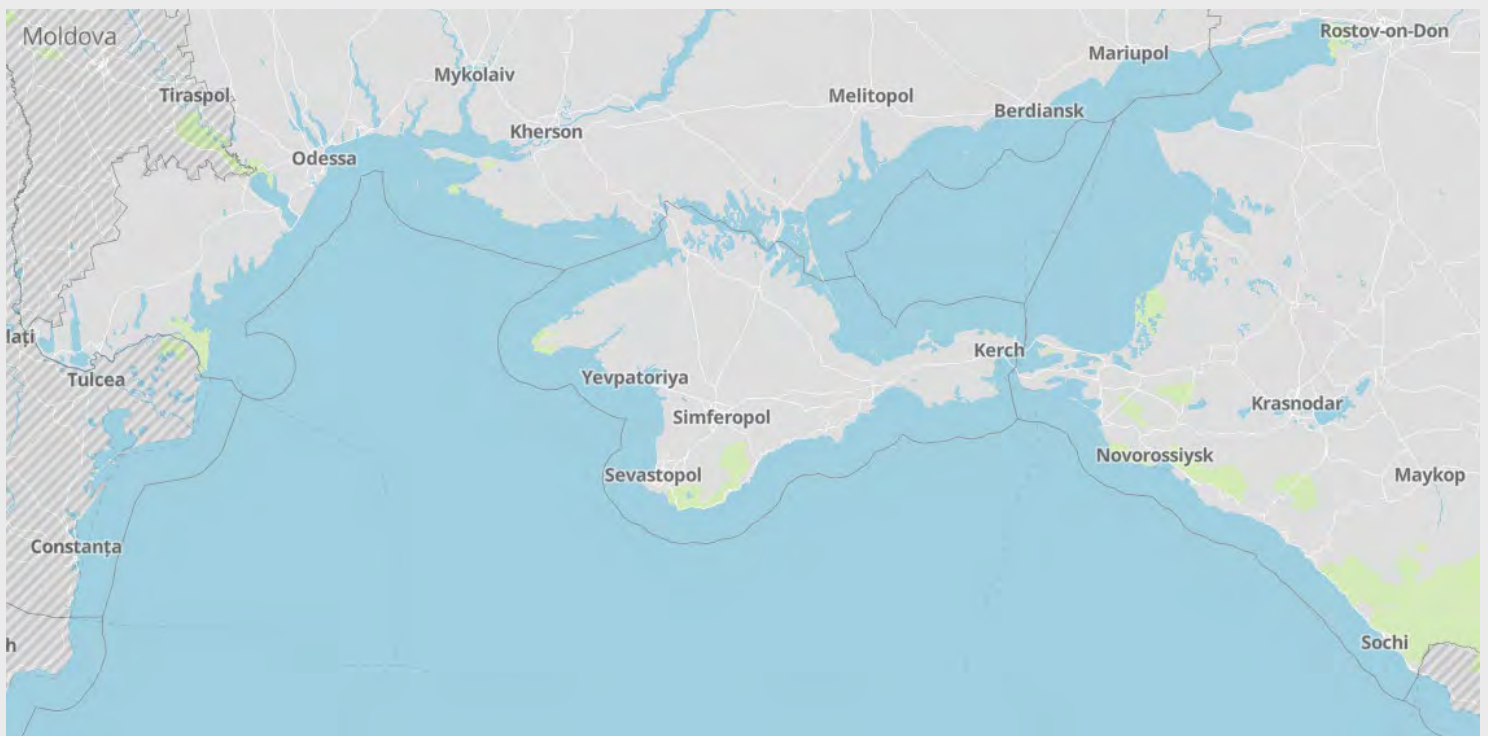# Northern Black Sea and Russia Ports Threat Assessment
Port operations and security overview

Date and time of latest intelligence included in this report: 14 SEPTEMBER 2023 - 09:00 UTC

Overview of current situation

Black Sea:

There remains a heightened presence of military assets in and around the NW Black Sea, and the threat from military operations in this area is considered severe. Aside from the threat of reported sea-mines in the Black Sea, military operations and engagements in the NW Black Sea have become more common after the closure of the BSGI. This includes frequent reports of the movement of UKR naval drones and special forces, and Russian assets patrolling to counter these movements.

It should be noted that Ukrainian special forces launched an operation in August against oil and gas platforms in the NW Black Sea, previously held by Russia. Here they reportedly dismantled Russian radar and relay systems. This has likely led to diminished Russian situational awareness in the NW Black Sea. This, in turn, may allow for an increased tempo and room to manoeuvre for Ukrainian naval drones and special forces in the NW Black Sea and further south.
In addition, the diminished situational awareness raises the likelihood of Russian miscalculation and potential misidentification of targets. The likelihood of this increases with the reported Ukrainian targeting and destruction of Russian intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance systems in Crimea.

Recent incidents also indicate that Ukraine is actively targeting sanctioned cargo vessels operated by the Russian government, or their naval escorts, in the southern Black Sea.

While no targeting of proper civilian vessels in the Black Sea have been confirmed, recent incidents underline the volatile nature of the general security situation and how it can change rapidly.

