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2K Trucks Stuck in Belarus After Lithuania Closes Border – Association

By AFP

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State Border Committee of Belarus

Some 2,000 trucks were stranded Friday in Belarus after Lithuania closed its border in response to recent airspace disruptions, a truckers association said.

Dozens of balloons loaded with illegal cigarettes entered Lithuania's airspace last week, forcing the temporary closure of airports in the capital Vilnius and Kaunas, affecting numerous flights and thousands of passengers.

Vilnius and the European Union denounced the incidents as a "hybrid attack."

"Around 2,000 trucks are stranded in Belarus," Oleg Tarasov, vice president of Linava, the Lithuanian road carriers' association, told AFP on Friday.

"The Belarusians have seized all Lithuanian vehicles and are not allowing them to leave [the border area]. We are being held hostage, our goods are being held hostage," he said.

Related article: Lithuania Closes Border With Belarus Over Repeated Balloon Incursions

An estimated 60 million euros ($69 million) in assets are currently stuck in Belarus, according to Tarasov, who warned such delays could cause around 18 million euros in monthly losses.

The Linava official criticized the government for not consulting or informing road carriers ahead of the closure, which affects cross-border freight transport.

Lithuania's logistics sector employs some 54,000 drivers who operate around 56,000 trucks, according to data provided by the association.

Lithuania, a NATO and European Union member, shut its last two border crossings with Belarus until Nov. 30 in response to last week's incident.

Four other border crossings with Belarus were closed in 2023 and 2024 due to security concerns after Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Neighboring Poland also temporarily shut its border with Belarus in September when Minsk hosted Russia-led military exercises, and has since reopened only some crossings.

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