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U.S. Releases Russian Crew Members of Oil Tanker Seized in North Atlantic

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U.S. Coast Guard

Russia's Foreign Ministry said Wednesday that two Russian crew members of an oil tanker seized earlier this month by the United States had been released and were on their way home.

U.S. forces took control of the Russian-flagged Marinera in the North Atlantic earlier this month, alleging it was part of a so-called "shadow fleet" transporting oil from countries such as Venezuela, Russia and Iran in violation of U.S. sanctions.

American officials had said the Marinera's crew could face prosecution in the United States, which Russia called "categorically unacceptable."

"Two Russian sailors have been released and are on their way home to Russia," Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told the state-run RIA Novosti news agency on Wednesday.

The fate of the rest of the Marinera's crew was unclear.

Russia initially condemned the ship's seizure as "maritime piracy" but later said U.S. officials had agreed to release the two detained Russian crew members of the Marinera.

Washington sanctioned the ship, originally known as the Bella 1, in 2024.

AFP contributed reporting.

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