No southbound transits were made in the unilateral Ukrainian corridor in the NW Black Sea. There still are no reported security guarantees, although some tacit agreement from the Russians is possible to have been secured via back-channels for previous transits. Ukrainian success in targeting Sevastopol may limit further Russian willingness to accept transits. Overall, very little information is available regarding the procedures and conditions of the corridor, and future voyages are likely to be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

It is understood that the corridor, announced by the Ukrainian Navy, is primarily for the evacuation of vessels in the Ukrainian Black Sea ports and it is worth noting that the Ukrainian Navy, when announcing the corridor, also stressed that the regional war risks had not diminished. A chart of the announced corridor, as published in the Annex to the IMO Circular Letter No.4748, can be found in Annex 2 of this report.

Following the termination of the Black Sea Grain Initiative (BSGI), Russia has mainly relied on the (re)announced prohibition of navigation north of 45-21N in the NW Black Sea to prevent any potential trade with Ukraine, rather than actively denying traffic by blockading the NW Black Sea area. While the Russia threat against merchant vessels transiting to Ukrainian Black Sea ports remains, it is uncertain if Russia will attempt to intercept any outgoing ships – any focus will likely be on inspecting or intercepting any north-bound ships to Ukrainian ports, should any such transits happen in the future.

Another scenario related to this, may be Russian forced inspections of vessels trading not only in the NW Black Sea, but also off the Ukrainian Danube ports. In this case, there may be increased threat for maritime trade near the conflict area. Still, it seems uncertain that Russian Naval capabilities at this point can uphold such a blockade or strict inspection regime, especially with Ukrainian anti-ship capabilities in place throughout the region. Any overt rhetoric on threats in the area, real or not, are likely an attempt to influence threat perception and insurance prices, in the wider Black Sea and make any trade north of 45-21 untenable for commercial operations.

Should a northbound corridor be announced or established, Russia will likely be forced to act to assert control of the area, both to as a show of force of the Black Sea Navy, and to keep the need for negotiations (and the prospect of sanctions relief) open in relation to the BSGI. In such a case and to justify military action, Russia will likely stress the lack of inspections, and that northbound vessels may be carrying military hardware or supplies to support the Ukrainian war effort. A Russian effort may include harassment of vessels, forced inspections and boarding, as well as firing warning shots. Such incidents are most likely south of 45-21N. North of 45-21N, Russia may in the worst case, sink merchant vessels. In case of a northbound corridor opening to UKR Black Sea ports, Russia may also release more mines in the area north of 45-21N to deter any traffic. In both cases of sinking vessels and releasing mines, Russia may rely on the use of submarines to do this covertly, thereby maintaining deniability and have the option to blame Ukrainian mines or similar. The use of submarines will likely also be influenced by the risk to surface vessels due to Ukrainian anti-ship capabilities.

Because of the increased likelihood of collateral damage to vessels in Ukrainian Danube, the threat of military operations here is high. The Ukrainian Danube ports face intensified Russian drone attacks since the closure of the BSGI. Nightly attacks regularly occur, and the potential use of ballistic missiles adds to the threat.

Reports of drifting naval mines at sea, and mine disposals on or near Black Sea coasts continues. While a connection to the war is likely, the exact origin of individual mines is uncertain. There is also doubt about the potential number of mines deployed in the Black Sea, but known sightings and ongoing efforts of disposals, highlight that mines are a threat. Storms in the area often lead to new sightings as mines become untethered from anchors and begin to drift.

The current threat picture for the Black Sea can be assessed as transitioning into a "post grain-initiative" reality, where both Russia and Ukraine are attempting to assert control and affect shipping. Conflict related implications when operating in the Black Sea are therefore likely to continue – with continued increased naval presence and activity, congestion and delays when transiting the regional straits and rivers, congestion at other regional ports due to volume of diverted traffic, impact of sanctions on trade to and from Russia, and complications with crew changes.

Sea of Azov:

The Ukrainian Sea of Azov ports (Mariupol and Berdyansk) are still controlled and operated by the Russian military and occupation authorities. While the Russians have announced the ports to be open and being rebuilt, technical intelligence indicate very limited traffic. Vessels given access into these ports are known to have transported stolen Ukrainian cargo, most notably steel and metal products, as well as grain. Naval movements into the ports are likely to occur. Incidents of long-range attacks and sabotage in both cities are known, but unverified.

The Sea of Azov is still assessed to be limited in access for normal commercial maritime traffic. Previous attacks on the bridge across the Kerch Strait, have reportedly halted traffic, and similar situations are likely to occur again in the event of a future attack. Russia has announced that vessels which have loaded anywhere outside of Russia, will not be permitted to pass through the Kerch Strait. Disruption and delays to transits of non-Russian-flagged vessels are known to occur. Direct targeting of Russian (proper) ports, port cities, or nearby areas is generally considered unlikely, although the potential targeting of Russian Black Sea ports is assessed to be more likely. Russian Black Sea ports are understood to be operating at ISPS level 2.

BSGI: Black Sea Grain Initiative

As BSGI operations remain suspended, there is, at present, no clear outlook regarding any future incarnation of the Black Sea Grain Initiative.

While the Turkish government is reportedly very active in diplomatic efforts to reopen the BSGI, including Erdogan meeting Putin in early September, no breakthroughs are likely. Russia reportedly demands sanctions relief in exchange for a renewal, and Ukrainian officials have repeatedly stated that Ukraine will not support any renewal based on acceptance of Russian demands or easing of sanctions.

