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Ukrainian Drone Attacks Trigger Major Flight Disruptions at Russia's Busiest Airports

July 07, 2025



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Thousands of airline passengers at airports in Moscow and St. Petersburg were facing travel chaos on Monday after hundreds of flights were delayed and others cancelled amid Ukrainian drone attacks.

Russia's civil aviation authority Rosaviatsia said 104 outbound flights were delayed for more than two hours at Pulkovo Airport in St. Petersburg as of Monday morning. Eight incoming and outgoing flights were also canceled.

At Sheremetyevo Airport in Moscow, 40 flights were delayed, though none were canceled, according to Rosaviatsia. However, the airport's own website showed several flights being cancelled.

The agency also claimed that "all airports in the country are currently operating as

normal," but the timetables on the websites of airports in Moscow and St. Petersburg showed significant delays and cancellations into Monday evening.

Between Saturday and Monday morning, airlines were forced to cancel 485 flights and delay another 1,900, impacting over 240,000 passengers.

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Those disruptions came as Russia's Defense Ministry reported shooting down more than 200 Ukrainian drones over the weekend. On Monday, the ministry said it had downed 91 drones overnight, including eight over the Moscow region and three over the Leningrad region.

Videos and photos shared on social media showed overcrowded terminals at airports in Moscow and St. Petersburg, with some passengers sleeping on the floor as they waited for updates on their flights.

The flight disruptions are estimated to have cost airlines around 20 billion rubles ($250 million), industry experts and airline sources told the business newspaper Kommersant.

Similar scenes played out at Russian airports last summer, as near-daily drone attacks on Moscow prompted airports in the surrounding area to introduce temporary closures and flight restrictions.

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