KERCH BRIDGE

KERCH STRAIT, OCCUPIED CRIMEA · 2018 – 17 NOVEMBER 2026

THE KERCH BRIDGE: BUILT WITHOUT CONSENT, BROKEN ON 17 NOVEMBER

Russia built a 19-km road and rail bridge across the Kerch Strait, from its own territory into occupied Crimea, without Ukraine's consent. The UN General Assembly condemned its construction and opening; the EU sanctioned the companies that built it. Ukraine treats it as a supply route for Russia's forces in Crimea and the south and has struck it repeatedly since 2022. On the night of 16–17 November 2026 its road arch over the shipping channel fell into the sea, and Russia suspended road and rail traffic.

UKRAINE EVIDENCE HUB
VERIFIED RECORD
NOV 2026

19 km

road and rail bridge from Russia into occupied Crimea; road opened 15 May 2018, rail 23 Dec 2019 [C]

RFE/RL, 23 Dec 2019

66–19

General Assembly vote on resolution 73/194, which condemned the construction and opening of the bridge (72 abstentions) [A]

UN press release GA/12108; A/RES/73/194, 17 Dec 2018

6

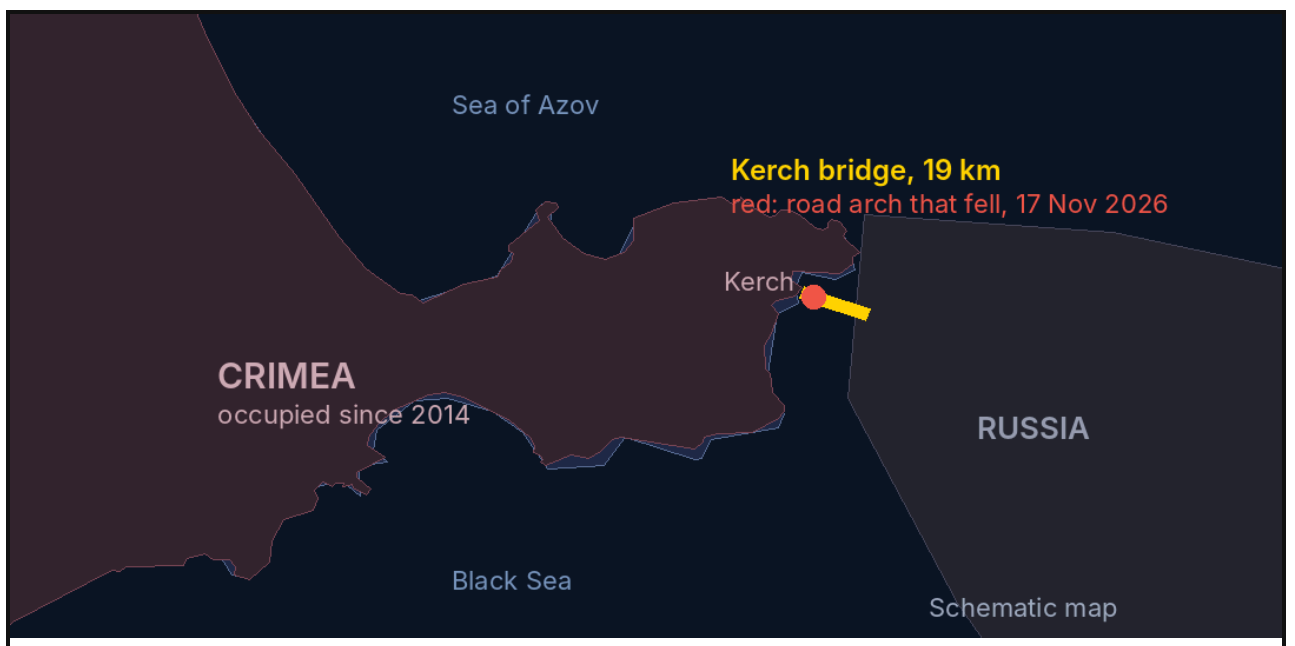
Russian companies placed under EU sanctions for building the bridge [B]

