



WEEKLY INTELLIGENCE REPORT | ISSUE NO. 03 (22 JANUARY 2026)

# 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:  
22 January 2026, 08:00 UTC.

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# Overview of current situation

## Summary

- The current threat picture for the Black Sea remains unchanged
- Russian and Ukrainian forces continue to target infrastructure
- Incidents involving vessels occurred during the past week
- World Economic Forum, Davos

## Brief update

Incidents during the reporting period include targeting of vessels and port infrastructure in both Ukraine and Russia.

In relation to the Black Sea and Russia's ongoing war in Ukraine, the past week was overshadowed, in terms of focus, by the US administration's eyes on Greenland, and their expressed concerns over security of the island. It seemed fitting, that a calming of the US focus on Greenland occurred during the annual World Economic Forum, in Davos, which for 2026 had been given the theme of "a spirit of dialogue". Nevertheless, the wider result has been that the war in Ukraine, was sidelined compared to the initial schedule and compared to previous years' forum gatherings in Davos. However, a Zelensky and Trump meeting is taking place, and the outcome of this meeting remains to be reported. The US negotiation team is also reported to be traveling to Russia on the eve of 22 January, to present recent negotiation developments to Russia. Given how Russia has continued its pressure on Ukraine, any immediate solution to the current situation appears unlikely – but events are and can move quickly given the parties involved.

It is worth noting the inaugural presentation of the US led 'Board of Peace', which, given the presented broad focus, may be where the current US administration chooses to "park" the Ukraine war, if no further substantial and positive development is achieved in the near future. The most recent comments on the reported negotiations, echo previous ones for instance that 90% of an agreement are settled, or that only one point is remaining. Some claim that the last hurdle is to do with territory – which seems plausible. However, this does indicate that there has been no real progress during recent negotiations and that, although the US and Ukraine may find points to agree on, if Russia rejects the same points, the war in Ukraine will continue, if no other pressure is put on Russia, to force it into future negotiations.

The current scenarios for vessel attacks are (order does not represent likelihood):

**Scenario 1:** The threat of damage to vessels in both Ukrainian and Russian ports, remains the most likely, due to the general targeting of ports and terminals by both sides. However, damage towards vessels transiting to both Ukrainian and Russian Black Sea ports, also remains likely.

**Scenario 2:** Vessels can be targeted due to flawed intelligence from the Russian military, suggesting they carry military hardware.

**Scenario 3:** Although vessels are not assessed to be targeted specifically based on their flag, owner etc., Russian attacks are likely aimed at deterring vessels and disrupting maritime exports by creating uncertainty and danger, and to increase pressure as part of influencing future negotiations.

**Scenario 4:** Ukraine may target vessels with ties to Moscow and the Russian military to increase pressure on the Russian economy aimed at deterring vessels and disrupting maritime exports by creating uncertainty and danger, and to increase pressure as part of influencing future negotiations.

Regardless of objectives, ports, terminals, and their supporting infrastructure remain likely targets, as part of Russia's ongoing war in Ukraine.

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

Vessel traffic continued through the Ukrainian Black Sea Corridor over the reporting period. The threat to vessels in transit may be higher at present, following recent attacks involving vessels, by both Russia and Ukraine, as further retaliation is possible, and similar incidents cannot be ruled out, although the threat during transit is considered lower compared to the threat of damage to vessels in port, given the general military campaign towards port infrastructure by Russia.

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-raids or 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 continue to pose a threat to shipping as the Black Sea remains an active war zone. Future incidents should be expected throughout the Black Sea.

The latest incidents underline the widening of the overall threat picture for operations in the Black Sea, with the security situation still varying locally.

Attack by Ukrainian forces remain less likely to target non-“shadow-fleet” vessels, including those transiting to Russian Black Sea ports. However, occasional attacks on non-‘shadow fleet’ vessels, is possible and a future expansion of target selection cannot be ruled out.

Russia remains likely to retaliate in response to any Ukrainian attacks on “shadow-fleet” vessels. The retaliation is most likely to target Ukrainian drone production facilities, drone support facilities, and port infrastructure, although future attacks on commercial vessels as retaliation are possible.

