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5 Azerbaijani Crew Members Killed in Sea of Azov Cargo Ship Attack

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General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine

An overnight drone attack on two cargo ships in the Sea of Azov left five Azerbaijani crew members dead, while at least one person was killed in a Ukrainian airstrike in the southwestern Belgorod region, Russian authorities said Friday.

Azerbaijan's Foreign Ministry said five of its citizens were killed and three others were wounded during an early morning attack on two commercial vessels, the Natra and the Zircon.

A ministry spokesperson said that while the ships are not state-owned Azerbaijani property, they were carrying a crew of 25 Azerbaijani nationals when the strike occurred in Taganrog Bay — a narrow northeastern arm of the Sea of Azov bordered by Russia's Krasnodar and Rostov regions.

Officials in Baku said they were coordinating emergency responses with domestic government agencies, diplomatic missions and the "competent authorities of the respective countries."

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Several employees from the Azerbaijani Embassy in Moscow have been dispatched to the area to monitor the wounded and arrange the repatriation of the deceased.

Azerbaijan's Foreign Ministry did not say who was responsible for the attack.

While Russian officials have not released a formal statement about the incident, the pro-Kremlin tabloid Izvestia, citing an anonymous source, reported that six people were hospitalized following the early morning attack in Taganrog Bay.

Meanwhile, in the Belgorod region, authorities said a drone strike on a business in the village of Otradovsky killed one man and injured another. The village is located around 15 kilometers (9.3 miles) east of the border with northeastern Ukraine's Sumy region.

Russia's Defense Ministry said it intercepted 123 Ukrainian drones across nine Russian regions, annexed Crimea and the Sea of Azov between Thursday night and Friday morning.

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