ISS GLOBAL / INCIDENT REPORT

Merkury sinks at Benghazi

Russian corvette loss in Libya, 22 November 2026

REPORTING / REVIEW WINDOW

Incident: 22 Nov; claim: 23 Nov 2026.

ISSUE DATE

2026-11-24

Ukraine claims a naval-drone strike that sank a Russian corvette in Libya. Published aftermath imagery strongly supports a severe vessel loss.

This Incident Report examines the attack at Benghazi on 22 November 2026 and Ukraine's public acknowledgement on 23 November. It separates visible ship damage, official attribution and other reported consequences. [1][2][3]

The focus is a concise, source-led incident record: what happened, the quality of the available evidence, and the security and investigative implications. Review cutoff: 24 November 2026, 05:02 GMT.

01 / EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

What happened and its threat significance

COUNTRY	WHERE	WHEN
Libya	Benghazi port, eastern Libya. [2][6]	Incident: 22 November 2026. Ukrainian acknowledgement: 23 November 2026. [1][2]

What happened

Ukraine says its forces sank the Russian corvette Merkury using naval drones. Satellite imagery published by Navy Times shows the vessel capsized and largely submerged beside a pier. UNSMIL has called for an independent investigation. [1][3][6]

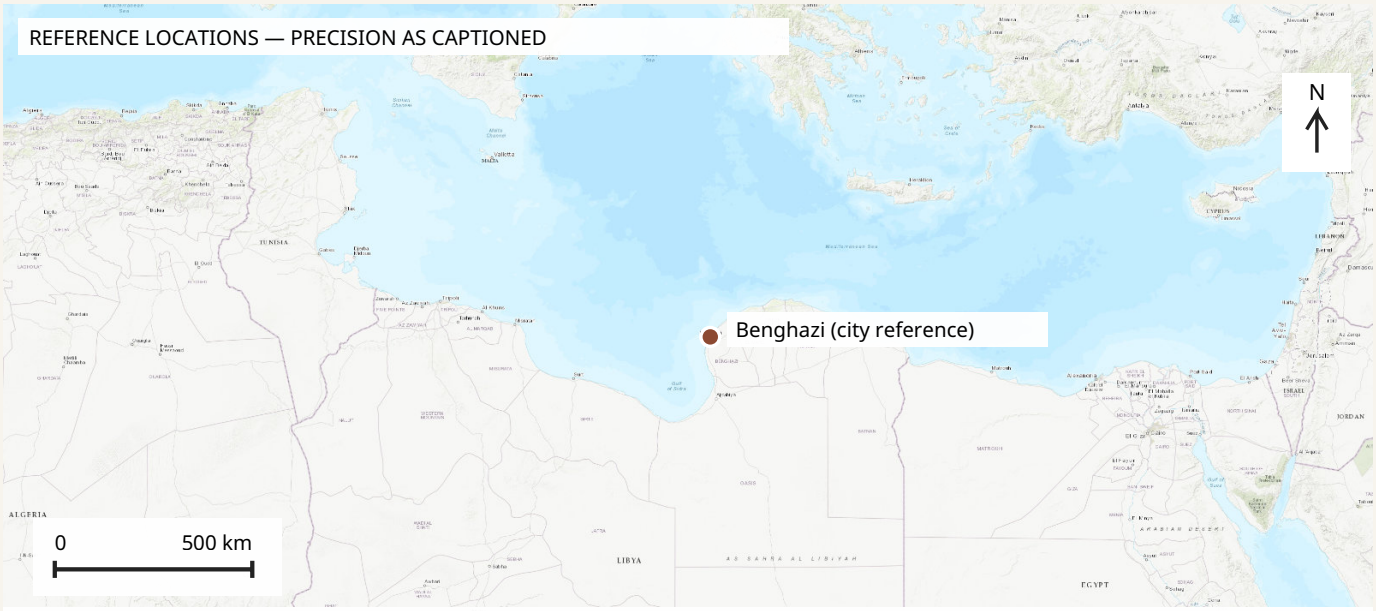
Threat significance

ISS Global assessment. The loss extends the consequences of the Russia–Ukraine war into a Libyan port. It links military asset loss with questions of sovereignty, maritime security and the reliability of incident reporting.

