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Soaring Turkish Exports of Military-Linked Goods to Russia Raise Western Concerns – FT

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Haydarpasa Port, Turkey. **V&A Dudush (CC BY 3.0)**

Turkish exports of military-related goods to Russia have surged this year, raising concerns that the NATO member is acting as a conduit for sensitive Western goods, the Financial Times reported Monday.

Forty-five categories of civilian goods useful to the Russian military, including microchips, communications equipment and parts including telescopic sights, are subject to United States, European Union, British and Japanese export controls intended to keep them from reaching Russia.

However, according to FT, Turkey reported exporting $158 billion worth of such goods to Russia and five other former Soviet countries in January-September 2023 — significantly more than the pre-war average for 2015-2021, $28 million.

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Turkish imports of these goods from G7 countries are likewise up more than 60% from the 2015-2021 period.

"It's obvious these goods are going to Russia," Elina Ribakova, a senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics think tank and vice president for foreign policy at the Kyiv School of Economics, told FT.

Turkish exports are labeled as being destined for Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, but authorities in those countries do not report increased imports.

For example, Turkish data said it exported $61 million of goods to Kazakhstan in the first nine months of this year, while Kazakhstan only reported receiving $6.6 million worth of items from Turkey.

FT reported that these goods are likely being transported directly to Russia, where they can be used in cruise missiles, drones and helicopters.

U.S. and European officials have raised the issue with Turkey, asking for increased enforcement and sanctioning of Turkish companies.

The FT cited the Turkish foreign ministry as saying that, while they do not participate in sanctions against Russia, they work to prevent sanctions evasion through the country and that evasion attempts came from "obscure and insignificant entities that are uneducated about or indifferent to sanctions."

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