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Russia Orders Total Ban on Fish Imports From Armenia

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Yaroslav Chingaev / Moskva News Agency

Russia has suspended all seafood imports from Armenia after imposing a partial ban earlier this month, the state-run news agency TASS reported Friday, citing Russia's agricultural safety agency.

Rosselkhoznadzor restricted seafood imports from all but two of Armenia's fish processing plants on June 1 after the facilities allegedly refused to undergo health and safety inspections.

In a statement on Friday, the agency said it uncovered safety violations at those two plants — MF Export and Invest Plus — and moved to ban the import of their seafood products as well.

"A decision was made to temporarily suspend product certification for these remaining enterprises," TASS quoted Rosselkhoznadzor as saying.

The move follows previous Russian restrictions on the import and transit of most Armenian

food, seeds, flowers, wood and fertilizer due to what officials identified as the "systematic detection" of pests. Russia has also restricted the sale and import of Armenian mineral water and alcoholic products over various alleged health and safety violations.

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While Moscow maintains that its mounting trade restrictions are based strictly on sanitary concerns, the measures increasingly resemble an economic pressure campaign targeting Yerevan as it pursues closer ties with the European Union.

Sergei Dankvert, the head of Rosselkhoznadzor, has denied claims that the trade bans are politically motivated.

Armenia's central bank estimates that Russia's import ban affects roughly 2% of the South Caucasus country's GDP. The resulting oversupply of goods redirected away from Russia could cause local prices in Armenia to decrease by 0.6%, policymakers said.

Friction between traditional allies Russia and Armenia has grown since Azerbaijan regained control of the breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh in 2023. Armenia accused Russia and its peacekeeping forces of failing to deter Baku's military offensive and, in 2024, froze its participation in a Moscow-led regional security bloc.

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