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Russia Plans to Resume Egypt, UAE, Maldives Flights Amid Pandemic

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Russia grounded most international flights in late March. **Stanislav Krasilnikov / TASS**

Russia has added Egypt, the United Arab Emirates and the Maldives to the list of countries it plans to restart flights with five months after closing its borders due to the coronavirus pandemic, a government decree said Thursday.

Russia grounded most international flights in late March to slow the spread of Covid-19. Russia gradually lifted travel restrictions to Britain, Turkey, Switzerland and Tanzania starting in August.

The decree, signed by Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin, states that air travel with Egypt, the UAE and the Maldives will resume "on a reciprocal basis." It means that the three countries will need to accept Russian citizens in order for Russia to accept theirs.

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The decision was based on the countries reporting no more than 40 daily Covid-19 cases per 100,000 people over the past two weeks, the government said.

Egypt has officially confirmed 99,280 coronavirus infections, with the UAE reporting 71,540 cases and the Maldives confirming 8,140.

“The crisis center continues to monitor the situation and work on expanding the list of countries with which air traffic can be resumed,” the Russian government said.

Greece and Poland this week lifted their coronavirus travel restrictions to allow Russian citizens to cross their borders for two-week periods. It was not immediately clear if Greek and Polish citizens would be allowed into Russia for non-essential travel.

Russia has the world’s fourth-highest number of cases, with more than a million confirmed infections this week.

Mishustin also signed a decree allowing Russians multiple border crossings to take care of sick relatives abroad.

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