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Syria calls for independent probe into sinking of ship in Black Sea

By Reuters

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[1/3] General cargo vessel ALFA WATAN, one of the two vessels attacked in drone strikes in the Black Sea off NATO member Bulgaria, according to a October 6, 2026 statement by Bulgarian PM Radev, sails in... [Purchase Licensing Rights](#)  [Read more](#)



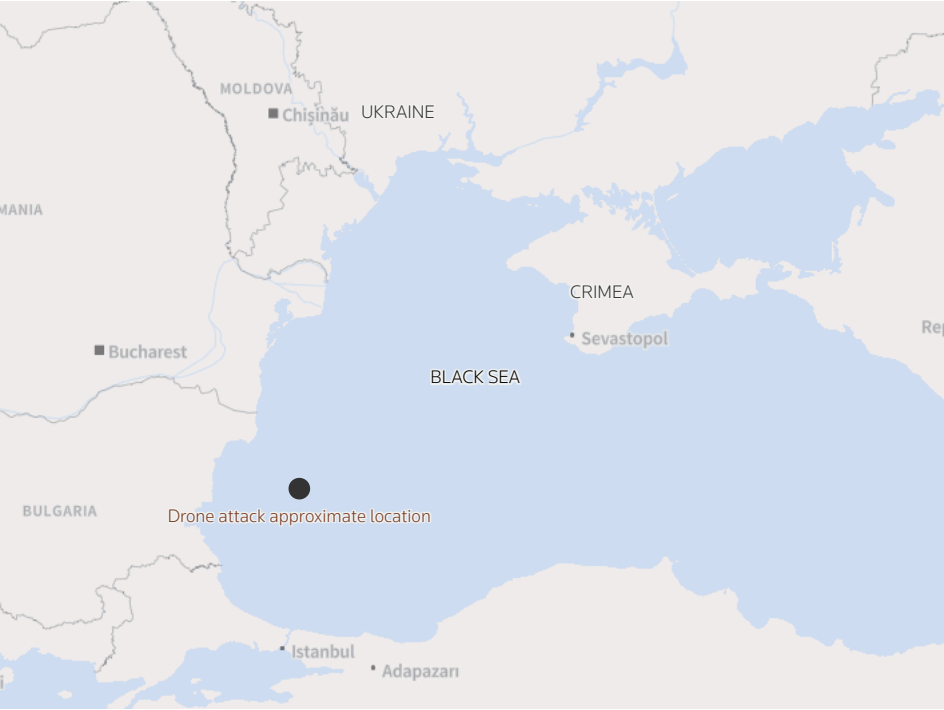
Oct 8 (Reuters) - Syria called on the International Maritime Organization and Bulgarian authorities on Thursday to conduct an independent investigation into the sinking of a cargo ship in the Black Sea, whose 10 crew members including 9 Syrians were missing.

The investigation should look into why search and rescue operations stopped before the fate of the missing crew was determined, said Mazen Aloush, director for international relations of the Syrian General Authority for Ports and Customs.

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Bulgaria said on Wednesday [it had halted its search for the crew](#) of a ship that sank after being hit by a drone about 70 nautical miles (130 km) off its coast. Vice-Admiral Rumen Nikolov said no trace of the sailors had been found and that the rescue operation would not resume.

Drone attack sinks ship in Black Sea



Source: Reuters calculations | By Canan Sevgili

The ship, the Alfa Watan, was attacked early on Tuesday in Bulgaria's exclusive economic zone, Aloush said.

It remains unclear who carried out the attack.

Aloush added the authority was closely monitoring the incident and condemned the targeting of a civilian commercial vessel, saying it represented a serious violation of maritime safety and a direct threat to sailors' lives, as well as international trade routes.

He urged authorities to use all available technical means to locate and inspect the wreckage to help establish the cause of the incident, and said the case should not be closed before all available avenues had been exhausted to determine the crew's fate.

He also called on international organisations and maritime bodies to strengthen measures to protect commercial shipping and crews in the Black Sea amid growing risks to maritime transport in the region.

Russia has struck cargo ships in the Black Sea with drones and missiles during its war with Ukraine.

Bulgarian Prime Minister Rumen Radev said on Wednesday that the nature of the cargo and the direction of travel of the ships could point to Russia, but said there was no evidence allowing Sofia to directly attribute responsibility.

Russia's embassy in Sofia said the merchant vessel was not among targets hit by Russian drones.

Reporting by Kinda Makieh and Khalil Ashawi in Damascus Writing by Tala Ramadan; Additional writing by Antonis Pothitos Editing by Peter Graff and Xevi Fontdegloria

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