The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
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Tourism Head Says Russians Don't Need Beach Holidays

By The Moscow Times

December 07, 2015



Russia earlier froze all flights to Egypt, after a Russian airliner broke up in mid-air over Egypt's Sinai peninsula in a suspected terror attack.

The head of Russia's federal tourism agency has called beach holidays "a fad of the past few years," even as he was exposed as owning a holiday home on the tropical Seychelles islands.

Rostourism head Oleg Safonov said in an interview with the Rossiiskaya Gazeta newspaper on Monday that Russians should diversify their idea of what constituted a holiday.

"The necessity of a beach and the sea is largely an inculcated fad of the past years, that we have taken up as our own opinion," he said. "Our forefathers, even those who were wealthy, did not travel en masse to foreign coasts," he said.

Safonov also said that people living in China, the U.S. and Canada, among other countries, did not have "the same stereotypical idea of a holiday as an all-inclusive trip to the seaside in

Turkey.”

Safonov's statement was promptly followed by a Facebook post from Sobol Lyubov, an employee of opposition leader Alexei Navalny's Anti-Corruption Fund, who accused the official of “hypocrisy to the 80th level.” The post included screenshots reportedly proving Safonov's ownership of two properties in the Seychelles.

Responding to the allegation, Safonov admitted to Dozhd TV he had owned property on the tropical islands but said they had been sold earlier this year.

Safonov's recommendations come as Russian authorities have recommended that Russian citizens avoid Turkey in retaliation for that country's downing of a Su-24 Russian fighter jet on the border with Syria.

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