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4 Dead After Russian Ship Catches Fire Near South Korea

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Firefighters put out a fire on a Russian fishing ship at a pier in Ulsan, South Korea. **YONHAP / EPA / TASS**

A Russian-flagged fishing vessel caught fire off the coast of South Korea, leaving four out of the 25 sailors on board dead, Russia's state-run media reported Friday.

The 769-ton boat was carrying 100 tons of fish and seafood to Russia when the fire erupted after midnight off the coast of Ulsan, 300 kilometers southeast of Seoul, the South Korean news agency Yonhap reported.

The Ulsan coast guard said 21 people had been rescued, two of whom were receiving emergency treatment for minor burns.

The remaining four were initially declared missing.

Russia's maritime transportation agency Rosmorrechflot later told the state news agency RIA Novosti that their bodies have been found on board the vessel named the Kaltan.

All 25 crew members were said to be Russian nationals.

Firefighters put out the blaze aboard the vessel after it was tugged to port, according to Yonhap.

Neither the Ulsan coast guard nor Russia's Rosmorrechflot disclosed what may have caused the fire.

Rosmorrechflot claimed that the Kaltan's captain and chief engineer stayed behind during an evacuation to assist search and rescue efforts.

Russia's Far East transport prosecutor's office said it has launched a probe into the incident, TASS reported.

Russia's Investigative Committee, which probes major crimes, later said it has launched a case into the violation of safety rules.

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