

Russian Tour Companies Claim \$23M in Losses After Egypt Flight Suspension

By [The Moscow Times](#)

November 11, 2015



Egypt is Russia's most popular winter travel destination. In November last year, Egypt was visited by more than 310,000 Russian tourists, RBC reported.

Russian tour operators have lost 1.5 billion rubles (\$23 million) since flights to Egypt were suspended on Nov. 6, the Interfax news agency reported, citing the Russian Tourism Industry Union.

The major losses resulted from tour operators being required to fly empty planes to Egypt to evacuate Russian tourists, Russian Tourism Industry Union spokeswoman Irina Tyurina said, Interfax reported Tuesday.

When returning tourists to Russia, every empty seat on the plane costs Russian tour operators approximately \$125, the RBC news agency reported.

President Vladimir Putin ordered the suspension of all commercial air traffic between Russia

and Egypt, and the evacuation of Russian tourists began Friday amid rising speculation that the Russian airline crash on Oct. 31 resulted from a bomb on board.

As of Wednesday afternoon, more than 45,000 Russian tourists have been evacuated from Egypt, the TASS news agency reported.

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Earlier this week, the Russia's Tour Operators Association (ATOR) sent a letter to Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Arkady Dvorkovich with a set of proposals for supporting the tourism industry.

The tourism industry has already suffered a significant decline in demand for traveling abroad among Russians. In the first half of the year, outbound tourism in Russia dropped by 40 percent, according to data from Russia's Federal Tourist Agency Rostourism.

The suspension of flights to Egypt for 2-3 months would result in additional \$200 million of losses for Russia's tour companies, according to ATOR's estimates.

Flight between Russia and Egypt will be suspended for several months at least, Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Ivanov said Tuesday, the RIA Novosti news agency reported.

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