Potential harassment, AIS/GPS signal jamming or spoofing, and the use of warning shots also 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. The 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, for the foreseeable future.

Mine Countermeasure (MCM) operations conducted by Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey, and Ukraine, are ongoing to address the threat of sea mines that persists in the wider Black Sea. 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 Ukrainian ports.

Russian strikes on ports are likely to continue to occur, although the main Russian effort is likely to focus on energy and heating infrastructure.

Power-outages and air-raids continue throughout the country, which routinely disrupt port operations. Russian attacks on Ukrainian power infrastructure are likely intended to cause as much damage during 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 operating in the Black Sea, with frequent Russian reports of encounters with Ukrainian naval and aerial drones and special forces. Ukraine's unmanned systems can now reach all Russian territorial waters. Poor weather, especially storms, significantly reduces long-range naval drone activity, while aerial drones are less affected.

Ukrainian targeting of cargo vessels may expand beyond Moscow-controlled or Russia-affiliated "shadow fleet" ships. After the 13 JAN strikes in Novorossiysk, vessels legally trading Russian energy—even under sanctions and price caps—are assessed as potential targets. This includes ships calling the CPC terminal. Recent attacks on non-aligned tankers suggest Ukraine aims to deter activity in Russian waters and limit Russian energy revenue. Damage on 13 JAN appeared

intended to disable operations, not sink vessels or cause casualties, focusing on equipment such as manifolds.

Ukraine may now also include the Caspian Pipeline Consortium terminal in its targeting. Although primarily carrying Kazakh oil, the CPC pipeline crosses Russia, connects to Russian systems, and has substantial Russian ownership. These factors may have led to its reassessment as part of Ukraine's campaign against Russian exports. Future attacks could target the onshore facility via aerial drones or the offshore terminal via naval drones, likely at night to reduce collateral damage.

Vessels operating in Russian waters continue to face public identification by Ukrainian authorities, including those transporting Kazakh oil from Novorossiysk. Ukraine's introduction of long-range missiles ("flamingos") or foreign long-range systems may lead to sustained strikes on Russian Black Sea ports and energy assets. Videos of earlier drone attacks show weak Russian countermeasures and anti-air fire that risks damaging port facilities and harming personnel.

Ships calling Russian ports—Black Sea, Arctic, or Baltic—may face attempts by Russian authorities to recruit or pressure crew for espionage, reconnaissance, or even sabotage such as dragging anchors across undersea cables. Though unconfirmed, such activities align with Russia's hybrid actions and need for plausible deniability. Russian operatives disguising themselves as crew is also possible.

Several vessels have suffered explosions, likely from limpet mines, after calling Russian ports. While details remain unclear, Ukrainian special forces may be conducting a broader campaign of mining ships linked to Russian port activity.

## Conflict outlook

The attention during the past week, with US talking about Greenland, and the inauguration of the so called and US-led "Board of Peace", has led to the war in Ukraine being sidelined, with only a last-minute changes to Ukraine's Zelensky's plans to visit the World Economic Forum in Davos, where a meeting between him and US president Trump also took place. It is expected that a US negotiation team will present the outcomes of recent negotiations between the US and Ukraine, to Russia and therefore the process continues – with no apparent end in sight – under current circumstances.

Ukrainian attacks on maritime targets in the Black Sea and nearby regions remain likely to continue. Oil and energy export facilities likely remain the central targets for the Ukrainian bombing campaigns, although strikes against Russian and Kremlin-aligned vessels may occur. This is most likely to be focused on naval vessels or Kremlin-

affiliated “shadow-fleet” vessels, although a widening of target selection, if deemed appropriate by Ukraine, cannot be ruled out.

Naval drone attacks are likely to be heavily influenced by winter-weather conditions, and poor weather, storms, and similar, may limit the potential for Ukrainian naval drone operations.

