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Russian Yacht, Cruise Ships Ferry Seafarers Out of Gulf – Philippines

By AFP

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The 142-meter luxury yacht Nord, reportedly owned by Russian tycoon Alexei Mordashov, arrives in the far eastern city of Vladivostok on March 31, 2022. **Pavel Korolyov / AFP**

A Russian super-yacht trapped in the Gulf by the Middle East war carried stranded Filipino seafarers out through the perilous Strait of Hormuz, the Philippines government said Tuesday.

The Russia-flagged Nord, a 142-meter- (466-foot) long yacht reportedly linked to the Russian billionaire Alexei Mordashov, passed the strait on Saturday, the Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) said in a statement.

On board the yacht and a bulk cargo ship that also passed that day "were 36 Filipino seafarers, bringing the total Filipino crew of vessels out of the Strait to close to 1,200," it added.

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The department's secretary Hans Leo Cacdac told a news conference last week that about 800 of them had been taken through the strait in cruise ships that escaped the strait with passengers.

Maritime trackers indicated that several cruise ships managed to make it through the route on April 18, after Iran briefly announced it was lifting its closure of the strait in the war.

Cacdac said 15 other Filipino seafarers were on board two container ships that were later seized by Iranian forces on April 22: the Epaminondas and the Francesca.

"We have been assured that all 15 Filipino seafarers are safe, unharmed, and it will be a matter of time for their ships to be cleared," he said.

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