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Russia Lets Private Firms Buy Heavy Weapons to Defend Sites From Drone Attacks – RBC

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A fire at an industrial site in Russia's Perm region following a Ukrainian drone attack in late April.
@exilenova_plus / Telegram

Russian authorities have approved a mechanism allowing private companies to purchase heavy weaponry to defend industrial facilities against drone attacks, the RBC news website reported Thursday, citing sources linked to the Defense Ministry.

The new system will allow companies to procure anti-aircraft artillery systems, turrets, radar equipment, specialized vehicles and electronic warfare systems, RBC reported.

"In order to promptly provide newly formed mobile fire groups with everything they need, the relevant decisions were recently adopted at the state level," one source told RBC.

The move underscores mounting concern among Russian authorities and business leaders over the growing frequency of Ukrainian drone attacks targeting oil refineries, industrial sites

and other strategic infrastructure across European Russia.

The issue was publicly raised Monday during a meeting between President Vladimir Putin and Alexander Shokhin, head of the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs (RSPP).

“Large companies are certainly taking steps — at least all conscientious major companies are — to protect both their facilities and the areas where they operate. But some issues still need to be resolved,” Shokhin told Putin, according to a Kremlin transcript.

“These include mechanisms for supplying weapons — not only light 7.62 mm firearms, but also heavier weapons systems. That includes various electronic warfare systems, laser installations and other types of weaponry,” he said.

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He also asked authorities to permanently assign reservists to specific industrial sites, complaining that personnel were frequently reassigned elsewhere.

RBC reported that most regions in European Russia are already forming new mobile fire groups consisting of reservists, volunteers from regional BARS units and employees of private companies.

To speed up deployment, weaponry purchased by private firms will reportedly be transferred directly to military units tasked with protecting industrial and civilian infrastructure, one source said.

Previously, private companies were only allowed to purchase passive defense systems through the open market or the Industry and Trade Ministry. Procurement of light firearms for private security personnel was handled through Russia’s National Guard.

Separately, a Pantsir-SMD-E air defense system appeared to have been installed atop Moscow’s 42-story Nordstar Tower skyscraper. Video published by military analyst Yan Matveyev on Thursday showed a helicopter lowering the system onto the roof.

The pro-war Telegram channel Voenny Osvedomitel said the system is specifically designed to counter drones. Its combat module can carry up to 48 small-sized Gvozd missiles with a range of 7 kilometers (4.3 miles), or standard 95Ya6 missiles with a range of up to 20 kilometers (12.4 miles).

Nordstar Tower is among Moscow’s tallest office buildings and houses major tenants including state oil giant Rosneft, which leases nearly half the building’s space.

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