**Ukrainian drones hit a Russian tanker near Crimea**

Ukrainian drones hit a Russian tanker in the Black Sea near Crimea late Friday night, according to Russian officials and video circulating on social media, AP reports.

The strike was the second sea attack involving drones in one day, after Ukraine struck a major Russian port earlier on Friday.

As Kyiv’s naval capabilities grow, the Black Sea is becoming an increasingly important battleground in the war.

Three weeks ago, Moscow withdrew from a key export agreement that allowed Ukraine to ship millions of tons of grain across the Black Sea for sale on world markets. In the wake of that withdrawal, Russia carried out repeated strikes on Ukrainian ports, including Odesa.

An official with Ukraine’s Security Service confirmed to The Associated Press that the service was behind the attack on the tanker, which was transporting fuel for Russian forces. A sea drone, filled with 450 kilograms (992 pounds) of TNT, was used for the attack, added the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to give official statements.

“The Sig tanker ... suffered a hole in the engine room near the waterline on the starboard side, presumably as a result of a sea drone attack,” Russia’s Federal Agency for Marine and River Transport wrote on Telegram, adding that there were no casualties among the 11 crew members.

Vladimir Rogov, a Kremlin-installed official in Ukraine’s partially occupied southern Zaporizhzhia region, said several members of the ship’s crew were wounded because of broken glass.

Without specifying that Ukraine was responsible for the drone strike, Vasyl Malyuk, who leads Ukraine’s Security Service, said that “such special operations are conducted in the territorial waters of Ukraine and are completely legal.” Any such explosions, he said, are “an absolutely logical and effective step with regard to the enemy.”

The attack briefly halted traffic on the Kerch Bridge, as well as ferry transport.

Tugboats were deployed to assist the tanker, which is under United States sanctions for helping provide jet fuel to Russian forces fighting in Syria, according to Russia’s Tass news agency.

Ukraine's earlier strike on Novorossiysk halted maritime traffic for a few hours and marked the first time a commercial Russian port has been targeted in the nearly 18-month-old conflict. The port has a naval base, shipbuilding yards and an oil terminal, and is key for exports. It lies about 110 kilometers (about 60 miles) east of Crimea.

Elsewhere, a two-day summit on finding a peaceful settlement to the war kicked off in Saudi Arabia.

Senior officials from around 40 countries – but not Russia – will aim to agree key principles on how to end the conflict.

“It is very important because in such matters as food security, the fate of millions of people in Africa, Asia, and other parts of the world directly depends on how fast the world will be in implementing the Peace Formula,” Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said of the summit. “I am grateful to Saudi Arabia for this platform for negotiations.”

The main Ukrainian envoy to the summit in Jeddah, chief Ukrainian presidential aide Andriy Yermak, spoke of the talks on Friday night in a television interview published on his Telegram account: “I expect that the conversation will be difficult, but behind us is truth, behind us goodness,” he said.