

Russian Military Evacuates 500 From Afghanistan

August 25, 2021



The Defense Ministry will deploy four military transport aircraft to airlift Russians, Belarusians and Central Asian nationals as well as Ukrainians. **Zuma / TASS**

The Russian military has begun evacuating 500 citizens of Russia and its regional allies from Afghanistan, the Defense Ministry [announced](#) Wednesday.

In a statement [carried](#) by news agencies, Russia's Defense Ministry said it will deploy four military transport aircraft to airlift Russians, Belarusians and Central Asian nationals as well as Ukrainians seeking to flee Afghanistan after the Taliban militant group's lightning takeover.

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“Under the instruction of President Vladimir Putin, Defense Minister and Army General Sergei Shoigu on Aug. 25 organized the evacuation of more than 500 citizens of Russia, CSTO member-states (Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan) and Ukraine by military

transport aircraft from the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan,” the statement read.

The CSTO is a Moscow-led military bloc of former Soviet republics known as the Collective Security Treaty Organization.

“Medical and nursing teams of military doctors with the necessary medical equipment are located in each Russian military transport aircraft to provide medical assistance and support to the evacuated citizens during the flight,” the military said.

“A sufficient supply of drinking water, blankets and food rations has been provided in all Russian military aircraft for the evacuated citizens,” it added.

Russia has said it would [provide](#) civil aircraft to evacuate anyone who wishes to leave “to any foreign countries that show interest in receiving and accommodating them.”

Russian officials [said](#) last week that “one or two hundred” Russian passport holders remaining in Afghanistan had been evacuated earlier due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Media [reported](#) earlier Tuesday that the Russian military staged helicopter drills on the Tajik-Afghan border as President Vladimir Putin warned of an influx of militants disguised as refugees from Afghanistan into the Central Asian republics that Moscow counts as allies.

Several ex-Soviet republics in Central Asia share a border with Afghanistan and Russia.

The Kremlin has been cautiously optimistic about the extremist group since its Aug. 15 seizure of power in Kabul despite the group being officially banned within Russia itself.

The Taliban’s political office in Qatar told Arab media Tuesday that it maintains “[good relations](#)” with Russia and China.

Putin on Tuesday vowed that Russia would not interfere in Afghanistan and that Moscow had learned from the Soviet occupation of the country.

The United States, which is organizing what it calls the largest airlift in U.S. history with the help of European and Mideast allies, faces an Aug. 31 deadline to pull troops out of Afghanistan.

The Taliban is a terrorist organization banned in Russia.

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