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Ukraine Says Struck Russian Tugboat in Black Sea

June 17, 2022



RF NAVY

Ukraine's navy said it struck a Russian ship in the Black Sea on Friday.

Russian tugboat Vasily Bekh was allegedly transporting supplies to Snake Island, a remote island off the coast of Ukraine occupied by Russia since the first day of its invasion that has become a focal point of the conflict.

The vessel was then hit by two Western-supplied Harpoon anti-ship missiles, the Ukrainian Armed Forces said in a statement.

"The Black Sea Fleet tugboat Vasiliy Bekh was hit in the Black Sea as it transported ammunition, weapons and personnel of the fleet to Snake Island," the statement read.

Ukraine's Armed Forces Strategic Communications Directorate published a video purporting to show two missiles striking the ship from the air.

The claims have yet to be verified. If confirmed, the Vasiliy Bekh would be at least the 14th

Russian vessel damaged or destroyed since Moscow launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in late February.

These include Russia's Black Sea Fleet flagship the Moskva, which sank in April after Ukraine said it struck the ship. Moscow denies the Moskva was struck by enemy fire and says it sank due to an accidental fire on board.

Having captured the bulk of Ukraine's naval fleet following the 2014 annexation of Crimea, Russia has used its dominance in the Black Sea throughout its invasion of Ukraine to transport supplies and support ground offensives.

Snake Island became a widespread symbol of Ukrainian resistance early in the war following a viral radio exchange in which Ukrainian soldiers told a Russian warship to "go **** yourself" when it ordered them to surrender.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2022/06/17/ukraine-says-struck-russian-tugboat-in-black-sea-a78036