The Ukrainian 'Humanitarian Corridor', as circulated by the IMO, should not be seen as direct replacement of the BSGI. The corridor, for now, serves as a temporary maritime route in the north-western part of the Black Sea, with a focus on evacuating ships long stuck in ports, and only going south. The actual operational practicality of this temporary route remains to be seen.

Any attempt by the remaining parties to the BSGI (Ukraine, Turkey, the UN) to revive the BSGI without Russian approval is still assessed as unlikely to be successful – predominately due to the threat of Russian naval capabilities and the likely intention of Russia to prevent such a corridor.

Exporting additional Ukraine agricultural produce via the land-routes – such as Poland, Bulgaria, Romania or expanding the current capacity of the Danube continues to be explored as well as any other possible means.

Any future variation or incarnation of the BSGI would ideally include some form of security guarantees or measures for the vessels involved.

Further information regarding past vessel movements and goods transported, as part of the BSGI, can be found on the UN dedicated website below[1].

https://www.un.org/en/black-sea-grain-initiative/vessel-movements

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[1] Risk Intelligence is not responsible for third party content.

Ukraine:

Port information is located in the port table p.6-7.

The Ukrainian attack on the port of Sevastopol on 13SEP is likely to drive Russian retaliatory attacks, potentially against Ukrainian ports.

Ukrainian Danube ports are reported open and operating, with some operational disruption and delays. Since the closing of the BSGI, Russia has significantly intensified drone attacks against the UKR Danube logistics infrastructure near the river, as well as strikes against ports. Attacks at night are common, and anti-air defences in and near the ports often work through the night against Russian drone attacks. Recently, the possible use of ballistic missiles in this direction has been noted. Collateral damage to vessels in the ports is possible – either from strikes on the ports, or vessels may be hit by stray or disabled drones. The impact of reported attacks on Ukrainian Black Sea and Danube port infrastructure is likely to complicate operations to varying degrees.

While Russian long-range missile and drone attacks against critical infrastructure continues to some degree, a shift is likely as the weather gets colder. By then, Russia is likely to restart the bombing campaign against heating and power infrastructure in Ukraine, to put maximum pressure on Ukrainian society. This will likely be a potential issue for future port operations, for example in the case of targeting of power and electricity infrastructure, that may cause power failures.

In case of a dramatic change on the ground, Russia may limit the strategic bombing and use the long-range precision weapons and drones against military targets closer to the front-line.

On 04SEP Russian Minister of Defence, Sergei Shoigu, commented at a press conference that the Russian military is working from the assumption that, because of heavy damage done by Russian strikes against Ukrainian military port facilities, Ukraine is now using former merchant vessels as platforms for preparation and launching naval drones – effectively making the cargo vessels military targets. While the factuality of this statement is uncertain, it is worrying that the Russian ministry of defence is actively preparing the information space for the potential for strikes against, or damage to, cargo vessels. Future incidents involving cargo vessels being targeted or hit in ports cannot be ruled out. This is especially true following the alleged use of naval drones by the Ukrainians on 13SEP and 14SEP against Russian naval vessels in the Black Sea.

With the Ukrainian offensive underway, Ukrainian strikes targeting Russian-held infrastructure and logistics hubs have continued. This may also include strikes against port facilities in occupied areas, as well as maritime targets in occupied Crimea.

The main efforts of the Ukrainian offensive are reported to be concentrating in the south. In case of a wider breakthrough in Kherson and/or Zaporizhzhia Oblasts towards Crimea and the Azov Sea, Russian priorities regarding operating the ports of Berdyansk and Mariupol may change.

Martial law is in effect throughout Ukraine and was recently extended until 15 November 2023, with some local night-time curfews in place. All Ukrainian ports are operating at ISPS level 3 in accordance with the communication to the IMO by the Ukrainian authorities.

Russia:

Port information is located in the port table p.6-7.

Ukraine has increasingly signaled readiness to attack Crimea and the Kerch Strait, in an effort to isolate the peninsular and Sea of Azov from maritime traffic through area denial and an increased tempo of attacks in the region. An example of the threat is the 13SEP attack on the port of Sevastopol in occupied Crimea. This attack was reportedly carried out using air-launched cruise missiles, and show that Ukraine are increasingly capable of striking Russian targets even in areas where Russian defences are significant. The Ukrainian intent to strike at, and the availability of capabilities to reach, Russian targets highlight that the immediate threat towards Russian Black Sea ports has increased.

While direct targeting of proper civilian vessels is assessed as unlikely, collateral damage or mistaken targeting is possible, especially as Ukraine are willing to attack "civilian" cargo vessels operated by the Russian military – such vessels are often sanctioned due to activities related to the Syrian Civil War and the transport of military equipment.

It is uncertain to what degree countermeasures and security will impact operations in Russian ports. However, reports indicate that the Russian authorities have increase security over fear of UKR naval drones. An example is the port of Feodosia near Kerch, where there now is a ban on entering the waters closer than 1km of the port in small vessels and crafts. This adds to previous reports of gunfire in Feodosia and various reports of drone sightings, which are known to result in the closure of the Kerch Strait Bridge. The actual presence or sightings of drones are uncertain.

