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Nigerian Pirates Abduct 2 Russian Sailors, Embassy Says

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The two Russian crew members of the Ambika oil dredger were abducted by unidentified armed men on Jan. 2 alongside a third crew member from India. **Jan De Nul**

Two Russian sailors have been captured by pirates off the coast of Nigeria, the state-run RIA Novosti news agency reported Tuesday, citing the Russian Embassy in Abuja.

The two Russian crew members of the Ambika oil dredger were abducted by unidentified armed men on Jan. 2 alongside a third crew member from India, Nigeria's Premium Times newspaper first reported Sunday. An ensuing firefight between the pirates and a Nigerian Navy rescue squad ended with the deaths of four rescue personnel.

"Two Russians and an Indian were abducted from the Ambika vessel and the embassy is taking measures to secure their release," RIA quoted the Russian Embassy in Abuja as saying. The embassy added that the sailors are in "satisfactory" condition.

The pirates left behind five crew members, the Premium Times reported, while two rescue personnel survived the firefight.

Update: The sailors have since been released and plan to return home "in the near future," the Russian Embassy said in a statement late Wednesday.

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