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U.K. Expands Russian Shadow Fleet Sanctions

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RANJITH AR / pexels

The U.K. on Tuesday added two Russian companies and 20 ships to its sanctions list, as a part of its effort to tackle Russia's ghost fleet of oil tankers, the U.K. government announced.

The U.K. reinforced its support for Ukraine by sanctioning 2Rivers DMCC and 2Rivers PTE LTD and 20 shadow fleet vessels carrying Russian oil. The new sanctions target ships carrying illicit Russian oil, including three ships that have each carried more than four million barrels of Russian oil in 2024.

Experts say the shadow fleet, with opaque ownership or no proper insurance, has allowed the Kremlin to keep selling oil despite sanctions on exports and a price cap on global sales.

The Nordic-Baltic 8++ countries (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden and the U.K.) announced a new partnership on Monday to combat Russia's shadow fleet. In a joint statement, the group laid out their mission to disrupt and deter the fleet by tasking maritime authorities to request

relevant proof of insurance from suspected shadow vessels.

U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer said: "As Putin's oil revenues continue to fuel the fires of his illegal war, Ukrainian families are enduring cold, dark nights, often without heating, light or electricity, targeted by Russia's relentless missile attacks."

"These sanctions will add further pressure to Putin's stalling war economy, just as we strengthen Ukraine's hand with new funding for emergency support to meet its humanitarian needs and for vital repairs to the energy system, to help Ukrainians living through the third winter of Russia's illegal full-scale invasion."

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The U.K. sanctioned 30 other ships on Nov. 25. The U.K. has now sanctioned over 100 ships for transporting Russian energy, including 93 oil tankers, more than any other nation. The aim is for the ships to be left idling outside port, becoming a drain on Putin's coffers.

"These new measures will further drain Putin's war chest, by clamping down on the oil revenues he so desperately needs to fuel his illegal war and put those who enable Russia's oil exports on notice," the U.K. government said.

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