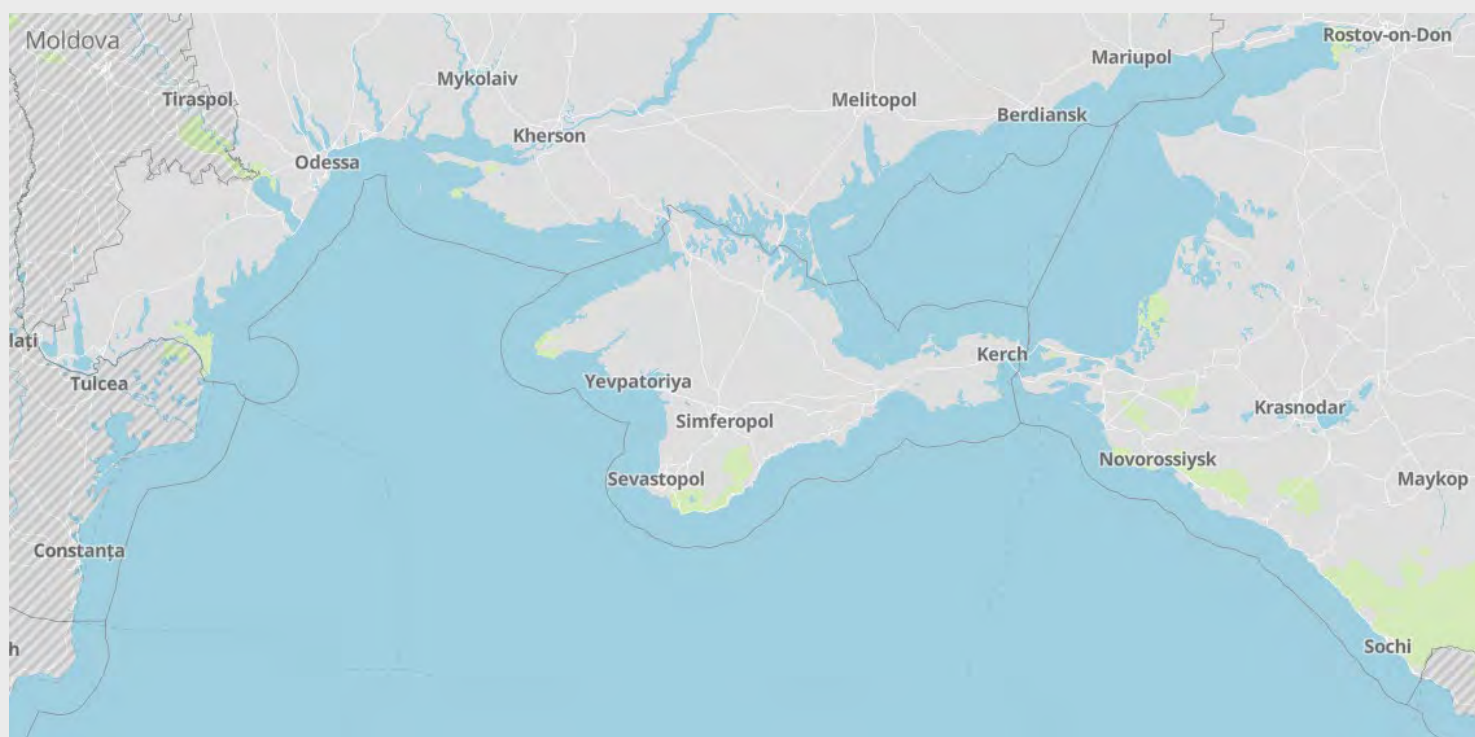


# Northern Black Sea and Russia (Ports and Terminals): Weekly Intelligence Report

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# Overview of current situation

## **Brief update:**

During the past week Russian forces have continued to target Ukrainian infrastructure and have continued the campaign of large-scale drone attacks on civilian objects. There are indicators of renewed Russian targeting of energy infrastructure across the country, as well as logistics infrastructure in the South of the country.

The port infrastructure of Izmail was hit in a drone strike overnight on 20 August, setting fire to oil storage facilities. A vessel, the Panama-flagged EXCELLION, is likely to have sustained damage during the incident.

