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Shipowners halt vessel calls for farm exports at Ukraine's Black Sea ports, minister says

By Reuters

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Smoke rises from a civilian vessel on fire, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Odesa, Ukraine July 19, 2026. Picture taken with a mobile phone. REUTERS/Stringer/File Photo [Purchase Licensing Rights](#)

Summary

Ukraine's Black Sea ports lose a third of grain export capacity, traders and analysts say

Farm minister says alternative routes are underutilised

Foreign minister requests urgent UN Security Council meeting

July 23 (Reuters) - Shipowners have temporarily suspended vessel arrivals at Ukraine's Black Sea ports for agricultural exports after a recent surge in Russian attacks on ports and merchant shipping, the country's agriculture minister said.

Ukraine has lost about a third of its capacity to export grain via the Black Sea ports due to Russian missile and drone attacks, traders and analysts have said.

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"As of today, the entry of ships has been suspended. This is a decision taken by the shipowners. Ukraine, as a state, has not imposed any restrictions," Interfax-Ukraine cited Taras Vysotskyi as saying on Wednesday.

Vysotskyi added that alternative routes and infrastructure were currently underutilised, Interfax-Ukraine said.

Ukraine has been exporting much of its grain through its Black Sea shipping corridor since 2023, following Russia's withdrawal from a deal that had guaranteed safe passage for agricultural exports after its full-scale invasion of its neighbour in 2022.

But Russian attacks on Ukraine's deepwater ports and international vessels have intensified in recent weeks. Brokers have said shipowners are refusing to enter Ukrainian ports because of sharply increased war-risk concerns, while traders have paused purchases.

A Russian missile strike on a ship carrying corn near Odesa on Sunday killed nine crew members from India and Syria and a Ukrainian maritime pilot, Ukrainian authorities said.

UKRAINE REQUESTS URGENT UN SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING

Ukraine's acting foreign minister, Andrii Sybiha, said late on Wednesday that at least three civilian cargo ships had been attacked by Russia in the past few days.

"Today, zero vessels passed through Ukraine's Black Sea maritime corridor - right at peak harvest. This is deliberate economic and humanitarian terror," Sybiha said in a post on X, adding that Ukraine

had requested an urgent United Nations Security Council meeting for Monday.

Moscow says it is hitting port infrastructure and vessels that support the Ukrainian military.

Ukraine is also stepping up attacks on vessels in the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea, in an expanding campaign aimed at isolating Russia-occupied Crimea and undermining Moscow's key revenue sources.

On Wednesday, Russia introduced a temporary nighttime ban on vessel movements in and out of Novorossiysk port, its biggest port by volume that handles up to one third of its grain exports.

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