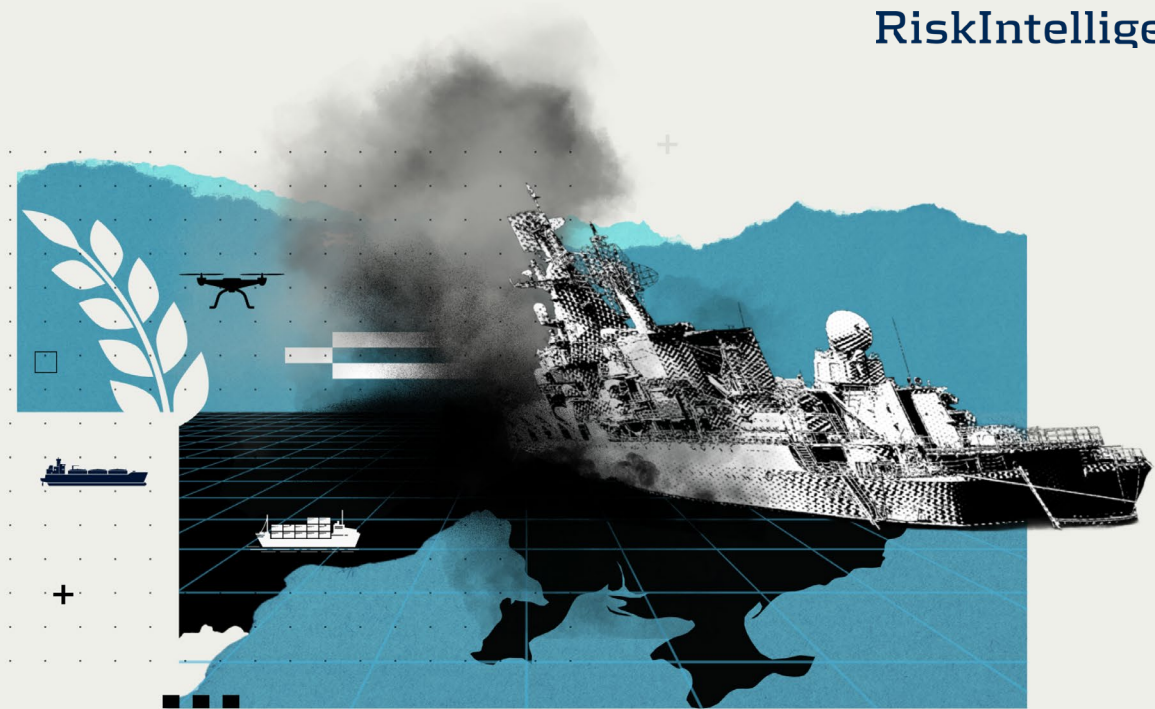




WEEKLY INTELLIGENCE REPORT | ISSUE NO. 40 (02 OCTOBER 2025)

Northern Black Sea and Russia (Ports and Terminals)

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About the report

This report provides an overview of the current maritime security situation in the northern part of the Black Sea, particularly in the vicinity of specific ports and terminals. It is primarily aimed at assessing the threat of security incidents affecting operations of merchant ships operating in this area.

Comprehensive descriptions for individual incidents as well as statistics about attacks against merchant ships are available on the Risk Intelligence System.

Time of latest intelligence included in this report: 02 October 2025, 08:00 UTC.

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Overview of current situation

Summary

- Turkish fishermen recover explosive USV in the Black Sea
- Black Sea threat picture remains unchanged
- Ukraine and EU leaders meet in Copenhagen

Brief update

Russian forces continued to target Ukrainian infrastructure, during the past week.

During the past week there were unconfirmed reports of a Russian attack against the port of Izmail. However, given a current lack of information and the unverified details currently available, the alleged incident may be a ruse part of a disinformation campaign or prove to be accurate, once additional and verified information becomes available.

There was also a report of fisherman in Turkish waters recovered an unmanned surface vessel (USV), while fishing off the north-eastern Turkish Black Sea waters. Investigation later established that the vessel was carrying a 300kg of explosives. The incident highlights the ongoing issue with maritime operations in the wider Black Sea.

The reported attacks during the past week continue to underline the continued strategic approaches to the war by the Russian forces. Russia continues to primarily target civilian non-military targets in an attempt to pressure the Ukrainian population to put pressure on the Ukrainian authorities to, essentially, give up their defensive posture against the Russian forces. Similarly Ukraine is likely continues to target, primarily, military facilities and infrastructure connected to Russia's oil economy, in an attempt to both give the Ukrainian forces an advantage in their fight against Russia and to put pressure on the Russian economy, which in turn is likely to both limit the capacity of Russia's war in Ukraine but also, make the Russian population put pressure on the Russian authorities, as fuel and food prices rise in Russia, due to the strain put on the economy.