Given the recent uptick in Russian strikes against logistics hubs in the Izmail region, the security threat level for the Ukrainian Danube ports has been set to RED.

The summit between President Trump, President Zelenskyy, and several European leaders on 18 AUG in the White House aimed to maintain the momentum of negotiations. The main takeaway was the success of Zelenskyy and the European leaders in winning favor with Trump over Ukrainian and European concerns. While many details were discussed, no significant results emerged from the summit. Key points of discussion included the need for sound security guarantees for Ukraine and a European push for a ceasefire ahead of further negotiations. Discussions also included a potential bi- or trilateral meeting between Putin and Zelenskyy, possibly joined by Trump, as part of peace negotiations. However, it is unlikely that the Kremlin will entertain such an idea.

The main goal of Putin and the Kremlin is most likely to convince Trump that they are actively working towards peace in good faith, to avoid triggering US sanctions or renewed military support for Ukraine. However, as long as Putin and Russia see progress along the contact line, regardless of the cost, it is unlikely they will engage earnestly in any negotiations toward a sustainable peace. The Kremlin's maximalist war goals, notably the demilitarization of Ukraine and control over the annexed territories, will derail any real progress. Russia

may also use the Ukrainian demand for significant security guarantees, such as Western troops in Ukraine, as an excuse to say that Ukrainian demands are non-starters. Vague demands or requirements for the protection of "Russians" or Russian-speaking people in Ukraine, without any real tangible or realistic demands, may also be used as arguments.

Given the current good relations between Trump and Putin, it is unlikely that the US will impose further sanctions on Russia without significant Russian stalling or obstructions. However, if Putin angers Trump by falling short of his demands and expectations, extensive sanctions and economic pressure may once again be threatened by the US against Russia. The US administration may also enact secondary sanctions on countries conducting business with Russia.

With Trump sensing momentum and likely wanting to see substantial progress, it is possible that Russia will be forced to offer something tangible as a sign of goodwill. This could be a highly limited ceasefire in a specific area or a hold on a specific type of weaponry, similar to the previous short-lived Black Sea ceasefire in March, or an aerial ceasefire limiting the use of airpower, missiles, and long-range drones.

From a maritime security perspective, the most plausible outcome in the immediate future remains a limited ceasefire—either geographically constrained or focused on specific weapon types. If implemented, this could reduce the risk of direct strikes on Ukrainian ports and limit collateral damage to commercial vessels operating in the region. Russian ports would also benefit from reduced exposure, although Ukraine's demonstrated proficiency with surface drones means maritime threats could persist even under an aerial truce.

Vessels are understood to continue to transit the Ukrainian Black Sea corridor. The general threat level remains unchanged as future attacks cannot be ruled out.

The current scenarios for targeted attacks against vessel are:

**Scenario 1:** Vessels can be targeted due to flawed intelligence from the Russian military, suggesting they carry military hardware.

The likelihood of this has dropped considerably since the US stopped supplying weapons to Ukraine.

**Scenario 2:** Attacks may be aimed at deterring vessels from using the Ukrainian transit corridor and disrupting maritime exports by creating uncertainty and danger.

**Scenario 3:** Russia could target vessels to increase pressure on Ukraine to influence future negotiations.

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### **Ukrainian Black Sea Corridor:**

Vessels continue navigating the corridor to the open Ukrainian Black Sea ports, during the past week.

Strikes impacting vessels underway remain assessed as less likely to occur, as this would require direct targeting. Based on previous incidents involving vessels, indicate that the likelihood of collateral damage while in Ukrainian ports remain greater, and future incidents involving commercial vessels—whether from collateral damage, debris, missile misidentification, or potential direct targeting—cannot be ruled out.

The Ukrainian Black Sea corridor and ports operate under IMO Circular Letter 4748 and local guidance, though operational differences should be expected.

Operational disruptions such as power outages and air raid alarms are likely, until security improves. An elevated threat to maritime trade in the NW Black Sea and near the conflict area persists due to possible Russian actions against vessels and port infrastructure.

### **Black Sea:**

War-related developments during the past week, do not change the threat picture for the

Black Sea region, with the north-western area still an active war zone.

