

## Russian Tanker Moves Oil to Notorious Shadow Tanker to Avoid Sanctions



Ocean Hermana (left) was caught last year in an Iranian oil transfer and now linked to a Russian STS (MMEA)

PUBLISHED JUN 10, 2024 2:03 PM BY [THE MARITIME EXECUTIVE](#)

Russian tankers sanctioned by the United States for price cap violations are copying a technique from the Iranians using ship-to-ship transfers to avoid the U.S. and European sanctions. Reuters is citing data from Kpler of a 1-million-barrel STS completed last week while Bloomberg working with TankerTrackers.com tracked the vessels and reports it was the first of several likely transfers. This comes as Russia is desperate to maintain its oil income which Bloomberg reports rose almost 50 percent in May versus a year ago.

The U.S. Treasury began listing tankers in October 2023 for violations of the G7 Russian oil price cap. Among the first two listed was the *SCF Primorye* (158,000 dwt)

which at the time was registered in Liberia. The U.S. accused the crude oil tanker and its Dubai-based management of transporting Novy Port crude at prices above \$75 per barrel after the \$60 cap was imposed. After that, the tanker in December switched to the Russian flag but according to Bloomberg's research, the vessel remained idle for nearly six months. The U.S. has sanctioned about 40 tankers and listed Sovcomflot as well as various managers.

Working with TankerTrackers.com, Bloomberg reports that *SCF Primorye* loaded about one million barrels of Urals crude and traveled from Novorossiysk on the Black Sea to a point off Malaysia about 70 miles east of Singapore. The two organizations identified the *Ocean Hermana* (159,000 dwt) as the tanker that came alongside for the transfer on June 3. Kpler confirms it reporting that the vessel is still in the anchorage but expected to sail for China.

It is not the first time the *Ocean Hermana*, registered in Panama, has been [caught in an illegal transfer](#). In October 2023, the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) detained it and another tanker carrying Iranian oil for suspicious activities. Bloomberg tracked the *Ocean Hermana* to multiple voyages shuttling between Singapore and the Malacca Strait to China. The vessel is 20 years old with its current manager and insurance details uncertain. Some reports are saying it is managed from India, but Bloomberg said the listed company is only supplying crew to the tanker.

Typical of other STS transfers, the vessels went dark according to Bloomberg turning off their AIS signals. *SCF Primorye* resumed transmitting and is now showing that it is sailing to Hong Kong with Bloomberg reporting its draft indicates it is now empty. Bloomberg's analysis reports another Russian tanker that was sanctioned in February 2024 is also sailing laden to Asia. Now known as *Brask* (156,500 dwt) and registered in Russia, the crude oil tanker was named *NS Burgas* when it was listed in February. It had been flagged in Liberia till 2024, then briefly in Gabon, before switching to Russia.

Bloomberg estimates *Brask* will arrive in Southeast Asia next week. They are also reporting that seven other crude oil tankers recently went dark in the Black Sea, but note to transit the Turkish Straits they are required to turn on the AIS signal.