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Russia Evacuates Citizens From Middle East as Iran Conflict Upends Air Travel

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Nasimi Gasanguluzade/TASS

Russia is evacuating thousands of its citizens from countries in the Middle East with specialized emergency aircraft and dozens of charter flights amid the conflict in Iran.

Russia's Transportation Ministry said Tuesday that more than 1,000 Russians have returned from Abu Dhabi and the Omani capital of Muscat so far, as it coordinates with airlines to bring back travelers stranded due to major flight disruptions in the region.

Around 4,500 more Russians are expected to return from the UAE and Oman via evacuation flights later on Tuesday, which the ministry said would continue operating until Saturday.

Besides Moscow, the ministry said flights were being directed to the cities of Novosibirsk, Yekaterinburg, Kazan and Mineralnye Vody.

The Emergency Situations Ministry said an Il-76 transportation aircraft was dispatched from Zhukovsky Airport near Moscow to bring back Russians who had fled from Iran into

neighboring Azerbaijan.

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Russia's Embassy in Baku said that 39 Russians had fled to Azerbaijan as of Monday morning, with another 500 people still estimated to be in Iran.

Other foreigners and some Russians have been leaving Iran through border crossings with Azerbaijan, Armenia and Turkey.

An undisclosed government source in Baku told Reuters on Monday that at least 312 people have been evacuated from Iran through Azerbaijan since the U.S. and Israel launched strikes on the Islamic republic Saturday. At least one-third of them were Azeri nationals, while others were nationals of countries including Russia, China and Pakistan.

Russia's Embassy in Turkmenistan said Tuesday that its citizens could leave Iran via its border crossings with the Central Asian country if they email detailed information about their evacuation route.

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