The security situation varies within the Black Sea, with lower threats to maritime operations in the southern half. Potential harassment, AIS/GPS signal jamming or spoofing, and the use of warning shots remain possible. Ukrainian forces are expected to continue pressuring Russian forces in the Black Sea, including in and near Crimea, in order to achieve greater control over the maritime domain to secure future shipping corridors to Ukrainian ports.

Russia, despite reduced naval capabilities in the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov, maintains a presence that can deploy mines or munitions into the Black Sea. Submarine deployment will be influenced by Ukrainian anti-ship capabilities. However, under current conditions, Russia is unlikely to enforce any blockade or inspection regime in the north-western Black Sea. Although the overall usage of naval drones, both on surface and submerged is likely continues to increase by both sides, the deployment, as part of military operations, do not, in of themselves present a change to the current threat picture to maritime operations.

The threat of sea mines persists in the wider Black Sea, as indicated by this week's incident, with ongoing Mine Countermeasure (MCM) operations conducted by Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey, and Ukraine.

Russian and Ukrainian military activity in the Black Sea, underlining the continued threats posed to shipping in the area. War-related implications, such as varying degrees of naval presence, congestion at regional straits and ports, sanctions on trade to and from Russia, and complications with crew changes, have become more common since Russia's withdrawal from the UN-backed Black Sea Grain Initiative in July 2023.

### **Sea of Azov:**

The Sea of Azov is largely restricted for commercial traffic without Russian consent. Mariupol and Berdyansk ports, controlled by Russian forces, have unclear operational

statuses. Reports indicate stolen Ukrainian cargo is being transported from these ports.

Ukraine monitors vessels to occupied ports in the Sea of Azov and may consider them potential military targets. Russia has increased defenses around the Crimea bridge due to Ukrainian strikes. Non-Russian-flagged vessels face disruptions in the Kerch Strait, and Russia may prohibit vessels loaded outside its territory from transiting. Attacks on Russian Black Sea ports operating at ISPS level 2 are probable.

### **Ukraine:.**

Port information is located in the port table.

Due to recent events with more new Russian attacks against logistics hubs in the region of Izmail, the threat level for the Ukrainian Danube ports has been increased to RED from YELLOW.

It should be noted that direct targeting of vessels is possible, although collateral damage is the most likely threat to materialise. This is similar for all of Ukraine and Ukrainian ports.

Power-outages and air-raid alarms continue throughout the country, which can also disrupt port operations.

There are indicators of a renewed Russian effort to disrupt energy production and supply in Ukraine. This is likely to cause as much damage before winter as possible. Therefore, concerns regarding the operational future of the country's energy network, including sufficient supplies and making the network more resilient to aerial attacks remain. Given the constant unpredictability, future disruption should be expected.

Until any form of a ceasefire is agreed and enforced, Russia is likely to use any pretext for future attacks on Black Sea maritime operations, if deemed useful to achieve their military or political objectives.

Martial law remains in place with some local night-time curfews. All Ukrainian ports are operating at ISPS level 3 following the communication to the IMO by the Ukrainian authorities.

### **Russia:**

Port information is located in the port table.

It is assessed that Ukraine has continued military activity in the Black Sea, with numerous Russian reports of engagements with unmanned naval drones and special forces in the NW Black Sea. There are also reports of USVs reaching as far as Novorossiysk - as well as reports of attacks across Crimea.

The introduction of long-range Ukrainian produced missiles, "flamingos", may lead to strikes against Russian ports in the Black Sea, including against military assets and energy infrastructure.

Previous videos of naval and aerial drone attacks in Russian ports also highlights a general lack of advanced counter measures. Russian anti-air is often fired at near horizontal angles. This is likely to lead to damage to port facilities and vessels and may potentially also wound or kill sailors or port workers.

When using Russian ports other than those in the Black Sea, for example Arctic or Baltic Sea ports, it is possible that Russian authorities will try to recruit or coerce crews on visiting vessels with non-Russian flag or crew, to conduct espionage or reconnaissance on their behalf, or even sabotage of undersea cables by releasing the anchor and dragging it across cables or pipelines. Such cases of recruitment have not been confirmed, but it is possible given the ongoing Russian hybrid effort in the Baltic Sea, and the requirement for plausible deniability.

