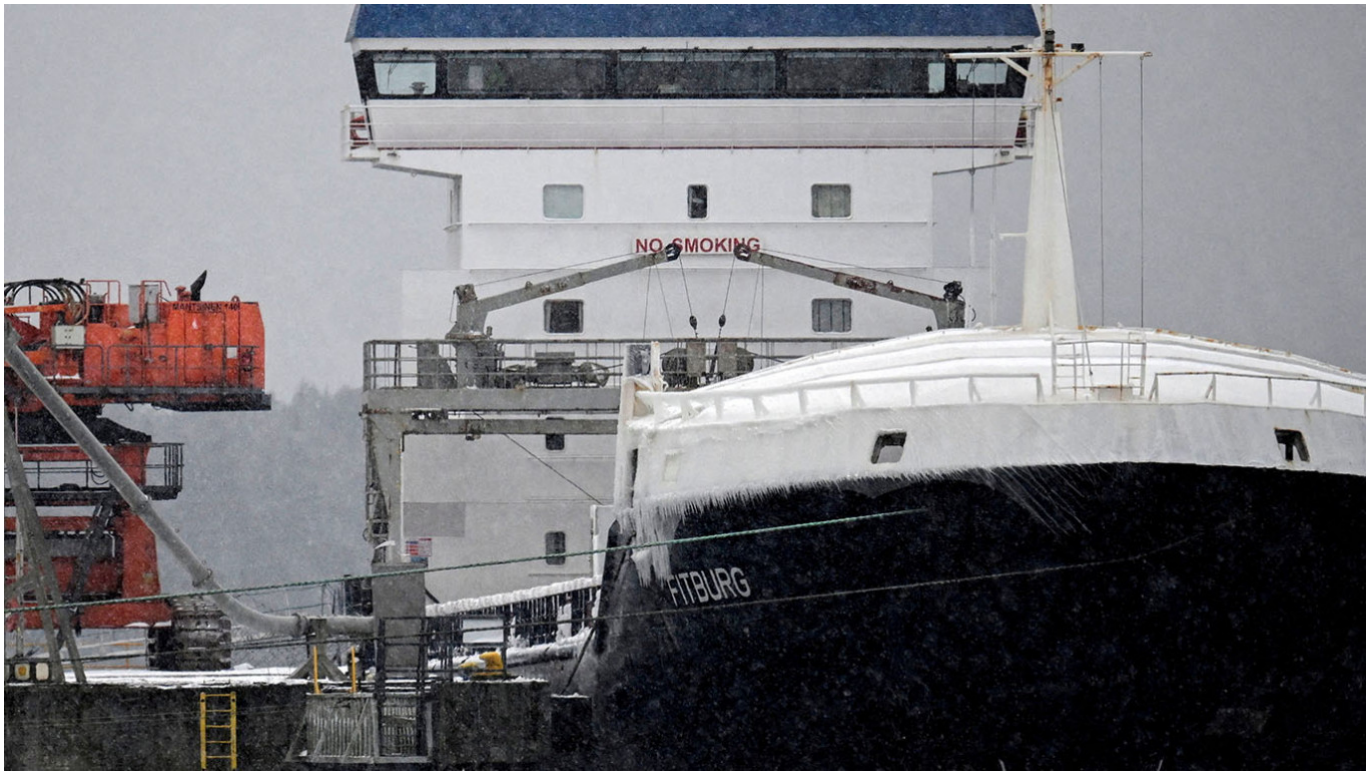
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Finland Jails Russian Captain and Azerbaijani Crew Member Over Baltic Sea Cable Damage

By Reuters

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The Fitburg at the port of Kantvik after it was seized in December 2025. **Markku Ulander / Lehtikuva / Reuters**

A Finnish court on Thursday found a Russian ship captain and an Azerbaijani crew member guilty of aggravated sabotage after their vessel, the cargo ship Fitburg, damaged two underwater telecommunications cables in the Gulf of Finland last year.

Finland seized the Fitburg in the Gulf of Finland on Dec. 31 while it was sailing from St. Petersburg, Russia, to Israel. Authorities in the Nordic country suspected it purposefully damaged cables running from Finland to nearby Estonia.

A judge at the Helsinki District Court sentenced the Russian ship captain to 3 years and 6 months in prison, while the Azerbaijani crew member received 2 years and 10 months.

In a statement, the court said the two men acted intentionally when the ship dragged an anchor chain and shank along the seabed for around 130 kilometers (81 miles).

Lawyers said that the Fitburg's captain will appeal the verdict, though the crew member has not yet decided whether to do so.

The Helsinki District Court also ordered the two men to jointly pay around 1.9 million euros ($2.1 million) in damages. The captain is required to pay another 85,000 euros, the verdict showed.

Both the captain and crew member, who have remained in Finland since the Fitburg's seizure and are subject to travel bans, have denied any wrongdoing. They also challenged Finland's jurisdiction in the case.

The 14 crew members of the vessel were nationals of Russia, Georgia, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan, investigators said.

Finland has stepped up efforts to protect its undersea infrastructure following a string of incidents impacting cables and pipelines in the Baltic Sea in recent years.

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