The Moscow Times
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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Israel's EL AL Suspends Moscow Flights as Drone Attacks Disrupt Air Traffic

June 25, 2026



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Israel's flagship airline EL AL said Thursday it was temporarily suspending flights between Tel Aviv and Moscow, citing developments in Russian airspace as repeated Ukrainian drone attacks increasingly disrupt air traffic in and around the Russian capital.

The airline notified passengers that Flight LY611 from Tel Aviv to Moscow, scheduled for June 25, had been canceled as a result of the suspension, the Israel Info and Kol Israel news outlets reported.

"In light of developments in the airspace over Russia, EL AL is suspending flights on the Tel Aviv-Moscow route," the airline said in a notice to passengers published by Kol Israel.

An airline spokesperson confirmed the suspension to The Times of Israel.

A scheduled S7 Airlines flight from Tel Aviv to Moscow, due to depart at the same time as EL AL's Flight LY611 on Thursday morning, was also canceled, according to the Israel Airports

Authority's online departures board.

The Moscow Times has contacted EL AL for comment.

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Ukraine has stepped up drone attacks on Moscow in recent weeks, with Russian authorities reporting four large-scale attacks targeting the capital since mid-June.

On June 16, Russian air defenses shot down 60 drones approaching Moscow, officials said. They reported intercepting another 76 drones on June 19 and 84 on June 22.

The largest attack came on June 18, when Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin said Russian forces destroyed 194 drones targeting the capital. The assault forced Moscow's airports to delay or cancel 527 flights.

EL AL, Israel's largest airline, carries more than 6.5 million passengers annually.

Political analyst Abbas Gallyamov said the airline's decision highlighted the extent to which the war in Ukraine has begun to affect daily life inside Russia.

"Read this carefully: Israelis are afraid to fly to Russia — not the other way around," Gallyamov, a former speechwriter to President Vladimir Putin who now lives in exile, wrote on social media. "Sometimes it takes an outside perspective to understand how absurd the situation at home has become.

"Security was the core of his message," Gallyamov wrote of Putin. "Now Russians find themselves in greater danger than they were in the 1990s."

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