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Finland Braces for Potential Oil Spill After Tanker Explosion in Northwestern Russia

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The oil tanker Koala at port Ust-Luga. **Aleksandr Drozdenko / Telegram**

Authorities in Finland said they are preparing for a potential oil spill in the Gulf of Finland after Russian officials reported an explosion aboard an oil tanker in the northwestern Leningrad region.

"We're closely following the news about the oil tanker damaged in the port of Laukaansuu," Finnish Prime Minister Petteri Orpo wrote on social media Sunday, using the Finnish name of Russia's port of Ust-Luga on the Gulf of Finland.

"Finnish authorities are investigating the situation. Finland has increased its oil spill response readiness," Orpo added.

The explosion occurred in the engine room of the oil tanker Koala at the port of Ust-Luga, west of St. Petersburg, on Sunday morning, according to Russia's Federal Agency for Sea and

Inland Water Transport (Rosmorrechflot).

The crew evacuated the ship, which was built in 2003 and sails under the flag of Antigua and Barbuda, Rosmorrechflot said.

Finland's Gulf Coast Guard said it sent an inquiry to authorities in Russia but had not received a response as of Sunday afternoon, according to the Finnish public broadcaster Yle.

"Typically, we do get replies to such inquiries," field commander Tomi Waltari was quoted as saying.

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