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Ukraine Says Russian Drone Hit Turkish Cargo Vessel in Black Sea

By AFP

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A clip released by the Ukrainian navy shows water on the deck of the VIVA. **Ukrainian navy/AFP**

Ukraine on Saturday accused Russia of striking a Turkish vessel transporting sunflower oil in the Black Sea, a day after a Russian attack triggered a fire on a Turkish-owned ship at a Ukrainian port.

"Russia delivered a targeted strike using a drone against the Turkish vessel 'VIVA', which was en route to Egypt carrying sunflower oil," Ukraine's navy said on social media.

None of the 11 crew was wounded. The ship was able to continue its journey, it added.

The navy published a video showing a damaged vessel with water on the deck and what appeared to be a drone engine.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky condemned the attack and vowed a "response."

"It was a strike against food security," Zelensky said in his evening address, arguing that "striking such ships, which have nothing to do with the war, is a direct challenge by Russia to the whole world.

"We will work with our partners to determine how to respond to this. There will be a response."

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The ship was in Ukraine's exclusive economic zone, using a grain corridor that hugs Ukraine's coastline and is supposed to provide safe passage for vital agricultural shipments through the Black Sea.

The strike is the second on a Turkish ship in as many days and comes after Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan called for a halt to attacks on ports and energy facilities during face-to-face talks with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin on Friday.

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