Overall, because of the threat to Russian ports, and the increased security, there is a chance that guards and troops will be overly nervous or paranoid about attacks and security incidents. This is especially true following major incidents like the 13SEP Sevastopol attack. The hyper-vigilant state can lead security personnel to perceive benign actions or individuals as potential threats, thus increasing the likelihood of unjustified use of force – this extends to sailors and vessels.

There are also known reports of Russia sinking some old ferries or similar in the Kerch Strait, as an attempt to create a bulwark against the Ukrainian naval drones. While this most likely won't affect the regular shipping lane underneath the bridge, it highlights that Russia are stepping up security and are taking the threat of Ukrainian drones extremely seriously.

With the ongoing Ukrainian counter-offensive, there has also been an increase in strikes and sabotage against Russian infrastructure, logistics hubs and recruitment centers inside Russia. This has included oil terminals near ports. Such attacks are likely to continue for as long as Ukraine need to keep a high pressure on Russian forces and supply-lines – likely continuing over the Autumn of 2023. Reports continue to note the issues with Russian spoofing of AIS signals in the Black Sea.

Extra scrutiny against crew, and passengers from the West in Russian ports, has previously occurred. Extra focus is expected against Ukrainian crewmembers, who are required to be brought ashore and questioned by Russian authorities before berthing. Some crews on merchant vessels in the Black Sea, are known to have been questioned on attitude towards Russia and the invasion of Ukraine. Content on phones and electronic devices, as well as messages on social media and other text services may be investigated to establish anti-Russian sentiment.

Reports of activism against vessels transporting cargo to or from Russia are known. This is predominately when vessels with Russian cargo call European or western ports. Similarly, there have been previous incidents of vessels carrying oil and gas products from Russia being targeted by environmental/peace activists at sea or while underway as recently illustrated by the cruise ship calling at Batumi. Port workers and industrial action in the form of refusal to service the vessels once it lands in Western ports, is also likely. Hacktivists targeting companies trading with Russia cannot be ruled out.

Outlook:

Ukrainian military operations in the NW Black Sea indicate an increased focus on establishing area control which will limit the opportunities of the Russian Navy to operate in the area. These operations are likely to continue. Russian efforts to counter the Ukrainian presence are likely to be stepped up, although it is uncertain to what degree Russia can contain the Ukrainian operations.

The volatility in relation to operating in the Black Sea is likely to continue, as both Ukraine and Russia will attempt to assert dominance and disrupt the activities of the other side as much as possible.

Any future southbound voyages from Ukrainian NW Black Sea ports are uncertain to take place, given the volatile situation in the area. Any tacit agreement from the Russians on previous transits is unlikely going forward, due to the increased tempo of Ukrainian naval operations.

Without any apparent breakthroughs in the Putin-Erdogan meeting on 04SEP, positive developments on the BSGI are uncertain in the immediate future.

Russia is likely to continue targeting Ukrainian Danube port infrastructure to disrupt grain exports as much as possible. For now, it is uncertain to what degree Russia will attempt more boardings and forced inspections of vessels going to Ukrainian Danube ports, but future incidents are possible.

The Ukrainian ground-offensive is likely to include future areal and naval drone strikes against Russian logistics infrastructure and storage sites to disrupt Russian supply-lines and military operations in Southern Ukraine. Much of this can be focused on the Sea of Azov and Crimea, and future major attacks against maritime infrastructure to keep the pressure on Russian supply-lines the area, are likely.

Although the Russian authorities appear to rule out any future "official" mobilization of Russian citizens, other means are being utilized, such as recent legislative changes, so that conscription age now focusses on the largest segment of male citizens.

Future sanctions towards Russia may affect the overall security dynamics of the Black Sea. If further sanctions mount, Russia could still respond by restricting Russian ports for vessels affiliated with or connected to EU/NATO/Western countries or flags. In such a scenario, any effect on vessels in Russian ports is uncertain, although detention of vessels could be a possibility – threats of this have been reported. Russian authorities might do extensive checks and controls of western vessels as a form of harassment.

The war in Ukraine has proven it can take on additional dimensions – with the likely example of the sabotage of the Nord Stream 1 and 2 pipelines in the Baltic Sea, in late September 2022 – this means that additional hybrid-warfare means may be used not just in relation to Ukraine and the Black Sea, but also elsewhere in the world- especially where the international tensions between Russia and the West/NATO are prevalent. These may include, but are not limited to, harassment, espionage, cyberattacks, and sabotage of and against maritime assets and infrastructure. This has the potential to affect maritime security in a negative way.

