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Antitrust Service Investigating Moscow Gas Stations for Possible Price Gouging

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A Trassa gas station, owned by EuroTrans. **trassagk.ru**

Russia's Federal Anti-Monopoly Service (FAS) has ordered two gas station chains in Moscow to explain recent price hikes, coming as intensifying Ukrainian drone attacks fuel rationing measures in an increasing number of regions.

Neftmagistral, which operates more than 100 gas stations across the capital and the wider Moscow region, and EuroTrans, which owns 57 Trassa gas stations, both have until next Friday, June 26, to submit pricing data for gasoline and diesel sales.

The companies are also required to provide "an economic justification for the changing cost of fuel," FAS said in statements cited by the Interfax news agency.

The inquiries follow two major Ukrainian drone attacks this week on a Gazprom Neft-operated refinery located just south of Moscow, which supplies around a third of the Russian capital's gasoline and jet fuel.

Sources cited by Reuters claimed the June 16 attack damaged a distillation unit that accounts for 53% of the refinery's capacity, while the June 18 attack damaged a more modern Euro+ unit that accounts for the other 47%.

Related article: Russia's Fuel Shortages Are Manageable. But the Kremlin's Options Are Shrinking.

Moscow is among dozens of Russian regions and annexed Ukrainian territories where fuel rationing measures have been slowly introduced at gas stations in recent weeks. The disruptions arrive at a critical time, with both the summer vacation travel season and the agricultural farming season in full swing.

The average price of gasoline in Russia has climbed 6.6% since the start of the year, with a single-week jump pushing national averages to 69.11 rubles per liter ($3.56 per gallon) as of June 15.

Earlier on Monday, FAS launched antitrust investigations into three major Russian fuel traders over alleged cartel activities that are believed to have artificially impacted the price of fuel.

Ukraine began ramping up its attacks against Russian oil refineries and supply lines this spring 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.

Industry sources told Reuters this week that Russia will import fuel from Asia by sea this month due to the shortages.

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