

Ukrainian Oligarchs Flee Amid Fears of Russian Attack – Reports

February 14, 2022



Kyiv's Boryspil International Airport. **Sergei Supinsky / AFP**

Ukrainian oligarchs and wealthy businessmen are fleeing the country as tensions with Russia reach a boiling point and Western countries order their citizens to leave, the Ukrainskaya Pravda news website [reported](#) Monday.

At least 20 chartered flights departed from Kyiv on Sunday, more than at any other time in the last six years of flight observations, Ukrainskaya Pravda reported, citing flight logs. Ukraine's two richest men Rinat Akhmetov and Viktor Pinchuk are among those who have reportedly fled.

Shipping magnate Andrei Stavnitser and agricultural tycoon Vadim Nesterenko also left Ukraine on Sunday.

Billionaire Igor Abramovich, a deputy from the pro-Russian Opposition Platform — for Life party, reportedly chartered a plane for party members and their families to Vienna, with 50 people onboard.

Related article: [KLM Suspends Flights to Ukraine: Airline](#)

The spate of flights follows nearly two weeks of high-profile departures, with billionaire Victor Pinchuk and metallurgy magnate Vadim Novinsky already believed to have left the country.

Some of the individuals named in the latest report have since denied leaving, with Stavnitser said that he was leaving the country for a business trip and would return within days.

Businessman and former deputy prime minister Boris Kolesnikov, whose plane also departed Kyiv on Sunday, said that his plane had actually flown to Prague for maintenance, and that he was still in Ukraine.

“The deceitful and forever manipulating publication is lying as usual. I'm in Kyiv, and I'm not going anywhere until March 1,” Kolesnikov [wrote](#) on his Facebook page Sunday.

The report comes as tensions between Russia and the West over Ukraine reach an all-time high and threaten the outbreak of a new war in Europe.

Western warnings over the 100,000 Russian troops massed near Ukraine's borders reached their gravest point yet as the United States said that Russia could launch an offensive at any time in the coming days, with the capital Kyiv among potential targets.

Moscow denies planning an invasion of its pro-Western neighbor but demands sweeping security guarantees, including a pledge that the U.S. and NATO permanently block Ukraine from joining the Western military alliance.

A flurry of diplomatic talks between Russia and Western countries have failed to significantly de-escalate tensions.

The U.S., UK, Germany and Canada have asked their citizens to leave Ukraine following Washington's warning of an impending Russian attack, and several countries have evacuated their embassies in Kyiv.

The Dutch carrier KLM became the first major airline over the weekend to indefinitely suspend flights to Kyiv.

Industry analysts believe other international airlines may soon also ban flights into Ukraine because of the growing cost to insurers.

AFP contributed reporting.

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