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Russia Advises Aeroflot to Avoid Tehran at Night After Ukraine Airliner Crash

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The Foreign Ministry recommended that Aeroflot only perform flights to and from Tehran in daylight hours. **Sergei Bobylev / TASS**

Russia's Foreign Ministry has advised the country's national carrier Aeroflot to avoid airspace over Tehran at night after Iran's downing of a Ukrainian passenger plane, the RBC news website reported Monday.

Tehran has acknowledged shooting down the Ukrainian jetliner by mistake on Jan. 8, killing all 176 people aboard. Russia's civil aviation authority told its air carriers to avoid airspace around the region but fell short of issuing a blanket ban.

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The Foreign Ministry recommended that Aeroflot only perform flights to and from Tehran in daylight hours, RBC cited two unnamed sources familiar with the decision as saying.

It was unclear if Aeroflot followed that advice, but its hub, Moscow's Sheremetyevo Airport, has delayed flights to and from Tehran by at least four hours since Saturday, according to RIA Novosti.

Tehran said its air defenses were fired in error while on alert in the days after Iranian missile strikes on U.S. targets in Iraq. It said the airliner was mistaken for a "hostile target" after it turned toward a sensitive military base of the elite Revolutionary Guards near Tehran.

Update: Aeroflot decided to suspend its nighttime flights to Iran without the Foreign Ministry's recommendation, Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said at a press conference Tuesday.

Reuters contributed reporting to this article.

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