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Crimea Suspends Gasoline Sales and Distribution of Fuel Vouchers

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Authorities in annexed Crimea on Thursday halted gasoline sales and the distribution of fuel vouchers for the foreseeable future, as the peninsula faces a worsening shortage blamed on Ukrainian drone attacks along a key stretch of highway used to supply the region.

"Starting today, cash sales of gasoline will be completely suspended for several days," Sergei Aksyonov, the Russian-appointed governor of Crimea, said in a post on Telegram.

Aksyonov, who warned earlier this week that the local gasoline shortage could last at least until July, also said that fuel vouchers introduced as a rationing measure are no longer available and "will not be reissued in the near future."

Drivers who already hold valid vouchers will face a strict purchase cap of 20 liters (5.28 gallons) per vehicle. To prevent hoarding, officials will be deployed to every gas station and keep a record of license plates for all vehicles refueling with a voucher.

“These measures will remain in effect for a few days, and we will provide daily updates as the situation evolves,” Aksyonov said.

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At the same time, the regional government in Crimea banned taking photos of fuel delivery trucks or publicly sharing any details about their movements. Violations of the ban will be treated as “assisting in sabotage activities,” an offense that carries criminal liability.

“This information can be weaponized by the enemy against Russia’s security,” the regional government said in a statement. Officials explicitly advised parents to warn children aged 14 and older that they could face criminal prosecution under the new rules.

The rationing comes after Ukraine recently began ramping up its attacks against Russian oil refineries and supply lines in a bid to deprive the Kremlin of windfalls from surging oil prices. Drone strikes have halted or scaled back production at facilities that account for large shares of Russia’s gasoline output.

Ukraine has also been targeting fuel trucks driving along the R-280 Novorossiya highway, which connects Crimea to southern Russia’s Rostov region. Kremlin-backed authorities in the partially occupied Kherson region restricted non-essential traffic along the route in May.

This week, gas stations in Moscow, the southwestern Belgorod region and parts of northwestern Russia also introduced purchase limits. Some of those rationing measures, however, appear to be aimed more at preventing hoarding rather than addressing an acute shortage.

While the Kremlin recently acknowledged that gasoline production had decreased “in some areas” of the country, it insisted there are “no risks” of nationwide shortages. The Energy Ministry said supply in the domestic market remains “stable and under control.”

A ban on gasoline exports remains in force across Russia through July 31 to prevent shortages and rising prices.

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