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Russian bombardment of merchant shipping in the Black Sea intensifies

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A Russian ballistic missile strike on infrastructure at Ukraine's port of Chornomorsk yesterday killed six people, wounded 11 others and damaged a Panama-flagged containership, the fifth merchant ship to have been hit by the Russian military in the space of a month with the Black Sea region having gone the whole year prior without any attacks. The ship strike was the third in Ukrainian waters in just four days.

The 24-year-old, 1,679 teu *Shui Spirit*, operated by Nortada Shipmanagement from Portugal, was yesterday's ship attacked.

"Vessels operating in the Black Sea are advised to conduct comprehensive dynamic voyage threat assessments. Crew members should remain within the vessel's superstructure during any aerial attacks on port infrastructure," advised Ambrey, a British maritime security specialist.

In other news from the Black Sea, Ukraine revealed yesterday it has confiscated a dry bulk vessel accused of exporting agricultural products from Crimea.

The 42-year-old *USKO MFU*, a Cameroon-flagged general cargo ship, was detained in July over its repeated trips to Sevastopol to pick up grain exports. The decision has now been taken to confiscate the Turkish-owned ship, which is valued at \$600,000, while its Azerbaijani captain has also been detained, potentially facing a jail sentence.