

## Turkey closes access to Black Sea

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Turkey has asked all sides in the Ukraine crisis to respect the 1936 Montreux Convention, which gives Turkey the right to limit transit through its straits during a time of war.

Russia is refusing to define its invasion of Ukraine as a “war” and has forbidden its own media from referring to it as such. However, over the weekend Turkey began to accept the view of Ukraine and nearly all of the Western World that there was a war in progress.

The Convention will permit Turkey to curb Russian warships going to the Black Sea, but the pact grants exemption to ships returning to their home bases.

Turkey borders Ukraine and Russia in the Black Sea and has good ties with both.

At least four Russian ships were reported to be waiting to cross from the Mediterranean into the Black Sea.

Turkey has referred to Russia’s invasion as an unacceptable violation of international law but has been careful not to offend Moscow. Turkey has close ties with Russia in energy, defence and tourism. It has called for dialogue and offered to host peace talks.

Late on Monday, Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said that “we are determined to use the powers the Montreux Convention grants our country to ease the crisis”, adding that “we will surely not compromise on our national interests, but we will also not disregard regional and global balances. This is why we cannot abandon ties with Russia or Ukraine.”