There have been a number of incidents of vessels being hit by explosions, likely due to limpet mines, after these vessels have called Russian ports, or during Russian port calls. While the circumstances are unclear, it is a possibility that Ukrainian special forces and intelligence units are part of a wider campaign of mining vessels calling Russian ports.

Overt and direct attacks against shadow-fleet vessels is assessed to be unlikely.

## Conflict outlook:

Recent developments along the frontline do not change the threat assessment in the northwestern Black Sea.

The meeting between Presidents Trump and Putin of Friday 15AUG did not yield any tangible results. However, it did seem afterwards that Trump is somewhat convinced that Putin is serious about ending the war and is ready to engage in honest negotiations with Ukraine.

A summit between President Trump, President Zelenskyy, and several European leaders took place on Monday (18AUG) in the White House in Washington. The meeting was meant as a follow-up from the meeting between Trump and Putin, to keep the momentum of negotiations going. Main take-away from the meeting was the apparent success of Zelenskyy and the European leaders of winning favour with Trump over Ukrainian and European concerns.

While a lot of details were discussed, no significant results came out of the summit. Main points included the need for sound security guarantees for Ukraine, as well as a European push for a ceasefire ahead of further negotiations. There were also discussions about a bi- or trilateral meeting between Putin and Zelenskyy, potentially joined by Trump, as part of peace negotiations. It is uncertain if Russia will entertain such an idea, but are more likely to demand preliminary talks between Ukrainian and Russian delegations.

The main goal of Putin and the Kremlin is to convince Trump that they are actively working towards peace in good faith, as to not trigger any US sanctions or renewed military support for Ukraine.

It remains the assessment that as long as Putin and Russia see progress along the contact-line, regardless of the cost, it is unlikely to engage earnestly in any negotiations toward a sustainable peace.

In the end, the maximalist war goals of the Kremlin – notably demilitarization of Ukraine and control over the annexed territories – will derail any real progress.

Russia may also use the Ukrainian demand for significant security guarantees such as Western troops in Ukraine, as an excuse to say

that Ukrainian demands are non-starters, and that negotiations will not happen on that background.

Vague demands or requirements for the protection of “Russians” or Russian-speaking people in Ukraine, without any real tangible or realistic demands, may also be used as argument.

With Trump sensing momentum and likely wanting to see substantial progress it is possible that Russia at some point will be forced to offer something tangible as a sign of good will. As previously noted, such a suggestion may be for a highly limited ceasefire in a specific area or a hold on a specific type of weaponry. This could be similar to the previous short-lived Black Sea ceasefire in March, or an aerial ceasefire limiting the use of airpower, missiles, and long-range drones.

Such a ceasefire will likely only include limited means of control and monitoring, and it would be easy for Russia to argue that the Ukrainians have broken in some way, thereby hindering the peace process, and return to overt hostilities – potentially without provoking the US.

Given the current good relations between Trump and Putin, it is unlikely that the US will impose further sanctions on Russia without significant Russian stalling or obstructions. However, in case of Putin angering Trump one way or another, most likely by falling short of Trumps demands and expectations, it is possible that extensive sanctions and economic pressure will once again be threatened by the US against Russia. In addition, the US administration may enact secondary sanctions on countries conducting business with Russia, such as the announced 25% extra tariffs on India due to its import of Russian oil.

Potentially coercing countries into not importing Russian oil will be a major issue for the Russian energy exports and will be a strong signal against trading with Russia. It is unlikely that Trump will distinguish between countries buying oil legally under the set price-cap, and the ones in breach of sanctions.

As noted in previous Risk Intelligence reports, an initial negotiated solution is most likely a

limited ceasefire in a specific area or a hold on a specific type of weaponry.

Still, in the above cases such a ceasefire at sea or in the air, for example, will greatly reduce the threat of direct strikes against ports and collateral damage against vessels calling Ukrainian ports. Similarly, it will limit the threat against Russian ports, although in the case of an air truce, Ukraine have demonstrated greater capabilities in surface weapons in the past, and strikes against maritime targets may continue by using those capabilities.

It is possible that Ukraine will be willing to accept a ceasefire, considering the extreme pressure of indiscriminate Russian attacks on large cities over the Summer. Still, a ceasefire will also limit Ukraine's own successful attacks against the Russian rear and Russian energy infrastructure. Both parties will also be very aware of how their actions are perceived by the US – where Trump is under pressure to show some progress on the conflict - and this is also likely to influence the Ukrainian response.

