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Small Share of Sevastopol Gas Stations Lift Fuel Rationing Restrictions

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Yandex Maps

Nine out of more than 100 gas stations belonging to a single major retailer have resumed sales in annexed Crimea's biggest city of Sevastopol as restrictions remained across other networks, authorities said Friday.

Mikhail Razvozhayev, the Kremlin-installed governor of Sevastopol, announced that nine ATAN stations in and around the southern port city would begin "unrestricted" sales of AI-92, AI-95, A-100 and Diesel Ultra fuel grades starting 10 a.m. local time.

ATAN's rival TES, which also operates more than 100 stations across Crimea, will only sell gasoline via special QR codes issued through the state-backed messaging app Max, he warned.

Crimea, which Russia annexed from Ukraine in 2014, has suffered from gasoline shortages in the weeks since Ukraine stepped up its mid-range drone attacks against military trucks and fuel tankers that supply the peninsula from the north.

Gasoline shortages have also been reported at filling stations in at least 25 Russian regions.

The Kremlin blamed the shortage on "unjustified panic-buying." Earlier this week, however, Russia's Energy Ministry acknowledged that Ukrainian drone attacks were to blame for the shortages and set up an "industry-wide task force" meant to stabilize the Russian energy sector.

Late on Thursday, the Russian government said Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak held a cabinet meeting in which he called for the creation of a "predictive model" to improve monitoring quality, flag bottlenecks early and allow officials to make proactive policy decisions in the fuel market.

Russia has enforced a ban on gasoline exports through July 31 to safeguard local supplies and combat rising prices.

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