The Moscow Times
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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Zelensky Confirms Ukraine Was Behind Drone Attack on Russian Cargo Ship in Gulf of Finland

By Reuters

November 24, 2026



Firefighting boats battle a blaze on the Sparta II cargo ship after it was attacked in the Gulf of Finland on Nov. 22, 2026. **Finnish Border Guard / Handout via REUTERS**

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has confirmed that his country was responsible for Saturday's drone strike on a Russian cargo ship in the Gulf of Finland.

Finnish, Estonian and Russian vessels took part in a joint rescue operation to put out a fire that broke out on the Sparta II, a Russian-flagged cargo vessel owned by a shipping company with connections to Russia's Defense Ministry.

On Sunday, a Russian boat towed the Sparta II back into Russian waters, where it is now anchored in St. Petersburg.

Zelensky argued that the cargo ship was a legitimate military target.

"We did everything right," Zelensky told Bloomberg in an interview published on Tuesday. "Every vessel with a Russian flag, everything that carries weapons or any sanctioned cargo that can carry God knows what — it is a legitimate target for us in Russian territorial or neutral waters."

Zelensky said the attack occurred in Russian territorial waters. "We had all the rights for that and then some drift happened, and surely there are questions," he said.

He acknowledged that some European allies were "worried when something is happening in the Baltic Sea." Zelensky said he instructed his ministers and the military to "communicate more with partners so that they have enough details and there are no surprises."

Zelensky's comments come as Norway's Defense Minister, Tore O. Sandvik, said that Ukrainian attacks on Russian targets in the Baltic Sea region "must respect our need for stability in our near areas.

"We have a good dialogue with the Ukrainians on that now," Sandvik said on Tuesday.

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https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2026/11/24/zelensky-confirms-ukraine-was-behind-drone-attack-on-russian-cargo-ship-in-gulf-of-finland-a94364