Council of the EU, 31 Jul 2018, via Euronews

5

strikes on the bridge recorded in this file, October 2022 – November 2026 — derived [C]

Hub count: 8 Oct 2022, 17 Jul 2023, 3 Jun 2025, 16 Nov and 16–17 Nov 2026; sources in the timeline



BOTTOM LINE

Built without consent. Russia built the bridge across a strait it shares with Ukraine after occupying Crimea in 2014; Ukraine did not agree. The UN General Assembly condemned its construction and opening (A/RES/73/194, 17 Dec 2018), and the EU sanctioned six companies that built it (31 Jul 2018).

A gate on the sea. Ukraine objected that the bridge's low clearance hampered shipping to and from its Sea of Azov ports. On 25 November 2018 Russian forces fired on and seized three Ukrainian naval vessels and 24 servicemen trying to pass under it; ITLOS ordered their release (25 May 2019). The General Assembly recorded 'intentional obstruction of traffic through the Kerch Strait' (A/RES/74/17).

A target in the war. Ukraine treats the bridge as a supply route for Russian forces in Crimea and the south and has struck it since October 2022. On the night of 16–17 November 2026 the road arch over the shipping channel fell into the sea, and Russia's Ministry of Transport suspended road and rail traffic (Security Service of Ukraine; Russian Ministry of Transport).

LEGAL QUALIFICATION IN THREE LAYERS

CONSTRUCTION AND OPENING CONDEMNED BY THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY (A/RES/73/194); SEIZURE OF VESSELS AT THE STRAIT — ITLOS RELEASE ORDER — ESTABLISHED

THE BRIDGE AS AN INSTRUMENT OF THE OCCUPATION: CONSOLIDATION OF CONTROL OVER CRIMEA, OBSTRUCTION OF PASSAGE THROUGH THE STRAIT — PATTERN

UKRAINE: AN ILLEGAL STRUCTURE ON ITS TERRITORY AND A MILITARY TARGET · RUSSIA: 'TERRORISM' — POSITION

Established. The UN General Assembly condemned the construction and opening of the Kerch Strait bridge by the Russian Federation (A/RES/73/194, 17 Dec 2018, 66–19–72) and later recorded the intentional obstruction of traffic through the Kerch Strait (A/RES/74/17, 9 Dec 2019). ITLOS ordered Russia to release the three Ukrainian naval vessels and 24 servicemen seized next to the bridge (25 May 2019). **Pattern.** The bridge consolidated the occupation of Crimea, as the Council of the EU put it in 2018, and was used to control passage through the strait. **Position.** Ukraine regards it as an illegal structure on its territory and a military target; Russia calls the strikes terrorism.

WHAT WE ASK

No recognition of the occupation of Crimea and no sanctions relief while it lasts; keep sanctions on every company that built, maintains or repairs the bridge, and respect freedom of navigation through the Kerch Strait.

Sources: A — UN General Assembly A/RES/68/262 (27 Mar 2014), A/RES/73/194 (17 Dec 2018; press release GA/12108), A/RES/74/17 (9 Dec 2019); ITLOS, Order of 25 May 2019. B — Council of the EU, 31 Jul 2018 (via Euronews); Security Service of Ukraine (2023, 2025, 17 Nov 2026); President of Ukraine, 17 Nov 2026 (via Ukrainska Pravda). C — RFE/RL, 23 Dec 2019; Euromaidan Press, 27 Jul 2023 and 17 Nov 2026; Ukrainska Pravda, 17 Jul 2023 and 17 Nov 2026; The Moscow Times, 3 Jun 2025; agreement of 24 Dec 2003 (unofficial translation). RU — V. Putin, 9 Oct 2022 (AP via Courthouse News Service); kremlin.ru, 15 May 2018; S. Aksyonov, 16–17 Nov 2026; Russian Ministry of Transport, 17 Nov 2026. All accessed 17 Nov 2026.

