

WEEKLY INTELLIGENCE REPORT | ISSUE NO. 04 (29 JANUARY 2026)

Northern Black Sea and Russia (Ports and Terminals)

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Intelligence Reports

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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:
29 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
- Sea mines and war related debris remains a threat in the Black Sea

Brief update

Incidents during the reporting period do not alter the current threat picture in the Black Sea.

During the past week, Romanian forces successfully dismantled a naval mine off the coast of Constanța. Although incidents involving naval mines in the Black Sea remain relatively infrequent—and some degree of underreporting is likely—the episode underscores the persistent and unresolved challenge posed by drifting mines in the region. Nevertheless, it does not alter the overall threat assessment, which remains unchanged.

Recent diplomatic efforts in Abu Dhabi, including the trilateral meeting involving the United States, Ukraine, and Russia, do not appear to have yielded any significant progress towards establishing a workable or mutually acceptable peace agreement between Russia and Ukraine. Even so, the mere fact that all three parties were present in the same room can be regarded as a modest step forward. Reports suggest that a second meeting may take place during the weekend of 31 January. The principal unresolved issues reportedly concern possible US security guarantees for Ukraine and the question of whether Ukraine might be expected to make territorial concessions to Russia. A key difficulty is that both Russian and Ukrainian leaders need to be able to present any negotiated outcome as a “win” to their respective domestic audiences, albeit for different reasons. For Ukraine, the outcome must be framed as a positive settlement that ensures both the sovereignty and the long-term security of the country and its citizens. For Russia, the leadership will seek to portray the result as evidence that the objectives of the war have been fulfilled and justified the costs incurred. One of Russia’s maximalist demands is that Ukrainian forces withdraw from areas of Donbas still under Ukrainian control—an entirely unacceptable proposal from Kyiv’s perspective. Moreover, Russia has stated that the presence of non-Ukrainian troops in Ukraine as part of any security guarantee structure would be unacceptable and would constitute legitimate targets.

It cannot be ruled out that a temporary pause or limited ceasefire—such as halting attacks on energy infrastructure or on shipping—might be agreed. Such ideas have been floated before, though never adopted, but could represent a plausible first step should momentum develop.

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 will be higher when attacks, by Russia, are focussed on port infrastructure and port cities. Although the threat during transit to and from Ukrainian ports is considered lower compared to the threat of damage to vessels in port, a general threat persists to vessels operating in the area.

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.

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

Attacks 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 recent open letter, or declaration, by 14 NATO coastal states in the Baltic and North Seas stating that vessels calling Russian ports, can only have one state flag, if more flags they will be considered flag-less, that AIS must be maintained, no suspicious STS activity, have proper documentation and maintain clear communication with maritime authorities is likely a response to president Zelensky's complaint during his speech in Davos, questioning European nations actions against Russia' shadow fleet vessels when navigating through European waters. It remains to be seen both how and to what degree any action will be taking to enforce or control the above, and any intervention of Russia affiliated vessels is not without its own consequences. However, it is another way to further place the kind of pressure, on Russian affiliated

vessels, and the income gained by Russia through this trade, as Ukraine itself has been attempting to do with its attacks on Russian oil infrastructure and vessels undertaking Russian shipments.

Until a settlement of either a temporary ceasefire, or more permanent peace agreement is reached, Ukrainian and Russian strikes on maritime targets in the Black Sea are likely to continue. Oil and energy export facilities will probably remain the main focus, but attacks on Russian naval units or Kremlin-aligned “shadow fleet” vessels are also likely. A broader target set can also not be excluded. Naval drone operations, however, will remain heavily constrained by winter weather, with storms and poor conditions limiting their effectiveness.

With Ukraine continued pressure by Ukraine on Russia’s Black Sea oil exports, Russia is likely to respond by targeting Ukraine’s own maritime export capacity. This would most plausibly involve increased strikes on port infrastructure, including while vessels are docked, raising the risk of collateral damage. Attacks on shipping may also occur as a like-for-like response, potentially extending to neutral vessels calling at Ukrainian ports.

Although strikes on ports and maritime infrastructure are likely, Russia’s main focus is still expected to be the bombing of critical civilian infrastructure facilities across Ukraine. This approach, aimed at worsening civilian hardship during the winter, has been a consistent feature of Russia’s strategy. Any attacks on ports are therefore more likely to serve signalling purposes or target high-value assets rather than indicate a fundamental shift in priorities.

