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Russia Hit by China's Drone Export Curbs – Kommersant

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Chinese curbs on the export of drones and their components have caused supply disruptions and shortages in Russia, the Kommersant business daily reported Monday.

Beijing this summer announced the drone export restrictions, which came into effect on Sept. 1, after Washington accused it of aiding Moscow's war efforts in Ukraine.

Chinese authorities said the restrictions would apply to drones at risk of "being converted for military use," while also denying they targeted "any specific country."

Russian agricultural, surveillance and industrial drone retailers told Kommersant they had either run out of stock entirely or doubled prices due to the export curbs.

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Some companies said they had stocked up on Chinese drones and components ahead of the

Sept. 1 restrictions, noting that they expect these supplies to last for up to six months.

Meanwhile, acquiring licenses to become verified buyers of Chinese drones could take up to one year, Kommersant said, citing anonymous industry sources.

Kommersant said several Russian drone companies accused Russia's Trade and Industry Ministry of ignoring the issue and failing to liaise with Beijing in order to secure drone supplies.

At the same time, authorities in neighboring Kazakhstan, where companies have continued to supply Moscow drones from popular Chinese makers that suspended their Russian operations, reportedly told their Russian counterparts that they plan to stop shipments due to stricter controls.

China's top-selling drone models have been deployed on the battlefield in Ukraine by both Russian and Ukrainian forces.

A July 2023 U.S. intelligence report said Beijing likely supplied Moscow with dual-use civilian-military equipment employed in Ukraine, but noted that it is "difficult to ascertain the extent to which [China] has helped Russia evade and circumvent sanctions and export controls."

Customs records cited by media outlets showed Russian companies ordering $100 million or more of Chinese drones so far in 2023.

AFP contributed reporting.

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