If accepted, the monitoring and implementation of such a ceasefire remain uncertain. Large and high-intensity strikes may occur before the ceasefire takes effect, including against ports. If accepted, it is uncertain as to how such a ceasefire would be monitored and implemented. Large and high-intensity strikes may occur before a ceasefire takes effect, including against ports.

Overall, should be noted, that the intensity of the US diplomatic effort may only last until 10 October, when the Nobel Committee are set to announce the annual winners of the Peace Prize. As Trump has been outwardly obsessed with the prospect of winning a peace prize, evident from his own and official media and social media, and the timing of the intense August effort to end the war, suggests a connection. If this is a main driver behind the effort, and because of the erratic and unpredictable US Presidency, it is possible that US Diplomatic efforts may subside after the announcement of winners - especially if Trump fails to win a Nobel. In such a case Trump may abandon the negotiations entirely out of anger with the parties, or even impose penalties on those viewed as having slowed the process.

New sanctions on Russia could alter Black Sea security dynamics, with potential restrictions on EU, NATO, or Western-affiliated vessels accessing Russian ports. Detention and harassment of such vessels by Russian authorities are possible. The war has shown potential for broader hybrid warfare, with Western intelligence warning of increased Russian activities in Europe. Ukraine is also likely to continue to target Russian infrastructure beyond the Black Sea. Examples include "parcel bombs" at DHL sites and incidents involving Nord Stream pipelines.

**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 – List of commercial vessel incidents**

**Annex 5 – 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
<b>Odessa</b>	The port is understood operational in accordance with the IMO Circular Letter 4748, and local guidance.	Russian strikes do occur against critical infrastructure in the Odesa Oblast, including some direct targeting of Odesa city and port. Future attacks targeting Odesa port cannot be ruled out. The overall security situation remains highly unpredictable and local operational differences and issues should be expected. Disruptions to operations may occur due to power outages or air raid alarms.		
<b>Pivdenny</b>	The port is understood operational in accordance with the IMO Circular Letter 4748, and local guidance.	Russian strikes have occurred against targets in and near Pivdenny in the past, including targeting of the port. Future targeting in the area as part of military operations cannot be ruled out. The overall security situation remains highly unpredictable and local operational differences and issues should be expected. Disruptions to operations may occur due to power outages or air raid alarms.		
<b>Mykolaiv</b>	Closed. Cargo operations suspended for commercial operations.	In control of Ukrainian forces. Russian strikes against military targets and critical-infrastructure targets in or near the city do occur.		
<b>Mariupol</b>	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 the rebuilding of the port facilities by Russian military and contractors.		
<b>Chornomorsk</b>	The port is understood operational in accordance with the IMO Circular Letter 4748, and local guidance.	Russian strikes have occurred against critical infrastructure in the Odessa Oblast. Future attacks targeting Chornomorsk port cannot be ruled out. The overall security situation remains highly unpredictable and local operational differences and issues should be expected. Disruptions to operations may occur due to power outages or air raid alarms.		
<b>Ukraine Danube ports</b>	Ukraine Danube ports are operating and handling ship calls via the Danube, and the Sulina and Bystre Canals.	Incidents involving mines have previously occurred in the Black Sea near the canals. Russian strikes against the ports in the Izmail region, do occur. Local weather conditions, water levels, and pilot shortages also impact maritime operations. 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
<b>Kerch Strait</b>	Open for navigation but only for authorized transit. Ports located within the Strait are reported to be operating.  Inspection regime and additional security measures are in place.	UKR naval drone or missile strikes against the Kerch Strait Bridge and nearby naval stations and critical infrastructure remain possible. Attacks are not expected to directly target commercial maritime traffic, but collateral damage cannot be ruled out. Russian defensive fire against drones may hit commercial traffic. Russia has announced transit restriction of vessels which are not loaded in Russian ports. Scrutiny against crew is possible *. See Annex 3 for reported Kerch Strait inspection area.		
<b>Russian Black Sea ports</b>	Open with restrictions. Additional security measures are in place.	Ports operating at ISPS level 2, some operational delays possible. Ukrainian attacks against naval or state-affiliated vessels, and port infrastructure, using naval drones, aerial drones, or cruise missiles, is possible. Collateral damage from drones may occur in case of incidents, and Russian defensive fire against drones may hit commercial traffic. Scrutiny against crew is possible *.		
<b>Russian Sea of Azov ports</b>	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. Ukrainian attacks against naval or state-affiliated vessels, and port infrastructure, using naval drones, aerial drones or cruise missiles, is possible. Collateral damage from drones may occur in case of incidents, and Russian defensive fire against drones may hit commercial traffic. Scrutiny against crew is possible *.		
<b>Temporary corridor from UKR Black Sea ports</b>	Operational status is reported to be open, in accordance with IMO Circular Letter 4748 – though likely influenced by local operational circumstances in the NW Black Sea.	The corridor is reported to be running without considerable issues, although disruption following attacks are to be expected. Any tacit agreement from Russia on current transits are unknown, and further Russian acceptance is unclear if the increased tempo of Ukrainian strikes on Russian assets in the Black Sea continues. Military activity in and near the corridor is possible, collateral damage to vessels is possible.		
<b>Constanta</b>	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.

