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Turkey Imports, Resells Coal from Russia-Annexed Ukrainian Regions – Reuters

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Cars loaded with coal at a railway station in Donetsk. **Vladimir Gerdo / TASS**

Turkey has become a leading destination for exports of coal from Ukraine's Russian-occupied Donetsk and Luhansk regions this year, according to an investigation by Reuters published Tuesday.

About 160,400 tons of coal — or 95% of all shipments — from the regions were delivered to the NATO member state between February and July this year, according to the report.

The total value of these shipments was upwards of $14.3 million, according to Reuters. They likely reached Turkey via the southern Russian ports of Rostov-on-Don and Novorossiysk, which both have rail connections to Donetsk and Luhansk.

Reuters found that as many as 10 producers in the occupied regions have been selling coal to Turkey, including Luhansk-based Vostokugol and Nedra-06.

But no Turkish companies were identified among the buyers, some of which were registered in Hong Kong, the UAE and offshore destinations such as the British Virgin Islands.

The Turkish government has refused to recognize annexed regions of Ukraine as a part of Russia. But unlike its partners in NATO, it has stopped short of introducing restrictions on trade with Russia or the occupied regions of Ukraine.

The U.S. State Department told Reuters it was aware of Turkey’s dealings but was unable to comment on the details of the investigation.

"We abhor any attempts by Russia to profit from the theft of Ukraine's natural resources. Ukraine's natural resources belong to the people of Ukraine," a spokesperson for the U.S. State Department told Reuters.

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