Annex 1 – Illustration of reported mined areas
Annex 2 – Announced temporary corridor from UKR Black Sea ports
Annex 3 – Reported Kerch Strait inspection area
Annex 4 – Incidents

Ukraine and northern Black Sea ports

Refer to the following page for definitions and information on sanctions/commercial restrictions

Port	Current port situation	Current local situation	Operations	Security
Odessa	Likely closed, with regular cargo operations suspended for commercial operations. Some activities related to the unilateral UKR corridor may occur.	Russian strikes have occurred against targets in the Odessa Oblast, including some direct targeting of Odessa city and port facilities. Further targeting and increased focus as part of military operations cannot be ruled out.	🟥	🟥
Pivdenny	Likely closed, with regular cargo operations suspended for commercial operations. Some activities related to the unilateral UKR corridor may occur.	Located in the Odessa Oblast where Russian strikes have taken place, including in the nearby city of Yuzhny. Further targeting in the area and increased focus as part of military operations cannot be ruled out.	🟥	🟥
Mykolaiv	Closed. Cargo operations suspended for commercial operations.	In control of Ukrainian forces, but strikes and shelling, by Russian forces, of targets in or near the city, has been reported.	🟥	🟥
Mariupol	Disputed operational status.	Controlled by Russian forces and part of annexed territory. Actual operational status is disputed with Russian authorities reporting the port to be open, although this is with very limited traffic prioritized by the Russian state. Reports indicate rebuilding of the port facilities by Russian military and contractors.	🟥	🟥
Chornomorsk	Likely closed, with regular cargo operations suspended for commercial operations. Some activities related to the unilateral UKR corridor may occur.	Russian strikes have occurred against targets in the Odessa Oblast. Further targeting in the area and increased focus as part of military operations cannot be ruled out.	🟥	🟥
Ukraine Danube ports	Ports of Reni, Izmail, Reni and Ust-Dunaisk are reported operating and handling ship calls via the Danube, and the Sulina and Bystre Canals.	Russian strikes regularly occur against the port of Reni and Izmail. Recent incidents indicate Russian priority targeting of logistics infrastructure on or near the Danube, including port infrastructure. Collateral damage to vessels is possible. ISPS Level 3 is in place, as communicated by the Ukrainian authorities. Delays and congestion have been reported in relation to port and canal operations.	🟨	🟥

Port	Current port situation	Current local situation	Operations	Security
Kerch Strait	Open for navigation within but closed for unauthorised transit. Ports located within the Strait are reported to be operating. Inspection regime and additional security measures are in place.	Future UKR naval drone or missile strikes against the Kerch Strait Bridge are likely. Attacks are less likely to directly target commercial maritime traffic, although collateral damage cannot be ruled out. Ukrainian attacks against naval or state-affiliated vessels, and port infrastructure, using naval drones or cruise missiles, is possible. Russia has announced transit restriction of vessels which are not loaded in Russian ports. Scrutiny against crew is possible *. See Annex 2 for reported Kerch Strait inspection area.	🟡	🔴
Russian Black Sea ports	Open with restrictions. Additional security measures are in place.	Ports operating at ISPS level 2, some operational delays possible. Collateral damage to vessels may occur in case of incidents. Scrutiny against crew is possible *. Ukrainian attacks against naval or state-affiliated vessels, and port infrastructure, using naval drones or cruise missiles, is possible.	🟡	🔴
Russian Sea of Azov ports	Open with restrictions. Sea of Azov is currently closed to unauthorized navigation by the Russian authorities. Additional security measures are in place.	Ports operating at ISPS level 2, some operational delays possible. Collateral damage to vessels may occur in case of incidents. Scrutiny against crew is possible *. Ukrainian attacks against naval or state-affiliated vessels, and port infrastructure, using naval drones or cruise missiles, is possible.	🟡	🔴
Temporary corridor from UKR Black Sea ports	Operational status is reported to be open – operations are likely very limited given conditions in the NW Black Sea and further transits uncertain.	No vessels have used the corridor since 01SEP. A total of four ships have used the corridor since the opening. Major uncertainties persist on the practicalities of the corridor. No overt security guarantees are in place. Sources indicate limited UKR escorts in the form of RHIBs. Some tacit agreement from Russia on the previous transits were possible, but further Russian acceptance is likely limited due to increased tempo of Ukrainian strikes on Russian assets in the Black Sea. Military activity in and near the corridor is possible.	🔴	🔴
Constanta	Open.	Operating, with additional cargo diverted to Constanta due to closed Ukrainian ports. Congestion should be expected, and although this is being managed, it could lead to delays.	🟡	🟢

* Constraints and demands related to vessels with Ukrainian crewmembers. Russian crew with previous military service may be questioned by authorities withheld as part of Russian mobilization efforts. ** Risk Intelligence is not responsible for third party content.

Operations and Security definitions

Operations:

Green – Operations in the area are ongoing normally with no significant issues.

Yellow – Some delays or disruptions in the area may be expected, which could be due to limitations to, for example, port operations and/or congestion in the area, or other difficulties with access or operating at the required ISPS level or complying with other procedures either at port or offshore.

Red – Operations have been significantly disrupted and ports or areas might be closed or only partially operating due to restrictions, blockades, lack of functioning infrastructure, personnel disruptions, and access concerns, or other issues preventing all or most operations.

Security:

Green – The area is secure and there are no direct or indirect security threats in the port vicinity or offshore area. Low threat to vessels/personnel.

Yellow – There are no direct security threats but there are possible indirect threats in the vicinity, particularly but not limited to conflict taking place in proximity either on land or offshore. Moderate threat to vessels/personnel.

Red – Direct threats are possible to the port or area and/or its immediate approaches, including collateral damage in the immediate area or direct attacks that could target infrastructure and vessels at berth/anchorages/underway. High threat to vessels/personnel.

