

## Russia bans foreign ships from crossing the Kerch Strait

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Russian authorities have banned vessels loaded outside of Russia or Russian-occupied territories from crossing the Kerch Strait, which separates the Black Sea into the Azov Sea.

The move comes a full month after the Kerch Strait bridge, only opened a few years ago and a flagship demonstration by President Putin that Crimea and mainland Russia were united, was seriously damaged.

Türkiye's Directorate General of Maritime Affairs said that "according to the official notification we have received from the Maritime Administration of the Russian Federation, the passage of ships, loaded outside the Russian Federation, to the north through the Kerch Strait into the Sea of Azov is prohibited".

Such a ban would bring into question how Russia would be willing or able to renew the UN grain shipping deal. Russia would be using ports in the Sea of Azov to export its own fertilizer, and if it can only use its own ships, problems of insurance and finance would make things difficult.