Russia prevents 3 Ukrainian naval ships from passing through Kerch Strait, sanding civilian bulk carrier under Crimean Bridge

KYIV/MOSCOW. Nov 25 (Interfax) - Russia has closed the passage under the Crimean Bridge, thereby preventing three Ukrainian Navy ships from passing through the Kerch Strait from the Black Sea into the Sea of Azov on Sunday afternoon.

"The Ukrainian Navy ships have been waiting for passing through the Kerch Strait for more than two hours. According to the Kerch Traffic Control service, the navigation in both directions was blocked as of 1.42 p.m. because of a tanker aground in front of the bridge from the side of the Sea of Azov. The passage through the strait is blocked in both directions. It should be noted that this information has not so far been confirmed by the international navigation control system," the Ukrainian Navy said on Facebook on Sunday.

The Ukrainian Navy has some time later posted on Facebook a photo of a large bulk carrier escorted by several more ships lying right across the Kerch strait under the Crimean Bridge.

"Two Kamov Ka-52 helicopter gunships of the Russian Armed Forces took an attack course, with their onboard arms control systems locked on Ukrainian naval boats, at 1:12 p.m. on November 25, 2018," the Ukrainian Navy also said on Facebook.

Several Russian warplanes have been sent to patrol the Kerch Strait, an informed source in Crimea said.

"Several warplanes, which are based on the peninsula, were scrambled for patrolling," the interlocutor of the news agency said.

"Russian coastguard ships are continuing to escort Ukrainian warships at a dangerous distance," the Ukrainian Navy said.

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