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Russian Airlines Allow Middle-Eastern Passengers to Fly to U.S. Despite Ban

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Russian airlines are not stopping foreign nationals affected by a U.S. travel ban on some Middle Eastern countries from boarding flights bound for the United States, pending advice from the country's aviation authorities.

"Russian airlines are following Russian legislation in regards to their passengers, including those who are taking connecting flights,"
an unnamed source told the Interfax news agency.
"No passenger, regardless of nationality, is being barred from taking flights to the United States without a valid reason."

Russian airlines are still waiting for guidance from the country's aviation authorities on whether to stop passengers affected by the ban from boarding or refund tickets, the source said.

U.S. President Donald Trump unleashed the travel ban in an executive order signed Friday.

Travelers or refugees who have nationality or dual nationality of Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen are not permitted to enter the United States for 90 days, and cannot be issued with a visa during that time.

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The legislation sparked chaos in U.S. airports over the weekend, with many people from the affected countries finding themselves detained on arrival, even if they held full U.S. residency permits.

The executive order also indefinitely banned all refugees from Syria, and halted the country's entire refugee program for 120 days.

Trump has so far defended the law, despite protesters flooding U.S. arrivals terminals and American streets. He dismissed critics who labelled the decision as a ban against Muslims.

This is not about religion - this is about terror and keeping our country safe," he wrote on Facebook. "We will again be issuing visas to all countries once we are sure we have reviewed and implemented the most secure policies over the next 90 days."

"I have tremendous feeling for the people involved in this horrific humanitarian crisis in Syria. My first priority will always be to protect and serve our country, but as President I will find ways to help all those who are suffering," he wrote.

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