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Fuel Shortage Hits Crimea's Tourism Industry as Summer Bookings Canceled

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A fuel shortage in annexed Crimea is beginning to disrupt the peninsula's crucial summer tourism season, with tour operators, hotels and wineries reporting a surge in booking cancellations as travelers reconsider plans to drive to the Black Sea resort region.

The disruptions pose a new challenge for Crimea's tourism-dependent economy at the start of the peak holiday season. Industry representatives say concerns over fuel availability have prompted many visitors to postpone or cancel trips, though some larger tourism operators insist demand remains relatively resilient.

Crimea's tourism sector has become increasingly reliant on domestic visitors since Russia annexed the peninsula from Ukraine in 2014. About 80% of tourists travel there by car, making fuel availability a critical factor during the summer season.

Yelena Shtringel, director of tour company TurEtno, told the RBC news website that around 80% of previously booked June trips had been canceled, along with roughly half of reservations for July and August.

"There are a small number of new bookings, but they are for August and September," she said.

According to Shtringel, tourists began actively booking summer vacations at the end of 2025, and the company had already achieved 60% to 70% of its sales targets by the May holidays. Cancellations accelerated after fuel supply problems emerged, she said.

TurEtno is refunding customers the full cost of canceled trips, including its commission.

Hotel operators also reported sharp declines in demand.

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A representative of the Rassvety-Zakaty hotel in Crimea's Bakhchysarai district told RBC that cancellations during the past 10 days had exceeded the total recorded during all of last year.

The hotel is currently operating at around 30% occupancy, compared with the 65% to 70% level typically expected in June, he said.

The hotel even offered guests guaranteed access to fuel for their vehicles in an effort to retain bookings, but the measure proved effective only in isolated cases.

Guesthouse owners near the city of Alushta described a similar situation, telling RBC that roughly 90% of June reservations had been canceled, with only one out of every 10 expected visitors ultimately arriving.

Many small tourism businesses had already invested customer deposits into preparations for the season and are now struggling to return funds to clients, according to the report.

Yet some industry participants argued that it was too early to declare the tourist season a failure.

Sergei Romashkin, vice president of the Russian Union of Travel Industry and director of tour operator Dolphin, said tourist traffic to Crimea had been running 10% to 15% above last year's levels before the fuel disruptions.

"A small portion of tourists canceled bookings because of the fuel crisis, but it cannot be said that everything has collapsed," Romashkin told RBC.

He said bookings at his company were down around 10% year-on-year in June, while reservations for July and August remained 12% higher than a year earlier.

Large resort complexes appear to have been less affected.

Samvel Sarukhanyan, CEO of the Mriya resort, said occupancy stood at 87% and that only three bookings had been canceled during the previous week, alongside around 20 postponements.

"We received about 400 calls from guests who were concerned about their planned

vacations," he said.

Sarukhanyan said the resort had built up fuel and essential goods reserves in advance and had adjusted logistics arrangements. Even so, fuel and supply costs had risen by 10% to 15%, he said.

Related article: Crimea Suspends Gasoline Sales and Distribution of Fuel Vouchers

The fuel shortage is also affecting wineries that depend on tourist visits.

Winemaker Oleg Repin said around 70% to 80% of customers who had booked tours of his vineyard over the past week subsequently canceled.

"They said that, for objective reasons, they would not be traveling to Crimea," he said.

In an effort to ease concerns, Crimea's Tourism Ministry launched a hotline on June 5 and promised that visitors would be able to obtain up to 20 liters of fuel.

Crimea's Moscow-backed head, Sergei Aksyonov, said Friday that authorities had reached an agreement with fuel retailers to reduce prices by 11 rubles per liter.

Anushavan Agadzhanyan, the peninsula's economy minister, acknowledged the broader economic consequences.

"In any case, this is a blow to the economy, and we need to speak clearly about it," he said. "Artificial excitement cannot replace stable and predictable economic activity."

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