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Russian ships seen obscuring names and IMO numbers while transiting the Bosphorus

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Yörük Işık

Russian-linked ships are getting crews to crudely obscure vessel identities, contravening laws established by the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

Yörük Işık, who describes himself on social media as an obsessive ship spotter along the Bosphorus, has tracked “dozens” of vessels where original names – and even IMO numbers – have been painted over.

Işık told *Splash* that Russians increasingly did not care about how the repainted ship names looked.

“There are more and more homemade efforts to write names, ridiculously small, crooked, or written by people who are not familiar with Latin letters,” Işık said.

On X, Işık has captured many images of ships transiting with questionable backgrounds or identities.

One such example was Murmansk Shipping’s Russian flag bulk carrier *Grumant* which transited the Bosphorus recently to occupied Sevastopol after delivering 20,000 tonnes of stolen wheat to Tartus in

Syria. Grumant transited the Bosphorus with the first four letters deleted and the company logo painted over.

An IMO spokesperson told *Splash* that SOLAS regulation XI-1/3 requires ships' identification numbers to be permanently marked in a visible place either on the ship's hull or superstructure.

States in their capacity as flag, port or coastal states have the responsibility to enforce the regulation.

IMO Resolution A.1162(32) also urges governments take all action within their national laws to prevent and suppress all forms of maritime fraud and cooperate fully in exchanging information for this purpose.

[Russia](#) [Turkey](#)