

Foreign vessel with 12 crew carrying 'smuggled fuel' seized in Persian Gulf – Iran's IRGC

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Iran's Revolutionary Guards have seized a "foreign vessel," saying it was "smuggling" one million liters of fuel, the Islamic Republic's media reported. It comes amid Tehran's quarrel with London over a seized tanker.

The tanker was intercepted by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) near Larak Island in the Strait of Hormuz off Iran's coast, the bottleneck point for maritime traffic from the Persian Gulf. According to a statement aired by Iranian state TV, the ship was seized on July 14. The IRGC would not provide details about the ownership of the vessel, but said there were 12 crew members on board when it was detained.

The ship in question may be the UAE-owned, Panamanian-flagged MT 'Riah,' which went missing last Sunday while passing the strait and was presumed captured by the IRGC. Tehran earlier insisted the ship had experienced a technical malfunction and was towed into Iranian waters for repair.

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British authorities previously seized a supertanker carrying Iranian crude through the Strait of Gibraltar, claiming its cargo was destined for Syria and thus was subject to EU sanctions targeting Iran's ally. Tehran compared the arrest to an act of piracy and demanded the release of the ship, the Panamanian-flagged 'Grace 1.'

Iran accused the UK of doing Washington's bidding and helping the US attempt to stifle the Islamic Republic's oil exports.

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