The Moscow Times
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Finland to Partially Reopen Border With Russia

December 12, 2023



The Russian-Finnish border. **Alexander Demianchuk / TASS**

Finland's Prime Minister Petteri Orpo said his government will reopen two of the eight shuttered border crossings with Russia, the Nordic country's Yle broadcaster reported Tuesday.

Finland closed its entire border with Russia in November after accusing Moscow of funneling asylum seekers toward the country, an EU member state that joined NATO after Russia invaded Ukraine last year.

Those closures were set to expire on Wednesday.

Finland's Interior Minister Mari Rantanen identified the border crossings slated for reopening as Vaalimaa — the busiest crossing of the Russian-Finnish border — and Niirala.

Rantanen said the border crossings would stay open until Jan. 14, 2024, but warned that they could close earlier if Helsinki sees another surge in undocumented migration from Russia.

Mikko Lehmus, head of the Finnish Border Guards analytical unit, said Vaalimaa and Niirala were chosen for reopening to allow family members to visit each other on either side of the border, according to Yle.

Russia, which shares a 1,340-kilometer-long border with Finland, has warned of "countermeasures" to Helsinki's reversal of its decades-long policy of military non-alignment after it joined NATO.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/12/12/finland-to-partially-reopen-border-with-russia-a83397