The Moscow Times
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Georgia to Launch Transit Flights Between Russia and Europe

May 25, 2023

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Georgian Airways plans to launch transit flights connecting Russia to European countries via Tbilisi, the airline's founder said in an interview with Russian media outlet RTVI.

Russia has been largely cut off from Europe since its invasion of Ukraine prompted the European Union to ban Russian airlines from its airspace and vice versa. Russians traveling to Europe — and Europeans traveling to Russia — have since had to travel via cities like Istanbul, Dubai, Yerevan and Belgrade.

Georgian Airways plans to operate flights to Vienna, Milan, Paris, Thessaloniki and Larnaca starting June 15, said Tamaz Gaiashvili, the airline's founder.

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Direct flights between Russia and Georgia resumed this month following a four-year pause.

Russian authorities also introduced a 90-day visa-free regime for Georgian citizens.

The resumption of flights with Russia sparked opposition protests in Georgia, a country that in 2008 fought a brief but bloody war with Moscow that resulted in an ongoing Russian military presence in 20% of its territory.

Georgia's government did not join in international sanctions which punished Russia for the invasion of Ukraine.

But the country has been a key refuge for thousands of Russians who left their country since February 2022 to escape political persecution or mobilization.

Original url:
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