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Belgorod Region to Use Armored Vehicles for Food Deliveries in Drone-Struck Border Areas

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Alexander Polegenko / TASS

Authorities in Russia's Belgorod region said they will begin delivering food and mail to border areas using armored vehicles equipped with electronic warfare systems, as Ukrainian drone attacks intensify and disrupt civilian life.

Governor Vyacheslav Gladkov ordered local officials to organize deliveries using protected vehicles fitted with drone detectors and electronic countermeasures, describing the effort as akin to a "military operation."

"Commercial companies are no longer delivering goods at their own risk — this is being done either by shop owners or sales staff," Gladkov said at a regional government meeting, according to local outlet Pepel. "I ask municipal leaders to pay special attention to delivering food and correspondence using armored vehicles. I forbid the use of such equipment without detectors and electronic warfare systems."

The Belgorod region, which borders Ukraine, has faced frequent shelling and drone strikes since the start of Moscow's full-scale invasion of its neighbor.

At the same meeting on Monday, Gladkov also instructed officials to equip all retail outlets within 15 kilometers (9 miles) of the border with protective structures.

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He said modular bomb shelters could not be delivered due to constant drone attacks, proposing instead to reinforce buildings with anti-drone netting and sandbags.

The governor had previously pledged to deploy 718 modular shelters in border areas.

Gladkov said last week that residents were "quite often" being killed because they were unaware of incoming attacks due to internet outages, which have drawn complaints from locals.

"For the inhabitants of the border region this is another serious threat. Lack of information unfortunately leads to quite a lot of death, injuries and destruction," he said.

Authorities are seeking a "compromise solution" that balances connectivity with security concerns raised by federal agencies and law enforcement, he said.

Olga Medvedeva, the regional deputy governor for domestic policy, said last week that shelling by multiple rocket launch systems had tripled year-on-year in 2026, while drone attacks had doubled.

The number of civilians killed and wounded has nearly tripled as a result, she said.

At least 147 civilians were killed in the Belgorod region in 2025, according to estimates by local outlet Fonar, bringing the total number of civilian deaths since the start of the war to 429 as of January 2026.

Most fatalities occurred while people were traveling in cars or near them, commuting to or from work or in their homes and yards, the outlet reported.

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