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Estonia Says Russia Detained Greek-Owned Tanker in Gulf of Finland

By Reuters

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Port of Sillamae, Estonia. **Wikipedia (CC BY-SA 4.0)**

Russia detained a Greek-owned oil tanker on Sunday after it left an Estonian port in the Gulf of Finland, the Estonian Foreign Ministry said, adding it had alerted NATO allies to the incident.

The Liberia-flagged ship Green Admire was leaving Sillamae port using a designated navigation channel that crosses Russian territorial waters, the ministry said in a statement.

"This is definitely connected to the fact that we have started to harass Russia's shadow fleet," Foreign Minister Margus Tsahkna told Estonian broadcaster ERR. He also said he had informed allies of the event.

Experts say the shadow fleet, which comprises tankers with murky ownership and no proper insurance, has helped Russia continue selling oil despite export bans and a price cap.

Estonia said last week that Moscow had briefly sent a fighter jet over the Baltic Sea during Estonia's attempt to stop a Russian-bound oil tanker.

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The Green Admire had departed Sillamae port on Saturday, and on Sunday afternoon was at one point anchored near Russia's Hogland Island, according to Marine Traffic, a website that tracks vessels.

A Greek government official said the ship had entered Russian waters to avoid shallows and that Russian authorities intercepted it and moved it to a safe place to impose a fine.

Shipping data showed the vessel's operator was Athens-based Aegean Ship Management, and one of its key insurers was listed as Norway-based Skuld. The companies did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

The ship was bound for Rotterdam with a load of Estonia's shale oil, the Estonian Transport Administration said. The tanker, with a maximum capacity of 700,000 barrels, was almost full, LSEG ship tracking data showed.

The navigation channel out of Sillamae through Russian territorial waters has been set up under an agreement between Estonia, Finland and Russia to avoid shallows in the Estonian waters, the administration said.

Vessels sailing into and out of the port will now be guided through Estonian territorial waters, it added.

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