The Moscow Times
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Ukrainian Drones Attack Russian Black Sea Naval Base, Annexed Crimea

August 04, 2023



t.me/vchkogpu

Russia claimed Friday it had thwarted Ukrainian sea and air drone attacks on a naval base in the Black Sea and the Crimean peninsula.

"Tonight, the Armed Forces of Ukraine, with the use of two unmanned sea boats, attempted an attack on the Novorossiysk naval base of the Russian Armed Forces," the Defense Ministry said on the Telegram messaging app, adding that Russian ships destroyed the seaborne drones in the first such attack on the port city.

Yet video published online showed what appeared to be a partly sunken Russian Navy vessel being towed in the waters around Novorossiysk.

Pro-war Telegram channels claimed the ship was the Olenegorsky Gornyak, which has been used to transport troops and military hardware into occupied Ukrainian ports.

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Ukraine's online newspaper Ukrainska Pravda also published video of what it said was a Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) seaborne drone attacking the Olenegorsky Gornyak.

"The Russians' claims of a 'repelled attack' is fake," an unnamed SBU source was quoted as saying by Ukrainska Pravda.

Similarly, Reuters, citing an anonymous Ukrainian intelligence source, said the vessel had suffered a "serious breach" that rendered it unable to conduct combat missions.

The Kremlin on Friday declined to answer journalists' questions about the reported damage to the Olenegorsky Gornyak.

Embed:

> СБУ провела спецоперацію в бухті Новоросійська - пошкоджений великий десантний корабель "Оленегорский горняк". Відео надане джерелами УП pic.twitter.com/raQavQp1qU
>
> — Українська правда ◙◙ (@ukrpravda_news) August 4, 2023

The Black Sea port of Novorossiysk hosts a pipeline terminal that carries most of Kazakhstan's oil exports through Russia.

Friday's drone attack prompted the terminal's operator Caspian Pipeline Consortium to temporarily halt the movement of ships in the area, according to the state-run Interfax news agency.

Meanwhile, the Russian Defense Ministry said Friday it had downed 13 drones over the annexed Crimean peninsula, noting that there were no casualties or damage in the attacks.

Both Crimea and Russia's Black Sea Fleet have been regularly targeted since Moscow launched its invasion of Ukraine more than a year ago, but attacks have increased in recent weeks.

AFP contributed to this reporting.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/08/04/ukrainian-drones-attack-russian-black-sea-naval-base-annexed-crimea-a82053