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Russian Plane Grounded in Israel as a Result of Western Sanctions

By The Moscow Times

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A Yakutia Airlines plane landing at Vladivostok Airport.

A plane operated by Russia's Yakutia Airlines has been grounded in Israel after the European company who owned the aircraft canceled the lease agreement as a result of Western sanctions against Moscow, news reports said.

Sixty-six passengers who had been scheduled to board that plane for a flight from Tel-Aviv to Krasnodar in southern Russia managed to take a later Yakutia Airlines flight to their destination, Rossiiskaya Gazeta reported Thursday.

But the Boeing-37-700, leased by Yakutia, remained grounded in Tel-Aviv's Ben Gurion Airport, news reports said.

Company spokesperson Svetlana Sivtseva told the Rossiiskaya Gazeta newspaper that following the introduction of Western sanctions against Moscow, Amsterdam-based leasing

company AerCap had demanded Yakutia pay all of its bills for the lease of the plane and had canceled the agreement when the airline failed to pay up.

"In connection with sanctions, leasing firms from Europe and the U.S. have tightened their requirements on Russian companies," Sivtseva was quoted as saying. "In particular, they are demanding prompt repayment of all credit on their aircraft."

Yakutia Airlines is now in talks with Chinese aircraft leasing companies to replace contracts with Western firms, a spokesperson said.

The incident follows the grounding last month of Russia's low-cost carrier Dobrolyot in line with Western sanctions against Moscow over its policy on Ukraine.

The airline, a subsidiary of Russian national carrier Aeroflot, said the leasing contract for its Boeing-737-800 aircraft had been annulled, forcing the cancelation of all of its flights from Moscow.

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