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Tunisia Releases 11 Russian Nationals Following Terrorism Allegations

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The Mornaguia prison in Tunisia. **Zuma / TASS**

A court in the North African country of Tunisia has ruled to release 11 Russian citizens who were detained in November on allegations of "terrorism," Russian state media reported Friday.

Russia's Embassy in Tunis claimed the group was detained on a "sightseeing" tour of Roman monuments in the municipality of Haidra on the Algerian border, where it said there were tensions due to the presence of "terrorist cells."

The embassy was later quoted as saying that the reason for their detention was "suspicions of involvement in terrorist activities" and that Tunisian authorities had confiscated equipment from them that allegedly had no "declared tourist purposes."

Although Tunisia is a popular destination for Russians due to visa-free travel and relatively low costs, Haidra is not on regular tourist routes, the French news agency AFP reported earlier.

Neither Russia nor Tunisia have provided details about the case.

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Tunisia held the group on suspicion of "involvement in terrorist activities," but they were not formally charged.

According to the RBC news website, the 11 Russians were released from prison on Thursday after they were said to have been cleared of terrorism charges.

The Russian citizens were taken to Tunis-Carthage International Airport to return home, their lawyer told the news agency RIA Novosti.

They are expected to board two flights to Moscow later on Friday, the Russian embassy told TASS.

AFP contributed reporting.

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