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KERCH BRIDGE HOW IT WAS BUILT

A BRIDGE ACROSS SOMEONE ELSE'S STRAIT

The Kerch Strait joins the Black Sea to the Sea of Azov, on which the Ukrainian ports of Mariupol and Berdiansk lie. Crimea, on the western shore, has been under Russian occupation since 2014. The bridge runs 19 km from Russia's Taman peninsula to Kerch.

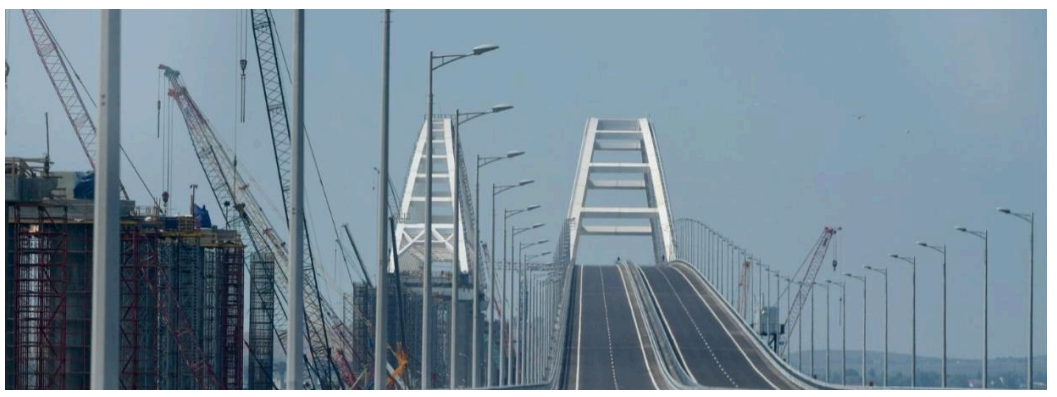
UKRAINE EVIDENCE HUB
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NOV 2026

24 Dec 2003	Ukraine and Russia agree that merchant ships and warships of both states enjoy freedom of navigation in the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait. C — Agreement on cooperation in the use of the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait, art. 2(1)
Feb–Mar 2014	Russia occupies Crimea; the General Assembly affirms Ukraine's territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. A — UN General Assembly, A/RES/68/262, 27 Mar 2014
15 May 2018	Vladimir Putin opens the road section of the bridge. C — kremlin.ru, 15 May 2018; RFE/RL
31 Jul 2018	The EU sanctions six companies that built the bridge for supporting 'the consolidation of Russia's control over the illegally annexed Crimean peninsula'. B — Council of the EU, via Euronews, 31 Jul 2018
25 Nov 2018	Russian Coast Guard vessels block, fire on and seize three Ukrainian naval vessels and 24 servicemen at the strait. A — ITLOS, Order of 25 May 2019
17 Dec 2018	The General Assembly condemns the construction and opening of the bridge (66 in favour, 19 against, 72 abstentions). A — UN press release GA/12108; A/RES/73/194
25 May 2019	ITLOS orders Russia to release the vessels and the 24 servicemen immediately (19–1). A — ITLOS, Order of 25 May 2019
23 Dec 2019	Rail traffic opens; the EU says the opening is another violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. C — RFE/RL, 23 Dec 2019
8 Oct 2022	An explosion brings down road spans of the bridge; in July 2023 the head of the Security Service of Ukraine says it carried out the operation. B — SBU, via Euromaidan Press, 27 Jul 2023
17 Jul 2023	Sea drones damage a road span; the Security Service and the Navy of Ukraine claim the attack. C — Ukrainska Pravda, 17 Jul 2023
3 Jun 2025	Underwater charges equal to 1,100 kg of TNT go off at the bridge's supports; the Security Service of Ukraine claims the operation and says no civilians were harmed. B — SBU, via The Moscow Times, 3 Jun 2025
16 Nov 2026	The bridge is hit; Crimea's Russian-installed head Sergei Aksyonov says traffic is limited, then resumes in alternating directions. RUSSIA SAYS — S. Aksyonov, via Euromaidan Press, 17 Nov 2026
16-17 Nov 2026, night	The road arch over the shipping channel and the road span under it fall into the sea. The Security Service of Ukraine calls it the seventh stage of a month-long operation; the President of Ukraine says Palianytsia missile-drones hit the road section and Neptune missiles, Ruta and FP-5 drones and a Flamingo missile targeted the rail section. B — SBU; President of Ukraine, via Ukrainska Pravda, 17 Nov 2026
17 Nov 2026	Russia's Ministry of Transport: road and rail traffic across the bridge 'temporarily suspended'. RUSSIA SAYS — Russian Ministry of Transport, via Ukrainska Pravda, 17 Nov 2026
17 Nov 2026	Since this file: the Kremlin says the bridge will be restored, "even better than before"; Russia's Investigative Committee opens a terrorism case; Russian officials report no casualties, preliminarily. RUSSIA SAYS — D. Peskov, via the Kyiv Post; Russian Investigative Committee and Transport Ministry, via Türkiye Today, 17 Nov 2026