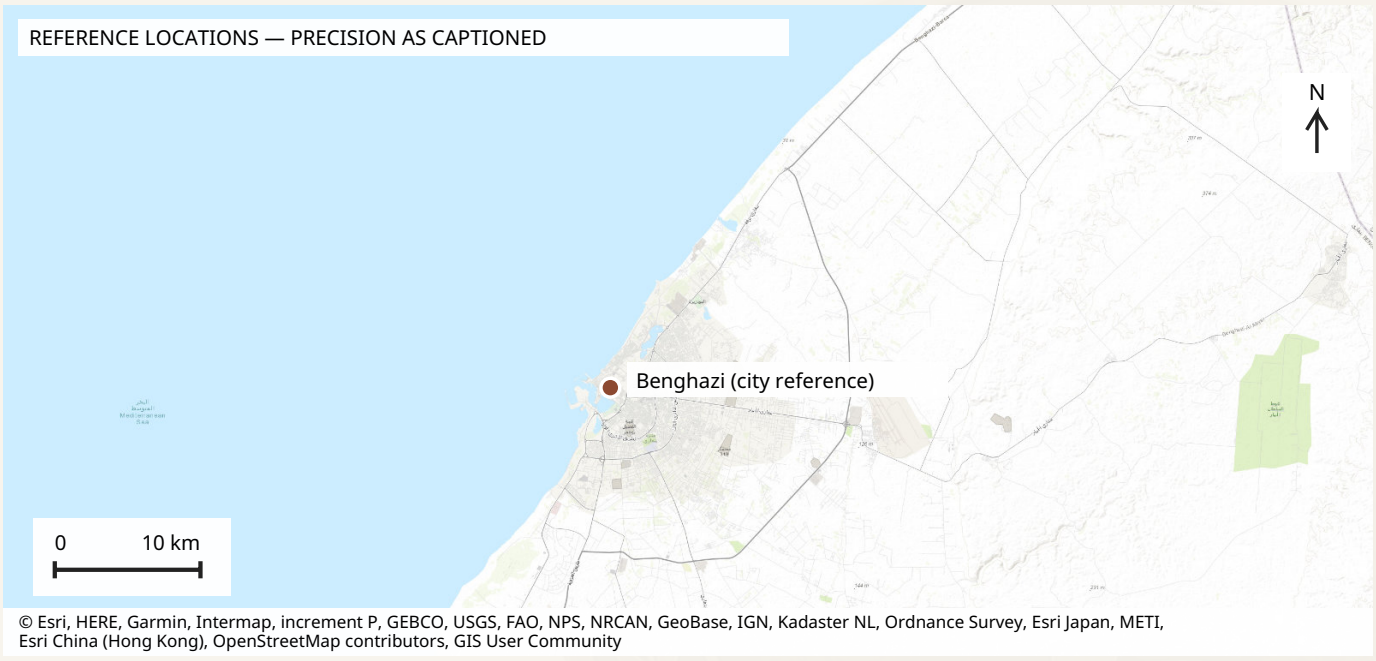
> EXECUTIVE JUDGEMENT
>
> Treat the corvette’s visible condition, Ukraine’s attribution and reported human consequences as distinct findings. Preserve original sources and their dates before combining them into a single incident narrative.

02 / LOCATION ATLAS

Benghazi and the Mediterranean setting



Regional orientation; 500 km scale. Benghazi city marker only, not the vessel's berth or a verified impact point. [7][8]



Local orientation; 10 km scale. Benghazi city marker only, not the vessel's berth or a verified impact point. [7][8]

Benghazi lies on Libya's Mediterranean coast. Both maps use the same gazetteer city reference: 32.11486° N, 20.06859° E. The locality matches the official UN account of port and offshore incidents. [6][7]

EPSG:4326 input; EPSG:3857 display. Acquired 24 November 2026. No launch locations, movement routes or military dispositions are plotted. © 2026 Esri and its licensors; full provider credits retained. [8][9]

