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Russia Will Send Second Oil Tanker to Cuba, Energy Minister Says

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The Russian oil tanker Anatoly Kolodkin in Matanzas Bay, Cuba. **EPA / TASS**

Moscow plans to send a second ship carrying oil to Cuba as its economy buckles under the Trump administration's fuel blockade, Russian Energy Minister Sergei Tsivilev said Thursday.

The deliveries come amid a deepening energy crisis on the island, marked by widespread blackouts after a U.S. embargo sharply curtailed oil supplies in recent months.

"A vessel from the Russian Federation broke through the blockade. A second one is now being loaded. We will not leave the Cubans in trouble," state media quoted Tsivilev as saying.

Earlier this week, a Russian tanker unloaded hundreds of metric tons of oil at the port of Matanzas.

That ship, the Anatoly Kolodkin, is listed as coming under sanctions against Russia by the United States, European Union and the United Kingdom.

U.S. President Donald Trump said he was not opposed to shipments of oil to Cuba, including

from Russia, despite his own administration tightening economic sanctions on the island as part of a "maximum pressure" strategy.

Cuba, which imports around 60% of its energy supply, previously relied on oil sold by Venezuela. Those shipments ended after then-President Nicolás Maduro was captured in a U.S. military raid.

Russia has described the oil deliveries to Cuba as humanitarian assistance.

AFP contributed reporting.

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