



KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY
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Shadow Fleet of Oil Tankers

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In News: The **United States** has intensified a **military-led crackdown** on the global “**shadow fleet**” transporting sanctioned crude from **Russia, Iran, and Venezuela**.

Shadow Fleet: A network of **3,000+** vessels that evade Western sanctions using:

- o **AIS switch-off** (Automatic Identification System)

- o **GNSS spoofing**

- o **False flags & frequent re-flagging**

- o **Opaque ownership / shell companies**

Dark Fleet:

- o Highest-risk vessels

- o Deliberately conceal activity (AIS-off, GNSS spoofing)

- o Use **covert ship-to-ship transfers**

- o Often directly sanctioned

Grey Fleet:

- o Not necessarily sanctioned

- o Shows risk indicators: **irregular routes, rapid ownership changes**

- o Designed to **appear compliant**

- o Emerged post **Russia–Ukraine war**

Regulatory Loopholes: Many vessels registered in **lax-oversight jurisdictions** such as:

- o Panama, Liberia, Marshall Islands, Gabon, Cook Islands

- o **Mongolia (landlocked)**

Risks:

- o Undermines **international sanctions regime**

- o High **environmental & maritime safety risks** due to old, poorly insured vessels

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India Link:

- o **Gatik Ship Management (Mumbai-based)** was a major transporter of Russian crude (2022–23)

- o Managed a fleet worth **~USD 1.5 billion** before restructuring under scrutiny