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Moscow Travel Chaos Drags Into Second Day After Unprecedented Ukrainian Drone Attack

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Sofya Sandurskaya / TASS

Moscow's four major airports struggled to return to normal operations Thursday, a day after Ukraine's largest-ever drone attack triggered widespread travel disruptions, Russian transportation authorities said.

At least 60,000 travelers were impacted by some 350 flight delays and cancellations at airports across the country, according to Russia's Association of Tour Operators. Russia's military said it downed 524 Ukrainian drones, forcing civil aviation authorities to temporarily ground flights.

"Planes that didn't arrive at their destination on time will be late for other flights," the Association of Tour Operators said. "This delay will trigger the next delays like a domino effect."

Some passengers reported delays of more than 30 hours. In total, around 12% of all flights in and out of the Russian capital were canceled on Wednesday.

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By Thursday morning, Russia's Transportation Ministry said more than 14,000 passengers remained stranded on nearly 100 inbound and outbound flights at Moscow airports. It said it expected operations to return to normal by 6:00 p.m. local time.

Still, Russia's Association of Tour Operators reported that roughly 150 additional flights in and out of Moscow were canceled Thursday.

Turkish Airlines and Pegasus Airlines canceled about 40 flights between Russia and four Turkish cities on Thursday and Friday, affecting more than 15,000 passengers.

The ongoing travel disruptions came as President Vladimir Putin hosted dozens of world leaders for the May 9 Victory Day parade. Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić was among those reportedly affected, making a stop in Azerbaijan before arriving in Moscow late Wednesday.

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