

Hundreds of Chinese Tourists Stranded in Moscow by Debt-Ridden Airline

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Hundreds of Chinese tourists have been stranded at Moscow's Domodedovo Airport after their debt-ridden Russian airline canceled flights, the RBC news site [reported](#).

Russian authorities have reportedly [grounded](#) VIM Airlines planes because the company owes money for fuel deliveries and airport fees.

The World Without Borders tourist agency [told](#) RBC that 500 travelers from 13 Chinese tour groups were stranded at Domodedovo and another nine groups were stuck at St. Petersburg's Pulkovo airport.

With their visas expiring and no accommodation, logistical problems were piling up, the agency said.

Under a Russian-Chinese agreement, Chinese visitors are allowed to come to Russia without a

visa for 15 days, but those coming on pre-approved travel packages of six or seven days cannot extend their stay.

Hotel owners are reportedly reluctant to rent rooms to the stranded tourists because they may be accused of violating Russia's migration law, punishable by a fine up to 400,000 rubles (US \$6,913)

None of the Chinese travelers have passed through passport control. Their numbers could grow to 2,000, analysts told RBC, since another 63 groups are expected to fly to nine Chinese cities by Oct. 3.

The Russian Federal Agency for Air Transport [said](#) in an online statement late Tuesday that seven Russian companies had agreed to pick up VIM Airlines passengers.

VIM-Avia could stay grounded, however, as the Investigative Committee has [opened](#) a fraud investigation into the company.

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