



SEMAPHORE

Newsletter of the Maritime Law

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Expiry Pending for Extended Ukraine Black Sea Grain Deal

A two-month extension to the Ukraine Black Sea grain deal announced on May 17 is now only weeks away from expiring.

As reported by *Reuters* at that time, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres described the extension as “good news for the world”, as Russia could have quit the pact over obstacles to its grain and fertiliser exports.

Sparke Helmore Lawyers associate [Richard Howard](#), who wrote an [article](#) [Ed, page ten in the linked PDF] about 12 months ago on the impact the Russian invasion was having on vessel owners and P&I Clubs, confirmed the positive reaction to the extension to the deal, originally brokered in July 2022.

“The extension was no doubt a positive for regions with a high reliance on grain importation from the Ukraine – one of the most highly productive cereal growing regions in the world – and obviously for Ukraine also,” he says.

“My understanding is that Russia has been using the Black Sea grain deal as leverage to enhance export opportunities of its own grains and fertilisers.”

Mr Howard says these exports have been impacted by ‘hidden’ sanctions related to:

- inability for Russian banks to make SWIFT payments
- insurance accessibility challenges (cargo and vessels)
- difficulties accessing global supply chains

“Interestingly, the Turkish-located Joint Co-ordination Centre – established to manage joint vessel inspections and approvals of vessel movements through the maritime humanitarian corridor to Ukrainian Port until recently – had not approved an inbound passage since 4 May 2023 and the above *Reuters* article indicates that the last outbound ship, approved inbound pre 4 March 2023, had departed Ukraine.”

News is awaited if the grain deal will be extended further.

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