

# 'Criminal activity' blamed for new UK cars entering sanctioned Russia

The boss of the UK motor industry's lobby group has blamed "criminal activity" for UK-made luxury cars finding their way into sanction-hit Russia.

The chief executive of the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) Mike Hawes was speaking just over a week after [Sky News uncovered a system](#) of getting vehicles from the UK and other European nations across the border from Georgia.

Vehicles including Solihull-made Range Rovers were filmed being taken to the border at a time when official statistics show no such trade exists, calling into question whether UK manufacturers were failing in their obligations.

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The import of cars into Russia is banned under both UK and EU sanctions regimes imposed in the wake of the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

Mr Hawes insisted the movement of new vehicles was the work of a "third movement" following a legitimate export.

"No one is exporting directly to Russia," he declared.

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## Luxury cars still getting to Russia

He said the industry could not prevent how cars were sold on once they reached authorised dealers and that the SMMT continued to work with the industry to ensure compliance.

“Individual brands have ceased exports to Russia. Where you’re looking at secondary markets, such as in the Caucasus’, certainly you are trying to restrict onward sale by verifying purchases, by verifying dealers and so forth.

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“But as I said, what you can’t prevent is when legitimate sales to certain countries, who may not abide or sign up to those sanctions, aren’t preventing them going forward.”

Mr Hawes said that what Sky News filmed was “clearly illegal practices” and that they must be stopped.

A government spokesperson told Sky News in response to the filming: “The UK has banned the export of thousands of goods to Russia, including cars. Over £20bn of UK trade with Russia is now under sanctions and we will continue to ratchet up economic pressure until it ends its brutal invasion of Ukraine.

“We are also working with UK businesses and exporters to ensure sanctioned goods are not supplied to Russia, and we expect them to continue to check their compliance with relevant UK sanctions.”

A spokesperson for Jaguar Land Rover said in response to the earlier Sky News report: “An ongoing investigation into these vehicles has confirmed they were not supplied by JLR to the Georgia market.

“They were supplied by JLR to retailers in countries that do not share a border with Russia and then in turn sold to customers in those countries, which are subject to similar sanctions and export controls as we are in the UK in relation to Russia.”