Note on sanctions and commercial restrictions

Sanctions and commercial restrictions are being imposed on Russia in response to its invasion. These sanctions are evolving and will affect ongoing business operations in many complex legal ways. Sanctions are being applied to individual Russians, business entities, and to certain Russian export products (such as oil products). There are also restrictions on specific nationalities (such as US citizens) engaging in certain activities, restrictions on payments (in certain currencies and through certain institutions), and restrictions on Russia's import of particular dual-use items and technologies. Port entry bans for Russian vessels are being implemented (in the UK, for example).

The fine print of sanctions and restrictions might affect chartering arrangements in unexpected ways, depending on the connection to Russia. These issues, as well as insurance issues for operating in war risk areas, are not covered in this report and might need to be assessed separately to reduce the risk of exposure.

Annex 1:

Reported mined areas

Risk Intelligence (Illustration for visual guidance only)

NAVAREA III: See above for visual guidance on mined areas according to the Spanish flag administration (NAVAREA III 0092).

Mined areas are most likely a combination of deeper sea mines and shallow water mines for anti-amphibious operations as well as on beaches. Mines in the sea are most likely cabled or anchored and under control.

Please also note that active NAVAREA III warnings include a warning of possible drifting mines (NAVAREA III 0122) for Northwest, West, and Southwest areas of the Black Sea.

Annex 2:
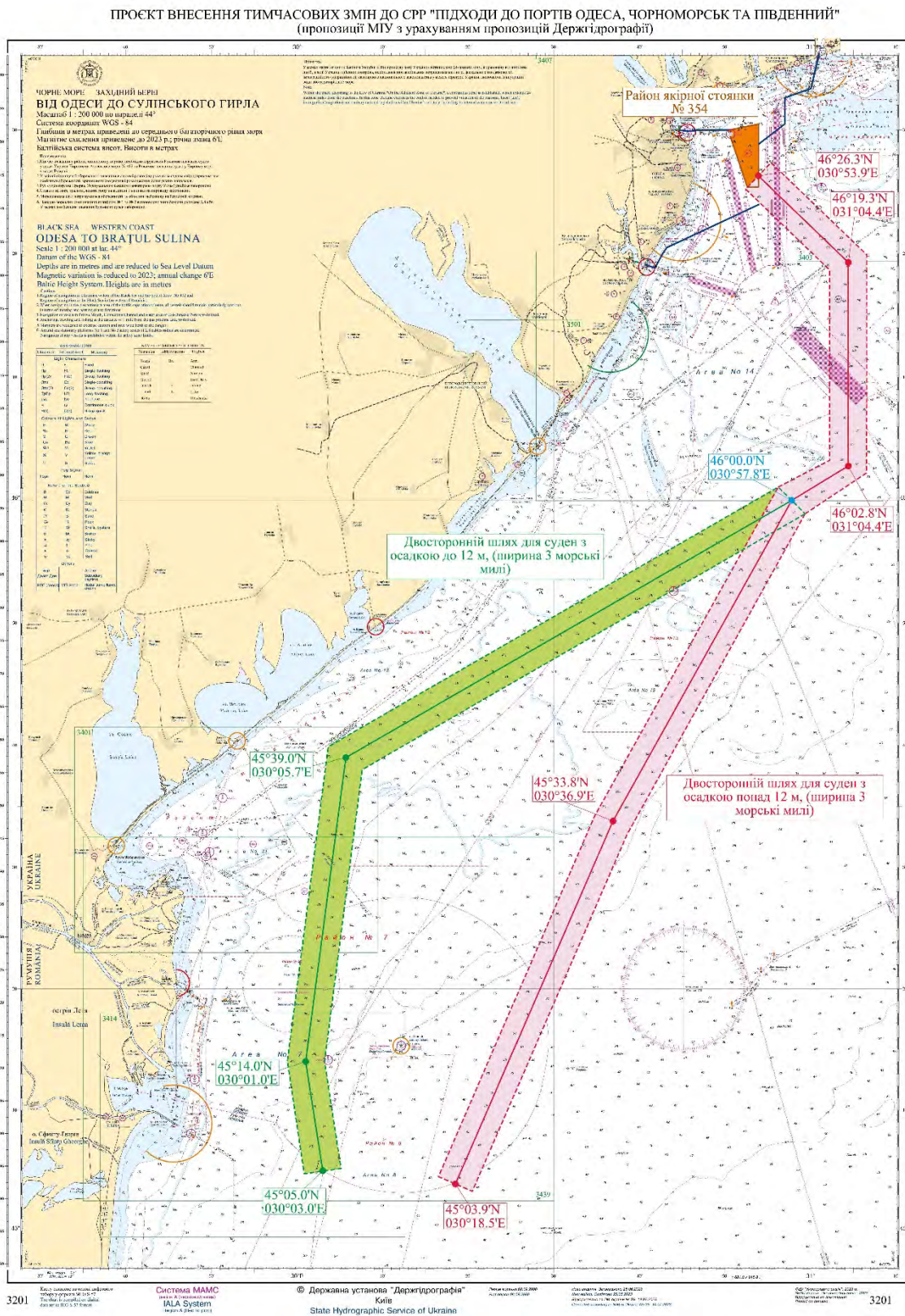
The above chart shows the announced temporary routes for civilian vessels to and from Ukrainian Black Sea ports. The Ukrainian Navy emphasizes that war risks, including mines, remain. Further details can be found in the IMO Circular Letter No.4748 *(Source: IMO Illustration for visual guidance only)*

