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Russia Calls On UN Aviation Body to Lift Sanctions – Reuters

September 22, 2025



The emblem of the UN International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). **Zuma / TASS**

Russia has asked the UN's aviation body to ease sanctions on spare parts and overflights that were imposed over the invasion of Ukraine, Reuters reported Monday, citing documents it had seen and a source familiar with the matter.

In a working paper seen by Reuters, Russia argued to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) that the sanctions go against global rules.

"Unlawful coercive measures violate the human right to freedom of movement regardless of nationality and citizenship," the paper said.

Moscow is especially pushing for relief from sanctions on spare parts, which it says are critical for flight safety, a Russian aviation industry source told Reuters.

The proposals form part of working papers prepared by Russia for the ICAO's triennial assembly, where Moscow is also seeking election to the organization's 36-member governing

council after failing to win enough votes for a seat in 2022 following its full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

The documents also criticize the closure of airspace by 37 countries to Russian airlines, the suspension of airworthiness certificates for Russian-operated aircraft, and bans on technical servicing and insurance.

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ICAO, the papers argue, must take "all practical measures to prevent states from applying politically motivated, discriminatory and coercive measures" in global aviation.

Russia's lobbying comes as the U.S. has partially eased sanctions on Belarus' state carrier Belavia in exchange for the release of 52 political prisoners.

But Washington, concerned that Boeing spare parts could be funneled into Russia via Belarus — where nine of Belavia's 16 planes are U.S.-made — barred Belavia from flying its Boeing jets to Russia, occupied Ukrainian territories and countries on the U.S. terrorism sponsors list, including Iran, North Korea, Syria and Cuba. Exempted aircraft are also prohibited from transporting goods subject to U.S. export restrictions.

The restrictions may prove to be symbolic in practice, Elina Ribakova, a fellow at the Bruegel think tank and program director at the Kyiv School of Economics, told Politico.

"There is no way to check what happens in [the] Russia+ customs union of which Belarus is a part," Ribakova said. "I see Belarus and Russia as fully cooperating states with fully porous borders."

Western sanctions have cut Russia off from foreign-made aircraft and parts since the invasion of Ukraine, prompting Moscow to block the return of hundreds of leased Boeing and Airbus jets.

Russian airlines, which operate more than 700 Western-made aircraft, now rely on complex parallel import routes to source parts, and the sector has been plagued by breakdowns.

In July, a Soviet-era Antonov An-24 plane crashed in the Far East, killing all 48 people on board.

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