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Sweden Detains Crew Member of Russian 'Shadow Fleet' Ship

By AFP

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The Guinea-flagged cargo ship Caffa **The Swedish Coast Guard**

Sweden has detained a crew member of a Russian "shadow fleet" cargo ship it seized on Friday off its coast on suspicion of transporting stolen Ukrainian grain, the Coast Guard said Sunday.

The 96-meter Caffa was headed for St. Petersburg when armed Swedish police boarded it off the southern town of Trelleborg.

Sweden's Coast Guard has said the ship is on Ukraine's sanctions list and was sailing under a false Guinean flag.

The Russian Embassy in Stockholm has said that 10 of the 11 crew members are Russian nationals.

"Findings that have been made have led to a crew member being detained and brought

ashore," the Coast Guard said in a statement on Sunday.

"The person is suspected of violations of the maritime code and the ship safety act, as well as the use of a forged document, which is an aggravated crime," it said.

The prosecution authority has taken over the preliminary investigation, said the Coast Guard, which is continuing its investigation on board the ship.

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Russia's "shadow fleet" consists of vessels used to skirt Western sanctions. They are often ageing ships in poor condition, without proper insurance and with opaque ownership.

The Coast Guard said it believes the Caffa has "extensive deficiencies" linked to its operation and activities.

"Our mandate is to uphold the regulations at sea. We will take action against vessels that violate them and that jeopardize safety in our maritime territory," the Coast Guard's Acting Head of Operations Daniel Stenling said in the statement.

The Swedish Transport Agency was to inspect the ship and determine whether it was seaworthy and authorized to continue its journey.

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