Annex 3:

Reported Kerch Strait inspection area, as announced by the Russian authorities 02 August 2023.
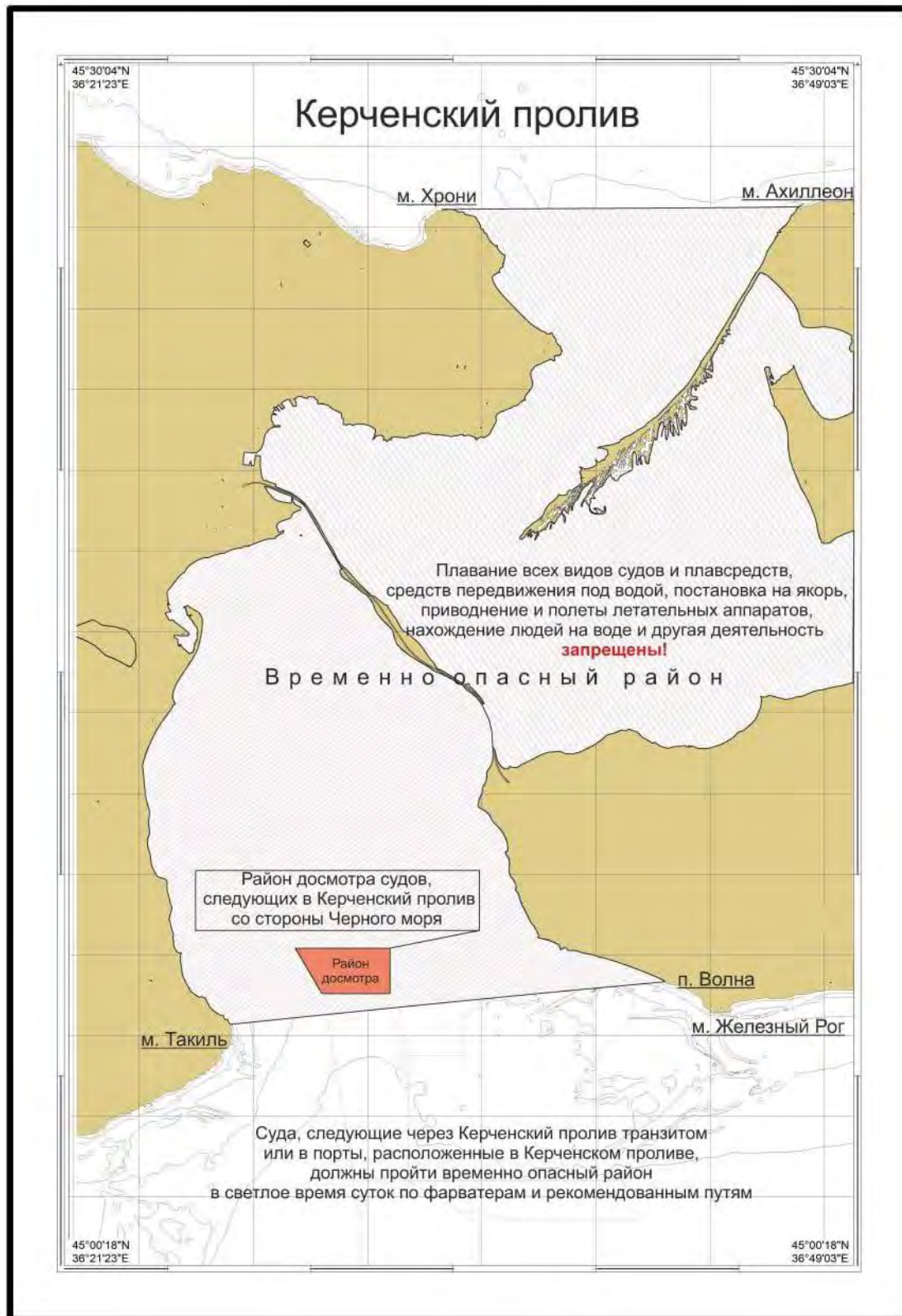
RiskIntelligence
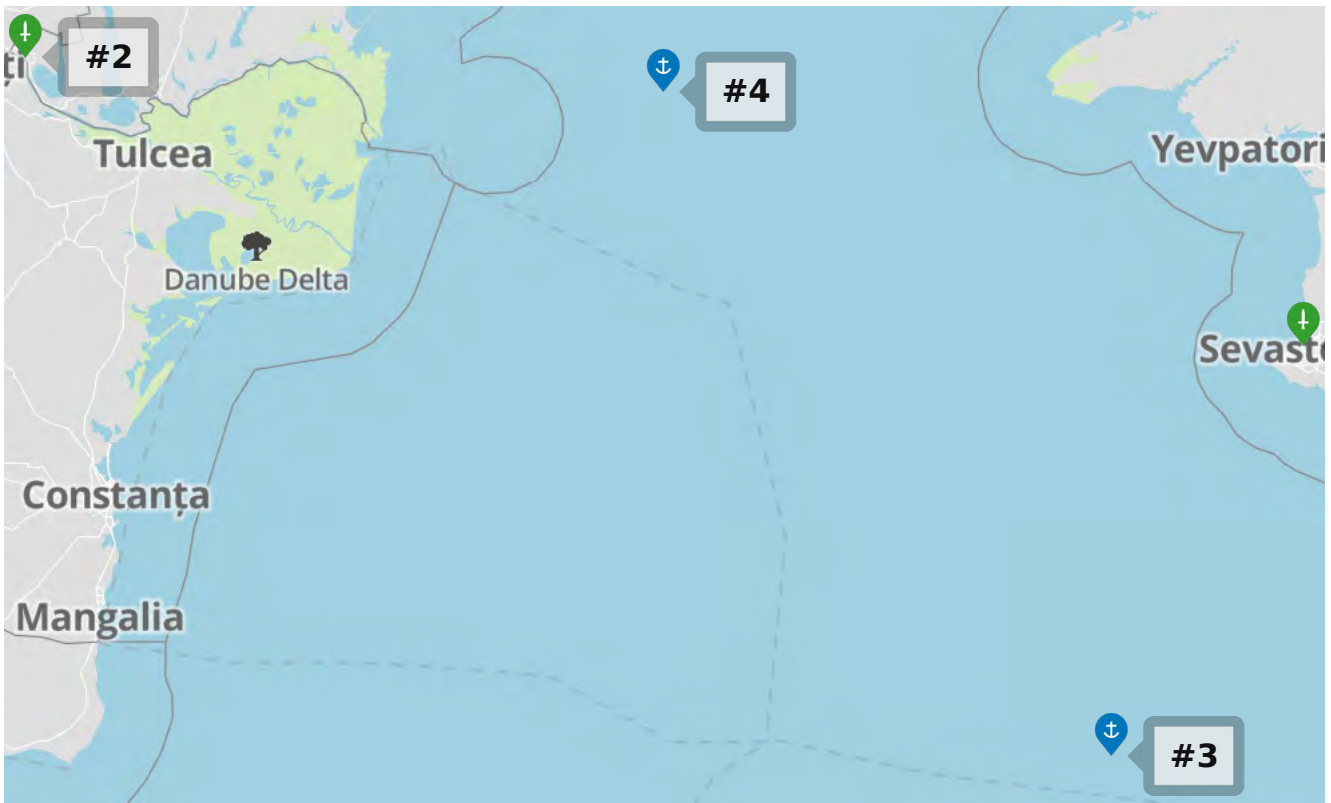
#1 Strikes against the port of Sevastopol reported

