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Russia to Resume U.K. Flights, Extend Turkey Ban

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Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency

Russia will resume flights with the United Kingdom along with flights to seven other countries in June but extend travel restrictions to Turkey for another three weeks, Russia's coronavirus response center announced Monday.

Moscow temporarily suspended flights between Russia and the U.K. in late December, after Britain announced it had discovered a highly transmissible strain of Covid-19. The flight ban, which also affected Turkey as of mid-April, expires on June 1.

Russia's Covid-19 task force said on its social media that Moscow-London passenger flights will resume on June 2 "due to an improved epidemiological situation in the U.K."

Starting June 10, flights will also resume to and from Austria, Hungary, Lebanon, Luxembourg, Mauritius, Morocco and Croatia.

However, the Covid-19 response center said Russia's flight restrictions to Turkey and

Tanzania will stay in place until at least June 21.

Authorities cited rising numbers of Covid-19 cases in both countries, although observers noted that Moscow's mid-April announcement followed the Turkish president's statement in support of Ukraine amid a flare-up in tensions.

Despite the direct flight ban, U.K. citizens have since late April been able to enter Russia via one of the 29 countries with which Russia has resumed regular air connections.

Russia grounded most international flights at the start of its Covid-19 outbreak last spring and has since gradually lifted travel restrictions to countries it deems sufficiently safe.

Most nationals from other countries are still barred from entering Russia on tourist, business and work visas, with exceptions in place for family members of Russian citizens and those holding Highly Qualified Specialist visas.

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