The recent developments do not change the threat picture for the Black Sea, in relation to maritime operations for the region. The threat picture is therefore likely to remain unchanged under current circumstances do not indicate any change in the Russian approach to their war in Ukraine, nor that they are prepared to change their objectives – which they apparently still believe are achievable by current means. Vessels are

understood to continue to transit the Ukrainian Black Sea corridor, and the general threat level remains unchanged although future attacks targeting port infrastructure or impacting vessels, cannot be ruled out.

Ukraine's president Zelenskyj is joining other European leaders in meetings this week in the Danish capital Copenhagen, to discuss both future military support and the future of Ukraine's accession path to possible future membership of the European Union. As the various meetings are ongoing any relevant outcomes will be included in next week's report.

The current likely scenarios for vessel attacks are:

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

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.

Regardless of Russian objectives, Ukrainian ports and their infrastructure remain likely targets. The threat of collateral damage to vessels in port and those transiting the corridor is high due to Russia's apparent willingness to target cargo vessels and port infrastructure near civilian areas.

Ukrainian Black Sea Corridor

Vessels continue navigating the corridor to the open Ukrainian Black Sea ports, during the past week. As past incidents have indicated the threat level for vessels in transit is assessed as lower than the likelihood of collateral damage in port, given the continued focus of Russian attacks on Ukrainian port cities and port infrastructure and future incidents involving commercial vessels – whether from collateral damage, debris, missile misidentification, or potential direct targeting – cannot be ruled out.

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, but 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 remain likely, until security improves. An elevated threat to maritime trade in the NW Black Sea and near the conflict area persists due to likely Russian actions against vessels and port infrastructure.

Black Sea

Russian and Ukrainian military activity in the Black Sea, continue to pose a threat to shipping in the area. 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 the shipping in the area.

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 to continue 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.

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 defences

around the Crimea bridge due to Ukrainian strikes. Non-Russian-flagged vessels can face disruption 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.

The direct targeting of vessels remains 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.

Ukrainian forces continue 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. The same is likely if Ukraine is provided with other long-range weapon system or assistance with targeting inside Russia.

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 generally less likely.

Conflict outlook

The past week does not change the overall threat picture in relation to maritime operations in the Black Sea.

Although the outcomes and announcements following the meetings between Zelenskyy and other European leaders, in Copenhagen, remains to be seen, the meetings might prove to be significant. If, following the announcements by the US administration that Ukraine could retake the territory held by Russia, and some reports noting that the US may supply additional long-range weapons to Ukraine, there does appear to be a resolve amongst the Ukrainian partners to continue their support. In terms of what this might mean exactly time will tell, but if the statements are also followed up with action, with Ukraine also continuing their own development of military capabilities September could prove a turning point, for Ukraine and maybe the war.

Ukrainian drone expertise and knowledge in counter-drone measures are also being discussed within a European and NATO context, during the meetings in Copenhagen, and is expected to lead to greater knowledge sharing and cooperation in order to better respond to future malign drone activity within the European continent.

The outlook for the Black Sea remains that, for as long as Russia still views the advantage of continuing to attack Ukraine and believes it will achieve its military and political objectives – and until some form of formal pressure is put on Russia, it will not see any reason to change its approach. Therefore, the focus of both Russian and Ukrainian forces are likely to continue to target each other's infrastructure, including port facilities, which may also result in future collateral damage to vessels – the future direct targeting of vessels can also not be completely ruled

out. Under current circumstances both Ukraine and Russia are likely capable of continuing the conflict at present or near-present levels without being to impose significant pressure on each other.

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

Port	Current port situation	Current local situation	Operations	Security
Odesa	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.		
Pivdenny	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.		
Mykolaiv	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.		
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 the rebuilding of the port facilities by Russian military and contractors.		
Chornomorsk	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.		0
Ukraine Danube ports	Ukraine Danube ports are operating and handling ship calls via the Danube, and the Sulina and Bystre Canals.	Incidents involving mines have 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.		

* 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.

Port	Current port situation	Current local situation	Operations	Security
Kerch Strait	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.		
Russian Black Sea ports	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 *.		
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. 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 *.		
Temporary corridor from UKR Black Sea ports	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.		
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.