It is likely that Russia, if Ukraine continues to increase the pressure on Russia’s ability to continue to export oil via the Black Sea, will retaliate by attempting to inflict similar pressure on Ukraine’s own ability to undertake maritime exports. Under current circumstances this is most likely to include increased targeting of port related infrastructure – including while vessels are in port. This also increases the likelihood for collateral damage.

Attacks against vessels are likely to occur as a “like-for-like” response, and such attacks may include strikes on neutral shipping calling Ukrainian ports.

While strikes on ports and maritime transport infrastructure remains likely, it remains the assessment that Russia will continue to mainly focus bombings on critical power and heating infrastructure in Ukraine, to increase the misery of the Ukrainian people over the Winter months. This has proven to be a central Russian strategy over the past years of war, and the main effort will continue in this manner. Any strikes on ports or maritime infrastructure are likely only for signalling purposes, or to hit high-value targets, rather than a change in operational priorities.

Russia and Ukraine are both likely to continue to engage with the US in an attempt to place their respective views at the forefront of the US approach. Recent negotiation efforts are unlikely to yield results, as Russia are unlikely to accept Western military forces in Ukraine as part of a security guarantee.

Until there are firm indications of all parties decidedly moving in a unified direction towards any ceasefire or peace settlement, the current situation is likely to continue. By extension, the overall threat picture for the Black Sea will also likely remain unchanged.

**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
<b>Odesa</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 occurs regularly 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 occurs regularly 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 occurs regularly 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 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
<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.

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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



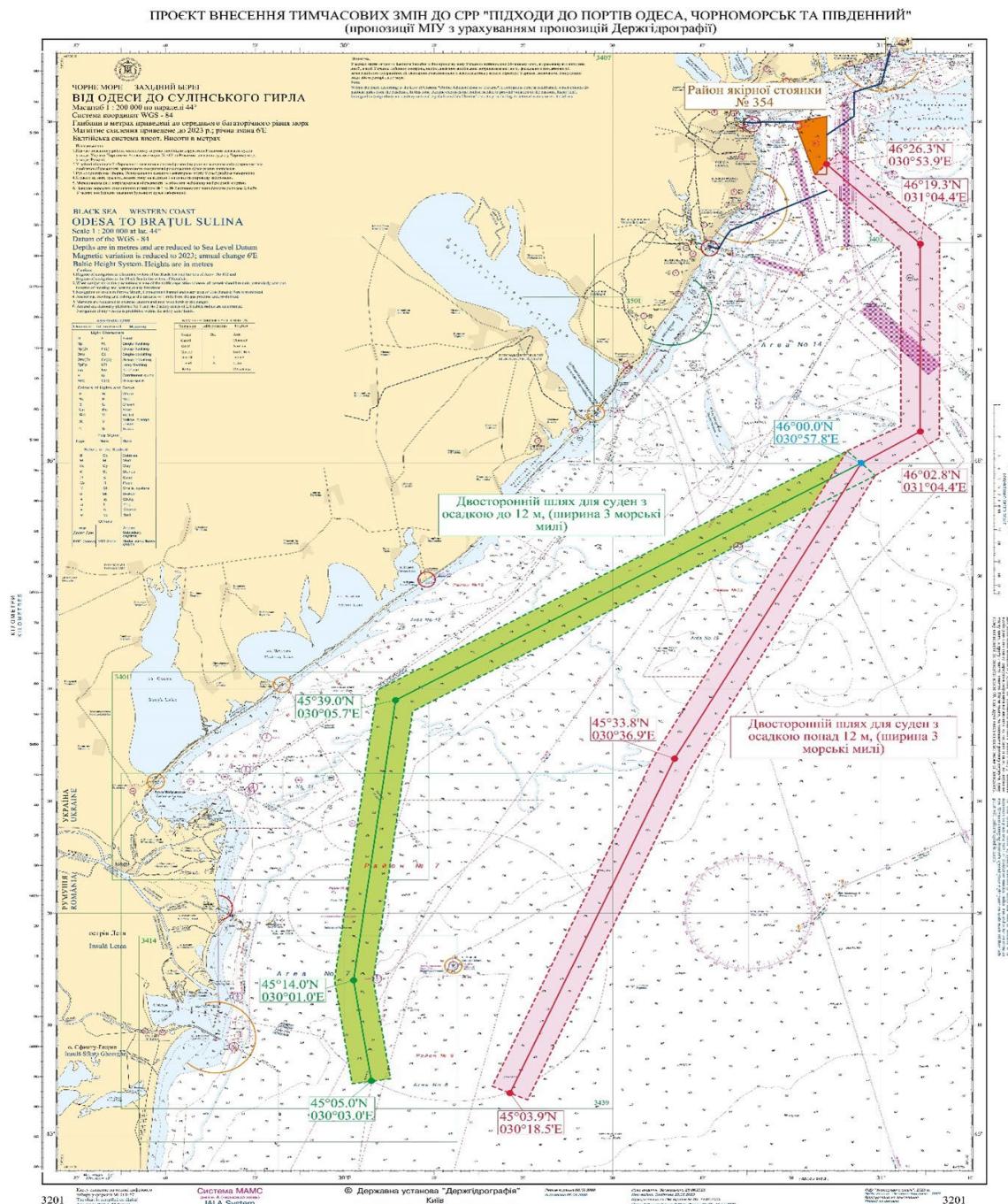
Image 1 - Risk Intelligence (Illustration for visual guidance only)