WHAT THE RECORD SHOWS

Russia began the bridge after occupying Crimea. Vladimir Putin opened the road section on 15 May 2018 and rail traffic on 23 December 2019 (kremlin.ru; RFE/RL). Ukraine did not consent; the US State Department said it was built 'without the permission of the government of Ukraine' (via RFE/RL).

The EU sanctioned six builders on 31 July 2018 — Mostotrest, VAD, Giprotransmost (GPSM), Zaliv Shipyard, Stroygazmontazh (SGM) and Stroygazmontazh Most — for consolidating Russia's control over Crimea (Council of the EU).



Opening of the road section of the Kerch bridge, 15 May 2018. Photo: kremlin.ru · CC BY 4.0 · via

WHAT IT DID TO THE SEA

Ukraine objected that the bridge's low clearance hampered shipping to and from its ports (RFE/RL, 23 Dec 2019).

On 25 November 2018 three Ukrainian naval vessels trying to reach Berdiansk were blocked under the bridge, fired on and seized with 24 servicemen (ITLOS order). The General Assembly later recorded 'intentional obstruction of traffic through the Kerch Strait' (A/RES/74/17).

Sources: A — UN General Assembly A/RES/68/262 (27 Mar 2014), A/RES/73/194 (17 Dec 2018; press release GA/12108), A/RES/74/17 (9 Dec 2019); ITLOS, Order of 25 May 2019. B — Council of the EU, 31 Jul 2018 (via Euronews); Security Service of Ukraine (2023, 2025, 17 Nov 2026); President of Ukraine, 17 Nov 2026 (via Ukrainska Pravda). C — RFE/RL, 23 Dec 2019; Euromaidan Press, 27 Jul 2023 and 17 Nov 2026; Ukrainska Pravda, 17 Jul 2023 and 17 Nov 2026; The Moscow Times, 3 Jun 2025; agreement of 24 Dec 2003 (unofficial translation). RU — V. Putin, 9 Oct 2022 (AP via Courthouse News Service); kremlin.ru, 15 May 2018; S. Aksyonov, 16–17 Nov 2026; Russian Ministry of Transport, 17 Nov 2026. All accessed 17 Nov 2026.

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KERCH BRIDGE THE EVIDENCE, BY TIER

TWO ASSEMBLY RESOLUTIONS, A TRIBUNAL ORDER, SANCTIONS

The illegality of the bridge rests on Tier A findings about the occupation of Crimea and the bridge itself. The attacks of 2022–2026 rest on statements by Ukrainian and Russian officials.

