Ukraine says it has sunk another russian warship in drone attack

Україна заявляє, що потопила ще один російський військовий корабель в результаті нападу безпілотника

Міжнародний редактор «The Independent» Кріс Стівенсон повідомляє, що у ніч з 4 на 5 березня 2024 року спецпідрозділ Головного управління розвідки (ГУР) України «Група 13» атакував патрульний корабель чорноморського флоту рф «Сергій Котов». Спецоперація ГУР відбулась у співпраці з Військово-морськими силами ЗСУ та за підтримки Міністерства цифрової трансформації України. Зазначається, що удар був нанесений морськими дронами "Magura V5" , внаслідок чого судно зазнало пошкоджень корми, правого та лівого бортів. Вогневе ураження "Сергія Котова" відбулось у територіальних водах України, неподалік Керченської протоки. За даними ГУР, вартість потопленого корабля становить близько 65 млн доларів.

https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-ship-sink-drone-b2507475.html

'Right now this ship is on the seabed,' Ukrainian navy spokesman Dmytro Pletenchuk said
Ukraine has sunk another Russian warship off the coast of occupied Crimea, Kyiv has said.

The Ukrainian military intelligence agency said a special unit called Group 13 had fired Magura V5 maritime kamikaze drones at the Sergey Kotov – a patrol ship Kyiv has said was worth $65m (£51m) – near the Kerch Strait, which connects the Sea of Azov to the Black Sea. The loss is another significant and embarrassing blow to Moscow's naval power.

Seven Russian crew members were killed and six were injured in the strike, while 52 crew were rescued, the military intelligence agency said.

"Right now this ship is on the seabed," Ukrainian navy spokesperson Dmytro Pletenchuk said. He added: "And, by the way, they were also supposed to have a helicopter on board. This is the case where you 'get two for the price of one' so why pay more?"

Ukrainian officials said that the ship suffered damage to the stern, as well as the port and starboard sides. The ship, believed to have been commissioned in 2021, can reportedly carry cruise missiles and around 60 crew.

Patrol boats such as the Sergey Kotov are said to be part of Russia's countermeasures against drone attacks. The vessels use radar to detect and destroy drones using grenade launchers and heavy machine guns, a recent report from the US think tank, the Foreign Policy Research Institute, said.

Video footage shared by the Group 13 unit showed the Ukrainian drones closing in on the vessel, seen in ghostly silhouette. A drone hits its hull and there is a large explosion. More drones then target the hole caused by the first impact.

The private security firm Ambrey said the attack took place at the port of Feodosia, in Crimea, which Russia annexed in 2014. Ambrey said it has seen footage taken by a crew member on a merchant

vessel in the port, showing the Sergey Kotov firing at the drones. The ship was hit at least twice, with the second strike resulting in a large blast, Ambrey reported.

Ukraine's Magura (maritime autonomous guard unmanned robotic apparatus) V5 sea drone (Ministry of Digital Transformation of Ukraine)
Some Russian military bloggers confirmed the account, although the Russian Defence Ministry did not immediately comment on the attack. Telegram channel VChK-OGPU reported attempts to tow the ship to port but said it eventually sank.

Mr Pletenchuk said the Sergey Kotov had also been hit in September 2023 and that a similar patrol vessel had been damaged in attacks since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine two years ago. "They have four similar ships, two of them are no longer in service," he said.

In a gleeful tweet, Ukraine's Defence Ministry said the Sergey Kotov had become a "submarine" and that it had "joined the Moskva" – the flagship of the Black Sea fleet. The guided-missile cruiser was sunk by a missile attack in April 2022, not long after the start of Vladimir Putin's invasion.

On land, Ukraine has faced a tough few months. While much of the 600 miles of front line across Ukraine is in stalemate, Russia's forces have been advancing in the east. Having taken the symbolically important town of Avdiivka, Putin's forces pushed on, but Ukraine's army says it has managed to slow the advance. "We are saying that in this hottest sector of the direct Russian assault, we are managing to stabilise the situation and the enemy's advance has been halted," said Ukrainian military spokesperson Dmytro Lykhoviy, on national television.

But Kyiv has had plenty of success in the Black Sea, having stepped up attacks in recent months. In February, Ukraine claimed it twice sank Russian warships using drones. On 1 February, it claimed to have sunk the Russian missile-armed corvette Ivanovets, and on 14 February it said it destroyed the Caesar Kunikov landing ship.

It came as French president Emmanuel Macron said during a visit to Prague that it was time for Ukraine's allies to step up, adding that a moment was being approached "in our Europe where it will be appropriate not to be a coward".

In a reference to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Mr Macron said that France and the Czech Republic were "well aware that war is back on our soil [in Europe], that some powers which have become unstoppable are extending every day their threat of attacking us even more, and that we will have to live up to history and the courage that it requires".

Mr Macron also said he supported plans announced last month by the Czech Republic, backed by Canada, Denmark and others, to finance the rapid purchase of hundreds of thousands of ammunition rounds from third countries to dispatch to Ukraine. Ukraine is critically short of artillery rounds on the front line as Russia attacks in the east.

"We support this initiative and we are ready to contribute to it," Mr Macron said of the Czech plan, without saying how Paris would be involved. He added that ministers would work on that.

Meanwhile, at The Hague, the International Criminal Court (ICC) has issued arrest warrants for top Russian commanders Sergei Kobylash and Viktor Sokolov for suspected war crimes in Ukraine. It said there were reasonable grounds to believe that the two were responsible for "missile strikes carried out by the forces under their command against the Ukrainian electric infrastructure from at least 10 October 2022 until at least 9 March 2023". Kobylash, 58, was the commander of the so-called long-range aviation of the Russian air force at the time of the alleged crimes. Ukrainian military intelligence has said Russian strikes on densely populated areas in the city of Mariupol were conducted under his command.

Sokolov was an admiral in the Russian navy who commanded the Black Sea Fleet during the period to which the charges relate, according to the ICC.

Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky welcomed the arrest warrants. He said: "Every Russian commander who orders strikes against Ukrainian civilians and critical infrastructure must know that justice will be served. Every perpetrator of such crimes must know that they will be held accountable."

Reuters and the Associated Press contributed to this report