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.

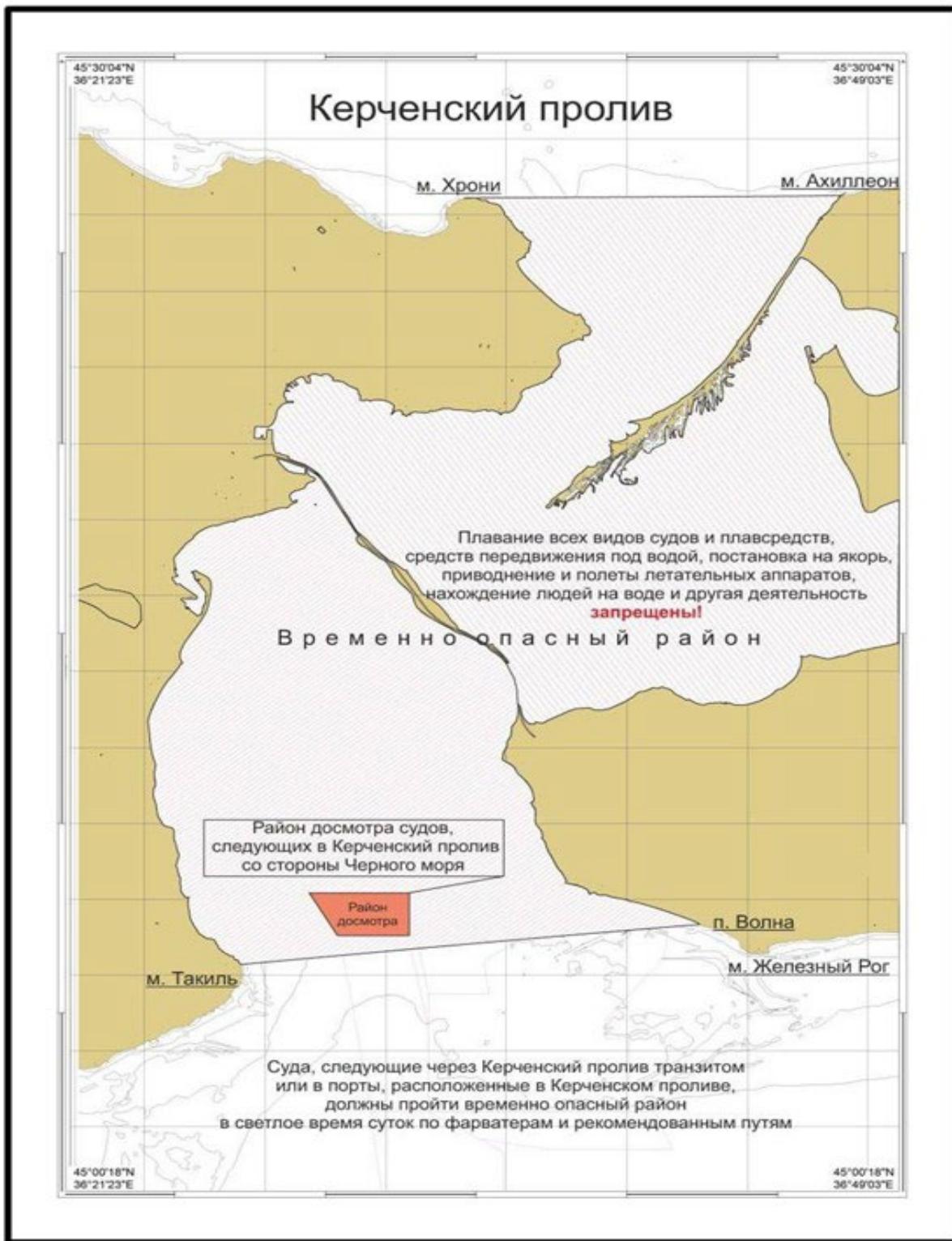
Please also note that active NAVAREA III warnings include a warning of possible drifting mines (NAVAREA III 0122) for Northwest, West, and Southwest areas of the Black Sea.