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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 - Illustration of reported mined areas



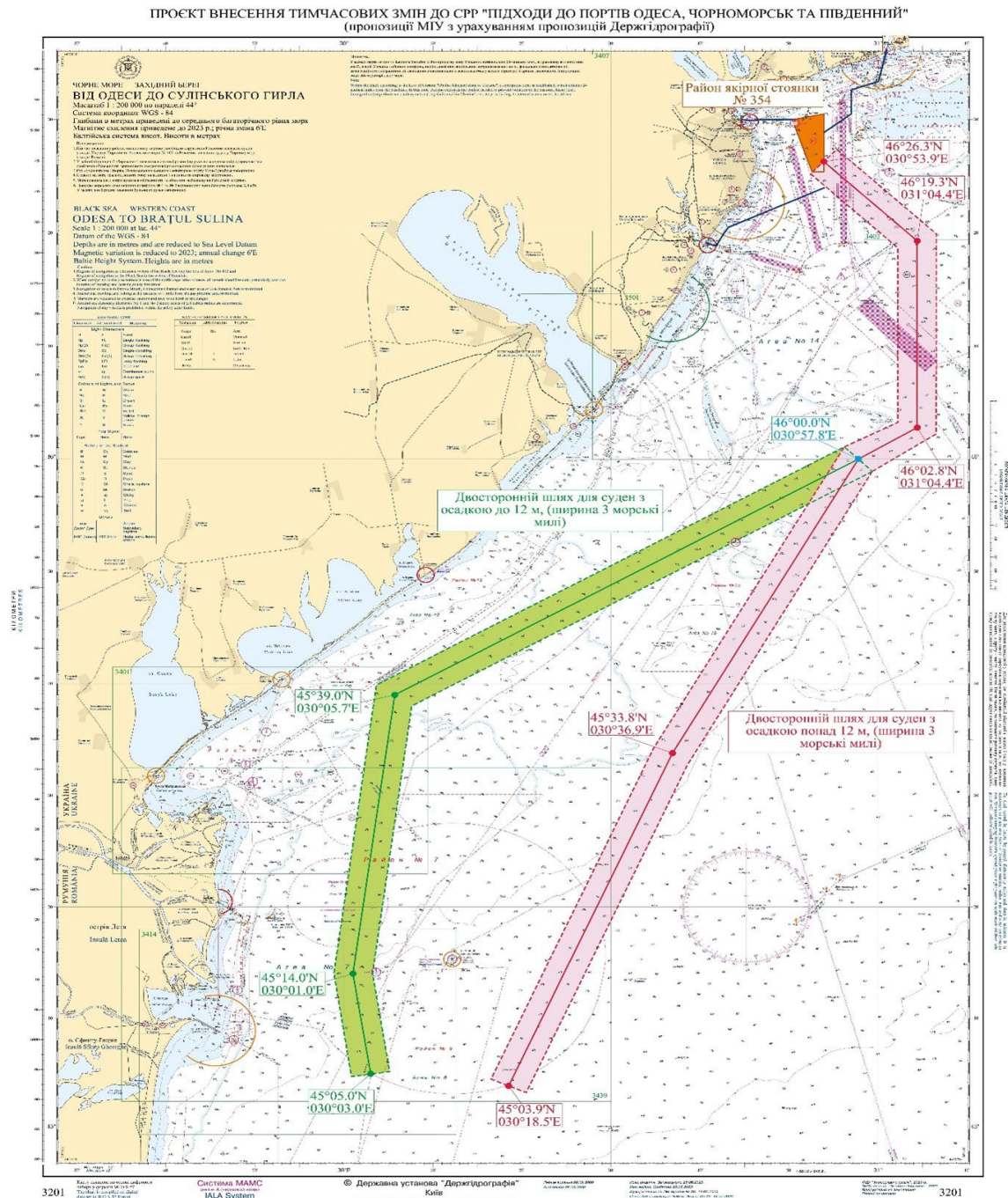
Image 1 - Risk Intelligence (Illustration for visual guidance only)

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.