UKRAINE EVIDENCE HUB
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NOV 2026

ESTABLISHED BY BODIES WITH A MANDATE

UN General Assembly: A/RES/68/262 (27 Mar 2014) on the territorial integrity of Ukraine; A/RES/73/194 (17 Dec 2018) condemning the construction and opening of the Kerch Strait bridge; A/RES/74/17 (9 Dec 2019) on the obstruction of traffic through the strait. A

ITLOS, Order of 25 May 2019 (19–1): release of the three vessels and 24 servicemen seized at the strait. A

UKRAINIAN INVESTIGATION

Council of the EU, 31 Jul 2018: six companies sanctioned for building the bridge. B

Security Service of Ukraine and President of Ukraine, 17 Nov 2026: the road section destroyed in a multi-stage operation; earlier SBU statements on 2022 and 2025. B

INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATIONS

RFE/RL, 23 Dec 2019: length, opening dates, Western reactions. C

Euromaidan Press, Ukrainska Pravda, The Moscow Times: attacks of 2023, 2025 and 2026, and Russian officials' statements. C

THE NUMBERS — EVERY SOURCE, AS PUBLISHED

Figure	What it counts	Source · date · tier
19 km	length of the road and rail bridge	RFE/RL, 2019 · C
66–19	General Assembly vote, A/RES/73/194	UN · A
6	builders sanctioned by the EU	Council of the EU · B
5	strikes recorded in this file — derived	Hub count · C

Casualty figures for the attacks are not part of this file. Russian statements are marked RU and are not treated as fact. The state of the rail section after 17 November is not yet confirmed by an independent source.

Sources: A — UN General Assembly A/RES/68/262 (27 Mar 2014), A/RES/73/194 (17 Dec 2018; press release GA/12108), A/RES/74/17 (9 Dec 2019); ITLOS, Order of 25 May 2019. B — Council of the EU, 31 Jul 2018 (via Euronews); Security Service of Ukraine (2023, 2025, 17 Nov 2026); President of Ukraine, 17 Nov 2026 (via Ukrainska Pravda). C — RFE/RL, 23 Dec 2019; Euromaidan Press, 27 Jul 2023 and 17 Nov 2026; Ukrainska Pravda, 17 Jul 2023 and 17 Nov 2026; The Moscow Times, 3 Jun 2025; agreement of 24 Dec 2003 (unofficial translation). RU — V. Putin, 9 Oct 2022 (AP via Courthouse News Service); kremlin.ru, 15 May 2018; S. Aksyonov, 16–17 Nov 2026; Russian Ministry of Transport, 17 Nov 2026. All accessed 17 Nov 2026.

KERCH BRIDGE
V1.1 · 17 NOV 2026 · LIVE VERSION AND CORRECTIONS LOG ON THE UKRAINE EVIDENCE HUB

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KERCH BRIDGE RESPONSIBILITY

WHO BUILT IT, WHO RUNS IT

The bridge is a Russian state project, and its builders are under EU sanctions. Ukraine says it carried out the strikes of 2022–2026 against it.

UKRAINE EVIDENCE HUB
VERIFIED RECORD
NOV 2026

Who	Role in the case	Proceedings	Sanctions · courts
The Russian Federation	Built and opened the bridge into occupied Crimea; used it to control passage through the strait	General Assembly A/RES/73/194 and 74/17	—
Vladimir Putin President of the Russian Federation	Opened the road section (15 May 2018) and rail traffic (23 Dec 2019)	—	—
Six construction companies	Built the bridge (Mostotrest, VAD, GPSM, Zaliv, SGM, Stroygazmontazh Most)	—	EU sanctions, 31 Jul 2018
Russian Coast Guard	Blocked, fired on and seized three Ukrainian naval vessels at the strait (25 Nov 2018)	ITLOS order, 25 May 2019	—

CHAIN OF RESPONSIBILITY

The bridge was built and is run by the Russian state on territory the General Assembly recognises as Ukrainian. Responsibility for its construction rests with Russia as a state and with the companies that built it.

Ukraine's Security Service and armed forces have said they carried out the strikes of 2022, 2023, 2025 and November 2026.

THE RUSSIAN STATE'S OWN ACTS

Russia's Investigative Committee opened a criminal case for an act of terrorism after the explosion of 8 October 2022 (AP, 9 Oct 2022).

Russia's Ministry of Transport suspended road and rail traffic on 17 November 2026.

Sanctions column: EU designations only; other sanctions regimes not checked for this draft.

