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Moscow Resumes Direct Passenger Flights to Damascus

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Sheremetyevo Airport Press Service

Moscow's Sheremetyevo Airport has said it resumed direct passenger flights to the Syrian capital of Damascus six years after Russia's flag carrier stopped all flights to the war-torn country.

Aeroflot, the only Russian airline to offer direct flights to and from Syria, suspended air travel to the Arab republic in 2012 as violence escalated between rebels and government forces. The Russian military, however, maintains an air and naval base in Syria supporting Damascus in its fight against opposition fighters and terrorists.

Related article: Aeroflot Suspends Flights to Damascus

Syria's Cham Wings airline will now conduct weekly flights to and from Moscow after the first Airbus A320 landed in Sheremetyevo on Wednesday, the airport announced on its website.

The transport hub did not say how many passengers disembarked from the 156-seat plane.

The flights resumed three weeks after Syrian President Bashar al-Assad made tentative plans to visit Russian-backed Crimea in April 2019. There, he is in talks about starting regular passenger flights between Syria and the Black Sea peninsula.

Crimea has been under Western sanctions since it was annexed from Ukraine by Russia in 2014. Syria is also subject to European Union and U.S. sanctions.

Moscow joins a roster of Middle Eastern destinations including Dubai and Istanbul where Cham Wings conducts flights.

Reuters contributed reporting to this article.

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