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Russia Closes Arctic Border to Norway Amid Security Concerns

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Moscow has confirmed the closure of the Borisoglebsk-Storskog border crossing between Russia and Norway for "security reasons," the Deutsche Welle news website reported Sunday.

The Russian government informed Norway that Russia would not accept migrants through the Borisoglebsk-Storskog arctic border crossing, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told the AFP news agency on Sunday.

"The steps taken by Russia were dictated by security reasons and based on bilateral agreements with Norway," Zakharova was quoted by Deutsche Welle as saying.

This comes a day after the Norwegian Foreign Ministry said it was suspending the return of migrants to Russia "until further notice."

Norway previously said that many of the 5,500 migrants that entered the country in 2015 via the border crossing carried valid Russian visas or residence permits.

However the Russian border authorities want "more coordination over these returns,"

according to the Norwegian statement.

Exceptions will be made for migrants who fulfill the criteria of an earlier agreement under which Moscow is obliged to readmit them if they do not satisfy Norwegian immigration laws.

Many migrants crossed the arctic border by bike, as Russian authorities forbid people crossing the border on foot and Norway considers those who drive migrants across the border traffickers.

They did so in the hopes of reaching Norway, a member of the Schengen passport-free travel zone.

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