

NATO to Send 2 Ships to Guard Baltic Sea Infrastructure, Finland Says

By [AFP](#)

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NATO is sending two ships to monitor critical undersea infrastructure and Russia's "shadow fleet" in the Baltic Sea following recent undersea cable cuts, Finland's foreign minister said Friday.

The Estlink 2 submarine cable, which carries electricity from Finland to Estonia, was disconnected from the grid on Dec. 25, just over a month after two telecommunications cables were severed in Swedish territorial waters in the Baltic Sea.

NATO announced late last month that it would strengthen its military presence in the Baltic Sea in response to the cable cuts.

Finland's Foreign Minister Elina Valtonen said Friday that the military alliance was sending "two vessels and we are also increasing other activities and presence in the area."

On Monday, the British-led Joint Expeditionary Force, which comprises Nordic and Baltic states, as well as the Netherlands, announced it would also increase its surveillance of undersea infrastructure in the Baltic Sea.

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Suspicion over the Estlink 2 cable cut has focused on the Eagle S, an oil tanker flagged under the Cook Islands and believed to be part of Russia's "shadow fleet."

That fleet, used to transport crude oil and petroleum products embargoed because of Moscow's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, often consists of aging vessels with opaque ownership and inadequate insurance.

"Finland has long been concerned about the risks to environmental and maritime safety posed by the shadow fleet used by Russia," Valtonen said Friday. "It is clear that the shadow fleet is also a threat to critical underwater infrastructure."

Finnish police seized the Eagle S on Dec. 28 as part of a criminal investigation into the cable damage. Authorities suspect the cables were severed when the tanker's anchor was dragged across them.

The ship remains anchored in Porvoo, east of Helsinki, while eight crew members have been banned from leaving Finland during the investigation. Finnish police said they recovered the vessel's anchor from the seabed earlier this week.

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