Russian Tugboat Rescues 12 Sailors After LNG Tankers Catch Fire Near Crimea

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Kerch.FM / TASS

A Russian tugboat has rescued 12 surviving sailors and taken on board those killed after two tankers reportedly caught fire in neutral waters near Crimea, Russian maritime officials said on Tuesday morning.

At least 14 people were reportedly killed in the flames that Russia's Federal Agency of Maritime and River Transport (Rosmorrechflot) said probably broke out during a ship-to-ship fuel transhipment on Monday. A total of 31 sailors, including Turkish and Indian nationals, were reportedly on board the two Tanzania-flagged LNG tankers. Videos were posted on social media reportedly depicting the blaze.

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"At 5:00 a.m. the Mercury tugboat took onboard the rescued sailors and the bodies of those killed," the state-run TASS news agency quoted a Rosmorrechflot spokesperson as saying on Tuesday.

"As of 6 a.m., the status of the operation has been reclassified to search from rescue because there is no hope of finding survivors," the spokesperson was cited as [saying](#).

A Turkish consulate official in southern Russia's Novorossiysk [told](#) TASS that eight out of the 12 rescued sailors were Turkish nationals.

The Rosmorrechflot official said efforts to extinguish the fire were still ongoing, and [added](#) that there was no oil spill in the area.

The Russian Investigative Committee's southern transport department [opened](#) a criminal case into death by negligence.

Reuters contributed reporting to this article.

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