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2.3M People Barred From Leaving Russia Over Unpaid Debt

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Artyom Geodakyan / TASS

A record 2.3 million Russians have been banned from traveling abroad over unpaid debts, a measure that Russia's bailiffs say has helped recover almost $300 million in outstanding debt.

Russian law forbids anyone who owes more than 30,000 rubles ($483) in unpaid bank credit, taxes or fines from leaving the country. The number of Russians with debts greater than the allowed amount doubled in 2015, when the threshold was 10,000 rubles, in what collectors attributed to an economic downturn triggered by Western sanctions and falling oil prices.

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The Federal Bailiffs Service has imposed debt-related travel restrictions on 2.3 million

Russians as of late May, the state-run TASS news agency reported Thursday.

That figure has nearly doubled from the 1.2 million debtors who were banned from leaving Russia between January and March 2018, according to the Bailiffs Service's quarterly report.

"We've recovered 18.2 billion rubles ($293.5 million) thanks to this measure being imposed on debtors," the bailiff agency told TASS.

Russians are free to travel abroad within 23 minutes of repaying what they owe, Bailiff Service head Dmitry Aristov was cited as saying by TASS at a technology and justice conference this week, touting the progress made from the previous 48-hour waiting period.

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