

Kazakhstan Suspends Defense Exports, Denying Russia Purchases

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OE Watch Commentary

When Russia annexed Crimea in 2014, international sanctions forced the Russian defense industry to consider purchasing military equipment from defense companies in Kazakhstan as a workaround to meet requirements for the Russian Armed Forces. In 2014, no significant Russian acquisitions from Kazakh companies ultimately took place. However, following Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, a new round of international sanctions against Moscow have reportedly caused Russia to look again at Kazakhstan's defense industry. However, as the accompanying excerpted article from the independent news website *Fergana Agency* reports, the Kazakh government's announcement on 27 August that it is suspending all defense exports for one year.

The ban includes "the export of weapons, military equipment and military products," and it appears to have the greatest impact on Russia. The move is viewed as a direct effort by Kazakhstan to avoid violating sanctions levied against Russia, which it has stated multiple times that it seeks not to violate. The article notes that Russia had been planning to make a \$46 million defense purchase from a Kazakh company, including acquiring shells for howitzers, ammunition for mortars, rockets, and even armored personnel carriers. Kazakhstan's Ministry of Industry and Infrastructure Development denied this. The article notes that the pro-Russian *Rybar Telegram* channel tried to refute



President of Russia Vladimir Putin and President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, following Russia-Kazakhstan talks in Sochi, Russia

Source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Putin-Tokayev_\(2022-08-19\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Putin-Tokayev_(2022-08-19).jpg) Attribution: CCA 4.0

The export of weapons, military equipment and military products will be suspended until the end of August 2023.

the Kazakh government by publishing documents for the purchase, but they could not be verified. Regardless of whether the Kazakh government agreed to the purchase, the one-year suspension of defense exports ultimately deprives Russia of a supplier of weapons and equipment that closely matches its own armed forces.

Source: "Казахстан на год приостановит экспорт вооружений (Kazakhstan is suspending defense exports for one year)," *Fergana Agency* (independent news website focusing on Central Asia), 29 August 2022. <https://fergana.agency/news/127503/>

Kazakhstan will suspend the export of military products for a year. The Ministry of Industry and Infrastructure Development of the country came up with such an initiative, and it was supported by the Commission on Defense Industry, the website of the Prime Minister reports...the export of weapons, military equipment and military products will be suspended until the end of August 2023.

In the middle of this month, Russian Telegram channels reported on an allegedly planned deal for the sale of Soviet and Russian-made ammunition by the Kazakh company Technoexport... They said that the contract in the amount of \$46 million was concluded on July 16, 2022. The reports also provided a list of weapons - shells for howitzers, ammunition for mortars, rockets, armored personnel carriers and so on. The Ministry of Industry and Infrastructure Development of Kazakhstan denied this information a few days later.

In response, the Rybar Telegram channel published documents (without specifying their origin) that cast doubt on the refutation of the Kazakh authorities.

On August 19, a meeting was held in Sochi between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Kazakh leader Kassym-Jomart Tokayev. As the Kremlin reported, the agenda of the talks included the development of Russian-Kazakh relations, strategic partnership and cooperation.