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Sevastopol Begins Rationing Gasoline Due to 'Logistical Challenges'

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Kremlin-backed authorities in the Crimean port city of Sevastopol on Friday announced gasoline rationing measures, coming as Ukrainian drone strikes against oil refineries across Russia cause a slump in fuel production.

"We are currently experiencing certain logistical challenges, the causes of which are known," Sevastopol governor Mikhail Razvozhayev wrote in a post on Telegram. "To prevent panic buying, we are reintroducing a measure that has already proven effective in the past."

Under the new restrictions, motorists in Sevastopol will be capped at a 20-liter (5.2-gallon) purchase limit per vehicle or container at locations of the TES gas station chain.

While standard and premium fuels remain available with inconsistent stock at the competing ATAN gas station chain, Razvozhayev said TES has run out of premium gasoline at multiple locations and restricted remaining diesel sales strictly to voucher-holders.

Recent Ukrainian attacks on Russian oil refineries have halted or scaled back production at facilities that account for around one-quarter of the country's total refining capacity and more than 30% of its gasoline output, according to Reuters.

Bloomberg reported that processing volumes at Russian refineries have plummeted to 4.69 million barrels per day — the lowest level since 2009.

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Crimea, which Russia annexed from Ukraine in 2014, had temporarily imposed a 30-liter limit on two common types of gasoline for automobiles in September of last year.

To address domestic shortages and rising prices, Russia has kept a ban on gasoline exports in effect from April until the end of July.

Hours before the rationing in Sevastopol was announced on Friday, Russia's Energy Ministry assured that the domestic gasoline market remained "stable and under control."

The Kremlin this week acknowledged that "production may decrease in some areas" but maintained it saw "no risks" of nationwide gasoline shortages.

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