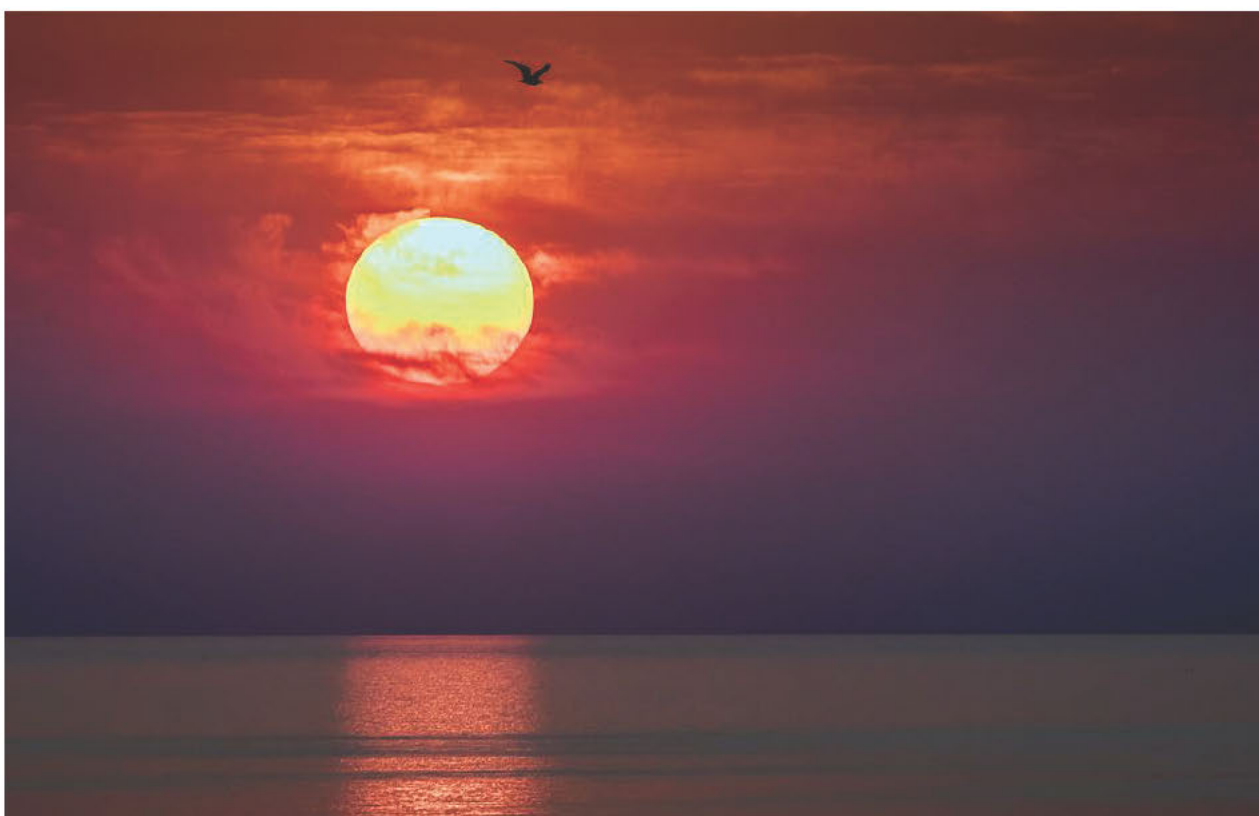


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# Ukraine to deploy more border guards, rescuers in Azov Sea — minister

The Sea of Azov is bounded in the north and in the west by Ukraine and in the east by Russia



A sunset above the Sea of Azov  
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KIEV, September 30. /TASS/. Ukraine's Interior Ministry will increase the number of its personnel deployed in the Sea of Azov, Interior Minister Arsen Avakov said on Saturday.

"We are increasing the presence of Interior Ministry personnel, namely of the State Emergencies Service and the State Border Guards Service. The safety of the Azov Sea coast, of our navigation, is of utmost importance for us," the Interior Ministry's press service quoted Avakov as saying.

Tensions around the use of the Sea of Azov, bounded in the north and in the west by Ukraine and in the east by Russia, flared up on May 25, when Ukraine's Border Service detained Russia's Nord fishing vessel there. Only two sailors managed to return home, while the other crewmembers were detained because Ukraine's Border Service considered them Ukrainian nationals residing in Crimea.

After that, Russia's border guards stepped up their inspections of Ukrainian fishing ships, while Kiev said it was important to beef up its military presence in the Sea of Azov "to counteract to Russian border guards."

The National Security and Defense Council on Ukraine, which convened on September 6, adopted a series of measures to step up the country's military presence in the region in order to "defend national interests in southern regions." Among other things, the measures include increasing the number of the country's warships and motor boats and equipping them with "advanced high-precision missile weaponry." Besides, Ukrainian President Pyotr Poroshenko tasked the government with drafting the country's naval doctrine.

On September 11, Ukraine's Deputy Infrastructure Minister Yuri Lavrenyuk said that the first Gurza-M small armored artillery boat was deployed in the Sea of Azov. Two days later, border guards chief Pyotr Tsigikal said Kiev has decided to boost its military presence in the region by deploying 270 members of special forces there. On September 27, two Ukrainian navy warships - the Donbas and the Korets - crossed the Kerch Strait, entered the Sea of Azov and docked at Ukraine's southern port city of Mariupol.