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Damaged Russian Tanker to Be Towed to Libya, State-Owned Company Says

By AFP

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This aerial photo taken on March 15, 2026 shows the wreck of Russian liquified natural gas (LNG) carrier Arctic Metagaz, which is adrift between Malta and Lampedusa. **MIGUELA XUEREB / NEWSBOOK MALTA / AFP**

A damaged Russian gas tanker that was abandoned in the Mediterranean will be towed to a Libyan port, according to a state-owned oil company in the north African country.

The Arctic Metagaz was ferrying about 700 metric tons of fuel and a consignment of liquified natural gas (LNG) from Russia to Egypt when it was hit by a series of explosions on March 3. Russia accused Ukraine of trying to blow it up.

The 30 crew members were rescued, leaving the LNG-laden carrier to drift between Malta and Libya for nearly three weeks.

Libya's National Oil Corporation (NOC) announced on Saturday that it would collaborate with

Italian group Eni to fetch the wrecked vessel.

“Managing this environmental threat is fully achievable,” NOC said in a statement. “It will be towed safely to one of the Libyan ports following coordination with the relevant authorities.”

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The company said it had already taken action to “reduce the risk of pollution.”

AFP footage taken from a plane earlier this month showed the carrier listing to one side, parts of it blackened and seriously damaged by fire, with two holes on either side in the middle of the hull.

According to Italy's Civil Protection Department, the carrier is located in international waters, but within the Libyan search and rescue zone.

It said that towing the wreck would be a “complex operation” due to the “large breach along its side.”

The WWF environmental group warned that any spill could cause long-lasting pollution in the area, among the most biodiverse in the Mediterranean basin.

The ship faced U.S. and European Union sanctions as a suspected part of Russia's “shadow fleet” of vessels carrying Russian oil and gas in contravention of international sanctions.

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