# 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
17 JAN 2026	AURELIA	General cargo	Cameroon
13 JAN 2026	MATILDA	Crude Oil	Malta
13 JAN 2026	GRUS I	Crude oil	Cameroon
13 JAN 2026	BREEZE III	Oil tanker	Panama
13 JAN 2026	DELTA HARMONY	Crude oil	Liberia
12 JAN 2026	BLUE BEAD	General cargo	San Marino
12 JAN 2026	ATA VOYAGER	Chemical/Oil	Panama
09 JAN	WAEK K	General cargo	St. Kitts-Nevis
09 JAN 2026	LADONNA	Bulk	Comoros
07 JAN 2026	ELBUS	Crude oil	Palau
30 DEC 2025	CAPTAIN KARAM	Bulk carrier	Panama

# Annex 5 – Incidents

## Merchant vessel damaged in strike on Port of Chornomorsk

January 15 2026

Region: Europe

A Malta-flagged merchant vessel sustained damage in a strike on Port of Chornomorsk, Ukraine, at an unknown time on 15 January 2026.

According to an official press statement from the local authorities the port was hit by a Russian ballistic missile causing damage to port infrastructure, and to a Malta-flagged vessel as well. One crewmember from the merchant vessel suffered injuries in the attack.

## General cargo vessel AURELIA reports drone attack

January 17 2026

Region: Europe

The Cameroon-flagged general cargo vessel AURELIA was hit by a drone South of Novorossiysk, Russia, in the Black Sea at 07:56 LT (04:56 UTC) on 17 January 2026.

The incident took place at: 43:32N 037:18E.

The vessel was in a laden condition, carrying containers from Novorossiysk, Russia, to Mersin, Turkiye, when it was struck by the drone. The impact resulted in a fire affecting deck container stowage, which was successfully extinguished by the crew. No injuries were reported. Initial assessments by the crew indicated minor structural damage to the main deck and related fittings. The vessel subsequently cancelled its voyage schedule and arrived at Samsun anchorage.

The 5,271 DWT vessel has Alesta Roro Gemi Acenteligi ve Isletmeciliği Nakliye Ticaret Limited Sirketi, Turkiye, as its technical manager.

## Port of Taman reportedly attacked

January 21 2026

Region: Europe

The port of Taman, Russia, was reportedly attacked at an unknown time on 21 January 2026.

According to local reports, citing official sources, the port of Taman was attacked by aerial drones in a strike that caused three casualties and several wounded, as well as setting fire to four oil storage tanks.

RI note: Position of incident is based on RI analyst assessment.



# Knowing Risk

Risk Intelligence A/S  
Strandvejen 100  
2900 Hellerup  
Denmark

Tel: +45 7026 6230

[www.riskintelligence.eu](http://www.riskintelligence.eu)