

France Intercepts 'Shadow Fleet' Tanker Near Sicily

By [AFP](#)

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The crude tanker Deliver. **Frank Behling / Marinetrffic**

France took control of a Russia-linked oil tanker off the coast of Sicily this week, French President Emmanuel Macron said Thursday, marking the latest maritime seizure aimed at disrupting Russia's so-called "shadow fleet."

"On Tuesday, the French navy boarded the oil tanker Deliver as it was passing off the coast of Sicily in breach of maritime law," Macron wrote in a post on X.

The vessel, which was flying a Cameroonian flag and sailing from Russia's Baltic port of Primorsk, was boarded by French forces due to doubts over the validity of its registration, according to the French maritime prefecture.

France's navy escorted the tanker to an anchorage spot for further inspections.

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Macron said the Deliver is tied to Russia's "shadow fleet," which is used to get around Western sanctions. To evade tracking, vessels often engage in what is called "flag-hopping" or operate under invalid registrations.

"We will not allow the 'shadow fleet' to circumvent sanctions and finance Russia's war effort," Macron said.

The operation marks the fifth time since September that France has boarded a suspected "shadow fleet" ship.

In late May, French authorities, working alongside British forces, detained the vessel Tagor in the Atlantic on suspicion of flying a false flag. The ship's Russian captain was initially taken into custody but was later released.

In response to the persistent evasion tactics, France announced a plan in April to double financial and criminal penalties for vessels that fail to display a valid flag or refuse to comply with naval instructions.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has slammed the interception of Russia-linked vessels as "piracy."

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