

Talks for New Black Sea Shipping Deal Collapsed in March – Reuters

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A cargo ship with Ukrainian grain in Istanbul. **Tolga Ildun / ZUMA Press Wire / TASS**

A possible deal between Russia and Ukraine that would have ensured the safe movement of cargo ships in the Black Sea fell through at the last moment in March after Kyiv abruptly withdrew from negotiations, Reuters [reported](#) Monday, citing four anonymous sources familiar with the matter.

The talks, which Turkey mediated after “nudging” from the United Nations, reportedly took place over the course of two months and were due to be announced by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on March 30.

“At the very last minute, Ukraine suddenly pulled out and the deal was scuttled,” one of the sources was quoted as saying by Reuters. It was not immediately clear why Kyiv withdrew from the negotiations.

Turkey and the UN previously helped mediate a July 2022 deal known as the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which had allowed Ukraine to safely export almost 33 million metric tons of grain.

Moscow withdrew from that deal in July 2023 over complaints that its terms were not being met. Ukraine then [created](#) its own Black Sea export corridor despite Russia's threats to target ships using Kyiv-controlled ports.

Related article: [With the End of the Grain Deal, No One Wins](#)

Large swathes of the Black Sea have turned into a naval war zone since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, leading to a drop-off in shipping volumes along the key route used for both Russian and Ukrainian exports.

Neither Ukraine nor Turkey responded to Reuters' request for comment. The Kremlin later on Tuesday [declined](#) to comment on the reported collapse in talks over a possible Black Sea deal.

"We have many different issues on the agenda with our Turkish partners, including those related to the Black Sea, but I have nothing to say specifically about this report," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told journalists.

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