Russian waters every year, according to a report published by Bloomberg news agency last year.

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