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Russian Cargo Ship Still on Fire off Finland After Attack

By Reuters

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Finnish Border Guard

A fire onboard a Russian cargo ship that was struck by drones in the Baltic Sea continued to burn through the night even as efforts were made to douse the flames, Finland's coast guard said on Sunday.

The Finnish military has said the strike on the Sparta II on Saturday was likely carried out by Ukraine and that the vessel later drifted into Finnish waters where it remains at anchor. The 16 crew members were evacuated onto a nearby Russian ship.

Pictures and video released by the coast guard showed several vessels spraying the Sparta II with water cannons during the night in a bid to put out the flames and cool down containers stacked on its deck.

Ukraine has sent waves of military drones towards Russia's northwest coastal Leningrad

region this year, including some that strayed into the airspace of nearby Baltic countries, leading to fears that the war was spilling onto NATO territory.

The ship, bound for Russian exclave Kaliningrad, was damaged in international waters west of Russia's Gogland island, Finland's Defense Forces have said, corroborating an account by Russian officials.

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The risk of further attacks in the Gulf of Finland, a narrow arm of the Baltic Sea, cannot be ruled out, Estonian Navy Commander Ivo Vark told public broadcaster ERR on Sunday.

Finland's military said last week it had detected a strike on a Russian warship in the same area during Ukrainian drone attacks.

The Sparta II is a 121-meter Russian-flagged cargo vessel owned by Russian shipping company Oboronlogistika that left St. Petersburg on Friday, according to LSEG data.

The vessel is subject to U.S. sanctions, according to the U.S. Treasury Department.

Oboronlogistika provides logistics services for the Russian Defense Ministry, according to the company's website.

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