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Passengers in Russia's Arctic Asked to Push Plane Down Runway in -50 C (Video)

By The Moscow Times

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Passengers were asked to push a Tu-134 aircraft down a snow-covered runway.

Authorities in Siberia are conducting checks after passengers in Russia's Arctic were asked on Tuesday to push their own airplane down a frozen runway ahead of departure.

More than 70 people aboard a regionally operated flight to Krasnodar from Igarka — a town in Russia's Krasnoyarsk region more than 100 kilometers north of the Arctic Circle — were asked to disembark in order to help prepare the plane for takeoff, the Interfax news agency reported Wednesday.

Other media reports said the passengers had left the plane in order to reduce its load, and had volunteered to push it forward themselves.

In videos posted to YouTube, passengers wrapped up in coats and scarves to protect

themselves from the cold can be seen pushing a Tu-134 aircraft down a snow-covered runway.

Temperatures in Igarka plummeted to below minus 50 degrees Celsius this week, media reports said.

Reports that the plane's chassis or its brakes could have iced up were dismissed by Vladimir Artyomenko, director of the regional airline Katekavia that operated the flight.

"The tow vehicle pulling the aircraft from the parking lot began to skid, and therefore we required the assistance of the passengers," Artyomenko told Interfax on Wednesday.

According to Vesti.ru news site, the plane took off without any problems and arrived in Krasnodar two hours later, having incurred only a slight delay.

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