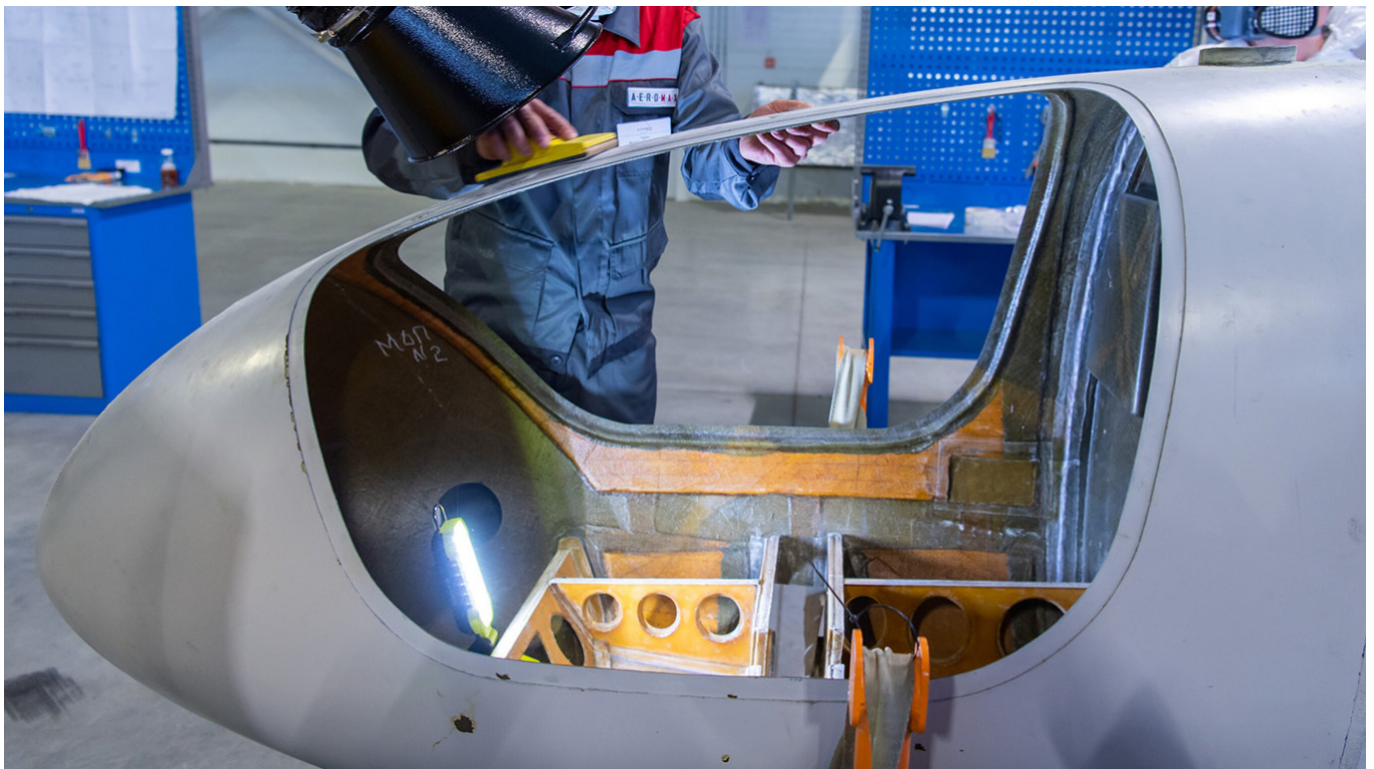


Interpol Launches Human Trafficking Probe Into Tatarstan Drone Factory

April 29, 2025



Drone manufacturing in Russia. **Moskva News Agency**

Interpol is investigating a professional training program for African women linked to a major Russian drone manufacturer, Bloomberg [reported](#), citing the head of Interpol's Botswana bureau.

The agency is probing whether the program, Alabuga Start, is involved in human trafficking following a review of its social media posts, Detective Senior Superintendent Selebatso Mokgosi told Bloomberg.

The Alabuga factory in Russia's republic of Tatarstan is a major supplier of drones for the Russian military, [producing](#) as many as 200 Iranian-style Shahed drones per month that are then used in the country's war on Ukraine.

[Branded](#) as a two-year accelerator that allows women from the Global South to gain employment at the Alabuga Special Economic Zone, Alabuga Start is suspected of serving as a front for luring swaths of young women to work at the drone assembly plant as Russia

grapples with a domestic labor shortage.

Related article: [AP Investigates Russia's Recruitment of African Women to Make Drones: What We Learned](#)

[Multiple investigations](#) into Alabuga's work have suggested that women and [minors](#) lured into working at the plant were placed in adverse work conditions and were subjected to clock-round surveillance.

Alabuga, which is located more than 1,000 kilometers from Russia's border with Ukraine, has been targeted by at least two Ukrainian drone strikes.

The first strike in April last year [left](#) at least 13 people injured, including foreign nationals suspected of being employed at the drone-making facility.

Original url:

<https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2025/04/29/interpol-launches-human-trafficking-probe-into-tatarstan-drone-factory-a88903>