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France Seizes False-Flagged Oil Tanker Coming From Russia

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French military personnel descend from a helicopter to board the Deyna. **Emmanuel Macron / X**

The French navy said Friday that it intercepted a false-flagged oil tanker sailing from Russia in the Mediterranean.

"This morning in the Mediterranean, the French Navy intercepted and boarded another vessel from the shadow fleet, the Deyna," French President Emmanuel Macron posted on X.

Russia's so-called "shadow fleet" consists of vessels with opaque ownership used to skirt Western sanctions. They frequently change flags and sometimes sail with invalid registration papers to evade monitoring and enforcement.

The Mozambican-flagged Deyna, which sailed from Murmansk in northwestern Russia, was inspected over the regularity of its flag and will be escorted to an anchorage point for further checks, French authorities said.

Ship tracking services show that the 250-meter (820-feet) Deyna left Murmansk on March 1

and was due to arrive in Port Said, Egypt, on March 26.

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Macron stressed that France "will not allow" vessels like the Deyna to "line their pockets while helping finance Russia's war effort."

"The war involving Iran will not deflect France from its support for Ukraine, where Russia's war of aggression continues unabated," he added.

There was no immediate response from authorities in Moscow.

It is at least the third such operation by French authorities in recent months.

Last month, France released an oil tanker suspected of belonging to Russia's "shadow fleet" after its owner paid a multimillion-euro fine.

In September, it detained a Russian-linked tanker in a move President Vladimir Putin condemned as "piracy." Its captain was due to stand trial last month.

Sweden, meanwhile, has seized two false-flagged ships in recent weeks.

The EU lists hundreds of vessels suspected of belonging to Russia's "shadow fleet," barring them from European ports and maritime services.

AFP contributed reporting.

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