

Rolkan Jet Grounded

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Afghan authorities have grounded another airplane owned by the company at the center of a diplomatic spat between Russia and Tajikistan, Interfax reported.

Officials claimed the An-72 jet owned by Rolkan Investmens Ltd. was not licensed to fly in Afghan airspace, company head Valery Pfeffer said.

Last week, a Tajik court sentenced Rolkan pilots from Russia and Estonia to 8 1/2 years in prison after finding them guilty of illegally crossing into the country with a smuggled jet engine.

The sentence drew a furious response from the Kremlin. Tajik prosecutors asked to slash the pilots' sentences Tuesday. Reports said they also opened a case against Pfeffer, but local media denied the information Wednesday.

(MT)

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