

Russian Senators Support Ban on Flights to Turkey, Tunisia

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Members of the Federation Council, the upper house of Russia's parliament, have spoken out in favor of banning flights to Turkey and Tunisia in addition to Egypt, the RIA Novosti news agency reported Thursday.

"At the moment, security in both Turkey and Tunisia leaves much to be desired," Senator Igor Morozov from the Federation Council's international affairs committee told RIA Novosti.

Russia suspended all flights to Egypt on Friday, Nov. 6 after strong indications that a bomb had caused the Kogalymavia A312 crash over the Sinai on Oct. 31. The head of the presidential administration, Sergei Ivanov, was earlier quoted by RIA as saying the ban would last "for several months, as a minimum."

"The main goal of the Russian government's actions — suspending flights, recommending that Russians not travel there [to Turkey and Tunisia] — would be to force the Turkish and

Tunisian authorities to seriously tackle security problems in tourist zones: in airports, hotels, near major sights."

The senator echoed the sentiments of two Communist deputies, who earlier called on Putin to ban flights to the two countries.

In their letter, parts of which were reprinted by the Izvestia newspaper, Valery Rashkin and Sergei Obukhov cited "Islamic State presence in Tunisia and Turkey" and the gun attack in Tunisia's coastal resort of Sousse in June this year as being among their reasons for the proposed ban.

However, Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Arkady Dvorkovich was quoted in a separate RIA report Wednesday as saying that no new restrictions were planned.

"We will support the tourism industry, principally by — I want to make this clear — encouraging and developing domestic tourism. There will be no bans, no restrictions on foreign travel," he said, referring to the proposals as "ill-conceived."

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