Sources: A — UN General Assembly A/RES/68/262 (27 Mar 2014), A/RES/73/194 (17 Dec 2018; press release GA/12108), A/RES/74/17 (9 Dec 2019); ITLOS, Order of 25 May 2019. B — Council of the EU, 31 Jul 2018 (via Euronews); Security Service of Ukraine (2023, 2025, 17 Nov 2026); President of Ukraine, 17 Nov 2026 (via Ukrainska Pravda). C — RFE/RL, 23 Dec 2019; Euromaidan Press, 27 Jul 2023 and 17 Nov 2026; Ukrainska Pravda, 17 Jul 2023 and 17 Nov 2026; The Moscow Times, 3 Jun 2025; agreement of 24 Dec 2003 (unofficial translation). RU — V. Putin, 9 Oct 2022 (AP via Courthouse News Service); kremlin.ru, 15 May 2018; S. Aksyonov, 16–17 Nov 2026; Russian Ministry of Transport, 17 Nov 2026. All accessed 17 Nov 2026.

KERCH BRIDGE
V1.1 · 17 NOV 2026 · LIVE VERSION AND CORRECTIONS LOG ON THE UKRAINE EVIDENCE HUB

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KERCH BRIDGE FACT-CHECK · WHAT RUSSIA SAYS ABOUT THE BRIDGE

'CRITICALLY IMPORTANT CIVILIAN INFRASTRUCTURE'

After every strike Russia calls the bridge civilian infrastructure and the attack terrorism. The General Assembly treats Crimea as Ukrainian territory under occupation and condemned the bridge itself.

UKRAINE EVIDENCE HUB
VERIFIED RECORD
NOV 2026

VLADIMIR PUTIN · MEETING WITH THE HEAD OF THE INVESTIGATIVE COMMITTEE · 9 OCT 2022

“There's no doubt it was a terrorist act directed at the destruction of critically important civilian infrastructure.”

AP, via Courthouse News Service, 9 Oct 2022

MISLEADING

The 'civilian infrastructure' is a bridge Russia built on occupied Ukrainian territory, whose construction the General Assembly condemned (A/RES/73/194). It also carries rail traffic into Crimea, where Russia bases forces for its war against Ukraine.

What the claim concedes: Nothing about why a bridge built without Ukraine's consent, on Ukrainian territory, should be off limits to Ukraine.

FAIR TO SAY

Ukraine has publicly claimed the attacks of 2022, 2023, 2025 and 2026; the bridge is used by civilians as well as by the military.

Russian statements about the damage and about traffic come from officials of the occupation and of the Russian government; they are marked RU.

Sources: A — UN General Assembly A/RES/68/262 (27 Mar 2014), A/RES/73/194 (17 Dec 2018; press release GA/12108), A/RES/74/17 (9 Dec 2019); ITLOS, Order of 25 May 2019. B — Council of the EU, 31 Jul 2018 (via Euronews); Security Service of Ukraine (2023, 2025, 17 Nov 2026); President of Ukraine, 17 Nov 2026 (via Ukrainska Pravda). C — RFE/RL, 23 Dec 2019; Euromaidan Press, 27 Jul 2023 and 17 Nov 2026; Ukrainska Pravda, 17 Jul 2023 and 17 Nov 2026; The Moscow Times, 3 Jun 2025; agreement of 24 Dec 2003 (unofficial translation). RU — V. Putin, 9 Oct 2022 (AP via Courthouse News Service); kremlin.ru, 15 May 2018; S. Aksyonov, 16–17 Nov 2026; Russian Ministry of Transport, 17 Nov 2026. All accessed 17 Nov 2026.

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V1.1 · 17 NOV 2026 · LIVE VERSION AND CORRECTIONS LOG ON THE UKRAINE EVIDENCE HUB

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KERCH BRIDGE THE LAW AND WHAT WE ASK

AN OCCUPIER CANNOT BUILD ITS WAY TO SOVEREIGNTY

The General Assembly condemned the bridge as part of the occupation of Crimea, and its builders are under sanctions. Ukraine treats it as a military objective in the war Russia began.

