

# ASEAN and Russian leaders meet in Kazan amid global energy crisis

John Malvar  
23 June 2026

On June 17 and 18, leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) gathered in Kazan, Russia, for a commemorative summit with President Vladimir Putin marking 35 years of ASEAN-Russia relations. Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., as current ASEAN chair, co-chaired the proceedings alongside Putin. The summit took place as the G7 met simultaneously in Évian, France. The two gatherings—one pledging to tighten the sanctions strangling Russia, the other deepening cooperation with Moscow—capture in a single week the accelerating fracture of the postwar capitalist order.

Southeast Asia produces approximately 2 million barrels of oil per day and consumes 5 million, importing the difference primarily from the Persian Gulf. When Washington’s war on Iran shuttered the Strait of Hormuz, it severed the region’s energy lifeline. Physical Brent crude hit \$141 a barrel. The International Energy Agency’s director called the disruption “more serious than the ones in 1973, 1979 and 2022 together.” The net shortfall reached approximately 13 million barrels per day—roughly 13 percent of world energy supply.

The Philippines declared a national energy emergency. Indonesia faced fuel shortages threatening an already fragile economy. Workers and the poor across the region were forced to absorb the price shocks through inflation, rising transport costs and cuts to social programs. This crisis was not a natural disaster. It was the direct consequence of a war Washington launched.

For six years, ASEAN-Russia relations were suspended in near-dormancy. The global COVID-19 pandemic severed contact; the 2022 invasion of Ukraine and the Western sanctions regime that followed made engagement with Moscow politically costly. The last in-person leaders’ summit was Singapore in 2018. It is the energy shock—not any shift in political allegiance—that has reversed this separation. The pressure of the crisis drove

ASEAN governments back to the table.

Against this backdrop, the Kazan summit produced four formal documents: the Kazan Declaration 2026, a Joint Statement on Energy Cooperation, a Joint Statement on Cultural Cooperation, and a Comprehensive Plan of Action for Russia-ASEAN 2026–2030. The Declaration committed ASEAN and Russia to a “just, democratic and multipolar world order” and pledged to “strengthen cooperation to enhance energy security.”

These are frameworks, not contracts. No specific volumes of oil were committed, no purchase orders signed, no delivery schedules established. The summit produced the handshakes of intended partnership, not bills of sale.

The concrete numbers tell a different story. The Philippines’ Petron Corporation—the country’s only refiner—purchased 2.48 million barrels of Russian crude, the first in five years. Two tankers docked at Limay port for the Bataan refinery. Vietnam activated a long-standing Rosneft-PV Oil supply framework and signed a new cooperation agreement with Zarubezhneft for crude, gas, and storage infrastructure. Thailand and Malaysia secured spot cargoes and bunkering flows.

Indonesia announced the most dramatic figure: 150 million barrels, agreed after President Prabowo Subianto held a three-hour meeting with Putin in Moscow on April 13. One cargo arrived. Roughly 700,000 barrels of Arctic Novy grade crude were delivered to the Cilacap refinery in late April. The gap between the headline and the reality is a measure of the difficulty every ASEAN government faces in translating political will into energy security.

Indonesia’s predicament is the sharpest illustration of the structural constraints. Pertamina, the state energy company, issues global bonds carrying covenants that require compliance with Western sanctions regimes. Direct purchase of sanctioned Russian crude could trigger a covenant violation and demands for accelerated debt

repayment from international bondholders.

To fulfill the political commitment while protecting Pertamina, Jakarta constructed new legal architecture. Presidential Regulation No. 26 of 2026 created a government-to-government import route through a public service agency. Lemigas—the state oil and gas testing center, ordinarily a research body—was designated as the import operator, allowing the state to take legal title to Russian crude before passing it to Pertamina for processing: a legal fiction designed to insulate the company from direct sanctions exposure.

On April 23, the day Jakarta announced the 150-million-barrel commitment, the EU issued its 20th Russia sanctions package, which included Indonesia's Karimun terminal—the first non-Russian oil terminal sanctioned by Brussels since 2022. Karimun had functioned as a hub for Russian shadow-fleet ship-to-ship transfers. Sanctioning it was a direct warning to Jakarta.

The obstacles are not only legal and political. Russia's own export capacity is severely constrained. Ukrainian drone strikes have halted at least 40 percent of Russia's oil export infrastructure—roughly 2 million barrels per day. By May, Russian seaborne oil exports hit a seasonal low, with diesel exports cut by 26 percent due to refinery outages. The Far East route most relevant to Southeast Asia flows through the ESPO Blend pipeline to the Kozmino terminal, which operates near its capacity ceiling of approximately 1 million barrels per day. This route is dominated by China, which absorbs roughly 58 percent of Russia's shadow-fleet crude. The shadow fleet itself is shrinking: Sanctions and seizures eliminated 22 vessels in early 2026 alone. Russian demand from ASEAN buyers may, in the Kremlin's own words, exceed what Moscow can supply.

The window is also closing. The US sanctions waiver that briefly allowed Russian oil purchases expired on May 16; Asian governments including the Philippines lobbied for its extension and were refused. Any transaction now structured in dollars exposes buyers to secondary sanctions risk. Washington launched the war that closed the Strait of Hormuz, opened the valve when it suited its interests, then shut it again. The EU, which decoupled from Russian fossil fuels after 2022 and faces no comparable energy emergency, sent its foreign policy chief to Brunei to tell Southeast Asian governments not to buy Russian oil—and sanctioned Indonesia's Karimun terminal to impede the flows. The costs of the war in Ukraine—now financed and prosecuted overwhelmingly by European imperialism—are being enforced on Asian

workers.

The G7 summit at Évian produced a formal statement pledging to “strengthen sanctions, including those on the oil and gas sectors.” The unity was a surface achievement. European governments spent days pushing Ukraine back onto Trump's agenda; Washington came to Évian to announce its Iran deal. The divergence is structural. The EU has committed over \$226 billion to Ukraine since 2022 and agreed on a further \$104 billion loan for 2026–2027, including nearly \$70 billion for military assistance. European military spending rose 14 percent in 2025. The war in Ukraine is now financed and sustained predominantly by Europe, while Washington's strategic focus is China and the Middle East. As the *World Socialist Web Site* has analyzed, European capitals increasingly pursue their imperialist interests independently of—and if necessary against—Washington.

ASEAN governments are maneuvering in the space this fracture opens. Their turn toward Moscow is driven by the collapse of the order Washington built and can no longer sustain.

The Kazan Declaration's pledge to a “just, democratic and multipolar world order” is the ideological packaging of, not a genuine alternative to, imperialism. Russia is a declining capitalist power whose export infrastructure is being destroyed by Ukrainian drones and whose shadow fleet is being seized in the North Sea. The ASEAN states are not building a new order. They are scrambling for position in the ruins of the old one.

As the WSWS has warned, what is emerging from this process is a fracturing political and economic order, competing imperial blocs, and an emerging world war. The political turbulence at the level of summits and declarations falls as a material weight on working people. Indonesian students took to the streets over fuel price hikes and cuts to social spending. Philippine workers face the consequences of an energy emergency their government is managing through Russian spot purchases measured in the low millions of barrels. Across the region, the pattern is the same: Ruling classes absorb the geopolitical crisis at the top and pass its costs downward.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://wsws.org/contact)**