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Russians Urged to Avoid U.S. Travel Amid Fears of Arrest

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The Foreign Ministry in Moscow. **Moskva News Agency**

Russian citizens should avoid traveling to the United States where they could face arbitrary arrest, Russia's Foreign Ministry spokeswoman said Wednesday.

Maria Zakharova claimed U.S. intelligence services had recently begun "luring" Russian nationals abroad in order to press political charges against them which are not revealed to the public. She did not identify the nature of the charges or provide examples of any recent arrests.

"Traveling to the United States privately or on official business is fraught with serious risks," Zakharova said at a weekly briefing, according to the Interfax news agency.

"In this regard, we urge [Russians] to avoid non-emergency travel to the U.S. and its allied satellite states, including primarily Canada and, with a few exceptions, EU countries, for these upcoming holidays and in the future," she said.

Zakharova said this was the ministry's first travel advisory linked to potential prosecutions.

"Our compatriots have long been hunted in the direct sense of the word by U.S. intelligence services," she said.

Russians already in the U.S. should avoid situations where they could become "victims of provocations" and face arrest under the pretext of violating local laws.

"If the attention shown to Russian citizens by Americans is becoming suspicious and intrusive, it may make sense to cut off these contacts and reconsider travel plans," she said.

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