

Beat: News

Iran's IRGC seizes 2 Greek oil tankers in Persian Gulf over violations

Greece confirms seizure of its tankers

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Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) on Friday seized two Greek oil tankers in the Persian Gulf over violations, days after an Iranian oil tanker was captured by Greece in its territorial waters followed by transfer of the oil to the US.

"The IRGC Navy today seized two Greek oil tankers for violations they have carried in the azure waters of the Persian Gulf," the IRGC said in a statement.

Earlier in the day, Iran's Nour News reported that the country was going to take "punitive action" against Greece over the tanker's seizure.

Nour News, which is affiliated with the country's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), made the announcement without explaining what kind of action the Islamic Republic intended to take.

Iran's Ports and Maritime Organization (PMO) issued a statement on Wednesday, describing the US seizure of the Iranian oil cargo from a Russian-operated ship in Greece's territorial waters as an "act of piracy" that was "in violation of international standards".

The PMO said the vessel had been held by the Greek government on the coasts of that country, and the cargo on board the ship was seized upon court order and in coordination with the US government.

On Thursday, Reuters quoted unnamed sources as saying that the US Department of Justice had confiscated 700,000 barrels of Iranian oil cargo seized last month off the southern Greek island of Evia onboard a Russian-operated ship.

US 'looking into' reports Iran seized Greek tankers

Meanwhile, the US Navy's Mideast-based 5th Fleet said it was "looking into" reports that Iran had seized two Greek oil tankers.

Cmdr. Timothy Hawkins of the 5th Fleet told The Associated Press that the Navy was continuing to investigate, without further elaborating.

A report by Lloyd's List Intelligence said that in two seemingly similar operations, the suezmaxes Delta Poseidon and Prudent Warrior, both under Greek flag, were seized by Iranian forces on Friday afternoon.

Also on Friday, Iran's Foreign Ministry summoned the chargÃ© d'affaires of Switzerland, which represents Washington's interests in Tehran, to protest the US seizure of the Iranian oil cargo.

The ministry also on Wednesday summoned the Greek chargÃ© d'affaires to protest the move.

Greece confirms seizure of its tankers

Athens announced on Friday that Iranian navy helicopters had landed gunmen on the two tankers earlier in the day.

One of them, the Delta Poseidon, was sailing in international waters at the time, the Greek Foreign Ministry said, adding that the second tanker was near the Iranian coast when seized.

The ministry also said nine Greeks were among the crews of both vessels, but did not give a number of other sailors on board.

Athens has informed the European Union and the International Maritime Organization of the incident, it added.

According to Lloyd's List Intelligence, Delta Poseidon's destination was Agioi Theodoroi, near Corinth, and the cargo is understood to be for the Motor Oil refinery located there.

Source: GlobalSecurity.org Newsletter, ARAC global media partner.

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