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# Annex 1:

## Reported mined areas



*Risk Intelligence (Illustration for visual guidance only)*

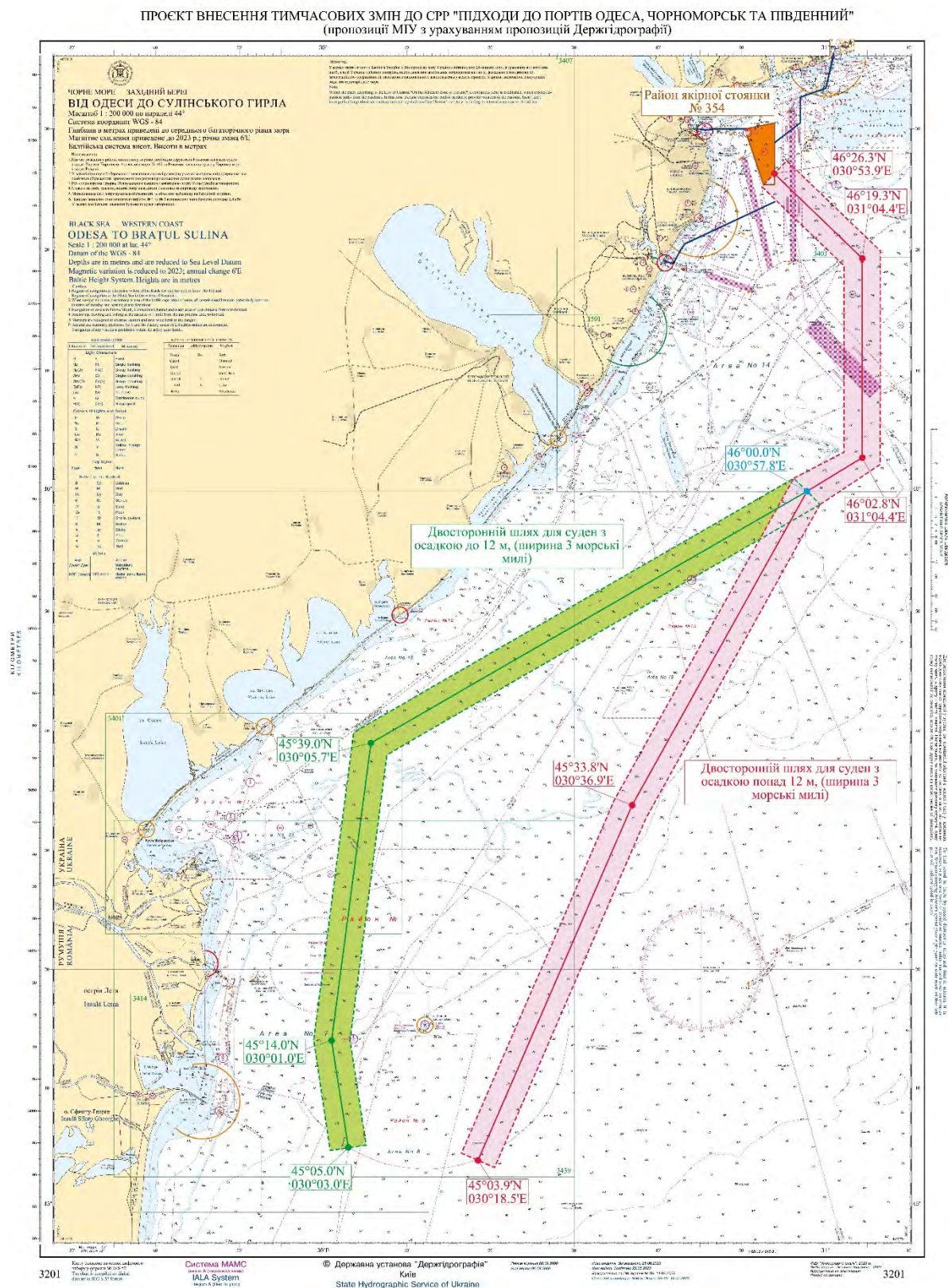
NAVAREA III: See above for visual guidance on mined areas according to the Spanish flag administration (NAVAREA III 0092).

