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Russian Flights to Egypt's Sinai to Resume Five Years After Deadly Jet Attack

By AFP

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An attack on a Russian jet killed 224 people in November 2015. **Mohamed Abd El Ghany / Reuters**

Russia will resume flights to Egypt's Red Sea resorts in March after the lifting of a ban imposed following a 2015 attack on a Russian jet, an aviation official said.

Flights "to the two cities of Sharm el-Sheikh and Hurghada will resume on March 28 via the Russian company Nordwind at a rate of four per week," said Ashraf Noweir, Egypt's civil aviation chief, quoted by pro-government daily Al-Ahram.

He said Russian authorities have approved the resumption of flights to the cities in the Sinai Peninsula.

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Moscow banned direct flights to Egypt after a bomb attack in October 2015 on a Russian-owned Airbus jet as it took off from the seaside resort of Sharm el-Sheikh that killed 224 people.

In April 2018, Moscow announced the resumption of flights to Cairo but not to the Red Sea coast, a popular destination for Russian tourists.

The United Kingdom, which had also suspended air links with the peninsula in 2015, relaunched flights to Sharm el-Sheikh at the end of 2019.

Claimed by the Islamic State jihadist group, the 2015 attack dealt a severe blow to Egypt's vital tourism industry as the country's economy was already crippled by years of instability following the 2011 uprising that ousted president Hosni Mubarak.

While the sector recorded a rebound of nearly $13 billion in revenue for 2018-2019, tourism in Egypt was hit hard again by the coronavirus pandemic, with official figures showing a drop of more than 20% in revenues for 2019-2020.

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