Ankara – 2 December

12:21 (TRT)

Subject: Third Russian Tanker Attacked in the Black Sea
Status: Heightened

Event:
Turkish maritime authorities report that a Russian-flagged tanker, MIDVOLGA-2, carrying sunflower oil from Russia to Georgia, was attacked in the Black Sea on Tuesday. The incident occurred approximately 130 km (80 miles) off the Turkish coast, within close proximity to Turkish territorial waters. All 13 crew members aboard the vessel are safe, and the ship has not requested assistance.

The attack follows Ukrainian naval drone strikes on two Russian "shadow fleet" oil tankers Kairos and Virat on Friday. Those attacks took place inside Turkey's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), prompting concern from Ankara.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan condemned Ukraine's recent drone strikes, warning that such actions represent a "worrying escalation" and pose risks to navigation, human life, and the environment in the Black Sea. He stated that Turkey is issuing formal warnings to all involved parties.

Both the Kairos and Virat have been identified as vessels used to help Russia circumvent Western sanctions imposed after the 2022 invasion of Ukraine. Ukraine has conducted multiple naval drone operations during the war, though previous missions primarily targeted the northern Black Sea rather than areas near Turkey.

Actions: The United States should mediate between Turkey, Russia and Ukraine in order to prevent escalations. At the same time the United States should discuss with Ukraine what their strategic goal was with the attack and if it is a viable strategy.