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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Engineering University Expels Turkish Students

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An engineering university in Russia has expelled a number of its Turkish students, independent Meduza news portal reported Thursday, amid the growing rift between Moscow and Ankara over the downing of a warplane on the Turkish-Syrian border.

Before the expulsion, police and Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) searched the dorm rooms of Turkish students at Obninsk Institute for Nuclear Power Engineering — a branch of Moscow-based National Research Nuclear University, or MEPhI — looking for drugs and accusing the students of sympathizing with "terrorists," an activist from an association of Turkish students in Russia, Okan Yildiz, was quoted as saying.

Turkish nationals in Russia have become targets of a major backlash after Turkey shot down the Russian Su-24 on Nov. 24. Russian President Vladimir Putin called the downing a "stab in the back by accomplices of terrorism."

But the association of Turkish students has been receiving reports of their compatriots being

expelled from universities in the Russian cities of Voronezh and Saratov, in addition to the one in Obninsk, Yildiz said, Meduza reported.

After initially denying reports of expulsions of its Turkish students, Voronezh Institute of High Technologies this week confirmed it was about to dismiss 14 students, including seven from Turkey, RIA Voronezh news portal has reported.

A spokesperson for the institute told Dozhd television that its Turkish students had been expelled for “academic and financial arrears,” Meduza reported

As relations between Moscow and Ankara have been turning increasingly sour, Russia's Education and Science Ministry said all Russian exchange students in Turkey were to return home immediately. But it vowed that Turkish students in Russia would face no reprisals and urged universities to ensure their safety.

Turkey says Russia's Su-24 bomber strayed into its airspace on Nov. 24 and ignored requests to leave, but Moscow denies this and says the shooting was illegal.

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