

Casualties

Russian strike on grain ship could be deadliest of Ukraine war

Triple missile strike could be worst attack on shipping since invasion



Фото: Військово-Морські Сили, 2026

Published 20 July 2026, 12:15

A Russian missile attack on a bulker carrying grain from Ukraine has killed up to 10 seafarers in what could be the deadliest strike on a commercial ship since the invasion in February 2022.

Three cruise missiles targeted the Turkish-owned 7,334-dwt Golden Leo (built 1998) on Sunday after it departed the port of Odesa, according to Ukrainian naval and port officials.

Dozens of seafarers have been killed this year as [wars in Europe and the Middle East](#) affect commercial shipping.



Read more

Eight seafarers killed and 10 injured in Russian retaliation against Ukrainian ship strikes

The attack started a fire on the Guinea-Bissau-flagged vessel, which had 17 Syrian and Indian seafarers on board and a local pilot, the port authority said in a social media post.

Article continues below the advert

“The search and rescue operation lasted all night,” it said. “The fire on the ship was localised.



Green Seas newsletter

Keep up with sustainability and technology in the shipping and ocean industries.

[Newsletter](#)

“It was possible to deliver to shore eight crew members. Unfortunately, 10 people ... died.

“We firmly condemn the latest war crime of Russia, aimed against civilian shipping, international trade and freedom of navigation.”

The dead included the pilot. The rescued seafarers were taken to hospital in Odesa, according to Ukraine’s Navy.

If the death toll is confirmed, the Golden Leo appears to be the deadliest single shipping attack of the war.



Smoke rises from the Golden Leo after the Russian strike. Photo: Ukraine Navy

Ukraine said a [Russian attack at the Chornomorsk container terminal](#) near Odesa in October 2024 killed a seafarer and nine port workers.

That double missile strike targeted the Panama-flagged, 1,679-teu Shui Spirit (built 2000).

Ukraine and Russia are ramping up their attacks against ships this year. Ukraine has said more than 50 Russian attacks have targeted shipping this year.

[Three suezmaxes were hit by Ukrainian drones](#) over the weekend at the Caspian Pipeline Consortium terminal off the Russian Black Sea coast.

Ukraine last month set out its case for [why commercial shipping is a legitimate military target](#), saying Moscow’s shadow fleet tankers “make an effective contribution to the enemy’s military action”.

[Read more](#)

Ukraine claims attack on 10 vessels in ‘industrial scale’ drone strike

Acting foreign minister Andrii Sybiha said Ukraine was informing the International Maritime Organization and the governments of the countries affected of the latest attacks.

Sybiha said he had discussed the issue with the IMO’s leadership and had called for the deployment of an international monitoring mission to Ukraine’s ports.

“We expect this mission to begin its work as planned in the fall and help document every act of Russia’s maritime terror, paving the way for accountability,” he said.

[\(Copyright\)](#)

Published 20 July 2026, 12:15 Updated 20 July 2026, 12:49

[Russia](#) [Ukraine](#) [Turkey](#) [Grain](#) [Odesa](#)

 [Copy link](#)

 [Be notified](#)