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.



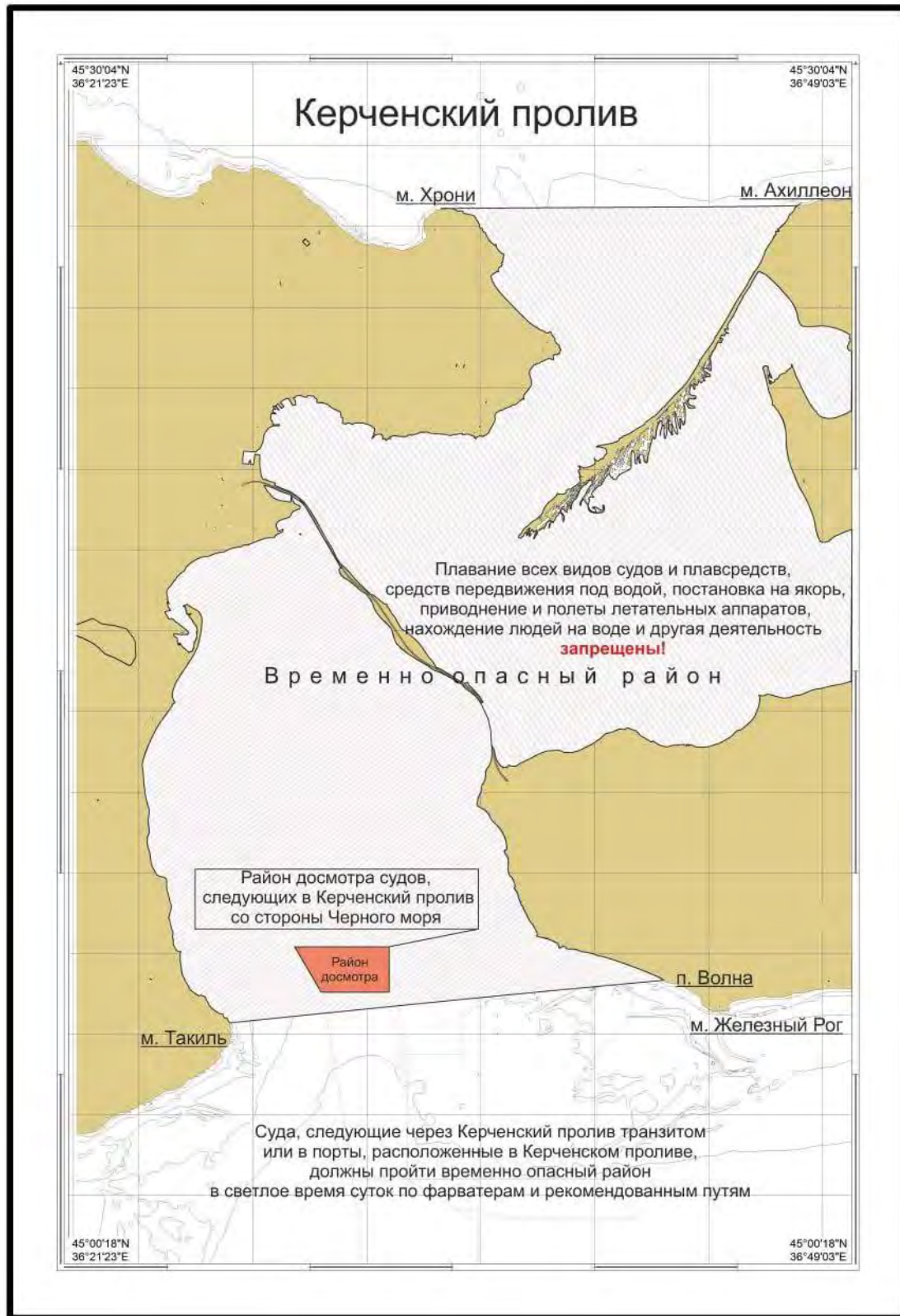
## Annex 2:



