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Drone Hits Turkish Tanker Carrying Russian Oil in Black Sea

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Social media

A seaborne drone attacked a Turkish-operated oil tanker in the Black Sea early Thursday, Turkey's Transportation Minister said.

"I can say that a foreign-flagged ship operated by a Turkish company, which had loaded crude oil from Russia, reported an explosion in its engine room after midnight to our emergency call center," Abdulkadir Uraloğlu said in a televised interview.

"It appears to be an externally caused explosion, particularly directed at the engine room, with the aim of completely disabling the ship," the minister said, adding that a seaborne drone attacked the ship.

Uraloğlu did not say whether the attack happened in Turkish territorial waters, though local media reported that it took place around 30 kilometers (18 nautical miles) from the Bosphorus Strait, a key commodities shipping channel.

Ship-tracking and Refinitiv AIS data showed that the ship, the Sierra Leone-flagged Altura, had left Russia's port of Novorossiysk with around 1 ◙million barrels of crude oil.

In December, multiple oil tankers came under attack in the Black Sea, including in waters near Turkey, with Ukraine claiming responsibility for some of the incidents.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has warned against the Black Sea becoming an "area of confrontation" between Russia and Ukraine.

AFP contributed reporting.

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