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Russian May Holiday Hotel Bookings Slump as Drone Attacks Hit Black Sea Tourism

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Fire at the Tuapse oil refinery. **TASS**

Holiday bookings at Russian hotels for the May holidays have fallen sharply from a year earlier, industry data showed, as Ukrainian drone attacks, airport closures and environmental damage along the Black Sea coast weighed on domestic tourism demand.

Hotel reservations in the Krasnodar region, home to some of Russia's most popular seaside resorts, dropped 20.7% year-on-year for the May holiday period, according to booking platform TravelLine.

Across Russia, hotel bookings for April 27-May 11 fell 11.1% from a year earlier, despite the average nightly hotel rate declining 2.2% to about 9,800 rubles ($130.80), the company said.

The decline highlights the growing economic spillover from the war in Ukraine into Russia's domestic travel industry, particularly in regions repeatedly targeted by Ukrainian drones.

Frequent airport shutdowns, disrupted flights and environmental concerns following strikes on energy infrastructure have increasingly affected tourism along Russia's Black Sea coast.

All 10 of Russia's most popular domestic travel destinations recorded falling demand, TravelLine said. The steepest declines after Krasnoday were in the Nizhny Novgorod region, where bookings fell 19.7%, and the Yaroslavl region, down 19.5%. Bookings in annexed Crimea declined 14.2%.

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The Association of Tour Operators of Russia (ATOR) estimated overall holiday travel demand was down about 15% from a year earlier.

The downturn comes as the Black Sea port town of Tuapse in the Krasnodar region has faced repeated Ukrainian drone attacks in recent weeks. Several large fires erupted at the Tuapse oil refinery after strikes on the facility, while local residents reported "black rain," air pollution and oil products leaking into the Tuapse River and the Black Sea.

Russian authorities have not publicly linked the decline in tourism demand directly to security concerns or the environmental situation in Tuapse.

ATOR head Sergei Romashkin said a shorter holiday calendar was the main reason for weaker bookings this year, with Russians receiving six days of May holidays instead of eight in 2025.

Travel platform Ostrovok said the average duration of hotel stays in Anapa — a Black Sea resort near Tuapse still dealing with the aftermath of a December 2024 oil spill — fell from four nights to three over the past year.

In Kazan, Yekaterinburg and Samara, the average stay dropped from three nights to two.

Tour operator Alean said poor weather and weaker consumer spending also likely contributed to lower demand.

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