03 / EVENT AND REPORTING CHRONOLOGY

From initial blast reports to an acknowledged strike

The event and its later acknowledgement are separate dates. Early accounts described a suspected drone attack; the following day brought Ukraine's public claim and a firmer assessment of the ship's loss. [1][2][4]

22 NOV 2026

Explosion and fire

Libyan authorities reported an attack at Benghazi. Published satellite imagery subsequently showed a capsized, largely submerged vessel. [3][5]

22 NOV 2026

UN calls for investigation

UNSMIL urged an immediate, independent and transparent investigation and respect for Libya's sovereignty. [6]

23 NOV 2026

Ukraine acknowledges responsibility

The SBU and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy attributed the operation to Ukrainian forces and said Merkury had been sunk. [1][2]

24 NOV 2026

This report's review

The present issue evaluates the loss, attribution, human consequences and limits of the public record. It does not announce a new attack.

Vessel identity

The SBU names Project 20380 corvette Merkuriy, hull number 734, commissioned in 2023. Naval News identifies the vessel as the Steregushchiy-class Merkury. This report uses Merkury consistently; spelling variants are retained in original source titles. [1][4]

04 / ATTRIBUTED VISUAL RECORD

A severe loss visible in the aftermath



Plate 1. Aftermath at Benghazi, captioned 22 November 2026. Vantor/Handout via Reuters, published by Navy Times on 23 November. Full supplied frame retained; a largely submerged hull and pier-side damage are visible. [3]

The image materially supports a severe vessel loss. It does not, by itself, identify the attacker, establish the weapon model, count casualties or prove the sequence of damage. The name Merkury depends on the published identification alongside the image. [3][4]

What the image adds

An aftermath image is a different evidence type from an attacker's edited release. The two can support different parts of the account. Reuters reports that it verified the released footage; ISS Global has not independently authenticated native video or original satellite metadata. [2][3]

The image's own publisher caption supplies its scene date. A different RFE/RL image caption gives 23 November. Those captions are not treated as interchangeable acquisition records. [3][5]

05 / FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

What is supported, and what remains distinct

ISSUE	ASSESSMENT AND EVIDENTIAL LIMIT
Vessel loss	Ukraine's sinking claim is supported by published imagery of a capsized, largely submerged hull. Final salvageability is a separate question. [1][3]
Responsibility	Ukraine publicly claims the attack. This is stronger attribution reporting than early anonymous speculation; it does not establish every operational detail. [1][2]
Human consequences	Ten injuries, including Russians and Libyans, are reported. Navy Times also carries a fatality claim from another outlet. No confirmed fatality total is adopted here. [3][5]
Other claimed losses	A Ka-27 helicopter loss and a strike on MV ANGARA are Ukrainian claims. They should remain separate from the corvette's visually supported condition. [1][5]
Libyan and UN response	UNSMIL seeks an independent investigation and warns against importing foreign conflict into Libya. This is a response and mandate statement, not a technical finding. [6]

Security and investigative significance

ISS Global assessment. The immediate significance is a major Russian naval loss in a third-country port and the accompanying risk of Libya becoming a wider arena of confrontation. A single incident does not establish a measured campaign trend or a quantified effect on Russian logistics.

For a Dfuze-ready record, link the vessel identity, dated event, original statement, published image and casualty claims as separate entities or records. Preserve who made each claim and whether it rests on observation, participant reporting or secondary attribution. Do not merge MV ANGARA's condition or casualty accounts into the Merkury record without an evidenced link.

Evidence cutoff: 24 November 2026, 05:02 GMT. No original investigation file, audited casualty register or independent wreck survey was obtained. The report makes no conclusion on legality, detailed weapon configuration or final recoverability.

SOURCE REGISTER

Sources 01–05

Source families and access limits are recorded below. Repetition of a statement is not independent proof.

