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Kazakhstan Denies Ban on Exports to Russia

By AFP

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Crossing point on the Russian-Kazakh border. **TASS**

Kazakhstan's trade ministry has denied banning the exports of goods to Russia as part of Western sanctions after an official said more than 100 items including drones were prohibited.

On Thursday, Deputy Trade Minister Kairat Torebayev was quoted by local media as saying that the ex-Soviet state has banned the export to Russia of 106 goods including "drones, their electronic components, special equipment and chips."

Local Kazakh media outlets reported that the ban would only apply to products "linked to the war."

The quotes came amid suspicions that Russia was circumventing Western sanctions imposed over its invasion of Ukraine by receiving goods via third countries, including Kazakhstan, a

former ex-Soviet republic in Central Asia.

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But late on Thursday, the Kazakhstan trade ministry dismissed the comments by the deputy trade minister as "incorrect."

"No prohibitions have been imposed on the export of any goods to the Russian Federation in relation to the anti-Russia sanctions," the trade ministry said in a statement.

"At the same time, the trade in so-called 'double-use' goods, the export of which is subject to controls, is carried out in accordance with Kazakhstan's international obligations," the ministry said.

Russia was slapped with Western sanctions after invading Ukraine in February 2022, but is suspected of having avoided many of them by getting goods via third countries like China, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and ex-Soviet republics.

Former Soviet states in Central Asia have had to walk a fine line to balance between Russia — the traditional power broker in the region — and Western countries.

During a meeting with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz in Berlin in late September, leaders of Central Asian states vowed to take steps to prevent the evading of sanctions, with Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev saying his country will "follow the sanctions regime."

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