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Russian Tall Ships Banned From Sail Amsterdam Festival

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The 117-meter Sedov barque at Amsterdam 2015. **Alf van Beem, CC0 / Wikimedia**

Russian sailing ships will be banned from a major maritime festival in the Netherlands this summer due to geopolitical tensions over Russia's war in Ukraine, organizers said Monday.

Sail Amsterdam, the Netherlands' largest public event, has been held every five years since 1975. This year's festival runs from Aug. 20 to Aug. 24.

"As a maritime event, we're closely linked to the Royal [Netherlands] Navy and we're not blind to what's happening in the world," Sail Amsterdam spokesperson Chris Jenssen said.

"At the moment, inviting Russian ships is not appropriate. I think people will understand that," Jenssen told Dutch broadcaster At5.

Previous editions of Sail Amsterdam have hosted Russian vessels, including the 117-meter Sedov barque — the world's largest sailing ship still in operation — the 114-meter Kruzenshtern barque and the 36-meter schooner Nadezhda.

Relations between Russia and the Netherlands have been strained since the 2014 downing of Malaysian Airlines flight MH17, which was flying from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur, but they deteriorated further after Moscow launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Sail Amsterdam was cancelled in 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

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