As talks on establishing a mutually agreeable settlement continue, both Russia and Ukraine are expected to continue engaging the United States in an effort to shape Washington’s stance. However, under present circumstances diplomatic attempts are unlikely to lead to breakthroughs, particularly as Russia is expected to reject any security arrangement involving Western military forces on Ukrainian soil.

Unless all parties show clear signs of moving towards a unified path to a ceasefire or settlement, the current pattern of hostilities is expected to persist. Consequently, the overall threat environment in the Black Sea is also likely to 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
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 occurs regularly 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 occurs regularly 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 occurs regularly due to power outages or air raid alarms.		
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

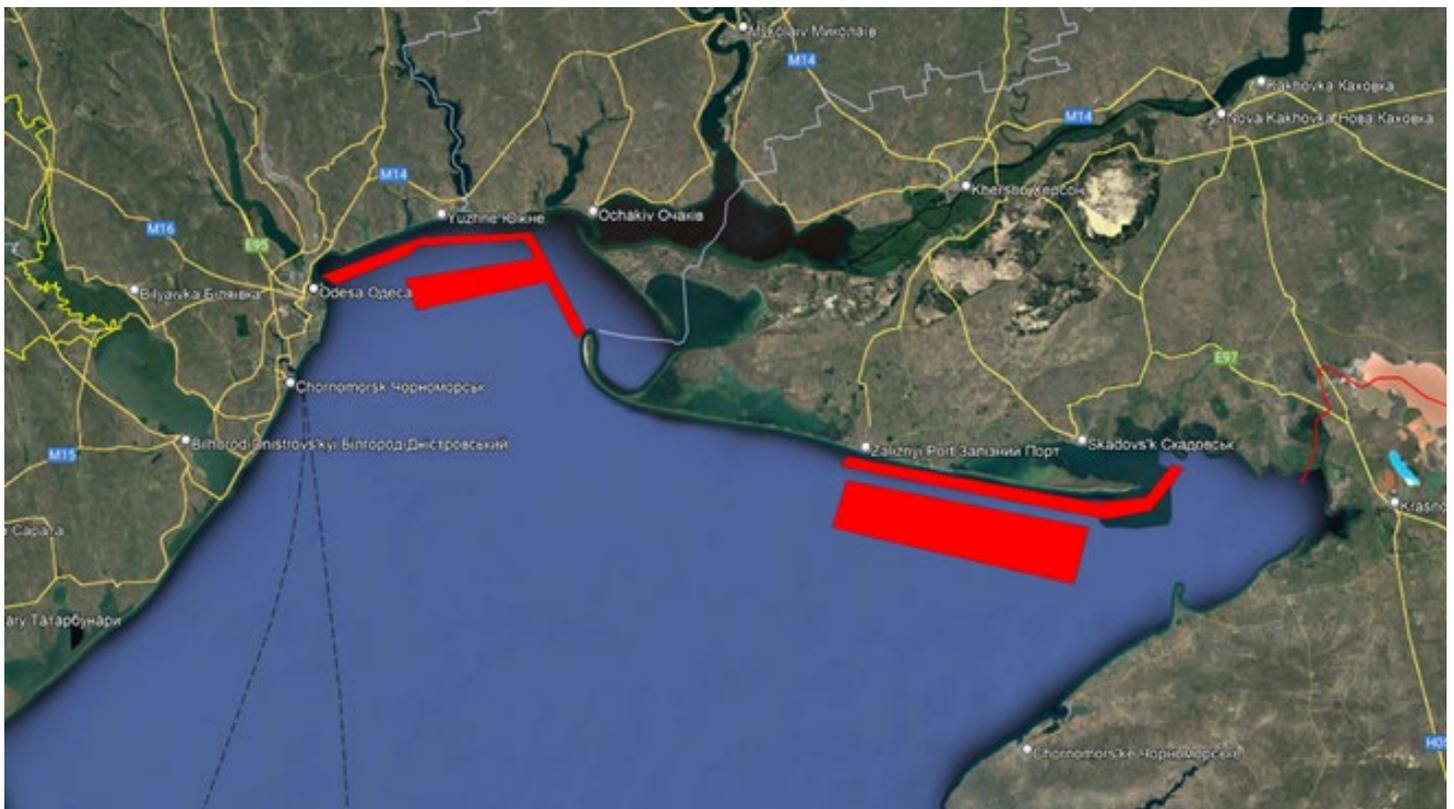


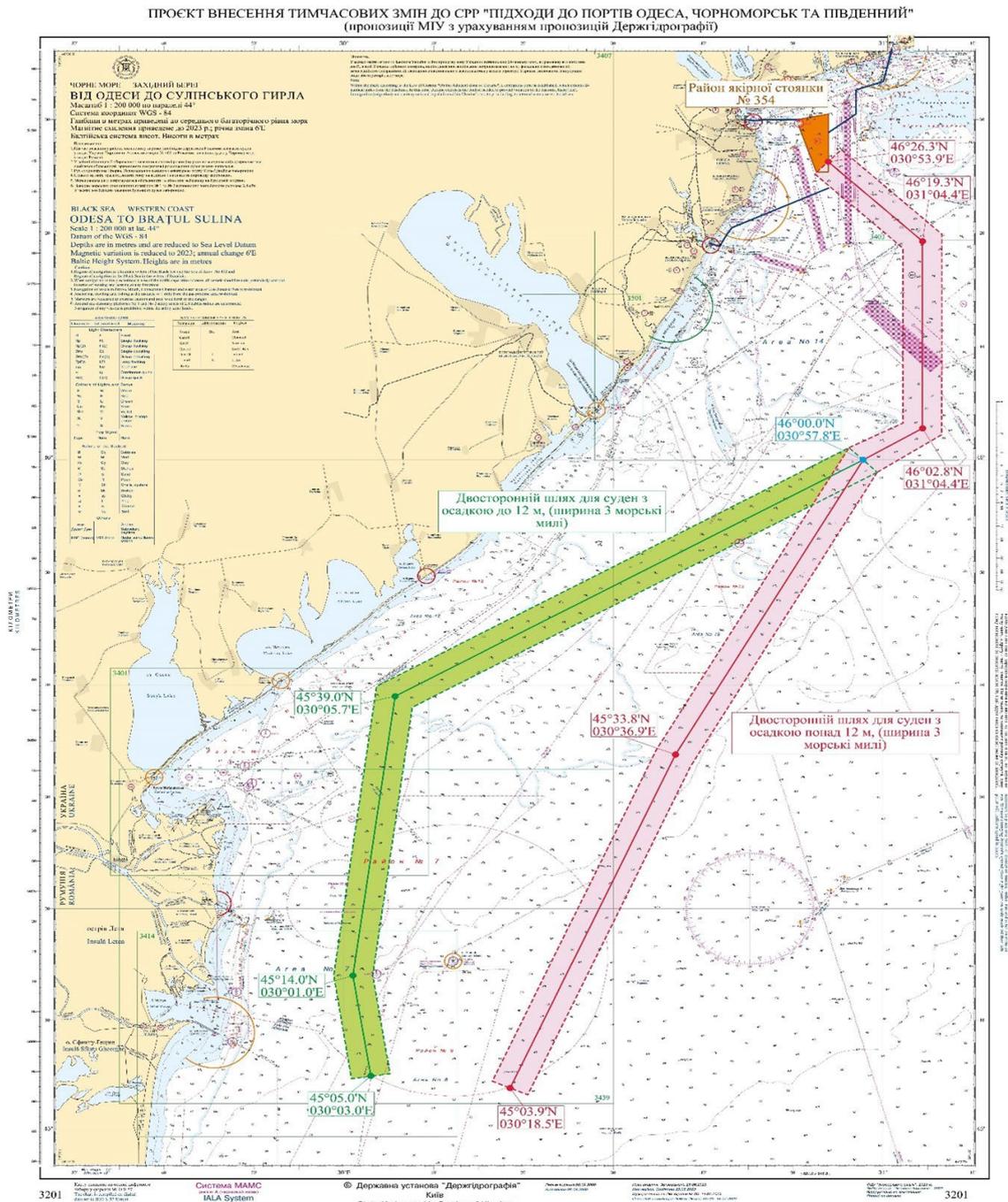
Image 1 - Risk Intelligence (Illustration for visual guidance only)

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.

