

Russian Officials Face Almost Total Ban on Foreign Travel

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Russian officials and employees of state-owned companies are increasingly being told to surrender their passports to members of the security services to ensure they cannot flee the country, a joint investigation by independent media outlets Current Time and Radio Liberty has concluded.

Requirements vary from job to job, with some state employees told to hand in their foreign passports to the FSB or a similar special department at their workplace, while others were just advised in no uncertain terms not to travel abroad on vacation, [according](#) to the investigation.

Officials who fail to hand their passports over are threatened with having them revoked, while employees at state-owned companies are generally given the opportunity to resign if they refuse to hand over their passports for safekeeping.

Travel restrictions may range from a complete ban on leaving Russia for some to having permission only to visit one of Russia's dwindling number of allies or members of the

Eurasian Economic Union for others.

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Exceptions are possible, Current Time reported, adding that for a "good reason" permission could be obtained to fly to the UAE, though anyone doing so would be required to submit a written report about their trip upon their return to Russia.

The investigation found that the rules tended to get stricter with proximity to power. Kremlin employees, for example, are no longer allowed to leave Russia at all.

The vast recent expansion of travel restrictions does not appear to have any basis in law, however. Current Russian law only prohibits foreign travel to officials with access to state secrets, members of the FSB as well as members of the military.

In February, responding to a question from journalists about the ban on travel abroad, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov [said](#) that no such ban existed for Russian officials.

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