The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
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# Russia to Close Airspace to Ukrainian Airlines

September 29, 2015

Under Ukraine's ban, its airspace will also be closed to Russian flights carrying military or dual-purpose material.

Russia's Transportation Ministry is banning Ukrainian airlines from flying to Russia, a measure taken in response to Ukraine's ban last week on Russian flights.

The mutual bans, which begin Oct. 25, underline the fierce tension that remains between the countries over Russia's backing of separatist militias in eastern Ukraine. Although fighting between the separatists and Ukrainian forces has quietened in recent months, a firm resolution of the conflict appears to be distant.

More than 8,000 people have been killed since the fighting began in April 2014, according to UN estimates.

Ukraine last week placed sanctions on about 20 Russian airlines including Transaero and Aeroflot, the country's flag carrier. Announcing the measures, Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk said that "Russian planes with the Russian tricolor have no business in Ukrainian

airports," according to the Ukrainian government's website.

Under Ukraine's ban, its airspace will also be closed to Russian flights carrying military or dual-purpose material.

Russia's response, announced late Monday, will close Russian airspace to all Ukrainian carriers.

The measures will severely limit the air connection between the two former Soviet neighbors, leaving only a few airlines unaffected by the ban and potentially forcing travelers to switch to overland transportation or fly more expensive routes via other countries.

*(AP, MT)*

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