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Fuel Shortages Hit Russia's Far East as Ukrainian Strikes Take Refineries Offline

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A 'No Entry' sign at a petrol station. **Alexander Ryumin / TASS**

Russia's Far East is facing growing gasoline shortages after a wave of Ukrainian drone strikes knocked out a significant share of the country's oil refining capacity, leaving drivers waiting in long lines and stations rationing fuel.

Russia has lost roughly 13% of its oil-refining capacity since early August as Ukrainian drones have hit at least seven Russian refineries, forcing four to shut down completely.

Motorists in the Primorye region started reporting supply problems in early August. The shortages have since spread, with fuel disappearing from pumps in towns including Arsenyev, Ussuriysk and the Chuguyevsky district before reaching the port city of Vladivostok itself, the local outlet PrimaMedia reported.

The disruption has snarled traffic on the Ussuri federal highway which connects Primorye with the neighboring Khabarovsk region, with long lines of cars forming at gas stations along the highway, the news site DVhab reported.

Residents said they can only buy fuel using ration cards, and only emergency services or company vehicles with special fuel cards are being reliably supplied.

“The pumps are covered with ‘Out of order’ signs,” one driver told the outlet. “You can still fill up in larger towns, but the lines are an hour and a half to two hours long.”

Related article: Drone Strikes on Refineries Push Russia’s Gasoline Prices to Record Highs

Regional media said the problems partially stem from a seasonal surge in demand during the tourist season, just as several refineries slashed shipments to the Far East — in some cases by as much as fivefold.

A separate bottleneck has emerged on the Russian Railways network, where fuel trains bound for Vladivostok have been delayed for up to two weeks.

Local authorities acknowledged delays but played down the scale of the crisis, attributing the shortages to summer demand and roadworks that slowed deliveries.

“Fuel reserves at the region’s gas stations remain sufficient to ensure uninterrupted supply,” the Primorye regional government said in a statement.

The shortages follow similar crises reported last week in annexed Crimea and the Far East Zabaikalsky region, where gasoline is now sold by coupons.

Sergei Aksyonov, the Kremlin-installed head of Crimea, publicly acknowledged the problem and linked it to reduced refinery output, urging residents to “be patient until the end of the special military operation.”

The supply crunch caused by the refinery shutdowns has sent wholesale gasoline prices to record highs.

On Tuesday, benchmark A-92 fuel traded at 71,970 rubles ($900, according to spot foreign exchange market data published by Reuters) per ton and A-95 at 81,337 rubles ($1,015) per ton on the St. Petersburg exchange — increases of about 40 and 50%, respectively, since the start of the year.

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