



War in Ukraine – impact on the maritime situation

The security situation in the Black Sea remains unstable, with commercial shipping facing an increased risk of attack. All transits and port calls should therefore be assessed individually, taking account of current threats, available guidance and appropriate mitigating measures.

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Black Sea security updates

On 23 September 2026, the US Maritime Administration (MARAD) updated its [Black Sea advisory](#) . It notes that, since February 2022 and as recently as September 2026, commercial vessels have reportedly been struck by projectiles, drones and unmanned vehicles in the Black Sea and Sea of Azov. Moored and drifting naval mines have also been reported. “ *While some past actions may have targeted specific commercial vessels due to their association with certain countries or their activity, the potential remains for miscalculation, misidentification, or accidental strikes caused by electronic warfare (EW) interference with missile and drone guidance systems, resulting in a high risk of damage to commercial vessels in the region ,*” says MARAD.

This follows a [warning](#) issued by the NATO Shipping Centre (NSC) on 23 July 2026 stating that the recent increase in attacks on commercial shipping in the Black Sea poses serious risks to the safety of navigation, life at sea and the marine environment. The NSC also continues to receive and assess [reports](#) from merchant mariners of GNSS interference in the region, particularly along the northern and western coasts of the Black Sea.

In response to the deteriorating regional security situation, the Joint War Committee (JWC) revised its Listed Areas on 16 September 2026, expanding the area in the Black Sea for which prior notification to insurers is required. The revised list includes the *Black Sea, excluding the territorial waters of littoral states other than Russia and Ukraine* . The latest version of the JWC’s Listed Areas is available on the [JWC website](#) .

Against this backdrop, a sustained improvement in regional maritime security is unlikely without a durable ceasefire accepted and upheld by all parties. Until such an arrangement is in place, there remains a risk of deliberate attacks and collateral damage to ships and maritime infrastructure, particularly in the north-western Black Sea and the Danube Delta.

Key security considerations

The situation in the Black Sea remains volatile and can change rapidly. Ships trading in the region should closely monitor developments and exercise caution. Key considerations include:

- Conducting a thorough risk assessment identifying current threats.
- Reviewing security measures, taking guidance from available industry information and the latest versions of the shipping association's Maritime Security Threat Overview (MISTO) and Best Management Practices – Maritime Security (BMP-MS), available from www.maritimeglobalsecurity.org.
- Incorporating appropriate protective measures into their vessel security plans.
- Maintaining regular communication with coastal and port authorities, as well as local agents.
- Briefing the crew on the potential regional threats and conducting regular security drills.
- Consulting the ship's war risk insurer before entering the Black Sea.

In the event of a security incident or suspicious activity, in transit or in port, ships should notify their flag administration, the relevant coastal authorities, and the NATO Shipping Centre ([NSC](#)).

Operators and masters may also wish to consult [ATP-02.1 Naval Cooperation and Guidance for Shipping \(NCAGS\)](#) , which explains how naval forces and merchant ships interact in areas of armed conflict or war. Although NATO is not a party to the conflict, the document provides relevant guidance for ships navigating in such areas.

Operational threats and guidance

In transit:

- According to NSC, the [risk of collateral damage](#) or direct hits on civilian shipping within the war risk area in the northern part of the Black Sea, west of Crimea, remains high. Reference is made to [NAVAREA III warning 0124/2022](#) .
- The NSC also reports that drifting mines continue to be detected and neutralised by coastal authorities in the southwestern Black Sea.
- Ships should therefore avoid floating objects, keep the forward area of the ship clear of crew where practicable, and maintain effective visual lookouts at all times. Any sightings of mine-like objects should be reported to coastal authorities, and ships should remain well clear of the hazard.
- Masters are reminded to monitor coastal broadcast and [NAVAREA III](#) warnings in force and consult their local agents for the most up-to-date operational information.
- Some coastal states may issue “recommended routes” for ships arriving or departing from ports. Masters should verify such routing guidance with local agents or port authorities and comply with any routing instructions issued by the relevant authorities.
- Operators and masters should also maintain contact with their flag administrations to ensure they receive the latest available guidance and instructions.
- The NSC recommends that ships operating in the Black Sea region keep AIS transmitting in accordance with SOLAS requirements and maintain a listening watch on VHF Channel 16.
- However, the [IMO guidelines](#) permit the master to switch off AIS if its operation could compromise the safety or security of the ship, or if a security incident is imminent. In such cases, the date, time, position, and reason for doing so should be recorded in the ship's logbook, and AIS should be reactivated as soon as the danger has passed.

Port situation:

- Black Sea ports in both Russia and Ukraine, as well as Ukrainian ports on the Danube River, continue to face an elevated threat from missile and drone strikes linked to the ongoing conflict. Although attack patterns vary in frequency and intensity, civilian infrastructure remains subject to attack. Consequently, short periods of reduced activity should not be interpreted as a sustained decline in risk.
- The [United Nations \(UN\) Black Sea Grain Initiative \(BSGI\)](#) was terminated in July 2023. Refer to the [UN press release of 17 July 2023](#) for details of the current situation.
- Since the termination of the BSGI, Ukraine has established and continues to operate a “temporary humanitarian corridor” to its ports in the northwestern Black Sea. See [IMO Circular Letter 4748](#) for details. However, Russia has not indicated its support for this initiative and has provided no security guarantees. As a result, the risks associated with using the corridor and ports may be higher than those that existed under BSGI.
- Commercial operations in many Russian and Ukrainian ports continue, although port activities may be disrupted temporarily by missile or drone attacks. Beyond the Black Sea region, Russian ports in the eastern Gulf of Finland are also exposed to drone attacks.
- Commercial operations in the ports of other Black Sea littoral states continue. However, ISPS Security Levels may be raised in response to changes in the threat environment. Ships trading to Romanian Danube ports may also be vulnerable to collateral damage from strikes against port infrastructure on the Ukrainian side of the border.
- Ships should implement security measures appropriate to the prevailing threat environment and applicable ISPS Security Level. These may include enhanced surveillance, stricter access controls, and additional security personnel where necessary.

The information provided above is based on sources and information available to us at the time of publication and is provided to the best of our knowledge. However, the security situation is subject to rapid change, and information and recommendations may become outdated without notice. Ships should therefore continue to monitor developments closely and consult local agents or Gard correspondents to verify the latest available information before and throughout operations in the region. An overview of Gard's correspondents is available [here](#) .

Additional resources are also available via our hot topic page, [War in Ukraine](#) , which provides an overview of Gard's relevant loss prevention material and links to external resources and guidance to help ship operators, masters, and crews remain alert and prepared for operations in the Black Sea region.