

Russia Says Cargo Ship Sank in Mediterranean After Explosion, 2 Crew Members Missing

By [AFP](#)

December 24, 2024



Russian cargo ship Ursula Major. [obl.ru](#)

Two crew members are missing after a Russian state-owned cargo ship sank in international waters in the Mediterranean Sea after an explosion on board, Russia's Foreign Ministry said Tuesday.

The Ursula Major sank "after an explosion in the engine room," the ministry's crisis unit said, adding that 14 crew members were rescued and taken to the Spanish port of Cartagena while another two remained missing.

Spain's sea rescue service said in a statement that the ship sent a distress call Monday morning when it was off the coast of southeastern Spain in bad weather, reporting that the ship was listing and a lifeboat had been launched. It dispatched a helicopter and rescue boats

and took the survivors to port, where they were helped by the Red Cross.

A Russian warship then arrived and took charge of the rescue operation since the ship was between Spanish and Algerian waters, after which the Ursu Major sunk overnight.

"According to the survivors' account, the cargo ship was carrying empty containers in the hold and two cranes on deck," the Spanish rescue service said.

Related article: ['Left to Fend for Themselves': Volunteers Step Up as Russian Government Falters in Black Sea Oil Spill Response](#)

The ship's owner Oboronlogistika, which belongs to the Russian Defense Ministry and also provides civilian transport and logistics, said the Ursu Major was carrying harbor cranes and hatch covers for icebreakers.

Russia's Foreign Ministry said the ship is owned by a subsidiary of Russia's Oboronlogistika, which belongs to Russia's Defense Ministry and also provides civilian transport and logistics services. A map on Oboronlogistika's website shows the company covers a route from Novorossiisk, in southern Russia, to Tartus, Russia's naval base in Syria.

The Ursu Major is listed on MarineTraffic.com as a 124.7-meter (409-foot) long general cargo ship sailing from Saint Petersburg to Vladivostok in Russia's Far East.

Oboronlogistika issued a press release last week with photos of the ship in port, saying it would transport a large and heavy load of cranes and hatch covers for icebreakers to Vladivostok. It said this was part of "state" efforts to develop ports and the northern sea route via the Arctic.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2024/12/24/russia-says-cargo-ship-sank-in-mediterranean-after-explosion-2-crew-members-missing-a87439>