

DRONE SINKS THE CARGO SHIP KHORYV OFF CONSTANTA: 1 SAILOR KILLED, 3 MISSING; ROMANIA'S PRESIDENT LINKS IT TO RUSSIA'S ESCALATION

On 23 October 2026 the Comoros-flagged cargo ship Khoryv, bound from Turkey for the Romanian Danube port of Sulina with 13 Ukrainian and Azerbaijani crew, sent a distress signal at about 10:00 local time some 24 km (13 nautical miles) off Constanța, just outside Romania's territorial waters. Romania's Interior Ministry said the vessel sustained major damage and capsized; another commercial ship rescued nine sailors alive and recovered one body, and three sailors were missing. The Romanian Naval Authority said bad weather and poor visibility prevented a helicopter rescue. It is at least the seventh merchant ship hit off Romania and Bulgaria in about two weeks.

UKRAINE EVIDENCE HUB
BEYOND UKRAINE
AS OF 24 OCT 2026

DEGREE OF PROOF

OFFICIAL ATTRIBUTION

A government, a prosecutor, the EU, NATO or a UN body has formally named Russia, its services or its state-backed forces. This is a position of that authority, not a verdict.

WHO ESTABLISHED IT

President Nicușor Dan, 23 Oct 2026, said the ship was "struck by a drone and sank near Romanian territorial waters" and that the attack is "clearly part of the escalation that Russia is carrying out in the context of the war in Ukraine" (as reported by Reuters and The Moscow Times). Prime Minister Luca Niculescu called it "unacceptable" and "a flagrant violation of international law". The drone type and its launch point have not been published.

LATEST

On 23 October 2026 the European Commission President called the attacks "reckless"; Ukraine, Romania and Bulgaria asked NATO to speed up additional surveillance for shipping, and NATO said it is sending maritime patrol aircraft, radar systems and drones to the Black Sea. No Russian response had been reported.

LINK TO THE WAR AGAINST UKRAINE

The ship was heading for Sulina, a Danube port on the export route used for Ukrainian cargo, during the Russian drone campaign against shipping in the western Black Sea; ten of the crew were Ukrainian.

SOURCES

- C** The Moscow Times – Romania Blames Russia for Deadly Drone Attack on Cargo Ship · 2026-10-23
<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2026/10/23/romania-blames-russia-for-deadly-drone-attack-on-cargo-ship-a94068>
- C** Al Jazeera – Romania blames Russia after drone sinks ship in the Black Sea · 2026-10-23
<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2026/10/23/romania-blames-russia-after-drone-sinks-ship-in-the-black-sea>
- C** Meduza (Reuters) – Romania blames Russia for drone strike that sinks cargo ship in Black Sea · 2026-10-23
<https://meduza.io/en/news/2026/10/23/romania-blames-russia-for-drone-strike-that-sinks-cargo-ship-in-black-sea-killing-one-sailor-and-leaving-three-missing>

WHAT WE ASK OF MEMBER STATES

- Name each violation in national statements and at the UN Security Council.
- Support NATO air defence along the eastern flank.
- Hold Russia responsible under international law for each incursion.

