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Russian Navy Holds Live Fire 'Exercise' in Black Sea

By AFP

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A Russian warship seen during joint exercises with China in the Pacific Ocean. **TASS**

Russia's navy carried out a live fire "exercise" in the northwest Black Sea, Moscow's Defense Ministry said Friday, days after the Kremlin said it would consider ships traveling to Ukraine through the waterway potential military targets.

The Black Sea Fleet "carried out live firing of anti-ship cruise missiles at the target ship in the combat training range in the northwestern part of the Black Sea," Russia's Defense Ministry said in a statement on the Telegram messaging app.

"The target ship was destroyed as a result of a missile strike," it said.

"Also during the joint exercise, the ships and fleet aviation undertook measures to isolate the area temporarily closed to navigation, and also carried out a set of measures to detain the offending ship."

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Russia said Wednesday that cargo ships en route to Ukrainian ports on the Black Sea would be regarded as possibly carrying military cargo, days after scrapping a grain exports deal with Ukraine.

The Kremlin has also declared unspecified areas in the "northwestern and southeastern parts of the international waters of the Black Sea" as "temporarily dangerous for passage."

Moscow warned of "risks" to establishing Black Sea shipment routes without its participation.

Kyiv said it was prepared to continue grain exports through its southern ports, despite Russia pulling out of the deal.

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