13 September 2023
Counter insurgency/Military operation

Region: Europe
Area: Black Sea

Strikes were reported against the Port of Sevastopol, Ukraine, on 13 September 2023.

According to reports on social media citing local officials, the port was attacked with both drones and missiles early in the morning and 24 people were injured. Some reports indicate that the drydock facilities were hit and footage show fires near the port.

Russian authorities state that three water-borne drones were intercepted by a patrol vessel and that seven out of ten missiles were intercepted. The Russian sources say that two vessels in the facility, a submarine and a landing craft, was damaged in the attack.

IMO: N/R
Call Sign: N/R

Marker Position: 44° 36' 45" N 33° 32' 11" E

#2 Drone strikes reported at Danube port facilities

13 September 2023
Counter insurgency/Military operation

Region: Europe
Area: Black Sea

A series of drone strikes were reported at the port facilities along the Danube, Ukraine at an unknown time on 13 September 2023

According to various reports on social media channels, citing local officials, seven people were injured and some facilities damaged, possibly in Reni and Izmail.

IMO: N/R
Call Sign: N/R

Marker Position: 45° 27' 0" N 28° 16' 45" E

#3 Russian vessels allegedly attacked by naval drones

13 September 2023
Anti-piracy/Naval operation

Region: Europe
Area: Black Sea

Russian sources reported drone attacks at an unknown position in the Black Sea at an unknown time on 13 and 14 September 2023

According to unconfirmed reports two Russian warships, the corvettes VASILY BYKOV and SERGEY KOTOV destroyed a number of naval drones. Unconfirmed reports on social media indicate that the Russian warships were escorting other Russian-flagged ships suspected of transporting supplies to Syria.

Some reports state that there were attacks on both 13 and 14 September

A similar incident, involving the same corvettes, were reported in an incident on 31 July 2023. See separate incident here.

IMO: N/A
Call Sign: N/A

Marker Position: 43° 23' 47" N 32° 45' 1" E

#4 Ukraine claims control over Black Sea offshore platforms

11 September 2023
Anti-piracy/Naval operation

Region: Europe
Area: Black Sea

On 11 September 2023, Ukrainian officials claimed to have taken control over two offshore rigs in the northern Black Sea at an undisclosed time and date.

According to reports on social media quoting Ukrainian special forces, the platforms – which had been taken by the Russians in 2015 – had been used to support Russian operations in the northern Black Sea. A movie is circulated on social media by the Ukrainian defence ministry, apparently showing Ukrainian forces on the platforms.

It is unclear if there were any Russian personnel on the platforms during the operation, but some military equipment and ammunition were found.

IMO: N/R
Call Sign: N/R

Marker Position: 45° 21' 0" N 30° 53' 60" E