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Estonia Increases Security Checks at Russian Border to Fight Sanctions Busting

By AFP

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A checkpoint at the border between Russia and Estonia. **Hendrix Eesti**

The Estonian government on Thursday revealed plans to introduce full customs controls on its border with Russia to combat sanctions evasion, with the measures scheduled to go into effect on Aug. 8.

"The goods that allow [Russia] to wage war against Ukraine, undermine Europe's and Estonia's security shouldn't be imported there," Estonian Prime Minister Kristen Michal told reporters on Thursday.

Tallinn has said it suspects some of the goods declared for transit through Estonia and then Russia may be destined to remain in Russia, thus bypassing Western sanctions against Moscow.

"Third countries are declared as destination points, but we don't believe it. And life has shown that these goods don't reach the destination," Estonian Finance Minister Jurgen Ligi said. "This cargo includes really ugly things, both military and dual-use goods, large amounts of cash."

"It's obvious that these are being smuggled through us," he added.

Estonian Foreign Minister Margus Tsahkna said the decision to introduce full customs controls at the border was taken "to better ensure that we do not feed Russia's war machine."

"We must do everything in our power to help Ukraine win and raise the cost of war for Russia," Tsahkna wrote on X (formerly Twitter).

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