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Russian Tour Companies Introduce Trips to Taliban-Ruled Afghanistan for $3K

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A market in Kabul. **Ebrahim Noroozi / AP / TASS**

Russian tour companies have started advertising travel packages to Afghanistan, offering weeklong trips to the country for around $3,000 as Moscow deepens its ties with the Taliban-led government in Kabul.

The offers, which have appeared on Russian online platforms in recent days, promise Russian citizens organized tours to Afghanistan, with the first group of travelers expected to depart as early as mid-July, according to the Telegram news channel Shot.

The packages, which cost 235,000 rubles ($3,000), have appeared amid Russia's warming relationship with the Taliban, which has governed Afghanistan since the U.S. withdrawal in 2021.

Russia last week became the first country to officially recognize the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, which is governed by the Taliban.

Since the recognition, Russia has announced plans to cooperate with the Taliban in a range of sectors including energy, agriculture, transport and infrastructure.

Officials have also discussed expanding trade and investment opportunities despite ongoing international sanctions on the Taliban leadership.

Related article: Experts: Russia Recognizing Taliban Rule in Afghanistan Largely a Symbolic Move

The head of Russia's civil aviation agency recently said that direct commercial flights between Afghanistan and Russia may soon be established, a move that would further normalize relations between the two governments.

The Taliban has enforced an austere interpretation of Islamic law since regaining power, sharply restricting women's rights, imposing public executions and corporal punishment and closing most schools for girls.

The United Nations and human rights groups have condemned the regime's practices as systemic violations of international human rights norms.

Moscow has pledged ongoing support for Kabul, including joint efforts to bolster regional security and combat terrorism and drug trafficking.

Western governments continue to advise against all travel to Afghanistan, citing persistent threats from militant groups, a lack of basic infrastructure and the absence of consular support.

Russian authorities have not commented publicly on the safety of the tours or whether the government will provide oversight or assistance for citizens traveling to the country.

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