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Finland Ends Probe Into Baltic Cable Damage, Officially Identifies Tanker Crew Members as Suspects

By AFP

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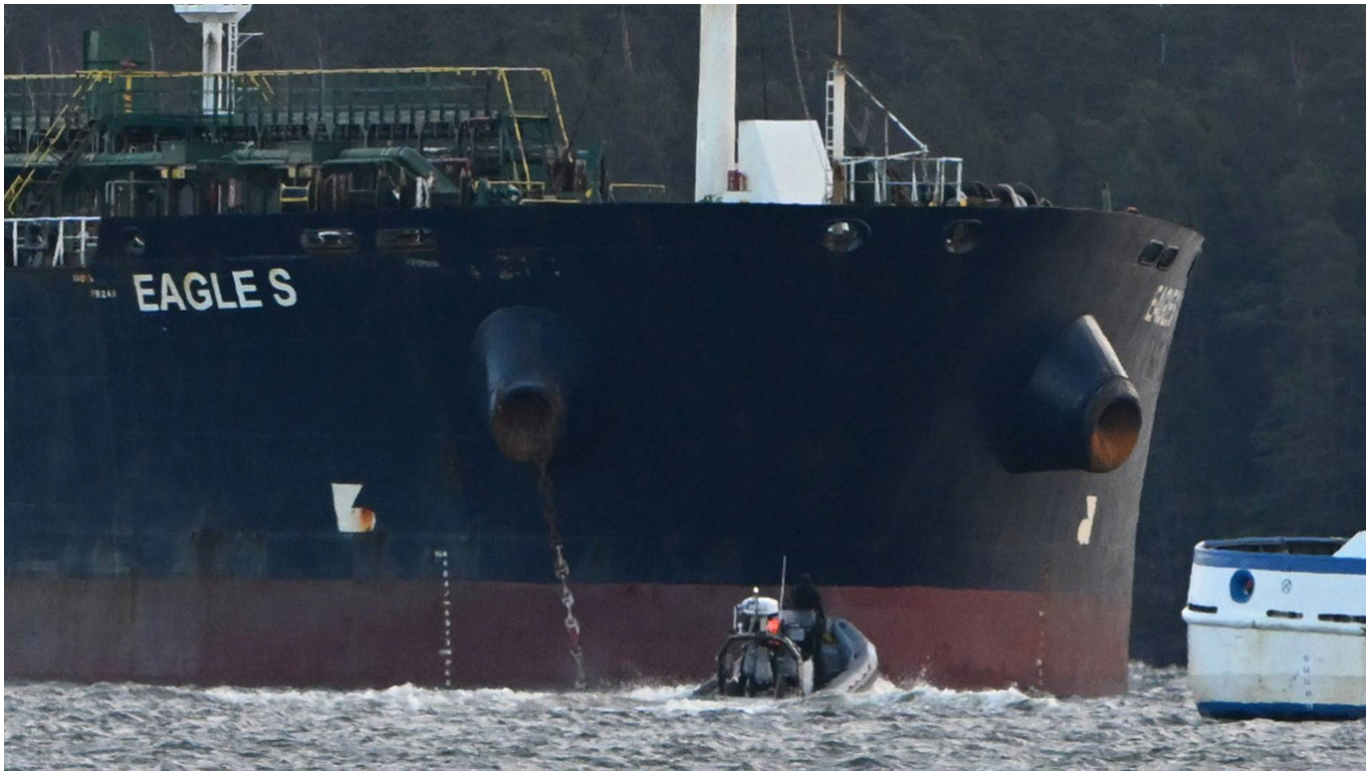

The seized oil tanker Eagle S in Porvoo, Finland. **Jussi Nukari / IMAGO / TASS**

Finnish police said Friday that they concluded their investigation into an oil tanker suspected of damaging several undersea cables in the Baltic Sea, officially identifying three crew members as criminal suspects.

The Eagle S, registered in the Cook Islands and believed to be part of Russia's so-called "shadow fleet," allegedly dragged its anchor for dozens of kilometers across the seabed, damaging one electrical cable and four telecommunications cables on Dec. 25.

The ship's anchor was later recovered by the Swedish navy in January.

"Based on the material collected from the vessel, the examination of the seabed and the interviews conducted with the crew, senior officers of the tanker Eagle S are suspected of

aggravated criminal mischief and aggravated interference with telecommunications," Finland's National Bureau of Investigation said in a statement.

The suspects include the ship's captain, chief mate and second mate.

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"The criminal investigation has examined and assessed, among other things, the extent of their responsibility for the condition of the vessel and the degree to which they should have observed the anchor falling into the sea," said Detective Chief Inspector Sami Liimatainen.

The case will now be handed over to prosecutors, who will decide whether to press criminal charges.

Several Baltic Sea cables were damaged last year in incidents some analysts believe to be part of a Russian "hybrid war" targeting Western infrastructure.

Sweden and Finland both joined NATO after Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, and the alliance has since stepped up surveillance in the Baltic region.

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