01 Ukrainian Defence Forces, jointly with SSU, destroy russian military corvette Merkuriy and strike enemy sanctioned vessel near Benghazi port, Libya

Security Service of Ukraine (SBU / SSU) · 23 November 2026, 09:16; site time

Family: Ukrainian participant statement · Full official English text read on 24 November 2026. Primary evidence of Ukraine's claim, not independent proof of every claimed loss or legal characterization. Operational details not reproduced.

https://ssu.gov.ua/en/novyny/syly-oborony-ukrainy-spilno-z-sbu-znyshchyly-rosiiskyi-viiskovyi-korvet-merkurii-ta-urazyly-pidsanktsiine-sudno-rf-bilia-portu-benhazi-liviia

02 Ukraine sinks Russian warship in Libya as conflict spreads beyond Europe

Reuters / Investing.com · 23 November 2026; page updated 23:06, timezone not stated

Family: Reuters reporting and source verification · Full relevant English article read on 24 November 2026. Syndicated Reuters copy; reports Reuters verification of published footage. No native footage analysis by ISS Global. Russian non-response wording is time-bounded.

https://www.investing.com/news/world-news/zelenskiy-says-ukraine-sank-russian-warship-in-libya-5044753

03 Ukraine confirms it sank Russian corvette in Libyan port

Navy Times / Linus Höller · 23 November 2026

Family: Original reporting; Vantor / Reuters imagery · Full English article and actual image bytes examined on 24 November 2026. Plate 1 credited Vantor/Handout via Reuters; caption dates scene 22 November. Injury/fatality accounts cite other outlets and are not a medical audit.

https://www.navytimes.com/pentagon/2026/11/23/ukraine-confirms-it-sank-russian-corvette-in-libyan-port/

04 Russian Warship Destroyed In Huge Explosion In Libya

Naval News / H I Sutton · 22 November 2026; updated 23 November

Family: Specialist identification; shared satellite and Ukrainian sources · Full relevant English text read on 24 November 2026. Early wording left sinking uncertain; update supports it. Reproduced Ukrainian statements and Vantor imagery are not independent additional sources.

https://www.navalnews.com/naval-news/2026/11/russian-warship-destroyed-in-huge-explosion-in-libya/

05 Zelenskyy Confirms Ukraine Struck Russian Warship, Cargo Vessel Near Benghazi

RFE/RL · 23 November 2026; updated 16:27 CET

Family: Reporting with AFP and Reuters contributions · Full relevant English text read on 24 November 2026. Reports ten injuries, UN response and uncertainty about MV ANGARA. Its satellite caption says 23 November; this is not substituted for Plate 1's own 22 November caption.

https://www.rferl.org/a/benghazi-libya-russian-ship-sunk-drone-ukraine/33903623.html

SOURCE REGISTER

Sources 06–09

Source families and access limits are recorded below. Repetition of a statement is not independent proof.

06 UNSMIL expresses serious concern over the attacks carried out at Benghazi Seaport and off the city's coast on Sunday

UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) · 22 November 2026

Family: Original UN statement in Arabic · Complete indexed Arabic statement read and compared with indexed official English on 24 November 2026; direct page access returned 403. Official parallel English title used here; original Arabic title retained in the source record. Calls for an independent investigation, without identifying an attacker or adjudicating legality.

https://unsmil.unmissions.org/ar/press-releases/unsmil-expresses-serious-concern-over-the-attacks-carried-out-at-benghazi

07 Benghazi — GeoNameId 88319

GeoNames · Current gazetteer consulted 24 November 2026

Family: Geographic reference · Coordinates 32.11486 N, 20.06859 E; city reference only. Hierarchy and coastal location cross-checked with UNT gazetteer and UN account. No claimed impact coordinates.

https://www.geonames.org/88319/benghazi.html

08 World Topographic Map — service metadata and static exports

Esri / **ArcGIS** · Retrieved 24 November 2026

Family: Primary basemap provider · 1600 × 760 exports and returned EPSG:3857 extent retained. Marker, north, WGS84 scales and attribution reviewed. No military disposition or attack route mapped.

https://services.arcgisonline.com/ArcGIS/rest/services/World_Topo_Map/MapServer

09 Terms of use for static maps

Esri · Current terms reviewed 24 November 2026

Family: Primary provider terms · Report use and attribution terms read. © 2026 Esri and licensors; actual provider credits retained. These terms do not license the separate Vantor photograph.

https://doc.esri.com/en/arcgis-online/latest/reference/static-maps.html