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Ukraine Warns Against Navigating in Black Sea, Following Russia

By AFP

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Russian Black Sea Fleet's frigate Admiral Essen in Sevastopol. **Russian Defense Ministry / TASS**

Ukraine said Thursday that ships going to Russian-controlled ports on the Black Sea would be treated as possibly carrying military cargo, a day after Russia announced a similar move.

Tensions are rising over the Black Sea after Russia exited a deal protecting maritime exports from Ukraine.

"Starting from 00:00 on July 21, 2023, all vessels in the Black Sea heading towards Russia's seaports and Ukrainian seaports located in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine may be considered by Ukraine as carrying military cargo, with all the associated risks," the defense ministry said.

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> Ukraine, as it showed with the naval drone attack on the Kerch bridge, certainly has the means to sink commercial vessels in the open sea. And there is a lot of commercial traffic to Russian Black Sea ports. https://t.co/xDsI3JQha2 pic.twitter.com/89EnC20JYJ
>
> — Yaroslav Trofimov (@yarotrof) July 20, 2023

Ukraine also said it had prohibited navigation on "the northeastern part of the Black Sea and the Kerch Strait" near Crimea.

The moves make navigation in most of the Black Sea perilous for vessels, after Russia on Wednesday banned traffic on the northwestern and southeastern parts of the sea.

After Ukraine signaled it was ready to continue exports, Moscow said Wednesday it would consider cargo ships traveling to Ukraine through the Black Sea potential military targets.

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