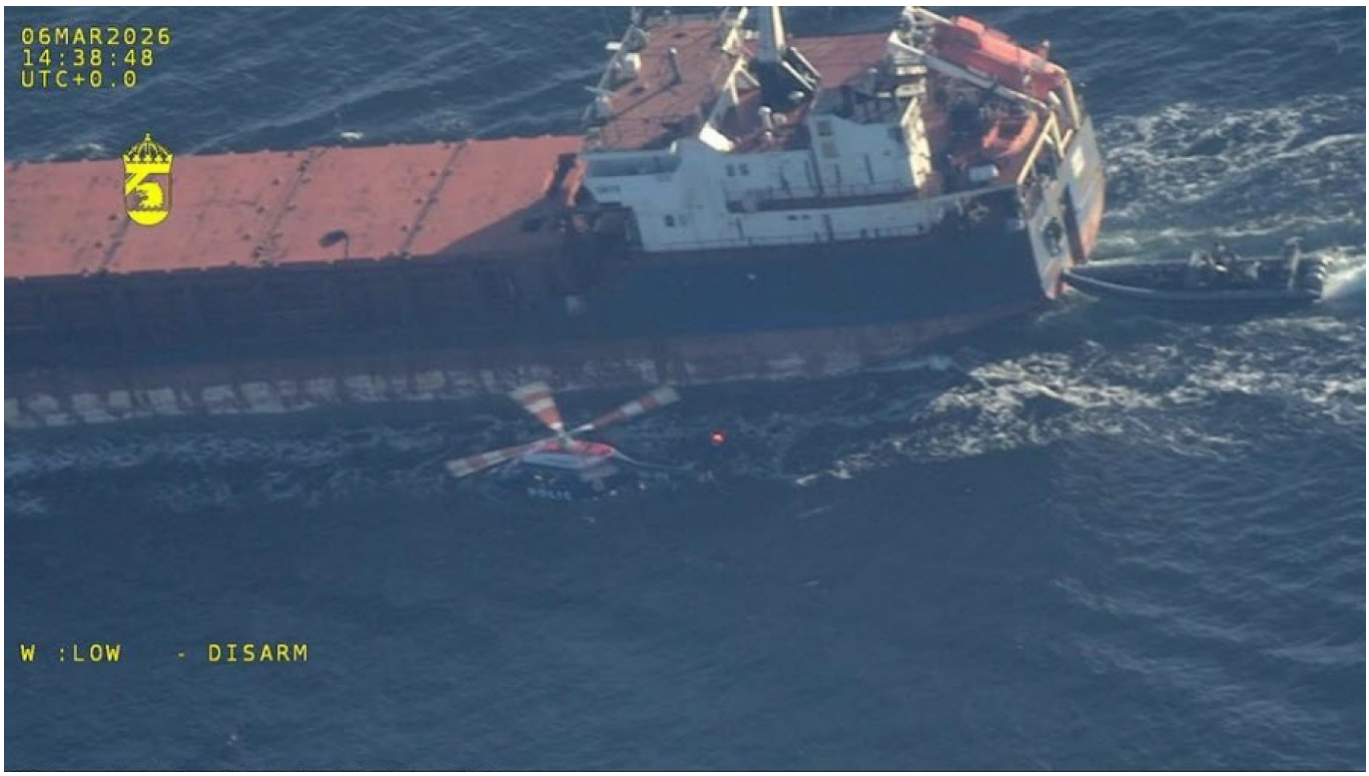
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Swedish Coast Guard Seizes Cargo Ship Bound for St. Petersburg

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Swedish authorities seize the Guinea-flagged cargo ship Caffa on March 6, 2026. **Swedish coast guard**

Sweden's coast guard took control of a Guinea-flagged cargo ship bound for St. Petersburg on Friday afternoon over suspected safety and seaworthiness violations, adding that it may also have been transporting stolen Ukrainian grain.

The Caffa was said to have been sailing under a false flag, the coast guard said, and it is also on Ukraine's national sanctions list.

"Information indicates that it has essentially been used to transport grain that is stolen, as we understand it, from Ukraine," the Swedish coast guard's acting head of operations, Daniel Stenling, said at a press conference on Saturday.

"We have been able to establish that the vessel is sailing under a false flag. She is registered in Guinea, but that registration is in fact false," Stenling added.

He said that "a majority" of the 11 crew members were Russian nationals.

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Ship-tracking data shows the Caffa departed from Casablanca in late February and was heading to St. Petersburg. Authorities said the vessel was seized off the coast of Trelleborg in southern Sweden.

Images released by the Swedish coast guard showed a helicopter landing on the ship and personnel boarding to take control of the vessel.

The Russian embassy in Stockholm said it was in contact with local authorities about the Russian crewmembers of the ship and was ready to provide them with consular assistance.

Sweden's coast guard said the main focus of the investigation of Caffa is a suspected "lack of seaworthiness."

One crew member was under investigation for violation of the maritime code on seaworthiness and on ship safety, Stenling said at the press conference on Saturday, declining to disclose the individual's identity or crew role.

"The investigative measures we have taken so far reinforce our suspicions and our view that there are extensive maritime safety deficiencies on this vessel," he said.

Western governments have seized a growing number of ships linked to Russia in recent months over alleged violations, including sanctions breaches and suspected sabotage operations.

Earlier this week, a suspected Russian "shadow fleet" oil tanker was seized by Belgium on a 10 million euro ($12 million) bond after inspections found safety infractions.

AFP contributed reporting.

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