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Germany 'Strongly' Discourages Citizens From Traveling to Russia

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Germany's Foreign Ministry in Berlin. **Leonhard Lenz**

Germany has revised its travel advice for Russia to "strongly" discourage its citizens from traveling there, German media reported Thursday.

Previously, Germany had only advised citizens against visiting Russia. The updated travel recommendation now includes the word "strongly."

Germany's Foreign Ministry, which issued the travel advice, said the change was "due to the continuing deterioration of the situation [in Russia], including arbitrary arrests being observed more and more frequently."

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"In this context, [long] prison sentences are repeatedly imposed arbitrarily for public statements critical of the government — sometimes due to private statements on social

media," the ministry noted in the updated travel notice.

"In connection with unauthorized rallies and demonstrations, massive, sometimes violent actions by security forces can occur throughout the country," it added.

The travel advisory also warns against travel to Russia's regions bordering Ukraine.

The announcement comes days after hundreds of people across Russia were detained during and after attending memorial events dedicated to the late opposition activist Alexei Navalny, who died last month at an Arctic penal colony.

In February, a German tourist was arrested in St. Petersburg on drug smuggling charges after he brought gummy bear edibles on a flight to Russia.

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