The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Zelensky Confirms Attack Against Russian Warship in Libya

November 23, 2026



A satellite image of a capsized Russian corvette after an explosion at the Benghazi naval base, Libya.
Vantor / Handout via REUTERS

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Monday that Ukraine's military used several naval drones to attack and sink a Russian warship and a cargo vessel alleged to be transporting Russian weapons near the coast of Libya over the weekend.

In a post on X, Zelensky called the strikes "an exemplary Ukrainian operation in response to Russia's war."

"Despite all the enemy's efforts to counter the attack, the Russian corvette Merkury was sunk," he wrote in the post, which included a nighttime video of the operation. "It's one of their newest ships, commissioned in 2023, during the full-scale war."

Zelensky claimed that a Russian Ka-27 combat helicopter was also destroyed along with the Merkury.

“We continue our operations in designated waters. We are responding to Russia’s aggression,” he wrote.

Al Jazeera, citing local sources, reported Sunday that an “unknown number” of Libyan and Russian nationals were killed in the attack. The Merkury, a warship designed to patrol coastal waters and escort other ships, was reportedly carrying weapons, ammunition and drones.

Medical sources told Reuters that 10 people, including Russians and Libyans, were slightly injured and were receiving treatment in Benghazi, where the Merkury was docked.

Benghazi is the de facto capital of the eastern Libyan government, which maintains close ties with Russia.

Related article: Libya’s Eastern Government Suspects Drone Attack Caused Explosion on Russian Ship

Libyan military officials told the Associated Press that several Ukrainian sea drones were launched at the Merkury from a base run by Ukrainian forces in western Libya.

Ukrainian forces operated under covert deals mainly at an airbase in the coastal city of Misrata, the coastal town of Zawiya and other military facilities in the Libyan capital of Tripoli, AP reported in March, when another Russian tanker was struck in a suspected sea drone attack.

Satellite imagery cited by all three news outlets showed the Merkury largely capsized and submerged at the Benghazi port.

Russia has not officially commented on the loss of the Merkury. The Libyan government rejected efforts to turn Libya “into an arena for international conflicts or a theater for external powers to settle scores.”

The strike in the Mediterranean followed another suspected Ukrainian maritime drone attack on Saturday against the U.S.-sanctioned Russian cargo vessel Sparta II. That ship, operated by the Defense Ministry logistics firm Oboronlogistika, burned and drifted into Finnish waters after being targeted in international waters in the eastern Baltic Sea.

Reuters contributed reporting.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2026/11/23/zelensky-confirms-attack-against-russian-warship-in-libya-a94346