

Russia Blames Turkey for New Spike in Coronavirus Cases

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Turkey is the most popular holiday destination for Russians. **STR / EPA / TASS**

Russia's healthcare and consumer protection watchdog believes that most of the country's "imported" coronavirus cases came from Turkey, [Interfax has reported](#).

"Our general monitoring showed that out of the total number of detected (imported cases) — more than 10 thousand positive tests for coronavirus, some 90%, are people who returned from Turkey," Interfax quoted the head of the Rospotrebnadzor watchdog Anna Popova as saying.

Turkey is the most popular holiday destination for Russians. According to Rospotrebnadzor, since the resumption of flights to and from Turkey on Aug. 1, 1.5 million of Russians have visited the country on vacation.

Air traffic between Moscow and Ankara had been halted from March 27 because of the pandemic.

A source in Turkish air industry [told](#) Interfax that Russian and Turkish officials have started discussions on the possibility of cutting the number of flights between the countries.

"The issue of reducing the intensity of flights is being studied on a mutual basis. First of all, this may affect charter flights," the source told Interfax.

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Irina Tyurina, the spokeswoman for Russia's tourist agency Rostourism [told](#) the RBC news website that not everyone who flew back from Turkey had holidayed there.

"All incoming tourist traffic to Russia coming from other countries goes through Turkey," she said, adding that many Russians use Turkey as a transit point to reach other destinations.

Turkey has also been facing a surge in coronavirus cases in recent weeks. Authorities are considering introducing new restrictions to curb the spread of Covid-19, including domestic and foreign travel bans, the *Hürriyet* daily newspaper [reported](#).

Russia [confirmed](#) 18,648 Covid-19 cases on Tuesday, bringing the total to 1,673,686. Daily new cases and deaths are spiking amid reports of shortages of drugs and hospital beds across the country.

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