

Russia Blames Sanctions, Closed Borders for Rise in Traffic Accidents

April 27, 2023



Moskva News Agency

Russian police ascribed an increase in road accidents to Western sanctions that have shifted traffic flows toward ill-equipped infrastructure in the country's east, the Kommersant business daily [reported](#) Thursday.

The Russian Interior Ministry's road safety research center said in its 2022 report that some highway sections in eastern Russia saw upticks in accidents of as much as 80%. Western highways saw fewer traffic accidents, it added.

With Western destinations cut off as part of economic penalties for Russia's invasion of Ukraine, traffic redistribution placed a heavy toll on roads to Turkey, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and China.

"The infrastructure was not ready for such changes and as a result, the main traffic arteries were overloaded and vehicle miles traveled increased," the report stated.

The surge came despite Russia's car fleet increasing by only 0.5% compared with annual growth of up to 1.9% in previous years.

The Interior Ministry's research center warned that aging cars, a 70% increase in used vehicle imports and bootleg auto part shortages would further deteriorate road safety in Russia.

Russia last year allocated 13 trillion rubles (\$160 billion) toward road construction through 2027.

Russia's automotive industry has been the sector hardest-hit by Western sanctions imposed over the invasion of Ukraine.

Original url:

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