



Summary (As of 1300 Hrs UTC)

As of 14 April, Ukrainian ports remain closed.

A number of Ukrainian sources claimed on Thursday 14 April that the nation's armed forces have hit the Russian cruiser *MOSKVA* in a guided-missile attack in the Black Sea. Governor of Odessa Maksym Marchenko disclosed that "it has been confirmed that the missile cruiser *MOSKVA* today went exactly where it was sent by our border guards on Snake Island!" referring to the cruiser's involvement in an attack on a Ukrainian border post, adding that "Neptune missiles guarding the Black Sea caused very serious damage to the Russian ship." The incident occurred on 13 April. Separately, Oleksiy Arestovych, Ukrainian presidential spokesman, claimed that there was a fire aboard the *MOSKVA* and that other Russian vessels were attempting to assist it. Open-source satellite imagery has so far not confirmed the claims as weather has been poor in the area, with heavy clouds, rain and winds of about 18 knots. *MOSKVA* was last observed departing Sevastopol on 10 April.



As of Thursday afternoon, Russia's military is claiming that the *MOSKVA* is still afloat, with Ukrainian military claims indicating that the Russian flagship has started sinking. A statement released by Russia's defence ministry disclosed that "the fire on the cruiser *MOSKVA* is under control. There are no flames visible. Ammunition supplies are no longer exploding," adding that "the cruiser *MOSKVA* is still afloat. The main missile armour has not been damaged." The statement went on to say that "the crew of the cruiser were evacuated to Black Sea Fleet vessels nearby. Measures are being taken to tow the cruiser into port," adding that "the causes of the fire are currently being established." Meanwhile the Ukrainian southern military command, in a post on its Facebook page, has said that the vessel suffered significant damage and a fire started after the strike, adding that Russian rescue ships were then hampered by ammunition exploding on board as well as bad weather that "overturned the cruiser and it began to sink."

The strike is likely to be the most audacious yet to be claimed by Ukraine's coastal defence force. A previous Ukrainian strike at the port of Berdyansk damaged one Russian tank landing ship and sank another, resulting in an apparent loss of a shipment of munitions. *MOSKVA* however is a different warship - the vessel is the flagship of the Black Sea Fleet, a *Slava*-class guided missile cruiser. Confirmation of the strike would also suggest that Ukraine's anti-ship missile inventory is capable of penetrating heavy air defences. Amongst Russia's Soviet-era vessels, *MOSKVA* is the hardest of targets. It possesses three fire-control radars, two search radars, two heavy anti-aircraft cannons, six 30mm CIWS cannons, 20 short-range surface-to-air missiles and 64 long-range air defence missiles.

Damage to the vessel will not only materially impact Russia's naval capabilities, but it will also affect Russian morale. It will likely be a boost in morale for Ukraine.

Advisory

MS Risk continues to advise any vessels currently within Ukrainian Ports to leave immediately, if it is deemed safe to do so. Vessels should ensure that they are broadcasting on AIS and clearly state their intentions across VHF. In the event that any vessel is challenged by Russian military vessels, they are advised to comply fully with instructions. MS Risk further advises all commercial operators at this time to avoid any transit or operation within the EEZ of Ukraine or Russia, notably in the vicinity of the Crimean Peninsula within the Black Sea.



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