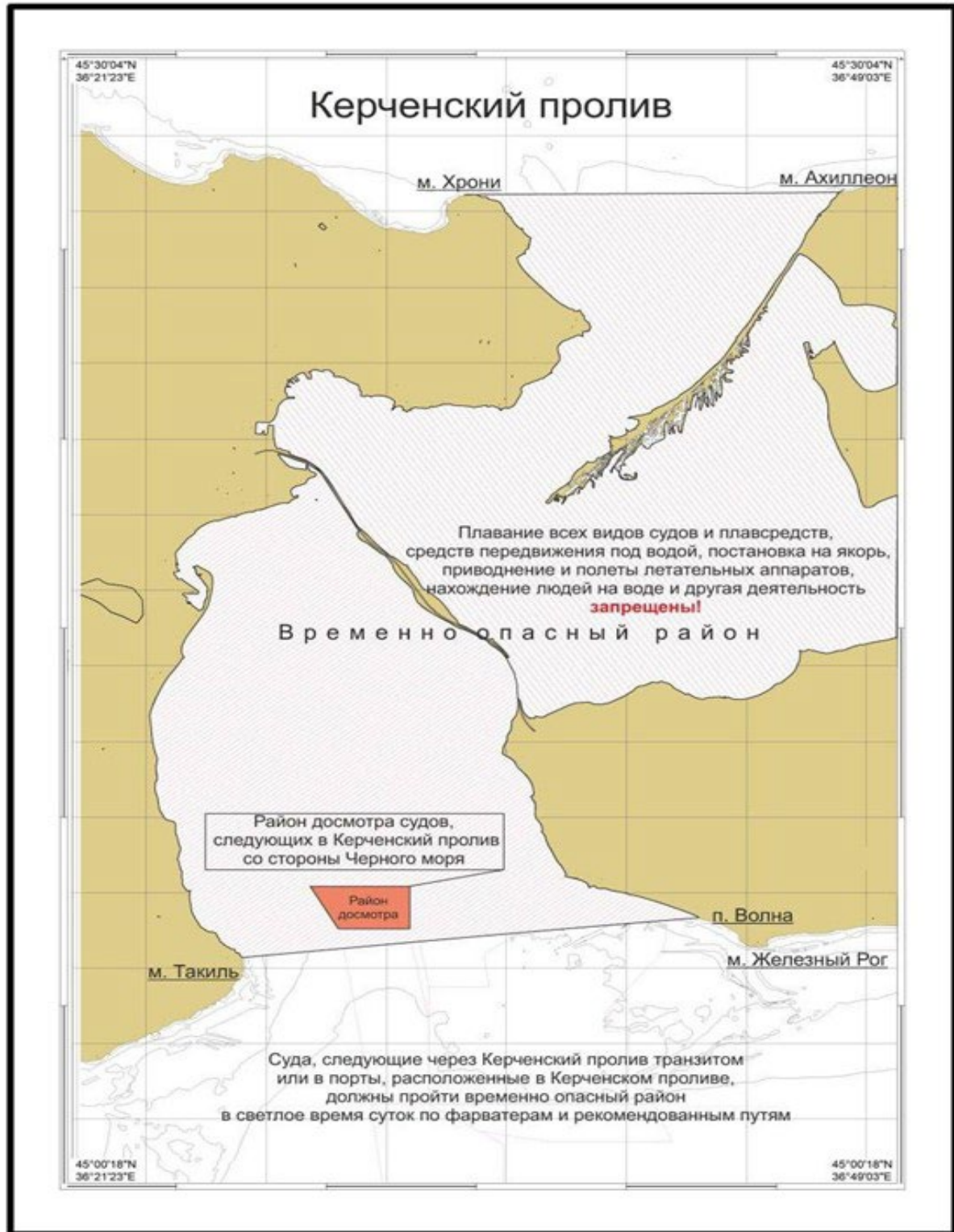
Please also note that active NAVAREA III warnings include a warning of possible drifting mines (NAVAREA III 0122) for Northwest, West, and Southwest areas of the Black Sea.

Annex 2 - Announced temporary corridor from UKR Black Sea ports



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



Reported Kerch Strait inspection area, as announced by the Russian authorities 02 August 2023.

Annex 4 – List of commercial vessel incidents

Date	Name of ship	Type	Flag
31 AUG 2025	NS PRIDE	Bulk carrier	Belize
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
20 SEP 2024	GOLDEN LION	General cargo vessel	Antigua and Barbuda

Annex 5 – Incidents

Turkish fishermen recover explosive USV in the Black Sea

September 29 2025

Region: Europe

Turkish anchovy fisherman recovered an unmanned surface vessel (USV) of unknown origin in the Black Sea off the coast of eastern Turkey at an unknown time during the night of 29 - 30 September, 2025.

The USV was discovered entangled in the fishing vessel's nets about 800 meters from shore near YoroZ Port, a small fishing port in the Carsibasi district of Trabzon, Turkey. The fisherman initially thought the USV was a small fiberglass boat and hoisted it out of the water and lashed it to the side of their vessel. They transported the USV to YoroZ Port, where it was inspected by the Turkish coast guard and bomb disposal experts who determined the USV was armed with 300 kg of explosives. The port was then evacuated and closed to traffic. Turkish authorities are continuing their investigation into the origin of the USV.

There were no injuries or damage reported as a result of this incident.

RI note: position depicted on map is notional only.



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