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Russian Police Question Holders of Kazakh Bank Cards – Reports

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Russian police have begun summoning citizens who remotely obtained bank cards in neighboring Kazakhstan, media outlets reported on Friday, citing anonymous sources.

Several cardholders told the Ostorozhno Novosti Telegram news channel that law enforcement officials had informed them about an ongoing investigation in Kazakhstan. Russia's Interior Ministry reportedly claimed it was looking into "more than 1,000" Russian holders of Kazakh bank cards.

Neither the authorities in Kazakhstan nor in Russia have publicly commented on the reported investigation.

Remote applications for Kazakh bank cards surged after Visa and Mastercard pulled out of Russia following the 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

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Kazakh authorities estimate that up to 700,000 Russians received payment cards from banks in Kazakhstan between 2022 and 2024.

But Kazakhstan banned the remote issuance of individual identification numbers in January 2025 amid pressure from the West. Those numbers are needed to obtain bank cards.

At the same time, major Kazakh banks suspended debit card issuance to non-residents or their validity for up to 12 months.

Ostorozhno Novosti said Russians have retained the ability to obtain individual identification numbers through so-called "assistants" or "facilitators" in Kazakhstan following the ban, suggesting that the reported criminal investigation may be targeting those workers.

Kazakh financial regulators claimed that more than 90% of cardholders implicated in alleged money laundering schemes were non-residents, saying they had "passed on" that information to foreign law enforcement agencies.

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