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Russian Warship Fires Warning Shots at Turkish Fishing Boat in Aegean Sea

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A Russian warship fired warning shots at a Turkish fishing boat to avoid a collision in the Aegean Sea on Sunday, the Russian Defense Ministry said in a statement.

Deputy Defense Minister Anatoly Antonov summoned the Turkish Embassy's military attache in Moscow over the incident, the statement said.

The crew of the Russian destroyer Smetlivy spotted an unidentified Turkish fishing boat at a distance of about 1 kilometer, headed for a collision with the anchored Russian warship, the ministry said.

"Despite numerous attempts by the Smetlivy, the crew of the Turkish vessel did not make radio contact with the Russian sailors and did not respond to special visual signals by semaphore and warning flares," the ministry said.

When the boat approached to within 600 meters of the Smetlivy, the Russian crew fired warning shots "guaranteed" to be non-lethal, the statement said. The Turkish boat "abruptly changed its course," passing within 540 meters of the Russian warship without making

contact, according to the statement.

But Muzaffer Gecici, the owner of the Turkish fishing boat Gecici Balikcilik, disputed the Russian account on the incident, CNN Turk reported.

The boat never came within a mile of the Russian warship, and the crew did not hear any warning shots, Gecici said, adding that video footage of the encounter had been handed over to Turkish authorities, CNN Turk reported.

The incident comes amid increasingly tense relations between Moscow and Ankara over Turkey's shooting down of a Russian bomber plane near the Turkish-Syrian border on Nov. 24.

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