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Russian Airports to Require Biometric Checks for Foreign Travelers Starting Next Month

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Vladimir Gerdo / TASS

Foreigners arriving in Russia through four Moscow airports and a land border checkpoint with Kazakhstan will be required to submit their photos and fingerprints starting next month, according to a Russian government decree.

The new rules take effect on Dec. 1 as part of a policy experiment and will last at least until June 30, 2026. Biometric requirements will be extended to all Russian border checkpoints starting June 30, 2025.

Foreigners with visa-free entry to Russia will be required to provide their biometrics via a downloadable phone app.

Those requiring a visa to enter the country will have their biometrics automatically entered into a central database and "linked" with Russia's unified biometric system, which is

accessible to the police and intelligence services.

“A foreign citizen and stateless person’s biometric personal data shall be transferred to the state information systems of authorized bodies and organizations involved in the experiment for their identification or authentication,” the decree states.

Diplomats, employees of international organizations, Belarusian nationals and children under six are exempt from the biometric requirements.

Rights groups have criticized Russia’s biometric system for its invasiveness.

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