

Tankers

Drone hits tanker in third Black Sea attack on Russian oil shipments

Crew evacuated from the Azeri-owned Nelsa on Monday



An oil tanker is moored at the Sheskhari complex in Novorossiysk, Russia Photo: Scanpix

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A Russian-trading suezmax tanker has become the latest vessel to suffer an apparent Ukrainian attack in the Black Sea.

The Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC), which runs a terminal near Russia's Novorossiysk, said on Monday loadings were again suspended after a brief resumption, following a new incident.



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CPC is internationally owned and ships out a blend of mainly Kazakhstan crude, with some Russian oil mixed in.

A drone hit the 157,000-dwt Nelsa (built 2010) on its starboard side during cargo operations at one of CPC's single-point moorings.

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A blaze began on the ship's deck and in some of its compartments, CPC added.



This was eventually extinguished by the crew and emergency teams.

CPC tugs evacuated 22 seafarers, but the master and chief officer remained on board, and the vessel remained afloat.

“Oil loading operations were suspended. No oil spill occurred and no ignition of oil in the cargo tanks was allowed,” CPC said.

The ship is listed as owned by Nurlis Stormcore of Azerbaijan, which could not be contacted.

The suezmax’s AIS has been switched off for nearly three days.

The Nelsa was the first shadow fleet ship intercepted in May under new powers granted to the European Union’s EUNAVFOR IRINI.



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The naval force, set up six years ago to enforce an arms embargo on Libya, has been quietly transformed into yet another instrument in Brussels’ toolbox to disrupt Russian energy exports, TradeWinds reported.

Three suezmaxes were attacked by drones at CPC over the weekend.

The attacks came as Ukraine appeared to have kept up its aggressive campaign against its antagonist.

The 163,000-dwt Asia (built 2022) and the 157,000-dwt Nissos Ios (built 2021) were hit on Sunday during loading operations, CPC added.

The Asia, owned by George Procopiou's Dynacom Tankers Management, caught fire. This was later extinguished.

The Nissos Ios is owned by the Alafouzos family's Kyklades Maritime.

"There were no injuries or fatalities among CPC staff or contractors. There was no oil spill," CPC said.



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The vessels remained afloat, the consortium added.

On Friday, CPC said a suezmax loading oil was hit and damaged by two drones.

Sources told Reuters this was Nordic American Tankers' 159,000-dwt Nordic Zenith (built 2011), chartered by ExxonMobil.

CPC said a fire that had broke out on the ship has been put out.

Terminal vessels evacuated 13 crew members from the tanker, while nine remained on board.

"The tanker has been removed from the loading schedule and is unfit for mooring or loading operations at the CPC terminal," CPC said.

Nordic American told TradeWinds the ship has safely exited the Black Sea region.

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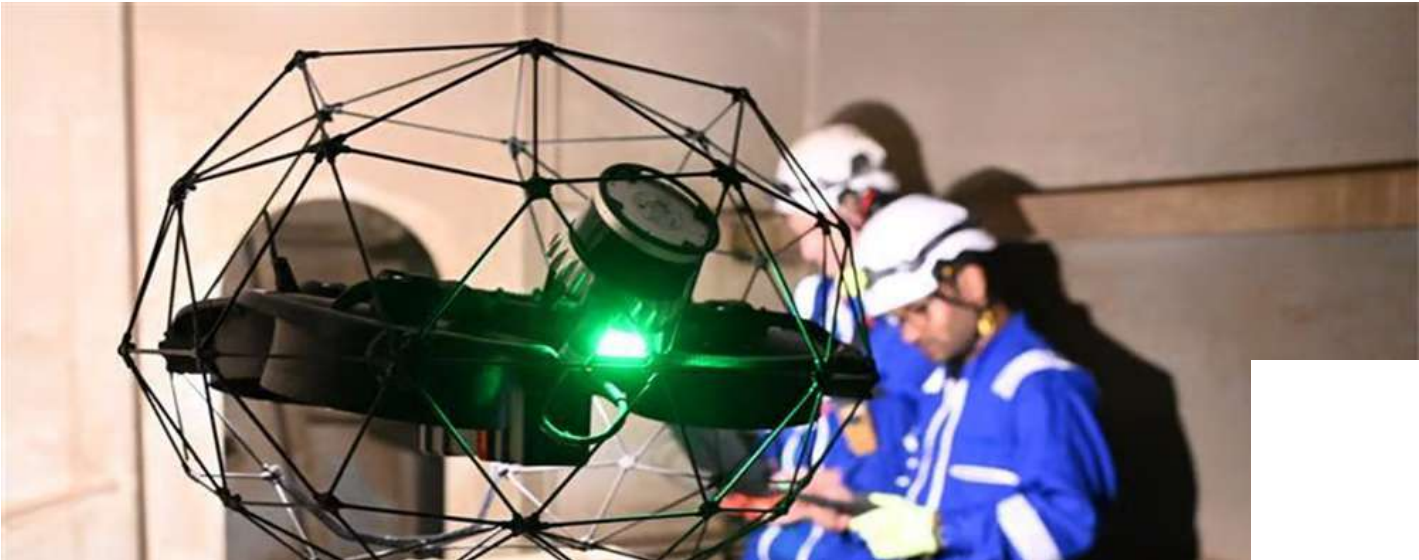
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