

## Zhibek Zholy leaves Turkish port

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Ukraine's foreign ministry has said that it would be summoning the Turkish ambassador to the country for talks to seek clarification of the situation, a day after Russian-flagged cargo ship **Zhibek Zholy** (IMO 9598880), which is suspected of carrying stolen Ukrainian grain, left the Turkish port of Karasu.

Ukraine had previously claimed that Turkey had agreed to detain the vessel until the nature its cargo was established (*IMN* July 4th and subsequent dates).

The ministry said that it was "unacceptable" for the ship to have been allowed to leave Karasu. Refinitiv ship tracking data showed the vessel sailed from the small port on the Black Sea late on Wednesday July 6th.

AIS states that the vessel is en route to the port of Kavkaz, Russia, with an ETA of July 8th, but this port looks to have been used as a "default" destination for Russian-flagged ships in the past, and its true next port of call could be somewhere else.

Ukraine's Ambassador to Turkey, Vasyl Bodnar, said on Sunday that the Turkish authorities had detained the ship, but Russia's foreign ministry said that this was "fake news" and that the ship was undergoing standard procedures before leaving.

Ukraine's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has confirmed the departure, stating that, although the ship failed to unload, its appeal for the arrest of the vessel and its cargo had not been successful.

Zhibek Zholy is currently owned by Ktz Express Shipping and the beneficial owner is Ktz Express, a Kazakhstan-based company. GreenLine, a Russian company, assumed the role of operator role on February 24th, the first day of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

"The Ukrainian side, with deep disappointment, accepted the information mentioned and appeals to the Turkish side, insisting to investigate the said situation and provide an exhaustive response to the requests of the relevant authorities of Ukraine, and by all means to prevent such cases in the future," the Ministry said.

Meanwhile, Moldova-flagged chemical tanker **Millennial Spirit** (IMO 7392610), which has been drifting in the Black Sea for over four months, was hit by another Russian missile during an air strike on the Odesa region on July 7th.

The 1974-built ship, formerly known as **Freyja**, was first hit by a navy ship 12nm south of Ukraine's Yuzhniy port on February 25th (IMN, February 28th), the day after Russia invaded Ukraine. The Russian crewmembers were all rescued, but two of them were seriously wounded in the first attack.

The Ukrainian military has claimed that the ship is "an environmental time bomb". It said that the vessel was drifting without a crew because of the Russian blockade of Ukrainian ports.

"Currently, it is likely that the remains of the cargo are burning. At the time of the first hit, the ship carried more than 500 tonnes of diesel fuel," said Serhiy Bratchuk, spokesman for the Head of the Odesa Regional Military Administration, on Telegram.

2016-built, Russia-flagged, 5,686 gt Zhibek Zholy is owned by KTZ Express Shipping of Yesil audany, Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan. It is managed by Green-Line LLC of St Petersburg, Russia.

1974-built, Moldova-flagged, 1,665 gt Millennial Spirit is owned by Enertrans Ltd care of manager Millennial Energy Trading Ltd of Birkirkara, Malta. ISM manager id Real Management Services Ltd of Kherson, Ukraine.