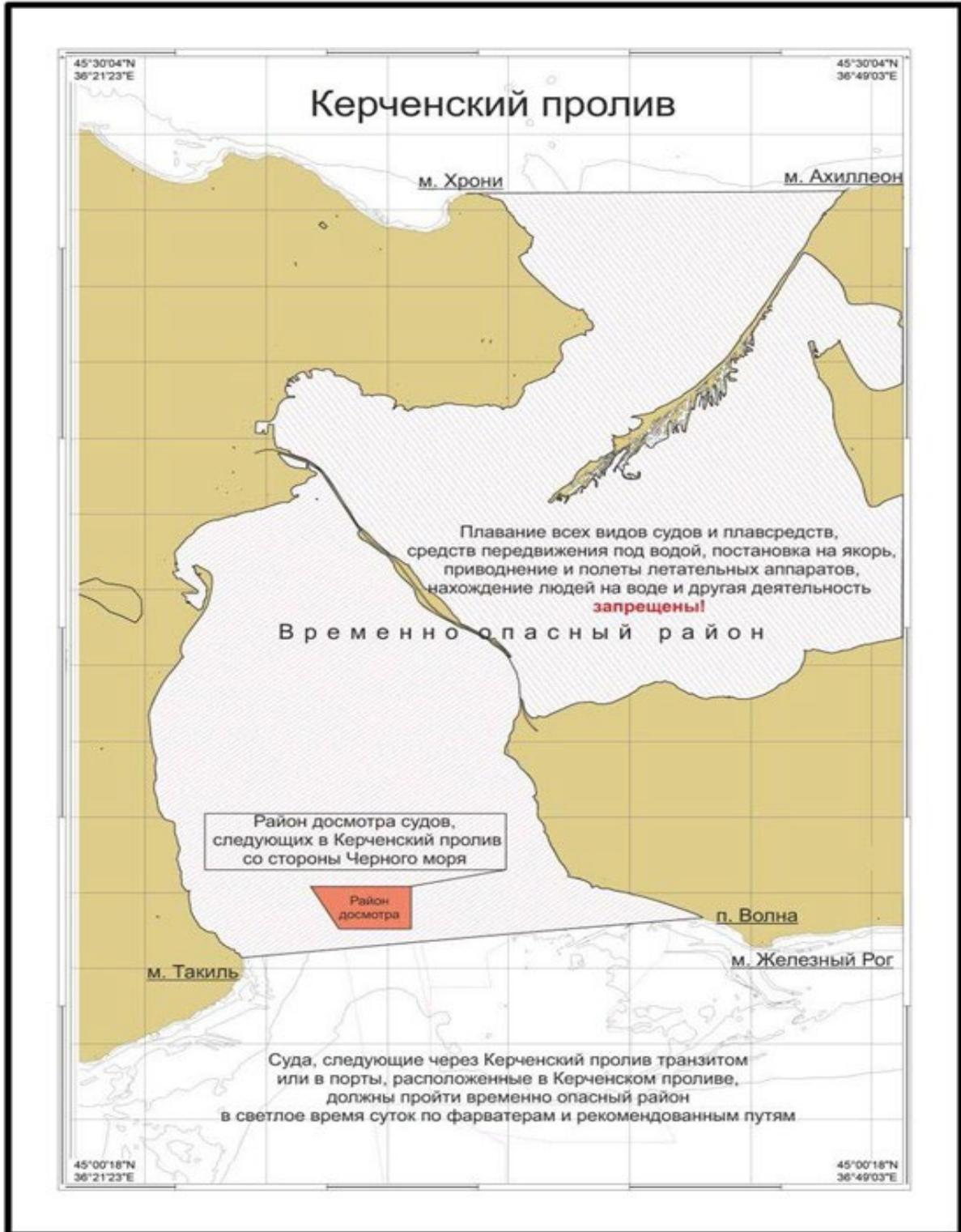
Please also note that active NAVAREA III warnings include a warning of possible drifting mines (NAVAREA III 0122) for Northwest, West, and Southwest areas of the Black Sea.

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
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

RiskIntelligence

Drone strikes on port of Feodosia reported

January 28 2026

Region: Europe

The port of Feodosia, Crimea, Ukraine was reportedly attacked at an unknown time on 28 January 2026.

According to reports on various media the port and other targets in the vicinity was struck by Ukrainian drones, causing some damage. The strikes include targets in or near the oil facility in the North of the city.

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

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Romanian forces dismantle floating mine

January 28 2026

Region: Europe

Romanian forces has dismantled a floating naval mine at an unknown position near the Midia firing range North of Constanta, Romania on 28 January 2026.

According to local media reports, citing official sources, the mine was discovered by military personnel in the area who then received assistance from explosive ordnance disposal units.



Knowing Risk

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