UKRAINE EVIDENCE HUB
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NOV 2026

ESTABLISHED — BY BODIES WITH A MANDATE

UN General Assembly, A/RES/73/194 (17 Dec 2018, 66–19–72): condemns the construction and opening of the Kerch Strait bridge by the Russian Federation.

UN General Assembly, A/RES/74/17 (9 Dec 2019): records intentional obstruction of traffic through the Kerch Strait.

ITLOS, Order of 25 May 2019 (19–1): Russia to release the vessels and servicemen seized at the strait.

PATTERN — WHAT THE RECORD SHOWS

Consolidation of the occupation of Crimea through infrastructure (Council of the EU, 31 Jul 2018); obstruction of passage to the Sea of Azov (A/RES/74/17).

Russia opened criminal 'terrorism' cases after the strikes of 2022 and later (Investigative Committee, via AP, 9 Oct 2022).

POSITION — UKRAINE'S QUALIFICATION

Ukraine: an illegal structure on its territory and a military target; a supply route for Russian forces in Crimea and the south.

Russia: 'critically important civilian infrastructure'; the strikes are terrorism.

THE RULES THAT APPLY

UN Charter, art. 2(4); A/RES/68/262: territorial integrity of Ukraine.

Agreement on cooperation in the use of the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait (24 Dec 2003), art. 2(1): freedom of navigation for ships of both states.

WHAT WE DO NOT KNOW

The state of the rail section after 17 November 2026.

How long road and rail traffic will be suspended.

Which other sanctions regimes cover the bridge's builders and operators.

WHAT WE ASK

No recognition. No recognition of the occupation of Crimea, of the bridge, or of any 'border' it is said to mark.

No sanctions relief. Keep sanctions on every company that built, maintains or repairs the bridge, and add those that do the repairs now.

Keep the strait open. Respect freedom of navigation through the Kerch Strait and in the Sea of Azov, as the 2003 agreement and the General Assembly require.

Put the record on the record. In every Crimea and Black Sea debate, cite resolutions 73/194 and 74/17 and the ITLOS order of 25 May 2019.

Sources: A — UN General Assembly A/RES/68/262 (27 Mar 2014), A/RES/73/194 (17 Dec 2018; press release GA/12108), A/RES/74/17 (9 Dec 2019); ITLOS, Order of 25 May 2019. B — Council of the EU, 31 Jul 2018 (via Euronews); Security Service of Ukraine (2023, 2025, 17 Nov 2026); President of Ukraine, 17 Nov 2026 (via Ukrainska Pravda). C — RFE/RL, 23 Dec 2019; Euromaidan Press, 27 Jul 2023 and 17 Nov 2026; Ukrainska Pravda, 17 Jul 2023 and 17 Nov 2026; The Moscow Times, 3 Jun 2025; agreement of 24 Dec 2003 (unofficial translation). RU — V. Putin, 9 Oct 2022 (AP via Courthouse News Service); kremlin.ru, 15 May 2018; S. Aksyonov, 16–17 Nov 2026; Russian Ministry of Transport, 17 Nov 2026. All accessed 17 Nov 2026.

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V1.1 · 17 NOV 2026 · LIVE VERSION AND CORRECTIONS LOG ON THE UKRAINE EVIDENCE HUB

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PHOTO & VIDEO RECORD APPENDIX

THE KERCH BRIDGE: BUILT WITHOUT CONSENT, BROKEN ON 17 NOVEMBER

1 photograph from official sources, as shown on the live page. Each image is credited and openly licensed; videos are linked to the official post (scan the code). No image shows the dead; graphic aftermath is blurred in print. The downloadable pack on the live page holds the full-size files and their SHA-256.

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VERIFIED RECORD
OCT 2026



Opening of the road section of the Kerch bridge, 15 May 2018

kremlin.ru · 2018-05-15 · CC BY 4.0

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Opening_of_the_Crimean_bridge_(2018-05-15)_16.jpg

Live page and evidence pack (ZIP): ukraine-evidence.org/#cases/hist-kerch-bridge/media. This appendix is not an evidence repository: original material is held by the Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine (warcrimes.gov.ua) and the ICC Office of the Prosecutor.