

80 Kilograms of 'Heroin' Seized on Dushanbe-Moscow Train

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A file photo from the Interior Ministry's website showing bottles on the floor of a train car.

Eighty kilograms of presumed heroin has been found packed in plastic bottles aboard a train traveling from the Tajik capital, Dushanbe, to Moscow, raising new Russian worries about the train route.

The Interior Ministry said two Tajik train conductors have been detained on suspicion of drug trafficking.

Officers with the Astrakhan region police and the Federal Security Service found the plastic bottles — 40 with a capacity of 2 liters and five with 1.5 liters — hidden in a cache aboard the train as it passed through the southern Russian region, the ministry said.

The bottles contained "an unknown dark gray substance, presumably heroin," the ministry said in a [statement](#).

"The confiscated substance has been sent for testing," it said.

In mid-April, Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin inspected a passenger train traveling from Dushanbe to Moscow during a visit to the Astrakhan region and declared that the train "must not be allowed to enter Russia" because it presented "a serious threat to the sanitary health of the nation."

On Wednesday, Rogozin said that the discovery proved that his earlier claims

about the train were justified. "This is a very large batch ... that proves that the criticism that we voiced during the inspection of this train is well-grounded and serious," he said.

Shortly after the April inspection, the deputy head of Russia's Border Guard Service, Vladimir Mochalov, proposed suspending rail service between Russia and Tajikistan, saying the route was "systematically used by drug traffickers to smuggle drugs." But a day later Audit Chamber head Sergei Stepashin said on the sidelines of a meeting with Tajik President Emomali Rakhmon that Russia would not be raising the issue.

The train is popular among Tajik migrant workers.

Rogozin said Wednesday that Russia's state border guard commission would look into how to make trains from Tajikistan more secure in June, Interfax reported.

He said changes were needed "to benefit the whole country and, more specifically, the Russian citizens who have to withstand this heroin aggression," RIA-Novosti reported.

Meanwhile, the Federal Anti-Drug Control Agency said Wednesday that Russia would host a major anti-drug conference of more than 120 countries next month. The 30th international conference of law enforcement agencies against drug trafficking, which will be held in Moscow, is being prepared with the assistance of a working group on combating drug trafficking in the Russian-U.S. presidential commission and was discussed Wednesday during a meeting between anti-drug agency chief Viktor Ivanov and Gilberto Gerra, head of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Interfax said.

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