

Civilian Planes Face 'High Risk' Flying Over Russia, EU Agency Says

By [AFP](#)

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Denis Grishkin / Moskva News Agency

The downing of an Azerbaijan Airlines airplane shows that flying over Russia poses a "high risk" to civilian aircraft as the war in Ukraine continues, the European Union Aviation Safety Agency said Friday.

The EASA said in a safety bulletin that the ongoing conflict "poses the risk of civil aircraft being unintentionally targeted in the airspace of the Russian Federation, due to possible civil-military coordination deficiencies, and the potential for misidentification."

The agency renewed its recommendation for airlines to avoid flying over western Russian airspace. Russia has banned EU airlines from flying over its airspace but those from China, Turkey, the Gulf states and other countries are still allowed.

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Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev has said the Azerbaijan Airlines passenger jet that crashed in Kazakhstan last month, killing 38 people on board, was shot at "from the ground" over the Russian city of Grozny, where it had been scheduled to land.

Russia has said its air defense systems were active at the time as they tried to repel Ukrainian drones but has stopped short of saying it shot at the plane.

The EASA said the use of Russian air defense systems to counter Ukrainian missiles and drones launched into Russia "may have a direct impact on flight operations at several locations, including major international airports."

"Most of the incidents have occurred in airspace not closed by the Russian Federation during drone attacks or activation of air defense systems," the bulletin said. "This poses a high risk to flight operations, as demonstrated by the incident involving Azerbaijan Airlines flight 8243 on 25 December 2024."

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