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.





## Annex 4:

Black Sea commercial vessel incidents: Latest 10

Date	Name of ship	Type	Flag
20 AUG 2025	EXCELLION	Chemical and oil tanker	Panama
03 JUL 2025	AJ ROSE	Bulk carrier	Sao Tome and Principe
11 MAR 2025	MJ PINAR	Bulk carrier	Barbados
01 MAR 2025	SUPER SARKAS	Bulk carrier	Siera Leone
01 MAR 2025	MSC LEVANTE F	Container ship	Panama
14 OCT 2024	NS MOON	Civilian vessel	Belize
14 OCT 2024	OPTIMA	General cargo vessel	Palau
09 OCT 2024	SHUI SPIRIT	Container ship	Panama
07 OCT 2024	OPTIMA	General cargo vessel	Palau
05 OCT 2024	PARESA	General cargo vessel	St. Kitts and Nevis

## Port infrastructure and vessel at Izmail hit in Russian strike

august 20 2025



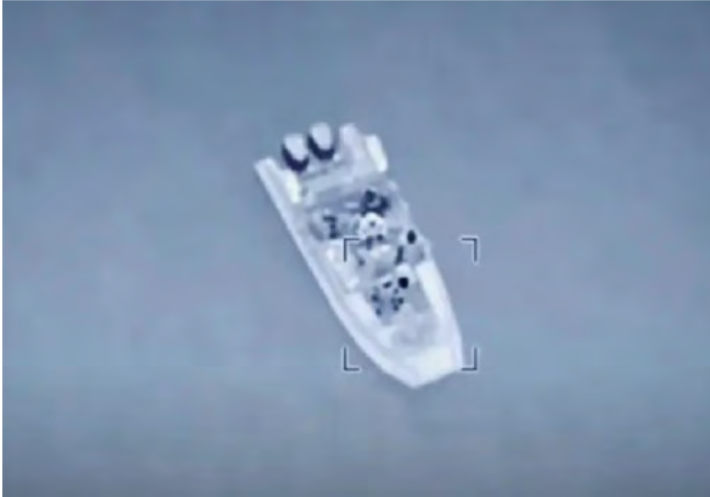
### Region: Europe

The port of Izmail, Ukraine was hit in a Russian strike at 02:52 LT on 20 August 2025 (23:52 19 August UTC).

According to Ukrainian and Russian sources port infrastructure, possibly including oil storage facilities were struck. According to the media reports the Panama-flagged tanker EXCELLION was also hit by a UAV causing heavy damage to the starboard superstructure.

## Ukraine reportedly hits Russian craft at Crimea port

august 20 2025



### Region: Europe

Ukrainian forces reported a strike on a Russian light craft at the Port of Zalizny, Crimea, Ukraine at an unknown time on 20 August 2025.

According to reports on Ukraine affiliated media, the strike was conducted by an unknown missile, assisted by a drone.



## Fighting reported around Black Sea offshore installations

august 19 2025



### Region: Europe

Fighting between Ukrainian and Russian forces have been reported around some Russian controlled offshore installations in the black Sea at an Unknown time on 19 August 2025.

According to sources on both sides, both small craft and aerial drones were used in the incident, with one Ukrainian small craft likely damaged by a drone strike.

RI note: The platforms have been out of operations for years, but has seen substantial fighting since the Russian invasion with both parties trying to deny their use to the other.